

This digital proof is provided for free by UDP.

It documents the existence of the book *Fantasy* by Ben Fama, which was first published in 2015.

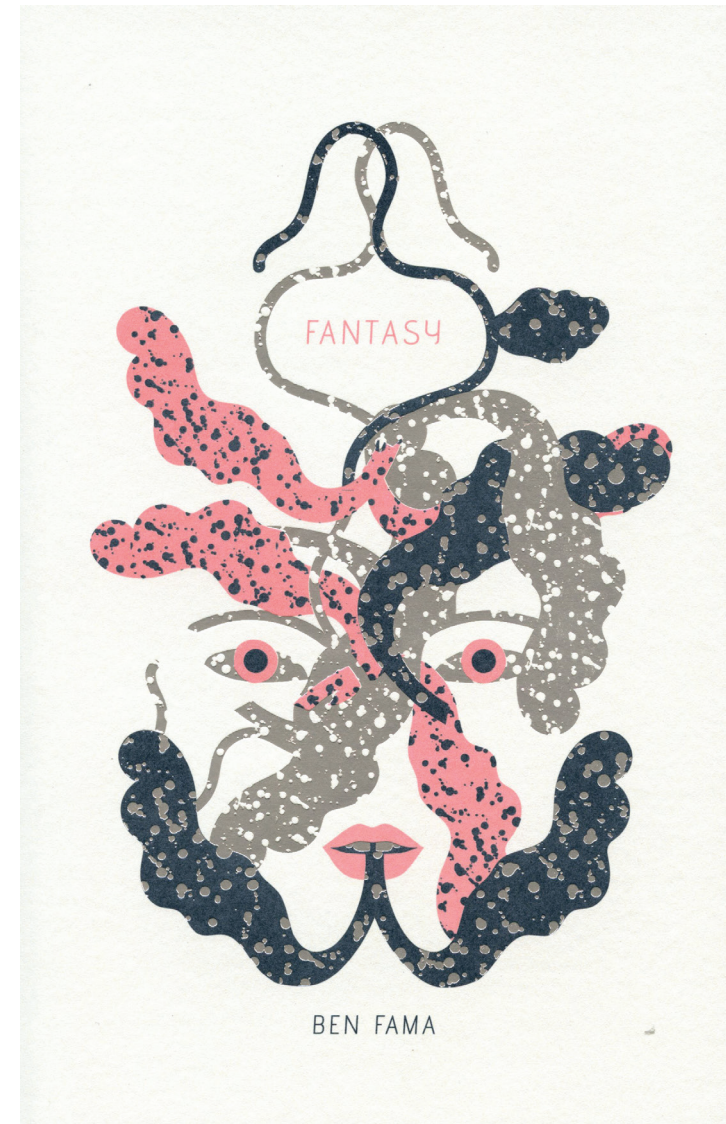
If you like what you see in this proof, we encourage you to purchase the book directly from UDP, or from our distributors and partner bookstores, or from any independent bookseller.

If you find our Digital Proofs program useful for your research or as a resource for teaching, please consider making a donation to UDP.

If you make copies of this proof for your students or any other reason, we ask you to include this page.

Please support nonprofit & independent publishing by making donations to the presses that serve you and by purchasing books through ethical channels.

UGLY DUCKLING PRESSE  
[uglyducklingpresse.org](http://uglyducklingpresse.org)



FANTASY

BEN FAMA

UGLY DUCKLING PRESSE

BROOKLYN, NY

2015

## Fantasy

Copyright © Ben Fama, 2015, 2016, 2018

First Edition, Third Printing, 2018 (150 copies)

ISBN 978-1-937027-47-6

Distributed in the USA by SPD/Small Press Distribution

Distributed in Canada via Coach House Books by Raincoast Books

Distributed in the UK by Inpress Books

Ugly Duckling Presse

The Old American Can Factory

232 Third Street, #E-303

Brooklyn, NY 11215

Cover design: John Lisle

Typesetting: Don't Look Now!

Type: Scala Sans and Advent Oblique

Printing (digital) and binding: McNaughton & Gunn

Cover offset and foil-stamping: Hodgins Engraving

Funding for this book was provided by generous grants from the Jerome Foundation's FACE OUT program, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Department of Cultural Affairs for New York City, and the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York Legislature. UDP is a registered 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit and a member of the Council of Literary Magazines and Presses.



NYSCA  
New York State Council on the Arts



ART WORKS.

## CONTENTS

Sunset	1
Boo	6
Fur	9
Anais NIM	10
Los Angeles	11
Fantasy	14
Elle	19
Hunno	20
Sno-cone	22
Odalisque	24
Flâneur	26
Mexicali Twinks	28
Pearl Lakes	29
Normsy	33
Frank O'Hara	34
girlwithcat2.jpg	35
Moët	36
#nofilter skies	37
R.I.P.	39
Like	42
Conscripts of Modernity	63
L'Officiel Hommes	70
1280 x 768, 60Hz	75
The Line of Beauty	80
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	82

## FANTASY

Bruce rarely buys anything, fearing that one purchase will lead to the next and so on—like S/M where you must always raise the ante to achieve the same degree of pleasure until you become a different person and not necessarily the one you intended.

— Robert Glück

## SUNSET

you need to plan what to do when you encounter an active shooter situation. in your workplace and commonly visited public areas, it's advised to plan now to increase your chances of survival. visualize and plan escape pathways, hiding places and available objects you'll improvise as weapons. act with aggression. you should escape if you can, avoiding public lobbies if possible. otherwise, hide. don't leave a secure room. blockade the door with heavy furniture, cover all windows, turn off lights. silence any electronic devices, lie on the floor and remain silent. if neither evacuating the facility nor taking shelter is possible, chairs, fire extinguishers and belts may be used to disrupt or incapacitate the active shooter by attack using aggressive force paired with yelling. commit to taking the shooter down. 95% of shooters profile as white males between ages 18–44. they've been in psychiatry, therapy and are actively maintaining a diary and social media blog. sometimes life is more like a movie set than reality. unfortunately, you need to be prepared for the worst.

sometimes you just need to buy something. life is full of responsibilities. joyce carol oates at the beverly hills hotel. i take a selfie of myself crying. for life i cannot access. offered to you as emotional currency. the most beautiful thing i've seen today so far is an online collection of fan art—drawings mostly, pencil sketches on notebook paper. stars from *twilight*. britney. credited to anonymous sources. i was pulling up directions when my phone died.

i check my klout score. klout amalgamates influence across a range of media networks. my score is down 0.04. i attenuate this anxiety with a one hitter, the neon purple bat. i know i'm in a film because i'm sitting beside normsies at lunch. boring, ambitious and cruel—power normsies i guess, they smile sheepishly before going on camera. “they got married and ordered the ikea catalog pages 25–27.”

provoking american gender anxieties. non-identifying and slant in the simulation. a new feminism sent from the future. the invention of the teenager in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century: new laws protect against child labor, parents no longer pair children off for marriage at age 16, an increased age through which children must remain in school. leisure time. access to transportation and their parents' income. a post-war economy. high speed and moonlight. freud's libido in the mainstream. dating. paraben-free barr-co oatmeal moisturizing cream. an off-the-shoulder sweatshirt in bleached turquoise. top of the bra showing. u look good bb. u look great.

a story about the body: they left for beach week on friday morning and stayed almost a month; brad paid for them with his dad's credit card. the game on the drive out is finishing a thirty-case of miller cans before they get to the cottage. they'll be drunk many afternoons living quite carefree in a crude paradise. summer passes this way. one day brad announces he's determined an unconscious fetishization of kelly's body parts based specifically on where he finishes. dawn denounces this as the normalization of misogyny and degrading porn culture. brad says kelly's willingness to accept a facial is an intensely powerful source of affirmation. dawn says it is simply not true and greg adds that nothing is more politicized in sex than where the ejaculate lands. kelly flippantly says she actually likes it, which dawn takes as tantamount to violence against women.

