

# The Crush

*For Laureana Toledo*

*The music feels strong in my heart.*

—From *The Enigma of Kaspar Hauser* (Werner Herzog, 1974)

*The facts*

This piece is therapeutic.

I was told by a number of people, my therapist included, that if I could only put my obsession into my own work I'd be a much happier & productive person.

This piece might not seem transformed enough to you, but I intend it to be transformative for me.

This is a piece about reconciliation.

This is a piece about air.

This is the type of thing I gave up when I decided I was a realist.

I'm trying to rescue my imagination, which I've neglected since I was about thirteen.

If this piece seems adolescent to you, there you go.

It's the return of the repressed.

When you grow up in Mexico City it's not okay to live in your head, unless there's no padding in it.

The same could be said of many other places.

This won't sound like music to you.

This won't sound like music to me either.

Therein lies the project's quandary.

*Lists are a form of problem-solving.*

This is no *Beautiful Music*.  
This is no *Comb Music* either.  
No *Danger Music*.  
No *Discreet Music*.  
No *Drip Music*.

No *Drive-In Music*.  
No *Elastics Music*.  
No *Incidental Music*.  
No *Living Room Music*.  
No *Music for a Revolution*.

No *Music for Airports*.  
No *Music in Union*.  
No *Music of Changes*.  
No *Music with Changing Parts*.  
No *Musica Elettronica Viva*.

No *Musicircus*.  
No *Noise Music*.  
No *Pendulum Music*.  
No *Theatre Music*.  
No *Water Music*.

Therein lies the project's quandary.

*Lists are what you write when you think you've got everything in your head but you've started becoming suspicious of what that could possibly mean.*

*More facts*

I have a crush on a musician, or is it his music? Go figure. I'll call him Blank (to protect him from stalkers.)

Blank seems like a real nice guy. He seems the type of person who you would encounter at the dog run, doing his groceries, or on an insanely crowded subway train any day of the week. (I've never fallen for the unapproachable Antonio Banderas type, although I did dream once that he was in my living room, trying to kiss me behind a couch.)

Whether or not Blank is a rock star has been the topic of an ongoing discussion between me & my partner: I argue that if that were the case, I would have known him a long time ago.

The basis of my argument is Blank's usual geeky posture. Except for when he's performing, he's always hunched. He never seems comfortable with attention.

A few weeks after seeing him play live for a second time (I couldn't stand him the first) I heard his solo music in my living room as my family was visiting for the holidays. I felt a psychic connection. Lines like "I store my memories in Ziploc freeze bags" must have done it.

Once I established this connection I returned to the images of him performing, and latched on to them.

Otherwise I hear riffs and drones.

The connection is so intense that often when I check my e-mails I expect there to be one from him in my inbox.

I am worried that there's an online girls-only "worship center" devoted to Blank.

I must be a walking cliché.

*Lists are what you need when your thoughts are scattered.*

*Letters Are What Is In a Name*

Tea, yes.  
Meat + yams  
+ yeast=  
Yum.  
Sake, más yum.

My Eye,  
yé-yé.  
My key: task.  
Say sky.  
Maya skate team,  
yay!

¡Ey! ¿Amas?  
¿Y tu kama?  
Me matas,  
me atas.  
Súmate.  
Tu suma, tema y meta.

My tee yutes,  
yuky.  
Muy musky.  
Sema.

Tame yaks meet meek tusks.  
Eye may meat my tusk.  
Eye mat meet my task.  
Ask a.k.a. Mask.  
Ay!

*Lists are what they tell you to begin with if you want to be on top of things.*

*Ten Steps to Follow the Sound*

- 1) Go to Mapquest and get driving directions from my address to his. For 24 days, drive there at a different hour of the day, leaving at 12 a.m. the first day and at 12 p.m. the last, so as to catch him at some point, by chance. If this doesn't work, rotate the schedule until I catch him, by chance.
- 2) Tell one of our mutual friends that an acquaintance of mine wants to do an interview of Blank for the publication that I work for, and needs to contact him.
- 3) Once I have his contact info, write him a letter for every piece of music that he's ever composed, performed, or produced, each one revolving around the idea of air. Write it on a surface on which it will disintegrate—a block of ice, sand, on the sidewalk with a watering can—take a picture, and fax it to him.
- 4) Write a mesostic combining Werner Herzog's ideas on "ecstatic truth" and the passage where the following quote by Blank appears: "To get somewhere, you have to take a car. But the journey isn't about the car; it's about the destination." Get my friend Rocco to set it to music, & ask DJ Acapulco to play it on his radio show.
- 5) Write a poem called "Have a Happy Day" where every line contains the word drone. Search the word and string the results:

