



Patriotism Runs Counter
to Ordinary Human Morality
Nicholas Syrianus Katsafanas

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Mode: >.75
7565:8896 .850

Preface ... 3

I: 2650 Syllables of Authentic Reflection ... 4

II: 2026 Syllables in London ... 16

III: Oil Paint Stained Mesh Shorts ... 29

IV: The State Formed by the Social Contract is the Modern
Atheistic State ... 36

V: We're All in This Together Really ... 41

VI: Untitled ... 46

VII: Untitled ... 49

VIII: Untitled ... 52

Diagrams ... 56

Preface

This modal text¹ is my official autobiography. Everything in this work is 100% accurate and basically reflects my exact experiences as a human being living on this circular planet we call “Earth.” At this time I’m unsure if Ben Shapiro has received eyebrow fillers or not. I’m not going to speculate on that right now. This isn’t the place for that. I used to get my eyebrows threaded fairly regularly and I feel like they actually reduced the girth of my brow over time. That’s all I can really say.

¹ For more information on Modal Textuality please read [“Self-Similarity in the Extended Line \(with Reference to Big Pun\)”](#)

I
2650 Syllables of Authentic Reflection
2226:2647 .841

Mode: >.75

—A: The Best Pizza in the State of Rhode Island
863:1043 .827

The blunt reality of my life at the time
was that the pizza at Bettola
was more appropriate to eat
with a literal soup spoon
as opposed to your opposable thumbs,
that each slice was steeped
in an ill-advised amount of oil and cheese,
that the bread, for that matter,
was already floppy,
that even a robust crust could never
withstand the weight of the toppings
as currently constituted,
which caused the entire pizza
to avalanche down to the tips of your fingers
whenever you attempted
to pick it up,
thereby forced to consume the slice
in essentially one rushed bite,
with all the ingredients
concatenating onto each other,
leaving you with a piece
of wet bread in your palm
that constituted the quote-unquote
"rest of the slice".

It was technically Curt's idea to go,

when we were
still at the cigar bar so-called dinner,
where the copious smoke
was seeping into our skins
by the minute,
where the pasta was mush
and the garlic was burnt,
where Curt attempted to
bum a single cigarette
off the forty or so people
in attendance,
all to no avail,
neither one of us
smoking a cigar or cigarette,
the new bartender
made almost entirely of plastic,
with a Picasso like
vibe to her work—
she actually gave me a great deal
on the maybe eight
Michelob Ultras I chugged!

But Bettola was alleged
to sport the best pizza
in the state—
it was something
apparently a group
of consumers cast votes on
at some time, somewhere,
and subsequently the award was
advertised
right in front of their stoop,
so I saw no real risk
in stopping by,
as I was still up

for a bite, finding
the pasta at the bar
a bit subpar,
plus it was a straight shot
up Pontiac
in any case.

Yet while I'm
typically of the mind
to silently disparage
a restaurant's offering
then just never return
again, Curt, by contrast,
tended to vocalize
his discontent
to wait staffs,
and with a complaint
I quietly addressed
to him now buttressing
his own disgust
he called the bartender,
Reign,
over to voice his concerns
with the notion both pizzas
we ordered weren't "great",
yet Reign, for her part,
found Curt's complaint
just as contemptible
as we found the place's
pizza—she was frankly a little shocked
that a person could dislike
this luscious pie.

This food in front of us was,
to Reign, great pizza,

yet she now stood faced with
two patrons
who seemed to disagree,
judging not just the particular pies
they got to be subpar,
but the actual construction
of the pizza itself—
the underlying architecture
of the restaurant's recipe—
to be deeply flawed.

Oh no,
it's fine, I said,
entirely insincerely,
telling Reign
the food was okay,
there was really no need
for us to complain—
maybe just get me
one more Michelob
if you have a chance?

So I believe Curt and I
were both surprised
when Reign came
over some time later,
after to-go boxes
had been packed
and night caps'd
been sipped,
with a fresh pie,
saying Try this one on for size—
yet, while I of course,
had no inclination to complain,
I didn't even object

to the meat on the pizza,
I'd rather have, at that point,
breached my own veganism
before I levied a complaint
to Reign,
yet Curt wasn't of the same mind
as I.

Yeah, see, he said,
this pizza has the same
problem—proceeding to show
Reign and now another
waitress
the essential incongruence
between the thickness
of the bread
and the payload
of the multiple toppings,
how it made the pizza
really hard to eat.

What Reign still failed
to comprehend was it wasn't
the components of Bettola's
pizza that were objectionable,
it was instead the
core geometry of the pie
that was basically unacceptable—
in an entirely ill-fated attempt
to save face
Curt asked Reign
to make us
an espresso martini
but with tequila,
her idiosyncratic take

on the cocktail.

Personally I found the
tequila-based espresso martini
as geometrically off kilter
as the pizza,
all I could taste
was the damn agave,
yet I kept my mouth closed,
my to-go box ready
to take home
to my loving wife,
filled to the brim with shitty pizza
as a little Christmas gift—

—B: Mineral Spring Avenue is for Lovers
743:900 .826

Sitting at The Social
by myself,
my first time back on Mineral Spring
since I'd moved from the street
after residing beside Taco Bell
for a decade plus—
the spot I drank at located
a door over from my former apartment,
a dilapidated building with
about five businesses
on the bottom floor—
and I knew for a fact this pasty bartender
was upselling me egregiously on
her shitty little mezcal glasses,
the Casamigos brand to boot,
my least favorite
by a large margin.

The whore charged me seventeen per
drink which in North Provolone
was simply an atrocity,
even fifteen bucks per
glass was hypothetically absurd,
it was completely out of line
I thought as I begrudgingly gave
her my Discover card,
recalling just a couple months prior
at my friend Ryan's
birthday party—when this particular
Social worker was,
in my mind, a little slow with
the Corona Light service
and overheard my critique of her speed
to Paul, subsequently slamming down six beers
onto a table and yelling "Here you go!" to me,
which I actually appreciated at the time,
as I was already ready for another
Corona anyway.

But now, sitting at The Social
by myself, being basically mugged
because of my proclivity toward mezcal,
I recognized that this comment,
even if not initially intended for
the server to hear,
had come back to bite me in
my ass, as I assumed the debt
for these seventeen dollar mezcals.

The waitress became the bartender
in the interim, and she's now
exactd her revenge with alacrity.

To the best of my recollection
I was only even on the damn street
because I had a dinner to attend
at Il Fornello around the corner,
and after handing the tab
back to my cocktail executioner,
I still had some time to kill,
so I drove down the street to Rocco's
for a sole additional drink
before I hit the dinner,
as I hadn't been
in eons it seemed
and now found myself in a nostalgic
if not bitter state of mind.

I recognized the bartender
at Rocco's from past eras,
back when I
grabbed cocktails with that absolute
crumb Enzo on the regular,
but I couldn't recall the girl's name—
she greeted me amicably,
yet also refrained from using
a formal address, no doubt also
failing to recall me
fully either as
I asked for a
Johnny Black.

O, what cruel ironies
North Providence had in wait
for me that afternoon!—
the Rocco's girl gave
me a reasonable fare

for my subsequent
scotch on the rocks, and
I figured at that point it was probably
about time, now half in the bag,
to go back toward Fornello,
looping through my old parking lot,
to find the Russian guy's white truck
Tree had hated
still parked in his same
dipshit spot and letting down
my Civic's window
to hawk a loogie at the passenger door
as I drove by, ejecting the spit
far enough to clear my car but
unsure if I actually
connected with a
direct hit on the pickup,
unconvinced if I'd, like
the previous bartender,
successfully enacted a minuscule
revenge on an individual
I didn't even technically know.

—C: On the Amtrak to Penn Station
620:704 .881

On the Amtrak to Penn Station
on a Friday AM
I considered my
professional investigation
into the Epstein scandal,
filled as it is with ageless enigmas
and faux hoaxes,
and also my related but aborted novel
that I at the time titled Jeffrey of Nazareth,

where I'd imagined a near future
where the kid trafficker Jeff
was re-interpreted as a Christ-like
figure, where Americans
bought for sex toys for house pets
they saw on TikTok,
but now witnessing
internet celebrities,
who still know no lows,
wearing Free Ghislaine
tees I contemplated
whether or not
my failed novel was
in fact still satirical at all,
even now,
that perhaps Jeff Epstein
would soon be seen
as a sort of second coming of Jesus,
that possibly everybody
had it all wrong
all along—
that all those silly girls
who alleged under oath
they'd been sexually violated
as little kids were simply
unprosecuted liars?

Could Jeffrey Epstein actually be Jesus,
I considered in the coach class of Amtrak—
or is every single American who votes
Democrat and Republican
basically a pedophile, I thought,
because only a C student chimpanzee
could possibly view our political
system as anything but

irreversibly corrupt?

Every election in this failed state
is basically a faux pas
kayfabe mock election obfuscating
from the true extent of our state
of corruption,
I thought on the Amtrak,
in a realm of even remote American
collective intelligence
all these politicians
would be prosecuted and
placed into prison cells
for multiple decades at minimum, because
if a so-called state can't at the very least
collectively act against
wide scale child rape
then the nation functionally
ceases to exist.

We live instead in a state of static anarchy
actually, I considered—
any notion of a nation
is purely illusory,
just like Zeno's proofs on
the fictitious nature of The Many,
America is equally if not more
imaginary—

People
despise Stephen Miller
and his muppet wife
for incredibly good reason,
I thought,
as they're both basically

treasonous idiots,
but they're actually
a relatively minor symptom
of an even more serious disease,
as when people
like Misses Miller
appear on television programs
to endorse American fascism
while interpreting any criticism
of her own Nazi-adjacent opinions
as a racist attack on her
so-called Jewish identity
it's unavoidably repulsive
to everyone,
yet even that egregious imbecility
is still an at best
minor symptom in the
larger scheme of a
fundamentally imaginary
America—

II
2026 Syllables in London
1751:2026 .864

Mode: >.75

—A

642: 712 .902

The lack of a literary culture
which is probably a fault,
primarily I'd assume,
of our collective,
more or less grotesque,
American oligarchic class,
is without doubt
at least partially
responsible for
this state's
seemingly easy descent
into unrepentant fascism,
which to be clear
indubitably extends beyond
this current president,
who, while I'm sure he's
a nice enough guy,
I've overheard from
a variety of sources,
often shits in his
knickers, creating,
according to some in his
social circle,
a peculiar stench surrounding
his bodily space?

In any case,
this bureaucratic
rot has been
viciously present
in the House and
Senate,
dating back
not just
to Reagan,
but the corrupt
Clinton regime
that placed personal
profit over national security,
in all likelihood engaging
in state-sanctioned
assassinations to cover
said nonsense up,
to the extent
our branches of
legislation
are now basically
little beyond a
sad collection of
sterile nubs.

But anyway,
after landing
in London
we found
ourselves on
the Piccadilly
line to Cockfosters
with a clockwork
like repetition of

the train's final destination—
yet, for our part,
we'd be staying
at the delightfully dreary
Earl's Court borough,
but as the train
proceeded,
with each progressive
stop squishing
me incrementally
up against my
bulbous luggage
in the cramped cabin,
I considered the
origins of words,
for instance
the wonderful work
of someone
like, say, Noam Chomsky
(a great friend
of Jeff Epstein
by the way!),
even a lurid word
like "cock"
could take on so
many meanings,
similar to the phrase
"tax advice"
in the realm
of pederasts
and their high profile
protectors!

In fact,
I saw a few stray

minutes
of the aborted Epstein P.R.
Steve Bannon interview,
skipping stochastically
to his explanation
of the oh eight
financial crisis and I was
a bit blown away
at how utterly dumb
Jeff came off—
especially when he
attempted to explain
Newton and Pythagoras!—
and it's not even the
Coney Island
wise-guy accent
either, no,
the pure content of
his words were
indicative of a man
who'd spent the vast majority
of his adult brain cells
on blackmail and
lewd sex instead of
any sort of intellectual
pursuits,
Epstein purported to be
some magnanimous curio
of math, yet his explanation
of Pythagoras
revolved around
the revelation that
two triangles,
given the right circumstances,
can create

a square.

And I'd imagine
even that fat opportunist
Bannon'd have
to admit Jeff just
wasn't quite that bright, that
simply because you spout
some bullshit
about exchange rates
and central banks
in text chains,
in fact,
in no way means you
own an above average
capacity
toward critical thinking?

—B

1109:1314 .844

At the National Gallery
in Westminster,
after Tree told me
we'd visit the
Byron building,
I became a little flummoxed—
wandering around,
wondering what exactly
the author of Don Juan'd be
doing among all these
fucking painters—
just to stumble upon
original Pontormos,
Parmigianinos, Bronzinos,

my favorite Mannerist
painters—
art I'd gazed at as JPEGs
on the internet forever,
but now witnessed in
their original forms,
and I reflected back
to spending twenty bucks
to be granted admission into
RISD's museum,
whereas, now by contrast,
I was seeing
a half dozen original
Bronzino's for free.

On a second go round
of the Mannerist
rooms an American
tour guide posted up
in front of
Bronzino's Venus
pontificating an impromptu
talk regarding
the Mannerist movement
surrounded by
a series of
I'm sure well-intentioned
senior citizens
who were then prompted
to relay personal and
specific interpretations
of the quote-unquote
"theatrical" painting—

The next afternoon

after drinking
a couple scrumptious pints
at Churchill's pub
in Kensington
we walked
to an Iranian
restaurant
my wife's
British aunt
recommended,
where upon
perusing the Persian menu
I immediately decided to
breach
my vegetarian streak
and order the
lamb shank,
number forty four,
because it was either
that or the vegetable
biryani, but
at an Iranian spot,
which struck
me as a bit
inane at the time.

Under regular circumstances,
of course,
I'd vigorously consider
a vegetable biryani,
it'd probably be a bullseye
on a menu for me,
but sitting at Sadaf
with Kat and her
faux aunt,

I curiously lacked
any urge
to even utter the
two words
to the girls
as a dish
I'd consider,
instead I just said
"I think I need
to have that lamb shank,"
expecting a delicious
and expansive
hunk of lamb
after taking note of
the table to the right
passing around
a voluminous chop.

If the lamb chops,
I thought,
which generally
in America
are overpriced and
paltry,
are hearty,
then the shank
should be massive,
and if I'm eating meat
I might as well make
it fucking count.

Yet when the waiter
placed a
large plate of plain
white rice in front of

my person
minutes later
I was ominously perplexed,
and when he dropped a
side-plate-sized
chunk of so-called lamb shank
beside the rice
I knew I'd made a
grave mistake,
that this shank,
this first foray
I'd made into
Iranian lamb,
that it'd pale
in comparison
to great lambs of my past,
because of the
portion, but also the
seasoning, which
was lacking
to the extent of
non-existence, that
I'd have to at some
point text message
Farhad to confirm
I finally ate Persian lamb
and it was
precipitously disappointing,
no doubt I'd blame
the lackluster taste
on "being in London,"
while shrewdly
refraining to mention
that every other meal
we'd eaten in the city

up to that day
was fucking delicious.

