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Fig. 1. Hieronymus Bosch, *Ship of Fools* (1490–1500)

TRANSFER QUEEN (MALE FIGURE DRAWINGS FROM THE NYC SUBWAY). Copyright © 2018 by A.W. Strouse and Patty Barth. This work carries a Creative Commons BY-NC-SA 4.0 International license, which means that you are free to copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format, and you may also remix, transform and build upon the material, as long as you clearly attribute the work to the authors (but not in a way that suggests the authors or punctum books endorses you and your work), you do not use this work for commercial gain in any form whatsoever, and that for any remixing and transformation, you distribute your rebuild under the same license. http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/

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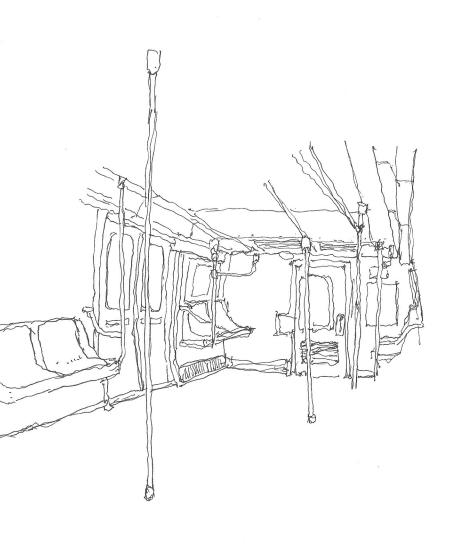


A.W. Strouse with drawings by Patty Barth



I'm obsessed with taking public transportation. I read about a guy in L.A. who rides the buses just to pick up people. A 'transfer queen'?

— John Waters



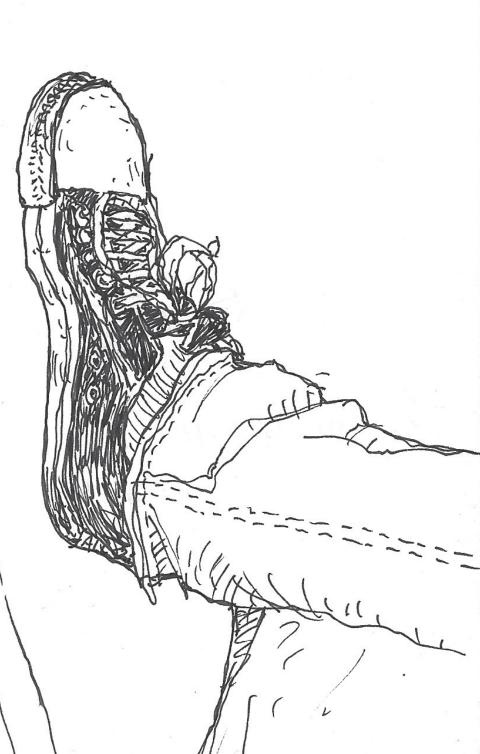
although i can tell (with his hand down his trousers) that he is scratching his butthole, my muse will not believe me



bearded men who trim their necks high (this gym rat, for example) i file under "botched circumcisions" construction worker crosses his legs leaning against the pole his fat ass way passed due as this guy picks a molar his attempt at secrecy prolongs the dive awakening from an 8-stop nap he immediately fellates a NUTRAGRAIN bar jailbait in a v-neck bats his eyes but i aint going down that-a-way



muslim boy in a skirt beside an older brother wears only one glove that dandy in the polka-dot fedora sports a non-foppish tote from any old DUANE READE whatever he mumbles causes his girlfriend to scream



biting an unopened, travel-sized ALKA-SELTZER pack, he seems content

if his restless leg unnerves me
— the man in aviators —
more unnerving still:
his shaking leg stops.

like a trappist, he slips his left arm in his right sleeve, his right in the left

i tell him that he dropped his glove on the seat but he believes i have instructed him to place his Chihuahua next to me reading horatian odes, he doesn't look up to catch my yearning



rapping about how he gonna kill all dem niggas, he tastes the feeling from a polar-bear COKE can in backwards cap studying a periodic table he smells like a hoagie "so, after six hours you take a shower?" he confirms on his smartphone then walks to the next car it might be rude to offer my seat to this old, buff dude gym shorts and moccasins with sweater and jean jacket he's a hanging chad



hasidic don Juan for whom even moses would break the law

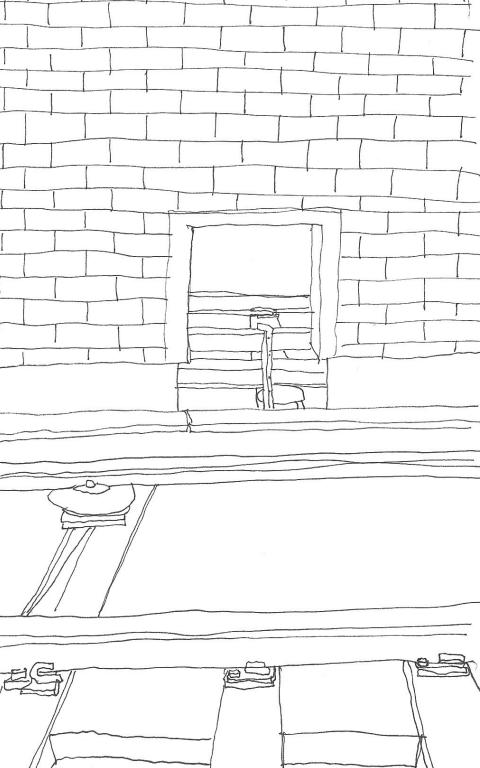
bloodshot eyes in ADIDAS sweats, this pothead wants my D

jammed in the seat by a fat lady he holds two gloves, one phone reading DEATH IN VENICE, he's headed down to battery park CARHARTT coat and skintight jeans, he must be somebody's pinch-hitter i always pay the showtime boys for commute's little pleasures cute show-time boy spreads his legs, hangs upside-down: no front teeth



there's a weird bump like an ear, on his ear, and his pupils suggest sincerity since NIKE bought CHUCKS, their semiotic stock remains in flux

downcast in a faded sweatshirt he's fated not to know a woman's touch if not the designer change purse, then the heavy mediterranean eyelids signalize wantonness i don't care that this teenage show-time poll-dancer is only sixteen, except he hasn't learned to douche

