

PIXEL'S MINUTIAE

by
Chandler Lewis

Beard of Bees Press
Number 93 · April, 2013

Contents

<i>Pixel's Minutiae</i>	1
<i>Rulers</i>	2
<i>Growth Stunt</i>	3
<i>Spines</i>	4
<hr/>	5
<i>Walking on a Plane's Wings Equals Negative Capability</i>	7
<i>(A collection of pus in a cavity formed within some tissue of the body.)</i>	8
<i>(Bottomless gulf.)</i>	9
<i>(Induction or elevation, as to dignity, office or government.)</i>	10
<i>(Having fine and penetrating discernment.)</i>	11
<i>(Any reality.)</i>	12
<i>(An adulterating substance.)</i>	13
<i>(To depart suddenly and secretly, as for the purpose of escaping arrest.)</i>	14

Pixel's Minutiae

That what limits the fixative agent unburdens the urge to see further than here
What one place becomes when its neighbors' maps're inked and cross-hatched
Put a human face on the emotion-reciprocation machine, hear those gears hum
Slow day at the furniture burner, my bones slowly mashed by planetary motion
Slacker tie-downs reify the shifting load's tenuous track as g-forces worry a load
Jilt the payroll and live off a flax husk, burning stock certificates to satisfy the man
These and other short-term solutions avail themselves as the moon lights us up
Rekindling in our prisms a weaker light not often referred to as "the tree's trim."

You knew how to pull strings, & learned later what happens when it unravels
Safe again within the confines of four or five well-worn pages of the book
In the morning, commuters form a sort of receiving line for new miseries
Tuck their undershirts in again, recalibrate the sports commentary to zero
And wall ourselves up behind a vast blue curtain called the hero's return
Scorched by trying to fly too close to the monitor while the air hums away
This is my vision of the future, in which miracles meet in plenary sessions
Sender signal diminished by the weakening need to chew, swallow, taste.

Half our allotment owed away, as the angles sharpen in shadow & recede
Treble the only thing left of our hearing, bitter what's left of our tongues
Bravadoed out, we compose symphonies of whimpering and score charts
Brown outs beleaguer the municipalities as the basement floors dampen
The dust-ups barely make the news now, and often our singing's hollow
Boats in the harbor unanchored make the crowds on shore nervously spit
Hewn logs jam the rivers, assemble themselves into what look like houses
From afar the scowl of the gentry almost seems like an uptick in the economy.

These are the reasons we will have said we'd always known all along what's what
These are the pigeons who commit to ley lines of magnetic memory, then quit
These are the instruments we cold forged from minerals we dug from our eyes
These are the lenses we chiseled from history, shined our brightest lights upon
These are the witnesses who recanted the testimony that might have saved us
These are the creases where the skin folds forever shut against slanting sunrays
These are the grammars we've won in hard-fought battles against style manuals
These are the ghosts of corrupted caches, read-only errors in the smear of our days.

Rulers

Mute the transients against
the echo's decay, it's as if:
All the sounds in the room
feel out the walls of another.

Test the voice to throw against
the thin metal membranes:
We'll curry favor & retune
the sounds of former selves.

The engineer sits in a chair
above the boards, folding.
Hands around each of our
open heaving chest cavities.

What products're assembled
w/ such delicate refinement?
We are the slippery slopes
of unabashed animal urges.

When in winter the hunger
grows from pang to gnaw:
Chart such similar seasons
in one' devotion to others.

I know, outside this office
there exist roads, villages;
Feel the effects of all those
fingers pulling meat loose.

I know on the other side of
paint, drywall, & clapboard:
Arteries of distilled luxuries
constrict the truest trades.

But he says again, sing into
this microphone as if to say:
What we celebrate tonight
is just the passing through.

Growth Stunt

The river's teeth in the evening when we went to see it.
The air's ears in the waving of this nation's colory flags.
The grave's bile in the diffusion of the morning's dew.
The road's toes' curl in affection for our tires' weaving.

Forgive the sky for causing all of my stupidest questions.
Forgive a throat's seize against things better left unsaid.
Forgive the office copy machine for botching our jobs.
Forgive a crow that cannot decide where or when to go.

Supplant intensity with a calm conviction we'll survive.
Supplant affection with ravenous need for sink-or-swim.
Supplant recalcitrance with an ambition to keep quiet.
Supplant grief with some new quality of desperation.

The neck's gift is its ability to reflect light's soft textures.
The moon's regret is its subtly persuasive dark whisper.
The wren's croak is its plea bargain for domestic reign.
The clown's trial is his unraveled hedge against blessing.

Insert a colon & make a decision regarding the diction.
Rephrase a nonrestrictive clause & fiddle w/ the syntax.
Suspend resolution until the minor plot points congeal.
Bind a book with baby's breath, inscribe it to a studio.

Collect unconsciousness from the radio commentaries.
Collect unemployment from the endless, dateless days.
Collect raindrops on eyeglass lens, save for later thirsts.
Collect insect shadows and the dust of windowed birds.

And sure of our way now, we begin the slow trudge up.
In the forest, darkness prevails, so we light our oily fires.
The pages we burn send signals made of significance.
The sentinels can't read a black cloud in the blank sky.

