



ASHES

a voiceHOUSE Production

DIALTONE

"I'm sorry but I can't come by the house, tell your mother that for me, that I'm sorry- please?"

"I will, but honestly it's okay. We really appreciate the food."

A labored breath rumbled over the phone. She poised herself. "I can barely walk- the chemo- it feels like my limbs are on fire. I'm sorry."

I didn't know how to respond. I had no sense of dignity, no concept of hardship, no appreciation for grace. I was twenty-two years old. I was selfish. I was rooted in self. And because my grandmother had passed away unexpectedly, I was playing out a role- I was a rightful mourner. I was allowed to be sad. I was allowed to be angry. I was owed sympathy. I was entitled to a few drinks without anyone telling me what was my business and what wasn't- despite the fact I had recently checked into to a rehab facility, then proceeded to relapse. Rightly so, my uncles and cousins neglected to invite me out to the bar after grandma's wake because I was a considerable liability. Another story. Anyways. A damn fool.

"It's alright, really- I'll let my mom know. Thank you for calling. And thank you for sending the food."

"You're welcome- and I'm sorry again. I'm sorry you had to lose your grandmother. And I'm sorry your mother had to lose her mother. Tell her that for me. Tell her I'll try calling after the funeral. I just can't be there in person."

"I'll tell her, don't worry. Thank you."

"God bless, sweetheart, everything will be okay."

"Goodbye Mrs. Fussino."

I had known Mrs. Fussino as a bubbly, short, all-smiles kind of woman since I was in the second or third grade. Our elementary school was intimate, only twenty or so kids in each class. Her daughter was in the same year as my kid sister. They played soccer together. We saw the Fussinos at church. I hung up the phone and probably mentioned Mrs. Fussino briefly to my mother and then forgot all about it for ten years.

My grandmother passed away in January- Mrs. Fussino departed faithfully in July. Breast cancer, twice, in both breasts- metastasis- her liver, lungs- sick and fighting for the better

part of a decade. I attended her funeral. I saw her lifeless, emaciated body in a casket with pictures of her kids scattered about. I listened while the priest recited the prayers. I smelled the incense. I doubt I remembered the phone call after we left the cemetery. I knew she was a good woman, I was sad for her and her family- but I had no concept of the depth of her compassion, of the lesson she had crafted for me.

The fact of the matter is we all suffer, and we all do it alone. It cannot be shared. It cannot be felt by anyone but you, and only when it is there- our memories of pain don't even serve us well. So with that in mind, do it in grace, do it with dignity and transcend it. Here was a woman who held a veritable trump card but refused to play it- Mrs. Fussino could have won any 'who's got it the worst' contest- and she refused to even submit an entry. It struck me- how I venerated my own pains and woes like a collection of sacred baubles to unearth and examine every so often, to admire neurotically- my 'hard knocks'- like my father leaving, like my alcoholism, like this mistreatment or that. But she- this woman, deceased for almost a decade- her phone call- it's as if she was speaking to me from the grave, "Put your trinkets of despair back into the dresser drawer and quit feeling sorry for yourself; stop the ridiculous story telling of your ego about 'how tough you have it'; stop pretending like you are unique; stop archiving transgressors and their transgressions against you, forget your fatuous pride- it isn't that bad and everything in the end is marvelous- wake up."

Mrs. Fussino spoke through that receiver into my ear and planted a seed in my consciousness which sprouted ten years later into a flowering realization of what a bodhisattva actually looks and feels and sounds like. A phone call ten years ago that woke me up today. A flash of light coupled with memory. A ghostly phone call from a form once beautiful and insightful, since passed on and absorbed into the pneuma of the universe into the center of creation's heart into pure consciousness- there is no need for me to answer back. Only to listen. "The comparison game leads to the self-pity game which leads to the dark cloud above your head game; it leads to a heart devoid of compassion, a suppurating organ without the life force of love, a selfish heart demanding justice demanding fairness demanding accolades- a middle school child's heart but bereft of any purity."

