

“One makes the book one is able to. This ‘making’ always aims at ‘making more.’

None could reduce the possible.”

-Edmond Jabes-

Remarking Mark Remarking

*“I recall only a solitary march toward I don’t know what kind of writing, a slow, hesitant march delayed indefinitely by the intimate conviction, from time to time reaffirmed, that...in any event
...writing is futile...”*

thus one can create it out of whole cloth, without fear or restraint, since it has no other justification than in and of itself...A kind of writing, in other words, that would be self-generating.

I have looked for it everywhere”

-Marcel Benabou-

*“Language is what gets us where we want to go...
and prevents us from getting there”*

-Samuel Beckett-

“Thoughts of shipwreck, but also of haven...”

The place of language is language...

*I went to the word
to make it my gesture.*

*I went,
and I am going.”*

-Edmond Jabes-

Mark had found his voice. A kind of melancholy, plaintive one. It circled stuff interminably. Whispered and wandered around. He'd come to like his name.

His head was full of thoughts. Thoughts that behaved like swirling water, replete with undertows. Thoughts like dust raised by raindrops. Like powder snow at night.

Things percolate and move mistily. Indefinable, almost impressions, almost unnoticeable weather.

Thus he marked his own context: foreground-background-landscape-subject. Almost blank. Or over-filled. Like an atmospheric system, some elaborate mechanism or perpetual-motion machine humming quietly in its place, its workings hard to decipher, difficult to dismantle or repair, it just goes on.

For instance, just now, Mark's mind is troubling an idea that what he perceived of himself in his present being was probably some long accrual of an unknown living entity existing by some limited and specific energy source – shaped, concocted, constructed and moved, *invented* as it were, by whatever had ever happened in what he'd been trained to call his "past," along with the opening and openness of all possible "futures" – the nuts, bolts, wires and fuel; performances and emissions, surfaces and frames, meticulously manufacturing this specific form and substance complete with some content and exhaust – Mark Riley, *now*.

"Now was," the oxymoron of inherited language around the relative concept of human time bothered Mark. And yet seemed exactly the case to him: "Now" always "was," "Is" always "almost." The teetering present of movement having no palpable term. At least that he was aware of. Alas.

He mumbles it: "now. now. now. now." Then shouts it, whispers, wondering if it matches.

"I am here" he thinks. There is music, sunlight, books and pages, and he belongs to his body. Yet still he feels more like a zone or a field than a subject or object. A strange cloud of shifting perceptions and malleable registers, constantly importing/exporting, an odd and dusty exchange with variable borders between. Many imperceptibles.

Mark appreciates the good fortune of his name. Of all the words his family might have aimed in his direction, that they chose one sufficiently flexible and adequate to his ever-metamorphosing sense of himself, he found very lucky indeed. "Mark." No one properly named themselves (or others) words like "sign" or "I," "swarm" or "subject," the synonyms he often preferred for personhood. Being human. A propensity for tags and categories, when, as far as he could tell, we were all simply successions of "I's" with useful pronouns.

However, he could actually conceive of and *feel* himself as a mark or system of markings. As if someone called “paint” or “compose.” “Sketchy” or “imagining perceiver.” Mark *was* a marker; there was no doubt about that. From early youth he’d left marks on his world – sounds, messes, drawings and words.

Through time, he would come to puzzle marking itself. A voracious student and reader, Mark had come to think humans well documented indeed. This cognition fostered a kind of destiny in his identity – to go after any and every experience and subject he found un-re-markable, that which had scant or insufficient representation in signs or gestures or speech.

Mark sought to mark the ineffable and fleeting. Those realms of experience not readily translatable, the searching for words, moans and sighs and grimaces. That which seemed always to leave a remainder, unmarked. Mark would mark the un-marked with a necessity that the coexistence and correlation, involving as it logically *must*, **himself**, would accomplish the “Mark”-ing lack.

He finds these experiences everywhere. Emotions, perceptions, knowledge and actions seem suffused with un-Marked areas. Sounds as well as the notoriously nonverbal, nontextual Silence (does it even exist? Or is it purely and absolutely abstraction? he pondered) offered themselves to be Marked. Thoughts and dreams, sensations and incoherent babble – the lack of adequate marks came to seem ubiquitous and infinite, both compelling and overwhelming to him.

