

Sister

David Nelson Pollock

My poetical philosophizing often begins like this: it originally moved in one direction then went in the other. Most likely it is moving in those two directions at the same time, though it also may appear not to be moving at all. It includes all possibilities, among which we might find movement and stillness, left and right. As incomprehensible as this sounds, there was a moment when I believed I had it and finally I was able to make sense of the exact movements and non-movements orchestrated by divine energy both on quantum and universal scales. I wanted to make myself open to the public about what I found. Were one to ask me, however, what it was that I was talking about – what *it* was – I'm afraid I would not have known what to say, other than, perhaps, that I was speaking about an element of existence, which could be both big and small, and which both did and did not concern them at the same time. Because I am speaking of something that is, in a sense, unspeakable, it seems okay for me to speak about a thing that cannot be defined with any specific nouns or modifiers. Whatever it is, I feel comfortable saying that it is something great, something

divine, and that I have created it as much as I have accepted it into my life.

After some time of sitting and thinking in my apartment, which is a small room sparsely decorated with modern art (scribbles and other things) it occurs to me that I could benefit from being alone in the presence of others. This is something people often want. They want to be extroverted in the sense that they are around others, but they also want to be introverted in the sense that they do not talk to the others. They want to walk the righteous path; they want to ignore their fellow man. My sister is the only person, until now, who has heard my philosophical ideas. She is retarded, and sometimes I read them to her, though she is not capable of understanding a word. She spends each and every afternoon in a room that my parents had painted like the sky, which is to say that they hired a couple of men to paint the walls in blue and then to make dreamy white bursts of paint that resemble clouds. Being a retard who incessantly scribbles, she creates work that is genius in its modern expression of frustration.

All men want to have drinks after hard days at work. A man walks into a bar and demands a mocha martini please. When the bartender, whose head is wrinkly pink and whose necktie is egg yolk gray and who appears to sneer at a white overhead light – when he says to yours truly that this mocha martini costs all of eight dollars, it is I who removes the ten dollars from my wallet so I also can leave a two dollar tip. I take the mocha martini to a wood table in a corner beneath a black-and-white photo of exposed breast, where I drink and experience the martini's power. How should I describe its power? It makes me heavy headed, yet it jolts through my bones all the same; it energizes me just as it causes my eyes to droop; my fire burns in the form of modern poetic philosophy and my sister, two years older than me, still waits for my mother to cook her hamburgers, my sister drools onto a bib, my mocha martini frees me. A new bird has escaped from the window of the open heart, my heart, and therefore is introduced into existence, or other such nonsense.

It occurs to me, it occurs to me, how do I even make my money? Literally, yes, I know - I am not my sister, for example, I am not a retard who knows only to whinny for miniature burgers and to scribble - I go to work, I receive a check, I deposit the check into an

account that is reserved just for me. After a few days, a period of transition - voila! The money is made available to me. This money I can withdraw and spend on items such as a mocha martini. I may feel the buzz. I touch my head. A woman in the booth beside mine tells her friend that she has begun dating a man who is so *horny* that she can barely even take it and now she is suffering from chafing on her inner thighs. Life is flying high. I am flying high. What I mean is that like most workers I am alienated from my work and from the fruits I reap. How can I connect this mocha martini, its chemical splash into my nervous system, with what I do all day in the gray room, making things, moving things to the side, using my veiny, pale Caucasian hands to make more things?

When I think that something important with spiritual overtones is about to happen, nothing actually does, which is in itself a phenomenon. After finishing my powerful beverage, I go outside. I wait for something to happen inside of me, for a divine energy, perhaps, to seize me. Though knowing that I have just consumed a mocha martini, it also is quite possible that whichever divine feeling I experience, it could very well only be chemical. This is just something I will have to accept. There might never be a divine feeling that I do not make happen. At the same time, I do not let this affect my unwavering faith in the divine, for this is what faith is all about: believing in spite of the rationales that float surfaceward when something inherently mystified suddenly becomes demystified by those who wish to shatter your faith. Plus, my will to feel divinely is in itself evidence of the divine. What faith I choose to have. What harmony I can sometimes feel when entangled with the impossible. What a way to live. What a way to be free.

