

Thin Hardcover Artbook

Vice Versa | vol 1



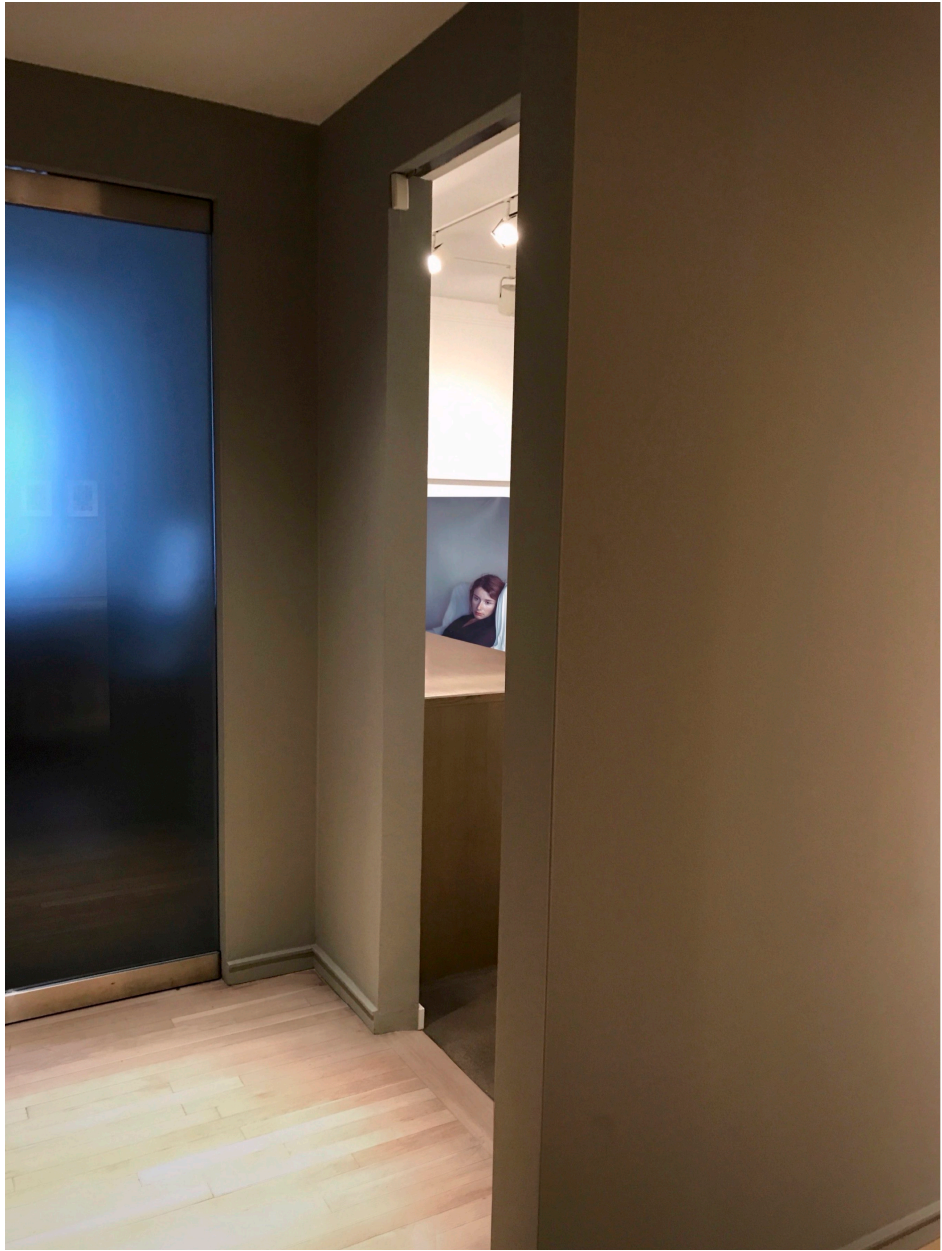
David Estes

For poetry can only be a partial approach, which substitutes for the object a simple image and for (our feelings) a verbal expression—thereby losing the intimate experience.

On the other hand there is nothing before language, for there is no consciousness, and therefore no world, without a system of signs. In fact, it is the speaking-being that has created this universe, even if language excludes him from it. This means that we are deprived through words of an authentic intimacy with what we are, or with what the Other is.

