

12/13 Boy in the bubble meets girl in the rubble.

Violence attends the alphabet from getgo. R as B with it's bottom blown out.

Brrrrrr!

Now is the winter of our discontinent...

Amidst the massacre reports, page 2 of the *Messenger* advertises a \$5,000+ totally bling'd-out Chanel handbag. *First I look at the purse...*

Désouvrement. Unclasping. Disbursement. Gauzes passed through a very small ring.

#### THE DACCA GAUZES

...for a whole year he sought  
to accumulate the most exquisite  
Dacca gauzes.

– Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

Those transparent Dacca gauzes  
known as woven air, running  
water, evening dew:

a dead art now, dead over  
a hundred years. "No one  
now knows," my grandmother says,

"what it was to wear  
or touch that cloth." She wore  
it once, an heirloom sari from

her mother's dowry, proved  
genuine when it was pulled, all  
six yards, through a ring.

Years later when it tore,  
many handkerchiefs embroidered  
with gold-thread paisleys

were distributed among  
the nieces and daughters-in-law.  
Those too now lost.

In history we learned: the hands  
of the weavers were amputated,  
the looms of Bengal silenced,

and the cotton shipped raw  
by the British to England.  
History of little use to her,

my grandmother just says  
how the muslins of today  
seem so coarse and that only

in autumn, should one wake up  
at dawn to pray, can one  
feel that same texture again.

One morning, she says, the air  
was dew-starched: she pulled  
it absently through her ring.

So sang the late and much lamented Aga Shahid Ali in *The Half-Inch Himalayas*.  
He closes "Ghazal," from another of his books, *A Nostalgist's Map of America*, with these  
lines:

They ask me to tell them what "Shahid" means –  
Listen: it means "The Beloved" in Persian, "Witness" in Arabic.

Since his death, Shahid has come to mean, for you: "Absent," and "Present."

It's five months after the Deutsche Bank fireclosure, and the NYFD has yet to sign off on a program of safety recommendations, hence no deconstruction lo in all dis time.

"We are not going to get into too much of this, but I can say concerns are being addressed," said Commissioner Scopetta after a City Council hearing on *why, why, why* the Department failed to inspect the hulk as mandated, resulting in a botched attempt to fight a blaze that claimed two firefighters. ...*Wearin' your high-heel shoes, an' a low-neck sweater, get back home Scopetta...*

Lower Manhattan Development Corporation namechange. As of Jan. 1, 2008, it's official: Lower Manhattan Désouvrement Corporation. The organization's watchword, however, remains unchanged: "The LMDC declined to comment."

Janus: god-protector of doors and gateways. He begins as an emissary of light, opens the sky at daybreak and closes it at night. Eventually he evolves into a general-purpose deity of beginnings and endings, entrances and exits, depicted as looking both toward past and future – the double-faced image that appears on Roman coins. Near the forum, the Romans built Janus a temple. According to legend, its doors were kept open during wars and locked when Rome was at peace – an event which occurred only four times from the earliest kings until the reign of Augustus.

In Julian and Gregorian calendars, Janus, as a month, represents the end of one year and the beginning of another. And then there are Janitors – persons charged with presiding over domestic comings and goings.

But who needs Janitors when the doors are blown off? And who's to blame?



Dita Alangkara/Associated Press

Al Gore said that the U.S. was to blame for the stalled Bali talks.

Dot earth has found its belov'd Witchfinder Generall.

*Koom lah rayati yafati, ulehi lah*

*Arise my beloved, my beauty, come away!*

Neither snow, nor sleet, nor bloom of blight... Nearly overlooked in your mailbox, a self-effacing little mouse of a letter whose indicia reads: Presorted, Standard, U.S. Postage, PAID, Citibank.

The face of the letter is printed in stars and stripes colors and bears in the white space to the left two corporate logos: the red Citi umbrella and next to it, the strange, stylized, origami-like American Airlines "eagle."

Your name and address alright, beneath which :

The Citi<sup>®</sup> Gold / AAdvantage<sup>®</sup> World MasterCard<sup>®</sup>:

Exclusive Offer: Earn 25,000 American Airlines AAdvantage<sup>®</sup> bonus miles.

No Annual Fee for the first 12 Months

(See Details inside)

Thus, in this modest, flattened, pulped, bleached and plastic window'd way, Citi<sup>®</sup> and AAdvantage<sup>®</sup>, having briefly flown, now crash and burn as one.

Yet may rise, phoenix-like as the OneBank<sup>®</sup> to come.

Ice on the wings.

Elektrik dance in the ionosphere.

"Deadly Winter Storm Hits Northeast... 'People are crazy. They're still shopping,' said Kay McIntyre, shoveling a sidewalk in Colonie, an Albany suburb, as cars inched into a nearby mall parking lot." [AP]

Castor and Pollux, blow me to Bermuda.

How are we going to colonize the universe if we don't kill Earth first? Where's the incentive?

"Bitter Divisions at Climate Talks: Amid growing frustration with the U.S. in deadlocked talks at a global warming conference, the European Union threatened to boycott new talks proposed by the White House next month," barks the *Messenger*.

Not only are the divisions bitter, but so are the brigades, regiments, battalions, companies and platoons. Bitter down to the squad, the grunt. But what can EU do? Besides, as they say, *embrace the suck* and move on.

Or: *Exeunt (omni), pursued by a bear.*

Fog and friction. Axioms of Clausewitz. The signs by which one recognizes a state of war, no matter how brilliant the wattage, nor viscous the oil.

