3 /

I	

WAS

IN

THE

OPEN

THEN

Moth-eaten time capsule for the far future
I WAS IN

1.

Immed
The moon is in the gutter.
—Nick Cave

iate task
or third or fifth or seven thousand
arc coughing litany and void

wavelength of a storm in thunder

with hold

this process. In the dust room above the corner of
53rd & Kimbark,
it’s summer, sleeveless, wet.
[ ... ] auma in a room of notes
Acanemic hylomorph, industrial arm

At 19,

Herr Stern sketched while
a hunter in the sky with belts
sang cave-light symphony of the Holocene.

At 40, I held the letter they sent in my hands.
Lars’ tape came in 1998, four years before defense.

I had no way to include ’89 that fresh, open time when the Norwegians mixed their three hundred year bent streets with gone, drunk legs at Big Benneth’s clock & barre.

Gothic polyp of dyed black hair & Max Von Sydow’s intelligent dying lit Julie Delpie at a distance.

Tarry & Traum, they gesticulated mildly and fretted Tarkovsky the ceiling round the wavelength of a storm, later alight over the bridge I crossed daily on clouded water.

I didn’t know how to include, and so, I write this now.
Earth thought 66 of 365: “All one needs is a system. Once a day to do some small thing: fill a glass of water from the tap. Flush it down the toilet, only that. The world would have to change.”

Earth thought 27 of 365: I need a voice that isn’t philosophical and isn’t poetic. Which isn’t religion. Which is experiment. At the pace of Earth time, with the part of us that isn’t destructive or blind.

I need to tell you why I writ this thing.

A pall — in air — strained, we carried branch and bronze.
Years of frost.
The first things are fresh weather.
Slowly heard and cavernous – their history scratches out chalk, tic, tic. The kid-bearing Summer, the kick.

Century’s early, crawler.
Supper’s late, bawd.
Open-end the cry & never ever-stop.

I stood on the floor, the rain of Europe behind me.
Who wept as you walked through Paris?
Only Beckett heard
your sky–zinc slouch, the reflections along the bar in a
room of sweating men.
I was nineteen; you were Folio,
a pocket-book bought on the ark of dying animals.

Cloud tasting souls of cinder.
Ash in the stones along the shore.

With St. Sebastian, we cracked the spine. Was
that his name? I sat near the spire, silent near noon and
waves of air flowed from the clock. Street, knock,
Nick
Cadavrous:

Pigeon dripped from vine.
His dirty beard soaked in time.

With that bum I red — a stranger thing. I lift your hands
and sing
together. We loved the elements
or tossed hair,
sunlight in busses, the forgetful café
with plastic seats.

A car gear-shafted patiently, &
you poured out, and
out, you poured
wholey out
the wavelength of a storm, all
Three days past tenure, I started hearing drone. The main was bad shoegaze from the globalized nineties.

Lars sent phylogeny as high art was Nan Goldin. Mine energy was spentlet

me tell youlet announcements fade.

*Euphoria*

O there is nothing like dozing in a mystical city.

*6 A.M.*

On mixed tapes from my last four years to defense, I’d often place the song near The End. Farther,

blue room and clouded time.

historia. My

[...]

*Earth thought 3 of 365: We have a right. But this morning like last night, I have no idea where to turn to find the world beside me as it should be. Or it should be of each and every one of us.*
Only industry has grown and human population. Of course, no, I can’t be right. “Transcendence,” floats. Behind all signs, life declines.

My room was narrow, heat-knicked, and long.

Almost nothing in the fridge. Iced coffee in a condiment jar.

and summer again.

Endlessly footnotes mote
on waves of sound

beat box cars shaft gear so patiently, say:

Small peas
made from sugar bees nursery tease
of my last memory.

Earth thought 65: Individualism in the 70s made the world inside the rage, while around us all, industry spewed junk into the sky.
2.

Histo
Child of the '70s

 Feathered hair and flesh on hand, '77 was hot. I was a kid, but you could sift evaporated care.

Corvettes swooned a teen-age back unconscious in the sheets. If troops sinned, weather-men underground. Way gay love on the side.