I wish sometimes that I would meet a person in a square, in the park, on the corner who is just like me and who would share the same reverence for the mysteries. At once we would combine and ascend, two movements in conflict, yet complimentary of one another. Isn't this the story of existence? There are some physical philosophers, I imagine, who say that this dual existence is at the heart of the universe, *the eye of God*, especially at the quantum level. The great literature of the 20th century is a result of modernism, and this duality both of nature and of man is an important theme in a great deal of modern literature. Soon there will be a great literature of the 21st century, and while one only can guess about what the

great themes will be, one fears they will be marked by an increase in mental retardation among many members of the species. While anecdotally I may point to my sister and say: *here, a retarded person I know* - what are the chances of my knowing a retarded person (by blood nonetheless) if there are not thousands, millions more all over the world, impacting our philosophies? While I might do this with bitterness, for retardation leads to an understanding only of singularities, as opposed to dualities – while I can do this, I will refrain. Regardless of which changes in the human species affect our literature and our philosophy about life and about the physical world and physical action, one cannot deny that great literature will continue to exist because we want it to be so in the same way my unwavering faith in the divine is so because I will it that way.

When we come to a park it is dark and the yellow lights are on. They flood the dark park. My heart feels muddy, the way it beats, which may be a sign of sickness. My body is ill but my mind is great. My soul, being an invention of mine mind, is greater still. A boy (a young man) beside his bicycle, beneath the light, holds one of his mobile devices, the light of which illuminates his slack-jawed, wide-eyed face, making him to appear symbolic of the retardation of the future. I say he holds *one* of his mobile devices because probably he has more than one. It is true that he uses them for different functions. For example, I know of children his age, 13, 14, 15, whatever, whichever age you would like, who use one handheld device for their games, in which graphics of men in fancy metal chestware fire the boom-boom guns, and other devices on which they text and call, and other devices for listening to music. I think that we have entered a golden age, but then I think that we have entered a truly dark age in which mental retardation is becoming more common. Though we wouldn't know because of how well hidden the retardation is behind the golden crust of technological development. With a sister like my own, however, who wears a bib at age 33 and who still moans for the little hamburgers that mom cooks (sliders), I can no longer hide from the truth of retardation that swells to the surface. One feels that there must be some correlation between the growing number of retarded people being born and the golden crust of interactive technology.

I know he knows that I am watching him, for I stand dumbly. I

stand in the park. I am no pervert. I take no pleasure in watching him; rather I am stunned, and I am curious, and I feel an overwhelming sadness at the sight of a boy who is not me. His hair is all shaggy. At home, his mother sleeps on the couch in a sky-blue robe with her meaty, vein-ridden feet up on the armrest. His father is at the computer playing Minesweeper, a game in which a bored-to-the-point-of-depressed middle-aged man uses deductive logic to avoid picking a block that is a bomb instead of a number. A chiming sounds in the distance. I should return to my home, I think. A swirliness most certainly is alive in my head.

One may play games and lose at them all, even if he is by himself. Would you like a woman? Then in a funny voice in front of the mirror where I see me, it becomes Would Voo Vike va Voman? And then I spin on one foot, only to be silly, and fall back onto the bed. Then I experience a rush to the head. Then I sweep my eyes across the ceiling to make sure there is no space where they can get in.

In the morning it all begins again. Surely this is one of life's many miracles. One can see it all of the time; at each moment one can see that change is inevitable. Not only that, but one sees that change happens at moments of the most surefire stillness. It moves frontward and back, from the left, to the right, and vice versa. Even my sister moves, though she is overtly symbolic of these dark ages in which we live. She moves nonetheless, backwards mainly, but also forwards. I take pride in her; I despise her. Man prays to one deity or another that he may walk the righteous path, though in the end we hurt our fellow man. We go out of our way sometimes to do so. We take pride in our ability to make decisions. A common philosophical question asked by many of the great modern artists is whether we do indeed have free will. Out of frustration, they furiously scribble haphazardly many curvy, lazily imagined lines on a canvas, and we have, *voila*, art.

Traveling to work on the bus, a woman on a seat across the aisle from where I am seated carries a radio on her lap, and the radio is off. She nestles it on her lap as if it were a metal pet, and she wears a garden skirt that is shin length, and there is a sense, as the bus chugs along and groans down the street lined with birches and maples, that the world is being left behind and that we are entering together, all of us on the bus, a place that is quieter. In reality, I

only am going to work, which is how I make the moo-la. The duties I perform, they are for me alone to complete. In this sense, I am well connected to my work and I like to think that I am the only one who can perform the duties that I perform. When I get off the bus, it occurs to me that I am the only one left on this vehicle, save for a young woman who sits at the back. She is a teenager, or perhaps a creature in her 20s whom I have seen before (I believe she visits the social services building two stops down the road) – raven's hair and a tight yellow waitress top. I can be sure that in the right light, and that perhaps if her skin were more pale in a way that I might describe as ceramic instead of sickly, I could find her desirable, though as I leave the bus and her behind me, she is a moment that is stuck. There always is the sense that the world quickly is moving without me and that I am the exception to all of this continual change of which I speak. We suffer terrible feelings inside that everything quickly is moving away, and then it is not moving away, that we embrace the movement entirely. This surely is the state of human existence, moving and not moving. We are with it one moment then not with it the next then with it again.

