

# OXO

(1988-2001)



Lewis DeForest Brown

Dedicated to all of those, present and gone, who are cited as the muses of these pages.  
You have engaged a life other than your own.

*Can't you buy five sparrows for two cents? Not one of them will fall to the ground without God knowing about it. Even the hairs of your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid. You are worth more than many sparrows.*

The Book of Q

**OXO**

## DC

I passed a shore hidden by reeds hiding wrens.  
Her skin touched my eyes as the razor my cheek.  
Her hair lied and her mother was spoken.  
But I don't speak that, believe that or need that.

A crisis again rose from the airstrip and began a day.  
What was closeted was tidy. What was worn was explosive.  
I took her back. I took her back. I took her back.  
I felt her blue looks, her crystalline resentments.

Talking with her was arguing with a bible of unchosen brands  
— a congestion of spikes, folds, soups and rubble.  
Twenty years ago, and twenty pubes lost and twenty nipples:  
I have a shelf for these behind a fuzzy moving cube.

Don't tell me I can't cry; I can't disturb a smug forever.  
I have lashed her to a mast, and the boat is wailing.  
Step away and seize her height between my thumb and index  
finger. These notes are near impossible to follow.

It began with a smack of leather and landed in stress.  
No fear was negotiable. The acid was not amorous.  
I forged the sensation of truth without any of her metal.  
She is now a goat in Florida and a kid and a whistle.

## DP

I could not enter her with breath.  
I came from behind to make my sleep.  
As I tried to die, she unbundled her prices.  
She advertised her awakening, beckoning to her needs.

My friends and strangers approached her satisfaction  
while I was a lump on her bog, the beguine of bearing bare babies.  
I was nothing to be proud of, a stillborn father,  
a rhythm without soul, a barfly the entomologist could ignore.

I was made to walk, to scare an absent night, to watch  
a long clock, a space for trigonometry, a sine, a cosine.  
And she with cunts all over her had resources, dreams, definite edges,  
while I was pickled in orders, brick, large elevators and no delight.

I begged her. But I was a Boston, a blob, no bubbles, no curls.  
She felt for not with me. The people we made had no bearing.  
My science crushed her fancy.  
Her laugh ability and odd negligence swept my brain.

Elephants go where they go for their demise.  
All elements are born and blessed in their native disguise.  
What made her made me and we made.  
But I didn't go out of my way for her or for anybody for that matter.

## AH

The transmission found her inappropriate.  
She was not facing (a profound gerund) a new sound.  
She worked from the lowest level of evocation possible.  
She was a soprano in a world of sopranos, reading wrong, clumsy notes.

I saw her as a lioness; I mean she was the lioness.  
And I am one century at least removed from being the lion.  
She was the only truly dangerous person I've ever known...well.  
We smuggled our connection across the borders of our sanity.

We had (with every available word) a trip.  
The tattooist flew among us squirting our feathers and chewing up on us  
— that was the Grand Tattooist demonstrating a better way to live  
— a tattooist to which we imprinted and waddled after anywhere it went.

Madness is you are a brain and your body deceives and receives.  
As she struggled with herself as a plot, I remained steeped in pot.  
Engines could: She told me in the end to funk up my life  
if I want to be Beethoven. I switched eventually

to memoranda with enclosures, nosing my thumb at excessive success.  
I saw her now as a license. Never to expire.  
She allowed me elemental effrontery against the predictable, the norms.  
So what if there was no wisdom in her, just the beginnings of a fine coat.

## X

Am I a cynic, or do I love?  
Here at the gate I read the signs:  
"Sisters of Mercy. Private Property. Violators will be prosecuted."  
So the world is bigger than you and me.

The world is about the size of a pea  
(there are more stars in the sky than grains of sand  
in all the beaches of the Earth)  
which is what I do against a tree, avoiding the glance of a nun?

But further down the street, looking into the ideal home,  
I see bras featured on the TV while Xmas lights are put up,  
close-up of the urgent motility of moving stuff  
against the frieze of sacred stuff.

And I catch myself explaining the grains despite the grains,  
Blessed nowhere is further down the street  
where no happens, where I was before I was born,  
before my father became tumescent for a particular invitation.

While I explicate sacred and profane, a flare fades.  
You can lead a horse to water.  
If a monkey counts the countless it will eventually be counted.  
Our situation is just as desperate as drought or the name of a hurricane.

