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January 25, 2007

What can I do? I can't do anything. What can I do?
I can't do anything. What can I do? I can't do anything.
What can I do? I can't stop thinking about what I can't
do. The forces that tug on us and poke from all directions
constantly, forever. We are out of our hands. It's not fair that
we are what we are. What can I do? I can't do anything.
Laughter, the laughter of children, singing, dancing, slaying
demons and wrestling with beauty and the lack thereof, shadows
as they dapple the cold concrete beneath the trees, ~~and~~ entering into
playful courtship with the sun's light, laughter, the laughter of
children. Nothing changes our pantomime. We are ragdolls, into the
Indifferent we are tossed, lost, we were discarded and lost
long ago. What can I do? I can't do anything. A tiny little
~~idea~~ indecision grew and grew and now here I am, sitting
with my cramped-up fingers wrapped around a stupid plastic
pen, trying to drain the damn a bit rather than let it burst.
The shards, O the shards! Are they made of glass or of
light? Glass reflects light and light simply IS. Is it meaningful
in any way to make a distinction? What can I do? I can't do
anything. What can I do? I can't do anything. One time we
did a nice thing for the Librarian who was fed up with the
petty trickle of trivia that she must sift through as a result of
being a Reference Librarian, but she thought of it only as a
practical joke, or at least that's the only way she was able to
articulate it. The smokestack at the top of the factory. What
ABOUT it? Imagery will throttle me lifeless and I need to
find a better way. Those that do everything and those that do
nothing. Neither is correct. There is no correct yet. Head toward
two goals: Liberation from the forces and Rebellion against
the dead gods who made us for no reason. What can I do?
I can't do anything. What can I do? I have to keep
writing. I should write all the time, never let a moment
slip by undetected, trying to escape, on tip-toe. Time is slimy but
I mustn't let it slip through. I can... do nothing. I'm a wave
crashing against a cliff, broken. I'm whole chapters torn from

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a book, whole lines left blank on a family tree. What's there to write about except for the immensity of the blank space and all the ways to fill it up with the simplicity of our gestures, our swinging arms ending by pointing up into the stars that we made up anyway in our folklore and our myths and our bellyaches, all the ways to paint a picture of the sky that's as big, and finally bigger, than the sky? Why don't I go to the bar and get drunk? Soon that's just what I'm gonna do. Yup. Yup. Yup. Yup. Uh-hu. What's going to happen when all the fires that spot the darkness of the globe burn out?

What's done is done: the sun and it's final extinguished embers sprinkle themselves lovingly ~~and~~ like down all across the face of the earth. Earth becomes soft. A soft earth is a vulnerable one. A story about a swan child on her first day of school: She wants to take off her feathers because it is too cold outside. Too cold? the grown-up swan teacher asks. You're right. It is very cold. Why don't you keep your beautiful coat of feathers on because it is so cold? No! the swan child objects. I have to take my ~~my~~ feathers off because it is TOO COLD! The Swan Teacher floats atop the lake, perplexed as the day she was hatched. The child does as she wishes because the teacher has no recourse in the face of the unintelligible. The swan child has a glimmer in her eye, thinks the Swan Teacher.

Fables can be made up as you go along, and then, like a pre-made birthday cake ~~with~~ with the spot for the name left blank, you can fill in the moral at your convenience. I feel a little calmer, but not completely calm yet. There is still a wrinkle or two to smooth out, ~~and~~ which of course there will always be. You smooth out one and ten more rise to take it's place. People are absurd. How do you explain them? How could you describe them to some other form of life or existence or consciousness? Just an endless series of flukes... Just a brain that somehow superseded more primal ~~and~~ appendages... Just a species that wanted it more than the rest...? Wanted what? Where am I going with this. I thought maybe if I just kept writing I would sooner or later fall into a comfortable niche and hit on a flowing stream of words that would actually LEAD to something. I'm frustrating myself further, and that is not

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
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References available upon request

Why I'm doing this. I feel foolish. Now I'm in a bar sipping on a PBR waiting for a friend but I'm sure it looks like I'm just sitting all alone wanting people to THINK that I'm waiting for someone. I've done that before, too. When I was younger. You work hard trying to make yourself less pathetic in some ~~ways~~ ways and then once those are taken care of you notice a whole new set of ways in which you are pathetic. That is the name of the dance. It's sweeping the nation, or whatever. In the days in which we were carefree and light, we believed we superceded sight. In the days in which our outlook was bright, we believed we didn't believe in the Night. I see the paper and I see the pen, and my hand with its little veins and hairs, I see as well. It flops around like a fish with a hook in its lip. It might believe that it's dying like the fish for all I know. I don't know the mind of my hand. I see the various light shapes and gradations on the paper. I see one object casting two or three diffused shadows. I hear so many different sounds at once that they are all diffused as well, like the shadows. They lose whatever power they once had to communicate anything. They are random knocks at the door of my eardrum. Bad metaphors and similes can be liberating because they make you feel the ridiculousness of the undertaking. If writing is a record of anything, if words strung together constitute documents, it's news to me. They are like words spoken into one end of a homemade telephone, you know, two tin cans connected by a long string, with no one on the other end.