This Persian lamb,
in my mind,
was only comparable
to the so-called
lamb shank
I'd got at a place
I'll refrain from naming
on West Fountain Street
that tasted like a
pair of Air Jordans,
when our waiter
went on
regarding his love of
so-called Greek
culture, only to
serve a
shank that was
basically a disgrace,
but to be fair
the lamb was
no direct fault
of the server, just
a sad coincidence.

The reality is
while the Iranian
lamb in London
may have been
somewhat subpar,
I've yet
to peruse a so-called
left-leaning outlet

in London
like our Politico State-side
talking of what
it would take to
quote-unquote
"put to bed"
a case like Epstein's,
which struck me as
a perfectly callous
bit of verbal vomit,
to disregard
the dozens
of underage victims
routinely abused
by this mysterious
billionaire and
his cabal of
well-connected
friends, who
include at least
two U.S. Presidents.

When prosecuting, say,
a mafia don
circumstantial evidence
acts as imperturbable
truth in our country,
as witnesses
who by their personal admission
are criminal pieces of shit
sign sworn statements
that make the reality
of the situation
crystal clear
to all involved

and formal trials
with possible
prison sentences
proceed,
yet a whole harem of
women claiming
the world's most
prominent whore-monger
Epstein and his Mossad
descended "girlfriend"
Ghislaine
were routinely abusing
literal children,
these women
are instead smeared
by allegedly "moderate"
American outlets
as essentially
bigger pieces of
shit than the loanshark
informants who sign affidavits
to put capos in prison.

The notion that
career criminals
who're bequeathed
the tangible benefit
of suspended prison
sentences
for State co-operation
are somehow
more trustworthy
witnesses
than women
who've been abused

as children by
international sexual terrorists,
people with literally
nothing to gain
but the contempt of
public American outlets
who're grotesquely
derelict in their duty
as news organizations—
it's nihilistic to
the highest degree,
a fresh low
for a state
that used to say
black people
were sixty percent
human.

III
Oil Paint Stained Mesh Shorts
945:1111 .851

Mode: >.75

—(01) .921
In late Two Thousand
Eighteen
I was smoking an
ice hookah at Pasha
wearing
oil paint
stained black
basketball shorts
with dress socks
and creme brulee Sperry's
and felt surprisingly
fine about it,
which strikes me
like an acceptable
enough intro
to this mode.

—(02) .789
In a sense, I felt
in the moment that
all that remained was opinion,
this notion that the internet
itself was basically
our last standing forest,
a natural architecture entirely
dedicated to the morass
of people's little perspectives
on things, the informal

personal essay
basically as the fulcrum
of the internet itself,
but the essay as part and parcel
of a large amalgamation
of one expansive
Nonsensical Opinion,
and this
is essentially
our final remaining
foray into nature
and spontaneous architecture—
whereas Robert Frost
wrote about fucking trees
and sticks and stones
and shit, but
now?—that's all over.

—(03) .858
Even modern art,
I thought,
these horrendous Matisse
reprints you now see in Millennial
doctors' offices, what did they evince
but a particular degradation
of form, which then
expressed itself in unmeasured
and anecdotal poetry, which
subsequently served as a
rosetta stone of the
internet's personal essay,
which amalgamated into the
amorphous
Nonsensical Opinion—
was it possibly the case

the demolition
of all art basically
took place
in a free verse poem
about people's capricious feelings,
that this falsified subjectivity
that had been violently promoted
by CIA funded MFA programs
as so-called art for decades
was now finally realized
as a collectivist project
that was ipso facto the internet,
as an Amalgamated Nonsensical
Opinion, which is now our
last remaining National Park?

—(04) .769

Art is functionally nothing
if not just another
consumer product
in a capitalist machine
that at bottom
prioritizes portable butt wipes—
yes, the median
American citizen
is primarily concerned
with wiping their balloon knots
with only toilet paper
when away from home.

—(05) .841

Take an artist
like Tao Lin,
are we to truly believe
his novels,

which are perfectly
indicative of
acceptable contemporary
literary art,
was it ever truly tenable to
consider Tao's
specific novels
as explicitly
apolitical
(as they often are
categorized)—
regardless
of Lin's
more recent
tweets about
vaccines,
was his art itself
ever really divorced from
political opinion?

—(06) .847
Well, of course
not, not even close!—
because
Tao's novels are
absolutely apex
assets to the
private equity industry—
when Taipei
was released
K Street lobbyists
were absolutely ecstatic
that so-called alt lit
had now finally
reached the mainstream,

that this brand of
ruthlessly tracking
your subjective
fleeting thoughts
but while
taking illicit prescription
drugs, which was
of course nothing
more than the imaginative
art of memory itself, as
it'd be impossible to recall
pure thoughts
in that manner,
when you were three sheets
to the wind,
that the notion
ostensibly
literary millennials
had completely eschewed
any analysis of the system
that fed them infinite xanax,
in favor of Larry David
adjacent
minutia calculus
was nothing but a
fucking monumental
victory for the financial
engineers and derivative
salespeople
of this country!

—(07) .905
It's possible it
was, in fact,
when I sat at Pasha

smoking an ice shisha
in paint stained
black basketball shorts
and Sperry's that
I considered:
Tao Lin
penned a long form
piece of so-called
autofiction
where he questioned
the frequency
his ostensible ex-wife's
showering sessions,
essentially,
leaving the question
of her hygiene
in a diabolical public
literary purgatory,
and that, far from
being an apolitical act,
actually
allowed the private equity
industry to fundamentally
seize control of the market
for single family homes,
to the extent
every major city in this
country is now dominated
by quote-unquote
"developers" who scoop up
affordable housing
with outrageous cash bids
from middle class
suckers who are then
forced to re-enter

a bubbly market to
hopelessly bid
on said property "flips"
or even worse
"lease new rental units."

IV
The State Formed by the Social Contract
is the Modern Atheistic State

486:607 .807

Mode: >.75

—01 (162:196 .827)

Feeling
a day-after drag
from a mixture
of liquor,
which I don't endure
nearly as often as
when Max B was back
still serving
an ostensible
life sentence—
I can remember
laughing hysterically
when Carmine's dad
informed us he soiled his pants
on Christmas Eve
at his mom's,
mid conversation
with his biological brother,
excusing himself on
a whim because
he'd quote-unquote
"just shit his pants",
ambling to the lavatory
to discard his
racing track-laden
boxer shorts
tossing them into a

trash can
then continuing his
night, later
taking a call from me—
just to tell him
I'd left my mom's
a tad late,
that I'd fail to make
his mom's house,
he replying
it was winding down
anyway, apparently
no longer wearing
any underwear
whatsoever?

—02 (31:38 .816)
Carmine's dad's
admission of guilt,
I considered,
was actually an apt
allegory
for our government's
actions
over the past half
century?

—03 (109:145 .752)
In fact,
the man
might have
more honesty
in his pinky fingernail
than the entire
Department of Justice—

tracing back to at least
to the Sixties,
with Lyndon B's
mock investigation
into JFK's cranium
being blown into bits
in the middle of Dallas,
because
the United States
has for decades
been tossing its
shitty underpants into
the collective
metaphorical trash baskets
of the taxpayer,
but it can't seem to
ever admit to shitting itself,
instead contorting
history into
absurd proportions
to deny what's obvious
to everyone.

—04 (74:86 .860)

For my part,
on a Monday
evening on Mineral
Spring, I prepared a little fart
after peeing
only to spew
fecal fluid like
a lawn sprinkler,
which isn't really that
difficult to admit!—
to engage in a

mere modicum
of honesty
regarding past actions
(I too tossed
my drawers into a
trash receptacle
afterwards!)

—05 (110:141 .780)

But the State
Department
and CIA,
despite any
remotely educated
member of the
populace easily
identifying,
plus enduring the whiffs
of their bullshit underwear
occupying our bathroom
trash baskets
for decades,
seems to have some
psychological inability
with the simple
admittance of its
own grotesque
movements,
instead paying off
prominent media outlets
and so-called
public intellectuals
to muddy the waters
of their own soiled undies,
enacting instead

a perpetual motion machine
of shitting its pants!

V
We're All In This Together Really
610:729 .837

Mode: >.75

"Although I sometimes get disturbed and begin to think that there is nothing without an idea!" — Socrates circa 450 BC

—01 (96:106 .906)
When Socrates
inquired Does Dirt
have an Idea,
admitting
he'd ran fast
from the possibility,
fearing his falling
into that
well enough known
bottomless
pit of nonsense,
Parmenides
wisely replied there
would arrive a time
when philosophy
would grab a firmer
grasp on the young man,
when he'd "no longer
despise even the meanest
of things" being as is
too much inclined
to consider the opinions
of men.

—02 (118:151 .781)

It's the fault of
the scholars overall,
with the exclusion
of perhaps Proclus
and Bruno,
to gloss over
this reply,
where the grandfather of
the monad essentially
admits to the materialist
basis
of emanation, that
ultimately for oneness
to retain any logic
whatsoever
the divine
principles need to
exist in the same plane
as the sensory nonsense,
that opinion must remain
in a sense concurrent
with the pure,
that yourself, for instance,
with all your faults
are the infinite sole
mirror in which
The One witnesses
Their Names,
to reference the Bezels
of Wisdom.

—03 (60:66 .909)

Take for instance
someone like

Scott Bessent
who's basically
a piece of Dirt,
or Matt Walsh, who'd
probably tweet
he'd let
Les Wexner
molest his own kids
if it'd gain
him a little additional
clout for a day's
news cycle, do
they indeed emanate
from Ideas?

—04 (89:113 .788)
The reality
is the Spinoza substrate,
even if emanated,
must be material,
so even bozos
like Bessent
and Matt have
some element
of Ideas behind them,
even if I,
as an impending
dad, disagree
with Walsh
about actually opposing
the systematic raping of
children,
that doesn't mean
I, ipso facto,
oppose his essence

as part of a
materialistic substrate
that encompasses
all Being.

—05 (120:142 .845)

In any case,
on a related note,
I've previously
considered myself
a supporting patron
of art museums,
even attending the Tate
and National Gallery
in London just
recently, but
there's another parcel
within me that's
begun to believe
we might need to burn
all of the art museums
down to the ground,
that all the great
art patrons must be
exiled from aesthetics
in one explosive motion,
a single sweeping swing,
that the entire
enterprise of
showcasing
a person's paintings in
these buffoonish galleries
is reprehensible?

—06 (128:151 .841)
I for one
never really
got off with
the rich and wealthy
art collector
class
or even the aristocratic
douchebag sector,
probably in part
because
in my younger years
I was prone to anarchic trends
and liable to
become ruthlessly inebriated
with anyone who
held similar disregard
for any and all institutions,
in a way
I was maybe born with
some inherent
lack of respect
for people like
Peggy Guggenheim
and Gertrude Stein,
which in retrospect
probably hasn't exactly
assisted in the literary
dissemination of my work.

VI

452:514 .879

Mode: >.75

—01 (118:144 .819)

It's been a couple months
since I quit drinking Mezcal
on the rocks
after feeling for a few years
that Mezcal was the best
liquor to drink,
to some extent
"better" for your health than
Vodka or Scotch
and while I've
for the most part
appreciated
as a whole
not drinking Mezcal
on ice
I just today started
to contemplate
some of the shit
I'd written at the apex
of my Mezcal
consumption,
sipping mini water bottles
along the streets
around my flat
popping in this bar or that
and jotting down
syllables into a purple
notepad basically by
myself.

—02 (155:176 .881)

You can strip yourself
of a fictional subjective
perspective but I'm
not entirely convinced
that it'll land you any closer
to a true interpretation
of reality, which is perhaps
why at the beginning of
this year I decided to
start a series of
quote-unquote Modes
that would act as an
official autobiography
that was also obviously
false, not in the sense
of shit autofiction, but instead
in being constricted by
a metrical structure—
for example, my wife
was abutting upset
when we went to
Fred on Broadway this
past Friday because
allegedly I was
apparently glancing
at another asscrack
that occupied some
other seat in the spot?

—03 (76:80 .95)

Now, it's possible a couple
posteriors frankly
could have fit this

ostensible bill,
but I also didn't feel
like I was staring at
any singular ass
indiscriminately either,
unless my wife
was observing me
without ceasing, making
detailed note
of any passing glance
I may have made at Fred?

—04 (103:114 .904)
Yet it's obviously impossible
to accurately convey
this so-called subjective
experience via memory
alone, never mind when
constricted to a specific
metrical construct—not
only do I consider the idea
of me staring at shitshooters at Fred
to be fictional, but I also consider
my attempt to relay
the possibility
of me glancing at asses at
the spot to be equally untrue.

VII

553:660 .838

Mode: >.75

—01 (133:152 .875)

I suppose it's probably accurate
to say that to some degree
I have a bit of a beef
with the so-called Beats
who were really,
functionally speaking
at least,
faux revolutionaries,
mock reformers
of the highest order,
or at least, in any case,
a loosely knit collection
of writers who basically
became shamelessly
State adjacent
in their confessional
ametical texts that
like clockwork never addressed
economic root causes,
in my mind
at least, with the exception
I'd say of Kerouac
who at least drank himself
to death before he could
become an adjunct professor.

—02 (114:146 .781)

But at the same time
I was also sitting at La Braza

having just imbibed a couple
Michelobs, which to be fair
aren't exactly revolutionary
in nature, and I'd moved
my seat back just slightly
when I witnessed a couple waitresses
place a plate of what
appeared to be
shared apps on the table
in front of me,
because I didn't want to
find myself uncomfortably close to
these employees and their
de facto break table, yet I also
couldn't help but take
note of a cursive shaped
morsel on the plate
I was almost positive
was an octopus tentacle.

—03 (68:83 .819)

Son of a cunt,
I fucking love octopus,
I considered
while also recalling
my vegetarianism,
my previous pescatarianism,
my occasional flexitarianism,
my general aversion to consuming
corpses combined with my
occasional cravings for a lamb shank
but also octopus.

—04 (101:115 .878)

Octopus is like basically the best

seafood on the market when it's cooked correctly, I considered, but I was also, I recognized, sitting in a Dominican hookah bar, which struck me as slightly curious, to stumble upon a piece of octopus cooked by Dominicans, at a hookah bar?—while I was actually waiting for Cormier to arrive to, in fact, smoke a hookah—could Dominicans really cook delicious octopus?

—05 (137:164 .835)

I was a little dubious, as I'd indulged in Italian octopus previously at Maria Cucina and actually deemed it pretty subpar, really only the Greeks and Portuguese had the ability to properly cook plus season octopus, I guess I'd rather ruthlessly assumed that all other nations were basically octopus deficient simply based, perhaps, on this single instance of Cucina, where I'd seen a long lost second cousin, where the food was spotty overall, where mafia capos were celebrated with photo memorials, where the octopus was essentially trash to me.

VIII

542:602 .900

Mode: >.75

—01 (181:211 .854)
Listening to heavy metal
but screwed and chopped
I reflected on
taking my friend Farhad,
who came to town
from Chicago
for the first time ever
this past November,
to a place called The Avery,
where the bartender,
who alleged she remembered me
following a few rounds of drinks
despite the fact
I had no recollection
of meeting her ever,
yet I respected her
depth of knowledge
when it came to Mezcal—
she gave me a particular brand
she said contained animal fat,
which intrigued me enough
to break my vegan streak,
figuring distilled animal fat
perhaps didn't count,
and after a few rounds
she poured us both a shot of Malort
which Farhad,
being a Midwest resident,
acutely refused to shoot down,

I, however, having heard horror
stories decided to indulge
and considered the liquor endearing—
it wasn't bad at all!

