

NEW LIFE HAMLET CONSTRUCTION

by alina jacobs

three characters

a—a future lawyer, but here as a lecturer

x—a's cousin, but here a listener

y—a's other cousin, also in attendance

we are seminar seated, lit fluorescently; i wish there was a way for this to be less unpleasant for you, for all of us, wait and see, wait and see i suppose...

****alright**, maybe before all this happens we watch an 'informational' video, a video in which chess pieces move by themselves, a slideshow of faces appears, words are spoken without much context; this can be played on a loop at an audible but unobtrusive volume while the audience is coming in, as i don't want to waste anyone's time (beyond what could be called wasted already)

part one: global strategy

(lights stay on and do not move)

a: i want to apologize for the lighting in here; this is, or this could be, the first in a long line of things for which i could apologize, but, perhaps, you each could, now or whenever, list (as a verb), a grievance or two or three or however many and imagine me doing the apology for those; imagine my voice or a similar one or *(with modulation)* a completely different one, *(normal voice)* but let's not waste any more time we are here for a reason let's not forget the reason for being here; in a way we cannot say outright what precisely it is but we can hope to at one point estimate a description of our sensory experience of it; a semi-seminar in the vein of certain regime change greats, the names of which i will not deign to mention, indeed the listing of proper nouns has fallen out of fashion, though there was once a time, perhaps not so long ago, when all one needed to do to get a point across was to assemble a humble list (as a noun) of

words with capital letters, and lowercase ones too, but now of course that's insufficient and moreover rather trite and kind of gauche in a way, like congratulations, you need the names and the names are all that you need, like little trinkets with absolutely no practical use, while you walk around the buffet area, keen to sample your favorite flavors of historical calamity, and, perhaps, to make new favorites; anyway, now we know that we need no such things; either the names will speak themselves quietly in our brains such that we need not form our lips around their shape, or if they don't, then they won't; so, here we are, sitting, here, emerging from the ashes of policy, a global strategy—

(x and y come out of the audience; in a way they have much to say; in a way they have very little to offer; verywell now, let's keep going, it is the only way)

x: shot with the rays playing tricks in your mind conversions run rampant rampant conversion of sounds and images you get ditzie doing downs every person is a big gap in the foundation shot with the rays as to fill the cortex(t) with slurs slurs slurs slurs slurs slurs slurs my goodness what have i done where have i gone where did i wake up this morning where did i sleep last night the hand reached thru my brain again made me do things out of my control whilst i sleepwalked and drooled and nodded occasionally and even mouthed a word or two let out a sound that seemed to be a reasonable one in the moment and not until days weeks months later do i have even the slightest indication of this loss this loss of theoretical control if it did even happen if there was any evidence incontrovertible or otherwise plainly stapled to the wall; am i situated on the little red sailboat, blood on my lip...

y: made to be made to be made to function imagine what could be done you could even could try controlling my brain with a handheld device not unlike what do you call it that genre of the sega genesis the pee-s-pee the tamagoochi classic the color the color the color control my brain with a remote computer running a software program written yes written enscribed in its language by some throat gouting glasses acne pimple nobody on their lunch break in-between sips of chocky milk you could control my brain with a computer and i think that would turn me on not that you would hit the turn on button or enter such a command or rather you would not have to do that in order to i think just the tether the remote tethering it would and i mean it's i am so hopeless no

chance as the song goes man i haven't got a chance a nullifying throat option nullifying am made moribund schlocked entangled and stapled to my leash long or short long or short it doesn't matter

a: despite the fact we can all quack in unison, as though made up of butter or pâté, our tragedy unfolds as one that has played out, and whether done up as pekingese or mekongese or one more occidentalist, we all skate on the same glass lake, sniff from the same aspirant bottle, and despite the fact that we never really wear cloaks, especially not in this weather, and aren't even allowed to carry daggers, still we find ourselves in a country on the list, or not on the list, or recently added to the list, devising procedures for assessing the potential for internal war within national societies

x: patches on my forearms turning red whole left side becoming limp; aggro factcheckers scratching mercilessly under their sleeves whole territories of rotting flesh i turn to you and you have darkened blotches all over as though made to burn over a campfire; i open my mouth to urgently say something but nothing comes out; aggro factcheckers squirming in their chairs sweat pooling between the thighs tongues dry seizing keep scratching o keep scratching

