

The Theory and Practice of Oligarchic Collectivism

by graywyvern

111.

Each man
has a way to betray
the revolution
This is mine

Leonard Cohen

Time turns us into the karma of our habits. To belatedly teach us this is the particular function & task of long separation, in friendships; of artistic block, in artists; & in nations, of war.

Nota Bene. The opposite of injustice is not "justice", but reciprocity.

Genre is created by the spirit of emulation, style by the desire to excel.

Whatever maps onto our cages is the world.

Rationalism might be called the fallacy of believing language to be a category of description, rather than that description is a special use of language.

The terrain changes; so does the dance. What doesn't is the need to keep balance.

Poverty, like ageing, a necessary indignity. Squalor, like anger, not.

Bitterness would be nothing without the conceit of its reasons. Unfortunately they exist. But not as reasons for bitterness.

I am very confucian in my veneration of the past. But my mysticism consists in this, that i feel its living presence, & cannot connect with any future, except by becoming in my mind a great ancestor. --How different this is from vanity, & yet how similar! To act as if there were hope. I prepare my great-ancestorness like a spider laying eggs.

Ruin is a story. (What happens is more complicated.) One first conceives of an Age as a structure. Epics of building, epics of ruin. Epics of building have unity, epics of ruin have fragmentariness.

If an ikon is the Name, then the name of an ikon is the name of the Name. Artcrit = games played with the name of a Name.

The most precious sentiment is gratitude without the desire to possess.

TIME, the great commodity of the 21c. Is it not already worth paying more for so many things, if they be done quicker? Soon, this scarcity will rule every decision; & no aspect of our lives will escape its bullying consideration. But how puny a subject for art! (As Money seemed, yet Balzac made its epic. And since.) A tiny protest poem about being too busy: no one bothers to read to the end of it. --And more: the disorder of our days, & its very inhumanity, is also the product of not having the time to put things in order, or do them right.

New Mythic Question: How did all the time get used up?

In this life we are lost like one who has gone into the far corner of the garage to look for something, & the light then gets turned off; & we have to fight our way back out through collision with half-remembered forms. More annoying than wounding, yet it is more painful still to contemplate the futility of wishing for a space that contains straight lines.

Sometimes i think the only real philosophizing is in the form of music.

At the end of his rope is where a poet shines.

My one-minute antidote to binary thinking: else also. Whenever you think you have exhausted the alternatives, say to yourself: "There must be something else, also."

There was a time when only traditional music was listened to; then a time when only contemporary. Now we live in another kind of time, when not only every past era, but also every other culture, presents its version of music (& they even mingle). --But our literature, & even moreso our poetry, remains mired in the contemporary paradigm. This is its doom, & also its charm: to be unlike our music.

The illusion that everything is sayable comes from having dwelt too long among the things that have been said.

The Jungian "shadow" concept can be perhaps extended in a political sense; i.e. *mokita* (Swahili), 'what everyone knows but cannot say'. Historically, we see that around 0 AD it would have been slavery; in 1900 AD, the violence of industrial society; by 2000 it had become: the environmental toll of consumerism. For each age, the unveiling of this public secret will be the dialectic governing both overt politics, & the dream-life of the masses.

Handedness is a homeland.

I work at a bookstore, & one of my tasks is to select, out of the quantities of books brought to us by customers, which ones to take, either for cash or for store credit. It occurred to me the other day, as i was going through a boxful rapidly picking & rejecting, that the proper function of binary thinking is just this: to sort, when circumstances mandate an abrupt result. But how did this become, so to say, the default-philosophy of all humanity? It must be that in times of change (& the impact of globalizing-modernism upon all of us, in whichever of the numbered "worlds", is crushing & inescapable) the temptation toward Manichaeian habits of thought, & especially in the realm of public discourse, is felt, not so much as the easier path, as the only one.

Attending a poetry reading today is like going to a Latin church service; attending a slam, like going to a service that's been painfully rendered into the vernacular. The ritual stands for its own defiant persistence. Which is not, however, the same as transcendence: we've given up hoping for the same thrill we might find in dancing, say, or a really good movie. But it is not nothing that some of us still feel pious toward a dead culture. And in fact its deadness becomes ever more relevant, as the tricks of the moment begin to pall on us. For dead things never get any deader, & that, in a world of violently gyrating meaninglessness, can be something to hold onto.

My aesthetics are designed to make poetry impossible.

My failure is that i continue to write.

Why unreality is balm to the alienated. As the "opposite" of the realm where they find themselves

dispossessed, there is nothing more at home in it than them; & though they cannot belong in it, they can at least have the power to return to it more or less at will.

Like it or not, selfpity is close to the heart of Poetry.

The gods are not dead, but have become crows, whose jadedness is absolute.

Art is the only place our dreams cannot fail the test of reality. Not because Art is so strong, but because our conception of Art is usually so feeble that we ask nothing of it that self-deception cannot deliver.

Poetry has power the way intimacy has power.

The origin of Art: every night of sleep is the same, every night of insomnia is different.

Lives lived in a dimness of mosquitos. They don't even have a word for "mosquito".

As if all the ways to be broken comprised an alphabet, we hearken only to what could be stories written in it --incomprehensible to those who will come after. We thought we were saying something important, but all of it is destined to be lost. To write, now, with that awareness.

Tough times call for tall tires.

The peace within our grasp is not a matter of military muscle, domestic rigor, or geopolitical clout. The only peace possible is to cease the breeding of hate. And that would be the work of many generations, even if

all of us at once could instantly see the need.
Vengeance will not end as long as humans remain
trapped by their national identities; as long as there
are borders, these borders will not be secure.

In times to come, they will say we lied to our
children, wittingly & remorselessly; & this will seem
the most terrible thing of a terrible time.

The myth of Unity is the child of despair.

Love is a destroyer of worlds, & the passport to all
worlds. This is not two secrets about love, but one.

Despair is a concrete-eating termite.

Art eludes the artist as much as the critic.

Amateurism. Only an amateur believes in the magical
efficacy of procedures.

What addicts us are the METAPHORS for freedom.

Desire is the part of the Mystery that moves.

One day materialism will mean that all things are
artist's material; spirituality, that all things are
perfected form already; and no paradox. This word
Art is a name for the paradox. There are others.

The Thread Out is another Labyrinth.

The trouble is, people too easily see social decay as a
problem of excessive autonomy, rather than of
deficient reciprocity.

In traffic, the only way to punish another driver is to wreck your own car. --That's war in a nutshell.

It is typically intellectual to assume that problems can be solved by language alone, just as it is typically antiintellectual to assume that language cannot solve problems at all. Imagine these attitudes transferred, say, to a hammer.

Someday it will be understood just as clearly that power & egotism should be kept apart, as kids & guns today.

"Evil" as the shadow cast by the hand of fear in the spotlight of despair.

Refusing to believe in chance is the most subtle, & perhaps the least pernicious, form of denial. But who is there can believe in neither chance nor necessity?

Cities are the creation of slave societies & they continue to enslave us by the burden of their unquestioned demands.

What if poetry readings were completely unscheduled & nobody ever knew when they would hear one again?

Isn't Insomnia the anguished knowledge that you have wasted the day, that you have done nothing?-- And the wish for immortality, of whatever ilk, isn't that a spiritual insomnia, the thirst for infinity from never having grasped one's finitude in the world's particularity? The fame that would fill our ears is a rude misunderstanding translated into archetypal clarity; the plenitude that consoles and delivers a

creator at the time of creation is a precise comprehension of one perfect nuance of form--and you can jabber all you want about Art and artworks and never come close to this paradox. It is not for sharing. What the community can possess is an abundance of creative persons and room for them to grow in. Either a place sparkles with its own energies or it is a dustbin and matter-trap (though it explode, rage, and whirl with unconsummated inertias). When will there be a civilization that treasures silence, then music, and only after--speech?

The avantgarde is a necessary position because today art must provide what used to be taken for granted, a common cultural context. But the absence of culture is our common context, and so the struggle is not against dead traditions but against indiscriminate eclecticism.

They are anti-intellectuals who read, but that doesn't make them intellectuals; if you read for the sole purpose of justifying your prejudices, that makes you an anti-intellectual.

Dissembling is required to the precise extent that there is inequity in personal power.

As a philosopher begins by removing all the false notions before she can ever come up with a new one that is possibly true, you have to give up your class illusions in order to see what kind of action is possible for you in the real world.

We are greatly mistaken in trying to force ourselves to concentrate more often than a few times a day, or longer than a few minutes at a time. Coffee only

simulates the effects of concentration: it shuts out peripheries, but does not direct to one centerpoint. That takes interest. For concentration is the preparatory state for a precise act. When no such exactitude is needed, concentration wastes itself either in embellishments or excess pre-fitting (this accounts for how a lot of postmodern art looks, busy without being energetic; its "surrealism" is often all too premeditated). The normal state for humans, as other mammals, is relaxation (dittention, for maximum alertness to marginal sign-threshold phenomena). (Nowadays we have to learn how to relax without falling asleep or into a trance, and it's easier to fake it with alcohol & downers than condition the CNS to move quickly through several states.)

Prolonged concentration becomes stressful, generating the psychic equivalents of embellishments (complexes) & excess prefitting (neurosis). Boredom may be defined as a drive towards concentration in the absence of any interesting thing to focus on. It comes from habitual concentration on banal objects. A free person doesn't choose to force his attention; it happens automatically with learning. What makes something interesting is its potential for completing a larger gestalt (i have also described this as "relevant novelty"). Thus you have to have a worldview-context in order to be able to interest yourself in many things. Otherwise they're just Noise, or else stimulation for an idle curiosity that won't bother to make sense of it, and learns nothing.

The tragedy of syncretism is that it makes exact statements impossible: the conflation of so many various symbol systems dissolves every potential

synthetic concept (generalization) into an infinity of ambiguous associations.

Beauty is the sweetness and bitterness of being someone else in love with this I: not I as a person, but as a landscape of possibilities. Helplessly, hopelessly, out of inner necessity, there is the love--and whose, if not the Source of what happens? In dreams (rarely) i remember i was such a one, a violent force of becoming; i followed after the self that incarnated all forms, all reasons, all feelings, and all potentials, individualized, each a world... and knew never would i catch up with myself as i really am... though by waking i would, and die... I did, and nothing remains but beauty. How to explain this sort of dream, except by saying it is a metaphor for the advent (perpetual) of consciousness? Ah, i have no metaphors more than this one, nor any for it itself. Real-life infatuation is a result of trying to find one. The desert comes from not even having beauty in your dreams, from not being loved by it.

When i walk down stairs it's a controlled fall, that i continually interrupt and launch again to sustain the smooth movement of. This, then, might be a provisional definition of mature art--whose labor has disappeared, like scaffolding, and yet it holds to a line of necessity (the unseen stairs of my path) which is both arbitrary and contingent upon a specific context of reality (not a theory or a feeling but a thought like the solution to a quadratic equation: definitely ambiguous). And there is the despair of having nowhere to fall (no Culture), separate from the despair of being unable to jump (no culture, personally).

Since corporations are artificial intelligences that are unable to perceive humans as individuals, the only "freedom" is--being overlooked.

Only the makers know that they only make metaphors.

As soon as conversation leaves the immediate context and lives of the speakers, it becomes radically falsified, and as if we no longer talk together then, but clash in our monologs that are really directed against the television-drone in our heads--and all too often, too, this happens even as we are trying to talk about each other, and ourselves. Or if one of us has managed to cleave to a system, that system really exists in order to interpret the chaos of television, not the lesser disorder of human lives--which require no such Procrustean orderings to make a little bit of sense.

Practices when the self is opaque, must be different from when the self is transparent. Improvisation becomes unreliable; mindfulness, transitory. Then rituals and other dualisms are useful and necessary.

Art is the only place where being infinitely distracted can pass for productivity.

It is enormous in scope but no enormity (injustice): how? --Gravity the weakest of all forces. Is a universal relation but not the sum of all the relations in the universe (their common denominator, rather). I say: in this world things do not fall in a straight line, everything is very very slightly twisted (Coriolis force)--and all we do must include a compensation. I don't have to stop the earth from rotating just to put

things where i want them. Only a small compensation is needed.

I am as incredulous of those who eschew (poetic) technique, as one who has laboriously fashioned a pistol in prison out of scraps, when told by another prisoner it is possible to walk through walls.

I don't want to take anything from you, i just want you to unclench your fists.

For the weak, force is "power" --or if not force, intransigence. For the strong, power is: the willingness to learn, to co-operate, to become involved, to admit vulnerability. But to a significant degree, these things don't "work" against either force or intransigence. Then one must resort to superior cleverness. One is not yet strong enough if unwilling to admit the limits of (even true) power--to admit that this is not a moral world in which good intentions are acts in themselves, but a place where guile is often a necessary defense--as some of the old fairy tales (pre-Humanist) imply. Just as a person who won't put on a coat & hat in winter, is trying to create an impossible endurance--out of another kind of intransigence. And so is total truthfulness; wanting to help everyone you meet; caring about all pain, sickness & injustice in the world (the "world" doesn't exist--to human measures); & expecting yourself to make the best use of love, every time. Let me call that the most difficult art, till i respect at last the subtleties i so much want to rush past the learning of; let me find in these stupid miscommunications a reason for my studying, ever more deeply, the ways of the human heart--that will never be probed with a flashlight.

I go through my days with this abstract distress, yet no less palpable for being based on events far from my direct experience. It is like, i say, a child in a small town who finds out his dad is a serial killer, --& also the chief of police. No, rather, it's like i was ten years a paraplegic, only to discover fire ants have built a nest in my left foot.

