

PARSING

Charles Bernstein

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[Reading copy only: facsimile available at <http://english.utah.edu/eclipse>]

I.
Sentences

(oct-Jan 75/6)

It's an automatic thing. It doesn't require any thought. It's a parade in and out.

It has its ups and downs.

It doesn't affect me one way or another.

----***----

It sort of comes to you. I never look at it. The touch. My hands fit. It's the feel. I just look at them.

----***----

It'll sound terrible. It's true. It's nothing really. I like to fuss. I sit and relax and read, take a bath, have my ice cream. I fill the day.

You look around. You hear things. Sometimes you daydream you're really somebody special. It's the sort of thing you do.

I could never converse with anyone about it.

It would drive me nuts. It would drive me wild. I know I'm needed. I think alot. I have very simple pleasures. I'm not a deep reader. I can't understand a lot of things. I'm looking forward to it.

----***----

I always have a hard time saying it. It feels too personal. It seems inconsequential. It keeps me from knowing what to do.

It really get to me.
It do something to me.

They want you to clean.
They don't have no feeling.
They want to know "what should I call you?"
They stand and look at you like you crazy.

You can't take pride anymore.

You remember when a guy could point to a house he built.

You never see the end result of it.

You fend it off as much as you can.

You think of a perpetual vacation.

You just get used to it.

-----***-----

I become very upset.

I enjoy one thing more than another.

I think I'm much happier.

I have dinner.

I like the background music.

I don't become bored with it.

I find it very discouraging.

I get no word from her.

I dont like all this waiting

I feel she's not very considerate of me.

I feel left out.

I know it doesn't necessarily mean anything.

I wish all this could work out better.

I want by now to get some clear idea of where we are in respect to each other.

It seems so indeterminate.

It seems so uncertain.

You think of bringing back together all the people you ever knew.

You think of how it feels to be together again.

You try somehow to escape the fact of its absence, of its flight,
of its no longer being there.

You write letters.

You call people up.

You hurriedly meet with people.

You hope to find it.

You hope it will return.

You make fun of yourself.

You say it isn't so serious.

You try to be ironic.

You try to keep from going crazy with boredom.

You become accustomed as time goes by.

You read magazines.

You sleep.

You do anything to keep from going nuts.

You're very much occupied.

You're fighting to maintain your speed.

You have to be superalert all the time.

You have to anticipate situations a block ahead of you.

You have to get all psyched up.

You always give that smile.

You say to yourself one day my time will come.

You try to show a cockiness like you could care less.

You get in deeper and deeper.

I feel too dependant.

I feel no sense of myself.

I continually need reassurance.

I feel she won't really express her feelings.

I feel shut out.

I can project everything and be reassured of nothing.

I am constantly feeling left.

I see in her silence and distance the same fear and pain I have.

I see how much she means to them.

I expect to be refused.

I feel an intruder.

I see her pulling back.

I just can't keep being understanding.

I'll be disappointed, crushed.

I don't want to go through it again.

I don't exactly know how to act.

I came up the hard way. We was treated pretty rough.
We come up at the hind and get what we can to live on.
We was just children.

I just sit here and think about it. I just wonder
all about it. I wonder what people mean. I just thinks
about all that. That's all I can tell you. My mind
goes but my mind comes to me. I'm just here.

There was this man. All I wanted to do was see the man. He had these little trees. He was telling us to come into the boat. I asked Mama could I go down there.

He carried us down there and showed us things down there.

* * *

He named me Charley.

* * *

He was dying and he called for me. He said, "Bring me the holy bible with all y'all's names in it." And he was dying and he said to me, "Dont break your oath: dont change your name dont change your name." And I stooped over him and put his arm around my neck. And when he quit saying that he was dead. And I shook him.

I'm separated.

I would put myself in suspended animation.

I was never home.

you say to yourself is it me is it my fault is it
something i'm mistaking or getting wrong or failing
to see

it comes all about as bleakness, you never feel as
rich but in the emptiness, seeing a few things,
one or two, and being almost overwhelmed

people come in, you talk to them, you wonder if they
really are seeing the same things, if they are willing

you design patterns to get it all down, you stay up
all night trying to figure out the puzzles you've
created for yourself, you can't understand why so
few care, you forget about what you were thinking
and can't remember

you say to yourself let it go but you can't figure out
what to let go

I didn't sleep those nights.

I wanted to go and do things.

I don't feel that lonely.

I don't bother the nurses.