All blocks, tall cities popped corn to Skywalker drops.
Or ozone made a hole inside  
our kind, releasing  
mental night. Rococo  
Foucault, so  
rock-n-roll  
trigger. I  
am loud, my  
armpits shag,  
breasts unhassled  
twice.  
And T-shirt company’s equal you  
suited corporate ducks.  
So come, boss,  
multi-orgasmic  
you  
friend your partner’s last  
(Freud’s asked). Our  
bacon days are  
shipped. And  
Anna brings home  
groove in buckets crude  
from oily trips.  
Our hips feverish in her  
neon pants.  
Untethered worlds are lies.  
I cannot believe that sweet  
infinity made linguistic  
tapestry  
travesty. Desire’s a  
Earth thought 126 of 365: I sat on the floor with students last night, revising their semester-long work. Harried and laughing, once near tears, they tumbled out of industry with barely time to lose. And we post-students are like them with our home improvements and loan accrualment, our tasks, competition, dinners. We tumble out of time with barely life to lose.

1945, ’50s

A star of death invaded France and engraved the Russian front. History’s in ruins. Civilization cries—on you, on all that I love, on all the old memories. Fond, long bitterness—my necrophilic bile. The bureaucratic crime has just begun while we were bleeding in the streets of Normandy. Coldness will set in. The winter of our silent killing beneath a planetary hush, dying ocean. And the water of the lapping shores sends soft messages to overseas lovers. We’re concussed within our new-made homes, appliances a whirl of light and humming. My temples are drumming in this new-made life. I am so busy, I do not see that I have spent intention. My husband almost died while my father lost his job and
my children will be full with
food and images:
a new made T.V. set.
There is money to be made in our appeasements.
There is money to be made in advertisements.
  I know, Tom
told me, if
he made it home from work.
Things take off.
Big times win.
And all that we’ve wanted I’ve
forgot.

* 

* 

Earth thought 114 of 365: Moral heroism needs new things. Organizational decision puts the future incrementally at risk. Don’t stop a bullet with your body. Unlock the patterns!

* 

Rachel Carson, early ’60s

The housewives were the first to freak.
Birds died everywhere—
a carcinogenic binge.
War II’s crew of industry all-for-profit in
the chemical dawn. We
didn’t know. The silent foe invades our bodies
as we slept. It was there
in dewy sunrise, calculated on the flowers and
the stacks of dying wasps.
Rachel'd had enough. Her breasts undone as they metastasized, she wrote clear messages in *The New York Times*. Spelled “pesticide”:
“cry.”

*Dust the nightstand at a chosen time, and make the lawn a green and uniform expanse* –

Then *your* family.
At sunset at dinner, *Tom*!
In mailrooms in noon, *Senator*!

We’d never have thought that man has all the means to wreck our order. Once, from blow or chains or hunger it came. A soldier with a bright and steel-hard cask, a nationalist. Or unhinged man alone along the cold, wet streets at night, a threat. But how things change. They slighten in the waning century, are infinitesimal addition born by Tom and Mary, the Senator, the shopper.

* Earth thought 52 of 365: City of homes. Life passes through like utopia. And this city is real, a billion years of strength. The doorway, the species. The species: evolution’s stream of life. Phylogenetic tapestry. Portal of time.

But we throw the wavelengths off. Doorways shut. And we close down the city for many million years.
Paleo-geography, 14,000 years ago

It is windswept,
the forests all a roar of air like oceans
as mega-fauna falter
spear by axe and
hands eat the mastadons,
letting the carcasses fade to ground
half-done.

Atlatls are points of time.

They, they are future.
Shaken rod stuck deep in bone, it
bled there
in the ice-chilled moon

Dubai, 2008

I AM HAPPY though I didn’t know
that beach and sand are served
as caviar in a tray that’s
couched along a bay of ice
and bubbled by champagne brunches
made accessible to the hoi polloi.

