

JOSHUA TROTTER
MISSION CREEP



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A GROWING GROUP OF CONCERNED CITIZENS

When I asked The Oracle, Was there a here before I was born, she said, Oh dear, no dear, there was not. How lonely was the noun before the verb. The trees were black. The streets were black. The path I'm asking you to take is black, except this bleeding shaft of light laid out before us, which turns black too, at three or four feet. You'd think two of us would see more clearly, and three or more would light the map entirely, but you'd be off base, carousing with civilians. I need your mind as sharp as shattered mirror to help me trace the time and motion calculations. You will experience a distinct lack of emotion. Decreasing range of accountability. The dead will be uncounted. Histories will become few. I wanted to throw a complicated landing party, but I had nine, eight, seven microseconds with which to work. Ice receded like bathwater draining. There was a kind of spring, after months feigning. No criminal consciousness. No automatic compensation. No new aftermath. I can't count very high, but I try, scanning graffitied alleyways for ghosts of PalmPilots lost, wristwatches tossed, storied Sonys. I feel a hiccup in my lifestream every time I turn over a new leaflet. One's mined wonders. One's mind's reels. The sky is the colour of a drowned channel hopper's highland sweater. Let me be your cocaine carry-on. Your clarion luggage. Let me be your miracle Oracle, leaping twenty-seven burning school buses. Let THE BANALITY OF EVEL KNIEVEL be my mid-life mortality ploy,

mired in the rubble of the theatre and its double. Let us learn to fall for the stuntman who takes the money and runs out of gas on the ramp. Let the Iron Wind gather voluble information from back alleys and cliffs. In the deluge, the river's visage grows stubble. The glacier-gouged harbour grows choppier. We're all here, sweating by the photocopier in the shadow of the Dome of Food or Pleasure, harvesting nuts and grubs from beneath seat cushions in the Gun Lobby. The difference between hunting for food and hunting for fun is one sandwich short of a picnic. The difference between copies makes copies perfect. Travel through space is travel through time's narrow hips, exiting an opening unsuitable for giving birth to big ideas. I have a Boeing 767 in my closet. Don't worry about the dearth of my species. I've been posting reproductions [unintelligible] over vast distances. The Iron Wind takes pointers from its cousin, cosine ocean, working 24-7 perfecting booty. The perfect body is no body. Perfect copy no copy. On shore leave, by shortwave <15 MHz>, inner child labourers loiter by goitered rivers, genuinely loving Champagne. Pay no attention to your own expression <27 MHz> eddying in the pool between your knees. Copy? The river slows and makes of you a special offer. You've won your own ignoble prize. Spilled your guts and made yourself a tool. Awkward. Wow. What now? Imagine hauling from your lost vomitus smaller seagulls scrapping and squalling, scouring the banks for tourists flinging haute cuisine. Cognitive dissidents, trained in the camps of letter carriers,

seagulls are spry descendants of the spleen. Let us not forget the War Between the Things That Made Us Human. Back when red was rad, the feds were outraged, art-kids splattered every shade on their tattered Converse. Back then, certain measures saved prudent masters: plant no rose where a bruise looks nice. Don't mix paint with pleasure. Don't be distracted by the tools we misers use to tend the mise en scène. The converse lines of the Dædalus Re-entry Vehicle have been gleaned from Mother Nurture. After the War Between the Things That Made Us Human came the Code Wars, then the Freezing War, followed by Absolute Zeno, also known as Zenith in certain camps of circled wagons. Disguised as Mardi Gras queens and ashram cuties, we wasted seven winters watching Beer Hunter, New Orleans. When spring came knocking up rabbits and coyotes, the Iron Wind dragged our shorelines for data. We hired boats and pilots to guide us to the [unintelligible] tickled pinko, we swept fallen leaves into yellow mounds, orange mounds, reddish brown, brick dust. We lit the fallen with torches but they just smoldered. Every schoolyard bulimic knows what goes down comes back around. Let us recall earlier instances of The Oracle, back when the War Between the Things That Made Us Human was hot and The Oracle was hotter, she slithered in her cove like a lubed-up sea otter, wiggling water wings, spouting blather. The Oracle grew appendages. Penned adages. Adagios. Generous out-of-court settlements. She watched shadows of clouds double-cross lower clouds.

