

Audience Tectonics: an American-Scandinavian Reading

At a certain point the word “between” disappears.
First the quotation marks disappear.
— *Secret Architecture*, Aaron Kunin

Much like the protected spaces we share with a beloved as ivory representations otherwise left unsaid, words harbor a royal geography, allow both the audience and listener an intimacy and fleeting connection. This momentary collision between the observed and observer optimizes alternate means for creation — or its opposite. Artists are not artists, writers not writers — until each challenges the Other, with another Other. A distorted national portrait of the once hopeful ... now a mythologized face: eyes darting, convincing itself of self-reliance, tricked-out, recessive. But what happens when stifled voices make way through layers, crawl from the white noise of faulty props, pomp and circumstance?

The push and pull; something has to give. What happens to a land's people when the land manipulates, spits them out, when disasters involve trite sensationalisms, when few civilities unfold? Migration surmounts; askew forces shift. People move over oceans and terrains in search of a homeland. In search of meaning or a gaze, a voice now burdened, a valid reinforcement that *all is well*¹, that all could be as promised or inferred. But they do not travel the distance unsullied. They bring memories, earth fresh clinging to boots, endearing flaws.

Along with the responsibility of contorted inheritance comes the shame of how property is acquired. Along with oscillations of wrong-doing comes the heaviness of dissolution and brittle fragmentation. People *can* build from nothing, build tools to fix, fix a shoddy house or a ship without an anchor. It is possible to find diamonds in dust, symphonies from hushed phonemes, stories from remainders of unarchived events. It is possible to live out an unfiltered sigh, unpredictable yet honest. If not now, then when?

The function of poetry: *to give us back the situations of our dreams*². One could also argue that the function of poetry — much like a skilled editor — is to eliminate jargon. Yet, no two entities battle smokescreens with the same avatar. To never underestimate, to recognize that environmental deteriorations allow room for sound testimonies and examinations of dogmatism. To be on the look out — to find what needs to be found and discard what needs to be discarded. Between layers of diversity and language resides an investigation, a beacon of light scouting. Intersections leave an assemblage of loose pebbles and dirt, a macular gallery unfolding visions.

To listen, *really* — what is required? When the biography of a people is confused with a land's, some are mistaken for the coincidence of birth, are marked by a chain of events — is it fair to say that raw data has dictated enough, that perilous navigations in and among the ambushed lead to words or coordinates irreverent, vulnerable, faux? What is to be seen as freedom, if not the efforts of emerging words — despite disappointment, misunderstanding, failure? Some examine reality, both the fake-real and real-fake, through language; others escape one via the other. When supposed liberties stain influenced psyches, we theorize, manufacture or discredit bravery and intervene upon uncomfortable narratives. Again and again, we rebuild and attempt to placate one another in the process. We try, even if our nomenclature is forced to thread an awkward patchwork of *what if's* and *fingers crossed*.

If the soul is a house, then poetics is likened to what? If the future inquires in a house with no walls, how does one catch the question's answer? With a catcher's mitt? Butterfly net? Bride's veil? In an era of still primitive conclusions and offensive directives, where words are mocking, knocking on a house masked as both gentle enemy and brutish friend, the presence of individual alienation and guilt is universal, and sentiments such as love and loss appear bereft of prescriptive value. The crest of humanity's wave provokes despair, but lyrical frictions between disparate elements can erase

1 Jacobs, Jane, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (NY, NY: Vintage Books, 1961), 51.

2 Bachelard, Gaston, *The Poetics of Space* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1994), 15.

expectation and decodify shock — making room for new essentials³.

The poet designs a world of words out of generosity, necessity and sometimes the following conditional: that someone somewhere will prove capable of promulgating a responsive one, a desired end in and of itself. The meeting of both leads to invaluable exchange, and mutual derivations are luxuries among the living. We are blessed to breathe, feel tremors and mingle with forces larger than ourselves. Even when stretched to incredulous limits or in absentia.

3 Refer to Kerouac's *List of Essentials*; a suggestion to (re-)write our own.