

CONCRETE CONSCIOUSNESS

As of September 2024, the demolition of the Boston Center Garage is almost complete. The disappearance of the 1960s brutalist concrete structure is not only a relief to the inhabitants of Boston who found it incredibly ugly, but also desired by developers who want to rebuild on its valuable land. Where one half of the old garage once stood, six new towers will take its place. The remaining half of the garage is retained, creating a dialogue between a newborn character and an old one, co-existing on the site. The tension between the optimism and the dissociation of each is palpable...

How it feels to be concrete: The point of conception is when three ingredients come together: aggregate, water, and cement. At the moment when these elements are combined, an irreversible chemical process is initiated and the many specks of sand and dust and hydrogen atoms and oxygen atoms transform into one new thing: a solid, monolithic mass of concrete. In other words, a new, singular soul has been created from the many. Each continuous pour of concrete is a new character, a new consciousness originated from that singular moment of hot, chemical process. The arrow of time and lived experience for that concrete flows out from this point of origin.

I am the new concrete, freshly-poured at the old site of the Boston Center Garage. Still warm from the chemical process of hydration, I feel whole, intact, and strong.

Concrete's physical being is extremely strong and could outlast almost any natural rock; besides the slow natural weathering of being exposed to the elements, it is practically indestructible. The natural wearing down of concrete granules is gradual and relatively painless. But concrete, from the moment it was poured into one continuous soul, actually retains a piece of its consciousness in every fragment that is broken off. In instances of human-powered demolition, which is abrupt, violent, and results in the creation of many concrete fragment orphans, the experience is extremely painful and soul-splitting.

I am the half of the concrete that survived the demolition of the Boston Center Garage, but I feel half-alive. The other half of me, the one that is missing, was shattered into pieces and taken away. Every fragment still contains a piece of my broken consciousness that I continue to inhabit. I suffer from the splitting of my identity into multiples: I am the large, jagged chunks in the Middleborough landfill 45 miles away, but I also am the multitude of tiny granules in the road paving Highway 93 in East Milton, and I

am also the crushed pieces in the rose garden in Gagnon Park... and on it goes.

SCRAPS

It sometimes seems that that story is approaching its end. (1)

Do you have old furniture, appliances, electronics, tires, construction debris, or yard waste you need to make disappear? (2)

Hence it is with a certain feeling of urgency that I seek the nature, subject, words of the other story, the untold one, the life story. (3)

We make junk disappear! (4)

Histories, pictures, stories, anything. (5) It is the story that makes the difference. (6)

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For sale by owner > materials

Bowling Alley Wood
RECLAIMED BOWLING ALLEY WOOD (7)

Octagon Window
Cool Octagon Window. Opens. (8)

1.5" thick Formica countertops
Used countertops for new life in garage or basement workshop areas. (9)

Ladder A shaped
About 6-7 feet. Gently used. Wooden. (10)

REDUCED MAILBOX SLOT
PROTECT YOUR MAIL FROM BEING STOLEN WITH THIS NEVER USE STILL IN ITS BOX NEEDS LITTLE LOOKING AFTER AND DOES NOT DEGRADE IN APPEARANCE OR FUNCTION WITH USE (11)

Various Used Lumber Board

Purchased and used in September only once. (12)

Sink stainless steel 25"

Gently used. (13)

Huge Victorian Birdseye Maple Fireplace Mantel

This was removed from an upstate N.Y. Home earlier this Summer where it had been since around 1890. The largest mantel we have had in years. (14)

Framed and beveled mirrors

Recovered from a Boston Ice Cream/Sandwich shop (15)

Antique cake, muffin, pie stand

Great for thanksgiving (16)

Red bricks City Hall pavers

Installed for a few weeks, but the color did not match our intentions... (17)

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...a way of trying to describe what is in fact going on, what people actually do and feel, how people relate to everything else in this vast sack, this belly of the universe, this womb of things to be and tomb of things that were, this unending story. (18)

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Ursula K. Le Guin, The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction

1-800-Got-Junk? The World's Largest Junk Removal Service

Ursula K. Le Guin, The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction

1-800-Got-Junk? The World's Largest Junk Removal Service

Ursula K. Le Guin, The Dispossessed

Ursula K. Le Guin, The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction

<https://boston.craigslist.org/gbs/mad/d/bowling-alley-wood-multiple-sizes/7791307044.html>

