

Enter

Steve Benson

“Enter” is a 2008 transcript derived from two sources, both records of the same public performance event.

The left column presents, verbatim, as recorded on VHS by the Poetry Archive at San Francisco State University, the words spoken into a microphone and amplified during an oral improvisation I performed on the evening of May 31, 2005 at the Unitarian Universalist Center in San Francisco, CA, in a reading offered by the Poetry Center at SFSU on a double bill with writer Carla Harryman and musician Jon Raskin, whose collaborative presentation followed mine. The right column presents, verbatim, as saved at the time in a document file, the text that the audience saw me writing on poet Kit Robinson’s borrowed laptop, as it was projected on the concrete wall of the sanctuary they faced while I was typing it; several lines were visible at any one moment as the text scrolled down with its composition in progress.

My piece, spontaneously dedicated to the recently deceased poet Robert Creeley and to Carla Harryman, was simultaneously spoken and written over a 35-minute period. Aside from the initial sentence, all the material was improvised, without advance decisions as to content or theme; I had decided in advance to perform repetitions and variations but not what they would say or how they would progress.

One liberty I took in making the 10-page transcription was to eliminate punctuation—in the event, these were all commas—replacing them with three strikes on the space key. I used a close viewing of the video to collate passages heard with those preserved visually, breaking lines in the former to approximate both phrasing of delivery and also temporal association with the appearance of written text. Thus, blank lines in the left column may signify occasions where the voice was silent but the typescript was coming into view. The few instances of line spaces in the right column are editorial additions, not present in the original, introduced to identify instances where the voice was active while no writing was occurring at all. The only other change I made in the right column was the font, which had been Times New Roman in the performance.

When you and I are kind to one another
the war ends

Once you and I are
kind to each other
the warring ends

Once
you and I were kind to each other
as the war ended

Once you and I are kind to each other
the war will be over

One time you
were kind to me and the war ended

Once in my imagination
the war was stopping kindness
from reaching its ends

One war was stopping kindness
from reaching

One warm foot was reaching out

One warm footing was reaching out

One warm foot was facing
out

One way of facing out
is finding a war raging
inside you

One way you can face
away is inside you

One way I felt my brain swaying was
inside you

One day I felt the rain
make its way inside you

One day I felt the rain shape
around us

One waving mane of
unreal grains vegetables and fruits

When you and I are kind
to one another the war
ends

Once you and I are kind
to each other the
warring ends

Once you and I were
kind to each other as
the war ended

Once you and I are kind
to each other the war
ends

Once you were kindness
and the warring ends

Once in my image the
war was stopping kindness
from reaching an end

One war was stopping a
kind person from each
reach out

One warm foot was
reality outside itself

One warm footing was
resting on the ground

One wan face was
feeling out the face

One way of feeling was
finding a raging in your
heart

One wisdom can feel its
way is inside

One wave I feel my
brain sway was inside
myself

One day I felt the rain
making way inside us

One dame felt feels a
shape around us

One waving mane of
plastic grain staged for

staged for pretended eating	predtense of consummation
One inside the day I felt her feeling a reach in toward her	One inside the day once inside the person who was her felt herself feeling a reach in to her heart
One felt a reach in to the person inside	One felt a reason in the self personhood feeling
One was a face feeling out in the darkness	One was felt a feeling a feeling a face outside the in the work of darkening
Once in the world of darkness that slid open that face emerged into light	One in a world of darkeneing that slid that sliding face emerged into light
That face merged into the light around it	That face merged in the light face around it
That face felt itself merging into the light around it	The face felt merging into the face around the light
The face felt an emerging light around its feeling	The face felt an emergnecy around it feeling faces
The face no one could see was feeling itself finding out a merger a merged state	The face no one could be was it itself find out a merger of itself and another
In this emergency the feeling tone is rhyiming opening out and unspooling	It is an emergency the feeling tonight is reeling open into the night
In the darkening that's gathering the faces feel	In the dark the gathering faces the the feeling as of itse;lf
As if they themselves are becoming a mere register of what it means to be alive Whatever it takes	As if they were being a merger registration of faceness Of whatever means it

to be alive	take be alive my
might mean taking	meaning taking off
another life	another life beside
back	onself
One might mean to be taking	One might mean to be
another one away	taking another one
in one's imagination	away in image of the
	face
One might make another meaning	One might make another
face into the light	meaning face into the
of one's	imagine imaging
feeling it out	feeling it there
Once one feels its light leaking out	Ononce feels its leaving
it feels fine	it feels fine likke a
like mist	missed ones
One has missed oneself sometimes	One has oneself once in
and in the darkness one might	a time of darkness of maybe
maybe	one might or may not
find feeling opening up	find feeling opening up
One might feel one self	One might feel oneself
reeling open	reeling unreveling
seeming	seeming and seeing
what one seems to say	what once said was
	heard
Once what one said	Once what one said
was always heard	saying was heardf once
one could always listen in	always in to intself
through a device	through
One could lean in to the device	Once could leave in the
and believe in it	device and leave in it
	there listening
Once listening to the device	Once listening the the
I leaned in	device I listened in and
and waved at myself	toward myself at
	myself at myself
Once in a while	Once in a white time I
I could breathe	could become breathing
	inside the device
Once in a while	Once in the device I
I could breathe in	could breathe out the

