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"Persons exist as practical ways of speaking about bundles."

—Paul Williams

They awoke in a bookless world studded with lean-to performances artists interacting with electricity. This was the place. Evicted from elsewhere, here at last not rent but an apprenticeship in consumer technology. A kind of music that, though apparently dropping, starting, stopping, more specifically never ends, thus displaying as virtue its greatest flaw. Successfully, insistently. Who here has access to liquor? The youth of this century owed much to the sensual temptations of the nearby chipping block. This transparency at once a local pride and a fulcrum of alarmism. Yes. They then proceeded lengthwise down the post-racial boulevard, exhausted but happy, their travel plans successfully forgotten. Perhaps they would stay awhile. But

no... What's that humming sound?

Strangers

The so-called outside

The new-fangled windowpanes across...
the street, emptied into delirium of greeting.
The burnt marshmallow stuck to your cheek
Like a weak rhyme, a new genre of pottery, bolt
upright in the midst of a daydream.
So that we all might be blessed with the darker gifts
of broken car, tank top, a castle
full of water-logged documents.
Let us now return

so the Albanian shore.
The complete works of Edith Lauten.
We could build an entire civilization.

but that would be a mistake.
It is impossible to make a mistake.
Ask Palestine.
Ask Palestina.
Ask dead Buddha standing up the bicycle-repair shop.
At the age of two I strained my ear
and then the war

gone: lesson.
Water will become an issue.
Alpine meadows and gardens.
All that money spent
on oceanfront mansions.

The trimming of municipal welfare trees ongoing.

The paper-mache Potemkin
village we've spread like
spreadable cheese over the surface of
what we call Earth.
There's a space. You fill it.
but it's not you.
You're not it.

either—in fact you're not you.
Early computer music struggling to be heard
Smothered by an updraft
Insect smoke drifting

like a trombone player pretending to have a weekend gig.
This is our heritage, little bits
of paper left secretly in the corners of rooms.
The number of dune mites
in an average blue blanket

that has not been washed in five years.
Why haven't you written? It
seems so easy to have written,
to have dropped

a line in the ink-dark pool.
Great piles of fish for sale in Brooklyn bissnes
Bales of anagula
Ragorts of hibiscus vegetation
The acoustics of St. Agnes
The overworn series
People sitting up and remembering it's time to do something nice for
companion animals.
Not a gram of it would I swallow as tonic.

Listening for the distant hum of bombers
Unaccented English means you talk like me
To Albany by deer trail,

about prison glinting in last light.
The phone should cut it out now
I'm not home

Church bell one minute late
The smell of lavender in the hug too long
A drop of slightly sulfurous water
Throwing up, landing, walking up

Thought balloon above Bannock's head
"Under five minutes, rock, over five minutes, classical"
Drown down deep in the underworld

This also holds true

for at-bats.
I can't work today because I am crazy
with desire to stay inside and listen

to opera from four centuries.
A person you knew in camp once, on an island,
walking up to you in a dream asking to borrow money

for furniture.
Hold me tighter or I cannot stay.
I will sing in Italian until my needs are met

By the animals that have bound me
in the common toilet of Arocho.
In the New Jersey hills teaching basketball to middle-school girls
In a rapidly shifting ecosystem beneath grasses
In an anonymous industrial park, buried about eight feet deep
Inside a Malaspina oyster being flown to Chicago
In the flickering timescape of essential manners
In one ear and out the other
In time for dinner but late for epistemological theory—hope
Infertile oocytes at dial
In my opinion, standing on head before bright light
In lieu of flowers, ritual immolation
In what we call public spaces
The ancient odours of Hibernians
Moving from panel to panel
Noting elements of the collage
Several people wearing hats inside
The unframed repression of woodworking used sexually
Just because you thought it, or wrote it down
or printed it and had it distributed via whatever
networks of strategic alliance
doesn't mean
America won the war of 1812
White House in flames
First stirrings of Canadian patriotism amongst U.S. southerners
King leekers
Lovers of cold, hard, stupid life
Abundant fur-bearing rodents
Who cares for any of this
sediment of legend and angle brackets.
Ignoring the box scores, the ballooning ERAs
of once promising youngsters from Louisiana
and rural California
Intact despite splitting,
Polluting an unconscious
on the basis of boat slips.

Academic:
Having drawers.
Insight into the ransom
The great privatization scam
Indentured workers making bricks, ages 3 to 70
Animal line
Leghold trap policy
Ramps are of the silly clan

Relaxed
You can choose your friends
Arbitrarily, like family photos
bought at a junk shop.
Hey let's bury our radioactive garbage in the desert for
seven thousand years.
Or shoot it at the moon
and Mars along with bacteria.

see what happens.

