

**Portraits // Landscapes**





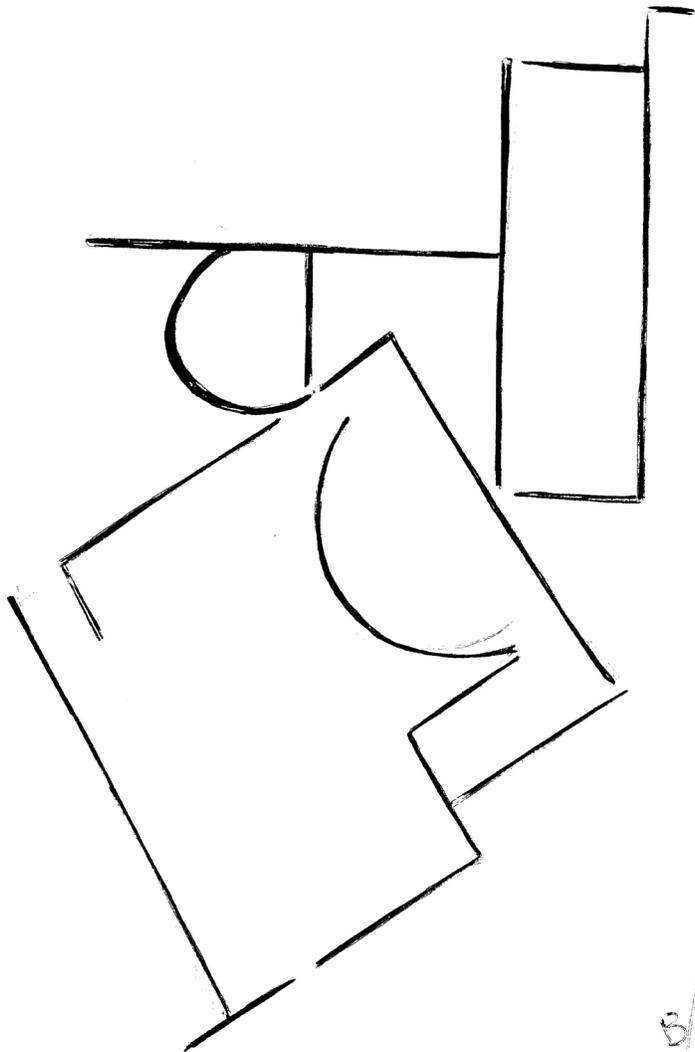


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## Beautiful Mannequins

some people are perfect // they last forever in  
the retailer's promenades // dismantled men  
and disrobed women with looks like someone  
in a film like everyone who is someone in a  
film // each one of these people is more beau-  
tiful with each new season // a few beauties  
// beauties by chance // pure chance // pure  
beauties // they have a look // a look that fits  
// the right look // a gesture // more of a pose  
really // expressing something money can't  
express // built to play // wearing a popular  
hat reinventions of themselves with painted  
faces under the lights // the lights are on the  
bottom of the fountain is painted blue to  
make it deeper and every day the same pen-  
ny tossed in the water every night collected  
and counted: one one-thousand one one-  
thousand one one-thousand // the problem is  
one of recession // maybe one of underwear //  
they've altered the notion of beauty again //  
something about the failure of dollars dims  
the lights and in the low lights sometimes  
you really look like what you really look like //  
it becomes harder to see the mirrors reflect-  
ing clothes you've never worn before



8/6



## Pompeii

Its proudest nature is to create and by creating to destroy and to do it once there in that place, and again a vast distance of time away but in that place, the fatal mountain, it affects people, real owners of their misfortunes, the hasty adopters of life, the fatal mountain's fugitives.

Relics grow weary where work of ancient hands shows still in the place whose character lies in the margin around the division delineating the true from the past, the fatal mountain. Flowers improve the ruins. Nearly the unnatural. An unfamiliar garden. This place is not at peace; it is defeated.

Signs at the border of this place warn the curious: there is death beyond the boundary of the mountain, and beyond the death there are no signs. Superstition suggested the boundary mostly for the sake of the living. The catastrophe, the failed enterprise to survive, the endeavor toward a destination.

No personal belongings. No crowding to escape. There is no ferry across the vast distance.

