org is an online platform, collecting, describing, presenting and generating documents of all sorts. It documents documents.

Your path through the collection lead along Ulcer, Shoulder, Ulcer, Subtractive Writing, Starry sky, long exposure, Sandersleben (Saxony-Anhalt), 14 April 2023, Interviews with residents of Sandersleben, no specific location, 2023 [1], Shoulder, Ulcer, Knee, Roofing (3) – Simon, tu me manques, Debatably graded, It’s Pouring, Debatably graded, It’s Pouring, CLOSED NO POWER. For prescriptions go to Walgreens 2690 Mission OPEN UNTIL 5 PM.

What constitutes a 'document' and how does it function?

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the etymological origin is the Latin 'documentum', meaning 'lesson, proof, instance, specimen'. As a verb, it is 'to prove or support (something) by documentary evidence', and 'to provide with documents'. The online version of the *OED* includes a draft addition, whereby a document (as a noun) is 'a collection of data in digital form that is considered a single item and typically has a unique filename by which it can be stored, retrieved, or transmitted (as a file, a spreadsheet, or a graphic)'. The current use of the noun 'document' is defined as '*something* written, inscribed, *etc*., which furnishes evidence or information upon any subject, as a manuscript, title-deed, tomb-stone, coin, picture, etc.' (emphasis added).

Both 'something' and that first 'etc.' leave ample room for discussion. A document doubts whether it functions as something unique, or as something reproducible. A passport is a document, but a flyer equally so. Moreover, there is a circular reasoning: to document is 'to provide with documents'. Defining (the functioning of) a document most likely involves ideas of communication, information, evidence, inscriptions, and implies notions of objectivity and neutrality – but the document is neither reducible to one of them, nor is it equal to their sum. It is hard to pinpoint it, as it disperses into and is affected by other fields: it is intrinsically tied to the history of media and to important currents in literature, photography and art; it is linked to epistemic and power structures. However ubiquitous it is, as an often tangible thing in our environment, and as a concept, a document *deranges*.

the-documents.org continuously gathers documents and provides them with a short textual description, explanation, or digression, written by multiple authors. In *Paper Knowledge*, Lisa Gitelman paraphrases 'documentalist' Suzanne Briet, stating that 'an antelope running wild would not be a document, but an antelope taken into a zoo would be one, presumably because it would then be framed – or reframed – as an example, specimen, or instance'.
The gathered files are all documents – if they weren't before publication, they now are. That is what the-documents.org, irreversibly, *does*. It is a zoo turning an antelope into an 'antelope'.

As you made your way through the collection, the-documents.org tracked the entries you viewed. It documented your path through the website. As such, the time spent on the-documents.org turned into this – a new document.

This document was compiled by ____ on 22.03.2026 20:05, printed on ____ and contains 15 documents on 35 pages. (https://the-documents.org/log/22-03-2026-6780/)

the-documents.org is a project created and edited by De Cleene De Cleene; design & development by atelier Haegeman Temmerman.

the-documents.org has been online since 23.05.2021.

Notes

- De Cleene De Cleene is Michiel De Cleene and Arnout De Cleene. Together they form a research group that focusses on novel ways of approaching the everyday, by artistic means and from a cultural and critical perspective.
  www.decleenedecleene.be / info@decleenedecleene.be
- This project was made possible with the support of the Flemish Government and KASK & Conservatorium, the school of arts of HOGENT and Howest. It is part of the research project *Documenting Objects*, financed by the HOGENT Arts Research Fund.

Sources

- Briet, S. *Qu'est-ce que la documentation?* Paris: Edit, 1951.
- Gitelman, L. *Paper Knowledge. Toward a Media History of Documents.* Durham/ London: Duke University Press, 2014.
- *Oxford English Dictionary Online*. Accessed on 13.05.2021.

In Zaffelare, young men who were called for military service but could not be missed at home were advised by the local doctor to swallow a small ball of aluminium foil an hour before the examination. In the X-ray, a gastric ulcer appeared. They were rejected for service. It is uncertain whether the increased incidence of gastric ulcers among young men in Zaffelare was a cause for concern.

the-documents.c

org Ulcer



type	date	filename	size	author
scan	26.02.2026	20240402-SC17.tif	43,47 MB	Michiel De Cleene

category
conflict, government, medicine, rural area

19:20:27

Yesterday I had my shoulder checked by a radiologist. He took an ultrasound and saw some minor inflammation of my right subscapularis.
After giving me some advice – ‘we could give you a shot of cortisone in the shoulder. It would relieve you from your pain for six weeks and then, without proper exercise, you’d be back where you are now’– he walked towards the door. ‘I propose you do this exercise thirty times, three times a day.’
The radiologists put his right hand on the doorframe, his arm stretched, the weight of his body on it and then leaned forward and back again, while keeping his arm stretched. ‘This will increase the muscles around the sore subscapularis. It will take months.’ After giving me his advice, he sent me back into the dressing room. I put my shirt back on and went into the waiting room. The nurse called out my name, charged me 14,00 EUR and gave me a card. ‘This code will allow you to look at the images of the ultrasound at home’, she said.

Today I entered the code and password and – instead of my shoulder – found the röntgen-images of someone else’s broken heel.

org Shoulder



type	date	filename	size	author
radiograph	14.01.2021	1f713c4c-6975-4760-ada1-9cc485930adc.PNG	1,2MB	Michiel De Cleene

category
data storage, mistake, medicine, fissure

19:53:35

In Zaffelare, young men who were called for military service but could not be missed at home were advised by the local doctor to swallow a small ball of aluminium foil an hour before the examination. In the X-ray, a gastric ulcer appeared. They were rejected for service. It is uncertain whether the increased incidence of gastric ulcers among young men in Zaffelare was a cause for concern.

the-documents.c

org Ulcer



type	date	filename	size	author
scan	26.02.2026	20240402-SC17.tif	43,47 MB	Michiel De Cleene

category
conflict, government, medicine, rural area

19:55:14

In an attempt to make it his own, Gino – it might also be Dino – has taken a can of bright pink spray paint to his hard hat and – as the paint was drying – dragged his gloved finger from top to bottom. G – or D –, I, N, O. In the dust on a demolished floor tile, someone has written 12,10. Perhaps a measurement, a quantity, a position, a date, a reference.

Subtractive writing is not uncommon. With the tip of a passer-by's index finger 'WASH ME' is subtracted from the dust on a dirty car. In freshly poured concrete, a name is embedded forever with a twig. In hot and soft roofing drawings and obscenities are scratched. Styrofoam lining a brand new elevator gets impressed with names, jokes and knuckles.

In the twenty-third canto of Ariosto's Orlando Furioso (1516), Orlando comes across the name of his love and another man, carved in the bark of a tree. He doubts. But that night, a gossiping shepherd tells him he's seen Angelica and Medoro together. Orlando returns to the forest, and in a four-day frenzy, he uproots every tree and pollutes the rivers forever.

CXXXI
For he turf, stone, and trunk, and shoot, and lop,
Cast without cease into the beauteous source;
Till, turbid from the bottom to the top,
Never again was clear the troubled course.
At length, for lack of breath, compelled to stop,
(When he is bathed in sweat, and wasted force,
Serves not his fury more) he falls, and lies
Upon the mead, and, gazing upward, sighs.[1]

Sources

1 Ariosto, L. *Orlando Furioso*. Translated by William Stewart Rose, Echo Library, 2006, p. 267.



type	date	filename	size	author
photograph	05.08.2025	IMG_8280.jpg	1,70 MB	Michiel De Cleene

category
architecture, construction site, dust, sign, waste

19:56:01

A constant, dependable presence. With the camera focused on the North Star for an extended period, the rotation of the Earth becomes visible. Nearby, in the municipality of Wiederstedt, the geologist, poet and philosopher Friedrich von Hardenberg (better known by his pen name Novalis) spent his childhood years between 1772 and 1784. A quote of his is engraved on a stone bench in the park surrounding the chateau where he was raised: “The human being does not speak alone – the universe also speaks – everything speaks – infinite languages.”

