WHO EATS

IN A CAGE?

A CAGED

OR WITH

MOUTH?
"The books she had obtained, were soon devoured, by one who had no other resource to escape from sorrow, and the feverish dreams of ideal wretchedness or felicity, which equally weaken the intoxicated sensibility. Writing was then the only alternative, and she wrote some rhapsodies descriptive of the state of her mind; but the events of her past life pressing on her, she resolved circumstantially to relate them, with the sentiments that experience, and more matured reason, would naturally suggest. They might perhaps instruct her daughter, and shield her from the misery, the tyranny, her mother knew not how to avoid."

MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT
FROM MARIA: OR, THE WRONGS OF WOMAN
If an animal is shocked, her body will produce an analgesic. This will involve endogenous opioids. This will be better than anything. Later, there will be no opioids, and she will go back to who and what has shocked her looking for more. She will go to the shocking condition—"science"—and there in this condition she will flood with endogenous opioids, along with cortisol and other arousing inner substances.

Eventually all arousal will feel like shock. She will not be steady, though, in her self-supply of analgesic. She will not always be able to dwell in science, as much as she now believes she loves it.

That humans are animals means it is possible that the animal model of inescapable shock explains why humans go to movies, lovers stay with those who don’t love them, the poor serve the rich, the soldiers continue to fight, and other confused, arousing things. Also, how is Capital not an infinite laboratory called "conditions"? And where is the edge of the electrified grid?

---

THE INNOCENT QUESTION

Some of us write because there are problems to be solved. Sometimes there are specific, smaller problems. A friend who has a job as a telephone transcriptionist for people who can’t hear has had to face the problem of what to do when one party he is transcribing has sobbed.

(He puts the sobs in parentheses.)

This is the problem of what-to-do-with-the-information-that-is-feeling.

Another friend (a poet) writes poems with many words in parentheses. I dream he sends me an email which is a survey requesting information. I respond to his survey, and when I do, the information becomes a three-dimensional topographical map. The map is both like a bowl and like America, and on it my information has been turned into states of many colors, most shaped like Colorado, some like West Virginia. The information I provided was my feelings, so there is grief in my dreams, square, red, and with a cluster of mountains rising from it.
I think of all those things conferring authority and exclude them one by one, an experiment in erasing importance. I thought there would be no better game to play than the game set up already, the game called "voice in the crowd of voices." I didn’t mark a piece of paper the whole month long.

*I’ll remove this thing, but in doing so make it legitimate.* I’m an ordinary human who likes objects, too. This is the opposite of how life goes, its steady progression of scars and accolades.

Monuments are interesting mostly in how they diminish all other aspects of the landscape. Each highly perceptible thing makes something else almost imperceptible. This is so matter of fact, but I’ve been told I’m incomprehensible: *Anne, what do you mean that noticing one thing can make the other things disappear?*

At first, I meant to write a treatise on happiness, but only as a kind of anti-history. This morning the impulse was to read every book. I was cleaved apart by invisible axes, crumbling, full of nausea, stinking of biology with 980 pounds tied to each limb. That’s an awkward way to do one’s work. Charlie made a drawing for the magazine: *less typing, more touching.* I feel like I read some, but still there are so many things of such importance about which I have never found a book.
I wanted to be really ordinary like an animal. I thought it was my writing that was making me sick. When I was writing I had many symptoms including back spasms and ocular migraines, and then when I was not writing I spent one month feverish, infected in many places, weak, coughing, voiceless, allergic, itchy, with swollen joints, hands, and feet. Finally there was something that almost cured me. The thing that almost cured me was a touch of Frost & Glow in my hair on top of a cocktail of Zyrtec, Zantac, Claritin, Benadryl, Singularair, Zithromax, Vicodin, Advil, Yaz, Retin A, and Albuteral. The Frost & Glow, not frosted at all but painted onto the tips of the lower layer of my hair, had restorative effects, as if the smallest bit of drugstore blonde could alter a person’s person so that she would no longer be anxious and beleaguered and prone to many infections and tragedies and immune system over-reactions to the deep terrible of survival but would soon be wearing a fitted orange sundress with pink flowers printed on it and playing pool in a suburban bar and grill.