Suppressed memory. We have all survived crash landings,
wandered here and invented plausible pasts
Every so often one of us will slip up
That’s why we have police
Booze
Regional art museums
French-Canadian acrobats
All-too-plausible breakdowns

and suburban shooting sprees.
Bang bang
I remember you
as a tender heart of my youth.
Now you are old, in fact,
dead, in a suit, and want something, even death can’t kill

a craving.
If we knew the formula we could make our own
Cut down on Mexican road trips
Just sit around
talking all day, wandering, renewing the parks,
cutting the back off trees,
Nights by the canal, shivering,
Hanging with Gen outside the necropolis
An outburst of postmortem attention
The remnants of a dream
The Punch archives
Into existence, a cave wall
Being chipped at, generation to generation
Not many beaches
Too few water closets

Lots of signs
Hand in hand, meandering listlessness
Vagrant kitchen veterans saving up for tonight
Fat pigeon that can’t retire
Neurotic Yodelers
genev.
Yesterday I stayed in out of the heat, washed dishes
Read a book
Remembered a cow
That as an ignorant boy with a board I walloped
For breaking into our yard
Eyes first puzzled then passed off
Bellowing near my asparagus patch
Or was that later
After the big collar fell and destroyed the fence
Or possibly when we mastered, refusing to follow
Alexander farther into the subcontinent
Just wanting to go back to whatever inevitably temporary homes
With the bubbles we collected and our blistered skins
Eat an entire sheep with a group of cousins
Maybe build a hut
Imperceptibly after a grammar
Chase birds
Stand in the middle of barley
Centuries later
Drab, the brand-new feudal nightmare, Drab
I loved a girl the girl loved me
They chopped us up by the thuggish sea

And
on like that.
The weather is something you notice
Anecdotes from random travel
Who tried to kill whom
over what disputed bottle
How are
visited Europe
How rules programmed mutations
Until suddenly the Internet breathed new life into corrupt housing councils
Spider silk in the milk of goats,
with forenames in Québec
Settled into a decent life of waiting to be allowed to breed
Sentimental calculus
twice taller than steel
Deciding who shall have access to the research library
Itself a front, cockfights our back
The clerks grown in vans near Langley
A economic sense of the ends of nation
Deteriorating nicely with the new national security apparatus
Year beloved on the lawn
as seen from space.
What we've learned from film:
Our engines swap gears
That figure in the distance portends catastrophe
In a day or two this will not be over
Monstrosities arise from steam
A heart of pure murder

Absolutely trudging barren scenarios
Ledges of the pockmarked earth give way
to fog psychosis, a ringing phone
inside a solid crystal cube
Eager to fall in love, to retreat to the car barn
The amusements out of control, a supper ready
for the consequences of a moth
in New Zealand, snatching the ear hair
of Franco triumphant in Madrid, letting loose
the vampire princes, the werewolf scions

of Central Europe, India
Like coming to the end of a dirt road
in a fever dream, as you trace the vegetation thinning
to reveal a copper-bound book of covert photographs
within which, looking closer, the vulnerable nudes
of downed soldiers and looksless memonolautics
have written upon them the dogged
of potem.
Life in the pressurized capsule
becomes intolerable.
Weeks, days, hours, seconds just passing
at the back of your hand and the carefully
printed instructions in twelve languages,
one of which you can read since the stroke.
What we need is a loop
of sorts and a sound
bullish thing to propel through it,
and a will to think otherwise.
A long history

of drainage.

—One could go on. One waits
for permission to go on, and in the meantime buses
one's self with the most basic sort of domestic
tasks, digging an ancient cigarette butt
from behind the radiator, washing one cherished dish, passing
a T-shirt over the dusty surface of the clock radio
But it all collapses before one's bloodshot eye, the loadbearing walls composed of particles
who refuse not to, who strike against the conditions
who saw nothing and ain't talking, who
refuse even to sweep themselves up. Wait,
what that last Tuesday? One is in need
of more current data, readings, graphs,
presentations, illusions,
varieties. The line for charity

groceries starts here.

So deeply in debt
that you're totally in the clear
and can once again endure the budding of trees,
the groans of living rock,
and the cross-eyed allure of prison guards.
So totally in debt to subagents of the imperium

that they can kiss your polished green ass.

Lightning strikes the watchtower
Midsummer hill
Tentacles of the Canadian carrot grow
toward the trees outside, seek counsel
Every bit of Brooklyn bent
double over hydrants, trying to get
comfortable in the heat of this dark blind.

