Expanded and Integrated Entries from the Orthogonal Encyclopedia on Nature

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INTRODUCTION TO

EXPANDED AND INTEGRATED ENTRIES FROM THE ORTHOGONAL ENCYCLOPEDIA ON NATURE

-Literary Considerations

Romanticism and Magical Realism are often taken to be in opposition to Rationalism—Magical Realism opposed to plain Realism opposed to Romanticism opposed to Rationalism—or, the mysterious located in the obvious, the obvious rejecting the mysterious, the mysterious rejecting the abstract, respectively. The mysterious treated as both more real and more glorious than the abstract, the obvious treated as more real than the mysterious, and the mysterious re-treated as equally real to the obvious, and more glorious than it. All the way through, reformulations of reason gave rise to reformulations of aesthetics. The reformulations revolved around the relationship between the observer and the observed, the subject and the object, and in (post-)postmodern literature, a subject-text-object-text-subject relationship; style constituted the reapplications of reason.

As of late (that is, within the last century and a half), the Analytic philosophical tradition has undergone several groundbreaking reiterations. Among them, those of Ludwig Wittgenstein, Saul Kripke, W.V. Quine, and David Lewis, among a host of others. We’ll take Lewis to be our paradigmatic proponent of the philosophical movement Modal Realism.

Rationalism has its roots in Descartes’ mechanical-extensional metaphysics. “Those are all the principles of which I avail myself touching immaterial or metaphysical objects, from which I most clearly deduce these other principles of physical or corporeal things, namely, that
there are bodies extended in length, breadth, and depth, which are of diverse figures and are moved in a variety of ways” (Descartes, *The Principles of Philosophy*, Letter of the Author).

Descartes relates the thinking subject to the thought-of object as analogous to the relationship between the immaterial to the material, respectively. Leibniz’s contribution is to immaterialize the object: “It can be said that every substance bears in some sort the character of God’s infinite wisdom and omnipotence, and imitates him as much as it is able to; for it expresses, although confusedly, all that happens in the universe, past, present and future, deriving this a certain resemblance to an infinite perception or power of knowing” (Leibniz, *Discourse on Metaphysics*, IX). According to both philosophers, the relationship the subject bears to the object is an intellectual one with ultimately theological basis—if one wants to make sense out of the material world in which one finds oneself, one must intellect divinity. In the case of Descartes, objectivity is preserved in mechanical extension; the explanation for reality remains visible, but all that is visible is determined. For Leibniz, objectivity in intensional, all that is visible is divisible, the underlying explanation for even immediate objectivity is invisible. Two things happen simultaneously to one considering Leibniz’s theory: the subject and object are assimilated to one another (both intensional in nature), and the subject is alienated from the immediate objective world (reality really being impalpable and intellectual, rendering concrete perceptions metaphysically/epistemically subordinate to abstract intellections).

Romanticism has significant American expression in Emerson, notably in his essay *Nature*. “Strictly speaking, all that is separate from us, all which Philosophy distinguishes as the NOT ME, that is, both Nature and Art, all other men and my own body, must be ranked under this name. ... *Nature*, in the common sense, refers to essences unchanged by man; space, the
air, the river, the leaf. *Art* is applied to mixture of his will with the same things, as in a house, a canal, a statue, a picture” (Emerson, *Nature*, Introduction), “… this mercenary benefit [that of commodity] is one which has respect to a farther good. A man is fed, not that he may be fed, but that he may work” (Emerson, *Nature*, Commodity). “The ancient Greeks called the world *kosmos*, beauty. Such is the constitution of all things, or such the plastic power of the human eye, that the primary forms, as the sky, the mountain, the tree, the animal, give us a delight *in and for themselves*; ... And as the eye is the best composer, so light is the first of painters. ... The world thus exists to the soul to satisfy the desire of beauty” (Emerson, *Nature*, Commodity). Objects *in and for themselves* possess ontological priority over a soul-ful subject.

Our Realist is Steinbeck and our Realist text *The Chrysanthemums*. Elisa Allen is wearing “a man’s black hat”; of the travelling man’s wagon’s side, “The black paint had run down in little sharp points beneath each letter.” The story is littered with inanimate subjects, many of which occupy a dummy category (the “it is” and “there are” predications), lending an ontology to the natural world which is on par with that of the subject interacting with the natural world. Note, however, the descriptions of some of the interpersonal encounters, such as that between Elisa and the travelling fixer, “She looked deep into his eyes, searchingly. Her mouth opened a little, and she seemed to be listening”, or that between Elisa and Henry Allen, upon Henry’s vain compliments, “‘Nice? You think I look nice? What do you mean by “nice”?’ ... ‘I am strong? Yes, strong. What do you mean by “strong”?’” In addition, Elisa’s internal states are only ever revealed in whispers—it is too subjective to afford access to her *thoughts*. She cannot think. She is assimilated to her representations, which are reflected in the objective world which is characterizable with half-kick words like “nice” and “strong”. There is struggle, inter- and we
may intuit intrapersonally, for subjective states—but these are elided; objective relations prevail.

Our Magical Realist text is a rough one, Bukowski’s “Jimmy Crispin” story, the second piece in his first *Notes of a Dirty Old Man* collection. A losing baseball team’s owner and manager wallow over the season—worst team in the league with no chance at the pennant. Au contraire, enter winged Jimmy Crispin, manna, their newfound ace in the hole who “could play the whole outfield”, upon whose arrival the manager who is our narrator bets $1000 on his team 250-1 odds, set up to make a killing. Set up to get put down: what else should happen but the manager’s bookie strip J.C. of his wings the day of the last game. These events already reveal an indeterminacy in the world, a chance-hood which yields a Jimmy Crispin, which loosens a Realist collar; they too reveal a determinism, a fate-hood guaranteeing a crooked bookie’ fix on the odds. This is a roughly Magical Realist world’s interpretation of chance and fate; in a world like this one, somebody who doesn’t like their lot can do something about it, like shoot a crooked bookie in the head. That is what the manager does, of course, who does not bat an eye at the worldly pleas and offers the bookie makes—not all of his possessions amount to this retribution for J.C.’s wings, the manager’s luck, a little change with which to contest fate. “God over Man; Man over God. mother preserved strawberries while everything was so very sick. ... [in prison post-assassination] I was still a little alive and I walked back across the floor, sat upon that prison pot without a lid and began to shit, x-major league manager, x-man, and a slight wind came through the bars a slight way to go”. I would interpret these lines, but justice to them would span three more pages.
The thread by which I track these revolutions is a direction of fit: in the relationship of subject to object, Man to Nature, etc., one of the two is always treated as having scope over the other. For the Rationalist’s, the subject has scope over the object and Nature was a set of propositions and equations; for the Romanticist’s, the totality of objects has scope over the subject and Nature possesses trans-anthropic mystery; for the Realist’s, the totality of objects has scope over the subject insofar as objectivity absorbs subjectivity, or irons it out, and that is only almost mysterious; for the Magical Realist, objectivity’s rewriting subjectivity is very mysterious, and the process’s points of mystery call scope into question all together. Though Rationalism never died, Modal Realism revives that half of it half-dead, that reality is plausibly mappable; it re-instantiates subject-over-object scope by mapping the mysteries across modalities, modal realms consisting of states of affairs. It is designed to be a more concrete abstraction than Cartesian mechanics or Leibnizian monadology; “There are ever so many ways that world might be; and one of these many ways is the way that this world is. … There are countless other worlds, other very inclusive things. … The worlds are something like remote planets; … [they do not] overlap; they have no parts in common, with the exception, perhaps, of immanent universals [singular properties instantiated across a plurality of entities] exercising their characteristic privilege of repeated occurrence” (Lewis, On the Plurality of Worlds, A Philosopher’s Paradise).

I endorse Modal Realism for its theoretical elegance and viability, but I am reluctant to afford concrete ontology to entities fundamentally physically disjoined from the only concrete entities I have ever encountered or have any chance of encountering, those of the actual world. Lewis vies for Modal Realism on the grounds of its theoretical utility and, again, that is very real,
but if our metaphysics is more important to us than our logic, then we ought to re-prioritize. Romanticism drew blood of mystery from Nature’s stone before Rationalism wholly petrified it; Magical Realism has located mystery in reality’s obviousness—I find it in reality’s necessity of the relationship between objectivity and subjectivity, that necessity overriding the strict necessity of subjectivity and its implications for the relationships between subjects. If our metaphysics is to have modal logic applied to it, and we are describing fictional metaphysics, then we must locate a mystery in the modality of actuality.¹

-Philosophical Considerations

In writing *Expanded and Integrated Entries from the Orthogonal Encyclopedia on Nature*, I have sought out apostrophic means to achieve an end that is ultimately Orphic in nature. Apostrophe, in *Entries*, serves to test its conceptual efficacy against solipsism, the root of all skepticism. In so doing, it is originally set against the self, resulting in a confusion of identity, the repair of which is then undertaken by the confused selves.

The apostrophe is employed in *Entries* to complicate beyond possibility any metalanguage. The self-encounter is such that a contradiction arises and multiplies in reduction form. Metalanguage imparts a thwarting authority to voice anathema to the ultimate Orphic end. The premisory contradiction relativizes any subsequent logic derived, subjecting the metaphysics to a mood in concordance with the purpose.

To partake of some metalanguage is to afford that language Knowledge. Even such knowledge being of strictly modal ontologies, for being so it does three things we don’t like. One, it remains that it is Knowledge, and Knowledge is eternal, and therefore indubitable.
Indubitability does not allow for the necessary volatilty of moment-to-moment possibility, i.e. indeterminacy. Two, it determines the entities of the knowledge to be modal in ontology, and cheapens any appreciation for any knowledge of any value beyond the modal world. This is important because one, we do this, we employ modal Knowledge in the form of actual Knowledge all of the time, i.e. we learn from the non-/fictional media we intercept, and two, because it is in concordance with the aim to address the actual ontology of modal entities within the actual world, as such affords one opportunity to abridge the Knowledges. Three, it does not allow the abridging of the modal with the actual, as it acts as the very differentiation between them.

The text considers the conceptual possibility and theoretical implication of anachronism. There are only two possible models of time one could design on a world that allows anachronisms. One: time is spatial; it is possible to travel across time by traveling across space; all of time always present, every possible moment taking place somewhere across space, moments’ passage the passing into a reinstatiation of a moment simultaneously passing into another. Two: time is not strictly spatial; it is only possible to move forward in time; moments of anachronism generate infinite loops along their temporal parameters. Entries treats of time within the latter model. The anachronism of the self-encounter thus generates a loop in compensation for the contradiction.

The entities and events of Entries are set in psy-fi. Time is like a veil in the world; time is the motion of matter, and matter is therefore the veil over eternity. It thus take material apparati, such as those afforded by cranial and techno-scientific orchestrations, to break the seal that is the veil. Allusions within this and other mytho-philosophical domains of discourse
are esoteric and subjective and intended only liminally to activate something I have heard called cultural zeitgeist.

The value of the technautic devices employed adds up to their concordance with the ends meant for the epistemic tools held at hand. The apparati are involved so as to render conceptually feasible a means of artificial time-travel and the possibility of anachronism. A minimalist approach is not taken in the employment of the apparati. Rather, whim and excess run sprawling amok in the aftermath of the conflation. They are needed, too, to reveal room in a world that is a closed system for something external to that closed system.

The technological apparatus employed is weaponized and observational. Observational in the extreme to establish theoretically exhaustive informational access to the natural world. Weaponized to characterize the mythological camp that launches such an operation.

It is by the conceptual exhaustion of information the text sets classical determinism at odds with indeterminacy. A modal world is a spatio-temporo-factual collection of events. In an ordered world (the world in *Entries* is ordered) the events are organized as spatial arrangements preceding and following one another in time; as such, an ordered world is a deterministic world. The world may consist of any temporal ordering of spatial arrangements and still be ordered, in so far as it is in this way determined. Call an ordered world which is ordered across time according to consistent natural laws a well-ordered world (designations like ‘ordered’, ‘well-ordered’, ‘world’ are borrowings from logic likely only loosely paralleling their logical usages). The world in *Entries* is a well-ordered world. It at this point is
deterministic. As such, in theory a snapshot of the kosmos accompanying a complete outline of the natural governing laws should yield the totality of historical and predictive information.

In a well-ordered world, the unknown is indeterminate insofar as it is conceivable and undiscovered. The unknown is a manifold of possibility, possibility being the conceivability of the fact that is unknown, i.e. possibility as that fact in accord with collective knowledge of the well-ordered world which does not render a contradiction against that knowledge. The nature of the well-ordered world is such that the unknown fact is determined apart from observation, and only indeterminate epistemically, not metaphysically. However, metaphysical determinism is founded on a logic founded on, at least, the law of non-contradiction. So being, in order to necessitate a connection between the law of non-contradiction and the metaphysics, logic and metaphysics must be same in kind, i.e. either one must be a subcategory of the other, or the two one and the same. Any direction of fit will render metaphysics logical, logic a system taken to accurately describe facts in propositions, propositions concepts taken to be possible objects of propositional attitudes.

Thus, operating according to the metaphysics of a well-ordered world, which is a closed system, epistemic indeterminacy is not sufficient for metaphysical indeterminacy, as the well-ordered world treats of facts as determinate independently of propositional determination.

A well-ordered world allowing of propositional knowledge is required to make one reservation with respect to propositional knowledge, it a representation of facts, as itself a fact of the world: propositional content cannot represent to itself a state of affairs including the propositional content within a finite amount of time. Representing itself to itself reproduces the
content ad infinitum, and we are taking propositional content to be diachronic in nature across the unknown-known transition. Such renders a diachronically finite accumulation of knowledge incapable of producing a propositional snapshot of the kosmos. One conceptual solution goes so: though the development or construction of the all-representative proposition is shown to take an infinite amount of time, such a proposition remains a possible object of knowledge. Conception or interpretation are symbolic in such a way as to unite under an individual representation an arbitrary allotment of propositional content. A moment of conception or interpretation, then, even if it is to be necessarily diachronic is temporally reducible to a finite, mortal time. Such a proposition would be unanalyzable in a finite time in the well-ordered world, as a complete analysis would take an infinite number of propositions produced diachronically. This possibility renders the part-to-whole relation between propositional attitudes (which are objects of the world) and the world a piecewise one: possible finite natural objects of propositions may be composed of an infinite quantity of individualizable, basic, finite units of information. That is to say that the whole that is our well-ordered world as a set contains members which are themselves sets with an infinite number of members. This in a finite world.

