

The apartment was spacious.
Large bay windows before
old wooden desk. The man
sat at the desk and stared out
at the desolate courtyard.
Gray satellite dishes on
neighbors' rooftops, low sky

Cellphone screen under starlight.
Almost innocent its blinking
battery light.¹ Nothing else
glowing in the meadow but the
eyes of the coyotes roaming the
dry brush. Inside the phone, a
passing life recorded. Left
forgotten when the star-gazing
was done. Still, it is broadcasting
its signal, calling out uselessly for

1 As children, in the farm, we often lay
atop the grass hill by the river. The
summer nights warm and the sky filled
with the gliding lights of planes and

O you signals spinning round the
world with our secrets in tow,
what lies below, what pleasures
go, what torn bits show?

-visible days, shreds of fate sailing above the five-o-clock gridlock. Here I am in my body, incomprehensible. Screen, give me the nearest exit.² This weekend we simulate escape. The mind is not made for continuous use, yet it traffics in dreams as we sleep. External organs attached to our senses. Kind buttons pop into color. Our longings revealed by white light. From finger to pixel and pixel to cloud. In underground tunnels, the city's processions of memory hum. This meadow of cables

2

Commuting creates some of the most solitary moments of our lives. Here in this car I have known the meaning of the mind's isolation from the body. Attached to this machine, I become an operator of gears, but another part of me, elsewhere

I watched the jet planes flying in formation above the apartment.³ It was Sunday. My medication had run out and I started crying for some reason. The roar of the engines tore thru my chest. I don't

3

Like everyone else, I've had dreams of the end of the world. It's an incredibly peaceful feeling the moment just before light takes back everything

I didn't feel a thing. The anesthesia worked like a charm. Going under was a subtle sinking, an ocean rolling over me before I could know what was happening. Delirium of waking punctuated by nurse's speech. Instructing my uncle to hold my arm and walk me out through the back. The proper way to handle me like I was a monkey or a dog,⁴ my words a jumble, hilarious, no one understood a single thing I was tryi

4

If the body is dull, so is the mind. If the eyes are drawn inwards, so is the self. If the mind is dull, the body is anxious. The body is a child, the body is an animal. The mind is an animal, a link that thinks itself out of the body but cannot break its connection to the body. If the body is obsessed with sensations the mind can only watch and wonder. If the mind is lost,

Barlight spilling onto sidewalk. Grimy faces of gutterpunks watching from behind curls of smoke. Legs, legs, legs, heels, popped collars, bare breasts under v-cut blouses, legs, ass, stockings, ankles

It's okay to have your stomach pumped. It's okay to spend the last of your money on beer. It's okay to be depressed. It's okay to be ashamed of things you've done. You're not alone. It's okay to have broken your promises. It's okay to not have been a decent

O pop-up ads! O gas pump
screen news clips! O elevator
music! How you fill my extra
minutes with noise. How the
silence runs from you. How
you fill my skull-sized kingdom
with your calming emptiness,⁵
how my thoughts flee! O how
the weight of being here drains

5 After they parted, for a year she
appeared in the man's dreams. He
would wake up full of such terrible
happiness, and then slowly the
realness of his bare room would
seep in. Mercilessly, each day
made a present of her absence to
his small, unwashed bed sheets.

The way dark backgrounds allow
your screen to reflect your face. The
way you can spend hours there,
wallowing in boredom.⁶ Letting
time go to waste. Letting objects
abstract and words float away

6 We never called it happiness, for we didn't know that's
what it was, but there were days that felt endless.
Abandoned lots to be explored, evening skies so fierce in
their bright goldenness, which pierced the tall dry grass of
the fields and glinted like starlight off the chain-link fences,
the massive trees dancing above us in the wind as we ran
after each other laughing, for what reason, who knows

the fast food joint filled with street kids nursing \$1
coffees in the sterile fluorescent light. Those with
screens take advantage of the free Wi-Fi. All of
them, their clothes and bags, exuding that musty,
sour smell. What life are they at war with, that this
sleepless interior night, littered with trash, seems
the best choice?⁷ More keep walking in

7 A plan can break apart, like a
cookie, like a sand castle, like a
cracked limb. It's easy, all you
need is to not know all the facts
and to go ahead anyway, and
how else should we proceed, the
wind always ahead of us,
blowing dirt over our heads

bare planes of lonely moments in a small town where nobody knows you or cares to. The cloister of a crammed apartment room.⁸ The reason we love caves despite the crawling thoughts living in them like spiders. We make friends of them. We hang from their threads on those nights when our minds threaten mutiny. Would that we could

8 For a long time, man was happy to take from the fruits of the earth's transformations. Then, like a computer with an over-burdened hard drive, the earth began stuttering around our towns. But there is no malfunctioning in nature. This breaking apart is also necessary. Time will keep brushing

We are here, at the scene of the shooting, and our hearts really go out to these families, these families who must be, just devastated, who were victims to unimaginable—of just unimaginable, hard to imagine levels of—what we can only barely—I mean really, our hearts really go out to these families,⁹ go like dogs eager to leave, to run out of the house and never come back.

