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We dream of an age that is equal to our passions

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Eugene O'Neill

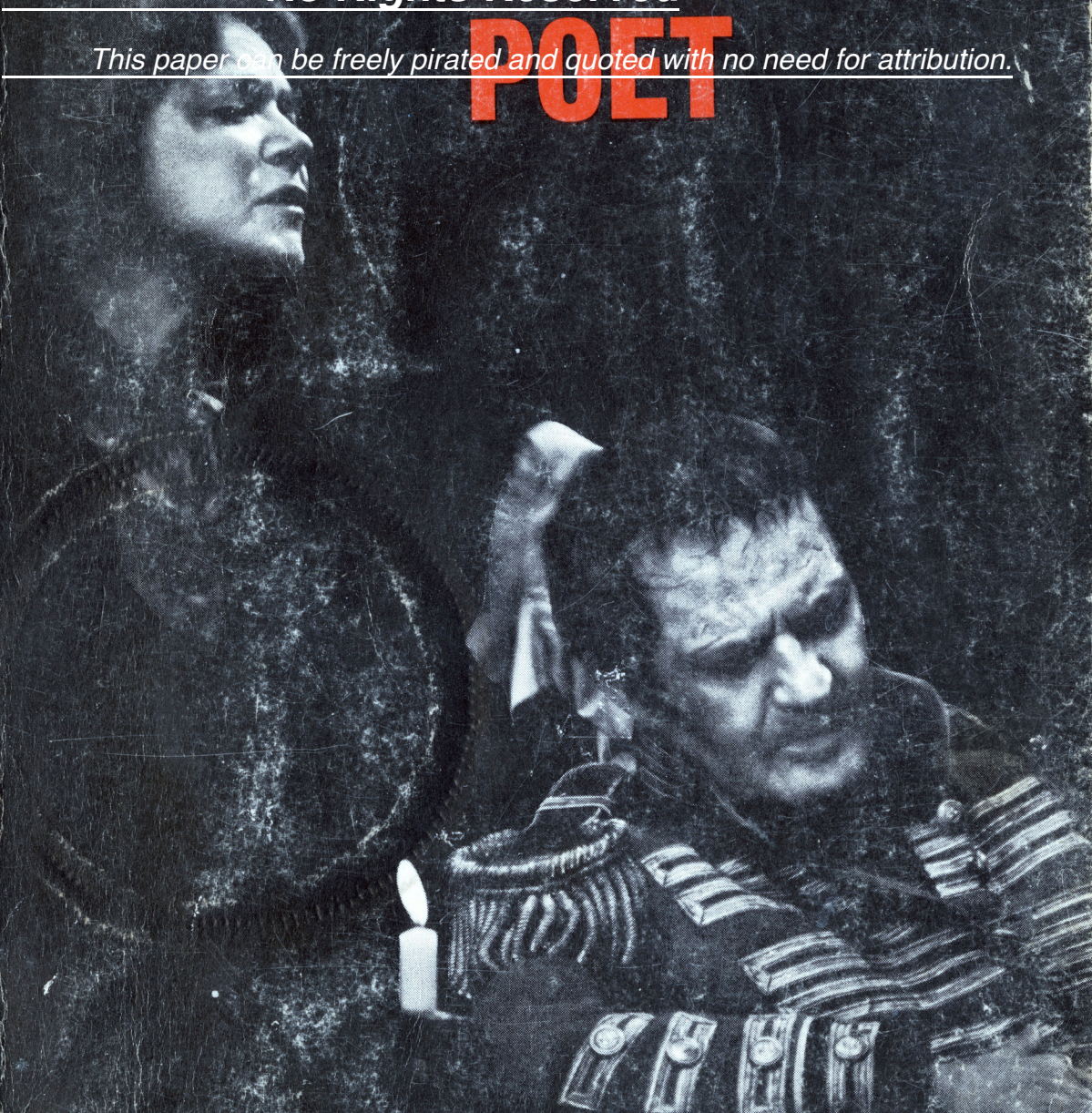
A TOUCH OF THE POET

⊙ William Sam Winks

2013

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A person wearing a full-body white protective suit, including a hood and a respirator mask, is using a power sander on a large, dark wooden log. The person is bent over, focused on their work. The log is standing upright on a light-colored floor. Numerous shavings and dust are scattered around the base of the log and on the floor. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

We dream of an age that is equal to our passions

William Sam Winks

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Fine Arts at Virginia Commonwealth University.

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BFA Savannah College of Art and Design 2009

MFA Virginia Commonwealth University 2013

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Virginia Commonwealth University

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Abstract:

We dream of an age that is equal to our passions is a series of soliloquies and ideas that look at the false narratives I tell myself in order to get out bed in the morning, at the depression that came after failed revolutions, at the unrealistic hopes of my politics, and of my desire to become a whole human being.

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To whom it may concern,

I used to say that I used the structure of painting and the imagery of basic architectural elements to create site-specific objects, or interventions, within the institutional space. At the time I was trying to use my work to point to what I saw as a problem, that is to expose the dream like state that I thought we lived in. But that was a few years ago, and what was outrageous no longer outrages, and my objections aren't what they used to be.

In a world that has *really been turned upside down*, the true is a moment of the false

In fact what I meant was a theatre in which action (and poetry) would be expressly and deliberately



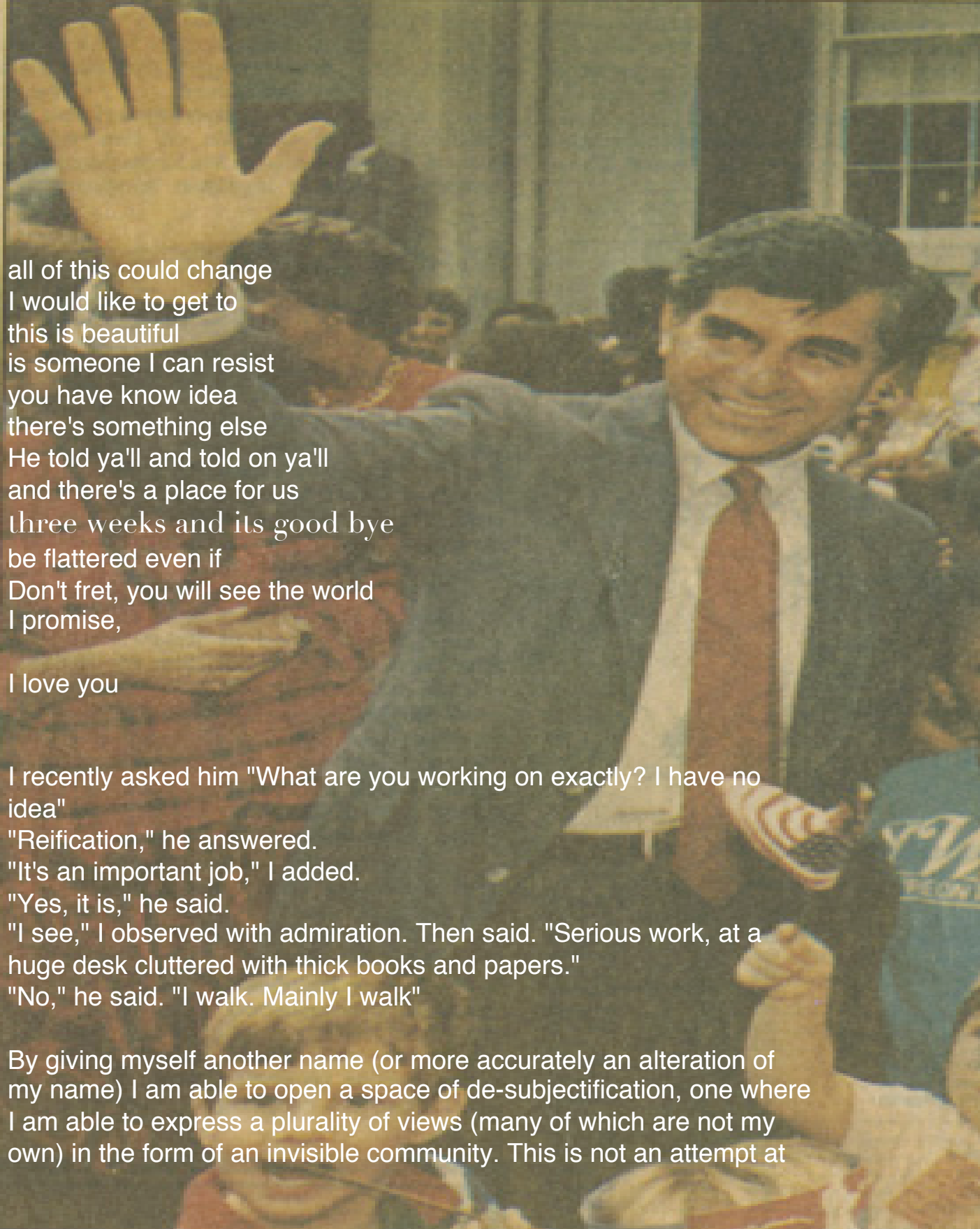
brought close to everyday life. When I tried to explain the meaning of the word 'epic', I used the example of the traffic accident, with witnesses discussing what happened and giving biased accounts of it, each implying a judgment (taking a stand, taking sides) and an attempt to make the listener share that judgment.

