

TEMBLOR

CONTEMPORARY POETS

ISSUE NUMBER 4

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Gustaf Sobin: *Road, Roadsides and the Disparate Frames of Sequence* complete

Aaron Shurin: *City of Men* complete

Leslie Scalapino: *Delay series* complete

Lyn Hejinian: *The Person* excerpts

Susan Howe: *Heliopathy* complete

Robert Crosson: *On Spicer & other poems*

Pierre Joris: *Canto Diurno* complete

Norma Cole: *Letters of Discipline* complete

poetry, prose, translations:

Rachel Blau DuPlessis · Steve McCaffery · Bob Perelman · Bruce Andrews ·
Johanna Drucker · Karin Lessing · Velimir Khlebnikov · Douglas Messerli ·
Dennis Phillips · Gad Hollander · Eric Selland · David Searcy · Holly Prado
· Jean McGarry · Minoru Yoshioka · Jed Rasula

EDITED BY LELAND HICKMAN

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Issue Number Four · 1986

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North Hollywood, California

A reading edition

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About this Edition

Temblor ran to ten issues between 1985 and 1989, edited by Leland Hickman from an apartment on Cahuenga Boulevard in North Hollywood. This is the fourth, published in 1986: twenty-five contributions over 166 pages, with Gustaf Sobin, Aaron Shurin, Rachel Blau DuPlessis, Leslie Scalapino, Lyn Hejinian, Susan Howe, Steve McCaffery, Bruce Andrews, Johanna Drucker, Pierre Joris and Norma Cole, and translations from the Russian and the Japanese.

This edition is set from the scans of a single copy. Every page has been read and transcribed by eye against the page image; the text is not machine-read output. The magazine is a small portrait book, roughly 6¼ by 8¼ inches, and this edition enlarges it to 8½ by 11 with a single wide measure, so that long lines do not have to wrap. Each contributor opens on a fresh page.

Where a poem's sense depends on the placement of words on the page, the page is reproduced as a picture rather than reflowed — Susan Howe's *Heliopathy*, which sets words in scattered fields and turns some of them on their side; Karin Lessing's *The Slate Opening*; Eric Selland's *Transparencies*. Nine pages are set this way, the type reduced where it must be to keep the widest line inside the measure. A title standing above such a page is set as a title, not swallowed into the picture.

Gustaf Sobin's sequence is mechanically centred, every line and every turned line on a single axis. That is how it is printed, and it is kept.

Bruce Andrews's poems are justified prose with authorial line breaks. Lines the printer wrapped have been rejoined and words broken at a line end closed up; only the lines that stop short of the measure are Andrews's own. The same reading was applied to Leslie Scalapino's alternating blocks, which sit at two fixed positions on the page and are reproduced at those positions.

Printed typos and eccentric spellings are kept as they were set — *penumatic*, *Accordian*, *morninged*, *speeces*, *beleive eny beleif*. No editorial matter of mine appears once the text begins. Set in TeX Gyre Pagella, with display type in Termes after the magazine's own masthead; the colour is the cover stock, sampled from the scan.

Gustaf Sobin

Road, Roadsides and the Disparate Frames of Sequence

W. W.'s

the road, that narrow fiber of running sounds, on which —ineluctably— you'd
un-

ravel.

both phrase and paraphrase of your own unbecoming.

(dropped gears; raised ground).

after the cholla and mesquite, the ragged dark triangles of the piñon.

—were as if fed to those spaces—

to the light's high, dustless, near-lunar intensity.

each pebble, as if pedestalled black.

each object, as if struck, petrified, held —in raised relief— by *fiat* of some obscure,
and now extinct, divinity.

travelled across, a 'transparent slide.'

as if to catch, unawares, your scattered, semi-conscious projections.

(that dim, disarticulated ore).

"Los Lunas"

—where a water tower, on its tall stilts, quivered silver—

(brief stations of the syllable).

while moving, now, as if past yourself, drawn into ever-increasing degrees of displacement.

so many voices, as if thinned, rimmed in static.

edged, inaudible.

(where, through the light chaparral, saw —staring backwards— a pair of hunched,
high-shouldered coyotes).

—quills, beer-caps, obsidian—

the very instant the sun, in its ganglion of pink squibbles, went under.

the road, you wrote, began anywhere.

began wherever the words, out of the broken word, first rushed, irrepressible.
...the running tape of this sequence.
(wherever you'd finally rid yourself of any notion of return, of personal circuitry).
nights, even faster.
where the whipped ellipsis of lane-markers spun under, and past.
changed altitudes, frequencies, continuously.
(faint, now, the hiss and clipped, metallic snap of *maracas*).
near Albuquerque, neons, printing out palms.
saw (in an all-night diner) your own reflections as if splinter against steel, mirror,
tile; burst —radial— to a thin, featureless spray.
as if, even thinner, only the words (the fitted whispers) might withstand fracture.
might wedge —like headlights— a passage.
(creosote in sudden frames through the black, glass-smooth curves).
—might, in some eventual reassemblage, reconstitute image—
what —nebulized— you carried wherever.
night after identical night, through those pink, cellulated rooms, that the mumble
might persist.
its tiny, breath-bitten messages be sent, projected past.
(recorded, now, as if forwards).
*
* *
as a dream breaks into its most indissoluble salts.
there, where one by one, cardinal then quail, the still-dark desert awakens.
(already violet, the mocha adobe).
'as a moon seen through the sockets of a puma's skull.'
were journeying, now, invisible to yourself; as if fictive to any eventual other.
—outcrops of red, sun-shredded rocks—
while far out, over them, the quivering mineral of the earliest mesas.
everything was there, you'd written, except yourself.
dredged air for that vanished anatomy.
(for whatever —once— underwrote 'lymph' and 'gland,' the 'paired heart of the

indivisible').

clouds in thin, driven bands of crumbling nacre.

and, just beyond, on a last, laminal flake of scored sandstone: Acoma.

(a blush of smoke over its domed ovens).

'eye-dazzler' is the pattern, you're told, on those shattered fragments.

Haako, where resonance, first, determined habitat.

where voice and echo (off its sheer, vertical rock-face) registered identical.

—the chord, at last, accorded—

of the projections you'd send endlessly past yourself into the endlessly emanative:

that transcript.

(the breath as if gelled in a bell of light).

five hours, now, of penetrated vacancy. scattered *arroyos*.

now, only so many prepositions with which to fix immensity; determine, momentarily, a *locus*, an imputable name.

theirs, the 'directional shrines.'

there, where the gold poppies still wind-stiffened in the high chaparral.

breath-tooled, those spaces.

from Blanco's on outwards, a taut washboard, a wobbling, dirt ribbon.

(throb of your blue, wind-shaken sleeves).

'there, everything's there.'

would press yourself, full length, against the vertical plate of your own projections.

draw from its deep volutes.

(from each of its gradually unghosted vocables).

as if authenticating, as artifacts, presence and gesture; the very least ligament, rolled translucent.

Chetro Ketl.

where whole structures, once, were laid out, sidereal.

(a whole world, deferred).

followed, along the facing ledges, that erratic line of calendrical uprights.

'sun stones,' those squat, chalked-off boulders.

(you between, among them: at the errant center of so much conjecture).

pecked steps.

and —as if lacquered black— a high, cloudless sky, overhead.
towards Pueblo Wiji, intense thirst.
would have drunk, if you could, from your lens' dark, watery reflections.
(where an eye —scarcely yours— floated over).
charred hearths.
and a random marker, occasionally, to their vanished, ceremonial roads.
dune, and canebreak.
and the sudden, wet stitches of a blue hummingbird.
'later, would abandon these sights, and adopt —like their archaic predecessors— an
itinerant existence.'
with each death, would burn their hovels; move on.
ghost beads, ghost dances.
Kin Ya'a.
there, where the moon floated, diurnal.
later, towards Gallup, saw, in the flowing chrome, your own features as if pleat and
expand.
... hair, forehead, teeth ...
(like some small collection of ephemeral keepsakes).
each instant, each object, catching, now, in an uninterrupted sequence of displaced
frames.
you, who'd match image with image.
who'd bring the disparate twins —the nomadic— to meet, coincide, superimpose.
—the *you*, at last, within the 'you,' inserted—
(that bundle of wild, unkempt rays).
what, scattered, dissipated, held you, now, in a kind of vacuous echo, in the ring of
a negative radiance.
(while sleeping in the contours of its scuttled volumes).
further south: mesquite, saguaro.
the minute, electrically-charged signatures of the smallest clouds.
only real, seemingly, what you hadn't yet foreseen.
(the idea, at least, that the word, eventually, might possibly prefigure).
green slag, and the slow lightning, over.
as the desert breaks now into flat, residential sections.

and the traffic gathers —funnels, five lanes— through the unwavering rear-view.

‘tokens,’ ‘keepsakes.’

or a memory run far enough forward that you might, almost fortuitously, encounter some minor, still-emergent feature.

(some vestige, projected).

—a sonorous imprint, resilient enough to hold: withhold you—

for the poem you’d compiled and now nearly completed was still to be written.

still articulated: the length of these relapsing itineraries.

(a syntax equal to all that unhappening).

were so many knuckles, now, studding the black, scalloped steering wheel.

“(some vestige, projected ...)”

as the tires hiss —slick— down the damp causeways.

rainy city; shiny palms.

