

Wednesday

Just before five pm, right after the *mocad*-people came to pick up the AC-unit and I poured myself a glass of cheap white wine mixed with mineralised sparkling water, the thunder hit. A cooling wind whisked dust and other particles through the bug-net covered window on the upper floor, sprinkling my text-editor-screen with drops of water. I moved back a bit, thrilled, and lightly aware of E. who had biked to La Ferria to watch a football game. The downpour was so heavy I decided to close all windows on the rainfall-side of the house to prevent flooding. Luckily the impact was worst on the studio loft where I already had control. E. called, still inside and safe, and asked me to unplug his iPad which lay charging downstairs. I saw some lightning bolts and recorded some sound and noticed how, when blurred out by an open meshed-grid, a windowpane and the thick curtain of rain, the blind spot in the camera lens directed at a backyard light fixture, created a red, glowing circular optical artefact. Also, one of the nearby tree-tops looked a lot like the outline of Iceland.

Thursday

Waking at five am, in front of my minds eye, I held a project description for an upcoming exhibition. There would be roll-ups, flowers divided by a stick that was also a rule, quoting “rule of thumb” (being: the width of a stick one is permitted to chastise a family member with). Further: Clawed cock-feet and footprints in vector-marks on a background gradient from blue to ochre, and then a blue sky, vivid, with inverted clouds and an empty subtitle area on the printed plastic sheet. The backbone: telescoping steel tubes.

Monday

Sometime before noon, we biked down Down Cass corridor, towards the large grocery store. Again, thunderstorms were on their way and would stay until midday the following day, maybe crossing into dusk. The rain was forecasted to hit at one pm. Taking a left turn at Alexandrine St, as she snuck over the road just behind us on a red light, a woman called out: “Good morning you beautiful people!”. My ability to catch what’s being shouted or said while I’m moving around outdoors is intentionally turned down, very low. The reverse side of this defensive mechanism is I never manage to reply when the speak is to me and not at me, and the intention of the exchange day brightening. We filled our rucksacks with essentials: yoghurt, a new bag of brown rice, pitted prunes, a package of small soft corn tortillas I’ve never seen in Norway, a large bag of tortilla chips, three bottles of drinkable white wine, garlic, jalapenoes, tomatoes, black beans and tempeh. After shopping we were short on cash. We biked by a bank of america office. They had a guard posted outside. A tall, lean and friendly guard. He looked like a version of guards I’ve seen in Singapore or fought in Final Fantasy VII; same kind of trousers-tucked-into-boots silhouette. We asked him whether there were ATMs outside or if they only had counter service. He pointed us over to the drive-in-bank in the parking lot accompanying the bank. Great! To find secure parking for the bikes is a hassle. Then the guard asked us if we were from England. We said: “no, we’re from Norway.” He said: “woah! what are you guys doing in Detroit!?” We’ve been getting this question a lot so far, it often sounds more like why here of all the possible places in America, let alone on Earth, or maybe it is just a conversation trigger. We mostly don’t reply that we’re an artist and a writer. When we left he laughed and said: “Well fancy meeting you here, what a day! Go

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with Odin”.

Wednesday

Making rules for movement, if there are stairs, jump your way up. The heat and the sweating alone won't suffice to keep fit throughout a two months stay on foreign soil.

Tuesday

On two separate days, after grocery shopping at Honeybee Market and at Eastern Market, we were picked up by the same Uber-driver in a dark purple car. In the back seat sits an open box of thin wiping-crying-snot tissues. Both times he is very happy to hear our private communication in Norwegian. Ah! he says, it is your own language, much more practical, *ne*, I also with my wife. He makes apologies for his poor English, he's from Macedonia and moved to America for an american dream in the early 2000s with his wife and son. How can there still have been an american dream then? He says he is an engineer. If it is so bad, why do you not go back, we ask, I cannot go back, he says.

Thursday, almost midnight

Playing with Aloha, the soft, mackerel patterned cat, on the round zig-zag patterned carpet downstairs. Playing the spokes of the near flat back wheel on the red bike. Cat paws interfering. Bike-grease stuck under the flip edge of my fingernails. My macbook pro is acting up again, it no longer recognises the touch of my fingers.

Monday

Donnalee the printmaker has a bunch of Norwegian, Swedish and Danish distant relatives and in-laws, and her daughter's or son's wife is Norwegian. One of the first things she asks in our e-mail exchange is whether the texts on the .tiff-file for the *habotai*- and silk twill-scarves were written in Danish. Circles are the only movements available, or, also here an individual will look to the past to locate themselves.