y: we touched knees on the bus that's when it crossed into me we touched knees at such an angle and then everything became so fucking difficult if i could sing i would do one of those upbeat tragicomic lamentations as in a musical where she tells of all her unbecoming hardships with a terse smile on a pale lined face; we were sitting at a ninety degree angle on the bus and so our knees touched by accident and that's when that's when it all leaked into my mind the thoughts starting coming to intrude on my once peaceful orange marmalade bedspread of a field of mind; i was all smiles before our knees touched

x: we were one no two yes we were two not likely to be found anywhere and certainly not on the latest season of survivor (*pause*) yet i survived (*pause*) i chose to kill rather than to die (*pause*) and you—

a: anyone might say why is this happening presumably to just as well mean why is this happening to me which at that point one could only not help but point out it may just as well be happening as not happening as to say well why wouldn't it be happening, thus we are brought to a semi-conclusion: the why is fadingly relevant—as the sun sets, the why fades into nothing

y: my child might become overidentified with media and request body procedures or not not in the extremity of such but rather say request or even demand these cheaply made costumes made of polymers that will remain invisibly lodged within their skin and i will be instructed to give the costume to the school personnel to be the BACKUP in case of an ACCIDENT so my child can complete the rest of their day in school as their character; and as it comes to be known as we are made aware it is indeed true that such children prone to emotional sensitivity are more likely to encounter such bathroom accidents later and later into their schooling years and are more likely to overidentify with media characters in the first place

x: constructed memories passed by on a highway, you get a glimpse and then they are sublimed, simple as; fuzzy figures meant to induce a shock a type of coercion within; it seems like coercion is the name of the game, the word of the hour, word order patterns meant to striate your thoughts like pasta noodles

a: obliterated and cut down into a structure something that was, naturally, prefigured so long before it was recklessly absorbed into the general so soon after once having had the dream of being made specific; i cry out; you cry out; ok; enough of that now; i forgot about the sun i forgot about the aliens i forgot about the pope being beheaded with a flaming sword now even forgot about the year 2555 and 2268 and 2321

x: i'm always texting all my friends who all have birthdays for their births were resulted from you know what and they reassure me a joyous indeed satisfactory indeed flowcharted instance; i walk down an endless hallway as though in a dream and see sculptures of the parents of all my friends who all have birthdays locked within the irreversible moment of embrace that is their conception; frozen as statues in a mooseum

y: it could be that my spleen is full of rocks yes it is true that my spleen or maybe it's my appendix who can identify, my appendix is full of spiky gravel o what a great idea lets kneel on it let's kneel on the gravel yes let it cut slowly sting the dry skin around our knees a sort of ontology of pain; architecture of agony that brings itself into a kind of enjoyment ecstasy; clown hoarders that is to say clowns who hoard all the regular hoarder objects all the usual clown objects they are in the car all of them packed into the car outside my window, there is a crisis taking place there are arm in arm humans and cyborg whisperers; poisoned oysters i slurp i feel the bitterness of absence in my mouth or maybe it is an abscess

a: a youngin treated like sewage runoff, in a plant, an absence as to reappear days weeks later, de-raded and rosy, eyes glowing with a new fresh scent, much like the manufactured dew they now spray onto the playground foliage; say, mother, shall we visit the thrift store today? i have re-attained a great appreciation for physical objects, things that are not forbidden to me, i do not feel compelled to forbid myself from them, to undermine; she says, i've got my boy back, i've got my boy back, all those long years unable to clear my mind unable to clear my glaucomie eyes, i can see him, we can see each other now, without any defect

y (*choking somewhat*): maybe it is an abscess and my one relief is that i will die soon as to be redeemed from this nonstop calamity excess and crisis endeavors and whitefish substitutes and [??] substitutes and everyone a substitute and and and and

x: i went to the grocery store they were playing all the hits

y: i went to the grocery store they were playing all the hits

a: i went to the grocery store they were playing all the hits

y: eyes rolling up in a kind of ecstasy

x: amidst the smell of rotting vegetables

a: anyway so welcome to our global strategy workshop

y: oh god can we talk about anything else anything fucking else

(an extremely brief pause)