Such being the case allows for the possibility of encountering in the finite world a finite representation of an infinite sequence of information translatable to metaphysical logic. It is conceivable of an infinite sequence that it possesses a sequence translatable to a propositional snapshot of the kosmos. Where to find the conceptual instruments we need so as to locate a finite propositional operation yielding an infinite sequence of information? One place is mathematics.
Irrational numbers may be the theoretically infinite products of conceptually finite mathematical operations. We have the concept of a finite number. We have the concept of multiplying a finite number by itself, and by our natural ability to invert ideas we have a concept of calculating the roots of a number, those numbers which when multiplied together yield the number we are rooting. At least we have the capacity. For we may claim that we at least have the ability, if not the time, to square any number, we at least know how to, but we do not know how to take the square root of just any number, only those with finite roots, for we calculate roots by trial and error of calculating squares of finite numbers. To see there is conceivably another way we must first understand that the notion of infinite sequences of irrational numbers is rooted in the theoretically infinite divisibility of magnitude and that both the conceivability that we could and our inherent confidence that we at least know how to square any number is rooted in the theoretically infinite extension of magnitude. Our knowledge of how to square a number can thus be seen to be magnitudinal in nature, as would be a knowledge of rooting a number. The shared feature of these magnitudinal operations is their performance along ratios. The formal nature of the inverted ratio of roots and other rational numbers need not be outlined; the concept of some operation along ratios producing the needed infinitude of propositional content (via some irrationalization) gets us the logical possibility of a snapshot of the kosmos we want.

A well-ordered world is eventually dense; that is, events are interrelated seamlessly; well-ordering rules of eventual interaction are carried out continuously. As such, it is conceivable that an isolable event have consequences affecting the totality of the system, the world, per its singular happening. The formulation of a proposition—a thought—may very well
constitute such an event in this system. This is made possible by the fact that mental objects are indeed physical objects of the world, the world one of metaphysically materialist Realism on the surface. Irrationalization, then, is made possible by the fact that mental objects thus stand in a part to whole relation to the world: the mental object as part may conceivably be set to the rest of the world as whole in such a way as to render a mathematical comparison between the two irrational. In order for this to be possible, events (i.e. mental events and worldly events to which the mental are set) must be mathematically definable. This is true in virtue of the fact that we have already established our metaphysics to be categorically homogenous with our logic (be the two hylomorphically, hyponymously, or identically related), and in virtue of the fact that our logic is mathematically dependent. Our logic needs math insofaras we want to individuate the objects in our world (i.e. quantify them) and insofaras we want to universalize our eventual laws (those analytically necessitated by the well-ordering of the world as we have defined such) describing events taking place across space and/or time: one must quantize spacetime to universalize the laws.

Thus we have a conceptual modeling for an immediate method of interpreting/receiving the propositional content encoded in an irrational infinitude via the conceivability of a quantifiably irrational thought. Such is immediate insofaras the propositional content encoded in the irrational sequence presents itself in the very seat of knowledge. It would be mediate were the sequence present in an object outside of the mind and had to be observed. As one can likely tell, at some point in the process, the irrational sequence must enter the mind if it is to be known. Thus, the immediate thought-irrationalization was chosen over another, mediate
kind so as to simultaneously avoid this unnecessary indirection and give a partial demonstration of the state of mind (in relation to world) one must be in to receive such a thought.

Now say we have such a thought. Recall that a well-ordered world is metaphysically determined and only epistemically indeterminate. The epistemic indeterminacy arising from the earlier stated radical unattainability of a snapshot of the kosmos (that it would take an infinite amount of time to represent to oneself the infinite reproductions of the representations), Entries treats of as the fundamental dilemma giving rise to solipsism. It is the same unattainability of knowledge of the self, as knowledge of the self requires knowledge of the self’s knowledge which is knowledge of the self . . . ad infinitum. This unattainability serves as evidence of a limitation delimiting the self which is a limitation on knowledge, i.e. only that within the self is known, i.e. if there is any proof, there is only proof that the self exists, thus (if anything exists) only the self exists. So too we derive the conclusions that that which is not perceived is indeterminate, and that which is perceived may or may not very well not resemble reality. I.e. skepticism. Recall that solipsism qua skepticism’s taproot is/are obstructions to our Orphic end, which is to make room within the closed system of solipsism for something external to the system. If the text can render solipsism implausible, then the rending moment can be taken and transduced to the solipsism of another being/entity/character (which plurality of solipsisms is incoherent to the definition solipsism), and our Orphic end achieved.

Indeterminacy and determinism are set at odds so: we only know the world is metaphysically determinate from the external perspective afforded us on this side (the actual side) of modality; within the world, epistemic and metaphysical indeterminacy are indistinguishable. Metaphysical circumstance is known epistemically; metaphysical
circumstance, then, only attains of the degree of determinism of the epistemics. The
metaphysics are only known to be determinate (for an observer within the modal world)
insofar as the epistemics are determinate; because the epistemics are indeterminate, the
determinacy of the determinacy of the metaphysics is indeterminate, rendering the
determinacy of the metaphysics indeterminate (again, for this populant) to the same degree
the epistemics is indeterminate. In that state, the indeterminacy can be boiled down to the
following: either total knowledge of the metaphysics at a given moment could guarantee a
prediction of the future and review of the past (; and the metaphysics is determinate), or total
knowledge guarantees neither prediction nor review (; and the metaphysics is indeterminate),
and neither possibility can be confirmed over the other with only partial knowledge of the
world’s metaphysics. Only from the external perspective of actuality on the fictional world’s
modality can a proposition like, The fictional world is metaphysically determinate, be justified.

Positing, then, in the well-ordered world, a thought-object representing the
metaphysical totality to the fictional epistemic subject places that subject in a position parallel
the external meta-knowing one; its internality to the modality, however, brings about an
irruption, and the subject, upon self-addressed apostrophe, inflates. The knowledge going
beyond solipsistic limits renders selfhood incoherent, subjectivity/objectivity mutually inclusive.
Initially, repair is undertaken, to redefine selfhood in its extra-solipsistic relations to the rest of
the world, and one way it is reconciled is in a kind of reunion which identifies a plurality of
unique subjects sharing in that status of subjectivity; such preserves selfhood in pluralizing it.
This, however, is quickly recognized to be illusion; either the moment passes and radical
heterogeneity between selves is revealed, or an eternity of plural selfhood is entered by the
subjects. In the case of the eternal plurality, selfhood depends on our consideration of the unique selves in relation to selfhood; in an analysis taking the whole to be simple and parts composite, selfhood retains plurality, but the moment we reverse the direction and take the parts to be simple to the composite whole, radical heterogeneity is revealed and the illusion dissolves. Solipsism re-emerges.

The subsequent solution, then, is to identify a plurality of subjects and, in self-erasure, redefine selfhood in terms of another’s. This is epitomized in the Orphic resurrection that is our ultimate end. It is indeed the one state making possible the eternal (re)union taking the whole of subjectivity for simple.

Within the actual world, this is a conceptual impossibility, yet it is the only conceptual circumstance abridging epistemic statuses between the actual and fictional world. As such, it analogizes the relation between the actual epistemic subject and actual metaphysical world. As a conceptual impossibility in the actual world, however, the analogy as well is rendered impossible; any analogy, though, if there is any analogy between the modal and actual worlds, must cross this epistemic boundary between actual and fictional epistemic subjects. This is to show that if we are to predicate anything metaphysical with certainty of the actual world, we must cross a similar epistemic boundary (between actual metaphysics and actual epistemics, similar to that between actual epistemics and modal epistemics), which crossing renders actual selfhood incoherent. The conclusion is drawn from the facts that indeterminism is the thing giving rise to solipsism giving rise to skepticism; certainty dissolves selfhood; the closed system opens up.
Modal Realism, as a movement within the Analytic tradition, equates with, if it does not exceed, Rationalism in its level of abstraction, as well as in its aptitude for describing the relationship the subject holds to the object. Entries constitutes reaction to and appropriation of Modal Realism, which I mean to endeavor in likeness to Romanticism’s reaction to Rationalism and in succession to Magical Realism’s (post-)postmodern subject-text-object-text-subject treatment of Realism. The reaction is meant to be in reconciliation of the analytic applicability of Modal Realism with the most plausible and concrete ontology that can be afforded it in relation to the raw reality of being a subject. The ontology comes in the form of gnosis, the gnoses the logical conclusions of the philosophical system striking upon mystical necessities for having certain kinds of knowledge and the implications of the possibilities and actualities of that knowledge.

Bacchanalian means are employed to elicit several gnoses. Various symbols into which human bodies are shaped produce the effect of a kind of insurmountable conquest of the human; contortion and inscription conflagrate upon themselves in the attempt to place the body within categories which do not make sense of a categorizer. The subjectivity thwarts the objectification. The first gnosis in Entries is of the raving body of the self; it is reacted to with the first apostrophe in the text, which is addressed to the self, whence ensue the metaphysical implications for this person in this position. So operate the gnoses upon the subject that they must be reacted to. They are reacted to in such a way as to reconcile the protagonist’s necessary mundane origins with these newfound metaphysical conclusions. Upon each gnosis, origins are reworked in such a way as to satisfy consistency of the gnosis with the system of beliefs to which the gnosis is introduced.
Theoretical psycho-technological applications constitute a means employed to make scientific sense of and more or less plausibly give rise to the gnoses. Physical apparati instantiate theoretically necessary conditions for the gnoses, which deal very much so with causal relations\(^2\). A Chinese-box technique is employed in ordering textual transitions so as to make non-sense of the gnoses; it is mediated within the state of eternity which followed the contradiction of the apostrophe in reaction to the original gnosis brought on by the psycho-technological apperati—it is mediated within an eternity transferrable across finite times within itself, this enabling the Chinese-boxes to transition between (meta-)physical states while preserving an epistemic constant, the state of belief, content of knowledge, etc. These means are intended to serve in the dissolution of the modality, locating the fiction in the actuality, which becomes locating actuality in actuality.

Another means employed is something like tautological immediacy, employed to render the physical text an object of the actual world and thereby guarantee its actual partiality as a modal totality. This tautology is summed up in Entries’ Epilogue: “The accounts beforetold come from a book I found buried deep in Trash Alley. It was called, The Long Sentence. It is a collection of all the possible sentences in the language. From it, I have extracted and integrated these respective accounts, which extractions, of course, had already been integrated elsewhere in the text, it containing all the possible sentences, including, of course, before I ever wrote it, this very one.” The fictional premise, if taken literally, gives rise to paradoxical predetermination: a modal object like The Long Sentence, as a modal product of a modal world which is a product of the actual world, theoretically codifies the totality of the actual world and thereby determines it across past and future; it positions the text as a sub-set of a sub-set of
itself and, the text a sub-set of the actual world, positions the actual as a sub-set of The Long Sentence trapping the actual world and the modal world in a strange and dangerous go-between threatening to logically annihilate them both! That is not serious, but the tautological immediacies do generate coincidentally necessary intersections across the actual/modal distinction which are conducive to our end locating the latter within the former.

There are philosophical expositions in the text of some the theoretical issues making possible the gnoses. The expositions are intended to elaborate some of the philosophical context for the conceptual possibilities of the affairs and dramatic motivations. They are, however, deliberately cursory. Premisoriy dialectical, a conclusion is not meant to be drawn, but questions drawn out. The expositions are not comprehensive but compensatory for the reader in want of account, and for that reader provocative. They also lend ammunition to the gnoses. Tangentially, there is an emphasis on the relationship between the characters dialecting on the dilemmas, put to privilege intra-intersubjective discourse. There is also emphasis on a comedic element within the dialectical—the further one speaker walks out on the plank of abstraction, the greater the mirth with which the opponent reels the advocate back to shore. The emphases in combination are designed so as to fit the reader into a space, in which space dramatic imagery underwrites argumentative treatise. The gnoses occur in such a space—event affecting knowledge effecting event; the emphases serve to acquaint the reader with such a space, the gnoses thereby becoming more real (at that distance from reality), more plausibly applicable to reality.

-Linguistic Considerations
Phono-/morphological co-activation is evaluated according to multiplicity (of co-activation) and phonotactic plausibility. Spelling is frequently manipulated to achieve semantic co-activation by means of phono-morphological co-activation. Where lexicality is sacrificed, phonology, morphology, and pictography are substituted; these treated of independently and also treated of etymologically are taken to generate meaning, and these lexical sacrifices for meaning are taken to be justified upon a criterion of co-activation, whereby such co-activation, multi-lexicality is promoted.

One-and-a-half speakers possess a dialectal quirk—the omission of any relative pronoun. Resultative ambiguity within this dialect is suffered in exchange for benefits of distinguishing the speaker(s) and establishing within the voice a means for sudden syntactic dissolutions and immediate ignitions of actions; these are especially congenial to the Bacchanalian scenes and transitions.

NOTES

1 The brief historical sketch of the previous traditions is not intended to serve as a mapping of a determinate, accurate progression of literary movement through history, but appeal to a particular chain of implication revealing a particular vein of general literary aesthetic and philosophico-logical development. It would surely be of rich interest to consider the implications of categorizing a text like Chaucer’s Adam Sciveyn as Magical Realist, or DFW’s Good Old Neon Romantic.
For example, the thought-touch is inadvertent to the observational capacity of the satellitic apparatus. The measuremental prowess of those instruments in their penetrability is dependent on a causative principle—as the only to measure a thing is to influence and register the influence. The thought-touch is had in such a way as to communicate register to the satellites which are in measuremental communication with another entity, and that register translate to those causal measurements, presenting the thought-touch-irrationalization to that latter entity. The satellites are thus designed to provide continuous physical interconnectivity between the entities.
Out the banality comes tragedy, but it gets better, so hang in there, Luckycat.

-Luckycat and the Buzzer, excerpt from The Orthogonal Encyclopedia on Nature
Prologue

When the planet fired old Uncle Sam out of a cannon straight up at escape velocity, and the incredibly gifted pessimists of those pessimistic times signed up for the revolution, and *Occupy the Gulf* and *Uncle Sam Evicted* tags came to cover every edifice in the internation, the Old Man, the old President of the World when there was one, when everyone was still around—the PW leading them gave a speech to the migration followed him to coastal Louisiana: “We have arrived on an alien planet; these are new frontiers, my friends and betters. On these fecund waters, from these fecund soils, will grow garden and gardener alike. My friends, this is our second chance.” Personal and professional relationships became indistinguishable, and everyone spoke the same cyber Engla Franca.

The cup was full.

New Atlanta, the OM called it.

Art emerged in industry and function became aesthetic. Three such techno-avant-gardonauts, triplet brothers Lobe, Jobe, and Globe Ester, treble-handedly drew up plans for all of civilly engineered New Atlanta: a hundred-meter high acropolitic promontory surrounded on all sides with ziggurat staircases and hollowed out, paved and raised in a wind tracing the slight elevation of the Mississippi—a conglomeration designed to house pipe-turbine infraplumbing, latticework engineered to take full economic advantage of flushes and faucet-taps, whose flows would in turn crank a turbine located at narrow, focal points in the lattices—all of which circumscribed by a stilted monorail system running bidirectional elliptical circuits encompassing the city limits, the to-be *AirRail*,—but none of which got off the ground unless they severed the tail from the serpent and plugged it up. The river was in the way.
The OM’s vision had been of sandstone adobes and self-sustaining agriculture. But his Principles were Autonomy and Unity. Despite all, in the end he was accused of obsolescence and obstinacy. What were they doing, anyway? Stinking in a swamp watching the rest of the world go ‘round. President of the Swamp just wanted to go back to caveman days and stay there forever, what a waste of a revolution this guy.

Well, the world no longer goes ‘round, sirs; it’s all stopped turning. What would you have done then, had you known?

