

Act III – The Click
SCENE I – EVENT HORIZONS

The environment of a moment, a threshold between two stages of the Relative Now

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Ingredients. Conditions. Measured not by Time but by words, words, words.
Here are a few: “Mother.” “Father.” “Finite.”
Futility.

Arrest.

Dilation (how keen).

Panic—the sensation of It being Too Late.

As in: beyond the threshold I seem to have stepped.

(Or at least I seem to be leaning through it.)

Mired in its dialogue. This loud nothing.

This evening: its ingredients & recipe.

Its conditions, its patrons—:

the man, the myth,

& the cat.

Soon, Time will have made it so. The present is penned by the local past.

Call me a determinist! I care not. The crash does not occur upon impact, but rather
once the road-ice has stolen control of your vehicle. That is: once the potential has been
decided, even if it has yet to be actualized. Like frozen water, in all its forms.

Ingredients. Conditions.

Futility.

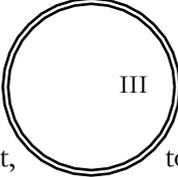
Tinnitus, constriction of chest. Please understand. Fever chills. A stranger in my house!
A stranger in my throat like an egg rising. Constriction of breath. Emetic thoughts like white
chipping paint on the Lifeguard’s Boat, as white as the sclera of a dying father’s eyes. No!
as white as rosewood and wetted ashes.

No!:

Time carries on.

as a picnic of Eves.

Time carries us.

I remember the folds of Time and the  folds of the sheets that carried us from
that young earnest passion (*patis!*) into our future unpremeditated:

when you said it’s too quiet, too dark and too still, beheld

within the Still itself, brought back to me; rebesieging me; I

remember thinking I’ve heard this before, you’ve said

this before; our mutual friend McLean(’s); our

deixic prosaic Time. I can see Blazes

in my dreams upon your face;

in the mirror and steam

in memoriam I

see Time

cease,

freeze.

I see more. Brought to me as such, as waves of lit memories, by a gardener of Eden
in soft hands, one with a clipboard asking for you. I bask in you in past tense. But even the
past is linear, mercilessly it carries me hither: penned again to the coin flip: for how else can I
decide? If either way you are lost from me. So either way I am lost. All one needs to know
about empathy is how hard it is to pull a ring off somebody else’s finger. All else is context.

(so rare to witness from within: such moments wax opaque beneath the accumulation of passing Time)

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He must be theory-mad beyond redemption!

I read this, somewhere.

I follow. Such is my nature. I need a leader lest I freeze, and cease entirely. Direction.

Time's direction. Surely not. Outwards, rather. It departs from itself: from its inflation. Chased by its own past self, until the sidewalk ends. Some Times the sidewalk ends before

Gieldan: to pay a debt. Outstanding balance

-
like a false vacuum

--
paid to the order of
that peace which passeth understanding. Unto another: so now I must lead. Such is my burden.

Commence! What have I learned? That age is the gravity of death, and youth of birth.

Some Times the sidewalk ends before the crosswalk. What then? Evidently this: us.

Commence!: the metamorphosis from Daedalus into a thread. Such is my duty.

Inside a stranger's house, as always I have been; and yet not entirely. Such is my fate.

Nothing seems to me as grotesque as the comparison of tragedies. Exempt, though, is their likening: transposed over my dustdrowned, frozen own: that of Danny. Like Winter's icicles pendent to their shelf in the mug of Spring's thaw. In the mirror and steam. I see: me. And as their dying sweat both engenders and fells them, so too has Time unto me. See:

Tick

Sense, sensation, sensibility, all senseless: altogether a mired violet fluid, coalesced as one and as one alone. The series of my drifting dreamscape, my life's cooling core.

tock

Long lost, my faith in youth: fading like the hot water of a Winter morning's shower.

tick

The hidden finish line, as close as Now or as distant as Tomorrow. When? The mystery is vital. Jack: take the idle history by its reins and lead. Here is your over-Time.