Why so tragic? ~~The~~ The words ask each other. To which the words reply I don't know... I wish it were otherwise. As I grow older my ability to champion the cute grows weaker, fainter, slower, duller.

It's not that the world has grown smaller, no, it's that the spaces in between each heartbeat have grown so huge. There's little room left to maneuver. maneuver? Spelling somehow remains an important concern of mine. Proper grammar is one thing, but spelling raises a whole different set of questions. I'm getting tired of this. The bottom of this page will be the stopping point. There. 

Daniel Bradley

Baker

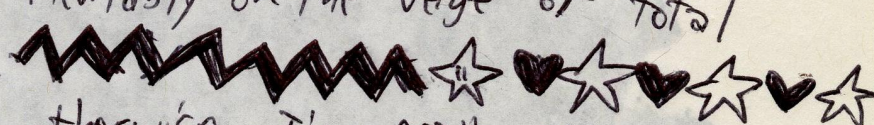
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
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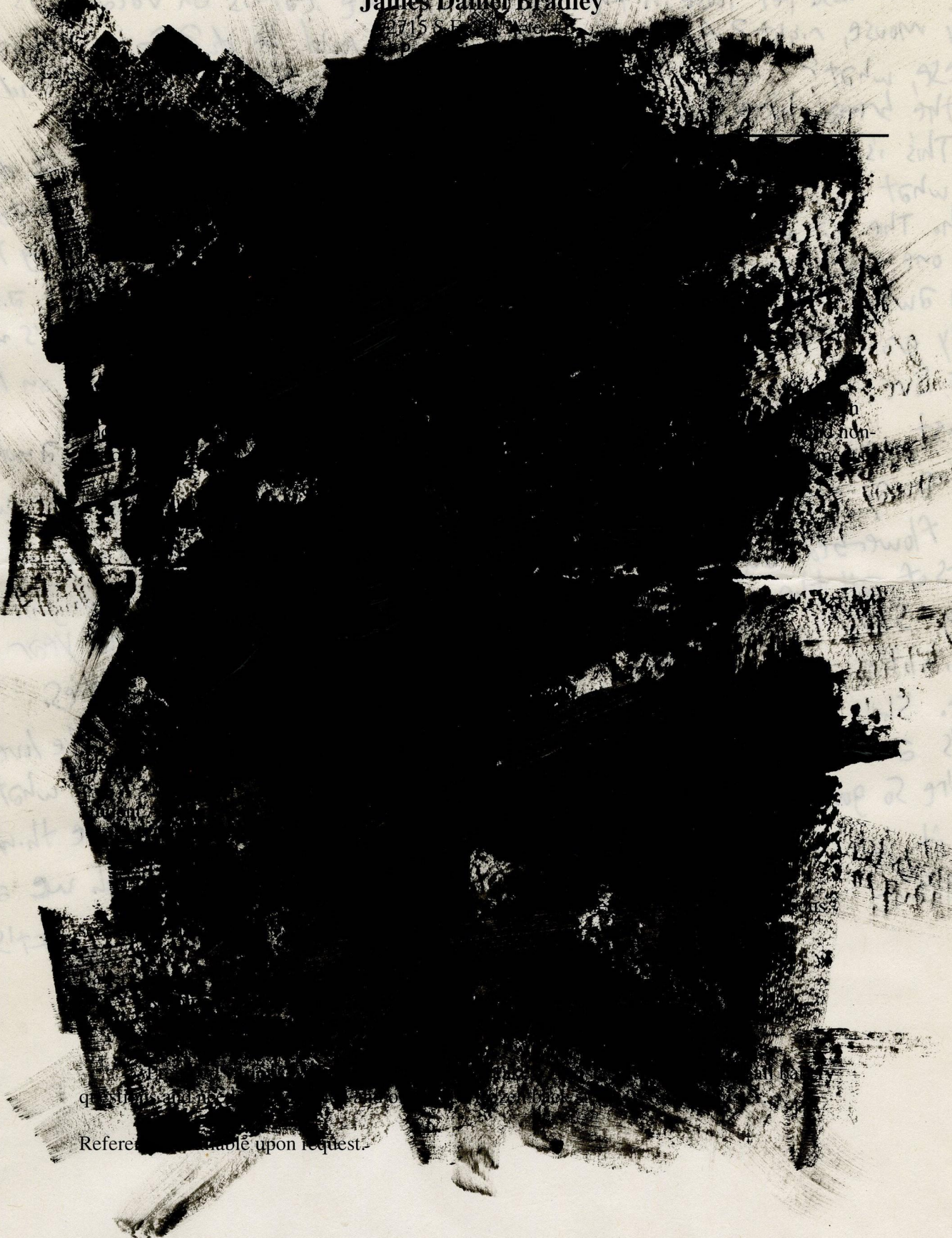
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Here comes another attempt to reconcile all my ~~faults~~ faults with all of my fictions. I was going to write a different word but didn't know how to spell it. That is the truth behind fate. A candle's output determines how much you see. I'm laughing because I'm an idiot. I can't decide anything about myself. I don't know if I'm a kingdom or a martyr fighting to topple a ~~kingdom~~ kingdom. I'm trite and inconsequential and one day I will work hard to erase everything I have ever seen or heard or felt or said. I get all tingly when I think about it. Tingly, really, like a porcupine sleeping on a waterbed. Like a ~~mountain~~ snow-capped mountain peak whose snow is inevitably on the verge of total collapse and ~~the~~ disappearance. 

