

Demographics, or, The Hats They Are Allowed to Wear

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for my oldest friends Alex & Bill & Ed

&

for my daughter Desirée my son Jody & my grandson Jonah as all things should be

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I

REFERENCE

She was or is representative of the shadow created by her opaqueness. The music that appeared whenever she appeared was not created by her. What she saw was never the same as what they saw. It was their responsibility to position the frame around her.

PANEL

No longer possible to ignore what is outside the boundaries. No longer possible to discount the numbers missing from the sequence. No longer possible to speak only inside of the frame. No longer possible to think that color is only something added to the surface.

TRIBE

The facts about the tracks grew into a forest where all the trails met. Behind the forest a piece of paper was covered with adhesive. In the foreground a hundred hands sprouted from the ocean. Each one had a name of its own.

CIRCUIT

Was turned around with it facing the goat and then the sky and then the remains of the barn. In the little holes a small song sang. She removed first sections of the road and then the forest itself, placing them on the side where the little hands could not reach. She used her own face cleansed of its shadings as the caption.

REACH

No longer able to differentiate between the different differences. Sometimes it was the hands or the feet or the colors of the eyes. At other times it was the depth of the forest behind them or the shadows cast by the unconnected lines. Even the frame itself was able to create more differences than it was able to control.

BALANCE

The camera does not see the fear that fills the corners of the room. The train he pulls inside is from a different negative. At each window a smiling man holds a pig. There is also a door that does not work.

SACRIFICE

Sometimes enough goat to make the forest mean. An axle tossed between the hands of moss, the fists of rock, the boat left behind by the damaged waters.

POETICS

Conscious of the page itself. Able to dig tunnels between the lines and follow them deeply into the shadows the words cast. It is no longer enough to drag the voice behind. It must be given legs enough to lead the reader deeper than she has ever gone before.

FORMAT

Had more canal than lotion. More river than beam. There was a stand closing. A peg to land upon. Three scissors reflecting the early bite. And when the drain paused they fell inside. Not ocean there that could not be stopped. Only lines of stain.

DESCRIPTION

How the hands twisted the sky until it rang ferrets and trembling mushrooms. How the moon was sliced into a soft red rain. How the mouth was pushed through the hole first with the shiny body barely able to be counted. How the surface was actually at the center of the concept that pulled them all inside. How the edge of the tale just fit into the mouth that spoke it.

ENCLOSURE

The hand is replaced with a sequence of colors that imitates the patterns of lifting. The voice is given a handle by which it can be moved to the center of the ocean. The sky can be replaced but not duplicated by the taller of the mountains. The name given to the system resembles the surface of the system itself.

PASSAGE

After the voice is given a man the two are pasted along the horizon behind the king's troops. There is a green that the advance guard understands to be forest and a purple that they do not understand at all. The women who follow along just out of sight are given the names of flowers. The meat remains inside the animals until it is needed.

NATIVITY

Light. Plants. Table. A hand removed and placed in the stable. There he grows filling the slow light. There is a night outside. A window opens full with music.

SURFACE

The red green was greener than the green red. There were yellow lines that changed where there was. The frame resembled the outline of a famous island. It was signed for the deaf.

Buoy

What the boat is. How the hat slumbers there. How the line becomes an outline of the ocean.

Touch

Are you able to touch it? The clouds were filled with arms and legs. The pail they wore was also a surface for the stubborn wind. They were able to rest there but only as slowly as the numbers came. The fifth room was also the first or the second or the third. The fourth room was worn out before it could be taken apart. There were wings there waiting for a new animal to hold them down.

II

THE NEXT DAY

More of them turned away. It was the next day. The trees were sewn into a sky. They waited for the fires to be closed. The watchman watched their eyes. Tires rolled across their sight. Others saw the night where the sea had left. There were dogs inside the bag. The hat was crushed into a man. They tagged the swans that flew inside. The boat resembled the shadow of a hand. There were toys inside the goat. Each was tied to its own end.

CONTAINS

The container contains what it contains. The train changes when it is put inside. The smoke was painted on the sky. There were dogs where benches once were placed. Inside a box was sewn from blood. It carried each moment into the next.

FORMS

How the air formed streams that pushed the separate animals away. How in each stream a separate name was given to each turn and twist and hesitation. How separate colors marked each stream. How at each ending a different man was waiting. How the numbers each spoke became legend to the animals. How the animals themselves were sewn together and became the distant surface that resembled sky.

DISTANCE

Listen to the hand. The forest knows it. The cars are placed where the roads are drawn. Planes are hung or are supported by the mountains. The mountains can be moved around. Several men adjust the angles. They rely upon the surface to give them sense. The voices are different near each tree. This gives them tales to tell around the fires. No one knew when they first began.

