

MEMOIRS OF AN OUTSIDER
vol. 2



JERRY KATZ

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I was a journalism major my first week in college. my first assignment (beat) was to cover an algebra class. I quickly dropped the course and the major. "if you keep on doing newspaper work you will never see things, you will only see words and that will not do, that is of course if you intend to be a writer," Gertrude Stein told Hemingway, who took her advice and gave up his job as a correspondent for a Canadian newspaper. I intended to be a writer, so as a former journalist I feel I'm in good company.

my first exposure to modern art was through the mainstream media. one night in the fifties, when I was still in my teens, a friend and I went to the Stadium, the neighborhood movie house on Plco and Livonia in Los Angeles, and sandwiched in between two features (long forgotten) and a cartoon, was the Hans Namuth documentary, Jackson Pollock. because of the demise precipitated by an antitrust ruling against the studios (causing a breakup of the theater chains) and the increased presence of TV, the theaters, desperate to keep afloat, threw everything in for the price of admission, which was, then, less than a dollar. and because one of our little group of high school friends was an artist, we were aware of the controversy surrounding Pollock, as framed by the mass media. at this time the cartoons in the magazines and newspapers parodied abstract art. they came in basically two modes; geometric – a triangle or rectangle intersecting a circle (Kandinsky), or organic blobs – chimp in artist's smock throwing paint on a canvas, etc. the movie, so different than the usual cute shorts they liked to present like the one called Day of the Painter, where the artist chainsaws a large painting and sells the pieces, held my rapt attention. both my friend

and I were impressed by the straightforward, unpretentious way Pollock demonstrated his process. it was the first time I actually personally identified with an artist.

my first exposure to Duchampian aesthetics was also through the mass media when later, John Cage appeared on the Tonight Show (Jack Paar era), and explained to a bemused Paar and the mostly inured but receptive audience, how the sound of water, dripping from the faucet of the tub or basin set up on the stage, was music to his ears, and hopefully, to ours as well. although I knew of Cage by that time I hadn't yet felt the impact of what he was doing. I guess, that night, I saw him as an affable eccentric, a curiosity in the music world, which for me, then, consisted mostly of hard driving jazz, as well as classical and experimental. in fact, the performance, in my mind, seemed a bit like the entertainment a person bowing a saw on the Original Amateur Hour might provide. an act Cage most likely would have approved of.

both Cage and Pollock, arguably the two most influential American artists of the 20th Century, were born in 1912. both spent formative years in L.A. aesthetically, and as physical types they were poles apart. so one might suspect that background (in addition to biology) is as important as generation in shaping one's aesthetic sensibilities. however, there are intriguing similarities. absoluteness of process is one, which allowed each, while creating art, to vacate their egos, and thereby allow their works to achieve autonomy, Pollock through an inner immersion of his senses, and Cage, through chance (the opposite). yet both were involved equally with movement and change.

I made about a dozen 16mm films in the sixties. almost all of them were shown publicly. none of them were reviewed. they no longer exist. my films ranged from explicit sex to pure light abstractions. most of them were short frames with dense imagery. a few of them were early conceptual films using single frames. several of my films were shot off TV screens, both b & W and color. I was possibly the first person to shoot entire movies off of a TV monitor. my first color TV movie, which was my third film shown publicly, was at a midnight screening at the Cinema Theater on Western Ave, to the usual packed crowd, in 1964. the film was superimposed (3 tracks) of the ubiquitous images of that decade, including talk show hosts and guests, movie reruns, sitcom footage, musicians, dancers, and commercials, as well as live footage (the undulating thighs and legs of a woman in bright colored hose and thongs). the juxtapositions were semi random. there was a girl sitting in the row behind us with her date, probably still in her teens, who was totally transfixed by the film. from the opening frame, she compulsively identified every image aloud as it came up. "David Suskind, Dorothy Kilgallen, James Brown," etc....she was obviously, unconsciously, a pop culture addict, and it was just her consciousness I was trying to reach...it was a strange and pleasurable sensation to be physically so close to someone who inhabited so different a universe than mine, responding (so personally) to something I created. the second to last scene of the movie was 3 tracks of Dean Stockwell being shoved off a bicycle, repeated over and over again. in the 60s the same movie would be played every weekday at the same time on the same channel, so I was able to go to my parent's house, we didn't have a color TV, and shoot the same scene with slight variations. the

movie ended with a single shot of Dean, bald like a miniature Buddha, drinking a glass of milk. both images were from *the boy with green hair*. as the numbered leader ran through, and the screen turned white, the element in the theater which was antagonistic towards me, and had gotten on two of my earlier films, started to boo, and then a much larger segment of the audience started to applaud, completely, and deliberately, drowning out the boos. although from then on I got good responses to all my films, this was my most rewarding and vindicating experience in terms of audience response.

when the opening score thunders you're embarrassed by the sheer emotion of it all as if you were the composer. surely such feelings died long ago. but just as quickly you're bored by them and can't imagine enduring this lavishness for another 2 hours pressed against the wall like one trying to keep dry. Elaine Equi – having a coke alone yet it's interesting I didn't suppress the chill I got while listening to the main title music on the soundtrack of the Wizard of Oz (CD) as the kettle drums rolled and the cymbals clashed, and the orchestra launched into the instrumental version of Over The Rainbow, then playful dancing, followed by a celestial chorus of female voices, then more clashing of cymbals, more playful dancing, then a sudden softening into quiet. superb. bravo.

soon after we met, the first thing Wallace Berman sent me was a postcard (collage), a still from a Flash Gordon (Buster Crabbe) serial. in it he had colored the hair of Flash Gordon, yellow, and had colored another person's hair, orange. in the front row of the group, standing in an ambiguously futuristic setting, was a pretty full faced woman with a short, dark,

Jean Seberg haircut, wearing a man's suit and tie. her cheeks had a rosy tint, and her lips were painted ruby red. above her head was a cartoon balloon, saying, "Gerald, Swing." I had never seen art like that – so un-highbrow, mysterious, edgy, and fun. the androgynous implications were slightly threatening. shortly, I was introduced to the flip side of his art, the contrasts of flesh and darkness. the first label I gave it was 'stoned' art because I knew I was on a different plane when I was stoned, which was every night. later, when I was more aware of the antecedents (re the mail art), I could see some of the same elements (and attitudes) in the postcards Apollinaire received from Picasso and Derain – a similar combination of beauty, kitsch, and humor (puns). dada, surrealism, chance, French bohemianism, American pop culture and hipsterism, and, perhaps, a dose of German expressionism, as well as the special qualities of California light and space, all come into play. however, I don't think any of these elements really explain what made his work and that of other members of the American 'underground' different, without considering the fact that he was part of a first generation of hip, predominantly white, artists, who used drugs as their muse.

"strongest aura." I wouldn't put it exactly that way, though I felt the same thing when I first met him. it wiped out whatever in my mind Beat was (or maybe defined it). his physical presence was authentic. it wasn't his image as much as it was his aura. it was physical. not his cool. in fact he behaved like a clown, standing in our bedroom in striped shirt and grey, soft textured, pants. I realized Beat is a physical state, not verbal, not hip, put-you-down coffee house silent smirk. but interestingly, although I got to know him pretty well, I never

had that feeling again, at least not as strong. when we meet someone for the first time, it's the aura that dominates. the more familiar with someone we become, the less we perceive their aura, except in those rare moments when it's revived.

He was not different in his way or in his talk to her from the way he had always been with her but somehow it had now come to her, to see, as dying men are said to see clearly and freely things as they are and not as she had wished them to be for her.

and then she would remember suddenly what she really thought he was and she felt, she knew, that all former thought was truer better judgment than this sudden sight, and so she dulled her momentary clearing mind and hugged her old illusions to her breast. Gertrude Stein — The Making Of Americans

in 1964 there was a benefit held in S.F. for artist Arthur Richer (to help cover medical expenses for a chronic back problem). a lot of the name Beats and other members of the S.F. Renaissance were to attend. John Fles asked me if I wanted to drive up there with him. it was just going to be he and me, and I looked forward to the space and relief the drive up there would afford. as we went about our errands that evening, the list quickly grew.. first, John invited my wife and a girlfriend of hers, then another girlfriend. then about an hour before we were to leave at midnight, he ran into Ben Talbert and Hal Glicksman, and invited them. now John's mother's Dodge coupe only seated five comfortably, and six uncomfortably, which left the seventh with no seat at all. we were

to drive by Ben's house in Santa Monica in route to the Coast Highway, as whether they were to go, or not, was still up in the air. I had my fingers crossed. to no avail. so much for my plans for a little space, rolling through Steinbeck country, etc. Ben, this was our first meeting, turned his head back at us with a big smile, and immediately pulled out a freshly rolled joint, 1 of maybe 20 he passed around on the ride up. the claustrophobia for me, turned out to be something truly debilitating. when we got to S.F., the rented storefront in the pre-Hippie Haight was already filled. I sat down on a concrete block and Dean Stockwell, seeing me alone, snapped my photo. a few minutes later, sitting outside on the side-walk with a friend I had arranged to meet, who lived on nearby Ashbury St., Dean walked by, and said, "you'll like the photo, I'll send it to you." as it turned out, we (Debby, Fay, and I) spent most of the day elsewhere with my friend, which for me was a regression, and turned out to be wasted time. the trip back was more of the same, one person (male) having to face the seats, sitting on his haunches. when it became my turn to drive, it was like trying to navigate a two dimensional map. it made Ben so nervous, that after about 50 miles, he asked me to pull over and let someone else drive. a couple of days later, when John came over, he was pissed because I had spent most of my time away from the benefit, which I regretted. he said I missed meeting Robert Duncan, with whom, he said, I had "a lot in common." Dean sent me the photo in the form of a collage. he cut the background away from the portrait of me (tousled hair, navy issue work shirt under a torn war surplus army jacket, and an olive knit wool scarf) staring wearily but warmly at the camera, and replaced it with a National Geographic photo of arctic glaciers. I was

impressed that he got my sense of isolation. of course, along with all the other artifacts of that period, I eventually destroyed it. John's motivations: first, he was beginning to feel uncomfortable with the idea of driving up there with me, alone, then uncomfortable with the idea of just he, me, and the girls. still too intimate. with Ben (and Hal) he found the male protection from intimacy he was looking for.....what was, for him, the perfect balance.

shortly after seeing two of my films (at different times) and responding with two words after each, "very lyrical," and "very poetic," Wallace came over with his 8mm projector and showed me his Semina film (now called Aleph) for the second time." my response, of course was positive. I also said, "it needs editing" and he agreed. then, as we were walking through the front room, he spotted Jack Hirschman's Artaud Anthology on the coffee table, and I started to describe the essay, Shit To The Kabbalah, re Artaud's assertion that Kabbalists (i.e., Jews) would occupy a space, then vacate it, but maintain possession of it by covering it with a symbol (number, letter), which I thought was an interesting but bogus premise (his advocating physical directness) to use to vent his hatred towards Jews. is the supplanting of the material with the symbolic the basis of all mystical systems? anyway, Wally reacted, saying, "don't tell me about Artaud. I know Artaud. Artaud was crazy." also, earlier, before seeing his film, I showed him some photos I took with the self-timer of my wife and I having sex (hose, heels, and garters) which he dug. included in the shots was a pair of battered work boots sitting to the left of the bed on the floor. the contrast of the boots gave the photos an added erotic edge. not too long before that he

had said, when he saw a girlie collage I had done on the wall, "Debby's better than that." as far as his snapping at me about Artaud, he never reacted that way before, and the only reason I could think of was that he was pissed because I told him I thought his film needed editing. having seen it countless times since (I'm not sure how much of it now was there then), at any rate, unequivocally, a great film. not too long after that, he showed me a poster he did for the L.A. performance of Michael McClure's play, The Beard. a blowup of his wife (very clear and grainy), bare breasted, black cross around her neck, holding a work boot in each hand. different intent. but make what you want out of that. note: my description of the poster has been refreshed by reproductions of it I have seen in books on his work however, my earlier recollection is of the boots, shoestrings tied together, hanging on each side from her neck. kind of a 'beast of burden' pose. maybe there were 2 posters, though more likely it's a product of one's creative, but faulty, memory.

one rainy night at about 1 a.m., I drove out of the canyon and ended up riding down the Sunset Strip, stoned, in pouring rain, floating, like in a boat, listening to Smetana's The Moldau (The River), on the car radio. on the way back, just before the intersection of Pacific Coast Highway and Topanga Canyon Blvd., to be exact, a large boulder rolled in front of the car, and I deliberately ran over it, just to see what would happen, and it gutted the car. so, at 3 or 4 a.m., I called Wallace's number, 455 2221?, and Shirley answered. they were both in bed, of course. Wally said, "can't you hitch?" I said, "there's no cars." after we got back to Topanga, he said as he was dropping me off, "call me anytime (you need help)."

towards the end of our stay in Topanga (as I became more reclusive and began to withdraw from social contact), Shirley Berman (as well as Toni Basil, Billy Gray's girlfriend, Helena, and, a couple of times, Teri Garr) started coming over to visit Debby. one time, having heard, I believe, we had no food, she brought two cans of tuna. I painted the empty cans and sent them back to her. another time she brought a Satie album, which I caused to scratch by walking too close to the record player, which was on the floor, so she said to keep it. one afternoon she was visiting Debby and saw a photo propped up in the kitchen, the face of a woman (Vogue magazine cover of British model, Twiggy) which I had painted over, except eyes, brows, mouth, and hair, with a thin layer of white ink, so that the face looked like it was covered with cold cream. across it I wrote in big black letters, **I suffer**. "who did that," she wanted to know. "Jerry." "I thought so.....everybody suffers." of course my intent was meant to be more universal than her response supposed. several times I put on mascara and dressed in drag to shoot self- portraits.

Shirley to Debby after Wallace's death: "Jerry thought there was a group. there was no group."

the following is excerpted from an email correspondence between myself and writer, Kristine McKenna, regarding the exhibition she co-curated at the Santa Monica Museum of Art: Semina Culture; Wallace Berman & His Circle, in 2005.

7/1/2005

Hello Kristine

we don't know each other and you've most likely never heard

of me. but here I am with a book (actually two books) I'd like to send you – my recent Memoirs of an Outsider, and a reprint of four small previously printed books under one cover – partly because the context may be of use to you (re your upcoming? book on Wallace Berman) and partly for the feedback.

Jerry Katz

7/1

Hello Jerry; I would love to read your books.....
Tosh may have told you I've organized a show that opens Sept. 17 at the Santa Monica Museum of Art that involves many of your old friends. Please come! Best Regards.
Kristine

(handwritten)

Dear Jerry;

I received and read your books and was very moved by them. They're so awash in feelings of regret and loss, and your connection to music is very beautiful. I certainly identify with the notion that music can encapsulate a time of an encounter. I'm sorry to read that you've destroyed all your films, I would've enjoyed seeing them.....You must come to the show. I'd enjoy hearing more of your recollections, of your time in Topanga with all of them. Thanks for sending the books – I look forward to reading whatever comes next.

Best Regards, Kristine McKenna

7/15

Hi Kristine

just a note re the title of your upcoming exhibition. if you

intend to include the Seminas, Wally printed a poem of mine in Semina 8. it's the poem paired with a photo of an extended third finger. he included only the initials of the contributors in that particular issue. I appreciate the warm response to my books. J.K.

7/15

Oh my gosh! You're J.K.?! We spent years trying to figure out who J.K. was. We have an annotated listing of the contents of Semina in our exhibition catalogue; our book is in blue line galleys now, and hopefully it's not too late to add this late breaking news flash. Could you tell me your date of birth? And should we describe you as a poet and filmmaker who lived in Topanga during the 60s? My co-curator and I are thrilled to finally know who jk is. We thought John Keats? Joanne Kyger" Let me know any other pertinent information about your poem in Semina.....we must meet and have coffee sometime soon, best regards, Kristine

7/15

sure. I'd like to meet with you Kristine. let me know a good time when you're free. I've never gotten credit for that poem, although it's been included in many exhibitions. my birth date is 1934. I made films (with one exception) only during the 60s. I guess you could say I'm a writer and a visual artist who lived in Topanga during the 60s. I do a lot of photography now. also small drawings which I call Improvs, because they're spontaneous and can't be corrected.

Jerry

p.s. the poem was written before either of us had moved to

Topanga .

7/15

I'm really sorry we didn't hook up sooner; the premise of my exhibition is work by people who Wallace published in Semina or took photographs of. You definitely should be in the show, but it's too late, now!! We've been working on this show for seven years and NOW we meet! Perhaps we could screen some of your films in conjunction with the show (did you really destroy them all?) Kristine

7/15

.....the poem came about when Wally, whom I hadn't known for too long at that time, told me he was printing an issue of Semina and I said, "I'll send you some poems," and he said, "good." and the next time I talked to him (which was on the phone) the first thing he said was, "that Poem." one night the poem just came into my head. word for word, I can remember where I was standing. and I said to myself this is for Wallace.

can't you print up an addition or correction separately, and add it to the catalogue? it's done all the time.

I shot a film in the rose garden at Exposition Park over a 2 year period, 1971-2. I had changed a lot by then, and it's quite different than my earlier films. it's possibly my best film. it exists in video, DVD, and 16mm format. however, although I like to look at it, it's a mess. totally unedited and I neither have the materials nor the inclination to work on it now (if ever). it was shown in the Scratching the Belly of the

Beast survey of the history of the non-industrial film in L.A, in 1994.

7/20

Hi Jerry; It was nice meeting you and talking with you yesterday.

7/20

Hi Kristine – it was nice meeting and talking to you too.

every letter is a love letter Chris Kraus

when I was in the Navy, in Japan, Hong Kong, etc., or at sea on a particular stormy night, it gave me inner status to feel I was experiencing something distant, something inaccessible, something far removed from my original surroundings. the lack of accessibility (both ways) facilitated by distance, fortified a sense of self, of independence, which was vulnerable to being diffused by exposure. letters were the one form of communication capable of bridging the gap without disturbing the illusion of distance. in the era of communication dominated by electronics where anyone can be reached at anytime, anywhere, while driving, shopping, walking on the beach, etc., accessibility can dim vision. people who drive and shop while using their cell phones while failing to acknowledge the people around them, are taking from, rather than giving to, the environment, so that external reality becomes even more warped. when we were docked at our home port, NAS Alameda, I often flew to Los Angeles on weekend passes. one night I was motivated (even before deciding to leave the ship) by a vision of sitting in the

breakfast room at about 1 a.m., eating a tuna fish sandwich and drinking a glass of milk, then going upstairs to my bedroom and playing songs from a Mel Torme album....the song most stuck in my mind being the Gordon- Warren song, *I know why*. I felt as if a magic wand had been waved and I was out of the Navy, living in the ghost of my former life, but not anxiety free. there was still the aura of a condemned man. the next morning I was surprised when my mother scolded me for coming in so often, spending all my money on airfare.

occasionally poets will come up with a poem that transcends the rest of their oeuvre. such a poem is Matthew Arnold's Dover Beach. another is e e Cummings', *somewhere i have never travelled* which in my mind is one of the most moving love poems ever written. when I say love poem I mean non erotic love. Cummings was puritanical. he wrote sex poems, he wrote love poems, but never together. both poems have a natural completeness that makes one feel they wrote themselves. occasionally I will find poems of this nature in the works of poets who are not that well known, who are not included in the textbook anthologies, nor whose works are extensively covered in the book reviews. there's a poem in Exene Cervenka's book, Virtual Unreality (which is mostly a collection of ingeniously hand scripted rants), titled, Perfect World, only this poem is typed and is more formal in structure, which muses on the eternal formation and disintegration of a 'perfect' relationship. the details are moving in the poignantly ironic way she has of expressing herself. another poem with a natural completeness that just seems to have written itself. one I'd be happy to include in any anthology of

short poems. it's also worth noting how the modulations of the handwritten script enhance the meaning in her other poems; how much expression is meaning in certain contexts.

I had a part time job at Orbach's in its first L.A. location in Prudential Square on the Miracle Mile, as a stock clerk when I was 17. my first night at work a guy named Joe Segal, who was somewhat of an operator in the social scene at Fairfax High (I went to Hamilton), took me around to all the departments, introducing me to fellow employees, and generally showing me the ropes. so we kind of bonded. he liked to brag about his exploits with his 'cool' jock and social elite "buddies," who were members of his club, The Cardinals. one evening he asked me if I knew a certain girl who went to Hamilton. and in fact I'd seen her walking around school and thought she was very attractive, a thin, quiet, sensitive looking, Italian girl, with black hair, dark brooding eyes, and though she dressed modestly, an extremely sexy figure, who seemed to be nurturing a hidden passion. one night, according to Segal, she had gotten drunk and had become involved in a rendezvous with Segal and his pals, which culminated in their having group sex with her. "put a pillow under her, she likes that," Joe said, playing the role of the connoisseur. as it happened, she was in the same art class as Aaron Cohen, a friend who was even slower on the make than I. Aaron was the 'artist' in our little group, and he later got a scholarship to Choinard where he befriended several of the future Ferus Gallery stars. anyway, it also happened that he and she were quite chummy in class. so when her name came up, I said, tactful person that I was, "ask her if she knows Joe Segal and the Cardinals." of course her answer

was, “no,” but the next time we passed each other on the walk by the lunch court, the angst on her face betrayed her sense of guilt, and she deliberately avoided my gaze. that she succumbed to the wild streak she generally kept hidden in no way diminished her in my eyes, but at the same time, because the ‘secret’ was out, there was no longer the possibility that anything could happen between us. both of us had blown our cover.

the relationship between eroticism and impotency: a long time ago, in the 70s, I dreamt I was having sex with a (plain) woman, probably instigated by seeing the many Latina maids in the neighborhood I’d moved back to. she looked to be half Indian. she was short, had neither good looks nor a figure, which was of no importance. she was totally matter of fact. we were at ground zero, no games, no psychological or emotional attachment between us. we were fucking. I was building towards an orgasm without the premature problems or the feeling of not being totally into it that I’d experienced in ‘real’ sex. perhaps because I was asleep I was properly connected. but moments before a complete orgasm would have naturally occurred, I tried to control and prolong it, drawing her scorn!. and causing me to come prematurely. this was the closest I’d come in a dream to succeeding in sex, and it served as an illustration to what I was already beginning to know – do not hold back. let yourself go. and the next time will be longer (and freer), because you’ve discharged some of the overdrawn, but suppressed, eroticism – feedback. the object in this case is to have an orgasm as quickly as possible. to experience satisfaction. not to tease yourself with desire.

.

"you can't help me. I can't help you." one of the times when my former wife most looked good to me, was shortly after her father's death. our relationship (if there was a specific time) was on the rocks, and I was sitting on the rug in the front room in a circle with an old school friend named Mark, his girlfriend, a pretty young blonde (not too long after I had filmed them trying to have sex) and Mark's friend, John (her brother in law). they were trading me a couple of bags of grass for some LSD. it was a typically fresh Topanga afternoon, the eucalyptus leaves were swaying outside our front window. John commented on their spiritual essence. she walked in, dressed up, hair up, wearing a black dress and black heels, looking really good, with a chip on her shoulder, saying she was going somewhere (I didn't introduce her to them) and left. John, who had, in the past, the same heroin connection as Bill Evans, wanted to know if he could come visit because our place had spiritual vibes, but I discouraged him. as they were leaving, one of our cats, an extremely sensitive white short haired cat with an orange patch on her nose, rushed in through the little hinged swinging door above the kitchen floor from the outside. "what a beautiful cat," the blonde girl said. she'd been sitting with her shoes off, and later I discovered she had left one white shoe. she had large feet. there's a symbolism in leaving something behind, and I believe it had to do with the movie we didn't succeed in doing. she never did retrieve it.

another time she especially looked good (to me) was the night Stan Brakhage presented his suite of 8mm films, Songs, at the Cinema Theater. she was wearing a tight fitting wine colored wool knit dress a girlfriend who had style gave her. I

had a sense we were an attractive couple that night. we were sitting in the front row, center, and I was all nerves (not because of the event). at one point Stan put his foot on my shoe to steady me, while he lectured. when we got back I called the theater and he was still there. the first thing he said to me (before I said anything) was, "I can't come over." we talked for a while. he said my nerves were really coming out at the theater. I told him I was having a nervous breakdown. "you sound clear," he said. we talked about film. I recommended Robert Mulligan's Inside Daisy Clover (except the ending). he recommended Billy Wilder's, One Two Three (except the ending). he invited me to visit him for a few days in Colo., or send him the films. he stressed the former, but I didn't feel up to traveling, so I chose the latter.

her fellow devotee had sex with her guru, Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche (Born in Tibet) and had claimed she had 8 orgasms with him. then Trungpa began hustling her as well, calling her "doe eyes." and partly, just out of competitive feelings towards her friend, she threatened to make it with him. then one evening I was sitting in a chair and she came over, dropped her drawers and mounted me, wearing only a chocolate colored long sleeve t shirt. she moved up and down on my stiff dick in quick motions, counting each orgasm aloud. "1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 (yes, 12). then she got off me. I had 3 good ones. we never fucked that way before. we never fucked that way again I enjoyed it. she didn't have to fuck her guru.

when I was a small boy I had chronic earaches. my parents took me to an ear doctor who lanced the abscess on my ear

drum, drained the pus, and swabbed the ear canal with Q-tips. the brightly lit office, the gleam on the stainless metal instruments he used, and the feeling I was being cared for, gave me much comfort, and when he was done I was relieved of both my physical and mental pain, the latter of which may have been a partial cause of the earaches. when we left it was already dark. after I got in the car the first thing I remember is my father yelling at my mother, "you and your goddamn relatives," and the pain returned. and sitting in the back seat, looking front as we were driving home, I had a realization that happiness as far as the family was concerned, was never going to be. this was one of the first conscious abstract formulations I remember making.

my father contracted several men from South Central to replace the broken asphalt in our driveway with concrete. he was outside helping them. I was sitting in the breakfast room waiting for my brown rice to finish steaming, listening (very quietly) to madrigals on a radio show that came on once a week at noon, called, Chapel, Court, and Countryside. he came into the kitchen, opened the refrigerator and pulled out a can of beer from a large pack he had bought for the men, and walked into where I was sitting (it was clear he thought I should be out there helping, both physically and socially). he considered the ambience for a moment, aware that I wasn't just entertaining myself, and then flicked off the radio, sat down at the table and started drinking his beer. it hurt more because he first carefully weighed his values, instead of, as he generally did, just fly off the handle. I knew he meant it.

it's not democratic to do more than your share. that just

allows someone else to do nothing. which is dangerous because the ones who do more than their share, assume the biggest burden, assert the most influence, become the future fascists. there are no heroes.

the domino effect of human collusion is the more their addictions impoverish them, the greater their need.

empathy for one's tribe: Hitler. re Nazi invasion of Norway; "meat and cheese to make the German people strong." John Wayne. from movie Red River; "I'll have that brand on enough beef to feed the whole country. good beef for hungry people. beef to make them strong. to make them grow."

what makes a good drawing is the (inner) speed. the slower it is the less precise the line.

it's much easier to fit the picture to the frame than it is to fit the frame to the picture, I've discovered. but not necessarily more desirable, nor honorable.

dreams are amazing phenomena. when dreaming there's at least partial belief the experience one is having is not a dream. what is experience?

when you're trying to think about what song to play, a song comes into your head, interrupting your thoughts.

it amazes me that knowledge can be so elusive when frequently gossip and innuendo sprout and thrive like weeds.

the automobile has made it possible to drift along in one's own universe while navigating the external world. like all technology from the beginning, it's allowed us to be more abstract. what does this signify? if everything is nature, as the Taoists say?

one evening when I had moved back into my parents' house for a long while, my father and I passed each other in the hall. he smiled, I frowned. "stop trying to figure everything out," he said. he was probably right, but I'll never change in that regard.

back in the 80s John Zorn made the interesting observation that he and composer John Adams were doing the same thing only Adams was going a lot slower (A to Z).

so be it

a snail's pace, actually.

I can move about without making a sound. my mind may be noisy, but not my body.

don't ask me to show you what you won't perceive. I refuse to be a different person than the one you see.

Yes, if you haven't already guessed, I am distressed, if not obsessed, by the collusion, re my exclusion, from the historical moment in art history (however small) I was a part of. exclusion from history can be as simple (arbitrary) as not being invited to a party.

my fantasy about playing a romantic lead in a David Lynch movie has come to a head. I think the best way now to achieve the fame that has long eluded me, that I hunger for and justly deserve, would be to star in a Lynch movie about the love affair between a septuagenarian and a woman 50 years younger, with sharp dialogue and explicit lovemaking. I, of course, would write the screenplay, or, perhaps, co-write it with him.

my motivation? so all the middle school girls (and boys) with whom I share the park where I run on weekdays, will say, "there goes Jerry Katz (throb), what a hunk."

deflower. magnificent word.

how we got together:

"where did you meet?"

"on J Date."

"Yeh? heh, heh."

