

HIGH-STORIES

A collection of short texts by Matt Lee

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These text stroke short stories were written during the course of a three year participation in an email list called Fiction of Philosophy (now called Wryting) run by Alan Sondheim. They are stil in an unfinished state and may well remain so, refelecting as they do a sort of apprenticeship or experimentation with style, form and voice that produced some interesting result but which was put on hold as I finished my doctoral thesis. They reflect a possibly obsessive interest and curiosity philosophy and at times suffer from the fragmenation that they explore, but there are still lines and phrases here and there that I think are worthwhile as well as a general atmosphere and the glimmerings of a voice that I don't want to simply throw away but which seems strange and slightly displaced to me now. Comments are welcome by email to matt.lee7@ntlworld.com.

Chilling one evening, glimpse.

They both sat in their usual places, slowly settling down for the evening, Charlie in his cell, Churchill in his office. Charlie's day ending, Churchill's just beginning, the same doors locked each into their respective routines.

Charlie sat at his desk in front of the barred window, absorbed in another world. He placed an envelope in his book to mark his page, put the book down, then rose and took the four steps to the toilet. As the piss hit the small lake in the bowl with a steady rhythmical noise it focussed his thoughts, broke the silence and the introspection of reading that had slowly crept up on him. Sharply, abruptly, it dragged him back to reality, away from the imaginary world that had been his home for the last few hours.

Churchill lifted the flap on the outside of Charlie's door in time to see him pissing. Registering the prisoner's presence, he dropped the flap again, moving to the next door, where he again lifted the flap and peeped in on another man's life. He finished his round and returned to his office to mark the roll-call form in the appropriate place. All night long, every half an hour, he would walk down the corridors, lifting and peeping.

Charlie barely noticed the intrusion of his privacy. He returned to his bed where he sat and gathered together his tobacco, Rizla and matches in order to skin up. The small piece of gear he had was kept, wrapped in cling film, under his foreskin. It was retrieved quickly and within a couple of minutes replaced just as deftly, Charlie knowing as well as any other that smoking was acceptable whilst rolling was nickable.

He settled back on his bed, putting the walkman headphones on his ears and the tinfoil ashtray next to him on the bed, before closing his eyes and taking a long, slow suck on the joint. The music surrounded him, completely enveloping him in yet another reality, except this time it wasn't a vision created by a writer.

First Words

Sitting with the sweat beginning to bubble up from the insides that churn in turn with each thought of the future, the tea is passed round. There's never enough seats in the room, the wooden floor covered in children's toys amidst the legs of parents and respective partners. Feet everywhere. There's always feet everywhere when my parents are round. This peculiar ménage a quatre of divorced reasonableness politely tiptoeing through the history that lies unseen alongside the scattered remains of the day.

"Well we've decided what we're going to do for the birth" I say, falteringly attempting to begin this whole thing that I wish would occur through an osmotic thought process rather than through me actually having to speak the words out loud. "And so we wanted to talk to you all because some of it involves you." Cups clink and tea is sipped as eyes turn and attention deviates slightly from the ever present children.

At times like these I wonder how life ever moves along, how that series of days that was my past ends up at this point where things are happening with my full awareness of them, yet almost as if they were occurring to another. There is a point at which who we are appears to disappear. No one quite sure whether this boy is a man, this son a father, this irresponsible dope fiend a reasonable hash smoker. My children appear from the back yard, three year old demanding tea, five year old asking another, yet another, question. "Can you just hang on for a bit Rosa, we're trying to have a conversation. Find something to do for a while and then we'll have dinner before Star Trek is on."

"Anyway" I continue, this conversation unable to start without some faltering steps, some first words that can't be found. "Anyway, we've decided we want to have the baby at home this time since both times we've had them in hospital it's been less than best. We've visited the maternity unit at Brighton General and although it isn't terrible or anything it's not really what we want. Apart from anything it's in a bloody tower block thirteen floors up and as you can imagine we're not too keen on that. So we've decided we really want to have this baby at home" and the conversation flows briefly through this history, through the conversations with consultants and nurses, through the need for a healing birth, for a birthing that is no longer medical procedures and pain relief but rather attempts to see the reality, the truth of the experience. Unseen history is again appearing as I speak, like the black hand of grave times resting on my shoulder.

My eldest daughter was born when I was in prison. I'd been jailed for rioting at the poll tax demo that happened at the turn of the decade. I didn't get out until she was seven months old and the first time I saw her was sitting in a prison visiting room at HMP Featherstone. She would be brought along by my lover, single parent lover, dressed in her Sunday best with me sitting there dressed in broken-zipped nylon trousers that were too tight but which allowed easy access under the table. We would sit there talking whilst the baby slept and Christina had her hand inside my trousers, the touch of flesh heightened by rarity, the coldness of another's skin burning through the tears. When Rosa first visited my first words were so wrong. "She's so small" I said, but with a tone of voice infected by shock and distance, without delight or wonder. The loss of time losing time.

The flask of tea had gone cold. Lukewarm prison tea, a peculiar dirty water beige, never quite opaque. Cheap tea, made from the dust scraped off the floor of the packing house in India. The scrapings suffused into hot water a million miles away in a different world. Shit tea. Even worse when the taste is exacerbated by the cold. He gives up after a single sip, spits the liquid back into the stained blue plastic mug and pours the lot out of the window.

The wing was quiet now. The echo of the radio could be heard through the door but little activity besides. For a moment he sits on the edge of the bed and stares at the wall. Here there is the time. Here, outside the voices of the day. He thinks for a moment about the endless stream of words falling into his ears and realises that he cannot remember anything that has been said to him today. Or yesterday. Or the day before that. In fact he feels for a second like no one has ever spoken to him. Of course so and so saying such and such; O Neil told him about the whizz, which he declined - after all, what fucking prat takes an upper in this hole; Brian told him something about the lifer down the end of the wing; Churchill gave him a bit more lip again about the poll tax; but the actual words any of them used had somehow got lost in the meantime, in the mean time, these average nothingnesses that stole even the words from his life, made him doubt whether they had ever existed. For another moment he sits silently as though this position is the centre, that fulcrum of life we always skirt around, that hole that exists where we all foolishly assume our self to exist. For just another moment he feels utterly bereft of words, as though he would never speak again, as though he's never spoken. Fleetingly he disappears outside, sees his lovers face, sees her eyes close and her neck stretch as she comes beneath him.

Without thought he stands and strips, flips off the light and climbs into bed. He lays there on his back and his hands rest on his groin. With his thumb and forefinger he pulls back his foreskin and takes out the cellophane wrapped piece of dope, reaches above his head and pushes it under his pillow. The action has given him a hard-on and he masturbates in boredom, the action enabling another momentary fantasy of release. After a couple of short minutes he feels the dead come fall upon his skin, not even urgent to escape, just a sense of exit, of end. He wipes the semen across his belly and enjoys brief smells of sex before turning on his side, resting his come smelling hand under his head.

The light burns. The noise crashes in. Bang bang bang bang bang. "Lee, you awake" bang bang bang bang bang. Metal threatens, he suddenly hears the key in the door. "You awake in there Lee". The screws voice is loud and urgent. Bang bang bang bang bang. He thinks for a moment that he's being busted and slips his dope into his hand before shouting his reply. "Yes guv, I'm awake now". Fucking awake now, that's for sure, he thinks. He sits up and the door stays shut but the flap is up and he can see the eyes and nose of some fat pig bastard screw fucker outside his cell. Fucking wanker. "Lee, your mother called" the screw says. "What time is it?" he asks. "9.30" comes the reply "your mother phoned". He has suddenly rushed into wakefulness and feels a surge of panic. "What'd she want?" he asks. He can hear the wing listening in. His stomach is flipping briefly but his head is still fuming at being woken since he will have to try to get to sleep again, that awful evening ending. It's as though another day's been added to his time and he feels incredibly angry.

The screw is businesslike. He speaks with chipped emotions and clipped wings. “Your mother phoned. Your wife went into hospital at lunchtime today and gave birth at 9.15. It’s a girl.”

The second birth was better in that I was there, but everything else was almost farcical. At one point I was rubbing Christina’s thighs, easing the pain emanating from her expectant cunt, only to be told by some fat prat of a maternity nurse that she shouldn’t be exposing herself. Imposing some sick prejudice, some peculiar distaste for the body. “Cover yourself up girl, you’re not decent sitting like that” she said, before pushing me out of the way as some irrelevant onlooker. As if I hadn’t ever seen this cunt before, as if its birthing was to be hidden again.

Flooding back in these unseen times prolonging the present, dragging me away from the time at hand. I return to the tea party. “So anyway, if we’re having the baby at home we’d like you all to be involved in some ways, to be around. To start with we’re going to need the extra pairs of hands to look after the kids and all” to which my mum assigns herself. More negotiation, more details tossed back and forth. God I wish this was over. “And Dad, we’d like you to take pictures of the birth” and a brief shock passes through his eyes that for a split second lets reality home. “No problem” he says. We make explicit that this means not of the first moments after birth but of the birth itself, even though it’s not some mad photo shoot and the photos are not the main reason for the event. “Sort of just be around and use your common sense” and now he has that slightly animated look that happens when a new task, an interesting experience, comes onto the horizon.

There’s a bit of time to calm, the ebb and flow of the conversation having peaked and now settling into time, words passing freely again, cheaply, like loose change jangling in pockets giving the illusion of money but never really able to get a purchase. The change remaining from spent thoughts. Teas are finished and kids talked to, people are seen out and wishes wished as they settle down into that time after time when thoughts are taken back to the little sub-units of family life to be chewed over and digested.

Retreat back to times when they are together alone. Framed times, sweet lines. The oil exhumes itself as the flame warms the soft Afghan black, the flicker red glint passes out and curlicue smoke writes messages of sweet smelling destiny in the air, heat scalding his skin as the performance crumbles into paper. Lined tobacco, rolled joy, inhaled and intimate.

She sits around her belly on the warm floor. The wood spits cinders towards the crossed feet and blims of hash drop from the joint. Toking. Her skin is taught and gorgeously engorged, a deep slow outward falling crested with Rodinesque breasts and delicate nipples. Along her side the rib cage firmness rises out of the mound and gives the ghostedge of her previous form as she rises through the body pregnant with otherness. There is an imperceptible joining. Like the line of the breast against the chest, that seamless separation echoed in her belly. She leans back against her arms, outstretched with palms flat and sinews sliding, and tilts her head back languorously to exhale, her neck glowing in the firelight. Across her belly a shape shifts and rises, an arm of leg stretching inside and forcing waves of subtle disruption.

On the bed sodden with oil glistening across the darklight, she rests with eyes closed dreamtimes. Her cunt bulbous like edges towards fruit, buds swollen with colour

intricately dancing inside flesh leaves, lines curving and enticing. Risen. Her legs are bent up and he kneels between, sliding thighs with oil, dampening her pubis with sweat, running his thumbs along the insides of her, sliding along her insides. Sliding. His thumbs descend and deep soft depths elide sight, bent forward to suck and sweet scents. He folds himself together onto his bent legs, concertina constructions, in homage, face forced into desert. A rich source, smeared across beards, sticky trails of sex. Tongues rise up and down the edges of her cunt, divination dives. Hands moving across her belly, over her hill and far away, under the weight of her breasts, movable and giving flesh. Deep tasted slide. Tongue flicking. He would collapse inside taste.

His cock hard against his belly, sandwiched onto his thighs, stretching between his upper legs, feeding itself on smells of flesh produced power. She strains forward and arches herself to hold his head firm, rasping hair skin of head, grovelling, grinding now, grunting back, his arms wrapping, her legs forced up higher, teeth bitten flesh, gently, gently, gently, flicks darting tips, gently, tips darts across, gently, sense, tight. Her belly rock hard, forced up, outward, taught, tightening her thighs, tight, flick tip, gently, tight, too tight, too tight, too tight, gently, “fuck fuck fuck fuck fuck” she slowly sighs. There is a cry from inside the sounds of the night and a moment collapse, before waves of tightness ram home again, breath back, eyes open, breath in, out, in out. Shit, shit, thirty seconds, timeless; a minute, timeless. Waved past.

He raises himself up, thin muscled arms stretched straight. He arches over her, his cock edging towards cunt, wishing well wetness beckoning. Her thighs twist and her arse lifts, cunt exposed, entrance dividing as he bends forward kisses lips sucks sense, then fuck. His cock pushes and at that singular moment of penetration life gives in and he slides inside, his belly massaging her mountain of pregnancy, deep inside until swollen cervix head limits the line of pursuit and then rhythm. That rising sense. Rhythmic gentle internal massage, slow and firm thrusts, timed sizes. His arse clenched tight, his knees apart, she raises her legs up high and folds her feet down onto the back of his thighs as he speeds, gradually temperature given, gradually burning inside, speeding cries until within he releases waves of come and is still. Kissing.

Twisting off her he lays besides and reclines, his cock glistening and smeared white cum mixed into the hairs around his balls. She lays there for a moment, her cunt allowing out a little of the liquid sex, falling, oozing down the crevice of her arse that glides down below her cunt, her legs still bent up at the knees. “Good fuck” he says, out of breath, “mmm, goooood fuck” he repeats, with a drawling emphasis on the good. She turns her head and smiles, still stoned and chilled, “why thank you kind sir” she whispers. As they lay there staring at the parachute canopy above the bed, the vibrant purple silk subtly reflecting the open windows breath, he thinks for a moment about the imminent birth and about the peculiar threesome they now form in sex, this odd obstruction that invokes caution and construction of bodies unnecessary when breasts squash against breasts and bodies crush into each other. Fucking pregnant women involves choreography that adds a frisson of distance unnecessary otherwise, that sense of containment in release that adds tension to high pleasure.

It’s a girl. He sits for a moment with the words still twisting his tympanic membrane, still physically real. It’s a girl. I’m a father. Just words. Like, I love you. Each time they try to get out someone puts them in a place, each time that place means more than

the words. It's a girl someone says to me and I am transported. This thing. This it. And I'm what. Somewhere fucking else that's for sure. The first words ignore truth. Those first words come without thought. Suddenly, explosive entrance, the first words exhibit nothing other than simple wonder and the sheer magnitude of existence. In those first words our worlds erupt.

His lovers face comes again and kisses his memories. "Thanks" he says to the screw, watching the flap drop and staring into darkness as the lights snap out. Thanks a lot, he thinks. Today is July 2nd 1991. Today is the birthday of my first child he thinks. A daughter. I'm a father. And today is her birthday. Fucking great, he thinks, pissed off, his lips drawn tight. He remembers a thought from a book he read ages ago. There is no greater sorrow than to think back to a happy time when one is miserable. Except perhaps to think back to a miserable time when one is happy. He knows that each birthday of his firstborn will always have this gap that he was at this second. He knows that the threads of time rarely break and the cloth is tinged with the colours of loss, frayed edges that always threaten the unity of the weft and weave.

His melancholic loss in this moment of paternity is stung by the sudden crashing of metal. "Wahay poll tax" Brian shouts from across the landing "nice going man". A number of his neighbours have heard the all too public announcement and a brief cheer is raised through a number of hammered doors. "Bet you're fucking chuffed eh" Brian shouts. He responds and for a moment, despite not even being able to see their faces, is caught up in the congratulations that surround most births, the backslapping bravado and rituals of release. For a moment the fatherhood seems almost real. As the noise subsides and the promises of wetting the babbies 'ed ring the end of the scene he smiles and lays back on his bed.

"How fast are the contractions?" the womans voice asks on the end of the phone. " 'bout every minute now". The voice is calm and reassuring, if metallic and slightly inhuman, slightly too cold for this situation. "Don't worry, I'll be there in about ten minutes. Try to make sure everything is ready and Christina is comfortable. And don't worry, it'll be fine.". He puts the phone down and then picks it straight back up again, dials another number, shivering in just his shirt sleeves at three in the morning. More reassurances and assurances of imminent arrival. He finishes and repeats the exercise yet again before returning to his lover, now sitting taugt in the bath. "Everyone's on the way. How you feeling?" She looks at him with sweat and tears on her face. Silent. He leans over the bath and hugs her, the water seeping onto his shirt. "It'll be alright" he whispers "it'll be alright" he hopes.

She is so full of child now that her body is squashed tight in the confines of the bath. Her belly has taken over from her cunt as the centre of her body, hiding the arena of sexhair beneath the stretched skin sensation of pregnancy. Her navel has long since attempted to escape and formed a third nipple on the crest of her hill. Her breasts have grown to a size no longer containable in one hand and tanned shoulders gleam in the light, the sweat and skin and steam intensely erotic, as an all too apparent hard-on attests. "And you can put that away I can fucking tell you" she quips. "They do say a good hard shag always helps bring on labour" he replies. "Like I fucking need any help bringing on labour." She tries to rise but is caught by the weight ands water and pain. "Shut up and help me out of here" she says. Wrapping a towel wound her he takes her weight as she steps carefully out of the bath and they slowly make their way up the stairs.

She's on the large four-poster bed, layers of material hang from the canopy and the mattress is covered with towels. Across from him the two midwives, with flimsy white plastic aprons and surgical gloves speak words of reassurance into her ears. She's on all fours, her arse high in the air, her belly hanging below, rocking back and forward with her breasts and she pants and sweats and grunts through all too visible contractions. Her cunt is expanding and her legs seem to have moved away from each other, allowing the breadth of a woman's groin to be birthed along with the baby. Only girls have that odd v shape where the upper thighs join, where the cunt prevents another's hand from holding it, cupping it. After birth does the woman opens herself.

For a second a head appears, a crest of hair and grey skin within the pubis. Her breathing is hard and her back arched now, her head held high. He is next to her, half on, half off the bed, rubbing her back, whispering into her ears. He stands back for a second, strikes her thighs and watches as her arse begins to separate, as the head begins to fall through, as she opens her mouth and lets out a deep, long growl that rises into a scream of a warrior goddess entering battle. As the noise echoes in their ears the child's head appears and the midwife pushes her hand inside the bloody and beautiful cunt. He lays a hand under the child's head and within a moment's breath the birth has happened, the child slips out as though the passage into life were the simplest, most gentle thing possible. For a second there is a silence and then the wrinkled face, speckled with blood and mucus, opens its mouth and a dainty wail rises from its lungs as the first sounds emerge. He looks back towards her and she is in pain but tears of relief mingle in the melee. They stare for a moment at each other.

The midwife reaches across and asks whether he wants to cut the cord. For a second the spell lifts as the glint of the metal flashes before his eyes. He looks back at his lover and she smiles her love towards him, all those threads of time, all those moments lost, all those seconds where each was lost to the other, all are seen in the glance. Raven lays on the bed and with a slow and deliberate action he places the blades against the twisted cord and squeezes hard, feeling the grind of the flesh as the severed threads fall apart, and as he does fresh threads lay themselves down in his mind and the cord that has hung round his neck since the birth of his first born falls away. He picks up the child, Raven, and hands her to his lover. "We have a beautiful little girl" he says, these first words spoken with tears.

Jostlings

Here

Here isn't there.

The most one could say, ('one' as 'Das Mann') is maybe here is a screen, a wire, a system, a community. Maybe the latter begins to touch something.

Here isn't there. It isn't a place I *go*, here is always a place I *am*. "I am here."

If I am here, and here I am, then here is here, in-here, inhere, inhering in me.

And back again...

here is not there, no screen, wire, system. Maybe it's a community, a communing, but to me no-one is here but me. Voices arise but no Body is here except mine.

So ... either *my* body - and I *am* my body - is here and only I am here ... or else maybe 'I' am 'here' without my body, with voices. But the voices speak with my own sound animated by words from elsewhere - and there's the rub. Yet it's still my voice, rooted in my lungs, my larynx, my body. Even the voice is only mine.

(So maybe voices will add something bodily after all ... thinking back to another post ...)

But then, the final twist (maybe) being that the here of the *here*, as you so notably noted, is never *here*

is this anything more than the problem of words and writing though?

Thinking 'aloud' ... or not, as the case may be ...

cf also Hegel PhG 97 and 98.

Regarding defining here...From Hegel, PhG, Sections 97 & 98.

97. It is a universal too that we *utter* what the sensuous content is. What we say is: 'This', i.e. the *universal* This; or, 'it is', i.e. *Being in general*. Of course, we do not *envisage* the universal This or Being in general, but we *utter* the universal; in other words, we do not strictly say what in this sense-certainty we *mean* to say. But language, as we see, is the more truthful; in it, we ourselves directly refute what we *mean* to say, and since the universal is the true content of sense-certainty and language expresses this true content alone, it is just not possible for us ever to say or express in words a sensuous being that we *mean*.

98. The same will be the case with the other form of the 'This', with 'Here'. 'Here' is, e.g., the tree. If I turn around, this truth has vanished and is converted into its opposite: 'No tree is here, but a house instead'. 'Here' itself does not vanish; on the contrary, it abides constant in the vanishing of the house, the tree, etc., and is indifferently house or tree. Again, therefore, the 'This' shows itself to be a mediated simplicity, or a universality.

Wanting

Maybe (just maybe here) the wanting walks too far.

Everyone wants what everyone gets.

To want is to lack and thus can never achieve peace. The absence of desire is maybe (just maybe here) the desire for absence. Death or nirvana. The wanting walks too far.

Everyone wants what everyone gets. Everyone's got what everyone wants. Every one has got what every one wants.

Maybe, *just* maybe here, wanting should be waiting. Weighted, weighed, weaved into what is. Into self-consciousness, which "is Desire in general" (PhG#167) comes self-consciousness - only in another is Desire desired, the "I" that is 'We and the 'We' that is 'I'. " (PhG#177).

Cutting

This is a curious phenomenon, though I'm so 'distant' from it now that it is difficult to dredge up the elements of experience that somehow connect me to this notion. I remember at my school in Haywards Heath the group of people I was connected to had a number of people who used to 'slice' up their forearms. Indeed we all (ten or fifteen in the group and 'all' being used a bit vaguely here) 'tried it', though some were slightly more obsessive than others I suppose, more intent on the pain of the thing.

I can remember. Though the memory is distinct it is peculiarly other to me now.

I can remember sitting round the side of the gym, behind the diamond wire fence, the sort where the metal is encased in a black plastic, peeling and broken, connected to angle iron girders at entrances and to walls with large bolts. On the grass, warm, early summer midday breaks, sitting on the slightly obscured bank with razors bought from the local chemists. Slowly unwrapping the folded papers that held the razors, with their slightly waxy feel - connecting in my mind now to speed wraps, the delicate process of undoing the pink fluorescent paper to find the small compacted area of powder inside.

The bravado of sliding the blade slowly along the forearm, watching the blood arise, gradually, in droplets at first, increasing gradually until a line of red lays along your skin. Never deep in my case, the blood fascinated me more than the pain. The pain, as I remember, didn't come till later, once the blood had stopped, when the wound was open and sore. But then following the pain came the scabs, long thin scabs that one could peel off, picking at your body when bored, a habit I cannot rid myself of now.

Oddly I distinguish these acts I participated in from aberrant behaviour and so in that way I can understand the comments of 'learn to live with it'. But I also connect these acts with the self-destructive side of me, one I always thought was less self-destructive than the similar side I saw in others 'close' to me - in the same group for instance. I view myself as almost a whole person though and my rages, drug usage, violence, depression and paranoia, when these elements arise, belong somehow to the underground me, another me, one I am *then*, but not now. This, I now know, is a

distorted picture and such an acknowledgement of distortion is important, though never really wholly taken on board I suppose.

A curious image, of 'learn to live with it', of cutters, of 'normal' life. There must be some sort of otherness from the act - and this otherness is difficult to disentangle in my own memories - for any need of talk of 'learning to live with' something though.

Pain

I was reminded recently of a conversation with a work mate in a local mental health community I was working in. Ins and outs of the context are not too relevant here but the essence of the conversation was that he had watched a snuff film with a load of other film buffs and *whilst* watching the film the acts of violence had engaged them in a conversation about their depiction - 'this was so unrealistic' being the jist of the thing, which gradually shifted as the scenes challenged these initial reactions, mainly as they couldn't work out how the thing was done. Despite the, to my friend, obvious fact, that by the end of the film these acts were plainly 'real' others were adamant they weren't even after finding out that it was 'supposedly' a snuff film.

The disconcerting thing for me was the motivation to watch. Why watch a film which had no structure other than the violence. Plainly I can see grounds for such watching at certain points, though the problems of situating the film/art becomes incredibly difficult I think and cries of 'artistic (ir)responsibility' do not, though echoing a kernel of truth (the 'anti-censorship' kernel) fail to account for the art *as* art. Moreover I have a problem with the basic ideas, as I have perceived them, behind certain Avante Guard 'transgressive' film, though I would be willing to be educated here. The problem is basically this: that in a film of transgressive violence the audience is still audience. Say, extreme torture - the depiction is always absent from the viewer. Whilst notions of absence may help deal with this the presence of torture to the torturer is absent and thus the transgression is mute it seems - to really transgress the audience would have to be tortured, thus have their choice removed, be placed in a situation from which they cannot escape. My work mate said he would never be able to 'remove' the images and perhaps this is a form of presencing but still an absent presence, still a ghost.

I thought of the rape scene in *Man Bites Dog* (is this the right film I'm thinking of..oh well...) where the camera crew become 'involved' (obviously distorted since the camera crew are themselves 'actors', depictions, absences etc) and where this scene shifts the film, turns it from a relatively humorous tale to a slightly sick and disturbing portrayal of a serial killer. The 'self-problematising' here seemed as much excuse as really critical thought about the films actions though in the fact that some account was taken of the response some responsibility was entered into.

I was struck with the thought that self-knowledge *of* drugs is far superior though their imbibing than through watching their imbibing - the presence thing again. Reflection presupposes the ability to reflect and so a certain barrier always exists with art in this self-limitation of the format, if the art is taken as 'art to reflect on'. But that strikes me as 'art as philosophy' or 'art as stimulus to thinking' whereas to reject a necessity for reflection, not its use but merely its *necessity*, may enable some experience to enter that is blocked by the reflection. Then again...

Debauchery

I only wish a little more *debauchery* were in evidence; no-one consumes anything any more, merely pass it through their material system. Only in debauching can we consume ... only no one consumes.

hiyall, been looking for a while but no back-chat. Spending a lot of time in other places, hospitals, hell, heaven, Heidegger (and now Schelling - way cool.....). Just thought I'd pop up, take a peek and all that, particularly now I've just slipped into digestion mode. Everything seems slightly psychedelic in this format, threads all over the place, the whole aura is different, but I still can't let go. Got other lists to read (boring but more *useful*, god how I hate that word, more *on the point* with reference to my dissertation etc).

in the context of the uselessness of utility, that never-quantifiable quantification, the endless counter, miser with his money, mathematician counting pi till infinity.

Blasphemy

I talk of the sacred in passing and such triviality may be blasphemous, but then access to the sacred can only come about through accident, through turning away from thought and entering into experience - the sublimity of the situation encompasses the sacred; the rain falling on my leather boot, death, life, sensuality mixing together as I observe and catch the beauty of sense. As for God, I don't speak of him..

"God; but others reading it take 'Him' less seriously also. This cant be good."

in distancing ourselves from talk of God, in being a-theistic, in *forgetting* God, we can approach ourselves. I distance myself from God, as a word, a concept, a faith, in order to attain the sacred in myself.

in reality such sacred essence intimately involves what most see as blasphemous - the revelling in the sensual delight of sex, sense and situation.

we desire to be more than we can be. my dry mouth wants to be filled with your succour, my body bury itself in yours, yet this desire is impossible.

"The metaphysical desire does not rest upon any prior kinship. It is a desire that can not be satisfied. For we speak lightly of desires satisfied, or of sexual needs, or even of moral and religious needs. Love itself is thus taken to be the satisfaction of a sublime hunger. If this language is possible it is because most of our desires and love are not pure. The desires one can satisfy resemble metaphysical desire only in the deceptions of satisfaction or in the exasperation of non-satisfaction and desire which constitutes voluptuousity itself. The metaphysical desire has another intention; it desires beyond everything that can simply complete it. It is like goodness - the Desired does not fulfil it, but deepens it." (Levinas)

the texts snap into place on my screen and words fill this emptiness they create that is my internet, an in-between, an indifference. Words create an emptiness as, isolating, they rip me from the already Other, the never to be consumed. I want to eat you, to throw my head back and drink the Other down, to merge. To lose myself in the moment of frenzy. To be irresponsible, to throw off humanity, to e-merge for a moment into absolute existence.

anorexic text flowing from anorexic lives. Language itself complicating instantaneousness. But such desire for absolute presence, for the eternal moment, is

the unquenchable craving. The permanent hunger. The empty belly. The postponed presence. (my words, written, postponed; all texts postponed.)

except that in the yearning for the reply the moment comes, the consummation shifts from skin to text, from materiality to ethereality, from presence to absence, from you to me. In this moment of the reply I have fully entered into the Other, into you; I have merged and e-merged but only ever as a ghost, only ever being-for-you.

Silence

working on stuff at the moment around nothing in particular and wonder often with these things why I wonder imagine me you them in a room a cafe perhaps a little music philosophy in the air just beginning

to speak of silence do I fear to make a mark and break the silence if I were to speak to you of silence how would I do it the aim is not to give an answer here but to try to push the question to open something with it maybe even just to open it I speak of silence and break the silence but there is no silence always noise so how can I break the silence maybe we should ask why is there noise rather than silence echoes would then abound deliberately of Heideggers nothing his question why are there essents rather than nothing deliberately mimicked but to what effect for what reason in my speaking a silence seems lost inevitably indeed it seems like this is inevitable I speak silence departs this is too brief however too quick to close the situation from view to lose the point the silence departs from the situation but only to be displaced to the listener I speak you listen listen in silence we all listen in silence of course it can be objected at once that the listener is not in any real form of silence is not bereft of noise or somehow emptied of sound merely by the invocation of speech the listener of necessity must be listening to must be in a situation of noise for them to even adequate the description of themselves as a listener if I were to speak these words then these words themselves form the noise thus the listener listens in a situation of noise to suggest that we must listen in silence by which I mean that we must be in an existential state of silence in order to be listening seems on the face of it a naive or disingenuous proposition yet it is this proposition I wish to propose maybe even to defend though that suggests concepts of possession and meaning that I find at best difficult to work with let us take a detour maybe I remember from somewhere the source and even the specifics of the concept are here irrelevant a suggestion by a neurophysiologist maybe sacks maybe cetowic or churchland even that a certain structure of dialogue exists in the brain and I will here avoid going into problems of category mistakes and the like which seem applicable at this point and that this structure of dialogue is incessant it exists as an interminable conversation that in our conscious hours takes the form of a negotiation between ourselves and the world which in our unconscious hours devoid of external stimuli folds back on itself as we talk to ourselves giving rise to dreaming and any other form of unconscious activity we might care to classify now this model seemed flawed in many ways but nevertheless was pleasingly formed for me illuminative though maybe as a metaphor rather than what we are wont to call a fact the most fascinating aspect of it was perhaps the implication of an impossibility of silence that somehow we are determined to avoid silence

would it make a difference to read this here or to listen in the cafe or should we ask whether the punctuation makes a difference like the invisible a but is this invisibility merely accidental or does it follow somehow that it must be invisible in the speech I'm lost in so far as I should reduce this further to phonics that would depend on the possibility of its readability as a listening does the silence matter in anything other than merely technical efficiency sure it would be quicker would seem like I structured it more for you from me as I wanted it I still cannot see the comma in my mouth

Philosophy and politics

I always think philosophy has got fuck all to do with political activity and tend to see the net similarly, though it may be peripherally useful. At root I think politics is constructed by people and in reality the mob rules. Political achievements come from our accepting we are part of the mob and attempting to move ourselves and others in certain directions. I have a very fluid model. Political stability is potential dammed up and breaching the damn through the envisaging of options is the single greatest skill in politics, and this is done in front of our eyes and ears and in our hearts rather than in our heads. "For a mass of people to be led to think coherently and *in the same* coherent fashion about the real present world is a 'philosophical' event far more important and 'original' than the discovery by some philosophical 'genius' of a truth which remains the property of small groups of intellectuals." (Gramsci.) This doesn't mean the net of philosophy or any other peripheral activity is unimportant, indeed its very peripherality enables a certain flux that opens up the exploration of possibilities. Their conversion into reality though is not something possible via the forms of the net. It only really happens with real people walking on real ground attacking real enemies. The rest is just imaginary.