That day Mrs. Fussino heard my grandmother had passed away- sick in her bed, her limbs pulsating, agonized, maybe even wishing she

herself was dead- she could have easily decided- "You have no right to mourn! Your tears are unsubstantial, inconsequential, phony! Forget your old woman grandmother earth! Her grey hair, her wrinkles- her life ran the natural course! What right do you have to be upset?" Mrs. Fussino could have easily moaned- "Woe is me! Look at my pain! Forget your problems! Do you know the price I would pay, the length I would go to secure a future and live out a life of eighty-two years like your grandmother? Do you know what I would give to see my children grown up, having children of their own? You call what happened to you a 'loss'? You are barely amateurs- pathetic dilettantes! Take your dead grandmothers, take all the dead grannies of all time and shove them up your rear-ends while I torment in this intractable bed vomiting and writhing unable to find peace, restive moment to moment, my skin on fire the needles and bruises the cancer eating me from the inside out and what the hell did I ever do to anyone to deserve this anyways?"

She could have been resentful.

She could have been upset.

She could have been mired in self-pity.

She didn't need to send us that food.

She didn't need to pick up the phone.

She didn't need to say a prayer for my family that night (I know she did).

Ten years later for whatever reason on whatever day Mrs. Fussino's phone call replayed in my head and I realized what a beautiful soul she possessed. A sublime beauty, like a majestic sunset on the shoreline or a mountaintop vista- I remembered our brief phone call and stopped to bask in her love energy which rippled forward from the past, a tunnel carved through eternity's space-time fabric, resonating into my ears of the present, the now. A saint, of the heart. I pictured my own self in her position. Would I have called up the dead grandmother's family? Would I have sent them food? Would I have given a single goddamn about them, or anyone-enduring such misery? I don't know. But I can say that when I'm thrown in that position, as the inevitability of life's harshness thrusts itself upon me and I am sent to go under the whip, the scourge of mortality- I hope I remember Mrs. Fussino. I pray I hear her voice. I'll need every bit of help I can gather.

feeling anxious?

-UV RADIATION EXPOSURE WARNING-

*avoid the park remain indoors fix yourself to a television drink
Coca Cola stay informed check your email remain hyper vigilant see
something say something high alert!*

-UV RADIATION EXPOSURE WARNING-

haven't you read the reports?

didn't you check the label?

it reads: home renovation silicosis, invisible carbon monoxide
plumes, imposter knock-off phone chargers at risk to explode, BPA
leeching PETE poisonous phthalate contaminants, Prop 65 alarm
bells, GMO trisomy gram-negative potatoes, sperm-death hair
dryers, mutagenetic cellphone towers emitting tidal waveforms,
mercury besmirched fish filets, poisoned tap water, natural gas
slow death goodnights, fast food heart attack highway rest stop

our red eyes never blink

daughters of Nyx, sons of pandemic fears

brand-name consumers

bellies turgid with rain

chromosomes barely intact

can you hear us, tense in the bathroom?

retweeting

paranoid- conscious not to wipe too hard

directed by local news anchors

sorting through message board posts

of cursed bedfellows

confirming

denying

washing our hands for thirty seconds, twice

when was the last time the hand towel was cleaned?

open up the sanitizers

kill that bacterium

read this article

be careful

worried

concerned

double-click

exhausted lifetimes busy preventing inevitable deaths

fatuous

robbed from under our noses.

how did we forget about the bomb?
or did the bomb explode,
shamed on us- dizzy and overcome in the shockwave

why consider:
limbless Palestinian children,
raped Bosnian Muslims crying under hijabs,
Cambodian purges,
imprisoned Armenians,
Tutsis disemboweled,
the final Iroquois dispossessed?

who remembers Columbus' first shipment of cargo to the king and
queen?
can you believe we convinced the Brazilians to destroy their own
rainforests?