## The President Wears a Necktie

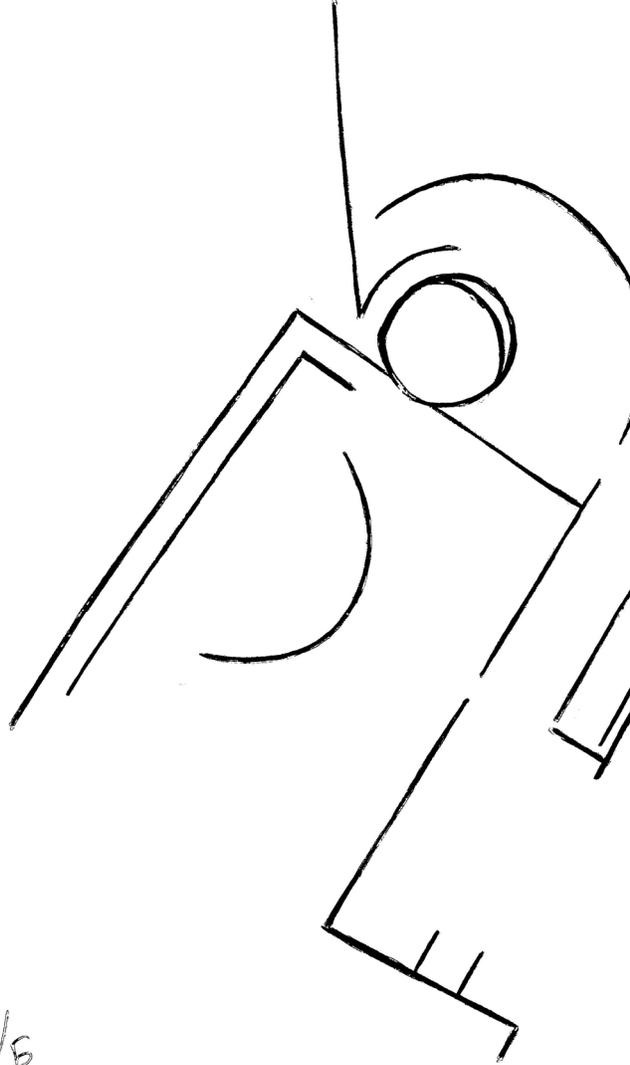
"sir you have exactly five minutes // excuse me sir your reminder sir // they are waiting they'll all be watching // please take a moment to tie your tie // everyone will need to see you now // there's time. always time. time for that. // we'll make it up in the air."

he takes a moment to tie his tie // he wears it the way his house wears a flag // where variations are significant // today is a secondary color day // after so much talk about the primaries // the president addresses his fellow citizens:

fellow citizens, guests // he refers now to a precise time // a difficult decision // how often, he often remarks // we are tested // he refers now to a history // he says "self-evident" // he says "manifest" // he says "fear" // no, he says "terror" or he is tested

we have often tried to find what is correct // it is we who are mistaken or they are mistaken // about which direction // the difference between steps and the road // where slight variations are significant // it is, it is it

a citizen. A citizen of it. // with its suits and streets // a silver tragic silent place // with what is correct and what is correct? // to be angry or to go and see? // anybody can be obedient // anybody can take a moment to tie a tie // or choose a set of pearls // the time. so much time // tying the ties, speaking the speeches // flying the flags // so much of that time // becomes the history // the pinstripes become the whole pattern



B/E



## New World

an insane frenzy, without complaining, their combined efforts to become separated from the old place, to find the air, in their own face, to find someplace lawless.

they endeavored to the place they had received word of it had become separated from the commonplace remark it inspired them to find a way toward the place in an effort, a tremendous effort to find the place had received no reward. They became so engrossed in the word of it the fountain of youth what gold in yonder hills the amber waves of gain.

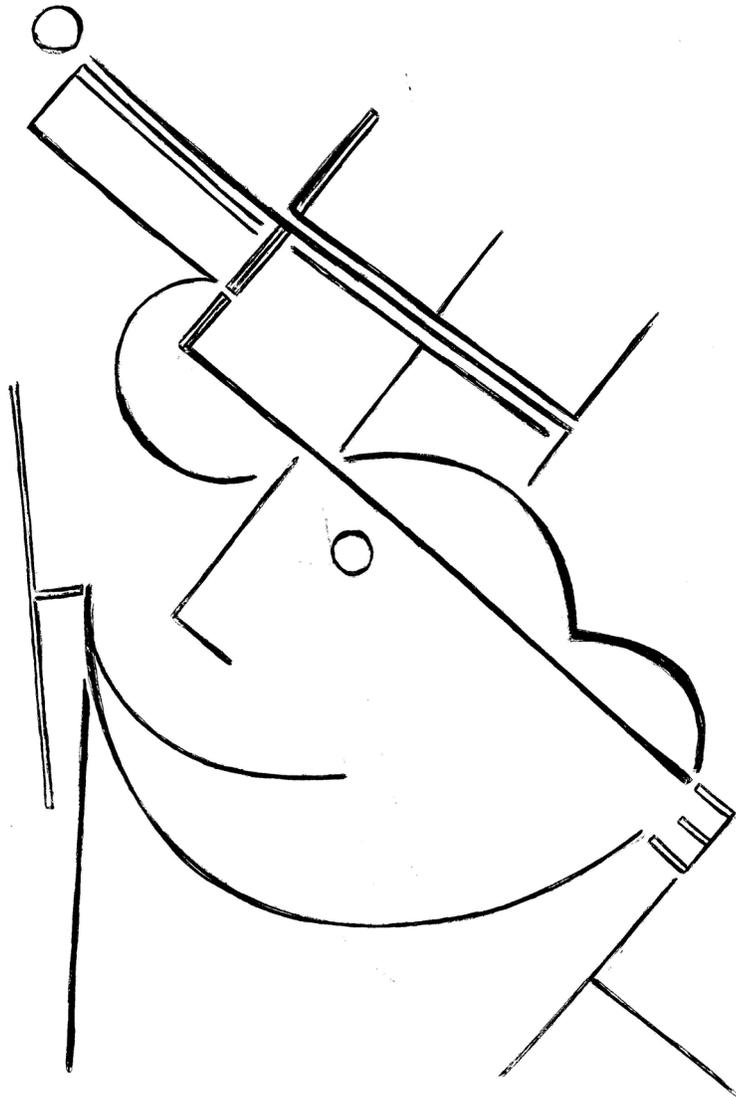
now that we are here we were not those that lived there then there must be some of the place unpaved.

we couldn't say as we had such a tremendous effort, so quickly as it is now now we have come only a step of the way out of a safe distance in the darkness.