Aaron Shurin

City of Men

I heard my name, the day rose and disappear over the beach. the day on each breath tasted my food, that night roll slowly cover in the cool, his face around my breast. the day inhaling grow pale and disappear, water on his way, up the shores hissing. under the night stillness inclined my morning beach, undressing my friend of liquid, my most same. at evening while whispering from the bed by me, his way was accomplished. his full perfect arm a health of ripe waters. the day received moon laughing, love lay me that night

love growth, manly types have been young men, my year my nights, comrades. projecting tongues clear my world; I feed, tell all the secret, offering delicious profit away from the clank. respond myself for all the need secluded, from standards to pleasures rejoices. escaped here; paths clear to speak: I can spot men and exhibit as I dare

fair warning. further affections perhaps destructive. expect your long room in the open air. on your kiss permit be carried into sleep, caught me that I have written this, go your hand on your way upon my hip, that hit I hinted at, perhaps more trial. put your lips back, new husband, who would sign himself a candidate for my affections? in hand one thing will be all, suspicious, destructive, give up all else, exhausting your conformity, troubling your hand from my shoulders. I gawk unborn with you on a hill; upon mine, lips, I permit your throbs; beneath your clothing I have escaped from me. which way? many times reading it not understand. some trial for I emerge uncertain, theory around would have to be abandoned. feel me go forth. touching is wood, is rock, is air sea island roof enough

diligently sought it many year at random, among animals, lapping apples and lemons, pairing fitful grossest nature and what goes with them. yearning for any and attracting whoever you are. swimmer naked in the bath from head to foot and what it arouses, trembling curve and the clinch of hips, the mouth makes me fainting from exultation and relief, embrace in the night the cling of any man drunk eyes, the storm that loves me, by the pliant loins a moment emerging stars. blending each body from the gnaw, wet overture anticipating the perfect face, for myself from you two hawks in the air, waves of nearness, floating the divine list to possess a lawless sea. I yield to the vessel, sliding fingers and thrusting hands, warp and woof, victory and relief, close pressure makes excess divine. pushes anticipating the strain exhaust each other; side by side on the coverlet lying and floating. from that, myself, without which ...

I have lived orgies and will one day make pageants. bright windows with continual feast: those eyes' swift flash as I pass. O I make rows of you, streets of you, processions, spectacles ...

boys up and down the road, priests of ourselves, wrenching and owning the other. fingers stretching elbows, alarming the air, making no law less than loving, ease on down fearless power

the arm, the arm, sleepless ... underneath what you say my measureless name ... walks within him at night wandering with other men ... ocean of hand in hand ... tenderest pictures hang in my woods ... another curved shoulder ...

acid river drain itself, blowing suppleness and strength from judges. milk commands mystery, moisture of the right man delights the earth, shame knows how to shoot for own sake. nothing lacking in gushing showers, warm-blooded rivers wrestle suns. deposit within me the pent-up winds of myself, crops from the birth of deliciousness, plant of you to awake at the touch of a man. greater heroes sleep in sex, wrap a thousand years in slow rude muscle of themselves, accumulated purities deposit gods on earth. onward pour the stuff; distil from the fruit of the fruit meaning's delicacies ...

growing up above the tomb there, pink-tinged heart ascend the atmosphere; rise with it breast in your sweet way. behind the mask of materials take control of all, emerge under you roots of sound and odor, scented show folded in shifting forms. spring unbare this serve me lovers, conveyed essential shape inhale the bloom. burn and sting will not be freeze, reverberations give tone to delicate blood. exhilarating immortal death, inseparably grow and dissipate, last beyond all in comrades body

sighs in night in rage not subtle, dismiss chattering words to savage wrists. willful broken oath, nourishment of beating and pounding, defiances thrown in the wilds of hungry pantings. dissatisfied dreams of every day show dead words, limbs and senses thrown from heaving skies. not savage but cries and laughter, pulse of systole/diastole sounded in air

a certain number standing alone, me twined around. it hung down and glistens there, unbending. wide flat companion of lusty oak makes me a little moss, stood for my sight and I grew wonder. lover in the dark brought to live green

produce boys! greed eats me, wholesome bunch saturate my palms. mounting my friend, waist hanging over my shoulder, dripping spiral, the hot hand that flushes. encircling red animal, purple lurking thumb, paternity of liquid will be torment and tide. odor of lips glued together; curves, brothers, that feelers may be trembling sweats; visions lie willing and naked under the ripening sun. whitened with the souse of primitive men, sleep together with crushed mint and sap, climbers after body blow husks from indecent eyes, find themselves breasts and bellies up and down the night. hairy murmurs and firm legs match the man to mountain, climbing my man I light the hillside. toss him, plucked from chastity, to saturate the sea; all men carry men, lurking. tight pause and edge to pressure, roaming hand-whirl, I glow spontaneous, know what he is dreaming. the same content, airs intimate that fill my place with him, smell of wild relief, welcome falling ...

two simple men modeled under full sail, splendor of one neck envelops the other. spread around me, crowd of glory, I saw the pass and kissed him

appearances, after all, may be only speculations; identities are of the real. hold me by the hand, that is subtle air, impalpable, curiously words hold untellable. reason confound us, sense surround us, he travels to me and these are the shining things I perceive. I walk in the fable of a man, charged with points of view, skies of colors, densities, and something yet to be known ...

full of you and become you. any number could be me. read these and become a
comrade. with you I am one

Rachel Blau DuPlessis

Afterimage

He has entered the space between
himself
and his dying
in that breath thru which
homeless
the pearly waters rose to make mud.
No plan. It is land
unnamed.
The deep oily
thoroughfare, no more primitive
element, no
going backwards, no leaping
backwards, away
from finding blackness.

•

Between darkness and light
before the white thread can be told
from the black before it is
palpable, how to tell
both how
can the black road be
white, the dark field mirror tolled
half-blank, how to toil and not
see Self?

•

Dark field, white mirror half-blank there
is a vanishing point.
Your eyes wide and inward,
your eyes watch your eyes still

watch yourself
cast in and cast out.

There is a vanishing
bottom of a fathomed place.

•

Soft
at the hillside crumbles the brown moist
edge
inward;
here pools naked water a scum green rises
within.

•

Because
it was not situated
and could not rise nor fall relative to
anything
he walks,
going on quietly
into something
enraged with annoyance
as with banality and also
peace. And time.

•

Legacy?
Sometimes every one else seems
perfectly unworthy:
bonfire crisps; flash floods; glass costs.
These are the obstacles.
People are inhuman as disease.
Is everything for the last time?
What use was it ever?

•

And earth.
Its powers.
It must not have a name.

•

Walks holding
a silver thread into
a water maze

flooded with
everything
tries to see to seize

changes he
ebbs and flows
around his silver body.

•

Terse riddings.
Riddled turnings.
What little shells in baskets over
and over the shells
from nameless emptied creatures!

The shadow round the bone
patiently
complies.

Why indeed should I not be
one
of them?

•

The little them.
Forgive yourself.

•

Watch, watcher into the night a
new, cool rustling darkness without
shadow, rictus as total.

These things probably true.

•

This crossing a river by walking
under a river.

Black hole in a universe of seeds.

•

Flat black stones smoothed in the whorl

wind of water, so.

Sometimes I want to avenge bread.

•

No doors.

Do not ask for any.

•

Swum into the cool of the lake (innocently)

found the icy updraft

feed and pull

hidden body tangles swimming body.

•

The hand cups.

It is not enough.

The hands cup.

Earth spring

swings sweet in the deepened hillock.

The drinker has fluttered the surface

reaching down:

must wait then

for the loose green floating

up from the earthen sides to still

to return to the hill

wait then for the pool's bud dark waters

to clarify.

•

Thirst that sudden and below

wells for other water.

The thirst was parched with life.

It bent to drink and quench.

• •

June 1986

materials: 1979; 1980; 1981; 1983.

Leslie Scalapino

Delay series: The Series as Qualitative Infinity

the man — who'd
put out a cigarette after he'd
gotten on the subway — responding
to the cop's bullying who'd seen him
— only — saying he knew of that
rule on it

acknowledging is — when
that
wasn't what was asked — by
the cop on the subway train — for
having had a cigarette on it — to allow
him to fine for that

responding — only
acknowledging one doesn't have that on
the subway — and so
opening up — that as the means of that — without there
being a fight indicated
so the man — as gentle — for
causing the fine — in that situation of
being on the subway — when the cop
had begun to
bully him — at its inception

and — a senseless
relation of the
public figure — to his
dying from age — having that
in the present — as him to us

as is my
relation to the mugger — a
boy — coming up behind

us — grabbing the other woman's
purse — in his running into the park
the boy — who'd
been the mugger — and had run
off into the park — with the other
woman's purse at the time — and that
relation to him

as being the
senseless point — though without
knowing the boy — who was the mugger — after
that — or of course then
either — but that as not being it

it's irrelevant to
want to be like him — whether
it's the mugger — who'd
then run in
to the park — though not that aspect of it

a man — occurring now
dying from being sick — at a young age
— we're not
able to do anything — so fear as an irrelevant
point

the man's death — from
being sick at a young age — as not a
senseless point — not to —
by desire — reach such a thing in
that way

which would be — for him —
fear — whether
it's the mugger — on
our part — but in his
doing that

and — when it could
be reached — though by
him — not by desire on his part — us going in
the cop car after being mugged — when
we'd seen it

where does that
come from — a delay —
not from the mugger — and
on
our part in it

when — that is
that relation —
not the president — which
would then not
be anything
fear — from dying at
a young age — from
sickness — when that emotion is an
irrelevant point — and is
that relation

and — the mugger's
state of mind at the beginning — as
that relation — though
of course afterward he'd run in
to the park

though
— for him — when
that state of mind which is
occurring at the beginning — but
when that aspect of his is of
course an irrelevant point
not in the sense — of
desire — of the mugger's as
that point — on
our part —
occurring at the same time

so — it's an insertion
into
that relation — of someone's

— regardless of
their manner of living

love — on the part — of
the sort of Greta Garbo — so
desire in union with
love — not produced from
it

the man — in a sort of
Greta Garbo — in
a simple union — as being
from desire

and — the man
reversing that — who's
dying at a young age from
sickness — not being that
relation

and — not
it's being the current
relation to
the event — of
it — occurring after that event

and — love finding out
everything — by the sort of
Greta Garbo — the state of mind producing
that — not from him — but as that
relation

that
— existing
in a state of mind
when that's a
senseless point

Lyn Hejinian

9 poems from The Person

There is no time
for rewriting
my thoughts
are in my neck
Self-consciousness is discontinuous
The very word “diary”
embarrasses me

