

# *The Deportation Begins at Midnight*

David Nelson Pollock

One evening I reached a new height of political consciousness while surfing the internet. It was early or mid February, and the Republican primary debates were sinking the country into a state of anguish. The president had just signed NDAA 2012. What I had always believed to be true – that they are trying to build a prison – was evident in the political language of the age. My sister, Annette, assistant manager at Kid Koala Convenience Mart, was drinking to escape knowledge of our political emergency. At one point I cornered Annette in the kitchen. She was drinking her gin sweeties. Maybe her girls were coming over. I simply had to disseminate political knowledge on her. I said to her that someone's friends in the Fed were benefiting then probably I said something about the revolving door and how the deportation will occur at midnight and then something or other. I started to draw a map with ground black pepper on the counter then I spit into it, mistakenly thinking that the addition of some wet would help me better to mold the ground pepper. She shook her head with violence then threw a plastic glass against the wall so that there was a puddle and some scattered ice cubes on the floor, a slice of lime. She screamed my name: "Jasper!"

Then a terrible fog occupied the kitchen, and here came Annette stumbling out of the fog, and I saw that she was not my sister, but perhaps the shell of my sister, manipulated by a third party. She said to me: "Jasper, create a hairy orifice in the attic above our heads. Broadcast yourself there. It can be ... it can be ... it can be your

situation room. Take a microphone to your mouth and broadcast an image of yourself on a television monitor. Then you can tell yourself what you already know about the American political scene and keep your politics from getting in the way of Annette's life, okay? She is about to have a breakdown. The calluses on her hands and feet, the grease in her hair, the oven burns on my wrists and forearms - she cannot take your constant blathering about prison, deportation, Republican fuggbuggery, and the foul drone of sorrow and violence that flies overhead tonight. You have lost your mind."

So for this last week and a half I have come up to my hairy orifice at the top of the house and I have broadcasted myself in the situation room. This is a story of the futility of such actions.

*I. Here is how I operate in the situation room and how I incorporate poetic visions into my dissemination of political knowledge to break free from the implosion of the American scene. It begins with my broadcast then I become bored, agitated, and scared, due in no small part to the green and yellow image of me on the television monitor.*

The microphone is attached to a chord that has a blue input bullet, and the camera is attached to a chord that has a yellow input bullet. The television has a blue hole and a yellow hole. All I have to do is put the blue input bullet into the blue hole and I can speak into the microphone, and the monitor speaks back to me. Then I plug the yellow input bullet into the yellow hole and suddenly I can see a pixilated, rainbow damaged image of me who trembles and who speaks through the monitor as I speak, though actually his voice is a second behind my voice, so a jagged echo reverberates in the situation room. It sounds as if there is another me with a deeper, icier voice who is overlapping with what I say.

The image in the monitor screen doesn't look like me, by the way. He's swirly at certain parts and a cloud of black static respirates above his head. Mr. Fritz Image is leaning over the TV table where his fuzzy puddle, a Dell Inspiron laptop, sits open, though the laptop in his world of images is but a poor, expressionist rendering - he's straddling the computer with his arms. I'm wearing a black sweatshirt and I see visions because I am a poet. I use a certain almond scented humidifier tablet in my Bemis. His scene

on the television monitor - Mr. Fritz Image's scene - is static. It's like modern art. It causes me a kind of distress that seems almost relevant, considering how we don't know who we are anymore. I look for the metaphor in things. The drone of sorrow sings terrible songs of violence. The image has not turned away from the screen because I have not turned away from the screen. We are looking right at one another, me and the image, holding our mics as if to interview ourselves. I can't see my heat in his eyes, though. I am the drone of violence and sorrow, and he is not.

"I have to fire up this machine of political knowledge," we announce. Into our microphones we are narrating the motions we perform here in the situation room. We're logging onto our Dells - the image and me - but we don't seem alright with it this afternoon. We seem uneasy, maybe nervous. We feel it's possible we're being watched by a third party and that they will come hammering on the door any day now. Within about a second, or maybe a little less than a second, the monitor says each motion back to us. It repeats everything we say in a deep, icy voice. Here are some of the motions we announce and which the monitor announces back to us: enter the 4 digit numeric code at the log-in cue; double-click the Firefox icon on the lower left hand corner of the desktop - it's the one that looks like a fox on fire who is about to swallow his own tail; once the web browser is open, click the red tab, upper left hand corner, that says Firefox; a dropdown menu will appear - click on "favorites."

