“Lost and Found”
A Collection of Poetry and Ephemera
in the Spirit of
Hypertext and Multimedia Literature

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Preface

I’m looking at the English SIP handbook right now, and it looks like it’s been about a year since I first proposed this SIP. Back then pretty much the only idea I had for it was that I wanted it to be about loss, because that was and continues to be something I grapple with on a day-to-day basis, and that I wanted it to be in the spirit of Shanna Salinas’s “Hypertext and Multimedia Literature” class. I also knew I wanted it to be largely a poetry-based project, chiefly because my poetry was and is much more refined than my prose. I didn’t have much more than that to go on.

I should probably explain a bit about “Hypertext and Multimedia Literature” in case the reader hasn’t been fortunate enough to take that class. I enrolled in that class on the recommendation of Ryan Fong, who noticed how thoroughly I enjoyed some of the more metatextual works in his class “RTW: Beyond Realism”; in particular the book How to Live Safely in a Science Fictional Universe by Charles Yu tickled my fancy. I’ve had an affinity for meta narratives all my life, probably going back to The Monster at the End of this Book written by Jon Stone and starring Sesame Street’s Grover, wherein the lovable, furry old muppet repeatedly attempts to prevent the reader from reaching the end of the book for fear of the titular monster, only for it to be revealed that said monster was Grover all along.

But I digress. I thought How to Live Safely was pretty mind-bending when I was in RTW, but “Hypertext and Multimedia Literature” is on a whole other level. It starts out mostly focused on the mostly web-based, somewhat nebulous world of Hypertext. We read some pretty dense texts on the subject such as N. Katherine Hayles’s “Electronic Literature: What Is It?” and sections from Espen J. Aarseth’s Cybertext: Perspectives on Ergodic Literature before diving
into the Hypertext proper (although truth be told: I am pretty hopeless at academia so pretty
much basically any writing with some modicum of academic rigor seems dense to me.
Nevertheless, I do think some of the stuff we read in Hypertext and Multimedia Literature is
amongst the most difficult stuff I’ve ever read). One such work we looked at that stands out in
my memory to this day is Shelley Jackson’s *my body — a Wunderkammer*. You go to the website
and are presented with a self-portrait of the artist in the nude, with various parts of her body
singled out and labeled. Clicking on one of the parts brings you to a piece of writing related to it.
Each piece of writing is littered with hyperlinks to other pieces of writing. If memory serves,
some pieces of writing are only accessible via these hyperlinks, and not through the links on the
body portrait itself, but I could be mistaken.

Before long we moved from the digital realm on to physical books that exist in the real
world (although *Between Page and Screen* by Amaranth Borsuk and Brad Bouse would blur this
line significantly— the physical book contains only inscrutable symbols, but going to the book’s
website, granting it access to your webcam, and holding the symbols up to the camera reveal the
book’s poems, projected into the space surrounding the book as a form of augmented reality).

The first such book we tackled was Mark Z. Danielewski’s *House of Leaves*, which
employs a mind-boggling array of techniques ranging from highly unconventional typography to
collage to coded messages in order to tell a rich and affecting story with at least 3 or 4
intermingling narrative layers.

The next book we read was Salvador Plascencia’s *The People of Paper*, which features its
own author as the antagonist at war with his fictional creations, who are rebelling against him for
filling their lives with sadness. It has large swathes of blacked-out text and the occasional
drawing. It sometimes has text arranged in columns and sometimes not. Outwardly it appears to
be one of the least complicated works we looked at but in reality it’s probably the most
complicated and possibly the smartest book we read. It’s just much more subtle about its
cleverness. I don’t think I got it at first. I’m not sure I totally get it yet. It’s excellent.

After Between Page and Screen we “read” Chopsticks, by Jessica Anthony and Rodrigo
Corral. I say “read” because Chopsticks is mostly pictures. It uses photographs and documents of
everyday objects to tell a love story with a twist.

After Chopsticks we read Nox, a poetry collection of sorts that’s a facsimile of a physical
object that poet and translator Anne Carson created as an epitaph for her late estranged brother.
The thing we read is a photocopy of the real thing, complete with repeated pages in order to get
inserted objects such as folded-up letters and telegrams from the original from multiple angles.
The copy is printed on one long sheet of paper, folded so that it “accordions” out, but can be read
basically as a normal book. This is the work I drew the most direct influence from in my SIP, but
more on that later.

