

In whatever I trace and undertake, I feel bound neither to a bordering death nor to its rush in a heightened and hazardous freedom, but to the mirrors and harvests of our burning world. – Rene Char, page 55 in *The Brittle Age*, translated by Gustaf Sobin

This writing begins on the verge of collapse. There is wailing in the distance, humming in the other, mumbling, murmuring, a bouncing back, and a new awareness, through the pairings and other geometries that make up relativity. This is the moment that has been spoken for, the way the wind carries, the way the sun blasts, the way the clouds wall up.

Landscape of fantasy meets reality. What is and then what is trivial in the depths of the darkest.

And knowing what fantasy does not meet.

And knowing what landscapes are not.

And leaving such landscapes behind.

There is hope through the structures that appease. There is hope through the harmony.

I write this as a static. As buzz I write this participating in the darkness that I know hasn't come yet at the time, at this time of presentation.

Or has. It always is. It always was.

Close your eyes. And breathe. A moment of silence, of personal closure, of collective breath.

From far below or from up above, there is the green and it is darker now.

Darker still. I think about the cycles that I have seen, that I am now aware of, and I think about the press of the eyelids into their crevices before sleep comes, almost immediately, each night. Cycles. It has always been this way, this immediacy has always been a presence, a feature that I have always been aware of. Cycles. Grateful for, never taking for granted, never ignored.

Cycles. I imagine where these words will be read. And then interpreted. And then spoken. I imagine the struggling grasses. I imagine the worn faces of the graves surrounding me. I imagine the perspectives and the angles in a space that is outside and inside who we are as a people, who we love and long for, who we admire and acknowledge. The slopes and the measurements of the lawn, manicured, perfected. The alignments. The placements. The hill or hills. This cemetery imagined before being here, standing here, now.

[Ellipses . . . and other things left imagined]

And meanwhile the glass and concrete and wood. The stability of an anchor latching onto time.

Moon Road Poem

Corrosion of cycles

Hammering distances of cycles

The melodrama of so many rooms and the understanding or lack there of (of patterns)

Faces I've known and haven't and will or won't to will and to won't

Including mine and mine and yours and yours

Specter, spectral, spectate

Here and now and there and then and me and other and other and you

It outlasts, at last, and it shines

This road of moon

The travel of cycle

Some news now, to bring forward cycles and patterns. In October of 2015, after struggling to understand a cycle of abuse I was participating in, which had two individuals, myself and a woman "NM," face to face with one another, there was a great fracture, and a great leaving. A mediocre scattering. A lot of pain. A lot of blunt, blunt pain.

A great peace, and a great unease all the same. Disease. Everywhere shuddering. I moved forward into the vision of another woman, SS, whose calm and maturity stood tall and was apparent despite my own circumstance and my own brutal lack of discipline and lack of satisfaction and greatness of fear and self-destruction.

I embraced her and we carried each other, forward, forward, through experience, through love, through understanding, and through harmony, again, harmony. Cycle. There was peace, momentarily, and there was travel, ongoing, and there was experience, and holding, and healing. And hearing.

But my cycle of abuse started long before NM, existed during NM, and expanded into my life with SS. Cyclone. Wyvern. Wicked. Collapses.

And our bodies roared the way evil can only roar. And then our minds did too.

And the abuse continued. And despite her holding on, and despite me holding on, it had to end, for me, for her, and so there was an end.

And SS, devastated through the agony of my personal vindication and vexing lack of control and stability, moved into her own space of escape, of security, as I imploded and damned myself into a dense fabric of darkness. And thus it was October 2016 and she was gone, and I was the lone fragment here, a Pisces lacking any spirited optimism as well as escape mechanisms.

A plunge into depths upon depths in all directions and I found myself arising, aroused by the idea of challenging my own assumptions and acknowledging my own presences. Over the past three months, activities became fortified: meditation, therapy, journaling, appreciation, compassion, health, nutrition, exercise, awareness. These things persisted and added to gaps that were leaking blood, clotless streams in all directions, while also an encounter and a new vision via a reduction of the demons: the booze, the drugs, the verbal attacks, the persistence of a dedication to derail, and the paranoia, and my conflagrations, and all those demons keeping the other and others demonized in their wake.

Applications. Breakage. New cycles.

I wrote a letter to NM of apology, a letter that was sincere and thorough and unfortunately disregarded and used against me, but it was an investigation of lightness and an examination of my deviance and behaviors of cruelty that kept myself exposed, raw, and under review.

Inspired, then and thus: a letter to SS, who deserved so much more than just a letter, and would receive more inevitably, though she took the letter as a sign of progress, a sign that things were evolving. And so we closed gaps and started breathing together, separate, but aligned, and new.

And then, an exploration, and an expansion into the periphery: a letter to another woman, EB, who used to live here, and now lives far away from here, far from me, but is still perfect, and deserves that letter. It remains unsent at this time, but will be sent soon, when the time has evolved as well.