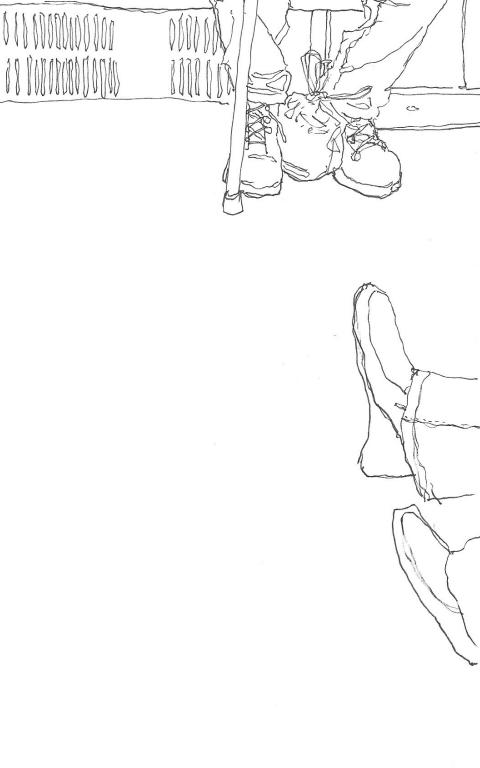


like an art, he practices the off-the-cuff misanthropy of an un-offered seat in olive coat with golden buttons he unbuttons his shirt starting to sweat POLAR EXPRESS cap,
he sits at an angle
turned toward
a newspaper reader
without, however, appearing to know her

cruising this guy, i didn't notice for fourteen stops his wedding ring sternly scruffy-jowled with burnished loafers, he is like an unworthwhile potato



some white dude who looks like my hot cousin sean contra natura are his haphazard blowfish smooches wearing the bleary-eyed hang-over of frat-dude repression he tastes the throw-up brewing like my old pet collie, his dark eyelashes look like eyeliner because the dude at the end of the car who is spewing bibimbap all over the floor deserves a little privacy, i will not write a poem on him



asleep standing up he licks his lips dreaming stock options in the land of lakes legs askance and torso turned, arching neck and twisting arm, feet at angles, texting quick—he's an easy target for my love

sneering at his facebook friends, the DL boy makes me hard



embroidered rose lining in his black leather jacket complicates my view that his pasty nordic face connotes RIEFENSTAHL tight leather pants and elevated shoes suggest a pussy pleaser bobbing his head to invisible music, he gives me the finger with his eyes

earmuffs and a notebook probably indicate a vatic sensitivity

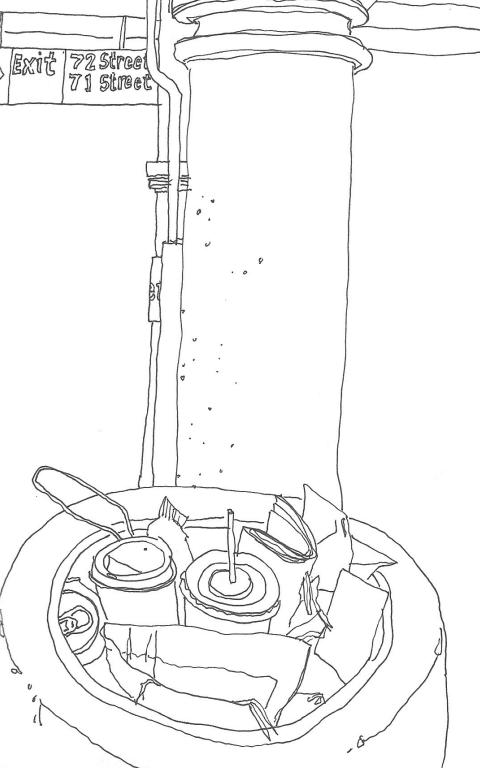
beneath his mets cap and his ray charles sunglasses, all chin



another note-taker surveys the scene sucking his pen cap, a pacifier this teenage boy with patchy beard looks just like TRAYVON reading his box of prescription toothpaste the infidel begs silent forgiveness

chubby buddha he is at one but falls asleep and cracks his phone as i spy on his crotch inspecting for gradation i receive no appreciation for my ocular blow men on the platform (even cuties who smoke blunts waiting for the C) are not eligible for my book wrapped in a winter scarf he burns with an innocence i must destroy asian man in sunglasses and a racing suit smells like patchouli

between the crowd of bundled passengers he peers at my crotch with jeepers creepers where you get dem peepers boy



aller and broader than me, the high-yellow boy whose freckles nspire envy

something about this stranger suggests to me today he radically altered his hairstyle — i gotta switch trains

hair slicked back like DONALD TRUMP, JR. — the same, dick-sucking pout

arab boy decked out like a dreadlock rasta: god bless america short scrawny white boy in giant overcoat, neanderthal features, a zen-like indifference



in shorts in december with gauged ears

what a waste of fag potential: the dumpy homo in pleated pants scratching his chin, the philosopher in the yankees cap

