



... ONLY PROSE
 PERREAULT/WEINSTEIN
 54 east 7th street
 nyc 10003 (july 77)
 ...

*Charles Bernstein
 464 Amsterdam ave
 n.y. n.y. 10024*

from

* FAME QUEEN *

by

Jeff Weinstein

Even though queen is a derogatory word, to women, to class, to popular culture, I have to use it now. My best friend is changing in ways I don't recognize, even though of course we all change all the time, at different speeds - but this, this is too much too fast - not fast enough he says, and that's the problem. He's an artist, which nowadays in New York City means a visual artist. Already I can hear the moans of musicians, conceptual performers, even writers, itchy little moans, or "what's this creep talking about." My friend just got a haircut, more than he could afford, and got his picture taken as a model for someone else's art ("he's smart, using me"). I've imagined all these people on one end of a camera or another, plugged in back and front with all their hands out. I've heard them talking "behind one another's back" - how else could you talk chained to each other that way - although I can't understand what their content is. I say "shop talk" and they laugh at me - I'm nice enough so they're polite, and actually, now that I think about it, it may be because of who my best friend is, becoming famous. That's all he's doing, as far as I'm concerned, that's the same as losing your identity or at least your integrity. He would sell himself for what he wanted.

Yet one can analyze it another way. Artists aren't hurting anybody, at least not as much as the Heinz King or someone comparable, also they aren't making enough money to live, and they are, as my best friend said, the only people left who are rewarded, if they are rewarded at all, for their innovations. Innovating all the time means being different from the next artist, influenced by, but different from. You add to the general consciousness, and since I like art I suppose this is okay, but every time I see my best friend I get a lump in my head - what happened to you? Where did your ability to work by yourself go? I hate innocence for what it implies, but oh I wish he was like he was before.

I'm losing my skill to tell you. The only way this can be interesting is to understand it. Let's say you believe "your only sickness is not being famous." Or "he can't handle his fame." He will have sex with you to get a review. Yet he was responsible for getting me... But. Yet. How long do old friends hang on before they can't run on sentimental vapors? When did my friend change - that's only interesting to me, what I mean is, when do fame queens get up there, and do they ever rest.

Sat May 11

HANNAH WEINER

You got some doughs FROM THE STORE tried twice to throw them out, you spat out SUGAR coated rescued them from the hall floor and the wastebasket. GINGER YOU DON'T EAT DESERT YOU NEED POTASSIUM

My Obsession

It should be clear, I am making it clear now, I am not obsessed with what other people think about me. I couldn't care less about fame. But I am interested in my friend - what I wanted to admit was a slight obsession I have about happiness. I want to propose something: let's say something small could be blocking your movement from the little room to the great hall, something - well, when I was young I found myself lying in the office of some doctor syringing my ear with hot water. He stopped and showed me, in a kidney-shaped silver pan, an enormous chunk of wax.

"THAT WILL NEVER BLOCK YOU AGAIN"

My hearing that afternoon was so delicate I needed cotton plugs. I am obsessed with pulling out a curled hair from under my skin. If it isn't a hair it will be something else. I once thought that I would pass (as doctors say) a blockage, like the plug ripped out. But no. I shouldn't talk any more about this, I'm sure, because

"WE MUSTN'T ANTICIPATE THE PAST"

That is my proposal - that happiness doesn't hang on chance.

My Mailbox

Yesterday that box was labeled by an impressed strip which read GWOMXKIE. The X wasn't an X but either a blur or a P; I figured the P because if you try to say the word GWOMKIE your tongue precipitates a P sound one way or another. The box was empty, for the first time in eight mailbox days:

I first noticed an unlabeled box had a carrot in it, but it was locked. The next day the carrot was cleaner, peeled.

Third day an onion. A note on the door read: "wechseln wie ein zwiebel mit kopf in grund." After that nothing, then some meat like stewing beef. (A small plastic rabbit in the hallway.) Someone pried the box open and tried, I imagined, to stuff a head of lettuce or something in because shreds of white-green leaf stuck to the little metal door. They tasted metallic. I didn't check the mailbox the next day because I was running to find the source of some smoke.

There was a dirty knife. I was beginning to lose my ability to expect these idiotic things so thoughtlessly. I wanted to know when it would be done. When the name appeared on the box I assumed it would all stop. Who were the GWOMXKIES? Most people were couples with different names. I saw a letter and wrongly assumed that was the end of the matter. The letter was still there the next day, the same one. Peering in: it is addressed to me. I have no key.