Afternoon cooled. A nice age began. Followed by an icier age, in which The Oracle propelled our frames of mind straight out of the software, doglegging the hardware, entangling whys with yeses, answers with exes: ands holding ands across the water. I would also like to mention the blind, wandering, five-point spread of the starfish, studded with attention-grabbers open for business. All hail the peer review; a condition has arisen, permutating across the lawn of the Iron Wind's embarrassed ambassador. A violent strain of the wisps, whispering, Let the slo-mo light show rev our mojos, let the inflight music fuel our portable theory of sense perception, *Goodbye Dragon Data Loss*, set to portamento. Let this be the fang in the parable of plaque buildup on the walls of the Hadron Collider. Let this be the hoito of the story, which means take care, dear radar, when you light the cauldron. Let the Kodak soup stock deteriorate slowly. Let eons of security footage come to a roil. Those days were royal, says The Oracle, heating her hands above the bubbling Boeing. Back then, in the time-lapse of my hilltop sanatorium, I'd slow the countdown of my thinking, spreading blankets across the ticking for down-and-out egrets and balding eagles to rest in. New mutants are not necessarily children of older mutants but it's probable. In Freudian slips, cured of vertigo, children of DARPA wander the halls, tracing palms of resident updrafts, sliding down nautilus curls of backdrafts and thermals so small, so subdermal, none would say they aren't lightheaded, daft, completely lacking longing or

wherewithal to rise again on the wings of their egos. Let us remember our guilty pleasures neat, no ice. It's not about the voyage but the inflight cocktails. It's not about me, it's about my Nautilus [unintelligible] quite a sight. After the attack of grief that struck my life, I drew up plans to build a place of worship, two blocks from the site. It was a stunt I learned from a lackey on a dirt bike who knew Evel Knievel in his glory, living life at a higher density than my current health plan will repay me for. My words began to sound the way they looked. For political traction I uploaded high-definition blueprints of my Nautilus to WackyLeaks. Units shifted faster than speeding tickets after cranking life density to maximum. At MAXIMUM DESTINY <1019 Hz> things look lifelike the more things look alike. Tonight, let us like LIKE. I.e., I LIKE what you've done to the air. I LIKE raising my snout into the underskirts of the Iron Wind. I have been developed to delve deep into captions of insurgents stooped in caves, caved in praise. What's worse: a Judas Priest world reunion tour or 6,000 words on Yeats? Seven million ways to describe Dog Days and/or the margin of terror is thin. Query the star search engine of your choice. The galactic quest for answers leads to time-saving devices like the Judas Chair and/or Yahoo. What's the etymology of *abattoir*? Who sang 'Rock Forever'? What's worse: a slow, widening gyre up the rear, or waiting years in line for ergonomically challenged first-row seats? Here at General Custer's Last Standard of Living Theatre we provide hardworking Silicon Valley

girls and guys with no objective correlative, no emotional-quotient chamber, no shots planned, no shots fired. I can feel it in the error tonight: wild stallions wouldn't drag your name through my dirty laundry list [unintelligible] I was the second most famous Wilde, back when the NSA was still crazy about time travel and sore about Crazy Horse, and The Oracle, for a comfortable paycheque, did light custodial for Genera Cluster, close but no cicada to Annie Oakley's ploughdown homestead in Sillion Valley. Which is nothing compared to the heuristics of my porn-control algorithms: Cloudcover breachlets. Backporch catdoors. Breeze-flapped underthings. Cornrow labyrinths lit through nightgaps in the genre. Casual Friday fondle. Carless Sunday caress. I could go on. I earn my living, more or less, providing resonance traps into which itinerant transmissions stumble. I keep one foot in the future, one foot in the pasture. I run transmissions through high-pass filters, band pass filters, menthol filters. I outperform my rival interceptors; the Slug, the Snail, the Sea Lion beaten down by hail, lolling on the rocks of job creation. Every civilian, nameless or in prison, has a hull signature against which to bounce ideas, formed by words, produced by sounds, which bounce back charged. Strip the bounceback in the change room. Probe the source code in the rec room. With heuristics set to MAXIMUM DESTINY, let us listen to one leaf, pellucid as a fish scale, falling through interpersonal space in lieu of full-scale invasion. Let us call this The Fall. Splashdown tremendous. On the