When I walk into my place of work, I am overwhelmed by stolid warm, gray room with walls a-flaking. At the same time, I don't want to be here. Don't you know that the workers feel alienated? You must know that. This is a concept that has been around for centuries. As a matter of fact, this is a major tenet of much modern art. How many books have I read (and one comes to mind in particular) in which a worker arrives at the factory and slowly loses his mind, and on the way home, he finds himself on a park bench. He finds there a double of himself who drools and who asks him: How do you make your money? But the worker cannot answer such stupid questions. Same with my father and mother, they work all day, they come home and fry the burgers for my sister who is a retarded stranger, every day, no matter how often they see her, so that they are no longer a family. Do you know what they are? They are a series of processes. The workers feel alienated from themselves. They talk about ideas in their heads without ever expressing them (in one telling, heaven occurs when such thoughts become vocalized, shared, and passed down through generations) and they do their work. They use their fucking hands! Scholars about whom we have watched endless specials in which invisible actors provide smooth, pedagogical

narration, and black-and-white stills of coal miners flash on the screen – scholars in our heads say we shouldn't be exposed to such dour conditions at work, so in the end, it's the work that has won while our heads are elsewhere. I have gone to college and learned about art, literature, a world of dangerous ideas, the power of strengthened minds, and yet it has done no good, for menial labor has made me incompetent. The younger brother of a retard, I smile and feel as if heaven had already descended. A bird escapes in flight from my heart window. The workers are alienated from their work but they work nonetheless as if in a dream. In a fantasy, me and my sister (who is not my sister, but a lucid woman in a yellow top who goes vackwards vand vorwards) skip hip-to-hip, hand-in-hand, dip her in the lake, a bird in the hand is two in the bank. Hear this, for I wave the surrender flag of modernity, on which a great artist has scribbled in frustration, and we skip with hip-to-hip. The bird escapes the open heart, through the open window of the heart.

There is a work table, under a leg of which is a cardboard wedge so that it doesn't wobble. It's where I sit and try to accomplish what I need to complete. I try so hard. While I am working, I think of the mocha martini, the burn and sting of that powerful beverage, and the drowsiness that might overcome me and the way I lay down on the bed, awake. Two flies flutter lovingly at one another in the air in a corner. This room smells like dust. A man, quite frankly, can write a book about a how a room smells like dust because one knows it when one smells it, but one would be challenged were one to try to make sense of it. Let me appeal to your senses, says the man of letters, upright in leather chair, scotch upper lip, let me tell you, the smell of dust is ... then a bang ignites the silence from outside, and the metaphor becomes quite clear to the man of letters. Yes, he says, the smell of dust is the smell of all eternity, which also is, in the mass consciousness, the smell of a library or of any space in which there are many books containing knowledge about the great duality, the divinity.

Watch me as I move one hand over the other. This is how I create things. Once a thing is done, I move to the next and create that as well, much in the way that life happens as divine forces move all features into place to create real outcomes. Really, my work is lovely in the way that all of God's movements are lovely. Sometimes I talk to myself that way. I hold up a mirror to myself and say: Would

Voo like vavothger *lovely* vrink? There are three other people in the workroom. Normally there are four other people in the room, which means that there are five of us when all is well, and today one of us is absent, supposedly because he is sick. I know who it is - we're all aware - but pretend not to notice, but I pretend to notice all the same by sneering in the direction of his empty seat, as does the woman who sits next to me. On a level that is not exactly conscious, it becomes quite clear that we are communicating with one another, this woman and me, two disconnected workers attempting to connect. In a sense, we make one another happen. We are, in a sense, bringing one another into existence by sneering at the empty seat. Our recognition of one another in the face of the absence of an associate, the woman and me - oh, before I go on, let me describe her. Let me put my descriptive powers to work, for the jotting down of thoughts passes the time and makes life come to life as it is told by me. She is squat and tall at the same time, squat when she is sitting, round and flab-stricken and wearing a pink blouse with a pink carnation pinned on her chest. Though when she stands, she towers. One thinks that her husband must be utterly emasculated. One imagines him cowering as she recklessly and spitefully wields her shoe. One imagines him as one imagines a skinny dog with visible ribs in a novel about Existentialism, in which an old man kicks the dog. This is a dialectical relationship in which the dog feels alienated from the master unless it is being kicked. One can't help but admire that novel's truthfulness and unflinching modernity. She smells like good creams. We sneer together at the empty seat. I share her bitterness. In this we are one. We are members of the human team. Such thoughts make we want to curse, in my head of course, for I am at work, so in my head, I say motherfucker, then I imagine a pussy, not hers, though inspired by what I imagine hers might be. On the way to lunch I don't even look at the empty chair. Hear, hear. When I am not working, I do not even notice the empty chair.

