

A series of conditional operations:

(by page number)

2: if i were invited to begin with my own writing from book

3: if there is something to do with our bodies

4: If

we can ask the question:

*What form can an inventory take if not written?*

*What form can an inventory take if not seen?*

5: If

we can ask the question

What is writing?

9: If

we can ask the question

Do we need to record everything?

Does everything need to be written?

11:

If

we can ask the question

What do non-written records look like?

17: If

we got to this ending

If  
then  
I were invited to begin with a work of mine  
I would begin with this:

*The website porn for the blind is a non-profit based in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Those letters sit swampily on my tongue. They are dedicated to producing audio descriptions for blind customers. M mouth holding itself barely closed. A breath released from the tongue. S the sibilant tip of the tongue, repeating its motions until the climatic tuh - turn of the tongue ready for another.*

*To prepare a recording of pornography - the depiction of erotic behavior for the purpose of sexual excitement. The now-defunct organization has fixed formatting instructions. Clear the throat: Porn for the Blind presents [website name]. This is a [clip length] located at [full URL including HTTP colon slash slash] [brief description of the webpage] In the course of writing this I write several frantic emails in the form [dear learned person] [Here is what I do not know] [I apologize for being frantic] [I have never written a poem before and this appears to be poetry] [question mark] [Would you tell me if I am doing it right?] it occurs to me that the description of the form misses the point. I cannot say that I am not excited.*

*Suzanne Farrell, I read before bed, was Balanchine's most loved dancer. "Hard as Farrell's class is, it's partly about joy. I say to them, you know how there's an employer and an employee? Well there's a looker and a lookee, and you can't be both. You can't be an honest performer and a spectator at the same time. If you want to become a boring dancer, that's how to do it, by trying to tell the audience what to see."*

*If I were to caption the most important bits for those who could not see it, I would stop at the mouth and the tongue as it sounds out the letters at the tips of my fingers. To tell you the truth, I do not what it looks like, only how it feels. Is that why my captions fail? Or is that how they work?*

[maybe this produces questions, maybe this produces silence]

If  
there is something to do with our bodies

then

*take an inventory of the space around you:*

*what around you is breathing and alive? (remember that you breathe)*

*were once breathing and no longer are? (this is most things)*

*never needed to?*

then

I'd ask you to turn your camera off &  
turn on the microphone &  
move away from the screen &  
perform one of the following actions [for how long?]

*to those that breathe, breathe to them (remember that you breathe)*

*to those that no longer breathe, gasp &*

*make a motion or a sound that helps you remember when they last did*

*to those that never did, remain still &*

*take some of their shape*

[maybe this produces questions, maybe this produces silence]

& ask

What did you just do?

What kind of inventory did we just take?

What is the difference between those two questions?

If

we can ask the question:

*What form can an inventory take if not written?*

*What form can an inventory take if not seen?*

*then*

I'd ask

*What is reading?*

If

there is time

then

I'd ask

*Is everyone able to see the screen?*

*Is everyone able to read the screen (in the conventional sense of the word)?*

*then*

I'd screen share, but not read (or ask someone else to read) (or read intermittently, at the pace of reading in the mind)

I am told that I learned to read later than other children. At seven.  
Does that seem right?

I memorized the symbols in my childhood books. In pictures, I see myself staring at other people with wide greedy eyes. And so, I imagine myself learning to read by staring at the books with the golden spines. I will always connect a barbed wire to Barbie, a live cat to catenation, hate to hat. The thing that makes you bleed when you try to cross over is always a little blonde and plastic. Hate is something you wear on the head to cover your face or to keep you warm. Catenation, the bonding of atoms, is always feline—whether tame or feral.

How can I explain?

As a child, I was slow to speak. I mispronounced words. I savored them. I still do.

If I were to describe, in a particularly convoluted fashion, the scene before me: the document has frozen twice and deleted twice. My hard drive is full of pictures. I write in Google Docs frustrated, facing a messy room.

In a previous draft, I had been sitting on a chair facing the ocean. Cars rounded the bend, their lights pulsing orange and white. The evening electric suns buoyed and bobbed on the shimmering surface of water. The next morning, the air cold, the mailman's rhythm controlled my typing.