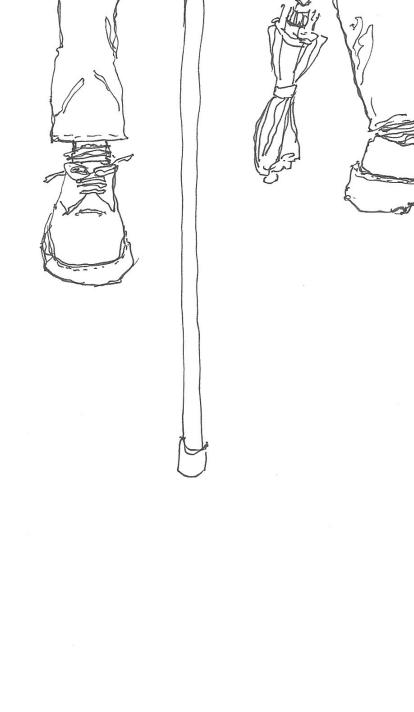
turned up waxed stache his perfect posture habituated to a snarky mommy jowly, pocky, wrinkly but cleanly shaven the elderly bicycle deliveryman



rugged slavic features and big fur hat no jolly disposition an apparition in the crowd: marijuana leaf-print on drop-crotch sweats fright-wig hair and prune face: a kind of subway hitchhiker thick neck beard with faded cheek beard tilting his head per aspera ad astra do-rag projecting uneasy tenderness



high-lighting every word of RICHARD II an over-eager joe college decidedly performing his disinterest with blasé baseball cap peroxide blonde japanese buzzcut, inexplicably masculine another white dude who looks like my hot cousin sean straightened hair with WIFE OF BATH teeth definitely a fruit



ELDER FOWLER the mormon missionary with a taste for espresso teenage boy with bowler and horn-rimmed glasses studying the cosmos teenage homo: greased, thinning hair and cum on his breath



construction worker with aquiline nose — not on the menu

in his front pants pocket a pack of MARLBORO REDS, lightly overbitten lips pince-nez specs in defiance of his musculature

NYPD one-hundred percent all-american beef unlikely candidate for handcuffing three hip-hop show-time subway teens twerking and popping with no latent homosexual content whatsoever



mouthing words to his headphones with eyes rolling along in J-train ecstasy

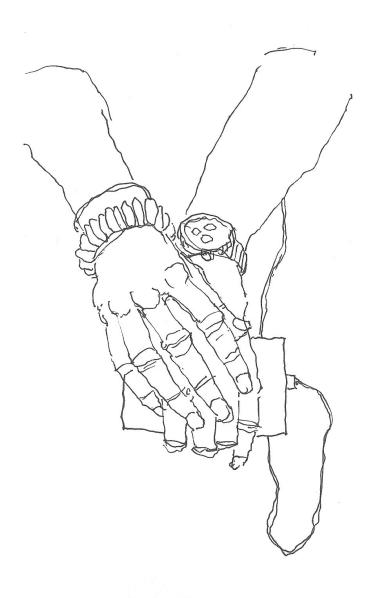
showing his ass giving an angry eyeroll dread-headed mailman with wide-spread knees sipping the MINUTE MAID APPLE JUICE of midlife regret leans into his iPhone with head in hands: she aint texting back

poncho with highlighter, college-ruled paper playing hard-to-get



some guy in love with his own reflection in the filthy subway window a middle-aged straight plumber on PrEP for the weekend a dude who looks like my hot cousin sean in a yale t-shirt asian twink with a GUCCI purse — fat-assed like nobody's business

old geezer with blinged-out dope cap checking emails



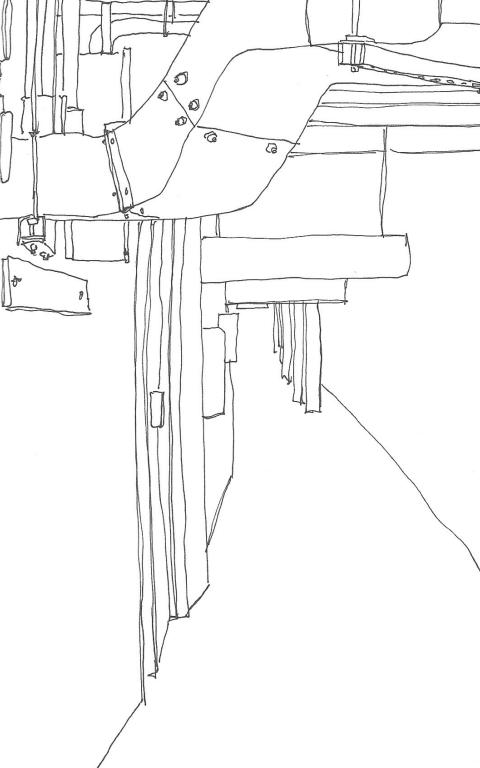
specs on the tip of his schnoz spying on neighbors the old man with mud on his thighs selling welch's fruit snacks in aluminum flip-flops, somehow post-sexual bad posture like slouchy gym socks



twelve wicker baskets stacked in a sack with his legs folded, prim, his brow folded, mad in Kmart shirt, freaky-deaky listening to CHICAGO on his iphone (the musical, not the band): the d.l. chubby-chaser

shining bourgeois teeth skimming GRUNDRISSE

beside his lanky, buck-toothed sister with sibling nonchalance: the towering, lanky, buck-toothed older brother



biting the inside of his cheek, caressing the outside of his cheek: an inscrutable case of itchy cheek syndrome so much gel in his unstyled hair nodding at whatever his straight friend says impeccably trimmed beard but rough, ashy skin — into PnP



