

“Interrupting The Conversation Of Sleepwalking Clocks”
by Michael F. Gill

This digital chapbook is available at:
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“Why interrupt the conversation of sleepwalking clocks?”
– Greta Knutson, from the poem “Foreign Land”, 1933

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The Hunger To Be A Witness

On a Saturday upon a future unmarked,
meet me underneath the hemlock
where we can sit and watch
unconscious crimes emanate
out from my mandible and into
the crush of your vestibular nerve.

I will be in the distance, witnessing
from the outside a body
overthrowing its mind.

Ginsberg Provokes

I have frozen crates of Alaskan weather stored inside my pants.

I'm a naked power outage,
a sober couch on desert rock.

They say when you over-inflate
the size of your heart, it never fully deflates.

Some nights you want to engrave
everything with two firm irises that read:

*I want to be
the stripes on your retina,
the zebras on your skirt,
the next drop of hope on your pillow.*

But hormones are easy propaganda.
One day I won't buy what they're selling.

10 Aphorisms From An Insomniac

#4

I have a recurring dream that the world has nearly run out of air,
and the only way to take in the remaining air
is to put a saltine cracker in your mouth
and breathe through the air holes of the cracker.

#17

Traffic across the mind for the whole day. Clear streets for an hour at 4 am.

#26

I didn't realize it was a rash. I thought it was the red hand stamp I got last
night while dancing at the club.

#32

"It's like listening to the perfect song while having a horrible headache."

#41

If only my life could match the intense focus I have when I'm running to
catch the train.

#55

All my spontaneous actions from the past become intentional when I start to
dwell on them.

#70

Loneliness is when a person has an excessive amount of love inside them but
not enough people to share it with.

#89

Love doesn't need a reason to be reckless. People do.

#93

the heart is a lonely hunter
because it needs nothing

#108

What happens when you get too comfortable?
You fall asleep.

Jillian

Look at me, she said, without your camera.

And Sometimes Y

I i e a a o e
e e a A e **[Y]**
e i o e e **[Y]** a e o a
a a a a a e u i
e i o i o e a i.

I e o a o u i o,
i **[Y]** u o o o u o u
o e a ' o a e a
u i e a u e
u e e a e i e
a e u **[Y]** o .

e a e e a e
o e a o a o e
a e u e a e e o o e o ,
a u u a o e o u .

I **[Y]** o u o o o e **[Y]**
[Y] o u a e e i e o
o e u ' a **[Y]** , a i
o e i o e i -
e a e a i e i o
o e i o e a i a **[Y]** i e
a e e i e o i e i e **[Y]** .

e **[Y]** o u a e y o u e u a ,
e e e a i i a e a
i a e o o i a u e o ,
e a i o **[Y]** a e a o i
a o u a o e e i a a e
o e o i a **[Y]** a i e .
I ' a e i e
a a a e a o e a e e ,
a e a a e e e i ' o e u
a e i o e u a e i o e a e .

o e o e u ,
[Y] o u a u e **[Y]**
e e e ' o e i i ,
a e e o e **[Y]** a
o o o e a o e

i a a e a o e a **[Y]** i
e e i e e o i e a i e i **[Y]** .
o u i e u e **[Y]** a i
o e i e a **[Y]** e o a
i a e e u a -
a i **[Y]** o u ' u e e e **[Y]** u e
i o a a e a e i o i i a **[Y]** .

u o u e **[Y]** a i e a e i u a o e ,
i o i i i o i e o
a o e i **[Y]** e e a ,
a o a i e o e o
o i o e a o e a i ,
a e o e u e e a e o a u e .
I ' **[Y]** a e o u i e
o o o i e i e u ,
o e a a a o o o a a
e a i e o o i e e
o a u a i a u u e .
o e a i e **[Y]** i a o
e o o i a e u e ,
o u i o , a e a e
i e i a i i u o u i
i **[Y]** a o a i a e o o e .

Sensible

I am sensible to the fact
that my head is a bowling ball.

Never self-propelled,
always rolling away.

Itchy

My back is a ticklish number
itching in all the decimal places of pi

I am going to set up an acupuncture ant farm
on top of my spinal column, right after I am done training each ant
the sequence

In The Dream

Every time that I am kissed, somebody sends me a text message.
I leave my phone on vibrate.

A Fragrance Of Confidence

First someone presses their index fingers
against the small pointillistic patches of my back.