After Nox we read S., by J.J. Abrams and Doug Dorst. You slide the book out of its box to
reveal a stolen library copy of the book Ship of Theseus by V.M. Straka. The book and the author
are fictional. Within the margins of Ship of Theseus is the story of two college students who
communicate by passing the book back and forth and writing each other notes on its pages. The
book even includes actual physical inserts of objects exchanged by the students— handwritten
letters, copies of old telegrams, postcards, a decoder wheel, even a map of the university’s
maintenance tunnels scribbled on a napkin. They uncover a conspiracy and fall in love. Ship of
Theseus contains coded messages, but our marginal narrators are kind enough to decode them for
you if you don’t have the patience to do it yourself. S. is an amazing read, and it makes a great
gift to book, especially for book-lovers.

All of these books together ask the following questions: What is literature? What is a
story? What is meaning? What even is “books”? And they ask them in such an engaging and
intricate way that they’d be fascinating reads even outside the context of a class devoted to them.
But within that context they’re way, way better. The kinds of in-depth class discussions we’d
have are like nothing else I’d experienced before or since. The student presentations were always
interesting and illuminating. The class literally changed the way I look at books, stories, life, and
the world. Very few classes can make the same claim— certainly not to the same degree and
magnitude. I don’t think I’d be who I am today if I hadn’t taken this class, and I’d recommend it
to absolutely anybody.

Given my passion for the subject matter, I think it’s pretty clear why it was so important
to me that my SIP be in the same vein. The most direct influence I took was from Nox. It
provided a good model for using Hypertext and Multimedia techniques in conjunction with
poetry in a way that didn’t require a level of computer wizardry that I simply didn’t have. I don’t
really have any idea how you’d go about making something like House of Leaves, and anyway I
didn’t have the time or space to make something that big and intricate. So I decided to follow
Anne Carson’s example and create a physical object as a vehicle for my poems and other
ephemera. I still drew some influence from some of the other books I mentioned above, but not
to the extent that I did Nox.

But before I could about creating this object, I had to write the poems. As an overarching
theme I settled on “loss.” When I first had the initial inklings of this idea, I think the only real
loss I’d suffered was being dumped (this actually happened while we were reading S. I didn’t deal with it super well, but S. definitely helped). I was also contending on and off with suicidal thoughts (something I still have to manage). Not long after I submitted the preliminary proposal for this SIP, the house I was living in suffered a fire that rendered it inhospitable. As I write this, my favorite movie theater and former workplace is shutting down (this development was too recent to write poems about for inclusion in the finished product but I did include a small tribute at the back). Losing things is the only constant in life. That’s kind of funny, in a way.

The organization of the collection emerged kind of organically. The poems I ended up with could basically be sorted into one of three categories: poems that dealt with the breakup, poems that dealt with the fire, and poems that dealt with looking forward to the future in spite of loss (although some poems about miscellaneous other biographical details are also sprinkled throughout the collection). Because the breakup happened in the dead of winter, I titled that section “Lost in the Snow.” The next section, dealing with the fire, was titled “Lost in the Fire.” The section where I try to turn things a little more optimistic (despite the dismal election results) I called “Found.” The first title I came up with for the project overall was “Paradise Lost and Found” but I thought that was too grandiose a title. So I dropped the word “paradise” and had pretty much the perfect title.

The general lack of traditional form in the poems of this collection was a reflexive reaction to the poems I generated in “Advanced Poetry Workshop.” One of the parameters I’d set for myself in that class was to write every poem in a different form. So by the time I got to this collection I was sick to death of form and just wrote however I felt was appropriate. Sticking so strictly to form in Advanced really helped me with this, though. Adhering so strictly to whatever
rules you’ve imposed on yourself by way of form forces you to think very carefully about how you choose your words and build and break your lines for maximum impact. By freeing myself from the restrictions of form I was able to more freely explore the space of the page while still ending up with a precisely crafted product that deceptively appears to have simply “happened.”