Notes

- From *S. Anders Leben. Eine Handlung in Gesprächen/S. Anders Leben – Living Differently: An Act in Conversations*
- Stephanie Kiwitt (1972) is an artist based in Halle (Saale), Germany. Utilizing a large number of images, various perspectives and also textual elements, she is known for her insightful photography that explores spaces emblematic of contemporary phenomena. Over the past three years, she has focused on evolving habitats in rural areas, photographing traces of transformation and conducting interviews in Saxony-Anhalt, the region she moved to in 2020. From 2018 to 2020, Kiwitt was a guest lecturer at the LUCA School of Arts in Brussels.
- In spring 2024 the-documents.org and Trigger co-publish a series of online articles with a focus on the meeting ground between photography and the document.

Starry sky, long exposure, Sandersleben (Saxony-Anhalt), 14 April 2023



type	date	filename	size	author
photograph	14.06.2024	Bild 003_mk.jpg	73 MB	Stephanie Kiwitt

category
astronomy, literature, Trigger

19:57:42

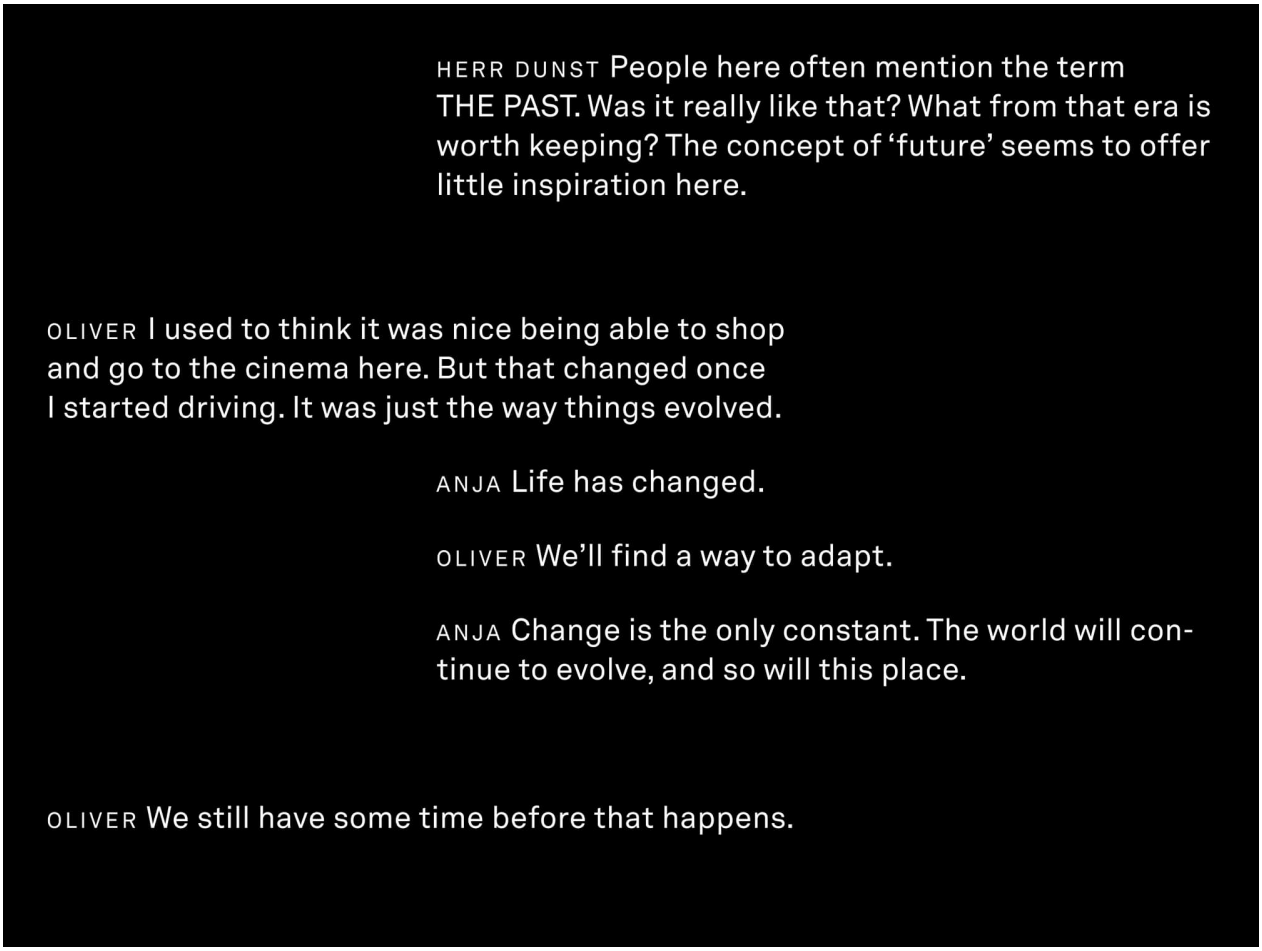
Freely adapted from interviews with residents of Sandersleben (Saxony-Anhalt). Three-act play. The first two acts take place in the present day; the third is set in the future.

From Act 1 ‘The Town of S’, Scene 2 ‘The Past’. Characters: MR DUNST club member I, OLIVER club member II, ANJA young mother

Notes

- Stills from text animation *S. Anders Leben. Eine Handlung in Gesprächen/S. Anders Leben – Living Differently: An Act in Conversations*
- Stephanie Kiwitt (1972) is an artist based in Halle (Saale), Germany. Utilizing a large number of images, various perspectives and also textual elements, she is known for her insightful photography that explores spaces emblematic of contemporary phenomena. Over the past three years, she has focused on evolving habitats in rural areas, photographing traces of transformation and conducting interviews in Saxony-Anhalt, the region she moved to in 2020. From 2018 to 2020, Kiwitt was a guest lecturer at the LUCA School of Arts in Brussels.
- In spring 2024 the-documents.org and Trigger co-publish a series of online articles with a focus on the meeting ground between photography and the document.

Interviews with residents of Sandersleben, no specific location, 2023 [1]



type	date	filename	size	author
collage	13.06.2024	1-The PAST.jpg	301 KB	Stephanie Kiwitt

category
economy, encounter, rural area, Trigger

19:57:44

Yesterday I had my shoulder checked by a radiologist. He took an ultrasound and saw some minor inflammation of my right subscapularis.
After giving me some advice – ‘we could give you a shot of cortisone in the shoulder. It would relieve you from your pain for six weeks and then, without proper exercise, you’d be back where you are now’– he walked towards the door. ‘I propose you do this exercise thirty times, three times a day.’
The radiologists put his right hand on the doorframe, his arm stretched, the weight of his body on it and then leaned forward and back again, while keeping his arm stretched. ‘This will increase the muscles around the sore subscapularis. It will take months.’ After giving me his advice, he sent me back into the dressing room. I put my shirt back on and went into the waiting room. The nurse called out my name, charged me 14,00 EUR and gave me a card. ‘This code will allow you to look at the images of the ultrasound at home’, she said.

Today I entered the code and password and – instead of my shoulder – found the röntgen-images of someone else’s broken heel.

org Shoulder



type	date	filename	size	author
radiograph	14.01.2021	1f713c4c-6975-4760-ada1-9cc485930adc.PNG	1,2MB	Michiel De Cleene

category
data storage, mistake, medicine, fissure

19:59:16

In Zaffelare, young men who were called for military service but could not be missed at home were advised by the local doctor to swallow a small ball of aluminium foil an hour before the examination. In the X-ray, a gastric ulcer appeared. They were rejected for service. It is uncertain whether the increased incidence of gastric ulcers among young men in Zaffelare was a cause for concern.

the-documents.c

org Ulcer



type	date	filename	size	author
scan	26.02.2026	20240402-SC17.tif	43,47 MB	Michiel De Cleene

category
conflict, government, medicine, rural area

19:59:24

The scientific exactitude sought for in the *Iconographie de la Salpêtrière* and the *Nouvelle Iconographie de la Salpêtrière*, the (in)famous scientific publications stemming from Paris' psychiatric hospital La Salpêtrière (1876-1918), lead to an abundance of photographic images in their pages. The photographs' ideal: 'Trace incontestable, incontestablement fidèle, durable, transmissible'.[1] The ambition of exactitude results in cold, and often cruel depictions of patients. In the digitized version of the Sorbonne library's copies, some photographs have left an imprint on the opposite page. The knee of Charles, 'le géant', adds an unwanted layer upon its measures on the opposite page, while the photograph of the knee itself loses ink.[2]