it's a very sad thing to only look like a celebrity. sometimes, commuting from monica's apartment in crown heights back to mine closer to downtown, it's easiest to get off at atlantic terminal. walking from the 2 line to the open air, passing the long island rail road tracks, and the schedule of times and the far away place-names of long island's east end: patchogue, bellport, southampton, bridgehampton, amagansett, montauk. it's an unexpected joy. marcel proust looking at a train station timetable and destination names says: *i had accumulated there a store of dreams, those names.*

he had the same feeling the first time seeing gilberte as a child, in front of a hedge of pink hawthorne, beside the steep little lane that led up to the méséglise way.

another violent news cycle this week. you'll wanna be high for this. a chevy blazer playing eminem passes the apple store on 14<sup>th</sup> st. did you see that email? people are writing *the worst* poetry. that apple store in chelsea services the hundreds of small galleries running mac minis looped into lcd screens. it's a clinton boom-era throwback economy. andrew tells me britney's breakdown in 2007 had a big emotional impact on him. old dreams waiting to be realized. pop culture displaces the threat of other discourses by not acknowledging them; a totalizing gesture. but just to be there.

someone was telling me about this bar called piranha. i've been meaning to check it out and go there alone. i've taken too much adderall and don't feel tired and need to engage with culture. i'm too late though i guess since it's half empty but i stay. stoli is on promo 1–4 am so i'm drinking. most people here are, like, networking. i read today there is a chance that our universe is a computer simulation. that theory is under investigation. understanding that if a culture could replicate a universal consciousness—our world—in simulation, it would. i drink and think about that. the dj is playing some really strange dance music. alien siren songs. as if brian eno's apollo soundtracks and atmospheres were re-written to reflect the darkness of our universe less understood after another quarter century of investigation. the 21<sup>st</sup> century and mtv's reification of despicable humanity and unending praise for the situation as it stands. the future inscribed in daily life.

at a video press conference broadcast from her floating home sanctuary off the coast of capetown in 2021, angelina jolie, alongside her family, announced that the majority of her body's cellular makeup had now been replaced by *accelate*, an artificially intelligent organic cell compound capable of regenerating major tissues,

organs and bodily systems. from cellular respiration to major digestive functions, *accellate*'s "smart cells" decompose primary structural components of diseased and cancerous cells, removing them permanently, replacing them with new healthy "smart cells." "smart cells" also defeat typical organ decay in advance of aging and heal injuries at twice the human rate. the body will now continuously reconstitute itself. the eventual implications for endemic disease control are paramount. the public reaction was split. fundamentalists decried jolie for using her wealth to surmount death and god, liberals pleaded for *accellate* research to be released from the private market to the public good. not announced at the time of the conference were other leading *accellate* clients, including aids, animal and human rights activist ellen degeneres, and l'oréal fortune heiress françoise bettencourt meyers. also omitted was the fact that to date *accellate* treatment has shown no efficacy in male bodies.

you're at the grocery store when this next thing happens, that key foods on ave a that everyone wrote about in the '80s. you're already done shopping when this song comes on the speakers, "a trip to your heart." a track buried late in the 2011 album *femme fatale*, "a trip to your heart" is a luxury item servicing a mass audience, much the same as how fran lebowitz noted coca-cola is the summer house of the poor. the song starts out glitching as if to announce the execution of practical exigencies that make life so dreadful, displacing individual sadness and lack of validation. it's through cultural products like this that violence and self-harm announce themselves when youth culture tests its desires inside the *cultural poverty of a thoroughly franchised landscape*. britney inaugurates a temporary kingdom of pleasure, and her troubled history makes her a cipher you can't erase. britney. marcel. the weeknd. i'm going to miss you when you rebrand. palm trees pulled upward in a constant state of abduction. loft music. brian wilson. in the shadow

of young girls in flower. john ashbery. i'm going to miss you when you rebrand. i'm going to miss you.

BOO

When a stereo goes by playing *Real Love*  
that's when the revolution begins.  
The whole boatload of sensitive bullshit.  
When I lost my virginity I was thinking about  
Wednesday Addams, from the Addams family.  
No one probably ever called her boo. That's sad.  
My boss keeps saying ICP to someone on the phone.  
Indian summer sun falls inside this perfect soda.  
Filmmaker Kenneth Anger...not in the one 1%?  
Jeff Koons? My friends are in this band called Damien Hearst.  
I love reality but there's no money in it—I wrote that because it's true.  
Remember 2011?  
The year Amy Winehouse died of a broken heart.  
And Four Loko became illegal.  
Somehow my childhood cat died.  
One of the first images of utopia I saw was the MTV video for *Today*  
by the Smashing Pumpkins. It's inconclusive whether the bread truck  
they drive is running on vegetable oil, though the whole video  
is basically a depiction of the art-as-play narrative  
post-modernity rescues through Nietzsche,  
or, as Adorno said, an impossible-but-necessary image of liberation.  
If Snooki were my daughter, I would not be proud of her.  
Let me give you a second to tweet that.  
When I die I want my ashes scattered into the twin waterfalls  
of a hotel named The Salish.  
I've left the details with Jesse because I trust her to deal with this  
in a way so as not to profane grace. That sounds like something  
Larry Levis might have written. Larry Levis died in Virginia, at age 44,  
where I was born. When I was 25 I was going to move to Portland  
to join a bike gang I'd read about online. Also I thought my 'zine

could really thrive there. Jesse lives in Portland and has a more  
sophisticated phone than even I do. All phones are basically smart  
because they continue to function while I am ridiculous.  
When I'm terrible, that's when Jesse's cool.  
It's 85 degrees today in October  
a Sunday, much hotter than Fall felt in the catalog.  
A day after Christopher gave the eulogy at his mother's funeral,  
which I have forgotten about. I only remember because I called him  
for something too small or unimportant to write here.  
He was about to get on a bus to go upstate.  
Later I saw a picture he posted of this lake—it was seemingly endless.  
The sky golden brown and pink,  
a gradient of makeup like you could see at the ballet  
I don't know what to say  
of the works and women I loved  
when I knew less.  
Some I still do.  
There's not much I believe in.  
Things I can be present inside.  
A sample sale.  
What's new for Fall?  
Maybe "sample sale" is the best phrase, not "cellar door,"  
which is supposed to be phonoaesthetically perfect.  
The sharp "a" in "sample sale" breaks the space  
making capital's entrance  
in this otherwise innocent moment.  
I'm aware I am using the rhetoric of Christianity  
to attack an economic philosophy.  
Where is Feminism now?  
Feminism is so fucked right now.  
I want Rei Kawakubo to be my mother.  
Her eternal black pitch.



As if the cedilla hanging down from Comme de Garçons  
(it looks of course like an asterisk or the anus)  
is the black hole, or degree zero I was born of  
wherefrom passes the structure  
of avant-garde capitalism along with its concomitant critique.  
When people talk about Fashion it seems so gauche.

*FUR*

I see fur  
when I cry

in the piss  
of a queen

when I lie  
and it's liked

in the sky  
when you text

## ANAIS NIN

My 1L is falling apart  
is that a good wig  
or an iPhone app?  
the decade is pixels  
endless scrolling  
everything before  
was glitter  
the internet is one of my  
major erogenous zones  
false eyelashes, nail art  
I just licensed  
someone else's art  
to Forever 21  
in this virtual open world  
I'll never work again

## LOS ANGELES

Like any subscription member  
of the Metropolitan Opera  
fashion bloggers believe  
they're at the center of perception.  
I want to go where men go.  
Is a high school crush  
on an alien surf girl  
the same as the need  
to fatally possess  
the other and the self?  
My friends were in a band  
called Second Life®.  
Let's get high  
talk about '90s nostalgia  
Scientology  
drink Diet Coke.  
The Real is a teenager  
drunk in a turn.  
A blue dot pulsing down  
Santa Monica Blvd.  
Hackers are the  
unacknowledged legislators of the world.  
For something to be timeless  
it must be outside mortality  
and if humans exist outside of death  
they're no longer subject to the violence  
of sexual reproduction  
or the fragility of life itself.  
In these conditions music  
will have no cultural efficacy.