These poems were also an exercise in voice. One thing I pretty consistently get praised for in writing workshops is my distinctive voice. People can generally tell whether I’ve written something without even having to see my name. I had to take this natural affinity and hone it into a more controlled tone for the subject matter— one of my worst writing habits is constantly trying to inject humor just to keep myself interested. Which is not to say that the Lost & Found poems are humorless; just that they are less overtly funny than the kind of stuff I write off the cuff and have a little bit more of a wry tone than my natural voice. Some poems were cut because they were just too damn depressing— and I left in at least two poems about contemplating suicide, and one about a murder, if that gives you any idea how dark the stuff on the cutting room floor might be.

Even as I wrote poems, I worked on materials I would need for the next phase of my project. I took photographs of the Kalamazoo College campus and the surrounding area and the nearby cemetery (a frequent subject of these poems) and worked on composing playlists (the cue I took from Chopsticks), although I would be fine-tuning these playlists until the very end of the project.

Once the poems were written and put into some sort of order, I could begin to craft the object that would contain them. I picked up a Moleskine notebook from Barnes and Noble (the notebook itself inspired a poem— the first page of it said “in case of loss, pleas return to: / as a
reward: $” and this was too perfect for my theme to just leave it alone). I had my photographs printed at Walgreen’s. I made copies of things I wanted to include snippets of but not destroy—namely, and old love note from my ex and some pages from a couple of my favorite comics (plus a quote from S. that was particularly meaningful to me in the wake of my breakup). I created the cover image in GIMP, a free and open-source version of Photoshop. The base image is the photo I took of my house on fire. I printed it out and affixed it to the cover of the notebook with double-sided tape. Once I figured out how I wanted the extra materials arranged relative to the poems, it was simply a matter of gluing it all in place. Unlike the loose ephemera of S., my supplemental materials can’t be moved about or lost (for the most part—the back of the book has a few loose things on it, but that’s different, as will become apparent). But my project only took up the first sixty or so pages of the notebook—what to do with the rest of it?

Why, hollow it out of course. This past summer I picked up hollowing out books as a minor hobby. It’s kind of a lengthy, messy, mind-numbing task, but it’s not unrewarding. It basically involves gluing the pages together by their edges and then cutting out the middles with an X-ACTO knife. There’s more to it than that, but I’m not going to get into that here. If you’re really interested I highly recommend Heather Rivers’s tutorial on the subject. That’s how I learned. It should be the first thing that comes up if you google “how to hollow out a book,” which is what I did. I filled the hollow part of the notebook with pennies, scraps of the love note that I didn’t use (I cut it apart and rearranged the words into a poem, but there were a lot of words I had to leave out for largely grammatical reasons), a button Shanna gave me, a pin I picked up at the historical Alamo in Texas (which I wore during my last days of employment at the Alamo Drafthouse Cinema), and a pair of keys left over from the old house. One of the keys
is broken. These were pretty much the only things small enough to fit in the hollow part of the
notebook. But by filling the back of my book with these mostly-real (the note was a photocopy)
partly-discarded objects I turned the book into a sort of literal lost and found.

Once this was done, there was one more thing I had to do: put it up on Tumblr. I scanned
it page by page. I had to upload the pages in reverse order so that they appear in the correct order
when the blog is viewed. There were a couple of reasons uploading to Tumblr was a necessary
step: first of all, this thing I made was unwieldy and hard to read. The pages with photographs
glued to them are much stiffer than the other pages. You have to be careful not to spill anything
out of the back. It doesn’t really close properly. I couldn’t turn this thing in and expect it to come
out the same. Second, the playlists only exist in the physical object as pieces of paper. But on the
Tumblr I included links to playlists I made on YouTube with the relevant pages. That way,
anybody can listen to the music I picked to go along with each part. The Tumblr is probably the
ideal way to experience this thing. You miss out on some of the texture of the real thing, but in
some ways I think that makes the object more special. I think only my family have really gotten
to take a good look at it. And they’re probably the only ones who ever will, because this thing
would be basically impossible to publish. It’s a truly unique piece of work. Most of the people
who ever get to know it will only be able to do so through a facsimile of the real thing. The
Tumblr of my SIP can be found at lostandfoundsip.tumblr.com

