

David Trinidad

“Ordinary Time”

My first two weeks in New York (August 1988), Raymond Foye let me stay at his apartment on Ninth Street (near Sixth Avenue) until my sublet in Brooklyn was ready. The apartment actually belonged to art figure Henry Geldzahler (whom I'd met earlier that year with Raymond when they showed me the pool David Hockney had painted at the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel). Raymond's bedroom was on the basement level, along with the laundry room, kitchen, dining area, and living room, which opened on a dark, walled-in garden. Art covered all of the walls. In Raymond's room there was a small Warhol—one of his flower paintings; I felt privileged to sleep in the same room with it. In the living room, the TV sat on a Brillo Box. Raymond was with Henry on Long Island, so I had the place to myself. Eileen visited me there. She showed me her poem “Hot Night” and the little essay she'd written about it. I was entranced (being brand new in New York) by the idea of stepping out into the night, into the city, “of going out to get a poem, like hunting.” Tim Dlugos also visited me there. After admiring the art, he drove me (in his mother's car; she'd died of leukemia the previous year) to New Haven, where he had just moved to attend Yale Divinity School. He wanted me to see his new living quarters (the bottom floor of a house on Rowe Street). We ate lunch in town. I bought a gray T-shirt with “Yale” on it. I'd grown my hair long and, in my left ear, sported a gold stud. (Before I left L.A., Bob Flanagan pierced it for me. I recently learned that there are photographs in Sheree Rose's archive at USC; I'd forgotten she documented it.) The following spring, Tim would commemorate my Yale T-shirt and long hair in “Ordinary Time,” a poem about going out to eat after an AA meeting in Manhattan; both Eileen and I appear in it. More importantly, though, it's about the intensity (and clarity) of the “eternal present”—the spiritual awareness that frees him from the confines of ordinary time. Tim captures, in words, the magic (“something / that shines through the things / I make and do and say”), and the momentary communion among friends. All well and good for him. But not enough light for me to see the dark road ahead. My enmity with Eileen. (When I sought Tim's counsel, he was in the AIDS ward at Roosevelt Hospital. “Well,” he said, “Eileen can be prickly.”) Then the finality of Tim's death.

Back at Raymond's, I wrote my first poem as a resident of New York, "Driving Back from New Haven," about a moment on the Merritt Parkway when, after taking an AZT pill ("Poison," he mutters under his breath), Tim and I discuss his health. I wrote it because Michael Klein asked me for work for an AIDS anthology. I sent it to Tim first, with a note: "Please like this." "Was I really that angry?" he asked. But gave his blessing. One morning, I made a cup of tea and set it on Geldzahler's midcentury modern dining table. Blond wood. It left a circle—a permanent stain—which I obsessed about. Ultimately I didn't say anything, moved to Brooklyn hoping they wouldn't notice, or not know that I was the careless houseguest who left the mark.

Last month, thirty years after Tim wrote "Ordinary Time," I received a postcard from Walter Holland: "Happy 50th Pride! Went to hear Stonewall Legacy Reading of Poetry last night in Bryant Park. Don Yorty read Tim Dlugos' 'Ordinary Time' & I thought of you & Eileen Myles & East Village days."

All of the References to Beer in Bernadette Mayer's *The Desires of Mothers to Please Others in Letters*

for Tony Trigilio

I'm drinking some awful cheap beer called Red White & Blue made by Pabst

Demeter later invented beer.

Demeter's consequent invention of beer

Claire's picnic which was full of strangers and food, even raspberries and chocolate cream pies and beer and ice cream

had a few beers

cans of beer

rolling rock!

I drink beer, sweet satchels of beer, some of it's bad beer

did I tell you how cheap cigarettes are in New Hampshire, cigarettes and beer

I hid my beer, it was the Molson, the Octoberfest you gave me hadn't been bad either

Bill C. is always saying, do you want another brewsky Bernie?

there are chemicals in the beer

beer

No Rheingold beer up here

To lose your job is to be free, only you can't get beer or beans

I feel guilty for drinking a few beers

you are forbidden from now on to drink any beer

It's colder outside than it is in the refrigerator so you can put the beer on the windowsill

We've had no real snow yet though we've stashed a supply of food, cigarettes and beer for being snowed in on this pretty echoing mountain.

the beers in gold cans

the beer capsizes on my cotton skirt

Molson Golden

The part of my house that keeps the beer coldest at this time of year is not the refrigerator

they write about cigarettes and beer and grass

if the beer freezes will the pipes

Golden England College mugs to drink beer from

I throw the beer bottle into the trash, it bangs against another one

WATER, BEER AND A DEER

I pride myself on drinking another beer at a time like this

Now Sophia's in a smaller box that says Michelob on it.

got the paper & some beer

TEN YEARS TILL THE NEXT BEER

taste of the metal beer

should I try a beer, will the beer lessen the chance for contractions I aspire to tonight