

## MUTE

The Outpost, Wednesday, March 4, 2009  
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alto saxophone: *shakuhachi, ludus microtonalis*

Mute

I rather dislike addressing an audience in monologue. In this situation, I don't speak fluently (odd for someone obsessed with language) but rather haltingly, forgetting shit, wandering down back alleys and generally failing to get the point across, particularly in an engaging way. This makes particularly little sense given that I've been performing in front of people for some 35 years. I have no stage fright—that's just not the issue. And what the issue is, exactly, I haven't yet made any effort to discern.

baritone saxophone: *hollow*

So generally, I follow the "just shut up and play" school of stage management. Or, in a group, I prefer to let someone else handle the duties. Dialogue, on the other hand, is a far more comfortable situation. Question & answer, dialectic, give & take. We could talk about something—that would be fun. Beer, for instance—I could go on about that for, well, you'd get bored. Trust me. Or perhaps Webern, or Elliott Carter. Ah yes, good stuff!

bass clarinet: *dreaming of something bigger, and lower*

But then we'd be doing something else, or at least doing it at some other time. After the show, for instance, or, preferably, at a pub or in a kitchen. We couldn't do it now—that would be cutting into time allotted to something else—the performance. So, how about you meet me for a pint after the show? Bukowski is right around the corner—it's up on Cambridge Street. See you there.

soprano saxophone: *super zero beatdown / Waking and Dreaming*

Waking and Dreaming

Waking and dreaming I seem caught in this ridiculous cycle of petulance, suspicions, and hostility. Working, and at the hour of waking, I see clearly what it is that I want: love, poetry, inestimable powers of understanding or forgiveness if that is needed, humor that is not rueful. But I seem to see much too clearly the working of an idle and a morbid imagination, I see myself succumbing to all kinds of imaginary meanness and, what's more, how can I take pride in my skin when my skin seems lacerated? But I also see that we perform our passions in the large scene of what we have done and left undone in the past and that now and then the curve of feeling--hostility--seems to intersect the structure of my disposition, for this painful feeling of laceration was felt years and years ago. Reason cannot enjoin the carcass to be cheerful and lusty--and when my powers of desire are maimed, so are my posers of wisdom--but I can persist at least in my hopefulness--in my knowledge that a simple cure--a trip, some skiing, the heat of the sun--will set the mind free.

—John Cheever, from *The Journals of John Cheever*, 1954