

UNDER
THE
SUMMER

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Let the writer take up surgery or bricklaying if he is interested in technique. There is no mechanical way to get the writing done, no shortcut. The young writer would be a fool to follow a theory. Teach yourself by your own mistakes; people learn only by error. The good artist believes that nobody is good enough to give him advice. He has supreme vanity. No matter how much he admires the old writer, he wants to beat him.

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For Jasper Baydala

Wanting to write but not knowing what to write. Wanting to think or do or see but not knowing what to think or do or see. That's fine. The problem is when you want to know but you do not know what to know. That is stage three. Stage one is knowing something, stage two is wanting to know something, and stage three is wanting to know what you want to know. This is about that.

The worst is being in San Francisco in a Mexican café on a foggy day holding a pen and having paper in front of you. It is embarrassing. It is just the city you would expect to see it in. Through a dirty glass window while walking down Valencia Street you catch the eye of a handsome young man and that handsome young man is me. The thing to do would be to always carry an atlas and a history textbook around so that you could put on that you were working on an essay, not writing on your own accord, because writing on your own accord is bad. It is a bad thing to see, especially in a city like this. I feel bad. People going by outside. People behind me in the café. If I were them I would write me off.

The street is full of young people and people with Spanish blood. The young people are in blue jeans and long shirts and sunglasses and nice shoes. The Spanish blood is slow walking, dark faces and clothes, not so young. I am not so interested in what is in their minds as I am interested in why I am interested in what is in their minds. A man and a woman walk slowly down

the sidewalk close together but not touching and not talking. Their little white dog walks ahead on a slack leash. The man is thinking about what he will have for dinner and the woman is thinking about her aunt who arrives tomorrow. Neither the man nor the woman are thinking or have ever thought about me. If this book were interesting and important they might read it and remember my name and then think about me on dog walks instead of thinking about dinner and aunts. I am more interesting than dinner and aunts. I am thinking about how best to convince people that I am worth thinking about. Little white dog's tongue is out. Somebody behind me is talking about dinner, about meat.

A lace ripped in my boot so I tied the ends back together, now I have a brown knot. The knot is proof that there is nothing wrong with my being in San Francisco. I am here for the wrong reasons but you would not know it - because of the brown knot. I might even live here. I came down on my motorcycle on highway 101 through Astoria and Lincoln City and Gold Beach and wherever else. I want not only to go everywhere that there is to go, but also to win and to beat everybody. By being young and going alone on a motorcycle and then drawing my route onto a map I am winning. I am beating other young people. The world is a planet, the one who has seen more planet is the one who knows more world. In conversation it is the person who has been to the most places who has the upper hand. Being a good person has to do with how many lines that there are on your map. My map is covered in lines. One day all of the lines will meet up and my map will be black.

Fumbling around in circles alone with my shoulders

up. Up Mission Street, down Market Street, back and forth on Valencia Street. A heavy book in my pocket makes me feel I am dying of cancer but it makes me feel glad that I am. In the big windy park where everybody goes I try not to think about the girl, Fireball, who recommended me the book. She had a good face and she was better than me. Everything that I said to her was not worth saying. She was older. She was tall and blonde and strong. She was dressed all in black and she wore a small black hat set far back on her head, she had a long face and she talked to everybody in the room, moving quickly between the different groups, always standing. She was moving so quickly. I told Kathryn McCaughey that the blonde one was a fireball. It was Kathryn McCaughey who introduced me to Fireball. That was bad enough because I had made the trip to San Francisco for Kathryn McCaughey and now she was giving me, or trying to give me, the Fireball. So Fireball said HM and two days later in the park the book is in my pocket heavy and cancerous.

But I don't want a story, or anything, I want to mention only about the problems that come with worrying about thinking about what to think. Everybody says 'I have something I would like to say but I don't know how to say it', what they mean is 'I want to know once and for all how I am supposed to feel about thinking about my thoughts so that all three stages will collapse into one'. If you think hard enough about what it means to think about thinking you will notice there is no difference between it and not thinking at all. It goes all the way around. People born incapable of thinking are the heroes of people who think a lot. En-

lightenment is when you stop thinking. So I sat in the park and thought about how I felt about Fireball. I thought I would have to forget her, but then I thought that feeling over and saw that it was not based on anything, and who would read three hundred and eighteen pages of something cancerous and then recommend it to a stranger, so maybe I can beat Fireball. When I called her she told me about a cruise ship to Mexico with a man and his parents and she told me about her career in singing. I sat in the park and read more of the cancerous book and on page ninety-eight it read 'on whatever crumb my eye fastens, I will pounce and devour'.

My motorcycle is out in front of Kathryn McCaughey's older man's apartment where I am scared to go near. Down the coast on the highway, through the rain, I imagined her and myself together and me saving her from her strange dark problems. But Brian M and her are sleeping in a bed less than fifty feet from my motorcycle. Me sleeping in the downtown Tenderloin. Kathryn McCaughey fits in; she looks like she might be Spanish. She is half Indonesian and half Irish. She is very confident about things. Her eyes are black and so are her clothes. She has big lips that she moves with her fingers at a coffee shop, a nightmare.

Drinking wine out of a brown bag in an alleyway in San Francisco, discussing the most effective way to discuss how to discuss. Me saying frankly that I came to San Francisco for her, her saying that it worked, that she will leave with me to anywhere, that we should kiss, that we should get it over with. Looking at me, holding the wine, black eyes, I bring up the question of what it means to want to have a first kiss over with.

We discuss it and finish the wine and I go back to the Tenderloin and she goes past my motorcycle and up the steps to Brian M's Apartment on Bryant Street.

In Vancouver, Benjamin is swinging his hammer away, calling me about the book about Feasts and the places in it, he should be calling me about our original Mississippi plan. It is my fault because I told him to read it. I suspect that the Feast is long over with in Paris but I don't tell him. I suspect that even if it ever was that way He probably made it seem even nicer than it was, anyways, all things change over time. Probably not much different than Main Street in Vancouver is now, if you just give it time for the best parts to get carried away in people's imaginations and for the bad and ugly parts to become romantic and old fashioned. Vancouver now has all the makings of a Feast, time will do it. Time will even do these words. Time does most things. Benjamin's Vancouver hammer swinging job and late Paris dreams. Same thing for San Francisco, it has been used up, dried up, they took it with them when they left, or else it was never here at all. Just as Vancouver is not here yet but will be much later on and somebody somewhere will read a book and put down their hammer and call their friend and want to go, too late. Time. Searching is important, you might find something new that nobody knows about yet. When something is good, and if it is recorded, and if that recording reaches somebody in the future, then the goodness will be magnified. It tricks people into chasing things that no longer exist, sometimes while they are chasing invisible things they go right over things that are very real and very good. Benjamin knows all of that though. I just want

to go down the Mississippi with him.

I am going from Kathryn McCaughey and Brian M's apartment towards Fireball's studio on Seventeenth Avenue. I am thinking that Brian M is strange, he uses slang terms and curse words in conversation - but he can still speak. I am talking to Fireball on a phone in front of Kathryn McCaughey and I am hoping that it makes her think. As I leave I even wish Brian M good luck. Fireball is older than me and she is a better thinker than me. She has a roommate named Brittney Paris. Brittney Paris is a painter, like Fireball, both of them with degrees. Poor me trying to show off with motorcycles and African stories, telling Tibetan stories, wanting to win. They give me wine and bring up the dictionary and I say that nonfiction is still fiction because all people have imaginations, but then I say that I don't like dictionaries because the definitions of words inside of them are very different than my own definitions of words. Fireball laughs and says that she will have to write that down. I am thinking that it is strange I ran into Fireball, a good thinker, when my dream is to find people who do not think, people who I can trick or learn how to trick. Fireball and Brittney Paris - Philadelphia painters with long hair and degrees.

Overcast, looking out from the fourth floor reference section of the San Francisco public library. Snakes in my eyes are a constant reminder that I am seeing, that I am using my vision; the snakes always come when it is cloudy. I have the strongest urge to leave San Francisco, but I won't. The wine that I drank last night not only put words into my mouth but also words into this book, words that I regret. In the morning I go over all

of the things that I did wrong and right in the day previous and I always feel badly about the wrong things. I then promise myself that I won't do any more wrong things. I think about learning how to think more effectively. Wind and clouds and a big sweater and a big coat and cold arms in the beginning of July in this city, and the snakes. In need of that feeling that you get every so often, when there is a trough and after the trough there is that thing that comes after troughs. I sat in the library thinking about how to think. July First Two Thousand Nine, Fulton and Larkin, Sitting by the window thinking about thinking and writing this all with a Pilot Easy Touch 'Fine' into a 'Penway composition book' – ruled – 9.75 inches x 7.5 inches – 100 sheets. And by writing about thinking about how to think I am at stage three, since writing is a type of thinking as well.

Kathryn McCaughey in a bed with Brian M in an apartment on Bryant and Twenty-second, my motorcycle she can see from the bed out the window. She will not call me until five in the afternoon. Rick Blaine seems fine walking off with Louis Renault into that fog on the runway, and it is foggy enough here. Since I have a motorcycle I can be confident about things, that is unless the other person also has a motorcycle. I like to make lists of why I am better and more interesting than everybody else; my motorcycle is on the list. It is a bad exercise, but it makes you feel good. It is strange that Kathryn McCaughey is not obsessed with me. Last night before I left to go to Fireball's studio Kathryn McCaughey said: 'I like it when a person throws themselves at me wholly in utter fascination and disbelief of my mental capacity'. We were talking

about being mean and cold and mysterious, and how important chasing is on this continent. Kathryn McCaughey will never surrender and neither will I. We are both conceited and we both believe that it is important to be. If your book is not good that is probably because you don't think it is good.

Brittney Paris is painting; she has a wide Greek face and curled black hair. She is suspicious of me from her workbench on the far side of the studio. The painting in front of her is not very good. Fireball is on a couch talking about surfing. She says:

“Have you tried surfing? It's so fun.”

I don't know what she is talking about.

“Do you wear a hood when you surf?”

I tell her what a hood is.

“No, but I wear a wetsuit.”

Wetsuits go against what surfing is, from what I have heard.

“I don't believe in surfing in a wetsuit.”

The conversation ends.

Fireball is eating wafers with dark chocolate tops. Their apartment is one room and it is full of instruments; a piano that you can see the strings and hammers of, two guitars, a lot of keyboards, and a rusty trumpet hanging from a nail. When Fireball filled my cup with wine she told me that it was Californian Syrah, she told a story about living with a grape growing uncle, the bottle had cost three dollars at the supermarket. To me it tasted like wine but to her there was something more.

Where I can I will mention names, first and last, street names, hotel names and town names, it is on the off chance that as time passes one of the names might

grow and drag this book along with it. When I say Benjamin and his hammer and the Mississippi River I mean Benjamin Marvin, a photographer. Together we went down Vietnam and we also were in Europe. We rode bicycles in France together. Since then he has purchased a hammer to make money with and a 500 C/M to take pictures with. We were going to go down to the end of the Mississippi river and see what is there and then try to capture it. Now he is talking about going to Paris in the twenties, which is impossible. When we were in Paris we lived in Chinatown in a very small hotel, we never went to the Louvre, we missed Montparnasse, it was good and I wouldn't want it to have been any other way. He also wants to stop in New York City in the fifties, but fifty-nine years have passed and everybody lives in Brooklyn now, everybody has a computer. In Two Thousand Fifty-Six - young people dreaming about Vancouver.

Kathryn McCaughey calls:

“How was your night with Fireball?”

“Good, I think we have become friends.”

“What are you doing now? Want to go to Haight-Ashbury?”

It is strange that she suggests going there as I am going on, holding my pen, about Montparnasse. Sitting in a chain coffee shop on Grant and Bush. Chain coffee shops are havens where you don't have to worry about what you look like when you are writing. Fireball calls.

“Want to go and find something to eat?”

“Yes, I will call you when I am back down.”

Even though Kathryn McCaughey is already on her way to meet me here, at the chain coffee shop on

Grant and Bush. As it is happening. Maybe this should be an essay and maybe I need a thesis and every page and point should be made to support that thesis.

I am confused and young and my boots are brown and made of leather. My legs are thin and I wear thin pants. I have a grey and white flecked wool sweater under a dark green hunting coat. My pockets are all full. Cigarettes, the cancerous book and a book about Carraway, a journal, four pens, half a stick of pepperoni, a passport, lip chap, money and a driver's license. That is all that I brought to San Francisco. My hair is short and light, brushed to one side. My eyebrows are normal but my eyes are big and blue. The rest of my face is handsome. I have a good face, a good head, it can do many things, it looks innocent, that is how I try to keep it. I talk about it because it must be part of the story. Reading what is above I think about writing the names of the books, that is how it is written on paper, but I will change the names of the books because this is a book too. I am tempted now to write that I had different books in my pockets.

But there are rules, always. Problems with conversation. Never tell the same story twice, no matter how good it is. You can mention the time you were lost in San Jose more than once, but you have to mention a different aspect of it each time. It is not only dangerous socially to keep telling the same stories, it is bad for all of your other memories, it is bad for your whole San Jose experience. What is even worse is if something happens in the morning, such as that you saw a snake, and then every time that day when a conversation lulls you bring up the snake. It is bad because if you say that you saw a snake you are bound

to be asked questions about it. The bad part comes when you answer those questions and have already answered them to somebody else. It is all already arranged and you know what to say because you have already said it.

Met with Fireball. Her eyes are strange. One eye looks in a slightly different direction than the other. I saw Brittney Paris as well. Also I saw Kathryn McCaughey and Brian M. Brian M's hair is gray which I thought was him deciding to look older, but he told me that it was natural. I played their guitar and sang some songs for Fireball on the curb. We drank brandy with butter and hot water in their studio. Too much butter. Kathryn McCaughey left and Brittney Paris went to sleep. I was alone and drinking with Fireball and that one eye, but she has a good face and I told her that if you are conceited you can become very famous; I told her that it was something I was working on in a book. She became drunk and so did I. She is five years older than me with a degree in a plaque on a wall, she had a story about a special thing at Ivy League schools that only the best can take part in. She put her arm around me on the dark steps of the studio, where we were sitting. The sun began to rise. There was nobody on the streets and it was very quiet. I shook her arm off.

Waking up on the couch in the studio, eating Fireball's cornmeal pancakes and her salsa that she made from scratch, and black coffee. Listening to Brittney Paris talking about New Orleans, impersonating old black woman on porches, what they said to her when she was there, how friendly and funny they all were. I can picture it as I eat a second plate of pancakes. My

head is aching and still is now. Thinking about talking about the past but also mentioning that I am in a chain coffee shop in a chain bookstore on the top floor of Westfield mall, by the movie theater, San Francisco, California. The pancakes were two hours ago. The stories about New Orleans were two hours ago. The black couple discussing home decoration in front of a stack of home decoration magazines, and using that dialect that they use, that is happening now.

