

DEADLINES AND DIVINE DISTRACTIONS

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Dear Sam Shepard,

Things have really changed around here since when you were balling Patti Smith. I guess that's ineptly ambitious of me to say since you guys actually had your thing in Chelsea not the East Village. If I am to believe Patti Smith's memoir *Just Kids*. I suppose I'm showing your ass, Sam and Patti's too as a way to show mine. A moment ago I was walking along Houston Street darkly in the rain my dog lunging at the people moving away from Whole Foods with their goods and I thought "my dog keeps lunging at bags full of meat & cheese" and I didn't so much think it, I thought about tweeting it. I walk in the dark with a gorgeous dog an aggressive pit bull named Honey and later I think: "My dog's name is Honey and when I pull her away from jumping on people and say Honey—I think people think I'm mommying her and I feel emasculated." I don't truly think that. I think about tweeting that. I feel like you never felt emasculated Sam. Tonight I started writing to an imaginary Sam and suddenly he became you who I've never met. Where are you living now, Sam Shepard? I live in New York and have for forty years & often I think about you & people like yourself who lived here and then left to live in London & then elsewhere to live more obscurely. With a movie star. I often wanted to live more obscurely but when I do I am actually obscure or feel that way which is not what I had in mind. Dear Sam here's the report on New York today. People right over there on Houston St. are buying food and today I was thinking while I was walking my dog I thought I will only go there once a month. That felt good. "There" is Whole Foods. There's a more generic old age supermarket on Avenue A Key Food & I really like shopping there. I bet it was here when you were here. Were you ever here? I feel certain you lived in the east village in youthful poverty in the 60s. One thing about Key Food is that Paul Thek worked there at the end of his life bagging groceries. Seems really saintly. The thought of living obscurely in New York (and dying here too) is an oddly warm & beautiful thing but I am certain if I think "that" then what I am doing today is not living in New York obscurely. But honestly I am most interested in that part of my life in New York today. Always that's the report. I go over the bridge at Delancey to the river with

my dog. Next day I go over the bridge at Grand Street. I call my agent Emilie who lives over there and I propose I pick up that book. Hours later she calls back and says she can drop it off at the dry cleaner's now or nowish and I text back and say great I will leave two infernos for you. I skulk into the dry cleaners hoping they do not despise me for leaving things there and having them picked up and having other things left and they do seem mildly annoyed. On the wall at the dry cleaners there used to be pictures of famous show business men. Musicians, guys in tuxes who have their tuxes mended & dry-cleaned here probably. Philip Glass's picture is up there. I remember trying to get them to frame one of my book jackets. I gave them a book and they just sort of smiled at me sadly. I don't try anymore. I took a cab over to The Swiss Institute for Hans Ulrich's book party tonight & later on I hung out w Anna Bozicevic & Sophia La Fraga. Sophia is part of Hans's 89 thing so at some point in the reading the whole room turned and looked at the wall immediately behind me & there was Sophia's piece projected on the wall. It was very awkward to read that angle so I read my phone instead & sent messages out like a prisoner. Later I hung out all night at the party at Soho Grand with Anna & Sophia & I now pledge to read Sophia's work more obscurely in the future. Mainly we were obsessed with Marina Abramovic at the party. With her & with getting food which kept arriving in tiny morsels all night. Finally large fierce sliders arrived & we wolfed those down, not Sophia who does not eat meat. I kept seeing Andrew Durbin all day, at McNally Jackson and finally culminating in his reading at the gallery & later at the party. Anna Bozicevic is Croatian & at one point she said something in Croatian to Marina & I think it wasn't acknowledged. I felt Marina looking at me at another point so when I passed her I said hi and she looked through me. When I reported this I thought privately this might be how I relate to the world. I think it's looking at me & then it looks through me. Later on we all wound up in a karaoke bar on Canal where Sophia got food & I said I'm going home now & did then I brought Honey down into the yard to pee did not continue writing this and did not watch Kelly Reichert movie in bed as I claimed I would when I was leaving but instead leaned into the light reading Emily Gould's novel but not finishing it yet. Nothing has changed.

Goodnight Sam.