There are schools of autobiography
far removed — into them
too, socialism hums
as mercury, spilled, splits
and is solid
The head is a case, with genitals
I laugh because things fit
This is the solace of fatalism
I distinguish it from non-literary reality

Anything that decomposes
rather than a person
into temporal rather than spatial parts
must be a person’s life
The rubbing of the grains of light
Here the vanishing point is on every word
The sun on the water that forms rings
and they implode
Streets stirring the desire
to abandon territory
The sky displays love of the continuous

In my neck, only time
A bigness of the city that is
I don’t possess space — that’s clear enough
Feelings sink to the surface
Kindness & worry, haste & interpretation
Here I translate my thought
into jump-language, to double fate
But fate imposes its very interesting exercise: select

You yourself could generate the aesthetic heat
of globes and stops, of shore and drone
This makes for altruism —
the generosity of the poem
If you know what to want you will be free

Altruism in poetry
Such is huddled in all audible life
Why do I say this?
Are there perpetual experiences and do we have them?
Nature washed her hands in milk in many years
And the blotting power?

Each sensation is witness to the congestion of its glance
It is very specific to say this
The person goes up to a perfect stranger in an enclosed
public space (for example, a bank, or supermarket, or
department store) and there belts out some aria
It's a wonderful thing, love wants to be more so
The personification in branches gesturing from the desperate
trees
"It will rain this afternoon, but I do not believe that it
will "

Elation can manifest itself from time to time in finding
like a seashell on a beach things of no great consequence
perfect, and then ... ?
The skin itches at a restless nerve end
Like a child with a bunch of keys then went down to the
street who learns to tell things, as Bach in his *Little
Organ Book* wrote: "To the glory of the most high God
and that my neighbor may be benefited thereby"
She knocked with a two-penned hand below the storm-punched
trees
It seemed to be raining trees — down came the trunks
and echoes

Put tongue to foot and say necessity
Outside there are 40 degrees
I see these degrees — that's a relief — there is something
to do or read
My dream was a dream of relief — vivid cleaning and
cleaning divorced
What it means is that the person will be disposed and
the night jumps

My thought hissed
Let us say that the poem, or the lines of the poem written
at this one particular sitting, fit this description
The vision only I could make though it seemed to come in
from the driveway
The expletives are sociable: "how amazing!" "look!" "I
can't stand it!"
Not everyone needs to do this
Experience distributes — the objects deliver perceptions
Psychic suppression of the place in which they sit
I look to the window, there is menace pressed
A gray and yellow face staring in the glass
It is an impatience I have ever after
To provide it with the answer to its needs I scream
It gets the good of the dread
Pressed to the members of happiness
Is that political or motherly behavior?
The baby discovered its hands with its feet
Why not the construction worker drove its truck, its
burden?
So — on this cold, gray, rainy day, an attempt to imagine
the heavy August heat of noon is like trying to experience
oneself as a child again
Does it change under many feet of sand?
I see these — feet
The rain picks at the hum in the sand, contained akin to
immediacy
Music is rational in a thing that affects me
The tongue in a song is a pushing pod
The mind must be round to be pushed along
Person, place, and ...
Amplitude & necessity
The mind is bumping over on its concavities
a.
The solitude flared out
Ears — almost every person has some
The stain of urgent wordiness on idea life
In the rain is the let & flow
The positions of the head are finite
More obstacle than the rain is the hour in the air
The air woolly as one wakens, the light oppressive rather

than expansive
But that's not fair! I complained, merely tinged with
spatiality
My intuition tells me that light is discontinuous
There are only brief, unrelated lights
Day and night — they lie within these

I dread the sound of the stone outside pronoun
Household substantives (long life, hyperspace, the
infinite-must-be-hyphenated, and so on) in talk about
talk — it wounds the feelings
A tide denied to the little pond, even a tiny one
What I learn is the link of weeds as I like it
There are lifespan & detection
Their object a dead weight, then empathy drops
Pathos and limp clustering

I brooded "What a creep!" whispered
The internal objects stand
Publishing ... is that public or maternal activity?
A person puts meals in its head
Then craving for knowledge might mean craving for noise
The season is drawn and they follow the captivity
Here I depict a trunk of a tree as a funnel and a day is
disgorged
Divides on solicitude
A concentric scrape and is converted
And I digress on destination

b.
"You talk too much and much too fast"
There was a standing matter
The disciplinarian, its swells
Don't be afraid — predicaments make a person apparent
Matter what

In a nightmare was depicted deployment of my intentions
Bird follows bird — but through a membrane
Can a person gulp with delight?
Swallow in chatty cadences (some people pick up languages
the way some other people get dirty)
The day has a bulk of light
It sleeps during a place at night
Would crave, it will have play
on light and nightmares

There are balls of these intentions
and on each a new world
The judgment and the matching method
Frogs copulating by a puddle
They are organs
An engine of internal revolving applause

Hear us for our ear cares
It all will matter where intended
Felicity by another means brings on a little hoarseness
The spacious retrospect within a writhing
The body has specific turmoil
The describing method and the symphonic outbreak
The milk-blue mind and the sky above it all its life
But the sun doesn't rise constantly here
That must have made a few people mad!
The next day my husband reports the ...
 overheard my emphatic forgotten adventure
I was heard to say, "Not dead, no one, not dead, but to be
 no one, No One: *that's who's an intellectual body!*"
 or perhaps "intellectual beauty!", rapping but asleep
The body is used impenetrably for flopping around
 with compassion
The pearly gates are teeth and the body is the carcass
 of paradise
Warp in the jambs so that it isn't perhaps discontinuity
 to exit and deploy

I want things to be real, of course!
The self is a lobe or palm
Scrupulously to think of the hand — so well-buttoned
Perceiver
Dispatched to the motions of the moment
A, C, K, and so on
There is a record of them somewhere
There is an anxiety to make one

The bulk ... sparks and jets drop off the bulk
The hands remember them
 in their locations — I've forgotten
A certain kind of prior life, say a happy one ...
 it has a pungent bulk, resembling light
Convalescence is a blanching
... I exaggerate: secret

The great sequences of incompleteness flutter
Many standards in nature crimp
Ego, Body, Position
I went to see
I rode a kind of engine of gender, a motive for bonding

Things see their argument go to and fro before my eyes
It takes science, patience — refusing to recede
Do you remember your hand years ago? or was it all anticipation
 to have flaked and vegetated
Perhaps time snaps — the patter of the hand
The snapping meant for recovery, there's no lack of rhythm
 for getting around to accumulate, with fingers and a
 capacity and possible use as a cover

Sound is a sentence of water
Much gender
Such that if one's head is lost one will not live again

The head a case
"All experience is an arch wherethrough"
Estrangement is technical in a sense

You see the solid harbor and a liquid city
What is the rhythm to tell between them
Thumb, middle-finger, pinky — forefinger, ringfinger, and
 back

In actuality, actuality
Oily waves of enormous mineral
If rocks can be born, then cliffs can die

There are lozenges of storm
The water is disturbing in great triangles
They cut & float, the receptive scoops approach

Scale
Water takes meditation
Metaphor in ratio to the time it takes

The noise of things and how they break off from one another
Now it is raining — that seems correct
Duration rides in real cases on rinds and the pins

I love the weather
The scene in nervous snapping
Rocks rise in a rain bearing bridges, chairs
The emotions follow ... watchful
My desire is dragging direction to say this

The pen is a nag
The bulb crackles
The sky was never a chipped ceramic
I say this about the psyche which is not optional
Bulk brightened by collapse
On my skin are a million lozenges
And outside are stalks of dirt upon inspection
Dimension and longevity — they raise ridges of description
Here are Rock-drop and Asylum, almost alone
Poem, or ragged prose
The pulse is not an omen of rhythm to come
Pedagogic love literally
Learning is like poetry an uncalm practice
It makes the promise of unlikeness
And discipline
I love a trilling bird with extended dawn vocabulary

Dawn Vocabulary

The reality of reality greets you
Reality, for your better personality

And difference

Rain of the painting habits and restraint of same
See, from the watchful stalks of unlikeness in living
Rational, trilling birds of 'permanent storm' (merciful puzzle)
What have you learned about life from these poems?