“Get Japanese wid’ it.”

“Yo, damn, we bomben’.”

I am listening to them and writing exactly what they are saying. But you can be selective about what you write; it is hard to mention things that are very new.

“I think damn, yeah, like a Freda Kahlo kitchen!”

“Killen’ um son, curtains ridiculous, now you talk-en’.”

What motivates people to make or write or do anything. Or to sing or act. I am writing this book because I want to be famous and to have a lot of money, famous so that I could do whatever I want and rich so that I could buy whatever I want. Other people have similar reasons for doing what they do. Not sure why some people get what they want and others don't. Being conceited has to do with it. Probably why most very famous people are conceited, it is what got them there. So when I read Kathryn McCaughey what I have so far, a page while sitting in Deloris Park, I expect her to praise me afterwards, but she does not listen and even if she had been listening I realized that all of the best sentences are from after we left the park. Every sentence is better than the sentence previous. This is why good book writers have gray hair. Though gray haired

book writers are generally not very famous or very rich and even if they were they would be too old for it. I waited again in the public library, in the same chair, for Kathryn McCaughey to call. I waited so long that I am waiting now. I found a large book named 'The Contest of Meaning', which seems appropriate – have not opened it yet. Remembering a conversation I had with Kathryn McCaughey while walking down Market Street, cars and busses going by in the fog – lots of people out on the sidewalks – very few white people. I was arguing that good books are long and have good titles and are written by good people and that's all. She was arguing that they need good ideas in them as well. That is true but if the author is patient and writes enough sentences in a row he is bound to stumble across something, even by accident. Bad things are good too. If I open 'The Contest of Meaning' to a random page the first thing that I see is:

“Certainly the competitive capitalist system encourages news reporting that resembles sensationalized entertainment.”

I am sure that it is a meaningful sentence, though it was not actually the first thing that I saw, the first thing I saw was:

“Page 298/299.”

My mother calls from Calgary but I am in the library so I can't talk. She told me yesterday that it was time to go. Spending her money, no job, no life, she said, in an understandable way. The sun is out and people are in thin shirts. Green leaves, the big gold dome of city hall. A bronze statue of a man with a shield and a spear. A good high angle from my desk in the library. Clean roads. Hoping I wrote clean roads in a way that

students will some day be forced to interpret them, clean roads. My clean roads. Only a few blocks from here the roads are cracked and littered. So close to city hall, gold dome, clean roads. Feeling like everybody is the same and my thoughts are also your thoughts. About 'The Contest of Meaning', which is a misleading title for a book about lesbians and photography. Or maybe it is not a misleading title; the title is the best part. The other book on my desk is good so I can't say the title. The words under my finger on a page that I randomly open read:

"Most of all, it has dutifully worked within the precepts of a time which demands that its art be either amazing or amusing."

In Westfield mall on Market Street everything is white and glass. Standing at the bottom looking up at the glass dome ten stories up. Curved escalators spiraling upwards, impossible to understand how a curved escalator might work. The escalators leave you on a floor and you have to walk all the way around, past all of the white and glass shops, to catch another one upwards. I think of how clever that is. I want this book to be one long curved escalator, no white and glass shops, but it won't be, it will be about where the steps of a curved escalator go once they reach the top. It is too well put. It is a nice thing to write and it is poetic. If you think about a curved escalator, or have ever been on one, then you know. They are impossible not to wonder about.

Trying to hurt Kathryn McCaughey for having something to do with Silver Fox, as I have heard Brian M called. I told my mother I was in the library in the reference section looking through big books and

she was happy. I told her about Fireball's education. I told her that I was writing the best book ever written and laying traps in it in case anybody tried to find meaning in it or wanted to say that it was good. She said it sounded like a good idea but she was off to the grocery store. She told me that my brother was mad because I am having fun in San Francisco and he is working at a golf course. It is only half true that I am having fun, and it depends on your definition of that word. I said that I would go back to Vancouver soon. Ian Wyatt is in Vancouver with a red beard and black glasses, and drumsticks, and wise words about why music is so nice; he is probably discussing strange African rhythms right now. He is a name worth mentioning and so I mention him. Ian Wyatt on a couch in an old room on Hastings Street, laying on the couch with his feet up, blue jeans and a white shirt, old running shoes, smiling his usual half smile, twenty six, he is saying that between all of his musical projects, one of which is with me, he has no time to do the things he wants to do.

Back in Fireball's studio they are cooking for the Parisians. I wonder who the Parisians are. Never tell a person that you like them because then you have to kiss them. Always let on that you like a person but never say it out loud, if you tell somebody you like them then you will have to sleep with them. I told Kathryn McCaughey on the phone about how good my book will be and after I told her I felt empty, but if she reads it she should know how good it is beforehand because she might not realize it herself. Sitting on a curb on Alabama and Nineteenth Street enjoying the first good weather San Francisco afternoon.

Deepening blue sky, gold light in the leaves, can of American beer. Very nice part of town, handsome young artists with dogs. Excited to meet the Parisians and to tell them my opinions when they ask for them. Proud of my wanting to write and aware that it is good writing, even if R was twenty one years old and said it all in French and then moved to Africa to trade ivory a year earlier in his life than I am now, that is what I read on the back of a book in the chain bookstore. But the things R said I can't understand, and I can understand this. San Francisco is becoming very good for me, especially in the sun - especially with Kathryn McCaughey around to think about things with, both of us so bad, can't look up from the idea.

Sleeping on Fireball's couch now every night, last night another person was over so Fireball and I shared the couch. Woke up. Bought a Simenon because He mentions Simenon. Went with Fireball to the street with the rainbow flags, went with her looking for City Lights Bookstore. She graduated from Columbia University when she was twenty-one years old, art history, literature. Interned for a man who was eighty years old and had spent his life making ordinary objects very big and then putting them in cities. She makes music. The Parisians were friendly and drank iced tea while we drank. We made a song about San Francisco together, Fireball and I, and the weather broke. Up on the roof looking over San Francisco, the sun coming down above the hills in the west, a trident-like telephone tower on the highest hill, the city buildings to the north glistening as American flags blow. In the east a house sticks out painted green and orange. In the south a yellow hill crowned with cartoon trees

stands reminding me of Mozambique. I think about nothing, about having nothing to say, at least now, not a word, and how good that feels, though the setting is important, but everybody can see it if they climb to a roof in San Francisco. Kathryn McCaughey calls. Fireball sent me out while she sings embarrassed overtop of my singing. It will be a good song. We spent time last night in an alley with three-dollar wine and then wine with gold flecks in it. She tells me that she has synaesthesia and that I am ochre. I would like to be crimson. I don't pick up when Kathryn McCaughey calls.

Two bicycle police round the corner and ride up Twenty-third Street. They look at one another. The one in the lead turns on his siren that is mounted on the rear of his bicycle and they turn down Valencia, the siren whines, they look again at each other and begin to laugh. I keep on walking, adding the event to a list of things written on my hand that I figure are worth putting in this book, but then I worry that if I put that event into the book it might be for a reason. I get to thinking about how it could be worth putting in because afterwards I could put in what I thought about putting it in. About how complicated it could be. A random thing with no connection to anything other than that it happened fifteen minutes ago and I saw it. Now I feel badly that I have run out of ways to go on about it. Two older women come out of a chain coffee shop as I go in and one says to the other:

“I am a bipolar alcoholic, so I know what you mean.” She was wearing an office suit and her voice was matter of fact. They both had their coffees to go.

Talking to people about a certain type of person

who finds out what you like and how you think and then uses it on you, that is how people put it. It is actually a matter of how opinionated you are. If you ask somebody a question and they give you an answer, and then you give your answer to the same question, and if your answer is different than theirs, and if you believe that your answer is the right answer, and if you support it convincingly, and if that other person is an open person, then that person may agree with you. It could also be that the person so happens to have the same thoughts as you, or maybe they have so many more thoughts than you that your thoughts fit easily into the vastness of their thoughts. In a chain coffee shop on Valencia in the back corner, everybody is working on their machines, and I write machines because I could never write laptop. It is a very bad thing to not be able to mention things because they are new. It is not real; the things that I like most about the past were bad in their own time. If the same amount of time were to pass and I had written laptop instead of machine, it would be better.

On the roof last night with Fireball at three in the morning, she told me stories from her life that made good pictures in my head. About her father's childhood habit of wearing a superman costume under his clothing - so many stories of living in New York City - about encounters with famous people. Fireball has a first and last name - I told her that I was still working on my own stories - still remembering them. I told her that I have always wanted to be famous and so have been careful to shape my life story so that it is nice on paper. In the morning when I had fully woken I regretted saying what I said to her and wanted to

take it back, not because it was not true but because it was a bad thing to say. I told her that she was in my book, in my pocket. She said she was going to write a play because she believed in dialog. I thought about how it is impossible to remember dialog as it was spoken - so it was useless - but I didn't tell her that. If I had told her she would have proved me wrong about it and she would have convinced me how nice it is, and then there would start to be dialog in this. Fireball turned to me, both of us on the roof overlooking the city, under the stars, and she says 'what a nice night.'

The first day in San Francisco, hiding in a motel, the Mission Motel, way up on the hill, way up the road, not sure about it. Planning to leave right away, a nightmare in the fog. Thinking about being lonely, about Vancouver, about everything that was wrong there, then thinking that the feeling would pass just as sure as it would return. The thought of that, the cycle, made me feel better. Aware that it would all keep going around. The one thing that you can only think about, feedback, how could you think about what you think about feedback. On that first day in San Francisco I thought I might not find Kathryn McCaughey, but I found her, and now it is the second time in our lives that we have met. It is also the second time that we have known that we must do something; it is the second time we have done nothing. It is not the first time that I have looked up on the page and been unimpressed by what is written there. Generally nothing that you write is very good until it is a few pages back, around four pages. That is how long it takes for you to forget about it and then be surprised by it, and to be surprised that you wrote it. That only lasts until

the beginning of the book. Previous things are much worse. Hopefully they are. If they are better then that is a problem.

Today has been sitting with coffee in one place, trying to think of things to say, then saying them here, then getting up and thinking of more things to say. Usually I write on my hands. As I was on the sidewalk writing 'how good my good stories are' onto my hand an old man came up and asked me for a cigarette, I gave him one and he began to quote from the bible. He first asked:

"Do you believe in Jesus?"

"Yes, I think so,"

"Well, there are very few of us left."

Then he quoted something and afterwards I said:

"I don't know what that means, I will figure it out on my own time."

He did not listen and continued to quote, he followed me, so I said:

"I am going over there."

I pointed across the street.

"So it was nice meeting you."

"What will you do over there?"

He asked that, his eyes were glazed.

"I am going to write some things."

I crossed the street to a chain coffee shop and ordered coffee and now I am writing this. Wondering why now that it says 'how good my good stories are' across the top of my hand.

Which is, in a stairwell in the dark, learning every story that Fireball has, picturing them all in my head, noticing that all of the stories are relatable and believable. My stories, all of them adventure stories,

are so big and unbelievable that I can't tell them. If I tell them I worry that it will only make the listener feel badly about their own stories. My stories are beyond what is believable and all of them sound too big, the only way to tell them is to make them small and normal. Kathryn McCaughey is meeting me now, in this coffee shop, hopefully we will have an adventure. Hopefully my motorcycle is still out in front of Brian M's apartment and hopefully I will like Kathryn McCaughey again and hopefully she will like me again. Most of all I hope that someday I will find a way to be honest without being conceited. If people never change does that mean that conceited people who know that they are conceited and aren't comfortable with it are trapped in it no matter what. Maybe there are ways to steer it or harness it and utilize it. It is funny when there becomes more pages than are easy to read and you have an idea but are not sure if that idea, an identical sentence, is somewhere in the pages previous.

What makes a good book and why is this book not good. How come by this page of it, it is not coming across. Is it because of sentences like the last one or is it because some people can make books and others cannot. It is because good books are a lot of work to make and are tied together by good ideas. This book for some reason is not a good book, and I want it to be. I want it to be the best book ever written. It is too bad because books are meant to be read and nobody will ever read this book, unless they do, which I would like, I know they will. Next time that I make a book I will think about it beforehand, and I will make it good. I should have described the old man who was

quoting from the Bible, I should have and still probably could make a picture of where I am and what is happening and who is around. I need to describe the loft and explain how Kathryn McCaughey is, and why she is so good, and explain how Fireball is and why we are getting to know one another, even though I have no idea about these things – they are important if you want to have a good book. I hope that the thing that is missing from these pages, whatever it might be, is not as important as I think it is.

Fireball and I on the roof at night, overlooking San Francisco, and we kiss. The roof is at a slant and we are lying on our backs. We talk about things we like and we forget all of the other things, and about how I was leaving in the morning. I think about cities and about the best ones I know. Time is passing and I am not interested in being older. And, if you can tell, after I wrote ‘I think about cities’, I checked into a motel in Eureka, Northern California, which is where I am now, four hundred miles from San Francisco. With two empty Hurricanes, eight fluid ounces, the sun is down and the town is old, Greece is on cable, I miss Fireball. ‘Thanks a lot kid’. A real girl, stranded at the drive in, all that is over with now, better get an iphone better acknowledge my own time, better not type this in different than it is written here. Void of what it is, a paragraph from a lonely person in Two Thousand Nine drinking in a motel in Eureka. On. What is the result of drinking under low light in Eureka, lonely in a motel with Greece on the television, the result for me, now, is to write in here knowing full well that in the morning all I will want is to wrip it out. As one who is inclined to drink, I am aware of the effect, it is

too bad – in Eureka, me here. Drunk, I am worried that instead of writing what I believe I am writing what I believe when I drink. I have now one King Cobra in front of me, hissing, fizzing, poor lion dying on TV, poor me going through my phone wishing I had someone to talk to. Now, not wanting to read it later, thinking about how drinking affects to coherency of writing. As seen here, and, being an example, wanting to finish the idea, not knowing if there is an idea at all, not knowing anything. End.

So much time has passed, waving goodbye to Fireball and motorcycling north out of San Francisco, going through all those little towns on the coast. Reading through what is so far written in this book and not liking any of it, not because it is poorly written - but because it is not a book and I want it to be a book. Kathryn McCaughey is back in Vancouver but is gone again before I get back. Ian Wyatt and I talk on the phone about a show and he decides against playing drums and I decide that no longer can Ian Wyatt be a friend of mine, so serious, and about what, I am not sure. And I am thinking, sitting in a coffee shop on Main and Broadway in Vancouver, that because somebody is not perfect it does not mean that they are a bad person. Ian Wyatt sitting on the grass in the park alone telling me I must be more serious, then telling me he has plans and ideas of his own, big ones. With my things in front of me, reading what I am writing now, these details, information about people. Is it important in a book to tell a story and is it fine in a book to worry about the quality of that very book as it is being written, and to write about it?

