

Alphabet For the End

a Song—a Story—a Speech—a Strike—
a Country—a Citizen—a Census—a Pledge—
an Allegiance—an Ally—an Article—an Ad—
a Feeling—a Flag—a Frenzy—a Feature—
a Bug—a Bribe—a Bank—a Ballot—a Bureau—
a Criminal—a Clue—a Commercial—a Jury—
an Officer—a Loan—a Like—a Leak—a Law—
a List—a Loss—a Lesson—a Leader—a Lie—
a Villain—a Voice—a Vote—an Oath—a Season—
a Series—a Show—a Slot—a Spell—a Sign—
a Tally—a Trigger—a Time—a Test—a Headline—
a Hero—a Hit—a Hope—a Hearing—an Incident—
an Ideal—an Idol—a Trend—a Task—a Site—a Sum—
an Emergency—an Effort—an Effect—an Evildoer—
an Event—a Name—a—an Offer—an Overture—
a Wire—a Wait—a Warning—a Pawn—a Prayer—
a Patsy—a Project—a President—a Pocket—a Price—
a Pact—a Fear—a Fact—a Front—a Theory—a Treaty—
a Trick—a Trade—a Broker—a Buyout—a Game—
a Grievance—a Gate—a Guide—a Guarantor—a Gun—
a Grant—a Globe—a Theater—a Threat—a Face—
a Crowd—a Scam—a Deal—a Date—a Drill—a Death—
a Company—a Collaboration—a Crisis—a Catch—a Con—
an Actor—an Alibi—a Mask—an Attack—a Collapse—
a Riot—a Rule—an Army—an Urge—a Zealot—
a Zenith—an Announcement—an Uprising—an Edict—
—an Outbreak—a Zone—

Ritornello for JM (1980-2011)

September 27 2011 was cold for autumn & it rained all day & the sky was grey like in that music video for the song we loved where a man lurches down a highway at night & keeps getting hit by car after car & gets up & keeps moving & clutching his face & yelling inaudibly under the piano ritornello which means *little return*

♣ September 27 2011 was cold for autumn & it rained all day & the best part of that music video for the song we loved comes after the ritornello which means *little return* referring to a recurring passage & in that music video for the song we loved the ritornello is four piano chords in the key of e flat minor 7 & it rained all day on September 27, 2011 & I went into work early & opened the newspaper in between trays of dishes left soaking the night before & the best part of that music video for the song we loved is when a fourth & final car hits the man who at this point is no longer wearing a coat or a shirt & he's bruised & cut across his face & back & chest

& September 27 2011 was cold for autumn and it rained all day & I went into work and opened up the newspaper at random to the obituary section & the dishes were soaking & I saw your name there in bold black font & I could hear cars on wet asphalt like in the best part of that music video for the song we loved where the man stands with his shirt off bruised & cut across his chest & smiling as the car hits him & explodes into metal glass & rubber & it rained all day on September 27th, 2011 & outside the cars bruised & cut the wet asphalt bold & black like in the best part of the video for the song we loved & I waited to explode into metal & glass & rain leaked from the ceiling onto the paper bruised & cut w/ yr name in bold black font & the kitchen windows fogged up like the lens of the camera in the music video for the song we loved & the cars sped across the wet asphalt blaring four chords, I sat bruised & cut surrounded by soaking dishes and e flat minor seven & September 27, 2011 cut a ritornello into the autumn, forever & raining yr cold name

In The Event Of...

Whack-A-Terrorist!

(Pin The Tale On!)

Bobbing For Terrorists!

(Duck! Duck!)

Follow the Terrorist!

(Ring Around!)

Name That Terrorist!

(Red Terrorist! Green Terrorist!)

Capture the Terrorist!

Cowboys and Terrorists!

Yankee Doodle Terrorist!

(Pop Goes the—)

Tag!

You're—

Direct Hit

war is an Addictive Drug—
go ask all the alienated Labor
in charge of our Civil Lies
one day at a time.

to calculate the cost of
a single hit of Liberty,
factor in Murder, multiplied
by the number of Sovereign
Nations our Country invaded
during its our Progressive era,
when Labor struck bloody.

(what I want to say
is cemented in the leaden air,
in the itching I've grown
accustomed to)

war is an Addictive Drug—
Uncle Sam OD'd in the Rose Garden
his last reported words were
I WANT YOU
to give a veteran
the High Life.

You got the stuff?

(Instead of committing Robbery
or Regicide or Revolution
I shot up and watched TV)

an Armed Drone circles the Crops
pay no mind to those annual Poppy Yields,
forget any sick bones Grinding into
a Mutinous Dawn.

We the People had Hard Choices,
Decision Points, Patriarchal Dreams;
Crippled America could only Run
w/ Painkillers, could only sleep
during Blackouts

Conflict sold itself via Campaign,
via Invisible Civillians,
via Humanitarian
concerns,
(those Beautiful Babies on TV)
via Tested Money,
via Legitimate Prescription,
via Oil Spill, via Tapped Water
blazing like a Heat Seeking Missile
on the Road to Damascus.

(Away means *I don't have to look*,
not at those Twenty Thousand
Narcotic Bodies who gave up
Breath forever, not at the Eleven
Thousand children whose Blood
soaked the Earth last year alone,
not into yr eyes when you ask
if I really quit for good this time.)

*you got Democracy?
that good shit?*

to avoid Troop Withdrawal, redact
the Impurities, the Night Sweats,
the Stress Positions, the Bound Hands,
the Fevers, the Hoods, the Clamps, the Wires,
the Logical Fallacies, the Nasal Intubations,
forgive the Smiling Psychiatrists,
believe in Buprenorphine & Free Elections...

