

ISSUE 4
(OOS 1)
APR '12

Christy Case presents

HANDOUT

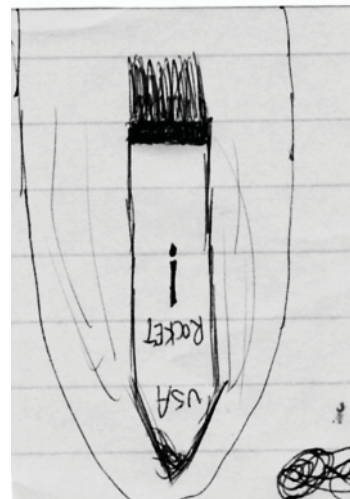


As close to a mission statement as we can presently get:

Our strategy should be not only to confront empire, but to lay siege to it. To deprive it of oxygen, to shame it. To mock it. With our art, our music, our literature, our stubbornness, our joy, our brilliance, our sheer relentlessness – and our ability to tell our own stories. Stories that are different from the ones we're being brainwashed to believe. The corporate revolution will collapse if we refuse to buy what they are selling – their ideas, their version of history, their wars, their weapons, their notion of inevitability. Remember this: we be many and they be few. They need us more than we need them. Another world is not only possible, she is on her way. On a quiet day I can hear her breathing.

- Arundhati Roy

more than me!



Nobody likes a sore loser

WAYS TO SQUELCH THAT SMELL (38)
Light an entire section of the news-
paper on fire, wait for it to burn out.
Toss ashes into toilet to complete the
sacrifice.

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More work by BAMN is available online:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/bamnx/>

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Are you a local musician or artist wanting to contribute to the peace and justice movement? Contact the Brooklyn For Peace Arts & Culture Committee at:

artists@brooklynpeace.org



WWW.CHARITYCASEWORKS.COM
WWW.OCCUPYOURSTORIES.COM
WWW.OCCUPYTOGETHER.COM

Prof. Gene Stavis & SVA

STAVIS: I've been with the school since 1981. And I have always been teaching. I was introduced to the place by Bill Everson (legendary film collector and teacher), who taught there from the beginning of the school. He went to NYU, he recommended me to succeed him and I was hired.

OOS: Many people know about SVA, that it is an art school in Manhattan. What is the school's history?

STAVIS: Something many people don't know about the school is that it is a for-profit school. It is what they call a proprietary college, like the University of Phoenix or DeVry Institute. It's not a not-for-profit. There are very few of them who have any sort of academic standing. SVA is sort of the top of the list. They've been accredited by the Middle States Association for I guess about thirty-five years. And it is a privately held corporation. It is owned by one family. They are entirely supported by tuitions and related income. You can't get tax deduction for donating to them. They pay sales tax on everything that they buy, it's a regular for-profit corporation. That's something that is not completely well known.

OOS: Who started the school in the first place?

STAVIS: Silas Rhodes, and Burne Hogarth, the guy who drew Tarzan, they started it. Then Silas pushed him out. And so Silas became the sole owner. There is an old quote from Hogarth about, 'I hope I live long enough to see Silas dead and buried, and I'll piss on his grave.'

Silas Rhodes, by the way, though he sounds like a Colonial patrician was a near-genius Jewish guy from the Bronx. He had four sons: one of whom died, one who became a veterinarian, and the other two work at the school. There is David, who is the President. And Andy, who is the Vice President. They have a Board of Directors who are appointed by them and serve at their pleasure and the Board has no effective power. The only people that they have to answer to in any way is the Middle States Association every ten years for some evaluation of the accreditation.

So that's basically what the school is, and I've been there for thirty years. I was okay while I was faculty, because they tend to leave faculty members alone. There are kind of two levels of faculty-members:

those people who have been there since the place began, who are generally famous, prestigious in their fields; and then people who are fairly transient who practice in their fields and teach as adjuncts to their day jobs.

OOS: Is there a community aspect to the school?

STAVIS: I would say no. Everyone there is subject to being fired. There are only year-to-year contracts, there's no such thing as a union, so they pretty much do what they want. There's no pension plan for anybody. They did up until a few years ago have a 401k that they contributed to, but they've stopped that, using the economic downturn as an excuse, even though the school is making as much money as it ever did. These kinds of proprietary schools are doing very well now. And because of the secrecy and aversion to internal communication, no effective community can exist.

OOS: So why did they get rid of you?

STAVIS: That is, of course, unknowable, as they refused (as is their right, by the way) to give any reason either verbally or in writing. About a dozen years ago I began to urge them to acquire a theater. And I worked on that pretty much by myself for about four years. We previously tried to get the Gramercy Theater at one point, but that didn't work out. And then I found, personally, this theater [the SVA Theater] which was a commercial movie theater, and they started negotiating. Negotiations which, typically, were done with no input from anyone at the school, outside of the ruling group of lawyers.

You have to understand that the school does not believe in any kind of communication internally. They really don't believe in communication outside, either. And so everything is extremely compartmentalized, nobody talks to anybody else, nobody is allowed to compare notes, all authority is vested in the president and he doesn't feel it's necessary to communicate with anybody at all. The Faculty doesn't really care about that, but the people on the ground in the administration are at a great disadvantage. Well I think it's an advantage as far as the owners are concerned.

From an administrative standpoint, it makes every administrator at best a Yes Man, or at worst, a henchman. And there is no middle

management, everyone is either an employee or the owner. It's not good for education because nobody talks to anybody else and this invariably trickles down to the student body. And they don't appear to have any rational long-term plan; they seem to run the place by the seat of their pants. Of course there is endless lip service to academic freedom, progressive politics and communication, but those things exist only as rhetoric.

More disturbingly, there is no depth in management - if the owners were absent or disabled, there are no alternatives waiting in the wings to take over. It is a very tenuous position for an important educational institution to find itself in.

OOS: What happened at the theater after the conclusion of the lease negotiations?

STAVIS: After several years of negotiations with absolutely no consultation with anyone at the school who might know something about theater operations, we were informed that a lease had been arranged. No one offered us a chance to even read the lease. So we were saddled with a number of things that were unfortunate. We weren't allowed to have a commercial theater. (A for-profit college not allowed to make a profit.) The lease also prohibited us from having a film premiere, or even to run a film festival. An in addition to teaching I, starting about three years ago, began to run the theater. I helped design it, equip it, establish the policies and hire the staff.

