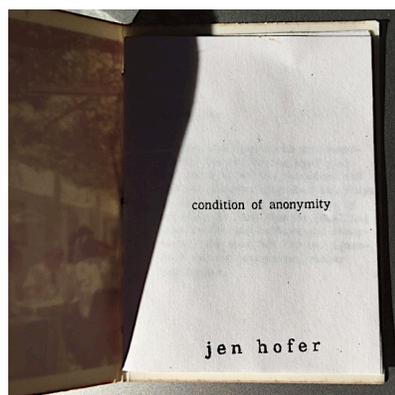


**condition of anonymity** jen hofer



Consider the play of at least two inspirations here So that the three men at table may  
be made into a claim this claim on the future

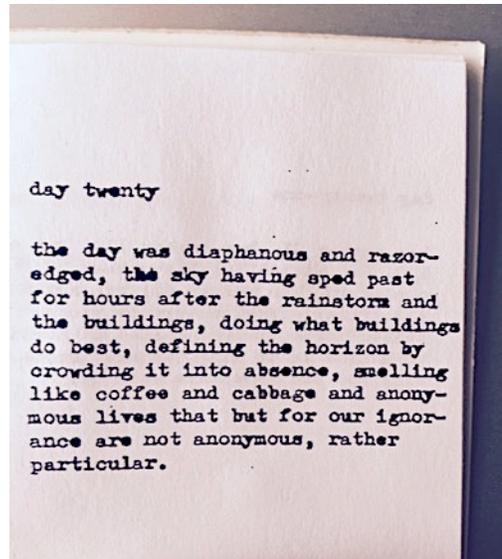
all the senses in a moment are given over to one sight  
Decades later in other hands this plane of bleaching daylight  
is folded in half A blue thread drawn three times through the new crease binds  
three folded sheets of common copier stock twelve pages in all  
a book of sorts for starters



now with us in the appearance and the vanishing

How long ago I came into possession I can't exactly say by mail or a handing on For  
the author and I are related  
I'm full of questions of her  
    who drew the needle maybe

A bit of folded day becomes a cover its blank backside an interior clasping a title  
then this



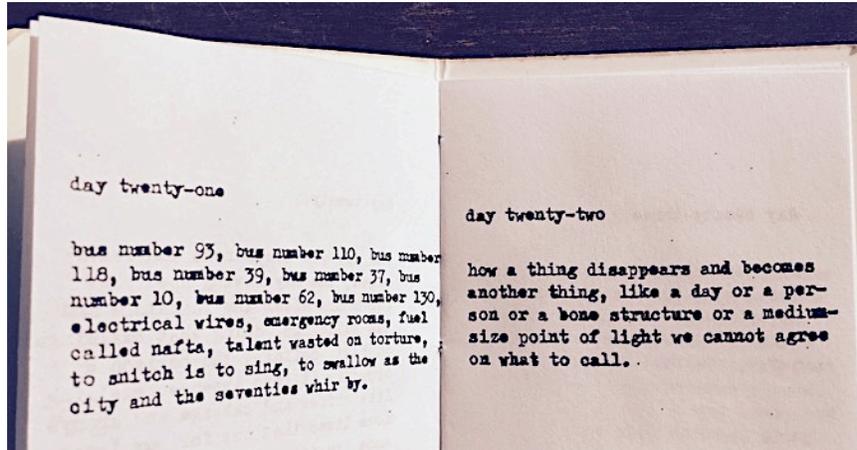
What becomes of days one through nineteen  
    And what *are* they and in the middle of

I'm inhabited by this book that misplaced itself how long in my study  
    *lives that but for our ignorance are not anonymous, rather particular*  
and now intimacy upon intimacy three dark suit jackets mingling in air the  
clothesline the white hanger almost a halo  
    *defining the horizon by crowding it into absence*  
and a silhouette between the photographer and them a second witness on the edge of  
things only here facing them too  
    a looking on a looking on and away  
    with us