—02 (109:118 .924)

Being outside
sans smartphone,
what a feeling!
even if it's brick
and you have a bad case
of sciatica your wife
may have passed onto you
and the trash
is filled with rats
the size of small donkeys
you could saddle
and ride downtown
like Lyfts
for free
on frigid days like these,
when you carry
three bags of shit you no longer
need,
yet I digress
(William Williams
denouncing usury was unexpected
but I usually keep an open ear
for Fed polemics)
but back to the bar—

—03 (66:69 .957)

One hundred fourteen bucks
struck me like a lot as a tab
until I considered the amount

we both imbibed
of allegedly top shelf liquor,
it was possible,
I supposed,
that animal fat Mezcal
was marked up more
vociferously than
the typical vegan options.

—04 (89:89 1.00)

In any case
since Tree was probably about
done doing her makeup
we wandered back
to the flat to scoop her up
plus discuss dinner options,
of course filling up
a couple coffee cups
of Japanese whiskey
as we considered
all audibles, just like old times,
almost twenty years ago
or so
when we'd get shitfaced
with Mexican cooks
after shift's end.

—05 (97:114 .851)

But we were aged now,
more mature,
I no longer fornicated
beside the linoleum sidings
of immigrant cooks'
colonial homes,
sure perhaps I liked

a couple glasses of Mezcal
when my friend was visiting
the city I currently occupied,
but that was actually
quite grown up I considered
as we walked to Ogie's
which was the last time
I entered that establishment
for reasons I probably don't
need to divulge right now.

Diagrams

I
Diagrams

—A: Diagrams
863:1043 .827

The [b][l]unt rea[l]ity of m[y] [l][i]fe at the t[i]me
was [th]at [th]e [p][i]zza at [B]etto[l]a
was more a[pp][r]o[p][r][i]ate to [ea]t
with a [l]ite[r]al [s][ou][p] [s][p][oo]n
as [o][pp][o]sed to your [o][pp][o]sa[b]le [th]umbs,
[th]at [ea]ch [s]li[c]e was [s]t[ee]p[ed]
[i]n [a]n [i]l-[a]dvised a[m]ount of oil [a]nd ch[ee]se,
[th]at [th]e b[r]ea[d], [f]or th[at] [m][a]tter,
was al[r]ea[d]y [f]l[o][pp]y,
that [e]ven a [r]ob[us]t c[r][u]s[t] [c]ould ne[v]er
[w]ithstand the [w]eight of the [t]o[pp]ings
as [c]u[r]rently [c]o[n]s[tr]ucted,
which [c]aused the en[t]ire [p]izza
[t]o [a]val[an]che down [t]o the [t]i[ps] of your fi[n]gers
wh[e]n[e]ver you a[tt][e]m[p]t[ed]
to [p]i[ck] [i]t u[p],
thereb[y] forced to [c]o[n]s[ume] the [s][l]i[c]e
in e[ss]entia[l]ly [o]ne r[ush]ed b[i]te,
with all the ingr[e]d[i]ents
[c]o[n]c[ate]nating on[t]o [ea]ch other,
l[e]aving you [w]ith a [p]i[er]ce
of [w]et br[e]ad in your [p]alm
that [c]o[n]s[tr]ucted the [q]u[ote]-[u]n[qu]o[te]
"re[s]t [o]f the [s]li[c]e".
143:189 .757

It was [t]e[c]hni[c]ally [C][ur]t's idea [t]o go,
[w]hen [w]e [w]er[e]
[s]t[i]ll at the [c]i[gar] b[ar] [s][o]-c[a]lled d[i]nner,

where the [c][o][p]ious [s]m[o][k]e
was [s][ee][p][i]ng [i]nto our [s][k][i]ns
[b]y the [m][i]n[u]te,
where the [p][a]st[a] [w]as [m]ush
and the g[a]rlic [w]as [b][ur]nt,
where C[ur]t a[tt]emp[t]ed [t]o
[b]um a [s][i]ngle [c][i]gar[e]tte
o[ff] the [f]orty or [s][o] [p]eo[p]le
in [a]tt[e]nd[a]nce,
[a]ll to [n][o] [a]vail,
[n]either [o]ne [o]f [u]s
[s][m]o[k]ing a [c]i[g]ar or [c]i[g]arett[e],
the [n]ew bartender
[m]ade al[m]o[st] ent[ire]l[y] of [p][i][a]s[t][i][c],
[w]ith a [P][i][c]a[s]so [i][i][k]e
v[i]be to h[er] [w][or][k],
sh[e] [a][c]tua[l]l[y] [g]a[ve] [m]e a [g]r[e]at deal
on the [m][ay]be [ei]ght
[M]i[c]helob [U]ltras I ch[u]gged!
122:144 .847

[B]ut [B][e]tto[l]l[a] was [a][ll][e]ged
to [s]p[ort] the [b][e]st [p]izza
in the [s]tate,
it w[a]s [s]o[m]ething
[a][pp]a[r]ently [a] g[r]ou[p]
of [c]on[s]u[m]ers [c]a[s]t votes on
at [s]o[m]e time, [s]o[m]ewhere,
[a]nd [s]u[b]s[e]q[ue]ntly the a[w]ard [w]as
[a]dvert[i]sed
[r]i[ght] in f[r]ont of their [s]toop,
[s]o I [s]aw n[o] [r]eal [r]isk
in [s]to[p]ping b[y],
as [I] was [s]till u[p]
[f]or a [b]i[te], [f]i[nd]ing

the [p][a][s]t[a] at the [b][ar]
a [b]it [s]ub[p][ar],
[p]lus it was a [s]tr[ai]ght [s]hot
u[p] [P]onti[a][c]
in [a]ny [c][a][s]e.
88:101 .871

Yet wh[i]le [I]'m
t[y][p][i]ca[l]y of the m[i]nd
to [s][i][l]ent[ly] di[s][p]arage
a [r][e][s]tau[r][a]nt's [o]ffe[r]ing
th[e]n just n[e]ver [r][e]t[urn]
ag[ai]n, [C]urt, b[y] [c]on[t]r[ast],
[t]e[n]d[ed] to vo[c]al[i]ze
h[i]s [d][i]s[c]on[t]e[n]t
to [w]ai[t] st[a]ffs,
[a]nd [w]ith a [c]omp[li]ai[n]t
[I] [q]uiet[ly] a[dd][r]e[ss]ed
to him n[ow] [b][u]tt[er]e[ss]i[n]g
h[i]s [ow]n [d][i]s[g]u[st]
he [c]alled the [b]artender,
R[ei]gn,
o[v]er to [v]oice his [c]oncerns
with the n[ot]ion b[oth] [p]izzas
[w]e ord[er]ed [w]er[en't] "g[r][ea]t",
yet [R]ei]gn, [f]or her [p]art,
[f]ound [C]urt's [c]om[p]l[ai]nt
just as [c]o[n]te[m]p[t]ible
as we [f]ound the [p]l[a]c[e]'s
[p]izz[a]—she w[a]s [f]ran[k]l[y] a [l]ittle sho[c]ked
that a [p]er[s]on [c]ould [d]is[i]i[k]e
th[i]s lusc[i]ous [p]i[e].
125:138 .906

Th[i]s [f]ood [i]n [f]r[on]t of [u]s w[a]s,

to [R][ei]gn, g[r][ea]t [p]izza,
yet she now [s]tood [f][a][c]ed w[i]th
two [p][a]t[r][o]ns
who [s][ee]med to di[s]ag[r][ee],
[j][u]dging n[ot] [j][u]st the [p]articular [p][i]es
they g[o]t to [b]e s[u]b[p]ar,
[b][u]t the a[c]tual [c]onstr[u][c]tion
of the [p]izza it[s][e]f,
the un[d]erlying ar[c]hit[e][c]ture
of the [r][e][s]tau[r]ant's [r][e][c]i[p][e]
to b[e] [d][ee][p][l][y] [f][l]awed.
68:79 .861

[O]h n[o],
it's f[i]ne, [I] said,
en[t][i]re[l][y] [i]n[s][i]n[c]e[re][l][y],
[t]e[l]ling R[ei]gn
the food was o[k][ay],
there was [r][ea][l][y] [n][o] [n][ee]d
for us to [c]omp[ai]n—
[m][ay]b[e] j[u]st get [m][e]
[o]ne [m]ore [M][i]che[l]o[b]
[i]f you h[a]ve a ch[a]nce?
46:47 .979

So [I] [b]elieve [C][ur]t and [I]
were [b][o]th [s][ur]p[r]i[s]ed
when [R][ei]gn [c][a]me
[o]ver [s]ome [t]ime l[a]ter,
[a]fter [t]o-g[o] [b]oxes
h[a]d [b]een [p][a][c]ked
and night [c][a][p]s'd
[b]een [s]i[p]ped,
with a [f][r]esh [p][i]e,
[s]aying T[r][y] this one on [f]or [s][i]ze—

yet, wh[i]le [l] of [c]ourse,
had [n]o [i]n[c][l][i][n]a[t]ion to [c]om[p][l][ai]n,
I [d][d]n't even object
to the m[ea]t on the [p][i]zza,
I'd r[a]ther h[a]ve, [a]t th[at] [p]oint,
[b]r[ea]ched my own [v][e]ganism
[b]efore I [l]e[v][ie]d a [c]om[p][l][ai]nt
to R[ei]gn,
yet [C]urt wasn't of the [s][a]me m[i]nd
as [l].
86:109 .789

Yeah, [s][ee], he [s]aid,
this [p][i]zza has the [s]ame
[p][r]o[b]lem—[p][r]o[c][ee]ding to show
[R][ei]gn and [n]ow a[n]other
w[ai]t[r][e]s[s]
the [e][ss]e[n]tial in[c]ongru[en]ce
[b]etween [th]e [th][i][c]kn[es]s
of the [b]read
and the [p][ay]load
of the [m]ul[t]i[p]le [t]o[pp]ings,
how it [m]a[de] the [p][i]zza
[r][ea]ll[y] hard to [ea]t.
48:64 .75

What [R][ei]gn still f[ai]led
to [c][o]m[p]rehend [w][a]s it [w][a]sn't
the [c][o]m[p]o[n]e[n]ts of [B][e]ttola's
pizza that were obj[e]c[tio]n[a]b[le],
it was in[s]t[ea]d the
[c]ore geometr[y] of the [p]ie
that was [b][a]s[i]c[al]l[y] una[cc][e][p]t[a]b[le]—
in [a]n [e]n[t]irel[y] ill-[f]a[ct]ed a[tt]em[p]t
to [s]a[ve] [f]a[ct]

[C]urt asked [R][ei]gn
to [m][a]ke us
an [e][s]p[r][e][ss][o] [m]art[i]n[i]
but with [t]e[q]u[i]la,
her id[i][o][s]yn[c]ratic [t][a][k]e
[o]n the [c][o][c]k[t][ai]!.
78:95 .821

[P]er[s]onally I [f]ound the
[t]e[q]uila-b[a][s]ed [e][s]p[r][e][ss][o] [m]ar[t][i]n[i]
as ge[o][m][e]tri[c]ally off [k]ilter
as the [p][i]zza,
all I [c]ould [t][a][s]te
was the damn agav[e],
y[e]t I [k][e]pt [m]y [m]outh [c]l[os]ed,
my [t]o-g[o] box ready
[t]o [t]a[k]e h[om]e
to my [l]oving wif[e],
[f]l[ie]d to the b[r][i]m w[i]th sh[i]tty pizza
as a [l]i[t]tle [C]hr[i]stm[as] g[i]ft—
59:77 .766

—B: Diagrams
743:900 .826

[S][i]tt[ing] at The [S]ocial
[b][y] [m][y][s]elf,
[m]y [f]irst t[ime] [b]ack on [M]ine[r]al [S]p[r]ing
[s]ince [I]'d [m]oved [f]rom the [s]t[r]eeet
a[ft]er [r]es[i]ding [b]e[s][i]de Ta[c]o [B]ell
[f]or a [d]e[c]a[de] [p][l]u[s]—
the [s][p]ot I [d][r][a]nk [a]t [l]o[c]a[te]d
[a] [d]oor [o]ver [f]rom my [f]or[m]er [a]p[ar]t[m]ent,
[a] [d]ila[p]i[d]ated [b]u[i]l[d]ing w[i]th
[a][b]out [f]ive [b][u]sin[ess]es

[o]n the [b][o]ttom [f]loor—
and I knew [f]or a [f]act this [p]asty [b]artender
was u[p]se[ll]ing [m][e] egr[e]gious[lly] on
her sh[i]tty [l][i]ttle [m]ez[c][a]l g[l][a][ss]es,
the [C][a][s][a][m][i]gos [b]rand to [b]oot,
m[y] [l][ea]st favorite
b[y] a [l][ar]ge m[ar]gin.
114:128 .891

The whore charged m[e] [s]e[v]ent[ee]n per
d[r][i]nk wh[ic]h [i]n North [P][r][o][v]o[llo]ne
was [s][i]m[p]l[y] an atro[c]i[t]y,
[e]ven [f]i[f]t[ee]n bucks [p]er
g[l][a]ss was hy[p]otheti[c]a[lly] [a]b[s]urd,
it was [c]om[p]l[et]e[lly] out of [l]i[n]e
[l] thought as [l] be[g]r[ud]gingly [g]ave
h[er] my Dis[c]ov[er] [c]ard,
re[c]alling j[us]t a [c][ou]ple [m][o]nths [p]r[i]or
at [m]y f[r]iend [R]yan's
birthday [p]ar[ty]—when this [p]ar[ti]c[ular]
[S]o[ci]al [w]or[k]er [w]as,
in [m]y [m]i[n]d, a [l]ittle [s]l[ow] with
the [C]or[ona] [L]ight [s]er[v]ice
and [o]v[er]h[ear]d my [c]rit[ic]ue of [h]er [s]p[ee]d
to [P]aul, [s]ub[s]e[qu]ent[l]y [s]l[am]ming down [s]ix
[b]eers
on[t]o a [t]a[b]le and yelling "Here you go!" to m[e],
which I [a]ctuall[y] appr[e]c[i]ated [a]t the t[i]me,
[a]s [l] was [a]l[r]ea[d]y [r]ea[d]y for [a]n[other]
Coro[n]a a[n]yway.
137:173 .792

[B]ut [n]ow, [s]l[ut]t[er]ing at The [S]o[ci]al
[b]y m[y]s[el]f, [b]e[ing] [b]a[s]i[c]al[lly] [m]u[g]ged
[b]e[c]a[us]e of [m]y p[r]o[c]l[i]v[i]t[y] toward [m]ez[c]al,

