Truisms – Jenny Holzer

a little knowledge can go a long way

a lot of professionals are crackpots

a man can't know what it is to be a mother

a name means a lot just by itself

a positive attitude means all the difference in the world

a relaxed man is not necessarily a better man

a sense of timing is the mark of genius

a sincere effort is all you can ask

a single event can have infinitely many interpretations

a solid home base builds a sense of self

a strong sense of duty imprisons you

absolute submission can be a form of freedom

abstraction is a type of decadence

abuse of power comes as no surprise

action causes more trouble than thought

alienation produces eccentrics or revolutionaries

all things are delicately interconnected

ambition is just as dangerous as complacency

ambivalence can ruin your life

an elite is inevitable

anger or hate can be a useful motivating force

animalism is perfectly healthy
Truisms – Jenny Holzer

any surplus is immoral
anything is a legitimate area of investigation
artificial desires are despoiling the earth
at times inactivity is preferable to mindless functioning
at times your unconsciousness is truer than your conscious mind
automation is deadly
awful punishment awaits really bad people
bad intentions can yield good results
being alone with yourself is increasingly unpopular
being happy is more important than anything else
being judgmental is a sign of life
being sure of yourself means you're a fool
believing in rebirth is the same as admitting defeat
boredom makes you do crazy things
calm is more conductive to creativity than is anxiety
categorizing fear is calming
change is valuable when the oppressed become tyrants
chasing the new is dangerous to society
children are the most cruel of all
children are the hope of the future
class action is a nice idea with no substance
class structure is as artificial as plastic
Truisms – Jenny Holzer

confusing yourself is a way to stay honest

crime against property is relatively unimportant

decadence can be an end in itself

decency is a relative thing

dependence can be a meal ticket

description is more important than metaphor

deviants are sacrificed to increase group solidarity

disgust is the appropriate response to most situations

disorganization is a kind of anesthesia

don't place to much trust in experts

drama often obscures the real issues

dreaming while awake is a frightening contradiction

dying and coming back gives you considerable perspective

dying should be as easy as falling off a log

eating too much is criminal

elaboration is a form of pollution

emotional responses are as valuable as intellectual responses

enjoy yourself because you can't change anything anyway

ensure that your life stays in flux

even your family can betray you

every achievement requires a sacrifice

everyone's work is equally important
Truisms – Jenny Holzer

everything that's interesting is new
exceptional people deserve special concessions
expiring for love is beautiful but stupid
expressing anger is necessary
extreme behavior has its basis in pathological psychology
extreme self-consciousness leads to perversion
faithfulness is a social not a biological law
fake or real indifference is a powerful personal weapon
fathers often use too much force
fear is the greatest incapacitator
freedom is a luxury not a necessity
giving free rein to your emotions is an honest way to live
go all out in romance and let the chips fall where they may
going with the flow is soothing but risky
good deeds eventually are rewarded
government is a burden on the people
grass roots agitation is the only hope
guilt and self-laceration are indulgences
habitual contempt doesn't reflect a finer sensibility
hiding your emotions is despicable
holding back protects your vital energies
humanism is obsolete
Truisms – Jenny Holzer

humor is a release

ideals are replaced by conventional goals at a certain age

if you aren't political your personal life should be exemplary

if you can't leave your mark give up

if you have many desires your life will be interesting

if you live simply there is nothing to worry about

ignoring enemies is the best way to fight

illness is a state of mind

imposing order is man's vocation for chaos is hell

in some instances it's better to die than to continue

inheritance must be abolished

it can be helpful to keep going no matter what

it is heroic to try to stop time

it is man's fate to outsmart himself

it is a gift to the world not to have babies

it's better to be a good person than a famous person

it's better to be lonely than to be with inferior people

it's better to be naive than jaded

it's better to study the living fact than to analyze history

it's crucial to have an active fantasy life

it's good to give extra money to charity

it's important to stay clean on all levels
Truisms – Jenny Holzer

it's just an accident that your parents are your parents
it's not good to hold too many absolutes
it's not good to operate on credit
it's vital to live in harmony with nature
just believing something can make it happen
keep something in reserve for emergencies
killing is unavoidable but nothing to be proud of
knowing yourself lets you understand others
knowledge should be advanced at all costs
labor is a life-destroying activity
lack of charisma can be fatal
leisure time is a gigantic smoke screen
listen when your body talks
looking back is the first sign of aging and decay
loving animals is a substitute activity
low expectations are good protection
manual labor can be refreshing and wholesome
men are not monogamous by nature
moderation kills the spirit
money creates taste
monomania is a prerequisite of success
morals are for little people
Truisms – Jenny Holzer