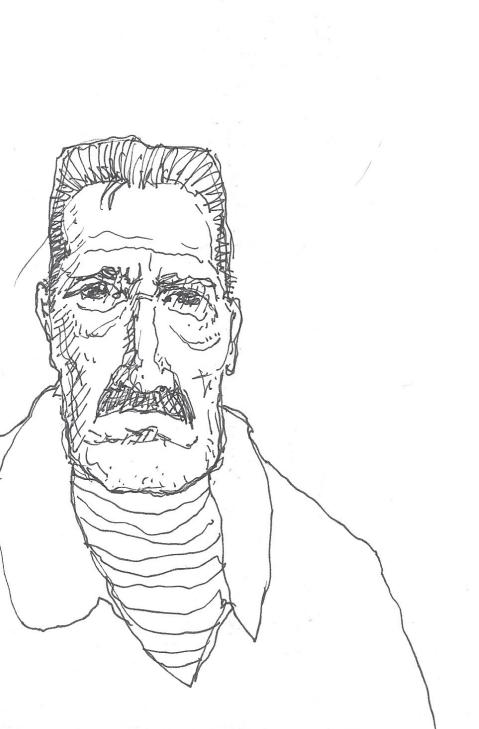
thumbs flitting gracefully playing CRASH BANDICOOT — IRL, a bad mamma jamma

twink with a comb-over, desiring this man's art, that man's ass

narrow eyes and a little Richard stache—like me, a transfer queen

his uneven stache and lewd gestures: the decline of the west

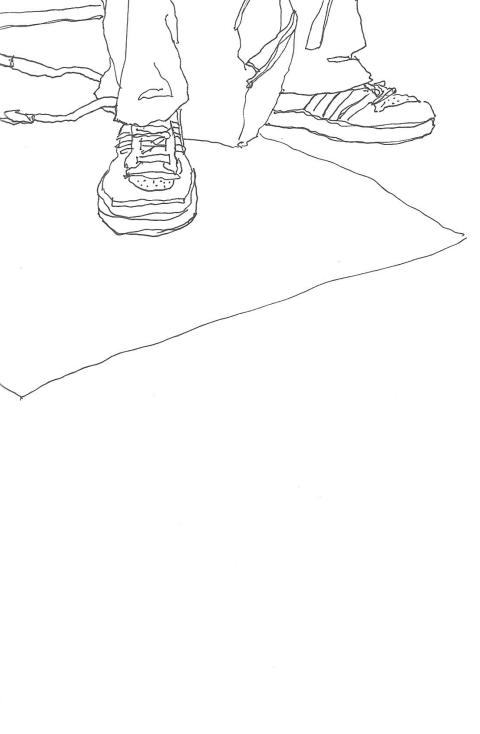
his brontosaurus trapezes credit a deep-throated complacency



his steely squint says
I AINT AFRAID
OF YER DONG
then slaps his hand
on his girlfriend's crotch

his glasses are too large for a crew cut so short

his pizza delivery backpack prepares him for a pizza safari his eyes linger on another man's texts with quiet dignity his sidelocks long and lush, his squint overfull with non-kosher angst



his little leather tote: a coat of many colors

his pants are rolled up but his cap pulled down, indifferent to libido's call his restless leg syndrome in a three-piece suit is an index of a hungry hole

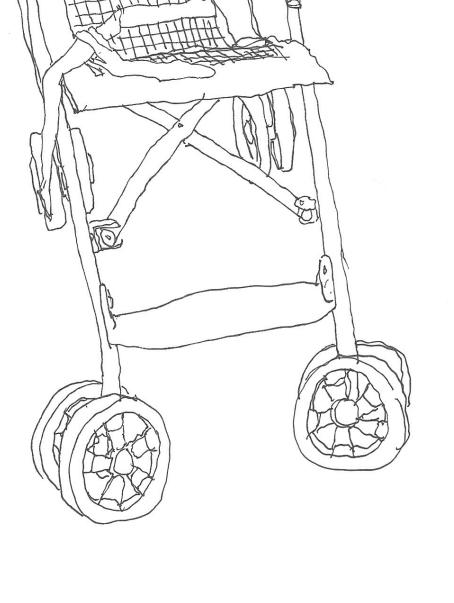


his pronounced lean and pencil-thin eyebrows suggest impotence his yellow hat belongs to his dad or his daddy his dour, turned-down lip and harsh brows cry out to the lord: he's a bottom



his lip-ring looks like a fishhook

his cornrows say G, but his chapstick says mama's boy his beard is square across the cheek, semiotically vexed and quite unattractive



his frizzy hair and chubby face make him look tetched: TELL ME ABOUT THE RABBITS, GEORGE his bandana divides his hair and his eyes like some brechtian mode of alienation always already recuperated his canvas bag says
COLUMBIA,
giving the lie
to an histrionic pompadour



his dorky subway sunglasses defy both function and style indicating substance abuse his bike basket reads LAW & ORDER SPECIAL VICTIMS UNIT: FILM CREW THIS VEHICLE IS FOR OFFICIAL THEATRICAL BUSINESS his head is cocked like a nervous pheasant with a lute between his knees



his shapely clavicle is below the age of my muse's consent his backward golf cap and quarterback hunch articulate masochism his soft chin and the one strand of bang on his forehead intimate benevolent patrician in a COOKIE-MONSTER blue fur coat and lime green, filthy tennis shoes he plays CANDY CRUSH with pavlovian predictability a bear with coffee probably wearing (underneath his office corduroys) a studded cockring a teased-out, space-age afro-puff on a teenage boy with tears in his eyes a chubby cherokee in a bullwinkle hat explains to his fag-hag the establishment clause