rich white problems
anxious
rich white fools
prescribed
rich white pills
empty

form(less) OR for Spengler

we have exhausted all forms
a barren western civilization
our empire
we have extirpated the last peoples
delved into the land
removed her arteries

our art has become collaged, rebooted
pastiche and unoriginal,
cut then paste
our souls have become products,
sold to us, marked up
credit card swiped

if you're born here you will die here
asleep under dark stars
demarcated amidst neat rows of
cactus land gravestones
death of fun
death of energy
death of creativity
death of life
no one to sing sad songs, to elegy
nothing original to be said
that hasn't been said
no tears to cry

we waste, we are corrosive
soon we will leech out
like our plastics

it will all be for the better
silent, equipoised
an angel shakes her head

dad

fan in the crowd
cheering home team
overweight
donned in a replica green jersey,
beer foam in plastic cup
circus eyes locked on jumbotrons
forgotten how much he
hates his wife
hates his job
pointed suburban buckled up
a fight against parking lot traffic
does it because he has to
never asking why
hardly listening
too tough to quit
too dumb to start

knees bent, a true believer
mumbles ancient incantations
mindless, khaki
drycleaned clothes for the kids
latest model mounted on the living room wall
conversations like checklists
conversations like sitcoms
a former chalkboard prodigy
tying up garbage bags
adjusts his watch
coughs politely
corrects a mistake
like he knows something
like he's got the right answer

customer in line
cart polluted with hydrogenated food
impatient, scrolling above his phone
distracted
unaware
nothing accomplished, but busy
being busy
something to do
get it done
do it again

water the hedges
flip the hamburger
fill up the tank
root on the good guys

SOS

direct treatment of the thing
sight of eye
vision of mind
complete experience

an impossibility

mediated by image
blinded with facade
regulated narcotic
victims of advertisement

a tragedy

Juxtapostured

a Palestinian family gathers in their living room
when missiles howl or gunfire erupts
and laugh,
a grandmother smiles earnest, wears a plain blue hijab,
silent
there are no qualms
so long as they die together

a simple wooden table,
rusty legs holding up worn chair backs
walls chalk white, plaster'd fissures
a tired lightbulb dangles heavenly

simultaneous

here we are at Christmas mesmerized by detergent commercials
enamored with our fake tree,
artificially scented wintergreen
our frozen appetizers thawing in the oven
as we vomit into a bog of complaints
the neighbors, tax hikes
amidst recently purchased wine glass charms

furnished, color and patterns coordinated
leather seats, matching couches
an obnoxious, glowing television
snowflake wrapping paper torn indiscriminate

inheritors to a cursed empire, empty
stained chocolate fingers
grasping indiscriminate and horny
between cellulose thighs
we are a doomed people, oblivious
unimaginative mouse-click brains
from one download to the next
spoon-fed, unquestioning and obsequious
we are in fact refugees,
disenfranchised of our time
our faculty to appreciate
our inner presence, and thus outer connection
blown dandelion seed goodbye

our birthright is
our demise
the top one percent
those with the most
stuff
nonsense
distraction
those with the least
tenderness
integrity
solace

an old man reflecting teenage summertime one July evening

dawn eyes amble upwards above wrinkled bedsheets gawked on pink
canyon skies
cigarette smoke punctuated by I-beam hoodoos
innervated by sylphy dancing fairies above asphalt radiance we
listen to prophecies of fun
we convert daytime lethargy transformed into nocturnal
excitement coiled up in loins of girls and boys on astral
collision courses
heads full of explosions stained permanent and purple against a
July Fourth firmament after the whizzpop like eyelids closed in
lightbulb rooms
faded echoes of tapedeck rock n' roll
part-time work underpaid anxious for sacrificial altars
itching to fill a gas tank to move to go to follow impetus
departed hours ago behind the garage with a bagfull and a story,
laughing amidst the television static admonitions of our
superiors dusty and forgotten

-ruptured in youth-

memories like baseball card bicycle wheel spokes like
revolutions emotions swollen we're drowned river overflowing
like that unabashed yearning for freedom bare-chested t-shirt
removed remembering the breeze the peeling sunburn crabgrass
cool underfoot
memories you almost forgot
memories that parts of you want to forget
memories that don't play nice with present selves
memories you can't escape
lo, the winter is over
reminiscing daydreamy back to this raw age