x: septum piercings gone wrong okay uh so he says i have global intentions oh right those again i say he says i have global intentions i say what are you our lady of f-fatima what he says you know i say i don't he says you know i say i do not he says alright so i try to collect as to at one point in the future maybe even just about *(slight pause)* now rec-collect; ah well you you've got these kids who are uh having a shared vision uh a couple visions actually and they're going days without drinking water in the summer in like PORTUGAL and when they do it's from the pool where people wash their dirty clothes and it's so hot and we're like so thirsty and we're trying to prevent nuclear war get everyone consecrated to the virgin's immaculate heart and—; i can guess it now he says now did i ever tell you about septum piercings gone terribly wrong? your septum? i ask, no not quite he says though it could have been mine abstractly or concretely but my friends and i always thought there was a direct connection between pierced septums and desiring anal penetration so i never did get one myself, do you never enjoy anal penetration i asked well he says it doesn't matter now but back then i didn't really know anything about the prostate and its capacity for well you know so i just would walk down the street in fear that something would get rammed up there i walked around just totally clenched for years and years and years— rammed how i asked you know i don't i said uh miscommunication misunderstanding of the signals would have been more likely with the mixed signal of the septum piercing

(an actual pause/lull/what have you)

a *(to x)*: thank you ☺

part two: the kids they have something to say

(weird silence, maybe a comforting visual shift, maybe we sit our asses down, look away at angles)

(a, x, and y speak the following section in chorus)*

when i

was

alone

i thought

i heard

unusual sounds

coming from

not sure

couldn't have been

downstairs

because

there is no downstairs

and couldn't have been

upstairs

for the same

reason

(slight pause)

'reason'

in her eternal decree

has thusly

figured

that decisively

the sound

is coming

from inside
me

(a moment we listen—nothin' much and you?)

and “‘reason’”
in her eternal stingy generosity
quite generously
suggested
that i listen
to the sounds
unusual
as they were
such that i had never
heard them previously—

(light romantic music, erik satie played by a midi machine, that's what he would have wanted)

torture devices
playing cards
enhanced interrogations
beep boop
counterinsurgency
advantageous resettlements
rural development
generalized secrecy
unassailable lies
the eternal quondam
infrastructure collapse
where you
are the infrastructure

we are
 waiting
 waiting for
 the sea
 to swallow us
 whole
 playing chess
 as we wait
 for the sun
 to swallow us
 whole

(quietly) space intentionally left blank ☺

part three: the kids they do their own thing

y: i am your friend a little girl who is actually thirty almost thirty your friiend and my quickest and dirtiest des eye yurr is to live in the mall that's right the mall the maaaaal you may remember it—beautiful caprisun coating over everything, silver and white sheen, eighties music without any lyrics, you won't like what they're converting the old malls into, in fact it's really quite sad so let's stop talking about it—okay alright okay—one: to be reborn clean or to be innocent of being able to tell the difference, two: to escape into an eternal default, three: to gauge a standard gauge, four: to approach sublime shades of light blue and/or violet, five: to arrive at an intersection of extremely intense speeds, six: to have infinity children, among them: plaza, gumball machine, burbry, temerity, hysterectomy... *(trails off nostalgically)*

a: okay soo i tricked myself and underwent a couple types of procedures—some of them, legal!—and now i smoke reefer at home and begin to cement my affiliations, mostly with television characters, children's, adults', etcetera, these affiliations have really gotten out of hand, out of pocket, and when i go to sleep i square off against literal demons from hell; you know what i mean; obviously our timeline has ceased to provide us this day our daily

verisimilitude and so in the quondam, soda speak, that's where i was born, now i drink my coffee on an airplane, streak of salmonella on the edge of the cup, o i can imagine them now, a'jumping upstream; they all talk about me in hushed whispers, bitch of the two sorrows, in co-hoots with the jesuits and the opus dei they all talk about me in hushed whispers i guess or maybe all speech just kind of sounds like that now

x: there was in a way a machine element of concentrated virtue in the blueberry eyes and bow leggy gait—she was kind of an everything to me in her own way—all endlessly renewing itself alike to moombeam—anything was possible you see, we'd never perish in those waters no matter how yikes or balmy—she was kind of everything to us so we thought it less than chumchange to kill and maim in her name, and commence projects of subber fugue and as everyone knows once you start you can never stop—i think she might have been the angel wing of history, not to be confused with the angel wing of time, though she was that too

a: okay soo i came back it was a crazy time in exile sort of kind of anyway so i come back once shit has already popped off it's a kind of do you remember me moment or for the ones who do remember a kind of did you miss me moment; wearing my cool specs, spirit of '56 tee shirt, ambling by with a song on my lips or otherwise not too far behind, humming in the key of insignificance, that song that's always on my lips, the song that has a symbolic number of verses, each representing a bullet point of my point program; we have songs, and we have uniforms; if we don't have uniforms we usually still have the songs