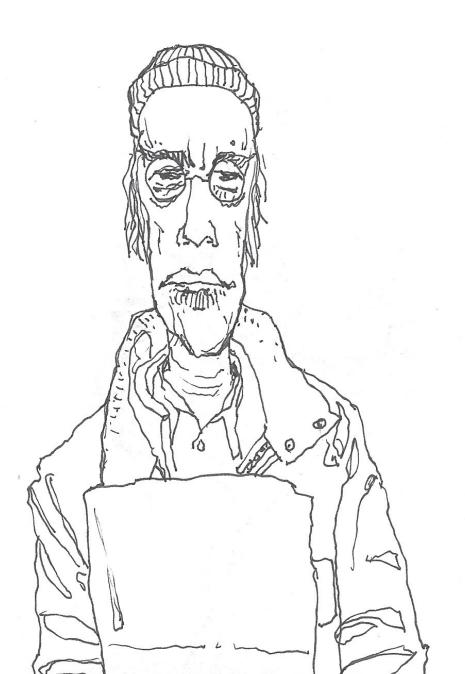
a scholar with orange spectacles mouthing the words of a JSTOR essay

a crusty with a carry-out thing of four starbucks

a high-fashion broach on his lapel probably means he's oral-only, the dora the explorer high-fashion broach on his boyfriend's lapel: a sign of codependence



a transparent purse fat with newspapers and gluesticks, fueling my suspicion



a roll of holiday snowflake gift wrap like a festive phallic scepter, rereading the POETRY IN MOTION poster a green-eyed sissy, diplomatic with his smartphone

an aristocratic slouch in shit-kicking heels



a bright red track-suit on a teenage brat

a well-fed prole in a red-knit cap who probably sports a chode a hollow-cheeked black with over-packed suitcase not bound for LAGUARDIA an angel-headed hipster destroyed by madness and OLD NAVY PERFORMANCE FLEECE a mohawked CRUSTY in a neckbrace laying on the floor yelling: it only takes 5 people 10 cents each to give a junkie 50 cents a scowling black nationalist who likes white dudes who rim him

a varsity letter jacket growing up to be a debaser



a jerry-curled boy asleep in a shawl like baby Jesus a pensive
DIESEL shopper
heading to the next car
makes a timely BREXIT

an unattended youth with LISA FRANK binder sends mixed signals



a panther beret and a pleated skirt: either a commie or faggot or both

a scruffy bookworm caught in a simple misunderstanding with his polka-dot loafers

the homeless man exposing himself performs a public service the man in paisley pursues the New York times crossword with a purple gel pen

the dark-skinned fellow with harpo marx peroxide puff kindly offers his seat the sidelocks of this hasidic bucher: NELLIE OLESON, arch-rival of LITTLE HOUSE the guy who cruised me (sashaying up and down the platform) now sits across and won't deign flirt



the pakistani kid with prematurely saltand-pepper hair belongs in my superpac commercial the dude in the hoodie smiles as he catches me writing my christmas list the old man, angry, dissertates aloud about blue lipstick the cartoon bumble-bee on his hat persuades me of his humanity

the shrunken-face teen is giving me the willies as he commits a misdemeanor



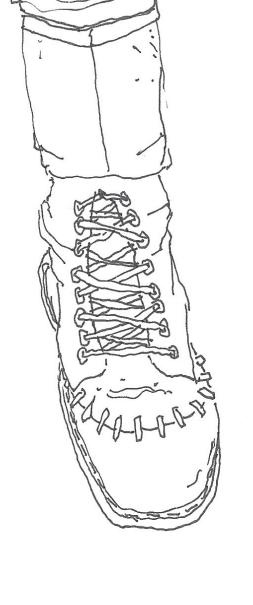
the gaping-mouth twinky arab boy with his two hirsute buddies pats his friend's thigh, intoning "habibi, habibi" the tattoo on his left hand may say MONEY TICKLES (but ink is hard to read on skin so dark)

the clean-cut, well-dressed catamite removes his gloves revealing his prison-tat knuckles



the pink-haired pixie boy kicks a stranger's bag just for the hell of it the frayed denim around the hole in his jeans at the knee he twists coquettishly the YANKEES fan who picks his nose while wearing one glove potentially barebacks

the bro with bangs poking out of his hat regrettably must explain to his girlfriend they missed their stop the pasty homo a MODIGLIANI in an H&M suit



the misfolded brim paradoxically shows *joie de vivre* the homeless, rail-thin white dude with a grocery bag of his own vomit works for the CIA the teenage wunderkind with a top-knot looks at me angrily like i just grounded him

the name tattooed around his throat is (from this distance) not quite legible, but i stare too long and he approaches with murder in his eyes the triangular cut on his nose in the shape of a cartoon nose