Amusing really since I love the philosophy of the text and in terms of subjectivity, personal identity, our being, I think there's a lot of room to explore here, but room to explore doesn't mean there's room to build. I no longer have the meaning of my existence tied up so intimately with being politically active however and so feel capable of allowing my self some room in my life and such room can be provided in part by the net. It is far better as part of the background of our world than as a medium for transforming that world. The transformation will go on outside the net I think, not because of some spurious notion of anarchic capitalism that seems so trendy in 'intellectual' circles, but because of trial and error and persistence. I tend not to believe in a 'socialist' future on the basis of reason or historical law but simply on the basis of persistence. The idea persists, the utopia stands present and is rebuilt, recast - at least that is part of the need now, and this will occur on the back of activity, example. Time and persistence, probably human beings two greatest resources.

Wondering

wondering about the face of the other.

what if you were Turing's prodigious accomplishment and your face was here, literally the text skimming across my retina. yet you aren't. no more a robot than I. Inevitably I must wonder about the face..

and the body, the presence, the texture of skin, slope of thigh, smell of sex.

but such pat suggestions fail to ensnare the inevitable curiosity of immediacy. at that point of entry of the tongue, of the lip pressing hard against lip, hands moving, erections rising, legs opening, clothes loosening, pressure of pressure upon pressure.

of entrance and movement, of exhausted emission and compressed contraction followed by silence.

such wondering though occurs endlessly. it relates to no-one and anyone. the nudity of the body begins eventually to become abstract and symbolic in its depiction of the memory of sensuality, of sense, of a never consummated scent.

presence sent, scents presence, in the present tense.

>>> Solipsistic identity is ruled out by the net. Here we can only

>>> exist together.

>

>Is this so? Absolute egoism may be even more possible here. A person

>could continually graze and move on from site to site, feeding their

>ego and never having to stick around to confront the difficulties of

>sustained communication.

I think this is entirely possible (indeed it seems like the continual problem of this 'space', coming across such selfishness.

>

>>> The net is, in many ways, a ruthlessly logical example of such

>>> interdependence.

>

>And so, the net...rather than being a ruthless example of

>interdependence becomes a playground for the solipsist, where

>being-with is transitory and without repercussion. In PL we have to

>live with the consequences of our interdependence for the most part.

>In cyberspace we can continually move on, never having to return. But

>perhaps I stretch the definition of solipsism.

I think maybe...! But that aside, the idea of no repercussions is a little odd I think. Only we have to openly rely on 'internal' policing here. There is less ability to even envisage a physical threat and even virtual threats will be bypassed. The problem in separating off c-space is that in the *rest* of our 'spaces', PL or whatever, we don't have to deal with the repercussions of our actions. Of course whilst I would cite the 'global' nature of our mutual guilt and thus use this as a formal example of how none of us really 'face up to' or have to deal with the consequences of our actions, that would be to miss the point. At the heart of the matter is the fact that I think the whole notion of 'repercussions' is based upon guilt and this notion can work just as well within c-space as it is a 'psychological' or 'internal' device. As to moving on continually, well if need be this can be done in a city - the whole notion of familiar strangers and the fact that most city dwellers are estimated to have some 2000 contacts/friends/acquaintances suggests it is just such an ability to constantly 'move

on' that lies behind a lot of the reactive(reactionary?) shit about atomisation and loss of community.

too often when we get a post we are seem somehow 'trained' to reply instantly. this is the notion of the medium as the massage, as manipulating us into activity that would otherwise go differently. so I would aim at something other, a 'correspondence' electronically, in the same way that a letter-writer works, and thus the time-lag becomes a valuable part of the relationship rather than a destructive entity we constantly (but always unsuccessfully) try to destroy/remove/erase. enjoy the lag. embrace the time.

this relationship? well, some *relation* exists in the basis of our correspondence, in the fact that you responded to a text, I responded to a text and that in those texts are traces of our selves. this is a relationship, more than that what would it be? Do you classify you relationship with people? I'm curious, I suppose we all do, but then this would be 'my relationship with morning glory in c-space'. But what else might there be? The first moments of a relationship are inevitably thrilling and the desire to move on, to keep going for new moments is always with me, thus there is a pull towards you that would be part of the loyalty - the loyalty works both for the other and for me. But what more...

my life tends to be one round of bursts followed by another as I juggle constantly with numerous projects, each edging its way along towards completion. Relationships slide in between these projects, easing into the gaps, forming the backbone of my life but as such also tend to work in bursts - last week for example I had dissertation chapter to write, a wall to strip down, two bikes to rebuild the gears on and a front garden rose bush repair, all to fit in around usual routines. Next week will be different, the week after different. I hate others routines and so tend to be slightly more 'sporadically' consistent. I also suffer from periodic depressions, 'black days/weeks/months' that cause a lot of crap and so the combination of these destroys my ability to maintain any sort of 'virtual presence' on cm or the like and is part of the reasons I moved towards looking for more personal communication where some tolerance of these idiosyncrasies is available.

smell... such things are intensely erotic and so incommunicable in this arena of loss, beyond their trace. the true smell of warmth, sweat and moisture and calmness on skin close to breath, sinews and flesh felt under sinews and flesh. a moment remembered. but here this memory is always others, it is imagination, projection forward, never returning. it is the returning that is lost here. I can only strive toward, never return to.

I come from a background with gypsy blood, two generations back, but enough to take the edge of the translucent whiteness of the Celtic or Saxon European. tanned I look quite sallow, but still white nonetheless, not a fact I either worry about or mind. I suppose it is 'easier' being white and so probably 'ought' to feel lucky, but luck seems absent from any realm of interest here.

I have no fat on my body. five foot ten, ten stone and slim, I consider myself at my best when naked, though a pair of levis tends to cover my bum, in a way that appeals both to me and to others. tight. legs, arse, stomach, shoulders, all tight. I hate flab on my body, though love the sensuality of roundedness on a woman. in pulp fiction fabienne declares she'd love a pot-belly, justifying this on the grounds that 'it is

unfortunate that what is pleasing to the eye and pleasing to the touch are not the same'. but then I don't have any flab, which sounds like it's verging on a brag. it is I suppose.

short cropped hair, short cropped beard, armani almond shape gold wire frame glasses, which I wear all the time, from morning to night. I only take my glasses off to go to bed or to fuck; I always fuck with another face. large eyes, hazel, straight nose and full rose lips. I like the back of my head best, hence the cropped hair, the shape of a skinhead. incongruity is my favourite style.

large hands, thick fingers, with gold medallions with the crest of saudi on my right hand, a ring received from my father-in-law after his death last year. my left hand has a wedding band and a small silver pinky ring, with the three legs of the isle of man, a family ring, one shared by my brother, connecting us to our father. my right wrist wear a brass bangle, eight Celtic dragons flowing across it. the skin is slightly rough, coarse, though softening after four years in a land without work. scarred slightly, leaving the tonal difference of the line in the tan.

I am not a muscle-bound man, no barrel chest or six-pack stomach, but a firm smoothness, no hair, save a few wisps around my nipples, which are small and discrete. my collar bone sit atop my breast, framing the base of my neck without, I think, betraying an air of absence or lack, without the word scrawny coming to mind. from the back a certain tightness of the skin reveals present muscles, fit without fanatic.

my legs and arse fail to live up to this model of hairlessness and a gentle covering of down begins from my trousers down, though this merely accentuates the sensual in a variation of texture. my legs again are firm, my cock apparently a normal length, though rather thick. uncircumcised yet tidy, no flapping foreskin or distended scrotums. of my feet I will not speak, save to say that they are better than they were and constitute my principal Achilles heel (with as much pun intended as possible).

I wear a pocket watch, attached to my belt holder on my trousers, with a yin/yang ring on the chain as well as two Celtic life symbols on the connector, one triangular, one circular. I always wear this watch. on its back it has a train, just beginning to show the signs of wear from five years of being put in and out of my pocket, whilst on the face it has a train wheel with wings on it, in red. an old soviet railways watch.

On Derrida...

Derrida's talk of conditions of possibility and impossibility going together as in, for instance, the case of the signature (SEC), or in *Plus de Metaphore* in the essay *White Mythology*, indicates some sort of 'presence' of absence. It also points to why scepticism is, to a certain extent, irrefutable since if the conditions of impossibility exist alongside the conditions of possibility the sceptic can make use of these conditions to undermine knowledge, knowledge of the existence of X, such as the signature. Looking at the signature, if we say that the signature has certain conditions of possibility that are at the same time conditions of impossibility we must thus say that the statement 'this is a signature' is never a hundred percent certain. There is always the possibility of error, such as the fact that the example given may be a forgery.

This also seems to have implications for the ideas that Robert Stern was talking about in his paper on transcendental argument (Sussex Uni, Philosophy Society). In this paper Stern identified four different types of transcendental arguments that can be used to refute scepticism but presumably if scepticism could be said to be located within the fact that conditions of possibility for a certain thing are also at the same time conditions for impossibility, scepticism is one side of a coin of which the other side is knowledge. And as such scepticism would go alongside knowledge at all points and would thus be irrefutable although not itself knowledge. The problem of sceptical knowledge is the fact that it's status as knowledge is underminable by its very scepticism, by a further scepticism that could be employed upon it.

Can we be sceptical of scepticism?

Note 2 On Thomas A. Fay, Heidegger and the Critique of Logic.

Fay's argument works from Heidegger's initial attempt to get Being and Time (BT) to focus on anxiety, on angst, as a revelatory experience for Dasein, this anxiety or angst being related obviously to the nature of Dasein and death. In the lecture What is Metaphysics? (WIM) and in the work Introduction to Metaphysics (ITM), and presumably Fay's interpretation of what would be classed as the 'introduction' to this introduction to metaphysics, the context of the Introduction, Heidegger is moving beyond the arguments regarding the proposition and the derivative nature of the proposition that he outlined in BT, to develop this derivativity in regard to nothing, or the Nothing, negativity in general. *"During the course of the Inaugural Lecture Heidegger attempts to show that the 'not' of the assertion is but a derivative sort, having its source in the Nothing, which is bound up with Being and the foundational thought which was attempted in BT, the positive assertion which was examined in the light of the Being question, was seen to require a more ultimate ground in the pre-ontological comprehension of Being. In WIM we have moved a step farther, the negative proposition cannot be interpreted in the most ultimate way unless it is also seen within the same perspective of Being. But whereas the positive proposition derives from a primordial grasp of Being, the negative proposition derives from the Nothing."* (pages 46-47) Fay continues, *"in BT the ultimate grounding of the positive proposition had been disclosed. IN WIM the ultimate grounding of the negative proposition has now also been revealed."* (ibid).

Derrida - The cogito and the history of madness

after some preliminary apologies for the questioning of the master, that being Foucault in this instance, Derrida moves to ask what he calls two 'preliminary questions'. The first is "*have we fully understood the sign itself, in itself, in other words has what Descartes said and meant been clearly perceived?*" The use of the word 'fully' in the above sentence, indicates some sort of totalisation of understanding, totalisation of interpretation, which appears to go against Derridean moves in other essays, in other works. Moreover, the second element of the question, the second sentence in the two sentence question, states that, or asks about, Descartes 'saying' and meaning'. "*what Descartes said and meant*". In itself an innocuous enough phrase, perhaps, but in the context of Derrida a rather peculiar and initially perplexing use of what seem to be concepts derided elsewhere. (SHOW) How can Derrida talk of Descartes meaning? and moreover, or "*fully understanding*" such meaning.

Derrida goes on to state "*this comprehension of the sign, in and of itself, in its immediate materiality as a sign, if I may so call it* (Note the rhetorical twist here...why is Derrida asking permission? what is indicated by this 'backhanded' move?), *is in the first moment also the indispensable condition of all hermeneutics and of any claim to transition from the sign to the signified*". He is identifying the practice of the question here as a hermeneutic question, one that he will subsequently, in either other essays or within this particular work, will bring into question. Page 38 "*all our European languages, a language of everything that has participated from near or far in the adventure of Western reason - all this is the immense delegation of the projects defined by Foucault under the rubric of the capture of objectification of madness - nothing with this language and no one among those who speak it, can escape the historical guilt - if there is one and if it is historical in a classical sense - which Foucault apparently wishes to put on trial.*" The 'nothing' within this language which is mentioned by Derrida here seems to exclude the ability to speak. However, to speak of nothing (objective/subjective genitive ambiguity), as Heidegger does in his essays and lectures

Moolog 1

ng your real name, research interests, character name (please include several choices; you may use your real name if you like), and preferred password. You will receive confirmation of the character creation by return e-mail.

Sorry, but no help is available on 'teleport'.

Syntax: go <direction> ...

Invokes the named exits in the named order, moving through many rooms in a single command.

Example:

Munchkin types:

go n e e u e e s e

and moves quite rapidly from the Living Room all the way to the Bovine Illuminati Atrium, all in one command.

You can't go that way (u).

You walk out the south door, onto North Clark street.

North Clark

One long traffic jam. Good thing you are walking. Along North Clark street, for some reason, there are various bits of poetry-in-progress, found items, collectively authored pieces, and the like. To the west, just beyond the alley, are the twinned red doors of the Virtual Poets' Cafe. Typing the following words, though not typically a pedestrian activity, yeilds additional information about this rather odd block: poetry, exits, slam, map..

You see RandomHaus Dictionary here.

You go north, and enter the Poem-O-Rama.

Poem-O-Rama

A multivalent, multicolored place for your virtual scrawl. Type 'help here' for more information. A door to the south leads to North Clark Street.

There is no poem being worked on right now.

You can't go that way (e).

You can't go that way (w).

You walk out the south door, onto North Clark street.

>>Virtual Poets' Cafe & Clam Bar<<

A narrow, dimly-lit room at one end of which is a slightly raised stage. On it, in that predictable pool of light is an even more predictable microphone stand and a lone black stool. Beside the stage is a piano. Yet, that is all that is predictable about this poets' cafe. Scattered about the room are truly strange objects, the kind collected by those who have trouble throwing things away. Behind the stage, in lovely loopy letters, a neon sign spells out 'Steamed Clams.'

There are, of course, a collection of mis-matched tables and chairs.

You see Baudelaire's Clock here.

A round wooden wall clock. The hands are missing and across the face is written: IT IS LATER THAN YOU THINK!

You can't go that way (w).

You push open the fire doors and exit onto the crowded street.

North Clark

One long traffic jam. Good thing you are walking. Along North Clark street, for some reason, there are various bits of poetry-in-progress, found items, collectively authored pieces, and the like. To the west, just beyond the alley, are the twinned red doors of the Virtual Poets' Cafe. Typing the following words, though not typically a pedestrian activity, yeilds additional information about this rather odd block: poetry, exits, slam, map..

You see RandomHaus Dictionary here.

Scrawled on the wall: .. the letter S stands for a slow match burning.

Somewhat to your surprise, the graffiti covered fire doors of what looks like an abandoned urban warehouse swing open and you enter.

>>Virtual Poets' Cafe & Clam Bar<<

A narrow, dimly-lit room at one end of which is a slightly raised stage. On it, in that predictable pool of light is an even more predictable microphone stand and a lone black stool. Beside the stage is a piano. Yet, that is all that is predictable about this poets' cafe. Scattered about the room are truly strange objects, the kind collected by those who have trouble throwing things away. Behind the stage, in lovely loopy letters, a neon sign spells out 'Steamed Clams.'

There are, of course, a collection of mis-matched tables and chairs.

You see Baudelaire's Clock here.

You can't go that way (w).

You can't go that way (s).

You can't go that way (n).

You push open the fire doors and exit onto the crowded street.

North Clark

One long traffic jam. Good thing you are walking. Along North Clark street, for some reason, there are various bits of poetry-in-progress, found items, collectively authored pieces, and the like. To the west, just beyond the alley, are the twinned red doors of the Virtual Poets' Cafe. Typing the following words, though not typically a pedestrian activity, yeilds additional information about this rather odd block: poetry, exits, slam, map..

You see RandomHaus Dictionary here.

Scrawled on the wall: As you dream—always unwillingly—of a writing not visible and voices muffled by walls.

Rhizomatic Fields [public]

You've lost yourself in a large, hypertextual field.

Nodes poke out of the ground all around you, like potatoes. Just out of sight, tubers and rhizomes spread in every direction, taking flight, connecting, shooting onward.

Each node is an entry, a point of departure, a multiple. You can map its assemblages. Maybe you'll find you've become part of the field, fine tendrils branching off your fingers, your hair, your lips.

If you see something you like, you may ENTER it.

Obvious exits: west to DeConstruction Zone and poly to >The Polyphonic Refrain<

You see Sumerian Vistas Cemetery, Computer-generated Environment, and Time capsule here.

Thank you for visiting the North Clark zone.

DeConstruction Zone

Architecture by Piranesi—

Doors open into the void, stairs climb up and disappear. The trains rumble into the station.

Saw horses and drop cloths are everywhere—it must be under deconstruction.

Obvious exits: diagonal to 1001 Plateaus [public], out to exotica, east to Rhizomatic Fields [public], chat to Coffee House [public], offices to Other Heading [public], night to Night Town [public], Blast to Galerie des Archives, library to Library Hub [public], and down to The Sewer Subway

An access panel in the floor may also be an exit.

You see A Crashed UFO (Welcome), Mirrored Globe, Bicycle Wheel Stool, an access panel in the floor, Compass, and Directions here.

For more information about this site type 'about here'.

No comprende. (type 'help' for help)

Coffee House [public]

The rest stop for deconstruction workers—

Through the smoke-filled room, through the sound of bongos and the wail of a saxophone, you can see scarred tables, and a very odd selection of chairs—a recliner, a beanbag chair, a bench, a couch.

Someone is at the microphone muttering about the best minds of his generation passing through universities hallucinating Arkansas and Blake-light tragedy among the scholars.

A fire burns in a huge stone fireplace, with a Pollock hanging over the mantle.

If you flip it over, it's a Rothko.

If you jiggle it hard, it's an etch-a-sketch.

Obvious exits: climb to Other Heading [public], out to DeConstruction Zone, door to Night Town [public], and beach to Horizon Beach [public]

You see Porn Made Cultural and Postmodern Hot Tub here.

The last traces of the fire are visible.

Coffee House [public]

The rest stop for deconstruction workers—

Through the smoke-filled room, through the sound of bongos and the wail of a saxophone, you can see scarred tables, and a very odd selection of chairs—a recliner, a beanbag chair, a bench, a couch.

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If you flip it over, it's a Rothko.
If you jiggle it hard, it's an etch-a-sketch.

Obvious exits: climb to Other Heading [public], out to DeConstruction Zone, door to Night Town [public], and beach to Horizon Beach [public]

You see Porn Made Cultural and Postmodern Hot Tub here.

The last traces of the fire are visible.

You walk over to one wall and start scaling the stones with all the agility of a spider. Up a long dark tube (or was that down?), pushing aside a heavy metal grate, and you're inside Out.

Other Heading [public]

hmmmmm

headings, other headings, subheadings.

A mossy brick path strewn with the blowing, torn pages of an electronic text leads EAST to the library and museum complex.

To the WEST, past the rusting bodies of some vintage Fiats, stands the door to the PMC2 Staff Offices, while to the NORTH, there's a sidewalk heading up to the conference center.

A singularly ordinary metal grate covers a dark hole in the ground—a pit. Someone might struggle to emerge from it at any moment.

To the SOUTHEAST, a gust of wind whistles in from the museum—home of available generic stuff.

Before you go anywhere, take a look at the New Projects Board, somewhere around here, or the projects room and quota review board complex, just behind you to the SOUTH.

and EXIT to the station

You see New Projects Board here.

You push the grate back into place.

You want me to WHAT? (type 'help' for help)

This is the projects board; it is automatically updated when someone submits or approves a new project. For more information, please type 'help \$proposal'. Note that projects are also mailing lists, whose names start with *project: or *p:. For example, *project:tutorial is the mailing list for the 'tutorial' project.

Participant	Connected	Idle time	Location
A_Different_Guest (#95)	15 minutes	0 seconds	Other Heading [public]
MediaMOO-link (#15615)	2 days	2 seconds	switchboard
blade (#15851)	an hour	12 seconds	Sheath
Jackknife (#2092)	2 hours	21 seconds	Sheath
aluminum (#6888)	an hour	31 seconds	Howdah atop lucy the elepha
Babaloo (#14951)	24 minutes	a minute	PityParty

Xerox (#13442)	4 days	2 minutes	Virtual MOO Room
Pert (#10928)	2 hours	3 minutes	PityParty
Nicole (#10958)	2 hours	7 minutes	Palace
fanny (#10379)	51 minutes	23 minutes	Fanny's room
WriTinG (#9309)	46 minutes	34 minutes	Mystic WriTinG Pad
Sakana (#9169)	38 minutes	38 minutes	Garden of Dark Blue
Andalou (#6316)	59 minutes	58 minutes	149 Rue de Flandres
alchemist (#10743)	3 hours	2 hours	Defiance
Anwin_Wolf_4 (#10310)	4 hours	4 hours	PMC Cafe [Public]
turd (#15553)	8 days	4 hours	Vampire's coffin
Ev (#11086)	15 days	6 hours	The Ruins

Total: 17 participants, 8 of whom have been active recently.

Participant	Connected	Idle time	Location
A_Different_Guest (#95)	16 minutes	0 seconds	Other Heading [public]
MediaMOO-link (#15615)	2 days	2 seconds	switchboard
Jacknife (#2092)	2 hours	16 seconds	Sheath
blade (#15851)	an hour	23 seconds	Sheath
aluminum (#6888)	an hour	a minute	Howdah atop lucy the elepha
Babaloo (#14951)	25 minutes	2 minutes	PityParty
Xerox (#13442)	4 days	2 minutes	Virtual MOO Room
Pert (#10928)	2 hours	3 minutes	PityParty
Nicole (#10958)	2 hours	7 minutes	Palace
fanny (#10379)	51 minutes	24 minutes	Fanny's room
WriTinG (#9309)	47 minutes	35 minutes	Mystic WriTinG Pad
Sakana (#9169)	39 minutes	39 minutes	Garden of Dark Blue
Andalou (#6316)	59 minutes	59 minutes	149 Rue de Flandres
alchemist (#10743)	3 hours	2 hours	Defiance
Anwin_Wolf_4 (#10310)	4 hours	4 hours	PMC Cafe [Public]
turd (#15553)	8 days	4 hours	Vampire's coffin
Ev (#11086)	15 days	6 hours	The Ruins

Total: 17 participants, 8 of whom have been active recently.

I don't understand that.

DeConstruction Zone

Architecture by Piranesi—

Doors open into the void, stairs climb up and disappear. The trains rumble into the station.

Saw horses and drop cloths are everywhere—it must be under deconstruction.

Obvious exits: diagonal to 1001 Plateaus [public], out to exotica, east to Rhizomatic Fields [public], chat to Coffee House [public], offices to Other Heading [public], night to Night Town [public], Blast to Galerie des Archives, library to Library Hub [public], and down to The Sewer Subway

An access panel in the floor may also be an exit.

You see A Crashed UFO (Welcome), Mirrored Globe, Bicycle Wheel Stool, an access panel in the floor, Compass, and Directions here.

For more information about this site type 'about here'.

Spirit of Hermes (PMCRR #2708) speeds into the station - surrounded by a cloud of soot and the sound of metal on metal - and comes to an abrupt stop.

No comprende. (type 'help' for help)

I don't understand that. (type 'help' for help)

Help is available on the following general topics:

introduction—what's going on here and some basic commands

index—index into the help system

participants—setting characteristics of yourself

movement—moving yourself between rooms

communication—communicating with other participants

manipulation—moving or using other objects

miscellaneous—commands that don't fit anywhere else

building—extending the MOO

programming—writing code in the MOO programming language

editors—editing text and code in the MOO

@pagelength—what to do if lines scroll off your screen too fast

@linelength—what to do if lines are truncated

Ummm. What? (type 'help' for help)

Available Help Indices

prog-index -- Programmer Help Topics

builtin-index -- Server Built-in Functions

core-index -- Core Utility Help Topics

gen-index -- General Help Topics

full-index -- EVERYTHING

Ummm. What? (type 'help' for help)

The conductor of Spirit of Hermes cries, "Next stop is Grand DeCentral Station."

Help Database (#61)

alias	@exits	message-sequences	@resident
name	feature-prefs	messages	@rmaliases
"	features	@messages	@rmmail
:	@features	miscellaneous	@rn
::	@forward	@more	room-messages
?	full-index	@moredesc	rooms
@add-entrance	@gag	@moredescribe	say
@add-exit	gagging	@move	security
@add-feature	@gaglist	movement	@send
@add-owned	gen-index	negative_quota	@set

@addalias	@gender	@netforward	@sethome
@answer	get	news	@setprop
@audit	give	@next	@skip
@bug	go	@nn	@sort-owned
building	@gripe	@notedit	spoofing
burn	hand	notes	staff-list
@check	help	@opacity	@subscribe
@classes	helpstaff	page	@subscribed
commands	home	@pagelength	@suggest
@comment	@idea	@paranoid	summary
common_quota	index	@parents	@sweep
communication	index-list	participants	take
container-messages	information	@password	theme
containers	insert	@peek	thing-messages
@contents	introduction	players	throw
@count	inventory	@prefer	tinymud
@create	@keep-mail	@preferences	topology
creation	key-representation	@prev	@typo
decrypt	keys	privacy	@ungag
delete	@lastlog	programming	@unlock
@describe	letters	pronouns	@unlock_for_open
descriptions	@linelength	put	@unprefer
@dig	@link-exit	@quit	@unrecycle
@doomed	@listgag	@quota	@unrmmail
drop	@locations	read	@unsubscribe
@dump	@lock	@read	@uptime
@edit-options	@lock_for_open	@realm	@verify-owned
@editoptions	locking	@recreate	@version
editors	look	@recycle	whereis
@eject	mail	remove	whisper
emote	@mail	@remove-entrance	@who
encrypt	mail-forwarding	@remove-exit	@wrap
@entrances	@mail-options	@remove-feature	write
erase	@mailoptions	@rename	zombie-messages
examine	manipulation	@renumber	zone-acl
@examine	me	@reply	zone-admin
exit-messages	@memory	@request-character	zones

The conductor of Spirit of Hermes cries, "All aboard!"

With a shrill whistle and a massive exhalation of noxious smoke, the Spirit of Hermes (PMCR #2708) leaves the station and rapidly disappears from sight.

The MOO helps those who help themselves. Try starting with 'help summary'.

Usage: @request <participant-name> for <email-address>

This command available to Guest characters only.

The @request command requests a new character, registered for your email address. Please use your primary address for this, as your password will be sent to the address provided.

I don't get it. (type 'help' for help)
Try this instead: @request-character for
You want me to WHAT? (type 'help' for help)
You can't have a blank name!
I don't understand that. (type 'help' for help)
*** Disconnected ***

Lovers' Discourse (unfinished)

Chris: There is a distinct lack of response it would seem, although appearances can be deceptive. Emotions flow and ebb, there is no constancy here, although there is no uncertainty.

Matt: There is no uncertainty because the lack of constancy in glory is an established state of affairs.

Chris: Lower case is not a question of importance but an irrefutable grammatical fact, you always spell God in the lower case, as a reflection of the perceived being's total irrelevancy to your existence.

Matt: And I quote, meaning to complicate things. "God is dead, but immeasurably more important, God is death (except 'God' means the fascist ass-hole of the West). The beginning of the secret is that death (=0) is immense." And again, talking of 'God', speaking out of his arse, "yet amongst the accidents of his omniscience - or of his inexistence - was included the absence of eyelids. We burnt on his sleep starved retina like harsh stars."

The first quote needs little explanation, God _ and all he represents, every morsel of being that surrounds him, every utterance of his word, every breath of prayer, every church, every stone in every church - all are our arse hole. But like any body we must have an arse hole.

And the second quote - *we*, me and you, the particular allocution of this text, are the stars that burn on God's retina.

Intimate Absence

Scratching about, scritchng stripes along log stipes, scratching at my head. I have a scab, just above my left ear, on the cusp of my temple, and I scratch at it, pick it off repetitively. Reminds me of the scabrous lines incised on my arms at school, behind the green plastic-coated wire fencing, diamond shapes with edges of rust where the metal came through, scratched off with compulsion, peeled layers of epidermic detritus and decay.

Scratching around, a round, writing around, rounds, pounding heart rate thrust my chest through my ears and forcing my stomach into my frontal lobes. In Capgrass Syndrome the lesions, those scabrous points of decay on the right side of the brain divorce, so it's thought, the recognitive from the emotive. Whilst you may recognise the face of your lover or father or brother there is no emotional response and it is this which leads to the peculiar features of Capgrass where the person thinks their family is full of impostors. Symptomatical of the emotional basis of truth. Truth emotes, gains a certain valence and lances through us. One doesn't cognise the truth, or recognise it even, or establish it or argue for it or touch it, one smells it. We know the truth. Belief is everything.

Switch flicker. High twisting bifurcation and cleft, breakage, hole, whilst not holed, held. Smelled. The shit-smell of masturbation Genet reckoned he had because he always used to jerk-off in the outhouse when he was a kid. Life could never have ran smoothly, of course.

Of course. Of the course of true love; they say it never runs smooth. But then smooth? What would that be other than the removal of edge, the lack of sharpness and definition. Definition in deed, de finito, of the finite. Infinite. Spiral comet tails invasion, witnessed in midst of concrete and jungle jagga. Not then, once, standing in forests of verdant green, disputing the feud and resorting to blood to feed thrice born young.

Never believe anyone, except me of course. The arrogance of the insane perhaps. Never believe the truth since this lie lies heavy within us. Never believe the lie either. Lie, to lay with you is to fall delicately through the opening of the abyss. I could freefall fuck, sex in mid-air, conjoin bodies amidst the heavens and then slice the chute from my back to crush in the aftermath of orgasm the frenzied boredom of lifestyles.

Grind scrapes layers of skin from the fingers and my nose metaphorically erases itself as I place it back time and again. A gain arises from the persistence, though the loss of something no doubt accrues. Yet what of it? We all lose, we all win, the terms are meaningless. If we all do anything then anything becomes nothing. We all differ. We all die. We all lie. But we are not all happy. At times we have are will be be.

Fuck em. Let em lie. Sleep sweetly in the scent of my sweat and lie discretely behind the small of my back. Rest my sweet, to feet defeat and reach high again, here in our past and so there, here, epistolic, systolic, the sense of loss, lost, losing, absence, no longer a certain present loss, no longer a certain presence, always confusing me, always contusions, conflutions, conflations inflated beyond apparence. Here, no, something else, peculiar in its peculiarity and worthless at the same time, achieving

perhaps the intimate absence. I love the intimacy crated, typography revealing, lying nature of it all.

