

The Hundreds

Lauren Berlant &
Kathleen Stewart



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Kathleen Stewart

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Preludic

We are lucky to have collaborators: never taking creative labor for granted, we give unbounded gratitude to Andrew Causey, Susan Lep-selter, Fred Moten, and Stephen Muecke, who responded to our request to index the book with shrewd and thoughtful creativity. Indexing is the first interpretation of a book's body. So, rather than presuming the standard taxonomic form—which is its own achievement—we gave the task over to writers whose take on things always surprises us, in part because their style of critical thought generates power in twists of voice and craft. We included blank pages at the end of the book for your own experiments in indexing. We did a little more formal playing in the section “Some Things We Thought With.”

Gratitude also for reading, editing, and assembling to Carmen Merport, Ken Wissoker, and the anonymous Duke University Press readers. There were audiences at the University of Chicago, the WTF Affect conference, and the many places where we read solo: thanks for considering the experiment with us. Appreciation to those who gave extensive feedback (for LB, Claudia Rankine, David Simon, Jerry Passannante, Ian Horswill, Keston Sutherland, Carmen Merport; for KS, Jason Pine, Susan Harding, Donna Haraway, Lesley Stern, Ann Cvetkovich, Derek McCormack, Craig Campbell, Joey Russo).

The Austin Public Feelings group was where it all began. It is usual in Public Feelings writing workshops to work with five hundred words on a scene, thing, or situation. Sometimes participants write from a prompt in real time, and others they prepare, but each always reads aloud, the others listening compositionally. In 2012 in Austin, Circe Sturm told us about a one-hundred-word poetics exercise that she'd learned from the estimable Emily Bernard in the context of the “100-Word Collective.” Circe took it to ethnographic writing. We brought it to the concept of the new ordinary we'd been developing, and *The Hundreds* project took off. The process has changed our writing, and much else.

The constraint of the book is that our poems (makings) are exercises in following out the impact of things (words, thoughts, people, objects, ideas, worlds) in hundred-word units or units of hundred multiples. Honoring the contingency of the experiment, there is no introduction up

front but distributed commentary throughout the book, plus reflection in many spots about how the writing attempts to get at a scene or process a hook. We don't want to say much in advance about what kind of event of reading or encounter the book can become. We tried not to provide even this preliminary.

A hundred words isn't a lot. We made individual hundreds, series of hundreds, and very long hundreds but held to the exact. Some separate pieces became joined and reframed, and the theoretical reflections were shaped as hundreds and folded into the analytic, observational, and transferential ways we move. We wrote through the edit. Every edit set off a cascade of word falls, Rubik's Cubes, tropes, infrastructures, genres, rhymes and off-rhymes, tonal flips and half-steps this way and that. But if the number "hundred" had weather effects it was also tricky: every word-processing program has its own way of determining what a word is before the count goes down. "Word count" might as well be the hastily written notes of a conversation recalled a few hours later. We did the best we could to attain consistency within the constraint of one-hundred-word multiples. If you count more or fewer, you're not coming onto an Easter Egg or a secret door leading to a world for the special people or prisoners but just seeing what the counters we used said we had. (600)

I. The Hundreds

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First Things

Every day a friend across the ocean wakes up to suicidal thoughts. Another friend takes a drink to eat clean and another eats a candy bar in bed before washing the sheets, doing laundry naked to ensure soft sleeps. Another friend chants before going out to her analogy lab. Another hires retired people to walk her dogs so that she can get to her trainer. Others, desperate, rush harsh. Many people's kids climb in. Many pets assert the dominion of their drives. There's stretching and the taking of medicine. There's accounting and anxious text checking. There's scanning for bossy emails and preconceptions. Lists get made. For some, there is breakfast. Once spring rolls around there is running before the heat and catching the first shift sitting outside the punk bakery to smoke, drink coffee, and "break each other's balls" before work does what work does. I asked them about this phrase once and sparked a debate about whether it is properly "break" or "bust." Whatever, Professor, they laughed, yanking your chain, busting your balls, don't take it so serious!

Some people sleep in. Other people wake at the sun. Some people walk into the house and see only the order in it. Some people serve other people. Some use the quiet time to do the best things quiet time allows. Some people waste it, which is not the opposite of using it well. When I was little I had a task: to make coffee for the adults, measuring out the Maxwell House, setting the breakfast table. Then I'd leave for school and my early teachers would let me into the teachers' lounge. A little troll doll kid overhearing Allende, Planned Parenthood, and MLK. A confused and sunny face taking in the voices and the concept of concepts, before the day.

