



What now?

How eerie is the quality of awareness  
that comes with outliving

Who?

- Fellow Artists
- Children
- Parents
- Idols
- Lovers

If I died, what would happen to my work? Asked not in a contemplative existentialism, but more in an earnest curiosity.

→ Where would it go? Into boxes first, shuffled into the closet along with the rest of my childhood paraphernalia. My mom would sort through it eventually, I'd like to think. Throw out the ones she never approved of, the naked women, the gore maybe. Then she'd pick out two works, the ones that would look best on the mantle over the fireplace. *the residuals of my breath in this world.*

I'd like to think my sister would pilfer the ones discarded out of the trash. Put them up on her wall, along with the ticket stubs from every movie we'd ever seen together. Her shelves would sag under the weight of my textbooks, notebooks, binders, papers I never finished. *I don't think she'd read them.*

~~STED~~ I hope she'd find a use for my supplies. Collected over years, magpie like, my counter to her sentimentalism was the manifestation of utility. Years of inheriting odds and ends, scraps off old projects meant to be transformed into new projects, when I had the time.

Time.

It seems to me that we never know exactly the shape of time. How one can be very happy and at the same time, not. How the body (of work) can rise and fall.

Time. I'm convinced I (don't) have enough.

GEORGE E. WOODMAN

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October 2

Dear Francesca,

Thank you for the latest episode in "The Adventures of F.W. in the Far East." I am glad that you are hanging in and that things go forward. I do not expect that you will get any special grades, and maybe will get some lousy ones. I only hope that you keep on ~~making~~ working hard and do not become discouraged. Schools like Abbot only admit girls that they believe will eventually be able to hack it. But it will take pazienza.

(\$40 per month)

Enclosed is a check for \$40.00. I am hoping that with this amount, you can exist at some reasonable level between stinginess and extravagance. Expenses will turn up, like keeping your clothes washed and cleaned, and other unglamorous stuff. Besides you need to save a little ahead for traveling expenses, etc.

Last week-end we had a huge party of artists to raise money for McGovern which was fun. The kittens have graduated to the stage of wobbly rough-housing, soon they will climb out of their box. Gray moved them all from our closet down to your room; apparently she feels that is has the right atmosphere for kitties to grow up in. Charlie has a job four nights a week working in Orange Julius. We have pointed out that you would like to hear from him- but don't hold your breath until you do!!

I really like your drawing showing all that knowledge being funneled into you.

We haven't heard from Jamie (neither has his parents) so Mom called where he works and we have at least verified that he is alive and well in Champaign, Illinois even if we know no more about it.

Your air-mail letters are more likely to fly if you use an 11¢ stamp instead of 8¢. Enclosed are some free stamps. I am trying to figure out a good photo for the fall pottery sale- wish you could give me some professional tips. Finally a cleaning lady has turned up who promises to be adequate. All our friends and everybody are always asking how you are doing. Are you the only Boulder girl who has ever been to boarding school? Mom wants to know how you have figured out to take care of your laundry. I have all the avocado plants, including yours, at my studio. They have done MAGNIFICENTLY.

Much Love  
Dad.

Xxx

What now?

To be this, to be after the after, you know, is a miracle.

To be this is to be selfish.

To be this is to have left her behind.

To be this has asked her to go first, in all things.

To be this is to have failed her.

To be this is to mock sacrifice.

To be this is to fit my feet into the shoes of my father. He is a size eleven, so my feet slide forward as I trudge through the silt deposited on the bank of the river, whose warm clear water has now receded.

Colorado is notoriously dry. I hear Illinois is humid this time of year.

His mom died last -how long ago was it?- I ruined the trip back, because somehow,

*You somehow managed to turn the whole trip into a story about you when it should've been about your father. It was incredibly selfish of you. This is not me, bringing this up. You made this incredibly difficult. Can't you just be*

*Can't you just be*

To cope is to shut down all of the arguments, even those that perhaps would be most beneficial to hear right now.

To be this is to be selfish.

I apologize.

To cope is to be selfish.

I apologize.

To cope is . . . what?

How can I abstract home enough so the edges don't cut my lungs as I breathe in, how can I fuzz the corners and cabinets and conversations so that they exist in a distant, painless stasis? What now? When Home has abandoned or perhaps, never existed in the first place, what then?

