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Try to Make it Real: A Bruce on Broadway Tale

My elder daughter and I are on the platform at Asbury Park, awaiting the 7.19 a.m. New Jersey Transit to Manhattan. Above the door to the platform is the statement NORTHBOUND TRAINS. Songwriters have long adapted the literal and local into the universal and the evocative. Given Springsteen's familiarity with this route, were it not for Chuck Berry's song of the same name you might therefore think that "Downbound Train" grew from it. But right now I'm wondering if this will feel like a downbound journey. We have tickets for *Springsteen on Broadway* but we don't know if they're legitimate. We might have the bitter disappointment of not getting in, not to mention all that money down the drain.

"Downbound Train," I say to my daughter. "Northbound Train. Down the Drain. Maybe I've wasted a lot of money."

"Have a little faith," she replies.

It begins to rain.

With blazing headlamps and a lonesome hooting the train arrives. I've been reading James Wood's essays on literature, *The Nearest Thing to Life*. Wood is an Englishman and my contemporary. Unlike me, his home is in the States. His wife and children are American. Part of me is envious of him. He made that choice to move

here while I didn't. But the last part of the book shares the ambivalence I feel about such choices. "There is always the reality of a certain outsider-dom," he writes. "Take the beautiful American train horn, the crushed klaxon peal you can hear almost anywhere in the States." This "crumple of notes, blown out on an easy, loitering wail," sounds to him "less like a horn than a sudden prairie wind or an animal's cry." It stands for "the sound of America, whatever America is." I know what he means, but Americans do, too. "Lonesome whistle" is a Hank Williams song, a phrase reprised in Johnny Cash's "Folsom Prison Blues," and alluded to by Springsteen in "Downbound Train" itself, with "that long whistle whine."

The rain lightens. We climb aboard. Through the window we watch lakes, swamps, wasteland, parking lots. Sunlight occasionally streaks the leaden sky. The grime on the window seems to crystallize in the rays. Like music, it transforms our perception, lending the passing townscape a sparkle. I listen on my MP3 to "Wrecking Ball, "Outside Looking In" and "Open All Night," then hand it to my daughter. She has her own music on her phone but dutifully listens. Meanwhile I get to thinking about the stage of life I'm at—no longer young, like her, twenty-five with much of life before her, I'm at the wrong end of middle age. The carriage holds us passengers, and our mortality. The train is slow. It knows no haste. We trundle by puddled gray platforms with yellow lines at the track-edge, piles of sodden concrete, scrubland, detritus. The wind whips the trees. We pass backyards and barbecues, children's toys, swampland. When we pause beside a patch of forest near South Amboy I glimpse a statuesque deer, soaked and pale against the brown woodland. The conductor arrives in black peaked cap and coat. We pass railings, a billboard with an upbeat, can-do statement followed by the word "condominium." Pylons and concrete overpasses crisscross the landscape. On a wide estuary a shattered boat, red hull

bleached from years of sun, lists in the brown water. Reeds intersperse jetties. The rusting girders of a bridge slant away over slate gray waves that lap against a small beach where maybe no one has swum since the time of Thomas Eakin. Preferred Freezer Services, states a sign. The Perth Amboy station has terracotta-colored tiles reminiscent of a Roman villa. There's a sign for the New Jersey lottery. Turn your Bill into M14$. Next to it a more functional sign instructs passengers to exit the platform to the left. Flashes of weak sunlight aside, the light of day is so dull this morning that the platform lamps are on. Hammer it Home, written as orange graffiti. The guard is up close now, checking tickets, his grizzled greeting framed by his pale blue shirt and maroon tie and his cap with the silver NJ Transit badge. We pass a baseball field. The flag. Enlert (Metal Roofing Innovations). Ju jitsu. More clapboard houses, yards, cars or, as they're known here, automobiles. I reflect on music and transport. Riding along in my automobile! Oh Chuck Berry, with no particular place to go, where are you now? Well, we know his body is in St. Louis, and that with him in his coffin is his cherry-red guitar.