We are at lunch and we eat alone. We share a table, but we eat alone. We unwrap our sandwiches from their plastic sheathings and we bite in. Mmmm, we say in our heads. The earth is turning but no one can feel it. Were it to stop, however, that you would feel. Newtonian physics: that's what they mean when they say that. Say I were to move five steps to the right from the lunch table. I would

end up five steps to the right. Tell me, lady, squat and tall, had you a retarded daughter who screamed through the night and drooled for salty burgers in the afternoon, would you hide from yourself, would you cause yourself to vanish? I would, for I then would be nothing more than a process, and I could not live with that for one cannot enter into a dialectical relationship with a driving force. God knows no dialectic. That is why my relationship with the divine is so refreshing. Then we go back to work. The bell has rung. We must move, but we take our time. We'll show them. Alas! We are free people. This day will continue as such for the next five hours. Then we are released, and I get back on the bus, where I nod off into sleep. I always have liked that phrase: nodding off. I nodded off.

And so it goes. This is the way of the world. We do what we do for money, then we get on the bus and we go back home. Has anything else so true ever been stated? No, because money always has existed. When humans first came to this earth there was money, and we fit into its system. We formed with money a dialectical relationship. Money and what we do for money will not go away and will remain true forever. This is what I live for, these moments in which life appears to really be happening, without its illusions. When I return home, indeed, you must admit that it really is happening, this nothing, this desperately stupid silence. The way in which I have decorated my walls, which pleased me at one point, now strikes me as dated, as if I had been entangled in a moment in which modernity seemed truly to exist, but which now has a distinct aesthetic stink. Now that I have come further in time away from the point at which I originally had decorated my walls and truly relished what I had done with them, now I feel stupid about it. Say that my walls are gray, for they are. Now say that I once decided to put up some art to please myself and to feel that I was surrounded by elegant illusions which I believed were *allusions* to the *real*, which is exactly what I did to my walls. I put up art, though I was quite mistaken in believing that I was exploring what was real. I wanted to add a modern touch. I wanted, in fact, modern art to hang up on my walls, so I began with a print of a work by an artist whose name I shall not mention, though I will say that to the layperson, to he or she who is unfamiliar with the subversive and unattainable quality of much modern art, some of these prints I had chosen were scribbles. And I had several prints, several prints

of scribbles that very well could have been created by one's retarded sister. Then I had a magnificent idea, which was to re-contextualize the book, which is something artistic and even more modern, for it brings into question many assumptions we have about the roles of art and of books, and I ripped off the cover of a book I like, a novel, a novel that originally was written in French and which then had been translated into English, and which now is considered quite the classic. The plot includes a romance, a suicide, some class jumping, and military strategy: indeed, the whole breadth of the 19th century dramatic novel, the uncanny social mirror of realism. I hung the cover of said novel beside the modern art, and I thought to myself that by hanging such subversive modern works (scribbles!) beside a book cover of a novel decidedly not modern - even though it had been modern at one time - I had made a new subversive statement, though nothing of the sort was true. I grew sick of the decoration pretty quickly, and now when I return home on a work day like any other, it is the same, the stupidity hasn't changed. I may go out on a limb and use the word ennui, for surely that's why this word exists, though even the word ennui gives me an even greater case of ennui, so I shit myself - not really, but that is the feeling. Life, I think and other big abstract words for which there is no definition, and I go about my thinking. I continue my thinking, my post-work mental exercises, my poetic philosophizing.

I begin like this. I think that it can move one way, though it may move the other. I imagine something that doesn't exist, such as a space, where there is nothing, but which may move as a whole, and I am quite sure at this point that I have come closer to an idea that will change nothing, but which will, nonetheless, force me into a state of divinity, though who am I kidding? I want it, but I shall not have it. Perhaps I'll open a beer. Perhaps I'll look out the window. Perhaps I will touch mine own face while I look out the window. Perhaps I really will imagine this terrible nothing for a little bit longer, which you should admit, really is something beautiful. It is a postmodern idea. It is a stupid idea. There is a story about a man who kicks his dog in the ribs. They need each other. You imagine a woman who is like my sister, on the other hand, and her relationship with my mother and father, and you see how a loving relationship can turn two overwhelmingly competent people into mere processes, and you think that this retarded woman provides

you a wonderful analogy for the modern era.

