FEBRUARY 25

and
and
and
and
and

and you...
DECEMBER 2

for Ted

and distracted, jumping from dictated French beds, beds of sentences, shoved up against beds of remembering tea or neurosis, to buying an armful of branches but not buying the tree where the owl therefore lives on, undisturbed, in forest’s “swag”

and alive, ignoring for now some monologues and the call of beds being made and ranking all visitors by their corners as managerial approach to suitors whose successes have, after all, not been predictable by their kindnesses, untuned, not even song, but which do matter

and matter, converted from back to shoulder, liquid matter, the bag definitely exists, has seven pockets, but the books inside, though there, don’t take the form they would if I would open them, not becoming journal, at most to do list, but one where the tasks aren’t mine but the reading is

and open, stretched spine, to the next thing worth thinking, the syntax of a not-yet-friend whose lines can introduce another’s style without capitulation to it, I thought that, too, but could not be open to my putting it awkwardly in public

and you, the motivation for day’s distractions’ lively openness to mattering addressed to you in borrowed clothes that you could not name, a villanette or whatever and a walk, calm matter in a painless assisted gait, you appeared and said the nuns’ rebuilt spire could yet fall again

Rainer Diana Hamilton
DECEMBER 3

for Rainer Diana

and collected, feelings of being around,
around the operative word, while around unvisited tombs or
even desired, John whose memorial is fucked under and John whose words
say simply, “To be casual and to have the wish to heal”

and “The heart / is too far buried in the sand / to tell,”
around a repetition and turning stretches of sand
falling from one chamber to the next, stream together to form a picture,
that heartening which is rendered so clearly, how after enough time
a bone heals

and healed, resolved to better health which is still entropy, healed like that,
—it’s in the bag (so to say)—an open form or a form to empty first
and shake out all that could be healing to start again from the unhistoric acts of
oneself, a censer of loves and hates swinging in time, a matter of opinion
that knows us better as students

and time, when the students among us are diffused from
what couples us here, wage or perspective, like San Juan
viewing his Christ’s body from above before dropping from the window
to meet them, to lay the hair of the beloved God upon his breast

and that poem, met in resurrecting a collection of the heart’s lines
healing over time, which is to say endless when absence
is lived with, unmet and the saintly courtyard emptied of mortal witness
so the spirits can inhabit freely, and your closed eyes turn in their annex
that poem when you are writing yourself

Ted Dodson
DECEMBER 5

and chatty today, sending psychic cat messages
messages unsent, unthought of or pocketed
quiet where hands go but not so quiet
in the mind I slip green like a pocket to hold

some days another lines the insides, other times
the day goes by in independence, turning colors
over in the dark, in case they mean
something again

and thought grows darker, painted
nails in gloves, where daylight hasn’t slipped
in around hands, rehearse my message
wearing Oppenheim’s gloves inside out
intentions, with luck, grow out before they chip

and, look, again the paint, material, has decided again
to mean something as the cat means something
“in his way” where again occurs regardless of
lighting, not the paint, the daylight, but the
others coming near + near approaching

and gestures, affected, the hand’s wardrobe
hovering the periphery of my nude green bath
new life as a charm when used beyond use
where we go from here, I’ve had it sideways
use is the gesture but also the foreground
hands are foremost for petting, and don’t I forget it

and you, the relief of your side in the dark
the once again and the gesture with you, not with paint
which is the words of this I use to approach
again unpocketed your smiling hand, as you text
yourself to pet this poem

charles theonia
and surrounded, escaping worries on a waterway of influence, influenced by friends and their postures and even by influence’s promise or lie that nothing is finally mine, ungrounded nothings evening into an open ear, such as, just now, “coitus interruptus LAPD is a drag”

and resigned, not to a consequence of song but to the flood of influences flickering under my life, that nameless singing whose upshot is surrender to form’s hotness, intention meant and met, a resignation, finally, from the contented idea that my repetitions are fated, not free

and free: the other day, free all morning, I went to see the last show Peter Schjeldahl ever saw, a swarm of photographs, a theory of photography as spending unscarce resources unhindered by the artifice of titling, and what was the content of this freedom but repeated seasons and aversion to text

and titles, ours, each delays a fretful manumission, feeling from form, but perhaps a name is just a pose, a strong angle on a wayward body—and body and angle, object and facet, title and essence all fruits left to ripen in the same paper bag

and you, my title, my resignation, my interruption, give me the freedom and the duty to surround my promises with one name and feel the dragging repetitions of one day, not the true span but the mark, not what you saw but what scarce time let you put down, as when you pose me for that photograph