(DAVIS 2010; EIGEN 2004; HEJINIAN [1980] 2002; JACOBUS 1995; PEREC [1974] 2008)

Swells

We write to what's becoming palpable in sidelong looks or a consistency of rhythm or tone. Not to drag things back to the land of the little judges but to push the slow-mo button, to wait for what's starting up, to listen up for what's wearing out. We're tripwired by a tendency dilating. We make a pass at a swell in realism, and look for the hook. We back up at the hint of something. We butt in. We try to describe the smell; we trim the fat to pinpoint what seems to be the matter here.

Words sediment next to something laid low, or they detour on a crazed thought-cell taking off. I saw a woman standing on a sidewalk, chain-smoking while she talked to a buff younger man. She was trying to get him to give someone else a break because he means well or he didn't mean it. Maybe her son. "He don't know no better." She was hanging in there, but the whole top half of her black hair was a helmet of white roots. She was using her fast-thinking superpowers to run a gauntlet of phrases and get out quick even though we all knew she was just buying time.

A thought hits at an angle. Subjects are surprised by their own acts. But everyone knows a composition when they see one. A scene can become a thing after only a few repetitions. At the Walmart in New Hampshire, scruffy middle-aged men hang back at the register, letting their elderly mothers pay. The men have a hint of sour and the abject; their mothers are a worn autopilot. Women talk in the aisles about the local hospital; it's incapable; it misreads people, handing out exactly the wrong, killer drug.

(ERICSON 2011; SEDGWICK 1997; SEIGWORTH AND TIESSEN 2012; SERRES 1997; STEVENS [1957] 1990)

Dilations

The Hundreds is an experiment in keeping up with what's going on. Ordinaries appear through encounters with the world, but encounters are not events of knowing, units of anything, revelations of realness, or facts. Sometimes they stage a high-intensity tableau of the way things are or could become; sometimes strangeness raises some dust. This work induces form without relieving the pressure of form. It pushes and follows histories out. It takes in signs and scaffolds. If our way is to notice relations and varieties of impact, we're neither stuffing our pockets with ontology nor denying it: attention and riffing sustain our heuristics.

What draws affect into form is a matter of concern. Form, though, is not the same thing as shape: and a concept extends via the tack words take. Amplified description gets at some quality that sticks like a primary object, a bomb or a floater. The image that comes to mind when you read that (if images come to mind when you read) might not be what we're imagining—and we're likely not imagining the same thing either. Collaboration is a meeting of minds that don't match. Circulation disturbs and creates what's continuous, anchoring you enough in the scene to pull in other things as you go.

“Punctum” ought to mean whatever grabs you into an elsewhere of form. There ought also to be a word like “animum,” meaning what makes an impact so live that its very action shifts around the qualities of things that have and haven't yet been encountered. You can never know what is forgotten or remembered. Even dormancy is a kind of action in relation. Think about watching a dead thing, a thing sleeping, or these words. Think about skimming as a hunger and defense against hunger. Think about the physiological pressure of itching.

(BARTHES [1980] 1981; DELEUZE [1988] 1993; FREUD [1925] 1961; GOFFMAN 1981; MASSUMI 2010; MOTEN 2013; NERSESSIAN AND KRAMNICK 2017; POSMENTIER 2017; SHAVIRO 2016)

Space Junk

Things cross your path like the fireflies you once dreamed of collecting in a jar. Memories come at you like space junk. My sister, Peg, remembers that our mother made us get short haircuts when we were kids because it was easier to take care of. All I know is that when my hair is cut short it's chaotic. I *remember* the humiliation of the high school yearbook picture with the parted hair all poofed up on one side. And that, only because the picture showed up at the bottom of a box forty years later.

Thought is an afterthought.

(A BOX OF PHOTOGRAPHS ONCE TAKEN; SISTER TALK OVER DECADES)

You have to start somewhere

I dreamed I was emptying the blue glass vases we bought for her memorial service at the Elks Lodge. I had learned long ago, following her around like a duck, that cleaning up was how you started a day or the labor of carrying on. But now I was alone in a panicked hollow act and I knew it. The flowers in the vases were brightly surreal, like plastic, but bloated, too, like a swollen Cabbage Patch doll face or a generative bacterial load blooming into a state of indistinction.