-we were together those liminal summers, alive and oblivious,
we were a throng of ants fated for better or worse-

past lives cast life rafts overboard, I grab hold, greeted at
eye level by a person who yells fully individualized,
a person hyper aware with grand debates over aesthetics playing
worry-free politics careful with style arrogant and certain and
never been wrong before,
a person who fought and won, a person who considered the future
incomprehensible so why worry about it because we'll never turn
into our parents so long as we read the right books and listen
to the right music,

a person convinced he could spare himself certain to avoid the
doomtragic happy suburban endgame perfunctories,
a person loyal to all the wrong parties, boisterous, drunk
stupid with a grin, a person then people who defined themselves
by a sense of being together

-his face is so young, familiar-

before an impossible Faustian loneliness took hold of us like an
invasive species of vine and wiped out the canopy so even
sunlight abandoned us,
before we faced cellphone infinities unable to communicate,
before our resigned adulthoods with their traditions of
additional pounds birthday cake'd in body fat, before we became
too concerned and afraid but conversely stopped caring thus run
out of our goddamns to give,
before a proximity to death grew tight like a gelid whisper upon
our neck,
before we eroded away,
before we denied what had happened or who we had been or what
the world once felt like, before the big fun left
before we bought the lie and lost all conviction

-we surged together those aimless dawns full of potential,
teeming with kinetic charge, unbuckled
we resonated, it resonated, a real connection-

Acknowledge- yes, our drive through hootenanny 2AM was a luxury.
Sure it was a lark, a dumb practical joke in a terrible world
ripe with tragedy. But we were blind. We had eyes only for the
next high, the next wall to climb, the next tingle, the next
wave to ride.

We were exempt for a moment.

Maybe we should have been more grateful- but how could we have
known but for the days and nights and weeks and years later, for
the time between then and now? Gratitude wasn't demanded from
us.

What was asked from us was a sense of presence- being present-
and present we were. We were totally there. There was nobody
that could stop us. We were Greeks. We were sensuous, full of
body and touch, full of abdominal skin and faint blonde hairs at
the base of our spines. We were alive in tongue, hands full.
Enjoying it. Moment to moment. Unconcerned with eternal pasts or
futures, with generations before or after- we occupied the
vanguard. There was no reason to think "this will pass" because
how could it? How could a person allow himself or herself to
exist in any other manner (aside from our idiot parents)? We

wouldn't allow our conceptions, our beliefs, our attenuated
sensory transistors to change. We wouldn't become Romans. We
wouldn't grow up. We wouldn't be unhappy. We wouldn't play the
game. Not us. How could we? We were so new to Time, so fresh
from our adolescent awakenings, so into ourselves

-into each other

we believed in the moment, the experience-

memories remembering now with a confused glance backwards in
furtive neck abduction bent like a heron flown South
we peek upon those shadows cobwebb'd and haunted in our curated
arcades, in our museums, in our cities and countries
hearts beat with resentment, with wonder, with lessons to
administer and admonitions
we can't believe how 'naive' or 'contrived' or 'reckless' or
'selfish' we had once been
we bury hard earned perspectives, tender-hearted longings of
those exhausted teenage supernovae
under mountainfulls of detritus, under tax returns and Super
Bowl commercials
so we can no longer imagine we had ever lived that way
we can't imagine what it's like
to not be tired
to not be scared
to not be wound up
to not be alone

-his face is so bright, his smile-

an infinitude of multiverse individuals pass through a single
lifetime,
each one a Prufrock a Caliban across a new stage, day to day
hour to hour, seasons changing
yet we grow tired of the roles
we solidify with committed lines with monologues repeated over
and over,
our imagination dwindles,
a fog settles and forces us to dead reckon with one static
personae whom we never would have chosen for ourselves at the
outset excited and hoping for a casting call,
yet here we are
our inability to relate to the consciousness of our past selves
continues to rise like tides between sections of our identity
parsed out into islands across Time
shipwreck'd
tortured without drink in a desert midday,

exhausted- until a memory rescues us

OWNERSHIP

there is no clever metaphor, no image,
no piquant description for your own wrinkled hand
under inspection
the thing itself
is the thing itself
your fingers, the nails
scars, veins
your fissured palm, tough
so old...
never look down at your own hands
especially if you haven't looked for years
engrossed for minutes, an hour
these hands
your hands
so old...
things grasped, caught
things dropped, lost
tight, then unclenched
keys, pockets, coffee cups, your wife's fingertips, newspaper
clippings, your daughter's cheek, a wallet, marijuana buds, a
knife, a baseball, your own chin, a pen, piles of clothes
what have you touched
what did you neglect
so old...
the skin will fall off
bones
the bones will turn to dust
disappearing
with the spirit