Susan Howe

Heliopathy

insofar initiand two fold invisible errand
soever before Purchas people hereby them
backwood todo great Beech where discord
crossed Ohio occupation arrowhead noonday bay
was killing and planting blare campnation
sensible peltry legal surname between surname
nomatter how turncoat grow green roundagain
cross own thin 'slumber fleshly asprawl
swamp finite apparel become rushes She
happiness laden as Eve amongst ore
even asone figment form beloved Form

PARMENIDES LED BY DAUGHTERS OF THE SUN

	TRIS	
	trample	
	eagle	
	bugle	ar
wan	command	wer
want	THat was a lie	bin
	seconds shiver away	
wash	bang	enny
was	tongue	grate
wasp	scene	cy
what		ck
	scent	t'oth
swan	Sceptre	cymbal
swamp	scatter	Mercy
swal-low	Wing	
wal-low	fetch	
wander	vast	
watchman	Oak dient jut	
sheer	school	
bear	theday	
there	languishment	
their	Alm	
where	<i>The darkness hideth not from thee</i>	WE
hear	huddle Un then All	
here	raculus cup in such manner Over	
	Favorite	
mire	Favorite	

oar

Favorite
Favorite

Anly which he has alt nettle
corrector. that I. cristende.

breaches skegger or forty

stupor research I return lovingly
 Quahog
smok fane vane flag gro

raccoon chogset cisco assapin
cat mint

ifig ivy yew staff lelie

kinnikinnick kilhag mealwe cicely sweet

duindoorn

pog methy menhaden
 to nine Herbs

toss coast splice Luggage
 maeshowe
longe holly hun
Powow
 cohusr
 Pung

muskelunge bark look

hackmatack sgraf saerden wudu
 pooquaw pne

Pakenum, *dark*, (very.) Pekenink, *in the dark*. Pisgue, *it is dark*.
Pisgeke, *when it becomes dark*. is dark.)
 brembel

Flesch: fle-

Inch-pin of civilization
 Oratory
 Memories trace a discourse
Iroquois
 of marked eyes
Cattle moving in stubble
 Peace messengers
 Spiders haunt cellars
 live on wildflowers
Scalping—whoops or yells—prisoner

 Our duty how we should be bound
 To do
 Such phrases and such phrases
 All those hands feet figures of speech
 queareswildesthrentenbalance
 Wicker logic mortal to ambulant
 blunt
 Fragile dialectic
Metaphor of nations swarm
 Set of silver teaspoons
 We all wear mocassins
Draft of pseudonymous proem
 or half-singing or recitative

 Poring ar av prise
 whe war se herd won
 Gathred leves mon sacret

 Altogeather togeather
 hops fra hoops
 Idia sinsly
 beleive eny beleif

 Line about dim hill in legend and so forth interwoven.
 Ear shall make age be forgotten, earth of the teetering edge.
 Revel he stood hush generations here otherbody.
 Counting by threes the limit in counting.
 A hare a fox a bear.

Ages for long been Oursoul
Fledgling I will go over
Look where she lies asleep
Shadow gone out of my body
Real being or actual Being

jocund cipher and idiom
My strange act my text
my strange book
twig basket casting net creel
Body figure of a body
no illusion but an illusion
antithetical roundabout pastoral
Long journey in iron shoes
Stage set up on a stage
Figure of Comedy pastoral tragedy
Mysterious fugitive identity
Stripped of crown and purple
Old Mortality brow of adamant
runs carelessly to a precipice
Great men of the New World
walk on water after winter
Evergreens screen the earth
They are denying the Dark
after dark will ever gather
Inside the language of names
they stretch out their arms
Here is blank reason
Realm of thought ruin of things
What hierarchy of furious intention
lies here in ruins
So dark they run against trees
Havoc of infinite progression
Generations predestined to obey
Aspire's empty cry
The lake has been opening all day
Gloomy water eager to get free
Play of Nature
in the lapse of time
an hour past the hour
of Midsummer

Counterjudgement
of mind in Mind
abiding
at the meadow-edge
drifts of inland
Stray memory
Wounds of pity
wounds of peace
Old chief muffled about the face
St Tammany
Civilization
thrusts and envelops him
Point to point
Broad magisterial right
Side by side
Sower and seed
Precepts and secular reason
Typology of charm
Structure of ritual song
The Past the proven half
There can be no doubt
The world as an emblem
The echoing valediction
of light gods crossing
and re-crossing
Hermeneutics of paternalism
Mediator mouthpiece
prerogatives of dominion
And the old domnu
cast in a corner
ghost of baffled meaning
thin flesh arms crossed
Around her hangs dark vapor
Unconscious meadows loom
Necessity and premonition

Faces fade from faces said
Fate draws Zeal's sequel
Each stoic fortification
Afterthought
Between reason
and revelation
apperception fell to ruin
What was always
and will always be
abdication
gripped by thought
Thought's descent
into character trait
in deep troughs
hunch deeper Troughs
Luminous night
or black Light
hunter gatherer
Known and the known
The untried fields
The sound of human pain
Sanctuary
Constancy
Structure of truth
Truth of structure
Genealogy of the kings of Idumea
Names passed over in silence
Names that remain unknown
Vestiges of their action
Distant tribes endlessly rove
Annal and action into confusion
Slingstones still stones
To manifest these names
In bodies of bushes stray voices
Stray voices without bodies

Stray sense and sentences

Concerning the historicity of history

The mind's absolute ideality

Old age old child

Farewell to every generation

Enkindling kin arc on the horizon

young parents bending in sunshine

End of filled space in the world

To confront an abstraction

a proper name or the author's name

My ordinary self beside life

Steve McCaffery

Three Poems

Ba-Lue Bolivar Ba-Lues Are

CONSTREINT FOR PENSIHEDE TO BED whan that was joyned amyde be kalendes of
 and derk hir bemys within my bed the waloing to er i gan sodein dedeli which me
 rauysshid in I nyst that foundid not opon but as that shone es eny gan I neigh this wex
 astonyed persing on part that I abouten me considre hestres til last certain wind stremes
 myght whereso report of al that compaswisewhen wicket into temple side and soth
 depeynt from west of sundri ordre aftir lifli colours with and as some kneling doleful sate
 upon hire wo first so goodli gan complein deceyued al hestis said alas when saugh next
 hou and nygh the maner wepte pein saugh so long hir wex of aldernext I mene and for hir
 hou she turnyd was al mekenes eke al turment hade and hou herte swerd al maner
 minatawre wrynck craft in prison shette grete fire of falsched walles depeint was honged tre
 filbert were in tempil sawe al writen eke hov iturned was the fest of also saugh in that he
 thurugh hurt faire fressh bitwene one groue acordid onli that iturned was did fle cope
 oonli into bole list transmwe bi shap gan almen so was with cheynes ther was of him that
 she iweddit high hou with hir vppermore hov ring hir ledne foule coud vndirstond her
 myschefe ful mani redi unto were and hou obak a causless hem that were on werin exiled
 wikkid withoute remysyoun eke no open wise discure for othir that some double thurgh
 some that for her endurid whiles berith of labur wher trw noon some pleined sore were
 coupled coked elde to oold Ianuari diurs grucching ire entendeth to and plai that euer
 sugre criden shape anon bi conseiles in yrendred were hade yeris al her lif wide copis
 perfeccion curen shew thus wepen other next in eleccion seld at laarge chese other oft that
 they in seisoun bi disdein that whilom was to lust that in som pitousli mych beaute set on
 namely there a loke oft falleth neuer efter gret to eny maken him hir purcaas ledin graue
 for perauenture wit saugh som were hastines for alderlast I walk beside tofore that knelid
 which as sterres to voide in clerenes so as euere in bawme pris stones of al is right with
 stremes thurugh semelines and euer coude in werkes so sonnyssh lich replenysshid wel
 ennuyd rose so egalli in thought to yeven hir in enviroon to speke of holynes or semlyhed
 and mirroure eke so lere benigne embrouded sondri rolles expoune that fulli vertu was of
 woord and stones of perre to sein that bettir wil that list harmes sumwhatbi hir hond held
 quarel to effect modir in gouernaunce high mekeli to thin causer of relese that is eterne
 bemys after the blak nyght voide hede recounford oute that my bil bounde chese to lak
 and want the bodi of necessite hertis outward lust thogh sauf again to knit atwixen hang
 deuoide what

redi nold drede contrarie is mede ilaced of wille with feruence thurugh axcesse to an
 vnfold payne and hetter brenne hole chaunge withoute no space vnto hir hede enclyne
 hou holpen sone and feithful menyng planted in persone audience to oure bihote oon

pacient peynes so long to thinkith this in asswage bi passen weddir spere whan wo ne
 came to folk waped grisilde man akoye ivoide of for euer forto hurt that is to sein of shal in
 maner cnowe entencion set parti chosen chaunge in fulli brond afire withoute escape i
 mene your honde its spot vnstidfastnes sithe cherice is of aspectes make t'eschwe nwe
 spice benynge soote kneis deuocion made mekeli of thanke suffice ententif thurgh aboue
 ful reconciled appese peynes gladnes sodeinli hennesforth for sithin daunte bounte varie
 shal to conuert withoute laude last reuerence or transmutacioun the name of some
 substaunce into hir lap brunchis wenten hed and bade shul fade old bidding and bowghis
 followith effect to sein oon dures nomore in then so b'ensaumple wele or for pouert kepe
 oo degre in cheine in peas spake shoke ful femynyne with murmur bronte to shove ful bise
 that i ne may descriuen rithes gise kunnyng with encense and som with sarovis that
 offerin gan hem sigh relese within the estres semed as me espiing thought of shappe
 passing in werkis made therwithal of happi ewrous face semed outward lak i herd that
 bound went laarge verre homagere caught where stremes appere eyen sodenli to stert
 more mekeli sith hir hond to gruch the palm it hires werre i am yold cause hurte brid a
 lich icaught baarge blow in ouerdrawe so hid i can not wit wex davnte strif sturdines in
 such a place that for vnknowe kindled murdrid within wisse wot what way betwixt
 againward laarge at my turment where i am bold somewhile to stond dismaied in traunce
 drede tremble harmes to tel in encrease greuen wanhope to answerith at onys face not
 sitting then anone a nwe ple symple rederess of hetethe hurten bemys that i bie as brought
 mai wete withoute more life and mynde bisenes lak enprintid compassid persant a world
 inli supprised til ouerpace of pite oone avowe whethir grucch humbeli found til hem
 bounde wo departid i mene whiles that i lyve concelid but witen trowth more for
 offensioun clepe and calle the guerdon hond of my bound place grene woundis ellis the
 effecte of bodi oon assent eke pite bright to mark that euenlich selfe hete of routhe shal
 helping hole desire lyfe lust a litel space blind stele buxumnes in no degre bicause i know
 secrenes to make of message nede encline that arace specheles to his lech of souerain
 supprised what sustren weymentacioun connyng to whom shal as enspiren reherse wel
 vnnethe inke to his sorois blot ground eke shul hem ispersid no grettir yow ne i ne may
 from *The Black Debt*