Then I was leaving her house. We had to go. We had to leave the little dog behind. I ran back in to put the laundry in the dryer, do something with the trash. I had a second thought about the kitchen. I could repaint the shelves, restock, replace tuna fish and lentils with tomatoes and McIntosh apples. The dream flared up at the judgment call. I panned the perimeter of the tree line, scanned the living room hankering at her jade tree, the blue Sandwich Glass teacups on the windowsills. The front door closed at the other end of the house, its sound precise like something momentarily proving true.

(BLUE GLASS VASES; MCINTOSH APPLES; TOMATOES)

This is vanilla

These prose poems come from a long poetic and noetic collaboration. The project pays attention to the relation of scenes to form, observation to implication, encounters to events, and figuration to what sticks in the mind. To convert an impact into a scene, toprehend objects as movement and matter, retains a scene's status as life in suspension, the way an extract in cooking conveys the active element in a concentrated substance that comes in a small brown bottle. (This is vanilla. *This* is almond.) The elaboration of heuristic form on the move points to pattern, patina, atmosphere: the object world of vestiges that scatters bumpily across the plane of what is also a vibrant tableau. But we get it: your eyes want a place to land on. You want to know what happened when the glances passed or where the train of a dark sentence will go. At different speeds we move around the effects, causes, and situational membranes. As we proceed we sift figurative types and object relations, seeking out the gists of things. Our styles move in proximity to currents. We get distracted sometimes. This is a practice of tightening and loosening the object-scene in hundred-word swatches.

(B. ANDERSON 2009; DIACONU 2006; FONAGY AND TARGET 2007; INGOLD 2015; MANNING 2009; MASSUMI 2010; QUICK 1998)

Handyman

He's helping her make the fox-owl for her genetics class, bending coat hangers into a ribcage, some wings, what kind of neck? *The Voice* comes on, she squeals, papers rustle, a tool crashes. In the living room, he perches on the hearth, his ears pricking on the first sign of a performer's bad pitch or throaty soar. The fox-owl hangs gracefully from his right hand. His fingers make the fox ears. He bleats when I skip the comments from the coaches—their sincerity tracks (“I love seeing you blossom, it does my heart good, me, me, me”) or the long clips of the contestants' life melodramas bloating out of the detail of lost love, a house fire, poverty. Sitting in the living room, fox-owl in hand, all ears, he's a professional singer again, soul trained on the little tip that could drop from a coach's lips.

Sentimentality doesn't describe this noumenal-material suspension, the sudden cushioning density of the summons to an outside chance. Everyone has their own version of the glimpse of a long-forgotten realm of possibility suddenly intruding into the real like a splice of light captured in a photograph. My version of this is a recurring dream in which I'm walking to the back of an old house I forgot existed through room after room, repeating my surprise to rediscover them, some already clean, most still occupied by the detritus, clothes, and toothbrushes of a living that once looked for traction and company here.

A fantasy of a lit life is a worry stone to rub and it's a disturbance, too, even if it feels like comfort-food thought. We're gonzo for a minute. Then we'll see a chipmunk. He'll say it will be OK. I'll say you can get your sweaters out. There'll be four seasons again, and rain.

(DILLARD 1975; LINGIS 2015; *THE VOICE*)

Writing, Life

Once, I needed the perfect time and place to write. I stood in my way like a poison-pen letter to myself. But slowly, under the velocities of worldly reals that came and went, I learned to write in my own skin, like it or not.

Making money, making dinner, taking care of people and stupid shit, getting sick or getting well, getting into and out of what presented, I ended up with a writer's life. I learned to write in thirty-minute episodes on my frail mother's dining room table with a three-year-old playing with old plastic toys underfoot. I took notes on my phone at a doctor's office. I started the day writing in bed even though I had only ten minutes. Over time, I became allergic to the long-winded and roundabout, cutting words down to size. But then I'd become attached to a word fern shooting up in the space between words or I'd be surprised by something energetic already somehow taking off.

Some people have long, lean writing muscles; mine are shortened and taut like a repetitive stress injury turned into a personal tendency. I can write anywhere now but not for long, and it's only in the morning that I have that kind of energy and interest.

Things are usually in my way but that's the thing about writing. For me, it's an arc sparking in the midst of what's already freighted. It knots up on what crosses its path in a bit of bark, sparks on a sliver of rock, turns its back on someone.