Vinson Cunningham
and a blue ghost with a huge ass, the whole thing looks like a bowling pin without a base only bigger and curved, a pin with an ass and a cartoon scribble for a mouth, she's constantly getting out of bed and beckoning me to follow her but it seems absurd and then I think I did that already why do I need to do it again

and engaging in a mock battle with women who are opposing my team, they sit on risers like they're the audience in a play and we play-act our fight with them like Edward II by Derek Jarman except all women, they sort of look like Audrey Wollen and when we touch each other with swords at vital points it's supposed to represent death only when I do it to the three or four laughing women who are attacking me they don't “die” and then when i'm supposed to be indignant the taller graceful Audrey character touched my wrist with a sword and i don’t “die” either

and a major cultural difference particular to North Carolina according to which people both receive and make a point of hunting down these multicolored tokens, they look like pastel candy corn but they aren’t edible and then later you trade them in for drinks and food at the local microbrewery so really I say you’re just accepting part of your wages in another currency one that’s only good for beer but you and another girl say well you’re not from here you don’t really get it and later it’s a sex dream and you turn in the tokens for rides at the local Vanderbilt-owned amusement park called the Bildung

and two women in early middle age, sisters, they look as if animated by Alex Katz, discover that in conversation with other people each can hold herself still for a second longer than necessary, stare for a second longer than everyone else, although it was disconcerting to witness you could never be sure she was really doing it, like perhaps the animator (Alex Katz, God) had just slowed or blurred your vision, in a way it was a semi-private effect and everyone observing the sisters thought that they personally were experiencing a druggy blip in the pacing of reality where really two 30-something brunettes were conspiring to put a private language into practice. it slowed conversation down, they said when confronted about it, and after all why did it matter we aren’t so very attractive (Jerry Seinfeld in conversation with them hotly disagrees) and people didn’t look that closely anyways. Now that I, Jerry Seinfeld, can see the effect I can’t unsee it, I see them do it while they pull the books off my shelf, I see it while I walk with you up the exit ramp for an Appalachian gorge

and you are host to this poem I am the mother of many children I live illicitly in a hotel in Toronto like my grandfather's apartment; I’m helping Sarah accomplish a task, she’s unhappy, i’m buying her a large bottle of vodka and then I have to have it delivered to her apartment as room service. Sarah and Jasmine and David are in this apartment above me, which also looks
like my grandfather’s. I can’t get past the doorman; I weep and use an initialism many letters long, which turns out to mean that I have many children but custody of none of them. they enter the dream and beg for attention. one can’t walk up the stairs and there’s at least one set of twins. it’s not clear how many children I have, only that it’s a brood and the oldest whom I love the most is only 3 and you are emphatically not the father

Kay Gabriel
and fixed, to slow a petering out part of personality, 
or personality’s inability to show itself before others despite wanting 
to have it split like a mussel who arrives undesignated 
to a party to get stuffed before shared, some vip guest

and chill, to make loudspoken the possible, possible murder at 
party, the impossibility felt when thud a body appears 
stopped the two guests kissing in, yes that’s your bedroom, and a possible 
non-deletion with everyone in, standing there by the two vases, full of flowers, still

and twenty minutes left, enough to make what’s less than tv with a candle, 
Hannah, Claudia, Nicole, Memory, Spit, Phone Sex, Feb 25, *Cosmogony*, 
*To the Lighthouse*, *Getting Lost*, a printout of “February 25,” 
postcard, notebook, bottle of Schweppes, and wallet, grow 
quick in moments and for storage for good on paper

and shrinking, or what is the desire for it to do in me, 
not overthink it, I just want be clear, you see, and no I don’t 
literally mean shrinking; this verve stuff, it’s not part 
of my personality yet, you get me doc

and so then another one, the correlation of the fixedness the chill the urgency and the shrinking 
no changing part of it, wherein a backyard is something it 
 isn’t, not almost but completely: this unrare activity of occupying a poet
made form instead of the old part of one’s mind, this result 
still unshrunken, big like memory, so nearly a poem.