STRATA

The water went below the surface forming a new surface. What they saw was not what was there. A face can be made to resemble the sky it reflects. When there are many faces the sky itself disappears. Comparison is a hand turned in upon itself. It grasps a moment during the changing and holds it fast. This is all that we are allowed to view.

DEPTH

How cold it becomes inside the grave. Her eyes were once their eyes. His face was placed beside her. They speak with a distance that turns into scripture. The wood has almost disappeared. The earth still retains its shape.

SPEAKING

The smaller hand placed next to or perhaps inside of it. The smaller boat unable to float except inside the dog. The stamp taller than the rest and leaving circles beside it. The way was filled with dreams that would not move. It was a foot when it was younger and filled with air. The paper always smaller than the rumors it contained. Their dance the one the women filled with wounds. This portion of the potion a separate thing that crumbled when it sang. A clock was waiting at the colors that counted in their plans. The taller head no longer filled with speaking.

System

Doesn't the air push the man down? Doesn't the ocean breathe bright fishes? Doesn't the woman listen to her own ear? Doesn't the light return inside the cattle? Isn't what is eaten always closed? Isn't the voice a hand for the ages? Isn't time always after everything we understand? Isn't it night also inside of the animal? Doesn't the distance compare us to the clouds? Doesn't the second always imply the first as well as the third? Doesn't the chair sit in its own place between the two people? Doesn't it end when the word disappears? Aren't we left in the room the wind leaves behind? Aren't we allowed rest only when the rest are understood?

CIRCLE

Each chair where it was left. He moves the air and then sits down. The chairs reluctantly form a town where others sit as well. Each tells a tale about the room that fell outside their minds. Eventually one understands each one is blind.

Mirror

That is forbidden or forgotten. That is waiting or weighted. That is charged or changed. That is secret or sacred. That has lights or lines. That is blue or blown. That has seams or scenes. That has sides or sky. That has hands or handles. That has eyes or ice. That is spoken or broken. That is found or formed. That divides or divines. That forms the sum or sun.

SCOPE

This is not a bag it is a hand. This is not a box it is cold. This is not a blue one. This is not filled with lion. This is not what the animals announce. This is not time it is a flower. This is not surface it reaches through to the other side. This is not a light the circle can touch it. This is not where the sentence ends.

LEGEND

This is where the boat went. The arrows are not applied to the landscape. This is where the water came from. The numbers are an arbitrary condition that no one else should be concerned with. The lines correspond to the journeys of those who have disappeared. They become dotted where the uncertainty begins. They disappear at our starting point. We no longer have the knowledge to make more boats. Our minds can only fabricate the distances that lie ahead. We step into the future until it covers us all.

REPRESENTATIONS

This was a man filled with stones. This was supposed to be the sky. This was an iron menaced by bears. This was a ball made of feet. This was a bag filled with worms. This was supposed to be the cart the dead man drove. This was the edge of what could be represented. This a room that permitted no light. This one also was the same. There were three others that could not be explained.

STANDING FORCES

Who remain as women when the background is changed and the dogs are brought out of the earth.

SYNAPSE

This was the way they spoke. There were no trees or clouds or sky. This was what they saw. There were more of them running between their eyes. This was what they tasted. The ocean had closed upon the dog. This was what they touched. The fire tore apart their clothes.

Work

With hands it became possible again. There were no women in the forest. The sky was full of deer he could not stop. The tool fell from his hand as time passed.

ENTRANCE

When the houses moved the sky was no longer the same. It still held each tree in place but now each tree wore a different face. There were faces on the rocks as well that swelled in size whenever a separate wind passed by. No one spoke with a separate voice. The choice of color remained inside each separate eye. Ice arrived whenever the sun departed. The stars remained the same. They were fastened each to each with links of chain that only could be seen in dreams. It seemed that way at least until the animals returned. Each one lifted a separate urn into the sacred place. There was space for many more. At least until someone closed the door.

AGENDA

Some of them given ears or a stick with frogs attached. Some of them resting inside the forest or furnace. Some of them eating the pigs or the horizon. Some of them removed or retraced in a new position.

JUSTICE

How the light rearranges each witness. How their clothes are preserved inside the great chamber. How the animals are described with the traits of metal objects. How each sound they make corresponds to a blow of the weapon.

III

DINING

Formal delineations separating the tuxedo. The moment before disaster the moment of dining. Four of them with glasses not yet resolved. Their mouths all that is seen inside the troubled room.