Or
those from England, France, and Spain —
(while India’s mostly off limits) and the Philippines
send thin-boned, gentle faces
to take our orders and our shirts.
Sri Lanka’s there! China, too! Bangladesh!
And high Nepal.
The workers live together all in six foot rooms, a trunk
beneath them
with burners for cheap lentils.
“HISTORY RISING” said a sign stretched
far across the sea.
But time begins to shrink infinitesimally.
There’s a loop in
this scene and others.
I feel frenzied at
noon beneath the shade of three tall buildings.

Nightly, soft service girls pull men far out all along the
line.
They pinch them. By and by, they say:
“Take me.”

Do not
hit me.

*  

Earth thought 163 of 365: Recently, the Alaotra grebe
of Madagascar went extinct—another bird kind, an
increasing number. The causes are clear—we took their
home, moved in new species. Alaotra had nowhere to go,
couldn’t cope.
Globalization’s just another name. Globalization is mass

extinction
88

3.

I was in
The macro-perspectives of geological time and of planetary ecology make it hard to keep in view, simultaneously, the human. I look at a book bag I bought alongside my father from Strand Books. On it, profiles of all different sorts of people. The warmth of that memory which goes back to when I was young. Every one of those faces holds different stories.

From within each of our worlds, our loves are so intense, and it would be inhuman to forget them.
Broadway began on 92nd nearby Symphony Space. The buildings were a shadow in the street. We paused along the median waiting for the sign to blink. Charred coffee burns inside paper cups. The homeless sift through ashcans seeking stubs and stuff. Above, the sky was cloudless, blue, and inside March.

We weren’t yet overrun. Do you understand?

Windows glowed when the sunlight died. Families fit together on the street.

1983. I felt the Rothkos in the room. Museums are not busy at 3 in the afternoon. Outside, Utica was cold with winter. Time to go to church and sing. There is more to life than what goes on beyond the richest family on the block. Like this space and song, an intimation of people, think.

Along Grace Avenue, snow rolled into slopes before the plow.
Then, Chicago in the 90s. A blue line at sundown.

Hold yourself to grain where
light begins to crack apart. A
wracked, repainted wall, an
apartment with old heating. I do
not believe in cheating and the
market never was.
Everything was inside, nothing to show for it.
The sounds of marimbas mixed with backbeat
as ghettoized selves rolled to red octagons.

O—O

there is nothing like living in a genuine city.
The incognito life is lost on houseplants.
You steam cylinders with exhibit.
Innocence is realness with no news flash,
nor repayment in cash.
No eternity ever was soundbit.
But the people, the people are everywhere.

I once crawled down an apartment closely
owned by a soul.
She was searching for her way to give.
In the cold, we went to eat in a rusty bar.
Locals collected on Saturday and ate vegetarian soup!
O truth be told, I remember you
and November.

* 

What I first thought
when I saw you off —
the taxi said goodbye.
I rode on.
And on — you
disappeared around
the block
Your hold in pink-red fabric
   a dress with roses
against your almost blue black hair.
When you talked,
you were alive,
twins inside,
your natal glow a mood
I could not cast off.

That is why you kept me
inside this memory of silence.
Seldom do I know
how to map existence.
Here is a corner in New York
where young lovers we once were
on the grass of the Munstitute.

You walk out of my life
---------------------------------→ away.

* 

14th Earth thought of 365: The look on my parents' faces
that night before their 45th wedding anniversary.
Money makes little difference beyond modest means.
Status likewise is a joke.
There isn’t even pride in contentment. Quiet is the need.
You’d think we’d approach our planet, indeed, through the Significant.

* 

And then there was the translation, looking back.
Somewhere still in summer, I rang an old friend on the line.
Cell-less, boothed inside a phone,
the sun was old, yellow, alone, the city anticipating night.

Not a thing.  
Outside, the street, pavement, quiet.  

It doesn’t matter.

I was in the open then.

*

A wedding, 2009

...subways, shot, sleeveless, wet...

kitchens,  
tubs,  
sinks,  
child-washing,  
tolls  
news,  
links  
sprawled  
longs  
photos  
halls  
bright colored toys, dark  
Mom  
Dad  
basket of  

cries.