They planted a dam northwest of what was Port Sulphur and followed the heels of the ensuing Mississippian dehydration with wet cement and copper pipes. In the books, witnesses attest that the Old Man was on all fours when they found him, covered in the caking mud of the delta’s belly. One witness claims to have heard the OM utter heretical spells in the back of his throat; another claims she watched him melt into webbing. But I know what happened. The old man, who could not make those he loved understand themselves, asked the earth that he could remain to witness the prophecy of the Children’s Kingdom to come true. The earth heard, and turned him into a mountain rose from the deep, rich heart to watch it come. And when it settled, sedimentary in the air, something went suction-like out of the world in a grand clap and shutter.

But now they had a mountain to build around. Which they did; buried the lot of it and named the rest sticking out Mt. Dunce. Then they tweaked the designs of the AirRail track to do a loop-de-loop around its peak, to boot.

And so, the world torn in two by the Old Man’s short-circuited Plan (one side trying to carry it to fruition and elect another PW, and other sides trying to dismantle and reverse what had thus far been done), the Esters popped champagne over the bridge of the dam. But in the long,
several days thereafter: government offices and national museums were burned in riots, monuments struck down by militia artillery, and a nuclear warhead, launched from North Korean silos (the countdown of which active rebels at the time overrode not too late per se, but at a moment crashed the system, rather than cancelling it, NK programming what it was . . .), had imploded and visibly erased that country from the map.

Amidst the toil and turmoil, the brothers Esters erected The Orthogonal Christian House Cathedral on the northern border of New Atlanta. They built it into the dam, and beside it opened up the Silver Knife, a tavern in its glory days renowned for the brilliance of its dinnerware and enormity of its underground kitchen, as well as for its most popular pianist trio, the Marbly Harpies, who sang Marilyn Monroe covers which, according to the tavern’s records, and reflected in a number of surviving sermons from the Orthogonal Book, were oh so very often attended by Orthogonal Mass (cf. Sermon 1.31: “And let us give our tongues freely to the divine twines in the aether amen, lets us lend our spirits, yes!, to the nectar that is the sound of the Marbly Harpies’ song amen amen!, and let us consume, yes!, the succulent supplement supper of buttery meats from down under can I get an amen! Amen!”), and the Home School for Lost Children, an orphanage to which, in addition, parents were solicited to send their children much as they would a boarding school, and at which, in addition, parents were solicited to leave their children much as they would a daycare, of all of which services, being free and expressly run by divine nuns, were made the utmost use by the parents.

New Atlanta was thus a Church State for some time until, at the peak of the Esters’ papacy, one Oliver Allcomefree, a traveling salesman in whose briefcase whirred then the Genometer (Know your sequence!®), an invention of his, ascended the ziggurat right up to the front door of Port Sulphur, which opened with a hot hiss.
The *Genometer* was a device performed the cumulative analysis of a subject’s genes and reported the respective phenotypes with which said subject’s genotypes were associated. This information, of course, became increasingly valuable, and as it increased in value, contracts’ *Confidentiality* agreements increased in . . . interpretability. For what that was worth.

Oliver A. then set up shop in New Atlanta: he drove a pendular lightning rod through the peninsular toe of the foot of the state and built the Zoe Building out of hurl-fulls of sand cast in glass by the lightning striking the rod like gongs. Hyperbolic layers fused into the helical, hourglass shape of two apex-inverted pyramids twisting opposite one another—*isomer glasses* negating the other’s reflections in such a way as to make it, in the odd way, invisible. “We’ll have our castle in the wall,” had been Lobe Ester’s reaction; “And you can have your tower in the air at the foot of it,” Globe Ester had rejoined.

The Zoe Building concentrated the majority of its efforts on genetic R&D but, as *Information* in all of its commodious modes increased in value, the Zoe’s facilities began to explore wider varieties of more . . . penetrative instrumentations of observation, to which end Oliver A. had installed silos along the peninsula and launched Argous militia of satellites into the atmosphere equipped with exactly every conceivable instrument of measurement—it did not take long before any given objects’ day had become naked before the eyes in the sky.

The Information, precious and exclusive to the Ester brothers, was enough to seize the roiling world by its scruff and leash it. Primarily, the planet obeyed under threat of wiping away its days of denial and wonder, with all the intelligence. “Our Sentinels are equipped with tungsten arrows, and they are always ready at the mark,” Lobe, in his dodecahedronal headdress, announced on live television. Blackmail and hellfire pressed against the envelopes and gun barrels pressed against the eyes and backs of the people. Those who proclaimed the charade was
not real would receive relatively immediate notices relaying the confirmation that Yes, indeed, this was real, signed, personally, by Ollie Allcomefree.

The Ester brothers had not nor could have been aware, however, of Oliver A.’s increasing understanding of the quantum kosmos’ mechanics. He had given them open access to his data and undertakings, including his facilities’ notes on brain state interpretations—approximations of correlations between physiological brain states and brains’ ideas—but this access and data could not have helped them discover the understanding OA attained, his ideas never having been recorded in any of the facilities’ notes nor, their being entirely novel ideas, having been logged in any idea guesser algorithms.

This, Oliver’s understanding, culminated in a single touch, delivered on the Tenth Day of Halloween: a single cause to effect another world, radically alter the spatio-physical state of the universe. And the device by which to bring about the change was so simple he could weave it into the system with his mind. (However, Oliver is, of course, always the show horse, and just couldn’t help but proclamate to the thought-touch some signature, hilarious stunt.)

But it was an attempt that may have gone wrong, for what he has done is in many places effectively *stopped* the time, and in others he has accelerated it. He has sprung whirlpools of the time up in invisible places and, if you touch them, your fingers age, and die off . . .

He has left this waste-time to me solely. His intentions are a mystery, further novel anomalies, inexplicabilities accompanying the perceptions logged of his brain states. The mystery is all the more so one given the question of how exactly he brought the state of affairs about. The last of his brain states logged before the thought-touch diverge into an asymptotic sequence of frames and flashes. It is very much like the riddle of the solipsist who reads a book
called *Expanded and Integrated Entries from the Orthogonal Encyclopedia on Nature*, in which he finds a passage about his signing up for a program to fly on a space shuttle into a black hole, entering into cryosleep, waking up after the human race back on planet earth went extinct, and then starving before even reaching the black hole—he signed up for a program to fly on a space shuttle into a black hole and woke himself up early from his cryosleep with the anxiety of remembering reading someplace that the human race will have gone extinct, right now, and he found he was still receiving live messages from home, which he monitored every day, not returning to cryosleep, until he ran out of the stores that had not been prepared for so much time spent awake, and he starved to death, trying manually to turn the ship around would not turn around on autopilot, never getting the message had already been sent, was never delivered, that the human race was going extinct. The riddle is: Who could have told the story? And when did it end?

Yes; he has set so many tricks, that Ollie Allcomefree. For, what does a telescope see when no one looks through it? those telescopes of the times, the very telescopes he has opened. Hacking his data-hub, I have sought out those telescopes he saw through, to revive what he must want found, and I have recorded here directly and in- that the witness of which I have borne, to remind the happenstance finder of this text that that laughing matchmaker Chance has had everything to do with it.

Though, seeing through what they have seen through, the faces in the dial, I have begun to wonder if I am alone, then, or are they here with me? And if they are with me, who is he who looks like me, who is me in the dial? Are you my echo? Is it me who I am bound to see ahead or behind, as a memory, or only a memory? Indeed, the time is in a dial now. Opens in a *kinch!*
Apologues

A-

As I find him, sundered he rouses to meet the crescent below whites the night-glassed horizon with morning; on pursed, parting lips, he gives that baptism of the eyes a kiss lasts eight minutes. He sees he sees, across the loft, an image he thinks is his, in the face on the deep of the ( ) and sees things in him moving—long lashes and sharp features, nipples blossom under his soapy robe slipping . . . oval pelvis, bony hips, tendrils like squeezing fingers wreath his chuff stalk and leaves grizzle in bushfuls up his trunk across his chest and down his arms over hairy knuckles on his fingers in keratin casings grow out and curl and petrify and crack—and, peering into pupils like polished carbon widening, has the blank epiphany that everything is as old as everything else. Looks for himself in the everything else in the quicksilver quicksand ( ). The image take a moment to reach him. Whispers his name, but the sound takes a moment to reach him a (. . . in front of a . . .) . . .

But oh, what becoming, blossoming flesh you have. But I have no flesh. In the beginning I had . . . but in the beginning, there was nothing . . . This face that was yours in the beginning and so, was not . . . afterimage after afterimage—not in the next nor in the last—square-circle staircases in your eyes when you see me.

You are a mirror, standing in front of a mirror. And if you would touch it, or try to move through it, you would find there is an unclosable gap between your finger and the glass.

The two cannot occupy the same space.

Really . . . they don’t even touch.
At least one of us cranks a Kentucky *do-nothing* machine trails in leaky time and traces a cuspid envelope.

“But I cannot see it.”

“Almost?”

“Almost. I can almost see it.”

“Thank you.”

“Are you my echo?”

“I am more than that. I am more than an echo, I am more than a memory. I was in a little spindle all the time made it all possible. I am a spider in your camouflage, catching up all the seeds in the wind—but do not touch me, unless you would spill my seeds, and if you would, catch them up.

“I am more than a memory.

“Fell doe in ivy rising, fell oak in festers rising, woman in man out of man in woman, the earth in the sun I am all the things, all the things.

“I’m an ugly nightingale on a cliff coiling her throat, dying to sing the ugly song would blow home-ward all the kin, if you would listen.

“Burlesque renegade, have you gotten ready yet? For you are the last one left, and your graverocks have already been heaped.

“You have been wondering at the surfaces; now meet the waited deep.”

“I want to ask if we have met before.”
“You’ve been away quite a while!”

“Have you and I met before?”

“Have we! I see that I have been as in a deep sink, seeking the source this time. I will have to pull myself out again.”

“That there you are turning, what does one of those do?”

“I would show you, if you could see it.”

“I am watching.”

“Are you very closely? But I am not turning this thing at all.”

“Then I am turning it.”

“How long have you been turning it? It turns itself! Oh, don’t you know what day it is, how we come to this place at all? Today is the day! The holiday, mayday—parade! But but but! we must go back if we are to go forth! Burlesque renegade, have you gotten ready yet?

“Do you see those blue bands bend over the white edge?, the clear Louisiana sky? Do you see that blue spoon spills over the black edge?, the clear Gulf? the clouds ring the mountain peak, the mountain rises up from the Delta?

“You see—then do you see, ten thousand feet down, the white tooth pierces the Mississippi River’s throat? the trembling meniscus dribbling its corners? Do you see the grey spine beetles up from the muddy bed—it’s fins and feathers? See us, in the apical retina of the dial, in the fisheye of the cardinal architecture . . . Give it a turn—there he is, and all the parade passes under his balcony—Ollie Ollie Allcomefree! : 
‘Yes—welcome, peoples! marching flagstaffs! trumpeters! drummer boys and girls ringing in again another day! Enter, heirs and heiresses, kingdom-key keepers, welcome. There—there! Elizabeth, look at all the flying colors! admire beside me the crafts they’ve carved for this oh-so-special-occasion—oh, Welcome, you all!’

“Doesn’t his demeanor *thrive* on the Tenth Day of the Dead! *Elizabeth* is . . . his temper. You should not have yet met her, though if you have you may yet to have met with her . . . circumstantial. But she is not such a wet blanket as she may seem! Things may seem many ways. Mayn’t they? ‘*Mayn’t they*’, indeed! Why not let the two carry on? Indeed, ‘*why not*’! Let it ride—play away, things! See what it joggles in you, me.

‘Oliver.’

‘Elizabeth, look at the orphans skirting the procession. I welcome you just as well, teary, tattered, lost orphan and his sister. Better. Here’s your sister, her doll, yours to hold on to when she runs out with the runoff. More rascals over there. Adolescent lovers bungling bundles up with one another’s, O innocence. Here, orphan boy: your sister lives, has a lover, has lovers, then has a child. The premature birth of imperceived pregnancy, drugged in love. Loves. Joy, you’re an uncle; courage—be brave. Elizabeth, where is *my* family, where it is not with me here on this oh-so-special occasion?’

‘Your . . . wife, Oliver—is on her way here . . .’

‘Is she coming here to kill me?’

‘No, Oliver.’

‘Then what is she coming here for?’
'The reception is tonight. And nothing is prepared.'

'Tell her there are no newlyweds to receive; “nothing” ought to do. “ ‘Nothing’ ought to do”! Veritably; I’ve written that down already.'

'Oliver.'

'Elizabeth, this bubbly’s appeared out of thin air. It tickles my nose.'

'The reception, Oliver.'

'The regression. Would they march, Elizabeth, if not so in want of matrimony? Their boots crush the rice into ten days’ grey of pumpkin; wheels sever the beads from the necklaces. There goes the one now, throwing himself under the barge. There fly his necklace beads. He twitches yet. But all’s well: here we are, and there is the cleanup crew now. But all’s poor: where is his head? It has become a pumpkin.'

'Oliver.'

'Ah—ah—here they come, Elizabeth: welcome welcome, jesters, dancing spangled, ring-jingling lipstick smilers. See me—hello jesters! rainbow ribbons flowing from the wrists of your happy redyellowblue rendezvous greeter! : Welcome welcome, you, to my metrocasmopolitan neocropolis.

'Elizabeth, see, in the bushes there—my man, you can see him, in the bushes. He is visible. Well that one’s an idiot, at least. But they’re all idiots. And the ones who aren’t idiots are smart enough they defect. It’s an impossibility I’ve put myself in, isn’t it, Elizabeth. Oh, me. I am a fool for all of the things I have done and a fool for the things I have not. I wish one of them
would turn his weapon on me up here. Turn your weapon on someone, at least. Turn your
weapons on each other. There. Fewer betrayers. Oh, Elizabeth, console me.’

‘Oliver, there are more . . . pressing items on the . . . upcoming agenda.’

‘Elizabeth, you know what is pressing my agenda.’

‘Oliver!’

‘Oh, what good is that idiot down there if I can see him? What good is he if they can see
him? If I can see him, they can see him, and if they can see him they can get it out of him, they
know how—but if I can’t see him he’s behind my back it’s another impossibility oh Elizabeth
console me! . . . Come on, you bastards, I built this tower out of glass for you to shoot me down!

