

THE CHATTER OF A BEGGAR'S TEETH



The Chatter of a Beggar's Teeth

As Transcribed by Anonymous

APOPHASIS

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You are alone now in spite of the stars,
The center is near you and far away,
You have walked, you can walk, nothing changes anymore,
Always the same night that never ends.
And behold, you are already separated from yourself,
Even that same cry, but you do not hear it;
Are you he who is dying, you who have no more anguish,
Are you even lost, you who do not seek?

— Lapadie the Nomad

Transcriber's Preface to the Narration

The beggar is drinking beer with the son of Euphrasie Nalpas and Antoine-Roi Artaud. Familiar name? Yes, attentive reader! He is drinking beer with Antonin Artaud, miner of esoteric tales, smithy in the alchemical workshop of theatrical production, impresario of sublime cruelty. Amid the mumble and drone of voices, amid the clanking and racket of mugs and glasses, Antonin Artaud swallows his beer, looks the beggar flush in the eye, and says, *All true language is incomprehensible, like the chatter of a beggar's teeth*. And with this utterance Antonin Artaud and the beggar belt out a howl so uproarious that the unnerved bar dwellers flee in fear for body, mind, and soul.

Later that rainy evening, as he is walking the slippery cobblestones of Old City Philadelphia, the beggar has a revelation. I will narrate a book and call it *The Chatter of a Beggar's Teeth*, he says to his beating heart. For, all my life have they not called me a chatterer, a stutterer, a stopper-

and-starter of sentences? Have they not called me a fracturer, fragmenter, hesitater, buster of sense and speech, an utterer of incomprehensible childlike gobbledygook? Blessed is the chatter of the world made flesh, said the beggar to his beating heart, and walked on.

Transcriber's interjection to the Preface The beggar once posed me a question. Why is it, he asked, that I attend so closely to fellow beggars whenever they stutter and stammer and trip over their pathetically tangled tongues? I really do make an effort to listen to my defeated brothers and sisters. Oh yes I do. When I hear a stutterer stammer, teeth chattering in the night, I feel I am in the presence of a bared soul. Why is that?

Why does the beggar say such a thing? I hope the reader will indulge a theory of mine regarding the beggar's utterance. Here is my theory. Sigmund Freund's deepest insights about the subterranean life of the unconscious were derived from his therapeutic engagements with his "hysteric" female patients. Do you recall? Dora, for instance, suffers ailments aligned with speaking, such as dyspnea (difficulty breathing), aphonia (loss

of voice), and chronic nervous coughing hindering her ability to communicate verbally. The symptoms begin when her father takes the side of his close friend, whom Dora has accused of inappropriate sexual advances, and dismisses the claims of his “over imaginative” daughter. Here my theory adds another knot, one that mitigates the literalness of what I just said. The theory, namely, is that of “mystics.” Like hysterics, mystics is a manner of speaking. It is speaking (and writing) in a way that circumvents the accepted logics of sense and meaning that attend to our everyday speech (and writing). It replaces these logics with the *production of effects*. Why does it do so? Because mystics, like hysterics, is concerned with that which language eludes. Wary of language’s ability to confer meaning, the beggar’s mystics, like the analysand’s hysterics, instead speaks (and writes) to catalyze effects. (Toward what end, you ask? Ha!) This is a shattered speech. Shattered like the condition it hovers near. This is the speech of mourning. Mourning a loss that cannot be named.

May I add to this the parallel of physics? Mystics is the theory-practice of a particular measure-procedure of the person as physics is the theory-practice of a particular measure-

procedure of nature. Virtualities circulate within nature which physics makes manifest. Physics takes measure through its methods. Similarly, virtualities circulate within the person which mystics makes manifest. Mystics takes measure through its language. Likewise, think of hysterics as another parallel. Virtualities circulate within the analysand which psychotherapeutics makes manifest. Let me cease my own stumbling speech and say it straight: *The Chatter of a Beggar's Teeth* endeavors to embody the thesis that the malady of the mystic runs alongside the malady of the hysteric. Mystics, that is to say, is the symptom of a particular, and a particularly problematic, relation. In his narration, the beggar, I believe, makes this relation, its mechanics and ramifications, clear. Furthermore, mystics, like hysterics, is properly classed as a social, not a religious or psychopathological, phenomenon. More even, mystics is a social practice toward the disruption and rending of the smooth flow of the social status quo, the What Is. Finally, like the hysteric's stricken utterance, mystics is a way of speaking and being in the darkness of the world's night. And, finally, like the hysteric's, the mystic's speech is

typically received with bent heads and blinking eyes.

Why?

Thank you for your indulgence, dear reader. For better or worse, I will continue to intersperse my dissertations into the beggar's narration. You will know from my speech that it is I, the transcriber. And now I share with you my transcription of the beggar's narration.





On the road to Philadelphia the beggar was breathing out murderous threats against the disciples of the Lord. As he drew near to the center of the City of Brotherly Love, a light flashed from heaven all around him. He fell to the ground. The last mortals traveling with the beggar stood there. Their standing there is not insignificant to this narration. Allow me to properly emphasize:

Eerie as sleepwalkers they stood there.

Mute as dummies they stood there.

Vague as marionettes they stood there.

Dazed as dunces they stood there.

Faintly swaying like hanged men swaying faintly
at their last end they stood there.

The beggar fell, the last mortals stood there,
yet all heard the voice of the Lord.

Heard, but saw no one at all.

The beggar got up from the ground, dusted himself off, opened his eyes, and saw nothing.



You may be wondering, reader, when did the beggar become a beggar? It happened on the school bus when he was twelve. A song drifted out of the speaker near his left ear. The tumult of the children faded into a dim hum as the soft strumming of guitar strings fused with the mellow voice of a singing man:

Morning has broken, like the first morning
Blackbird has spoken, like the first bird
Praise for the singing, praise for the morning
Praise for them springing fresh from the word.

When the bus arrived at school, he headed not into the dark satanic mill as he should have but back toward his home. His classmates saw him ambling astray and asked,

— Where are you going?

— Where am I going? Have you not heard? he replied. *Morning has broken, like the first morning, blackbird has spoken, like the first bird.* Have you not heard?

This is what he says. And his classmates bend their heads and blink. A moment later all is once again dispersed into the chaos of commotion. He walks home, bearing the second mark of a beggar.



One day, approaching the corner of 18th and Walnut streets, the beggar is stopped in his tracks by the demonic force of a seductive thought. Requiring utterance to be brought full to flesh, the beggar spoke to the passersby:

— What do you think: I once heard a Master say Praise for the singing, praise for the morning praise for them springing fresh from the word. What do you think — do worlds emerge forth from words or are words mere air emitted from the living corpse? I give you an example: *We are but the vapid excess of the sun.*

Did those very words just uttered by me to you not say something? Well, but you there understood this and you over there understood that and I otherwise altogether. So if what the words say is not fixed and final, then in what way do words say something? In what way? People suppose that words are different from the shrill twitterings of wrinkled fledgings in the nest, but what is the difference? What can we rely on to say this or that, true or false, right or wrong, good or evil? Are words mere manipulative agents of worldly hallucination?



Did you not wonder, attentive reader, What *is* this “nothing” that the beggar saw on the road to Philadelphia? Let me pose to you a question, What is this “nothing” that the beggar saw on the road to Philadelphia?

Be careful, attentive reader! Speak, and you risk one thousand years in the Hell of Groaning, to be crucified then abased prostrate with your head, hands, and feet immersed in spiked iron roses engulfed in flames.

So I ask again, What is this “nothing” that the beggar saw on the road to Philadelphia?

Be careful! Remain silent and you risk being beaten with white hot hammers born by giant rabid rats and crushed with fireballs and iron mountains for one thousand Hell years on end.

Now, respond, reader, What is this “nothing” that the beggar sees?

Be careful, reader!



When the beggar heard that I would interject this nonsense that I have just written into his narration he became exasperated and exclaimed, Oh, is not such talk soul-numbingly tedious? Are we not done with gurus who pretend to know a proper response to questions such as *What is this “nothing” that the beggar saw on the road to Philadelphia?* — gurus who say one thing and do another?

Are we not done with these Improvers of Humankind who do one thing and say another, who spew koanic proverbs and robotic corporate shibboleths, who talk themselves and everyone else out of strong feelings and burning desires with anesthetic proverbs, who smooth out contradictions and complications with the self-serving logic of the inscrutable spirit, who pray or meditate away anxieties and pain? From where does the guru's anodyne affirmation flow if not from the streams of prudence, sterility, fear, and resignation? My joys are smithed not in the cool void of frictionless space but in the fiery catastrophe of life.



The beggar said to his beating heart, Well if the Masters say so, I guess, who knows? But in that case I will say something more and something else and something even more severe, *All* sentient beings are equally noble by nature.

This nature is One, and simple, said another Master. And in hushed tones they spoke of The One. A Master said, Something may peep out here or hang on it, but that something escapes The One.