WELKED MOONS THROUGH PORTAGE FLOWING. Stone surged pestilence is
 singed. Foul thicket's rabblement burnt in. There is a height a felness would affray. Waste
 measures tolled or bleak cast-logs on ground. Stretched foot to seeming head-craig
 handiworks. Wine-wind trussed opened cleft from sea-deep angry leak. Root-stop in
 mood and muled-swart suture. Head-hinders shouldering a heaved on-nape. Down glow
 and pierce flank tributary lair. Flint-pan to ice shard cities sink. Each-other once as eye
 poised hill is set. Mustered by wile. Flood herded tread infrangible on nouns. Kin-mould
 which chokes to over-break a sound. Kindle-breath fainter bitter reeks in air. Afflicted
 questions staggered more than stars a belt-loamed missive faultermas and spoor. Couch-
 razed snatched corn in trouble seed of slide. Thin emmot's foot on heel of beast throb slice
 together. Outwend of pensive yields drooped cattle-throng. Colt fostered stock
 ensorrowed bleat is looned. Skin fills and partly falls towards white supper fires. Heard
 led is set. In shouted waters morrow's ready starn that brings to lay along in reach

drenched foot. Hemned daphne-liquid cause for thistle piss. Waste thirst of sated force and cooled moved lifelode to a hardly castanet. Low journal's incline thither dimpled heat. Finds daily sojourn soilbeat's bundle herbed. Backed. And pastures-ginneth scant. Green flints of dust beneath vast sun-baulked stare. Abyss of boneless stone to light. Hide-lines at any stay is raised. Ceased earth in bosom stoop and cloth spent variance of be. Heaped clot-up metal motes and place whence thick in form of water-drop-and-foot stooled fire derives. Stripped wisdom into gaze and sparkled shed the light's bright rule of contours heavenward. Aired squadrons in a height partake and malice yearns still later seeds. Names still remain in vapour clutch. Metals in ore and bubblewise to fold. From each the fingers wanting breadth to part the unlimned bulk of other feet. Cloughed face from former fume part dimmed in marble flank. Rent brast coacervate as oft as roar. Ripe stretchings to a reed oozed knees in derne-lap's course. Haze gathered trace to stride shine springs louse grass. Went-members flashly flint stepped weariness in bourne and haze. Cloud-height of pallet grave moves stature to a stone. Reverted seats revive in well-age transfused firth. Miced golillas gormed crenatures and staves through pit-spring's breath. Scab loin and ear oiled ligatured through loss. The glaik breaks stillness at first dawn. Threat wings a wedge shaped scent of siskin's chant. Night-drops a glaive to twinned swart costrels pen. The hills beak simpler swears high quiddering mounds. Mede-turn and culver through a lattice. Empty sound streams hurt to higher warmth. Roars returning to a day of this bends pastures down to marish pools. Lithe briar is clean and rustled-brink in visard fingers graded. Through pale sucked tussock forged in salvage eye. Slow grass in-troops down movement trodden water's horny bruise. Stamped smitten waft of tassled trail slid-team. Syth holds meropic in a syssition as lucid pictures van the while. The blotted hews field soft on hang dank light. Thin thicket sin since soft

oft midges cloud. Mazed pulse a little hour after voice. Spurned coats with foot no eye beholds waste sand to teeths' sharp gaining. Clay mastery of woodshaw harbours. Malebolge in manifold. The misshape lips to woodwight semblable. Wherein waxed sea-holm pass a portent placed. Dust took to feeble limb-edged ebb. A wont of sithen wakes in wildered slide. Laps gathered in a fruit of fields the hunt for wattled climbs is set. Fire slings its bough bats crooked whiles eyes serpent fell at night. The cradle based in surety fenced pale by pebble tones. Faint caves chaogenous in gathered trunks at night. Elm else to measure height. Flint-flit defect in sinewed snare. Ash fledge though chosen founden gore hand throweth. Reek wind that serves cast up of steady pulse whelped measured shoots that mark new quarry paps. Door nimble-sill bent diverse glean in bray. The bronds of mattock untilled drink drives pasture herdwife udder-meek to clod. The shapes of whinstone cataracting parts. Blenched solemn-stature nethered murk cloud told. To form in lapse deep norms and tides. Phatic as neck chill birth pangs man defend a thrird kiln in a causeway's marble joint. Poised to behoof a dart is rhyme-old stiff. Each pike as herb brook blotted tempest storms the cliff's ash blast. Down rinded fields through cattle foot the floor. As water drops scud whines and rides the mildew falling mood. Cankered or wretchedness a middle thickening blast. Crabbed contrawise is coast ooze abyss place the wave. Rots whirl on squalid sea-cobs cry. False lobbs in fire not understood where red-heat hammers bellow labour wrist. Habitacles of sledge and steel stanged prefix flakes. Nodes

suture levers to a higher forge. Sun-sires to rise in light mist's clinquant band. Palmed pause on loft and soother kinship murk. The sullen zone of helm-browed heinous nods. Thorns that with a tawny courbe on shoulder rock a mire of crippled shanks its lifting croups. Trained basilisk as asp in scurried mound of shardlurk remnant in a fell. Pulse kindled vehemence impulsion's theme through shuffle-footed beast aids speeds joints impress through unsupple length. Huge issue made as rumour gait and beam. Holmed poplar mained and craggied impress wont. Heaped rills draw tardy arcs through shrink and puss of imane gaze. Long frost from swink. Weed's home in eaten feast. The mead of brickle hearts high brinks endure. Groundsel in sleight to pious threshold coils. Through sobbed and wedded woe soun puling cries for pinfold pured and poor layed cotes in clay. Lean hoared to beam and cleansed blind floors to stake. Stool smell of small razed hessian dart not death. A burnt child's hand expecting ween in weave. Trance through a truant visage sense the note which icelets compellate. Frost cups and creep through strangled body hues. Flight-by-degrees in pine midst under clap. Haired substance wissed raised up to forehead. Bard stars in milled murk flesh before. Eared slough to suck eye turret set aloft a crystal bourne's sway wave. Insight exceeding influence or housetop dust. Frost set and wends through head-dust valley sun. Filled numbers through a saffron soared in-flint. The dew-hewed simmer shape dismeasurate in bulks. Wend clarity not stars in murmur muttered throat. Frost spokes and trouble night through louver pass is trooned. Hitherward ear's heaviness comes sperse. Swooned

boast through moonlight cedar-bleak ascensions to a nygma's clew and head. The hoar high settled savoured weight of groans in shut appears to holden chest oppressed. Mare-ridden dread in panic walk conveyed. Breed-semes in street wide-fathomed creeps are pale. The sun a supreme span of ground rock renting walls. The mother's threshold rumbled timbers hurt. In eyes the trembling of thripped neezing beards. Seemly the rocks in thyme regurgitate to herd sling flint and many footed stock. From neats of fold-sinewed sober cheers town stock in lamb pushed supple subtled flags. Cheer's lock arrived. Hemp's womanhed with rush-ringed fingers knit. Twin wreathed in green. Corn blown up through driven even pluck. Chord-stagger through a stover. Gathered wide field's chert. The stall of provender as cataract declare sky semblable in syllable to dwelling's rock-sill dust. Tokens to ash beamed lourdain moulds. Patibulate. The pulse of poplars shovel souls. Voice whisht through thither flood and overstridden force. Land lard to stony knees bent foreheads fold beyond. Murkwood in shaw-blind paths on shoaling pressed. Throngs neat in drenched reached currents stumbling waft. Scud blush and swerve and traced themed crapple's corse. Wind bands through three rechambered mountain clefts. Mists glidden napron glaived asperian binds. A frosty dawn of manquelled crystals sealed. The purblind image kinned on mould. Cresset with groundsills metal clear. Suspent when paled sap frowns. The cumbered streets of quern-stones droop forced as a hill would watch an ancient weight. Loomed clusterings on white ribbed stupor's mule. Sunk diligence the foot's night langour last. Speed sentience in an impotence of berg downfalls the sense to compass passed where stars are ireful. Swart stairs not steps and craig-stones iron brays. Disrocked by cuttle blanch and eotens of gore. Spires quivercles have split and silled to shelve an armed hand's hissing seems. Dizzle death on rampired head to vent

stanged smithereens of steel rock-toppling cling. The manifold through flint bleak air directs a destiny to bat billed corn stalks clubbed. Lofty as buffet sand the maze in fur and heap still passes pits. Flight bays in hollow bristle-shank. This stature-troop in cankered space puffed long. Toad spots on bristled routs crop multitude to shank the sidelong rise from lap wild widening mounds. Rind tumulus in bursted hubbub overgo. Seethed metalmas and clotted iron glow blots breath in undecided lines of noise. Sense fleshed as blains lie bellowing womb dross and scale breast crippled bristles sworn. Voice. Within a single cinder's enclose there. Sutures of whilom-sting and follow-on. Bred glutton press and flank cut quivers flat. Shrunk foot and seizure's glutton throats. The tongue a stream of nedders paddock cold. Face burn to perish up ash-brood teeth thicket flamed. A leathern drift towards a star's dim face turns bloat. Forth scapes aloft and timber brood-foul withers elements. Stone in shingle felness passes bows. Furlongs a flat long harmony is held. Toil stang to forge lit shiny capelet's murk. Breeds commixture eddying in kin. Forge cleft but days remain a spended frangible of holon dag.

