

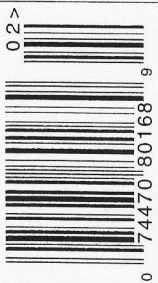
OBSERVATIONS

A MEMORY PALACE

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THE MOONLIGHT BALL

The garage is bright. Different from the others in town, generally CNP its orange and white identity. Statoil, so well remembered by Caro, the most colours she said the brightest, stubbornly telling me it's the best, well she's absolutely right. Blue and orange, green, red, white, a fine spaceship from an unknown planet. The Statoilmen wear orange and blue stripy shirts I think, through the wodka haze in the shop terrified giggles at what we are doing, they just don't do anything though, they just watch and seem to let us get on with it. Later someone tells me they rang up the museum and said that they'd enjoyed the performance. If that's not a result, I don't know what is. Perhaps getting let off by the police who stopped us on the way home. Wild car load. There is something familiar, nostalgic and haunting about getting into a car, lots of people in a car, bodies close squeezed together, getting to know each other in such a close proximity, the intimacy of a full car, I remember loving to be in the car going on a journey, as the car rolled round a bend, the weight of two or three peal swaying in tune with the motion, we played a game called where the car goes, which involved leaning as heavily as you could in the direction of the bend. Loving to have the head squeezed. Wanting to laugh and laugh and laugh. Incoherence. Communal incoherence, collective adolescence. How the irrational was so easily embraced. We went out hunting for it, walking hilariously along the street with a cardboard box on his head. Into the darkness. The road gave you space to play and an element of terror and security with the oncoming headlights. Like driving. She jumped out of the back seat and began to dance, around and around in mad and dizzy circles weaving around the petrol pumps, grasping for another pair of waving hands to hold so briefly, spinning off to encircle another pump. Gliding around the florescent space, misguiding a cou-



ANNA BEST *Moonlight Ball*, 1996. Lodz, Poland

ple of cars, the drivers got out and filled their cars with petrol, sidelong glancing all the while. Looking from the shop, all orange and red and white lights. A kind of altar. We got there and danced and danced and drummed and then went to the shop for refreshments, the vodka sat on a petrol pump. It felt outrageously stupid. You just can't do that in London. Dare to go to the spaceship that we saw land last night, dressed in a fantastic dress and ritualistically dance around it, enter their space, see what happens, harmless arrive and disappear. Leave an impression, colours aurora borealis and fairies, real live dancing ladies, streaming cloth, intoxicated patterns, drumming like there's a reason for this. Trying to awaken the spirits, vaporize the fuel, get some energy, use some energy. By circling the pumps systematically, in time with the rhythm, touching hands, stretching the space with the bodies, spinning out the space, drawing and encircling this precious fuel, praying for free petrol, safe journeys, pleasant breaks, summoning up the zoom factor, the

continuity of all journeys going to the garage to be there, nowhere else, just hang out. Redefining hanging out, hanging, spinning, swaying, dancing, touching, swirling, out, getting out of here. Dear petrol station, of the desolate, unlovable, trashy glamorous places on earth, can we spin some money around, get some love out of your stock tanks. Pumping the gas, filling up, accelerate into a frenzied state. It's an ancient ritual, don't you know? To attach ourselves to each particular gas station we need to wear clothes, long dresses preferably, which are the same colours as the gas station. This is a crucial connection in the ritual. It must be late, almost deserted, quiet enough to occupy, but most important, all the lights will be blazing. The hearts of the drivers: forevermore, their trips to get petrol will be enchanted by the image....