Journal Weiner Hannah Weiner 77 Circle

playing with you you don't like it FUCK YOU PERRY COMO Big enough in beer you don't want see you later YOU CRY ALL NIGHT You miss Rhys children you want to talk about Sunday it's too late it's a week too late he feels your anger DOUBLEDAY

Who Would Kill For Fame

"Dying of boredom haha no one can really die of boredom just as no one can be sick at heart" (arrant Western ignorance)

"Boredom doesn't exist without leisure" (uh-oh a Marxist)

In the range of life someone must have literally died of boredom. The only thing that's keeping everyone awake now (AT A POETRY READING) is the possibility of becoming famous... and counting the audience I saw at least 18 or 19 fame queens, one of whom was charged with murder last year, and obviously acquitted, but god did he make the most of it. So in some way his wife did die of boredom. That's a non sequitur but anyway they never did find the killer. I would sure love to know who the detective was...

She was found in her kitchen closet, a sort of pantry, bludgeoned in the head by something, and was dead for a few hours when Hubby found her. He didn't call the police until the next day because he was too shocked (he said) and ashamed, thinking she had "done" it because of something he had or hadn't done, which was a likely story, except that the police and coroner both agreed it wasn't suicide even though the motive was there - boredom. Charlie Boy was making it as a performance artist, out all the time at other people's rehearsals. He said to everyone that he asked her to come along but she hated them - they were so boring - that's because you aren't in on them, which was true of course. Who knows what she thought of her Better Half's part in all this "junk". He made money selling corn on the cob in Central Park; she had a part-time teaching job from which she was fired a week before it happened. You see no one broke in. The window was open and the dirt was a few hours thick, leading you to believe it was open since early morning. There was no acceptable evidence, except a possible identification of the weapon as a wrench, and the statement Hubby made that he "would kill for fame as soon as die of boredom." Everyone laughed, secretly wondering just who one should kill in order to become famous. No one could figure it out.

Oddly enough the Mrs. had a will. She left everything she owned independently of Mr. Artist to a small dance company she once said "gave me so much pleasure it makes life worth living." These people, the couple, lived in New York City of course.

Sat May 11

You got some donuts FROM THESTORE tried twice to throw them out,
 you speed on them SUGAR coated rescued them from the hall floor
 and the wastebasket, GINGER YOU DONT EAT DESERT YOU NEED POTASSIUM
not alright in almost empty beer glass YOU GET ANOTHER ONE YOUR
 VOCABULARY is NOA'S NOT TURE You now have 6 glasses BIG WOW
 PHILLIP LAY DOWN You dig another dopey donut out from under the
 dirty washed floor paper towel and empty tuna fish can NO GOODS
 pour some more beer Control yourself you ate less LECITHIN
 you didn't get any DONT MENTION ME ^{TOOTS} says the maple syrup
 bottle fake you've taken a wig of it every ^{Capital words are seen} night since the
 doctor told you to give up sweets completely potassium ^{so are} UNDERLINES
 awful NOT GOOD. FOOD They all taste of Carbona wall wipe
You destroyed your chance COLE SLWA you know you can't digest that
 You haven't tried chocolate pudding either TNAG GOD DONT LAUGH
 The oil in the donuts that dont taste of cleaning fluid is awful
 THROW UP Begin IT IS THE LIQUID DRINK A LOT OF BEER DONT LAUGH
 NO MORE HOMEWORK. Voice says dungarees just to remind you your 2nd
hand corduroys and the velvets are both all cotton You do
 the count down 10 9 8 GODZ NO MOR MILK you saw neighborhood
 you had to wash the dishes to wash the paint brush you knock
 over the corkscrew into the cat food spills NOT A PERFECT MASTER,
 printed in beer and dirty yellow sponge it's PRETTY NO MISTRESS
think You almost drink some peppermint tea poetry DONT
 MIX BUSINESS says the cup. You get up to wipe up the cat food
 SIT DOWN FOR A SECOND small caps Dunk every tues BIG FANTASTIC
 hear Rhys's voice as you clean NO MORE HOUSEWORK big fantastic
 had better get his ass over her negative monday or call dont agree with him
 THAT'S ALL BENCH LECHT Light candles BIG DING A LING
 is that Donde's toy telephone NEGA YOU LOVEIT HERE VERY HAPPY YEAR
not alright margins ok SAYS JIM THEY SUPPORT YOU Where is the
 word sensitive chakra Malcolm you need a typist be confident NOT OK
 You think you will stay drunk TIL MONDAY OR TUES wed thurs GO GIN
 DONNIE INPERSON says forehead MORE PLEASURE TO COME OBVIOUS RHYSSSSSS
 MORE SURPRISES MORE INNOCENTS All those sssssss seem to be negativ
 NOT COMING. DRINK ONE MORE BEER you can hardly sit up LIGHT BULB
 which whose? NO MORE COME IT DEPRESSES YOU to think NO MORE
think champagne early in June You're getting depressed they're
 playing with you you don't like it FUCK YOU PERRY COMO Big
enough in beer you don't want see you later YOU CRY ALL NIGHT
 You miss Rhys children you want to talk about Sunday
it's too late it's a week too late he feels your anger DOUBLEDAY