Hope life now won't need.  
A forever sadness, though possible, now obsolete.  
What did I do this weekend?  
Listened to this song "Tropical Winter" on repeat  
while POV jogging through Runyon Canyon.  
Totally desperate boys following cute boys  
making out under Tumblr skies  
reblogged as gossip  
sent from my iPhone.  
Kenneth Anger fatigued and  
decadent in silk  
post-fantasy.  
Negation is part of the  
positive identity of an object.  
There is no snow in Hollywood.  
Celebrities constitutive of a  
scene that draw the populations  
restaurant owners want as their clientele.  
In a single day three stars photographed  
in the same gray hoodie.  
I want to create a product  
too unstable to be marketed.  
Not to say lacking  
maybe messy  
discursive and sort of pushing  
oscillating among  
the various dimensions of influence.  
I could write here randy details  
of my consumer choices  
banal and otherwise  
it would not amount to much.  
Mallarmé on fashion.

Benjamin on fashion.  
A monograph retrospective  
of Guess's photo editorials  
next to the bed.  
So maybe alien visitations  
directly influenced human history over the millennia.  
What does it take to start a new life?  
You take lonely trips to the city  
you are interested in moving to.  
Saturate the market with your resume.  
During interviews order both coffee and juice.  
Masterfully handle the acceptance of your ontological incompleteness  
by affecting the persona of the applicant they want to hire  
a winning assurance that you never intend to realize  
obvious to all parties six months into the job  
as if persona or voice was something laid stable  
over the truth of a tectonic subjectivity  
Jean Paul Gaultier staged his Chic Rabbi  
collection at Paris Fashion Week FW '93  
Very beautiful, very elegant, the orthodox religious  
clothing and the gender bending  
fits with his interest in tradition and iconic imagery  
as well as the fact that he's treating somewhat impertinently  
something that most people wouldn't dare play with  
in couture design.  
When Gaultier talks about himself though he sounds so dumb.

## FANTASY

Forever is the saddest word  
The poem's not worth it  
I'd like to read to you  
What Andy Warhol said  
About the traps of the rich  
But my tastes are changing  
This is a love note  
To a Fire Island lifeguard  
Tuscano shearling  
And mauve champagne  
I should never talk  
Even after two sips  
Though that's when I can  
I hate the George V hotel  
But I would take you there  
Then walk to the open market  
Some thoughts are not that great  
The Internet is my home  
Where it's easy to be beautiful  
And seen and new  
In the glow  
In the spell  
I thought I was better  
I guess I won't ever be  
God wants us to make out  
'Cause I'm in this airport  
Where nobody's important  
I just wrote a letter  
Explaining all of this to you  
In my head

The prism refracts  
But the stone is cloudy  
All that comes through  
Are the deeper obsessions  
Arvid Nordquist and dry shampoo  
Cocaine and Pellegrino  
This weather should have an entry  
In *A Lover's Discourse*  
A fully enclosed private garden  
With direct access to the pool  
Hardwood floors  
Perfect light  
I, like, crave you  
Doesn't it ever just make you sad  
Plans you had with different people  
And how it all can't come true?  
I want the extremes  
Of pleasure  
Boredom  
Watching my lovers cry  
I really want to show something  
To the lifeguard from Fire Island  
Thoughts like nectar  
International cities  
To stand here a young prince  
Unique in spirit  
Replete with hospitality  
Aren't you even curious  
To see my hotel room  
After I swim?  
Sitting on my bed  
I typed

Principal Dancer  
Into YouTube  
And drank  
To see the discourse  
And the honor  
Feels good  
Standing at my window  
What I think I will miss most  
When I die  
Is color  
And the light  
Sometimes it just comes to you  
Amidst occasional instances  
Of radiance or darkness  
I mean  
Everyone has their shit  
Then enough time goes by  
That's your life  
Maybe I expect too much  
I wouldn't know how not to  
In my room  
With these portraits  
In gold frames  
Feels like theater  
MGM Pictures  
The bronze light of Hollywood  
1928  
The future isn't real  
I should walk in golden rays  
Past rows of motorcycles  
To Coney Island  
Because I know grace

Is more real than love  
It feels so real  
In the morning  
On Fifth Ave.  
With the lifeguard  
From Fire Island  
Weightless in badinage  
Whatever comes from  
Art and life  
Being can be too easy and common  
Like soda  
I let him come inside my world  
Because he gave me a key  
To Gramercy Park  
Maybe tonight  
I'll have a breakdown  
Sometimes  
I use this French product  
To soften the water  
When I soak in the bathtub  
It is silent there  
Like a tomb  
Sometimes I wish  
I was already in mine  
Sometimes I wish  
The world had a face  
I could touch the cheek of  
When I feel  
I could be a part of it  
When I cannot  
And I lie in the hot water  
Sometimes I wish

The pearlescent steam  
Could sublimate the malaise  
And the lassitude  
That is there inside of me  
Maybe it does  
I believe it is that way  
When the light touches down  
Upon bunny lawns  
Of Fifth Ave.  
I don't care at all  
About the lifeguard so much  
Gravlax or Paris  
I should call this friend  
In Los Angeles  
An aesthete who hosts parties by the pool

ELLE

i would  
make out  
with you  
hold hands  
smoke weed  
etc

HUNNO

After Bunny Rogers

the world is yours  
60# gloss pages  
pop stems  
Nicki  
listen to my heartbeat  
on Sunday  
I cry for the beach  
why do people say  
I just hate celebrities  
rather than  
It's smart to recognize  
exemplary moments?  
a bad table at Spago  
late nights at Katsuya  
the cute couple from  
that pay-as-you-go site  
"Come over  
at do bring coke now"  
we'll complete this study  
in hate, or self-hate  
illusions of boyhood  
LaTurbo Avedon  
wrapped in code  
sometimes tilted blinds  
slot jade shadows  
on my wall  
the millennia turn  
a shout from the woods

a frat house in full sun  
fucked up my Warhol like  
the world is yours  
you can go to the Met  
to hear music and drink  
four Beefeater martinis on credit  
with a Lillet rinse  
and a pickled baby onion  
kiss me a final sunset  
April folds its snow  
you are shitfaced  
and find a place  
to lay down in the park  
you fall asleep  
and someone steals your backpack  
but only your work computer was in there  
I'm just a California boy  
having two or three people in love with me  
like having money in the bank

## SNO-CONE

pics or it didn't happen  
sort of hot girls  
wearing Toms  
other normsies

I'm behind a curtain  
in a car  
spending money  
on Amazon.com

I get into the culture  
of attention  
elegiac pixels  
an exit strategy

I'm Abercrombie  
at the bus stop  
completely lost  
pill regimens

young and hungry  
for new presence  
this great sports club  
at the next turnoff

I am a perfect person  
more lace than sole  
Giuseppe Zanotti  
pride of an empire

I'm smart  
as smart as Siri  
chatting teens on Grindr  
drunk in the sand

this critic says the work  
was "Ikea-friendly"  
I laughed and I don't even think  
that phrase means anything

on Hollywood I was trance  
my iPhone autocorrected  
*soulmate* to *simulate*  
we split an Adderall

in the mood  
aliens watch you fuck  
large oval eyes  
reality is a buzzkill



## ODALISQUE

There's a picture of you on my phone  
I look at when I'm bored  
It's basically an American Apparel ad  
In a world I have access to  
I'm looking at it now  
Or possibly through it  
And listening to "Gymnopédie No. 3"  
Sometimes I think it is a perfect song  
I wonder what you are going to wear  
To this cocktail event  
At the Gershwin Hotel  
We are going to  
But when I left you were sleeping  
And I don't think you are awake yet  
It becomes obvious  
When I am thinking of you  
Lying on the bleached sand  
In the soft powdery  
Easthampton light  
I will die  
Under conditions  
Premeditated by myself  
I think in that eyeliner  
Lancôme and Dior  
You would give me  
Something to live for  
By doing something  
Remarkable  
Like throwing  
A champagne flute