In the afternoon, in Tea Swamp Park, I went to be

alone and to read and to play my guitar. The sun was low and gold and there were no clouds and there was no wind. The park is very small and I was the only one in it. I had beer and sat on the grass. Around the corner came Hannah Acton and a friend of hers, a very attractive girl with a German accent, skinny legs, did not get her name. They drank whiskey with soda and talked about Canadian history. I could not believe the German girl; I did not answer any of her questions that had to do with me in order to make myself seem mysterious.

“What do you do?”

“For work?”

“No, for fun,”

“I am still figuring it out.”

“What do you do when you aren’t trying to figure it out?”

But I never answered directly and I learned about her because she was talking a lot because of the whiskey.

There are some things that I have left out, I have noticed, about the German girl, about how good she was and about how she knew that I was trying to be mysterious, she was aware that I was aware she knew. I left the park abruptly from their company in order to create an impression on the German girl. After I left the park I hoped that Hannah Acton would tell her about all the best parts of me, my strengths. I pictured the two girls in the little park sitting on the grass drinking whiskey and agreeing that I was something. In my apartment later on that evening I hoped I might get a phone call from somebody in that circle inviting me out, and that the German girl would be there. Instead

I had a phone call from Kathryn McCaughey in which I described to her what is written here and she accused me of being lonely, then she had to go because she was off to meet somebody named Devan Forster. I spent twenty dollars on six Italian beer and drank them slowly on my balcony and then had a shower and went to sleep before midnight, I hope that I said the right things to the German girl – I hope that she likes me and is thinking about me.

Sitting now behind Simon Fraser Elementary School at a concrete picnic table, overcast but hot. Reading the cancerous book, happy that I am near its end. Simenon also on the table, which He recommends for passing time. I have beer also, in a brown bag. This book, the making of it, has been keeping me good company; it is better to try what you want to do directly instead of always planning or preparing. Even when doing nothing, and having nothing to say – by writing it – it is still moving. Benjamin Marvin calls me, he is not in Paris where I thought he would be by now, he is building frames for houses, steel toe boots and tool belt. I am working too but nobody is paying me. Someday, somebody will like this and then give me their money. I want to be a well-known person, I know that I will be, this can be for people that I don't know who know me. It is what I want and how I feel, if it is bad to want and feel that way then it is, and it probably is. When I was in Mozambique I was lonely. Going south down the highway, a dirt road, on a little motorcycle. Sun and trees and red dirt and a blue sky. Going through the little villages. A couple of huts and shops and a lot of people. Going down the dirt road. There were baboons on the road so I honked at them

to move aside, they moved aside when I yelled. I was the only person on the road all day. Baboons have big teeth. After passing the baboons my rear tire popped and I came to a stop. There was no battery on the motorcycle so the horn and light would not work. North of Mocimboa da Praia, south of the Tanzanian border. I began to push the motorcycle back towards the villages I had gone through earlier. The baboons were back on the road. Four of them. The sun was going down so the light was red. I told the baboons to get off the road, not yelling, they stood staring at me as I pushed the motorcycle. The baboons only giving me a little room to pass through them, staring at me and me avoiding their eyes. Me pushing that bike through the sand, back towards the villages, into the night. Dar es Salaam to Cape Town.

Why do people read. I read because I want to know why some people are great people. If somebody who was considered not to be great made or did something I would not be interested in what they made or did. That is a big concern. This writing and this story will not be worth anything unless some day I am considered to be great. If He had written a song or made a film, or danced on a stage, it would have been great, if only because he was great. A great person can make and do anything and it will always be great. What makes a great person is a mystery. There are two boys walking through the park in front of my table, both in ball caps, both talking quickly at the same time. They don't notice my camp or me. There are three small dogs and their three owners by the curb, by the goal posts. A silver car is driving slowly down the road, I can see it through the fence as it passes behind the

school. Since that is all happening now while I write about greatness I wonder if there is a connection. Greatness and young boys and dogs and owners and fences and silver cars, schools, goal posts. And then I am thinking that I do know what makes somebody great, but I won't say it, even though I should.

The German girl, Fireball, Kathryn McCaughey and some others. After I was on stage at Fifty-Six Powell Street I went to the Biltmore Cabaret to see Mich Way on stage. Leah Gudmundson asked for a kiss. On the sidewalk around the corner Ali Biddell grabbed a hold of my jacket and cried, pretended to, she is very good at that and she enjoys it. We laughed afterwards and I wondered if one day she would become great, I write her name in case. She refused to get into a cab and I told her to get into the next one or I would say something mean, so she did. I sat with my beer on the cement picnic table behind Simon Fraser Elementary School thinking about it – that is what I am doing now. Thinking about little Ali Biddell and how she is skinny and has such a nice face and bright young eyes. I told her she was an actress when she was crying and she was excited because that is what she wants to be. Leah Gudmundson with her _____ and _____. Words I would never write into this, and if those words are still here I will be surprised. Leah Gudmundson and her friends and everything, having fun every night in the summer, not honest fun.

Moving from the Elementary School to Tea Swamp Park hoping to see the German girl. In San Francisco there was a person I wanted to meet, a person who worked at Bi-Rite by Deloris Park. I wrote him a note and gave it to him over the counter. It only said what

this says. Fireball went into Bi-Rite and met him properly and told me about it. He was a musician; she was going to see him on stage. My own music is so bad, that is how I want it to be. That is the same with my writing. Fireball will get to liking him and I won't have to worry about her anymore, or maybe I will go to Philadelphia and find her. Walking yesterday, home from Brennan Lloyd's house, I found a phone in the gutter. JS's phone. I met him just now, between writing 'same with my writing' and 'or maybe I will go to Philadelphia'. He gave me a ten-dollar reward.

"You are doing me a big favor."

He said that, leaning against a blue road bike, brown beard, maybe thirty, handing me the bill. I waved the bill and smiled, I don't remember speaking, I crossed the road. He now has his phone back and I now have ten dollars, I have been paid, maybe not for this book. I have earned ten dollars now doing what I like.

I am thinking about Ian Wyatt, he is going camping on Maya Beaudry's island, by Vancouver Island, with my friends. Will he mention that I used him to go on stage at Fifty-Six Powell, will my friends agree that I am bad. They won't mention me at all and they will have fun while I sit in Tea Swamp Park looking at a ten-dollar bill. Wishing the German girl would appear. My things on the grass in front of me. Little red flowers on a bush behind me, European children playing with their parents in front of me. Seven in the afternoon but the air is still hot. My friends are old because I made them old; I made them old because I want new friends. Some of my friends will always be my friends because they are good people. The friends that I have made old were not good people; they were not bad

people either, they were just people.

Sitting here, typing up what is on the page so much later, I am not impressed by what is written in the middle of this book. It is as if I am not aware that I am a person, it as if I am lost in things that are not important. But I will not interrupt again and I will not change it from how it is. Maybe it will get better. This is the first time that I have read it all.

Young people all around, playing in the park, me in a dirty shirt by the bush drinking beer from a bag, smoking cigarettes, a nightmare maybe, or else it is curiosity. Writing this book sitting cross-legged. A couple comes past with a yoga mat and they look at my beer. We have different techniques but we have similar beliefs – if they are using the mat for what they are generally used for, and if I am using the beer for what it is generally not used for. But I am wrong and they use the mat as a cushion for a picnic and they open wine. They are young, older than me, and they drink from the bottle. Now there are drinks of two sorts open in the children's playground. Maybe the children think that it is soda and juice. On the grass, Inspector Maigret and the Killers. Maybe I will never open it, knowing full well what it is. When I drink beer I forget that I am alive and I forget that I am thinking – how I will read Inspector Maigret and the Killers, even if I write that I won't, I sometimes forget that this is a book. I can't forget that I want it to be a good book with no bad parts; useless parts are only good if they lead to something that is not useless. Now they are off their yoga mat and they are laughing and playing badminton without a net.

It is strange that when I interrupted it was right be-

fore I realized that I was off track. Now it seems that I am getting back on track. I need to erase this interruption and the other interruption.

What is here so far, on the pages previous, is not what I wanted. I want you to know that this is a book and that you are reading. The story about the baboons was easy to listen to. It was only one moment; the moment when I told the story was not included, nor was the moment before or after I told the story. There was no mention that as I wrote it I knew it was the wrong thing to be writing and that it would not lead anywhere, but I still wrote it. I wrote about those baboons because I wanted you to know what I have done, that I have seen baboons. When I wrote Dar es Salaam to Cape Town it was to impress you. Half or more of this is that and I feel badly. So many stories that are so good. These pages are two things, a struggle not to mention my adventures or my strengths, and a struggle to only mention what I think and how I feel about what I think. Three stages. The first stage can be accessed by anyone at any time, in any park or any place, anywhere. The second stage is harder because you have to remove yourself from your thoughts and look at them from somewhere else. The third stage is only possible by writing about what you think about your thoughts, as the act of writing counts as looking as well.

Tomorrow morning I will motorcycle east to Jasper, then to Edmonton, and then to Calgary, and then to New York City. In Jasper there are mountains and pine trees and lakes and a dying Grandfather, Adrian Smith. My mother is also there, looking after him. In Edmonton is my other Grandfather and his wife,

my Grandmother - my Grandmother recovering from surgery to her vocal cords. In Calgary are my oldest friends and their prairie thoughts. In New York City Michelle Ford and Dani Brown are working on their names. People in New York City care about names. Two years ago I motorcycled to New York City and it was good.

Now, one week later, I am in Calgary. Forgetting about this book, letting it rest in my pocket. Reading it over I am not impressed, even how that I wrote 'two years ago I motorcycled to New York City', which is not part of the story, it is to be impressive. It rained in Jasper, it rained down the Banff Jasper Highway, my dying Grandfather asked me who I was ten times and each time my answer was slightly different and I learned something about myself. He told a story ten times over, each time slightly different, presented from different angles and portraying a more complete picture.

I am worried now because many parts of this book are not interesting to read, not all of it is not interesting, some is good, but there are many bad parts, some that make you embarrassed. In Calgary, where I am now, on Seventeenth Avenue, everything is different than in San Francisco, even the wind, the air. Sharp heat, the color of a blue sky. Pale. Look how they dress here. Look at the trucks they drive. What do they do for fun. Curse words from every sidewalk and every window and every table. Beer, hockey, newspapers, Alberta music. Nobody likes the place that they grow up, especially people who like to pretend. In San Francisco and in Vancouver there is a lot of pretending, slow building, characters of our choosing, ideals. In a

hometown the character dies. It is considered to be dishonest. That all sounds good. I look down on cursing and hockey and beer because I feel like they are not helpful, though that depends on your point of view and what you need help with. I am worried now because I want everybody to like this book, not just me. I am trying not to be very specific so that everybody can apply it.

Sometimes I think about how in the past all the best things were made by old people. Old writers, old painters, old inventors, old thinkers. It means that as a young person I still have a chance of some day making something good. It is strange now that so many young people are making things, and that they are competitive; it makes me want to make nothing until I am older, but that would not work because it is a process. So many young people now worried that they had better make something good right away, or else. A good picture or a good book or a good song. That is why I am making this book. The only deadline for making something good is before you die – though sometimes people die before anybody realizes how good the things they made were. Young people want it when they are young, they want to receive letters from strangers telling them how good they are, they want it when they are young and can enjoy it in a young way. It makes a lot of sense to me, though making good things is only one way to get there, and it does not always work. There are a million things on either side of that and a million things that come out of it, but it is too complicated and I already feel badly. In Edsworthy Park, down by the Bow River below my parents house. The sky is blue and there is a train go-

ing by. The leaves are blowing in a breeze. White fur from the poplars is blowing around. There is a bench by the river. I have beer and it is the afternoon. The light is going red. I am reading about a fight on a dock in a book by Him. I am hoping that I might see some of my oldest friends down here, they all live around here. I would like them to see me as I am now, with my motorcycle and all of my true stories, reading His books. When I left those oldest friends it was to go forwards, now I would like to see if I have moved at all. They might be somewhere in the park now and soon I will get up to look. There are birds chirping in the trees, different birds than the ones in San Francisco. I am really hoping that I see those oldest friends. I will not try to contact them. When I left them I really left them and they knew that. Finding them directly would be moving backwards. What would be best is if they read about me in the papers or saw me on TV, though there is no trace of me yet in either of those two places. The river is fast and I can hear it against the supports of a nearby footbridge. When I came into the park a girl said hello to me from the window of a park maintenance truck, the truck was full of young people; she stuck her head out of the window as the truck crossed the railway tracks.

Between Vancouver and Calgary, before arriving in Jasper, there began along the road, in the sky, towering black thunderclouds. There were patches of blue sky and then patches of rain and lightning. The road would be dry and then there would be an abrupt wet line - and rain. When it would rain every part of me would get wet, down to my socks and undershirt. The rain would hit my face like pellets and I would put

my left hand up to cover it. But I knew always that I could drive through the rain back into the sunshine, so I would drive fast. When it was not raining the dry wind would dry me quickly, just as quick as another storm would appear. In one such storm I remember yelling, no words, but I was yelling. I became dry once again, coming up to Blue River British Columbia, and just down the road - past the little Blue River town - was a cloud so dark that it was truly black, plugging up the valley, no way around it and it was not moving. It was late in the afternoon so I stopped the night at the Blue River Motel and in the shower my hands tingled under the hot water; I drank whiskey after the shower and stayed under the blankets on the bed. I lay there hoping that it was an adventure - or a story - or something that would make it not as bad and lonely as it was while it was happening, but I did not know, so it was bad. When I woke up the storm had broke and I made it to Jasper.

As I am typing this all up from the page I sometimes finish a thought from my current self instead of looking at the page to see if the thought went the same way originally, it always does almost word for word. Writing about the recent past in Calgary, in this park, at a picnic table by an empty playground, hoping those older friends appear, but they won't. Thinking about stories, about how this can't be a story, if it were a story it would be one of very many that have been written. Also hoping that what it says on one of the sleeves of His books, often imitated, does not apply to this book. Take what you want from those who have died, what more could they ask for but to continue to live. Use the progress of those who came before as a

staircase. They built a couple of steps, on top of other peoples steps, got to use those steps, step right on them, there is not enough time in a single life to build much of a staircase, got to pick up where they left off. The playground is not empty anymore; there is a very young boy in a tan hat and a funny shirt climbing around on a green plastic dinosaur. His mother, blonde hair, white shirt, arms crossed, is following him around, she is smiling. The playground is in the shadow now of a row of pines, I am also in the shadow. There are runners going past and I look at each one of their faces hoping that one might be one of my oldest friends, but none of them are.