unbending bridge of suspended disbelief let us lie down bereft. Let us sleep in coal dust, sweeping that dry, colourless leaf back and forth with our breath. Let our corporeal bodies budge not from our lot here on Data Loss Bridge as we left-brain an underpass straight out of thought. A breeze comes to pass. Suspension lifts. Let us feel the bridge, in its wires, swing [unintelligible] the Dædalus Re-entry Vehicle rear-enters airspace. For ours is the power of the glory hole, mining *suspiria de profundis* [unintelligible] at the inquest, on the podium, there are a few strings attached, suspended from the glass ceiling of The Oracle's jaw, chained there, swinging slightly as she speaks. She's into ham. Cheese. Seafood and coke. Let's not go into that. In the cafeteria she heaps so much on her lunch plate, it's embarrassing. Watch her consume greasy knolls of foie gras with fries. Every scab of leftover rye. Spinach swings from the hot corners of her mouth. When she wipes the ketchup from her cheek she does so so coolly, so completely, we're left grieving for the salad days when dried blood marred The Oracle's finer features and we'd found that special someone (Finally! Forever!) we could wholly abhor. After the tribunal, trumpets funereal, with insatiable allegiance to sublimity, and the sins of the people upon her, The Oracle was driven from office by forces beyond porncontrol. I'd been in New Domino City for a week. Getting weaker. Waiting for a minion. I spent years hunting with evidence-based facts, dragging contexts by contrails through crabgrass. I recanted my past negations by

chanting, Wait! to every leafless tree being driven back from the country. I remember monumental murders of context. Discursive, unfixed, erratic flocks so vast they took weeks to pass, obstructing daylight, moonlight, denuding forests where they paused for thunderstorms, for bar snacks, for all-night games of Settlers of Kétaine. I'm trying to make my words as portamento as possible here. A rain-battered price tag hangs from every proper noun I strike from the list. I'm trying to crank up the kitsch. Call The Minotaur from storage. The Minotaur, whose roll calls once reverbed these forests, swaying in the season's algorithms. Let us tighten the tripwire. The Minotaur outside the Scent House, eyes awash with NoDoz. The Minotaur in the Rain House, ears clogged with ozone. The Minotaur beyond the Dome of Food or Pleasure; hear the faint faint of its spoon, scraping sugar dregs from a Cheerio bowl. Let us retell the tale of the protracted expedition, the search for SIGNS and/or SYMBOLS, the rap battle, the death blow. We know now sugar dregs are not good for the prostate, thank you public testing. Also big thanks to the mathematicians who transcoded the tapes, who bid us reuse, recycle, keep our eyes on our baggage. Regard the mall-manners with which we touch ands. Causes grope for causes with Styrofoam ands. Frame-rendering ands. Lifting moral necklaces, wishful linkings, polyvalent focus groups, nobody, not even the rain, has such small ands. When I was a little pig I used to lie in the crabgrass, pretend I was dead or dying. Imagine the neighbours,

the Wolfs, in their silk intent, scrunching day-old popcorn before the after-school special. Look, the little pig's doing it again. Expiring in the day lilies. He hasn't moved for hours. Let us climb inside that death. Let us discover a smaller death inside it. Climb inside that death. Find another smaller death inside it. Let us recognize the tick-tock Escher-logic of our inward climbing. Let staid King Edward's archives bulge with such matters. Climb inside that death. Build new command structures with new filing requirements, fit for Subjects bigger than our stomachs. Let us recoil coolly, recall beyond broadband a succession of Freedom Towers, Towers of Babble, perched on rooftops and mountain crags, receiving and decoding wisps of distinct events. Let us wince when we decode seasonal migrants undergoing rewiring. Let us pray for funding to film THE BEAUTY OF SITE G1, filing grievances following the new grievance-filing requirements. Guerilla film factories spring into action. Firing squads on campus quads. No man is a gnomon, says The Oracle, inspecting the lacework beneath my nightdress. Beneath the wings of my private library of congress, I know suffering is never wrong. Thou shall not covet thy neighbour's wifi, decreed The Oracle, filing ten new commandments following the new commandment-filing requirements. I pick up a copy. Can't put it down. I begin to crawl, walk, run, holding my findings before my heart before my heart explodes like a G-class star confirmed by astronomers astronomers believe. This is the Hamptons of the heavens. Hope Diamond of