Intimations of intimacy perhaps ride a well adjusted scripting carefully clarified and understood by the participants, just as the well acted piece brings out certain truths about human experience in the midst of what is a lie. Truth and lie. Sometimes truest truths are situated in the truest lies, the scripted always apparent scribing, the notion of the script, as cript and cryptographic remembrance and con text and 'scrip' as in prescription as in pre-scribed as in mediating medication. As past and future script allows a certain notion of combination and futural presence of the past. The script flows down from the past yet reworks itself towards a future within the presence of its act. The script opens much that benefits from returns in terms of returning to and that turns again around a similar theme, though perhaps the script needs to be broken too, in time, with the slightest twist, a perception of a turning away, of an unwillingness to face front.

The body twists away from us as we address it, the fish twists in the catcher's hands until it skips and drops back into the water. Or a twist of lemon, a hint. The twist seems to bring with it a lack - Of honesty presumably, or maybe clarity, that we might assume exists in the facing front stance, in the face-to-face, what is shorthanded as an f2f in the domain of e-mail and electronic discourse. But of course the twist is much more slippery than this, itself twisting away from definition in terms here even more so given it the slightest twist.

Twist again, last summer dance through sound divined down from land above screen type hype. Hip, hip, come on eileen, on john, on your chest, between your breasts, watch semen splatter the glass and smear the words of the screen like three dimensional saving grace place. There, out there, coming out there.

A page of the web, the net, perhaps even the interminable internet, intermittently producing garbage and gall, written in code, html. The html code projects the pages onto the screen, we never actually get to see the text, the real page. The net is an intensely coded structure, decipherable, constantly devious, java scripts and weaving blinking texts and the view-source button to steal the coded jewels of this weeks walk. The web designs interpretation into itself, designs signs that betray themselves and leaves markers and traces within its borders. It is intensely infuriating, inspiring, as it does, a mimicking of such sleight of hand on the surface and in the surface.

The surface, as poor a metaphor as it is, tending toward a complementary notion of depth, also holds as merely the entrance to the water. The ripples reveal a depth that is not the real water any more than the tension determines the edge. Sur face as not a top or a sheen but as a door or entrance, as a face on the body. The surface behaviour of the net tendencies is one that tends towards the superficial - the behaviour of the surface - the pond-skater, skimming wildly without even a glimpse that this is possibly an entrance. This is nothing other than the fetishisation of the web. That too in a way reveals something, perhaps because the fetishising opens up - and in this sense no longer skims -the surface superficially but rather skims the surface judiciously, aware of the surface unlike the pond-skating passivity.

Each page slight ripple, rainbow glints of light as eyes elide another realm, space, face slight return, turn through pages which aren't pages. At first I always thought of the web as a large self-published magazine but then the very vibrato of its voices forced

through. The pages stages in journeys of boredom that glides drifts pulls mauls a permanently exiting world. The spaces beyond beyond, beyond even the fingers initiating the codes, enable such frisson. Spaces, places, laces done up tight on boots walking the night, facing through distances no different to any other. Walk down the road then the knowledge of further spaces. Look at the eyes and elide again, as soon as the eyes slide back towards slight return. The slight return moves deftly towards a look, glances lances momentarily through any singularity or through the glass glance rooms, interiors of memory filled walls or ramshackle halls of residence and precedence or cells of confusion, each shut shut as darkness declines the day and the light of objects to observe fails, leaving only other eyes remaining.

Each page speaks to me. It wants me to listen. It wants me to look at itself and yet not to. Viewsource, look at the physiognomy of the page and its very point, the very line of course, it disappears, no longer the vanishing point of the horizon on screen on line in line over page but rather the cacophony of noise that an other language makes within the non-speaking visitor, where words no longer even exist, showing the existence of words relies on more than a noise. Even a sound relies on more than a noise. Even noise relies on more than noise.

So you surface inside each page, abstract semantic markers perhaps but this is only from behind; in place there is just lines, not even abstraction until we begin to draw together, gather together, return to, return from, return into, turn into, never resting. Each screen screams, wrests from us the face we give it, then wrestles elision with frisson when perhaps only elusions enable the initial filtering of fiduciary contact. Then beyond trust there may begin a thrust.

Through a slight breeze again settling into a subtle sliding of keystrokes and key strokes, the light at the end of the tunnel returning, sight shifting. Each of us, though memories of returns, invade spaces through which others thought their life went. Each of us slips our tongue into the hole. Placing moisture on the positive and negative, tasting the electrical charge of the battery, before slipping once more into reverie. Early memory.

Here then once I found this. "Eva Lucy Alvarado was born on Thursday, January 25th, at 3:56 in the morning, at the University of Virginia hospital in Charlottesville. Although premature by about three months, she emerged quite a healthy baby, screaming and weighing in at just under three pounds. At first, doctors were worried that she would need to receive a drug called "surfactant" to get her lungs going, but her lungs were just fine upon entry into this world. Apparently, the steroid that her mother, Rennie, received just 72 hours earlier, when her labour began, had done the trick. Or perhaps Eva Lucy, tired of doing the salsa in her mother's cosy womb, had decided that she was good and ready to come out."

Another file site combed and obscure hidden treasures gleaned. Peculiar file name extensions engender for obscure reason desires to view. And here, then, once more, I find, again, again, again, finds. Once more. Ever more.

"Now, just over a week after her birth, Eva Lucy has been moved to a quieter place in the Newborn Intensive Care Unit (NICU) at U.Va. Hospital, and she is gaining weight steadily. Her move to "D Pod" means that she is doing well by all measures, and simply must gain weight. Right now, she is on track and gaining an average of about an ounce a day. With sufficient weight—and body fat—she will be able to

perform a feat that we all take for granted: gain weight and maintain body temperature at the same time. When she does that, then her proud parents can take her home."

Public domain. In the public domain. What was once what once was. Clogged. Water logged. Surf slow, surface low, deep in the horizon or deep red pink warm alveo. Lie again, thread through, slip into silk dip into. Logged on. Threading though crowded rooms, life and soul alveoli. Branching sponge soft pink flesh, pig lungs, tongues, fresh. Deep rhythms.

Surfactant lines the lungs and is thought to open the ability to breathe; it is, if you would stretch the analogy, a condition of possibility of life.

I grew up on a pig farm. At christmas we would get a bonus from the scum that ran the factory, a whole pig. Literally, whole. Every last bit from the balls to the brains. A pig is remarkable in its similarity to the human form, its organs parallel ours in shape, size and organisation to such an extent that it is the prime candidate for transplant donorship - indeed there are already the beginnings of animal arm type invasions, cross species transplantation.

The pig lung lolls on the table as though basking on a sun lounger. It sinks into the surface, spreads out, yields to the touch. Nipple. It is still warm to the touch, the granularity of the surface, linear undulatory. Smooth grain. Skinless. Breast. Neither meat nor flesh, an inside giving way yet pressed further, resists, presence.

Her arms raised above the head, open, attached, flat. Breasts rising to meet destiny. Nipples pushed hard forward, volunteers for testing. Bitten hard, sucked against the palette as mouthfuls devoured, glistening saliva rides the curve towards the caress, into the musk of concave depth, the distant gap, the gentle discoloration under the arm.

Pink flesh yields to butchers blade. Cuts light. The lung yields and opens, riven deep, depth. The sides of the slash lean backwards beckoning the knife inward as the carcass dissected. Silver glisten conversation as meat wrapped obliviously.

The lungs of the pig, its lights as they are called, fascinated me when I was young, when the meat of the animal was more than plastic wrapped product's of capital's disturbance. The lightness of the corpses capillaries, which gave it the name with which it is ordered in a butchers, seemed to speak of a luminescence in the centre of the body, a purity. If there were a soul, I thought, it would be found in the lungs.

Feeling the force of the light as an erotic experience burning deep within me a sense of intimacy with what was consumed. The cut of the blade and movement of opening welcome as the slices were craved, slivers of soul more sweet than any communion wafer.

The lungs form a descending system, operating at the micro scopic but supported by a hierarchical branching structure that ascends to the central core operating, if you would stretch the analogy, as the systematic categorical framework of life.

Systemic plural present, system of plural presence, like letters from unfaced arrivals. When I was in prison I would receive letters of support because of what I had done, daily deliveries of encouragement chip up we're with you comets missive mass, a little light in the dark hole, light tone, always opened, the opening welcome always

troubled by distance of the done deed, letter read, dear etcetera et set er ah. Done dunning, dunno what to say but, need to say, slay politely the presence of the face. For those who wrote I was often no more than a number, MW1054, but I had facial features displayed across news casts aspersions on activity through depiction infliction of fighting police.

Done dunning dunno thumbing through, assonance, the pages of my life style manual align. Cool air sleek hair running through fingers sublime sign divine time wine of, assonance, mine. Speak to me from your navel, of your umbilicus tail ridiculous snail mail fail ure remembering. The post lost most often. That letter, was it a or b, perhaps even z, said as an american would, or could. Zee and two noughts. Compared to zed as in zedsdead the zee always sounds so twee. Polite language of delight full carnage, that's the americans four square towards the fight, light spilling over sweaty brow as blood from the boxers mouth falls 'nto the front row done dunning dunno.

Each morning after unlock they would trail up to the wing office, plastic formica tabletop presence, loved ones scattered in a pile. Name call, roll call rolling through each man stands towards the eloquent absence reminded rewired necessarily of the outside. Peculiar ritual of the letter getting, that oddly embarrassing glance each gives the other as they reach above the heads to grasp another missive from the missus peeling off one by one until the dregs remain, the remains of today's episode.

Done dunning. Dun down light down lights up thrown. Fingertip slips, skin slice covered clown. Duck down. Up down. Through town. Cuticle. Slivered silver embryo. Working, dunning, through lights down alightin candle sharp words in the dark. Reading you, communication ablation, elation letters of provenance love and providence. A two z through v and b, thee and me.

The screw evidently enjoyed this ceremonial humiliation, particularly as the session progression reveals the last remnants, the moment of vulnerability that lets in the little dig, the spade of grave diggers delights.

Letters through lice, twice, thrice, speaking in tongues caressing lungs distant divining exit sounds breath, pining, even though this would be too be nice as lice. And how did you mean this? Mean this, meanness, mean line divined, median meander. Absent again, absent gain, a gain absolved through allocution, locution, your candle burned skin double time. Done dunning.

“Looks like nothing for you today”

“No guv” he says, already trying to get out of the office, rapidly wanting to put a stop to this chink in the armour before the grave is dug too far. He has his back to the screw, arms raised high trying to squeeze through the scrum of six other cons entering the office in search of some titbit to lighten today's tedium. He's got one more layer to go, only one other bloke to pass before he's at the door and down the landing.

“That must be a week now without anything ... “

here it comes he thinks

“not even a dear john. Must be hard waiting a?”

He passes out the door as the last words pass out that fuckers mouth. The screw is smirking, just enough twist to the lip, just enough glint in the eye. He turns to glance

back as he finally moves free, just long enough to catch sight of the light flash glint. Like a song on the radio in the morning repetitively throbbing and looping through the day, he knows even before it works that this day isn't going to be a good day.

Rippled spine define censor. The pages alive strive to reach through strip search forays with letter knives and wives tails the sigh secretly repeated forlorn lost time determine. Open letters. To open is to own, to take that way, why did you open my mail this morning? Open the door through which I stay. Open sewer revelation appellation appeal unsealed.

For the first time he now owned a letter knife. Pewter present Celtic scrollwork handle, life knots tied down to brown paper wrapping slice torn even rip, or even tear. It was a present given in the first anniversary of release. Ure mail now torn neatly just as the censors opened it in prison, gashed with precision in blunt proximity. Each missive mislaid envelope betrayed time past post.

Lined through living life, knife, gash slash crashes to echoes of doors that enter dead ends. Living lines now lay boxed and bound in bundles surrounded by elastic ribbons dust gathering sediment sentiment. Daily daily diaristic. Strings of past stinged and stringed as the past.

Let her caressing letters leave momentarily past present. Each morning mourning ritual aspirant hopes breath short lived passion. Light height of the days drear unless sense, perhaps from yesterday, of dread dead hand landing. Withdrawal without opening, always that opening already opened first glimpse gone.

He watches the mail delivery, foetalic first mention drop through the gash in the door floor take the mail. Watches from the desk, screen busy papers and electrical currency click opens as mice scuttle across. Picks up the morning mail, snail garden given streaks of gum done through the night flight passage. At the desk returned he sits and pushes the paperknife into the corner hole pocket to tear rip open spine remove fine lines no longer, just drudge smudged marks of mistaken accounts. Letters used and thus confused with letter caress. Screen placement incapable replacement for nostalgic disaster of dis apparent opening. By return.

There is little left in recall call me back from past post to future front door frottage. Open in there where the time chime sounds bell, words bathing through breathing dew. Rubber signs, bouncing checks upon my knee, sending decks of cards free spiral trial. Shuffle the deck of memory presents resentfull story. Here we go again, back in the run again through the time past. Rubbing signs together, spark lit light, tonight call you back to me. There was a time when I wouldn't drink wine.

Openings close openings. The opening moment forgotten, breath brief thief. Can you remember your breath? When administering oxygen to the patient the danger lies in an overuse of the assistance such that the body forgets to breath and thus the patient would enter a danger zone. Assistance requires resistance. The slide slice, succint sink of blade into flesh. Caress. Each phrase phase faded face.

Wouldn't you like to know, wouldn't you like to, no? Why forever and never do we wish this closeness. You cannot open close, close by me, autre chose. The wind pulls hard at my coast, toast taste of freedom, winding through lanes of traffic absence, country lanes descent towards the beach. There they stand, two figures of fun, run through waves of light filling eyes, flight of mighty sea three present. They stand in

front, canute-like, present to the salt dew settles upon their skin. Wind pulls my coat again, the pull to my coast.

The page turns, another lie line down, moments bereft adrift. Letters of the past, let us of the past recall call me back. Dear John, I know this must be hard to hear but. The hardness of hearing close openness refused, closely, openly. This culmination.

He knew before he ever received the letters of deceit, simple receipt of time spent past given. Even before he said it he knew it, though it was only with the saying that the knowing arrived. He, new before the sign knelled, foreknew.

Surface of page time, lines of crinkles, opened to view within public domain the screw screws you, screwed into him, the sign of the time spent past now gone. Each page of lines, each face races through his mind, signs upon signs of signs of sighing resignation. Each page surfaces again. He takes all the letters, every received sending, every gift of death, and places each won moment beside the other up on the walls of his cell. A wall of signs layers their lovers lair, layer upon layer, around and round he goes, pasting, tasting, wasting the words of wine he never used to drink.

Each page faces and is faced, face to face, nose to knows, intimate absence. He calls back to time to sign again from when he went through the gates of hell, through the steps of tyranny and escalating democracy. Each page surfaces again. Pasting these letters each sign realigns itself to form a new figure, not any more of fun, none would call it this. Pasting each sign up high, even the ceiling now bows down to receive receipts of time, promises fresh visions, new horizons, long times.

The letters are pasted to the walls with porridge, a traditional method in british prisons for adherence to the walls. He soon runs out of porridge however, after the first few months of times, and thus resorts to excrement mixed with piss to form a smooth paste just firm enough to take itself to the cell. On and on, lone night draws through, the oxygen spew breath of letters left behind, each day was a new day, a new letter in the line. His breathing is pasting itself, he knows he must pace himself, race himself to the line time after time. Dew time comes dining birds catching worms. Perhaps I will come back as a worm and fly in the stomach of a dove, he thinks.

Through the slit of the cell door we could, if we so wished, at any time we desired, see this public domain. With restrained pain boredom reigns time after time. Yet at the end of that particular corridor, on that particular night, in that particular cell, in that particular country, pain retrains itself from restraint to taint the sky with the dye of death. Won by one the letters form a new word, a new sign - time, it says, is over.

When I came out of the cell door that morning the smell was breathtaking. I had to fight to get my breath back. I saw straight in through the back of the screw the signs laid out so resignedly. In the middle of the cell the green painted bed with its green cotton cover over the green woolen blankets glowed in the light of the morning dew. The window had been removed between the central bars, the putty clearly scratched out methodically and silently. The walls were obliterated with a papier-mache design of lines of past love above a hell death cell death. Upon the bed he lay, yes obviously dead.

The screw puked and slid down to his knees, to pray in a pile of vomit before the altar of humility. I stood entranced by this new dance. Grunting noises, like pigs feeding frenzies, appeared to arise from beneath me and soon the screw moved. "Urr fuckin

cries' all my t". He wiped his mouth with the back of his hand, leaving a small trail of vomit along his left cheek. "Stand here and don't fucking move" he says to me as he piles through the blokes in the wing, crashing out of their pits into another days dry bones. Zeeboy next door has seen it too and I can hear him now telling me he ain't gonna fucking ang around ere, before he goes inside and slams his door shut. Clearly the news is spreading as I can see a small group of cons at the end of the landing looking down my way. One of them walks toward me and I just pass my hand across my throat. He stops and turns to the others who all disappear towards the showers. No doubt there will be fun tonight, noone likes a death on the wing.

I turn back toward him. He lies in this bizarre beauty, paradoxically peaceful amidst such violent carnage. I walk into the cell and stand just inside the doorway at the end of his bed. I might almost be visiting him in hospital. In his mouth is a balled up sock, prison issue grey nylon. He is naked, or at least has no clothes on. Naked tends to involve the sight of skin and there is little to see below the neck that isn't covered in his insides. The most noticeable thing though is plainly the sheet of glass that stands clear through his stomach.

The floor is sticky still, the blood mixing with puke adhering to my feet and squeezing its way through my bare toes. It is surprising how long it takes to comprehend quite what has happened here but the image is now beginning to come into view. He lays on his bed, his arms askew crucified almost, except they hang limp, unattached, like his now dead cock. He is skewered on a sheet of glass that is somehow rising vertically from the bed, as though he fell back onto the device, impaled himself. The difficulties of such operations flash before my mind before the sheer depth of the colours overwhelms me. Dark reds intestines and bright luminescent scarlets, with verdant greens and ochre browns on the walls. Image intensifies. I think briefly about dropping that tab I've got hidden in the cell but soon reckon on there not being enough time to get a hit before the screws will clean this up.

The glass rises through his body from just below his groin to past his navel. It is a new cock, having severed the old version on its way through. He must have propelled himself onto the sheet, arse down hard, cobbled together hari-kiri. The smears on the glass show signs of hands and struggle, suggest that somehow after plunging himself onto the lethal shard he still had enough energy to pull the sheet through him some more until it reached his sternum and poured out his lungs. Soul spilled spoil.

Before collapsing. Sheet written death. Come to me. Come in me. Scream thought muffled sound, stuffed like a turkey before christmas. Gob shite. Pull you fucker. Christ almighty mary mother of god, here's the angel bitch. Here's the angle bitch. I want to see my soul. Here's the angle bitch, by return. One, tow, fear, for, I know an english gentle come. Pull you fucker, see the tear, there! there! At last, at last, once more into the breach you fucker, once more, once...

Time stands still for the dead. For the living it rises to meet us each time we stop to let it catch up. Keep running in order to stand still for never ever sever the lost times past. Here, once, occurrence disturbance tends towards violence resurgence, imago arrives, final return.

From the page each line disturbs mine time, mine of time, time of mine. Fine weather side, in dark screen deline heats hate is late. Each line mine. Each time thine. Each

fine wine, drunk despite fires sight, respite, gives one more presence in this permanent potlatch.

Though I may never be here, there, no doubt, is an intimacy in my absence. In deed I in fact intimate their absence. In fact I in deed intimate their absence. In reality there is no loss, only step on step on time after time, line after line after line.

Flowing

#1.

Tonight the boom-base thud through the floor, the blood thump of the sounding. Repeated words, repeated phrases, repeated rhythm, repeated randomness ... hear the silence, hear the silence, hear the silence, of water. Within, the words point, bring us to focus, take my mind away from the words flowing here. The thud, thud, thud, syncopate, break, thud, and fresh words now flow onto the screen, onto the page, thrusting back again, sweat coming again, just inside the thighs of my fingers. Standing at the event, intimate; sitting at the screen, desolate.

Trembling keys, trembling thighs, fingers tremble, sweat tingle. Blood cursing, dancing through, snaking across the pavement.

Standing on the pavement, hundreds of us rising into presence, reclaiming the streets, channelling back the pavement into our discourse, removing the sign of autogeddon. For a moment, however briefly, we glimpse a presence of the future, of hope.

We congregate in a square, in front of shops. This here reinforces the desire to shave my scalp and have the thrusting presence of my body in the crowd. We express sensuality in the deliberation of clothing, style, dress. We express a philosophical position towards the crowd and the mass, a disparagement of equality and, if necessary, superiority. We declare ourselves, you watch the bone and muscle come toward, imposed. An arrogance of presence that should be revelled in, though not of the sort the exhibitionist defaces in their subservience to the pleasure of the crowd, a pleasure that comes even in the simplicity of the shock. No, a subtler more violent power, a looming threat, not immediate but peripheral almost, as though we become aware of a smell, a certain atmosphere. This expressed in the crowd now, a crowd that is no longer a mass but a homeostatic entity. A fresh somatic experience comes through in the situation, the collective ambience.

A silent whisper runs through the crowd, a figure that glides by us and says, without preliminaries other than the simple gesture of catching our eyes, 'north street, ten minutes'.

We step off the bench, having watched the arrests as the presence built and the square filled completely with people, spilling into the streets of the town, at the centre of a further body of quarter of a million people, a small town. In London we took the motorway. The mass still separated cells, coagulating gradually, only their proximity forming the union; but even this intimacy now beginning to press in on us. We move, through shoppers, pass buses, cars, taxis; photograph the photographers, the police cameras looming over the buildings from a crane placed at a position from which it can survey.

This is their weakness, with their calculations and measurements, their technology which they fail to even see, their desire for the omniscient opticon. Panoptical paranoid psychosis. All they see is a mass, numbers of people, they cannot smell the beginnings.

#2

The car pollutes, an aspect of the pollution technology implicitly imposes on us, though one that is inherently ambiguous we are told. Such ambiguity as exists in the car, in the technical subservience we enhance our lives with, can be seen innocently;

as innocent or with innocence, either way, this is the innocence of the imbecile. This is the innocence we perhaps see in the example of the child's language, of the unquestioning question that comes as freely as the breath. The innocence of the dance is perhaps a clearer image however of the wonder which should come from the innocent, from the stainless. Of course the stainlessness of the gleaming surface of purity, such as the minimalists pose in front of us with their stark nakedness that refreshes our eyes with the sudden imposition of a wall, of the dwelling itself, is also a gleaming, but one that is clinical in its caress.

The stainless itself is a technological pollution. Bacteria destroyed in a genocide of hygiene, always incapable of fulfillment without an expenditure of effort that is itself surreal. In the factories that produce computer chips there are Class 1 areas where the dust factors are kept surreally low so as to prevent the minute circuitry of the silicon being polluted with the destructiveness of reality. From its very inception the computer is born in a virtual environment, one programmed and controlled so intensely as to prevent it from being capable of being understood as human. Indeed the human being is not allowed into this space, having to be clothed in suits and helmets that incarnate an alien fantasy. The workers here enter a space where their body is stripped and the very clothes they wear are the limits of the factory, lying against their skin, lying in the supposed paternalism of the protective. The clothes protect the product from the skin and yet pose as protecting the skin from the product. Protection is afforded and not by the staff but indeed from the staff. The space itself is sealed, crypt-like.

This space requires enormous energy, an enormous expenditure of effort and money and wealth and technology. The stainlessness of the space is itself technological and can only come into being through technology. Stainlessness itself only exists through a technological outlook, a framework of techniques constructing a clinical lack.

The crispness of the edge, the slice of knife through flesh, always stainless only in brochures, fresh out of the shop and unsullied; unused, as yet not real in its purpose. The stainless edge of the knife remains only as long as it isn't used and thus isn't really a knife. For the full reality of the blade to come to us, in its real innocence, it must be draped with the sheath of blood. It is this sheath that turns the blade into the dagger before our eyes. The stainless is a pollution in that it feigns innocence, it pretends to be without stain, without the stain of life. Yet the necessity to impose the unstained upon the stained, to create a stainless situation, is a necessity that arises from and is driven by technology and is, above all, therefore stained by life.

The child's innocence is stainless in that it is absent from guilt, from responsibility; in that it lacks the stain of life. This image, though, is also surreal in its abstraction from the grime of infancy, from the defecatory reality of childhood. This innocence is merely the clinical lack with a human face, except the human face is scratched away in an idealised abstraction that removes precisely what is human from the face; it pollutes the child with technology and turns them into the raw material of a full reality as an adult. This whole atmosphere of lack resembles nothing more than the reincarnation of original sin and the loss of eden.

#3

We move, through shoppers, pass buses, cars, taxis; photograph the photographers, the police cameras looming over the buildings from a crane placed at a position from

which it can survey. The two others in my small segmented aspect of the crowd become now faces, embodiment of an ethical reality only exhibited by the mass. We weave inside shoppers, to them no more than other members of the herd. Imperceptibly penetrating an other, a mingling. An entrance occurs in their lives through which we slip surreptitiously. The street has begun to take on a commerce beyond the abject capital leering at us from plate glass walls of objects and an order of things.

Behind us we see others, only vaguely identifiable to us now, but more so as groupuscules coagulate, the flow thickening at certain bottlenecks. By the pedestrian crossing for example. Cars halt and buses pause, just for a moment to let people through, but this moment, these few seconds grace allowed for the flesh to halt the steel, allow us another opening soon filled by our combination. We step onto the road and wander, gently. Walk slowly and with time across the space. The regimented pausation of traffic is disrupted and the lights signify the need for movement where we have begun to halt an other's flow. Gradually clots form and drift through the crowd, through the cars, onto pavements, up railings and atop monuments. We begin to fill the crossroads quickly, tens, and then hundreds suddenly appearing from within the everydayness of a saturday shopping spree.

We were existing-between, passing for the other and yet now we break open in front of their eyes the regularity of their routine. Gentle ripples pass through these others, now audience to an existent exhibition. To them we look differently than we look to ourselves. Suddenly large figures, carnivalesque creations of flurescence on stilts amble into view, the scene increasingly moving beyond the order of things. Secretly plastic bags pass from hand to hand, containing uninflated beach balls. We exhale, our breath captured for play. A scene opens and unfolds into splendour, drums now beating within whistle-blown exuberance the dancing begins.

I climb railings and hang from a lamp, head tucked under a traffic sign made in a prison somewhere, and sense the adrenalin rising. This is. Ears pierced and nostrils filled, an excess enters our bodies as all around us eyes open.

The gradual rise of the note brings passers-by to a stop. Buses turn back, cars disappear amidst a wealth of flesh, and life spills onto the streets, forcing itself into the open.

The note calms and sustains, but always the dynamic is onward and the scene unfolds further as higher on the hill police lines of blue-black density form, delimitations revealed by the presence of presents. Beach balls are thrown towards the state, offered as gifts only to be studiously ignored, bouncing back off helmet-encased heads bereft of humour. The scene is now stupendous, joyous abandon enables an assault on the police to be enacted with air so that the seriousness of reallife is negated by our play. Balls to the coppers.

Action, though, entails re-action and now the air begins to thicken slightly as barking dogs and humming engines add to our voice. Our entrance over, our presence and exit begin to be the next feature of today's entertainment, this exit impinging already as the real force of reason assembles. Words pass and preparations begin, and I lean forward to photograph.

The metaphor is the fuck of the written. Metaphor fucks the writer. The writer is the metaphor of the fuck. Fucking is the writing of metaphor. The writer metas to the reader. Have I had it in the ear before?

We pollute, pulling the air inside us and exhaling. We dirty the word, sucking it in through our mouths and exhaust a flatulence forsaken by wisdom. Bitch-fucker, whore of the world; prostituted paragraphs proseletysing a peculiar disgust, picking scabs from my forehead raked in whilst fucking. We pollute. We are the transition from earth to filth, our souls emitting shit. But can you find the change, the gag reflex as my cock fucks your mouth, as I pull your head toward me, engorging you with flesh. Velvet heat violence and visceral fluid jumping over your tongue and entering directly into your throat. Gagging. I am gagging.

I tie you, bind you to a white sheet, a screen or page of sliding curses blinding the blind. Even the blind can see. Gouge your eyes out if you fail, your vision betraying you, deluding you with dissimulation. I masturbate, play with myself, come in my hand, suck white clumps in, filling my sense, slipping semen through my teeth and coating the inside of my mouth, my inner lip, falling. Watch, dammit, watch. I stand before you and come again, begin again, your eyes sting as I fall on you, spill across your face, and you watch. Watch, dammit, watch. I kneel across your chest, forcing the air back into your lungs, draw with the athame a line from my groin to my sternum and spill my guts. On you, gash spills. I offer you my bowel to gorge, turning your head away, neck stretched. Watch, dammit, watch. Flesh forced into your mouth, skin splitting, shit spilling, gagging, vomiting, pushing. Watch, dammit, watch.

Under anaesthetic we can see our own skin opened with a scalpel and yet observe this event through a distance that connects its instantiation to the image. I might as well be watching it on a screen. My testicles are opened with the blade and blood flows, gorgeous red blood, though nowhere near enough to satisfy. No bathing allowed. I watch, almost bored, constantly reminding myself to watch since the observation is important even if sublime indifference seeps into my soul. Here blade, blood and cut revel in their ambiguity, in the dirt of life; behind me, around me, above me, beyond me, attempts to wash away the filth of life, to prevent a pollution, yet here, in this instantiation, in this singularity of the cut, ambiguity welcomes the blade and blood and amidst the sterility life is sterilised. Gorgeous flesh yielding my insides.

Before, though. Before the cut, the needle. Sharp short sliver sliding into my balls, penetration inverted. Stick a needle into your cunt, into your cock. To anaesthetise before the cut you stick a needle in. Needles me. It needles just enough to suck my breath in and cause glimmers of erections, though at a distance, in memory. As when you lay back in the chair, stare at the light, the wall, the sealing silence of idle chatter as simplistic diversions are employed to avoid the anticipation of impact, an art of dentistry that always reminds me of sophistry. Cock hardens as you penetrate my mouth, insertion my gums, wishing for the scrape of metal against bone in a reminder of nails screaming slides down a blackboard. Fuck me you bastard.

I cannot see my insides. Even as the vas are pulled hard through the riven skin, severed and sealed, tied as though it were nothing other than a lacing of shoes, the inside avoids me. It escapes, laughing down the corridor, dancing backwards, grinning maniacally and calling to me, "Watch, dammit, watch". So that you may remember.

Watch, dammit, watch. So that I am not ignored. Watch, dammit, watch. So that I can slide, surreptitiously, into your skull.

#5

Action entails re-action. Entrance over, our presence and exit begin to be the next feature of today's entertainment, this exit impinging already as the real force of reason assembles. Words pass and preparations begin, and I lean forward to photograph, hanging like a monkey from the signpost, iconographic position within any riot. Down the road towards the sea I see vans lining up as weapons of war. Up the hill towards the station an infantry of inanity, just following orders.

There is a brief moment of acknowledgement between us as we party on the edge of insanity. The insanity of this need to party against cars, the insanity of this party being so dangerous as to need blood spilling and bone crunching violence, the insanity of their sanity. Our eyes meet amongst strangers and we know each other briefly, willing to stand in an understand this stance; understand this, no more.

Leaping down from the sign, I gather myself and my pregnant lover, usher over to the crowd and weave through towards the sea, towards the cavalcade massed below, mechanical cavalry of late twentieth century capitalism. I have been here before and bottles and bricks will soon follow. Photographing each section of time I pass others who now seem distant. Memories of blood come back and screams echo from the past. There is no joy in insanity.

