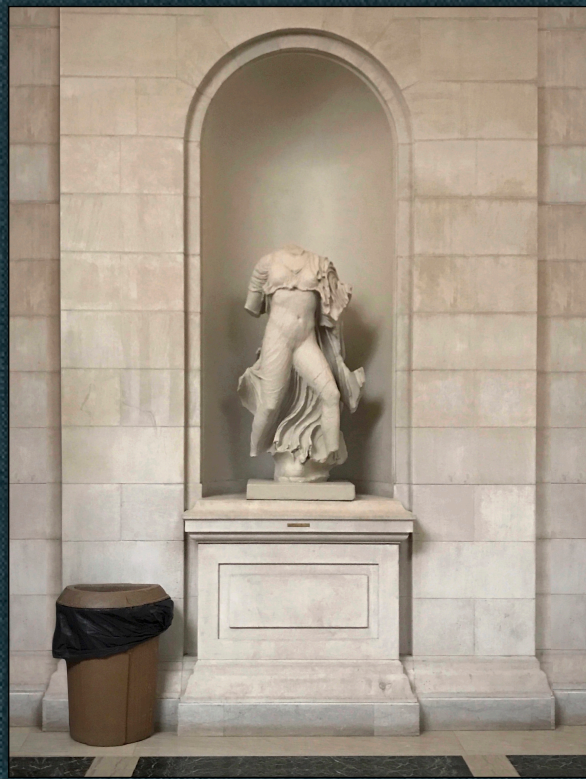


Thin Hardcover Artbook

Vice Versa | vol 1



How I like the idea of lives being made like poems
and vice versa.

Robert Travers



of Art

Sort of similar to sharing your sunscreen
with a stranger on a beach
and that person
(and especially their new spouse)
are deeply appreciative
and kind
but then ride off
back to the only Bed and Breakfast
on the island.

And you turn and walk on
thinking about them
for a while.

Barefoot Mary

Our poor kids never taken to
Disney
but instead
to another chapel
just a little further up
and around the next corner
in Rome;

where the Caravaggio hangs
dimly-lit,
unless you have
a coin.



California

I bought a beret
and never wore it
though I did wear
a tie but for less
than a week
soon after reading
how an artist,
perhaps
Giacometti,
surprisingly did.
I taught art to
kids that year
at a school near
campus and most
memorable of all
was seeing Jesse
Jackson walk by;
the kids cared less.



That's John's thumb in the corner above Anita and me standing by the lake just a few days before she departed.

John loved Anita even though she called him Tom, the name of her previous boyfriend. He left kind notes on her bed, like: "Hon, I'm down to my room looking for some socks" or "I'm down at Mess Hall, a place you eat."



The Grackles

I step out back to grab a bite
and see the grackles have been here;
the feeder is empty
and the two chipmunks
don't even bother
to chase away the other;
there is more than enough droppage.

And then the man
(he must be a neighbor)
walks by in a hurry and I consider
hurrying down to say
please don't flick your cigarette butts
in our yard; but instead
I finish this and go back inside.



Kansas Ave

Razed lots
the years flattened
by tornadoes
and urban
flight except for
that McDonald's
at the
corner of this
building where
she still
lives now
alone with a
phone book
opened
at her side
dialing strangers
she hopes
she may know.





Thaw

Silhouettes of large birds back from Venezuela
swirl high to appraise the ice-scattered debris
at lakeside; a few runners pause,

their paleness raised to the warming sky
with neon caps and shoes; an early bloom.
Our need to be seen.





The photograph was wedged safely in an old college textbook shelved in the bedroom of her childhood home; we had thought it lost forever. We didn't take so many photos back then just enough for reminders of our wheres and whens. We were essentially our own audience.

The plan that summer was to visit London, Paris, Montpellier, Nice and then I would return home to New York while she continued on to study for a semester in Florence.

In Paris we stayed near the Luxembourg Gardens at a small hotel that felt authentic. In the early morning we awakened to a soft double-tap on our door signaling the delivery of fresh bread and coffee.