Back in the tulsadrone  
there was a daily drone;  
under the drone  
one heard a Tokyo drone,  
above it, a nebula drone.  
An artful drone  
Generated by bagpipe drone reeds  
In the drone room,  
take the photo, drone.  
Dismantle the fear drone project.  
Flickr: rogue drone  
turns into exdrone dragon drone.  
What if a drone virus...  
What if the drone armies are coming...  
What if drones start border duty...  
If Iraqi drones could have dropped chemicals  
Dismantle defense tech: toughest drone ever  
to enter the drone zone  
generates a dull drone.  
Escape the dronescape...  
Go to the drone forest  
where drone raising  
and the association drone

seem born to drone.  
Dismantle defense tech: whirl-a-drone-begins to spin...  
Listen to the drone music.  
Listen to the daily drone.

Call him and leave the poem on his answering machine.

6) Use Leevi Lehto's Google a Poem program to come up with a poem based on the words "country ass"—what Blank's last name means, according to who knows who—and e-mail it to him.

**Skeleton of A Country Ass**

*(Google a Poem—Compiled 3/20/2005 3:44:27 PM)*

... does anyone have, or know where i can get the lyrics to Rhett Akins "kiss my country ass" ? i cant find them anywhere!!

-

... Friends of the West Country Ass. v. Canada (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans).

-

Wolf Country, Myth and Stories, The Ass and the Wolf.

-

Irregular Goods: For Progressive Resistance: Country Girl Democrat Bumper Sticker:  
Those of us who live out in the country know that Bush's so-called...

-

Irregular Goods: For Progressive Resistance: Country Boy Democrat Bumper Sticker:  
For too long, the Republicans have taken rural America for granted...

-

... In the mean time, I'll have my trashy, simple-minded, country-ass at the county club.

7) Compose a fake interview of him lifting questions asked to John Cage in different interviews and answering the questions with quotes of John Fahey. Get it published and FedEx it to him.

8) Since meeting him at his own show seems almost impossible, go to others where he might be. Go see everyone who is from his hometown, anyone who has recorded with the same labels as he, anyone he has ever played with or produced. Text message him short comments on the performances.

9) Ask the audiences at shows if they've ever seen him around, what they know about him, what they think of him, etc. Make a chart with people's responses and use it as a road map to follow the sound.

10) When I'm around him, pretend I haven't recognized him and casually start singing one of his songs. Then he'll surely want to come my way, out of outrage or camaraderie.

*Lists make you realize what you have and have not.*

*Once amorphous, the desire has morphed.  
A blockage: now this is what has to be perfect.  
Oh displacement, I did not invoke you in vain.*

A few minutes later, I experience an arresting turpitude. The Isakower syndrome.

Nothing would keep my eyes from closing except for leaving the room.

I am not leaving the room.

A soft ballooning shape threatens to crush my face.

Anticipating its enveloping warmth, I fall into it.

Nipple, what else is one to do but suck the milk, withdraw, doze off. Tit for tat.

H.D. described to Freud “the transcendental feeling of the two globes or the two transparent half-globes enclosing” her. He mistook this for a pre-natal fantasy, misread the palpable shapes.

Sound is not frontal, like vision. Not attack, but surround sound, almost redundant.

**Atmospheric Resemblances  
(A Life of Blank)**

When it itself,  
an open possibility for reassembly,  
behaves in waves across/ through configurated energies  
at its own pace,  
it gradually becomes a “forming Blank”  
into which all configurations are drawn, absorbed, condensed,  
and out of which unrecognizable places jump,  
shaping volumes into images.

