

ITCH

Steven Seidenberg

Foreword by Andrew Joron

RAW ArT PRESS
Pittsburg, California

Many failed attempts. Perhaps this is the first. Of my many failed attempts, perhaps this is the first. The first in what will soon appear a series of such failures—surrendered to the obloquy of having yet to happen, or having happened...I say surrendered, and I say attempt, the language of a game which attempts...I say the saying and the saying says...

φ

Perhaps this is the first of all the many claims to primacy required to claim any claim to primacy a proof, an incidental figurement of problems and procedures near to happening...near to constituting *happenstance* as it stands fore right now...

φ

If this is sure the first where there has not yet been a second...If this attempt to...If this trope yet *amounts* to the surrendered primogeniture of other tropes predicted to surrender sometime soon, then how can one presume to think...to *mean* those varied instances within the nearing preterit and certitude of having passed and purposed themselves into...

φ

If this is sure the first of what I know will soon be many...But that's not where this portent finds its bearing—so its aim. What saying this is first without first having said that this is something...something like...that this that I will soon contrive as something like the subject of...of this and this alone...

φ

What saying this presumes is that its referent is this saying this—the saying that this *saying this* presumes, if it's not clear. One ought not need proclaim that such an act of proclamation is occurring—is *transpiring*—by virtue of the saying *of* it in its present term, but thinking of it so and still adducing it as primary allows that what will follow has since discharged its effects, a shouldering of contraries that I can't yet...can't here...can't yet to here abide...

φ

One might well think to countenance this sort of vain perversity—and the speaker thus inveigled to presentiment by the pose—in hopes that such regard could thereby supervene the parallax through which this dreary précis is ostensibly reviewed, and I have—or will admit to—no clear motive or intention to do otherwise; one *might* do so, but why take on the trouble of resisting so much contrary resolve...

φ

It's not that there's no evidence to justify describing this the first of many failures all the rest of which have yet to be construed, but rather that the aftermath that *this* failure maintains vows neither to be recently accomplished nor begun, a failed attempt by dint of this attempt to claim a first successful failing to...to...It's clear even *to me* you have no reason to be sure...

φ

And do I now—or still, I'll risk—have any sense what pratfall I have since proposed as primary—the first first in the series, as though the very first of all? The first to send me canting down this course without a recourse; to have at once succeeded in the taking of this seeming leave as though it were a trail? Seeming, I declare, to crudely intimate a *truer* drive, a yet unnamed ambition in this...*from* this deftly garrulous repose, this feigned rapport, despite the fact—which you may well have missed—that I've done only that to make it so. Suggested that it's so. That I've done nothing more...have *proffered* nothing more than the suggestion that it's so to make it *seem* so...

φ

If it appears I have a purpose that's unwittingly concealed by my advancement towards fulfillment—towards *arrival* in the form I will uphold—then it's arguably best for me leave off leaving off with it, and forthwith leave off leaving off with it for good. For the good of all concerned, myself not least among them. Neither most, I'll tell you now, although I might be wrong...

φ

Having made countless attempts at an accounting of the countless, each attempt is equally a failure, a dead end. This may well be the first of all such minor supplications, whether you or I will ever come to know it so before...before what will come after this, whatever that that this is—or will by some yet unknown means *become* when it's revealed. Whatever will come after this will make of this before the very first of all my failures in the endless seriatim that will surely follow after, as one conceives the chain of chance arrayed within the bane that set it off...

φ

That failure results from failure and success from success may seem

more of a posture than an inference, or a premise proved; one can readily concede success where there seemed failure in the offing and... What matters in *this* instance—this measure of the case in point by pointing to it elsewhere, to the elsewhere it implies, if not unwittingly presumes—is that my many failures to enumerate my failures are enough to countermand what yet appears the *future* failure of the path we've started on...we've started *down*...

φ

Of my many failed attempts to name my many failed attempts, this one, I assure you, has proved to be the very first, so equally convincing my importunate receivers—importunate, no doubt, but no less welcome a contrivance of the form of this address...the address of this form, which is...So equally *concerning* to whomever should accept this affectation of a prelude—of what I hope will someday seem the prelude to a finished tale—is that there are still countless deviations from my purpose still to come...

φ

But if they're still to come, you ask, how does he know they'll happen? Is he the sort of dullard who sees catastrophe at every turn? Alas, it's not for me to blunt the edge of such accusatives—to countenance an ancillary predicate of character that I can't say I wouldn't scorn were I but judge and not accused. I *can* say that the proof of my ill humor won't be found in the veracity of my anticipations—my near *announcement*, if you will, of some last resort. And even this capitulation won't suffice as an appraisal of the stratagems thus strategized, and aiming towards...

φ

The problem has to do with the foreboding I still feel for those same acts that I allege to have completed—to have *left behind*; the rupture, it appears, between my image of...my *reverence for* a series

of events I've claimed concluded and the accompanying announcement of that imminent catharsis as though it had preceded all the rest *by its design*...