Three days prior to the Citi® Gold / AAdvantage® World MasterCard® appeal, your letterbox received a 9" x 12" manila envelope containing several chapters of a book in progress, "Memoir of the New York City High School Student Movement in the 1960," authored by your back-in-the-day-comrade, David S.

Three nights since you read his pages and discovered within them a reconnection to moments at once removed and familiar and so charged with repressed energy that they triggered, all unbidden, a sequence of resonations – overwhelming and seemingly autonomous – that only now cohere into an utterable thought: Once upon a time, forty-odd years ago, you found your place among a loose collectivity of young

people, which despite its dispersal in dozens of countries and stratification by economics and culture, nearly succeeded in pushing open a portal toward a constellation of values and social relations far different from the global catastrophe seven billion souls cohabit today. Had you – this plural you – succeeded, even modestly, an extraordinary transfiguration might have occurred. But it did not.

And with this awareness came again, redoubled, the shock and bitterness of defeat. Every time you look at Bill or Hillary you want to puke. Power-bloated poster children for the corruption of a generation. Still, until David's words stirred up the depths of your pot, you didn't realize how much contempt and fury you still feel toward so many of your contemporaries, some of whom you see and casually palaver with as though nothing were ever at stake: the ones who took the job, took the tenure, took the bait, and rolled over easy. They're retiring now, some of them, with 401K's and pensions. They talked a good line for a year or so back in the day. It's them you hate, more even than the McNamaras and Westmorelands, who never claimed to be other than what they were.

No, what galls you still is your own misplaced trust in folks who headed for the exits when it became clear that what revolution entails is making up the struggle as you go, like quotidian bread, kneaded in the darkest hours. And risking whatever's held dear – not for a day or a year, but for as long as it takes to become, collectively, a new kind of animal – one that may, on the outside, look entirely the same.

It's not you who could have been a contender, it's your race. Ah yes, but what if *the great moment is met by a faint-hearted generation?* You've lived long enough to swim in the consequences and adapt after a fashion. But your gills refuse to evolve. So you're stuck with breach and dive, breach and dive.



Rage masking grief, or a double-helix of the two?

Still consequences. Some of which are that nowadays companies flagrantly union-bust with impunity. Witness the strategy recently employed by FreshDirect, privately-held and based in LIC, i.e. to rat themselves out to the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Bureau of the Department of Homeland Security, just ahead of an election to choose a union to represent the warehouse workers. So out on the street go several dozen folks, most from Latin America, whose paperwork isn't quite in order.

Solidarity not being what it was or could be, would that The Ghost of Christmas-Yet-To-Come and Joe Hill might appear together in Joe Fedele's bedroom at midnight and, tag team-style, show him who's boss. Unlike mortal brothers, you can't deport a ghost, or kill him.

12/14 Early solstice where you live, or rather from your living room: the sun rising, beams directly between two megalith towers to the east and down 25th Street. Orange as the day is long. Consequently green spots all over your laptop screen.

Rigor at the sentence level. Profound associative freedom.

Anyone running from the presidency has got your support.

The world festival of abandonment.

Self-diagnosis: palimpsests on the brain. Prognosis: Beyond hope. Rx: fuggaboudit. Till it pops up again.

Dig that crazy truth!

The St. Francis legend. As a child she wolfed it down.

Social life is collective madness with lucid moments.

Up to MoMA with Katie and to the George Seurat drawings which you zip through like a mayfly, lingering an instant on one piece and somewhat longer on the description next to it:

“Whether despite or because of their deprivation, ragpickers fascinated many 19th Century artists and writers. Charles Baudelaire exalted the ragpicker as a poet ‘lost in his dreams,’ a ‘hero who aids the victims’ cause,’ even a drunk of ‘splendid qualities.’ Édouard Manet and Jean-François Raffaelli found nobility in his vagrancy. [One assumes this refers to the ragpicker, not Baudelaire.] Although he depended on the city and its cycle of consumption for his very existence, as a dealer in what others had thrown away, he was master only of the margins.

“Using the broad side of the conté crayon to create a hazy blackness and the sharp point to render desiccated brush and debris, Seurat focuses on the wretchedness of the ragpicker and his environs. Moreover, through stumping... the artist creates a sense of agitation in the figure. The abraded fibers of the paper attest to the rigor with which he worked this sheet.”

Rag paper, made ragged. ...his very existence... very...

Work that sheet, George. And see you Sunday in the park. lol.

But can you show us, O writer of exhibition notes, one dweller in the city whose existence does not depend on its cycle of consumption...? Whose agitated figures inhabit the Center *within* the Zone, yea even unto the bar at MoMA? Down the block they're gating shut the public arcade so the homeless won't encamp there. Nameless curator, curator's subaltern or amanuensis, over what margins can you claim mastery?

Extraordinary. The entire population of Europe, and not just northern regions, but the farthest eastern ones as well, has washed up on the shores of the Museum of Modern Art. Large portions of Asia as well. Lovely dinner with K. at a half-deserted restaurant a block from the roiling lunacy of Fifth Avenue. Dénouement to a waystrange week capped by Iran pulling the plug on the "unreliable" dollar as a currency in its oil transactions. Dangerous rampings up on the oil-slicked slope as little by little, those wily Persians back Dick and George deeper into their corner. What would you do if you were them?

And then there's Jay-Z's latest video wherein the rap mogul and, of late, Manhattan real estate player – has ubiquitously switched currencies. Gone are the Franklins. Like Ahmadinejad Jay-Z is flashing Euros now. But then the Philadelphia printer himself, even before he sublimated into a banknote, harbored deep affinities for the continent and its pleasures. We swim. You row. Where do Yuan to go today? All it takes is a pounding and a dream. Extreme makeover at the level of pyramids.