I kind of have to grit my teeth.

I never have anyone to share it with.

I have gone into intense pain.

I have talked this over.

I don't really know.

I liked books and things.

I would have been a good mother.

I crank the bed down.

I'm not so young.

I had to evaluate my faith.

I had to become what everyone wanted me to be.

I had the fever and the chills.

I developed nodes again.

I've noticed it.

I would feel guilty.

I was the only one in the family.

I felt like a leper.

I have done everything I possibly could.

I don't know why.

I thought this was kind of typical.

I need people.

I look at the young people.

I'm not going to change my language

I said nothing to anyone.

I really have a problem understanding all of these things.

I was in a room.

I have walked.

I didn't really feel too well.

I'm not afraid.

I ask for a pain pill.

I felt this out.

I'm glad for what I've got.

I do it in pain.

I think this is all good for me.

I had to remind them.

I think they resented it very much.

I refused.

I get up.

I feel a part of life.

I can go to my room.

I can bear it.

I've watched.

I had so much pain I couldn't breathe.

I dread loneliness.

I mean it was a compulsion.

I could have really used a backrub.

I have gotten panicky.

I felt that no one was around.

I put on the light and waited.

I'm glad I have done everything I possibly could.

I have a sense of accomplishment.

I am aware of these things.

I need these things.

I wanted to give myself to God.

I see the difference now.

I was groping to understand.

I looked at him.

I was so different.

I went on thinking.

I joined different clubs.

I wondered if it would get me somewhere where I would stand out.

I was not behaving myself.

I would allow people to come in my room.

I could be there.

I would find it a barrier.

I found it hard all my life.

I didn't understand.

I don't begrudge other people.

I did it freely.

I really mean it.

I hate it so much.

I do not often find a person who can talk to me beyond ordinary conversation.

I must convey to others that I don't need them.

I don't think this should be necessary.

I think they should be aware.

I'm not trying to hide anything.

I've been very ill.

I would stand in front of the desk.

I had a rash all over my body.

I was always trying my hardest.

I felt it.

I didn't think I had more than a year to live.

I went and looked it up.

I didn't have to convince anybody.

I found it so hard.

I was starting to teach.

I had somebody else's religion.

I was attracted to these things.

I had to almost hide all my sores.

I am in tears.

I had never really met people like this.

I know I have to do something.

I can forget my problems.

I could ask.

I can talk as simply to a child as anyone else can.

I take the blanket out.

I didn't necessarily make them angry.

I do receive a lot.

I couldn't discuss it anymore with people.

I had what I said I had.

I didn't feel accepted.

I needed to be treated.

I've been up.

I have to do it slowly.

I do better on my own.

I can't beg them for it.

I don't even like the word.

I need it.

I have pain.

I go back to work.

I appreciate their understanding.

I'm going to sweat.

I.

I am ashamed.

I hide.

I felt my life with both my hands.

I had not minded walls.

I felt a cleaving in my mind.

I tie my hat.

I crease my shawl.

I cross till I am weary.

I felt as if the grass were pleased.

I cannot buy it.

I know some lonely houses off the road.

I watched the moon and the house.

I learned at last what home could be.

I lived on dread.

I stood up.

I measure every grief.

I heard as if I had no ear.

I held a jewel in my fingers.

I cannot tell you but you feel it.

II.

It always felt to me wrong.

It bloomed and dropt.

It ceased to hurt me.

It knew no lapse or diminution.

It knew no medicine.

It rises.

It sifts.

It struck me every day.

It tossed and tossed.

It was not death.

It's like the light.

II.

Parsing

(dec, Jan 75/6)

the reach, the middle, endless, drift, sway, hold, belie
unfold and furl, it makes, smack, abated,

against at top

what, and frap

jimmie, ice blue,

the. It sat

sometimes, among

who on

could, semblance

of narrow

land, larger, riddling

axe, they

so its i dont want to work there you plunge in you do anything
you can to keep from going nuts you write it down you go
to the store with it it persists as thickness as shape as
figments and fragments of refusal you stare at it & by
the time you notice you have lost your comprehension
 wanting to see event k but despairing of its possibilities
 it doesnt work
 too many refusals,
 poetic
 & flat surfaceless ridgeless
 degree zero is marked
 ashen
 is so many times reaching, pouring
 in tuppats
 a man, son, millionaire
"a capital assets tax"
 --they dont play that way
 & i sat & i listened & i behaved myself
 being in the presence of
 telling me how to live to go on
 it, solemn
 its vacancy
 too many now and i cldnt choose because
always there was unclarity how do i approach this how do i
go on am i seeing things okay the blind reb who wants love
attention wants to be seen battered unbroken