My life is my life. There is nothing else to it. I do stupid things. I have insane ideas about art and about the subversion of art which really are not so unique. And then I feel horny. I am afraid to leave the house. Perhaps at this point you would like to hear a story. I can tell you about a teacher I had when I was in college. He was a history professor. His focus was Native American history. He had some questions about Louise Erdrich. Her work and its positive reception among critics frustrated him. He felt she was phony, sure, but what does it matter? Could anyone actually get through *The Bingo Palace*? Yes, she wrote other books, but for some reason this is the one that sticks in my mind. As a matter of fact, when I hear her name, when I hear *Louise Erdrich*, I think only of this one novel, *The Bingo Palace*. I imagine a scene in which a man witnesses his own funeral. The rest of the novel I can't remember. I can't remember what he was teaching on this particular day, but he was a big sweaty guy with a wet beard and a checkered shirt and he hammered his fists in the air as he described some injustice, and we were a small class, and we listened to him intently, and when he was through hammering his fists into nothing, he moved his hair away from his face, and he said: What does it matter, you don't care, let's just get back to the lesson. But we did care, and that's why I remember this scene so well. I think this man, this historian who taught at a public university, why, I believe that he witnessed oncoming retardation in our culture, for this was before the dawning of the age of the smart phone, of the living mobile device, though he must have seen the stupidity in mine face, in all of our faces, slack-jawed retards. So when he declared that *The Bingo Palace* and everything that Erdrich ever wrote were fairy tales and that she was helping Native Americans to further vanish, he gave up, frustrated, and did what historians do when they suffer the sensations of the frustrated modern artists: instead of scribbling, they punch at the air!

I don't think myself retarded. That's not what I'm getting at. I am getting at the fact that there is a space, and one can hit it in frustration in the way a modern artist scribbles in frustration. One also may step out of his body for just one moment. Imagine me doing that now, standing on one leg, my head a-swirling. When it happens to me, you see nothing. You might think that I simply

am alone in my apartment, behaving like a knob, sure. What is happening, however, what is happening is that my inner life at this point is becoming more stimulated than what is normal, and it seems to me, from my perspective, at this exact moment, that I am escaping. In the end, this is what we want, to escape our bodies, to become free from our fleshy shells. Yes, we do. That is all we want. I'm healthy when I am alone in my room, standing on one foot, feeling absolutely elated. It is quite clear to me that I have left my body, which is debris, so it is a good thing that I cannot see it, because it would depress me to see the debris in which I had spent so many years and to which I must return.

I am, however, ready to leave this apartment. I want a drink, but first I want to do something different. First, instead of going into the bar and ordering my mocha martini so I can have the chemical whoop and the sluggishness on which I have become dependent, I might walk in some circles and enjoy the night air. To be more specific, it actually is evening air, which, for me, means that the air still is warm, as opposed to the night air, which is noticeably cooler. And the visual effects of the evening air, surely - we all agree that the evening air visuals really are more poetical. Look up there in the sky, as the sun becomes muted orange, and look there: some particles of sky seem to mix like static flakes of snow.

Of course, I really don't see such things. Instead, I imagine that I see such things. I am walking, whee. This is something people like myself enjoy doing so that they might think better, for surely you agree that when are you moving, when you get your legs a-walking, what happens is that the thoughts go at full speed. This action makes me something of an interior dynamo, inside of my head, you understand, so that those who are watching me, they really are thinking that I am only a schlomo who is walking along, getting some air, reflecting on what kind of meat he will have for dinner, when in reality, I am searching for a divine feeling that should make me feel apart from other humans and enable me to escape my hereditary retardation, for when I am concocting my own recipe for divine touch, I feel somehow elevated. I say *somehow* because I could not describe the elevation to you. I might say only that it is moving at one point, and that it is not moving at another and that both phenomena, the mobile and the static, are occurring at once, but its movement and non-movement are so much more

complicated, for the divine must surely be so complex that within each movement are facets of stillness, and within each instance of stillness are facets of movement - how could it not be so? – how much reading have you done about the universe? – it would seem that the side that is moving, it is moving in two directions at once, while the state in which it is not moving may even appear to be moving, though it clearly is static for I say so, for this is what I state, and this is what we're left with, or what I am left with at any rate: a thing, an idea, a universal idea that moves and which does not move at the same time.

Do you remember when I saw the boy in the square standing beside his bicycle and playing with his mobile device? Of course you remember, for it wasn't so long ago. I have returned to this same space, and how strange would it be if the same shaggy haired little monster still were there, which he is not, though it would be strange, but I have returned to this space because I want to, because I think, in my head, that it would be superb were I to find another with whom I could communicate. There always are people in this space, though they are never who I want, they are never the ones with whom I could communicate, though as you probably can imagine, since I have bothered to sit down and tell you such things about my exterior life and my interior life, that things are about to change. There is a moment I want to express. I am now in the square, and I am now looking around. And the evening is not a static thing. You must understand that the evening is a fleeting thing. There have been so many poems written about the fleetingness of the evening, that surely you must accept this as a poetic truth. And if I may, for a moment, explain what I mean by a poetic truth since I have used it so many times, I just want to add that a poetic truth is one which appeals solely to the senses, and as you can imagine, yes, the sensual truth, the poetic truths are the ones we most can count on, so much so that some little brains, some weaker brains, some *retarded* brains might consider that these poetic truths are somehow evidence of the divine in our everyday lives. I am not one of these people. I believe that the divine is in my head and that it is significant.