We have herein collected those thoughts that once fit.
You've thereby resisted those thoughts that threatened. I
have thus maintained my anonymity in this hierarchy.
So they've nothing but the will to speak in this vacuum.

Spines

I do not intend to tell tales out of school but
in darkness one sees what one wants to see.
Too many times we've been down this road,
encouraged by the promises made by words.

In troubled times the bottom rises up to us &
a river runs against another kind of current.
Too many heads have rolled in the service of
blind dogs barking up what once were trees.

The wars waged against sin exact a price but
not until the corpses outweigh the munitions.
If you listen to the radio, you're only hearing
the sound air makes when all the dust settles.

For once let the voices define what you are.
Let the weatherman make your day's shape.
Let the filigree determine the wood's grain.
And let the data describe our histories for us.

It isn't worth fighting to establish this fortress.
When the morning mist clears, it's just bodies
and the papers that fill up their pockets with
cheatcodes that make the game worth losing.

Underneath the patterns lies a changeling
whose syntax parrots some external stimuli too
ancient for you to even begin to translate.
After all, no action can ever be spoken, really.

Sitting in brightly-lit rooms lined with books
whose hand-tooled spines shine in gold leaf
we don't need to recount the hero's epic tale of
returning. He didn't change. The book did.

Retrograde amnesia can affect every journey
no matter how metaphorical or how spiritual.
Looking back, we watch our salt statues form
poems built from all these unproductive days.

encouraged birds flock themselves
& you realize: they know exactly how they look
black holes in gray sky, granting permission
to look straight through to what terribleness lies behind.

the narrow threat of ledges is also invitation
we all want to eke out a purchase in the trying times
& a limit necessarily makes use of fewer, of
lesser, of shorter duration, or an unwinding.

if cement understood how much time it took
to cure, if all those cartoon snowmen
survived the mirror-stage only to
contemplate Icarus & The Doors.

they, just like you, would revert to syntacting everything
into sentences like Christmas presents, disappointed in the
dearth of design possibilities, the uniform aesthetic of acceptable
patterns that, in the end, form no pattern but predictive cycles.

and that's only the first emergence of what blank slates.
that's the first utterance of the grafted tissue's tongue.
that's the whole ballet, the folded swerve, the poison apple pie.
that's the way the depths plumb and maps unfold.

white canvas film screen hung on iron hooks
empty pale blue public pool it's winter 1987
in the ballroom chairs stacked piles of folded napkins
parking lot litter in meaningless gust orbits.

sold a car to the neighbor's daughter leaving for Atlanta
tutor former student for med school entrance exam
read all the no news & notice the new headline ethic
leave out the one piece of information anyone needs.

there is money to be made in the identity redaction racket
there is no time left to get in on the bottom floor of gravity futures
there is an assertive type-A jist in the marketing of tomorrow
there is ink even in the kindle, smoke to pull the fire out.

Walking on a Plane's Wings Equals Negative Capability

Today I'm going to be working entirely on the metaphorical level I just decided. There is so much yet left to be done, like sharp plow tines itching to get digging. What we remember of our childhoods is tainted by the quality of radio reception. All in all, my t-shirts aren't stained so much as painted with the tints of loneliness.

I would like to take custody of your misconceptions first, and then you of mine. What I've been angling for these last few hours is how to best extricate myself. Intuition serves an absent master, meaning: Go with gut, because you're clueless. Got up too late to watch the meteor shower, smoked a cigarette, then bathed.

Sublime intoxication, body mass index rift, sculpted re-absorption of calamity. Cocktailed booty-calls, a calendar of spite, post-it note foodstuff taxonomies. The rough edge of neighborly resentment, the pre-dawn car-door slam signal. There are birds nesting in the bathroom ceiling exhaust fan, coughing at night.

If in dearer times we wax nostalgic, then watch the dandruff dust our desktop. Consider the ways in which the skin cells spell our name across the furniture. And softly — softly — the scotch-taped windowpane troubles a January gust. Friends depart in late model Toyotas, windshields fogged with remonstrations.

(A collection of pus in a cavity formed within some tissue of the body.)

Credible witnesses have been reporting
some pushback on the future initiative.
The refined manner of Scout Troopers.
Slopes of intersections milled from ore.
Creatures of habit, we pause at first light,
scalpel haircuts ablaze before heart heats.
In two or three years you'll have forgotten
scuppernong porn in the mall mezzanine.
Filtered water for everyone, even the dog
whose mange means a new kind of clock
has stopped its hands, & it points at us.

(Bottomless gulf.)

I am damned if I do and don't exist if I don't.
Our home is in heaven, this is just a vacation.
The rake-combed grass beats a breeze in trees.
One drunk's cirrhotic liver's another's foie gras.
Until then, boys, bake yourself a fuck-you cake.
Slow the phonemes for the rest of the day down.
Delusions are memories yet strung to the loom.
Don't blame me, I vetoed my idealism by proxy.
Home-grown ego is the new cult of domesticity.
No children were left behind once again today.
It behooves the world to build such slow boats.