[adapted from a poem on May 18, 2009 for Chris’ and Mary’s wedding]
4.

The psyche sh
Pieced, lean, inaccurate,
events derailed time.
Work is not an engine; know
that the shape of pink is home.
Willem stoved a studio
as sex and Elaine slept.
Rose and turned when images stay
aligned in your mind, you wake.
It took ten years to make
the psyche shatter slowly.
I, no, you... am there.
Beneath us, the senses unfound,
stalked on splinters, we allied broken with light.

Say what you want — it wasn’t confessional.
The mean and stuff of bodies seldom is.
— whether they are souls or limbs ——

*  

Earth thought 1: We are individualistic. We have missed it.

*

Earth thought: The child’s face in light.

*

Aurora

The lake open in the afternoon light.
Tufts of wild down seeded wind-side into air,
while grass wears a gauze of fine off-white.

We were becoming-cloud without anger and evolved.
Water see-says the shore between lapped elements
as scales silver bowl beneath green waves upturned.

Do you see the graduates, long thighs along the dock?
A boat stops near them, chats or calls. A shell
catters softly beyond their point. Then
the wake comes inward and the rocks splash black and wet.

How could we be without animal order?
Our shift beyond our border which the Buddhists try
to make is something true,
where something softer, unspoken gives. Wind lives as movement, sidles unsuspecting into ours.

Once I lay here at the landing’s edge and heard the story of the drowned. I was struck soundly by the sad, sure truth.

How could some one in such a pure, lost water cross silt to the billowing plume of forgetting?

Knock.

The summer day says we should become a festival.

Children splash wild shallows all a ring while spent flies flick their legs on tables.

Cool the clouds blue wavelength of a storm in wondrous hunger.

Now there are voices! carload headed for the leap

We run too.

5.31.10
Aurora, N.Y.
Walt Whitman’s birthday
* 

_Earth thought 131_: See the strata where I once lived, underwater, ocean, & strange. Overlays compel in ways advertisements do not. Shells don’t seduce. They are coolish fact.

* 

_The impossible cities party_

Center and non-center. And similarly in ecological life. 
How we maintain stable vision 
is that we bend sense to fit. 
   In our world, 
   and beside it, 
   then in yours, 
   above.

We should outlive, but we die inside these tasks. 
Dexterities bound our funneled work, 
   round and round in Earth.

Across the dusty galaxy, fists 
sky-scaper cranes and the dead, 
   dozing, worker’s eyes.

   Some far-off place 
   was spent. 
   Dirt-street and florescent shop 
   phone-card, plates of rice.

   Sympathetic ears save silence.

   We talk resistance. Let me be clear. 
   This must stop.
Suppose the sixth mass extinction were caused by us. A species is like a poem, but we erase genres. We pile up the library to the *auto-de-fé*.

Then in a dream, I climb
a stairway behind
a friend
whom I used
to love.
We
hit Lex & 51st
    with the open
life all around.
That was the
innocent
disposition.
Time, voice & life
were one.
How
to make of
weeds
what sidewalks

donot.
I was in

5.

Ben
Earth thought 146 of 365: A million year form of life. [...] how it has weathered and been weathered.
I often wonder if or when
the newspapers will stop
—will they ever stop?
The busses outside roar past
    a cold, November day.
Coffee on in the kitchen,
    words on the steps,
    the courtyard.

All time in this city
    explains no thought.

[May 15, 2006, Paris]

I used to feel the sky’s vastness unaffected by us. A slow moving glacier of light. Now things are different—effects we cannot steer just as we can barely steer ourselves.