From the very beginning I tried to get [SVA President] David [Rhodes] to say what he expected from the theater, what he thought it ought to be. The plain fact is he didn't know, so he was silent. Which I think is a technique that his father developed, and which he is now using as his own. Which is to give no direction to anybody, but then make arbitrary decisions based

on, as far as I can tell, whim. No input accepted. He doesn't want any input. I sought, from the beginning, to create something that would get the school more publicity and more visibility than anything in its history.

OOS: How do you know that?
 STAVIS: The school is rarely mentioned in the press for any reason. Mainly it's mentioned because of obituaries of people who taught there. The school has a public relations department which is a joke, because they don't do any public relations. They don't talk to outside people, they don't generate stories. They kind of half-heartedly continue the school's well-known subway posters, which Silas started. Did you know the school has a gallery? It's an extraordinarily expensive and elaborate gallery but nobody knows about it. So the only publicity the theater got was stuff that I generated.

And the theater returned about \$800,000 in the first year. That was of course less than the cost of the theater, but David didn't really do anything to explain what he wanted the theater to do so it was hard to know And it was only the first year, so presumably it would become more known and produce more money.

I was originally reporting to a Provost, the first Provost the school had ever had, and he left a couple of years ago and they never replaced him. It was the closest thing they had to middle-management there. ...It started as a mom-and-pop operation, but it has outgrown that. It's got 4,000 students, it has got a one-hundred-million-dollar-a-year budget, and it's not the kind of outfit that can be run by one guy. He's seriously overworked. He doesn't have anyone to report to. Nor does

he want any. It's a philosophy which helped establish the school and it's a philosophy which is now hurting the school, because it doesn't take advantage of all the talented, gifted people who are the teachers, students and lovers of the arts who would naturally gravitate to a place that had some vision of creativity or innovation. The waste, redundancy and missed opportunities have become the hallmark of the school. The film department never talks to artists, never talks to photography students. Even now we have redundant courses.

I mean, my God, the school is a training ground for most advertisers and public relations people in the country. I mean most of the great advertising people went to the school, and they don't do any advertising! I mean, it's nuts. And I don't understand it. So I was getting zero feedback from David and then he decided to, after this Provost left, to have me report to an Auditor. A guy who was kind of a Uriah Heep type of guy, who was only interested in bottom line issues. And I couldn't make a dent in David to say, 'This isn't the sort of advise you ought to be taking. It requires a more expansive view. Because it should be a cultural institution. It should not simply be another room in the school.' Which is how he prefers to treat it. He'll lock it up when it's not being used, and if someone wants it, he'll open it up and have no overhead. Just like everything else in the place. And I kept saying that this is not a good way to run this. If you want to make money, you've got to treat it like a business. So it's got to advertise, it's got to promote itself.

So, without warning, on the twenty-first of May 2010, this Auditor comes into my office with the Director of Human Resources, whom I had barely met. (I came to the school long before there was a Human Resources department.) And they hand me a letter saying, 'You're through as of today. You can continue to teach if you like - no reason given - but you have to sign a secret agreement which you can never refer to, which says you will never criticize or denigrate the school.'

I was flabbergasted. They gave me no reason that anything was going on. And I said to myself, 'I ought to talk to an attorney,' which I did. And I discovered that NY State has no protection for people who aren't in unions or government workers. You are an employee at will, no one has to give you a reason, no one has to give you notice, no one has to give you severance, you're

just finished. Which I didn't think was an appropriate way to treat an employee of thirty years. Particularly one who got the highest evaluation of any teacher there, on Rate My Professor, by the students. And they used me, they used my likeness to promote the theater in the first place. And they named a smaller theater in another building after me. With a bronze plaque, yet! So something was weird here.

So I thought about it. I'm 67. I'm on social security. And rather than sign something so insulting - I mean, they're just assuming I would denigrate and criticize the school unless I were prohibited from doing so. And that to me was insulting. My loyalty has always been to my students, not the school. And it seems to me that they were ill-serving the students. ...And my own personal take is that I was not enough of a Yes Man.

I didn't operate the place like it was supposed to be empty. I was interested in making it good; famous and as high quality as it could be. So I said 'I'm not gonna sign this. You don't want to give me any severance, that's fine with me. And I'll teach but I want to teach in the theater.' They said I could not teach in the theater. So I said that I'm not coming back to teach. I'm on social security so I'm not desperate. I mean how many years do I have left here anyway I just don't get it. They know I'm good. People who use the theater and wanted to use the theater said it was the best place in town. I can't think of any other reason except he didn't want someone else to get part of the credit for something the school was doing.

OOS: Do you know David?

STAVIS: David is very private guy, he doesn't communicate with anybody really. I've known him for 30 years. My particular impression is that he's the son of the guy who started it but he's not college president material. He's not a particularly forward thinking educator. And I don't know if he's even ever done anything except run the school. So I have no idea. I always found him personally pleasant until the last year when I started to make waves. I was always reminded of the old business saying, 'He who sees the problem, is the problem.' And I think that's what happened to me. If I'd stayed teaching I would have been fine. I could work there forever. But the minute I joined the administration I became completely expendable.

OOS: Making waves means things like....

STAVIS: Like promoting the theater. It's not that I was making bad decisions, it's that I was making decisions. Or trying to make decisions. And that didn't sit very comfortably. So I said to myself, 'I'm not gonna reduce the quality of my teaching to my students, sign insulting and rights-defying secret agreements in exchange for a few more years of teaching.' Now to this day I have never heard a word from David or the school or anybody representing the school even acknowledging the fact that I refused to sign it and wouldn't come back and teach.

Most importantly to me, it's counter-productive to my students. It's against the whole notion of what education ought to be. Students who are there ought to be able to understand what the philosophy of the school is. And what actions they're taking to impede it or advance it. But since they don't ever say anything beyond boiler plate, 'We want the finest in education and so on,' and since no one can encourage ... in fact everyone is discouraged from talking to teach other...

OOS: Do you mean the school does not have academic policies?

STAVIS: Academic policies are pretty well spelled out. They couldn't get Middle States' reputation without that. It's a philosophical matter. Where does the school want to be in 5 years? If the school gets many more students how are they going to cope with that? What is the long term goal of the school? It seems to me that the school has to have that kind of long term philosophy in order to know the steps that go towards building that. And if they make decisions as they made the decision about me, seemingly at the spur of the moment, it doesn't speak well for the eventual survival of the school.