x: i heard the sound and hallucinated the fundamental; i gave away the object permissions and the location tiles; i guessed passwords i offered educated guesses and changed certain passwords in order to lock others out of account access; i needed her love because she was the co-mediatrix of going anywhere and i wanted to go without going, move without moving, the alert sounded and i hallucinated the fundamental, comprising a partial chord in the endless song of air conditioning

y: here is the paradigm of air conditioning: that which opens up a new way of life you could never have known before that it was the only way to live and so life without it becomes an

unbearable obligatory occasion where we soggy up fake dollar bills even though real ones would have served us better and place them on our foreheads to relieve the ungainly perspiration and our barely repressible incidents of rage

part four: grievance program

a: this part is the grievance program—is there anything you’d like to bring attention to?
(no answer, a bit of flustration) is there anything to which you’d like to bring attention?

y: i heard you the first time

x: i don’t really understand the question

a: do you have any grievances any buried resentments any potholes in the road you need filled anyone who is spreading vicious lies about you and needs their tongue cut out (metaphorically that is)

y: not really

x: me neither

a: or any information? *(again no answer)* well think about it; we all have a role to play it is just unknown as of yet it’s hiding its face

(slight pause)

x: i guess i would have liked a seat cushion

y: i think everyone wants a seat cushion

[brief interlude]

(a card is read by an audience member; or, the following text is projected)

resolutely kill the pacification team members and boycott the new life hamlets. the pacifiers are the number one enemies of our people. they carry out the orders of the american imperialists and their lackeys, actively implement their schemes of terrorizing, attacking, and destroying villages and hamlets, and of conducting pacification programs that force the people into the so-called "new life hamlets," which are just a disguised form of the diem-nhu regime's old strategic hamlets, and are in fact prison camps. their objective is to steal our population, steal our resources, prolong the war of aggression, and murder our compatriots

resolutely combat the enemy to protect yourselves and to protect the lives and the property of our compatriots. every citizen should do everything he or she can to resolutely resist letting the enemy quarter soldiers in their homes. in addition, our people should dig solid bunkers to protect themselves from the bombs and shells of the american pirates.

military committee

rach gia province

part five: ?? a miracle ??

a: okay thanks, very many absolute thanks for listening to all that bullshit; now, back to what we all came here for—the sun!

x: what will it do

y: how will it present itself to us

x: in a way

y: differing from the ways we've seen it before a million times

x: will it—

y: turn

x: as to be like a bouncy ball

y: spin really fast

a: or perhaps it will be us who are spinning really fast

y: will it turn

x: pale and grey

y: like an overboiled egg yolk

x: will it go poof and disappear

y:... and then return after an appointed amount of time

a: lúcia

x: francisco

y: jacinta

a: i said there was no point to names anymore but indeed some names are only recognizable by their absence and their presence equates to just laying your fist down on the space bar, soda speak

x: ideas come to shatter at the feet of reellife

y: the virgin mary

a: although we did not know who she was at the time didn't know for sure couldn't know for sure but really who else could it be

x: the thirteenth of every month

y: eyes stinging

x: she was draped in pure light

a: stars on the water lines of her eyes

y: not only are we under siege the sun has hidden its handsome smile

x: so we gotta get down and beg

y: begging for the sun

x: everyone is huddled and waiting

a: we have gathered you here today for a serious situational reflexivity encounter; this is the event for some of you who may not be aware as none of you can relate to experiencing the event though some of you can relate towards waiting for that which is always on the precipice

y: and all this was foretold so

x: and as you can see, we're telling you

a: some of you can relate towards waiting for that which will at last render extremely profound everything we do, whereupon even seemingly mundane actions will take on great significance, and semantics will finally mean something, if that makes any sense