Then aloud we read the list of our favorites, which the monitor reads back to us. It includes: *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Salon*, *Pundits Corner*, *HuffPo*, *Lakehouse*, *Naked Capitalism*, *The Drudge Report*, *The Tame Three*, *RT*, *Politico*, *Gawker*, *The Hub*, *Fox News*, *The Atlantic*, *CNN*, *The French Existentialist Novelist and Philosopher Albert Camus and His Ideas Digest*, *American Heritage*, *N+1*, *The Deportation Occurs at Midnight*, *The Roosevelt Institute*, *The Raw Story*, *Info Wars*, *Congressional Hearing*, *Truth Dig*, *The Political Life*, *The Daily Kos*, *The New Republic*, *Canaan*, *The National Review*, *The Spectator*, *Bloomberg*, *Business Insider*, *Is That You Moon of the Night of American Liberty?*, *Forbes*.

Here are some of the things we see. You'll understand now why the fires of hell burn in this house and why I must take the role of drone of sorrow. We see: Greece Bailout Funds Could be Split; Plans to Drug Test Welfare Recipients Gaining Momentum; Is Occupy Wall Street Behind the Philly Conference?; White House

Struggles to Contain Up roar; Truth, Lies, and Afghanistan; Iran Unveils Advancement in Uranium Enrichment; Rick Santorum Attacks Mitt Romney and the president in Michigan; The Atlantic's First Post-NDAA 2012 Freedom and Civil Liberties Survey for the Public; The Deportation Occurs at Midnight; Cheerful Color Blocking is What's Hot for Spring; What It Means and Why It Matters; A Las Vegas Man Pleads Guilty to Kidnapping a 7 Year Old Girl; Mitt Romney Has Been Glitter Bombed; Repulsive Progressive Hypocrisy; The Doctor of Camus Looks the Sickness in the Eye, or Does He?; J-Lo and Mark Anthony are Still Friends; Shock Poll – 20% of Republicans Leaning to the President; 2.2 Million are Losing Benefits this Month. Welcome to the dark night of the drone. The owl watches from his steel tree.

We know that I am a poet, so it should be clear that I am guided by my visions. My visions are black. One thing that interests me and which makes me see a black sky in the monitor right above Mr. Fritz Image's head is The Atlantic's First Post-NDAA 2012 Freedom and Civil Liberties Survey for the Public, co-authored by James Fallows and Esther Wheathouse. I click it. The image doesn't click it because there is no internet in his world of images, but he mimics my actions.

Into our mics we say: "How would you rate your current state of safety consciousness? Are you in more danger now than you were five years ago, or are you in less danger? Which do you consider to be the greater threat: terrorists or the United States government?"

A little firecracker is smoking inside of me. This hairy orifice makes me feel restless. I'm not interested in the program I'm broadcasting today. It makes me bored. When I'm bored I become nervous. Mr. Fritz Image won't look at himself. This is a potential problem with how I have been summoned to spend my time. Annette fumbles around downstairs. She's doing what she calls cleaning, which is really where she talks on her cell phone while she rearranges the furniture in the living room, making a controversy of the space. I'm the drone. I'm in the orifice above her head. I must have said that aloud because the monitor says it back to me.

"Have you heard about the NDAA controversy?" we say, pretending that we can make the heat. "Is there any way the president could not have signed the defense budget bill? Do you ever hear the sorrowful singing of the drone overhead? Do you believe

we are at war or would you say that we are engaged in a number of humanitarian interventions?”

Mr. Fritzy Image is getting muddier. He’s making a buzz sound. In a number of hours there will be a knock on the door. A loud intimidating hammering on the door. The girls will come over. They drink and snuzzle. I hide. They haven’t called me into work in weeks. They are disappearing us. I used to mop at the Tompkin Shopper. I have found myself breaking a sweat in the situation room, getting worked up. It’s so hot and wet up here. Mr. Staticy Discolored Image is breaking up too. I can’t stand him.

“Annette,” I holler down to my sister. She’s terrified to come into the situation room. She was up here just once before. She says she could feel heat coming off me when she was up here. It’s a wet, almost tropical place, and it smells like almonds, and there is a muddy, vibrant, destroyed image of me on the screen. It’s so hot, she told me, that it made her want to punch a wall or even someone’s face.

I call down to her because she is my sister and because she must know that I am electric with political knowledge this afternoon and that I will not let her rest. I don’t want to be alone, but I also don’t want to leave the situation room. Annette is a member of the management class. She manages Kid Koala Convenience Mart then comes home. The girls come over. She rattles ice cubes in her glass and says, “hairdo makeover.” I, on the other hand, went to college, where I was a bright young poetry student. Nevertheless, she is my sister. She hardly ever listens to me.