Sources

1 Didi-Huberman, G. *Invention de l'hystérie*. Paris: Macula, 2014, 72.
2 Launois, P.-E., Roy, P., 'Gigantisme et infantilisme', *Nouvelle Iconographie de la Salpêtrière*, Tome XV, 1902, 548, pl. LXVI, online: https://patrimoine.sorbonne-universite.fr/fonds/item/2613-nouvelle-iconographie-de-la-salpetriere-tome-15?offset=6

org

Knee

	mai 1899	novembre 1902
Hauteur de la malléole interne	87 mm.	79 mm.
Longueur du pied	287 »	299 »
Longueur du 1er orteil avec le métatarsien	143 »	» »
Longueur du 2e orteil seul	82 »	» »
Longueur du 1er orteil (partie libre)	48 »	» »
Largeur bicondylienne	108 »	» »
Largeur bimalléolaire	81 »	» »
Largeur du pied	126 »	» »
Membre supérieur gauche.		
Hauteur de l'humérus	381 »	422 »
Hauteur du radius	298 »	298 »
Longueur de la main	233 »	243 »
Longueur du médius	118 1/2	124 »
Longueur du pouce avec le métacarpien	125 »	126 1/2
Longueur du pouce seul	72 »	76 »
Longueur de l'ongle du médius	16 »	16 »
Largeur de l'humérus (extrémité inférieure)	74 »	83 »
Largeur du poignet	67 »	69 1/2
Largeur de la main	97 »	103 »
Circonférences.		
Cou	370 »	370 »
Thorax	1015 »	1040 »
Taille	892 »	925 »
Bras	280 »	260 »
Avant-bras	271 »	250 »
Poignet	197 »	197 »
Cuisse : circonférence supérieure à droite	544 »	» »
— — à gauche	539 »	450 »
— inférieure à droite	420 »	» »
— — à gauche	399 »	» »
Mollet : droit	382 »	» »
gauche	375 »	350 »
Malléoles (droite et gauche)	240 »	» »
Tête.		
Hauteur naso-alvéolaire	87 »	87 »
Hauteur naso-sous-nasale	64 »	64 »
Largeur biangulaire interne (yeux)	36 »	37 »
Hauteur ophryo-alvéolaire	102 »	102 »
Largeur biangulaire externe (yeux)	96 »	» »
Largeur bimastoïdienne	142 1/2	145 »
Diamètre antéro-postérieur glabellaire	199 »	200 »
Hauteur ophryo-mentonnière	154 »	159 1/2
Diamètre antéro-postérieur métopique	195 »	197 »

type	date	filename	size	author
scan	01.09.2023	Pagina's van CS_000015_015_pdf-2.pdf	184 KB	Arnout De Cleene

category
archive, book, interference, medicine, replica/copy

20:00:11

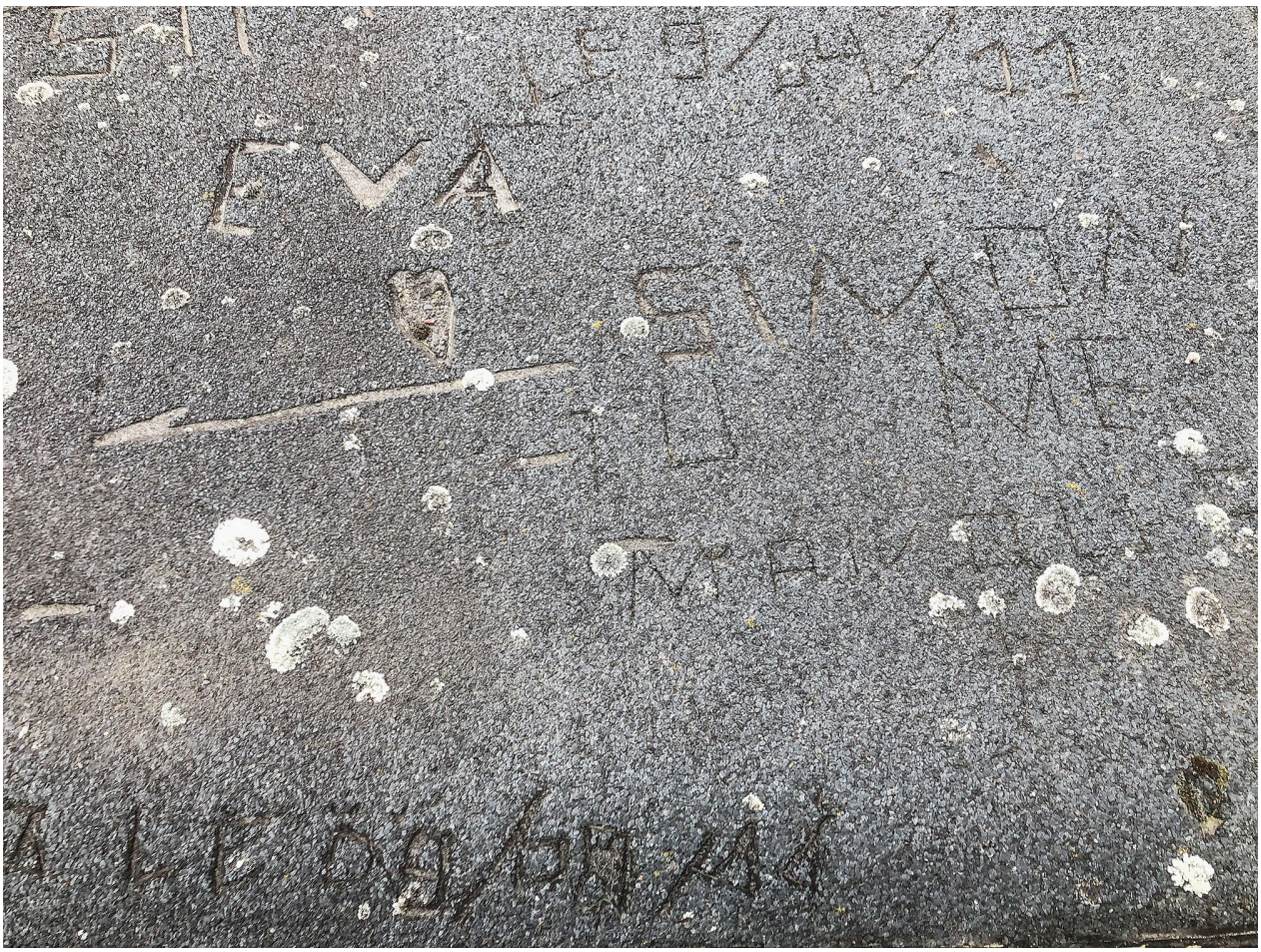
the-documents.c


Nouvelle Iconographie de la Salpêtrière.
T. XV. Pl. LXVI
Cliché Infroit
Phototypie Berthaud, Paris.
GIGANTISME ET INFANTILISME
(P. E. Launois et Pierre Roy).
Le genou du géant Charles
(Genu valgum tardif et persistance à l'âge de 30 ans

In what order and by whom the various texts and drawings were carved into the soft roofing is unclear. To the right of ‘EVA’, a heart symbol and an arrow (pointing to the left), the roofing reads ‘SIMON TU ME MANQUES’.

The short sentence usually – yet hastily – translates to ‘Simon, I miss you’. However, in French the ‘you’ (tu) is the subject and has an active role, whereas the ‘I’ *(me)* is the direct object. In short: by his not being there, Simon actively effectuates hurt to the one who carved this text.