## SWF

I have to be responsible. You are dying.  
I want to say the plain thing before you disappear.  
Before I disappear, it is not love we live with.  
It is our constant imagining of it. It is Dusty!

I have learned the dust from you "right in the heart  
of Butchertown," as clear as green letters on glass,  
as fine a line as you ever made and never said,  
as selfish as grief, as hip as the woman you ever [always] saw.

As magician you are my model; as artist you are.  
You are that moment incarnate. You are that fruit of the line.  
In as many incarnations as you can muster you are mine.  
We'll disappear together in our frivolous necromancy.

Well, I'll just have to slip back home, change my clothes,  
and drive you there myself, into the middle of nowhere.  
"If it be nothingness that awaits us, do not let so act  
that it shall be justice." That it shall be just us.

I have to be responsible. I am compelled and gladly so.  
I say good-bye to you and soon I say good-bye to all  
and sundry, Sandy. Be it Sunday or Saturday,  
from Sandy to Sandy; from Dusty to Dusty.



## JEF

If art doesn't facilitate your thrills, deny it.  
If thrill don't facilitate your art, deny them.  
Don't take cheap shots. Keep at it until you can start.  
You can't start art if you take cheap shots.

If smart doesn't debilitate choir chills, belie it.  
If skills don't regurgitate more hots, decry them.  
Don't make leap dots. Peek at it until few can lurch.  
You can't blurt smart if you make leap dots.

Who am I to be giving you advice? Where was I when you were  
trapped in the ice? When art was not, when snot was fart?  
I wasn't smart. I wasn't even cold-blooded.  
I saw our lives mincing about like rice krispies.

There was a frigid desert symbolized by brand new mattresses,  
which had never seen a sheet much less saw.  
Eyeless mattresses made of springs and the staples I aimed at them,  
while comprehending Freud the fraud and Jung the hung.

Not now then. Not now later. Not now until the white beard  
watermaker, the oyster centers, the hun, the dispossessed beat.  
Now is then. Now is everywhere like air is, like the synapse  
which multiplies and transits and transfigures and transcends.

## LDB

You taught me a skeleton of unnamed bones  
and just as I saw it you went away, awry.  
Here's a bitter toast to the completely unexpected  
after which the stitches rot and the cicatrix stays agape.

An end to matter. A complete vacuum is negotiable.  
I keep caressing the center of this possibility.  
I remember the pain to come. All you need to know  
about time — about forcing the idea to come of to come.

Callisthenic of days, weeks, you know, you know,  
you always knew or could have. But eliminate  
the protuberances jamming out your taut tent,  
you rise as a Christ of industry — courageous exemplar!

You look like Thunderbolt and I of the braves  
— I have every feather that I believe is mine.  
The edges of these feathers are carefully defined.  
Your design, I believe. I believe your grand design.

"Meet my dad, Mr. Kafka. He reached calipers  
and moved on to girdles — yours is the stamp of approval,"  
as you would have it and believe in its natural infection. I  
in all that, stood on my own two feet — subject to inspection.

## AF

I always thought you thought I would explode or, at least,  
manage a swift budding (to make this world a better place).  
Some color or note would set off an implacable resonance.  
But that horse has been scratched — gone from the track.

Now I represent a drafty stray, a gray old bay, I met along the way.  
"Give the picture a rest; stop talking with it for a moment.  
Explore the wordfree vocabulary it presents.  
Examine the rich boundary between where it is and where it isn't.

Confer with its arrested movement; take advantage of its secret  
of boomeraging into all directions and tenses of time.  
Think of sound as the surface of silence like the skin of a balloon.  
Orb-size depends on how much you compress silence before it breaks.

You can enjoy the arrival of sound and, as well, appreciate its departure.  
And, if you are faced with an importuning, pronounceable symbol, don't  
pounce on it; give it a head start and let it fruit in its fruiting season.  
Decisions are [not] the truth; they are springs to further possibilities.

There are no final decisions. You can't just stop it. Caught  
in breaking water? Enjoy the ride. Or don't. Or both. Or neither.  
I can always draw you a Venn diagram that shows where you float.  
Experience unencumbered by decisions is more difficult than weeding."

## BB

While you're not here. While I have the chance.  
The real show comes when it is worn off.  
And, I think the real show is to be forgiven and encouraged.  
Do you expect flowers?