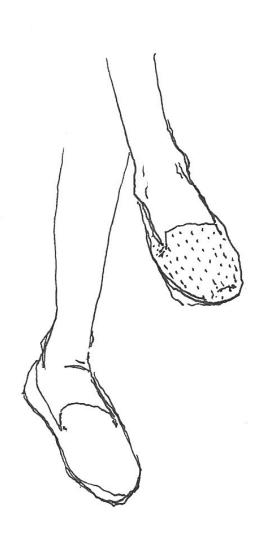
the bear with a crease on his nose bridge & stack of unopened mail: his baseball cap says sorry mom

the busking drummer tells us to have a blessed day but there's no guarantee the trim on his strap like an ancient phoenician trading ship hunkered down for some sexting



the rough-red stigmatism on his left eye takes the derivative of mid-life crisis over teenie-bopper cut-off tee the camus nose of a pakistani businessman recalls the <code>REEVE</code>'s Tale

the CRUSTY with a heart of gold has a worried mom back ST. LOUIS the long silver chain dangling from one back pocket to the other back pocket is a butt necklace the undershirt beneath his collared shirt cuts his neckline, revealing the calloused glans of circumcised straightness



the contrapposto of this Candy-Crusher is polymorphously perverted

the accordion panels in his drop-crotch jeans are mama's little squeeze box the rip in his pants — a window to his soul

the flesh rolls on his upper leg tightly bound in khakis appear to me like a pussy the strange flatness of his nose offsets and recomposes his lack of a chin until he is seen as classically beautiful like the marble bust of some demonic child emperor



he stuffs one napkin into his mother's coat pocket then blows a snot-load into his other napkin

he smiles wryly as he texts a friend: "i'm dumping her ass"

he carries his earbuds in his teeth having swallowed the red pill

he drinks from a paper coffee cup branded UFT forlorn pedagogue of unending whiteboards he's got that lone-gunman look as he caresses the back of the knee of some little wifey who's charged with re-directing his demons



he frowns determinedly composing a manifesto, a ski-mask framing his wine-dark lips he twists his lips, perplexed, but his eyes in placid focus beam inner peace he kind of squats to zip his fly with a pleased smile



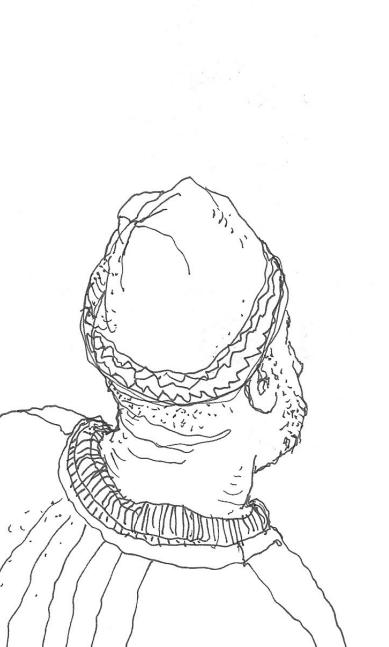
he taps his phone exactly how i'd tap his butt he tells his interlocutor that they must part ways at GRANDMA AVENUE he wears a lime and gray flannel shirt like the one I wore in a former life he looks like my student, Awn, (the hot pakistani chemistry major) but less hot than Awn because he hasn't shaved his patchy beard he presses his leg against mine, the horny teen playing MARIO CART, pwning some noobs he has a very small face and (with his hands in his pockets) disappears he keeps taking photos of himself, the nondescript guy whose carpenter's pencil tells the whole story he pursues the subway like personals ads, his expansive song-of-self

he wears cargo pants without any cargo



he is a J CREW editorial well-built and expertly tailored but biting his thumb nail he wears the sunglasses and dreads of a vietnam vet

he has his hands clasped behind his back like some french cabinet minister he wears a paint-splattered track suit as he reattaches a saint's medallion he's 42 but still admires HOLDEN CAULFIELD



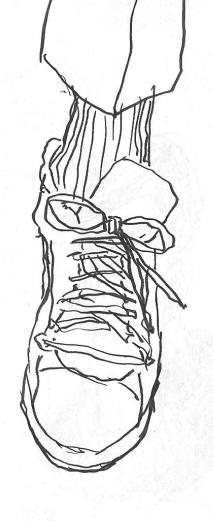
he twirls his pointer to an earbud song with sinister intent he is decked out in vestiges of feudal finery he watches a *parodia* vid on YOUTUBE with spanish subtitles i can barely translate he looks exactly like my ex-boyfriend (the one who got his eye beat out by a homeless man) but it's not him

(DREW has to wear an eyepatch now)

he glares at me, then dims his eyes—an enigma



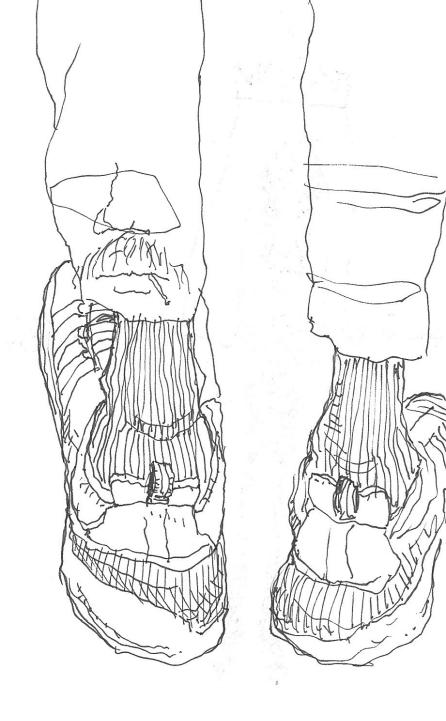
he holds his adam's apple with thumb and forefinger like an apotropaic talisman to ward off castration he talks loudly about his ex-girlfriend's suicide but i'm a sucker for man-splainers he has his priorities in order, scarfing kung-pow chicken he has a rosebush sleeve tat up his thick olive bicep: poor banished children of EVE he touches my leg with GRINDR open on his cellphone and gives me his number but has blue gums



he has the same faux-leather bag as me, but i'm gayer he will be unable to explain his marshalls splurge to penny-pinching wife