Journal Weiner Hannah Weiner Hannah This dont chat Clairvoyant '74 Periodo Hannah 2 all words

DRINK COFFEE

Sun May 12

John Perreault

Jana louder you're a big girl
think of it you go to bed Jackson's voice doesn't stop you get
exhausted Jackson shut up DONT TYPE YOU TOOK ASPIRIN it's awful
all the interference is back why does Jackson's voice always
start when you're tired and want to do something else SLEEP IN BED
wear underwear grow up You're a minute, you're an hour it isn't funny
your stomach's upset RHYSS IS COMING if he doesn't ASPIRING dont take
it. it's an up TOO OPEN FOOLS BIG IDEA telling me go knows
how many times to take asprin late at night you're a me. you're
going to bed and breathe to get rid of the aspirin SAY SOMETHING
THE ENEMY in green aspirin bottle color The garlic was much MORE
effective CLEAN ENERGY says forehead HOLY DAY, clean the air
ANOTHER HOUR a lot of these words hang in the television air
negative
in dont forgive the typewriter in front of beware in typewriter
color BOSTON OH YOU DID A SERIOUS PROBLEM ASPIRIN It Isn'T Spou
out GO OUT NOA FEEL PROGRESS AWAKE at 2 am I am also in mega-
PUBLISH GO TO A DOCTOR typewriter

Mon Children big announcement May 13

Rhys big decission You see him, loft, call 1-2, call he's at the
kitchen, call, no answer see 2:45 You missed 11 o'clock you woke
up and it said CALL HIM NOW but you didn't call PRONOUN the phone
said it Red RHYS IS LOVE He doen't have to be in love to talk
touch me come into bed Donnie
rides HORSEBACK make him jealous BIG IMPOTENT NO SEE YOU LATER
YOU CALL TRY TRY IMPOTENT NOT WORKING well in the hospital
Not SURE
NOT FEAR call the kitchen now it's an example it's 10 min early
you started to dial and the phone said 10 min early be exact on time
get discouraged see Rhys me TOMB BOSTON dont forget it Time for
kitchen TIME IS SLOWER, NOT THE NEGATIVE DOMINOS HE FALLS IN LOVE
TOO MUCH red in love big disagree KEEP WRITING ABOUT ME red NOW
NOW LOVE appear in the little window where the ON light is when its
off a little grey look beautiful negative RHYS TOLD YOU
you called negative at 2 minutes before 3:45 no Rhys
get drunk

another beer, a joint BIG BOSTON a little down on the right you're too
tired to shit BIG DONNIE **HAPPY BIRTHDAY** 2 minutes after 2:45
it says IT IS 2:45 Good grief if you make a mistake twominutes
early does it compensate by making one two minutes late? ON TIME
there was a never back to the sun It's the RACE of TIME Pee
all day TOO MUCH CALCIUM that's a signal go period you have
yours they said PERIOD COMING the day before • PEACE WITH RHYS



* THE SUCCESS WITHOUT COLLEGE LETTERS *

(Or, It's Best Not To Be Living In A Dream World)

by Melvyn Freilicher and X

Then X was forced to take a leave of absence from law school, even though she was testing at the top of her class (exams were graded objectively, students identified by code number not name). But the faculty were pissed that X had stopped going to classes. X wasn't showing the proper respect. A year later, X had to officially inform the Dean of her intention to return and finish the second semester of law school. This was the same Dean who had delivered the original ultimatum: either "voluntarily" take a leave or face a "judicial board of review", composed of professors and nazis. X was too immobilized with ambivalence and despair to write this letter to the Dean whose name she couldn't remember. (She knew it started with a "J"). She asked me for help. The following are some of our drafts, roughly chronological, of the now-historic "DEAN JEW" Letters.

