

OVERVIEW

Influenced by Jasper Johns' numeric series *0 through 9* (1961), a woman of multiple roles discovers that there is not enough time in a life to reach full potential, to experience enough, to create without reserve. Like a feline with nine lives, she writes entirely new fictional variants of her obituary nine times, reciting at fifteen minute intervals (for three uninterrupted hours), before composing the next one from scratch. In writing *through* these imagined summations, new possibilities were meant to become realizable. Johns commented, "I tend to like things that already exist." Some prefer what doesn't yet exist.

BACKGROUND

Periodically, it is necessary to take inventory of one's own life, to determine if one is staying on any constructed path or to decide to create a different one which may have presented itself as a better or more compatible option. Having an ongoing interest in both poetics and fiction, following through with this automatic writing exercise of creating nine improvised obituaries ensured a time-sensitive platform to apply fictional alternatives to my future and finality. This writing-exercise-as-performance aspires to be a positive gesture to actively redesign my life by overriding my own set of self-constructed illusions and mythologies - from the narrative perspective of nine fictional characters from nine fictional versions of my life in summation.

PROCESS

Curated by Merzedes Sturm-Lie, the public event "White Zoo & Black Powers" occurred April 21-27, 2011, which included video works broadcasted in a "black box" and live performances in a nearby "white box" - both temporarily constructed at the Royal Institute of Arts (KKH) in Stockholm. "Black Powers" video works were from the following contributors: Cecilie Meng Sørenson(DK), Hou Chien Cheng(TW), Kamen Zlatev(SE), Merzedes Sturm-Lie(BE/SE/NO), Quinten Leon (BE), Petr Davydtchenko(SE/RU) and Markus Bowie(SE/UK). "White Zoo" performances were from the following: Playgroundsound(SE), Isabelle Gressel(FR/AT/GB), Quinten Leon(BE), Fredrik Fermelin(SE), Cecilie Meng Sørenson(DK), Vera Karlsson (SE), Xander Stragier(BE), Jacquelyn Davis(US/SE), Kamen Zlatev(SE), Merzedes Sturm-Lie & Ingrid Jansson(SE/NO/BE), Sofia Karlsson(SE), Petr Davydtchenko(SE/RU) and Markus Bowie(SE/UK). Live performances were held each day, 11:30am to 2:30pm, and were live streamed via:
http://www.kkh.se/%7Etore/stream_kkh1/

Sofia Karlsson performed "The Deerstalker and the Territorial House" while I followed through with "*0 through 9 (or Nine Lives)*." The boxed-in "white zoo" space was shared simultaneously for three hours. Our two performances were constructed separately but were re-contextualized through our performance's direct communication with one another stemming from proximity.

TEXT

The automatic writing exercise follows.

What is to be said about Jacquelyn Davis? Well, I was her neighbour for 20 years, and I saw a lot of people come and go from her life while living side by side. I must admit, that we didn't talk very much since we weren't exactly on good terms, but hey! I guess there was no one else to discuss what was actually going on with her life - even though, strange enough, like I said, a lot of people came and went. She had a tendency to be explosive when something didn't go her way. I remember often getting her mail and not feeling inclined to give it to her - because she accused me of opening it on several occasions. It's sometimes better just to avoid conflict, rather than give her the postcards that were sent from her only son before he died in the war. She was always well-dressed, despite the fact that she seemed a bit off when bumping into her in town - at the opera, the grocery store, company picnics. By the way, she was the boss - though it was never talked about, everyone knew it. So people moved to the other side of the sidewalk when she was approaching - because that's how you are supposed to act with the boss - give the boss her space and time. Don't cross the boss, right. Anyhow, her house was white with oversized gargoyles guard her swimming pool because, to Jacquelyn, swimming was one of the only few things which she could relieve herself of the burden of being the boss - I used to watch her swim laps in her pool that was made especially for 1 person to swim laps. She was fast and her speed

fit nicely - she seemed to never age past forty. I think it has something to do with eat berries - and the fact that her only son was adopted - so yeah, her body hold up nice and tight. But so, yeah, here we are coming together to express how much we appreciated everything that she accomplished while alive - she definitely took the time to wash her sports car often. She was great at washing her cars - she liked driving fast, and she would zoom up and down the driveway and the dust would fly - it would stand still in the air, hang there for minutes, then land all over my furniture indoors. I was constantly dusty because of her, but I got used to it. She grows on you like that - she's contagious, like the plague, and i liked having her as a sickness. I am feeling fine now that she is dead - funny how I'm having an opposite reaction to her non-existence. Funny how I've been chosen to speak about her, because shouldn't it be someone else? But

We are gathered here today to get through the
thing called life - hehehehe - no scratch that. Listen,
Jacquelyn Davis, she was a real peach - there's no one sweeter,
no one tastier. She was so supportive of me, she has
always been so helpful throughout the course of our
40 year marriage - I couldn't ask for a more perfect
wife and confidant. She gave me four children - Jimmy,
~~and little Jimmy~~, Natasha, Marten and Brenda.