My doctrine of Moments of Choosing: humans don't have free will except at long intervals & for brief moments, & they mostly let them go by; but for that time, it is possible to make a more free or a less free choice, with ramifying consequences thereafter. Thus, it is wisdom to develop sensitivity toward such moments, & to learn what to do with them while they are here.

I'm in a Rube Goldberg machine, pushing the ball that rolls down an incline to set off a spring, & pulling the lever that opens a gate for the greyhound that catches a rabbit; & at the same time i am trying to weave a rope for a ladder to escape out the window of my prison that is only open one day a year, & also in the process of composing an anthem to the saucer gods who are not going to come & rescue me in time anyway.

Imagine righteous indignation to be an addictive, debilitating drug--made from mashed up baby kittens. Would we still love it then? Dubya loves it, Osama digs it, protesters get high on it, & the troops in the desert eat it up--it's the coin of the realm, the denim everyone wants to wear: veil of the twin desires of greed & punishment--greed, to take from the Other in order to make your Self bigger, & punishment--to reduce the Other to nothingness as

much as possible, so as not to be troubled by resemblances.

Forms of the desire to be just. Putting some back when you have too much. Admitting you are wrong. Listening, against the impulse to blurt out contradiction. Alms giving. Seeing yourself in others, particularly those who seem at first very different. Giving up the wish to seek honors or take credit. To not care about winning or losing. To let someone in line go ahead of you. To rescue something forgotten, lost, or wasted. To show mercy; even, to those in the wrong. To not do everything you could do, no matter how good it would make you feel. To be content with partial solutions, slow results, & achievements that you will never see the outcome of.

To admit it when you don't know.

Just take this one idea: that every thing born in time carries the imperfections like a fingerprint of the forces that went into creating it. Is this not a definition of style that transcends both imitation & originality? And isn't it time we gave up all those sticky dualities, half-acquired with the very words, half-effaced by the fumblefingers that snatched them? If all that is left to Western Art is the political mind-set of team sports (& what else does all this talk of movements amount to?), then it is high time as well to have done with games; time indeed to remember: what we are here for.

Not enslaved; stupefied with the distractions. We could throw off these overlords any time we wanted to. And oneday we'll realize this, & like the Soviet Empire, our own house of cards will cease to exist as such. But everyone will be here. Only a stupidity will have actually perished.

It's the luck of a lifetime if just once you are shown the whole breadth and depth of your fear. For any act of will, merely suppresses it. It goes automatic and that willing builds an imposture. When you become aware of, instead of symbolifying, your fear, what is real in your character remains, and the rest falls away, leaving very little perhaps--a child of six, or three (but in any case it seems negligible next to the infinite)...and you can then start to build, not a tower toward heaven, but a house to live in. To realize you are finite and perishable, comes not from having said it a thousand times, but from having been--briefly--perished and infinite. It's the zero that begins a life of measure.

In the salvation racket, politics is despair of psychology, and psychology is despair of politics. To unite these perhaps it is necessary to eschew salvation.

Disillusionment: another illusion. That you're safe.

The body as image creates dissociation. Rather, the body as movement, potential energy, transformative possibilities. Because gesture is at once a sign and expression of feeling; unambiguous except in isolation, infallible knowledge and the standard of honesty. This was before acting became the basis of normalcy, of course. Now we don't feel into the existence of others, we try to imagine what we look like in their eyes. And we blind ourselves to our own gestures as a result. We lose our expressiveness.

Give these eyes to someone who can stand them.

Much more important than our eyes' image is our skins' image of each other. And this may be the substance of our reality--or lack of it.

Insomnia is the first distance; and all distances--are degrees of insomnia. Tinctures. Ink.

There's no "litmus test for poetry", of course, but i always think of that anecdote from classical antiquity wherein someone hears a poem, & asks that it be repeated over & over, "so I won't die without having memorized that poem". In an age of mechanical reproduction, one can devise a hierarchy: poems you'd buy the book for new...poems you'd check out the book from a library to xox...maybe even: poems you'd copy out by hand (i remember typing out all the Rubaiyat for myself, once upon a time). Nowadays you more often see this passion in song collectors. And such. Would you buy that poem on eBay?

Our image of violence is that it escapes causality, whereas it actually relinquishes our only freedom from causality--detachment.

I only mean to figure in that late 20c anthology: among the 10 million minor poets.

Flags & creeds are parasites on humanity; parasites that cause derangement. The sooner we shake them off, the better. I will be proud of that nation which gives every child medicine & every adult employment; & no other. I will be ashamed of those nations which perpetuate the cult of Guns 'n' Punishment, & i will despise all those to whom nature is less sacred than personal gain.

The pain of incompleteness is a lodestar--if we allow ourselves to listen.

The trouble is, there's a plethora of authority-basis principles: legitimacy via force, via politics (which may or may not coincide with consensus), via tradition, via the trappings of authority itself (which, alas, is most true of American business today--bad decisions don't seem to matter, as long as you "walk the walk"), via love &/or family, or (finally) via competence--this last the one that i, being the sort of person i am (introverted-intuitive), consider the only sane alternative. Does that mean i want a meritocracy whose leadership is determined by exams? (I have to admit i haven't been impressed by the Mensans i've met--the local artists' co-op had far more interesting, & accomplished, people in it.) Well, at the very least, this last election could have been solved by a spelling test.

A real doctor would tell me, All you need is to run wild in the woods awhile. "But i have run wild all my life!" Yes--except you ran in a maze. That doesn't count. Every rat in the maze thinks it's running wild. But put them in an open field, and they keep on making maze patterns. Do you want to be a Big White Coat? Then learn how to make up new mazes. But don't talk about wilderness or the woods.

We are inordinately impressed by those who can train their face (actors, yogis, impassive peasants, cats). What does this say about our concept of the mind? Personality is a face-metaphor, extended to include the whole body & body movement (especially talk-style). Mind as: the underlying bone structure of a

face. (Brain- washing = reconstructive surgery.) What kind of mind-concept would we have if we didn't have mobile faces? Would we consider monkeys like magical protean Houdinis on that account? (Jesus who walked through walls.) Would we never try to teach anybody? (Shape their expressions: straighten up, kid!) Would our hands be useless?

How can i blame anyone for what they believe? Our definitions are as much forced upon us as the deformations of age, illness, and employment: they are the surfaces where our bodies touch the hook we all writhe upon.

Sometimes i try to imagine that these are exciting times i'm living in. Instead of--dreary and terrifying.

Though i am sick of violence, this alone cannot give me a belief in nonviolence. Ahimsa--soul force--i have never seen work. And the only environment where i always have enough love--the wilderness--that's just where i don't need to believe in nonviolence. No, i can't do more than try to be fair with each person, from day to day, moment to moment. I don't have the integrity for convictions.

Insofar as we aren't free, our lives generate injustice. Friction. But it's no use to search for the blame. Rather, learn not to react from your sensitivity-- knowing how far we are from being completely free-- learn how not to make it worse. When to get away from words, and when to take refuge in them. Because even the most balanced of us is recovering from a grave and subtle sickness. (To say this without cruelty.) (Or sentimentality either.)

Will and willingness: law and justice.

How i am with influences. --I dance in the skin of the lion, i dance in the skin of the deer. I even talk with someone an hour and come away borrowing their cadences in my head. Is this weakness? I think it is strength--to leave my ego by sympathetic projection and be secure of returning. --Then why don't i know it when i'm doing it? (I almost never detect my influences till much later.) Maybe: i don't have to. Maybe: identification is the other side of knowledge.

And "subjectivity" is the myth that conceals this fact.

For, as Reason was discredited by bad thinking, insincere identification led to too much undependable inner-knowledge.

Poets on the factory model: decide to produce (not poems, but books of "poetry"), and then try to drum up a market for their product (this may be the chief sin of the Quietudinous--but not only theirs). Who will hold a gun to the head of their pet & ask: Does this need doing? Who would not be burst like a bubble by such a question? --Then how much of our art is self-protection against that actual irrelevance.

I don't enjoy the struggle of intelligence vs. stupidity. I can't see it as a game. Therefore i shouldn't choose to play it if i can avoid so. Never mind "what has to be done". My feelings of indignation aren't a good guide on this, because though they keep me aimed with an image of Justice, they would make me try to reach it by an impossible directness. I must make myself immune to emotional blackmail--even when it comes from me.

None of us is sane, none of us is healthy, none of us is whole-- & the pretence that we are, is not the least of our afflictions.

An age poor in individuals is an age rich in devotees-- which does not make it an "age of faith" to live in (though afterwards it may be called so): such believers are faithless to themselves and to each other; that's what every age of faith is really like.

Until there is social justice it's no use kvetching about our personal injustices. But we can still strive to be more just ourselves. How do you increase your desire to be just? Not intellectually--by empathy.

More than i want social justice, i want a land where i don't have to hate.

Nothing should be simpler to keep up than the meshing of related purposes, like well-used forest paths that don't have to be recleared everytime somebody uses them. I only have to count the crossed out lines in my address notebook to see the likelihood of that. Well, we are gossamer, and if like the coral-tube worms we contribute to some Great Barrier Reef, visible from the moon, that's not a part of a tubeworm's plans. Maybe 'organizations' are obsolete. And networks --except as the temporary filament sufficient for a contact, a letter, an image glimpsed for 1/30th of a second. But i don't know that. The old paradigm, of building to last, still troubles me; it must be too long since i've travelled, for that's like a great wind sweeping away a lot of clutter & reducing you to essentials. It helps teach the art of prioritizing, which is worth any number of megalithic monuments. Having gotten that, further travel is

redundant--turns into a place itself; albeit one without any particular topography.

The metaphor of the Spirit. Put your hand out the car window at 90 mph. Most of the time we don't even know air is there. The "Spirit" is simply a way of saying this about the humanness of humans. It's really harmful to posit a separate place (or mode of existence) where we will (or could be now) always and necessarily fully human. Because then it becomes politicized--a collective condition (e.g. why should salvation be the same for any two persons--the same process or the same language--Christianity arose when having an identity was rare; that is, when it was possible to ignore individual differences, or when they were usually subsumed under sectarian names) that obviates the need for individual effort (the doctrine of Works is almost better, except it too narrowly defines what work can be). Gurdjieff's concept, however, is restricted to building an ego. I would like to integrate this into "The Cloud of Unknowing" (future mindscientists may measure my folly from this), for it matters most of all what kind of ego (and egolessness) you make --or allow for. I think of what a wonderful house my mother's father built. There was a pit in the garage for working under a car. There was a receptacle for dog shit so it wouldn't draw flies. There was a foldup drawing table by the window with the best light. He just failed to anticipate the disintegration of society in his plans. Which left them completely isolated. --So we construct egos without considering the destruction of the Spirit.

My favorite utopian idea: the 20-Hour Week. Just double everybody's hourly wage, & cut their hours in

half. (I maintain that practically no one works more than four hours in an eight-hour shift, anyway.) What would we do with all that extra leisure? Perhaps, construct a civilization.

When will we understand that our dream of a free & egalitarian society requires an athleticism of the spirit we have to train for, when all we know of discipline is the bogus dichotomy of unlimited self-indulgence versus coercive regimentation? When all we know of choosing, is between the packagings of indistinguishables?

degrees of sanity

ability to make small talk

capacity to recognize illness

understanding past mistakes

foresight & avoiding situations of lessened choice

teaching others the same (who ask)

teaching without appearing to teach

Nidor of sagas for Odin.

Everyone who creates finds that parts of their work and portions of their lives seem finer and more profound than the rest of it; and they would give anything to increase their share of that bounty. The trouble is, you can't. There's nothing you can do.

What kind of artist you are capable of becoming depends on how you choose to deal with this rude and imperious paradox.

After writing for many years, you've made all the big easy discoveries and you come to a kind of watershed. There's the temptation to continue what you already know how to do well--and this is the road of self-pastiche. Or you go looking for exotic subject matter to renew your sense of novelty. Or (and i think this is best) you will be forced to turn inward and seek out the sources of your own creativity. I can only liken this to the difference between a long term relationship that takes you on an unending journey of mutual exploration, and the kind of short-term affair that relies on an excitement that soon fizzles out. I don't know where it leads but i know i can never be limited to the purely lyric mode again.

I am not one of those who can comfortably accept that the waste and inequity of the present system is the best humans can hope for on planet Earth. But the direct emotion of this, registers as rather banal. It manifests in my work more subtly--as an aesthetic of restlessness, self-contradiction, and a tendency to evade the expected.

If there can be said to be any "origin" of so complex a phenomenon as binary thinking (as a syndrome & not as a procedure), i think it must be in parental malpractice, by parents similarly afflicted, who are incapable of unconditional love & thus force their children to suppress part of themselves which will be a long time retrieving (if ever); in the meantime, they will have to become some sort of dualist, although the

exact form of this may turn out quite a heretical one.

If every time the word "evil" was used by someone who should know better was the playing of a song, & i got royalties for that song, i wouldn't have to work at this bookstore, that's for dingdong sure. It's theology, it makes about as much sense in any discussion about the real world as requiring all of us to invoke Mickey Fucking Mouse in the news. And do you know why it's so convenient to have this word at our fingertips? That which is "evil" is a Monster, & a Monster's feelings don't count. You don't try to persuade Monsters, you exterminate them. --And what is a crusade against crusades, but another kind of Monster?

Empathy is evidently a freak talent, the sixth sense that not only does 80% of humanity not possess (--okay, 70% of women & 90% of men), they do not even suspect the existence of. So a compassionate society cannot be founded on the regular exercise of this talent. However, i don't know why it shouldn't be possible to train people to regard it as a respectable fiction, like so many others.