Had I been asked if any of this would have happened: the moments before, during, and after (now) the abuse, I would have been unable to describe or envision the track I've been on. There has been suffering. And, as mentioned, a scathing presence of abuse, directed within and without. Pain has been dealt from my mind to those of my most intimate histories, and pain dealt from their mind to mine in organic response. And now: finally, some clearing in the dust of the wars that our quantum entanglements suggest are always possible, some smoothing to the rubble, some space to rebuild through awareness.

And now, it is dark, but the light is on the move, on the make, and I close my eyes, and I imagine what that rebuilding will look like.

Desert of Snow Poem

Like knives the ice waits
and it bleeds through the humidity
and the reflections are lit
microcosmic and forever
and frozen, unchanged
But there is one degree of change
and that degree is spacious
And that space is special
while my skin is burned by the cold
and my nerves have been deadened
but the realm is open, full, and it forms a future
and the future is filled with ice, still,
but also, the warming, as all warming stills

I think about early January and the realm of my brother passing. I think of those we have lost today, and the reasoning behind dwelling in their passing. For me, Bret Bem. Transforms to for others: Leonard Cohen. To David Bowie. And so on and so forth. Celebrities. Artists. Astronauts. Politicians. I think of Cuba and the great unlocking. I think of the sludge around my sink and the seated, sinking feeling of exposure. I think of all the black men who haunt my bookmarks bar, and whose images and recorded persecution and death make us all live that much further, in darkness, and in lightness.

Icons and iconography from the macrocosmic to the personal. Last winter my stepfather died. And in his death in the drag of that dark plane, the showers of cold emanating from Maine, life sat at a still. For years ago I begged for the day to come and then, at that moment, there it was, and there it stood. The giant, stagnant, in his tomb of ash and wind. And the uncertainty lingers today, lingers like all of the above, from the decadence to the crucial demonstrations of

destruction. And all of its cruelty, an emulation of my own, or that bilateral, poly-directional wonder, that ownership.

Like bits of wind I could see the banks of our carried, universal existence, and encountering it, countering the tides of it, and being it, being part and parcel to it and what "it" is, semantically, and semantics as wonder, as awe.

Ellipses.

Along the banks of my greatest wonders the pause of the absence and the growing of the days. And now the beckoning of the light. I remember Bret's laugh the same way I will always remember it. His tone the same as mine. His voice so similar. Matching vocal chords. Structures of breath. Lungs of gold. I think of my lungs as trees of blood. Where does the blood drip upon? Who is resting at the roots, at the banks of the history of our breath? Since we're all sharing the same rhythms, the same ins, the same outs, we all have figures in mind.

Beings passing themselves as they stand on train cars. Pass themselves on the highways in their automobiles. On the sidewalks as they walk. I have admitted to myself my problems and my contributions to the world are fraught with problems. There is much I can offer to the world, like everyone else, but there is much I currently offer to the world that reflects a sickness of the soul. The heart, indeed, is sick, and how that impacts my mind goes on to disease my brain. These cascades of effects reflect a humanism and its shadow: the purpose and the priorities to get better, to become redemptive, to grow, are here, present in this darkness, as they are in the light that precedes and comes later, though perhaps here they are more visible, more imaginable, and that is why the bottle is so tempting at night, to keep what's in staying in, to keep what's bubbling to the surface buried, suppressed. But I will not further my understanding of the bottle here. No, that symbol belongs elsewhere.

So dark a day in the year, a sad childhood,

As the boy quietly descended into cool water, silver fish,

Calm and a face;

As he flung himself hard as stone in front of wild black horses,

His star came over him in a grey night.

- from **Sebastian Dreaming** by Georg Trakl, pg 14 of **Seagull Books**, translated by James Reidel

But I am aware. I am aware the same way the world is becoming more aware. I know not everything and there is much to see, and we have seen everyone around us start to see more and more. Accept or reject, the eyes are pinned open and there is seeing that is happening and the seeing is not the of the type or time that may be unseen or completely removed, forgotten.

I stagger under the stars or perhaps I sit and wilt in the depths of beyond the rain shadow, beyond the place we call safe and comforting. There is a dryness to that snow-filled desert I most recently visited, and I was there in that dryness, with PA, and we were looking at the stars. Then, later, looking at the moon, and I felt everyone sleeping in their homes, and later, I could feel what a being feels like when its followers are under prayer, and I understood, for a moment, what the letters were telling me as they collapsed upon me from the ceiling looking down, that there is some coherence, some integration, beyond all these actions (or lack thereof), and to strive for an awareness will unlock further that which a hallucination will only preview.

Through the admittance of the cycle I hope to resolve it: or at least know it exists. Much is beyond the control of the individual. There are so many factors, circumstances, instances of control outside of our awareness, all contributing like currents of air to our sitting and situation.

Poem for the Rugged

In memory of Freddie Gray, who was the first to die before I started to notice.