(Induction or elevation, as to dignity, office or government.)

In the morning, we pushed up the prolapsed cavern, it's hold on or fall off.
You'd said made the push, but the scramble was less physical,
more like digression, when your shoe slips off and you cannot swallow.
We can choose from a pool of words, but they still will come out wet —
ecstasis tonguing resignation, once, or glossing the stricken-dumb.
And texting me all the time, and still no sign of the grammatical you, and the one
I count. And examples of abandoned adaptations. And will we or won't we? And
why not blow the future on the emergence of now, what you get when
axles burn the grease from the gears? Talk slow to match your gait. Brief, and
in a manner of an ovulate hen, each day's labor the shriek of
each night's certainty. The fox knows its game, and willingly obliges.
Consider the lock mechanism, blued tumblers & pins, that none knows
what the next knows, but all fall in line when that moment comes. Is in
the process of coming. Keyed memory, like holding each day in your head
with every color's blood full of air, gusts growling, every sound still slipped
in the air between, in the letters' crests, in the pressed paper's threaded fields
rivuletted with ink whose hellos we hear, whose hands we shake. In whose hands
we shake. Whose hands shake. It's without fanfare, hens writ out by the henhouse.

(Having fine and penetrating discernment.)

Sloppy silences.

When all your words battering rams and all the imagined flickers still us, a blight on the brain. This is what politics meant when it prescribed a dose of range life: We were put here for a reason but not by the past. By the future. Return to the tropes of incarnate youth, trembling words that yawn a string theory out your mouth.

Emotional recluse.

What is it about the dripping water, the calcium deposits and reticulated rust coursing through the cement? These old buildings suck at keeping sexy alive. Its spigots' squawk before the groaning gape of depressurized lines. We were burned out in 1987, Reaganomics' raised pitchfork galvanizing our uncertainty like a fog immune to late-June sun.

Playing Slayer.

Pried from our course by the smooth skin of time. If you want something, you must try to forget the mercurial impulse lack taught you. The swoosh of air up the elevator shaft. The galloping cadence of each moment's hope, poofs of poison that wake the brain's state until the dopamine drowse makes even the flesh bloom blue. Scoffing at boners. Blighted by famine.

Wormhood, until the cell blows-up, then woman herd.

Space as a latticework of filth. The pretend settlers in squalid disarray. & how once you've organized your shit around some constructed schema, the splints fall away, trusses collapse, beams of vowels fold in on and down. It's better to cave in than to cave out. Wonder at the foundation's edge, just briar and busted beer bottle and the gauzy decay of rot's rich grope.

(Any reality.)

I am trying to bleat
where the light leaked

baffles no dam
against the pinioning

days' glare, radiant complaint
in crisp fogs, what broke me was

near as I can tell
stop solution's reaction

to the plate blurred firmament —
history enclosed the frame, &

finally, or eventually, exhaled
(or when we bothered to

look, to bother ourselves, scouts
sent out, & finished off adjunct

missed running into you
today at coffee, so saying hello

tell the police you know your way
been doing it all your life,) but

it's more complicated than the doctors
know, these habits one needs to go

on into the next day's wages, deep veins
you mine, blistering fingers curled in ruin
a shooting star you saw before the sun rose.

(An adulterating substance.)

Get used to it, not by it. I was trying to erase all that, just forget it. When we left the house all the lights were on, walls painted with the garbage having been taken out. The little emergencies kept blinding us, remembering our busted bodies with stitching such as: razor wire, nuanced imprecations, catgut, another mux we'll need to make a quick call to get the hell out of. Or of which.

Used to the pleasure or making such acquaintance, unable to extend at this time any measure of generosity until such time as disquisitional energies have been exhausted. Went to the bank with the top down to plenish the republic, or they might have meant polish their pubics &, I'd imagine, publish or perish. In his hand bag of receipts proving Paris in the winter is garish, unable to complete his thoughts before a plane plows the terminal with such fuel as we've been getting used to.

Songs keep singing themselves these days. There is no one left to lock us out. The cirriform tangle of syntax wending words against common convention, until what we'd meant to have been saying catches up to what you'd hoped you'd be hearing. All along I watched your lips' curl against the text effect, what waves emerge from the filthy filatory maw left us unable to furnish any plausible alibi but this: Unable to function.

(To depart suddenly and secretly, as for the purpose of escaping arrest.)

Am great, resilient, no taste
left of death. & was smoke
snaked from a chimney but
blue sky swallowed it all up.
Am stoked, jazzed, blessed
even keel from stem to stern
wings trim, locked & loaded
though tremble some stutter
pixels mask fault as tracking
lacks static gaps black us out.
Redoubling waning strength
against the currents' sucking
course against the gathering
gale's caustic graze against
proverb & against holy writ
& against the scripted flits
trapped in cracked lips' grist.

CHANDLER LEWIS is a poet and public school teacher in New York's Hudson Valley. Some of his work has appeared in *Altered Scale*, *onedit*, *Shampoo*, *Radioactive Moat*, *Prick of the Spindle*, and *Tool a Magazine*. His chapbook *Illuminated Aluminum* is available from The Spire Press.

