

For the Record

by John Olson

Here I sit as always clouds floating out of my head. You know those states you get in sometimes when the writing turns hornet and motorcycle? When the jewels appear, when the rubies hit patterns of elsewhere? Experience is turned into crystals. There is so much to describe. You can't keep up with it all. All you can do is jabber. Talk to the walls. Hang from the ceiling like a human chandelier. Like a chandelier chandelier. Hazel and lurking. Pamphlets on the table describing a Utopian world in which nobody works that doesn't want to work. Where work isn't work where work is more like play. Where night disintegrates into heated dancing and the strange servitude imposed on the body. The original body. The body of Adam the body of Eve. Those wonderfully innocent bodies. You see people like that sometimes in the desert. Or wandering the streets of Manhattan. Believe me, nobody wanders Manhattan, not unless there's something weird going on. Something primordial, something full of fire and fingers. It sometimes happens that a word will assume a quality similar to water. In that it will flow and float an idea. And the instincts will tickle the bones and the parodies of the blood will circulate in volumes of meat imagined as an arm or a leg or a torso. As if our thoughts were mohair, a suspension of gumbo pulled into percolation. I might get occupied by doing brushstrokes, or shooting tin cans with a .22. How do nerves work? Electrical impulses fire up the brain like lightning forking through a storm cloud. That's my image of it how about you? How do the nerves in the eyes do their thing? What did Cézanne's eyes look like? Were they blue? Green? Did his pupils dilate? Age is how we discover ourselves. As we get closer to dying we get bigger in our being. Being dilates. As being ebbs it deepens. The mind grows truant. We inhabit a permanent Saturday. There's a nakedness that happens on Saturday. That's all I know. I don't care where you're at you can be in the Antarctic without a clock or calendar within fifty miles but somehow when Saturday arrives you'll know it's Saturday. Bubbling out of the air,

creaking in the snow, blazing out of the stars, funny rectangles on a floor black and ivory sprinkled with dimes. Picture Stephane Mallarmé pounding on a reluctant vending machine and you'll get the picture. There's endless support in writing these things down. Keep a record, my friend. Document it. Everything. Nothing is too thin, too thick, too audible to call mud.

