



To Becky, Ben, Lisa, Jack, Diana, and Leonard

Hard pressed on my right. My center is yielding. Impossible to maneuver.
Situation excellent—I attack.

Ferdinand Foch



The Red Ceilings Press

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Impossible I

David Eingorn

My America

For Allen Ginsberg

America I have a fake mustache for every day of the week
sitting on my desk between the law and the poetry books
in case I need to give you the slip.
For Sunday, I have the "Square," for Wednesday, I have the "Bruiser,"
For Thursday, I have the "Weasel," for Friday, I have the "Sheriff."

America I know that makes six mustaches
and there are seven days in a week.
I am not an accountant, but I can count.
America I know I must have given
one of my fake mustaches to a co-worker
who was in worse trouble than I am I can't remember whom.
America I have a colleague with a real mustache,
but I am not talking to him.

America I am not in trouble. Everyone is on trial for misdemeanors.
I count 72 dollars, an unsigned check made out to my wife,
various smeared or smearing receipts along with
credit cards, insurance cards, and identification cards in my wallet.

America, on January 17, 1956, Allen Ginsberg wrote,
"two dollars and twentyseventcents."
America I want to found a poetry magazine
with a two dollars and twentyseventcents prize.
I don't care how much
two dollars and twentyseventcents is in 2013 dollars.
Two dollars and twentyseventcents is still more than nothing.
You see, Allen Ginsberg, America is still capitalist.
I bought your red-covered Collected Poems
with the insignia of the Buddha's footprint.
You signed it, and misspelled my name.
You wrote "for David Einhorn," and David Einhorn is a dead Yiddish poet,
or there is the David Einhorn who is a hedge fund manager, but not me.
I should have had you re-sign the book, but, instead,
I asked you if you had any regrets, and you said,
decaying Allen Ginsberg in shambles Allen Ginsberg
who wanted to make his supermarket purchases by his good looks alone,
"I was too shy when I was young."

America I have my white collar to the grindstone.

The 23rd of July

I'm wearing a t-shirt with a whale drinking from a frothy mug of beer. The bartender asks me if I knew who Moby Dick was. I tell him I do, and with the ghost of Herman Melville at my side I wonder whether Moby would have been less ornery if he had drunk an occasional red, white, and blue Pabst Blue Ribbon? Would he have bit off Ahab's leg in the first place? With these thoughts in mind I'm marching through the streets of the City of Des Plaines on the 23rd of July, albeit 19 days late for the 4th of July parade.

I've found out that someone I cared for died at 60, and I thought I had the resources for this, but I don't. I have everything in my 13 year old car, the one without steering, brakes, and functioning air bags and a dent in the door from the first day when an errant shopping cart ran into it.

In the car, I have an unframed Jackson Pollock, two tennis rackets, approximately 21 spent tennis balls, a lot of McDonalds toys, a 1788 page Illinois criminal code (just in case), four clinking coffee cups, Hostess Ding Dongs in and out of the wrapper, a cookbook with recipes for chicken, pens, instruction manuals, really old crumbs, a child's car seat, bandages, giveaway clothing, a turntable, something sticky on the steering wheel, no poetry books, and a sinking feeling.

A sinking feeling because I don't have a long, painted candle to mourn him. I don't have a candle to mourn him because I'm not Catholic and I'm suspecting that he may not be Catholic either, and I've been warned by my wife not to have any objects of adoration from other religions at home with the children, no Ganeeshas, Buddhas, copies of the Koran because the first commandment is that you should have no Gods before or alongside me, but does that apply to the car?

I draw myself away from the library plaza, a fine place to begin one's sobriety, to look for a sundry shop. At the gift shop, I am torn between purchasing one of two candles. I decide that the Lazarus on the Lazarus candle looks too sickly for life everlasting. The right choice is of Jesus Christ depicted as a shepherd; it's under \$2.00. After my purchase, I can end my very late parade of the City of Des Plaines.

At work, I give the candle to my friend who is Catholic. She says a prayer that she has composed herself.