Kathryn McCaughey sleeps over, but only until dawn, then she leaves. She is in Calgary and so am I. We talk in the park and she says that the things she made are as complete as the things she is making because she is honest. I disagree because the way honesty is presented and the degree of honesty are not constant, they change from thing to thing, honesty is a skill. I made her a bad analogy to prove it. She saw Jupiter in the sky before it was dark and mistook it for an airplane, because of the wine. Two days before that night in the park with Jupiter I put my phone into a fire, now Kathryn McCaughey and I have no means of communicating during the day. Fireball calls the landline at night and tells me about the Fourth of July in Maine and there is no room for me in the conversation. I tell her that I will call her back but then I never do. I think about Calgary, about why I can't make anything here, I think about my own honesty and about how Kathryn McCaughey was probably right and about how I was probably wrong.

Thinking now about justification. About handing somebody something that is bad in order to make them know they could make something better. I tell you that the book in your hands is one of the best books that there is, or ever has been, or ever will be, you disagree and say that it is not and that even you could do better and then maybe you go and really do better - then I would take some credit for your book and this book would be justified. I often look for justification. That would only work if you found something that was said to be truly great and it was something that you cared about, like books, and then upon reading the good book you found it to be truly bad. Maybe you would feel like it was a good time to try and prove that it was bad. Though badness and goodness are personal things – there are groups of people who think alike, sometimes the groups are so big that they encompass everybody, every person. This book in your hands is truly good and there is no chance that if you made a book it would be better.

Quixotic is a word that I don't understand the meaning of. People keep saying to go and do what you want to go and do, but that is hard because there are always steps in between. When I read this, what is here, I don't like that I am always writing 'I'. Maybe there is a secret and 'I' is not me. Maybe 'I' is a character in this book. He does a good job of writing stories where the word "I" refers directly to him, he does not use them so often. I want to go to Montreal and New York City, I want to Visit Evan Clifford Morson-Glabik and Michelle Ford in the east, both of them escaping the west. There is Leaves of Grass on my table in front of me, in the park by the river, and it is not helping me

to feel at home. I am trapped here, in Calgary, it is because I do not have any money, not only do I not have any money but I have no plans to make it, I only want it and need it.

The story is going to open in San Francisco, wanting things there, meeting people there, then the story will follow me up the coast to Vancouver and across to Calgary. I will talk about people and things and also about Africa when I was there, the story will be about me, but I might go back and try to connect everything to Kathryn McCaughey, the story should be about her, about me chasing her. Especially if she goes back to Montreal and if I go there to find her. If she does go home and if I do motorcycle there to find her and if I go back through these pages and connect everything, then the story will become readable. Last night, very late in the night, she put her clothes on and left, she said she was romantic and therefore she could not stay. I asked her about how she was fine with what happened earlier but not fine with sleeping. She said that what happened earlier was not as important as sleeping would be. After she left I promised not to ever see her again or to ever talk to her again. Where she is staying in Calgary is an hour's walk from where I am staying and she walked home at four in the morning through the western suburbs of a city in which there is nothing interesting to look at in any time of the day.

Ending friendships with groups of people, then wanting to prove them wrong. Wanting to beat them, wanting to make better friends – then making better friends and doing the same thing over again, moving. Benjamin Marvin in Paris writes that I am childish, but that it is good that I am. Ending things that

you know well and going out looking for things that you don't know at all, only to get to know the new things well – discarding them for unknown things once again, building. To not be childish is to be stuck. Benjamin Marvin's paragraph describes very well all people alive and dead and not yet born. It is impossible to describe somebody accurately without describing everybody. Leave what you know behind you and find unknown things, never make a dime doing that. Would you rather make a life here, doing what you are doing, or would you rather move and change and be unsure and uncomfortable, it is hard either way, mostly because of dimes and dollars, a million dollars. Millions of dollars come generally only to those who spend a lot of time doing what they are doing; they keep a dream for later, when it can be had comfortably.

Kathryn McCaughey lying on her back in the grass, in the dark. There is a bottle of wine in her hand. She says that human interaction is important for story telling purposes. When a person learns about philosophy at a university for four years does that mean that when they speak they have something to say. Kathryn McCaughey's skin is dark and her face is good in the right light. She is thin but her smiles and laughs are strange. On her back in the grass, it was before she left last night, before Jupiter, she said she makes her stories about people that she meets, because those are the best stories. I want Sean Sader to make Kathryn McCaughey's stories into books but she does not feel ready. It is important to make units and to hand them out, always, presenting them, your garbage. Because of time all you will ever have to offer will be garbage.

The most you will ever like your own garbage is for fifteen minutes, after that your garbage will really be garbage. Maybe somebody will learn from your garbage, maybe they will pay you for it. This garbage is young and I am ready with it, but in fifteen minutes it will be garbage.

Two men rustle in the bush only feet from my table in the park. The sun is low so the park is empty. The men curse each other and kick each other, homeless men with low voices. One is accusing the other of calling him no good. Eventually they conclude that somebody nearby must have said it. I am the only other person in the park. I collect my things and this book from my table and walk carefully to another park. I am midway through writing about ending things that you know about and doing things you don't know about and I feel that it couldn't be right to sit in a park wearing an expensive coat writing about ideas when men so close are figuring everything out. The men were evidence that this book is missing something important. Inhuman. The thousands of words I have avoided saying. The times that things have been reduced to goodness and badness, or to something, or to things, when there is more. But more would be complicated. It's replacing all more with less, not mentioning shooting stars in the sky, or spiders, leaving out explosions and yellow roman candles.

I don't at all like being in Calgary. I now have five hundred dollars and I can't believe that I am still sitting here. I would like most to be in Peru or Guatemala, where people are likely simpler than they are here. Must leave any place that you do not like for some place you have never been before. Ignoring Kathryn

McCaughey now, letting her go, writing her off because I too am romantic. The sun is low and the rain clouds are brown. The river is rushing along, the river water is going down to the coast but you can't tell by looking at it, it looks as though it is just staying in the same place, bubbling and making those rushing sounds. People with dark skin are speaking in their own language down by the riverbank, pointing with their fingers; I wonder why they chose Calgary. Kathryn McCaughey is a nice part of this book though and maybe if I said that I was sorry then this book could continue, something needs to happen or the story will stop. Kathryn McCaughey going back to San Francisco soon to be with Brian M. Brian M the great musician, she will travel with him by car to New York City, she will watch him play his songs every night and all the while I will be sitting by the river wanting to be a musician going across the country.

Noticing now that I am slowly losing the ability to think about my thoughts. That instead of wondering why I would write this into my book I only write it. What is worse, I could not guess why I do and think what I have been doing and thinking, where I feel like on earlier pages it has been clearer. For this book to be a great book, the one that I want it to be, I would have to do what I said I would do; always mention my true thoughts on what I think about my current thoughts. It is clear enough that this thought here, about my lack of thoughts, is a bad thought and one not worth having. Last night my old friends came over and sat down by the fire, but they cursed and spat and laughed and then left to go downtown, reminding me of why they are my old friends. Every word from your

mouth and every action that you make, every look in your eye, everything must be good, successful, interesting, worthwhile, true, or else you have no reason. Using curses so often that they become only bad; going downtown so often that it means nothing, leaving behind a perfectly good fire only because it is a Friday night.

In Mikeys on Tenth, a juke. Really heavy clouds outside are keeping me in. Motorcycle will be rained on. Thinking about what it means to write a book in a place where there might be people who know about books. About how if I walked into an empty juke on Tenth and saw myself writing a book I would think that it was funny. TJ Schneider calls and says that he would like to paint but has run out of ideas - which seems like a good idea to me, if not the best idea that he has ever had. Looking back, there are some good ideas earlier in this book, there have also been some bad ones, also there have been ideas that are neither good nor bad. Now, with no ideas at all, and mentioning that there are none - that is an idea. Emptiness is the biggest idea of all. People are singing and chattering as the place fills. Middle aged people who all know each other by their first names. The band is preparing to play. Only half the place if full, the stage side, I am on the empty side. Old wooden floors, low ceilings, green tabletops, a pool table, pictures of old negroes on the walls. A television playing baseball.

“Check...one...two...yes Sir.”

That is what the drummer says over the speaker.

Kathryn McCaughey blinks her eyes and moves away. She stands up off the bed and looks down at me and puts on her clothes. She gathers her things, all

the while talking, but about nothing. The room is dark and small; light from a clock on the far side of the room shows her face. I wonder about her, she is probably wondering about me. I tell her to stay, it is four in the morning, she says she will go. She goes back to San Francisco. That was how it happened after Jupiter. The band is playing now at Mikey's but they are not playing their own songs, but the songs are good and they believe in them. It must mean that some songs are in everybody's heads, so there would be no need for the band at Mikey's to make new ones. The band is content playing old songs to old people, the songs are so good, if they made their own songs maybe they would not be as good, but who knows. Kathryn McCaughey is in San Francisco, probably for the better, but definitely not for the better, probably better if she had stayed when I told her to. The game is one that neither of us wants to lose. If I tell her to stay, but she goes, then that must be the end, I can't go after her, I must be finished, to make a point. Same as she must make a point of leaving me behind. Thinking of real things and about honesty, of how maybe what I wanted was for her to leave, though probably not.

The computer keeps attempting to rearrange my sentences as I type them from the pages into the program.

When a good idea is found by a person and when that person expresses it in some physical way, but then later on, after more ideas have been expressed, when that person goes back and notices that the first idea is incomplete, that person has no right to meddle with the original physical thing. By doing so that person would be erasing their trail of progress, and a trail

of progress its self is a good idea. Progress is slow and it cannot be sped up that way. It can be sped up only by finishing things and then starting new things, by completing units and giving them out. The mystery is where the progress leads. One big curved escalator, everybody on it, everybody moving at the same speed towards the same thing. Hopefully not. Two very long sticks planted in the ground side by side. Throughout history people coming along and nailing cross-bars on for other people to climb, making a ladder, the ladder always getting higher, closer. Somebody way up there fighting the wind, hammer in hand, trying to nail on another rung. Maybe to see the world from above, maybe out of curiosity, to find out what is up there, at the very top, maybe nothing is up there, or maybe it goes on forever, or maybe the ladder leads right up to heaven, maybe it leads right up to the back door, unguarded, easy entry. When the ladder is complete we could all just climb up there one by one and that would be that.

Home is such a strange place. One idea of a person, a complete idea, no way to change it. Home will always know, you can't trick home. Not with a new hat, or new friends, not even with a new thought. At home all of these things disappear. At home you are you when you were living there. You are very young and you are just as empty as you were before you left. Out there, finding things out, things that are so important to you that they merit the purchase of a new hat. Sitting again in Mikeys, waitress gives me a beer on the house. I bought a new hat yesterday, what does it mean to buy a new hat at home. The band last night here was original, which I could not realize at

the time, I felt badly about assuming that they were not. Sean Sader with long hair and a soft face, he will be here soon, he will talk quietly and he won't express his opinions until near midnight, then he will begin to express them, they will be good opinions as they usually are. Maybe he will bring along a girl as he usually does. A little group of young idealist people in the midst of a big group of older blues people, older idealist people. But everybody likes to have fun and is having it, so there is a common interest. Maybe it is bad for us to be here, handsome older men are talking to the handsome old woman.

Fireball says: "that will likely be the most interesting part to read", she says it over the phone after I tell her of a plan to confess that I have run out of ideas to write. I try to confess it in here and worry that if Fireball were to read it she would not think it that interesting. Fireball is back in West Philadelphia and I will drive there in one month from now. Kathryn McCaughey stumbles past my home at midnight and I am on the curb. I lower my hat and refuse to listen to anything that she says that has to do with me. She wants to say goodbye but I will not let her. Everybody is thinking about themselves mostly. When people aren't thinking about themselves they are thinking about how everybody is thinking about themselves mostly. Now, since I had left this paragraph unfinished and a month has gone by, I am in Swift Current, Saskatchewan on my motorcycle on my way to see Fireball in Philadelphia. It is raining, windy and cold. In Montreal I will play my guitar. In New York City I will think about myself. Right now I will think about finishing unfinished paragraphs and leaving

one month gaps and making things lose their places in time. I hope it stops being cold outside so that I can drive my motorcycle to Moose Jaw in the morning.

My other grandfather, not the dying one, looks like a polar bear, his big motorcycle roaring for him. He is up front, heading south through Montana. My father is behind him on a Harley Davidson. They are riding in formation; they are going south to Yellowstone. The mountains are hazy in the distance and the sky is blue, the air is hot. The road is a single lane and winding. I am behind them. Maybe I am like them, but I do not think so, my Grandfather had a chain of pharmacies in Edmonton. My father is an oilman. Both of them fly airplanes. My father knows about the stars and about even bigger things. Neither of the two have ever considered writing a book and I seem to think it is an important thing to do. My grandfather had my father become a pharmacist, I guess because he knew it would make him money, from experience. It did not make him any money though. Education only works if you want to learn and to be educated. Making money is only possible if you want to make money; even better is if you know you will make it. I leave my grandfather and my father in Coeur d'Alene and go back to Vancouver, but only to leave again to Calgary, only to leave again to Philadelphia. On my way now and caught up to now.

I must be good. I can tell because nothing on the TV or on the radio impresses me. When I see or hear it I think about how I could do better, whatever it is, a Hollywood film, a song from somebody famous, even a commercial. I must be good. Why is it that everyone you talk to has something bad to say about the TV

and the radio. Everybody can't be good because then being good would be normal. Who is responsible for the things on TV and on the radio. I am a good person. People have ideas. I hope they do. Does everybody have ideas.

I wish that I was in love. I wish that I believed in those others. There is something wrong. I barely believe in anything at all and I am glad that I don't.

Go to work they say, get a job they say, make some money, we are a communist family, yes, there is money in the federal reserve, but the reserve will not last. It needs to be kept afloat. So go, float. Find something that will make you happy, but find something that will help you do for your children what we did for you. Find somebody to love. But, be happy, always, and do what you want. Know that your parents are as confused as you.

I must have had too much to drink. In Swift Current I write that I need a song about parents because of something that I see on TV. And then as I write that I need a song about Him I begin to vomit. I move to the toilet, I flush it afterwards, I move back to the desk and I write these words, all in Swift Current. And then I wake up, but in a sleeping bag on wet grass in Portage le Prairie. Making the slowest progress across the country. Worrying only about the importance of myself. Telling an old man at midnight in Dryden that I am driving to New York City to live a dream, but then confessing afterwards to myself that I do not know exactly what dream that I am talking about. The old man telling me that it is good and to do it while you are young, but he does not say what it is. Parking in Wawa Ontario to sleep, close to Sault Ste. Marie.