With all the existing marks and documents – the words and events and artifacts of human history – how could there really be so very many insufficiently remarked territories of existence?!

Science, Mark understood, with a world as vast and seemingly endless in its providence of detail and information. *In-formation* equally bewildering – how does it all interact and effect, or develop? Which propelled the perpetual craving to envelop and understand, attempt comprehension – to incorporate and represent to ourselves each new moment – our philosophies, religions and arts.

Nevertheless, what of we, ourselves? Mark asked. Is our range of feeling and activity really so varied between persons, places and times that *human* experience of engaging and failing to survive our lives really calls for further markings and reflections?

It did, in fact, seem so. As closely matched and reciprocal as other human marks mated to his own, there was always some difference. And extremely hard to qualify. This dissimilarity of the similar – really all one takes note of – that continuous liminal activity...*between*. Between Mark and all things un-marked-by-Mark, not yet acquired or understood, not created by him, requiring his interpretation, apperception,

and yet...

what could make Mark’s marks distinct? Unique? Of any value or usefulness to others and his surround?

Here Mark could not say. His everywhere seemed utterly stuffed with unmarked and perhaps un-Markable territories, with import and mysteries (to him), and yet it was not new human territory, or occasions?! Things like loving and pleasure, parenting and nature, thinking and feeling – in fact, the entirety of being *has* been signified by other human beings, as far as he could tell, yet every moment Mark encountered had an aspect of un-Markedness somehow.

Until he'd mark it himself.

Perhaps this is the crux, for each of us, he thought. Everyone a Mark, a Sign, a Gesture, a continuum of I's – and until we individually make our marks our existence remains, remains un-re-Marked for *us*, even while retaining and remarking all other Marks and marks we encounter in encountering?

Mark ached to re-mark all this. His thoughts swirling like slow water, like dust raised up by rain in small bursts, like powdery snow flustered in the night. His confusion with time and space and naming. His marked sense of things not yet Marked, circling interminably.

Mark Marking Questions

“Man is a riddle. Our complex relation to others may also be affected by our fascination with this riddle...Origin means, perhaps, question”

-Edmond Jabes-

“Writing as the ‘talking cure’

he thought, thinking in language what he thought language might do. Be doing. To him.

He heard “why?,” a term learned early in order to learn, and thenceforward laid over nearly everything he read, encountered, overheard or stumbled across, as if it were his placeholding destiny in some infinitely progressing equation simplified “world.”

He’d read he needed other persons and things, places and times to know his own. –
“Why?”

He’d heard “until others acknowledge or teach you your shape, your ideas, what you see what you feel what you taste or speak or hear, your perceptions and scope, you won’t be aware of a thing. You’ll have no ideas or sensations *per se*, you’re essentially Nothing without Them.”

Arching his back and shrieking a sound at an absence of breast: “why?”

“I guess I’m just punctuated that way,” he came to think, as he adapted vocabulary. “My role in a sequence is: - ?”

“And God said ‘Let there be light,’ and there was...” well, maybe - ?

“The Tao that can be named is not the eternal Tao...” well, maybe - ?

“1 + 1 = 2,” well....maybe - ?

“You are Mark, a male form of a human animal, replete with these working organs, the English language, and certain beliefs. These are your parents, your sibling, your probable friends. Here are some feelings, some expressions and thoughts. Here are your words.” Well. Maybe - ?

Shaped with letters and numbers and sounds. Voices and touchings and feels, he became, slowly, surely, puttied toward a recognizable form – perceptible to others, acknowledged, even affirmed or engaged from time to time.

“Why?” propelled the lengthening problem of life but never grew toward solutions.

He read elaborate explanations and descriptions as he borrowed more languages. Spiritual terms, medical terms, words scientific, political, philosophical and intimate. Thick reams of median symbols asking to be joined or embraced, understood or imbibed.

Mark enjoyed these fabrics, and found a belonging among them. Layers and theories, emotions and dreams – he simply need append his simple gesture - ?

Trouble, in the form of discomfort or pain, of disjunction, arose when agreement was desired. Explicitly or implicitly, this undermined his form. In situations where reciprocation or statement, some firm relation was called out for, his questioning mark failed to serve. Choices, commitments, integrities or beliefs turned to drizzle around his definitive (self-identified) symbol.

“I love you,” she wooed. “-?-“ he replied. “I cannot know what you mean, what your language portends, I am unable to verify *why?*” he’d respond. To collapse and retreat.