Roofing (3) – Simon, tu me manques



type	date	filename	size	author
photograph	14.04.2021	IMG_6512.jpeg	4,50MB	Michiel De Cleene

category
automobile, decoration, fissure, parking, roofing, sign

20:02:54

The two photographs arrived in Belgium inside a used hardback[1] in spring 2016, though it is unclear how long before that time they were actually taken.[2]

Photograph #1 measures 151 x 100 mm and shows two young people who appear to be mountain climbing and captured while clearing a ridge. Behind the two subjects a bluish mountainous landscape is vaguely visible, suggesting a vantage point of some considerable elevation. The person on the left is wearing a white T-shirt and a bracelet, and has several earrings. The person on the right is carrying a backpack. What appears to be a black tank-top may in fact also be the straps of the pack. On their head they wear what appears to be a grey T-shirt or other garment, presumably to protect the subject from the sun; this person also has earrings and is wearing a necklace and sunglasses. The weather appears nice, both subjects are smiling and appear relaxed. The effort may well have been staged.

Photograph #2 measures (approximately) 43 x 62 mm with the left, bottom and right sides appearing to be cut, rather unevenly, with scissors. It has the typical appearance of an American high school yearbook photo and shows a young person wearing a shiny black blouse and a necklace. They have blue eyes and below-shoulder length auburn hair. The red lips appear painted. On the back of this photograph is written in a clearly legible hand:

Clay, I can't
wait until next
year when we're
in grade 12![3]
Have a great
Summer and
call me [XXX XXXX][4]
by the way, I haven't
forgot about how big UR

The only assumptions to be made somewhat safely from these two items are that (a) the book has once belonged to 'Clay', and, (b) a relationship of a close, friendly, perhaps even intimate, nature has at one time existed between 'Clay' and the person in the second photograph (assuming also that (c) the note on the back of the second photograph was indeed written by the person in that photograph). The circumstances surrounding, and/or motivations ('Clay''s or any third parties') behind the book's ending up in a used-book shop[5] must necessarily remain a matter of speculation. There are no reasons to assume that the book was gifted to 'Clay' by the note-writer (or by anyone else) as no dedication appears in it.[6] It must also remain inconclusive whether there are either two or three different persons appearing across the two photographs, and whether any of those is in fact 'Clay'.

Notes

1 The book is a first edition, first printing hardback copy of *Word Virus: The William S. Burroughs Reader*, edited by James Grauerholz and Ira Silverberg, with an introduction by Ann Douglas, published by Grove Press (New York) in 1998 (160mm x 235mm, 532pp.). On the used book aggregator webstore, the book was graded 'Very Good' (or, VG),* which proved a realistic assessment as it appeared (in fact, still does) largely unread with a dust jacket in equally good condition and no markings inside whatsoever. In fact, the book's condition might well have warranted a 'Fine' (F) grading were it not for the only notable (yet not noted) defect, which was that the 'Spoken Word CD' that was originally included — as indicated by a 32mm diameter round sticker in the top right corner of the front of the dust jacket, and the glued-in envelope in the back of the book — was no longer present. This defect may well have accounted for the apparent disparity between the state and grading of the book and the low price of $4.53 (shipping not included) it was sold at, although the fact remains that this incomplete state ought to have been mentioned in the listing. Since the time of purchase, however, markings were added to the book, presumably with an additional adverse effect on its market value: appearing on the half-title page, they are in dark green crayon and of an abstract nature and were made by the current owner's infant son.
* According to the terminology of the grading scale proposed in 1949 by *AB Bookman's Weekly* and still widely, if not universally, in use in the online used book market today, albeit with some additions or modifications by individual platforms. See Wikipedia for a brief overview.

2 Elements of style and physical nature of the artifacts may be taken to indicate an origin roughly contemporaneous with the book.

3 '[In the United States of America, the] twelfth grade is the twelfth school year after kindergarten. It is also the last year of compulsory secondary education, or high school. Students are often 17–19 years old. Twelfth graders are referred to as Seniors.' (Wikipedia)

4 A 7-digit phone number, without country or area code, redacted here.

5 Located in the state of Nevada, no further identification of the particular shop was provided on the aggregator webstore, and it must be noted that the book was subsequently shipped from 'Auburn', presumably Auburn, CA.

6 Indeed in accordance with its 'Very Good' grading, which is generally understood to explicitly list any defects such as markings (including dedications) but also any missing materials.

7 Quality hardbacks being notably easier to read without damaging the book.

8 Speculations on this, and any potential subsequent extrapolations are, fortunately perhaps, further inhibited by the fact that the book presents a rather generous cross-section of writings spanning the entirety of William S. Burroughs' famously prolific career. The inclusions span the period between 1929 and 1994. Although undertakings of this kind will inevitably meet with criticism, the consensus indeed seems to be that the editors have done an excellent job in selecting and presenting the material. Was 'Clay' mainly drawn by the hard-boiled straightforward prose style of the early novels; the highly experimental and provocative writings of the 'middle period' (traditionally labeled as rather 'hermetic' and 'cold', though they are quite often not without a haunting, perhaps even 'poetic' quality); or the later, one might say 'integrated' style which saw the earlier experiments wedded to a certain 'return to narrative' and, in old age, traces of a much more 'humane' author than ever before (if a point of critique may yet be formulated, one might indeed say that the writings from this later period (roughly 1978–1997) are somewhat favoured (quantitatively) in the *Word Virus* volume; as these have a (still: relatively) greater 'readability' than much of the older material that may indicate a decision of a commercial nature, yet there is also the fact that these texts were written in collaboration with one of the editors of *Word Virus*)?

9 Being in fact a promo sampler for the 4CD Giorno Poetry Systems compilation of William S. Burroughs material also released (by Mouth Almighty Records and Mercury Records) in 1998. See Discogs.

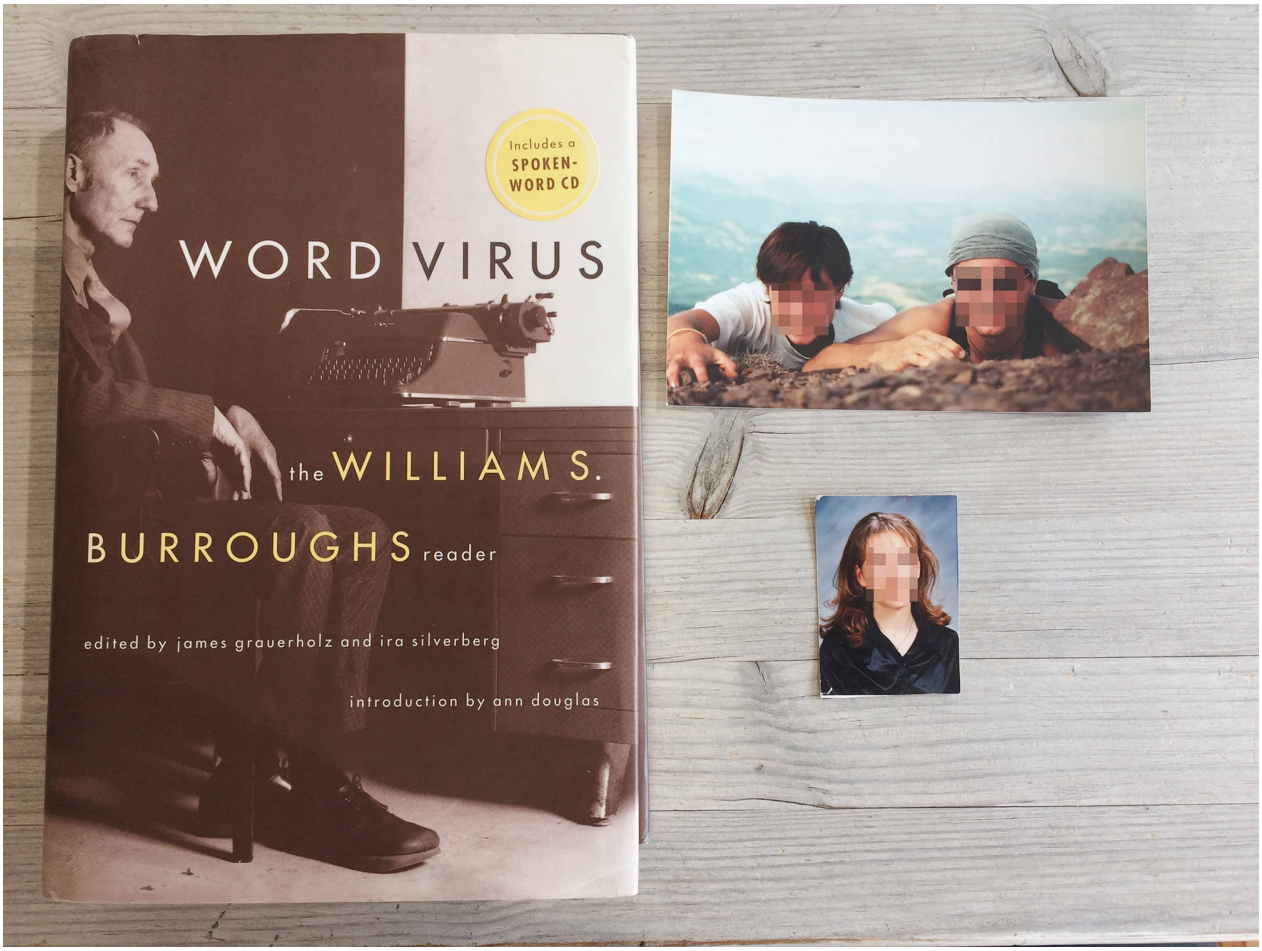
10 Nevada has three area codes (702, 725, and 775), yet quick Google searches of the 7-digit number combined with any one of those yield no easy identification. Considering the overall scarcity of information, however, it seems clear that anyone seeking to reconstruct the biographies of 'Clay' and/or the note-writer should take up this line of investigation.