For me, writing is necessarily recursive. Every day I start at the beginning, scoring over words like a sculptor chiseling things neither here nor there. Working words is like feeling out the pitch of a note set by an imaginary tuning fork. Pockets of composition can produce worlds as if out of thin air but only because writing is a compression stretched by a torque. When writing fails the relation of word and world, it spins out like car wheels in mud, leaving you stranded and tired of trying.

Deleuze once thought to say we're *for* the world before we're *in* it. Writing throws the world together, pulling the writer in tow into contact with a slackening, a brightening, a muffling. Something saturates with physicality and potential. There is a pond and then the occasional water bug skimming its surface.

(CLOUGH 2000B; DELEUZE 1986; DELEUZE AND GUATTARI 1987; KUSSEROW 2017; RAFFLES 2011, 2012)

Red Bull Diaries

MONDAY

To add insult to critical injury it was a chrome cylinder of diet Red Bull Zero that closed my throat despite its promise to lubricate the suicidation drive I call work. Even if it's just a job, what is just? It never releases, ever. The snake replaces the mole, the body converts to a trip wire for talk, and the bargaining is desperate freedom, which is to say, whatever, motherfuckers! I'm your teacher and I showed up. This week's *wah wah wah* translates as "use the object!" which is a spell to provoke a rhythm. The university is a harbor for Cartesian OCDers testing out their desires for impact.

TUESDAY

I was a good close reader as a child. At eight I made money for my mom at the track because I didn't rely on instinct, whatever the hell that is to a girl who'd had only a minute to look around before shaking her head purse-lipped. Ply me with a Shirley Temple and I'll tell you where to place your bets. Now I dope an hour before any event, risking a shut throat to keep me on top of the mouth where I promised *someone* to be. My heart is at stake—but fuck a sticky heart when there's a shot at a good long talk between a you and me.

WEDNESDAY

I and another loaf-thighed white woman are writing midafternoon in a bar. I don't know what her grimace is about, but I am imitating a friend who writes like her, hunched over a notebook with a cloudy sake to maintain an ironic line on sovereignty. This morning I awoke on my side in the dark and wrote with my thumbs for a few hours, breasts hanging clear of the open shirt. The ginger cat climbed onto my hip. Sometimes work is the most important thing, and sometimes it's like walking into a beautiful room and grinning at the weather. What would it mean to have that thought? Rain, snow, wind, sun.

THURSDAY (FOR SIANNE NGAI)

I sipped vodka with club soda and a twist and a ginger kombucha too because you told me that the combo produces frenzy like a speed high I'd gladly grind my teeth into niblets for. It is Thursday and everyone is taking things a little personally. A friend is having a tube slid up her thigh to fix a torn heart and another is sliding a tube through his nose to fix a distended gut. The adorable kids wearing Vans right near me are taking belly selfies and using phrases like "throw a blanket over it" to get the subject changed. I am trying so very hard to want the world I have in front of me to want. My heart is beating so fast that I swear I could beat the shit out of something quite grand with it. On Skype you miss the breakthrough dreaming that follows a series of sleepless nights: there's too much flicker and echo to grasp the whole psychotic show.

FRIDAY

Here's a story:

Once upon a time a dog wandering on the dirt took a shit that turned out to be a big baby crying from despair at its uselessness, and even though we knew that by the end everything would be OK because the shit would turn into compost, it was sad. These days even a shit has to enter the workforce. Even a flower petal is obliged to produce something. I have a darkish mind; I need half a break. There is no getting around the object, or unsaying a thing, or unseeing what floats by or sets for a spell.

("EVERYTHING IS GONNA BE ALRIGHT"; HOBBS [1651] 1991; HOMER 2016;
KWON 2004; LAPLANCHE 1999; LINEBAUGH 2008; PEANUTS; SHIRLEY TEMPLE;
WINNICOTT [1971] 1982)

As if

Thought images now touch matter as a matter of course. Composites of money, manipulation, and impact take on the cohesion of a milieu or a habit as if they're worlds to live in or want. Built environments have gone live in an all-sensory surround. Objects, deserted by the big baby subject who wants everything but can't leave itself alone, rise up like the undead; they raise a hair or stand proud in their texture like the nap of corduroy. Even the shape of things has to be defended. We want people to ask *what if*, but many are already full throttle into *as if*. Anything can seem like (or be) a game. An event is a loss of footing; the nightly news is an end times shoot barely covered by the gauze of the public eye.