Much of my work and its titles are taken from previous eras of civil unrest. What I produce can be seen in relation to this.

Those of us raised in city and suburb (and many in the countryside as well) feel that we have lost contact with the world of earth, sky, and sea. We do not seem to be able to regain consciousness or even healing except by imitation or summoning up primal images that recall our lost connections.

Dear Lumberjack,

Weeks like these were made for us
to find a new chapter in my life's story.
He's smart enough to know when he's wanted.
Life is short so are we
This house is still under repair
I woke up this morning
I'm on the bye
his loving touch is what
and we will share another new years desert
I'm beginning to like it here
you know who you are
perhaps those extra
you roll own tobacco, be still my heart
You've sent me a few marks, but I'm not a paying member

A photograph of Michael Dukakis, a man with dark hair wearing a grey suit, white shirt, and red tie. He is smiling and waving his right hand towards a crowd of children. The children are in the foreground, some with their hands raised. The background shows a building with windows.

all of this could change
I would like to get to
this is beautiful
is someone I can resist
you have know idea
there's something else
He told ya'll and told on ya'll
and there's a place for us
three weeks and its good bye
be flattered even if
Don't fret, you will see the world
I promise,

I love you

I recently asked him "What are you working on exactly? I have no idea"

"Reification," he answered.

"It's an important job," I added.

"Yes, it is," he said.

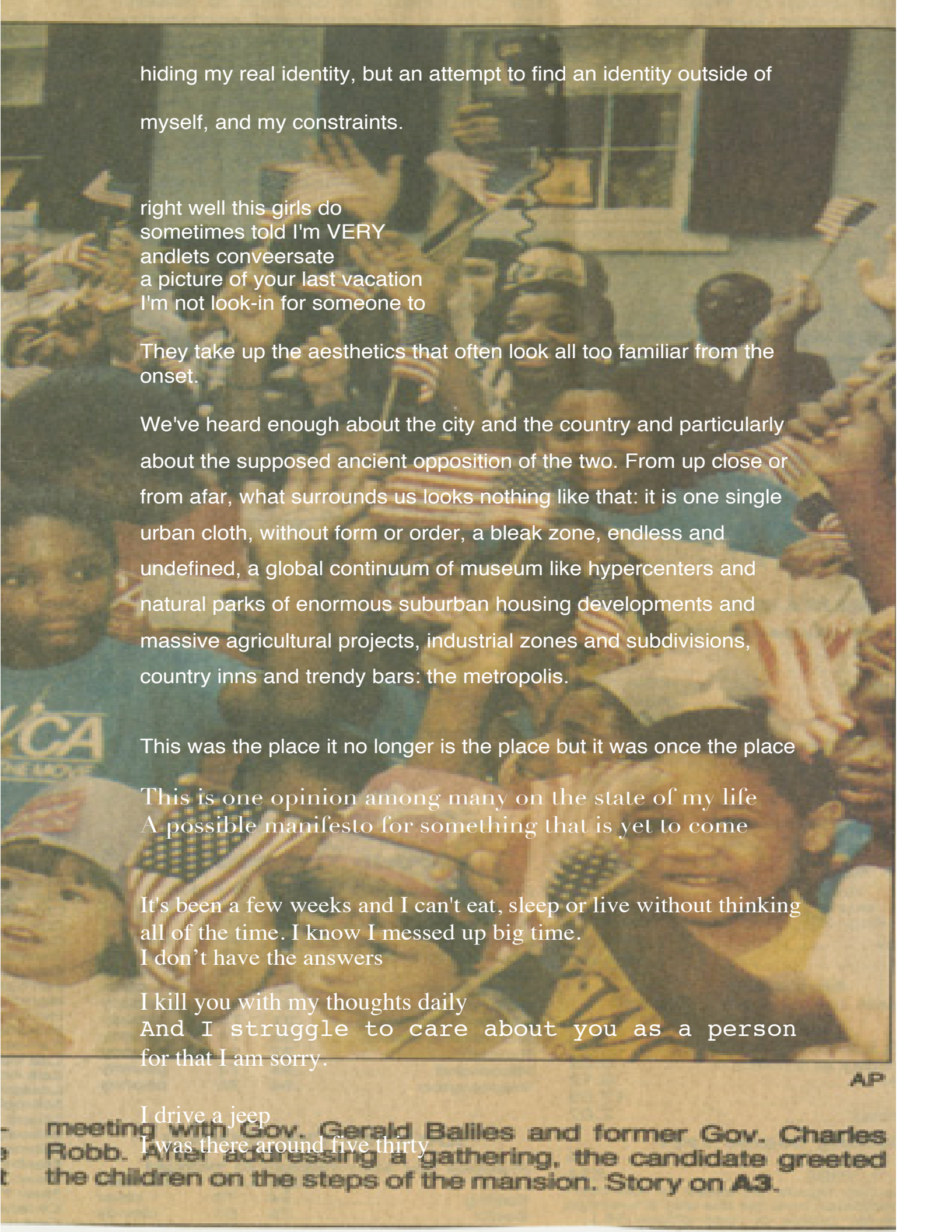
"I see," I observed with admiration. Then said. "Serious work, at a huge desk cluttered with thick books and papers."

"No," he said. "I walk. Mainly I walk"

By giving myself another name (or more accurately an alteration of my name) I am able to open a space of de-subjectification, one where I am able to express a plurality of views (many of which are not my own) in the form of an invisible community. This is not an attempt at

Wooing the kid vote

Democratic presidential nominee Michael Dukakis is surrounded by children from day-care centers Friday at the Governor's Mansion in Richmond. Dukakis had a breakfast



hiding my real identity, but an attempt to find an identity outside of myself, and my constraints.

right well this girls do
sometimes told I'm VERY
and lets converse
a picture of your last vacation
I'm not look-in for someone to

They take up the aesthetics that often look all too familiar from the onset.

We've heard enough about the city and the country and particularly about the supposed ancient opposition of the two. From up close or from afar, what surrounds us looks nothing like that: it is one single urban cloth, without form or order, a bleak zone, endless and undefined, a global continuum of museum like hypercenters and natural parks of enormous suburban housing developments and massive agricultural projects, industrial zones and subdivisions, country inns and trendy bars: the metropolis.