- David Depestel hesitates in trying to make something of himself; a character, a profession, a fixed mode of being, are for him concepts that already shadow forth the outlines of the skeleton, which is all that will be left of him in the end.

Sources

- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_used_book_conditions
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Twelfth_grade#United_States
- https://www.discogs.com/Various-Selections-From-The-Best-Of-William-Burroughs-From-Giorno-Poetry-Systems

Debatably graded



type	date	filename	size	author
photograph	18.10.2022	IMG_0059.JPG, IMG_058.JPG	2,11 MB, 1,55 MB	David Depestel

category
book, collecting, encounter, landscape, literature

20:03:43

the-documents.c

Indeed, the number of questions raised by these items far exceeds the number of answers they provide. Even leaving aside the nature of the writings in the book, one cannot help but speculate as to:

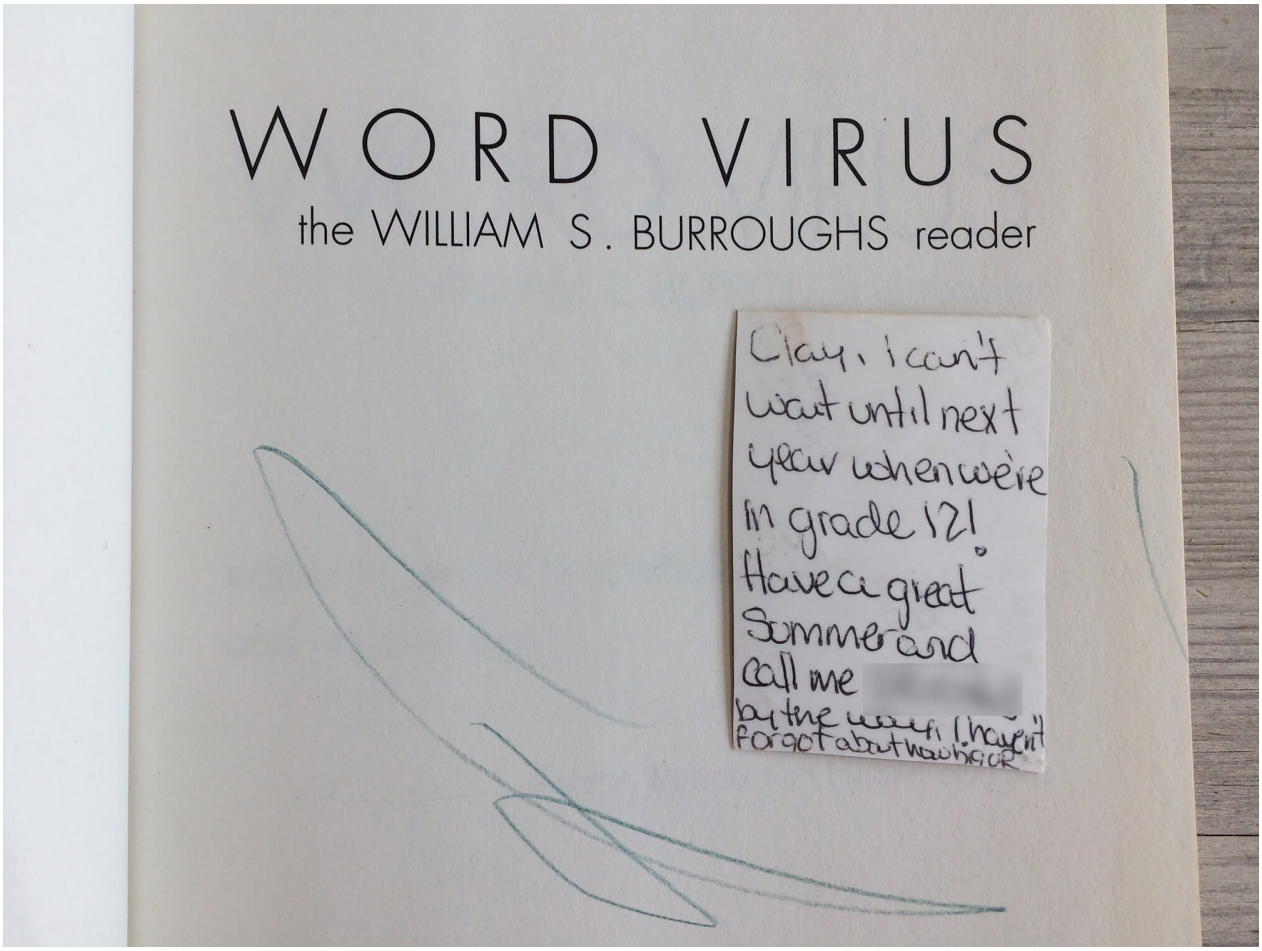
— how much, if any, of the book ‘Clay’ ever read;[7,8]

— what happened to the CD originally included with the book;[9]

— why the unrelated inserted materials were not removed from the book before sale (as opposed to the CD);

— whether ‘Clay’ did in fact ring up the writer of the note over that summer;[10] indeed whether the two ever did meet again, remain close during their ‘senior’ year, perhaps even stay in contact after graduating;

— the meaning of the rather cryptic final line of the note.


WORD VIRUS
the WILLIAM S. BURROUGHS reader
Clay, I can't
wait until next
year when we're
in grade 12!
Have a great
Summer and
call me
by the way, I haven't
forgot about how big OR

In his debut novel ‘De Metsiers’ Hugo Claus employs a multiple narrative perspective. In the copy I picked up in a thrift store, there’s a bookmarker between pages 44 and 45 where the perspective shifts from Ana to Jim Braddok. It’s pouring. The pink piece of paper lists 9 sessions at a driving school. There’s a total of 20 hours, taught alternately by Johan and Guy.