"I was 30 years past the cutoff age for the Temple Emanuel Singles. so what else could I do?"

another plan. one of my first ambitions was to be a singer of standards. lately that ambition has resurfaced and I fantasize cutting an album with Charlie Haden. once he hears me sing I'm sure he'll drop everything to do it. *I've never been in love before I thought my heart was safe I thought I knew the score.*

no shit.

dare to be happy.

the more successful, i.e., the more public the power, status, and image, of a particular group or individual, the more all related issues refer back to them, whether earned or not, regardless of the initial source. to challenge their hegemony is to incur not only the wrath of the group or individuals, but the ridicule and condemnation of the countless critics, culture mongers, acolytes, hangers-on, and sycophants, who have vested interest in reinforcing and perpetuating the myths of said groups or individuals. one may get beyond the premises that provide the foundation of the shared beliefs by relating to groups or individuals who are more evolved, sophisticated, or purer, i.e. have more magic, or, one must personally transcend. as the possibilities for the former may eventually be exhausted, the latter is the only real solution, the only ultimate recourse. beyond is always a matter of coming to terms with the facts.

dark. the last shade of light. staring at dusk. day after 3 orgasms with woman who's attractive, sexy, not flashy, does not stand out. whose sensual powers have me enthralled. dark palm fronds in paling light. smell of cool air through window. sound of aircraft approaching, receding. the aura of her image. cool, sensual, mystical. no lights – yet. mellow-ness of my state, engendering a feeling of tenderness towards women in general (while in my car this morning I saw a young lady wearing a black dress, pleated trim at the hem, probably walking to work. I had this feeling of tender eroticism for her). night. dark blue sky. slowly moving helicopter lights – UFO like ambience coming from another planet. put my nose to the screen. breathe in the cool perfumed (laundry detergent) air.

modest bragging:

“don’t expect the people you mistreat to love you.”

“I just made it up. I’m just making love to myself.”

“the interesting thing is now I can afford to be choosy, too.”

she’s always on, erotically. that leaves no space for sexuality to grow.

re – the cute girl I take home after the Black Cat art annual, who’s a Feng Shui ‘consultant’ by day. “where do you want to fuck? on the couch, bed, or floor?” terrific toenail polish.

emotional perfectionism – I freak out when people stifle their emotions under a guise of objectivity. I always suspect a need for power and control behind it.

still hope someone with a kind heart and a sexy curve will appear?

Subj: **Walking & Falling**

Date: 12/3/06 4:57: 11 P.M. Pacific Standard Time

From: Jer L. Kat

To: mail@difficultmusic.com

Dear Ms. Anderson

I am a longtime admirer of your work. one of my favorite pieces is Walking & Falling. I love the mood – the beauty, austerity and poetic intent of the piece. I must, however,

dutifully take issue with the faulty premise you base your conclusion on – i.e. that walking is falling. now, running is falling because you do let yourself go, or rather,` throw yourself and then catch yourself, over and over, as you say. while when walking, the lowering of the leg is always controlled. one never lets go. this, in fact, is what distinguishes walking from running. I hope my pointing this out to you will in no way give you the impression that I think less of this brilliant piece. quite the contrary. the deceptive logic adds to its charm. it's just that I can no longer (scientifically speaking) stand aside, as I have done for some 30 years, with the knowledge I have gained from physically subjecting your premise to the test, without speaking out!!!

Best of everything to you. keep up the good work.

Fondly,

Jerry Katz

From: jerlkat@aol.com

To: kimaddonizio@comcast.net

Subject: a slight (not slighting) critique

Date: Tue, May 18, 2010 3:47 pm

Hi re your poem Blues For Dante Alighieri – while I agree with you that the transformation from the literalism of an event to a work of art can sometimes lead to the opposite of what had been experienced, I don't completely buy your contention that what actually happened wasn't already contained in the poem – for one thing at no point in it did I read that you were "bitter about the guy." rather I read the experience was mutual. of the fifteen lines five begin with "we." but the evident lack of satisfaction, joy, catharsis, whatever,

was still there when the line from Inferno triggered your need to give expression to it. I like the poem and copied it and several others from the same collection after checking it out from the library a number of years ago. well, as it's stopped raining, I think I'll go outside and plant carrot seeds in my landlord's garden. what's up, Doc?

Jerry Katz

I'm not just willing to give up what I never had. the loving embrace of a woman. the warmth of her breasts. the fullness of her kisses. she receiving the flow of my semen. not yet. accusations are flying right and left. but sex, and through it love and soul, is the only thing that makes me mentally alive right now. I'm indifferent to everything else. to me, it's a clear trajectory. I try to write, perceive, dream...a state that can apply to the hard reality of connecting to another person – any object that can satiate the hunger the state has fueled. as far as I'm concerned, if I don't stir up the coals and start some new fires, I'm dead. I've got one goal, now. I may not be cool, but there's love in me, and I don't intend to hide it.

I listen to a little music. I start fantasizing (conversations) creatively. I sit here in front of a blank page. is anything outside of actual confrontation meant to be said? the thoughts I say are exquisite. creates a flow. but can I get them down on paper without killing the goose that laid them? when I fantasize it's still conversation. when I write it's still talk but it's one voice. the more I analyze it the more the drift away from the heart of it, the flow.

we go back to the beginning. take two steps together, legs bare, avoiding thorns along the path in the rose garden. then on the crowded street at dusk, arms around each other, walking, the homeless camped in storefronts, urchins on skateboards, wet leaves and garbage trucks, rubbing our legs against each other's like cicadas, creating sparks, warmth, if not music. the more world lost, the more our love, our hunger. they complain there's no real love. no real passion in literature and life. yet they ridicule all that isn't sophistry, cynical, and piously academic. we kiss on a corner, faces whitened by headlights, eyes blinded like jackrabbits, groping each other. then back to the gloom of a room, shades up, walls painted red and green by the neon across from it..... scorched cool. we bathe together and kiss. go to bed. sleep and dream as one.

desperation we're standing outdoors, a group of us. she, a couple of guys, myself, George. I'm facing her. she's wearing a white pull-over sweater and jeans. suddenly I'm pleading with her to have sex with me. "I haven't had sex in 40 years," I tell her. "just one night of love would change my life forever." she's shocked. but I can see she's also moved by a spirit of adventure. "give me a chance to think about it," she says, before walking away. the rest of us stand there in silence. "it took a lot of guts to do that," George finally says.

at Stoner Park today, while walking across the grass to begin my run, a skinny blonde girl, one of a group of uniformly attractive teens from one of several schools that use the park on weekdays, waves (mockingly) as I approach. a sexy dark haired nymph did the same several weeks ago – the first time

this has happened in the 4 or 5 years I've been running there. it didn't surprise me, even though there has generally been empathetic vibes between me and these kids, because they've been raised with a sense of entitlement and lack of respect for others. a case in point - one morning I left my shirt on a bench while running. a small group of girls opting out from games sat down on the bench. one of them picked up the shirt (not knowing to whom it belonged), held it on her lap a while, tried it on, took it off, held it awhile longer, and then, instead of putting it at the end of the bench where no one was sitting, threw it on the ground. when I finished running, I coolly walked over, they didn't dare look up, picked up my shirt, shook it out, and walked away without looking at them. I'm also thinking about my own nature. how I sometimes draw attention to myself by holding (not exposing my intentions, desires), which goes back to my own adolescence. for instance, I remember one afternoon when I was in junior high school, and was cutting through some vacant lots in my neighborhood to get to my house which was at the top of a hill. as I approached a small group on the block before mine, kind of looking straight ahead, one of them, a pretty girl in my grade named Nancy Thompson, who had transferred over to my school from Catholic school, and was one of the few non-Jews to make it with the 'cool' crowd there, called out, "duh," as I walked by. years later when I was in college and had a very different image and manner, we were both standing in the small private park across the street from my house (it was the first time I had seen her since junior high). she was there with her dog, but dressed up as though she was going to, or had just come from, a party, and her vibe towards me was warm (I learned later that she was about to be married). but

as soon as I responded with that old habit of shutting off, a knowing smile came on her face. this is not the only such incident I could relate to you. nor can I say the shoe has not been on the other foot on a number of occasions.

I rest after running. turn my head and look down at 2 black bobby pins left next to me on the green bench. that feeling arises in me. an aura of affection for the female. do I just like women or am I queer? not that much difference between the adolescent boys and girls playing. but the distinctions between them are delicious. still growing, yet complete, their agility is what they have in common.

in the parking lot of Co-Opportunity, pushing the shopping cart to my car, a girl, young adult or late teen, with her father, flashes on me as they walk by. the light of late afternoon flooding her natural fire red hair and lightly freckled face, floods me with her youth. what is to be gained by this continued pursuit? am I putting off something possible by maintaining this mindset? but it's not frivolous. it's not escape. and it doesn't preclude anything else. I'm not adverse to older (mature) women. if anything, many of them are adverse to me – sarcastic, cynical, turned off (to anything other than security, status and occasional lust). something about all this needs to be resolved so I can go on. why must I just respond to the image and put aside everything else?

back in the late 80s there were a couple of interviews Carl Stone did with Brian Eno on his radio show (KPFK), Imaginary Landscape. unlike some pop icons, he's open and articulate in many areas, especially aesthetics. it was interesting to

hear about the English town he grew up in, which was the proximity of an American army base during WWII, because of the music and culture he was exposed to as a result. he talked about how his moods affected his creativity. how one ambient piece they played grew out of the kind of melancholy one feels when day turns to night and one doesn't "bother" to turn on the lights. during the period, 1969-73, I lived in a single apartment on Beverly Blvd., above an electric company which overlooked an alley. beyond, was a view of the opulent backyards of the relatively affluent houses on Alta Vista. often in the summer I would sit alone at dusk, in the one chair (rocking), looking out the window at the lawns, fruit trees, flowers, etc., watching the sky gradually darken. inevitably, one or another of our cats, tuning into my mood, would climb onto my lap and we'd share the darkness and silence as one. if I tired of their weight and tried to nudge them off, they wouldn't budge. eventually I would go to bed, not having turned on the light at all. it's interesting, also, that when I met Eno a number of years later at Toni Basil's apartment, mostly because I was physically too far out of the loop by then, we didn't particularly hit it off.

one of the overlooked gems of group improvisation is the Richard Grossman, Ken Filiano, Alex Cline, disc, Trio In Real Time, a series of totally improvised live performances they did in 1989-90. listen to track 4, Silk The Color Of Water (all the pieces are titles of poems written by Grossman's wife, Dorothea), for some of the most delicately melodious non linear interaction you've ever heard. I can't say I knew Richard other than he worked at Rhino Records at a particular time I came in a lot. during most of it I didn't know his name,

that he was a musician. just that he seemed to know about jazz and didn't like to talk a lot. there wasn't much chemistry between us until one day I called the store to see if they had a CD by a French female improviser (he was the New Music buyer), and he said he'd order it and call me when it came in. he recognized my voice and while we were on the phone I told him I really liked his CD. he thought I meant a more recent album he had done with Vinny Golia (both CD's are on Golia's 9 Winds label) until I mentioned the cut, *Silk The Color of Water*. "I like the Trio," I said. "you guys get a lot of sound." "we like to think so," he replied, obviously pleased. for the first time I could feel the chemistry that had been lacking. I felt my response had buoyed him up unexpectedly. for a month or so I noticed he'd frequently be absent from work. 2 weeks after he called to say the CD had arrived, I was in Rhino and someone told me Richard had died of cancer. at least at that one moment I felt I had given something.

Wed. afternoon – Dec. 27, 2006, I saw *Inland Empire*, appropriately at a theater at the end of the Sunset Strip. it was the first time I'd been inside a commercial movie house since 1972! so I'm keeping the ticket as a souvenir. let me start with the theater. I'm happy to report the venerable green exit sign is still there, thank God. not because the film was boring, I stayed right through the end credits, but what would going to the movies, or any other event that exists in time, be without it? and I doubt there's ever been a movie where at some point I didn't, at least unconsciously, focus on it. why do critics think the logic in a full length (and then some---whew) Hollywood movie can't be similar to a Jack Smith or a Cocteau? there's a scene where the image of the female

actress protagonist visually fragments in much the same way as Maya Deren's does in *Meshes of the Afternoon*. the difference is the light, ethereal, organic, quality of Deren's, which allowed her film to breathe. I brought ear muffs (26 decibel reduction) to the screening to protect my sensitive ears from the volume I knew they were going to play the soundtrack at (does a cup being set down on a table have to sound like a thunderclap?), but I couldn't bring about myself to wear them, so it took me a couple of days to absorb the film, physically. what greeted me when I did 'exit' was one of winter's freshest late afternoons – orange/amber clouds in a blue sky, but kind of over the top. surreal – Lynchian, you might say.

when I was in my teens and young adulthood, I was still willing to put up with the inevitable boredom of the feature cinema just for those moments...a scene with Brando and Eva Marie-Saint, Elizabeth Taylor and Montgomery Clift, etc...“the illusion of reality on a two dimensional sheet” Ronald Tavel. the 'illusion' of reality is just one kind of cinema. the kind Andy Warhol reflected on and rejected. I don't think the 'visionary' filmmakers, Cocteau, Brakhage, Robert Breer, etc., gave a damn about that.

when I saw *The Wizard of Oz*, age 5, I just didn't understand where the images were coming from. I thought maybe they were behind the screen and their images were being magnified. I had no such problem with Disney's *Snow White* (the year before) because, intuitively, I accepted it's artificiality. and after the next feature film I remember seeing, *The Young Mr. Pitt*, a boring drawing room period piece with Robert

Donat, the English actor (but oh the auras of the theater), I ceased being curious about the mechanics of film, and in due time the science of it became apparent.

we all live on the cusp between one thing and another, and yet have to find ways to justify the sense of absoluteness we feel in ourselves as unique beings.

again shadow and waning light.

yes, everything the post-modern questions and parodies, I try to perfect.

is fame, by definition, the opposite of substance?

profound is never far out. it's just more difficult to achieve, because the ego seeks uniqueness, not the universal.

'the last refuge of a scoundrel', even more than patriotism, is populism.

making something more rational doesn't necessarily make it truer.

do we really change or do we just get more sophisticated?

they thought I was either all washed up or a never was. they were right.... on both counts.

the less extreme the difference between elements, the slower it is. the tension is between density (staying in one place)

and motion (in my drawing), defying the obvious (cond. response). if you feel that going anywhere is separation, and you feel like going around in circles, then go around in circles. if it doesn't feel good to move, then stop. and bleed. let the ink blot.

5-7-07

really hot day sensual night. warm breeze, clear. actually some scattered stars, a bright planet. red lights, white lights. 2 choppers. quiet, peaceful. woman rides by on bicycle, white shirt, white shorts, lots of bare leg. nightful bliss. a night for something, somebody, special. so many nights like this in the past. why has nothing ever happened? I lean and push against the rail, exercise, take a few more deep breaths. go back in.

on a night like this that licorice smell (anise, fennel) comes down from the hills where I've always longed to live, but can't afford to. mobility is money. just another thing unfulfilled. where is the love manifest of the feelings, the images, inside? what is there else to do? nobody reads my books. nobody looks at my art. most important, no one, any longer, looks at me. someday I'm going to be dead. I wish I knew what this consciousness was.

pianist, Russ Freeman was quoted as saying in the Chet Baker bio, *Deep in a Dream*, "Miles knew everything about polytonality, so he could play notes against the chords and make them work. Chet couldn't do that. he heard music very melodically, very linearly, because he didn't know any chords." this is not totally true of Baker's playing, as the sparseness

(which he shared with Miles) was partially an attempt to go into the harmonic structure of the piece, and when he played with someone who pushed him in that direction, like Gerry Mulligan or Paul Bley, he did it, to some extent, by ear. he was a melodic player, but not particularly linear. like Miles he was very conscious of space and tone. this got me thinking about my piano playing because I can only play by ear, and playing the correct chords is difficult for me to do, unless I'm freely improvising chords that come out of my own logic (and touch). and I would not be able to duplicate what I was playing, because it was born through my ear in the context of the moment. as for Monk's criticism of 'free' jazz, that it couldn't be duplicated, with the development of recording technology, though, is that an issue?

a quote from Ruth Young, one of Baker's many lovers. "why is it that every jazz musician just happened to get bent out of shape? is that just an accident? what you have to go through to bare your guts – it's so fundamentally obvious. in order to really, genuinely be a participant in that world, you have to find a poison to let you look in the mirror."

it's interesting how time can be kind to artists' reputations, re the negative aspects of their social and political behavior. it seems their reputations as artists, in most cases, survives, by the quality of their work transcending the known facts that would permanently mar the good offices of those following almost any other pursuit. the list of names of artists who were racists, bigots, or, at least, crass opportunists, could stretch from here to China and still not be exhausted. and yet their reputations, although in some cases sullied in the

short term, generally survive, relatively unscathed. when people refer to Joseph Conrad's or Louis-Ferdinand Celine's rabid anti-Semitism, it's only to show that geniuses have flaws. in school I learned Ezra Pound arguably invented modern poetry in English, but nothing of his participation as a fascist propagandist (at least he paid for his indiscretions). nor have I heard a word of criticism of e e cummings, whose Complete Poems includes, among other racist tomes, a poem that begins, *a kike is a.....* it's interesting that while C G Jung, who preempted his mentor, Sigmund Freud, as the pre-eminent influence in modern psychology during the second half of the 20th Century, and who endorsed stereotypical racial theories, is almost deified as a guru of 'positive' behavior, while German filmmaker, propagandist, and Hitler confidant, Leni Riefenstahl, continues to be vilified. perhaps, in addition to being expendable, it's because she was a woman. but, most likely, if her work stands the test of time, she will, no doubt, be vindicated. on a more pedestrian level, there's the artists whose opportunism or political incorrectness, causes temporary smirches on their reputations. such was the case of Frank Sinatra, re his insistence on performing at the Sun (Sin) City resort in South Africa, at the height of the struggle of South African blacks to free themselves of apartheid. I was in Rhino Records, standing next to a hip looking girl who was rummaging through a bin of old, used, Sinatra LP's. she caught my eye and said, apologetically, "it's for my boyfriend." "I guess he likes martini's," I joked. "definitely," she responded, relieved I wasn't judging her. then, not too long after, I fell victim to the same political correctness, when spotting a vinyl re-mastered reissue of, In The Wee Small Hours, and thinking how much that album

once meant to me, I compulsively, bought it. but couldn't live with it. and when I discovered two of the original tracks were omitted, including one of my all-time favorites, *it never entered my mind*, I just had to return it, which I did that very afternoon. because it had been opened, they wanted to only give me an exchange. but after listening to my pitch, relented, and gave me my money back, not without reprisal. when the person at the register (a fellow whose antenna was way up for political heresy) called to the back of the store for approval, he pronounced the word, Sinatra, distinctly, with succinct disdain. since then 'old blue eyes' ' stock has risen back to its former luster, due to a resurgent interest in the American Songbook repertoire, and his place in it. I should also add that I'm the proud possessor of the CD reissue of Wee Small Hours (which gets my vote as one of the best standard concept albums of all time), which includes all the songs, and which continues to give hours of blah, blah..... sorry for the digression, folks.

what does my mother's dying have to do with sex? the day after I took her to the hospital the last week of her life, the day before they moved her to the other side of the hospital, she was given a sponge bath, after which she scrubbed her face with cleansing cream, applied makeup, combed her hair, and was sitting up in bed, feeling refreshed, and for that brief time, comfortable. neither of us knew at the time she had leukemia. but what I'm getting to, is her attitude towards her image. even at the age of eighty-eight (a nurse later commented on it), taking care of her skin, etc., being pretty, to her, was not superficial. nor was it vanity. she believed in beauty. it was an attitude towards life. she possibly didn't

feel empowered in any other way. nor is my attraction to young, pretty, women, superficial. the attraction is to something spiritual, to poise, and to a quality of grace. as the chemotherapy took hold (which along with, eventually, the narcotic, killed her) before going into a coma, her only physical comfort was a limp, but vibrant, toy monkey, a niece brought her, the kind that would cling to wherever you placed it, that she wrapped around her neck, almost a surrogate baby. the last time I saw her was the day she died. it was morning and she was lying peacefully, bald, due to the chemo, like a Buddha, at that moment, breathing easily, morning light coming into the room. I kissed her once on her forehead and left. the time, during the Bill Clinton, Monica Lewinsky hub bub. place, Cedars hospital.

dream...about the young drug culture. movie reels. ask young man where they got them, at first thinking he stole them from me. tells me where to get them downtown. offers to write the address in ink on my wrist. at least three pretty girls. one in white dress is especially appealing. she's so pretty, her energy, movement so subtle. what drug is she using? yellow pencil, is she writing orders? is she serving? is she in high school? is this place a diner? downtown. another girl, a blonde, smiles sexually, so there I almost don't catch it. also on drug. ecstasy? no. downtown - Broadway, Main? east of downtown? I feel I have the sensibility, but not the knowledge to decipher the code...to communicate with them, advance my attraction, esp. to the girl in white. I can't fathom what she's under the influence of... her reaction to a much later version of popular culture. something I've gotten beyond. my conclusion is there is a cultural gap which is not

insurmountable, which can be bridged. next night. another place, scene. like a movie set. filled with people. male, female. group of women. one woman I've had previous association with, sits at the table in front, like a teacher. lights up a joint. starts smoking. I come up and ask her for some. she hands me a roach so used up that when I toke on it all I'm smoking is paper. male friend asks me if I want to go to lunch. I say I'd like to get stoned. he smiles. we walk up to a group of men. when he tells them we want some pot, they become 50s jazz hipsters. an African- American man in a long sleeve wine colored T shirt rolls a joint in white cigarette paper, lights it, and directs the lit wrong end towards me. I put it in my mouth that way, take a deep drag, and mostly swallow the smoke, but don't get noticeably high. the place is packed. a procession comes by. a spokesperson says, "you can ask Clifford Brown (late jazz trumpet player) questions. but bold questions, no bullshit.

would I still like to screw a sweet young lady – make her moan with pleasure, or have I wised up? yes, I would.

several days ago when AOL put up the contentious Miley Cyrus photos, I read the story and the blogs, and a couple of days later, when it hit the newsstands, I bought the Vanity Fair with the Annie Leibowitz shots of her in it. you may not believe it, but up to that point, I'd never even heard of Miley Cyrus – as you can guess, I don't watch TV, etc. anyway, after reading the blurbs in the blogs – some people were very incensed – how could Achey Breaky Heart and the rest of the grownups, exploit so ravenously, this delicious 15 year old. as the magazine, I don't believe, was yet out on the streets,

their opinions must have been based largely on the low resolution downloads and the commentary – speculations about incest, Brittany, Lindsay, etc., what will happen to Disney's Hannah Montana, and finally, an apology from the object of all the attention, saying she let down her "fans."

well, the photos of Miley Cyrus are gorgeous. the 'portrait' is one of Leibowitz's best. the other photo of her, leaning, suggestively, on her father (literally and figuratively) is unsentimental, but tender – yes, it is sexual. but given the context of her life; probably a considered and relatively healthy expression of the pan sexuality every human being harbors. probably more so than the disguised incest and suppression that goes on in a lot of families. the only thing Cyrus needs to apologize for is the apology, and for whoever put her up to it. I won't dwell on how much credulity, cynicism, hypocrisy, and puritanism, not to mention, savagery, makes up so much of the self-expression on the internet, because people should be able to say whatever they think. the portrait, however, is funky, vulnerable, and beautiful.

the following web submission, methinks, is pretty good.
submitted by Nigel 4/24, 2008, 9:22 A.M.

"American's Hilarious

OMG! She's naked AND topless under that sheet!

OMG! She's got bed hair and looks like she just gave someone a blowjob!

OMG! There's only an overcoat, a shirt, a t shirt, and underwear between me and that totally naked person!!

OMG! She wiped that hamburger grease from her lips with the back of her hand and now looks like she had sex with the

whole football team!!

Please keep your puritanical loony ideas to yourselves.”

there’s an obvious parallel between the posters of fascist Germany and Soviet Russia, depicting the ‘working man’, that the ‘right’ and the ‘left’ both used as propaganda to facilitate their agendas. while in the U.S. ‘democracy’, the powerlessness of the individual took the form of the comic book superhero, many of which were created by American Jews.

I was a fuck up and non-achiever in high school, not liked by some of my teachers (although I wrote for the school newspaper, and got A plusses on a couple of essays). one day during an afternoon class, a Mrs. Abbott, who conducted the A Cappella choir, came to our room as part of a program to test all the voices in the school. when it was my turn and I sang a few scales, she stopped, and said, “where did you get that voice?” she then asked me if I’d like to sing in the choir next semester.. looking for a way out I told her I already had a class scheduled that period (which was true). “maybe I can arrange to change it,” she replied. I declined. she politely accepted. of course, I always regretted that decision. one of my earliest ambitions was to be a singer.

Robert Blake was a year ahead of me in high school. he sang and played the guitar in a vocal group, The Harmonaires. their repertoire was one song, Nevertheless, which they did at every assembly – *maybe I’m right and maybe I’m wrong maybe I’m weak and maybe I’m strong/ but nevertheless I’m in love with you.*

looking for a way out. a way in. my vision of sex is the same as that of my work. hard truth, the same propensity for beauty and vision. if that's an idealistic view then so be it.

6-29-08

Sunday morning – a young lady, blonde, wearing a fresh pink, summer dress and shades, legs so fine, doesn't look at me as I wait to cross on the corner of Rodeo and Santa Monica Blvd. I look back as she crosses diagonally to the Presbyterian church on the n. w. corner, hugs a man wearing a dark suit at the entrance, and walks in with him. she's going to church, but the words, affluent fuck, are emblazoned on her forehead.

in the sixties a group of us gathered at Peter and Judy Mays' apartment to show films, on the occasion of Peter Kubelka's visit in L. A. later in the evening, after viewing his film, Arnulf Rainer, which is entirely solid black and white frames, put together in rhythmic patterns, ranging from single to 24 frames. I remarked that his math didn't account for the fact that the white and black frames don't have equal value because the white frames (light) permeate the black frames (darkness), so that when projected there's not a one to one ratio between black frame and white frame. he didn't get the gist of my remark, partly because of the language barrier. a week later he called and asked for a print of the last film I showed that evening (I was impressed with his eye when he observed it was the original color reversal print) for his film museum in Vienna. he offered to pay for a print done at Western Cine, in Denver Colo., a lab where, through Stan Brakhage, a lot of experimental filmmakers had their work done.. as he was off to

N.Y., he asked me if I'd write him a long letter about his films, which, I suspect, may have had something to do with my remarks that night, about Arnulf Rainer. after arranging to send the film to Denver, I decided it would be a lot less stress to get a print made in Hollywood, but because of some footage I'd attached (of a friend and his girlfriend) to one of my films, I was now persona non grata at the lab where I had all my other work done, (they even called the police – another story), and I had the print done, cheaply, at a lab that primarily processed the daily network TV news. they just put it in the soup with the newsreels. the result, unfortunately, was an overload of colour. I sent it to Kubelka with a bill for \$16, and a deliberately short, non-technical note, praising his work. years later (70s), at a party or social get together of some kind, which my by then, former, wife told me she had attended, he immediately recognized her – she was the central image in my film, which Stan Brakhage had named ("Color Abstract No. 2, is it?"), and, according to her, he went on and on about what a "creative" and "intelligent" person I was, and asked her to "give him all my love," so, no, though I was unhappy about the result I'm not unhappy about having had to foot the bill. I gave a much better print to a 'friend', whose earlier 8mm film using the same device, a mirror, influenced mine. it evidently got lost in transit when he moved to Amsterdam. he later told me he didn't particularly care for it. does the film still exist, however? who knows.

whether A Love Supreme is a great work or not is debatable. it is a serious attempt at being that; sincere, unpretentious, and emotionally compelling. it's ironic that Elvin Jones, who could be brutish (I once witnessed him scream "chinks" to the

two Chinese bartenders, between sets, at the Jazz Workshop in San Francisco), had such a subtle, empathetic, touch, on this album. he was the master of mainstream, poly rhythmic drumming at that time in history.

John Coltrane – Slow Dance. late 50s. time when I reentered school shortly after discharge from Navy, and I was becoming someone I wasn't before.

walking past the free books cart at the Santa Monica Library, and stopping for a change, I spy the Evergreen Original edition (Grove Press) of Jean Genet's 1959 play, *The Blacks*, among other surprisingly interesting titles, and grab it. this is only the second time I've taken a freebie, the other being Mary Welsh Hemingway's autobiography. as I'm not particularly a theater person, *The Blacks* is one of only a dozen or so plays I've seen in my lifetime. we saw it at the Coronet Theater, with friends, and I remember I liked it then. the book, published in 1960, is in excellent condition with b & w photos throughout. and on the inside back cover, written in lovely, delicate, teal blue script, is the name, Karen Donovan, 100 Sullivan St., NYC. she may have been a student then (nearby NYU?), because on pages 26 & 7 (only), in the same ink, are underlined a half dozen lines. page 26. "Archibald: Dammit, do the best you can – I invent – if not words, then phrases that cut you off, rather than bind you. I invent, not love, but hatred, and thereby make poetry, since that's the only domain in which we're allowed to operate." page 27. "Archibald: By stretching language we'll distort it sufficiently to wrap ourselves in it and hide, whereas the masters contract it."

