

Barry McKinnon/from PULP LOG
(work in progress)

—making landscape of self, the stopped line or silence —
breakfast at Sears, earlier the common, noted,
September polluted fog (or / this morning, clear:

death's reminders / debts of breath—pollution is now an
amber count,—the colleague feeling not right after a drive
down from College Heights.

breakfast: \$3.09 includes coffee, muffins, announcements and paint sales.

john & I talk exigencies of pension plans (*how* it works — sense it *doesn't* you die, no pay & who really thinks of the beneficiaries — details of who or what's left, when you believe the notion of legacy: we buy Sears gloves, with leather palms, 99 cents — momentary bargain / charge cards and sear sucker

in all these years to get here (this screen of memory, the deluxe screen of surface daily life, note

the September fog is back. I've been here 20 years. it's dark /
at 8, you wonder where the kids are. / you are still marvelling
at that bush of tomatoes — Mrs. Snowden's plums, little
crushed juicy hearts on the wooden walk.

I'm 43, and soon 44. mathematics of age and time and this urge to say what, or how explain contours, thots, sex, love, this old marriage, her changing shape (slight rise of belly — or / see myself a bit stooped — in abstract moments dream of stretch, exercise, swimming, health

47,000 a year, the truck a bit smashed, old / I'd give casual
inventory of household goods in this indulgence of being able
to speak, without guilt (but for these mounds of food scraped
into plastic bags — world of care, world of wonder, to wonder
little you can do

yet wish to change: would wish capacity to stretch the happy threshold, to hold love in all useless contexts, *to see* (all shaking by their own admissions —

it's the Mill in all its forms that rules — power and source, that one joke will bring its wrath or smug indifference (they think the “no smoke” signs *too small* — weigh a few cigarettes against their polluted air.

or / in order to avoid the margins we indent, invent a threshold, and call the limits, yet just when you don't expect the moose to rush the shadows — the boy is strapped, patterns of the world emerge, the bullies go free. so you go this life, tailless, must stop to look from room to window to the outside — other patterns of wonder. how would you have wanted *it*? less or more than you are is only a question. in any event you'd get lost looking for the answer — ah fool, yr infidelity is the rose bush seeking its sum of potentials — what a vacancy, the hell of it, this separation from self and other, self and self.

•

I have seen world's stripped, so each object takes the enormity of itself, and the mind unstable, unable to integrate its integers — this is not the window shopping at Sears, the pull of those 4.99 shoes, the 99 cent slippers, or to notice wood still cheaper for toilet seats. (why wld I go, where would I go in this fear of empty rooms, sense of fucked self to move amidst any bed or table, in this the raw tree view of colder weather coming? is this a cost of beauty, the focus of word and thought to make the thing already there, *there* as object of seeing?

wind — a jet lifts over Prince George. rain, 28 September 88. felled branches glisten freshly dark. I look out, almost blank from this specific and verifiable form of a bureaucracy's meanness (that very few believe, explains my insistence of its truth: what do we know? how do we know in this spontaneous breath, the vital versions of a life? hang all this speech on the line —

the accuracy of the persona, dressing up for show and tell. tell me a story: once upon a time, long long ago. (oh it's infinity we're up against, the sum of the self and all it carries in the dangerous meandering social world full of humans getting ahead at everyone else's cost: officials in the strip clubs, hiding breath in time for their versions and "visions" — this wind, upon a time was pure to move. we see its invisible primeval roots / at night we see in a mist, the polemical moon.

●

—that the world is a paradox of favours where cheaters seem to prosper. was it the boy who hid in terror, didn't know this? flowers to please a mother, a gift you give in fear, the thank you's to them for the pleasure of even *this* your lowly place as peasants of therapy and stress, where I hear the lowly bitch or whine in the darkness of these tiny rooms. you might know of this.

I sigh at the wonder of the lawn to my left, or the colorful splash of David Hockney's California drive, — simple pleasure of self alive to pure elements of slow breath, the expensive coat that fits, the possibility of deepening love. yet to some, you are them, maybe to them you are you with the message: don't expect a truce, don't expect crumbs or sleep.