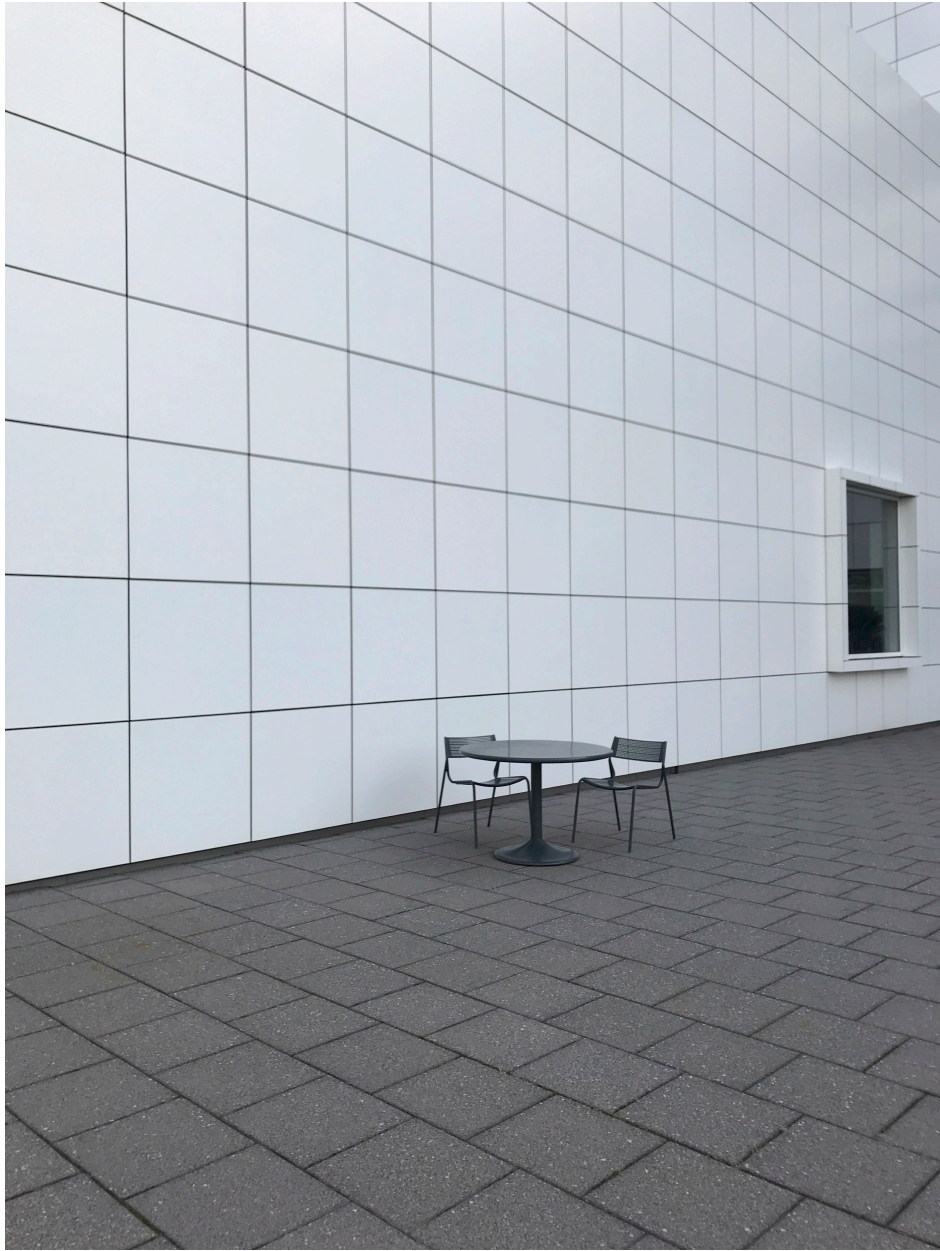
Russ Smith

Can't picture where One Eighteen is but I enjoy thinking about your thoughts; here is where I am. That is lovely. Thanks. Remember the player that answered "Lovely" to how it felt winning the Championship? And how was the Guggenheim? I do. Ended up going to the Met instead; Alex Katz show has closed. But mostly I headed up there so I could walk back. Your photograph is really stunning. Where? Lodz, Poland. 1993. It was taken by Camila Rocha, Alptekin's wife. Was it a Louisville freshman? Russ Smith. I still say lovely to this day because of him. Nice how that is. And how about this: Turk Truck. We need to drive that one into the lobby. Are those balloons? When the Soviets leave; party time. Guggenheim still looks good; some designs age well. I asked a colleague who was a commercial fisherman about barnacles on fish. He said he'd seen it, big fish that don't move much like a black drum. Good to know. A lesson for us. Just doing some fact-checking; we need it more. In Bishop's time, news moved more slowly. No. Soccer balls.



Heroin

In the search for an archived file I found instead
a song I once and still admire.
It reminded me of Jeff; someone I liked growing
up though he didn't play sports
and was a grade younger but years ahead of me
full-bearded while I was still
peering closely in the basement bathroom mirror.
In college he once showed up
for dinner wearing a nice dress and spoke of its
comfort but immediately stepped
into a closet when hearing an unexpected knock
on the door. The last time I saw
him was at Rebop Records where I was looking
for a Tom Waits CD. I asked him
what he was listening to and he suggested this:
Shadow (State of Bengal Remix).





Morro Bay

I recall Morro Bay in late-morning

the bird life, pelicans
and entitled seals below the pier
so loud I thought eventually I would tire
but I didn't;
so how are we not living there?

We continued on to San Simeon
where I ripped my jeans, significantly
on a barbed wire fence.
Huge elephant seals speckled the beach
sand-covered and still, boulders
until we neared

and then later we checked out the Castle.

