Teaching Myself To See

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Daydreaming differs from selective, hyper-visual seeing. While hyper-vision enhances what lies before the eye, daydreaming is the voluntarily created story — the manufacturing of images in the mind.

The fertile farm of the mind is more than enough for planting dreams. Grow that pyramid or grow your script or grow both. Your mind is as secure as a Swiss bank safe. Your daydream will not be hacked by any hacker. Its images will not be discovered.

A daydream, although invisible to others, becomes your reality if you can surround yourself with seeing like a holographic movie theater. You draw new boundaries to cross the limits of seeing. And soon the day isn’t enough.

So go ahead — fish out that Goodwill job coach from last year’s November right in front of you in that daydream. You may even paint a red mustache on his face as part of the hologram. He was assigned to be your job coach. And he followed you with yelling and tantrums in impatient gibberish, just because you did not have the right motor movements to do whatever he was yelling about. You heard his frustration at being insufficiently compensated for the toughest job in the world: job-coaching. “One of
these days....” You had walked out of that job, determined to end the new language and his woe. You never saw his real face. You gave him a face in a daydream later.

Faces turn out to be more real in daydreams. Just as your education outside of the bonds of a “system” turned out to be real within a special-needs bracket. When someone talks about finishing school or college, I feel surprised.

Did you learn how to be misunderstood? My learning it was real.

Did your college teach you how to conceal your cogitation within the volcanic space of your mind? Did you learn how to be rejected? I learned. And did you learn to laugh and to see the whole system of existence as a simple joke?

Or did you learn how to be bored? People get so panicked about retirement and being bottled up. What will they do after retiring? As if a “job” is the only way to survive. I can give a whole lecture on how not to do anything and survive just fine — by daydreaming. I can create a whole college course on this.

Sweeping away the clutter of a situation as with a giant mop, replacing all needless stimulation, your daydream will decorate your mind with its own artful fancy. At first your breath and your body reside in both landscapes — the real one that you mop and the replaced fancy that you intend to enter and decorate. In the beginning you may stand at the threshold of the two worlds — the “here-and-now-world” against the “could also be” world — in utter confusion; then you decide where to step. Your stepping is clean. There will be no clutter. Sounds will be erased as walls begin to whisper.
You prefer to hear them whisper at you. You prefer any gibberish story to a job-coaching yell. Like gibberish graffiti making a point, your story will begin to whisper a new script. Yelling faces will squeak, and the mustache you drew on that face will start fading on one side till you make the face actually “talk”!

You know, and only you know that this world of daydream is real and that you are unlimited. I like unlimited freedom! I am a disaster with mathematics—but I can explain how to get unlimited wrong answers. There is a restricted rule of writing the correct answer and there, on the other side, is the freedom to give any random answer to seven times five. You can feel free to write six plus six equals a cross-eyed kangaroo.

There is only one right answer for your test. But wrong answers? I have a million choices and can care less about that big failing mark that someone will give me on a test. Did you learn how to give a wrong answer and still feel good? Feel really good?

Colors are brighter here when you paint that face green or greenish-blue... unlimited choices! The job coach will let you do that in your daydream. A splash of green to fill the space of his open mouth will quiet it.

Some daydreams are less intense.

One day, while daydreaming, I had been memorizing a vague impression of a man standing at a bus stop on Santa Monica Boulevard; and I had just seen Los Angeles for the first time! This was long ago, before the bus rides had turned ritualistic. I had just seen the darkest shadows of people and seagulls on the sandy beach right across the bus stop; I knew that I was definitely coming back the next day to see more of those dark shadows.
I knew I was supposed to look at the sea like everyone else. But I cannot remember whether I even saw half of anything called sea that day. I just saw outlines of people walking and the dynamic calligraphy of shadows on sand. No one knew what gibberish was moving around on a page called sand. In the daydream I invented a language and a script with those shadows.

The man at the bus stop continued to be just an outline. His shadow on the cement pavement was a dark brushstroke. I had daydreamed a story — in my new language.

We went to Santa Monica to see the stores, the beach, the people. We were learning how to look at California. We did not know that day that we would end up staying in Los Angeles for three years. The man whose outline I had memorized never showed up again. Once, in my daydream, I finally heard his shadow talk. I read aloud the heading to my story translated as “Singularity.”

Looking at the wall, learning how to daydream, you can teach the shadow on a wall how to talk in your language....

Life goes on everywhere, breath after breath, meal after meal, ritual after ritual. Everything follows like faithful domesticated animals in our minds. You couldn’t count how many more memories your brain can keep track of. They will pile up as you try to remember that particular day when you saw a creeping ant by your foot that ignored you because your face didn’t matter to an ant. You had to imagine its thoughts in an ant language — something like, “Where is that dead beetle they were talking about?” It had crawled outside your shadow limits. Daydreaming about it allowed you to memorize the ant’s thoughts.

You have created many real memories of daydreaming in your mind. The memory of a daydream may matter more.
than one work day at the Goodwill store! And the Goodwill store's good job coach will give you a lifetime's worth of rent as he lives inside your head. You may grow your lifetime's worth of interest from that rent he pays just by daydreaming. Fair and square....

And I daydream about the refugees. Moving is a part of life when you become a refugee. Perhaps cameras and words don't matter. They will put your face up on a page and leave you with your dark shadow. You understand life like air and smoke, like evaporation and explosion. You understand dust and you know everyone is dragging shadows. Sun swirls, shadows change. You memorize the weight of a bleached sky. Within and without you imagination is starving. Your questioning eyes look at the photographer's camera. You have memorized stories that are too real to remember, too much like gibberish to language them. Even at night you could be up with a daydream.

A daydream is more than just a real ripple on the stretch of dust, or a shimmering mirage at the end of the horizon. Look at that wall to your side, for instance. Freedom can be created with just a scratch of an imaginary green marker. Then inventing new shapes, designating them under a new geometry, calling them by new names, you become the daydreaming Euclid, lassoing those wild amorphous scribbles, finding a reason to assemble them as a structure. In one of your daydreams you co-author the *Elements* with Euclid, the father of geometry, by looking at that wall where Euclid's shapes and measures merge with all the amorphous shapes of shadows creating one fuzzy singularity.

Thoughts are vulnerable. Imagination has a will. You can plant a shadow even on the sun's face, then dream up something and store it as a memory. One day you will write that book proposal recalling each daydream and
no one will believe you. No one needs to believe a super-dream.

Like boys on roller skates, day dreams ride thoughts. Like new islands they show up and vanish beneath the waves, and no one can know what you are listening to. A familiar voice bubbles and pops between here and now, mountains float, dunes vanish.

The refugees don’t go to any promised land they dreamed of all night! They just pile up their shadows under the plastic tents. Their tents are like a patchwork quilt on the rocks and sand. Settle here or there watching a photographer escape like a stray strand of cloud, taking away their pictures. Life was about watching everything ebb and wane. There couldn’t be a place for a butterfly anywhere on dust.

Pharaohs see the land of Osiris in a hall full of museum visitors. And a young parent sees Abolishing Autism in the April fund-raising parade.

Daydreams of a future cure keep them walking.