10 Stories -

Hills Like White Elephants

Winter Dreams

The Chrysanthemums

1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8

Uncle Wiggly in Connecticut

Raise High The Roof Beams Carpenter/Seymour a Portrait

Wunderkind

A Pane of Glass

A Distant Episode

What Was Interesting

I wrote down 10 American short stories, written in the first part of the 20th Century, that particularly impressed and moved me when I first became seriously interested in literature, and then reread them. the one story I wasn't able to find was Muriel Rukeyser's A Pane of Glass which was printed in a 50s New World Writing. I substituted 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8 for Saroyan's story, Love, which appeared in the same collection. and Lydia Davis', What Was Interesting (from her book, Almost No Memory) I included, although it was written in the 90s. Hemingway's four page Hills Like White Elephants still has the most perfect use of dialogue I've read in a short story, and Paul Bowles', A Distant Episode, remains the most chilling.

immortality is, I suppose, perceiving freshly, indefinitely

a number of years ago, I was in the Otis Art Institute gallery, when they were still across the street from MacArthur Park, looking at an exhibit of wall assemblage, made mostly from corrugated cardboard. standing next to me (the only other person in the gallery) was a man who had the trim but

compact figure of a lightweight boxer. he shook his head in disgust, and said, with a mildly New Yorkese accent (Italian), that his daughter was a student there, and that cardboard was not a valid material for (serious) art. he said he was a window display designer, so he knew what he was talking about. I politely disagreed. he then asked me if I was a student at "the institute" (as he quaintly put it). pushing fifty at the time, I said, "no." finally, though careful not to provoke an argument with him, I said, "anything is valid material for art." he froze up, glared at me like I was putting him on, and walked away. I thought it was interesting that a designer who worked with those materials, would feel competitive rather than validated by the use of them as art – that he was still concerned with an issue that had long been resolved. if there was still a reactionary position at that time, it would have had more to do with whether an idea could suffice without any corporeal manifestation, as art. but he evidently did care enough for his daughter, or, at least, where his daughter was at, to go see the show. it's even more interesting my main thought at that moment was how I would have liked to (sight unseen) gotten into his daughter's pants.

because of a tension caused by disturbance the night before, my stomach aches all day. I don't eat dinner, but the pain won't go away. finally, that night, needing relief, I take a Vicodin, left over from the prescription I got for a neck injury, and half hour later, when it doesn't seem to be working, go to a porn site, where I become blissed out by the combination of erotica and the narcotic finally kicking in. the high, and relief from pain, makes me more tolerant, and I just laugh at the phoniness, fakery (it's really feeling, even more than sex,

that's being mocked, misogyny, etc. for once, I have a valid reason for being there, and when the pain wears off, I exit. porn is 'sex' for people who have no access, or it can be escape from pain. if you're really against it, then open up, sensually, and give a little.

early morning – sunglasses, auburn hair tied together in the back of the neck, spearmint green summer dress showing plenty of underexposed white skin, lethargic, erotic, adult baby, crossing the street.

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what I'm looking for in a woman, however, is that special quality of intellect and empathy, that transcends adherence to in-group values and privilege.

2 Quotes: "Like Proust, I don't look at people. 'Je les radio-graphie' (I X-ray them), But at the same time, their troubles upset me, I have so much sympathy for Proust, and so much admiration. What intellectual energy, patience, and lucidity – The literature of half tones and quarter tones, as in Oriental music, while the Occidental ear can scarcely perceive. I see these quarter tones, these almost intransmissible nuances, and marvel at his rendition of them.....

"What Proust does not have is an intuition of the future, the power to imagine places never seen, the patience to buildup preconceptions. This additional activity of the imagination helps to fuse the three 'Times' (past, present, future) so harmoniously that you can grasp the links that bind them, you can follow their moments of unity. Proust finds little unity, besides this central idea of Time and Timelessness, found and

fixed by memory. and by observation only.” Anais Nin, Diaries, April, 1928.

aside from the fact that the “places never seen” do exist in his description of what is seen, or rather, what he sees, and all description is imagination (literally), I think this is thoughtful criticism. Proust did, of course, have a fecund imagination. she quotes Proust – “an hour is not merely an hour, it’s a vase full of perfumes, sounds, projects and atmospheres.” though I do agree his idea to reconcile past and present, did not appear to reveal, or include, a vision of the future, Proust’s work, like Monet’s, could be viewed, perhaps, as much a brilliant ending to all that preceded it , an homage to history, as it is a deconstruction of it... through the elevation of memory into vision.

Proust’s writing is complex without it having to resort to jargon, labeling, classifying. one thing that allows one to completely immerse oneself in Proust’s world is pages of Proust can be read without one reference to terminology.

“Do you think she’s found somebody else?” I ask tentatively. “Vo,” Belinsky says, nodding. “Years ago, one day she came home at dawn. I say, ‘tell me, bitch, have you been out fucking somebody?’” She was quiet for a long time. then, softly, she said, ‘no’. After that, we had our second son, and neither of us mentioned that night again.” Steven Leigh Morris .

although there’s no day in which I don’t fantasize sex, and dream of love, it’s always been easier to relate to men than to women. as a boy, a teenager, I simply didn’t know how to

talk to girls. perhaps, because my siblings are male, and with the exception of a female cousin my age, I was early infatuated with, there were not girls to relate to. in grammar school girls were a separate entity. from JHS on, they were a visual fantasy and obsession. but I'd have 'lost my tongue' had an object of my desire attempted to carry on a normal conversation with me, or more prescient, I with her. so, my first one on one, intimate, experiences with females, was on dates. dating, at least to me, was a peculiar phenomenon, totally self-contained, beginning at a predetermined time, and usually ending in the early a.m., directed by a certain protocol – small talk (which I was not disposed to doing well), movie/party, food, make out (maybe), home. early dates were, for me, excruciatingly formal. I was too nervous to relax and be loose enough to communicate. sometimes a cool style sustained an attraction, but eventually, tension (mostly sexual) would destroy the ambience. although my motivation was always sexual, because I couldn't loosen up enough to encompass the broader possibilities, I couldn't get beyond them, bend the rules, by which I mean, get to the mutually acceptable permissiveness which went beyond the formal protocol. when I think back on my dating life, I can't recall one serious, extended conversation I had with any girl I dated. that was not entirely my own doing. in the conventional world I inhabited at the time, it wasn't considered sexy or masculine to do so. a male and female were supposed to communicate in a different way, on a different plane, within a different set of parameters.

when I moved to N.Y. in 1960, I arrived with contradictory visions of it . the older myth that I had nurtured since child-

hood, as expounded by the Gershwins, Rodgers & Hart, etc., which I knew was already dead, and the Beat, black hipster, jazz, vision of it, which, although I didn't know it at the time, was dying. neither reason, though, was why I lasted only three months, holed up in a roach filled apartment in the West Village (well, the kitchen, at least, was roach filled), not yet using drugs, reading James Farrell's the Lonigan Trilogy, it's depressed mood augmented by the humidity, listening to Symphony Sid (*jumpin' with my boy Sid in the city*) every night, going to the Five Spot and Jazz Gallery, to hear Ornette Coleman, Coltrane, and Monk, to the Bleeker St. Cinema to see the Robert Frank movie, Pull My Daisy. Ben Carruthers (Shadows, Guns of the Trees) lived with his African American, actress, girlfriend, a couple flights up from us. Norman Mailer, with whom I had two semi-hostile (vibe) encounters, lived on the block. discovered (too late) by a pretty Ayn Rand acolyte, the day before she was to return to Calif. sold my blood (twice) for food. the density of N.Y. too stifling without the tools, or the proper connections, to penetrate it, and I returned to L.A., although not in the best shape, a little wiser, and, perhaps, more ready for action.

I've always adhered to the line that Bill Evans' early work was his best. and if his latter seemed more redundant, even mirrored, I assumed it was because of his substance abuse, and, perhaps, a failure to continue to face the challenge of, or was a withdrawal from, the necessary confrontation between black and white on the cutting edge. re his 'addictions', is there concern, in this regard, because he was a white guy? seen as the white man's Charlie Parker? Art Pepper, Chet Baker, Gerry Mulligan, Stan Getz, all fit the image of the white

hipster/junkie, better. yet, how many loved them (and their music) with the fervor Bill Evans was loved? in fact, he didn't fit the image at all. which was precisely the point. Evans was the martyr for the non-hipster, white, middle class element who frequented the clubs. just read the online reviews. it's amazing how long and laudatory they all are, illustrating the need to share, express, so much undying affection and regard, towards this man no longer with us. as if he died for them. what did he do to inspire this response? by staying almost solely within the confines of the Standard American Songbook? continuing to explore the changes commonly eschewed by the avant-garde? choosing to go his own (and some people would say, more conservative) way, because that's what he felt to do? yet, and it was because of this, he was such an original. so influential, that every jazz piano trio, hence, had to bear the mark of his playing – the more subtle, penetrating, introspective, heightened interaction between piano and bass, the feeling he had for his material, which was, to him, more than just a vehicle to blow on, but meaning, to get to the core of....a subtle deconstructionist, but a consummate melodist.

well, I shelled out the bread for the 8 disc, box set of his final recordings, The Last Waltz, of the 9 day live performance he did at San Francisco's Keystone Korner, in Sept., 1980, 11 days before his death. the booklet accompanying the discs has the usual words like "charged, warmth, urgency, inspired." the pieces in Evans' entire oeuvre are easy to compare, partly, because he played the same material over and over. therefore, we have to assume something in them was central or crucial to his meditation, which, essentially,

was what he was doing. did he play them better or worse than he had in the past? I'd say neither... denser than the earlier ones, but less tentative and thoughtful (space and hesitation always having been an important quality in his music) however, more automatic, perhaps. the song titles, *but beautiful, my foolish heart, spring is here, like someone in love*, etc., in addition to Miles Davis' *Nardis*, and the growing list of his own compositions, pretty much spell out the meaning, the musicians he played with, accomplices in the realization of that vision. (I don't think he ever did a more lucid recording of a standard than the one he did of *all the things you are* on the Solo Sessions in 1963, while going through a painful drug withdrawal!) listening to *waltz for Debby* (played only once) on the Last Waltz, and then listening to the version he did on the first, Live At The Village Vanguard recordings, 20 years earlier, the most notable difference on the earlier version, is Scott La Faro's melodic note for note placement alongside Evans on the opening chorus, which, together, created an ecstatic tapestry (to coin a phrase) of sound. Last Waltz is more than just a metaphor. Evans unlike the jazz pianists of his era who sought to avoid the obvious, by circumventing the melody and chord structure of a piece, fully embraced it, while at the same time probing it. this is what gave him the depth and power to express his feelings, and the freedom to explore his ideas.

intelligence is two things: thinking in motion, and depth. intelligence is not what coded language you speak.

subtlety is an avoidance of repetition

there are basically three realities – personal-inner, social, and public. personal reality remains largely hidden. social reality is shared but too often delusional, but public reality, which includes everything external, is generally thought of as ‘the’ reality, even though our perception of it is a manifestation of all our projections – the weather, moods, objects, spaces, automation, serve as reflections of our states, modify our states with new data, and as agents of indifference can stoke our feelings of alienation. being it is everything outside ourselves, it can cause us to question its very existence. this is not solipsism, it’s this sense applied to our thoughts, feelings, emotions, the coded spaces, the mutant memories, that provide for the auras of everything.

when I read something that inspires me, I’m inspired to do something different. because what’s inspired me has already been done.

I think Wally partially felt he didn’t reach me. yet, he pulled out (twice) when we were getting it on together more deeply late at night smoking pot – once, when Shirley walked in, once, when Tosh, his son, walked in. neither of them seemed to be aware we were stoned.

I question whether Dada fits the American temperament. there’s this search for meaning which is alien to it. American artists use the technique. but only to transform it.

they were partying downstairs tonight. I walked past her open door, all lit up, and they were dancing, one girl wearing a white dress, facing the door, pogoing, stared at me. I stared

at her. later, I thought, I would have liked to standing behind her, wrapped my arms around her breasts, and hugged her, affectionately, lifting her slightly off the floor.

the action on St. Mark's Place, in 1960, the times I went down to the 5 Spot and Jazz Gallery to listen to Jazz. they were dressed in regular street clothes. they were not Beat. not yet long haired. but starting to go to seed. swarms of them out on the stoops. was this the beginning to the Hippie scene?

it seems as though the rewards of freedom are most intense after deprivation. the appreciation a person might feel having just been released from jail – for fresh air, sky, trees, people, motion, etc., all the common details that are ecstasy to the senses when freshly perceived, wane quickly. what is to be learned from this?

Chet Baker, sitting one row behind us, barefoot, checked us out at a free Ornette Coleman concert at the L A. County Museum of Art, in the late sixties, Ornette, standing, impeccable, in suit and tie, at the top of the museum steps, his plastic horn brilliantly gleaming in the late afternoon light. "he's looking at you," Debby said. when I turned my head around, he was. our eyes met, and I grimaced. he mocked my response and turned his head away.

`high' art – safe house (for the soul)?

"from Scholem's point of view Benjamin seemed to be Janus faced, turned simultaneously toward Moscow and Jerusalem."

the failure of the German intellectual (specifically the German-Jewish intellectual) to have any effect on the social-political outcome of the time.

“the lessons he (Scholem) drew from Hannah Arendt’s biography of the most important German-Jewish woman of the Enlightenment, Rahel Varnhagen, was that a relationship to ‘Germanness’, could not end without misfortune.” German Jews, however, were German. a denial of this was a denial of their identity. if, as said, America is a country of ‘immigrants’, does this make it more valid or give more meaning to Americanness other than living and being American? I think not..

George Mosse – “the fierce attachment of German Jews to Goethe, Schiller, and the other titans of German philosophy and literature was not simply chasing after noble illusions, but a bulwark against Nationalism and anti-Semitism.”

did Benjamin’s attachment to being German, his quasi-Prussian upbringing, make it more difficult for him to escape? was Scholem ‘saved’ by his Jewishness?

yet, there were those “who saw the light in the darkness.” – The White Rose – that strain of decency in humanity that must be nurtured and maintained.

Hitler and his ‘colleagues’ destroyed because they feared their ‘vision’ had no place in the intellectual, emotional, and psychological schema of the times. they attempted to destroy culture they feared deeper, richer, more subtle, more complex, and more influential, than their own.

both European Jewish culture and African-American culture, grew from similar roots of oppression, and were subsequently faced with the same identity crisis, re assimilation. consequently, Zionism and pan-Africanism are derived from similar needs. ironic then the anti-Semitism it fueled among blacks.

“as one can imagine, Benjamin was acutely aware of the ambiguous position in which his acceptance of Dora’s hospitality placed him. in a moment of self-laceration, he said it was ‘pitiful and a disgrace to nest as it were, in ruins of your own past’.”

Benjamin – “our works can be , for their part, measuring instruments which, if they function properly, will measure the smallest fragments of this unimaginably (slow historical revolution of the sun.)”

“Benjamin here portrays his work – and would do so with increasing frequency – as a photographic emulsion uniquely suited to the recording of subtle changes in the social-historical landscape.”

final letter to Scholem. “every line we succeed in publishing today – no matter how uncertain the future to which we entrust it – is victory wrenched from the forces of darkness.”

Scholem – “for a long time I could have only a vague notion of what we now know from Brecht’s complaints in his *Arbeit journal* (working diary) about Benjamin’s ‘mysticisms in spite of an anti-mystical attitude’ and his personal ‘Judaisms’, namely, that what attracted me to him was precisely the

element that Brecht was bound to find annoying in him.”

one must credit one's own cosmos if one is to have form and substance that corresponds to one's true beliefs. or rather, one has to credit one's own cosmos if one is to have any belief at all.

the crux of this from a political perspective is whether there is any sense at all in making analogies. even if events, then and now, are similar, either the outcome is unpredictable, or fixation on them almost always guarantees the feared results. contradictory truisms like, 'what we fail to remember we're doomed to repeat', and 'history never repeats itself', fail to consider that the dynamics of change create new variables, and that analysis is a modifier in itself. fixation on the past, that is, thinking in a static mindset, can ultimately become self-fulfilling prophesy. no matter how much we try to stay on top of it. there is a humanizing element that knows all this, at least instinctively, but the power, always in the hands of the least inclined to think and behave humanely, is the reality of political power, or rather, the reality of the relationship between power and powerlessness. the irony: if history does repeat itself, it's frequently because of a fixation on it, rather than a letting go of the mindset.

“Nobody can make any truly well founded predictions about the future – the internal and external viability – of the new state. It could just as well be a great success as not, the calculations consist of nothing but two-edged factors. What's obvious is that historically it represents a watershed for the place of Jews in the world. Like many others, I am personally

against Partition as such, since I believe joint Arab-Jewish sovereignty in the whole of Palestine to be the more ideal solution. But this opportunity is one we will probably never be granted. The question of the day is only whether something better can be gained by rejecting the Partition (they could hardly carry it out in practice without our acquiescence, and, unfortunately, this can scarcely be answered in the affirmative.” this excerpt is from a long letter written by Gershon Scholem to Walter Benjamin, July 10, 1939.

did the anti-Zionist French and British former colonialists who complain about the European Jews taking Arab land want the Displaced Persons to stay or settle in their countries after World War II? no need to answer. and would the majority of them have stayed even if they were asked? so what other recourse, logic, was there then, but to become Hebrews (genetic research has determined, anyway, half the Ashkenazi genome is Middle Eastern in origin).

of course, this does not justify the contingencies the Zionists always had in place, even before 1948, nor the continued theft of Arab land, nor the resultant subsequent occupation.

Marx – “labor is the source of all wealth and culture.” but much, maybe most, art (culture) has been created by the most subversive element of society, by persons and sub-cultures in direct opposition to it. by slackers.

All This Useless Beauty

at the natural food co-op where I shop, a young lady works, whose probably in her early twenties, pretty, with blue eyes

that glitter, streaky, teased blonde, and part of her cleavage usually on display. there's a vibe between us as our customer-cashier routine/relationship progresses, initiated mostly by my mysterious attention. but she doesn't back away from it. we both have a very precise process, our interaction determined by rote gesture – In the passing of the receipt or change, for instance, in how one hand answers the other (fluid, stiff, sensitive, gentle, nervous, etc.) one time (in the absence of a bagger) I'm holding the canvas tote bag open while she fills it. she stuffs in the last item, a loaf of bread, at the top. stops. we both get the symbolism of the action. she chooses to look away. earlier I'd considered putting a copy of the lyrics to the Bob Dylan song, *something there is about you that strikes a match in me*, in an envelope and leaving it with her, but thought better of it. I've not fantasized having sex with her. anything other than what is actually going on would seem dangerously unreal. I balk at asking her out. with these qualms I'm not happy about the prospect of shopping. something alights on the sleeve of my shirt and I instinctively sweep it into my hand, a bee whose wings may be slightly damaged. I walk outside and let it go. this appears to me to be a portent, and I think of the words to the song, *Sleeping Bee: when a bee lays sleeping in the palm of your hand/ you're bewitched and deep in love's promised land*. I go shop and on an upswing there's a hum of energy between us. a small piece of wilted lettuce lays provocatively on the counter. both our thoughts are simultaneously on it. I hesitate for a second, and she picks it up, pleased smiles on both our faces, but each week the ambiguity whether to ask her out or not, is resulting in increased nervous tension and dysfunction. one day I decide, if the opportunity arises and I don't ask her

out (a pressure I haven't had to face since my late teen/young adult years), I will not be worthy of facing myself, and consequently unable to move on, and even though the vibe between us at this time is not conducive to it, while she's ringing up the total, I ask, "would you like to have coffee with me?" at best her reaction is disturbed. "I don't drink coffee." "neither do I," I say, and we both laugh, mirthlessly. "champagne, tea," I continue. I know she doesn't drink. nor do I. "I'll call you," she says, turning towards the register. it's hard to completely decipher her tone, but she's looking for space, control. "let me give you my e-mail address," I offer. she nods. we both pause. with no pen and paper to write on, I shrug my shoulders. she then belatedly responds by peeling a sheet from a scratch pad. I recite my email address and as she starts to lift the pen away I give her my phone number. "sometime in the evening after work," I say, looking at her with a total lack of conviction.

well, it's at least a month later. and I (finally) see her there, on her break, schmoozing with her friends, not acknowledging my presence, though I have to pass through her group several times. all of a sudden I'm sick of this place, of patrons with their carts, asleep in the middle of the aisles, or pilfering samples from the bulk bins, of the great Blossom Dearie reduced to Musak, to the wing and a prayer parking lot, of her, ill at ease, quickly glancing to see if I'm glancing to see. I know she's not into any of this. she's most likely just trying to get on with her life so am I.

cashiering is a performance. in front of one person at a time. the customer is the audience.

over the years, George Herms' aphorism, *use the pitfalls as a springboard to vision*, has frequently presented itself. I've had plenty of opportunity to use it. I shot a movie of him and his work, at his home in Topanga. unfortunately, due to a misconception about the camera, the lens I was looking at through the viewfinder was not in taking position on the turret, and, of course, nothing was 'filmed', except one shot of him (when I switched to a smaller lens), shirt off, trying to stare down the camera, which had a beautiful orange glow. some of the shooting in his studio was playful, but at one point, when I filmed him, profile view, holding a small artwork, wrists bent forward, he froze it into a pose. I coaxed him to relax his wrist, but he blocked out. not too long after, as a Christmas gift he sent friends, we received a packet in the mail of brightly colored wood block images he had done by hand, accompanied by aphorisms he had written and printed on his small letter press. one aphorism was the aforementioned, Pitfalls. another, curiously, was , *keep yr wrists loose and the doors for doing open*.

on Arizona St. in Santa Monica, while walking to the post office, a woman passes me. I continue, closely behind her, watching her bare hips swing, her very short, flimsy, white, cotton skirt, precariously perched on her buttocks, threatening to drop at any moment, off the shoulder top, hair up, fastened together with a metal clasp, round, spindly, calves in heels. an African American male walking the other way, passes, checks her out, a lusty smirk on his face, then passes me. we both laugh. what's interesting is I would have kept my thoughts to myself had she been black. he would have kept his thoughts to himself had she been white. but because her

skin was brown neither of us felt we had anything to protect.

when I looked in while she was sitting on the crapper and she closed the bathroom door (there had never been any self-consciousness between us and our bodies before), I knew she was thinking of sex with others. but now (I recall even more), I realized the unspoken intimacy we'd had was gone.

there was a time when avant-garde meant just that, something that would, in the future, be part of the mainstream. now, avant-garde means, just another genre, with specific assumptions that are held by a particular segment of culture, with its own clichés which are self-perpetuating, and while may influence the mainstream, is never assimilated by it.

psychic reciprocity – there's no question we read each other's minds when we're in physical proximity of one another. and it continues when we're apart. I think of you. you think of me. the exchange (pattern of thinking) continues. that's why when we see one another again, we've reached mutually modified perceptions of one another. the process, on this level, is not metaphysical.

every time I see the empty, parked, bright red VW Jetta that belongs to the girl who lives below me because of her absence, it's a symbol of, surrogate for, her. she's not showy so it doesn't quite seem to fit her image. yet, to me, it's the symbol of her – soul? strange. I don't have that feeling when I see the parked cars of the other tenants.

how I became a vegetarian. in 1968 I was sitting in the front

room of our house in Topanga Canyon, chewing on a piece of meat. I said to myself I'm going to keep chewing until I'm ready to swallow. I kept chewing but that moment never came. I got up, went into the kitchen where my wife was, and said to her, "I'm not going to eat meat anymore." for about 6 months she made a fish dish...Haddock, or Welsh rarebit, from recipes she had, and after that, from then on, I've eaten no meat at all. I've been a vegetarian 45 years.

myth of monogamy. in romance presence is everything – is why whatever is not present doesn't exist. if a man loves a woman it precludes another woman to the extent the power of her presence is in him. even when the relationship goes bad, he'll feel she's irreplaceable. that there is and can be nobody else – an addiction – until her presence in him sufficiently wanes that the mindset can once again be neutral, allowing the allure of a new presence to replace the old one. then, like the old one, no one else will do.

Stravinsky, on the death of Diaghilev. "anyone who is truly unique is irreplaceable."

when I asked my neighbor why he broke up with his girlfriend, he said, "going on to bigger and better things." then I asked him, "what about her?" "she has the same opportunities I have." I thought that was an interesting equation. that they could both do better...than with each other.

no artist suffered more from the ravages of Nazi persecution than Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, the German Expressionist painter/architect founder of Die Brucke. 600 of his works were

destroyed or sold after the infamous 'degenerate art' exhibition in Berlin, 1936. and in 1938 he took his life. no one better captured the angst and sensuality of Germany between the wars (and before) than Kirchner did in his paintings – the landscapes and street scenes, but especially his sexually charged portraits of women. the following is a quote from a letter wrote in 1919 to a friend, from Davos, a town in the Swiss Alps, where he was hospitalized after having a nervous breakdown, partially due to the effects of service in the military during World War I. *The delights the world affords are the same everywhere, differing only in their outer forms. Here one learns how to see further and go deeper than in 'modern' life, which is generally so very much more superficial despite its wealth of outer forms*

it was a happy place to be (you may not understand) with the dead grass and the rusted cans.

glib entrepreneurs who steal the light.

in the Yom Kippur services (reform) I attended as a boy, just prior to the conclusion of the main portion, the Rabbi and congregation would recite, in unison, a litany of sins, prefaced with the line, 'our father our king we have sinned before thee'. of these, only one stood out in my mind; 'for the sins we sinned against thee in the evil meditations of the heart'. one would normally associate the word meditation with spirituality. yet it is true what we contemplate in solitude can be just that. unlike the other lines of the prayer, that was the one that hit home, that I identified with, even as a boy.

I belong to no tribe.

You Belong To Me

in the summer of 1952, the months between high school and college, my pals and I, along with our younger brothers, took a 145 mile hike, beginning at Sierra Madre in the foothills of the Angeles Crest forest, and ending, 2 weeks later, at Lake Arrowhead in the San Bernardino mountains. at about the middle of the hike we received a food drop from one of our dads, who drove up to Wrightwood, where we spent the day before continuing at night (to avoid the heat) through a 20 mile stretch of desert, until we reached Cajon Junction, just a truck stop then, where we camped before starting the climb up the back of the San Bernardinos to Big Bear. the first thing we did when we got to Cajon Junction was to pile into the roadside café, a typical 40s/50s diner with a Formica counter and juke boxes in front of every seat. while waiting for our burgers, fries, and malteds, I put a coin in the juke box and selected a new release, You Belong To Me. sung by Patti Page (there were later versions by Dean Martin, Jo Stafford and Joni James), and for whatever reasons, the context of the situation, as soon as I heard it, it was one of those moments where listening to a song transformed my state. Fred, who was sitting on the stool next to mine, and had already heard it, said, "it's going to be number 1," which it did turn out to be. the next day, after having spent the rest of the night camped out next to the highway, we named a giant pig we saw in a field, A.J. Prescott, after the sign on the fence, filled our canteens at a farm house, whose owner allowed us to gorge ourselves on the abundant, small, delicious, tart/sweet apples from his orchard. from there we began the climb the

back way up to Big Bear. at Arrowhead we showered and shaved at the cabin where Fred's girlfriend and her club were staying for the Labor Day holidays, and emerged, to their approval, transformed from extremely motely to generally acceptable. I went to the movies with one of the girls that night, but aside from a smooch in the theater, I was too uptight to make anything happen (the dual context just wasn't working for me), and instead of staying and enjoying the sunshine, lake, social scene, etc., like the others in the group (my brother stayed on) who didn't have this 'lover' role to live up to, I hitchhiked back to L.A. the next day with Skip, who had threatened to "kick the shit" out of me if I didn't stop complaining, earlier in the hike, and who went along because he was uptight about staying on for different reasons. but the 'true' romance of the trip for me (always somewhere else), was at 2.00 a. m. at a truck stop diner in lonely, deserted, Cajon Pass, listening to the thoroughly mundane song, You Belong To Me. *see the pyramids along the Nile/watch the sunrise on a tropic isle/just remember darling all the while/you belong to me. see the marketplace in old Algiers/send me photographs and souvenirs/just remember when a dream appears/you belong to me....*

summer 1950

she resents having to help serve us spaghetti lunch (for her brother and his friends) because she thinks we're squares.

at Lake Arrowhead she has a change of heart. the boys want to go bowling. I want to distance myself from them and possibly be alone with her. so I say I'm going to play miniature golf. she quickly says she's going to play miniature golf, also.

a dream date. firs and pines, lights, and mountain air. an elusive closeness and strangeness. our communication is mostly wordless. a guy immediately behind us wearing a Fairfax high Cardinals club jacket, says to his girlfriend, "he never misses."

at an end of summer party at a rundown country club in Sherman Oaks, although my date is another girl, in the pool we continue from where we left off.. inside the club I effectively abandon my date. I get drunk for the first time, on a full glass of straight gin. (this is to set a pattern of behavior for many future years.) she plays nurse applying a wet towel to my forehead.....talks to the girl about us, who starts crying. she and I make out, at her instigation, in the parking lot of her parents' car, with her brother and others in it. there's a thrill in those first (French) kisses. from that night on in the minds of my group of friends, I am a lover.... there will be karma!

over, a few days later with Fred, their next door neighbor, Roy, who's been hanging there, starts jitterbugging with her. I then go along with her, Fred, and Mark, to pick up two of her girlfriends, one who is also named, Sheila. packed together in the back seat, Sheila number 2, a lively, sexy, honey blonde, starts swaying her hands and singing current hit tunes - *I love you a bushel and a peck*, a song from the musical *Guys and Dolls*, and, *down in old Kentucky where horseshoes are lucky* (she and I get it on together in summer school a year later, but I don't follow up).

fall 1950

I'm experiencing a letdown. I don't want the obligation of

seeing her in school. although I can't rationalize it, I want to protect my independence, my dreams. a compulsion to withdraw I don't want to admit she's not always attractive to me.

problems about not driving. problems about not dancing. fear of getting into fights. we never speak. she skates circles around me at the Pan Pacific ice skating rink.

winter 1950

the day before New Years, Uncle Emmett comes in from San Francisco. he always takes his "favorite nephews" to dinner and a show when he visits. he's disappointed I have a date that night.

we see King Solomon's Mines in the afternoon instead. my heart isn't in it. but the aura of the movie, the repressed eroticism of Deborah Kerr, the tall Watusi, the romantic scenery, stays with me. for a number of years afterwards I can't think of it without a pang.

New Years Eve the Boys pick me up two hours late. we have dinner in a dingy restaurant in the mid-Wilshire district. our romance flares again at a party in Beverly Hills. I'm drunk. a repeat of the country club experience. on the way home, my head in her lap, because of buried insecurities and inhibitions, at her small breasts I flail and slap, effectively killing the relationship. my friends dump me on my front doorstep.

New Years Day – Rose Bowl game on TV at their house with Mark, Fred, Aaron, Don, and Bill. she walks out of her room, with her girlfriend, Roz, and leaves, totally ignoring me. am

experiencing abject misery. her father shows compassion for me. another bowl loss for Cal coach, Pappy Waldorf.