*Shiv Kotecha*
FEBRUARY 11

and sitting, thinking on the train of the ease with which
those around me hold their bodies, and myself ignorant envious
of their ability to move through the writhing of being always on the edge
of breaking down or wondering, as if held too long a stranger’s eyes

and breaking, under the pressure of too much,
this communal space, where one could ignore but hold together
were only ‘theirs’ as in everyone else, who had certain rights
granted them when I was somewhere else, mistaking love for others
in my afraid but desperate need to appear

and standing, breathing too close to a stranger,
still this ability to disentangle from a sense of another or
in this case multiple, on the train to Bedstuy to pick up a book
from a friend, and feeling the desire to shrink my own body
to a point of light, or something you can remember without effort

and remembering, bringing this simple image to mind that appears without need
to interpret or assign a particular significance, as if there were nothing greater,
than this moment in which its presence, the mental image gaining solidity,
taking place alongside you, that daydream of memory

and beginning, to place yourself in that field
remembering a place you’ve never been, but the sweetness of the grass
in sunlight on which you can place a coat or blanket, feeling
an unseasonable warmth in the air or watching, say
a flock of pigeons flying against a sky without clouds
and therefore without movement, except in the poem you make by being there

Joey Yearous-Algozin
To the reader on Feb. 25, 2023

and stupid, even so, it really isn’t such a big deal, once you —
and I mean you, in this case, not one, — stop for a second
to actually think about what could go wrong here;
not nothing but not everything either, stop worrying

and mistaken, fine. but does not count as a catastrophe,
just the sort of thing that happens to people, like when
you leave the keys in the door or your wife or the lights or stove
or your camera on, even if by accident, while unzipping

and sinful my god! clearly it’s a joke, but archness
only goes so far before wearing out or it gets hard
to get over the idea that your friend could — meant impersonally,
both you and the friend, who you probably already hate —
actually be serious re: conversion, just lacks follow through

and withholding, in fact, makes sense but does not mean
that it’s going to make anything better if you’re just planning
(in the loose, but please not the impact-not-intent sense)
to keep getting by and off on self-denial.

and the stupidity, the mistakes, the sin, the withholding:
it’s all in there, but it’s not even clear that it’s hypocrisy,
and anyway, if it is, what comes next: just because you get off
to poetry means you need to go out and become a writer?
sometimes it’s fine not to reciprocate.

Elena Comay del Junco
Across the sill a window to superfluous time
perhaps something empty like a bowl perched on it
or some self-help book with a self-congratulatory title
which has been purchased but won’t be read

some correlation of the parts of the self you can
partially see a woman tilting her head
to the side yearning for a more fruitful slut season
amidst the grinding churn of the rise of fascism

her little desires clarifying like what exactly?
earbuds tilting in her ears an audiobook narrator
voicing Circe—the hours were nothing to me—watching
mortals age—apples in a bowl, wrinkling and shrinking — Now

I’ve said the opposite of what I mean Time is not
passing it is slowed or stuck
slowing like August afternoons or Sundays but also
revving up again as soon as someone comes

home as soon as something within her comes to be
at rest as soon as the right person texts
back and the certainty of things picks up
and she can forget herself enough

Marina Weiss
Feb 25

Silently heckling our so-called resemblance,

my body’s double wouldn’t progress, would check with me first,

that’s good, it’s where we meet at least

Hiss silently against them, these innocents

had less to do with me and you said die

and slurred yourself, they peer down nothing in their faces

Steering my ass to comprehension, to silently

teaching the me with the remnant of you,

learning and objecting my every stance

Ease me now, now you are, in such rhythms I use with latitude,

describing difference like a squeaky wheel

However we thought to keep going, the rest

were reminders of the same, distributed and forgotten

Isabelle Olive
and we’d wished someone would have told us about that kind of terror I’ve known ways of sneaking out or not being found, how did we play it back then the tape ran and ran until we forgot a recording was being made

and is that better to be unaware, probably, though it also documents shards of trajectories we don’t yet understand I was saying something about plants and what it means to care for them and then it turned into a conversation about what it means to be seen and witnessed not caring

and misunderstood because sometimes buried within not caring is a very deep kind of concern for life and things that breathe and for the self I’m remembering now when your mother told me a little bit of ego was good how it stuck in my mind that she thought I needed to hear her say it to me

and how does one get to a point in life where the self is a shameful thing to revere and its all tied up in money which is a bit obvious but that’s where we are now in that bliss state where the most beautiful ones are the simplest ideas

and you and you and you, how they convinced us that the idea of the “other” was a radical philosophical stance as if we hadn’t been playing that game forever each push against a disparate being relearned many times over