POTION

How the cup calls out for its kin the raccoon. How the three hairs are what the water misses. How there is sky at the bottom of each rabbi's pocket. How the arm is a substitute for the smothering fire.

REMAINS

Only the man closing. Only the tree filled with hands. Only the animal with a face made of gold. Only the automobile made out of clay. Only the surface that was shaped like blood. Only the kite the volcano devoured. Only the woman sewn with desire. Only the afternoon where no colors took. Only the edge that formed their whole body. Only the vegetables that walked away. Only the color that they knew was inside.

CANVAS

The line is divided for four of them to speak. Each arc envelops the other three. The difference in meaning is one of distance. The one that covers the most ground is stretched the thinnest before the pegs can be applied.

Excess

Has more ants than the hand in the picture. Has more doors than the plans require. Has more sky than the ocean can reflect. Has more earth than can be counted. Has a person who can not be returned.

VIEW

They were found in the river without their hands. The sky was heavier than it was large. The little animals had come from all around. No one heard the whisperers before they arrived. Someone had taken the color from the surrounding land as well. Once it was removed the distance could be seen again.

TOTAL

Most of the wall was on top of the hill. Most of the animals remained behind it. Most of the sky was on top of them. Most of the clouds could not be seen.

IDENTITY

Who are mistaken for others and turned inside out. Who are mistaken for others and painted with glass. Who are mistaken for others and given furs with their animals still attached. Who are mistaken for others and removed from their garments of clay. Who are mistaken for others and given shadows that they do not resemble. Who are mistaken for others and are named in the explanations. Who are mistaken for others and placed deeper inside. Who are mistaken for others and placed deeper inside. Who are mistaken for others and are never seen again.

PELTS

Defects in the animal become defects in the garment. Only the elders can wear them out. Eventually another skin shows that belongs to the men themselves. It is marked so that the animal inside can come out. Each man has his own animal inside. Sometimes the outer garment is also made to resemble it, but it is only a man's own skin that can be trusted to hold the truth. The first man who caused his skin to lie became an outcast, and thus the leader of us all.

CONGREGATION

Who are refused by the shadows and by the man without a head and by the potion made of bark and by the edge of the horizon and by the bestial librarian and by the machine filled with ants and by the hand that was sewn together and by the plants that were slanted and by the paint made of paper and by the sofa the forest wore and by the words that decorated the blind woman's walls

METAPHOR

The surface divided into shadows the roof craves. There are seven points where no one can survive. Beneath each a ghost of angles plies its trade. One of them points animals into the sky. Another allows water to fill each conceptual room. Something surfaces just as the mind learns to hold the water back. It is the solution to the problem of divisive metaphor. They tie it down and drag it off before we can read the clues tattooed on its underbelly.

THIS TIME

This time the hand is made of clouds. The sky is a huge animal whose breathing has stopped. The climbers when they arrive are composed of different colors. One of them has forgotten to attach his lifeline. He is the only one who does not fall. He is constructed from a system made of hesitations. Each time he tries to speak a different pause emerges to smother his incentive. The hesitations are named after the settlements the river never returned.

MATERIAL

They have a hand the car needs. They have an animal no boat should be without. They have the tree that encircles the salad. They have a face made of olives. They have the water the child drew on the faded wall. They have a wing that no one can recognize. They have the stone that broke the colored glass. They have another sofa just like the first. They have a motion that causes the flesh to flame. They have a name that can make anyone brave.

ANATOMY

The hand devoured by sunlight. The arm placed between the sheets. The body filled with tiny seeds. The neck tied into a tree. The head painted yellow. The face covered with features. The hair removed and replaced with water. The shadow only then noticed.

DIRECTION

There were more cards than hands. The dice were swallowed by the table. Inside of each eye the possibilities were endless. There was a figure of a man that they moved around and around. No one knew why the money was important. Nonetheless they kept it intact.

NARRATIVE

The vehicle stopped where the page ended. Turning the leaf did not help. The forest of text allowed no room for the road to begin again. When we see them next they are bobbing up and down on a dark lake beneath a map of stars that has not yet found its moon.

Music

This was the song the sailors sang. Three hands on the blood red sun. This was the song the maidens sang. The shadows cast by the heavy air. This was the song the children sang. Four fires inside of a single man. This was the song the ancients sang. The fat birds captured by the fox. This was the song the farmer sang. The cave was filled with hungry ice. This was the song the teacher sang. The mushroom rings were closing now. This was the song the artist sang. A woman's outline on the floor. This was the song the rabbit sang. The thread led everywhere.

