

I wish to breathe. I wish to breathe you in.

I inhaled you in large gulping laughter. Gulping I remembered so much of other times. The whys and wherefores unknown, like shadows, a play of light, a distinct memory, visited much later when previously forgotten.

I had to lie down for a long time confident the feeling would come back, that it was simply transient. I took the bus; I rode my bike part way. I stopped and listened until, until all that is transient emerged including stuff like the farmers market or the immediate recognition that someone is Dutch simply by size. *Allow me*, and I opened the door. He looked a bit surprised and I inhaled him immediately. As he passed me by I asked him if he was Dutch. With his back to me he said yes and disappeared down the hall. I didn't see what door he went through. I went back downstairs to wait and it was still raining. I was gulping, gulping air.

Swallowing, a swallow swooped, a play of light and shadows. The police car stopped without a sound. I had no idea what happened and never would. I only knew it was on the street in front of my building. I waited and then proceeded on wishing to breathe. I wish to inhale you so there will be a remnant of memory surfacing, not forgotten or temporarily forgotten, but distinct, the whys and wherefores unknown. Believe me, I know of this, like clouds fleeting, a pocket of sun. There was a rhyme and a reason. Much later I knew I could stay with that feeling. I could bear the burning transience, a tangent intersecting in past, present, future. Yes, yes, yes. Standing there like that, not forgotten precisely and distinctly remembered, a heart memory, a heart murmur. Murmuring and mumbling like a murmeration of starlings. (KitKit's tail flicked, his teeth chattered.) I sank back, down and in grateful for the moment, not at a loss. Instead full, right to the end of the exhale. The exhale embraces.

Nothing wept as long as I could remember and that was a long long time ago. I stood on the edge of my seat, I sat on the edge of the street.

I saw it all and heard it too waiting to cross Kingsway on my bike, an ambulance approached and a taxi crossed the street right in front of it. I wonder how this is possible. I shook my head; this is what I found. I found other things too, keepsakes, mementos, pentimento, even pentimento, painting overtop of what is underneath is so much of how life is. I will paint this over; I will clear my head with a short walk and some fresh air. We must consider this. The swiss chard is for supper and I may visit the garden. The sun is out as are the mountains and the door opens and closes and opens and closes and I know it is still winter.

June 3, 1965

Dear Dad,

Sorry I'm so late in writing you this letter but things have been quite busy for me settling down and getting established in Prince Rupert. This note is to let you know precisely how I think and feel about my life and you. Particularly how I justify to myself, at least, actions like hitchhiking at 3 o'clock in the morning in spite of your ardent disapproval, how and why I really do care about you, and what you probably won't believe until after I come home from this summer that I am actually off my "dead ass" and working or rather living.

The hitchhiking question is open to suspicion on both its feasibility and my justification in making the decision. I know it seemed and was to a large extent impractical and I understand you might feel a moral responsibility as a parent to protect me from the dangers of our modern civilization. However I had made commitments to both my employer in Prince Rupert and Sam. It was unfortunate that our ride to Cache Creek fell through but the thing was it did happen this way. I realized the hazards involved both as to the poor timing in acquiring rides and drunk drivers. And I believe that when I have done everything I can providence will help me.

As for the question of authority please let me state emphatically that in all family matters I believe that you should have and should influence complete control. By family matters I mean the actions in which the whole family is involved. However in matters like hitchhiking, my education, my religion, my friends, I believe that as they pertain primarily to me as an individual that I should have the right and obligations to make these decisions myself. By my very nature as a human being I am endowed with a free will. Again as I will be responsible and have to take the consequences of my decisions I think I should have the freedom to make my own choices.

Man Boy story

The other day I went to the store early in the morning. On the corner of Main and 14th there was a transient I didn't recognize. He was very young, just beyond a boy. Around six later that day I walked past the same corner and he was still there except now lying on the ground with his jacket pulled up over his head. I startled. I went to the store and came back by. A young woman was standing over him with her cell phone in her hand. We spoke together. She was debating who to call. She didn't want to call 911 and we couldn't remember the non-emergency number. We were speaking with him, asking him if he wanted help. He mumbled a bit, shook his head no. I watched his breathing. She went into Starbucks and bought him a sandwich. I followed her and bought him a banana and a fruit and nut bar and got him a cup of water. We went back out.

A man came up on his bike. He joined in the conversation and thanked us immediately. He was very clear looking and took immediate steps. He said call an ambulance. He spoke to the young man/boy in a clear, direct voice and a head began to emerge out of the jacket and he sat up and began to wolf down the sandwich. His hair was tousled and I saw he was very young. He said he just wanted money for food and clothing. She called 911 and asked him if he wanted an ambulance to come. He said no. Given he declined help the ambulance would not come. I thought the ambulance should come.

I told the young man/boy to drink all the water. We all three left, the young woman, the clear man and myself. I asked the clear man if he had locked his bike. He double-checked and said yes and thank you. He was so clear.

I went home. Sometime later I went back and he was still there lying down again with his jacket over his head. I asked him to sit up for a moment. I asked him if he wanted help, an ambulance. He shook his head no and did not sit up.

I went home and called 911 and asked for an ambulance. They said someone had already called and he declined help. I said he was a really young man, early twenties at the most and if he lay there all night he could be very not well in the morning, sir. I went back one more time. He was gone, the banana resting across the top of the cup of water.