Even thoughts and decisions were questioned and split open on his sharp weapon of a mark. He was not trusted or deemed trustworthy as doubt was perceived an anomaly.

He remained uncertain.

Self-perceivably, he reliably questioned, he’d respond and then take it away with his mark, his “signature move” as it were, his undoing. “Yes I will...” “This I think...” “I am...” always followed by his -?- (which sounded like “why?” in the air) and found no rationale that could not be further put to query.

The world was unstable as well as a “self” for him. All under the branding shadow of “why?” This Mark never outgrew in all his adaptations, acquisitions, mutations and metamorphoses. His certain core of uncertainty. His permanent doubt. His oxymoronic reality of being, not-being -?-

They perceive him – they really do – but as full of content with no substance; as possible and capable yet a great risk; as veritably human but unnamed from within. Without “identity.” This is true even of his wife and his children, parents and friends, all unsure who or what they are relating to, marked with the sign of the -?- The indeterminate one, the questionable and uncertain, the duplicitous and vague, are various ways he is read and conceived – standing there as he does on his tiny spot of *here*, long-legged and stooped as in prayer, or inquiry - ? -

Mark Marking Marks

*“oh it’s working, it’s magic, each word lifts me up, takes me away from here,
from this nothing; I feel...I am...speak always, Maybegenius.”*

-Macedonio Fernandez-

Writing as the ‘Talking Cure’

As long as I keep speaking, Mark thinks, - ?

WHAT IS REAL?

As long as I keep talking to myself, even better the inscribing, using matter somewhat foreign to myself, like this plastic pen, this sheet of paper, this blue ink...I am providing myself with evidence. A humming continuity, a series of marks, a silent sounding breathed into air.

But when unable?

As long as I keep telling myself these stories, Mark thinks, - ? then what - ? why - ?

There is evidence that I am here, he says to himself, marking it down. Marks make Marks, he supposes, I am, at least as far as the reach of this pen, and I stay, at least longer than my thoughts, he thinks.

Mark got tattoo’d. He did so for evidence, a permanence. They said it could not be undone. So he had them spit into his skin the names of those who had changed him, affected. As if to say, to go on and on saying, these, *these* existed for me, in and on me, these folks made impressions that made impressions on me, therefore I must, yes, it logically follows, here – you can see them can you not - ?, it logically follows that I must exist – to have these names, these titled and organized and permanent woundings of names, of those who existed (it’s attested by many), so it follows, it must, with them pierced in my arms, that I, too...

If it all keeps on talking, these whispering names, the sound of my voice, the terms in my head, and if I work to make it real, as an object, if I chisel or stencil or ink it to the world, then surely it must testify on my behalf – I was here! I *am* here! I’ve left my Mark! Mark marking Mark – a declare!

Or so he is thinking through his days, through his life or lives, through his odd and self-imposing tormenting sort of fear, of worry.

Am I?

To no effect? he wonders - ?

Mark often fears he’s interchangeable. Or worse. Perhaps another boy would have been a better son, left a fuller name, a more remarkable mark than - ?. Another man a truer spouse and more sensitive or empathetic, more evolved or more mature than his straggly droopy heavy brain of a - ?. A more substantial father with clearer love and direction, firmer hands, readier tears - ?. Mark was aware they were out there. They’d been fellow students, inhabited stories

and novels and other people's lives. Why were his people stuck with the - ?. His nagging mark, so often read right over as innocuously as a comma or period. Weren't they looking for content not a pause or an absence? A man marked by inquiry?

But if I leave here some trail strewn round my desk, this floor all these cupboards, perhaps at some point they will see I *was* here! I *am*! And I was watching and listening, loving and feeling them all. Spending myself and my worries in this strange attempting to trace and to hold, to keep and remember their details, their effects, my responding.

Someday shuffling through or perhaps clearing out, maybe they'll stop, pause, question and wonder. Who was this man? Where was he? When? How? Why?

What did he do think make say? And perhaps they'll find these markings. Perhaps they won't have burned or mouldered away, and all these messaging reports, all these processings and accounts will come to mean, to have significance, these bird-routes of scratches and marks, dashes dots lines, this pouring forth of constructing an identity against with the world...

As long as I keep speaking, Mark thinks, possibly –

- ? -