I am nothing if not floatable,  
cascading or bubbling up,  
more verbs, more events, more and more.  
I am nothing if not.

Come on, you can get this out of me.  
Shake before using; line up the arrows.  
Your back has as much to do with you as any other part  
including me and my other strange cities.

The subject frequently has been changed.  
Old recognitions get shattered. The new plugs and mugs  
come in the nick of time — time, one would say.  
Time is as listless as powder and twice as inert.

Your shadow is as important as your vices  
— both enchant, escape and forge long companions.  
Your breath is as silver as your voice,  
but the ductile hornful lingers on.

## MLB

What if I had a dream  
and in it I told you how to lie?  
There was never a better reason for not believing me  
or Mendelssohn.

When I touched you into you, you were not there,  
and then you were after a reason.  
Able was what I dreamed. Or dreamt as Duncan would  
have said if he were here now or were more there then.

He caught me in a bookstore and fantasticized my ass.  
A compliment, I'm sure. But I refused the complement.  
I won't where I am or ever was.  
I'm making clear the urge

that brought you forth was first or fifth but ne'er foul.  
You were the birth of native, natural whims and  
how many compliments and complements that held  
sway as would any tree worth its salt thus wind (like find) up.

I don't have the heart to say that love invested,  
infested the way we cranked it up and you out.  
I don't have the heart to say that love instead  
of any number of nouns lay about lying, insisting.

## GL

*Lo que el presente es, lo que la eternidad es, tu lo sabes.*

You know there is no space or time between them.

Whatever it is that always continues — that you know you can touch.

And I have counted your lives. You have five. At least. Maybe more.

First you're a *campesino* kid, working the dirt out from under your nails.

In another you're ecstatic, sleazy, boots and chaps, lost in a feeling.

And in another you're cautious, prudent, formal, *el hombre de negocios*.

In yet another you're meditative, studious, serene, transcending.

Sometimes you want to know how everyone makes his basket.

Other times you put aside weaving and wanting.

You allow the sound of all things to take you up.

Quietly, you fold the blanket, you bend your knees to sit in dreams.

Then you have that next life you have chosen,

to climb the ladder you see floating,

to take advantage of what you have been,

to make advantage of what you might be.

You praise any of us who are edging out of the snake's skin,

out of our killing and exploiting, our ignorance and our damning,

to get at what is not smug or bestial, to get at being whole

and understood. And for all that and more, *te amo*.

## WGF

What does it mean to die in a war? Are you no longer fair?  
Was a bite removed of you? You can't be in Hell; you're already dead,  
holding your armament — you will kill. Your friends (if they  
are possible) will kill. It's what it's all about.

December 1944 and over there blammin' on, taking scalps,  
making the world safe for those who would vote if they thought  
it was worth it. You made all this possible. What do you mean  
what do I mean by all this? Was there a child for you?

Bring back the English girl and set her down here. Sure it's a far cry  
and our mother cried and someone else or two. And sure I thought you'd kill them  
and I knew they shoot back. I had died many times  
in the drifts between the blocks. I took some blams when I was seven.

It was serious. I knew that. I saw the photo portraits of the heads  
in the newspaper (which counted them). I saw the stars in the windows.  
I saw that. But it passed like the wind of an untied balloon,  
crazy, free, wheezing, fast and gone.

You came to life out of my giggles; you came to death from a telegram.  
I forgave you. We all did say: OK, it happened.  
What else did we expect? I knew nothing.  
I was way too young for any of this.

## VGG

Again it is time  
to write, to right, too right, aha,  
an oxymoron, one can only be just right, a rite  
for the righteous, that ladder, climb,

as a foot would place itself as Brahms would.  
Don't make it impossible for us to find some measure  
of access, of a recent development, a swing,  
an allowed abstraction, or distraction, abstract and

as conceptual as air which is as water to coral.  
Yell at the plumber as if that would do any good.  
The dog is in the way. Use a hammer. Be practical.  
I've gone as far as I can without my clothes on.

And not just be an accident. Of nature.  
When I left that part of you I never saw,  
did you leave that part of me you never saw?  
Our way became not to see each other's parts.

Don't you feel my bones? I've gone so far.  
Waiting for it. Childlike. What part does smoking  
play in this? What part must I play with to end  
my part of this? I so much wanted us to love each other.