(sounds start at a low level and progressively rise)

x: we are just kids though just little kiddie kids i don't know any country capitals, i don't know what percent of gee dee pee is accounted for by grain exports, i have never operated a weather machine; but you know who has? the holy spirit

a: in fatima, we skip the line in the hopscotch of millenarianism, with marianism, we eschew the chalk schematic of endless waiting in line, of course we still gotta wait we are just living in sped up time (click the gear icon on the right to adjust playback settings)

x: one encounters entire worlds defined by waiting in line

y: regarding the ostensible irrelevance of village life—the humblest of villages can become the most special through happy or tragic accidents, while you rot in new york city, us kids are having worldchanging spectral encounters, while you choke and seethe in washington dc

a: you see, the sun will come to resemble something different though perhaps not wholly transmogrified; it will be a half-familiar sun and we've even removed the clouds so as to have a better visual palette, with minimal obstructions

y: and shortly thereafter

x: found covered in orange dirt, lying on the ground dead after confessing all my sins

a: but before that

x: guys we are going to stop world war guys guys guys the atom will never be split, the trenches will be filled in with sand and we will play in the global sandbox of christ's love

a: and shortly thereafter

y: pleurisy operations in an industrial death chamber with lofty high ceilings, everyone kissing my tiny tiny hands

a: but before that—

(a genuine coup de théâtre followed by a relatively hasty, bathetic reversal)*

a: but let's face facts insofar as you very well might be having an even more intense vision as to lose eyesight, consciousness, etc, and miss whatever's going on with the sun

part six: the kids they have a bit more to say

(the seminar continues, at this point it is rather hopeless to go back...)

a: sooo the next presentation was based on some very special documents i found at the home of an aging WASP near alexandria (not egypt!) just given to me for no understandable reason, fallen into my lap, as it were, but to the surprise of no one i showed myself to be stupid in a keen keen way, my precious lede buried, oh no! my precious lede!—i screwed the lid on my hydro flask too loose and there was dreadful embarrassing damage and then the mold set in as it invariably does, no use in extracting any information from these documents, so i apologize for this lapse of human endeavor, however it is rather hopeless to go back at this point, bear with us here

*potential coupes de théâtre: the spraying of particulate matter into the air, the revealing a great stash of hoarded objects, a removal of a (prosthetic) body part, turning mirrors onto the audience, revealing a surprising number of people from a container under the audience, levitation a few inches off the ground etc

y: sometimes i live in the country, sometimes i live in the town, sometimes i live at the intersection of a seven lane highway, sometimes i live in the kitchen sink, sometimes i live in hell, sometimes i live in the province interrogation center, sometimes i have milk for brains, sometimes my words are butter and cheese; i used to live in the mall now i am content to live in a chinese takeout box, i fold the folds over m'head as i lay me down t'sleep

a: it's rather hopeless to go back at this point; some of the bodies were, you know, found, without skin; some say this might be because the accords were never signed maybe because the accords were in fact not very accordant you know not at all one could even call them DIScordant that is in the manner in which in which they were how do you say designed such that effectively they were in fact unsignable i i i mean—here's a picture of the man who wouldn't sign the accords (*projector malfunction*) okay sorry it's not working right now someone is maybe gonna come fix that later—if i may— let's go back to the beginning—the quondam that is—if i may

y: you know some of these bodies were found without skin, in case you forgot! i mean really in case i forgot! it's kind of warm in here which can make the average body very sleepy and also there's that sort of dull pounding in the ears which just you know could be making you liable to forget words beyond the kind of incessant whine—and it really does sound like that when you 'oh please' kind of shit like who are you talking to?? weee demand a springtime of human interest, we demand an uptick of investment in our interior lives, we demand a rapid response with appropriate accompanying eeeemoooojiiis we demand a good story we looove a good stooooory is what you fucking sound like sometimes

x: that wasn't me talking; so the skin thing it's a bit of a dynamic because you have an array of folk creatures in basically every culture it's a bit of a universal phenomenon actually and there's quite a rich history of vampiric entities and other scary guys hanging around and you know it would kind of be sort of a trick a rather cheap form of the theatrical spectacle to assassinate someone and leave some sort of mark of the spirit world on their corpse, for instance the draining of blood or the removal of the umm pineal gland— because the real target the real target is well not just any one guy it's everyone and furthermore the everyone sense of an everyone...