“Annette,” I yell, feeling all frantic inside, “please attend an emergency session in the situation room. ASAP.” She’s walking around down there. She can hear me. Anyone can hear the drone’s whispers of political violence. Annette wants to ignore political theater. Everyone in my life has wanted to ignore political theater. In college, the poetry co-eds told me to write in the style of Rilke. “Bah, no,” I told them. Have you ever read *The Plague* by Albert Camus? In this novel, each man must choose his role. Here’s the co-eds’ idea: politics aren’t as glimmering as the angel of Rilke sitting on a windowsill and, from a great height, watching people walk funny down the sidewalk.

Here’s Annette’s idea: politics smother her sensibilities, which include management strategy, gin sweeties with lime slices for the

pucker, and television. Politics cause her stress, unneeded stress. Politics get in the way of her enjoying her life, and there are other things that she needs to think about too, like if she should get on the general manager track at Kid Koala or if middle management is too big a commitment. She busts my balls because she says I should look for work at the Staff Kings. Unlike many people in America today, I hold the firm belief that they are trying to put us all into a giant prison.

I have to get down from this situation room and find Annette. I cannot be left up here with this muddy image. Hello, Mr. Fritz Image, but you are not me. Plus there is something I need to ask her. There is something that she and I need to discuss. She won't want to discuss it. When she's not at work, she hobbles around the house, rattling ice cubes in her glass, playing synth music. The girls probably will come over. They'll take shots of green liquor and blow vicious horns of laughter through their snozzles. "Hardy-har-har" they go and push one another playfully. The fuck of the fuck, I think and get out of this place. You have to open the floor, climb down the ladder and close the floor over your head. Annette is an escapist while I am like a doctor, straight from Camus, who faces the sickness out of duty. He is an unsung hero - it only makes sense this way for me. The drone flies over our house this afternoon.

*II. Here is where I attempt to disseminate my political knowledge on Annette. I look for her, I find her in the kitchen, cutting a lime while her food cooks in the oven, I confront her, and then I flee.*

"Oh sister, where art thou? Art thou on the sofa eating cheesy mac? Art thou in the kitchen preparing cheesy mac? I know that you are preparing food, for I smell your ovenwork's toasty fragrance. Here I am, the drone who has come to find you as if remotely operated. I come to shoot my missile of political knowledge at thy brain. Resist and I will corner you to show you how liberty grows from soil moist with political discussion."

We find her in the kitchen. You can see her. She is standing at the counter by the sink, slicing a lime with an overlarge knife, making thuds. She's doing drink prep for when the girls come over while her cheesy mac gets hot and crispy in the oven. A long, wide woman with an inverted bowl of grassy, overworked hair on her head, she

wears a purple blouse, jeans that are light – faded – sandals on her sock feet. She doesn't want to talk to me because she believes that I will smother her with politics. Her fears are not unfounded.

Annette, thud of the knife on the cutting board. Annette, thud of the knife. Were she to turn and face me, you would see why guys from the convenience mart pursue her. They buy her chocolates, cigarettes, beer, all for a chance at her plumper parts. Poor Annette, weakened by her desire for affection and success, yet caring all the same. You would be able to tell by looking at us that we are of the same line. She has the round sweet face of a cherub and we share the same vertical crease down the center of our forehead. She won't turn because she knows that I am behind her. I witness her from the back and say: "I know that you are preparing your gin sweetie, Annette, and that now might not be the best time to talk about the implosion. I know that you have no interest in the knowledge I disseminate, even though it affects your liberty, even though it dictates the boundaries of your freedom, but I urge you this once to listen to me. The deportations begin at midnight. Right now as we speak, there is a controversy developing over the military budget for 2012 that our president has signed and it might mean that men in suits soon will march these very streets -"

She stops slicing. I can tell she's breathing deeply because of how her back lifts and falls. Then suddenly, as if to scare away a small animal, a cat, she shouts: "Boogadaboo" and swings her slicer through the air. "The girls are coming over, please. Have you called Staff Kings?"

"Yes, of course, Staff Kings. The girls are coming over. By the way," I note, "a fly is in your hair." It is true. I witness it. A fly buzzes around her grassy hair. Funny to see a fly in February.

She swats at the fly. "Why don't you do Annette a favor and get her another lime from the fridge," she says. "This one has a spot. Annette won't take a lime with a brown spot inside of it."

I get her the lime, like she says, and she huffs at me as if I've done something wrong, but she takes the green fruit just the same, she rather yanks it out of my hand.

