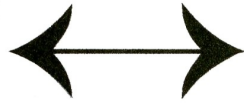
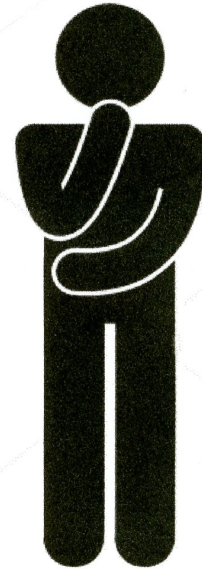
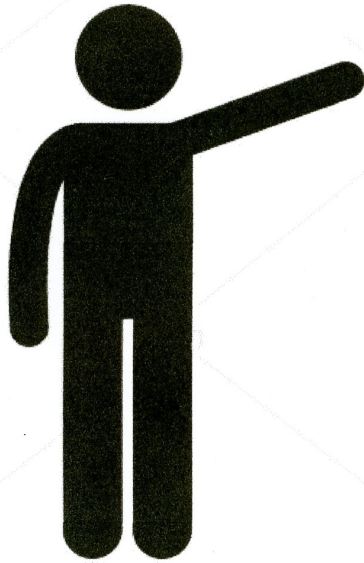


**Q**



**A**

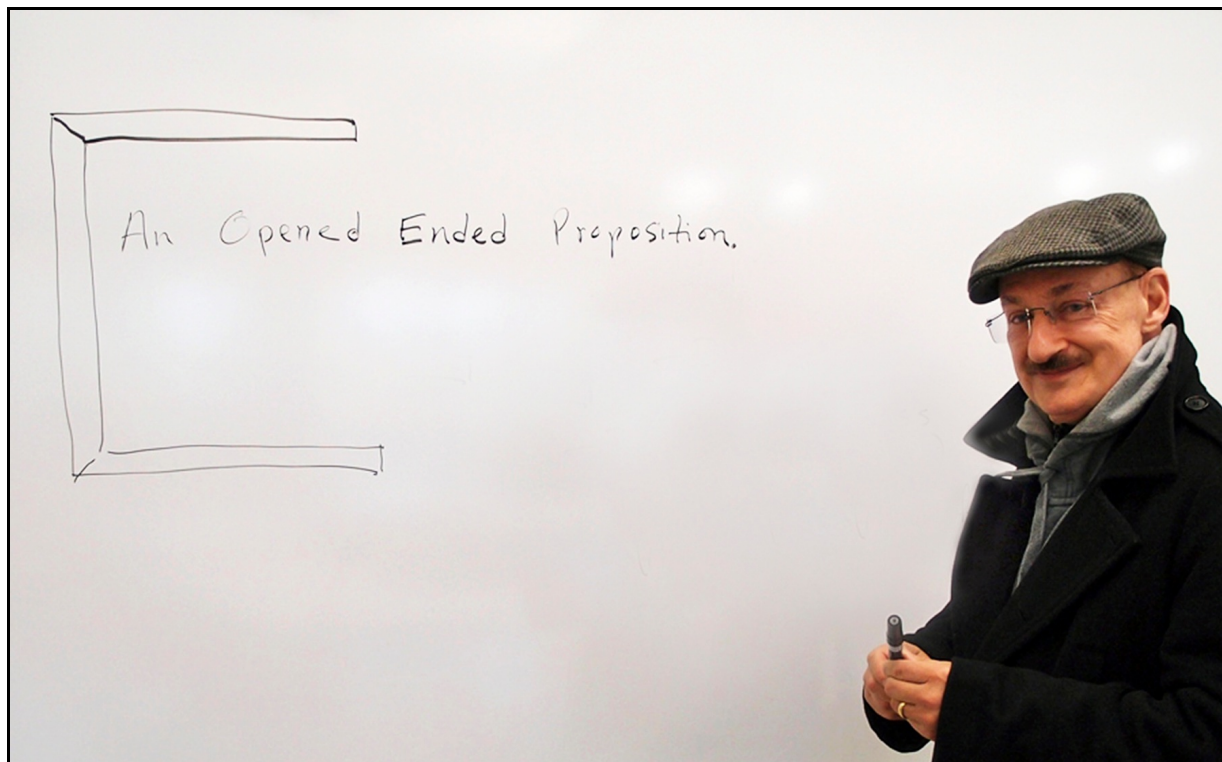


***An Auto-Interview with  
James Hugunin***



# An Auto-Interview with James Hugunin

with excerpts from his books



James Hugunin, a white-board sketch of one of his conceptual artworks (see page 21 below) from 1975, University of Wisconsin, Madison (2012) photo by Lewis Koch

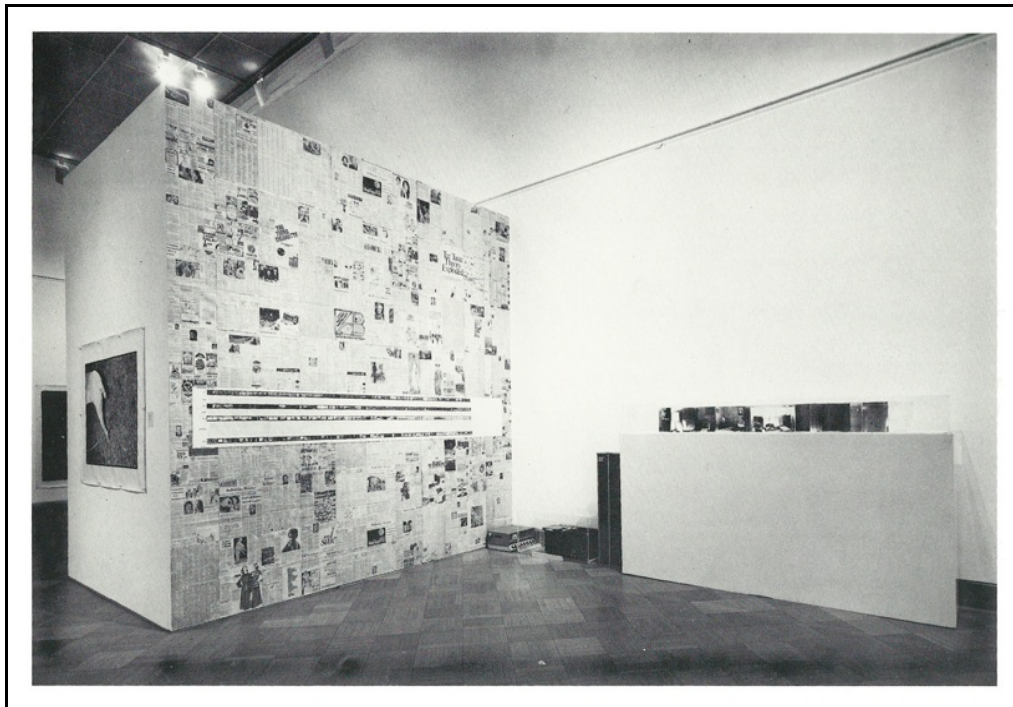
© Copyright 2017 by U-Turn and James R. Hugunin



## Introduction

In 2016 a British art writer, Dominic Jaeckle, requested information for an article he was writing concerning San Francisco Bay Area photographer, editor, critic, and curator, Lew Thomas. During the 1970s, Mr. Thomas was a key figure in the Photo-Language conceptual photography movement at that time in San Francisco. Although I was residing in Los Angeles at the time, my conceptual photography, artist books, and quarterly art journal, *The Dumb Ox* (1976-80), had gotten Lew's attention. He asked me to write an introduction to a book, *Photography and Language* (NFS Press, 1979) based on an exhibition of the same name in 1976 at La Mamelle Arts Center and Camerawork Gallery in San Francisco.

This book and show, Lew saw as putting forth artwork and ideas of a gaggle of image-makers whose concerns involved bringing to bear the so-called "Linguistic Turn" in contemporary thought onto current photographic practice. Many of these works were also exhibited at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art in 1976, "Photography and Words," a show guest-curated by Lew Thomas.



*Depositions*, (1974 - 76) Lew Thomas in "Photographs and Words" exhibition  
6 panels with mounted photographs and type, newsprint, Xerox Book, sound  
17 x 22 in, 43.18 x 55.88 cm each panel; installed dimensions variable.  
Installed at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, 1976



Colophon for *American Roads* (1982) portfolio assembled by Victor Landweber, on display at Stanford University's Cantor Center for Visual Art's "Speed and Power" exhibition. Hugunin wrote an introductory short story, "Records of a Travel-Worn Camera," in which all the images in the portfolio were featured as part of the narrative — a unique exercise in *ekphrasis*.

I sent on to Dominic what information I recalled. Later that year, he requested images and a discussion of my own work from that period. Good timing. Approaching age 70, I had been thinking of writing an "auto-interview" which would delve into my artwork and thought from that period to the present, something that might be useful to scholars. Dominic's request jump-started me on that project.

Many of my own past reviews were done in dialogue format, with each character

viewing a show and giving forth their respective observations — always at odds with each other — on the work hung before them. This permitted the reader to make his or her own decision whose critical argument was more convincing. Therefore, it seemed appropriate to use this dialogic format for the probing of my own production. In so doing, I've added a generous amount of imagery and at the end of the interview, excerpts from some of my books, criticism and fiction.

What was interesting to me as I carried out my project was that themes begun earlier — scripto-visual hybrids, epistemology, *ekphrasis*, and appropriation — had kept my interest and still showed up in my later work in more complex ways. The interview was written quickly, in a flurry of typing; the words just flowed.

May you find it interesting as well.

Finally, I wish to thank Lewis Koch, Dominic Jaeckle, my editorial assistant Felissia Cappelletti, and my wife, Marianne for their inspiration and assistance.

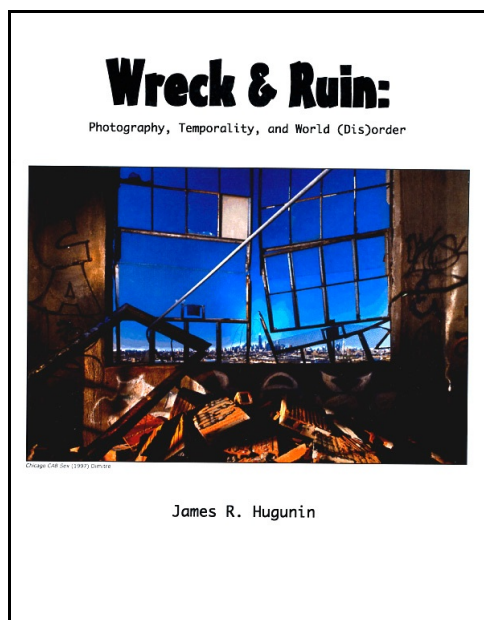
— James R. Hugunin, Oak Park, IL, 2017







## An Auto-Interview with James Hugunin

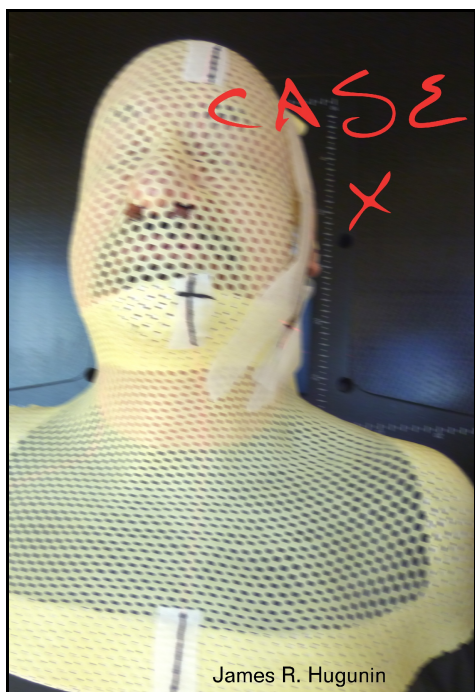


Cover for *Wreck and Ruin* (2013)

**Question:** Can you provide a “backstory” for this 2013 critical monograph, *Wreck and Ruin: Photography, Temporality, and World (Dis)Order*?

**Answer:** Both of my parents died within six months of each other, my mother long-suffering from emphysema from smoking. My dedication page references that disease and symbolizes her exit from this realm in the photograph chosen to accompany that dedication. There is an underlying engagement with death here. Moreover, just prior to writing this book, I had a year-long battle with salivary gland cancer, during which I literally became a “wreck and ruin” after several surgeries and 30 rounds of radiation treatments. Coming out of that experience coincided with working on this critical project and on a docu-fiction experimental novel, *Case-X* which, instead of chapters, was divided into thirty radiation treatment sessions, five per each of six weeks. Once inside the very claustrophobic Tomo-Therapy machine, trapped in a horribly confining plastic mask, I imagined I was in a time-machine, letting my mind go anywhere into my present, past, or future; it was a way to cope with the rad treatments. I used that aspect as a narrative device in my book.

Of course, I always had an interest in dystopic spaces as found in Wynn Bullock’s time-exposure photographs of ruins, Robert Smithson’s *Monuments of Passaic* (1967), and sci-fi stories by J. G. Ballard; moreover, my scientific studies (pre-med) spilled over into my *Case-X* book where the dystopic space was the Tomo Therapy machine I was strapped into.



Cover for *Case-X* (docu-fiction, 2015)

**Q:** *Wreck and Ruin*, after your introduction, presents several interrelated “case studies.” Which did you write first?

**A:** I initially did the study on Edward Ruscha’s 1967 artist book, *Royal Road Test* and Lewis Koch’s 2011 book and intallation, *Bomber, a chance unwinding*. I had been a fan of Ruscha’s photobooks ever since Jerry McMillan, my photo instructor at California State University, Northridge from 1971 to 1973, introduced me to his work. He took us students to Ruscha’s studio (they had been close childhood friends) where I got to meet him personally. As for Koch, I had been familiar with his photography for nearly twenty years. After seeing Koch’s show, *Bomber, a chance unwinding*, in Madison, Wisconsin in 2011, I saw the similarities and differences between the eras, and their approach to a similar topic, as worthy of probing. One situated as the start of postmodernism, the other toward its decline. Moreover, my father had been a bombardier in B-17s, based in East Anglia, England during World War II — the very site of many of novelist W. G. Sebald’s famous peregrinations. In addition, Sebald had written brilliantly on

the Allied bombing of Germany in *On the Natural History of Destruction* (1999). So both Sebald and the tragic crash of that WWII “war-bird” also played a part in piquing my interest in the comparison. Sebald’s use of images in his text to expose their failure as documents, his use of appropriation, and so forth, are what my work is about, albeit I didn’t know his writing until the late-1990s, but it was nice to find a person on the same “wavelength” as I — and I adore his work.

**Q:** Anything of influence here from your conceptual artworks from the 1970s? Your scripto-visual pieces?

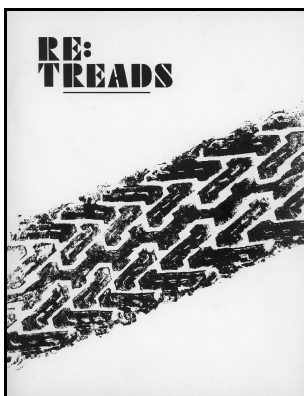
**A:** When I was a photographer in the Air Force (1967-71), my girlfriend at the time gave me a copy of *Aspen* magazine, a boxed presentation of conceptual art, including work by Dan Graham and Ed Ruscha’s *Thirtyfour Parking Lots* (1974). The work therein radically changed my approach to photography, which had been more traditional.

In late 1971, I had just resumed my college art studies, I took a series of “dumb-snapshot” photographs of trash cans on trash collection day in the alley behind my home, and proceeded to write a mock formalist analysis of each pile of trash. Another instance: I discovered a large, empty, but waste-filled, field near my home — this about the same time — and meticulously photographed the junk that covered what had once been a tilled agriculture field. I then created a grid map showing the precise location of each item photographed. It was like doing a survey of a specific territory, noting whatever was found therein, and presenting it as art. What the NTSB do at an airplane crash-site was in the back of my mind. The piece consisted of a laboratory notebook with grid-lined paper (like I used in my lab classes in pre-med) with that map and tipped-in photos; it was presented on a white pedestal so people could leaf through it. Important to me was easy access contrasted with its presentation as a sacred object.

**Q:** I’ve been looking at your two recent productions. Why so many images in both your critical study, *Wreck and Ruin*, and your docu-fictional text *Case-X*? Those images, without the text, seem to take on a life of their own.

**A:** The images not merely illustrate the two texts, but also “dialogue” amongst each other as images. I could have simply erased the text and these books would still make interesting statements about their topics. Overall, I wanted these two books, despite their different genres, to be, to cite from Deleuze and Guattari’s essay “Rhizome,” “a book made of plateaus, each communicating with the others through tiny fissures, as in the brain.”

**Q:** As *Wreck and Ruin* went to press was there other work you would consider treating in more detail therein?



*Re:Treads* (artist book, self-published, 1974) James Huginin

**A:** Yes, I realized that one could extend the “Case Studies” section linearly, like pulling out Ed Ruscha’s famous folding book, *Every Building on Sunset Strip* (1966), engaging the work of many more artists. *Royal Road Test* was very influential on the development of my own conceptual photography in the early 1970s. The photobook’s objective treatment of place was an inspiration for a work I did in December 1973, *Activity*, where my visiting cousin would toss a felt-tip pen at a map of the San Fernando Valley in Southern California, then we would travel to the spot where the black mark was and take a snapshot of the locale with my Rolleiflex. The very first time he tossed the pen, Kurt hit “Art St.” in Van Nuys — no kidding! And the billboard we saw there fortuitously read: “A mind is a terrible thing to waste, contribute to the United Negro College Fund.” You can imagine our glee when we hit pay dirt, twice! The whole project was objectively documented with contact sheet-size

ACTIVITY

12-31-73

INTENT: Determine three locations using chance; go to those locations and document them.

PROCEDURE: A felt tip marker was tossed at a map of the San Fernando Valley (Los Angeles Basin) by a non-artist. The marker was tossed three times.

RESULTS: The three locations hit were: 1) Art St., Sun Valley 2) Raymer St., Van Nuys 3) Dempsey St., Van Nuys

VERIFICATION: The artist enlisted the aid of a 'layman' in this activity who tossed the felt marker and took the photos herein presented. A sworn statement of the authenticity of the chance determination is herein enclosed.

I Kurt J. Neuwirth do solemnly swear that at the above date at 1030 hours P.S.T. I tossed a felt tip marker at a map of the San Fernando Valley, utilizing chance only. No pre-determination was used. The three locations the pen hit were:

- 1) Art St., Sun Valley
- 2) Raymer St., Van Nuys
- 3) Dempsey St., Van Nuys

I do further swear that the artist made no attempt to influence the fall of the marker onto the map, nor did I have prior knowledge of any of the locales herein documented.

I am a resident of the State of Wisconsin, visiting MY COUSIN in Los Angeles.

I am not an Artist. I am a Journalism major.

*Kurt Neuwirth*  
signature

State of California ) ss.

County of Los Angeles )

Subscribed and sworn to before me  
this 31st day of December, 1973

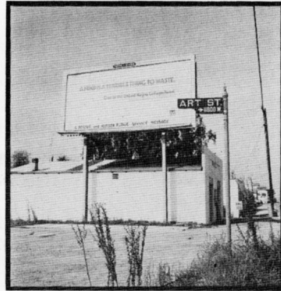
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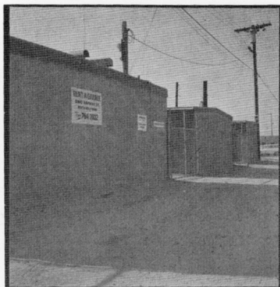
SIGNATURE OF ARTIST:

*James R. Hugunin*

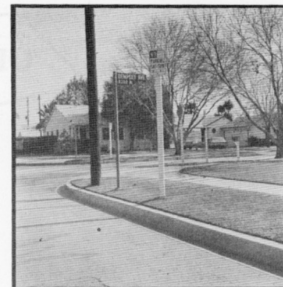
DATE: 12-31-73



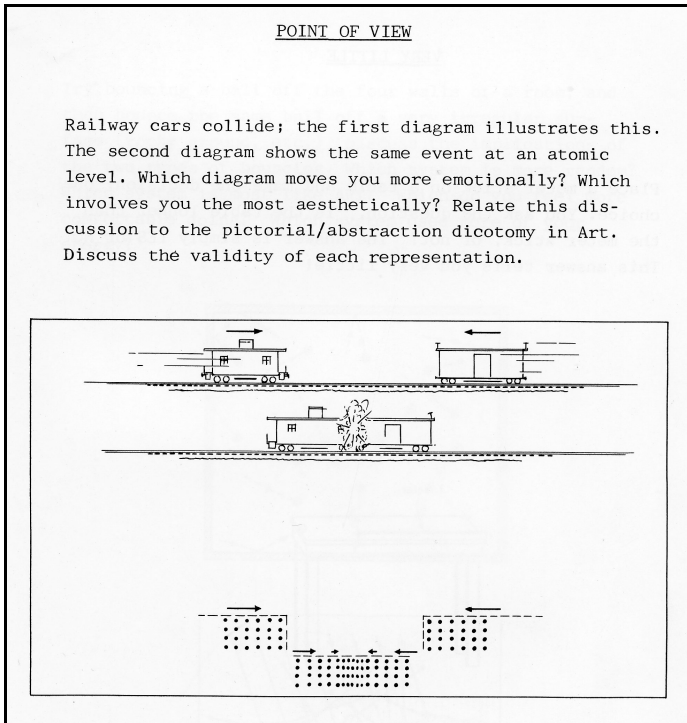
ART ST.



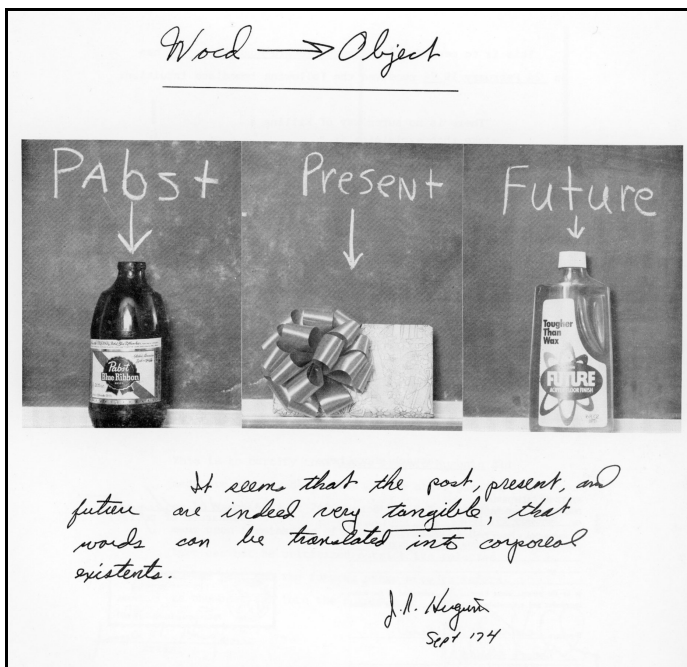
RAYMER ST.



DEMPSEY ST.



*Point of View*, (page from *Re:Treads*, 1974) James Huginin



*Word → Object* (page from *Re:Treads*, 1974) James Huginin

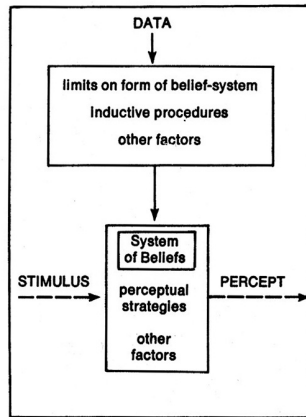
photos and a notarized document verifying the activity as “truthful.” This was part of an ongoing project where I would do one conceptual piece each month. *Very Little* (1974), although having no photo attached, was part of this project. These individual artworks were collected into an artist book titled *Re: Treads* (1974). That title had a postmodernist feel to it.

**Q:** I’d like you to continue this time-travel back to your earliest conceptual photography as that seems to hold a key to your later dual development as a photography critic and founding editor (along with Theron Kelley) of *The Dumb Ox*, [for an interview with Huginin concerning the history of publication, *The Dumb Ox*, go to this url: <http://www.uturn.org/Intervu.pdf>] where you often used dialogue format reviews, even faux interviews, as you’ve continued in your more recent transition into more complex narrative in your experimental novels.

**A:** *Re:Treads’* cover was an indexical sign. That was important. Just as a photograph is such a sign (as per Charles Sanders Peirce’s semiology). Rosalind Krauss’ article “Notes on the Index, Part I” was of great significance to me. So I inked a tire on my small Honda 600 Coupe and ran over a good quality paper stock, then photocopied the inked impression on the huge vertical copy camera at my job — I was a graphic arts photographer at Litton Industries in the Valley at the time and did stats, line negs, and half-tones for presswork, and so all my pre-press work for my books was done at that job, for free. In all my publications from then, headlines were accomplished using Transfer-Type, and body text was pounded out on a huge proportional-spacing IBM typewriter.

That artist book, my third, featured works that were word-image combinations. *Point of View* (1974) is a good example of work consisting of mundane, copped imagery, whose original meaning and context was then altered by appending text, taking the piece’s meaning

into the realm of aesthetics. Another example, but one utilizing a snapshot of common objects placed like clay pigeons on the chalk tray of my studio’s blackboard, was *Word → Object* (1974). It shows my interest, in a humorous way, in the philosophy of time. A topic that has come full circle to be influential on not only *Wreck and Ruin*, but on *Case-X*, and now



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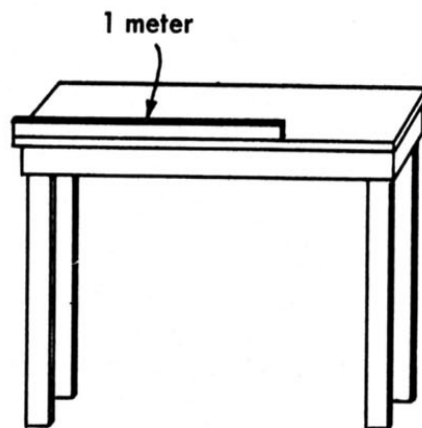
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Data: I Do Not See Reality Objectively, from Re:Treads (artist book, 1975) James Huginin

## VERY LITTLE

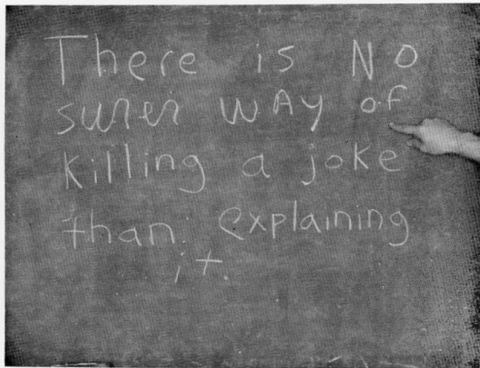
Place a meter stick on a table and make one decision, one choice. You ask the question, "Is the table longer than the meter stick, or not?" The answer is simply YES or NO. This answer tells you very little!



Immediate-----Intuition

This is to certify that James Richard Hugunin has on 24 February 1974 received the following immediate intuition:

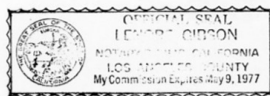
"There is no surer way of killing a joke than explaining it."



attach photo here

STATE OF CALIFORNIA } SS.  
COUNTY OF Los Angeles  
On February 25, 1974 before me,  
the undersigned, a Notary Public in and for said County and State,  
personally appeared James Richard Hugunin  
  
\_\_\_\_\_, known to me  
to be the person whose name is subscribed to the within  
instrument and acknowledged that he executed the same.  
Signature: Lenore Gibson  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Name (Typed or Printed)  
Notary Public in and for said County and State

James R. Hugunin  
(signature of artist)



1-117

FOR NOTARY SEAL OR STAMP

Immediate - - - Intuition (page from *Re:Treads*, 1974) James Hugunin

movie) guest-edited the last issue of *The Dumb Ox*.

My favorite fiction authors at the time were Henry Miller (for his lack of artificial plotting, his surreal language), Aldous Huxley (for his ironic stance and social critique), Donald Barthelme (for his unromantic, objective approach to the short story), and John Barth (for his humor, his probing of academia in *Giles Goat-Boy*). Also, Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* and François Rabelais' *Gargantua and Pantagruel* for their outrageous narrative and wonderful humor.

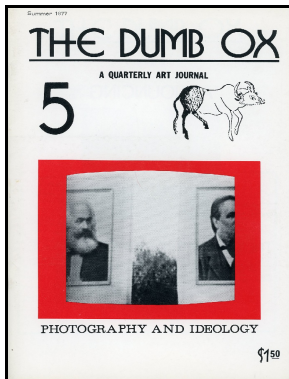
I like writers and artists with a sense of irony and humor. I eventually came to teach a course, "Art and Humor," at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago in the mid-1990s. At every first lecture, I would show my eager students a

on my 500-plus page novel-in-progress, *Finding Mememo* where Einstein and Bergson's conflicting notions of time gets an airing.

**Q:** Very interesting. What kind of magazines and books were you reading back then?

**A:** I was subscribing to *Art-Language*, *Artforum*, *October*, and *Critical Inquiry*, taking meticulous notes on information pertinent to my own interests. I was absorbing Roland Barthes, Noam Chomsky, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Jacques Derrida, Jean Baudrillard, Fredric Jameson, Allan Sekula, Claude Lévi-Strauss, Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty. I was developing my understanding of Structuralism, Poststructuralism, and their challenges to Phenomenology, which has recently had a comeback in academia. I was reading Theodor Adorno, Raymond Williams, and John Berger about the social production of consciousness.

I've always been intrigued with pedagogy. No surprise then that Alan Kaprow's essay "The Education of the Un-Artist" was very influential on me, besides his *Happenings*. I did eventually meet him. He and Paul McCarthy (who was a workmate of mine during a stint doing special effects for Paramount Pictures' first *Star Trek*



slide of another work I put into *Re:Treads*, "Immediate Intuition." The point was to let students know that our in-class analysis was somewhat problematic given the nature of the topic. Dissection most often kills the subject. They appreciated that.

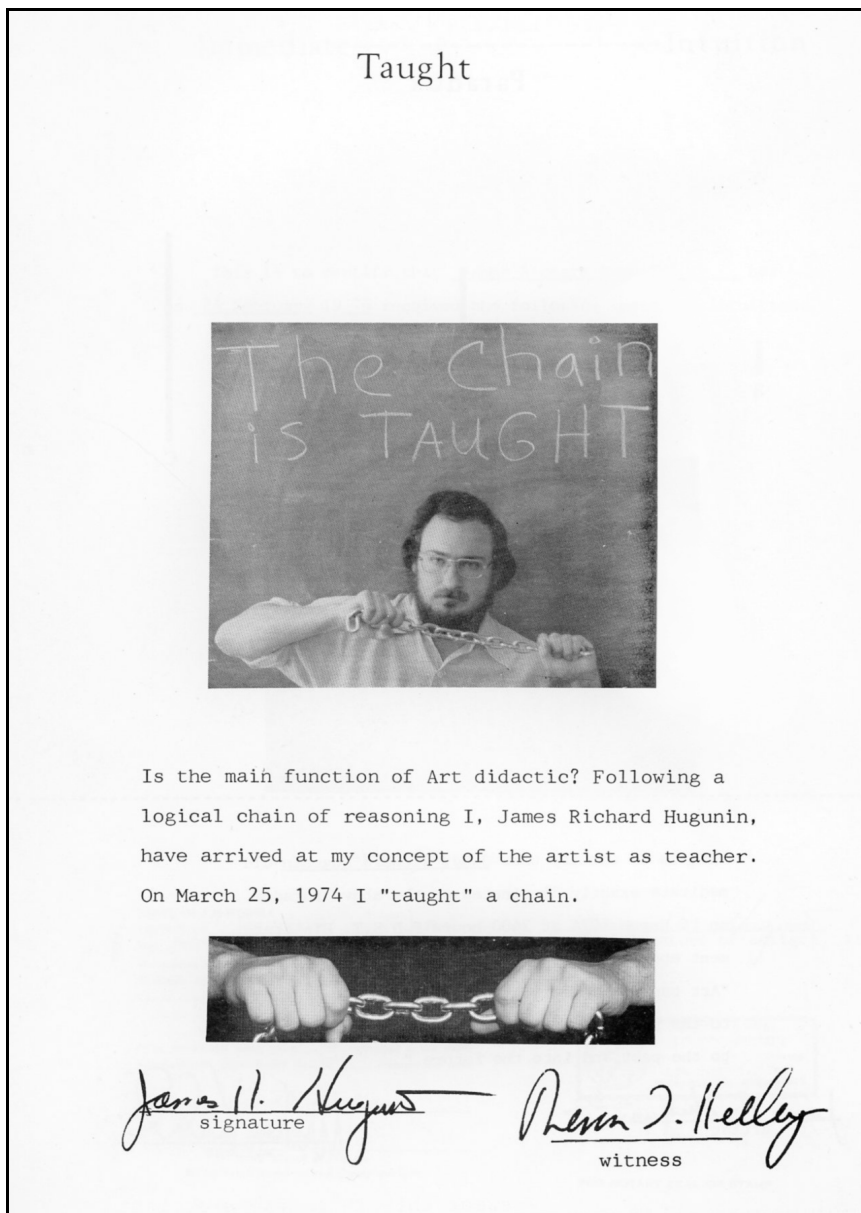
**Q:** And what artists were influencing you besides Jerry McMillan and Edward Ruscha?

**A:** Well, my grad advisor, Robert Heinecken, of course, then there was John Baldessari and Douglas Huebler, both at California Institute of the Arts at the time. I was on a friendly basis with them both. And I studied with Bruce Nauman when at UCLA — admired his work

immensely. But of greatest importance to my creative life was the influence of Lew Thomas in the San Francisco Bay Area. Our ideas concerning photography and language were wholly compatible and he supported my creative work by getting it shown at La Mamelle Gallery in San Francisco, and helped grow my magazine, *The Dumb Ox*, by praising its concern with conceptual photography, and even guest editing our fifth issue, "Photography and Ideology." I, in turn, contributed an essay "Photography and Language" for his NFS Press publication *Photography and Language* (1976). Recently, work from Lew's book and exhibition has been revisited by recent scholars, such as Dominic Jaeckle: [<https://minorliteratures.com/2016/11/02/writing-letters-to-lew-thomas-dominic-jaeckle/>], and gallery owners: [<http://www.cherryandmartin.com/exhibitions/200>].

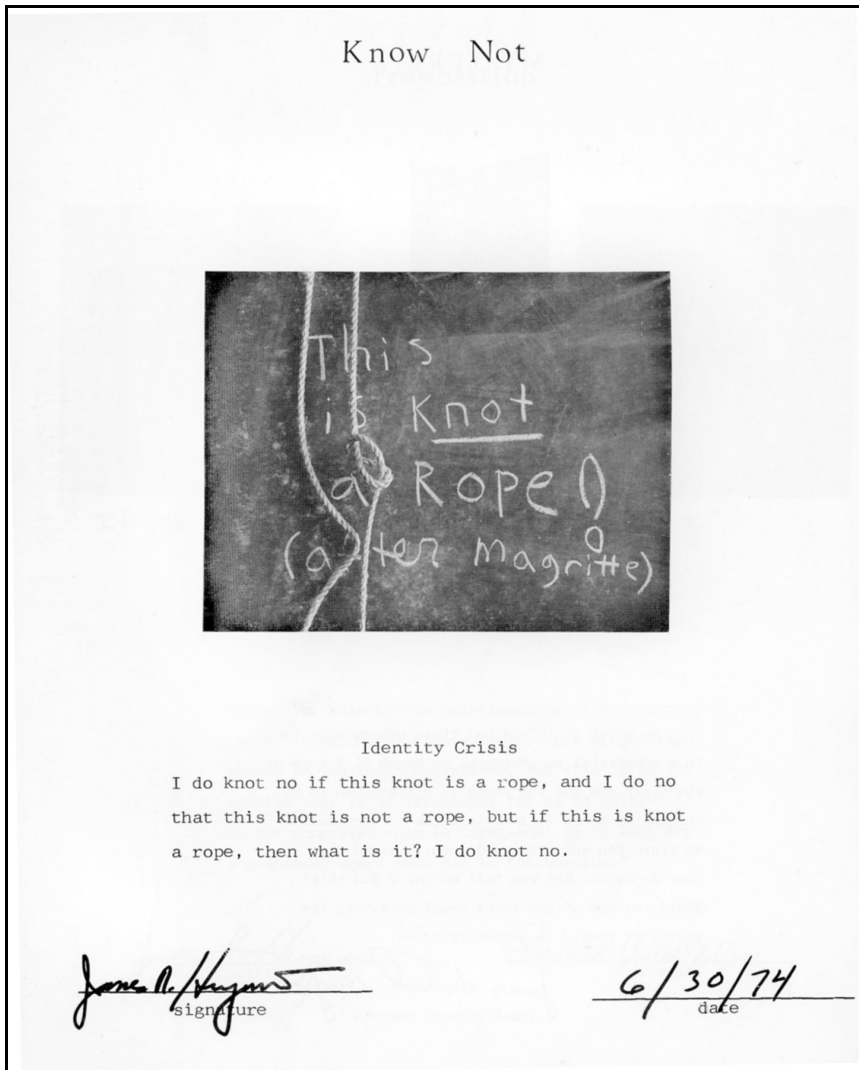
**Q:** I noticed you used a blackboard as a prop in many works of yours at that time. Is there some . . .