<https://boston.craigslist.org/bmw/mat/d/hudson-octagon-window/7788056720.html>

<https://boston.craigslist.org/bmw/mat/d/grafton-15-thick-formica-countertops/7785327057.html>

<https://boston.craigslist.org/bmw/mat/d/westwood-ladder-shaped/7785797562.html>
<https://boston.craigslist.org/nwb/mat/d/swampscott-reduced-mail-box-slot/7790339018.html>
<https://boston.craigslist.org/nos/mat/d/georgetown-various-used-lumber-board/7787965672.html>
<https://boston.craigslist.org/bmw/mat/d/dover-sink-stainless-steel-25-wide/7790108662.html>
<https://boston.craigslist.org/gbs/mat/d/canaan-huge-victorian-birdseye-maple/7785841939.html>
Post not found
<https://boston.craigslist.org/sob/atq/d/hanson-antique-cake-muffin-pie-stand/7785396035.html>
<https://boston.craigslist.org/nos/mat/d/newburyport-red-bricks-city-hall-pavers/7791559068.html>
Ursula K. Le Guin, The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction

WOODEN DOOR

Newly-formed wooden doors are coming fresh off the factory belt, ready to be put on a truck and transported to the Lowe's, except this one door, it's not identical to the others and it won't be sellable, unfortunately, ~~so it will be put through the factory incinerator to cut costs.~~ but a discount door will sell, it will be sold at half-price and used as the door to the basement instead, where its factory defect (a small, cut-off corner, like a dog-eared page of a book) is not bothersome day-to-day, and actually helpful when guests need to get something from the basement and are instructed to go down the hall and look for the door with the missing corner, an instruction that will be given for the next four years until the basement is renovated and the door, still intact except for its missing corner, is put out on the curb with the rest of the drywall bits and the smashed-up 2x4s ~~so that the construction waste removal service can pick them up and bring them to the landfill.~~ just in time for a passerby taking a walk on the street to look past the pile of trash the way that people habituated to seeing piles of trash on the street always do, but to do a double-take for a door with a little missing corner, to love that the corner of the door is missing because in a world where every piece of wood comes in a four-sided shape, this one is in a pentagon, so the missing-corner-lover takes the pentagon home to put some trestle legs underneath it and using it as a table, it's not the flattest surface to put plates on and to pour wine into glasses on but out on the balcony the door-table's six rectangular panels hold little rectangular plant pots of basil and mint, until it's time to move and the door-table can't come along

and is ~~thrown into the big metal dumpster behind the apartment building where everyone puts the things that can't come along, the things that they don't want to look at anymore.~~ put on Craigslist and a contractor who doesn't look that closely at the listing drives thirty-five miles out to pick up the door-table to use it in a new house that's under construction, only to realize, cussing, that the door-table doesn't fit in the Camry, and on top of that it has a little missing piece in the corner that will give away that this isn't a new door in an otherwise new house, ~~and actually just abandons the door-table right then and there by the side of the apartment building dumpster.~~ but drove all this way and won't let this trip be a complete waste of time and money, so takes a hand saw from the car to cut eight inches off the door-table so that it now fits in the car, and this will be a big enough wood at least to close up a a hole in the living room ceiling instead, and the door-table gets to live on in the ceiling now, the decorative door-panels unintentionally making a coffered ceiling now, and the little notch in the corner not an unwelcome addition because it allows for a small light to sit inside and illuminate the triangular gap, and actually this ceiling lasts for a long time until an extreme flooding event moistens and destroys most of the pieces of the house, including the door-table-ceiling panel, and only then, finally, is the door-table-ceiling taken to the landfill and laid to rest, but just because it cannot be seen anymore, just because it's buried under thousands of pounds of debris, doesn't mean that this sentence is allowed to end...

GOODBYE, BUILDING

2027:

The cranes have arrived at the demolition site and at this point there is no turning back. The wheels of Belgian bureaucracy have been turning for decades to transform the offices of the *Radio Télévision Belge Francophone*—an old, concrete building from 1974—into its vision for a shiny, new complex. Years of planning, getting approvals, and 71 million euros have been poured into the project, meaning that no force can reverse the demolition now...

Everything has already been emptied out of the building: electronics, people, copper wiring, and any other materials that are still worth something. What isn't worth something is left for the cranes to turn into dust. The crane is in position and the arm is reaching for the first part of the building: the roof. They will work systematically from top to bottom until the site is a

flat, dusty heap of rubble. What appeared to be a solid, immovable mass will be made to crumble like a dry cookie under the mechanical, unstoppable force of the crane.