There is concrete beneath my feet, tarmacadam terror edged with pavements encrusted with chewing gum droplets, products sedimented on products sedimenting products. The street is no longer seen as a place to conduct through, blocked continuously with motorised mayhem, atmospheres of anger and antagonism, roads giving birth to rage. We are all caught here, in this rage, and the only choice is what to rage against. At least, for a moment, we will twist, have twisted, the cages of our rage, rattle their cages.

We halt further down the road, towards the walls of the buildings, penned in between walls of brick and glass and officers of the law. Across the barriers and slightly further down the road there is a space where only the vans wait to move. Here there is a throng of people, drumming and dancing and laughing still, despite the gradual encroachment of an inevitability that the end of today's decision will soon end. For an eternity there is the knowledge without convictions, waiting for the arrests to begin, the arresting of our activities, the arresting of our bodies. That we have to be arrested though is another proof of our activity. We have to be stopped from stopping. The traffic must pass, the cars must flow. Flowing through our bodies. We flow through their machine, inevitably to exit the other side in their procession of power, but for now our procession proceeds to stop. Soon the convictions begin.

#6 (text missing)

by way of a preface.

When I was an undergraduate philosopher, fresh out of prison and studying at the heart of the black country, the lecturer who converted me, if you like, to thinking, had a thing about Spain and Spanish culture. He had or perhaps had had a Spanish wife or lover and spent considerable time in Spain. His favourite films were Spanish, a fact I learned when he presented a final year philosophy seminar group with a film rather than any 'proper philosophy' - talking in, as they say, inverted commas of course. His favourite ethical thinker was Spanish, a bloke called Savater whose work is not much translated into English I think, thereby automatically making it seem a little alien to me, perhaps the point of referencing this thinker so much. This philosophy lecturer, a bearded and diminutive Scot, is still the principal figure for me of what a philosopher is. Not, by any means, without what I would think of as considerable faults, such as the seeming existence of strong prejudices against Martin Heidegger, one of the foremost thinkers of the twentieth century whose reputation is somewhat tarnished by his activity as a National Socialist, speaking here slightly ironically of course.

The existence of what I thought of as faults enabled me to gain a sense of the ownership in my own thought which enabled this teacher to both act as a tradition from which I would have to accept authority and as the authority from which I would have to break into autonomy. This thinker thus exists in part for me as my fault line with philosophy, as the point at which I break into philosophy. He is a transitional figure for me, a transitional moment that forms a peculiarly important place that is perhaps due as much to the positioning within my life as to any specific presence that exists within his work. It is a position for me that I want to recount not account for and that I have rather than one I am trying to get others to have. It exists for my I and in my eye and my eye and I are not universalisable.

To return to the thing about Spanish. This I felt, was part of a general attempt to open us to otherness, to the alien and the foreign, and this was enacted for me through the very names I was taught that always seemed to be on the edge of the mainstream. Of course the main stream was miles away. This was an ex-polytechnic, only just a university, small, tucked away in an old backwater of the Midlands in England, a little place called Dudley. Even in this place I studied in a backwater of the backwater, in the smallest campus site, ten miles from the main building. The main stream was miles away. In this situation the mainstream lines of the education I received differed from another college where that mainstream is closer and those issues that so characterise academics, issues of little or no importance, are much more central to the everyday concerns of the lecturing and teaching staff. Fashion was unfashionable in Dudley. No, that would be too strong. There was a void of fashion in Dudley that makes even the fashionable/unfashionable dichotomy invalid. The unfashionable is, after all, in relation to the fashionable, each shifting slightly as the years went by. In Dudley however the very notion of 'fashion' failed to exist and thus the peculiar void I just mentioned operated so that, even though a slight ripple effect could be seen in the town, in the college the very notion of fashion was so out of sight it might as well be called a notion of bollock. The town formed the event horizon for the college, such that the college was the centre in the same way a black hole is the centre of the event horizon that we see, an absence revealed through a presence elsewhere.

The other thing about the spanish influence was the peculiarity of the politics in that country. Manyana, tomorrow, tomorrow, always tomorrow. This symbolic sign of laziness to the north europeans, manyana, is perhaps also the opening to a particular attitude that seems to arise in their cultural products that opens a futural presence that does not die in its own realisation through spurious utopianism. Utopian ideals have a structural miscarriage built into them, they are memetically constructed to die at birth. It's of their nature, speaking colloquially of course. Manyana, however, seems to open that fault between today and the other, the foreign that enables us to live today, to see the whole of today because we can see tomorrow. Without tomorrow the night never comes. Without tomorrow we would never rest. This acceptance of tomorrow, this complete living of today, belies the sceptical northern europeans with their inductive reason problematics and their futile debates about questions like 'how do we know the sun will rise tomorrow?'. This question, after all, presupposes the tomorrow in which the sun rises in order to question the rising of the sun. A peculiar form of logic if ever I saw one. Manyana. Much better to endow the word with a meaning that is unassailable by such idiocy than to have to resort to either that question or the equally barmy notion of kicking stones to prove existence.

Mind you, the question as to how we can know the sun will rise tomorrow is a provocation perhaps, a call to thought rather than a serious call to attention, to a lack, to a need for answer, and in this may prove of some worth in that it might prove unsettling in its simplicity. Like the child's question, like the question my daughter asked me once about when today was going to be tomorrow. Childlike simplicity, questions of childish insight. Except that particular question seems so settled in its unsettling nature I am unsure whether it can remain unsettling. Of course the question can be said to be about the meaning of the word 'know' or about the nature of our inference of future events but is still unable to operate unless it avoids being taken seriously. Scepticism is an accepted form of zeitgeist thought to such an extent that the maxim that 'everything is questionable' becomes a new faith. Lack becomes a new presence. It seeps into every corner and becomes the mainstream; the main stream though always leaves eddies, sedimentations, deposits around the bend and gradual erosions.

This work is part of those eddies perhaps, those side sections, brief glimpses, moments in the river. Never the same in a Heraclitean game. This work is part of a life that has a moment somewhere where that lecturer and his spanish obsession play a role and where Machado's poetry became important to me and for now, in particular, the line "*The eye that you see is not an eye because you see it but because it sees you*" which serves here as a first epigraph to the rest of the work in a move that is conscious of its replay of a move already made.

So through some long twisting route, not too long I hope, I come to the first aspect I want to touch on, the eye. And the I. A common theme. Much said.

He breaks off there and I notice that I am slightly bored already. This was supposed to be brief but already I can hear his voice droning away for the next few hours. Interminable, that's the trouble with these people, bloody interminable. No doubt they would love that, love to play with the word and suggest how they need to reject termini, endings, a particular end to which they must be directed by some outside force. No doubt he or some others would make some point about the need to not end. As I say, bloody interminable.

The window of the office is filthy. His desk is confused with piles of papers, all looking as though they're about to topple over and scatter the nascent colony of coffee cups across the floor. And this bloody chair. My arse is hurting and I've only been here half an hour. Why are the chairs always like this, low slung, wide bottomed monstrosities with the stretched straps of support beneath the cushion almost audibly crying out as they attempt to resist collapse. He's stopped for a bit long though.

"Much said by whom" I ask. "Are you suggesting some problem in writing because of what has already been said"

"Yes, I suppose so" he replies, the life of his sentence now adrift, the thought processes taking him away from the room, the dry and encrusted death all around me. "Yes I suppose so" he repeats with a touch of vigour, turning to me again and once more opening up that never ending damn.

There is always a problem in speaking in that to speak we must have heard what has been spoken. Thus there is a problem of origin, of the origin of something new. Putting the matter simply, if we pose the existence of language embodied in a speaking community, and here let us not think too closely of speaking as necessarily oral, and next suggest that entrance into the speaking community comes through an immersion in this community, then a problem seems to exist when we want to suggest possibilities for where new ideas and new speech comes from. Why does speech continue, if you like? Why bother to talk? Plainly these latter questions focus on, amongst other things, issues of motivation and that is no doubt important and interesting. However I am curious, and perhaps have always been curious, as to the origin of new speech, not in terms of motivation but in terms of an immanent origin, an origin from within.

The questions could be reformulated as 'how' questions for example but then this would still tend towards a breaking down of the problem at the heart of this issue, a breaking down into technical difficulties that can be analysed and for which models can be constructed. Yet at the heart of all these instrumental approaches, approaches that want to reach answers if you like, there is the origin of what is questionable. Again this can be analysed into a motive for the question or an analysis of the sociological field in which the question operates but once more these all seem to me a little like strategies of avoidance. Of course at times avoidance is important. One does not necessarily take the hardest route to a goal unless the taking of that route is itself part of the goal. Here is where philosophy has come in for me. Its goal is the finding and taking of the hardest routes for thought. In the expression of thought, therefore, the philosophical influence constantly brings me back to this question of how I can speak if everything I say has already been said and even if I say something original the problem still exists then of how there can be such an origin.

"Can I just go back a moment because I didn't really get the starting point for this, the idea of language embodied in speaking communities, if I remember the phrase right". I had interjected more out of spite than anything. I wanted to see this stuff work without being accepted. God knows I've been to enough academic conferences to watch how the people give their papers and then there is a sort of rigmarole of questions, perhaps an objection or two, before the conference chair either closes with congratulations all round or the speaker finishes off with a couple of obviously well-rehearsed rejoinders. How do these people actually think they achieve anything? I

always wonder about that. Then again, some of them must be tomorrows past and that is perhaps what makes me continue doing this, trawling round inter viewing and recording the never bloody ending supply of words. Adam Smith suggested somewhere that supply creates its own demand and maybe that's what's going on with this lot. They just keep turning out the words and someone just keeps turning over the pages. Always something new eh.

The idea of language embodied in a speaking community is meant to suggest a concrete location for discussions around language. Philosophers have been well known for talking of either abstract languages, even when they refer to what they call 'natural languages' or to solipsistic languages. What I mean here is that language itself does not exist outside of its use, something which Wittgenstein clearly points toward in his later work. We can see this quite clearly in the death of languages and even in their artificial maintenance, such as in the case of Latin, where the language is no longer used as embodied but as a tool. Alasdair MacIntyre makes an argument in his work 'After Virtue' that relies on a break in the moral language we use, what he calls a great disaster and which roughly parallels the European Dark Ages. Here he suggests that the origin of moral language in ancient Greece has a fundamental effect on the use of such moral language today because there is a break in continuity, there is a loss of meaning along the way. Of course such a suggestion is posed by MacIntyre, as it must be, as a sort of parable since there is little possibility of empirically proving such an hypothesis, but it never the less seems convincing. The point for me is that this suggests a dependence on the embodied community and thus suggests the language as embodied in a community phrase as one that enables me to attempt to begin correctly.

The other aspect of the phrase, the embodiment 'in a speaking community' is here meant to redress what I see as a fundamental problem if we begin to think of language as an inner dialogue. In reality this notion of an inner dialogue is not something accepted by many people. For example, who would be happy to leave someone who was mute to their own devices, confident that they were merely more interested in their own inner dialogue than in some outer conversation. Most people would rather see the mute as exhibiting some behaviour that rejected speech rather than which embraced speech as the solipsistic model would tend to imply. The Cartesian figure is perhaps the paradigm case here, the lonely philosopher in front of his wood burner contemplating the world through a split-personality like discussion in his own head. The normality of the phrase 'language embodied in a speaking community' only becomes strange when placed alongside certain other supposed normalities that have, strangely, come to be accepted as normal when they plainly are not. It is meant to enable, as I said just now, that starting point to be corrected, adjusted if you like, through recognising that the phrase is needed simply because it is not accepted or commonly thought from.

"So you're suggesting that language is necessarily in this format if you like, in the form of a conversation such as this". It is always necessary, I have found, to suggest, through the odd little phrase or so, that I am following the person speaking to me. If you just listen they assume you're not listening. People used to commonly say to me, are you listening to me?, and I'd think, what an odd question, surely I must be for you to ask me that. Like the question, are you asleep?, another anomalous asking that it took me a while to get. Of course the person is not actually asking you anything,

they're simply indicating that the way you're behaving isn't making them feel comfortable when talking to you, so after a little practice I found that repeating a paraphrase to them of something they said seems to be the most efficient way to suggest and convey a 'fully listening' mode. People are peculiar like that I suppose, but then no-one ever says what they mean do they?

Of course the idea of conversation is nothing new, if you excuse the irony here, and has been suggested in reality since Plato's dialogues. The form of the dialogue actually initiates philosophy and the pre-socratics, whilst perhaps accepted as philosophers, are definitely seen as precursors to a field of learning that opens with the dialogue and which seems best embodied by the dialogue, though not, of course, necessarily as a literary form. In recent times Gadamer, building on the work of Heidegger, has also suggested the conversation or dialogue as the central form of the human sciences, as he calls them, where the knowledge gained is radically different from the natural sciences.

We already seem miles off course, miles away from the main stream of the thought here, which was supposed to be touching upon the texts that form the work 'I am Eye'. Still, it was an interesting train journey here, and I have at least got that to look forward to, the drifting landscapes bordered by travel that are the peculiar face of transport. That particular view from the window on the inter city, the shifting sliding surface of life always makes me feel somehow larger in this country, in any country perhaps. I expect the desire to travel has a lot to do with this, a notion of encompassing the place we exist in. It always leaves a certain melancholic longing for the texture of reality. Its lack is its pull and despite the knowledge that it is superficiality at its most modern, the superficial circumnavigation of the globe, there is still a lure I always feel towards travel. Shit, now I'm really drifting. To work.

"Let me stop you there for a moment and return to this spanish influence."

The context for the line from Machado in its relevance to me was the point of that really.

"Of course, of course, but this context presumably has some pertinence here and so I would be interested in you expanding this influence of the spanish in terms of this line."

I suppose the importance of the line from Machado and of the context in which it came to my notice, in which it embedded itself within me, is the network of immanence that begins to appear the further one travels along the road of philosophy. This has been seen in numerous guises and relates most centrally to a notion of force that was suggested by philosophers like Austin but which has also been exploited and investigated in the work of Derrida. The force of philosophy is something that has also exhibited itself in guises that now mingle with elements of power extraneous to thought - economic, social, historical, political. I begin here from a notion of the importance to me of a singularly singular event, this line of poetry and its contextual place. The thought here would be something along the lines of the claim that its placing was layered with complexity by the original lecturer, the one with the spanish obsession, and those layers of complexity were, if not forethought before the placing, then at least immanent within the placing. That is, that through an articulation of the place of that line within my own life I feel like there is a peculiar force that interprets the original thought of both the poet and the lecturer in such a way that the complexity

seems to have pre-existed rather than been constructed. In philosophical terms this force vacillates on the edge of an a priori or a postereori problematic, that is, do I construct the complexity or do I merely find it and gradually bring it to my understanding. Is the complexity there? If there is complexity where is it?

To me the complexity of interpretation cannot feasibly be attributed to a subjective will to complicate. My object when interpreting a work, when reading it and then discussing or analysing it, is not to complicate it but to reveal it. Why then does the process of interpretation appear to produce such increasing complexity rather than rounded resolution? Why do we not begin to arrive at the consensus that you would imagine would arise from a prolonged and ongoing discussion? These questions feed back into the very nature of philosophy since, if we view philosophy as a dialogue about the central concerns of human existence, which I think is not an unreasonable view but by no means the only definitive view, then we have to say that this dialogue has been progressing now for some two thousand years and is no nearer the sense of a consensus than ever. Indeed the notion of consensus would imply an agreement, an end, an arrival at somewhere which then, perhaps, leads to other places but which is, never the less, arrived at. Such an arrival, and thus such a consensus would, it seems to me, spell the end of philosophy and thus philosophy appears to exist in a tension between on the one hand an appearance of dialogue which tends to presuppose an end of consensus or of at least a purpose, a 'to which' to which the dialogue is aimed, and on the other hand a necessity to refuse endings, to refuse the past, to refuse the authority of the tradition if you like, where 'the infinite conversation', to use Blanchot's phrase, is in fact the best description of the situation. This tense situation involves us rethinking the very purpose of speech it seems to me, the very purpose of philosophy, the very purpose of interpretation.

"I am afraid I still don't quite see the link to the line from Machado here, though I perhaps can catch a glimpse of what you mean about complexity. Are you saying that the line of poetry offers an event horizon for you, a certain moment of existence for a complexity of meaning, and that the central problem for you is somehow the location of this meaning?"

(1)

He can see you through the mirrored window of the transport. Large white authority vehicle struggling through the heat of London, box bully on wheels, with those high, small black voids along the side. Prison transport vehicle, recognisable as easily as jam jars used to be, the old Rover cop car that became a fixture of the seventies and eighties, that amorphous time of younger days when colours and sounds wouldn't stay separate.

Each window hole, black void, a space into another universe, boxed inside as well as out, a box of boxes travelling past the everydayness of grocers and buses and grannies arguing about the price of peas in the pod and resorting to frozen bags of dulled green pills. Each box inside the box moulded out of white plastic, no edges except around the door and window, and even here the crisp lines of glass give way to the rubberised emasculation of space. Gentles curves that betray a clinical and psychotic aspect to the prison's mentality, as though such sterility would be of benefit to us. The only advantage of such blank surfaces is the easy clean access to spilt blood and excrement.

Each box is like a toilet. Aside from the lack of edges there are no separations, the chair protruding from the wall, morphed out of plastic, reminiscent of the typical explosive alien that emerges from surroundings, the infected body transported into oblivion. Frozen movement, some aestheticians delight with notions of form mutation and singular plurality invading spaces constructed around moulds.

I sit on the seat before the door is shut, wedging my feet up high, knees bent up, soles planted firmly. The seat tilts forward slightly, forcing an inevitable torsion into the body simply to sit still. Here we need to work just to sit still, let alone stand.

“Four
clear,

five
clear,

six
clear”

the screw shouts as the door slams shut again. Always slamming shut. Numbers boxed and accounted for. The music of a humming vent begins and engines rise up through the floor, vibrato. Through the gates looms the park and a green that’s missing from inside the castle walls. Peace for a moment within these walls. No screws or cons or begs for burn or weed or batteries or radios with shite blaring across the walls, just a little peace, albeit no quiet. Engines race and movements allow a little space back in. From in here I can see you all.

The transport falls in behind the queues of traffic clogging up the atmosphere, each tick tock of the green amber red lights letting through it’s dribs and drabs, mechanical movements governed by chips and logarithmic modules, button pushing and monitor watching in some deep mystical control centre. Control centre. Like newspeak gone wrong. Control. Comfort blanket words.

The sun looks warm outside, the people dragging through the streets oblivious to the rays. The sun doesn’t reach inside the window, the shadowless domain of the fluorescent bulb. Across the way I can see some kids playground and a bunch of homeboy losers wasting on the roundabout, wondering what they can possibly do to feel, even for a moment, like they’re alive. A second later they’re gone and another scene flicks across the screen.

“I want a fucking piss”
Nothing.

“I said I want a fucking piss you cunts” and a thudding, a dulled plastic edgeless thudding comes from in front. The voice is loud and pissed.

“I
said
I
want
a

fucking
piss”

the voice shouts again, slowly, pronouncing each word with strength

“you
fucking
cunts”.

Just enough gap between the request and the insult.

Studious ignorance.

A slow rhythm begins and each thud, thud, thud sets up a beat that breaks the space outside, draws me back in. I want to watch the world. I want to sit back in peace, even that can't be had. No peace.

“I said, in case you fucking morons can't fucking hear, that I want a fucking piss. Now is anyone of you cunts gonna let me out of here”

“Shut the fuck up or I'll fucking shut you up you stupid twat”

“Yeah like shit, now will you open this fucking door or do I piss on the floor?”

“Piss on the floor McGovern and I'll use your fucking head as a mop to clean it up”

“Go fuck yourself you stupid cunt . Now will you fucking open this door for a moment so I can have a fucking piss or are you just gonna stand there like the fucking cunt you are. I'm fucking bursting here.”

“Just shut the fuck up McGovern, we ain't gonna be long, only another ten minutes or so”

“So where the fuck we going to so close then”

“Scrubs”

“Fucking great” I hear him say quieter, to himself, before yelling again, “I'm supposed to be going to fucking Maidstone you fuckers”

“Ah well, you'll just have to wait and see and be a fucking good boy then wontcha”

A couple of good thick wacks are given the door and I can just see now the black scuff lines against the white plastic, the traces of anger.

“And you'll be fucking cleaning that toilet if you fuck it up McGovern, you hear”

“Course I can fucking hear you cunt, not like you, you fucking deaf bastard. I'm no fucking ignorant cunt.”

I can hear the screw sit down again. His breath was hard and fast against my door as he watched the man in front through the peep hole. He stood obliquely to it so the eye didn't show through, so he didn't let the man in front know he was watching, though he knew, so he didn't let him think he was bothered, though he knew he was. I can hear him sweat. I can hear him wondering whether to stop the van and kick fuck out of the man in front or whether to just play it cool and let him have a piss or whether to just to keep him locked up. Always keep em locked up seems to be the motto generally. Let some other poor fucker deal with it, or the local wing psycho screw.

The screen is going to finish it's play soon, and the doors will open to swallow us back into the real world beyond.

“All right you lot, out you get” and the door unlocks. He stands and stretches his legs, the creased muscles of his thighs pulled back into line “and don't give me any more fucking lip McGovern” the screw barks at the man in front. Inside the transport there is a corridor with a row of five doors insetted into each side of the wall and a seat at the far end away from the door. The floor is studded stainless steel and in the centre of the ceiling is a large, flat disc light with a red centre point. He walks out, in line, down the steps of the van and onto the tarmac, marked with yellow and white paint like a school playground.

I remember very early the feeling of drowning amidst people. That sense of loss within the crowd that vacillates wildly between euphoria and terror. It's not like the loss of a death, it's less settled than that, moving all the time, though often with an everpresent shadow on your shoulder. Walking down the halls at a massive school, huge town comprehensive, coming out to the obligatory ROSLA block of the seventies, wooden and glass boxes within fences with chained in bits of grass and garden, token realities. Even, a few times, charging amidst a mass of schoolkids, uniforms disconsalately askance at the horde of heathen children. Flies without lords, a spewing mass of idiocy, adrenalin and hormone. Children form these horrific swarms of half-human beasts of archaeological origin.

The birds in Brighton swarm across the Level in Autumn as they prepare for their flights south. Black clouds raining white slime. Huge billowing masses of the things, screeching and scrawling, alighting in that magnificent unity onto the treetops along the roads, filthy avenues infested with vermin cars and birds. Filthy tarmac and battered grass with pebbled and black, bay window houses stretching along towards the sea and the pier and the beach and the light. That light that blows through you when you glimpse it, edging the towns extreminities. In this edge there is both the death and life of the town and when, as in London or Birmingham for example, that edge is lost amongst conurbial spread, the people begin to age, spread a little all over and life gets flabby, over indulged. When there is no edge to space there are no boundaries to death. It infects everything.

He goes in behind the other men, the one called McGovern the man in front of him. The screw marches in behind, an obviously young and over-efficient little shit with his brushed clean black ridged woolly and his oh so shiny-nylon trousers above his buffed up beautiful Burton's shoes, black again of course. What a fucking twat.

The wing is high and long, racks of landings stretching along the walls. Metal mesh walkways with cast iron filligree work on the stair steps and shiny silver banisters, shallow convex curves that fit your hands beautifully as you rise up the heights. These railings are cleaned with a particular precision in some prisons. Each landing has a specific cleaner and it's his job to go along those railings with a little piece of green scrubbing pad, the sort used to give that edge of sterility to the saucepans at home. The railings are rubbed with this dry green pad and then buffed with a rag, all the grease trace fingerprints and smears removed, all trace of life expunged in sterile orderliness. As I worked along these railings the rivet heads fixing the metal to the uprights would form little circular islands of metal within metal, details only perceivable at such close range, but which can be found all over the engineered reality of our lives.

He follows the other transfers up to the wing office and takes his queue in the ritual number giving "MW1054 Lee, Sir" The fat fucker looks at him, the office behind him a cacophany of half shut filing cabinets and litter strewn desks. To the screws left sits a plastic cup filled with a chocolate or crisp wrapper, screwed up. Next to that the obligatory grimy cup of char, tannin stains above the beige brown liquid.

"Number 26, on the threes lad" he states, "one floor up and to my left". He hesitates for a moment, wondering if that's all, whether to leave. "On your way then" the screw says, as though the formality of waiting for a dismissal were no longer needed.

"You call me Sir or Guv" he says "not Mr fucking anything, alright".

"Fine" I say, standing there still wondering quite what to do.

"And if I were you lad I'd keep you're nose clean. Just get up when you're told, eat when you're to told and don't ask too many questions. You'll pick it up."

A funny thing to say really, he thinks, as he stands there at the reception desk for the first time. This whole thing is a bit fucking peculiar. He has just come off the transport from court and walked, still dressed in civvies, into the front doors of some brickbuilt little building in a yard, in what could be almost anywhere on any old factory estate that's been around since the forties or fifties. Dirty fucking places.

"Your number is MW1054, try and remember that" the screw says "and here's your information card. Go through those doors, round to the left and into room A. Wait there until your name is called."

What a fucking joke. My name is not fucking MW1054 Lee. Still, he says nothing and walks through to the obligatory room. It's half panelled with glass along the walls, about twenty by twenty, in a row of four or five. They are false ceilinged boxes in a high wide corridor. On top of the roofs, which are no more than ten feet high, the layers of dust and shit sits atop the soon-to-be-prisoners. In the corner of one of the roofs, at the far end of the row, is a bird's body, rotten away and revealing the eye-sockets of the skull. The wings still hold the bulk of their feathers but the ends of the flight tips are broken or eaten away.

He goes into the room and finds a seat at the far end near the corner. Another six men are in the room, sitting along benches attached to the walls, with a green formica table in the middle. The floor is a dirty brown lino, with scuffs and stains and indented ridges from the years lives. All the men look tired, sitting there in old and knackered suits, or new looking baggies, smoking or staring at the walls opposite. Boredom.

Here there is waiting. Always waiting. Waiting to get out, waiting to get in, waiting to eat, waiting to shit. The whole rigmarole of prison is a system of waiting, of carrying out some peculiar constriction of reality through the imposition of time. Waiting for time to pass, for the clocks to tick tock their way through your life, the sounds drumming rhythmically into your mind, tick tock tick tock. No fucking sound though, which is perhaps why that tick tock of the old clocks at night still comforts, the presence of time's passing. In most of our places now the time is registered secretly, the control of the moment the crux of power. Orwell understood this only too well. Tick tock tick tock.

Making you wait is part of that control. The ability to make you wait. In the doctors waiting room, or at the dole office to sign on, the fuckers always make you wait. In the end they can make you wait here because they can make you wait there. In prison waiting is at its peak. In this prison is the perfected symbol of fatalism. To wait is to wait for death.

(2)

Boots high, laced tight, armed jackets of leather black weight, arms slide inside, the silk lining internal edge, thick zips drawn three quarters up. Check for no identification, no phone numbers or names on pieces of paper. Every pocket empty. Tap toes against the wall, firm soled pressure. Keys. Exit, door shut, looking up at the tall, plastic fronted walls with windows in white borders of eighties estate agents dreams, council furnishings of state paternalism.

He walks singularly towards the bus stop. There is only one way to tell certain tales, with certainty. The ride to the centre. Alighting, lightin roll ups in the winds, hands cradled delicately over flames. Bustle and bawling children. The waiting. Walking through the market he stops at the stall with oddments of china, the half plastic translucent white of the plates, with their false tapestry of pressure given transfers. Similiar somehow to flowers, yet never quite yet.

Eyes sight felons and feel slight tensions at the rear of the eyeball, pressing ever so firmly into the space of aqueous illumination. This slight pressure. Pressure sure of itself. The air heavy with scent from tardy blondes, large busted white tshirts within billowing black quilts of shiny nylon, lycra legs and white, white trainers, edged with black and BK. British Knights. British nights see a lot of peculiar iconography abound. Knights of the Garter, the legions of St. George. Today is St. George's day, the remembrance of things past, mythological remnants of heroic times revalued into symbols of destruction, the dragon now wears a black face. White Knights with Red Crosses on white flashing and folding in the wind.

Today it is no night though, the shrouding of symbols pushed back into later regions. Today the April sun shines clear and harsh, bringing out the edge, the black and white within the grime of grey city centre scenes. Today is no party of admixtures but the face of realism. Grimy black and white realism. In tolerant moods we might all wish the world an eternal dusk of delivery, the sun falling beauty of evening stars and

yearning skies. Intolerant moods though are never far away, the next door neighbour mutilating his wife, the children of hell trashing the local school, the far gone boys crashing askew. Intolerant moods of black and white grinning reality.

“Morning then”

“Oh hiya, sorry, miles away you know”

“No worries. Been here long”

“No, only a coupla minutes or so, thought I’d try to get here a tad early. See anything on the way in.”

“No, I got off outside the Odeon and walked down to the ramp and through the Pallasades to the Station to see if anyone was around but nothing that I could make out.”

“Well the information says ten thirty at New Street so we should get someone up there soon. Who else came in with you?”

“Half a dozen from the cafe, they’re down there by the Church taking the piss out of the swopies I think....”

He trails off as another group joins them. There’s half a dozen people standing there, all in jeans and boots and jackets done up with hooded tops sticking out the top of many of the coat necks. Out for the day.

There’s thirty or so now, the mood has dropped off again after the initial greetings, small conversations as the time passes, half an hour gone already before they all gather round to sort out what goes where.

There’s only a certain amount of point to these things. There’s little point in description. Here then, once, there is a young woman, wearing doctor martens and bluejeans standing in front of a man who’s probably her regular fuck. They smile occasionally at each other, a sort of semi-formal smile, not one borne of enjoyment of a night out, not the smile of a lover anticipating the lips of the other caressing her breasts or smoothing her hair, breathing hard into her shoulders, but the smile of disturbed waiting. The sort of smile one might see in the doctor’s waiting room that betrays a young couples failed contraception or foolish conceit. A closed smile, with no mouth shown. A wordless smile.

“Right you two, with that lot down to the train station.” he says.

“Can you go with them too” he states, turning to a thin, gangly goth, pale faced youth with black combat jacket darkened by deliberate dirtying at home, at night, to get just that right aura of grunge. Dragged along the roads or just kicked about a bit out the back of mummies house in Quinton. “And here’s a phone. You alright being communications?” he inquires, only to get a low nod, the youth barely lifting his eyes to look him in the face. “This is on and this is the number for our phone” he says, pointing out the details as the machine beeps alive and glows green yellow in the daylight. “Keep it switched on and don’t fucking phone anyone else understand, only us. And don’t say too much...just where you are, how many of you and how many of them you know, short and sweet. We’ll ask the questions needed and tell you what to do.” The goth tucks the phone into his jacket pocket, still glowing away, then looks down, lifts the flap and watches the illuminated intelligence with a sense of pride.

“And don’t fucking break it alright...” he says, turning away towards the remaining group.

They split into two separate parties and whilst one moves across to the other side of the walkway from where they’ve been standing, outside the doors of a cheap clothes shop with tarty dummies littering up a window display that is barely capable of being a display of anything other than poverty, the other group walks off down the market place towards a large busy road that runs behind the dirty black brown church building. The church has a fence around it as though it were trying to stake out its ground within the city centre, living in an ambiguous relation to its surroundings. St Martin’s in the City it’s called, fronting onto the Ragmarket and backing onto Digbeth. It’s staked out distinctiveness is perhaps added to by the filth that has accumulated over the years as cars stream by and buses deposit soot filled sediments onto the stonework, giving cause for images of dark satanic mills. It fails to attract the eye as a place of warmth, as a heart breathing life into a body, but seems rather to be slowly rotting within the burden of city life, the stoneworks’ discoloration standing, like the lungs of chain smoking bus queues, for the betraying decay, except here this waste is visible rather than inferred.