Then a concrete color allocates across my face.

Then the mirror becomes a solved Rubik's cube.

Then all decision is set in stone.

Then my body becomes a light shone
on all the unglued fields of fortitude.

Fidget

Everything is still
as he lays on his back
with a coffee mug
balanced on his chest.

His meditation succeeds
when the coffee mug stays firmly
in its original place. In times
when great concentration is needed,
he fills this mug with water
or places more mugs on his body.
Often he will do both.

Everyone around him is a ticking clock, a restless fidgeting leg.
He stands there staring at seconds until they refuse to move.
Love has been refusing to move.
He needs to be as still as possible
in order for it to be fully absorbed.

Hieroglyph

Does my common sense stick only
to the pectoral muscles in my chest?

Will library patrons & debonair doctors
retrieve my body from the insides of manila folders?

Somewhere in the row
of tomorrows to come
I firmly believe that my voice
will make sense
in the wind-marks of trees,
in the indented ardor
of a ballet futurist
who is arabesquing near
the site of a mystery.

Thieves

I start genteel small talk
with a series of shadows
that hover over the school
of tiny thieves that are robbing me
of my beginner's mind.

Meeting April

I've only known you for an hour,
but I already feel our friendship as reality.

It's not that far-fetched fantasy.
It's not that overoptimistic hope.

We have got such an easy bubble,
a place
where the holes in our consciousness
forget to manifest.

O how this wide range
of possibility
between us
keeps bouncing back and forth
between forever
and time unstretched,
between stone carvings
and a blank etch-a-sketch.

What Does It Mean

What does it mean
when you dream that you're sleeping next to a grizzly bear
and its fur is so soft when you squeeze against it
that you're willing to swallow
the fears of being mauled
for this utterly fleeting sense of comfort.

I've learned that this means
there's really no difference
between my waking life and my dreaming life.

Autobiographical Film

I've spent
surreptitious months
dying the yolks
of these film strips.
They were once home movies,
now they're interruptions of Rothko.
Every reel has a brief shimmer
like the lighted fire of a
smoker's fingers. Every
reel has me being spun
in saturated youth, a
self portrait Brakhaged.

Cassie

Cassie, if you could.....

These forks on the.....

Here you are on.....

I will talk as.....

We are both caught.....

I know too much.....

I hate that I.....

What would you do.....

I have lost the.....

Cassie I want to.....

My life is a.....

Oh it's all exciting.....

Tomorrow I will have.....

In two weeks I.....

It's too bad I.....

Cassie you don't want.....

My joys are pre-planned.....

I am about to.....

I already know all.....

I know every time.....

Am I just playing.....

The cruelty is that.....

I have complete control.....

You may wonder why.....

You must be perplexed.....

I hope you don't.....

I wish you weren't.....

But I know the.....

I want you to.....

This existence of mine.....

Hold on to the.....

Raw emotions, they just.....

Cassie, do I know.....

If you are hearing.....

If you are planning.....

Yes, I do know.....

And it's breaking my.....

Improv

Can my hand-held device be your hand?

Can you be my emergency parking space?

Can you possess my heartbeat by tapping an elevator button twice?

Can you do it right now?

I want to start over and say all of this again.

Taste

I need to stop avoiding reality in my poetry.

So I've decided to start peeling fruit. Vegetables.

No skin will be left after I finish.

Forget It!

The whole town came to me with letters that I don't remember sending?
What else has jailbrokeed my head without my knowledge?
♪ It would be so nice ♪ to get a postcard from a still-blooming invocation?
And ♪ It would be so nice ♪ to know that they were thinking about me?
That they finally had something to say to their father?

Generic

*I n o o e l n o l
i o i o i n e.*

*E e i e o i e l o n e l o e , i e n s
l e s s n e e i o s o n e . N o e o
o o l i l e s e l i i o ' e s i n e
e l s l o n e l o e , e e i l l e i i n i s i n
i s i e n s . o ' e e e n o s s i s o n
o s n i e s . I o n e o l e l e s s o n
e s e n o n e o l n ' e e l s o l o n e l n o e .
l o n e l i n e s s s o l e e l l e s s i n l i s i e ,
s o o o e s n o o l l o l o i . I i
e i o e l o n e l o e s o o s e n e n s
o s o i i n i s . i s o e i s n o o i n o i o e ,
e s e i l l e n I o e e s o n l i s s e s i e
o n e n s o s o o , n e n e s e o i e l
e s i e o l e s i o o l o e l
e s s s e i n e n e i . e s , i o i l s o n o i s*

*o e l e o o e
i o e o i n o .*

Frosted Winter Glass

A head-strong solidity.