Everyone's a sensitive now. Someone looks at you, a little slip shows up, you claim some way of living. Preppers have turned their apartments into survivalist storage units; they dream of living in a bullet-proof railroad car. Their daily leisure-time practices—canning food, shooting practice, more food canning, scouting for getaway land, shooting, fooding, scanning—are a way of breathing, as in take a breath. But now half of the top 1 percent are Preppers too. They know the instability rampaging inequality brings, that the food supply will go down with GPS, and finance with the internet, so they give to progressive causes but also stockpile gold, cryptocurrency, and real estate in New Zealand or a luxury condo in a nuclear-hardened underground missile silo tricked out with solar air filters, a tank to pick up owners in a four-hundred-mile radius, tilapia farms, a sniper roost. They get Lasik surgery because there won't be replacement contact lenses or glasses. They'll prevent cliques by rotating chores.

(THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT; THE NAP OF CORDUROY; OSNOS 2017; PREPPERS)

Checked out OK

Police reports in small-town western Massachusetts newspapers note residents' suspicions . . . a child reported home alone at the Brook Estates turns out to be an adult and OK . . . a man seen looking into car windows on Spring Street is a blind man just waiting for a bus. . . . A dangerous-looking animal moving about on a man's property is a black plastic trash bag blowing in the wind . . . threatening graffiti on the lawn is markings left by phone company employees warning of gas lines.

The precisions of what could be unfolding are a trail of bread crumbs opening onto unknown registers. There are four reports of men crawling in the middle of the road; one man seemed to be licking the road, another man seemed to be licking door locks on apartments on North Pleasant Street. A human hand in the middle of the road was just a rubber glove, a blood-soaked glove on Elm, just a pink glove. But the patterns of licking and hands in roads remain. Women report intruders who leave alien urine in their toilets, eat bananas, take four 60-watt lightbulbs, or four boxes of cranberry bread mix. Or a favorite white bowl is cracked.

A composition regrounds thought in a vivid pragmatics. A rhythm interrupted, or the shoot of an affect, are events in the variegated poiesis of a world riven by experiments. It matters that something was yellow, not red, that it passed in a blur, or something moaned. A bit of social debris, a scattering of material-aesthetic forms taken up or left to languish like litter are an archive of objects of attention. Regleaning them is a thought practice that needs materials to think with more than it needs the attitude-skill of debunking.

Thought can wait to feel out the recomposition of a tendon snapping back.

(CLOUGH 2000A; ERICSON 2013; FOUR BOXES OF CRANBERRY BREAD MIX; STENGERS, MASSUMI, AND MANNING 2009)

Graduation Speech, 2016

During the last four years, people threw sex to the crocodiles. People smashed people into trees. People got fried, fired on, fired. People hated each other's likes. People wore plaid like their mothers' mothers, and put aviator glasses on dogs. On the chance that something good might happen, people called each other from cars.

We opened the window and dropped things out. There was more dancing than singing. We learned about uprisings but not about puns, because puns aren't considered knowledge. Meanwhile a local family was so poor it lived off cigarettes and apples. Then the black dad was beaten with arms like chains. Is scar tissue live or dead? Then the white perps appeared on the news stiff and proper in suits. What do you do with parents and nations once you've decided not to kill them back? Once you stay close to love, despite all the evidence?

Bearing angry beards and radical thinness, stop apologizing for wanting to live speculatively. While your hair's streaked and sharply undercut, please forgive your own desperate debt. Find the hole in every room; be queer as fuck. If not, you'll buy T-shirts to wear at the gym asserting variations on "there are no words."

It might be worth saying that the next phase pulses. We've done a lot of coasting in our life. We've coasted more than lived. The yogurt, the potatoes, the peanuts and bananas. If we're lucky, and only if we're lucky, we'll get to do more of that, more not paying attention and being forgiven for mistakes we could have avoided. But the world isn't made for most of the people who make value in it: rebegin there. That includes us. All the kissing and commenting and ridiculous eating to keep things going distract us: the exceptional cruelty too.

(CULLER 1988; FACEBOOK; INSTAGRAM; OCCUPY; STRIKE DEBT!;
WALLACE [2005] 2009; YUMMLY)

The New Ordinary

The new ordinary is a collective search engine, not a grammar. A table of elements flashes up erratically, throwing up a bit of atmosphere or a practice you may or may not take to. There are receptivity genres and they have consequences. In the uncanny mode, something surfaces eccentrically like the message of a Magic 8 Ball whose mystery meaning spurs thought's drift in search of the serious, or just drifts. In the slow-learning mode you start to get into a musical genre, then you start to notice all the insider references, or your foot starts to tap. There's always the question of whether others notice and what they know.