The accountant and the air-conditioning repair man then said “Look at that sexy mouth. Look at those sexy legs” as if erased from the page of the body they were reading was that only hours before (before the Frost & Glow) that mouth and those legs were part of a story that read exactly as it was, told in the threes.

I mean that things changed after the Frost & Glow. Things change.

Some people believe to know the fin is to know a shark, but this is an incorrect belief. The fin is not a fin of a shark at all though it is a reproduction shark fin strapped on a boy’s back, and the boy with the reproduction fin does very much want to be a shark, wishes it a great deal, dreams some nights of being a shark in a great fleet of sharks in some unexplored sea where sharks are in fleets and somewhat even more powerful that the sharks of the daytime world have shark banks full of money and minnows. One could be, also, a person with a fabulous malformation of a shark fin on her back, who says often “please excuse the fin” but others look at it and say, “look at that grand shark with that awesome fin” when she is, underneath the fin, a person who is fond of peeling carrots for soup and a person who could otherwise just not help the fin that fortune dealt her.
Some could be real sharks, the fin an adequate representation of sharking reality: that’s just the deal.
I live in the innocent question. Subjectivity will be convulsive. I read on the Internet these words about art, philosophy, politics, and poetry, also this information about the lives of my friends.

Inadmissible information is often information that has something to do with biology (illness, sex, reproduction) or money (poverty) or violence (how money and bodies meet). Inadmissible information might also have to do with being defanged by power (courts, bosses, fathers, editors, and other authorities) or behaving against power in such a way that one soon will be defanged (crime).

Often what is perceived by one party to be an over-reaction to circumstances is the case of that one party not having sufficient information because the information being reacted to is the inadmissible information of the other.

To feel deeply, or to admit to feeling deeply, is also inadmissible, though not as inadmissible as to admit to having been un-free.

Inadmissible information is inadmissible because it provokes a kind of social discomfort, like how if a group of poor people are in the room with one not-poor person the poor people might without conferring about it work together to carefully conceal their own poverty for the benefit of the other, not-poor person, sometimes going so far as to increase their poverty by paying for the things they cannot afford.

Many kinds of inadmissible information are inadmissible because they provoke a feeling of pity, guilt, or contempt. All three of these (pity, guilt, and contempt) are feelings of power, are the emotional indulgences of those with power or those who seek it. Who wants to admit the information that will make more wealthy those already so ugly with being rich?
For a month I had wondered what happiness was, then I found a book on happiness from a thrift store (The Strategies and Tactics of Happiness Volume 1: Background by Maynard W. Shelly). It had chapters with titles like “Having Everything is Wonderful” and “Missing a Few Things is Great.” Shelly argues that happiness is about having enough resources, but not too many. He makes no arguments for happiness or against it. This book, which was printed in soft ink in 1977, has hand drawings of happy or sad figures and these marvelous looking subtitles which are set in all caps as if they are being shouted. These are subtitles like:

THE RICHNESS OF UNPLEASANT SETTINGS AND THE RICHNESS OF UNPLEASANT MIND EVENTS BOTH TEND TO INCREASE WITH TIME WHEN SUCH SETTING OR SUCH EVENTS CANNOT BE AVOIDED

or

THE MORE INTENSE THE ANTICIPATED SATISFACTION ASSOCIATED WITH A GOAL, THE MORE MEDIATED SATISFACTIONS IT WILL GENERATE AND THE MORE IT WILL ORGANIZE SATISFACTION SEEKING

I thought I, too, would write about happiness if I were ever to write again. For who better to consider sleep than the insomniac? But as I became very ill, I thought less about happiness and had instead many thoughts like “I do not want to be ill” and “It is difficult to work with a high fever.” and “I wish someone were here to take care of me” and “How will I pay to see a doctor?” Then I applied Frost & Glow to my hair, became almost well, and decided that happiness is a temporary state achieved in those days or weeks after one has been very ill and is not that ill anymore. It was in this brief period that I could hold a visceral memory of having been miserable firmly enough to appreciate almost being sick no more that I experienced something like happiness. I dressed a young man in a leopard fur coat and sent him walking through the neighborhoods like that. There was a rising interest in tango dancing. I allowed myself to eat liberal amounts of fresh fruit. I had some words in my head, rather some phrases, like “as the flea goes we go and pick up that grief” and “steam boats spring” and “the frontier is soily.”