Sunset with the liquor store closed. Desperate to be well known so that this book will work. Interested in a drink.

People are surprised along the road when I tell them that I began in Vancouver and am going to New York City. I can't tell them that I have already done the same trip, on the same motorcycle. I can't tell them that I have motorcycled across Asia and across Africa as well. I can't tell them about riding trains across India or hitchhiking across Europe, I can't tell them about Tibet and Nepal and Kyrgyzstan. I can't tell them anything about myself because there is too much. I feel the worst for having these thoughts at all. Most likely everybody has had experiences and has stories, of all sorts, too many to mention, but I don't believe it. I believe that the experiences I have had set me apart. When you are young, and when you are human, you try your best to come up with evidence that you are different. Everybody is the same; the differences are only in second to second actions and thoughts, which are changing constantly, along with everybody else's thoughts and actions. Mostly though everybody is wanting to be different. I can't believe that, though I know that it is true, the reason that I can't believe it is because if I did believe it I would no longer be young, or human.

Fireball is waiting for me in West Philadelphia. It has now been two months since I last saw her - in San Francisco. Kathryn McCaughey is gone and maybe I will never see her again. I am in Wawa Ontario, going to Toronto and then to New York City and then to West Philadelphia and then to Omaha. Jamie Montes is in Omaha but she does not like me, I am in love

with her if not for TJ Schneider. Jamie Montes does not like me at all. In Vancouver I am registered to start University, Emily Carr University, where my parents would like me to be. I have no money but theirs. Sean Nicholas Savage and I could go across the continent being famous singers, I would like that the most, not that I can sing, but I like him. That is my dream now. To sing across the continent. Afterwards I will live in New York City; everybody will know my name and thin girls will want my autograph. I have so much money. People are talking behind my back about how good I am all over the world. I have to go to my farm to not be recognized. I never go west except if I have to. My old friends are always reading about me in the papers and seeing me on television, sometimes they tell strangers that they once were a good friend of mine. It all happened overnight.

Now I am in New York City. I am sitting in Dani Brown's apartment in Chinatown. She is wearing a large button-up and she has her hair in a bun. She says that New York City is different because people help each other, it is not competitive like other cities, you meet somebody new every day.

"That sounds good."

"It's really good."

I am on the fire escape overlooking the city at night drinking tequila and orange juice and she has her head out the window. One of the beautiful people that I know, it is hard to talk to her because of that. I worry about writing what I say or what people say because it will not be remembered by me correctly. Dani Brown does not speak like that. My shirt is in the sink in the kitchen in soap water. She told me that it did not smell

good and that it would hurt my chances at the party.

“You should wash that shirt in the sink before we go out.”

The sun is so hot when it comes out through the clouds. I am afraid to take off my jacket in New York City. Tonight I will be on stage at the Cameo Gallery in Brooklyn.

At the Museum of Modern Art, in the contemporary section, it was very good. It seems that now things have become funny. Most of the things were clever and simple. The better you are the cleverer you are. In the Museum of Modern Art everything was clever. I like that because I am clever. The Museum of Modern Art and those clever paintings made me feel good. Tonight at the Cameo Gallery I will sing all of my clever songs. It is possible to be aware that you are conscious of what you are doing. Sometimes I get the feeling that I could very easily take over New York City. I could. Some days you want to move to Kansas and start a family, and other days you want your face to be on every television. When it shows up on your TV it would be best if you had good things to say about me. The best part about making a book is after it is finished and you get to work on it, it is something you believe and it is done and you can't wait to give it to everybody - to everybody in the world. Never thinking about quality.

I have been writing page by page. The pages are seven and a half by ten inches. When I get to the bottom of a page the thought must end. Not once have I continued a thought onto the following page. It makes it easier for me. Though maybe if I had not told you, you would not have noticed. Sometimes

I stop halfway down a page and then go to the next page to start another thought, then I will go back and finish the unfinished thought when I remember what it was that I was talking about. If somebody told me to read this book or if I received it as a gift from somebody, I would not read it. But I would read it if I saw the author on television and that author seemed to know what he was talking about. My family always buys me motorcycle books for Christmas but I do not read them because motorcycling is personal. I bought *Black Spring* at Strand Bookstore yesterday because the reviews on the back were funny. Today at the Museum of Modern Art I saw a photograph of a hero of mine walking down a winter New York City street, I coughed because I was dressed like he was, I hid around the corner, even my hair was up. I wonder how many people have him as a hero.

He says that he won't have any drinks before working. When I have some drinks, three now, I start to write only about how good I am. Sometimes I have an idea but forget it before I can sit down. Sitting now in Johnstons on the Lower East Side with two-dollar beer. Bad people are shouting and cursing. Everybody is bad. The bartender is good and is good to look at, she must be thirty. She must not be able to stand her job. She must have come from Kansas to New York City to become famous but instead ended up working Johnstons happy hour. I like her. She wrote me off when I walked in because of my shirt, ripped and dirty. She liked me when we talked. Soon I will leave to Williamsburg. In the Diamond S. it says to help yourself before you attempt to begin to try and help others, others will learn best from a good person. I take that

as an excuse to be conceited. It is important to them. It is called the Diamond S. because it is so sharp.

Down in West Philadelphia Fireball meets me at Chernobyl House on Locust Street, near Baltimore Street. We watch young people play guitars, each taking turns playing songs. Me playing songs. I arrive before Fireball so I have to be confident and meet everybody, nobody that I know. I arrive on my motorcycle with my guitar on my back and I time it so that I arrive more or less directly from Vancouver right before it all begins. I do not feel badly about doing that because it worked and people listened to me more intently. I had a Roy Rogers chicken sandwich from the Walt Whitman Service Center just before Philadelphia on Interstate Ninety-Five. I went into the service center because I wanted to eat something ironic so that I would have a good story to tell, but there was nothing very ironic about any of the food. I went over the Walt Whitman Bridge as well and it cost four dollars. There were a lot of cars on the bridge, crossing the Schuylkill River. I thought about how many people per day try to find irony in it. I found none - but I did look. Fireball and I make pictures in her apartment for three days. I make a picture that only says 'I will be famous for this'.

Fireball is laying on her back on her bed and I am on a cot next to her. Her bedroom is small, we had just woken up. I am telling her that in one hundred years the fastest person will be able to run one hundred miles per hour. It is because the records are always being broken. The night before we were drinking on the balcony with her guitar player, Jesse Stober. I told him about W F 56, supreme vanity. I told him because

he is conceited in a good way. A lot of the night I was thinking about how excited I was to write these things into this book. West Philadelphia is full of good things and good people. I leave Philadelphia. I arrive again in New York City. A few days ago I walked into Pratt and spoke with a woman. I realized that I could go to Cooper Union and I decided to do that. After I made the decision I spent the rest of the day walking around excitedly on Manhattan. Manhattan was windy that day but there were people out, some of them were better than any people that I have ever seen, the things they were doing and the looks on their faces. Now I can't wait to live in New York City. The buildings are old and tall and there is energy in them. Kathryn McCaughey sends a message that only says about how worthless words are. I disagree and think that they are important.

If you have ever tried to make a good book before then maybe you know that it is very hard. I tried to make one before, about a mountain. It had characters and a plot and it seemed like maybe it could be good, but only five people bought them and they only bought them because they felt sorry. This book is not supposed to be good so if nobody likes it that is fine. I hope, when I think about it, that because I know that this is not a good book and that it is admitted, it could actually be a good book. You can tell a good book by reading it, if you like what you are reading, for whatever reason, then it is a good book. That is how it should be done. For me a good book is one that I have written that a lot of people buy and then I get the money. The best book ever written is one that you wrote and that many people have read and many of them think of

you as being very good. I know that some day I will be very famous - it makes me write things sometimes that only somebody who is not famous yet, but will be, would write. Sometimes I only write those things because I know they would be interesting to read for somebody who was reading this to know what I was like before I was famous.

In San Francisco Fireball and I were romantic. In Philadelphia we were not. We were eighty-three years old, married to each other for fifty of those years - or else it was that we had fought in the war together. I cut her hair on the front lawn because she wanted me to. I cut it into a fireball. She is coming up here to New York City on the weekend. I am going back down there after the weekend on my way back west. I rolled a desk out onto the balcony. My temporary apartment on Myrtle and Marcy in Brooklyn. Tall cans of Coors around the corner for a dollar each. On the desk are two candles. It is late at night. The air is sticky, there are no clouds but there are no stars either. New York City summer night. The landlord knocks and attempts to figure out who I am and where I came from and how I got a key. I try to explain but it is not a very good explanation. She has a hair lip and is overweight. She is friendly. She is older. She says that I seem like a good person. She catches me as I am lighting the candles. Everybody who was living here before I went down to Philadelphia has disappeared. I am alone here. There is one girl who is living here, my roommate, I am in love with her.

Tomorrow when I wake up I will have coffee, don't call me, I won't be home, send me a letter, I'll be gone, it's a long road west again, lend me what you were

going to lend me, show me some good words, I am happy now, I know it is not allowed, at least they have not caught me for it yet, after I have coffee I will meet a man I have never really met and he will offer me a job and a place in history, that much I can see, on a sidewalk in an alley where you would not expect a life to change that way, I will rearrange my things and be different, a lot different than I am now or have ever been before.

When somebody makes something, they generally spend a lot of time afterwards preparing it for people they do not know. They want what they have made to be a certain way. After they die the people who end up with the things sometimes change them. They want them to be different then they are, the reasons are always different. Sometimes people who make things know it will happen so they make things that have traps in them, so that the person attempting to change them will end up with dust. It is usually only small changes, like a wife finishing something that was unfinished, or a boss deciding to use the real names of non-fictional characters that the author had chosen to assign fictional ones. Sometimes people who make things are made to work side by side with businessmen who are there to make sure that the things are worth money. Money is important but not as important as getting what you want.

“Yes, that is great. That will be perfect,” she said as she stood looking out the kitchen window. The air was hot. “You will go back to New York City tomorrow?” She turned and looked at me. I looked away. “Yes, I should use the apartment while I can.” She was wearing a white shirt and standing with her feet close to-

gether. "Well, maybe I will come up on the weekend." I knew that she probably would and I knew it would be fun. "Yes, you should come, you can stay at the apartment, and you can show me the city." She had gone to Columbia University. She had lived in New York City for six years before moving to Philadelphia. I sat up from the kitchen table and put on my coat. She drank from her wine glass and looked again at me. "Do you like Philadelphia so far?", I nodded and picked up my glass. I went over to a door across the kitchen that led to the balcony. She followed. I opened the door and looked out over Philadelphia at night and thought about how little I like dialog.

The first book that somebody makes is generally the best one. Not always though because sometimes at first people try to make appealing books. From the time a person is born up until they make something honestly they are gathering good ideas. Those ideas all come out in the first thing that they make. After that the person can see their ideas in front of them for the first time. They can see which ideas are very good and which ideas are not as good. They begin to refine the good ones and eventually they settle on the best ones. What is nice about the first thing that they make honestly is that there is so much, and it is personal, and it is simple.

This is very simple so far. Probably because I have read so much of Him. Everything must be simple now. Things have become too complicated now. People mistake complicated things for good things and then makers of things get confused and think that the more complicated something is the more popular it will be. It has been going on for a while. Complicated

times. The makers have been hiding from the people who stand in front of their things - they have been hiding behind unnecessary complication and hiding behind sunglasses that they sometimes wear indoors. And now it is starting, openness, to the point where complicators are starting to look like they do not know what they are doing. It turns out that behind those complicated things is somebody who is just as confused as everybody else. It will soon be that all the good people who have so long been embarrassing will get a chance to say their good simple things. The complicators will have to start being more honest.

I walk down to Myrtle to buy beer; there are young people out in front of the apartment. I find something in the garbage outside of the store - I want to talk to the young people. The thing I find is a wooden disk with three two foot long screws drilled through it, it can be set up as a little table. I go over to the young people on my way back and I ask them for a cigarette. I set up the little table in front of me on the sidewalk, in front of them; I sit with my legs crossed. None of them speak to me. They leave. They must be busy young people. By young I mean my age. Below me right now, one story down, two people are talking about my motorcycle. Now I will go down again and hopefully they will mention the motorcycle to me and I can tell them that it is mine.

It is the morning now and it is raining. I do not know what to do. I could try to find Dani Brown, but I have noticed that she does not believe in me. She has always found me to be embarrassing. Only twice in three years of knowing her has it happened that she has thought that I am a good person. The first

time was a year and a half ago in an apartment in Vancouver where we were both living. It was just her and myself in the apartment that night, which was a rare thing because a lot of people were living there. She asked me if I would want to go to a party that she was going to. It was between the apartment and the party that it happened. She was talking to me in a way that I felt I could talk back to her and the words would be heard. The second time was in her Manhattan apartment a few days ago, it was just the two of us, it was right after I told her a long poem about a mast that I had written, I told it from memory and she sat and listened to the whole thing. After I was finished telling the poem she was fine with me for the rest of the night. She is a very good person and she has a very good face so I do not mind that she finds me to be embarrassing.

I heard a thing about how important heroes are and about how in America everybody just thinks that they are some sort of weird sandwich. I can't find where I heard it now. Some things are so nice to hear, and so short, it does not take much. There is probably a name for that. I know that I should go and do something instead of just sitting here. And I feel the same way now that I am typing it from the pages. I read through everything in this book and liked almost all of it. Some pages are so good that I got to feeling very good about myself, to the point where when I went for coffee down the road I was walking like I was famous. What do you do in New York City on Friday night when you do not really know anybody.

In some songs, mostly older ones, there are very catchy melodies and words, and the words are positive.

So without knowing it you will find yourself singing 'I am so happy.' This is very good on the part of the song makers. Not only does it make the listener happy when they have it in their head, it makes the listener happy that they listened to the song. These songs are the supports of some of the most famous people. It is not only with music. It is strange to know that and to hear people making sad things, or nothing at all.

I walked up Bedford into Williamsburg today and saw where all of the Jews live, and where all of the young idealists live. Everybody walking alone, including myself, was trying their hardest. That is how it seemed. I was trying my hardest not to try my hardest. I called Jody Rogac, a Vancouver person who now takes her photographs in New York City. She invited me out but then my phone went out and I never talked to her again. I bought a bottle of Old Granddad to keep in my room. Hopefully tonight I can meet new friends. My desk with the candles on it is nice. On the balcony overlooking the street. There are people always walking by and looking up at me, they usually say hello. Sometimes they ask me what I am doing. At night with the candles and smoke I could see it looking good, me here. The girl that I am sharing the apartment with is hard to talk to. She is a guitar player and a painter. Everybody in this building is making things. I wish I knew more about her. She is too good for me, but maybe not. Short black hair and blue eyes. She is very thin and very tall.