What i think about Mathematics & Reality: when i mow the lawn, i automatically visualize the grass being divided up into regular, linear segments, & this is the path i follow so as to complete the task in the minimum number of strokes. (I determine my path through supermarket aisles in the same fashion.) In fact i am constructing the job as i go, & i recognize that there are any number of geometric alternatives in the same area of space. But my tool determines the width of the path, & its linearity. Some people (& i include friends among them) would take this lawnmower &

push it any old way; eventually they would get most of it, but it would take a whole lot longer. (They would, however, feel "less regimented". Digital to them is in varying degrees, a foreign language.) So time constraint also is one of the hidden aspects to this job-constructing. But if exactness alone were the goal, then i would do better to use a high-powered weed eater--analogue style--& if i wanted to become really intimate with the contours of the landscape, i should use scissors. (Call this an image of an Aesthetic Civilization--such as i like to imagine Heian Japan to have been.) Alternately, i might let it go & stick to the paths that my routine generates through the waist-high brush. Or, plant something else that is so appropriate to the climate & my needs, that just as it naturally is, is the way i like it & we co-exist peaceably. (Call this an image of a Sustainable Society.)

We are so reliant on the infrastructure that our science has allowed us to create, & so oppressed by the lack of genuine leisure, that not only do we regard our Crunching Numbers as the acme of all possible epistemologies, we refuse to consider that anything but small adjustments to the machines, can ever be necessary. At best we solace ourselves with the Dream of the Perfect Machine. Much like "Heaven", it is a dream without particulars (can you say "nanorobots"?).

I think it will only after the failure of the petroleum-based world economy, & its consequent social disruptions, that people will be willing to listen to something so radical as a value system based on quality not quantity. The question really becomes: will it be a new smart one, grounded in rationality, or one of the old stupid ones, grounded in irrationality?

Question: how do tribes define themselves in a society where costuming is to some degree a matter of personal taste? and to a greater degree, dependent on what's available and what's allowed? Related thought: boundaries that are defined with subliminal repulsions, is counter-magic, in a way. I thought of how, tuning through the radio dial, I jump away from some classes of music like a hot surface. I so strongly dislike sports, etc that an ambience of those sounds is sufficient to keep me from casually wandering into a space that contains them. In a population which is largely functioning on autopilot, no greater force than this is necessary, especially where it isn't critical to defend class privileges or possessions (e.g. at the symphony. I can go there [or i used to be able to, before each season became sold out in advance to \$200 season ticket holders--] , but the presence of people dressed up makes me uncomfortable). --How a city is organized according to caste dislikes, through a gradual process of unconscious sorting. --How it is a very useful ability to tolerate feelings of extreme dislike in order to transgress these minor aversive boundaries.

[2003. Perhaps it was by this means that all but a certain kind of player, was driven out of the Game of Politics.]

Effortless data reproduction [i wrote in 1986] is a time bomb ticking away in the heart of capitalism.

Probably nothing else is needed to defeat it in fact, so we ought to be imagining what can be done when it all starts to collapse.

We are not yet to the point of being able to use places, we are irremediably nomadic, & our expectations of places far exceed the sense of obligation we should

bring. Therefore at present, networks of short duration & high velocity preferably serve the purpose of places. [Note: dixit 1987] When friendship itself is sacred, we will know we are ready to dwell upon the land.

Ego is the ship's figurehead--not its motive power, its steering or its buoyancy.

The more intuitive you are, the spookier your world is. Not more frightening--but more mysterious: & more inhabited.

Suffering corrupts; unavoidable suffering corrupts unavoidably... After i am dead, where will be the pain i endured? Nowhere. Only the crippled work will remain. Do i want that? I wouldn't want it done to my children. I would want them beautiful & complete. (I would send them to a better place if i could. Art as that better place.)

If ideas are tools, we choose ours by the picturesqueness of the rust encrusting them.

Is not fashion, propaganda without content?

The child makes the ritual, the child disbelieves the ritual (unmakes it)--two powers denied to normal adults.

Initiation is to discipline. Even ego-death is an initiation into the mysteries of ego crafting. Techniques are natural initiations. Tests are artificial initiations. ...Love is a mixture of the two.

There's a peculiar & very American desire to do without psychology, which is akin to the desire to eat what you want & dispense with all knowledge of nutrition. And the results are not that different. In the name of a specious "freedom", we have the unedifying spectacle of a nation wholly given over to the tyranny of its appetites.

Emotional states should be named with verbs, not nouns.

The virtue of storying our lives is that, since there are only story-consolations, our sorrows become amenable as they fit the outlines of story-sorrows. The depths of grief yield but to death: it is necessary, except for very tranquil interludes, to live on the surface--a facade of artificial continuity. Artists must know this, & also heed it. Where they give up storying, they come face to face with ultimate destruction. (Keats sonnet.)

Better to write down bare metaphors than force a poem where the first line hasn't spoken itself.

Why do we poets fear a future without criticism, when all the best poems were written when there was none?

Rimbaud gave us a formula--an easy formula--for making art. "Live excessively, & your art will be intense." But excessively-living sheep merely produce mediocre art that is messy.

Stingy poets: if it has one thing worth saving, save it.
Greedy readers: who want all the fruit without climbing the tree.

Admit every day: you do not know how to write. You only know ways that sometimes work. (There are others.)

What only is not denied me, is the dubious elaboration of an obsession. Is there light past the gnawing at the duodenum? Perhaps the only honesty left to poets anymore is the furtiveness with which they begin in adolescence. That is timeless & sincere. The shamelessness of later on allows them any amount of lying, unfortunately. Therefore the worst amateurs strike me as more poetic in their practice than our suavely professional poets.

Line endings: you go to the store at regular intervals,
Sense endings: but you run out of this & that,
continually.

We cannot admit that the power of magic has no force, for that would imply that the arena of its actions--the ego --is not a real thing. Therefore magicians have always resorted to force & trickery to keep from themselves this damning knowledge.

Eye vs. Hand. Voice is Eye + Hand. Eye-poems, Hand-poems. But no Voice-poems anymore. The poets are mute, why? ("dissociation of sensibility") --silent reading, television & movies, decayed speech: broken paradigms only.

Experiences which repeat...until by some chance or change we are able to recognize ourselves in a pattern: only then, dreaming but lucidly, may we escape it... and this is the truth that has been obscured

by the dogma of Reincarnation. It seemed such a secret-- to remember through whatever might come (even to ego-death)--they took extraordinary precautions to preserve this knowledge; what remains is but an elaborate sarcophagus, & not even the dust of that secret remains, in any living theology you can name, among the very ones that discovered it. For an insight really cannot be transmitted. Its idea can, but it has to take hold in you by the fire of its spontaneous ignition. The words alone won't do it. Worse, they put you to sleep more-- because you feel you're safe: the war has been won.

Ah, but to keep a journal! You record all your forgettings indelibly: you can never forget that you forget, constantly & only relieved by intervals of clarity: & not always those in which you write. Keeping a journal is to realize the truth of reincarnation, & if you are of a thoughtful disposition, it makes you more a philosopher than any learned Ph.D. in its history, simply because you interrogate yourself for the meaning of existence, not on exceptional occasions, but habitually. I think i value this more than the making of art, even if it is less perfect & useless to others. That other is what i make of the flies i catch; this is the very web of my spiderhood.

Genre pleasures are pleasures of recognition. But also: of playfulness with the rules.

That a writer has something personal to say, is in genre an accessory; an overlay.

The ideal reader's reaction when they have finished a genre work is to rush out and buy another one, not to reread the same book.

A genre work that stands alone and is too unique, would be a kind of BETRAYAL.

When Mystery is banished, knowledge & ignorance alike become something other.

Why theorize? --a question not contained in most theories!

Sense is pre-existent; meaning is a relationship of ego to sense.

No symbol is a symbol unless it causes a change in consciousness. Symbols are more akin to drugs than to nonsymbolic pictures & phrases.

This society. The discrepancy between the path you would take as defined by the lines, & the path you have to make around potholes & road debris, grows ever wider; now, if you would save your tires, you run the risk of being stopped as a drunk driver. All our social forms approach this pitch of absurdity. But it's been happening so gradually, no one laughs.

Headline: "Blind Sailor Challenges the Ocean". The story of my life.

N.B. the term metaphor means nothing more than to showcase the focussing power of a name. It is self-referential but not infinite or basic on that account. There are different kinds of focus a name can aid. But i use 'metaphor' rather than 'name' because the other seems to cover only those opaque arbitrary coins we feed our data-machines with. If you imagine Shakespeare's "a name to conjure with" --or one of your childhood idols-- you will not need to be limited to the word 'metaphor'. To name is to create & destroy at once. This is clearest when someone

renames something better than it was named before & the old name drops out of circulation. (At present this process is distorted by propaganda. The real namers are carefully excluded from the name-factory's controls.) A poet today, then, is confronted with a double conundrum. There seems to be "nothing new to say" (nor any new way to say it), & no one will listen anyway. Both of these are half-truths. If a poet really does exercise her power of naming (& most of us i suspect refrain, from whatever reason), it does get heard. And that is new for the context enough, & all that any other breakthrough was, too, before it became mythologized. Anyway, this for me demonstrates the inherently political context of our poetry. But how unpoetical our politics are! Indeed Magic seems a more promising career...even to have to reinvent it entirely, than to struggle against two centuries' accumulation of dead poetry--these "ideologies"-- names that hide.

We name emotions like languages have conventionalized names for the sound that a dog or cat makes.

Nothing has done me more harm than the will to believe. It always perverts my devotion.

Publishing poetry--like trying to guess the combination of a safe, but most of your guesses aren't even considered numbers.

Of all the reasons for a musician to cover a song or a critic to write about a book, doing justice must be the rarest.

The power of a poem, like the power of a mirror, lies in its coordination. And we think we see another room there; another life.

Playing music for other musicians, versus: music for nonmusicians. But: there are no magic tricks for other magicians! So art has a tendency toward illusionism that goes unchecked when its culture no longer cultivates.

What is it that's so difficult? To talk about each sick person--and not the Plague.

I want no great art if that only means to be the tree for a great monkey.

The mark of a barbarian is clumsiness. What passes for culture today is the strenuous simulation of a few smooth moves.

For a thinking person, violence is the ultimate banality; and all banality seems to some degree an act of violence.

Art is wasted on those who have to decide right away "it works" or "it doesn't work": you have to be willing to be bored, before you can begin to get interested.

We are inundated with images of unavoidable injury, to the point where all injury seems unavoidable. (That entertainment accompanies this teaching is entirely irrelevant.)

Four and a half billion years to produce a creature that would rather kill than push the brake pedal with its foot!

Would you drive the moneychangers out of the temple? It's their temple (the Art World).

Egotism creates empires, but Empire also creates egos. The missing link is collectivized education: the means is by preventing contemplation (which would develop the power of voluntary attention). That's why dogma is so important to an empire. Without knowledge of real things to furnish a common context, the only basis for human relations must then be a rigidly preserved terminology. [N.B. Dogmas need not be verbal. Many of ours are made of images.]

The ego is finite and unbounded. Psychologies have been founded on either of these (half-) truths.

The concept of the Unconscious means: here there are no more explanations. But that assumes explanations must be rational. If explanations are instead 'stories', then the unconscious is also a story, and can be elaborated. Once there were two brothers who lived in the same house. But these were blind and deaf brothers, and each thought that he lived there alone. A day came when things were no longer where they were supposed to be. They couldn't find anything half the time. "Am I going crazy?" they said to themselves, "Or do things move of their own accord?"

Artists settle for gestures. Then curse the audience for not having enough imagination to supply the rest.

You don't gain skills, you lose preconceptions.

No dreams grow where reality is not examined.

Art can be a discipline instead of just a drug, when it demands more freedom of the artist.

I could never be a professor, because the first thing i'd have to profess is the evil of universities.

An addiction is like being pinned to the ground by a spear. You don't just get up and walk away. --Nor should you hang a flag from it.

Every heresy is at once a power struggle & a quibble over words.

We seem not to be able to conceive of an individualism which finds fulfillment in solidarity, or a solidarity which does not suppress the individual. Why is that?

A real history of ideas would have the effect of mapping possible discourse. Without a continuing dialog with the past, however, it's only etymology and dates.

First mistake: that words have a meaning. Second mistake: that they don't.

Falling ones admire jugglers most. It makes them feel like they're going somewhere.

Perhaps the hardest thing to recognize is the process through which a truth becomes a lie. If you believed it, you can't alter it without attacking some part of yourself. And if you never did believe it, then it seems to have been untrue all along.

Sleepiness makes me forgiving. Ego thrives on revenge.

I can't stand to read poems that are nothing but a display of sensibility. It gives me the same feeling as a blank message left on my answering machine.

Fast reading & slow reading is how i solve the problem of defining prose & poetry. In an ideal world the former would not exist. If you wanted to find out something you would go to a person who knew about it, & stay till you really understood. And if you wanted the sound of words you would seek poetry.

To be a poet & to be a word- (& phrase; & book-) hound, is not necessarily the same thing. And poets who are poets because they love language may actually be in the minority at all times, & have more in common with crossword puzzlers & collectors of old books, than with people who want to stand up in front of a crowd & be heard, or who want their name in history-lists after they're dead.

The Price of Repeated Transformations Is a Zigzag Course & Spells of Confusion.

One who has ceased to share the illusions of a group, is farther removed from them than if he had died & come back to life. So it is with me & artists.

I hate injustice, but i don't love justice.

The Gnostic is a mood, but Justice itself is either a passion or a desperate pretense. A passion, to remain cool-headed. The world lacks, not so much truth, as moral courage. No one has a long enough life to learn

all the truths we've accumulated in books already--& who tries even for a whole day to practice them?

Too often i do "good deeds" for the singing of a lie inside me: that this changes the person i am. I should do them only out of an understanding of causality. I must know by now, nothing ever changed me without great pain--& i continued to regret it till long afterwards.