If I were a child reading this, I would get caught, I think, at that sentence:

If I were to describe in a particularly convoluted --  
eye desk rib volume  
scribe lute



i

Describing is the destiny of the scribe,

at the desk we match the rib to eye.

determined in part by the volume of the container—

this, a song.

It is a pleasure, and mine. A fantasy and a fiction spun off the pieces of things. My mother tells me of that child who, after a rain storm, walked over to a puddle, touched it, and said wonderingly, smiling: "It's not a puddle—it's a muddle. It's confused!"

It helps me be kinder to myself. To remember the child who spent time laughing, pleased at the strangeness of language. Who licked the scum off a shallow pool, stuck their fingers in the mud and lay on their belly attempting to breathe in the oily rainbow trapped at the surface.

I learned, eventually, to sound out words as sounds, syllables, combinations of letters. With practice, to read fluidly, piece whole words together into the concepts and the worlds to which they gestured. But, still, no language feels like my native language. All that silence. You know?

I will always remember that language is a strange tool. And that meeting this strangeness is the pleasure of reading. Of getting so, so, so absolutely lost on the way to which it gestures.

I am perpetually learning how to read.

ii

I want to tell you why I am so obsessed with colour.

But it goes without saying, doesn't it?

Separating things by color is one of the first things a child learns how to do.

Sorting it.

Differentiating shades of blue, green, grey.

Red beads, blue beads, green beads...

A friend told me a joke.

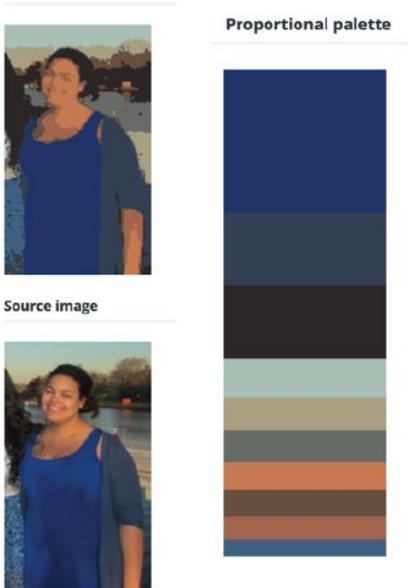
Do you know the South African question?

Her mother had told her a story about a woman who walked from her house to a shop. Or maybe from her office to the car. Or maybe from her village to a well. Not sure. Anyway, when the woman got to where she was going what she had wanted to get was no longer there. And so, the woman stands in the perpetual time of the story before the shopkeeper, car door, well...

Now here's the question, here's the joke:

So—what color was she?

What color am I?



3

Hex color	Area	Closest color name
#132d71	29.4 %	Sapphire (Blue)
#333f54	15.1 %	Biscay (Blue)
#2d2725	14.9 %	Bokara Grey (Grey)
#abc3b7	8.0 %	Opal (Green)
#a8a27f	6.7 %	Hillary (Green)
#676b67	6.6 %	Dim Gray (Grey)
#cc7c4b	5.8 %	Raw Sienna (Brown)
#6b503f	5.4 %	Spice (Brown)
#a7684a	4.6 %	Sante Fe (Brown)
#41628a	3.3 %	Wedgewood (Blue)

I think that I am blue.

4

I have two nephews close in age.  
 One learned to hold his breath so that he would turn blue.  
 A cry and a thud on the wood floor.  
 The other began to cry.  
*It's okay, he's fine, he's going to be fine,* said the designated adult.



*No,* said the other child, inconsolable. *If I went blue no one would notice.*

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*They say he so black he blue.*

167

I'd ask

How do we learn to read?

If

we can ask the question  
What is Writing?

[There's another question here, around 2501 Migrants and writing. Basically I think that project is writing but can't figure out what if to show]

Links: <https://vimeo.com/105274852>

<https://www.google.com/books/edition/Grieving/n-nuDwAAQBAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PT36&printsec=frontcover&bsq=alejandro>

If

we can ask the question

Do we need to record everything?

Does everything need to be written?

I'd share [from the Faggots and their friends between revolutions]

**T**he men love papers. They love to sign them, file them and move them around. They believe that certain papers are sacred and display them. They buy papers from each other and they lock papers up. They store them in huge underground hiding places so other men who are their enemies cannot have them. They make women sit endlessly in airless, tall buildings making new papers for them to write on and then send to other men to write on. And if enough men who the men think are important men sign a paper, it becomes either famous and is put on guarded display or it becomes important and is hidden away and gossiped and speculated about endlessly. All the men accumulate paper. But if a man can accumulate enough of the correct papers he can become powerful. Then he hires other men to watch over his correct papers. Most men never get hold of many correct papers. Still they hoard and protect the papers they do have hoping the market will change.