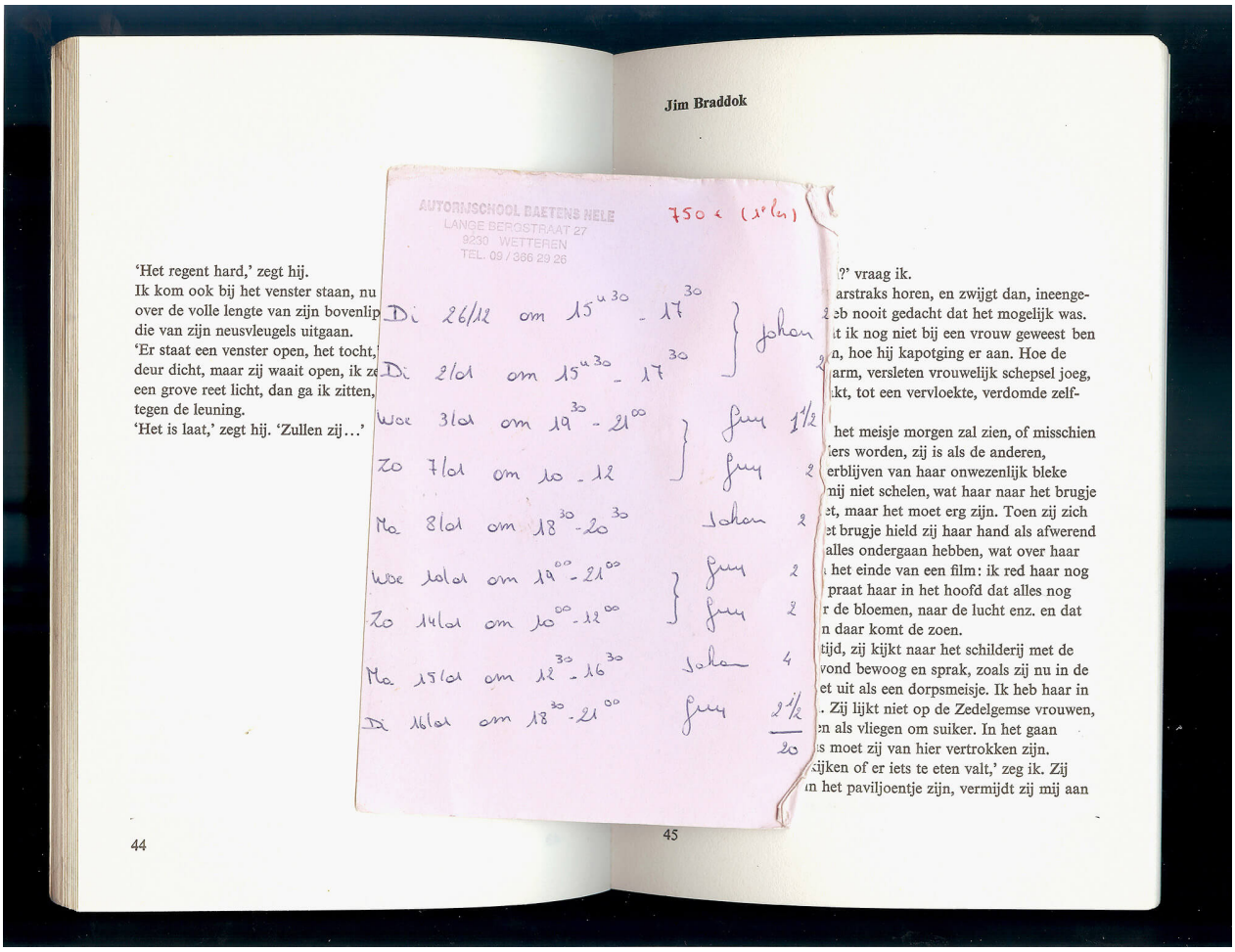
Notes

In 2000, 2006 and 2017 the twenty-sixth of December was a Tuesday. (Earlier years are improbable, since the Euro was not introduced yet.)

Sources

Claus, H. *De Metsiers*. Amsterdam: Uitgeverij De Bezige Bij, 1978.

It’s Pouring



type	date	filename	size	author
scan	09.06.2021	metsiers.jpg	11,61 MB	Michiel De Cleene

category
automobile, book, card, literature, precipitation

20:04:17

The two photographs arrived in Belgium inside a used hardback[1] in spring 2016, though it is unclear how long before that time they were actually taken.[2]

Photograph #1 measures 151 x 100 mm and shows two young people who appear to be mountain climbing and captured while clearing a ridge. Behind the two subjects a bluish mountainous landscape is vaguely visible, suggesting a vantage point of some considerable elevation. The person on the left is wearing a white T-shirt and a bracelet, and has several earrings. The person on the right is carrying a backpack. What appears to be a black tank-top may in fact also be the straps of the pack. On their head they wear what appears to be a grey T-shirt or other garment, presumably to protect the subject from the sun; this person also has earrings and is wearing a necklace and sunglasses. The weather appears nice, both subjects are smiling and appear relaxed. The effort may well have been staged.

Photograph #2 measures (approximately) 43 x 62 mm with the left, bottom and right sides appearing to be cut, rather unevenly, with scissors. It has the typical appearance of an American high school yearbook photo and shows a young person wearing a shiny black blouse and a necklace. They have blue eyes and below-shoulder length auburn hair. The red lips appear painted. On the back of this photograph is written in a clearly legible hand:

Clay, I can't
wait until next
year when we're
in grade 12![3]
Have a great
Summer and
call me [XXX XXXX][4]
by the way, I haven't
forgot about how big UR

The only assumptions to be made somewhat safely from these two items are that (a) the book has once belonged to 'Clay', and, (b) a relationship of a close, friendly, perhaps even intimate, nature has at one time existed between 'Clay' and the person in the second photograph (assuming also that (c) the note on the back of the second photograph was indeed written by the person in that photograph). The circumstances surrounding, and/or motivations ('Clay''s or any third parties') behind the book's ending up in a used-book shop[5] must necessarily remain a matter of speculation. There are no reasons to assume that the book was gifted to 'Clay' by the note-writer (or by anyone else) as no dedication appears in it.[6] It must also remain inconclusive whether there are either two or three different persons appearing across the two photographs, and whether any of those is in fact 'Clay'.

Notes

1 The book is a first edition, first printing hardback copy of *Word Virus: The William S. Burroughs Reader*, edited by James Grauerholz and Ira Silverberg, with an introduction by Ann Douglas, published by Grove Press (New York) in 1998 (160mm x 235mm, 532pp.). On the used book aggregator webstore, the book was graded 'Very Good' (or, VG),* which proved a realistic assessment as it appeared (in fact, still does) largely unread with a dust jacket in equally good condition and no markings inside whatsoever. In fact, the book's condition might well have warranted a 'Fine' (F) grading were it not for the only notable (yet not noted) defect, which was that the 'Spoken Word CD' that was originally included — as indicated by a 32mm diameter round sticker in the top right corner of the front of the dust jacket, and the glued-in envelope in the back of the book — was no longer present. This defect may well have accounted for the apparent disparity between the state and grading of the book and the low price of $4.53 (shipping not included) it was sold at, although the fact remains that this incomplete state ought to have been mentioned in the listing. Since the time of purchase, however, markings were added to the book, presumably with an additional adverse effect on its market value: appearing on the half-title page, they are in dark green crayon and of an abstract nature and were made by the current owner's infant son.
* According to the terminology of the grading scale proposed in 1949 by *AB Bookman's Weekly* and still widely, if not universally, in use in the online used book market today, albeit with some additions or modifications by individual platforms. See Wikipedia for a brief overview.

2 Elements of style and physical nature of the artifacts may be taken to indicate an origin roughly contemporaneous with the book.

3 '[In the United States of America, the] twelfth grade is the twelfth school year after kindergarten. It is also the last year of compulsory secondary education, or high school. Students are often 17–19 years old. Twelfth graders are referred to as Seniors.' (Wikipedia)

4 A 7-digit phone number, without country or area code, redacted here.

5 Located in the state of Nevada, no further identification of the particular shop was provided on the aggregator webstore, and it must be noted that the book was subsequently shipped from 'Auburn', presumably Auburn, CA.

6 Indeed in accordance with its 'Very Good' grading, which is generally understood to explicitly list any defects such as markings (including dedications) but also any missing materials.

7 Quality hardbacks being notably easier to read without damaging the book.

8 Speculations on this, and any potential subsequent extrapolations are, fortunately perhaps, further inhibited by the fact that the book presents a rather generous cross-section of writings spanning the entirety of William S. Burroughs' famously prolific career. The inclusions span the period between 1929 and 1994. Although undertakings of this kind will inevitably meet with criticism, the consensus indeed seems to be that the editors have done an excellent job in selecting and presenting the material. Was 'Clay' mainly drawn by the hard-boiled straightforward prose style of the early novels; the highly experimental and provocative writings of the 'middle period' (traditionally labeled as rather 'hermetic' and 'cold', though they are quite often not without a haunting, perhaps even 'poetic' quality); or the later, one might say 'integrated' style which saw the earlier experiments wedded to a certain 'return to narrative' and, in old age, traces of a much more 'humane' author than ever before (if a point of critique may yet be formulated, one might indeed say that the writings from this later period (roughly 1978–1997) are somewhat favoured (quantitatively) in the *Word Virus* volume; as these have a (still: relatively) greater 'readability' than much of the older material that may indicate a decision of a commercial nature, yet there is also the fact that these texts were written in collaboration with one of the editors of *Word Virus*)?