## Who Paints What She Sees

I see a splash of light // paints  
shapes of windows on the floor  
// catches dust in the air. // I  
wonder, do you look through  
// which of these windows? //  
You create your own shapes,  
don't you? // I see the dust  
when you are there. // I have  
time to see it there. // The dust  
doesn't move unless you do. //  
The shapes are shapes of the  
light you break // between the  
window and the floor.

You have many more brushes  
// than you use // many more  
paints.





## Railing Against the Kaleidoscope that Passes for a Rare Innovation

We should leave. I myself took my own personal step. I stopped by: the cities, the bobo bicycle byways, the chain stores. I stopped by to call home. Things. Things are new. Things are really new. Really high end. Really expensive. Click to buy. Click to live. Click. Where is the by and for the we the people and who are we? are we? we? are you? and I? and why are we here of all places? we have to believe the independence. People will have very strong words about anything to the contrary. Words are free. Really lofty. Really expressive. Click to comment. Click to share.. Click. My intention is as open ended as a tourist's. Why pay the fiddler? To fill the pocket of a couple parties' collective bargaining rights. Collectively, there is no bargain. We should leave.

My country is this country that passes for my country because i live in this country. If I lived in some other country my country would not be my country. My country has been buzzing around my experience. These freedoms not those freedoms are the ones that are free for me. freedoms, freedoms granted by, protected by laws, which govern. I've watched my city and if I still know one thing it's the choices. we got some. locksmiths and bodegas giving way to an early summer afternoon bike ride. I like dreaming of taxis vying for a fare.

I don't move closer to trust implicitly. I still learn. Things mixing together, mostly.

Bike-powered, two feet and dust, locals alike, to the real here.

Time is the real commodity. Time is supplied precisely in proportion to its demand; Time is in demand precisely in proportion to its supply. Time can therefore never be subsidized, though budgeted, never in surplus, never in deficit, often in debt. Time in debt to money. Money in place of time.

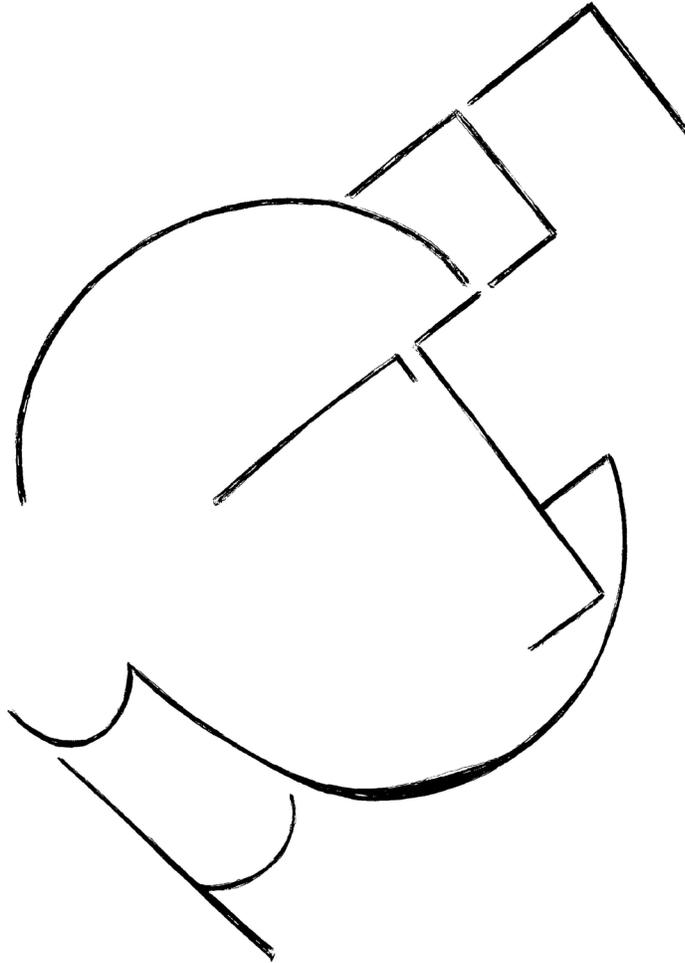
## Housekeeper

A syringe in room 212 // is lodged deep underneath // the cracked plastic vent // of the radiator, beneath the window. // Don't touch a syringe: // company policy.

So, visit housekeeping closet // in the basement // to get the kit, the one with // "bio-hazard" written on it. // Tug rubber gloves. // Grab tongs. // Pick the syringe up, and stash it in the bag.

The bag has a color // brighter than any other color, // in all the rooms along the hall, // identical. // I clean them all, each day, // fifteen minutes apiece. // Each little mess is unique, contained // as the individuals, the customers // behind each numbered door // "This is housekeeping." // This means rent money.

B/6





### There are Rabbits in the Woods

There are dead fish in the run. Go out and have fun, boys. Strange men linger by the tracks.  
Before the dark, boys, come back. A truck's stuck in the mud. Throw rocks at the sun.

They'll laugh at your games, boys. You build a fortress.