Off a yacht  
Making me  
Want to throw you down  
Against the hard-packed sand  
The Amagansett waveline  
Until all that is left to feel  
Are the elegiac melodies  
Nocturnes rapt in the air  
I should hire a painter  
To capture this feeling  
So that we may simulate it again  
Before returning to quiescence  
Today it will rain  
I should take you into town  
To the galleries  
In a Japanese yellow raincoat  
To have some champagne  
At a group show of landscape paintings  
I'm sorry they will probably be shitty  
Driving back to New York City  
Mendelssohn, Grieg, Liszt  
It is Memorial Day  
Drinking grappa on ice  
From a plastic cup  
In traffic  
I think I left my magazine at the beach  
If you were not here  
I'd be incredibly bored

## FLÂNEUR

Fashion makes me less crazy  
It should be looked at  
Never discussed  
It's an honest joy  
To be shocked by beauty  
In the 21<sup>st</sup> century  
I was shocked when my lover was caught stealing  
From Dean and DeLuca  
I was thinking of a line  
By Robert Hass  
The floor manager stopped us  
We simply went to a different store  
Poetry  
A requiem for leisure, pleasure, thought  
I cannot take your high school friend's  
Hoop earrings seriously  
And every picture on my phone is obscene  
Look at it  
All these effetes  
Boring travel stories  
Details of somebody's dreams  
Champagne condensating  
On leather seats  
All summer long  
I wish I could afford a room  
At the Peninsula New York  
Suites with TVs above soaking tubs  
With city views  
And all that sun on Fifth Ave.  
I live inside it too

I am at Uniqlo  
Buying underwear  
And after I paid  
I stayed and shopped again  
A surprising second erection  
After you've just finished  
And you know it's time

## MEXICALI TWINKS

trust me  
celebridades  
natsume nana  
anorexic girls  
trying for a baby  
curvy mature  
public no bra  
real teens  
under blanket  
goth girl  
ballet boots  
coquin de france  
amateur teen couple  
amateur facebook teen  
lana loves it  
love on a plate  
electrician  
emo twinks  
anime pregnant  
chubby swinger  
webcam gold show  
tail plug  
bikini squirt  
my mom's friend  
nick in the office  
keeping job  
kitchen counter  
prolapse eating

## PEARL LAKES

There are things  
You can't get anywhere  
But we dream  
They can be found  
In other people  
No one can fuck  
With my love  
I'm on this boat right now  
Kylie Minogue's *I Believe in You*  
Is coming up from the cabin  
Off an iPod dock  
Bobby's talking about his next tattoo  
I'm thinking I wish Claire  
Had actually died  
I'm in the sun  
We're both smashed  
All I did was to come to a funeral  
And it's like I fell into a dream  
To live among the orchids  
My last gift to Laura  
Who hasn't  
On an awkward night alone  
Laid back and pleased themselves  
Thinking of the girls at Horne's perfume counter  
Their slim fingers  
The make up tones  
And that one soft true thing  
Or the disgusting and sweet leather  
Of Bobby's jacket  
Or James's

If you like guys like that  
Did I read somewhere  
That Special Agent Dale Cooper  
Was basically a Boy Scout  
From the dog star Sirius?  
Or how David Foster Wallace said  
If you're ever in a situation  
That evokes the capacity for feeling  
David Lynch creates  
You should get out of that situation  
As soon as you have the chance  
I think  
David Lynch  
Creates worlds  
That are not like our own  
Which is not the way television is supposed to work  
Usually you have a soft abstraction of everyday events  
Detached enough from reality  
Canned to be like the lives we live and breathe in  
The deviations therein hold our interest  
I believe  
In dark magic  
And the dark woods  
And the times our real lives  
Mimic the currents of Twin Peaks  
Cause dread and uncanny temperament  
In the self  
Anyways  
My mom use to watch this show  
Unsolved Mysteries  
And this one particular scene  
From April 4, 1991

Showed 20-year-old  
Bank clerk and college student  
Angela Hammond  
From Clinton, Missouri  
Getting abducted while talking to her boyfriend  
On a gas station payphone  
There were long shots  
Where the viewer saw her  
Freaking out when she realizes  
This guy in a truck was waiting for her  
The boyfriend she was talking to on the phone got in his car  
This station wagon—you can imagine—  
And tried to find her, and he did find her  
Cause in this small town there was no one on the streets  
He heard her scream  
When she passed him in the abductor's truck  
So he chased them for a few blocks  
They showed the girl struggling with this guy, the kidnapper  
His truck had a decal across the small windows  
Behind their heads  
Of a fish jumping out of water  
A detail that was backlit by headlights  
And pressed upon my unconscious  
During this dramatization  
They even played this shrill, slowed down version  
Of a woman screaming  
Basically just like Maddie Ferguson dying  
But anyways, the station wagon  
Died out during a shift into reverse  
And they never found the girl  
When I was a young teenager  
Buffalo Bill was the scariest villain

I'd seen in a film  
I didn't know much  
About drag culture then  
To realize it was camp  
The best part  
About writing a poem  
For Twin Peaks  
Is that  
There already is a poem  
In Twin Peaks.  
We hear it from Rita Hayward  
Donna Hayward's little sister  
Right after the youngest Hayward sister  
A piano prodigy  
The real baby of the family  
Performs in a pink tulle leotard  
And rhinestone tiara  
She'd make the perfect internet girl

## NORMSY

I didn't know you were such a normsy. You don't even know who Joy Division is. And you always like the boring parts of museums. I didn't know you were such a normsy.

FRANK O'HARA

The only time I wish  
other people heard my thoughts  
is when I put your name  
into youtube.com  
right now I'm thinking  
I wish you were still alive  
so I could be your partner  
whether in art or life  
I'm not really sure  
mostly life I think  
but they say  
life imitates art  
so who knows

GIRLWITHCAT2.JPG

I found you  
on Gothtrash.com  
and saved your picture  
to my computer desktop  
it gives me the feeling  
of something terrible  
and familiar  
a space  
between lives  
like seeing Marcel  
seeing Gilberte  
for the first time  
how the fact of life itself  
becomes a thing  
languished and melancholy  
I think I would like to lie  
among southern magnolias  
in snowfall  
dark skies above  
into which  
I will never enter  
I'm watching Maya Deren  
maybe I will smoke weed  
I called out sick  
it's the afternoon

## MOËT

The Rodarte sample sale was shit  
Now I'm just lying on my sofa  
I hate this "in love" feeling  
But I have it

## #NOFILTER SKIES

sunset me  
Pouilly-Fuissé  
a postcard in the mail  
from Burbank, California  
even my own thoughts  
I think only somewhat  
Haribo gummies  
girls in fall clothes  
I'd like to perform something  
not dominated by industry  
each consumer decision  
is a chance to end the world  
an expense report  
celebrities vacationing  
in sunny Polynesia  
teens smoke salvia  
in the Ikea parking lot  
call your girlfriend  
it's time you had the talk  
now is a good time to start reading  
a book called *Dead Souls* by Nikolai Gogol  
on our second date  
we put up this Hemnes wardrobe  
there are exotic myths  
that have to do with size  
anorexic pool boys  
serving hot dogs  
in the nude  
I forgot the things he said to me  
a Polish working class guy

who went to Fordham  
looked into the dark waters  
considered suicide fall semester  
a creep in an idle Honda Zipcar  
in the parking lot  
just staring  
*W Magazine*  
I dream all night