There was a plaque in the airlock of the Walt Whitman Service Center that said about how Walt Whitman had a new sort of poem that was helped by his character. He was part of the poems - that is what it

said. It said that the poems were good but that he was good too and therefore the poems were very good. I think that is nice. I do not understand much of anything, but I like that I can look at a photograph of somebody and know that they are good and that what they make is good. I hope that there will always be a Walt Whitman gas station between New York City and Philadelphia. It would be nice if they built a big sculpture of him by the pumps. Before I left Calgary, when I was on a stage at Dickens Pub, before I had met Sean Nicholas Savage, I cut the front page off of a copy of *Leaves of Grass* and wrote the songs that I was going to play on the back. I wanted to give it to Sean Nicholas Savage and I wanted it to be nice, I also wanted him to be impressed by me. He had not heard of Walt Whitman, I had not read any of Walt Whitman's poems but I had heard of him and had the book. Sean Nicholas Savage said that after the show we should drink together and talk about how smart we are.

The smokestacks of the Cascade Laundromat are sticking up across the road. The building is four stories tall, it is built of red bricks. It is more of a laundry factory, as if all of New York City's dirty laundry ends up there. Outsourced from every inexpensive and expensive laundromat across the state. I wonder what comes out of the smokestacks. The staff are black. They wear light blue smocks and come out to have cigarettes. Some of the windows are broken. There are giant rusty vents running along the outside upwards – this is on the corner of Myrtle and Marcy, in Brooklyn. The guard at the main door knows everybody. He is old and black. He only yells, he never talks quietly, probably because all of the foot traffic is on

the other side of the street. Poor man. I had to ask the thin girl what the word is for when a company needs something done but can't do it themselves - so they send it to another company. She knew that it was outsourcing and I knew that was right.

While I was in the kitchen pouring Old Granddad a mouse ran across the countertop and was caught in a mousetrap by the stove. It was right in front of me and I watched as it slowly died. I called to the thin girl. She came out of her room in her sleeping shorts and a thin sleeping shirt. I moved the dead mouse for her into the garbage can. I talked to her for the first time. I poured my drink and went back out onto the balcony, where I am now. I will go slowly. I like her, I need time. I probably need to not drink. Maybe she likes me. I think that she does. It would be good to read this to her. I had seen the mouse earlier, it went from behind the microwave into one of the burners on the stove - I wish that she would come out of her room and talk to me. I am drinking and she is drinking. Maybe in a little while when her drinks start to affect her. She has three bottles of good beer, if she drinks all three then maybe we will have a conversation.

Now I write, on my balcony, in New York City, with the roommate girl that I am in love with, so close. The Old Granddad bourbon two-six that I bought is close to empty. I have become drunk. I would hope that my normal self will leave this alone, but probably my undrunk self will come along and scratch this all out. I tried my best to talk to that pretty girl who is my roommate, I went into the kitchen, she was there, she seemed like she was interested in me. I don't know what to do. I love her. How old is she. Maybe she is old-

er than me. Maybe I've never drunken so much. They say bourbon is very influential. I agree that these are very drunken lines. Maybe you can tell. I am not sure what I hope. I had a shower and brushed my teeth in case I had a chance to kiss her. My eyes can no longer see the words. The bottle is empty and it used to be full.

On Delancy and Allen in a chain coffee shop that I bought nothing from. It is hard to find an unassuming place to sit. I have been walking around all day looking for the man who is going to offer me a job and a place in history. Where could he be. I bet he is on the Lower East Side. The only way that he will recognize me is if we are walking head on down an uncrowded sidewalk. It will happen. It can't be any other way because I can't say the first words and I definitely can't chase him or follow him. He is too well known. I know that he will remember me. When will I meet him. Maybe tomorrow, I think I will see him tonight. Later tonight I will be on a stage in Brooklyn again. Out the window it is very busy. A lot of cars. I need to go and find an unassuming place to have a drink. It is very hard to find a place that serves drinks that you can write in without looking out of place. I will go up Allen now.

I walked all around the Lower East Side looking for him, planning what I will say. Deciding if I will show him this, thinking about how good it will be for this book when I find him. I have been making things happen by knowing that they will. I do not think there is any mystery in it. It is scientific. I am in a place called Local 138; I chose to sit by the front window. At first I was going to tell him that I was looking for face paint

but then I found some. I was going to tell him that I was looking for famous people so that I could see how they walk but that was a lie. I lied earlier when I said that I was drinking Old Granddad. I was actually drinking Old Crow. I like the name Old Granddad, but I could not find it. I felt badly about lying after I wrote it but it sounded good so I left it. I bought a bottle of Heaven Hill today, again because there was no Old Granddad. The waitress just put a candle on my table, it looked bad so I blew it out and hid it. I don't believe in fiction because it is mostly lies. I don't believe in dialog because I know I cannot remember it exactly and it ends up being lies.

I was thinking just now about going back through the whole book and finding all the untruthful things I have said and then putting an asterisk after them. Maybe putting one at the bottom of the page if there is something untruthful on that page. If there were two untruthful things I would put two asterisks. That way you would not know where the untruthful thing was on the page and would have to guess. It would be clever and it would be engaging. It would not say at the front of the book what the asterisks were for. Everybody is excited about Saturday night on the street. People are drinking and making plans. I should be going back to Brooklyn soon to tune my guitar. I would like to have another Anchor Steam here but I do not have time. I have begun to notice that this book is better on this end. The beginning is good but not as good as over here, the first two pages are bad. Maybe this will not make sense because I have gotten rid of the beginning. The beginning was from the west, now I am in the east. The east is better than the west. Every-

body is good in New York City.

Page 100. On the roof of a building on Thames and Morgan in Brooklyn. The building is home to a large group of young idealist types. It is an interesting place. It will go down in history. I played some songs last night on the stage in the main room. Maybe fifty people are living here, making things. Not many of them came into the main room for the songs. Fifteen Thames Street. Last night Fireball came to New York City from Philadelphia on the bus. She stayed in my apartment on my bed and I only recall parts of it. I remember putting my hand over her mouth. Lisa Widmur, Andrea Carroll, Valerie Skalicky, Leah Gudmundson, Ali Biddell, Kathryn McCaughey, Fireball. In the morning Fireball and I went to Central Park. In the morning the thin girl was angry and kicked me out for being loud. I miss her and I miss that apartment, but we were being loud. Fireball was being loud and dishonest; all girls are loud and dishonest at night. From the roof now in Brooklyn I have a view of a film they are projecting on the wall across the street. I can hear the soundtrack. The film is taking up the side of the whole building. It is a strange old film. The film is about a heavy woman named Devine who likes eggs.

I accidentally wrote on page 102 and left page 101 blank. So this is really page 103, but in the place of page 101. It turns out that the film is named Pink Flamingos. The people watching the film are funny. One of them has curly hair. He is wearing an old blue shirt, sitting on the sidewalk watching the film on the wall. He tells a story about when last weekend he made fun of a group of hipsters on Bedford. That is a hard thing to do because by definition a hipster is a person

who defines people who are like himself or herself as hipsters. The one with curly hair and maybe the rest are in a hard situation. Maybe they think that I am a hipster, but I am not. There are no young people anywhere who admit to being one. It is only an insult. I like that. Young idealists know that everybody but themselves and their friends are being dishonest. What I know is that everybody is the same, so I have trouble with groups. Some of the young people who live here will go to the summit; they are planning to push around in the mob. I wonder what portion of the mob at summits is there only to push around.

Probably page 100 here will not end up being page 100 later on. Some pages have drawings on them, some have maps, some have phone numbers, some are torn out. It would be nice to include them but I would worry that the drawings are not good and would make you think less of me. The movie on the side of the building is very good. The story of Devine, the filthiest girl alive. It is a nice night. Everybody below is laughing. I am laughing with them from the roof. There is a pervert in the film and when he gets out of his car there is a close-up on the car's taillights and they are pointy and red. Everybody on the street below is on old couches and chairs and mattresses. Everybody is enjoying the film. The way that the film is composed it makes you think that you could make a film easily. It is a very good film. I am trying to think of something interesting to say but I am distracted by two people in a bed and there are chickens between them, and the people are four stories tall.

This is where page 101 is supposed to be. My cheap pen rolled off the roof a minute ago and fell three

stories. It landed in front of my motorcycle below on the sidewalk. Now I am writing with my drawing pen. I am worried about mentioning Pink Flamingos. Not that it was on the wall, or that it was good, but mentioning the title. In one of His books, my favorite one, he writes about The Purple Hills, ever since then I have been looking for it. Now, when I read that favorite book by him I get confused about The Purple Hills. I bought beer and loose-leaf Top tobacco with my parent's credit card. Everybody is making their own cigarettes in Brooklyn, now I am trying. It is hard I am told. Fireball took the Chinatown bus back to Philadelphia. She is strange. I was afraid that I would find the man I am trying to find while I was walking with her.

I am glad that I am getting to write this. I am proud of this. I like to tell people when I meet them that I am writing a novel. I wonder when I tell them what they think it would be about. It is about something. I am excited to be here. Alive now. Even to be on this roof in Brooklyn. In the year Two Thousand and Forty-Nine when all of these people and all of these places are well known this book will also be well known. It is nice to think about how right now I am not well known and this book is not well known but how that will change. I like to wonder what people are thinking as they read that. Maybe they are thinking that I must be worthless, it is true, but so is everything else. There is power in worthlessness. It is in worthlessness that all things begin. When I tell people that I am writing a novel it is because they ask what I am doing. When I ask them what they are doing they say that they have a job. Most things are jobs. Even going on vacation is a

job because if you never went on vacation you would not be able to perform your job. Going on vacation is the most important part of your job.

I believe they are called the Glass Bead Collective, at this place. This might be their roof I am on. It is their roof. I hope that this book makes it into their library. The film is now over and a girl is now checking her mail. Her mail is being projected forty feet tall on the building across the street, she is aware that it is clever of her. She is on a networking site now, which is even more clever. Everybody is impressed. Maxim Lester is down there. He does not know that I am up here. I am living in his room with Luke Dyer. They are musicians. I don't believe that they will become famous. It is the wish of all young people to become famous. Being famous is important. It means that you can do what you want. I want to walk around and have people that I like but don't know liking me before I meet them. I also would like to have a lot of money. On the street now everybody is going inside. There is a black JMB man playing an electric guitar on the middle of the road, he is blocking the projector, his shadow is on the wall thirty feet high. Maybe all young black art people are JMB men in New York City.

Earlier I went down from the roof to get my bottle of Heaven Hill. There was a girl in the kitchen washing dishes. I went to get some water from the sink and knocked a glass onto the floor but it did not break. I asked her if the water from the taps in New York City is good, she said that in Manhattan it is very good but that she was not sure about what it was like in Brooklyn. I will not describe her. While I was walking out of the kitchen I dropped the bottle and it broke all over

the floor. She asked me if it was my bottle. I pulled some old sheets out of the garbage in the main room by the stage to wipe it up. She said that I did not have to be too thorough. I picked up the larger shards of glass and swept up the rest. Her bedroom was a home-built loft overlooking the stage, she watched me from there. I washed it all down with another sheet from the garbage and went outside to see the rest of Pink Flamingos. That was before I went looking for beer. She was not friendly, even before I dropped the first glass. She knew that I was worthless but she was under the impression that it is possible not to be.

We are all sleeping in a very small room. A person who lives here comes out onto the roof and wants to know who I am. I tell him that I drove my motorcycle here from Vancouver. I point at the motorcycle below and he is not worried. I can get away with a lot now that I have this book. The more trouble that I am in the better it is for the book. Everything is better for the book, this book. I have noticed that where I am has an impact on what I think. It is going well in New York City. Very good people write in one place, it must be because they have one idea. I am on the roof again. I am thinking about the weird sandwich. About how all of my weird sandwiches are Americans. All except one. The exception was born where I was born. The same country, different sides. But he moved down here as soon as he could. You can do anything and you can be anywhere, all you have to do is not worry so much. I could use a weird sandwich now but I do not have any money for one. They are three dollars at the end of the street.

Speed is important. People have very short atten-

tion spans. If someone has an idea and if it is your job to help make their idea into a thing, then you must work quickly. People have ideas all the time, especially when they get to see their own ideas in front of them. When it is my job to work with people's ideas I work very fast. People do not care about quality half as much as they care about time.

Most of the time people are only trying to be honest. A lot of honesty is misinterpreted as being important. People are always looking for answers. They find what they want to find, even if there is not anything important in what they are looking at. Sometimes I worry that this book might be considered important. Sometimes I worry more about that than if it were to be considered unimportant. It must be good if you are reading it. Hopefully you are not my mother or my friend. It is very late now. Everybody is asleep. I should be asleep. I will go to sleep. Thames. Thinking about quotes. I hope that I am quoted. I wonder what quote they will choose. I wonder how many people in New York City plan on being quoted. I wonder how Fireball's bus trip went. I can see her as I fall asleep. I fall asleep on the floor of the small room; the walls are covered in quotes that have been finger painted on with red and blue paint. The roof is covered in glow-in-the-dark stars.

While I was sleeping I had a dream in which a girl was telling me to keep this book just as it is written on these pages. When I woke up I went to Cooper Union. The plan was for me to walk in and walk out a student. It did not work that way. They gave me a brochure and told me to apply by mail. I went afterwards and sent them a message that said I had been into the office

but it did not work. I mentioned that my art is good. I asked if I could meet with somebody. Now I am on First Avenue and East Fourteenth Street. All sorts of people are passing the window. Some of the people are very well dressed. Some of the girls have very good bodies and faces. I overheard a man in Tribeca say:

“Yes, you know I was in Fiji, for my honeymoon.”

The way he said it was competitive, the other man was only listening. They wore suits. I am going to find the man that I have been looking for today. I will see him on the Lower East Side. I still have red face paint under my eyes from two nights ago. It looks good. Going back to Philadelphia tomorrow.

East Ninth Street and Avenue A across from Thompkins square park in Doc Hollidays, drinking very cold Coney Island Lager. The afternoon is hot; the sun is low and orange. There is nobody who recognizes me, talking to me and annoying me and I am not in Paris. It is not a very nice place. Still I am waiting for the man to find me. I will tell him that I have only ever met three people in person who live in New York City and that I have already stumbled across the other two. At the beginning of this book I am going to state that all of the characters and events are fictional. I might do that. It would not be true. I thought of it because I was feeling badly about how conceited I am. It is not that I really am, not compared to other people. Everybody is the same and some people are good at hiding things. I am also good at hiding things but I am curious about what it is that I hide, it looks like I hide that I am conceited. On the street out the window are two young dressed up girls with a very young man. They are all wearing sunglasses of different types and all

are holding onto long black cigarettes. I wonder how they all managed to come together. I have decided that I will do what I want and get what I want. You should not think too hard over decisions. You should make quick decisions and if they involve work then you should work quickly so that you find out quickly if it was the right decision. If it was the wrong decision then you can make another decision, at least you will know that the first decision was wrong, it will not be a mystery.