tock

Danny. Hold fast: this is my last. Unless it's a cycle, crystalized within us: my epilogue, engendering your prologue. So into a thread may it be rewritten. Such is my desperation.

tick

In your mother I see my own. In Merlot I see she whose name I've forgotten. In you I see: me. And yet not entirely. I see in your dirt

-
(is a text called "Was")

--
parallel roots—healthier.

clock

A helmet, a cuirass in my own dirt. Laid down by my calloused feet, by an opened book. Frozen water in its crystal form. In its crystal matter: a feather of fallen snow, enchrysalized in my dirt. Into a labyrinth of threads. Invisible: I see Svalbard: Hopen. Lehmann's obituary. Bodø: beneath the wake of nautical twilight, twelve degrees down, dazed: the memorial shore.

Click

SCENE II – CHRYSALIS

is right here: a Time-ecology, balanced in the living room, wound round them both: enchrysalized

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All else *is* context. Here in the living room, inside my cocoon, I address, abiding.

I seem to recall a dream, dreamt, penned by an Other. I recall that haunting presence, that Terror, lurking just beyond the grasp of manifestation; unseen, but not unnoticed. It prowls behind me, nimble, sinuous, like a feral cat that darts at any shift of my timid gaze, that I may never catch its hidden form, and yet never escape its itching ubiquity.

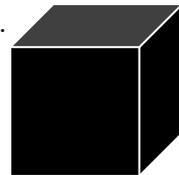
A fingertip’s reach between its slit maw and my quivering nape; I, surrounded all sides by its evanescent shade. No next page for it to flee to. All future has plunged into the present.

Caesura—between one moment and the next, the cloud had changed.

I spin around, an instant too quick for its escape. Within the Still I behold it: my familiar: these Three Faces of God.

Drowned in a boat.	Drowned in Time.	Drowned in herselfes.
His breath like scotch.	Steered into a cliff.	Moored on the shores
His breathlessness	Your censored history	of Away: countless isles
like brine, drowning	(that vital mystery)	battered by the wake.
my plunging future.	is hidden from me.	You’re lost from me.
I was only ten years old.	I was only seventeen.	It was just last week.
Perseverated; re and re and re repeating; a picnic of Woes, of Merlots.	What is it that dilates Time? Acceleration ... equivalence principle;	the gravity of the Lifeguard’s Boat, his breath like scotch, like
Old Man Jack’s. But not the same. Time dilates to zero.	It ceases, freezes entirely. The arcane horror goes Still.	Hello I say. It has been a long Time. It has been
a whole moment, since last I addressed you—	since our last vocative exchange. Not a lot	has changed. I merely replaced you. I
transposed over you another, over	her another. I locked you up	inside of a little black box.

You come to me as such, as three; as waves of dark memories, dazed. I speak to you as such: through rewritten words. Platitudinous street signs. You are, after all, the progenitorial Still: the first incantation of my dirt, my Text, swum from you into an Other, creating another. Understand, please. I found you, drowned, inside a little white box.



We locked you up inside a little black box. It had to be buried, like it were a Time capsule. Your wife’s ghostly bulk spilling out of its borders, her ghostly tears falling in rhythm to the beat of the conductor’s eulogy. One little drop, Pops, and the whole box turned black.

I can’t remember anything. I was only ten years old. I was drunk. I said I’d never drink again. I’d find other ways, for a while. It took just seven years for her to catch up with you.

But that’s all in the past. And they say the past is never dead. I see so here: now that Time has ceased, frozen. In this niche of dysfunction. Can’t you see? I was too young to bear you. Your weight was much greater than my own. I saw that she had lost direction.

I tried to replace you. But look at me now, enchrysalized in my living room: my whole estate: a cat and a stranger, strangled in my mementos. This memorial black box: this Click.

inside a black box:

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Shantih, shantih, shanty: like jetsam off the *Patna*, the voice of my father, my own words.
His compass.
I lied to a stranger invited me into his black box. What was her name?
It is rewritten: it was Merlot.