As a capstone project, “Lost & Found” pretty accurately captures almost all of my
experiences here at Kalamazoo College. Its form embodies some of the most important classes
I’ve taken— namely the poetry workshops and Hypertext and Multimedia Literature. I also took
a lot of theatre classes— nearly enough for a minor. Fundamentals of Acting, which I was lucky
enough to take with Todd Espeland in the first quarter of my first year at K, was another one of those classes that changed the way I looked myself and the world in a major way. This gets a nod in the poem “To State the Obvious,” where I wax philosophical about the difference between lying and acting. Speaking of which, I took a couple of philosophy classes. These are referenced mainly by “Imagine Sisyphus Happy” which is about Camus’s ideas about the absurdity of life and finding a reason not to commit suicide. The subject matter of the poems, of course, covers the personal stuff I was going through at the time while all of this school stuff happened. If the entirety of my experience at Kalamazoo College could be expressed in a physical object, this would be it. And working on it helped me understand that loss isn’t just a part of life— it’s the essence of living. And it helped me be ok with that. This project allowed me to put my past to bed. Now I just have to get on with my future.

Acknowledgements: Thanks to Diane Seuss, not only for her guiding hand on this project but throughout my career at Kalamazoo College. I don’t know if I would have made it through this thing without you, Di, and for that I’m eternally grateful. Thanks to Ryan Fong for recommending I take Hypertext and Multimedia literature, and extra-special thanks to Shanna Salinas for teaching it and taking a look at my SIP while it was still in progress and reassuring me I was on the right track. And for giving me that button. Thanks to Sara McKinney. This project wouldn’t have been possible without you, but it wouldn’t have been possible with you, either.
You should smile more. Wider.

As a reward, enjoy your eternal happiness.

This is what happy feels like.

You are happy.

If nothing, congratulations!

What’s wrong with you?

The problem may be internal.

Is this document work,

from the available materials.

Try and make one

If no such place exists,

you were truly happy.

The last place

please return to

In case of loss,
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dessert</th>
<th>Fruit of Speech</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Call On Your Name</td>
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<td>My Chemical Romance</td>
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<td>The Black Parade</td>
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<td>Distractions</td>
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<td>Transmisssion Epiphanies Blues</td>
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<td>Black Like Our Sleeves</td>
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<td>Go to Hell for Heaven's Sake</td>
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<td>Free Time to Your Game</td>
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<td>The Poet and Camp of Breathing</td>
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<td>Touch Me Now</td>
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<td>Lies (I Leave One to Know One)</td>
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<td>Stupid - Single</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Single (E)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Waiting Life and Time Vol. 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lost in the Snow
If only you could
or how you long to do it again
for that My Chemical Romance was playing,
than I gave you a sick semi-erotic thrill.
You won't say

It hurt.
Yes, you'll say.

He how many times you'll have to answer the question, 'Did it hurt?'
It's just one of those things you don't think about until it happens.
I'm still not even a year after I submitted myself
Still, it shocked me to see the place closed.

This place can reasonably be expected to last
next to the used CD shop and the coin exchange.
Certainly longer than the tattoo place

through the skin for a lifetime, if not longer.
The scent of the needle seems an echo
I guess that's probably true of most tattoos.

This tattoo on my chest proved more permanent
3rd Coast
On my childhood bed
On in the churchyard. On the pike,
They wouldn't mind if we played here.
They'd want us to poke fun at their gravestones.
The dead would want us to have a good time.

Cemetery Poem

It's your best friend. It says it feels the same way, and
If it's ok to leave. Later. On the way home with this object. You tell it
For you, and before the party even really begins you ask the object

Invited you to this party. You don't normally go to

The object of your desire

 Comes closer.
of my memory:
I run them ragged through the halls,
Every night I exercise these demons,
contemplated by time and torment.
Filled with treasurable keepsakes,
My brain is a haunted house.

Haunted House

Today is the 85th of an anniversary.

the kind of darkness that lends you no sense of space.
or more missing from my face.
and it's either a million miles away.
It's pitch black, wherever it is.
At least I think that's the night sky.
through the ceiling, blit no moon or stars.
and you can see the night sky.
but does not close.
It has a door which looks.
This is the room where I died.
Do you remember this place?

Memorial Day
You are an angel. Beware of those who collect feathers.

The doctors can't explain it.

This happens after every meal because you taste your breath instead again.

Hold it in—maybe you can make it to a bathroom.

If you try to keep it in, you'll vomit for sure.

If you let it all out, you might not actually know up.