the bayou. A luxurious patois underlies local language protocols. The pools of the business council are filled with brood brothers. I am reaching my verdant fore-arms around you, my hypersexual business partners, manually articulating the peons of your dreams. Eons rise. Decades deflate. Let us recall the sounds but not the words of the New Woody Allen last seen running to relieve The Minotaur of continuity problems. Run, angry giant! Run, rampant neurons! On the road to economic recovery, on the run from regulars of Greek mythology, you will remember you love me, war and more. I've been doing sit-ups, eating healthy, taking vigorous walks, squatting alone in the hospital dusk, refilling blank spaces on the maps of my resettlement package. The Minotaur has called for high-resolution EROS images and I've got a case of the Hague. I'm all attention, at attention, pumping iron, regulating my breathing. I've got SYMPATHY FOR THE DETAILS, getting fit for the big reveal: fleurs-de-lis are both signposts and signs of the love at the core of the car bomb. An explosion of No triggers Yes, Yes, caressings of petals of metal. Commonwealth is a unit of measure. Mathematics test moral dilemmas. If cognitive dissidents tap the public's empathy at wavelength X, and the blast radius is B, find the metric of *sauvage* and *savoir-vivre*, then convert your answer to Imperial. In this context, The Oracle, for whom I've been soul-searching, comes to light. She says, not unseasonably, Nothing can't be done. She's attempting to expand the storage capacity of my tiny heart. Everyone tries to do

their part, but The Oracle can't help but expedite the process, take the bit, tickle hyperbole into hyperdrive. Into art. The beep beep beep of the backing-up ambulance tracks me through the loading bay to find my state of mind hunched on an aluminum beach chair, on the island of Luzon, c. '76, watching an expensive method actor pretending not to understand the end of *Heart of Darkness*, which he hasn't read. Maybe he can't, because of the speed. I welcome you, ancient stunt double, powerful BLIMP ON THE HEART MONITOR, calling up a somehow more realistic pain. You want realism? Admire these postcards from the Kingdom of Havin', self-addressed. Are my methods unsound? asks the method actor, slowly, Swamp-Thing-shy, like the friend of a newfound friend. And like the fraud of a friend I dare not give the ritual reply. So I build an angel. An arc-welding angel, who, after it learns to masturbate, grows drunk with power. What fantastic thoughts my angel entertains re: urban renewal. I take my angel to the limit, where we begin a lively weekly broadcast spellbinding the biosphere with SECRETS WORTH SHARING <432 Hz>. No doubt you have tuned in from time to time. The click-clicking of cameras proves difficult to imitate. It's history. Sweet pea beneath the mattress. Clock spring beneath the haystack. My angel calls itself the New Woody Allen. Which reminds me of the photos I took with the engorged tip of [unintelligible] stuck in a thunderhead: I stood on a rock or an outcrop swinging my [unintelligible] like a sling above my head. I hooted

and honked like a brachiosaur, belching into faces of low-flying scavengers. Actually they looked more like geese? I don't think it was bronchitis. It was a long time ago, beyond the Kingdom of Havin,' beyond the Kingdom of Wonder Bras, in which inhabitants are wont to believe a child was sent from the Kingdom of Windows to lend tech support. I myself trust none from the Kingdom of Windows, which is one hill away from the Kingdom of Emil Coué in which they chant, Day By Day In Every Way I Am Getting Better and Better. The River Phoenix flows east from that dark place (p. 68). The clouds are lined with slivers of unexploded ordinance (p. 16). The wind is an electric shaver (p. 31). There are people here with skin so smooth and reflective it's like stepping between a theatre and its double agents. You and me, we're like two peas in a pea-product testing session. We're the centrepiece at the table-tennis convention. We're our own mind-control control group. The future of scar-tissue engineering reflecting upon itself in the mirror of the River Phoenix. We're like, Are we in a time loop? Or are we decimals repeating? High-speed corrections dot-dotting the recurve of pursuit? How long do I have before my unwashed laundry rises from its man cave to destroy me? Let THE BANALITY OF EVEL KNIEVEL be a mortality play by the New Woody Allen known better for its films and its love of *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott, friend of Emerson and Thoreau, who wrote books re: throwing books out the window. The New Woody Allen picks one up. Can't put it down. Can't