Epitaph for Chicago, May 20, 2012

The revolution will not be televised,
and the revolution was televised.

R.I.P. Gil Scott-Heron.

A mountain left un-summited.

Crappie Lake

Wearing an eight gallon cowboy hat
With two gallons to spare in the chamber
Richard Brautigan
Hippie partisan
A smile or a frown underneath a sheltering mustache
Buttons like pesos on his secondhand pinstripe vest
In tight jeans posing in front of a statue
Of Benjamin Franklin
Scribbling on a stream
Of Trout Fishing in America.

In the chapter, "Trout Death by Port Wine," his fishing companion
pours the named wine into the reluctant creature's mouth
In an act of human kindness
Before lopping off its head.

Trout intentions, but no good vibrations,
No screw top Dionysian variations
Of riverbank patter
At Crappie Lake where all species may not be found, but

Scaly stucco outhouses
Of narrow bandwidth
Sudden drop offs measuring 38 feet
Rusted orange veined fenders
Fall leaves brown, smeared and crumpled like dollar bills
In a child's pocket

DANGER signs all along the shore. No skating, wading, swimming,
boating,
Bony knuckled fingers of trees truncated
Woods not secluded
Dirt full grounds
The fishermen's poles like the few reeds remaining
Not thunder, but the rumble of passenger planes overhead
Landing beside a gold and purple mega billboard calling for CASH
Against the gray lichened sky.
The noise of honking semi's, and

crappies, a few crappies at Crappie Lake.

Oh Crappie Lake, Oh crappie, crappy lake.
A three-holed forest recycling bin at the exit
With the quote, "Help Us Recycle America,"
And the word, "recycle" scratched out.

Dead Katz Returns

Dead Katz is not a zombie.

Dead Katz is not a greener, an immigrant.

Dead Katz is way past 82, the actuarial span of a man's life.

Dead Katz wears Leonard Cohen's signature black fedora.

Dead Katz has a salt-and-pepper pony tail and a wispy goatee.

Dead Katz cannot play the banjo on the street corner for tips.

Dead Katz is really good at folding.

Dead Katz will not tell you the rest of the joke whose punch line is "How did you know my name was Katz?"

Dead Katz says he walked Hart Crane across Brooklyn Bridge and told Jewish jokes with Ezra Pound.

Dead Katz tells me he ate thin-crust pizza with Herman Melville, lived next door to Raskolnikov's garret, and has a plot in the future cemeteries of 2666.

Dead Katz tells me to stop using the name, David Foster Wallace David Eingorn.

Dead Katz tells me that he cannot help me move furniture because he's going to Cleveland and needs his back for the poetry bordello.

Dead Katz says where he is, he can eat bacon and shellfish.

Dead Katz is a movie critic, and claims that the Bruce Willis character is the only one really alive in The Sixth Sense.

Dead Katz cannot be revived by extra extra strong coffee.

Dead Katz stands with me inside Paco's Taco Embassy next to the high-pitched Trixi's.

Dead Katz can eat anything now, and reaches his meager hand to the bottom of the pickled jalapeño jar, picks out some car keys, and swallows them whole.

Dead Katz hears gasps, belches and farts and feels regret.

Dead Katz says, "All I want is to live just like everybody else
Only God resurrects the dead."

The Space Between Spaces

There is a suspension (without a bridge)
in the first line of the first dream song by John Berryman.
It reads, "Huffy Henry hid the day."
Berryman tumbled over the bridge.
But this declension before death
His
Is
A furrow of ground challenging
the living to plant it.

Describe it
as the end of the line before the end
of the line.
A whitewash of troubles
ideas crashed into the empty space
like cars in a demolition match,
or faulty trapeze artists
somersaulting in between and down,
or divers in shallow water,
or drunks on ice.

skidoo, skidoo, & skidoo.

Before every letter and the next, there is a crack of space
Without exaggeration

never to be patched

because, as science tells us,
the universe is filled with empty space
And every silent street,
Every empty home or apartment
Is a clue.