A steady stream points from your mouth.

The first definite sign is the drool.

In your throat or in your stomach?

You're not sure where the feeling starts.
How to Hollow Out A Book

Step 1: Choose your victim. Go down to the used book shop or a thrift store, and just pick one that looks interesting.

Step 2: Do NOT read it. It will be too painful if you know your enemy.

Step 3: Glue the pages together by their edges. It will take a while to dry.

Step 4: Slice the insides out with a razor. It will not be easy. There will be blood and there will be ink. Collect the remains in a pile to be disposed of later.

Step 5: Hide your secrets inside. If you don't have any secrets, substitute apparently unsearched watching your pool into the forest, possibly forevermore, leaving me stuck.

The scar issue will heal my wounds that heal clean.

Hearts and Minds:)

You've got the heart of a wild animal.
I've got a mind like a steel trap.

These aren't wounds that heal clean.
Kissing is a conversation. Listen and respond.

That's up for the two of you to decide.

Crows? Trashy? Stupid? Beautiful?

Hickies are a point of connection.

without breaking the skin.

Scratch just enough to leave a mark.

Just let her know you're there.

rather than hard.

Your bite should be sharp.

Lessons in Savagery

Don't blink.

and find yourself in there gazing back.

Cage into those abyssal eyes.

Feel in love with a monster.

Give a monster a hug.

with their horns and heir phallic ores.

Defend them from the seeking hordes.

Instead, believe them.
Who knows what you’re thinking anymore?

Perhaps you’d be proud of me for that.

But a coin purse I bought myself.

I don’t use the coin bank you bought me.

Now I need pennies for my job and I pick them off the ground.

I wasn’t worth it to me to keep them around.

Even though I knew how much one was worth.

I couldn’t see the value in a penny back then.

Change
What has a man of God, if not his virtue? What, then, must be defend most of all? I cannot risk eternal damnation for the sake of entertaining your womanly whims, Kat. You understand. That time by the side of the road was really too much. It's lucky this lake is nearby.

Saint Coemgen

Hold still, now. Don't struggle. Let the water take you. Feel your skin go cold. Know that your death secures my afterlife. Lord knows I do.

So, you take a few... And the next day you take a few more... Then you re-assess your inventory and find you're a pill short of suicide.

Then you wait for the withdrawal to hit.

So you make your stash last a couple weeks. And even had a drink. Why not live a little at the end of your life?

After all, you've been a good boy your whole life—and you have plenty more than that, so you take a few for fun.
Some people are liars. They willfully deceive others for personal gain and

They lie about their own and don't look back.

Your best self is just within of everything. It's not said or done so a lie.

The best thing is just within of everything. It's not said or done so a lie.

That is, until you realize they're a

Probabilistically don't even know themselves. They'll always be a

Lie. On what sort of person they actually are (the) I'm set of lures

So often so deeply entrenched in their various actions that it's impossible

Some people are liars. They willfully deceive others for personal gain and

To share the obvious,

It's obvious, or "phony" aren't going to "tell". They're just bad actors.

"dishonest"... of people aren't being "real". They're just bad actors.

In and of themselves because they think they're more honest and human decency are

That's how you act. All the world's a stage, and all those people are not

Who are others is believe you are, which kind of person do you want you to be?

You're probably doing it right now. What kind of person do you want

Even when they're alone, without even realizing what they're doing.

I'm just not a difference between lying and acting. Lying to share the obvious.

The object of your desire

Isn't an object in all but a living, breathing person.
Far away graves
and walks through
he walks during Sunday
and the darkest matter
with weird feelings
most nights
the boy leaves me up
the boy sans me
abellissa
The bay sans me
interesting things
The bay says no
Dear Mrs. Fortune,

I'm writing this letter even though I know it won't reach you. Oh, it may.

The boy who sits at windmills

Sincerely,

The best. I hope I never see you again. Even though I know I will change and let me love you again. If you won't work, but there's probably no
dread and let me love you again. If you won't work, but there's probably no
understand somehow the pain you're causing me, you'll take up your old
good, ostensible, but with the understanding that if you do read it and do
real, but she would have understood it. I'm writing this letter for my own
real, but she would have understood it. I'm writing this letter for my own

I'm writing this letter even though I know it won't reach you. Oh, it may.