1 “A man who falls straight into bed night after night, and crosses to live until the morning when he waken and rises, will sorely never dream of making, I don’t say great discoveries, but even minor observations about sleep. He scarcely knows that he is asleep.”
I decided I could read something other than Rousseau. Though I was experiencing this often truant condition, happiness, this did not mean that my mind was behaving admirably. Wasn’t it stupid to take pleasure in the fact of being sort of well? I was happy but stupid or least more stupid than usual. And happiness had always seemed the province of the idiotic and immoral, which is why I wanted it so—much so—often so—all-of-the-time. There are many things I do not like to read, mostly accounts of the lives of the free.

Maynard Shelly wrote something about how life without sufficient constraints produces aimlessness, alienation, and boredom. So it is that the constrainingly unconstrained literature of Capital produced aimlessness, alienation, and boredom in me when I try to read it. I am now constrained to abundance, “happiness” or its absence / infirmity.

I get spam from Versailles. It seems like all my life I have gotten images of hard-ons in the mail. What is the difference between happiness and pornography? I mean what is the difference between literature and photography? It would be easy at first to confuse that which makes us happy and that which makes us aroused. It would be easy at first to confuse documentation and duplication. What I like on this earth is the company of bright young men. I am not a fan of infirmity, though it does supply the opportunity for some relief. It is all this self-expression that makes me so ashamed. In the comment boxes of a popular fashion blog someone suggested any documentation of individual expression is in fact anti-social rather than pro-social, in that it is a record of individuation from the human mass. There are those who hate the expression of any self that is not their own or like their own. They do not find happiness in the fact that day after day women and men take photos of themselves wearing clothes, never the same outfit twice. Maynard Shelly wrote something like

**Creative power is the creative aspect of power reflecting our ability to create psychological resources in space**

Other things that cause discomfort: people picking through trash for their food. There are those who want “only the best” and those who believe only-the-best is immoral. I would talk about these two impulses, one for comfort, the other for justice, and how one appears animal, the other not that animal at all, for what dog says of her litter, “It is not only my own that should have my milk, but I will suckle the world”? I would like to meet that dog. I am the dog who can never be happy because I am imagining the unhappiness of other dogs.
There are the trash eaters; there are the diamond eaters. The diamond eaters are biblical; the trash eaters only so much in that they are lepers. I am on the side of the trash eaters, though I have eaten so many diamonds they are now poking through my skin. Everyone tries to figure out how to overcome the embarrassment of existing. We embarrass each other with comfort and justice, happiness or infirmity. It is embarrassing to be pornography; it is embarrassing to not be pornography. That requires a success like limitation. Let's be happy insofar as we were for a few days not infirm. Happiness is only the absence of some ailment, but arousal is a source of unhappiness: I am writing to you in a long paragraph so that I will not be pornography. If you read this you will not be turned on.

"The classic example of positive contrast is produced by hitting yourself on the head with a hammer. The pain produced is part of the ordered dimension and so the more of it the more you get adapted to. Thus, when you stop you 'feel great.'"

I didn't intend for this to be an invitation. In the kitchen I was chopping vegetables and thinking about how discourse is a conspiracy, then how discourse is a conspiracy like "taste," then how taste is a weapon of class. Those guys have gotten together and agreed on their discourse; it will make them seem middling, casual like a sweater. Who dips in or out of it? What does it mean to give stuff up? There is a risk inherent in sliding all over the place. As if the language of poets is the language of property owners. As if the language of poets is the language of professors. As if the language of poets is not the language of machines. I would prefer to have a different name, that way in the strip malls I could be someone other than what I know and don't know about language. What does this have to do with happiness? "Let me fortify myself against death."