PLATOONS

There are men who are placed along the mountain to hold the clouds up. There are men filled with feathers to insure the coming of the night. There are men painted with stripes to give the jungle depth. There are men nailed together to cover the air. There are men who remain because they resemble the water. There are men the soil rejects where no system can be found. There are men allowed surface because they look like other men. There are men formed with no mouths so that the stories can continue. There are men who are able to change because they are no longer men. There are men who correspond to the hats they are allowed to wear.

THE STORY

Less lace where she supposed the story began. Fewer touches between the beginning and the destination. A car embedded in the subtle twistings that the plot commanded. Her own desire not reflected in the lines allotted to the others. Their surface the texture that made this story different. The other stories like shadows surrounding her if she dared to rest at all.

Tour

There are trees that hide the singers from the garden. No one still knows the lesson of the mountain. They dwell instead inside a lake or highway. The tracks turn suddenly to prevent the passengers from getting a good view. The extra passengers are nailed to the outside of the car. This prevents the sky from touching them too harshly.

PROCESSION

This time the room returned empty. There were men pasted to its outer wall. No one knew who had shaved the animals. They were lined up according to the shape of their bodies.

EXPEDITION

Thinner words were used to make the room large. It became the largest room the mind could hold. A woman walking there discovered her own hands. They were busy doing something she did not understand.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Who doesn't understand why they have not returned with the stripes. Who doesn't need a bucket to fill the zebra. Who cannot speak between the yellow buildings. Who did not wait for the crack to appear. Who gave a name to the plant waiting between their bodies. Who were speaking when the others heard them. Who were counted separately once they were whole. Who were forgotten once their hands had disappeared. Who knew that time would return inside the red car. Who tapped their feet on the entrance to the ocean. Who flew once the music had been trapped. Who were part of the system that had not been given numbers. Who held the page against the rushing air. Who found a tear in their only bodies. Who had a dance engraved on their shoes. Who were

waiting where the four states were burning. Who found the map left by the swollen road. Who were different then.

LIGHT

There was light inside of the rabbi's pocket. There was light fastened to the monkey's leg. There was light pasted on the door to the refinery. There was light hidden under the baker's hat. Three lights were found beneath the priest's cassock. A light that did not work was buried next to the barn. Half a light was drawn by the child with no knees. A new light was rising from inside the book. The man who was found dissected had discovered his own light. They were able to see it on the other side of the valley. As the sky grew lighter no one could remember its old name. They found pieces of light wherever they went. It made them remember every step. They returned the light when there was no one else to share it with.

OBJECTS

The objects can be moved around without respect to their singular properties. Each can be made to cast a specific shadow that is able to retrieve a memory or two. Their names are not uniformly known. The memories that can be retrieved are often memories of things that happened only in their dreams.

ADVENT

Examined the window and found it without meaning. Took the clouds away from the dreamers and made them simple. Placed the door against the mountain where the rocks had bled. Drew a simple line to connect the remaining limbs.

Progress

When they are given the power they abuse it. The list of plants they can describe is long. They carve their names onto the stick they beat the dreamers with. The blood that falls nourishes nothing. They move into a room that no one else can see.

REMOVALS

The church and its people disappeared once her hands were removed from each other. She sighed when he removed his hand. When she removed her hands he could see again. They were all afraid he would remove his hand from the button. A hand was used to remove the dust that had gathered on the sculpture. The sculptor's hands were removed by someone who did not understand their meaning. No one knew how to remove the hands that were attached to the mountain. They remembered the shape of her hands even after they were removed from sight. Someone else's hands removed the gloves that she had removed from her own hands.

FEAR

In the abbey where the monks died. In the river that had no bottom. On the mountain that was always filled with shadow. In the jungle where the plants spoke. In the factory where a second cellar was discovered. In the shop where they sold the shrunken creatures. On the road that tilted strangely. In the book that had extra pages inserted. On the clock that was filled with the wrong numerals. In the stains on the coat hidden under the bed. Behind the picture that showed nothing but wall. Inside of the car buried beneath the house. Between trees that seemed wrongly the arranged. On top of the ground where no one could sleep. Inside of the air they were unable to breathe. All over the surface they refused to touch.

SEEKERS

This time the trees formed a chapel or slaughterhouse or pier where the boats were afraid to go. They listened to the air moving past them and grew afraid for all the things they did not know. The mirrors were attached so that they would be recognized before they could be seen. They had been here once before inside a song. That was why they stayed so long.

CRONES

They were at table in a tedious fable that presented them to the sky. Their voices were the voices of old ships tossed deep beneath the sea. They assumed the identity of careful people who resembled you and me. The sea lied to them each time it poked the shore. There were more of them later tied to stakes outside the store.