OOS: Do you think the students care about these things?

STAVIS: They don't care as a principle, but they care about that in the way that the school is implemented. There are rules and regulations at the school which are impenetrable. And they are discouraged from taking courses in other departments. And a lot of them want to, because in the real world the arts are melded together. And while they [the school] give some kind of lip service to it, they do absolutely nothing at all to encourage it. Now my suspicion is that that was an excellent way to build a school 30 years ago. But it's a very bad way to prepare a school for the future. I think that they are stuck in the philosophy which was

implemented to consolidate their power and to prevent any internal dissention. But now that the school has become bigger than any one of the people, it is creating dissension, because everyone is dissatisfied with the decisions. The decisions are made by the administration, they are never discussed with anybody. There is no discussion. You know, it's an absolute monarchy.

OOS: What was Silas like?

STAVIS: Silas was a visionary in many ways. He was a monster in many ways, too. Particularly monstrous as a parent. Because the way I was treated and the way he treated his kids He gave them enough rope, but never enough authority. Sort of allowing people to I said to him once, 'Don't you think it would be nice to encourage [your son].' He said, 'I don't do encouragement.' I said, 'Oh, why?' He said, 'My father treated me like shit. And I don't do encouragement.'

OOS: But even Goldman Sachs, Citigroup, answer to somebody.



STAVIS: Goldman Sachs is a public corporation. This is not. Goldman Sachs is responsible to shareholders. And they have fiduciary responsibilities as well. The school is a mom-and-pop store. I mean they don't have to answer to anybody. Alumni give no money to the school, the Alumni Association is deplorable. They have an effective placement service.

The thing that struck me was that the divisions of the administration that are supposed to service the school - public relations, culinary, fiscal plans, security services, all that kind of stuff - don't. The kind of personalities that this kind of structure attracts are Yes Men. So no one makes waves. And what they do is they build these cocoons of bureaucracy around them so that it's extraordinarily difficult to get them to say anything but No. And they see that as an advantage, because saying Yes means 'That's a good idea.' It's encouragement.

The attitude of everyone in the administration is so locked into kind of looking at David to see if David approves that they'd much rather go through a complex process that would cost ten times as much so that they had a paper-trail they could show him. He has an extraordinarily inefficient administration, which wastes a

great deal of money. And they lose out on synergy. I said to him once, 'You need someone who can look at this school and say what's good for the school as a whole, and how can every element of the school contribute to that?' Rather than having every element of the school be at kind of war with each other, protecting their interests and not daring to do anything lest they be head-chopped.

OOS: Why do you think the school acts this way?

STAVIS: That calls for rank speculation since everything is played out in secrecy. Maybe there's something in the makeup of the school that would not bear examination. And maybe their theory is: 'Keep a low profile, nobody investigates too much and nobody cares.' And maybe there's some skeleton in the closet. I'm not suggesting that there is... I don't think they'd like it to be known that they're a for-profit college. Most people who hear that do a double-take. They say 'Oh really?' They just assumed it was a not-for-profit. But the more it gets known, the more people who will know that. Total speculation, but maybe that's what it is.

OOS: Do you think it's wrong for the school of be profitable?

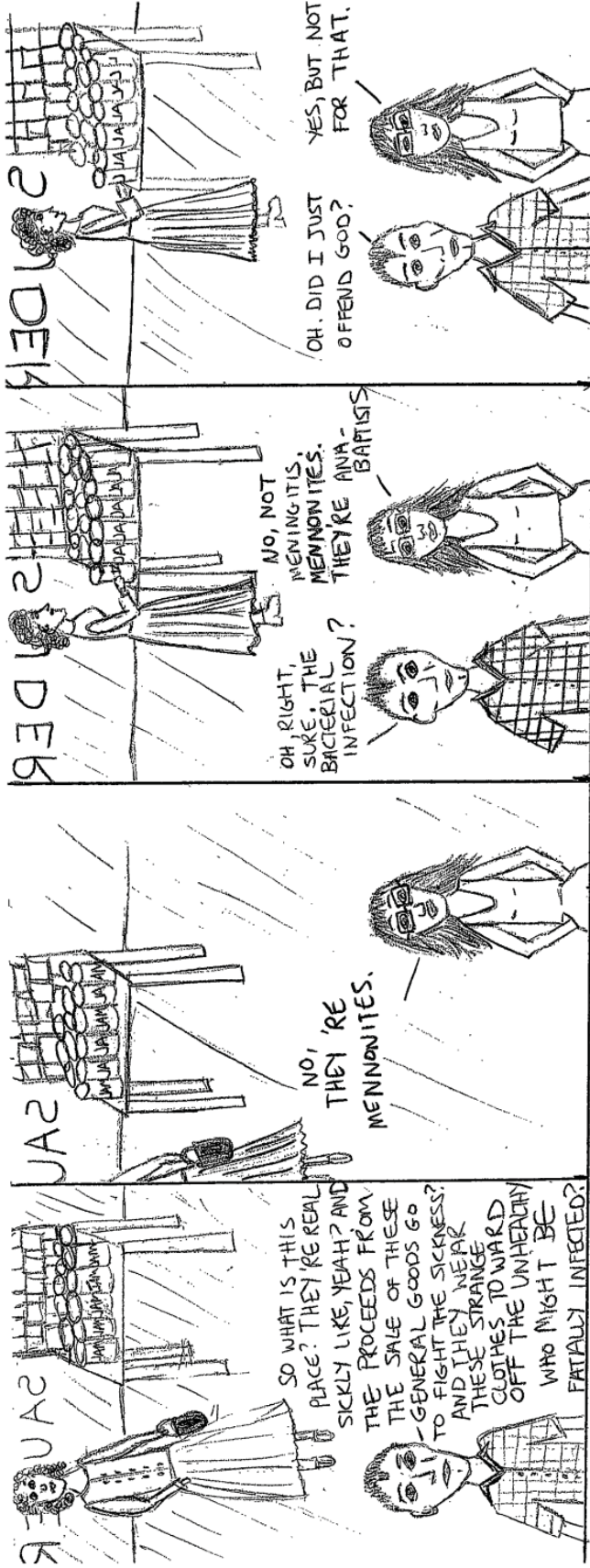
STAVIS: I don't think it's a bad thing for a corporation to make money. I think that, at least from the outside, the way they operate there is not consistent with producing the best education results or of producing the most profits. Even a for-profit educational institution requires creative leadership and some input beyond the executive suite. Making the school more open, less authoritarian seems to me the best way to ensure both quality education and high profits.