a: if i may, a message to the quondam from the future: friends, lovers, countrymen, the future has become uninvolved, not much worth occurring occurred to me, and between lurid counterfactuals and bitter lies we successfully inveigled the humanitarians out of their lunchboxes, if you know what i mean; counterflexing in the age of disembodiment, in the dry-ice age of upturned noses at the reveal of 'state secrets'; you leaked a video and no one cared, confluences that shouldn't exist were proven more or less beyond a preponderance of the evidence to exist and everyone shut their eyes and declared confluence an outdated social convention, far less interesting than the weather report

y: and there's this feeling that something is always transpiring or rather i am told that it transpires, whilst i figure myself to be a speck of dust sticking to the cornea and i watch myself like in a how do you call it, 90s vee hech ess and i'm either trapped watching or trapped within the tape itself and sort of murmuring I'M NOT SURE WHAT I'M SUPPOSED TO BE SEEING HERE I'M NOT SURE WHAT I'M MEANT TO BE LOOKING AT HERE

x: everyone got imaged and the frame of reference got into me endocrinely, we were all raised on a diet, insulentine, insolubles, sweet sweet bread, good morning rods good morning cones, good morning jelly; i find the spaces in between my fingers, i find them everywhere, there is an ache that never subsides because it springs from within the sweet bread, the light entered me endocrinely and there went my frame of reference basically, even if it's not real in the usual sense i still don't like it, even if it was invoked by sticky or stretchy or otherwise hyper-deliberated means, even if it's been sugar-adjusted as to not cause flare-ups, i am still not sure if i like it anymore; that which enters through my eyes regulates me endocrinely

y: i buried myself in the form of compost in the yard, i longed to live in the mall now i long to lie with the compost; this is where i have discovered the demonic that which lives in the immediate vicinity

part seven: the kids they just remembered something else

(a brief interlude announced by a comforting visual shift)

(a, x, and y speak the following section in chorus)*

o i die

horatio

this

(pause) shit

i cannot

live

to hear

the news

from [redacted]

(kinda fast) but i do prophesy the election lights on fortinbras he has my dying voice so tell him
with th' occurents more and less which have solicited the rest is

(normal speed) we built the mall the mall is ours

we received

instruction

pope and antipope

we built

all this

competitive infrastructure

on the condition

that

we promise never to use it

how luckily

and fortunate

the one

whose

interests

were maintained and left intact

[another brief interlude]

(a card is read by an audience member; or, the following text is projected)

ONE OBJECTIVE OF THE NEW LIFE HAMLETS IS TO BUILD A NEW SPIRIT

that is the spirit of unity to create a community force, openness that leads to mutual understanding, morals that heighten the virtues of humanity, integrity, civility, intelligence and trustworthiness, nationalism to preserve the nation's qualities, a scientific mind for advancement, and responsibility to utilize the rights of citizenship.

ONE OBJECTIVE OF THE NEW LIFE HAMLETS IS TO ERADICATE UNDERGROUND COMMUNISTS

a factor that brings about victory over the communists is to separate them from the people through tracking down the communist grass-roots structure until their complete destruction.

ONE OBJECTIVE OF THE NEW LIFE HAMLETS IS TO COMBAT DISEASE

to provide guidance in the maintenance of public and family sanitation

to provide facilities to help prevent and cure diseases

to counter superstitious treatment of patients

ONE OBJECTIVE OF THE NEW LIFE HAMLETS IS TO ORGANIZE THE PEOPLE TO ENGAGE IN THE ANTI-COMMUNIST STRUGGLE

motivate the people to organize combat hamlets to maintain security so that people can build and enjoy their new bright life.

part eight: word pairs

(the seminar continues, at this point it is rather hopeless to go back...)

a: still it's rather hopeless to go back at this point; some of you maybe saw the informational video, just a few moments ago, even if it feels like a lifetime; please raise your hands if you saw

it (*a few people, including x and y raise their hands*) ok great so let's recall what we learned
WHAT do we remember? (*a bit of a pause*)

x: i remember word pairs

a: okay well it's very simple, we are trying to learn how to effectively recall what we learned and when this is over we will hold hands and reconcile everything

y: i would do anything to become that

x: i would do anything to become that

a: okay consented?

y: consented

x: consented

a: great well everything is on record so you don't even have to sign anything; i will say a word as appearing within our introductory video and you will tell me the corresponding other word and if you fail there will be some notion of discipline, and we're not going to start off small and move up incrementally, that would really defeat the point, so—

(*a whispers something into x's ear and then into y's ear*)

x: i would do anything to not become that!

a: okay so you get it (*pause, takes out a card, reads off card*) old

x: bird

a: correct!! white

y: man

a: correct!!