As I've said, it's good to believe

Another thing entirely.

That our efforts are utterly to

I'm writing this letter even though I know it won't reach you. Oh, it may.

As I've said, it's good to believe

Another thing entirely.

That our efforts are utterly to

Nothing is wrong. So you were.

A few words, a few

Nothing is wrong. So you were.

A few words, a few

Sensation across the

A few words, a few

Sensation across the

As I've said, it's good to believe

Another thing entirely.

That our efforts are utterly to

I'm writing this letter even though I know it won't reach you. Oh, it may.

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Another thing entirely.

That our efforts are utterly to


two minutes later the whole house would be gone.

You find out if you had called 911

There's no story.

You stand outside bunched in a cold April shower and watch your home go

There is a fire in your kitchen. Do you have a fire extinguisher? Does it
until your palms become flippable.
If you cannot read your instructions, repeat this process.
on how to deal with your specific emergency.
Any precautions should spell out instructions.
When you are finished crying, open your hands.

It will be longer than you expect.
The next time you cry,
Gather all the pieces together.
and make sure every shard is gathered into the reshelving arrangements.
When that's done, whisper the details of your emergency.

If I fall and I don't do it again,
If I try and I succeed and I keep doing the thing.
My life has pretty much followed this pattern since then:
I quit basketball right there and then.
I roll the ball off and roll it to the door.
I step on it, and I shot it to the hoop.
My first time playing with it, I can up to the basket.
I yell, "Get me a ladder-lever basketball hoop.
My parents tell me that when I was a toddler.
I've been a quitter longer than I can remember.

The white keys on the Casio will remain speckled forever.

Was that humid here? Was that humid always so sunny?

And when you pull it back, your hands come away sort-stained.

Even months later, you might lift through an old favorite.

Books are another story.

It's funny, what comes clean and what doesn't.

Smoke Damage

Maybe the new one will actually smell something.

We'll build a new one.

and he collapses under his own weight;

until he can't any more.

So he stands there and looks like a man.

There's nowhere to run.

The whole world is on fire, though.

"the whole world is on fire"...a rude awakening.

This something giant has suffered.

Pulled back to the burning windmill.

The Louis's expect them, so there they are.

The windmill in this town are just for show.

But know that it needs nothing anymore.
Some people say they were born in the wrong time.
I also have no sense of direction.
Even one fool in front of my face blinded me.
Wet feet lost to me, but now I can't see.
Bend them only the distant details
were totally indistinguishable to me.
Across the room a microwave oven glowed
and the digital readout
I glanced up and the digital readout
when Day I wondered what time it was.
When my nose in a book, as usual,
I had my head raised, I was eight years old.
I remember the first time I looked at a clock.

Riley Trails

I'm helpful for people like me, who are easily lost
for nature. The trails are colored and marked with spray paint.

This forest is on a grid system. All the trees are in neat rows stretching as far as the eye can see. At least as far as the road. You'd never mistake it for natural. I imagine that once this whole area was one big forest. Hugh
Eulogy for a Graveyard

I miss having a cemetery in my backyard.

Perhaps more accurately:

Before the fire

I would visit the graves of long-dead strangers

I like to think they enjoyed the company

Although I never knew the etiquette of the weather-worn grave — the toppled tombstone. Should I try to stand it back up?

But I was afraid to touch them.

My living neighbors rarely give such consideration.

The dead make better neighbors than the living.

In my experience ghosts are benign creatures; if you don’t disturb theirs, they won’t disturb yours.

My living neighbors rarely give such consideration.

They make better neighbors.
After this bit of dirt we happen to live on.

We named a planet mostly covered in water,

This was not an act of humility;

but we named our own after dirt (or we named dirt after our planet).

We named the other planets in our solar system after gods,

An Astronomical Observation

Nature doesn't have a plan. Nature just happens.

Our cities are our犁, and weapons of mass destruction our sin

High-hedged corn still is our honey.

A skyscraper is no more unnatural than an ant hill.

Every time we do is a part of that process.

Humans are a product of nature. They are part of the process of nature.

Humans do not exist outside of nature.

3. There is nothing unnatural; there is only the neo-natural.

On the surface of this planet, it was just a rock.