Tennessee Waltz (Patti Page) plays over and over again at ITA (Isaiah Teenagers) dance in Culver City. I go with the Boys. she's there with her best friend and constant companion, Roz, flirting with her U.S. Marine cousin, Henry, from Georgia, who comes in from Camp Pendleton.

spring 1951

gym meet with Hamilton and Fairfax (where she's transferred for the social life) for the league title. day of glory for Bob Henry (Hamilton), one of her suitors – first place in 2 events, parallel bars, high bar. her brother, Mark places fifth in rope climb. after the meet, I overhear Henry gloating, referring to her as his girl, to a couple of fellows. his only wins of the season. shows you what a little inspiration can do.

track meet at Fairfax – her brother wins 2 hurdle events, D division. a guy standing next to me, says, "that bastard is fast." I'm half lapped by both their runners, B 1320 (3 laps). equals my worst race. though I come on team bus, I ride back with Fred, Aaron, and Mark, along with her and her girlfriend, in Fred's car.

before going to Palm Springs for a visit at an aunt and uncle's, my mother calls to me from downstairs to see what's holding me up. "I don't want to go," I cry. "come on, you'll feel better," she says. that always worked before, but it doesn't this time, and I learn the lesson I can no longer depend on my mother's 'knowing' to comfort and console. to accentuate

the negative, a female cousin I've had a long going crush on (also visiting) is unfriendly, cold. but Palm Springs is a great place. just desert. healing heat. only 2 main streets (then) – starlit nights, pristine passion, etc.

catch Bob Henry in compulsive verbal escape (from sexual tension) where she's baby sitting with same girlfriend, car talking about milled heads, etc., to her brother, involuntarily and sheepishly looks at me, after we (my pals and I) unexpectedly drop in. sweet revenge.

one evening, acting on a rare healthy impulse, I walk the mile and half to her house. she's already in her bedroom, lights out, in her pajamas. I ask her out. she accepts. she's uncharacteristically mellow and warm towards me. she's begun to forgive me. I tell her I don't have access to a car, that I'll have to find someone for us to double with. my father doesn't (generally) let me use his car (as a result, etc., my friends, Don and Aaron, call me the 'poor little rich boy'). she says it doesn't matter. she doesn't mind taking the bus. at the last minute, however, I enlist my old grammar school friend, Sandy Goldberg (her cousin) to go, along with his girlfriend. it occurs to me, had we dated, taking the bus, there might have been a breakthrough, both with her and with myself. I've sometimes regretted the passivity behind my laziness.

spring 1951, cont.

by this time I have a new girlfriend. someone nice, whom I've had my eyes on for a while. same old story.

summer 1951, hiking and camping

night time. see a car similar to theirs on the Angeles Crest Highway. preposterous, but I imagine her to be in it, on a date with someone.

several years later, on a whim, we date again. she fixes up my closest friend, Dick, with the ever present Roz. she's engaged to an older guy in the service. she seems dispirited, almost depressed. the old insouciance is absent. as I'm about to turn and go, she surprises me by saying, "aren't you going to kiss me goodnight?" she gives me a warm, tender, perhaps, sad, kiss. I don't think we were ever really alone together. I never see her again.

Roy was the first homosexual I knew. we were friends in grammar school, and to a lesser degree in junior and senior high. in grammar school he carried an atomizer around with him for when he had an asthma attack. he had straight, dark hair, dark eyes with long lashes, a smooth complexion, and a hook nose. his family was rich. in addition to being entertainment 'Genties' from Liverpool, England, they owned the famous newsstand on Hollywood and Las Palmas, as well as the one on Pico and Robertson. they had a chauffeur who drove him to and from school. one afternoon they offered to give me a ride home. on the way we stopped at the newsstand on Robertson. I was allowed to pick one comic book. after deliberating between a Looney Tunes (Bugs Bunny, my favorite) and a Disney comic (Donald Duck), I chose the latter. I guess I was attracted to the cover. in high school we were a part of the same fairly large social group. as soon as it became evident a certain girl and I were getting it on, he suddenly began hanging out at her house. because he was

solicitous towards her mother, not moody like me – he was a good dancer – her mother liked him, while she didn't trust my motives. one night we double dated. when we got to his date's house, my date offered to go in and get her (a friendly, tomboyish, unpretentious, girl who lived across the street from Roy and appeared, to me, a lesbian), and while she was gone, Roy started to sing old standard songs. I, reluctantly (at first), joined in, breaking the sexual tension I ordinarily maintained (with her). I sensed my girl had offered to get his date for a reason. they were inside together a long time, and I assumed they'd had a frank discussion about Roy's intentions towards her, and where she was at with it, consequently. they (the girls) seemed to be in almost good natured collusion with each other. we sang old forties songs until the girls came to the car, catching us in act. my girl laughed and made some caustic remark I don't remember, embarrassing me, and the rest of the night, sexual tension dissipated, I was somewhat subdued. one afternoon, passing each other at school, Roy again started singing, and I called him a queer. we had nothing to do with each other after that. later he had a cute, overtly sexy, girlfriend who he liked to pick up and carry in front of my, by then former, girl's mother. not too long after high school, I read in a newspaper item, she was granted a divorce from him, because he wouldn't have sex with her, and instead, laid around all day with a mud pack on his face, which reminds me of lyrics in the intro to the Rodgers & Hart song, *it never entered my mind* (Larry Hart was gay). it was a homophobic piece full of crude innuendo. I saw him only once more, years later, when standing at the newsstand on Hollywood and Las Palmas, looking at a Sight and Sound, a late model car rushed to a

stop. he got out, gave the operator a few terse orders, yelled at him, really, got back in (I don't think he recognized me) and drove away. he now had a nose job. he looked much better the old way.

connoisseurs of the American Standard Song perpetually search for the more intimate, lesser known gems to record or perform in the clubs. but there's no getting away from the fact that the 'overdone' masterpieces deserve their acclamation on the whole. aficionados all have their own lists, and certainly on mine would be one of the more obvious choices, Cole Porter's, Ev'ry Time We Say Goodbye. there are a number of reasons a song may make one list or another – melody, lyrics, the particular time and association related to the song. Porter was the only major song writer of his generation, with the exception of Irving Berlin, who wrote the lyrics to all of his music, and the opening line, *ev'ry time we say goodbye I die a little*, has a singularly startling and sobering effect due to the use of the verb in the context of a danceable melody. unlike many of the other great standards, I can't think of a definitive recording of Porter's tune, one that fully captures it's elusive quality. Coltrane's version comes closest in feeling, but the sound was tinny because he played it on soprano, and McCoy Tyner's somewhat dainty tiptoeing solo did little to unearth the song's deeper intent. what's missing in all the versions I've heard, is any extended probing of the meaning of the song. strange and surprising as it may seem, I don't believe Bill Evans ever recorded a solo or trio version. it's also interesting that it was Porter who wrote this, perhaps, most emotionally straight song in the entire history of the canon, to begin with, as his bent was to elicit poignancy

obliquely, often with caustic humor, or lushly, through sophistication of the exotic, erotic, sensual. the dramatization, however, is very much Porter. *there's no love song finer/but how strange the change/from major to minor/ ev'ry time we say goodbye.*

Naked If I Want To -

when one experiences something special from a performer, the highest praise is just to perceive it, be blessed to not possess, and that should be enough. however, there's still this feeling, urge, to do something with it, the need to do something more – a public manifestation. a perverse need for satisfaction. this is the frustration of the anonymous perceiver, and most often, it can't be any other way. it's unlikely the interest will ever be reciprocal. I suppose it's ego. but it's also a part of the creative process. this is how I've felt listening to Chan Marshall (a white southern girl, I've felt a special attraction to) sing and play – at least on Moon Pics and her first Cover Record, where her voice is, at once, both willfully childlike and deliciously seductive. and the totally absorbing personal nuances she brings to other people's songs, artful, stripped down, urgent, sensual, inadvertently amusing, can be deeply moving. she's quite successful in synthesizing 'roots' in a unique, meaningful way. *her best work is unsettling in a good way, off kilter and unbalanced most of the time, then strong and clear for brief, fleeting moments, as with an eclipse. this power of the best Cat Power songs comes from sensing the perfection within them can't last,* wrote Elizabeth Goodman in her bio, Cat Power: A Good Woman. I think in addition to being insightful about Chan Marshall's music, it's also equally valid for not only our moments of

achievement as artists, but our moments of vision in life. it's an appreciation of the ephemeral quality of vision – what's value has been enhanced by its elusiveness and fragility. *the area between transparency and mystery*, she wrote.

the function of the reviewer is often to engage the subject/object in a discourse with the perceiver. I felt an immediate attraction to the newspaper photos I saw of her prior to performances a number of years ago. but usually when I read the hype on an artist whose work I may be interested in, based on style and description of content, it usually turns out it lacks the lyricism, substance, and edge, I need. my false perception was there's an offbeat, but sensually attractive female, with an arty, minimalist façade, trying to be a pop culture star. and if I hadn't happened upon Goodman's unauthorized book at the public library, I most likely, never would have given Chan Marshall's music a chance.

the Cover Record, recorded in 1998-9, indicates how genuine, moving, meaningful and personal, an album of covers can be when done out of necessity and openness, how self can be regenerated through the inspiration of other people's work.

in 1961 John Coltrane, Charlie Mingus, Sonny Rollins, and Thelonious Monk, had consecutive gigs at the Club Renaissance, on the Sunset Strip. the Coltrane and Monk dates were paired with a standup comedian, if I remember correctly, an 'underground' comic whom I recall played the Bleeker-MacDougal folk circuit in Greenwich Village when I, briefly, lived there in 1960, named Hugh Romney (later called Lumpy Gravy) with Monk, and Lenny Bruce I think with Rollins

the Bruce gig began with him calling up a young middle class looking African American male (a plant) from the audience, seating him in a folding chair on the stage, and then proceeding to berate him with liberal clichés, such as “Joe Louis is a credit to your race.” of course, we, the ‘progressive’ white audience, ate it up. after the show, upstairs, where there was a buffet, Bruce was standing with DJ, Tommy B., who broadcast his nightly jazz show from the lobby of the club. they both looked like morticians in dark blue suits (esp. the sallow and hollow cheeked T.B), and they glared at us for staring....years later, I happened to be listening to the radio at exactly the time RFK was shot dead at the Ambassador Hotel. I’d flip the dial and it would be the same pointless hysteria, as though what occurred could be reversed....”twist his thumb, Rafer,” etc. then I turned to the jazz station. Tommy B., whose voice had become weakened, almost sodden, by then (I assumed heroin addiction), simply reported Kennedy had been shot, and then put on The Four Freshmen’s Voices In Modern track, *we’ll be together again*

Maude Maggart does the most moving vocal version of My Funny Valentine I’ve heard. yes, a far cry from either Frank or Chet (when it debuted in the 1937 Rodgers & Hart musical, Babes in Arms, a woman sang it to a man!). it’s also odd that the L.A. Weekly reviewer, in his pick, described her performance of it as “icily cool.”

my brother and I stole pennies from mom’s purse when we were little more than tots (several times). I remember walking to the corner drugstore on Beverly Blvd. and Crescent Heights (much later, an art gallery), buying Fleers Double

Bubble, bubble gum for 1 cent. when I lived above Nicolas Electric on Beverly Blvd for 4 years – sitting alone at night, cats on my lap, not bothering to turn on the lights, I was only what?.... 36, 7, 8, but felt my life was already behind me. it was a healthy time, hiking, going to the library, drawing, nutrition, nurturing vision. ironically the electric company also became an art gallery a decade later. must be something in my vibe I give to buildings. still feel I've never really lived externally – the sixties , drugs, yes. I made film during that period, photographed my life and those I shared it with, wrote criticism, etc., but that was a lower level of creativity than just being stoned, which is why, now, I so much insist on being sober.

two lesbians walked by this morning while I was wiping down my car, holding hands. the one closest to the curb had a perfect lip imprint (lipstick) on the left side of her neck. the other was wearing very provocative black mesh stockings under skimpy black shorts. there was a hush. an air of perfection. it would be interesting to note the sensation and feeling this 'assumed' heterosexual had when they (without looking) passed.

I've been alone so long I'm not sure it could be any other way – yet, I feel neither strong nor independent.

my adaptation, I suppose, is to be aware of everything, but be nothing.

a pure, a beautiful negativity – is like saying, I love you.

words – delve, dwell. similar, yet, each creates nuances of states beyond words.

the female cello, bassoon, and oboe players in Vinny Golia's Large Ensemble, aren't gorgeous like Chan Marshall (there are no 'cool' looking 'cats' in there, either), but they're committed to, and adept in, the making of sound.

all eroticism is porn – involves some fetish, disassociation, dirty thought. the only thing that's obscene, however extreme, is dishonesty, i.e., fakery, phony passion, making fun of others' natural love and lust.

I'm still trying to look the way I feel. I'm still willing to listen.

they market their dreams like soap.

there's a kind of domino effect with this (thinking). it determines the potential outcome of each new beginning.

"you're right! but that's not my turf. that's for *you who philosophize disgrace and criticize all fears*, to deal with.

reality according to W.B. "I sometimes don't answer the phone, but I always answer the door."

traditional Indian and Arabic music – formalizes and beautifies ages of suffering.

"if there was a better way to go then it would find me."

-Fiona Apple

new year, old thoughts (worries).

I'm building memories and we've never met.

*the trouble with you really is you don't think you simply
worry. Philip Whalen, 11:X11:56*

John Cage – “subject, idea, color – ideals are not necessary --
responding to changes in the weather – it's a joy, in fact, to
begin all over again.”

the tonality of ambient sounds – machinery in the distance
like a church choir on a sustained (chord) note.

Allen Ginsberg to me. “so you think you have a great mad-
ness.”

populism is always the tool of the oppressor. Goebbels
banned films that were not “uplifting.”

not being allowed to be alone when you are alone. is there
anything worse?

if despair is only what I can embrace fully then I'll embrace
despair.

“we're practically neighbors (sing to the intro of *the girl next
door*): though I live at 90404 Santa Monica California, and
she lives at 90403.”

they've subverted their libidinous instincts to power. that's

why their sex is necessarily adulterous. the way you fill out, and `don't` fill out, that slip.

I am a writer because I write. not the other-way-around..

at Clover Park in Santa Monica, where I (and a lot of others) exercise and run in the morning, there's a group of young ladies who play soccer. one of them, a thin girl with long dark hair and shades, who wears shorts but not the bulky athletic socks most of the others wear, and while about on the same playing level as they, doesn't have the physical power some of them have, I'm drawn to. soccer girl – sense of otherness I see in her. she doesn't quite fit. I think she's aware of my attraction to her. situations like this leave me with an insatiable itch...what I'd like to do is walk up to her, put my arms around her, kiss her, and then fuck her on the grass. the need is based directly on the circumstances which daily occur, and can ideally find immediate satisfaction only at that time, which, of course, for all practical reasons, is an impossibility. back in the early 70s I used to go to LACMA a lot (admission was free then), and hang out in Hancock Park, sometimes while sitting there with my then wife, Debby, remove my shirt and run around the circumference, a number of times, taking short strides, as I was just getting into a process (post drug), while the seniors who also hung out there watched me run by. it was kind of like I had the feeling that I was running for them. that I was their team. this was confirmed when while walking along the wooded path adjacent to the museum, one arm in a cast due to a broken wrist acquired in an auto accident, I passed an elderly woman who frequented the park, and she asked me if I injured it running. another time a

man who was a dead ringer for George Raft (the actor who played a lot of gangster roles), wanted to know if I was on the Fairfax high track team (I was in my mid-thirties at the time). he told me I was a good runner, but I should lengthen my stride (I could picture him clocking the horses). he actually was right. another time a self-styled hipster, he had large eyes and a small beak shaped like a hawk's, who lived with his parents in a two story house on the corner of 1st and Martel, and had a UC Berkeley sticker on the windshield of his car, who also hung out there, was standing by the back lot with a friend, handing out leaflets to select people. he stopped me, then said, "this is the moon shot. what do you do if you see a woman and want to feel her boobs?" I responded something like, "your energy and hers have to correspond." "you mean the vibes,?" and I replied, "no," searching for the articulation I felt would best convey what I felt. then he said to his friend, "he's bullshitting." I wasn't. I was foolishly trying to give his 'question' serious thought.. "bullshit," I laughed, aggravated, and walked away. I'd see him around the area a number of times during the next couple of years (once in the museum outdoor dining space with his father), becoming more spastic and wasted with drink (I supposed), once, passing out some political diatribe, eyes glowing, at the intersection of Fairfax and Beverly, with his one good hand, his other curled in a hook. even after I moved out of the area, I would invariably see him sitting alone on the wall in front of his house (his rehab), blankly watching traffic, when I'd return from Erewhon where I shopped. in my mind the question he posed I never cared enough to consider. I guess, upon reflection, 'you can't always get what you want'.

when I see women at night midst night lights and darkness,
while walking past a bus stop, or in the CVS parking lot on
26th St., that feeling of strange warmth, meat, out in the night
time, more romantic, desirable partly because of the homey
traces, or even desolation, of from whence they came.

a motel on the moon. slow boat to China

on the street she wears a warm jacket and shorts. warm legs
on a cold morn.

“you fuck like you sing.” “I never did it that way before.”
“you bring back old auras. new and fresh. light and color
surrounded by darkness – not at all lush and sophisticated,
either. that’s the freshness – hint of tang. shabby, untold
stories, country air.” “let’s drive around where the lights are
still on.” “I’ll drive.” “stay with me tonight?” “of course.”

Emily B. (never did know her last name) – her figure a con-
trast – a little bit of a mermaid’s. quite substantial, both
above and from the waist down. ethereal from the neck up.
delicate, pale face, with ice blue eyes. an impassive nymph’s
gaze, and an engaging smile. *why won’t somebody send a
tender blue boy to cheer up little girl blue.*

the moon pokes in and out of clouds, and there’s the
perfume smell of roses in full bloom. standing with her on
her front porch, afterwards, her kiss is tender. and for the
moment at least, he feels totally fulfilled – a completeness
that has eluded him since he first began to identify sexual
desire. on the sidewalk, after she closes the door, fantasizing

the image of her naked body, and dark, wild hair, he's walking on air.

"you're just a bluff – with your white t shirts, long sleeve chartreuse gabardine shirt and slacks, levis and Angeles peggers. with your brown suede jacket, your black leather jacket, your long greasy hair, your cordovan loafers, you're still a square," she screams.

Ivy Leaguers run the country, even at the liberal end of the spectrum, although I wouldn't call Arthur Schlesinger's relationship with JFK exactly Aristotle mentoring Alexander the Great.

Ginsberg – "poetry was just a reflection of the mind, independent of politics." true. if politics is just a synonym for behavior, then words have no meaning.

politics is the strategy of influencing others – that's all. it's not a synonym for communication. it's not a synonym for behavior. vision involves freedom on a different level – molecular freedom that transcends politics.

not recognition, but appreciation, would be nice.

I'd rather be hated than ridiculed.

even in my Beat/Hipster days, I had to sleep in my own bed at night.

it amazes me. Sasha Vujacic, although nervous, smoothed

back his hair just so before shooting the two clinching free throws in the Lakers victorious 2010 finals. now that's sincere vanity.

dream – at a post season meeting, we (Lakers players) were all in a room, each coming up to Phil Jackson to sign the Lakers roster for next season and see what our salaries were to be. at the end my name was no longer on the list. when Kristine McKenna (the only female there) came up, her name was. she made the team. I didn't. analysis: rather obvious.

a dream is not possible unless the dreamer believes it's actually happening in real time.

I had to decide whether I wanted to continue to be a 'good old boy', and I decided against it. which precluded my being included.

the (idea) thieves collude.

Vinny Golia. Gift Of The Unusual. by listening at low volume I can hear his (their) thoughts, which it seems to me, is much what the music is.. also, physical sounds – energy, yes. I don't get a lot of emotion. at least I don't feel emotion. intense abstract bursts of energy. but does it move me? melody moves me. is melody love?

whatever it is, you have to listen. once you let your mind wander, no matter what the music is, it seeps into your unconscious not fully comprehended. free improv, but composed, formal. so it's not entirely a new listening experience.

standards are mostly about resolving love, whereas Vinny Golia's Gift Of The Unusual is more expression and thought. on a radio show, free improvisational pianist, Richard Grossman was asked if he ever performed standards. his answer was, no, but when pushed, he said he played Bill Evans compositions at home, presumably to relax.

this writing is mostly analysis. but I value the former, which gets me into thought. the avant-garde is mostly about thought – conceptual art, etc., and the structure that supports it is mostly analysis. love and desire (lust) become ironic, as a defense, when subjected to analysis.

one night I brought my color slides (the only of my 'lost' art I occasionally miss), over to Wallace's to show them to him. Billy Gray and Helena happened to be there, as well as a neighbor named Gloria – I think someone said she was Shirley's sister though I don't believe she has one. unlike some people who tend to give little narrations, I didn't say anything as I projected the slides. there was a kind of tension that built up in the room – I remember Billy saying, "that's cute," about one of the images, and the neighbor wanting to know who 'that' was of a shot Debby took of me. and at one point she cried out, "I can't stand the tension," and left, but evidently thought better of it, and came back. Wally, during the whole projection, seemed to be deeply absorbed, and didn't say anything until the end, "that was a real trip."

at Beyond Baroque, George Herms, who was performing that night with a jazz group, was sitting on the stairs with Aya Tarlow and introduced me to her. I mentioned I still had her

small book of Poetry, Zen Love Poems (by Idell), George had printed on his letter press way back in the mid or late 60s, when we were both living in Topanga Canyon. the interaction was tepid between the three of us, George was not particularly friendly, and she appeared to me, to not be, at that time, a particularly happy woman. a little later, in the area where people were talking and waiting, she flashed me a look of recognition, to which, self-absorbed with my own hang-ups I didn't respond, an experience I'd been having with some frequency, I might add. the only reason I bother to write this, is, her book of poetry, at the time we (my former wife and I) lived in Topanga Canyon, was very important to me. it characterized and enhanced the states of my stoned existence, especially at the time when the roads were washed out and Topanga was isolated from the rest of the region, and I still hold her book in high regard. but the chance of conveying my appreciation to her for the shared vision of those, albeit unknown to her, moments, was, of course, nil.

Sartre saw literature as bourgeois substitute for real commitment, as Lenin did Gorki, Pushkin, Chekov, et al. Camus was dazzled at Vassar by the spectacle of "an army of long legged starlets, lazing on the lawn," but was occupied by what he thought of as the "American Tragedy" – the tragedy of the students was, they lacked a sense of the tragic Europeans who suffered through the war had. for Sartre the tragic was the commodification, mechanization, and objectification of the human.

Sartre – the thing in itself: "the reflective consciousness in just forms (scientific, artistic, or otherwise) can only limit the

thing itself – by virtue of its attempt to understand or describe it.” was he missing the point? language is just language. still necessary. art is a thing in itself.

with religions and mystical systems the form precedes the experience – you learn the form first then try to have the experience. with the creative process (art) the experience comes first and the form, if at all, comes out of that.

the difference between me and them: I accepted a period of purgatory, they didn’t. can I still refer to them? yes, as players in my life’s story. not the other way around.

calling Silverlake and Echo Park the Eastside is psychological gerrymandering. same with calling Westside public schools ‘inner city’ just because the students there now are mostly Latino, black, Asian, and other minorities, and the majority of whites are in charter schools.

she wants to know your politics before she can love you, or as Anne Waldman wrote in the seventies, “oh, he can’t love me until Puerto Rico is free.”

there’s a small photo I took years ago at Venice Beach. the girl, who I believed to be in her teens and a prostitute, had just left a young black male with dreadlocked hair on Ocean Front Walk, who, I assumed by the way they related, to be pimping for her. I found her to be very attractive in the role she was playing, followed her and managed to click the camera just as she disappeared around a corner, but didn’t get a clear shot. the lack of focus, however, gave the photo a

very mysterious quality, while retaining its sensuality – the combination of something and nothing at the same time.

all art is a projection – it's a reflection of one's inner world. but not devoid of influences or there would be no zeitgeist.

I'm not disputing old leftist claims that anti-Semitism in Russia before the revolution was provoked by the rulers to divert attention from the miserable conditions they themselves had fostered. but the anti-Semitism had to be there, initially, in order to have been provoked. my grandmother (who later was appalled by the murder of the Czar's children, and who immigrated (Ukraine) because of the pogroms of the 1880's, told my mother it was the priests who goaded the peasants into anti-Semitic violence. at any rate, my history does not allow for much populace sentiment.

is there a link between the elders in Le Sacre du Printemps, watching a maiden dance herself to death, and the priestly oppression of the Pussy Riot girls?

all 'weather' has spiritual and emotional associations as well as physical ones. the Santa Ana stirring passion, sensuously cutting into winter's chill. the mostly relatively mild rainy days of my grammar school years, filled with the scent of musty clothes, aroma of lunch bags and boxes, and the bright colors of comic books passed down the aisles. I'm cold. but there's an integration between the inner and outer here because there isn't that much difference. there, the differences are more extreme. the differences as well as being physical, become emotional, philosophical, psychological. is watching

the snowfall from a heated room reality? inner, I guess.

a warmer wind in dead of winter is the answer – Santa Ana coming in tonight, as we know, from the desert, unfortunately, fanning the flames of a fire (one of several) which will become the largest in the state's history, displacing and despairing thousands of people, many of them losing all they materially own. here, the wind is gentle, not as aromatic, nor as sensual, perhaps, as at some other times, notably in February or October, but still that aura, indescribable, carrying with it a sense of promise, a suggestion of paradise, deleting the mundane, though some authors, noir provocateurs, in fact, who write about Los Angeles, see in it something sinister, this quality that arrests and caresses the senses. perhaps they don't appreciate a relief from cold, perhaps they prefer the insidious darkness that locks the soul.

news photos of half destroyed structures and wild growth, bright flames glowing in eerie semi-darkness. total destruction, but from a distance, stark beauty, suspension of usual. there's momentary beauty in destruction because it destroys the usual (in which one is trapped). the price of devastation, is, of course, for most, no doubt, a much bigger trap.

are you blessed with vision? or are you waiting – for dinner, waiting to go to bed, waiting for the red light to turn green?

the problem - trust, when based on faith rather than behavior, is religion. sometimes tolerance is a more applicable solution than faith. just as there's no one I totally trust, there's no concept I totally accept.

Wed., May 16, 2012 begins with, after breakfast, shopping for my weekly groceries at Co-Opportunity, with a side trip to Whole Foods to grind some peanut butter. on the way back and in the kitchen, I listen to Mitch Jesserich interview Noam Chomsky on Letters and Politics (KPFK), then drive to Culver City and view Laura Parnes' most recent video, County Down. "destruction is the one principle in the world we can count on," says Angel, the protagonist. while I wouldn't go so far as to call it the 'one' principle, I do concur it's frequently something we can't avoid. there's a total disconnect between the views implicit in the first two events, and that of the latter. although there's more that's 'constructive' in the first, I find myself more emotionally and intellectually engaged with the latter – maybe because I'm more engaged with art. my sense of isolation is reaching a critical mass, not because of philosophical discrepancies, which I'm quite able to reconcile or reject, but lack of commitment to any one thing other than myself; the powerlessness on a social level that comes with having no friends, and subsequently, no outlet, no support, something we all need just to survive.

warm winter – looking across the Polo Grounds, at the late afternoon sunlight and shadows, bordered by a wood rail fence, imagining the stables beyond to be, perhaps, site of country club dance at night, standing outside with a woman wearing a grape-red party dress. what does this hearken to? Kandinsky painting, *lovers on horseback* – evening, light and shadow, couple on horseback in foreground, in park setting. Lanterns hanging from trees, brilliantly lit bejeweled city of domes and minarets in background. same feeling. nature and civilization at a balance, defining each other as vision.

nature further away from civilization, the more darkness and death. civilization too far from nature, trapped. saw several young deer grazing in the park.

sensitized after reading an appeal for funds from the LGBT center in Hollywood, for homeless gay youth, viewing the palm fronds outside my bedroom window, the way the breeze pushes the plants, on an otherwise warm, sunny, afternoon, gently assaulting the stability, hence ethereal presence, in what is natural, normal-poignant, moved by a feeling of fullness and (fuller) meaning of sexuality. there's a paradise of emptiness, if we could just get there – free of hate, pain, and sorrow. it was my response to the material I had just read and had already shit-canned. yet their voices did not go unheard.

after three hours of tests, then hassling with the blue-eyed receptionist at the Jules Stein Eye Center, while arranging a schedule for cataract removal, as I walk in the hazy late afternoon sunshine to my car, my senses tied up and stuck, there's instant relief when I'm taken by an intense urge, the only antidote, really, to my troubles, of wanting her, her face in mine, as in our prior necessary interaction, and ravish her, blue-eyed and slight, not readily identifiable accent, her face, neck, and hair, breathing breasts beneath the open collar of her powder blue blouse, and soft navy zip jacket, would be the only immediate compensation for my dilemma – preposterous, for what little response was there, the immediacy of my desire already fading, as rudderless, I drive the few oddly arbitrary, streets to my apartment. at about 10 pm I go to my computer, look at a porn video of a well-endowed, dark hair,

young lady, with a hairy muff, strip her already scant clothing, and proceed to masturbate for six minutes before climaxing (as I masturbate and come with her), no male obstruction to tune out. but then it's over. now what?

I continue to write words nobody reads and do art nobody sees. thou shalt not beg.

"sometimes when you look at me a thrill goes through me.
I'm not sure why. I actually shudder."

"that's because I appreciate the goddess in you. you're a
young Athena."

"on a pedestal."

"no, and I can see your feet of clay! it's just that the excitement I feel is in your power to arouse, satiate, and heal. it's
real."

"but you're not talking about an outer form?"

