

One Sentence

I learned it all from first grade to fifth when I learned the components of a sentence, when I learned that the beauty of language is that we are all part of that language, that as we study what it means to be a noun, or a verb, or an adjective – all things I will reveal later – we also, simultaneously, as if the universes of emotion and alphabet were suddenly fused into one, we also *feel* what it means to be a noun, or a verb, or an adjective, and at that moment of fusion, when life becomes the word on paper, I finally come to terms with my life: a sentence, a line of words strung together sometimes with meaning, sometimes without meaning, always containing those things a sentence always seems to contain, like a noun, a common noun at that, like *faggot* (as in *God hates a faggot*, but not as in *God hates your faggot ways* because then I am no longer a noun, but an adjective, and that, you will find, comes much later in life), so instead my life, at this moment, is a noun – sometimes a common noun but then sometimes a proper noun (as in *Tommy*), or a compound noun (as in *twins*), or a collective noun (as in *the genes that made us this way*), or a possessive noun (as in *I am and I will always be, my brother's keeper*); and only once I am a noun, whether it be a common noun or a proper noun or a collective noun or a possessive noun – something inside me yearns to be, something inside yearns to give the nouns in my life meaning, and it is only when the desire to be burns inside like an ember struggling to stay lit do I suddenly unfold and become a verb – an inactive verb today (to be, as in *I am gay*), an active verb tomorrow, as in *replicate* (like carbon copies, or identical twins, or infectious viral particles); and as a verb I will be a variety of tenses, sometimes more than one simultaneously, sometimes just present (*I have AIDS*), sometimes present continuous (*I am trying to tell you I have AIDS*), sometimes just past (*I tried to tell you I have AIDS*), and sometimes future (*I will die with this disease*); regardless of which, I can be one or I can be all, but I will always be tense, and once I've seen myself as noun and verb I will slowly grow into adjective to describe myself and make myself more interesting to you, my audience, so that you will no longer see me as *your twin* but instead will come to know me as *your gay HIV-positive twin*, and to the parents who once knew me as *their son* I will be remembered as *their sick son*, sick from too much language and too much love, adjectives can do that to a person, and sometimes the adjective I become is multiple in meaning, and so I am split (as in *zygote*) and split (as in *personality*) – the adjectives I become can be confusing to a person; the adverb, on the other hand, disassociates itself from the subject and marries itself instead to its action; so, whereas I love, I can now love too *deeply*, and whereas I cry, I now cry *passionately*, and when it comes to loving, and when it comes to crying the sentence of my life takes on objects, and when those objects are direct I no longer love too deeply, instead I love *you* too deeply, and when those objects are indirect I no longer cry passionately, I cry passionately only *for you*, and so it is, as is the case with most twins, that the components of my life take on meaning and structure, and my life becomes the very sentence I use to describe it; yet like a sentence, as in the string of words full of subject and predicate, my life, too, is another sentence, a prison sentence, as in removed from the outside world, a sentence as in a final verdict, a judgment, a lack of freedom, or a loss of freedom once owned, a life once held in the palm of my hand and then taken away, forever, leaving me with only a series of words never without a verb to follow; otherwise, if I could, I'd be *individual* or *asexual* or *undetectable*: words all by themselves – words, ironically, only befitting a prisoner.