I write & have always written for one reason & one reason only: not to be at the mercy of my feelings. To pretend this is a way of manufacturing unique artifacts for public consumption, is a stupidity i am often guilty of.

The only thing long experience does to a true artist, is turn irrational insecurity into rational humility. Failure isn't any farther away, it just has a changed countenance.

Art & careerism are like human-powered airplanes & commercial jetliners--they hardly even share the same sky.

Is there any trick but patience?

"I consider ego something to be starved into submission," i was saying to someone the other day; but i said it with pride of tyranny in my voice.

To put up with picayune effects from good intentions is admitting a symbolic victory is better than none. But a symbolic victory could have been had even without those efforts. Truth is sacrificed in order not to believe in magic.

Dualism: "the splitting sickness". There's a machine in my head for making coins of conceptuality; they all have heads & tails: i don't know how to make any other kind (or it isn't a coin).

Reason is a chainsaw but only hands can build.

The chief illusion of art is the same as the chief illusion of the City: that it has everything you need (& can't find elsewhere).

In antiquity, the only Halloween funhouses were the Mysteries. Today, the only Mysteries are Halloween funhouses.

By distributing its effectual parts among the arts & sciences, magic has been gerrymandered out of existence.

In a culture that celebrates the apotheosis of trivia, poetry is the one thing that doesn't matter. All ambitions are silly, but poetic ambitions are sillier than most. Poetry itself should teach that small is beautiful, that the unimportant can be infinitely precious. As such, it's a metaphor for human life.

A painter should be no smarter than his fingers.

People lack freedom to the precise degree that they avoid self-criticism.

Art must be a wilderness howling among the voices.

Only the colors move.

Just because you wake up earlier doesn't give you any sort of moral superiority. So, neither does intelligence.

It behooves a barbarian to speak in particulars, to collect shards, and to sleep uneasy. A barbarian with ambitions beyond that is himself a shard, a freak, and a disturbing dream-episode.

Fusion is explosion made conspiracy.

If art is proto-mindscience, we are all of us mad scientists, for attempting to prove what we already know, and disdaining results that contradict it.

What is a leader? A person standing at the point of maximum illusion. They have the least freedom but the greatest sense of power... Nobody tells the truth to a leader.

Speech is only the latest language.
Story is older than speech.

The only storytellers we listen to anymore, are either professional liars or people who believe words can describe reality.

Science is the political expression of method, and arose with the modern state (17c.). It was inevitable that, having chosen to perceive reality in terms of its largest gestalts, and in generalizable relations about groups, exclusively, scientists should have gone on to manifest a collectivized institution which serves the state in oppressing individual humans, just as science must ignore particularities in order to attain certainty; not "Knowledge is power" but "certain knowledge is Power-thinking applied to things"...

The only separable form & content is in lying. But even so: this is a true representation of an inner contradiction.

I have the hatred of injustice of the true poet, & the love of gewgaws of the false poet--in equal measure. I am obviously predestined for no ordinary disappointment.

The Three Unholy Muses: Insomnia, Suicide & Rejection.

The most interesting thing about the pseudo-sciences is that they are able to exist at all. This world we suppose so empirically-bright, is it not rather darkened by the presence of minds?

Ego + ignorance = folly. So egolessness in the pursuit of knowledge brings wisdom?

If Art only has meaning in relation to a tribe, what deracinated artists create for? Tribe-simulations: such as, all the artists that came before--or their imaginary audience-to-be.

Movies in which the necessity of work does not exist. Movies in which poverty does not exist. Movies without the consequences of inertia. Movies without books. Movies without people who are familiar with what tends to happen in movies.

If movies were poetry every movie would have a screenwriter as protagonist & the whole action would take place in one shuttered room.

To make my hobby try to be also, my therapy, my justification, & my livelihood--is asking too much. How much more generous would artists be toward each other, if they could just let go of that mocked garland! Art is the cultural sanction we seek, for what we'd be doing anyway.

Source. Our nonverbal awareness is essentially animal-like. Therefore it is worth considering that our "Unconscious" is as unique to us as "Language"; somehow they're the same process; the connecting link is Ego. As-if Me/As-if Not-Me. But it is nonverbal awareness, not the unconscious, that is our true source. Religions based on Trance, religions based on "Stance" (attitude, dogma, form)...we need a religion based on Dance.

Each poetics, like the rules of chess: beyond justification or argument. And the chaos after playing a game, when for a moment the rules suspend, & you change sides & set the pieces up reversed, this is something a poem should contain as well!

When i say Love, i mean--a perception which changes your life...feelings are tidal, they come & go; but Love is a Rubicon, a typhoon which erases every trace of the former shoreline, so you couldn't figure out where to replace everything if you wanted to.

I keep struggling against the false belief that to be something not yet defined is to be useless.

Modern poets are in love with intellectualized sensuality because it seems to give them a method that cannot err.

The way to get the most out of discourse is not to challenge each other's assertions reflexively & indiscriminately, but to take time to imagine what the world would be like if they were true.

What happened to irony was simple. Kitsch became the signifier of authenticity. --A position which has no opposite, because it is itself nonsensical.

Luciferian pride. Poetry is a canyon through which once flowed all the news, knowledge, dreams & prophecies of humanity; now there's only a lyric trickle at the bottom--& nothing you write is going to change it back.

I image a brawl in which ten million poets fight to the death for access to the last reader of poetry.

The equivocal relation between poets & musicians-- as if apples were worth a million dollars, & oranges considered not even worth picking up off the ground.

The reason our criticism is generally more interesting & better written than our poetry (admit it, in any journal you read the reviews first!), is simple. Criticism has to be about real books & personalities, & their puzzling or clashing contexts. But the poetry is mostly about other poems: usually one's own, that the hapless reader has never seen!

Watching TV for story-hunger is like getting a tapeworm for companionship.

"Political science" will not exist until it is understood that Government is something that just doesn't work above a certain size. I am reminded of an article once

written by Asimov, on the subject of those giant versions of familiar animals, so beloved of hack science fiction. He starts with a mouse & makes it weigh a ton, then analyzes each of the systems of that mouse's body & shows how in order not to die at once it must be modified; & before he's done the result is not a one-ton mouse, but something much like an elephant. Yeah, & we go on using mouse scale words for elephant scale realities. A tiny example: the personalization of the war, as if it were against one super-villain, a Saddam the size of a mountain, instead of against millions of human beings just like ourselves.

Ah, but listening is on the way out. In the future there will only be "sending a message" (i.e. pulling the trigger) & "receiving a message" (catching the bullet).

A corporation is not so much a machine for making money, as a device for diffusing responsibility.

Worms eat the page before they eat the page's poet.

Edison, Tesla. Like it's any use to be more than 5 years "ahead of your time" ...!

Some rights which could be usefully abridged: the Right to Pollute, the Right to Have Children You Can't Take Care Of, the Right to Make Things Nobody Needs. And of course--the Right to Take More Than Your Share.

--It'll never happen. We'd push the button first.

When one is joyless, justice becomes much harder to perceive, even as a direction.

Scurrying through my library of poets, like a rat in a warehouse full of small appliances.

The moral solitude of believing that compulsory schooling is as great an evil as slavery--a hundred years before anyone else does.

Violence from yang-excess in humans, & the destruction that occurs in Nature, are disadvantageously lumped together in every theory of Cosmic Evil. Perhaps that is why it remains a philosophical "problem" to this day. But by dividing it into two problems, one for physics & one for psychology, i think a provisional answer can be reached. It is necessary, however, to distinguish yang-excess, "egotism", from being used as a label for every manifestation of the social identity, or "ego". The latter has different forms according to one's type. The former is a pattern that results from being cut-off from access to the unconscious.

Rabbits are voiceless & odorless. Such is the provenance of the Meek. Cats are noisy & smelly. Such are carnivores. As the super-carnivore, Mankind's only concept of civilization seems to be to make the ultimate racket & the inescapable reek.

A vanishing privilege: to build for oneself.

Ego is a vessel on the gray sea of Time.

The first step to Clarity is inner silence (Clarity of Perception). The second step to Clarity is calling things by their right names (Clarity of Thought). The third step is striving for reciprocity, or interpersonal

justice (Clarity of Feeling). The fourth step is doing what must be done (Clarity of Purpose).

Prophets. The first prerequisite of a prophet is love of repetition.

Not only do i realize i'm just a minor character in a Dostoevsky novel, i even know what sort. I'm the one who goes mad so he can spend 2 chapters arguing theology with the hero.

Jargons seem to give you a handle on the world--but it's a handle that's not connected to anything.

Geomantic Poles (centripetal & centrifugal spaces): the Cave & the Savannah. A house is a pseudo-cave. A yard is a pseudo-savannah. Perhaps this is the deep origin of esoteric/exoteric, sacred & secular; even, private & public. Dance on a savannah makes Waves, whilst a dancer in a cavelike area is a Particle.

The Ego is a magic circle maintained by mostly invisible taboos, avoidances, distinctions & practices. Making this fact explicit is a step toward acknowledging & utilizing non-Ego powers. As soon as you draw a line, you posit Doors. Why are they conceived as separate entities then? Because you won't try to open a door you believe is merely painted on the wall.

Muse-Silence. Begins for a poet with those things he cannot change & has ceased to have new feelings about. Properly considered, it is a call to arms. But the only way through --is surrender.

In order to become human, a measure was

lost; humanity itself is a leaping of bounds. But that gesture completes itself in the finding of new measure.

My ideal of a healthy audience-artist relationship in the present epoch would have to be that of Bob Marley & the Rastas. Though it may be my fate, i really don't want to be a "poet's poet".

To make CD's with that old 78 crackle.

They have tried to tell us that causality is meaning-- that the skeleton is the body.

The Bulldozer is our sacred cow.

How can community exist without a sense of place?

Those who insist on fitting every experience into a coherent worldview, end up learning only what can be paraphrased. Which is like being unable to read poetry (even in your own language) except in translation--.

Description, though, itself is a genre of poetry. Bad poetry.

It is the magician's privilege to disbelieve in magic.

Science, wishing to disesteem marvels, says they are worthless if untrue & then proceeds to prove their impossibility. But science holds sway among the people solely by virtue of its marvels & its promises.

One can love one place or many places, but not the Earth. The same with cultures & Culture, humans & Humanity. We rootless ones, i suppose, identify with

whatever flotsam we bump up against --popculture, subculture, well-worn arcana--without ever grasping the meaning of any whole, that comes only from having grown up surrounded by legible relationships.

Improvisation is like a game you make up the rules of as you go along. Others soon want to join; & if you persevere, you have made a language.

Theory is making a game that is like the problem-- & then thinking that to win the game is to solve the problem. Well, maybe for especially gamelike problems.

Shocking. I cleaned my yellow sink with dutch cleanser and it turned white!

The mass production of "facts": an abstract artform. (Its aesthetics is called "plausibility".)

One who is broken-hearted cannot write criticism. It all seems equally pitiful.

An artist wages transcendence against his alienation; a pseudoartist cherishes alienation as a badge of honor.

Poetry in a book is like a record in an album cover.

Songs about being rock stars; poems about being English professors.

Perhaps in all times & places the spirit of emulation is responsible for the bulk of poems produced. (How odd that none of our criticism will cop to this.)

The survival of the art of poetry should only be measured by the amount actually memorized in people's minds today.

Lying being both socially necessary & morally unjustifiable, every viewpoint which depends upon forgoing it (as a token of earnestness) will be rendered ineffectual or else succumb to unwitting hypocrisy.

--This is a myth about the Death of God, i think--

--but a true myth.

We are all targets in the same murky battlefield-- whose sense of each other, naturally, derives from the competition for shelter. So i cultivate humanist attitudes i don't often feel & actively refute in my thinking, in order not to lose touch with that future time in which people will be born with a reason to have them.

The re-marginalization of artists won't be the end of the art-making impulse, merely its spurious authority & glamour. It will be salubrious for Art, certainly. Those who were in it for reasons of the ego will then move on to other things.

When time making pots didn't have to be stolen from time making spears, it was easier to be an artist. But they didn't try to be priests, either.

There is a mystery named by the color greenish-orange. Know this, & you know a secret about all mysteries.

Computers are a greater snare than even drugs. They appear to confer intelligence without effort, as drugs appear to confer an inconsequential joy.

The Big Lie. Nothing is so contagiously inspiring as total commitment to a blatant fraud. It's as awesome as levitation.

We Americans are so childishly delighted with the bare act of choosing, like Midas in the first hour of his "golden touch", it hardly matters what; but very often i am as weary with the plethora of indistinguishables, as Midas after years of the curse, till i cry out: only give me one necessary task & the barest sustenance, & i will ask no more! But my art refuses me.

Integrity is all the more essential in isolation, though it seems that lies there harm no one & to oneself are transparent. But it is only in truthful relation to yourself that you exist--the other kind is merely the maintenance of a convincing façade.

Our system has more safeguards against good leadership than the goddamn Roman Empire.

And at last i begin to wonder: was it maybe a mistake to have associated Art with meaning in the first place? When, most of it has more in common with birdsong, than the delicate encoding of an insight?

Real religions typically survive almost any amount of persecution. Whereas these new ones would be snuffed out by the smallest tax, methinks.

The coercion of Technology is NOT the Rule of Reason. (That's just its protective coloration when attacked.)

Bad art is made by beliefs about art; good art occurs

in a state of incredulity.

The style of parenting that seeks to perpetuate its own lifestyle (materially) is simply self-betrayal: a kind of significance-suicide (if it has to be done over, the first time didn't count). What should be perpetuated is dynamic freedom & custodianship.

Even cultures require an Art of Dying. --So do our previous selves.

