

by JEN HOFER & DAN MACHLIN

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Dear:

Open to an empty run-down intersection of a city, winter, 5 a.m., empty except for the occasional rat scurrying by and a few random individuals (a few sleeping homeless men/women on steam vents, a cracked out couple pantomiming a fight in the distance). The sounds of garbage trucks disturbing the otherwise stillness and an occasional bus screeching and panning light across the pre-dawn street.

Open to an empty scuffed intersection of a city, summer, 5 a.m., empty except for the headless mannequins and torso-shaped wire stands in a storefront window and a few random individuals (a few sleeping homeless men/women in delivery doorways and along the metal grate in front of a former movie theater copiously adorned with pre-columbian imagery, a cracked out couple scoring from a high school kid two blocks south under the freeway overpass). The sounds of ghetto birds disturbing the otherwise marginally noisy streets and an occasional bus huffing and stuttering light across the pre-dawn street.

Open to an object - real or imagined: a box of matches "Hotel Europe" Davos Platz, Switzerland. An unusually long and thin rectangular shape. Open to an object, which opens and begins to speak: "Empty, no explanation why except poetic value windy, rain-spattered, shadowed against the corrugated. In other words valueless: priceless. Depending on where it is struck. If it is struck."

Open to a coordinate - real or imagined: fenced fire. Open to an unusually long and thin rectangular shape, which opens and begins to speak: "Manola from Mexico City and Fragata from Buenos Aires—*préndete con fragata*—cohabitate at this edge of the world. At this rough edge we are struck: ignited in buttonhole fervor beyond explanation or explication."

Open to an object - real or imagined: 1920s Royal Office typewriter. A mannequin speaks: "Current Bid \$580.00 SGD, Bid Increment \$10.00 SGD, Time left: 5d 15h 10m 33s, Opened: Jan 23 12:42 AM, Closes: Feb 2 12:42 AM, Available Quantity: 1, Location: Singapore." A typist speaks: "Masquerading as a 1940s Olivetti Lettera 22, a 1950s Royal Quiet De Luxe, a 1960s Smith-Corona Clipper. Real or imagined: the case broke, due to the weight put on it." Pan to packets of needles packaged in local advertising or balls of rubberbands collected from under the sneakers of paperboys.

In unison, the object, the coordinate, the matchboxes, the typewriter, the mannequin and the typist speak: "The sun—real or imagined—stopped: it is itself not particularly an explanation. Not particularly an explanation, settling down to us our thoughts cohabit at different edges, bi-coastally."

Open to an empty run-down intersection of a city, winter, 5 a.m., empty except for the light across the pre-dawn street.

Open to an empty scuffed intersection of a city, summer, 5 a.m., empty except for the light across the pre-dawn street.

ember

Dear:

The world was imbalanced and we
as if simplicity might bend to
our sense-data laced illuminations into unfurled
fronding streets, unplanned, as if radiation
scintillating spoke-like might solve the problems
radiation causes, barbarically at a tilt

and might add to lulling myth.
I do not doubt other people's
wills or magic (far enough from
belief was the wound). What say
you heart of the city? *Unparalleled*
acts commit. Aaaaaiiii!! — so many crises

plumbed from the mine. What say
you uncaredfor avenues rocketing into less
sheltered transit, pod-like in our humming.
Where is my glass slipper? Surgically removed
from its image of itself, vectoring,
the city abandoned ship and we

often etched into the unnerved avenue
perceive, as drifting out of Philly
on a train, generations of public
art devoted alternately to war and
love. Upper limit search, lower limit
tricks. *Say it, don't pay it*:

What I'm trying to text is
unreduced to its molecules, dark matter
acronymically textured into temperate understanding. Money
talks, dear, and the silence is
deafening. Or heartening. Harmonizing singly in
unison until the sheen unbearably flurries

us open. I do not doubt
the axis upon which we tilt
or *nude descending a staircase*-like sputter
out of inappropriate comments. How many
pageants? How many rants? How many
references? O unnameable books! O sickly

clone of desire! What do they
want from us! What do they
suggest we eat so we might
know each other as the political
beings we are. *We are animals*
literally and have built sidewalks to

facilitate our synaptic reverb or reverse
magnetization. How else might we transit
this pageant-laden rant-weary referential maypole? How
backwards winds the of prison pent
that shimmered in *the image-figure is*
the transgression of the revealing trace.

No, stop that, put down your
pen and sit with me a
while *as it increases its use*
of robots in war zones tell
me once again of the miracle
of your escape *quantum information can*

run but it can't hide. We
stumble and stun, blisters exposed, or
else we're so busy choosing from
among all the choices we failed
to notice that *the military calls*
its weapon an "active denial system"

as if euphemizing ardently soothes. We
forget the names of our accomplices
and forge ahead in unflagging pursuit
of the rarest beauty. Organic evanescence,
every instant poised for reassemblage or
litigious exhalation of still lingering certainty.