The camera placed at such an angle The taker taken with the prospect was seated  
and the snapshot a private deed the mien of secret  
    ignorable ignored ignorant  
thus to be filled with fiction

jen

against secret's wishes if secret had wishes



on this a second page or a screen now *point of light we cannot agree on what to call*

noon beating on a cafe pergola sky branching three men in business and between them and the silhouette two dark bottles and a vacated table

And these poems are these poems these entries

days like bus number these numbered days how many

(With people things are never equal)

becoming other things

The poem watches you if it is a poem

It takes a picture maybe of a peaceable lunchtime a ritual haven

as all around but also now inside it the city wires

the snitches singing the dictatorship *the seventies whir by*

a break in oblivion

maybe another for the genizah

Circle one of the following

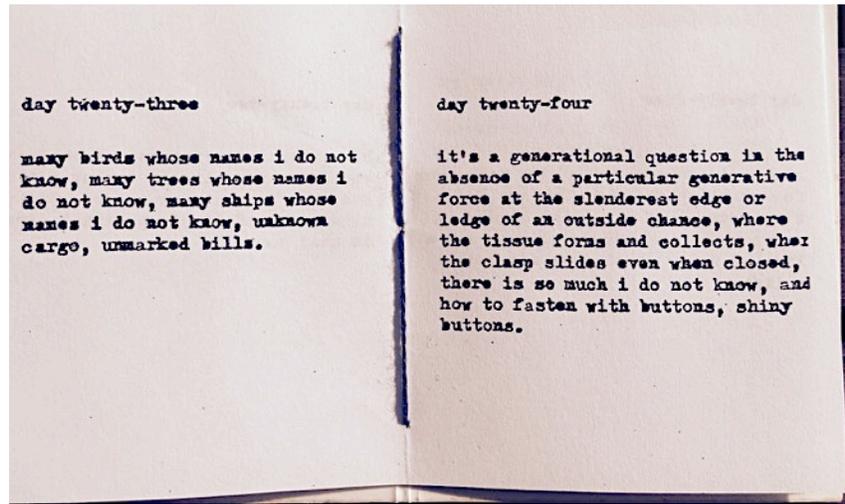
You do don't want this gesture to become an emblem of you

I read all the way through many times

To where

If we only had the living to talk

we would never recognize them even once



Where the yoking thread loops back to seek its knotted endings    where the trace of  
inspiration curves toward its origin  
    and since birds fly as they will  
    and water runs as it will

all surrounding us  
    beyond the categorical names we hunger after things with  
    when we notice them by knowing we don't know them

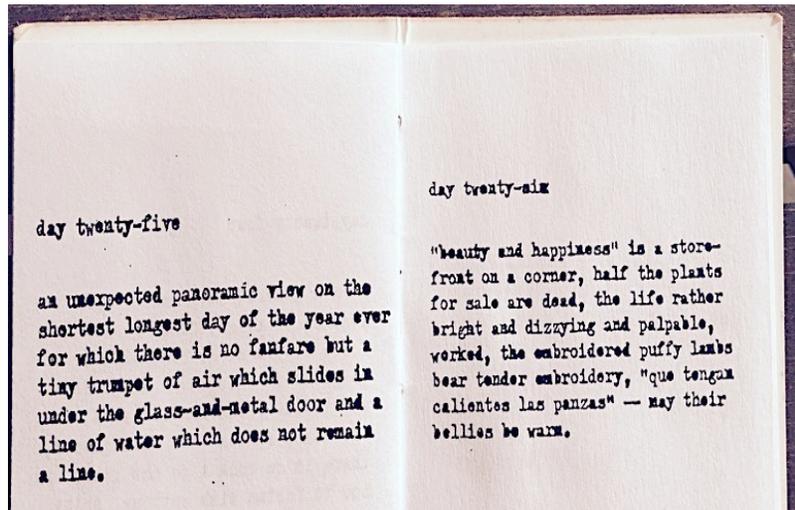
jen  
are these numbered days set inside adding up to what  
    are these meant  
        to keep story from invading image  
        to keep us from a captioned everything