the idea
I could breathe the idea into the feeling

A feeling of feeling of thinking
if only out loud through the breathing

If I could feel what breathing
felt like
in that minute
because it felt
like my beating heart

My heart was beating
inside my breathing
And one of us was being
kind of alert
and noticing
what was sought to be thought there

One of us was sighing
the same time as the other one
thought about the sigh

One of us cried in a sign of
thinking
just barely
One of the times that we fell
and the breath blew open the window
through which I left

One time in the autumn
I was there
leaving as you entered

I was not leaving you
but the space that was not there
after you came in

feeling
I could breathe the idea into
the feeling of thinking
aloud

Of a feeling out thinking
if only out loud through
the breath

Of I could feel what
bearing itself in the
lake breathing beside
myself felt my own
heart

My breathing breathing
my heart inside and
being there too
And one of us what
being kind of aware
and thinking and not
thinking and was a sigh
signed there

One of us was sighing
the same time as the
other one thinking
sighed

One of us cried in a
sign of thin thought
bare leaves thinning out
One of the in the fall the
wind blew the leaves the
door opened the leaves
to fall

One time in the the
autumn I was there
leaving as you were
entering what
became of us

I wasn't leaving you
but the space that was
not there after you
came in before me

One time after you found
 my belongings
 left behind
 I became a sign
 One left one's belongings
 to become a sign
 One left oneself in another body
 to become what was signed there

One had left and feeling what was left
 had opened the door
 to befriend what could be there

One was not myself
 but being there
 I could believe
 I once thought I was being
 believing a signature
 when in eighth grade
 I was signing everything
 with my signature then
 I was belonging in the world
 of my signature
 there

In eighth grade where
 my signature belonged
 becoming looser and more open

In eighth grade where my
 signature became a sign
 of what would become
 and how I would belong

I would become
 a belonging
 to myself

I would become
 my past memory
 to enter the future

I would enter the future

Oned time ofater yuou
 find my belongings
 leave you behind I
 became a sign
 One left belong behind to
 be what was a sign
 One left oneself in a sign
 to become was a body
 in mind
 One had felt and feeling
 the last one there had
 opened what was to
 becoming
 One was not me myself
 but becoming mnyself I
 could be leaving too
 I once thought I was be a
 believing a signature
 whaten in 8th grade
 I was signing every name
 with my signature then
 I was beyound myself in
 the whirl of my
 signature there
 In eighth grade whaere my
 signature belonged becoming
 looser and more open
 In 8th grade where my
 signature became a sign
 of what I would
 become and belong to
 I would become
 recovered a beloonging
 to my own past and
 memory
 I would become better
 than my past of
 memory to enter the
 future
 I would enter the future

of my believings
 before it was too late
 Before I left it was late and I was too
 I was left too
 and it was too late not to be so
 I was left and left to it
 by myself there and so
 I wanted to leave myself
 there in the scene
 we had shared
 I wanted to be left there
 in the scene we had
 shared kindly together
 I wanted never to leave
 that I had not had that kindness
 I wanted a kind of feeling
 everything together
 together with you
 I wanted my own kind of feeling
 with you too
 feeling it with me
 I wanted what I won to be
 your winning too
 I was seeing what I was feeling
 as yours
 and then I grew
 I was seeing what
 I felt there with you
 grow
 I was seeing
 a feeling growing there
 between us
 I felt my own self
 writing as I grew
 to become more there
 and feel all of you

memory of the belives
 what I left beind
 Beofre I lfeft It was late
 and I was too
 I was left too and it wsas
 too late late not to be so
 I tool was left and left to
 be myself there and so
 I wantged to believe
 myself in there in the
 scene we had shared
 I wanted to bereft there
 in the seeing we had
 shared kindness in
 together
 I wanted never to believe
 I had to leave that kind
 mess with you
 I wanted a kind of messy
 everyhting together
 with you
 I won my own kind of
 feeling with you too
 feeling your own too
 I want what was I own to
 be your own won tune
 I wwas seeing what I was
 feeling as yourself and
 then I grew
 I was was seeing what
 eye felt there with you
 grow
 I was felt was feeling
 seen feeling groan there
 between you and it
 I was feel my groan and
 writhing as gto be there
 with you and all of you