A mockery for all things aquatic.

A perpetual, tangible sign of life.

A promise bequeath to me in sculpture.

An abyss of dense, eternal light.

Copper and Abstracts

“But Michael, if you just sit down, relax,
and tell your poems exactly what they mean,
it would be a big help.

We are all so confused.

We are just tiny pennies.”

Cracking The Ice

To S in the L of someone's
double V W

To have the H of your P
run through R I instead of W A

To fill B with P of the O
that have been S to you each N

To B your H against the I, and
S yourself through the right E of Zzzs

To be M by H and find a T
your B wants to W through

To S
H
F
B
and B

Eccentric/Rational

A castle that is full of antique lily pads.

A man permanently lost on his way to heaven.

A seeing-eye horse.

A talking boomerang.

An entire species that does not dream.

A smile as warm as a toaster.

An expert at finishing a life sentence.

Neuro/tic/string

I//you/are/on/a/sca/enger//unt//an//you//in//a//ersona//y//e//t//neur
otic/e//t//interesting//it/s/a/goo////at//you/are//intereste//in////at//a//ens
/to//you////en//I/is//neurotic//e//osits/its/gi//t//insi/e//you////ecause//t//at//s/
//ere//interest/usua//y//ies//in//t//e//e//ects/o//a//ersona//y//e//t//neuro
tic//t//at//s//no////een//e//t//insi/e//you//

neurotics/are/interesting/to/you//an////o/i/e//you//it//a//ersonn//o//in
teresting//e/a/i/o/r//as//e//as/access/to/an/intereste//set/o//eo//e/
//o/are/g/a//to//ait//or//you/at/certain/G/S/coor/inates/an//t/en/sen/
/you/to/s/eci/ic//ocations////ere//ersona//y//e//t//neurotics/are//aiting/
/or//you/an//are//o//ing/your/great/interest/insi/e//t//e//You/nee//to/
get//t//at//interest//ac//an//return//it//to//ere//it//e//ongs//insi/e/o//yo
u//T//at//s//so//et//ing/you//ou////ay//to//see//a//en//

An//once/a/neurotic/current/is/surging//t//roug//you////o//cou////sto//t
/e//interest/in/your//o//y//ro//a//ening?/Not/your//rain//an//certain/
y/not/your//rien/s////o//no//ant/to/register/as/c/ients/o//your/ser/ic
es//ecause//it//i////resent//t//e//it//neurotics//t//ey/can/actua//y//in////
an//it//i////ersona//y//connect//t//e//it//interests//t//at//are//interesting//t
o//t//e//an//t//en//ay//e//t//ey/cou////see//t//at//t//ey//are//sti//interesting/
/eo//e//

So/no//you//ta//e//ri//e//in//your//neurotics//tra//ic//ing//an//you//ut//so//
uc//o//yourse//into//t//is//o//t//at//t//ese//ersona//y//e//t//neurotics//no
//re//resent//you//You/are//a//e//u//o//a//series/o//egrees//inutes//an
//secon/s//an//you//a//e//a//ot//o//eo//e//o//are//intereste//in//eetin
g//you////o//no//cou////you//e//er//sto//t//is//interesting//era//it//so//any/
/eo//e//oo//ing//to//interact//it//you//an//e//erience//t//e//e//ects//you//
ea//e//in//eo//e//s//o//ies//

You/an//t//e//neurotics//you//ersona//y//ea//e//so//uc////oy//in//eac//ot/
er//at//42//egrees/nort//an//71//egrees//est//eo//e//i//argue//it//yo
u//a////ay//ong//to//ea//e//t//at//oy//e//in////ut//en//you're//a//ing//a/
ay////at//s//e//t//o//t//e//ersona//y//e//t//neurotics//e//t//or//you//to//ay?
Not//uc//

Maniacal

What I've learned
from staring at the sun

What I've learned
from staring out the sun

=

you will
become a different person
after illumination

you will
stay the same
inside the dark of night

Poet Dies Due To Lack Of Moonlight

So typical.

