

## Self-Portrait, 1864 Self-Portrait, 1896 Self-Portrait

I started dragging Cézanne  
on Twitter—the bot posting  
canvasses, no discernible order—

about a year back, on his  
birthday, which is my birthday,  
making us each as earthy, as

stubborn, practical, not given  
to extravagance, self-reliant,  
detached, unfussed by material

goods, prone to morbidity,  
patient to the point of inertia,  
unmothered, emotionally

avoidant, driven to infer meaning  
from context, overly fond  
of a sardine and whites

from the sandy Languedoc,  
anarcho-syndicalist by nature  
though homebodies in the event

of actual rioting, affronted  
by whiffs of the transcendental,  
afraid of dentists, sexually

omnivorous, fiscally infantile,  
unready to renounce  
psychoanalysis in toto

while alternatives remain  
limited to CBT night classes  
and homework, disinclined

to afford benefit of the doubt,  
doubtful of benefit, slow to open,  
open to indolence, solicitous

of others' esteem in private,  
private, piratical in the aesthetic  
realm, domestically recursive,

allergic to church, interruptions,  
and gambling, devoid  
of long-term episodic memory

rendering sense of the self  
chained to the present  
tense, gun-shy, importunate

in pubs, hyperpareidolic,  
ornery, saturnine, vengeful,  
glum, and given to huffing

the turps as the other, being  
capricorns. Though here's  
a thing, we're *on the cusp*

of aquarius, Paul and me.  
You know what that means.  
Everything to play for! An open

concern in the late nineties:  
immediacy as a poetic practice  
might be a reification

of the status quo, as in, hey,  
friend, I can hold your compact  
mirror while you touch up,

sing to you from behind your  
ovoid reflection, if it's all the same  
to you? I have a screen grab

from spring showing *Rocks At  
Fontainebleau* squeezed between  
Roma's De Rossi screaming

at Samp and Sontag's diary  
from 4/6/49 below:  
'Nothing but humiliation and

degradation at the thought of  
physical relations with a man.'  
Why did you ever go near

the human form, Paul? I mean,  
your bathers are atrocious,  
atrocious in your eyes

even as you painted  
their buttocks and lumpy torsos  
as turnipy, waxen, over-leavened

*pains de campagne*, arranged  
their intimacy to exclude  
you, us, leaving them talking

and damp against the damp  
grass and river rock  
in cool evening shadow pinks.

They pass by periodically now  
along with Hortense, a few  
black suits, men in a bar,

a boy in a loincloth, not one  
of them fully convincing.  
Perhaps you wanted release

from the mountain's chronic  
dissembling, the unfinished  
trees and outcroppings

pounding their dumb note  
of mass and relation. Perhaps  
you were lonely and knew

of no working ameliorative.  
Perhaps you were lonely  
in the face of stone and bough.

Good that a supportive  
community has formed now,  
though, so many subject-slices

you couldn't have known  
in the south, and Sontag again,  
'Last night I said in my drugged

post-migraine sleep, "I hate  
your mind.'" By which I believe  
she meant the very weather

framing the horse chestnuts  
west of Marseille was  
the phasing of catastrophe

in and out of your filtering  
front brain, set up *en plein air*  
three-legged and fingertips

made of horse hair. Do we  
find ourselves wanting to spit  
the chewed pigment over our

hands again held over our  
heads as the captured do? Crocus  
midwinter the very cave wall

and canvas and standard  
of a crushed comprehension—  
Another death after the farewell

to an idea of a charnel house  
we live inside as sentry, nurse,  
busker, and tenant. You

had me at tree but I've lost  
me again, back in a tide pool  
totting the money in a pinned

crab's purse, the chest plate  
folded back on the four or  
six discs as the hydraulic

peel grab of six legs detached  
from a jib leave their impress,  
weaken, twitch, and let go.

Abject, a cancer would say.  
Little fan-and-bubble drama.  
Little expiration of walking

rock; the mountain never  
returns whole from having  
been worshipped to pieces.