Dear Dean Jew:

Hi! My name's X! My personal problems are solved. Be seeing you soon.

*

Dear Dean Jew:

I want to come back. Take me back. I'm a new woman.

Yours in bitterness & apathy

p.s. I promise to be good.

*

THE SEASONAL LETTER

Merry Xmas, Dean Jew:

Or, if you prefer, Happy Hanukah! (My tongue has sworn but not my mind.)

I'm planning to law school & I feel very sleepy knowing how you value honesty, I'm sure I'll let you return.

*

Dear Dean Jew:

I'm planning to return to law school. Could you suggest a good one? (p.s. I won't fuck up.)

Dear Dean Jew:

How's the boy. And how are you, you old fart?

too crude!

I'm planning to return to the Law School this coming semester, whether you like it or not. (I hope you'll let me in). Could you please tell me when it starts & where it is again? If I should change my plans, you'll be the last to know.

Please send the necessary material.

*

MULTIPLE CHOICE LETTER: FRAGILE DO NOT LOAD FLAT

Dear Dean Jew:

The stronger word

I plan/hope to return to the Law School this coming semester. I feel certain/confident that I can successfully complete my studies now. After a year's thought, I am more sure/certain/confident than ever that I should pursue the study of law. (Believe me, this is heartfelt./ Since I left I've become better & better every day in every way). (Optional sentence here about continued interest in subject).

Please send any necessary materials that spring to mind/ that I need/ which just blehhh ... (and if you've got any papers send them along too!)

I continue to be grateful (if not honest) for your assistance and look forward to seeing you in January./ I appreciate your turtle-necked sweaters.

Sincerely yours/ Insecure & Riddled With Doubts, But Yours ...

*

Dear Dean Jew:

I plan to return to the Law School this coming semester (you old fart). I feel confident that I can successfully complete my studies now. After a year's thought, I am more sure than ever that I should pursue the study of law.

Please send any necessary materials. I continue to be grateful for your assistance and look forward to seeing you in January. (Sincerely yours)

*

I NEED TO RETURN TO THE LAW SCHOOL AS WE DISCUSSED LAST YEAR OR I WON'T BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CONSEQUENCES. YOU WILL BE RESPONSIBLE, DEAN JEW, AND DON'T THINK I'LL FORGET IT!

THE BLACK SHADOW

p.s. To understand everything is to pardon everything

I love you madly, Dean Jew, but ...

SURFER FOOD

by John Perreault

Bought one but it was loose so I washed it in order to obtain the correct color relationships. That was last week and now you won't speak to me. I don't mind. I'm used to it. Bought a piece of the action just outside Borrego Springs, Anzo Borrego in the backyard. For an investment. So I moved the other room a little further to the left, during the Santa Ana, altering the floorplans from above, as seen, so from my den I would be able to see both the desert and the beach at the same time; both places so full of life, although seemingly barren.

I bailed out from my backyard special with a body flyaway, the bowl section missed. To the crew I was a cruiser, all of them on the dawn patrol with their dwid danglers. The waves were feathering. I tried to take the glassy freight train but had to eat it.

It wasn't Thursday. I banged my head. The car was simmering outside. Heat waves. The hot, dry wind of the Santa Ana. In the distance I could see the Pacific with a chorus-line of dolphins. Some people call them porpoises. I call them dolphins. The ice plants blooming; a whole bank.

"You've got to get yourself together. I'm sick of you. Bitching all the time, walking out on me, just jogging on the beach, making a mess of things. Who do you think you are? You're not nineteen anymore you know."

I slammed your door behind me and went out to sulk on the porch with the hibiscus and the poinsetta, palm trees dropping leaves on the gravel roof. When I found myself there, the belvedere was even cooler as I looked out over the ocean from the top of our cliff, to the left La Jolla in the distance, all tiny lights.

What the shit do I care about your elephant gun? Your R.V.? Your lack of stock reports? Why should you care that I'm now over forty? That I just needed to take a piss off the side of a cliff? That I once taught English Literature at UCSD?

My son was hitchhiking through Japan.

Your daughter was away at school.