By the time we reach Woodbridge I'm philosophical. Thoughts of mortality provide perspective. On the one hand, so far as *Springsteen on Broadway* is concerned, this may be a journey to nowhere. On the other hand, I'll be in New York with a daughter, something rare indeed. The last time, with my younger daughter, then aged nine, was to attend William Styron's memorial service at St Bartholomew's. That was memorable enough. She got to see Meryl Streep, Ted Kennedy, Carlos Fuentes and Bill Clinton give Styron his send off, or would have had jetlag not defeated her. But this was over a decade ago and that daughter, too, has grown and gone from her childhood home. The weather was icy and, though we visited the Statue of Liberty and walked across the Brooklyn Bridge, it nearly froze

my hands to remove my gloves to take photos. I don't get to New York myself too often, let alone with family. I was here with my wife in 1986, visiting on our Greyhound passes in our twenties. 1988. 1990. 1995. 1998. 2002. 2007. 2010. 2016. How those years pass. I think of that haunting echo of youthful ages passing in the Beach Boys' "When I Grow Up," such important years, those formative ones, still here for my daughters but not for me.

I should explain what I mean by a journey to nowhere. One spring day, before the last snowfall of the English winter, with my younger daughter studying and my wife working, I asked my elder daughter if she'd like to join me at Monmouth University for the 2018 Springsteen symposium. I didn't expect her to say yes but she did. I don't know why I was surprised. She knows you have to grab these moments. I booked the flights. That was when I suffered an interlude of what, depending upon how this journey ends, might be regarded as the wisdom to risk, total gullibility or temporary insanity. A friend had suggested tickets might yet become available for the Broadway show. Oh, wouldn't that be nice? I checked online but somehow ended up on a resale site. I clicked on Thursday 12 April, the one performance we could attend. Up came two tickets for a lot of money—a *lot* of money. I kept clicking. Not just a lot of money, I then realized: this was for one ticket. Two tickets came up as twice the price. I obviously wasn't going to buy them. I was in control, sitting on a couch that January in the Wiltshire sunshine, I knew what I was doing. I could back out and I would back out. Two tickets. The minutes ticked on by. Tick, tick, tickety tick. Bye bye, minutes. Bye, bye tickets. Buy, Buy! Did I want to release them? Keep them? Obviously it was too much money! Ridiculous! Tick, tick, tickety tick. I could have clicked off the site. I would have clicked off the site. But I didn't.

Stop! I would phone my wife and daughters, tell them to tell me not to be stupid. No one answered. I scrambled for my credit card. No harm in continuing the process to the last second. *Rebel without a Cause* came to mind. Like Jim and Buzz playing Chicken, I was racing toward the cliff. All I has to do was open the door, jump out and roll in the dust. It was that or hurtling over into the void, first facing the stars, then experiencing a heart-lunging plunge toward the rocks and churning sea. But I was not in a car and I couldn't catch the sleeve of my leather jacket in the handle. I would bail out in time. Vroom vroom! Tickety tick!

Minutes later, I was still thinking I wouldn't do it. I'd fill in the details then I'd withdraw. Do you want to buy?

"Dammit!" I said to the empty room. I clicked again. Alea jacta est.

Except the die had not been cast. The card was rejected.

Well, that was that, I thought. But instead of relief I felt anxiety, then hope. I had another card! It's too much money, I told myself. But you'll regret losing the chance! Stop! I was a veritable Golem, arguing with my alter ego. Stop! Stop! Stop! But I didn't. I filled in new details. My fingers hovered over the keyboard. My index finger moved to submit. I pressed.

Confirmed.

Thank you for your order.

Done.

Bought.

Congratulations!

Thousands of dollars spent in minutes.

I felt . . . elated. We were to see *Springsteen on Broadway*. But when I emailed my family I wrote, not "I've done a wonderful thing" but "I've done something insane."

Only then did reality dawn, and some degree of dread. I went for a run to take my mind of it but thought about it all the way. I bought a newspaper but page two carried an article about dodgy resale websites selling bogus concert tickets. Beware scalpers. Beware, above all, the notorious website where you've just purchased what are probably dud tickets. I clicked on their site, checked out the FAQs. It sent me on a loop. They were beyond contact.

Well, I thought, lesson learned. Money spent.

Later that day the tickets came through. I printed them. They had someone else's name on. Their actual price was $400. I'd paid three times as much plus hundreds of pounds in commission. Again, I checked FAQ. These tried to reassure me they were valid. I didn't believe them. I'd bought fake tickets, or they'd been multi-sold. I convinced myself I'd wasted our money.