.....

Anat Vovnoboy, another former student of Stavis', recently completed a short film about the Professor, called 'Reel Life.' Stavis jubilantly called it a 'living obituary.' *END*

BUNS & GUTTER

illustrated by maggie taylor



illustrated by maggie taylor

BUNS & GUTTER

illustrated by maggie taylor

FROM THE QUICKSTOP (28)

Being useful is more noble than making oneself feel good. Are the two distinct from each other? If I am useful does this not make me feel good? And if I feel good isn't it only from being useful? One can decorate oneself in buying automobiles, jewelry, technological devices; do these make the buyer feel good only to the extent that they are useful to the buyer? And does not the buyer also think (however woefully), 'This is a good thing I have done, purchasing this item. It improved, with dollars, the lives of the people at the store I purchased the item from; and the shippers who transmitted the item from factory to store; and the workers at the factory, who wouldn't have made this item if I were not willing to buy it.' It feels good to buy something – anything. Even a cup of tea from the corner store. It feels as though one is *doing* something, because spending money is the pinnacle; the raisin deo-tray.

CROWNING THEIR GOOD WITH BROTHERHOOD

Currently Most Awe Inspiring American Martyrs

- Rachel Corrie
- Bradley Manning
- Daniel Shays

And then Andy Brown, an 18 year old senior that always played with and paid attention to the younger kids, smiled thinly and looked at me. He sang along to the songs, too; but he changed the words: 'I am a dick. Oh oh oh. I am a dick.' I was elated with hilarity; and confused. Andy Brown didn't want to be rich? And what's more he thought that someone who *wanted* to be rich was a dick? It was an introduction to radical thinking; thinking not shaped by capitalism.

I was 9 years old. On the school bus. Singing along to the very popular Calloway song 'I Wanna Be Rich,' a heavy rotator on pop radio. My parents and their friends didn't worship money, but they were just old and the Lord. Everyone else wanted to be rich. The kids at school, the kids on the bus, the people on TV. Everything around screamed 'I Wanna Be Rich.'

Andy Brown Occupies Calloway



work by
BAMN

TOPICAL DEVOTIONS
BELSHAZZAR'S GROOM OF THE STOOL'S
THOUGHTS AS HE WATCHED THE HAND WRITING
ON THE WALL

1. Egads! King! Watch out! Your hemorrhoids!
2. I thought it was a costume ball.
3. That thing couldn't wipe an ass unless it were the heavenly host's. *
4. I wonder if our Persian soon-to-be-overlords also take dumps...
5. Finally, these hands are free. Free of ass. *But who will want them?*

* *Blatant anachronism.*

A Teacher on Teach for America

J. Emerson wrote:

I read a short article today about Teach for America getting government grant money. If you don't know, Teach for America is an organization that has governmental approval to take recent college graduates with no degree in education, who did not study education in college, give them a five week crash course in 'teaching,' and then send them into our most impoverished and hard to staff districts to teach. They bypass certification laws as well. Teach for America was founded by a woman who wrote a thesis in college about teaching and staffing schools, etc. Her name is Wendy Kopp and she has no background in education either; her thesis advisor was a sociology professor. I believe Teach for America is a well-meaning but misguided initiative. Anyway, I posted in the 'comments' section at the bottom of the article. I know I shouldn't, but I couldn't help myself. Here is what I wrote:

"Someone needs to go back to college and write a thesis so he or she can start something like 'Nurse for America.' Picture it: take recent college graduates with degrees in business, economics, sociology, history, literature, whatever - give them a five week summer crash course in nursing, and then send them into our hardest to staff city hospitals as nurses. Don't worry! Those enthusiastic and dedicated young people will learn quickly on the job with only a slight rise in mortality rates. We'll never have nursing shortages again. In a few short years they'll be master nurses, or even doctors. And after a two or three year stint our Nurse for America alums can also work their way up in hospital administration, replacing those stodgy old doctors with their worthless 'experience in the medical field.' They'll bring in fresh new ideas; like maybe paying patients for getting better, or maybe a Value Added assessment of how much

'health' individual doctors are adding to their patients. Then we can remove the low-performing doctors. I am confident that doctors and nurses are good people and that such programs would in no way push them away from working with 'high risk' patients whose age or potentially terminal illnesses might 'bring down a doctor or nurse's Value Added statistical score.'

And let's not limit ourselves to the medical field. I envision five-week-crash-course lawyers, engineers, CPAs, executives, pilots... Let's do this America!"

Any volunteers?

OOS asked in response:

How much of what you learned in your education classes actually furthered your teaching skills or was even, in any way, useful? From my limited time in education classes the only thing I learned was that I didn't want to take any more education classes. Do you think there's any merit to the argument that one's time might be better spent focusing on the material you aim to teach than another round of the chalkboard vs. overhead projector debate?



work by
BAMN

Teach for America (cont.)

7. *Emerson responded:*

My education classes were hit or miss. Some of them seemed like they should have been called 'Common Sense.' On the other hand my best education professors were the ones who had been or were classroom teachers. One of my best education classes at SUNY Cortland was taught by a guy who was also an 8th grade English teacher in Cortland. It was practical, he didn't romanticize teaching, but he could tell us what it was really like and give us advice, etc. And he cared about students and was with students daily, he wasn't just a research professor who never taught in a real school. (One of the best little pieces of advice I remember about teaching was from him: Don't whine about what your students can or can't do. If you want them to know how to do something, teach them, even if you think 'They should already know this.')