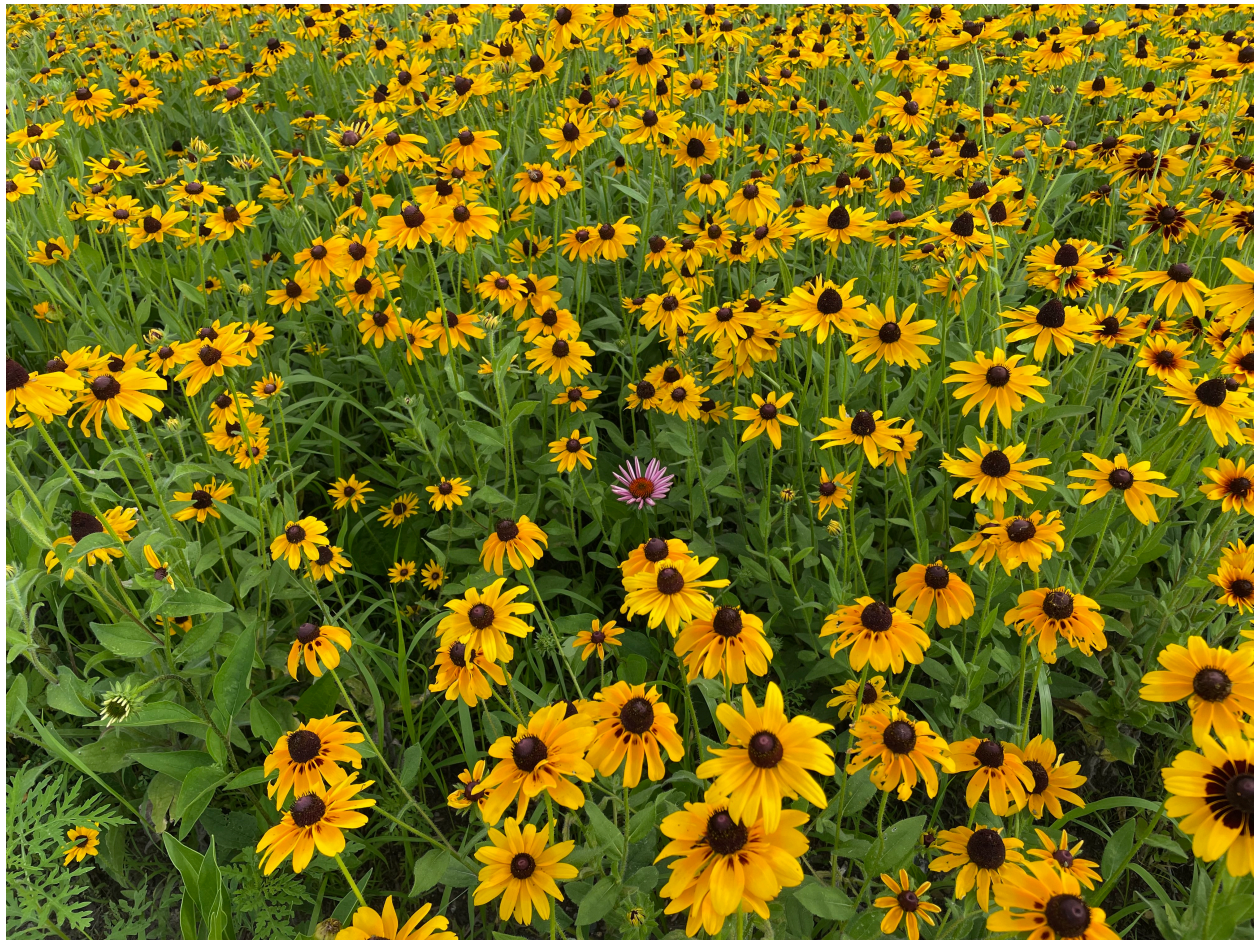
We need poetry, not to regain this intimacy, which is impossible, but to remember that we miss it and to prove to ourselves the value of those moments when we are able to encounter other people, or trees, or anything, beyond words, in silence.

Yves Bonnefoy



Kansas Ave.

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



White Fence

Near the bridge near the school is a
quiet property with unraked leaves
brown and brittle nearly weightless
to the early risings of these longer
days but what has stopped me is the
turn and tilt of a squiggly-wired
white fence a shallow-arc breathless
and reminding of how someone
once cared.





John's Thumb

That's John's thumb
in the corner
above Anita and me
standing by the lake
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.”