Still, when April arrived I took the presumably worthless tickets with us when we flew to Newark. We landed to the setting sun. The cobalt blue windows of the Dreamliner lightened to allow sight of tail fins silhouetted by an orange sky. Back in the U. S. A. We stayed at the Fairfield Inn and the next day caught the New Jersey Transit to Long Branch and then a cab down the coast to Asbury Park.

So that's why we're on this train into New York, and soon enough at Penn Station, and spending a few hours roaming Manhattan, taking the subway to the Staten Island Ferry, drinking a light and a dark in McSorely's, visiting the Strand Bookstore. I'm showing my daughter my old haunts. But my thoughts are also on what may for us

become the show that never was. At the Strand I buy a hardcover of *Born to Run*, absurdly imagining I'll somehow meet Bruce and get him to sign it. Ridiculous, but something must give us reason to believe.

Back up Broadway, after a visit to B. B. King's—its last couple of weeks before closure, it turns out—we talk with an old black guy handing out leaflets in Times Square.

"What you been seeing," he asks.

"Been to B. B. King's."

"B. B. King's!" he exclaims. "This your lucky day. I's Mr Jimmy and I sat on B. B. King's knee as a child. I ain't kidding you! You folks have a fine time and, let Mr Jimmy tell you something: this your lucky day. You gonna have some fine luck today, yessiree. You got a wish, young lady? No, no. Don't tell Mr Jimmy. You just think it. In fact, B. B. King he lookin' down on you and he says to Mr Jimmy, since I's his clairvoyant agent on Earth, you can have three wishes come true—count 'em! Three, in one day! God bless you, folks. Yo gonna git what you want today!"

We carry on up Broadway and eat lunch at a steakhouse. "Does Mr Jimmy make you feel more optimistic?" asks my daughter.

"No," I say. "I'm a realist."

"Believe," she says.

My heart isn't in wandering any more of Manhattan. My black sneakers, bought in Berlin and barely worn, are making my feet ache. It's shortly after 3.00. I'm distinctly prepared, and have prepared my daughter, not to see the show. At 3.30, we head for the Walter Kerr Theatre without me being sure why. Ten people are waiting: two lines of five, from wall to road, either side of a golden door. There's no more room on the sidewalk so we stand behind a blonde lady in a sky blue jacket, just by

the roadside, facing Broadway and the main entrance. Madness, we agree, even as we do this. There seems little point. Maybe, I reason, we'll at least see Bruce, even though we won't get into the show. Not that we intend to stay. We're simply curious, or I am, at the length some fans will go to see the Boss. But we stand in line behind the blonde lady, knowing we will shortly leave.

Half an hour later, we're still standing at the roadside end of the row behind the blonde lady. Eventually, since we're right behind her and will be for the foreseeable, she turns and smiles. One might as well talk. Pass the time.

"Been to eighty shows," she says. "And you?"

"Not so many."

"I'm Christina Wildrick, from Philadelphia," she says. "I want to meet Bruce but my husband, Troy, he's gone walking. We have a table booked for dinner and I doubt I can stay long. They say Bruce used to arrive around 5.00, 5.15 but it's later now. If I have to leave you can have my spot."

4.30: "I may have to go soon. How about you?"

"We don't even know if we'll get in," I reply.

5.00: "Here he is!"

"Who?"

"My husband, Troy. That's it for me."

Christina and Troy go off for dinner and we shuffle into the vacated space. And there we stand, for another hour and more. I ignore the pain in my feet. The breeze has turned to a biting wind, howling down 48th Street toward Broadway. This is madness, says a voice in my head. You can't stay here, at your age, with your aching feet in the sneakers you bought in Berlin and have never found comfortable. You can't make your daughter stand here for over three hours. Yes you can! No, you

can't subject your daughter to this. She's here to see Manhattan, not a square foot of asphalt.

"Let's go," I say. "It's stupid. Do you want to go?"

"Yes, but you don't. You'll regret it."

Like Vladimir and Estragon waiting for Godot, we stay. Passers-by look at us with pity. Some make cruel jokes. We feel foolish. We're crazy, we tell them. One or two people mock us. We are worthy of mockery, all of us standing here, either side of a small golden door in a brick wall next to the main entrance. My feet ache even more. I've been standing in the same position for two hours, perhaps only halfway through the vigil.

"We could leave?" I say, knowing we won't.

"You'll regret it," she says, knowing I will.

So we stand on the same patch of asphalt, our stage set, our little Beckett play. We could leave. Let's leave, we agree. But we stay.