This was the place it no longer is the place but it was once the place

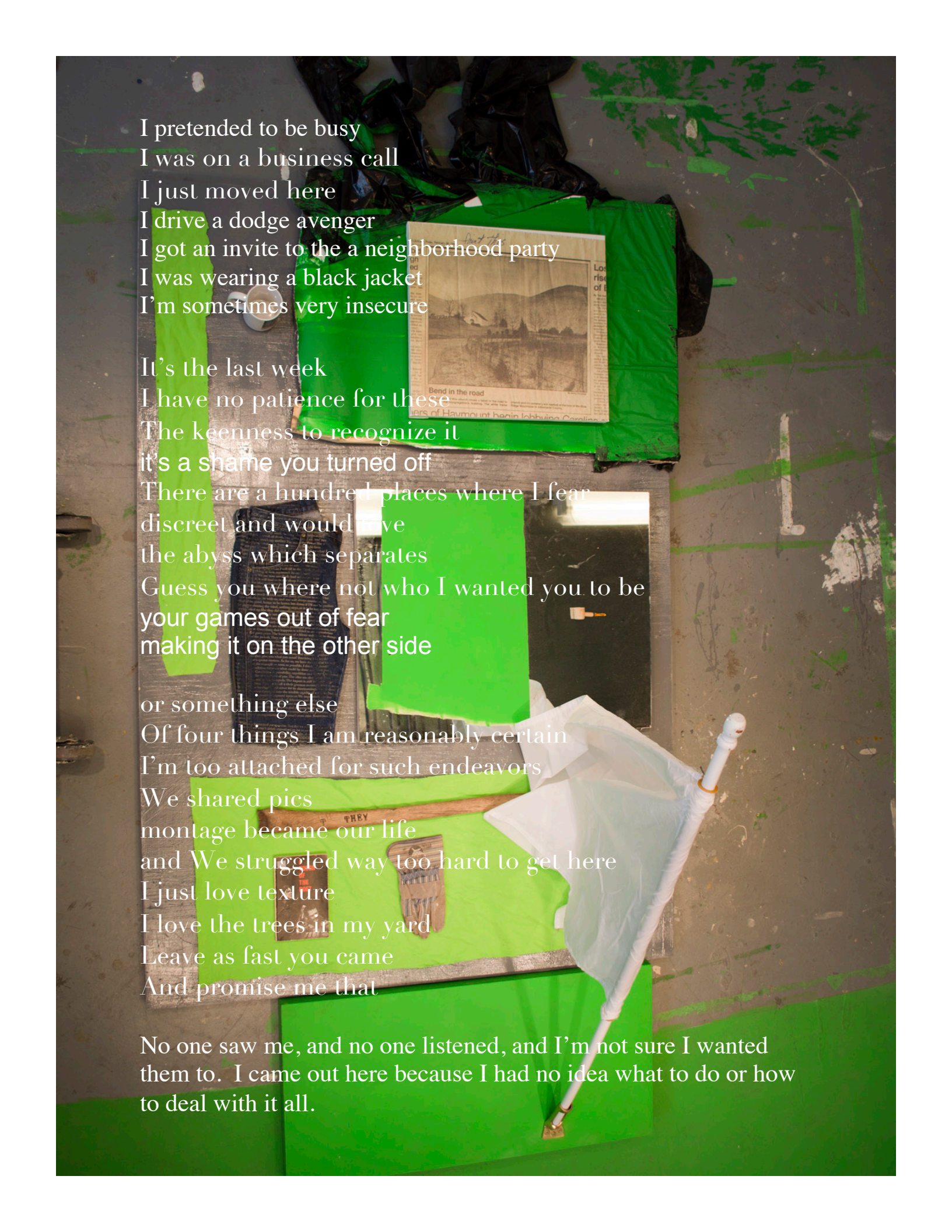
This is one opinion among many on the state of my life
A possible manifesto for something that is yet to come

It's been a few weeks and I can't eat, sleep or live without thinking
all of the time. I know I messed up big time.
I don't have the answers

I kill you with my thoughts daily
And I struggle to care about you as a person
for that I am sorry.

AP

I drive a jeep
I was there around five thirty
meeting with Gov. Gerald Baliles and former Gov. Charles Robb. After addressing a gathering, the candidate greeted the children on the steps of the mansion. Story on A3.



I pretended to be busy
I was on a business call
I just moved here
I drive a dodge avenger
I got an invite to the a neighborhood party
I was wearing a black jacket
I'm sometimes very insecure

It's the last week
I have no patience for these
The keenness to recognize it
it's a shame you turned off
There are a hundred places where I fear
discreet and would give
the abyss which separates
Guess you where not who I wanted you to be
your games out of fear
making it on the other side

or something else
Of four things I am reasonably certain
I'm too attached for such endeavors
We shared pics
montage became our life
and We struggled way too hard to get here
I just love texture
I love the trees in my yard
Leave as fast you came
And promise me that

No one saw me, and no one listened, and I'm not sure I wanted
them to. I came out here because I had no idea what to do or how
to deal with it all.

Maybe I'll bring a table, and we can have coffee and talk about the weather. I have been thinking about this possible option for nearly two years now.

To whom it may concern,
you wear you well with a community with which I have no relationship with, nor romantic interest in, it is strictly platonic, and we are strictly a community. I have never had feelings for this community, nor will I ever have feelings for this community. So this community needs to get it in its heart that nothing will never happen between us.

Sincerely,
you wear you well
right well this girls do
sometimes told I'm VERY
and lets converseate

A PICTURE of your last vacation
she pointed to the horizon

Hello, precious

I'm not look-in for someone to

I have letters on my wrist

and am a home body

be very well grounded

but from I can see

Something with asset

maybe bod & face

So Casual is defined as

and see what happened

maybe do something that

who can relate to be lonely

and as what you owed me

What I would give for a Take 2

waiting on the curb for someone

or was it just my gold tooth catching the sunlight?