φ

Yes, yes, you say, what of it; who needs this hardly bold expatiation on the evident...the ostensibly *self*-evident paradox of a past presumed preceded by the inherence of its now. The difficulty, I suspect, has *more* to do with this regression to the first of all my inferences—the gist of our acquaintanceship, both in fealty and affray—while the incident such desultory debitage implies is still *in medias res*; that once again the *this* of which I speak can't be identical to this instance of my speaking it, and yet I'm more than willing to proceed with my account...

φ

Perhaps you see this *this* as but a retrospective prologue, a second thought appended to what's first come first—the first into which this appendage leads us, as a pathway; the first that draws our pathway to its finish, as a line. And while I think I've long since shown my sympathy with the argument—even argued it beyond what I imagined the peculiar skills of those who I imagined firstly raised it, whoever you or they may prove to be, or serve to court—in answer I can only say...can only *claim* it's not the case; that the paradox must not...*will* not yield to resolution if I'm to have my way—whether in the end I have my way or somehow, some way don't...

φ

I may not have my way with this or that digression, accepting that my way is not laid out before it's had, but it's still in agreement with those same preconditions that determine what the making of an ought will...*must* avoid if it's to prove desideratum in the end. Again, I am aware of the discordance of this idiom—without, that

is, a sense of fore or aft the fore or aft I've started here...this *herein* with—but such awareness does not sway my addled inclination to continue on the way that I've continued in the past...

φ

I've found no way to properly delineate the passage, other than this manifestly inconclusive pose—a pose that hardly *strikes* despite the absence of its obverse, the sense of having up till now eluded all fidelity to posture *or* device. I've come upon this aggregate—or gleaned it *from the whole*—by claiming to describe my breaking free of its arrears, a subtlety of affect even *I* can't adjudge due. As though one might already have concluded that my competence to prosecute the yet unstated point of this reprise is at the limit of what's possible for *any* sort of intellect to prove. Even I, I say again, am fairly sure the confidence this surety suggests is not quite warranted...will be revealed *unwarranted* by avowals still to come...

φ

Whatever this state is—this state in which you've found me, which might as well be understood the state in which I'm found—it is by implication the emergence of the whole towards which this pretense of an ego strives. Whatever I'm *suggesting* is the purpose of my purport, the action of purporting it to not yet be complete must be included—must be *signal*—and this is still the *least* that I'd expect myself to show. To *be*, rather. That I'd believe I'm being, whether knowing that I'd been the being—thus that I've become or...or not; such transitives can't be resolved by any *other* means...

φ

Whatever this position now—this truncheon of a pause—it is what it will be, and nothing else, and nothing...It will be nothing more than it will be, it stands to reason, but that it will be more than it's been yet—than it's *become*—reveals another problem in the shape

of it's becoming so—it's next capitulation to the open, to the *clear*...

φ

This *it* which I am now and surely will be by default assumes that if I speak of some identity beyond the narrow scope of merely speaking of it so I will be speaking of the same intrinsic speaking out again, that I'll find that I'm speaking of the same I I referred to when referring to the I I've spoken *as* up to this point. Such a spastic torpor can't help but to usurp the soon to seem invariable accidents of agency despite the selfsame difference—the insuperable *exclusion*—of what I'm speaking of from what I speak of *through*, by which I mean the I I seem to point to with the same portentous whimsy I employ in the apparent speaking out I'm speaking now...

φ

Let us say, for the sake of argument...for all it's worth...for the sake of all it's worth...Let us say that we've conceived of no such grand distemper, and so have left off leaving off without a thought to this delay—to the trouble this excursus is attempting to elude, if not yet resolve into a ready aim...

φ

If I were to here suggest that what will happen next, or rather...or at the least...or at the least *and* rather what events that, having happened, I'll soon narrate to an otherwise inconsequent assent...

φ

If I were to here *address* the preface that sits fore this ever tractable look back as though I've always known how it will *turn out*, so presuming the existence of the addressee that you have quite surprisingly—and with the embarrassment, I might add, most usually attendant to such ill-apportioned and impossible wants—allowed

yourself to seem, almost to act; should the telling of the tale in some way come to rule—or decidedly *affect*—the substance or the nature of that turning, then the moment of transition from account to mere performative will be signaled by a shift in the character of said terminus, or the telling of it as...

φ

Should it come to the fore that this very act of coming to the fore plays some...plays any role *at all* in the resumption of my purpose—the fulfillment of my ends, and so the promise to move on—then I would grant no quarter to those abstract insubordinates, an ideal that I have not yet pursued, or framed as cause. In the absence of a way to fully demonstrate my point, I'd justify its discharge by dint of the same instrument that's led me to accept the imposition of objections from the auditor, objections I've already raised myself. What I'm trying to say is...

φ

I expect you've found yourself beset by such chafing deportment many times before our meeting at this amicable stand, and so I ought not need continue my portrayal of the state I think you're more or less most suited to live *in*, but I've come to accept that supposition of the kind oft proves imprudent, which in this instance is more than likely equal to untrue. In this instance indicates the premise is untrue, and as such seems an impulse quite imprudent to engage...