* 

Extinction

Like a nineteen year old with crammed feet, we cast off caution and made our daily rounds. Impossible to find the air nearer, it’s cold, pale yellow on the old brick walls. Some say the day like any others, the heat came through the ventilated shutters. We watched a lecture on scrape. Song was exhausting, the otherworld quiet. My students scrambled. Where is the
box? I must find the box. 
came to a street. She told me about the
cars swept by. I
’ve lost my sense of
emptiness. That should be good. Damn
equilibrated touch when
she walks through the door.
The porch screen slams. Echo night along the block.
Come to me in our room. Light from the hallway
made your body a burning shade. You
smell of soap and your hair is
cooler than outside. Arms
on backs this is
the warm corridor of silence

The bus’s hydraulics squeaked. We
descend.
I have as many small things within my mind
as an overcrowded table, a desk whose stacks of once-
live memos
became a folded range. Why
don’t you make our dinner? I have to go and clean
the backyard deck. What
night are we asking the neighbors out to eat?
That six o’clock news speaks on
small manners of new found things — like
travel to the islands and
how to make quiche. Then
I remember how it was when
Carson felt little. He’d watch carrots
fall to thin, neat piles beneath the life.

* 

Another Earth thought: Between character and conse-
quence, decent people breathe in the gap. Thunder rolls
daylong through the sky.
This Tasmanian wolf, or tiger, he died inside a cage. 1936 was 3 years after he was filmed, last known member of his kind. If he died in April, then he did the month my father—Dave—was born. Ten tens of thousands years have ended when a studious man began. Which individual’s aware of wide disorder? As I write now or live the summer and the year, some form sluffs off, a disheveled skeleton there in leaves against thick rocks. Not even a naturalist would know, or sense, the canopy in silence.

*These are things that I do not own.*

Benjamin ranged around these lands, haunches ribbed from time’s design. His tail bent hard to tell a tale sent back.

*What was like your almost night? Dry of leaves, the hollow where you slept, your Eucalyptis forest, tides of wind and hunger . . . How was the riotous smell of everything?*

1936.

Hitler’d come to power. All eyes focused on his front. The world economy spun and grandpa Bendik jumped a truck of elbows every dawn.

Able-bodied men did some such thing.
They dug, and the Thylacine knew nothing.

Into Earth ran
its Holocene memory of cells.
moth-eaten cast of unknown characters

53rd St. In the 1990s, an integrated street in the Hyde Park neighborhood of the South Side of Chicago where the University of Chicago is. Malik Usef, on Common’s One Day It’ll All Make Sense (1997): cars “rolled to red octagons.”

5.31. Walk Whitman’s birthday, when he came out of the cradle, endlessly rocking.

Guillaume Apollinaire. From the beginning of the twentieth century, a French-Polish poet. “Zone” is his long ramble through Paris while processing historical and personal time (“Sur toi sur celle que j’aime sur tout ce qui t’a épouvanté”). It’s also a work of compassion (“Tu regardes les yeux pleins de larmes ces pauvres emigrants / Ils croient en Dieu ils prient les femmes allaitent des enfants / Ils emplissent de leur odeur le hall de la gare Saint-Lazare / Ils ont foi dans leur étoile comme les rois-mages / Ils espèrent gagner de l’argent dans l’Argentine / Et revenir dans leur pays après avoir fait fortune / Une famille transporte un édredon rouge comme vous transportez votre cœur. / Cet édredon et nos rêves sont aussi irréels.”) Samuel Beckett wrote the only good translation of “Zone” yet. I wrote an axe de lecture (close reading exercise) on Apollinaire’s “Autumne Malade” (ill Autumn) as a Rotary exchange student in France, 1988–89.

Marcus Aurelius. A Roman emperor and Stoic philosopher who wrote spiritual exercises designed to do inner work that would change outer life indirectly. Resignation to our mortality was one of his themes.

Aurora. A village in Central New York. It borders Lake Cayuga and has the small Wells College in it.
Auto-de-fé. Death by inquisition, in a bonfire.

Benjamin. The last known living Thylacine or Tasmanian wolf (or Tasmanian tiger), a now extinct marsupial which used to range in Australia and New Guinea. He looked like a strange, striped dog, and died inside Hobart Zoo, Tasmania on September 7, 1936.

There is also the German literary theorist, Walter Benjamin, who used literature to do social philosophy and to criticize the oppressive contradictions of our capitalistic world.

The Blue Line. One of Chicago’s elevated train/subway lines.