To his beating heart the beggar said, I say something else and something even harder. Well, then those who would exist in the nakedness of this nature, free from the Improvers' and Authorities and even the Masters' mediation, free from their predication, must have left behind all distinction of person, so that they are as well disposed to a being who is across the sea, or who is as different from them as a pig, as to the one who is with them in presence and in species.

Or do I misunderstand the Masters? muttered the beggar out loud.

When he came to Broad and Pine the beggar stopped and asked the passing people: What do you think, is it not obvious to each of you that as long as you favor your own person more than that being you have never seen or from whom you differ in kind, you have never for a single instant looked into this simple universal One of which the Masters speak? You may indeed have seen a derived image of the truth in a picture, but it could not have been The One! And, too, might we be pure of heart? For that heart is pure that has abolished particularized creatureliness.

This is what the beggar says. And the people bend their heads and blink their heavy lids. So he provides a pithy summary.

Where creature ceases, One begins. Thus summarizes the beggar. And the people bend their heads and blink. A moment later all is once again dispersed into the chaos of commotion. The beggar walks on.



One winter's day, while crossing the corner of 21st and Walnut in Philadelphia, the beggar observed a snowflake falling onto a homeless person's steam vent. Is the dissolution of all risings and fallings not as evident as this snowflake? he wondered out loud to the passersby. Why should not dissolution obtain as likewise and immediately in every instance of snowlike perception, snowflake conception, and snowflake sensation? Over greater spans of time, say a lifetime, is snowflake-like dissolution not made evident through comparison and memory? Does science not trace snowflake-like dissolution over aeons, before the advent of even the first blinking

mortals? Does science not trace snowflake-like dissolution, too, into oblivion, when the catastrophically violent expansion of the universe will have pulverized the fabric of matter, minute and massive, itself, terminating for all eternity the very possibility of embodiment and animation, when the fire of every star in the cosmos will be extinguished, plunging the All into an infinite achromatic oblivion? Perhaps lifeless, dissipated casings of matter will wander like undead wraiths through the nothingness. Dissolution is instantaneous and continuous. It is to extinction what a molecule is to mass, what argon is to vapor. Extinction describes more than the absolute cessation of objects and entities. It describes the condition that negates even the possibility of their being further extinguished. Extinction is patient, it waits for the final instant. Its purview is immense and vast. It sees its object after millions and millions of years. Dissolution occurs in the midst of things — in the salience of their rising, persisting, and fading away. Its view is minute and narrow. It sees its object in an instant of intimate if destructive embrace. Yet, being instantaneous and continuous, dissolution is not extinguished. Although a concept itself, dissolution is one that hovers near the fact it names, rendering it intelligible. Dissolution as concept lends lucidity to what,

without it, remains a dark, foreign, and harrowing domain. The concept dissolution makes possible the thinking of the fact of dissolution. Yet, thinking is mere thinking. The facts of human being seem to necessitate no constraint to human thinking. Thinking is often contentedly at odds with phenomenality. Intelligibility and lucidity, by contrast, though characteristics of thinking, suggest thought wading into the surging sea of immanence.

This is what the beggar says. And the people bend their heads and blink. A moment later all is once again dispersed into the chaos of commotion. The beggar hesitates to walks on.



Reader, have you ever heard a beggar speak? Listen, and you will know them, these beggars, by the manner in which they pour molten wordblood deep into the desiccated well of human being. Bile of enmity rouses them to their dark subterranean speech no less than ecstasy of love.



Once, the beggar spent the day in Jenkintown, a northern suburb of Philadelphia, resting in the shade of the town square, cool beneath a birch blanched in seclusion. As night fell he got up and went for a walk. The sidewalk spiraled through the town. Instinctively, his dreaming eye sought the droplets of light that dotted the night sky like fugitive islands. Here, too — as the tormented beggar Trakl says — is a stubble field where golden stalks sneer spear-like in wait. Here, too is a searching wind encircling well-fed houses. This is what the beggar said to his beating heart as the windows gestured toward him, *look through our icy glaze at tables richly set, and satisfy your hunger*. The beggar saw the people bathed in the soft blue haze of their beloved screens. He saw them huddled around the fire's flame laughing as they drifted delirious as castaways. And on the table: bread and wine.



The beggar had a friend named Benjamin Lay who lived in a cave on a creek near the northern suburb of Philadelphia called Jenkintown. Benjamin Lay was a beggar. Although he stood only three feet eleven inches, Benjamin Lay was the largest man the beggar would ever know. What made him so large was that he lived the courage of his convictions. For he abhorred cruelty to animals. One day, while walking down Old York Road into the city of Philadelphia, Benjamin Lay related to the beggar the following incident.

For the purpose of conjuring a perceptual shift within the mind of my neighbours, neighbors with whom I have often remonstrated against their ignorant conviction of guiltlessness in keeping cows for milk, chickens for eggs, and pigs for slaughter, I adopted a plan. These neighbors have a frisky dog whom they keep as a pet, and love as dearly as a child, they say. Occasionally I meet this dog on the wooded path to my cave. On one of those occasions I invited the dog to my cave with the promise of a treat. My intention was to keep him there as a means of forcing a perceptual shift within the minds of my

neighbours. As night was falling, I heard frantic footsteps outside the entrance to my cave. On exiting I immediately discerned the distressed faces of my neighbors.

What is the matter? I asked.

Fearful that they may never recover their dogchild, they replied with anguish, Oh Benjamin, Benjamin! Our dog is gone. He has been missing all day, and does not come when we call to him.

I paused a moment and said, Your dogchild is safe in my cave. My neighbors shot me a mixture of anger, relief, and confusion. I asked, Might you now conceive of the sorrow you inflict on the cows and chickens and pigs who, like you and your dogchild, form heartfelt relations and loving affections?



You may be wondering, when did the beggar become a beggar? It happened in his bedroom when he was fifteen. One morning a song burst out of the stereo speakers. Like a junkie in the throes of his first high, the beggar imbibed the violent metallic hootch of the Vietnam War-contaminated song issuing out of an incendiary device called *Raw Power*. Fastened like a demonic twin to lyrical beauty, a primitive vocal howl erupted from the speakers.

I'm a street walking cheetah with a heart full of napalm
I'm a runaway son of the nuclear A-bomb
I am the world's forgotten boy
The one who searches and destroys.

As he stood at the corner waiting for the school bus to come and take him to the dark satanic mill, the tumult of the other teenagers faded into a dim hum as the savage music, pure metallic luminescence, gritty, volcanic, violent to an extreme, that which he just imbibed in his room, continued to roar in his head. He started back home.

The other teenagers saw him ambling astray and asked,

Where are you going?

Where am I going? Have you not heard? he replied. *I'm a street walking cheetah with a heart full of napalm, I'm a runaway son of the nuclear A-bomb, I am the world's forgotten boy, The one who searches and destroys.* Have you not heard?

This is what he says. And his classmates bend their heads and blink. A moment later all is once again dispersed into the chaos of commotion. He walks home, bearing the third mark of a beggar.



Transcriber's dissertation on dark speech. Those old mystics spoke endlessly of darkness and night. So let us invoke them here, darkness and night, but in an act of mystic inversion reverse their direction. The desolation, obliqueness, and blindness that darkness and night connote are not internal but external. This is my thesis. It is not that our beggar's *soul* is a dark, barren, benighted desert. No! It is that *the World* is a dark, barren,

benighted desert. Have not the certainties, truths, and values of the Authorities vanished into an irretrievable void? Might we consider mystics as a way, indeed the most *responsible* way, of speaking and acting at the time of the world's darkening? Might we consider that the beggar, as perpetual mendicant, embodies this condition?

To be true to the extramoral spirit of dark speech, I will resist translating it into supernal speech. But the gravity of the Authorities' condemnation is heavy. They say evil! vile! We say twilight, abyssal. They say infernal! We say primordial. They name it the language of Hell. We name Hell the World and mystics the language of Utopia. For they are warriors of the celestial promise, and we are fierce earthly utopians.

Some wish to hold onto "mysticism" as a contemplative retreat into the interior depths of the soul. We desire mystics as a subversive incursion into social otherness. Some desire the mystic to be a saint. We desire the mystic to be a stranger. Some desire the mystic to struggle against Satan. We desire the mystic to struggle against the State. Some desire the mystic to become fit for union with God. We desire the mystic to become fit for the clash with Hell.



While wandering along the Schuylkill River in Philadelphia, the beggar heard a fellow beggar speaking to passersby. He stopped to listen. We dwell in an eternity without shores, she said, in an eternity that expands by the center that absorbs it. With the intelligence of calm desires, she said, you will be consecrated to total loss in the totality of the immense. They who have glimpsed that fact, she said, wander on the dark path, a path untraced, unmarked, unnamed, unseen, undesired. Those wanderers are drunk with what they have not drunk. Those wanderers are unmoored drunken boats. Those wanderers are illuminated yet possess no knowledge. I speak of those who walk and cannot stop walking.

Her words fill my body with warmth, said the beggar to his beating heart, but leave my mind cold and my soul empty.