Tuesday afternoon

After lebanese in Dearborn and browsing community gardens, at Woodbridge bar. E. positions himself so that he sits with his back against me while talking. I take quiet offence. While researching basic scents, I find the following on a youtube documentary: When planted in the right way along the edges of farm-fields, the long roots of vetiver grass keep the earth from spilling out into water sources or polluting nearby areas with fertilisers. The method serve urban farmers as well as the rural. Wherever you are, spilling water is the loss of a resource. In the wee hours of the morning, lying on my back on the folded, light-blue blanket on the studio floor, having just learned the new accommodation plan at Ulvøya* in Oslo wouldn't happen after all, working to sift through and gather my thoughts, I won another way of making sense of the turned back of E.: instead of opening a gap, it could be a sign of trust, I trust you to have my back.

* Woolf's Island.

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Friday

A spider has moved into the bathroom. It has very long front legs and is shaped almost like a star-sign scorpion. America is a wrong place. The earth here does not want me.

Tuesday night

It is three years to the day since the Breivik bomb and shootings in Norway and in two days, for the first time in forty-one years, the Norwegian government will raise a terror alarm. Over cactus&octopus-lasagna dinner politics comes up several times. Palestine. Ukraine. Detroit.

I thought: Endorsing mis-information is choosing a fast track towards repetition of past unjust conditions. Set on a structural scale: when a group is allowed to maintain their power and give it on to their spawn, we have carelessly re-established aristocracy (this is even before I read T. Piketty). It can be recognised by a tendency to naturalise domination. Their vast accumulation and use of human beings as mere ends to further hoarding, amusement, support in petty conflicts and internal brawls for dominion. An unaware cruelty. The pain is not accessible sense-data for them. It is outside. I surmise their babies will be even worse and generally fail, filling the world with contempt, inhibiting movement, shaping the law to suit them and soothe them. Our education system has done too much and too little good, misleading us to slightly deviate from affirming the right of violence, the right of the psychopath, of the corporation. I'm all liquid pre-flint.

We watch *Snowpiercer*. It is a fable. The neighbours join us, the popcorn is delicious, spiced with cumin, rosemary, salt and cinnamon. Eat your bug-protein bar, at least it is nutrition, there is no life outside. Remain strong in your beliefs, sustain and await reward. In the movie all must move within their own circuit, any circle but your designated area, shall remain invisible to you. Accept and believe the inability to adjust behaviour, let alone change. You are just the birthing machine of our enemies, and thus not human. Or, the group you're visible as belonging to has been subtracted from the human species by withdrawal of empathy. Inequality ensues. We are such curled up fragile things. Be calm, be beast.

Saturday

In my young adulthood I became familiar with a sci-fi series named after the insect firefly. I've never seen fireflies before. But now, on the porch: They are like small versions of the fool. Flaring up and emitting an oil-glistening light from their tail or body. Hovering around. Heavy. I wonder what they eat. I don't wonder how they work, I'm happy to let them stay magic, that is to say: without causal explanation.

Thursday morning I

The following simple ethic code has grown green and sticky now, like aloe vera mashed under foot, and burn me if I cannot stick with it: I need to continue to strive to practice to treat living things as a goal in themselves and not as mere means to service me or other ends.

Thursday morning II

Missing the premiere airing of the TV-documentary we, E. and my self, manage to find it in an online stream, mixed in between various world championship streams. If, as Grace Lee Boggs says, acting without thinking is just another way to reproduce a faulty and unequal

system, then blind acting cannot be the solution, thinking and talking could be. On I go serving as my own sage to advice myself (the terror of the open sky above me and the thin crust of earth beneath my feet, the sound of the drone, the flight of its shadow), how angry I am: “The old stories are old stories and the ones I think and tell must be of my day and should ready tools for tinkering with thoughts to wrench thinking out of trenches. To spit in the eye of the present that fills the tongue with yellow bile I must write my mother tongue”. I’m the spawn of farmers and fishermen and I’m hungry.

Saturday

Trust once lost is difficult to regain. A truism. Sure. But I’m cynical enough to see how easy it is to let the system reproduce, and weary of the temptation of ease. It is hard to choose to not attack. Peace is not leisure. In the gift shop we see T-shirts with the names of cities listed in a glittering, decorative column:

BERLIN
TOKYO
BARCELONA
DETROIT

Tuesday

In addition to the raw recording of the thunder and rainfall, I will bring two distinct sound-combinations from Detroit back with me:

1) The sound of the suburban area in the evening: The Michigan-cicadas, the continuous hum of the motorway, soft because it is blocked by endless lines of similar buildings. These set the ground note, then the details: The sharp closing of doors, someone shouting a command or laughing, the domino effect of dogs barking, the various brands of AC-units whirring in and out of action.