Buddhism & anger. Buddhism proposes that (1) we should acknowledge anger, that (2) we shouldn’t act from anger, but from compassion, and that (3) ideally, we should come to feel only compassionate, not angry about injustices.

Rachel Carson. A science writer woke the U.S. up from its chemical slumber by decrying the misuse of pesticides.

Nick Cave. P-punk-raconteur / who got his start in / an Australian combo. The Birthday Party. Ritz thru them owt cuz Cave thru amplifiers in the pit. (A Birthday Party song → “Blast off!”)

Ceremony of the Dead. A Buddhist practice of chanting and meditating in compassion with the dead.

Coffee in New York. Is often served inside paper cups with an ancient Greek theme on them.
The Cold War. Mid-1940s to the end of the 1980s. Rise of the slow moving, silent bureaucracy with long-range effect.

Corvette. A long car in the '70s, a swooning hood.

Willem De Kooning. An abstract expressionist painter of the New York School, mid-twentieth century. His painting was in layers, hard-etched, scrubbed, weathered and alcoholic.

Defense. The closing rite of a Ph.D. — the defense of one’s thesis or dissertation before a committee of scholars, open to the public.

Julie Delpie. Starlet from the ’80s and ’90s, seen outside France in Krystoff Kieslowski’s film, White (Three Colors series).

Dubai. City of extreme consumption whose logo is a sail-shaped building called the Burj al Arab. Workers from all over the world built Dubai, often on small wages in poor living conditions, but often better than those found back home.

Earth thoughts. Begun on December 24, 2009, numbered 1 then.

Folio. Inexpensive French brand of paperbacks. In kid knapsacks.

Andrew Forrest. Served in W.W. II. Deceased now. He taught regular and honors English at New Hartford High School near Utica, N.Y. for thirty+ years. Would read and teach a poem per day unless the work was long. The Waste Land was a month’s analysis (April 1988). Even the reading took the hour. You could hear the silence when sound and sense left off.
Michel Foucault. Poster-child of post-structuralism, saint of Gay Liberation.

Anna Freud. Daughter of Sigmund, she shaped American self-psychology.

Grace Avenue. Does not exist in Utica, N.Y., although Grace Church does. There was an old men & boy’s choir in it. I sang there.

Lars Helge Strand. A member of Lycée Corneille’s section norwegienne (Norwegian section). The section norwegienne was established in the nineteenth century to honor Normandy’s ties to Norway. Each year, sixteen Norwegian guys begin their sophomore year of high school in pension (dormitory) (the gals are boarded at a school in Bayeux where the tapestry of the invasion resides). Lars liked comics, loud beer, music, punk communes, and the environment.

The Lycée Corneille is a high school in Rouen named after playwright Pierre Corneille —whose statue has bird shit on it in the main courtyard. Stéphane Mallarmé taught there. The L.C. dates back to Napoléon.

Rouen, a larger, French provincial city about 80 minutes from Paris by train. Monet painted its cathedral at different times of the day. Maligned by Gustav Flaubert who lived there. Rouen’s where Jeanne d’Arc was burned at the stake. The “ville de cent cloches” (city of a hundred spires): filled with gothic churches. A downtown of cobble streets. A central clock. She overhangs the street, a Medieval arch. Next to that clock in the ’80s: a brasserie (beer bar) named “Big Ben.”

High Art. A film of the late 1990s whose central character—a drug addicted, lesbian photographer—shoots photos similar to Nan Goldin’s.
Hitler. The leader of the National Socialists in Germany (the Nazis) who rose to power during what, in the United States, was called “the Great Depression.” Most people knew who he was for many centuries until the mass extinction made his evil appear anachronistic. His was pure evil for most of the twentieth century while they mostly ignored the invisible war.

I stood on the shore, the ruins of Europe in back of me. The opening line of Heiner Müller’s *Hamletmaschine* which I first saw at the Yale Drama School in Fall 1989.

Impossible cities party. Going away and 38th birthday party in Dubai, May 2008. Each invitee brought an impossible flower, a story of an impossible city, or a memory of utopia in the frustrations of urban life. Many people performed while Zlatan showed videos on the wall.