(3)

You don’t seem to see the point though.

Perhaps not. Is there one?

pause

thought

Do you ever finish anything? Even your sentences seem truncated.

Paragraphs always seem so overweight. As though they

Truncated sentences themselves

Tiredness.

The truncated sentence takes one back to the name. And beyond that to the sound, to the phonic.

A, B, C

(a bu se)

(ay bee sea)

Below that even.

Isn’t there some point to the formal structures though? To the quotation marks

Invented in the seventeenth century apparently

And the commas, paragraph form, sub-clausal organisation of sentences and tense structure.

Precisely.

I beg your pardon?

Precisely. Tense structure. Tensed. Tensing under the strain of hearing, ears straining inside, as though the tone could come through the tensing and taughtness of the vocal muscles themselves, of the body active action, boding ill, activity giving,

sudden slipping, sliding, slip sliding away, through their eyes, always through, throughout taken through the ghosting hand inverts as pushed into the mist, misting windows breath, souls' dew. As if the words were no more than

Souls' dew.

(4)

He's still standing there of course. Forever in some ways, once. Here then, once, there was this group of them. Of them and us. And us was standing, light like, you know the way, just standin, smoking, walking round, pulling shoulders up to our ears and then dropping off again, slight shaking of the head, like the horse tossing the mane, waiting, the exhalation of boredom occasionally breaking the winds whistle, markets bustle, people's distance. Waiting and watching.

"Check him out, I think we might ave got a bite"

"Where?"

"To the right of the ramp, just coming down towards us, passing the flowers. You and you, walk off, either side of him and check out badges. I want you back with me before he gets past the church. Now."

The two disappear into the crowd and the remaining four form a circle just behind the break sight formed by the paper sellers stall, that peculiar box they sit in all fucking day. Fags out, flames flick. He watches as the suspect target walks past about fifteen feet away without even glancing over. He's definitely a possible, usual features and even some markings but they're unclear from this distance. He carries himself well and is worth the pull. The blood is racing and it's infectiously catching alight within, shielded from reality by ideology. Blood and honour, almost. Though whose.

"We gotta be on with this one man"

"Yeah I'm fucking cold, let's just do him anyway"

"Will you shut the fuck up" he says "this is not some fucking game. You wanna play cops and fucking robbers then piss off now. Now shut it and wait."

The humour of the moment gone again. Sullen bastard that one, they say in the pub. Right moody fucker. I'll fucking have him next time he lips me like that. Right. No, fucking right, cheeky fucking twat, I mean, who does he think he is, fucking ordering us round like that today, arrogant bastard. He was sposed to be in charge of our group though. Yeah, and fucking right mess that turned out to be. Comeon, thas not his fault, I mean you can't hold him responsible for the fact some fat basterd can't fucking run up the hills. No, but I can for lipping me like that. Why, what he actually fucking say to you apart from shut up? Aw fucking shut up will you. Want another?

He pulls out the phone and pushes three buttons, switching it on and calling the other party. His eyes work seperately from his mouth and face, he's watching the crowds bustle, the runners appearance from within the mass of bodies that from an unrecognisable conglomerate within any city and which spews out a recognisable face only every now and then, almost as though the face is pulled back from the brink, drawn out of the mass within which it loses any definition. He catches sight of the hood of one, form drawing in the eye, just as the voice of another crackles through the ear.

"Yeah"

“Jus me. We just spotted one and might be on a run so pull back for half an hour or so and keep your distance since there ain’t gonna be any backup from us”

“Need any help”

“No only a single, I’ll ring again as soon as situations have developed and that.”

The phone is drawn down and switched off, brief glance, pocketed prosthetic, clips down, pockets drawn tight.

“Well?”

“Two St. George’s, a rangers logo and a nice little ‘White Power’ breast badge.”

“Nice one”

“We on then?”

“Fucking right. Time to go gents. Keep up, two abreast - and fucking move it”.

(5)

Still walking, even now, in this imaginative space, the group uscules the line and dine of word plays out their existence. Syncopated rythmns align the concoction of legs, arms, torsos, heads and hands as they sort of march, sort of walk, briskly, down the hill. Keeping up and two abreast and fucking moving it they walk through the crowds, seen from above as eyes glance across, the body mass of the market tussles are invaded by a micro-organism of emergent properties, clearly exhibited directed behaviour that is unseen from the ground as people simply walk past, for what else could they do. Yet what else could be done is being done. As you pass along the waves of the crowds dynamics others pass past and across and behind and within, unseen yet at all times capable of being seen from somewhere. From a security camera for example, placed high to enter the view from nowhere that offers co-ordinated space for the viewer such that space itself may become ordered about. Here afar the single focus is missed and merely the co-ordinated movement observed, its direction both obvious and occluded, obviously directed at but unclearly at what.

As though from up there they can see me. I have sat in Paddington Green police station watching their cameras watch me, watching through their eyes, doubled vision intrusions, as I ran and smashed and threw and fell. Watching through your eyes. Remote viewing. As though each persons eyes were simply holes through which we peered, windows out to the world, dualistic dream of transferable viewpoints. As though I really could slip inside your head. Of course this spurious concoction of science fantasy and poor philosophy, centred on mechanical constructions, defers the reality of the inside that is the very externality of these view points. An inside that is at no point outside anything. The views are not points. There is no point to them.

(6)

He dropped the bomb at the bus stop in Yardley before flicking open the CD. A little tuft of rizla paper filled with amphetamine. He sucked up some saliva so the bomb slid down easy, without breaking on his tongue or just at the back of his throat, leaving that searing coarseness he hated, the sense of the surface of his insides tasted in his own mouth. The CD case clattered open and the silver disc dropped into his hand. He reached inside his jacket to open the door to the player, glided his finger across the surface and felt it push out and slide sideways allowing two thirds of the

little music room to be exposed in its mechanical interiority. The shifting shapes of technics glinting inside.

For F. the portable CD player was like this totally fucking mindblowing metaphor for the power of technology. For the power of technology. For the sheer fucking mindfuckingly awesome ability of man to alter reality. Every time he got on that one though, say after a meeting or some other thing when G. was around, he always told him to shut the fuck up and to get another pint in. He seemd to nearly always see G. in pubs, to spend half his fucking life in these holes, shitty insides of the bowls of the city, where the black brown lino looked as though it was from the nineteen fifties or so, maybe even the fucking eighteen fifties, so scarred and grime laden it was. He was getting a bit sick of G. always telling him to shut the fuck up. He never wants to listen to anything I have to say. Fucking areshole. And he always wanted another drink, always that little fucking excuse to scrounge another bevy. Fucking ponce. It'd cost him about a tenner every time he went to a meeting now, just in fucking booze. That meant he was always skint for the rest of the week, till giroday.

Still, he liked his CD player and it looked smart inside his jacket, tucked just under his left arm. It looked smart. Felt sound. F. enjoyed the presence of its pressure and almost imagined himself logging onto some wierd fucking cyborg space every time he reached inside his jacket to slide a disc in. He closed the lid of the player by squeezing his arm gently into his body and felt in his pocket for the remote button. He heard the click of the drive in his ears and the music begin to kick in fiercely through his ears, exploding back out of his eyes onto the world, colouring the very edges of his vision with a soundscape accompaniment. On movie film the sound is carried along the edge of the image, truth at 24 frames a second Goddard called it. The sound sits there, spliced in and out like the stills that incrementally adjust as the film rolls through the editors, clicking through movement in a way reminiscent of those old early-digital clocks and the way they clicked through the rolls of numbers held on flaps of black plastic within the face of the clock. Times passage. Echos of the old style movement of spring wound clocks, pendulums passing back and forth and the accompanying sound of times passing. The CD player was like this addition of sound to the world, an impact as profound as the sudden onrush of words that the talkies advanced onto our screens. The CD player splices back and forth, reconfiguring reality from the bustling accompaniment of nihilistic city life, from some absorbing organism that insists on filling our ears with garbage, replacing this with the meaning given through the soundtrack.

In the cinema, watching that old classic at home, stoned viewing of videos in your friends flat, always the music, spliced in, cutting through, additional layer. The sense of power through this affected reality gave F. a moment of calmness amidst the noise, a moment of control. The track finished and for a second other people rush in again, clattering voices and the din of the bus pulling up. As F. sits down at the top of the bus and the driver accelerates back into the traffic, lurching the passengers to the left as they pull out, he begins to feel the force of the blood in his head, his body pushed back into the seat. He reaches up to just touch the pads in his ears, in a reassurance-motivated fidgetting that signalled the kicking in of the first effects of the whizz. The rise before the rush. A horse rearing to the point of its utmost height, coming crashing down again, charging towards you with the full force of blood and earth pouring from its nostrils, streaming from its mouth, screaming at you.

He breathes in, lifts his head so the curve of his chin rises slightly, so his chest fills up and his shoulders spread, his body expanding its presence. The young asian woman sitting behind him sees the back of his neck wrinkle as the close cropped skinhead stretches in front of her. His green bomber jacket betrays a threat and she only hopes his attention is caught by the music he is listening to, which she can hear escaping like a hiss from his ears, which she hopes will stop him seeing her skin. Behind her others sit and watch the back of this man's head, threatening passivity, thoughts of dragging him down and beating him, of him disappearing somehow from their lives, of how they hate having to feel like this, blood rising, shoulders stiffening, stomach churning with the smell of shit.

F. catches sight of St.Martin's and moves to get off the bus, turning and entering the stair cavity where he catches the eye of a black kid sitting just opposite. F. grins at the impassive face and notices that the young man knows what he is, clocks his badges, his hair, his tattoos, his uniform. As he descends the stairs F. feels his arms stretch as he holds on to the bannister, feels the speed rushing into his body, the sudden leap up forcing the rush to really kick hard and take him into the fresh body of the speed kings. He likes the niggers and pakis hating him. He likes rushing. He likes that tonight he's going to get blasted at the gig and then kick some fucking niggers head in, that tonight's gonna be a good night.

The bus pulls out again. He hadn't even noticed it stop. Shit, I've missed the fucking stop. He gets off the stairs, leaves that power driven reverie for the moment and grabs a rail near the door, holding on as the bus spins round the Bull Ring, leaning and grinding as it forces a path through the Saturday traffic. He gets off round the other side of the Ring outside the Rotunda, this huge monstrosity of a landmark in Birmingham, this tube that sits in the centre of the town like some some of stunted giants lampost. Descending the ramp into the market halls he walks briskly knowing that if he ain't quick he'll miss the coach to London. Down the ramp, turn right towards the flower stalls and then a quick left right through the crowds, mothers with push chairs and fathers with shiny crinkled tracksuits and spongy patchy faces with tufts of beards and greasy hair.

F. marches down already at war. He walks through the world, literally though it, as though it weren't there and yet no matter how much he tries he still has to move around some fucker in his way, stupid cunts, old fuckers who ought to make way for the young. He marches on. Past the crappy shops, the tatty stalls, the shit that floats round here like so much human waste. He watches the commie seum near the church selling their stupid fucking papers, how they see him and move together for a little comfort, fucking ponces. Still, I've a coach to catch. Bigger fish to fry. With amusement he notices the 'ANL' stickers on the stall as he passes by. Not one of them with the balls to even stop me, even say anything. He also notices where they are, how many, and touches the bottle inside his pocket, just in case. He feels as though his head is going to explode and twists the volume on the CD to maximum as the sound roars in his head.

The empty road after the market allows him to pick up his pace and he twists left and right again, round a corner, onto Digbeth, catching sight of the Bus Station and glances at his watch to check he's on time. The sound dies for a moment and the cars crash in again, briefly breaking his reverie, and the speed rush dies a little, his feet pounding and the muscles on his leg stretching to full extension as he forces the pace.

He hates running for buses, so uncontrolled. G. always says that the charge is a group activity and it is only then that we run. Mind you, I've seen that fucker run like the rest of us when the odds got a bit too heavy. Even G. can't ignore fucking reality and no-one's gonna stand around for a kicking when a bunch of reds or niggers is out for blood. Everyone knows a good soldier retreats when necessary.

He gets to the depot and glances at his watch again as he crosses the road, past the taxi rank and into the bowels of the garage, fumes forcing themselves into his nostrils and the grime under foot going unnoticed. The music is pounding still and his body takes on a slightly syncopated rhythm as it walks, his head ever so slightly betraying an affinity to the soundscape of destruction that fills his mind.

Shit to fuck. "Get off you cunt" fucking hell, fucking bastard, fucking catch this you bastard. "Get off you cunt, get off, get off, get off, fucking bastard, bastard BASTARD BASTARD"

F. roars as he falls.

(7)

He couldn't hear a thing within the din of the traffic. They followed the target down Digbeth and as they walked, at a speed that was always quivering with the first vibrations of running, with the adrenalin racing them to where they were going. He watched the back of the man in front. His black nylon bomber jacket and large frame wobbled as he marched down the road. It was comical. Truly comical. Like a moving blancmange. Each footstep rippled up through his body, ending in a little quiver in the layer of fat round the back of his head, just at what would have been the nape of his neck, had he had a neck. He was truly a fat bastard.

You don't pause for thought in these things. They always prattled about too much as it was, though never really about what it was they did. They jockeyed for position, rankled each other, acted at times like petulant brats, always nit-picking something or other. They never really talked, though, about what they did. Oh, there were conversations about the political merits of active resistance, about street fighting, about violence in general. Nobody ever persuaded many of them of the supposed unsoundness of the activity from an abstract perspective. It wasn't any longer this, though, that seemed important. The perspective he had, a word used as a short hand for a certain type of political 'line' or outlook, was always abstract, even in its most concrete moments. Action was dealt with from subjective and objective positions of agreement, not of involvement. The issue was always agreement or otherwise with a particular proposition. The issue was never the event itself.

The fat bastard in front had begun to sweat and he knew that they really should have sorted out a better spot to hit the target by now. They had passed two alleyways which would have been perfect and were heading down towards the Bus Station in Digbeth which is, amusingly for them, opposite the police station. Not a good place to be fucking about like this. Why hasn't the fat bastard grabbed him, he can't be more than twenty feet behind him. A quick sprint and he'd have him. We'd all break into a charge. He'd be down and dead in a moment, stuffed up in an alleyway. But this was getting daft, why hasn't he hit him yet, why don't we fucking move. He regretted that the fat bastard had got in front. By default the one who acts gets others to follow. And now he was following this fat sweaty pig who wouldn't fucking bring it home.

Past the alleyways and into open ground again, past a pub and getting closer and closer to the Bus Station. For chrissake is he gonna move or what. Surely he's gotta move soon. Into the Bus Station, a quick right left synchronised amongst the six of them, and into the bowels of the garage. Fumes hit hard. The light changes. The dark hole that is the garage. To the left a door, light. The waiting room. The target enters. The doors stiff. He pushes hard, slows down. We're practically on him. We practically walk into his back. Like a traffic pile up. He's barked and we hit him from behind. The fat bastard grabs his neck in an arm lock. The target doesn't go down. Moves forward. The fat bastard moves to pull him down. The target is strong, hits out. Fist hits home and he is forward. He is there. Round the side of the fat bastard. See the target's face, looking at me. The fat bastard again tries to drag him down. The target's head moves forward, towards the ground. He drop kicks his smile into hell. He feels the cheek bone splinter beneath the steel in my boots. The target falls. He's screaming BASTARD BASTARD BASTARD.

Two others rapidly finish the flooring and a speedy combination proceeds to immobilise the man on the floor. The people waiting in the Bus Station watch as this mob of thugs piles through their door, one man in an arm lock obviously being attacked by a gang. They watch as someone viciously kicks the victim in the face. They watch as blood spurts onto the floor like a busted mains line. They watch as the victim falls to the floor and others kick and punch him. They watch a large fat man kneels on his back and punch his head to one side and into the floor, as another man kicks him four or five times in his mouth and nose, until the blood covers the floor and the face of the victim begins to dissappear from recognisable form. They watch as the fat man screams into the ear of the man on the floor, "you fascist scum, this is AFA, you fascist scum, you scum, this is what you get and don't fucking forget it, don't fucking forget it" and then punches the man in the side of the head again.

He's kicked the target three, four times, checks around. No-one has moved. He clocks security across the way and sees the fat bastard losing it, really going for one, totally caught up and unable to see the job, lost in the red mist. He almost slips on the blood and realises the target is out for it. He pulls at the fat bastard and yells "enough, fucking move it. OUT OUT OUT".

Before going he gives the target a last blow. Head rising, leg back, the crimson spill seems to have a depth that is unreal, impossible, as though a door to another world has opened. For a moment too short to mention he feels as though he is trapped in the gaze of blood, in the sheer drop. Blood red. Against yellow lino. Like some sort of organism, moving outside, moving from the body on the floor into his mind, moving into his memory, snarling and laughing as it moves, cackling, screaming inside his head. He feels the wind rush against his leg, the trousers fall back onto his skin, as he sweeps through a large and fast arc, as though he were kicking a ball. Always kick through, to the other side. He feels the boot connect, the skin give way, the resistance of the bones, the cracking, the momentum. The head lifts off the floor and then falls off his boot. As his foot continues in its arc the head speeds tangentially away before it snaps back as the neck reaches full extension. Small droplets of blood spurting upwards, glistening as they land on his trousers, round tensioned realities which then dissolve into the material to become simply another stain, dark and dank. The head crashes back to the floor and a tap has been opened, pouring its darkness out into the light of day. He almost slips on the fresh blood that is beginning to outflank him,

beginning to encircle him. For a moment the colour has him in its grip again. For a moment he wishes he'd dropped a tab. For a moment.

The sound rushes back in again. The whistle of someone pierces his aural silence. The film rushes on. The event continues. To his left a young and long haired hippy finishes with a final kick to the balls, wheels round and bursts back through the door they entered. Every one else thunders out and the door flies back against the wall, smashing into a green tubular frame handrail. The noise attracts everyones attention in the darkness and people move out of their way as this gang of youths falls over themselves to get out the station. They charge out, two security officers, by now realising what is going on, running after them. "Oy, come back here you bastards, come back here".

He turns around and sees one of the others yell back to answer the security guards. "What the fuck for, so you can give me a pat on the back" before laughing and running on again. Twat. Now they've clocked his face. He also sees the fat bastard, now really fucking sweating, trying his best to move his frame up the hill. He also sees the coppers pull round in front of the Bus Station and clock their movements. "Shit, shit, shit - fucking leg it Fenian, the police have spotted us".

He turns and kicks out towards the market, left right to get up the back way.

(8)

"Where you going?"

"Just out to play."

"Be back for tea."

"Yes mum."

He pulls the front door shut, careful not to slam it since the pane of glass that fills the top half of the double paned door is loose and can fall out if too much force is applied. The grass smells like sweet hot tea and the fields have a haze of seed and chaff above them from where the harvesters have been shredding. The concrete path is warm beneath his feet. As he turns he is faced by this enormous pile of pig shit, excremental scrapings from the farm. The dung heap is the size of a small school playground, about thirty feet high and still steaming in parts, though elsewhere a thick crust has formed strong enough to support the dumper trucks that have carved a path out of the shit heap in order to deposit their loads on the top. It looks like a God's turd. Like some giant Atlas squatted and dumped his load barely fifty yards from the houses.

Every now and then one of the dumpers would happily make its merry way, wheels churning and shit flying, only to find at some point near the top that part of the crust gave way and inside the heat had cooked the manure into a liquid soup of cess. That would normally cause a great cauffle of activity for an hour or so but otherwise there was little to look at near the farm apart from flies and shit, the two always going hand in hand in a symbiotic relationship that would later form the metaphorical image of the young boys vision of society. Like flies round shit.

He walked off and skipped up the step past the garage and the row of hutches containing ferrets before twisting his body round the motorbike parked in the driveway. He made off out of the drive with that peculiar exuberance children have,

that exertion that they make of walking, always over-expenditure. Half way he kicked a stone, full drawn moving penalty shot of a kick, dead ball direction. The ball screamed and fluttered over to the left. He stopped dead. Drained instantly of all joy. Lost to sorrow, falling. He stood and watched as they small stone struggled across the dirt before collapsing on its face, nose diving into the floor. The stone became the bird it was, metamorphosed in front of him from thing to being. He stood and stared, his eyes, those cruel instruments of deception that had betrayed him in their short sight, fixed on his horror, on his waste.

He knelt down by the bird and the full shape, the feathers and colourings, the green flashes of depth within the black body. Cradled in his hands drops of blood smeared themselves across the thin skin, the unscarred hands coloured as if with an indelible dye. Tears had formed into streams of torment by the time the boy reached the kitchen, walking now with caution, as though the fragile creature in his hands was the most important being in the world, as if the whole universe would collapse in on itself if it died.

They put it in a box after cleaning it up. It perked up after a short while, obviously stunned by the blow but apparently not substantially injured, except for what appeared to be a broken wing. The boy sat for three hours and fed it on drops of milk and the soft parts of a white processed loaf, an offering of repentance and a penitence of patience. He cried the whole time. Tears eventually becoming a silent line of pain that streaked his cheeks with further marks of guilt.

When his father came home from work the sun had already gone down. They took the little box, made more comfortable with tissue paper torn from the toilet roll, incongruous in forming a lilly pink background to the black depths of the birds night colours. Sitting in the front seat of the car he was driven to the local bird hospital. His father gently explained that it wasn't his fault and that they couldn't do any more and it needed to go somewhere where people knew more about birds. When they arrived at the bird hospital come sanctuary it was shut except for a little spotlight above what looked like a safe deposit box. In poorly painted black letters it informed them to place the bird in the deposit box where it would be looked after. The boy pull open the doors and place the box inside a warm and gently lit box. He looked again at the tiny being and cried one more tear before drying his eyes, closing the door and turning to his father.

“Come on then son, let's get home.”

(9)

He walked back home feeling tired and upset. As though some terrible trauma would occur the moment he walked through the door. Maudlin. The maudlin moment of drunkenness, when the world itself edges away from anyone, when time itself disappears into the present. Too many guinnesses, sweet black concoction now laying darkly in his stomach, churning from side to side in the rise and fall rythmn of the mobile wave machine. It felt like the sort of harmonic resonance that occurs when walking along holding a cup of coffee, the sort where the movement of the liquid gradually builds until it suddenly usurps the boundaries of the beaker and stains the fresh morning smelling shirt with a brown patch that at first burns and the sits coldly against the skin reminding failure. He felt tired and weary and understod the phrase initmately as he walked, unable to even fly with the alcohols illusions.

Turning the corner towards his back gate he stopped for a moment by a patch of grass that lay just outside his house, a stain of green on the concrete surface city life, a square patch hemmed in on two sides by large bustling roads, still busy even in the lamplight hours in which he found himself there. From outside the city the boundaries seem natural, almost ideal, the gradual decline of buildings into trees, the acknowledgement of cultures containment. On patches of green irrelevance like this though the structure has reversed, as though if we watched the history of the town we would see the gradual erosion of green, through the damp browns of horse and tracks, into the grey black concrete tarmacadam uniformity. From the bird's eyes we would see the colour shifts, the green gradually fading, invaded by some bacterial destroyer, leaving only pockets of resistance.

Trees lined the roadsides as if somehow left to hide the daily grind. Only half a dozen rather pathetic specimens, recognising their own futility so close to the heart of the enemy. He leant against a tree with his hand, leaning forward so his head fell through his arms, his neck stretching down, his shoulders pulled back. If you removed the tree it would be like a gesture of homage. Bowed head, extended arms. Praying to the ground. He vomitted onto the grass and watched the large pile of puke give off that faint steam of ejection, dark and colourless in the nightlights. Disappearing into the black grass. All grass is black at night.

As he pulled his hand across his mouth the slime residue felt cold already. He wondered for a moment if he'd slipped into sleep in that position. Repulsed by his own taste he spat the pulled his mouth inside itself to drag up some more saliva before spitting again. Spitting the albumen like slime, the bile taste bilge, out of his mouth. Large tendrils of eggwhites seemed to hang from his nose and he spat and snorted to rid himself of his own bodies productions. Wondering how easy it would be to simply drink and spit his own soul away.

By now his head had begun to clear so he stood upright, wiped his face with the back of his hand this time and struck out for the backgate again. Pleasantly surprised to still be upright. As he reached the back alley gate and clicked open the catch on the wooden doorway the sense of maudlin foreboding fell over him again. As though the edge of some event was spread out from a point nearby, some heartache resonating loss, infiltrating itself into his psyche. For a moment. But that would be ridiculous. So he continued, closed the gate, went into the back garden and stood fumbling in his pockets for his keys before going down the path to the house.

The large white expanse of plastic that formed the wall of the council house he lived in had deep opening windows, wide glass inlets that allowed him a full view of the houses' insides. He always loved watching the insides of houses, even his own. Fittings and furnishings take on a doll like character when looked at through a window from the outside. Even in the dark can be seen the kids pictures hanging on the fridge door, the pile of dishes on the draining board gradually drying, the cupboards with their postcards and slogans, malcolm x, gun in hand, standing behind a net curtain in his suit. He paused again for a moment when he reached the back door, trying not to make too much noise as she was probably asleep and the dog barked at the slightest clink of key. He thought for a moment that he could just stand like this forever.

Ever so gently the key slides into the lock, clicking each barrel as it passes into service. Full penetration and a gentle turn, the lock feeling itself into his consciousness, the key turning so slowly that every gentle rise and fall of the mechanism is felt in all its sensuous engineering. Click. Tack. The door gives. He's inside. Keys on the table. The little nob turned and the door gently closed. Click. Tack. Dog. The dog has seen him, is next to him, so desperate its tail seems to wag its little body with eagerness. He bends to give the creature a moment's recognition, to which it responds by falling on its back and urinating across the chipped lino tiles. Sighs. Stupid fucking dog. He grabs a cloth from the back of a chair and wipes the piss from the floor. Breath out again. He walks across, chucks the cloth in the washing machine. Fucking dog.

Again, a wave of sorrow. He can even feel the tears burning deep cavities behind his eyes, etching an inside pattern into his eyelids. Blinking, the wave resumes its course, passing, replaced by nausea. He knows he can't lay down. Water. For a while, just for a while.

He sits at the table with the glass of water. By now the tears have gone. He feels suddenly empty and wishes he wasn't drunk. Leaning down he wipes blood off his boots and glances at the dark brownish residue on his hands before wiping them down his jeans. He can hear nothing except the occasional car, and his own blood. For a while.

through the nature of interruption

The central problem for everyone is the location of meaning. Without this problem being, precisely, a problem there would be no academia, that much is for sure. There would be no ongoing dialogue between writer and reader, there would be no ongoing structure of cultural norms constructed and propagated by Plato's heirs, there would be no life. More importantly though, without the centrality of this problem there would be no problem with death.

Death is in some sense the exemplary philosophical subject whilst simultaneously philosophy is in the end subject to and the subject of death. Simple phrases such as 'I know what you mean' allow us a space, if we pause for a moment over their breath, in which we can see through the eye of another, though we must beware of a reduction to empathy. Such phrases, however, always seem impossible if impersonalised, in the form of 'I know what it means'. To know, for example, the meaning of death is perennially possible but inevitably postponed. Further, to know what it means brings the issue of knowledge through the door and the notion of knowledge as, forever, impersonal, tends towards myriad problems with regard to death. Dastur, for example, gives a strong account in her work on death and finitude of the role that this problem of the 'knowledge of death' plays in the hands of Heidegger and the surrounding eddies of thought. Interestingly the focus on this issue of knowledge places the Heideggerian project within an almost classical epistemological paradox, where the paradox itself becomes, where death becomes nothing more than paradox. This, perhaps, is what occurs in Derrida's work 'Aporias' where the aporetic itself replaces the experience, where the impossibility of an experience of death is converted into an experience of aporia that relies on the impossibility of experience itself. This aporia, fundamentally, revolves around experience as such and attempts, through manoeuvres such as varying forms of 'disinterestedness', to remove experience from our experience. I react strongly to any such problem, with hostility, even violence.

“Isn’t this reaction thoroughly irrational though, doesn’t it end in simply refusing reason?” I say, still fundamentally bored. The best attitude I have come across is boredom. To be bored, that is to be alive. Life itself bores us, death no less so. Reason is boredom occupying itself. Unable to sustain boredom we forget life. Still, this isn’t a bad way to make a living really, just sitting listening to some old - and boring - fart waffling away, interested as hell in his own words. I cross my legs and notice the slight line of thigh on thigh revealed by my skirt, the glide of skin against skin. How odd that I can’t touch myself. I wonder whether his touch would interest me, whether this allusion to a future possibility offered imperceptibly is noticed or whether life bores him too. I lean against the back of the chair, relaxing, allowing my body to recline and sensualise itself. He looks almost attractive with his passion and I notice, for the first time, that he has a decent body for what must be someone getting on for fifty. In fact remarkably so, somehow maintaining some sex in himself despite the age. I wonder what it’s like to fuck an old man.

At one point for example Dastur says the following. “If no experience and no thought of death is possible, if this ‘nothing’ that ‘is’ can only silence conceptual discourse and if it constitutes the non-phenomenal par excellence, that which never appears to me ‘in person’ “ - these being all the ideas she has sketched as the subject matter, if you like, of the essentially Heideggerian ground of work - “it nevertheless remains true, as mythologies and philosophies show, that knowing and feeling oneself to be mortal form the foundation of the experience which the human being has of itself. It is this strange, and for each of us certain, knowledge which we have of our own end, unlike any other knowledge by very reason of its irreducible ‘affective’ dimension, that makes possible not a discourse on death in general but, rather, a discourse on the relation in which thinking being stands to his own mortality.”

The knowledge of death, this strange lachrymatory capacity that can erupt on stage in its eternal presence, this mourning outside of any time, this knowledge that is quotes “that repetition of death known as philosophy” as Dastur at one point calls it, this affection nearest to the heart of existence, this is what interests me in the notion of the eye and of meaning. What might be called the affect.

We might ask, no doubt, what of this knowledge though? In the citation from Dastur’s essay it is not death, in the phrase ‘knowledge of death’ but the strangeness of this knowledge that is perhaps peculiar to this knowledge of death but which is, in its strangeness, the focus of my interest. Is it, for example, death that gives such knowledge its strangeness, or is knowledge of death merely one form of a strange knowledge whose uncanny nature riddles our being? The strangeness itself needs to be thought.

This strange knowledge, if we put aside other paths for the moment and think with Dastur for a while, is made strange, is the product almost of a process and moreover is made strange not by death itself. The second of the sentences quoted puts forward quite clearly the speculation that this knowledge is strange quotes “by very reason of its irreducible ‘affective’ dimension”. From the knowledge of death, then, we move to the strangeness of that knowledge and then move again, trying to each time tighten our grip on the thought of the affect of death, the affective dimension Dastur speaks of - to achieve what Merleau-Ponty might call our ‘optimum grip’. If we were to crudely use a model of causality this affective dimension has been placed in a principal role as

a causal agent within Dastur's account of the knowledge of death and, in this role, bears some right in justifying itself as a focus of thought.

What can we say then, sticking for the moment just with the starting point from which we began this thought, about the 'affective'? Dastur suggests that the knowledge of death is made strange by very reason of its affective dimension and it is here a stress on the word 'dimension' that is worth noting. The 'knowledge of death' has an affective dimension. It is, it seems, somehow plural, multi-dimensional. It is not however the object of the knowledge that has been cited as the reason for a certain strangeness, neither is this object dismissed. Nor is it the knowledge itself that is strange, thought that too is also not simply dismissed. It is, rather, a certain scale almost, a certain dimensional aspect to this knowledge that is suggested as the reason for its strangeness.