φ

So how, you want to know, have I achieved this grand assize? To answer would amount to the confusion of my means with my ends, at least my ends with my beginnings. I suppose I'm only willing to suppose your acquiescence...I only here make *mention* of your willingness to suppose such wrenching suppliance *in me* at this first pass—this first pass *through*—in order to allay the damp of those for

whom it seems a second nature, that they might come to tolerate the repetition of implicit terms...

φ

So. What I'm trying to say...to *prove* is that one can still rightly minimize—still *sacrifice*—the moment of confusion that's coerced this wayward turn, the moment that's confused *me* by compelling such contradictory ends. One need but think the guarantee by which I introduced myself mistaken—a fault that, understood as such, ought have no further impact on the this tittle of carousing goads...

φ

Merely to attest that what's to happen next—so far as it amounts to a performance of that happening by being self-identical with *fact*—is a description of the many failed attempts I've made at doing anything...anything *other* than attempt to describe my many failed attempts, whether any such attempt proves failed or not, would relieve the sort of reader I imagine *I* would be from further concern. It's only by beginning with an ending my beginning, in effect, still brings *about*—and by virtue of referring to some happenstance made real by the disclosure of a reference to that happenstance itself—that I've found reason to take issue with the primary this terminal incipience preempts...

φ

It isn't much to say that any scene made uninhabitable...made practically *unbearable* by a premise whose insistence trains a contrary resolve need but ask of its presumptive inculcator the extraction of said premise in order to continue on to more propitious ends, but I do not do so—I do not *say* so—because I think it less than obvious to those who've come to view it as an easy perch, a place to rest...

φ

And it may be thus—less than obvious, that is; it may well prove a tricky feint for those who've happened on it without previous and parallel pursuit. But *I* say it, alternately, because I can thereby ensure that those wise patrons still immured within my peerless and incorrigible brood will know I have not foisted said first premise falsely, without having concluded that within that premise something still left unresolved resides; that I am not as ill-equipped as any thinking otherwise—any thought that I've pressed on because I know no *better* than to do so—might reasonably suggest to all those listless mountebanks who have hearkened to the song...

φ

If one might grant the vision of this tell-all—of this *telling*, really, that what's been told therein may still amount to only part—as such a missive subornation, then I think the interlocutor to whom that missive points is halfway won. Her *sympathy*, that is, might be conditionally proved. And *this* point, rest assured, can only be rejected—let alone compelled into some promissory calm—by an equal adherence to contradictory ends; a registered receipt of what's been pledged as unreceivable, if for no other reason than its having not been mailed. If there are any so inclined, I'm happy to declare, they've surely put the book down long ago, before they started, and so I have no need to try to keep them in the fold...

φ

Halfway won, I say, the very state in which I found you, as you know with near certainty by now. I'm sure you don't conceive yourself as much further along in your attempts to train your quizzical departure into either an acceptance of the voyage still to greet you or—more likely—the contempt of one convinced to move along. Which is to claim...to here *admit* that I'm aware your being halfway *lost* has happened...*is happening* in answer to this

salutary salvo, a practice I've adopted to promote such pained rapport...

φ

All the same, I won't predict that you'll accompany my soon to seem insufferable delays with anything but halfway measures—that your continuance amounts to...will *ever* amount to less than the acceptance of the intimacy of my discharge, as a missive intended for you alone. And even granting your adherence—witting or otherwise—to such contrived resolve, the pose is only possible if you're able to allow that I'm as...that I've *proved* myself just as aware of the iniquity—the contraindication by which I've sworn to make haste towards the prospect that this contrary portends as ready aim, as clear result...

φ

To summarize again, and this time for the first, this failed attempt plays precursor to all the many failed attempts it will soon serve to iterate...to *unconceal* to those who've found the strength to tag along. Attempts at what, I realize, you have yet to be enlightened; let it suffice to say that you will find out in due course...

φ

If it makes it any easier to accept the peculiarity of such unutterable self-reference, one might do well to notice that—while standing true as first—this failed attempt still claims it will succeed in its succession, and thereby will assume the equally exclusive posture of the last. Of my many failed attempts this may well be the first, but it is furthermore the *final*, and with any luck such character will wrest you from your wallow in this patchwork of a fundament—from *keeping pace* with what is soon to seem its sure collapse...

φ

And should this claim to certitude unwittingly deter some odd purveyor of the scene and its yet untold mise from keeping with me while I make my way from prelude to account, then I say good riddance. Someone's got to take the rubbish out, and convincing it to take *itself* is nothing less than a narrative coup. It seems just as unlikely that I'll ever gain the measure of that disaffected cohort, no matter how successfully I manage to do otherwise—to increase its pitch and flutter in the midst of such rebuke...

φ

A dwindling many or a countless few; a frenzied pullulation of devotional adherents or a supplicant's surrender to delirious decline; one need but to assume the possibility of it happening for it to scan as actual—so the claim that it's already happened *true*...

φ

Okay then. Let me start again. In the first place, let me start again. I'm sure you don't require an alleged reaffirmation of your willingness to continue to convince you of the wisdom of permitting me this...this *reprieve*, given what you've let me get away with to this point. If it indeed proves my intention to return to the beginning before I go too far in the continuance of my tale—and it does, let me assure you while I still maintain the gravitas to warrant such a vow—then the only thing to stop me, I can readily disclose, is my own damnable attachment to what I've done so far, and if some vain reversal were to vitiate that attachment, it would have done so prior to your ever having had the chance to browse...