*III. Here is the part where I escape from the kitchen and retreat to the living room, where I can rest with the television off - with the idiot box shut off - and I may look deep into that black screen*

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*and let my head do the talking for me, but not before sensing that as I flee the kitchen, Annette is frowning at me so sadly that even I feel that the shell of the drone has been pierced and her sadness trickles in.*

The television screen is black so that it creates a perfect mirror image of my visions. Oh, sweet meditative state, I see the future of America in my head, I do, but I only wish that I might have Camus' poetic soul to communicate it. I don't know if you've read *The Plague*, but I have been in love with that novel ever since I was a bright poetry student in college. Let me explain that the vertical crease in my forehead throbs as my mind conjures images of our disease. For example, I predict the Santorum surge, I see his face holographically projected onto a map of the flyover states. The surge is real, the corn fields murmur his name. I see that the NDAA 2012 military budget will be used to justify not only the indefinite detention of various foreigners who may or may not pose a threat to the United States and who will be attired in orange suits, but also justify the indefinite detention of American citizens, who will be attired in orange suits. Feet up on the couch! Feet up on the couch! They are trying to build a prison! You see me now. I am the owl, a blind and strong observer who may or who may not be sleeping. I feel the hot sizzle of a firecracker inside of me and green smoke does emanate. Cover your nose. The pigs have come. When men in suits and black helmets break down our door, I'm afraid we won't know whose side they're on.

I am not a right wing policy rider who wants to police a woman's body; nor do I toe the Democratic party line; nor am I a liberal who believes that our president secretly is a Republican, who is not so secretly promoting a free market agenda. If you have read the work of Yves Smith, Matt Taibbi, and other voices from the left, you would understand what I mean. I am not one of them. I have a situation room – in my mind, I meditate on the political scene. A mother loses her baby while vacationing in the French Riviera, a couple disappears in Mexico City, the Santorum surge occurs in the Midwest. Do you understand? I witness various situations from the steel perch in my mind so that I am like the owl. Though when I sing from overhead, I am like the drone. No political affiliations this way lie. It is possible that one reason Annette turns against me



when I attempt to disseminate political knowledge on her is that she fears I'm trying to convert her. On the contrary, information only informs. I don't know if I've made this clear, but I am a champion of Albert Camus' novel *The Plague*, and I see myself as the doctor in that book. His name is Rieux. Or Reix. I am like him. In the same way in which he confronts the illness in the town, I confront the truth. I am the drone of sorrow. The owl is perched in his steel tree tonight. With sealed eyes he watches.

*IV. Here is the part where I return to the kitchen to confront Annette again and then to speak about a metaphor. An uncanny fog occupies the kitchen and Annette delivers a prophecy, a warning, and a plea.*

March I do into the kitchen where Annette sips her slippery drink, and I say, "You and the girls may get your laughs tonight, I know about that, but the world burns around you."

"Oh Jasper," she says, "you know?" She uses her hand to swipe violently at the air. It's almost as if she wants to slap me. Poor Annette, inarticulate, frustrated, infected in an organ she doesn't even know she has.

Goddamn this place where we are forced to cohabitate. That's what I say. It's a house where we have lived our lives, and the damage and residue of our lives has devaluated it and made it an extension of that same invisible organ that is infected in Annette. Look at the gray walls. You go over here in this corner, in the hallway between the kitchen and the living room and you see where the wallpaper is peeling and where the yellow wall beneath the wallpaper is exposed. You understand poetry and the preeminence of the metaphor, so you understand that this peeling wallpaper is more than just a spot that should be fixed with some creamy adhesive – instead it is revelatory.

Look, my sister won't listen to me. I'm squatting in the hallway now on the floor where there are clumps of hair and dust in the corners and a curvy orange stain with a tail of orange drippings on the floor, and I'm looking at the yellow wall that I should not be able to see since it is supposed to be covered with wallpaper. Green smoke of the firecracker rises inside of me. I know that war is coming, I know that the war drum beats. Hey, Assad, what do you say? How

many insurgents in Homs have you killed today? Well, that's just it - according to some, no one knows. The world may never know. How do I spend my life doing it? How do I spend my life chasing after the naked truth, which is a terrible, terrible pastime. Oh Jesus, one puts one's head in one's hand, one sweats, the war drum beats. "I'm sorry," I'm yelling to Annette, "but I have to return now to my hairy little hole. I have to take action in the situation room. The drone of sorrow howls overhead."

"You're completely insane," she tells me. "When's the last time you left the house?" she says.

I don't have to answer her questions. When she is at work, she is not here. When Annette and I spend time off together in this house, doing what we desire, that's when the fires of hell burn in this house, and that is when I unfold strategies for political dissemination.

