

## STAY CLOSE TO THE OWL

### On Ghosts:

Neither violent nor old, not bloody not headless, neither found on shady lanes nor slate covered hillsides, not in cloudy dark pools, but originating from us. Within us. Their presence is the when of significance, the overflow, overwhelm of our own powers of expression, of the excess of identity, the when of the ordinary that shows up clothed in strangeness, ringed round in foreign odors, the leftover baffling thing, when namely escapes nor confesses not us. So many acute anomalies and obscurities, negative quantities, as little expressive, as little dramatic, above all as little continuous and conscious and responsive as is consistent with their taking the trouble to appear at all. As evoked and predatory creations, something remains unaccounted for, wormed into depths twined with an intense hush in which the sounds of evening drop. Feebly apprehensive at last of any sound, our unnamingselves.

### On RECIPE:

I's a messy. I's wanting, yet messing. I's losing, gone ranging the LIST OF INGREDIENTS, lacking illustrations and worrying an overall drama. I needs you's help. You, you's a messing also. I's willing you's want to give an account of I in INSTRUCTIONS or you's self, either. But our cupboard's bare to would even that still wanting. *For there is no respite without shadows, no husbandry without grief, no queen without her bees eager for the wound.* I's consulating you on YIELDS, ornate and otherwise messy, as I is to you, you is to I, and we translate that smell into any given form. You says I tries to speak but a million words, wanting, yielding, mess our way.

### On Being Ill:

I awake embarrassed to find myself with a hard-on. My hands try to hide it, involuntarily. Getting used to the smell of it, I sit up. I flower while putting on my shoes and the water boils simultaneously. I put my fingers to my lips leaf by leaf, composing in smoke the movement from without inwards limb to core. Could I be as ill as I look? Which deserves no satisfaction, scarcely. Then scarce could be a question for me, for

as ill as I look would be scarce very near. In that case would be nearly nevertheless. Seriously menaced was called sick as ill, between a laugh and a dark confused thing—in hand. A shadow across it. The air once whispering to me now begins to hum. The names of the forest animals, lest losing mean scarecely. Momentoes from the forest animals: thus I am summoned hence. Following along a resistant ear, hard-on wilted in hand, defiant known. I sew my limits. My shoulders twitch with annoyance when it asks me again, that mummer of want, gently does it, furloughs of appeals I tremble, blown out, shaking off the nettles.

#### On Mothers and Periods:

This period that. Bleed period. Interpellate. Period.  
Period mother, searching a period. Bloody period. Clot mother.  
Clotting periods mother me and my Sunday. In bed period with mothers.  
Interpret mothers interpret blood: bleeding, one egg less how many left?  
How many mothers, this mother that mother. Interpellate.  
Mother with a penis, with a bloody penis period.  
Periodic bloodotic motherotic. Interpet mother me.  
Mother of all, periods not for all, eggs blood eggs.  
Days period nights period love and war mother war.  
Negate mother plus period minus days and nights period.  
Sunday mothers Monday bleeds Tuesday wars Wednesday birds  
Thursday fights Friday for Saturday once more Sunday.

#### On Little Big:

*Nox nihil donat.*  
Nothing is the night's gift.

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So decries a little subject in a big system.  
Little Subject scribbles on note pads, records the immeasurable movements of Big System. Little Subject v. Big System: both are pugnacious, both defy all offerings of others. Difference as rule. Little Subject rallies—Big System sustains not a dent. Do either know the gift, night's nothing? Or the night's night?  
Or.

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Or your gift, for you who has what use for, whose subjects are ours, to whom offers so much—in all the senses, movements from word to word, feeling your senses on my tongue as it shapes each syllable, forms thought, attention. How to proceed, make meaning, find no meaning, that intensity. The words invite that gift of night. We move in tandem at times, we who say *no*, the aversive, a kindred ally, the stubborn immobility, silent potent, an obstinate night's nothing, whose *no* unites, disrobes, finds flesh, interrogates the state, of language, of making, and of war, unmakes and disarticulates night's night, all that everyone has worked for, forces, to which we say *no*, the subjects who say *no*, made visible in your ongoing engagement within space.

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Little Subject hoards books, takes more notes, for note-taker presses on, seeks to inquire within. Little Subject pits against, signs, seeks a healer, presses a cheek along the iron tracks, seeks a retreat, wonders at the land unto self.

Big System sighs, imperceptibly. Big System could not, so said, give any details.

Little Subject is fully aware, as fully aware as small subjects are, of how it defines, delimits subjects and articulates lines, that Big Systems love neither what nor knows who.

Big System, let's call it [ ] might detail the contour of [ ]'s macula, of [ ]' nerve. In this Big System degrades little subjects and big systems, alike, both tiny and huge subject their degradation. And no neither can name the insects and shadows.

Little Subject roguely fucks and phraseful. Does Big System know where the bodies are hid?

Big System out-sources remembering, shelf-ready, resource.

Subject flings clay at the walls, muddies the sites, hemmed in, pulls at the edges of self-lived hummings, ribbons an untoward way.