Now that I have gotten that out of the way, you should imagine me standing in the evening, the fleeting evening that grows darker and darker, and not in a way that light dissipates as the blinds are

drawn; on the contrary, it is in such a way that the colors become more and more fiery, and the odor of the cooking of the buns from a baker on the outside of the square is filling this little part of evening with warmth and deliciousness, and all of the hunger pangs that I don't normally feel, they come back, even though I had a bowl of noodles with some butter and a hamburger from a take-out restaurant, which I neglected to tell you about because it was not important at the time. So in the fleeting evening I stand, with the smell of the hot buns baking for tomorrow's bakery clients, and I spot a fellow who strikes me as the kind of fellow with whom I might like to speak, for he is nothing like me, yet he also is somewhat like me.

That sounds confusing, so please, let me explain that when I say that he is not like me, what I mean is that he is not dressed like me, and at the risk of sounding superficial, it is important that you understand that the way we dress says quite a bit about who we are. Take me, for example; and now you may see me. Take me, my soiled tennis shoes and my corduroy pants and the way my hair hangs around my ears, and even the way my face seems - what? - discolored, pink, exhausted, with horrible wrinkles around my eyes, lips and hooked nose? The truth is that the way one looks is evidence of the kind of life he leads, though I shouldn't have to explain this. It should be something you understand, for surely we all are modern people. And when looking at this fellow (he was sitting on a park bench, hunched forward) I knew that in some sense he was not like me, for he wore a white button-down shirt and his sleeves were rolled up, and he had been out of work for some time, I know, because of how the top of his shirt was unbuttoned and how his tie was loosened, and he was balding at the top of his head, and he had a round figure, and to make him more dramatic to mine gaze, he was sitting on a park bench beneath a streetlight in the fleeting, darkening evening, but the thing is that he was older than me, I would say by about ten years, so, of course, considering the way he was dressed and his age, I had every right to assume that he was well established in some capacity. Why, he even could have been the kind of man who would have been my boss, and not the floor supervisor, for even I could be a floor supervisor after a few years, but not the fellow in the Barkbeirs' suit from the home office who drops by the gray room with the dust where we work once a

month to make sure that things are going his way, or the way in which his boss or his boss's boss or his boss's boss's boss prefers. Yes, there was a distance between me and the fellow on the bench, there is no doubt. So how could I say that he was like me? How do I have the right? I'll tell you. I say that he was like me because he was hunched forward. It looked as if there was something heavy on his mind. As a matter of fact, it seemed to me that he was pained with thoughts so large that he barely could stand them. Oh, he was so pained by such terribly heavy thoughts that he could not even wear his suit jacket, which was over the back of the bench, and he was hot from that terrible weight, so he had to roll up his sleeves, and he was so pained that he sweated and the light above him, that white light that came on automatically, perhaps, about an hour before, when the terrible, fragrant evening released its spell again on the world, its poetic beauty - oh, that light - it turned him into quite an actor, and perhaps this was where I felt that we were similar, for I too am an actor. I decide that I would like to experience divine feelings and I make them happen. I play-act. This is the route of my existence, this is how I get from A to B, and this also is how I define A and B. We were both such sad and sorry actors, for this also is how I see myself, sad and sorry, that I wanted to approach him and ask him about his sadness, his sorryness, but what could I say? Which reason could I use to address a man, who in another sense, I was sure, was not the least bit similar to me? When I was younger and spent much time in my room, as I do now, I never had a drive or an inch of ambition. Instead, I felt that the world was so large that I would crumble under its weight should I even attempt to approach it, an irrational fear, but a fear nonetheless that I never was able to overcome. My sister moaned in the next room. When I smelled the beef frying, I knew she would begin to whinny. The first time I saw her modern scribbles, I practically cried. I did cry. I took one into the garage where I majestically snotted onto it. I am a majestic fountain of feelings and statements. I imagine he was a different kind of young man who kicked the shins of his classmates and put his hands in the girls' nylon pants.

So my idea was to linger around him for a little. I thought that perhaps he would notice me. Look at me now, or, look at us now. For here we are in the park in the evening that is closer and closer to losing its magic. He is on the bench. I am lingering around the bench.