9 Being in fact a promo sampler for the 4CD Giorno Poetry Systems compilation of William S. Burroughs material also released (by Mouth Almighty Records and Mercury Records) in 1998. See Discogs.

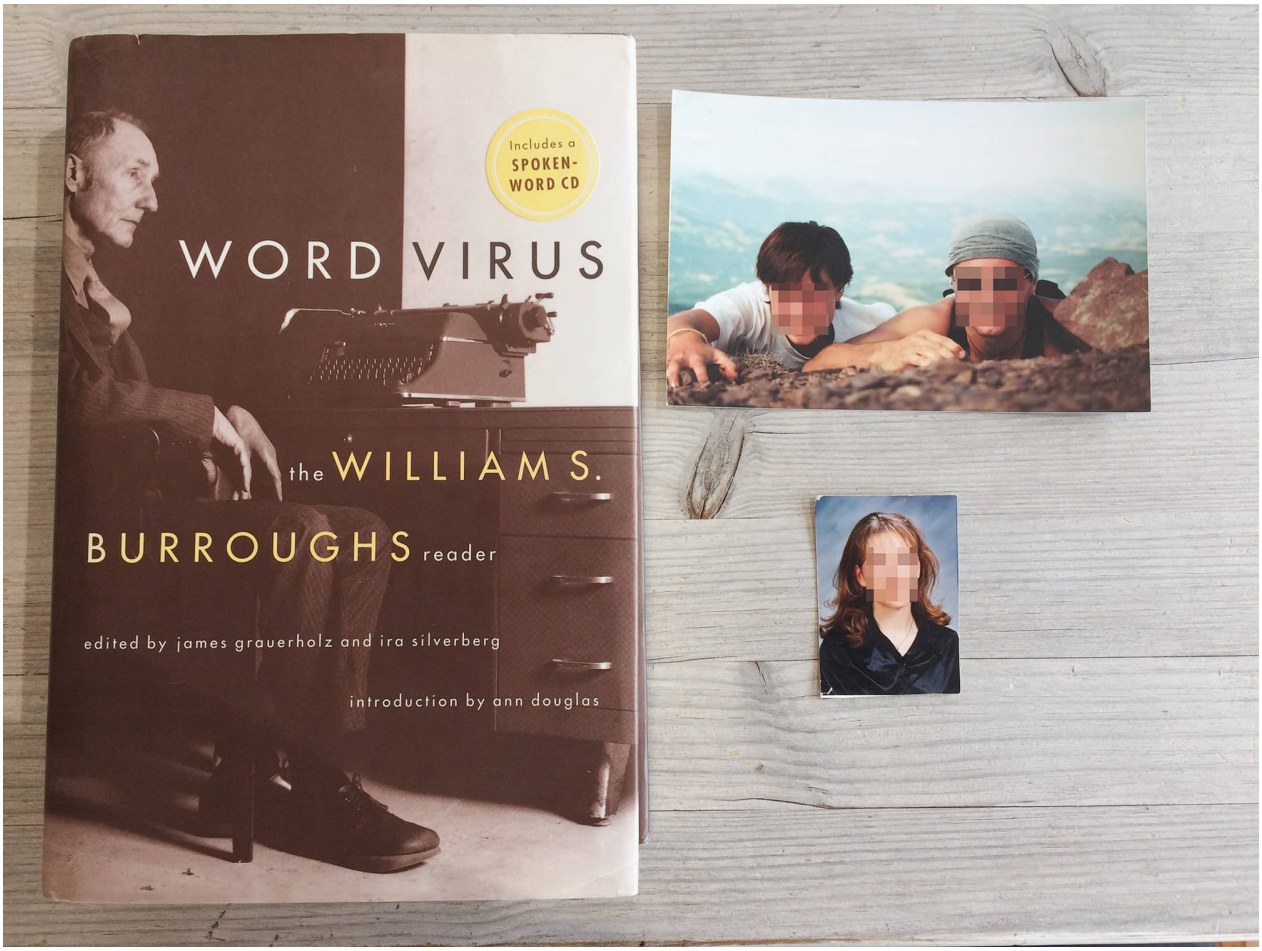
10 Nevada has three area codes (702, 725, and 775), yet quick Google searches of the 7-digit number combined with any one of those yield no easy identification. Considering the overall scarcity of information, however, it seems clear that anyone seeking to reconstruct the biographies of 'Clay' and/or the note-writer should take up this line of investigation.

- David Depestel hesitates in trying to make something of himself; a character, a profession, a fixed mode of being, are for him concepts that already shadow forth the outlines of the skeleton, which is all that will be left of him in the end.

Sources

- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_used_book_conditions
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Twelfth_grade#United_States
- https://www.discogs.com/Various-Selections-From-The-Best-Of-William-Burroughs-From-Giorno-Poetry-Systems

org Debatably graded



type	date	filename	size	author
photograph	18.10.2022	IMG_0059.JPG, IMG_058.JPG	2,11 MB, 1,55 MB	David Depestel

category
book, collecting, encounter, landscape, literature

20:04:46

Indeed, the number of questions raised by these items far exceeds the number of answers they provide. Even leaving aside the nature of the writings in the book, one cannot help but speculate as to:

— how much, if any, of the book ‘Clay’ ever read;[7,8]

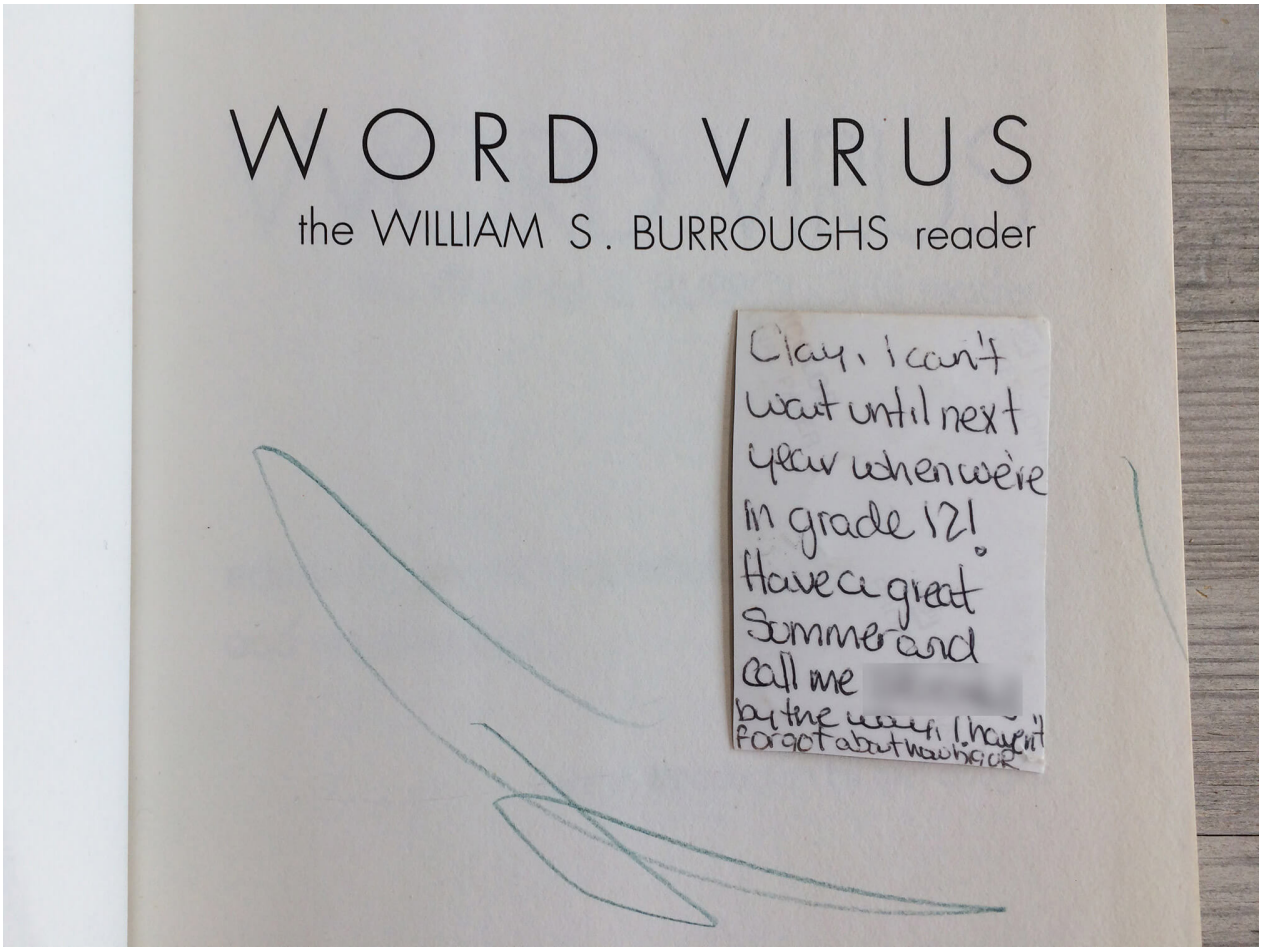
— what happened to the CD originally included with the book;[9]