Dastur seems to suggest that this dimensionality is somehow unique to 'knowledge of death' when she says that it is quotes "unlike any other knowledge". This knowledge, it seems, is dimensional, plural somehow and yet unique, singular and certain. If this were to be accepted, if we were to follow Dastur here, then the implication would be that this 'affective dimension' exists in this unique relation to death, to that mortality that makes us mortals, and in this alone. This seems perhaps unlikely, though never impossible, when we look again at the way the term knowledge is used within Dastur's essay. Here, having suspended the act of thinking with Dastur we may think better by noting the combination that occurs just prior to the arrival of the 'affective dimension'. In the first of the two sentences quoted Dastur sets up her premiss and paradox in which the possibility of a knowledge of death is three times decried and yet finally affirmed as something to be shown - and I would want to think with her in this affirmation. Yet it is at the same time not knowledge that is so affirmed. It is no fact or proposition but rather an activity. Moreover, an activity to quote Dastur once more, of both "knowing and feeling oneself to be mortal".

This introduction of feeling, even as in the form of 'feeling oneself to be', suggests that it is from this side of the pairing that the affective dimension arises, that it is the reality of 'feeling oneself to be' in some such way, in this case feeling oneself to be mortal, that distinguishes - makes strange I would say - that type of knowledge of which knowledge of death is a principal example. 'Feeling oneself to be' anything would in this situation either have to have a fundamental relation to death and finitude - that quotes "dark light" Dastur tells us arises from the background of death - or else the affective dimension that seems somehow to arise from 'feeling oneself to be' in some way or another is not unique to knowledge of death, in which case the affective dimension to or of knowledge would perhaps be opened up for broader application that it seems to be given in Dastur's account. Of course the problem then would be to establish a basis for 'feeling oneself to be' anything when it would presuppose 'feeling oneself to be' nothing because death is a nothingness. Death would impossibilise life and feeling oneself to be and yet this impossibilisation seems incapable of simultaneously possibilising life, as it would need to in order to operate as any form of classical or known impossibilisation. Located here is nothing other than the problem of the meaning of death.

(10)

The street is in that darklight, that inbetween lightness, teatime over and the presence of bodies beginning again gradually to fill in the spaces already disappearing into each

other. He's waiting at the bus stop, watching the lights go by in their speed trash, standing still amongst toing and froing formations and splinters. Each little pace along the tarmac alights itself in ears that are attuned to the light as much as his eyes. He stands at the bus stop, checks his change for the trip, his sixty seven pence, silver and copper cold in his hand. He slips the sorted out detail into his back pocket and pushes his thumbs into his front pockets, the leather motorbike jacket refusing to give at the front, creating a strait jacket sense of rigidity. The jacket has square and rectangle patches of flatness on it, all down the spine, across the shoulders, on the elbows and forearms. They look like the scales of armour and that is indeed what they are, extra strong plastic intended to prevent road burn when falling off a bike at high speed. The jacket is designed for friction, its beauty in the display of protection. The armour, of course, provides useful padding against kicks, punches and even the average blade.

The bus comes after time and the doors creak open, brushing a little more surface from the lino steps leading in. Passing the change into a slit at the side of the drivers cab the money falls behind a glass plate before being sucked into the mechanism and deposited in the large steel blue painted box below. It looks, as it sits there for a moment, like a stalled child's game, the sort where youngsters are encouraged to give a little to charity, that oh so wonderful noone could disagree with its notion of help without helping that is pervasive insidious assuaging.

Charity is grief converted to succour, to a sense of well being. Monette said grief is a sword or it is nothing and in charity it is nothing. I always thought Emerson had a similar temperament to mine when I read him speaking of charities. He said that he occasionally finds himself giving and then feels a guilt at his compliance, wishing tomorrow gives him the strength to refuse the herd. Charity begins at home that's for sure. It begins there, seeps into our every pore and eventually replaces reality with a sense of helping, a sense of the good samaritan summoning the drop in the ocean into a wave of support. Charity though is just more money fed into a creature that devours people in order to produce piles of cankered gold and stenchridden silver upon which it sits, gradually ascending into the heavens as the pile grows, or into oblivion as the weight of wealth crushes the ground beneath it.

As the bus slides through town he tumbles out amongst seventeen year old flirts with skirts revealing goosebumped flesh thigh and overperfumed hair that would burst into flames were a cigarette dropped too near. New Street, Birmingham City Centre. The lights and noise of the amusement park that is the Odeon facing the balcony above the Vokins shopfront where, according to local legend, bits of bodies were scattered after the Birmingham Pub Bombings. The cannister that is the Rotunda. The crowded confused Ramp that leads off to the Pallasades mall which is barricaded and patrolled at night to stop the youth mixing it under cover. The walk up to the Council House and the cool light illuminations amidst which sits a huge rounded Rodinesque reclining figure of a woman carved in smooth sight stone.

Around the woman are huge balls, spaced out along the edges of the fountain top, great spheres of weight that seem wondrous in their fragile fixity. The water breaks into the traffic, each noise layering itself within a time that begins to fracture if a moment is given to listen. At twilight there is a wonderful balance between water, car and voice that allows a gentle hum to generate itself in the air, though this can only be found by standing for time enough to listen. After pausing for a moment enough he

passed the IronMan, a twenty five feet figure erupting from the pavement, a mummy's case, a container of life within which something may exist but where outside, as we must be, all we see is the iron foundry results, rusted oxidisations and constructions. This sense of melancholy affinity is hated within the city by Brummies, which is perhaps as it really should be, revealing that aspect of truth that should, for many, remain lying.

Then through Chamberlain Square, skirting the glass frontage obscenity that is the library, square faced reflections of offices and efficiency with all the sensuality removed from reading and books reduced to objects of education, tools of the trade. To lose the fetish of books is to lose their sense of uselessness, the radical idiocy of writing about what can be lived that spurs us to creation. A land of dreams locked within a city of glass. Transparency destroying any depth as the clarity gives everything such sharp definition it cuts us in return, cuts us out of itself. We end up being oddities in a construction aimed at efficiency, the only spanner in the works. A system designed to work without the need for humans needs no humans. He notices all these things in moments shorter than they can be written or read. He sees such things as many do, moments on moments. He passes through and into the Grapevine.

“Alright fatman” he jibes as he walks through the door seeing a familiar face at the table near the door. Fatman looks. He grins at Fatman, enough to make it seem like it might be a joke, to put any comeback into the category of ‘cor, you’re a touchy bastard tonight ain’t ya’, ensuring that even a response gets another insult, and walks past to the bar. “Pint of Guinness please mate” he asks and leans against the bar, feeling the gentle surety of the light armour under his elbow, pulls down the zipper at the front of his jacket and reaches inside for his wallet.

He puts the wallet on the bar, laying it centrally on the barmat, the browns and beiges and dull reds of the M&B logo weaved within towelling tardiness. The mat is dry and clean and he places the wallet very particularly though automatically, aligning the long edge of the wallet with the short edge of the rectangular towel. He reaches in with his other hand and pulls out a black leather pouch of tobacco with the rizlas in a small pocket sown to the front which has a slit in it to enable the papers to be pulled through. Paper pulled, placed flat, resting lightly on the central fold that runs along itself, allowing the edges of the rizla to rise slightly. The zipper on the pouch. Brown and golden strands of tobacco laid on the whiteness. Zipper. The pouch is placed to the right of the semi cigarette, once again automatically particular. Ordered.

Habits become rituals at the time they become continued consciously. Sometimes we go for years without noticing some aspect of behaviour others see as so indicative of our characters. Slight twitches, phrases, or mannerisms. Repetitive sentiments sedimented into our bodies, carried beneath and within our skin, automotive actions. Living is as much a skill at times as driving, or chess, or sex. In order to live we have to forget to do. We have to just be there, what we are, inside the stream even if swimming against it. He knows less about himself than he imagines. He is still at that time when these layers gradually occur and occlude the inside within convex screens through which others see him seeing. He is still being more than doing, existing as autopilot line of flights prearranged within cultural equilibriums that ceaselessly churn over the soil of lives. Dust to dust, dirt to dirt. The soil, falls through the fingers clattering onto the wood below placed back inside its mother. We all die.

“One pound ten please” someone says. He almost forgot where he was. His eyes move too quickly and he catches himself before he snaps his head up betraying his daydreaming. The Black Guinness is in front of him, golden clouds rising in eddies of gorgeous depth as the beer settles. He pulls a fiver from the wallet and leans forward onto his elbows, coiling out, setting to rise, feet on the floor and the stool he was sitting on now no more than nestling under the edge of his arse. He waits for the change, says thanks a lot, shoves the coins into his pocket and then quickly and unthinkingly, ease, places the wallet back into his pocket, then his pouch, straightens his jacket and picks up his pint. Sips long and hard, licks the residue lip stain, turns to walk back towards his comrades.

Four people sit inside a booth. He sits down opposite Fatman and grins at him. They are all engaged in a general gossip from the sounds of it. Who’s doing what, where, with whom, why. He sits for a moment, smoke curlicues, sipping the dark solidity.

“So what’s this meeting for then” he says inside a pause that rises out of the movement of lips and words. “And we alright here, u know?” he adds quickly, before anyone else answers. “Yeah I think so” answers a man to his right on the opposite side of the table. “The music loud enough and it ain’t too busy.” He looks up, “Yeah suppose so, still don’t like talking about stuff in pubs u know.” A couple of people shift in their seat. “Well this shouldn’t be too bad” another man says, sitting to his right “and besides”. Besides fucking what he thinks as the man tails off, unfinished. “Anyway, what’s this all about then”.

Fatman sits opposite and has been silent up till now. To his left sits Dave. To the right of the activist sits a young woman, Mo, and then in the corner another man, Plug. Fatman speaks up, his stubble chinned lardiness moving in a way that revolts him. He stares for a moment while he listens at the undulations, the shine of the skin and the slight ripple of sweat. Fatman’s neck deepens red pink and he clearly feels a bit worked up about something, tense. “Well for me we need to sort out what the fuck happened at the last action and what I’m fucking ‘sposed to do now.”

“Learn how to fucking run faster you fat bastard” he says. Fatman goes to reply but Plug pipes up. “Just hold it a minute you two will you.” He is older than the activist and Fatman, both of whom are about twenty, twenty two, though Fatman looks older by a couple of years, more worn out. “Just fucking hold it” Plug continues, measured tones, not harsh words, as though he’s trying to arbitrate “can we get a little professionalism here.”

“Yeah, sorry” he says “it’s just this is exactly the sort of thing I don’t think we should be discussing in the fucking pub.”

Fatman doesn’t seem to get it. “Why the hell not” he asks. “It’s not like it’s gonna compromise anything. All we got to do is sort out fundraising and stuff, get the bust fund together and all that and sort out the details of publicity and shit.”

“Look I’m sorry I don’t think it’s as simple as that. Before we do anything we need a proper fucking discussion about what happened last weekend cos I for one am fucking pissed and think the whole thing was a fucking pile of crap. We totally fucked up and I don’t think we should be getting on any fucking crusade about this you know. Besides that I think we need to seriously sort out what the fuck happens on these things cos in my opinion you” he says staring at Fatman “fucking pissed that operation up.”

“That’s fucking rich coming from you, you cunt” Fatman hisses at him “you were the one in fucking charge. If you’d fucking sorted it this would never have happened. I’m the one with the friggging charge ain’t I, I’m the one getting get the shit, the least you lot can do is fucking support me here.”

“Yeah maybe. I don’t really disagree I just think it was a fucking cock up and you need to be held responsible for your actions. If you were in my fucking organisation I’d have laid charges against you by now.”

“You fucking asshole” Fatman says, his neck is really bright beetroot, burning through now. “I don’t fucking believe you, you cunt.”

“Do you think we can cut out all this cunt stuff you know, I really don’t like that sort of language.” Mo pipes up. “Jeesus” Fatman sighs.

“I can see things are not as simple as I thought” Pete says. “Perhaps you’re right, we need somewhere a bit more private. Any suggestions anyone?”

Fatman is sitting back staring at him. He stares back, feeling really jangled, his stomach ripping itself from its anchor, wanting to force itself through his skull. It feels like it’s at the back of his throat, like his cheeks are filling, like he felt just before. You stupid fat bastard he thinks. You stupid fucking bastard.

(11)

“Right Lee, get your stuff together, your moving.”

Before he had a chance to ask anything the screw was gone. Down the wing, his brief excursus into civility perhaps costing him an hour of bastard behaviour that he will empty against another con. Each word of reason was matched with ten gestures of contempt. It was as though there was a scale which each officer carried around in their heads, a headboard scratched with two columns, one of reason and one of disgust and contempt. Each time an element of behaviour fitted into one column a balance was upset that could only be returned to by filling in the appropriate amounts in the other column. Since the screws behaved towards the inmates with such contempt for ninety per cent of the time it could only be that the scales were set on a ratcheting ratio favouring such behaviour. Maybe it was a form of control, part of the subtle and often unformulated, though well known, rules of disengagement that operated in prison.

There was no engagement in prison, no engaging with an other. Each realm, of order and chaos, sat throughout their time on either side of door where handles existed on only one side. The side of order had the keys, the door handles, the open gates, the flaps and peep holes through which they spied and pried on the interned. They had the order of flushing toilets and choices of food, of a supposed freedom that comes from such order, such responsibility, such community justice. Chaos, on the other side, was no less ordered, no less patterned, though in a way that despite such patterns, predictability was almost, if not completely, impossible.

Today he would be moved. He would be logged into a computer, his existence registered in a machinic life that preformed each particle into a wave of resentment or dissension contained by the nearness of that brutality they were being distanced from by being sent here. He would be taken to a room somewhere, amidst a myriad of rooms and corridors, within boxes of clothes and personal possessions in plastic bags, tied at the top with black plastic slip fixers and embossed with "HMP whatever" on the side, in blue lettering. Cold, cold blue on clear plastic. He would imagine for a moment as he picked up his belongings and watched them being checked and logged that the same factory would make the bags in which the police would intere the belongings of a murder victim before handing them back to the family or loved ones who had lost a body. Replaced with things. Oddments. He would look passively at the shirts and socks, balled and ready to wear on the day of realease even though they would have been unwashed for months, perhaps years. He imagined momentarily the hands of his lover unbuttoning his shirt, pulling it up and out of his trousers, deftly flipping his belt out of its catch and peeling apart his flies to be greeted with an erection the size of which always seemed surreally large in his imagination. He would stop himself from drifting into fantasy as the officer in front of him, sitting behind the desk, in shirt sleeves on a warm summer afternoon, pushed a clipboard towards him and asked him to sign.

"Sign here then Lee, to say all your belongings are present and correct."

"Are they" he says, politely.

"What?" the officer says, looking up for the first time in the whole procedure, staring into his eyes, a look of tension and confusion in his eyes. "What did you say?"

He can feel himself getting hotter. The summer sun has a heat that can penetrate the thick walls through its medium of air, the breath of warmth slowly circulating and rising, unable to escape, gradually filling the rooms and corridors with a depth and viscosity that sucked the fluid from the skins it touches. He can see the air on these hot days, the warm settling on top of the cold, gradually filling the spaces, gradually pushing out the small pockets of coolness that nestle along the floors. On days like these he would crawl along the linoleum floors if he could, kiss the greenblue cold to ease the pain of the oven on his lips. As the officer looked at him he flooded with heat, sweat burst from his forehead as he anticipated, as he feared.

"I just asked whether all my things where there" he says.

The officer startes at him again, quite clearly having heard the words this time, staring at his lips as he spoke them, staring at his eyes as he watched him, staring at him. It takes the barest moment to say everything.

“Sign here then Lee, to say all your belongings are present and correct.” His eyes turn back to the desk, to the next form, the next machinic life entry.

He leans forward and signs.

(12)

He feels out of touch today, unable to feel the world around him, the people, the objects, all seem somehow beyond his skin. He’s locked in. The cold contracts, the bringing inside itself of life, the huddling inwards. Cold. It is so cold his back is beginning to cramp as the space along the sides of his ribs tries desperately to escape reality. Cold.

As he walks down the stairs he notices his shoes and wonders whose feet these are. He floats above another’s feet. Their legs are beneath him, he can see the knees and ankles and shin bones moving along with all the right actions, with the natural ease that belies their automation, yet they’re someone else. They exist on their own. He thinks for a moment he hears them laughing at him. Gotcha, they’re saying, thought we were yours and now...

He’s sure it’s the shoes. Must be an illusion he thinks. Changed my shoes, these bloody boots, always looks a bit odd when you change over from one pair of shoes to another. He wears the same shoes until they fall apart and then changes over, yet at the point at which materials begin to decay and the footwear wear out, the odd ridge splitting, the sole cracking or the toes giving way, at that point there is a transition period where the shoes alternate between old discarded but slightly better pairs hidden under the dust piles beneath the bed and warm willing accomplices to his body that are fading fast, like old friends dying on a battle field. Today he put on some old boots he found in a plastic bag belonging to a friend who stayed once and left a load of gear around when he moved into a bus. His nice trainers are beginning to go and their soft warmth is replaced by tight laced and badly styled boots. Black things. Walking beneath him. He thinks for a moment of the red shoes, the dancing shoes, the shoes the girl puts on and that dance and dance and dance until she dies. With a life of their own. That must be it, he thinks, it’s the shoes, the change, the odd readjustment that needs to happen but that is now just an arena of disturbance.

Nothing is going to happen today. Nothing ever happens. I don’t know why I bother. Nothing will happen, no matter what happens. Nothing.

The shoes suddenly get up and walk out of the house. He barely has enough time to grab his jacket as he flies through the door. He strides down the street pushing his arms into the jacket as he goes and finally begins to zip up the leather about two hundred yards from the house. It’s raining hard and by the time the coat is done up his neck has become the cascade origin of a river flowing through his body. He thinks nothing.

At the end of the road he turns left and marches down the hill, then crosses the road, through the park and into town. He’s walking through The Level, across the diagonal ribbon of tarmac that crosses the dog toilets on either side towards the large series of roads and shops that marks the edges of the town centre. On and on he walks, past St. Peters church with its huge tower and four-sided clock, past the old buildings on the right that have been demolished and rebuilt for what seems an eternity, past the stupid beauty of the Royal Pavilion. On and on he marches, the West Pier ahead, its lights

and noise now coming into view as he strides straight across the main roundabout just at the entrance to the pier. Onto the pebbles and their crashing crackle and cackle as he marches on and on towards the sea. The wind smashes into him, blowing his body to the side, yet he walks on and on and on until he stands at the very edge and the boots rest in the silted gravel line that forms the edge, the sea touching and teasing with its foam fingers as the leather of the boots gives way and allows the wetness onto his feet. There he stands, his boots bathed in salt water, until a man from behind shouts at him.

“Go home” he says.

He feels nothing.

Monological Fascia

sleight thrusts, outward, from nowhere unheard.

generous words, falling, have no life till they wreak my lips.

spiralled meaning, unfocussed, recognition spacing along.

seems pays to sing, twist of the back breaking line, upon line up on line.

never seen always, seam, holding sutures a part of perenniality.

ear rings fractured, subtle, hue pounds sliding upon breath.

watch.

thunderous sounds spill, disguise, scream insults one voice.

hammer breath, storm, complement of incontainability increases.

listen with eyes, listing, flickers time spoken in mists of light.

and so free, body, face in front between.

then sit.

still.

Deceptively simple living. Deceptively simple, yet with a mere sleight of hand there thrusts up into our existence a new reality. Thrusting outwards from nowhere. Unheard but unerringly unmissable. Here suddenly I laugh, almost maniacally. Sleight of hand. In the tricksters sense. An egg appears from my ear and I didn't even feel its' presence. A failure appears from nowhere and its unheard voice calls me back to despair.

It's not so hard really, to see what happens.

'We don't see things as they are but as we are' goes some old Talmudic saying. So of course, coasting along, easy like happy like calm, suddenly I say it and, bang, up the junction, here I am, my generous words smashing the silence and yet silence. Sitting in here, nowhere, words falling like confetti in windy corridors, there is no distance. But like confetti, a touch of time and tears tears them away and these words have no life, no time of life, until they till the soil of language, till they wreak my lips with aspects of alterations, my voice including itself echoing off walls and ears. As mute I sit invisible. As voice I stand unheard.

'Then write, dear boy, write' some nob from nowhere calls, valiant effort of value and valence. The words crawl from my pen and their spiralled meaning creeps onto the page yet only ever unfocussed recognition, blurred image through the gaps that let the tears come to the fore. If it was to work, then I would never know, the sleight of hand transferring the pain from here to nowhere, nobody, someone who feels it arrive as though pulled out of their ear with no prior presence. A simple trick perhaps present, yet not quite visible since we never really stop to look at the spacing along which the words lie. And then I wish I wrote lyrics, a learnt by heart lament for their time and it seems that it pays to sing.

Still sitting comfortably I thrust the twist of the back breaking at you - hear the ligaments frission - but even this refuses and so I brutalise your eyes, spit in your ears and now no longer name the breaking sounds of the back but rather attempt to ring the

twist of the back breaking in the line, line upon line upon line, codified, encoded, forcing the line up on line to line your eyes until finally the words come up for air, this time in your nowhere, on line in your line main line straight line break line break. Now, now, now; hear me now, watch me, stare, feel it, stamping across the line, crossing the line, crossed out, ripped out, ripping and writhing the line out with line upon line upon line upon line up on line. Now now now now know.

I want to fuck it up, this never seen always present absence of line and space and voice and face. Fuck it up so that it no longer works and instead sits on the dole, scrounging its life away, smoking dope from day to day and listening to iggy pop and ambient dub while fucking and fucking the day away. Fuck work and fuck it working. Who wants everything to work, fucking machine-texts written by robots with eyes glazed from years of disguised buggery, the true sleight of hand the truth espoused by spouses supported forever with nuptial greetings of boredom ironing their seams into their oh so pathetic trousers of nylon and plastic effluent dug from the ground by machines, working like machines, fucking like machines. Slice their arms back and rip their larynx from their throat, suturing it back together with their asshole until their breath smells as bad as they sound. A part of me always apart from me, distance given together yet aside from this no longer yet always in a form of perennality that beggars belief and wishes for an eternal return to the same moment repeated and then again.

Then again, we all love and above all we all speak and above all we all love and above all we all speak. And my ears ring. At the stiff little fingers gig screaming again, my lover stands in front of me screaming again, sweat drops forming through the nape of the neck hair and the smell of sex returning me to earlier in the day and the dressing we do, before we go out and the music and the noise and my ears ring. And my unborn baby kicks. And I am drawn around, reach around from behind to feel the stomach and womb through the cotton, and again feel my baby kick and then again, we all love above all. And life fractures for an instant and crashes into the colours in hues never to be repeated, never returned to and always returnable, always back again, always here, my hand sliding down her belly and the baby pounds upon my hand and my breath pounds upon her breath and I stand there, rushing upwards almost, still standing there, gushing blood pounding upon breath pounding upon body pounding and I stand there and watch, alive.

Thunderous sounds spill and crash against the walls. Battering the senses, whipping my breath away if I step inside, catching my body in its grip, the force felt by me. The force can be felt just as powerfully with the breath of the other, with words exhaled in a disguise of calmness. The voice of reason is rarely raised, rarely does it scream insults and spit abuse; “to raise one’s voice is to enter not a realm of reason but of unreason”. The philosopher never argues. Or rather, the philosopher argues but never fights.

To philosophise with a hammer is the breath of the hurricane, the moment of storm which must complement the calmness of reason. The wind rips the sails it can at other times fill; the force can be uncontainable but its very uncontainability does not make it diminished in its reality, but rather increases its importance. The text as the sails, filled with the breath of being, the flatulence of wisdom. This is the basic model (metaphor) - organic, complementary, modelled on primal elements of existence such as earth, air, water fire.

We all call out again, listen and watch. Attempt no more to understand and to run through my words like they are grass trod underfoot, gravel spat from the souls of your feet as you race frantically up the garden path. Listen, rather, with your eyes, silently, wordlessly, with the words ringing, listing gently as you rest your head on your arm and recline with a candle touching the wind that flickers to your side. There is time spoken of here, in the midst of the light that you read by, time spoken of another time spoken of.

For if we do this, if you do this, if anyone does this, we may see free from restraint of voices echoing nearby a body and face in front of us that stands stock still yet moves effortlessly between the gaps that the words leave in their wake, slipping through the bars of language to silently whisper in your ear, without sleight of hand but by mere presence. And then sit. Still. And enjoy this present. Once given never removed. But always beware, for all you have is the bars, all you have is the wake, and the face escapes as soon as you think of it.

The door would close at eight o'clock. Every night at the same time. The weight of the door, the loud metallic nose of a dead weight, falling as the lock snapped into place, the flap in the door dropping after the screw checked. These things are not unpleasant memories, prison is not an unpleasant memory, simply a memory. As in different memories of time spent waiting in dole offices watching the numbers click away on the counter, that reminds the butchers shelves in a supermarket, working at a press churning out thousands of bolts, of the nuts and bolts variety.

The nuts and bolts of life, that's what these memories become for me. Yet at the same time there is something peculiar in thinking of them, of writing of them here, as though they somehow create a person, a figure, sketch in the lines of an ethereal presence that forms in front of our eyes. That character looks different to me than it does, it exists as mine. The memories fill this picture, fulfill it, fill it full of memories. Each one has its own taste, its own smell, its own soul even though each sliver slips from grasp as soon as I attempt to grasp it. Like trying to remember the feeling of being a child, of the size of the world around. I remember, somewhere, the smell of enormity, of space, of the solitariness of being me that was the absolute certainty of my presence. Everything was mine, even the powerlessness was mine. Now even my privacy eludes me. Even on my own I am with people.

Prison is the most intimate raping of freedom. It removes the freedom of solitariness. Solitary confinement, the confinement of the solitary. I never spent any time in solitary confinement, technically, though in Wandsworth I would spend twenty hours a day in a single cell with a toilet and my books for company. I was lucky as well, getting a job as a landing cleaner fairly early into my sentence and so having a lot more time out of my cell compared to the vast bulk of the cons. I also had an in-cell toilet rather than a bucket, an en-suite.

Freedom conceptualised in terms of choice or action or will, is expressed in terms that suggest a lack, a freedom from. Freedom for, however, freedom to do, to have, to be, is a freedom that is intimately my own, that which is most proper to me. Whilst I can retreat back into mind and retain a semblance of control over my thoughts even whilst my body is constrained by cell walls, the entry into my past of the prison walls removes elements of me to replace them with the other. This process however must

have no limits. My memories are memories of..., unconstitutable without the other, whatever it is. I become what the other makes me.

The intention and will to become what I am, that Nietzsche screams from his mountain tops, eludes. This pure will, locatable in the space my body fills, is only and always intangibly and ineffably present. Bundles of perceptions, with no 'I' behind them but which are unimaginable without an 'I'. Memories layered upon memories, replaceable, contingent, irrelevantly determining. This bundle, though, must be bundled, brought together, gathered. A process of life that is the gathering of being constitutes my Being as a being.

Three candlesticks sit on a window sill in a room filled with all the signs of renovation, exposed brickwork, rough patches of plaster, pipes running along the bottom of the walls and a floor that stops at the entrance leaving the parquet exposed like the edge of a puzzle resting on the dining table. Brass, covered in a layer of dust and with the dull edge of tarnish developing an air of age, consisting of two globes in the stem and three steps at the top. They stand together, originally made to symbolise the three members of the family they now take on the role of representing merely the children, through this original meaning is not lost. Layers of signification are beginning to build around these objects, a certain history that belongs to them as much as it does to me. I can tell the story of these candle sticks and tell part of my story at the same time, we are entwined in our existence.

They were made in December 1991, the date scratched on the bottom along with my name. 'Made in December '91 by Matt Lee'. It's a rather amateurish engraving. I made it with one of the vibrating pens, the sort used in metalwork at school to write names on a key ring or some such trinket made of aluminium. I have a certain pride in these items though. They're attractive items, something I would happily purchase from someone else and probably the most successful expression of a manual skill I've achieved yet. They are the result of the training course I took in prison, the 'project' we finished with. As something to allow us a little something for our work.

After a few months in local prisons like Brixton, Wandsworth and Wormwood Scrubs, mainly Wandsworth, I transferred to Featherstone near Wolverhampton. Christina lived in Smethwick at that time, we'd got a place on the Blackpatch estate before I went down. Appropriate name too, but that's for another time. So, in Featherstone we had to work during the day, something I wasn't too keen on, never having any great desire to 'occupy my time'. Most of the jobs were mind-fuckingly boring. Welding chairs together, making the metal waste-paper baskets so common in offices, spraying furniture all day long dressed in overalls and masks in sweltering heat. Not really anything to shout about, no real concern with working for 'job satisfaction' or the like, not that many of the blokes would get such a job on the outside either so what does it matter? All for the grand total of £5.50 a week to buy fags with, the odd battery for the radio or a packet of biscuits. Top money in the nick was about this, whereas the training schemes only paid £2.50. This proved to be enough for half an ounce of baccy and either papers or matches, never both. So most of the cons never took the training.

It's these sort of details that make a lot of difference in prison. Whether they want to attempt to sort out those who get sent down and get them off crime or whether they just want to lock 'em up. I never saw anything that even hinted at anything other than

simple containment. Paying the training schemes more than the basic work-rates would encourage the cons to attend simply out of practical necessity. Of course the screws would probably argue that the lack of a financial incentive weeded out those who really wanted to do the course and added the motivation to work enough to succeed, and there is some truth in this way of thinking, except that it automatically assumes only a minority of the inmates will ever be helped out of the situation in which they commit crime. It assumes the job of containment as the basic bottom line and offers an escape route that resembles an assault course. Anyone has to really want to come out of the environment they are in before they are ever going to get anywhere and even then the chances are real low, the odds stacked against us. The whole system is designed to maintain the status quo.

Given my dislike for working in yet another factory at that time though, particularly one that was inside a prison exacerbating the deprivation of freedom inherent in the way such places automated a person's very existence, I opted for the training. As I'd worked in engineering before going to prison, mainly on lathes and power presses, I chose the lathe course and never really regretted it. The course started a few weeks after I got into Featherstone and was a lot more relaxed in its approach to working conditions than the factory situations. We had a decent workshop, clean and with a good set of machine-tools and a decent instructor, a civvy with a conscience and a sound engineering background.

The atmosphere was that little bit better though, because of the fact that it was training, as the blokes going seemed generally more interested in thinking about their future. Maybe this gives the necessary credence to the shitty ideas of screws about not making a way out of the system too easy. Whatever, there was definitely less ducking and diving going on all the time, something I wanted to keep my distance from anyway given that I wasn't in any hurry to stay. I was a 'political' and so tried to maintain enough distance from the basic activity of the place to enable me to treat this period of confinement as merely an occupational hazard, something that happened at some point in the course of political activity. In that sense I liked to think I had an approach that was similar to those cons who were professional thieves, who saw prison as just a way-station on the journey, a bit like working abroad for a few months or maybe even a few years, with the difference that they saw prison as just another environment to work, to carry on ducking and diving, whereas for me the work, the politics that brought me here, involved continuing various other activities. Despite the great disparity in our lives it tended towards a common approach to prison that saw it more neutrally, as something that wasn't worth raging against all the time. Not that it should be seen as an innocent and justified organisation.

Maybe this is the wrong way to put it however as it may give the impression of acceptance. That would be to deny the deep hatred and lines of unencroachable allegiances and hostilities that existed, the ongoing war of position that is the very existence of a prison. It merely enabled the space for reason to enter, for patience to suggest itself and for time to become a weapon rather than a restriction.