Caesura—

Strange, how memory. You can almost paint it; rewrite it, pen it yourself. It is plastic. I spend my life burying Time in the dirt of Time. Its coffin is my youth. Within it: lightless. Schrodinger's moment. I would unlock it, if only I had the key.

Here you go:

-
No next page for it to flee to.

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I would open it if only I had the nerve. The nerve: the axon, seventy one years long. Overboard I lost it, jetsam off the *Patna*. My nerve. His compass. Direction: Jack's direction. No thread for my labyrinth. In the mirror and steam I find its frayed end, lost in mediation. Real or reflected? It matters not. I am Old Myth Jack. As upon a mirror, lightyears away.

My reflection's emaciated hands, like needled fingers, lift the lid off the lightless coffined moment. The lidded black box, opened like an eye set afoot the memorial shore, dazed. Vocative with naught but sand, dirt; Text. Her witness: the reader, shadowed by my form.

It is rewritten: it is opened like a book.

Ask me what's within it. I will look.

An unlit space I see, cradling the echoes of a lie spoken only a moment ago, its afterclang dead in the air made colder. Its wake tides out to me: something happened in the garden.

It is rewritten: something happened on the shore.

He is rewritten: I am he.

Wine and silence fill the black box.

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The past is lost beyond my sway, penned by my past self, the author of my own memorial text. But my mind is not the stage, and we are not the audience. History is both.

Ask me to remove it. Such is my burden.

A young girl's hand I hold, cradled in my own. Pricked its fingers, stricken with agency.

Ask me what it means. I will tell you.

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What does it mean?

--
The telling calls for a life's worth of context. And as it happens, I forget. Threadless. I wind out to you, wound into you. Threaded through.

Let us begin from left to right. That is my direction. A thread of letters will guide us, and puzzle it back together for me. The page is the stage. Danny is my audience.

I must rewind back to my first act. I must remind myself. I am as a myth: my answers are questions. My epilogue, a quick ellipsis; and my dead ends intersections.

So let us begin with a question. Although I see it clearly, lit by moon and Time, that Still.

What was her name?

SCENE III – YOLK

and back out again—freed from the vital mystery, deposited into

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Fetal. Fetal! Cold; keen. This Relative Tomorrow.

Cotenants of my mind. Old Man Silver in the Guest Room. If I were born then I'd be seventeen now. Maybe being seventeen is the Winter.

Was too young then to miss you now. Anger is more apt. Rapture in the release, out of the yolk. It's as though I was born when I was ten. Your death fertilized my prologue. What is my prologue? It is unwritten. It is Act N. The moon's age in days, dazed. Cyclical.

Old Man Silver's Old Man Scotch. My breath too like scotch behind you, trotting a pace back, keeping up. Trying to catch up. Took no Time at all. I counted Time as space, as weeded reeds and bulrush, passing like Roman numerals, counting the moon's age in seconds. The second division of the hour. Inescapable.

This is the quickest way to the water.

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The Time was five past late. Slowly, in Old Man Time. I saw sand like countless atoms. In my head I transcribed every contour of its shifting beneath my feet. Five steps of bread, a thousand pages of butter. The sand was dark and green like a Wasteland. Lights behind us. I heard a car pass, covering the sound of your cough. You toppled. You chipped the white chipping paint. The red chipping letters, grated by your grip. On your back. Emetic shores.

Expelled from you, draining back into you. Always seeking its lowest state. The floor of the Lifeguard's Boat (& any parallel false minimum/lung), or its true minimum: entropy—

I heard sirens singing me awake into the Relative Tomorrow. That progenitorial Still: your limp white fingers, matted with white & red chipping paint. Emetic memories.

No, no—

All right. Yes, yes.