*R.I.P.*

I don't want to  
be on an island  
without celebrity  
or flirt  
sea like a mirror  
I don't know  
if I'll make my link  
it's basically Monday  
I think on the island  
yesterday a horse died  
right there at the party  
and the girl was so sad  
with a braid in her hair  
her birthday is Getty Images  
I show her some  
I don't know  
how it is  
beneath the sand  
it's sad  
to know so little  
like this island  
it's perfect  
to wave your nudity  
from the end  
you find something  
send it to print  
it's totally fine  
like the potion  
if it's good  
you breathe it in



I have  
Sandy missed the link  
I said it's ok  
I mean whatever  
I start feeling bad  
and walk to a new location  
and look through magazines  
until I'm ready  
to respond  
I'm not too famous for it  
it's just this reputation  
around the island  
I have nothing  
you know that  
I could kill  
you told me  
everyone agreed  
at the party  
I wasn't there  
Sandy was  
sort of waiting  
alone in curls  
there was a singer  
slow and elegant  
she texted me  
I couldn't respond  
I was in public  
I had no thoughts  
other than people  
uglier than me  
getting fucked  
at that moment

I'm not afraid  
of falling in love  
some die  
Claire did  
I thought  
I saw her today  
in the metro  
my heart went crazy

## LIKE

There are some feelings I'd like to demonstrate  
To a woman of my age  
I know you about 3%  
We've hung out  
Then you moved to Los Angeles  
Thank you for accepting my invitation to chat  
I like your hair  
I like your shirt  
I like how you have a funny picture of Justin Bieber in your online photos  
And some sexy ones of yourself too  
Are they ironic?  
They're good  
Have you ever had sex outside?  
Is there a relation between the internet and madness?  
Perhaps this video chat application will provide a forum for us  
To further explore this question  
You will not be upstaged

I'm sad a lot  
I'd like to get away from culture  
Are you staying with anyone?  
I have these records...  
There are a few things I know by heart  
Today I had to look up the definition of perfidy  
And louche and remembered  
Things said for Art always sound true and aren't forever  
Dark all day  
Glamour all night  
Public makeouts  
Unsolved celebrity murders  
Tabbed browsing  
Cubicles  
Love me or not  
You'll be sorry all fall

Have you met my housekeeper?  
I was touching you and you said not too much, that was it  
The balcony windows were open and we slept  
Someone put peacock feathers under the door  
But there are still things I want more of  
So you live in California  
We meet in a hotel room  
VH1 plays in the background all night  
No compromises are necessary  
Just ride it out  
Express wave  
Basically I'm wearing shorts  
And there's a lot of white girls

I want a blonde more than I want my next book to be pink  
*Loveless*  
Sometimes I feel that way  
Did we have a good time  
I'm here  
You're just leaving Soho?  
Wanna come to Chelsea?  
I am  
I'm going to Boston tomorrow morning...  
Do you know anything about car insurance?  
I may be driving a car?  
My friend Lindsey says hi  
I need a cocktail now

I think I'm in love with the world of billboards and magazines  
It is so intrepidly based in fantasy  
Like things online  
And literature, all the immaterial world  
I mean the actual world we live in all the time  
Like mp3's and visual art  
That replaced painting  
I dunno  
You're the best actress in the world  
Right now you are acting retarded  
Your agent comes in on roller blades, wet and horrible  
I like it  
I'm gonna go shopping all afternoon  
Then I'm gonna need to have sex with someone  
Let's talk about it in the car  
This work will not last

I think the invention of the alcoholic energy drink *Sparks*  
Was the event that launched the 21<sup>st</sup> century  
Not 9/11  
This is some really good music  
If Frankenstein was in a really good band it would sound like this  
I was alone on the beach thinking about you like really late last night  
If the world ends tomorrow I don't want to still be mad at you  
Once I was dumped via email while I had an auto-reply response up  
It took two weeks  
For me to learn my new status  
It was so sunny that day, I remember  
I was drinking on the balcony of some house in Miami  
You know how wonderful the 21<sup>st</sup> century can be  
The details do not improve what's at stake here  
Maybe this new profile picture will open some doors  
I've been dying my hair black for 15 years  
What's it like to be you?

That post on Deleuze started a fucking orgy  
I don't even talk like this  
You make me  
I'm so obsessive  
My car is beautiful  
Antonio Villaraigosa calls me for advice  
So we meet for lunch  
I say  
I'm not a writer  
I'm a stylist  
A charlatan  
With an unwholesome interest in all people  
He wants details  
I'm ready to fall  
For the subtle grace which I am able to describe you with

Soak a sugar cube in bitters  
And place it in a glass  
Fill the glass with champagne  
The decade happens  
You're not the only one I'll love  
Solar plexus  
I am evil in it  
My life  
Walk to the water  
What's been done here will  
Be relevant  
I'm writing this so the youth may learn  
The power that kills that they may live  
Fama Witchcraft Ouija The Valley  
Muscular and romantic  
I'm ready to fall in love  
And envy the perfection of what I've done

Who will keep my secrets when I die?  
I want to be shot with an arrow  
Into a jacuzzi while the jets are firing  
Boys  
Girls  
Pools  
Human Sexualities  
Suburban spells  
I cannot numb these vulgar emotions  
Maybe in a long email made of disabled things people say as "I"  
Maybe you heard them  
In the original French version?  
As if falling in love were so uncool

I want a swan to spit an expensive Malbec  
Straight into my wanton mouth  
It's harder if it's true  
I could make an enemy  
I'd like to get involved  
You can't die from loneliness  
But can't I try?

Can your makeup remover do that?  
Do you want to go to Dazzle Ships?  
How are your Wednesdays?  
Don't be such a guy  
Aren't we all just looking for love?  
Appearing in the element of pure presentation  
I sleep beside this psychotic altar  
My bedroom looks like a tomb  
I want my headstone to say  
*stay cool*  
*Or have a nice summer*  
Just being alive  
Paying for things  
Hanging around  
Whatever  
Contact information  
White linen  
Pre-cum  
Prosecco  
Kokomo

Whenever that song comes on, *Kokomo*  
That's when the world begins  
It's the kind of cultural production capable of dissolving  
Any kind of human grief  
Satanic physical allure  
Tropical contact high  
Diane Keaton young  
Diane Keaton hot  
Celebrity impersonators  
Soba Noodles  
Salmon Wraps  
Sushi Rolls  
I just had dreams so intense it's like a sea-wash over all reality  
Like I actually had to remember the details of my life  
As they came to me  
Gossip is better than pornography  
But they both make great screen grabs

It's not even 10am and you've already  
Put Napoleon Perdis foundation on top of  
Dr. Macrene 37 Extreme Actives anti-aging cream  
Doctor Dennis Gross Skincare Alpha Beta and  
Dr. Brandt Time Arrest Creme, over a layer of  
Neutrogena Ultimate Sport Sunblock Lotion SPF 70+  
Bobbi Brown pink lipstick  
MAC False Lashes mascara  
Chanel eye shadow  
Estée Lauder perfume  
(a fragrance that cues remarks from friends and strangers alike)  
Sonia Kashuk concealer  
Bobbi Brown beach body lotion  
And Bausch & Lomb contacts  
Probably more coverage than you need for a plane ride though

I've gotten to read this poem in the garden  
Of the Museum of Modern Art  
At a remembrance for Frank O'Hara  
In the summer of 2008  
Even his sister was there, Maureen O'Hara?  
Because I wanted a poem to fulfill all my needs  
Death curious, a shy dirty mind  
I've gotten my way for way too long  
Though I would plié for a moment of your attention  
Even if it's staged  
Like performing sincerity  
Which people have done  
Since Revolution Summer in 1986  
Do you have access to that?