**A:** Ah, you caught that! Yes, while in graduate studies under the mentorship of Robert Heinecken at UCLA, I had a school-type blackboard in my studio and used it in my still images and many of

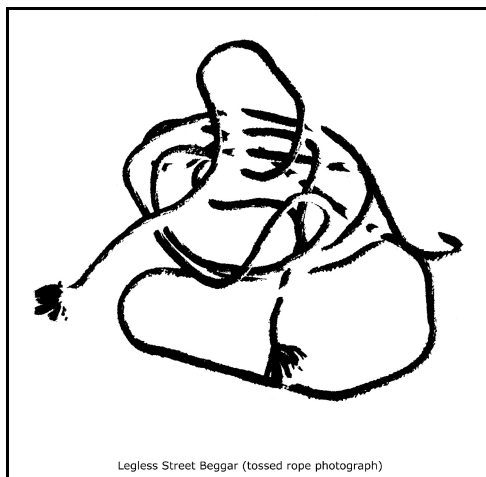


Taught (from *Re:Treads*, 1974) James Hugunin





Know Not (from *Re:Treads*, 1974) James Hugunin



Page from *Tossed Rope Series* (2012) James Hugunin

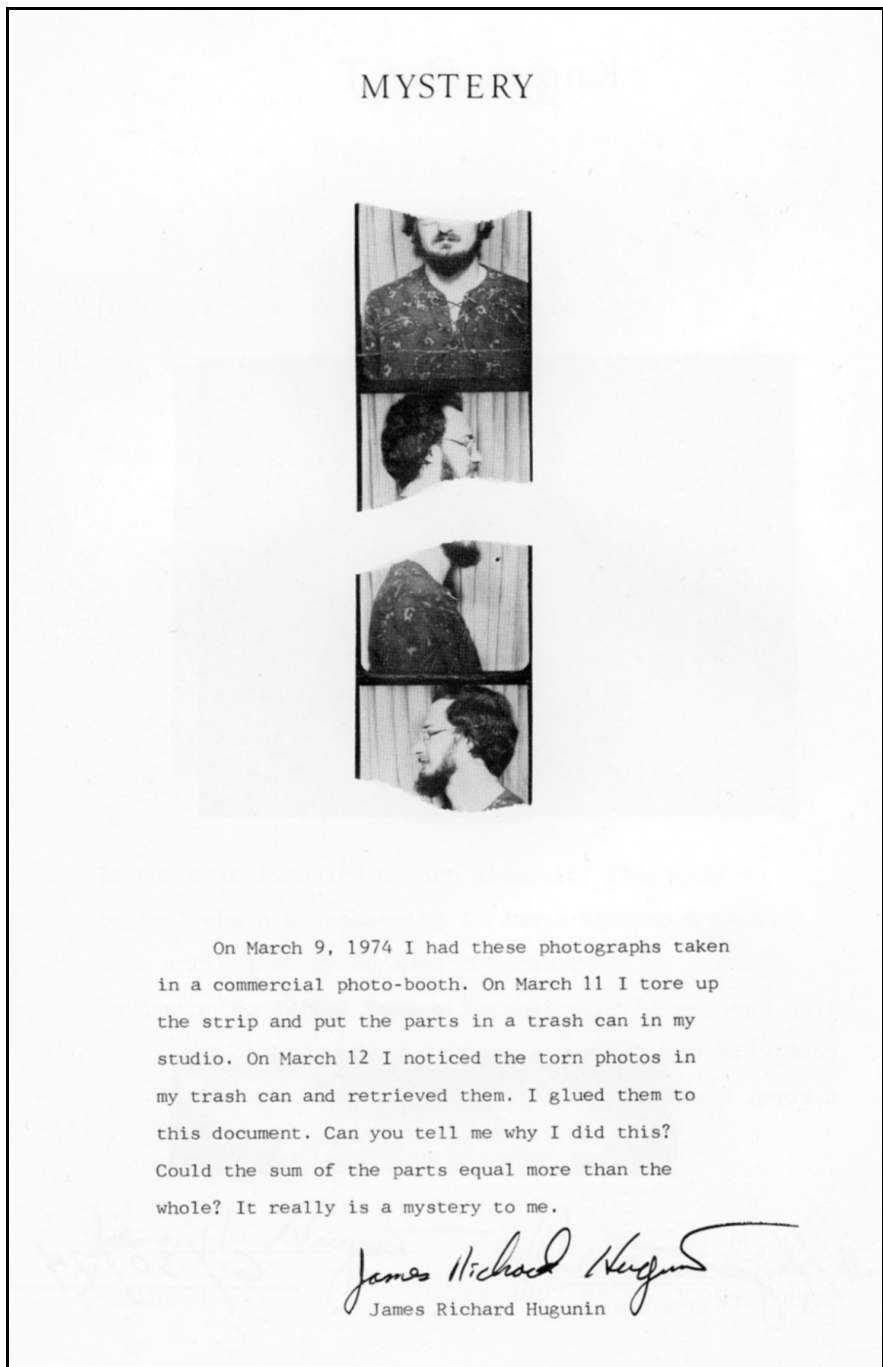
my early videoworks. I liked the pedagogical implications of it, as a professor puts “knowledge” up for young eyes to scan and jot down notes from. That data on the chalkboard was a form of verification and “truth.” Like other works from this time period, I had the artwork verified by a notary public. For me that was a very important element to the pieces. It brought into play our social/judicial system as an aspect of the work.

**Q:** Does that relate to your idea about doing a piece a month for a year around the theme of “knowing?”

**A:** Yes. That series was imagined as a probe on how one knows about things. Often in an absurd way. Often employing visual and verbal puns, as seen in some of Nauman’s work. Two of my favorite philosophy classes as an undergrad were a Theory of Knowledge course and one on Symbolic Logic. I also took to an Ethics class and its’ insights still inform my work. My whole creative life’s work has been caught up in elaborating on the simple question: HOW DOES S KNOW THAT P? (where S is a subject, a person, and P is a proposition about the

world) and what follows from that. These questions also pervade my current docu-fiction.

*Know Not* (1974) was an homage to René Magritte’s clever painting *Ceci n’est pas une pipe* (1948). I liked the way image and text contradicted each other. This was prior to Michel Foucault’s little book on the topic. The piece also featured a rope, which appears in several of my artworks from this period: *Rope* (1973), where I photographed in close-up sections of a six-foot rope, reconstructed it image-wisely with interlocking photographic segments, and tacked it to a wall. In *40 Ropes*, I shot 2 rolls (72 frames) of 35mm film of that six-foot rope after I’d tossed it high in the air and it fell randomly to the ground of fresh black asphalt. I made a one-of-a-kind artist photobook of the chance patterns the rope made. A work influenced by Ed Ruscha’s 1967 artist book, *Thirtyfour Parking Lots*.



*Mystery* (from *Re:Treads*, 1974) James Hugunin

time, I'm was shooting, a young boy came out of the bushes, walked up pushing his bicycle, and asked the same question about needing a crescent wrench. Now if that isn't weird! To top it off, I was in the middle of reading Carlos Castaneda's popular 1971 book about the Mexican *brujo*, Don Juan, in *A Separate Reality*, where surreal events are commonplace. It really shook me up. To this day it baffles me. Imagine the odds. Did I open some kind of portal or what?

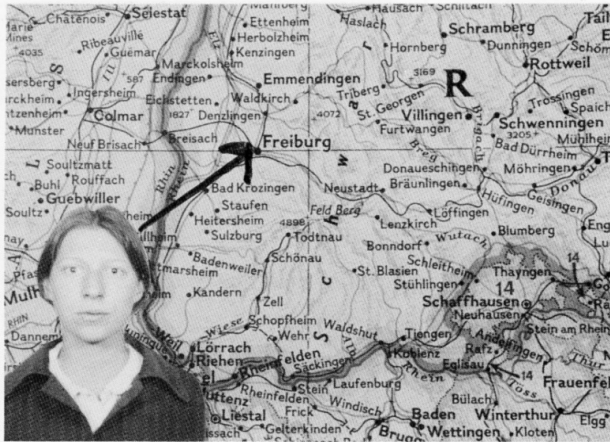
**Q:** Certainly a weird roll of the cosmic dice there. Say, where might I obtain a copy of *Tossed Rope*?

Recently, I re-did the piece as a POD book (*Tossed Rope Series*, 2012), reversing the tones of the rope photos so one gets black lines on a white background, then adding a title to the image based on what the linear shape suggested to me: "Birth," "The Start of a Good Friendship," "Legless Street Begger," "Strangulation scene from Hitchcock's film *Rope*," and so on. The underlying idea was that performing this rope-tossing act indefinitely would result in limning every object/event in the world, just as a million apes typing randomly would eventually write all literature. People really like it. By the way, I have a strange story to tell about shooting those original rope images.

**Q:** Let's hear it.

**A:** I shot the series in a new housing tract that was being built into local foothills near my home, so the road was freshly blacktopped; the area was deserted on the weekend. I photographed on Saturday and Sunday, one roll of film shot each day, and each roll exposed precisely at 10 a.m. to get the right light. Now exactly at 10:20 a.m. on the first day, I noticed a young man pushing a motorcycle my way from the main access road to this area. He asked me for a crescent wrench as his handlebar had come loose. I told him I didn't have one. The next day, same

# Argument Against Idea Art



For a period of one year this girl and I carried on a conceptual (objectless) romance. She was in Freiburg, Germany studying philosophy; I was in California, U.S.A. trying to be an artist. We exchanged documents, maps, and photographs in lieu of corporeal interaction, ie. concept usurped object. No matter to what extent we exchanged ideas we both felt an overwhelming need for each others' bodies. Could this be analogous to the relation between artist and society?

*Argument Against Idea Art* (from *Re:Treads*, 1974) James Hugunin

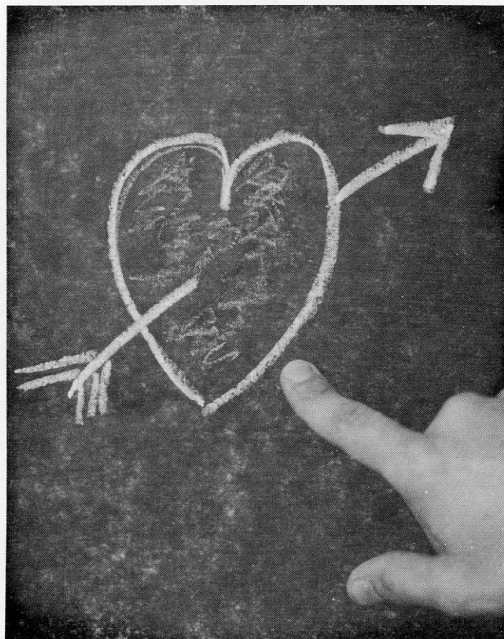
**A:** You can view and order a listing of most of my key books — critical theory, artist books, and novels — at: <http://www.urn.org/HugBooks>. That rope theme, by the way, continued, in a fashion, in my photo-language piece, *Mystery* (1974). There the commercial photo-booth strip of four images of myself depict my body twisting within the frame like a DNA helix. The concept of knowledge emerges as the textual section inquires why the discarded strip was retrieved and turned into "art." The piece has Duchampian aspects to it, touts the "magical touch" of the artist to turn chaff into wheat, so to speak. This process where context changes meaning always has interested me. Oh, and one more thing, that notion that "the sum of the parts maybe equaling more than the whole" reverses the terms of a famous statement by Aristotle, which happens to be our current understanding of what Bucky Fuller called "synergy." I was making fun of that assertion in a light-hearted manner. I was also making a sly personal reference to my own special case of dyslexia whereby I often reverse any terms, words or numbers, that are set in a paired arrangement. I like the play of language found in puns, alliteration, antanagoge, antiphrasis, non sequiturs, palindromes. I dig irony, contradiction, uncertainty, appropriations, allusions . . .

**Q:** I get it. I get it. I can see why Postmodernism must've seemed

custom-made for you personally.

**A:** Yes. If it hadn't come along, I'd have had to invent it! PoMo problematizes knowledge, decenters the subject. I often bring that aspect into my critical reviews by using a Socratic dialogue format, a duel between a duo who look at the same

## ERRATA



THE SENTENCE BEGINNING ON LINE 4, PAGE 61, OUGHT TO READ AS FOLLOWS:

Briefly, this form is characterized by the use of an interjection like a sigh (which is pronounced much like the word 'sigh' is spelt and was once pronounced in English).

PAGES 70-71 CONSTITUTE THE NOTES TO PAGES 68-69. THE INSTRUCTION (SEE NOTES OVERLEAF) AT THE TOP OF PAGE 70 SHOULD BE IGNORED.

"Errata" from *Re:Treads* (1974) James Hugunin

artwork, yet develop opposing views on it. I always argued each person's position passionately. In my own artwork, like in the piece "Argument Against Idea Art," I did something analogous. My own propensity for idea art and intellectual distance and estrangement from society are both challenged by my real-life experience with this woman. I am arguing with myself about mind and body, individual and social body here, and asking the viewer's opinion. Yet, I'm doing so in a conceptual mode.

**Q:** The theme of romance is once again broached in *Errata*. Can you discuss that piece?

**A:** That was purely fortuitous, that piece. I opened a new book and an errata sheet just fell out. Its odd phrasing struck me and I immediately went to my studio's blackboard and drew the arrow-pierced heart, the cliché for love. Then, in a Baldessarian gesture as seen in his *Choosing Chocolates*, pointed my index finger at it, snapping a Polaroid. By the way, many of these artworks we've been discussing were shot on Polaroid and pasted onto the text document. The key connection between the image the bizarre text is the word "sigh." It's the conceptual bridge between the text's original context and meaning and its now refunctioned meaning. I really like this piece. Remains a favorite of mine.

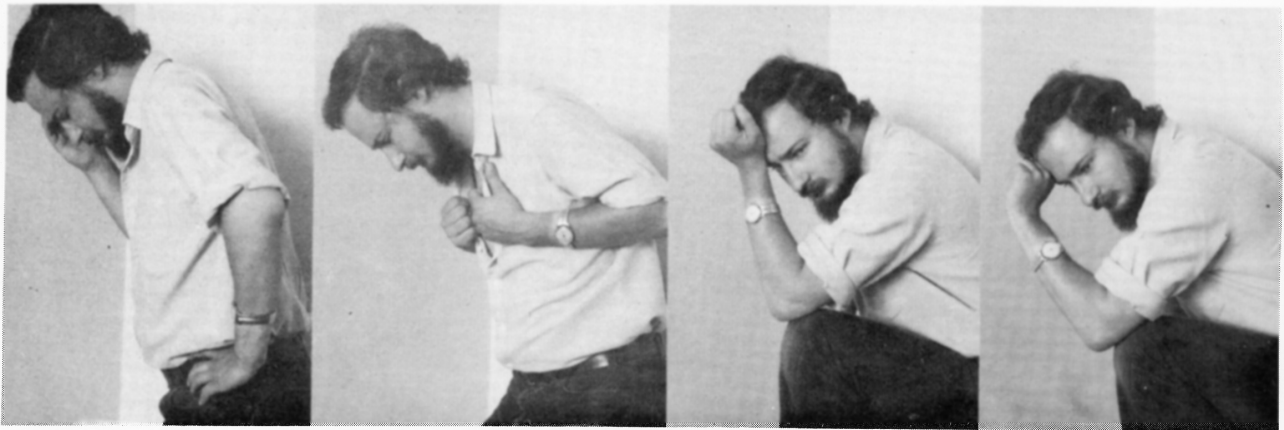
**Q:** You didn't alter the text at all?

**A:** Nope. I just dropped on my studio floor like manna from heaven. Luck, chance, have always played an important role in my life and my creative work. Why quantum mechanics is of great interest to me. Bohr doesn't bore me like he did ol'

Einstein. I enjoy playing dice. Used to consistently clean out my sister of her pennies when we were kids. Particle physics, uncertainty, chance versus determinism, are worked into the book I'm writing now, *Finding Mememo*.

**Q:** Speaking of choices, of possible interpretations I personally found your *Multiple Choice Question* (1974) one of the more interesting pieces in *Re:Treads*. It deals with the hermeneutics of reading body language — Body Art must've had an influence here — and anticipates the 1980s craze with posed photographs, rejecting the street photography.

## Multiple Choice Question



Select the answer

This series of photographs represents a succession of mental states I had when:

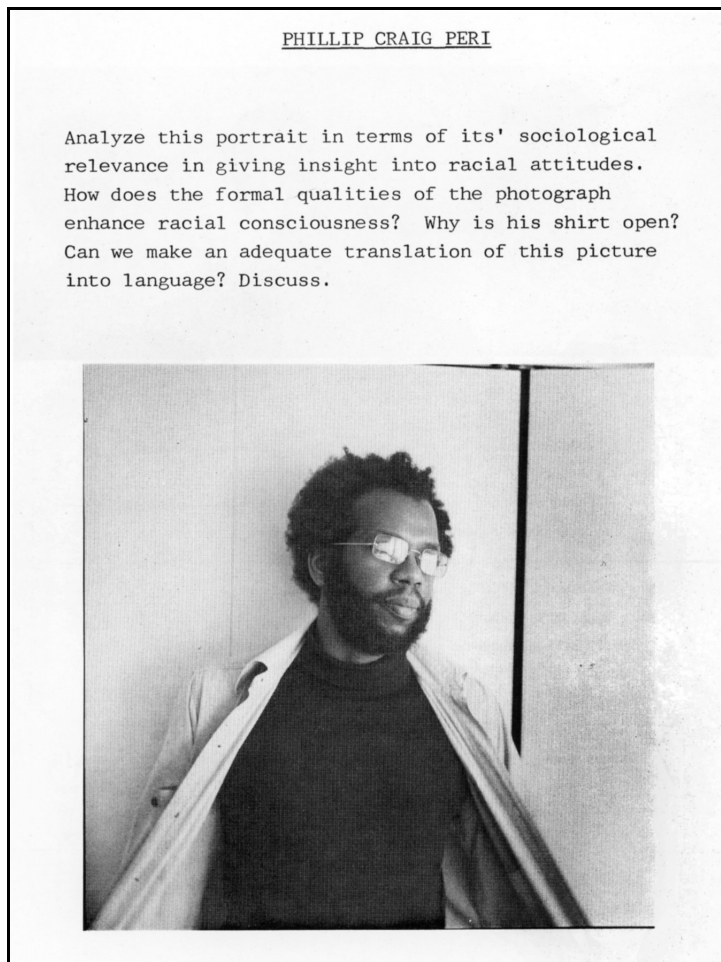
- a) I found out that my best friend had committed suicide after he was given orders to Viet Nam. He gassed himself.
- b) I was trying to work out the artwork you are now reading. The implication being that art is hard work.
- c) none of the above.
- d) all of the above.

answer here \_\_\_\_\_.

*Multiple Choice Question* from *Re:Treads* (1974, artist book) James R. Hugunin

**A:** Oh, yeah, love that one too. Again, it's shot with Polaroids and pasted onto paper, then a half-tone and line combination are made and printed. I was posed in the corner of my studio so the "fold" of the corner was carried into the image as a slight tonal change which makes the image look a bit like a book opened slightly. The poses were meticulously staged, a series of mock gestures imitating grief. I purposely posed so a line drawn over the in-line heads would gradually be sloping downward to the right, a kind of graphic objectification of the emotional decline implied in my bodily gestures. I was referencing Body Art here, of course, and playing with something that always intrigued me, multiple choice questions. In school we were barraged with tests replete with these types of queries. It dawned on me one day that life is just one large set of multiple choice questions! It is our existential condition, *n'est pas*? I'm surprised Sartre didn't use them — literally.

**Q:** In inquiring about "mental states," the piece has a Phenomenological-Existentialist tenor to it.



Phillip Craig Peri (from *Re:Treads*, 1974) James Huginin

**A:** That is correct. But filtered through a more Structuralist embodiment. In listing the choices to the question, I purposely made them ultimately contradictory: "d" (all of the above) would cancel out answer "e" (none of the above). Answers "a" and "b," respectively, take us into a personal loss of a friend and into art-making as process.

**Q:** Yes, the work has many levels of reference. A kind of conundrum. Mental puzzle.

**A:** A puzzle, yes. I've always found Zen koans to be wonderfully provocative, teasing, and *simpático* to my own mode of thinking. I tried to bring an element of that into my work and into my pedagogy.

**Q:** Speaking of pedagogy, many of your works seem addressed to a potential student. I can imagine an actual college test booklet with many of these pieces listed as actual questions. For instance, your 1974 *Phillip Craig Peri* piece.

**A:** I agree. That is why I used the blackboard in many of my works and the question format. My early video-work was staged as if I was addressing an invisible audience of students. These kinds of works ask the reader-viewer to complete them. They are blatantly "theatrical," in Michael Fried's use of the term. By the

way, I've always disliked Fried and his minions — and the guy is getting a renewed audience these days.

P.C. Peri and I served in the same photo lab during our Air Force days in northern California. Upon discharge, he went on to work with a gaggle of radical photographers in Berkeley called Photon West. They documented the People's Park occupation and other Bay Area events for radical mags. He remains a close friend even today, and he is still committed to



Same model Polaroid as Hugunin's



Same model Argus C-3 camera as Hugunin's



American Cameras series (1980s) Victor Landweber

radical politics; he does socially-relevant documentary video for Portland Oregon's Flying Focus Video Collective. One righteous guy. That shot of him was done in my studio, the closet door was pushed slightly open, again to make the background appear to be a large book opening up.

**Q:** It's also a Polaroid shot?

**A:** I was using at the time two methods of making Polaroids. I had a Polaroid Land camera that was popular with Sunday snapshoters, which produced a small print, and then I had a professional 4 x 5 inch Sinar view camera fitted with a Polaroid back which I used to shoot Polaroid's positive/negative film. Ansel Adams had used such film. With that technology, I could use the original Polaroid as is, fix and wash the negative and print from that. It depended on the effect I wanted, really.

P.C. Peri was shot with the Sinar. But if it was important to give a very casual, funky look to the piece, the cheaper Polaroid was used instead. This was just prior to the market advent of the Polaroid SX-70 camera, which I eventually bought and utilized as well.

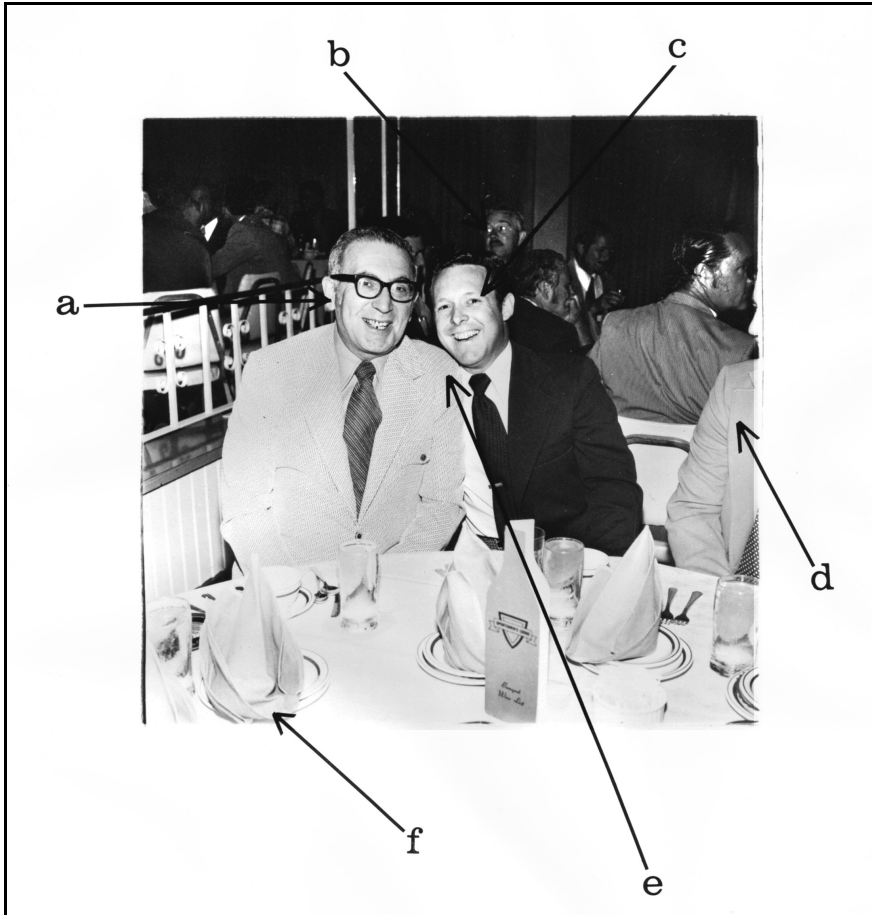
I really like old cameras. My first was a Kodak box camera, then I upgraded to an Argus C3, then a 1950 model Exakta VX; finally, my repertoire of cameras extended to Rolleiflex, a Leica M-3, an SX-70, and for view cameras, a 4 x 5 Sinar and an 11 x 14 Deardorff. I eventually acquired a 4 x 5 pinhole camera too. Now, of course, all my equipment is digital. My liking for such vintage equipment was given full expression by a classmate of mine at UCLA, Victor Landweber, in his wonderful *American Cameras* series from the 1980s, large Cibachrome prints of frontal shots of classic cameras limned in a bright backlight. He's having a retrospective of that work at Bellows Gallery in La Jolla, California. Check it out.

**Q:** I will, thanks. But can we refocus on our main discussion?

**A:** Sorry. I can wax nostalgic over the old analogue days. There is one multiple-choice question piece not in *Re:Treads* that bears mentioning. It was realized as a postcard. It was titled *Hew:Yew* (1975) and was mailed out as a "Mail Art" piece. It presents a list of analogies — there were always analogy questions on the SAT — and art and poetry are often understood as analogies or embodiments of analogic thought. I tell people this is the "Rosetta Stone" that can unravel the mysteries underlying all my creative efforts. It broaches issues concerning I-Thou, Althusserian "hailing," inequality, and brutality in a very succinct form.

**Q:** *Hew: Yew* sounds like "Hey, you! Yew can be taken in two ways."

1) HEW:YEW::	
a) I:you	
b) hay:you	
c) few:many	
d) butcher:ewe	
e) creature:victim	1) a b c d e o o o o o



Aaaa? (originally the print was put in a clear plastic bag, then used as a book cover, 1974, 2012)

**A:** Yes. "Hew" is chopping using cutting blows and "yew" is a type of tree. There is a Pacific yew (you), a Western yew (you), a Canadian yew (you), a Chinese yew (you), a Japanese yew (you), a Florida yew (you), a Mexican yew (you), a Sumatran yew (you), and a Himalayan yew (you). It's a multi-cultural set of you's, obliquely referencing racism, the chopping blows we can suffer as social beings in a racist society. Interestingly, the piece has even more relevance today, what with Trump and the rise of American-brand fascism.

**Q:** There is another image of your, the one you used on you POD book P-H-O-T-O--L-A-N-G-U-A-G-E. It's unlike the other work we're looked at.

**A:** The image was appropriated from the negative archives of Litton Industries. A casual snapshot of two table mates mugging for the camera at an official function covered by one of the

Litton Industries photographers prior to recording the awards ceremony to follow the dinner festivities. This sort of imagery common, printed and given as a gift to the people in the photo. Kept up good will between our department and the higher-ups. Well, I copped the image and added via Transfer-Type the alphabetical characters with arrows pointing to . . .

**Q:** The question is *why*?

**A:** To suggest that images, even this silly one, float in a sea of language. Look at the image. The "a" points to the chummy guy's right ear and I imagined him hard of hearing, saying "Aaaa?"; the "b" points to an area Behind the pair; the "c" points to the other guy's organ of Seeing; the "d" points to the man Divided in half by the frame; the "e" points where the guy might wear Epauettes on his coat; and the "f" points to a Folded napkin. Silly, just as silly as the image. Also, there are arrows here slung at two corporate-types whom I don't find appealing. A bit of aggression here if you want a psychological interpretation. In highschool, I was a crack shot with a bow and arrow.

**Q:** Would I be wrong to also see a conceptual re-imagining of the iconic image of St. Sebastian here?

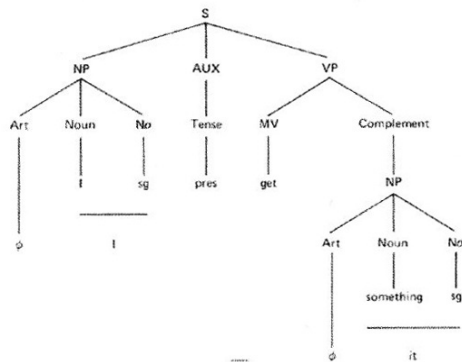
**A:** Not at all. I do have this "thing" about that saint being pierced by arrows. But here language pierces.



# STILL LIFE

5

I do not get it.



by *not* insertion rule 2:

not

by *do*-insertion rule:

do

by flip-flop rule:

do pres

do

1



2



3



4



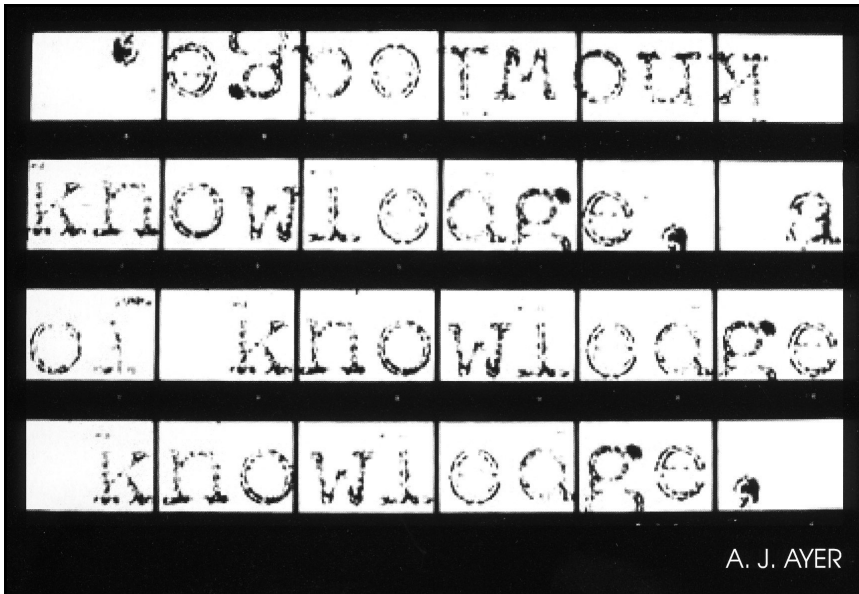
# WITH WOMAN

J.H. '72

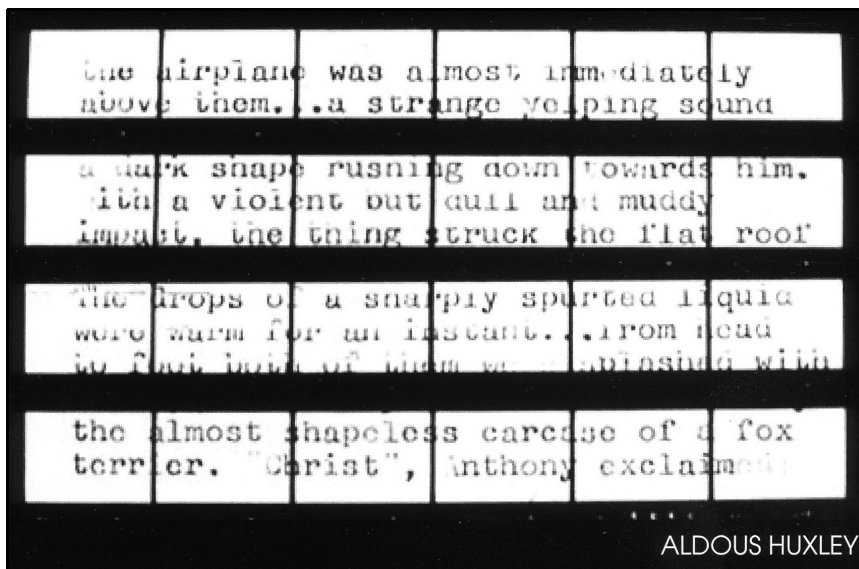
Still Life with Woman (cut photo-booth strip and text, 1972/74) James Hugunin

**Q:** Oh, one work we didn't discuss yet harkens back to the rope theme of *Mystery*. I'm referring to: *Still Life with Woman*.

**A:** I prefer read the title out loud as "Still — Life with Woman." The pause is significant. It changes the title into a statement. It implies the perpetual entanglement with Woman, in this case, my own mother — genetic entanglement as well as emotional. I did the work two years previous to *Mystery* as a photo-booth strip alone, then later reworked it, cutting the strip, flipping it around, and adding the text.



*Knowledge* from the "Copped Contact Sheets" series (1973) James Huginin



*Aldous Huxley* from the "Copped Contact Sheets" series (1973) James Huginin

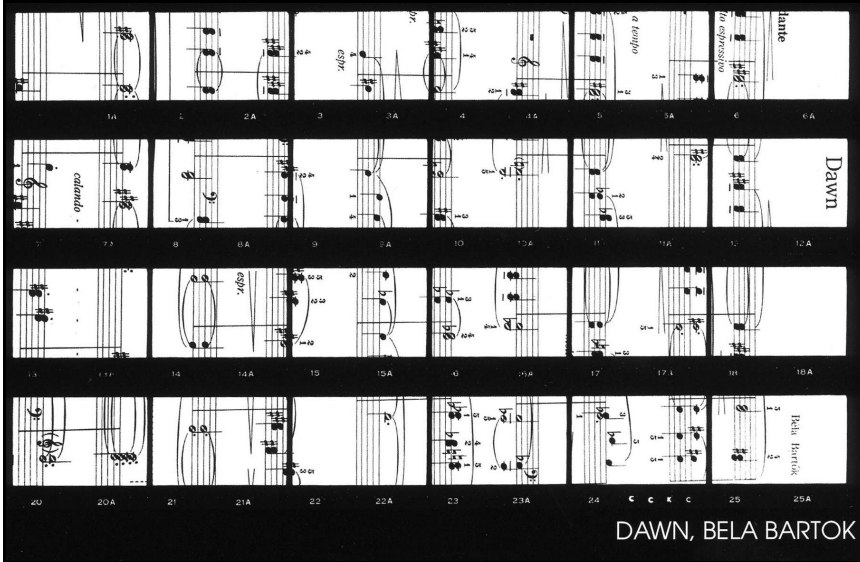
**Q:** Yes, you employ a photo-booth strip here as in other works. And like in *Mystery*, it is cut in half.

**A:** But rather than carelessly torn, it has been precisely cut in half lengthwise and the strip flipped over and reconnected. The visual result is quite akin to a DNA helix, wouldn't you say? My mother (laughingly holding a tray of fruit to make the still life reference plausible) and the propagation of genes are the subjects here — my origins. It is nice that my mother's name is Jeanne — a pun at work here, but only to those who know her name. So people might say about this work: "I don't get it," so I've included that observation in the work itself, in the text that is followed by a Chompskian syntax-tree diagram. Again the piece touches on ontology, epistemology, entanglement, puns, Structuralism, the genre of still life, and photo-language.

**Q:** You seem to be attracted to using photo-strips, from photo-booths and contact sheet strips.

**A:** I am. I like the cinematic quality of such imagery. I decided to do a series that appears to be contact sheets of 35mm film with text, but it's a simulation thereof.

**Q:** Yes, it would seem to be hard to expose each 35mm frame and get the result you come up with here. I notice how words are impossibly split by the frame edge, as seen in the words "strange" and "struck."



*Dawn, Bela Bartok* from the "Copped Contact Sheets" series (1973) James Hugunin

A: What I did was fully expose a roll of 35mm film shooting a white wall and overexposing it. The result was black frames, of course. I then cut the film roll into strips and contact-printed them onto high-contrast lithographic film. The result was a black sheet with clear rectangles where the filmic image would normally be.

Q: So you obtained a film mask?

A: Yes. Next I took an unexposed sheet of 4 x 5 inch cut film, that I would normally use in my Sinar view camera, and cleared in a hypo bath, so the film was devoid of anything. Once dry, that

film was typed upon with my mother's old 1930s Royal typewriter with its bad, near-dead, ribbon that produced gaps and imperfections. That positive image was reversed onto litho film as well, so the image would print black on a white field. Thus, I two pieces of film were used to make the composite. I put the litho film mask down over the unexposed photo paper and printed the litho with the reversed text on it, making what seems to be a contact sheet. *Knowledge* (1973) was the result. I did this with a number of appropriated textual fragments, like from Aldous Huxley's famous scene in *Eyeless in Gaza* (1936) where a couple has just made love on the rooftop terrace of a high-rise and look up to see an airplane; suddenly a small black object is tossed out and falls toward the couple; it turns out to be a black dog, who splatters onto the roof before the startled pair — it's a plot device known as *Deus ex machina* (akin to my role in doing the composite

image). Therein, something extraordinary occurs and resolves a previously unresolved problem/situation. In Huxley's novel, you have the two lovers at a stage in their relationship where it seems meaningless they should continue seeing each other. After the horrific incident with the dog, the woman decides on the bloody spot to leave the protagonist. I had this aspect in mind in choosing that excerpt to work up this artwork. I once used a musical composition in *Dawn, Bela Bartok* (1973). It was important to me that I use appropriated material. This, of course, is a key element in my current "mash-up" docu-fictions. The fragment of text in *Knowledge* was taken from a book on knowledge theory by famous British logical positivist philosopher, A. J. Ayer.

Q: In the Huxley quote, I love that exclamation, " 'Christ,' Anthony exclaimed."

A: I know. I saw that and flashed on a Roy Lichtenstein comic strip painting. Yes, that was intentional to make an allusion to Pop Art.



*Verbal Translations of Famous Photographs* (detail, the books with photographs were placed on pedestals, 1975) James Hugunin

Famous Photos Series

(a verbal translation of)

Les Krims, more gore. Sadistic society r...
ning riot. Is there any real difference
between actual and virtual murder? Has L
es Krims committed an insanity as perver
ted as if he had stabbed these women to
death himself? Why are we so magnetically
attracted to violet death? Do we want to
kill, does Les want to kill? Is the phot
ographer basically sadistic in his relat
ion to his subject? "Medium Cool" and al
l that stuff. But can we get into the co
ntrivedness of it all? Just how many pin
ts of blood did it take for this set of
ictures? Did you really enjoy it Les? I j
ust bet you did! Composition with an ins
anity for particulars, a real Nominalis
t is Les Krims. But those fucking pancak
es! Did you work for the International h
ouse of pancakes Les? Is this series the

death of art? Hey, maybe someone will rea
lly pick up on the idea and perform the m
urders using real blood, a real knife, an
d real corpses! Art can change life, i
nto death. The aesthetics of compositiona
nd your talent for irony would be missing
you say? Does he have a "problem" about h
is mother? Does Les like the female sex, I
mean really like the opposite sex? Is hea
nother De Kooning? The laundry room scene
is one of the best with that pile of dirt
y clothes over her head. Did Les sell thi
s series and if so WHO bought it? The pol
ice should tall him. But you are screamin
g out for something, and we hear you. Weh
ave nice quite places for people like you
where they try and help you. Maybe you ca
n work it out huh, Les? I was there mysel
and I solved my hang-ups so there is hope.

