

CONTENTS

Introduction 7

i	13	xxi	59	xli	107
ii	15	xxii	62	xlii	110
iii	17	xxiii	65	xliiii	112
iv	20	xxiv	67	xliv	114
v	22	xxv	69	xlv	117
vi	25	xxvi	72	xlvi	119
vii	27	xxvii	75	xlvii	121
viii	29	xxviii	77	xlviii	123
ix	31	xxix	80	xlix	126
x	34	xxx	82	l	129
xi	36	xxxi	84	li	131
xii	39	xxxii	86	lii	134
xiii	41	xxxiii	88	liii	136
xiv	43	xxxiv	91	liv	139
xv	46	xxxv	93	lv	142
xvi	48	xxxvi	95	lvi	144
xvii	50	xxxvii	97	lvii	147
xviii	52	xxxviii	100	lviii	149
xix	54	xxxix	102	lix	151
xx	57	xl	105	lx	154

lxi	157	lxxv	190	lxxxviii	224
lxii	159	lxxvi	192	lxxxix	227
lxiii	161	lxxvii	195	xc	229
lxiv	164	lxxviii	198	xc i	231
lxv	166	lxxix	200	xcii	234
lxvi	168	lxxx	203	xciii	236
lxvii	171	lxxx i	206	xciv	239
lxviii	173	lxxxii	208	xcv	241
lxix	176	lxxxiii	211	xcvi	244
lxx	178	lxxxiv	213	xcvii	246
lxxi	181	lxxxv	216	xcviii	248
lxxii	183	lxxxvi	219	xcix	251
lxxiii	185	lxxxvii	221	c	253
lxxiv	188				

i

- People think I'm American but inside I'm foreign. 1
- German was my first language, and though I learned English when I was five, I sometimes grope for words. On the other hand, I can't find them in German either. Then I'm stranded on a sand bank. 2
- I don't want to tell people things they don't know about me. 3
- Once I wanted to tell all and confess everything in colorful language and cracked metaphors, but now that seems tiresome. 4
- I suppose I could reveal trivial and partially true things. 5
- Yeah, I slept around. 6
- Yeah, I took some drugs. 7
- I was closer to my mother than my father. 8
- My father is easier to get along with than my mother though. 9
- Uh, I have a lot of favorite books. 10
- I hate when people ask me who my favorite writer is. 11
- Or favorite artist. 12
- I mean, what am I supposed to say? It's a sort of mindless conversation topic. Like, what's your favorite color? 13

- 14 Usually I just answer with what I suppose the person asking wants me to say.
- 15 No, I don't think it matters.
- 16 The best realization I ever had was that the universe is basically indifferent to us. It's neither for nor against us. And that indifference is a good thing, a really comforting thing. It's consistent, you can really say that about it.
- 17 I think conceptual art is great, but I hate when everyone says everything they do is conceptual. All they usually mean is that it has an idea in it. That's not conceptual art. Everything has an idea in it somewhere, even nothing.
- 18 Narrative is overrated. An addiction to transparency. A simple-minded need for linearity to organize a set of data. It doesn't have much to do with real life.
- 19 Of course I love a good story.
- 20 The best sex? The best sex I've ever had was with the worst boyfriend I ever had. Yup.
- 21 When I was a kid, the museum we went to most often was MOMA, the old MOMA, where *Guernica* hung on the landing by the top of the stairs. That was as close to church as we came. I remember looking at one of Ad Reinhardt's all-black paintings, and someone next to me said it was about "infinite absolute negativity." That was a formative moment for me.
- 22 Yes, punk rock, the 80s, the East Village. What I loved about punk then was how serious it was, and how realistic.

I really love people who sing out of tune. Morrissey, 23
 Rufus Wainwright, Marlene Dietrich, Lotte Lenya.
 Love them. I met Lotte Lenya once, when I was a
 kid. My aunt was head of the Goethe-Institut in
 NY, and she took me to lunch with her. We went
 to Horn & Hardart, Lenya's favorite place to eat.
 It was an automat, where you get your food pre-
 made through little boxes with glass doors.

Borscht. 24

I've seen as many people destroyed by success as 25
 by failure. You don't get much empathy when
 success overwhelms you. Nor with failure. No
 one wants to talk about you then either. "The
 thing about American success," said Gertrude
 Stein, "is American failure."

ii

Ja, Gesamtkunstwerk. 1

I do believe in genius. I've met at least one: Kathy 2
 Acker.

This is pretty unbearable, isn't it? 3

I'll make more of an effort. 4

I went to Buenos Aires, where I was born, for the 5
 first time in 32 years and the most familiar thing
 about it was how it smelled.

For many years when I was very anxious I would 6
 close my eyes and visualize this small green shovel
 my mother had. I would think about what it was
 for, just digging in the soil. And then I could calm
 down, because it meant everything and nothing.

My favorite things to visit are probably hot springs. 7
 Real ones, built into cliffs, or mud holes in the

desert. They're like the hot womb of the earth, taking us back despite our feckless ways.

8 I'm trying to be sincere now.

9 When I read up to numbers 6 and 7, I guess the message is that I'm earthy.

10 Or the message could be I want you to think I'm earthy.

11 Maybe by expressing my cynicism just now I am forestalling your critical reaction and demonstrating my ineluctable earthiness and sincerity. Like an apotropaic expression.

12 I love big words, but mostly I avoid using them because I don't want to sound pedantic. Why use a long word when a short one will do?

13 I don't like candy.

14 My dog Peggy is almost 14 and pretty deaf. She can't see that well and has arthritis.

15 I think she has some kind of Alzheimer's too because sometimes she walks around with a dazed expression, and she looks up at me as if asking who are you, or where am I, or how did I get here? Somehow this isn't sad to me though. It feels like the natural course of things.

16 I've been writing a piece about me and Peggy for a long time. It's about interspecies relationships.

17 You could say I'm interested in other forms of language, how we communicate with each other. Also how others communicate with us, especially the others who can't talk.

18 I have trouble finishing things, but not starting them.

- Overall I believe women are better people than men. 19
- I am attracted to people who are verbal and articulate. 20
- Almost everyone I've been involved with is taller than me, and I wonder what this says about me. 21
- I guess I should tell another heartwarming story. 22
- One of the worst things about writing is the general expectation that what you say has to make sense. 23
- Nonsense. 24
- Have you noticed that it's not cool right now to act like you have no financial problems? 25

iii

- I remember reading Joe Brainard for the first time and how I wasn't taken by *I Remember* at all, until I got about a third of the way through. Memories are cumulative and Brainard's book proves the futility of linear narrative in relation to the past. Each entry thickens and complicates Brainard's life or his "identity." At the end there's a kind of cloud of Joe, a mass of being there or having been there. 1
- Sometimes I hate David Burns. Sometimes I love him. Often I like him a lot. Other times I have no opinion. 2
- I remember thinking I would never write my own *I Remember*. What would be the point? 3
- On some level I also don't actually remember much, and much of what I do remember is what people tell me to remember. 4