

*"Today I feel: indeterminate monkey monkey CLOP."*

--journal entry, circa 2003, according to memory

*"May my silences become more accurate."*

--Theodore Roethke

To start, facts. I grew up in the rust belt. I invented my own religion.

I'm not sure what you're meant to read from the fact that I'm from a small city in rust belt Ohio. I have always felt most at home when in motion. I was thinking about how this specific city left its mark on me, and what I came up with is this: that I have a soft spot for the most mundane of physical debasements -- nosebleeds, hangnails, balls of earwax. Things too slight, too mild in their grubbiness to be abject. They leave me with a romantic, cheerful pessimism, and one possible sense of a universal.

When I was living in small-city rust belt Ohio I invented my own religion. The Legownian cosmology involved mapping an unseen world over the seen one. Originally, there was a sheer joy in inventing creatures to populate the invented universe. Pobellics, for instance, live in Pobellenia and speak Pobellenian. Later developments focused on how these creatures communicated, mirroring in a fantasy way the perceived limits of human communication. A Pobellic speaks in literal speech bubbles, storing all the letters of its alphabet as physical objects inside itself. They open their mouths, and a bubble full of letters spills out. After you've absorbed their meaning, the bubbles pop and the letters dissolve, leaving wispy traces.

But the inner store of letters is not infinite. I'm sorry, you have used up your week's ration of the letter R. You must speak around it and risk being misunderstood, or else fall into silence.

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Beginning an art practice as a sculptor, my evolution has largely been one of language upending objects. Letting feelings slam sideways into words, and experience condense into aphorisms or slogans. Until silence descends again, like a smooth sheet of pavement, and sculpture pushes its way through the cracks.

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37% of my work is straight-up erotic art (without bodies). Although Mary Reid Kelly says I'm lowballing myself.

I'd like to see an entire political platform constructed around criminalizing faked orgasms.

Or a hard candy with a shell made of poison, its gooey center the antidote. Bring you up to the edge of queasiness, then pull you back.

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In its world-mapping, the more advanced manifestations of Legownianism focused on absence, disappearance, meanings unknown, mysteries unresolved. In high school I began to ask myself, "Whoever decided that 'I see' means 'I know'"?

Every day as I walked home from school, in about the year 1999, I would pass a squat yellow house with one enormous window. The window was filled up with leaves, these massive, marvelous leaves, three feet wide, like leftovers from some prehistoric epoch. They felt ancient and heavy and suffocating. The house stood looking at me with its unblinking cyclops eye. Outside, three crows were pecking at a barren lawn.

I stood a long time, absorbing this scene, and trying to understand what I saw. But what is there to understand, in seeing? What does that even mean? I had a sense of a strangeness beyond perception, of the limits of sight.

I'm interested in the experience of looking at a thing and not understanding it -- hung up on legibility, and what it means for an image to be legible. I like not-understanding in the midst of visual chaos. But in viewing my own work as matter of perception + (ir)rationality, I had ignored the experiential and emotional roots of it.

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I'm never sure if my personality is an obstacle for my work, or a material for me to exploit.

I believe on principle every book must have a nosebleed on page 117.

I believe hot pink is an appropriate choice for every context.

My greatest strength may be [falls apart on closer examination].