...Mission Accomplished...

war is an Addictive Drug—
Never Forget:
go ask Saul, gold-blind, which Blocks
always end up the Hottest,
go ask a Journalist's Widow
if All Roads always lead to Rome
or to those COINTELPRO poppy fields
planted while we nodded off under
Ball Games Bullet Holes &
Debt Debt Debt Debt Debt.

(look Forward, not Backward, lest
we turn into Pillars of Fenthylline.)

war is an Addictive Drug—
Side Effects include Amnesia,
Excessive Spending, Compassion Fatigue
to prevent Infection from Dirty Wars,
Shared Wars, Dull & Rusty Operations,
Change Filters, refresh Feeds,
blame Immigration, blame the price of Oil,
blame Secure Community Networks,
blame Religion, blame Defects of Character,
blame the Architects and Engineers of
Pharmaceutical Grade Headlines,
so good we'd Die for them
or at Kill with Stealth Precision
as long as They kept us good
& Numb enough.

(& what comes after this No,
packed with Body Parts,
this bloody Spike I
just can't throw Away

A Brief History of Burning

"I have no feeling either for the future or for the past; the present, to me, seems like poison."

-E.M Cioran.

I came into the world during the row house conflagrations. My mother was a washrag & my father was a denim shirt. Doctors were our holy men. The sacraments could be injected.

Everything was caught on video. My mother was a camera & my father was a lens.

Impossible to see it all. The machines sometimes choked on the tapes. The book inside myself is blurry. The book inside myself is banned.

My father was a confession & my mother was a vow. Baptism came mostly for free. God showed himself to me in secret. His nose was bleeding & his cowboy boots were badly scuffed. What the shaking said was *no stop don't fine whatever yes ok*. My father was a donkey & my mother was an elephant. What was man made for if not to handle? The windows had heavy bars to keep the street away. The city lived inside a Stetson hat. Half of us were invisible. My mother was a superstructure & my father was a base. The gutter was stuffed with cellophane. The roof shingles kept sliding off, making every tendon visible. My father was a merger & my mother was a firm. The book inside myself is dripping. Its pages taste like diesel fuel.

Home was something made for leaving, w/ two stories and a smiling sun. My father was reflexive & my mother was an action word. It only ever rained indoors. Taxidermy & T.V. snow & disenchanted bargains left behind by trash so white it almost vanished. Tins of sardines reached to the ceiling. My mother was an avenue & my father was a street. This was

a changing neighborhood. Yellow ribbons untied themselves. Twitchy citizens were holster ready. The book inside myself knows how to tear.

Everyone came back from work all bloody. My mother was remote & my father was controlled. The cat was, in reality, a hundred thousand tiny bugs. The dog digested his own tail. My mother was a pilot & my father was a stove. I came out of the womb pre-euthanized. The book inside myself keeps jumping time. In a fever dream we fled decay. The suburbs sucked some families dry. My father was a contract & my mother was a dotted line. The book inside myself was tracked & marked. My mother was a sleeper & my father was a cell. They submitted me for further study & in return were asked *How much money do you make per week? How many teeth have you got left? What's your neighborhood look like?* My mother was the carpet & my father was the floor. The walls were jaundiced & the floors were caving in. I loved getting lost in garbage cans. The book inside myself had dodged the draft.

My father was a riot & my mother was a police state. *What color is your chalk outline? Would you prefer an x-ray or a thorough frisking? Do you prefer bars or barricades? Have you ever been detained by a soldier or a sergeant or a teacher after class?* My mother was united & my father was a front. Newscasters sat in on dinnertime. My father was a radio & my mother was a wave. At school we learned what not to say. My first words were *rat tat tat*. I had already learned to growl. My mother was a lesson & my father was a threat. We were a family made of steel & traces of corrosive lye. The trees bloomed sewage every Spring. The book inside myself is swollen. My mother was a cover & my father was a story. The images were rarely colored. The book inside myself was changing channels.

My father was laughing ashes & my mother let off lots of steam. Clothes were made only for ironing. The book inside myself forgot its cover. Everyone was always eating, opening and closing orifices until every flavor shot itself. I made my sister up out of dismembered evergreens. We ate cooked cork & baked newspaper wrapped up in other children's skin. The book inside myself ejaculated battle. The television smelled like gasoline. I needed another hole to stuff. My mother was a conveyor & my father was a belt. The book inside myself foamed at the mouth.

My father was a riot & my mother was a police state. The day the row-houses burned became an official holiday. Firemen wept openly. My mother was mentholated & my father was double wide. When I turned myself in for further study everything spurted out like jism into an extra special Kleenex set. My father's father's father starved in some European bog while my mother's mother's mother burned like a lady at the stake. The city was a living thing like a houseplant or a battlefield. The book inside myself got the DT's.

My mother was a rocket & my father was a drone. Don't you just love a man in uniform? I kept waiting to melt like morphine into a lonely soldier's arms, but they all came back too yellow. My father's father was a veteran & my mother's mother scrubbed the floor. World War Two had the best pictures but World War One had novelty. The book inside myself got bad reviews.

My mother was a yankee & my father was a doodle. History books burned the best. We made snowmen out of the ashes which were always very very white. Withdrawal made my colors run. My mother was **[redacted]** & my father was **[redacted]**. The book inside

myself could check you blankly. The book inside myself is hooded but not in the way you'd maybe think.

My mother was insurgent & my father was under siege. We stuffed ourselves with skyscrapers & breast implants. My father was a virus & my mother was a gun. Explosions graced our movie screens. Do you think television is better now that it fits inside our palms? The doctor I reported to looked like he hadn't slept in forever so for his sake I tried to sound the sort of sick that entertains. My mother was a headline & my father was a lede. What the shaking said I have trouble remembering. The book inside myself had been abridged.