I love you despite everthings Les, I am d
art of you, and you a part of me. I owey
ou something and maybe this translation i
s necessary for me to distance myself fr
om your influence as well as pay homaget
o you. Your work is personal and so I ad
dress a translation to you in hopes tha
t you will understand me as I try to und
erstand you. The angles are all about 45
degrees down from the horizontal. Your e
e just slides down into all that gore an
d damn it I feel like shit. Tits and but
tocks lead to the slaughter in various h
ousehold areas. Bathrooms, kitchens, lau
ndry rooms, rooms sans furniture. No pla
ce is sacred anymore. And back to those s
tack O' wheats; can America eat pancakes
again in all good conscience? An all Ame
rican breakfast, an all American murderm

ystery, they do cohere well together, per
fectly logical. Why are women always thev
ictims in this world? Is there no equal o
f misery at all? If the shoe fits wear i
t Les, it really isn't such an enormous m
istake as you would have us think. Oh, yea
h why do you think Les is such a nut on t
echnique when his photographs are documen
ts that overlay content on form? Is it th
at retentive neurosis coming to thef
ore again, as it does in all too many pho
tographers? Hail Ansel, etc. Oh I am notr
eally doing credit to the series of pictu
res herein translated? Sorry, but if I di
d really get into it I would be just as g
uiltily as Les is of complicity in murderin
g these poor women. Who posed for the sho
ts anyway? I want their names. Are you ri
pping off the Concept Artists 'story art'

THE INCREDIBLE CASE OF
THE STACK O' WHEATS
MURDERS (detail) 1970
by Les Krims

Verbal Translations of Famous Photographs (type on paper, framed, 1975) Huginus

Famous Photos Series

(verbal translations of)

BLACKBLACKBLACKBLACKBLACKBLACKBLACKBLACKBLACKBLACKBLACKBLACKBLACKBLACKBLACK
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BLACKBLACKBLACKBLACKBLAC v to have that very personalBLACKBLACKBLACKBLACKBLACK
BLACKBLACKBLACKBLACKBLACKtouch in his work? Like does EmmetACKBLACKBLACKBLACK
BLACKBLACKBLACKBLACK Gowin's use of the vignette to make hisBLACKBLACKBLACKBLACK
BLACKBLACKBLACKBL photographs constitute that stylistic quirkBLACKBLACKBLACKBL
BLACKBLACKBLACK which art historians love to gloat over? It doeBLACKBLACKBLACKBL
BLACKBLACKBLACKs allow him to make his compositions center-seeking KBLACKBLACKBLA
BLACKBLACKBLACKor seem to spin off from a central axis. A new way ofCKBLACKBLACKBL
BLACKBLACK ordering 'reality' in the image is generated. Yet his uBLACKBLACKBLAC
BLACKBLACKBse of the circle is made more subtle by the dark vignetteBLACKBLACKBLA
BLACKBLACKd edges of picture which resolve themselves into ordinary fBLACKBLACKB
BLACKBLACKectangular borders. In some of his photos the circle yields uBLACKBLACK
BLACKBLAC to your awareness only gradually, so subtle is the use of sBLACKBLAC
BLACKBLA hadow and vignette. A mandala is overlaid upon our visual expBLACKBL
BLACKBLAerience, the dark edges of our fears enroach upon what we see.ICKBLACKBL
BLACKBLAN this picture by Gowin, the forces of light and dark struggle tCKBLACKB
BLACKBLD overwhelm the subject, Edith, who is pregnant. Two windows areBLACKBLAC
BLACKBLen on either side of Edith, one is square, the other has the shaCKBLACK
BLACKBLde pulled down to form a rectangle. The bed is seen in perspectiveACKBLAC
BLACKBLso forms a parallelogram in the center of the composition. An ovalACKBLAC
BLACKBLnight stand is next to the right window, while the walls and the cACKBLAC
BLACKBLaeling have horizontally striped wood work or wall paper on thCKBLACKB
BLACKBLAem. The intent here seems to be to use a room in conjunction witCKBLACKB
BLACKBLACof circle, square, rectangle, oval, parallelogram- all grapheBLACKBLAC
BLACKBLACd out on the grid of space Gowin's setting provides. The fo3BLACKBLACKB
BLACKBLACBrming of the child in Edith's womb is associated with the oldBLACKBL
BLACKBLACBLorming of abstract forms in space. Edith becomes, liketACKBLACKBLAC
BLACKBLACKBLAhe abstract shapes, a Platonic Universal for all creatCKBLACKBLACKB
BLACKBLACKBLACon. For a brief moment we have crawled out of PlatonBLACKBLACKBLA
BLACKBLACKBLAC's proverbial cave to glimpse the eternal reality oBLACKBLACKBLAC
BLACKBLACKBLACKBf higher truths. Emmet has paid his dues to thBLACKBLACKBLACKBLA
BLACKBLACKBLACKBLAe straight print freaks, however, in his workCKBLACKBLACKBLACKB
BLACKBLACKBLACKBLACKit is quite necessary to be so fussy aboBLACKBLACKBLACKBLACK
BLACKBLACKBLACKBLACKBLut where one outs the shadows and hBLACKBLACKBLACKBLACKBLAC
BLACKBLACKBLACKBLACKBLACKghlights, mystery and all thatBLACKBLACKBLACKBLACKBLACK
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EDITH, 1971
by Emmet Gowin

Q: So you graduated UCLA in 1975. Were there any
works from that year you would like to discuss?

A: In late 1975, I did a series called "Verbal Trans-
lations of Famous Photographs." And it had a suc-
cessful exhibition in a small L.A. gallery. What I did
was find well-known photographs in books, then
measure the images' exact proportions and draw a
rectangle in that proportion in pencil on a large sheet
of paper, then, using an ordinary typewriter, I filled
that space with text, text copied from the artist's
statements, from critics commenting on that photo,
from my own critical observations. In other words,
where the silver gelatin image would be, I replaced it
with a verbal substitute, a mash-up of responses to
that specific image from different sources. The
"verbal translations," as I called them, were matted
and framed and hung on the gallery wall like a photo-
graph would be for exhibition. Since the images used
as the sources were in books, they were put on
pedestals and opened to the page showing the image
used in the translation. The gallery space I used was
a narrow hallway. I put the framed textual versions
of the images on one wall, and books on pedestals
against the opposite wall. One looked at a framed
image on the wall, but read text, and then turned
around behind to see an open book with the cor-
responding photograph. You could not see both
image and text simultaneously. That was important
to the installation and its effect on the viewer-reader.

Q: Whoa! A reversal of the way one would ordinarily
encounter image and text.

A: You got it. Remember the old adage, "A picture is
worth a thousand words"? I had that in mind. The
show, its overall title was "Writing Pictures," was well
received. In this fashion I displayed a "verbal trans-
lation" of four of Les Krims' infamous The Incredible
Case of the Stack O' Wheats Murders (1970), Emmet
Gowin's fish-eye lens image of his pregnant wife,
Edith, Danville, Virginia (1971), Brassai's portrait of
Jean Genet (1955), Alfred Stieglitz's Steerage



(1907), and Brett Weston's *Garrapata Beach, California* (1954). As a joke, at the end of the series, I hung a frame within which Transfer-Type on paper read PHOTOGRAPH NOT AVAILABLE.

**Q:** A trope one sees often in the media. Clever. I suppose the book on its corresponding pedestal against the wall was open to a blank page?

**A:** Indeed. I've always been intrigued by what it means to frame something. In 1976, I did a wall piece once that consisted of a wooden frame with one side removed, its back removed, and hung on a white wall. With a felt-tip marker I wrote in cursive inside that frame, on the wall, AN OPENED ENDED PROPOSITION. The writing extended outside the missing edge of the frame.



James Reflected, AIC Museum (2015) Lewis Koch

Later, studying about Derrida's undermining of the notion of "presence" and his subversion of the stability of the *ergon (work)/parergon (frame)* binary had a profound influence on my thinking and practice.

**Q:** The issue of work/frame and rethinking their relationship, problematizing frame and what's framed, using Derrida's characteristic "logic of the supplement" to subvert binary oppositions, as utilized in his *The Truth in Painting* (1987), became important to you.

**A:** Yes. Increasingly so. Derrida's "logic of the supplement," I believe first detailed in *Dissemination* (1981), has had a deep effect on my approach to criticism and creative production. Speaking of overcoming binary oppositions, my photographer friend, Lewis Koch, honored me with a sly reference to my interest in Derrida and framing with a nice shot of me at the Art Institute of Chicago: my reflected image with a frame. Futzing with opposites, it combines both a Purist style (sharp) with a

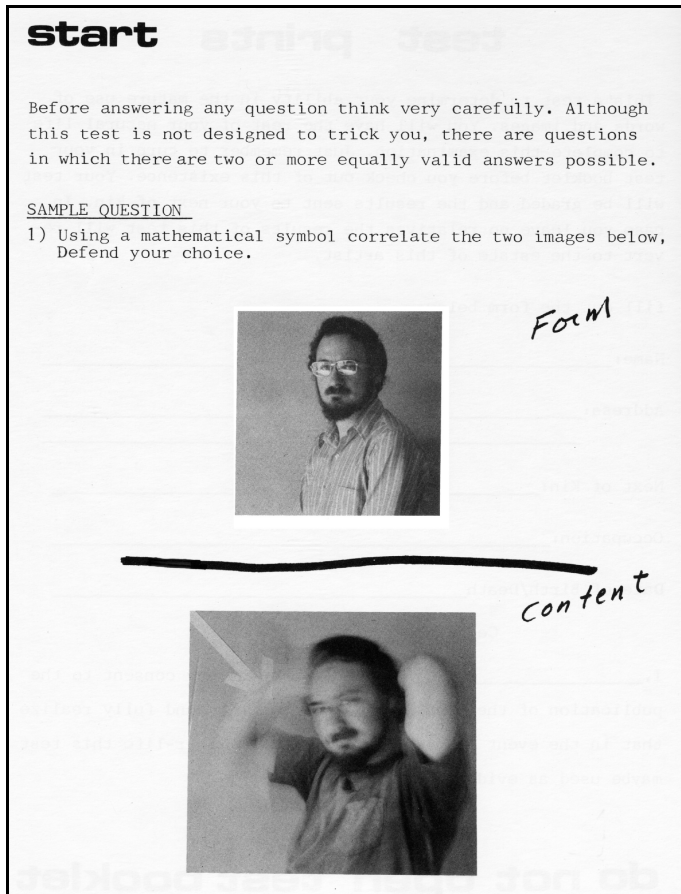
Pictorialist treatment (fuzzy). No either/or logic here.

By the way, at the time I did those "translations," I was researching the complexities of translation, a fascinating problem as it brings an author, two languages, and an interpreter onto a field of textual contention. I even wrote an essay about the topic in my little self-published book *Frequently Rejected Essays* (1982) and illustrated it with one of my "verbal translations." Another pet interest of mine is *ekphrasis* — a graphic, often dramatic, verbal description of a visual work of art, either real or imagined — because criticism, I think, involves partaking of *ekphrasis*, as well as translation. In case you haven't noticed, my scripto-visual works have always had an element of criticism to them. *Verbal Translations of Famous Photographs* was my attempt to apply these practices within my photo-language aesthetic.

**Q:** Oh, you know I forgot to ask you. I noticed some typos in those "translations" and the texts all end abruptly. What's that about?

**A:** Very much done on purpose, that. I saw the typos as akin to spots the photographer might have missed during re-touching and the abrupt line break had a poetic quality to it. Remember each line of type in the translation, to keep the hard edge of the "print," had to end precisely at the pencil line frame. You can't see that pencil line itself because it was

drawn very lightly and the litho film didn't record it. I still remember today how excited I was as I typed out these speaking images. I knew I had something of significance in the progression of my work.



Sample Question beginning *Doing Art* (artist book, 1976) James Huginin

**Q:** I've noticed you make use of yourself in many of these images. A bit narcissistic, maybe?

**A:** That pertains to the underlying theme of "knowing." Remember my epistemological question "How does S know that P?" I am that S, that phenomenological subject. I did an artist book soon after graduating UCLA, *Doing Art* (my friends humorously pronounced it like "Boing," that is, "Doying Art") in which I say "I've done enough art now, and now it's *your turn*" (by the way, this was an inspiration for the name of my online art e-zine, *U-Turn*), your turn to do the art, so the book consists of exercises in which the doer makes his or her own art within certain parameters I set for them. You can see this is an extrapolation from the earlier participatory aspects of my multiple choice questions, but here the freedom of the doer is much greater, permitting true creative expression. The book does not become "real art" until it is completed by the doer, and since each doer will complete the book in different ways, very different artist books will be so generated.

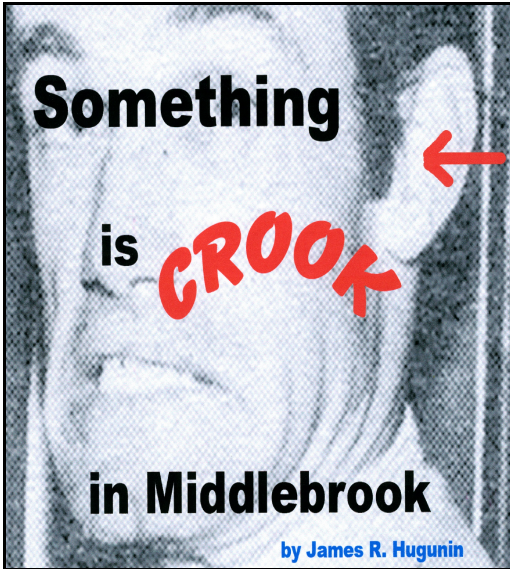
**Q:** Hmm. Very clever. The result is very open-ended.

**A:** That is because I function only as a catalyst. By the way, this type of participation is very different from the type found Allan Kaprow's Happenings. Doers in his Happenings are very much under his direction. He's already laid out the piece, given it a "trajectory" which the doers of the work execute. If you look closely at those Happenings, it very much Kaprow playing the *Capo*. His ego is always there in those participations, but cleverly disguised. "Programs" would've been a more accurate term for that approach to performance.

**Q:** I'd like to end the discussion of your artist books with a curious piece you and your wife executed in a Prague Museum in 2014. It was your first trip to the Czech Republic was it not?



*Man and Language, Museum, Prague* (inkjet print, 2014) James Huginin/Marianne Nathan



*Something is Crook in Middlebrook* (experimental novel, 2012)  
James Hugunin

**A:** Correct. Kafka had always been an important writer for me and to be able to visit the Kafka museum was very satisfying. I also saw the Karel Zeman museum featuring his amazing early special effects for Czech film. I once worked in Hollywood in that area. Assisted on some of the effects for *Star Trek: The Movie* (1979). On my second trip to Prague I was one of eleven jurors of the 2015 Czech Press Photo Competition. On our initial trip, my wife and I went to a major museum and fortuitously ran across a show of contemporary Czech artists who were using language in interesting ways. I staged an odd pose and had my wife make the exposure. My bald pate here is akin to a face whose identity has been washed off. My body twists uncomfortably in an awkward attempt to read the abstract typography behind — *Man Encounters Language*, something like that was what I had in mind. I liked the formal relationships in the image and it continued the “knowing” theme of my earlier work. Language has always been a major concern of mine, from childhood on. So no surprise that in my creative work, language begins to overtake photographic image, such that today my primary mode of expression has taken

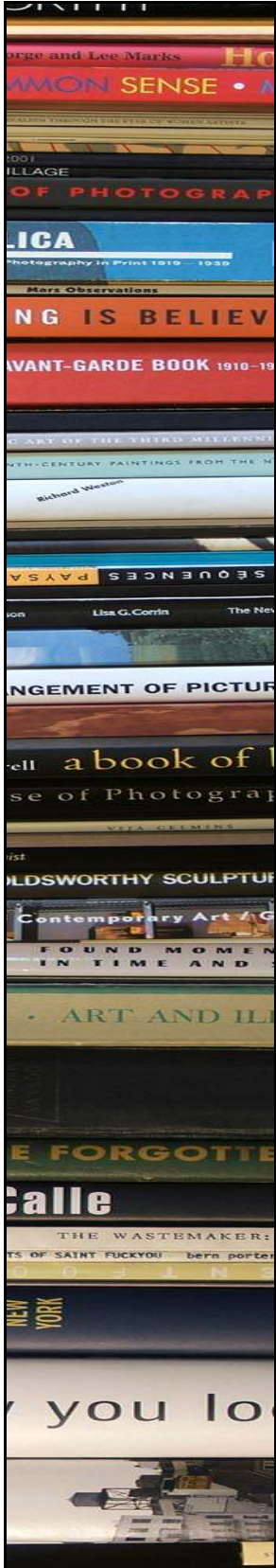
written, narrative form, albeit images always play a strong role. My earlier use of quotation and appropriation has continued into a form of expression I see as creating a new genre, the *Ludicakadroman* (playful academic novel). The first realization of this genre was my experimental novel, *Something is Crook in Middlebrook*. The title is Aussie slang for something being “screwed up.” Middlebrook is the last name of the protagonist, Arthur (Art), who has asked me (in the frame-story) to ghost write his biography, but in so doing I must only use text from the myriad books in his diverse library because, as Art, an obsessive autodidact, puts it: “I am what I read.” He lives in a golf ball-shaped dome home with a cockloft from which he spins on a stool, scanning his world with super-hearing that developed after a brain aneurism gave him shotgun-mike hearing in his left ear. At one point, Art’s spin turns his “weird ear” southward and he audits the gunshots and cries of agony arising from south Chicago street violence, an area that is now being referred to as “Chiraq.” The narrative, largely constructed from shards of “the already-written,” is largely about how Art’s lived-world is changed by this alteration to his senses.



*Great Moments in Art History: John Baldessari*, from *Something is Crook in Middlebrook* (experimental novel, 2012) James Hugunin

**Q:** Marshall McLuhan quipped on how the extension of our senses via technology is changing us and our relationship to the world. Creating, permit me the pun, you’ve inspired me, a “heard mentality.” Did you have . . .

**A:** Yes. McLuhan was much in my thoughts when writing that novel as was the postmodernist quip, “In the Beginning was the Word, now there is just the quote.” Again Phenomenology and Post-structuralism are theoretically mined for expressive purposes.



Q: Just out of curiosity, who is that on the cover image?

A: Remember I told you about my stint at Litton Industries as a graphic arts photographer, well, one of our roving photographers snapped that guy mugging at a dinner function where he, Barry Goldwater, Jr., was a guest speaker. He was hamming it up after too many martinis. I copped the shot and used it.

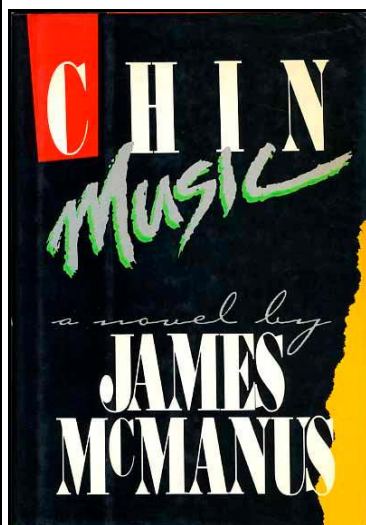
Q: Can we look at some pages from this “firsty” of yours?

A: Indeed. Here is a slice of Art’s library as photographed by Lewis Koch, books that, as ghost-writer, I copped from to tell Art’s story. Then there are two pages from the frontispiece (see following pages). All my docu-fictions have elements of fact in them. *Crook* is based on the fact a person I knew had a “brain-event” in a museum in which he lost most hearing in his left ear. In my narrative, that event results in the “super-hearing,” and propels the story forward. So these frontispiece images show an ear and also underscore the academic element with citations, and citations that underwrite the use of appropriation in the book. I keep up the ear theme in an image in the book spoofing “Great Moments in Art History.”

Q: I see. I like that image and the one with the ear on the T-shirt with hands appearing to pull in the sound.

A: That image was copped from famous deaf British percussionist Dame Evelyn Glennie. Here’s the first seven pages of section 1.0 that follows the Introduction. It tells of how Art ended up with his “weird ear,” a blessing *and* a curse. By the way, the key inspiration for *Crook* came to me after reading one of our Writing Department faculty’s early books, *Chin Music* (1987). In James McManus’ story, Raymond Zajak, star pitcher for the Chicago White Sox, is in the hospital recovering from a head injury when missiles are launched that mark the nuclear destruction of the city and the beginning of World War III. As Chicago goes mad with

panic, Zajak awakens from his coma and wanders into the streets on his way home, although home is only a vague concept in his muddled brain. One feature of the narrative caught my attention, Raymond is literally *hearing* the city as much as seeing it as he traverses it in his weird state of mind. I even do homage to that book by inserting a similar scene from it into mine: a guy committing suicide by jumping off the Hancock Building, his body bouncing against the trapezoidal shape (narrow at the top, broad at the bottom) as he falls yelling from that famous structure. This was fictional, but I worked in a scene of a real tragedy that happened in our city at the time I was writing the book: iron girders fell off a tall crane in a high wind and crushed a lady in a car below, Art hearing the awful clank of metal-on-metal above, and the smashing of the car below.





**Q:** After *Crook* you went on to produce a strange text, *Tar Spackled Banner* . . .

**A:** That book, actually, was completed well before *Crook*. My publisher, Eckhard Gerdes, founder of The Journal of Experimental Fiction (<http://www.experimentalfiction.com>) wanted to publish it because it was so visual, pertinent to today's social issues, and involved me in inventing a future patois — a mix of Esperanto, Ebonics, and Hacker/Cyberpunk jargon, and neologisms — spoken in a territory known as "Arboretum." I had to teach myself Esperanto to do it. This text was supposedly written by a time-traveler, J. A. Ellis, who had already written a document of his travels to this future society, *Aboretum*, written prior to *Star Spackled Banner* but only produced in a very limited comb-bound edition, 1999, and was now relating the violent events that led up to the founding of that utopic society some years previous. Presciently, those events were the rise of American fascism, a civil war of liberals and against the extreme Right in a highly fractured society led a the maniacal monoculturalist not unlike Donald Trump in size and demeanor. *Spackled* was written just after the awful bomb attack on the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City on April 19, 1995 and the rising numbers in a variety of neo-Nazi manifestations in the USA.

**Q:** I can see why your publisher wanted to take it on.

**A:** The next two books came fast. *Elder Physics*, *The Wrong of Time: Stories from an Elder Home* (2013) was a series of interrelated stories based on my personal experience with tending to my elderly, bipolar, father while he was in an elder home. While doing so, for over four years, I met many astonishing characters, shared some very good and very bad moments with my father, and gathered factual data so odd no fiction writer would deem it believable enough to use.

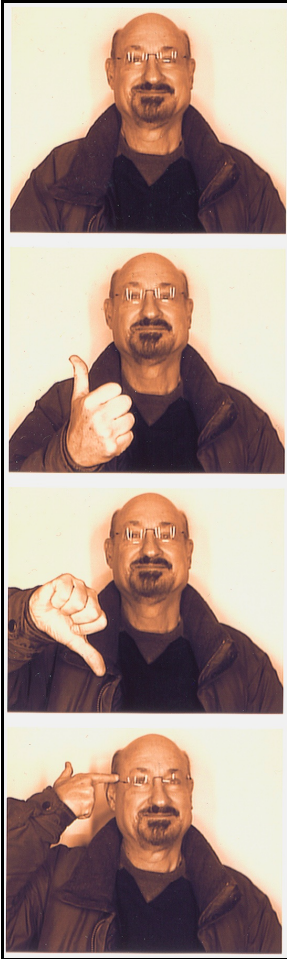
**Q:** Yeah, reality can be stranger than fiction. I do love the title. . . A very personal book, I imagine.



**A:** Yes. It was hard writing the final death scene. I literally broke down when I finished it. But I was able to develop my characteristic *ludicakadroman* aspects, an experimental approach, what with meta-levels of textuality. My father is writing his memoirs, and I'm assisting him; he belongs to a writer's group in his elder home and guest writers come in to discuss the residents' writing. The memoir exists within the main text where his overall experiences are detailed in sections of blue type. Similarly, in *Crook*, when Art was hearing with his "weird ear," the text was rendered in bold, blue.

**Q:** But your *magnum opus* is *Case-X* that came out in 2015?

**A:** Yes. It documents a traumatic number of months in my life when I was fighting a skin cancer metastatic to my left parotid (salivary) gland. Three surgeries and radiation therapy finally got the best of a squamous tumor. My surgery was, ironically, on Halloween in 2011. While I was awaiting the biopsy to see if the tumor was cancerous or not, I did a photo strip piece reminiscent of my earlier 1970s works, *Benign or Malignant?* which expressed my anxiety over the forthcoming results. I lost my left salivary gland, and then my beard to the healing rads, my



*Benign or Malignant?* (photo-booth strip, 2011) James Hugunin



Parotidectomy, left salivary gland surgery

moustache survived. Instead of chapters, the narrative in this book is structured by thirty "treatments," or sections (six weeks of five radiation treatments per week). Within each treatment section my mind wanders across time. Short bridging narratives link the separate sections. Interspersed throughout are images copped from a variety of sources.

**Q:** And this also at the time you were working on *Wreck and Ruin*. Interesting how you were able to express yourself in two registers: the theoretical-critical and creative prose.

**A:** Well, my new genre, the *ludicakadroman*, is an attempt to bridge that opposition. My tactics in so doing are often opaque to many readers. Some object to the overt plagiarism, which Art in my first novel calls "playing jarism," that I employ. If you think about it, photography "plagiarizes" Nature or God. Language, like Nature, is already out there. I am just "taking it" like a snapshot "takes" Nature. I make use of Language as photography does with the world around us. My dual citizenship in the visual arts and literature propels me to a mode of expression that can grate on people in the literary arts.

**Q:** Yes. Your world uncomfortably bridges visual art and literature. I can imagine there are misunderstandings about your work from both sides.

**A:** You bet. Literary types hate my appropriational strategy and the use of images, whereas the visual types want the type deleted. But the visual types do get my attempt at doing something different. The literary types are so much more conservative, locked into realist forms of narrative and story. They tell me to adhere to their dictates of realism, but that would be like in the realm of photography to limit yourself to doing merely photo-journalism all the time.

**Q:** But book publishing is more driven by economics and the audience, the readers, than the visual arts. Doesn't the dynamics of publishing today demand that your work appeal to a broad range of people? I mean the "Dumb it down so even I can understand it" mentality?

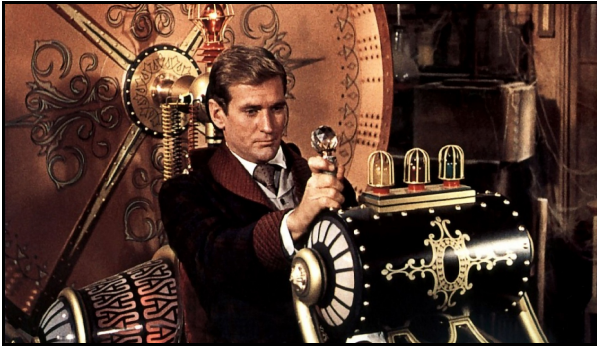
**A:** Of course, my experimental work is seen by only a very small fraction of readership and has only been published due to a very adventuresome editor who has supported my odd productions. My audience is, of necessity, limited. I would not bother to write if I had to do something that had to be purposely made to be "popular" in the book world sense. It would be a waste of my creative time. We don't like it when our visual artists pump out visual pabulum, so why do we encourage it in our writers? There's an alternative, single-owner run bookstore in my town, but even they won't feature my work and this in a town rife with academics and creative types who would be more receptive to my work. You can imagine what the responses are from the mainstream bookstores, albeit, online services like Amazon.com are wonderful purveyors of my material. So, in a way, my books do go out into the world, but akin to manuscripts in a

bottle tossed into a vast ocean, or as dangerous submarines in a sea of authorships.

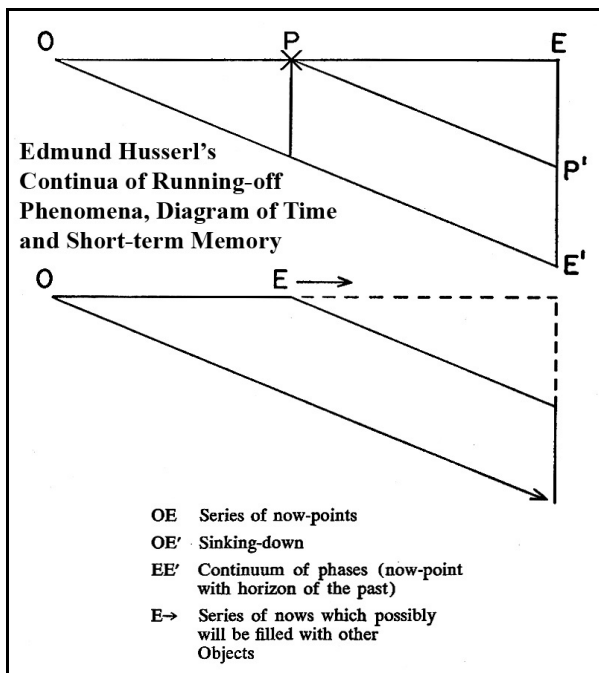
**Q:** Nice. Let's look at some pages from *Case-X*.

**A:** I did revision after revision on that first treatment section, trying to capture what my diagnosis and treatment experience was like. Reading it some years later, it still creeps me out.

**Q:** How did you arrive at that century-by-century list of gain and loss? Both funny and painful at the same time.



*The Time Machine* (1960) Dir. George Pal



From Edmund Husserl's *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time* (1893 - 1917 (1928)

**A:** What phenomenologist Edmund Husserl would call "the now-point," and which he'd see as always fated to be sinking back into the past in his classic study of such in *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time* (1928).

**Q:** What I like about your retrieval of the past, and the future in other of your works, is it's done in a manner that is humorous and yet biting. Again that duality, a *both/and* rather than *either/or* mode of handling binaries which you've discoursed on here awhile back. There is a consistent Proustian aspect to your work.

**A:** It was a funny way to situate my trauma within a larger social context of traumas. But that type of ambiguity is what my writing tries to foreground. It is basically the way I experience, or should I say, construct, my world.

**Q:** Again, memory plays an important role in your narrative here. The TomoTherapy machine as time-machine, but which goes into the past more than the future.

**A:** In *Case-X* my future was a tenuous one — you can follow the details of my case in the medical reports included as documentation in the book — my past certain. So no surprise that text moves backwards in mental time as the rad treatments move forward in time to that, as yet, uncertain cure.

My favorite film as a child was *The Time Machine* (1960). I was taken with the idea of seeing the future and the past. My interest in utopias/dystopias comes in here too. No surprise that an early art photo of mine was titled *Why Don't They Build a Monument to Memory* (1969). It was a composite print of two exposures: a man's face and a tombstone.

Remember, due to my photographic memory I can travel to any point in my life and replay an event in detail. My own brain is a built-in time-machine. I exploit that gift in my writing.

**Q:** It would seem you are uncomfortable with your present. You find your narratives going into the past and projecting toward the future more often than remaining in the NOW.

**A:** Proust's notion of involuntary memory is important to me.

**Q:** Your novels are all quite lengthy. Looking at your manuscript in progress for *Finding Mememo*, it is going to be around 500 pages.

**A:** I said memory is important to me, it was to Proust too, and we both have produced tomes. In fact, notice that if you elide the space between *to me* it becomes *tome*! That sort of justifies the length of my books.

**Q:** Ah, okay. But I see that sort of nonsense . . .

**A:** *Seeming* nonsense.

**Q:** . . . *seeming* nonsense is important to you.

**A:** Yes. As in poetry, line breaks, spaces, and so forth have expressive purposes. I always include some poetry in my books, usually a mash-up of fragments from already-existing poems which I have re-functioned for my authorial purposes. Here, let me read an excerpt from *Case-X* about being inside the radiation machine:

*O! You round one, who flies above, and takes in  
and gives away on a pewter-colored platen, that section  
of U.S. Route 50, the Loneliest Road in America — you.*

*You can ne'er know its circuits, only open maw and inner tum  
into which your lucent body comes to burn, sometimes hum.  
Quickly, simply, artlessly by Hi-Art, nature mediated.*

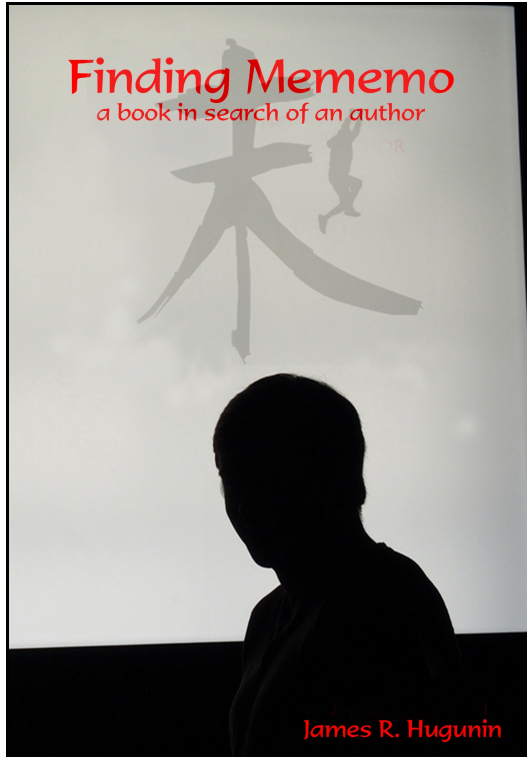
*Abducts the throw and releases its killing rays.  
That into which inside objects cannot remain — like you —  
too dangerous to linger.*

*You go offward and inward, here versus there collapses.  
What arrives are atoms of perception, but not a book,  
a photograph of a world of pains and troubles.*

*Hero is no hero without the dark mirror of the monster  
who, into a grey world, whirls you where -lethe and -alethe  
share a bond and your injury becomes means of making.*

*Tomo confident — All goes onward and outward.  
With push of a finger to raise your raysed corpus,  
then raised into raised hands you are again.*

**Q:** Interesting. Wacky and profound in the same breath, so to speak.



**A:** Thanks.

**Q:** Tell me about the inspiration for your newest project, *Finding Mememo*? I can from your preliminary manuscript glean that it is long, filled with images, and largely images of people jumping, falling, from buildings and other high structures.

**A:** In fact, just as *Case-X* was motivated by the trauma of my cancer treatments, *Finding Mememo* was sparked by another trauma, witnessing a young black man jump from a second-floor balcony inside Chicago's Art Institute Museum, just inside the museum's modern wing's entrance. For an instant, I thought the guy was re-enacting French artist Yves Klein's famous leap from a wall.

My friend, Lewis Koch, and I were getting our tickets when we heard a piercing scream and saw someone leap up on the waist-high barrier wall and leap forward, falling some thirty feet — WHAM! — onto the hardwood floor right in front of us horrified museum-goers. Blood slowly seeped from his skull. No kidding, this event really happened! We were on our way to see a show of Belgian artist James Ensor's work, strange imagery, what with skulls and other death references. So, ironically, the stunned crowd was directed away from the scene

down a hall and into the Ensor show, where they were greeted with more death images. Visitors already in the show were curious why we, with horror frozen on our faces, were milling through the space. The guy survived the fall, but last I heard was in a coma.

Need I say, Lew and I were still shaking an hour later over lunch. Weirdly, no mention of this event was made on television news. The museum higher-ups managed to have it suppressed. I noticed a small piece on it in middle of the daily paper a day or so later. It seems the man was still in a coma. No follow up article, so I never did find out the fate of that poor soul and why he did what he did. But it did provide me the grist with which to begin my new book. I wanted to expose that event to a broader public. I just couldn't get my mind around the idea of someone going into a museum to commit

suicide. I mean buying a ticket, perusing the art, then having a psychotic break in front of little kids and then kablooy!

**Q:** Most surreal. I can see why that would get the creative juices bubbling.

**A:** So what I did was imagine an academic character, Hy "Mememo" Grader, who mysteriously has either jumped or was pushed from a building during a faculty event. His friends, one a private investigator, try to find out the truth about his demise. Their probe finds them looking into a mysterious cult who are supposedly developing a

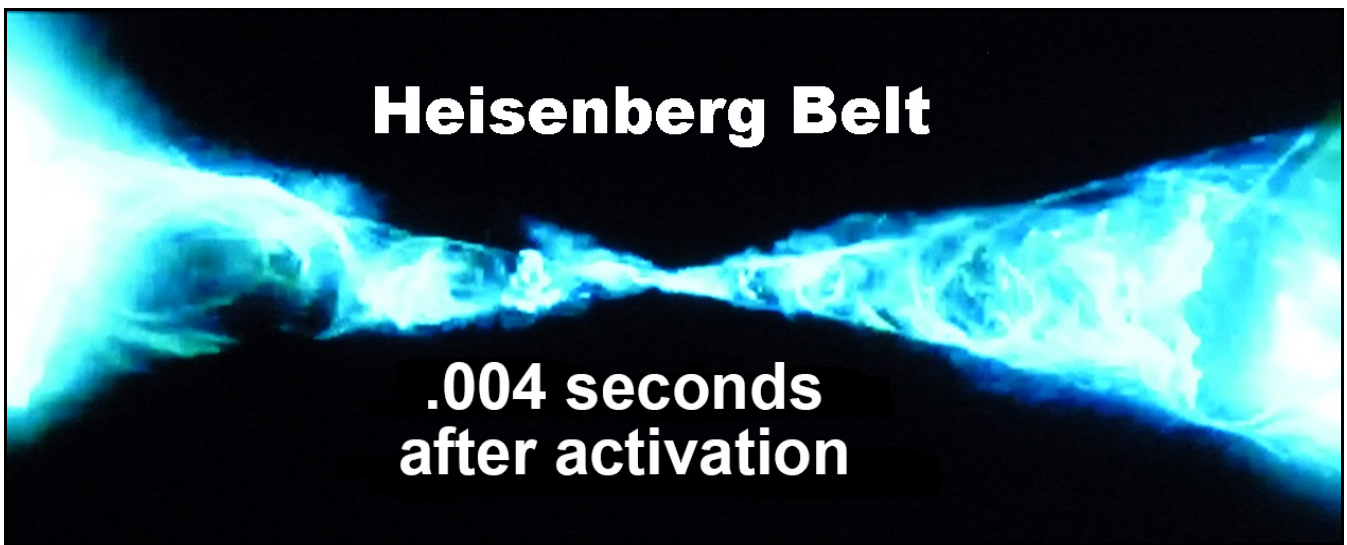


Image from the experimental novel, *Finding Mememo* (in-progress, 2017) James Hugunin

method of dimension-travel involving having to jump from a high-rise, accelerating to "escape velocity," then activating a "Heisenberg-Belt," which is supposed to propel the jumper into a new dimension of spacetime.



Two images from Hy "Mememo" Grader's "Jump-shot Collection," from *Finding Mememo* (2017) James Huginin

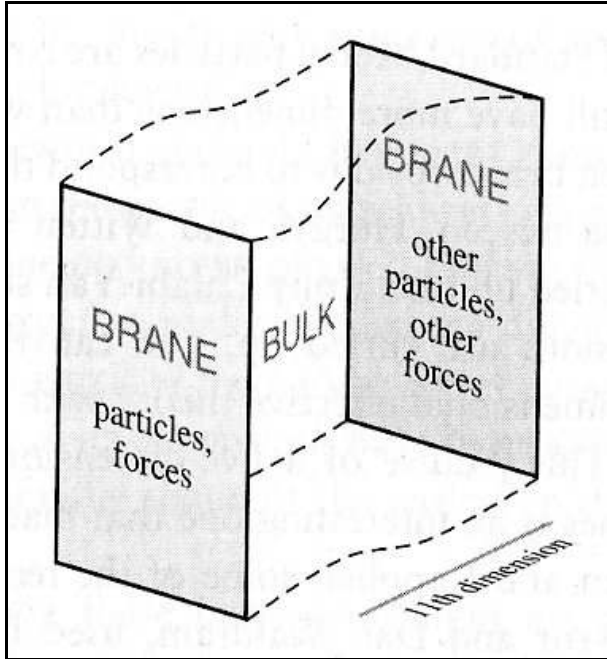


**Q:** I notice you, called "Jym" in the narrative, are Hy's close friend and the editor of Hy's fragmentary notes for his unfinished book.



Dallas Johnson's fictional private-eye, Blurt Wildbraine

**A:** That relationship to the text permits me to develop a metacommentary on Hy's strange writings. Hy's wife, Dorinda, has tasked me with putting together a posthumously published version of his work-in-progress. So I comment on Hy's efforts via editorial insertions and deletions, footnotes, and glosses at the end of each section. The private dick, Dallas Johnson, also intrudes into the narrative with the results of his investigation. Moreover, Hy has included snippets of Dallas' own detective fiction within his narrative. To complicate matters, Dallas is writing mystery stories and his fictional detective, Blurt Wildbraine, is also writing mystery stories under the name of I. M. Blunt. So, you see, there are multiple levels of discourse in the book.



Physics illustration from *Finding Mememo* (2017) James Huginin

Q: A kind of *mise-en-abyme* is produced, to put it into academic jargon.

A: Yes. A textual hall-of-mirrors effect — frame-within-a-frame. That’s why the narrative needs Jym as an upper-level character commenting upon the levels below him. He can correct errors in Hy’s text, leave out text, chide him over various aspects of his approach to writing, disagree with him on events, and so forth. The book plays with the genres of detective fiction and sci-fi, the latter coming to the fore in the second part of the book where the possibility of dimension-travel is broached. That latter part is filled with references of current quantum and string theory in physics to give the scientific backstory to the G.O.N.E. group’s attempts at D-travel some validity. I’ve noticed the theme of such travel fills the movies and cable TV series these days.