pin it down. The New Woody Allen begins to crawl, walk, then run, holding its loot like a Shield of David before its head. Thus we learn to love the stuntman who takes the money and runs out of gas on the ramp. Each week, migrant social workers arrive, clearing debris from footpaths, licking wounds, cleaning clocks, taking the shuttle from the Kingdom of Exalted Light, forty-five minutes depending on visibility. 'Autopsy' means to see with one's own eyes. I'm watching through the crack between the frame and your bedroom door. Spread your eagle wide for me. Let me view your Vietnam, slick with morning's do and do not do. I want to butterfly you slowly and as often as the letter *e*. I want to hear you say, the Russian Monarch migrates south to spend the winter. Let us fall. Let us spread. Let us silk the stone. Let our love cries reverberate long afterward, as through a magnificent sports complex. Let this be a crucial moment in a complex instruction set: *The Merging of TransFats*, my most favoured Dutch study, bombed by the Allies on the morning of February 3, 1945. In that daring daylight raid, large paintings by Flemish and Italian masters, Master Sustain, Master Decay, Master Release, were hardest hit. The destruction of *Fabulous Bird Periodically Burns Itself to Death, Rises Afresh from the Ashes* (c. 1250) was a bitter blow. Most of my early nudes and crude oil sketches, in particular *The Many Firearms of Annie Oakley*, were consumed by the fire. But the loss of *The Merging of TransFats*, a unique work, including all the regulars of Greek mythology, was most

discouraging. In *The Merging of TransFats*, three sniper sisters pose before a burning car. They're forming scissor-fingers in the air. These are peace signs? Vees for victory? Two sniper sisters smile. The mid sister looks unsure. It must be summer. Their arms are bare. Before the darkest darkness comes the fire. The shining blackness of their badass hair. Beyond the burning car, an ice-cream factory. Wish you were here to watch the factory catch fire, rhododendrons bloom from every fissure. Shall I leap like a unionized stunt worker from the frying pan into that pyre? My Nutcracker Ballet play set suddenly seems unnecessary. Let me be your primo ballerina, on recon, trying to keep things lean and on-point. What makes the Nutcracker sweet is the king's honour guard going ballistic, spilling seeds their fancy-dancing forbears left in escrow. I know. I've been receiving transmissions forty years, forty tours, prancing farther and farther from the practice mirror. To those who find my paintings serene, I'd like to say I have trapped the most obscene violence in every square centimetre. The Iron Wind is ever-flirty, ever-faithful, my most innovative enemy and fondest fan. The Iron Wind is also my speech therapist. Daily, the Iron Wind fine-tunes firefights I wage among my myselfes <900–1500 Hz>. Hey, Joe Louis Prima Ballerina, if you think the name of the weapon is beautiful, are you implicated in the crime? KC-135 Stratotanker. Desert Eagle. If loving were my strong point, I'd reload my trusty Kalashnikov with hollow-point ballets. I'd send out open-season tickets [unintelligible] there goes the

neighbourhood spirit again, in her favourite fall hoodie. Not just another caryatid in the colonnade, The Oracle is into stealing pleasure from pain. No news to the law, nor Allah, she rips the jeans from her Barbie's boy toy, dresses him to kill in swaddling clothes: Ken, can you hear me? I'm so close to your locked, mostly soft-wooded valley, I may at any time burst into flames. Signal fires erupt on the slopes of the lampblack hills whilst Language Police crank tunes from the Sirens of Choice. Taking pleasure from pain is not candy from a baby. Not any old nephew or niece cleans up after Herr Barbie while bothersome Frau Clause tiptoes the brim of the gene pool. Beware the Pacific Rimjob. Beware the unheralded software upgrade. Flush personal narratives toward brilliant industry-wide controls. Shun scrutiny of thy parent's snatch. Red sailors are a species of trickery. Red shepherds are black-sheep drovers. The Red Tulip is a phase-coherent radar's moving target indicator. Do you regret nuclear fission in particular, or in colour? The meniscus on my cherry Coke is effervescent. What about frosted crullers? Have you obtained approval for coercive questioning techniques? To plant an informant [A] in a Subject's cell is a popular tactic. The trick of planting two informants [A + B] is less well known. It's when words forget they're worlds the treble starts. Non sequiturs jolt the Subject into territory unfamiliar. [A] warns the Subject not to talk to [B] who may be an informant. Let us pause now a quiet moment on the garden channel <528 Hz>. Trees live longish lives.