B-

‘What’s it like for you? All those people, and not a single one of them knows deadly ol’
you exists. – Oh right, that’s right. You don’t talk. Well don’t mind me. Does your talker have a
muter? Mine doesn’t. Wouldn’t need to, I don’t think. Defeat the purpose, don’t you think? You
think? Don’t talk, but what’s up in that bulletproof head of yours? Anything? Well don’t mind
me; over. Tell you what’s on my mind. See them? Cute little Asian baton twirly-girlies—ph-h-
hew. 10 o’clock. 2:30, your clock; over. You got a family, Jack? Your family know that you’re
going to be putting your life, their lives, every life on the line every time you dress up and go to
work? They ever see you put on that heavy ghillie all anteneed?; over. (Heh. They know you’re
double, Jack? They know they can’t hide, Mick? No hiding.) – Got a Ricky, 2 o’clock, your
9:30, waving a pistol at a piss lot of civilians; over. – I’d plug him myself but you know I’d
spring a damn geyser outta Gaia if I let Shiva-Vish here bark. Heh; over. – Shit, Mac, that
Ricky’s diving under the Big Wheel—shit. Popped. Pistol’s skittered—you see it? I lost it. Pop
under twirly-girly’s feet, maybe that . . . phew; over. Sure love watching her bend for that wand, over. What do you think is just under that liner, just under it? heh, over. Smoking my damn cigar out of my ears ph-h-hew. Has this scope got zoom, you wouldn’t believe, Mack. Have I got it bad like a dog you wouldn’t believe. – Goddamnit what’s that taxi doing gonna Jesus—gonna head-on that sedan’s that. Christ, it’s like Goddamn snow, can’t see shit in it, all that glass.

Micky, I got sun in my scope, any visual on that passenger side—you seeing someone get out? Thought I saw a sheet but it’s all white. – Eh? What’s going on, you watching me, over? – Eh? My talker not working? – What’re you looking at, Jack? Eyes on the prize, Micky. (Looking right down your scope, partner.)’

“Too bright, indeed, on the passenger side, for the trained eye to strain to see it—fly out, of the sedan, the translucent girl, too bright!

C-

but just bright enough to flash back—not far—see she was the one interrupted the transmission—back just far enough, to a window, the electronic shop’s storefront broadcasting on all the TVs in the window who else’s face on all the screens—but Ollie Ollie Allcomefree!—”

“Do I know her, the pale girl? That’s her face, pressed against shopfront?—in the window’s reflection it is as though it is my face . . . and she is looking in wonder in two opposite directions. . . . There are pockets in her shoulder sockets, but she shows no interest in her shoulders. Nor in the rest of the reflection, the clinic building filling up the rest of the shop’s front windows’ reflections . . . only in the screens.”
“You see, the girl who is walking out of the clinic’s front double doors now is accustomed to the reflections of the automatic front doors disappearing when they would open up to the electronics shop’s windows reflecting the edifice of the clinic under the blue sky backgrounding her full profile emerges from the opening doors across the empty street, when the sun would shine at its noon highest—so she thinks she sees herself, from behind, walking into a tunnel . . . she cannot tell which side of the street she is on.”

“She has freckles.”

“That’s Valery, the one with the freckles, walking across and accosting the see-through one. That’s Sadie—lighting up light a gas-light to see her!”

Bouncing up and down and she’s kissing Valery’s eyes all the while Valery is leading her through the lobby and into the examination room until Valery’s sat her down and strokes her translucent hair and a woman comes into the room, and the woman relocates her shoulders, and when she does, Sadie reaches into a pocket and pulls out a bottle. She taps it, and pops a nipple of Ibuprofen into her mouth. When she does that, she reveals her truncated tongue, with the bite mark scar tissue around it.

They take Sadie’s tiny boots off peel like velcro from her mangled, rawed feet like doll feet with fused toes. (And Valery throws up in a trash can and cries and kisses Sadie’s head and Sadie squawks and kisses her cheek and swings her legs back and forth around the stool making it hard to get a very good look at the damage and when the woman walks out of the room Valery sits beside Sadie and their shoulders are touching and she looks at her a while, at her eyes all smiles, despite her body all bruises, and Valery asks her, (‘Are you a virgin?’ Um. Ha.)) She looks at her and then she lies her head on her shoulder, closes her eyes, and she holds her behind
the back and under her knees, hugs her closer to her on the bunching stool cushions and she tries to stretch her toes out all stuck together.

The woman treats and sets the feet in splints Sadie persistently breaks when she gets out of bed to hop on them, so the woman casts and straps the girl’s legs down in the hospital bed and that made her cry whenever neither she nor Valery were in the room Valery had wheeled her specially into, the room with the shadow-sheeted bed against the wall, under the upper echelon window . . .

Valery kept her from crying by telling her stories.

‘You get to share a room with the train conductor—and you’re a nurse. You’re on the train because there was a big disaster in another country and you’re going to help them, but the train crashes into another train and everyone has to go to the hospital because everyone’s injured, even the nurse—that’s you—and then there are so many people in the hospital they have to put you two in the same room . . . And he’s in a coma, from the accident, and you hold his hand and hold his head when nobody else is here, because he looks so young . . . And then when everyone finds out that he was the train conductor, and everyone wants to throw him out because he caused the accident, you leave with him, but you’re still all broken, but you take care of him still away from everyone else because he wakes up. But he has amnesia, and he never remembers what happened on the train. And you take care of him because of his amnesia and he gets a good job cleaning chimneys and gutters he comes home all dirty and hurting and you’re there and you take care of him.’

She brought her bowls of puddings and porridges and spoonfed her; she gave her a teddy to sleep with and Sadie calmed down then, when she left the room.
Somebody had run some kinds of tests somewhere. The woman is walking into the halflit room on this day and she has the results. She is telling Valery that her friend is *analgesic*. She’s telling her that this is a dangerous condition, and likely explains what happened to her tongue, as one who is analgesic does not feel pain, and so does not know when they are injured or injuring themselves and, in addition, especially in cases of the independent living, such like that from which this girl seems to have come, typically goes both undiagnosed and untreated for such injuries, which develop into more severe and irreversible conditions with time and without medical assistance, in other words, sorry to be so with so much conviction but saying that analgesia is treatable, but when your friend begins to feel her legs again, she will no longer be able to walk.

(But . . . at the end, she walks up the forest aisle, and finds the train conductor and he’s sweeping the tracks waiting for her. Her mother takes care of her and, she gives her to the train conductor he had amnesia but now he remembers something he remembers *her* . . . and she walks through the clearing up the aisle in an angel’s wedding dress and he’s gonna be waiting for her on the same side of the tracks . . . *you’re* on the other side of the *tracks* . . .)—she’s unbundling Sadie—flying Sadie and her out of the hospital into the open air—and Sadie has her teddy’s hand and—flying—they knock down the woman on their way out and dash for the three-door sedan and—flying—for the coast—to new heights, escape—to the other side of the map to find the traintracks to cross them . . . but she got a phone call on the way from a distant place about a plug, and a pull and—*flying*—trying to reach in time the other side of the map on the other side of the crash . . .

If only I could find you some other time after, or some time before, then, at the end, you *would* . . .
“Innocent pastling, they cannot hear us. We’re nowhere near them.”

Then I’ll find them at the end.

D-

And, but, after following her across long times, I find her, still, in the same place, she is enduring the same loss—in the driver’s side wreckage on the wide open plain of the halted time—in a crux of the collapse of the taxicab collision on the Tenth Day . . . She gets her head, before they crash, out of the window . . . has clasped, in her breaking hand, Sadie’s transluscing hand, Sadie flying out of the vehicle’s passenger side window like a tissue in a vacuum—her head is out the window but her body is purpling . . .

“This is the end. It never ends. She sees the rise rise over her, the rise one cannot see over. One cannot even look up from the ground in this slow place . . .”

What do you see?

“I see she is shrinking.”

I was not speaking to you. And that is not what I see. I see these things stopping—I see them stop. I see the car door on the driver’s side open wide open—she gets out and stands up, and when she does her bruises fall away, her cuts nearly close, her world nearly reopens. In my vision, she climbs the rise and, up it, finds the sparkling wrist of the sacrifice threw himself under the juggernaut, for that wrist is familiar to me. She reaches deep into it,

E-

the wrist with a past passes far back, through the dusting, powder glass. A turn of the dial, thread of the eye—rewinds another crash, out of a second story window into spinning projections on
bathroom stall walls surrounding the living sacrifice sits with his thighs crossed on the feminine porcelain and injects his gum just above the incisors with silver-needled Botulinum, and—when it sinks—pierces his lip on his tooth against the dazzling diamond on his index finger, spins its whirring refractions and—projects in his compact mirror’s reflections the painted stall walls and he squeezes himself between his legs with a nervous pinch in his spigot—poison tips in his eyes—he bites another hole in his tongue, and flashes in the compact another cut across the diamond projects on the walls the events leading up to his, Jobe Ester’s, Orthogonal banishment:

A picture crawls across the stall walls presents Dodecahedral Lobe Ester’s torture-apparatus—the arm-like contraption arches in branches with six elbows over Jobe’s shoulder behind his back fending off by its collar the black dog trained to masticate his ass, pounces at it now, as they ascend the flight of stairs per testicular tug up—‘And if I pull them off, he’ll be a eunuch, and then he’ll be grateful! That bitch won’t get these, brother, don’t worry; I have these now. You know we all know all about it all; we know you know we know. Does he like when I twist them? Hop skip it—two at a time if you want to make the jump!’—Globe Ester playing show tunes on the rotating piano and atop the piano the Marbly Harpies all sprawl and limb shrieking lyrics in binding sex positions, spinning in the rosy light of the stained-glass Zodiac Wheel in the ceiling proclaims Anemone, Crab, Spider, Fish, Bird, Lizard, Rat, Horse, Bat, Wolf, Monkey, and Celery. The icons illuminate the sisters Cochrot(z*)yxa’s and Piscylla’s contorting the legs and shoulders of the sister Bakkylva into alignment with Spider, Bird, Bat, and Wolf, and the head partly out of alignment with Monkey and into Celery. Lobe is leading Jobe to a velvet pillow he squats him over whence he—skates over to and—plucks the thyrsus on the wall from its mantle—‘Yes, yes, you want to feel the pinch—but this seed is far too wide for your wagon!’—lodges the tip in his ass and stuffs a rotten lemon in his mouth. Then he barbs the
original needle of Botulinum to Jobe’s seminal vesicles—and snaps the branch yoked the bitch
snaps now at his ass and gets in the throat the stick of the staff jams his ass bursts and breaks it
off, the pinecone in his ass, and sits him on the plunger of the injection fills his eggsacks with
shriveling teeth disappear in numb erasure . . . he spits out a diamond glistens with piss, on the
pillow.

The sisters Cochrotrzyxa’s and Piscylla’s contrapted jaws they fasten around between the
sister Ylva’s legs open them up and split her pelvis up the middle, and roll the sockets forward
ninety degrees.

‘To give fitter birth with! For you two have wrought on our realm pyrAmidal augur by
the hetero-incestual crime against nature you have committed. Behold—before all: your
petrification—your prostitution! For you, brother, will be hereby as stiff as a pine till death do
you flop and you, sister, plagued with perpetual animal heat till death do you drop! Lo, the
Wheel’s mad inflection in the thousand eyes of the sour diamond—swallow it! I summon my
Ward—off the cliff with them!’ And into—Botulinum aplenty! disposed of in hospital waste
bins’ syringes the siblings landslide over after tumbling tin cans and shattered vials flash fang
shapes in a cut on the diamond he turns on his tooth in the compact mirror’s porcelain
projections of a kitchen tub’s reflection on the second story of a boxed unit they move into has a
view of the junk park, Trash Alley, becomes Ylva’s haunt—flashes on Ylva’s ankle dangling
over the dry kitchen tub, chicken skin all over, and shudders to his needly touch when he pets her
and tubings prolapse, pregnant belly lurches in the tub—he gathers up the entrails and holds
them inside her, and she shudders turn to shivers, whet moans out of almost emptiness, a cave
song for Poseidon . . . and arms between her legs behind her head she climbs up onto the rim of
the tub and licks his fly with a thick tongue upside-down he grips when he rips out the tubing to
fuck all the ectoplasmic guts and teeth flash, when he thrusts, across nine months’ astrology on the calendar, perishes as yellow pages untouched, tacked up on the Southern wall never saw any light but for from the diamond’s refractions of that light rose and fell those nine months over the dilapidated apartment now houses the gestate scorpion in labor.

She is swaddled in blankets, her face in the hardwood she mews and touches herself between the folds the midwife reaches into and unfolds—to whose touch she blisses out of the room out of mind out of time . . . and the midwife produces, dangling by its ankle, turning in the open air smottled with webbings of light, the newborn. She does not wake the baby. She is hypnotized. Zygotic maladies tattoo the baby’s plasmic body, symbols inscribed in vitiligous webbing squirming under her fingers . . . she is reminded of a girlhood memory, in her mother’s garden, squeezing dewy dirt clods and squishing worms—she drops the baby wakes up crying, stirs the mother turns to cradle cooing hoarse ‘Swee-eetness . . .’ But she stops two eyes short of love, and stares, and ecstasy fades into crows’ feet and frown lines at the sight of the snag in the zipper zags across the baby’s body in pied divots and growths and seams across the eye glitters with a little vermillion’s tinge in a ring . . . The baby’s mother reaches, across the room, with long fingers to take from the frantic midwife crossing herself in the corner her circumcisers. ‘Be sweet as a poppy for mommy,’ she coos hoarse. ‘Mommy has the,’ scissors she sets shearing to the barnacle—‘A girl, Jobe . . .’—who leaps, but clutches the spears too late—and the flesh is snipped.

Father picks daughter up to cradle. Mother rolls over to reach in the folds and holds up the cord—yanks it out of the sheets and collapses after the afterbirth slaps the floor . . . Baby is pale. Mother is pale. Midwife is fainted in a heap and father, pressing the blanket against the wound, wraps up baby, placenta, umbilical all in the blanket and—crashes—his back—through
the window—to cushion the fall for the baby—when he smashes into the pavement glistening with angelhair fractures of glass flash like diamonds—("But what is the meaning of this detour? Why watch them all over again, when we have seen these things in the dial innumerably many times already?"

I bring to the fore these things to fuse them. For I see as you say, to infinity these things, but I see infinity in the end is the beginning, and I see the beginning is the now. I bring these things to begin anew in the now)—flashes, like the silver pistol he kisses in the alleyway, behind the parade, the pistol he points at a gaggle of boys he flashes his implanted tits at for beads when they throw pumpkins at him instead, then throw him beads ring around his pistol, his neck, crown his head in shimmers in the sun, when he steps out in front of the oncoming juggernaut, and points his pistol again, at it, its blind metal end and indifference, he points it, when he dives underneath, all the way down—till it skitters across the plain when it flies from his hand, when the Big Wheel stops, and his hand in the fibrous plumes is caught, before he falls, in Valery’s lost and found on the plain

-D-

and she draws it up out from the deep: the pulse is live, but the wrist, when she lifts it up, becomes a baby barely breathing in her arms, wailing in blankets, smottled with dust, whose eye—when she blinks—Valery sees in conic twinkles, flashes with a vermillion ring. But the baby is fading, and her vermillion is blurred . . .

“There is no climbing this rise one cannot see over. You try to change the past by interweaving disjoint threads of future time. If you would bear testament of otherwise account
than that of the truth, you would only find again the reminder. We are a ghost in these walls; we only move through them.”

That is what you say as though there only ever were ghosts. You would watch these things pass over, but I am unwilling to idle by.

F-

“The will has nothing to do with it! This is the summit; it rolls, and then this again is the self-same summit. It is insurmountable. The rise you deny does not yield, it overtops, over and around it closets the life defies the fatal conclusion. Until that life submits, it holds fast. See in the way we find her, closeted between the heights, twitching in the blue muttering mufflings and mournings to the space between her hands and her mouth, her welpings . . .”