Before living things radicid the way

2. Life is an intervention between species.

Try not to think about it,

Death, intuitive death,

is somewhat like the death

of intuition against

memory is war

is the difference.

And what, really,

and then forgetting,

it can be experienced

can not be created

I. Matter and energy

Rules of Nature
A Zoo Story

This may or may not be factually accurate, but I remember it as true. There's a neighborhood in my hometown that used to be a zoo. A long time ago some rich guy moved out to the coast of Lake Michigan and established a private zoo on his property. Importantly, this thing could survive long in Michigan. Anyway, people live there now. The gate at the entrance still stands. There are houses where the cages used to be.

Kindling

Divided we fell apart. Nobody died, but that house held us together. I lost a home, I lost a family. I didn't just lose a house to that fire. The fire affected people. I didn't even know in ways I could not conceive.

by more people than myself
and can still be felt today
Just that its effects are in-retrograde
Which is not to say that it's still burning.
That fire was never extinguished
2nd Law

Fire doesn’t just burn.
it breathes and every breath taken unleashes more chaos into the universe, bringing us that much closer to the end of all things.

Even the life-giving sun is an agent of ultimate destruction and the Lord taketh away and the Lord giveth.
**Railroad**

The keening wail of the train whistle ties me to the tracks, like a damsel in distress in a Western.
But there's no hero coming to save me, and anyway I put myself in this position.
I lay my temple on the rail and watch the road go on forever, hoping the train comes from the opposite direction.

I've heard that the most stressful part of being a train conductor is bearing witness to so many suicide attempts.
I've heard that most people who attempt suicide instantly regret it.
I've heard my friends and family tell me that they love me.

I can't hear the train whistle anymore, so I get up and live to die another day.
Moore: Alan; Gibbons: Dave

Watchmen, issue 6. DC Comics, 1987, p. 26

Loose at Elysium's edge,
DD: Aylee

Dear Ms. Fortune,

Sincerely,

for die:

Said my wisdom, I'll keep writing letters like this in my head until I forget you

Said a leaf I was once a deep soul, but that's gone, but here sotetor still haunts my life.

I'm writing you again but this time I won't send the letter. I'm sure I was

Dying and night I dream of this illusion and I suffer for it. Memories are

made of glass. Over time these twist and warp but under pressure they

smoke heavily mtfether your speech is gone but you're speech still haunts my life. I'm writing you again but this time I won't send the letter. I'm sure I was
Safey Pin

For just one more day
of the universe together
life to hold the fabric
loose, clinging for dear
life, immersed against
a hilt twisted piece
So much depends on

You can't remember how you got here
The air smells like burnt flesh and rotten meat

Hungrily cheeks open wide.

Startling, squawking, staggering toward you,
ough off the earth for all as you can see—
and there s a whole flock of these things
And you look up from this one, "bird"

Caught in like intent
And a choked, smoky song
With that weird stare
but it just keeps glowing
like somebody walking its neck
but its twisted and wrong.
It's supposed to look like a bird.
Imagine Sisyphus is not sorry for offending the gods.

Imagine his mind numb from losing count of his failures.

Imagine his body bruised and beaten like Rocky at the end of Rocky.

Imagine Sisyphus sweating so hard you can see his tears.

Imagine him smiling as it rolls back down, cushioning him underneath.

Imagine he likes pushing that boulder up that hill again and again.

Imagine he likes a good workout.
and none of it hurts
and it's all beautiful
so I don't have to work
and it's all free
and there's a museum and a library and a movie theater and an arcade
and all my favorite bands tour there
wherever I want,
and all my friends can visit
and never meet,
where it's always overcast.
in a cold desert.
in an abandoned city.
I want to live.

After Graduation
Dear Me,

It's ok that you still think about Ms. Fortune sometimes. It doesn't mean you owe her anything. You can still move on with your life.

It's ok you lost your chosen family. The fire left it structurally unsound. It's ok the world went crazy. Or maybe it didn't go crazy. It just stopped pretending to be sane. Now you know what you're dealing with.

It's ok to not be ok. Just try to leave things a little better than you found them, and let that be enough. If you can do that, you'll be ok.

Loss isn't just a part of life. It's the essence of living. And that's ok.

Love,
yourself
Watchmen, issue 12. DC Comics, 1987, p. 27

Moore, Alan & Dave Gibbons