In flashbacks, just moments before its death, the building wonders: What led to this moment? When did the demolition really start? At what point was my death decided?

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Was it in the early 2010s, when the government of the Brussels-Capital Region drew up a Master Development Plan for a *renewed, mixed, open, lively district, focused on the media and creative industries*? And in the undertones of the lively words, sent a message that *this old building does not fit into our vision, this old building will have to go*?

Was it in 2015, when the architect showed the renderings for a new design, a shiny, white building, to replace the old one? So that no one comparing the two buildings, looking between the ugly, water-stained, gray concrete and the white, glassy facade could argue that the old one shouldn't come down?

Or was it in the early 1970s, when the original architect designed an inflexible, hulking concrete building that would cast shadows and darkness on its inhabitants, that was destined to become dated within 40 years? Was it then that the building's death was decided?

Did the death sentence come in 2020, when the results of an inspection were released reporting that there was asbestos inside of the stairwells?

Or was it in 1875, when asbestos was starting to be industrially manufactured in insulation, where the harms wouldn't be discovered for another century of humans breathing it in? Where installations of insulation were planting harm in innocent buildings everywhere, passing along the blame to unknown carriers of a disease?

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The crane takes its first bite out of a corner where the roof meets an exterior wall. Pieces of concrete and rebar are flying off, the building starting to disintegrate at that edge.

WAYS OF KNOWING LIMESTONE

I'm in an anthropocene moment when I am in aisle 15 at Home Depot buying limestone for \$856.95 a pound. The limestone in this aisle is a square-ish block shape, intended to be used for outdoor floor surfaces or garden walls, according to the catalog photos. The blocks don't bear much resemblance to the natural stone you would find in the quarry, but they are scored and unscored units that combine to make a 3-piece system. All around me are other types of limestone blocks and pavers that aren't real limestone at all - they are concrete made to look like limestone and they have limestone in the name tag: RockWall Large 7 in. L x 17.44 in. W x 6 in. H Limestone Concrete Retaining Wall Block. The fact that "limestone" is worth calling out as an advertisement to make the wall blocks more sell-able makes me wonder where and when it was decided that limestone-esque was a desirable trait in our blocks. I don't know which quarry the blocks come from, but I do know that they are for curved or straight walls. I can return this item within 90 days of purchase but the limestone will never return back to its real source.

Other ways of knowing me: tiny fossils and shell fragments were captured in my body as sea creatures decayed and compressed on the ocean floor. You may see me as one solid entity, to be carved up for your use, because your eyes are not able to perceive the many bodies, but I know I am the combination of every creature that has been compressed to form me. I have been in the process of formation for the last 200 million years, a witness to the drastic changes to the earth and the species that live on it, but you look for consistency in my color.

LIMINAL REFUSE ZONE

A *liminal refuse zone* is a space, usually adjacent to human dwellings, designated for the temporary storage of unused or unwanted objects while the possessor hesitates about whether to dispose of the object permanently or to hold on to it "just in case". It can also be called *object purgatory*; an in-between space where objects are neither designated as *usable* or *trash*. A *liminal refuse zone* may take up a partial or entire area of a space originally designated as *garage*, *closet*, *yard*, or *balcony*. The spaces are outside of the primary dwelling area, but remain on the property of the owner so that the

objects cannot be accessed by the public or the greater community (this is a different form of object-exchange behavior, see *stooping*, *thrift*ing, *Craigslist*).

The object-storage behavior in a *liminal refuse zone* differs from instances of objects being kept in the primary dwelling spaces of a human because of emotional attachment, despite the lack of function or need for that object (see *tchotchkes*) or excessive storage of objects because of the irrational inability to let go of them (see *hoarding*). Instead, this type of liminal storage behavior is found in humans that lack resources and therefore cannot afford to let go of objects, or humans that are aware of an overall decline in natural resources in the world and don't want to further contribute to the large piles of refuse accumulating in their environment (see *landfills*).

In the *liminal refuse zone*, the fate of objects remains undecided. They wait in a state of purgatory for a time in which they might be needed again.

THE STICKY WINDOWS



The bedroom window is stuck in its frame.

