



UNTITLED

Ethan Wedel

We begin with a box. It's nothing but a black and bulky rectangle, on the side five inches high and eight long, and extending, in front, about eighteen inches from east to west. The upper part inclines gently along the fixed axis of itself, ending, without warning, in a vertiginous cliff of some two inches. There, we find ourselves on a small salient, looking toward a town of gray buildings, a series of dull houses lacking wholly the signs of life—study in desolation where no columns of smoke rise into the sky, and the ephemeral and empty windows are always unlighted. From the air, so to speak, the keys of the machine seem the teeth of an Aztec God, its face painted in the prudent and precise style of such works, smiling brazenly below the long eye of the margin-control, the space bar an enormous lip pouting in the visage dark, haughty, divine. Each tooth has a role to play in un-written histories of solitude; each is a monument to feeling placed all together with the others for the purposes of feasting, for creation in the magnificent destruction of formlessness. They are cenotaphs to civilization—singly and in the fullness of their fracture, a sumptuous collection of chaotic possibility inside the desperate stinginess of language's native order. Rising, moving over the teeth, above the eye, the precipice, we arrive at the mouth. Here there sits the great tongue, the bar for feeding paper to the monster, and, looking farther on, we can see the interior paramour, soft and gently throbbing red, of the beast—that place where its heart beats silently within the implacable sluttishness of its viscera: the sphere of the words, the revolt of mechanical parts, cords of steel, wheels, levers, mysterious and undefinable things that give their loyalty to anyone, everyone. And, deep down, we reach the center where, when electrified, the typewriter trembles, raises its head, shakes itself, and pommels the keys, the universe, into something like courtesy.