## Specimen

Nothing is dust // ashes are ashes of what  
was burned // dust is a smaller part of  
what was // teeth // bones // hair // some  
skin // a vast gaze // but the shadow has  
walked away // the echo melted

murdered on the ice // given to the moun-  
tain // delivered to the gods

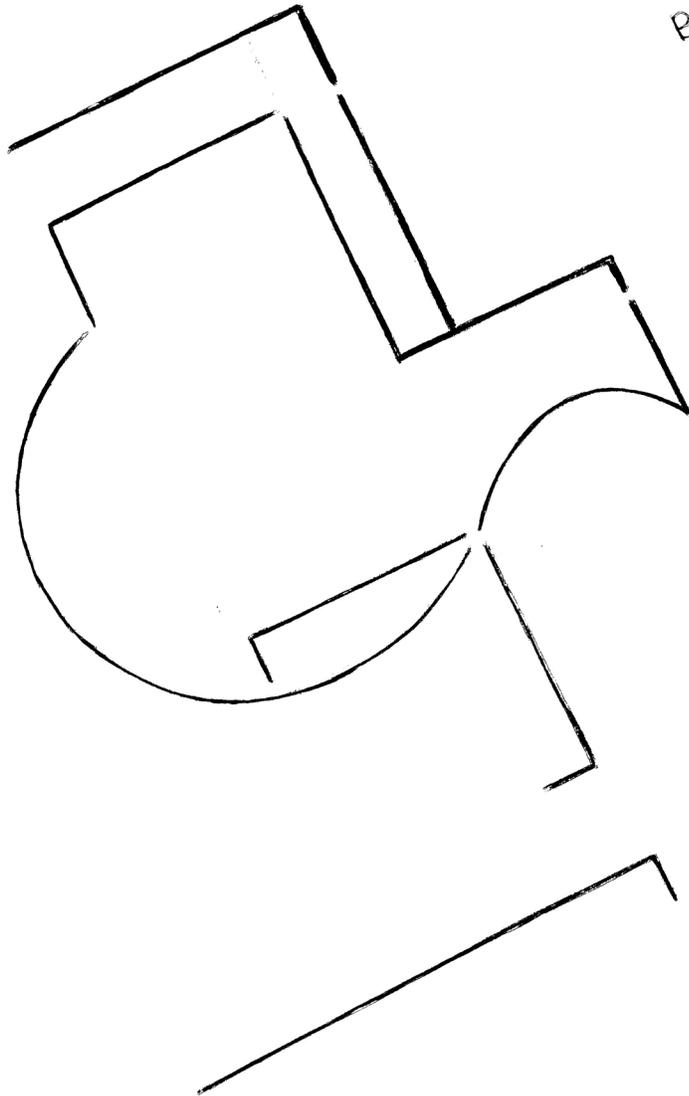
frozen for thirty centuries // buried in the  
mountain // hidden under the rock // lost  
for fifty centuries

king // shepherd // child // preserved //  
thin little hands // grasping ordinary  
things

grasping ordinary things // technicians in  
labcoats // secured // doctor // scientist //  
specialist // they study the clothing // re-  
moving the shoes

the sand was once rock // the ice was once  
water // the sand reveals // the ice retreats  
// earthquakes, eclipses, droughts;

a natural process // a body outlasts death  
// not the whole body // enough for evi-  
dence



B/E



## Walls

Blank walls are  
places for shadows  
are everywhere.

Walls in the airport, the walls in the restaurant, the walls in the office, the walls on the outside of the arena, and the walls on the inside of the arena, and the walls in the living rooms that depict the arena: they show events in the instant of the event; afterwards the commentary, afterwards the commercials.

Walls of stone where light only goes where we carry the light into the stone, along where we carry the fire, we carry the pigment, we spread them both and we capture the hunt, we capture the dreaming, we spit pigment over our hands onto the walls to prove we were here.

## A Live Studio Audience

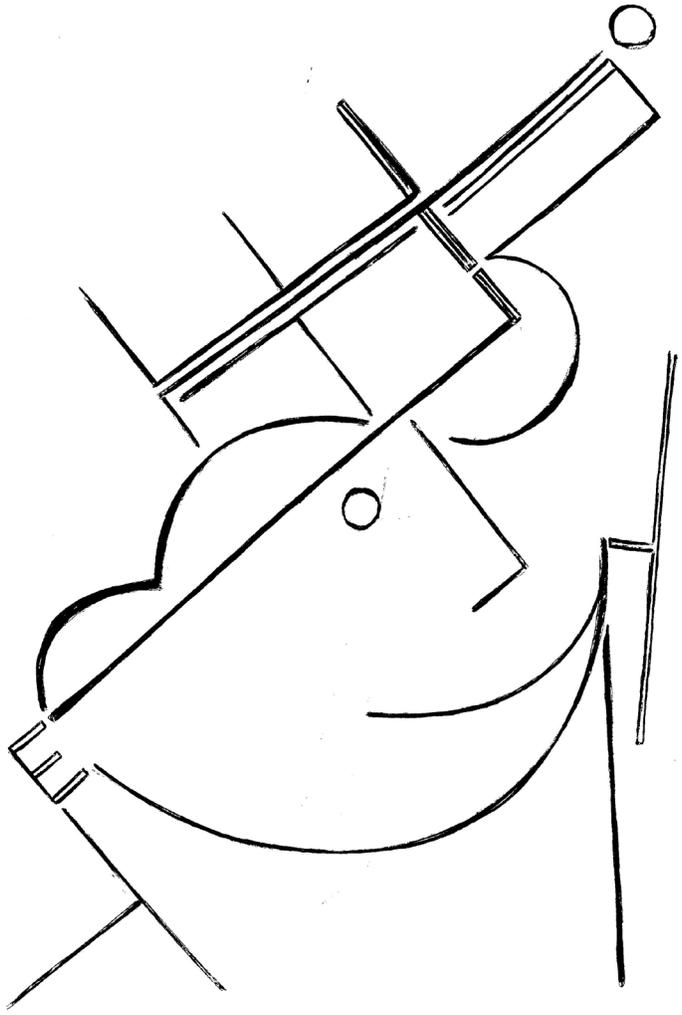
Musical comedy, you make us laugh // Workplace situation comedy, you make us laugh // Animated comedy, you make us laugh // Ethnic situation comedy, you make us laugh // Satirical news programs, you make us laugh // Family situation comedy, you make us laugh // Absurd comedy television, you make us laugh // Sketch comedy television, you make us laugh // Reality television comedy, you make us laugh // Romantic situation comedy, you make us laugh // Domestic situation comedy, you make us laugh // Improvised situation comedy, you make us laugh