"well, I am, to the extent that your image has become a
signifier of inner perfection. I'm sometimes actually thrilled
when I look at you."

"you make me feel like I'm more than human."

"the quality is universal but the thrill is in that each form it's
embodied in is different."

“the devil is in the details, so to speak.”

“yes.”

a short review of Chris Kraus' book, *I Love Dick*, which seems to be getting some renewed attention some years after publication: first section – Chris and Sylvere's letters to Dick are brilliant. the letters, as they evolve from there, now just as rhetoric, also work well, stylistically, throughout the book. second section – road trip across U.S. in pickup truck. sharp observations and imagery of educated and uneducated Americana, striving to survive, psychically and emotionally, as well as physically. third section – interesting depiction of late seventies, eighties, post-modern art scene from her perspective, where the players are victims and exploiters, neither happy nor moral, as depicted, in a period in which the arty, intellectual/ academic/sophists' world became enmeshed in the consequences of the street realities. a lot of second generation feminist dialectical axe-grinding. some insightful, but arbitrary, art criticism, including her assertions of who's authentic, and who's not. fourth section – well, what is a writer who wants to add scope to her 'great' book to do? flashbacks, of course, the function of which, though some interesting on their own terms, here, seem generic and obvious (as a device), rather than organically necessary and meaningful – perhaps because it seeks a sympathy, at least inadvertently, for her she's not been willing to give others. fifth section – one page...the letter and Xerox copy of the letter – has impact, but is debatable who comes off worse....Chris, or Dick.

I desire to love a young woman's body. what does an older woman desire? what are her fantasies, and how can she project them in terms of her image; a brighter hair style and more makeup won't do. her mind may still be sexy. how can she make it work? she's no different than a man in that respect. can she still be the object of an older man's desire? can an older man be the object of hers. does she desire only younger men? younger men sometimes desire her. can one's ideas of beauty transmute? does sex (initially) need the stimulus of an erotic image? does the reality of decay past the point of fetish have to encourage the dissolution of sex?" see beneath the skin? what are the eyes saying?

after I moved back in with my parents (the long no social action period of my life), I'd see performance artist, Rachel Rosenthal, who lived in the same general area, around a lot, a couple of times at her gallery on S. Robertson Blvd., but mostly, with her dogs, where I'd run in the morning at Rancho Park. if we actually ever made eye contact, she'd give me a hard stare, like she was questioning who I was, or what I was about, or it was a solicitation to stare back in a mutual way. one early morning (about 6 a.m.) I was on the track at Hamilton, the high school I once attended, and she came, the only time I ever saw her there (although she lived a couple of blocks away), with her dogs. there was a very strong aura about the image, and she gave me one of those hard stares. when I got back, while I was sitting outside in the driveway, the doctor called from the hospital to tell my mother my father (who was 95) had died. I associate the image of Rachel Rosenthal that morning, on the track at Hamilton High with her dogs, as the death lady – the messenger of death. I

interpret her hard look (and aura) though most likely unintended, to be a portent that finally hit the mark.

glossary to the name Helen

Helen – my mother's name. she didn't have a middle name or a nickname.

Helen - 'the face that launched a thousand ships'.

Helen – the tragic femme (only referred to) in F. Scott Fitzgerald's short story, *Babylon Revisited*, which ended with "Helen wouldn't have wanted me to be so alone."

Helen H. – a girl I dated at the time I read the story. the first (and only) time she kissed me like she really meant it, was while parked at the beach the night after I returned from a 75 mile pack-in trip in the Sierras w/ multiple blisters on my feet.

it was through George Gershwin and other Jewish song writers I was first able to feel being Jewish was being American. I always felt his detractors, who'd claim he imitated black music (a variation of the phony German-Jewish music tag), were motivated by a need to deny that Jews were a valid part of American culture

you may think the lyrics to a popular song is secondary. but here's one example why that's not true. I get home from shopping. I'm conflicting about the social/sexual politics I always seem to feel trapped in, in context of being alone while putting away the groceries. then, the strains of a song is going through my head I go to the CD player and put on Gene Ammons playing Burt Bacharach's *A House Is Not A Home*, a song I don't even know the words to!

during certain periods in my life extreme changes radically affected or separated me from my relationship to earlier eras. generally it is not uncommon for people to feel gaps from early childhood, adolescence, and adulthood for example. but one can also experience change which is almost entirely physical such as drug use and the corresponding mindset and culture associated with it. such a time for this was the 60s in which the inner experience as well as the social culture that supported it was almost totally informed by pot. during and at the time that period ended, in my case abruptly, the various phases of my past life had ceased to be a connection. as an illustration: included in my record collection were 78 rpm and early LP vinyl records of music I lived by and was obsessed by in the early 50s during the height so to speak of my dating life, records I hadn't once listened to since. prominent among these were the Frank Sinatra 10 and 12 in. albums *Songs For Young Lovers* and *In The Wee Small Hours* respectively. one afternoon I pulled out *Songs For Young Lovers* with its 'benchmark' Nelson Riddle arrangements to give it a spin, in fact I chose a specific cut on it, the Jimmy Van Heusen song, *Like Someone In Love*, because of a specific romantic relationship I associated with the song; the ideal of romantic love the song invoked and the social life I was living then, even the clothes I wore, trying to actualize the experience by evoking the aura. but what I did experience was something weirder, a world that no longer existed and was totally unreal. a world I once tried to hold onto long after it was useful. it wasn't until years of reintegration that I was capable of listening to that album and for that matter the whole of the Standard American Songbook which was once of such vital importance, and feel any relevance in the present.

Jim Roberts was the draftsman for our division, ComCarDiv7 (Flag) stationed on the U.S. Navy carrier the Bon Homme Richard (CVA 31). he turned down a scholarship from General Motors to Art Center in Los Angeles, because he didn't want to design 'Detroitions.' he was a devout acolyte of Ayn Rand, and an advocate of Functionalism (a concept that design correspond to the function of an object rather than hide it). he also was reactive to 'Momism,' and the books author, Philip Wylie, was another one of his gurus. to round out his trilogy of influencers, he referred to the social realist artist Ben Shahn as 'that Old Swinger.' his father was the Norman of Norman's Automotive, a venerable Silverlake landmark (which later became a punk art gallery owned by Johnette Napolitano of Concrete Blonde). his family lived on Castle St. directly across from the reservoir. they were Mormons. his married older brother who was a big influence on him was then making the Beat scene in North Beach. Jim asked me, if while home on leave, I might deliver Rand's book, The Fountainhead, to his younger sister. I was also asked by a shipmate from another division, named Martinez, if I would stop by his girlfriend's house in Highland Park and let her know he would be coming in the following weekend. I carried out both requests while on a blind date with a UCLA student who was part of the broad Westside clique I related to before getting kicked out of school and having my draft number raised to the head of the list, who chose, while I performed the errands, to sit in the car and wait.. at Martinez' girlfriend's home her mother answered first. they both invited me in but I declined as my date was waiting in the car. the girlfriend was very pretty, very sweet. I didn't give her a reason for not coming in, and later, Martinez jokingly called

me a rat (ostensibly for trying to hustle his girl), but I felt, really more, it was his disappointment I didn't visit with her. my date and I first went to the Family Of Man photo exhibit at Barnsdall Park. she'd already seen the show she kept saying, whenever I commented on the photos. then we went to an AAU gym meet at LACC where an old friend from high school was competing. it turned out he did quite well. prior to the event I walked on a low, narrow concrete wall bordering part of the school as she walked on the sidewalk beside me. at a certain point I kissed her, and she responded, somewhat. I think she was attracted to the way I functioned with the errands, and, generally, to my independent attitude. I also was not bad looking. a number of my older friends were there, including the younger brother of my gymnast friend who actually set up our date. I (although I knew I was dumping on myself) invited another of my high school friends to come along with us to an NAACP chapter party my date had invited me to, in the Malibu Hills, which, after turning off the Coast Highway, was, through a series of seemingly endless tortuous roads somewhere deep in the hills. it turned out almost everyone there, like us, was white. mostly because of my having invited my friend, giving she and I virtually no space for intimacy, and then she holing up with a core group in a separate room when we got there, the night, which began with promise had turned bad. disturbed, next day I called her. "I can't help you," she said, the standard response for rejecting someone when a relationship soured, "I told you we should have gone alone." not too long after, October, 1957, to be exact, I was transferred to the naval base on Treasure Island to be processed for discharge – had the best sleep of my life, then or since. awoke to an empty (except)

for one fellow who was appreciatively smiling at me) dorm at 10 am, showered, dressed, and took the A train to SF, knowing in a couple days I'd be done with all of this. after returning to UCLA, I had a new group of friends, hooking up with the left bank bohemian element on campus.

Analysis: although she (the date) was good-looking I was really not much attracted to her. too compulsively complacent, too cold a surface. her previous boyfriend whose first name was Howard was studying to be an architect. the protagonist in Ayn Rand's novel is named Howard (Roark) also an architect. my inviting my friend to come with us was a compulsion (self-destructive), at a point when things were going good (the social context was complimentary to me), and typical of my frequently blowing it with women when there was impending social interaction I feared, in this case the party in Malibu, but I enjoyed the first part of the evening which was free and open. I think this is just another illustration of how I am an outlier. I think Martinez just wanted to show off his girlfriend, who was actually more attractive to me than my date was. I was somewhat drawn to the Eastside and Mexican girls, non-Chola Chicanas, who seemed both sweet and bad, however essentially bourgeois. her house on a quiet street of single family homes that night signified and extended my earlier experiences with girls with more modest upbringings than I, as a teenager, my still extant illusion (dreams) of love, romance, still suppressing that it almost always ended up in self-destructive behavior and rejection, not to open up a can of worms about my not completely conscious attitudes then towards sexual objectification, and who I was in relationship to that.

1960, New Years eve, we, my former wife and I, after spending a couple of hours at a female friend's (a student, daughter of a shrink) house in Beverly Hills above the hotel, and my drinking quite a bit of gin, we went to a New Year's eve party in nearby Benedict Canyon attended by students, young professionals, and leftist bohemians. on the crowded stairs leading up the hillside, I somehow got into my mind that one of the persons climbing alongside us, a heavy set fellow, deliberately stepped on our female friend's foot, and was bragging about it to his friend, this is all very vague, and I chose him off. when we arrived at the top where the party was taking place, things went back and forth, with him denying he stepped on her foot but I kept on it, and at one point the fellow shouted, "I'll kill him, I'll kill his wife." "then a couple of really cool 'spade cats' intervened. one said to me, "you've got a pretty wife, you've got a nice jacket (long, soft olive green corduroy). go inside and dance, we'll take care of this." I walked over to where the fellow and his friend was. "my money's on the skinny cat," another hip, black guest said, as I threw a weak (impotent!) punch. he grabbed hold of me, we tussled, and he, being stronger than me, got me down, with his thumbs gouged both my eyes, and crushed a rock onto my head. they kicked the fellow out as he shouted, "I'll go, but he started it." a couple insisted they take us (in their VW Bug) to UCLA emergency, needless to say I was pretty beaten up, where a doctor (whose last name was Bernstein, and who much later became my mother's eye doctor), examined my eyes to determine if there was any serious damage, treated them and the head wound which may have required stitches, and set up an appointment for me to return was generally matter-of-fact, mildly empathetic,

and mildly contemptuous I had put myself in that position. the couple then dropped us off at our flat in Laurel Canyon. it is interesting, he wanted nothing to do with me, in fact, felt disapproval if not outright contempt for my behavior. he was just doing what a responsible humanist should do, but one had to gratefully admire him for his commitment in a world where people walk by others in dire need and don't even look. our then erstwhile friend said afterwards no one stepped on her foot. her sister, who was also there with a 'serious' date was mortified. it ruined her whole night. a friend from my college group, one with whom I'd had a previous minor (from a purely physical perspective) tussle, came along to take photos of the second visit, which although I allowed, I felt, he was motivated by sadistic intent. the doctor didn't seem to mind. believe it or not I returned later that same night to retrieve my coat which was ripped off of me during the fight. the room was empty except for the two cool cats. the one who had tried to talk me out of fighting, in a super cool manner, wordlessly pointed to the corner of the room where my shredded beyond use jacket lie. it didn't take many weeks to heal, at least outwardly. I suppose I was lucky. some things that have happened which may have been quite traumatic in the past, can upon reflection, eventually dissolve into spirituality and vision. this particular event, however, I quickly forgot about. but thinking about it today while walking in the park, was surprisingly painful. one of the factors that tipped me away from accepting the young man's advice, was because I didn't dance. even though my wife was a (professional) dancer, and even said in the beginning of our relationship, she didn't care whether I danced or not. but it is that I was motivated to such degree by this fact that made it

still painful.

not dancing has always been a bane going back to my dating life. not dancing, or faking it, was at least a contributing factor in the failure of several of my early romances. mostly because I wasn't open about it. when I was a teenager, I recall the concept of dancing meant being 'in step' with someone. as though the urge to move had to have a partner.

sometime in the sixties, they briefly came together, as guests on the Les Crane talk show, along with singer, Tommy Sands. as I didn't tune in until the program had already commenced, I don't know how it started, but it was totally surreal. Torme and Dylan had already clashed on the issue of patriotism, evidently, and the first words I remember hearing was Mel spouting "only in America," and Dylan making a sneering reply, prompting Crane to say, "you talk that way to Mel Torme?," then Dylan replying, "Mel, shmell," and Crane responding with a mock (but serious), "ohhh." then they went down to their seats, and Tommy Sands took off his tie and said, "look, Bob, here's my tie, will you give me your guitar?," which didn't seem to me a fair trade. Bob said, "now why would I want to give you my guitar?" meanwhile Mel sat there, speechless. then Bob said something half to himself like, "what am I doing here," got up to leave, as Les said, "take it easy, Bob," then to Sands, "how does it feel to be the son-in-law of Frank Sinatra?" "he doesn't bother you, but it's a good feeling to know he's there when you need him."

musng on the hyper-masculinity TV is pushing while watching a football game including the relentless ads, I go to the

PBS channel which is in the middle of a fund raising special of footage, photos, and talking heads offering the DVD John And Yoko, and am immediately struck by how androgynous and antithetical the images and attitudes are to the hypermasculinity I had previously watched on mainstream TV.

dreamt Chet Baker and I locked ourselves in the closet of my former bedroom, happily singing songs together. this was not the cool, brooding, Chet, of his public image.

comments on Ernest Hemingway's first novel, *The Sun Also Rises* published Oct. 22, 1926, which, in most people's minds, including mine, was his best novel. the first 'serious' literature I was exposed to and the first to move me were the writings of the American Moderns such as Steinbeck, Hemingway, Fitzgerald, at a time when I first committed myself to being a writer during the 1950s. if I read a book or story by an author that affected me it was not uncommon for me to walk around in its aura for days after. this was the only period I could genuinely say that, though I've gone on in subsequent times to read and be influenced by a good deal of the world's so-called great literature which would imply where one is at is at least as important as what one is perceiving. I have recently reread the long main section of the book where the expatriots traveled from Paris to Spain for the annual bull run event in Pamplona and was surprised at the impact it still had. how well Hemingway communicated through the structure of language the rhythm of dialogue depicting the frustrated often inarticulate attitudes of the little group which were based on the lives of real people most of whom can be seen in a famous photo taken there in 1925, and perhaps I can

expand on an element in the book which has been frequently, although not adequately, commented on. all of Hemingway's portrayals of Jews were negative though in the the case of the two Jewish 'hit men' in the short story, The Killers, interesting, but his portrayal of Robert Cohn was his most ambiguous. the portrayal, although in my mind clearly anti-Semitic, seems an actual attempt to deal with the dual nature of which I believe was a core aspect of the book, that of impotency, of the ineffectuality of the contemporary individual to function autonomously, by pointing to the physical impotency of the narrator Jake Barnes whom he depicts as having the quality of stoic grace which Hemingway believed characterized a 'real' man, juxtaposed with the impotency of Robert Cohn whom he believed was rendered psychologically impotent because of the discrimination against him as a Jew, whom he depicts as one who is a social imposition (spoilsport), a complainer, and 'crybaby'. the critical response justifying characterizing Hemingway's portrait of Cohn as anti-Semitic has been that rather than portray him as a person with certain characteristics who happens to be Jewish, Hemingway characterized Cohn as a person who had these characteristics because he was Jewish (a kind of blaming the victim), thus perpetuating a stereotype which Hemingway himself believed. this is true. but the fact that he recognized the results of discrimination at all as a factor in Cohn's personality suggests a certain amount of empathy which he chose to suppress but was manifested in the ambiguous relationship between Cohn and Barnes. could a parallel possibly be drawn between the impotency and ineffectiveness of Robert Cohn beating up the bull fighter and the Israeli bombardment of the Palestinians? this is significantly

different than the less benign philosophical anti-Semitism of Henry Ford, Charles Lindbergh, and Ezra Pound.

with the exception of some short stories I wrote in the late fifties while still in college, I only began writing fiction about at the beginning of this century, and the only thing that motivated me to write it was sex. and when I think back to my old stories it was pretty much the same, though it had more to do with romantic feelings than with erotic ones than it does now. just after I got out of the navy, and just before I reentered UCLA, I recall on two separate occasions, attending the LA County Museum chamber music concerts which were then held in the Museum of Natural Science in Exposition Park. on one occasion I was with an art student friend, and afterwards he introduced me to a fellow student, a pretty girl with green/brown eyes, and although nothing much of interest occurred between us, when the spring semester ('58) began, I gave a piece I wrote (titled green/brown eyes) about the experience to John Espey as a requirement to gain entrance to his popular Short Story writing class, and shortly after leaving it with him, when I returned to see if I was accepted, he nodded approvingly, meaning 'you'll do.' the other time I went to the museum chamber concerts, was with a former shipmate, who later was the person who first turned me on to marijuana. at this concert, the cellist in the group playing a Schubert quartet, was a poised, of course given her role, pretty girl no doubt just beginning to perform, named Joanna de Keyser, and infatuated, I focused on her almost to the exclusion of anyone else, as she was, in that cultural context, the embodiment of my ideal of beauty at the time. but just as we were getting up from our seats at the end of the

concert, my friend, said, "I'm in love with the cello player", absolutely shattering the silent and secretive communion I was having with her and was nurturing. I was going through an enlightenment, high on myself and creativity, and it was like my feelings were more special than anyone else's at that moment. it disturbed me he had the same feelings I did, and, so to speak, had 'beat me to the punch'. this has happened throughout my life, the often grosser manifestations than silence ruining an intimately kept secret. my vision of being a lover began innocently, without afore-thought, my first day in junior high school, perceiving for the first time the older girls' lipstick and noticeable breasts. this awakened in me a conscious raison d'être. F Scott Fitzgerald was the writer who most influenced the content of my early writing.

"The greater part of our memory lies outside of us, in a dampish breeze, in the musty air of a bedroom or the smell of autumn's first fires, things which we can retrieve...the last vestige of the past, the best of it, the part which after all our tears have dried, can make us weep again. Outside of us? inside of us more like but stored away....it is only because we have forgotten that we can now and then return to the person we once were, envisage things as that person did, be hurt again, because we are not ourselves anymore, but someone else, who once loved something that we no longer care about." In The Shadow Of A Young Girl's Flower – Marcel Proust – 1918

(must disagree a bit with Proust here. we remember....thus are one person, however changed and will forever be so.)

this piece is on the objectification of sex and why I sexually objectify women in my writing, all my fiction writing, in fact. am I sexist? if by sexist you just mean horny male who gets erotic pleasure out of looking at women, then I am a sexist. I, however, define sexist as someone who has a prurient interest in the other based on a compensatory need for power and control. I suppose I should begin with as far as my fiction goes, I've published three short story collections, the first over four hundred pages, and a novel, and every story, almost without exception, begins with a sexual fantasy. although this factor does not relate to my non-fiction and poetry, it is the only thing that motivates me to write fiction, and a big, necessary part of it is the objectifying of the female image directly in relationship to the sexual act. but name me one piece describing the sexual act that does not include objectification.

to start with, all of my extant fiction dates back only about fifteen years. in college, during the 50s, I already considered myself a writer, and like many of my student contemporaries, hoped to write the 'great book.' my first short stories were about romantic love. although Hemingway's writing style influenced like he did so many others, how I wrote, F. Scott Fitzgerald was the first writer whose content I felt any personal affinity towards. my first stories reflected this but the well dried up, as did the whole idea of literature, as I started using drugs and became part of the arts oriented head scene of the 60s, doing mostly visual work. at primary concern in all of my fiction, as it was with Fitzgerald, is the psychological, emotional, and physical confluence of beauty, sexual desire, and transcendence. whereas my early stories

dealt primarily with the romantic pain aspect of love, my current stories deal more with the erotic aspect. am I a sexist? men hold no power over women in almost all of my stories, and I certainly do not advocate for it in the few that they do. I defy anyone to show otherwise. it is my belief that anything erotic is porn. that is involves some separation (fetish) between the image and the act (I might also claim, tentatively, that any relationship is incest-uous to a degree). there is a difference between an author depicting sex graphically, with humor, insouciance, and affection, than in taking on the more extreme issues of violence, obscenity, and defilement, in one's writings, and the most serious and authentic depictions of sex seems to be with the latter. why is that? and, in the latter, is it sex which is primarily being depicted at all? Richard Hell said in an interview, that the only good writing of sex is done by homosexuals, I think implying that to write well about sex there has to be a taboo against it. but I think he did a pretty good job in his novel, Go Now, in depicting non-radical hetero sex, though as it related to his drug addiction, and, I don't imagine seducing one's aunt, however young, would exactly conform to the March sisters' morality, as displayed in Little Women. does writing about sex need an added compelling condition to be valid? it is difficult to write just about sex, that is, literally and fully describe it with meaning and insight, as something other than that influenced by Rimbaud, Burroughs, etc., without appearing to be corny, unsophistica-ted, or, as in romance novels. contrived. there is the tension to reconcile the contradiction between a physically based 'Reichian' view of sex, and the attempt to create the perfect timeless erotic image, which is a product of the imagination,

to fixate on the erotic image is initially not sustainable as it will lead to the dissipation of the desire that gave rise (pun intended) to it.... "consumed by that which it was nourished by," and can attain permanence only as it becomes refined through art. if this balance is achieved the mystery and sensuality, perhaps, can be contemplated indefinitely. does sexual objectification really negate relating to the whole person? my straight forward answer is, at least theoretically, no. it is interesting that the word 'objectify' is the enemy to, really, most women now, not just feminists who yet advocate, for instance, for the objectification of intellect or athleticism. I feel neither guilt nor responsibility for the system that has flourished through-out the ages in which men have become the subjects and women the objects, at least on a sexual level, and, in fact, it would be better to examine the complicity it's made up of, than push for discriminatory simplistic fixes which aren't going to change that.

as for Hollywood's New Puritans, who want to regulate just how many years difference, age-wise, is allowable in a relationship (this is called ageism and it's never been so rampant), and what is acceptable sexual behavior for others, tell us what you think when you masturbate. the most sexist people are the ones who won't reveal their own sexual proclivities, and neither want you to, nor graphically depict it, either. why is that?

the caveat then is not sexual objectification but the unequal treatment of women ingrained in every society. it is, however, hopefully changing, by mutual need and understanding.

in a cartoon I recall seeing in a 60s East Village Other, I think by Kim Deitch was depicted two males on the street about to pass each other. one was a bearded hippie with long hair wearing flower power clothes. the other was a square dressed in a suit and hat, carrying a briefcase. there were thought balloons over each of them. the one over the hippie's head was a pile of swear-word symbols. in the bubble over the nine to five was a single flower growing in a pot.

she (Hannah Tillich) and Paulus felt that "drugs provided a shortcut without the personality development that must accompany such experiences to make them fruitful." the Tillichs' may've thought porn a shortcut as well. while one may experience a desired pleasure, they'd reason it would not result equally in subsequent personality development.

what was most upsetting, given my belief in the transcendent nature of science and culture, was how easily the buildings went down. yet, at the same time, there, on film, from a distance, was the more aesthetic sensation of how softly and peacefully they crumbled.

Lee Krasner said that Pollock's frame of mind gave him the sense of always being in danger – artist, poet, sense of danger. it was his sense, his inner, creative, emotional state, hence his enhanced existence, was always being threatened, she was referring to. you have to push the envelope to that point where something personal pokes through the mold. this is where the authenticity and poignancy are strongest. anything beyond that is experimental.

the lighter the line the quieter it is. which is why a lot of my best drawings are when the pen is almost dry.

when you cover for yourself the separation stays one step ahead of you.

Religion is just belief. spirituality is a state.

I defied the mythmakers (with my lack of esprit de corps). in the beginning it wasn't intentional. but it got more that way. call it Networking In Reverse.

as for myself, I had to 'grow' beyond those who had no interest in me. the healing and reintegration to 'start over' precluded the burden of having to physically maintain a legacy.

anything you have to maintain will work against you.

the main difference between the drug user and the non-user is not language. it's conception of time.

get me some pot and I'll like you a lot. one, two, tie my shoe. three, four, shut the door. five, six, pick up styx for tri-ex.
Warren E. Gusinow 1961

paradise not lost – Lennie and Lee, recorded live, in the Sing Song Room (heh) of the Confucius restaurant, NYC, 1955.

`Thank you for applying to model at American Apparel. Your information has been received and will be reviewed shortly. If your personal style seems like a good fit someone will '.

the night of a family dinner, Thanksgiving I think, and I showed my *Roses* film, I wrote down the first four lines of the opening stanza to T.S. Eliot's, *The Wasteland* (April is the cruellest month, etc.) on a paper napkin on the breakfast room table, while they were cleaning up and washing the dishes. my niece, Nicole, then went upstairs to my father's office (my former bedroom) and started writing a poem. I came up to tell her I was going to project my film in the living room, and asked her if she'd like to read us her poem afterwards. she said she would. the screening took a long time. then my father got on me about it – everyone else enjoyed it – a short argument ensued between he and I, and Nicole, discouraged, gave up on reading her poem. in the den I tried to tune her and her family in, so I could ask her to read her poem. my brother Leonard (who had a dominant position with our brother Burt's family at the time) immediately picked up my vibe and competed with it for their attention, ruining my chance to keep the sensitive connection alive, and I gave up on it. I think it was the napkin that inspired her to go up to my father's office. I certainly would have liked to have known what she wrote. her birth date is in April. she will be a half century old. she was a teenager at the time.

during the day of the night Thom previewed his *Muybridge* film in a UCLA screening room, I had discovered a 16 mm film strip I'd kept from when we, his then, girlfriend, my then, former wife, lived in Topanga Canyon, of first, filming a reflection of my head and upper body through the bathroom mirror, the crank of my windup camera unfixed and revolving, a kitten perched on my shoulder, then of her with a very short haircut and smooth complexion, looking very young in

a short, silky nightie, coyly mugging for the camera, as she placed her hand on my crotch, only my torso and pants now in the frame – it was a spontaneous and quite charming sequence, I think anyone would say, though I foolishly spliced away everything but the latter part, of her hand on my crotch, before bringing it along and giving it to her when she picked me up to join them. after the screening which got good responses from the other guests, four of us, Thom, Debby, Morgan Fisher, and I, were standing next to the projector, and she put her hand on Thom's crotch. I think she was totally unconscious of the precedent, and Thom, unaware of what provoked it, mildly, negatively, reacted – she, most likely, disposed of the film strip without ever having shown it to him.

for decades, maybe longer, the shirts we wear have had tags attached to the inside neck line. they sometimes were the source of mild irritation but otherwise of little import. in recent times, however, due to an increase in air pollution resulting in our greater exposure to the sun's harmful effects, our skin is more sensitive to irritation. now to deal with this problem it would seem the logical approach would be to cease the pollution which is causing us much greater harm than merely an annoying itch as a result of the tag label rubbing on our necks. but instead of addressing the cause of distress and taking the issue straight on, we instead create tag-less shirts in which the label is printed directly onto it, voila, completely eliminating the irritation. thus we now have another useful invention, thanks to our circumventing the more important issue that gave birth to it. this, I maintain, is how the sophisticated society works in almost all its realms.

in 1963 Wallace Berman included a poem I wrote in issue 8 of his hand-printed book editions of Semina: I am that noise which/must against their/common paraphrase/charge deceit. here/in this first and/final place, with the/impeccable and mad, i/thrust my only blossom. in the years since I have never reproduced the poem in any of my published work, including poetry, as I felt its intended effect remain best in Semina. this is the first time I have typed up the poem since 1963 and sent it to Wallace, and I had to look up my copy of Semina 8 to get the phrasing. my reason for doing so is on doing searches on the internet, I came upon two books of criticism related to the arts and social politics, which attributed the authorship of my poem to Jack Kerouac, one published as recently as 2011, Wally gave only the initials of the contributors in that issue, in my poem, JK, and Kerouac's initials also being JK, which, due to lazy research, or who knows, something more deliberate, they came up with the name of the Beat icon. there are other books or papers on Semina, at least two that I am aware of, including Semina Culture: Wallace Berman and his Circle, that correctly lists me as the author of that poem, but what has occurred has substantially raised my fear, that history, in addition to neither recognizing nor appreciating the work I've done, could credit what I've done to someone else. that, at one time, in my mind, just did not seem possible. the poem has special meaning to me in that it is, really, one of only a few outstanding verified links to Wallace and his world other than anecdotal. it is especially important in light of the denials and power struggles that existed, and perhaps still exist, even to the extent of greeting misinformation with silence. it is also important for me it is my first published work.

there is also the issue of appropriation outside the confines of copyright infringement, which may be legal, but still questionable. given anything could, and should, influence, anything of worth can be 'taken', or at at least, appropriated, and often one can't tell what are influences and what is coincidental. but to take from someone unknown without revealing, is stealing.

often I can tell by the context in reading books that may have content similar to mine whether it has been appropriated or just part of the zeitgeist. but when the words, in a similar context, are exactly the same----for instance, on page 61 of my book, *Forever Anna* (novel version published 2014), Anna, describing to Jerry the nature of her having had paid sex with three wealthy men in a locked bedroom at an arts event..... "there is a different kind of intimacy, interestingly enough, you can have with a stranger, because of the contrast that occurs when what you're showing or doing is with someone **you don't know at all....**" on page 107 of Stephanie La Cava's novel, *The Superrationals* (published 2020), she writes, after describing ambiguous sex in a man's hotel bath and room, "it was so intimate because I didn't **know this person at all.**" it is more the wording than the concept that raises an issue. a few books of my fiction, in addition to my giving them to people, had been floating around including *Forever Anna* (short story and novel version) and my first collection of short stories, *Horny Love Stories*; two copies of the latter were apparently stolen from Book Soup, which they paid me for. same occurrence at The Beyond Baroque Literary Arts Center. also all of my writing is accessible online. one doesn't have to even be aware of my work. it could have filtered in second hand. it is

not she I'm criticizing, it's frustration with the feeling of being both used and unknown.