The wind drops but it begins to rain, a soft spring rain. I become curious about the handful of people across the sidewalk on the other side of the golden door. Standing beneath New Orleans-style, cream-colored balconies, and therefore perhaps more sheltered from the light rain, they look very serious, very patient. There's a silver-haired, bespectacled lady, not very tall, with a giant cardboard poster of Bruce on the cover of *Magic*. The life-size photo, and his weary, tousle-haired expression give the impression that he's waiting in line with us, hoping maybe to meet the real 'Bruce Springsteen.' Clipped to it is a felt pen. She can barely see over the top, and, with her hands gripping it, nose on its rim, she resembles *Kilroy was Here*. Next to her is a younger man, maybe in his forties, wearing a beret and resembling Steve Van Zandt in the *River* photos. Beside him looms a big man wearing a red suit beneath a

fur coat. He seems to know how cold you can get standing on a Manhattan sidewalk in April. Give him a saxophone and, unless I'm hallucinating, he'll resemble Clarence. There's no one young in the identification parade either side of the golden door except my daughter, who, on behalf of her father, is patience personified.

Time passes. A young black man in a doorman's uniform—smart overcoat that, like his peaked cap, looks a size too big for him; red cap badge to match the red tie on his white shirt; pale blue gloves—appears with a dustpan and broom, not in homage to Robert Johnson singing "I believe I'll Dust my Broom" but to sweep invisible debris or maybe the dust of reality from around the golden door. This provokes a murmur of anticipation. Burly men turn up and erect barriers in front of and beside us. This is to protect Bruce from us, and perhaps to protect us from being infiltrated by latecomers. One wears a polo neck beneath a gray sweatshirt, slacks the color of the balconies and a dark jacket. Another sports an Abraham Lincoln beard, black overcoat, black tie on white shirt and black trousers. Both have phones and earpieces. The polo-neck fellow receives several messages and each time frowns and looks very serious. When not receiving messages he looks bored. After a while the burly men adorn the barriers with red covers with JUJAMCYN THEATERS in white lettering. Now and then the murmur of anticipation increases. We crane our necks each time, but on 48th Street this afternoon every other vehicle is a long black limousine.

"Will you get warning?" I ask the burly man in the polo neck.

"When he's arriving you'll know."

Bruce and Patti, I reflect, are an American Royal Family—Gypsy royals, reigning on merit. He's there as the result of stupendous talent and hard work. She's

there as more than a partner, a soul-mate perhaps, a rock to steady his role. They are real royalty, fit for a republic.

"Tell me," says my daughter, if only to pass the time. "What's your favorite Springsteen song?"

"The song that lit my young soul was 'Badlands,'" I muse. "So many great lines, such important sentiments to galvanize the individual. It's about frustration, dreams, determination, 'Talk about a dream / Try to make it real,' you know?"

"Favorite lines?"

"Maybe those, but lots. And you?"

"None of your business."

More burly men arrive. They joke with one another. You look tougher every day, says one to a colleague who has turned up in camouflage uniform, shades, skull ring and graveyard boots. He pinches his cheek. Tough guy! Ha!

Come 6.00 p.m. we've decided we need to get into the venue as soon as it opens at 7.00, in case our tickets have been sold more than once.

"What happens," she asks, "if he doesn't show up by 7.00?"

"We'll have to get in line in case our tickets have been double-sold."

"What, wait four hours and then miss him?"

"We'll go to the entrance at 7.00."

6.45: "We're going at 7.00."

"You'll regret it."

"No, 7.00 it is."

"What if we get in line and find our tickets are invalid," she asks. "Then he shows up and we've missed our spot. That really would have been a waste of four hours."

"That would indeed."

People gather across the street. The tension mounts. What if the Boss is stuck in traffic? Do they close the road for him? Halt the traffic? Part the waves?

Then, at 6.50, up pulls a limousine and out rolls Bruce. Almost all eyes are on him, except for those of the security guards, who are watching the crowd. Boots first, faded jeans, then the familiar visage behind shades. He looks as if he's slept all night on the couch fully clothed. His shirt hangs beneath his brown leather jacket. His messy hair sticks up.

A whoop from onlookers: Bruce!

"How many necklaces does one man need?" asks my daughter.

"The answer, my daughter, is blowing in the wind."

"That's not the answer. It's his hair."

Anyway, he makes for the other side.

"Oh well," she says. "Worth the wait."

