

2008

It's Important for Me to Get Good Light. Or "Things Which are Happening"

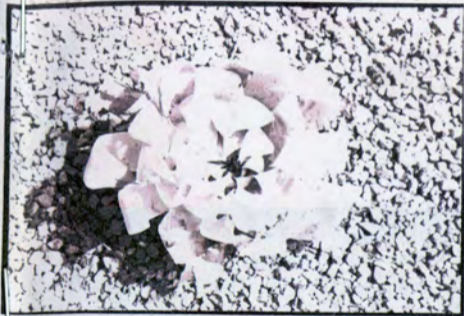
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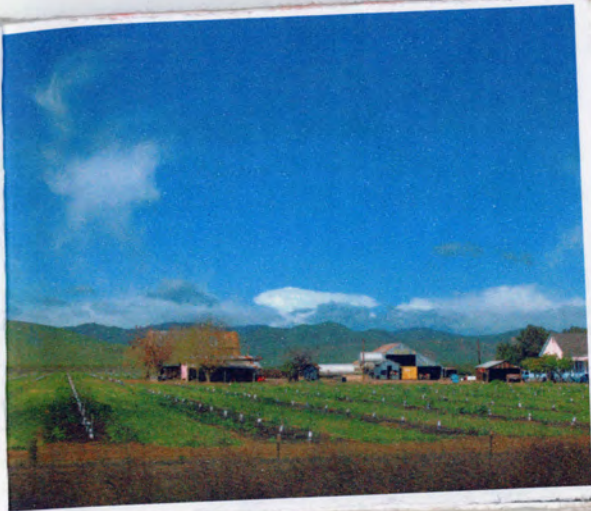
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It's Important for Me to Get Good Light.
OR
"things which are happening"



i
my exposure to the morning was slow
my head out the window
inspecting the moss of neighbor's roofs.

this seems to be a place that's flat
until the mountains. here, too, must be
the small fog of sheep's breath.¹



ii
the title poem:

a housemate was telling me over coffee:
*i've been wearing colorful things
lately and it's been helping, i think.*



when i meet someone i look for something
definitive. like the way he ties his shoes.²
someone calls and asks if they can take a nap
in my bed. of course of course anything.



i'm pretty sure i saw something fall
out of the sky. in my room eating a lemon
i can hear wild dogs.³

someone was saying:
help yourself to sleep.



iii
this is winter

my mom is talking to the birds
and then to me. i learn
my grandparents lived in fresno
when my uncle was born.⁴ it was so hot
they kept him naked and he cried and cried
until grandfather put a tissue over him.



iv

"meet you back at the ranch"

or

when the sun is on my bed

i can't help but lie in it

you warn me not to give you

my dreams you don't normally dream

about spinning things and you didn't like it

one bit i was walking home with hands

in my pockets and what a treat to walk

by a curtainless window and see a boy

with lather on his cheeks you forget

things like your age and that you saved

someone from drowning in the morning

there's a tiny dead bee on my spare pillow

i don't think it has anything to do with you



i was sitting cutting hearts out
of five dollar bills
and i kept on hearing the sound of an ice cube
dropping down the throat
of a bong our friend tells us the livers
of polar bears are poisonous another tells
us africa fucked me up and a third says
we look like midwestern housewives^s
all of us have started drinking our water
with frayed limes through straws i'm thinking



of a long-legged bird standing on the steering wheel
of a tractor in the middle of a field

v

an elsewhere poem

i am becoming a person who wears shells
on twine around her neck.

i pretend
that the sounds of cars and trees
in the wind is the ocean.⁶



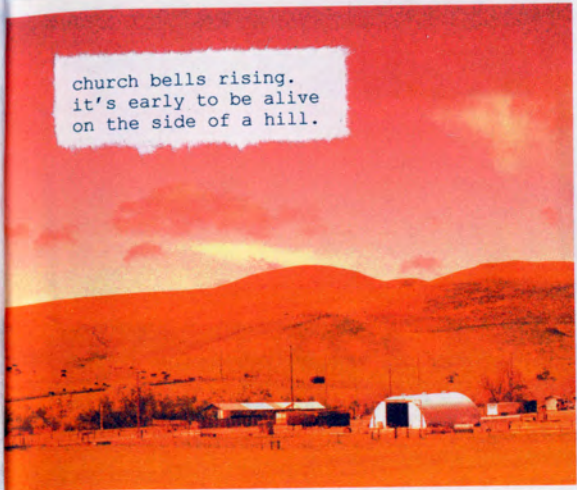
i dream i found a bear cub, small
as a kitten. i brought it back to the man⁷
i loved, the man who loved me
with his body, who was cruel with a gun.
the cub began to nurse, catching
it's sharp little teeth on my skin.