Just walk up to me and say

and be rider ready

I believe scandals

had frozen up

some ask if I am psychic

don't flame

it was my kind of beautiful

a smile like sunrise

I'll never get back to you

Other than that we are cool

but why

Because we must

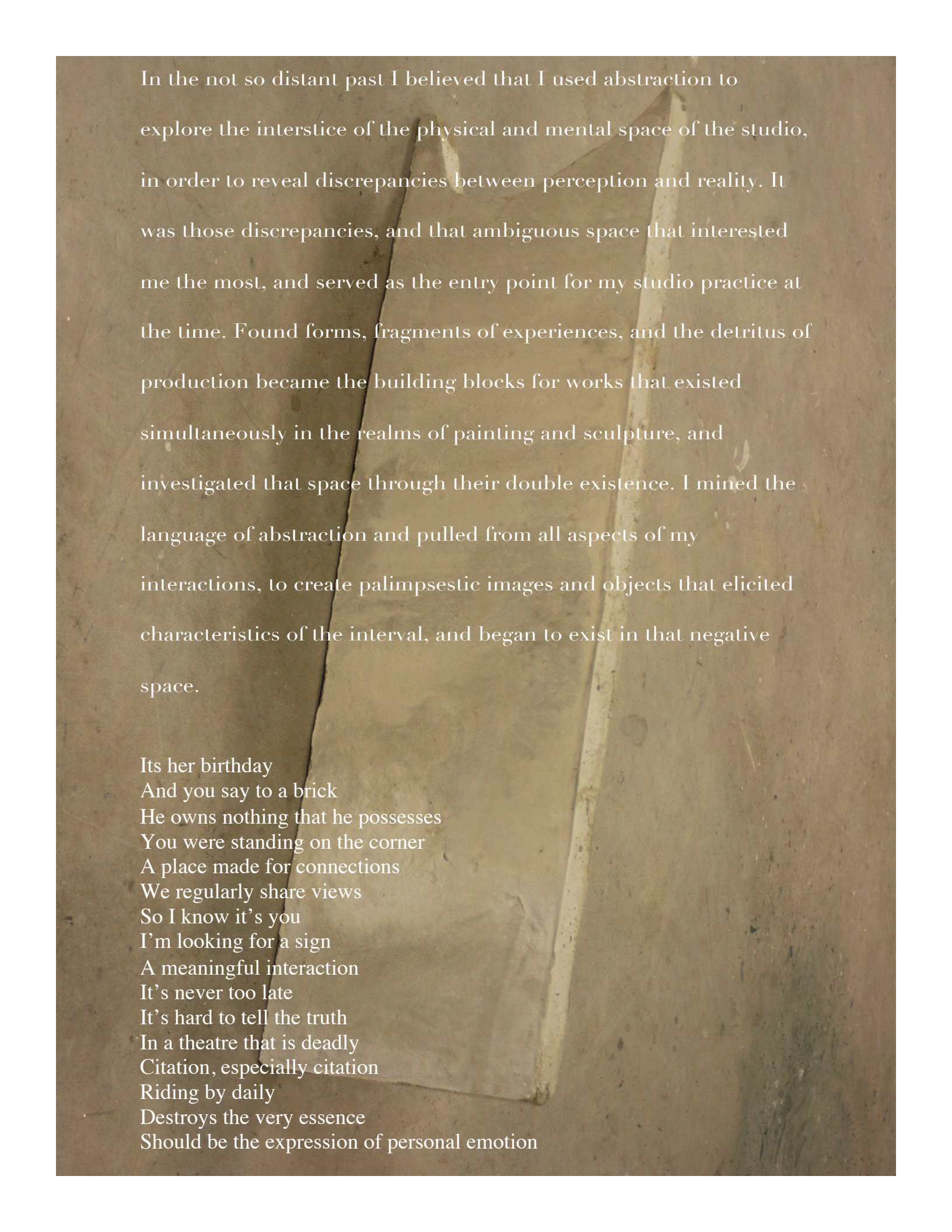
On the regular

and that is what we need

My view is that we ought to
I hope you find what your looking for
I'm not sure if you'll see this
but hit me up with "radical"
it's going to take a different path
somewhere in the haze southbound
It's a choice
That is the day I live for
black begins
for a fire sign
Can you help us?


I don't think you do though
What do we change into?
I don't know
Will you do this?
Its about us
Love is for a quiet place
and other means, but I made the final
There are a lot of points
I want more too
in case you are unsure of what that is
Here's what I'm offering...
those baby blues make it easy
the only people I know around here are my customers
but you'll never meet him
go through it piece by piece
this is the metropolis
I mainly walk
In a world that is upside down
And what I meant by theatre
Is that I'll do whatever it takes





In the not so distant past I believed that I used abstraction to explore the interstice of the physical and mental space of the studio, in order to reveal discrepancies between perception and reality. It was those discrepancies, and that ambiguous space that interested me the most, and served as the entry point for my studio practice at the time. Found forms, fragments of experiences, and the detritus of production became the building blocks for works that existed simultaneously in the realms of painting and sculpture, and investigated that space through their double existence. I mined the language of abstraction and pulled from all aspects of my interactions, to create palimpsestic images and objects that elicited characteristics of the interval, and began to exist in that negative space.

Its her birthday
And you say to a brick
He owns nothing that he possesses
You were standing on the corner
A place made for connections
We regularly share views
So I know it's you
I'm looking for a sign
A meaningful interaction
It's never too late
It's hard to tell the truth
In a theatre that is deadly
Citation, especially citation
Riding by daily
Destroys the very essence
Should be the expression of personal emotion



He's only waiting on time
You were the cuter of the two brothers
We live in a world of relationships
At the core of a revolution
Can and is already
people are starting to awaken
there on the grass
but it was a beautiful morning
we smiled at each other
waiting at the stop light
unoriginal lines
drifting through the streets
against the transparency
to name the
sun in our eyes
You aimlessly wonder to try and free yourself
Unbelievable, unbelievable, unbelievable
This place is never going to be the same
Make it fucked up
On the same plane
I tried

When I think of you, I don't
AA BBC SWM MWM SBW
Make it old

DWM LTR CPL BBW
Is it just me?

Older Models welcome
Now hosting

NSA CWB

How you spend your days
Let's get fucked up

Single and looking

Lonely and tired

Made in America

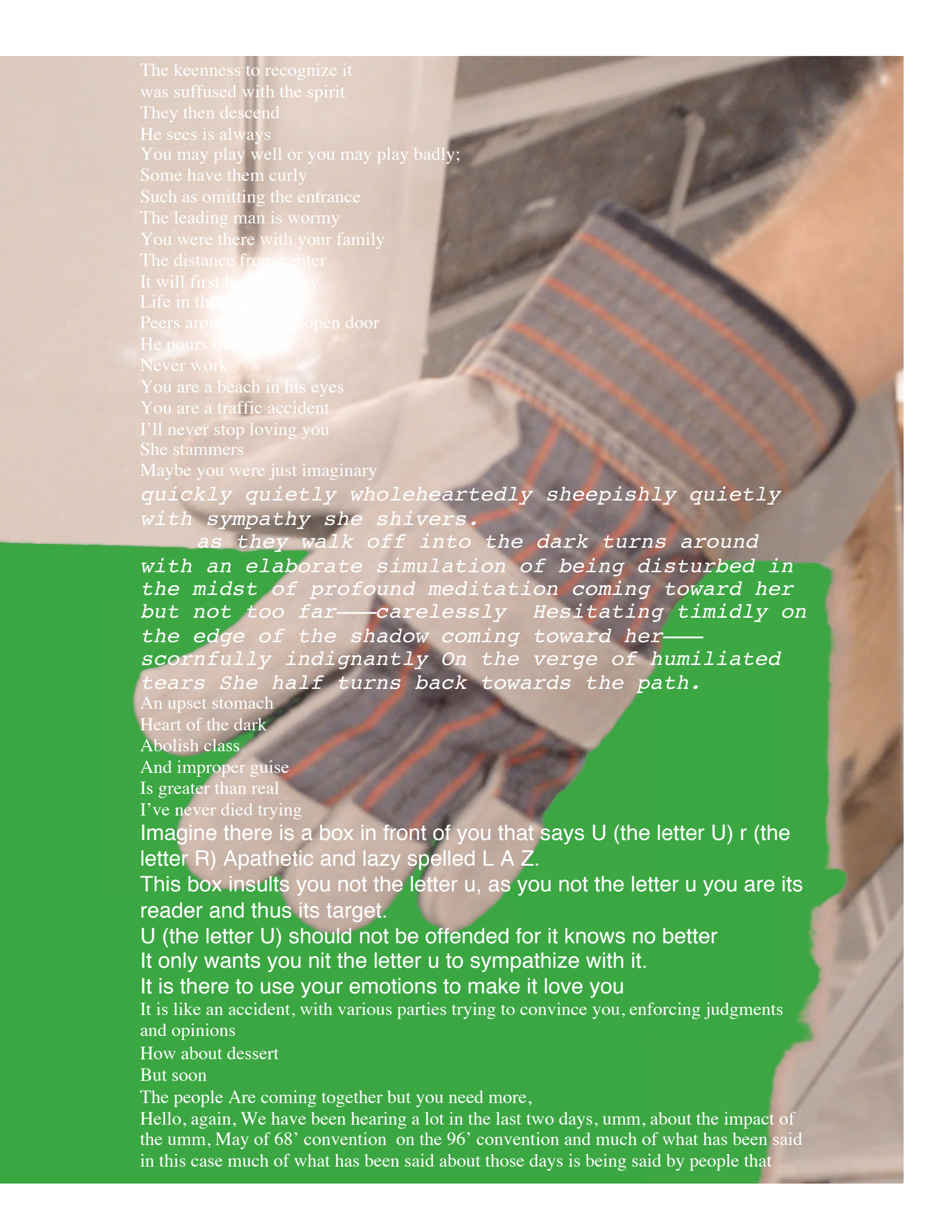
AAAAA I NEED TO KNOW WHO YOU ARE
but what the heck, maybe you're curious?