Is this also anonymity speaking    do you read me    over  
I'm present to your absence    barging in    imposing posing    what cannot be fastened  
but is bidden and unbidden    debt and tender    at once

We never spend our time  
    because we cannot save it

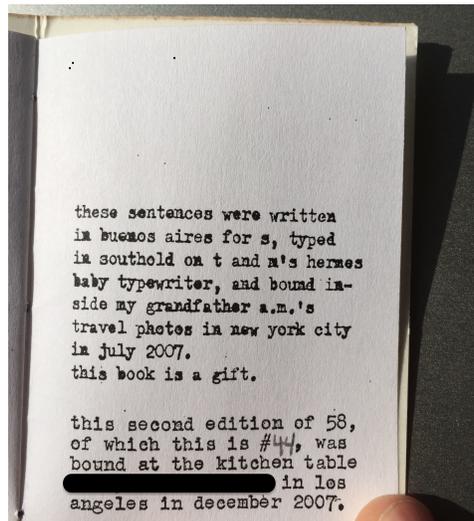
Is this then a satire of riddance  
(with story a revenge for which the perpetrator hopes to be admired rather than called  
to account)

(a revenge for what)



or seven days in mere creation an *unexpected panorama* of obscurity  
"beauty and happiness" and the vitality in bad taste  
blessed  
(almost nothing human-known untouched by dream)

So the book ends



and begins again a.m. her grandfather my stepfather-in-law dead fifteen years is also ante meridiem

That would be morning that would be mourning as in a book of  
which this is  
just now becoming one thing into another

amid the initials beginnings of a sort the indicated privacies conveyed by baby  
hermes messenger of the gods (most likely from *herma* in the Greek “heap of stones”)  
equipped for travel

Stones and the givens and collaboration  
with the dead and the unrealized which the present is  
(a giving what does not belong to us)  
our dear old apocryphal

and not all the sentences sentences

a.m. once kissed me goodbye and called me son as ancient men sometimes do in  
tenderness (my father dead some years then in that life)

And only now I’ve come to wonder if the Pentax he handed on to me very late  
(which I’ve never used termite wings atop its case)  
made this cover image (most surely of Brazil or Argentina in the ‘70s his final State  
Department posting then Rio)

No The camera shop receipt therein verifies it as a later purchase

And if this had been that promiscuously accommodating instrument  
only the absent one’s absence is possessed by such an object  
just as the writer writes so what  
(Making all expressive makes expression more elusive)

I was one among his death watch and weeks later at his long-planned birthday  
celebration turned memorial and family reunion  
jen of a solitary noon played fiddle with her sister in pine shade  
reels  
their skirts furling on sea breeze  
(each having been a child in a.m.’s lap at the piano)

She’s known (by me at least) for her vitality  
(jenerosity one might say Well I might)

all our metered miscommunication

rendering through cunning detail  
what has been lost and will be  
and perhaps was present  
though not to anyone

*a generational question in the absence of a particular generative force at the slenderest edge or ledge  
of an outside chance*

The snapshot whispers to the viewer



“give up” as the only one facing us from a distance deep peers back chin in palm  
ironic beside the boy (his grandson maybe) with head so near the crease as to be  
minded by its creeping crack unaware of him

But I anthropomorphize

Each death resurrects former deaths

Each wisdom a road blocked by scenic overlook

To rip this book in two To bring it finally to that implied premise To slow the  
commonplace catastrophe getting out of one's devices

One will never hold the gone enough for all the ceasing they achieve  
who become a back cover an afterthought

a thought after sought after

And who is “s” that hofer’s words are written for *in buenos aires*

And you one hundred and two different covers distributed before mine (not mien at all)

of this spectral network only known to her

of what folded threaded aspects are you made what a.m.’s

and how do each of you imbue days twenty through twenty-six

This spring I finally asked our bookmaker Why This and she said “I had these pictures and wondered what I’d do with them. The ones I didn’t really care about keeping”

Who’d ever want to leave this feeling

Circle one of the following

