

DENIZEN

1.]

It happens and it occurs. These are our times
happening, their weight and consequence
a noise that cancels out
and others, a noise of war,
of nothingness, which is potentially an act

within its infancy, a thing
through which we make each other
into endings, our edges
pressed together, pulled and parted
open, torn and tortured, that we exist, are still

existing somehow through the fact
of our erasure, beginning over
and again, ceaselessly
and through it. That one is left
no choice but to imagine. No world
but that of words to build a breathing world between us

2.]

Covenant as bridge, *there shall be people*. The breath [a kind of noise beyond
the book] transcribes the book
as secular. Between competing points of reference

on the horizon [I, as in
insurgency] like atmosphere at times occurring wildly

in the interior [no sea
or even reason] [leads to a reduction] [a process
by which the state of nation-states surrounds our thinking, enters everything and ends

against itself] [as land
and circumstance] [as hydrogen, an openness exists

if one is listening] [a bond to oxygen]
[as bomb] A face beyond

its politic [eidetic
check]

3.]

It was the month in which the noise became the violence of its occurrence. The garden ended in September and it burned. In the east they lit a flag and raised their own above the ashes of our reasoning. Though I was far, I felt responsible. I had done so little to abate the context going on around me. Everywhere around me, a violence flitting in the wind and scattering, a thing. From which arose the structure of a nation which invaded. I felt responsible. The news was everywhere, the war and what to think of it. The thousand threads of it. Which were and are particular, in both a person's hands, peculiar, the fact of continents, estrangement. In the mornings I wrote poetry in a small café and read what lived and died on my computer. Elsewhere, smoke designed its ornaments against the sky. In a valley far away the alphabet became a desert and I crossed it. I found no water there but that which welled in others

4.]

What is thinking now upon atrocity? A thought
discretely gripped around its subject
enters into one of many fields described in art as actual,
none of which approximate an overlap.

This it could be said and has been. Terror
alters us. We speak and are immediate, relating strangely
to the wind which picks the desert up
and changes it. What is carried there, what noise exists

upon announcement, the groundwork
of a correspondence. *I would like to write to you
from deep within the language of a room*, some music present
in the tepid depth of these remains, excursions,

a sound within a sound pronounced to live inside of
like a death-thought. Is this excusable?
Do we forgive ourselves too easily? In such a world
as this, at such a distance, it is possible to hear

from deep within the safety of an unexploded building
the continuous expansion and retraction
of the human lung as it attempts
to push and pull the air that others scream in

5.]

Heard at certain distances, the cry of a civilian responding to the sudden and unexpected vacancy of loss begins to take the shape and form of music violently composed. Categories of voices used in the production of human music (and thus our sense of “the human”) include “chest voice,” “middle voice,” “head voice,” “whistle voice,” “falsetto,” and “vocal fry.” An irritant known mostly for its pulmonary properties, chlorine gas affects the body through the production of hypochlorous and hydrochloric acid. To perform the vocal fry correctly, one controls the air, taking care, above all else, to stay suspended above a whisper. This occurs when elemental chlorine reacts with water. The song of cells attaching strangely to the edges of the cells around them is one of many sentences in which the verb “to be” begins to disappear upon the instance of its utterance. Agree or disagree. To weep is to belong to that which waits beyond the problem of the singular, there in the impossible despondency of things. Cry of error, the molecular. One is often emptied

6.]

Aesthetically, what defines a desert is a human being
burning in a cage. In the ears of the dead,
music isn't beautiful
or rare. When written in a state
proportionate exactly
to the fact of history invisibly defined, language often
shadows out the other. Histologic findings
of this occurrence include: bronchial
edema, desquamation
of epithelial cells, erosions and localized
necrosis. It is difficult
not to look on Youtube. It is difficult,
but one has done it, often
and repeatedly, varying the angle
of the screen, the time
of day, the music. This damages the cell walls
and negates them, interacting
with various amino and enzyme systems. Speaking
is amiss. This damages the circuitry of the vast
electric happening. Thus, the desert blisters where its edges meet
with thought. How should we compose?

7.]