My hands are in my pockets, and I am wondering if he knows that I have tuned into him. When it comes to speaking to people, trying to express myself, letting my feelings and thoughts loose on them, I am terrible. It simply is something that seems nearly impossible for me, the idea of stating my purpose and then following through, so I suppose that's what is happening now. I am wondering if perhaps he will notice me first and ask me if I he can help in any way. Perhaps I am looking for directions to get to some place. But he seems so self-absorbed, and I cannot blame him because I know exactly how that must feel, to be locked inside of yourself, trying to figure the ends of problems to which there are no solutions. Believe me, so much of my life has been spent between the proverbial rock and the hard place that I have determined simply to believe in two things at once, which I have explained to you, and which you no doubt know. But now I have become so aware of myself, waiting for him to notice me, that I get the fear. I get the fear, it rustles inside of me, and certainly it is time for one to go to another place.

Quickly I escape from the square, where that gentleman who is like me, and who is not like me, pouts. I go to the only place, other than my own gray room or the gray room in which I work, where I feel comfortable, which is the bar, where I can order my mocha martini. I give the bartender a 10 for an eight dollar drink so that I can leave a two dollar tip and continue to receive instant service and I sit down in a wooden booth and I sip and feel the sting, the rush, the sluggishness, and then I return home. At some point I fall to sleep and have a dream that takes place in the basement of a house. I simply know that it is a basement because it is damp and cool and feels below, but I am not in it. I watch from above, an out of basement experience. A large woman with sweaty breasts in a white nightie is lying on the floor. I think she is having nightmares. I am aroused. I want to ask her about her nightmares and perhaps even share my own, but she doesn't wake. Or rather, I wake before she does.

And my life continues as I already have described it, and I feel no need to go on describing it as I already have, though I do so anyway. I do so for the sake of continuity, and I do so because I want to communicate something. Really what it is I want to communicate is this difference or separation between what it is that happens inside of my head versus that which actually does happen

externally and how one affects the other. No, this isn't quite correct; it's not what I want to express at all. I will try to move in a different direction, one that can help to explain, in terms perhaps abstract, exactly what it is that happens when that divine phenomenon, which is what I have already explained, about how one aspect may continue to move in two directions at once, and how the other is more or less static, but also might appear to move. Let us take, for example, the prints of the scribbles that I hang on my wall. If it will help you to feel the continuity of the piece, I would have no problem allowing you to imagine me on the bus the next day, traveling to work, looking out the window at the passing maples and birches as I imagine the frustrated scribbles of modern art swallowing up the nature in transport, seeing the road turn. A tree turns from one tree to another as the bus goes, so I experience the sensation that I am watching the same tree pass again and again. Superimposed over the image of the same tree appearing again and again is a reflection of my face. More specifically, it's the corner of my eye that I can see, and I am deep in thought. My interior world at this point is positively transformative as I imagine these scribbles, these pieces of famous modern art with which you no doubt already are familiar. They represent for me the turning from sense into nonsense, which is why I like them so much, though what's so intriguing to me, now that I come to think of it, is that this transformation, in culture, in the world, in the universe, is actually no movement at all. I mean that it is a transformation, a change that in no way can be documented. You have heard all of this before because you, for listening to me, are not retarded.

Why don't we talk about the weekends? Surely, I have weekends just like everybody else who goes to work in their gray dusty rooms during the week, which means that on a Saturday or a Sunday, I might get on the bus, and I may see the maples and the birches as they jet past the window, my face superimposed on the glass. I am not going into that quiet space, that gray room with dust where I make things happen. On the contrary, I am going to a noisy place, the weekend place. You see, I have a family. I already have made this clear. Like most other people who have families, I am indebted to them even though they have become mere processes, or at best, purveyors of processes. We might even say that they are alienated from themselves in the same way that the workers are

alienated from themselves and from their work and from the fruit they reap and consume. For the love of God, they have a retarded daughter, 33 years old, who can do nothing but whinny for sliders and scribble brilliant art that is symbolic of the modern age. Will she be remembered? No. Will a person buy her works, even out of charity? No. The brilliance of her works runs deep. Imagine me getting off of the bus. Imagine me filled with impeccable sadness. Oh, imagine me attempting to step outside of myself, to fill myself with the divine in order to no longer have to deal with the terminal pain of living in this flesh debris my parents gave me, the garbage of existence. The dust is everywhere in specks and it even obscures the naked air. So why do I go there then? This is a question I ask myself each time I visit this house, for wouldn't I be more comfortable at home in my little room, staring at my subversive scribbles, working out the poetical philosophy that might come to define my relationship with reality and perhaps even the relationship of the public with the reality? You would like me to describe my house from the outside? I won't do it. I won't let the bird go free. Inside the poetic bird symbol is a rat with wings. A pigeon! My parents, who are anxious and who run back and forth, preparing one slider after another, flipping one miniature patty after another, squirting the condiments that make comical wet fart sounds, and a sister who is retarded and who drools on the bib - why do I subject myself to such discomfort? I do know, though I pretend not to know in order to mystify what I already have demystified, which is that I am part of a dialectical relationship with them. I am the dog with visible ribs from the Existentialist novel. Don't feel sorry for me. I will divine energy. It moves and does not move all the same. This family is not mine as easily as it is.