Shirked shoulders irked as we're older

Stones thrown into the gutter

I write this with the memory of the presence of the Duvall Big Rocks

and their placement emboldened and ready

I write this poem in the memory

of my worst nightmares having always been true

The "like father like son" illustrative

Like country like citizen

and the death of our comfort

as the swarms of evil take over the meat between the borders

as we hold ourselves hoping we will know newly so
something better than the atrocities
recognized between the screens

Ellipses

In the thickness of the screen I've written the momentos in solitude, in solemnity, in solace. A trying. A trying to sort it out. Stand it out. The strength and the arrival of openness and opening to the density of it all. An embrace toward the opening up. The grating of the retrograde's flash: in awareness and beaconing of openness.

For Friends

LF thank you for carrying on my identity like a torch through our lineage.

KF thank you for acting as balm despite the burns across all our worlds and visions.

KF #2 thank you for serving as a gameboard or a gemstone and the language for passing between generations is crystalline.

TH thank you for sitting on my carpet and staring at me through the hours of tired dusks, mutually present and exclusively our own.

HH thank you for following and tracking in spite of all the spirited spit of the wind upon our shouldered and kneed souls.

A quote from Dan Siegel, *Mind*, page 138, where I am currently: "The conduit sensory stream is the vivid present. We are now-here. But the conceptual constructor, while important, when without the sensory conduit stream can feel quite numb, distant in time and space, and when lived to the extreme, give us a sense of being no-where. / I love thinking and constructing ideas. But living a life only of construction and not linking to a conduit flow is a non-integrated life, making us prone to chaos and rigidity. Harmony involves honoring both conduit and construction."

I think of my friends and I think of the proximity that allows, like a tuning fork, the witness of both conduit and construction. These shared and lively owned experiences.

SH thank you for your wraps of prose that come across through efforted scratching of pen against paper, effortlessly read in the middle of every nowhere.

JC thank you for a presence that is as quantum entanglement as it is Newton, and the apple is a carcass of sound that makes soft burping into the horizon of eternity.

PC thank you for the manliness and the depths of darkness that we encounter as steps we take toward new comforts.

And BW your smile is the sash that holds us together.

And MN your smile is the underlying morality that sows seeds and harvests surplus.

RN thank you for your commitment to the self as a reflection of our independent commitments to ourselves.

KH, it is with our mutual moments that subtle rises and falls of loss are documented, investigated, and save us with their insulation.

BG, your hugs never ceased from the vantage you've carried.

EC, a thorough exploration of the heart starts and ends with the model you've created.

CW I think of you and your journeys the way I think of my own: with trepidation and courage, seeking love as our common chord.

RD it has always been of the most staggering mode that your existence reveals itself, wave like the lengths capturing all our heartaches and disabling and all is temporary in the world.

TW, you invited me into your lair and stretched out your claws in a finesse that I continue to find fascinating.

PC, hope exists in the way you never let loose strings stay lax, tautness a brightness we lean on, attentive.

EC, forever we are united through inquiry and constructive application of our daily allowances of energy.

TC, you brought me in and kept me there, aligned, furthering and envisioning a future of balance and a breathtaking acknowledgment.

CB, we know the landscape as well as the communication of the land, and with that there will always be a space for us, together.

SS, it is true that our lineage is now a common one, and the idea of severance and separation is impossible, when looked at universally. Our mythology precedes us and proceeds.

CP, through your warmth I have stayed warm and through your laughter I have laughed, and I turn to open myself continually to you, similarly.

In the thickness of the darkness and its great unraveling there are the hushed ushering sequences of thank you and thank you and the gratefulness is like a band of light that covers the sketched peaks of forests across the continent.

HL, whether house party or mountainside, the thorough examination and appreciation of who we have been and where we are going persists, like icicles carrying growing reflections, like pools of rainwater opening up the universe of light around them.

HW, through your mentoring I have found justice and I have seen what it means to be just.

KM, through your camaraderie I have begun to understand kinship within the walls of the exposed coffer.

SH, through your leadership I have grown to love my confidence, and have grown to know my weaknesses.

LK, we have only just begun.

KH, we have only just begun to understand.

JS, your qualities are the dagger I keep in my boot.

JM, it was with you I knew a soulful kindness to this Northwest.

HD, I have known the glorification of difference with you, through you, and as a part of your world.

PA, we have known the coldest and confronted some of the oldest visibility possible.

MW, how long has it been since we tore across the country like a scrape against the skin, a tear in the jeans?

AK, your greatness will be forever in the way your meekness has helped everyone around you.

It is with the longing of days I've recited these homages.

It is with the longing of days I open and relinquish the self's isolation for the world.

It is now through the world's incoming lightness that I find myself basking, but in the ongoing lightness carried by the beacons of those minds in my periphery, proximity, and most intimate experiences. These stories. These people. Humans that give the grace of the world a proper home: to be burdened with the touch and trestle of a love that is as describable as it is fleeting through its own morphing splendor.

"Ever in the Present" by Pierre Chapuis

Having become silent—since when?—birdsongs would crumble, shattering on the stony trail sticking out from under the snow and frost. / Deep in the chest, enough to take one's breath away, the stars of the cold are wavering. (page 206, from *Within the Voice's Reach in Like Bits of Wind*, Seagull, 2016, translated by John Taylor)