

Robert Crosson

# *Daybook*

(1983–86)

OTIS BOOKS | SEISMICITY EDITIONS

*The Graduate Writing program*

*Otis College of Art and Design*

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i.

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A long time ago I decided that writing was a necessity for me. I would not await 'grants' to enable me to write ( that *compartmentalization* – such an awkward word – of the *Yearly Retreat*): instead would write *daily*, whatever might become of it. And so I started my Daybooks.

My idea was to incorporate 'writing' as part of my daily life (work, gossip, et al): part of a fabric, and let it fall there. Through the years the DAYBOOKS have become my mainstay and what, with friends, I often humorously refer to as my curse and 'center of sanity'. Out of them (now 53 volumes) have come most of my periodic pieces in magazines and three (now four) published book: a discipline, focal to what I draw from...

*Immediacy*. The word 'subjunctive' doesn't apply. Life stares us in the face every minute: what we make of it in writing is pretty much up for grabs. Caution: and patience. To celebrate Occasion and (general) tapestry of regular address.

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Quote (a poet-friend): "I want a real poem in my coffin." His-  
fairly; why not? Alas it might be said 'it's all *enterprise*' afterall:  
and close celebration... which has nothing to do with (one of my  
more-repetative lines) the English Morality Plays (like *Everyman*,  
or *Piers Plowman*); much less (likewise) the German *Jedermann*  
(subsequent) which I once heard in performance at Salzburg  
in an outside amphitheater – full cast of actors, Choir and  
symphony orchestra.

. . .

At the end, when Jedermann goes to his grave – of course  
alone: no kith, ken or Cousin to join him (symphonic Chorus  
rising) – all the churchbells in Salsburg rang from hill to hill:  
splendidly touching, and beautiful.

ii

So much for the joys of Fiction – and/or the romanze  
of Poetry – the way we might like to see it.  
When in fact, it lacks the 'theatricalism'  
we most heartedly might purport.

'Simplicity' another awkward word.  
(Sentiment, Of course applies): up to another day  
for hopefully yet another generation...

Leaving dead flowers from the desert:  
kept in a white envelope.  
With a scrawl of signature affixed.

Carefully pasted next to laundry-slips  
And cautious warnings from Creditors.

6-23

Wrote left-handed, right to left  
and upside down.

People would cure that straightaway.

Led to bed-wetting.

Most likely grow up a criminal.

Mirror ws to see your face.

Outside-violence to the right image.

(Don't matter he spoke Italian)

Could see through bone.

Made shadows at will.

Invented the microscope.

Three-hours into a workday

and still in pajamas...

The use of it.

Its function.

How George Washington slept or Jack Benny

played midnight trumpet.

An indulgence.

Days that look like nothing, except

some trapping be assessed.

Plastic bone in the silver socket.

A braying goat.

Cut-toenails...

No framework to hang the lighted jellies.

9/am

*Sonny just come, but did not.*

(Ms Fickett's gardener,  
Blond, six-two)

Ania phones.

Did I think that Hermanos (who suggested I visit Kestler in Mexico and find me a Mexican lover) was *really* referring to the possibility of Ned's selling the house? Thereby warning Option? I suggested not.

And would I care to drive up north with her in November? Also, she has some carpentering she wants done. In case I'm "maybe needing a job."

6-26

Shark-swallowing: fifty cases of Red Cross sausages and jam voracious kids tore their clothes off and ett. Maybe seven of them. Audience...

"A false penis we buy from the enemy  
to save our troops."

Lamp; shade off...  
Stye, left eye.

10/pm

Chinamen, fed relish... docile. The ravenous... Train... that flag took... across the ice....The old woman with her dancing leg in the air.

Celine, droll whore, administering

Mahalia Jackson, singing nextdoor...  
Sons-of-famous-men fighting it out on the parapets...  
A dancer, drunk atop his carlid...  
singing *Climb every mountain...*

On his way here?

Tennis shoes?

Patches of red.

Undoing his sock in the lumberyard.

6-28

3/pm

Look at house with Cady and Penelope, Eagle Rock.  
Check foundation, roof.  
Shop hardware for Jesson.  
Pick up tape-deck loaned Thomas.

Click the day.

Swat invading bees.  
Drink what's left of a six-pack  
and wrestle scabies. Stye worse.  
Can't focus.

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THOMAS: "I enjoy other people's miseries...inspires me. So long as they don't expect sympathy."

Compared him to Flaubert.  
Thomas laughed. Read the letter.  
"Obviously a poet."

Myth or not? I said... houses built, falling in on us. "Backed to the corner, there's nowhere to go. The I ends it... I don't want that."

"Meaning what?" said Thomas.

"I've exhausted me."

"Bravo!"

"Same program, same words fed back. It's a lie."

"Which?"

"The myth," says I.

"I don't see my face in the mirror," said Thomas. We agreed: the face is not to be looked at. "That's not me."

"Or it is," I said.

Look at Jesson for crissake.

"Identity," sd Thomas, "we're stuck with. Either that or become a Buddhist monk."

"I thought you were."

"I lie," he said.

His daughter, Lally, going off with her young beau, needs change for busfare....Thomas plays Ms Parra (Carlos Hagen tape) on my machine: Chilean folksongs... Dead, mid-Fifties. Suicide. A gun... "Loved men too much –

"I like her," sd Thomas, "Uneven. Reminds me of Piaf... 'embracing life' ... A last song... and shot her head off."

"Appropriate," I said.

Zen-appropriate... mid-Fifties appropriate.

"You have a blue-collar mentality," sd Thomas.

Cady had told him. "With qualifications, of course – *qualifications* to the back steps and down the roadway... you are down on technique."

"Artifice," I sd.

Admitted my bias: the virtue of concept that says a man should be example. I was done with it. "The romance of the proletariat, all that..."

And stumble and bumble.  
Smoking Thomas' picayunes.  
Scratching my back with a pencil  
and broke the lead off.

The function of legend.  
*To make myth.*

"A sense of humor –"

I thought you had," sd Thomas.  
"Gargantuan," I sd.

Jesson phones (my answering machine): says the plumber needs help. "That's okay, you're not home anyway."

Hear the truck door shut,  
the rattle of a ladder...  
Turn out the lights.

"–platitude?" I sd.

"O, you know me," sd Thomas.  
He walked me to the steps.