Every book is a community. Occurring openly. In the desert of the singular, an act of faith or else an orchestra opposed to its arrangement. From this the poem arises, disseminates a fledgling self into the air. Mouths and sand and syllables. A destination leading to an overwhelming sense

of the particular. Of who we are
as people

8.]

Of narrative and nationality, a state

of pure emergency. Talk

is occupation.

Speak to me,

just speak. [The neighbor's house
is burning. Beautiful,

the trees. The trees
existing.] Master, make me over

9.]

Moored to this, to them and thus the world
that speaking makes

around us, attached to things
and that from which arises

thingness, the myth of surfaces in the beginning,
occurring over in the aftermath

of time, of populace, becoming nothing in particular
and therefore

more than real, the art of the material
and what to make of it,

what form to struggle
with or for,

that we may be there,
differently, again, emerging through an opening,

a doorway in the wilderness,
or mouth

10.]

The course of empire illuminates the path
behinds us. Apathetically the noise
that deafens from the screen
and is, to this extent, commercial
in an ordinary sense, arises
in the middle distance,
a kind of difference between localities
extending out from one place
to another, a bridge it could be said
and has been, most certainly a sound, I hear it
there, it is, I see it, we are here,
together breathing, you, I see you, are you breathing

11.]

Cage or context or cacophony.

The noise accumulates beyond the mind's ability
to score it. Translation thus becomes
necessity. The music there
as well as not there. You, sitting in your room,
existing in the rich and orchestrated light

of a computer, having never had to hear
directly that which does
in this world, not the next, occur.
Having eaten well and exercised and learned.
Having written, having read,

what is it then that you exist within
the system of a system
of a system of. Startled, staring out,
not screaming, your voice is not
the voice that you remember happening.
It isn't accurate, the sound

and its appearances. It isn't accurate enough.
Though it occurs within a framework,
a page of snow or else the static overwhelmingly
apparent, a surface scared by what
is written there, the shape and shadow of a flag

atop a building, moving in the wind,
its angry history unfurling like the alphabet
which has been used and put within
the service of atrocity. Which is itself a desert
spoken of and into, a violence made
to make an order, to enforce. O to breathe the air

12.]

Breathing solely into the upper regions of the chest, an untrained vocalist pulls without intention at the air around her body. The first effect is a burning pain in the throat and eyes, followed by suffocation. As a result, the lungs emanate a meager 40 percent of the singer's potential volume. Respiration becomes increasingly difficult as the pain behind the sternum rises. Because the posture of the vocalist is poor. Because retching and vomiting provide relief, the head begins to tilt, reaching for the upper pitches, for the lower pitches. Relief, it seems, is temporary. The lips and mouth grow parched. The high notes pinch. A thick, dry fur begins to gather on the tongue, a sticky film. Despite the sound that one imagines she is making, the song constricts and hardens. Nothing more is known about cases which prove fatal in the field

13.]

If I have learned to sing I have done so only
as a matter of result.

Language is a residue.
I cling.

At the end of a line of others speaking at the end
of a line of others.

That one can take a sound and make it over
in their image should remind us

beautifully at last
of the appearances

surrounding noises changed to music
and renamed. Therefore,

one must force oneself
to do this, often

and repeatedly, to say
as many voices

together mostly, but only
mostly. Here I am: a variance, a violence

14.]

Ebbing inward, pooling, a drift of energies distends
an interruption in the sense
of being. Only causes
are occult. *Eros*, or *the West*. A thing from matter
forms, is formed beyond and by its growing
older. Before the growing
less than adequate a stranger's face
becoming difficult
in certain light, a new desire,
terror. It's beginning to feel a lot like I'm at fault
for something far away. That there
is television. That I sit within a room.
Spell apology, spell mercy. I know the world we make
collapses, but the first time I ever read
a poem that worked I got
distracted. The words came in from nowhere,
and I agreed. The world came in,
the noise in which it's getting difficult
to pray. To be apart,
to separate. Before the alphabet begins to ache
again as series, even finite now I must
remind myself to say not faith
so much as what is after center: other: there.
A state of many nations, selves, a strangeness overwhelmingly
apparent, absent. We find it difficult
to mind and cannot say it. War, the terrible
satisfactions. That we are capable
of this. That finally, after everything, we find that we comply