It takes a moment to realize that the woman in front of us is Patti Scialfa. She's come to our little line, standing at the barrier erected an hour ago, and more than two hours after we first stood there and couldn't bring ourselves to leave. In contrast to her husband, Patti looks ready for a night on the town: beige hat, beige suit, brown boots. The only obvious connection is their dark glasses. A couple in shades. King and Queen of the Gypsies.

"Excuse me, Patti," I say—best British accent in case it helps. "May I give you this? It's a flier for my book. But I'm just a fan, too."

I hand her the flier for *American Lonesome*. She smiles and thanks me. She holds the flier while talking with others. Then she goes to the other side and over comes Bruce, straight to where I'm holding *Born to Run* open at the title page. Part of

me wishes I'd told him the truth, or certain truths, thanked him, told him I was in Paris when the lights and sound blew, told him he changed my life aged nineteen, or, if he didn't change it, he was the right person at the right time, for when the student is ready to learn the teacher appears.

What I in fact say is: "I've written a book about you."

He looks up quickly. Straight at me, eye to eye, except that his are behind shades. I see my own reflection.

"That's so kind of you," he says.

Even as I tell him the title, he's moved on without further acknowledgment. Maybe I've pissed him off. Not another book. Either way, Patti will show him the flier and he'll either be happy to know another book is in the pipeline or he'll have his management check out this latest exploiter of his fame.

Just before they leave, Patti gestures back to me. "I look forward to reading it," she says with a smile. "Will you see the show tonight?"

"I hope so."

And she and Bruce, the golden Romany couple, aging with dignity, disappear through the golden door.

We, meanwhile, must find out if our faith is to be rewarded. We skip out from the barrier and move round to have our tickets scanned. We approach the lady on the door. Red light or green light? Green for my daughter. She's in. She turns to wait for me. Green! We're both in! We're actually *in*. The auditorium is small indeed, all dark wood and gentle lighting and a cosy curve of soft red seats. We find our places and go off to buy memorabilia. We talk to those around us, everybody happy, everybody smiling. Then up comes Christina.

"You made it in!" She seems pleased for us. I tell her I'll mention her, if not in the book then in any subsequent material I write.

"Call me the blonde fan from Philadelphia," she says.

The lights dim across the auditorium and brighten on the stage. It's as if we're looking in on a warehouse: a coiled rope on the brown-painted bricks, wooden floorboards, assorted trunks and boxes. The warehouse also happens to contain a stool, a couple of microphones, and a Yamaha grand piano. The lights go out over the audience and the show begins.

And in no time at all, it's over. In no time at all, we're leaving the venue. We haven't a minute to lose if we're to catch the last train south. We're running from 48th down Broadway to Penn Station. In no time at all, we're on the 11.18 train to West Long Branch to change for Asbury Park. In no time at all, we're in a long conversation with the ticket man, Jim, about when he saw Springsteen at the Stone Pony and the Upstage back in seventy-one. Only as the small hours arrive does time, or the train, slow, dragging toward Asbury Park as if the weight of the evening were holding it back. By the time our southbound train reaches Asbury Park it's gone 1.30 a.m. We walk down Kingsley past the giant new hotel, still skeletal, rising, we're told, to fourteen storeys so far and eventually seventeen. All its lights are on, and there's the sound of rattling covers in the Atlantic breeze, or of ghostly hammers, or they're actually working through the night. I think of the Titanic, as if, on the seabed, as in the film, the lights had all come back on.

"So what did you make of the show?" I ask my daughter as we reached the hotel around 2.00.

"I enjoyed it. And you?"

"My theory is that he said to Patti, I'm getting too old to tour. I don't want all that, but I have to perform or I'll be that truck full of nitro glycerine heading toward doom. You know—sink into depression."

"I got the allusion."

"Patti replied, Well, play on Broadway. It's down the road. You'll make yourself happy and you'll make people happy, so that's what he does."

"And a lot of money is made."

"Sure, and it's only a theory."

"Maybe he'll play until he drops. Maybe he can't not perform. Maybe eventually, he'll be at the stage door giving away tickets."

"Buddy, can you see my show?"

"Born to run and run."

"By the way, did you do as Mr Jimmy said and have three wishes?"

"No comment."

Mr Jimmy! Did he even exist? I have many theories about many things, including ones about fantasy and reality and how they can merge, and maybe always merge, and how we don't know how good things are until they're gone. But I don't continue to expound my theories. It's been a long day and night and will soon be dawn.