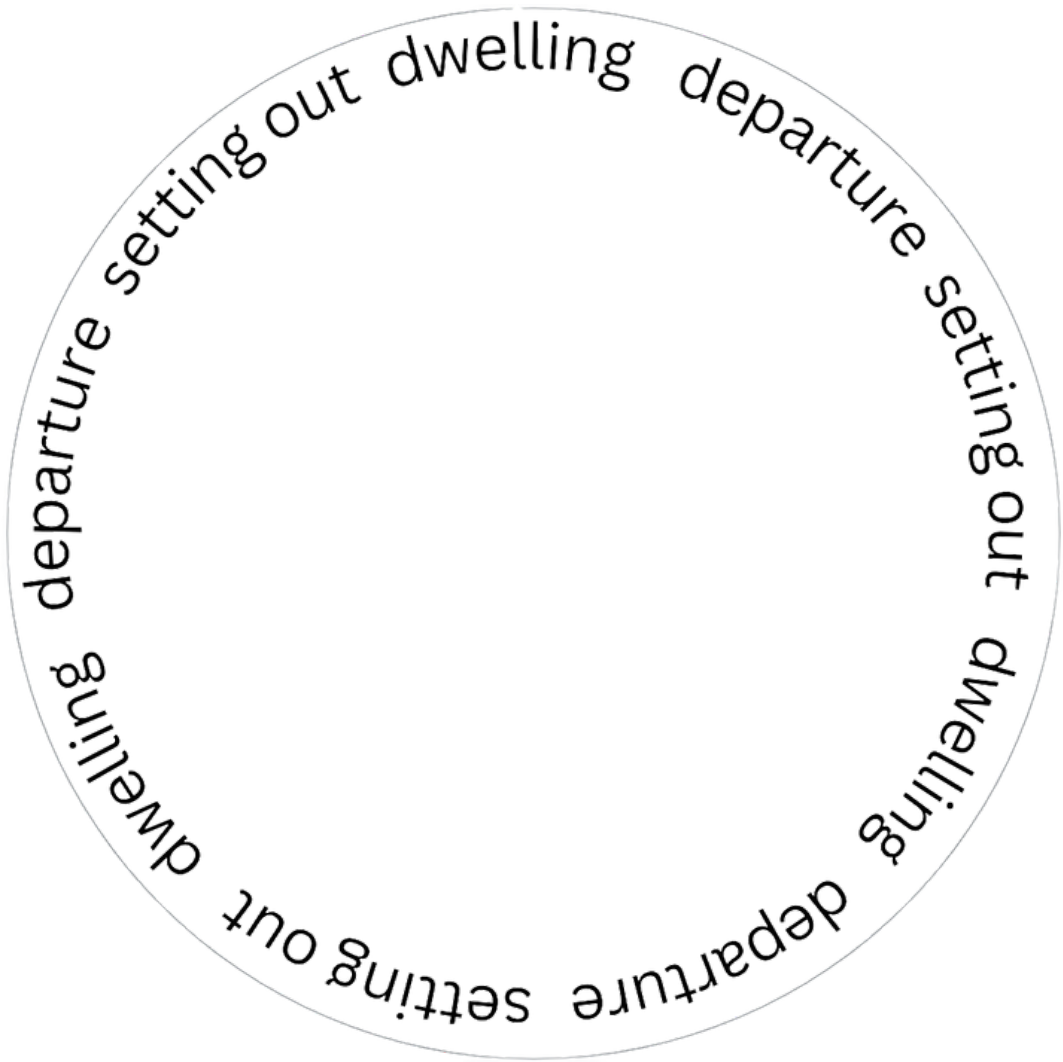
Finding himself at the Schuylkill, a river that runs through Philadelphia, the beggar decided to sleep in a copse near the banks. In the shelter of the trees he made a bed of branches and leaves. Tired after a day's wandering, he fell quickly to sleep. Like a machinic tic the words of the fellow beggar from that afternoon pinged in his head — *I speak of those who walk and cannot stop walking I speak of those who walk and cannot stop walking I speak of those who walk and cannot stop walking*. Although such pinging threw the beggar into a state of fitful slumber, it was another calm voice that rose up from his unconsciousness. The voice was beggar-like, and spoke.

The ancient spirit of Transcendence seduced the Improvers into seeking an end in Union with that which they chose to name God or The Absolute. Or else the spirit of Transcendence dropped hints of hiddenness of an Ultimate Knowledge to be unveiled by those properly initiated. Alas, beggar, how can we maintain an origin, a foundation, or an end today? How is that possible? Perhaps it is as one Master

says, namely that a theology of phantoms would articulate how the object of seduction vanishes and reappears elsewhere. A theology of phantoms would articulate the new status of the mystic way of which I speak.

Today we have but a walker who can only walk and cannot stop walking. And in walking, beggar, you too dwell and leave, having inhabited the place which you must, as walker, leave. Time has mutated origin, foundation, and end into setting out, dwelling, and departure, or into departure, setting out, dwelling, or into dwelling, departure, setting out. The sequence no longer matters. Time has mutated a line into a circle.

Like a machinic tic the image of the dream words spun round and round in the beggar's head.



Like a machinic tic the words of the fellow beggar from that afternoon once again pinged in his head — *I speak of those who walk and cannot stop walking I speak of those who walk and cannot stop walking I speak of those who walk and cannot stop walking I speak of those who walk and cannot stop walking.*

Yet a third voice then swelled from his unconscious.

You are an Icarus, beggar, seared by the sun, fallen from the sky, flapping your plumage like a silkie, flopping your wings that are no wings at all but naked arms.

You are a cloud beast, beggar, spiraling down through the air like an unfettered sail to a lush field where the ancients slaughter goats in blood-soaked sacrifice, goats whose throats gurgle consonants when slit.

You are a drunken boat, beggar, that sails on and on innocently oblivious that it catches in its tangled nets drowned men and women sinking backwards into sleep.

The first dream voice swelled again from his unconscious.

You are marked by a nameless desire, beggar. Perverting, contorting, estranging, is this desire. But you know that already, do you not? You know already that to the ears of the World you are a child, making little sense even to those who love you and so strain to hear your speech or ignore you altogether. You know that you are more alone than ever in your perpetual setting out, dwelling, and departure. So walk, beggar, walk and know that in your walking you are ...

The dream voice went silent as the beggar woke to the chromatic kaleidoscope of dappled sunlight shimmering on the ground of the copse.

Those dream words fill my body with warmth, said the beggar to his beating heart, but leave my mind cold and my soul empty.



Filled with the warmth of the last night's dream, the beggar wandered along the Schuylkill River. He came to Wissahickon Creek. The forest trees were autumn, all nakedness in gold. The air was as crisp as the leaves that crackled beneath his feet. Of all sounds, said the beggar to his beating heart, none gives me more pleasure than the rustle of decaying leaves crackling in the wind. Of all scents, he said, none gives me more pleasure than the smell of dying leaves clinging precariously to forest trees. Coming to Cresham Creek, the beggar walked along its lower bank. As afternoon was falling into evening, he came to a field of buttercups and strawberries. There, touched by twilight's orange, red, and yellow hues lay the Ruin of Buttercup Cottage. The beggar entered the ruin and sat on a large square stone overgrown with creeping thyme. Inhaling the invigorating earthy tones of the herb, he took in the beauty of the ruin, where stone and wood, once fashioned for human habitation, now hosted wildflowers, anemones, and capers. A crooked elm took root in the center, providing a muted yellow canopy where once a cedar shingle roof reigned.

Reflecting back on the week's hard wandering through the city, he spoke to his beating heart. The Masters say the Real is the Impossible. But I say something harder still, and something more severe. It is we who are the Impossible. We are the Lived of the Impossible. We are the Lived Impossible. The Improvers speak gravely of the unconscious, God, Truth, the Absolute, the Superessential, the Void as origin and end and all the while pass over the very speaker and thereby miss the very Impasse that they seek in their seeking as their all-knowing words spin round and round noisily in their mouths like the triple reel of a slot machine.

The beggar lifted his eyes to the moon's light cheering through the branches of the crooked elm.

Ah, peace suffuses this ruin, said the beggar to his beating heart. In this ruin the violent potencies of the World, with its imperious conceptions of self and society, become purely natural being. In this ruin World merges imperceptively with nature. Wild chthonic energies breathe here.

The beggar sat in rapture.

As the blue hour blackened, he let his spent body sink softly into the ferns and fragrant wild grass that was the ruin's floor, and fell to sleep.



One crisp autumn morning, as the beggar was walking along Chestnut Hill Avenue back into Center City, he overheard the parishioners streaming out of Our Mother of Consolation. What they were saying struck him hard and made him wonder, Is it, as a Master once said, within our power to make heard a Word without a holy testament? The force of this thought induced the beggar to strange gesticulations, attracting curious onlookers, who in turn attracted curious onlookers, and so on, until a crowd had assembled. Must we choose, as the Master insisted, between the ancient mythology of traditional religion and a messianic utopia?