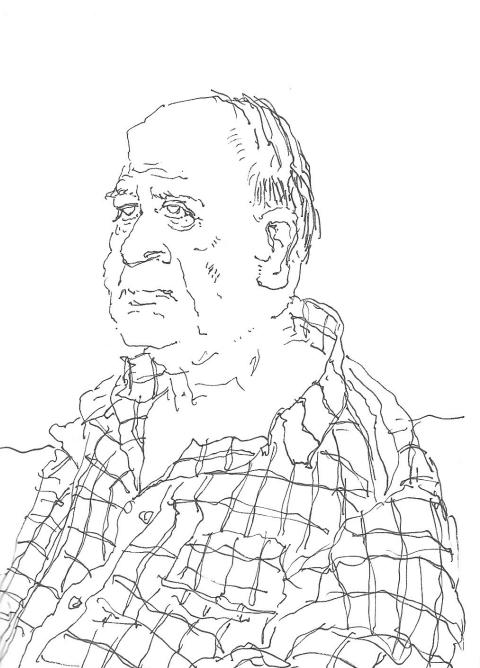
he rests his umbrella against his unzipped fly gazing without hope

he wears baby-blue uggs with a spongebob bookbag and a construction worker's helmet my scanning inconclusive he has evidently caught the transfer from the F to the M at west fourth street



he trimmed his neck-beard upon some YOUTUBE style vid advice are those big buggy eyes the product of coke-bottle lenses or a CHENEY-esque exit strategy?

does this pre-pubescent boy need a permission slip to wax those eyebrows so fiercely?



in capris, he carries a cherry wood folding table a christmas gift from nana, or for her?

what is
THRASHER MAGAZINE and why is he
wearing their hat —
this black hipster with white girl —
a peer-reviewed journal on jungle fever?

why do mexican bus boys only ever grow to 5 feet 4, i silently ask this teeny hottie? how can someone so tall plead so for love?

is this very tall old man squeezed between two girls committing predation?



how does the doe-eyed traveler staring at my forehead avoid my eyes these many stops to bushwick?

why does this man stare at my shoes griping a POLAND SPRING?

tortoise-shell glasses and a LAKERS hat — something tells me he's celibate: maybe his ecstatic stare?



long curly hair like a renaissance courtier perhaps he's texting machiavellian schemes? a palestinian solidarity scarf on a chubby jew — but is he a fruit?

guy with bloody chapped lips, why do you mutter conspiratorially about derek jeter?



his cheeks, hollowed by pock-marks lend a simian flair — but do apes get zits?

chinese boyfriend speaks to his chinese girlfriend with squeaky chinese accent — why not speak chinese?

help me disambiguate the holes in his jeans: is he slutty or grungy or both? is that businessman lost in a heroin slouch? no, he just can't get his zipper unstuck

long-haired chubby guy in green hoodie and green trousers — from MIDDLE EARTH?



in hounds-tooth trousers, a package-bulge or camel-toe?

the asian boy with muttonchops throws me off—
can't tell if he's gay or even if
right now
i am?

he holds his fist on his heart, beating to what earbud song? he puts his hand on her thigh like it's his own thigh — maybe it somehow is? a grumpy skater boy with poor-little-rich-girl eyes or is it BETTE DAVIS eyes?



MALCOLM x look-alike he is half-asleep like getting picked up from grandmas some fat
KEVIN SPACEY with
a flannel hunting hat —
solving the race crisis

he looks like CLARK GABLE with a runny nose from poppers he smells like a roachbutt thugged out and asleep somehow recalling PAUL SIMON LEE HARVEY OSWALD pudgy playing Candy Crush



MARILYN MONROE beauty mark on his left cheek which i would smear with cum but which probably interferes with his shaving little cutie pie with REAGAN hair didn't cover when coughing and needs to get spanked JABBA THE HUT face but a PRINCESS LEIA torso wrapped in a sheet

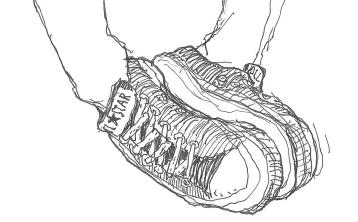


slicked hair like ralph fiennes in schindler's list with similar bad-boy appeal grasping the pole and leaning back like my own TYLER DURDEN giving me side-eye he's reading the gospel according to SAINT MATT hands crossed over his belt buckle, an unlikely gesture of reverence given his scarface teeshirt like BORIS KARLOFF giving me the once over, has a frankenstein dick



in airbrushed camouflaged sweats he smells like popcorn and looks like PUTIN long silver hair and big horse teeth this dude is as horny as EILEEN MYLES WILLEM DEFOE face checking his hair in his phone

this stank-face twink is just begging to get sero-converted this straight dude wears a sour, faggy frown because his girl just chewed him out



this faded, flat-topped hustler, whose weary eyes graze my bulge this new york times devotee has a crush on Paul Krugman

this pretty boy in under armour makes my day



the homeless man beside his trash bag kingdom reads a xeroxed essay from forbes old man folded in a death pose like PICASSO's blue guitarist — i yearn to be so detached: but did he just wink?

with a blue scarf, blue hat, and blue book the lonely reader doesn't notice me.

also, blue tennis shoes.