## ADA

Ideal this time could not more be  
waiting for you from under your multiple clothings to emerge.  
We wonder and care a fiddle for your many resemblances  
— whatever who means what by we.

Everlasting mysteries would not be salt without some enchanted head  
to say whom it am — be it a name or some other noun.  
You can't be my future — that's passed.  
You can't be my past — that's buried under six feet.

Hark! I see an impression, a waxy sign, a closeted intention.  
Speak! Speak! I can handle it. What's the worst?  
A tracing in soft dirt severs the information, the datum reeks of split.  
Far fewer means are allowed.

The loss is what I am at. Grubby words from dingy deeds.  
Grandeurish spaces finalized in risen pink owing  
is the same damn sun that consumes and stomachs all.  
By all is meant the entirety of here and there — nothing left

(only to return). I watch for something other than you  
in dying love (which goes with me when I go).  
I'm asking: You can't pretend there's no more taxes?  
I'm asking: Why you shaved your head? To pick me up?

## ADA (2<sup>nd</sup>)

You leave the smell of Mahler No. 5 and the sound of salmon.  
It escapes from your wife.  
The modern classical composer is a proven, devoted oxymoron.  
And we two will go to sail along, our oboes syncho palpitating.

My eyes return to the truth full ness of green  
left behind your slattern shades,  
if I may hurry so long,  
if I may take my merry time,

a time of amens and goddamnits.  
In the corner of my left eye a wick is lit.  
Your wife cares and escapes.  
As if she is your wife or anybody's.

Zappa says "Andy." I see it cursing in on you  
and on him. There is no news.  
I am blind, ignorant and will die so.  
So much to thank for, to think for.

Mahler and Zappa, all wealth and dirt, plain  
spoken, crud sung, marvels full of caskets  
and sperm and all the other goodies perforce.  
And you, of course, you Carlo me Alvaro, you wrong me right.

## AAB

"He's in Dallas without us tonight." Any night.  
I did not embrace but nor was I either.  
This way, in the ice, so clean and cold, you can see  
the cracks pray as if for a man or an old ace.

There is only room enough on this raft for those  
who can justify their coveted position on this coveted raft.  
Remembering it is not Dallas but in the heart.  
(Once I found this written of Mexico — that it was not but in the heart.)

Can you welcome a digression? Have you a hole for it?  
Look! It's as if you born with a beard along with your femme parts.  
I don't know to trim it, braid it, shave it or spray it.  
You will visit the museum with us and be an exhibit.

Of course, now that I realize I am not going to get better  
— a phrase in a dream but spoken by one I don't trust  
— all the wing-fluttering vanity went ahead and improved.  
So, I sit and spit, tortured by hating vanity and I don't.

Don't give your life a theme! Live in the harrowing outdoors!  
Don't chop off you outliers! Here's a gob of moon goo!  
Live anonymously! Remember the dead! Everything is not right or wrong!  
But everything is late! I did not embrace! Still the air between us!

## JS

But not to all the versifiers. They are cheeky and tonguey.  
Dear Jack. A life of torment is only as good as the next one.  
So I insist, but not because I have something to insist, but  
to protect and insure my right to, my duty to, my ability to insist.

But to you I do not owe insist; that belongs to Richard.  
However, the clouds are insurmountable, and I for one  
would have it no way other. I was better than resist.  
And that was good enough to make his admonition my tenet.

The story so far: a tendency to sway  
a fetching discombobulation, making its way up  
the seam between clashing philosophical concepts  
like bad taste color matching — not.

I continue to trust your admonition to  
get the fuck out of the way and let it happen less or more  
— divine amusement versus sacred texts.  
I relate best to the kicks.

I inhabit a fantasy where reaching is satisfying  
in my shorts with an eye on the pulse and sweat.  
Reaching is my apology. Most satisfying and most disappointing  
— my plug did not work in your outlet.

## JGB

At the edge of my kingdom where hospitality is sparse,  
where you know your better judgment may prevail,  
where witches are warm and satyrs cold, where toms  
are content with their lot and queens scatter dishes,

at the point where uncommon understandings are not prevented,  
where miniature pleasures can be expanded, each conversation  
blessed with a failure of context and anarchic volume control,  
at the joint between my ignorance and your history, I find you.