— why the unrelated inserted materials were not removed from the book before sale (as opposed to the CD);

— whether ‘Clay’ did in fact ring up the writer of the note over that summer;[10] indeed whether the two ever did meet again, remain close during their ‘senior’ year, perhaps even stay in contact after graduating;

— the meaning of the rather cryptic final line of the note.

org Debatably graded



20:04:46

In his debut novel ‘De Metsiers’ Hugo Claus employs a multiple narrative perspective. In the copy I picked up in a thrift store, there’s a bookmarker between pages 44 and 45 where the perspective shifts from Ana to Jim Braddok. It’s pouring. The pink piece of paper lists 9 sessions at a driving school. There’s a total of 20 hours, taught alternately by Johan and Guy.

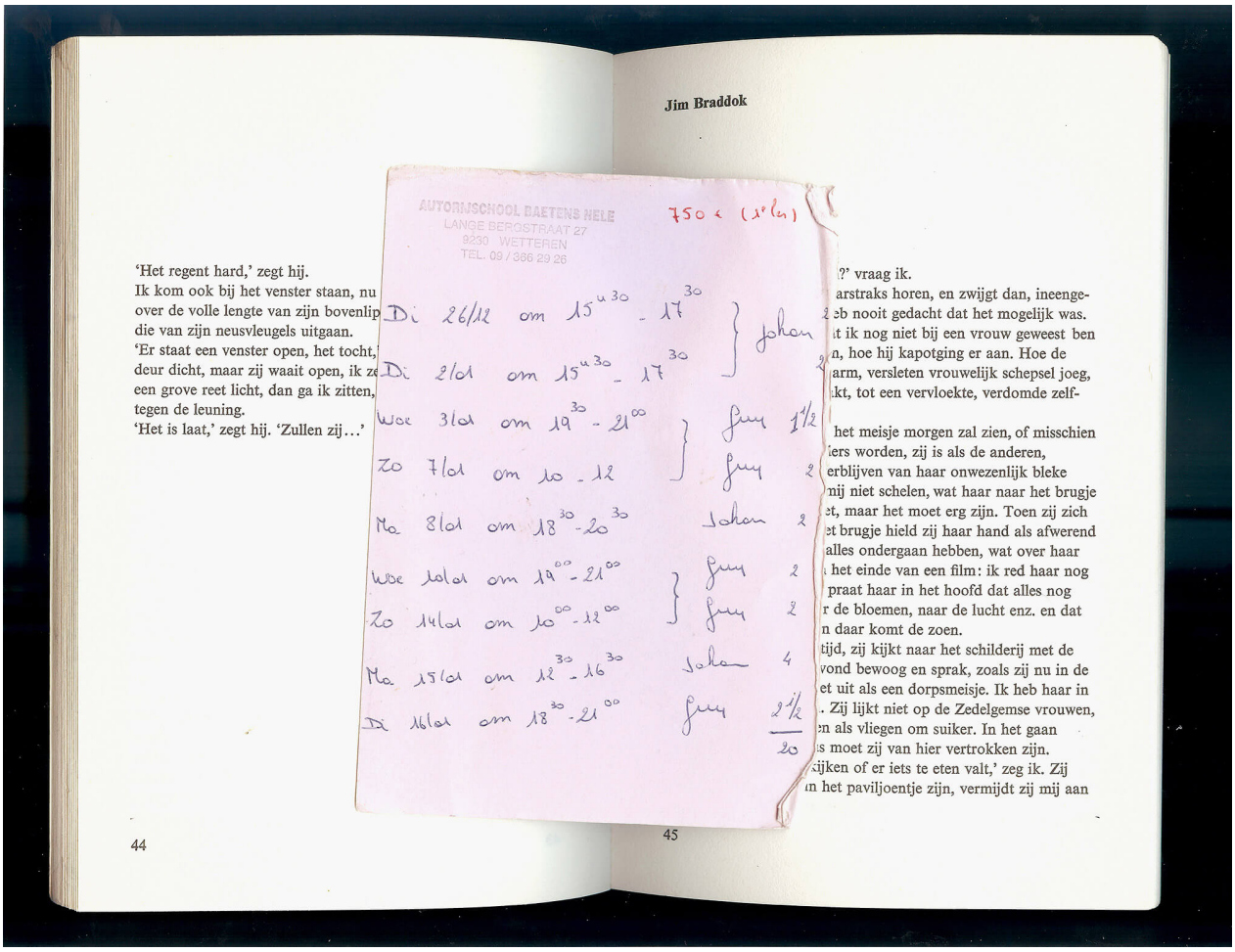
Notes

In 2000, 2006 and 2017 the twenty-sixth of December was a Tuesday. (Earlier years are improbable, since the Euro was not introduced yet.)

Sources

Claus, H. *De Metsiers*. Amsterdam: Uitgeverij De Bezige Bij, 1978.

It’s Pouring



type	date	filename	size	author
scan	09.06.2021	metsiers.jpg	11,61 MB	Michiel De Cleene

category
automobile, book, card, literature, precipitation

20:04:53

[13:42] Maziar: Power out at Rib now.
[13:45] Mathew: It's windy here today, sorry!
[13:45] Maziar: Saying from the comfort of his electrified home, or…you also have no power?
[13:45] Mathew: No, I don't. But, typically, outages in the city are shorter than in regional areas. PG&E website estimates service within two hours…Maybe you could post a business sign on Rib's window?[1]
[13:52] Maziar: Yes. Though my phone is almost dead. No light. Can you send me a text for the sign? I can't access the drive.
[13:52] Mathew: Yeah.
[13:52] Maziar: I feel reality hitting. Not so much the reality of blackouts in the U.S., but the reality of life and work…and that it is time to go home.
[13:55] Mathew: "CLOSED NO POWER For prescriptions go to Walgreens 2690 Mission OPEN UNTIL 5 PM."
[13:55] Maziar: Thanks.
[13:56] Mathew: Yeah, maybe it's time for you to leave for the night. I'm going to drive around to see what's happening.
[13:59] Maziar: Okay, enjoy.

Notes

1 Local businesses experiencing a blackout typically post handwritten notices on their street-facing windows. These condensed notes detail acute symptoms felt at a community level, hinting at the improvisation required to maintain social harmony.

- Mathew Kneebone is an artist based in San Francisco. His interdisciplinary practices takes different forms, all in relation to an interest in electricity and technology. He teaches studio and thesis writing at California College of the Arts.

org

CLOSED NO POWER. For prescriptions go to Walgreens 2690 Mission OPEN UNTIL 5 PM.



type	date	filename	size	author
photograph	21.02.2023	closed-no-power.jpg	641 KB	Mathew Kneebone

category
automobile, impact, repair, sign, wind

20:04:57