

## CLINT BURNHAM / Three Chapters from Mixtape, a novel-in-progress

### BEGINNING / I

no

<new page>

yeah

<new page>

yeah no

<new page>

yeah no yeah

<new page>

yeah no, no I yeah I know no I know what you you know yeah i know what you mean you know yeah I know no now you're getting not I know yeah I know what yeah I yeah no yeah yeah no yeah no yeah I know you know I know what you're what you're yeah I know what you're getting at yeah what you're getting at I don't know I dunno I'd no to like generalize generally like maybe no yeah no not now, yeah i don't know i don't if if if I don't you know if you know what I'm getting at here getting kind of yeah yeah I follow I don't follow if you get my drift yeah my yeah I no I know you're getting yeah yeah if you could I could if you could not I don't I don't I don't I don't yeah if know what what that's no yeah no yeah no I think you know generally if like start again come again just if you had to yeah that's what what I what I was saying yeah you know i don't yeah if you I don't if I know no I know yeah I what yeah I yeah no yeah yeah yeah it's getting it's it's getting kind of hot in you know in here do you think yeah what I don't know do you yeah I yeah I don't know do you think you could that's what is what I meant

what I'm getting that yeah no not I know not when I yeah I get your general no I don't I don't know i kind of see where you're what I'm getting at if you get my do you generally do you do you ever get I get it yeah I could get it you don't need to keep going on its it's its it's not its ever not like you didn't kind of hot in here hot in here i know I know I know what you're getting at here yeah what you're trying to say if you yeah no not now not no not back then back in that if if if I'd'no get what you're getting at if I get the general you're saying it's kind of not it kind of not it's kind of hot not that it's hot per se but if you think it's hot and you get hot and yeah no if you yeah no if you know yeah if you know what you're the general state of mind if you don't if you could if you don't mind just stating your general drift of what you're getting at there's no getting back to not getting back get it or not yeah no no I get what you're finally not if you end that way you're back at the start of yeah no, no I yeah I know no you think I know what you know what I was getting at yeah I know but you don't what you mean you no you don't know yeah i know I don't know

The retro-activists always showed. Sometimes turned-up shirt collars, cars painted primer grey, low brow. Bill Haley Dick Dale Ray Charles The Surfaris the Ventures the Shadows the Phantoms Bill Black's Combo, Otis Redding The Straycats the Beach Boys (but only their car songs, "Little Deuce Coupe"). When I was, it was the early 70s I was ten or eleven I don't I don't think we woulda seen *American Graffiti* but the first couple of seasons of *Happy Days* (*Six Million Dollar Man*, *M\*A\*S\*H*) and our class had a 50s retro dance I was in the back seat heard Mrs. Al-Moky talking to my dad or my mom complaining they weren't even around in the 50s. This was Tony he was like a gang leader, the joke going around was did they have jackets, the Main street gang, the east end boys, Clark park boys, did they have those jackets with embroidered writing on the back. One of them Tony he had a job for a while at the college had his acolytes, girls and boys followed him around to the openings, put bottles of cider, beer cans onto the edge of paintings that was their joke when the curator'd which just meant the artist's ex the curator was always the artist's ex it was the primary job qualification that and being able to hose down the sidewalk in the morning barely got to work in the morning step on a crack break your mother's back wiseguy barely got there before noon standing with a hose and a cigarette hosing down the sidewalk dodging binners and boosters and grifters and hookers on their stroll there was still that city ornament on the block from the millennium projects a memorial to crack if you could believe it a testimony from a crackhead comparing it to a zillion cups of coffee yeah so the chick or some guy in Tony's class or the guy's girlfriend or some guy there after some girl and all intimidated by the scene making fun of their friends of liking their friends for being there at their scene, and he'd put or she'd put a beer can on the edge of the painting that was their joke taking the edge off and the curator'd sashay up they had to act gay or butch even or especially if they weren't the women'd look tough the guys'd sashay up and take the beer can off the edge or a bottle if it was a girl who'd put it there & it was a cider the girls always drank cider if they were for real from the

burbs former feathered hair if they were older and the curator'd pass the bottles  
on to the little Chinese lady who'd come in once or twice a night her bundle  
buggy granny buggy of empties taking them out everywhere else plastic cups  
with stems for wine a table never a liquor license outside in the daytime the black  
lady selling J-dub papers Repent Sinner!

### III

so you're an artist, if, to be an artist, it's not just saying you're an artist.

that isn't right, to be an artist, you can be an artist, but that doesn't mean you're making art, it isn't art right away. maybe never.

you start off, you start making art, maybe you're at school you're a kid or you're at art school or you never went to school.

so say say you're, you're self-taught, or no one ever taught you a thing, no one could ever teach you anything, could they.

never listen to nobody. damn fool.

so you just made art, you made whatever you made it wasn't art yet, you didn't want to call it that or maybe you did, you carved trees out in the bush somewhere, made sculptures from iron bed frames you found by the side of the highway in the Appalachians, you made quilts, with your friends, you did those tiny paintings little pencil drawings super detailed, poems about star trek bit players, songs on a guitar you made yourself from a kit from popular mechanix sent four track tapes to your uncle's girlfriend who knew Lucinda Williams.

it, it wasn't, it wasn't that, it wasn't art yet, making it was one thing, doing it alone or with your friends or in a studio at a 25k a year school or at summer camp, then mailing it around was something else, or maybe it just sat in your back lot suburban garage, drawer, closet drama, writing for the drawer like the Russians, that master and margarita dude.

they then they then they pass it to someone else, or it's in a magazine someone mimeographed or someone puts it on their wall or it's twenty years or someone driving around comes by and you have a sign on the edge of your property there's this guy you go drinking with who knows somebody your uncle is a super rich lawyer for bryan adams other people read it or see it or listen to it

more, more and more or more or less more people twenty more two hundred  
more

the happy few

myself and strangers