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*A and B and Also Nothing*

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To Wayne,  
*for last week's reading material*

*A note on translation*

These items once lived in a single envelope. Sometimes I like to imagine them still in the envelope, and all of the places to which they might alight.

on copying out, or

the gesture of a hand; pacing and peregrination; the back and forth beat of passengers to be on a platform below the smell of orange juice leaking onto the tracks; on redrafting an exile; permutations and mutations; myth and etymology; on approximation and resemblances and the interior of a flower; desired elsewhere and unthinkable rooms; misquoting Duchamp's equation or marking what it was he'd never said; on being missed or being mistaken; feverish or false attributions, the miracle of near homophony and my tendency to assume all thoughts I have belong to everyone; the relationships between parts and something to do with the future; on haunted hotels and the transactions between guest and host, host and guest; on guessing, guesswork, the work of what used to be called *private eyes*; on the endeavor to share the memories of strangers—we do this by adjacency and enjambment, we do this by setting aside a place for meeting—on gatherings, dinner parties, citation and recitation, impossible embraces, erroneous encounters, aspirational togetherness, the productive nature of forgetting—a slip in transcription—the plea to remember or remind myself of something I felt the same as someone else (but differently), the stutter or convulsion of the past—magnetic—a convergence of two or more voices ventriloquized by a subject outside the text, or: *how to improvise in the presence of what has already been recorded*; on the eyelash on your cheek as you read this—a source code that reshapes reality—on detours brought about by the interlude of a song in one's ears, the private experience of listening in public—how many more stops on the F until we're here?—the time of day, the day of the week, intermission between meals or just general

hunger; idiosyncrasies or divergences of inscription—the aforementioned hand—a little listless in the wrist, a little tremulous (the F, bobbing as if an amusement ride along Sixth)—on lapses, then; on limitations and possibilities, recursions of process and serial accounting; the confusion between subject and object, text and analysis; on address and correspondence, Dear Angel of Death, disidentification, or: *procedures that elude discipline without being outside the field in which it is exercised*; untold exercises of repetition; on the desire to be endless and endlessly repeatable, pretending in the way of certain conventions that the thought stops too with the placement of a single period and then going back, returning, erasing one's own mark; on traces, then, the play of veiling and unveiling—the angle of the sun against the glass holding my face half in shade a moment ago—an undoing that allows for the possibility of structure, pattern, shape; on substitutions and exchanges; the reversibility of reading and writing writing and reading; language as a state of emergence; unfinished compositions and a style of joy like a bowling ball; the penetrating gaze of little windows; on window shopping; on stolen time and stealing time and especially wasting time—picture, if you can, my neck—on fragments and details and the absorption of a good tailor—the fantasy of *taking one in*—on the need to underline, annotate, and insist upon; on the performance of theory and theory as performance; linguistic slippages that are each self-effacing and intimate, ethical and erotic; on dreamers of great curtains and the curtains which are dreamt of, unlocatable and adorned in passing; on stochastic passage and porous foyers; on trespass and permission; on starting points and the nowhere they permit.

“I must have a list I must”  
Gertrude Stein, “The Mother of Us All”

14 February 2017

What would it mean to re-write *The American*  
or the American?

A

You should certainly consult your pleasure when you write this.

I sat here, like you are sitting here. Awaiting my only instructions during an introduction to a course called “James and Stein” about the writers James and Stein.

I would also like to consult your pleasure when you read this.

Consulting can be a form of concentration. To consult could mean to go to, to seek out, to talk about something with someone, to look for information, to refer.

My only reference to Gertrude Stein before today was the story Ernest Hemingway told about a visit to the Stein and Toklas residence.

I’m interested in real-time retrieval, I say, by way of introduction.

What happens when you itemize things in a list? They become ordered and measured and accounted for. They become accountable. They become exact.

To *exact* means to demand and often to get, especially by using force or threats, or to call for as necessary or desirable.

In the word *exacted* lives, somewhere nearby or around it, the word *extracted*. To extract means to remove something by pulling it out or cutting it out, or to draw forth as by research; to obtain by much effort from someone, sometimes unwilling. I think Stein is extracting consciousness from the cascade of sensory information available to us, all the time and at the same time. I think she is trying to roll footage of the scenes that were cut before the film's theatrical release. An insistence for theater. And applause.

In my notes, I've written *exactitude as a response to interrogation* and underlined it.

James's version of exactitude deals in modifications: colons, semicolons, several commas, em dashes, ellipses, parenthetical asides and enumerations, add-ons and updates. Epiphanic inconclusions about who is who and when.