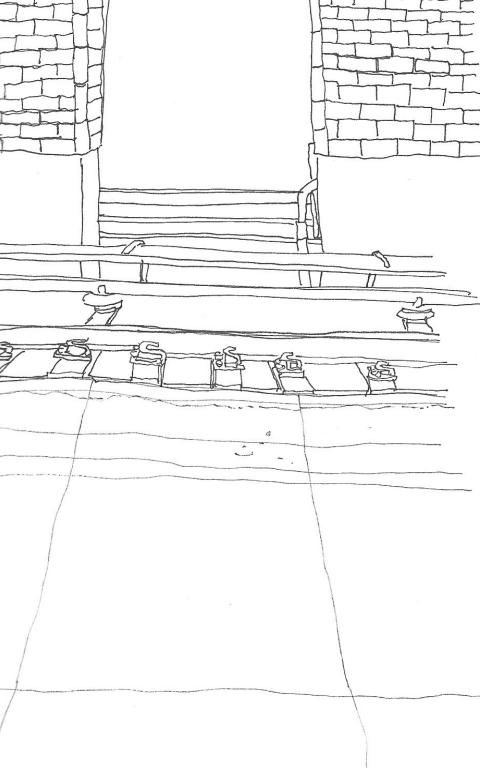


polka-dot shoes (blue with pink spots) he cock-blocks me with a game of CANDY CRUSH



DORITO dust on his blue suede shoes strangely apropos blue contacts make his brown eyes gleam, no homo what the young novelist types into his smartphone:

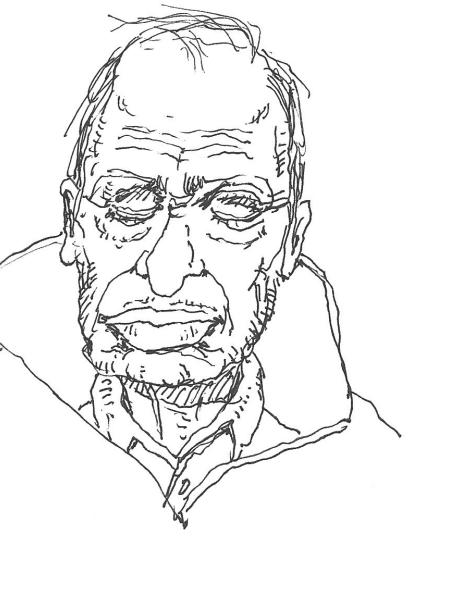
"what the hell is that?" daywalker yelled. "it's really happening," ricky replied.



another LITTLE RICHARD stache

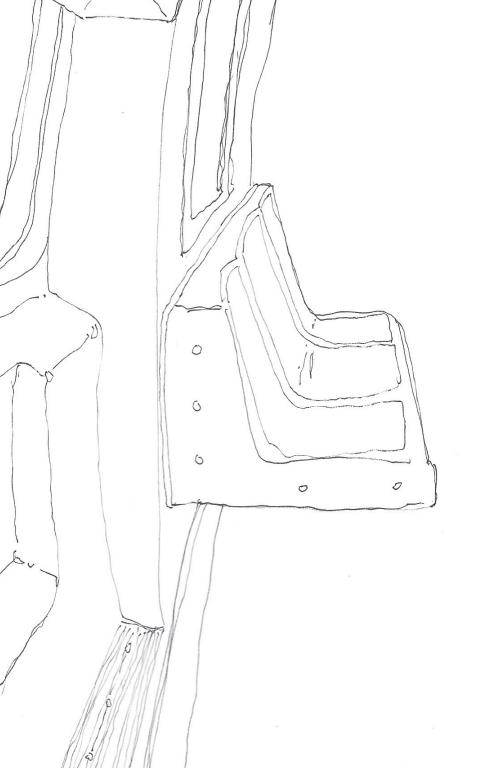
unpolished loafers, a slow sort of suicide

appearing before in this book (in a coat like COOKIE MONSTER): today he wears a dreary flak jacket



falling asleep with an eyeball painted on his eyelid warding off naughty spirits DION, in a SHAKE-SHACK uniform, explains he's not a bum but his mom has stage-four cancer

receding hairline like a ruined greek amphitheater and a face like my hot cousin SEAN

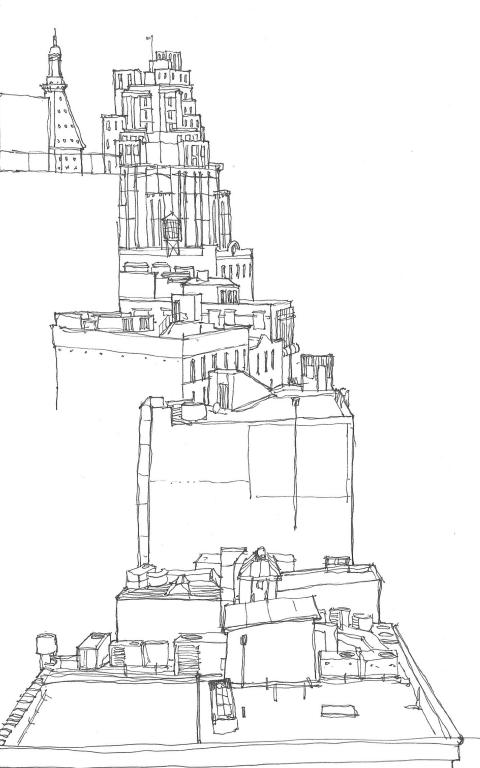


O, emerald-eyed BORICUA, you inspire my politically-incorrect fear of demonic possession!

O, JASON, selling your WELCH'S FRUIT SNACKS: let me vouch for you at the parent/teacher conference!

O, baller in JACKIE O glasses, you carry CHARMIN, proclaiming no femmes no fats no asians!

O, short papi chulo, can't tell if you're gay or if you're illegal!



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