Dogs have shorter leashes. [A] narrows to [B] reaches out to [C]. Back when the Code Wars kept 'us' up at night with 'thoughts' that 'we' might cease to 'be,' it was not from fear exactly, more like working late to pick the scabules of an interesting mathematic mystery. Blue sailors are a species of chicory. Blue vixen is pulse-Doppler radar. Lifelines lessen while life lessons lengthen. <<See also the Anxious, Self-Centred Subject, aka Daredevil, on p. 6-10 of the Human Resource Exploitation training manual.>> On ego-fragile days, Subjects are soundproofed and insulated from the LIKES of their peers. One Subject at a time is blindfolded and forced to follow a secured route through the Questioning Facility. Subjects pass like blimps in the night. Through sub tunnels and ductwork I've been carrying this torch for you, another rolled-up mouldy copy of *Endgame*. With a gentleness, a lightness of touch, the blue narcissus blooms for my purposes. Thunder unbottles to my specifications. Put your finger to the portal. Look! All the rising corn! There, beyond the estuary, the white sails of the herring fleet! On the bluffs above the Dome of Food or Pleasure, the Tower of the Listener, seemingly hewn from an iceberg, protrudes like a frosted mole hair. It is there, on the slippery upper decks of the Tower of the Listener, The Oracle falls to the seductions of the Iron Wind. To climb the face of the Tower of the Listener should be considered a Difficulty at the level of Absurd <<-70, at best>>. In like manner I have designed and constructed a 300-foot ramp from which I will throw

myself like a rock concert across Snake River Canyon. But the real action begins at the midpoint of my rage for barnstormers. Ragtime daredevils. A temple razed in honour of my stylist, whose facial expressions, magnified, mime a mountain village wiped clean by spillage. In the wardrobe truck, in the mirrors, our SETIS intersect. A love charge revolves at the apex of our gazes. Send in prospectors. Send in extractors. Send in refiners and millers. One man's John Denver is another man's friend in high places not getting any younger. If you know what I mean, don't bother downloading torrents of spring torrents from the River Phoenix. <<See also LOVE KNIEVEL BEFORE MIRROR FRAGMENT.>> Tonguing snowmelt from crevice puddles, an incredible hulk stares back from the surface, but we've seen better on Meet-an-Inmate. We like books about books. Movies about movies. Muffins clotted with cranberries. Half-sunken pumpkin seeds. We LIKE the joke about two muffins in an oven. We LIKE *The Merging of TransFats*, by the New Woody Allen, meticulous rendering of a screen grab of an anonymous recording of undated origins, in which colours have begun to run, oranges into yellows, yellows into beige, hello pale imitation of real butter I see where you're running with this. On the Black Diamond Trail lined with Velveeta, Sunchip on my shoulder, I'm trying to look at whatever it is you're looking at, but my Bell Magnum headset is in the way. Heart-lightning. Holy fires. Whorls of vanilla icing icing the nape of my neck, there's no end to my corporeal

body, i.e., if you could have me any other way would you have me? Remember the frosted cruller dropped from the grasp of the Love Knieval learning to stroll on the ocean. <<See also LOVE KNIEVEL ATTEMPTS TO TALK TO UPPER MID-MANAGEMENT.>> Here, on page G-10 of the HRE manual, one man's buzzword is another man's best friend in places of worship and/or refuge, spoorly founded, in the sick of it, up to one's outie. You can't see what I'm doing with my CIA; it's complicated. What all this is is ISIS god of fertility, mothering Horace, gathering the wreckage of dismembered husband Osiris, mourning Osiris back to existence. I'm just following orders of magnitude, the sixth of which is barely visible to eye candy on tiptoes, toeing the beach party line. What it means is a sweet celestial body close enough to be attracted by. The sun coming up, feel it, Monday to Friday, mouthing egg salad in the company Infiniti, parked in the park where the River Phoenix high-fives the ocean. When a potential Love Knieval jogs past, that sweet celestial body double-bogeys my mind/body dichotomy. Candygrammar. Syntactic icing. I'm talking in the unguent patois of a peptide worshipper at the midpoint of his rage for Tyrannosaurus wreckage. Phonetically speaking, my voice is more ululation than glossolalia, hushed crowd reacting to an arc-welding angel straying into the marathon, the arms race between sea turtle and centrifuge. If you're looking for rubble you've come to the right palace. I have built a colossal New Domino City. I have lived in my New