Forever Anna – it keeps becoming apparent at every stage of the book that sex is best when there's not so much personal, emotional, baggage. of course that is just one narrative. I guess another major factor in both the character oriented stories and the more singularly erotic is the idea that exclusivity and possession dim the libido, and, ultimately, love.

one night when I was at Dean Stockwell's, I was rather intently looking at a small City Lights pocket book edition of Philip Lamantia's poems. Toni Basil, who was also in the room, gave me one of those intense, just between us, stares, and I, feeling I was being hustled, deliberately did not respond – I always felt it was false to use art for one's personal-political agenda, esp. without knowing the person it was being directed towards. from then on I felt she sought to denigrate me in little ways, such as an afternoon Dean and I were screening films, Toni walked in as we were looking at my film, Color Abstract N. 2, which was mostly moving camera shots of Debby reflected on a broken hand held mirror. it seemed she was really taking it in and responding, but as soon as it was over, she deliberately assumed a so what look. as I think back, my later falling out with Dean was a sad thing – I valued his friendship, he was very responsive to me. we had a rapport people didn't know about – it was due, partly, to a misunderstanding when he publicly showed his films at the Community Center in Topanga, expecting a response and support from me I wasn't able (or willing?) to give, for reasons never understood. prior to that, he showed me two versions of a film he

did of 'dancing' colored lights, evidently shot at night. there was a long version which was rather generic and silent, and a cut version which he synched to the, at the time, hit song by the Left Banke, Walk Away Renee, which moved me, then asked me which I preferred. I said the latter, and by his look, I assumed he agreed with me, but at the public screening he showed the former, for which, truthfully unjustifiably, I felt betrayed. at any rate the event turned out to be a bad night for me, resulting in bad vibes between me and several other erstwhile friends – my personal relationships with friends were rarely public. when I showed my films at the Cinema Theater I didn't invite people, or hang in the lobby between screenings. the Bermans invited us over the day we were finally forced to move from Topanga as a result of gentrification (it was kind of a nostalgic afternoon with Wally telling us a little about his time living in a health camp for underprivileged boys in the mountains). I had just bad-mouthed Dean to Shirley, almost as he, unexpectedly, to me, walked in to share in the leave-taking, giving me no chance to recover from my ill-conceived remarks which I, of course, regretted. whereas if I hadn't gratuitously opened my mouth, there would have been, most likely, given the occasion, a rapprochement between us, but as it stood I locked up inside, negatively influencing my interaction with everyone that afternoon. many years later I sent Dean a letter telling him I appreciated the time in which we were, to one degree or another, friends, along with my first book, An Imperfect Lover. his agency promised they'd see to it he got it. I don't know if he ever did.

people don't really understand the maturing mind. it has

nothing to do with memory loss. triggering memory is selective, determined by need and association.

inner optic color visions can be read as well as perceived. triggered by mental fatigue and the need to let go, are bits and pieces of stored perception, which are composed and modulated by the mind, sustained and enhanced by manipulation and pressure. at its most lucid and exquisite, it's an abstract creative act, and only partially translatable.

one time when I visited Wallace, I brought along a book by Ray Bremser titled, *Angel*, written in prison, illustrated with Beardsley-like drawings by his wife, Bonnie. the next time I saw him he asked me if it was all right he gave the book to someone. one piece, Bremser wrote in solitary confinement, described Ray and Bonnie slow dancing, while mouthing every note to John Coltrane playing *Slow Dance*, a moody lament from the mid-fifties. *Traneing In*, my first Coltrane album, a rendition that really connected with me then, and that I still admire. Wally, who had previously published Bremser, said he thought Bremser's writing, at that time, was dated, I guess too confessional and sentimental, more in tune with the fifties than the then current head scene we were all a part of. despite the association of him with jazz, largely during the be-bop era when he did jazz album covers, and a big part of it for him was the hipsterism, by the sixties, to my knowledge, he was mostly into pop. I don't think he was much in the mood to just listen – music, for him, was a soundtrack to the life he was living. he wasn't into Coltrane, Ornette Coleman, later Charles Mingus, Albert Ayler, or the other 'heavyweights', to my knowledge, but I think he was

always into Monk. also, almost all the jazz he listened to was by black artists. he didn't relate to Chet Baker, Mulligan, Getz, or Brubeck, partly because of their lifestyles, even though all of them, with the exception of Brubeck, were, at times, heroin users – there had to be a hip element to anything he was attracted to. James Brown was as much a hipster as Dexter Gordon, whereas the brilliant alto sax player, Lee Konitz, was not. I doubt he ever listened to Bill Evans, or was interested in the songs he played.

I've been looking at things on You Tube, Annette Peacock videos, night walk scenes in Shibuya, Tokyo, seedy sex in Thailand, the DW Griffith film True Heart Susie starring Lilian Gish, rare daytime home movie footage of Kerouac, friends and families, outside NYC's Harmony Bar and Restaurant in 1959, and a short video on Marjorie Cameron, Cinderella of the Wastelands, in which George Herms, Kenneth Anger, and Curtis Harrington, talk about her art. her show at MOCA, Pac Design Center, a number of years ago, was the last art exhibit I visited that had any real effect on me – she was a great, authentic, artist. I won't go into any of this except that Anger's somewhat biased comment that Cameron used her mystical power to drive Anais Nin out of the house, and replace her as the Scarlet Lady in his film, The Inauguration of the Pleasure Dome (George said something I felt more accurate that "her power wasn't in relationships, it was in her work"), got me into something I'd read previously, while reading Anais Nin's Diary, about her friendship with Renate Druks who also knew Cameron, and was secretly married to football star, Ronnie Knox, a star-crossed relationship when she was 37 and he was 24. I won't go into that, either, except

to say Knox was a classmate of mine at Canfield Avenue grammar school in West L.A. during the war years. although a semester behind me we shared the same classroom in the fourth grade. he was tall, thin, fair, with a quiet sensibility, and well liked. his name, then, was still Raoul Landry, his bio father was French. the famous Harvey Knox was his step-father. at my first cub scout pack meeting when we were introduced to Harv who was the coach, he said to my parents, "he's a husky lad, he'll make a good fullback on our tackle football team." I was a bit chubby for a while in grammar school, before I grew three inches during my first summer in junior high school and became a beanpole. I won't go on about Knox and what people might say was his tragic odyssey, either, except that I recall reading in an interview, George, who played end on the UC Berkeley freshman football team, saying Ronnie Knox was their quarterback that year, before he moved on to UCLA, and it's interesting how all this stuff (frequently does) ties in – I'm, anyway, having to deal with my own, very real, social dilemma. the anxiety I feel regarding any social movement, activity, or action. the feeling of going day by day without enough engagement or meaning in the backdrop of previously unsustainable, un-fulfilled, relationships, (animosity).

at Wallace's, not too long after we became friends, the three of us, Wallace, Debby, and I, were finally getting it on in a way that I had wanted, and Russ Tamblyn, whom I'd hadn't yet met, dropped by, carrying a small brown bag with a hamburger in it, which, from their interchange, I gathered Wallace had asked him to bring. then we were standing around and Wallace brought up the movie, Westside Story,

which Debby was also in as a dancer (Shark), blink and you'd miss it, and I thought to myself, 'oh no, here we go again, back to square one.' I completely lost my center (the first and only time I ever freaked out on pot) and threw my arms around her, crying, "help me." even though she did nothing, the physical contact allowed the energy to flow back and I was ok. as soon as we got home I turned on. the next time I saw Wally after that, he said, "that means you are an artist."

there is an illusiveness of feeling and meaning for me to the Frank Loesser song, *I've Never Been In Love Before* that I've never until this moment quite put the whole together. the song was a duet sung by Sky Masterson and Sister Sarah Brown in the 1950 musical, *Guys And Dolls*. my first exposure to it, however, was the George Shearing Quintet instrumental version in 1954. it was the auras of that version which evoked in me, for some reason, the narcotic attitudes of the West Coast Jazz scene. Chet Baker recorded it in 1956. his version of the song is the most seductive rendering of a classic American Standard ever done, the aura it conveyed almost spiritual porn. strange I would read into its intimacy in such a manner – seductively subtle smut behind the tender façade. but it is that, the disembodiment, that gives it its strong aura and is what made Chet's singing unique. and it was my sense of that era that affected me, moving me into a newer, less naively idealistic pre-hipster stage, which was the point.

when I was a small boy (new, you might say) many things, the world, seemed old – print for instance (newspapers, books, etc.), office buildings, rooms , decors, ceilings, walls, yellow

lamplight, burgundy drapery too heavy to command, operetta divas on the radio, arcane water spouting fountains, black nights, the little ballerina down the street who fatally danced too close to the fire – was it a fetal projection having not long come out of darkness myself? – but even then there were intimations of something new (dare I say sex). *oh Johnny, oh Johnny, how you can love*, a tune that was played a lot. the older boy on our side of the street, high school age, one, I used to annoy when he was out front mowing the lawn, lived next door. his friend, whose house had a goldfish pond in front, and who was followed around by the younger boys like he was the pied piper, was named Johnny. so naturally I put the name and the song together. the first song I learned all the words to and sang, was Three Little Fishes, a hit song of the period. conversely, the world got newer as I got older, adolescence, dreamlike, more space, more detached, more possible to own, peaking late teens/young adult. neither of my parents had any particular special interests (obsessions) that might have directed my ambition aside from, perhaps, my mother's early aspirations and preparation towards a career in song and dance. my father, who had a lighting fixture showroom in the warehouse district east of downtown, where the lights on all at once may have stirred an unconscious creative urge, played the piano. so my main influence was popular culture, notably movies and song. song was whatever I heard on the radio – everything from overly sentimental love songs, and trivial novelty numbers, to the great standards, and I knew the lyrics to them all. the record column I wrote for my high school newspaper was full of disgustingly clichéd banter about the hits done by what was available to a naïve, white, middle class, 'culture lover' of that

era (while the hip kids at Roosevelt high were listening to Stan Kenton, Shorty Rogers, Georgie Auld, Earl Bostic, and Big J McNeely...the stuff that was being played on the juke boxes in East L.A.). but because of my earlier history, the Kerns, the Gershwins, lingered in my memory, resurfacing when I discovered the 'cool' world of jazz my sophomore year in college.

entering a club in the middle of a set and feeling the pulsation of the rhythm section, was once one of my greatest pleasures, and is, still, I imagine, the perfect way to describe the initial sensation of experiencing jazz live. a Corelli Trio sonata was culturally relevant only in its time, yet, still we carry its meaning in our souls. Robert Ashley's *Improvement*, may be opera, but opera as most commonly defined, is no longer culturally relevant (post-modern definitions aside), yet for the same reason listening to an aria sung can move us. generally we respond to the art of the past on a more inner level than we do to what is current – part of the deeper response that comes with the knowledge that culture is no longer there. the Corelli sonata can be deeply moving precisely because it's time of social relevance has passed. our feeling of loss gives us a sense of the ephemeral quality of life. at the same time, and perhaps, most important, its artfulness transcends its social relevance, it's time. it is its artfulness which makes it poignant and precious.

when I was growing up during the so-called 'golden age' of Hollywood, the city was literally dotted with movie houses from downtown to the beach. they ranged from elaborate art deco palaces to dingy flea houses and everything in-between. a large number of them were situated on Hollywood Blvd (the

large number of them were situated on Hollywood Blvd (the Chinese, then the Grauman's Chinese, home of search light, star lit, major studio premieres, was the most famous movie theater in the world), Broadway and Hill in downtown LA, and a string of theaters along Wilshire and Pico, the upscale, first run, theaters on Wilshire, mostly from the Fox Beverly on Wilshire and Beverly Drive to the Warner's Wilmet on Western, and the modest, mostly second and third run neighborhood movie houses on Pico. of particular import in my life was our neighborhood theater, The Stadium, on Pico and Livonia, a theater with a phallic tower balanced by the box office (the balls), where inside, a unique design, steps rose from the back seats to a half balcony. our previous neighborhood theater was the Fairfax on Beverly Blvd. an older cousin took my brother and I to see The Wizard of Oz there, my second movie, when I was five. the area still retains an aura of that period although Gilmore stadium, Gilmore Field, the Pan Pacific auditorium, etc., are long gone. we went to the movies every weekend when I was a boy. there were the auras; driving up Doheny on a rainy afternoon in 1943, age 9, spotting the sexy poster of Jane Russell from the movie, The Outlaw through the streaked car window on the marquee of the Music Hall – off-shoulder blouse, cleavage and bare legs, turned on but not knowing why, projections of my life at different stages and ages. as a young adult, while waiting in line one early evening at the Fox Ritz, a girlfriend of my date who'd emerged from the prior screening, wearing shades, informed us that James Dean had just been killed in an auto accident. it was September 30, 1955. there were movie theaters even actually on the beach. the Rosemary and the Dome, two first run Fox movie houses, occupied opposite

sides at the head of the Ocean Park Pier – haunting, displaced soundtrack singing voice at night amid the shrieking fun zone, and beyond that, the impenetrable quiet and blackness of the ocean. partially due to the breakup of the studios precipitated by an anti-trust ruling prohibiting them from any longer owning the theaters they distributed their films in, and TV, many of the film houses were on their last legs. the alleged ‘golden age’ of Hollywood cinema was over. in late 1957, a period I particularly recall, because I had just been discharged from the Navy, and was awaiting reentry to college, a friend and I went to see the movie, *The Enemy Below*, starring Robert Mitchum and Curt Jurgens, a war-/suspense film involving a deadly duel between a US destroyer and a German submarine, at The Stadium. I had just sold my MG-TD and had some hundred dollar bills, taking one of them to the theater – they couldn’t change it and let me in free. soon after The Stadium closed down for good, its box office removed in a symbolic castration, becoming (perhaps, appropriately) a synagogue, which it still is to this day.

given I write so much about aesthetics and the arts it’s interesting I haven’t written much about film, even though I was a filmmaker during the 60s, and at that time had written reviews of the films I saw, including a piece on Andy Warhol’s *Sleep* published in *Film Culture*. for one thing, I stopped going to movies. after 1969 I’ve sat in a traditional movie theater only twice. in 1970 – *Zabriskie Point* (a waste of time) and David Lynch’s *Inland Empire*, 2006. other than that, in addition to you tube, I’ve viewed film on DVD.

I was born in 1934 and my generation was ‘the’ film

generation. to be sure at a certain point (the 50s) I became an avid cineaste my consciousness of the Auteur (director) predated by a decade the popularization of the French Auteur criticism and the directors favored by the critics of that period. Elia Kazan, George Stevens, John Houston who were at the top of their work were not, primarily the directors favored by those critics re Mise en Scene. most notable was Kazan's, On The Waterfront in which Brando gave such a complete and riveting performance as to revolutionize the concept of acting in cinema. nobody was better with actors than Kazan. add to this 2 films made in 1948, Huston's The Treasure Of The Sierra Madre, and Howard Hawks' Red River which I've recently viewed on you tube and still looks good – though given the aesthetics of brutality developed by Quentin Tarantino (who championed The Wild Bunch), makes the violence at the end of the film seem a bit pathetic and sentimental, no 'Western' before it dealt with the implied attractions and homoerotic conflicts between macho and androgyny like this one did. but one moves on quickly in pop culture and I certainly did.

focus on the 35mm narrative films of the 60s were on foreign, mostly French, Italian, other European, and Japanese films. although Godard's Breathless was more popular and influential than any of his other early films, his fourth film, Vivre SA Vie, 1962 was my favorite. I also specially liked the later Pierrot le Fou. Antonioni's 1960 L'Avventura was another highpoint.. I discovered the same films were meant to be viewed many times like rereading a book, especially particularly dense films like Alain Resnais' Last Year At Marienbad which at the time of its release I had seen three times.

this phase of absorption with narrative cinema too lasted only a short time as I got more into drugs and started making so called underground films with a hand held 16mm camera as well. film during the long early semiconscious period of my life played havoc on my psychic-emotional state, in two cases resulting in serious recurring nightmares. I was vulnerable to adult psychological drama as well as foreboding noir movies the latter ironically becoming the old Hollywood movies I'd most appreciated in subsequent years, preferring war movies and musicals, esp. musicals. my favorite was the 1944 film, **cover girl**, which we saw on a school night at the Pantages on Hollywood Blvd. when I was ten.

as for me now, the 40s films mostly remain forgettable artifacts of the past, which, not regrettably, disappeared with the puberty of the postwar 50s, where I was already beginning to view early European experimental film at the Coronet Theater in West Hollywood. almost all the films that would be on a movie-goers list of someone my age, and of course, younger, would be films I haven't seen!

are icons necessary (religious or otherwise)? are not obsessions with them corrosive? when a person's sphere of influence becomes far more than what has been achieved. the populist sentiment that accepts and demands the branding of the individual is anathema to a mature, functioning society's well-being. as far as the system goes, there's little difference between Donald Trump and multimillionaire actors, actresses, athlete superstars, etc. – all own rooms and chairs they've never sat in. there's a difference between respecting and accepting whatever an individual might achieve that inspires

or influences, deserves recognition, appreciation, and in exceptional cases, even gratitude, for what they've done, but it becomes something else when it transforms into virtual compensation for the weaknesses of the individual perceiver and of society as a whole. the concept of 'Fan', which is a populist form of worship, need not be necessary if one can appreciate others' achievements without engaging in idolatry. those cool people, James Dean and his followers, for instance; what it really was, they were parodies on being natural. it worked in acting terms, but not as reality, because reality is not acting, no matter what claims are made to that effect. Brando actually rejected that claim when he said the actor doesn't become the character he just plays the character. Truth.

artists say they like to push the boundaries between art and life, anything can be art, and, of course, everything is life, but it can bounce back. I've looked at Bob Dylan's early interviews, and while his humor was pointedly clever and kind of being 'Zen' with the 'Squares', his hip style; the dress (dandy-ism), the body motions, cigarette smoking, not referring to his music, was mostly bullshit. re Dylan's White House performance – I think he could have come up with something other than (ridiculously ironic in this case) The Times They Are A Changing, and genuflecting (sorry to say) before the Obamas.

it was interesting and touching to read in Chronicles one how Bob Dylan found a moment of romance on a night out with his wife, Sara, eschewing the hip downtown scene, to catch Frank Sinatra Jr. and his band, instead, at the Rainbow Room

atop Rockefeller Center, with a 65 story view of Manhattan, ending with, this reminiscence: “after a while I bought a red flower for my wife one of the loveliest creatures in the world of women, and we got up on our feet and left. said goodbye to Frank (who surprised to see them, after the performance had come over for a chat).” what was interesting to me is that Bob and Sara wanted to have this bourgeois experience.

healthy hair – walnut, kale, Greek yogurt, spinach, lentils, flax seeds, eggs, avocado, vitamin c, strawberries, red pepper, brown rice, oats, b complex vitamins, scalp circulation. the effects of plants on one’s health.

afternoon light. devoid of trouble. I am the instrument I play.

I like to think I only write what I feel like writing. if it doesn’t interest me it won’t interest anyone else, either.

.
‘sex on first date’ – pretty enough but generic looking college-young adult age female, long blonde straight hair framing face, hanging, wearing a white, skimpy tank top with long straps exposing her cleavage, and a full, almost to her bare feet, indigo and white print skirt, facing the camera, telling the viewer about a dating site she’s been to, then, first seated in profile, sensuous lips, no makeup, she, ostensibly reenacts the experience, but in actuality, begins typing on her phone, long, gorgeous ocean blue nails, rapidly with considerable dexterity, selecting the dating site, exchanging texts and photos with the person she will meet (a large part of attraction to her is her facility with the phone), then cut to her, very nice figure, kind of tall, hips flowing in skirt, walking

to the door and opening it. what follows is the various, extreme sex they have, hardcore but mainstream, matter-of-fact, giving the impression of normal, that this is just the way things are today. seems authentic and compelling if one is into it.. has this obviously fictional, porn account which emulates those actual ones like it which are set up to arrange sexual hookups, as well as claimed longer termed relationships, become the actual norm, where horny, young, attractive adults can connect with each other for immediate sexual gratification at a moment's notice? if this is so and a search of such dating sites would seem to confirm, then this is a testament to the enormous influence porn has had on sexual attitudes and behavior in contemporary culture.

spending considerable time in Japan while in the Navy, 1956-7, and living on a ship, was a unique experience because I was both there and not there at the same time. living on a ship below decks, is the same wherever you are, and it served as a tether in which I was always conscious of the inevitable return and the fact that I wasn't free. one could take a long walk and 'explore', as did the astronaut on the first space-walk, or ride the train to Tokyo or someplace else, extending the tether, but it was always there, undermining the possibilities and mitigating the pleasure. this may be one reason why many (most) of my shipmates got no further than the bars or clubs situated on the perimeter just beyond the base – booze and girls – that were there to service them. and the thought of going AWOL in such a circumstance was there, but too extreme, as the consequences would not have been worth it. partly because of this, perhaps, part of what was out in the bitter but semi delicious darkness as a result of this duality,

was, possibly, an impulse towards, at least, oblivion. Japan served to me as a mirror image of the U.S. the outskirts of Yokosuka, Tokyo, Kobe, seemed to mirror, specifically, like opposite butterfly wings, similar areas of L.A. – it's flatness, the similar general climate/weather in central Honshu, tended to support that – cold winter mornings, wearing my pea coat, hot, summer (though sometimes sticky) days with mild nights, the main difference being the language/culture, and, in my recollection, the permeating odors of burnt fish, perfumed pomade, and dung (but how accessible was the culture of U.S. society to the service personnel walking the streets of S F, Oakland, or San Diego, the bars always there, at your service), the feeling of an impenetrable vastness and mystery, inaccessible, yet nostalgic? it was a Japan that predated the LED and neon lit Shibuya and Shinjuku at night's multiple flavored colored squares of Charms candy. this relates, also, to my feelings of a Japan of privilege – a chic supper club atop a glass enclosed high rise for instance, dimly lit, with digital colored lights, could evoke the mirror image, an equivalent feeling of the same in Japan. today, when I listened to the minimalist rendering of the Rodgers and Hart song, My Romance, on Shigeko Suzuki's album, Silent Stories, her voice, tone, and space, spare as a traditional Koto, I experienced the same duality of the mirror image of the Japan I was, cruelly, never allowed to, satisfactorily, either penetrate, or embrace.

I walk the block from my apartment to the newspaper dispenser in front of the MacDonald's on the corner of Princeton and Santa Monica Blvd., lift the lid and pull out, not from the top of the pile, an issue of the LA Weekly, carefully lower the

lid so that it does not make a crashing sound, look at the front cover whilst holding the paper in both hands, then bending it in half, as I start to walk, exposing the back cover, still half expecting, as in times of yore, to be face to face with the image of a pretty, young , sensual, but slightly resentful, Latina (generally), in a full page, dirty to some, American Apparel ad. chastised, I return empty handed – is there not anything sacred?

young Chinese girl w/glasses, intense look, short, full face, part of a group at a larger arts event, objectifying my body. wants to give me a blow job according to her older, female instructor-mentor, wants me to remove my sox, wants me to put my sox back on, wants me to put this on, take that off. she's fetishizing my body which feels good. somehow, as in most of my dreams, things towards that happening start to disperse, getting further away, into no action.

the resonant space I first experienced in JHS was that at the same time I dreamt of love and heroics, I wanted out.

saying "sincerity is a denial of complexity" is an oxymoron, if the sayer is sincere, of course, if not, it's mere sophistry.

in my writing I try to turn clarity into beauty. writing, describing accurately manifest behavior is more psychologically and emotionally revealing than analyzing causes.

you begin with nothing and you stay with nothing as you progress. one must begin with oneness if one wants to be whole

re- Jerry Stahl's comment that the drug addict channels all issues into one need. if that's true then so do political junkies, artists, whatever.

to you aging second generation (power driven) feminists – if subjectivity is your bane, then objectivity is mine.

you manipulate, negotiate, your shadow onto mine.

memory increases with age. one just begins to forget what is least important.

uncomfortable in my sleep my state is like a collage I'm compulsively attempting to put together.

with their freshly shampooed hair and their snotty dispositions, lusting their legs but wanting their kisses – intimacy, at least in the silences.

it's interesting, how tenderness can inspire lust, and vice versa.

is the camera focusing on what Nadia (Tolokonnikova) has to say or is it focusing on her good looks? it seems to me, mostly, the latter – a study on how she maintains it, moving only her mouth while steadily maintaining the 'look', never allowing her face to lose it, or be spontaneously absorbed.

sometime in 1961 Richard Capper a friend who was a shipmate of mine several years earlier turned me on to marijuana. were both living in Laurel Canon at the time. he

he handed me a rolled joint and showed me how to smoke it. a friend of his was also there. a complete asshole who ineffectually tried to scare me. while there I didn't get high. but before I left his house which was at the top of Stanley Hill one of the steepest streets in the canyon, he gave me about a dozen thinly rolled joints and had the insight to say, "try it when you're alone." I didn't have to wait, however. as soon as I left the house I became completely enveloped in the high, standing strangely energized in the dirt lot next door. as the experience as yet had no dimensions, I actually felt the possibility of total freedom. driving down the steep hill I feared the car would buck out onto the highway. but as soon as I put my foot to the brake it stopped like a feather. this was the graph of the gap in my nervous system between thought and action. the neurological gap from here to there. when I got home I tried to relate what had happened (was happening) to my wife. but she frowned, and I realized we were never going to communicate sexually. I think that realization, at least unconsciously, helped push my pot smoking experience mostly away from the carnal towards silence, solitude, the eternal, which I had a propensity for anyway. I hadn't yet had the solipsistic realization that my most meaningful and transcendent inner experiences were to ever remain just my own.

not too long after, a girlfriend of my wife, brought over her friends Llyn and Kelly Foulkes. later, Llyn invited us to a party. I didn't go but Debby my wife, and two girlfriends did. there they met Dean Stockwell and a person whom they thought was 'very interesting', Wallace Berman. one afternoon the girl friend who was also named Lynn, brought Wallace over. I had taken off work early that day and the three of them were

standing in our bedroom when I got home. Wallace whose physical aura was incredibly strong immediately, clownishly, began teasing me, calling me Gerald, I think as a projection of what he perceived beforehand to be Lynn's ironic attitude towards me (smart former college boy making the transition to street-wise). the plan was for us to go up to Music City to get tickets for the Bolshoi Ballet, Debby and Lynn were dancers. Wallace insisted I drive and that he would drive the night of the ballet. when they picked us up Wallace was dressed in a tan velvet suit driving an old black Cadillac. actor Sal Mineo sat in the row in front of us with his date and a man with a Russian accent named Illya. there was no indication at the ballet he and Wallace knew each other but there he was at an art exhibit at Wallace's home shortly after.

Wallace courted me bringing over friends and sending me mail art collages. we became friends and shortly after that I also became friends with Dean. at Wallace's invitation and encouragement! I became part of his world. and the importance of his presence and influence cannot be overstated. much because of the world he provided, I was able to stop tripping and focus on the sublimity of being stoned (every night). for the first time I felt I belonged socially and physically to the true elements of the avant-garde.

driving in my car and looking at a few raindrops on my windshield from an unseasonal light shower, thinking the word, streak, that I like different words, a lot of them, how we shape them to create the world we want to make. many academics, for instance, use the technique of transforming ordinary words into semi-abstract codes (often as pretense to

maintain a hierarchal system, such as the ones they may be claiming to criticize, and one's position in it) to the extent it's their cloak and veil. using that language makes it easier for one to burrow in and not be dislodged. and for what other reason would one want to put one's mind into reading it other than as a place to be, much as Joyce may, or may not, have provided in *Finnegan's Wake*, or Proust, *In Search Of Lost Time*, though neither found it necessary to hide behind obtuse gentrification of ordinary language.

we differentiate ourselves by the words we use, from others who use different words; windshield, raindrops, streak, words that are not only sensations but often convey hidden meanings. a good example of how a poet can choose words to exhibit feelings of freshness and beauty is Michael McClure's *Ghost Tantras*, in which concrete words emerge out of the abstract, emotive one's which create moments of clarity and beauty by contrast. this is similar to what e e cummings, an obvious influence, did, by staggering syntax in such a way as to shake loose the lyricism.

if we were to exchange brains each of us would instantly go mad –proof each individual is unique. we communicate with one another through a language of shared meanings. yet the same words may not have the same meaning to each of us. there are no true synonyms for a word. each word has a texture, aura, and nuance of meaning of its own. who, when asked by someone, what is the meaning of a particular word that person has used, has not found difficulty in finding an adequate synonym, because the meaning is only contained in the word itself?

I once valued being a part of a community of intellectuals, speaking, primarily, in quasi-academic codes. but with the use of drugs I shut up, and I find as I've aged and evolved, I more and more seek a plainer more direct language, one without sophistry, but one with tentativeness and nuance.