vi
jumping the walls and running⁸
or
fighting for your life when there's
nothing left to fight for
or
we've got company (spring break is
a state of mind)



church bells rising.
it's early to be alive
on the side of a hill.



lately i've been listening to bowie's
at night
on the balcony
when the 210
is a line of lights following each other.

someone still sees vegas in everything.
(if you can't be woken
up it's not good sleep).

'golden years'



(i could go anywhere so long
as i wear my traveling clothes
and

telephone poles).



vii
today⁹

wearing my white dress
on the grass in the sun, i felt like a paper
doll about to burst into flame.

when the winds are like this it's hard
to remember what season it is.





viii

(now it's spring and we play our summer music¹⁰)

and now it was elise¹¹
whose window bees flew into.

(i'm bringing in
the chrysanthemum and lavender. things spill
and it's sort of just intentional and



mostly water.)

the bookstore in the village closed and i bought¹² eighty dollars and forty-four cents of living-room-table-reading books like:

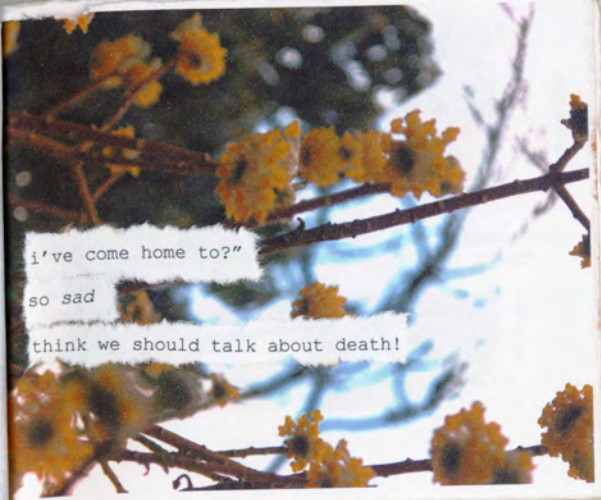
The Great Northwest¹³, and Whittier College¹⁴:
The First Century on the Poet Campus, and
The Pacific Tourist: The 1884 Illustrated
Trans-Continental Guide of Travel from
the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean.



viv
Poem
To Portland

Title:

i've decided to say "so this is what
or
after a glass of wine everything feels
or
in the parking lot i yelled, quote, i
or
the strangeness of arriving in the dark



i've come home to?"

so sad

think we should talk about death!



8728
Illustration by the artist

Forward:
Elizabeth, who was just about to go home, put
a large feathery flower on her night stand
and thought of her mother.



8729
Illustration by the artist

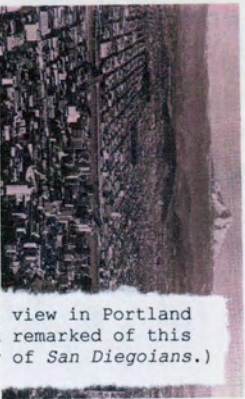
FRANK I

BY'S MAGAZINE

approx. 4:32pm, The Rose Garden¹⁵ in march: dead
and i walked on the train tracks and thought
of summer and i was glad it was march. i saw
planes when i looked up through the blueing
sunset. one narrowly missed the moon.

with possibility.





The city of Portland, still strengthened by the commerce that finds its way to the Willamette River docks, opened and housed the Hartman and Michael Flood.

