

“That’s the Way I Always Heard it Should Be”

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That's The Way I Always Heard It Should Be

The streets are salty today and my shoes leak use value as I walk up Bloor. No one would advocate salt as a romantic hero, but people sure like to spread it around, any other solution more work or more surface contamination. It's lovely to walk arm in arm with scholarly time, stop at the liquor store, then back down the street where value passes back and forth through the environmental progress reports breeding our sustainabilities. I can adapt to a changing climate too as I pull my scarf up and adjust my long johns. Value is breeding value out here and all this salt is leaking into my shoes.

Lionizing his friend, Engels claims that where some see a solution, Marx sees a problem. One problem is that complaint is a great pleasure and to declare that everything is deserving of critique sometimes seems the declaration of an endless banquet. Brine entire fields until they melt with resentment. How much will wilt or molt the deposits left electable desire in the fracking of possibility? What do I do, faced with a senior scholar who rejects my elementary premise on the grounds that it's exclusionary, to clear my own plates from the table

when I haven't been excused? Is it bad luck or bad practice to spill all over? Sometimes I feel like I need to accept all this value out of politeness even though I've clearly laid out all the variables in a smart looking table above the solution.

Anyway, it started raining on top of this freezing slush because no one in this city can shovel their walks. Like a good Vancouver boy, I've been carrying my umbrella this whole time, but that's only a solution in this weather. If a tree falls in the forest and no one is there, should it self-abolish? Where is the salt in this weather? In the language of valorization? In the gritty frisson of contradiction? I've been twining multiple threads from a friend, bending their elegant complaint around my own worry about whether they were right to light their book on fire when it didn't bring them joy? Along one, there's that sad admission that the book graveyard is just part of the process and, along another, there's the potential embedded in quietly producing art for fifty years before being discovered after one's death as the commodity form.

It has to repeat if its value is to be valorized. It all has to yoke itself into place. Every moment I work on my computer, a piece of its value dissolves

into this poem until, suddenly, the cost of the book you're holding is tied to Apple's stock price. You need an editor because your line breaks are gonna tank the DOW, you jackass! The cost of keeping faith with maintenance is the wait of brick over the wear of revolutionized form. Why replace these bridges when there are better forms? A poet cannot be replaced bit by bit, but only by another poet. Here's the contradiction: poetry builds a whole formal approach adequate to its needs at one point in time, only to have to revolutionize that approach. What gets left behind is just another algorithm reproducing all the shittier structures stabilized by language. That's poetry. Yet still, every time I value a book, I stop and wait to find out its value.

History moves quickly. Five hundred years ago, I couldn't be sitting here reading Alice Notley's *Disobedience*, wondering why it sat unread on my bookshelf for close to a decade. Five hundred years ago, I'd be dead because of my bad eyesight. What matters now that won't in another life? Will we still care about taking something to turn it into something else, often without permission. But now, at the end of the world, what raw material sits on my bookshelf just waiting to be discovered? What new value seeps from the newly

cracked ground? Once, a faculty member told me I was too worried about following the rules when really I was worried about hurting someone else. At what scale do we disobey? I write my landlord an email about the ice on my steps and she sends back a bag of salt. A friend tweets about her partner, unable to leave the house because of icy sidewalks. But that dull duration isn't much compared to the bus that couldn't make it up the hill last week. The scales of value and a set of logistics at work. The book I ordered yesterday arrives on time even if the bus is stuck and my steps are slick and I'm out of breath.

There's tact and then there's the failure to launch your brand into the public sphere. An orchestra conductor need not own the instruments of his orchestra, but maybe I'm just making a lot of unproven assumptions about history. The sun slowly moves across the window of this Starbucks and I reflect back, what, a feeling of loneliness still attached to all this capitalism? When an alarm goes off and I don't care for the profit of loss, does security allow the rest of the world to do as they please? Does the expansion of connectivity challenge the water as it drips off the roof and onto the steps of my personalized factory floor? I walk into the street to think about everything that hails me and only slip on my feelings.