I [r]e[c][o]gnized [th]at [th]is [c]o[m]ment,
even [i]f [n]ot [i]n[t]i[t]ally [i]ntended for
the [s][er]v[er] to [h]ear,
[h]ad [c]ome [b]a[c]k to [b]ite [m]e in
[m]y [a]ss, [a]s I a[ss]umed the [d]ebt
for th[e]se [s]event[ee]n [d]ollar mez[c][a]ls.
65:79 .823

The w[ai]t[r][e]ss [b]e[c][a]me the [b]ar[t]ender
[i]n the [i]n[t]e[r]n[e]m, [a]nd she's now
[e]x[a]cted her [r][e]v[e]nge with al[a]c[r]i[t]y.
23:28 .821

To the b[e]st of m[y] r[e][c]o[ll][e][c]tion
[I] was on[l]y [e]ven on the [d]amn str[ee]t
be[c]ause I had a [d][i][nn]er [t]o [a][tt]end
at [I] [F]or[n]ello [a]round the [c]orner,
[a]nd [a][f]ter h[a]nding the [t][a]b
b[a]c[k] to my [c]o[c]k[t]ail exe[c]utioner,
[I] [s]t[i]ll had [s]ome t[i]me to [k][i]ll,
[s][o] I [d][r][o]ve [d]own the [s]t[r]eet to [R]occ[o]'s
[f]or a [s][o]le a[dd]i[t]i[on]al [d][r][i]nk
[b]e[f]ore I h[it] the [d][i]nner,
[a]s I h[a]dn't [b]een
[i]n [e]ons it [s]eemed
and [n][ow] [f]ou[nd] my[s]elf in a [n]o[s]talgic
[i]f [n]ot [b]i[t]ter [s]tate of m[i]nd.
90:114 .789

[I] [r]e[c]og[n]i[z]ed the [b]artender
at [R]occ[o]'s f[r]om p[as]t e[r]as,
[b]a[c]k when I
g[r]a[bb]ed [c]o[c]k[tails with th[a]t [a]bsol[ute]
[c]r[umb] [E]nzo on the [r][e]gu[lar],
[b]ut I [c]ouldn't [r]e[c]all the [g]irl's n[a]me—

sh[e] [g][r][ee]ted [m][e] a[m]i[c]a[b]l[y],
yet also [r]e[f]r[ai]ned [f]r[om] using
[a] [f]ormal [a][dd][r]ess, n[o] [d]oubt als[o]
[f]ai[l]ing to [r]e[c]all m[e]
[f]u[l]l[y] [ei]ther [a]s
I [a]sked [f]or a
Johnny Bl[a]c[k].
71:87 .816

[F]u[c]k a mez[c][a],
I [th]ought,
re[f]le[c]ting [th][a]t
the g[a]s station [a]t the
[c]or[n]er of Mi[n]e[r]al
and [D][ou]g[l]as w[a]s
[c]omp[l]e[t]e[l]y [r]e[d]one,
it s[ee]med [l]i[k]e [d]e[c]ades
[s]in[c]e I'd [b]een u[p] North
b[ut] it w[a]s j[ust] a c[ou]p[le] [m]o[n]ths
at [m]ost [s]in[c]e the [m]o[n]ve—
the [f]u[c]king [K]orean [B]ar[b]e[q][ue]
[s]p[ot] [f]inally o[p]ened t[oo],
after [r]e[m]ai[n]ing in a [s]t[a]te
of [l]imbo for the [l]a[s]t
[s]ix [m]onths w[e]d
[l]i[v]ed a[c]r[oss] the [s]t[re]et.
77:92 .837

O, what [c][r]uel i[r]onies
[N]orth P[r]ovidence h[a]d in w[ai]t
[f]or me th[at] a [f]ter[n]oon!—
the [R]occo's [g]irl [g][a]ve
m[e] a [r]ea[sonable] [f]are
[f]or my [s]ub[s]e[qu]ent
[s]c[ot]ch [o]n the r[o]c[k]s, and

I [f]igured [a]t th[a]t [p]oint it was [p]ro[b][a][b]ly
 [a][b]out time, now h[a]l[f] in the [b][a]g,
 [t]o go [b][a][c]k [t][o]ward [F][o]rne[ll]o,
 [l][oo][p]ing thr[ou]gh my old [p]ar[k]ing [l]ot,
 to f[i]nd the R[us]sian g[u]y's wh[i]te [t][r][u]ck
 [T][r]ee [h]ad [h]ated
 [s]till [p]ar[k]ed [i]n h[i]s [s]ame
 [d][i][p]sh[itt] [s][p]ot and [l]etting [d]own
 my [C][i]v[i]c's w[i]n[d]ow
 to haw[k] a [l]oogie [a]t the [p][a][ss]enger [d]oor
 [a]s I [d]rove by, [e]jecting the [s][p]it
 [f]ar [e]n[ou]gh to [c][l]ea[r] my [c]ar b[ut]
 [u]nsure if I a[c]tua[lly]
 [c]onn[ec]ted w[i]th a
 dir[e]ct h[itt] on the [p][i]c[ku]p,
 un[c]onv[i]nced [i]f [l]i'd, [l]i[k]e
 the [p]r[e]v[i]ous bartender,
 [s]u[c]c[e]ssfully [e]n[a]c[t]ed a m[i]n[u]s[c]ule
 [r]e[v]enge on an [i]n[d]i[v]i[d]ual
 I [d][i]d[n't] [e]ven t[e]h[n]i[c]all[y] k[n]ow.
 166:199 .834

—C: Diagrams
 620:704 .881

[O]n the [A]mtr[a]k to [P]enn [S]t[a]tion
 [o]n a [F][r]id[ay] [A]M
 I [c]on[s]idered my
 [p]r[of]e[ss]i[on]al [i]nv[e]s[t]i[g]a[t]ion
 [i]n[t]o the [E]p[is]t[e]in [s][c]andal,
 [f]i[l]led as [i]t [i]s w[i]th [a]ge[l]ess en[i]gmas
 [a]nd [f]a[x] h[oa]xes,
 [a]nd als[o] my [r]e[al]i[za]ted [b]ut a[b]orted [n]ovel
 th[at] [l] [a]t the [t]i[m]e [t]i[t]led Jeff[r]ey of [N][a]za[r]eth,
 [w]here I'd im[a]gined a [n]ear [f]uture

[w]here the [k]id [t][r]a[ff][i][c]ker Je[ff]
 [w]as [r]e-in[t]erp[r]eted as a [C]h[r][i]st-l[i]ke
 [f]igure, wh[er]e Am[e][r][i]cans
 [b]ought for [s]ex [t]oys [f]or house pets
 they [s]aw on [T]i[k][T]o[k],
 [b]ut [n]ow wit[n]e[ss][i]ng
 [i]nter[n]e[t] [c][e][l][e][b][r]ities,
 who [s]till k[n]o[w [n][o] []]o]ws,
 wea[r]ing F[r][ee] Ghis[!][a]ine
 [t][ee]s I con[t]e[m]p[!][a]ted
 wh[e]ther or [n][o]t
 my [f][ai]led [n][o]vel was
 in [f][a][c]t [s][t]ill [s]a[t]iri[c]al [a]t all,
 even [n]ow,
 that [p]erh[a][p]s J[e]ff [E]p[s]t[e]in
 would [s]oon b[e] [s]ee[n]
 as a [s]ort of [s]e[c]ond [c]oming of J[e]sus,
 that po[ss]i[b]l[y] eve[r][y][b]od[y]
 had it [a]ll w[r][o]ng
 [a]ll [a][o]ng—
 that [a]ll th[o]se [s]i[l]ly girls
 who [a][ll]e]ged under [o]ath
 they'd b[ee]n [s][e]xua[l]l[y] v[i]o[l]ated
 as [!][i]ttle [k][i]ds were [s][i]m[p][!][y]
 un[p]ro[s]e[c]uted [!][i]ars?
 200:239 .837

[C]ould J[e]ffr[ey] [E]p[s]t[e]in a[c]tua[l]l[y] b[e] J[e]sus,
 I [c]on[s]i]dered [i]n the [c]oach [c][!][a][s]s of
 [A]mtr[a][k]—
 or [i]s [e]ve[r]y [s][i]ngle A[m][e][r][i]c]an who votes
 [D]e[m]oc[r]at [a]nd [R]e[p]u[b]l[i]c]an
 [b]a[s]i[c]a[l]l[y] a [p]e[d]oph[il]e, [!] thought,
 [b]e[c]ause on[!][y] a [C] [s]tudent chim[p]anz[ee]
 [c]ould [p]o[ss]i[b]l[y] view our [p]o[!]t[!]i[c]al

[s][y][s]tem [a]s [a]nything [b][u]t
i[r]ever[s]i[b][l][y] [c]o[r]r[u]p[t]?—
87:88 .989

[E]very [e][l][e]ction [i]n th[is] [f][ai]led [s]t[ate]
is b[a][s]i[c]a[l]ly a [f]aux pas
[k][a]y[f][a]be m[o][c]k [e][e][c]tion [o]b[f]u[s][c][a]ting
[f]rom the [t][r]ue ex[t]ent of our [s]t[ate]
[o]f [c]o[r]r[u]ption,
I th[o]ught [o]n the [A]mt[r][a][k],
in a [r][ea]lm of even [r][e][m]ote A[m][e][r]i[c]an
[c]o[l]l[e]c[t]i]ve int[e][l]l[i]gence
all th[e]se [p]o[l]i[t]i]c[i]ans
would b[e] [p]ro[s]e[c]uted and
[p]l]aced [i]n[t]o [p]r[i]s[on] [c]ells
for [m]ul[t]i[p]le de[c]a]des at [m]i[n]i[m]u]m,
be[c]a[use]
if a [s]o-[c]alled [s]t[ate] [c]a[n't] [a]t the ver[y] [l]ea]st
[c]o[l]l[e]c[t]ive[l]y] a[c]t against
w[i]de [s]c[a]le ch[i]ld r[a]pe
[th]en [th]e [n]a]tion functio[n]all[y]
[c]ea[s]es to exi[s]t.
126:129 .978

We [l]i]ve [i]n[s]tead [i]n a [s]t[ate] of [s]t[atic]
[a]nar[c]h[y]
[a]c]tua[l]ly, I [c]o[n]s]idered—
a[n]y [n]o[t]ion of a [n]a]tion
is [p]ure[l]y i[l]l]uso[r]y,
just [l]ike Ze[n]o's [p]r]oofs on
the [f]i]c[t]i]t[i]ous [n]ature of The [M]a[n]y,
A[m]e[r]i[c]a is [e]q]uall[y] [i]f [n]ot [m]ore
i[m]agi[n]a[r]y—
59:68 .868

[P][e]o[p]le
[d]e[s][p]ise [S]t[e]phen [M]iller
and his [m]u[pp]et wi[f]e
[f]or in[c][r]e[d]i[b]l[y] good [r][ea]son,
I thought,
as they're [b]oth [b]a[s]i[c]all[y]
t[r][ea]s[o][n]ous [i]d[i]ots,
[b]ut they're actua[l][y]
a [r]e[l]ative[l][y] [m]i[n]or [s]ym[p]tom
of an [e]ven [m]ore [s]e[r]i[ous] dis[ea]se,
as when [p][e]o[p]le
[l]ike [M][i][s]s[e]s [M]i[l]ler
a[pp]ear on [t][e][l]e[v]i[s]i[on] [p][r]og[r]ams
[t]o endorse A[m][e][r][i]c[an] fa[s]c[i]sm
while in[t]er[p]r[et]ing a[n]y [c][r]i[tic]i[s]m
of her own [N][a]zi-[a]dj[ac]e[n]t opinions
as a [r][a]c[i]st atta[c]k on her
[s]o-[c]alled Jewish i[d]entit[y]
it's [u]n[a]voi[d]abl[y] [r]epul[s]ive
to [e][v]e[r]yone,
yet [e][v]e[n] that [e]gr[e]g[i]ous [i]m[b]e[c]i[i]t[y]
[i]s [s]t[i]l[a]n [a]t [b]est
minor [s]y[m]pt[o]m [i]n the
[l]arger [s][c]heme of a
fund[a]m[en]ta[l][y] i[m]a[g]in[a]r[y]
[A]m[e]r[i]c[a]—
148:180 .822

II
Diagrams

—A

642: 712 .902 (x5)

The [l]ack of a [l]ite[r]a[r]y [c]ulture
wh[i]ch [i]s [p][r]o[b]a[b][l]y a fault,
[p][r]ima[r]i[l]y I'd a[ss]ume,
of our [c]o[l]l[e]c[t]ive,
[m][o]r[e] [o]r [l]e[s]s [g][r]o[t]e[s][q]ue,
A[m]e[r]i[c]an o[l]i[g]a[r]c[h]ic [c][l]a[ss],
is with[ou]t d[ou]bt
[a]t [l]e[as]t [p]a[r]t[i]a[l]y
re[s]p[on]sible for
this [s]tate's
[s]e[m]i[n]g[l]y [e]a[s]y [d]e[s]c[e]nt
in[t]o unr[e]p[e]n[t]a[n]t fascism,
which to [b]e [c]l[e]ar
[i]n[d]u[b]i[t]a[b]ly [e]x[t]e[n]ds [b]eyond
th[i]s [c]u[r]r[e]n[t] p[r]e[s]i[d]e[n]t,
who, wh[i]le [l]e[m] sure he's
a [n]i[c]e e[n]o[u]gh g[uy],
[l]e[as]t [o]v[e]rheard [f]r[om]
a [v]a[r]i[e]ty of [s]our[c]es,
o[f]t[e]n sh[i]ts [i]n h[i]s
kni[c]kers, [c]r[e]ating,
a[c]c[or]d[ing] to [s]ome [i]n h[i]s
[s]o[c]i[a]l [c]i[r]c[le],
a [p]e[c]u[n]i[a]r [s]t[e]nch [s]u[r]rou[n]d[ing]
his bo[d]ily [s]p[er]a[c]e?
130:149 .872

In any [c][a][s]e,
this [b]u[r]eau[c]r[ra]tic

[r]ot h[a]s [b]een
v[i]c[i]ously p[r][e]s[e]nt
in the House and
S[e]n[a]te,
d[a]t[i]ng [b]ack
not j[u]st
to [R][ea]g[a]n,
[b][u]t the [c]orr[upt]
[C][i]nt[on] [r]egime
that [p][l][a]c[ed] [p]er[s]o[n]al
[p][r]ofit o[v]er [n][a]tio[n]al [s]e[c]u[r]ity,
in all [i]k[e]ihood eng[a]g[i]ng
in [s]t[a]te-[s]a[n]c[tion]ed
[a][ss][a][ss]in[at]i[on]s to [c]o[v]er
[s]aid [n]on[s]e up,
to the [e]xt[en]t
our [b]r[an]ches of
[i]n[te]r[na]tional
are [n]ow [b]a[s]i[c]a[lly]
[l]ittle [b]eyond a
[s]ad [c]o[l]l[ec]tion of
[s]t[e]rile [n]u[bs].
97:113 .858