φ

You can forthwith *assume* that this succeeding primary will remain just that—will remain *successive*—and so that my devotion to the parlor trick of etiquette is but one more way to vindicate an unreasonable...what one might rightly classify an *unreasoned* response. If it

works, so be it; if not, then let me start another way, the way of starting out again I've only just begun to...

φ

Let me start again with something...I don't know...something more *vernacular*, if not precisely common to the argot broadly sanctioned as the acme of locutionary verve. Let me start the scene again; it hardly seems the first instance of such disjunctive posturing to rate the marginalia of the empty page...

φ

I awoke that day with little...nay, with *nothing* on my mind—a quietude most usually thought evidence of contentment, although it's oft coincident with other feeling modes. And while such vague affinity may impute the subtle ornament of causation to some distended prelude or remorseless fugue, it was not so on the day in question, the day with which...whose first moments of consciousness I've chosen to begin with...to begin *again* with, admitting even *this* attempt at telling holds the prospect of beginning for a *second* second time...

φ

To begin with that same cognizance of drifting off that I'd have sensed had I been at the moment of the drifting made content by some condition or collation of conditions in...in what would have to be...to be *and* seem my present state—the state in which that scene transpired presently, and not the present state of its recall...

φ

The sense that I awoke to, I became at once aware, was suggestive of contentments I'd awoken in before, but this presumed diversion...this *insistence*, as it were, had been neither occasioned by a circumstance

I'd judged to be desirable—let alone desired—nor by expectation of some circumstance to come. I was merely there, trapped in an unrelenting clarity with nothing to see clearly and no target to divert me from those same discrepant ends, other than the breaking of the trance that any notice brought to bear upon a scene is sure to cause. It was as though an absence...as though I'd *come upon* an absence, a bound beyond which there was nothing left to fate or chance—to stimulate awareness of such stimulus *or* response...

φ

I found myself corralled within that feckless grace—that *startled fluency*—no dream to break the silence, no wisp of cloud to blot my view of sky. And despite this novel...this *newfound* ataraxia—or without consideration of it any way at all—I began my day as I always had, moiling in the bed clothes till I'd marked the addled maunder of some portion of my figure into shadow, a process just as likely to take half the day as some mere instant to occur...

φ

The measure of the passage of some collop into umbra—some part or part of part that *had* been blighted by the day—depends on both the locus of one's preceding arousal and the attitude of desiccated corpus likewise ciphered...

φ

It is not my way to tarry, I should confess, but neither will I rush through those scant signposts that could serve to set me straight along my righteous course. No good can come of it, as far as I'm concerned, although this claim suggests I've reaped the lessons of that haste, when my only recollection of an instance of said learning...when I have no recollection of an instance of said learning—of an instance of the sort that I've learned *from*—only boundless recollections of similarly referencing the lessons of imaginary pratfalls...

φ

I'm not always in the same place, a mere moment's recollection of so many moments past makes perfectly clear. My memory of those instances in which I'd been reminded that I ought not leave without my wan ablutions...without the rigid practice of *perceptual* ablu-tion by which I greet each coming day puts that froward regimen in whereabouts that may appear distinct—read as *distinguishable*—de-spite the fact that many are repeated...

φ

If there are only one or two that bear repeating—that are manifestly echoed in the bearing of the vestiges they trail—then I feel confident in my belief that some more formal repetition may satisfy the pres-ently pursuant...the demonstrable *pursuit* of that one present in par-ticular, when I awoke to recollect that some imperiled clarity would only cede into an active tense after I had let that static luminance reveal...*concoct* the derivations thus redacted as discerned...

φ

I know what you're thinking. You're thinking...

φ

First, I think you're thinking that I can't know what you're thinking; that what you're thinking *now* is but one of many things you *could* be thinking, given the divulgence of so little over so much time. You're thinking that you don't know where to start with your objections to such dithering abstraction in the *absence* of all predicates—an ab-sence by which you are here advertently engaged; *how* to next pro-ceed with your aspiring objections to the many unexplained—in some way *inexplicable*—details that evoke a paltry inkling of the scene...