Something uncanny occurs then. Annette says something about Staff Kings then a giant fog occupies the kitchen. Out of it stumbles Annette with her grassy hair raised like Frankenstein's wife, and she says: "Jasper, get thee to a situation room. Look at your destroyed image in the television monitor and know that it both does and does not represent you. The drone of sorrow does whisper tonight. In circles it flies around this house announcing the implosion that shall occur. It may no longer even be safe to broadcast to yourself. Please leave me alone, for tonight I wish to drink the grease and the burn and the calluses from my memory."

*V. Here is the part where I return to the situation room and confirm what I already believed. I then retreat from my hairy orifice to find Annette, who watches a program about interior design. I comment that this kind of programming is escapism offered by the American media machine. Then I take a nap and suffer terrible visions.*

I climb up through the ceiling then lower the ceiling shut behind me. I have the blue input bullet for the microphone and the yellow input bullet for the camera. You know how it goes. You understand that once the camera and the mic are plugged into the television monitor in the situation room that the static mud appears on the screen, that image of me, Mr. Fritz Image. When we speak into our mics, the monitor repeats what we say back to us. His eyes of static mud do vibrate in the pixilated greens and yellows. This is a space

of unfortunate self-identity for me. I am not in control, even though I should be. This is my situation room. It is a way to bring me into existence. This is straight from Camus.

“I have some things I want to say about the job rate,” we announce – the image and me – into our microphones. “According to Flashlight Anderson at the Daily Kos and Petra Dillinger at The Tame Three, the unemployment numbers are looking better than prominent economists might have predicted, but still far higher than they were before the crash. Robert Reich on Salon predicts that this can end up backfiring for the president this election year.

“One thing you have to be conscious of,” we continue wiping sweat from our forehead creases because it’s getting humid in here with political knowledge. “One thing you really have to be conscious of is the rate of unemployment,” we continue. “It has dropped and the goddamned service sector has created thousands upon thousands of new jobs. You wouldn’t believe it,” I feel my forehead crease throbbing in the heat. The crease on the forehead of Mr. Fritzy Image looks messy. “You wouldn’t believe it,” we say, “but it would seem that even manufacturing is taking a turn for the better in the American arena. Of course, there are thousands who have disappeared from the labor market.”

We are feverish up here. There is no metaphor to understand the interactions that occur in the situation room. Annette didn’t know that you would turn out the way you have, Mr. Fritzy Image, when she suggested the situation room. Of course, there is the underconsidered notion that Annette was infiltrated by a third party. I’m thinking just how obvious it is that a silver drone is soaring above our heads right now. There are going to be deportations in the night. They will hide us in its hot wet orifice. They are building camps right now. They are going to turn the whole world into a prison.

I leave the situation room to confront Annette. She is watching a television program. That’s what she does on her days off. I know she’s getting drunk already. She has the residue of the workplace in her grassy hair. It’s the grease that emanates into the air from hotdog and dessert pie drippings in the pans under the rotisseries at kid Koala’s. She’s a shiny cherub. Sometimes she smells like beans. Get your sister Annette a lime. She has weaknesses. Let her have her gin drink. It’s a gin sweetie. Let her have a slice of lime. The girls

will come over. We pay no attention to the whistling of the drone overhead.

“How much longer,” I’m asking, “before your girls come over to snort the place up with apolitical humor? There’s a good chance the drone will strike tonight.”

She ignores this part. “Going to Staff Kings is going to be just like getting a job interview. Why don’t we get you a hair appointment,” she says. “Call Gretchen. I know you remember Gretchen.” Snorty-snort-snort.

I’ll explain: It’s commonly believed in this palace of pain that is about to implode that I don’t take care of myself, and Gretchen can help me. I’ve got what you might call a shag helmet which threatens my eyes so that I need always to be pushing my hair out of the way.

She has removed her socks and has her pink feet up on the coffee table and she’s watching one of those shows about how a poor family’s house is being redecorated by charitable interior design experts who have a taste for ethnic zeal. I don’t sit down to watch it with her because I won’t let myself be taken in by the escapism offered by the American media machine, but I see what is going on at the moment, and I can see that there is a small brown dog running around in circles on a candy cane-colored carpet and that a Chinese lantern hangs overhead and that slants of light come in through the window and that a boy and girl clumsily are using chopsticks to dip dumplings in a brown sauce. Sometimes my ankle hurts. When it’s been days and days since I mopped and my ankle hurts, it seems pretty obvious to me that the best thing to do is to lie down and to take a nap.