Like sheep, tracing the matter in space, like making the matters of our own body's movement matter. Like ghosts and poems, whose presence makes for more, more *no*, more us, more matter, more than that love.

## On Sisters:

Dearing. You are the bird who sings to us, for us, you my escort in tree-land. A clamor half heard of stiff tongues, a beak at the window, the lure of feathers. Your face sings the world's longing like nothing like roiling helpless water, is inactivity and more longing, grieving for waterfalls and shrubs troubled in your singular chair. Hidden wholly in that kindness which is night. Elastic or magnetic attraction, a sparrow amid forces. What poverty threatened us, of granite and brass, or what we question as fortune, what dollars an hour, the spending of fancy, facts answers with sneers and scowls, stuck on faces, glittering night owls the lure of material, it speaks for itself, summons its imitation, winter's own eye, winter calls, falcons counsel. The touch of waters springs, onwards stirs troubled to your beaten way, broken shells, a hover sounds gliding in the wind over nesting.

## On Collecting:<sup>1</sup>

The movie *The Shining* is about a writer who lives in a house. The house is old and isolated, maybe off the grid, or almost so, since there is a telephone line, but nothing else. The writer is also a collector, he is collecting history, dandy-ish, meanwhile he counts syllables. It's a private act, like other private acts, the writer is making a history for himself and writing himself, but it's not autobiographical. He's trying to figure out history. For example, his house is an index, pointing to different parts of the alphabet: "r" is for rooms, and there are many rooms in the writer's house. One is for collecting, another for murder, and yet another for writing. They are connected by a long hallway called "iota to omega." (Personally, I hate long, dark hallways.) One thing the writer wants is to be glamorous, to be a star, to be the one all others want, simply because he is a star, shining with amazing bone structure. He wants even his fame to be historical yet private, elsewhere, so he rarely leaves his house in the rugged woods. These are some of the things the writer, who is empty of heart, likes to collect: errors, discarded multiplications, prisms, lost codes, unused murder weapons, approximate obstructions, edited prayers and prophecies, imperatives, strangers in strange lands, blind insects, deaf birds, sadness, unfit ghosts, cricket cages woven by absent minded shepherds, shapes of love, of holding, of ballads, of falseness, pink-slip notices, undeliverable mail

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Glück gave me the prompt for this text: to write about a film I had never seen.

written by lovers, architectural syntax, errant hurricanes born in Kansas, palindromes strung together by cord, and rust. This is a horror film so there is a bare bulb hung above a manual typewriter whose ribbon is dried out in parts. He wants in life and in the movie to harm both himself and others. He does this. Primarily through writing, and infrequently through collecting: both his sovereignty, both his horror and his psychology. This makes for a psychological horror movie. (Personally, I hate psychological horror movies.) His collection forms the characters and the scenery, spread through the snow outside and the rooms inside. While never straying far from the rural house that houses both the writing and his horrors, his idiosyncratic form of discovery moves the plot forwards. He is inspired by the sound of snow falling to invite others. We hear this, too. The others come drawn by the fame of his glamour and by the fame of his collection. Twins visit. As twins tend to, these two have many secrets, secret languages and secret hideouts, that they share. (Personally, I hate secrets, those of others in particular, yet twins I personally am drawn to.) These twins, named Phoebe and Mariya, are good at diagramming sentences. One has bangs, the other not. They have a pitiless ideology of play and of work. They form a small army onto themselves but are easily defeated by word play and puns. No match for this writer who collects. The twins leave their animals outside. A big mistake. For their animal secrets might have saved them. The writer now collects twins.

### On the Alphabet:

The ruthlessly efficient, the reducer of sound to space, the alphabet, pressed into direct servitude, the setting up of new space defining sequences, abcd to index, record, the font of visual retrieval, catalog of main entry, fenced out or fenced in. Wordings replace then replicate intimacy. Shadows are that life of space, crashingly then, simple, endless. Start with light, unstrap, stay close to the owl.

### On Self Sovereignty:

She blusters a first, little general, for she owns none but a jealous one. She submits to her own dominion, inner, forsaking all outer indulgences. She gives it all to the woods and the animals inside. A word forest under the spell of that which occupies her. Whether by obsession or possession or otherwise, a delight-less but agreeable wandering, she dwells alone, for having undone her if trouble her, her feral thought. She wilts, she

howls, she raves, she hears the primordial birds speak to her alone, an untouchable origin, her own source, broken and open. Unserved, she's errant in her word wilderness, formed from old catalogs, mortalities, industrial detritus, and ancient lexicons. She gives over to the common source, her so-called "community," for apart from membership she signs meaninglessness. Thus she abdicates and self denies, she renounces her inner enemy lest sovereign turn spy. Sovereign trespasses sovereignty by common permission into release in her word forest, she is not queen of her own queendom but rather she is the she of it, alone. No matter how small her dominion, what impregnable fortress, sovereign assaults self, undiscovered and itinerant, throws power into the wilds.

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