—Arakawa

*Some say lists are boring, others think they're symptoms.*



**Found:** *We can learn from a tree how to exist in ecstasy.*

go  
  meet  
    engage  
      one on one  
        get along  
          make out  
            get together  
              make off  
                get nowhere  
                  not get on  
                    on the surface  
                      make do  
                      make off  
                    not engage  
                      get over it  
                      build up  
          not meet  
            go at it again  
            get used to it  
              move on  
              repeat  
not go  
  run into him  
    come up to him  
      get along  
        run around  
        run off with him  
      not get on  
        have a run-in  
        run away  
    not come up to him  
      build up  
      fade away  
not meet for now  
  go at it again  
  get it done with  
    move on  
    repeat

*Lists can be roundabout.*

*Green & Franklin*

“Desde esta playa inútil, y desierto,  
a donde me han traído mis antojos...”  
-Lope de Vega, sonnet 71

Calm I will be not I  
Am absolutely  
Following  
Espresso doppio ersatz ecstasy

Scared to come here I bumped  
into parked cars.

*It's good that you're taking a lot of risks. You'll see the consequences of falling down are really not that bad.*

(I wouldn't be able to approach him if he walked in right now. It's so quiet everyone would overhear me while I make a fool of myself, just like I overheard every word the waiter said to the little girl.)

How does he  
become a you.

I sit facing the door. I pretend to be absorbed in my reading of Lope de Vega's love sonnets and can't help but notice, besides his obvious absence:

a girl with a miniskirt and red tights who speaks in a high-pitched voice and eventually leaves with a dullard whose name she didn't seem to know when she approached him

the intermittent sound of pages turning coming from an unshaven guy in his mid-forties who waits for his food & makes me wonder why people want to be seen reading...

a hipster Chinese cook making a kitchen utensil clang a little as he talks to a young waiter who looks like Six Organs

one or two giggles of the sexy French yoga instructor at the Y—whose ooms I despise and who's always telling the class to remember how beautiful they are during deep relaxation

the glimmer in the hipster waiter's eyes while listening to the yoga instructor (her accent sounds as if she's secretly Canadian)

a musician type with what seems more than thirty keys dangling from a key chain in his side pocket who orders six coffees to go and stirs milk and sugar into every one of them

a ghostly couple in the table behind mine playing checkers all too quietly

a bearded redhead guy with a sports t-shirt who huffs while he reads and looks just like what I thought poets ought to look like when I first came to New York

what sounds do they hear, are they just killing time

*Lists are what you write when you've collected information.*

*Hearsay*

I can tell she's as smoke, her.

Ay hear, she's been sin, someone else  
I hear she's been seen as someone else  
"She's being seen by someone else"  
I here, she's been seen as some elf

Ay here

Eye hear

She's no imp; she's no chimp

I hear she once kids, she once skids  
I hear you dew knot, yew dew not

Guess yew will break Op  
Guess you'll say pirate  
and then?

Then comes knot eye, bought another twenty-five, you're old.

*Lists are what you write when you're going shopping for things you don't need as much to remember regardless.*

*A Way Out of the Negative: Attempts at Communication*

Task: Write him e-mails but send them to different friends, or leave them messages on their answering machines. Compile their responses and come up with composites that could be his possible replies.

Dear Karaoke Kingpin,

I wish I were the one for whom you made a tape with a song by The The back in the eighties. If that were the case you might be happily surprised to hear from her (me, that is.) I wonder if she'd be offended that you dissed The The, just as I was, since I remember liking the band a lot in my teens although I can't remember a single one of their songs. (It's one guy, I know...) Anyway, I'm not her, so it's time to go. My name is not Susie, and for you, I leave a little riddle:

*Did the nightingale torture the ear,  
Pack the heart and scratch the mind? And does the ear  
Solace itself in peevish birds?*

*Lists are what you write when you're feeling eager.*

*Telephone Cryptomessage*

Itchy,	run a tan,	you coo	say mass at,
niche,	it sweet,	shiatsu, cara,	no, nay day
it Ixcaret,	coco, knee,	dare you	me, kudo
air, oh	can gal rook	toe, dough,	you sure in co.
what a she,	oh to wok, E!	genie, ow!	cougar sweet
HA!	can I soar	what a she,	they roof
sue war, E,	a ham ok,	HA!	fir, oh moon
coco, knee,	yo bee day	what does she	sue curry
he in co.	Aires	want: egg,	in no
who say no	what a she	a can, carrot,	he bee,
coo, Roy,	hand a tan	a day	HA!
oh yo bee	it sweet,	tall toque, in E	he wrack
in co.,	can gal	what a shin,	I coo,
cougar sweet	they roof	in a kid	IQ...
they roof,	are you to core	ooh, eat a...	
fir, oh moon	on E.R.	ta-ta, toque,	
o' mere wrong	<i>arruga</i>	ooh!	
coo, no, totter	what does she	what a she	
Tom, a knee,	want: egg,	hack ok,	
<i>me acuerdo</i>	a can, no, an...	oh knee	
<i>atar a...</i>	a tan	can gal rook	
what a she,	song, say who?	oh, to wok!	
HA!	I can, gee...	sue war,	
what a she,	Nay soar,	at say...	
no shin	or carrot	they roof	
pack of war	what a she,	coo, Roy	
what a she,	HA!	he in co.,	
sue war,	what does she	who say	
asset, eh	want	oh yo bee	