Anna Gurton-Wachter
Feb 25

for Anna Gurton-Wachter

and improbable, that I imagined a day a little like
paradise, to do nothing, say nothing to almost
anyone, no suggestion of movement
on earth, except when Michael Palmer says “minerals caked on the edge of the glass” and a text
message rings, hi Anna, and a little plan for the future

and funny, I made this video of
paradise once, low resolution in green and
brown, some ocean salt and trees, the after-version tells me
no more no less, though I do return to it and do miss it

and missed, walks in cold
places that occur somewhere off
the page, and the blue hill where
we said we never would again, what then

and then, the cores of apples
are still on the roof and love is singing
twin-scents, the day at a distance
is ending in spring, they’re walking around laughing
and dodging raindrops

and ending now, we will start our
routine earlier tonight, you will
sit down forever into the bath while
I get the sponge, brush your hair, kiss you goodnight
secretly waiting to write this poem

Alexis Almeida
and lost, surrounds something that was so positive, not involved in a kind of mourning, even thought to follow myself or at least what once was myself but rehashed, gloss-bulb cordoned off and rewound our waists we’d wound, felled

and loved, sharing a living place but lottery’s made love of gravity only, never a mean to contrast pleasing & devolving, painted him as a child from a photograph I know, to write another letter, imperative, steam-tunneling, would rewetten like his cash experiences his hands in his pocket my fist stays

and experiences, not performing the work how I wanted to, see dashes for eyes and keep heaving to reach the end of the night, 50 yards away a brittle black and heavy revolver gets to predict heart of a child, dark and stormy, needles and pins, heart laid preformed and lies, one of aversion then cruel on an object

and unformed, also to sort of “side-shadow” rather than back-shadow that outs me in a moment of history that’s quite exciting that always leads to networks of other players, wait in silk I pasted, in ease I have appealed while unwanting but she walks to bed puts flower on bed

and you, of the redwood trees, protecting women as they are arrested and shoved together to get to the end, to lose the end of the love, experience lying, your form, if revolution be the same, surprising, not much has happened since I’ve seen you last, from our fully lived cradle I wept at the color

Corina Copp
and resourceful, succumbing to the most secure fantasies,
fantasies of not writing, even fantasies of being scared or
unhappy, careful what words I use but not so careful what words
of other people stick in my mind, as if, "in trouble"

and loved, denying at the least a desire & a swing
of fantasies evolving & getting lost in the intimacy of desire
as only one's own, not shared, and at the most an assertion of
that love which can be rendered, almost picked, for a portrait,
it is so clear

and clear, I had even anticipated the bookbag, clear as that,
not in doubt that, what I want or even need, but doubt that space
of energy where this clarity remains intact without violation of
the poses, not of that portrait, one of assertion, but of the
others standing still & still watching

and poses, my own, of the body's exhibition of strength,
the agility that performs around the exact center of a mesmerizing
talent for the new, & now I've said the opposite of what I mean,
this is the pose but it is also the strength

and you, the correlation of the resourcefulness the love the
clarity and the pose with you in the arc of the painting that
is being made, in an obsession to be exact again & that is,
clearly happy in a state of our own possession, as you possess
yourself when you are writing that poem

Bernadette Mayer
On December 1, 2022, Ted texted this poem of Bernadette’s and asked “is this [form] something she made up or is this something i should know.” We weren’t sure—if it’s a pre-existing form, we couldn’t ID it—but the specific repetition (the “clear” at the end of stanza 2 becoming the repeated term of stanza 3, and so on; the “and [adjective]” construction) was appealing. We agreed to each try to describe the form to ourselves and then use it.

To join the February 25 society, do the same, and send your poem to february.25.society@gmail.com.
I pray for a large appetite, so that I may enjoy myself for as long as possible.