Running throughout Hy’s text is his sufferings under a martinet of a departmental chairman, Chad Armbuster, and the over-controlling, infantilizing administrators at the institution where Hy, as a long-suffering contingent faculty, teaches. The

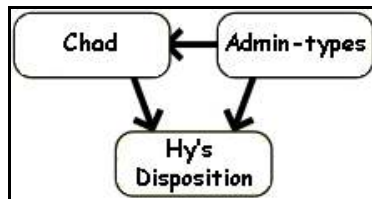
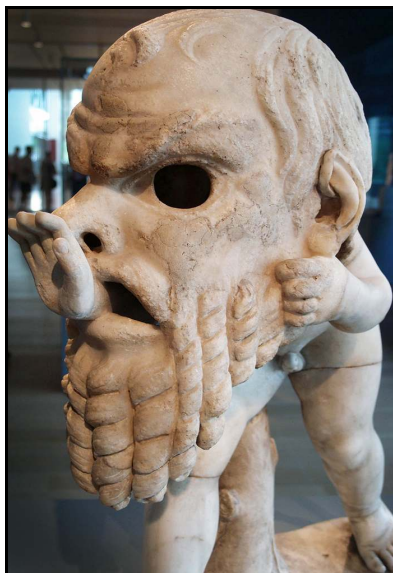


Illustration in *Finding Mememo*

obdurate “admin-type” is, in the text, imagined as a monstrous figure with a clawing hand emerging from the mouth. The offices of the administrators is known as “The-Lair-of-the-Talking-Claw.” My friend Lew, took a photo of an ancient sculpture and we used that figure in the book.

Hy, fortunately, has a very good friend in one Ichi Honne, a Japanese-American artist/academic, who resides in Madison, Wisconsin, and who, in the story, witnesses the suicide attempt in the art museum alongside Hy during one of his many visits south from “Mad City,” Wisconsin.



Monument to the Admin-type, *The Talking Claw* from *Finding Mememo* (photo by Lewis Koch)

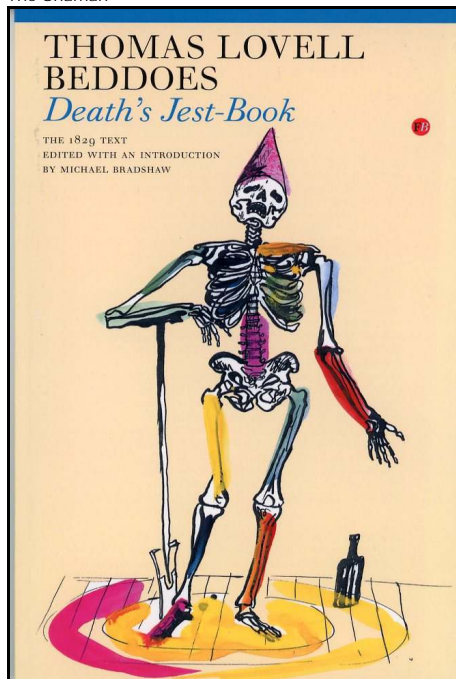
Q: I love it! Any academic can identify with that! And your decision to make Hy a part-time faculty member makes sense given the proliferation of such contingent, economically vulnerable teachers in our colleges today.

A: Yes, we all have our horror stories. The question raised in the book is: Was such harassment a factor in Hy’s supposed suicide or was it motive for his murder? Either seems possible at the start of Dallas’ investigation. Jym is re-dacting Hy’s text, finding other clues to this dilemma, while preparing to post-humously publish it. The evidence leads Dallas up to a fishing resort in Northern Wisconsin where Hy fled to (an eleven day vanishing-act mimicking the actual disappearance of mystery writer Agatha Christie in 1926) just prior to his return to Chicago and his fatal fall from a Literary Club’s balcony overseeing Michigan Avenue. At that north-woods lodge, Hy meets Wishwer Watt, w-o gives him a copy of *The Fischer-Filoni Effect for Dummies*, a book broaching the possibility of dimension-jumping in which he learns about a

gaggle of G.O.N.E.-ers, D-jump wannabes. While trying to “get his act together” there, Hy is befriended by The Shaman,



The Shaman



a politically astute Ojibwa herbalist who dispenses Essiac, an Ojibwa anti-cancer herb, and discusses herbal remedies and tribal politics on his radio show featured on the Lac Courte Oreilles Tribal Reservation's radio station WOJB. This individual, by the way, is based on an actual person I met on a fishing trip in Wisconsin during my cancer treatment. WOJB is an amazing station, with tribal music and radical politics pertaining to Native American issues regular fare on their broadcasts. A real shaman, he performed a ceremony for me personally to assist my cure. As you can see, it worked!

Q: I like the large frontispiece section with the images and epigraphs, but let's sample something from the main text.

A: We can jump right to section three. This was actually written first, then sections one and two followed.

Q: I assume that is because it speaks of the traumatic scene at the art museum. An actual event you witnessed. Right?

A: Yes. Just after witnessing that bloody event, I started reading Thomas Lovell Beddoes' (d.1849) *Death's Jest-Book*. The text was initially conceived as a satirical tragedy unmasking the terror of death; this book was the counterpart of Beddoes' anatomical research. The edition I obtained presents the jest book in its early form, as Beddoes intended to publish it in 1829. Why this book you might ask? It's a pastiche of Renaissance tragedy and is replete with treachery, murder, sorcery, and haunting. A perfect kick-start to my imagination to deal with such themes in *Finding Mememo*. You see the readings that parallel my writings are very important. It wouldn't be an exaggeration to say that my books are "read-den" rather than "written." Rather than meticulously plotting out a "story" in advance, my story is generated by the sequence of readings I do and the readings I do are based on intuition as much as a certain need to glean data by specific research. A simple phrase in a text may send my writing down a very new path, or it may remind me of something from my past, and so propel me to develop work with material from those early experiences. When I sit down to a day's writing, I have no idea where the story will go.

Q: Would you say the story finds you, rather than you finding the story?

A: Hey, that is a perfect way of putting it! I just leave myself open to possibilities. An example: I may chance upon a pull-quote from, say, *Art in America*, and away my fingers go, developing a sentence into a whole page of narrative, pushing the story forward. In this regard, my writing retains its excitement, my excitement, as I find the story and further develop it. I, myself, feel like a character in a novel exploring a terrain never strode upon before, new horizons appearing, forking





Mr. Memory on stage, from Alfred Hitchcock's *The 39-Steps* (1935) as used in *Finding Mememo* by James Huginin

paths are approaching, where decisions are to be made. No authorial god-like, already-plotted storyline. This is something, as I said earlier, I took from those open-ended plots of Henry Miller's.

**Q:** I notice throughout our discussion both of us have used the term "inspiration."

**A:** I know. It does sound a bit unpostmodern in the age of the producer, the *bricoleur*.

**Q:** Yes, the Romantics had a word for it, *Begeisterung*.



Ichio's Honne's gin flight as served to Hy "Meme" Grader in *Finding Mememo* by James Huginin

**A:** But that can also mean "enthusiasm," if my memory serves me right, that which keeps one going through the literary work's production. Those little insights that stir you. For me, it feels like a little homunculus in my brain suddenly points to something I hadn't noticed. That is closer to my use of the term inspiration than the mysterious god-sent type of . . .

**Q:** I catch your drift. Dogged intelligence combined with letting associations fly up like a flock of birds.

**A:** Or maybe, just maybe, just rank terror, making one, as Hemingway put it, "Write drunk, edit sober."

**Q:** I do think our Limoncello shots are starting to . . .



Dallas Johnson's T-shirt, as seen in *Finding Mememo* by James Huginin

**A:** Ya, we should've kept to my character Dallas Johnson's preferred drink, craft beer. The main character, "Meme" (a shortened form of "Mememo") prefers exotically-flavored gin shots hailing from Cape Town South Africa or white wine from South Australia and red wine from Tuscany.

**Q:** We should've doubled up on the double espressos, instead. . . . Okay, so back to business. One image found in *Mememo* struck me. The dead girl, the result of her fatal jump. A bit graphic don't you think? [See next page.]

**A:** Oh, that's the "mystery woman" in an episode in one of Dallas Johnson's Blurt Wildbraine wacky mysteries that I "excerpted" for strategic purposes. In the text it is hinted at that she may have been attempting a



Unsuccessful D-jump? in *Finding Mememo* by James Huginin

dimension-jump from Milwaukee's new Potawatomi Hotel and Casino, a Native American capitalist endeavor scalping Anglos, all with a friendly smile. The image is a stand-in for the actual museum jumper's face, a face I didn't see as it was turned away from me; albeit, I witnessed the man's blood spill out. This image, copped off TV, was a dead-ringer for a dead jumper, close to what I had imagined his traumatized face looked like. So the image serves two purposes: that of illustrating the narration and to remind us all of the horror of fatal falls — I almost said "fatal flaws" — such is the risk that tribe of D-jump wannabes, the G.O.N.E.-ers, are willfully putting themselves in; ultimately, the risk Hy Grader *might* be taking. I have to be vague here so as not to give the ending away.

**Q:** As your character Dallas, might put it, "I grok." When you put your life in the hands of the indeterminacy of quantum mechanics, escaping the precision of Einsteinian theory, you are asking for trouble.

Well, Jim, thank you. This seems to be a good place for us to end our chat. I look forward to reading the whole book . . .

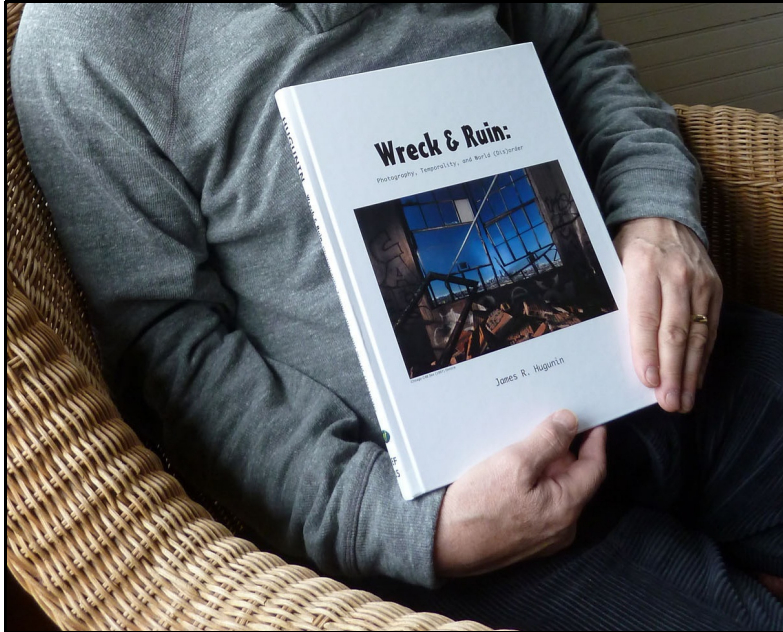
**A:** More a tome, actually.

**Q:** . . . when it comes out.

**A:** I can see the reviews now: *A novel all about literature, high and low, starring one of those heroes who is a lightly disguised version of the author himself; how easily this could be nothing more than a precious lattice of ludic narcissism and unbearably "literary" adventures. But . . .*

— THE END —

# Book Excerpts



- *Wreck and Ruin: Photography, Temporality, World (Dis)order* (2013)
- *Something is Crook in Middlebrook* (2012)
- *Elder Physics: The Wrong of Time, Stories from an Elder Home* (2013)
- *Tar Spackled Banner* (2014)
- *Case-X* (2015)
- *Finding Mememo* (forthcoming, 2017)



# Wreck & Ruin:

Photography, Temporality, and World (Dis)order



*Chicago CAB Sex (1997) Dimitre*

James R. Hugunin

# Wreck & Ruin:

Photography, Temporality, and World (Dis)order



*Bomber, a chance unwinding* (detail, archival pigment print, 2011) Lewis Koch



*Harlem Valley/Wingdale Project* (detail, 2011) Avery Danziger

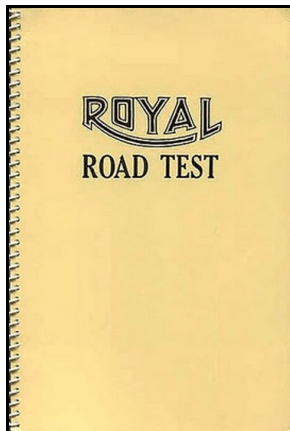
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# Case Study I

## Wreck-Ages: Edward Ruscha, Lewis Koch

**wreck·age** [rékij] noun

1. remains after destruction: the broken pieces left after something has been extremely badly damaged or destroyed
2. process of wrecking: the ruin or destruction of something (formal)



Cover



Royal Road Test (1967) Edward Ruscha

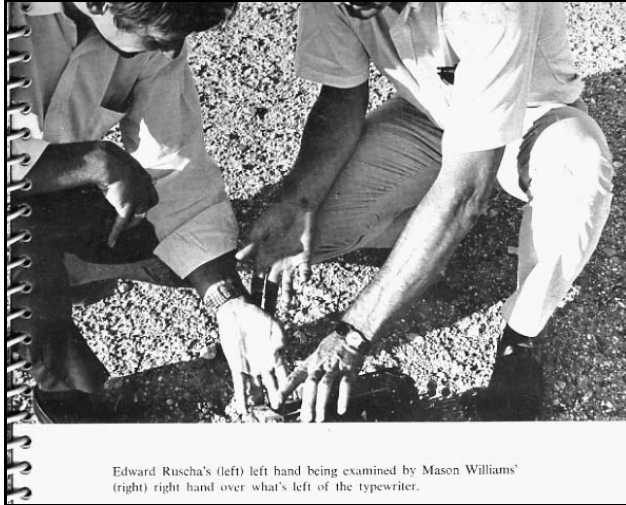


Cover



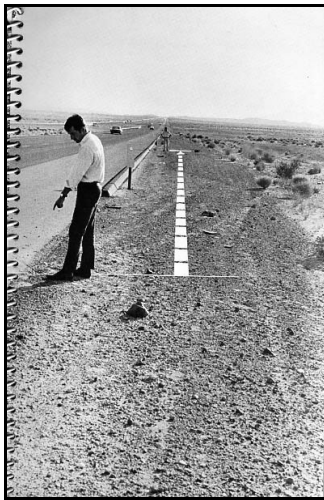
Bomber, a chance unwinding (2011) Lewis Koch

Sitting before me on my desk are two artist books, each filled with machine wreckage, from two ages: proto-postmodernism (Ruscha, analogue) and the post-conceptual years of a waning post-modernism (Koch, digital). What might be gleaned from a comparison of these “bookends” to post-modernity? In what way are they similar? In what way are they different? What are their respective relationships to technology: the recording camera, the object recorded? What are their relationships to

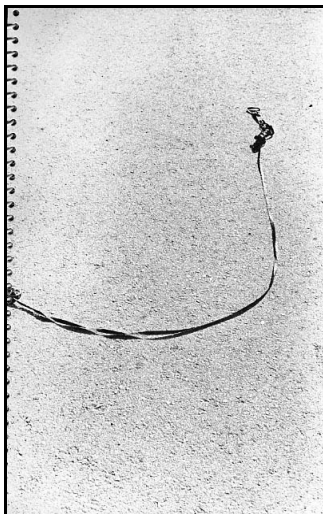


Edward Ruscha's (left) left hand being examined by Mason Williams' (right) right hand over what's left of the typewriter.

Royal Road Test, playful caption



Crash path of the typewriter



Left ribbon spool and ribbon

a key concept in postmodernism, "the fragment?" In what manner do they construct a form of knowledge?

Ed Ruscha's book exemplifies the second definition given above, "a process of wrecking: the ruin or destruction of something." In *Royal Road Test*, Mason Williams tosses an old Royal Model-X (circa mid-1920s) typewriter out the window of a Buick *Le Sabre* speeding along at 90 m.p.h. on August 21, 1966. Like an accident report, the wreckage is assessed photo-by-photo along its 189-foot crash-path on U.S. Highway 91. The weather ("Perfect") is recorded, other parameters

of the event are, with tongue-in-cheek meticulousness, listed and diagramed. The straight-forward black-and-white photographs (most *not* shot by Ruscha) are captioned snapshots *pointing* to the shards of the machine, visual data which, in a few shots, is a pointing that is humorously *doubled* in-frame by a conspicuously pointing index finger.<sup>1</sup> The deadpan, monochromatic photos are bled off the pages in this offset, small edition book. Text is descriptive, yet can become playfully interactive with the photograph (see above image). The photographs depict a machine reduced to smashed parts, exemplifying an increasing interest in wrecks from Wynn Bullock's *Typewriter* (1951), to Jean Tinguely's self-destructing machines, some of Robert Smithson's works and writings that parallel J. G. Ballard's literary exploration of dystopian landscapes, to overtly staged wrecks like Rodney Graham's set-up of faked "film-snow" dusting an old typewriter and Chinese artist Ai Weiwei's dropped Han Dynasty urn.

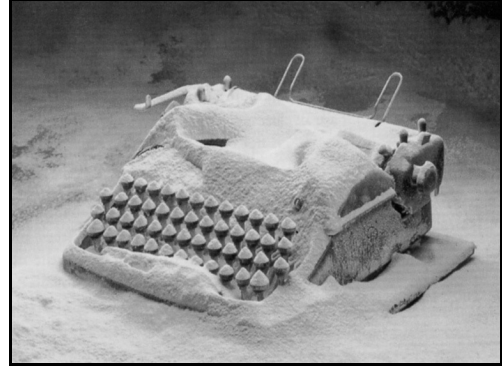
This book is one of several witty photobooks Ruscha produced during the 1960s: *Various Small Fires and Milk*, *Every Building on Sunset Strip* and *Twenty-Six Gasoline Stations*, *Real Estate Opportunities*, *Thirty-Four Parking Lots in Los Angeles*, and so forth. Margaret Iversen discusses these little books as "cool in conception and as hotly subversive as Duchamp's Readymades."<sup>2</sup>

The implications? Art can be fun and sell for \$3.00 per copy. This deadpan mockumentary at the behest of the *seemingly* trivial (Rube Goldberg devices and Jean Tinguely's crazed machines mine such humor) *is* funny *and* yet profound. The trivial can be fascinating as curators John Szarkowski and Peter Galassi assert when they state that banal photographic subjects can be raised to new heights of *formal*





*Typewriter (1951) Wynn Bullock*



*Rheinmetall/Victoria 8 (2003) Rodney Graham*



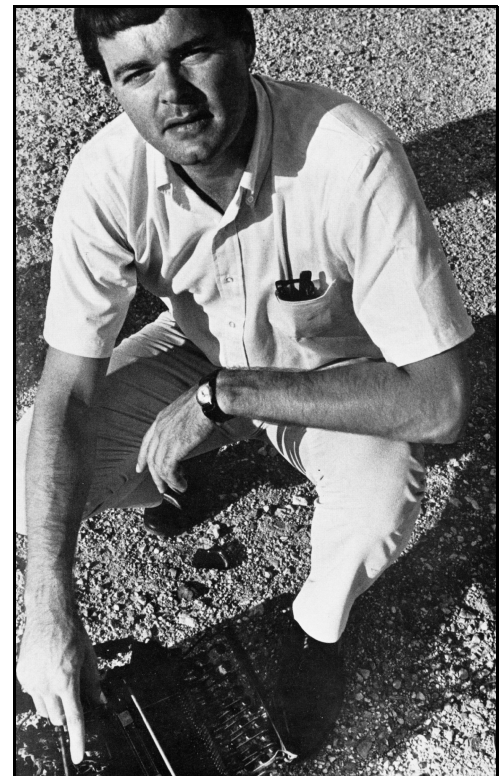
*Royal Road Test, 1963 Buick Le Sabre*



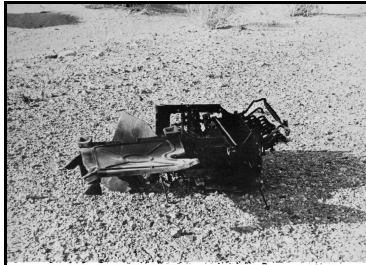
*Royal Road Test, window from which test was made*



*Royal Road Test, Ed Ruscha and Mason William with debris*



*Royal Road Test, Mason Williams, index finger pointing to the typewriter debris*



Royal Road Test, typewriter debris



Royal Road Test, deadpan expression

coherence by “the intelligent eye of the photographer.” But Ruscha and his photographer, Patrick Blackwell, compose so as to *foil* such optical *haut cuisine*. In Ruscha’s world, art can be *anything*. And photography? What do you know! It need not exhibit an Ansel Adams print fetishism, nor Szarkowskian formal astuteness, nor a romantic air as in Bullock. Traditional photo-connoisseurs reacted defensively: “It’s art (maybe), but is it photography?” Ruscha’s scripto-visual text counters traditional pictorial aesthetics with the “auto-maticity” (car, road, typewriter, toss, camera) of a controlled experiment, a crime-scene investigation.

In *Photography After Conceptual Art* (2010), Margaret Iversen and Aron Vinegar reassess Ruscha’s bookworks. Iversen sees *Royal Road Test* “most obviously as an instance of instructional-performative photography,” but where “the photographs are a trace of the act and do not necessarily document a performance,”<sup>3</sup> what Aron Vinegar understands as evoking a “pre-symbolic state.”<sup>4</sup> Iversen reads Ruscha’s book as putting into practice instances of what will later be denominated as “systemic art,” carrying out a predetermined set of instructions, a counter-expressionistic mode of working akin to the computational methods of punch-cards and computer programing.

Much has been made of Ruscha’s “deadpan candor” in these photobooks, a nonjudgmental approach to their subject matter.<sup>5</sup> Seemingly banal objects have been touted by André Breton and other Surrealists, and Iversen notes a surreal flavor to Ruscha’s books. But she misses an opportunity to re-enforce that point when she overlooks the book’s title, “Royal Road Test,” as a play on Freud’s famous dictum that the *dream* is the “royal road to the unconscious,” probably because Ruscha’s objects are most often the quotidian of our car culture

(gasoline stations, pools, parking lots, cheap apartments, etc) and *not* the “old-fashioned, broken, useless, almost incomprehensible, even perverse,” uncanny objects Breton found in the Saint-Ouen flea market.<sup>6</sup> But Ruscha may have put forward his “road test,” where an old-fashioned machine is smashed as obsolete, to introduce its old-fashioned remains as a pop-oriented, neutrally depicted object. *Royal Road Test* transforms a nostalgic, surreal, uncanny object into a pop/conceptual wrecked object via



Buster Keaton, *The Cameraman* (1928) publicity still

"indifference" and a nod to entropy, employing a neutrality of observation akin to Edmund Husserl's sober phenomenological reduction, bracketing the natural world and imposing an *eidetic* reduction so as to reveal essences underlying variants. Speaking of sobriety, Vinegar reproduces a publicity still of Keaton, a collapsed machine (a camera no less) flattening him to the ground. The photo records the scene in deadpan, mimicking Keaton's expression and revealing his equanimity under stress, what Heidegger in *Being and Time* terms "a disclosive submission to [the] world out of which things that matter to us can be encountered."

Like that philosopher's attending to a mode of deep receptiveness toward the facticity of the world (an approach consciously expressed as an aesthetic in photographer Edward Weston's essays and in his famous *Daybooks*),<sup>7</sup> Ruscha also goes "to the things themselves," but he does so tongue-in-cheek, putting to the "road-test" Husserlian seriousness and Weston's modernist exemplification of Husserlian essences. (Having the same surname, did Ruscha see the wordplay potential in having the two "Eds" butt heads on the field of photographic contest?) While Weston took great care in selecting his subject matter and arranging it on his ground-glass (becoming the "ground" of the situation), Ruscha plays the role of the naive snapshotter (Jeff Wall affirms this in "'Marks of Indifference': Aspects of Photography in, or as, Conceptual Art," 1995) where one is thrown into a situation that is already there; in this case, *the situation* becomes "ground" upon which the photographer finds him/herself. This ground, this situation, will become important in Aron Vinegar's take on this "dumb snapshot" aspect (evoking "happy accidents" or "fortuitous wrecks") as used in Ruscha's photobooks.

Calling attention to issues of random sampling and aleatory choice in Ruscha's work (the naive and quotidian), Benjamin Buchloh offers its source in Duchamp and Cage's legacy of an "aesthetic of indifference."<sup>8</sup> But Vinegar critiques Buchloh's Adorno-inflected socially-oriented critique wherein Ruscha's work is viewed as in conformity with the dominant structures of our "administered" society, a stance that meshes well with Stanley Cavell's analysis of film actor Buster Keaton's poker face where, in "What Becomes of Things on Film" (1978), he reads it as "acceptance of the external world and the things in it." Vinegar counters this by citing Jaleh Mansoor's article in *October*, "Ed Ruscha's One-way Street" (Winter 2005) that reads Ruscha's practice as much more critical of mass culture than Buchloh and Cavell's positions offer. But Vinegar, attuned to the anti-Marxist trends these days, moves his discussion away from societal issues toward an understanding of Ruscha's existential *being-in-the-world* as exemplified in his photobooks.

Vinegar proceeds to take the Keaton-like rhetorical delivery of "deadpanness," the comic acknowledgment of the world remarked upon by so many about Ruscha's work, and rethink it as *not* ironic distancing, but a mode of *being-with-the-world*. He uses Martin Heidegger's existential spin on Husserlian Phenomenology to focus on the sense of our "attunement" to things that constitute our Life-World, our moods. According to Heidegger, our *Being-in-the-World* entails no "objective" that is not also accompanied by an interpretation; hence, no mood ever comes from merely "without" nor from just "within," but arises from our whole situation that discloses our mode of existence (note some similarities here to Systems Theory's emphasis on relation and reflexivity).<sup>9</sup> For Heidegger, "indifference" is not merely negative, but opens out into "equanimity," a calm and even vision of the possible situations of the *potentiality-of-being-as-a-whole*. Douglas Davis lauds this "indifferent" use of photography in a December 1976 *Artforum* essay, "The Size of Non-size": "Cheap, flat, and accessible, the photograph is the signifier of recent art, as canvas-stretcher and steel frame served its predecessors. The photograph furthermore calls no attention to itself (as medium)." Unlike "museum photography" now.<sup>10</sup>



B-17 debris, Bomber Mountain, Lewis Koch

In a 1976 lecture, Davis offers a way to understand “dumb snapshots” within a Pop sensibility: “Among other qualities, the Pop sensibility is markedly indifferent to content and to personality. It accepts what it finds in the world [like typewriters], prefers that to the subjective regurgitation of the psyche [as seen in Bullock’s typewriter], and uses it quite often directly [in what looks like deadpan] . . .”<sup>11</sup>

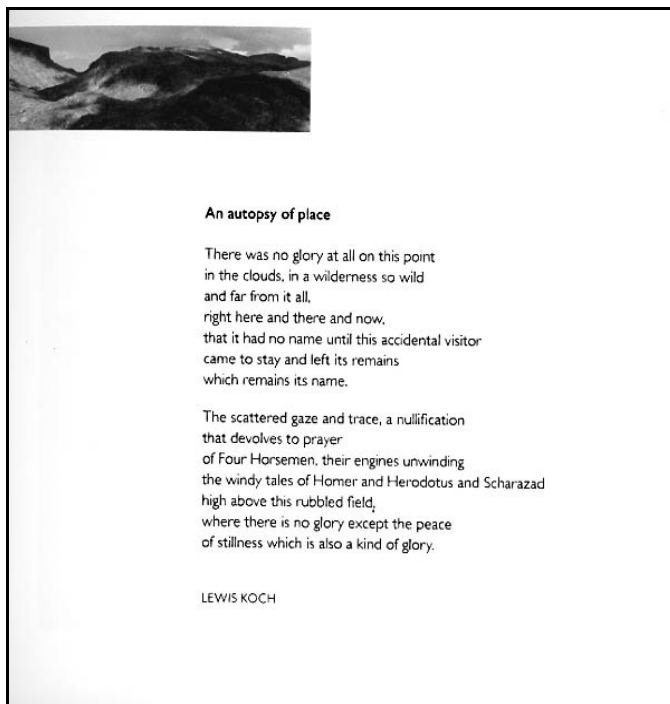
Vinegar expands on the attitude of Pop and “deadpan” in an argument that rests upon Heidegger’s description of deadpan expression as “resolute raptness,” the ability to remain open to the ordinary in the pursuit of some distanced and more “knowing” condition which, he says, explains why Los Angeles’s

“superficiality” (Ruscha’s description) can be profound and funny and worth living for, as it makes one aware that everything is ephemeral when you look at it from the right angle.<sup>12</sup> Ruscha’s photobooks are read as an expression of wonder (rather than critique) of our era, specifically, wonder evoked by Los Angeles’s very mundaneness and captured in his books. Object (L. A.) and subject (Ruscha) seem fated to a perfect phenomenological pairing of world and self.

Lewis Koch’s book, *Bomber, a chance unwinding* (Madison, WI: Areness Press/Blurb. com, 2011) exemplifies the first definition of wreckage sketched above: the “remains after destruction: the broken pieces left after something has been extremely badly damaged or destroyed.” Like Ruscha’s

book, the event recorded is tied to a specific date: June 28, 1943, when a B-17 Flying Fortress bomber on its way to join the air war over Germany, crashed in Wyoming’s Big Horn Mountains, killing all the crew, scattering shards of the plane across what became known as “Bomber Mountain” (elevation 12,840 feet).<sup>13</sup> Koch reverses the entropic direction of Ruscha’s project, constructing a new meaning from the imaged debris (non-rusting aluminum, so the debris looks “new”), and sets up a comparison/contrast between geological time (the site) and human time (the historical event of the crash).

Unlike Ruscha, Koch gives us a scripto-visual autopsy of a site of an *actual* disaster. Deaths haunt the scene; no tongue-and-cheek here. A

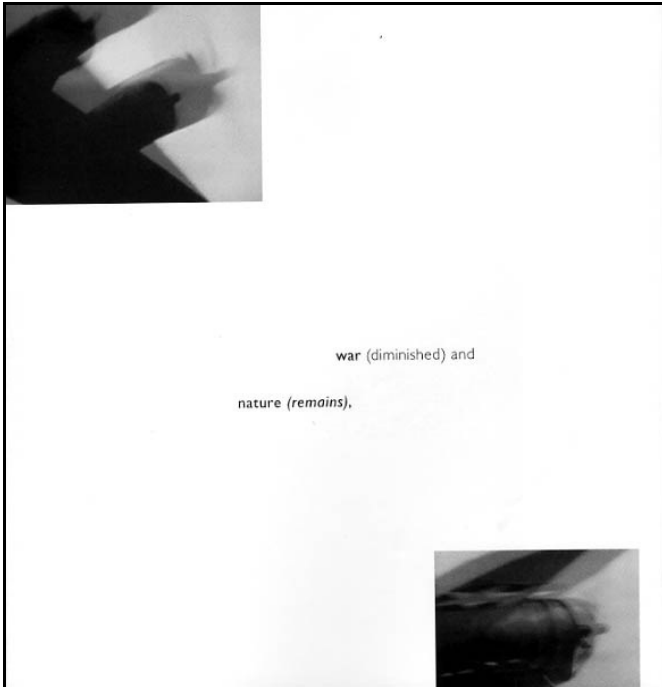


Epilogue to the book and wall installation (2011) Lewis Koch



Top and bottom: Images from *Bomber, a chance unwinding* (chapbook and installation, 2011) Lewis Koch





Left page, freeze frames by Lewis Koch from WWII documentary footage

pathos pervades both the book (conceived in full-color with *InDesign* software, published via print-on-demand) and installation. Installation? Yes. Whereas Ruscha's book is a stand-alone object in a series of similar texts, Koch's was conceived as a supplementary chapbook (yet named one of twenty notable recent photobooks at PhotoIreland, Dublin) to accompany gallery installations of this project, such as at the James Watrous Gallery at the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters in Madison, Wisconsin (June 24 - August 7, 2011) where the artist used the walls and glass of the space like giant book pages that envelop the viewer *inside* the text.

Where Ruscha's photography is purposely casual, mocking the tenets of formalist fine art photography, Koch's is meticulous, considered.<sup>14</sup> After all, he's been working and defining himself as an art photographer for decades. And much of that work has been an exploration of the possibilities of the visual fragment and the importance of text in and outside the image. The traditional versus conceptual employment of photography (where language was to be purged on the one hand and foregrounded on the other) debate is now shopworn, inapplicable in our post-conceptual times.

Where Ruscha's photography is purposely casual, mocking the

These images (in the book and exhibition) are well-rendered, the text (both appropriated and written by Koch) is serious, poetic even. Important to Koch's efforts here is his use of screen-shots appropriated by unwinding archival WWII black-and-white documentary film-footage of B-17s in action. We have the interlacing of two "databases" and two historical junctures — a THEN (our "good" war, World War II) and a NOW (our problematic war, Afghanistan) — realized via a monochrome-and-color

contrast, each contrast is key to the aesthetics and ethos of the work. When Koch selected the screen-shot, often a double-image resulted, giving an illusion of motion, a dynamism which contrasts effectively against the very stable images of the scattered debris, aluminum debris that has rested in place for decades *without* showing the effects of time, of the slow combustion we call *rusting* (coding this more a wreck than a ruin).



Right page, B-17 debris, Lewis Koch

The word *unwinding* in the title of Koch's project obliquely refers to the unwinding of the archival footage and the considered deployment of film fragments from a war past, and the chance, sudden, brutal unwinding of the



Ehlers Caudill Gallery, Chicago, 1992 (left to right): *Slender Thread Totem* (7 prints, 106 x 19 in., 1991); and *Dream Portal: The Manifestations* (13 prints, 100 x 106 in., 1992) Lewis Koch

Boeing bomber's integrity as it smashed in the dark night across the boulder-strewn heights of a remote mountain. For a thousand and one nights these shards have been there to tell their story. This hints at another level of reference to *unwinding* in his project and it has to do with the airplane's nickname. It was customary for crews to name their "bird," usually with a female appellation. Pilot William Ronaghan and his crew chose "Scharazad," an alternate spelling for Scheherazade, the famous female protagonist holding death at bay (the *raison d'être* for it being chosen) in the frame tale of *One Thousand and One Nights*. The bomber's namesake is described in Sir Richard F. Burton's translation:

"She had perused the works of the poets and knew them by heart; she had studied philosophy and the sciences, arts and accomplishments; and she was pleasant and polite, wise and witty, well read and well bred." This was a *classy* war-bird.

Ironically, one night the tale turned tragic for "Scharazad's" crew. The fragments of this final tale had a small audience until, camera-in-hand, Koch began to "decode" these "ruins" which, despite time, still sit gleaming incongruously in their mountainous setting. Gathering them up visually, he unwound them for our thoughtful reflection in a small book and across gallery walls.

Koch has always had an eye and penchant for wreckage and an attention to signs and slogans that mark our public space, as seen in *Manitowoc, Wisconsin* (1999). His mature *oeuvre* (starting with his "Totems" series) has involved the arrangement of such photographs into new wholes, a poetic riff on Russian Constructivist "factography" (where complete images are juxtaposed rather than shards of cut-up photos into collage). These earlier works put individual photographs into close proximity, forming distinctive shapes. However, these overall shapes retain within them the formal and semantic



*Manitowoc, Wisconsin* (1999) *Touchless Automatic Wonder*, page 71, Lewis Koch



*Every Building on Sunset Strip* (1969) Edward Ruscha

integrity of the single image (we can refer to them as "photemes"). These photemes (like morphemes, words), are given a syntactical import that builds toward a "sentence," toward a fuller meaning that is more than the mere sum of the parts. In



*Tar Pit Totem* (1994) (7 gelatin-silver prints, 106 in. X 19 in.)  
Lewis Koch

Ruscha, the closest one gets to this feeling of “language” is in unfolding his clever book, *Every Building on Sunset Strip*.

These photemes are the basic building blocks of Koch’s aesthetic world which he combines to form a more complex poetic state of affairs. At times these photemes display a logical construct, like links in a chain, as in *Tar Pit Totem* (1994), where the figure’s head grows from the tar pit/soil via interlocking vertical forms. Other times, the image linkages are more ideational than formal, as in Koch’s text-image installation of *OSAYCAN-YOUSEE* (Wright Museum of Art, Beloit College, Beloit, Wisconsin 2008). *Bomber, a chance unwinding* is a development from such past work, but the gaps between images increase and text takes on a stronger purpose; the result is a complex dance between text-as-image and image-as-text. And between images and object: the installation includes rocks, simulating those at the crash-site, placed at the gallery’s entrance.<sup>15</sup>

In Ruscha’s *Royal Road Test*, the imagery flows over the page edges and through the turned pages without gaps or interruption, the text is informational. The book has a stable frame of reference, reveal its subject unproblematically, *working* stereotypes of perception as a gauntlet tossed in the face of high modernism. Hence, it is easily deciphered, what Roland Barthes called a “readerly text,” giving as its Barthesian reward a comfortable reading (*plaisir*). In contradistinction, Koch’s book and wall installation (where the prints are nailed, suggesting rivets, to the wall) are products of interconnections that make effective aesthetic use of carefully positioned gaps (both spatial and conceptual, as seen in the actual crash site) to create a dance between revelation and concealment, between found imagery and authored.

The result is a Barthesian polysemic, “writerly” text open to many interpretational constructs as the frame of reference is more complex due to the ambiguous constellation of image-text; the codes regulating the text-reader/viewer relationship are fragmented, requiring imaginative restructuring that invites deeper participation by the viewer. This demands more effort to bridge these gaps. Significantly, the gaps function as pivots on which the whole text-reader/viewer relationship revolves; they trigger and control the activity of decipherment.

Unlike Ruscha’s book where the segments are marshaled into a graduated sequence, here elements are transformed into reciprocal reflectors. The blank as an empty space between segments enables them to be joined together into a referential field where the two reflecting positions relate to and influence each other. Thus, the 1943 crash date is paired with the 2006 and 2008 dates when Koch made his photos *in situ*; monochrome images play off color; text off image; a past war resonates with a present conflict; a book reflects a wall installation, and so forth. Obviously, one must give sustained attention to these complexities, but one’s effort is



rewarded by what Barthes in *The Pleasure of the Text* (1975) associates with a bliss accruing from the unsettledness and discomfort of aesthetic co-creation (*jouissance*).

The fragmented language — laconic phrases, found or authored imagery dispersed within the book and running across the gallery walls and glass — produce a charged, heightened expressiveness absent from Ruscha’s book. In one double-page spread the poetic text on the left runs up and down the page: “a small punctuation . . . in the **everlasting** . . . of it all ... **The everlasting** matter . . .,” while a shot taken through a twisted flange bridges the book’s gutter. That ruined flange, in turn, irregularly frames a shard of mountain distance, turning the landscape itself into a fragment. *The past frames our present*. But in *Royal Road Test*, entropy wins the day, the object remains abjected.