Time moves on. *Springsteen on Broadway* has come and gone and I've long ceased thinking of the number of dollars each minute of our particular night cost. Our trip, too, eases to its end. The symposium, the sunshine, the conversations, they're all a memory as the weather worsens on the Sunday. We pull our suitcases to the station in drizzle but it's just the start. The next day, a rainy Monday New York morning, the

Empire State outside our Hotel 31 window is hidden in cloud. A storm is brewing. As we leave the hotel the rain is so heavy we might as well be standing in a waterfall. All hell lets loose. The streets stream. Water cascades into the subway. Worse than uncomfortable, my Berlin sneakers absorb water. Had this been the weather that Thursday we'd not have been able to stand in line. Eating a bagel in Fresh & Co on Lexington next to the Double Tree by Hilton, we watch rain cascade down the windows. A woman opens a blue umbrella as a yellow cab sprays by. Red taillights pierce the avenue in shimmering daggers. Streets of fire.

To avoid getting lost in the flood, we join what seems like half of Manhattan in the Metropolitan. As ever, I'm drawn to the Rembrandt self-portrait in Room 634 that reminds me of that world-weary photo on the cover of *Magic*.

Hey, old friend, I say to Rembrandt. There's magic in the night.

Some day you'll look back on this, his expression implies.

We fly home with me not for the first time pondering the merging of reality and fantasy. I think of the show, of how Springsteen began with "Growin' Up"; of how he told the story of dreaming that he was in the audience with his long-dead father, telling him that the guy onstage was the way he saw him; of how he then sang "My Father's House" and kept rubbing his eyes; of the almost unbearable way in which, again close to tears it seemed, he told us about his mother, in her nineties and seven years into Alzheimer's, and of how one of the few things she remembers is how to dance; of how a later night there was TV footage of him dancing with her in the Wonder Bar; of how on Broadway he then sang "The Wish," with its line about them in the kitchen, and how this was not a sad song, and how they'd dance. I recall thinking maybe he wouldn't even get through it, even as I knew that this was both real and a show, a performance he puts on every night, his confession, his purgation, the

thing he needs to do. I think of how he sang "Thunder Road" and a slide guitar version of "Born in the U. S. A.," and "The Promised Land," and spoke of all the ghosts around him when he sang "10th Avenue Freeze-Out." I never hear that song without recalling driving to night school decades ago. I think of how Patti came on stage and sang "Tougher than the Rest" and maybe "Brilliant Disguise"—I can't remember everything. Then, or around then, he sang "Dancing in the Dark", and then a version of "The Rising" that felt like the whole band was there, those alive and those dead, as if he were accompanied on stage by the souls of the departed. Somewhere in there he commented that this was a dark time for America but an episode that would pass. By the time of "Born to Run" I was putting my sneakers back on for the sprint to catch the last train, but thinking I shouldn't be distracted and should concentrate on the moment, for it wouldn't return. There he was, Bruce Springsteen performing for us on Broadway. At the end, he said the Lord's Prayer. Once a Catholic, he confessed, fist to chest. "They got me."

That time in New York is over, and those hours of waiting are over, and those hours of the show, and that long ride home, and there's very little human beings can do except make a little magic, have a little dream, and for a while, now and then, try to make it real. Some months later my family and I happen to be in Lisbon and see that Van Morrison is playing at Cascais. We buy tickets for twenty-five Euros, somewhat less than the price of a T-shirt at the Broadway show. Morrison doesn't do intimacy, at least not at concerts. He just does his thing and leaves, but it feels like a fitting end to the summer, going back in time to an influence on Springsteen, feeling the way that music encircles us. When he plays "Precious Time" I think of *Springsteen on Broadway*. I think of that one-off time with a daughter in New York. Precious time. Precious time. Precious time. Slipping away. But now and then we

touch base, through art, with something very real, and maybe more rather than less real for being fleeting. As is often the case, I think now of Emily Dickinson, long dead but her words so alive: “Since then — ’tis Centuries — and yet / Feels shorter than the Day / I first surmised the horses’ Heads / Were toward Eternity —.” Imagine that—*Dickinson on Broadway*: what price tickets? *Whitman on Broadway*. *Emerson on Broadway*. *Baldwin on Broadway*. When they’re gone they’re gone. Talk about a dream, Bruce. Talk about a dream.