9 The first dose of it decreases the anxiety. And then, slowly, the inability to keep from faintly smiling. It does not work for everybody. There are cases where the heart is essentially bashed repeatedly against the nearest wall. These cases have to do with what we don't understand. A madness from our world's other face—

lights of the tunnel streaking by outside the windows. Here I am in my body, untouched except by the fabric of my clothes, drunk, admittedly, subway speeding underwater,¹⁰ occasional shriek of metal gears punctures the constant noise of wheels on track and compressed air rushing past train cars. Everyone sits silent. A small child looks down at a book he's holding open with both hands

10 What is it about crowds. There are invisible threads that stitch us together, all the time they are forming and dissolving. There is a thread going from the small of my back to the small of your back. I can feel it stretch and snap when we say goodbye and I watch you mount your bike and disappear into the thick traffic

All you've ever wanted now comes in colors. People are starving still, of course, and killing and dying, but it all comes in colors now. The world has split open before you. You can walk through a paused explosion and peruse the human tissue hanging in the air. Love somehow exists still. It's difficult. And never what you think. Requires waking. Walking with your heart softened past the spectacles of human pride. All of it in color now. If you want to see the entrails of the beast.

As a crinkled bill disappears into the metal gash of the machine, I realize I am ready to sell my body parts. I wanna make the most of each. I am new to the market but it seems to be flourishing. So much is being felt by the wealthy and their hard-earned spare limbs.¹¹ I grab my drink from the slot and go back outside. It's true, my body has not been bad to me, but I have never asked much of it either. Will my hands get me through this month? Will my right ankle and inner thighs be enough?

11 In a perfect world it would be April.
The means of making would bloom
from the hands of righteous people.
Our machines would sleep when
unnecessary. We'd think as a species.
We'd listen to our cells as to music,
listen to the calmly speaking doctor

state of the art trees, ultra-realistic ponds,
professionally planned weddings, actual sky.
Arranged faces, organic glasses. Wired walls with
droning ghosts. Do-it-yourself birds, downloadable
leaves. Playgrounds of unparalleled verisimilitude. A
place for all your daily-existence needs. No
membership or memories required. State of the art

Under me, the bed. To my left, the small wooden desk we found in the alley behind our old apartment complex. On top of it, lamp, books and papers¹². More books atop the night stand at the foot of the bed, next to the window. Shadows on the curtain cast by leaves moving outside. A weekend in this coastal desert town. The god of unpaid debts lies around the house all day, watching me. Waiting patiently for my options to

12 A cosmic feeling is possible amidst the most mundane situations. Every person must eventually discard their body and their name, become objects again. Every one who ever listened to a train go by or searched, while stopped at a red light, for a lost phone that kept on ringing somewhere in the car

Attention sleepers. There's a deal tonight on fucking your first girlfriend, both of you teens again, on the beach behind her house, every night, under the moon, bodies eager and never too familiar. We also have a discount on weightlessness and a two for one

The wires in the walls and floors of
the building hum softly all night.
The sound of a television leaks from
one window. Two tenants smoke
cigarettes out in the courtyard.
Another workday gone¹³. Spider on
heat pipe holding very still. Winged
insects sawing their songs in the
trees, the night birds passing

13

To stop living around your fears like orbiting
debris, learn to squander your various
selves. The trees passing by us on the
freeway, branches, leaves, twigs, roots and
flowers, sway to their fates so peacefully
between the patches of concrete.

Due to mindlessness while packing
I am phoneless for a week. I wander
these new streets without a link to
friendly voices. I found a bookstore
randomly. I stumbled upon the local
cemetery unprepared for the sudden
quiet, the air of peace above the grass

We have, essentially, two choices: take a god (any god. The State, for example: is an excellent god;¹⁴ also Art, your Bloodline, the Right to Have Things, Pleasure), or step out into the field on your own, without a name, a little woken speck of awareness, the magic of death playing always around you, your handle on the earth only as strong as your will to take hold of it, always dreaming towards that hour of your disappearance with no promises or illusion of meaning no

14 and being a kid, I was forced to go with them. Had to sit through sermons, fidgety, thinking of the things I could be doing. Thinking, how do they stand this? Then the singing and dancing began. Men on one side, women on the other. Full adults jumping up and down, looking insane. Out of all the things to pray to, this ghost who supposedly rips through you, leaves you babbling and spastic so they have to catch your shaking body, lay you slowly on the floor