late stage capitalism

we have lost our ability to dream,
wiped clean on FDA approved tranquilizers
we have lost our ability to love,
mired in discount acquisition schemes each Christmas Eve
we have lost our ability to appreciate,
bought shipped received fingertip warpspeed
we have lost our ability to think,
inundated by hot-press articles, buzzed inattentive
we have lost our ability to consider,
regurgitated with digital scholarship and credential
we have lost our ability to share,
handicapped by gelatinous clots of cupidity,
we have lost our foresight,
blinded with smog in the aftermath of production
we have lost our stories
deafened by bankrupt words of marketing executives
we have lost our mother's perfume
infected instead by prefabricated smells of dressing rooms
we have lost our father's bulbous red knuckles
acquiescing to the apparatus
we have lost our visions of tomorrow,
stuck in the shadow of today
we have lost our heart's natural response to the laughter of
children
convinced joy only comes every other Friday

what have we gained?

TRUTH

capitalism
replaced the monarchy
scientific materialism
replaced the church
and as many people are
lost
empty
tortured
enslaved
as there were
three hundred years ago

peasant traditions, customs of the earth
races of patina, red clay
of blister
of flapping leather sole
of midnight bus stop
of coin purse bony forefinger
bound together by belief, sacrifice, virtue, family, stability
against the odds

against the rich
against the apparatus
against the complex
against the machine
against the masters

on two feet, firm
generations before and since with faces glimmered by votive candles
blessed, from two knees
anchored by determination
they hold steadfast with jagged grins, with guitar melodies and
refrains, scribbled recipes on napkins and the smell of garlic and
herbs in a kitchen
they'll keep going on
they're built to last

Currency Exchange

America- you killed your hoary God by sailing him across the ocean,
chained and left to defecate blind for weeks below deck!

All that trouble only to forget your prayers...

to finally decide you were enough
for yourself.

America- you've allowed your mother to wither away
in neoprene waiting rooms, haunted by intangible visions
of a life she once knew, unable to touch it...

waiting impatient for a signature line, a notice,
for a check to cash.

America- heavy handed you call to arms and rally
your patriots with cries of 9/11, Pearl Harbor, Cold Wars,
freedom ringing like a baby's ears next to an explosion...
limbs blown across village commons, burnt off eyebrows,
lifeless for the city fathers to admire.

America- you glitzy salamander of rock diamond stud
done up for another night on the town, another drink
another expensive pair of shoes, another picture...
let them watch, let them run home hypnotized
and autosexualize fantastic.

Nostril

May accelerates into June
Days stretch lengthwise across longitudes in our northern
hemisphere, a shadow like a regret can shift long or short
depending on where you stand, or when
But whenever or wherever I breathe my lungs fill permeated with a
gysmy dynamo of pistil, of stamen
Of indiscriminate pollinated love, vegetable, turgid in wetlands
Dusty windshields, grill covers rusted neon yellow
Your married, loveless cock is jealous, gesundheit
Your pussy nearly folds inward supernovae
A field of wildflowers bloom under velvet grass stalks the whole
meadowy scene in exultation alongside a graffiti besmirched tri-
state highway

Ishtar opens her hips, twirls golden curls on her back
Shiva admires the syrupy blood trickling off an obsidian blade

I decided to research the varieties of trees on our property, to
better appreciate that seventy-foot weeping willow about to
puncture the firmament
Hopeful it might eliminate my own ignorance, plant blindness, an
epidemic according to horticulturalists with worn backpocket
library cards
But true stewards, the initiated, like that volunteer punching
tickets at the Conservation Land Trust in her private backyard her
precious clippings held in calloused palms concerted on knees
dirty, pockets of shiny penny and geranium seed, she doesn't care
for names assigned by biologists or their field assistants, Latin
scholars
She holds untold names for each member of her cadre dear in her
heart
As her nostrils fill with life, damp bedsheets thanks to a sailor,
New Orleans in 1957