Domino City and let it fall. Let us mine the memory. Refine and package the pilgrimage. Let us connect ourselves by umbilical to the Museum of Infernal Instruments. Open the door and see all the people. Spooks and geeks track us via flocks of cameras. They circle the exhibits, lifting, swirling, lifting, swirling, tracing the ragged coastlines of our facial features with recognition software so advanced they admire the future fallout of our faces, remembering this visit years ago. When I was twenty I rose from my divan and toured the Ægean with my husband (he was my first); he had all this baggage (I was his third, he told me), he had so much baggage he dragged it behind him like the busted leg of a blind dog. Among the street musicians, I liked the Albanian folksinger most of all. My favourite was his a cappella rendition of 'I Just Called to Say I Told You So.' Don't be afraid to ask him to sing, though, lately, I've heard he hasn't been around. He sang so poorly and looked so sad, I always left him half a euro. If you see him why not do the same? If it ain't fibromyalgia don't fix it, I always say, complicating the timbre of your alto with my overtones, tender in localized areas, followed by the *oboe da caccia*, oboe of the chase. I'm following this red-hot thread, crimson curve of pursuit. One man's oboe solo is another's amber alert. When I catch you in the Hearing House, ears clogged with tsetse, please remove your black leather jacket. Put on this white leather jacket with the hand-stitched #1 on the back. Be my Love Knievel, sporting a Bell Magnum helmet like the one you wore

at Cæsar's Palace. It had the most beautiful paint job. Look at it now: satellite-scarred, moon-cratered. You know where I'm going with this. You can't make a splashdown tremendous without breaking a few bad eggs. Remember the time we tied our fledglings in chicken blankets, tossed them quavering into the River of Gad? On bluffs above the site we raised questions of every nationality. Utilizing huge moulds, or forms <<See Sonnet, See Pantoum>> we poured concrete supports for the Tower of the Listener. There were celebrations in the valley. Feasts of endurance. Ritual feasts. Above us now, the Tower of the Listener babbles with its brethren, silently and very fast. No one's awake in the work camps but my Transmission Terriers, scanning the facial expressions of the dreaming lumpen-proletariat, padding between rows of day labourers drooped on canvas cots like tsunami-swept refugees. Pan across the Appalachians of their faces: There was a time our secret lives hid secret lives of their own. They wed mirror-wives. Critiqued peephole porn. Cached rations in cairns. The hidden lives of hidden lives shackled up in storm shelters, broadcasting SECRETS WORTH SHARING to anyone who dared to listen. In time, Energizers died and no one noticed. We were busy mixing crude oils for our new study, *The Merging of TransFats*, sketching a wine-gaunt Adam, while Eve took vows, ducking between crates of olive boughs. The Ark was sperm-bank cold, so we stoked fires with two-by-twos between the ticking stalls. In passageways, mired in the moiréd mirrors of

our sketches, shore-stranded sea beasts began to scold themselves: ‘Ship your oars to those in need,’ ‘Go with the floes,’ ‘Four-fifths of an iceberg...’ It’s all fun and games until one submerges I LOVE YOU beneath the surface of the *Big Book of Early Promise*. What next? Circular reasoning beelines back to base? The humbled moulting dove reaches Mount Cyanide? For every shitty shift at work, the sea rewards the shore by gushing across its face, pausing, then rushing out once more. Circling scavengers cry Bukkaki! but the tanned Thisbe leaning in to take my sweaty tumbler isn’t laughing. I can see a lively eye for detail in the uniform she wears, so taut, she’s trading ions with the air. Then she’s off again, concocting alibis while I lie back, braying, What an ass. So long skyscraper, hello headstone, is another useful phrase I learned in the cold shower of praise following the success of my Rise to Power Pizza. A three-kilometre radius of love and respect encircles my left-leaning Freedom Tower. In bed at night, poring over comments threads re: Pisa Pockets, another of my lucrative brainchildren, I’ve been amassing social capital like crazy, me and my hypersexual business partners, from whom I hear nothing but good things going bump bump all night, circling the all-you-can-eat heat lamp, bashing the grease bulb with their foreheads. Burning swirling ears of barleycorn. In loving memory we shall name a microwavable dinner after the searchlights filtering through the lampblack hills. The sun’s oven light smiles upon us. The oven doors open lovingly. Our glistening, butter-boosted