When this book is finished I will mail it all over. I was just imagining what somebody older and who reads would think of this book. Maybe their mailboxes are all already overflowing with books identical to this one written by people identical to myself. Maybe they would read one sentence and go scrambling across the room to find their chequebooks and telephones. Maybe they would read a few pages and send me a letter that says to keep it up. Old people who read books own book companies. Old people who read have the money. When this book is done I will be very forceful. There are so many handsome young men going past on bicycles. Everybody who is handsome in New York City has an expressionless face. It is very serious to be handsome in New York City. I bite my fingernails when I am walking alone to seem less serious. I do many things to be innocent. I might even be innocent. Sometimes I pretend to be slow because then people are forced to be honest. It could even be that I am slow, but it is not likely. I am the least slow person that I have ever met. Maybe all slow people think that about themselves.

It is not a journal because it is a novel. How could

it not be. It could not be if every page flowed into the next. If I had never said that each page is its own thing and has no connection to the following one. I will spend time making sure that this is a novel. Fireball is organizing her new apartment in Philadelphia. I am at the Life Café on East Tenth Street and Avenue B on Manhattan. I am watching and listening to people. There are tables on the sidewalk and I am sitting at one. The people I am looking at can see me, I wonder what they think, probably they think I am writing in a journal. Maybe they think that I have chosen to sit outside in order to be seen - that is why, but it is only to be seen by the man. After Philadelphia I will go to Montreal to plan a big trip with Sean Nicholas Savage. We will go all over the country becoming famous. We are good because we are both conceited. My motorcycle is parked outside on the street in front of the building where I am sleeping under the stars. The area is rough. Hopefully Sean Nicholas Savage is happy to see me up there. Montreal is close to New York City. I hope that Cooper Union admits me based on the letter that I sent them. People are just people. If you know one you know them all. Sometimes I get carried away and believe that somewhere there are people who are much better than me.

When I said that the older people who read would tell me to keep it up it was not because of the quality of this book but because of the quality of those older people. This book is one of the best books ever written. I have ordered another beer. My bill will be seven dollars; it will be hard to pay when you can have ten beers at the store for that price. I am only interested in doing things that I think are important. Eventually

I will be paid for doing those things. If I were to do a job that I did not believe in I might start to lose my interest in doing what I feel is important. I have known people that work jobs they do not like to work and it has made it so that they do not have time to do what they think is important to do. That will not be me. It is possible to make money doing things you think are important. It is also good to have plans. Without plans your energy is loose. The plan is the center. If you know that you will follow the plan and you know that your plan will work, then it will. It is because you will start thinking more and more about that plan, the plan will become so well thought out that eventually it will become foolproof.

In the dream, after the girl told me not to change this book, I overheard her talking to her friend about me. She told her friend that I was very good and that I could notice things that very few people could notice. I always find money on the ground. I feel badly about picking up anything smaller than a dollar because I know that I have no use for it and maybe it could buy somebody soup. I pick up anything larger than a dollar because the things I like are expensive and I can always use the money. It was a nice dream. The two girls were thin. Famous people have no trouble with anything. They have thin girls coming to them. Their pictures are on people's fridges. All famous people are more aware. It happens afterwards. They wanted something and they got it. That is better than wanting something and not getting it. So many people want things, the people who get things know somewhere that they will get them. When I was leaving the Life Café one of the waiters told me to leave. He thought

I was from the street. I thought that was nice. My clothes are not in good shape. Maybe someday after I am dead somebody will include a photograph of me in this, or maybe I will include one.

I am back on the roof now. Now I have a table and a chair. The house is known as the Surreal Estate. I will live here after everything else is done. Somebody needs to pay me so that I can pay rent. On the subway I saw another young black JMB man. There are so many. They look so good. The one in the subway was JMB reborn. I look like my heroes as well. Maybe if you can imitate something or someone then you can learn why and how it works. From there you can figure something out for yourself. New York City is better than anywhere else. People are more open to things that are different than the things happening all the time. Next door to this roof is a motorcycle shop. Big bikes. Everything is good. Kathryn McCaughey sends a message that is very long. It is written in her complicated way. Dark and complicated. I do not like the way it is written so I do not read it. If she wrote a book that way I would not read it. I am not sure who those people are that do dark complicated things, people who live in caves maybe.

The more that you do something the better you get at it. That is not true for many things. Many things depend on what you want. If you do not want something but are after it anyways, you will not get it, if it is a skill then you will not get better at that skill. Maxim Lester and Luke Dyer go out for the night. I do not go with them because I like the roof. I have drinks on the roof. I have candles but they go out with the wind. I am thinking about how when you read a good book

or see something good or hear something good that was made by somebody your own age or younger it is intimidating. I was thinking that maybe you are intimidated by me. I would like that. Maybe you are the reverse of being intimidated. That is good too. That means you are better than me, but what that means I don't know. There is a young girl sleeping on the roof. There are twelve airplanes in the sky. Luke Dyer and I counted them before he left. I am pouring the liquid wax from the candles to dig them deeper, so that they are protected from the wind. They keep blowing out and I keep lighting them again as it is very late and very dark. I can hear airplanes and sirens and people talking in another language. Fire trucks are honking. Right now sometimes Fireball is referred to by her real name. I will go through and make sure that she is only Fireball. She is not a real fireball compared to some others that I know. She seemed like a fireball at first. I have a friend in Vancouver named Cam Dales. He is a very good person. He is not my friend. He is not my friend because he really is a fireball. I am not a fireball so I cannot catch up with him. Sometimes he slows down and I catch up, this is how I know that he is a good person, the few times I have caught up. One day he will be well known. He would have something good and complicated to say if I asked him about that, just as he would have something good and complicated to say about most things. He is smart and complicated and fast. He has a degree. He uses it to make money now but also he uses his face and his music. Maybe one day I will catch up to him. Fireballs generally travel in groups. A group of fireballs are impossible to speak with. Lone fireballs will sometimes slow

down. That is when you can catch them. So Fireball does have a name, but I will not say it. Cam Dales can have a name because maybe you know him or maybe you are him. I would like that because I like him and I want him to read that I think he is a good person.

I know only one famous person. The man. The one I have been trying to have find me on the street. I cannot write his name because it would not sound good. I know that I know other people who will be famous but are not famous now. I know I have been places and walked down streets that will become famous. There is a JMB man below my roof, walking down the street. I like Africa more than I like America. People dressing up like their weird sandwiches all over the world. I want to be somebody's hero, a lot of people's hero. That way I could know that in some way it was important that I was born. The moon is right in front of me, overtop of the wall where Pink Flamings was projected. The moon is almost full, but probably it is waning. I hope not. Once Benjamin Marvin told me that now that I sing everything that I say sounds like part of a song. I can picture Benjamin Marvin walking around in Paris alone with his 502 looking for images. No reason for the images, he is excited and curious. He is especially excited to see the images much later when he can afford to have them developed. His little beard and small body in France.

JMB died of needles soon after AW died by accident. He died by his own hands. HST died similarly. JK died by drinking. HW died at 29. My real hero is still alive. When he dies I will go to his funeral. I will die in Mozambique, in Mocimboa da Praia. I won't be the first person to die there. A lot of people die there.

When I was there I thought maybe I would die. More than anything I was sure that I was alive. Sleeping on a straw mat in an old church. I know that this book is almost over because I keep almost saying things that I am sure I have already said. The church was very dirty. My motorcycle being fixed down the road by a bicycle mechanic. Cold air at night. Reading during the day. Watching the white South African contractor work on the church. Turning it into a camp for oil company staff from America. Me staying with him because the oil company staff were occupying the only hotel. Kingsley Holgate who I met on a ferry over the river separating Tanzania from Mozambique coming past the church with his jeeps, everybody waving to me surprised that I had made it over the long dirt road from the border.

There are no detours between New York City and Philadelphia. Sitting out in front of the Thomas Edison Service Center under a very hot sun. Going to make some things down there. Must find subway tiles. Then to Montreal. There is nothing that I must do any time soon. It is a strange feeling. Not long ago I would have had to be in Vancouver right now for school. I was going to write about Thomas Edison but I really don't know much about him. I could look him up but that would be dishonest, especially if I did not write that I had looked him up. I stopped again at the Walt Whitman Service Center. I had a cheeseburger from Roy Rogers. It was not ironic. Mostly I wanted to read his plaque again, about invincible things. In Philadelphia it is hot and Fireball is not home. I rang her buzzer. Maybe she is at work. I am around the corner on Baltimore and Forty-eighth Street at a table under an

umbrella.

I am so excited to make this book into a book that I am having a hard time continuing to write it. Sometimes I catch myself feeling good or being excited but it does not show on my face. I make an effort to smile any time that I am happy. I have been trying to always show myself as a happy person, especially when I am walking alone. It has the effect of making me feel better if I am not feeling entirely well. People want to talk to you when you look happy. Being happy is very important. I know that I can do anything when I am feeling good. Right now I am not sure what to do or where to go. Nothing is very satisfying. I have gotten so that I need to always have a date that is just around the corner that I will be on a stage. Right before it is my turn on the stage, and if while I am on the stage somebody smiles knowingly, those are the times I feel the best. I also feel good after I write something into this book that I am sure somebody will like. Money makes me feel the worst, when I need it for something but I don't have any of it. Very soon I will have a lot of it so it does not bother me as much anymore. I want to find somebody other than you and this book to talk to. This book will be called *Under the Summer*. I have been digging as fast as I can. Whether or not I have gotten very far is relative to how far you are yourself. I will be on the front instead of my name because that means something and I like what it means. In Clark Park now. By the Fishbowl, in West Philadelphia. It is a nice afternoon with trees. There are a lot of trees in Pennsylvania. Big leaf trees. The people under the trees are young and many of them have books. It is a very good afternoon. Slight breeze, children playing,

dogs playing, parents playing, young people reading. People on bicycles, somebody singing, West Philadelphia is a good place to be. It makes me want to put all of my dirty black clothing in the garbage and get low white shoes and loose pants and a white shirt. It makes me want to go out to a restaurant and eat a three course meal. Mostly it makes me want to look as clean as I feel on the inside. Tomorrow I will do all those things and become clean. I will put away HM and find WW. It would be especially nice if I were to smell good, like I used to. It is easy to smell bad when you are away with only the clothing you are wearing. If it is too simple then that is fine. If this had been before, when my heroes were different, it would be more complicated. I put a lot of time into my heroes. I want to beat my heroes but first I will find out why they are my heroes. It will help me to beat them. Something is changing and I like it. It is becoming harder to mention what I am thinking about my thoughts. It is because now I am writing what I think about my thoughts to begin with. Everybody thinks. Everybody has the same thoughts. The difference is in what people think of those thoughts. They might like some and not like others. They may feel guilty about some thoughts and they might say other thoughts aloud. Still they are the same thoughts as everybody else. It is dangerous to make things that you do not know personally because you might create a thought that does not exist. Thoughts go around and around. They are all there to start with and they will always be. That is how you can tell a lie, if it is not a thought that you or anyone would ever have. You can lie about what you think about your thoughts easily, but you cannot lie

about your thoughts. Everybody would know.

Today is September the First. When it is the year Two Thousand and Forty I will be fifty-three years old. That is my father's age now. Maybe I will be living on the moon. I hope something changes. Maybe nothing will. I will be famous and rich and I will send my father a cheque for what I owe him. While I was driving I worried about why I would want to be famous and about why there is something that I don't like when I write it. It is because I have been told that you need a good reason for wanting to be famous. That is not true. If that were true you would need a reason for everything. You do not need reasons, reasons are slow and complicated. What is better than having reasons is being sure. Reasons are a problem for sure people because sure people are going to get what they want no matter what. Sometimes sure people are made to invent reasons for people who must have them. It is embarrassing to be made to lie. Some people like reasons so much that they will give you them without even being asked. The worst is when you have no reasons and you can't even invent any and you need them to keep moving forwards.

I left Clark Park to find a place to charge my phone. When I came back to the park I sat in the very same spot, where I am sitting now. Right in front of me a four-leaf clover is growing. I picked it and rested it in my helmet. I don't know what to do with it. I am glad that I found it now though. Four-leaf clovers are very good luck and luck can be very important. I will save the luck until I am back in New York City. I will use it to find the man. I was not going to go back, I was going to go to Montreal, but now I will go back and try

my luck. I was not using luck before. I was using will. I did not know that I was lucky, now I know. It is a useful thing to know. With luck and will combined one is liable to achieve anything. I have never known somebody to possess both. My four-leaf clover is strange. The fourth leaf sprouts from the stem of one of the original three. Maybe that is how they all are. I was not looking for one. I have looked before and never found one; this is the first one I have ever seen. I am glad that I found it in West Philadelphia.

Fireball and I went to a hardware store to buy tiles. Fireball drew a mustache on Jesus, even though Jesus already has a mustache. I wrote with caulking on a piece of wood that I am a better artist than you. Underneath is my name, and then it is signed. I know that it is a good painting because it is an ugly thing to do and it is also true. Her Jesus and my wood are hanging in a gallery on South Street. It is hard to be modest but from now on I will be. In real life I will be. My feeling is that all people who make good things are secretly conceited and they really do believe that the things that they make are the best things. Fireball said last night that she considers some people to be better than her at making things. Mostly people from before. We were lying on our backs late at night, early in the morning, in her living room. We decided that some people have made very good things in their lives, but that does not mean that you cannot also make very good things, or things even better, if that is what you want to do. It was all very good in the end, better than I would have put it. We had been having a lot of wine so we eventually fell asleep there on the floor. That was where I woke up.

At some point last night I grabbed hold of a very large painting that I had made when I was first in Philadelphia, I took it outside to break it. It was painted on glass and it only said 'I will be famous for this' and then my name underneath. The problem was that I meant famous for the words, not the way it was painted or anything at all about the actual painting. Looking at it you might have thought I meant I would be famous for painting. Fireball liked it anyways and saw me taking it out. She ran after me barefoot and the door locked behind her. She grabbed it from me but as she did I kicked at it and it shattered in her hands. Her foot was cut. We were locked out. It is important to take care of the things that show your past. To make a good trail. Sometimes I think that. The painting was not right. I made another after that and it was closer. It is hard to isolate things for other people. It is nice to break breakable things. Sometimes people make things just to break them. I want the story of my life and the things that I made and the things that I said to all be good. Bad things are good too. The problem is with gaps. The glass painting was a gap. I know how I want to think about all of my thoughts. I know how I want it to all look in the future.