All the Wines

Having drunk all the wines in the shop to know
death is not a Cabernet Sauvignon,
earthy and smoky
dark cherry lachrymose lady
draped in back of the tongue tannins,
a receding leathery apparition of ambient sleepwalking
in gest,
or a black suit and black tie guy.

Death is more of merlot,
An open-shirted Rhone.
Charon floating down a Russian River pinot noir
Not even a malicious malbec,
A serenade, Syrah, Syrah,
the taxi fare paid,
A soft landing
as the wine reenters the bottle from the glass.

Death has no stopper.
A rampaging box wine under \$10
Without a nose.

Tierra del Fuego

She stands before the judge this afternoon
her dirty feet overhanging her flip-flops
(a saint would wash her feet)
sugary sweet notions flake from her lips
falling into a bucket of lies
as she twists the strands of her hair.

Where has she been this morning?
Not collecting fragrant magnolia petals from suburban front lawns,
An experienced traveler at 27,
She has been to Tierra del Fuego,
the land of the fires, el fin de mundo, the archipeligo at the end of the
world.

The opiates flood the straights of her synapses
like the Straights of Magellan
down by Ushuala , the southernmost city of South America,
mountainous, arid and cold
as she shivers from being there with the sea lions
on the rocks that look up at the glacier-covered mountains.
The glaciers withdraw as she is bound to withdraw.
How could the beech trees survive in such thin soil?
She rubs her hands together and draws them to her chest rocking
with the penguins frolicking in the frigid water, so close to Antarctica,
the albatrosses, vultures, and condors all in their roosts.

And offshore where the killer whales search for the prey
she is swimming with the dolphins,
(on Green Dolphin Street as the jazz musicians say)
sharing their staccato cackle.
And, although it is after the gold rush, and all the gold
has been mined from Tierra del Fuego,
and all the indigenous people have been dead
from disease for a century,
the extinguished fires rise through her.

Where do you go when you have to go there
they have to let you in?
It's not home, but Tierra del Fuego.

D Theory: The Myth of the Self-Writing Poem

(Peter Quince) at the clavier with (a librarian) and a stack of (books) or alternatively,

Ronald Reagan mask
Morning in America;

Marilyn Monroe imposters

Nylon subtitles
pavement;

Paz de la Huerta eye frames

Gold medals
blank.

lost grandmothers

Recent Past Perfect

Dear _____,

Is Roberto Bolano alive? The light switch on the dust jacket is switched off.

He is alive with a Spanish-speaking David Foster Wallace who has replaced his wizard's head scarf with a sombrero. Amor Eterno, the shot glass reads. Don't write. Bolano is alive in Natasha Wimmer's pure translation

perfect to me without knowing any Spanish. Perfect to me unlike Glenn Gould's personalized Goldberg Variations.

Your Philosophy Exam

Among the single malts on the liquor shelf, does the Glenfarclas know the Glenmorangie? Does Dalwhinnie know Oban? Has the ten-year-old Macallan heard about the eighteen-year-old Macallan?

The writer who has written your book and is wearing your best tie whispers into your ear, "Listen, Chip, it's not about last night; the answer is The Uncanny."

The Thimble

The young rabbi tells the story of two men in a dispute over land ownership.

They go to a wise man who tells them, "The land owns them."

My ten-year-old son says it means we are but dust and return to it as we must.

The rabbi says it means we are cultivators and custodians of the land.

After Rosh Hashana services, our family goes for a walk through Japanese gardens.

After the walk, I take a nap because I have never met a nap I did not like.

I dream I am in an apartment listening to someone reading a poem of mine.

The reader stumbles over the last lines, which are incomplete and in Hebrew.

I go over to her, and she shows me a printed copy with her name.

The title of the poem is "The Thimble."

Green Dungarees

Sloped shoulders like corral
A turntable the only moving part in the room.
We lay on her emerald green carpet like rafts
on the deep green sea.

Paint on her dungarees
Splattered red, yellow, and blue.
We listened to Dave Brubeck's *Take Five* without exchanging a word.
I read her Janet Planet's "A Fable" from the inside cover of Van Morrison's
Moondance,
and she didn't accept a word.
She took me to the art museum on the slope
Where she clapped, and the sound bounced off the walls like a coil.