Lightning strikes
cactus in the dry flats beyond someone's town.
The work just never ends. First there's the obvious
problem with the rug, then all those papers
close to toppling, and the gentle turning of the mind
away from thoughts of political
assassination, and then, not finally, this whole matter
of Senator Dreyfus's Citron Chapel.
You might be familiar with the old adage I'm shoring
in your face to keep both of us cool.
You might have a gift for the rough stuff in vacant lots.
For now, though, just wear the hat.

There isn't any way to decide for sure
and it's childish to keep crying. Lightning strikes
the baby sister and we clutch each other in fear
and grief. The cactus rises in triumph and invent
democracy in those eyes that. We're long gone,

and it's a pleasure to meet you.

—No, that, of course was another film
possibly in another universe, possibly inside
one of those appliances
Or inside the cow's eye
sliced open in service to the surrealist project
in a previous century

This very lovely
bass flute part written by Cowell
as a favour
to the vice cops who busted him
who arrest him
over and over
in an eternal-return machine
constructed
for the entertainment
of conglomerate nonbeings
who are, sort of, near there
in the percussion part
but then again knowed
in the eternal return

of anti-light, to put it in the vernacular.
So a Swiss Army Knife walks into a bar.
The biker develops a crush in his saddle sore.
The regiment marches on its fantasies.
A familiar weight presses down on the shoulders,

aiming you toward the mercureal.
Forget the grape-and-grain prohibition.
It is not dancers who are difficult but dance itself
an exchange of brains on a stage of oil
reminding you of something immediately forgotten

by Jim and his red-shirt buddies down at the co-op.
The challenge is to stand up boldly
and say nothing, saying nothing at the tips
of the microphone, refusing to move. And to repeat this
action at every possible venue

until your mind's as clear as a piece of rye toast.
The sad fate
of obsolete bellshakers trying pathetically to fish
for mackerel in the East River—see this and move
on, steel your heart against the old booms
attempting to smash the new. You've got Susan's

work to do.
I got laid

off, deserted
in muscling, with only a little pan
and a sharp spoon.
Having dreamed of a reunion
with my grandfather, dressed in the clothes
in which he left Ireland in 1926, at a critical
time conference of some sort, complicated
iron staircases leading to sub-basements
and pipes, finally being able merely to wave
at him and Uncle Bill as they're ushered through doorways
and reception areas, the speeches ongoing.
But how am I going to survive? The plane a buzzing dot
against sub-Arctic mountains in the distance.
No bug spray even.
Not cold, but it will
be cold. Feelings, as always, like a television
pilot with minor script problems and a conflicted
relationship between the principal avatar.
Two choices: march or dig. Gather tiny petals
or remember tobacco. Upside really clean air.
A melancholy peculiar to mammals
or vertebrates generally, regarding their own
fossil evidence with a sideways,
querulous stare.
Keep sheep off this point.
Return pert pigs to glen to gambol.
Make provision for dog and goat.
Enable the carrots to live free of themselves.
Give the barn she
heating it deserves.
Promote infancy, elongated youth, steroids
Skill at games
of chance
A wondrous feeling of emptiness engulfs the entire
who are everyone not currently engaged in a real-estate transaction
Racing camels through the streets of Kamloops
Calmly turning the pages of a family history
in which the names Sike, Howard, and Dardillas
keep recurring throughout disconnected generations
in different states and provinces.

There's a map here to where there once was a well.
Far apart from every diluted view

The heart attack
in an unfamiliar town—so this is what it looks
like. It broke big, but right into the whistle-house.
Another case. Gone. That's all she.
(Lorraine N., janitor of Wisconsin) wrote. The whole

damned thing, properly edited this time.
Signing my name with a restraining order

the Roderic sublime.
She sells timeshares by the lakeshore.

Having been invented by a malevolent demigod
and forced everyone to pace the room

under the woodshedding saxophonist.
For breakfast we have a bunch of leftovers
and the fresh kidneys of a Salvation Army hell-ringer.

Just a place where you can be "yourself," an array of glitz
for the cocktails, a little patch of hush by the backshore.

Anything that's been rubbed that long is a real object
of pie-eyed worship somewhere in the so-called
universe, spending away from itself as though there is
somewhere to go. here's

your headgear:
It depends on what you mean.
by dragged

The last guy, he had a lot of answers
and a collection of vintage wanted posters.
The new guy, he doesn't say much.
The next guy hasn't even been born yet,
and with any luck never will be.
Refusing to work requires great discipline.
Waiting in tool clothes under a bridge requires great discipline.
Insisting on knowing that about

shit requires great discipline.
I'm standing before a mirror, shaving my ear,
when Safi devotional music bursts through the door.
in a bid to wrest, with big news from the physics think tanks.
Orange box. Black wrench. Purple

pot.
Fetters are people.
in wilderness outposts.
The arsenic of treated wood,

bitten into.
Not all the fruit trees hate you—just this one.