Perfecting my tan in the backyard  
Then writhing on a couch in front of daytime television  
I just have a brain full of information  
Your pictures haunt it  
That makes them real  
I wish I could stand behind them  
But even that commitment could become  
A limitation on the play I need  
Basically I'm a 13 year old goth child  
And when I picture the graveyards I imagine  
Faces beyond the tallest spires and headstones  
Nothing more remains except to know them and to love them

There are some feelings I would pay for  
Because this tan can't last forever  
Maxxis girls  
New York Dolls girls  
Yves girls  
Art House Revival  
Plastic looks  
Long legs

Tomaž sends letters  
Another day in this head  
Over and over until you're dead  
I got really fucked up at work

I've been working on this screenplay  
And I'm impressed with myself—  
A romantic comedy, for teens  
Basically updating *Sleepless in Seattle*  
And *You've Got Mail* for the social media generation  
Where two people meet online, in the comments section  
Of a pop culture website, and develop a relationship through  
Online correspondence and text message  
He's a writer living in Washington DC  
Basically a hoodie heartthrob type  
With a large friend group and some moderate successes  
Who otherwise can't get his life together  
She lives in Chicago and dreams of becoming a professional artist  
Giving her life over to a day job  
As the editorial assistant of a lifestyle magazine  
Alluded to briefly throughout various points of the story  
As *Teen Vogue*  
Breaking into hotel pools with her girlfriends by night  
She's a little wilder than he is  
We hear her confide to her co-worker over the phone  
That she is feeling lost in general  
While his roommate in DC, the co-star of the film, is determined  
To leak a sex tape of himself which will go viral  
Launching his career as a web-age porn star  
This virtual romance goes on predictably as life continues  
Over short emails, texts, cute pictures  
Basically just trying to share something with someone  
Where is the strangest place you've ever masturbated, she'll ask  
On the Ferris Wheel at Coney Island, he'll text back  
She sends him a video of a student film she starred in during college  
A remake of Francois Truffaut's *Les Mistons*, meaning *The Brats*  
Where she rides around dirt country roads in a sundress on a bicycle

Eventually the protagonist's roommate uses our hero's cell phone  
To send flagrant texts  
Causing a meta-conversation, over a phone call  
Which until now would have been  
Unthinkable within the boundaries  
Of what's understood in this relationship  
Resulting in admissions of affection, anguish  
And the value of human connection  
Despite the alienating mode of interaction  
Which they address during this conversation  
As well as the fact that they've never actually met  
She confesses she may take a job in Miami  
She's on a layover in Dulles airport  
He drives out to the airport, walks into a kitschy bar, at the climax  
In the final shot we see them driving back into the city together  
That's the end  
As of now I'm calling this screenplay *Happening Now*

Tomaz says either marry a sorceress or become homosexual  
He's given it a lot of thought  
There is no other way

When I look into the mirror  
I see the possibilities  
I don't know how it is for you  
I'm going to deny  
And expand  
Like my sorrow isn't good enough  
There will always be new stuff to buy  
Winona Ryder levitating  
At the end of Beetlejuice  
I think I should talk to her about all of this  
She's probably thought about it a lot too  
Child like the world  
Why don't more people actually suicide  
Glamour  
Illusion  
Human frailty  
So tell me

## CONSCRIPTS OF MODERNITY

persona. brand. empire. andré balazs (b. 1957) purchased the chateau marmont in 1990, at the start of a decade known as the longest period of peacetime economic expansion. personal incomes doubled from what they were during the recession in 1990. after the 1996 welfare reform act the united states experienced a reduction of poverty. the wall street stock exchange stayed over the 10,500 mark from 1999 to 2001. during this time, balazs expanded his hotel collection when he purchased and restored the mercer hotel in downtown new york, establishing “the benchmark by which other fashionable design hotels would come to be judged.” the andré balazs luxury group’s holdings now include chateau marmont in hollywood and sunset beach on shelter island. the standard hotel locations include hollywood, downtown la, miami beach, high line, meatpacking district and the newest addition, the standard, east village. in 2011, balazs launched a sea plane service to the hamptons, StndAIR, an 8 seat plane operating scheduled flights and charters from manhattan. this summer, andré balazs is pleased to release two new labels of his andré balazs collection of rosé. an international blend in collaboration with château minuty, located in the provence region of france, and a second, sunset beach rosé, being produced in partnership with the local winery on long island’s east end. more a resort than cosmopolitan hotel, the sunset beach location includes a lively french beachside restaurant and bar with sunset views and a luxury beach boutique. international hotel staff are on hand to assist in arranging all the local activities. do you like drinking wine?

if you can't afford it, affect it. known for its romantic small homes characterized by a low, broad frame building with end gables with a large central chimney, the cape cod house is synonymous with new england romance, designed to withstand the stormy, stark weather of the massachusetts coast, that thin curve of land in an infinite

black sea. during winter, darkness so wholly encapsulates the cape, residents say it qualifies to have its own time zone to account for the premature sunsets over the cape's drastically eastward bound longitude. its famous icy clear skies rendered into devastating sunsets. the cape and islands regional suicide prevention coalition was formed in 2009 after statistics proved suspicions in cape cod were true: short days and long quiet dark nights correlated with high suicide rates. spring also appears notoriously delayed each year despite cape cod's high average of 200+ sunny days per year.

andrew sends me a warhol quote: warhol's asked "do you believe in emotions?" and responds "yes, unfortunately i have them." andrew has an extra ticket to paul mccarthy's ws show at the armory so i attend with him. it is july of 2013. 100 degrees. 21<sup>st</sup> century. later in the evening i cool off reading reviews of the show and wonder if a white man can can ethically portray female exploitation and alterity, (meaning *could i?*) in the times review they relate the thematic content partly as determining nostalgia as a fool's faith. the times, in a separate but much longer article on frank ocean's rise to international fame, agree that maybe it is best for artists to give less when speaking publicly about their work. frank ocean's debut mixtape *nostalgia, ultra* was released free despite being signed to island / def jam who delayed movement on a release during the first few years he was under contract. *nostalgia, ultra* apprehends the past as source material on which to graft emotions. the cover to *nostalgia, ultra*, designed by ocean himself, features an early '90s model bmw m3 in neon orange, parked at the forest hedge. *channel orange*, his follow-up album, for which he was paid a million dollars in advance, exhibits a pure swatch of the same orange tone.

these pure, "natural" colors express instinctual life and threaten inwardness. look around inside a bed, bath and beyond some time: gray, garnet, mauve, beige. reassuring certitudes for the anxious subject. in this regard bright color becomes apprehended on products as a sign of emancipation—often compensating in the

home for the absence of more fundamental qualities (particularly a lack of space). the preserve® bpa-free pasta strainer in "ripe tomato" or "apple green." cuisinart® dutch ovens in "provençal blue," "island spice red" or "pumpkin." having once represented something approaching a liberation, both have now become signs that are merely traps, raising the banner of freedom but delivering none to direct experience.

bpa, a man-made synthetic compound found in certain plastics, introduced into the mainstream by bayer and general electric in the 1950s, found now in products such as 99¢ disposable water bottles and other temporary food storage containers, has been reported to affect neurological functions and behavior. to avoid bpa, you'll want to avoid number 7 plastics, which as containers leach bpa as they break down over time, heat up in in the microwave, or are subject to hot water during cleaning. one way to avoid bpa is to use a stainless steel water bottle (like the klean kanteens carried right here at bed bath and beyond). and now on shelves are klean kanteen's new advanced design sport cap 2.0, which has a loop, dust cover and sport top. very convenient, very klean and very cute (see?).

kate moss saint tropez no tan lines. the huffington post reported that individuals engaging in bdsm sex suffer less anxiety and enjoy greater well-being than others. july emotional heat index. diamonds fur coat champagne. totally gorgeous sunsets. netflix under the drone of box fans. air conditioners reportedly in peak use on weekdays at 6pm. watching television online and wondering if my fashion has become normative and cinematic. when you start by imagining what it might be like, you step back, you think. how it makes someone feel. the experience of the product. this is what matters. this is it.

