

Pleasures

Two Extracts



Then the simplest of ideas arrives simply and I must use the toilet downstairs, I must piss.

And what does that feel like in writing? Urgently; a wetness within the wetness of insides, its character is not '*full of*', but '*suspended over*' like a fat raindrop over emptiness.

Downstairs I brace for the first inhale of different bodies,
but the door to the bathroom is locked, water pulses
against the basin and exacerbates my need –

“OBJECT in the poem: its function is to burst.” George
Oppen.

There is somebody inside, adrift in the steam. The frosted square window on the door is obscured by a rainbow of hung towels. There is movement in the gap between the towels. I can see the dark silhouette of a young man washing his hands – he pauses for a moment to look at himself in the mirror; to direct a thought toward his own reflection.

Outside I roamed the naked day, looking for a good spot to relieve myself, things I like; her hair, this bike. I took to city life, rolling in an arc along the sentence of its edge, its legend. Next to me a bus hissed, crouching toward the curb like a living thing. The shutters in the

pawn shop raucously opened and the swinging pendants flocked with diamonds flashed out onto the street; the first appearance in their daylong cabaret. London, London haywire in the directions of it! So much pain, ignorance, and kindness, explicit; unalienable from the fidelity of winter; swinging so visibly with diamonds. *Conjunctivitis* as a word, cold, queueing up for the hole we leave in each other.

The novel; an equipment with which to see you better, could not contain everything, but it could try and then *end*. Meanwhile my tragedy will not be allowed to thrust into the picture frame (first novels are so often autobiographical). The city shared my mantra; live as variously as possible and don't believe anything you hear about me.

Totality is the story we tell ourselves about ourselves. It has *nothing* to do with *anything*. Choose your own metaphor – metonymy – image – mirage. Strip me of my medals; they were for killing anyhow. We have no narrative, only particulars; the smoke curtseying off a

cigarette, the ecru whites of the old shopkeepers' eyeballs, hidden behind his cubist spectacles – he emerges from his shop as if called forth to add a clause. And his eyes dart in their compartments, over London's object; feeding oxymorons to the mind's many deltas. The idea of speech, inchoate; squirming in the current, struggling towards clarity and the lips parting to publish the word and the word was *now*. He *Yawns*. The old man yawns, pinched off with a quick shiver.

I looked to where he looked, as if it was his suggestion, but saw nothing. A view of branches on a huge empty tree; scalpel cut against the white sky. But now it started in me too. An obligation somewhere in my lower jaw, under the tongue – it was unstoppable, no effort could stop it; I yawned too.

His yawn had found its host in me. It was the most illegal feeling, as if he had yawned the idea hotly into the back of my throat, or slid me a folded note under the table. A writer is defenceless, always upturned—accepting life's mobile and fragmentary depths.

Fragmentation and continuity, either are good I think
trying both against the wheelie bin. Sound is
important, musicality, timbre is what I care about. Sorry,
but you might be in a poet's novel.

Water out my penis asks; where are the gullies? Where is
the ease? It will flow out, unchallenged, into traffic and
not even flinch. It will look for relief, because that is its
nature or its art or it is the law. I piss out the third person
– It will acquiesce into a puddle's big letting go and add
volumes to the gradeless sky reflected therein. “Hello
person” the puddle says, guileless,
as I appear inside its mirror, “*May I draw a ghoul?*”.

It does not even recognise me.

Why would I not write like the experimentalists? Living
is an experiment! For writers who are struggling to find
an audience, for christ sake remember; your reflection is
a public – and a critic; sad sunken eyes, no chin, goat
eyes, far apart eyes.

Oops, time for lunch says the steel vent, dumping food smell presently into the alley.

I chased the most adventurous tendril of piss to where it digressed around a corner; to where it found an imperceptible dimple on the pavement; a meeting of slants in front of an empty shop.

The little junk shop on the corner, once filled like a dark beer with mahogany furniture, had been overwritten with emptiness. My practice was once to lose myself in the horde. I would sink into its auras of depth and antiquity and wait for the shop to produce time from its tooth gemmed mouth. And there, it would! A little black rubber thingy, or a long blonde wig as majestically fake as a white mare's mane, the taxidermy rat must plastic watch its whole death. It was heaven for a writer of sculptures to put my mind there, in its dubstep charm melos – darth maul poster, white airforce in a jar of vinegar, camping spork. Look, even in the mind I egress into its broken unities, its art of insistent difference.



Now a memory emerging, softly stinking of rain – an image of many years ago – of childhood; that fugitive premise. The lost land where first we are nobody in its vapors and then we hear it called; our name. And we drift in wastelands, over the rubble, closing in on our origin; the feeling of a door handle; the weight of a door. A room appears as we enter it and we are inside, close to whatever it was that called it; our name, the source! Something red and warm is gently put in our mouths, aboard a curved spoon, and life is sharply found on a molecular level. Full bodied life, extending into its ghost like a hand into an empty silk glove. And we swallow life, swinging our legs, and we know all of a sudden that we are an event. *Awakening*.

Now an eyelash falls from Sarah's eye and lands on the linen tablecloth.

Narrative shows how concern "interprets itself" in the saying "now." – it selects itself from time for interpretation.

Now Sarah presses their finger onto the eyelash and inspects it on their fingertip. *Was this my origin or my ending?*

When Sarah was young they would stand on the checkerboard floor behind their mother in the kitchen as she washed dishes and volley question after question against her vast back. Sarah was a little *curioso* and their body intoned the bad music of that word – it jolted and made gawky flourishes for emphasis like there was a little grease on the levers within. *Whatever will be, will be*, Sarah's mother used to respond whilst pressing her marigold finger down on the harvestmans that marauded the damp window sill in front of the sink *full stop*.

Those harvestmans were so big to kill with one finger, Sarah thought, they shuddered.

Sarah would say they were bored to death and their mother would automate; *to confess you are bored means you have no inner resources!*

Now Sarah vengefully tears off a chunk of sourdough bread and swallows it nearly whole, without any evidence of alarm they grab the upper neck of a beer bottle with a confidently hooked forefinger, and tilt beer steeply onto the bread that was lodged in their throat, the dry bread is flushed down. The mechanism never fails, and the napkin says silence as Sarah silently belches behind their screwed up napkin.

Sarah's mother used to tell Sarah that while most people were pissing out kids onto pregnancy tests, she, finding no blood, took a leak onto the circular window of a magic eight ball instead. *Ask again later*, it triangled back at her.

But then again, of course; Sarah's mother never said or did any of that. Sarah searched and searched their memory, but could not find themselves anywhere in its offices. No, wrong – memory's narrative could not

accommodate the selves that took office inside of Sarah.
Sarah balked at its attempts.

We drive to know the mother and father because we
drive to know the beginning and the end. Cause bears
down on effect like the blue mouth of how you die.

But I was the phenomenal ruin, the fragment – cast off
from myself. Why would I pretend at origins? I would
hardly risk total manifestation. Because, Barthes says so;
“The monument of psychoanalysis must be traversed –
not bypassed – like the fine thoroughfares of a very large
city, across which we can play, dream, etc.: a fiction.” So
the unmade ground of my youth was a place of
improvisation and abstraction – *writing*. I staged my
mother and father as arrows drawn on a psychic white
board, the directions of which signalled a variety of
movements, violences, pleasures. They were simple
functions, erased and redrawn.

The eyelash on Sarah’s fingertip, stood up on its curve.

Hugo Hagger

Sarah smiled with it.