B[u]t a[n]yway,
[a]ft[er] [i]n[d]ing
in [L]o[n]d[on]
we [f]ound
[o]urselves [o]n
the Pi[cc]adi[ll]y
[i]ne to C[o]c[k]f[ost]ers
[w]ith a [c][o]c[k]w[or]k
[i]k[e] [r][e]p[re]s[en]t[ati]on of
the t[r]ai[n]'s [f]inal [d][e]s[t]in[ati]on—
yet, [f]or our [p]art,

w[e]'d b[e] [s]t[a]y[i]ng
at the [d]e[ll]ightfu[lly] [d][r][ea][r][y]
Earl's C[ou]rt [b][o][r]ough,
[b]ut as the t[r]ain
[p][r]o[c][ee]ded,
with [ea]ch [p][r]og[r]e[ss]ive
[s]top [s][q]u[i]sh[i]ng
[m]e [i]n[c][r][e]m[e]nta[lly]
[u][p] ag[ai]nst my
[b][u]l[b]ou[s] [l][u]ggage
in the [c]r[a]mped [c][a]bin,
I [c]on[s]i[de]red the
o[r][i]g[i]ns of [w][or]ds,
for [i]n[s]t[an]ce
the [w]o[nde]r[ful] [w][or]k
of [s][o]me[one]
li[k]e, [s][ay], Noam Chom[s][k]y
(a g[r]ea[t f[r]i[en]d
of J[e]ff [E]p[s]t[e]in
by the [w][ay]!),
[e]ven a [l]urid [w][or]d
li[k]e "[c]o[c]k"
[c]ould ta[k]e on [s]o
[m]a[n]y [m]ea[n]ings,
[s]i[m]i[lar] to the ph[r]ase
"t[a]x [a]dvi[c]e"
in the [r]ealm
of [p]e[d]e[r][a]l[s]ts
[a]nd their h[i]gh [p]ro[f]i[le]
[p]ro[te]ctors!
175:174 1.01

In [f]act,
I [s]aw [a] [f]ew [s]tray
m[i]n[u]tes

of the [a][b]orted E[p][s]t[ei]n [P].R.
[S]t[e]ve [B][a][n]non [i]nterview,
[s][k][i]pp[i]ng [s]t[o][c]h[a][s]ti[c]a[lly]
to his ex[p][l]a[n][a]tion
of the [o]h [ei]ght
fi[n][a]ncial [c]r[i]sis [a]nd [i] was
a [b]it [b][l]o[wn] aw[ay]
at how [u]tter[ly] d[u]mb
J[e]ff [c][a]me off—
[e]sp[ec]ia[lly] wh[e]n h[e]
att[em]pted to [e]x[p]lain
[N]ewton and [P]yth[agoras]!—
[a]nd it's [n]ot even the
[C]o[n]ey [i]sland
w[i]se-guy [a]ccent
[ei]ther, [n][o],
the p[ur]e [c]ontent of
his [w]o[r]ds [w]er[e]
[i]nd[i]cative of a [m]an
who'd [s]p[ec]nt the v[a]st m[a]jority
[o]f his [a]dult [b]r[ai]n [c]ells
on [b]l[a]ck[m]ai and
[l]ewd [s]ex [i]n[s]t[ea]d of
any [s]ort of [i]nt[el]l[e]ctual
[p]ur[s]uits,
E[p][s]tein [p]ur[p]orted to be
[s]ome [m]a[n][a]n[i]m[ous] curio
of m[a]th, y[e]t his [e]x[p]l[an]ation
of [P]yth[agoras]
[r]e[v]olved a[r]ound
[th]e [r]e[v]e[la]tion [th]at
[t]wo [t]ri[an]gles,
g[i]ven the [r]i[gh]t [c]ircum[s]t[an]ces,
[c]an [c]reate
a s[qu]are.

173:203 .852

[A]nd I'd [i]m[a]g[i]ne
even th[a]t [f]l[a]t opportu[n]ist
B[a][nn][o]n'd h[a]ve
to [a]dmit [J]e[ff] [j][u]st
w[a]sn't [q]u[i]te th[a]t br[i]ght, th[a]t
[s]im[p]ly [b]e[c]ause you [s][p][ou]t
[s]ome [b]ullshit
a[b]out [e]x[ch]a[n]ge [r]a[tes]
[a]nd [c]ent[r]al b[a]nks
[i]n t[e]xt [ch][ai]ns,
[i]n fact,
[i]n n[o] w[ay] means you
[o]wn an abo[v]e [a][v]e[r]age
[c]ap[a]c[i]ty
toward [c][r][i]t[i]c[al] th[i]n[k]i[ng]?
67:73 .918

—B

[A]t the [N]a[tio]n[al] G[a]llery
in [W]estm[in]ster,
[a]fter [T]r[ee] [t]old m[e]
[w]e'd v[i]s[it] the
[B]yron [b]u[i]ld[i]ng,
[I] [b]ecame a [l]ittle f[l]ummoxed—
[w]an[d]e[r]ing a[r]ound,
[w]on[d]e[r]ing [w]hat exactly
the [a]utho[r] [o]f [D]on J[u]an'd b[e]
[d]o[ing] [a]mong [a]ll th[e]se
f[u]cking [p]ainters—
j[u]st to [s]t[u]m[b]le [u][p]on
or[i]g[i]n[a]l [P]ontorm[o]s,
[P]armigia[n][i]n[o]s, [B][r]onz[i]n[o]s,

my favo[r][i]te Ma[nn]e[r][i]st
[p][ai]nters—
art I'd g[a]zed [a]t [a]s J[P][E]Gs
on the inter[n][e]t for[e]ver,
but [n]ow w[i]t[n][e]ssed [i]n
their o[r][i]g[i]n[al] [f]orms,
and I [r]e[f]l[e]ct[e]d [b]a[c]k
to sp[e]n[d]ing [t]w[e]nty [b]u[c]ks
to [b]e g[r][a]n[t]ed [a]d[m][i]ss[i]on [i]nto
[R][I]S[D]'s [m]us[e][u]m,
[w]here[a]s, now [b]y cont[r][a]st,
I [w]as s[ee][i]ng
a h[a]lf dozen o[r][i]g[i]n[al]
[B][r]onz[i]n[o]'s [f]or [f]r[ee].
141:166 .849

On a se[c]ond [g]o [r]ound
of the [M][a]nne[r]ist
[r]ooms [a]n A[m]e[r]i[c]an
tour [g]uide [p]osted [u]p
in f[r]o[n]t [o]f
B[r]o[nz[i]n[o]'s V[e]n[us]
[p]ont[i]f[i]cating an im[p][r]o[m]p[t][u]
[t]a[k] [r]eg[a]r[d]ing
the [M]anne[r]ist [m]o[ve]m[en]t
[s]u[r]roun[d]ed by
a [s]e[r]ies of
I'm [s][ur]e well-in[t]entioned
[s]eni[or] [c][i]t[i]z[e]ns
who w[er]e then [p][r]om[p]t[ed]
to [r]el[ay] [p]e[r]s[on]al and
[s]p[e]c[i]f[i]c in[t]e[r]p[r]e[t]a[t]i[on]s
of the [q]u[ote]-un[q]u[ote]
"thea[t]r[i]c[al]" [p][ai]nt[ing]—
88:98 .898

The [n]ext [a][f]ter[n]oon
 [a][f]ter d[r][i]n[k][i]ng
 a [c][ou][p]le [s][c][r][u]m[p]tious [p][i]nts
 at Church[i]ll's [p]ub
 in [K]ens[i]ngton
 [w]e [w]al[k]ed
 to an I[r]anian
 [r][e]stau[r]ant
 [m][y] w[i]fe's
 B[r][i]t[i]sh aunt
 [r]eco[mm]e[n]d[e]d,
 where u[p]on
 [p][er]using the [P][er]sian [m][e]nu
 [i] i[m]m[e]d[i]atel[y] [d]e[c][i]d[ed] to
 b[r][ea]ch
 my vegeta[r][i]an [s]t[r][ea]k
 and [or]der the
 I[a]mb sh[a]nk,
 n[u]mber [f][or]ty [f][our],
 [b]ec[au]se it w[a]s either
 [th]at or [th]e vegeta[b]le
 [b]iry[n][i], [b][u]t
 [a]t [a]n [i][r][a]n[i]an [s]pot,
 which [s]t[r][u]ck
 me as a [b]it
 i[n][a]ne at the t[i]me.
 99:119

Un[d]er [r]egu[l]ar [c]ir[c]um[s]tan[c]es,
 of [c]ourse,
 I'd [v][i]go[r]ou[s][l]y [c]on[s]i[d]er
 a [v]egeta[b]le [b]iry[n][i],
 it'd p[r]o[b]a[b]l[y] [b]e a [b]ullseye
 on a [m]enu for [m]e,

[b]ut [s][i]tt[i]ng [a]t [S]ad[a]f
with [K][a]t [a]nd her
faux [a]unt,
I [c]urious[ly] [l][a][c]ked
an[y] [ur]ge
to [e]ven utt[er] the
[t][wo] w[or]ds
[t][o] the g[ir]ls
as a [d][i]sh
I'd con[s][i]der,
in[s]t[ea]d I just [s][ai]d
"I think I need
to h[a]ve th[at] [l][a]mb sh[a]n[k],"
[e]x[p][e]c[ti]ng a de[l][i]c[i]ous
[a]nd [e]x[p][a]n[s]ive
hun[k] of [l][a]mb
[a]fter [t][a]k[ing] note of
the [t][a]ble [t]o the [r]ight
[p][a]s[s]ing [a]r[ound]
[a] v[o]luminous ch[o][p].
107:132 .811

If the lamb ch[o]ps,
I th[ou]ght,
which gene[r]ally
in [A]me[r]ica
[a]re over[p][r]iced and
[p][a]t[r]y,
[a]re h[ea]rt[y],
[th]en [th]e [sh][a]nk
[sh]ould be [m][a]ss[i]ve,
[a]nd [i]f I'm [ea]ting [m][ea]t
I [m]ight as well [m]a[k]e
it fu[ck]ing [c]ount.
36:47 .766

Yet [w]hen the [w][ai]ter
 [p][l][a]ced a
 [l]arge [p][l][a]te of [p][l][ai]n
 wh[i]te [r][i][c]e in f[r]ont of
 [m]y [p]er[s]on
 [m][i][n][u]tes [l][a]ter
 I [w]as o[m][i][n][ou]s[l]y [p]er[p][l]exed,
 and [w]hen he dro[pp]ed a
 [s][i]de-[p][l][a]te-[s][i]zed
 chun[k] of [s]o-[c]alled [l][a]mb sh[a]n[k]
 be[s]ide the [r][i][c]e
 I knew I'd [m][a]de a
 g[r][a]ve [m][i][s]t[a]k[e],
 [th][a]t [th][i][s] sh[a]n[k],
 this [f]irst [f]o[r]a
 [l]'d [m][a]de into
 [l][r]an[n]ian lamb,
 that it'd [p][a]le
 in [c]om[p]a[r]ison
 to g[r][ea]t l[a]mbs of my [p][a]st,
 be[c]a[us]e of the
 [p]ortion, but al[s]o the
 [s]eason[i]ng, [w]hich
 [w]as lack[i]ng
 to the [e]xt[re]nt of
 non-[e]xi[s]t[en]ce, that
 I'd h[a]ve to [a]t [s]ome
 [p]oint t[ex]t m[es]sage
 [F]arhad to [c]on[f]irm
 I [f]inally [a]te [P]ersian l[a]mb
 [a]nd it was
 [p]re[c]i[p]i[t]ou[s]ly [d][i][s]a[pp]ointing,
 no [d]oubt I'd [b][l][a]me
 the [l]ack[l]uster t[a]ste

on "[b][e]ing in [L][o]n[d][o]n,"
while shrewd[!][y]
[r]ef[r][ai]ning to [m][e]ntion
that [e]ve[r]y other [m][ea]
w[e]'d [ea]ten [i]n the c[i]ty
[u]p to that [d]ay
w[a]s f[u]ck[i]ng [d]el[i]c[i]ous.
168:200 .840

Th[i]s [P]ers[i]an [l]amb,
in [m][y] [m][i]nd,
was [o]n[!][y] [c]om[p]arable
to the [s][o]-[c]alled
[l]amb sh[a]nk
I'd got at a [p][!][a]ce
I'll [r]e[f][r][ai]n [f][r]om n[a]ming
on West [F]ountain [S]t[r]eet
that t[a][s]ted like a
p[air] of [Air] Jordans,
[w]h[e]n our [w][ai]ter
[w][e]nt on
[r]egarding his [l]o[ve] [o]f
[s][o]-[c]alled G[r]eek
[c]ulture, [o]n[!][y] to
[s]erve a
sh[a]nk th[a]t was
[b][a][s]i[c]ally a di[s]gr[a]c[e],
[b]ut to [b]e [f]air
the l[a]mb was
n[o] [d]ir[e]ct [f]ault
of the [s][er]v[er], just
a [s][a]d c[o]in[c]i[d]e[n]c[e].
80:101 .792

The [r]ea[!][i]ty is

wh[i]le the [l][r]anian
 [l][a]mb in [L][o]nd[o]n
 m[a]y h[a]ve been
 [s][o]mewh[a]t [s][u]b[p]ar,
 I've y[e]t
 to [p]eruse a [s][o]-[c]alled
 [l][e]ft-[l]eaning out[l][e]t
 in [L][o]nd[o]n
 [l][i]k[e] our [P]o[l][i]t[i]c[o] [S]tate-[s]ide
 [t]alk[ing] [o]f [w]h[a]t
 it [w]ould [t]a[k]e [t]o
 [q]u[o]te-un[q]u[o]te
 "[p]ut to bed"
 a [c]ase [l][i]k[e] E[p][s]tein's,
 which [s]tru[c]k me as
 a [p]erfe[c]t[l]y [c]a[l]l[ou]s
 [b][i]t of [v]er[b]al [v]omit,
 to [d]is[r]egard
 the [d]o[ze]ns
 [o]f [u]n[d]erage v[i]ct[i]ms
 r[ou]tinely a[b][u]sed
 [b]y th[i]s m[y][s]terious
 [b]illio[n]aire and
 his [c]a[b]al of
 w[e]ll-[c]o[nn]e[ct]e[d]
 f[r]i[en]ds, who
 inc[l]ude at [l]east
 t[wo] [U].S. P[r]e[s]id[e]nts.
 109:128 .852

When [p]ro[s]e[c]uting, [s]ay,
 a m[a]fia [d]o[n]
 [c]ir[c]umst[an]tial [e]vi[d]e[n]ce
 [a]c[t[s] [a]s im[p]er[t]ur[ab]le
 [t]r[u]th in our [c]ountry,

as w[i]tn[e]ss[e]s
wh[o] by their [p][er][s]o[n]al adm[i]ss[i]on
are c[r][i][m][i][n][a]l [p]ie[c]es of sh[i]t
[s]ign [s]worn [s]t[ate]m[en]ts
that m[a]ke the [r]eality
of the [s]itu[at]i[on]
[c]r[y][s]t[a]l [c]lear
to [a]ll inv[o]lved
and formal t[r]ials
with [p]o[ss]i[ble]
[p][r][i]s[on] [s][e]nt[en]c[es]
[p][r]o[c]eed,
yet a w[h]ole [h]a[r]m of
[w]o[m]en clai[m]ing
the [w]orld's [m]ost
[p]ro[m]inent w[h]ore-[m]onger
E[p]s[te]in and his [M]o[ss]ad
[d]e[s]c[e]n[d]ed "[g]irfr[ie]nd"
[G]his[!]aine
were r[ou]tine[ly] ab[u]sing
[i]te[r]al ch[i]ld[r]e[n,
these w[o]m[en]
are in[s]tead [s]mear[ed]
by [a][ll][e]g[e]d[ly] "[m]ode[r]ate"
[A]m[er]ican out[lets]
as [e]ss[e]ntia[ly]
b[i]gger pie[c]es of
[sh]it [th]an [th]e l[o]an[sh]ark
in[f]ormants who [s]ign a[f]fidavits
to [p]ut ca[p]o[s] i[n] [p]r[i]s[on].
153:183 .836