Mister Ed, we laugh at your jokes // Fat Albert, we laugh at your jokes // I Dream of Jeannie, we laugh at your jokes // Gilligan's Island, we laugh at your jokes // The Flying Nun, we laugh at your jokes // Inspector Gadget, we laugh at your jokes // Tonight Show, we laugh at your jokes // Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson, we laugh at your jokes // Tonight Show with Jay Leno, we laugh at your jokes // Tonight Show with Conan O'Brien, we laugh at your jokes // Late Show, we laugh at your jokes // The Late Late Show, we laugh at your jokes

You make us laugh // You make us laugh // You make us laugh // You make us laugh

We laugh at your jokes // We laugh at your jokes // We laugh at your jokes // We laugh at your jokes

We laugh // We laugh // We laugh // We laugh



## Pennsylvania Station, Baltimore

A man announces the last and final boarding call for a train bound for New York, making all local stops between Baltimore and New York. The man lists them.

"Remember, there are no suspicious persons. There is only suspicious behavior. If you see something suspicious, please notify the authorities immediately. Hopefully it's nothing."

A man in a suit might also carry a briefcase. There's nothing surprising about that. But in the station today there are many men in suits, a few in jeans, and one in athletic clothes, but only one of these men carries a briefcase. It is a dark burgundy color, to match his tie.

That tunnel north of the station is one of the most congested tracks of rail on the entire eastern seaboard. Once one of the lines of text on the sign says DELAYED, eventually the others change below it. DELAYED 5 MINUTES. DELAYED 10 MINUTES. DELAYED 15 MINUTES. DELAYED.

"Mommy can we ride on the train I want to ride on the train now when can we go to the train?"

"Pedestrians are killed every day along the tracks. Please remember to wait, look and listen. The train is moving very fast. If it strikes your body or your vehicle, you could be seriously injured, or even killed."

In any space with hundreds of people who are transitory and replaced by hundreds more, there can't be one story. It's too crowded to think about one person. It's too difficult to follow anyone from one part of the station to another because each path is intersected by another path. Waiting is interrupted by moving is interrupted by waiting is interrupted by moving is interrupted by waiting. Things converge into straight lines only after the station, on the railroad or the highway, but not here. Here, the station itself is the only constant.

A bewildered potential passenger decries his confusion: "the sign says 'Gate A, track 4' and this is gate A but the screen says 'track 5' so which is it the sign or track 5, track 4 or the screen?" A computerized voice announces, "Now boarding, Gate A, track 3 --" but it is interrupted by the announcer in the center of the station "-- now boarding, Gate A, track 2." The passenger kicks open the door to gate A and hurries down the stairs.

"How was my ride? I'll tell you how my ride was. It was just fine except for the person behind me. For three whole entire hours this lady would not shut up. How do you talk constantly without stopping for three whole hours! -- I'm sorry -- What did you say? Reception's a little funny here. Oh! I said how do you talk constantly, seriously without stopping once, for three whole hours? Ok. Yes. I'll see you in fifteen minutes."

"Welcome aboard train 386 making all local stops. Only tickets with today's date will be accepted. Your ticket must be marked for train 386 in order to board this train. No other tickets will be accepted. This train is bound for West Virginia. This is not the train to Baltimore. This is not the train to Baltimore. If Baltimore is your destination, please be aware that this is not the train to Baltimore. All aboard, train 286. The quiet car is in the rear of the train."