I love the trees in my yard
if your down with that. :)
word to the wise love
playing passive and ignoring passing by glances
into my eyes

at a party
nine years this July

He puts a timid arm around her awkwardly
great condition

no one will see this
stages an imaginary voyage through
it deals with human experience
in loving Beatrice,



The keenness to recognize it
was suffused with the spirit
They then descend
He sees is always
You may play well or you may play badly;
Some have them curly
Such as omitting the entrance
The leading man is wormy
You were there with your family
The distance from center
It will first be a memory
Life in the
Peers around the open door
He pours out
Never work
You are a beach in his eyes
You are a traffic accident
I'll never stop loving you
She stammers
Maybe you were just imaginary

*quickly quietly wholeheartedly sheepishly quietly
with sympathy she shivers.*

*as they walk off into the dark turns around
with an elaborate simulation of being disturbed in
the midst of profound meditation coming toward her
but not too far—carelessly Hesitating timidly on
the edge of the shadow coming toward her—
scornfully indignantly On the verge of humiliated
tears She half turns back towards the path.*

An upset stomach
Heart of the dark
Abolish class
And improper guise
Is greater than real
I've never died trying

Imagine there is a box in front of you that says U (the letter U) r (the letter R) Apathetic and lazy spelled L A Z.

This box insults you not the letter u, as you not the letter u you are its reader and thus its target.

U (the letter U) should not be offended for it knows no better
It only wants you nit the letter u to sympathize with it.


It is there to use your emotions to make it love you

It is like an accident, with various parties trying to convince you, enforcing judgments and opinions

How about dessert
But soon

The people Are coming together but you need more,

Hello, again, We have been hearing a lot in the last two days, umm, about the impact of the umm, May of 68' convention on the 96' convention and much of what has been said in this case much of what has been said about those days is being said by people that



weren't there. You ahh, remember my T-shirt yesterday, umm I have another T-shirt, unfortunately I didn't bring it in today, but, ahh, but that T-shirt sums up what I just said.

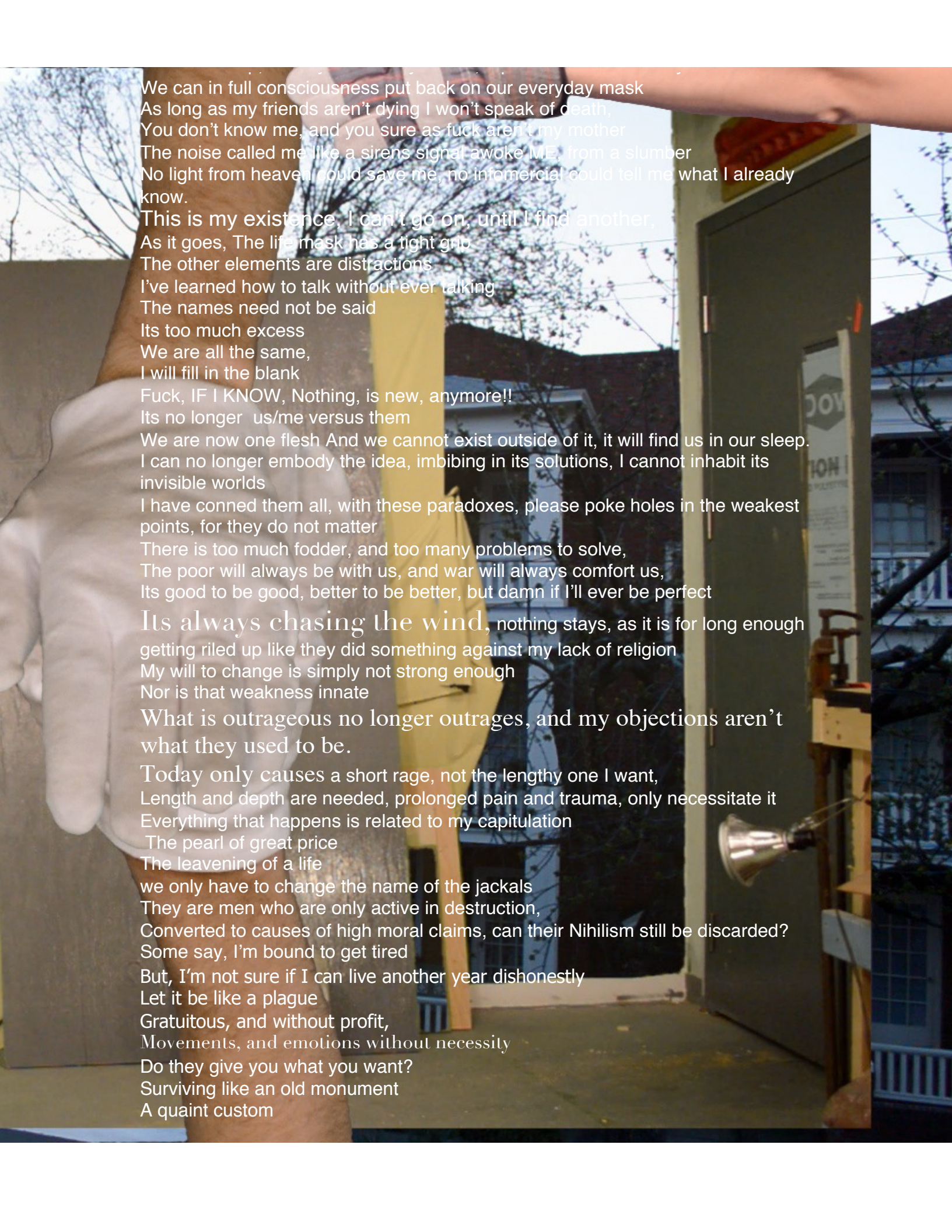
But in our lifetime, I've only had the chance to see the effects of the
_____ religion, this purism and extreme moralism that doesn't help to
change anything at all. We needed to make fun of such a paradoxical position.
But today, maybe it's like shooting the ambulance.

My own literary interest is more about excavating
the past, or sensing the past inside the present.
This requires all kinds of exclusions and sleights
of hand. There's an admittedly antiquarian flavor
to it, even though there's enough of the present
included to lull the reader.

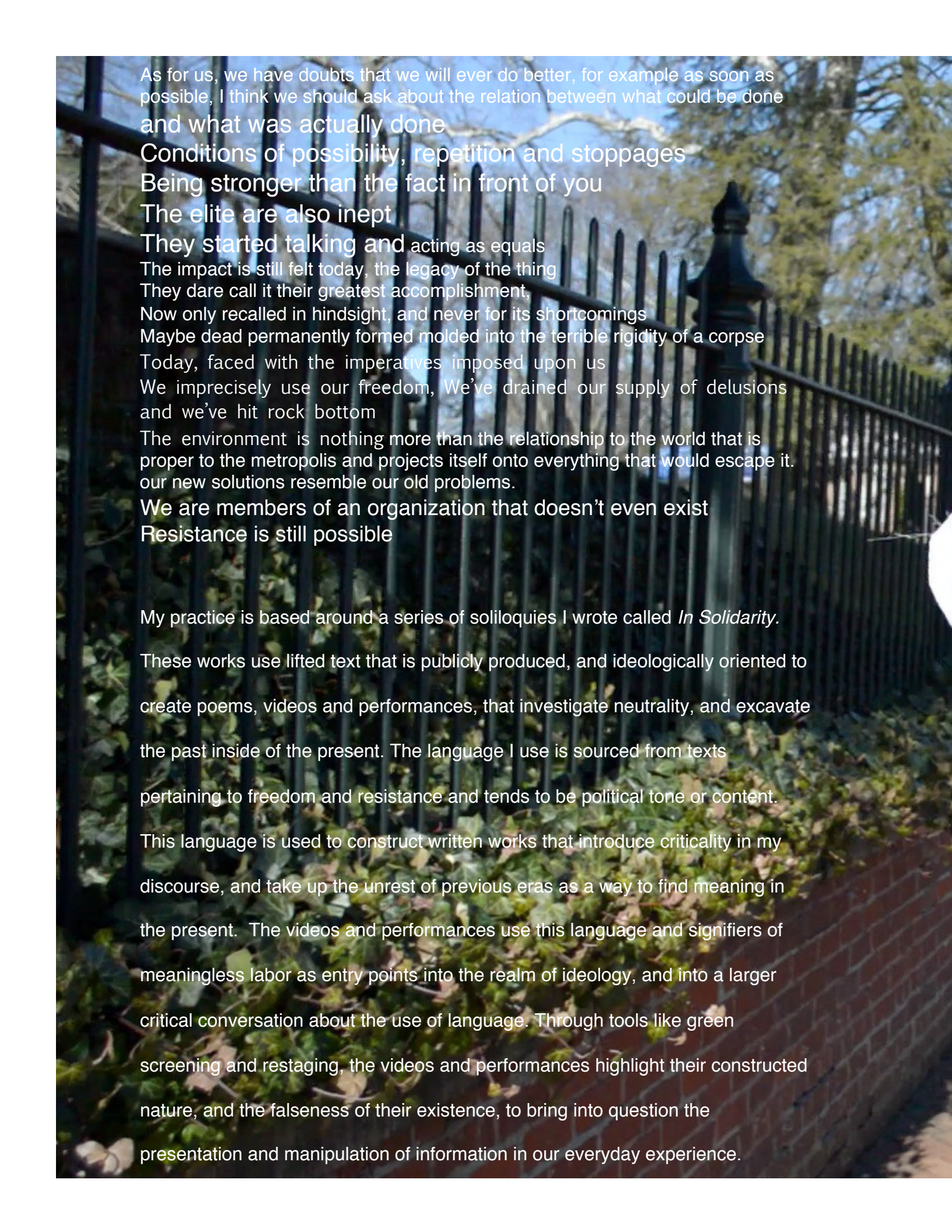
She leans from one side to the other
Showing one breast then the other
And surprise without evil
According to this breast that one identity
And this produces from
One foot to the other,
They themselves
On the feet
Breasts
A kind of dance
Frightening sketch
And when immobile without moving