I do it in my bedroom. The president is locking up civilians. That’s what I dream. I see them lined up in orange suits and getting onto a bus. I see a firecracker that is trembling on the sand and emitting green smoke. A drone whistles overhead – its missile is that of sorrow. I see brown foreigners from all over the world riding candy cane-colored rugs right up to the front doors of ordinary American families. I see snorting women who are allowing great atrocities to occur. I see the falling of night and a bright silver Dell that seems to grow like the heart of man in the horizon. I see the day rising and I see the floors I used to mop. I see that they are slippery and that light itself, a glare, is reflected in the wet floors. I see the president with sweaty forehead, telling us that the air is full of flies but there

is nothing that can be done. I see those men in their blue uniforms and shiny black boots busting into my situation room to smash my Dell to fragments with long sticks because I have chosen to stay apart. I am like Camus, but I am not on the side of the executioner or the executed. No, I am a doctor called to see about a sickness. I see young people, young Americans, black scarves wrapped around their mouths, knocking on the windows of different storefronts – banks, cafes, and retail shops - up and down Main Street, knocking on the windows with long silver shovels and making sure that the glass all breaks.

I hear the sister downstairs when I wake up, and I know she's setting the table for when the girls come over. She puts out glasses and bowls of nuts. One of the first thoughts I have when I wake up is that Rick Santorum, the Republican presidential hopeful and ex-senator of Pennsylvania, has accused the president of not being a Christian. Why do the girls, Annette's friends, believe we can go on pretending that we have not reached the moment of true political emergency? We live in a world in which the owl always is perched in his steel tree, watching. Madness descends over us all. I can tell you something: there will be riots in the streets before long. The Occupiers, the Tea Partiers, and even new parties that we don't know about yet - teenagers done up head to toe in black with black masks and black pants and black gloves and black padded vests, splattering the walls and windows of their communities with political messages. Alas, like a bird overhead, the drone sings us messages of violence.

"Because you're all liars," I say aloud when I am talking to myself on the bed. "Because you don't want to know what's what." And then I see clearly that a fence might be built and that there will indeed be prisoners hanging onto the inside of the fence with their fingers. They are put onto a bus. Camus and I would say that most people will pretend that these deportations in the night are not actually happening. We play roles, we fill roles.

*VI. Here is the part where I confront Annette about how damaging her music is. Then I admit that I commonly fall into voids. I discuss the nature of the void and reminisce about something I once did that was inexplicable yet perfectly sound.*

She has her music on, the drum machine stings, the impassioned diva sounds strangled, synthesizers moan like digitalized prisoners who are in a hairy orifice in the wall. We can't think in this kind of environment. I live with her because we like the house and we can't make enough money. When I go downstairs she is out of her jeans and blouse top and in a green robe and swaying around in circles, and the ice cubes in her glass are rattling, and a slice of lime is on the floor - probably it fell there - and she is singing that she doesn't want to wait for her life to be over. Oh tender evening, the drone flies overhead. "I see you," I holler over the music. I must make my voice heard. The damage of the music on my brain is terrible. The booze stinks.

"Could you please play in your room when the girls come over," she shouts over the music.

"Gababa," I mock her loudly over the music.

The owl watches from a steel tree. One waits for the fatal knock on the door.

There are many voids in my life. Nomadic-like, I roam from stage to stage, and there are voids in between each stage: on the one hand, I go into the situation room where I broadcast myself, I see myself, I become as one with the diffuse political perspectives that I harbor inside of my head; on the other hand, I might do something like clean the floors at the Tompkin Shopper and make those floors slippery and let them dry and I smell the chemical lemon and I imagine that a sun is there rising in my head and that an owl is in a steel tree and that the drone sings overhead; and on the third hand, there we have the voids into which I fall, phantom orifices into which we all can disappear, and by which I regularly am haunted. Just like the great philosophical novelist who penned one of my favorite books ever, *The Plague*, Albert Camus, I am forever shadowed by my concern for moral behavior in the modern era in which we all live in prisons. This is my political philosophy. Political visions do occur to me: I see those which were, I see those which are, I see those that can be, and I see those which will never be. You wonder how I can possibly traverse that in which it is impossible to be conscious?

The void traverses itself.

The owl is in the steel tree. The Republican primary is happening in all states at once. The dirtiest and nastiest negative campaign ever. Will an effective capital gains tax be implemented? How

does the body lay to die? Sometimes in the morning I wake up and feel terrified that I have gone wrong somewhere. One time I did this when Annette was still sleeping and I went to see her in her bedroom. I peeked in my head. On her side she lay, and the room smelled of farts and mints and like booze and cooked eggs, and her breathing was a fleshy motor and her head was a pile of hair and the fears of the world did soar over her like an invisible drone – the political phantom haunted that room as in every space because the fires of hell are burning - and I said to her: “You are under arrest” and then I escaped so that I could return to my room without her knowing. Never was it spoken of. This is how the void takes us. It is something uncanny. It is the frosty breath of the human soul.

