

Accident of Construction

written by Guest Contributor | March 3, 2017



1. There is narrative and there is the everything else. The everything else can be part of narrative, but trying to apply the comfortable predictability of narrative to the everything else feels like constructing a house where the only available building materials are what has been discarded by the surrounding neighborhood. It's impossible, and the finished product is essentially garbage. Nonetheless, I spend my days parsing the visual landscape for strays, accidents of construction, problems in space, bright, secluded objects and screams of illegal joy.

2. The fantasy of safety is congruent to the fantasy that life can swell comfortably among pre-planned narrative, that resolution will arrive in direct response to the motions leading up to it.

3. The week of the election, sandwiched among a collection of national and personal tragedies, I sat at home without leaving, aching all over, flinching at loud noises, half of my body bruised from the car that hit me on the sidewalk while I walked home from a poetry reading with my friend.

4. There was the meeting of the narrative with the everything else. He was elected, everything else. But his election was built as a result to the hidden brutality inherent in cis white status quo, narrative. Some liked to pretend it was not built as a result, it was an accident, or rather that the brutality wasn't inherent, or that the status quo was not white, everything else. This is an example of how misclassification of narrative as everything else can support a blanketing violence.

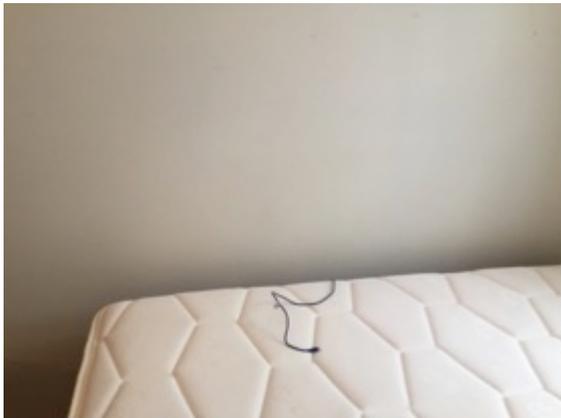


5. I'm the Bed Stuy food share. Garbage as the everything else to plastic-wrapped narrative.

6. I annoy myself with the drive I have to relate everything in my life to every other thing, as if I owe an enormous respect to this narrative. It was for this reason that everything, the accident and the election, blended together into one singular motion against which I felt helpless and vulnerable. Those words aren't strong enough. I felt like I was going to be killed.

7. From the internet: slow motion perception is a postulated mental state wherein time seems to be slowed down. People in life-threatening situations sometimes report experiencing this.

8. Back and forth over whether this was the culmination of a swatch of bad luck, or the beginning of it. Again, my tendency to draw connecting lines to notice patterns in my life as if questioning of what I know is real: that my life has already been explained meticulously for me, and has been bound up in a tightly structured capitalist design. That design is occasionally undermined by bursts of randomized natural cruelty, but of course natural cruelty can be harnessed by the State and used as a weapon. For example, a sparked wire can catch on a carpet or not, but if you are poor, queer, brown or living in your space against the permission of the city, the wire is likelier to catch.



9. I was on all fours in the street, in a moment that must have lasted less than a second, and thinking about my friends who've died, and my friends who've lost friends. Some of them dead by these bursts of natural cruelty, a randomness that feels impossible to politicize. But there is no death that is apolitical. There are deaths that, in a calculated move, are written down as so. Is the "random" death of a queer comrade not political when the community in which the death takes place is already engaged in the daily mental and physical grief of surviving under fascism?

10. Thinking I was about to die, I felt confused at the gap of logic between knowing that brutality is a necessary condition to the functioning of this world, and the fact that this was going to be how I die, something so nothing? The everything else marking its hold on space, just when narrative is so dominant?

11. Like how in the 5th season of Buffy, after she's killed off countless vampires, Big Bads, giant reptiles, sent her own lover to hell, and is in the middle of battling a demi-god, her mother dies of a regular brain aneurysm.

12. I felt like this was happening to me last summer when I went back to Massachusetts for my dad's brain surgery. I stayed with my mom in the waiting room five hours until the surgery was over. We went to the cafeteria three times in that five hour span. The last time I bought pudding. The surgeon called us into a room where a couple other surgeons were hanging out, eating chips. He showed us the scans of my dad's brain. That dark arm reaching around the artery, that's the aneurysm. That bright white dot at the base, that's the stroke. My mom had been able to remain calm throughout the process until this point. I had no idea it was that bad, she said, wringing her empty hands on our fourth pass through the quiet cafeteria.



13. This interesting phenomenon, not being able to perceive the obvious danger surrounding you. I guess the neoliberal myth of a free progressive country relies on our staying unaware of exactly how bad it really is. Here is a way to separate people into two sides: the side which didn't know it was so bad, and the side that did know.

14. All we can do now is remind ourselves that if we didn't know it was that bad, we were lucky. And that if the inclement weather tells us anything, we were wrong.

15. No narrative to the movements of weaponized male violence. It comes like weather, yet follows no science. I'm standing on the train platform and watching myself, through picturesque, intrusive thought, be pushed onto the tracks by any man who walks by. Am I hysterical? I know the car had no reason to hurt me, but that didn't alter the reality of what was happening. I even thought at one point, he must think I am someone else. Convinced to the point of bargaining reason that this attack was purposeful. It was easier for me to believe, even during the crisis, that a man I had never met before had reason to kill me, than to assume the everything else – some malfunction with the vehicle, a glitch in the way things are supposed to be. Some of us have this nightmare that we are being hunted for reasons we don't understand. For some others, it's reality. Even accidentally, those some, the porous ones, should fear being picked off.

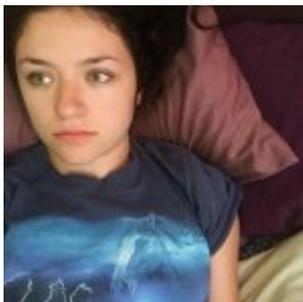


16. There is a deep cut on the skin of my inner thigh. We don't notice until halfway through the ambulance ride. The young, white, Islamophobic EMT cracks a joke. He says maybe the car was trying to, you know, get to you. I look at my friend. We don't know what to say, but we already haven't known. This is just an unmasking of solid, long-lasting narrative. There is a distance between the words we use to express shock and the shock. There is a puncture wound that can only be attributed to the failure of language to hold it shut. There are two events, they occur one after the other, but they become the other. Memory reterritorializes them into present. Shock recalibrates itself into the code of each day.

17. At once I am called out of the reverie I had of my own body and the space allotted to it by surrounding social psyche.

18. The ambulance is just like the street. You turn to away to find it facing you again, many-sided.

19. This spot, inner thigh, the only place aside from palm which does not grow hair, soft like bread.



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