One summer, I searched for her along the Connecticut shore
in my pocket a scalloped ticket home.

The Placebo Effect

There is a machine,
a camera machine,
which has the peculiar effect
of viewing the body,
not superficially
like on a magazine cover,
but from within.

The camera is ingested
and threads through one's I
(Biological system mouth properly)
to show where the pain is.

I am your doctor, the doctor says confidently,
and this is your pain,
not in your mind
but in an image
look at it
like a torn feeler from an insect head.

Poetry and Therapy

The plaster statues in the basement are your enemies.
The corridor upstairs is as empty as an early morning subway tunnel.
Your advisor appears on the platform like a ghoul.
He hands you the autopsy of your poem.
You won't be in the *Norton Anthology of Poetry*.

He says poetry and therapy in the same sentence like test and positive.
By "therapy," he doesn't mean the original meaning of the word, which is
friendship.
He doesn't want to be your friend or mentor. He's just looking outside
his frosted window as the quail run by.

And tennis is therapy, and work is therapy, and relationships are therapy,
and everything else is therapy.

And poetry will save you, or it won't.

The Nightmare of Perfection

If you are looking for perfection,
Perfection is a commercial building
At the intersection of Fullerton and Ashland in Chicago.
The word "Perfection" is chiseled into its marble façade.
Although not especially perfect,
Its columns are cracked
and the adjacent sidewalk is usually blocked by snow in winter.
What is audacious, the building's greatness,
Is its name.
Having thus found perfection plainly in front of me
in a Chicago building,
I awaken from the struggle for perfection
To speak easily.
To see around me plainly
the man on the corner dancing;
his body pulsating,
his head moving from side to side,
crazy, high or out of context?

Steiner (Stones)

The light is a burden.
It flashes
Leaving diamonds in his eyes.

He excavates himself from a hole.
Not a World War I foxhole,
But from a cellar
Underground
A Jew in hiding during the Second World War.

He has uncovered himself.
He risks everything
For a smoke.
His children are in the cellar playing with potatoes because
They have no toys.
He exhales, his mind occupied by the defeat of Hitler.
Did he kill a man before?
Did he pound the Nazi gendarme
With his huge, mallet-like fists?

Grayed
When I knew him,
He wholesaled diamonds, which he called stones.
Smuggled in a doll's head,
The stones were the family's money during the war.

Never a bar mitzvah boy
When his father died of pneumonia
He had to travel across Europe by train
As the family's breadwinner.

I accompany him to Antwerp on a buying trip by plane.
We walk through a building with crisscrossing corridors
Of Yiddish.
The diamond dealers' doors buzz customers in and out,
And everyone greets everyone else
Because they have survived the war
And are not the last Jews on earth.
From unlocked desks, the black hats remove papers

Filled with diamonds called stones, steiner.

My grandfather's *landsman* hands him a loop.
The sparkling stones sing to him like sirens
and I watch the capillary pressure build in him,
The blood pressure which in the last instance
burst his heart.
This is the choke of business: to buy, hold, or sell.
And I remember what he has taught me
That diamonds resemble a glass-like perfection, but are flawed.
Flawed like poems in their making.

He has instructed me how the stones' clarity
is marred by black specks of carbon,
or their mirrored facets shattered in small
during imperfect cuttings and unfinished polishing.

Born deep underground
blasted up from the inferno of the earth's core,
The stones are milk cloudy
Almost opaque like cataract eyes.
Occluded, their beauty obscured
Like the beauty of his soul, his storytelling.

I look at my grandfather's photograph,
A handsome man.
His blue eyes are aquamarine
Clear and brilliant diamonds.

Stepping on Stones

Walk over the dead bodies.
Are they stones?

Denting the surface tension
Skipping stones on the water
elongated ripples
Reverberations without sound.