●

no purpose but happiness — that undefined state of the pup ripping carpet. me, off work till noon skimming Foucault for sense, adding one or two points to the percents I missed — or argue a decision, weakly — that *that* character was *not* smart, but he might be by the story's end. so goes the drift, and daily world of organized and arbitrary surface. behind the walls, frayed wires, mice, and men with further schemes — oh who cares, or what the result that the mayor sits in a used car lot open for the public? this public drives by, hopeless with questions, maybe to be fooled: it's everybody waiting, to wish pleasant forms of time's commodities —

with no lyric here. we watch and talk — note frayed rugs, rot — the sandwich left uneaten, loggers beaten — these boasts of skill and old times (and how *with 2 fingers left he could still crush your fucking hand* — *this is my fucking mom*, he says, then asks: *are you a fucking used car salesman or a fucking lawyer?*² why take this chance, this conspicuousness. this 19 dollar Woodward's sweater gives me away. college professors, stay home. Harvey Chometsky and me in hiding / that sense of being visible when they get us — heros stupid, slurping soup / clearly post post modern. ugly ugly & so much danger you think *why am I here*. beer and strippers and other parallel images to describe the condition — a kind of subtle hunt when those who know see threat, mistake the disguise. — kill you just the same — this is the drift into psychopathology, the conspiracies that decide who goes who stays — devise the ways.

●

this morning, again: thin blue to the east, warm, unseasonal south wind. nature vast & seemingly silent — is it best not to worry that we are the source of our own undoing? undone? for some, a beginning. but how end the day without some sense of future and well being — made urgent, that time and life have limits. in this despair of questions: what can be done — acts of large decency be made part of the scheme? isolate / isolate. it's so late. I love the screen as map and tendril, would wish to change the course of anger to its proper cause, with these words, and lines, as maps, as roots as tendrils.

xmas carols ring out at sears (more like a muffled electric voice — sub text buy buy — tho nothing on the clearance rack could seriously be given. what is this process of becoming more and more a self, yet still unknown. a little out of kilter, and *off*, cld be blamed on coffee — that you've become subject to the extent of seeing each thing for its truth and value — (exasperated father loading excited son onto electric horse — an old student much bigger and shuffling, or someone seemingly slightly stunned at the bank book's balance. this is a day. the weather must be changing. it's true. rain in december. it's xmas at sears. and to think you'd reach this far to middle age

greenhouse effect:—these misnomers, world and place misnamed . . . earlier I thought that everything I've done is fucked—to be alone and pensionless a poolside fear. of money, what's it worth? this is the 20th Century. years of dismantling—only cries in the human condition. in the bar, we not only sense but talk decay, disintegration, and manage laughs as if these recognitions *are* truth. how many years left for the wood as our lives hurl quickly on to the universe—life as a breath, a sigh that we didn't know any better than to waste time lining up for material bargains in the infinite day.

heat's on: outside frost—snowless december, frozen dust. a student withdraws. won the lottery. I go on, into the text for what it's worth—and love this attention to these words, the minimal conversation as discourse of worth. earlier thought an essay cld explain, then thot, why explain when maybe it's all cliché, what's already known, & I'm just slow, out of it. I used to cuss entering the institutional door, want more. now, it's less when I think the disappointments of material world. the lottery winner's life, we think, is ruined. won't finish the book or the thought beyond some immediate pleasure of a well earned life, a well earned holiday. I sign the form W & maybe joke about being “hired on”. but I seem to want it slow, smoke out the fists coming down and in charm, loathe that sense of “escape” / those who make us wish we could.

●

part way thru, William Carlos Williams' poem “Nantucket,” the students' books begin to close . . . time, they think, is over—so that I imagine their imaginations—the dark and light of possibility—could say, *it's maybe not quite the gym-suit-world, you think, of high paying jobs and leisure and material comfort.* / but this little poem, gives no solace—it's only what was seen,—its message, that this is a moment—and better it than . . . —(here the possible harrangue re. conspiracies and manipulations—the local language news about the Mills philanthropy and “interest” in art—corporate citizens, make valuable donations—at what cost: this tax dodge (and millions of hectares of trees for every little flower you might draw.)

the book *will* close. the dark *is* the closing, this moment we are in—I see a future bleak and treeless, and the mindless willful out for present gain—to establish further “direction” and noxious shift, that we’ll live, torn from what little can be claimed.

the flowers / lavender, thru the window. a curtain, late after noon sun—a pitcher, a tumbler, and a key—what he saw, the full moment of its own recognition: man, eye, and thing.