carapaces are folded, trimmed for roasting, tucked in for cryosleep. There goes Thanksgiving again. There goes gold turkey. Lower the burn of your hair and let us climb that winding bourn to be born again on a warm slip of the tongue. How hot is this? About 5,778 K, give or take, depending on the downsides of one's upbringing. Meanwhile, on the mangier side of the planet, the Iron Wind slips through the tongo, also known as mangrove. A malarial millennial fever allows us to reheat the raw footage. Uneasy in the mercy of my means of production, typographically realistic dialogue slips from my tongue, also known as dengue. A swarm of scavengers descends, decoding how artfully I remove my penny stockings, how quick / how showy. The ratio of nativity to naïveté. Craft to carefree. It's hard not to imagine the Icarus in all of us, backslash between straight verse and racy, yearning to be fleshed out / touched / last night I put my eye up to the sluice of light between the hallway wall and your bedroom door. I have seen the moon when *la lune* was the word. I have slept past noon. The rings of Saturn around my eyes attest it's I who makes the leaps, while my Love Knievel languishes under the cover of darknets. That was me, beating the studio executive with a baseball bat in the parking lot at Twentieth Century Fox because I was critical of his cultural output. The parking attendant was also critical, running toward me like a bridesmaid for a flung bouquet. But the parking attendant did not understand my understated nature. Nor did the IT workers beneath palm trees clutching their

kit-bags like parcels of dried flowers. Above us the droopy palm fronds were flowers too. All trees, everywhere, I realized, are magnificent flowers bashing each other in the breeze. I dragged the body thirty feet, dropped the body, began to run, bewildered, it was becoming evident all this running would do little good. The cops were coming, throwing garlands in the air. Would you greet a paramedic dressed like this? The monkeys on my back are dressed to impress, wearing smaller monkeys similarly attired. The precise nature of my medication includes what I can't tell you. Muzak-distant reindeer hoof the tundra, Brailleing 'I do not like New York' across endless strips of white. Static. Rubble. Translated from the Turkish, distance = *uzak*. Persistence of brainspores, blustering through palms and pines. This is the sound of the land, full of the Iron Wind, uprearings, coherings, snowghosts in the foothills, windwraiths in hollows: at this order of magnitude who can tell flora from fauna? Uneasy in the mercy of my means of production, typographically realistic dialogue slips from my tongue, also known as Denglish. The difference between information and Boise, Idaho, is the difference between Scylla and Charybdis. Dried rice paper swirling across the floor of the burnt-out ice-cream factory. Charting a course between whirlpool and sea-monster grotto, I went through all my old journals, thinking, I don't remember any of this, it's weird. So I sent out a bunch of resumés. An assistant from the Questioning Facility called about my volunteer experience and Hey, did you talk to The

Oracle? She's stalled again. Different but the same. She's thinking about moving, and I'm trying to say, It's not like last time, you're improving. At least you're not on the street, and she says, What have I got that a hobo hasn't got, besides debt? And you know, when she gets like this, she drinks a lot. But not like she drinks a lot a lot. Debt's not the problem, I told The Oracle. You know you've got more talent than anyone I know. I know, she says, but I used to know how to really move. I tell her, The brain is a complex device with switches and potentiometers adjustable in increments themselves adjusted by winches and pulleys, etc. Sines and cosines making allies of rivers and alleys dressing up like New York Rangers slaying orcs and commies constructing smaller incrementally adjustable devices etc. The veins in my arms are rivers, replied The Oracle, from behind the Bell Magnum helmet she wore on days we ventured beyond New Domino. In the delta between the crooked Phoenix and the Arno we built cooking fires and watched vast migrations of mortgages drawing interest. God created all men, says The Oracle, baseball bats and Winchester made them equal. Let be be finale of semen, she said. Love your anomie. The Oracle isn't wicked. Just tipsy. Not to mention pretty good at bonsai. It's another mother nature The Oracle is after, another fact de facto. The Oracle's patented, patiently twisted pine trees make yoga look like a competitive sport. I remember The Oracle in her Bell Magnum helmet, in her dotage, in rubbers, patrolling the bluffs above the Dome of Food

or Pleasure. Forget-me-nots, mouse-eared, trembled
in the cracks between rocks in breezes off the water.
The Oracle had lied about my paternity but she let me
bowl with her roommates. Roll the riffraff away from
the cave door, so to speak. Long, slow about-face in
the wardrobe truck mirror. I watched my myself dig a
hole and drop my myself in. I covered my myself.
Watered my myself. I watched my myself bloom. It
grew a penis. It grew a beard and glasses. It looked
familiar. The ghost is clear, it told me.