Nature is a lovefest
Nature is a deathfest

Humans are strange elements, too cutesy, busy with thoughts and
puffed chests, sporting red faces hurt by secret woes
We believe we are special

Navy recruits tell big stories, they hold tight fair maidens
hostage amidst motel promises and forearm tattoos praying to
disembark the next morning
I feel like a bridegroom ambulating hung gardens now that I can
point and say *Salix Babylonica*

Cracked-tooth veiny women only want one last fuck, one last roll
in the hay, one last shudder of bliss
My tree ain't mine and it doesn't care what I call it

I found a skunk cabbage- it didn't seem to hold on to its import,
it made no case for itself
She burgeons, enjoys sunlight
A child, one among infinitudes
Her parents don't write letters
She doesn't worry about when it will rain next
Nature kisses her foliage each morning, until that last day- I
uproot her swift
Nothing is personal

Satori

At breakfast my son
eats raspberry thimbles off his
fingers, he grins, chews

Act One

I asked my brother-in-law, the banker, joking, 'Why don't you fix us up with a small business loan?' so we could pay for a new HVAC system

the old one broke

my sister's family stopped over for a barbecue

it was hot and

he responded sheepishly, his eyes pinched

'That would be a conflict of interest'

A moral banker

he was the right banker with the wrong morals, or vice versa

a second mortgage on his own home

unable to trade in a rusted minivan

my niece's medical bills proliferating

additional student loans for my nephew's tuition

Concerned- his duty to the branch, to the company, to the vaults with their galaxies of accounts and credit sheets and balances, to ensure the safety of each dollar billions upon billions in endless transactional forever, individually, a guarantor

Conflicted- like financing pallets of grenade rounds and tank tread to burst open children's skulls in cherry tomato molar splats unflinching

Delusional- maybe one day the chief executives will repay my brother-in-law's loyalty and widen the rake, fatten his share, grant him passage into exclusive back rooms because whose money is this anyways?

But such accommodations will never be permitted

to company men who keep their head down and play by the rules

avoiding conflicts of interest

allowing mahogany titans to charge interest for conflict

pretty funny, I thought

but he didn't get the joke

A Moral Banker

say- isn't that the title of an Arthur Miller play?

my sister nudges me a look

momentary stuff

Walked through a nightmare door
Past a man, two women
Some children
Captivated, absorbed
Unto their own palms
Unaware of my presence
Not a pair eyes to greet my own
Must be important, I thought
Must be interesting
Hope it's worth it
To miss the whole ballgame
To never experience
A beauty which transcends time
Under my nose, in my arms, my daughter's eyes
Blue like a mermaid's, ethereal crystalline
Behind them eternity
They leave me feeling weightless
Unbound
Certain there's nowhere left to look
No more groceries in the refrigerator
No more weekend plans
No more gasoline tanks, dry cleaning slips
I fall off the cliff-face sunlight blinded
Vast, unapproachable
This portal beyond realms, removes me
A perfect silence
A newborn baby, a howling toddler
A handsome beauty
An old woman
In all these bodies
Before they came, after they left
Waiting with a kind hand, open

questions, answers

fuck the fourth of july
fuck mama's apple pie
fuck daddy's baseball team
fuck the school board
fuck mini malls
fuck discount prices
fuck the ice cream truck
fuck fast food
fuck red meat
fuck radio stations
fuck the lobbyists
fuck money
fuck stock prices
fuck Amazon
fuck convenience
fuck enjoyment
fuck the golf course
fuck the movie theater
fuck main street
fuck the president
fuck the senator
fuck the representative
fuck party lines
fuck voting
fuck not voting
fuck their lies
fuck their promises
fuck their policies
fuck keeping the peace
fuck war
fuck the brochure
fuck morality
fuck good
fuck evil
fuck pornography
fuck censorship
fuck authority
fuck everybody who's told you
to listen
fuck anyone who's told you to
be quiet
fuck modernity
fuck culture