Freedman attempted to purchase Mexico.
Darwin feared meteors and their possible connection to lichen.
Machinists hated ducks. Just based on em.
Martin Proctor cooled and ate an entire cabin boy.
Jack Spicer invented the clap-on clap-off lamp.
Fatty Arbuckle liked his own death and ended up running a go-cart
track in Alabama.
Goya lost his nose

in a practical joke gone very, very wrong.
Back to slowly away from the hear, not looking
in its eyes. Pretending to be asleep.
Ignoring the tornado. Refusing to acknowledge
the legitimacy of the middle.
Not flinching—holding steady—when the monster
falls into the bath. Glowing back, turning to salt, and not
caring. Driving blindfolded on acid in the 70s.
Arguing for a lower grade. Pulling the thighb

bars of the opposing power forward.
A small gally, with a few boards, can be home.
for a while. Flooding inappropriately, standing up
at the wrong time, on an accidental street. Now you are ready.
It isn’t what anyone needs to want. This music
includes recordings made on Trade Center windows.
Pluto labeled Gypsies to advance his own pop-
fascist agenda. Those clicking words. An unexpectedly
depressing millennium, a real letdown after
the frisky ad campaign.

The flag in tatters at last. The pledge
to reunite in front of a fountain in twelve years.

Until then, storage: A sprig of tarragon
behind the car.
And these are the bite marks that prove it.

The great purge. The final round
of adjudication and ridicule. For a time—say
thirteen thousand years—we were more or less always

giddily prospectors with claims on the attention of the invisible
archivist, and then look, no one can even get the cork
out of the bottle intact. I remember I was bent over

inspecting the remains of a rival gatherer when I got the poke.

So many things to chop up and divide, but the day
ended early and the benefits were substantial, and,

retirement, let's just say it was taken care of. The joke

get passed around, permitted, quadrupled,
and came home river to mountain to lake to field, hungry

as a ghost and similarly startled. I remember dying

of starvation during one protracted cold patch, another time slowly

suffocating, covered with weird webs, while the things

that bloom bloomed. And, much later, being flushed by my elders

into a fiery abyss, keeping quiet about the deleted

status of my virginity, hoping for the sake of everyone

that it would rain soon,
or the delicious frogs would return.

But I guess you had to be there, at the assembly, writing


to return to what we now call northern Kyrgyzstan

and to round up some of those horse-like things to see

if they'd be willing to carry our stuff.

What begins as career
returns as lust.
The IMC on trial for murder. You want this
to be the case.

Want

finally have enough pens to finish the job—
there won't, soon, be any job for which you qualify
other than postbox repair, but even then
the competition will be fierce with those of your ilk.

Hard to imagine that much freedom, that large
responsibility of the totally useless list
that collects in the mud. Have you passed

much yet in your anxious dream? Very important
to pass the tests and be permitted entry

to the secret shed.

Youth passed quickly as a hoaxed Depression jackrabbit.

And now offspring fight over your frozen body,
debate the propriety of your clone.

It took me years

to recognize the painting as a landscape,

and then my pleasure was not diminished.
but different, like Scroopy Sales’ later dramatic roles at fractured small-town druggist and recovered
memory rape victims.

We call it stuffing but actually it’s form,
that is, emptiness.
Back from breaking the fall of the accounting class
Midsummer, gathering early nuts
and staring past the 8th on a mission
to Venus, a very hot planet
peckmarked with regrets and fallen rotten cyprians.
In whose care do you wish to be returned?

Afternoon popping sounds
above the subway station.
This is a good cave—not much
to brag about at the reunion, but it keeps our things
dry and provides shelter from hungry beasts.
You’d laugh at the things we believed back then.
That our cats cared for us.
This Belgium existed.
That we couldn’t fight any bad
because it kept running off.
But we didn’t have your advantage of logarithmic
detachment and prank. We in fact had little prank —
it seemed to dry up even as it was squirting from our ears,
and food preparation was a lot more involved than subsequently.
Eye recognition software was in its early stages
and we feared death horribly because it seemed so
effortless. Yes, there’s no going back, even though,
especially since there of course is now a way to go back.
The new name-worshipers are a big improvement.
The reopening of the baths. Three desert oasis.
I do miss the old scribbled, though,
and the cawing crickets that attended great injury,
and the pungent odour of stolen cars.
And it is true, not false. It’s a lot to take in
to the losherman, the thriving corner store, all at once.
If we were to receive instruction from a root
or shooten, one could then decipher these glyphs.
A patchy itinerary. Free vesp for workers.
When a friend is leaving town, go with her and drink.
When he arrives where he is going, keep a photo
on the fridge.