*VII. Here is where I listen to the girls downstairs from my bedroom then from the top of the staircase. I suffer what might be described as a moment of unreality. Out of frustration, I return to the situation room.*

How do I know when the girls come over? It begins with the doorbell. The doorbell will ring a few times throughout the night, and with each ring I will hear a few more women tumble in. I'll hear their shoes on the floor. They tap and snap, they shuffle across the floor. They snort, they get drinks, they rattle ice cubes in their glasses. They don't think for one instant about the imminent collapse of the Eurozone. Armed soldiers frolic in the streets, gliding white paper drones from hand to hand. There is blood on their lips, their faces are of many different colors. Some predict that in the future, we will live under a diverse, multicultural socialist government.

Quietly, with ear to my bedroom door, I listen to the women downstairs. Their gathering has begun. The girls have come over. Hello, oppressed ones who do not know that the drone flies overhead.

Body length mirror on my bedroom wall, tell me about myself. I look at myself. I am being broadcasted on my mirror. Tell me, mirror on the wall, who is the silvery drone? I look like a shaggy brother bum, a janitor, but in many respects, I am the figure who is most like the owl. The steel tree does not whimper in the wind. The air in my lungs is political. My blood is poisoned with political vision, which compromises my mental faculties. How many politicians

actually keep their campaign promises? More than you might think, according to a recent study. Republican presidential hopeful and Libertarian Ron Paul had dinner with Storm Front white supremacist organizers. Investment bankers make all the decisions in this country. They lobby for loopholes. What if my sense of safety is but an illusion? Armed soldiers, they say, might be coming for us any day. One imagines a tank waddling down the street, knocking into cars and things.

Flames, Annette, I think, flames. One imagines oneself as I imagine myself now, at the top of the stairs, listening to the girls who sound to be occupying both the living room and the kitchen. One imagines oneself listening to their giddy snorts and the ice cubes rattling in their glasses. The ice rattles in the glass. One can hear their drunken singsong conversation that veers from the men who sex up the convenience mart by circling it in their hogs and mod scoots to which booze flavors are the sweetest and the most affordable, from what booze go well with certain beverages then back to the men on their hogs and scoots and how they lift their sunglasses up on their heads when they see something they like (suggestive giggling ensues). The conversation veers again – or perhaps one picks up on another conversation among another small gaggle of girls – it veers from a television program, a show about the British aristocracy, to the possibility that a new cashier has been taking pocket change for gum out of the Kid Koala register drawers. Then they discuss how they might suddenly disappear, vanish, travel upwards into the invisible orifices above their heads.

Of course they don't actually talk about how they might vanish, even though it seems to me this is quite likely considering how little they are involved in the world. From the top of the stairs I hover over them, the drone, the owl, the hysterical political agent who pulls data from the internet on the silvery Dell and who spreads imperative data around the room, that is me, the drone of sorrow, and I have been infiltrated. They are downstairs squawking right now. Would it be too much for me to insinuate that the girls downstairs, who are getting hairier now and louder and who are foot stomping – would it be too much for me to insinuate that their thunderous booms, screeches, and squeaks are infiltrating my mind? The women could be punching at the air. The night blackens as armed forces are unleashed into a field where patches of grass



sprout from breasts of dirt. Flashes frighten the silence, explosions gurgle in the background. Our true landscape – the landscape in which we are and in which the great novelist and philosopher Albert Camus encouraged us to assert our existences – our landscape is surveyed day and night by the drone of violence.

“Annette, upstairs please, the world is on fire, and tonight is not the night for self immolation or pony talk or whatever it is you call it that you are doing down there with your drinks.” At first I was loud when I called her name “Annette” then I might have broke off into quieter tones or even just mumbling. One feels that one is confused and that one has never quite woken from a nap. One suffers the impression that doors on all sides, doors that are not even there but which really are just walls, are opening and closing by themselves, making a real controversy, a real racket out of our house.

The music starts. The synths, the strangled divas. They are playing a card game now where they take turns slapping their hands down on the table. I don't know what the game is called: Hearts of Slap? The Joker Cometh? The Jester Laugheth? Slap your table, Annette. I reckon there are six, seven women down there, and keep in mind that more may be on the way. They're porky, they have obese heads, except for one who is tiny with the startled eyes of a nocturnal little beast, and one of her ears is deformed so it looks like a growth of fleshy flaps. All their heads are full of pinkly imagery: a new bisexual rap queen from Brooklyn, Azelia, who rides a bicycle and who wears cutoff jeans – I know her from the HuffPo entertainment blog. One must return to one's situation room in order to process. The world burns, and yet the ladies infiltrate with gin sweeties, foot stomping, escapism.