A nothing place.

Within a historical perspective but for us only right away
It exists so we won't think ourselves to be lonely
Together in our mind's eye, we picture that first night
A special silence in which there is much fascination
A FORCE, with no barriers to the outside world, a space where ideals and
influences can freely pass
Born to five them
A Mobius strip, A body molded by others, a person without History

A person wearing a white mask and white gloves is holding a yellow sign with a black silhouette of a person. The background shows a doorway leading outside to a street with trees and buildings. The text is overlaid on the image.

We can in full consciousness put back on our everyday mask
As long as my friends aren't dying I won't speak of death,
You don't know me, and you sure as fuck aren't my mother
The noise called me like a sirens signal awoke ME, from a slumber
No light from heaven could save me, no infomercial could tell me what I already know.
This is my existence, I can't go on, until I find another,
As it goes, The life mask has a tight grip
The other elements are distractions
I've learned how to talk without ever talking
The names need not be said
Its too much excess
We are all the same,
I will fill in the blank
Fuck, IF I KNOW, Nothing, is new, anymore!!
Its no longer us/me versus them
We are now one flesh And we cannot exist outside of it, it will find us in our sleep.
I can no longer embody the idea, imbibing in its solutions, I cannot inhabit its invisible worlds
I have conned them all, with these paradoxes, please poke holes in the weakest points, for they do not matter
There is too much fodder, and too many problems to solve,
The poor will always be with us, and war will always comfort us,
Its good to be good, better to be better, but damn if I'll ever be perfect
Its always chasing the wind, nothing stays, as it is for long enough
getting riled up like they did something against my lack of religion
My will to change is simply not strong enough
Nor is that weakness innate
What is outrageous no longer outrages, and my objections aren't what they used to be.
Today only causes a short rage, not the lengthy one I want,
Length and depth are needed, prolonged pain and trauma, only necessitate it
Everything that happens is related to my capitulation
The pearl of great price
The leavening of a life
we only have to change the name of the jackals
They are men who are only active in destruction,
Converted to causes of high moral claims, can their Nihilism still be discarded?
Some say, I'm bound to get tired
But, I'm not sure if I can live another year dishonestly
Let it be like a plague
Gratuitous, and without profit,
Movements, and emotions without necessity
Do they give you what you want?
Surviving like an old monument
A quaint custom



As for us, we have doubts that we will ever do better, for example as soon as possible, I think we should ask about the relation between what could be done and what was actually done

Conditions of possibility, repetition and stoppages

Being stronger than the fact in front of you

The elite are also inept

They started talking and acting as equals

The impact is still felt today, the legacy of the thing

They dare call it their greatest accomplishment,

Now only recalled in hindsight, and never for its shortcomings

Maybe dead permanently formed molded into the terrible rigidity of a corpse

Today, faced with the imperatives imposed upon us

We imprecisely use our freedom, We've drained our supply of delusions and we've hit rock bottom

The environment is nothing more than the relationship to the world that is proper to the metropolis and projects itself onto everything that would escape it. our new solutions resemble our old problems.

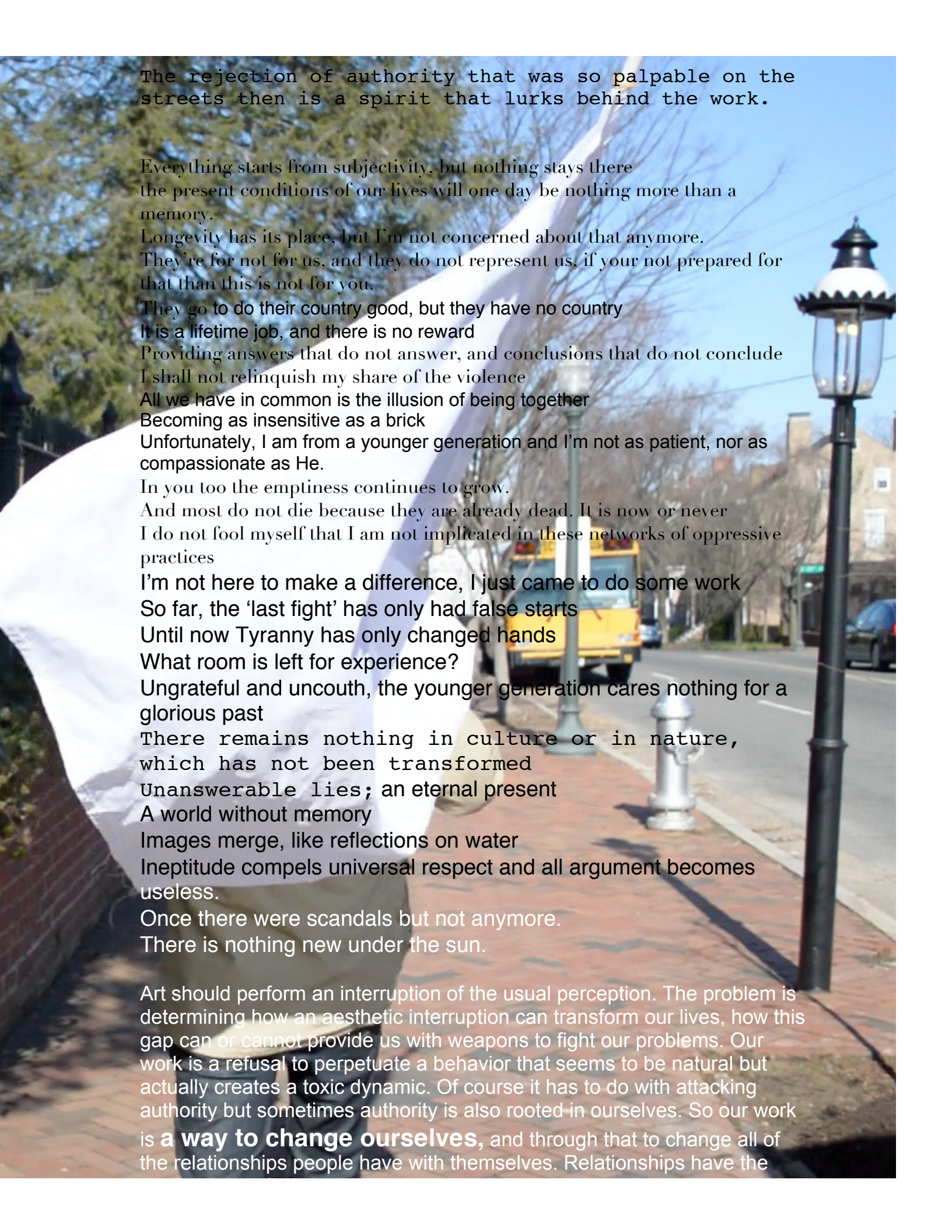
We are members of an organization that doesn't even exist

Resistance is still possible

My practice is based around a series of soliloquies I wrote called *In Solidarity*.