The [n]otion that
[c]a[r]eer [c][r][i]m[i]n[al]s
who're [b]e[qu]eathed

the tangi[b]le [b][e][n][e]f[i]t
of [s]u[s][p][e]nd[e]d [p][r][i]s[o]n
[s][e]nt[e]n[c]e[s]
for [S]t[a]te co-op[er][a]tion
are [s][o]mehow
[m]ore tr[u][s]t[w]orthy
[w][i]tn[e]ss[e]s
than [w]o[m][e]n
who've [b]een a[b]used
[a]s ch[i]ldr[e]n [b]y
in[t]ern[at]ional [s][e]xual [t][e][rr]o[r][i]sts,
[p]eo[p]le w[i]th [i]nter[ra]ll
n[o]thing to gain
[b][u]t the [c]ont[em]p[t] of
[p][u][b]lic Am[e]r[ic]an outlets
who're g[r]o[t][e]s[s]q[ue]lly
[d][e]r[e][i]ct [i]n their [d][u]ty
as [n]ew[s] orga[n]izations—
[i]t[s] n[i][h][i][i][i]s[t]ic to
the [h]i[gh]est deg[r]ee,
a [f]r[esh] [l]ow
[f]or a [s]t[a]te
that [u]sed to [s][ay]
black [p]eo[p]le
were [s]ixty [p]er[c]ent
h[u]man
128:140 .914

III Diagrams

In I[a]te [T]wo Thousand
[Ei]gh[t][ee]n
I was [s]mo[k]ing an
i[c]e hoo[k][a]h at [P][a]sh[a]
wear[ing]
oil [p][ai]nt
[s]t[ai]ned [b]l[a]ck
[b][a][s][k]et[b]all shorts
with d[r][e]ss [s]ocks
and c[r][e]me [b][r]ulee [S][p]e[rr]y's
and [f]elt [s]ur[p][r][i]singly
[f][i]ne a[b]out it,
which [s]t[r][i]k[es] me
l[i]k[e] an a[cc][e][p]t[a]b[le]
[e]nough int[r][o]
to this m[o]de.
58:63 .921

In a s[e]nse, I f[e]lt
in the [m][o][m]ent th[at]
all th[at] re[m][ai]ned was op[i]n[i]on,
[th]is [n][o]tion [th]at [th]e [i]nter[n]et
[i]t[s]elf was b[a]si[c]a[lly]
our [l]a[s]t [s]t[an]d[ing] [f]orest,
a n[at]ural ar[c]hi[t]e[c]ture [e]n[t]ire[lly]
[d]e[d]i[c]ated to the mor[a]s
of [p]eo[p]le's [l]ittle [p]er[s]p[ec]tives
on [th]ings, [th]e in[f]ormal
[p]er[s]onal e[ss]ay
[b][a][s]i[c]ally as the [f][u][c]r[u]m
[o]f the [i]nternet [i]t[s]elf,
[b]ut the e[ss]ay as [p][ar]t and [p][ar]cel

of [a] l[ar]ge [a][m]alg[a][m]ation
[o]f [o]ne ex[p][a]ns[i]ve
Non[s][e]n[s]ical O[p][i]n[i]on,
[a]nd th[i]s
[i]s [e][ss][e]ntially
our [f]inal [r]em[ai][n]ing
[f]o[r][ay] into [n][a]ture
and [s]pon[t]a[n]eous ar[ch]i[t]e[c]ture,
whereas [R]o[b]ert [F][r]ost
w[r]ote a[b]out [f]u[ck]ing t[r]ees
[a]nd [s][t]icks [a]nd [s][t][o]nes
[a]nd shit, [b]ut
now?—that's all [o]ver.
135:171 .789

Even [m][o][d]ern [a]rt,
I [th][ou]ght,
[th][e]se ho[rr]en[d]ou[s] [M]at[i]sse
[r][e][p]r[i]nts you [n]ow [s][ee] [i]n [M]ille[n]nial
[d]o[ct]ors' [o][ff]i[ce]s, what [d][i]d they ev[i]n[c]e
but a [p]arti[c]ular [d]egra[d]ation
of [f]orm, which th[e]n
[e]x[p][r]e[s]sed it[s]e[lf] in un[m]easur[e]
[a]nd [a]n[e]cd[otal] [p]oet[ry], which
[s]ub[s]e[qu]e[n]tly [s]erved as a
ros[e]tta [s][t]one of the
in[t]e[r]n[e]t's p[er]s[on]al e[ss]ay,
which [a][m]alg[a][m]a[t]ed into the
[a][m]orphous
Non[s]en[s]i[c]al O[p][i]n[i]on—
was it [p]o[s]sibly the [c][a][s]e
the demol[i]t[i]on
of [a]ll [a]rt b[a][s]i[c]a[lly]
took [p][l]a[c]e
in a [f]r[ee] verse [p]oem

[a]bout [p][eo][p]le's c[a][p]r[i]c[i]ous [f][ee]l[i]ngs,
[th]at [th]is [f]al[s]i[f]i[ed] s[ub]ject[i][v]i[ty]
th[at] h[a]d [b]een [v][i]o[l]ent[l]y [p][r][o]moted
[b]y [C][I][A] [f]un[d]ed M[F][A] [p][r][o]g[r]ams
as [s]o-[c]alled art [f]or [d]e[c]ades
was now [f][i]na[l]ly rea[l]i[z]ed
as a [c]o[l]l[e]c[t]i[v]i[st] [p]roj[e]ct
that was i[p]s[o] fact[o] the in[t]ern[e]t,
[a]s [a]n [A][m][a]g[a]m[m]a[te]d [N]on[s]en[s]ical
O[p]i[n]ion, wh[i]ch [i]s [n]ow our
l[a]st re[m]ai[n]ing [N]a[t]ional [P]ark?
193:225 .858

Art is [f][u]nctio[n]ally [n][o]thing
[i]f [n]ot j[u]st [a]n[other]
[c]onsu[m]er [p]roduct
in a [c]a[p]italist [m]ach[i]ne
th[at] [a]t [b]o[tt]om
[p]r[i]o[r]it[i]zes [p]orta[b]le [b]utt w[i]pes—
yes, the [m][e]d[i]an
A[m]eri[c]an [c][i]t[i]z[e]n
is [p]r[i]m[ar]i[l]y [c]oncerned
[w]ith [w]i[p]ing their ba[l]lo[n] knots
with [o]n[l]y t[o]i[l]et [p]a[p]er
[w]hen a[w]ay from h[o]me.
60:78 .769

[T]ake an [a]rtist
[l]ike [T]ao [L]in,
[a]re we [t][o] [t]r[u]l[y] be[l]ie[ve]
his novels,
which are [p]erf[e]ct[l]y
[i]nd[i]c[at]i[ve] of
a[cc][e]p[t]a[b]le [c]ont[e]m[p]o[r]a[r]y
[l]ite[r]a[r]y art,

was it [e]ver [t]ru[li]y [t][e][n]a[b]le [t]o
[c]on[s][i]der [T]ao's
[s][p][e][c][i]f[i]c [n]ovels
as [e]x[p]o[si]t[i]o[n]al
a[p]o[lo]g[ist]ic
(as they [o]ften [a]re
[c]atego[r]ized),
[r]egard[less]
of [L]in's
more [r]e[c]ent
tw[ee]ts about
[v]acc[ines],
was his art it[s]elf
e[v]er [r][ea]l[ly] di[v]orced f[r]om
[p]o[li]t[ic]al o[p]i[n]ion?
95:113 .841

Well, of [c]ourse
[n][o]t, [n][o]t e[v]en [c]lose!—
be[c]ause
[T]ao's [n][o]v[els] are
[a]b[s]o[lu]te[ly] a[p]ex
[a][ss]ets to the
[p]rivate equ[it]y [i]ndust[r]y—
[w]hen Tai[p]ei
[w]as [r]e[ea]s[ed]
[K] [s]t[r]ee[t] [i]bbyists
were [a]b[s]o[lu]te[ly] ec[s]t[ra]t[i]c
that [s]o-called alt [i]t
had [n]ow fi[n]a[n]c[ial]
[r]ea[ched] the main[s]t[r]ea[m],
[th]at [th]is b[r]a[n]d of
[r]uth[less]l[y] t[r]a[cking]
your [s]u[b]jective
f[lee]ting thoughts

b[u]t while
ta[k]ing [i]ll[i]c[i]t [p][r]e[s]c[r][i]p[t]ion
d[r][u]gs, [w]hich [w][a]s
of [c]ourse [n]othing
[m]ore [th][a]n [th]e i[m][a]gi[n]ative
art of [m]e[m]ory [i]t[s]elf, as
it'd [b]e [i]m[p]o[ss]i[b]le to rec[a]ll
[p]ure th[ou]ghts
in th[at] [m][a]nner,
[w]hen you [w]ere thr[ee] sh[ee]ts
to the [w]ind,
[th]at [th]e [n]otion
o[s]ten[s]b[ly]
[i]te[r]a[r]y mi[l]ie[n]nials
had [c]omp[re]te[ly] es[c]hewed
a[n]y a[n]a[ly]s[is] of the [s]y[s]tem
that [f]ed them [i]n[f]i[n]ite x[a][n][a]x,
in f[a]v[or] of [L]arry D[a]v[i]d
adj[a]c[e]nt
[m]i[n]utia [c]al[cu]l[us]
was n[ot]hing b[ut] a
[f]u[ck]ing [m]o[n]u[m]ental
[v]i[c]to[r]y for the [f]i[n]ancial
engi[n]eers and de[r]i[v]at[i]ve
sales[p]eo[p]le
of this [c]ount[ry]!
194:229 .847

[i]t's [p]o[ss]i[b]le it
[w]as in f[act]
[w]hen I [s][a]t [a]t [P][a][sh][a]
[s]mo[k]ing an ice [sh]i[sh][a]
in [p]ai[n]t [s]t[ai]ned
[b]l[ack] [b]a[s]k[e]t[b]all [sh]orts
and [S][p]erry's th[at]

I con[s]idered
 Tao [L]in
 [p]enned a [l]ong [f]orm
 [p]ie[c]e of [s]o-[c]alled
 auto[f]i[ct]i[on]
 where he [q]u[e]st[i]oned
 the fr[e][q]u[e]nc[y]
 his o[s]t[e]n[s]ible [e]x-[w]ife's
 [sh]o[w]ering [s][e][ss][i]ons,
 [e][ss][e]n[t]i[a]l[ly],
 [l][ea]ving the [q]u[e][st]ion
 of [h]er [h][y]giene
 in a d[i]a[b]o[li]c[al] [p]u[b]l[i]c
 [l]ite[r]a[r]y [p]urgato[r]y),
 and th[at], [f]ar [f]r[om]
 being an a[p]o[li]t[i]c[al] [a]ct,
 [a]ctua[ly]
 a[l]lowed the [p]rivate [e][q]uit[y]
 in[d]u[s]t[r]y to [f]un[d]a[m]e[n]ta[ly]
 [s]eize [c]ontrol of the [m]ar[k]et
 for [s]ingle [f]amily homes,
 to the [e]xt[en]t
 [e]ve[r]y [m]a[jor] [c]it[y] [i]n th[is]
 [c]ount[r]y [i]s [n]ow [d]o[m]i[n]a[te]d
 by [q]u[ote]-un[q]u[ote]
 "[d]evelo[p]ers" wh[o] s[c][oo]p u[p]
 a[ff]or[d]a[b]le h[ou]sing
 with [ou]t[r]ageous [c][a]sh [b]ids
 [f]r[om] mi[dd]le [c][a]ss
 [s]u[c]kers who are then
 [f]or[c]ed to [r]e-enter
 [a] [b][u][bb]l[y] mar[k]et to
 ho[p]e[less]l[y] [b]id
 on [s]aid [p]r[op]erty "f[i]p[s]"
 or [e]ven worse

"[l][ea][s]e [n][ew] [r]ental [u][n]its."
210:232 .905

IV
Diagrams

—01 (162:196 .827)

[F]eeling
a [d]ay [a]fter [d]r[a]g
[f]rom a m[i]xt[ur]e
of l[i]q[uar]
wh[i]ch I [d]on't en[d]ure
n[ea]rly [a]s often [a]s
[w]hen M[a]x [B] [w]as [b]a[ck]
[s]till [s]erving
[a]n o[s]t[e]n[s]i[b]le
l[i]fe [s][e]nt[e]n[c]e,
[l] [c]an [r][e][m]e[m]b[er]
[l]au[gh]ing hy[st]e[r]i[c]a[l]ly
when [C]ar[m]ine's d[a]d
in[f]ormed us he [s]oiled his p[an]ts
on [C]hr[i]st[m]a's Eve
at h[i]s [m]om's
[m]id [c]o[n]v[er]sation
w[i]th h[i]s [b]iol[og]i[c]al [b]rother
ex[c]using h[i]mself on
a wh[i]m [b]e[c]ause
he'd [q]u[ote]-[u]n[qu]o[te]
j[us]t sh[ut] h[i]s p[an]ts,
[a]mb[ling] to the [l]a[vat]o[r]y
to d[i]s[c]ard h[i]s
[r][a]c[ing] [t][r][a]c[k]
l[a]den b[o]xer shorts
[t]o[ss]ing them in[t]o a
[t]r[ash] [c]an
then [c]on[t]i[n]u[ing] h[i]s
night, l[a]ter
t[a]k[ing] a [c]all from me,

just [t]o [t][e]ll him
I'd [l][e]ft [m]y [m]om's
a [t][a]d [l][a]te,
th[at] I'd f[ai]l to [m][a]ke
[h]is [m]om's [h]ouse,
[h]e repl[y][i]ng
it [w]as [w][i]n[d][i]ng [d]own
an[y][w]ay, appa[r][e]nt[l][y]
no [l]onger [w][ear]ing
a[n][y] un[d]er[w][ear]
[w]hatso[e]ver?

—02 (31:38 .816)

[C]ar[m][i]ne's [d][a]d's
[a]d[m][i]ss[i]on of gu[i]lt
[l] [c]ons[i]d[er]ed
was [a][c]tua[l][l][y] [a]n [a]pt
[a][l]l[e]g[or]y
for our [g]overnment's
[a]c[tions
over the p[a][s]t h[a]lf
[c]entury.

