

Brenda Coultas

“The Tatters”

-----from *A Critical Mass for Brad Will*

Looking at the ground, the tatters of the nest I destroyed, but how else could I know the nature of physical objects, and of my body?

I, a physical object, ask what's inside the body? The Mutter Museum and its collection of swallowed needles, fish hooks, and pennies.

For a long time looking in, gazing, trying to know

The nature of the physical, like the man who could balance jagged, sea rocks, one on top another. He could know an object and if those boulders could be stacked as steady as plates or as delicately as a house of cards.

I, a physical object, reading *Anatomy*, 1924, colored plates, diagrams with overlays. It is good that I saved these thick books, each one a doorstopper on female anatomy and child care, from the time of paper and print, colored plates to lift and reveal. Each plate, like a candy pop, taking you further, dissolving layers until you reach the baby soft center.

Diagrams, like this one. See.

A man told me of finding the foot pedals of a sewing machine covered in dust on Mott

St., about how he put his foot to the pedal and the flywheel turned although the rest of the machine was extinct.

Flywheel, I like to say it and see it.

Alone with paper, or reading from paper, in a room

It's quiet.

Me, a noun, an animal from the time of the animals

I write and I eat with my hands.

Working late and decoding secret writings from the tatters (read once of a wealthy young artist who slept in nests he made out of bedding in luxury hotel rooms. I thought a nest should be made from discards, and humble like a quilt.)

The feather again (the blade). This time on the street.

First quietly in front, then as I move, cocks quietly towards the 10 o'clock position. Later in the day, silently soaked with winter salt.

Too, same roach and rat.

Regulars.

Can't recall the center, only the fury with which I tore it, then a drop in the blood at realizing what I had done.

Paper at my feet.

Bodies.

Stillborns.

What little I know of other lives.

BradWill was a poet, Indie-media journalist, anarchist, and a friend of mine. He was murdered in Oaxaca, Mexico on October 27, 2006, while filming a street battle between the Oaxacan governor Ulises Ruiz Ortiz's thugs and APPO, the Popular Assembly of the People, during a months long teachers' strike in which at least eleven were killed. For more information: www.friendsofbradwill.org.

The Battle