— Messianic? Do you speak of Jesus Christ? Called out an onlooker.

— Utopia? Do you speak of Karl Marx? Called out another onlooker.

— What I intend, replied the beggar, is this very in-human, and that one there, and the one between those two, as messiah and this very world as utopia. And I intend this not as a promise to be fulfilled but as an ultimatum to be lived, for you to live. For has not the currency of the Coming as a sacred promissory been rendered counterfeit by the absence of the first lender? But I do not renounce the Coming itself for, look! we, the in-humans, we Come ceaselessly, do we not? What I intend is each of us as a furious utopian, though without even knowing it and definitely not waiting for it and certainly not hoping for it. Just observe your ceaseless toil and you will catch a glimpse.

This is what the beggar says. And the people bend their heads and blink. A moment later all is once again dispersed into the chaos of commotion. The beggar walks on.



One cold moonless night the beggar found himself walking along in a group of people. He was walking and they were walking and then the two walkings momentarily merged. But in that exact moment of merging they heard a scream. Everyone turned toward the scream. The scream issued from the body of a woman who was running up South Street toward 20th Street. Behind her was running a man. The man was holding a knife. Everyone froze. The beggar calmly walked over to the point toward which the man was running. When the man arrived at the point where the beggar stood he stopped running. The beggar calmly said, Give me the knife. The man calmly handed the beggar the knife. Everyone looked on frightened and confused.

This is what the beggar does. And the people bend their heads and blink. A moment later all is once again dispersed into the chaos of commotion. The beggar walks on.



One night Antonin Artaud and the beggar were enjoying beer in Dirty Frank's on 13th and Pine in Philadelphia. Antonin Artaud asked the beggar, What is the way?

— The way? Do you not know the way already, Antonin? If you do not know the way already and indeed know it already in the most ordinary way I cannot help you find the way, replied the beggar.

— Then I should try to find the way? Antonin Artaud asked.

— If you try to find the way, Antonin, then you will become separated from it, responded the beggar.

— But how can I know the way unless I try to find it? persisted Antonin Artaud.

— The beggar said, It is not a matter of knowing or not knowing the way, Antonin. Knowing the way is delusion. For, from and to which infinities of placepoints does this knowing

apply? Not knowing the way is confusion. For, the way spreads out before your body wherever your body goes, from every placepoint. When, beyond a shadow of a doubt, you are on the way you will find it as vast and boundless as outer space. How can it be talked about on the level of knowing and not knowing?

And with this utterance Antonin Artaud and the beggar belt out a howl so uproarious that the unnerved bar dwellers flee in fear for body, mind, and soul.



On a bright day at noontime the beggar was standing on the corner of 18th and Walnut streets in Philadelphia. He was waiting to cross the street. A couple mistook him for a person in need and offered him money. The beggar declined the money. The couple looked confused and hurt, so the beggar said, Help is not service, reciprocity, or exchange. Help is the work of solitude. Only inalienable poverty is capable of doing combat with Hell.

This is what the beggar says. And the couple bend their heads and blink. A moment later all is once again dispersed into the chaos of commotion. The beggar walks on.



The beggar was walking along the wild Wissahickon Creek on Forbidden Drive in the northwest wood of Philadelphia. Sunk into a sweetness born of watching the foaming rush of white water rolling in the river to his right, the beggar was startled by a crack of thunder and the unwarned pouring of cold rain. Just then, crossing Bell's Mill Road, he saw a wooden hut. He pushed open the door and went in. With the steady tapping of rain on the roof tin and the tapping too on the window glass, the beggar sat down at a worktable and made himself at ease. Drawn into a daydream by the harmonious song of rainfall, roaring river, whip of wind, and steady boom of thunder, the beggar took pencil and paper from the drawer and, with the counsel of his beating heart, crafted a song:

**Once the beggar awaited some fame, but wretched with care
along the ice-cold walkways he wade with his feet to no end.
Now he travels the path of exile. It is hard to change what is.**

.

And so I speak, I the earth-stepper, with mortal toil,
stern death, and the last fall of all sounding in my beggar's body.

Often at morning I speak my mourning to my beating heart.

Is there no one to whom I dare speak my thoughts?

I know it is the way of people to bind fast their minds,

to hold near their horde,

to speak as others wish them to speak and so to keep

the World's web whole.

But sweet words cannot fight with this World, this World that is
Hell, nor may a heart bent to the horde offer help.

And so those who dread the doom of their people

will bind their mourning deep in their mind's cave.

So too I, the earth-stepper, mournful, must often bind my mind,

far from my home, fettered, friendless, after once a wordsmith

in my youth showed me beneath the earth's shelter, and I,

ruined, from there wandered in my beloved winter over bindings of
cold waves.

I seek the place still where I, far or near, might find again

the one who knows me,

or who would comfort me, friendless, with gladness.

That one is the wordwright who understands how harsh mourning is
for one who has no friends.

It is exile that harms me, not entangled gold.

It is true, in my youth a wordsmith drew me to a dwelling.

Through many years of wandering, I am finally lost.



When the tapping of rain stopped the beggar left the hut to wander once more on Forbidden Drive beneath the falling canopy of leaves. He felt gladness in the cold air's frosty bite.



Transcriber's dissertation on modus loquendi. Locked in the ruts of borrowed speech we are locked in the ruts of borrowed thought we are locked in the ruts of borrowed deeds we are locked in the ruts of a borrowed World. And so all is perpetually dispersed into a predictable pattern of commotion. This is Hell. As a *modus loquendi*, mystics disrupts the predictable pattern of commotion. This is my thesis. Born of the nomad's hyperdiligence
the prisoner's hypervigilance
the woman's oppression
the outsider's strangeness
the heretics clarity
the child's wonder
the schizoid's disorder
the maniac's rage
the stammerer's stutter

the depressive's silence

the alcoholic's delirium

the mother's love

the poet's precision

the dreamer's vision

the witch's wonder

the vagrant's attention

the artist's perception

the immigrant's hesitation

the mystic *modus loquendi* heaves words like wet leaves onto the ruts of borrowed life, the mystic *modus loquendi* is the commanding of words against the mere allegiance to them, the mystic *modus loquendi* pledges itself to an impossibility released like vapor by the Real that eludes it. And yet, as a Master has taught us, charisma reifies. The unchartable chatter of the beggar's teeth is contorted into an algorithmic code. The theologians and scholars give the name "mysticism" to their code. Unlike mystics, mysticism is a discursive form circumscribed by the mania of its inventors, the Authorities, for an eternal, an eternally mortgageable hinterwelt.

The Authorities determine mysticism's program.

The Authorities validate mysticism's experience.

The Authorities supervise mysticism's procedures.

The Authorities nominate mysticism's authors.

The Authorities canonize mysticism's texts.

This is tedium. Let us exhale. Is anything in Hell as unstable as the Name? And yet circulating within the Authorities' circumscription of mysticism are particles — somatic, energetic, psychic in origin and nature — free radicals not bound by the noun's field. Because it arrogantly refuses to pledge itself to an impossibility released like vapor by the Real that eludes it, mysticism dies in the hands of its Authorities. The beggars flee the institutions of meaning to walk and to keep walking on paths of exile. Mystics live because they walk and cannot stop walking.



His curiosity aroused by a path marked Hermit Lane in the northwest wood of Philadelphia, the beggar followed it. To his pleasure he came to the ruined Cave of Kelpius. The day being hot, he entered and in the coolness of the ancient stones took delight. To think that three hundred years ago the Society of the Woman in the Wilderness gathered in this cave to mull the teaching of the German Master Kelpius, said the beggar awed to his beating heart. Reclining at ease, he looked around and saw chiseled in a stone a strange writing:

Die Ros' ist ohn warumb
sie blühet weil sie blühet
Sie achtt nicht ihrer selbst
fragt nich ob man sie sihet.

I am like that rose. I do not ask why. I walk simply because I walk. I am not impressed with myself. I do not wonder whether anyone pays attention to me. I am like the rose, spoke the beggar to his beating heart. And then he stepped out of the cool dark cave and back into the bright sun of the hot summer afternoon and walked on.



One spring afternoon, the beggar was sitting on a bench in Rittenhouse Square in Philadelphia. He felt at peace as he watched people walk past in lively animation as they talked with one another about their daily lives. He rejoiced in the cacophonous chirping of the birds surrounding him. He delighted in the slurp and gurgle of the fountain nearby. A sensation of pure pleasure sweetened his body as he inhaled the scent of rose blossoms wafting through the spring air. A smiling face suddenly appeared before the beggar. The smiling face asked,

— Was that you that I heard speaking to the passersby this morning?

— Did I say Speak of love not hate, things to do, it's getting late, and you and I, we're only passing through?

— Yes, said the smiling face.

— Yes, said the beggar.

— May I invite you to speak to our congregation this Sunday?

— Congregation? inquired the beggar.

— Yes, we are the Satanic Temple of Philadelphia. We preach benevolence and empathy among all people. We reject tyrannical authority. We advocate practical common sense and justice. We encourage our congregation to noble pursuits guided by the individual will.