I was feeling what I knew was not you in you there	I was wanted to feel what I was knew was not you in you there
I was my own feeling in myself being what was not there because it was you	I was was my own eye feeling being what was not being there was you
So I was very much then because I was being I felt this in you	Very much then Because I was not me I felt this in you
Because I was feeling myself being there I felt in you a corresponding felt tone	Because I was fee3l myself I in you a responding feeling tune
I felt a tune with you that was stirring	I felt in tune with you the was stirred by your contact
I felt the contact between us and I felt here far from you and yet close	I feel the contact between our skins and hearing and from you and yet very close
I felt inside you with me what was closed and opened	I fit in with you with me what was closed and opened
I felt with you what was closed opened	I felt with you what closed opened
I felt what was closing opening	I feel what closes up opening up
I felt up your close chest and felt up my feeling inside	I felt up your close chest and felt up my feeling inside
I felt up in my chest and felt a feeling rub over you	I felt up in my chest and felt a feeling rub over you
I felt felt over my chest feeling the rubbing of you	I felt felt over my chest feeling the rubbing of you
I felt rubbing again by you	I felt rubbed against my you
I well I made feeling and I became it too	I fwell I may feel it and I being came too

I came to feel you
 and you did too
 because you know you
 I won what I knew
 and I knew you were feeling
 what you were not me
 We know what we know
 but that's not what I mean
 It is not I that feels
 but my little mind
 that thinks it knows
 The way that thinks
 its knowing is fine and misty tonight

It's finding mist in this night
 outside and inside of me

It's fine and I find it
 and it's missed and it's mine

It's whatever I did
 miss being here
 its being here tonight
 In this I am not missing
 what I am meaning
 or its not being so true
 And if I were ever true to you

I would be belonging
 I wonder how I would
 be in belonging here with you

In so doing
 I would be becoming you
 not really
 I could not really
 become what you belong to

But in the night as I was saying
 I wanted to feel that mist on my face

I came to you fear and
 you did too because
 you are not you
 I wanted what I wanted
 to know in feeling and
 not me too
 I and you feel what when
 why we no not that's it
 It isn't what I that feels
 but my little eye that
 knows it

The where that thinks it's
 snowing is fine and
 misty tonight
 It's finding mist in the
 night outside in inside
 of this here

It's fine and I find
 missing and mine
 tonight

It's whatever I didn't
 miss being is this in
 here is tonight
 In this I am not missing
 what I meant I mean
 being so true to you

And if ever true if ever I
 were truly tuning in to
 you belonging here
 I wonder and how who I
 would be in being you
 inside

I in si the so it in this is
 be becoming you not
 real

I would would not not
 really belonging there
 with that

But in this night I was
 sne I want y cold and

cold and wet	wet feeling
Its cold wet damp feeling	Its cold wet harsh dirty
was hitting me like a hard rock in the face	felt stone faced there
It was a hard rock	It was a hard a rock that
that we felt through the glass	we felt through the
that we were drinking from	stein the drink came
	intto
When we drank it was not over yet	I want to drink It was not
It was hard to get over it	yet of it hard to get
	over
It was hardly over yet it was	It was hardly over yet it
something still	wa a still drinking it
and we were inside it	
It was drinking from us	It drank from our lips
where we stood	where stoanding belong
and we were feeling a longing	for not being there
as if we were somewhere else	
It was there that we	It wasn't there that we
drank that nectar of forgetfulness	drank that need to
that we had longed for	forgetfulness that that
	we lengtheend
It was in that lengthy shot	I t was in that lengthy
of dark mist	shower of dark
that we felt	messiness that we felt
around for our feeling wants	around for our longing
	what was there
Inside that dark mist	Inside that darkaness of
of the clothes that had gotten soggy out	damp closing up we
there we felt our brains tingle as the air	soggy rains tingle as air
hit them	faired well
As the air hit us on our clothing	As the air hit us acorss
that was wet and shivering	on clothes wet and
we felt ourselves	simmering we spelt our
in our faces	names erased
Whenever we felt the rain	Wehenever we felt the
sizzling across	rain sizzling acorss our
our terrain	shifting terrible strain
we felt the names of	we felt a mane of a
a wildness and our voices became hoarse	wild hoarse breathing
Our hoarse breath	Out hoarse breathe

breathing in and out
after hours and hours of
believing we were there
we felt that we could breathe in that air

We are now not kind
and wet but we are
where we belong
We came along from
the dark places we couldn't see
in our imaginations
and we left behind
our warm
hot breath

breathing in and out
and hours and hours
believing we were not
only there but belong
in that air

We are not now naughty
and yet but we are
where we began
We can out and from the
darkness we could only
see in our images or
signs and we left
behind our warm hot
breaths