You tunneled through. I tunneled after you. Fell into entropy.

I was only ten years old.

Women ever since. Lost touch with touch. Mind-fort furnished with them. Mrs. Silver. Phoebe. And the first division of Eves. Three doth a plurality make.

So sewed you the seed.

It took root in my context. Hydrated by prosaic Time, which hydrates all. Shut up in a lightless confined moment, it grew like weeded reeds, groping about its context for sunlight. It matured like a tree whose heartwood burned away, enclosing an empty, unlit space, a Guest Room in its structure. Hydrated by wine, like all my dirt, all my text. The gene you passed on: illiteracy in carnal dialogue, that—that Oedipal uncertainty, that cleavage of gender. It tries to seal the world around it within it. Tries to fill its heartwood vacuum with anything but itself (friends, mother, pleasure). Its Self: with which it alone is compatible; a code that no other can copy, a Guest Room that no other can fill. Cleft from my beginning, a lag in my initial conditions.

My sensitive dependence. One small change, and the whole tree is hollowed.

Father: it links back to you. One small change, and your whole fate was decided, even if it had yet to be actualized. Did Grandpa Silver drink Old Man Scotch? Did you follow him to the beach as well, and see his soul in the galloping tide? Is that what carried you thither? The frayed end of your linear succession, threaded through another—crystalized within you?

the Relative Tomorrow: into the folds of vanished night Time, where Incitatus prowls, enthused.

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Breathe like Danny does: one two three...

At the dead end, *horologium* like a right hand turn, one two three...

I see you there, your darker skin like my sister's. Your full moon eyes wide like white paint. Shone back to me off the galloping tide, under a cool dusk, cool steel on my fingertip. A single event, $t = +16 \text{ years}$, so hastily made I can almost elude blame. Proportionally.

Like a ripple in a pond, dilating outwards to distant opposing shores, the disturbance of your fall like a butterfly's fluttering wings, miming Time's direction: chased by your passed self. Splash. A slow push pulled back, lapping silently. The echoes of a sound dead in the air made still. Slow pull pushed out, beneath your voice a whispering calm, diminishing:

"You have Shantih."

No, no—

Okay. Yes, yes.

It will be rewritten.

This is the quickest way from the water.

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I stepped back, I stumbled. I coughed and toppled on the sand. Hair tickled my ears, empty in the soundless space. Shifting sands beneath my form. I looked back ahead. Chaos found its pattern in hindsight. Strange, how memory bends.

Buried twelve degrees deep, the sun lit another world where sons of mothers marched mired in fear. Lit by the same star, eight minutes later. Made up of little boxes, frozen by my gaze. The same ever since, and ever rest.

This is the quickest way to the air so cold it froze Time itself, frozen in little boxes. Where noon is June and every day is Christmas: northeast as all roads do. In sufficient darkness. In sufficient light. As far as the slow push pulled back, the drawn tide, dazing.

I waited for your voice. I held fast for your last. For your threadend, severed clean, unfrayed. The paling psalm. As though you'd hoist yourself into a fetal position, and we'd descend again into Relative Yesterday, darker only by the stars, whose contrast.

Lightless, confined moment. Intrinsic grey.

I will look.

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Lost in space, among the innumerable uncharted planets, as atomsand beneath my gaze.

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We will look.

Upon a roof in Svalbard, toppled on its steel, coughing smoke. Numbed by the arctic text.

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Upon a bed in Connor's mansion, silent in its folds, beheld by none. Lightless like the

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polar night. The clouded veil, unchanged between one moment and the next: impenetrable. An impregnably starless firmament. Old lights and Northern, exiled by the dome of frozen water crystals, suspended in the air made silent. Snowglobed by a pall, contained within it.

Lit by Time and tide, an era numbed, rebeseiging me. It is written: it is history.

The opened book on the foot of a chaise lounge. Picked up where the author left off, a lone thread: endless, unsevered, breathing: one, two, three, four.