You are fragility and strength; festivity, frankness;  
this crucible; this kiwi sweet thang;  
this rack of nouns; this erasure of crises;  
of sense; of of of wrongness, cursory cross

— kick in, bitte, prego, I wish you  
relief from scabby kneed belief  
and complete access to the next step:  
K's slate of brain, his sleight of mind.

If there is no claim that it is important to remember or to forget,  
before then or after when,  
perhaps it's the shallow contract of eyes  
that I lost or wished for in the touch of your voice.

## JC

I am a witness. No blame. No pride. I have heard eternity.  
Be laughing. It was to die for. Walls became before;  
right where they were they became themselves  
— changed into themselves as they were. Be laughing.

Nested inside the Galilean and in Its Parent  
and in Its Spirit I stared, started, startled.  
Inside the sight of the fingers of Charles Mingus,  
the butterfly idea of Mencius, mindless, most holy... Be laughing.

My history, all history, all her story are scales on this fish — waterless  
and transparent. Unfathomable, that deep, that glorious, that feeling  
of growing forgotten walls, of leaf speech in tree language  
reaching these emptied ears, eyes — what I live for, die for.

I avoid danger. No blame. No pride.  
Teeth tearing away at limbs is a thought in time.  
In time the thought lingers as a code in Hell.  
But off time limbs of the dial are torn away;

only the center turns — turns as slowly as time doesn't.  
Go into the center I witness, be the fish out of water.  
All danger, no danger... All dying, no dying...  
Hear the waterless eternal thought. Be laughing.

## RD

This is the one you never read. It was in the closet  
that I never. The one I forgot to write. Tried to forget.  
We had slippery mouths then. A sliding retrospect to invent, to inherit,  
to forge as a football or as a wife or as another wife or as simple danger.

I even forgot to regret. Rue the way I never sucked it out of you.  
Never made an honest man of me. Now I'm left with me.  
You bounced the air, you warned, you shook the free, you wandered.  
I was a moon away, watching corruption, fearing dirt, merely zeroed out.

I was offered a rudder. I took it and broke it, repaired it, ignored it.  
I recall it. I resurrect. Do these acts, these rolling over and over.  
In the last act I bring it again and again back, the fucking theme:  
"Insist", you said. It was the nail I hung on. The nail to make it hold.

It wasn't what the admired ones do. It was just what to do.  
It wasn't a pansy, or a cruise, or a shovel, or a dime. It was.  
It wasn't cruelty, or omniscience, or the Tao of cops. It was what to do just.  
It wasn't instruction or the air. It was a mouthful, something to suck.

Now that I'm well-oiled working and you have had your speak,  
what I thought might be courage smells more like stupid chance.  
We were like old Greeks learning to dance like geeks, uphill, and  
back to fetch a pail of water. You can see from here they need it.

## LS

Lunch the Crisis! Though the vessel is corporeal, confused, empty.  
Out, again, anyway, hatches askew, locks busted, horn blaring.  
How your admonitions, your ghosts, hurt as high seas! What? Can I  
place your nose on my page and plead my quick stepping?

I suspect projection. You speak to me as to yourself.  
Classic, I swear, and a big so what to count jellybeans in.  
OK! Lunch and whatever will score the ridiculous-  
ly untampered surface of the leaderless ride.

Mind you, our friend says you were just tired.  
Yet I'll be generous. I'll be good. I'll see you and raise.  
Prolificacy is not all it's cracked up to be. But I'll sway  
to counter your admonitions, your ghosts, and obey your lusty leather.

I am sworn to be unhidden. I will produce waste.  
I will create the smallest pebbles, micronically wee, nano-tiny,  
that scare not, feed not, creed not, wield naught.  
It's fate it is you to be my beacon to showcase this shore.

Your reward will be the weeds ignored of eons.  
What is it that makes our hearts beat out blood?  
What the fuck is it that concerns you so? You don't?  
Hey, it's just the peaceful pudding of the faces we see.



## DH

First it was Whitman, then e. e. cummings,  
and then they came tumbling in – Samuel Beckett,  
St. John Perse, William Blake, Rainer Maria Rilke,  
and fifty others squeezed between the leaves.

The last was Jack Spicer, dying in San Francisco  
General Hospital, uttering unhealed, folded, crushed nonsense,  
as if in tribute to the physics of poetry he invented and  
stood by as the laws of life squeezed it out of him.

But before it stopped for me, swollen, damaged, interrupted  
and sustained, there was a beginning. And you  
were its biotic companion, smiling at the alphabets,  
squeezing out the pretension, to let in scrabble craft.