an inability, of warmth, that blasts, the old j d thats,
popping, pouring, get going, getting started, trying to lose
sense, lose consciousness, myrrh, warmth, an occlusion,
blotting, test pattern,

amazing can only remember what has been
previously written so a repeating and continual reference,
unable to make progress, to move ahead, wanting each thing to be
a new thing, to be perfect, to be interesting, stellar, a
gem, full of crystals and obsessiveness

so that they give you a free dinner, an echo, a chant,

but insecure, giving up on the prior and trying the
inherent, what gives or comes, set on puerility, boredom,
non-interest, a desperation that communication will
fail for lack of direction, he plays the piano, the harp,
harmonium, flute, lute, and loses track, key, treble

much too hard, to know, to want to give it over, to
find place, is a delusion

simply cant keep up with itself

"& weep"

an excitement of adulthood

"look how many keys i have so that shows
i'm important, I have entry
& they care"

they blast, keep it,

its not even them liking me but my being able to care
about them, to feel it, and then its not enough, because
by then all the force bottled up explodes and fills up
the other, becomes fixated, transfixed

so you get so and its all blithering and its all
just endless figments, fragments, the

to get it, it

you cant insure it in the same way that you cant necessarily
go to sleep at will, at the drop of a hat

to begin a topic, misplacing, miscatching, nouns,
that is calling a peach a pear with absolute conviction,
like mistyping an l instead of an e, why so peculiar, that
e, l,

placing the jug on the table

always the loudness of on, that quiet seems less
a zen, exchange, bracelet

ovular containment

till it comes, somehow in the taping,
performance, i felt continually called upon, demanded of,
that it was necessary to act without particularly the good
fortune to know how to act

he placed the jug on the table

& still this sense of sense leaves residue
of personal taste, odor, that blocks from its granite
like figment, blankness, frozen shape

was invited, called to attend, was involved
in that shrine, feign, meeting ground
& F___ & W___ & M___,
all necessary to this,
in this
light, air, substance

to fill up this
was a man sitting there
without program, rule
abiding
was a grouper hence graphic
makes no cohesion
world, waste,
too its too
i placed the jug on the table
placing the jug on the table
i was placing the jug on the table
hence graphic, groupe
a graphic
a piston
a placement
of the jug on the
sitting, without program, abiding
a gunge hence grouper
placing, hence
piston, gunge
the jug coming upon the table,
surfacing with it

was peeling an apricot
was peeling an american
was peeling a jug, sitting,
 setting, the apricot
was peeling a fig
was peeling,
very sorrowful, she said,
 in itself
 was standing
 was luminous
 was a kirelian photoillumination
 was beautiful

"its more than that, than anything," □ explained joyfully
 & sat down,
 head bare,

 & more than that it
 does not change
 though its patterns
 vary, recur
 in illuminations
 or occlusions, amid a
 field, grid
 the mind is

 as
 jug, fig, luminous

 was aztec
 was sock
 was misplaced

hence polyhedron, figment,
 lemon, limit
 vagrancy

 was a sign
 was painted
 was glassy

 & slipped in it

so you sit down, they say, & wait for it

stripping the bass on the beach,
peeling the skin off,
cooking it & eating it,

was a tall one, they say
was fat, they say
was in a blue robe or hunting vestment

& then walk around, looking
& leave the room

they say it's

& the bones unnerve yr tongue
you spit them out

sitting down, you run out of content

yr tongue in its mouth
cheeks inert

going into the space outside
yr body spilling out of doors

as though,

the dishes , piling
the work refused

piles, clump, clot

contextual disruption
contextual disruption
contextual disruption

having robbed my self

of illusion, chimera

wild insistence on
being there,

here, as

progression to opal

i cld not paint a picture

...i cld not live with you

knowing then the

circumference of an

opal is

bounded by disruption

“I did not drag my father beyond this tree”

was waiting

was jumping around

was giving it up

. across

speed, struck,

& then

was tasting

was a jack in the box

saw a stuffed pig

dry,

"to like from being"

is an attraction

to rudeness, fixation

an intimacy or sense of outside

an edge

coming to meet

only the talking no more than the waiting for speech,
an emptiness I bring to it, or both together, in the
interpretation, always seeing as, & as absence