A great flapping bird, looking for something to eat in Brooklyn.
I’ve lately been rereading my schoenig essays in Latin
and there is much I could learn from my younger self.
if I were the sort of person interested in learning.
I debate the merits of cremation and embalming
while in Rome, New York, burning, doing as the Rome,
New Yorkers do: Slave to my click
was a song of this spring. Later, whether Julie
should be executed as a traitor, Gerry,
the conscious swooge. Ann the anarcho-Latina, as if
But at least they can look back from old age and think,
yeah, goddamn it, we blew something up, we blew something up, didn't we? The rest of us, what did we blow up?
A few hairdryers in domestic ranges, correct?
Not really the same thing. Possibly once or twice sabotaged a Zamboni or contaminated an enemy with plutonium, laid a curse or two. Model

workers.
I remember most of the plot. And the main character—his name is Fritz or Cooper or Kawasaki, something like that—spends the whole film trying to get change for a hundred. And he wakes up bumping his aged father. Or has he woken? One of those brain teasers that appeal to crossword types. Any surface at all, inside or out, you touch it and a scrolled menu appears. Listing recent history, chemical makeup, distance to the sun in millimeters, distance to the Vatican in inches, famous people who have previously touched this spot, far context, will to power, adjacencies, and further articulations. And each category has elements of subcategories, and each subcategory scores of its own, all meticulously cross-referenced. Linked, so that each square centimeter of surface everywhere, pole to pole, from the top of the mightiest Portuguese bell tower to the intestinal lining of a sea turtle off Ecuador, has billions of words and images attached to it, and a special area, a little rectangle, for you to add your own comments. It is the great work of a young-electric global

civilization, a meta-literate culture with time on its prothetic condenses, at this point slightly more silicon than carbon, blinking vulnerably in the light of its own radiant consciousness. What villain would wish to blow this up!
But look who walked off with the hardware!
—Now that the heat wave has broken and the pain in the left arm has subsided some,
I can consider your proposals less hysterically and with proper intent. The thing about food is, somebody else might get it. Also, that tomorrow a particular item might be gone,

so what's the point?
The image problem of vipers
is their greatest asset.
More or less day-to-day
war and business crime.

What happened to that guy
who was writing books about secret ciphers
and anagrams in the Bible? Has the U.N. got him locked up in a secret underground prison in Paraguay or did they smear him and replace him with a Ralph Reed duplicate? We'll never know for sure.
A fit so vast that even
we’re in on it.

I understand

neither what you’re saying nor why you’re saying it. There’s a good half-boy/half-turkey, my masterpiece.

The situation is as they say fluid, Boss.

We’ve got our ex-constituents on most of the councils and boards, and they’re itching to whip ass.

Our studies show that water will be the new smoke. This is what I really and truly feel. Send a ham to the widow Cheney. Live your day as though it’s a little routine that you can cope up in the evening for fun and profit.

Pausing at the end of another successful homily, the assistant

panson bursts into flames.

Yeah, that’s more or less what I expected.

I don’t have a biography. I’m lower middle class. I take comfort in histories of education and their attendant heartbreaks. The cello is marvelously obscure. I mean disturbing in a good way.

That’s why we got along so well; we disagreed about everything, and thus were freed from the obligations that come with a shared perspective.

A round of applause. What finally doomed me was my refusal to take notes. I could have used a bit more repression as a child. The switches

and nightmares seem a small price to pay.

But I fell in love with restaurants and worked in them till retirement; finishing as an executive chef in a midtown two-star, after which I returned to the Adirondacks, where I foraged and grew settle and plotted the deaths of the political enemies of my adolescence.

It is a sad and holy thing, this announcement paid for by the Patriarchy in Action Committee to Re-elect a Chunk of Wood. Summer dwindles into oatmeal.

The young graphic artists and web designers stand on street corners buying for day labor next to hookers slinging fortunes.

Most of the crops look bad, the reservoirs are severely depleted, and a huge brown cloud hogs over south Asia.

The very fact that you are writing

a string quartet is itself an argument.

I then witnessed my own liver being roasted.

for Ernest Adamsenoch and Ruth Goldberg
at best 50 copies, by a publisher tormented with multiple drug addictions, & who died following a party (drugs overdose) in 2005