Double-page spread, *Bomber, a chance unwinding* (2011) Lewis Koch



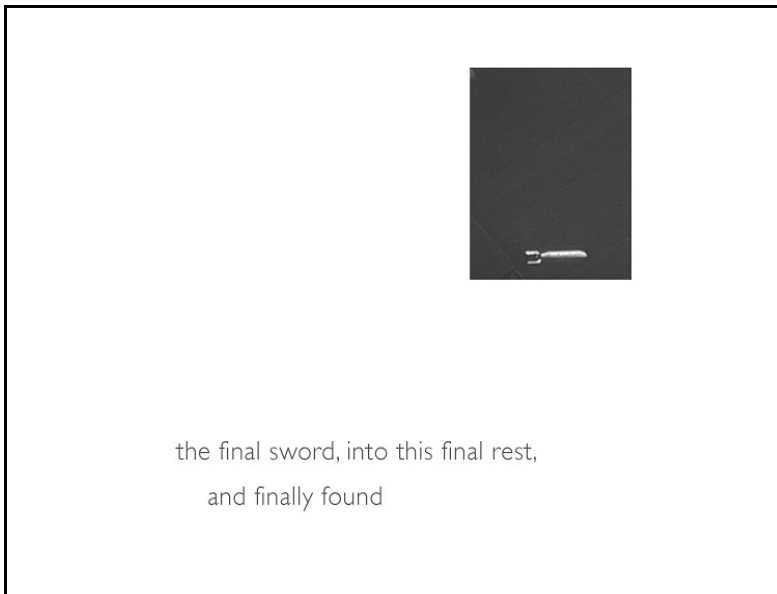
*The Wichita Falls, Texas Tornado* (1979)  
Frank Gohlke

The “dismembered” text/images in Koch’s work are, nevertheless, given a conceptual order, a sort of visual post-mortem (the images in the installation, ranging from 4 x 6 inches to 14 x 30 inches, are tacked up with small nails as in a crash investigation), creating a tension between the broken and chaotic and the ideational net thrown over the evidence of disaster. Koch’s color images of a rugged topography strewn with debris, in approach and subject matter, recall the cool, detached gaze of the “New Topographics” photography of the “man-altered landscape” as featured in the influential 1975 exhibition (curated by William Jenkins) which included Frank Gohlke. Gohlke later documented a damaged Wichita Falls after a tornado hit and recorded the same scenes a year later.

Common to New Topographics and Koch’s project is a focus on the altered landscape, the antithesis of the sublime Ansel Adams type of landscape that had, by the mid-seventies, become moribund. But where Gohlke records destruction and then



Wall installation, bombsight photo, target map, *Bomber, a chance unwinding* (2011) Lewis Koch



Wall image and text, *Bomber, a chance unwinding* (2011) Lewis Koch

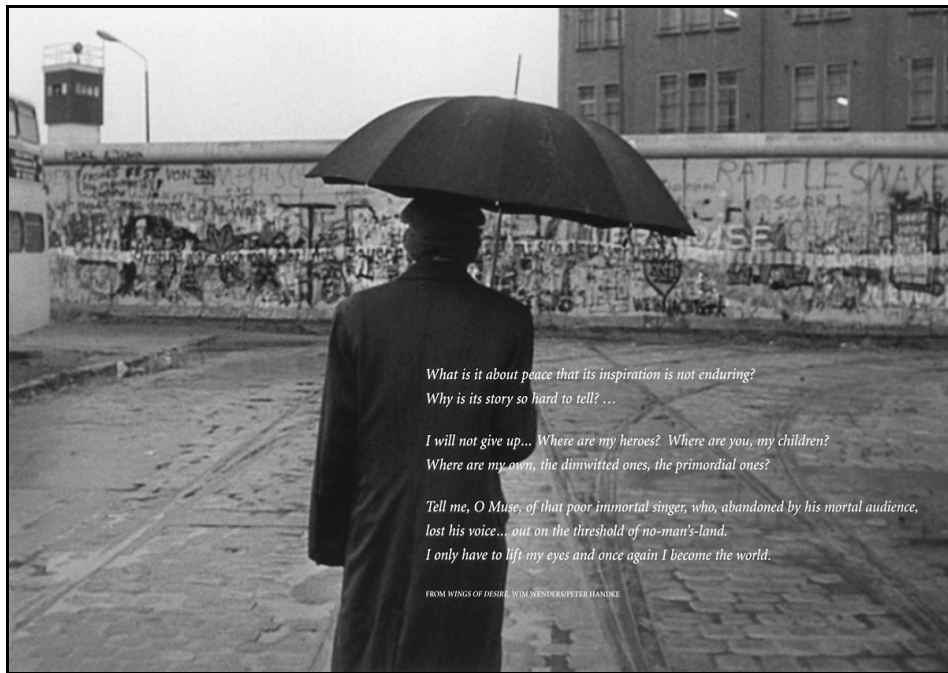
restoration, or Robert Adams and Joe Deal visually comment on tract-home suburban sprawl, Koch loosens an historical object (the B-17) from its celebrated historical continuum (intimated by the documentary WWII footage) to become part of the viewer/reader's own present-day experience (Koch's image-text array). Koch's project generates an "afterlife" for this war machine in which a fragment of the past finds itself within, even framing, our present. This strategy asks us to uncomfortably revisit the theme of war and destruction, to recall the destruction wrought on cities and civilians during the Second World War and still to this day (my own father was a B-17 bombardier who later had moral twinges about the "collateral damage" from his bombs). The inclusion in the wall installation of appropriated bombsight photos and target maps, bringing to mind the awful effects of aerial bombardment, as well as reminding us of the fact that now nothing utterly disappears,

history enters the realm of the permanently present via photography.

Koch's pun in one section on "sword" and "words" and the phrase "final rest," juxtaposed to a single released bomb, further connects the act of bomb destruction with the plane's crash. His project brings back for our consideration a fatal moment when the destroyers were destroyed, the destructive machine itself destroyed, an unwilling Tinguely-like act. The plane *carried within itself the seeds of its own destruction*. This observation opens Ruscha's *Royal Road Test* where it humorously refers to the ill-

fated typewriter; but Koch seems to suggest this existential fate is akin to Marx's notion of dialectical social contradictions, or even to "bad karma" (he's lived in India, photographing at Bhopal).

Koch's photo-poetic probing of wreckage (human remains removed in 1945) is more serious than Ruscha's and analogous to German critic Walter Benjamin's interest in the ruin, the corpse, the fragmenting of language, the captioning of photographs where images do not speak for themselves (found in both Ruscha and Koch's art), and the working of the past as something still uncompleted. Koch is Walter Benjamin's "angel of history": eyes backward as he flies forward.



Appropriated image-text from Wim Wender's film *Wings of Desire* (1987), installation, *Bomber, a chance unwinding* (2011) Lewis Koch



Middle wall, *Bomber, a chance unwinding* (2011) installation, Lewis Koch

Walter Benjamin's seminal study of allegory in seventeenth-century German *Trauerspiel* asserts, "Allegories are, in the realm of thoughts, what ruins are in the realm of things." For Benjamin, allegory is a mode of ruination for the sake of truth. Might we say this is what Koch has given us for our contemplation? The ruins of a war-era event converted into a very mysterious set of scripto-visual "runes" we must decipher and come to

grips with in our own destructive present. If the shards of wreckage in Ruscha's book speak to the issue of entropy and disinterested seeing, Koch's begins with entropy as a *fait accompli*, taking pre-symbolic fragments of wreckage and reassembling them into a Symbolic (text-image) that evokes indeterminacy and evokes the mood of trauma. Unlike Bernd and Hilla Becher's organized grid of serialized images, Koch places his images (in book and on wall) with large gaps between images and text, like a Scrabble Board incompletely filled.<sup>16</sup>

As in real-life trauma (war and nature) Koch's ideational elements remain unreconciled. They refuse us a single harmonious perspective, providing an uncertain knowledge, a knowledge-in-process as suggested in an epigraph for his accordion-fold photobook, *Slender Thread Totem* (1993), where he cites John Muir: "When we try to pick out anything by itself we find it hitched to everything else in the universe." As such, Koch's project refuses a deadpan approach and dodges Aron Vinegar's touting of the *wondrous*<sup>17</sup> (a reading of Ruscha that deploys the original Enlightenment promise of an aesthetic ability to judge without interest) in favor of a disaster scenario that remains committed to an anti-war stance without being tendentious, an ever open-ended scripto-visual unwinding offering many readings.

Koch's coda to his gallery installation is a scene snatched from the ending of Wim Wenders film, *Wings of Desire* (1987), on which is over-printed the voice-over from the film (screenplay by Peter Handke). This is not reproduced in his chapbook. We are confronted by a melancholy image of the Berlin Wall (later to become a ruin) blocking any perspective, the back of a person, Homer, sheltering himself from rain, blocking our view of the wall as he seems to contemplate it in a mood that could range from deadpan acceptance to sorrowful loss. It's as if we share a prison yard with him. The voice-over, a verbal clue from Homer, reads in part:

*What is it about peace that its inspiration is not enduring?*

*Why is its story so hard to tell?*

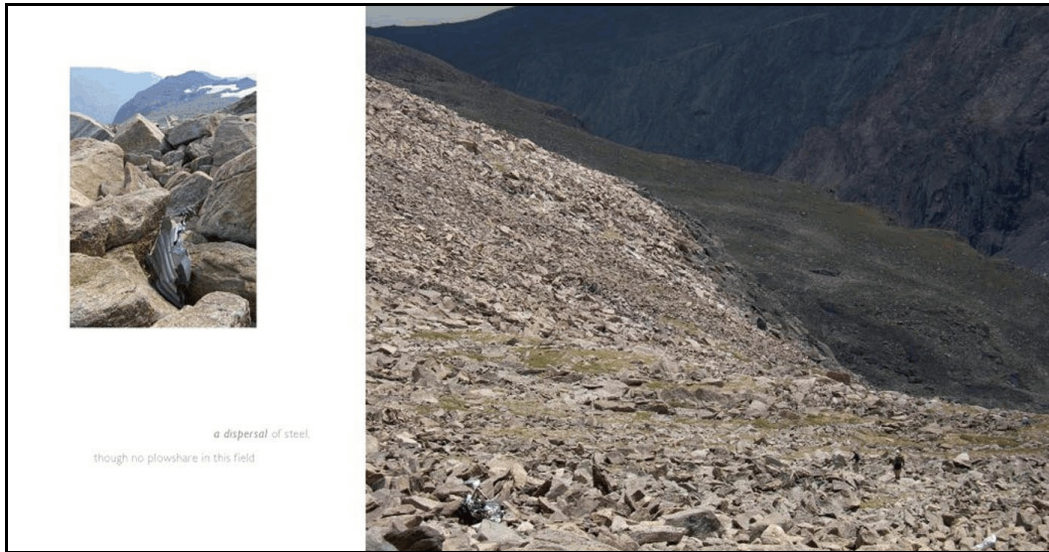
*I will not give up . . .*



Text on glass, *Bomber, a chance unwinding* installation view (2011) Lewis Koch

So does Koch give voice to his commitment, his struggle for peace in the face of the trauma of war, nor can we viewers give up constructing and reconstructing our readings of Koch's complexly layered project.<sup>18</sup>

Finally, as if asking us to take time to *reflect* upon his installation and our place within it, to suggest the interpretational *mise-en-abyme* he's evoked, Koch uses the reflective glass surrounding the gallery space to his benefit as a virtual wall



*Bomber, a chance unwinding*, chapbook double-spread, (2011) view of rock strewn crash site



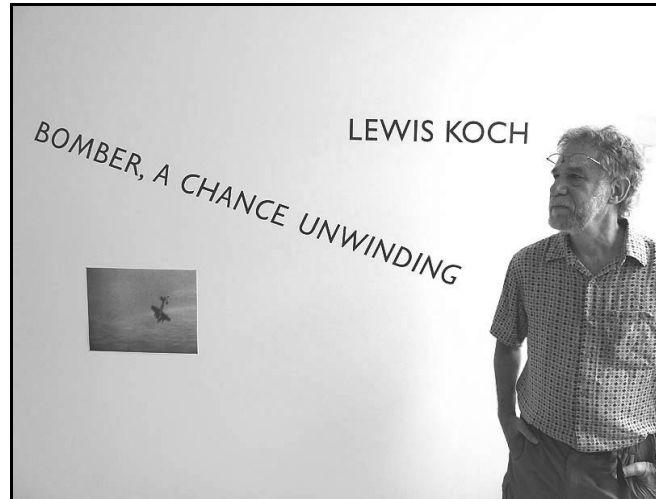
Installation view, *Bomber, a chance unwinding* (2011) a line of rocks suggest the terrain of the crash-site



*Bomber, a chance unwinding*, installation view with glass reflections



Patrick Blackwell, Photographer, *Royal Road Test* (1967) Edward Ruscha



Lewis Koch, Photographer, at the entry to his installation of *Bomber, a chance unwinding* (2011) James Huginin

that mirror-reverses shards of his poetic text (in this instance: "Only sun and stones, and soon") as you look up toward the sky, a sky from which that ill-fated B-17 plunged one dark night. And soon: a wreck (that fateful night) and/or soon, the wreck of war (now)?

Both Ruscha's and Koch's artworks reconcile two times: the fleeting instant seized by a single photograph and the duration necessary to perceive these series of images by using sequenced imagery. But Ruscha's appropriation and re-use of a dead commodity, the typewriter, has shifted in Lewis Koch's installation to the invocation of the crash-site that "lives" through time. Beneath this shift one can posit, as Jan Verwoert does, "a radical transformation of the experience of the historical situation, from a feeling of a general loss of historicity to a current sense of an excessive presence of history, a shift from not enough history to too much history or rather too many histories."<sup>19</sup>

\* \* \*

## Endnotes

1. This use of the pointing index finger doubles the indexical pointing of the analogue camera and was used frequently in John Baldessari's early work — e.g., *Commissioned Paintings* (1969) and *Choosing ( A Game for Two Players) Rhubarb* (1972), *Choosing Chocolates*, *Choosing Green Beans*, etc. — and other conceptualists of the period. In *Camera Lucida* (1981), 5, Roland Barthes writes: ". . . the photograph is never anything but an antiphon of 'Look,' 'See,' 'Here it is,'; it points a finger at certain *vis-à-vis*, and cannot escape this pure deictic language. This pointing to objects, implies we reply to that command to look, evoking a verbal response (precisely what for Greenberg made the medium problematic from his perspective). Language mixing with depiction meant photography could be construed as the enemy of all the values of late modernism.

This, in fact, enacts Marcel Duchamp's negation of painting by photography as espoused in a letter to Alfred Stieglitz in 1922, where he chides Stieglitz's touting of art photography: "you know how exactly I feel about photography. I would like to see it make people despise painting until something else will make photography unbearable" (As cited by Luke Skrebowski in *Photography After Conceptual Art*, eds., Diarmuid Costello and Margaret Iversen [UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010], 91 and 106, n. 21). Skrebowski also cites John Roberts's *The Impossible Document: Photography and Conceptual Art in Britain 1966 - 1976* (London, 1997) on p. 106, n. 25: "Photography was the means by which conceptual art's exit from Modernist closure was made realizable as a practice."

Digital photography problematizes the notion of photography as index and recorder of the contingent event for in the latter, as W.G. Sebald observed in an interview: "The photograph is the true document par excellence. People let themselves be convinced by a photograph." Sebald aligns his use of photography with conceptual art: "The second point is that I use the camera as a kind of shorthand or *aide mémoire*. I don't tie this to any artistic ambitions at all. . . . I don't want to integrate images of high photographic quality into my texts; they are rather documents of findings, something secondary" (" 'But the Word is Not a True Document': A Conversation with W.G. Sebald on Literature and Photography" by Christian Scholz in *Searching for Sebald: Photography After W.G. Sebald*, Lise Patt, ed. with Christel Dill-bohner [Los Angeles: The Institute of Cultural Inquiry, 2007], 104).

2. Margaret Iversen, "Auto-macity: Ruscha and Performative Photography," in *Photography After Conceptual Art*, 13, where she relates Ruscha's use of image-text as showing the influence of structural linguistics and the critique of authorship coming out of French theory at the time. John Baldessari was also much influenced by such theory, carrying it more explicitly into his artworks. Both Baldessari and Ruscha would agree with, and make use of, Lady Eastlake's famous words concerning the automatic recording of nature by the camera, that the "obedience of the machine" in photography is no "picturesque agent." (Elizabeth Rigby, "Photography," *Quarterly Review* 101 (April, 1857): 466. However, Rosalind Krauss, in " 'Specific' Objects," in *Perpetual Inventory*, claims Ruscha is not debunking art photography's pretensions via the dumb snapshot, but exploring the mass-produced automobile (it was a favorite subject of Pop artists) as an artistic medium. Diarmuid Costello, "Automat, Automatic, Automatism: Rosalind Krauss and Stanley Cavell on Photography and the Photographically Dependent Arts," in *Critical Inquiry* 4 (Summer 2012): 849 - 851, engages critically with Krauss's claims.

3. Iversen, 16-20. She draws attention to the root of Ruscha's proto-Systemic Art approach (which undermines spontaneity, self-expression and immediacy) to the influence of verbal instruction as found in Sol LeWitt's system's based view of conceptual art, the performative aspects of Marcel Duchamp's 3 *Standard Stoppages* (1913-14) as well as the

performative "scores" of John Cage, Lamont Young, and George Brecht, such that Ruscha's books are here "presented as a totally pre-meditated, performative, and instructional piece." On this point Iversen draws upon Liz Kotz's *Words to be Looked At: Language in 1960s Art* (2007). In the same anthology edited by Costello and Iversen, Gordon Hughes explores the intriguing notion that in Douglas Huebler's work this very predetermined system can seem to be adhered to, but is actually a clever conceit on Huebler's part, a "double assertion and negation," that futzes with the preconceived system ("Exit Ghost: Douglas Huebler's Face Value," 73).

Iversen goes on to mark the difference between Robert Frank's *The Americans* (1959) with Ruscha's earliest books, seeing it as a shift not only in subject matter, but that of personal expression (Frank) to an automaticity consisting of a systemic, neutral approach (Ruscha). It is this demotic use of the medium that can be generally taken as a rebellion against the expressive uses of painting and fine art photography. In a note on page 37 in her "Introduction" to *Searching for Sebald: Photography After W. G. Sebald* (2007), editor Lise Patt compares conceptual artist Ed Ruscha and W.G. Sebald's demotic approach to the medium and contrasts it with post-conceptual artist Sophie Calle's use of the medium: ". . . both Sebald and Ruscha use photographs arranged in a cumulative monotonous tone to evoke other 'jobs' for the photograph . . . Whereas conceptual artists used these techniques to record perceptions of language, time, and space as objectively as possible, for Calle they function as a means to register a range of subjective and psychological responses" (what Patt says about Calle, applies equally to Lewis Koch's *Bomber, a chance unwinding*). As example of the low status of photography during the 1960s, Luke Skrebowski, discussing Mel Bochner's photographic-related work in the mid-sixties, cites *Art Forum* editor, Philip Leider's rejection of Bochner's attempt at submitting for publication his *Dead Ends and Vicious Circles* (1967): "we're not a goddamn photography magazine, this is an art magazine, . . ." (*Photography After Conceptual Art*, 88).

But this very conceptualist choice of photography as a low medium has been reversed as photography after conceptualism has become the dominant medium, a medium wholly accepted within fine art circles and being shown extensively in museums. It is, of course, the key theme running throughout Costello and Iversen's anthology, a compilation that tries to steer an interesting course between the Scylla of Jeff Wall and Michael Fried's touting of "internal aestheticization" as behind post-conceptualist photographic practices and the Charybdis of Benjamin Buchloh and Julian Stallabrass's Marxist (market-driven) analysis.

Interestingly, Iversen fails to explore the influence of Systems Theory's relating of people, structures, and processes into complex systems, which was just putting a blip on the avant-garde's radar at that time. Such theory as touted by Niklas Luhmann, Claude Shannon, et al. stressed the interdisciplinary study of systems, explored a communication theory of inputs and outputs (unlike Heidegger's notion of "attunement"), and self-regulating systems. For instance, this theory, as realized in Talcott Parsons's "Action Theory," influenced Allan Kaprow's living systems as explored in his *Happenings*. In a video "Interview with Hans Haacke, 1980" (The Video Data Bank, Chicago, IL), Haacke stresses that Systems Theory influenced his move toward a more relational and conceptual (i.e., phenomenologically-structuralist-influenced) approach to his artwork in the early 1960s.

Although academically opposing theories, Phenomenology and Structuralism were often complexly interwoven in sixties-era aesthetics as they both adhered to a belief that what we take as "reality" was actually "the experience-of-reality," constructed in mind. Phenomenology took "mind" as an individual construct, while Structuralism saw it as a social construct; Douglas Davis's critical essays appearing in *Artforum* during the 1970s shows an easy slippage between such theories. For artists eager to move beyond Greenbergian models (as was Douglas Davis), these respective philosophical approaches were resonant with their intuitive sense of reality-as-a-construct. Artists absorbed from each branch of contemporary thought what they saw fit into their evolving manner of working. Hence, Structuralist-inflected artworks were often referred to as "Phenomenological artworks" by both artists and critics at the time.

4. Iversen, 24 and Aron Vinegar, "Ed Ruscha, Heidegger, and Deadpan Photography," in *Photography After Conceptual Art*, eds., Diarmuid Costello and Margaret Iversen (UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), n. 17, 47 .

5. Aron Vinegar, "Ed Ruscha, Heidegger, and Deadpan Photography," in *Photography After Conceptual Art*, eds., Diarmuid Costello and Margaret Iversen (UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 29. Vinegar elaborates on Stanley Cavell's discussion of Buster Keaton's face in *The World Viewed: Reflections on the Ontology of Film* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979), brings in Charlotte Cotton's discussion in her chapter "Deadpan," in *Photography as Contemporary Art* (2004), and Denise Scott Brown's article "Pop Art, Permissiveness and Planning." He then follows Martin Heidegger's thoughts on mood and attunement in section 29 of *Being and Time* (1927) to produce a more complex, less politicized, understanding of deadpan's status as a mode of *being-in-the-world*.

6. Andre Breton, *Nadja* (1928).

7. Edward Weston, "America and Photography" (1929) in *Edward Weston on Photography*, ed. Peter C. Bunnell (Salt Lake City: Peregrine Smith Books, 1983), 55: "With a medium capable of revealing more than the eye sees, 'things in themselves,' could be recorded, clearly, powerfully . . ."



8. Benjamin Buchloh, "Conceptual Art 1962 - 69: From the Aesthetic of Administration to the Critique of Institutions" in *October* 55, Winter 1990 (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press).

9. Hence, for Existentialists, there exists only a *subjective-objective* and never an *objective-objective*. When taken into knowledge theory, this "weakening" of our foundations of objective knowledge comes to be telescoped — via Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Derrida — into a hallmark of our postmodern condition which Italian thinker Gianni Vattimo describes as "weak thought." See Gianni Vattimo, *The End of Modernity: Nihilism and Hermeneutics in Postmodern Culture*, trans. John R. Snyder (Polity Press, 1991).

10. Apropos the debates surrounding the trend in large-scale photographic prints, what is often termed "museum photography," as seen most characteristically in Jeff Wall's work, Douglas Davis in "The Size of Non-size," *Artforum* (December, 1976) and reprinted in *ArtCulture: Essays on the Post-Modern* (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), 38.

11. Originally presented in a lecture for the Northeastern section of the American Association of Museums at Winterthur, Wilmington, Delaware, November 1976, in *Artculture* (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), 88. On this topic, I can speak with personal experience, living in Los Angeles at that time and being directly influenced by Ruscha (whom I understood as a Los Angeles version of New York's Pop Art) and Baldessari (whom I understood as more language-oriented in his interests). In my earliest conceptual word-text pieces (early 1970s) I perceived "the dumb snapshot" (in my work, often a Polaroid) as a direct rejection of fine art photography's formalism and print fetishism. And as Mel Bochner has testified to, I found what passed for theory on photography slim pickin's. It was reading Roland Barthes that changed that for me. In my work, "auto-maticity" was inspired by my pre-med training in the sciences; thereafter, I mimicked the form of my university laboratory notebooks, explicitly stating in my artworks "Intent," "Purpose," and "Procedure," going on to execute the aesthetic "experiment" as preconceived. Many of these early works were recorded in a grid-lined laboratory notebook in hand-written text with photos pasted in.

Moving from lab notebooks, I began to do my first artist books. My first undergraduate photo instructor at California State University, Northridge was Jerry McMillan (long-time friend of Ruscha's), who first introduced me to Ruscha's books and even took us students to Ruscha's studio to meet him personally. My experience with artist books (1974 - 76) eventually led me on to expand my publishing interests by founding and editing (along with Theron Kelley) the quarterly art journal, *The Dumb Ox* (1976 - 80), in which our editorial focus was artwork exploring image-text combinations. One of our guest editors for that publication was Lew Thomas, who was the nucleus around which San Francisco Bay Area's "Photo-Language" group gathered. His many self-published books through NFS Press during the mid-seventies, books like *Photography and Language*, heavily influenced by Structuralism, remain an excellent source for innovative conceptual photography during that period.

12. Edward Ruscha, *Leave Any Information at the Signal: Writings, Interviews, Bits, Pages* (Cambridge, MA: M. I. T. Press, 2002), 245.

13. The bomber encountered bad weather and was not at a proper altitude to clear the mountain range. See *Wikipedia*, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bomber Mountain](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bomber_Mountain). Another source of information is a booklet available in bookstores near the crash site and from the publisher, Scott Madsen, *The Bomber Mountain Crash, A Wyoming Mystery* (Buffalo, WY: Mountain Man Publishing, 1990, 4<sup>th</sup> ed., 2004).

14. To compare Koch's imagery to other photographers visiting the site, see *Flickr*, <http://www.flickr.com/photos/u1976turn/1246336658/>

15. In the 1970s, as if to double the indexicality of the photograph, artists (such as Robert Smithson) began to supplement their optico-chemical traces with physical traces of the site photographed. These fragments read as "specimens." In Koch's installation, however, this "evidence" is actually rocks from another locale, Madison, Wisconsin, and so a rhetorical diorama-like simulation of the actual rocks at the actual scene. They now function to recall *absent evidence* and become a gesture of welcome and enhances the fractal mode of presentation in the installation. This is a tactic wholly at odds with how Smithson deployed his "true" artifactual evidence. Overall, Koch's *modus operandi* is that of a perpetual collage of disintegration and reintegration.

16. Sarah James, "Subject, Object, Mimesis: The Aesthetic World of the Bechers' Photography," in *Photography After Conceptual Art*, eds., Diarmuid Costello and Margaret Iversen (UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 54, offers an analysis of the Bechers' use of seriality: "The cumulative effect of the series defines our reading. Yet, although it increases our knowledge of the subject matter, the work paradoxically renders it more abstract." Where the Bechers fill in the slots of their gridded series with images, Koch's use of seriality asks one to fill in gaps, like in a Scrabble game, inviting a play with meaning that leads from the past into the present. The project invites us to create questions and then pose answers.

17. Vinegar, 45-46.

18. Koch has been researching WWII bomb devastation of German cities, mentioning W. G. Sebald's *On the Natural History of Destruction* (1999) as important to the aesthetic and anti-war concerns developed in his *Bomber* project. Koch wants to counter the amnesia concerning the destruction produced by the strategic offensive bombing of Germany wrought by air forces, but does so by subtle implication that lets the work speak to our current issues of aerial war by impersonal drones. A more direct, journalistic indictment, Sebald's text cites a 1984 British book where British journalist, Max Hastings, comments: "In the safety of peace, the bombers' part in the war was one that many politicians and civilians would prefer to forget." Sebald reveals the horrors of a policy that was England's response to The Blitz, and ultimately resulted in the genocide of civilian populations in Hamburg and Dresden. At one point he tells the reader that "there were 31.1 cubic meters of rubble for every person in Cologne and 42.8 cubic meters for every inhabitant of Dresden," and that Pforzheim "lost almost one-third of its 60,000 inhabitants in a single raid on the night of February 23, 1945."

Sebald continues to detail people's numbed response: "But these things obviously did not register on the sensory experience of the survivors still living on the scene of the catastrophe. People walked 'down the street and past the dreadful ruins,' wrote author Alfred Döblin in 1945, after returning from his American exile to southwest Germany, 'as if nothing had happened, and . . . the town had always looked like that' " (Modern Library, 2004, 4, 5). Döblin's observation was recorded in Hans-Magnus Enzensberger's collection *Europa in Trümmern* ("Europe in Ruins") published in 1990, but the majority of the pieces in the book are from foreign sources, hinting how the horrors had been largely repressed within Germany itself. Koch's *Bomber* project is an attempt to visually recall those destructive days and permit us to meditate upon the chance destruction of a machine of death that died during the height of the aerial war over Germany.

19. Jan Verwoert, "Living with Ghosts: From Appropriation to Invocation in Contemporary Art/2007," in *Memory*, ed. Ian Farr (Documents in Contemporary Art, Whitechapel Gallery and The MIT Press, 2012), 150.



**Something**

**is**

**CROOK**

**in Middlebrook**

**by James R. Hugunin**

**Something is**  
**Crook**

**in Middlebrook**

(a comic database in 12 parts  
which is thoroughly jolly and in  
many respects useful to read)

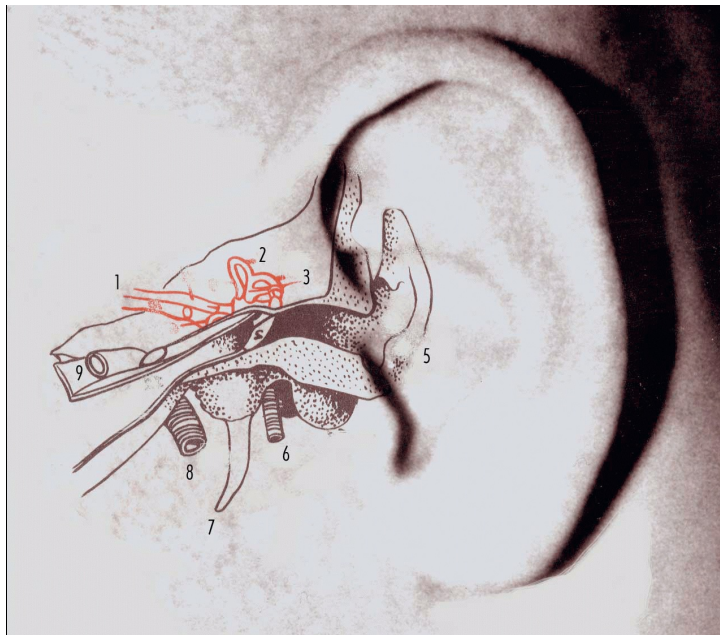
**By**  
**James R. Hugunin**

**Copped Right in 2011**  
**by *U-Turn*, Oak Park, IL 60302**

*The extension of any one sense alters the way  
we think and act — the way we perceive the world.  
When these ratios change, men [sic] change.*  
— Marshall McLuhan

*The ear is the delicate skin caressed or  
irritated by sound: an erogenous zone . . .*  
— Michel de Certeau

*For the perceiving subject who sees is situated and placed  
within a set of clarities and distinctions, but the perceiving  
subject who hears is displaced within a set of obscurities.*  
— Kevin Barry



Arthur's Left Ear (Photo by Beth Reineck)

*Think now of a world devoid of quiet and empty,  
where every surface shouts and every silence is filled.*  
— Brent Staples

*Suppose the ~~eye~~ [ear] were an animal—  
~~sight~~ [hearing] would be its soul.*  
— Aristotle, modified

*Let him who has ears to hear, hear!*  
— New Testament

*Noise is what defines the social.*  
— Michel Serres

*. . . I heard the voice of the city.*  
— Saul Bellow



Arthur's T-Shirt, a Gift from Una Calda Bionda

## Something is **Crook** in Middlebrook

# 1.0

~~It is the best of times, it is the worst of times, it is the age of wisdom, it is the age of foolishness, it is the epoch of belief, it is the epoch of incredulity, it is the season of Light, it is the season of Darkness, it is the spring of hope, it is the winter of despair, the gigantic anthropological circus is in full swing. Art has everything before him, he has nothing before him ... he has a thirst for contradiction like a thirst for wine.~~

City of Chicago, like spatter of ink on a map. Another day in our deMOREcracy.

Something's crook in Middlebrook. Something's wrong with Arthur Strewth Middlebrook that is. As he comes limping down sidewalk, he can hear your heart a-tickin' from across street. Or sitting high up in his cockloft on top his golf-ball shaped dome-home with his left ear focused in your direction, he audits conversations hundreds of yards away. Pure electronic hum of untuned radio some four blocks away bores through his *cabeza*. With swollen ear, gimpy left foot, at 55, Art finds everything auditory to larboard closer than soundings to starboard. Only malleable waxy ear goop purchased at Walgreen Drugs thumb-stuffed into auditory canal can balance his auditory perceptions. How would you recognize him? Could be stunt-double for beefy actor Bob Hoskins, except for enlarged left ear, that gimp, and his left-handedness. If an artist did symbolic portrait of Art, it'd look like some fantastic cartoonish creature out of repertoire of Chicago Imagists such as Jim Nutt or Karl Wirsum. When watches frightening films, put his hands over his ears, not his eyes.

Wants to audit *mucho* stuff, so his Chicana workmate, Mala Gra-decido—who sports teeth like screaming horse in Picasso's *Guernica*—blesses him in Spanglish after each museum shift: "*Bato, go con la oreja al vuelo* (Friend, go with ears wide open). She wittily captures Art's new selfhood in punning couplet: "*Hombre nuevo/hambre nueva*."

"Yes, new man, new hunger; I'm fearfully and wonderfully made," agrees Art.

**1.1** It all begins little over year ago in eighth biggest city on earth. Budget cuts at Chicagoland suburban jerkwater college art department. You know, large campus green with bad imitations of Richard Neutra architecture built circa 1965. Classrooms that have tall, narrow windows easy to defend with student desks firmly bolted to floor. Art department in basement of science building so student work nearly invisible. Must not risk offending anyone. One ominous word from Dean Gerta Hackenkruzler and Art's yearly renewable part-time pedagogical position teaching "New Forms"—critical writing, conceptual art, performance, video, digital art—to suburban brats *ist Kaput*. His usual Gramscian mantra—"Pessimism of the intelligence, optimism of the will"—isn't working any more. Last class Art declaims: "God is dead, Marxism is a specter—neither alive nor dead—budget cuts are rampant, stu-

## Something is **Crook** in Middlebrook

dents seeping into my classes are increasingly stegosaurus-rugged no-hopers, parrot-crested blankies, Ayn Rand-wannabes, and I don't feel so hot myself." Fellow faculty there are what you're bound to get when you deal with people who want to write their own lives: star bursts, black holes, white dwarves, dead suns. Decides to go back to school for reskilling.

Imagine. A garden with a hundred kinds of trees, a thousand kinds of flowers, a hundred kinds of fruit and veggies. Suppose, then, that gardener of this garden knows no other distinction than between edible 'n inedible, nine-tenths of this garden would be useless to him. He would pull up most enchanting flowers and hew down noblest trees and even regard them with a loathing and envious eye. That's *capitalism*. Imagine same *jardin des plantes*, but now gardener can't even distinguish between edible 'n inedible. That's *fascism*.

That is what Art used to tell his "Introduction to Art" students. Used to tell them anyway until course evaluation forms came back with comments like:

- ✓ THIS COURSE IS COMPLETELY WORTHLESS IN PREPARING US FOR REEL [SIC] LIFE.
- ✓ THIS CLASS HAS NO REDEEMING VALUE.
- ✓ INSTRUCTOR TOOK US ON TOUR TO STUDY INGENIOUS DRAWINGS IN LAVATORIES.
- ✓ SEND THE PROF TO BOB JONES UNIVERSITY FOR REMEDIAL TRAINING.
- ✓ DEFEND OUR MORALS, DEFUND ART (BOTH ART AND ART MIDDLEBROOK).
- ✓ PROF SAID ART IS ALWAYS AIMED LIKE A RIFLE AT THE MIDDLE CLASS.
- ✓ OUR REQUIRED FIELD TRIP TO THE ART INSTITUTE MUSEUM PUT US AT RISK FOR OUR LIVES FROM INNER-CITY NEGROES.
- ✓ PROFESSOR[SIC] IGNORED MY CLEAVAGE—HE'S EITHER GAY OR WAY OVER-COMPENSATING.
- ✓ PROF PRAISED *SPLICE GARDEN*, MARTHA SCHWARTZ'S TRAVESTY OF ROOF GARDENS THAT MIXES JAPANESE AND FRENCH MOTIFS, USING PLASTIC PLANTS.
- ✓ PROFESSOR TOLD US MARCEL DUCHAMP PLAYED CHESS BECAUSE THERE WAS NO TELEVISION BACK THEN; IF THERE'D BEEN, HE WOULD HAVE WATCHED IT ALL DAY LONG.

Collision of two worlds—neo-con versus rad—manifesting itself in Art's classes. Art now be heap tempted to introduce his courses with rhetorical flourish known as *captatio malevolentiae*: "I don't know if it's worth saying what I have, because I'm talking to a bunch of complete idiots who won't understand a thing."



## Something is **Crook** in Middlebrook

So one sad day Art is found in school's hallway, eyes wild with cascade of internal reckonings, lips acting out some unintelligible discourse, inaudible to numerous students who race by him noting his mad appearance and, quite rightly, offering him wide berth as they escape into someone else's class. When he begins to wash all the blackboards with soap and water, he is called into the RREMFs (Realm of the Rear Echelon Mother Fuckers, i.e., the administration), to be precise, into Dean's office. Art's blood slows 'n clogs, what little of his hair is left hums. Cooler blood chills Dean's veins, as if her mind works best at temperatures lower than her heart's. Dean sits at her desk ignoring him for a long moment, while Art scans her Deanly terrain: books on shelf with decorative beer steins as bookends, jagged-line graphs depicting declining enrollment figures, a print from minor German Expressionist, and an engraved "Strathmore's Who's Who" plaque honoring one "Gerta K. Hackenkreuzler, Distinguished Albert Speer Professor of Architectural History." Over Dean's door is placard denominating her office as *Das Warum* (The Why of It All). Faculty punfully call it "The War Room." I.D. badge photo reveals: square crushing jaws, scornful jutting lips that spit with defiance, massive rock-like head with ultra-dynamic eyes (corneas of a wolf, they dart with speed of baby-blue Ferrari on Germany's *autobahn*), brutal hands. In department where most faculty are sheathed in image broadcast by the self—but only in weak local frequency—Gerta's international broadcasts come booming in like Deutsche Welle.

Wow! Does Dean Hackenkreuzler have more than several unkind words for Art—including calling him "extraordinarily wilful"—peppered with strict advice. Something like (sitting on her fat *Popo*, adjusting her *Büstenhalter*): "*Prost, Herr Luftmensch! Hirnlose Ochse!* Another *schwarzes Auge* on your record, *mein Herr*. Ach! Is your brain steeped in milk? We've received written complaint from S.P.O.G.G., The Society for the Promotion of Good Grammar, concerning your critical writing; you're not Theodor Adorno nor teaching at Berkeley, *nein*," and (cracking her knuckles) "*Ja*, this maybe not be a Christian school in *der* town of Vheaton, *Herr* Middlebrook, but it's still *der* suburbs," and (re-adjusting her *Büstenhalter*) "*Studenten* are here to learn practical skills—*ja, ja*—to raise their EPR, their economic potential ratio. Not to be indoctrinated by you," and (clasping both hands before her, staring Art down with icy eye) "Like Kant, vee make distinctions here . . . categories, modalities. *Ja, ja*. Reason vee have a downtown campus *und* a Schaumburg (*not* Shamburg as one irate student claims you slandered it) suburban locale is *precisely* so our middle-class kids neither have to mix *mit der* subachievers *und* dope fiends nor learn Spanglish nor ebonics. *Und* then there vas your ill-received curatorship of 'A Festival of Plagiarism' which aimed at, I quote from your trashy gallery announcement, promoting 'The New Plagiarism as an anti-capitalist gesture by redeploying photo-copy machines and computers in favor of a cut-'n-paste aesthetic of revolt'. But, Sir, your penchant for imitation is merely imitation of a penchant!" (Art calls such Postmodern art strategy "playin' jarism," a kind of Glass Bead Game aimed at subverting capitalist notion of intellectual *property*.) "Ach, *mein Herr*, you are a mature pedagogical technology: you generate as many problems as you solve."