Who could ask for a more perfect family? 2 twin boys
and two beautiful little girls who have all grown up
and done well for themselves. Jacquelyn wasn't a very
demanding person; she always had time for others - In fact,
she gave everything she had, everything that she was -
to her family, for her family. This probably had something
to do with the fact that she was an orphan - her

parents made the decision one day to put her in a
large black trash bag drive out to the outskirts of

El Paso, Texas and sling her over the side of
their pick-up truck into an abandoned desert -
literally a field of dust - no one around. She could
have suffocated in that black bag, if it wasn't for
me, i happened to be irrigating the soil there
one day - because I had just bought that same
plot of land to grow soy beans. Anyhow, I raised
her - were something like 20 years apart in age.

Then I fell in love with her - because I was able
to mould her into exactly the wife that I had always
wanted - I taught her everything she knows. She
has never had contact with other women - I decided

that she might get some big ideas from too many women folk hanging around, gossiping and dragging her off to play Bingo every Sunday. An excellent cook; she remembered little things that I told her, because she was a good girl. Like how I like cherry tomatoes from the farmers market in my rice dishes - like how I like a good massage before hitting the sack, like how it's best to talk only when spoken to, how it's a good idea to not bother me after a long day's work with familial trivialities, like how I like it when the remote control is to the LEFT of my recliner next to my special coaster that we got as a souvenir on our honeymoon in Tampa. She didn't talk much, but you get used to the silence - she had a way of telling you what she wanted and needed just by a small gesture. You shouldn't be upset that she not here any more, or that she didn't say kind words to you when she was living - that was her way of doing things. And her unpredictable sobbing was no indication of unhappiness -

So we gathered today on this rainy day in the year 2050 to celebrate the life of ~~the~~ one amazing individual - an advocate for change in all respects. Jacquelyn Davis devoted her entire life to others - she was a ~~missionary~~ and lived her life for God and his words. After deciding early on that life just wasn't worth living without giving it your all, she sold all of her possessions and disappeared for several years. I'm her only brother, and from the years 2020 to 2030, she was nowhere to be found. Our family was hysterical at first, then we placed our problem in God's hands, and we had to move on with our lives either way. We knew that she would come back to us, that she was just going through a phase. She tried to be selfless, but her decision to disappear like that - well, it seemed selfish to me. I mean, why not a Dear John letter or a simple postcard? What did the girl have to prove by such a stunt? So when she arrived one Thanksgiving on our doorstep, can you blame me for throwing the entire turkey at her pretty face? Can you blame me for grabbing the mashed potatoes in my fists and feeling them squish between my fat fingers? I've got a weight problem now - I think it's because of her. So much anxiety in not knowing - so much pain. She was my best friend, and her advice was always spot-on. Forgive me for getting personal. I should keep this light - so yes, here we are and I'd like to remind everyone to live their own lives to the fullest, because I'm sure that Jacquelyn, being relieved of the responsibilities relating to her family to give SELFLESSLY as they like to say, to others - to other strangers -

must have been a fulfilling experience for her. I cannot ever understand why my sister acted the way she did, but God help me, I LOVE HER TO DEATH. Ooops - excuse the pun. She owned no one and nothing and didn't pick up a pen or phone to inform anyone of anything - a fortress, an ivory tower - she was in many ways. You must knock before entering, you must know the code: Open Sesame - well it's too late for any opening up now, isn't it? But for the rest of us in the room, let's hope to remember what made Jacquelyn different from all of the others - her distance from us all was synonymous with a golden, listening mirage. ~~She can only be appreciated and loved through distance - so now that she rests eternally, we can love her even more.~~

Jacquelyn Dan's never failed at anything she has attempted to do. She was blessed from day 1 - coming from a family that was always supportive of her, knowing what she wanted from life since a young age. She knew that she wanted to be a scientist since she was four, and we gave her support and love even though she was a woman and we knew that fewer scientists who were women are ever taken seriously. She was dedicated, studious, and devoted to finding a cure for malaise - and after 17 years of research in Umeå and Peru, she finally reached conclusions about how to cure such a feeling. Her findings changed the world - we all were grateful for her scientific contribution. The world will never be the same again - we can see clearly, we focus on our ambitions, when we smile we mean it, when we don't want to do something, we don't do it - because we know now that lying to ourselves only leads to malaise - and worsening related symptoms. Before Jacquelyn developed a treatment for society's mutually-shared crutch, we spent a lot of time on the internet, or going to birthday parties that weren't really very fun, or buying clothes that didn't look good on us because it was deemed fashionable to do so. She wasn't just an inventor and scientist, she was also a head librarian of our town's library - and she had won multiple "community service" awards related to being the most knowledgeable and helpful librarian in all of North America. Because she didn't just collect books to sit on the shelf, she actually read them all. She had made a decision to read every book which existed in her public library - the same one that she ran - ~~s~~ just in