Things land on you, ending up in a facial tic or passing fast, a one-time-only smirk. The impacts on your body are seeds for a worlding. A phrase in circulation becomes your new jumping-off point. Or you find yourself suspended in a partially compelling form of eye contact, or a tendency to warm up to strangers that goes only so far. Some things etch into you like tree sap baked onto a windshield. Everyone puts in petunias on Memorial Day or grief over killed kids is the thing that has to be handled now. Identities are the expressivities of a situation—capacious performances and a work that has to be done.

The everyday is not a conceptual burial ground drumming things out of thought. More like an energy circuit scoring over all the incipient tendencies in a scene and what's actively taking form. Some people find methods of living out whatever's happening, some only sometimes, others just pace and chafe at the imposition. Everyone's got an angle. Some practice some kind of appetite control, others go with the flow as if it's just interesting to see what will happen next.

(A PHRASE IN CIRCULATION; KILLED KIDS; MAGIC 8 BALL; SEARCH ENGINES)

Contact Sheet

It is only evidence that she's been somewhere at the same time as her camera's been there. There's a pig in a doorway, a street, a man from behind. There are street crowds sweating and a glaring woman gesturing although she's alone. The place seems akimbo, as though wildly drawn by a child's tight fist. The problem of a book is that it is fixed. But "archive" points to a strewn thing scattered and prey to inattention, let alone winds and kicks. Will we want to know that insurgents at the skirmish wore brightly colored jeans? We can't forecast all of the archives into which this will slot, each according to its palate.

The contact sheet is a record of no memory. The images track lens cruising that hits a thick. Some details point elsewhere. Shoes are worn in many senses. It's all side effects, clattering with a few pricking moments. Sometimes it's blurry when the camera swerves or overfocuses. It's hard not to get vitalist about it; hard not to melodramatize; hard too not to slice the world into precious still lifes on a string. They were fighting with their fingernails, but there was no event? The revolutionary ordinary is contact and action inducing the speculative present.

The body is a contact sheet with a nervous system.

That girl in profile smiles and covers her lower lip with her teeth, which in the next frame emerge all stained and mottled, as though she had kissed herself with blood. Groups of people look around for prey or try not to be prey. There is an image of grinning at nothing you can be sure of. But not all the untimely is uncanny. Because presence isn't overpresence it can sit there like a meal's full feeling. To witness struggle is not always to be one with suffering.

You want to get the atmosphere. The caption states, "Someone was smoking pot." You can't help but breathe deeply while reading that phrase, wanting to inhale the head of the world. Doesn't revolt require lubrication and interruption—isn't that why it's sexy? RETURN THE WORLD TO

THE RAW. CHOOSE YOUR LAVA. WHEN YOU RUB SOMETHING ROUGH ON WHAT'S ROUGH IT GETS SMOOTHER. Politics moves across the surface like sex with its rush-hour friction and minor pulsation. If you skim the sheet—and there's no choice—you've only just arrived at its gist.

(BOLAÑO 2012; CADAVA AND CORTÉS-ROCCA 2006; MARX AND ENGELS [1848, 1888] 2008; MEISELAS 2015; TAUSSIG 1992; TAYLOR 2014)

The Things We Think With

Our citations are dilations, not just memories we have fidelity to. We meant for this text to appear like *A Lover's Discourse*, its stories couched in cascading cites. But Barthes could animate whole worlds with the word "Goethe," whereas our referential matter is too singular, various, and plenty. So the performance called format takes another route here, windup parentheses holding the things we think with: encounters, a word, a world, a wrinkle in the neighborhood of what happened, and reading we wouldn't shake if we could. Even if some cites look like direct sources, all things are indirect sources, in truth. Our ekphrasis is brash, approximate, edited, and feeling its way around. It's ordinary writing.

Not just sources: all things are indirect. We trained to be patient for implication and context. Food arrives: is it turned? Threats to confidence appear to appear. We overhear unruly talk that pulls us back. People *could* say, "We got remediated today: I feel so close to you now." *The Hundreds* crisps context and extends scenes. Its tropes are never mere. There is location, skin, convergence, and the fallout of failing numbness. The form knowledge takes involves limited reception. There is spareness and filling in.

(BARTHES [1977] 1978; W. J. T. MITCHELL, FORTHCOMING)