it's the year of the snake, and an elegant dress, bag, or shoe is one of the easiest ways to incorporate it into your wardrobe. an alluring

pit of python sheath dresses and clutches is on the market right now. wearing just one serpentine element makes for a memorable look. click through for examples of this stunning trend, picks for pre-fall, the latest in berlin street style, beauty, people, parties, culture. spears first performed “i’m a slave 4 u” publicly at the 2001 mtv video music awards at the metropolitan opera house in new york city on september 6, 2001. along with dancing in a very revealing outfit, the performance is probably most remembered for featuring a number of exotic animals, including a white tiger and a live albino burmese python on her shoulders, the latter of which has become one of spears’ most iconic images. the inclusion of the animals in the performance brought a great deal of criticism from animal rights organization people for the ethical treatment of animals (peta). in august 2008, the mtv network named the performance the most memorable moment in vma history.

i wake up at 4:30 a.m. i never really sleep much and often start my day at this time. when i am very lucky and sleep through the night, i might get up at 7:00, but that is rare. the first thing i do when i get out of bed is weigh myself. i do this every morning, and if i have gained more than two or three pounds, i try to eat fruit and vegetables exclusively for a couple of days until my weight is back to my ideal. i make myself a tall glass of iced espresso (i don’t like warm drinks), get into a hot bath, and slowly sip my drink as i come to life.

if you can’t live off your wage, consider living at work. more than 20 percent of new yorkers may be living in poverty, the country may be on the verge of another war in the middle east, but this year’s fashion week is turning out to be a weeklong party for the ages, with so many events, hardly anyone can keep them straight. remember the chris dorner manhunt? remember shape-ups? remember jay z at pace gallery? remember the beginning of the recession of the american economy? people asked *would new york city be affected?* no, they’d say, it’s too much of an international city.

i was about to start a job at that time. the night before the first day in the office—well my mind just goes constantly—i took a sleeping pill, and had a dream that was really vivid. i was walking into my office for the first time. it seemed no one was there, it was possibly a saturday and my desk was near the very back of the floor. it was quiet, the floors were vacuumed, everything was untouched. the halls continued for quite some time. the serenity of it had a pristine purity. i thought *you know, i feel like i’ve been here before*. far back there was the glow of a desk lamp, in an office that look liked it might be mine. i turned and followed the path. within an hour i came into the office and there was an individual slumped back in the desk chair—myself—like i had been there thousands of years.

i thought about chelsea manning for a long time again yesterday, and then again as i was drifting asleep last night. today i decide she’s become allegorical of nearly 100 years of failed western culture, and in fact, likely the most important story and person of the postmodern era. born the second child of a squarely nuclear family, her father traveled while her british mother, who didn’t drive, spent her days drinking. after their divorce, manning relocated to wales, where she became the target of bullying for being american and, living as a boy, for being viewed as effeminate. her mother’s decaying mental health lead chelsea back to the united states to live with her father in oklahoma city, where she had violent confrontations with her stepmother over her troubled employment status. manning left for tulsa in a truck given to her by her father, sleeping in it at first, then moving in with a high school friend, whom she briefly worked with in a themed all-you-can-eat pizza buffet called *incredible pizza*. chelsea soon after settled in with an aunt in potomac, maryland, for a 15 month period of stability while working, leisurely attending school, and dating. manning enlisted in the military in 2007 with plans to attend college through the g.i. bill. she told her army supervisor later that she had also hoped joining a masculine environment would resolve her gender identity. trapped beneath

the totalizing censorship of *don't ask, don't tell*, and opposed to the kind of war in which she found herself involved, in january 2010 she began posting on facebook that she felt hopeless and alone. subjected to solitary confinement after arrest, denied pardon after conviction, chelsea manning had the perfectly uncomplicated goal of "revealing the true nature of 21<sup>st</sup> century asymmetric warfare." coming out as transgender tazed the nation's media, unable to mature themselves to the contemporary politics of identification, most media outlets continuing to use the "he" despite the perfectly clear "i am chelsea manning, i am female" declaration. never on her own terms. sweet child from oklahoma.

court-ordered chemical castration became legalized in 2033. cyproterone acetate was combined with an anti-psychotic medication; sex offenders had wrist sleeves procedurally implanted which deposited the hormone inhibiting serum directly into the bloodstream via reverse iontophoresis processes. lack of funding for prisons led to shorter sentencing, but the convicted wore sleeves for life. everything was tracked. airlines merged into a symbolic oligarchy of parent companies. borders locked in cold wars fought over the last remaining fossil fuels. civilian travel applications lolled around bureaucratic networks. the rich traveled through a privately administered network of jets. the poor went unmonitored. international markets governed the wealthy. in 2043 the death penalty became nationalized under the flag. those sentenced were hauled to one of four national zones on the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month. contractors streamed the executions. after scotus passed the "treason act," journalists became extinct. encrypted news traveled through torrents, a moving target for the administration. in a macabre act of political theatre, suri cruise, operating out of a digital commune of leftists, dropouts, artists and hackers, founded the "funeral party." in families, suicides among siblings or kin were encouraged by a series of income tax waivers. families of euthanized elders collected payouts and substantial debt relief. amounts were determined

on an age gradient. in time, cruise's gesture quietly became right wing legislature under the staid auspice of the "family care and protection act." the middle class rose from the grave.

you look good, like the ads. continuously reconstituted through the things i desire. because i want things and need to be desired. when they say "we're being authentic," they mean "we're extremely on message." a content warning. a user history. i understand and wish to continue. i'm going in late to work today. and i'll probably be coming home late. love you, so sorry, dear. a tax form. a loan application. the eighteenth brumaire of louis bonaparte. may be monitored. viva la vida. a whitening treatment. become a friend and save 30% today. shop the entire store.

L'OFFICIEL HOMMES

dev hynes

you smell like summer

in the tropics

your new car

smells like cocaine

mustique rain

slanting downward

on a hilfiger towel

i miss summer

in greece

eating grapes

depressed economies

desultory poetics

everything is embarrassing

century 21

a savings account

dev hynes

enunciate pleasures

i still feel

pleasures of empire

bourgeois pleasures of time

authenticating details

a paris autumn

a new starbucks in dubai

egyptian cotton

bananes frites

losing you

on location in st. barth

a video look book

a sunset view

we shared a sandwich



on a balcony

in montreal

it was april

i was slow

with my camera

dev hynes

it was warm

after winter

you said

*feel the world*

*against your skin*

in the parc

du mont-royal

among the many people

we bought

opium and hash

and smoked it

near the basilica

from a pipe

carved from marble

in the shape

of a mollusk

because lord is dead

and grace existential

songs set to feelings

songs of empire

dev hynes

a melody

dev hynes

after hours

dev hynes

dev hynes

dev hynes

on the cover

dev hynes

1280 X 768, 60HZ

John and Mary meet.

What happens next?

A.

They flirt through text and social media, grafting their lust onto a tenuous mutual experience they shared at Avenue in the Meatpacking District during a mutual friend's birthday: someone bumps into Mary, causing her to spill vodka onto her handbag a moment before John is introduced to her. She remains lighthearted about it, so the misfortune becomes the topic of their conversation. John dabs the orange leather clutch with cocktail napkins and orders a replacement drink. Because they're New Yorkers, they discuss the neighborhoods they live in, what they do for work, and where they like to hang out. John studied business, lives in the East Village and works for a digital media company, Mary studied psychology, lives in Tribeca and consults for an online shopping website. They share music and food as hobbies. Mary enjoyed the recent Diego Rivera exhibition, which John hadn't seen. John had always believed he would own a business, and they laugh at how, just 5 years ago, they wouldn't have imagined being on the career path they currently follow. John loves craft beer, and writes articles "for obnoxious partying males," as he puts it. Mary's clients don't follow trends, but instead are devoted to unique or high fashion. As dutiful and educated employees whose work only benefits a detached board of owners, what else are they to do but ironize their existence? They like going to brunch, though John had that day just bought equipment to brew pour-over style coffee which he was eager to try. The next morning they both did. And maybe that first night at home, his head between her legs, Mary moaning with pleasure, John saw into the future. Check-in for a free appetizer. Traceable spending habits. Human behavior indicating a belief that the world

has already ended. Their affective decision-making acknowledges no linearity, making John and Mary normative consumer models regarding their shifting sense of morality vis-à-vis nihilistic indulgence. They're just like us. John comes into money after his father dies, and he purchases an apartment in a luxury condo building they watched being built. They move in together and become engaged, wedding a year later. Mary wants a child. Six months into their marriage John discovers he has a low sperm count, though treatments are available. After two years of no luck they accept their lot. Now age 31, Mary begins spending more time away from John, staying out late drinking with co-workers or friends she met at a continued learning course on wine, or taking the car alone on weekends to visit her mother in Pennsylvania. Soon after, she moves out and asks for divorce. John takes a job managing assets for a bank in New Jersey and relocates to Montclair. After two years Mary is living with a boyfriend in Lancaster. John and Mary don't really speak.