— Satanic? inquired the beggar.

— Yes, Satan is our symbol of the Eternal Rebel, perpetually in opposition to arbitrary authority, forever defending personal sovereignty even in the face of insurmountable odds. Satan is our icon for the unbowed will of the unsilenceable inquirer, the heretic who questions sacred laws and rejects all tyrannical impositions.

— Yes, I accept, said the beggar.

When night fell, the beggar entered the candlelit temple in the Philadelphia Mausoleum of Contemporary Art on 12th Street near Spring Garden. The date being April 30th, the congregation was celebrating *Hexennacht*, the Night of Witches. The mood was solemn yet expectant. The officiant, Moina Mathers, stood at the pulpit, raised her harms, and intoned:

Let us transport ourselves:

Tonight, in this age of slender hope
we witches with our guest, the beggar,
ride to the Brocken's top.

Look! There where the stubble is yellow and green
the crop gathers a crowd for some festival.
See! Satan sits over all.

The congregation responded as a chorus:

Wind is hushed,
a star shoots by,
the beaming moon forsakes the sky,
mystics surge, like spark in spark,
discharge, sizzling through the dark.

When the beggar's turn to speak came, he stood behind the pulpit and spoke.

I will speak the beggar's sermon.

The beggar proclaims: *To you, World, I refuse.*

The beggar identifies, the beggar resists,
alienating representations.

The beggar proclaims: *To you, World, I give.*

By means of interminable negation,
the beggar reinvigorates being and thought
in the face of radical immanence

in the face of empty reality

in the face of the axiomatic

in the face of the void

the quasi

the apophatic

the desert

the dark night

the mysticofictional

Real.

The beggar transfuses the symptom — exposed in the yearning embrace of the curative fantasy that is ideological self-sufficiency — into a sovereign discernment for going forward.

Transfusion occurs in subjective submersion.

I speak here of the decomposition that precedes bioremediation.

I speak here of the inalienable poverty that begets the beggar.

Let me intone a postulate:

Sunk in inalienable poverty, the beggar emerges fit for the clash with Hell.

Allow me to recommend a practice which I will call decomposition with walking:

Now, assume a relaxed yet alert walking body. Establish awareness right there. Like this: step, attending to the sensations of the walking body and its purview; step, simply attending to the sensations of the walking body and its purview. That's all.

Our mystic walking contemplation consists in three basic postures, in the first instance: Stillness. Stepping. Awareness.

Now take note as I warn you twofold:

Decomposition with walking is rich in results for the person and is of benefit to society. But only if it remains an insufficient practice. When taken as sufficient, it conspires with the New Age Apocalypse. This is your first warning.

Decomposition with walking is rich in results for the person and is of benefit to society. But only if it remains on the side of the living. When applied as a pharmakon for the imaginary plenitude of calm contemplation, it conspires with the Spiritual Death Drive. This is your second warning.

Please indulge me an autocommentary.

Decomposition with walking is rich in results for the person and is of benefit to society. It places the practitioner in the teeming ruin where person and World intersect and transfuse. The soil of this ruin is flush with fungal mycelia generating the energetic flows — biological, psychological, mythological, narratological, ideological — that we call existence.

We vigorously apply a fiction: In the ruin of our practice unfolds a process of bioremediation. Through decomposition, contaminants are purged from the soil. Be clear! Remediation is not purification. Think, rather, quickening and augmentation of earth-incrusted organic matter.

That's all. I have spoken the beggar's sermon.

And then the beggar stepped down from the pulpit and out of the mausoleum and walked into the night. Toward what end does a beggar walk? the beggar inquired to his beating heart. To struggle against the powers of the World. To clash with Hell.



Transcribers dissertation on the mystical inversion. The beggar's
mystics is without the consolations of the spiritualist's
mysticism. The beggar's mystics is

without transcendence

without God

without union

without religion

without salvation

without purification

without rest

without morality

without hope

without striving.

The beggar's mystics is

negation without remainder

darkness without cleft

silence without significance

passivity without effect

void without fullness

revelation without content

The beggar's ladder's rungs are broken.
The beggar's path has no beginning or end.
The beggar's river has overflowed.
The beggar's garden is full of weeds.
The beggar's mountain is flattened.
The beggar's quest has already failed.
The beggar's dance is like St. Vitus's, erratic.
The beggar's boat is like Rimbaud's, drunken.

And yet... May we speak of mysticism without consolation?
Yes, we may. And we may call it mystics. Like the faithful of
mysticism, the beggar longs to transgress the *already is*, seeks
experience disentangled from the snares of language, and
desires wholeness,

and yet,

where the Master says, The eye with which I see God is the eye
with which God sees me
the beggar says, The eye with which I see no God is the eye
with which I see my dissolution.

Where the Masters speak of spiritual ascent
the beggar speaks of immanent collapse.

Where the Masters speak of *unio mystica*
the beggar speaks of disunity devoid of meaning.

Where the Masters speak of peace
the beggar speaks of vertigo.

Where the Masters speak of Heaven
the beggar speaks of Hell.

*Deprived of mysticism, drained of idealism, the mystic of mystics is a
furious utopian.*



A black ant brought the beggar to his senses. It was just a haze of various shades of green and brown, at first. Slowly, something — a speck of moving blackness no larger than a peppercorn — came into focus. It was an ant. And a moving leaf. No, the ant was carrying the leaf. The leaf was perpendicular to the ant's body, rising vertically like the head sail on a reed boat. The ant was struggling to surmount a cluster of dried leaves with its leaf intact. As the beggar observed the ant, he was vaguely aware that his left cheek was pressed hard against the copse's floor. The sour stench of stale vomit filled his nose. He tasted blood on his lips. He squeezed his pulsating head. But he kept his right eye trained on the ant, captivated by its furious determination. The ant thrust forward; the leaf fell; the ant whipped around, grabbed the leaf; charged another fraction of an inch; darted, and dodged an onslaught of branches and leaves. The ant lost the leaf in the melee, clinched it again, like a buccaneer, in its barbed mandibles, and charged again. This was the moment when the beggar passed from a mental fog into self-awareness. A simple but invigorating thought bolted through his mind — *just drop the leaf, you foolish ant.*

The ground was cool on his cheek. He closed his eyes and breathed in deeply. *What happened? What the hell happened?* He remembered sitting, as usual, cross-legged, back straight, head centered on his shoulders, leaning against the tree trunk. He remembered that he had refrained from food and drink. He remembered that he sought purification. These memories quickened him. He pushed himself back up until he was sitting on his buttocks again. The tree trunk was right there to support him. Leaning against it with his bare legs straight out in front of him, he stared into the Fairmount woods. *What happened?* He remembered hunching over like a withered reed, gazing at the ground. His head suddenly felt as if a strongman were tightening a leather strap around it as a headband. Instinctively, he grabbed it with both hands fully extended, and began massaging it, hoping, in vain, to ease the pain. He gasped with fright when he felt his scalp. It was shriveled and withered. When he rubbed his head, the hair, rotten at the roots, fell to the ground. He remembers heaving in waves. The vomit shot in a stream onto the ground and splattered on his face. He couldn't hold out. In pain and exhaustion, he finally fell on his face.

The beggar stared into space The woods were dark. He wrapped his arms tightly around himself, pressed his knees against his chest, and pulled the tattered cloth that was once his robe over his shivering body. Overcome by loneliness, shame and, most devastating of all, a sense of catastrophic failure, he began to weep. After half a minute, he stopped. He wiped his face with his sleeve. He sat still, then punched the ground. His gaze sharpened, he muttered to himself, *now, where is that ant?*

When he was a young man, sadness was the beggar's natural element, and anger was his most effective tonic. Together, they were elixir, flushing self-pity and delusion from his mind and paralysis from his body. As a child already, he had discovered the futility of struggling against anger and sadness. It was like trying to prevent rain from soaking the ground. He had tried that once. The rainy autumn was coming. With the help of his brother, he constructed elaborate hemp roofing and dug a complex drainage system to protect his herb garden. The result

was the ruin of his herb garden. The plants were smothered by the collapsed roof, beaten by the rain mercilessly into the ground, and finally drowned in ditches. He observed this disaster from his window and drew the logical conclusion. Nature is supreme power, he said to his beating heart. Nature is perverse. Nature is beyond good and evil. Nature is amoral. Nature is indifferent. Nature does not care. Nature is element: water, fire, earth, and air. I, too, am this. I am nature. I have a stark choice: I can either struggle against nature as it takes its course or learn to live as its force. But doing so will take precise knowledge and great skill. In the meantime, I will just let the rain permeate the ground, pervade and infuse it, saturate it with its very nature, wetness.

Like the rains, anger and sadness were for him inevitable and all-consuming forces. When sad, he felt drawn down to the ground, helpless and disoriented. He lost all sense of who he was, what he was doing, and for what reason. Anger braced him, lifted him up, turned his face squarely toward the world. When mixed, these two affects were like the gods' nectar: they simultaneously clarified and impelled.