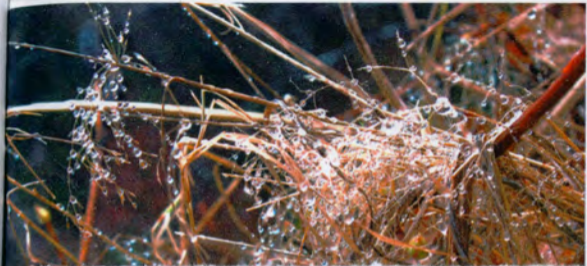
1906, 100,000 people were employed in building facilities and developing streets. The city looked to the middle of the previous boom: housing was built, businesses and public services proliferated to meet the needs of the summerers and well-to-do employees; then the business dropped out. The government canceled orders for large plants and buildings, critics ordered declared because actions found they had reached maximum capacity, and in 1910 the SOT project ground to a halt. Between August of 1908 and December of 1911, 60,000 men were let go: a decline of 60 percent.

Scarcely did one turn into a ghost town of starving destitute (although bread lines were formed and Kable, Fjorve, was moved to donate a half ton of rice to her indigent elder city—grains were appreciated, but the city was badly overbuilt and overextended. Construction work held up remarkably well since other building continued elsewhere, but business faltered,

and there was a crisis of confidence by preceding 1906-20, and a 1911 downturn in a long-term's strike. 3 of recovery—some of it directed manufacturing plants, and building has opinion has sunk the plan appears, there is a writer for reactivated growth in the oblong.

Scarcely also provides a clear face the people: whether to preserve it, in character, or yield to the onslaught of urban reconstruction that has hit so many cities with a smite,

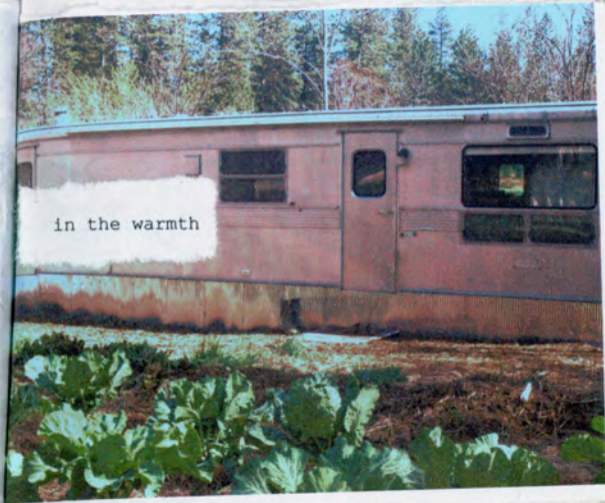
(i found the best view in Portland and remarked of this to a family of San Diegoians.)



my father is reading the paper in bed. my mother
doesn't say where she goes when she leaves. the
city sparkles. for the second time i dream i'm
driving up Burnside at the base of the hill and
we go to an apartment building and go to the room
of an old man and i take his black shiny shoes.
then the sound of my mother in an apron whisking
an egg for salad dressing.
my dad, gone, seeing Madame Butterfly¹⁶.

x
NRP Murmur

sleeping next to aloe in the basement like mice
we wake without knowing how
to rainlessness.



we let goats leave hoofprints on our backs
we climb watertowers
we slip down big flat rocks.



i had been
in the secret library in the round things
of the toolshed
in the daffodils in the spring coming
in the trailer's tile, the wet prayer flags.



footnotes

¹ the country is close

² he's been tying his shoes wrong
since his grandfather died

³ ?.

⁴ 1941



⁵ in a photograph

⁶ wearing the big coral ring
gives me a headache. something
about weight.

⁷ this man does not exist
but if he did he wouldn't listen to strangers' talk.

⁸ what thomas feels like he's doing



9 January 28, 2009

- 10 i remembered playing 'funeral'
in my parents' bed. that was the fourth of july.
11 who was sick and now has just a cough.
12 with laura.
13 i'm going home to sleep and wake up
to Mt. Hood and meet a new baby.
14 (where my grandmother sat on
Richard Nixon's lap in a school play).
15 a destination

regain in the north central section, the dedicated with July 1952



CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

By the end of the 1950s
the culture was finally
changing and custom. If
the Association had to
be a greater cooperative
process, at least, the dis-
tinct rural culture of
the area as many of them
attainable, as the present
woman with the present
history grows down. It
remained difficult.

PHOTOGRAPH BY WALTER J. ...

16 giacomo puccini's





poems
and
photographs

to
the ranch
with love

elizabeth ferguson