A stone at the bottom of a lake.
A boy's body underwater.
Resurfacing?
As a lad, I asked the Lord
In my bedtime prayers
Repeated every night
not to let me stumble over a stone.
A cute moral universe held by and tight.
Facing eastward toward Jerusalem away from bullies
The then now.

But not my father's chronic suffering.
The dislocation from his setting.
The fiddler on the roof incinerated.
Looking at the pre-war photographs, which was his town?
Looking for his face in the concentration camp photos,
The lists of surnames from records,
Are these his names, the names of his extended family, his neighbors,
The summer houses, the animals, the orchards.
Isaac, Benzion, Moshe, his brothers.
How precise is a child's memory?

From his boyhood, he remembers a Catholic Cathedral in the center.

During wartime,
Always the reference point of before, during, and after the war.
As a young boy of eleven saving his life from the selection
By gathering a pile of stones to stand on
Making him larger to work and not to be gassed.
It elevates him today.
He stands on those stones, not obliterated.

A perpetual loop,
An unending heroic story
Calcifying the present
Stones on a scale
What those eyes have seen and will always see
Unnatural acts
Not the earth's diurnal rocks and stones and trees.
He knows death, this survivor.
It is his seriousness.

Surrendering to war without end,
War more casual than sex.
We await the next chapter to be torn from the text.
Unmoved by the passed on trauma
We watch silently like stones.

Violence, Silence

The date of Hitler's birthday, two days after her own. My mother reaches for words to capture the evil, her face in a scowl, "Scum," she says. And I wonder, is anybody celebrating Hitler's Birthday today, a day after Yom Hashoah, which falls on April 19th, the tiny yahrzeit candle lit for the six million still burning on April 20th, the birth date proper of the enemy of the Jews recalling that it was once a national holiday in Germany during World War II? In 2012, is anyone celebrating now? Around midnight, do they bring out a photograph of the fuhrer? Do they pour shots of schnapps and shout Heil Hitler for the fuhrer who would have been 123 years old, born in 1889? My namesake, was born in 1895 and died at Dachau, which represents death, in 1944 at 49 years of age. Should I mark the occasion in the striped uniform of a Jewish prisoner (because it was, after all, a war against the Jews)? Would the holocaust museum let me borrow one, or should I make a replica myself? And if I encountered the new Nazis gathering on Hitler's Birthday for a reconstituted Jew hatred knowingly commemorating the murder of the Jewish people (the image of an Anne Frank dying of typhus at Bergen-Belsen who was never liberated) what would I do?

What could my parents do after the war, but to remake their lives? They couldn't jump into the graves to pull out their dead? They couldn't return to their villages because of the pogroms.

Happy and lucky to have survived, my other grandfather changed his name from Fishl to Felix, which means happy and lucky. A cousin named Victor was born after the war. All happy and lucky to have survived the typhoid, cholera, the cold, the starvation and the selection. My father straightens himself up at 81 as he did at 13 to show how he pretended to be older at the selection, and touching his left shoulder where the SS officer struck him with a stick as death passed over him, not as in the time of the Egyptians and the death of the first born, but for him a middle child. The other brothers went to the gas chamber. Or, for my friend's father who worked in the shadow of Eichmann. The two of us growing in Skokie at the time of the neo-Nazi march. And if Hitler had lived for other birthdays?

Battles

The rubber dinosaurs are in the tub
no longer extinct.
Their skins are smeared from soap scum
From previous battles.
Unselfishly they never bathe themselves.

The generalissimo, the commander of commanders, is in his room.
No two battles are alike.
Monsters get dropped in department stores; fall under the car seat;
None die on the battlefield.
Their greatest danger is being washed away
From the water cascading out of the spigot.
The legions are better trained for dry carpet,
but what can you do when the prime one needs a bath?

I ask my son to explain the fight.
I only hear the side effects, the shouts and fake explosions.
He tells me there are sides.
The forces of light and the forces of darkness
Further subdivided into greater and lesser teams.
His battles are just like his television shows on a smaller scale.

He battles like this, which leaves a hurricane like devastation.
Dinosaurs tipping over,
Vehicles smashing into each other.
The good team will win.
He's arranged that.
Ben 10 wins, Batman wins.
You don't even have to watch.