—03 (109:145 .752)

In [f][a]ct,
the [m][a]n
[m]ight h[a]ve
[m]ore ho[n]esty
[i]n h[i]s [p][i]nky [f]inger[n]ail
[th]an [th]e en[t]ire
De[p]artment [o]f J[u]s[t]ice
[t]ra[c]ing b[a]ck to [a]t [l][ea]s[t
to the [S][i]xt[ie]s,
w[i]th [L][y]nd[on] [B]'s
mo[c]k [i]nve[s]tig[ati]on

[i]nto [J]F[K]'s [c]r[a]n[i]um
[b][e]ing [b][l]own [i]nto [b][i]ts
[i]n the m[i][dd]le of [D]a[ll]as,
[b]e[c]ause
the United St[a]tes
has for [d]e[c][a]des
been [t]ossing [i]ts
sh[i]tty underp[a]nts [i]n[t]o
the [c]olle[c]tive
metapho[r]i[c]al [t][r][a]sh b[a]s[k]ets
of the [t][a]xpayer,
but it [c][a]n't [s]eem to
ever [a]dm[i]t to sh[i]tt[i]ng [i]t[s]elf,
[i]n[s]tead [c]on[t]orting
h[i]s[t]o[r]y [i]n[t]o
ab[s]urd [p][r]o[p]ortions
to deny [w]hat's ob[v][i]ous
to e[v]er[y][o]ne.

—04 (74:86 .860)

For my [p][ar]t,
on a [M]onday
[e]ve[n][i]ng on [M]i[n]eral
S[p]r[i]ng I [p]re[p]ared a [l]ittle [f][ar]t
a[f]ter [p][eei]ng,
on[l]y to [s][p]ew
[f]e[c]al [f][l]uid [l]i[k]e
a [l]awn [s][p][r]in[k][l]er,
wh[i]ch [i]sn't [r][ea][l][l]y th[at]
d[i]ff[er]e[n]t to [a]d[m]it,
to [e]ngage [i]n a
[m]ere [m][o][d]i[c]u[m]
[o]f h[o]nesty
[r]egar[d]ing [p][a]st [a]ctions
(I [t]oo [t]o[ss]ed

my [d][r]awers in[t]o a
[t][r][a]sh [r]e[c]e[p]tacle
[a]fterwards!)

—05 (110:141 .780)

But the [S]t[a]te
[D]epar[m]ent
and [C]I[A],
[d]e[s][p]ite any
re[m]otely [e]duc[a]ted
[m][e]mber of the
[p]o[p]u[l]ace [ea]si[l][y]
i[d]enti[f]ying
[p][l]us en[d]uring the [w]h[i][ff]s
of their bullsh[i]t un[d]er[w]ear
o[cc]u[p]ying our [b][a]th[r]oom
t[r][a]sh [b][a]s[k]ets
for [d]e[c]ades,
[s]eems to h[a]ve [s]ome
p[s]y[c]ho[l]og[i]c[al] [i]nab[i][i]t[i]ty
w[i]th the [s][i]m[p]le
ad[m][i]tt[ance] of [i]ts
[o]wn g[r][o]t[e][s][q]ue
[m]ove[m]e[n]ts,
in[s]t[ea]d [p]aying [o]ff
[p][r][o]m[inent] [m]edia out[!]e[ts]
and [s]o-[c]alled
[p][u]b[ic] [i]nt[e][e]c[tuals]
to m[u]ddy the waters
of their own [s]oiled [u]ndies,
en[a]cting in[s]t[ea]d
a [p]er[p]e[tual] [m]otion [m]achine
of sh[i]tt[i]ng [i]ts [p][a]nts!

—CUT

—X (63:74 .851)

Max B is
surprisingly free
which didn't make me
reflect on my own mortality
as much as it
could have,
I considered drunkenly—
as I acquiesced to an
objectively grotesque
shot of orange Alize,
then asking my wife
to drive me back
from Carmine's
second birthday
get-together.

—X (58:71 .817)

Of course
hindsight being
perfected
by nature,
Carmine's Aunt Rachel
would have made
a way better
real estate agent
than the tawdry
Caucasian
I, by contrast,
contracted
for the rigamarole
of the flat
I bought, but that

was now water
under a bridge
of orange Alize!

—X (63:74 .851)

Max [B] is
[s]urp[r]isingl[y] [f][r][ee]
wh[i]ch [d][i][d]n't [m]ake [m][e]
re[f][l]ect on [m]y own [m]orta[l]it[y]
[a]s much [a]s it
[c]ould h[a]ve
I [c]on[s]id[er]ed [d]run[k]en[l]y
[a]s I [a][c]qu[i]e[s]ced to an
obj[e]c[t]ively g[r]ot[e][s][q]ue
sh[o]t [o]f o[r]ange [A]lize
then [a]s[k]ing m[y] w[i]fe
to dr[i]ve me [b][a][c]k
from [C]arm[i]ne's
s[e][c]ond [b]irthday
[g][e]t-to[g][e]ther.

—X (58:71 .817)

Of [c]ourse
h[i]nds[i]ght [b]eing
perf[e]c[t]e[d]
[b]y n[a]t[u]re,
[C]ar[m]ine's Aunt [R][a]ch[e]l
[w]ould have m[a]de
a [w][ay] better
[r]eal est[a]te [a]g[e]nt
[th]an [th]e tawdr[y]
[C]auc[us]a[s]ia[n]
[I], b[y] [c]ont[r][a]st,
[c]ont[r][a]c[t]ed
[f]or the [r]ig[a]m[a]r[ole]

of the [f][a]t
I [b]ought, [b][u]t th[a]t
[w][a]s now [w]ater
[u]nder a [b][r]idge
[o]f o[r]ange Alize!

V
Diagrams

—01 (96:106 .906)

When So[c]rates
in[q]u[i]red [D]oes [D]irt
h[a]ve [a]n [l][d]ea,
[a]dm[i]tt[i]ng
he'd r[a]n [f][a]st
[f][r]om the poss[i][b][i][l]i[ti]ty,
[f]ea[r]i[ng] h[i]s [f]all[i]ng
[i]nto that
well e[n]ou[gh] k[n]own
[b][o]ttoml[e]s[s]
[p]it of [n][o]n[s][e]n[s]e,
[P]arme[n]i[d]e[s]
[w][i]se[l]y [r]e[p]l[i]ed there
[w]ould [a][r]r[i]ve [a] t[i]me
[w]hen [ph]i[l]oso[ph]y
[w]ould [g][r]a[b] a f[ir]m[er]
[g][r][a][s][p] on the young m[a]n,
wh[e]n he'd "no longer
d[e]s[p]ise [e]v[e]n the [m][ea]n[e]st
of things" b[e]i[ng] as is
[t]oo [m]uch in[c]lined
[t]o [c]ons[i]der the o[p]i[n]i[ons]
of [m]en.

—02 (118:151 .781)

It's the f[au]lt of
the s[c]h[o][l]ars [o]ve[r]all,
with the ex[c]l[u]sion
of [p]erha[p]s [P][r][o][c]l[u]s
and B[r]un[o],
to [g]l[oss] [o]ver

this [r]e[p]ly,
where the [g][r][a]ndfather of
the [m]on[a]d [e][ss][e]ntia[ll]y
[a]d[m][i]t[s] to the [m]ateria[ll][i]s[t]
b[a]s[is]s
of e[m]a[n]a[t]i[on], that
[u]lti[m]ate[ly] for [o]ne[n]ess
to ret[ai]n a[n]y [l]ogic
whatsoe[v]er
the di[v]ine
[p]r[i]n[c]i[p]les [n]eed to
ex[i]st [i]n the [s]a[m]e [p]l[a]ne
as the [s]en[s]ory [n]ons[e]nse,
that o[p]i[n]i[on] [m]ust [r]e[m]ain
in a [s]e[n]se [c]on[c]u[r]r[en]t
with the [p]ure,
that your[s]el[f], [f]or [i]n[s]t[an]ce,
with [a]ll your [f]a[un]ts
are the [i]n[f]i[n]i[t]e [s]ole
mirror [i]n [w]h[i]ch
The [O]ne [w]i[t]n[e][ss][e]s
Their Names,
to [r]e[fe]r[en]ce the B[e]zels
of [W]i[sd[o]m.

—03 (60:66 .909)
Ta[k]e for [i]n[s]t[an]ce
[s]o[m]e[o]ne [i]i[k]e
[S][c]ott [B]e[ss]ent
who's [b]a[s]i[c]a[ll]y
a [p]h[ie]c of Dirt,
or Matt [W]alsh, who'd
[p]ro[b]a[b]l[y] t[w]eet
h[e]'d [l]et
[L]e[s W]e[x]ner

mo[l][e]st his own kids
[i]f [i]t'd g[ai]n
him a [l][i]ttle a[dd][i]t[i]o[n][a]
[c][l]out for a [d][ay]'s
[n]ews cy[c]le, [d]o
they in[d][e]ed ema[n][a]te
from l[d][e]as?

—04 (89:113 .788)

The real[i]ty
[i]s the [S]pi[n]oz[a] [s][u]b[s]t[r][a]te,
ev[e]n [i]f ema[n][a]ted,
[m]ust b[e] [m]ate[r][i]al,
[s][o] [e]ven [b][o]z[o]s
like [B]e[ss]ent
[a]nd [M][a]tt h[a]ve
[s]ome [e]l[e]m[e]nt
of [I]deas beh[i]nd them,
ev[e]n [i]f I,
[a]s [a]n im[p]en[d]ing
[d]ad, [d]i[s]agr[ee]
[w]ith [W][a]sh
[a]bout [a][c]tuall[y] [o][pp]osing
the [s]y[s]tem[a]ti[c] [r]a[p]ing of
ch[i]l[d]r[e]n,
that [d]oesn't mean
I, i[p]s[o] fact[o],
o[pp]o[se] his [e]ss[e]nce
as [p]art [o]f [a]
mate[r]ial[i]s[t][i]c [s]ub[s]t[r]ate
that en[c]om[p]a[ss]es
all Being.

—05 (120:142 .845)

l[n] a[n]y [c][a]se,

on a [r]e[ɪ][a]ted [n]ote,
 I've [p][r][e]v[i]ous[ɪ][y]
 [c]on[s]idered my[s]elf
 a [s]u[pp]orting [p][a]tron
 [o]f [a]rt [m]us[e]ums,
 [e]ven a[tt]ending the [T][a]te
 and N[a]t[i]onal G[a][ll][e]r[y]
 in [L][o]nd[on] j[us]t
 r[e][c]ent[ɪ][y], b[ut]
 there's an[ɔ]ther par[c]el
 w[i]th[i]n m[e] that's
 [b]egun to [b]el[ie]ve
 we [m]ight [n][ee]d to [b]urn
 [a]ll [o]f the [a]rt [m]us[e]ums
 d[ow]n to the [g][r][ou]nd,
 [th]at [a]ll [th]e [g][r][ea]t
 [a]rt p[a]t[r]ons [m]ust be
 [e]xiled from [ae]sth[et]ics
 in one [e]x[p]l[os]ive [m]ot[i]on,
 a [s][i]ngle [s]w[ee]p[ing] [s]w[i]ng,
 [th]at [th]e [e]n[t]i[re]
 [e]n[t]er[p]r[i]se of
 showc[a][s]ing
 a [p]er[s]on's [p][ai]nt[i]ngs in
 th[e]se [b]uffoonish galle[r]ie[s]
 is [r][e][p]r[eh]e[n]s[i]b[le]?

—06 (127:151 .841)

I for one
 never [r][ea]ll[y]
 g[ot] [o]ff [w]i[th]
 the [r][i]ch and [w][ea]lth[y]
 [a]rt [c]o[ll]e[c]tor
 [c][l]a[ss]
 or even the [a][r]isto[c][r]a[ti]c

douche[b]ag se[c]tor,
[p]ro[b]a[b]ly in [p]art
[b]e[c][au]se
in my [y][ou]nger [y]ears
[l] was [p][r]one [t]o anar[ch]ic [t][r]ends
and [i]a[b]le to
[b]e[c][o]me [r]uth[l]ess[l]y in[e][b]r[i]ated
with any[o]ne [wh]o
[h]eld s[i]m[i]lar d[i][s][r]eg[a]rd
for [a]ny [a]nd [a]ll [i]n[s]t[i]tutions,
in a [w][ay]
I [w]as m[ay][b]e [b]orn [w]ith
[s]ome inhe[r][e]nt
[l]a[c]k of [r][e][s][p][e]c[t]
for [p]eo[p]le [l]ike
[P]e[gg]y [G]uggenh[ei]m
and [G]ertrude [S]t[ei]n,
wh[ic]h [i]n [r]et[r]o[s][p]e]ct
[p]ro[b]a[b]ly h[a]sn't ex[a]ct[l]y
a[ss][i]s[t]e[d [i]n the [l]i[t]e[r]a[r]y
d[i][ss]em[i]nation of my work.

VI
Diagrams

—01 (118:144 .819)

It's been [a] [c][ou]ple [m][o]nths
s[i]nce I [q]u[ɪ]t d[r][i]n[k][i]ng [M]ez[c]al
[o]n the [r][o][c]ks
a[f]ter [f]eeling [f]or a [f]ew years
th[at] M[e]z[c][a]l was the b[e]st
l[i]q[ui]or to dr[i]nk,
to [s]ome [e]xt[en]t
"b[e]tter" for your h[ea]lth than
V[o]d[k]a or [S][c][o]tch
and wh[i]le [I]'ve
for the [m][o]st [p]art
[a][pp]r[e]c[i]ated
as [a] wh[o]le
not [d][r][i]n[k][i]ng [M]ez[c]al
on [i]ce
[I] just [t]o[d]ay [s]tarted
[t]o [c]on[t]em[p]l[a]te
[s]ome of the sh[i]t
I'd wr[it]t[e]n at the [a][p]ex
of [m]y [M]ezcal
con[s]um[p]t[i]on
[s][i]pp[ing] m[i]ni w[a]ter b[o]ttles
[a][l]ong the [s]t[r]eets
[a]r[ound] my f[l]at
[p]o[pp]l[i]ng [i]n th[is] bar or th[at]
and jotting down
[s]y[ll]a[b]les [i]nto a [p]ur[p]le
note[p]ad [b]a[s]ica[lly] [b][y]
m[y]s[elf].

—02 (155:176 .881)

You [c]an [s]tr[i][p] your[s][e][l]f
 of a [f]i[c]t[i]onal [s]ubj[e]c[t]i]ve
 [p]er[s][p]e[c]t[i]ve but [I]'m
 [n]ot ent[i]re[l]y [c]onvinced
 th[at] it'll [I]and you a[n]y [c]l[oser]
 [t]o a [t]r[ue] in[t]er[p]r[etation]
 of [r]eality, [w]h[i]ch [i]s [p]er]haps
 [w]hy at the begi[n]n[i]ng of
 th[is] year [I] [d]e[c]i[d]ed to
 [s]tart a [s]eries of
 [q]u[ote]-un[q]u[ote] M[o]des
 th[at] would [a]c[t] [a]s [a]n
 o[ff]i]c[i]al autobi[o]graph[y]
 that was [a]s[o] [o]bvious[y]
 [f]a]s]e, n[o]t in the [s]ense
 of [sh]i]t auto[f]i]c[t]i]on, [b]ut in[s]tead
 in [b]eing [c]on[s]t[r]i]c[t]e]d [b]y
 a met[r]i]c]al [s]t[r]u]c]ture—
 for example, m[y] w[i]fe
 w[a]s [a]b[ut]t[ing] [u]pset
 [w]h[e]n [w]e [w]e]nt to
 [F]r]ed on [B]r]oadw[ay] this
 past [F]r]id[ay] [b]ecause
 [a]ll]e]g[e]d[l]y I was
 [a]pp]a[r]ent[l]y g[l]a]n]c]ing
 [a]t [a]n[ot]her [a]ss]c[r]a]c]k
 that [o]cc]u[p]ied [s]ome
 [o]ther [s]eat in the [s]p[ot]?

