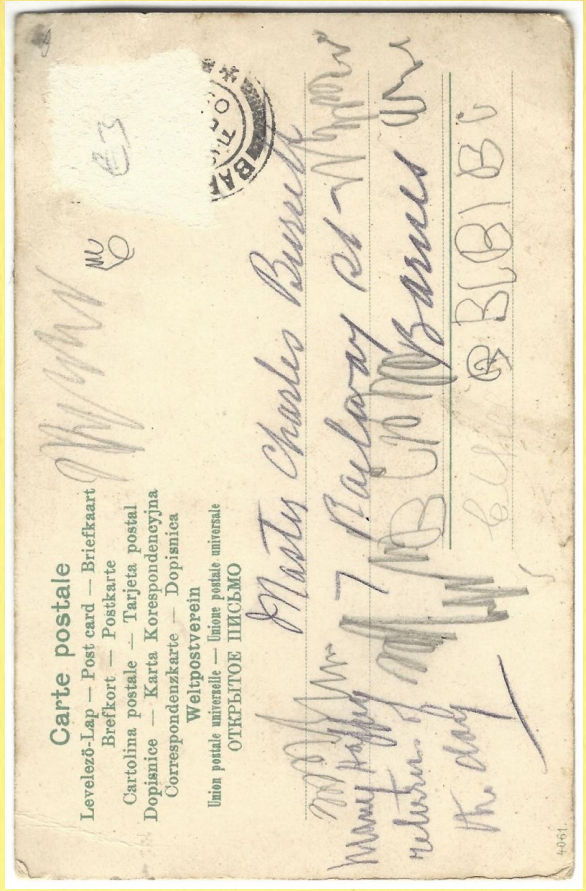
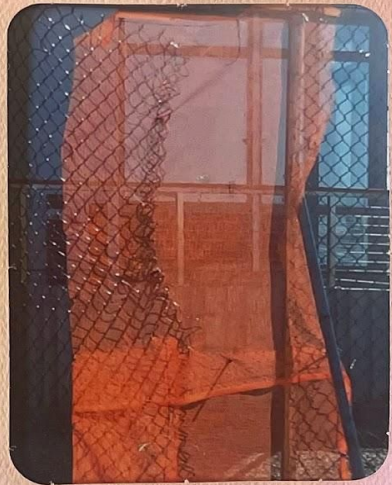
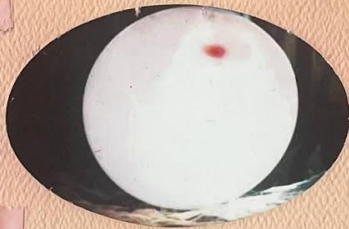
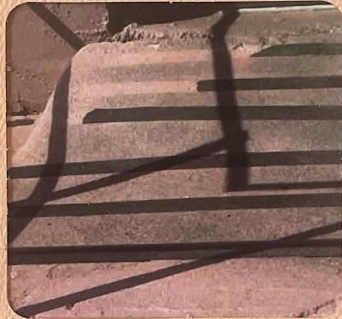


When  
New  
Things  
Happen  
New  
Things  
Happen

MAY 2028









On Saturday morning I went and looked at the alpacas. There's a guy down the road who has a bunch of them. I counted nine or ten, but I think there are more around back. It was gray and quiet and about fifty-five degrees. It reminded me of Ireland.

My new place of residence is outside the city limits, a border between the town and rurality. I've been trying to get a handle on what kind of place it is. My own little block is made up of mostly tidy, timid mid-century single level houses, but then just beyond that you have trailer parks, a Muslim community center, and, as mentioned, an alpaca farm.

I saw a bunch of "We love our library" signs along the way, and that made me happy. I also love our library, and though I'm not much for putting signs in my yard, I do appreciate my neighbors letting me know that we have at least that in common. Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure thought of signs and symbols as being defined by their opposition to or distinction from other things. I think that's very much the case with the library sign, because my thought upon seeing one is essentially, "This is not a Trump sign."