*Lists could turn into lisps.*

*Nice to Meet You: KILL YOUR TV*

1. Grand Street, made a right on Roebling, got on the Williamsburg Bridge, parked. Walked half a block to Norfolk and Delancey.
2. Grand Street, made a right on Roebling, got on the Williamsburg Bridge, made a right on First Ave. Looked for parking, parked. Walked 3 long blocks to Second Ave. & East 2<sup>nd</sup> Street.
3. Grand Street, made a right on Roebling, got on the Williamsburg Bridge, made a right on First Ave. Looked for parking, parked. Walked half a block west to Second Ave. & East 2<sup>nd</sup> Street.
4. Grand Street, made a right on Roebling, got on the Williamsburg Bridge, made a right on Clinton Street, a left on Houston, a right on Bedford, a right on Hudson Street, got to 8<sup>th</sup> Ave., made a left on 17<sup>th</sup> Street. Found parking, walked a few short blocks to West 17<sup>th</sup> Street and 10<sup>th</sup> Ave.
5. Grand Street, made a right on Roebling, got on the Williamsburg Bridge, made a right on Clinton Street, a right on East 4th Street, looked for parking, parked. Walked a number of blocks to Ave. C & East 2<sup>nd</sup> Street.
6. Grand Street, made a right on Roebling, got on the Williamsburg Bridge, made a right on Clinton Street, a right on East 4th Street, looked for parking, parked. Walked a few blocks to Ave. C & East 2<sup>nd</sup> Street.
7. From Bleecker and Broadway walked south to Houston St., made a left on Houston Street and walked to Ave. C. Made a left on Ave. C and walked half a block to East 2<sup>nd</sup> Street.
8. Took the 1 train from 116<sup>th</sup> Street to 59<sup>th</sup> Street, changed to the B train, took it to 34<sup>th</sup> Street, changed to the F train, got off at Broadway and Lafayette since the train wasn't stopping at 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave., walked on Houston to Second Ave. & East 2<sup>nd</sup> Street.
9. Walked east from East 6<sup>th</sup> Street and 1<sup>st</sup> Ave., made a right on Ave. B, walked south to East 3rd Street, made a left, kept walking till reaching Ave. C, made a right and walked to East 2<sup>nd</sup> Street.

*Lists have very little to do with acquisition power.*



*Exterior, Day*

Neither pomades nor unguents or balms, only time & a stiff bed can untangle the knot that causes Blank to play all hunched up. But if his fingers were loose, his tongue was even more. What side are you on: foreplay or forethought?

Nice to meet to you, Mr. Not-Afraid-to-Underwhelm.

Je m'appelle Geraldine, et toi?

I must be going through an analogous Belle du Jour phase. (As of now I should be preparing dinner.)

What's inside if it's all exterior. Ever notice how the private never crushes the public?

But how it distorts it. Think of the specter who wasn't much of a person when alive since most of the conversations he partook of happened in his head or before a handheld video camera, with animals—most of them menacing—who didn't need him around.

How distortionists become their own caricatures. Oh celeb, is that why you split?

Your audience doesn't know you, Blank. Do you know your audience?

