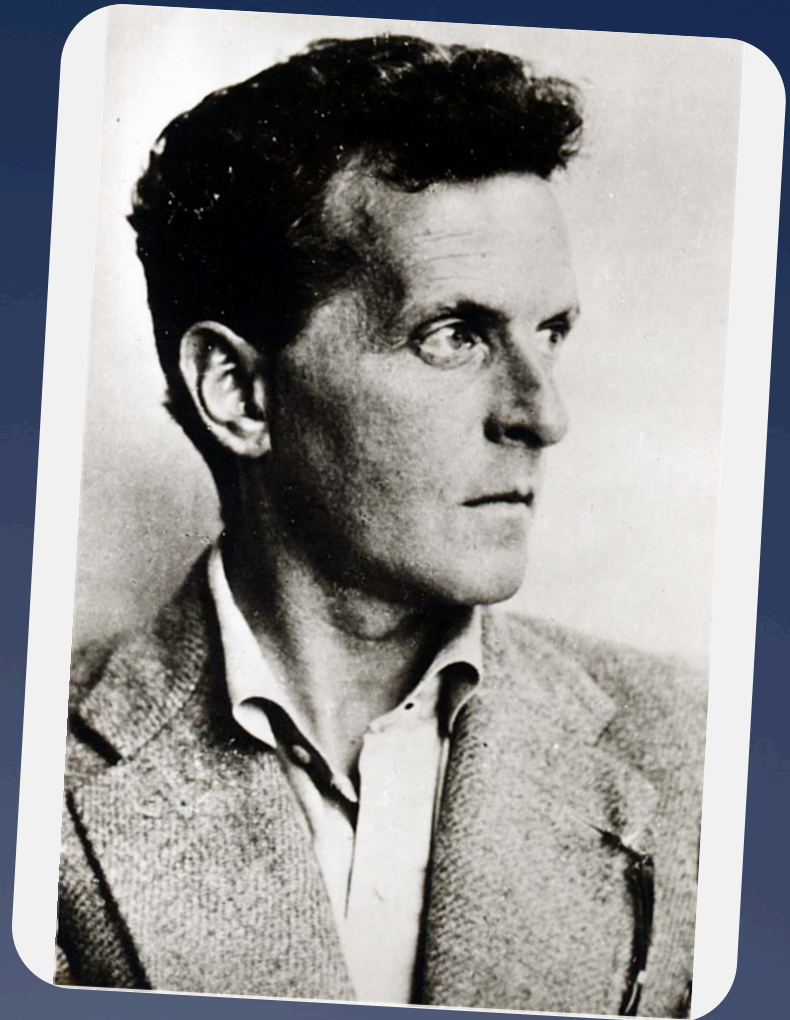


# assembling reminders:

Wittgenstein, Language, and  
Kenneth Goldsmith's  
'Uncreative Writing'

*“The work of the philosopher consists in assembling reminders for a particular purpose.”*

Ludwig Wittgenstein  
(*PI* §127)



# Wittgenstein's Later Philosophy: Tools in a Toolbox

## Tools in a toolbox

- \* The use of a word constitutes its meaning
- \* Each word is a tool in our language toolbox
- \* Like a hammer, a word "means" whatever it allows us to do with it
- \* Philosophy = Describe "ordinary language practices"

## Language games

- \* Language use = One great big game of chess
- \* Range of possible moves determined by rules of the game
- \* Consistent use + Ability to explain use = Correct Use
- \* Philosophy = Observe and describe rules

**“If someone is using language correctly then, by definition, his words already make sense, they already have meaning. Meaning is therefore not something that awaits approximation via [a] hypothesis, at least for those who can already use a language correctly. Rather, it awaits perspicuous characterization.”**

**Richard Allen and Malcolm Turvey (5)**





More Reminders than Anyone  
Could Possibly Want:

The Poetry of Kenneth Goldsmith

# the poetry of kenneth goldsmith

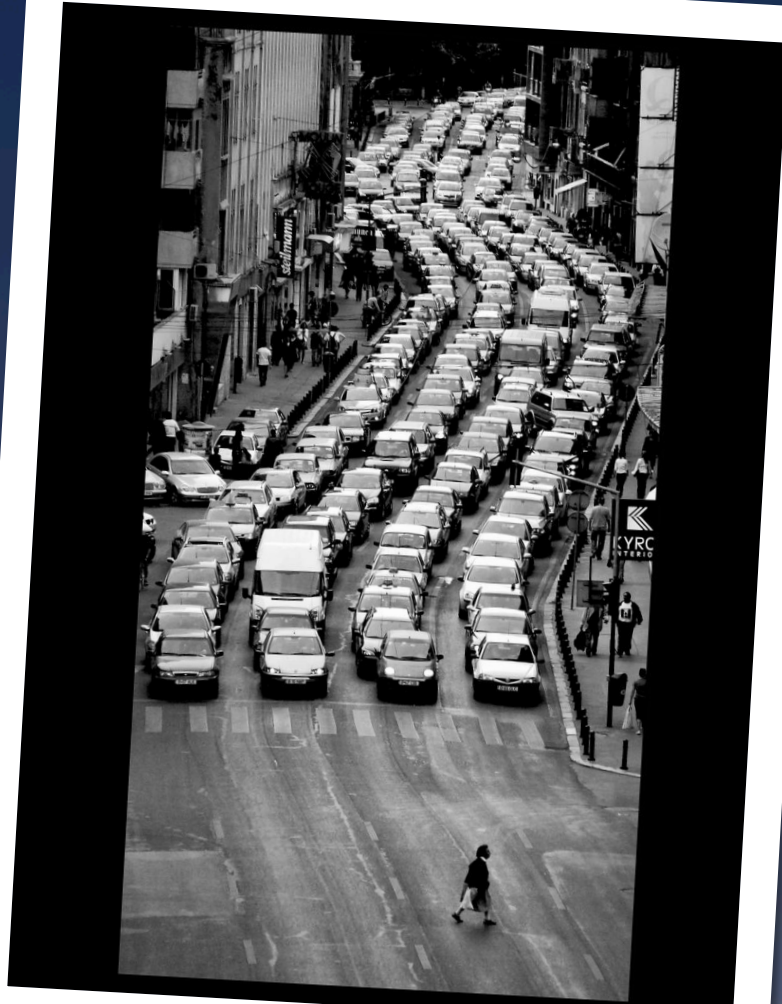
- \* “plundergraphia”
- \* “the suppression of hierarchic ordering”
- \* “devices for the accumulation and concentration of cultural data”
- \* “suspend conventional time to create a radically new historical event”
- \* COPIOUSNESS / ABSENCE



“Well, in conjunction with the big holiday weekend, we start out with the Hudson River horror show right now. Big delays in the Holland Tunnel either way with road work, only one lane will be getting by. . . . Still very slow on the eastbound Southern State Parkway here at the area of the, uh, Meadowbrook there’s a, uh, stalled car there blocking a lane and traffic very slow.”

Opening Lines from *Traffic*





In leaving things out  
of his transcripts—  
names, dates, even  
(perhaps) whole  
periods of time—  
Goldsmith refocuses  
our attention on **the  
things we really  
should be noticing**  
but often never  
manage to.

**“We would not see what our eyes are thus opened to were it not for the arts, but equally what our eyes are opened to in this way would not be there for us to see were it not for the arts.”**

**Ilham Dilman (280)**



From Goldsmith's "Assorted Street Posters"  
Ubuweb.com

We should,  
therefore, view  
Goldsmith's work not  
as a permanent  
cure for what ails us,  
but as **a sorely  
needed reminder** of  
the postmillennial  
tendency to  
overlook the  
**linguistic rules and  
systems** that govern  
so many facets of  
our lives.