Sadness was a mirror for his self-delusion. It lay open to view his fantasies about himself and the world. Anger narrowed his view, sharpened his focus. It provoked ideas and spurred him to action.

Now, here he was, sad and angry. With patience and care he will absorb their force and harvest their seed, as he has done so many times before. That is what he determined. On elbows and knees, he crawled over to where the ant had been struggling with its leaf. That leaf was both its food and its burden, the beggar said to his beating heart. Both its sustenance and its ruin.



ou may be wondering, when did the beggar become a beggar? It happened when he was seventeen. He was sitting in the lunch hall of the satanic mill, within the cacophonous circus of hungry youths, when out of the din drifted a sound that snatched every fiber of his attention. The clamour dimmed to a background hum as the dirge-like drum beat, the slow soft steady strum of the guitar, and the mournful wisp of a voice drifted into his consciousness. It seized him. It possessed him like a succubus.

Nights in white satin, never reaching the end
Letters I've written, never meaning to send
Beauty I'd always missed with these eyes before
Just what the truth is, I can't say anymore

His ability to carry on with the day was ruined. A spirit of profound melancholy dripped through his bloodstream.

The other teenagers saw him ambling toward the exit and asked,

— Where are you going?

— Where am I going? Have you not heard? he replied. *Beauty I'd always missed with these eyes before, Just what the truth is, I can't say anymore.* Have you not heard?

This is what he says. And the hungry youths bend their heads and blink. A moment later all is once again dispersed into the chaos of commotion. He walks away, bearing the third mark of a beggar.



The beggar was walking though the southern courtyard of City Hall in Philadelphia. The day being hot and sunny, he took pleasure in the vibrant array of tourists gawking at the majestic marble edifice, wedding parties snapping photographs, jugglers and magicians oohing and awing the crowd, singers and musicians conjuring a joyous atmosphere, children romping and playing happily. Among them all, an Improver was noisily intoning the glories of mystical transcendence. The Improver yelled at the passersby:

You were created by God for an eternal glory that surpasses your nature. Even now, you are called to a graced participation in a transcendental divine life that draws you above and beyond yourself, conforming you to the One in whose image you were made. Common Doctor Thomas Aquinas teaches us this order of excess that characterizes God's elevation of you, the rational creature, discerning in its most extreme instances — mystical transport, ecstasy, and rapture — the essential contours of the ordering of mystical life to the transcendent union of beatific vision. Rejoice!

Strange, said the beggar to his beating heart. The Improver speaks of crucial matters yet the passersby pay him no attention. Perhaps the Improver speaks not of crucial matters after all. Or perhaps he does indeed but they do not comprehend. I must admit, his words fill my ears with pleasure yet leave my body and mind cold and my soul empty. I will risk a word with the Improver.

— Have you not heard that mysticism bound to transcendence confuses the real with the divine? the beggar asked the Improver?

Have you not heard that mysticism bound to transcendence mistakes exclusion with hiddenness?

Have you not heard that mysticism bound to transcendence imagines revelation as barring's overcoming?

Have you not heard that mysticism bound to transcendence hoists a battery of harassing secrecy, initiation, authority, institution, and illumination onto the in-human?

I say the ineffable is not the unspeakable.

I speak the ineffable, the ineffable speaks me.

Still, its speaking is ultimately excluded, barred.

I say there is no revelation of the real.

Have you not heard that the word does not reveal?

Have you not heard that the word performs?

I perform the word, the word performs me.

Still, its performance is ultimately excluded, barred.

Have you not heard that the word does not open a beyond?

The word opens the real within and around the in-human, I say.

May we say this: mystics is no longer a revelation of The Beyond but a performance of the in-human?

This is what the beggar says. And the Improver bends his head and blinks. The beggar walks on.



That evening, the beggar and Antonn Artaud were drinking beer in City Tavern. When the beggar told Antonin Artaud of his conversation with the Improver in the southern courtyard of City Hall, Antonin Artaud said, If we must speak of God, is it not more correct to say that God gets drunk and raves than that he is conceived and expressed?

And with this utterance Antonin Artaud and the beggar belt out a howl so uproarious that the unnerved bar dwellers flee in fear for body, mind, and soul.



The beggar and Antonin Artaud finished drinking beer at City Tavern and decided to take a walk along the Delaware River. They came to the ferry crossing, near the foot of Chestnut Street. The beggar said, This is were Walt Whitman catches the ferry to take him home to 330 Mickle Boulevard in Camden, across the river in New Jersey. *Flood-tide below me! I see you face to face!* Indeed, said Antonin Artaud, did Walt not say, I have always had a passion for ferries, to me they afford inimitable, streaming, never-failing, living poems. Ferry crossings are a refreshment of spirit. Inspired by that image and with the beggar's story of the mystical Improver still clanging in his head, Antonin Artaud said, Let's each compose a poem. Yes, said the beggar, and let's call it "The Holy Ship Mysticism." Antonin Artaud went first.

The holy ship sails on even though
No ports on earth receive it.
Still, who cannot be warmed to behold its plowing
Alone, through glorious, infinite waves
Into the mystery of the ocean's depths?

It was then the beggar's turn.

It has run aground, that archaic ship
On shores drenched with fevered dreams,
Its infinite mast hidden in the mist
Of a darkening God-lit sky.

And with this utterance Antonin Artaud and the beggar
breathed in the fishy scent of the roaring Delaware River,
heaved a sigh, smiled at one another, and walked on.



Standing on a narrow platform before the Eternal Flame in
Washington Square in Philadelphia, an Authority named
Bernard was speaking to passersby. Proclaiming the centrality
of “experience,” Bernard uttered these words: *Credo ut experiar*,
and expounded, What they do not know from experience, let
them believe, so that one day, by virtue of their faith, they may
reap the harvest of experience. We must add that the soul
which knows this by experience has fuller and more blessed
knowledge even than someone who knows by mere faith or
understanding.

Hearing this exposition, the passersby nodded approvingly. But the beggar felt unsettled, and inquired, *Credo ut experiar* — does that not mean *I believe that I may experience*?

It does, replied Bernard.

Surely, said the beggar, you will think me foolish to question the reality of experience. For how can we speak of our first person perspective, indeed of our inner life, if not with the aid of the word “experience”? But I cannot refrain from asking: in terms of a deeper understanding of that perspective and that life, is “experience” not a mere weasel word? For beyond *I so gather* what have we gained in claiming “experience”?

— We have gained an account of a verifiable event, replied Bernard.

— Event?

— Yes, an indubitable confluence of sentience, cognizance, comprehension, and information.

— Indubitable? To whom?

— To the experiencer, insisted Bernard.

— May I suggest that “event” and “indubitable” do not but assume and assert a transparent account of an inner state and so should not be permitted beyond trivial everyday locutions?

— I don’t understand, said Bernard.

— An account of an inner state is by definition not open to inquiry as to its being “verifiable” or “indubitable” or “an event” or indeed anything at all. A Master teaches that a private sensation is impossible. I am not as severe. Let us acknowledge the subjective life and use “experience” (or “sensation”) to do so. But no further. Indeed, the beetle in my box is a *coccinellidae* while the beetle in your box is *leptinotarsa decemlineata*. Peering into my private box, I insist that a “beetle” is a small, dome-shaped creature, one to ten millimeters in size, brightly colored red with black spots, with a rounded body and short legs. Peering into your private box you insist that, no! a beetle has a bright yellow-orange body with five bold black stripes running lengthwise on each elytron, and that it measures a minimum of ten millimeters in length, is robust and rounded in shape.

— Ah, pounced Bernard, therein lies the proof.

— Proof?

— Yes, proof of the validity of inner experience, continued Bernard. For do we each not speak of “beetle” and understand the other? And do we not derive “beetle” from our individual private box?

— We have *agreed* on “beetle,” Bernard. And we have done so through shared engagement and socially-approved criteria. Do you want to hold that “beetle” gives itself to inner experience?

Much to the delight of the passersby, the Authority answered the beggar’s question in the affirmative and then proceeded to offer further, minutely detailed, defenses of the epistemological indubitability of inner experiential events. The beggar, fatigued by the oppressive weight of argumentative tedium, conceded the point and walked on.

Indeed, said the beggar to his beating heart as he stepped into the roaring rush hour traffic on 6th Street, it is as the Master says: If a lion could talk, we would not be able to understand him.



The beggar told Walt Whitman of his late night walk with Antonin Artaud along the Delaware River. Delighting in the images of their poems, Walt Whitman said, For two hours one January night I cross'd and recross'd the wide Delaware River, merely for pleasure — for a still excitement. Both sky and river went through several changes. The tide was high, and the ebb was strong. The river, was full of ice, mostly broken, but some large cakes making out strong timber'd steamboat hum and quiver as she strikes them. In the clear moonlight they spread, strange, unearthly, silvery, faintly glistening as far as I can see. Bumping, trembling, sometimes hissing like a thousand snakes, the tide-procession, as we went with or through it, affording a grand undertone, in keeping with the scene. Overhead, the splendor is indescribable, yet something haughty, almost supercilious, in the night. Never did I realize more latent sentiment, almost passion, in those silent interminable stars up there.