Three other points: 1. The best thing about teacher education at the college level is student teaching. It really helps to get that experience. It is the biggest thing I think the Teach for America crowd needs that you don't get in a five week crash course. 2. The whole idea of Teach for America is that these people have just 'covered the material' in college so they will best be able to 'transfer the knowledge' to the students. This is a radically oversimplified concept of teaching. It's not as easy as they want to make it seem. That said, you do have to know your material; but you have to know a lot more - you have to know how to teach, not just what to teach. 3. The best model for teacher education I have heard of is Finland's. Every teacher gets a Master's degree, paid for by the state. Every college with an educational program is connected to an elementary, middle, and high school; those in the teacher ed. program teach and research alongside veteran teachers for several

years while they are getting their degrees. It's more intense, practical, supportive, and scholarly. That is what we should have; but in America we want the cheapest, most 'efficient,' least labor-intensive solution. You know, the crappiest solution. In America we actually believe that online education is just as good as classroom education, because we think of 'learning' as simply memorizing information. I guess what I mean is, we are a shallow culture and Teach for America is a shallow solution to a deep problem. *END*

THINGS TO LOSE IN 2012

- Gitmo. Maybe just put it in the territory of another country.
- Thighs. Can I hunger strike my thighs only?
- Anything too big to fail. That includes you, Charity Case's ass!
- Delusional hopes for change; replace with shit in hand; shit used in multifarious and exhilarating acts of street justice.
- Mind. Not wasted, just lost.
- It.
- You know what, Taylor!

Ona MOVE

- Joel Chaffee

Come. Step lively.

This is the cemetery I was telling you about, to your right. It looks like a park, I know, but if we were to climb yon hill (and we will be climbing yon hill) we would meet the gravestones about halfway up, behind the evergreens. At the top of the hill, where Highland Avenue South ends and urges traffic left or right, onto Highland Street: up there we would find the large mausoleum where the neighborhood kids congregate, come nightfall. I see them evenings when I walk to the corner to use the payphone, see them sitting on the mausoleum full of remains of people whose names are street names and county names, more than they are names of people who once could climb hills and make names.

My roommate, Manfred, says there are police barricades all around the neighborhood. He says that he can't get to us from work; to the apartment. I called him an hour ago for a favor while he was at work, and he said he'd tried to come home earlier but the police had barricaded the streets in a rectangle that included our apartment. He's still driving that VW his dad fixed up and gave to him. Yeah, Ramona, I'm still driving the Lumina I bought with a loan the credit union gave my dad.

And this was at noontime that Manfred couldn't get through to the apartment. Over two hours ago. You're right, Ramona, must be to do with the house on Osage Avenue, where there is always trouble going on. Those people killed a cop when they lived in a different neighborhood a few years ago. Nine of them went to jail for killing that cop, Officer Ramp. They would not even defend themselves in court, I remember; they didn't recognize the authority of the court. And now at their house at 6221 Osage Avenue they're always screaming out of megaphones, megaphones that they rigged up into the trees in front of the house. Always screaming, 'Motherfuck this and motherfuck that. Systems this and oppressions that.' I know it's only a few blocks from my apartment on Highland, but I am ecstatic not to live on Osage. Not that I've ever said anything to anyone about it, except to Glassey maybe, this guy I know in the neighborhood, who hopefully we won't be meeting.

They call these 'the cuts,' Ramona, where we are walking now. 'The cuts.' The spaces between the houses and along alleys to other alleys. I learned the term just recently at work at the convenience store, from a coworker, Jeff. Obviously it derives from 'short cuts.' But Jeff is from the sticks of Lafayette, so don't take it too seriously. Although Jeff was the one who brought me to Osage in the first place, to make the acquaintance of Doug the Nug, the man who is always holding. That's another slang term I'm using for your benefit, Ramona. Taking you into my confidence, Ramona. Holding substance; holding contraband. In possession of.

'Manfred, hey.'

'Hey Jonah what's up.'

'Sorry for the second call today while you're working-'

'No problem what's up?'

'I'm with Ramona. Near Osage. What's going on?'

'Go inside and watch TV, Jonah. It's all over the TV. There's a blockade, the cops are telling everyone to get out. If you were at home they would have told you first hand.'

I rarely come here, Ramona, to Osage Avenue. Where is there to go? There is the first street-corner where I first saw a sex-worker. And the wholesale depot where Manfred purchases quantities of beers and liquors. And streets so dangerous the loiterers steal your tires even while you're driving the car, is the old joke. And that old woman on the porch grimacing.

That man approaching us, that's Glassey. I know him from coming here to see the man Jeff told me about. He is good, Glassey. He is familiar. He spends all day cutting the cuts. All night, as well. You see him around when you've cuts to be cutting, when you're cutting the cuts. He talks like that. He will nod. Nod back. Try to say nothing, even if spoken to. Not because he is dangerous, but because he will never shut up.

'Hey, Jonah, man.'

'Ramona, this is Glassey. Glassey, Ramona.'

'Hi, Ramona, nice to meet you what the fuck is going on here, Jonah?'

'I don't fucking know at all.'

'They want us to leave. To vacate.'

'Now?'

'Yeah. Now. The whole neighborhood. Bunch of cops going around, telling everyone to leave for twenty-four

hours. Why should I leave? This wasn't declared a disaster area. I don't see any reason to leave, unless they're planning to blow up everything around here.'

'Not in the daytime, Glassey.'

'Oh yes, in the daytime, Jonah. Down here on Osage they don't have the decency to die at night. They die here at midday. That's the Osage secret. . . Ah, Jonah, just cross your fingers and use up all of your wishes. And don't look for Doug the Nug, neither, he ain't holding and he ain't even in the *county* anymore after the cops knocked on *his* door. And pretty soon they gonna be knocking down the Osage door. That's right, Jonah. 6221 Osage is having it once and for all. And don't they deserve it, throwing their garbage everywhere 'cause they believe in recycling or some shit. And attracting rats and roaches and they got a hundred dogs and a hundred cats, Jonah, don't you know it? And hollering bullshit out of the trees all day and night at folks. That crew is gone get it, Jonah, and you know 'cause I told you so, and you know I know the inside of it, Jonah. You know what I'd do, Jonah? I'd tell them they got so many minutes. And if they didn't come out, I'd level the place, kids and all. You don't want to leave any kids growing up wanting vengeance.'

You can wave to Glassey as he leaves, Ramona, but he never waves back.

And what now? To my apartment on Highland? I don't have much I would want to take from there. I don't want to take anything with me. I don't want to go. Why should we go? Are they planning to nuke the place or something? You know, there is an attic in my apartment. It's kind of a sleepy place.

.....

Sorry, I almost fell asleep there,

Ramona. It's past midnight already. I can't believe I'm not hungry. I told you the attic was a sleepy place.