Chalk-drawing on the sidewalk is what we are. One good rain & we're gone.

Music is only sweet against silence. Without it, it's only another kind of noise. Space, too, is only perceptible in relative silence. Thus is named "the desert" --by what we discover there, by leaving (some of) our noise behind. But silence is not a product to be exploited or carried home. Perhaps one can only obtain a loosening of the noise-compulsion, if that.

Philosophy is the building of a road. Out here, you wander, you are grateful for one when you come to it, but you can have no illusions about roads belonging in this place or emanating from it somehow. Exile, tsimtsum. For, of course, we came from a forest or savannah or anyway a place with trees, shade, & water. (=Talk) There is something uniquely terrible about a dense throng of cacti. The Old Ones.

A poem is a butterfly. A butterfly, that can live for a thousand years.

Suffering is a koan i must answer with my life (joy), but i keep wanting intellectual solutions. Nixon

financed his first political campaign with poker money he won in the war.

In a limited universe of signifiers, things say themselves, & truth is self-evident. In an unlimited, difficulties arise at every stage...questions of point of view & veracity; ambiguity & the right to opine. Thus it seems revolutionary to open up a universe of signifiers, however slightly. But i rather believe the conditions for revolution precede its articulation. The trouble is, writers of history identify the whole process with the final conflagration. Thus writers appear to foretell catastrophic events, over & over. But they don't!

Very low humidity makes you aware of being a bag of water--a leaky bag. Rain here must be like the speech of a god. Sleep, in such a place, like smuggled ice. You get out of your vehicle, immediately you recognize there is "nothing to do". --Could one persist in that realization, it would lead to enlightenment. But that would be like prolonging astonishment beyond the instant of realization. A secure beginning might be: reluctance to describe.

I found a dead vulture, crucified on a cactus--it must have died a terrible death--i wrench a tail feather loose for my hat; & wear it the rest of the trip though it gets raggeder & raggeder in the cramped confines of the bus.

Wind + Sun explain everything here. Boulders spraypainted with names & years. I guess humans have been doing something like this ever since they first ventured into a desert. The immensity seems to demand some defiant response. Ego vs non-ego in the

starkest opposition. (Interplanetary exploration will be no different!) The alternative--is to identify with it all. (And the alternative to that?)

The desire for meaning creates the Void. People ask the meaning of life, the meaning of the world. They don't ask the meaning of a pile of rocks.

Consumerism & science: a popular religion & a priestly one. Technology is where they intersect, & increasingly that which justifies them both; art exists only on the sufferance of its consumerist uses.

The Insomnia of Reason is what produces Monsters.

Rewriting a poem is like patching a meteorite with concrete. (Sometimes, however, years or months later, another chunk from the same swarm falls into its ordained place!)

To denounce Egotism with the ego is a little like the War to End All Wars which is always being fought-- & for other reasons.

Modern warfare is so destructive it ought to be called something else. In the long-range cultural context [1991], rather, it signifies that the United States has reached a point in its decline where neither its productivity nor the prestige of its ideals can anymore convince the world of its preeminence. Only sheer tonnage of bombs is left. So we can expect to see lots of "little wars", as the real leaders of the new order emerge as precisely those nations who refuse to squander their resources on senseless militarization. And pyrrhic indeed shall those victories be. The Superbowl can be won; wars, like a forest fire, just

end. The important thing for you & me is not to feel powerless. What has ended, what has been taken away, here, are a few illusions about where things were headed--& that's good. As for the rest: terrible though it is to live through, even vicariously, i think that the hollowness of its justifications are far more obvious to the Allies today (though its leaders are obliged not to snigger); & its whole feel is so anachronistic, that it must not be many generations to come before the world's population will know this only as one of the many luxuries the Twentieth Century boasted, & which they can no longer afford.

Is despair like a faith in the impossibility of all efforts?

Everyone does Madonnas, never any Crucifixions.

Maybe that's the part of language (or at least, textbooks as presently written) i care least for: naming all the furniture. When a picture is a much better description. Suppose there were a language only for describing the invisible?

The absence of a common intellectual framework is to the mind's cathedrals as the absence of mason guilds is to real cathedrals that want to be built. All that can happen today is the Watts Towers.

I ought to just regard Art as a game i'm allowed to play by myself but not with others. (My imaginary playmates: the dead.) To be accepted, to be noticed, to be cherished--this our birthright has been stolen; & we are forced to fight amongst ourselves for scraps.

Good novelists can describe personality types so exactly i can recognize them. Does this prove

typology is real, or unnecessary?

Ego is a theory of the introvert in isolation, the extravert in conflict.

Possession by the Shadow: the desire to punish; the Avenger. Identification with the Shadow: the Anti-Hero; the Condemned One. Both are wrong. You must affirm the midpoint of balance.

My religious roots are not so much in Christianity as in Rock. Only the corruption of the latter fills me with any sense of betrayal.

A poem is a bug like a cricket.

This maze made of confusion, a thousand casual lapses. Damnation--of the flaccid grip.

How do you know you're in a Mystery: it codifies your experiences.

Contraries: truth & Mystery. Their opposites: lies & banality.

Banality: a cancer with its own health & its own antibodies.

What techniques are to problems, initiations are to Mysteries.

Ego as a lawnmower engine each of us carries on our backs from birth. The noise, the stinks which obscure our selfhood. And some have engines so large, whole nations are required to hold them up. And we think we'd die without them.

Surely the greatest hindrance to human freedom is the fact that not everyone wants it, needs it, or knows what it is when they have it. But if i contemplate this too long, i become speechless.

I'll side with any libel at 2 p.m.

Poets can still feel like they're taking part in a grand collective enterprise: the denial of our extremity.

Fairness is a duty enjoined by the existence of typological differentiation. But objectivity is a despicable pretence.

Eclecticism itself has a significance (cultural dispossession, Late-Empire-style) which no act of appropriation can transcend. That is, being uncultured, we approach past (& exotic present) cultures in an inescapably superficial way--as costume. And the more we realize this, the more desperately we grasp at the attainments of others.

Imagine a reader who prefers "shannonized" prose to that composed directly by humans, which seems in comparison too banal & too manipulative: well, that's kind of how i feel about my preference for instrumentals & songs in languages i don't know.

For him the avantgarde myth of origins was like the Wiccan one--it symbolically represents a basic orientation that is correct, without being literally true. Interestingly, all the other poetry factions share the same myth (only the names are changed), which is Romanticism's --a triumphant movement if there ever was one-- that can only conceive of itself in terms of the underdog. The rare few poets i know who have

pursued careerist goals, via the university system or else the slam network, have not really had to compromise their integrity, as in the myth. What actually happened, it seems to me, is they chose their totems already, & either system was able to accommodate them: these were personal, not ideological networks. Likewise, publishing. But what confuses people is when you do not subscribe to literary totemism per se--you will only be perceived in terms of your fit to the existing paradigms. Perhaps it is just as well to proclaim oneself under the totem of the trickster.

The poem in the air, the poem on the page: motile & sessile forms of life.

There is a very interesting dialectic possible between the poetry of "identity"/"authenticity" & poetries of "mask" & "hoax". If one wishes to give a name to this dialectic, i suggest that "Baconian Shakespeare" sums up its challenges & rewards.

So the newly acquired untranslatable subjectivity ("angst") submerges in a resurgence of older & better stabilized levels of consciousness...a global regression. All aside from the pre-eminent fact of economic disparity, of course: but it's still kind of a pity that the knowledge cannot be shared, that we are all equally victims of modernity.

The mass media...have become inaccessible to the usual symbol-shapers (artists, mystics, visionaries, cranks), so that the natural process that would adjust a population to its dreams has been radically aborted. It seems like the only solution is for individuals to withdraw from the media-world on their own

separate initiative & try to recover tribal, pre-urban group identities with more or less homemade ideologies & worldviews. Which is happening now-- often violently--but unrecognized as such because they still use the old words for their new, haphazard syncretisms. Strictly speaking, there is no more traditional culture. Anywhere. In the world.

You can't fight images with images you have to use reality. Or images of greater reality?

I believe community has gradually disappeared or become supplanted by more primitive organization because the growth of subjectivity has outstripped the capacity of all current symbol systems to communicate it.

I find out when i've been living with insufficient consciousness the same way i find out i've been reading without enough light--by the headache it gives me.

Those who have no will are only dependable in their compulsions.

Intuition is experienced without sensations. It results in spontaneous knowledge. The Unconscious has meaning without being experienced. It results in spontaneous creation. --Most of our psychological systems use the same vague terms for both. Because to the ego they are equally invisible.

Until we quit calling our mental static Freedom we will never have any use for silence.

The myth of Babel is only lately true.

Nobody leads; but among those who join, some are facing forward, some backward, and some are whirling around.

Art is the shallowest cause and the deepest symptom.

Imagine performed music to be forbidden --& a hundred years passes--& only those who can read sheet music to themselves, imagining the notes in their head, have music.

Self knowledge looks like destruction when the knowledge is of a self-destructive self, but that knowledge really only destroys those incompatible illusions we mistook for part of us, and which were crippling us. The most convincing, ubiquitous illusion is power. As "knowledge" is an incomplete, context-less understanding, so power is action without considering consequences; the adage "Knowledge is power" is subsumed by "Understanding is powerless doing" (wei-wu)...

Idea: that consciousness arises in those who are ON THE EDGE--of cultures, races, classes, sexes, conditions, sanity, history, places, etc--they have familiarity with two different modes of being which prevents them from falling into either conformity. Consciousness is nature healing a split in humans.

The role of the artist has become untenable, just when the myth of the artist has reached its furthest inflation. It is time to say: Human is enough.

All day long we wear the face that monkeys reserve for a lion about to eat them.

When everything's a symptom there's no way to change. When everything's a cause there's no basis to decide. We must straddle this dichotomy in order to be able to act. Monism is achieved at the end of doing, and lasts for one breath only. Then we start again.

The old men in front of the museum, trolling the fallen leaves with metal detectors. I don't want to be famous, i just want not to have wasted my time.

Why 2 brains? --Why 2 hands?

In broken times, to do one thing well is hard enough, and seems sufficient. Though there are dreams of unification they will also be broken; the system will be incomplete. But people who are also broken cannot perceive this.

Mind is the outermost layer of skin, the most sensitive & easily marked; it is only because we have no wider senses that we cannot determine its extent or limits.

An integrated person is a working democracy.

TV: "We don't know what the part, corresponding to the left hemisphere's speech centers, does on the right."

me: "the silence." --How long till we learn the use of silence?

You can live without meaning, without seeking meaning; and no metaphysical retribution ensues. Our alienation isn't teleological. It's simple as wearing shoes. When i came back to Dallas i was able to smell

the pollution. Now i don't. Absence of meaning is like that. You never find it by trying to reason it out because meaning transcends rationality. How else can i say this? And yet the meaning i have found from leaving is not the meaning i must make here. What i can keep is the knowledge that meaning exists. I won't find a recipe for it. But i might acquire a nose for it.

--By meaning, i don't mean faith. Faith is kind of like the knowledge that meaning is possible, the knowledge that makes meaning possible, but it's a wholly visceral knowledge; swimming which is so natural yet not a part of our genetic heritage--we develop our doubt and faith in tandem (always & everyone!)--while meaning is what holds the entire network of relationships together. Harmony.

Writing for publication is the slot machines without Vegas.

Shallow noise is noise. Deep noise is sense.

Physical habits are like canyons & gullies--traces of innumerable mental habits, weather we keep no other records of. Rain, we say; it falls. No one gathers it up.

Order & Control are as different as a diamond & a diamond mine.

In the kingdom of the blind, the one-eyed man pokes his eye out.

Swim exactly 12 inches under water.

A life is not a long time to be asleep. An hour is a long time to be awake.

For every signalless lane change, a baby will be born deformed.

There is no soft word for a soft death, that does not sound like love.

An adult is someone who flunked adolescence.

I think i have a privileged seat at this melodrama just because i found a program & opera glasses when i sat down.

When you see a UFO, you want to tell the world-- partly to prove it wasn't a hallucination. I'm that way about my insights sometimes.

Reverence won't get you there, but you won't get there without it.

Nothing is as beautiful as a flock of birds at dusk. I look at it, then turn away, having learned only the futility of all my art. I should look longer next time, & learn more.

A painting is much more like a stray kitten that you pick up & take home, than a child you give birth to. As people come to resemble their pets, artists develop a style. Not developing a style means you are the stray cat that goes from home to home. We revere & distrust Picasso as if he were Genghis Khan, king of the nomadic hordes. --Our own nomads being lost.

When i have watched fire as many hours as i have watched television, my mind will be free.

We shouldn't kill trees unless we dance on their graves.

The wings of poetry, the claws of prose.

On the treadmill you feel surrounded by interstellar space.

And having explained and thoroughly understood the source of all that is false in my life, i disown it-- thinking thereby to advance beyond. Instead, i should admit what caused it to find such ready soil in me.

Being alienated is our communion with dead matter.

For every science an equal & opposite science.

An artist without a community is a lightning rod without the storm.

A mask is a choice of faces--a face is an end to masks.

At different times in my life i come to restate the same truths, like an airplane circling the landing strip.

In times of language growth the imitation of speech enriches poetry (Elizabethans); in times of decay, it depletes it (today).

Squirrels feel superior to cats because squirrels have a sense of humor and cats don't. (Poets; philosophers.)

Maybe all our age really means is now we have enough people to manage a Renaissance and a Dark

Ages at the same time.

If i am a moralist in art it's because i find it monstrous to cherish stillborns as living children.

Hypocrisy defines Empire. Our new twist is to not know when we're lying.

Fear is the coriolis force we never notice and always correct for unconsciously in our trajectories. It is visible in its effects, most conspicuously in the magic rituals that proliferate and mean nothing. Without television's reassurance, there would be a panic.