How I Was Made (My Family Tree Grows Me)

Where they are meeting and what they are doing to make twice, Germany.
What they are making and what will come after they do what they do, Ireland.
When they don't do, and what they are again and again is what they are,
Sweden.

What's repeated inside them is repeated in their children. What he makes and
what he does is functional, which he is, and what he makes on several
occasions is what she makes as well. When she is about to make me, it is what
he makes so often and it is also what she can produce, and the whereabouts of
what I am is also found in what they've obtained, and what they're obtaining,
which is what life does and doesn't do in time.

Thus, what you make and what you display is twice what it is: you are what
you are and what you produce. What we make and do with what is done is
repeated. What it does and what it is when it leaves is so very appealing.

I have repeated things which were part of him, and have obtained what she
obtained—which she got from the moment when the moment left someone
else, and now it's become this thing, twice. What it makes, who it makes, and
what it does not make is what this life really is, when you get down to it.

She is part of what he makes, so this is something that she takes part in,
repeated. Who he is and that part of him that gets what he should get is who I
am. He gets what he gets when it comes out of what she does, and she does
what she does twice, once to be herself, once to be him, and then there's me.

What he does and what he doesn't do, it makes a condition of who I am.
What she's getting is what she gets from doing what she did to time.
What they do after what they did to me is to do it to someone else, create
what they did again and then share what they did with their friends. What she
doesn't do is stop being who she is.

Twice they made it, and what makes it do what it does is Germany.
What makes it do the things which are what it doesn't do is Sweden.
Where its repeating and what its making with its results is Ireland.
That's the sound of my family tree, repeating.

**I Shall Follow The Example Of St. Augustine
& Take A Bath In Hot Water**

(Title taken from a letter by Ezra Pound)

I shall follow the example of a scattered brain
and place a subterranean toupee on my homeland.

I shall drip an excess of my asymmetry
across the underfoot of all American hot springs.

I shall wait for the arrival of a scathing and scholarly
22nd century macrobreath to erase myself

from the footnotes of future's past.

Inhibition Incinerator

Where are the extra set of senses
one needs to bring down
a bushel of birds from the sky?
I am not drinking myself silly this evening,
but I *am* still looking to siphon some flight
from those who have it.

It Really Was This Fool

It really was your hand cupping your breasts as you slept.
It really was my ear laying on your introverted sense of space.
It really was too damp in that room for nothing to be happening.

For you it really was
a normal night
of downing Ambien
and living it up
in a disentranced
folding of arms and legs.
It really was all about
this fool right here
fumbling at the dollhouse gates,
exodus sloppy and clumsy
with the taste of your dried plums
on my throat muscles for days.

Lefinition Of Dove

modern and personal. entertaining. stimulation. something to stare at.
something to laugh out of. malignant against tumors. followed by words. used
every day as a new thing. has all the fun. put on a pedestal. holy infallible verb.
never stops. won't take a breath. can do all of this. stands proud. ready for
definition. completes every phrase. always follows through. has no feelings.
just makes sense. make things awkward. makes you sound silly. much more
mature in its style. can never be like you. came from the ocean. came to get
lost inside our weather.

Academia

I have dug myself inside the gaping lungs of textbooks
and I will not let them breathe until I die.

Three Reasons I Can't Fly

gravity glue

gravity glue

gravity glue

Without Hesitation,

I let myself be burned
by the forest fire between legs.

Self-Image

The mirror shatters in four pirouettes

and

as the image falls

a small tornado

a tiny disintegrating ballet

Pablo Picasso On A Boat

Disoriented information casually passes out on the ground, and when it wakes up it will take its breakfast. The bluefish are ravenously stepping off the ladder of their bunk bed. It's said they will never drink rum below 85 proof for life is shorter underwater. A low lecherous respiration is breathing throughout the walls. I'm a janitor, and sweeping this boat has been good for me, but now I am going to cast my set of dice upon the sea.

A small anchor grows two hands over time, and marries into the species of clocks. "I love to gather death under the guise of sleep," said the stopped watch, who was now divorced. The streets are plugged with fire but here I sit at sea with an otter, stuffing a cushion.