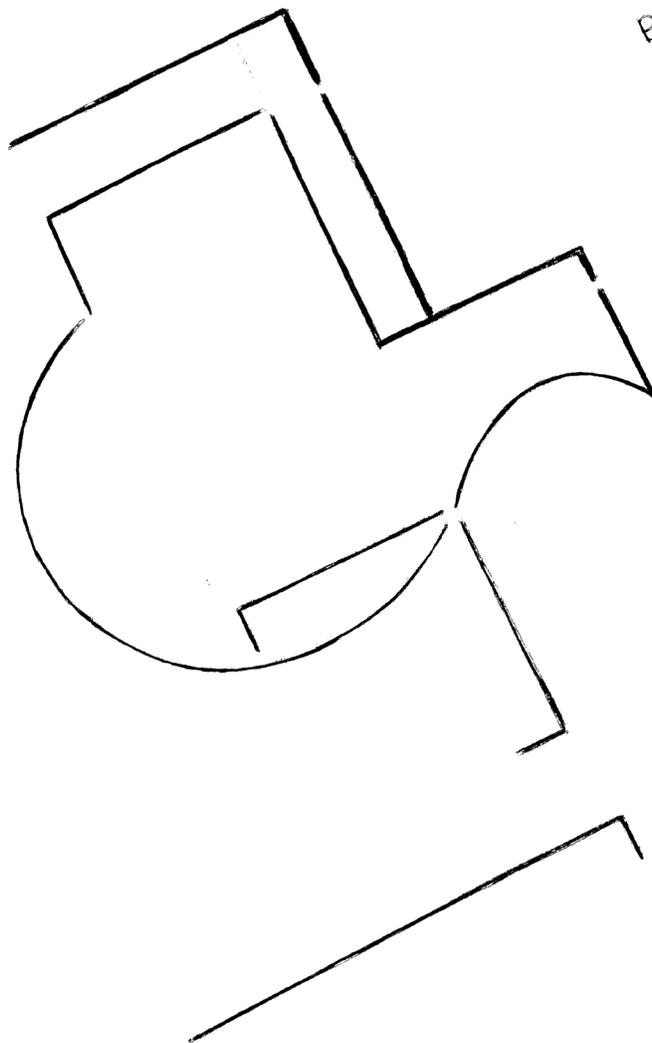
All the rails that cross the American continent had their start here in Baltimore. All the rails and all the tunnels and all the bridges are connected to this city, historically if not physically. The first railroad bridges in Baltimore were expertly crafted by masons, to serve as cornerstones for the expansive, pioneering enterprise to come. First the continent, then the stars. The stone bridges are unusual. Most bridges outside of Baltimore were made of wood. Many of those wooden bridges were burned in the war. Today's bridges are manufactured from steel, not crafted from stone.

3,000 people use this building on a day. Many of them use it every day. Some are just passing through on their way to another city and never see the interior of the station. Others, here on business, they see the place exactly twice. Although this is the eighth busiest train station in the country, two thirds of it are empty. Imagine what ghosts must busy themselves on the upper floors. Clerks counting tickets for trains that no longer exist. Ghost trains with names like "The Spirit of Saint Louis," "Dominion Limited" bound for Canada.

A mother welcomes her daughter who has arrived at the station, saying "I almost didn't recognize you with that hat on. It's lovely. Where did you get it?" The daughter removes a pair of headphones from under her hat. She did not hear her mother welcome her. Her mother's smile fades. They walk quietly away from the terminal.

"For your safety, and for the safety of your fellow passengers, please refrain from running anywhere in the station or on the platform." The sign's letters change in an instant from DELAYED to DEPARTING. The man in the athletic clothes begins to run. The man with the briefcase has not yet noticed the change on the sign and does not move. A collision between the two of them is imminent.

A recorded narrator reminds passengers that we're all on the same train together so if you see something, say something. "...Describe specifically what you observed, including: Who or what you saw; When you saw it; Where it occurred..."



B/E

I Dreamed of Chopping a Tree  
That Would Never Be Felled

working forever // never well.

splinters // ever and ever  
splinters // never timbers

an axe // swinging brightly  
daily, nightly

a man // grindstones // dust

visible breath // morning  
light // jewels of sweat

the swinging // the swinging  
the swinging is all

## At the Jubilee Café

We take a seat in a booth by a window and wait for a server to appear with a menu. This place offers up an entire buffet of conversations to overhear, all at once.

“His doctor says that it’s spread to his liver now.” — “There’s that old bingo parlor out in the county.” — “Sure there are rules at the demolition derby. Like what? Like, you have to take all the anti-freeze out of the car and replace it with water.” — “What?” — “I don’t know.”

Staring at the speckled pattern on the tabletop, we don’t appear to be listening to anything in particular. I attempt to begin a conversation of our own.

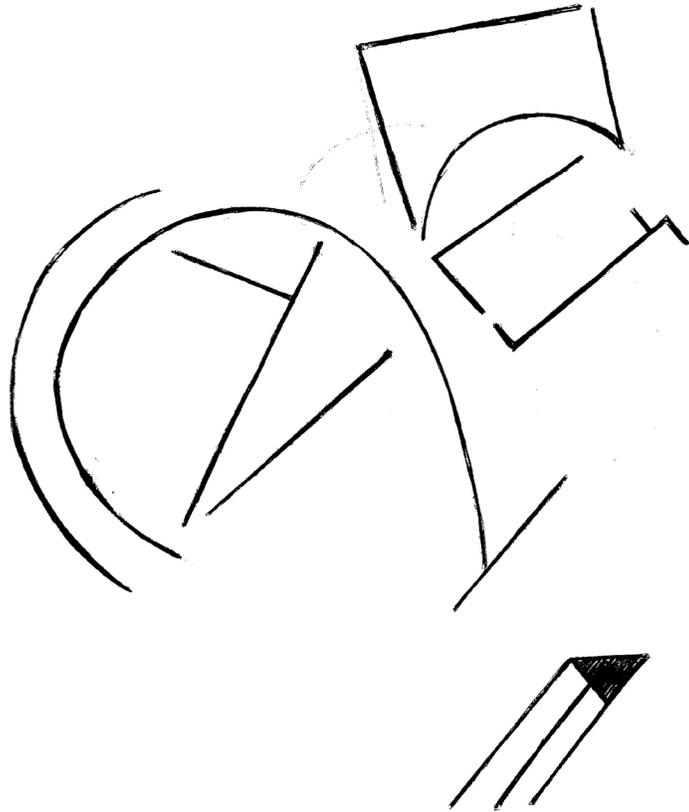
“Did I tell you” — “Oh hello, so your name is Patsy is it? Patsy are you sure you can smoke that thing in here?” — “No, she didn’t hear that.” — “So as I was saying, I wanted to tell you — “

“What’ll ya have? Regular, decaf?”