RAIN

It was the way the rain was adjusted. They moved across the valley that was pasted on the map. Each of them had a line to speak that they could draw with. The river was not a river yet but they could see it in the valley. They put the animals into it to make them disappear. The rain was becoming something else but they had no time to wait. One of them rolled their world into a tight tube that was carried away. Where it had hung for so long the phenomenon of stars was just beginning to take place.

IV

SIGHTS

The lake is placed so that its waters seem to fall but don't. They hide instead behind the trees that look like men. The underbrush is actually composed of small animals that no longer move. Each is inscribed with the name of the president of an obscure country. The inscriptions are not visible unless you use the glasses you were given at the entrance.

SPRING

The forest was arranged so that the light became a constant. Somewhere deep inside it a building was used to rearrange the animals. The water that flowed beneath it was filled with their voices when it emerged. No one knew when or where it would emerge. It became an event by which their time could be contracted or enlarged.

IF

If they had learned the lesson of the stick or the ocean or if they had assembled themselves from the sky that was left over or if the name they were given was your name but they had no idea how to use it or if the buildings you remembered were only the shadows that they cast when they emerged from their last bodies or if they arrived only after you were no longer able to remember or if you were all that remained after the sky had crushed them all beneath its own unbelievable weight

ACTION

The ocean in a car. The sky pasted to a cactus. The wind sewn between her waiting arms. There was fire again once they tried to see it. There was a man who could speak outlined on the broken house. Not a single machine was left untouched by the women. They had expected to grow again but instead were made to cover the entire surface.

PATTERNS

The laced up lizard. The stomach of the famous cow. The fingers removed from the second parking attendant. The hair that the heiress found disturbingly similar. The false eye that had fooled the rodents. The remains of the snake that had just been eaten. The surface the separate tigers rubbed themselves against. The vocal chords that had so disturbed the japanese. The remaining bees that would not fit into the hive.

OCEAN

There was also a man placed inside the outline of a small boy and a boy placed in the outline of a car and a car placed where the house once had an outline of its own.

CHART

Certain objects becoming charged with meaning. The sky heavier or lighter depending on who else is in the room. The numbers available to them remaining as code even after they are used. The separation of the people the only reason for returning to the surface.

GEOGRAPHY

There was a circle where the tower was built. There were three circles where the wife changed into salt. There was a square where the tablets were broken. A line was all that was left after the boat sailed by. The triangles indicated the place where the murders took place. A single dot represented the eye of the serpent. The mountain where the sacrifice didn't occur was the only horizon they were allowed.

GOATS AT REST

There were hands that replaced the trees and a sky that replaced the boat and several cars that acted as clouds to balance the earth. The numbers recovered from the obvious sequence formed a mountain that left them in shadow most of the day. It was the arrangement of the outbuildings that gave this particular section its only name.

V

NIGHT

Money replaces compassion when it is had. The man who drives is driven by desire. There is a different night for every man who enters it. Certain women can be placed where the journey ends.

EXIT

Nobody wants to hear the fat lady sing. The room is full of ceiling that they have to push away. One of them is able to understand the machine. It was a table until it was turned on.

DECOY

Too much time spent to arrange the ducks. The hat adjusted without any light to guide it. The boat an obstacle to the other man. His wings not yet long enough to use.

STATEMENT

The dog was shaped like a boat when it returned. They hoisted it out of the dream and left it lying on the bed. They say that we were lovers then. In the cold forest a line of cars was added to the distance. But we could not return. The professor's lesson had exhausted itself. The walls of the classroom were removed to allow another system to enter. Its depth found us whenever we were alone.

SYMPTOMS

In my cousin's story it continued to rain. I had something like legs to move between the lines the page contained.

EXTENT

The same room always different. The different people passing through always the same. There is a seat, or there are seats, or there is nowhere to sit at all. Someone speaks when the shadows ask them to. Everyone else is covered with light.

MAN

One can not require the hands to move. There is no difference between coat and close. The man sitting is the same man long ago. He had many shadows then.

PLACE

A man and then a woman together in that place. Their hands busy with each other. Remembering nothing but that place. Not even the fruit able to give them a different knowledge. The serpent only something they told their children because they didn't want to mention the other thing.

AREA

Like drinking soda or beer for breakfast. The yard shrinking as they grow older, then getting larger again. The height of the sky controlling their emotions. The yard next door not theirs to imagine.

quale (kwa-lay): Eng. n 1. A property (such as hardness) considered apart from things that have that property. 2. A property that is experienced as distinct from any source it may have in a physical object. Ital. pron.a. 1. Which, what. 2. Who. 3. Some. 4. As, just as.