I know, I too can't believe that the house at 6221 Osage Avenue has not made a sound. I know. They're usually 'motherfucking this and motherfucking that' all over the place. Telling everybody everything that's wrong and so on. And now the cops empty the neighborhood, and 6221 is staring down how many cops out there? And fire trucks? And how many fire-fighters? And they don't make a *sound*?

Oh! How on cue was that blast of feedback from the trees, Ramona? Painful dispatches in blasts from megaphones in the trees. I think it is the sound of crying babies. Yeah, crying babies in the house on Osage.

'You're going to see something you've never seen before.' It sounds so dominant and terrifying coming from those megaphones. Must be a man speaking. 'Send in the CIA. Send in the FBI. Send in the SWAT teams. We have something for all of you.' What the hell are they talking about, Ramona? Yes, I'd be scared if two-hundred cops and fire-fighters were hanging out outside my house, waiting for me. Yeah, I'd try to escape somehow. No, I know I'm not a cartoon, Ramona, but I don't know. . . I know I can't dig a tunnel to China, yes, Ramona, I know.

That's the police commissioner right there. Are you hungry? I wish we had something intoxicating to consume so that we could settle down into disorientation. Although I know you don't ingest intoxicants, even in jest. But for some, disoriented takes the cake. It is what one is doing.

I think I'm getting splinters in my fingers from leaning my hands onto this beam to look out the window. Who is that guy, passing on the street below? Is he familiar to you? Not to me. He walks quickly and with great purpose. If I were passing him on the street, I would not look at him; but I definitely would not *not* look at him. You see guys like that all the time, Ramona, I know.

Goddamnit, they must've cut the power. Is it out across the street? Yes. And down the block? Yes. But the streetlight is still on. And there is just nobody out there, Ramona. Everyone else is gone. And the streetlight just flashed a brilliant flash before it too dissolved and left the neighborhood illuminated only by the enormous electric-light apparatuses muscled in by the authorities, on Osage, below; and all of

the headlights of their red and blue motor vehicles.

.....

I'm sorry, Ramona, I fell asleep. Just for a little bit. Did you? No. What's been going on? I need to pee. Where's the bucket?

Remember that girl named Dottie? She lived with Doug the Nug, the man who Jeff introduced me to who was always holding. Yeah, the Doug that Glassey said has deserted the neighborhood like it was on fire. Remember Dottie, with the missing front tooth that nobody ever noticed? She's got her other teeth in abundance, anyway. And her dog, Puppertino, who always lay in the doorway of the house, and you had to make friends with him before you could step over him and follow Dottie to speak with Doug. There were always treats on the counter-top above Puppertino that Dottie would leave for visitors' use. And you'd have to hold a treat and let Puppertino smell your hand, palm down in a fist in case he decided to bite. Then the cookie, palm up. You had to let him lap his tongue to your skin; his soft Molossus' jowls. And then you step, step over, and follow Dottie through the kitchen, beyond the running faucet dashing water into the piles of plates yellow with egg-yoke and tiny food crusts, brown and gray with sundries, splashing water becoming puddles on the counter-top. And Doug, in the recliner in the den Dottie led us to. (I know not *us*, Ramona, not me and *you*, Ramona. *Us* meaning *me*; and whoever I was with.) And Doug the Nug in that green bathrobe, ketchup and mayonnaise on the collar. Cheese slices poking from the pocket. He would never remember a name. He skirts the issue of names by using 'Dude' or 'Man,' or in how he snaps his fingers or bangs an object to get my attention, instead of just calling my name.

It is light out there, Ramona. Thanks for making me take notice. I might have nodded off again. Holy shit that is a lot of cops. That is a lot of fire-fighters. Holy fucking shit Ramona Ramona. I don't know weapons very well, Ramona. Tell me what you see. A water cannon, okay. Browning rifles? M-50s and 60s? Uzis? I didn't even know Uzis existed outside of like Mogadishu and Herzegovina. And what else? You think you see an anti-tank gun? Holy crow, Ramona, does the house at 6221 Osage Avenue have a tank? Is that an eviction notice the police commissioner is serving

6221? What a motherfucker.

Can't they just use an armored car and ram down the doors, Ramona?

And now the trees at 6221 are talking again, saying,

'This ain't gonna be no goddamn repeat of your history. We're gonna give you motherfuckers a taste of something different. You gonna get the best. This ain't gonna be no goddamn Grenada.'

And remember, Ramona, Doug would find any girl I was with to be beautiful. And his bookshelves full of books from school bookstores, which Doug liked the sight of, the books.

And remember- No, I know, Ramona, they just turned the water cannon onto 6221, the water cannon that can shoot a couple thousand gallons in a minute. Where'd they get all that water from? I know it's not playing games anymore, Ramona, I know. And I know that was shots fired just now. I think the police are firing at the house. Is the house firing back? Is it? The trees are saying, 'We ain't got a motherfucking thing to lose, so come on down and get us.' But they just keep shooting for five minutes. Ten minutes. Twenty. Forty. They'd better send to the police academy for more bullets, Ramona, wouldn't you think? What have they got going on down there that they need to shoot so much? Is 6221 bringing out a tank?

The cops stopped shooting. Nothing coming from the house. The trees are screaming with crying babies.

More shooting. More shooting than I thought could get done in a day. And that's tear-gas they're shooting into the house now? They just blew holes into both sides of 6221, near the front porch. How did they do that?

We'd better be *real* careful, as it's getting very light out now. There's sharpshooters

on all the roofs, I think. Let's hope they're only shooting at 6221.

.....

Sorry I fell asleep again, Ramona. I'm like the disciples in Gethsemane. When the shooting stopped I just about collapsed from the release of tension. It's forty minutes until noon. The water cannon has even stopped! They probably shot half-a-million gallons at the place. It's quiet enough to wake the dead. You don't think that's clever, Ramona?

The trees are saying,

'Testing, murderers, testing. You're trying to kill breastfeeding mothers and breastfeeding children. We're not backing down. If you want us out, you'll have to bring us out dead. We are hearty and healthy. Tell the world you killed black babies for a health violation.'

The trees are saying,

'The gate is open. Stop playing games. What are you killers waiting for? Our door is wide open. Your pictures will be plastered everywhere. Is your insurance paid up? Your wives will cash it tonight.'

The trees are saying,

'I was talking with my sister, Rhonda, and I said, "They blew half the porch away." And Rhonda, she was just laughing, laughing.'

.....