It would be nice to have ideas and to keep the ideas separate from how you live. My ideas are in my actions now and it is not nice to look at. I will try to separate them; if I do not separate them soon I will loose everybody. Sometimes I see myself on film or hear my voice as it is recorded and that is when I can tell.

In Montreal Sean Nicholas Savage introduces me to all of his friends and all of his friends are good thinkers and good people who live in various large spac-

es with each other on the Plateau. The Lab Synthese, where Sean Nicholas Savage is living and where I am staying, is a very big room with very high ceilings. At one end of the room they have built a stage. Sean Nicholas Savage and I play on the stage for everybody one night. Off the big room are a series of bedrooms. Everybody is young and smart and has a good story. Everybody likes me and I like everybody, I make so many new friends. Sean Nicholas Savage tells me about his girls and about sleeping with them. He tells me it is not a big deal. I agree with him but I don't touch people and maybe I never will. I only touch people if I have been drinking and even then I regret it afterwards. It is embarrassing. I will not sleep with any more people.

This morning after I left Montreal to go back west I got very excited about myself. I was excited about being famous as I was going down the Kings Highway. The sun was out and it was hot. The highway was busy. I thought about how I had such a good idea and about how that idea was new, and about how that idea was going to make me famous. My motorcycle felt good going through Toronto. I thought about myself mostly but I also thought about all of my new friends in the east. About how good they are. I told Montreal about West Philadelphia and they were surprised. Nobody knows about West Philadelphia. People know about Brooklyn and Omaha and San Francisco. People know about Berlin. I know about Mocimboa da Praia and Gwaldam and Astoria and Lhasa. I know about Hue. If I were older I would be in Astoria.

I wonder where I am now. Sitting at a desk in a motel west of Toronto. Unsure of the name of the town.

Thinking about how little I like Ontario. In Vancouver I will get rid of all of my things and then go back east to start things up. Today is September Eighth. Today would have been my first day of school. Sean Nicholas Savage and I have planned our tour. There will be thirty shows in thirty cities, all of the cities that we know good people in. Sean Nicholas Savage writes about a girl named Sonya mostly. He shows me her and now I like her as much as he does, and she likes me. I am thinking about her now and also thinking about delusions. Sitting here in this nameless town. Stripes is on television. I am having Holsten Premium beer from bottles, it does not have any unique flavor but it is making me feel better about being alone. I am not even worried now about taking from Him. He was not embarrassed and I am so it is not the same.

This book is not for now. This book will be nice to read in forty years. This book is for people who are young, or young in spirit, who live in the year Two Thousand Forty-nine - for people who are worried that they have to do something a certain way or else nobody will care. In Two Thousand Forty-nine it will be even harder to be honest. Even now it is hard. The more that you hide and the more that you lie the more popular that you are. I recommend that you suffer for honesty, at least you will not have to feel sorry all of the time for not being the person that you are. Before there was a web of things already said there were only honest people. Now everybody thinks that you need to know about everything that has already been said and made before you are allowed to make something of your own. If you want to do something then you should immediately do it.

I am glad on page 136 that that I can speak and somebody will listen. Cody Hicks writes and so does Evan Clifford Morson-Glabik, Chad Buccholz also writes. Evan Clifford Morson-Glabik writes poems that I do not understand, though I have never understood any poem by anybody. Cody Hicks writes but I have never read anything that he has written. Chad Buccholz writes, I am told. None of the three write books. I am not worried about writing books because I write bad books. If they wrote books they would probably be good books. Everybody wants other people to listen to them, the only people who are ever listened to are the people who are careful to only ever say things that they believe in. You can do whatever you want and say whatever you want; you do not have to think at all about other people. The less you think about other people the more you think like them. If you consider other people's ideas you lose yours and everybody else's idea because everybody's idea is the same as yours. Say what you want to say and don't worry, if you do that then you will say what everybody is thinking.

Kathryn McCaughey wrote another message. I do not like how she writes or how she thinks. Everything is bad and dark. She must be in the Midwest by now, driving Brian M around. It is possible only to appeal to people who make things. It is possible to trick people, or you can trick some people while other people are aware that they are being tricked. Kathryn McCaughey is driving a car for people who are no good. She is better than them but she has to drive their car, her car. She likes somebody and is now with somebody who does or does not know about when Kathryn McCaughey and I were in Calgary. The town is

called Mississauga. I asked the receptionist. There was a young person at the desk and I felt proud in front of him to be asking where I was, where I am now. Maybe he felt ashamed that he knew the name of the town he was in. I hoped that.

Do not write anymore, there is nothing left to write. When you have nothing to say you should not say anything. This should be the end of the book, but it is too short and should be longer. In Montreal I met a person named Luke Nicholas Neima and we were drinking at Lab Synthese and talking about making books and I told him that the book I was making now, this book, was going to be long. He liked that; he liked it because of the length. It is hard to make a long book. I keep thinking about going back and adding pages in between the pages already written, but that would only make it longer. This is supposed to be a live book. It will have to end soon and it will not be very long. Worrying about that now, staying in Madison, not sure which state. The afternoon was so nice on the Interstate Ninety. Watching the sun come down. Admiring the long shadow of myself and my motorcycle on the shoulder, watching the shadow get longer until eventually it was on the fields. Sitting way back on the seat and holding on only by the fingertips of my right hand and resting my left hand on my lap. Dreaming about my future. About how nice everything is going to be. Singing as I drive. Finally not being lonely. Company can be very lonely. Being alone on highways is not lonely.

It is too bad that I was never able to find the man in New York City. Maybe someday he will come looking for me. I wrote down that I should mention him

now that I am leaving. After I wrote about him just now it did not feel right because I only needed him to give me a job. There is nothing that he will ever need me for. It is mostly bad because if I had found him it would have been good for this book. This book though is this book. A lot of things would have been good for this book. I went outside to play my guitar in the parking lot, now I will go out again. My room is in a hallway on the main floor. I am closer to Cambridge than I am to Madison. The State is called _____. On the page I wrote a line, when I make this into a book I will replace the line with the name of the State. If I were doing what I am supposed to be doing I would leave it as a line. I don't know what State I am in now so it is not fair for me to pretend that I do. Even though I know that I will end up leaving it as a line, which is also unfair. If I had filled the line in later on I would have been doing something bad. I drove through downtown Chicago and it was bad. It was clear blue sky but the city was in low gray smog. A tall black building stuck up from the smog with two evil gray horns on its head. The building was from a movie about the future, predicting the future to be bad. They called it haze instead of smog on television just now.

I made a plan to write about my motorcycle accident in Cambodia. It is a good story and so I wanted to tell it. To work it into this motorcycle story. I tried to write it but could not for two reasons. The first reason was that I only wanted to tell it because I wanted you to know where I have been and what I have done. The second reason I could not tell the story is because it did not happen in Cambodia, it happened in Vietnam,

before Cambodia. I wanted to say that it happened in Cambodia because Vietnam is a place that many people have motorcycled across. Not as many people cross Cambodia. It is a good story and it is the only time I have ever fallen off of a motorcycle. I can't tell it because it does not fit and it would only be so that you were impressed. I want to tell it now but I can't. In my notebook it says to tell the story and then to admit afterwards that it was in Vietnam and not Cambodia, then there is an arrow to the note that says to write about what it means to be dishonest on purpose while having plans to confess. What does it mean to talk about that.

Coming into New Salem in the late afternoon under blue sky but with a bigger and blacker cloud that I have ever seen, sitting on the horizon. Thinking about good and bad all day on the highway. Making notes on my gas tank. Mostly thinking about how good and bad are not at the top and bottom of a scale, they are part of a circle. If you were to look at the circle it would start with bad, then it would go through mediocre, and then it would reach good. Good and bad are right beside each other. The very worst and the very best are the same thing. There is a lot of mediocre between them. It is that way with everything. It is always a circle. It is never just a line. Perfect things are neither good nor bad, they are both and so they cancel each other out. On the highway I was pretending that I was famous and that somebody was interviewing me. I was telling them that I might be bad but that it is good because of the circle.

New Salem is in North Dakota. There is a very big plastic cow on top a hill overlooking the town. Past

the cow to the west is the storm. I watched its lightning out front of this motel with an old man. I pulled a heavy wooden chair out from my room. The wind came first and the old man went inside. Then the rain and the real wind came, I ran inside as the chair took off down the road. It is all happening still. Alexander Cowan in Montreal told me about when he hopped trains from the Atlantic to the Pacific and then back again. His stories were good. He is the same age as me. I did not know that it was still possible to hop trains in the old way. I have decided to hop trains myself. I know that I would be good at it. Sean Nicholas Savage and I must first cross the country and go to all of the comfortable cities to play music. Now I am in a dream. I am glad that I am not a student. In New Salem I am afraid for my life because I now know that my life will be important and good. I went to the store and bought beer. I opened one on the way back to the motel. At the motel there were some men who were drinking, big men. They looked at me and I looked at them. I drank from my beer. Later on I noticed that I had bought non-alcoholic beer. I could not tell from the taste and had been under the impression that I was becoming drunk. I went back to the store and bought more beer. I drank the first two quickly to get where I thought I already was. I put my bottles down where the big men might see them. After the storm came I went inside and set up my writing things, now I am writing in the kitchen beside the sink. I had to go outside in the storm and look for my chair.

Everything goes in a circle. I am glad that I know it. When I was riding today and pretending to be interviewed I was becoming very excited about this

book. I was not worrying that people would like it in the future - I am sure people will like it now. You are reading it. Maybe you will tell me that you like it and think it is good. If you are somebody that I have never met and you want to meet me then I am happy. If you are aware that you know how good or bad you are then everything is fine. When bad people try to make good things the result is mediocre. When good people try to make bad things the result is mediocre. When mediocre people try to make things that are good or bad the result is mediocre. When good people make good things the result is good. When bad people make bad things the result is good. When mediocre people make mediocre things the result is good. You can only make good things if you make them from who you are. Good and bad are personal, but they are still good and bad. What you think is good somebody else might think is bad and what you think is bad somebody else might think is good, but if the thing you made is honest then it is good for everybody.

Tomorrow I will need to sleep one day's drive away from Vancouver. I must be there by six in the afternoon on the Twelfth of September because my parents will be there to collect my most important things. My switchblade, my dog fur and my photographs. Soon I will not own anything and I will not have to take care of anything. I will not have to worry. I will put my motorcycle away. I will have no possessions other than a box hidden in my father's basement. I will be free to become famous. I will go between Montreal and New York City and Philadelphia and I will never have to go west again other than to show my new self to old friends. When Sean Nicholas Savage and I go

in November we will go through Vancouver and my old friends will hear my name on street corners. They will be jealous of me. In Vancouver and Calgary my old friends are my best friends and they do not think I am good. It is something different. When you leave old friends and go by yourself to somewhere new you have a chance to become good. Nobody has ever been good. Being good is a careful show and a show that you can only see so many times.

Look closely at any one person that you consider to be special in some way and you will notice that they are just like you. Nobody has ever been born more capable than somebody else. This is because everybody is the same. The thing that makes it seem that some people are better or worse is their honesty. Very heroic people are very honest people. Heroes do and say what they feel. Un-heroic people are not honest, they want to be something that cannot exist, something that is different than the way everybody is. I don't know for certain, or else I know absolutely. Having beer in New Salem by the sink with a storm outside. What you do with your time is important. Everybody is the same but not everybody has gone around. Not everybody wants to know that everybody is the same. Some people think that there are people who are in some way better than them, and they believe that they could not ever be as good. There are a lot of flies by the sink. There is also a lot of smoke. There is a lot of crashing outside. I think about trying to explain about how everybody is the same and everything is the same. I think about how I already knew about the big cow on the hill. I could see it from the road and I recognized it, so I had to stop. Everybody is thinking what you

are thinking, about everything, the reason you do not think so is because some people are still learning to say what they mean.

By the sink on the wall is a mirror and I can see myself as I write. My face is young. I wonder if anybody who reads this will ever pass through New Salem. I would hope so. I would hope that they would see the cow on the hill and a storm that blows chairs away. I found my chair by the gas station to the north. A heavy wooden chair with padding. Tomorrow I will go through Billings and through Missoula towards Seattle west. When it was my Grandfather and my Father and myself in Montana on our motorcycles last month a bartender told us that Missoula was the cultural center of the state. I am sure that it meant nothing. I will sleep there tomorrow night and it will be Friday night. Probably I will arrive there very late and I will drink in a motel on the outskirts. I will not really see the cultural center on Montana. I write Montana off as being just about the middle of nowhere. It is my favorite state to drive through out of the states that I have driven through. If I do not go to sleep I will continue this book and the book will suffer from drinking. He says not to have any drinks before or during work. I do not agree because having one or a few drinks a day is important and makes you remember how good you are. Soon I will not be in North Dakota.

To make this book longer I could use wider spacing or a slightly bigger font, but maybe you would notice. Maybe you would not notice and you would be impressed by the book's thickness. I will do that. Maybe you will be impressed by the thickness and won't even read this far. Maybe you will read every page and read

the book twice because you are so impressed. If you think that this book is good you should read an AW book. If you think this book is bad you should read a book by JJ. If you think it is good but think that I must have gotten it from somewhere then you can read AMF by Him - or read the note at the beginning of TAFL. I know that this book is as good as all other books. I know because I wrote it. If this book is good then I am good. Same as that if it is bad then I am bad. If it is mediocre then I am mediocre. No matter which way it is it can only be good because it is the same as I am. New Salem at midnight in a motel off of the Interstate Ninety-Four with only a little beer left in the sixth bottle, there was also a can of something else. When people drink they become conceited and there is nothing wrong in that.

When I woke up in New Salem it was foggy and cold. I rode to St. Regis in Montana. When I crossed into Montana the sky immediately parted and the air grew hot. The drive was eight hundred miles. I do not have a windshield or a helmet that covers my face so it was an especially long drive. Now I am in the Fifty Thousand Silver Dollars Motel. I stayed here with my father and grandfather on the way back from Yellowstone. It is important to always confront people that you do not know who want to know who you are. It is especially important if you choose to be in a place where people live. There were people on the television that had people they had never met following them around. They were doing their best to get away. When I am followed I will take the followers aside and find out who they are. I will put off everything else.

Now in Vancouver I have a drink with Evan Clifford

Morson-Glabik at Burts on Main Street. He tells me about being done with school. He tells me about being a poet and a botanist, and about being broke. It sounds good. Soon I will be broke. We will live in Brooklyn. I tell him about how proud I am of this book, but also about how it must end. I never tell him about how it must end. I pay for the drinks and then watch a hero play guitar in a chair alone on a stage without effects in Ambleside Park and it makes me run home excitedly afterwards. Something is happening, people are giving up on complicated things. People are being more straightforward. The end is as near as the beginning. I am glad to be a part of something, even if that something is nothing. Today, now that it is past midnight, my new life can start.