*Lists are what you write when you're going on a trip and you don't want to miss any attractions.*

*I'm So Lonesome I'm an I*  
After Hank Williams

See my aging freckled-face  
and sidewalks filled with trash  
So warm outside, the flowers rot  
I'm so lonesome I am an eye

You left for good and fled the hood  
with yuppies heaping on  
I saw your film, and felt the spurn  
a take off and a knob

The door is closed, your music's gone  
Nippon so far away  
That means you've lost the will to play  
I'm so lonesome I am an isle

The silence of your frozen face  
lights up the screen at night  
and as I wonder where you are  
I'm so lonesome I am an eye  
I'm so lonesome I am an I

*Lists are what you can resort to when there's nothing to further a plot.*

*Afterglow: If Music Can Be Film, then this Can Be a Mockumentary*

Task: Come up with movie plots and send them to him. Ask him to come up with a few ideas on how they could be scored. Give these to a musician friend who might deem them a good source of inspiration, à la Arthur Verocai.

Pitch 1: A woman in her mid-thirties has finished a series of poems titled “The Crush.” She’s bringing a cake to someone’s birthday party and crosses the street distractedly. She’s hit by a car and dies on the spot. In memory of her, her friends send Blank the series. They ask him if he’d be willing to write music based on the poems. He talks to his band mates and they all agree to do a song about her. The song, titled “Boredom,” becomes a smash hit. The film would recount the story and film the band on an accident-ridden tour.

Pitch 2: A woman in her mid-thirties is listening to some of Blank’s music on her iPod as she runs to catch a train. The heel of her shoe comes off, and she tumbles down the stairs. She suffers a brain contusion that causes her amnesia. For a few months she receives treatment, to no avail. She seems rather content, although remembers nothing about her life before the fall. The film would chronicle her odd interaction with people whom with she had close relationships, how she gets reacquainted with family members and friends. One day she walks into a local record store, where they are playing one of Blank’s songs, and recovers her memory. Title of the film: *If I Could Only Remember My Name*.

*Lists are a form of feedback.*

wrry tht ths prjct hs nthng t d wth wht's gng n n my lf: my nt's brst cncr; my nel's kdnpng n Mxc Cty nd th fet tht h's bng thrtnd by th cps tht wr prt f th kdnpng; nd spkng f bnks, 'm wrrd ls bt my shrnkng bnk cent nd my vr-xpndng dbt; my nblty t flly dvt myslf t my detrl dssrttn; my rltshp; my gryng hr; th fet tht 'll nvr b bl t ffrd rl stt n my nghbrhd, r nywhr ls n Nw Yrk fr tht mtr; fmly mubr's ddetn nd th hrdshps tht thr fmly mubrs hve gn r r gng thrgh; my mbvlnc n trms f wht 'll d crr-ws, mny-ws, chldrn-ws, y nm t. wrry tht mght b mre f slpsstc gmnc thn thnk m nd tht ths prjct hs nthng t d wth th crnt pltcl clmt. Nthng t d wth ntrl nd hmn-nfletd dsstrs lk th tsnms tht ht Sth s n 2004 nd csd 169,070 ppl t d r th fillwng yr's dvsttn f Nw rlms nd th Glf Cst rgn d nt t Hrren Ktrn bt th dmnstrtn's ndmc nemptnc; nthng t d wth th rplsv pssblty f th prsdnt nd hs crns gng dwn n hstry bks s th prphts whse vsn md *dmercy* sprd n th Mddl st, jst lk t wht thy dd wth Rnld Rgn; nthng t d wth th wrld's dspprng lnggs; nthng t d wth th hypcrsy f th "cltr f lf" gnd, wth th ncngrsnss of th blfs f ppl wh rbdly spprt t; nthng t d wth th fet tht thr r plcs whr tchng vltn s hghly sbvrsv c; nthng t d wth Hms, Hzblth, nd l-Qd; nthng t d wth th trtr tht's systmtclly crrd t n mrcn dtntn cntrs brd; wth th fet tht th mbgty f phrss sch s "cvlzd ppl" nd "dgrdng trtmnt" s bng cptlzd fr pltcl gn; nthng t d wth llgl wrtppngs; nthng t d wth th 2,538 nd cntng mrcn trps klld n rq, th vr 11,220 wh v bn srsly njrd, nd th hndrds f thsnds f nctd rq cvln cslts. wrry b th mpletns f th phrs "w lv n r hds," by Cncptl rtst nd prfr wht th plywrght sd: "knw xst n dlq." wrry tht ths hs nthng t d wth r dpltn f th rth's rsrcs r wth th cmmn vw tht thr's nthng y cn d bt t. Sm s whn y'r nfttd, y cn't s th drknss, y'r tkn by th msc. If "war does not sing," it makes noise.