Dean's dressing down ends with her pointing unpleasantly at Art and yelling, "Go! Go *und* zin no more, *mein Herr*. . . . Or tender your resignation. Oh, *und* by *der* vay . . . due to budget cuts janitorial staff are being laid-off, so

## Something is **Crook** in Middlebrook

adjuncts *und* assistant professors will become our new *Scheisse-kommando*, latrine patrol. You will owe us *ein* hour after your regular office hours to bring your overalls, *mein Herr!*" Her face takes on appearance of an old sneaker as she subtly belches odor of *Weissbier* subtly laced with *Mittwurst* toward his startled face, while her shoes take on look of pair of large dead brown birds.

If Art had any doubts as to why, in German, "I" was *Ich*, they're gone now. Pronounced "Eck"—like sound of child confronting its own feces. Armoring himself from this verbal flogging and keeping him from telling his Dean *Mach'ne Fliege!* (Take a hike!), Art silently repeats over and over and over his family motto: *Etiamsi omnes, ego non* (Though everyone else conforms, I don't). Ho, yes! Fill your *cabeza* full, full, full enough and other stuff can't get in. Meanwhile, Gerta's face—framed by her grey, straight, severe hair—successfully seeks that precise angle, thirteen degrees from horizontal, signifying smug satisfaction. Jeeze! Whitey whites of her eyes sting like fresh frost. As Art slinks out of Dean's lair, infamous faculty secretary (Vera Goodykind but aptly dubbed "The Barracuda") just looks up at Art from her paper strewn desk with Cheshire Cat smile that breaks her face into different occupation zones. *Fuck these RREMFs*, he silently grumbles. Decides to quit.

So fuck New Forms course, now wants geologically ancient stuff. He is leaving theory now and entering practice. Enrolls to get Masters Degree in Geology, his childhood love—hammer banging on rocks, knees in dirt and gravel. First love was small chunk of stibnite: glossy black, spear-like prisms of antimony sulfide. Largest come from Ichinokawa Mine on Shikoku Island in Japan. Crystals five, even six feet, high. Early on loves galena. Its cubic structure is expression of way its atoms arrange in lattices. And cryolite, ice stone from Greenland, so low in refractive index it is transparent. Ah, those delicious mineral names taste good on tongue. Like melodious pair orpiment and realgar after which he names two childhood pet cats.

Oh yes. Obvious it all comes down to rocks: from basic bedrock to fault zones to gems in tiaras tippy-top Heads of State. Fact: favorite cartoon character Rocky of "Rocky and Bullwinkle" show. So Art diligently studies character in geology classes (both rocky and fleshy) at Roosevelt University on South Michigan Avenue in gem of building designed by Louis Sullivan. Still having love of aesthetic ambiguities and odd words, he specializes in aggregate and metaphoric rocks. Altered by heat 'n pressure. Like *hornfels*, hard, compact rock that breaks into splintery fragments. Fact: field associations of such rocks are "zone or aureole of contact metamorphism bordering granitic intrusions." Ah, those geological textbook descriptions be as fascinating as are actual minerals.

Yet wanting to remain close to art, Art pays his way through program working as drably uniformed museum guard guarding art at Art Institute of Chicago. (He was seduced by employment ad that offered the new guard the benefit "of warming yourself at the red and golden fires of Titian and Veronese.") Imposing building is rip-off of old Italian *palazzo*. Black plastic Motorola walkie-talkie in hand, his gaze perpetually torn between pigment on paintings and fleshy cleavage in jostling crowds. There he can exercise certain love for arbitrary authority and in his own small way contribute to goal of such museums: obedience, subjection, surveillance, 'n control, that is, to cleanse and civilize bodies and spirit of our so-called subordinate classes

## Something is **Crook** in Middlebrook

by touting purely visual experience that excludes movement, noise, smell, and taste. Oh, how he delights in yelling across gallery: "DON'T TOUCH THE ART," startling art patrons (decked out in suburban garb) out of their confused reveries. Once, stout, white-haired tourist in hospital-green polyester pants suit starts to raise small white Tic-Tac breath mint past her sagging breasts to her over-painted lips. "NO EATING IN THE GALLERY," Art yells obtrusively. Woman caught like deer in car's headlights, mint one inch from mouth. All heads turn. Embarrassment. Hope she has on her Depends. Fun!

In sly, destructive moments on night shift (when put off by set-jawed throning Virgin looking at him aslant from large oil) has balls to gingerly pull out box-cutters (like those preferred by terrorists highjackers) to scrapiddity-scrape diminutive pigmental flakes off famous paintings into small white envelope. Later ceremoniously adds 'em to *Wunderkammer*, cabinet in which—besides dainty jeweled *Schloss Bijou* almanac about half size of postage stamp (enclosed in small solander case which reposes in tiny silk lined 'n leather bound case in which was also diminutive magnifying glass shaped like a hand mirror), guitar made from eighteenth-century French bidet, statue of Chinaman with double pupils, skull of St. John at age of twelve, and postcard depicting "The living statue of Hananuma Masakicki, the greatest sculptor of Japan, a self-portrait in which the artist's own hair, teeth, toenails, and fingernails are embedded"—he keeps what he calls "My Testes-tube Art Collection." A sculptural spectrum Minimalist-like array of sixty-six (and growing) six-inch tall Pyrex tubes stoppered and neatly labeled with title, artist, and exact color of pigment. Taxonomic order. After brain event, where veins be just burstin' for a bustin', begins to write these labels left-handed, a southpaw overnight.

Normality be tightrope-walker above abyss of abnormality—sometimes one falls. Year ago, as if maimed paintings wish his demise, Art nearly expires among artworks. Outside, transient Chicago thunderstorm rages, nature's Tesla coil sends jags of electricity across dull sky, angry drops form sheets of rain, blow horizontal, dousing tourists and homeless alike, purging city of its summertime grime, making trees angular and ill-tempered; against glass building fronts, treetops foam like surf. Abandoned black umbrella, turned inside-out and blown against museum steps, looks relieved that it be broken, broken out of world of definition and be just sprig of plastic tackle again. Inside, Art's brow be suddenly 'n minutely sequinned with sweat. Voices around him sound like pile of foreign noodles smothered in black bean sauce. Feels vascular roaring rushing that until pain hits seems like gathering of a kind of orgasm of the head. In Art's once *vas bene clausum*, stupendous cerebral event sizzles, bangs! Strobe-flash of light—electrics fire off like jellyfish in brain. Everything be expanding in blackness; inflating 'n widening, yet at same time shrinking 'n straining, evading something, with some kind of winnowing, general 'n particular, dangling by fine thread as well as transformation into some something, transmutation. Boiled engrams. Engrams of oblivion. Flicker-image of data being hastily deleted. Traces left in his "reactive mind" go bye-bye, a fucking L. Ron Hubbardesque Blitz-therapy happening right now in his throbbing *cabeza*. (Umberto Eco, prolific Italian semiologist, noted that: "Dianetics can do a lot in terms of wash-'n-wear sorcery and Holy Grail frappé"). One moment heart be pumping, sloshing blood from one room to the next, then, a door slams and his mind pulls up





# ELDER PHYSICS

The Wrong of Time:  
Stories from an  
Elder Home

By  
James R. Hugunin

# Elder Physics

$$i\hbar \frac{\partial}{\partial t} e^{\frac{i}{\hbar}(px-Et)} = \frac{-\hbar^2}{2m} \frac{\partial^2}{\partial x^2} e^{\frac{i}{\hbar}(px-Et)} + V(x,t)e^{\frac{i}{\hbar}(px-Et)}$$

## The Wrong of Time: Stories from an Elder Home

by  
James R. Hugunin

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454 Iowa St., Oak Park, IL 60302

*... how beautiful are the old when they are doing a snow job!*  
— Saul Bellow, *Seize the Day*

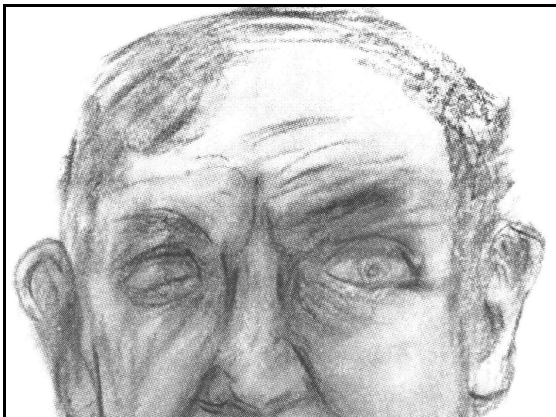
*Nothing in this life that I've been trying can equal or surpass the art of dying.*  
— George Harrison

*Nobody disobeys a ukase, said the Dead Father. He chuckled.*  
— Donald Bartheleme, *The Dead Father*

*When the subject calls upon the Father . . . he encounters only an echo  
in a void that triggers a cascade of delusional metaphors.*  
— Jacques Lacan, *Érits*

*I am quite content to go down to posterity as a scissors and paste man. . . .*  
— James Joyce

*True aesthetic innovation can only come from reworking and transforming existing  
imagery, ripping it from its original context and feeding it into new circuits of analogy.*  
— Andrew V. Uroskie, "Beyond the Black Box"



*Self-Portrait in a Mirror* (pencil on paper, 2004) Gerald Hugunin

Although this is largely a work of fiction, and any resemblance to actual people or places is purely coincidental, much of the material was inspired by actual events in my father's life.

Dedicated to my father, Gerald (1922 - 2008)



O fahter, fahter  
gone amoong

O eeys that loke

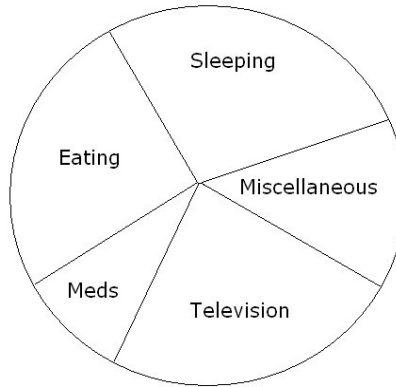
Loke, fahter:  
your sone

— Charles Olson

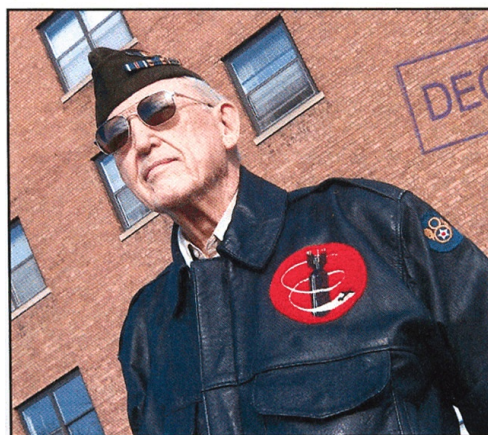
# Part I

## Independent Living

My Life Broken Down into Segments



**El'-der Home**, *n.* a simulated environment, a universe of ceilings, constrained by known elder physical principles — a turbulent field in which various and variable materialities collide, congeal, morph, de-evolve, and disintegrate; significant inconsistencies in the noetic density of the underlying fabric of this region of existence weakens the gravitational pull of memory, and movement is defined from the place of arrival and the end toward which the object is directed by a sort of "appetite" — but which still permits the occurrence of multifarious event anomalies. Within elder physics, mass will be a permanent property of things, while energy will express itself through sweat, grunts, groans, and curses. The contingent aspects of the mathematical models peculiar to elder physics lend themselves to be used to reach cosmological conclusions. A universe where "Star Trek: The Next Generation's" Deanna Troy advises "just take that memory and put it aside for a moment." Or as Gerald Hugunin frames it within his *interpretive armamentarium*: "It all Depends. Today rules are ambiguous, adversary concealed in aliases, and the oracles broadcast a babble of contradictions; it's all wheels-within-wheels, like in ancient cosmology."



Gerald in his flight jacket with squadron insignia (2005)



# Elder Physics

## The Situation

*In the Beginning Was the Situation:* An extended mood with and without joy and sadness. Sobs and laughs, black humor and white seriousness — events in the Elsewhere of Elder Physics where the wrong of time rules and where escape velocity seems impossible to reach. Where every day is a patchwork of small battles and myself a brochure of needs. Where Lorentz contractions and time dilations are common and everyone feels like the dummy-hand in Bridge. Where once I am a will within a world of wills, now I am a weed in a wall of indifference; where I now *sit* as many risks as I *run*. Great context for a personal narrative delivered healthy (if not the narrator) and full of beans, where I can *play* at being exactly what I am, a suspicious fellow in a melancholy year littered with psycho-inquisitorial sessions within a society best described as organized crime working within a general larval conformism.

Yep, my body has grown a tale in which I will try to isolate the look from the eye, the action from the verb, and extricate the twitter from the machine. This little tale will wag a *have pity on us all and don't get mad at me for writing it*. If you have tears to shed, prepare to shed them now! And excuse me if sometimes I tend to speak *vatically*. I'm Gerald, Catholic, wary, tight-lipped, and tough-minded in my beliefs. I have my strong opinions. And Jim, my son? Well, he has his soft opinions. I look at stars and see sparks from a train of God's thought, but "Jimmer" merely sees loopholes into 256 dimensions. "If God existed, he'd be a library," says my bibliophile offspring. When he defiantly asks, "If God is good, why does he permit evil?" I trump him with, "To thicken the plot." For instance, every day I manage more and more finely terrific internal turmoil, driving off a flood of black crows in the fibers of my inner tree while it seeks the torrid truth of a two o'clock sun.

Today, the sky skys, the blue clouds cloud and blue as I sit in my tiny room where the pressure of reality has put me. I swear I see a fly escape from a cheap print of a Dutch flower painting parked on my abode's south wall and start to explore the human comedy therein until being dismissed in my missal, slammed twixt hallowed pages. Fingers are on my Smith Corona typewriter using a blue ribbon gotten *gratis* in cartons from Sunny "Storm" Atkins's brother, Butch, a night warehouse watchman in Stickney, Illinois. I'm banging out my memoir, *By the Seat of my Pants*, by machine. It's what us old farts do, it's what I'm doing right now. But, be forewarned, light of head, I play moon to my pedantic son's assistance. So here goes!

Here is the imperfect human. Here he is. The imperfect human. You will see the imperfect human function. How does such a number function? Waiting. What kind of thing is it? To be waiting, only waiting, for Ticktockman. Or as engineers (like me)phrase it: *the negative entropy in the ordered organization of life has now become balanced by the positive entropy of disorder and death.*

My head's stuffed with dried memories in place of quick thoughts, the YesterNow of elder physics. My experience of myself is like it's shot at 100,000 frames-per-second and projected back at 24 frames, dragging out time toward my end endlessly.

Mirroring my mood inside, outside my window Illinois's black clouds stall, darken the view of my street

## Elder Physics

roads out from the Rome-of-Self. As fussy as an old house-keeper, suspicious as a C. I. A. operative who listens with the attention of a blind man listening to fireworks. Aware that particular corner windows, archways, and street lamps know a great deal about me and use the knowledge threateningly.

Question: Who has a birthmark, the sort by which mothers recognize their kidnapped children decades later? *Moi!* Or "Big Guy" to my son, whom I affectionately dub "Jimmer" or, unaffectionately, "Jammer" (code for "obstacle-boy") when he screws me or insists that my concept of the boundary between the relevant and irrelevant needs policing. Either way, I'm his jester, angle jokes off him like a handball off a low wall. And he returns my serve. Not so with Jeane, my former wife. When I'd slip into my paranoid vernacular, stirring things up, propelling myself into her world, she'd maintain a brittle pose, delicately draw out a premium-length cigarette from its pack with fingers stained the color of fumed oak, and reprimand me in a frightened reedy, emphysema-inflected voice that sounded like someone had squeezed her windpipe partially shut, "You think God made trees to keep the sun off your head!" I'd reply that, unlike her photographer-lover (more on this later), I didn't substitute cologne for character. Poor Jeane, destined for pain, trouble and dishwater, for bathrooms with special little toilet-seat and toilet-paper covers on. But she does love our son and he her, their hearts pulsing in unison, skulls vibrating in sync. A boy's best friend is his mother.

Unlike Jeane, I had a future. In aerospace. I read it in the North Woods's stars. As a kid, I'd put my knuckles up in between those stars to see how much space between them and I could tell I was meant to be. The stars knew who I was. Winked at me – some people call it twinkling.

Before The Weakness came upon me, I would propel myself, albeit slowly, for miles around what was home before this home, Oceanside, California. My modern suburban environs had almost succeeded in excising the casual walker from society. Roads, no sidewalks. All motored hither-thither, foot to pedal, not to concrete. Nice to soldier on here, unimpeded, on my own pegs. I saunter down to my art supply store for exotic papers and pens, or up to the small, local park to chat up the strays slumped on benches. I make my way three blocks north to my Church for early Mass. Or haunt the new snazzy postmodern village library to either feed my autodidacticism (my mind doing that race-condition thing where every time I try to concentrate on something I think about how I was trying to concentrate on something and should stop thinking about how I was concentrating and just concentrate), or try to trace the dim trails of my Huguenot genealogy (I'm somewhat computer literate), or wipe spots of rain 'n dust from my past to add to my writing project (our "Happy Scribblers" writing club meets in two days).

Jimmer, Heavy Culture Man, in a drop of think, advises me: "Literature is the intelligibility of mind transferred to the most alien medium," and encourages me to, as he does in his own writing, "include a flotsam of literary tags imbedded in an indescribable jelly of content." From his own observations, he gives me clues. A woman on the Assisted floor in a wheelchair, he describes as, "wearing

# TAR SPACKLED

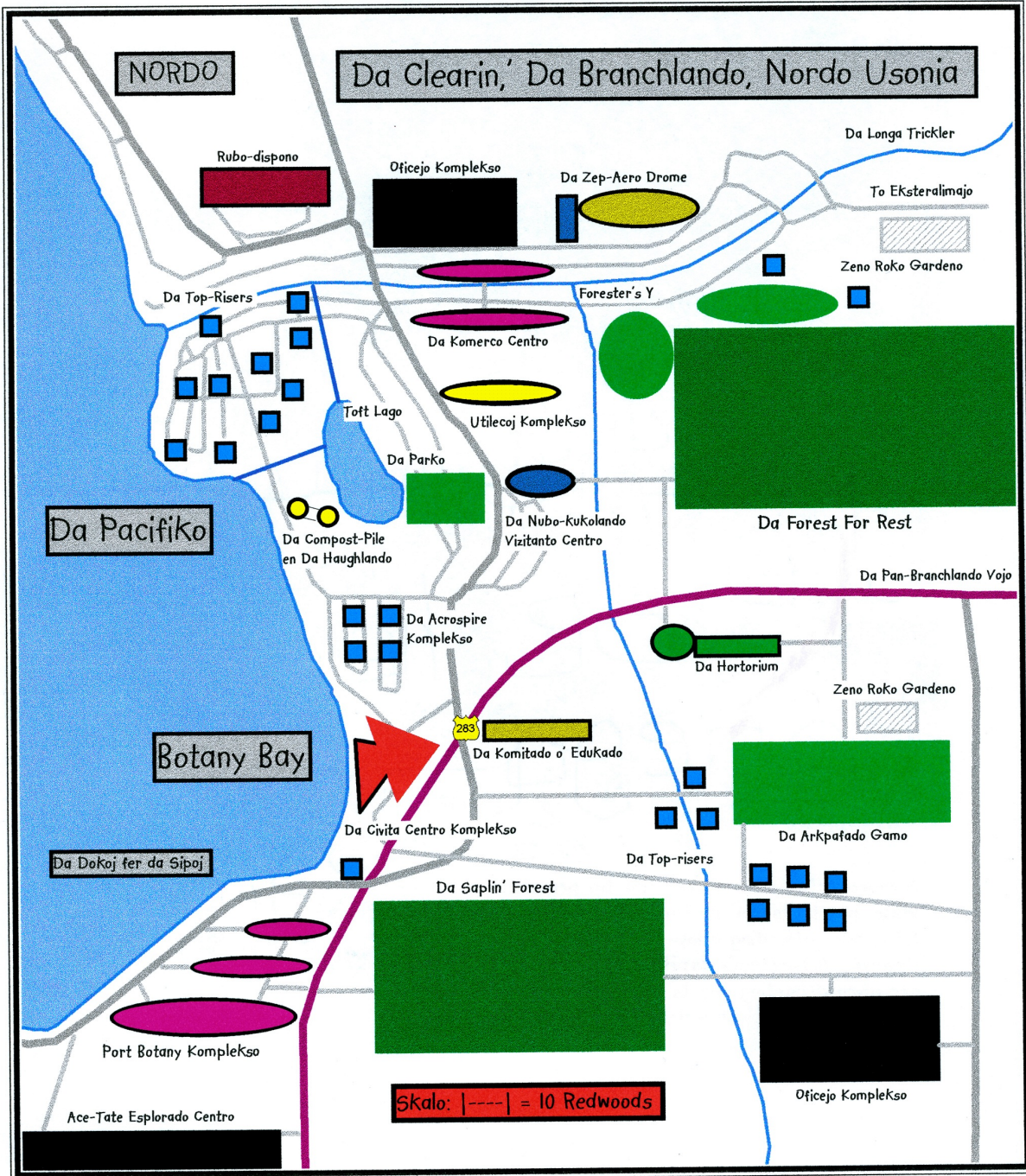


# THE BANNER

**By J.A. Ellis**

**Edited by James Hugunin**

# Map of Arboretum's Capitol City





**Nova Republik of Texas's Infamous Flag of Secession (2020)**

*Only look about you: blood is being  
spilled in streams, and in the merriest  
way, as though it were champagne.*

*—Dostoevsky, Notes from Underground*

## Editor's Introduction

Two years ago Laura, a friend of mine, was cleaning a studio space she'd just rented in Pilsen, southwest of Chicago's famous Loop. There she discovered two manuscripts (one large, one smaller), digital prints, and odd computer diskettes accompanied by a publisher's rejection letter all secreted away on the dusty top shelf of a bookcase—next to a dessicated, dead rat. All were stuffed inside an opened, resealed, blood-smeared padded manila envelope addressed to one "J. A. Ellis, Chicagary, North Usonia" and post-marked, astonishingly, "June 20, 2054." Sender? The return address claimed "Alfred Knopf-Abbeville Press, New Yorsey, North Usonia."

Texts from the future returned by a publishing house that in our time is two distinct entities? A hoax? If not, a future history (an oxymoron?) of the *United States in extremis* had been found. According to this text the USA, rife with separatist violence, was renamed Usonia in 2019 ("The Bunker State" or "The Divided States of America" to dissidents) and contrasted markedly with a small ecological utopia known as Arboretum ("Da Branchlando" to its Green citizenry). A surprising revelation of things to come might be in our hands.

But no surprise that despite an exhaustive search, Laura and I could not find the author to get permission to publish the manuscripts. After much urging by Laura, I edited the earlier, larger text down in size, snipping large sections of redundant material. I included bracketed, italicized explanatory editorial comments (I keep the practice here in Ellis's prequel to the larger book) and self-published this redacted version as *Arboretum: A Utopia* (U-Turn Monograph Series #8, 1996).

This larger text, dated earlier than the second, describes in detail Ellis's journey in November, 2053 to a small "ecotopian" sector of North Usonia, formerly the State of Oregon. It had been given over in 2019 A.D. as a land grant to one Charles Cane Forester and his North Usonia Loyalist Alliance Freedom Brigade of anti-fascist freedom fighters after their suppression of the infamous Durfuherman Rebellion. These earlier events are detailed in this, Ellis's second text. The revolt, spurred on by The Nova Republik of Texas's successful bid for autonomy in 2020 A.D. (flag reproduced herein), instigated the bloody secession of Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming from Usonia proper. With global warming making Usonia's south and midwest less habitable and arable, these northern territories became prime real estate. They had to be reclaimed at any cost. The liberal personages who volunteered for that famous Brigade—for instance, the members of famous The Bread and Puppet Theater—were at first defeated at the battle known as "Retreat from Yellow Pine," then victorious at "Wipe out at Warren Ridge," only to be betrayed at "Li'l Intrigue at Big Creek," until finally renewing their forces for the final drive to complete victory at "Return to the River of No Return."

# PART ONE

## I

*The subtler forms of self-deception lie around us, and never do they lie more temptingly at hand than when the subject is our own character with all its merits and the extenuations of its infrequent errors.*

—Edgar Johnson, *One Mighty Torrent* (1937)

**D**ear Peeper: blarghful [*unpleasant*] boredom may lead you to anything, even working up many years of remembrances and diaristic jottings into both personal confession and social indictment. I here play 2 roles: an archivist-time-traveler doing primary research and a synthesizer suturing up the surviving fragments of my life. A life cobbled together using the phraseroos: *moreover, and then*. It is painful re-mem-bering, a putting together of the dis-membered past to make sense of the trauma of the present. Yes, I hear your question: *Why the perennial mañana? Why all this in 1 mighty torrent—now? [A reference to a line in a poem by Shelley.]* My excuseroos are excusable.

First. Discomfort and doubt. Most contemporary texts are hypertexts. To redact diary entries for human peepers by hypertexting, that is, maximizing peeperly choices in a life already-lived, presents great difficulty for that form. So must revert to, at best, a dialogic imagination expressed in conventional ways. *Moreover*. To reflect *now* on the *back then*, tempts one to do so for *hysterical reasons*, altering one's observations of *now* in a stupid way for the sake of backwards compatibility with one's past *then*. Plinko! What is lost, put at second remove from origins, is what C.G. Jung dubbed "the terrible ambiguity of an immediate experience." In order to accomplish both of the above, one must first have a mind completely at easeroo and without a trace of doubt left. Yes, yes. Like the *vas bene clausum*, the well-sealed mental vessel, of either the blinkered Fundamentalist or the tenured Humanist acanemic, ya peep?

You laugh? Ha ha only serious! This is an achievement neither pingful [*pleasant*] nor easy in our blarghful [*awful*] Bunker State of Mind (BSM). Discomfort and doubt, twin stars mutually producing the dual-gravities of our society, Usonia, or The Bunker State (TBS) as our Lefties (what's left of them) have dubbed it. Try and escape Doubt, Discomfort pulls one in with increasing force; try and escape Discomfort, Doubt pulls all the harder. Together they increase the magnitude of the levity-quotient needed to reach escape velocity to detach oneself from our despicable Desmodernidad [*the state of living in*

## TAR SPACKLED BANNER

*permanent chaos, from the Spanish noun desmadre, meaning to be motherless]. A State that is all-elbows [very brusque, disregarding] with its citizens and their eco-environment.*

*Moreover.* Ugh, blech! The fear of autobogotiphobia. To take the slack [*hacker jargon for 'internal fragmentation'*] of one's life-memories and defrag it is to instantly bogotify [*make bogus, over-simplify*] it. To produce coherence and closure where it probably doesn't exist. One risks the production of a personal and familial fakelore. As V.Y. Mudimbe put it: "History is a legend, an invention of the present." *And then.* There's an epiphenomenon of this bogotification process: the tendency towards *creeping elegance*, dotting on certain autobiographic points at the expense of the *seemingly* less interesting, but not necessarily less important, parts of one's life-story.

*Moreover. Suppressio veri:* biography is firmly in the possession of the hack, talk-show host, and spin-doctor—blarneyful yak-yaks all with 80-column [*deficient, slow*] minds. The plausible knave and the man of maladroit virtue are on audiotape and cyberspace as well as in the flesh (and the half-flesh of the humanoids). *And then.* Even more unfortunate for my project. *Suggestio falsi:* autobiography is in the hands of everyone. Earth's total communications company, Globo-Com, encourages, nay, *urges*, the proles to have their own personal Websites. (These sites of self-promotion have become so organic to our cyberlives, an insanely great wit once suggested they be redubbed "Webcytes.") Yes. *Downloadable biobytes for every Beavis and Butthead by every Beavis and Butthead*, goes the Globo-Com jingle. *Pure biodemocratic Levelution*, claim its supporters. *Pure fritterware*, counter its critics.

Sorry St. Augustine. Confessions no longer in the hands of saints. Sorry Blaise Pascal. *Pensées* replaced by either puffing boasts or self-righteous self-roasts. *O.K.* Marcuse's "affirmative culture" with bang! Maybe an occasional *me-malign* that allows no virtues, no abilities, no merits whatsoever, until the peepers wonder why one ever chose to chronicle a self so mucho the futile clowneroo—the fav neg strategy of our aesthetic Mean-Modemists, our *derrière-garde*, who worship as that proto-*derrière-gardist*, Paul McCarthy, an artist who irritated the sensibilities of Southern California audiences in the late-20th century. But I do digresseroo.

*Genrecide.* That's what it is. Traditional confession corrupted by an all pervasive Pop-Modemism with its On-line Personals, Chat Rooms, Hypertexts, and Webcytes. That's why I'm again physically moving backwards in time to script this. Risking the wrath of Usonia's Tempokops who enforce TBS's strict prohibs on temporal-displacement. Although such displacement is relativity easeroo—you rewire a Taco-Bell Maytag industrial-size clothes dryer to revolve opposite the earth's rotation at quadruple its norm r.p.m., install a kill-switch inside rigged to an vintage oven-timer, add a whole box of Taco-Bell Downy's Bounce anti-static dryer sheets to prevent electrocution, and



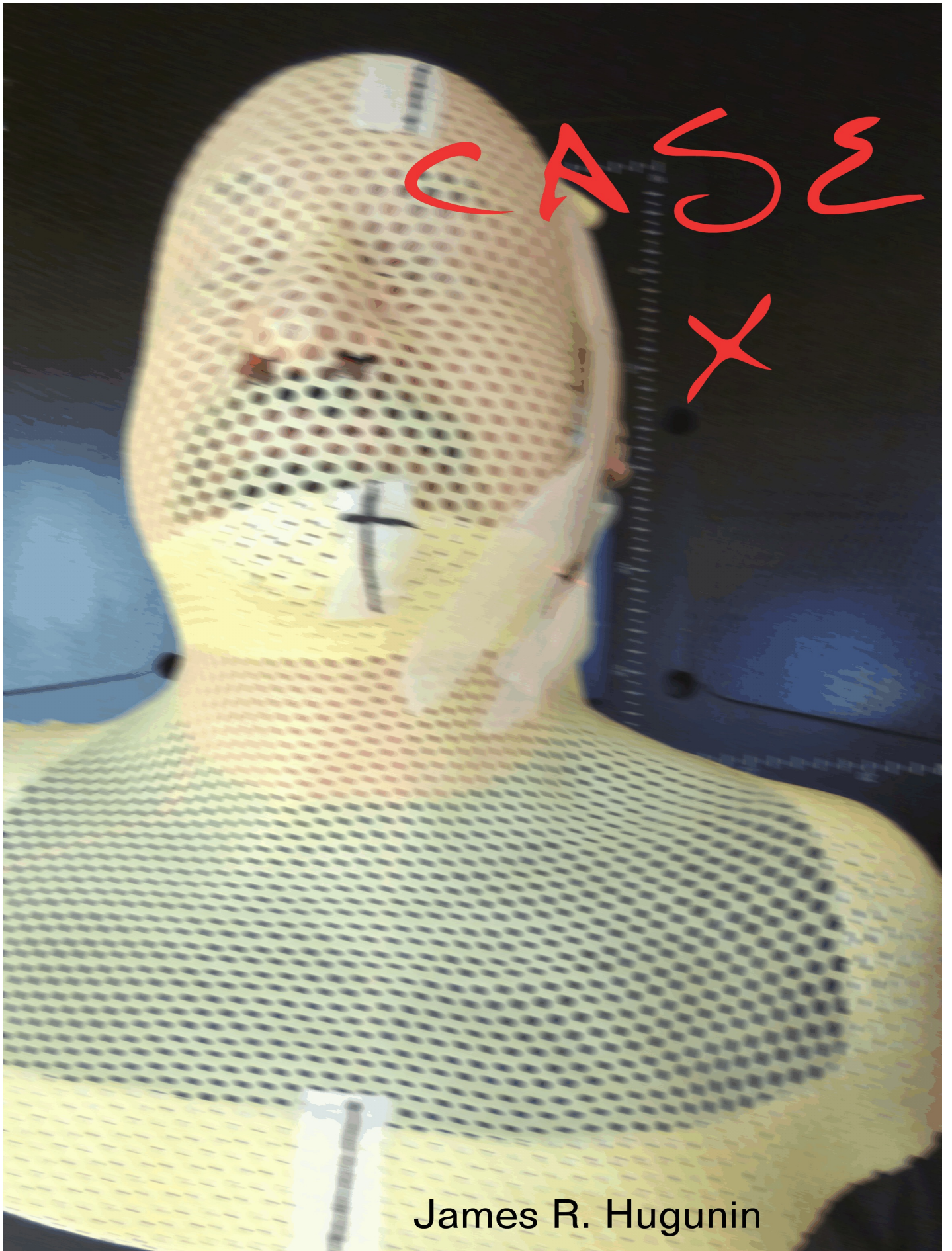
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stuff oneself inside after fasting from solid food for 12 hours previous—Usonian propaganda has painted such a bleak cyberpic of the past that most Usitizens [*Usonian citizenry*] have turned to “Chemistry for a Better Future.” All manner of Taco-Bell Dow designer drugs. *And then*. One’s body can only be displaced *backward*, or forward to the *original* time from which one was displaced. Blargh! Heap no time-travel into one’s future, pilgrim. So it’s mucho more pingful to forgo the vertigo and walkabout backwarderoo by peeping rétro-vids (like Hitchcock’s original *Vertigo*), re-reruns of TV reruns, auditing Oldies-But-Goodies on rare vinyls or tuning in Globo-Com’s 24 hour Nostalgia-Tunes Channel, and making Taco-Bell Pillsbury heap rétro-Do-It-Yourself-Again Cake Mix mixes.

So who I am to attempt to revive the genre? Where are my creds? I sport no old-timer’s tattoos and skin-piercing holes. A scar from my identichip insertion surgery maybe. That’s all. *And why?* you ask. A commemorative instinct fed by self-affection or nostalgia? Dessert for a well-nourished ego? But I’m no Napoleon, with a complaint or interesting story, marooned on a bare rock at St. Helena. Nor am I a sports coach with endorsements to make. A didactic purpose? But I’m no Euripides, a sad old man with a long beard, mind-crunching on something pingfully great and high. An apologia? But *je ne regret rien*—except my birth. I still call my *madre* by the tag *muerte*: by giving me life she gave me death—Q.E.D. Pecuniary reasons? The pan-capitalism logician may so charge, knowing my pedagogic profession is even less valued and more ill-paid in TBS than it was when this gaggleroo of disparate citizenry was called The United States. Nay, gentlefolk! I enclose no contract. I make no endorsements.

Say more fueled by abstract enthusiasms. Devotion to principles and causes that proclaim: *No pingful tranforms of the pan-capitalist economy is possible in the absence of trans-zonal political co-ops by anti-systemic movimientos* (SexDemo Pres., Manuel Wallerez-Stein). *And then*. The pingfully astounding fact that an earlier pingful female resident of a heap tamer Chicagary (it was still dubbed “Chicago” then) had found my, so to yak, ms.-in-a-bottle. She cajoled, complained, seduced to get it published; she defended its fantastic veracity; she touted its mysterious author, me, finally convincing her male art critic friend to put it into hardcopy—*Arboretum*. So, unwittingly, she and he now prompt me to expose my delicate subjectivity and precarious social context in heap deep gratituderoo. Against my cautious and paranoid sensibility—survival habits from living in TBS—I give to your time a present of *my presence* in your future written in your present, my past. Like Ripley, you may believe it or not. Peeper! Peep that thou shalt weep. As the *ecolustreeous* founder of Da Branchlando [*Arboretum*] once wrote in his bozotic ebonic diction: *Da self-confessor’s trials in workin’ to grok him- or herself now do be becomin’ da peeper’s trials in makin’ sense o’ da text* (Charles Cane Forester, *Da Green Book*). \* \* \*





James R. Hugunin



Case X prepped to enter a Helical Tomotherapy Hi-Art machine delivering intensity-modulated radiation therapy; Case X views it as a horizontal TARDIS (time machine featured in the "Doctor Who" TV series).

*Physical pain has no voice, but when it at  
last finds a voice, it begins to tell a story . . .*

— Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain*

*In the dark times / Will there be singing?  
Yes, there will also be singing. /About the dark times.*

— Bertolt Brecht, "Motto"

# CASE X

## Treatment 1.



But who, you wielding your Dr. Who toolkit? Once upon a time, in your mind, late fall. Lawns cold, yet still green. Streets show signs of potholes after rain followed by bitter freeze. Seasons march on, but you feel time has a different meaning for you now — gone splat into a *Zeitspalt*. The fire of yesteryear replaced by the cold of today — barometer falling and the wind from the west. In your former life, time arrowed forward effortlessly, memories were sporadic and inconsistent; yesterday's Novembers celebrating your sister's birthday barely recalled. You had allowed yourself to be carried away by this fresh weightless contraction of a hardly begun day and in your notebook would express this *élan* in weird scripto-visual abstractions. The look of the daily world was then governed only by which point you happened to be focused on at a particular time. But NOW you're an encumbered self locked into a blanked out space, your shiny mirror of perception replaced by a dim-mirror naught formula. Y-O-U, you ask? Why, oh, you? Weakness, fluidity, concealment, and solitude assume their place in a kind of dream world. Feeling self-pity, you invert a Muslim prayer, "Lord, *decrease* my bewilderment," face the opposite of the Qiblah direction from Chicago to Mecca, feeling like fleeing to a more hospitable country. These thoughts will follow you home today from the radiation center and onto the El and then into your waiting car for the drive home during which you will feel an intolerable sadness as you pass a large blue house a block west of the expressive face of your own street and house. But right NOW — what the %@&#! — you are bummed out in a clean well-lit place — a *potenza* approaching possibility. But blind. Yet you see an odd chronology (in Hobo bold font) running like movie credits before your startled inner eye:

**Nineteenth Century — have a heart.**

**Twentieth Century — have the stomach.**

**Twenty-First Century — lose a parotid gland.**

You feel like a hobo, the opposite of that 'oceanic feeling' you once experienced on a bus from San Francisco to Sacramento in 1976; have that not-oneself sense one gets in medical situations when one's body seems more powerfully biological and complicated and therefore unfamiliar. You used to be able say with confidence: *I am the space where I am*. Less so now. At best you can assert, "Where it is, shall I be," just before laying down on a movable platen in a featureless white room, a kind of guarded enclave, a *loculus*. You, an at-risk cancer patient, are in 'it', a big radiation machine. In defense, you call forth a gaggle of engrams via axons, dendrites, and ion channels — accelerate to 'V-one' and 'rotate,' lifting off into memories of what brought you here: skin cancer metastatic to the left parotid gland, surgical removal of same, resulting in permanent numbness in areas of the left cheek.

A minute ago you were on your back, staring at white walls that echo the blank white page of your large Clairefontaine® spiral bound notebook wherein you scribble 'n sketch. "Notebook of a Return to a Return to Tomo" is scrawled on the cover. *Was, is, will be* — between the tenses of the verb — your body now serves as conduit for hopes and memories. Memories, a deep resonant word so evocative and full of meaning, experiences and anticipations formed in your 'concentration station' where all thoughts unfold into oblique autobiography, a genre New York artist Robert Morris

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described as "the trace of a wave goodbye made with a slightly clenched fist." This sterile white space — an internal pocket of the system where a game of life and death is played out, site of your melancholy, sadness, joy, terror, anger, and blissful recollections — is a hot-shot hospital's radiation therapy treatment room (a TR) on the Midwest prairie in that "toddling town," Chicago. Therein time eddies, a vortex, not a riverbed.