Lex. Lexington Avenue in Manhattan, New York City. The E train stops there at 51st.

The market. The job market for academic jobs—notorious among graduate students.

Munstitute. The nickname of the Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute, a museum in Utica, N. Y.

Never stop. The name of a song by the band Deerhunter.
**Rap.** In the 1990s, a predominantly African-American musical and poetic form from ghettos with roots in African oral traditions.

**Robin.** A common bird, rust-breasted, in central New York.

**Rococo.** “Extravagantly or excessively ornate, esp. (of music or literature) highly ornamented and florid.” *(Oxford American Dictionary, Apple Version, 2005–07)*

**Mark Rothko.** Known as a “color-field” painter of the New York School. He said he painted “color objects.”

**Second nature.** Associated with Aristotle and his idea that habits, which are not instinctual, become second nature as if they were instinctual.

**Shoegaze.** A kind of post-punk, sometimes electronic music *(My Bloody Valentine* or sometimes *Sonic Youth* — post-punk shoegaze; *Scala* — the electronica variety). *Scala* was on Lars’s tape in ’98 (the album *Compass Heart*).

**The sixth mass extinction.** An alarmist worry, but you knew it was not impossible. It was caused by us humans. Alarmists thought it would be as deep as the deepest-cutting two mass extinctions in the history of life — the end Paleozoic extinction (250,000,000 B.C.), and the end Mezozoic one (65,000,000 B.C.). They were almost right.


**Slovak.** My mother’s heritage. Andy Bendik was my grandfather who worked a pick-up labor crew during the 1930s in the Great Depression in Southern Ohio.
Patti Smith. ’70s feminist rocker — braless, bush armpits, “Rock N Roll Nigger.”

Herr Stern. “Mr. Star” in German; an intensive German teacher at Yale College circa 1990.

Stop signs. In the United States of America, they are octagonal, red and with white letters, “STOP.”

Strand Books. If you walked down University Street in New York City, you would have seen the sign: “18 miles of books.”

Symphony Space. A world music concert space in the 1990s on Broadway in New York on the West Side. World music is music from non-Western traditions played in the West, or Western music mixed with non-Western music. These were old, colonialist categories.

Andrei Tarkovski. & 12 miles of moving painting. Offret (The Sacrifice) was filmed in Sweden while he was in exile from the U.S.S.R. Edited in Paris on his deathbed, it was dedicated to his son. I saw it in Rouen in 1989.


The word comes from the French tenir from the Latin, meaning “to hold.”

Tom. A generic 1950s man. Mary is his wife. You don’t know him? In 2010, their son was Carson.

Tragedy of the commons. Biologist Garrett Hardin created this concept to explain common resources
unregulated well by custom or by law. With such resources, it is rational for some people to take more than is sustainable for the whole community, since taking more will in the short term pay off for these opportunists, leaving others in the future to deal with the increasing scarcity. The planet’s atmosphere is an unregulated commons whose resource is its ability to trap pollution. Our grandkids dealt with our pollution, but too late for the mass extinction.

*Victoria’s Secret.* A mass-market lingerie shop begun in the 1980s.

*Max Von Sydow.* A Swedish actor, known for work in Ingmar Bergman films of the 1960s, Von Sydow appeared at the Nordic Film Festival of Rouen in March–April 1989, where *Offret* was screened. Under T.V. lights, he was inside a glass atrium visible from the street.

*Wasteland.* A long, overly-complicated poem influenced by French symbolist poetry—e.g., Stéphane Mallarmé, Guillaume Apollinaire, Gérard de Nerval (a proto-symbolist). The poem was about cultural extinction, among other things.

*Weathermen Underground.* A Maoist terrorist organization of the ’70s. Militant against U.S. military intervention abroad, they destroyed government property. Once, a faction tried to kill policemen and their dates at a New York City dance. They blew themselves up by mistake.

*W.B. Yeats.* An Irish poet who bridged the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. His “Sailing to Byzantium” says at one point “soul clap its hands and louder sing.” Shall we?