NASA Insight Lander says goodbye - "my power's really low so this may be the last image I can send; but don't worry about me though. my time here has been both productive and serene. if I can keep talking to my mission team, I will but I will be signing off here soon. Thanks for staying with me. I've been lucky enough to live on two planets. four years ago I arrived safely at the second one, to the delight of my family back on the first. Thanks to my team for sending me on this journey of discovery. hope I've done you proud."

around 1955 my friend Dick and I went to see the Elia Kazan film, East of Eden. we were in college at the time. I do remember the film made a deep impression on the both of us, and after calling my mother to pick us up, it was raining, we sat in the back seat of the car and talked about the movie. what is interesting is not about my friend and I and what we talked about, but the effect our conversation had on my mother. years later, she told me how she kept looking back, and that we were having a serious discussion about a film made a big impression on her. I don't think she had conceived before of my being serious in an intellectual way. it also revealed my mother had a hunger in an area I had not conceived. I knew she had a passion for cinema and things theatrical (she said her three favorite actresses were Bette Davis, Joan Crawford, and Ida Lupino, all heavies, whose

films, when I was a boy, I'd hoped to avoid). this was reinforced when after I recommended another Kazan film, *A Face In The Crowd*, a couple of years later, she went to see it with my father and was very impressed with the film, especially the performance by Andy Griffith.

in the sixties singer Janis Ian, a teenager at the time, scored a big hit with her song, *Society's Child*, about a hypothetical relationship with a young black male the girl was forced to relinquish because of parental prohibition. the song, more in tune with thirties social realism than the love generation songs of the sixties, was especially liked by liberals such as Leonard Bernstein who had her on his show where she performed it, building to the phrase, *I can't see you anymore, Johnny*, poignantly half sung, half sobbed. what's interesting, in terms of sexual choice, is when she, personally, later had lesbian relationships and defined herself as such, how much did her focus have to do with the fact, in effect, as in the song, society forbade her to have a heterosexual love affair with an African-American boy her age? what does this say about the arbitrariness of sexual choice? did she feel if she couldn't have a sexual relationship with whom she wanted, she wouldn't have one at all. or was an attraction towards an African-American boy, something forbidden in the world she grew up in at the time, a step towards her lesbianism, something even more forbidden? can love ever be wrong?

Judith Butler wrote; "the identification of women with 'sex' for Beauvoir as for Wittig is a conflation of the category of women with ostensibly sexualized features of their bodies and, hence, a refusal to grant freedom and autonomy to

women as it's purportedly enjoyed by men." but dominance and control fostered by self-will is not autonomy, which can only be natural, a concept she seems compelled to reject. 'non-binary' (conceptually nothing new, as scientifically detailed by Dr. Magnus Hirschfield 100 years ago) , has become a progressive cliché, though public discussion overdue, not just regarding gender, but in regards to the confining dualistic structure of society and the thought processes that inform it.

when you say something is (just) a performance, you're saying the deepest part of you is not engaged. if there is a physical object then there is an identity. there is a critical sense behind learned behavior. the form is learned but the impulse is biological. matter can be shaped but it's still matter.

as one advances to what is (perhaps, mistakenly) called old age, the inner voice often supersedes external structures. when one listens to music the tones deconstruct from the specific musical form, and exist more abstractly, because also true of speech and conversation, what may be viewed as cognitive deterioration, may be more an unwillingness to indulge in, or listen to, a rationalization which keeps the mind locked. there the ear also listens more abstractly to accent, texture, rhythm, inflection, etc. the body language of the sounds become elementary fixations to the listener, hindering cognition of the symbolic function of language, which is the meaning people must necessarily pay attention to, in exercising the need to become free of these restrictions. this understanding became apparent to me while listening to an interview on a daily public affairs show at a listener supported FM radio station, and just not wanting to absorb the guest's thought

processes or her personality, and so conceding, in this way, the media can be the message.

still, my ability to listen to music, or the way I listen to music has deteriorated in a relatively short time. when I sing a song in my head, the nuances of my phrasing and tonality are there. but if I listen to the song being played I frequently no longer can assess the key. it's sad because the songs and the romantic feelings the songs evoke still exist in me. this is due to the distortion and diminished perception of sound resulting from my significant hearing impairment. however aesthetically I'm also listening more abstractly. all notes (sounds) have equal value. whereas the dissonant notes played in a song meant to give it edge, rescue the lyricism from banality, I now read as on its own terms. free of the conditioning that keeps the mind locked, it is now more difficult to listen to music in a conventional way, to do so is a burden because it keeps my mind trapped in old mindset. an example: I can no longer listen to the Stan Getz instrumental version of the Rodgers & Hart song, *It Never Entered My Mind* (Jazz At The Opera House), nor can I listen to the Frank Sinatra vocal version of it (In The Wee Small Hours), both great renditions of a great song, yet I still have no trouble listening to Morton Feldman's *The Viola In My Life*. I've always listened to experimental and improvised music in this latter way of pure tone and space. listening is whatever the ear can hear: tone timber, space, etc., this is somewhat ironic because I've always been, and considered by others to be, a melodist, who enjoyed listening to, and singing, the classic American songbook. but when I've written about the American Songbook and jazz I've done it with an old mind,

which was once the new mind! strange though, I can still, occasionally, dim the lights, close my eyes, bend my face to the keyboard. and savor the recorded voices of Blossom Dearie or Nat Cole sing Like Someone In Love, or Let's Fall In Love, in the old way, however. I've also lost my voice. as it turns out, issues with my vocal chords. I'd once harbored the possibility of doing a standards jazz vocal album. more accurately, my mind has evolved. I think I am equally able to focus on the basic elements and the symbolic ones. at any rate, the evolution, is towards silence – aesthetic, becalming, and spiritual, which I view as positive.

I once had the ambition to sing the standard American songbook professionally. now if I try to listen to a song on one of my once favorite record albums my ear can only hear distortions. yet when a song is in my head the phrasing and tone is perfect. and I could sing it that way if my voice hadn't totally deteriorated. not all of this is pathological. my listening aesthetic has always been away from the linear and I can still delight in tones as long as it doesn't relate to scale or repetitive patterns. I can hear variations of tone in machinery. I could hear the music in it even though I could hear there was no structure that would imply aesthetic intent. there is the intent of the listener, however and that was the music I was hearing. this is the difference between music and just sound. this is my new mind an attempt to silence thought. silence is presence minus feedback. song is sentiment. song is the old mind. begin with my hearing difficulty and rewrite my musical history, meaning, musical moments then, now.

"I thought that you and Debby made the perfect couple. I felt that there was a very strong mutual respect between the two of you that provided the foundation for a strong relation." (Jay Rosenberg - excerpted from a daily email exchange) we experienced an intimacy which was deep only on an abstract, non-verbal, level, the only level we could communicate on. as our sense of privacy was inviolable, it was there when we shared the usual social information of how our discrete days were spent, or in the silence when we were alone in separate rooms. more and more, however, the intimacy, at least on her part, morphed to alienation. our relationship (marriage) was neither romantic love nor, very strongly, sex, but more based on mutual respect and concern for the welfare of one another. something I suppose we needed more. there was a genuine love hidden in the silences. but we both overcompensated by suppressing our natural instincts – she, by suppressing her social behavior, me, by being overly assertive. Hassids believe each in a marriage is half of one soul.

to the public, image, no matter how flimsy, is everything, and it's against the law to show one's body. when it comes to biology there's no greater sin than objectification. this is the one thing the 'law' and arch-feminists are totally in agreement on.

each individual is the 'other' for everyone else, and the 'other' is everyone else for the individual. this doesn't preclude familiarity or mutuality and identification comprised of both. but an individual we've once known, over a time, can once again become a 'stranger'. what we carry in us of them are our own experiences. they reside inside permanently, are

a part of us, as we become a part of them. even after estrangement or permanent disengagement, we continue to know the part of them that is a part of us. we can also choose to not know someone we knew. deliberately failing to 'know', i.e., respond, to the updated image in real time. upon unexpectedly seeing a an ex-patriot, friend with whom I'd daily communicated via email over several recent years, before the friend stopped responding, failing to recognize him while contemplating the similarity to him of the image I was confronted with at Samy's Camera, is an example. another issue with me is trust. how much can one trust someone. I do not think this is being cynical, but just that there's never been a serious relationship which didn't result in some feelings of betrayal, or at least the other's interests at the expense of mine.

"Desire makes everything blossom. Possession makes everything fade." Marcel Proust.

"she was so beautiful so promising, gaily smiling, she was made out of all the years I had lost. she symbolized my youthcolourless, incomprehensible, time materialized itself in her, as it were, so that I could see and touch it, had moulded her into a graven masterpiece while upon me alas, it had been doing its work." M's response upon being introduced to Gilberte's sixteen year old daughter at the Princesses de Guermante's ball, depicted in the last pages of Marcel Proust's, Time Regained.

the madeleine cake crumb dipped in tea segment in Swann's Way, often, and justifiably, perceived as a singular moment in

Proust's work, has become somewhat of a truism. but it was more than just a brilliant moment in literature. it was a brilliant moment in science. what makes it so unique and such an achievement is the writing and the mental process of staying with the initial sensation and nurturing it through the process of recall are exactly the same – truly a remarkable feat. there is a point, however, I would like to make in noting the fragment of sentence that precedes it ---*weary after a dull day with the prospect of a depressing morrow, I....*that often it is our dullest moments which precede and serve as conduits, catalysts, to insight ecstasy and vision. the thing that I immediately discovered and what first attracted me in reading Proust (Swann's Way) was the similarity in M's thought processes as a boy and mine as a boy. when thinking deeply I had yet the exposure to philosophical and intellectual thinking and so was naturally, less affected, but deep.

I also recognized the similarity of his romantic notions and fantasies towards the female sex, which was quite encompassing, was similar to mine, both pre-sexual and at a later time, which led me to recognize the development of sexuality in the homosexual, including identification with the female, is not that different than in the heterosexual before taking divergent paths. what I first felt with Proust upon reading the first section of Swann's Way was the density and pre-sexuality of his thought was similar to mine as a very young boy in a way I had not encountered before in the writing of someone else. it brought back the physical density and state of mind I later had, to some degree, abandoned – the density and substance of a not yet fully developed consciousness, one more formed by just one's inner state. it is interesting to

note it was Proust, a homosexual, if that word still has any meaning, who, possibly more than any writer, explored the unconscious emotional and psychological mechanisms of ostensibly heterosexual romantic relationships, i.e., his depictions of M's relationships with Gilberte and Albertine, including his fears/ obsession re the latter's lesbianism. were these thought processes, which are so much the product of identification, the still heterosexual germination of homosexual thought, or rather the necessary complement to the differentiation and objectification essential to a heterosexual response? his depiction of M's wrestling with Gilberte as an adolescent and having an orgasm could be any male's first sexual experience with a female. identification and objectification are essential in exploring one's sexuality, including in a world in which heterosexuality is equated with sexism and white nationalism.

I like her because she's pretty, but not just because she's pretty.

the best thing for you would be me. Irving Berlin

no amount of data can replace or compensate for experience and consciousness. intellect is a tool. consciousness is a state.

I was part of the jazz culture when it was at its hippest – Elvis had arrived. but there was a cutoff point. the kids in high school or lower grades, were getting into rock and roll. those of us who had just graduated were making the jazz scene, going to the clubs – I didn't know anyone my age at that time who was into rock. I do remember driving late at night, car

radio tuned to Hunter Hancock, or Huggy Boy at a later hour, listening to *a thousand stars in the sky* (original version) sung by the Rivileers, an archetypal rhythm and blues song, one of the earliest and best, that reached the top of the r & b charts in L.A., 1954.

a picture of the Beatles on a t-shirt through the window of a store on Melrose got me thinking of the sixties, when relating to them made me feel like I was robbing the cradle – then, they reminded me of the popular group of boys at Louis Pasteur JHS (which at the time I attended, was about seventy-five percent Jewish) in the mid and late forties. compare that with my previous music background which included Monk in a club, sitting at a piano, solo, cigarette dangling from his mouth, archly striking the chords (although there's no denying he did need other musicians, and a culture, it was an adult one.). it was that group, groupie, ethic, and what they ultimately showed was, once formed, how difficult it would become for any of them (including Lennon), at least publicly, to transform their images (and the fact that he tried seems to have been what led Chapman to shoot him). it was the bully power of populism that was their success, but, also their demise.

in addition to the image Fiona Apple creates, as do all performers, through hair, makeup style, and clothes, etc., is the striking images and phrases she creates with words. I'd not been able to appreciate them as complete songs, however, until I viewed videos of the changing lyrics in a black frame, while listening to her sing, without having to look at her pretty face in a montage of photos, which, enigmatic and

soulful as they sometimes are, often seductively detract from fully assessing and comprehending them as songs. in fact, I think I get more out of, am moved more, watching the lyrics float by, than actually watching images of a singer – and there's something about actual performances as well, no matter how sincere, which, for me, always seem a bit contrived, as though the performer is trying to have these emotions, when what they've already created, the song and the lyric, is what it is about. but back to the images *I look like a neon zebra shaking rain off her stripes*; in my mind a rainy night shot of a black and white zebra in the foreground, perhaps with cars darkly passing in the background, lights shining on it, illuminating the drops, an image, at once, both neon and organic – an image of her. so I was disappointed when I looked on the internet and discovered neon zebras actually exist out there in pop culture, as multi-colored toys, tag names for bloggers and entertainers, and the title of a lyric by Shonen Knife (I didn't associate Shonen Knife with her song, Hot Knife, until just that moment). Fiona transformed the image into something more serious, and beautiful. everything comes from somewhere. nothing's created in a vacuum, but I would like to think the image of a neon zebra, at least, unconsciously, originated in her mind, and maybe it did. what I am pointing to is the sometimes gross ubiquity of access, re the internet, which for all it's positive aspects, in this way, works counter to the mystery of imagination. I suppose I could just say it's a provocatively beautiful image, which had momentarily instilled a need in me to create, and leave it go at that. but then I have these thoughts.

last night I typed in Spring Can Really Hang You Up The Most,

and listened to a relatively recent jazz vocalist I hadn't heard before (having never watched American Idol), Kat Edmonson, sing it on YouTube. I really liked her voice – it wasn't until halfway through the song that I realized she was singing a cappella – then “stalked” (as one commentator put it) her other videos. YouTube, as I think we all have come to know, is a great resource – one may go quickly to whatever one is looking for, yet inevitably trip on random suggestions, each giving access to new choices further and further removed from our original intent, and previously unconsidered and unexplored universes, ranging from nostalgic visits, to the disclosure of new artists and forms. we should all play our part in keeping YouTube free and accessible – the FCC must never be allowed to let the money/licensing grabbers turn it into a pay-for-play enterprise like cable TV.* an example of an evening of searching, listening, and viewing – from P J Harvey videos, to forties Lindy Hop film clips, to Archie Shepp, to Charles Ives' The Unanswered Question, to Kenneth Anger or James Benning, to the 1944 movie Cover Girl, to Hitchcock's Notorious (full movie), to early Surrealist films, to Ken Jacob's Little Stabs At Happiness, to Bill Evans', Stan Getz', Stan Kenton's, Here's That Rainy Day, to Susan Sontag's essays on photography, to Bugs Bunny cartoons.

*guess we all know how much it has already happened. assemblage of meaning as well as spontaneous pleasure stifled, stilted, and stunted by the profit seekers who have cornered more and more of what was once free. this is totally immoral and totally expected once one views the similar fate of all previous media development, which is why art so often emerges at the cutting edge from what has been discarded

and rejected. manipulation and control – killers of spontaneity and change. a lot of talk (justifiably) about net neutrality, but nothing about control and restriction of content. leeches like Ted Turner buy up all the film licenses, even though they had nothing to do with their creation, and then restrict who can view them – this is corporate America at its most parasitic. it's how the rich get richer while the poor pay for everything. corporate licensors are more cutting into YouTube accessibility. YouTube is also now politely asking you to subscribe. will there be a point when YouTube is no longer free? they also repeat one's searches indiscriminately, irrespective of relevance, in much the way Amazon 'suggests' what one has already searched for or bought. if you look online for lingerie or picture frames, no matter where you are on the internet the resultant ads will never let you go). if internet accessibility becomes restricted to where it's subscription based, those who've merged with this technology, will have to eschew it in favor of going more underground, as the only way to function in an uninhabited terrain. data service is expensive. access to new media, after an initial free state, always gets Balkanized – those who can afford it, have it as quality and originality dips. those who can't, get left out.

I was reading Lou Reed's lyric to Perfect Day. which is from his album, Transformer. when I got to the words, *I thought I was someone else Someone good* (after describing a perfect day in the park with his lover), followed by, *you're going to reap just what you sow*. it wasn't exactly an epiphany – I wasn't responding to something new – but that was precisely the point. it's the confirmation of what we already know that is so often the creative moment in art and life. what

comes before or after is either obvious, obscure, or sterile. the song says a lot in just a few words. his song, Vanishing Act, cut 7, disc 2, from his album, the Raven, ran through my head after standing outside on this hot late summer night, looking at the starless sky. I went to the CD player, becoming deeply immersed in my need – *with a young lady on my arm looking for a kiss* – if only it were to be. listening to Reed's sensitive reading, texture of his voice, spacing, inflection, along with the resonant, beautifully spaced, sparse, piano – listening carefully, soberly, deeply....to his talk-singing, was intonation, not necessarily the ability to go into the song and hold the pitch supported by the piano – sometimes hitting it, but to go into, always in tune with himself.

looking at the Lincoln Center video of Bill Frisell's, *when you wish upon a star*, something lost came back – feeling I'd returned home to a place of richness – the aura of a major performance in a major venue, with serious artists, an aura one could almost describe as a feeling of affluence, not in the money sense, but cultural, free and avant-garde, but far from the stripes earned in the gritty clubs, feeling the City that way, when 'coming up' still had a promise, not as burdened by ego, yet certified, sanctified, romantic, the players, not icons, ordinary, not as musicians, but as people who just did things well, myself, a person, severely hearing impaired, could still hear and enjoy the sounds, but couldn't hear the voice of Petra Haden at all, could only perceive her visually, watch her lips move, her facial expression. sometime before that when my hearing wasn't so bad, I'd also listened to, some of Frisell's solo guitar playing rock and jazz standards in an intimate setting on FretBoard Journal and NPR. these he

played very simply, restructuring the chords and sustaining the sound, with inner intent and a lyrical sense of purpose, displaying, at times, an almost bell-like tone reminiscent of Jim Hall. it's interesting, however, that it was the Brian Wilson song, *surfer girl*, that most moved me, that, in fact, to my surprise, stilled me the first time I watched the video, a sensation I rarely have with music anymore. when *surfer girl* was released in 1963, I thought ok, a song more reflective of the mid-to-late fifties than when it was written, and while I did like it, somewhat, I was too far beyond that point in my life to not see it as more than mostly sentiment – somewhat of an anachronism, in fact, closer, in time, to the Teddy Bears', quite worthy, *to know him is to love him*, possibly, the Fleetwoods' also worthy, *mr. blue*, than anything done in the sixties, and listening to Frisell's cover, the nostalgia it evoked for me, was not for the sixties but for that earlier time, no doubt, which his faithful and tender rendering drew out.

ok PJ, punish me. I (don't) deny death. I'm (not) a Faustian. I (don't) like (dumb) pretty girls. fool's gold. (don't) let a (mere) fixation on blood and bones turn you into a Dame Polly, or whatever.

the myth of a global village keeps getting more distorted, warped, but don't fret, we all live in parallel universes, because we're all individuals. the tension is always between the individual and the group, although clones and sycophants attempt to disguise it.

two opposite views of writer and Beat Generation promoter, Lawrence Lipton: Anais Nin wrote, that the alchemist, in this

case, poet, turns “dross into gold,” and that Lipton turned “gold into dross,” a pretty damning remark, and as I remember, she made it without any rancor. Venice poet, John Thomas was on his friends’ Austin Strauss and Wanda Coleman’s radio show, The Poetry Connection. they were talking about a book that had then come out on the Venice West Beat scene of the fifties, and, of course, talked about Lipton, whose book, The Holy Barbarians, was notorious. finally, Strauss asked Thomas what he personally thought of Lipton, and Thomas said, “I loved the man.”

Leni Riefenstahl was one of the most guilty of the Nazi’s, a deeply committed National Socialist to the core. what she did was defy the common definition of guilt, just as, at the other extreme, Hannah Arendt’s, ‘banality of evil’ defied it. the image of excellence – strong, defiant, creative, physically attractive, but deceptive and ruthless in the service of her vision, she was the opposite and counterpart to it.

Andy Warhol did more to legitimize neo-liberalism than just about anyone. he didn’t create brands as icons, but he called attention to the fact they were. he didn’t critique the psychological propagandizing that went into their branding, he just presented them as such.

time is a measure of existence. can there be time without existence? no. is there anything other than existence? no. is time a state? no. can the concept of nothingness exist without the concept of being? no. do we experience the cumulative effects of existence? yes. there is duration to a specific event like one’s life, or geological events, etc. do we exist in

time? no. we exist, that's all. time is just a measure of the duration of that. yet the concept of time is incredibly important to us all. language is structured in such a way it's impossible not to reference time in almost every moment of verbal communication. not just in the use of tenses, but in the endless, and often creative, quirky, phrases we construct. what we recall is not time but neurological impressions, but which are inextricably linked to the time they were formed.

auras exist in reality not fantasy.

cold (weather) past a certain point puts a chill on my soul. our souls are physical or not at all. our souls exist only as long as we do (I'm not sure I believe that).

a quiet "Hi," is what Audrey Hepburn and George Peppard exchange, the latter leaning out the window of his brownstone after watching her seated on an adjacent fire escape a flight below, plucking on a guitar while singing Moon River, encapsulating a timeless ideal of an incipient romance, his slicked back hair and the line of its part so exact as to be viewed, now, with an odd fascination – relic of a time which may not even have existed for some, but still lives inside for others. compare this to David Lynch's Mulholland Drive, in which that world is totally collapsed, and, perhaps, never was, but is echoed in a perverse nostalgia. Mulholland isn't, however, an alternative reality. it is, in fact, still a narrative film (and I've never been good with plots, anyway) though not linear, and more intentionally symbolic, psychological, but is it, in itself, the only point, or is it still, as well, old fashioned storytelling (deconstructed) the type film aestheticians theorize exists in time only a time indeterminate? you watch the mostly slow

movement and nuances of facial expression, absorbing the mood of compulsion and corruption which seems to be Lynch's forte, denser, more inner, sensually less superficial.

I fell asleep sitting in a chair last night just before I went to bed and dreamt I was in a beginning romance with a girl who was going to Fairfax High (I frequently photograph in the two alleys of the Melrose Strip, so-called, which the high school is adjacent to). the aura of it had the sweetness and tentativeness between us of those rare times as a teenager, I had long thought no longer possible. the environment of the dream was typical, however, of many (bad) dreams I'd have of moving in and out of rooms and houses, partly where I may have lived, trying to, but not, belonging – in fact, most of my dreams during that period were incomplete futile struggles to belong, in a physical and social universe. but from this dream I realized I was suppressing, partly because of age, partly because of social condemnation, the particulars of my need for love. kissing is what I miss most.

restless tossing and turning – myself and a much younger woman facing each other in the darkness – as we mutually draw together I grasp her chin, pulling her towards me to kiss – at this very moment she asks me my age and I say, eighty-one. there's a moment of suspension between us and the dream ends. the question was not entirely an interruption or inhibition, because it was a manifestation of my (unfortunately socially caused) deep concern. we may have kissed anyway. and I didn't want hidden barriers. but before we were equals! that's the way it should have remained if we were free of illusion – two forms each expectant and sensual.

the image of Serge Gainsbourg at the piano, pounding out *all the things you are*, stogie in mouth, is Goofy in a Disney toon.

with pot finally legal here the only real escape now is `reality`.

each year, after it became apparent, the vision of love as a social reality, got a little more faded. instances would cause it to regain color then go nowhere and dry-up. so what I'm looking back to is just earlier longing – what I wished for then retained in the auras but what never materialized.

watching the pace and nuance of a major league baseball game is like viewing an old Ozu movie.

Hope Hicks Trump's Edward Hopper-Andrew Wyeth portrait?

"How I'm anti-Semitic? I just fucked a Jewish bitch" Ye quote of the year 2024

the art scam – example: does Marcel Duchamp, arguably the most influential western artist of the second half of the 20th century need more praise (from acolytes and sycophants)?

as soon as I push the negative, go for power at the expense of love, interfere with something delicate, I tighten up. then need the eroticism from my cock to loosen up the flow. the flow locks and unlocks.

Here's That Rainy Day – Nov 17, 2019 88 today, sunny. expected to be 59 Wed., perhaps rain. it's Sunday and it's quiet. tried listening to white noise, rain sounds, amplified. listening to sounds of silence, better. I'm 85. my biggest mistake is that I've tried to do it all myself. like the tree in the

forest – nobody there to hear it. scared and diminished that it's not been shared. belief in myself and the importance of my work. the quality of paradise is untranslatable. hell is being vulnerable without friends. though hearing impaired. and, perhaps, because of it, I listen.

one can be fascist, racist, sexist, and, or, totally irrational, and still be sane as long as there is the external power to compensate for it. many of the biggest players in today's and past power struggles are borderline psychotics. as are the systems that support them. immorality is excessive power, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. and, for the most part, obtaining material power demands mediocrity. we live in a society in which while some people starve and go homeless the kings and queens are entertainment celebs, professional athletes, and corporate investors (money gets you money), boring mainstream 'award winning' performers whose tags are a specific role in a TV series, who own multiple mansions, and whose portfolios are essentially real estate. land is power. these are the new plantation owners. what is your net worth, Darling? I'm convinced that's the impasse to having unrestricted mutual relationships, not fame. it's not just the so-called one percent vs the rest. there has been an increasing number of haves, but never has the distance between the haves and the nots been greater, socially and culturally as well as materially - an elitist class ostensibly assigned by merit, but actually based on, and sustained by, media, wealth and influence. corporate game players, actors, musicians, and athletes. these are among the world's richest people, a result of the icon worship of the needy, and greed. many are off-springs of the wealthy and famous, and started at the top

rung. my response? 'let them eat cake.'

more misinformation – according to Peter Mays (Alternative Projections: experimental film in Los Angeles 1945-1980), I “followed Wallace Berman to Topanga Canyon”. one afternoon, not too long after we moved there, Wallace, Shirley, and Dean Stockwell, came over, unannounced, and the five of us, including my wife, Debby, drove up to a Topanga real estate office in Dean’s station wagon for the key to the house he had just bought, then drove there to see it. on the way back we rode past the Berman’s house-to-be which we viewed from below on Topanga Canyon Blvd. Peter was one of the few people who knew all my films and possibly the only one who really saw (understood) all of them. but he has written a number of things about me on a personal level which are so absurd they defy comment. and people publish things they just heard, or assume, without any regard for fact. sitting in the park where I exercise in the morning, I watch two generically attractive mothers (wearing ubiquitous tight, black sweat pants and no-show or sock-less running shoes), with their babies, seated on a bench adjacent to mine, one rocking her stroller back and forth, while they talk, the other cradling a baby in her arms so small as to appear no more than a few weeks old, and casual as they may seem, it becomes crystal clear how much power a woman has. at this stage, parenting is pretty much nurturing, and nothing the male will do subsequently (as the child becomes more active) will alter that. whatever influence the male has, however significant, in the growing family, it is a mere superimposition on the power of the female to shape the individual, both figuratively, and literally (in the womb).

a rampant ageism is behind almost all the vilification of Woody Allen. Allen didn't invent the concept age gap relationships, which in film goes back at least to French (feminist) filmmaker Germaine Dulac's, 1919 *La Cigarette*. for the younger actors he's hired, who've publically stated they worked with him because of the prestige of doing so – not exactly the most idealistic of motivations, to retract and negate any associations they've had with him does not appear to be as pure as they would have you believe. esp. if they'd suppressed misgivings about relevancy or indifference at doing it, for what they then assumed would be the positive effects on their careers, while sunning themselves in deck chairs next to his at Cannes, and just maybe, when it clearly in light of more recent occurrences, they perceived that any association with him would be more liability than asset, there was a ('courageous', of course), jump on the blame Woody bandwagon, when they could have just moved on without negating their own pasts. the upshot: Woody is essentially viewed by his detractors as a 'dirty old man,' totally out of context, in addition, of course, to the ageism which is the center-piece of every single critique of his work. once Woody Allen films were viewed (on a bourgeois level) as expanding sexual attraction to include a consensual permissiveness that went beyond a stereotypical alpha male definition of male sexuality. for most 'progressive' thinking people in the mainstream at least, this was good. now that the new puritanism has emerged, however his films, viewed in light of the accusations, which may, or may not, be true, are subjected to a cynical and arbitrary reassessment of his 'intentions', note the word, 'grooming', as something evil and self-exonerating. all of a sudden the earnest intent of former admirers of his

films is to reassess them as though the movies have changed, not their attitudes. the same falsehoods are repeated here that he has controlled the narrative regarding the accusations, when, in fact, almost all that has been written and discussed, at least in recent years, has come from the Farrow camp, and the media, who emotionally and psychologically side with the Farrows, and who are spooked by Allen and any association with child predators, as well as the conglomerates which have acted to remove his work, and generally, restrict his public access. and now Mia states she's "afraid of him" and what he might do. do what? based on what? the false claim also abides that by 'grooming' his characters to participate in these July/December romances (a critique which is ageist to the core and of genuine concern for what in the future will be allowable), he 'gets the girl' in the end, asking you to forget, no doubt, in a number of his films, esp. his most important ones, it is quite the opposite. the lyrics to Dory Previn's song **with daddy in the attic** written at the time of Mia/Andre Previn affair, depicts exactly the same scenario later alleged against Allen. could this be where Mia got the idea then transferred it to her susceptible daughter consciously or unconsciously? just asking. and don't think what has been done to him (guilty or not) is irrelevant because he's too bourgeois for it to matter.