Postmodern totalitarianism depends upon, among other Orwellianisms, "Freedom is Slavery", in a very precise way: we demand--

the 'freedom' not to have to think
(leave it to the experts & intellectuals)
& the 'freedom' not to have to feel
(bad feelings, but anesthetics don't discriminate)

--and shape our politics accordingly. Television democracy is like a fool's dream of anarchy --how to give as little responsibility as possible to most everyone. And thus real freedom seems to consist of maximizing your hassles. Who wants that?

America is a rotting corpse because Americans aspire to the condition of maggots.

The wholeness of the dynamic aspect is the hiddenness of the visible.

Poets used to be the custodians of language; now it's journalists whose style book scarcely extends past punctuation & capitalization. Not surprisingly, when

we begin to try to think, we mistake our linguistic chaos for philosophic chaos, whereas in truth we have barely one or two ideas and not any profusion except of equally clumsy ways to phrase them.

You got to study for years to be a doctor or a lawyer or an engineer, and have licenses & degrees and stuff, but for the most important jobs, there are absolutely no formal qualifications: nobody is too stupid to be entrusted with running a government or raising a baby.

If we are ever to prevail, it won't be because of our righteous feelings, or delicate sensibilities, or correct views, or even the taste for freedom. It can only be because we outthink those who are committed to destruction.

--Put that in an anthem.—

The neurotic symptoms of physicalized conflict, surround us in lieu of an intelligible world.

I think about jail the way a medieval Christian must have thought about hell, & as often.

In a way, the 19c. bloating of the book market was a temporary anomaly: television's audience arrived a few generations before television did.

The dogma that the Real is the True denies the experience of Transcendence, in which the self becomes more True but less Real. --But the dogma that the Real is never the True, denies the experience of being in Love, when they coincide.

Attitudinizing: expressing opinions in order to reinforce within oneself a certain outlook, instead of communicating an idea to others or discovering an insight previously unknown. You have to realize that every point of view, however reasonable and complete it seems to be, is subject to change from new information or deeper understanding; that this continual transformation is desirable and to resist it for no other reason than fatigue is Accidie (spiritual inertia) not self protection; that it is no use to express opinions to others at all, because they already have those: what they need is knowledge & techniques.

The centrifugal force that pulls people apart, as long as it remains ascendant, makes every awkward & discordant connection necessary. The trick is not to overestimate what immediate good will come of it.

People are starting to ignore driving etiquette as they do precise punctuation. On one level, it's the haste of desperation; on another, the false sovereignty of an individualism for which anything not coerced can be instantly jettisoned.

To be lonely is to experience solitude as a victim.

I think it'd be wise to assume from now on that none of my ideas is truly new or unique but that my perceptions may very well be--though i tend to believe the converse. An insight is first a perception: and by conceptualizing it it passes through a prism of language in which some qualities are bound to be lost, and conventional ones added. A due respect for ideas will acknowledge the tragedy of their birth. A due respect for the moment will seek not spontaneity but openness to grace.

Barbarians oversimplify into banality, decadents overelaborate into obfuscation. High culture means clarity in complexity.

Let me tell you, we're a lot closer to being the New Byzantines than New Romans.

We think there are styles, but there are only forms of encounter.

You ask Otherness "Where?" & it seems to say, "Elsewhere". Don't ask that question. You spit in the wind.

My passion for symmetry blinds me to forms of understanding that are highly asymmetrical--& anisotropic--like Time.

I said it would have been very easy for me to find a logically satisfying system of belief--except for my experiences (i dare not call them mystic) of the numinous, that utterly transcend my ability to account for them & make them fit into such systems as my mind might hold. Feelings that toss you & leave you for dead, as a grizzly would.

Pretending is one of the best, as having to pretend is one of the worst things. The liberty of art.

There are subtle virtues in being lame, but the muse is swiftness.

There's no harm in it after all, as long as i don't identify myself as an artist. For in order for that to be true, i would have to discredit all the other artists in

the world (except for the few that are like me). This Draconian measure, i sometimes wonder if all my theories of art are a kind of blueprint for.

The urge to rewrite--a mental tic. All the effort should precede the act: readiness, emptying, centering oneself in the crucial situation. Mumbling, humming, staring, pacing, reading or reciting key lines...light as it falls across the page. These should be the interest of criticism: shedding one's skin, its etiquette & physics. Not battling ideologies, genealogies, quibbles.

Make no mistake--the poets are every bit as dispossessed as the people, of the power of the word.

When i've hurt my index finger & have to tie shoelaces, it's incredibly clumsy until i make the conscious effort to realign my attention--to "deputize" the second finger with the directedness of the first--then it goes easily. (An allegory of much else.) [N.B. learning to snorkel-breathe for the aqualung of scuba classes was like that too.]

None of this would've happened except for my mediumistic fondness for self-surrender. It even disfigures much of my art--when i come to a hairpin turn in the course, there's often nobody driving. Deep down, i still regard Sanity as a shameful expedient; without distinguishing between etiquette & reason. If my social context were less frustratingly arbitrary, & my efforts bore fruit proportional to the energy i put into them, then i would not turn from this daylight world with the repugnance of a vampire. Surely love is more about reciprocity than it is about sleepwalking. Possessed & Possessing (sigh): when the ego has failed to demarcate its proper boundaries.

They are not limned in any light, but pain's. So this is not a divagation after all. A circle. (1987)

It's only the ones who dare to live the future now, who make the future. The rest it just happens to.

Culture as war feeds my sense of self importance.
Culture as therapy feeds my despair of the world. No:
culture as culture, war as war, therapy as therapy,
love as love.

Some people you have to give directions in landmarks, others (like me) in street signs; maybe literature is like that--it needs a story & also a meaning, one not reducible to the other, & both as clear & unique as possible. (Muddiness for enhancement only. Those who want all-muddy works are perceiving Literature itself as a single work with too much clarity (but how? their ignorance maybe) & wish to complete the big picture.) Character is part of story, images are part of meaning; where characters create images, the best literature is born; and what else is History but that part of events graspable in terms of characters creating images?

The taste for freedom as a form of sensuality. --How intuitives can be indulgent in a revelry of movement & change, to the exclusion of true growth. (My thousand interests--)

My ivory tower sank in quicksand.

To dwell among weapons, then: only possible for the unthinking, or the lucid suicidal, who find comfort in their potential, as in carrying house keys, while you move from room to room in a large locked mansion.

A real myth solves an unanswerable problem with a string of images, that together create a story which implies its answerability. A world mythologized is not a world with infinite anxieties, though its meaningfulness give no satisfaction to the inquiring intellect. Science is an attempt to create a myth that is also an explanation. To the extent that it succeeds as one, it inevitably fails as the other. But our popular arts are almost totally devoid of myths; they are deliberate lies made to foster certain sensations or else, more or less candid self-exposure. The real myths of our time (not: its cant or its prevalent misunderstandings) are more like pre-myths, the ritualized feelings of certain habits & recurrent practices, which tend to sustain a set of familiar images, but which never (or seldom ever) attain the clarity of a single complex mythic-core, on account of the fact that no artist has yet bothered to contemplate that context, without bringing in everything else he knows & feels & especially, his desire to be stylish.

Pity the poet who isn't ahead of the science of her time; pity the scientist who is.

The desire for an eclectic style & the desire for a homogeneous style: both nilpertain the necessity of textural relief which form (perceived as insight) imposes. These idols come from a blindness in the mind's eye. It's a glaring indictment that modern art history seems to be about them.

After complaining about the way things are run, Americans invariably add "but it's still the freest country in the world" --to which i want to respond: "Two dozen others have lower infant mortality rates".

Prejudice against "abstractions" is usually against words of Latin origin vs. Anglo-Saxon--but their words were as real to them as ours to us.

To go to work regardless if you're sick--to write when uninspired. What can be the justification? If you get fired otherwise.

After a good poem i am a little more myself & a little less the pretender, by that exact degree of extra effort i have had to make to keep from lying in the presence of my fearfulness (not: my fears. they are nothing so discrete!).

The rites of a trade remain, through all high culture & decadence, inviolate. Until the actual technical secrets get lost. Then cultlike nontrades emerge: associations without any real knowledge, & invent a secrecy & hierarchy to justify their existence.

So many poets today hate words! They only love "being a Poet".

How can i sing the fate of an empire when my own life has no direction?

The time for critiques is past; now it's find a new form of life, or perish. THIS IS NOT AN APHORISM IT'S A FIRE IN YOUR SHOE.]

Books to recreate the magic of first books...Finnegans Wake.

Maybe Art doesn't want to be saved; maybe all it wants is an easy death & we are torturing it with

heroic measures of prolongation--unwilling to believe in actual rebirth.

The Novel rolled through poetry like a Panzer division & left every poem cluttered with irrelevant anecdotes, meaningless description, arbitrary allusion & obscure personal trivia. While novels succeeded in becoming flat, standardized, & fearsomely contemporary.

We mass-produce diseased souls; we heal them one by one. If at all.

Yesterday i ran out of gas; today my electric car window broke. Though "luck" is only our word for unknown causality, it is certain that things will continue to break, wear out, & go awry. I resolve for the new year, not to count any of this as evidence, in the ongoing still mutable case.

The hour of dawn is a place i inhabit, in my organometallic way. I know all its lights. It is a dangerous place, but a place with rules. Its walls are made of pain, but its roof is made of music. The hour of dawn borrows me, for as long as it needs, to see.

This doesn't put me any closer to the mystery, though. What is the mystery--that i so seldom am moved to remember? That any thing abides? That the grammar can shape these unanswerable questions?

Meaning uses itself up. It has to be replenished. From where? The silence that we clear within ourselves. Without it, we cast off old & seek new lovers, new languages, new cities--when nothing really died but the growth of our understanding. For every meaning

is infinite.

I imagine myself able to accept any outcome. What a cruel illusion!

Typologies of writing styles remind me of typologies of "race": simply the act of imagining such groupings as distinct, bounded entities creates nonsense. We now know, of course (or ought to), that "race" does not exist; there are only traits, some of which are genetically linked, but many of which are not. It's the fact of static traditional societies that tended to confuse the issue: because people who lived in a place resembled each other more than people living far away, all sorts of connections were assumed between accidentals. So, style. Because writers tend to write in only one, or a narrow range of styles, this produces an effect exactly analogous to the traditional social grouping; whereas if writers wrote in all sorts of styles & combinations of stylistic features, this would be the equivalent of the modern multicultural society. --Now, the politics of getting published, that's something else: & if you observe attentively, it is often the case that a particular trait may be accepted in a writer who is already a member of the "in-group", while being rejected when an outsider uses it. Canons are thus not about style so much as they reflect the literary politics of the people who compile them. And the period immediately preceding ours has produced, out of a putative struggle to rectify the canon, not so much a new canon as a new set of canons--which has nonetheless failed to alter the catholicity of any of the agonists. --I think also of food purists: people who will eat fish but not beef, or orange foods but not green foods. Well, there may be sense to some of these

preferences, but we will not discover their sense by treating them as universal laws.

Still feeling alienated toward artmaking. I realized i preferred the purity of discarded objects to anything that can be made with them. Found myself wanting only to make practical objects, things i needed or needed to make (this does include magical implements & religious icons)--especially despising highly-crafted but meaningless artifacts that are nothing but the end result of a career process. And i wondered how i ever could have had an "aesthetics".

Left over, obsolete opinions: like old shoes you realize one day you don't wear anymore, though you can't remember wearing them for the last time.

We are phosphenes in the eyes of Pain.

My heart dumps its whole store of love everytime. It doesn't know deserving or undeserving. All it knows is the imperative need to bestow.

The trouble with the idea of reincarnation, is that being an animal is not the punishment. Being human is.

Assuming that because there is power, there must be a center of power ("God"), is just as absurd as assuming that the universe has a physical center that it expands from.

The doctrine of the soul: an ethical prescription. For, once you divide it into ego & unconscious, the former belongs to everyone [society] & the latter, to no one [or nature]. Its uniqueness resides in the sum of

accidents of place. Which can only be grasped partially, at moments, in glimpses. Perhaps these alone are what should be preserved.

Ghost: the one who uses my terminal [at work] when i'm not there. --The "unconscious". It has its own work to do.

Hope would kill you yourself before it consented to die. Hope is ruthless.

A question was put to all the poets at Chumley's that night: what would you be reincarnated as, & why? Finally, i decided, a siliqua, one of those tadpole-shaped seed pods that drop twirling down like a helicopter. "Because first you get to fly. And then you become a tree."

To give everything away before i die: sometimes that is my muse, sometimes my anti-muse. For one can be tempted by a greater generosity--to give it to the Void.

Loneliness corrupts; absolute loneliness corrupts absolutely.

Even the view that we have no history & our actions have no consequences--has a history, & consequences.

And i feel stupid for the last residual twinges of wishing i could make a poem of it. For there are some things greater than poems. There are some things too great to be written as art.

But there are movements of the mind like a headache without pain, nagging as a toothache: these are

deformations of ego from within, slowly being forced as orthodontic braces guide the teeth, by elements not yet admitted to consciousness, that cast their grinding, the voice of a continent in flight, apparently to the stars, white noise--becoming sense. Thoughts that don't yet carry the burden of a thousand repetitions, so light you must hold your breath beside them.

Empirical art history, which makes out the purposes of art to be so divergent, is like a physics that concludes gravity used to be weaker than it is now, because of the Dinosaurs. What changes is the set & setting, the means, and the prejudices to be overcome.