Florida, years ago

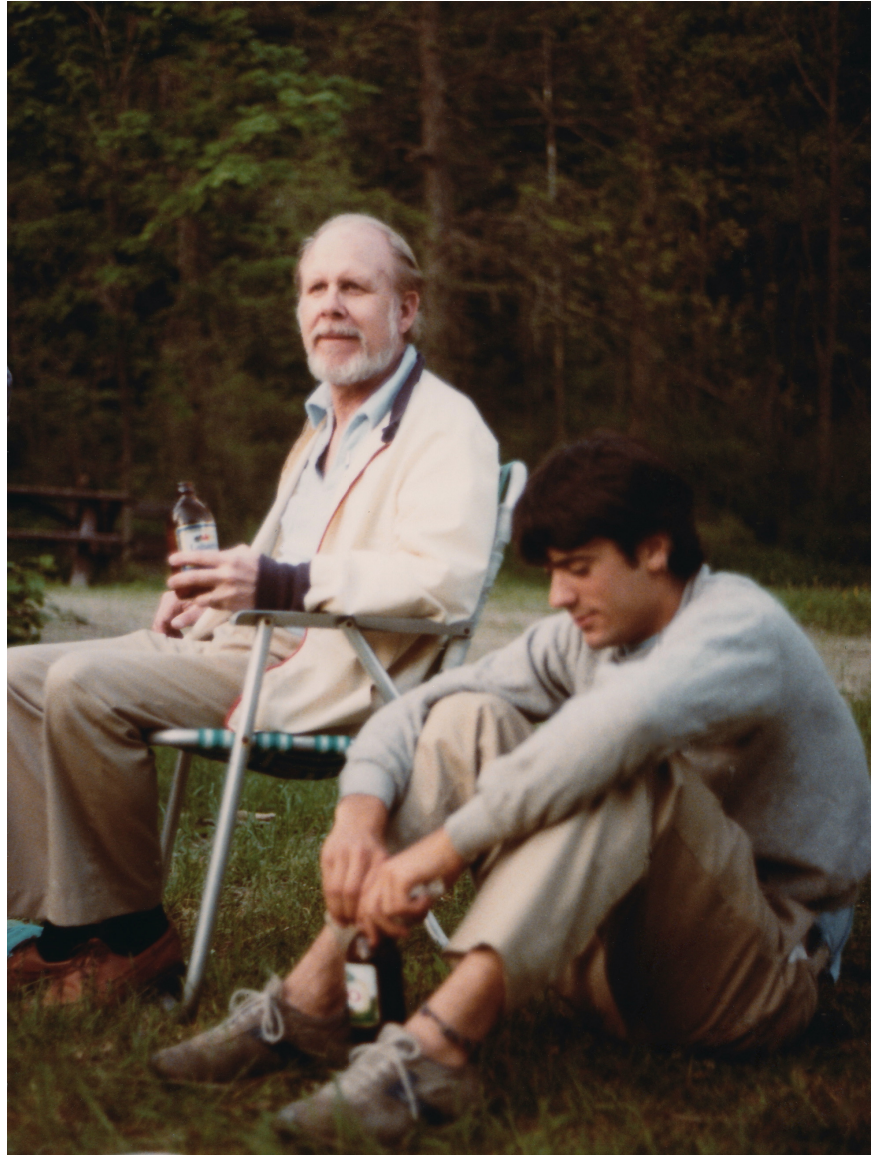
Embolden and adrift on this Lauderdale lawn her bare
thighs press hard to a quiet warming and beyond the
shallows of undisturbed waters from the last high tide
a sunrise aches sideways with several pink flamingos.



I didn't know John very well but we liked each other and shared a similar group of friends. He went on to medical school and now lives in Colorado but that's just information found on the Internet.

Dad had been diagnosed with Parkinson's disease over ten years earlier and the physical symptoms were obvious and increasingly limiting. And the social consequences were already devastating—regular dinner dates with friends and colleagues had dwindled and in general, people would shy away from any engagement with him. Certainly, I was aware of this but at the time I had my own issues.

Dad was a kind and quietly inquisitive person, and always easily amused, but to realize this required patience; a willingness to allow him the time to manage the limitations necessary to communicate. John sat with Dad for a long time that late afternoon, sharing a beer and chatting about art.



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.

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 write this and then go back inside.



A Pouring

We lived near the trail on South Hill and it was pouring but warm enough to go for a run so we did out to the reservoir where we swam briefly until thunder turned us straight back to shore where comically we struggled to put our wet clothes on and how ridiculous it all felt though of course necessary so we did and had no regrets until later that evening because our shoes were still soaked but quickly we recovered and that's why you saw us barefooted and smiling downtown.



When a song is a life

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 the 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).



Flock

Evangelicals bow to
blustery winds and
the approaching
young woman with
her clean lines of
yesterday evening
form-fitting now
slackened and
hungover below
clouds bare
branches sway,
above the birds
just listen:
their tiny lungs
must ache.





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. Need to drive that one into the lobby. Are those balloons? When 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.





Crescent Place

It will be measured as a smallish lot for a small ranch home
but now it is still a meadow
open at the edge of the frontier; the frontier I was learning
about from the much older kids.
Someone had bought Smarties and shared them
as little pills. We encircled our red wagons and started
digging for gold
but Billy (or maybe Bobby) found a German medal instead;
it had been buried by a neighbor, his souvenir
from the War.



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.

David Estes received his BA in History from Cornell University and MFA in Sculpture from California College of the Arts. He has recently become interested in poetry and how it relates to making images; and vice versa.

Ithaca NY

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