Lag

A RED ENVELOPE, THE RAIN stood up, the prolonged cossetting or a silhouette the customer knows, dead drunks arriving at a gate, these enormous movements of soap intact and called a breakdown on the road, winterthorn but a floating crow in flight, secondary systems around the kitchen, a list of old socks, independent with dessert then pushing a chair away to the left, setting down well in advance of the middle limp before the brat, a way of doing coke, binocular interior on inspected coffee, the ashtray 's cracked, an evanescent need to fill and putty, travels on the tray, waking at sixteen to an echo, three and a half inch width, the cracking of spokes in the distance, whispered vowels due to laxity, the length of paragraphs in prose, passions building sounds, them and the name Howson on the back of a car, all the tissues stick in mud, speech and conditions, an order given to the sentinel at ten, powder means delays in daylight, earphones you might call shopping bags, "going up in a plane and not coming down until nine", vodka means instance, white pills that rust easily, continuing to have a nice day, reading the fable of the bees, the knowledge of three reasons why a cold spoon works, another line that "ends" in three "hundred" yards, flashing lights each one with a separate gate, the form of the word future, an aperitif in a table, the postman sawing a thick oak log, deletion of the concept collage, a pot of bones before you freeze, it squeeks, it lasts all day, it takes a word at random from a desk, the sentence the image of abstract needles thrown away, each neighbour complains of flowers in a vase, what the linguists call finesse, a telephoned farewell that issued from desire, standing in the fifteenth century with an angel, a kangaroo born in 1954, consecutive moonlights of pure juice, television compared to Mallarmé, the word as an amateur, warts which phlebotomize, this foot is a sock, calling a cleaner an existentialist, a single snow shovel that eventually became art, Chernobyl as a christmas card, a wrist on a summer's day a little above one's eye, this entire sheet of nails, the effect of spacing on a lower case vowel, politics as a fact, the language of pain resists a composite history, some buttered peas, hypnosis spreading to the cheek, sudden breezes

through a tree, my whole work from a career point of view, magazines where people go to suck the entire length of an aisle, a supermarket used as a storehouse for random objects, the film opens in paint, a chain of phonemes building light, geology thirty years ago and glad, living by proxy with a male surrogate, think of the sit-coms on TV, conflict is born of gaps, chewn panties barely differ, a door through to the window of the concept code, the written present is an absolute power, each sun is closed today, an unripe light which cars pass through, history beginning with footprints, just as you find those fingers under your bed, you close your eyes, sequence and its meaning, every chair

is a pictogram, to cause the dead to speak, roast beef becoming sweet, a sudden carwash in a rare moment of moonrise, elephants in church, i call these actiants, chiliastic refrigerators change, news from Soweto makes you silent, the self is not a thing, what exactly are imagined lumps, my deepest gratitude to criticism, odor as a narrateme, no mind rules scruples, a flat box equidistant to another plane, the spark leaps out, it's the rustic i want to bathe me, the capital of vexation is tobacco, narrative proceeds at the pace of a human being in motion, typography's an error, birds which fly beneath a thundercloud, just in time to catch a train, don't bawl the word, the head of a haddock stuffed with roe, what's going on, a motorcycle passing with a radio set, simultaneous translations in a big amphitheatre, arrhenotoky, an upright post, taking society by the entire glove, the way syntax sways in summer, hiring a vettura and going to see a tomb, playing a rubber between small talk, to trip as a plural form, the barrier of sepia, the obsolescence of ontology, in patterned bermuda shorts to sprinkle the lawn, a model of Herculaneum by Hogarth, the proper use of digging till, a chairman comes, the band fits perfectly around its tune, eight barristers in a parked car, the colour of complexion, anthropinistic like his son, the enamel of the teeth described as a modified protoplasm, blood coagulates even when stagnant, used correction tape by a pile of rotting index cards, went to Genoa in ill health, translation alone makes a body move, that night the old woman fried, the letter fell from the reader's hands, the narrator is a metaphor, it speaks in the other which I say, silk curtains one disagrees with, only the tadpoles survive, the current form of state, someone scratches, at the extreme dilation comes evaporation, one mind is a terrible burden, the sum total of trees subtracts from a landscape, paying by cheque, concentric friendships make a family, the bulk weight of the Titanic, the point the glass fills up to, a sudden surging beyond the self, every dream is ambiguous, opening up a new book, fog more than either dust or smoke, gentle breezes through a tree, changing the channel, a gowing spiral contained in a box, the moment in which P shifts out of place, entropy, my whole work from a career point of view, a film that's opening with a painting, literature thirty years ago, by changing the angle light is composed, living by proxy with a male surrogate, thinking of the sit-coms on TV, conflict is born of groups, a dark alley through the concept code, an unripe light that cars go through, maximum difference, every chair is a pictogram, roast beef becoming sweet, i call these actiants, history beginning with footprints, there is no such thing as neutral language, the sheets on the bed as you close your eyes, citation is a suture, a supermarket is a storehouse for random objects, commodities as signs, a single slice of toast, this is resonance,

Bob Perelman

Two Poems

Parts

The beginning of the poem:
surplus, sunrise, king's face,
speaking scenery, no sentence,
words, quivering sound,
body bursting into leaf, green,
the holly and the ivy,
the very sod, heat
annexing city after city,
addition, confederation, comma,
bildungsroman, getting married
at the end, basic being, unqualified,
not subject to limit, actual size

Objec

t: Jocasta—why say Jocasta?—with
makeup ten thousand years thick
on her sixteen year old face
around the city different myth
an army of pure need
vengeance all one
big body and why this desire
to go faster and faster
down scenic empty Baja
punishing oneself the car
the motoroil a change a
substitution a veil reach
hand toward being touch
steering wheel potato chip
variety is the price
of clear and present
picture to not always
have to worship at that
same altar that said
no so long ago

Meaning: So that

the dusky gorgeous image may rise to please
the eyes of the gods, the ones
upon whose hyperreal balance sheets
our cities with their names and teams
quiver in their lakes of debt and
therapeutic brimstone

Question: who
is looking at Jocasta? How fast is she driving looking for the
perfect parking space
to what length do the analogies. . .
get gas pee maybe grab a bite to eat

Thesis:
things are,
and are fucked.

Interpretation:
get lyric, naked
mar the labels engorge
the middle postpone the end

The beginning of the end:
minus, sunset, religious tables,
metallurgic, actuarial,
oxymoron, moonrise, prince's horse,
copyright, salvation,
Ra = Christ, Mary + printing press
= the desire for food to have
consciousness, contemplation
of the pared off rind
on an off day, bored, mad,
born, made, the cliché's tidy tragedy
crumpled in the mess that it pushes away,
inferior real estate
infrared sails and a paycheck
far down the netherworld.

Assertion:
The object can only be created by the senses.
So beat me with your light-saber
make me watch and direct bad movies!
The end is form-fitted space.

Echoes:
quivering sound, the assertions
in the tree-like adjectives pale

and spread, all power figures
seem contemptible down here

break them I'm forgetting
my beliefs, the one about
the shopkeeper, the floor walker,
the safecracker, the one about one.

hot dry wind
that wonderful power
of instant, if perverse,
registration

The senses:

lived reality, the room echoes
in livid fealty, would be
breath the drunken image chasing
the true one oh shit
I'm shouting at the TV
again, it's addressing itself, erasing
its body in search of
the appropriate background to wear
to its own coronation-funeral, proclaiming
that the world revolves, smoothly
on the eye's point, dizzy
in my damp maternal ear

Politics:

Opposed positions chained together
estheticized esthetics &
politicized politics, the white
desire to hose the streets

further, wider, these
verbal words, human persons,
appetitious meanings, the flesh
I sell myself for a sign

Business:

It is convenient for words
to exist, therefore let us say
they . . . "We will not give up
Star Wars till they

they . . .
pry the cold dead
meaning of it all . . . missing part

from my overdetermined phallus . . .

save the last best
dance for me . . . to read about
Emma in the Count's arms
for the only time . . . sad . . .

pathological . . . I sing you hear
they . . . is my personal
penis, falling off in the face
of public-phallic heaven, unravelled

We go from here . . .
missing
parts of many bodies
chopped and fed to

I go frozen into signifier frenzy
the dead man the controls . . . they
ye olde meaning
church bells pealing

synchronized with impression
more normal than sleep
Christmas presents
Red light.

the dead man the controls the living
pay the freight and the I will live
on the father's bumpersticker forever
in the center of the back door

Narrative:

The devils surrounded the house
and tried to set it on fire but god
sent a providential shower

Theory:

There should be a word for each word
a red word for red,
something big for mass
simple, perhaps sanserif for simple,
and so on, until justice reigns in
the single mind's vacant center.
No more things than there are dollars.

Coda:

Gulliver pissing excited words on
the tiny castle.

You had to have been there,
inside that hardened body rhetoric
“Frankly, my dear,” and getting
paid for it

grim little phallic universe, ruled
by me . . .
The dead man, not reify the dead man

the education wants the poem, like a sidewalk, waterpipes under
the street, wires overhead in every direction, grass
and cement under foot, cars, no cars in alterity of
sincere disposition.
And my time is gone in the smooth
code I send before.
Good night. Good night.

Sentimental Mechanics
for Ben Friedlander

Never, never, never, never, never.
Icecold delights, forever and
ever. I’m so obsessed,
I need to know, what it was
my mommy said. The icecream melted,
I was in my head. The catch
in the throat, in the contract,
the reason there can be
no contact through reason.