There never is anyone else on the bus, or perhaps there is and they simply don't matter to me so I smoke them, whee. I am about to enter into a dialectical relationship which is, in my opinion, something that transcends the debris of my typical existence, since these are people with whom I share certain biological features that unnerve me to think about. My father's nose for instance, is hooked just like mine, and when my sister cries for sliders and rattles her marker cup then scribbles in brilliant frustration, I feel that I am spinning, for really it is me who is making the art. This will not be pleasant. Transcendence is not always pleasant. As I force the

divinity through my body, and especially without the chemical enhancement of the mocha martini, and it can be a frightful and painful experience. Nevertheless, I proceed. I make sure that I have all of my documents, for I do bring documents to show my family members sometimes. The truth of the matter is that when I go to visit my family members, it often is not simply to spend time with them and to participate in this dialectical relationship. Instead, I also come to communicate with them, my sister in particular, who, of all people, should stop her incessant nonsense about the burgers and listen, for her scribbles tear free the bird, or some such nonsense, but there is beauty in stupidity. Surely, you are not retarded, so you understand why a philosophically minded person like me might latch on so tightly to his symbols. It never works the way I want it to, as I'm sure you can imagine. When you think about who it is that I am dealing with, a retard, then surely you understand that there is not much in the way of communication. She is incapable of understanding the complexities of a universe in which duality is the only singularity. And then there are my parents, and they I already have explained to you, how they have become processes, how they are alienated from themselves and from the work they perform for her, how they run around, providing sliders for the retarded girl, my sister in the bib. I enter the house where my family lives and I smell immediately the beef on the stove top from the endless fucking sliders, and in the background that warm under-odor of shits. I hate it. When I am in this house I have to escape. Look at my mother now, chubby and bubbly, who tries to wrap her hand around my wrist and asks me how my recent poetical philosophizing has been going. Oh, it's just a hobby, I tell her. But we're so proud of you for having such an energetic philosophical mind. Yes, I imagine she would be proud, though the problem is that I cannot communicate my ideas to her. Behind the clouds of white steam that come a-chugging up from the stove, there is my father. He sits at the table and plays with his fingers. He's a butter eater, which is to say that he uses the little cub knife to scoop pieces of butter from the stick and he puts them into his mouth, one little lump (or cub) at a time, and he says that my sister is upstairs if I want to read my philosophies to her, and I tell him that I know, because that's where she always is. The first time I called her a retard to his face, he slapped my face and I had the sensation that

my self was leaving its debris. I can escape myself to get this slider dinner over as quickly as possible. Your sister is upstairs, says my mother. I know that, I say. That's where she always is. Then I punch the air to communicate my frustration. We lay around in the living room. Television is turned on. I don't watch the television. I have no interest in it. Would Voo Vike to Vink avout What Voovses at Voo Virections Vat Vonce? My father is lying on top of a satin camel. He releases tender flatulence. Fucker. Mother fucker. My sister's squealing upstairs. I can hear. Something is going to blow up inside of me, nothing is going to blow up inside of me. It's a ball that is still, moving surfaceward, leftward and rightward. It is still.

Mother cools her face by waving her hand and says that I should go upstairs and read to my sister. Do you see how my identification changes when I am in the house with my family? Do you see how I become enwrapped in the dialectic? I don't want to go upstairs, I tell mother, because sister won't understand a word of what I say, which is my way of entering into a fiery debate in which mother tells me that what I say is not true, and I argue with her. It most certainly is true, I tell her. My sister is a great symbol to my philosophical brain, which is capable of capturing the duality of the entire universe in multiple scales, and she is a frustrated retard who cries for the burgers, miniature burgers at that, sliders! She is a symbol of man's future of mental retardation. She is not a symbol, she is your sister, says my father; come here while I punch your face. She is a symbol, I insist, and she disgusts and frightens me. Of course, when I think about all of this in retrospect, it does not match my telling so much. Instead, you might see me as I climb up the stairs, and you might see me as I take one step at a time, all a-trembling for the genius approacheth the woman who always has seemed so large to him in her dumbness. All she's doing is scribbling, a great genius, a retard. The smell of beef burns on the stove. I can get on my knees with her, and I can do the same as her and create frustration with my pale and capable Caucasian hands.