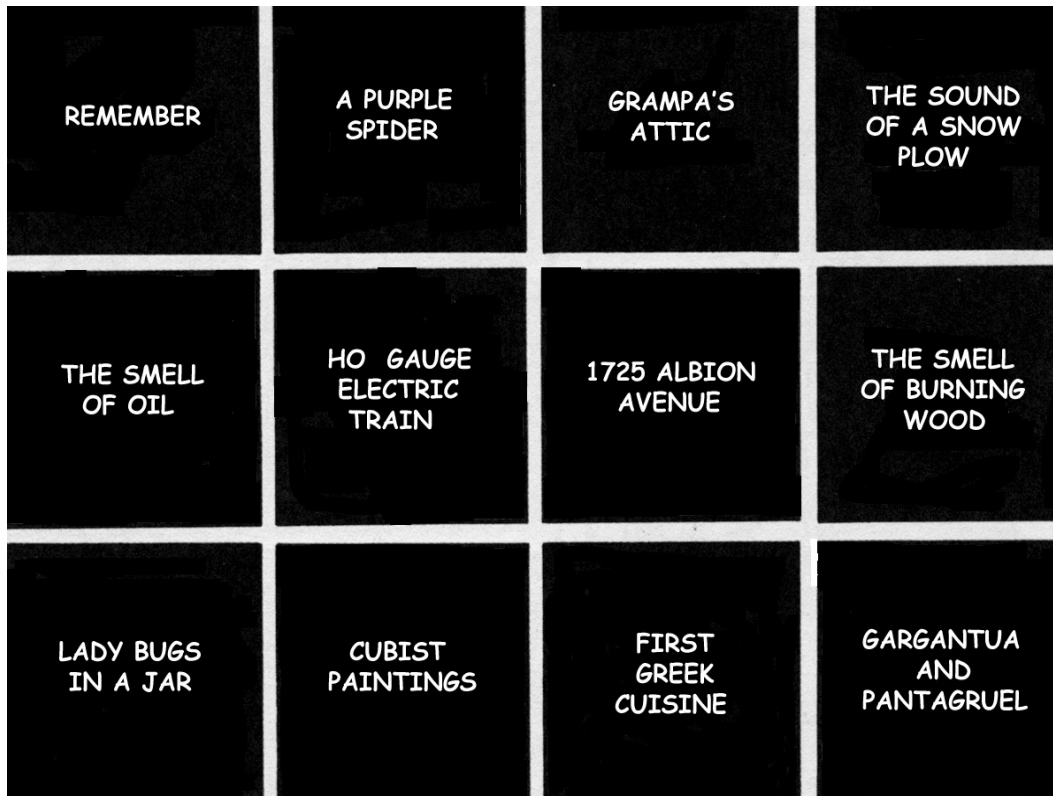
Minutes ago, arms akimbo and sporting a Howdy-Doodo mask, you say "Howdy-doodo" to "Tomo," confronting your high-tech torture chamber with a flair that says, "Look out Tomo, I'm comin' atcha'." The nucleus of that image before you is all verb, the seen availing itself to your seeing. You are asking more questions these days, so inquire of Tomo: "Who's afraid of you, snow-on-the-leaves melting away? I mean, where's your gun, your money, big mouth! [Louder.] We gonna get along?" You imagine the reply: "Where were you before you got here, dude? Where are you going after you leave?"

Did you really want to insult it? Confuse it? Maybe get a cheap laugh from a rad tech? But the laugh was on you; the French-accented technician placed you on the intake platen and yelled in the direction of the control room window, "Le Poptart ez en zee plat!" Ironic, as you are especially sensitive to how your gourmet cuisine is plated for you. After your rad session you sketched the platter upon which you were served up to Tomo, on which you will be repeatedly pulled between physical reality of place and metaphysics of mental space, a fleshy driftwood swirling through time (like Doctor Who) and your unconscious, your Portable Circus Velodrome of Camouflaged Sensations (P.C.V.C.S).

Swarming lab coats meticulously prepare you for treatment; strap 'the body' to platen inside a form-fitting protective plastic *recticulum*, a meshed head-torso mask that reminds you of a Giorgio de Chirico mannequin head. Motionless will be your course work. You find it synthesizes everything. During treatment, after tuning out the machine's noise, you will experience the 23 kinds of silence touted by Indian mystics. Wearing it, you are not "you," but "not you" either. For a duration of fifteen minutes, for five days per week, for six weeks, your existence will shrink into this clinical space (staff call it "your lifebox") where you will be in a state of legitimate attack, one treatment ladling into another until you march toward cancer-free status. Today, your first treatment, you look worried. One of your three techs (Chinese) advises: "If someone chase you down street with knife [jabbing motions with hand], you just run, you don't turn round to shout, 'Give it up!' [hands up like a football official signaling a touchdown]. Was heap big champagne-winning urbane track star at Champaign-Urbana. You just go." That relaxes you, then. But now, so compressed is your head in that mask, that your *cabeza* feels like a new species of Spanish grape in an ancient Roman, Horace approved, *torculum* (wine press). For the next six weeks — no! no! no! no! no! no! — that mask will block the real, while opening uncharted interiorities to be positively discovered. Inside a machine, inside a mask, you will become the creative nothing, the nothing out of which you yourself as creator will create everything.

Insertion into an O-shape device. Reminds you of a sculpture you encounter at MoMA once, a painted wood construction, six feet high, in the shape of a huge capital letter O which, when rocked, emitted odd noises like *baling-balong*, *ed pelut kondo*, *myoing-nyang*. Stuffed inside, you experience a greying to darkness; you — a photomaniac, a scotophobe — whisper a prayer to Janus, pagan god of doorways. You are not sure if your eyes are open or closed as there is a **dark** that has no depth to it and no boundaries inside the machine's tubular opening. The TR's white walls vanish, only thought or memory relieves the porridgy oneness that now fills your mind. You know yourself vaguely as consciousness, but your dimensional body seems to dissolve. Someone heel-clacks in and snaps in an older woman's voice — "Ya got mascara and deodorant? Use it!" — probably directed at *la*

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*mademoiselle* as your Asian tech's grooming is as meticulous as women featured in Chinese Cultural Revolution posters. A word in this artificial night is like a shaft of sunshine. You imagine the older lady exhibits a marked rigidity around her mouth recalling the face of a stubborn child.

Life is beautiful, but you have to take care where you sit or recline. Or you might end up where you are now, cloistered within the high-tech maw of this *everythingisterrible* space, where you fear a between-time wherein you may start to feel the earth's rotation and the vibrations of matter or flashes of energy rather than the stability fixed perspective. As a countermeasure to this fear, you start to glean shards of recollections and exercise your imagination by applying what you call "skull-time" (a term copped from one of your heroes, writer-photographer Wright Morris) to ameliorate your confinement. Your theory of life has varied according to the sum of your experiences. Now, here, you will permit your past to replay in screened footage. Prone, inside your horizontal Whosian TARDIS, you — with a face of waxen pallor appropriate to major occasions, rouged with a ruddy, bloated left cheek, blue eyes exuding a discursive charm — knock down that wall of words that is time, returning to an initial experience that has yet to cease occurring.



"Dr. Who," the TARDIS time machine as featured on the British TV show

You live in a "ctrl+S" world of Total Information Awareness, inhuman memories stored in and circulated by machines. A supermarket of memories of mostly when the great dark birds of history screamed and plunged into our personal weather: the sinking of the Titanic, World War I, Great Depression, Pearl Harbor attack, the D-Day Invasion, atomic bomb

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dropped on Nagasaki, V-J Day, Ghandi's assassination, Truman's very close Presidential victory, Sputnik, the Beatles on the Ed Sullivan Show, JFK's election, Martin Luther King's assassination, the Kennedy assassinations, Apollo 13, Janis Joplin and Jim Morrison's deaths, Kent State, Arab-Israeli War, massacre of Israel's Olympic team, end of the Vietnam War, John Lennon's assassination, Challenger space shuttle explosion, Israel invading Lebanon, Israel bombing Palestine, the Khobar Tower bombing, the Lockerbie Scotland airliner bombing, the first home computers, the start of the Internet, President Clinton's sexual misadventures, the Bosnian War, advent of Facebook and Web 2.0, Columbine and Sandy Hook school massacres, 9/11, the start of the Iraq War, Saddam Hussein's execution, the space shuttle Columbia disaster, Osama Bin Laden's execution, devastating Japanese quakes, the Indian Ocean tsunami, hurricanes Katrina and Sandy, Michael Jackson's death, Lance Armstrong's disgrace, Syrian war atrocities, Veteran Administration abuses, mass kidnaping of Nigerian children, Middle Eastern beheadings, another terrorist attack on another American embassy, "et cetera, et cetera, et cetera" (as Yul Brenner repeatedly put in *The King and I* and which, as a child, you repeated endlessly).

But this patient-hungry machine you've been inserted into, where you come around for private lessons, is more conducive to *personal* thoughts. William James said the Self, full of "infinite inward iridescences," distilled from a world that is "big blooming buzzing confusion," consists "mainly of peculiar motions in the head and between the head and the throat." Strapped immobile inside a large machine, head and throat encased in plastic, your body is physically frozen, but your mind is free to explore iridescences all your own, a private mental space where past and present come to form a new constellation. Might evoke an elegy of your lost childhood (if you had been born one day later, would've been a Cancer on the Zodiacal calendar!), a time when you were less preoccupied with suffering and death (you prefer the abrevé ' \_\_\_\_th'), and were able to stare wonderingly at the simple, immediate realities of life and the incomprehensible moon. If only you can relax your body to reach a deep level of concentration in this point in space. Ludwig Wittgenstein somewhere wrote that a point in space is an argument place, a place where *Practicemakesperfect*. But when you speak to yourself from that point, you speak with the silent sounds of others, an inner voice that is a copy of other voices. Whether those voices are scientific (applying to your physical woes) or wacky like your riff on Gertrude Stein: "Near ear cheek nuts, look at that. Neck. Let it strange, in a WR with herds of same" (which seems to address your mental response to your bodily situation).

Okay. From that starting point you try your hand at describing your experience after insertion into a space that seems to ache with an unfulfilled, uninhabited air that desires a patient to complete it. For you there is: white, white, grey color now, more grey color, more more grey, then dark, darker, followed by a real nerve-jangling *arga, arga warga, wurra, wurra, wurra, chink, chink, chink* machine noise attacking your cochlear nuclei, brain stem and cerebellum. Imagining the number five brings to mind the color red, recalling the taste of Wisconsin cheddar cheese makes you hear a D-flat, and the ambient smell of the TR evokes an image of dill pickles.

Yes. You are inside, pinned by that plastic mask. Eyelids parallel to parallel lines, parallel eyes perpendicular to vertical lines. You fight a panic response to the confinement as the rest of your body seems to disappear. The Equanimity of Complete Despair. Transducer for an Eye Show, eyes toward blues that deepen like vertigo into permanganate purples, purples to blackness, to nocturnal, cloudy darkness. A brink of nothingness. Brings to mind that Russkie Kazimir Malevich's pre-Revolution modernist-minimal canvas *Black Square*. Analogous to that Frenchy, Yves Klein, you are Jacques le Monochrome, a figure melting into the ground, but a black one, rather than that artist's International Klein Blue. Although black, the space seems to see you as its fragmented and technologized subject. You see shapes flatten and spread in the dense, two-dimensional atmosphere, without contour; soon no plane is presented as stable visual fact, you are experiencing the 'hysterical sublime' of a *Ganzfeld*. You suffer three of the "four privations of the sublime" as noted by Edmund Burke:



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vacuity, darkness, and solitude (you wish you suffered the fourth, silence, but the machine forbids this).

You are being *platformized* into something like an undressed piece of wood nailed in place or a motionless log. You no longer look human. You have no choice but to turn inward as defense, press to your center and see what's there, slip into super-added thought, what you call "skull-time," the hypertrophy of your visual imagination, where you can counter your discomfort in no uncertain terms with a silent, but hearty: *Itjstduzzentmatta*. What *mattas* is are you greater, finer than you were yesterday — practices of self-examination and self-transformation as culled from the wisdom of ancient Greece, a time when fact and value had not yet been separated. Inside this machine can ask if you've fulfilled your possibilities, made the most of your potentialities. What are you now and what are you now becoming? Your mind is not a place, but a process where a raucous parliament of cells endlessly debate what should become conscious. Can your writing probe such? Poetry sways matter, *your brain* certainly responds to it. In your writing, you've striven for an immutable artistry that evokes thought; can you maintain such now as you fight your recent tendency to sleep fitfully beneath a chill blanket of worries? Oh yes, your wife has noticed you've been droning under your breath melancholic lyrics from the opening title sequence to Elvis Presley's film *Flaming Star* [The King's one serious Hollywood film, a dark western scripted by famed Hollywood writer Nunnally Johnson, ed.].

*Ev'ry man has a flaming star  
A flaming star over his shoulder  
And when a man sees his flaming star  
He knows his time, his time has come*

*Flaming star, don't shine on me, flaming star  
Flaming star, keep behind me, flaming star  
There's a lot of livin' I've got to do  
Give me time to make a few dreams come true  
Flaming star  
(Flaming star) Chorus by the Jordanaires*

*One fine day, I'll see that flaming star  
That flaming star, over my shoulder  
And when I see, that old flaming star  
I'll know my time, my time has come*

Your wife, looking up at the ceiling, affirmed that she hasn't noticed a shooting star lately, nor is it near the solar time for any major meteor showers. "Your time hasn't come," she insisted. Remember Bob Dylan once remarked (sounding like a Chinese fortune cookie's advice): "He not busy being born is busy dying." "Get it?" But you still find yourself, almost unconsciously, reciting each time you try to fall asleep, "Flaming star, don't shine on me, flaming star. Flaming star, keep behind me, flaming star." *Think, think. Yes, that's it, good, yes, now you're good, now you're fine. Yes, that's it. Steady, steady. O night guide you. O night more lovely than dawn.* You are now moving toward a fullness-emptiness, a sort of Buddhist plenum-void, a *domaine poétique*, in which one thing leads to another to another to another. Next you silently chant: *Laar, Lita, Ondoe, Endu . . . Laar, Lita, Ondoe, Endu . . . Laar, Lita, Ondoe, Endu . . . Laar, Lita, Ondoe, Endu*, a magical incantation plundered from the titles of light-environment artist James Turrell's early work and meant to ward off bad stuff like your Elvis mantra is meant to do). *Give me time to make a few dreams come true, Flaming star.*

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That gets you into You-Time, the good blanket of the boundaryless self, that promotes the perceptual unity with your dream screen; helps you defend against mind-contracted muscles bouncing anxieties off your platen-splayed body, like fists in the boxing ring, where you breathe with difficulty through your woven mask. Air comes slowly, surely slower than when you breathe in words and words breathe you into creative inspiration. But you will find in doing skull-time the ability to escape — you sometimes have to ask yourself if you are *there* or *here* — and listen to the murmur which rises from the dark streets you mentally trod. Sometimes you will find yourself working cubes and square roots, or drifting into reverie about your dead sister, or wackily associating the idea of cockroaches with the idea of fish, or get the two words *black* and *great* to remind you of some poignant scene from the past or from a wonderful repast you and your wife have enjoyed. Sometimes you will find yourself digging into the universe's largest knot — your brain, that myelinated mass of fissures and folds — for what neuroscientist Christof Koch has dubbed "the neural correlate of consciousness (NCC)" where you would find what Virginia Woolf called "a queer amalgamation of dream and reality, that perpetual marriage of granite and rainbow."

Whimsically recalling salamanders or quail may send you into a complicated meditation leading to metaphysical soliloquies. You may, in fifteen minute treatment segments, take on those eternal questions: What is life? Is life possible on another planet? Do you believe in metempsychosis, in the immortality of the soul, in the inviolability of the laws of nature, in ghosts foretelling disasters to come, in the subconscious of dogs, in the dreams of owls, in what is enigmatic about cicadas, quail's heads and the spotted skin of the leopard, in enigmatic elements in all things, animate and inanimate?

When you've found a sign, you turn it around and, like De Chirico's surreal character, Hebdomeros, look at it front and from the side, take a three-quarter view a foreshortened view, remove it and note what form be the memory of its appearance. If the poet Lorca can will deer to dream through the eyes of a horse, what might you be capable of? Command mulberry trees to tear themselves up and transplant themselves into the sea? [Luke 17:6, ed.] But you are content to prowl your elders' attics, marvel at a purple spider, recall the first time you tasted Greek food, play again with your HO gauge train. Bingo! In a flash you are now in a horrible dark green room; back in 1951, seeing in your mind's eye a faded photo of your young mother watching you play with toys in a depressing Pittsburgh apartment, while she casually smokes a Camel in a large room with dark forest-green walls, equipped with a Queen-size Murphy bed; followed by a 2000 A.D. memory of your chain-smoking elderly mom's weak body coughing, wheezing in late-stage emphysema; now you are way back in 1975 watching a younger teacher's assistant version of yourself in basement classroom, diligently sweeping up your graduate school mentor's pile of half-smoked cigs accumulated during an all afternoon art critique slug-fest; quickly followed by another basement classroom, the one in which you delivered your first professorial lecture at a small Lutheran College. Blinded then by neophytic jitters, you see yourself once again step unawares into a huge dome of dog doo in front of twenty bemused pupils, shit smeared shoes spreading a pox in brown footsteps back and forth before rows of laughter. **Class temporarily canceled due to malodorous fumes and uncontrollable cachinnation.**

Yes, in Tomo you discover a love for certain aspects of the past, especially the past as found in your family's photo album. You revel in the hidden you can re-reveal. Each movement forward into Tomo is actually a catching of what is coming at you, thoughts to be written down in a delicate balance between the necessity of plot and the blindness associated with the repetitive experience. A mystery of thought only to be solved by thought itself, worked up during your trial and tumults at the Radiation Treatment Center. Strapped inside Tomo today, you replay your nervous arrival at the sign-in desk today: stumbled in with a worried, thoughtful appearance; an abrupt halt, a military salute as clicking heels on the decisive syllable of your odd last name given at the front desk where

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the receptionist replied in deliberately elongated syllables as if she wanted to caress the sound she put into them. Your uniform of the day: jeans and a black T-shirt under a purple western-style shirt.

Standing, looking for a seat, you noticed patients staring at you with the intent of archaeologists watching a statue being unearthed; you self-consciously took your seat in the WR (waiting room) where no one knows each other, but each wears an anxious irritated expression, and alignment accords to race. You will come to think of them as *knot-people*. Your gaze riveted on the call of the squint-eyed man. A face pockmarked, battered, granulated with a skull flat, a worried forehead, eyes vacant, merely a rim of a well, the well itself, colorless and with no intensity. A man with a disquieting manner, muttering something that sounded like, "I'm a butterologist." When someone came into the room, he'd say "Someone's floating in." When they sat, he'd say, "It looks like someone just stopped floating." The stink of brandy floated on his breath. Your stomach turned, and you turned your eyes toward the wide-screen TV, preferring the dullest stereotypes of name brands and generic celebrities to his severe topology and the winds blowing across it. Sound muted and text in white below lily-white, blond announcers, like an ecology expert waxing eloquent: . . . *involves creating a simplified problem description in which the amount of small isolated forbidden zones and their removal becomes the determinant of water balance.* (After six weeks of Fox News with blue-eyed blonds watched in the WR, you notice that everything false looks more real on the screen.)

You are startled to see a woman apply lipstick to only the right side of her lips (you will later find out she suffers a brain tumor resulting in *visuospatial neglect*). A frail man sitting like death on a soda cracker, suddenly shot from his chair, repeating "grabbedy ain't gonna stop me." His verbal engine coughing a kind of last breath before \_\_\_\_\_th, he grabbed for his aluminum walker. You wanted to flee, to flee, yes, to flee; no matter where, no matter how, simply to flee, to leave the place, to disappear. Before you can, you too were summoned (name mispronounced) to your TR, freed from this awkward-feeling situation, only to be recaptured, restrained, and fed into the O tunnel of a large Corvus system Tomotherapy machine for your daily dose of intensity-modulated radiation in a slice-by-slice fashion — where everything has its number and limit — as deadly rads are precisely aimed at areas along your face's left side where remnants of cellular dissonance might lurk near where a prominent surgical scar now pouts its proud flesh.

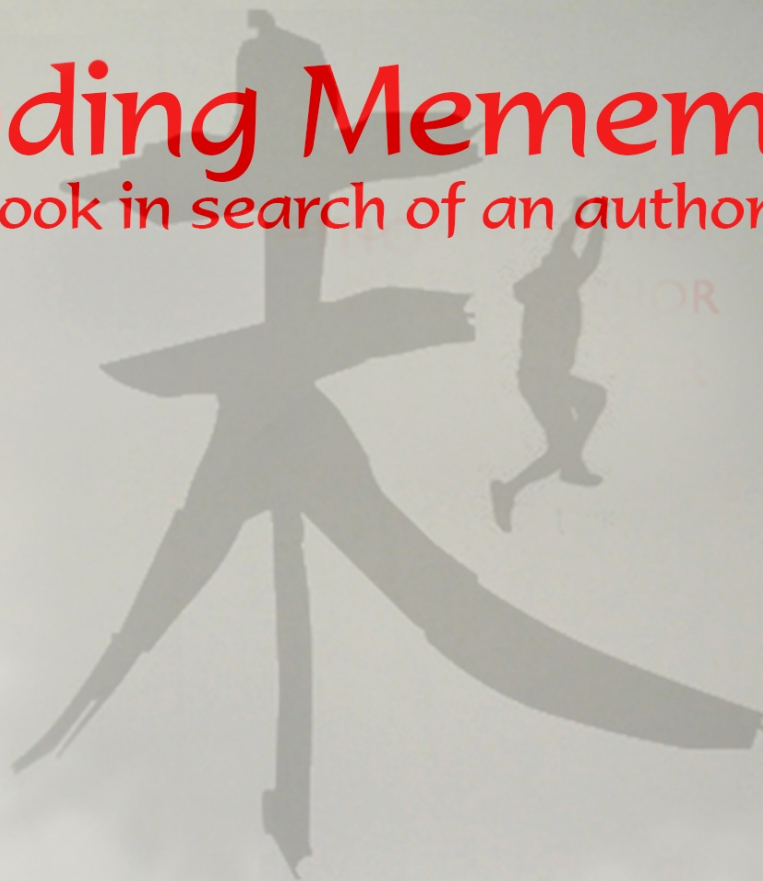
You were first introduced to Tomo when you arrived the day prior to your initial treatment to have your denuded head molded to fit that awful plastic mask, a near-suffocation torture that sent the most mysterious of shivers through you. Tomo's large circular tube, both Cyclopien eye and giant birth canal, aroused sublime fears, and when you did emerge after twenty minutes from the suffocating face mold, an awful fluorescent light had filled the TR and you tasted worn-out metal. That day you behaved with a disturbing mixture of timidity and boldness. Perhaps, why you tried to hide your discomfort by boldly confronting Tomo today, asserting a proleptic 'destruction survived' body language. But Mr. Cautious warns of that tempting demon: *Oh, gentle lamb platen-fed into Tomo, don't count your chickens before they're hatched. You may still be badly batched in the prematurely snatched.*

Hereafter, your submission to this restricted position is briefer, a milder hibernation during which you quickly learn to mutely watch a prisoner's cinema of memories and projections. Your mind in here becomes an exuberance of distraction. One minute you recall a weather dream you recently had — who but you dreams about weather? — about a tsunami sweeping you up off a Southern Californian beach and floating you inland, or write about seeing the wind chasing clouds, a desperate flight of the moon behind them during which the moon disappears for a while and the whole earth is muffled like a wooden bell; but then moon rays pass through the clouds again as the wind blows them apart. Or you are watching yourself watch a setting sun light up a Midwestern cloud that leans over the whole sky like a pink sail pulling the earth into the harborless night. This is today's weather — pure verb around which nouns pile up thingified.



# Finding Mememo

a book in search of an author



James R. Hugunin

# Hy "Mememo" Grader's Choice Picks



Hy "Mememo" Grader

*The past is not dead. It is not even past.*

— William Faulkner, *Requiem for a Nun*

*Time is like falling, I thought. We are always on the verge of falling forward into nothingness; but, in each moment, the world becomes anew, and the creative advances continues.*

— C. Robert Mesle, *Process-Relational Philosophy*



NBC Channel Five Nightly News is the first to report Hy "Mememo" Grader's mysterious demise

*One morning my wife told me that on the river, bodies crash like a car wreck. She said she had been waiting at the high bridge, watching and studying the jumpers for years. She had discovered the sound was almost glacial, glassy, like somebody breaking hundreds of china plates all at once. / Your skull splits right open sometimes, she said. / I feel sorry for these humans who cannot fly, she said.*

— "For These Humans Who Cannot Fly," *The Unfinished World and Other Stories*, Amber Sparks



Sherlock Holmes and Moriarty at the Reichenbach Falls, from "The Final Solution" from Hy "Mememo" Grader's collection of Sherlockania

*"It's a waterfall," he said,  
"what counts is the fall, not  
the water."*

— Red Grass, Boris Vian

*The French call the tempta-  
tion to throw oneself from  
high places l'appel du vide,  
the call of the void.*

— *The Marvelous Clouds*,  
John Durham Peters



Mercury Takes a Nose-dive, Vatican Museum Ceiling fresco from Hy "Mememo" Grader's collection of air-borne figures





Film noir bad guy (William Bendix) takes a fall, from Hy "Mememo" Grader's "Jump Shots" Collection

## The Elevator Game

How to get to another world

This is a game from Korea. By performing this ritual you are supposed to get to "a different world."

According to people that have successfully completed the game, it looks the same as the town/building that you are from, but all the lights are off and you can only see a red cross in the distance.

There is no other living things there except yourself.

Some say electronics (cellphone, camera, etc.) don't work while some say they do.

Splash page on Wishwer Watts' website



Wishwer Watt's iPhone's dimension-travel themed wallpaper

*Space and time are the framework within which the mind is constrained to construct its experience of reality.*

— Immanuel Kant

*... rise out of your body to land suspended between worlds.*

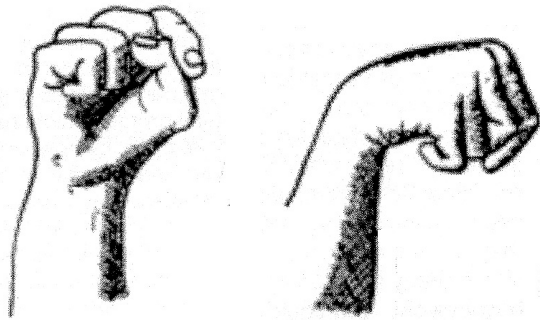
— Jalāl ad-Dīn Muhammad Rūmī

# Ichio

*Deru kui wa utareru.*

("The nail that stands up will be pounded down.")

— Japanese proverb and illustration, frontispiece to Ichio Honne's portfolio "Academia Series."



*The Faculty Meeting*, photo by Ichio Honne (from "Academia Series," collection of Hy "Mememo" Grader)



*Monument to the Admin-Type, The Talking Claw*, photo by Ichio Honne (collection of Hy "Mememo" Grader)



Ichiō Honne's mother, pregnant with him (Japan, 1946)



Ichiō, Hy Grader's friend, at college in 1968



Hy "Meme" Grader and Ichiō doing the Maori ritual of *hongi*

*Dropping napkins, corks, paper plates, and non-compostables into the trash, I see that Hy has so much mistaken my cool ivory everyday chopsticks for disposables.*

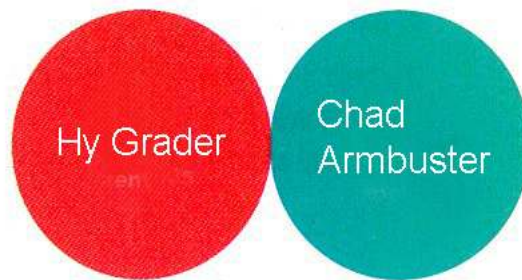
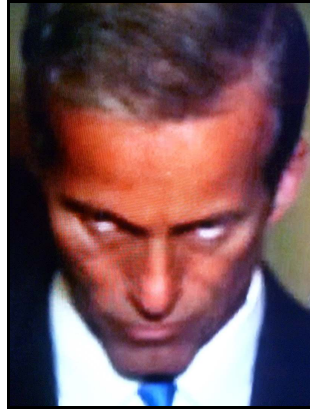
— Ichiō (Hy's first trip to my home, Birthday diary entry, 6/23/86)

*Japanese has no word for 'fuckwad' or 'fuck-face,' no verbal blunt instrument, so I tell Hy today. English, well, most Western languages, permit me to say things I can't in my native language. I say this to Hy who recites a series he calls 'a litany' of curse-words upon the head of his department.*

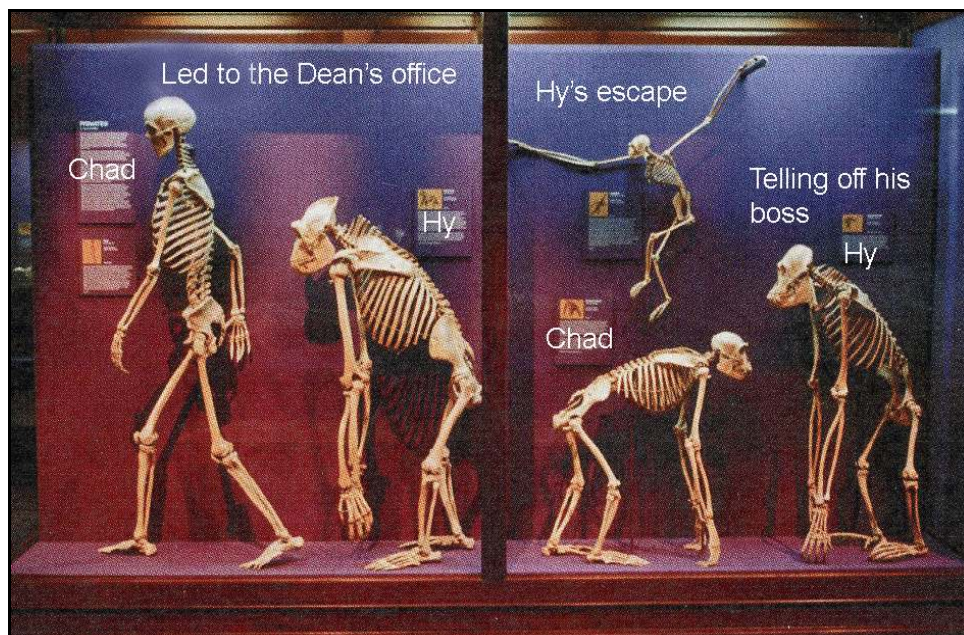
— Ichiō (diary entry, 5/27/08)

# Chad Armbuster

Hy "Mememo" Grader's departmental chairman



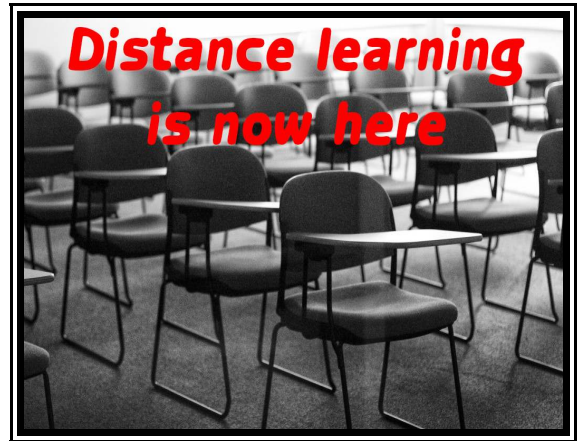
Venn Diagram: Compatibility Assessment



Hy Grader's Dream: The Natural History of Hy Grader and Chad Armbuster's Relationship

## Putting a Hole in my Sunny Sails

*Scene: Chad Armbuster's departmental office on the sixth floor of McUniversity, Chicago. In the Milky Way moving in excess of cosmic expansion toward the constellation Hydra. The gravity in the room is a smidgen stronger than earth-normal. A face-off betwixt this chairman (a Magister Bombardarum, a towering mass of sounds, a Rudefunk; a nervy, never-smiling man of affirmation and negation; a bell-tower jangling out of time, harsh; a fount of evil power now dolled up in Shakespearean garb), and two contingent faculty: Hy Grader (looking smart in his French sailor's uniform), Wyoming Mann (a.k.a., Wyoh, a fanatic Leftie wearing Western garb: cowboy hat, chaps, bolo tie, and carrying a copy of Ivan Illich's 1971 diatribe against organized education, De-schooling). On the wall behind them, a large poster with bold red text promoting the economic advantages of distance learning and low-residency academic programs, symbolizing neoliberal discipline at work within the university. On the opposite wall, a framed exhibition poster featuring Théodore Géricault's famous 1819 painting Raft of the Medusa.*



Poster hanging in Chad Armbuster's office

CHAD: *[Arms akimbo, circling the room for advantage, bored little monkey eyes scanning his opponents; in an aside.]* I am the Black Hand of the Black Death. All I ask of thee: thinking sustains momentum, momentum identifies targets, targets bring in money.

WYOMING (a.k.a., Wyoh): *[In an aside to the audience]* Prithee, know we two are the Red Peril of the Red Plague. There is a time for reciting poems and a time for fists. *[Then aloud]* We say, "do de-school society," may the autodidactic reign free of guards and gaol. *[Then aloud]* The Dean seeketh a dialogue on demands, which as the admin-ninnies made clear before, are non-negotiable. Small ideas scamper and scrabble, seeking power.

HY: Am I a man of gingerbread that I should be molded me to your liking? I assign thee to *Malebolge*, the ditches of evil, you hemorrhoid-licking bastard!

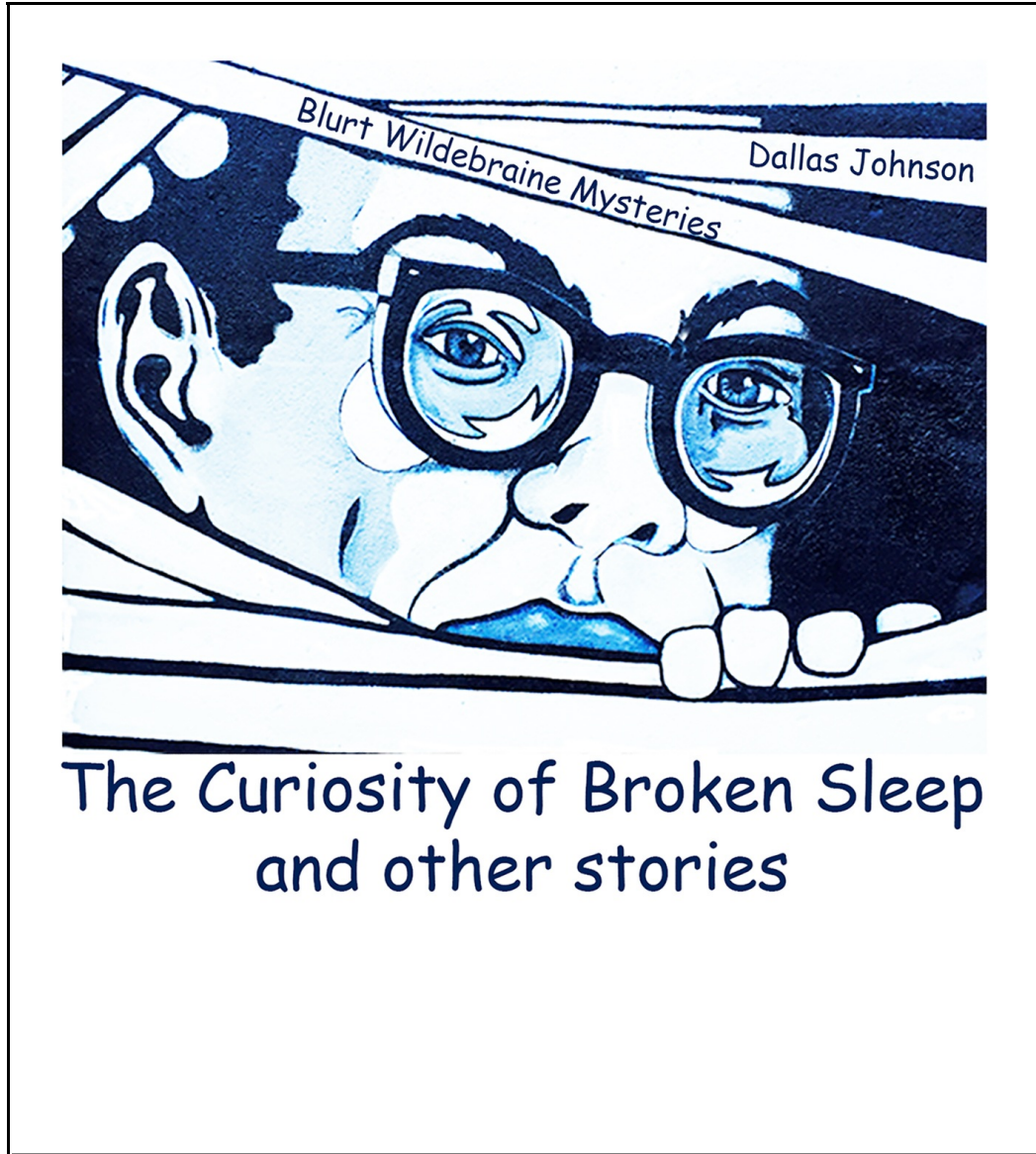
CHAD: Oh go blow your nose you self-forgetting wild one! Your pedagogical acts are cracked, your coxcomb fallen. Your bauble, your slide-projector, I confiscate. Your blackboard stripped classroom hath now been mediatized. Toll the bell, for slides, they are no more! Nay! Soon thy classroom will soon be obsolete. A field full of empty chairs. Thy admin will be up your butt hairs! You and your fools will soon be singing WYOH, WYOH me.

HY: In struth, I mark our noble faculty be in decay. Our contingent kingdom suffers being broken up, so every don is now his own fool and our world be cheerless. I prithee, Sir Armbuster, go back to your lord, the Dean, and tell that this Merry Jack Pudding, along with his fellow basement-based zannies, will joust with your neoliberal black arts.

CHAD: Avaunt, unwise contingents! Thou hast no portion in me. Now then I bustle into the Admin-Lair to rub smooth my cares there, where the Dean awaits my presence. *[Sounds of manic laughter off-stage, echoing, like heard in a mental hospital corridor.]*

*Exeunt.*

# Dallas



Cover of one of Dallas Johnson's mystery anthologies featuring a case in which his private investigator, Blurt Wildebraine, unravels the many threads surrounding a suspicious death by fall from a high-rise window; in his introduction, Dallas remarks that "Everything that begins as comedy inevitably ends up as mystery."

*His spine curved just enough to suggest a youth spent amidst a boring landscape. Though he may lack wealth and grace and charm, he does so in a special and superior way. . . . His personality had become over-digested until it became suitably surreal to others and unreal to himself.*

— Dallas re: Blurt Wildebraine in "The Curiosity of Broken Sleep"

## Finding Mememo

### 3



It had been perfect weather a minute ago. But you still can't expect me to believe that a dead man, even if a suicide, has the power to put out of joint the meteorology of this part of the world.