but what

at least a person's gotta work,

eat, wear clothing

at least a person wants to feel a part

to sometimes have a place to sit

to sit down

to place oneself in a chair

sitting,

trying to stand up,

peeling an apple,

at least one has a need for

(a sense of)

space

& is veiled

"deep
the abyss
calls to deep"

as if in peeling
the fruit was compromised

so among

& seeing within

the method of sight

is ingrained

fixed as shrine

grid, map

in which we

as a pear is succulent

or a ball divine

is pen

is key

is this, in particular

& so lets say

"I remember
the pearls that were his eyes"

how they shone

with the he, she & it of it

as if,

seeing as,

they stood alone.

I remember how her hair, tangled,

so that she always was wanting to refuse

& waiting, next to

it occurred to me

it made me unable to concentrate

it made me want to forget about myself

so that thinking as much as drinking in a stream
demanded a full measure of

trout, they said,

"but I know you"

turning a bed down

or a deaf ear

"but won't you a least..."

ear drum, steel ear, ear ring

turning to

apple, peach,

fish wine,

"What is the reason
that as soon as someone
expresses a need for
another she draws away?"

Gravity, that pulls down
or away as fog.

I can't feel what you're saying.

I become frightened.

My mind wonders.

I think you don't care.

I want you to listen to me,
care about me.

I want to hold on to your
weight, substance, the gleam i keep seeing

& you say -----,

but don't care about it,

not caring if i'm convinced,
if i get to know you

It is as If

i want you

to get up close

& look in.

the snow,
 flakes,
this parsing of the world
 to make worlds & worlds
like atmospheres
 a substance, of gravity
 that pulls apart
 or back on
i slept then, i bathed on wednesdays also
 the feta cheese
 the mozzarella marzipan
 the seedless eye brow pencils
was waiting for the bust &
 was on a telephone,
 gyroscope, sleeping binge
was hiding in a rock,
 crystal, postcard
was a blue flame,
 a grammar booklet, an azure
 azalia

'The weight of a gaze
conveys an intention,'

substance, particular of consciousness,

located as the gravity of a space,

thus composed

as seeing clumped with memory.

* * *

An outside much colder

static, globous,

* * *

"They would demand to tell you how to look,"

shave, wear clothing,

as if

imperceptible,
fixed as mode,

you could eat an orange

or peel a pear

without some longing for it

as an atmosphere is fixed,

charged with a static that binds,

as the head is pressed.

SPACE AND POETRY

space, and poetry
dying and transforming words, before
arbitrary, period locked
with meaning" and which
preposterousness. Still
the "energy" of a given
to be. After
changes. These changes
dislocated from any
sequence. If you are used
of obvious dialogue, the sermonizing
"type." But
events, and probability
consolatory asymptote
translucent pink ones
art, but an art
put upon it by
elements and operations. It is even easier
relating to truth (the object
which meaning is inferred, as in
openness. That they should appear
the mark of
recognizability. Sometimes only the attachment
across the board
between representations on
arrangement, of balance or equivocal balance
king." This hostility

or else a kind
concluded. By which
centered around
you'd say "that's
up an image, not upon

ROSELAND

you need some way of
some set of
you live in a place
it isn't much
you move out
you have to
you live at the edge
your memory has let you down
a kind of chaos
when you go
if you face it
this axis this
the human order
more or less
you have a map
you put yourself in position
and try to
this is the
a human construction
you try out the space
try to
you drive on them
go straight
one might imagine
only grasping
a pity
a pile of rocks

more or less
and place the
wander for
not proceed
is still a little
an edge
unless the habit
land of
boomerang say
carvings
all of the circles
so that what we have is a network
and thats all
a sequence of camping sights
is arbitrarily adapted
which was shape
very much a matter of
there will be a woman
of anxiety which is to
the career
some premonition
the appearance of white
the fixing
when the time comes
edicts and statutes
in some unexplained
has the nostalgia

and thats
as talking
of some other blind man
exists in space
an overall kind of thing
cant flip
or more information of any kind
the passage is nothing
one thing in particular
a technique of erasing
and people could start
its not too
that is real
and how it
or you hope
you get ready
you work on it
a literal culture
a piece of sand
in such a
an elaborate way
an art of naming
a kind of
that is danced
as among
a residue
from the milk
notion of a

goes in

of entrance

if you use stone

as required

in such a system

you use language

or some set of

if you face it