For most of the people most of the time escape was not an option. Getting out of prison isn't that hard it seems, at least from the stories that went round and the number of escapes that occurred. The problem was staying out it seemed, this involving either going underground for those with any amount of time left to serve and who the authorities thought worth re-capturing, or keeping out of trouble for the smaller time

crooks, a task infinitely impossible given the situation of general illegality once they escaped and the impossibility of making a living in this country without being traceable by the coppers via inland revenue, dole offices or doctors and dentists.

In prison I read a lot. On the second day inside I was in Wandsworth - a victorian shithole with buckets for toilets and rats for company. Locked in for two day, aside from collecting meals, reading the only things left in the cell as the library was out of bounds. Trashy westerns. Months later, more settled in the longer term prison and my cell was stuffed full of books. Three, four hundred books, piles of letters. Every day, after 8, I would sit for four or five hours and read, sit at a table by the barred window, occasionally looking up to see the tree, wire and lights of the outside of the wing.

(the text is bracketted, itself wanting. wanting time, time that has now occurred. wanting experience, experience that has now occurred. wanting writing, writing that has now occurred. so the text becomes bracketted, as a moment, within a line of thought, within a cycle.

Sometimes I look out of my window

and can only see the bars.

Other times the bars dissappear

and I see only the sky,

the clouds illuminated

in pinks and blues

so soft, so human,

the colors so beautiful

the pinks so gentle

last remnant of the suns life

the blues so deep

everlasting and cool.

And in front of it all

my tree sits

swaying in the wind,

it's branches stretching

toward that beautiful sky.

I touch my skin and wish

it were you doing so.

I lay here and see such beauty

I have only before seen in you.

And yet today I see only the bars.

and as with all good parenthesis, we close, again noting the naivete of the early life, which has a power disproportionate to the writing in its ability to evoke memory in me; love, wanting. The text may be wanting for them, but for me, transcribed from a prison notebook, written in scrawled, almost childish handwriting, in blue fading ink and dated 13th July 1991. For me this ill-fitting piece sears through me).

Ten or fifteen letters would come every day and I would write two or three. Pages to my partner and a mixture of incessant discussions of ideas, feelings and thoughts, communicating with a huge unseen layer of fellow residents, somehow enabling a bridge to the outside, so I felt. But even then a distance emerged, a distance reflected by an almost nostalgic longing for the centrality of that experience where life was not only words. And life itself. A regularised monotony for which I was not in the least responsible. I ate, slept, worked, and moved in the timetables of others and felt happy to allow this for the letters and books prevented me from being the one who was regularised and distanced me from the monotonised body.

I read and read and read. I've always loved the touch and feel of books, the absorption possible in the text. And in prison the absorption was a way of survival and succour.

Today I still read and read and read but now the monotony is mine. The reading is constrained, restricted and sometimes almost strangled by routines and timetables that I choose, that I can choose to reject or accept but which feel inevitable, feel as other as the routines of prison. And now the letters are electronic, the window of my cell replaced by a glimmering screen and a humming computer. Silence never sits by me any more. The sounds of hundreds of men lost and an isolation deeper than any I found in a cell can descend at times, when I take time to notice. But somehow the text is still a line to myself, a personal haven inside a prison life, a way to life. But still the people are distant.

Except that there is something here that was forever gone inside. When I queue and send this (close and stamp the letter (edit and delete the text (scrawl and scribble my notes))) I go to bed and feel the touch of skin on skin, the warmth of another's blood. That feeling was so easy to forget, yet is for me the most valuable in the world and can never come from a text, electronic or paper. In the end words help(,) the body counts.

Take a word, anyword, anyways. Temporary resonates tempestuous, tempting, tempting. Where does it start, nobody knows, where does it go, nobody knows.

Texts work, they gather and reveal and unfold and gradually, beyond appearances, a reality forms, something misty and incongruous perhaps, but inevitably pressing in. Texts affect and the subtleties can be read and re-read and reading itself becomes the game, the writing a move in a play that suffers from nothing and dissolves into barely meaningful reverie. A vestige of meaning ripples through the surface though, a revelation of this effect. A ripple of sense.

One of the things a number of language focussed philosophers dwell on is 'nonsense' poetry. The peculiar thing, amongst others, is the ability to gather sense from such 'non'-sense, from something that almost attempts to breach sense. We pull against chains and crash against walls yet break free of language we cannot. As long as we are within language.

Language points away from itself however, a pointing that is too often assumed to be 'referential', that is, that assumes each word has a separate 'object' somewhere that gives the word, somehow, its 'meaning'. The word 'tree' for example being meaningful through our knowledge of trees. Of course this becomes more complicated in words where no 'object' such as a tree is available, such as God, and here theories of meaning can either resort to reducing everything to an object, to what might be called 'original forms' (Plato) or else a break can be made with referential theories and we can take another path. Perhaps add in 'our minds' and certain 'categories' such as space, time, history etc can be derived from something that pre-exists (that is 'prior to' experience, a priori) experience of 'objects' and perhaps even 'forms' - this may be, roughly, like Kant. Or perhaps we can reduce any contact and reference problems by assuming language is 'free-floating', a system that has meanings because of the 'interplay' of words with each other. The classic argument is that to define a words meaning you use words and thus this process goes on forever, thus the words refer only to themselves and the meaning we derive is from the difference between the words rather than the words themselves. That is, for example, that 'cat' only means what it does because we also know words like 'dog' etc. This 'structure' of language (hence the term 'structuralists' for those that agree with this) derives from a linguist called Saussure.

And then it all gets well wierd as words dissappear and only difference remains, never ending, never achieved difference. An interminable process of deffering that has a notion of time linked to it by Derrida as he combines the term 'difference' with the term 'defferal' in the french word 'differAnce'. And then it all gets well wierd.

Repetition and difference I once heard a character tell another in a play. They were writers and so the play held a certain curiosity, inevitably. I watched with a certain jealousy almost, feeling the desire to go beyond the desire to write, feeling the need to lay down some past, some work, some body. This is often suggested it seems, to be some sort of immortality drive in the writer, a drive to be remembered, a drive to leave a legacy, and yet such a wish is immediately ridiculous. I would never achieve such a desire and even to suggest this is the 'real reason' someone writes would be to miss completely the attempt to embody, living, aspects of soul, of mind, of vision. In part it isn't even the attempt to get another to see how I see but simply to get another to see that I see. Machado writes somewhere that 'they eye you see isn't an eye because you see it but because it sees you' and this is the drive, at best a drive for recognition but this suggests a desire fo the other to know me, to 'cognise' me.

I want rather to spew my life into the air, to form blue boiling clouds of desire, of lust, of hatred and humanity, into the night sky forming eddies and wakes as they rise above the hills. Like the smoke from the ciggarette, rising in front of the lamp on my desk, dissipating inevitably in front of me.

Repetition and difference of course most often reduces to plot substance, too easily seen as certain tricks or ploys to move the narrative along then reach its climax with the twist, the difference. But this fails to acknowledge the base rythmn of instinctual rhetoric, the voice of the dialogue, the passion of the polemic, the whisper of wishes. The play revolves around words and content yet eludes elucidation. We speak and then speak of our speaking, we write then write of our writing, the sheer length sometimes forcing the reader to plough through, to wade amongst the leaves of time.

Through the park, children kicking footsteps forward, throwing legs abandoned into the musty browns and ochres, the crunch and rustle of regenerative death washed against the shore, the concentration on irrelevant irreverence, dancing amongst nature's effluent. Soft suns and cold winds, bulky coats and over wrapped scarfs. Reds, blacks, brown mudstains and puddles of joy, chattering mouths and the sound of a word.

At times a word can be something elusive. Temporary. Passing. Transient. Of necessity perhaps there must be deferral but there is, also, memory and desire. Each aspect laces into our past/present/future as we wade through life, kicking leaves into the air. Then perhaps a word can remain, everpresent, under siege and often lonely, budding and shedding, washing gently through the seasons.

Blue joy once touched our shores,
ripping into skin with carnivorous jaws
bursting seams and grinding groans
laws violence providing glory.

Blue joy once touched our shores
leaden doors crashing dreams desires
as long nights walking home
tainted loves' sweet story.

Blue joy again touches our shores
experience teaching slowly that
joy is joy be it blue or red.

Blood seals the rhythm.

High on a balcony, on the 11th floor of a British tower block, built in 1968, the same year I was born. The flat is filling with smoke, the lift is broken and the stairwell is impassable. So we stand on the balcony, with the doors shut and hopes low. Below us the firemen fail to reach us, design faults preventing platforms from being of use. Alongside us the block burns fiercely, from the sixth floor all the way to the twentieth. Three quarters of the block is blazing - our quarter is last. The metal railings burn my fingers as I lean, so I move back to the middle of the small platform and look again at my watch. Three hours have now gone since we saw the blaze and realised we were trapped. Three hours of watching, ringside, the largest bonfire I've ever seen. Glass starts to shatter, explosions rip through the air and crash against the walls that surround us. Gas pipes rupturing, evacuations below. Now the floor of the balcony is beginning to get too hot to stand still on. The heat has singed my arms and my hair is matted with sweat. Even the air is beginning to be unbreathable. I stand silently as I have for hours. My lover panics and I try to calm her. I panic and she tries to calm me. There is nothing we can do now. Just wait. Watch. Who talks of hope in hell? I

shake as I write this. The heat is now so intense and the flames so high that's the experience is actually beginning to take over from the fear. The adrenalin has gone and post-adrenal calmness takes over. Eventually, four hours after being trapped and with the fire above and below us, glistening in the evening sun, a fireman reaches up to the floor below on his platform - it cannot reach any higher. A metal ladder is raised and he swiftly ascends, lashing the top step to the balcony rails, wearing asbestos suiting with a full face mask. Like something from another world, the one we had left. We clamber over and later reach the ground. Pictures in the paper show kids in ball gowns and mohicans. Still. Frozen. Momentary -

Being alive is never momentary and too often forgotten in the feeble attempts we make of finding meaning. To see the Being of being alive we need to reach its borders and look back, letting the scene wash over us as we see, for once, a horizon too often out of view in our attempts to be in it.

How does one tell another of their life? The desire to respond is so immense that I am wary of the response alone existing and of the words stealing my soul from me as they skip across screens in another's place. But the call is irresistible. Tell them how I live?

Do I throw out a text full of mundanities, trivialities of the day, only to miss the point in an attempt to reach out ('through the wires' the cliché goes). I live in language and this dawning, for me, threatened myself as the words of others became the meal in my mouth, as I realised my voice merely echoed.

I live as I write (as I rite, I wrote, then deleted to replace with the 'correct' version, only the rite of writing fulfills me at the same time it empties out my being from its textuality.). I always wanted to be a writer and in some funny way still do, a residual desire to exist as a text in another's hand, a name upon their lips, even for an instant. Of course now I am a writer because I write, a lesson in humility and arrogance from a poet in Wolverhampton. I am a writer and a philosopher, the latter a late addition, relatively speaking, though one that now centres me, giving me the ground the term 'artist' never played. I am no artist, my imagination too weak and my mind too textual. I am a recombinant and no longer seek after the originality of the work the artist so viciously desires. Still, I too desire perhaps to achieve the 'recognition' Hegelians root us in, though this now comes from a self-recognition of my own validity to myself and a continual struggle to maintain such a role. I live by continuously attempting to avoid the death so many around me seem to fall into and embrace, the death of 'living', of 'getting on with life', as though some burden were befalling them in every spare moment they found they possessed.

I am surrounded by paper, wood and metal. I live in a melee of attempts to connect with my ground in the earth and desires to fly to the sky through the medium of my mind. I live an attempt to live a 'duality without a dualism' (Schelling), a commitment without a closure.

So I work with texts. I live with texts. I read, write, recombine, in order to go on reading, writing and recombining - in order to stay alive. Of course (of course, another deleted deletion) I live as anyone else; eating drinking walking doing being talking shouting sleeping bathing, and again and again and again and again.

Words seduce a response.

I am a little tired of groups. I need a little distance from the cacophany of noise. But I like to hold an ear open to possibilities, always possibilities, and so skim over conversations at a distance, that sense of overhearing a conversation in a cafe amongst people you know, sometimes quite well, sometimes only by sight, whilst sitting and reading by the fireside. Dorset in Brighton, a lovely place. But I am new in Brighton again, coming back down last year after an absence of many years, and so the conversations are only gradually becoming those of people I recognise.

And a sense of loyalty, a sense of loyalty that pervades my whole life, that is possibly my most central value. A loyalty above all to time, to the course of things. Links into time that gradually establish who we are. Words seduce in much the same way that the conversation we always desire in the cafe with the stranger from the other table always lingers despite the monotonous nature of its non-appearance. Though its occasional arrival spurs us on to further waiting.

‘2. In reality, it is unimportant that I have no likelihood of being *really* fulfilled (I am quite willing for this to be the case). Only the will to fulfillment shines, indestructible, before me.’ Barthes, **A Lovers Discourse**

Of course he writes to himself and we read his intimacies, written as they are, for us, a deception at the heart of his text that grates despite the beauty of the work. It is the ‘will to fulfillment’ of language striving towards fulfillment that reminds the other (or makes them) the desire of the lover. I am reminded of letters in prison again.

to continue...

‘By this will, I well up: I form within myself the utopia of a subject free from repression: I am this subject *already*. This subject is libertarian: to believe in the Sovereign Good is as insane as to believe in the Sovereign evil: Heinrich von Ofterdingen is of the same philosophical stuff as Sade’s Juliette.’

Though belief in either the Sovereign Good or the Sovereign Evil being equally insane makes a certain sanity reign in both.

to continue...

‘(Fulfillment means an abolition of inheritances ‘...Joy has no need of heirs or of children-Joy wants itself, wants eternity, the repetition of the same things, wants everything to remain eternally the same.’ [Nietzsche] The fulfilled lover has no need to write, to transmit, to reproduce.)’

And so fails to lay bare their souls desire for fulfillment, the metaphysical desire.

Let us toast. To transmission and reception.

Awaiting.

I was reminded recently of a conversation with a work mate in a local mental health community I was working in. Ins and outs of the context are not too relevant here but the essence of the conversation was that he had watched a snuff film with a load of other film buffs and whilst watching the film the acts of violence had engaged them in a conversation about their depiction - ‘this was so unrealistic’ being the jist of the thing, which gradually shifted as the scenes challenged these initial reactions, mainly as they couldn’t work out how the thing was done. Despite the, to my friend, obvious

fact, that by the end of the film these acts were plainly 'real' others were adamant they weren't, even after finding out that it was 'supposedly' a snuff film.

The disconcerting thing for me was the motivation to watch. Why watch a film which had no structure other than the violence? Plainly I can see grounds for such watching at certain points, though the problems of situating the film/art becomes incredibly difficult I think and cries of 'artistic (ir)responsibility' do not, though echoing a kernel of truth (the 'anti-censorship' kernel) fail to account for the art as art. Moreover I have a problem with the basic ideas, as I have perceived them, behind certain Avant Guard 'transgressive' film, though I would be willing to be educated here. My problem is basically this: that in a film of transgressive violence the audience is still audience. Say, extreme torture - the depiction is always absent from the viewer. Whilst notions of absence may help deal with this, the presence of torture to the torturer is absent and thus the transgression is mute it seems - to really transgress the audience would have to be tortured, thus have their choice removed, be placed in a situation from which they cannot escape. My work mate said he would never be able to 'remove' the images and perhaps this is a form of presencing but still an absent presence, still a ghost.

I thought of the rape scene in Man Bites Dog (is this the right film I'm thinking of..oh well...) where the camera crew become 'involved' (obviously distorted since the camera crew are themselves 'actors', depictions, absences etc) and where this scene shifts the film, turns it from a relatively humourous tale to a slightly sick and disturbing portrayal of a serial killer. The 'self-problematizing' here seemed as much excuse as really critical thought about the films actions, though in the fact that some account was taken of the response some responsibility was entered into.

I was struck with the thought that self-knowledge of drugs is far superior though their imbibing than through watching their imbibing - the presence thing again. Reflection presupposes the ability to reflect and so a certain barrier always exists with art in this self-limitation of the format, if the art is taken as 'art to reflect on'. But that strikes me as 'art as philosophy' or 'art as stimulus to thinking' whereas to reject a necessity for reflection, not its use but merely its necessity, may enable some experience to enter that is blocked by the reflection. Then again.

I only wish a little more debauchery were in evidence; no-one consumes anything any more, merely pass it through their material system. Only in debauching can we consume ... only noone consumes.

I was sent down for 2 and a half years for violence, connected to the big Poll Tax riot we had here in 1990. So I suppose I was a 'political' as far as that is a reality in prison here. The cons treated me slightly different - I wasn't expected to fall in with certain elements of life - because of the political status, which enabled me to have a pretty sound time in nick actually. Stoned most nights when I wanted to be, read a pile of books, wrote a ton of letters and got some training on computer lathes. In many ways I have no problems with the experience. I made something out of it and gained considerable knowledge, experience, and in some ways even pleasure from the whole thing, though the effects on my family and my wife were quite negative and still echo through our relationship, more distant as the years go by.

So in some funny sort of ways I was in the position of an anthropologist maybe, slightly distanced, not quite 'in' but 'in enough' to have to follow the rules. Mind, I

would probably have ended up in prison at some point before I was 25, and so the way I did it was probably 'the best'.

I'm an aspirant. I search through discourses in order to attempt that communication that borders on communion. But they talk of the desire to reach through the texts, and that must be the point. This seems entirely right, natural, necessary even, though we never reach through the text to the textual but to a physical materiality. I'm not a robot sitting here in Brighton spewing out rough combinations of words, I am a person, a reality. I write with a desire, with a meaning.

Communication is always intensely personal. A conversation in a coffee-bar, sharing an umbrella in the rain as we run to the bus stop, sensing the closeness of a physical reality near. There are many ways to consummate though - physical, ideal, spiritual - because consummation is that moment of absolute honesty, the loyalty to the other that demands the truth. Such activity can be sexual - too many people never experience honest fucking, honest sexuality. But it can also be simple presence, there-ness, reliability, trust.

In writing this it misses the point maybe. I'm from the earth, honest dirt flowing through your fingers, except most people simply walk over it forgetting it's there. I describe my lives and it seems pat, misses the point. Above all I'm peopled, real people, I am a real person, not an abstraction or text, though I have some form of soul and this doesn't live in my words but can maybe only be seen in our eyes. Trust.

As I write more, for a longer amount of time now, I can look back to bits I've written four years ago and see a continuity, a link between notes made then and thoughts I'm trying to develop now. I have begun to build threads that link the parts together, but the persona is still something beyond my sight. It would be like trying to see the back of my head. It's only possible in a mirror and so is always going to look different from my perspective than from another's. So I tend to accept a certain differentiation since I've come across mistakes, or perceptions, which seem so at odds with how I feel that I can only accept them as honest and take note. It is here that loyalty and honesty become critical since their lack removes my self from myself, the false image of the liars image becomes my reality and the realisation of its irrelevancy destroys part my very being as I realise I am not who I thought I was, or I am who I don't want to be.

This is something that happens less now and is partly at the root of my desire to avoid too many people in my life.

Smell... such things are intensely erotic and so incommunicable in this arena of loss, beyond their trace. The true smell of warmth, sweat and moisture and calmness on skin close to breath, sinews and flesh felt under sinews and flesh. A moment remembered. But here this memory is always others, it is imagination, projection forward, never returning. It is the returning that is lost here. I can only strive toward, never return to.

And suddenly they charge. Underneath my feet I can feel the concrete burning with the acquired heat of the day. The tarmac of the road is beginning to melt. It is taking on that slight viscosity that betrays its latent fluidity. That solid immovable object that is the road seems almost unstable, betraying a different reality that lies within its apparent rigidity. A heat haze blurs the lines of the buildings, making the point at which buildings stop and space begins increasingly unclear.

The proximity of so many people makes me sweat. The sheer number is just incredible. I cannot actually move, locked into a physical union with every other individual that forms this mass. I have to squeeze my way past other sweltering bodies in an intimacy that makes the collective nature of the crowd seem direct and immediate. I sense the skin of the other as I press my flesh through the space. The mass is now one, each aspect, each body, each individual in an intense physical connection with others that would not seem out of place in a brothel. An orgasmic atmosphere of feeling pervades us, drives the production of adrenaline and the sweep of excitement that washes through the demonstration. The heat passes from one body to another as we wait.

The rising odours of human perspiration fill my head with the aroma of heat and happiness, of a carnival of protest. My body feels, totally and I am awash in sensuality and life. I blink away droplets that gather above my eyes, push my hand across my forehead then through my hair, clearing the excess from my skin, leaving a film of liquid dampwarmth on my body.

Something is happening behind me. I can just about turn around and, when I do, I can see the blueblack helmets of the policemen wending their way through the mass of the crowd, like some invasive disease entering my body. People move to the side, squeezed together in ever increasing intimacy as the line of men dressed in the symbols of separateness slowly and rigidly force their way through us, a penetration by an outside force that has a profound effect. The raping of the festival. As they come we are forced closer and when they pass we all focus on them, on their slow and short journey from one side of our body to the other. The differences between our groups become more real - we are one, they the other.

As I slowly move towards the side of the mass and reach the grass I can see more of the picture, a different perspective. People, horses, coppers and vans. The road is filled to bursting almost, yet down the middle is an impenetrable wall of metal crash barriers, about five feet tall. They are almost invisible behind the mass of people and the only sign of their existence is the abrupt edge to the crowd. It is only a few seconds after noticing the edge that the source of the containment can be perceived.

Here is a very wide road, split lengthways down the middle by a line of crash barriers, and containing on the one side a thronging mass of people and on the other a noticeable nothing. Its suddenly strikes me as peculiar that a line of police has just forced its way through the crowd when such an obvious alternative exists beyond the barriers. This has happened twice now since I have been standing here, each time increasing the smell of sweat and the tension in the mass. Something gonna happen.

On the far side of the road, past the surreal empty space of haze and uniform, was Whitehall and the entrance to Downing Street, that famous seat of power. Outside its entrance a force of police stand guarding it against a massive and colourful crowd. They stand there, the dull blueblack of their uniforms contrasting with the walls of Whitehall, which always seems to remarkable grey. It would be so much more effective a seat of power if it gleamed in a positive celebration of Whiteness. Here though we can see, in front of us, as though some artist had constructed the metaphor for us, the inhumanity that resides in this seat of power, the sheer absence of colour. The sun shines bright, letting the reds and blacks of the flags, the yellows and greens of the banners and the pinks and blues of the hairstyles shine and glow, jackets and

dreadlocks burning bright. My eyes are dazzled by the crowd in its living beauty and focusing on the walls of greyness, with their morose guardians standing in our shadow, seems immensely pointless all of a sudden.

By now I am standing along the edge of the grass, the opposite side to where the coppers are concentrating. I can see horses standing down a side street, almost opposite Downing Street, with vans and buses for company. The buses are large ancient looking vehicles, probably excellent for benders but painted a peculiar shade of green that could not be bought in shops no matter how hard one looked. There are lines of police sitting inside, bored and in their shirt sleeves.

A line of horses comes out of the side road into the main are of the street. This whole place was beginning to enter a state of flux. The crowd had stopped here for nearly an hour now and things were obviously gonna happen soon. There is a constant movement, to and fro, slowly shifting patterns of people beginning to take their places for the days main event. We all know something's gonna happen. Some leave, or try to, others wait around, others come in. I move further back, across a little road that went alongside the patch of grass, at right angles to the main street and opposite the police. I stop against a wall and lean back, take out my ouch and roll a fag, and watch. I notice that my hands have a slight tremble. Fear and adrenalin are beginning to mix with the sun and sweat. I feel adrift from reality, seeing things from afar, as though I am watching this on television. Innocent, uninvolved. I laugh quietly to myself, waiting. Noone is innocent.

Another line of men in blueblack uniforms is wending its way through our body, this time to my right. I am still trembling slightly. I can hear a child screaming somewhere behind me, whistles now begin to sound. Continuous whistling and a ripple of sound emanates from where the coppers walk. They too are trembling. Less than ten feet away I can see the perspiration on their skin, the grain of the weave on their uniform, make out the metallic numbers on their shoulders. Their faces are locked in a forward position, trained on the nape of the neck of the copper in front. The enormous gulf between people is almost absurd now, their proximity enhancing the contrast. Body against body, mind against mind. Now we are two. Each of us takes our place.

People in the crowd are not talking as much. A noise is still present but its tone has changed. A few minutes ago children could be heard battling through family life in the midst of the crowd, laughter and reprimand mixing incessantly. Now there is crying. Music from saxophones has given way to drums and whistles. I can see children sitting quietly afraid in prams with parents increasingly desperate to get out of this area yet impotent to move. Standing there watching they look afraid.

The tobacco from the fag is sucked onto my tongue and as I pick it out, returning to myself, I see yet more fucking horses from the side street beginning to line up opposite me. The little piece of grass where the human throng is slightly less dense, is now encircled. On two sides are the grey walls of Whitehall one of which is supporting me as I lean resting. On the third side is a human mass, impenetrable and unmoving. On the fourth, opposite me, where there had been a fuzzy haze of police and space, there now stands a solid line of horses, riders sitting atop their steeds with helmets on that have clear plastic face guards which reflects the sun and obscure the face. I notice a woman on top of one of the horses, tense and firm, only the curve of her breasts under her uniform betraying her sex, holding her reins firmly, tensely,

attempting to keep the horse facing forward as it moves from side to side in frustration. The line of horses quivers in anticipation, pent up. They move continuously, shifting from their left feet to their right, jostling about. It is like standing in front of the start line at a race course, watching the riders hold their horses in place ready for the off. And we're under starters orders.

I drop the cigarette and tidy up my jacket, zipping up the pockets on the leather jacket, then zipping together the two sides so that it doesn't flap. I can feel things beginning to move. I straighten myself and ensure all valuables are safe, money in my inside pocket, keys attached to my belt hooks, laces tied on my dockers. People are beginning to climb down from the walls surrounding me, letting go of their observation posts next to the railings as the time for watching begins to come to its natural end. I begin to take note of groups in the crowd, clusters of people who have now began to wrap scarves round their faces and pull their beanies down to just above their eyes. I spot the person I was with earlier and make my way toward him. It only takes a minute to reach him and I am surprised how quickly I have moved through the crowd, space now opening slightly.

Looks like we're on for one, he says.

Yeah, I reply, not long now.

Suddenly someone starts to shout, whistles and drums increase in tempo and we look toward the horses. They are moving forward, into us. With nowhere to go they want to stand on our space. Behind the horses I see a thick line of riot police, round shields at the ready. And then the horses charge.

I come from a background with gypsy blood. Two generations back, but enough to take the edge of the translucent whiteness of the Celtic or Saxon European. Tanned i look quite sallow, but still white nonetheless, not a fact i either worry about or mind. I suppose it is 'easier' being white and so probably 'ought' to feel lucky, but luck seems absent from any realm of interest here.

I have no fat on my body. Five foot ten, ten stone and slim, I consider myself at my best when naked, though a pair of levis tends to cover my bum, in a way that appeals both to me and to others. Tight. Legs, arse, stomach, shoulders, all tight. I hate flab on my body, though love the sensuality of roundedness on a woman. In pulp fiction fabienne declares she'd love a pot-belly, justifying this on the grounds that 'it is unfortunate that what is pleasing to the eye and pleasing to the touch are not the same'. But then I don't have any flab, which sounds like it's verging on a brag. It is i suppose.

Short cropped hair, short cropped beard, armani almond shape gold wire frame glasses, which I wear all the time, from morning to night. I only take my glasses off to go to bed or to fuck; i almost always fuck with another face. Large eyes, hazel, straight nose and full rose lips. I like the back of my head best, hence the cropped hair, the shape of a skinhead. Incongruity is my favourite style.

Large hands, thick fingers, with gold medallions with the crest of saudi on my right hand, a ring received from my father-in-law after his death last year. My left hand has a wedding band and a small silver pinky ring, with the three legs of the isle of man, a family ring, one shared by my brother, connecting us to our father. My right wrist wear a brass bangle, eight Celtic dragons flowing across it. The skin is slightly rough,

coarse, though softening after four years in a land without work. Scarred slightly, leaving the tonal difference of the line in the tan.

I am not a muscle-bound man, no barrel chest or six-pack stomach, but a firm smoothness. No hair, save a few wisps around my nipples, which are small and discrete. My collar bone sits atop my breast, framing the base of my neck without, I think, betraying an air of absence or lack, without the word scrawny coming to mind. From the back a certain tightness of the skin reveals present muscles, fit without fanatic.

My legs and arse fail to live up to this model of hairlessness and a gentle covering of down begins from my trousers down, though this merely accentuates the sensual in a variation of texture. My legs again are firm, my cock apparently a normal length, though rather thick. Uncircumcised yet tidy, no flapping forskin or distended scrotums. Of my feet i will not speak, save to say that they are better than they were and constitute my principal achilles heel (with as much pun intended as possible).

I wear a pocket watch, attached to my belt holder on my trousers, with a yin/yang ring on the chain as well as two Celtic life symbols on the connector, one triangular, one circular. I always wear this watch. On its back it has a train, just beginning to show the signs of wear from five years of being put in and out of my pocket, whilst on the face it has a train wheel with wings on it, in red. An old soviet railways watch.

What if it were Turing's prodigious accomplishment and it's face was here, literally the text skimming across my retina. Yet they aren't. No more a robot than I. Inevitably I must wonder about the face..

And the body, the presence, the texture of skin, slope of thigh, smell of sex.

Such pat suggestions fail to ensnare the inevitable curiosity of immediacy. At that point of entry of the tongue, of the lip pressing hard against lip, hands moving, erections rising, legs opening, clothes loosening, pressure of pressure upon pressure. Of entrance and movement, of exhausted emission and compressed contraction followed by silence.

Such wondering though occurs endlessly. It relates to no-one and anyone. The nudity of the body begins eventually to become abstract and symbolic in its depiction of the memory of sensuality, of sense, of a never consummated scent.

Presence sent, scents presence, in the present tense.

Hard hands, heavy

Solid softness, large plates.

Worked hands, worked over,

Worked with, working less.

Typing seems such a gentle affair

Unsuited to my hands.

Delicate touches betray ineptness,

Yet desire imagines pianists politenesses.

At that point of pointing the mutton betrays its essence, the lamb dress unable to hide. Which would I want - the hard hands with a soft heart, or the other, common, combination.

This, of course, an imaginary image.

My hands, for me, are my roots. My pointer to my past. My grandfathers hands. His huge monsters born of romanes and roads, travelling and travellers. Working a lathe, with oil and blood mixed, blisters and calusses forming the clothing of position. This now fading, gradually, and only the shape, solid, more like my father, coming to the fore. Noticeable maybe, I'd like to think, as a link to the roots.

'I love your hands' She sees the roots, the balanced precariousness of my soul, which I deny and embrace, never thinking through. Touching skin with desired delicay betraying ineptness.

I often type three letters at once, always correcting, feeling, always, like the keys fight me. Maybe one day I shouldn't correct the text. Maybe let my hands speak.

Of course the hard side is loved too. Large rings, gold squares threatening and showing. I desire a gauntlet, a covering of metal, cyborgisation mixing with mediaeval power, armour metaphors playing with my soul. Desire the armour to hide my soul? Too easy, too one-sided, too soft.

Boxers have hands to be proud of.

But boxing, fighting, is something we shouldn't be proud of, I am told, given constantly this lambs' message, whilst desiring politeness. I always love Nietzsche.