—03 (76:80 .95)

Now, [i]t'[s] [p]o[ss]i]ble a [c]ou[p]le
 [p]o[s]t[e]r[i]ors [f]ran[k]ly
 [c]ould have [f]i]t th[is]
 o[s]ten[s]i]ble [b]i]ll,
 [b]ut I al[s]o [d]i[d]n't [f]eel

[i][i]ke [i] was [s]taring [a]t
[a]ny [s]ingu[l]ar [a][s]s
[i]nd[i][s]cr[i]m[in]a[te][i][y] [ei]ther,
un[l]ess m[y] [w][i]fe
[w][a]s [o]bserv[ing] [m][e]
without [c][ea][s][in]g, [m][a]king
d[e]t[ai]led [n]ote
of [a]ny p[a][ss]ing gl[a]nc[e]
I [m][ay] h[a]ve [m][a]de at Fred?

—04 (103:114 .904)

Yet it's [o]bvio[u][s][i][y] [i]mp[o][ss][i]ble
to a[cc]urate[l]y [c]onvey
this [s]o-[c]alled [s]ubj[e]c[t]ive
[e]xpe[r]i[en]ce via [m][e][m]o[r]y
a[l]l[o]ne, n[e]ver [m]ind wh[e]n
[c]on[s]t[r]i[c]t[e]d to a [s]pe[c]i[fi]c
[m]et[r]i[c]al [c]o[n]s[t]r[uc]t—n[ot]
[o]n[l]y [d]o [i] [c]on[s]i[d]er the [i]d[e]a
of me [s]ta[r]ing at [sh]it[sh]ooters at [F]red
to [b]e [f]i[c]t[i]o[n]a]l, [b]ut I [a]! [s]o [c]on[s]i[d]er
my [a][tt]em[p]t [t]o re[l]ay
the [p]o[ss]i[b]i[l]i[t]y
of m[e] gl[a]nc[ing] [a]t [a][ss]es [a]t
the [s]p[ot] to [b]e [e]quall[y] untrue.

VII
Diagrams

—01 (133:152 .875)

I [s]u[pp]ose it's [p][r]o[b]a[b]ly [a]ccu[r]ate
to [s]ay th[a]t to [s]ome deg[r][ee]
I have a [b]it of a [b][ee][f]
with the [s]o-[c]alled [B][ea]ts
who were r[ea][l][y],
[f]un[c]tiona[l][y] [s]p[ea]k[ing]
at [l][ea]s[t],
[f]aux [r][e]vo[l]utiona[r]ies,
[m]o[c]k [r][e]f[or]m[er]s
of the highest [o]r[der],
or at [l][ea]s[t], in a[n]y [c]ase,
a [l]oose[l]y k[n]it [c]o[l]l[e]c[t]ion
of writers who [b][a][s]i[c]a[l]y
[b]e[c]ame sh[a]me[l]e[s]s[l]y
[S]t[ate] adj[a]c[e]nt
in their [c]onf[er]en[ce]s
[a]m[e]tr[i]c[a]l t[e]xts that
[l]i[k]e [c]o[c]kwo[r]k n[e]ver add[r]e[s]s[sed]
[e]c[on]o[m]i[c] [r]o[ot] [c]a[us]es,
in [m]y [m]i[n]d
at least, with the [e]x[c]eption
I'd [s]ay of [K]e[r]ou[a]c
who [a]t least [d][r]a[n]k him[s]e[l]f
to [d]ea[th] b[e]f[ore] he [c]o[ul]d
[b]e[c]o[m]e [a]n [a]d[j]u[n]ct pro[f]e[s]s[s]or.

—02 (114:146 .781)

[B]ut at the [s]ame t[i]me
[I] was al[s]o [s]i[t]t[ing] at [L][a] [B]r[a]z[a]
having j[u]st im[b]e[d] a [c]o[u]ple
Mi[c]he[l]s, which to be fair

aren't exact[ɪ]y [r]evo[ʊ]tio[n]a[r]y
in [n]a[tʃ]ure, and I'd [m]oved
[m]y [s]ea[t] ba[c]k just [s]a[ɪ]nt[ɪ]y
[w]hen I [w]i[t]n[e]ssed a [c]ou[p]le [w]a[ɪ]tre[ss]es
[p]a[c]e [a] [p]a[ɪ]te of what
[a]pp[er]eared to b[e]
shared a[pp]s on the t[a]b[le]
in [f]ront of m[e],
[b]e[c]ause I [d]i[dn't] want to
[f]i[n]d m[y]self un[c]om[fort]ab[ly] [c]o[se] to
th[e]se emp[loy]ee[s] and their
[d]e [f]a[c]t[o] br[e]a[k] [t]a[bl]e, yet I als[o]
[c]oul[dn't] hel[p] but [t]a[k]e
note of a [c]ur[s]ive sh[a]p[er]
[m]or[s]el on the [p]a[te]
I was al[m]ost [p]o[s]it[i]ve
was an [o]c[t]o[p]us [t]en[t]a[c]le.

—03 (68:83 .819)

S[o]n of a [c]u[n]t,
I f[u]c[k]ing l[ove] o[c]topus,
I [c]on[s]idered
while [a]s[so]r[e]c[a]lling
[m]y [v]e[ge]t[ar]i[an]i[sm],
[m]y [p]r[e]v[i]ous [p]e[s]c[a]t[ar]i[an]i[sm],
[m]y o[cc]asional fl[e]xit[ar]i[an]i[sm],
[m]y ge[n]e[r]al a[v]ersion to [c]on[s]uming
[c]or[p]s[es] [c]omb[i]ned with m[y]
[o]c[c]a[s]ional [c]r[av]ings for a l[am]b sh[a]n[k]
but al[s]o [o]c[t]o[p]u[s].

—04 (101:115 .878)

O[c]t[o]p[us] is [i]i[k]e [b]a[s]i[c]a[l]y the [b]e[s]t
[s]ea[food] on the mar[k]et when it's [c]ooked
[c]o[r]r[e]c[t]ly, I [c]on[s]i[d]ered, but I

was al[s]o, [l] [r]e[c]log[n]i[z]ed,
[s]i[t]t[i]ng [i]n a [D]om[i]n[i]c[a]n
hoo[k]ah [b]ar, which [s]t[r]u[c]k me
as [s]i[gh]t[i]y [c]u[r]i[ous], to
[s]t[im]b[le] [u]p[on] [a] [p]ie[c]e [o]f
o[c]t[o]p[us] [c]oo[k]ed by Do[m]i[n]i[c]a[n]s,
at a hoo[k]ah bar?—[w]h[i]le [l] [w]as
[a]c[t]ually [w]aiting for [C]or[m]ier
to a[r]rive to, in f[a]c[t], s[m]o[k]e a
hoo[k]ah—[c]ould [D]o[m]i[n]i[c]a[n]s
[r]ea[l]l[y] [c]oo[k] [d]e[i]c[i]ous o[c]topus?

—05 (137:164 .835)

I was a [l]ittle [d]ubious, as I'd
[i]n[d]ulged [i]n [l]talian o[c]t[o]p[us]
[p]r[e]v[i]ou[s]l[y] at Ma[r]i[a] [C]uc[i]na
[a]nd [a]c[t]ua[l]l[y] [d]e[e]med it [p]rett[y] [s]ub[p]ar,
[r]ea[l]l[y] onl[y] the G[r]eeks
and [P]ortug[ue]se had the ab[i]l[it]y
to [p]ro[p]erl[y] [c]oo[k] [p]l[us] [s]ea[son]
o[c]t[o]p[us], I gue[ss] I'd [r]ather [r]uth[le]ssl[y]
[a]ssumed [t]hat [a]ll [o]t[her] n[a]tions
were [b]a[s]i[c]a[l]l[y] o[c]t[o]p[us] def[i]c[i]ent
[s]i[m]p[l]l[y] [b]a[s]ed, [p]erha[p]s,
on th[i]s [s]i[n]gle [i]n[s]t[an]c[e]
of [C]uc[i]na, where I'd [s]een
a [l]ong [l]ost [s]e[c]ond [c]ousin,
[w]here the [f]ood [w]as [s]p[ot]ty
o[ve]rall, where [m]a[f]ia [c]a[p]o[s]
[w]ere [c]e[le]b[r]ated with [ph]o[t]o [m]e[m]o[r]ials,
[w]here the octo[p]us was [e]ss[e]ntiall[y]
trash to m[e].

VIII
Diagrams

—01 (181:212 .854)
L[i][s]ten[i]ng to h[e]avy m[e]tal
but sc[r]ewed and ch[o]pped
I [r]e[f]l[e][c]ted [o]n
[t]a[k]ing my [f][r]i[en]d [F]arhad
who [c]ame [t]o [t]own
[f]rom Chi[c][a]go
[f]or the [f]irst [t]ime [e][v][e]r
this [p]ast No[v][e]mb[er]
to a [p][a]ce [c][a]lled The [A][v]er[y]
where the [b]art[en]d[er]
who all[e]ged she [r]e[m][e]m[b]ered m[e]
[f]o[l]low[i]ng a [f]ew [r]ounds of [d][r][i]nks
[d]e[s][p]ite the [f]a[c]t
I h[a]d no [r][e][c]o[l]l[e]ction
of [m]eeting [h]er [e]ver
yet I r[e][s]p[ec]ted [h]er
[d]e[p]th of knowledge
wh[e]n it [c]ame to [M][e]z[c]al
she g[a]ve [m]e a [p]arti[c]ular br[a]nd
she said [c]ont[ai]ned [a]ni[m]al [f]a[t]
wh[i]ch [i]nt[r]i[g]ued [m][e] enou[gh]
to b[r]ea[k] [m]y v[e]gan [s]t[r]ea[k]
[f]i[gu]r[i]ng d[i]s[t]i[l]led animal [f]a[t]
[p]erh[a]p[s] [d]i[d]n't [c]ou]nt
[a]nd [a]f[te]r a [f]ew r[ou]nds
she [p]our[ed] us [b]oth a shot of [M]al[or]t
which [F]arhad
[b]eing a [M]idw[e]st [r][e]si[d]ent
a[c]c[u]tely [r][e]f[us]ed to sh[oo]t [d]own
[I] [h]ow[e]ver [h]aving [h]eard [h][or]ror
[s]t[or]ie[s] [d]e[c]i[d]ed to in[d]ulge

and [c]on[s][i][d][er]ed the [i][q][uor] [e]n[d][ea]ring—
it wasn't b[a]d [a]t all!

—02 (109:118 .924)

[B]eing out[s]ide
[s]ans [s]mart[ph]one,
what a [f][ee]l[i]ng!
[e]v[e]n [i]f [i]t's [b]r[i]ck
[a]nd you h[a]ve a [b][a]d [c][a][s]e
of [s]c[i][a]ti[c]a your w[i]fe
m[a]y have p[a]ssed onto you
[a]nd the t[r][a]sh
[i]s f[i]lled w[i]th [r][a]ts
the [s][i]ze of [s]m[a]ll [d][o]n[k]eys
you [c]ould [s][a][d]dle
and r[i]de [d][ow]nt[ow]n
[i]ike [L]y[f]ts
[f]or [f][r][ee]
on [f][r][i]g[i]d [d]ays [i]ike th[e]se,
when you ca[rr][y]
th[r][ee] bags of shit you [n]o longer
[n][ee]d,
yet [i] [d][i]g[r]ess
([W][i][l]iam [W][i][l]iams
[d]enouncing [u]sur[y] was [u]n[e]x[p][e]c[t]ed
b[u]t I [u]sua[l]l[y] [k]ee[p] an o[p]en ear
[f]or [F]ed [p]o[l]i[e]m[i]c[s])
[b]ut [b]a[c]k to the [b]ar—

—03 (66:69 .957)

[O]ne h[u]n[d][r]ed four[t]een [b][u]cks
[s]t[r][u]c[k] me [i]i[k]e a [i]ot [a]s a [t][a][b]
un[t]il [i] [c]on[s][d]ered the [a]mount
we [b]oth im[b]i[bed]
of [a][l]l[e]g[e]d[i]y [t][o]p sh[e]lf [i]i[q]uor,

it was [p][o][ss][i][b]le,
I [s]u[pp]osed,
th[a]t [a]ni[m]al [f][a]t [M]ez[c]al
was [m]ar[k]ed u[p] [m]ore
[v]oc[i][f]er[ou]sly [th]an
[th]e t[y][p][i]cal [v]egan o[p]tions.

—04 (89:89 1.00)

In any [c][a][s]e
[s]ince T[r][ee] was p[r]o[b]a[b]l[y] a[b]out
[d]one [d]oing her m[a][k]eup
[w]e [w]an[d]ered b[a][c]k
to the [f][l][a]t to [s][c]oo[p] her [u][p]
[p]l[u]s [d]i[s][c]u[s]s [d]inner o[p]tions,
of [c]ourse [f][i][l]i[ng] [u][p]
a [c][ou][p]le [c]o[ff]ee [c][u][p]s
of [J]a[p]an[ese] [w]hi[s][k]ey
as [w][e] [c]on[s]i[d]ered
[a]ll [a]u[d]ibles, [j]ust like [o]ld times,
[a]lm[o]st twenty years [a]g[o]
or s[o]
[w]hen [w]e'd g[e]t [sh][i]t[face]d
with M[e]xi[c]an [c]oo[k]s
a[f]ter [sh][i]t's [e]nd.

—05 (97:114 .851)

But [w]e [w]ere [a]ged [n]ow,
[m]ore [m]ature,
I [n]o [l]onger for[n]i[c]a]ted
be[s]i]de the [l]in[o][l]eum [s]i]dings
of [i]mm[i]gr[an]t [c]oo[k]s'
[c]o[l]o[n]i]al h[ou]ses,
s[ur]je [p][er]h[ap]s [l] [l]i[k]ed
a [c]ou[p]le g[l]a]sses of M[e]zc[a]l
wh[e]n my f[r]i[en]d was v[i]s[i]t[i]ng

the [c][i]ty [l] [c]u[rr]ent[l]y o[cc]u[p]i[ed],
but th[a]t was [a][c]tua[l]y
[q]uite [g]rown up I [c]on[s]idered
as [w]e [w]al[k]ed to O[g]ie's
[w]hich [w]as the l[a][s]t [t]i[me]
[l] [e]n[t]ered th[a]t [e][s]t[a]b[l]ishment
for [r]easons I p[r]o[b]a[b]ly [d]on't
[n]eed to [d]ivulge [r]ight [n]ow.