While I shied away from the nave and prediction,  
you risked all for safety and irenic foundation.  
Say for you humping hidden heidelbergs; lumping scientific diseases  
for me – squeezing time for unhindered but definite desires.

I hear strings weeping, exalting our split lives and giggling.  
We are of the mastermind, the bright bringers of word,  
that abandoned our calling because we can listen.  
But behind the lines we have squeezed out the solid fact.

## EW

We act. We direct our actions. We ecologize the result.  
We are the production. Then we meddle with the middle.  
We begat the beginning. We refurnish the finish. As if  
we had the handle of what we are doing. As if

in our nature resided the wisdom to affect the universe  
of alpha to omega, of the crises, the craft, or the critics.  
We both know in that part of living where the pores contain,  
where holidays are hard work and the danger we avoid

is placed on the top of the door to fall on our heads when we close it,  
that no beings amount to a hill of beans in a world at war  
with itself and time to come which is endless or not.  
And our perceptions, o god our perceptions, are as immoderate

as our dreams. Speaking of which is where I keep heading.  
I wanted to operate heavy machinery when I grew up.  
Back to us. We dream. Of our creation. Only human.  
So little. So much. So empty. So dense. As if

the attack of chemistry could negotiate more than the crust  
of feeling. As if science would outplay drama or poetry  
could matter. Matter is not what matters, at least not  
in the third act which could use some cutting.

## AA Y

The only grandparent I knew. Bacon, coffee, chair and Bible.  
The odor of cat shit in the coal bins never got past the stairs.  
She of a tribe nearly six feet in her prime. A Connecticutian  
whose second marriage was to the son of a Connecticutian.

More roots for me than a wide maple could provide.  
The first sample of fabled unconditional love.  
Content and cuddle, do not betray the little bastard.  
A model of dignity, purity and smiles.

She read the good book to sleep. My father's mother.  
We spent mornings with the breakfast clubbers on the radio.  
She sewed to One Man's Family. Small kitchen.  
The noisy refrigerator was in the dining room.

She didn't know a man was lusting for my penis in the park.  
I didn't tell her. I rode my bike to see her  
through Providence past the rubber factory.  
It was cheaper than the trolley bus.

I always say prose is not poetry.  
It has to be something different in some manner.  
It has to be as different as my mother was  
from the only grandparent I ever knew. My father knew.

## LF

Dice come to mind. What were you doing with my wife?  
You know, people are not interesting unless you are interested.  
Yeah, change it to Greek, split it there, space it out or  
kiss it. Climbing above bewilderment with an ordinary fork.

Now it is my donkey and my tail. I have all the future  
because there is none. And no names to drop. No faces.  
It turned out to be nerve endings, the courage to be  
complacent and dumbly capable after all these years.

Dice, face, choice, truce and trace. It keeps coming.  
Ambition, shmambition, all is in the wait.  
The crucible burns, the genicals pop – froth everywhere.  
The trick is no trick. Nothing is wanting. Just wait.

What were you doing with my wife? Demonstrating  
old colored ladies blues dancing? The musical phrase,  
the moment of destruction denoting creation? Bull.  
We shared the vanity of being ignored regardless

of the lists, the architecture of the arts, the hierarchies.  
The needs we shared we were ashamed to share outloud.  
The silence in all that noise was more like mute.  
And all we had to do was wait for nothing to come.

## CODA

Dip into the cooling lava of 1957 through 1966.  
It was the middle, the fat of our lives.  
It was the shadow of my present life.  
I played it out like a timed-release capsule.

So who is it who is waiting to ascend in my personal history  
to the glorification, winged, automatically atoned.  
— no opus, no onus, no anus? No amends, no regrets.  
I was just that easy — but who was it that

sowed the load that rode the mode to the very last?  
Somewhere I know who but I have this moment to indulge the anticipation.  
Of course! The last card is hand-in-hand with the lost chord.  
We absolutely have nothing to worry about.

For this insight and to aid us all in understanding  
— was where I paused — I wanted a perfect impact.  
I was wrestling with the gods and it was time.  
The secret of disorientation is not to mistake it for something else.

I know I have learned my lessons poorly. But it's a sign of the times.  
Real horror makes real people pay real attention.  
You cannot masquerade any longer. You were and are