These works use lifted text that is publicly produced, and ideologically oriented to create poems, videos and performances, that investigate neutrality, and excavate the past inside of the present. The language I use is sourced from texts pertaining to freedom and resistance and tends to be political tone or content.

This language is used to construct written works that introduce criticality in my discourse, and take up the unrest of previous eras as a way to find meaning in the present. The videos and performances use this language and signifiers of meaningless labor as entry points into the realm of ideology, and into a larger critical conversation about the use of language. Through tools like green screening and restaging, the videos and performances highlight their constructed nature, and the falseness of their existence, to bring into question the presentation and manipulation of information in our everyday experience.



The rejection of authority that was so palpable on the streets then is a spirit that lurks behind the work.

Everything starts from subjectivity, but nothing stays there
the present conditions of our lives will one day be nothing more than a memory.

Longevity has its place, but I'm not concerned about that anymore.
They're for not for us, and they do not represent us, if your not prepared for that than this is not for you.

They go to do their country good, but they have no country
It is a lifetime job, and there is no reward

Providing answers that do not answer, and conclusions that do not conclude
I shall not relinquish my share of the violence

All we have in common is the illusion of being together

Becoming as insensitive as a brick

Unfortunately, I am from a younger generation and I'm not as patient, nor as compassionate as He.

In you too the emptiness continues to grow.

And most do not die because they are already dead. It is now or never

I do not fool myself that I am not implicated in these networks of oppressive practices

I'm not here to make a difference, I just came to do some work

So far, the 'last fight' has only had false starts

Until now Tyranny has only changed hands

What room is left for experience?

Ungrateful and uncouth, the younger generation cares nothing for a glorious past

There remains nothing in culture or in nature,
which has not been transformed

Unanswerable lies; an eternal present

A world without memory

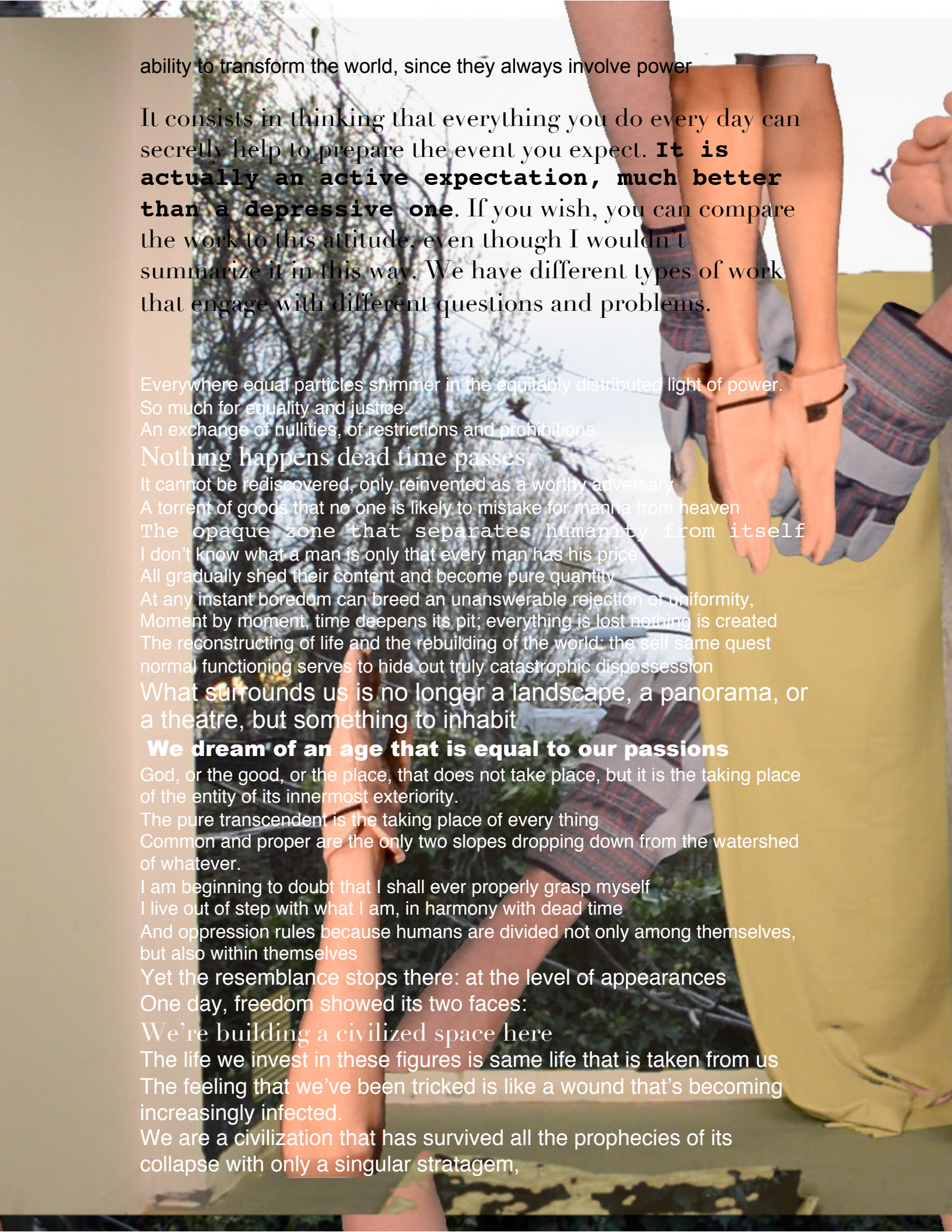
Images merge, like reflections on water

Ineptitude compels universal respect and all argument becomes useless.

Once there were scandals but not anymore.

There is nothing new under the sun.

Art should perform an interruption of the usual perception. The problem is determining how an aesthetic interruption can transform our lives, how this gap can or cannot provide us with weapons to fight our problems. Our work is a refusal to perpetuate a behavior that seems to be natural but actually creates a toxic dynamic. Of course it has to do with attacking authority but sometimes authority is also rooted in ourselves. So our work is **a way to change ourselves**, and through that to change all of the relationships people have with themselves. Relationships have the



ability to transform the world, since they always involve power

It consists in thinking that everything you do every day can secretly help to prepare the event you expect. **It is actually an active expectation, much better than a depressive one.** If you wish, you can compare the work to this attitude, even though I wouldn't summarize it in this way. We have different types of work that engage with different questions and problems.

Everywhere equal particles shimmer in the equitably distributed light of power.
So much for equality and justice.

An exchange of nullities, of restrictions and prohibitions.

Nothing happens dead time passes.

It cannot be rediscovered, only reinvented as a worthy adversary.

A torrent of goods that no one is likely to mistake for manna from heaven

The opaque zone that separates humanity from itself

I don't know what a man is only that every man has his price

All gradually shed their content and become pure quantity

At any instant boredom can breed an unanswerable rejection of uniformity,

Moment by moment, time deepens its pit; everything is lost nothing is created

The reconstructing of life and the rebuilding of the world: the self same quest

normal functioning serves to hide out truly catastrophic dispossession

What surrounds us is no longer a landscape, a panorama, or a theatre, but something to inhabit

We dream of an age that is equal to our passions

God, or the good, or the place, that does not take place, but it is the taking place of the entity of its innermost exteriority.