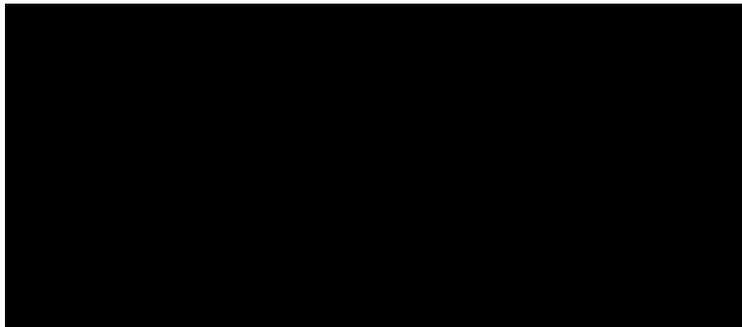
φ

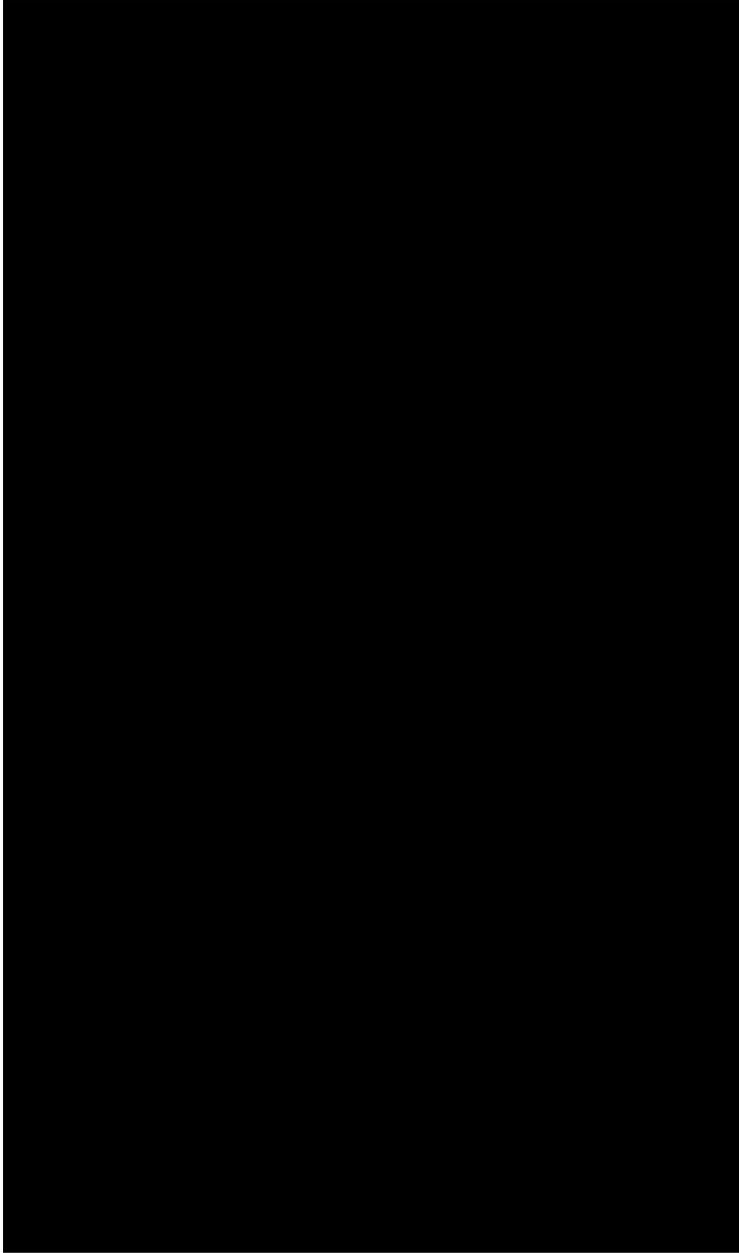
Should anyone, that is to say—that one that you amount to, that you've more or less accepted as the sum of those adventures most responsible for tempting you to lend me your concern...