'dirty old man' Roman Polanski, on his sleeping with girls sixteen to nineteen while in Switzerland, wrote in his memoirs, "more beautiful in a natural coltish way than they ever would be again." cynical, poetic, though not (necessarily) true. e e cummings wrote poems with the words 'kike' and 'nigger' in them. he also wrote *somewhere i have never travelled*, in my

mind, possibly, the most moving love poem in English ever written. if you read the Moderns, try to find one who was not anti-Semitic. not to be involved with this silly discussion as to whether art is separated from the rest of life, but rather that it be good, aesthetically honest, and accurate. still another aspect of this: should an individual who's done something of worth's legacy (in any endeavor) be wiped out, erased from history, because of some ill that person has done? if this is your view then you're allowing that the good one does has less value than the bad. Pete Rose, I hear you. moral behavior occurs only when the means and ends are the same. all movements are totalitarian in that when they pick up steam the means are compromised or abandoned.

beginning in 1961 through 1967 I smoked marijuana, once I got into it, every night almost without exception. it totally transformed me. it was not a secular experience. it was, from the moment it took effect, transcendent. it was not shared. it was something I experienced alone. my then wife, who did not 'turn on', may have, on some level, assimilated that environment, however. of course it did create a physical state, a metabolism, a reality, which separated those of us (who were part of the hip underground) from the mainstream, and when we'd get together, in addition to our thought processes, our physical states and awareness were similar but it was not on the same level, at least for me, as being stoned alone. when I would visit Wallace Berman or George Herms, their homes had auras that were not secular, the results of being creatively stoned. occasionally, in dreams long ago, but long after I stopped using drugs, I would be in a room or house which I believe was a dream modified vision of Wallace's (and possibly a bit of George's), and having feelings

of indescribable ecstasy and pleasure of the actual place, an image of an inner, as well as external, state. as I grew further apart from this world subsequent dreams of this order, became less and less approachable, and, finally, inaccessible. I'd scored some LSD from a friend who was my main drug connection, and one evening during a period in which the dissension between my wife and I was simmering, she decided to take one of the 2 capsules of LSD. my sense was, although she didn't do drugs (although several years earlier we'd taken LSD, our first trip, together), she was looking for space to get into herself and her situation, and compulsively, it was a compulsion, I decided to turn on too. in my recollection, I became, though not physically forcefully, sexually aggressive. it was a compulsion. it was not felt. I recall we were standing together in the brightly lit bathroom and she shrunk, became tiny, compressed to the point her face was as finely textured as porcelain. "I'm just a little guy. it's easy, like taking candy from a baby," she said, obviously under extreme duress, then "Oh don't you see, I have you and you have me. that's all we have," which to my mind (if the sole reason), a futile, debilitating rationale for us to be together. then I backed off, and the hallucinatory effects of the trip we shared together commenced. at one point I was able to absorb myself by looking into the mirror, my face modulating into the faces of others, a friend/adversary, a pirate, etc. which was pleasant but not absorbing enough given my physical state. what I didn't know at the time, but found out from my friend later, was the acid was also laced with amphetamine, a considerable amount, and we found ourselves moving from room to room. we tried to escape by going to bed and getting under the covers, having extreme cartoonish hallucinations. there was the smell of shit in my nostrils, just trying to hold

on and avoid a possible psychotic break? by daylight the effect had worn off, but from a neurological standpoint I was left more devastated than I had ever been – when I tried to eat later I almost couldn't move my jaw. it was my habit to smoke pot every night, usually staying up till the wee hours, frequently past dawn, which was the happiness of my life at that time, in fact, consistently, of any time. but the damage was such that from then on I could no longer get high, and stopped, foreshadowing the austere, acetic life that was to follow, and a need to regain neurological affluence. I think the trip, along with the cumulative effects of much previous abuse (not from pot), contributed to the significant damage that resulted, including, 4 years later, after she and I split up, of 25 year of purgatory, living with my parents (preposterously attempting to live a life separate from them), leaving me considerably socially disconnected, continuing after their deaths,. in short, as smoking pot nightly was the basis, the phase of life I was living then prematurely, abruptly, ended as I could no longer get high. it was at this time I destroyed all my work. this is, of course, a simplification. just as the more mainstream was beginning to turn on I was forced to, rather than continue as participant, be an observer to a whole era. but I never lost my creative vision and this is what sustains me. I don't know if there was an enduring physical effect on my wife. she did develop a benign tumor on her uterus shortly after. it is, of course, unclear what would have happened, had she turned on alone. it certainly would seem to have been an opportunity for her to assess her role in the relationship, and I regret if I hindered that possibility as well as precipitating an experience which physically destroyed me.

I did take acid in small doses on three consecutive days a short time after, with virtually no effect. the first night I had one of Mozart's Hayden Quartets on the record player while developing and printing photos, including some sexually explicit ones of my wife, in the kitchen which I used as a darkroom. she was out and my brother-in-law stopped by. it was pleasant but except for the ambience, which would have been there anyway, and even though I told him I had dropped acid, I wasn't high. underneath I was in terrible shape, but on the surface, listening to the music and watching the images appear in the chemicals I was mellow. when I'd earlier told Wallace of my intent he said, "aren't you afraid you'll make an even greater distance from Debby?" I don't imagine he ever got high with Shirley, as I don't think she turned on. he said he had just come down that day from being so stoned on acid all he could do when the refrigerator repairman arrived, was point in the direction of the kitchen. Wally also gave me some peyote buds that afternoon (all the peyote I used came from him – the first trip, the only really memorable one, he came by to give assistance – if needed). subsequently, my wife and I took the peyote together, only the third, and last, time in the 13 years we were together, we jointly took drugs. the living room seemed to slope considerably downward to the front window, our house was on a hill above the highway, but other than that, neurologically I was in too bad a state to experience the drug's effects. standing in the bedroom she began to come on to me sexually, but I deliberately didn't respond. the first time we turned on together it was for both our first acid trips. I felt the effects, but I didn't get high then either. we (I) decided to drive to John Fles' pad in Beverly Glen Canyon which was further back than Wallace's, as he

was the one who gave (sold me) the LSD. he wasn't there and when we got back down the steep steps from his studio, a police car was parked next to ours, and they interrogated us, surprisingly extremely politely, one of them asking me if I was high. as soon as they left we drove to Barney's Beanery where I knew John would be, fearing the cops might search his place. as expected, he was in the bar, and was totally unconcerned. we then sat down in the diner with a group that included, in addition to John, Jack Hirschman and his wife, Ruth, Bobby Notcoff, a former prodigy violinist who played with symphony orchestras, and later, a rock group, the L.A. Rockets, and was a heroin user at the time, and, I think, others I don't remember. John told Jack, "this is the 'kids' first LSD trip," even though John was actually a couple of years younger than me. Notcoff kept trying to make eye contact but I avoided it. I was suppressing being open and felt locked and uncomfortable. I don't know where Debby was really at but she was keeping it under wraps (Jack once referred her to me as "that sweet girl"). I don't know why I suppressed being high with her, but I think I did fear, as she played the role of the underdog, of being usurped by her in some way.

he wore a suit jacket over an open collar shirt but it looked like it'd been slept in, one of a group of people crossing the intersection of a hilly street in the heart of North Beach, looking hungover, fresh, bright, S. F. afternoon light on his face, beard, coolness of already impending darkness – a grad student, perhaps, who'd dropped out, to explore something deeper – really a feeling I can't put into words. an image I've never forgotten, best encapsulates what the North Beach scene meant to me at its deepest – the disassociation of the

ethereal S.F. late afternoon light, and the intent, hungover quality of the young esthete, its appeal to the senses, downbeat, but indescribably ecstatic. it's interesting, I never quite experienced that feeling again in a similar context.

in viewing Amber Tamblyn's stunning images of the 'deeply troubled' protagonist in Paint It Black (trailer), through her lens, never looked so good or charismatic. it may be the 'abject' reality that drives the plot, but it's the 'aesthetic' reality, regardless of the plot, I suspect is the selling point of the movie – is glamour, in fact, manifest in how she, and her co-star, project. if the film didn't look good there would be no movie.

yes, I've a love relationship with Alia Shawkat. why not? a kiss playing 'spin the bottle'. riding camels with her father in the California desert on a warm summer night.

when I looked at the photo of Nika Stahkarami, the teenage girl, who was beaten to death by the Iranian so-called morality police, I thought how pretty she was, how intent her look the care and perfection with which she applied her eyeliner – how she gave her life for beauty.

"Dean always played a milquetoast Oedipus trying not to murder but to please an imperfect father who's either too stern----or too soft." (from narration of film Los Angeles Plays Itself) Dean's role was hardly milquetoast in East of Eden when the Oedipal role shifted to brutal fratricide – Cain and Abel paradigm in reverse. a seeming obsession with Kazan who used it in On The Waterfront and Viva Zapata as well.

my mother gave us, my brothers and I, enemas when we were sick, as boys. this was a common practice at that time. I felt I perceived a bit of a lascivious intent from her in regards to that, though of course I couldn't, at the time, define it – possibly akin to pegging. that, and viewing her from her bedroom, sitting at her dressing room table, while making up, wearing a slip, her cleavage, long bare legs with nylon hose and garters, visible, I suppose, is the cornerstone of my (at least pornographic) desire for women, along with something more ethereal and abstract, a longing for, attraction to, females with subtle, quiet, detached sensitivities,.

who will understand that the object is the necessary surfacenot demeaning, and that both subtle desire and lust can be tempered into abstract transcendent meaning.

porn normalizes sex acts that have previously been seen as extreme or anti-social, though mostly in an inept, defiling manner. good or bad, **acting** is not sex, however.

5-6-22 I was lying in bed exhausted and more than usually receptive to sleep. as I started to doze a sound came into my head coming from what I pictured to be a building with large glass windows situated in a tree filled setting, of a guitar playing, single note, Dave Brubeck's (I think) *in your own sweet way*. an actual sound! the sound was neither jazz nor classical. it wasn't played like a love song, the melody purer, deeper, each note distinct and resonant which moved my heart.

that vision is an encapsulation of the late 50s when I first fully embraced art, music, literature, and film, a time which just

preceded the New Wave cinema era, which was, as a reflection and projection, the end of that (for me).

important is not that I've documented it, but that the vision was still there.

in light of this it is interesting I'm hearing impaired and no longer listen to music.

sitting on a bench at Clover Park between walking, getting much needed sun to warm away the distressful effect on my body of a harsh winter the thought of Gerry Mulligan's 1953 version of Moonlight In Vermont comes into my head. transforming the words, *pennies on a stream/rustling of the sycamore/moonlight in Vermont* into something narcotic and deep, blissfully transporting me recalling the 'Sound' now that I'm hearing impaired and can no longer listen to it, and I realize how important 'sound' is to me.

among the first jazz records I owned in my late teens was the 78 rpm Fantasy label disc recording of it (Gerry Mulligan quartet 1953 with Chet Baker). one evening before dinner, listening to it while lying on my bed in the darkened room with only a red night light on for atmosphere, my father looked in and said, "it sounds like an opium den in here." it did.

he and Judy Holiday used to come into the Westwood Bookstore where I worked for several years while in college and a bit after. they were friends of Jimmy Hakes the owner. one day they walked by me carrying a load of books while I was packing in the back. each said "Hi" to me as they walked past

me to the exit. I remember thinking, as celebrities, how modest the older model red English Ford compact they drove was.

also sunning myself in the park after walking, *couldn't sleep and wouldn't sleep when love came and told me I shouldn't sleep* (from the Rodgers & Hart song, Bewitched Bothered And Bewildered) filtered through my mind. (1950 I think it was. a friend who fancied himself as a singer, whose sister a short time later became my first lover, sang it standing by the piano at a party), the meaning of the song, the auras of the time dissolving my somewhat abject state into pure vision.

recent dream of myself and my former wife – seated opposite my forehead to hers, eliciting ecstatic feeling more satisfying than a kiss, symbolically, our minds together.

As Time Goes By – the things we believe the most may be clichés we've rejected and are, therefore, locked in them except for rare moments such as a warm day at a park in winter where because of the auras there is a brief re-connection of the senses, including, perhaps, the lyrics of a popular song we've rejected. aside from our annual ritual of 'stirring dull roots with spring rain', that is.

myself in relationship to movements. I suppose I was always attracted to a kind of 'hipsterism' – rebels who assumed a cool style, and seemed to speak a language counter to the mainstream – Chet Baker, Brando, Dean, and their moody white equivalences at the high school I attended in the early 50s. however, they did not constitute a counter culture, and they certainly weren't a movement. about being hip at every

phase that knowledge of it was available to me, I drew a little closer to it. the first genuine movement that affected me was the Beats as a college bohemian (where I was also a part of L.A.'s after hours jazz scene). but I wouldn't say I was a participant, until I began turning on sometime in 1961, and subsequently became active as part of a group of artists and poets, some of whom were influential in the S.F. and L.A. Beat scenes of the fifties, and was publicly manifesting my art. the scene by that time had pretty much morphed into the 'head' scene of the sixties, with its emphasis on pop culture and drugs. this is the only period (a decade) where I can truly say I was, actively, involved in a social movement (I should make clear that the basis of the participation was almost entirely personal, and the most significant aspect of that experience, by far, for me, was being up all night stoned alone).

it has been my experience, however, once one has gone beyond the restrictive premises and boundaries of the mainstream, one can never truly go back. one can assimilate one's past through reintegration, but can never go back to (nor should want to) where one once was – one is destined, only, to become more of an individual. the process of change at this time can be one of painful isolation, including jealousy and paranoia, where one is in touch with both a changing counterculture, and a changing mainstream, but a part of neither, yet experience necessary to one's spiritual growth. one is more than just the sum of one's experiences, but the experiences matter, and when there's an effort to exclude one from his or her own historically significant legacies, the

roots of which are alive and active, the result can be a denial of one's life – past, present, and future, including the blocking of the paths and avenues one needs to tell one's story, or to be taken seriously by others. collusion can begin, quite consciously, with the original perpetrators, but spread, unconsciously, in the more general scene, through acolytes, further removed from the source, who weren't there, who don't know the object of exclusion instigated by the original conspirators, nor care about the motives behind the instigation. why do I write about some relationships more than others with whom I may have actually been as much, or more physically involved, poses an interesting question. for instance, during the late fifties, extending into the first couple of years of the next decade, my friends were mostly from a group of like-minded student bohemians at UCLA, which culminated with my marrying the younger sister of one of them. from the early sixties through that decade, coinciding with my smoking pot and using other psychedelics (an actual physical change), I shifted abruptly to the artist-poet underground. this is the scene, these are the people, I mostly mention when assessing my creative past. yet, the preceding group was very instrumental in my artistic and intellectual, development, although no public manifestations had yet occurred, probably equally as important as the latter. but while both periods involved serious changes, and with the former, considerable intellectual growth, the latter represented a more precipitous change, mentally and physically, primarily, as a result of being stoned. however, this is not the reason for why I write about the individuals I was involved with during this period. it is, for the most part, not why I've been compelled with a necessity to write about them rather

than the former (over and over again, it seems). it gets down to, unhappily, mostly, access and image. the former are not famous (nor have they denied my role in what was our mutual participation) , so what was shared remains between me and them. there's no public to address, except to the extent I find relevant to the telling of my own life's story, for which I have included them on a number of occasions. this is essentially how I have addressed the latter, as well, though it may be manifest more in terms of public relevance, re how the private is manufactured, manipulated, and sometimes falsified, in the name of history (turned to myth) for the value of self (and group) image, for public consumption.

our lives are a series of steps through people. to not acknowledge that is usury. if you give people credit for what they've done, and/or given you, instead of stealing from them, then

you don't have to compete (either openly, or secretly).

George sounded me about my being in the show, Semina Culture: Wallace Berman and his Circle, although I doubt he knew Wallace had included a poem of mine in Semina and I didn't know what he was getting at, because I was unaware he had any intention other than to tell me about the show as well as a show of his work at the same venue. too bad because it would have been a rare opportunity to exhibit in a situation favorable to me. I now believe one reason I wasn't included in the show was George who played a major role in suggesting its participants, felt I was (to borrow the term Russ Tamblyn used re his relationship with MGM at the time his contract with them ended) 'not a team player.' although we

knew each other at the time of the issue of Semina 8 we didn't actually become friends until we were both living in Topanga Canyon, and one afternoon, when Debby and I were visiting the Bermans, he said he read a piece I wrote in Film Culture and, later asked if he could see one of my films. I used to enjoy visiting George late at night as I did Wallace and Dean – we'd talk, drink beer or smoke pot together. but by the end of the sixties after I was forced to stop turning on although I'd see him from time to time, we no longer had that basis to communicate with – I think it was that simple. I once asked him what it was like living in a small town in Oregon as a teenager. he said if you wanted to be friends with the cool guys at his high school you had to go out drinking with them on weekends. we all shared the mystical and spiritual, but with me, at least, it was mostly in solitude.

John Fles to me, via 2 telegrams sent the same day, on starting an underground newspaper, pre-Los Angeles Free Press – “this town is ripe, believe me. let's get it before the shits do.”

FDR was president the first ten years of my life, and so I suppose, my conditioned view of government was one of boring bureaucratic benevolence, one that attempted to be beneficial to the majority of citizens as it trotted out the clichés of fairness, tolerance, and equality. the hate mongers like the Bilbos, Gerald L.K. Smiths, and those common folks who shared their views, were the losers, a dying breed in an era of, I believed, irreversible progress. of course, then, I didn't know that FDR, though not a hate monger, was, like many other hypocritical, white, liberal, New Englanders, an anti-Semite. during World War 2, Americana, for me, was laying

on my back after school, on the backyard lawn, watching small aircraft overhead, while eating a jelly donut from the Helms Bakery truck, or a cookie from the sky blue painted faux windmill adorned Van de Kamp's on Pico. in JHS the artifacts of pop culture had a new potential for pleasure (energized by sexual desire) which by high school, at least unconsciously, was becoming jaded, personally, and tainted with the knowledge of the A bomb, Korean War, Mc-Carthy-ism, etc. living on the west side, and going to racially almost all white schools, as yet I hadn't factored in racism, although I had witnessed a number of examples of it first-hand. after high school I basically had no real ambition except to enjoy myself – beach bum early fifties, for example, and be part of a social elite, all sexually driven – a dapper period (wearing pink and lemon dress shirts, charcoal fleck sport coat and pants, and thin knitted ties, extending into the Ivy league olive green and conservative stripes of the late fifties). at this time I was very much into jazz, and although underage, frequented all the clubs. although I had no aptitude for working for it, I wanted, even assumed, it would come to be, the fruits of being rich – but in the coolest sense, on the cutting edge – fashionable modernism, west coast style, the canyons, the right woman – sex. not doing the homework, 'hanging' on the library steps at UCLA instead of going to classes, finally got me temporarily kicked out of school, and before returning, doing a two year hitch in the Navy, where plans for my future began to crystalize as something creative. I no longer had any desire to be a part of the mainstream. exposure to the Beats in North Beach, 1956-7, gave me some sense of direction as to where that future might be in that respect. when I returned to school you might say that a shift

from mainstream to counter culture was well underway – it was still mostly college bohemianism, however, no more, no less, until after quitting school, I discovered pot. looking back the seeds (no pun intended) were there from the beginning – I never was going to be a nine-to-fiver, and there was always a need and vision to be something else. music, literature, film, and sex, were the fueling elements. as I mentioned earlier, while I never completely identified with it, as a boy I still viewed mainstream culture, the government, as to a good degree, of and for the people, and that progress would inevitably solve the problems of social injustice, and that happiness was something only an individual could account for. I was, though, not particularly happy. I was incredibly lazy. there was a big gap between my everyday life and my dreams. I had no process, no positive conception of work. and while an existential reality was clashing with my romantic notions, and I thought the global militarism after WWII, madness, it became increasingly clear only the artist had sane enough self-generating values (to live ecstatically), and that the more fucked up you were, and the more truthful you were about it, the more soul you had, and many artists in all the disciplines, both peers and predecessors, served as examples. I quickly saw, however, while it was cool to reject establishment values, there was a set of clichés involved with this – group think, etc. there was still pressure not to think on one’s own; not to be who one really was, and the tension for me to this day remains the tension between the individual and the group. the downside of my relationship with others, certainly any group I’ve belonged to, has been my perceived lack of group chauvinism, which is ironic because these groups, for the most part, have made their reputations on being rebels. in addition, most people involved in leftist and

progressive politics don't understand that some elements of the counter culture are not political. no amount of proselytizing is going to change that. to these elements, politics is, in itself, part of the problem, and will resist any attempts to equate the more general term, behavior, with the more narrow definition of political behavior. but outsider is more than just estrangement from a specific society or group. it is a thought process adverse to making a deal, to even the hint of collusion.

the first leftist dissident movement I was aware of, that I was old enough to participate in, was the anti-nuclear, anti-McCarthyism (Green Feather) movement composed of mostly folkies (white college students who were active in the NAACP and other liberal civil rights groups), in the early fifties. my own counter culture orientation at that time, though, was through jazz, hipsterism, i.e., more cool, aesthetic, style, essentially apolitical, than it was political action, driven by the social justice issues (which became national issues in the late fifties). by the mid-fifties the Beats had defined the New Bohemia, followed by the head scene of the early sixties, which included artists, filmmakers, poets, and assorted social rebels, who sometimes dropped acid, took peyote, and regularly smoked dope. dropouts, later to be part of the mass Hippie movement, were already congregating on the stoops on St. Mark's Place in NYC in the summer of 1960. as the counter-culture of the sixties became more mainstream, people who were more mainstream were drawn to it – attractive mini skirted college girls who earlier would have dated ZBTs or young movie industry people, were now dating SDS chapter members, some of whom, themselves, would have been more likely to have been taking bus ad courses than carrying

green feathers and refusing to take part in bomb shelter drills, half a decade earlier. I write this because while the various social movements have been characterized, little has been written about who comprised them, and what their motivations were – which boils down, possibly, to one factor more than anything else, an equation of sexual liberation to power, which no longer seemed possible via the mainstream. for instance, the UCLA film department managed to nail Godard, who was a hero of the New Left, (even though his early films had little to do with their agenda), for a symposium moderated by Gene Youngblood, posturing themselves as ‘the’ aesthetic rebels. I’m sure Jean-Luc was totally unaware of what was going on in U.S. experimental film at the time. I recall, with particular disgust an event that took place in Royce Hall where the UCLA film dept.’s master students had their films projected for the public, sometime in the sixties, which was preceded by the tawdry sexploitation of grammar school girls, scantily clad in French cabaret costumes, awkwardly trying to can can to old timey music (the presenters’ stab at sexual sophistication), as the mostly dating, faculty and students, filed into the safe haven of Royce Hall (the films, for the most part, unexceptional), mindless of the dues the film underground, and others, those in the real world, who had made the break, were paying.

when John Fles started his film series, Movies ‘Round Midnight, at the Cinema Theater, he decided to do a film festival as an adjunct. John and I were seeing a lot of each other at the time, so I decided I’d make a film and enter the competition. I bought some outdated WWII aerial machine gun film at Freestyle, and rented a then state of the art 16mm

Bolex reflex camera with a zoom lens from Birns and Sawyer \$2.50 a day? I also rented an editor/viewer. some of the film was shot at night from the bed of a pickup truck driven by Jay Rosenberg, a UCLA graduate student in neurophysiology at the time (my next movie, a color film, shot without a lens, at night, of neons, on Hollywood Blvd. and downtown Broadway, was filmed entirely from the same moving pickup truck). at one point I decided to include explicit sex in the film (with my then wife and I) which was done by pre-winding the camera the entire 100 ft. and fixing the release button. we did two rolls which amounted to two and a half minutes. there were also interior shots including some of my photos on the wall, and a shot of Debby walking out the door, standing on the back steps (of our garage upper), then cut to street below as she drives away, to (when shown), applause. the movie really had no overt plot. but that's how the audience took it. one afternoon, a few days before the film festival, John called, they were prescreening films, and he asked me to bring mine down to the theater. when I arrived he introduced me to Kenneth Anger, Cameron, who Anger was living with at the time, a couple of other people I don't remember, and Stan Brakhage. after the screening, we were standing in the lobby. as I recall, two short people (a male and a female who looked like brother and sister) from Time magazine, with identical stolid expressions, stood facing me. one of them, I can't remember which one, asked me, "where did you get the idea for the film?" already mesmerized, almost in a state of shock, I just blankly stared at them. at about the same time, Beat coffee house entrepreneur Herb Cohen's lawyer brother, said no way would the film legally pass. then Mike Getz, who managed the Cinema theater, said

he didn't want to show it, and Brakhage quickly said he'd pull out as judge (the two other judges were John, and poet, Jack Hirschman) if he didn't show it. some sort of compromise was reached as to when it would be shown, one or two a m, at which time, however, the theater was still packed. when the first jittery tracking shot went on the screen, Ben Talbert, who was sitting in the row behind me, groaned, "oh no, my eyes can't take it. let me know when your film comes on, Jerry." then, Hal Glicksman, who was sitting next to him, wanted to know if I was using a zoom lens – which was still a novelty then. the audience climbed on every frame, as they did on my second film, which was shown at a subsequent Movies 'Round Midnight regular screening. when it was over, Wally Berman, who was sitting in the seat directly in front of me, turned his head back and said, "cool." then Dean Stockwell, who was sitting a seat apart from him, turned his head and said, "cool." as the festival continued with the next film, Bill Becker, who I filmed scratching the credits (which appeared in the middle of the film) with a stick in the sand at the beach after an almost aimless pan of the sand and shoreline (which may have influenced a similar shot in Warhol's My Hustler – I have reason to believe he saw it while it was in NYC), and I, got up, climbed the stairs to the projection booth, and retrieved the film. in the lobby, I congratulated Stan Kaye on his film, Georg, which got a strong response and was the eventual festival winner.

a few added comments – both the negative and the print were processed through the Filmmaker's Co-op. John suggested I send a telegram to Jonas Mekas, who wired back, "send film." the print got damaged when a girlfriend of

Debby's ran it through her parent's projector, gouging a line through most of the footage. so I needed another print. Bert Cohen, the younger brother of Aaron Cohen a high school artist friend, who had been in the same masters class in the UCLA art dept. as Peter Mays, told me Peter had a home-made printer, and gave me his number, which is how I met him (and his wife, Judy). Peter did a print but the sex part was damaged when a small portion of the film slipped the sprockets. I joked that it was a puritanical reaction of the printer. conveniently, however, that section of the first print was the only part unscratched, so I was able to put together one good print. several years later, P. Adams Sitney, the film archivist, who was checking out the light show group Peter was a part of, told them there was 2.5 minutes worth viewing in my film. I later cut it down to 10 minutes, and would play a segment of Christopher Tree's, Spontaneous Sound, with it. after the prescreening, Stan Brakhage gave me the following advice – "hold the camera steady, breathe naturally, and, don't use a viewer. always work directly from the film strip." I never used a viewer again. he was also very supportive of my later films, writing about one, "one of the best super-imposition films I've yet seen." upon leaving the theater after that first screening, Kenneth Anger asked me, "do you know of a good color lab?" "come on," Cameron responded, as she half pushed him out the door.

subsequently, a number of my films were screened at the Cinema theater and elsewhere –after the first two, to good response. but cultural changes in the sixties were very rapid. the 'underground' phase of the New American Cinema which most of my films characterized, flourished, roughly, for half a

decade – by the end of 1966 it was over. for me the, perhaps arbitrary, marker was the appearance of a still from Michael Snow's, *Wavelength*, on the cover of *Film Culture*, which heralded the ascendancy of the structural/ minimalist era of filmmaking. the underground film (movement) was very fragile. it was, essentially, street art, fueled by the drug dependent social realities of the counter culture(s). even in the limited definition of New American Cinema which prevailed then, the underground film made up only a portion of it. Anger, Jack Smith, Ron Rice, harder to classify like Harry Smith, Ken Jacobs, lesser known filmmakers like Warren Sonbert, Andrew Meyer, etc. 'experimental' film moved on (and, in a sense, backward), once again becoming the purview of academics and the related film societies, who possessed the facilities, support, and the technical interest in film as an art form, to carry on. of the New American Cinema of the sixties, one generally thinks of Brakhage and Warhol as the poles. from a purely conceptual angle, this may be valid, though it's tempting to say, Warhol, for all of the factory shenanigans, was not an underground artist, and that the formalism of his aesthetics was as much in the Duchamp and Cage canon, as it was in the influences of the underground filmmakers he appropriated from. he was an underground artist, however, whatever his appeal to the plastic art world concerns of that era. in reading interviews and commentary of, and by, filmmakers, and other participants in L.A. film scenes past, there's been a tendency to reinforce an illusion of cohesion between the various elements that never actually existed. whether a result of historian fervor, or interviewee nostalgia, the claims are no less false.

nobody, outside of the particular scene I was a part of, paid any attention to my films. some, I think (John Fles, Wallace Berman, for instance), saw me more as a poet than as a filmmaker. although certainly new, innovative, and at times insightful, even transgressive, not one of my films was attended by a critic, let alone reviewed.

using psychedelic drugs created a shift in me from writing, which had become more and more absurd, to visual images. I, as a photographer, enjoyed the process of filmmaking, although it was not the basis of my vision, and it exacted its toll. my primary vision then was just being stoned. esp. late at night, first in mind tripping L.A., and then in Topanga Canyon, where I had a quiet peaceful environment, and the support of my wife. the visions of that period cannot be recalled, let alone translated, yet remain a creative source to me to this day.