Battles for adults are more like his yu gi oh, a card game,
Asymmetrical distributions of capital and skill.
He summons Colossal Fighter, Gaia Knight the Force of Earth, Gachi
Gachi Gantetsu.
I have never beaten him at cards,
and when he asks me, I tell him I never will.
He always has the better hand, and plays by rules I cannot understand.
The print on the bottom of the cards is way too small
Unintentionally designed to defeat adults.

Standby

One day boys stop battling,
or go to war and keep battling.

Those who stay at home

Fight battles at school or at work.

Others fight the green monsters of the mind

Wondering how easily a shoe

Can defeat Rath from Ben 10 or Metroman.

Tree

She was the tree,
And the tree smiled at me.

Her arms circle around agilely
like a ballerina's
Her right leg bends at the knee
To chalk a triangle.
Her right foot brushes against her trunk.
She has mastered yoga's "tree."

Early in the history of our house
Long before it was underwater.
An ancient suburban tree fell
Demolishing the neighbor's car
And impermissibly blocking the street.
Its retribution for so many Chicago winters.
The replacement tree died quickly.
You see, you must water a tree.
The second young tree,
A swamp oak, lives.

Fall leaves float downward, corkscrew, without momentum
Lit by an amber sun.
Being eight, she feels no loss.
She looks broadly across
Surveying the world from her tree.

A Lox Supreme, On Kaufman's Re-Opening

Life and fate like a smear of cream cheese

Kaufman's smoldering to ashes almost brought me to my knees.

I slipped a prayer into the western wall of the holiest of holies of Kosher style food

Not even a fluffy mazo ball to roll atop my bad mood.

A year later, I unfold my number in reverse origami

To behold a reassembled phalanx of hard salami.

Elbows on the counter, but respectful of the meat slicer, I see
all of the deli meats reacquainted with me.

From the super trim corned beef with no excess fat to unsettle

To the deckle cut, a cholesterol heavy metal.

With belly lox as salty as the ocean

I am swept away by a mustard seed love potion.

From the bakery, chocolate mandel bread like biscotti

Fine enough to be a pocket square for legendary John Gotti.

Baskets full of bagels; pumpernickel, sesame, poppy and plain,

Raspberry and apricot rugella, sponge cakes, and macaroons I cannot refrain.

A round challah for Shabbat as big as a cushion with raisins

An unsliced piece of heaven I had been craving.

Remembering from my childhood the tales of the beef tongue and the
smoked whitefish zayde

Renowned delicacies in the deli's heyday.

Time like a river of herring in white wine sauce

I can also remember the blue tattoos of the counter ladies who survived the holocaust.

But forget the past and fly with me on lox wings,

To sing of all of the joy which a sweetened tuna fish salad brings.

Today on Vacation

Wallace Stevens wears discreet boxers
and an "H" on his baseball cap for Harvard,
a sea bird gliding above the tumescence of Florida's beaches
who has driven, not flown, in a beige Buick
to Florida for Spring.

Ramon Fernandez, Stevens' friend, has relocated from the Florida Keys
And now designs Indian pottery with geometric designs in Arizona.

Lately promoted to the 21st century
Ramon brings us to the Lake of Underage Drinkers
in his sponsored speedboat.

We evoke the sirens who serenade back,
"What good is flashing your breasts to an also dead friend of a dead poet
and his companion?"

"Let the poetry go wild, then," I reply, and begin composing:

An announcement, no more announcements.
As the Garmin says, it is time to recalculate
To be out West (at least in sympathy)
To be born on a plateau,
To eat an expensive boxed lunch,
To find jobs in the service industry,
To find what remains of America, non-unionized, poorer,
Today on vacation.

From the standpoint of a fractured rim of earth
on a Grand Canyon causeway
beyond the railing
looking downward into the abyss
(Sometimes through glass)
To a river underneath
Rushing to its end.

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David Eingorn

lives and works in the Chicago suburbs where he negotiates between vocation and avocation, and hopes to sell tickets someday.



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