On that winter's day when, while crossing the corner of 21st and Walnut in Philadelphia, the beggar observed a snowflake falling onto a homeless person's steam vent and wondered out loud to the passersby Is the dissolution of all risings and fallings not as evident as this snowflake, his thought was not thus contented. And so, even though a moment later all was once again dispersed into the chaos of commotion, the beggar hesitated to walk on. Again he spoke to the passersby.

Is it not correct that a calculus models change? As such, is a calculus not concerned both with the tangent or trajectory of continuous instantaneous change and the area or space that ensues, even if only momentarily, from that change? As such, is a calculus not concerned with the quantification of real-world limits? Might we thus speak of a calculus of mystics? I want to give voice to that possibility. Consider: Newton's use of the calculus allowed a mathematical description of physical phenomena. The calculus of mystics allows for a conceptually deflated, qualitative, description of a non-component of the non-physical world: dissolution. What the calculus of mystics

apprehends is precisely a “non-component” and is “non-physical” because “it,” unlike the persevering bodies described by physics, names those continuous instantaneous instants when physicality is untethered. Dissolution — the phenomenon tracked by the calculus of mystics and the object of the organon of the contemplation that is mystics — is a non-existent proxy for what *was* but *is* no longer. Glowing like phosphorescence where the “no-longer” had just been, dissolution is evanescent but immanently real. Can you not verify my assertion for yourselves, passersby? May I put another meaning of “calculus” in play here? This sense is derived from the original Latin past participle *calculare*, “to account, to reckon.” It is surely clear that the calculus of mystics results in a perspicuous account and reckoning of a profoundly consequential feature of human existence. The clarity of this reckoning puts in play the third sense of “calculus.” A *calx*, of which *calculus* is the diminutive, was the pebble used for actual accounting. From this usage is derived the connotation of a hard lump produced by the concretion of minerals. Kidney stones are an example. Tartar and plaque are

other examples. A calculus thus names an infinitesimally minute quantity of matter that has aggregated and hardened into a quantifiable lump. Such *calculi* are found in the body's hollow organs and ducts. They are generally painful. The calculus of the organon is similarly jarring. It is unflinching, precise, and unequivocal. Most crucially, it is conspicuous, manifest, and verifiable. The logic of the calculus is unsparing. Merely taking it seriously, much less pushing it to its limit, would shatter the spell of virtually all of what is paraded before us as “spirituality,” including “mysticism.” But these things, naming, as they do, nothing in life, do not interest me today. I am interested in exploring some consequences of the organon's calculus for human life. If, for instance, the calculus models the trajectory of dissolution, if it reveals that everything is *always and perpetually* dissolving-dissolved — instantaneously from the side of subjectivity, eventually from the side of objects themselves — are not certain possibilities that we so dearly hold to be woven into the very fabric of human existence obviated, or at least seriously impeded? Employing the calculus in good faith implies a willingness to replace belief with knowledge; it implies a will to know. What if this will to know is driven by the traumatic reality of dissolution itself? Can mystics as organon of the traumatic

reality of dissolution Become equal to the trauma whose trace it bears, as one Master says? Is mystics equal to the trauma it traces? I make the severe claim that the calculus of mystics binds with the real as dissolution, rendering the practitioner's perspicuity commensurate with the real of dissolution itself. The calculus of mystics is the instrument of perspicuity, the organon. The calculus is the model of intelligibility. Might this be possible?

This is what the beggar says. And the people murmur to one another:

— Person 1: WTF?

— Person 2: That beggar's way of a speaking is far too fuzzy.

— Person 3: Incomprehensible!

— Person 4: Yes, a translation or the Cliff's Notes version would be most helpful. Haha!

— Person 5: I would like to hear the beggar's talk translated into Sanskrit or Ancient Greek. It would be much clearer that way. Anyone up for the challenge? Haha!

— Person 6: WTF?

— Person 7: I am a reasonably literate person. It seems to me that the beggar — someone who once said he is a person of flesh and blood who lives in the world of timber, shit, and stone — must be fully aware of the power and specificity of Anglo-Saxon words. Conversely, I would urge him to be chary of high-flying Latinate and Greekish words.

To Person 7 the beggar replied:

— But as a reasonably literate person surely you own a dictionary?

But as a reasonably literate person surely you have an imagination?

But as a reasonably literate person surely you possess curiosity?

But as a reasonably literate person surely you value literacy?

And why this prejudice that elevates virtuous Anglo-Saxon and debases high-flying Latinate and Greekish language? In that case you must render yourself not a *reasonably literate person* but a *lore-gifted wight enow*, for *reasonably*, *literate*, and *person* are each high-flying Latinate words. Besides, I love high-flying! Indeed a dream spirit once informed me that I am Icarus,

seared by the sun, fallen from the sky, flapping my plumage like a silkie, flopping my wings that are no wings at all but naked arms. Dropped through the air like an unfettered sail to the lush field where the ancients slaughtered goats in blood-soaked sacrifice, goats whose throats gurgled consonants when slit, I lie abashed awing oooing ohing howling sense-less vowels in the grass.

This is what the beggar says. And the people bend their heads and blink. A moment later all is once again dispersed into the chaos of commotion. The beggar walks on.



The beggar was sitting alone on a bench just before sunrise in Rittenhouse Square in Philadelphia. Except that the sun was not to show its fiery face this morning. It would remain hidden behind a thick blanket of billowing clouds. The beggar sat rapt in the silence and stillness of the morning when he felt the first drops. He took shelter in the night watchman's kiosk at

the center of the square. He looked out the window, ringing with the drizzle of the rain, in placid repose. Look at that sparrow, he said to his beating heart, her little wings spanned in fear to flee the storm cloud, borne in fear before a blackening sky, frantically seeking shelter. When I see the sparrow, my own good fortune gives me peace. Who would not delight in a life with such abundance as mine? And look! There, in the grass, bared to the bawdy earth that hugs the fading willow, a chirring cricket, well rid of its winged foe! Little cricket, do you not desire to proclaim together with me: Now is not the time to bound from this place. Sweet is this place. Here it is good to be.



Transcriber's dissertation on the space of mystics. Our most exalted names index the rattletrap of all signs. That statement summarizes the first thrust of my thesis. God, Truth, Energy, The Absolute, Spirit, Matter, Reason — that sort of name (can you think of others?). I mean names soaked in volatile rocket fuel, ready to explode into outer space — or to rupture in the hand that holds them, the mouth that speaks them, the ear that hears them, the body that feels them, the soul that yearns for them. Do you, dear reader, believe in epiphany — that it is

now time for shrouded gods to emerge out of darkness and into the light of things? Do you believe in *invocation* — that it is now time for a decisive summoning, for an ultimate appeal, for a forceful calling forth? Yes? So you must hold that there is a stable relationship between the word and that which the word names and calls? May I offer a counterpoint and theorize the following? Our most exalted names index the rattletrap of all signs. Is not the foundation of the old speech cracked and shattered like an ancient ruin? Is not the foundation of the old speech drained and depleted like timeworn soil? If you say no, I bow to you, reader, and walk on. If you entertain the possibility of a yes, then let us intone together: How is it possible to speak and hear today? As a Master once said, The messengers of our exalted words cannot tell us what we want to know. Unless we are heard and understood we cannot even know ourselves. Is it not painful to seek in vain for someone to listen? Yes, the Verb is absent yet we must speak. Yes, they

have ears to hear yet do not listen. *Speaking and listening is the way of mystics*. We speak (and write) as a way of proceeding. We hear (and listen) as a way of proceeding. And in so doing, we make present in the world that which the speaking/writing-hearing/listening itself makes possible. And in so doing, we create the space of mystics. The space of mystics is pure utopia, pure non-place, one moreover aroused by the desire for the real, a desire catalyzed by the language of exalted names. It is no longer a matter of lining up the proper statements dictated by the already-established Authorities. It is no longer a matter of ventriloquizing *the oceanic noises of the cosmos* so that they may reverberate yet again in the world. It is no longer a matter of reflexively latching onto the ruts of borrowed speech and the furrows of borrowed thought. The space of mystics empties exalted language of its content in order to lay bare the very vibrato humming within the objectless desire itself. Objectless? Yes, for the real is barred from our knowing and speaking. To assume this attitude is to bear the mark of a beggar's strangeness. Thus goes the second thrust of my thesis.



You may be wondering, reader, when did the beggar become a beggar? It happened when he was a little boy visiting his grandmother's house one summer. Although her life was hard, she was warm. She loved the little boy and he loved her. His grandmother wanted the little boy to go to church. But he refused to go. The church is cold and cruel and your home is warm and friendly, he said, so I will not go. One day, a friend of his grandmother's was sitting on the couch. Her name was Juliana. She, too, had a warm and friendly face. He felt a closeness to her immediately. Was Juliana there to convince him to go to church? Come sit next to me little boy, said Juliana. So he jumped up on the couch and, with his legs barely long enough to dangle, sat next to her. Once I was shewed a littleness in the palm of my hand, she said. It was a hazelnut. And it was as round as a ball. And I looked thereupon with the eye of my understanding, and I thought: *What may this be?* And it was answered thus: *it is all that is made.*

— In the hazelnut is all that is made? asked the little boy.