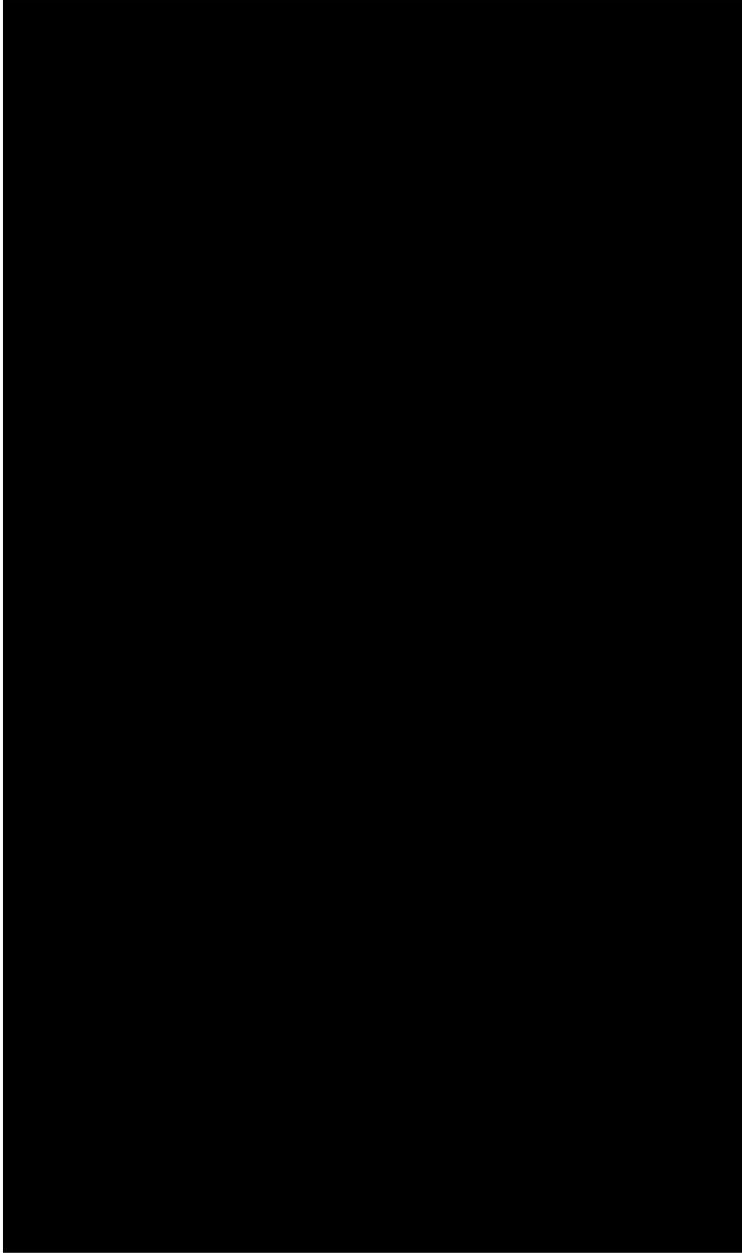
φ

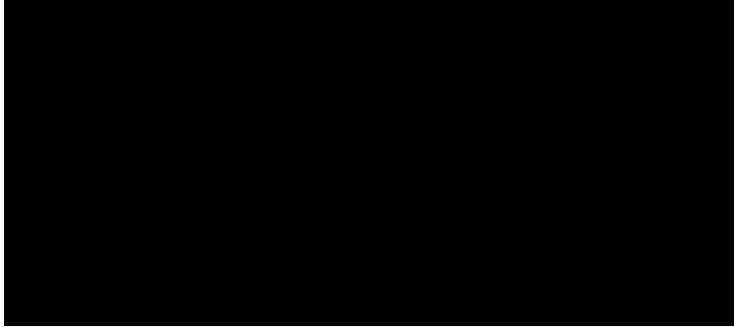
Should anyone *take issue* with the nature of my project, not merely for indulging this intrepid peroration, but equally for its placement just beside the point of planning it—the planning that remains beside the point the plan entails—then why continue on with the objection *or* its answer? Why bother bothering to uncover the point that there's no point to what's *essentially* beside the point, always as the point beside the point the side contrives? Why complain of points one has since understood as pointless—as having no relation to some broader scope or scale—when it's not even clear that such a scope is in the offing, or if it is that it *will* be for long enough to mark it and take aim? Why, indeed, when one can simply bound off to the coda, to skim those trifling bits that might inspire some new steel? Go ahead, then. I'll wait. I have no place else to go. And if, alas, you don't return, then let this vow of patience prove the fondest of farewells...

φ









φ

You're back. Satisfied? I can't imagine. I can't, that is, imagine that you found what I imagined you were looking for when—or *if*—you took the time to look for...You've made the choice to start again with this...this *intermediary* genesis, and by so doing have accepted the impending range of what's herein implied—or its' absence, even; whatever were the grounds of your demurrer when we parted ways...

φ

I attest to thee, my friend, if you could but take a view of my head—or at least the bloated foretop that embellishes its pale—then alas, let me tell you, 'tis so bruised and misshaped with the blows that your compatriots have given me in the dark, that should I recover, and mitres thereupon be suffered to rain down from heaven as thick as hail, not a one of them would fit it...

φ

And if you're one of those who didn't take my offer—as though you'd need permission to do just as you will—then it's probable you'd made your choice preceding my admonishment, and all this going on about first order objections has never once applied to you, or your

reproof. Maybe you'll find whimsy—or solace, better still—in knowing that when such discordance rises to *your* sightline there's a chance—the slightest chance—that I'll address it in good time, all in good time. Which is more than I can say for what's most usually vouchsafed as the apex of the literary stock and trade...

φ

For now, I will assume that you have overcome what troubled you when I first brought your notice to the exits on this stage—a comfort in your presence, I would humbly remind you, I have made no strides against, or claims upon. I'm *comforted*, that is to say, in knowing that you've put yourself at ease without assistance, that should you find yourself disturbed in future course you'll know you could do otherwise—could give up giving yourself up to it—and so that your continuance still constitutes a choice. Mine too, but that's beside the point...

φ

Which brings me to the trouble I believe I know you're troubled by—the sort I gather vexes those in league with this account. There are, I am aware, still many possible objections to specific turns within what I've discovered to this point; they may in fact be *countless*, lo these many inclinations to take issue with a turn of phrase, a metaphor, a gest—any passage one can call a principle, or an inference...

φ

They may be countless, I'll admit, but such avowal yields too little margin to be of any use—or too much, one could say, with the identical results...

φ

I said I knew your thinking, but now I'm not so sure—of either what you're thinking now or what you were when I first made the claim. I guess I meant to say...no, I said what I meant; I thought I knew your thoughts—and I may have, it remains unclear...remains *for me* to clarify. That you need think no further on the matter goes without saying...without saying or thinking, I should say, or think...Whether I knew what you were thinking or not, I meant to say I thought I did—I'm saying now I thought I did, which is evidenced by having said so then...