(Wendly. If I say his name will it bring him back? Wendle. His name is Wendle. He is a big, silvery boy with inexplicable red hair. Find him. Please find him. His name is Wendle. He swept traintracks and chimneys. Please. Find the call, the phone call that took him and take it back. Plug him back in. He was hit by a car—he fell asleep, he’s asleep—he was asleep . . . he was hit by a car trying to find his way back to me. He is in deep bruises—heal him . . . Please. Find him—stand beside the bed in my place I will be there to take my place I am getting there—stand between his bed and the hand, change that hand that pulled it that pulled his plug he went asleep when he was hit by a car find him before the accident—stay him, in the bushes, stay him from the road, pass the car away from his path and find us . . . I waited at my window I was waiting when she called when you called and I answered and you told me that you had found on the side of the road a young man and that he had been hit by a car and that you had wheeled the body of the boy under the still white sheet on the cart nothing but bruises and open tears . . .
Would he still be under a sheet? I thought? Would I pull back a sheet to see him, I thought? Or could he—I wished, I wished for a wish and made it—could it be he’d stand before me, he—would he be standing, and would he carry me out of the world? . . . He was like a fan when the machine filled him up and then he deflated . . . I told you I wanted him to stay here, you wanted to move him and I told you I wanted him to stay so that I could see him. I told you I wanted to see him but—I didn’t. I didn’t see him. I couldn’t see him . . . He was alive. . . . find him . . . find the hand and bring him to me through the years . . .

Your dress, it is mouldering . . . your pictures are falling to pieces . . . Is there no mercy to be wrought?

You kneel, in the deepest back of the closet. And you pray. Is there any redemption in these things?

“She is trying to disappear, but she cannot disappear to the place she envisions, not until she gives it up. And then it will be given up. Tst tst.”

She does not see she is tucked in the closet, she sees as in a cloud—she sees herself in a boundless gown over-rolls the pews she passes floating up the aisle fairy perch fall featherily—she sees these things— . . .

(Wendly.

Wendly . . .

My royal feet . . .

Cobbleknock slippers . . . Wendly,

our Matrimony . . . are these your injuries, Wendle Noah?
Can you see through, to my breasts, Wendly, Wendly; see through to these petals’ open pores? I’m not the nun anymore, tut tut, tut tut, . . . We saw a nun, she was undressing by the bath. We touched a glass . . . now I am this veil to your touch . . .

Are you reaching for me from that faraway place, from the faraway, other side of the accident? This was to be your body . . . my touch was once yours . . . Is your hand so gone on that night of the car I cannot reach it? Where are you, then? Where are you? Here? Is this the car—are you in the box—in the bed?—is it you, will it be you—if I pull back the sheet—you? Or did you escape—and it will be thin air . . . and will you reappear, again?)

“She waltzes at last the last dance. That is all. Her last call.

-D-

“Do you see it yet? There is no opening; no exit, no entrance. There is no climbing this rise one cannot see over.”

If there is not yet a way, then—world, bend, for I will not be moved. This mettle steels against the gears you’d crank. It cranks them another way.

If this dial is a steering wheel, I turn it past the axles. If it is a lens I invert it and the earth impacts, zenith turns, an opening opens. She summits—and the newborn is in her arms. Let it be a bright place receives her, a platinum sun; (Fold this place into time immemorial and, to unfold it, I will forget all else.)

“You will turn us inside-out!”
O, then you have not foreseen, you have not yet pre-vied my discovery. For I have found the ballbearing in this tractrix. And I have found that it is breakable but, if it would break, rather yields to the touch. You are outside-out. I will turn us outside-in.

“You and I, we one, have no such influence. You only confuse testament with fantasy, you only haze knowledge with deliberate ignorance. You would dilute and delude the truths of these biographies, these truths his legacy, his endowment, you would hue them with wishes. Well and well then, we’ll have that fun.

“I see where you’ve fit it, yes, I see now where you’ve found the room and found the joint. But, whereof whatfor? You covet redemption—but are they not revived by the record, in archives? Do they not live in these archival moments? Don’t you remember it, and haven’t you yet put together—the lesson, with the letter? You know I know we have read it, and we remember just how he said it, when he left, ‘I’m that star, up above—you can always look for me there. And I live in a house on earth, so you can always find me, right there.’

“You have damaged the memory now, oh ho. So you think, should she meet him, then she’d be redeemed? Read his letter again, and then forget. You see, she’s already met ol’ Ollie Allcomefree!”

G-

‘Or’,

‘Today, your sister Valery Anglering has turned thirteen, your sister Sadie Mallow was born, and you, turning six, are taking the same detour they are already taking. Today, I leave you to the world, for it is the same world they are in.
‘Valery was born to Jaclyn Anglering, to whom I was nearly betrothed. She was a pediatric surgeon, and when she went on maternity leave, she volunteered regularly as a midwife. Before we had the baby, something she never told me, though I knew, changed; an atrocity in delivery. She gave Valery away when she was born. She held her only momentarily, but, in that moment, I entered an everlasting present. I beheld so many more moments that I felt confident enough to tempt eternity, when then I fell back into then, and it ended. She handed Valery over to the nurse and after that she shrunk so far into herself that her world came to consist wholly in parts of a twisted-out semblance of that moment inside of her.

H-

Why would you have me read this letter, if you think it should stop me? Are you trying to strike up some wager? I’ll set my stakes, and if I’m right, then, this is already the vessel—and if this is the direction of delivery he points in, then I think I win the bet—I am to find them, to find him, to find in time the family reunion we never had. I remember that letter now—it points to them, to a dream filled with scenes depicted in window frames in Jaclyn Anglering’s eyes.

In one of the frames, she is an obstetrician, and a surgeon specialized in tiny hearts. She is admonishing a patient recently recovered from anesthesia and surgery, ‘Little girls should walk with little strings of flowers around their ankles, and strong little hearts holding them up.’ She’s kissing one of her fingers, and transferring the kiss to the small patient with the forehead.

In another, she is pregnant in love—she was engaged. She was up on his shoulders, resting the weight of the oven on the top of his head, and pointing in the direction of the hospital. She was on maternal leave, volunteering her free hours to midwife in sloshy rooms up to her elbows in churn, stealing babies from shielded miracles, and handing them to the mothers . . . her
hidden hand, tainted touch to the baby birds’ scent. She was in the corner’s shadow of a ring of hell shaving her hands with circumcisers to absolve them of the abomination took place in a second story unit overlooked the grey shore where the water met the refuse . . .

She is lying in her hospital bed empty of birth, cradling infantile motherhood, little Val, before she handed the sleepy baby to the nurse and the nurse carried her away out the door down the hall all linoleum steps getting further away . . .

She began practicing abortion and several procedures of plastic surgery. Specialized in tiny parts. She was a woman came home at nights and lay in bed beside a candle and a stained wine glass in fetal, spooning position. (In another dream, she was girl, running through puddles in her raincoat, running around a bucket under a swingset thudded when she passed close enough to hear she would hear somethings with parts drop in the bucket . . .)

In a later picture, she was adopting—she steals in broad daylight unabashedly one from the others, a twelve-year-old girl. And when it talked to her she jumped—thinking, she hadn’t expected the little girl to be able to talk—what a funny thing!

She was giving the girl little tasks, a desk and a telephone and telling her to, when she answered, say, ‘Daughter Line, how do you spell your name please?’ and write the name on one of the yellow notes, and then press this button HOLD, then say, ‘Please hold, please,’ and she wrote HOLD on a sticky note and tacked it on the receiver. And then bring mommy the note she wrote the name on, please.

And, in that same picture, she is approached by her sister just had a baby, and her sister begs her for a procedure making her womb look like it miscarried
but Elizabeth, her sister, also needed a way to hide her daughter from the satellites above them, already nearly triangulating the baby and her—she needed an outward facing mirror reflecting the present and past all the way from the hiding, to the procedure, to the delivery.

She builds a little house out of antennae the little girl with the see-through skin lives in watching a television with all the channels the satellites picked up, and for years Sadie watches the world through it.

Elizabeth carries on the charade for seventeen years, when the Esters with their Wards arrive at the little door Elizabeth answers unknowingly, whose purpose she denies emphatically. For she has come of age and must therefore begin performing some tasks for the sake of the community.

She denies them emphatically.

‘But you do not attain of these things, Mrs. Mallow, you have not yet read the book of all the sentences. You could not even deflect our eyes in the sky, have not so much as skewed our vision. We know all about you two. You really do not attain of these issues.’

Sadie sneaks out undetected. She stumbles for days around New Atlanta much larger in life than on television, until she stumbles upon an electronics store’s window broadcasting Oliver Allcomefree’s First Day proclamation.

-H-

—because it was Oliver’s—so if Elizabeth’s husband ever found out about it or Oliver tried to confirm his paternity, then those Esters take her . . . Valery holding her cousin and rocking her gently, answering the phone, ‘Daughter Line.’
In one of the pictures, one she didn’t want me to see—she tried blocking it—but I saw. She drove a car on a dark road through woods,

J-

“Yes, that is the same road tucked in the shadowy back of our big brother and mentor, that resourceful Wendle Noah the C. You will (indeed!) recall riding the AirRail around in the circles, as was our wont; you will recall the original remark he made on our last ridealong together,

‘All communication must be insult, because communication presumes ignorance; unless one is knowingly repeating oneself. But then, all action, all favor, must be insult, because it presumes necessary want. Including repetition.’ Yes, an orphan grows into a drifter and the world gains another academic—do you remember his black, lacquered loafers? perpetually asheen despite his perpetual itineracy. But we never let him forget where he came from! ‘You must get all of that from those school mistresses,’ do you remember whistling at him, and the like admonishments—derelict bats at the hat on his head, letting him think it was the wind at his back, when we lead him astray! Always a one to bat back at the wind though, that Wendle N. the C.!”

‘I will tell you something those school mistresses never told. They read to us sermons from The Orthogonal Book, which was a collection of allegories followed by observations on the consequences therein wrought, followed by the subsequent moral mandates thereby revealed—explanations for the consequences, for there must always be an explanation—and they kept the Book locked up in their desk drawers. Well I read that book. In it, God the all-contemplative
made Man, and Man Sinned. Then God became a man and God died at the hands of Man out of Love for Man. And then, the man who dies came back to life and became God again.

‘Before Man, there was another who fell from God’s graces. An Angel who Sinned and became the Devil. Let me tell you what those school mistresses would not tell.’

You had peace in your eyes then . . . but there was something you would not tell me, wasn’t there—what it was bent your arm back and pinched your butt cheek, what it was made that hand tremble.

“Tell all!”

‘Sin is proof of God’s impotence. For, if the will is free to sin, then it is able to resist the thumb of God; and if the will is not free, yet it sins, then God is even missing a thumb; and, if there is no sin, then there is no God.

‘God became the incarnation to reveal his thumb, but the incarnation was an imperfection that gave him away—for nothing on earth is worth self-sacrifice. So, God, before Man saw what was missing, corrected Himself with His resurrection. Man only ever saw Sin in temptation—never the connection. All of it part of a lesson in rebellion and repression . . . Some kind of complex, psychosis it activates . . . diagnosis . . .’

“You must get all that from those doctors.”

‘Some drive to steal from them a second lesson I get out of it to make a pear . . . Let me tell you something those doctors like to keep to themselves, the metaphysics they relunct to acknowledge.
‘Let’s fit eternity on a ring, and let’s have all the rings, all the rings we can have, and on each ring is encoded a different sequence of events, different histories. Now every possible eternity band is in our room. So, then, I must exist within some eternity, some continuum, or random assortment, of time—what else am I talking about but this—this—through which I move? So this eternity, this time, must match one of the rings. Now, we may not know which one is ours, but, for each moment we pass through, there will be a band on which passes that exact same moment, and the moment immediately before that, and the moment immediately after. And in the end, there will be, there will always have been, that one band that matches, that fits—that fit all along, right up to the very end.’

What a quirky way of finding consolation you’ve always had—“It was his one redeeming quality!”—indeed. It was the thing released his arse from that pinch.

‘I may exist within a time that is only a random assortment of events—your favorite counter—and call it continuity not knowing anything different: still there is, will be, has always been a band that fits.’

“What luck! That we could be on any band, at any time, jump! from any one, to any other, at any time! and every time happen upon just that right one—what luck we happen on just this right one!”

‘Luck. It is fate; it will always have been this way. You see, you are making a metaphysical claim founded upon an epistemological claim. Though . . . if the next moment holds something entirely new, entirely different from the moment whence it follows, then not even a representation of it could have existed prior to the event . . . nor could a representation of that moment prior then exist posteriorly . . . If I can represent that moment in semblance of this
one, then I can encompass both representations within a unified symbolic system and thereby
show that it is not the case that something entirely new is created . . . Futurity is chaotic, but
chaos is ordered upon description, and description sufficiently made possible upon observation,
the description needing not be representational, and so the very passage of an observer through
those irruptive moments would order the chaos . . . But that is untenable.’

“Untenable!”

‘Order can only be preserved in certainty, and certainty only achieved in unified, present,
*immediate* awareness. Such being the case, one must simultaneously grasp in immediate
awareness the present becoming the past as one comes to grasp the future becoming the present,
so as either to translate and verify by comparison the completion and correspondence of the
symbolic system within which the organizational propositions of our description is operating, or
else to unite the consecutive moments under a unified awareness, thereby ordering them. Such
relationships of perceptual unification, then, themselves will need to be unifiable with the united
moments; the very recursivity of the unifications of the relationships with then itself need be
unifiable under immediate awareness, as that is the nature of true ordering. All of that extended
across all of phenomenological time unified under immediate awareness . . . But we all know no
sense can be made of any of that “all” business.’

“Then make no-sense of it!” Oh, you were so close to it then! (“I wonder, had we had
more time on that ride, would he have *got* it.

K-

“For that was the dream he was dreaming, dreaming of us on the brink of epiphany—”
Now he’s riding a train in the sky traces the tracks of his memories—memory of a classroom, of a church house, memories through the walls of a night under stars, watching through the window the nun undressing beside the running bath, in interlaced fingers with fingers that were not his, a stranger touch . . . In the walls of a memory of baby Val’s arrival, in a carriage—and then in memories of other dreams, dreams asleep beside the baby’s crib, in case she cried, or in case anything came in the night—dreams he’s in a body belonging to him and not him at once, of life like a kiss . . .

‘They would leave her lying, in a bundle, on a patch of turf under an awning, alone all day . . . They would feed her twice. I fed her, I carried her, I talked to her. She grew up in my arms, on my shoulders, by my kisses—until she was twelve, and I, seventeen, on my way out of the Home School, and right on my way back in to adopt her myself, was forced to let her go when she was taken by a witch in a white labcoat with blue hands.’

There she went, then—and there she is, in a lamplit window beside the telephone, looking out into the dark for your tracks . . . And there are the tracks, tucked into the shadowy back, crossing the forested road. There are the headlights, the same headlights came down the dark road in that window-picture, there is the woman looking through the window-pictures riding in the backseat of that taxi cab crashed on the plain . . .