fuck tradition
fuck church parking lots
fuck headstones
fuck a reading from the book of
fuck please and thank you
fuck believing
fuck not believing
fuck the popular kids
fuck gym shoes
fuck prom
fuck the books you read
fuck the notes you took
fuck wedding receptions
fuck remodeling the kitchen
fuck reupholstering the couch
fuck plastic
fuck receipts
fuck new cars
fuck the walls
fuck the past
fuck what you did
fuck what you're going to do
fuck the story
fuck expectations
fuck good luck
fuck what they gave you
fuck what they left you
fuck what you earned
fuck your cellphone
fuck your television
fuck your email address
fuck your profile
fuck your affiliation
fuck your preferences
fuck your hard work
fuck your retirement
fuck your tax return
fuck your humility
fuck your charity
fuck your satisfaction
fuck your happiness
fuck your security
fuck your comfortability

lapping water from a bowl

Women like eyes on sidewalks
Calves
Thighs
A young girl running
Mara dancing bodhi tree clockwise with her sisters
Devoured by lust
Desirous of flesh
I am no Siddhartha
Pulled into a thousand ecstatic bedrooms
Lighswitch off
No time to acknowledge soul or story, no insight
Cast away to the physical plane
Of biologic impulse
Of hump
Of pitched vision
An unleashed dog
Attention diverted, cars rushing by
Without any concern for rescue
A few seconds longer, rear view mirror'd
Who needs food or water
Who needs wisdom
Forget interdependence, forget the noble truths
Give me that which I covet
Buttocks
Breasts
Motherless, fatherless
An object, a container to pour myself into
Faceless and perfect for my
Indiscriminate torture

emily dickinson

A world which lost her concern for tenderness
Brutalized herself
I felt their hands cold like quicksand
I watched their eyes skip off like stones
One hop or two, then they're gone
Collapsed beneath the waves
Did you see them
Did you believe them
Convinced they weren't alone

I sensed their judgement like the nighttime
I heard their whispers like rush hour tires
Anonymous and factory made
Tuned into the programming
They'll rent it
They'll take it off the shelf
Dictated by anonymous, yet deeply personal
Insatiable desires

realization

I am an old Hebrew prophet
stating obvious truths

there is a time and place for beauty
there is a time and place for ugliness

there are long grinds and I am surrounded by ugliness,
so what else is there to do but scream

there are faint moments in which I am engulfed by beauty,
so I shut up

out of body/mind

We're here above the arroyos at first light
Energies confluence together, water swells
My eyes, yours
Out of the darkneses across worlds
Empty forever
Empty beyond imagination
Empty like a brother's old shoes in a mother's attic
But it is filled
Entering another taught frame of day, together
The drumskin beats us into existing
Between nothing and everything, between never and forever
Where we all journey in our axial ways
Spinning
But who can come from nothing
What is first pulled under the doorway, into this house of
sunlight
A dream, love?
You are both
So I walk you inside to a window facing East
To greet the sun

SATORI (2)

the quickest fix
is to reduce your demands

Evelyn

Small things- like the first man to touch your
left earlobe
a blonde peach, tiny hairs between my thumb and forefinger
Big things- like your first rays of light
the sun
asleep portico in my arms, a hospital room
Your mother in the bed, tired from the night
Your first day,
like this poem, my first poem for you
A face beneath mine, changing in the light
untamed, aglow from astral travels
I watched you enter this world with rainbow colors melting
every second you grew older, more alive
from purple to red to pink
Born in a rainstorm, a
perfect thundercloud
Your first glance onward, upward to me
light flashes and
I whisper 'Bless you' to your first sneeze

At this window I let myself wander, to days which will come
between us, lifetimes
I kneel in prayer beside your hundred-year deathbed
an old woman, you
me, a ghost
because your life is the death of mine,
in the sense that death completes a circle,
in tidied perfection
I will have gone on, a polaroid photograph, these words
But you are still here, my
nimbus daughter who cannot be lassoed
eyes quiet, ready for distant horizons
I will keep watch
From the dawn of time until now
it wouldn't be nearly enough
to cherish you in my arms
But if I had that long then I wouldn't have this miracle
our morning
your first morning
to share with you

OUT OF PLACE

I had been dead for some time-
I will die again, perhaps, for longer
to live is absurd
this absurd life
this defiant life
in the cold everything of death
everywhere-
can you remember,
how did we arrive?