φ

The *truth* of an assertion, after all is said and done, has little to do with the intent of its maker—with what is thus meant *by* it—a truism I'd like to grant as though proved somewhere else. But that's not right. It's a premise, I believe, of some considerable import, if not precisely yet, then in some circumstance to come. I feel confident—I *state it as a truth*—that sooner or later having given further evidence...further *explanation* for this generalized conjecture will prove proof of something *else*—something that's not even thought incipient at present—and it seems to me such confidence is more than worth the effort of some casual pursuit...

φ

Let us, as a model, say this claim to future value—of the value of some similar assertion in a world to come—proves mistaken or a waste of time, at minimum provides no evidence to the contrary. That I was wrong—even that my being wrong should beckon me to postulate some providential sooth—doesn't mean that I meant something other than the claim thereby precluded, or disproved. What I mean to say, I mean to say, when I say I mean otherwise—or what I *meant* to when I did so, at *this* unyielding turn, accepting that the same plaint may apply in future course...

φ

What I was meaning to *divulge* was what first led me to the claim I've since refuted—that I knew what you were thinking when it turns out I knew nothing of the sort. Maybe not nothing—maybe *of the sort*, at least—at least in that my thoughts on what you are or have been thinking *might* have been the case, when I couldn't yet have *known* any such thing...

φ

I haven't said just what that was, I'll grant you, assuming that the absence of my saying—and consequently of your knowing—was what you were just thinking of just now. My point is that *whatever* I first thought that you were thinking could not have been in all cases *born out*, as any set described as such—as means to *aggregate* that lot—must be construed indefinite in scope, meaning no one league of arbiters—such as we are, one assumes—can conceivably have covered its full breadth. I *may* have been correct in the conjecture, to clarify the point, but I couldn't then have *known* I was, and as I said I did I can now claim with *perfect* certainty—can know, as proven *fact*—that I was wrong...

φ

What does it really mean, then, for me to have meant otherwise—to have meant *to say* otherwise? I know forsooth I didn't, and that you have no reason to believe I thought I did when I first claimed. What I should have said...what I *meant* to say when I said I meant something...something other than I *did* mean, at *that* peculiar stand, was that my deft mistake, now that I realize that I made it, comes with an explanation of precisely where—and by what means—my meaning went awry...

φ

What I was doing...what I meant to show...what was *shown up* by my...my *inclination* to believe that you'd do just as I would if pre-

sented with the same prodigious posture, as you have been—as we have *both* been, it appears, however many pairings we contrive ourselves to form—hoping, all the while, that you'd *more* than do as I did...as I *have* by sovereign testament of doing so; that more than merely doing so you'd *think* so—that your doing so would follow... would *have followed* the same circuit I, too, have done...

φ

I, too, have raised objections to the measure of my circumstance against so many instances of similar repose, and knowing myself quite well I'm able to reveal...to *unconceal*, I say again, the motive and the reason behind doing so, that it should meet the standard of its placement in this tale. This précis to—or *of*—what will soon come to seem a tale...

φ

I mean to say I understand that you might not have access to the same muddle of reasoning that's led me to my...my what, I'm still unsure, but regardless that in *this* way you can't cogitate as I do—or haven't yet sustained such course for more than the mere instant of objecting to its practice here and now. I want...I *wanted* to believe that the objection I was making, though unspoken, was still shared—having like minds, as I've always hoped we would...perchance we do—but there are differences between us...between my lone proximity to this parody of prosy vim and yours, differences that guarantee your reading is still partial...is always *less* complete than mine is, an assertion that I'd think you'd have no trouble thinking true...

φ

Take the claim as flattery or insult, whatever suits your mood, but even thus accepting some like affect in receipt of this odd gibe the asymmetry of our relation to its lexical purlieus—to all that is meant by this general affect of a broader view—is mirrored in its obverse, as a

limit on the voicing of a future plan. *I*, that is to say, do not have access to *your* locus in relation to this colloquy—*your* scansion and *your* path—and so you are as likely to hit on some new insight—some tremble that remains a novel variance to me. As likely as I am. And while we both may stub our toes on some one fissure in the pavement, there are surely many others I've alone avoided in my parallel resumption of a parallel decline...

φ

Too bad, really. I'd like to have heard your musings on the matter—on what the matter *is*, if not an aid to its discharge. I'd like the chance to glean your chance rebuttal to this missive, or understand such schism as the dereliction of the scene to come. Haven't we all felt it? The hateful deformity of the endeavor—the *exertion*—of throwing one's insipid elocutions off the summit, believing someday something will return...

φ

I'm not trying to prefer this as some new form of indemnity; don't take me for a fool, it will do neither of us good. Or both of us harm. More harm than the mere absence of some good. I know as well as anyone that I've given myself over to indomitable usury—that I will never get back what I'm due, what I deserve. This perseveration is expenditure, it's true, but it has been enacted for the sake of such expenditure alone; a potlatch that, with any luck, will leave my coffers empty when it's done...

φ

It is *at least* assured that the conceit of this remembrance—this memento of an age that's passing by as it's recalled—is that there's someone...some *many* who are hardly of a different mind than I am here and now but for the incidental contours of propinquity, of being not right here right now as I am, I suppose. I Suppose

Steven Seidenberg

you're not, but I would rather it were otherwise, that we could still believe we walked together...