The past month has been one of many maladies. Well, two, but I'm an enormous baby. My hip had been hurting like hell after my move, and I'd been suffering from a pretty heinous sinus infection. Both of these things

were ebbing, and it felt really great to be out walking. I used to walk for miles every day. I still walk a bit every day, but it's been a little heartbreaking to not be able to do it as much as I want to. It's also one of my favorite things to do when I'm traveling. One time I was roaming in Oxfordshire, in a similarly exurban area where the town was giving way to farmland. I was walking beside a stone wall, probably about seven feet high. Out of nowhere this lady scales the wall and leaps directly in front of me and shouts, "Hiya!"

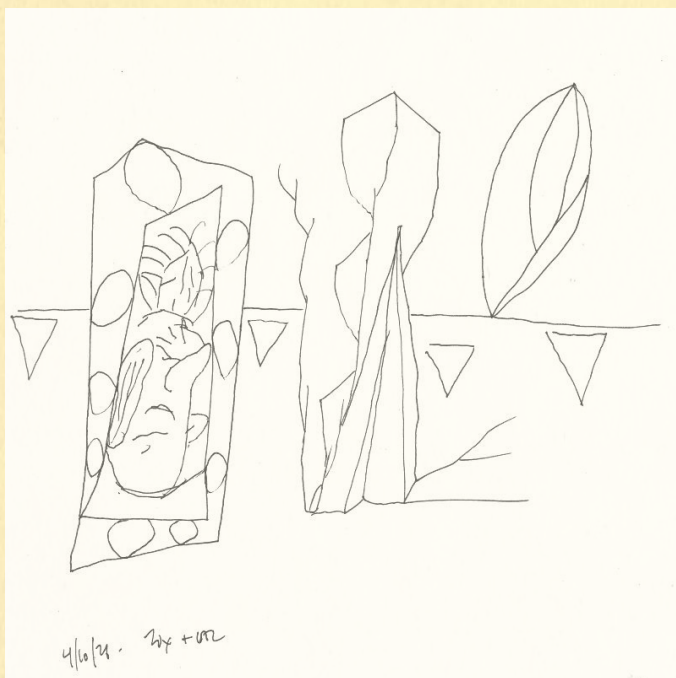


She had on some real muddy galoshes, and I envied her life.

It was only about a mile down to the alpacas, and it was really nice to stand there on the side of the road and stare at them. They didn't seem bothered by it. They seemed, in fact, to enjoy staring at me just as much. I still can't quite wrap my head around how weird these things look. Like a deer crossed with a pony? A camel with a standard poodle? They're just bizarre, when measured

against boring, everyday animals. "You bore me," I said to a squirrel just the other day, and yawned theatrically. But then he scaled a tree trunk in a dazzling pirouette and I had to hand it to him.

There's a guy on my block who has two animal traps in his front yard, and I wonder what exactly he's trying to catch. The only animals I've seen roaming in these parts are squirrels and bunnies, and they're all very well mannered. But then, I suppose I did see a



groundhog the other day, and I know that people have strong feelings about them. One time, my next door neighbor in Indiana threatened legal action against me if I did not kill the groundhogs who were living on my property. I didn't do it, and the resulting lawsuit nearly ruined me.

I've been talking to myself about artmaking as I walk. Thinking out loud about how, what, why. Trying to steer the thing back onto the road, or maybe to make a road-worthy thing for the first time. It's easy

to get a little too proud about a cute little thought that you have, to daydream about how clever it might sound to someone, and then you've got to swat it all down.

I'm not even really sure I know what road this road-worthy thing is meant to travel on. The one from me to you, I guess.

So why do I go out of my way to lock you out? Why do I obfuscate and hide? Clearly I'm scared. Is abstraction a defense mechanism? A handy posture to adopt when you're scared to say what you want to say? Or is it a celebration of the way we process experience? How everything we see and hear and feel plinkos around inside of us and comes out something else.

I said that I'm not much for putting signs in my yard. But I hope that the things I make can serve the same purpose. I want to try harder to remember that they should, at least. The point is that I put this thing out there, you see it, and you know more about me. And even if I'm lying to you, or lying to myself, I'm in the thing. I might be the butt of the joke, and I may not even be in on the joke. That's okay.