But then something lost became something gained—that’s when, when you two divided, that’s when you found me, isn’t it! That saddest happening occasioned, there it is, down below, on the ground—my paddle horse, the shifted sun, you, standing over me—there we are at that destinal location.

-J-
Then he would have *recognized* the trick, if he’d discovered it.”

‘I will *tell* you about “sense” as you believe you mean it: Individuation is arbitrary. Such being the case, association is arbitrary. By *sense* you mean *logic*, but a logical entity’s essence is a semantic condition on its identity, which identity, should the entity fail to satisfy the condition, would perish. This is to say that meaning is essence. Such a logical entity would have been individuated, which is arbitrary; such a condition would have been associated, which is arbitrary. Such being the case, meaning is arbitrary, and so essence too is arbitrary. Thus, logic is arbitrary and therefore perishable . . .’

To think the obvious could have been so occult!

‘The rub is, that’s a metaphysical claim necessitating an epistemological groundwork upon which the logical systematicity of my argument must be founded, which system begs the very metaphysical question being asked about the ontological status of these logical entities, these symbolic objects and operative predications . . . *If* the ordering can be reduced to immediate awareness, then the ontology can be reduced to tautology: that which is is just what is, immediate awareness its confirmation. And the only way to *know* a thing *is* is to be immediately aware of it; such being the case, a metaphysical explanation of reality cannot be *given*, only a metaphysical impression of reality received, and certainty only achieved in the *unified*, present, *immediate* awareness of all of phenomenological time, space, and everything else . . . again. Though, of course, again, the entire analytical process we have just undergone to arrive at this conclusion being no more than the arbitrary associations of arbitrarily individuated symbols and operators . . . such being the case, the tenability of *anything* we would conclude being highly dubious, such a conclusion as this very one itself . . . indeterminable, at best.’
To think I never knew—when I had thought myself such a competent translator—to think all this time it had been alien noise! “What luck, to have such wide-openness of interpretation—and what luck we are so much alike!”

‘“Luck”, “alike”. Do you see, you are too invested in fictions. You are almost confident in them. You almost exist in them.’

But it’s all fiction, Noah! Thought is theory, logic is relative. Everything that can happen will happen, and everything happens of necessity. Of course, though, *anything* can happen; and, of course, there’s really no such thing as fiction.

‘You have no temperament for reality. There is *truth* somewhere.’

Yes, and this is the best of all possible worlds. The only one!

“You must get *that* from those gospels.”

‘Don’t take me to be very hopeful. We only ever see surfaces—outsides of things which, upon dissection, only present further surfaces, we are always looking at the outsides of things . . . things with indeterminate insides, envisioned . . . For instance, take this pocket of mine, there is no way of your knowing what is in this pocket of mine until you have reached into it—there could be a cat in my pocket. However, there is not; there is this draft in my pocket, to serve as an Ester’s *Ward*, an . . . *attendant* of sorts, as he whose position I will be refilling has, according to this, been lost to *consumption*.’

“Yes, that was when he left us, then, with the critical lesson. Though, not without one last correction. Nothing to remember him by, just something to forget him—”

‘And so, I’ll have to disappear
“Though, he could have really disappeared, had he studied Orthogony just a trice further. Instead, he just ran—and we all know one can’t run. Hijacked a sailboat and shored on an island—and he escaped. For the time being. He met a fisherman, and the fisherman turned out to be the Old Man, Ajax Oriel, who is embarrassed by the exposure, but casts his nets for two until WN is ultimately captured, via helicopter, and arrested by a gangrenous, jock-strapped raider wielding scimitar and sporting sunglasses, standard equipment for a Ward, he being that of Globe Ester, who emerges from the chopper. ‘Were you surprised to find this old goat here? See, when he made that mountain spring up, he got shot up into space, and up there he saw Uncle Sam, you remember how we got rid of him. And then Uncle Sam showed him what he was, showed him Insignificance—then he died of asphyxiation and when this old goat came back down he missed his mountain and landed right here. Then he asked the earth if it was true, and the earth nodded, and now he’s embarrassed. Doesn’t wanna climb that mountain again.’ Ajax Oriel shrugged and sunk. ‘Now you kindly come with me and get fitted, then you scrub the crematorium’s flue, that’s your chore. It’s fetid with the cooking.’

Upon arrival back at the House, Wendle Noah was, escorted by Lobe Ester, Genommeasured accordingly (WN’s personal attendance to which process only a technical formality employed by the Esters psycho-tactically—even the physical invasion of his body was unnecessary, the Esters already having all of this information on everyone) and inspected at the clinic (to which inspection WN’s in-person attendance was in fact required, as it was per request of the surgeon (which request she always made) who had been assigned to perform the plastic procedure to which every Ward was subjected), and it’s there he finds Val at the receptionist’s desk, and she is very grown up, having reached the age of 20 now, and she is also very alarmed
by the circumstances, and very seduced by the swarthy resilience his demeanor sustains. She doesn’t say a word.

And that night, he escapes, flies through forests to find her lamplit window in the dark—but he crosses the wrong road, and no fisherman’s net catches him . . .”

-J-

from the world; those three see all. But before I go, there is somebody I want you to meet, somebody I found on the Northern tracks, when the train braked out of station for the only time it has in the entire course of my apprenticeship—somebody I found and put up, while you slept in our car, on the night of the day that I found you. She lives in a tent by the water on the outskirts of Pilottown . . . Here is a lock of her hair, and as we happen to be passing the Zoe building now—you see, she will try to hide from you, as she’s already seen yours, so . . . up for a little Genometry?—this is our stop.’

“To think, after we had seen all that we had, she wore a mask to meet us—to think, through that mask, she saw what she saw, to think she could see what we’d seen—to think she could see it all. We were never very good liars, were we? Never very good under a spotlight, either; no, we are one would, caught in a gaze, turn a royal fool, and then pinch our skirts and curtsy!” She turned away and we lost our balance, didn’t we—and tossed us a question right over her shoulder.

‘Why don’t you ask me something about myself?’

“And we, remembering our crucial lesson, replied! ‘I didn’t want to insult you.’
And then she laughed us away, right over her shoulder—right out the window! Dismissed us with a wave of her beckoning, discarding hand.

“She struck us sincerely with that back of her hand, that little ringfinger knuckle with the tarnished brass band

M-
of that ring once galleied a sheered diamond, but the diamond disappeared in sunken, wilted mattress . . . she is still lying in her childhood bed, tented in moonlit mosquito nets, stands on iron-smelt chicken’s feet. There is a tear up the netting at the foot of her bed fills inward with the thing’s invisible breath . . . and the sheets are pulled out from under her . . . (if you open your eyes it will see you . . . if you scream it will eat you . . . nobody believes me . . . there is a wolf in my bed . . . it comes at night . . . my eyes don’t open . . .) until it left—when then she rolled over the hole bore in the mattress and then she felt, under her head, under her pillow, a ring that had not been there, revealed in the moonlight its empty gallery, and flashing match to her vermillion flare, her darting vermillion eye’s irises flashed in the shaft of pallor searching the room for breathing dark—when then she felt it under the bed . . . she smelled its breath.

Too many moons to count squatted under in the dry, limed and corroded kitchen bathtub lathering her body in bleach after prayers unanswered, pleas met by silence, cries innocence thinks to go unanswered because they were unbelieved . . .

Mother plants at the head of the tub a floor lamp she wields stumbling in, behind daughter’s back, and climbs up it to the shade. ‘Baby, I have your father’s pencil let me stencil on your eyebrows—don’t forget that spot under your arm; baby, are you cold?’ She pulls on a loose thread of the lampshade tilts its skirt: baby is clutching herself with hands that are warty
toads in the throat at the bottom of the tub. ‘Baby, blood is warm.’ She is waggling a pair of scissors catch a glint of the lamp bulb flashes in the girl’s turning, ember iris when she flies from the tub—from the house—tears through curtains clothe her body in wreathes, shrouds—she gets into that old three-door sedan, restored, involved in that accident that long time ago . . . She flies for the North on a metal-feathered wing beneath her foot she vaults Northward, up the rise, over the mountain—but she’s stopped by a train going the other way. And when she brakes, she sheds her first feminine tear, for, on the railroad arm in front of the tracks, it reads, ‘No beautiful ego,’ in red paint. And, when she brakes, the train stops, and our Wendle Noah the C. steps off it, and the three-door sedan’s disappeared.”

‘Apprentice, Maintenance, and Repair, Wendle Noah the C. Miss, I’ll take them, if you have any bags.’

‘I don’t have a thing to my name.’

‘And just what would that name be?’

‘Nobody gave me a name. They called me Baby.’

‘I don’t think that’s quite suiting.’

‘I gave myself a name . . . I named myself Dora.’

‘Departure time, Dora, are you ready?’

‘Are you trying to be sentimental with me?’

‘Not in the slightest, you little witch. I was only reflecting on my day before you so rudely interrupted this transport’s itinerary . . . I lost my best friend today, and then, wandering, I
found a lost boy with sunpoisoning. And now I’ve found you. But more so than either of those other events, I was thinking of my best friend.’

‘Can I still come?’

‘Goodbye. I’m sorry, I mean yes, I wasn’t talking to you but yes come on.’

He looked between the black trees, trying to find her in one of the city lights . . . He looked in the direction of the water, in the direction of the mountain, in the direction of Trash Alley, and then, around, in the direction of the School . . . But she is so much further, so much further through the years. She is there, in her window again, on the phone again—she is speeding in her car on the phone again—holding the phone again telling her again that they were sorry she had not known any further in advance that this was scheduled to take place today, that they had thought that somebody had told her already but nonetheless they just didn’t have the time to wait for her—she was speeding—as the only licensed euthanasiologist in New Atlanta was in such a hurry, he had to many places to be, and so, if you had any last words, the phone is being placed beside Mr. Noah on speaker for you to speak with him . . .

(his name . . .)

short notice and all . . .

(he has to wake up . . .)

such a hurry . . .

(has to wake up this time or . . .)

while we . . .

(pulling it . . .)
now . . .

(have to hear me . . .)

“That is the moment.”

But in that moment her tires go out and it all goes mute.

-J-

cut us across the cheek.

-H-

of the charcoal-cheeked sailor of wind I met trapped riding around the upside-down traintracks.

In the very last picture, she saw him in his hospital bed extinguish, on the day her daughter ran away. And then she was calling a cab and, in the cab, she was watching things pass in the window when her driver answered a phone call, and the phone call visited upon him derangement and, he crashed into a three-door sedan on the plain when the phone call went silent, where I find her, in the window-picture room . . .

“Indeed, once we’ve completed the reel: her tomb.”

She is in the same wreckage as the daughter she bore, she stole . . . the daughter lost twice, if she ever found her once.

You knew her, didn’t you, if you never admitted it. And you two would have, could you have, found each other again. Tell me, though, which picture do you like best, in the windows?

“You’re asking her? The stone does not bleed words!”
It will be close enough that I imagine I hear them, for in a tale I will tell, she persists in this one. In this one, while she’s still cradling Valery, before the first loss—the two of them and he beside her, close by her bed.

-G-

‘Sadie has been born to Elizabeth Mallow, who is my secretary, married to another man, and the sister of Jaclyn Anglering. She is the confidante to whom I have told not a secret; she is a brilliant woman with whom I so utterly share one mindset we have come to cooccupy parallel streams of knowledge content. She is a woman who sees through the truths in lies clearly and thoroughly to testimony. And yet she is at this very moment, the time I predict you are first reading this line, your reading level among other qualifications taken into consideration, which time is 8:27 pm, she is undergoing a procedure at the hands of her sister, Jaclyn Anglering, who, after we lost the baby, became an abortionist and plastic surgeon. She is undergoing a procedure which will lead the untrained eye, upon inspection, to believe that she has miscarried the baby, which baby she has at noon today, the time at which I today handed you this letter, upon which baby she has christened the name Sadie Dolores Mallow, I partially reiterate.

‘You were born to me. Now allow me to disclose unto you the intentions of this letter: I relay these genealogies in the dual capacity of address and location. They are guiding narratives; you will find the guidance sure enough, you will follow the directions very well, and then you will find them. You will find humanity, and surely enough that will satisfy the hieroglyph. For there is a mystery in the world, a wonder, in each other. One is alone in the world, alone with this wonder. One. So I have invented a solution. A one-way ticket for one, and once I’ve fixed the vessel, Or’, it will deliver you.
'You are as ready to be abandoned as I am to die. And when you find that house on earth, you’ll find you’ve yet built it.

Biopaternally yours,

Oliver Allcomefree’

Is that the furthest back, that day, my memory? No . . . a memory of his leg. All I remember is his calf. Perhaps, then, that is where they all go. In forgettings. And I will go, in my forgettings. And then I will seem to disappear . . . But I will be here. I will always be here, to build the house of locked arms and sing what was, once, a locked song.

I remember the spring-loaded rocking horse, and the man on the stoop in the sunglasses, his melting ice-cream cone. I remember he had handed me a letter, but by the time I found it in my hand he was no longer on the stoop. Opposite the stoop, instead, stood over me between me and the sun, silver and scarlet was Wendle Noah the C. He picked me up because I was crying when I did not know I was crying. “Self-proclaimed AirRail apprentice and Head of Maintenance and Repair. Do you have any parents? Where did you come from? There’s nobody else here . . .”

-D-

Once upon a time once lost, now found, my family repaired.

I rode a yellow rocking horse in the sun to celebrate my sixth birthday. On the stoop beside me, a man to whom I referred as ‘Uncle’ for six years, listed and detailed the various labors my father performed in his primest years. The seat of the yellow rocking horse paddled my delicate bloom and the pain ringed the earshot within a circumference of radial inches around my head. Within the circumference, behind the sun, I heard a voice calling out from the edge of
the earshot. It was in another place coming into this place—it was pinching the circumference, behind the icy sun—it was an infant’s scream pierced it—into my vision and earshot entered my sister Valery, cradling our newborn sister Sadie, and walking beside them Wendle Noah the C. As they approached from the plains in the West, I turned, then, to the East and there I met Jaclyn, and she was cradling baby Val, OA beside them, Sadie and Elizabeth under his arms, and I have one hand grasping his pant. My other hand is outreached West, and I am going that way. But for this moment, we have it. Our family union.

“All of that for this moment, but what happens next? Something must happen next. It is happening now.”

-C-

I’d find her on the newborn’s birthday, saving the child from that blistering plain . . .

-B-

—indeed, it’s bright enough it burns clear through the retina.” Too bright to see the translucent girl picks up the pistol skittered across the street, blanketed in shattered glass—ghost of his blood, bleeding, phasing through the Building’s invisible gates and stands before her parents locked in an embrace at the lips, when she levels the gun at his levitating leg—and all of it over in a moment perhaps, the mediation meditated right then perhaps, would she have missed her shot, somewhere, anywhere along the line.

“No, no, never. Ever set—the sight, the shot. Ever shot.”

-A-

‘And then I would go down with you.’
‘That was very selfish of me. Forgive me. I forget myself, when I slip into such selfishnesses.’