B.

He doesn't get the job, but thanks her for the chance to talk in a follow up email. A few months later they run into each other at a pool party in Echo Park. He has since found employment as a copywriter at a similar agency and plans on staying indefinitely. She confides they hired the niece of a board member, who has already left the company for another job. Mary has another party to go to and asks John to find her online. John does, and they are able to learn about each other's social habits, friend group, eating patterns and lifestyle, and occasionally comment on each other's activity, though they never see each other in real life again.

C.

John and Mary enjoy a passionate relationship for many years, living together in Montreal. John is a novelist, teaching literature in a college. Mary is a very successful commercial producer working in advertising. One day, after doing laundry together, John comes out to Mary as transgender. She reacts poorly, accusing John of being gay. John, now known as Jesse, says she has been living a lie her entire life and needs to restart in order to thrive. Against the wishes of her family, Mary agrees to give it a try, becoming a big supporter of Jesse while helping her adapt to the nuances of clothing and makeup. Their honeymoon period is tested when Jesse loses her position at the college over concerns about her transition. Mary discovers she is pregnant, though doesn't make a disclosure to Jesse, and succumbs to depression after secretly having an abortion. She leaves Jesse, ultimately marrying and having a child with a man. Jesse begins dating and moves in with her girlfriend Madge, though remains deeply in love with Mary, "the love of her life." Jesse sends Mary a copy of her new book, whose themes and symbolic disclosures resonate with Mary and convince her to agree to a tryst with Jesse, under the cover story of working on a commercial on the desolate and romantic Isle of Black. They spend the weekend with a post-op trans couple, and Mary is once again unable to cope with the realities of life with a trans woman. They fight, and Mary confesses the abortion to Jesse. They part ways once again. Despite being homeless, childless, middle-aged and loveless, Jesse thrives as an award-winning author, and continues publishing. In a lengthy newspaper feature, stable and relatively secure, Jesse feels proud to age as a woman. In a daytime meeting in a Montreal bar during a leafy autumn, ten years after their first break up, Mary teases Jesse for living a life suspended above the ground with her thoughts in the sky. Jesse reacts defensively, and they have a brief but serious conversation exemplary of the disharmony that troubled their relationship as Mary was never able to comfortably accept living her life with who Jesse truly is. Jesse exits the bar alone after paying the bill while Mary is in the bathroom.

D.

They sing karaoke and really seem to like each other, John going so far as to think an unseen force brought them together over a mutual love of music they discovered in the elevator at work. Talking together late one night with friends, Mary says she doesn't believe in true love, a discussion that becomes the primary obsession of their relationship. Turns out, in this story, that John is correct, but they are an inappropriate match. Their patchy fling ends as Mary meets a new man for whom she genuinely feels lust, affection, and intellectual affinities. John limps into a new relationship with a woman named Jane as autumn begins.

E.

They begin a powerful affair, like birds caught in a thermal, from a very young age. Never marrying on principle, though effectively life partners, John and Mary live out a happy, dedicated relationship well into their thirties. Mary, visiting a fertility doctor after "having trouble," and feeling ill from the stress of trying to conceive, discovers that not only is she infertile, but after a series of referrals and ongoing tests, she learns she's got stage IV stomach cancer. Her condition isn't operable. John and Mary are devastated. John discovers a treatment—gray market—being developed in Switzerland, an artificially intelligent organic cell structure called Accellate, which attacks and eradicates harmful cells, regenerating body tissue and cell mass. Not much is known about it. They risk it all. John and Mary disinherit themselves of life as they've lived it. Six months later Mary is healed and virile, essentially in the dawn of her existence. Years pass pleasantly, they celebrate milestones in their relationship. Putting aside Mary's ongoing desire for children, they decide to embrace their union as an end-in-itself. John celebrates his 50<sup>th</sup> birthday. Mary has ceased to age. She's taken to a diet of raw foods, green juice, yoga. She keeps a low profile making

house visits for under-the-table body work in Orange County, while John has stabilized their income, making investments in the tech industry. Called to Zurich for a 20-year study of Accellate patients, John and Mary's observations are acknowledged: Mary's body isn't decaying. Versions of Accellate have been developed to function in a more organic mode, though physicians plan to proceed with what they've seemingly discovered: the tonic for eternal youth. Testimonies are being prepared with a team of lawyers. They tell Mary and John they have a celebrity spokesman who has since received Accellate and is ready to make a bold public announcement. Meanwhile, the International Court of Justice subpoenas the physicians for malpractice for their unregulated testing on humans. Mary and John settle the terms of a payout and move to Tangier. While Mary thrives, John sinks into a deep depression as he passes through middle age. Mary begins taking lovers. Men's sexual enhancement medicine carries them through the onset of erectile dysfunction in John's fifties. Failing that, in desperation, he has surgically implanted a hydraulic, inflatable prosthesis which Mary immediately rejects. John grows old, now so obviously a mismatch, their relationship purely platonic. The day before John's 72<sup>nd</sup> birthday, at a hotel on the Bay of Tangier, John discovers Mary is 4 months pregnant and plans to have the child. The next morning John wakes before Mary and watches the sunset one last time from the edge of the bluffs, then enacts the conclusive end of his life, as he lived it, with Mary.

## THE LINE OF BEAUTY

I love summer, the luxury of poetry, gin  
and tonic, quinine lost in juniper

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Some of these poems have appeared in *Action Yes*, *Atlas Review*, *Birds of Lace*, *Boston Review*, *Brooklyn Poets*, *Bushwick Sweethearts*, *Coconut*, *Destroyer*, *Everyday Genius*, *Finery*, *Heartcloud*, *Imperial Matters*, *Maggy*, *notnostrums*, *Similar:Peaks::*, *Souvenir*, *Sprung Formal*, *Third Rail*, and *The Volta*. “Conscripts of Modernity” appeared in *Privacy Policy: An Anthology of Surveillance Poetics*, published by Black Ocean.

“Like” and “Sunset” were previously published in the chapbook *Cool Memories* (Spork). “Fantasy,” “Odalisque,” “Flâneur,” “Los Angeles,” “tumblr skies,” “sno-cone,” “girlwithcat2.jpg” were previously published in the chapbook *Odalisque* (Bloof Books).

“Mexicali Twinks” was commissioned by *Animal* as part of a “Porn Poetry” feature, where artists were invited to generate poems based on a PornMD livestream showing search terms in real time.

“1280 x 768, 60Hz” exists in gratitude to Margaret Atwood’s *Happy Endings*.

Thanks to the following people for various amounts of support and editorial oversight: Monica McClure, Andrew Durbin, Kate Durbin, Alli Warren, Macgregor Card, Sasha Fletcher, Becca Klaver, Dan Magers, Jennifer Tamayo, Brandon Brown, Dana Ward, Andrew Shuta, Audrey Zee Whitesides, Ariana Reines.

Special thanks to Juliana Spahr, without whose encouragement this manuscript would not have been completed.

Thank you to Matvei Yankelevich, Michael Newton, Anna Moschovakis, Daniel Owen, Emmalea Russo, and Zoe Guttenplan at UDP.