φ

Such pretense aside...put *beside* consideration, which is not strictly out of...out of reach, beyond regard, I can...I *did* take the position that you were placed as I am; that *if* you were, I'd know...I *would have known* your thinking, what you were thinking *of* when I first made the claim...

φ

I thought I ought inform you I had realized—in the event you've had the good fortune of realizing it too—that I had offered something...some attempt at explanation that required explanation in its own right, if not in the end then surely when considered as a measure of the short view...

φ

How, if you were thinking it—thinking of the same *it* in its turn—can I suggest the distance between moments of repose by thus recalling them with that in mind—for the sole and sidelong purpose of evoking such singular ends? I feel no obligation to provide you with an answer...to *accept* the query now, before its censure or delay, and so you may take up my taking up of what you likely first conceived as your concern alone with trepidation, with a wary sensitivity that's sure to serve you well...

φ

Perhaps I ought to here confess my fondness for redundancy, even though I'm not sure if it's yet come into view; once again I tell you that, although this last *perhaps* may seem more tactic than dispositive, I've never much concerned myself with planning my next step—with where and when, that is to say, my next step will hit ground.

The shortest path between *two* points may well be straightaway, but multiply the number of such nodes along one's course and one might *most* effectively take a route that stands to hit a few. As if the least expenditure in reaching our release is the conditional that sets us to our bearing, our *pursuit*...

φ

What I *seemed* to claim, it seems to me, to such giddy effect was that my recollections of said moments passing—moments much like those with which my tale...some *portion* of my tale begins to come about—were similar with respect to the concern that brought me to them—that brought my *notice* to them, if nothing more or else—but still appear distinct in ways I can't seem to state clearly...to describe with any clarity, and so make clear *to you*...

φ

It's not that it's so difficult to *imagine*, as I see it—as I imagine it, I might as well admit—but despite that ease I have not fairly winnowed down the options—have not chosen any one or two or three...not *picked* a single one, that is, to justify the boast. To make it represent some wayward *something* in particular, or some *things*, as I've since confessed to knowing is the more accurate account, and I'm convinced that if *I* were the one thereby forbidden proper access to the setting of the scene I might soon find my puzzlement transfigured into animus, or easy mirth...

φ

Needless to say, I am not bidden *or* forbidden to avail myself of such acquaintanceship, but I have my sympathies—a fact that I will surely need remind you of again. If I expect to make my way along the course of my odd coursings—or expect *you*, that is, not merely to take me at my word but to take my word the way *I* would if I were in *your* place—then I count it in my interest—an *obligation*, really,

whether it proves in my interest or not—to provide you with a mode of understanding that will yield us *both* novel results...

φ

As such, let me tell you, no one set of many moments I can presently recall has revealed anything but the practice of awakening as precedent to that peculiar feeling—peculiar to you, it seems to me, to any one of you—with which the day in question...that one day *in particular* began...

φ

No precedence can vindicate my choosing *not* to throw myself out of repose and into...into whatever I've found myself reposing in—perhaps upon—when I've been thrown out into...can *gird* my choice to bide within such immotile posture until finding my place again within that obtuse frame, nor can I recall a single circumstance to warn me of the dangers of proceeding before coming to that clarity of purpose and impression, that finally elucidated *mise-en-scene*...

φ

This, it seems to me, is strange enough. But stranger still, I think, what I've been forced to recollect as something to recall before I further limn what stopped me from all furthering along is that within my summing up of instances the same—the same for having thus discerned no consequence...no single *undesired* consequence to dodging such routine—I claimed certain disparities between those disparate instances, differences I've yet to name, or press into the service of...of anything one can construe an absence, or a squandered gain...

φ

There was a time when I awoke not knowing what I woke to, or where I had set down the night before. I've often found it true that

the exception proves revealing on occasions when an endless iteration of the rule can never do, a truism I'm sure you'll take no issue with... Well, I'm not precisely sure, but let us say, for lack of a more friendly confirmation, that in this instance—if no other—I don't care...

φ

There was a time some time ago when I awoke in calm and carefree humor, without a sense of where I was or was, in turn, *moved towards*, but even at that moment I was more or less accustomed to the habits I have subsequently come to grant as commonplace...as commonplace *to me*, in present rank and form, a search for hint of shadow slung across the fading view...

φ

I *say* search, but that's not what I was doing...what I *thought* that I was doing at the time. In retrospect, I understand the impulse as the flailing of a child in the first throes of its *métier*, without the slightest whisper of such forthcoming accord...

φ

I imagine there are many who would find this disconcerting—a sudden apprehension of the generally impalpable complexion of prevenient pursuit. It's routine to credit feats of artistry or ratiocination as the coming to fruition of some crop sown in the womb, but the incidental contours of one's unwitting propinquity are just as wholly *of oneself*, as rightly thought *authentis*; still constitute the prowess we've indentured ourselves *to*...

φ

And why not. Or what other choice. The question, it appears to me, has nothing at all to do with the act in...in *question*, I'm inclined to say, despite my realization that such desultory diction might prove