most people are not fit to rule themselves
mostly you should mind your own business
mothers shouldn't make too many sacrifices
much was decided before you were born
murder has its sexual side
myth can make reality more intelligible
noise can be hostile
nothing upsets the balance of good and evil
occasionally principles are more valuable than people
offer very little information about yourself
often you should act like you are sexless
old friends are better left in the past
opacity is an irresistible challenge
pain can be a very positive thing
people are boring unless they are extremists
people are nuts if they think they are important
people are responsible for what they do unless they are insane
people who don't work with their hands are parasites
people who go crazy are too sensitive
people won't behave if they have nothing to lose
physical culture is second best
planning for the future is escapism
Truisms – Jenny Holzer

playing it safe can cause a lot of damage in the long run

politics is used for personal gain

potential counts for nothing until it's realized

private property created crime

pursuing pleasure for the sake of pleasure will ruin you

push yourself to the limit as often as possible

raise boys and girls the same way

random mating is good for debunking sex myths

rechanneling destructive impulses is a sign of maturity

recluses always get weak

redistributing wealth is imperative

relativity is no boon to mankind

religion causes as many problems as it solves

remember you always have freedom of choice

repetition is the best way to learn

resolutions serve to ease our conscience

revolution begins with changes in the individual

romantic love was invented to manipulate women

routine is a link with the past

routine small excesses are worse than then the occasional debauch

sacrificing yourself for a bad cause is not a moral act

salvation can't be bought and sold
Truisms – Jenny Holzer

self-awareness can be crippling
self-contempt can do more harm than good
selfishness is the most basic motivation
selflessness is the highest achievement
separatism is the way to a new beginning
sex differences are here to stay
sin is a means of social control
slipping into madness is good for the sake of comparison
sloppy thinking gets worse over time
solitude is enriching
sometimes science advances faster than it should
sometimes things seem to happen of their own accord
spending too much time on self-improvement is antisocial
starvation is nature's way
stasis is a dream state
sterilization is a weapon of the rulers
strong emotional attachment stems from basic insecurity
stupid people shouldn't breed
survival of the fittest applies to men and animals
symbols are more meaningful than things themselves
taking a strong stand publicizes the opposite position
talking is used to hide one's inability to act
Truisms – Jenny Holzer

teasing people sexually can have ugly consequences

technology will make or break us

the cruelest disappointment is when you let yourself down

the desire to reproduce is a death wish

the family is living on borrowed time

the idea of revolution is an adolescent fantasy

the idea of transcendence is used to obscure oppression

the idiosyncratic has lost its authority

the most profound things are inexpressible

the mundane is to be cherished

the new is nothing but a restatement of the old

the only way to be pure is to stay by yourself

the sum of your actions determines what you are

the unattainable is invariable attractive

the world operates according to discoverable laws

there are too few immutable truths today

there's nothing except what you sense

there's nothing redeeming in toil

thinking too much can only cause problems

threatening someone sexually is a horrible act

timidity is laughable

to disagree presupposes moral integrity
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to volunteer is reactionary

torture is barbaric

trading a life for a life is fair enough

true freedom is frightful

unique things must be the most valuable

unquestioning love demonstrates largesse of spirit

using force to stop force is absurd

violence is permissible even desirable occasionally

war is a purification rite

we must make sacrifices to maintain our quality of life

when something terrible happens people wake up

wishing things away is not effective

with perseverance you can discover any truth

words tend to be inadequate

worrying can help you prepare

you are a victim of the rules you live by

you are guileless in your dreams

you are responsible for constituting the meaning of things

you are the past present and future

you can live on through your descendants

you can't expect people to be something they're not

you can't fool others if you're fooling yourself
Truisms – Jenny Holzer

you don't know what's what until you support yourself
you have to hurt others to be extraordinary
you must be intimate with a token few
you must disagree with authority figures
you must have one grand passion
you must know where you stop and the world begins
you can understand someone of your sex only
you owe the world not the other way around
you should study as much as possible
your actions are pointless if no one notices
your oldest fears are the worst ones