*VIII. Here is where I retreat to the situation room and suffer an epiphany regarding the ways in which I have been infiltrated. I then venture downstairs to disseminate fiery political knowledge and warn that the drone of sorrow whispers songs of violence tonight. I encourage one of the girls to listen then she asks me a question to which there is but one answer.*

The blue bullet goes into the blue input hole and the yellow bullet goes into the yellow input hole. You know how it goes. The Bemis hums and generates almond scented moisture into the air. The

political heat is on. Mr. Fritz Image looks back at me. We hold our microphones to our mouths. He is a green and yellow pixilated mess. What fear we feel. It does not make sense to me this evening. As the girls hissy fizzy downstairs, groove their pumpkins to the aural monstrosity that blares, shaking our house, something occurs to me that causes my forehead crease to throb and which causes Mr. Fritz Image to turn messy and staticy and to buzz.

You see, my memoryworks at this point operate at full throttle, and I have not even turned on the Dell Inspiron. On the contrary, I am remembering. I see the giant fog occupying the kitchen and Annette stumbling from it to order me to this hairy orifice above her head as if some mission awaited me here in the situation room. Though I have been infiltrated, as I previously have mentioned. It occurred to me once that a third party might be influencing my actions. A story appeared in Truth Dig, penned by the forever gloomy Chris Hedges, in which he spoke of police infiltration of the Occupy movement. And yes, it doesn't take a scholar to see that the same can happen when one is the owl in the steel tree, the drone of sorrow and violence. When one takes the role of the doctor in Camus, one can expect resistance at each and every turn. The American scene is about to implode because it rests only on lies.

"Hello Mr. Fritz Image," we say into our microphones. The monitor repeats what we say back to us. "Hello there, you staticy representation of me. I hate to tell you, but I believe that you have been had. We are not doing any good here. From our situation room, we are not able to disseminate political knowledge. What did Camus once say, in his novel *The Plague*, about how information can be controlled or about how ..."

No, something indeed is wrong. We have known it is wrong for quite some time. I lift the floor, climb down the ladder, and close the floor above my head. Then we inch step by step down the stairs, into the den of lady lions who pony talk and snort and hardy-har-har, all while stomping and slapping and whinnying up a storm. Who is the drone of sorrow? Who brings messages of political violence? Who is the owl perched in his steel tree? It is me. It is my duty. Into the living room I step and I see them there.

I don't recognize them. Two ladies with hair that is frizzed and greased with product. It smells fruity down here, the music burns my aural canals. Hardy-har-har, they go. Snorty-snort-snort. There

could be a knock at the door – an intimidating hammering on the door - at any moment, but there is not. Not yet. The president has provided a signing statement in which he promises never to use NDAA 2012 to detain American citizens, but civil libertarians are outraged nonetheless. The moon of American liberty has risen. The night has fallen. The deportation occurs at party time, Annette. Their boots march down the street. Hardy-har-har. Glass shatters. A gigantic fog moves from the kitchen into the living room. Annette stumbles from the fog. Annette swipes her hand through the air. She is all done up in a strawberry dress and she wears green lipstick. She wears the same sandals as before, but instead of sock feet, she is barefoot and her toenails too are green.

“Look who it is,” she says. “Bridgette, this is my brother, Jasper. He’s very political.”

One of the women with greased hair whom I do not recognize stands to shake my hand, but I will not take it.

“Annette says that you’re very political,” she says.

“I am the fiery of drone of political information,” I correct her. “The drone of sorrow whispers songs of violence. Listen,” I encourage her, cupping my hand around my ear even though the synthy music does blare too loudly to hear the delicate and imperative messages. “Listen and you will know that the night of American liberties has befallen us. No one knows who we are anymore.”

“Oh,” says the strange lady, “is that so?”

“Yes,” I say with the frankness of the owl who knows for he has watched, perched in the steel tree. “I’m afraid that it is so. I am very afraid.”

“And what do you recommend we do about that,” she ventures. Annette snorts behind me, though when I turn, she is frowning – she is frowning oh so sadly. A gigantic fog thickens behind her. I suffer a terrible sense of unreality. Must one retreat to the situation room even though the broadcasts in that hairy orifice are futile? I shan’t answer the lady’s question.

Instead I tell her what Albert Camus once wrote in his novel. Perhaps you have read it. It is called *The Plague*, and it says that the only way to be free from the prison they are building is to be aware that you are inside of the prison all of the time, but no one listens when the doctor speaks.

*IX. Here is the part where the deportation occurs at midnight.*