case there was ever a ~~blackout~~^{working} of situation where they didn't have access to the database, people could still check out books and have a reference. She never drank or ate meat, she never was angry. She was the most even-keel person that I knew - level-headed, helpful, open-eyed. If I had to choose 1 word to describe her, it would - useful. She was like a Swiss Army knife, always some tool ready and at your disposal, no matter what the journey entailed. And that's why there are so many people in the room today to pay their respects - because she helped you reach your goals and dreams, she was there for you.

It's not easy to find something good to say about Jacquelyn - after all, she was a serial rapist, a repeat offender, who had bounced in and out of jails since the age of 19. But despite all the people she forced herself on, despite all the "No's" she interpreted as "Yes'es", can we really say that her life was not worth living? I mean, she must have gotten some enjoyment out of her little displays of tyranny over others. Relieving someone else of their own free will had to be quite satisfying for her. So, I'm not going to judge her for not learning any real lessons while alive.

I mean, I'm a smoker, for God's sake! Been doing it since the Reagan Years. It's funny how rapists are also sometimes good artists, and that's what Jacquelyn was also. People came from all over the world to see her installations, for Andrew Berardini did an excellent job curating a series of shows on her behalf in Los Angeles. Who would of thought that the artwork of a rapist would be so popular?

But people got off on the novelty, they really wanted ready-made pieces which could fit nicely above the mantle or in the game room next to the billiards - but Jacquelyn had standards. I know that many of you who sit here today are the loved ones of those who Jacquelyn has managed to either rape or pillage - that you probably came all the way out here expecting some kind of apology in response to her actions, but I'm here to tell you that you're not going to get one. Jacquelyn wouldn't have wanted it that way. No REGRETS, right? She would have liked instead for me to help you understand how all of the little victims made her what she once was - a monster. She would have

I liked for you to attempt to understand what it's like to be a monster with no qualms about being a monster. When she picks her victims, she always makes sure to get to know them first, to establish a comfortable level of trust. She gives them each a few encouraging words, a gift ~~or~~ or two, a few promises of exciting things to come - and it usually works. She isn't hasty or pushy. They never see it coming. They usually even seem to go along with her hairbrained schemes, because she convinces them that it's of their own volition - she was a good rapist and defiler, I'll give it to her.

It's always hard to come together because of a loss. And when I speak of Jacquelyn Danis: automechanic, sports journalist and golfer, we are reminded of the many wonderful facets that this woman possessed. It's not everyday you can drive your car out to a golf tournament, play a round of golf with her, then have her expound the ~~the~~ entire game from a clear, concise perspective, to discover upon your return that your tires have been slashed, then watch Jacquelyn change all four tire in less than an hour! She was truly a multi-tasker!

A queen of queens! It's hard to compete with a woman - with a, JACQUELYN-OF-ALL-TRADES, ~~she~~. Good thing we don't have to anymore! HA! When we lose such a kindred soul, such a go-getter - I've never seen someone look so good in plaid pants before, it's hard to manage how we can move on with our own lives. Before imploding, Jacquelyn took the time to write you a small note to express how much you will be missed, but on my way here today, I put the top down on my mustang convertible, and sadly, it must have flown out of the backseat. Anyhow, I had a chance to look at it, and it said something like this:

You can't make a HOE A HOUSEWIFE
or maybe it was :
You Gotta Get that Dirt off Your shoulder
wait no, I think it was:
Do You Really Wanna Hurt me? Do You Really Wanna
Make ME CRY?

Anyhow, Jacquelyn, in times of stress and sadness, would often quote others. But I bet would have wanted us to realize:

that it doesn't matter what was written on that little note that flew out of the back of my car, because none of you are probably listening anyway. When someone starts painting their golfballs neon-pink, you know that something's up. When someone ~~is~~ confuses the oil and the gas gauges when one take in their Mustang for a tune-up, it's a sure-fire sign that she was on her way out - BUT she lived a fruitful life, always surrounded by others who cared for her, ~~had~~ the nature of being such a good mechanic - people come back to you approximately every 3 months. As long as people kept driving, kept playing sports, Jacquelyn was never alone.