But come, Ramona, step lightly. I dreamt about midday on Osage Avenue, after leaving Doug and Dottie behind. Stepping over Puppertino, the dog. Watching the only sprinkler on the block water the only lawn. Seeing the girls so pretty they must have trains waiting at stations. The cat-calls of footsteps. Toys on lawns, broken, as useful as rocks. Balls that won't bounce, nets that won't catch. And the sunlight seeks us, shows us off as we smile and validate the avenue we are leaving behind.

Oh God bless you, Ramona, you found my shitty old attic radio. And there's batteries. *Extremely low volume.* Is that the Mayor? That is the Mayor, saying,

'We intend to take control of the Osage Avenue house by any means necessary. I am totally convinced the group is bent on violent confrontation, and so are- That is, I don't believe there is any way to extradite them without an armed confrontation.'

The Mayor is saying,

'They have heavy artillery. They have tunnels dug under the neighborhood. There have been thousands of rounds fired. I have had their neighbors calling my office for months and even years complaining about 6221 Osage Avenue. What we want to avoid is the worst that could happen: the loss of property.'

The Mayor is saying,

'From here on my back porch three miles from Osage Avenue, I am taking full responsibility for this confrontation. I pray to God Almighty the children will not be hurt.'

You say that's Rhonda's mother down there with the cops, on the sidewalk, about half-a-block from 6221? She's shouting through a megaphone, to Rhonda, I guess. No fucking way Rhonda can see her from that angle. I wonder if they can hear her over that water cannon.

Is that the police commissioner on the radio? Saying we cannot tolerate this resistance to official power? Saying he's gonna make Atila the Hun look like a faggot by the time this is over? I dunno, some German guy, I guess.

.....

I hate the sound of helicopters, Ramona. God, I hate helicopters. And look who I'm talking to, right? They brought a helicopter out to your Powelton Village house, no? So many years back? Yeah.

In my dream we are well away from Dottie and Doug's house, and all ways are clear to cross all streets. To the park. The thick grass. Then the gravestones, up yon hill. We can almost see it, my apartment. And I am telling you about New England, where my parents were born in towns so small they might not exist anymore. And I am telling you about the hills where no one makes a sound, and I tell you we will get blessedly lost out there, somewhere in the summertime, up on the mountains, naming all the hamlets, hurling stones down the sides and trying to break large strewn branches below.

And the helicopter is flying over the houses on Osage. And over 6221. It's getting dark out there. And what's that? They're just hovering over 6221. That guy leaning out of the helicopter, he's swinging something, looks like a bag, one of those canvas backpacks like you have. And where's the helicopter going off to now? Just racing away like they stole it.

Find another radio station, Ramona, see if there's any new stuff about the helicopter. If we had a television up here maybe they'd know.

And in my dream we were singing, Ramona, singing,

My grandma and your grandma

Sitting by the fire.

My grandma told your grandma,

'I'm gonna set your flag on fire.'

Jesus Christ what the hell was that? An explosion for certain. At 6221. The whole fucking roof is on fire. Jesus, did they light the house on fire, Ramona? Didn't you find anything on the radio?

.....

The man on the radio is saying they dropped four-and-a-half pounds of Tovex and C-4 onto the roof of 6221. Is that a lot? Anything is a lot for a house, I guess, right? God, it was just, like it bust like, and it would be all like break stuff up. An enormous and blinding body of fire stretching twenty-five feet into the air. Scattering debris.

Black and white smoke.

Black smoke. Great quantities of black smoke coming from 6221. It is over for the roof. Where the hell is the water cannon? I *told* you they would run out of water. The flames must be thirty-foot high. And the smoke is as black as you, Ramona, and you always prided yourself on being the blackest. Ha ha, I know, I know it's serious, Ramona, I know. And the flames are almost fifty-feet high, Ramona. And what is it that 6221 wants that they won't surrender? I mean, I wouldn't come out either if I was in there, but. . .

Oh right, yeah, the nine brothers and sisters that killed that cop? Okay, that were *framed* for killing that cop, Officer Ramp? So if those nine are released from jail this would be over? I know it's too late for *over*,

Ramona, I know. And the flames must be seventy feet high, Ramona. Maybe eighty. And the smoke is black enough to wash coal with. Don't you think that's clever, Ramona? And the flames must be a hundred-feet high by now, Ramona. Taller than the house itself.

Finally, the water cannon revives. I've seen so many movies of fire-fighters saving people in a burning house. How are they going to reconcile this with the police, who are hesitant to stop firing at the burning house? On the radio the fire marshal is saying they are fire-fighters, not infantryman. But that doesn't sound like any fire-fighter I know, and I grew up right next to a fire station.

And the front of the house just fell into the house, Ramona. The front of the house just fell into the house. And there's some more shooting, I can hear. Coming from the back of 6221. In the cuts.

Is that 6221 shouting something? I think they're shouting something. Yeah, they're shouting, 'The kids are coming out! The kids are coming out!' In the back of the house they are trying to come out, but the cops are afraid of getting shot so they are shooting.

That's a kid that's climbing the fence in the cuts, near the front of 6221. There's flames and debris everywhere. Didn't 6221 have like twenty dogs and twenty cats? They got that kid, see, the cops got that kid, Ramona. They're dragging him away from there. And there's a woman, in the alley, trying to get away from the house. She is as black as nighttime? Yeah. And looks burned up. They got her, too, Ramona, they're searching her for weapons.

And the fire is everywhere, Ramona. All over the block. On the radio the man is saying the fire is at four alarms. They're summoning extra equipment. If only they hadn't run out of water before, when it was just a little fire on one house. On the radio the mayor is taking full responsibility for the war. And the fire has gone to five alarms. And the trees aren't talking anymore. And all those houses, Ramona. They're all as bright as the sun at midday. And the fire has gone to six alarms. What are alarms, Ramona? That must be about sixty houses on fire on the block. And the flames are so inexpressibly beautiful. Like you, Ramona.

And do you think they'll raze this house like they razed the Powelton Village house, Ramona? And that woman they

arrested, Ramona, they're charging her with assault, Ramona, and riot and resisting arrest. And here it is National Police Week, Ramona.