*Dad? When's the last time you went home?*



What now?

Dear 

It is a Privilege to make Art capital A. For You, Art comes first, before body.

Please, neutral body, ask me to make Work.

Make Work

If you make Work, work

if you make Work work, make Work.

Make work. If you make Work

you make work. If you work,

make

Work

go

on

go on

go

on.

Make Work.

Gladly. But before I can make the Art You so desire from me, I have the need to unburden my load. Hold for me the grievances with which Society capital S has handed to me. Kindly, hold my head please, my eyes, my eyelashes, my tongue, my hair (all of it if you could. Again, I do apologize for any discomfort I might be causing You. I'm making Art, You see.) my skin, my ass, my hands (but give them back soon), my fingernails, my toes, my glasses, the tides beneath the waning moon, my sex. Hold it while I try and make this Art for a moment, Capital A, if You could please. Hold my burdens so I can rise to Your occasion, sir.

I...forgot...how.

I need your help. The doorman Capital C requires a fee. If you could pay it for me and then, please, ask me to make Art that defies You, that enrages You, that is contrary to exactly who You are.

I will gladly, but first, if You could hold this weight for a moment and pay my cover. I need my hands, You see, to make Art.

Thank You,

Haley



What now?

I made tea. When for the moment the question becomes "what do I do now?" and the imposition on Life feels larger than the substance or the conversation or the whatever.

I made tea because my skin would not slip off for the moment. Because consciousness is inescapable. The consciousness of being is the inescapable consciousness of This.

Whatever This is.

So, I made tea. To numb, not in a destructive way, because Catholicism or whatever the fuck prohibits it, but to numb ~~me~~ myself as I think a child would. Maybe.

I'm trying to avoid destructive coping mechanisms. Writing is not really that. Drinking isn't really either. But the tea helps.

The question isn't gone. The tea is warm and I haven't eaten since eight thirty. I cut up sweet potatoes. I turn on the tv. I numb. The pain that is existence can wait until I've eaten dinner.

I'm thinking about my mom. I'm thinking about Shannon. I feel. What?

<<My legs feel different, right now. Well, when I stand, the trudge of them through air is new? I should cook those sweet potatoes.>>

I feel empty  
I feel drained  
I feel tired and overwhelmed and I have said all of the words, but it wasn't enough. The thought wasn't enough. To be articulate and well-spoken and everything I'm supposed to wasn't enough. I haven't touched the tea, yet. The steeped bag remains undisturbed at the bottom of the ceramic cup, in a pool of ochre, fuzzed out at the edges.

My hand hurts  
My head hurts  
My hair hurts  
My feet hurt  
My back hurts  
My eyes hurt  
My skin hurts

Fifteen minutes before I flip the potatoes.

Am I a flight risk?

<<Sleep. I would like to sleep now.>>





What now?

How it feels to be lonely among good friends.

The feeling of loneliness,

Alone.

A

lack of

the language

for

intimacy.

Want. To be seen and heard. The version

of me that loved you in

high school is dying!

Shirt. Yours too.

Glint

rift

Sorry I choked you without asking.

Glad it worked out.

The version of you now, forgot me.

Anywhere.

I've got to stop dating my friends.



April 17, 1977

Dear 'Gesca,

I must be getting prozac in

My old age

I am

Very happy.

i dont have much money.

Nearly all of your mail arrives postage due- it is nice of the Post Office to bring it along, but you are taking your chances.

see ma

I think about your photographs. Whatever your teachers are like, they don't seem to stifle your development, or force you into cliches. I like your picture of you in a quilt in front of a quilt. Have you ever made any BIG prints. I would like to see the quilt picture printed on the full sheet of 11X14 or 16X20 paper. All that fine detail in the quilting should come across beautifully assuming that you focused carefully, stopped down some, and do the same in the enlarging.

i am here alone

I'm sorry we aren't friends anymore it is too bad for both of us - if i were

Love,  
Dad

Hot Tip. To save money making 16X20 prints, focus enlarger to full size image wanted, then make trial prints on 8X10 paper placed where there is a conjunction of full range of tones. No waste big paper.