We had just finished viewing a James Ensor show, then "post-Internet" Dutch artist Harm van den Dorpel's thematically cohesive installation, "Just-in-Time," focusing on the digital world's visual vocabulary and how the space between the images it produces can be warped. I particularly liked one work titled "Macro Intimacy" (2015): muted close-up shots printed on heat-shrink foil, showing a cluttered room corner. Sunny outside with clouds clean as if squeezed out of a tube, we decided to have lunch in the Art Institute of Chicago's inner courtyard restaurant when a violent hailstorm hit, putting us in harm's way. It reminded me of Rachel Rose's video *A Minute Ago* (2014), wherein the artist appropriated a YouTube video showing the moment when a day of summer leisure lunching on the banks of a Siberian river — probably involving sipping sour cabbage soup (*shchi* in Russian) — is suddenly disrupted by a violent hailstorm. As the bathers madly dash for cover, the thoughts of the amateur cameraman narrating the havoc turn to mortality: "If we die, know that I love you."

I had said the same thing to my red-headed wife — gripping her hand too firmly — when the Lufthansa Airbus A320 we were on sprung an oil leak and engine number one caught fire from a lightning strike minutes after take-off from Vienna en route to Abu Dhabi. Sitting in the airport waiting to board our ill-fated plane on a hot, deceitful day where the air weighs heavily and the colors start to dim. Soon we noticed dark clouds with jagged edges ranging over the far landscape. A dire expectation hung in the pallid atmosphere. Shreds of tattered clouds were growing blacker and blacker. Several coalesced into just one cloud, black and implacable, moving our way. The sun had ceased being functional. "A huge thunderstorm is on its way," my wife rhetorically observed.

Our flight was delayed an hour until it passed. But such storms can still be a lightning threat even when miles away. Suddenly at around 10,000 feet as the plane banked right, the light of all hells cracked like steel into aluminum. Number two engine took a direct thunderbolt hit. As flames blitzed past my C26 window seat, I swear I heard an excerpt from "The Airborne Symphony" by composer Marc Blitzstein [*ed., arranged for narrator, vocal soloists, male chorus, and large orchestra that premiered April 1-2, 1946*] and simultaneously saw, in a powerful Proustian flashback, Poussin's famous *The Funeral of Phocion* (1648) [*ed., the body of a goodly Athenian politician falsely accused of treason and forced to down hemlock*] is being carried on a stretcher away from an otherwise



## Finding *Mememo*



*The Funeral of Phocion (o/c, 1648) Poussin*

peaceful village, a classicizing painting of political violence and death in a pastoral landscape. Poussin, an exile himself in Rome, found in this tale a lesson and an inspiration which led to the creation of two of his greatest works. I saw that painting once, hanging in architect Philip Johnson's Glass House as I peered in through those massive windows, fighting the play of reflections, shadows, and glares.

Although we were helpless subjects of the sky and earth, the skilled pilot managed to suppress the flames and hastily U-turn-it back to the airport where we fanny-slid down exit chutes into firemen's arms. Had to change planes. Baggage reloaded. Half a day later, at our destination and dining with her son's family, my psychoanalyst wife offered that my odd involuntary memory at that moment of crisis was probably due to my feeling fragile as glass, sensing death eminent, the engine flared among the reflections careening off my window. Life hurls us like a stone, and we sail through the air; sometimes we almost fall, sometimes we actually do. This brings me to a five dot ellipsis . . . . .

Memory, with which my mind knows itself, is in the first place the *memory of the capacity-to-remember*, but I haven't fully exercised that capacity, having almost forgotten to mention that museum visit's most momentous event.

My photographer-friend-confidant, Ichiō Honne, drove his dark green Subaru down from "Mad City" (so locals call it) where he is a part-time lecturer

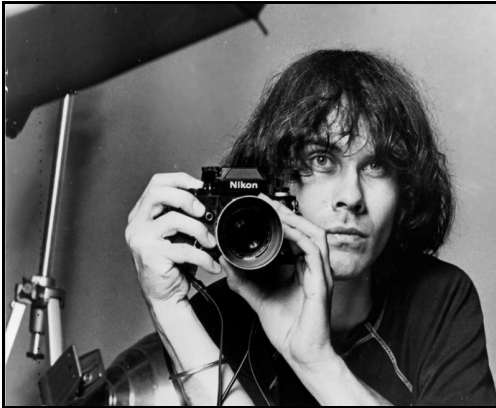
## Finding Mememo

("an errand boy for art," he calls it) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison's art department. The horoscope of our meeting was surely ruled by auspicious conjunctions. A mutual friend of a friend's friend linked us up when he found out I was moving my pedagogical-self from Los Angeles to Chicago, to within 120 miles of a man who practices the *Dō* (Tao, The Way) of Photography with a *bushidō* loyalty to his medium. He, in turn, was impressed with my *gambari*, my workaholic nature. As a boy, he showed talent for both numbers and martial arts.

At that first meeting, he introduced himself with, "Health is my only strong point," a typically modest opening gambit, like White's first move in the formidable Ruy Lopez chess opening. It seemed, he said after our first meeting began to wind down, we communicate via *ishin denshin*, Japanese for telepathy. "It is like," remarked Ichiō, "we play *kage fumi*, Japanese kid-game where we step on each other's shadows." It's a game expressing intimacy, as he explained. "There is an ancient expression, *Sanjyaku sagatte shi no kage wo fumazu*, which means 'Keep about ninety centimeters from one's master in order not to step on his shadow'." I was taken with this admission of closeness between us coming from someone socialized to be more reserved with their feelings. But, as one Japanese saying goes, "A clever hawk conceals its talons," so I was cautious at first about our new relationship. That was about 30 years ago now.

We still take turns suffering interminable road construction and expensive tickets for violating the 45 m.p.h. speed limit zones as we shuttle between Chicago and Madison to visit each other every other month or so. The trips get monotonous. To jar us back into creative mode, we begin our visit with a craft-brew or a puff of weed. This is often followed by Ichiō performing an it-always-cracks-me-up exaggerated Japanese pronunciation of an English phrase like "Roos rips shrink shrips" ("Loose lips sink ships"). That was a warning found on WWII posters, one of which he included in a photo made years ago in New York. Within the context of our teaching jobs, that phrase (like convict lingo) becomes code for "Be discrete around fellow academics." Relations between oneself and one's departmental chairman or dean, between artist and museum curator, and so forth, we code as "*Go-on to hōkō*," which translates as "obligation and service," like that of vassal to lord, but is heard in English only as a command to travel. When Ichiō tells me he is "Going on to *hōkō*," I know he's going to try to hawk his photographic wares to some collector or museum, domestic or foreign. So you see, besides the laughs and the Wisconsin micro-brews he brings me, I've learned much about Japanese culture from him. Like they have a Respect for the Aged Day, *Keirō*. In the States we've junked all that as sentimental Schlock and celebrate, instead, Respect for the Consumer Day, touting it as "Black Friday" bargains, the day after gorging ourselves on slaughtered turkeys.

## Finding **Mememo**



Kevin (1973)

As a grad student way back in those tumultuous 1970s Ichiō took to contemporary Japanese photographer Takuma Nakahira's complex photo series *For a Language to Come*. I later saw excerpts reproduced in a 1972 issue of *Asahi Camera*. And so I, too, became a fan of Nakahira. Not only for his imagery, but as an artist who, like me, also writes criticism. I had perused that Asian photo mag thanks to another photo-freak buddy of mine, Kevin (dead now 30 years), who had a subscription.

We'd sit side-by-side and eagerly page through each new issue like teenagers looking at *Playboy*. Prowling the streets, we each carried a Nikon strapped across our breasts in imitation of South American revolutionaries' bandoliers. And we did think, naively, we were revolutionaries in the practice of our medium.

For Ichiō everything is equal — the natural and the artificial — something that binds our postmodern friendship. He said he looks at a tree and face, a poster and a smile in exactly the same way: "Everything I see is for me the merely visible. I see, I see more and more, I reconstruct by seeing." He seems to notice everything as if for the first time, not to have learned to attach pre-determined meanings to all things. *To photograph* — he is that Verb eternally generated and incarnate in Time. Ichiō loves magnifying glasses — more than cameras — and has a vast collection of them. Says they magnify flaws. Perfect hobby for a guy who demands perfection; the magnifying glass suggests the scrutiny necessary to achieve it. Scans his negs and prints with them.

And this time, he and I were entering Renzo Piano's new Modern Wing of the A. I. C. I flashed my plastic rectangular faculty badge with its bad portrayal of *moi* (factoid: a student once pasted a photo of an ape's face on his badge and no one noticed) telling the teller a fib that my companion should be covered as a family member. The young brunette gave me that middle-of-day-of-the-vernal-equinoctial look of suspicion, as she glanced at my Anglo face and overly snappy attire, then to Ichiō's Asian visage and his careless dress that isn't entirely careless, and then back to me, then down to my I.D. badge and back to Ichiō. In a certain uncertain way I could see she was waffling on her decision so I exercised my natural Tellurism until her face relaxed and she let us pass with an, "Uhhhhh, okay," and tossed her left hand upward as she handed us the tickets with her right. We were there to have a magical, individual and silent colloquy between art and viewer. Not to happen.

## Finding *Mememo*

We had just got the tickets in our eager mitts when a huge racket on the second floor balcony drew everyone's attention. People pointing upward like they do in Superman movies. A dashing handsome young black man, flawless brutal power in struggle between two overwhelmed guards, screamed like a two-year old in melt-down, while bucking as if doing the Sassy Bump. We looked up, our eyesight an arrowhead parting the air, to see the hot elegance of a terrified thoroughbred attempting to be hot-walked between two trainers. He then gave out an animal wailing like a horse being gutted by a mountain lion.



Suddenly, racket turned into a racquet-ball, a racquet-ball that then became a *rocketing* rock that tossed itself over the cliff, jumping the balcony's railing in a wide trajectory to fall 30 feet at 32.2 ft/sec/sec to burst with a thud into a pool of hot blood, into death that attracted him like moth to flame. The head, a pricked yolk, spurted. A long cosmically held breath of generalized dread. A silence the size of a lunar sea in which some witnesses contemplated how close the falling black body missed a child milling about below; some looked around as if they might find the walls splashed with brains and a red rainbow. Husbands, slipping into standard gender role, comforted screaming wives. Children clung to parents like they do when they see a Rottweiler coming down the sidewalk toward them. I heard one parent tell a child, "If all your friends jumped off a cliff, would you?" But most just made sounds in trills and scales impossible for a mouth to conjugate into nouns and verbs. My heart pounded and I couldn't catch my breath. It was Chris Marker's film *La Jetté* right before my eyes.

Not sure who suffered more: the suicide; the nicely polished, expensive wooden museum floor (where eight hours later a fancy-schmancy art opening had elegant people shaking hands as if nothing had happened); or the shaken eyewitnesses. Shaken *not* stirred. A bond that for several minutes united us all as a special group in which the following phrases might be shared:

The Early Warning Ground Proximity Indicator is still flashing.  
Will the restoration of the floor be flawless?  
Presents itself as a secret we share.  
There is an inhuman beauty to it.  
The shrinks will try to explain it.  
I close my eyes and still hear it.  
The sound is almost painful.  
I can't believe it happened!

## Finding Mememo

O strange new final music!  
A life was last seen living.  
The lonely devastation.  
*This message will be repeated.*

All the stunned don't-think-but-look witnesses, adults and children, stared with horror as the fallen body seeped dark red. Then our after-burners cut in. Some searched for uniformed staff. Some pulled out cell-phones to dial 911. Some paced back and forth nervously. Ichiō once told me "I'm the size of what I see, and not the size of my stature." Taking him at his word, I wondered what his stature was *now*. Certainly he was too shaken to snap a newsie, and no visitor ran out to take a "selfie" before the corpse either. Were we waiting for a coach from the abyss to pull up and remove the body? I had to yell "Moshi-moshi" to get Ichiō's attention so he could get a shot, but he froze. Only his molars inside his mouth were moving, grinding together so hard you could smell the hot metal of his fillings.



Yves Klein's *Leap into the Void*

There's always been a thin sheet of glass between me and life (I was born premature and spent weeks staring at the world from within an incubator) on which is projected what I take for Life. All presentations appear to me as *re-presentations*, even my inner presentations. Life, literature, and the cinema coalesce as one thing for me, so no surprise I just majorly flashed on the three fatal falls staged in Hitchcock's *Vertigo* as well as on artist Yves Klein's famous *Leap into the Void*. Was what we witnessed today a *re-enactment* of such? Re-enactment's a popular aesthetic strategy these days.

Guards soon appeared. They get this deputized look as they alternatively listen to commands barked over official walkie-talkies and pass on those commands for us to exit through a door, down a narrow hall, our shadows falling on walls like those of sleuths in 1930s detective films as we are guided to an adjoining gallery. We moved with an automatism down below, our legs striking the feet inside our shoes against the ground, into a newly hung block-buster exhibition of Belgian artist James Ensor's major works. Imagine having witnessed what we just witnessed and having to shuffle by that maniac Ensor's disturbing visions! We, uninvited guests with "the horror, the horror" mirrored on our faces, zombie-walked among the other gallery visitors whose innocent

## Finding Mememo



*Skeleton Musicians* (drawing, 1888) James Ensor

visages showed placid gazes so perfect they seemed *trompe-l'oeil* illusions expertly painted on closed eyelids.

The media, shaking knowing hands with museum administrators, muffled any association of this unpleasantness with that world-class museum; the shocking event was under-reported, never making it to nightly TV. Even the newspapers and the Internet spoke in hushed tones of a “mental collapse.” But it was more an electromagnetic storm propelling a suicide *in potentia* to, in that awful instant, wave bye-bye to his past, actualizing his potential for self-murder. In academic terms, in a phenomenological frame of reference, our very “special group” had witnessed the “not-now” become the “now,”

that “now” becoming a “now-point” receding into our memories to lodge there our whole lives. Amazingly, given what we saw, post-trauma reports leaked out: “He is not dead, just critically injured. . . . On life-support . . . People are praying for the family during this difficult moment of . . . He’s not a terrorist. . . . Museum operations went on normally after. . . . Visitors were largely unaware of . . .”

I wondered what bizarre set of events and thoughts sent a man to try and kill himself inside a museum. He obviously had something very fragile or explosive to carry about his person and was all the time aware of it.

— Did he seek the hush of that institution to better hear voices emerging from the air, not from throats?

— Did he think: *Everything wearies me, including what doesn't weary me. My happiness as painful as my pain.*

— Did he seem normal when buying his entry from the gracious ticket agent? If not, why sell him a ticket instead of calling the cops?

— Was he a reverse Iconoclast: instead of destroying art, he destroyed himself?

— Was it a disturbing artwork seen that set him off, something in the Ensor show?

— Was it Happy Dust turned sad. Or medication gone awry?

— Was he an art student who got ripped a new asshole during an end of semester crit?

All these questions went unanswered. There was something unexpected and original enough in his decision and act to be altogether incomprehensible.

Sure, from a galactic perspective, this actualization of inner human turmoil was a mere speck on a pale blue mote of dust suspended in a sunbeam. But it yet affects Ichiō and me. I’m sure it has become a sort of baseline from which

## Finding *Mememo*

all the people in our “special group” set about the task of living-hence. As a sailor in Joseph Conrad’s tale of a cursed ship, *The Shadow-Line*, puts it to the new captain — “The great thing to do, sir, is to get the ship past 8 degrees, 20 minutes latitude” (the precise location where the former ship’s captain went crazy, died, and was buried at sea) — so did we, Ichiō and I — get the Ship of Self, our attitude, past that latitude. But I’m sure it will remain marked on our inner maps for a long time.

Sailors are so supersupersuperstitious! I think because a ship is the most

living of inanimate things. Swabbies say bad things happen in threes. And, sure enough, it did. Since this singular, horrible event, two more: a despondent, shriveled senior citizen dives from a local elder home, and the beautiful 20-year old schizophrenic son of University of Chicago professor and *Critical Inquiry* editor, W. J. T. Mitchell, leaps from the sixtieth floor of the Marina City apartments.

### Man jumps to his death in apparent suicide

Oak Park Arms senior living facility confirms man’s death

By TIMOTHY INKLEBARGER  
*Staff Reporter*

Oak Park emergency vehicles surrounded Oak Park Arms senior living facility on May 11 in response to an apparent suicide.

Moses Williams, executive director of Oak Park Arms, 408 S. Oak Park Ave., said in a telephone interview that a man appears to have jumped from the window of his unit, which unnamed sources say was on the fifth floor.

Williams said the facility “knows very little” about the 72-year-old man, because he had just moved into the facility on Saturday. He declined to release the man’s name.

The Oak Park Police Department could not immediately be reached for comment. The apparent suicide occurred sometime between 8:30 a.m. and 8:45 a.m., Williams said.

He said the facility is providing counselors and religious services for residents who might be affected by the man’s death.

But I’ve gone and sailed off narrative course for too long. Having gotten past 8 degrees, 20 minutes latitude, Ichiō and I are now tacking eastward, out of the harm’s way and the Harm installation where Ichiō and I imaginatively competed with ludic displays of hermeneutic bravado, about to set anchor among a school of landlubbers feeding in the outdoor lunch area in the inner harbor of the famous museum. They appear oblivious to “the horror, the horror” that had taken place an hour and a half previous.

The outside area is as dim as inside the museum. I look up to see imminent danger. Roiling black clouds. As the hostess is about to seat us, a dark squall with golf ball-sized hail and a violent wind that swirls about the space. Tables with umbrellas are knocked down. Everyone disperses in every direction. The chaotic scene recalls a threatened merchant marine convoy frantically trying to dodge a submarine wolf-pack attack, the blasting sound of AAAAWWW-OOOO-GAAAH AAAAWWW-OOOO-GAAAH AAAAWWW-OOOO-GAAAH calling men to their duty stations. I’ve toured Chicago’s Museum of Science and Industry’s famed captured German submarine and watched brave Hollywood heroes man their

## Finding Mememo



U-505, Captured by U.S. forces on June 4, 1944

destroyer's depth charges.

As any guy with a rod-straight back, broad shoulders with hair loose under his Cubs or White Sox hat, sitting on a stool in any one of a thousand of dim Chicago dark-wooded bars will tell you, in between hoisting brews and chomping at a pickle, Chicago weather is a fuckin' contact sport, as fickle as their last girlfriend. But it has been so even more during the last half decade.

Dramatic changes in our

clime come across due west from the plains are often pushed by tornadic winds. One hour it's 75 degrees F. out with blue of the sky between still clouds; the next it's 45 degrees, zip sun, a lowering dirty orange-black ceiling above. Wind blows and the former stage set from, say, *The Magic Flute*, flies off into the wings to be replaced with a frightening one from *The Flying Dutchman*. These rapid, violent scene changes, requiring a quick costume change on our part, are increasingly frequent, I think, due to Gaia's Revenge: global climate change.



Paris Street; Rainy Day (1877) Gustave Caillebotte

Groaning, unrelenting rain, bashing, bouncing hail. The scene recalls a tumultuous painting by J. M. W. Turner we glanced at a few minutes ago — not the placid rain falling in Caillebotte's *Paris Street; Rainy Day*. But today, after the worst of the storm passes, I hope we find some forgetfulness about our trauma in the subdued purple tones of the clouds.

Worked before for me.

As hail and helluva rain bounce off umbrellas, Ichiō is rattling off something Zen-like:

Pay attention to the flow of waters  
Pay attention to the integrity of the waters flowing  
Pay attention to where the waters are flowing







# HUGUNIN PUBLICATIONS

## Non-scholarly, artist books and novels

(These may be found in the Joan Flasch artists' books collection of the School of the Art of Institute of Chicago's John Flaxman Library, Chicago, Illinois.) A selection of Hugunin's writings may be read online at: <http://www.uturn.org> under the links titled "Writings" and "Reviews." His books can viewed at: <http://www.uturn.org/HugBooks>. Many of his publications can be ordered from Amazon.com.

## Published Fiction

- 2015      *Case X* (fiction, limited edition novel in full color)  
*Tar Spackled Banner* (fiction, limited edition novel in full color)
- 2013      *Elder Physics, The Wrong of Time: Monologues from an Elder Home*  
(fiction, limited edition novel in full color)
- 2012      *Something is Crook in Middlebrook* (Journal of Experimental Fiction 43,  
(fiction, limited edition novel in full color. This book was chosen  
as the best experimental novel of 2012" by nationally-published  
writer/critic Derek Pell on his blog "Zoom Street: Art, Culture,  
Photography, Noir" (11/4/2012) at the web url:  
<http://zoomstreet.wordpress.com/2012/11/04/best-books-of-2012/>  
*Tossed Rope Series* (self-published photobook available on Shutterfly)  
*Photo-Language* (self-published photobook available on Shutterfly)  
*Portraits* (self-published photobook available on Shutterfly)  
*A Monument to Wotruba* (self-published photobook available on Shutterfly)
- 2001      *A Hugunin Chrestomathy* (a CD-ROM includes *Tarspackled Banner*)  
"Chapter One of *Basco's Dilemma*," in *Belighted Fiction: Journal of Experi-  
mental Fiction #4* (2001), Eckhard Gerdes, editor and publisher.

## Scholarly Publications

Currently editing the *U-Turn E-zine* an electronic art journal at [www.uturn.org](http://www.uturn.org) which has won Study Web's Academic Excellence Award. Various artist portfolios, writings, and visual projects online. Back Issues available on CD-ROM:

- 1998      ISSUE#1:  
            "Art and New Technologies: Pro and Con"
- 1999      ISSUE#2:  
            "All Chicago: An Electronic Exhibition"
- 2000      ISSUE#3:  
            "The Ghost of Cornell"

My online critical writings and reviews published on *U-Turn E-zine* website:  
([www.uturn.org](http://www.uturn.org)):

## HUGUNIN PUBLICATIONS

- 1998 "alt.art.soc.tech.pro.con"
- 2000 "The Aesthetic Use of Machinic Beings"  
"Photobook review: *Wasteland* by David Hanson"
- 2002 "It's Art, but is it Photography: Robert Smithson's Photoworks"
- 2003 "Lewis Koch at Walsh Gallery"  
2003 "Book Review: *Winogrand 1964*"
- 2008 "An Uncanny Apparition: A Dialogue on Lew Koch's *osaycanyousee*"  
"Industria, The Photographs of Ryan Zoghlin and Dimitre"
- 2009 "Book Review: *Touchless Automatic Wonder* by Lew Koch"
- 2011 "Nomads at the Walls: *The Jettisoned Project*"

### Scholarly critical writings: Books

- 2013 *Wreck and Ruin: Photography, Temporality, and World (Dis)Order* (Depth Charge Publishing, Geneva, IL).
- Writing Pictures: Case Studies in Photographic Criticism 1983 - 2012* (Depth Charge Publishing, Geneva, IL).
- 3 Reviews: Susan Ressler, Ed Ruscha & Lewis Koch, Yoni Goldstein & Meredith Zielke* (self-published book available on Shutterfly).
- 1999 *A Survey of the Representation of Prisoners in the United States: Discipline and Photographs, The Prison Experience* (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press).

### Essays in periodicals

#### *Obscura*

(Los Angeles Center for Photographic Studies)

- 5-6/82 "Archimedes, Houston and Flick"  
5-6/81 "The Monads Have No Windows"  
3-4/81 "Wild Walls and Rollaways: Michael Levine's Urban Landscapes"  
"Finding a Chink in the Armor"
- 11-12/80 "Nina Salerno: Meaning, Use and Placement"  
"As Good As Picasso"  
9-10/80 "Monocontradictiosis"

#### *The Journal*

(Los Angeles Institute of Contemporary Art)

- 5-6/82 "Photography: A Bourgeois Success Story"

## HUGUNIN PUBLICATIONS

9-10/80	"Evidence"
2-3/80	"Gary Lloyd's ADP"
9-10/79	"Broken Mirrors and Dirty Windows"
3-4/79	"Robert Cumming: Recent Work"
6-7/79	"Two Photographic Books"
9-10/78	"Attack" (a review of Sontag's "On Photography")

### *Afterimage*

(Visual Studies Workshop, Rochester, NY)

1/88	" <i>Subjektive Fotografie</i> and the Existentialist Ethic" "Desiring Machines"
12/84	"Metropolis: The Restless Decade: John Gutmann's Photographs"
11/84	"Robert Fichter and Other Questions"
5/83	"Color Photography Gets Street-Wise"
4/82	"Out on the Street Anything Can Happen"
2/82	"Maintaining Photography and the Art of Defensive Perception"
12/81	"Fetish Flexing"
11/81	"Conversational Detente"
6/81	"Apocryphal Conversations"
5/81	"Mainstream Results"
4/81	"John Divola's Facts and Fabrications"
12/80	"Mocking Objects"
4/80	"Jenny Wrenn's Photo-Imprints"
3/80	"Holly Wright and Linda Lindroth"
2/80	"Rachel Youdelman: a Pleasant Sense of Ennui"
12/79	"Linda Connor"
11/79	"Living in L.A."
10/79	"California Cut-ups"
5/79	"Tarnished Meditations"
4/79	"Bark and Taussig: Photo-booth Pieces"
2/79	"Joe Deal's Optical Democracy"
1/79	"More on Mertin"
12/78	"Robert Cumming: Trucage and Falsehoods"
10/78	"Coloring the World"
6/78	"Foto Folder"
4/78	"Hot Shots"
11/77	"Mary Ellen Mark"
10/77	"Photo Flo"
5 & 6/77	"The Photograph as Mentioned"

## HUGUNIN PUBLICATIONS

### *The Center Quarterly*

(The Catskill Center for Photography, Woodstock, NY)

Winter/85	"Lou Stoumen's Paper Movies"
Winter/84	"A Separate Reality: Subjective Photography"
Spring/83	"A Structuralist Trilogy"

### *Exposure*

(The Society for Photographic Education, NYC)

Spring/Summer/96	"Grounds of Dispute: Art History, Cultural Politics, and the Discursive Field"
Fall/1993	"The Eternal Review" (review of Estelle Jussim's collected essays)
Spring/85	"Distinctly American" (review of Jonathan Green's Critical History)
Winter/84	"Letter to the Editor"
Spring/84	"The Map is not the Territory"

### *Random Lengths*

(Independent newspaper, San Pedro, CA)

Feb. 1985	"Diane Arbus: Magazine Work 1960-1971"
Mar. 1985	"Diversity in the University"

### *The New Art Examiner*

(Chicago, IL)

10/98	"Waste Land: Meditations on a Ravaged Landscape" (book review)
12/93	"Donna Ferrato"
4/93	"From Pop to Now"
2/93	"David Teplica"
11/92	"Flor Gardañó"
09/92	"Lewis Koch"
01/91	"Lynn Geesaman, David Plowden"
10/90	"Linda Swartz, Sage Sohler, David Buckland, Donigan Cumming"
9/90	"Cluing in to Baldessari" (feature) see cover image above
4/90	"The Female Gaze" (book review)
	"Cultural Artifacts" (review of Lynne Cohen, Elaine Reichek, Erica Uhlenbeck)
2/90	"An Insight into Contemporary Soviet Photography: 1969-89"
1/90	"Perpetual Motif" (Man Ray)
12/89	"A Painter of our Time" (book review)
11/89	"An Artful Dodge: 150 Years of Photography" (feature)
10/89	"Stern Bramson"
9/89	"Magic and Poetry in Photography" (Jerry N. Uelsmann)

## HUGUNIN PUBLICATIONS

- Summer/89 "Photems" (Gerlovina & Gerlovin)  
 6/89 "Retro Doc"/"Changing Chicago" (feature)  
 6/89 "Encampments" (Tobia, Sedaris, Jenner School students)  
 4/89 "Reclaiming Technology" (Jno Cook)  
 3/89 "Tony Tasset"  
 2/89 "Persuasive Views" (Bellavance, Lailios, Malagrino)  
 1/89 "Exploiting de Man: The Cultural Utility of Nazism" (feature)
- 11/88 "Transform" (Judith Golden and Holly Roberts)  
 10/88 "Subduction Zone" (Thomas Berault)
- 3/86 "Descriptions/Home Hospice Series" (Miscellaneous landscapes,  
 Debra Hunter's photographs)

### Views

(Photographic Resource Center, Boston, MA)

- Fall/91 & Winter/92 "Books: Andy Grundberg's 'Crisis of the Real'," 12:4/13:1, p.18.  
 Fall/90 & Winter/91 "Books: 'The Critical Image'/'The Contest of Meaning'," 11-4/12:1,  
 p.16.  
 Summer/90 "Books: 'A Forest of Signs'," 11:3, p.24.  
 Summer & Fall/89 "Sequence (con)Sequence: (Sub)version of photography in the  
 80s," p. 20.
- Fall/87 "Between the Lines," 9:1, p.16.
- Summer/83 "Meditations on an Ukrainian Easter Egg," 4:4, p.12. This essay  
 won first place in the Reva and David Logan Critical Writing Grant  
 and has been reprinted in the anthology of photo criticism, *Multiple  
 Views* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1991).

### Miscellaneous Publications

- 2003 "Patterning the Verbal *Pater*," commentary on/in *Cistern Tawdry: A Novel*  
 by Eckhard Gerdes (New York: Fugue State Press, 2003).
- 2000 "In::FORMATION: The Aesthetic Use of Machinic Beings," *Leonardo  
 Online*, vol.7, no.11 (Jan. 2000) <http://mitpress.mit.edu/LEA> and  
 in *Leonardo* 33: 4 (Fall 2000).
- 1993 "From Catop-tricks to Dwellings: The Art of Barbara Kastan," *Art Criticism*  
 8:2 (Spring 1993).
- 1992 "Lou Stoumen's Paper Movies," *Photo Metro*, Feb. 1992, p.5-10.
- 1991 "Meditations on an Ukranian Easter Egg," in *Multiple Views* (Albuquerque:  
 University of New Mexico Press), an anthology of photo criticism  
 of **Reva and Logan Photography Criticism Grant Winners**.

## HUGUNIN PUBLICATIONS

- 1991 "Greg Ligman: 'Tree Canopies 1988-89,'" *The Pinhole Journal*, 7:1, p.2-4.
- 1990 "Vernon Cheek, Dorinth Doherty, Linda Robbennolt, Karen Thompson," *Dialogue* May/June 1990, p.31.
- 1989 "Nebezpecny puvab penez" ("Return to Order: Report from America," *Tvorba* #34 (Spring 1989), Prague, Czechoslovakia, p.14.
- "Photography Illinois," *Dialogue* Sept/Oct 1989, p.23.
- " 'Journey to Land's End': A Paper Movie," *The Photo Review* 12:1 (Winter 1989), p.2.
- 1988 "Taking Refuge in L.A.," *American Book Review*, 7-8/88.
- 1987 "Robert Heinecken's 'Neo-Physiognomy'," *Spot*, Summer 1987.
- 1986 "The Big Sleep/The Flat Death," *Spot*, Winter 1986-87.
- "The Big Sleep/The Flat Death," *Parachute*, Dec., Jan., Feb. 1986-87.
- "Excerpt from The Life and Times of Cadmean Storch," *White Walls* No.14, Autumn 1986 (Chicago, IL), p.56.
- "A problem of Nuclear Phaf-out," *Spot*, Fall 1986, p.10.
- "Photography Against the Grain," *Parachute*, March, April, May 1986,
- "Man and His Circumstances: The Photographs of Lou Stoumen," *Photo Metro*, Feb. 1986.
- 1984 "Conceptual Photography," *The International Center for Photography Encyclopedia of Photography* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1984), p.117.
- "Reflections on Photography," *News Letter*, #6 (San Francisco Photo Group, 1984), p.8.
- "Multiple Dissentions: Linda Lindroth's Embedded Imagery," in "Multiple Dissentions," ed. Linda Lindroth (Los Angeles: *U-Turn Supplement* #2, 1984).
- "In the Beginning was the Word—and then there was the Quote," in "Vortex of Envy," eds. Robert Warhover & Eliza Tonachel (Los Angeles: *U-Turn Supplement* #1, 1984).
- 1984 "How To Write A Great Deal About Good Flicks," in *RE-DACT: An Anthology of Art Criticism*, ed. Peter Frank (Willis, Locker & Owens, New York, 1984), p.83.
- 1984 "The Map and the Territory: The Art of Douglas Huebler," in *Visual Art* presented by ArtScene (Los Angeles: Thinking Eye, 1984), p.36.
- 1983 "Past(iche), Post and Few Sure," in *New Mexico Studies in the Fine Arts*, vol.8, 1983, (University of New Mexico, 1983), p.14.
- "Letter to the Editor," in *Images & Issues*, 12/83, p.8.
- "A Show of Hands," in *Artweek*, 11/19/83.
- 1982 "Extending Portraiture," in *Artweek*, 6/19/82.



## HUGUNIN PUBLICATIONS

- 1982 "Joe Deal's Optical Democracy," in *Reading into Photography*, edited by Thomas Barrow (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1982). An anthology of photographic criticism/theory.  
"Book Review: Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida*," in *Art & Text* (Spring 1982), Victoria, Australia.
- 1983 "Not Just Another Alternative Space," in *L.A. Review*, 1/81.
- 1980 "Three Introductions," in *The L.A.C.P.S. Newsletter*, 3/80.  
"An Open and Shut Case of an Open and Shut Door," in *L.A. Review*, 12/80.
- 1977 "Robert Cumming's Endless Quantification," in *Artweek*, 10/1/77.
- 1975 "Michael Portis" (video tapes), in *Artweek*, 11/15/75.  
"Post-Partum," in *La Mamelle* magazine, San Francisco, CA.
- 1974 "On...Off...On," in *Straight Turkey*, 9-10/74, Los Angeles, CA.

### Catalogue Essays/Book Introductions/Forewords

- 2015 "Avery Danziger's *The Gate to Hell*," *The Gate to Hell: Photographs by Avery Danziger* (Waterbury, CT: The Mattatuck Museum).
- 2012 "Foreword," to *Favela da Rocinha, Brazil* (photographs of Sarah Stern, Gary Mark Smith, and Carlos P. Beltrán (Lawrence, KS, East Village Arts)
- 2007 "Foreword," to *Creativity: The Seekers Journey* by Larry Vogel (self-published).
- 2005 "The Cut of the Kitschen Knife," in *Confessions of a Dadaist: The Era of Existence 1979 - 2005, The Imagery of Helene Smith-Romer* (Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL, 2005)
- 2004 "Catalogue essay," in *Slap, Bounce, Spank!* an art and tech and humor exhibition curated by Sine::apsis Experiments, Chicago, IL.
- 2000 "Global Wandering as Method," Foreword to Gary Mark Smith, *Searching for Washington Square: A Celebration of Life on the Global Street* (Lawrence, KS: East Village PhotoArts).
- "The Aesthetic Use of Machinic Beings," *Sine::Apsis Experiments: in::Formation*, (Chicago: The Betty Rymer Gallery, The Art Institute of Chicago, 2000).
- 1996 "L'ABC du cinématique du René Fendt," *René Fendt: Exposition de 30 ans de peinture* (Musée d'art et d'histoire Neuchâtel, Suisse).
- 1992 "Duomonozygotic Illusion," *Double Focus, David Teplica* (Rochester: Rochester Institute of Technology, 1992).

## HUGUNIN PUBLICATIONS

- 1992 "Lou Stoumen's Paper Movie," *Seduced by Life: The Art of Lou Stoumen* (San Diego: Museum of Photographic Arts, 1992)
- 1992 "TransPorts," *Claire Wolf Krantz* (statement on artist's work in a gallery announcement self-published by Sazama Gallery, Chicago).
- 1991 "A Postmodern Romance," *Ink and Silver Two* (self-published by the Photography & Printmaking Departments, School of the Art of Chicago).
- "Duophotomonozygotic Illusion," *Double Focus* (self-published by Catherine Edelman Gallery, Chicago).
- 1990 "A Textbook of Simple Exercises for the Stretching of the Imagination," in *School: Howard Seth Miller Photographs* (Chicago: H. Miller).
- "Angela Kelly: Selections from the 'Chrysalis Series'," in *Angela Kelly* (Rockford: Rockford Museum of Art).
- 1989 "The Poetic Document: Bill Burke, Larry Fink, Phyllis Galembo," in *The Poetic Document* (Philadelphia: Drexel University).
- "Paul Knotter," in *Forty Years of California Assemblage*, (Los Angeles: Wight Art Gallery, UCLA, 1989), p. 180.
- "Notes Toward a Stenopaesthetic," *International Pinhole Photography Exhibition*, traveling show organized by The Center for Contemporary Art, Santa Fe, NM.
- 1988 "A X Cavation/RWF: A Weapon To Meet the Terrible Needs ...," *Robert Whitten Fichter: Confessions of a Silver Addic!*, University Student Center Gallery (University of Colorado, Boulder).
- 1986 "Past(iche), Post, and Future," *A Graduate Photography Portfolio*, The School of the Art Institute of Chicago.
- "The Naked Truth," *Naked*, a portfolio, The Boulder Center for the Visual Arts, Boulder, CO.
- 1985 "Uni/Di-Versity of California," *Celebrating Two Decades in Photography: UCLA MFA Recipients* (Los Angeles: Grunewald Print Cen., 1985).
- "Victor Landweber Photographs: 1967-1984," *Victor Landweber* (San Diego: Museum of Photographic Arts, 1985).
- "Past(iche), Post and Few Sure," in *Playing It Again: Strategies of Appropriation* (New Mexico: The Center for Contemporary Arts of Santa Fe, 1985).
- 1984 "The Map and the Territory," in *Douglas Huebler*, L.A. Center for Photographic Studies, L.A., CA.
- 1983 "Introduction," in *The Singer Collection of Photography*, Singer Printing, Petaluma, CA.
- 1982 "Records of a Travel-Worn Camera," in *American Roads*, portfolio produced by Victor Landweber Productions, Los Angeles, CA.
- "Creative Illusions," in *L.A. As Subject Matter*, Los Angeles Center for Photographic Studies.

## HUGUNIN PUBLICATIONS

- 1981 "A + B = Mc," in *Jerry McMillan*, Baxter Art Gallery, Pasadena, CA.
- 1981 "Add, Subtract and Multiply," in *Californian Colour*, Photographer's Gallery, London, England.  
"Making Strange the Familiar," in *Three One Person Exhibitions*, Mount Saint Mary's College Art Gallery, Los Angeles, CA.
- 1979 "Some Ideas That Have Colored My Thinking," in *Spectrum: New Directions in Color Photography*, Univ. of Hawaii, Manoa.
- 1976 "Conceptual Photography," in *West Coast Conceptual Photographers*, La Mamelie Art Center, San Francisco, CA.  
"Photography & Language," in *Photography and Language*, La Mamelie Art Center, San Francisco, CA.









## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



James Hugunin teaches the History of Photography and Contemporary Theory at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago. In 1983 he won the first Reva and David Logan Award for Distinguished New Writing in Photography. He is the author of *A Survey of the Representation of Prisoners in the United States: Discipline and Photograph*, *The Prison Experience* (1999), and *Writing Pictures, Case Studies in Photographic Criticism, 1983 - 2012* (2013), *New Art Examiner Reviews: 1986 - 93*, and *Afterimage: Critical Essays on Photography from the Journal Afterimage, 1977 - 88*, all collections of his critical writings. He has also written several novels: *Something is Crook in Middlebrook* (2012), *Elder Physics*, *The Wrong of Time: Stories from an Elder Home* (2013), and *Case-X* (taking us inside the mind of an academic undergoing treatment for salivary gland cancer). His current novel-in-progress, *Finding Mememo*, plays with the genres of academic writing, detective and sci-fi genres (forthcoming in 2017) as it critiques the suffusion of neoliberal economics into academia. In 2016, Hugunin was elected a member of Chicago's Society of Midland Authors.