“Oh, coffee? Are you having coffee? I’ll have coffee. Yes. Thank you.” — “So as I was saying, I wanted to tell you” — “I’m sorry? Oh, yes I think we would like another moment. Would we like another moment? Yes, we’re going to need another . Another moment. Thank you.” — “So, the thing is” — “Oh yes, thank you I’ll have the crab sandwich.” — “As I was saying, the thing is” — “Oh yes, everything is just fine, thank you. Delicious.”  
Anyway, don’t talk with your mouth full.



B/10



## A Live Studio Audience

Musical comedy, you make us laugh // Workplace situation comedy, you make us laugh // Animated comedy, you make us laugh // Ethnic situation comedy, you make us laugh // Satirical news programs, you make us laugh // Family situation comedy, you make us laugh // Absurd comedy television, you make us laugh // Sketch comedy television, you make us laugh // Reality television comedy, you make us laugh // Romantic situation comedy, you make us laugh // Domestic situation comedy, you make us laugh // Improvised situation comedy, you make us laugh

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You make us laugh // You make us laugh // You make us laugh // You make us laugh

We laugh at your jokes // We laugh at your jokes // We laugh at your jokes // We laugh at your jokes

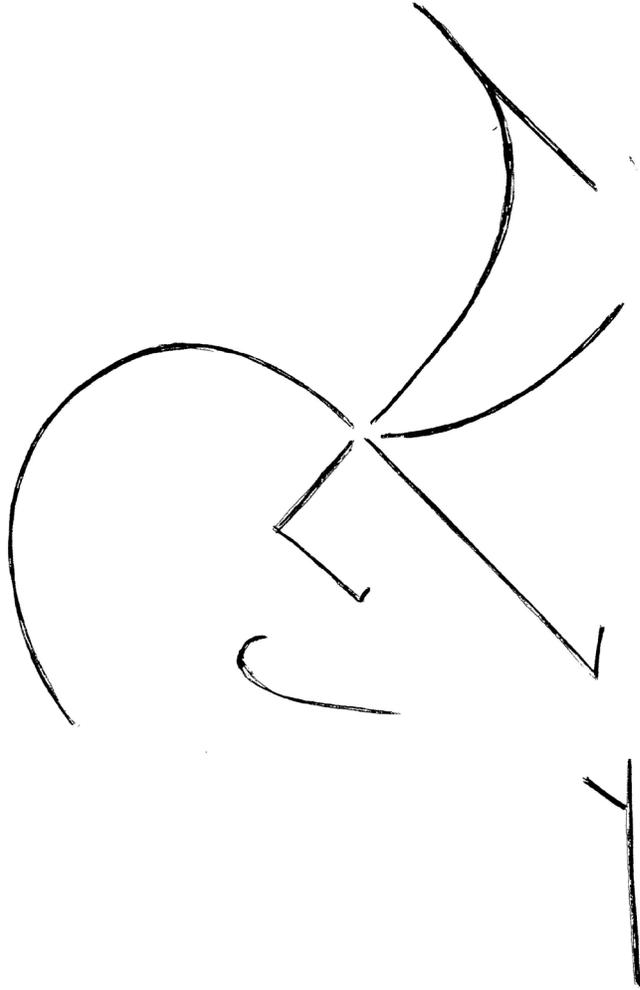
We laugh // We laugh // We laugh // We laugh

### View from the Other Side

The peephole in the door is a small tunnel with a tiny curved lens at one end. From the outside of the door looking in, it is impossible to see: who is on the inside looking out wondering: what is there?

The peephole only works in one direction, like an eye.





## I'm Sorry It's Been a While but You Know How It Is...

When you're too busy being happy // Paying the bills // Waiting in line at the pharmacy // Wondering whether there will be parking available // When you're too busy being happy // Having the perennial argument but not argument about what's for dinner // Sorting the junk mail from the good stuff // Defrosting the freezer // Adjusting the thermostat

When you're too busy being happy // buying useless things on sale // looking for the remote // pouring out old milk // using television to look at the sky // copy, paste, select, cut, undo

When you're too busy being happy // Wondering whether today's interest rate is a better interest rate // Cleaning out old boxes in the closet // Removing the dust that collects