I watched the president mistake aggression for strength live on TV last Sunday. Made a sandwich and thought of the emperors humanity has given to the ground¹⁵. In our epitaph, no one will have the last word. The late sunlight falls on the plants I placed on my window sill while

15 We act as if we don't belong together. As if we weren't like the bees and branches and glowworms mating suspended from the undersides of leaves*, the comet moths and fruit flies, the planet's particle extensions, here for a while to sing our unlikelihood

Nature's colors can hold any human sadness, joy, or anger, any feeling. I stare at the insect's green-veined wings, as it spasms on the sidewalk, its last useless efforts admonishing my pretensions

stations and buildings cluttered with a million signs. The authorities don't want you to get lost. These crosswalks, all set down for your convenience. To ease the flow of bodies. Be careful. Don't speed. The machines you move inside can kill so easily. All this and thousands more distractions. How the warm neon bar

in the aquarium, jellyfish behind glass panes which could have been high-definition screens. Except when I tapped with my finger the creatures reacted. How good is our programming? We left after an hour. Outside, a rain-mist floated through the air. We walked through the park watching the massive pines and eucalyptus sway above us, lush green leaves. I smelled the air, closed my eyes and we walked

We'll be traveling at an altitude of diminished worries. Here you can float above your given names.¹⁶ Among travelers with waiting lives you can watch the clouds below you glowing with that stronger sunlight. White and aimless fields

16 As I left the city behind, a little panic woke my skin up. Looked around the plane, my hands. I was again deserting company. Again failing to build

not at all how we meant to
u t o s t r a y connections in a crowd
little children tapping vir t u a l b t e n t i r e scraps of vision lost. You
small forgetfulnesses fo r y o u r s a f l y o u were looking for a stran
tired hours on the bal c o n y b e h o l d i n s i d e your purse, a little world
Hit record and feel your sol i t u d e g o o u t i m e g l a n c i n g out of windows.
which is not loneliness, w h i c h s t a y s i n h o w you fo un d me w/no map
Private cosmic rooms of c o u n t l e s s w a t c h e r s i m p l e eyes hold you
Go out and be a body i n t h e r a a l l a n d tell me how you see
b e t w a i t i n g for a sound to catch
h i n a t u r e of the wire, the wave
go. Life waits at the bottom

I've let my past connections fade—little by little they all have gone. I don't know my grandmothers anymore, nor my cousins from the old country nor any of my childhood friends, nor my friends from the last city I left one day in December¹⁷. Even with all these buttons at my fingers, what all those souls have to do with me feels thin. I am bad at keeping up with people. And it's not that I don't care, but what can I possibly do for your spirits from so far away, while I'm sitting in this park bench looking at a green lawn I've never seen before, clueless as to what comes next? What use can I be to you without my body there for proof that we both breathe in the same world? When I'm so terribly far away from even last night

17

The seasons we divide life into won't save us. Love won't save us. Hate won't save us. Love and hate and all the other colors will go on after we're gone and they won't save us. And in this lies our only "salvation". It isn't our task to guard against time. Just to weave and be woven through it. To conjure up our dream and lodge it in the real then vanish into it

in the age of disclosure. Scenes picked apart. We don't talk of the important things. Out of ignorance, distraction, a little fear. Our mess sold back to us in glossy, digestible light-textures. We need to speak a little death in our lives. Not the bright explosions on the screen but what actually happens

and the music played on through a night of rain. Cables snaking from computer to speakers blared out their bright electric seas; the walls of the packed apartment shook against the tide. It was the last few pages of our adolescence though we had no way of knowing, as the light projector threw a waltzing constellation of chemically lit stars onto the plaster ceiling and the hardwood floor vibrated with us. The pictures came out blurred and ghostly, mostly bad, but full of light, shadows and bodies. They went up the next morning as we sat hung over on the porch letting for a while the mess happily sit. From there the particles we were splintered into various vortexes of future days. Each morning we woke up and gave thanks if our memories held against the onslaught of hours which pulled us every day from who we were and grafted us to new endeavors new surprises and new loves. And loss, loss.

Loss which was just waiting.
To guide our footsteps. To wake us into something other than us¹⁸

18

It was not with music, but in the silence of his thoughts that he built, once more, a sustainable routine. At dawn he'd make coffee. At 7:30, bike to work. During lunch he'd sit alone and try to think about the trees and the clouds outside the office. Not of people. Or their things.

After the flight, you will return to a ground changed in your absence. The solitude of post-collapse identity is just what you need to unwind. We recommend the water. You won't want to go back