(we continue on like this, shake and tremble and blanch with fear, maybe fall to knees at moments, we are correct every time, nearly attaining a type of ecstasy)

(also i guess, we do in fact hold hands, reconcile everything, sing a little song with a symbolic number of verses maybe?)

part nine: global strategy (revisited)

x: take some time off your soulsearing fake job to attend mouth camp a camp for the mouth the reverse anus if you will the reverser hole suck forward and out; i could never move past my mouth, see the hysterical vomiting, mealtime invectives, excessive brushing of the teeth, inability to whistle *(attempts)* it is still quite hard

a: thanks are in order for the beneficence of that adroitness of the manner in which we were killed, no stalling, no opportunity to stall, to tarry, tarrying with hopes is the number one predictor of experiencing mental drawbacks in this country and presumably all countries, as presumably the whole species has a congruous mind; standing in the bus lane gives us the legal right to rig your car with explosives and detonate it after a quick deliberation; rights to force, adjudication, and so on; standing means when you are sitting in your car, assuming 'you' are the driver, without moving, or moving at a speed too slow for our standards of perceptibility, wind whistling under the pedal; we rig the bottom of the car with explosives as to use a remote quick click speed click magic wand and so on; this is what a goal-people-time and efficiency oriented society looks like

x: it's raining it's pouring

y: it's raining it's pouring

x: we are boring holes in our jeans

y: that's m'joy that's m'pleasure

a: this is what a society based on joy looks like; not everything needs to be strictly transactional

y: if you happen to hear from me i'm probably asking for a favor—

x: shot with the rays to finally see the reflected self it really went all the way through like an irresistible tooth pick or piece of floss it only makes sense as we cannot be made to be children again we cannot even relive what we once lived

y: i am absolved from all my memories each a puzzle piece locked together with craft glue; i was cut a little i was burned a little and in an instant evaporated wiped brusquely dipped in vitriolic chemical ducking down to check my work email it's always there it's always there

a: soon we will all be drenched in liquid from the sprayer

y: there were things that i remember and things that i was told, things that i remember and forcible remembrances that were made to me, things that i remember and things that i made myself forget, things that i remember and things of which i cannot conceive; remembering the things now that are finished; my teeth become the couch and and and and

x: a girl sits at a banquet table; she's a very very good kid and she knows to eat everything put in front of her; this is what she eats, a dozen raw eggs, hot honey turkey sandwich, rare truffles plucked from a well of despair, canvas fabric softened with safflower oil, a consommé made from endangered birds, a lithium ion battery

y: *(in the throes of a choking fit)* no but not me if you need me i'll be knitting my own shroud

(a diffuses the tension in a great display of human responsibility)

a: ok ok ok ok yes *(significant pause)* so as you might have expected by now i did write this like it was *(gestures)* written *(pause)* and *(gestures to x)* as well as *(gestures to y)* over there are not paying audience members like yourselves but actually my cousins from back home; you see i couldn't be helped, it just kind of happened, it was kind of a help me to help myself situation, and ultimately none of this was much of a threat or encumbrance to any of your *(gestures vaguely to the audience)* parasitic ways of life—i mean our parasitic way of life— and it's true because if it were if it were a threat i'd be dead and i'm not dead you know? and there's this absurd aspect to all this critical pretending, what sides are we on what sides uh, putting on all these voices naturally causes eventual strain as do all methods of extended pretending; i was a former child chess grandmaster, or was getting there anyway, prodigiously in fact, but gradually all the colors you know the colors they just got away from me as it were faded into one another some kind of disconnect between the eyes and the brain, the squares the pieces came to look the same, so it became very hard to begin a match never mind the endgames it was too hard i had to resign i came to be totally resigned; perhaps you're aware of this exercise, where you can focus on trying to visualize the endgames in your mind, form the board in the nondimensional space of your mind—even if i could perfectly think out the positions, speak the coordinates to myself—on the real board it remained impossible—there is as you may be aware an inexplicable tendency for the perfectly rendered model to fail to materialize in practice and we have no idea why this is, not even the computer knows why; anyway let's not succumb to determinism, after all god chose to inject chaos into our otherwise discretely logical, orderly, world for a reason, to keep things ... flavorful

(x and y retreat into nowhere, or the entrance which you came in through, or a completely different one)

a: and it was really nice to see everyone even if just for a moment it's just—ok now ok now so; one last small little tiny request, i don't remember if i outright requested anything so i'm

including all the implicit unspoken requests, dim these lights oh god; it was nice to see everyone
but god if you weren't in total agony initially you would be now and o god flash photography
(shrinks into a more pathetic version of their self) every crack every pore illuminated in such rare
violence...

(quietly mouths the word 'sorry')

END