"I'M BOILING" my boyfriend screams from the bed as I struggle to open the window. It's the first winter since my father moved into this old house and he had, without knowing how the heating system would hold up to the Connecticut cold, inadvertently blasted the heat in the house before we all went to bed making it so that by 2 a.m.--

"I'M MELTING" my boyfriend wails as I sweatily push and push against the sticking operable window frame, with its decades of white paint caked on the edges preventing the frame from sliding up.

"I'M BURNING UP" he hollers as I consider smashing my fist through the thin, single pane of glass that is standing between us and the sweet, sweet relief of the cold night air.

Craigslist listing:

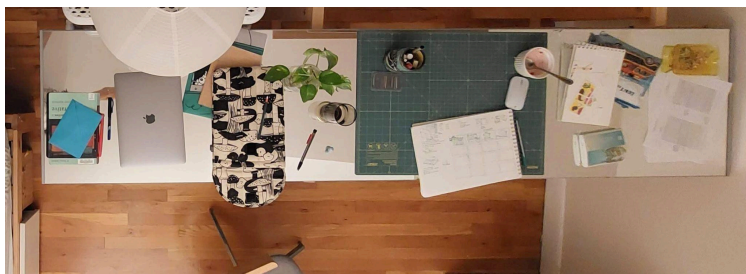
Vintage 1920's window.

Not operable anymore due to paint build-up in the frame. One pane is missing (recent damage), but it can be repaired with a small piece of glass if you are crafty.

21 1/2" x 36" x 2 1/2" dimensions.

\$20 OB0. Pick up in Wilton, CT

THE MIRRORED WARDROBE DOORS



Special care instructions for mirrored wardrobe doors that have been reused as a desk:

1. A mirrored wardrobe door that was designed to be hung off a hinge vertically will immediately start to bow when laid horizontally between two table leg trestle support points. Support the mirrored wardrobe door by placing a long, rigid support underneath, such as a leftover 2x4 from a friend in the neighborhood or a long piece of wood from a discarded bed frame left in the street.

2. Buy Windex. Learn to enjoy the frequent but meditative wiping down of the mirrored tops if you want to avoid a grimy look.
3. Be aware that the mirrored-wardrobe-door-desk reflects everything you set on it, giving the appearance of double the papers, double the workload, double the number of dirty mugs you left on its surface because you were so busy with the workload.
4. When you need to move to a new place with your mirrored wardrobe doors, you will have to bubble wrap every inch of its surface to keep it from sustaining any damage in the move. Wrap it in soft towels for good measure too.
5. When your boyfriend comes to stay with you for a few weeks and uses your mirrored-wardrobe-door-desk, you can expect to see some cracks appear on its surface. It was only meant for the gentlest touch, which only you, having carried the doors yourself, can comprehend.

VANITY



A dresser admiring itself in the mirror

THE CANVAS

A canvas has been left out on the street one night. Your paths intersect as you're walking home from the neighborhood Thai place with some friends and it's gently starting to snow.



The middle of the canvas has been cut out of its frame, leaving just a border of black paint marks to hint at its past. Who painted this? Was it any good? Did it get cut out because it was beautiful and needed to be reframed on a better canvas and shown in the Whitney? Or was it a failed painting, slashed out of its frame in rage and shame? And what was the painting even of? The black splatters on the edges of the canvas don't give much away, but your mind wanders.

An expressive, gestural piece of black paint. The artist likes to get through five of these at the beginning of each day, quick pieces that don't.... There was going to be a painting of a dark night sky. An abstract painting of a dark night sky, the canvas meticulously filled with fine brushes of black paint layered on top of each other until they blend into one black solid.

A portrait of a fair-skinned man whose features were best complemented if painted against a dark background. A friend of the artist's had agreed to pose for the painting out of goodwill, but he did not have the heart to tell his artist friend that the painting wasn't very good in the end. He accepts the portrait graciously at the end of the session.

Snow begins to collect on the top of the canvas, out there on the street. There is too much unresolved mystery to leave it for the garbage trucks to pick up in the morning.



At first you hang it on your bedroom wall as a joke (get it, the artless canvas on display), but the torn up canvas edges and its mysterious past emanate too much of a haunted feeling when you turn off the lights to sleep. The next morning, you take some scissors to it and fully cut the canvas off the wooden frame, saving the frame from the painting's curse.

In the end, the wooden frame on its own works well for hanging your washed socks and panties out to dry.

LIL PIPE



