

Immigrant Mind

Part I:

Learning the Language

I.

When I began to learn the language each word hung clearly, like a shirt on the clothesline. I believed I had something exact—that the replacement was true, and I began to translate myself, to accumulate myself in a new sound in order to be able to appear to the world again— tumbling down into the task as a child does, with a trust I remember having and no longer have.

I was unable to predict then what would happen. That my life would transform, due to the language of it changing. That there would be an incremental loss for which eventually there would be no English.

When I summon it now, English is cold. I have to heat it a little so that it starts to light up like steel does. Only then can I feel it has been in the mouths of countless others, that it is slipping from mouth to mouth as language does to stay alive... becoming immortal by filling time, by filling all spaces with the energy that rides upon the coattails of words. This energy rises gradually as I warm up the English, like the racket of insects after a summer rain: first one, and then hundreds of pulses.

You have to teach yourself how to listen to it.

2.

In my mind the company is this language. It's the great web I weave, deconstruct, eat, and rebuild. That is the solitary work that English presents me.

But here is where I play now, since I am *translating myself and therefore inventing*.

Since I am choosing when a separation between myself and the English word must occur. The separation grows and shrinks—

it is possible for me to bring the world close to my chest if I just keep using English, but when I look at the result: I am only getting further from myself.

I carry words in my mind from one language to the other, in order to see how they react.

It is strange, how a word holds light in one language and precipitates before your eyes in another; becomes a milky matte thing. How a word may disappear; may be a completely unavailable idea.

Inside a word, a culture stores its memories. Inside a word, one or many have tried to leave a note, hide a secret, let themselves wail.

I left one language, and entered another, at the perfect time, when I no longer had to relinquish myself to the sound in order to sing it. In this way I am fortunate. I am intact.

By using English, I have let out many violent spirits.

Words that I trusted fling themselves against the wall in English, or open like an elevator door to a dark drop. As a child it was very alarming.

More often than not it was like a ball of cotton in my mouth.

It became a matter of preservation *to leave certain things out of English.*

3.

As the words fell before me in a motion much like dominos falling and the picture that English painted became larger and larger, I realized there was a mania to it, that I needed to be very careful with the people, who may be suffering due to the very same thing that will one day cause the language to collapse.

Even in my thoughts, I thought, I must be vigilant about the words I'm using.

It is so easy to mislead your ideas for years— to *visibly* lie to yourself and others. Are manners entirely enacted to allow the lying to go on successfully?

it's a madhouse of well-mannered people here, I realized early on.

Who is ready to hear it?

When it is released into the tank and it blinds you in the water you have to give it to English—

and its unctuous expansion— its silky purple tendrils— squeezing and blinding you until it splits the iris and blocks the way to the light.

That is this language—

whose shape is still morphing— gaining strength—

becoming at once *more beautiful in my own eyes* and
increasingly horrifying.

4.

As time undresses each person, as time doles out to each person the whole dose of their life, so does time forget us. It is hard to capture: that there is both a unique experience of time, as specific as DNA (as lonely as death)

and a shared *realm of time*— which is quilted from pieces of language— which throbs through office buildings just like it throbs through my blood, which thrives in words, migrates like the monarch by dying and being reborn along the way.

My life changed, due to *the language of it changing*. It is the fate of English that I am living out, and to its demise I head, even though my mind can see it coming, something growing malignant in the depths.

When I fear what I'm participating in, when I realize I exist within an *english-speaking world*, the moment when my eyes open, and I am fully myself—I can't start speaking it.

But the longer I remain silent...

the longer I walk around in my mind holding hands with it.

I will tell you what I see coming out of this English and try to find some company.

5.

Language alone has no protection against human psychology.

The psychological component, *or the speaker's psychic intent*, determines the meaning of words. Thus the language is subject to the same mania as that of the person using it. In some places the mania is passion, order, hysteria, but I believe here the mania is competition.

The idea that existing requires power over others.

When people begin to speak, they assess as they're speaking the psychological dynamic between each other. Even people who don't know themselves know who they are facing. The words they toss at one another are pointed to injure.

You will see over time, fewer and fewer conversations will be possible in English; it is difficult to have them if people don't mean what they say. Or if what they say is always for their benefit.

It juts out when you're sincere— it reveals what's in your mind.

When they hear me do it people look at me as though I'm in danger.

As though I will suffer for stepping outside the protocol to which English subjects us.

But my goal as my own translator must be to keep my style.

6.

The words that enter our thoughts and plant themselves there will control our life.

There are words my blood gave me and words I earned, words preserved in amber and words that live in such deep darkness they have become transparent and luminescent. And there are also words that are hiding from us.

I am shocked by the many forces competing to enter my mind. Forces using words as incubators. Forces wrapping language around people in the same calculated way that ivies sculpt themselves to any shape in the garden in order to thrive.

The more groomed the language, the more likely it is to be selected by another mind. In this way, we impose a narrowing on the giant pool of possibility life could present us.

On some level, ideas are dependent upon a host to continue to survive... for it is the host who accepts the idea and begins to infect others with it.

Very few labor without the giant ideas whose voices are so violent they are no longer disputed. The work of inventing what you think— it's discouraged in almost every setting, it just so happens that it happened to be asked of me.

But the ongoing distortion of all ideas, due to the psychological deviousness of English, has made ideas *our* victims as well. As a group we take hold of an idea, repeat it aloud, become seduced by it, then disheartened, and then having become disappointed by it we react by destroying the very thing the idea tried to suggest.

It's a very modern language, in that it reflects the spiritual checkmate of our time.

7.

The mind is at all times becoming less body and more mind — and the body is at all times running out of time.

Can you feel the anxiety?

People cannot trust the English that is in them.

Language is the architect. It positions both our conscious self and the parameters of the exterior through which we move, through which we define what is real.

We witness it in the world, and it grows in the collective mind. We bring it into the world, give it a name, and rely on it to provide something concrete—

to transcend invention and become reality.

We are seeing a time in which people can no longer usher their minds through life. Can we get through it safely?

By my writing, and by you reading, as we are doing together now, although separately, we disrupt the element of time.

I speak without knowing my listener, and my listener appears months or years after I have spoken, such that whatever idea I meant to inflict resonates only if it is still living without

me. This is why I've chosen to tell you this way. So you can refuse my invitation if you want.

when I tell you something I want it to be like a smooth pebble in your hand, something free from invention. Something that through the process of existing and dying has entered a second or even third realm in which what is real can truly begin.

So many sentences dissolve with pressure and time, so many young, English words will never survive their first death and go on to live through tens of others. There will be a great erasure, when English weakens. But this realization has not yet begun to affect us.

The tension of our time is based on our inability to use English to change the future.

Does it not seem like we sit in our minds and rearrange everything with English until we are ready to invite the world in?

The allure of our consciousness...

that it can conceal what we fear in ourselves.

Can we really make a history, a nation, out of people who have been made afraid of who they are?

8.

There is a time in my life before English. This is the first thing I must show you— what childhood presented.

As an orbiting object strays, gradually dissipating its potential energy, through wider and wider curves, so does my consciousness venture, slowly but surely drifting further away from this point, although it is always at the center of me, visible at any moment, the heaviest mass, the thing that turns me without asking.

The mind lives many more turns than the body.

I turn about this impenetrable place, which once created cannot be modified—

can only be suppressed, denied, or acquiesced to.

