

## You're Doing Some Dangerous Work, Kurt Steiner

--- Neil Chapman & Ola Ståhl

1. Caught on a spike here where buildings are flattened, on timber junk sediment island where iron spikes secured buildings' posts to concrete. One iron spike twisting out of concrete, caught on it from amongst the trash crossing with the prevailing winds, a bag with handles knotted. Trash cast across where buildings stood now flattened, shacks flattened by wind by cyclones. Plastic things, tough in the weather their own time of degrading, crossing on journeys to the North, making lines of transit with the prevailing wind. Timber junk sediment island, unstable place of boards clapping as wind gusts. Posts square in section, sturdy to secure roofs and veneer-board walls, on the roof-irons some possessions, clay pots, salt carcasses, fire rocks no longer to be found, carried away by looters, combers, predators, posts arranged now by the collapse as a lattice for veneer-boards, splintered corners eroded by the weather's uses, tense area of veneer-boards, tense boards arched into curves by the weather's uses, clapped in the wind, unsteady footing for looters and combers, place of night-predators. In the day, grey light, things pointing windward, colours wind-bleached. Clear polythene bag containing something yellow, thing dented volume like an organ part-collapsed organ of the interior, bag given volume by yellow thing contained, bag too, yellow bag, membrane turned inside, plastic skin crushed into folds. Inner organ. And assembled with other matter, remnant of string, having been crumpled by two hands with the string that tied it tied round in loops unravelling too, or cut or broken at the knot, remnant of string tying the corner of

a yellow bag fist-crumpled, in clear polythene inflated like an organ, caught on a spike, polythene body with yellow organ within but not weighted by it. **Trash-age polythene body on a spike animated by crosswinds, surface a convex topography with depressions switching as the wind switches with sounds of polythene, inflating as the wind inflates it through the hole, through the 'o' of its opening by the knot, the handles knotted, that inflates it while its volume is buffeted, collapsing. Organ of the trash-age, organ of the periphery caught by the spike, animated by the crosswind.**

**Bag in a bag. Instrument in a bag. Bag-instrument, crumpled to be contained, with string wound now gently pulled out a fibrous spring, unwound to find the string tied to the bag, tied to its two handles but not to close it, the string wound but not to close it, no knotted handles, knotted string but knotted more by careless unwinding, unknotted now to find its use, the instrument in a bag, the bag-instrument held at full stretch of the arms then lay it out, held flat to the grass and unknotted the string,**

string unravelled having been wound the wrong way but still working as the bag is caught by the wind here, the instrument showing its workings already, the string affixed at the other end, tied to a stalk of grass, the bag left to the wind's devices, in an arc around the stalk is blown, inflated, elevated, buffeted. A system maybe stable, bag-anchored, to the ground affixed by string and stalk, inflated, elevated, bag-instrument to measure wind direction, and be visible, from a short distance, visible for an operator engaged in other operations on open grassland by the runway where someone must walk a short distance and be able at a glance to measure wind direction, to assess the changing wind. For the benefit of what? For the care of another operation in the space's other dimensions, an instrument asked to operate despite the prevailing wind, to adjust its operation with respect to the wind. Something rising perhaps, something asked to rise, to rise directly despite the wind. White spherical body, instrument as its payload, light metal assemblage, armature stamped from a sheet, tin-snipped, cut and bent, drilled first then bent into its box-shape, open box armature to support varied components, hold them in a convenient manner, instrument made, invented by steps, by trying, 'til it worked. Radio transmitter, fixed on a plumb-line to be carried into still air, to work for a time, to be lost, to transmit its data and be lost.

2. Course weave of cloth fragment, ragged end, plaid design of threads in colours turned grey, red-grey, black-grey, white-turned-grey, a yellow thread, cotton weave rasps something like static if it's dry, rasps against the skin, but the weave will soak up water, soak if it can, be cold too, ragged ends matting. Wrap it round the thumb, cloth fragment with bone to support it now muscle to move it. **Then into the mouth with the**

**whole. Make the cheek show content hidden, thumb then cold cloth then cheek, place between teeth and cheek-flesh, thick coldness of cloth from curtain fabric.** Taken from the old house where a family lived, **torn from the curtain with a pressure of thumbs, one thumb holding the fabric in a grip, the other drawing the cloth-corner away, two hands unless the curtain be drawn from its hooks (so old is the fabric) distressed in the house's still air over decades, hanging differently in that time, greying, the fibres hanging differently, smiling gaps coming in the weave, no one here that its corner should come away so easily, some threads drawing the cloth into bunches, straighten what's left of the cloth hanging, but not to tear it more, taking only the corner that's needed a corner of cloth for the mouth, run under the cold tap if the tap works (coughing of air in the pipes) the soaked plaid of the curtain cloth, fibres coloured differently shielded from the light, light in through windows, in through webs, plaid bleached by a grey light over decades, a yellow light through webs, the fibres bleached where the grey light has come, darker where hidden, on the cloth's underside its inside, stronger here too the cloth, other days not forgotten when children rough-handled the curtains, and the family, and the cloth was thicker by half, heavier by half, its brighter threads in the fashion of that decade, hung on hooks lined in a conscientious way, a curtain to fit a window, to hang past the life of that decade's fashion. Into the mouth now.**

Between cheek and teeth, packed tight, water expelled cold then withdraw the thumb, tighten the muscles of the cheek and cloth takes on a cavity shape pressed, cooling the cheek and the gums but being warmed before long coming to a body's temperature, forgotten there when it's warm as long as the mouth is clenched no talking. Smile but to oneself. Bitterness in the body's nerves, bitterness in the clench, not from the cloth but from the smile that grips the cloth the warmed cloth in the cavity between teeth and cheek-flesh.