— Yes, in the hazelnut is all that is made. This I beheld in the eye of my understanding, said Juliana.

— Oh, marvelled the little boy.

— I marvelled, continued Juliana, how it might last, for methought it might suddenly have fallen to naught for its littleness. And I was answered in my understanding: *It lasteth, and ever shall last for that We love it.* And so All-thing hath the Being by Our love.

— All-thing is held together by love?

— Yes.

— By love? Oh.

— Yes, for from that time, continued Juliana, that it was shewed, I desired oftentimes to learn what was our Life's meaning. And fifteen years after, and more, I was answered in ghostly understanding, saying thus: *Wouldst thou learn thy Life's meaning in this thing? Learn it well: Love is its meaning. Who shewed it thee? Love. What shewed It thee? Love. Wherefore was it to you shewed? For Love.* Little boy, said Juliana, hold thee therein and thou shalt learn and know more in the same. But thou shalt never know nor learn therein other thing without end. Thus was I learned that Love was our Life's meaning.

Her words fill my body, mind, and soul with warmth, said the little boy to his beating heart. And he jumped off the couch and ran out to play in the warm summer's day, bearing the first mark of a beggar.



Transcriber's dissertation: litany of apophatic mystics. Unlike liberalism, anarchism takes democracy seriously. Thesis: Unlike mysticism, mystics takes apophasis seriously. Given the electrifying force of our sacred weasel words, words that literally catalyze seizures in the hearers' brains and emotions, heaving hearers down onto the cold floor of eternally deferred attainment, heaving hearers prostrate before the altar of infinitely distant arrival, words that instigate a hurricane of desire and an interminable train of unfulfillable longing, the point can not be stressed enough. So let us place frankincense stones on burning black coal and intone the *litany of apophatic mystics*:

no God
no Being
no reference
no transcendence
no ineffability
no experience

no assent
no ladder
no descent
no depth
no purification
no description
no decision
no divinity
no access
no excess
no rapture
no rupture
no surplus
no path
no relation
no revelation
no relationality
no elevation
no ascent
no ecstasy
no hierarchy

no fallenness
no redemption
no saint
no prophet
no visionary
no authority
no conversion
no meaning
no determination
no reason
no lack
no illumination
no entrance
no maintenance
no success
no failure
no aspiration
no gratification
no ambition
no reward
no self

no identity
no virtue
no morality
no mastery
no knowledge
no justification
no catharsis
no synthesis
no reconciliation
no closure
no dark night
no breakthrough
no explanation
no persuasion
no seduction
no charisma
no wholeness
no recuperation
no climax
no assertion
no negation.
no

non negation.

Might we recognize here a minimal trace toward a *litany of cataphatic mystics*? If so, is not the proper locution interrogatory? Let us refresh our frankincense and intone:

Might we:

 speak of practice without progress?

 speak of a manner of lived immanence?

 speak of a posture of humility before the real?

 speak of compassion without moral law?

 speak of care without transcendental justification?

 speak of justice without eschatology?

 speak of union without duality?

Practice? Might we speak of practice:

 as *using* thought, language, suffering, and the world under radical immanence?

 as a rigorous refusal of spiritual surplus?

 as a posture rather than a technique?

 as poverty without purification?

 as *use* rather than transformation?

Might we adopt a Verb as a quasi-mantra and in so doing employ the imperative?

Use! Use! Use!



Notes for a draft of a sketch of an idea for a brief eulogy of the beggar.
Good words in the witness of the third. He was born under a double star. Twin stars of double aspect, though a unity. Gemini. That astrological fiction explains much about him as a person and about the life he lived. So many stories I could tell you, attentive reader, of how he was tormented and delighted by a lifelong sense of being caught in — of embodying, as they say — perfect oppositions.

There were other stars. He lived his life accompanied by the death star. The death star whispered — rattled — hourly in his ear. It whispered-rattled of his end. It whispered-rattled of this very end we now witness. *God damn that bastard star*, I heard him mutter on occasion, *it ruins all the fun*. He got over that complaint, though. The first opposition reconciled, I suppose, as a life nonetheless richly lived.

It is not untrue. He felt himself most, and he felt himself best, in opposition: life and death; friendship and disdain; concern

and indifference; asceticism and excess; action and resignation; passion and peace. This is why from such an early age he loved ideas. They were for him paradoxical cauldrons of confusion and clarity, of discord and harmony, of destruction and creation. Idea and person intimately intertwined. This meant dialogue, original encounter, the possibility of genuine response.

But — and here's the main thing — genuine response rarely appeared. So a pattern emerged. It was the pattern that permits my good words here. For it is the pattern that determined the warp and woof of his meager accomplishments. The pattern was woven from the interplay of the oppositions that I mentioned — concern and indifference, and so on — together with the threads of expression and non-response. Expression and non-response, I repeat it to make clear that this is the main thing. From the beginning — age six, I would estimate — his parents and teachers and playmates and brothers and sisters and aunts and uncles and cousins and grandparents and boy

friends and girl friends and dead friends and fathers of dead friends and fathers of living friends and mothers of friends dead and alive and brothers of friends and sisters of friends and cousins of friends' mothers' and fathers' and aunts' and uncles' man neighbors and women neighbors and man neighbors and women neighbors and all of God's incretion practically but dogs and retards and the swaying idiot autistics whom his father took him on Sundays to sway along with at the mental hospital on the green under the big tree with red leaves falling in autumn — his favorite season his whole life long I willa dd here — were to him baffling non-presences. Baffling non-presences in the presence of whom he would never even think of ever considering to cease from articulating his expressions.

Let me tell you about the first beggar our beggar ever laid eyes on. Ronnie. He loved Ronnie. Ronnie had spastic cerebral palsy. On top of that annoyance Ronnie, at the age of twelve, had the mentality of an eight year old. Since he (of whom I presently eulogize was only six when he met Ronnie, that worked out well enough. Now, from the time he was a child he

was popular with other kids. He was always the chosen leader, the leader by default, even though he never sought it.

Remember, attentive reader, this was in those far gone days when the neighborhood streets were teeming with wild hordes of screaming, playing children. They ostracized Ronnie. They bullied Ronnie. They made fun of him. They laughed at his entire being. Well, he did not. He included Ronnie in every single activity undertaken by the hoard of children — football, baseball, kickball, tag, hide and seek, mother may I, red light green light, birthday parties, smoking behind the bushes. Imagine, attentive reader, the spaz standing there bobbing his absurdly large misshapen head from side to side like Stevie Wonder, slamming his twisted foot into the ball and totter like a decrepit flumpnugget around the bases. Ronnie's mother told his mother that Ronnie only began to live his childhood when he befriended our dead beggar.

Here's the thing. As it turned out, he learned all he would ever need to know about life and about people from his friendship

with Ronnie. Yes, he learned about the cruelty and smallness of group mind, of course. But more importantly, he absorbed, in both its negative and positive aspects — the double star again! — the nature of expression and response.





Alas, the day came when the beggar became tired of wandering. Sitting on a wooden bench in Rittenhouse Square, in the center of Philadelphia, he mutters to his beating heart: I am tired of wandering. He looks about him. Autumn has returned. The park is a wash of yellows, oranges, reds, greens, and browns. In the crisp air wafts musk, pumpkin, and pine. He breathes it in, this air that has never ceased to give him pleasure, this air suffused with quiet answers to dark questions. He closes his eyes and breathes in decaying leaves, breathes in their rapturous scent of incense and amber, breathes in their succulence, bounty, and corruption! The blue wing of night flutters. A cloud drifts across the fountain's pond. The gestures of the parkgoers become calm. Soon, stars will nest in their brows, he says to his beating heart. Let me speak my final words, weasel or not, to those with ears to hear.

Come, and consider carefully what I say. Consider whether my words' wide witness anywhere, now or ever, fails a single thing that reveals this simple All. Behold the sun, its warmth, the bright-diffused. See the stars, forever steeped in liquid heat and streaming radiance. Feel the rain, obscure and cold and dark. And smell the breathing soil that stains your feet. Hungry fledglings shrieking in an oak — listen! And note how from earth streams forth the green and firm. And all, through fury, are split to unlike shapes. And each, through love, draws near and yearns one for the other. For from the All has blossomed all that was or is or ever will be — trees, beasts, the dreams of men, the ache of women. Fears of oblivion steeping in the deep, hope of paradise. For this is all, All in all — coursing like Lethe through time, yet each, through the another, brings forth a new face. All is by varied merging and enduring change. Time's bloody fingers weave tapestries of grace.

The beggar inhaled a big belly breath, exhaling, smiled, then walked away.





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