I think instead of blindness deafness is a better metaphor for the havoc wrought by egotism. Because deafness isolates whereas blindness makes dependent; deafness leaves you apparently still in the world, still able to get around and do things, it's not seen as such a disability...and the egotist does perceive well the world of matter, of things, though ignorant, as though deaf, to the subtle dynamic manifestations; finally, what the egotist is most deprived of, is world-silence, self-silence, union of these. His art if he has it is a form of shouting. No music of the spheres, he is the first to scoff; and never sings.

Personal and Collective Unconscious. Isn't what distinguishes these, a qualitative difference, oil/water, such that the ego can penetrate the first, but stops cold at the second? For the latter is the realm of form-genesis, and the ego is only another form-structure; in the personal unconscious all is change and transformation (ceaselessly: the sea) but

never new, not the worldshaking novelty which the collective can unleash (and the myths say as much), thrusting time into plateaux of complexity, and giving us the illusion of continual evolution. And going down, it's as if your bathyscape turns into a toy in the Marianas Trench, you return and find all the other selves like dolls, like stupid counterfeits of a real identity--but this is the essence of identity in fact--what more could it be? The ego postulates gods: ego which is real...which can make things new... And it's all a mistake. The interface is shiny like a mirror, so that you see (inevitably) shallows in the deep. Fish there, and submarines. What's really down there isn't a "what", hasn't eyes unless it be all Eye (the myths say so). Mysticism is the science of seeing through mirrors, the language of mirrorback-black.

The conscious and unconscious as one visible reality: like a palindrome you can't read backwards and forwards at once.

Of time as a fractal: neither continuous nor discontinuous, except as an artifact of scale/sampling-limitation. For if time had quanta, for beings of some degree there would be no change; if time were totally smooth there would be no permanence. Yet, since time is not regularly irregular, within the range of sampling available sometimes to some humans, there is a possible experience of time which seems to move very slow or very fast: these are reaching toward the limits of the species, not the total form of universal time.

Who doesn't prefer poverty is no true anarchist. Like so many others i'm, rather, a chaotic person.

Story is a landscape of feeling. Nothing we have but is story or story's end.

Creating art without human contacts (relationships are its substance, as emotions are its impetus) is like getting pregnant on a starvation diet.

I read about the lives of artists; i say, "my god, it wasn't worth it!" Well, the rest had it just as bad, and what did they leave?

Inspiration gives me the method all at once, and i can work it out at leisure...with linear thought.

Have i lost my taste for ecstasy, like a painter who gives up Cadmium Yellow--because of the cost?

All an ego can hope for is to decently evaporate.

Insofar as people polarize as extraverts and introverts, they divide their realm into two according to what seems most real to each of them. And speech preserves the moment of that fission, that confusion. (It couldn't get further until introverts began dropping out.)

"After Babel, no Art" is a truism we'll have to outlive, not outwit.

Strange how not knowing the future can pass for freedom.

Tongue-tied, ashamed of my eloquence.

My solitude fits in my pocket and goes everywhere.

All things we love we love because we can perceive them as we would human personalities; and the less one knows other people, the more real (person-like) these analogues seem.

The disappearance of our most delicate and important perception is like the stealing of the stars by city lights: imperceptibly gradual and so total in its consummation that the question of its existence can hardly be raised among us.

Painters want to be loved like dead Van Gogh, but to live like jolly Rubens.

Some computer systems are like this: past a certain point of fullness, it drops the oldest memories to make room for new. Perhaps humans can only learn three things, and if there's more it just becomes a different three you know. Personality, with its dark corners and shifting tumblers, its rhythms and its anomalies, may be a way to get around that limitation.

Personality as a nation-artifact.

Personality as a nation-toxin.

Nation as a personality-construct.

Nation as a personality disorder.

Sheepishly i would have to admit that i get more thoughts only after i have gotten up and gone into the next room to take a piss, than in an hour of sitting here with the journal in front of me. If i were honest about creating, i would want to chop wood or lift boxes ten hours a day. Then i would sing unfettered by wanting to sing.

I am properly appalled by Kerouac's claim of an art-phase in which he destroyed everything; but if he hadn't bragged about it, i might even envy that freedom.

Ego is after all a simple deception, as well as a complex process of transmutation.

Art may only be a moment in the awakening of our race, yet that nascent consciousness is and will be made up of such moments, light-quanta, each a bridge to tomorrow and a promise for the past. One day materialism will mean that all things are artist's material; spirituality, that all things are perfected form already: and no paradox. This word Art is a name for the paradox. There are others.

I suppose it shouldn't come as a surprise that the most powerful force in American politics today is something we don't even have a word for. So i will just invent one: thristnidinghent--the ability to ignore the needs of others. This goes all the way from the clerk who studiously ignores you at the checkout counter, to people who will step over a body on the sidewalk without breaking stride (not to mention higher crimes of our sub-benevolent masters). Thus we can cease with historically-inaccurate sobriquets of "Nazi" & "fascist" & simply state: "This debate is over whether thristnidinghent is a good thing or a bad thing." And: "These perthristnidinghensive policies must be changed."

The seas rose; dinosaur grease gave out. For a while wars continued, smoulderingly, till it became plain they only interfered with the present necessity, which

was survival; & the world settled into a long, grim decline. There was much cursing of the time before, that had seemed such a golden age, then: the Great Wasting.

Am i afraid to paint a "beautiful" painting, tell an "engrossing" story? Or to do so for the wrong reason (and what reason would i claim, that couldn't be bent into a wrong one, later?) and somehow cancel out my high, my only-meaningful ideal? An objective observer might well wonder in what possible danger i am, of all impossible artists the most willfully impossible, of being smoothly assimilated into the machinery of any art-process. Worry, rather, lest i succumb to an eccentric's dogged-dogma & bitter intransigence to change.

It must be that all culture is made by exiles, from somewhere else that lacked it, that didn't want it.

I don't want to read your Long Poem.

Art is a refutation and an antidote to simple materialism. However, consumerism can effortlessly co-opt it, unless the artist takes care to control the post-production life of his work. Her greatest enemy then is not rejection but uncritical admiration; a willingness to remain, in ignorance of the person who made it, at the superficial level of textures. This would be like illiterates buying books for their covers, --except of course people do that also, don't they?-- a denial that art has meaning beyond its sensual qualities. (And Moby Dick can be read as a fish story -- i don't mean just paintings.)

An artist of mass produced objects (like xoxes or texts) can consciously choose to have a limited

audience. This is in fact the usual route (it fits right in with society's pluralistic atomism). Or you could make them by hand and give them only to your friends. (The primitive/amateur/child/mad artist's way.) Or you could include your autobiography and a detailed commentary (art school does this with students before they visit a museum--if ever). Or you could make art with several levels of meaning....the top one, almost a cliché... (Shakespeare)

Travelling is my only drunkenness.

How to be an elitist without snobbery: whatever your specialty, call it a birth defect.

Dilemma of the modern artist--invent a new language to tell the truth and no one can understand it. The next dilemma--everyone speaks a different language and starts to collect into sub-sub-subcultures. And ours--people have forgotten what language is for.

This is the late twentieth century so i believe in magic and i believe in chemicals and most of my insights will fall between the two because both half-truth languages are too small for them and my metaphors walk on air or they don't go anywhere and what else is new?

Very likely the best minds of my generation are in prison. That would account for a lot of things.

A populace that never goes outside. The channels they tune into, variously describe it as sunny, gray, threatening, or blizzardous. This occasions numerous arguments among the few who are weather aficionados. I walk in & out of these arguments like a

pigeon at a crosswalk. The roof cracks; soon we will know who is lying.

The peace after making art--a diamond that's clear; and the peace after working hard (physically)--that's a diamond that's opaque. I wouldn't have one less than the other. But it's not these i love. They are what lets me love.

If a reckoning could be made, i might find that altogether i have one hour of inspiration in a year. The rest? An ordinary life--with the vanity of having been otherwise.

All our small but near worries, looming large, block any possible concern for the rest of the world's woe. Why not, you say. --Having heard it before, so many times. And one who cares, is always having to meet the same opponent, not in argument so much as inertial resistance. In these words, instead of new ones, repeated, you may measure the grip of the status quo, and its lack of freedom, of creativity, of life's renewal,--that doesn't even bother to change its lies across a span of generations, and doesn't need to. For we are not rationalists, susceptible to the finality of a logical refutation. We are clay in the system's hands, who seldom get a chance to pass through fire, by its solicitude; we are eager to confide our weakness, fearing spiritual ambition as we fear cancer, and all too clever to rationalize and cover up, reflexively, --so that your friends and family would be blind to your addiction, your creeping disease or creeping madness, unless you called attention to it --and for what? For a ghost called Happiness. Often only a name for the pain that is old and grown familiar, never seen anymore, as it might have been in

the beginning a terror, now terrible to do without.

Those whom i really ought to be addressing with my art of political angst, all i know of them is their dirty license plates at eye level as they roar past me: caught in the grip of the need to pass an old car, no matter how fast it is going.

What bothered me most about jail is how quickly i got used to it--i couldn't sustain my outrage. For i've been trained to this place, engraved with the rules upon my early years--and in fact it's freedom i can never get used to. I thought i had a thirst for freedom, but it was only the desperate longing to escape. I have to acquire a taste for freedom; at first i don't even like it.

And i want to be a liberator.

Heaven & Hell are for artists only. But they have trouble believing in Purgatory.

Sexuality is the basis of every certainty. And doubting is a kind of chasteness.

I felt a strange sensation, fever without heat, lightness without movement; i shook with a lost, unnameable emotion strong like a foreign chemical... And yet, it was long my own. I saw it then as fear. As though seen through a telescope reversed, small and far away: the fear of what? Only dying. I went on with my business. This is something else to know, for sure. Had i never known i lived?

Nonviolence only has meaning against force that's not routine. --Then what can we use against routine force? How would you stop a tank? At its head. With routine force humans become appendages, mere

tools. But there is always one who isn't--isn't there?
Can all this violence be part of a natural process??

Stores all stripped down to the bare basics: ten
executives & one checker.

I see how it will go. We are already lining up for the
privilege of dealing with a checkout robot.

I understand too perfectly the joy of being a vandal, &
that makes me already a compromised sort of
architect.

Midway between a virgin birth and an abortion.

Without discourse, i can't tell if i'm telling the truth or
not. (Sic semper tyrannis)

I think art should be like: sparks from welding
(maybe the real action too bright to look at directly),
thrown out, superabundantly, with no thought for
their home. But what i feel about my own works is
more like: messages from another star, that i don't
even understand (is that why they're precious to me?)
--and my modesty, that i'm never satisfied, is only
because they're so nearly perfect.

Without the touch of another, you walk on air.

At times when i have been sick, stoned, or shaken, i
thought i came close to understanding the
trustlessness of a life like A----'s. But that doesn't give
me any more communion with it. I learn a terrible
loneliness--and forget, because even myself is not one,
when i return to myself. Compared with that, my
regular solitude is rich and teeming with shades. Did

i curse haunting? when i was sick perhaps. But between life and morbidity there is a chasm, which all talk of death and dying by the lively but mocks. And i think it is the constant listening for this mockery, that makes a person violent. Otherwise they could be content with selfpity.

As if rising out of valley mists, i find my past ever more accessible with each new year; i recognize in my dreams now the places of my childhood, and begin to understand how a soul can be composed of a few vivid locations, from their infinite resonances, that the changed sojourner is always trying to discover or flee in the scenery of the nonce. But this only makes interpreting my art easier, not the making of it. The old forms have acquired such polyvalent power, such surpassing complexity of perspectives and sudden vistas, like mountains broken and rebroken by recent uplifts and ancient explosions, that when i manage to capture a single aspect i see in it mainly the failure of a thousand others. Then i turn to real-time [performance art], as if another dimension and closer similitude could further the impossible quest. But after all, this is just what my ego claims to be seeking, and why i really create remains a deeper enigma, which perhaps is being solved even by these perplexities and halting byways. And my art could be the least part of it. The visible one.

Untrammelled, our attempting to escape 2-logic results in: lying, imposture, denial, fantasy, gameliness, addiction, theory, criticism, collecting, idealism, projection, lateral thinking, art.

So much anger. What waterwheels could this force turn?

Prose is poetry all the air has been let out of.

The thematic House of Poetry would be something like the Winchester Mystery House, a structure that disregards both need & probability. On the other hand, you can charge admission to it. But i believe that the House of Poetry is better off left as the Destroyed Temple--a symbol of our exile, dispersion, & eschatology. Therefore i would spend the Poetry bequest (now funded, at its past rate of expenditures, through the year 3541 AD) on shelter for the homeless, because some of them might oneday write a true poem.

People become poetry editors in order to enforce their snobbery. If people became poetry editors out of a love of poetry, they would welcome interesting poetry of every description. The concept of a uniform magazine is one step removed from a Final Solution to poets you don't like.

Rhythm fights the fear of chaos. But it is less a barrier than a patterned path through, like marching. There are times when it is necessary to march. But one cannot build a pleasure dome out of marchings.

The Book, the Page, the Act of Reading itself--these can be examined (not that we have to do away with them). And after we examine them, perhaps we will decide that we like them the way they are fine. But i think the result of such an examination will be the creation of new forms, rather than the abolition of the old. See what happened to painting after photography.

We play Russian roulette with blanks. The danger of this is that we cannot blow our brains out.

Branding is only the surface indicator of our deep folly. We seek to become poem-making machines, when it is obvious all our efforts should be made toward freeing ourselves of the desire to write.

The Author is a figment of the poem's imagination, as is proven by the existence of so many misconceptions about dead authors which are inspired by fanciful people reading their works. Where she builds, where she makes her nest, is in the Future.

The architect as paradigm artist-- because it's closest in form to a science-- this means stale notions framed with the utmost clarity, so you wonder why it happened at all-- and that feeling, repeated, becomes the expected response to any art.