Mrs. Landlady, your step-mother, was finally dead. I had a dream. Had you really

pushed her in her wheelchair off the side of the cliff? Or was it a heart attack? What poisons did you use?

The inquest was infinite.

I took Interstate 5 and drove downtown, on the freeway, and then when I got there I didn't know what to do so I cruised Fashion Valley and then got back into the intergalactic orbit all the way home, loving the feeling of re-entry, down-shifting, each gear further reminding me of your arms. You know me. I'm sentimental.

The surf was gnarly. I tried to hot dog the hot lips, laid out, doing a liplock. Lunch and then the mushburgers. Noseride. Pitched out of my pocket rocket. To my left a quasi doing a quasimoto and then a ricochet. Roundhouse cutback over the net.

I remember looking down at the corpse of Mrs. Landlady, sprawled out on the sun-deck next to the heated, kidney-shaped pool in the blooming, enclosed backyard---hibiscus again. And I remember thinking: someone should place a sheet or a napkin over her face. She looks too pleased. Instead I took off my shorts and went for a dip in the pool, hungering for you.

Afterwards, I decided to eat.

I didn't want an avocado melted cheese alfalfa sprouts on Bible bread sandwich or a Del Mar Deluxe or a pineapple Smoothie or a Slurpie so I drank a whole quart of Kefir.

Strawberry Kefir, a cultured milk.

Ingredients: raw whole milk, strawberry concentrate, strain of kefir culture containing lactobacillus caucasicus, lactobacillus acidophillus, vegetable color, no sugar added. Nutritional value: Each 8 oz. serving will provide: Calories 190, Fat 7.8 grams, Protein 9.0 grams, Carbohydrates 22.0 grams.

Never having to chew makes perfect teeth and perfect teeth make perfect smiles.

All white.

But in the fresh night air I was sulking in the belvedere, thinking of L.A. traffic jams up north and pile-ups in Germany on the Autobahn, in the evening fog, stationed in West Germany...and of poetry and prose, of M.F.K. Fisher and Raymond Chandler.

I own a piece of the action outside Borrego Springs which I'm told will be the

Dear Dean Jew:

How's the boy. And how are you, you old fart?

new Palm Springs.

Styled out, I stoked on my stick in the sponge, thinking of going through the lip or the tube or the suck-out with three-sixty, an unlocal wired to the vibe-level, displaying my zig zag.

The desert, the beach.

Mrs. Landlady, your step-mother, in my dream got up from her daydream about your pushing her off the cliff and suddenly she too begins lecturing me:

"You'd better get more washcloths...You have to have one for the face. One for the upper part of tour body. One for the genitalia and one for the ass. And one for the feet. Towels to match. Don't give me any of your lip about how odor is gorgeous. I can smell you right from here on the other side of the room and it ain't gorgeous. So you'd better do something about it, right?"

I cover her face with a wet washcloth.

Meanwhile we are speeding along, you and I, next to each other on the freeway, falling through the night, falling towards the dawn, talking without looking at each other, profile to profile, amidst a swarm of light that is like the things that glow under the ocean or like the planets and the stars, speeding by.

"Yes."

"And then I said to the bandito that had me covered with his U.S. Army Surplus machine-gun, I said, but I don't have any money, just traveller's checks which was all I was told to take into Baja Sur and he made me sign them over to him, checking that the signatures matched, under the flashlight."

"Oh."

Time passes.

"I met her one evening after I was terribly drunk and we sat in the belvedere waiting for dolphins and at a certain point she confessed to me that now that her children were all grown-up she had nothing left to do and that she was the Trickster."

"How did you answer that?"

"I said the Trickster had to be male and she said that she was going to change that rule."

"Oh."

Time passes.

Profile to profile, we pass the Carmel Valley Road Exit and the Del Mar Heights Exit.

I ask myself: Where are we going? I hope not to L.A. The surfing isn't that good in L.A. Not as good as Windansea. Maybe we are headed for Hawaii or Australia or the central star of the Southern Cross or for the bottom of the sea.

I can only see the right side of your face and yet I understand it when you say to me:

"I used to hate people and then I found out something. No matter how much you hate someone when you get to know them you can't hate them anymore. The most you can do is feel sorry for them."

"Oh."

My son gets killed in an automobile accident outside of Osaka, a pile-up, but I don't hear about it until two months too late.

Your daughter is pregnant.

The dream continues, but the surfing doesn't.