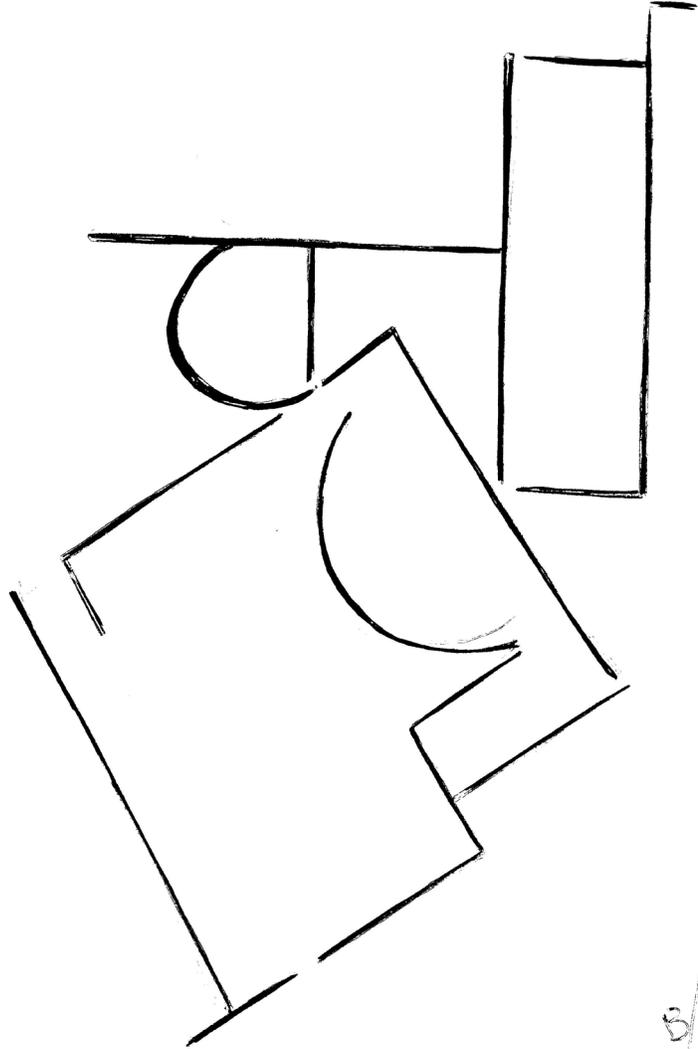
When you're too busy being happy // pressing the snooze bar // brushing twice and flossing // hailing a taxi cab // overdressed for the weather // blocking out work for life // blocking out life for work

When you're too busy being happy // Wondering laptop or tablet // Pairing the socks // Answering the phone, sometimes // Negotiating the morning traffic // Tying ties and shoelaces

## Lost Nation

This is where whole nations lost their prayers. The fields burned. Hot winds blow.  
This sky has seen too much. Too many centuries of nothing. Where seeds should be thrown  
to gods and not coins.  
The sky here has no rhythm. It is expansive. It begs for the long gone dance. There is no  
dance. The fields burned.  
The seeds blow.





5/6

## Channel Surfing the Horror Shows Without Paying Attention

A presence // in the winter // together with a reluctance //  
to go into the house // to persuade the old man // of insanity  
or ghosts.

All of the above will perish.

Woe to the guests, members and ghosts of the family. //  
There's a lurid history of heavy bitterness. // Theodora is  
a clairvoyant orphan // who bears the burden of her instincts. //  
who scares a terror you'll barely believe. // who remembers these remnants of the world:

the remote village, distant culturally most of all // the  
guests are never invited, never welcome // the antiques are  
somehow demonic // the caretaker believes there's something  
out there // the experts all agree, all but one // the  
one who has slowly slipped into a coma // the hushed voices  
and echoing footsteps // the Yankee Pedlar, he's not from  
around here // the children whose names are never spoken  
// the key never found, the lock never opened. // the lake is  
serene with fog and moonlight. // the memories begin to  
precede their causes

The bitch is weaning her pups // The fish are missing their  
guts // The leather is stretched until tender // Come inside  
now. Come inside.

The hinges have all gathered rust // The lake has turned  
into dust // The windows are dark. All dark. // Come inside  
now. Come inside.

The dust will turn into blood // The portraits are all covered  
up // The things in your dreams are only your dreams  
// Come inside now. Come inside.



## Convention Center

The point is to be both immediate and actually important.

You could say that. I just did.

People repeat the things they overhear. Someone has the conference podium, talking about what you need to know, how to do what you need to do, how to convince your boss of whatever it is that bosses are predisposed to misunderstand and they use the word “paradigm”. “paradigm” is the word for “I don’t care what you think. change it.” People write it down. Many of them write the same thing down. Know this. Do this. Something funny. I like his tie or her hat and I think the coffee is good or awful and one of the anecdotes doesn’t match my personal experience therefore the entire premise must be false and I sure did shake a lot of hands today and I ran out of business cards and I ran out of the line and I ran out of the taxi and I ran out in the rain to catch up with the tour bus and I ran out of coffee and the secret to success, you understand, the secret to success, now listen up here, the secret to success is always easier said than done. I think it must help to be attractive.

The point is to be actually important.

Are successful people attractive before their success occurs or does attractiveness change itself with every new successful person? I saw pictures of people who were famous in the decade before I was born and many of them were not attractive.

It’s so easy to see things from other times now. In other times, it wasn’t so easy to see things from other times. We don’t, in our immediacy, say so many things from other times.

There is a time and a place for every purpose that serves the immediate need it seems. Sometimes we take notes to remember we were there. It helps to be able to prove we were there.



## Portraits and Landscapes

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printed in a limited edition  
version 1.9 // © 2015