To admit that you no longer love what you once loved is hard, because that means admitting part of you has died. It implies that eventually, there will be no one to love what you used to love, that you will finally vanish from the earth (not merely from your life); and that thought is not pleasant to a person who defines self by external criteria: like the Sun King who tried to forbid anyone mentioning the mortality of monarchs in his presence. In order to grow, you must accept your death, for you are not a thing but a nexus of processes, some of which metamorphosize into others, some going out of, some coming into existence. The more you understand this, as form-genesis or as real-time, the less impeded by inner blockings will be your growth. And that means discarding much, as well as acquiring much-- in order

to create a past for yourself, and a future, out of the vortex of the present where nothing can abide.

Death is a thought of adolescence, of the first dying-over...And the human race, which even now consists mainly of children and teenagers, has always been obsessed with that thought, in spite of words from the few whose minds continued past that point. But now our dreams have become our reality.

Why there are always more artists than anyone suspects. --The glow of the workroom dazzles; crowd posits a demiurge within. The only thing known about the gods is their name, that is, their aspect to mortals. So. The names of gods must be few, and their aspects simple, else it's no pantheon but an encyclopedia: and crowd forgets all! Some like it that way. But the ones that don't, don't either want to admit one new god to the pantheon. Because they already learned it one way. It's tidy and they're happy to keep the shelves dusted. For the shelf-dusters there are no demiurges or else so long gone they might as well hadn't been.

Well, artists are people and people come in more names and aspects than any encyclopedia could ever hold. If you love artists you should say: Every one is a new eye in the world! Another revelation! We are that much closer to the dawn! --But don't you start loving Art more than artists, 'cause then it's the fewer the better, you want to save Art from all the artists.

Yes, and i would love the bad artists most; the better ones don't need it. Those who can't or won't see straight, their crookedness is part of world-texture. When i have my attacks of purism, it's really my own betrayals i am bemoaning and seeking to castigate. But how could i save art from the artist who is myself?

I never sit down to write as if it were going to be destroyed at once, and yet this is so.

Only a fanatic would try to fight banality with profundity.

My Place in the Riot. An amateur in a simultaneous exhibition against a grandmaster. I don't know how i'm going to lose only that i will. Yet i continue to cherish, in the face of this annihilation, some wild intuition or hallucination that there's a chance to win, based on my very insignificance...that i'll be underestimated & survive by a trick...the religion of all mice, maybe. So what does it enable them to do? Keep from dying out completely, i suppose. And the art-impulse now, is it a time for hiding or for witnessing on streetcorners? Neither trick has worked so far.

Freedom is the "phlogiston" of our times. Eventually they'll have to coin a new set of phrases when they want to talk about what that really involves. And as for love, we are like the laity tossing around the technical terms of medieval theologians--who themselves are ignorant of what the mystics have seen.

I don't know why i bother to think about art or art's purposes when no one could recognize my works in my doctrines or my doctrines in my works without a field guide. They are twin emanations from this friction with my world, like flames and smoke. But i am determined to know what i'm doing even if that means knowing that most of the time i don't and can't know what i'm doing (The Sleepwalker School). The

pleasure i get in ordering is a trivial one and the resultant order doesn't last for long. What i discover goes back into the unconscious ferment, though. And that reflectivity must show in the changes my work has undergone, if not in any single object. Unlike most artists, i think about my art in order to upset my sense of security from them; the more uncomfortable it makes me, the better i think i have succeeded in digging deeper or flying higher; strangeness doesn't guarantee truth, but truth is always strange and found nowhere else. A person (who herself painted) once said after looking at CARNIVOROUS EQUATIONS 2, "You're sick." To which i responded, "I sincerely hope so."

I would distinguish less between artists & non-artists, than between those who have learned self-discipline, and those who only had the forms imposed on them. This distinction is clearest, however, when the self-discipline is one that society actually frowns upon. So freedom-loving people gravitate to art, even if they have no specific talent. It's a way of definition (and sometimes a lying one).

Artists are more mistaken about non-artists than the converse. Mainly because with them it's a religious conviction--in defiance of collective dogmas & rites. But isn't it odd how monotheists keep calling other monotheists, atheists??

Any society which does not have multiple norms, is a violent society. Perhaps the majority of all violence is thus unnoticed--or at least, blamed on something else. And then self-hatred is a natural response to self-violence--from the other side, so it's never conscious (consciously, perhaps, as despair--self-hatred which

renders any other hatred simply a matter of fitting the right projection).

Reasoning: using the mind's patterned chatter to weave a cover for what you don't want to admit--debating on an unspoken question. Premises can be deduced, perhaps, but maybe not even his closest family can track down the source of a philosopher's system--like an ulcer into the 4th dimension. And maybe it's something perfectly simple in his relation to the world--only it's so new it hasn't been named till now and all this is its first identification, which will later be abbreviated (so that people quote anything he said, just to bring up his name) by others when that private blight has become a plague (i am thinking of philosophers like Nietzsche whom following generations adopt as prophets for their special kind of angst)--or else it could be said simply, but for the philosopher it's too important to leave off speaking about it then, he goes on & on like a madman.

How is this different from art? Art also is compensation. But it's born much more of pleasure, philosophy from pain. Take away the element of play--of voluptuousness, and glamour, and pride in skill--and you might have something resembling that drab, closely woven canvas of philosophy: Art sans paint.

When i read philosophers, it's like a squirrel cracking acorns for their kernel. I don't consider the outside as anything but impediment, certainly not from the tree's point of view. And when i start using those words, it's with no more reverence than a hermit crab moving into an empty shell. (True, some hermit crabs have made theirs a public shrine; but i've grown to dislike the smell of such places, and seek out a shell that's long uninhabited.) Considering shellcraft, i might say that to make what is to the ego's

petty opinions, habits & preferences, what a cathedral is to a tin hut, it takes a much greater nakedness--or shame (truer and falser philosophizing?).

Tenderness is the treasure. As long as you still have tenderness, they have not won.

Someday i want to write an essay about all the artists who preceded their media.

Careers in Art are not at an end, but their meaning is.

Nothing is so base a spectacle as the mass ejaculation of programmed sentiments.

Idea: Ego as passport.

An artist who professes pure rationality is also a mystagogue. And of course, some people call themselves artists who are only superstitious. Occultism would suit them much better.

Your most shameful memories, your gravest fears must be spoken or else vitiate your art at the source.

Were there none who, on the thronged road to this or that savior, became disgusted with the common craving for salvation, saw their own weakness then as what it really was, and went home, enlightened without having reached the holy one?

As long as i confuse two situations: that of there no longer being useful roles (good work, in Schumacher's sense), and my own, which sometimes seems to me the ironic case of an obsolete vocation (from day to day its exact identity varies; i think i

might've made a pretty good a-lot-of-neat-things), i'll always confuse this age's real tragedy with my own selfpity.

Does the fact that there are so many more artists now, mean each of them has a smaller share of Art? Or is that only how art-history has to be written?

Perhaps freedom only has meaning applied to a group, for how little they coerce each other. If you use it individually, that creates all kinds of illusory possibilities which don't in fact exist: in a "totalitarian" state one can be completely "free" by becoming an outlaw-- even if they live but 5 minutes that way. But most won't, and that's where freedom finds its limit. Americans like to talk about freedom as if it's a matter of being able to choose among different name-brands (that being the kind of thing they can always show a skeptic). But when you must choose starvations or letting corporations rape your body with lethal chemicals (the choice very many city-dwellers face, who aren't rich or enlightened enough to try to hunt down good food), that's nothing to brag of. Our freedom of speech & job are also like that. Just because there's not (usually) police to shoot you down the moment you step out of line, doesn't mean you're exempt from slower, more subtle but no less certain reprisals. In a depression, the threat is more naked and the fear more open, that's all.

What's illegimate about music as religion is that it's a religion mainly of nonmusicians. But isn't that true of all religions, past a certain point?

The artist is the clothes-maker who's always naked.

To be quietly, rationally desperate: yes; whether or not i play at making plans. The real struggle, though, is managing a laugh.

To know something worth knowing--is to make oneself an Enemy of the State.

On Coffee: What is not thereby banalized? For me, only the interlocking patterns of thought; more precisely, the flow of my voice in an orderly sequence. On coffee, only talk is real. Skepticism. Mechanical activities: body-talk. Or, chatter. No other voice is listenable, you turn away in irritation, wanting not to be interrupted (you drive on freeways to avoid red-lights)-- it is not such a huge distance to that point of wanting to Liquidate the One Who Stands In Your Way. And not out of anger. Out of logic. The reptile brain, the left hemisphere? Or rather, an anesthesia of intuition. But: good driving in a speed-situation, all reflexes--is that intuition also? Well, maybe speed-&-distances is a quantitative relationship, and you lack the qualitative. The words: just; nothing but; only; and all totalities fall apart in these X-ray eyes--they're just--Poetry. The sense that ego is everything, not even suspecting a depth to experience; no resonance, nostalgia, detachment, play, fantasy; you're serious and you desire above all else closure, which becomes your only motivation. Efficient as a bulldozer, you use up all your minutes and throw them away. There's an infinite supply--because all you know is the pinhole present.

Against the long poem as such. Like when your favorite band does a concept album, & half the songs stink because they were written to order.

A poet is an atavism, no doubt. Or a prefiguration.

Closure takes the same part in a neurotic person's life, as exploration does in a healthy person's. Their expression is the language of risks, or the language of possibilities.

"Artist" nowadays means someone who feels that being ignored is a kind of persecution. One American in a hundred calls themselves Professional Artist on the census (1980). I guess that makes the other 99%--amateurs.

Art is an impatient mysticism. And so it is always incomplete, and repeating.

I used to not mind the Square-Wheelers. They would sit there making growling noises as real cars sped by. I would wave. But now more & more of them are clogging the streets, claiming round-wheeled cars are the Devil's spawn; & i only marvel they can think they're rolling when they're obviously not.

My words will not carry. They are not words. They are not words such as you are ready to receive. They will fall from the air & perish, unlike those words that people want to hear & will repeat to each other endlessly, like the sound of raindrops. My words are dry, like the desert.

Honesty isn't a conscious virtue: it is a matter of good relations between a person's conscious and unconscious.

Not memory but forgetfulness is the single proof of time.

I painted many dots and though i tried very hard i couldn't quite keep my attention focussed for this thousandfold repetition: from time to time, i'd realize i had gone into automatic (i wanted a particular texture)--thus the conscious mind flees banality. But the earth is seldom banal (unless you try crossing it for great distances without stopping) and its banal places have enough micro-variations. Banality is man-made. How can consciousness produce its nemesis??

“Chance” means, really, accepting the limits of your reason. It is equally wrong to say the universe is random or determined.

--To apply this to psychology.

--To apply this to politics.

The myth of the image, the myth of the myth. Chance rules for casual encounters. Unless you become obsessed with an image, with a myth, it acts merely as a filler for your absence of real knowledge. It does not control your actions because your actions do not really connect with the concepts that a false analysis could unfold from those images and mythologies. (The myth that everyone is brainwashed. Match this to the myth of genetic predeterminism. Two opposite figments, pseudosciences,--like politics & psychology themselves--thus self-destruct.) Personality is the realm of chance. Not only formed by chance experiences, but also giving rise to others, in the sense that you react with accidental preferences which are far stronger than your ideas (most of the time) or even your feelings. Well then, what limits the realm of chance? What might be called Necessity--if this is understood without reference to objective/subjective quibbles about "freewill"--rather, those universal processes (like feedback) which cause irreversible (if not

permanent) changes...in personalities, in national histories... And there is the matter of scale, which is actually, defining the Individual, the Nation, so that chance does not always predominate--so that there can be some "freedom" at all.

I have my fame & all I ever deal with is other famous people, & lackeys. We do not have to wait; that defines who we are, at doors or at the ear of power. We think of suffering as somehow the fault of those who were not found worthy of being made household names.

I glanced at the clock on the wall with this question in mind: is it time for the mail to have come yet? I saw that it was about 11 and thought, No. Then i wondered, having made some tea, what minute it had been (so i could let it steep for 10 minutes), and found that though i looked at the clock before, i didn't know the minute--yet i had seen and noticed it, without understanding it in that way. The question precluded any other answer than the one i'd sought. So it is that too strenuous purposefulness creates blind spots: concentration leaves its shadow. Proving again, its special usefulness lies in infrequent application.

--Is it that everyone needs glasses, for instance? (Ask an optometrist) Or rather that we proliferate details past their natural occurrence?

Banality: the atomization of matter. Reduction of experience to facts & things & structured context (e.g. time schedule, space coordinates).

Heidegger & the Nazis: "I didn't know I was compromising myself with absolute evil, I thought I was just working within the system."

What you steal from the night, you return to the day.

To know that every 'I' is an imposture & an impasse.
The pseudonym points away, toward freedom. Here
blooms the soft green plum of poetry attained. Leave
it alone.

A critic today is just a drug purity inspector.

Our real definition of "sanity": the ability to make
small talk.

Rebirthing. Others kill themselves because they have
no metaphors for it. Poets kill themselves because
their metaphors are real to them.

Intellectuals beware: groupthink reaches beyond the
grave.

Introverts don't have more self knowledge than
extraverts--they just have a different definition of the
self. No less erroneous.

Artist pictures non-Artist: himself with a block.
Himself in an invisible medium. --One is too proud, one
is too humble; Non-Artist pictures Artist--as nothing?
as how Artists used to picture Artist??--no: himself
without a job. Or, himself but that can do every job
(how many artists would swallow that? as many as
the former?).

Entertainment in which the quasi-militaristic heroes
have such a good time doing everything that soldiers
do--except get killed.

Oh, but that's the best part.

