

SECOND CHANCE

My Life in Things



RUTH ROSENGARTEN



<https://www.openbookpublishers.com/>

© 2022 Ruth Rosengarten



This work is licensed under an Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 4.0 International license (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0). This license allows re-users to copy and distribute the material in any medium or format in unadapted form only, for non-commercial purposes only, and only so long as attribution is given to the creator. Attribution should include the following information:

Ruth Rosengarten, *Second Chance: My Life in Things*. Cambridge, UK: Open Book Publishers, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0285>

In order to access detailed and updated information on the license, please visit <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0285#copyright>

Further details about the CC BY-NC-ND license are available at <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

All images are by the author except for the two images on page 232 (© Zé António Sousa Tavares, CC BY-NC-ND).

All external links were active at the time of publication unless otherwise stated and have been archived via the Internet Archive Wayback Machine at <https://archive.org/web>

Digital material and resources associated with this volume are available at <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0285#resources>

ISBN Paperback: 9781800643741

ISBN Hardback: 9781800643758

ISBN Digital (PDF): 9781800643765

ISBN Digital ebook (EPUB): 9781800643772

ISBN Digital ebook (AZW3): 9781800643789

ISBN Digital ebook (XML): 9781800643796

ISBN DIGITAL ebook (HTML): 9781800646704

DOI: 10.11647/OBP.0285

Cover photo by Ruth Rosengarten

Cover design by Anna Gatti.

Afterword



At the start of the second lockdown, in October 2020, I lost the relationship in which I had invested my sense of delight in the present and hope for the future. I say *lost* as though I carelessly mislaid it, as I constantly mislay my glasses or my keys, but in fact, this rupture came from left field, as the sporting metaphor goes.

I did not feel sporting about it: I felt winded, wiped out, erased.

That loss is not the subject of this book, and only one object that I associate with that relationship—a small St Christopher trinket—has found its way into these pages, and that only in passing.

But the presence of this man and this loss hovers over this book and attaches to several of its chapters, especially the last one, in which I have had to change the tenses in the final edit. It attaches, most explicitly, however, to that vast, immaterial and invisible evocative object that is music, or rather, its constituent parts: tracks compiled into a very long playlist.

P sent me a track a day, sometimes two or three, for the entire first year of our relationship, a time I experienced as blissful. In attempting to duplicate this playlist to ensure not losing it as I had lost him, and

while writing about listing, I accidentally erased it all. Irretrievably, as it turns out.

I know that, through the lens of psychoanalysis, there is no such thing as an accident. But it seems to me that in no pocket or particle of my being did I wish to lose this man again by dispersing the evocative objects that acutely, singly and cumulatively, evoked all that was sweetest in our time together, and all that was most bitter about our (to me) unforeseen end.

Reading

- Adorno, Theodor. *Aesthetic Theory*. Trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2012 (1997).
- Agamben, Giorgio. *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998 (1995).
- Alcott, Louisa May. *Little Women*. New York: Barnes & Noble Classics, 2004 (1868, 1869).
- Alpers, Svetlana. *The Art of Describing: Dutch Art in the Seventeenth Century*. London: Penguin Books, 1989 (1983).
- Appignanesi, Lisa. *Everyday Madness: On Grief, Anger, Loss and Love*. London: Fourth Estate, 2018.
- Arnatt, Keith. *I'm a Real Photographer*. Exhibition catalogue with texts by Brett Rogers, David Hurn and Clare Grafik. London: Photographer's Gallery, 2007.
- Ashbery, John. *As We Know*. London: Penguin, 1992 (1979).
- Bachelard, Gaston. *The Poetics of Space*. Trans. Maria Jolas. Boston: Beacon Press, 1994 (1964).
- Baker, Nicholson. *The Size of Thoughts: Essays and Other Lumber*. London: Random House, 1997.
- Barthes, Roland. *Camera Lucida*. Trans. Richard Howard. London: Vintage, 2000 (1980).
- Barthes, Roland. *Mourning Diary*. Trans. Richard Howard. Text established and annotated by Nathalie Léger. New York: Hill and Wang, 2010 (1977).
- Batchen, Geoffrey. *Forget Me Not: Photography & Remembrance*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2004.
- Baxandall, Michael. *Patterns of Intention: On the Historical Explanation of Pictures*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1987.
- Beauvoir, Simone de. *A Very Easy Death*. Trans. Patrick O'Brian. London: André Deutsch, George Weidenfeld and Nicolson Ltd. and G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1965.
- Bellamy, Dodie. *Bee Reaved*. Pasadena: Semiotext(e)/Native Agents, 2021.

- Benjamin, Walter. 'Unpacking My Library', in *Illuminations*. Trans. Harry Zohn. London: Pimlico, 1999, pp. 61–69.
- Benjamin, Walter. 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', in *Illuminations*. Trans. Harry Zohn. London: Pimlico, 1999, pp. 211–44.
- Benjamin, Walter. *A Berlin Childhood around 1900*. Trans. Howard Eiland. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006.
- Bennett, Alan. *Untold Stories*. London: Faber & Faber, 2008.
- Bennett, Jane. *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*. Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2010.
- Bennett, Claire-Louise. *Checkout 19*. London: Jonathan Cape, 2021.
- Berger, John. 'The Metaphysician of Bologna.' *ARTnews*, 6 November 2015. <https://www.artnews.com/art-news/retrospective/the-metaphysician-of-bologna-john-berger-on-giorgio-morandi-in-1955-5253/>.
- Berger, John. *Ways of Seeing*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972.
- Berger, John. *About Looking*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2015 (1980).
- Berlant, Lauren, and Kathleen Stewart. *The Hundreds*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2018.
- Birrell, Rebecca. *This Dark Country: Women Artists, Still Life and Intimacy in the Early Twentieth Century*. London: Bloomsbury, 2021.
- Biss, Eula. *Notes from No Man's Land: American Essays*. London: Fitzcarraldo, 2017 (2009).
- Biss, Eula. *On Immunity: An Inoculation*. London: Fitzcarraldo, 2014.
- Blanchfield, Brian. *Proxies: Essays Near Knowing (A Reckoning)*. New York: Nightboat Books, 2016.
- Bobb, Brooke. 'Maira Kalman Has Put the Contents of Her Mother's Closet on Display inside the Met.' *Vogue*, 23 March 2017. <https://www.vogue.com/article/fashion-runway-maira-kalman>.
- Bollas, Christopher. *The Evocative Object World*. London: Routledge. 2009.
- Bollas, Christopher. *Being a Character: Psychoanalysis and Self Experience*. London: Routledge, 2010 (1992).
- Böll, Heinrich. *The Clown*. Trans. Leila Vennewitz. New York: Bard Books, 1963.
- Borges, Jorge Luis. *Other Inquisitions (1937–1952)*. Trans. Ruth L. C. Simms. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1975 (1964.)
- Boscagli, Maurizia. *Stuff Theory: Everyday Objects, Radical Materialism*. London, New York: Bloomsbury, 2014.
- Boyer, Anne. *Garments Against Women*. London: Penguin, 2015. .