

A Low-Pressure System

“There was a silence”
— Douglas Preston, **The Codex**

11:42

In most versions of this story,
we begin at the airport lounge
in Athens. Each of his men here
has a past. The minister of foreign
affairs, the IDF sniper and the expat are all plausible targets. All believers
in the conscious world and the world to come but they have no covenant.

Codex 1

In this story of falling a cigarette is brought back to life.
The body inhales. The sky is full of night. Soon it will be
dry season and the hills will rust but tonight, the night
keeps moving the way that birds do toward migration.
What does living do for any of us? The winds have found
some clouds to play with as trees rehearse the gesture
of surrender. Do birds think that cities are our version
of the natural world? Have you seen my city on fire?
Flames throwing themselves at buildings the way the sea
throws itself on the rocks. The furnace is the cities costume.
This world is a desperate element. I suffer the shame
of asking what happens in the voids. What shape does
the soil take when roots vanish? The visible making itself
known by the invisible. Rain falls through the trees
as the dark brick of our old lives is the pitch of the moment.

The Long Duration of a Split Second

After Forensic Architecture work relating to Al-Qia'an's killing.

Umm al-Hiran - 2017

Because all language lacks fluency in this pretence the sky itself was wilderness. A camera with its crooked frame was the first eye searching for answers. In this margin of the day, a helicopter unsure of how to get out of the world glided down through cloud cover and became a second infrared eye. Its purpose to separate people from trees and hills, still warm with the day's heat, from the shadows. Men dressed for war used torches like fireflies to follow the echoes. Inside a whisper - revenge, inside revenge - a language - inside the language - an algorithm of how to turn a collage of startling images into a village of some importance. A car horn shrieked like an unfed child to introduce the theory of infinite endings. Within that horn an eruption and within that eruption an another. Then fourteen seconds of darkness - before the camera

reproduced men in the motion of battle.

He who conforms to loss of land must be the right enemy. It is easier to divide the world this way. A disobedient tribe explain their extinction in the desert. To begin the story again, what was once a village on a rock they will call it Jerusalem. But who discovered you? Outside the thermal frame, a woman's voice cries after four gunshots made visible by a cloud of hot air invent a new kind of time. Paradise and violence are the same road, one cannot exist without the other, both gladly accept loss. A bullet has found its currency spiralling up towards a moving vehicle whose engine has died. Getting away is what a road is for. A car door opened to the wilderness and so this hill became a portrait of death. A fatal bullet turned the driver the shape of someone else as flowers are blamed themselves.

AMS

We are falling to earth.
The headrest TV display is a jukebox.
Night pins itself to the plane.

My earphones drown an audience
of men who have turned my homeland
into a theatre. Their mouths are full
of salt and lime, swimming through
my body weight in tequila. A low-pressure
system at the level of my abdomen
watches them from my cabin window.
Ryan Gosling is at the keys. My hands
want to be at their throats. They are Gods
in a City of Stars. No wait I am a city
watching three men play God. No, I am
God watching three men play with my city.

Codex 2

When my father lost his job,
it was a way to make the other
thing a beginning; the sit-ins
and marches with helicopters
twitching at twenty frames
a second. My father had been
many things, not just a face
behind a thought travelling
the free world. Once he was
a glass mountain. Once he was
a catastrophe separating day
from night. Once when we were
at the edge of town and he could
no longer keep the silence he used
the same face he spoke with to cry.
I had a small nonspeaking part.

*Flight is the tendency to move
toward or away from an object.
As in Basquiat's Icarus, for instance.
Notice how everything turns away.*

Codex

SAMO© first appears as a tag on a New York city wall in 1978 two blocks down from Aswad bookstore. It is a kind of Codex to speak the unspeakable as if it were a confession on redbrick or brownstone in the hard years. Downtown, was Jean's street studio so was the fridge, TV, wall and floor in our apartment. He saw no division between earth and sky. To call it graffiti is to call hieroglyphics gibberish. That's ignorant. This is Jean ordering a tequila to test his outer limits. It is a summer night and we have rented two 35-mm cameras. He has figured out that a painting is stronger than memory, passports, planes and nicotine. The curtains are drawn but still no money for canvases or rent. After red wine he swears he heard the wall say - let your wrists be free. In the face of all this, he was kin to me. This is a photograph of Jean after the ten-minute set at the Mudd Club. He says - It's not him and shows more interest in streetlamp above us. Look the camera is guessing Being a self, is a controlled hallucination generated by the brain. The night is a black moon. The Empire State building has always been a lead character in his inner movie. From the loft, it glows orange. This Jean and he says - If you can't see his three-point crown you should see a doctor. He is divided and dying for a piss. He presents as an image of a man and as matter in motion.