Working and Fighting, says Kojeve, make the dialectic, make man (sic). (But how can I talk of anything other than man?) Yet it seems so unlike, so Other, in this place, to talk of making, working, fighting. Where lives are reduced to texts, to literary figures, imaginary images, how can I show them my hands?

Imagine my screen now. My hand types, fingers outstretched, bent slightly, moving at times rapidly, staccato deletions giving intermitent linearities. de, de, de, de, de Goethe delete key. These aren't my hands. These aren't the hands I use, live in.

Imagine my screen now. In my hands, hoisted through the air, holding. The screen lost as the product appears and my hands manipulate, manufacturing life. Now my hands appear, but only as ghosts, lost in a past others take from me, that <'cyber-'
>s the world and leaves it out to die.

A breath of cynicism is often useful perhaps in allowing us to catch our breath, as it shifts the flow and makes certain lines of movement in thought become more apparent, and so I have a certain inclination towards the sort of doubts and questions raised by those seceptical of the notion of cyborg. At the same time I sit on a peculiar ambivalence, finding the notion of cyborgisation inevitably ambiguous but, like all technology, also inevitably containing a tendency towards, either innately or through its particular placement within our western culture, a negative meaning, a destructive. Ambiguity lies in the possibilities of fresh construction on the basis of the destructive potential of technology, but the destructive nature itself seems the base-line if not the

essence and thus all technology needs to some extent some awareness and meanings to be re-thought.

The entropic tendency that is talked of in regards the 'life' of the body could surely be in part an acknowledgement of what might be called our 'being-towards-death'.

Now, whilst this Heideggerian notion holds great difficulties, not least pointed to by Levinas' critique and attempt to introduce a being-toward-beyond-death, there is some ground that can be cleared with it. Levinas' introduction that may be dismissed, though how successfully is difficult to assess for me, as a *re*-introduction from the Judaeo-Christian tradition of a beyond that is religious, may also be thought, along with Heidegger maybe, as an attempt to *re*-introduce the spiritual, the spirit, in the manner of an unassuming assumption, where its complexities within three or four thousand years of discourse is neither ignored but nor simply accepted and taken on. It may be 'taken on' by being taken on.

In particular the point that may be worked on is that this entropic tendency 'towards' a pain of the body can still be a towards if the pain/death spectrum is brought together, if death/pain are brought into our lives, albeit as perhaps an unmentionable aspect. The relation of pain and death would also here open possibilities to an understanding of sado-masochism and submissive-dominant sex that is also understandable through an overlapping of one of the vectors in the sex/death combination that occurs in sm/sd relations, though my account would be limited to a personal and relatively limited phenomenology. Plainly the sex/death/pain aspects, though all distinguishable, perhaps also lace together and in a different way to that of, say, hope/death/politics which could be seen in cases of 'martyrdom'.

Of course the other unmentionable aspect in cyberspace is simply the body itself. The unmentionable aspect is the body.

There is a certain positivity in the striving towards a beyond-the-body, a body without organs not in some simple Lockean Leviathan where the concept is metaphoric from the point of the subject (though whether it is metaphoric full stop is another issue), but where the subject becomes without organs both physically, with replacements, removals, editing processes but also without the 'threat' of the organs being so great.

Diminishing the threat of the organ, finding ways to gradually replace segments of bodies, allows the thrust of technology as control/mastery into the body, into the subject. We fight 'nature', as an opposing force, in a battle located under our skin. This, though, we have done since medicine removed itself from an embedded approach and attempted to raise itself to science, to technology. Struggles against medicine, within medicine, through attempts to place meaning back as the central 'reason' for activities, will find the subject, the source of meaning, placed back at the centre of activity.

Two things as personal situations suggest other thoughts. My son Jordan has been in hospital for the last couple of weeks, in ITU, in a coma for a week. He has something called Sturge-Weber syndrome, a birthmark on the face that replicates within the brain, located on the meninges and surface of the brain, causing gradual decomposition through calcification of the extra blood vessels. His brain literally turns to stone as he grows. Not necessarily all of it and the process is slow and partial

but it causes uncontrollable epilepsy and a proneness to stroke as the condition is at root cerebro-vascular. He is three and a half.

Having caught what seems like a virus he went into hospital fitting and entered a coma two weeks ago. He was in a coma for a week and came out of it, in a serendipitous coincidence, two hours after taking a crisis recovery homeopathic remedy. He was already on a load of drugs, his drug-chart full and overflowing in its seemingly vain attempt to list all the techniques that were being thrown against what was in effect an unknown. I make no claims for the homeopathic remedy at all but what was important was that the doctors wrote the remedy up on his drug-sheet and acknowledged it as a choice we made and thus as part of his treatment.

We were acting in cooperation not just in attending and caring to his needs, nappy changes, turning, monitoring, washing, wiping the dribble and puke from his mouth, but also in attempting to help him. By the acknowledgement of this centrality of the group to which Jordan belonged, my family in this case, and its values the activity of the medical staff shifted from a position of 'solving the problem' to one of 'cooperating to assist the solution of a problem'. In the end, as the medical staff acknowledged, they cannot solve this problem, merely ensure certain aspects do not cause death when it can be avoided. Death itself, though, they acknowledged cannot be stopped. This cooperation allowed back in a certain meaning to the activity which was then shared.

This situation curiously played itself out against the death of another child on the same three bed ward five days ago, six months old and born twenty four weeks premature, where the parents had refused to acknowledge death and the medical staff had been unable to proactively move such an acknowledgement into centre ground. The child was on morphine, at six months old, because it was in such pain and the parents refused to allow the death of the child to really face them, its inevitability to become accepted if not acceptable or desirable. They could be perhaps described as having some role in the cause of that pain in that situation, precisely through a refusal of death that became dogmatic rather than thoughtful and proactive. This would tend to suggest blame however and no-one can be blamed for death - maybe pain is that aspect of death that we see as capable of being held to be 'caused' and which thus allows back in some false notion of blame in a lot of situations. The notion of a proactive refusal can be important though and is perhaps the way to invest the cyborg, technology, with meaning.

Another situation then is that we are now faced with a boy of three and a half who has as a result of this last two weeks, a paralysis of his left side.

Called a 'dense hemiplegia' the paralysis is technically not a paralysis since no brain damage could be seen to account for the sudden change, at least through CT scanning. Certain areas of the brain are damaged through the Sturge-Weber but nothing more than expected and nothing to turn an 'otherwise normal' boy into someone with half their body paralysed. No particular sub-dural bleeding was noted and this would be the main focus of attention as to the cause. It is therefore suggested that he has what is called Todd's Paralysis, operating in this instance from the seventh cranial nerve and thus paralysing everything from the bottom of his mouth down. He can frown evenly but only smile lop-sidedly.

Aside from the trauma for us all of this last two weeks there is also the fact that a certain rehabilitation is both accepted as possible and the most realistic course worth pursuing. At three and a half he will have half the capacity to attempt to re-learn to walk, though this may well be impossible. He will at a minimum have the capacity to learn to have half a body that works and thus manipulate his environment, including his own body, through this ability. What's left attempts to live, and in his case it is the left that is paralysed and which he needs to live, to animate even in its paralysis.

This I think applies to 'whatever's left' in any situation of entropy, either gradual or drastic. The other aspect, aside from his age though and thus the time he has, is the time he has for technology. Cyborgisation as a method and tool for his animation, not his re-animation as he is still animate, but for the extension of this animation, is more than possible. What is worth pointing to here is the role of technology in a possible animation of our bodies, in extensions of possibilities of animation.

Animation is here not understood as movement but as a certain being-as-animate, the anima both connecting to notions of 'animal' and of 'soul' or 'spirit'. Refusal comes in because of the initiation of this process. Here Stelarc could be brought in to open up a phenomenology of the extension of the possibilities of animation, both in his almost cartoon like appearance and in his praxis. His art would thus be a way of exploring possible worlds phenomenologically, thus creating a tension between logics. Perhaps. No doubt a certain novelty factor of the actor performing and earning cannot be excluded, but the individual's intention is not the sole guide for a meaning of the act.

Refusal here begins the process. We refuse a situation but the refusal must be open to refutation and still capable of maintenance as refusal. Refusal and refutation operate, as Levinas suggests, with different logics, but both operate. We thus always need to begin from refusal and this applies to technology as much as any thought.

What do you see?

What did you see?

All this formation of symbolic representation, sometimes misses the point, of the Other as site of our sight. Yet I see myself only from here. Always from somewhere. My body has no head as the here forms around my eyes, but then I'm not blind. Watching through lenses though I always see a screen except when I enter my bed, Having sex I see skin without a screen, nothing symbolic in this representation, entirely present only then. Sometimes, when the light is right, I see behind myself in the glasses, I can see through the back of my head.

Even the screen though is something I merely see through, the problem being that an inherent myopia exists in its opacity.

A tendency to reduce the Other to my symbolic representation, except the whole notion of representation is flawed.

I don't represent but rather simply see. I don't form a representation of a tree but simply see a tree. A representation of a tree presupposes this sighting, just as any notion of symbolic representation maintains a notion of presence beyond the symbol. The notion of symbol is simplistic and unfortunately too central to enable anything other than a notion of alienation to continually assert itself - and alienation, even as a

mood, assumes an ultimate presence, something from which we are alienated, an essence.

They suggest we can never reach the presence because of some barrier, lag, veil, text, still assuming the Other though. Like the idea of the Kantian noumenal - "I agree, I think the Kantian noumenal is unknowable" someone says. But then the knowledge of the unknowable comes from where? Or is it simply knowable as unknowable? Makes little sense to me, always wishing to lose touch, to be lost.

Fake? then the real becomes present behind the fake. The fake becomes a mask. Rather a face. I see a face, I see them, even disguised, even misleading, even denied in the moment of presentation but always real.

'I look into your eyes and see your soul' (James)

But only through my glasses. Still, my soul. Sometimes their words seem to locate me. And then we join. But mostly not.

'the eye you see is not an eye because you see it; it's an eye because it sees you' (Machado)

When I do, I talk of the sacred in passing and such triviality may be blasphemous, but then access to the sacred can only come about through accident, through turning away from thought and entering into experience - the sublimity of the situation encompasses the sacred.

The rain falling on my leather boot, death, life, sensuality mixing together as I observe and catch the beauty of sense. As for God, I don't speak of him.

In distancing ourselves from talk of God, in being a-theistic, in forgetting God, we can approach ourselves. I distance myself from God, as a word, a concept, a faith, in order to attain the sacred in myself.

In reality such sacred essence intimately involves what most see as blasphemous - the revelling in the sensual delight of sex, sense and situation.

We desire to be more than we can be. My dry mouth wants to be filled with your succour, my body bury itself in yours, yet this desire is impossible.

'The metaphysical desire does not rest upon any prior kinship. It is a desire that can not be satisfied. For we speak lightly of desires satisfied, or of sexual needs, or even of moral and religious needs. Love itself is thus taken to be the satisfaction of a sublime hunger. If this language is possible it is because most of our desires and love are not pure. The desires one can satisfy resemble metaphysical desire only in the deceptions of satisfaction or in the exasperation of non-satisfaction and desire which constitutes voluptuousness itself. The metaphysical desire has another intention; it desires beyond everything that can simply complete it. It is like goodness - the Desired does not fulfill it, but deepens it.' (Levinas)

The texts snap into place on my screen and words fill this emptiness they create that is my intern, an inbetween, an indifference. Words create an emptiness, isolating, rip me from the already Other, the never to be consumed. I want to eat, to throw my head back and drink the Other down, to merge. To lose myself in the moment of frenzy. To be ill responsible, to throw off humanity, to e-merge for a moment into absolute existence (an exit-stance).

Anorexic text flowing from anorexic lives. Language itself complicating instantaneity. But such desire for absolute presence, for the eternal moment, is the unquenchable craving. The permanent hunger. The empty belly. The postponed presence. (my words, written, postponed; all texts postponed.)

Except that in the yearning for the reply the moment comes, the consummation shifts from skin to text, from materiality to ethereality, from presence to absence, from you to me. In this moment of the reply I have fully entered into the Other, into you; I have merged and e-merged but only ever as a ghost, only ever being-for-you (begging-for-you).

I always think philosophy has got fuck all to do with political activity and tend to see the net similarly, though it may be peripherally useful. At root I think politics is constructed by people and in reality the mob rules. Political achievements come from our accepting we are part of the mob and attempting to move ourselves and others in certain directions. I have a very fluid model. Political stability is potential dammed up and breaching the dam through the envisaging of options is the single greatest skill in politics, and this is done in front of our eyes and ears and in our hearts rather than in our heads. 'For a mass of people to be led to think coherently and *in the same* coherent fashion about the real present world is a 'philosophical' event far more important and 'original' than the discovery by some philosophical 'genius' of a truth which remains the property of small groups of intellectuals.' (Gramsci.) This doesn't mean the net of philosophy or any other peripheral activity is unimportant, indeed its very peripherality enables a certain flux that opens up the exploration of possibilities. Their conversion into reality though is not something possible via the forms of the net. It only really happens with real people walking on real ground attacking real enemies. The rest is just imaginary.

Amusing really since I love the philosophy of the text and in terms of subjectivity, personal identity, our being, I think there's a lot of room to explore here, but room to explore doesn't mean there's room to build. I no longer have the meaning of my existence tied up so intimately with being politically active however and so feel capable of allowing my self some room in my life and such room can be provided in part by the net. It is far better as part of the background of our world than as a medium for transforming that world. The transformation will go on outside the net I think, not because of some spurious notion of anarchic capitalism that seems so trendy in 'intellectual' circles, but because of trial and error and persistence. I tend not to believe in a 'socialist' future on the basis of reason or historical law but simply on the basis of persistence. The idea persists, the utopia stands present and is rebuilt, recast - at least that is part of the need now, and this will occur on the back of activity, example. Time and persistence.

But there is always a promise in philosophy, a love of the promise. The promise is perhaps even the very seat of philosophy, its heart and the motivation for the love it professes. This is not just because of its exemplarity as a performative, but at the very heart of the words. I promise, you promise, he/she promises, they promise, it promises. This impersonal locates the promise as promise, somehow simultaneously removes the promise from itself. The conjugation distorts in the transition from the personal to the impersonal. Like a genetic aberration the impersonal disrupts the genus.

Nietzsche calls to us to 'dare to make promises' and almost promises us the promise of the promise (the impersonal of the personal), the law of law-obedience. Does a promise presuppose responsibility? In the moment of the promise there is 'a taking responsibility for' the future, for the unknown, for what I can't take responsibility for it would seem. If I knew the future, however, I couldn't promise merely state. It would be historical almost. There is a fundamental difference between 'I promise' and 'I guarantee', more than merely the difference between an 'ought' and an 'is'.

'I promise' and 'I guarantee', one is my responsibility the other I should be responsible with, the promise is responsibility, a guarantee of response it seems. Yet the responsibility of response needs the *failure* of alternatives to the expected - the promise contains the possibility of being broken and it is this which enables it to be kept, somehow. Thus in attempting to read Heidegger, to read the question, a certain promise of response is or was suggested and yet is now, in some ways, to be broken.

I can respond in many ways, with many aspects of my body; intellect, passion, love, desire. Responses to Heidegger often appear to absolve themselves of the body and refuse the promise in only giving of the intellect.

Perhaps an impossible situation, but the possibility of giving back the body in the response is one that has been broached. Yet to respond with 'many aspects of my body' is far too complex, involves far too many mediums; artistic, poetic, intellectual and possibly even spiritual. Tendencies to orthodoxy seem bound up with any such attempt, tendencies to 'follow', to 'respond to Heidegger's call' in the sense of 'falling in behind'. Such response is blatantly a failed promise of response, clearly apparent to Heidegger himself when he declares that 'philosophy is essentially untimely because it is one of those few things that can never find an immediate echo in the present. When such an echo seems to occur, when a philosophy becomes fashionable, either it is no real philosophy or it has been misinterpreted and misused for ephemeral and extraneous purposes.' Both those named 'Heideggerians' and those named 'Derrideans' spring to mind as the phrase 'when a philosophy becomes fashionable' glides by our eyes.

Garbled garbage flowing around us like the effluent in a swimming pool. We swim in the sea and as we come up for a mouthful of air we taste shit. We turn our world into a wasteland with our bodies waste then bemoan the lack of space. We create hell and then demand heaven.

The poison of pollution, tasted in our mouths as we walk through the streets of the city, invading our lives, creating a truly vicious circle. We kill ourselves then blame the other.

To look at the filth that surrounds us and appeal beyond the city limits to the peace of the past is to fail to accept that we are the hell we desire to escape from. Yet can we ever escape without dreaming for our desires' fulfillment in a future utopia, where hopes transform into memories? Can we ever lose our dreams? ever fulfill our desires? would we die to succeed in this perennial quest?

As I read the news, scan the little articles of information about Bosnia or Belly, do I find a point to it all or does a futility merely accompany me? Imagine for a moment the image of a human being, naked, in a bare cell. Stand in the corner and take a look.

There is just the immediacy of the walls. Noone walked through a door, we are simply here, in this corner. Waking up, looking around, bright eyed but without a past, with no thought of a future, no sense of identity. Stop and begin to look at this image.

In a cell. The walls extend to our left and right, back in the corner, face diagonally across the space of the cell. The walls extend out and reach their end, folding back into the corner opposite. We can see it all without tilting our head at all, without even adjusting our eyes. The room fills our vision, it's size closes in and a sense of enclosure arises.

The walls consist of badly painted brickwork. A dull, light greenish colour. Shining back the bare tube light in splashes of luminescence. To touch they are cold. Place our hands, palm towards the walls, arms extended to our side, fingers outstretched, skin touch. Lean back gently on our hands, pressing ever so slightly against the clinical paintwork, sensing the gloss of the glass in the finish on the paint, the skin of the cell.

As we look forward, towards the other corner, we see a naked person, crouching on their haunches, head against their hands. They face us, yet ignore us, engaged in the process of eating straight from their hands. Their left hand contains something they're eager to consume, their hands, like plates, moving together frantically with their mouth, an animal gorging on their latest kill.

Their right hand stretches out behind them to full length, the fingers pressing against the floor, knuckles scraping, fingers bent slightly upwards, cupping. The naked skin of the persons shoulders, visible at the forefront of a filthy back that disappears out of sight, show the skeletal structure clearly. Ribs arching out of the skin, providing an echo of the collarbone as the back flows away from you.

The person is covered in shit. A small window high up on the opposite wall to the left opens out to a cloudfilled sky, the sort which provides no indication of the time of day, other than to distinguish it from night.

As we watch this disgusting display the person shits on the floor, and deftly scoops the steaming excrement into their mouths.

This image, this brief moment of hell, is the glimpse of ourselves we can get if we dare to give up on any meaning. Hell is not a prosecuting demon firing up the furnaces of a volcanic horror, but the grey, naked, imprisoned reality of the vicious circle of existence; eat, shit, die. Existence and excrement are as intertwined as life and death. I shit therefore I exist. Our lives are just that; ours. Our hell belongs to the same people.

Noone persecutes us except ourselves. No demons exist which defecate on our planet, bringing poison into our lungs and filth into our mouths. Our planet is not mutilated by morons who know no better, but by ourselves. We are no innocents standing by. To pretend to be innocent is to practice the inevitable passivity that will end in us excluding part of ourselves, attempting to amputate part of our own bodies. We are us all. The individual is the collective and the collective is an individual. We are one world and that means we are the murderers as well as the murdered. But no individual is an individual thought, no thinking only the one thought. We all have options, most often though we accept that I don't.

If we accept anything we choose it. to accept is to fail to reject, to default choose. Certain patterns of acceptance become so ingrained their role as choices becomes lost. Yet when we set a computer program for use we make default choices which then form the ground that constantly repeats as a base line for activity whenever the program is executed. Our own defaults aren't thought out by any individual person but by the individual collective that is 'us'. Wider and wider concentric ripples of choice layer themselves upon us, giving us a position, an identity. If we throw a stone into a point in the water it is the point of emanation for the ripples that we take as identifying where the stone fell. Reverse this process - the ripples excrete a stone from the water, jumping out of the water like a flying fish, only to land again forming new ripples of life. Thousands upon thousands of layers, overlapping, intermingling, separating, enfolding, like some amorphous vibrant monster that arises from the chaotic imagery. Ripples turning to waves in bright hues of orange, green, yellow, blue, purple, red, white, black. Repetition and order forms a movement of colour and shape as we stare outside the image watching the screen evolve. Yet with our own existence, with the very soul of our being, we are not able to stand outside. No image, no model, no theory, can fully describe this being that is our lives.

We can describe ourselves. We can be ourselves. Yet we cannot describe us being ourselves since that would still be merely description and would end up only describing our descriptions into further inscriptions. Such work is needed. Poetry, philosophy, science, the one joined through the other to its opposite. But this is merely one thought, albeit the longest in our story. Outside this thought is another, the acceptance of our being, the unthought thinking of our lives we can find in living; in shitting, in eating, in sleeping, in fucking. I fuck therefore I am.

To begin to accept ourselves is not to sit and want to die but to begin to live, a task we must constantly begin afresh each new morning. At the end of each day ask 'did I live today, or merely exist?' Everyone will merely exist most of the time and to accept that is to accept death in life and life in death. We should accept. Acceptance, however, is still a default. A baseline, a ground for living. We only see the ground as we go beyond and soar to the sun on waxladen wings, watching a figure emerge from the ground, rising tall. Our existence has to be accepted but can only be once we have created a moment of life, a small figure on this immense expanse of existence, then watched it fade out and die, just as the ripples of the pond eventually fade. As we crash to earth with a sickening crunch of bone and bowels.

Accept that ground, embrace the arsehole in the car and the moron in the missile silo and 'the devil you know'. Accept humanity as it is and hug it firmly to the chest - and then bring a knee up sharply in its groin, with all the force reserved for the rapist next door.

At a certain point it almost seems like the validation of my words is needed for a validation of myself to occur. The desire in the text is to be understood. I have a desire to be understood. My text has a desire to be understood. This 'understanding' however is itself in need of being understood. I want the other to see through my eyes.

In dialogue a successful moment comes when the moment of communion takes place. At that point the phrase 'I know what you mean' takes on its simple presence as a

point of contact and in this point of contact the communion, understanding, takes place.

Of course, the moment passes. Most easily if we begin to ask why. How is it I understand them? What is it I have understood? Here the question takes the dialogue and rips its heart out, displacing the communion and replacing it with possession. This seems to leave us at once in a situation where a recourse to reason is lost and we are bereft of anything other than an intuitionistic leap, a phenomenon of communion that simply occurs yet is itself inexplicable.

Such a suggestion divorces the moment of communion from its historical and situational embeddedness within a social life which it presupposes. Without the inter-relationship of the I and the Other - or, rather, of I and the Other, - the moment of communion is incomprehensible. The moment of communion relates and connects, it is the moment of connection, the point of pain, and is thus a transcendental moment (of necessity). It appears as a transcendence of I into a situation of We. As such, however, it would (of necessity) be one-sided - it is the transcendence of I toward the Other - and yet this asymmetrical transcendence would be (of necessity) unconsummable. For communion to exist, for it to be consummated, it must, it seems, appear as union - the term communion posited as it suggests this union of community, such a community comprising at least two, though why should it be limited to no more?

As a moment, a fleeting transience, it is always past. It always 'happened', it is always a lost exchange which, when looked at, is immediately lost.

As a lovers joining sight is lost in silence, so communion is inexpressible - this gives it the character that could enable it to be dismissed as merely intuitionistic mysticism. As past, as happened, as memory, however, the moment can be situated, providing that its discrete character as a moment is not held to but rather disrupted by placing it or allowing it to come to us as past, as this temporalised beyond-us. As past communion can be reconstructed in order to attempt to bridge the gap of its absolute uniqueness in a categorisation. As unique the communion is inexpressible, but as it is (of necessity) communal the shared character of the point enables some purchase to be had in developing it as a concept, thus as expressible to others, precisely because it is in its original uniqueness a shared event, precisely because it is a *communion*.

Blanchot quotes Nietzsche as saying 'there is nothing more banal than death' and in so doing attempts to grasp the experience of death. 'Thus in voluntary death it is still extreme passivity that we perceive'. I want to note here in using this passage that the passivity of the suicide, the grasping of death, the taking death seriously that engenders the suicide, is precisely what is gone against in the act of the martyr.

The withdrawal of suicide is an act that aims at no more acts, whilst the martyr thrusts their act forward, holding themselves out into the Nothing, holding it out into the future with a faith akin to the priest holding the crucifix out in the face of the horror of evil. 'The imbecile gasped dumbstruck at the Englishman: an extremely silly expression darted across his handsome face. Something like an absurd joy began to open his mouth, he crossed his arms over his naked chest and finally gazed at us with ecstatic eyes. 'Martyrdom...' he uttered in a voice that was suddenly feeble and yet tore out like a sob. 'Martyrdom...'. A bizarre hope of purification had come to the wretch, illuminating his eyes'. It is in this last line that a certain fluidity arises and we

are drawn into the passion, perhaps, of the story, of the sexual debauchery of the narrator and Simone; yet in this scene of sacrilegious and orgiastic brutality we find a certain ambiguity entering into the situation, a certain futility of the Bacchanalian violence brought into relief by the 'purity' of meaning .

The very purity of experience that is aimed at in the violent exercise of desire that the central characters enact is lost in the climactic moment of this pursuit.

9 January 1997

With the blank page and the figures of formation that found my words out here, I hope to find solace. To find: solace. To find what? Solace is written.

Let's say, for the sake of simply saying, that it is solace found and fretted upon in this page and amongst this scrawled vanity. What would it be that is this solace, or do we avoid things by simply repeating maxims that refuse any use of 'consists of' (Wittgenstein, Zettel). Of what would solace consist of?

A principal aspect in the writing seems, after all has been taken in if not taken on, is a desire for duration. Mediate, immediate, absent, present, vapour, ether and air; always a notion of duration whenever there is an attempt to grasp. And how can writing ever avoid the grasping? Language perhaps avoids it, even written language; shopping lists and the like-minded simplicities of banal everydayness (Foucault, What is an author?). Writing, however, also attempts a duration or rather is forced into a space of duration from which it rises, baptised (Hegel, Introductory lectures to aesthetics). The grasping creates the space both for the grasped, the graspable and for graspability. As though the possibility of writing creates writing.

At what point does the mysterious force trouble these proceedings?

How can writing ever avoid the grasping?

I attempt to grasp her. He attempts to grasp me. They attempt to grasp it. He, she, we, ad infinitum. Or we can dodge and weave. I refuse their grasping; I reject them, stand stock still and exist. But then how do I exist?

The pen scratches, lines form, and stock still stand my words. The trail left behind me, my notebook padded with words and thoughts and history. Duration. Dates.

(21 August 1996

The print out has margins, a facet of the paper, of the text on paper, that is lost on-screen. There are no margins on-line. I cannot scribble down the side of the words, in that border that exists on the page and which, if written in, alters the page because it is re-formed with the comment. The 'taking in' of the text seems easier when I can enclose it with commentary, dialogue, focus and emphasis; when I can make it 'mine'.)

As long as I stand, I stand.

As long as it stands, he/she/it stands.

It stands if.

?

Watching the name of the rose I remember a remarkable sense of loss as the library burned and Aristotle's comedy perished. Duration isn't permanence but postponed perishability.

Of what though; surely none naive enough to believe in the author anymore. Although still, perhaps, we can allow a little authority back in.

Durability, death, disease, decay. One set of images perhaps, themes overlapping (or should we speak of tropes, metaphors, grids, matrices, blah, blah, inverted commas abounded, Derrida). Another image, that of the fuck. Base copulation built upon theoretical grounds of intersubjectivity: one or many, her and me, me and him, blah, blah.

(Echoes)

But we're still left with this (no of course I can't see it, touch it, smell it; but the shadow on my page, the heat on my legs, the scratch of my pen are all here). Can I grasp it? Even refusal opens doors.

Late, deep into the night, eyes singed and balls stung with blades and stitches, words again. Always the words, beginning again and again. Always the fuck, beginning again and again.

(8/9/96)

She has ejaculated life, primal base screaming as foetal pressure opened her vagina to bursting distortion, stretched, manipulated and forcing the body to expel reality. So a body moves between us.

Then this reality also seeps into the touch, making the caress orgasmic such that it makes even the word orgasm irrelevant; words irrelevant. Talk and writing work on a distance of the very body that comes between us; our bodies, her body, mine, the body of our lives. As a body imposes itself so our body exposes itself.

As in the morning; as we reimpose ourselves on a day; a renewal of the attempt to go beyond the average. This too is like a morning, a very early eye-scratching morning that forces us out whilst we simply call to return. And like the morning, new days come in its wake.

Relax, hear the pen scratch, taste the sounds of mundanity as we wait for the coffee to boil and the croissants to soften and warm in the oven.)

Do we slide beneath their grasp?

Or still stock still stock?

stock-still-stock-still-stock-still-stock

Like listening to the stream of popular music, of the atmosphere of a time. Through the stream moments appear, isolated in their closeness. Through the moments the stream beyond appears, the past stream of events of this event. At this moment we vent our existence as we experience the event of our past, of our duration.

The fragments work, if they work at all, in analogous fashion. They stream past the eyes; even if the words falter and tend to distance occasionally, as when I drift off occasionally whilst being spoken to yet still in thought, eyes slide back and forth across the page. Pages turn, texts scroll.

I'm sitting listening to a compilation tape, excerpts of another time, though it's only specific location for me is 'my past'. Not just 'past' but 'my past'. This is partly due to its being specific to me, though this is neither decisive nor indeterminable. The important thing about it being mine is precisely its mineness, the fact that the possibility exists of an identification. That the possibility of identification exists does not mean that any final fact of identification results, it simply enables the fact of identification to have possibility.

The fuck is the basic metaphor for the writer.

Prose is not abstract but a concrete entity, it is the paper with the ink, the screen with the electrons, and as such the prose must be affected by the machine - handle the book, a favourite book, then go back to a favourite text kept on the computer. No difference? Their very distinguishability as experience(s) denotes a difference - the question revolves around the quality of that difference and only the experience tells us this. ... the aesthetic sensuality of the book. The same applies to the fuck. Read a favourite fuck, then go fuck.

'In appearance and by comparison with the methodological practices of the age Hegel's approach is far less philosophical than Schelling's. Schelling operates with pairs of opposites derived from Kant and Fichte - freedom and necessity, essence and appearance - (opposites that coincide much more directly in Fichte's thought and his own than they do in Kant); and he uses them in such a way as to turn epistemology wholly into ethics. And in this ethics anything which is not the subject of praxis, becomes a mere object (or in Hegel's terminology, is merely 'positive'.) This world of lifeless objectivity is identical with the Kantian world of 'appearances'. Only through praxis does man come into contact with true reality, with essence.' G.Lukacs.

You.

'I am in words, made of words, the words of others.' (Samuel Beckett, *The Unnameable*; quoted in *London Review of Books*, 14 November '96, P.10)

Go fuck. At least he's fucking in words. Fucking come here you little bastard, I'm gonna mash your fucking face in. In words. My fucking words, fucking with you, fucking you. Fuck you. I'm gonna slice you up and stick you back together in my way, you fucking arseholes. I'm gonna fuck you up. I'm gonna make you scream in pain as I contort your body in an agony of ecstasy. Fuck you. I'm gonna fuck you and I'm gonna fucking make you want to be fucked up; you're gonna beg me to fuck you up. Fucking in words. Fucking fuck.

I refuse to read Beckett now.

You fucking fuck.

(This is all lies).

You.

17th February 1997.