

Circa 1974

It's an all vinyl day, spinning
thirty-three times a minute on my
donated turntable.

Today is about nothing but scratches
and pops, sounds that somehow match
the grayness outside and it's steady
dampness, a score for the scenes
of my mid-week sick day.

Dollar bin finds, garage sale
refugees, some long out-of-print,
others re-printed
 re-mastered
 re-packaged
 re-issued
 re-everything.

It's a one-man radio show circa
1974, spinning the black circle,
grooves as thin as razors, as wide
as corduroy, twelve inches of analog
compression touched by a diamond
chip and bouncing amongst the walls
of my living room.

The Fine Print Instruction Manual

Trace the money and then trace
it again and again once more –
I believed then and I believe
now that it all leads to a
handful of men (and it will
be men) in a hidden room
somewhere, their fingerprints
on every filthy cent that drifts
into circulation, dollar signs
and decimal points in place
of chromosomes.

Listen to their conversations
and then listen a second time –
translates them into another
language and translate them
back again while reading the
words in a mirror. They're
not sentences at all but simply
a string of code words, a
blueprint of sorts, the fine
print instruction manual for
our eternal screwing.

For The Benefit Of The Academy

Let's pretend that all of our wars are movies, epics really, ill-conceived and over-budget. And let's cast these movies with nothing but celebrities, fame worn like the medals they'll undoubtedly earn. Let's assume the severed limbs and the attendant psychosis are for the benefit of the academy. We'll consider the rockets and bombs just a marvel of special effect, the news of torture just a nasty rumor, second-page gossip and nothing more. Let's replace the fife-and-drum men with three young things in low-rise jeans and peeking thongs, cell phone ring tones all synchronized to the same canned patriotic thump. Let's leave the ending open for a sequel. And then let's admit that it's the only way we'll ever care more than we like to think we do.

Untitled #126

The sounds surface with an electric crackle, a subconscious pop, the love cries of a burning saxophone, the force of Albert Ayler's spirit ascending from the New York River where they found his body all those years ago.

You've got to love all those strains, compatible or otherwise, braided into one bitch of a knot, Gordian almost, and the critics hacking away at it lamely with penknives, dissecting like it was a laboratory frog.

I came to Ayler late, having been born a year before he died. I found out about him from someone else, someone saying that Albert played as if he had to, like the choice was out of his hands. The way all callings, good or bad, seem to work.