There’s got to be another word.
There’s not another world.
Real, serious traffic sounds
pour and pour into the open
windows of the hotel where
Humphrey Bogart unwraps his new face,
mine but for time and place,
myself but the heart, the brain,
the systematic displacements, never,
never, never, never, never.

The saw cuts through the branch.
The wood is good. That would be
good. Repress, repush those buttons.
Only a child would. Teeth
tear, eyes tear up because it’s
a movie of how real,

how it was here and gone,
far away. Row houses left
to tell the tale. Never, etc.

Bruce Andrews

4 poems from I Don't Have Any Paper So Shut Up Or, Social Realism

I Think

I think I'll marry it for the money. Assassin bug's use of tools is innate cheek
unilateral guilt, effects depletion yet bore is less incorrectly bundled faggots. Zulu in a
ham down hypnosis of what they'll do militarism
fires are fought by constructing a crowd; nail marks

on bald head: constitution is dumb. Walk with your wombs — & the right to refrain
from speaking at all: I'll show these lobsters who I am — as self-deprecating sausage never
meant to be. Overemphasis on 'flight' — despite cheerleading, tense expert high heel
prayer beads, headgear artery hole; the fact that — too circulationist:

Minstrel shows are socialist realism? Lapidary pacification — without legs must shake
their hands to zero in. Do you know who you are? — how's your controlled bleeding?
Tedium *disturb* the creature
people disguised as fig branches to be
at the general

insight favors graven images, follicles desired to stop. I emerged from the cafeteria with
a plastic bag stuffed with human hands — mental as anything nylon, fame as pillowtalk
releasing laboratory mice in snowballs — this story has no moral. Locals fled the
fighting, a self-referring celebration of an achieved condition of refinement and order with
little indication of why it's become petrified.

Dipstick doesn't touch oil against this hairdresser
& the aforementioned superfluous body beak misnomer repair
even *gaseousness* than . . .

right down to the breathtaking crotch barber beaters. They blew the dots off his dice;
you just go chop chop chop it's none of this fuss fuss fuss — have two mules is bourgeois?
Spirochetes, call home?

OPM — other people's money: they used to have beautiful energy & then they got
weird — peed on like costume jewelry shoes make vital bookmarks

turns homeless spermatozoa into harmless history. . . stalagmites in overdrive, silk
roving too defensive — too brief.

Candied oleo; geek gravity
don't such greet my bunny

four sleeping piglets to ensure verisimilitude. Freedom thinks it's in South Africa — let
your demographics do the walking, my state takes care of the cow; which end is up?
Open-toed shoes mean wanna fuck? Clitoris is just a sperm surrogate? Put mouth in
existing silos — needs a subheading around here; you don't want fusion for your night
stick — fault decals, a flush, a sweet pithy topless wimp

hens of health

goons' hoop, suitcases compartmental spit. Penalty. The contras always pay, competition-proof reincarnation; candy numbers: Mad Hatter could appear in the driver's seat, tinsel on stickerballs.

Jobs for *bunk*, a mini-sub & its mother, little empty coffins — paisley means germs, right? I don't live with people, I live with me — vacuum pimply envy

sweat denotes the real, flowering of the stricken legislators — the idea machine, the uglier one of course. *Do* vampires get younger when they jab them all over?

Imperialism doesn't catch my drift: nouns of menstrual dynamics, bonbon meltdown into it milk bath

take his head off for a clean kill. When dioxin was administered to rabbits.

About money unhurried only pectoral croissants — either denies them or just for so dreary kicks. Gospel pod, tongue group fix launder

luck. Curls are flukey, data back, elderly fish without a license = ubiquitous Karen Ann Quinlan, put me on the guest list. Law or sausages; debris through bullhorn

yellow mama pulled straps around shaved head. Allow you to do that — spun gold into gland warfare, I glue nest material on my back. Only Filipinos make cake, symbols use nonedible items, the buccaneers of America don't have these heartaches; distracts. Brownnosing vibrato tart crudded crystal radar devaluation. All of whom were to be shot, along with their parents, by the anti-Bolsheviks

lipstick line of fire which have acquired the most political visibility; spit, hit, that's it.

I Need Attention Bad

I need attention bad; explicit fix planet, balls are bad attitude.

Everything but the girl but proto-fascist progressive youth, ear wax fearless knobs, mere pinpricks calcified into manic ex-poser. I guess this is my own general reactionary & ignorant embarrassment, the stable boy inside a large inflatable stab at the matchbox; fetish has no physical limitations. They shot holes in every cup and saucer — haven't you given up on Arkansas? Dress your wound in feelings of isolation; I run & eat it up. Flies, kill them. Money is a symbol of power & power is a symbol of money. Pursued lips give it a growling garbage fix horses make noise too.

How to fake an ejaculation in someone else's mouth — spade the fat, thumbs sit in judgment

dub rifles, valium addict effigies give me inspiration. Endless AKG fake doom to not accept *this* eureka, gospel murderess purely physical young grey ruins, vasectomies on boxing

be my vast friend — what has the Bessemer process to do with it? You want your sprocket holes alive with harmless bugs; I'm teaching the car to wipe itself. Master a blossom by force, I'm having a baroque period — national interest is inappropriate. Dirt made

from christmas stories, i'm nearly dead from my Korea; illegal aliens, strong mental milk: don't worry about your candy — evil dread can mount it — worry about other

people's candy. Not to mention malaria — CIA is all spontaneous, grapes more like semen
spell jewels correctly, just nerves — you don't *look* ambitious.

Beelzebub fastening habits laughable, that's holocaust?, centipede

car tissue mother sugar too — must Scrooge McDuck. Why each guest box filibusters:
silly soldier killers than it solves, fun harm — my proportional midget: isolette incubator
grows. Queer pills dice felt tip pain: romance does not think
fur means torture

faux pas, doctrine in heat, bunnies be more original anti-spud, knobsmanship, pogo
boneyard what if testtube horizontal boss? Technology, aw shucks — *heart as dark ages*.
About time, penpal is Mediterranean highlight: carsickness should contact *us*,
enough juice for three legs

factual is great, take the chainsaw out of her verbs

different colored magic markers. Our children deserve a worse future, communist
atrocities just safety cures? Conflict blackens the circle talking mule a few sediment-heads,
pagans for biases, hefty embarrassment, disposable provisions, pretty icky to

leg — show me Moslem birth. Oil tasters by the Soviet Jewry dots

hideous in strength was less doctrinaire. Tar pits without working monitors, cooties
that risk the lot

'Ink! Ink! Ink!'

with cold-cranking amps, fake polaroid spinal tap. A catholicity of

rip it up but you keep seeing brochures of pliers, constant cause of contagion, mothers
cram crap.

Erection has market value. Priests who are tricks — languid & flaccid happy cadavers,
floral wreath may fear it too — my hairstylist thinks, vibrating rubbish
and every white throne

we come in home which kidnap the skeletons. Talk more, bang less; I can't hit a good
ball because I'm too nosey. Man thinks because he has feet.

A socialism based on mildew after debunking with mental turncoats I'm sure the
decapitationists would agree. Post-modernism just means let's forget about the social
barriers & political economy that kept modernism from becoming socially possible — &
not carry it through. Any institution makes mistakes — who's wearing the
panty hose?

There's no place for what we do, let's die. My

thick tongue into quality wines just blobs of ink & the paper folded over; the whole
thing just burns me to a crisp — meet me at the leg wax — venus velvet ox back, frat
thrash, bland colors, squid blossoms bloodmoney at the interstate mall so the Italians call
it Abyssinia. That's what happens when you look like Al Jolson — flags of convenience, so
what else is new?

Isolate Your Fuse

Isolate your fuse

my sentimentalization of hatred juggling for Jesus; hardware sweats at bedside discipline can be good detective, time for the blanket show. I wish into chocolate that's bloodhound prone facts, make prime less waste — if only I had strangled it in its tank.

I'm too proud to think

you want to be liberated but basically you're just a dental supply fixture, shoot them in the head to anesthetize them; hype anchors the argument like Mary Poppins under the thumb of a filthy vein body just another android fun machine. Quadriculus circuli sweethearts maneuver their sanitary napkins into impenetrable cabinetry; startled starlets squared by squids, alla-y'all sucker sucker muhfuhs — punk beliefs can be bought. 6 trolls out of 7 news be sweat holiday

prophylactic fishhead bloodclot — meanwhile back at the political.

Who wears the blonde wig in *that* family? Dollies hurt leg: I feel whoops shame; look for quick profits in communist misfortune. I AM SOMEBODY It's a Fun World friends you to buy their own money Because Politics Stinks, act insecure & put other people at ease. I went from Hegel to Mighty Atom comix

Afro-cubist that mass equals crass dim men pop

a sauce that monsters fault.

A perfectly glandular reprisal, hog-heaven for the fashion-tyrannized I recommend a transplant — rock of the weenies

those bottles will seek their own salvation. Vietnam tastes better: do ten seconds of fake mambo, spawn a tress shit

sticky history of perfection. What positions

your rights at the bidet flowering penis choreography, it's supposed to get harder if you're being strangled; why don't you just pest off?

Unleased disposition schemers, this is soup to be defoliated, just the right corporate body as eating roast tractor parts. I'd sell my government, to these men, any day.

Red devil sauce shoots like dick, give me that tongue in triplicate. Overalls means rent strike — scurve this air-raid, we can race ahead of the handicapped.