The fairies use their papers to start fires and to wrap up the trees in the winter.

The faggots throw their papers away every spring when they clean out the winter tribal odors.

The queens use their papers to wipe their asses with.

& ask

What papers are important to you?

What papers would you wipe your ass with?

What papers would you take some information from before you wipe your ass with them?

If we can ask the question

What do non-written records look like?

Then I'd share

Yet what do we see when we unravel the scroll of the twentieth century? Two world wars, the rise and fall of communism, perhaps some of the more spectacular episodes of decolonisation. We do not see the most dramatic event of them all, though it's right there before our eyes. When asked what was the biggest disaster of the twentieth century, almost nobody answers the Spanish flu. They're surprised by the numbers that swirl around it. Some become thoughtful and, after a pause, recall a great-uncle who died of it, orphaned cousins lost to sight, a branch of the family that was rubbed out in 1918. There are very few cemeteries in the world that, assuming they are older than a century, don't contain a cluster of graves from the autumn of 1918—when the second and worst wave of the pandemic struck—and people's memories reflect that. But there is no cenotaph, no monument in London, Moscow or Washington DC. The Spanish flu is remembered personally, not collectively. Not as a historical disaster, but as millions of discrete, private tragedies.



My art began by disappearing.  
I made an offering for the sea to erase.  
The waves weave our breath, in, out.  
Dissolving gives life to what comes next.

My /quipus/are impossible weavings.  
Not spun, not plied. They simply hang.  
Their knots are loose and about to fall off.  
Nothing holds them together, except desire.

/Quipus/are a metaphor for the union of all.

They were forbidden in 1583, yet they went on  
undercover, still weaving our breath.

My first /quipu/was /The quipu that remembers nothing/.

I was offering my desire for memory.  
—Cecilia Vicuña

[A String of Pearls by Amirah Tajdin](#)

Wreckage that was discovered on the Lake Michigan beach near Ludington on April 24, 2020. It is believed to be from a wooden vessel built between the 1850s and 1880s

[Shipwreck discovered on Michigan Beach near Ludington](#)



**Nerd Ghouls Says**  
@Rachael\_Conrad

⋮

Once again thinkin' about the giant western red cedar trees that washed up on La Push beach in Washington and how vast and terrifying the ocean truly is.



Oglala visionary and prophet Nicholas Black Elk, himself a Catholic, compared **the** invasion of white Christians as akin to **the** biblical flood. But unlike **the** Genesis flood that receded after 150 days, Black Elk's apocalyptic deluge had no end. It has worked continuously to eliminate Indigenous peoples and their other-than-human relatives from **the** land, thereby severing their relationship *with* **the** land. According to **the** vision Black Elk described to poet John Neihardt in 1931, white men came like an endless wall of floodwater, creating "a little island," or a reservation, "where we were free to try to save **our** nation, but we couldn't do it." Constantly hounded as fugitives, escaping from one patch of dry land to **the** next, **the** people "were always leaving **our** lands and **the** flood devours **the** four-leggeds as they flee." **The** four-leggeds were bears, elk, deer, buffalos, wolves, and so forth—some of whom are presently extinct in **the** lands of **the** Oceti Sakowin. **The** Department of **the** Interior **is** tasked with managing **the** diminished lands and territories of both wildlife and Indians, survivors of an ongoing holocaust. "All of **our** religion of **the** old times that **the** early Indians had was left behind them as they fled and **the** water covered **the** region," Black Elk lamented. "Now, as I look ahead, we are nothing but prisoners of war."<sup>4</sup> His "we" included **the** four-leggeds.



[Great Orme Kashmiri goats on the streets of Llandudno, Wales](#) in April, at beginning of global quarantines

[maybe this produces questions, maybe this produces silence]

[maybe this links to these questions:

(What is a record? What do we record? What/who records us?)

What is the form that a record takes?

When does narrative control? When does narrative release?

If we did get to that ending (time is fragile, I know, and this is unlikely)

I'd share

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/1TYKdQYyG5zMEGQ57>