

## Writing: the Apparatus

“one can think of the work (of writing) as a dialogue between the two distinct demands bearing on it (the demand of possibility, the demand of the impossible). Or between its two poles (measured form, measureless disintegration) or between the embodiments of these two ‘centers of gravity,’ if you will: reader and writer...two come together in a place where neither can be found...One of them keeps dragging it into the light of day as a completed oeuvre, a realized whole, something that has actually taken form and come to be (read, that is, or, you could say, heard), while the other pulls it back into the dark whence nothing ever springs (but where there is a chance that, coming to pieces, something might come to be written or said)”

- Anne Smock, *What is There to Say?* –

*-the demand of possibility, the demand of the impossible-*

The tools the writer possesses.

That there *must* be something to say...that it is impossible to completely say. Finally, definitively, to have done with, saying experience.

What does one make of this? *With* this? Paradoxical demand, desire, exigency – imperative, self-generating, uncaused and ineffectual, drive?

Our tools: awareness. Attention. Passion. We observe and take note, feel-with, and seek to spell it out (for ourselves, for world).

Our tools: available language, sound, gesture. Entering the woven barrier and thoroughfare of what is shared, common, constitutive, we act, operate, select, arrange, choose, rearrange from this quilted information of the world, our *saying* of it. Or singing, or stating, shouting or whispering and mumbles.

It seeks into fact. We construct an object, made up of nothing, of airwaves, scratch-marks, designs. Barely effable cues, hints, notions and signs. We begin again with that. With what it fails to say, to communicate or reveal. We tinker with and tamper, excise and expand. Ever the remainder. Inexact invention. Something there, some things not.

We pursue what is not. What fell aside or seeped away. The evaporate. The unknown (here I adore the French: *je ne sais quoi* – that feeling that one knows it, and knows it *so* well and *so* deeply, and yet is unable to say what it is that one knows!).

Endless anticipation, expectation, a lusted desiring...

Endless frustration, falling short or to the side, inevitable (inherent even?) failing, shortcoming, irresolution.

These are the tools of the trade. The writer’s apparatus.

A caveat: from time to time I’ll wager to say we all of us take in some language or sound, vision or world that seems “just,” feels ripe, adequate, full and exact to the perception of

our experience. This is wondrous, thrilling, satiating, “ecstatic,” a moment’s completion, wholeness, perhaps.

Yet is it? What does the masterful painting, the pregnant poem, the echoing song or fulfilling experience result toward? Yes, toward, not “in.” Not arrival but generation, bursts of multiplications of words, sounds, sights and movements now invigoratingly fueled and stimulated – fecund to go on...for more...fuller...richer...or even repeat!?

“Such then, would be my task, to respond to...speech that passes my understanding, to respond to it without having really heard it, and to respond to it in repeating it, in making it speak...To name the possible, to respond to the impossible. I remember that we had designated in this way the two centers of gravity of all language...Why two to say one thing? - Because the one who says it is always the other...”

- Maurice Blanchot, *The Infinite Conversation* -