

Your Itinerary

1. Eke out an existence.

Begin by coaxing atoms into molecules into shapes into self.
Stay away from the abstract. By all means, a starfish (fig. 1).
God willing, a pug (fig. 2).

2. Gain a perspective.

To the north: you should see smoke *pillowing* from the factories.
Do not be alarmed. This is progress. Your automobile,
should you choose to accept one, will garner a 5-star safety rating.

To the east: there's one now, a star, rising like a tiny fist to the top rail of a crib.
If it has the strength to pull itself into a position of standing, it will see
this is not a prison, but for its own protection. Dangers wait:
a spider's web, an electrical outlet, finding yourself within a figure-eight
with no means of slowing down (fig. 3).

To the west then: the wagons of pioneers are already setting out, searching
for a more pure north, a different east; but that east is here, you see. So
they have already begun to die, wilting beneath a too clear sky, fouling up
the too fresh air with their self-fulfilling decay, choosing now & again
to rest upon a cinder block overgrown with grass and twisted wire.
A heron sculpted from a shovel head and scrap iron.

And to the south: a marbled sea as beautiful as any spry young thing.
No—she's off limits. You see, it's toxic, but we're working around the clock
to make sure there will be fish or some passable imitation (figs. 4 & 5)
for your salad sandwich.

3. Pay it forward.

Operators are standing by, but due to heavy traffic expect long hold times.
We'd like to apologize for any inconvenience. We really would.
Please have your site ID ready. At least, there are so many things to see.
(Fig. 6) a factory fire. (Fig. 7) a salary man.

Vicodin

From origin to each
local limit

on the x and z
and y axes,

what the living would refer to
as skin, so smooth and white

like a pristine porcelain
sink fixture

or an egg shell:
something could be or has been started here.

It feels like I'm walking on water.
It feels like I'm healing the sick.
There's a burning bush in my mouth
where my teeth used to be.

The lights with my eyes closed.
A golem for a tongue, a totem for a bone.
And so what if God is a fag?
I'll take my reach around.

You can't trust in Hollywood.
Our mouths grew out of our asses.
Here's your cup of coffee.
Here's your forty-three cents.

More. More. More.

The Nature of the Beast

Even with its jaw unhinged, it seems impossible that a python could swallow a six-foot gator; but I've seen the evidence: my hand two knuckles deep in the side of Christ—who, also, was tempted.

I will confess; I thought it was consensual: the green hills, the white noise of the sea, all that beyond breathalyzer machine.

Here: a house.

What you have to understand ... on one hand, a dash cam; on the other, Sleep Number Bed.

We're hardwired to open our mouths, when our noses are pinched (when our stomachs are punched).

The politest incursion:
I was serving (myself).
Just two kids and some cold beer:
I was protecting (myself).

You'll see: balloons will fall from the ceiling.
Our Host will explain everything after we cut to commercial & ...
come back.

I've been piecing this together all my life.
The best defense is a seven-headed prosecution.
Her name will be changed to protect the dream.

Solar-powered floodlights along an s-curve to the front door.
Wildflowers herded into this alcohol-induced lullaby.
And everywhere you've found a scab and scratched,
we'll put another tiny, little, golden badge.

Virgin Soil Epidemic

It's frightening how quickly the changes come.
Your skin—a storm window nailed shut for winter—opens.
The rolling brown outs. The fine print.

The doctor merely mentions a scalpel
and your heart balks. Your skin and pericardium
recede to their antediluvian levels.

There's a gap in the fossil record; it belonged to your teeth
before your teeth belonged to you. They will return there soon
with tales of spirant elements and religious ballyhoo.

A mantis perched upon a burning cigarette
goes through the motions of praying.
We're past the heat break now.

You can fold a piece of paper in half only so many times.

All the lingering furbelows on the periphery, glittering
things, diminish: the two car garage you meant to clean out
before summer, the six-pack abs, the sky,

and a photo album we put together, together,
but couldn't agree on how to remember best
the shared events, so we left it empty and blank.

But look out the window: the hummingbirds are back.
Eight months from now that will be all
you wish to remember anyway.

Intervention: Your Malignancy

I am here today because I love you.

You have a disease and this is how it affects me.

We used to walk along the fence row, touching everything, believing that with everything touched molecules or at the very least electrons were being shared, that somehow we were all in this together, that even with just a fleeting touch our muscles would develop memory. So, if one picked a flower—say, that daisy—and put it behind another's ear, this could be repeated over and over and with every turn we'd be ever better. One morning, you woke to find you could only turn left. Walking in circles, your body was trying to unwind the clock: stop the ticking and the cancer spits out healthy bone, retreats back to its origin—some nothing, some healthy cell with only an underhanded notion that we pretend isn't inside of us all—as if the arrow could leave its target and return to find the bowstring taut. All of this movement becomes only the potential for actions yet to be realized.

I am here today, touching everything, believing.