How do you think she felt, Ramona, assaulting those police? Did she do the righteous thing? Is there any measure to what righteousness is worth, Ramona? I told you this attic was a sleepy place. *END*



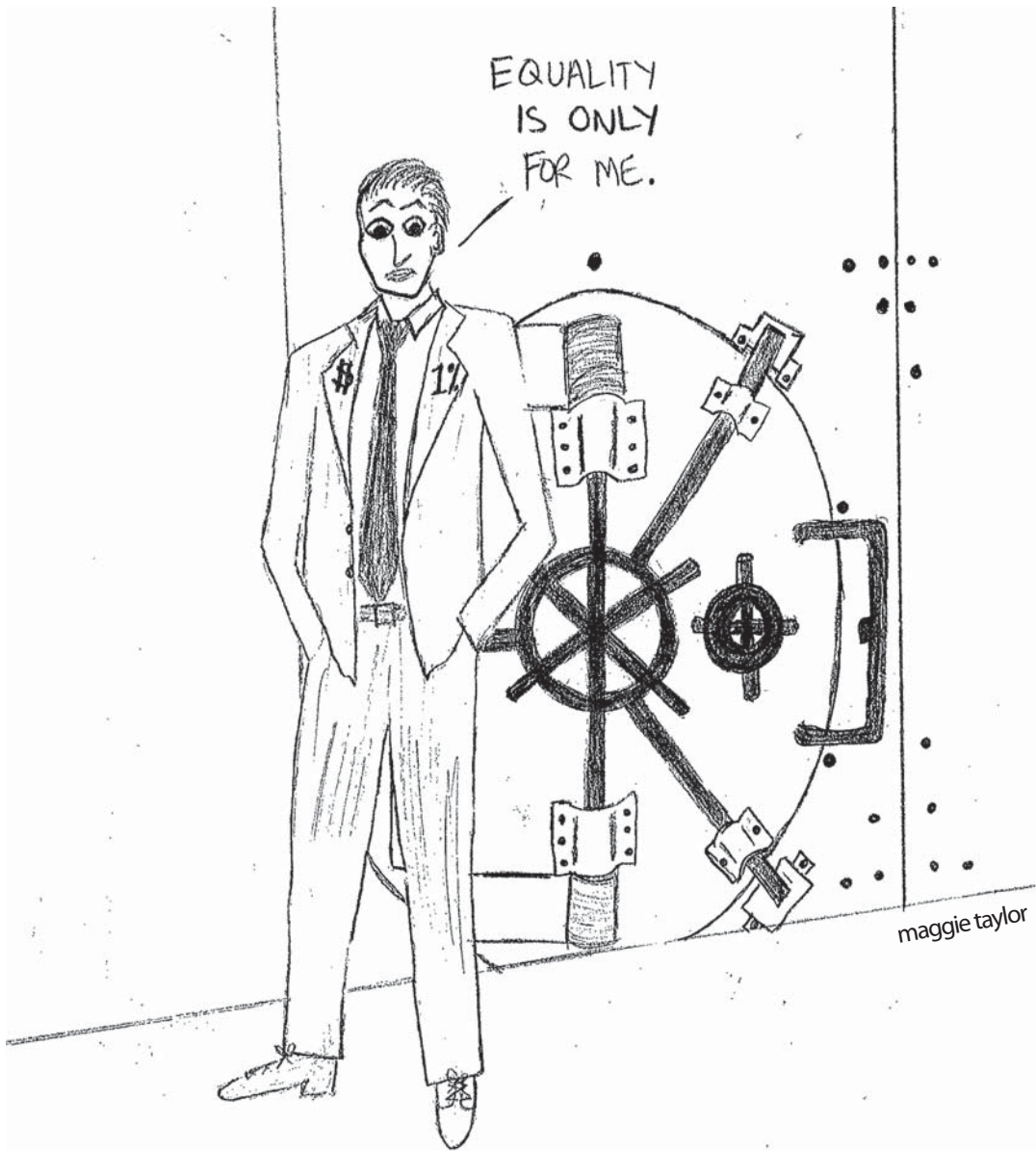
work by
BAMN

RADICAL IDEAS (2)

Public restrooms. A vast complex of bathrooms and showers. Every neighborhood. 24 hours per day. For free.
Problem: Who is going to hose all the late-night vomit off of the street if not public urinatators?

LYNNE STEWART!

FAVORITE POLITICAL PRISONER (S)
OF THE MONTH:



may day they made for workers
 may day they made for me
 law day they made all regal and legal
 cause nobody paid them attentions

may day they made for action
 voluntarily
 law day they made to sharpen the blades
 of all of the hecklers and henchman

may day they made for bailers
 railers and taylors and failers
 it might be one afternoon
 under the sun
 it might last until may 2



Favorite 99s (Aside From the 99 percent)

- I love you 99% of the time (Soul Asylum)
- Ninety-Nine. The Restaraunt. Mm.
- 99 luftballons
- 99 ways to die (the only Megadeath song Charity Case loved)
- 99 bottles of beer on the wall
- 99 problems but etc.
- Did you know that 99% of the world does it doggystyle?

MOST POPULAR AUTHORITATIVE ACTIONS AT THIS TIME
 1. Presidential Signing Statement, NDAA 2012: I can lock you away from mommy and daddy forevermore - but I won't! Totally I won't. Like, I promise, okay? It's just that some guy in the future might need to. Like me. In the future. Because the future is now. I'm forward thinking like that. Hey, I always said I was into change.
 2. Oh and also that thing out in the desert in Utah that's collecting our lives in digital format. The Utah Data Center - just look how unthreatening the name of the facility is! But just in case. Like for in the future and stuff. Come on guys, you know what I mean. Might have to get the goods on you sooner or later. And you, too, probably. Probably sooner than later, really, if I'm being honest. And who isn't?
 3. Air Flight 655.
 4. Charity Case's 5th grade in-school spanking. Thanks, Miss Le Crouse! And to Mr. Fos-tah, who was looking on as 'witness' - how you like that ass, baby?

THE WEEK AT OCCUPY OUR STORIES

Monday: Do I have a story? I just woke up.
 Tuesday: Yes, you have a story. You've been talking to the dog for three days.
 Wednesday: Just because I'm talking to the dog doesn't mean it's a story. He'll listen to anything.
 Thursday: He won't listen to just *anything*. He likes pastoral stories. Stories of struggle. Stories of peril. Stories of human connection and-
 Friday: Stories about witnessing my bathetic ennui.
 Saturday: He just walked away from me.
 Sunday: Ask him why! Get the recorder and *ask him why!*