Have a listen to this. (Distorted voice)

Nora

In the mid 70's I was a nobody with a foreign accent.
The sort of person you only recognise in a hardware
store when you needed to know *in which aisle can get*

one of these, as you show me the picture of Jane Fonda's
bathroom. I'd be the guy in brown overalls demanding
higher pay, but not demanding higher pay because that's

how the last nobody lost his job. So, I point you to aisle
seven and ask Nora at the register to turn the radio up.
It's not as good as a pay rise, but they are playing Nora's

favourite song. Don't ask me why I notice the smell
of her body among other bodies or why I stay late to help
her with the stock check. She's quite demanding. I don't say

anything, it is better that way. With the change in my pocket,
I take her yawns as a cue to order two coffees. I don't like coffee
it tastes like tar on my tongue. She adds three sachets of sugar,

slips off her shoes and offers me some gum. It is not until the gum
has lost its flavour do her eyes dilate to let more light in. I feel
like an ancient star waiting for this part of the night to happen.

An Essay on Man

Maybe the measure of life's brief sequence can be found in the mist that hangs over trees as their branches twist in the wind. A jealous fire ploughs through an abandoned warehouse and pays no attention to the security guard. His deadening eyes widening betray their duty. Everything floods in. His ex-wife wonders how it happened. The policemen at the door ask for a glass of water. Biting her top lip, she lets the evening in and offers them broken rice with fried chicken and coleslaw. As the stars appear, with their mouths full of food, the clock will chime. Despite the heat of the day they eat the meat to the bone. You are right to ask the question. Why share the favourite meal of the man she once loved? Let me place before you one or two things; the eye hungers for what it can't find, a wave of delivery trucks roar to a stop. She throws a window open, puts on his old coat and takes a drag from a cigarette a lady would not smoke. If it wasn't for the fence you would see her out on the porch tucking her hair behind her left ear holding the smoke that fits inside her body. What does she need it for? It is the last wave of the man who lived inside her.

Codex 9

00.21 (START TAPE)! We begin here in transit, it is September and I am inventing a kind of time the way Coltrane did in Alabama. I am looking for a hole in the ground or lightning from a skinned tree with its fragile brightness, that spikes below the waterline, not to be seen from the dirt road. Where is my city perched on seven hills? Where is the sky in its height to watch the evening crawl in? Where are the horses that broke loose? I know I come from another world that is both sheath and blade, both bruise and blood. You have me in a room. Your boss is using my last name outside this door to express the relationship between me in part and its whole. The word sounds strange at the edge of his mouth, like bait at the end of a hook. I glance at a clock. The ceiling tiles are perforated, and you ask *Why did I move from the home I once had to this home?* Your silence is also a hole. The soil from which I came does not want my return. Men who look like me in the eighth century came to the hem of your shores. They used the wind like a stone in a sling. I used an airbridge. I used a runway. I used a loud flight path. I used an airport lounge of a country known for its invading army. I used who I am in this night with its far-off star. I used what nobody would admit, that geography is everything. **(END TAPE)**

Over to you Dave!

*Dave Chapelle So, in that spirit, tonight
...I'm gonna try some impressions out.*

*Night and a new day crawls forth over dead sparrows.
There is no world, there's no self. According to the Times
They want to see a war. My iPhone develops a sense
of its own existence. Pure intelligence. 10:59*

Codex 6

Put a man in a room and lock a door.
If he is still alive after you have said
a lot of things, keep him from harm
and keep him in the dark until there
is no difference between this room
and the night of space. As the hours
pass he will try to cure himself of his
country. But isn't a country also a space?
The man is now an empty bottle. I fill
it with secrets. These yellow flowers
are my daughter's favourite that I
bought at the service station. That
too is a lie. Until you have been a body
collecting flies or a spirit departing
you will never know *the world's true form*.

BOM

This far East your thoughts are the edge
of the world. It will not be the last time
that you walk through a door hoping
to return. From your cabin window heat
sweats off the tarmac. Think of this space
like a tree without branches or a wind
that hides itself till you show your face.
You are not alone you have my voice.
There is the wind and there is my face.
The man next to you will wake from
his dream with the sound turned low.