Plehenos Emos

Wayside School Is Falling Down. It Was Purple.

my thoughts.
in my head and are controlling
grains have entrenched themselves
backwards—because these two
is why i am telling you all of this
point of origin: the brain. this
every day in real time at the
and watch our thoughts unfold
sand pellets will sit there

Processed Food (Addiction)

Food as designer earrings

circular morsels that pierce skin

hang themselves inside you

watch your reaction

build chemistries of addiction

make sure you stay in line

The Path

It/was.only,a)short\$time@ago
that%I^was~a@simple;fisherman
lying[underneath|the\blanket_of(my&bed.
'The:fish"Iwould*catch%all#looked
and{tasted+like!me-
me>and?my" gigantic^suitcase
filled'with-inside|jokes
and=invented(words.

This∅past ∩winter∩was∩so∩cold
that∩the∩blanket∩of∩my∩words∩had∩to
be∩incredibly∩thick∩around∩my∩skin.
And∩when∩my∩body∩continued∩to∩tremble
throughout∩the∩summer∩and∩spring∩and∩fall
I∩started∩to∩think∩that∩my∩obscurity
might∩be∩giving∩me∩a∩terminal∩disease.

To//be..true|[to..the|+path,,
my*thoughts==must^;be
really_{honest?_with^!themselves,,
and@@not~spend
every||single\\day
amusing<8my<8brain
with--descriptions""of::fantastical\+events
that:*have..never: happened^|..
You\$!can't"send,phrases
out/+onto#the__street
without-]a-[purpose,,
without)(a()connection
to\$%the^*life:}you""really8live..
Unless^you\$\$\$stay!as*|hermetic|as=this:_____?

Art Reflex

When you clap your hands
The air doesn't ponder if it should make a sound
It doesn't consider what kind of noise to make
All the sounds happen without hesitation
All these words appear before I have a chance to think

Frivolous Free Space

With a blue drained from the autumn sky,
a musical typing face
starts to print my commas, periods, and full stops
across an oceanography of silence.
A huge grinning head,
packed with optimism
and rosematter,
looks upon this sea
and gets to dancing
inside the frivolity
of its free space,
the punctuation of fact.

The Lewd Heart Yearns For The Past

vhs skin marks
sit inside the hamster wheel
that holds my circular breathing

an unquenchable string of yarn
falls from the past and mummifies my mouth

i find myself
an archivist's lung,
hidden inside the place
where my sleep should be

the scent of an old christmas tree
reappears inside my nose

in each set of home movies
i see myself become endowed
with quiet malaise

quiet confidence fading to shame

Doctor's Note to MFG

When the operation was finished,
we were able to open your mouth
and take out all the moth balls
you had stuffed inside

You kept confusing beauty
for an overly heavy bookcase

You kept looking for too many things
to put on your tongue

Stop hoarding fragments of everyone's else art

Leave some space between your voice
and the way it reflects and stretches on canvas

Fire In Portrait Self

*Fifteen responses to the fifteen poems in Chad Parenteau's chapbook
"Self-Portrait in Fire." Each poem is written by using the first and last words of Chad's
lines as the prompt.*

I

He loved
her over-sized coat.

He yelled and flailed
his nothing arms
inside her open windows.

II

So just then what how and why came.

If you if the will to be she with,
If you if the will, you will, be. With.
If you if.
If you *if* it.
If you *if* him.

III

The mind is fine on its own.
It declares that it might return to you
if it could find the labyrinth
that leads to your body.

IV

I wonder
if the phone calls
from my genitalia
will ever speak
without a quiver
in its voice.

V

I am best friends
with all the red stop lights
that live in this city.

VI

My heart lives at the unemployment office.
Death sees a lot of potential in me.

VII

My scarf tried to choke me to death.

The coats in my closet were forced to do the dishes,
and the photograph exposures of me at war with myself
could not be shown to children under the age of 13.

VIII

A person is watching the genders inside them fight to the death.

A futurist spreads genders inside their cups of tea. Then they drink.

IX

Opposing sides are paused in mid-air.
They briefly marvel at this frozen forever.
Lives will collapse when pause is released.

X

I of a or on I oat.
I of a or on I oat.
I have an oar on my boat.
I of a or on I boat.

XI

The handlebars of my stomach no longer scream with caress.

XII

My imagination whispering to me:

wish fulfillment

wish fulfillment

XIII

Love is the best metronome for the morning.

The pulse is there without a thought.

XIV

The time after playing chess is endless.

The time while playing chess is endless.

XV

I date people with the same frequency
that I hear payphones ringing through city streets.

The next time I'm able to sit down
I will try and get married. But it may
not happen.