Jacquelyn Danis was my mother, and she was the only one who understood me. There's nothing more useful to a son than having the best mother in the world. Anything I wanted to be - she was behind me 100%. If I tried to persuade her to let me do something that wasn't in my best interest - she always came up with the best way of telling me that it wasn't a good idea. She was the most intelligent, wisest, kindest person that I have ever known. She also gave me room to find myself and to explore, so I could become the kind of person that I am today. I remember when I was five years old, and it was the first day of school. I was trying to figure out what to wear, and I was nervous because I didn't understand yet why I had to go to school. My mother had just gone shopping a week before, and she purchased an entire set of new school clothes for me, but I didn't really like any of them as much as some of my older clothes. She picked out a pair of respectable grey pants and a yellow plaid shirt for me to wear - I put it on, and she smiled warmly telling me that I was her handsome little prince. But then I looked in the mirror, and I didn't like what I saw. I didn't recognize myself at all. So I started crying, and I quickly took off my clothes, everything but my skivvies. She was a little shocked, but then after I told her I wanted to wear my favorite outfit, the one that I wear almost everyday when I'm playing around the house and getting messy, she hesitated but decided to let me wear it. My favorite pin-striped pants which were worn at the knees, and my tee-shirt which had the Smiley face with the two X's for eyeballs instead of real eyeballs. I didn't realize

that when I got to school, that I might be judged, even though my mother tried to subtly warn me about this. It's the fact that she let me wear my favorite outfit despite knowing that it wasn't the best idea. It's the little memories like these which remind me of why I love my mother - that later, when I got caught smuggling coke across the border from Mexico, she didn't reprimand me. Instead, she just helped me get through my problem - rehab is a bitch, let me tell you. So, despite my flaws and the fact that I will probably never ever be the son that she probably wanted, she was the mother that I wanted. Sometimes, we get LUCKY like that.

When thinking of the life of Jacquelyn Davis, nothing really comes to mind. She was nothing. She was a nobody—she wasn't on the map at all. In away, she was never really of this world. She was beyond this world, and that's why I love her. It's so easy to love someone who is of this world; it's much more difficult to love something that is difficult to love, but even more gratifying once the love is reciprocated. We often love what cannot be replicated or replaced, and Jacquelyn, in embracing the essence of nothing and no one cannot be pinpointed, and certainly cannot be replaced. You cannot replace what you do not know, and nothingness is more closely linked to not knowing than somethingness, even though she was a nothing, she would often be caught doing a series of somethings, because at least attempted to get the most out of her situation—this unknown state of nothingness. don't get me wrong, i think that sometimes nothingness really wants to be somethingness, and vice versa, but it's just not possible most of the time. So, in making the best of being nothing, Jacquelyn-as-nobody still has to go bowling, do laundry, fix something when it breaks, put a bandaid on an ouchie, respond to emails, take a fika, and even do a little "googling" now and then. What was great about Jacquelyn as nothingness is that she could fit just about anywhere, didn't cost anything (you don't have to buy her drinks when you go out, you don't have to remember her birthday, you don't have to treat her like anything at all, really), she didn't get huffy about somethingness like the rest of us—she had flow, a resilience that comes with never expecting anything from anyone so never being disappointed with the whole package of nothingness. She didn't 'tell it like it is', she didn't tell you

anything. Another really fantastic thing about being friends w/a
nobody is that no one is in this room now except me. But who am I?
This one example of somethingness that has managed to befriend such
a nobody? I mean, I must really be something special, right?
When someone is a nobody, there's always the complication
of knowing what to do with the body, a body made of
nothing.

Jacquelyn was a woman of many faces - when I met her, she was 3000 lbs, but ~~she turned into the most person~~ more beautiful than Beyoncé or Elizabeth Taylor or Katharine Hepburn. When I met her, she was stupid, but ~~then~~ then the last saw her before her death, she was smarter than ever before. When I first met her, she only spoke Spanish, but before her death, she knew how to speak every language - even telepathy. When I first met her, she was an African-American woman, then she turned into a Japanese woman. When I first met her, she was a sex fiend, but before she died, she was frail and uninterested in men. When I first met her, she was inquisitive, but ~~then~~ then she became someone who only speaks when spoken to. When I first met her, she loved eating plums, but ~~then~~ before she died, she only ate chocolate - dark chocolate. Bitter-sweet. When I first met her, she was the kind of girl who rode horses bareback, but before she died she decided to remove the presence of animals from her life all together - a difficult task. When I first met her, she was training for a triathlon, but before she died she was addicted to ~~the~~ daytime television. When I first met her, she wanted to have a baby, but before she died, she wanted a career. When I first met her, she was asking questions about psychotropic drugs, but before she died, she was a vegan. When I first met her, she had a crush on someone, but before she died, she was divorced. When I first met her, she talked a lot about a best friend she once had who died of a heroin overdose, but before she died, she enjoyed taking long walks in the forest.