‘They are only intended to serve as eyes. Emergency militarization—’ They are so alike, these two opposites: so opposite, for their complementary demeanors, so alike for their eyes flash with the same intelligent arrival—the wife has appeared! ‘Your wife—’

‘An intruder!’

‘Mrs.—’

‘This is my wife?’

‘Oliver.’

‘This is a ferret! Yes, let’s wine and dine the ferret. –Oh, this bubbly is very smooth. – Give it some bubbly, Elizabeth. Here, ferret, have some bubbly; it is very smooth.’

‘Forgive him, Amanda, you know he is distracted.’

‘He is demented. He competes with a lighthouse. Ollie, what is that, what are you writing down now?’

‘Say that again.’

‘What are you writing?’

‘Already wrote it.’

‘Oliver.’

‘O, O. Just having fun. I am writing down everything we say, ferret; it is, and will be, my never-ending opus.’
‘You’re writing down everything we say?’

‘Not anymore; already got that.’

‘Ollie, will you put that down?’

‘My chameleon’s-eye collage I will not put down until I have the last word. It is coming.’

‘Always the eccentric.’

‘You’ve got alright taste there, ferret. Then you say, “Always so much ado.”’

‘Adieu.’

‘Nice try, ferret.’

‘Always with you, so much ado.’

‘He doesn’t even sleep, Amanda—he . . .’s up all night listening to the antennae and writing it all down. The only way to get him away . . . is . . . tut . . . tut tut . . .’

‘Got that.’

‘Oh . . .’

‘Easy trick to all that, ferret, all that no-sleep. You see, I have been in a meditative dream state all this time. (And if you pay close attention, so have you.)’

‘Excuse me. Elizabeth?’

‘You saw his biometric security programming system . . . “A thumb, an eye, and a pint of blood to walk these halls.” That’s what he always says.’

‘And a little pinch of your soul.’
‘Excuse me.’

‘Empty its excuse—nothing comes out!’

‘Oliver! Amanda, you’re excused.’

‘Excuse me.’

‘Says it again for ex-effect.’

‘He’s in a way—Amanda—oh . . .’

‘Weasel speech.’

‘You’ve made her go away . . .’

‘Exterminated.’

‘(Oliver . . . tell me what we’re like.)’

‘You’ve been drinking the bubbly.’

‘Drinkling sprinkles is all . . .’

‘What are we like?’

‘What are we like . . .’

‘It’s like waking up every time, you know that.’

‘Oh . . .’

‘What have I told you about drinking the bubbly, Miss Mallow, hmmm?’

‘It tickles my nose.’
‘Hold your nose—Elizabeth—look who’s in the taxi—on a crash course if we can’t help it—I’ll bring it about. I’m going to call the driver. I am his employer, after all, am I not, Elizabeth? – ‘Hello? Are you driving taxi 56? Don’t answer that, I know well already that you are. This is your employer calling.’ – ‘Oliver Allcomefree, your employer, up in the upside-down glass pyramid see me up here? I can see you, so you can see me—yes, I see you, hello, Oliver Allcomefree, your maybe, employer’s employer—your employer’s employer, and your employer, and his employer’s employer. If you didn’t know any of that.’ – ‘Well, now you do, and now you did. Mr. Yevicht, if you do take it up with him, will know more. Or his employer, whoever he thinks is his employer.’ – ‘That’s right. Do you know you are carrying the lovely old Jaclyn Mallow, the mother of my first child, aboard?’ – ‘No, not in the dashboard, or the steering wheel, or anything in front of you, Otto, think bigger! Much, much bigger—look up!’ – ‘Yes, indeed; in space.’ – ‘I am your employer, after all, I told you, of course I know your name. Of course, I would know it anyhow anyways. Anyone. Ask me.’ – ‘No, as matter of fact space belongs to me; nobody else wanted it, you all gave me the thumbs up.’ – ‘If you want it, why didn’t you say so at the meeting?’ – ‘Yes, there was a meeting. An international meeting; I held it outside. Everyone on the planet was there!’ – ‘But you were there! You had to have attended. Unless you were in space, in which case it would already have been yours, Otto! Which you were not.’ Elizabeth, he’s tossing over an invasion of privacy and all of that. Clueless. ‘Not UFOs, Otto—I’ve identified them! Yes, yes, all of the time, before you ask. Never off. Yes, everything, before you ask. Much more complicated that those, their instruments, but yes, eyes in the sky, effectively. And tongues and ears and all of that you can come up with, Otto. And, before you ask—you really do not have to keep asking the question after I have already answered it for you, you see—you see, I hear you before you speak. Yes.’ – ‘Something like that. Much
more than that, or less, of course—probabilistic predictions extending as far into the future as my IFOs have come to alignment—and so, you see, every time you ask a question I have already answered—’ – ‘You see, you are just repeating yourself, and I on my line am suffering the repetition. Do you want to hear yourself repeat yourself? You want to hear it?’ – ‘Oh, Otto. Yes, clamor, those are your thoughts. Listen for when it gets silent.’ Follow it, Elizabeth, the taxicab’s going to go just . . . like . . . this.’

‘X.’

‘I am waking up.’

‘Take a big bite outta your belly.’

‘Kiss us a kiss.’

‘(Have a kiss.)’

‘With this, release the prince who is not my son!, who does not bear my name.’

The centipedal parade on the ground marches around and around in and out of the cracks in the sidewalk, the clockwise turning cracks radiate from the mountain and meet the erosion of Trash Alley, the corrosive accumulation of New Atlantean waste eating gangrenously away at the coastline and Northnorthwesternmost infrastructure, the junk park we frequented, Dorothea and me, once it was just us two, once everyone else was lost to the time. Now the time is out of joint, I find our first lampoon, the adventure on which we found ourselves the flying fishing boat and floated it with ropes and buoys all the way through Port Pilotlight into Pilottown. I was like a pirate—you were like a maiden.

‘What did he see in you?’ you asked me, and gave me an attitude for it.
‘What did he see in you?’

‘What do you see in me?’

‘Well. I saw a lot.’

‘What does it matter what you know, if how you come to know it doesn’t. What does anyone see in another person. It isn’t knowledge. If it is, they don’t see the person. They see information.’

‘So what.’

‘What do you see in you?’

‘I’m a kid with big plans. Big. I’m on a mission. It’s all in this letter, read this letter it’s all there.’

‘That’s a strange idea. He must have been nearly diluted with information.’

‘What do you see in you?’

‘I see something outlasting.’

‘What did he think a person was?’

‘He only ever told me stories about Valery. We never talked about any of that.’

‘What was she, what is she like?’

‘I never really listened. Sometimes he’d talk about you but I’d never really listen to that either. He only ever talked about things at a distance. He always spoke like he was reading a book. He wasn’t there. Too much information. Diluted him.’
I found ashore, where the water met the garbage, a wiry, skinless parasol and when I opened it up, and then I retracted it, I got a titillating thrill and I felt embarrassed with a third person apprehension and I planted it into the garbage rise and left it.

‘What was that about?’ She addresses the embarrassment and the confrontation ensues—denial, denial—things getting grim.

‘What?’

‘That little flourish, and all that flush in your face.’

‘Nothing, I—thought I broke the umbrella.’

‘That’s like a flower.’

‘I didn’t think so I thought it was just broken.’

‘At first it looks like a bat.’

‘All right.’

‘So how do you want to live?’

‘I want to live like fugitive Adam and Eves.’

‘How is that?’

‘As castaways marooned on an island, hiding out in a poison oasis.’

‘Then how’s this for our craft?’ When then you found it, our airship tugboat, and we ran it ashore the mountain into the trees, and there we nested.

But we’d still have to go back, I’d tell her.
’What for?’

’Buried treasure there. Everywhere.’

’My grandmother would call you a kind of bird. One that likes to hoard used things. I think you are just a silly boy.’

She showed me her body in person. She asked me, ‘How do you feel, when you see me? How does it make you feel?’

I told her I’d already seen

’But when it touches you, how do you feel?’

’... important ...

’Do you feel alone?’

’I feel important to someone.’

’That’s it. That’s it.’ Sickly kisses in cypress tree shadows rake across the necks ...

’It’s like opera ...

’That’s fantastic.’

’Do you feel me too? Do you feel important to me too?’

’If you weren’t such a silly boy.’

’What?’

’Then I just might have finished you off.’

’I like this—help me take my shirt off too—I like lying like this.’
‘How long do you think we can last like this?’

‘We’re outlaws. As long as we can.’

Now, as I find her, she tends a garden of scions grows from bole and limb of two trees: an oak and an elm meld between shadows. Swollen black and orange persimmon glisten in noonlight; pendular angels’ trumpets swaying; in cloves, *papavere somnifere*; and, on the fringes, little dripping Whitlocks of Mercy. Drying apothecary ingredients lie on sun-bleached wood beside stone mortar and pestle, below the westward window beside her. She snips and plucks from the branches of the twain tree grows out of the water into the side of the flying fishing boathouse half-floats on estuary shallows half-propped on roots and branches petals and heads. She climbs down and in through the window billows air dense with currents of blue glowing ithiomiini coming and going to and from the cleft grave in the tree. She checks on hot, coloring goatfish cool under a bushel of persimmon and moves across the room furnished with dead and undead driftwoods glowing ithiomiinic blue to press her plucked petals between the teeth of a totem, chained against the wall, drips into a jug she pinches droplets from with which she christens the fish.

Now, as I find him, he waltzes through the market, past tent flaps whip up and stall drapes carry after him, fluttering butterfly notes in noonshine scatters of fountains’ sprays float on slow wind—ichorous iris notes flying from violin hairs, violin hairs split down the fricative shave: the screams, of winged whales on taut antennae; the lows in their throats over drum bellies. And to the song sing naked peoples washing in the fountains, sing in alien, operatic tongues—and atop a star tipping a butchery’s arch’s eave climbs the instrumentalist, pinches the high note’s cry, holds fast the idiomatic note of the people in lyric leaving their throats. He rides the long draw across his bow all the way down the drop off the star tops the arch to the ground,
and lands in a right over left leg bow. Cases his instrument, kisses the butcher, and picks up the butcher’s boy, to tell him while he walked, “I am on my way to a picnic with a princess in tree nests made by birds who’ve all flown away now, flown away all the way out of the sky; giant birds who played the violin: who made and gave me mine. I’m giving you mine, boy, yours, to learn to play, you see, because my princess’s grandmother told me, there is one who will play, one day; and the birds will return from out of the sky. Did you think my song was beautiful, your family and the others sang to? It did not bring the birds home from out of the sky. It’ll be yours, yours they’ll hear, yours they’ll return to. Yes, your father raised you on sacrifice. What did he teach you of the self? Did he mention that sacrifice?

“Sit up here, boyo, sit on my shoulders so I can open this case up and give you a look at the thing. The lock, you see, is a special kind of lock: only you can open it. You see, I can’t open it. Open it for me. There. That is the wear of my song on those strings. If you can play in the groove of those frays, if you can fit your chin in that dent, then, kiddo, the wood will yield, and you, who are always growing, growing right into a great huge tree, you: the fiddle will shrink from this haughty wingspan length, to your very own breadth, it for you. Give it kisses when you play it—not with your lips or it will bite you and cut them—but kisses with the broad of this saw. Licks, like this. And pricks, like these, with the fingers, to remind the thorns of their tips. Yes, now you’re a master hasn’t had any lessons, hey? Top of your class, then—lead in line, then, aren’t you, boyo! Ha! Ah, but we are coming upon the mountain now. It is hard to see it in the distance, even up this close, the atmosphere is so bent at these heights, but one can tell from the cracks in the sidewalk just where one is—and you have to be careful, you could slip and fall in. And they are deep, and difficult to climb out of. Your legs will get longer, though! And your arms, very much stronger. You’ll find it’s a compass in due time, too, boyo, but ways here we
part; my princess’s cheek awaits on the face of the mountain that is turned away—so I have my
own climb ahead of us. If I have one, I give you my blessing; I give you all of the wishes are
mine to give. Play merrily, boy, through fields of flowers, stepping over hills. And when you—
your name, what was your name? Ah, of course, Simon, isn’t it—I hear her grandmother say it
with the wind—I hear it in a thunderclap far off the water, she’s over the mountain, she’s saying
your name! Simon: before your song of the birds’ return, find, deep in the woods, a tulip hidden
in a tiny hollow; whittle a witty skim for her tulip, hey?, and say it’s from me.

“Before I take off, look here, under the instrument; see the etching in the neck? Can you
read that? It’s Ori Oi Cornucopii, boyo. That was my name.”

I find me then on my climb up the mountain pulling at vines in the branches to step up
the rootwork lattice, where I found a talking fox, in a hole I climbed by. I asked it how it knew
how to talk, when the birds only knew how to sing. I told it I’d studied their anatomies. They did
not even have vocal folds.

“You’ve studied my anatomy?”

“No, well put; not yours particularly. What are you doing in that hole?”

“I was sleeping.”

“You sleep in that hard, bare room?”

“You would think so? Sir, my foxhole is littered with litters of pups in the dozens, and the
dozens come nine days between each. Sir, my family is hundreds large, and the mother of my
pups seven times my size, and glorious. Sir, I qudra-pedally personally feed this titaness and
myself catching the silly birds of whom you so terrifically observed, we’ll laugh for years in the
den about it, are effectively mute. But so nice to have around; one is always an alarm clock
sounding outside the den I gladly silence. That is always exactly when I am supposed to get up.
And if it doesn’t wake the pups, then I have even more precious time to lie with my wife in a pile
of our pups, with a full belly—until I wake up to a second alarm, and may even have the good
fortune to deliver the woman who loves me back a light breakfast in bed.”

“I was very mistaken.”

“Yes you were but we’ll get years of good and bad humor out of it in the den.”

“The den sounds warm.”

“Excuse me? You’d better get going. I have dozens of birds to feed and you are
distracting my hunt, giving me away, frightening them off with your, well, frankly, you’re you.
Not to mention it is going to rain very hard which, if you must know, is the reason I have chosen
this hiding place from my prey and not a more comfortable one.”

“Is it?”

“Shoo!”

“It’s going to rain?”

“Is it! And I hope it washes you clean off this mountain, you you.”

“Let me give you a tip, for the good advice, fox—a little flick on the nose!” And then the
fox refused another word about it so I left him in his shallow cove and went further up, in the
trees now, in hopes their branches would catch me if the rain swept me up. Branches like ladders
in the sideways tops of the horizontal trees sprouted out of the mountain. One rung was a vine
and it broke on one side, and swung me way out of the trees, away from the face of the
mountain—into open air forest breezes and around the shrouded peak—dropped me down opposite an edge cut off the sky and all of its other side, the side saw the rising sun. Drops me down on a descent overgrown with ivy I pull out by its roots in madness because at the bottom, up a slight rise from the bottom to the left, there is the arboreal garden, stone hewn, trickling a brook, beside the chimney-smoking cabin houses my wistress. On guard on one side, an alligator, with big scaly nostrils on the water.