2) The sound of a squirrel dying: First a strong flash of light through the blinds in the morning. The sound of a flash. Then harrowing, short, vibrating low tunes or some sound like an extremely heavy object being dragged along a rugged surface, not squeaking, a plain, long growling grind. Then release; the sound of wood chips flying, falling and dryly striking each other in the air before tumbling to the mulch-covered ground.

Sunday

A Norwegian proverb goes like this: If you bend the rights, they will break. An American proverb goes like this: A tree never hits an automobile except in self defence. A Chinese proverb goes like this: A vacant mind is open to all suggestions as a hollow building echoes all sounds. An Armenian proverb goes like this: The fox has destroyed the world, and the wolf has lost his calling.

Fredag // Friday

(meinar vrede // means rage)

NO: Korleis smart-apparata tvingar meg til å sjå mitt eige spegelbilete når eg skal skru dei på. Fanden knekke den blanke skjermen.

ENG: I strongly dislike how the smart-devices force me to look at the reflected image of my face when I unwrap and turn them on. I wouldn't be the first to find a needed body part gone.

Tuesday

The ruin is the image of a ruin and the grass I tread, here. Abstract or present; two words connected by an 'or' but not antonyms. Together with A&A and a mother I went to a burger place named after a planet. One of the most photographed ruins in America was plainly visible from our table in the backyard garden. We had local micro-brewed beer, vegan burgers and sweet-potato chips and shared the lot with a mixture of plants and people. A child, after having unsuccessfully tried to climb a metal pig-sculpture, ran around between the tables giving away gifts. She meticulously picked up small white-ish stones from the flower bed surrounding the outer edge of the yard, and gave it to somebody and then repeated the pattern. This was generally met with positive reinforcing stimulus.

Mercury is Hermes or the messenger deity who travels between the world of the living and the underworld. A trickster, an alchemist. The rock the girl gave me looks like a lump of granite. I'm trading it for a rock from a different continent, a black and white quartz stone picked up on a Norwegian mountain path just before I saw a fox sneak back into the forest.

Wednesday

I'm still thinking about the security guard who asked me to go with Odin. Taking me by surprise so I remember it, I think, or: I only see what I know (like Iceland in the tree-top above). Did he mean "God bless you", or "Walk on the path of the Lord"? (That is, not knowing better). He wasn't very old, maybe in his mid thirties or early forties. Since he wasn't white-white I surmise he was no neo-nazi. How then has he come across Odin? This old god/Ås out of Norse mythology. The god of war, magic and transgendered wandering, the god for hanging from a tree for nine days to learn the *runer*. Cross dresser, border crosser, the god who gives his eye to the well for wisdom. Odin who controls the ladle that spoons out the *skaldedrykk*, the drink for the song-smith, the wine. Through video games, from books, or if he is a veteran, by fighting alongside Norwegian soldiers in Iraq or in Afghanistan? I know the Norwegian military were attacked by Norwegian media, the minister of defence and an assortment of politicians from various parties both in power and not, left and right, for acting out historical warrior-spirit themes while the *Telemarks battalion* was stationed in the Faryab-province. They needed to make sense of a past connection to a code of being warriors, they explained to the journalists, to strengthen themselves and manage their fear. Reaching back in time to find an earthing for the behaviour they were demanded to manifest. Maybe the security guard simply has some Scandinavian ancestry and grew up with the stories being retold to somehow have a bond to the old land. Who am I to say he does not know what he is talking about.

THE TOWER MAY BE BUILT OF FLINT STILL FALLS
AMBERGRIS ASHTREE
WOOD
STRONG STILL
SCENTED ENVIRONMENT
WOOD
T S U L GRANITE GATE OR HOLLOW HAMMER
WIND HIDEHEDGE
OOTING MOSS SLEEP
SLOPE
ENTITY PATCHOULI
VIRAK SILK
IF THE GRASS WAS THING LIVING
K L I S
ASH CATNIP MINT ANOTHER STRAY
A I T W I L L F A L L Y E T I F L I G H T N I N G
G O L D
APPLE APPEAR
LEMON. CELLAR. CEDAR. OAK MOS. S. VETIVER. A S P E A R
EMERGENT CAVE CURLE