I think mostly about clothes, sex, food, and seasonal variations. I have done so much to be ordinary and made a record of this: first I was born, next I was a child, then I learned things and did things and loved and had those who loved me and often felt alone. My body was sometimes well, then sometimes unwell. I got nearer to death, as did you.
This is an exercise in numbers. This is against information. On the local radio show a man who won a Pulitzer prize in fiction explained that one must write every day because if a person does not write everyday a person forgets how to access the subconscious. If one did not write everyday then whenever a person comes back to writing she would have to learn to write from the beginning again. This has always been my plan. I would like to not know how to write, also to know no words. I believe this prize winning novelist believed that the mind had two places, the conscious and subconscious, and that literature could only come out of the subconscious mind, but that language preferred to live in the conscious one. This is wrong. Language prefers to live on the Internet.

I left off here. People came back. There was talking and art and talking about art and food and drink and food and more people who came back. I thought everyone around me is noisy and they are saying "oatmeal" "toast" "cheese" "ice cream" and "sausage" and "it is good" and "that is not what I had in mind when I said toast."

Maynard Shelly has a chapter (Chapter 12): These things produce excitement and tensions. He includes incompleteness, concurrent incompleteness, ambiguity, and incongruity.

"showing the sculptured head of a chimp to a chimp who has never seen a piece of sculpture before will induce so much arousal that the chimp will go into a panic"

Good to keep counting to ward this stuff off. No one needs "———" And after math

it has altogether ceased to be practical to own things in the months of January and August. Strange thing to insist that we own.

little song "if middle class little song "free from the defining institutions of the cities which them-selves define little song "then late art was an embrace of late capital now late poetry was an embrace of late art

We're good—cheering content providers, boring despots—with a notebook in which to record the history of our stockpile of foods:

history dwindles.
Rousseau tells the story of "a little girl who learnt to write before she could read, and she began to write with her needle. To begin with, she would write nothing but O's; she was always making O's, large and small, of all kinds and one within another, but always drawn backwards."

Rousseau believed the O's to be O's, but every O could have been, also, every letter and every word for the little girl: each O also an opening, a planet, a ring, a word, a query, a grammar. One O could be an eye, another a mouth, another a bruise, another a calculation.

These sentences made of O's, written with the girl's needle, might have read:

"I understand the proximate shape of the fountain"
"Apples are smaller than the sun"
"My mother"

or—in the case of the O's inside the other O's—"In nothing, we might find a few things, also nothing." Rousseau says the little girl quit: "like another Minerva she flung away her pen and declined to make any more O's."

Rousseau believed this is because the girl saw how unattractive she looked while writing. But as someone wrote in the margins of one of my books:

"ROUSSEAU KNOWS NOTHING ABOUT OTHER PEOPLE"

Rousseau's little girl saw herself in the mirror, writing, but she did not quit writing because she could not tolerate a reflection of her own unloveliness.

The little girl quit writing because what she saw in the mirror was the message she had written to herself in code.

Her language of O's was written backwards: in this, it was most accurately read in the mirror in which she also saw herself. In the mirror was literature as a set of practical instructions, including this one: "Throw down the-pen-that-is-your-needle and refuse to write again."

Rousseau's little girl threw her needle down because of what she had taught herself, and after that, Rousseau said she became almost an entirely different person. After that, she was only persuaded to write again in order to mark what was hers.

The little girl in Rousseau needed only to write down her own name now: she had written, already, her revolutionary letters in the code of O's.
the walserian monument, a walserian wedding, walserian joie de vivre, a walserian ship at not-sail. the maybe floating of a walserian upon

their back inside a possible stream, walserian #nototyswhtlo ("you shouldn't really want to live once"). a clerk's antinomy.


to go to work and work all day and go home to sleep to get up the next day to go to work and then to think "that was walseresque"

walserian pedagogy, "do not look or use your hands." sancho panza as she-devil. the subsubsucategories of a whatever yes.

a catalogue of whales that is a catalogue of whale bones inside a catalogue of garments against women that could never be a novel itself.