Although I've come to believe otherwise, I'm really still pretty shy. The fact that I can sit and write like this in public, more or less unabashedly, is a testament to how far I've come, I guess, but I'm still pretty shy. I should really make something happen. ~~I~~ right now. I hate life! It's too alive, too real. I'm a horrible character in a really overrated Indie movie. I'm a horrible character in a really overrated Indie movie, maybe if I ~~repeat~~ repeat that sentence it will make more sense and sound more clever. I hate all the mediocre artists & writers who kiss anyone's feet who will listen. They all want to be crowned "Clever Fellow." I hate them. I don't want to be one of them. I like hair tied up more than loose hair. Pig tails or pony tails. That's what I like in a girl.  I like chalkboards half-erased, still smeared with the remains of a lesson that was meant to give some kind of handout of truth to some little people too young to care about a grown-up rendition of anything labeled "truth." These generalities will strangle me until I swallow my soul. I write one more ~~sentence~~ sentence for the sake of closure. I guess. I'm a loser, sure. If I get drunk in a bar, first by myself, then with a ~~friend~~ friend or two, then by myself again, that makes me a loser. It's more or ~~less~~ less true. I mean true in a universal, ~~objective~~ objective sense. TRUE. ~~Capital~~ Capital "T." I am the lying dog that keeps the cliché alive. I hate that last sentence. It's really horrible. I HATE it. I should just take photographs of the living. I'd be

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much better off. It's a dead end I find myself on. I just ran off ~~to~~ to piss and I left this shit on the table. I must feel pretty confident in Portland. No one is going to steal this shit. Who'd dare or care? Or dare to care? The mouse let loose in the house while the cat is on vacation is a happy mouse, right? AM I RIGHT? What would he do? Eat all the cheese, what? "Cheese, please, or my knees start to buzz like bees and sway in the breeze like trees."

This is an ugly scene, the bar one hour before it ~~is~~ closes. I don't know what to say. It's like the water in a toilet three-quarters into its flush. The outcome is preordained. It's ugly. I mean it. I keep feeling for this one curl of hair behind my left ear. It's there and it ~~isn't~~ going away. It's gross like a strand of pubic hair, but that's not really gross at all, so what do I have left to say? A story on New Year's Eve: a swan eats (accidentally) a couple pot brownies and is thrust into the abyss of unreliable sensory information. She wanders off, away from the party and lays her head down gently in ~~the~~ the flowerbed adjacent to the house. It's well past midnight. She thinks of all the great new experiences and ideas the new year will bring. She's in love with life, because life equals possibilities. Possibilities equal defeat, regret, etc., but that is equally why she loves life. She's higher than she's ever been. She has no direction whatsoever. She's a nonentity, as far as she's concerned. It's bleak. She thinks, "we're so good at setting up our little pantomimes. Even though we all do it, we're none of us sure that the others are doing it. It's brilliant!"