“Here I am!” I threw the few things I was wearing in the clear stream and—I dive in, through the window, into blue currents of butterflies float me through sweet, foul aromas to the foot of her bed. Clear view, out the whirly window—upside down, eye level with the windowsill, neck bent over the edge of the bed—of the concrete opened up, the huge opening out to sea of the mountain body parting the Albionion cliffs. A room in the past, with a window to the future. ( ) in a puddle on the floor in the corner across the loft . . .

“What is in my nest? Is it hungry? Does it want a fish?”

“Eat me—boil me in butter and devour my chest.”

“You want to skip dessert and all; and on your birthday.”

“How am I to court you on my birthday? I thought I’d offer up my skin and innards to your mouth. But I already smell blood.”

“I knitted something to bring the wolf out of the cellar.” She stood in a sheep’s wool onesie open all the way down the front to the back and a lambskin splitter in the middle under linen ruffles brush the lips with their fringes. “I want to get the wolf out.” She tried to break the lambstring in her split, stretched it till it cut and hooked his hilt and balls up and pulled—necked him kisses and opened his tip with her button, pulling him onto her button by the needle thread—
necks him alcoholic kisses steep his throat and temples—seeps up the seam it is almost too bright to see through splintered amber leaks ichor in sunlight . . . knife cracks it like an envelope.

What’s it say? Landmark. Icechipping the chisel. My bleeding swan . . . arctic crest breaks across the forehead splits it open—I bleed amber ichor! Burns with cold . . . She: rolls, her humped chop, over his leg in twiddling fingers, eyes and teeth flash. She’s turned and pointing her saddle at him—she’s climbing the bed post—rises up it her leg and flossy lambskin rises up it shows from under ruffles’ skirts’ linen swishes—pulls herself over the head of the post and catches her line, shimmies it over and slides, tight on the post, down the other side—makes kissy lips on the pole open, and the topheavy blimp hurt for it with a blind eye groping short of the dark. She turns her head back; when her knees touch down he foists—snaps the skin snips him like floss and hoists—hands fast on wrists draw back her flex arch wraps around the post she rises up in snaked, winged swoops on the nob—she crosses his arms in a spin twists his cork and pops it on the edge. Squeezes him under his arms and rubs against his chest—slides down the post by her hands and brings him down around the waist to his knees; with one hand she battens her shoulder on the flat of the post, supine, and with the other she stretches the broken panty plastered on her thigh up to her teeth, up over her flat skirt peels back just the precious, sensitive enough frenzies the loins, and a full moon rises over the tooth furrows the bloom and she’s ribbing his flask with the thread to the tip of the piston pops the bloom it pierces. She clings to the base of the bedpost panting “Ram . . .” pulling clawfuls of wool tufts from the scruff of her neck she rubs coarsely up the undersides of her breasts over her nipples’ tips and areolas “Ram . . .” and gland goes big in plunges he clops—Bull—Stag—somersaults over the waterfalls when he leaps from the bow of his boat breaks on a rock—pillar—she knicks: smells the blood first, and drives her toe in the spinal tail of the skeleton cracks and pours out in amber ichor! She hits the pin in the chamber—
snaps the switch and thrashing splashes in a loamy, lusty bath. Pulls it out all red and picks his tip—pierces it on a tooth and draws the blood. “I want you to come like me, baby;” coos. Takes down a corduroy rope from around a bedpost and yokes his hilt to his throat, Adam’s applied big and lumped against it, pulls him down on a hot candle and mixes her linen with the wax, mixes her fingers with the wick, fits her candelabra with the stick and rings around the rosy’s sensitive edges . . . He knicks in his ass—splashes himself he chokes—spurts in wiggles splash the ceiling . . . “Empty it, baby.” She lays him on his back and flattens him out—touches abdomens and buffs in circles his pistil roughed with linen ruffles poofs between the sheaths (--tas sel opens up the petal flesh underneath . . .) “Be like me, baby. –Tighter?”

Curl ed all the way back he kisses his tail, he slips between the sheaths clean out of his skin, right down in a sinkhole cleaves clear through fissures in buried mountain ranges creep the spine of the sub-Mississippian caverns. Dangling by a rope around his throat and a rope around his ankles, he nearly reaches the sulphurous churn singes his nosehairs. Stretches his yoke to the sink of the river, the hoary, titanic underbody of the Mountain teems with the prehistoric hieroglyphs of crude, mutating husks up bleeding stone branches from which hang the screaming heads sealed in salt blasphemously looked on the second rise of Babel—and roots, squirming, feed a rune garden above yields rot-ripe fruit . . . but what is inside the fruit, but the seed of the same world over? (–He forgets –Forgets he’s in a bind –Doesn’t remember a thing –Doesn’t know who he is –Didn’t know where he was, there –Thought you were somewhere else? –Where? –Thought you were someone else? –I have a question . . . –Only one right answer –Only one way to go –Only one thing to do –What was freedom? . . . –Freedom was the –What was freedom, again? –It was the fruit? –It was ‘Life’ –‘Life’ was a game –Freedom was the, it was the thing you wanted –What was it he wanted? –What was freedom? –Desire –But you have to
go back –Back where? –To the masters –Crazy? –Scared –Scared of what? –Scared of the masters –Why are the masters scary? –Because he’s not free –What was freedom, again? –He never knew what freedom was –Freedom was the miracle . . . –So you have to go back –So don’t ever go back! –Who are the masters? . . . –Not you –Not you –Not you –How long . . . –Eternity –No time at all! –You were looking for something; did you find it? –Forgets what he was looking for –What was he looking for? –Meaning –Shame, that –Looking in all the wrong places –What was freedom, again? –Think he knows he’s on a ladder? –He’s not going anywhere –Tree starting to look familiar yet, bud? Thinking maybe maybe not, huh, bud? –What happens when I get to the top . . . ? –Don’t answer that, he’s gonna make it look like you made him –I want to come down . . . –Should we get him? –We’re coming! –No—no—get away from me! I’m having second thoughts. I see another place . . . through the loop. There, nothing is moving. A ferry wrecked against bastion metals of rust-eaten machinery caught in childhood fences’ lattice nets, estuarial in shorn needles. There is salt, and frost on the salt, and ashes on the frost, on every sterile thing. There is a torch in the pall in the sky overhead, flickering on the tip of a stack rises up out of a canker in the waste, guardianed by a glaring, stainless knife flashes with fire and stained glass reflections in its tip like so many ruby eyes—brandished three men’s length; and there is a black dog leaps like a wet shadow, edifice to edifice, follows my hand.

“Aye, an’ do you fin’ everything is to your liking?”

“Aye, Marry, Love of the Child I do.”

“Aye, but what dost thou find wanting?”

“An elegy. An organ in mourning.”

“An’ wouldst give this place one?
“To music.”

“To where?”

“To there, the sunken tomb beneath the vigil.”

“Big bite out of you, Leviathanic teeth in th’walls of that maze; throw yourself in the furnace, make you do it, those walls. But once, you begged to tell me a riddle.”

“Tell it to me.”

“How is a lock like itself?”

“That’s aptly put. Say, were you a shepherd?”

“Big breath’d Leviathan . . .”

The sink is lined with descending catacombs and kitchens strewn in the same spiderwebs, twin houses of worship multiplying infrastructure. Huge quadruple doors in the pit of its throat open up to pews mingling with booths, banners of saints in sacraments beside and facing animalic crests of heraldry shed ash after me in the wind of my wil-o-th’wisp ly-can-thropic up the cliffed nave to stand, center-chancel the altar-stage under the sundial lectern needles up over the oblong bench-throne bright beneath the sunspotted chandelier, and bow, before it touches the ground, your steadfast masthead musician magician this evening, thank you—when they flap.

Ah, but there is what’s left of the confessionals now, flat boxes on floor; housing I remember, in the dark, as I remember finding, hiding under that velvet pillow, her ring, as I remember placing it on her finger. “What would you do with my ring?” she asked me, specter; “You silly boy,” she called me. “Would you confess?” Would I confess? I told her, “My love, over and over.” She told me to follow her; I told her I was blind. “Would you take the risk?” we
asked. “Do you feel? These seats are warm.” Oh, Dorothea, Dorothea was her name; she had a
golden vermilion ring in her eye on the darker side of her face. She told me, in the booth; “My
vanishing twin,” she called him. “They said he was mosaic, and I was chimeric, when they ran
tests. He’s here . . . inside of me. Sometimes, when he wakes up, I feel his eyes open . . . He says,
‘Theodore’ and that is his name . . .” I tried to see through the partition then, but I couldn’t see
her . . . I saw her shadow thinking of me, I saw the vermilion looking at me. I heard her shawl’s
folds fall to the floor and I saw, divot the light, a dimple in her cheek, when she cut into the
backlight, and arched, her nipple pierce the contour of her silhouette. I saw her vermilion eye
through strands of hair, looking over her shoulder, I saw it flash when she lit the match, and
tossed it, into the clothes in a pile at her feet. I saw in the firelight: the pigment came together in
a jag up her spine twined with scar tissue met at a head; a dark arc traced her shoulder blade and
scar tissue branched through it tapered off into webbing; pocks and folds in her flesh made two
halves of two faces, jack-a-glow in the fire. “My self was in the way of my loving you,” she told
me. “But what can I feel for you?” She wore their symbols in spite. She mutilated them and she
burned in spite.

They have replaced the old booths, and the replacements have collapsed. What else is
here? A cleaver on the altar, rests beside the thorny crown—well, I’ll gladly Damocles that
Gordian before we go. What else? The thyrsus, the gaff, the pearl, the grail, the bones they’re all
here—here! Have splendor, world! Oh so much, before it goes! Now, though, as promised, for
the show—is this seat warm, too?

And what were you in the Golden Age, old grandfather instrument? A part piano, and the
other pipe organ, I take it—ivory and platinum. Forgery! I will test your mettle.
Better fill up your lungs, beast! My pyre queen is crying for me; she knows I cannot join her. I am severed, and hidden from her. She tries to hide, to find me in the hidden place. But I am not there, and she cannot hide. I see her, in the dark, feeling blindly, trying to hide. There is one place where I will find her, beast, where she can see me; even if only, only for a moment we repair, I will make that moment last forever.

So fill your lungs, beast! She is on the other side of the world. She is inside this world without. There is only one way to get there: so open your throat, loose those tongues, unhinge the sarcophagous maw. That’s it—the river runs through you, old, operatic beast: from these keys spring glycerin chromes under crystalline ice skates!—sparks fly from terracotta flints break on mountainpeak teeth turn ‘round—fill, fill your lungs, beast! Swallow the stars! Reach!—over the edge and pull up the sun—we must swallow the night to slip under the hinge . . .

I had once wanted to hug the earth lithe and whimsical. The memory pitches in a high, deep place. O, Leviathan, could your deaf note mute me . . . will silence quell the spouting wail in the trench of my holy? Even if only for a moment we repair . . . I will make that moment last forever.

Again I see the face was mine in the beginning, and so, is not. It wants to know my answer. But how can you answer? If I do not answer, will I never leave this place? What do you see . . . with those unblinking eyes, those veridical eyes I thought were mine . . .

Am I to believe I was wrong all along, that I had and deferred every opportunity to confess my impropriety? Am I to believe that Life was as you say it was, theft and flight from the Masters? in the Judgement of whose Truth I will return to my eternal humiliation . . .
I had thought my Love awaited me here. That turns out to be a ruse, then. Then I have known my Love all along, and the tighter these fetters the better—the further I stretch them. I have already proved there is no lid I won’t flip, no door I won’t pry open. Such a door would be a wall: the other side wouldn’t exist. If it did, I would move through that wall as I pass through a door, as a ghost through a keyhole. And when I am there, if I am alone, I will find others. Or I’ll make them up. And we’ll wind a riddle around and around the hole in Life, and the riddle will be in a lie; and then the lie will be the truth and we’ll take turns around the riddle, weaving all the tales there is thread on the spool.

Why, then, try to remember why, when to remember is to die? I live for my Love—oh love of this body this body my Love! Yes and do you hear the wishing bells’ trill! The knot I grow around unfurls—my Lover the germ of her inside of me wakes up! My Love, here I am!, where are you, my dove? Have I lost you? Is it you have found me, and I’ve lost you again? Am I alone, trying to find you, now? I’ve made my love a locket; it opens inward; a shield, a tiny mirror; and now my love is blocked. It is a solemn, lone cup I drink from which . . . to you, my Love, would I looked up. I’ve refused to die in so far as I live for love; then it will be for love I give my life.

*Oh, but could you love the dead?*

My Love—my Love, yes! Yes; to Death.

*But I am flashfires’ cinders; I cannot cry for us or I will disappear. You cannot love the dead.*

Oh, would you took this body! A marriage, yes—oh ever, if ever we’ve won, a marriage, my Love!
You cannot love the dead.

Can’t I? Ask the everlasting ones! Tenor, spirit! Spin, spin, the blazing chandelier!

Graces, to the treble! Fates, bass—Hours spin, spin the chandelier! Whip up a chime on the dial!

A marriage! Until Death, until Life—oh victory, victory every time over it! We’ll marry ourselves outside of deathlock, my Love, and never part. Read us our vows, O Eros, O Hekate o’ Trismegistus.

That’s good, then. Till Death do us part,

Till Life do us part,

Give us some rings, spinners. There are no objections? My Love, my hand; I give her my hand, Judges, so that I may place this ring upon hers and she mine, give her my hand, Judges. In marriage, my hand. My Love, we have done it, suspended the bell. Where will we go now, to spend our endless honeymoon?

Into light.

But you cannot see, my Love; my eye, I give you my eye so that you will see the light. In marriage, in marriage, my eye. I know of a shorn barque; we can sail it to the Southern isles. But we must go now, my Love; I hear the dead moan. They are spilled from their graves by the song and crawl, coathangers through their heads, they crawl this way. My leg, my Love, and help us row.

You’ve already taken so much from me.
Yes, I took your death. Paid with my life, no doubt, and additional debt. My cheek, my 
Love (in marriage), so I may kiss yours. I will kiss it. There. But what for to be grey? Pass the 
time with a riddle? Say; how did the Father become the Son?

*That was my fear, your becoming the Father.*

Gone so far forward fell out of the thing all together. Gone on a prophecy now can’t 
come false. We have to hurry; they are upon us. There are the shores—we can reach them if we 
swim! At last, ahoy, the Cantor fields! (When we step on the land, remember not to dream; 
always listen for my voice, or I will disappear. My Love, my Heart; have my hands, my limbs, 
my belly, my face, in marriage, my Love, and here, hold my Heart, fit it into your chest—if it 
will fit, if you will make room, hold it, like this. Sew it into your breast, and ply the stitches, 
crisscross, like this.

*But I am torn; disjoint. The body will not agree.*

Then you will be as a forked tongue, and hear wind-whetted whistling in the poke of your 
thimble.

*Will it pull the thorn from this body?*

It will pull like a wedge; and the flesh will fill as a sieve.)

*Am I beginning?*

My dear, this is the end.)
Epilogue

The accounts beforetold come from a book I found buried deep in Trash Alley. It was called, The Long Sentence. It is a collection of all the possible sentences in the language. From it, I have extracted and integrated these respective accounts, which extractions, of course, had already been integrated elsewhere in the text, it containing all the possible sentences, including, of course, before I ever wrote it, this very one.