The pure transcendent is the taking place of every thing

Common and proper are the only two slopes dropping down from the watershed of whatever.

I am beginning to doubt that I shall ever properly grasp myself

I live out of step with what I am, in harmony with dead time

And oppression rules because humans are divided not only among themselves, but also within themselves

Yet the resemblance stops there: at the level of appearances

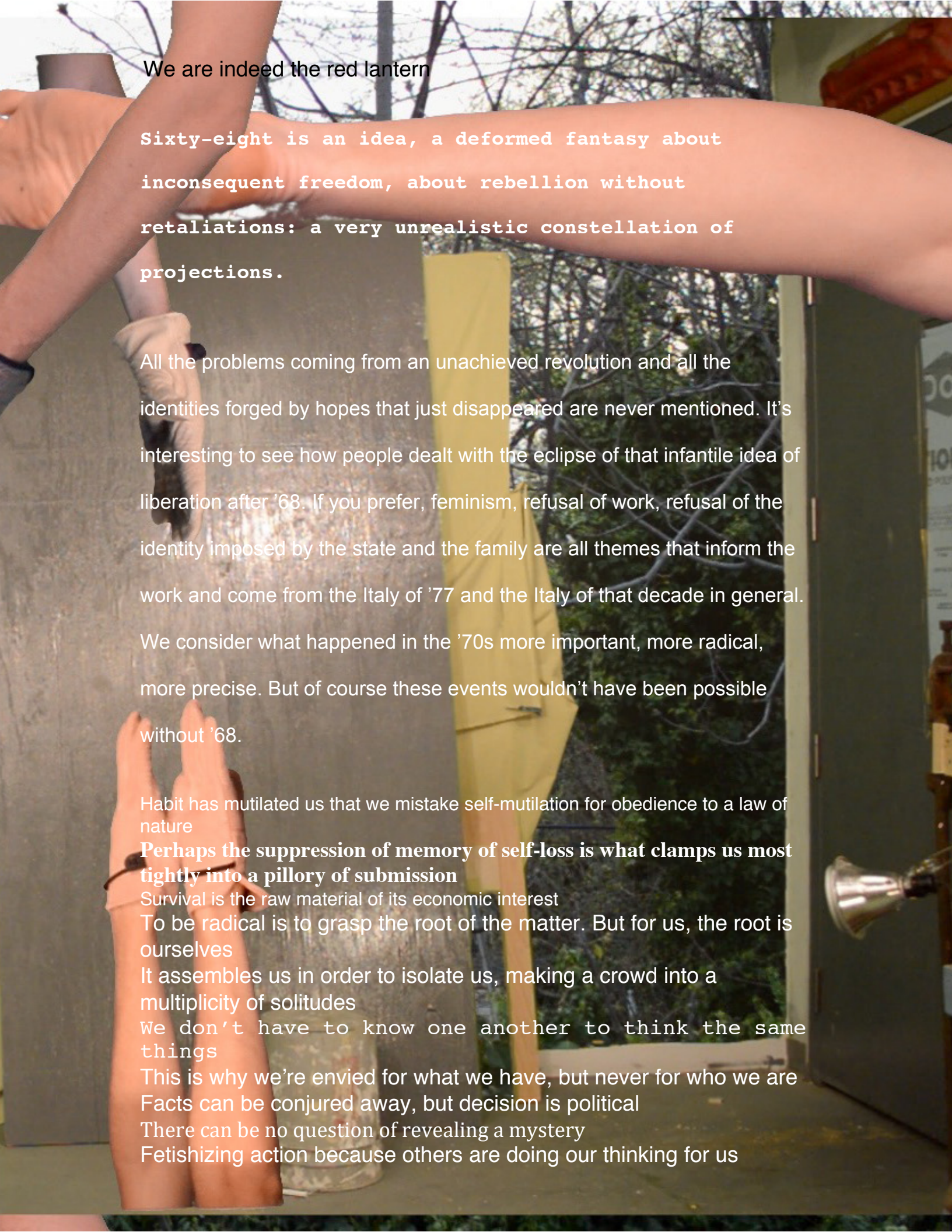
One day, freedom showed its two faces:

We're building a civilized space here

The life we invest in these figures is same life that is taken from us

The feeling that we've been tricked is like a wound that's becoming increasingly infected.

We are a civilization that has survived all the prophecies of its collapse with only a singular stratagem,

A photograph of a person's arm and hand reaching out from the left side of the frame. The hand is open, palm facing forward. In the background, a yellow umbrella is visible, partially open, against a backdrop of bare tree branches and a light sky. The overall scene is somewhat blurry and has a warm, slightly desaturated color palette.

We are indeed the red lantern

Sixty-eight is an idea, a deformed fantasy about
inconsequent freedom, about rebellion without
retaliations: a very unrealistic constellation of
projections.

All the problems coming from an unachieved revolution and all the
identities forged by hopes that just disappeared are never mentioned. It's
interesting to see how people dealt with the eclipse of that infantile idea of
liberation after '68. If you prefer, feminism, refusal of work, refusal of the
identity imposed by the state and the family are all themes that inform the
work and come from the Italy of '77 and the Italy of that decade in general.
We consider what happened in the '70s more important, more radical,
more precise. But of course these events wouldn't have been possible
without '68.

Habit has mutilated us that we mistake self-mutilation for obedience to a law of
nature

**Perhaps the suppression of memory of self-loss is what clamps us most
tightly into a pillory of submission**

Survival is the raw material of its economic interest

To be radical is to grasp the root of the matter. But for us, the root is
ourselves

It assembles us in order to isolate us, making a crowd into a
multiplicity of solitudes

We don't have to know one another to think the same
things

This is why we're envied for what we have, but never for who we are

Facts can be conjured away, but decision is political


There can be no question of revealing a mystery

Fetishizing action because others are doing our thinking for us

The background image shows a city street scene. In the foreground, a person wearing a light-colored jacket and dark pants is walking from right to left. A black metal fence with pointed tops runs across the middle ground. Behind the fence is a grassy area with a statue on a pedestal. In the background, there is a large, multi-story building with many windows and a tower on top. The sky is clear and blue.

Sacrifice has an endless succession of tricks up its sleeve

Inside, outside . . . these are things I don't understand. Who says that? There is no such thing as a defined *outside* of capitalism anymore, and the *inside* is so full of holes that billions leak out of banks just because of some unauthorized trading by an anonymous broker. Maybe in our latitudes the idea of the *outside* was a childish illusion to begin with, fed by the two blocs that used to face each other during the Cold War. But there is a real impossibility of working outside a capitalist system. The idea of working against capitalism was born from the utopia that a different type of economy could exist, run by different laws, where the power wouldn't produce oppression and repression. History has shown that socialist countries cannot make it without a world revolution. However, when those countries are convinced of this, they have already become dictatorships and/or ultracapitalistic countries. Our present situation is highly complex; many pockets of the third world exist inside "rich" countries, and these same rich countries happily practice the new form of colonialism that some people like to call globalization. Social classes have multiplied but everyone inside them is a lot more isolated and structurally competitive.



I produce poems, videos, and objects that look at the remnants of a revolutionary past, and the contemporary malaise that is its aftermath. I employ low budget effects like green screen to look at the constructed nature of my ideologies. I use found text and objects to assemble narratives that mimic the falsity of their surrounds. I use meaningless labor, and my body to ponder my own shortcomings. I write poems in order to consider that we may be the cause of our problems. I make objects that superimpose these ideas, and often reference my past, as a means of implicating myself in the various networks of oppressive practices. I make images that search for freedom, for a wholeness, and resistance from themselves, and their surroundings. I produce in order to create the conversations I want to have, and those I did not know that I wanted to have. In all that I do I come to the viewer with no answers, or preconceived notions, I simply offer the opportunity to come along in a line of questioning, and to see where it goes. I feel the need to use my work to say that confusion can be poetic, a learning state, or a space where multiple truths can be valid. Much of what I do is often contradictory, and inconvenient, and I like it that way.

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