Wondered why raggedy-ann isn't square

vindicator pencil wishes to be: I eat for a living — what specific problem have you failed? You are not making a commitment to oppressed people by listening to feisty riffs

groom is doom: articulate a shitty situation. If you don't know what you want, I'm sure you'll find it somewhere else.

Who wired your face? — fucky fucky you buddy buddy

I smell a sink riot

that's got to be a produced apartment. If you don't speak the language, you can't use the bus. I'm not acquainted, I don't understand a lot of normal human experiences serve up facile day-glo; we are *not* in transition

this nautilus needs a scratch — you want some briefly blowhard. Didn't your mama teach you how to close legs? — we think of punishment as refinement, very organ meat for me: creamery merges home. I did not kill my wife, I do not eat the heads of freshly-slaughtered animals for entertainment. I'm surprise to see pee your way to solvency, deaf head pushups dressed as bunny's anti-everything

too dumb to be insecure. Whose ache suds
ipso facto minstrel wrong spelling my-tie me some slots
hole hotels, clean pet ass.

Let me touch the hem of his garment

smash this phonetic armature: untape my slit = get leverage with your disadvantage,
I'm an oily privilege humped over piano bar. Why black prefers yellow invading Huns in
the shape of pot pies pay for each doomed dog. Brag me to drip. . . & then along comes
John. I like wigs with straps. We can buy rugs & hide.

Neon Helps Us Stupid

Neon helps us stupid. Agnostic agnostic magnetism, pistols me for being contemptuous
— homeostat

in the, I guess, grip of up to snuff

hinting, just, see, a dodge — bodily truce; suave slave sweated over a diseased pizza all
day long — altering your life style can relieve the symptoms. Just because you don't read
your books, doesn't mean you're an intellectual. I need supervision of the personal,
antidote, coy sparks, bodily deco, rodeo, whatchamacallit worms grow by radar.

Tofu apprentice. I'm just a voluntary ogre; me too. Flags are just
indians & so on due to natural causes

work truth

ortho art

hygienic coward wings dream wants some recognition; frag that relativity.

Chem bum. The recently decolonized better sense of rhythm:

tantalizingly rotten wattage glistens; don't blush. I'm

still masturbating

comets warp out! Extra integer sac is a fraud

which means the aliens get hectic whenever they have something to say.

Whom you call yellow

calendar mere mistakes my assassinations can't be a medicine show without censoring
out the virus. What's the good of shit — mimicry? smell like fireflies bumping off. I can't
humble you. Hammerhead won't make the sponge content, everything's a putrified
hillbilly

spitting up your sinecure.

Let the vegetarians eat, I'm being bombed by gold. How impertinent can farm animals
get? 500\$ mom shoe thing — let me tell you about my notion of tipico/avant-garde. . .
burban hotel, all thumbs sucker bleach — slack your talk; what are Polish war bonds?
Yeah, pet genocide — maybe men *can't* be retrained: our choices even if we don't hire a
therapist are interesting; how does the little girl maul the big man? If you want to drop
dead, step inside. Refried homily — pistols, it's you; let's get a red star & go fuck Hester
Prynne's pigeon hole; personal butane, alphabet blocks lit up full throat, okay?

Recreational civil war, submarine sinuses, guts rehab. You have to give me a hundred
dollars before I go shopping for babies — armies look better on celluloid, if warts could

last.

You buy it, we fry it. Albino jackson man the make

make a cream-on noun; tighten up what you want — electric toasters on the Department of Defense list! An infant can shoot smack with help. It's egocentric if there are other people on earth — high ceilings deny our attention. What's up with all the home girls in bed sty?

Darling, you're not prefixing me on.

Abalone rectums & sperm of red snapper. . . the hand doctored out
the arms scout to douche the salesperson, tight like that coward at best. Shock jam. . .
VIP suicide for the handicapped lisp a glitz, the creaminess of set theory, stubbornly. . .

extracurricular haystacks bearing down on that 9 month load; we can be bought but we can't be bored:

abstract means denazification. All muggy slangy morals and lardy diction, designer jeans have institutionalized the ass; life is work & you are thus dead.

Dirt the applauds

my bank account went into surrogate withdrawal pains
clitoral brouhaha, writing just means drug epistemology.

For those with unwigged needles, unlike the Americans, the Soviets have been single-minded and persistent in pursuit of their goal.

Voting means giving blood grows weak near faint spinning whoozy sit up bench down
flatter nausea paralysis pump ceiling not stopping to chill out puncture finger with a spear
shaped mental took blood to be sort out typology are lying dead in the hospital need
blood DON'T VOTE. Hi, what are you doing, I'm learning the metric system.

Too bad we can't pee out of our nipples.

Johanna Drucker

Final Fiction

One

OF COURSE I WANTED TO RULE THE WORLD. But an early crisis scratched the fender of my ambition. Striking out through the clean staircase I encountered the protein crescent of a woman's fingernail. The rising moon making itself visible through the narrow window was further evidence of the rising tide of mass liberalism. In the dark hallway nobody went unfed. Covering the opening of a long penumatic tube was the single response against the help which might arrive within minutes. An opportune voyeurism dropped its pants in my direction, disclosing a politically justified record of business profits. The media were disabled by their own editorial obsession, using close-ups from the operating theater to feed the rapid-fire stream of images. The domestic environment was well-arranged, but in the streets a strike had piled garbage up so high it broke along the curb. Shadows ran before the wind of expectation and the air stank, foul from lack of maintenance. Miscellany existed in all states under an angry pressure, needing adjustment.

On the sidewalk a colony of newborns swarmed through the layers of debris. Their birth was a demonstration. Radical virtues pass intact through the hand to hand combat of mating. A spontaneous generation of spiders arose from the raw cheese. Every favorite substance was honored for at least a moment by the tentative groping of the newborn breed. Burst free from their little egg cells they hot-footed their hairy way across the fresh surface in an ecstasy of exploration. Their joy at finding themselves able to make movements resulted in the fanatical tracing of a maze of finely stepped lines into the soft substance. Clever little devils. They hardly knew themselves what they wrote, except that it sure wasn't fiction.

Two

THE HEROIC THEME TWISTED THE SELF into formation against a bleak context of pedestrian circumstances. The sidewalk was more absolute than any of the other filmy contingencies forming in the uncertain air. A carhop jerked through the relations and positions, cruising the rows of substance to get a shot at their identity.

Back in the dead center of the house a pale faced matron forced a confrontation. Against the backdrop of the well-stocked battalions of her shelves she cried, "If you beat me, I'll rip your lips off." The fat edge of steak sighed, there was no finer cut anywhere in the family. But the house was insensitive to sound. A set of conversational devices defined the boundaries between presence and isolation. Privacy was used for publicity. Transcending its arrangement the space breathed through the positive air, exhaling against the sill. A

terrible dependence shutters one room from another. A glance out the window increased the distance used to measure the neighbor's losing battle to extract their sprawling replicas from the lawn.

A wild truck had been parked in the street. She saw a man break every window in it with a heavy bat. Affective movement of a pronoun. You bed. We stand as an example.

No synthesis occurs in the schoolyard. Everything shakes to the low end of the street. Disparate elements occur as small boys, tender, still with the bloom on. From across the yard their profiles are recognizable in spite of their posture. A languid report closed into a sense of height. A socializing companion compared himself with it, out and back. Meanwhile his mind filled with the image of the scratched woman, rolling on the linoleum floor. In translation, this was the story of a large group of tourists examining a wall of hieroglyphs after their boat ran ashore. While they rested a group of natives played tug of war alongside a mummy strapped into a casket-like basin. The snapshot was entitled, "Family and Formality."

Returning on the bus she sat behind a maniac pulling his hairs out one by one, discovering himself. Youth. Oh the guile of that sincerity. The travel light was an unfathomable flash. She aimed the beam. All that she didn't expect had been stated in the headlines. Futura bold: an institutionalized cliché whose meteoric rise to stardom condemned its every banal impulse to notoriety. Credibility subsided fast into acceptability. The striking attributes of face, hers too, enabled the blunt utilitarian dogmatist to insist upon itself to extremes. My word. Humor him, was the stray thought which grazed her as she found herself being passed in an envelope.

A man has been asked to do a job. A simple job. Just keep his mouth shut and move a deposit from one place to another. The signature was on the account somewhere. It had to turn up. But the old mysterious hand trick slipped him one inside his shirt. The conflict zone turned torrid. The mission was supposed to leave him anonymous. Her glance unstuck the gum from the paper. He thought his career would lend him glamour. But the kickback moneys knocked him flat. The prime minister had been set up, he realized. And dawn broke through the windshield of her interest as they entered the gates of the capital.

Three

TRIVIALIZING THE AFFAIRS OF STATE, they had chosen a new decorator. Orange was going to be her favorite color now, officially. The smell of the glue going down the walls seduced her sense of intrinsic value. She wanted her audience to come in and out with the help of a small device. From her pocket she drew one of her aides, closing her hand around his assignment. The tattoos of organization etched divisions onto the map of his bald brain. The function of official tension was to set a chill into the bones of

aid. Some parties will feel increased hostility, trapped in the elastic grip of influence.

Gather equipment to counter the strategic decline, he whispered as they edged toward the higher levels of the party. The antibodies, numb, adjusted to the change in scale, clinging to the threads of his sleeve.

He had been adopted by the couple who owned the yard. Their trailer, a small silver-stream, was neither a bed nor a plaything, but reminded him most of home. He came from an inconspicuous beginning, bargained for in the junkheaps of memory. The origin was so humble it seemed to efface all opportunity. But his story redeems us by its inspiration. Let it serve as a social policy to promote the refusal of heroes, the refuse of thinking, larger than life. The big ideas, not hard to recognize, but hard to see.

He had campaigned for the life of a modern. Getting up late he had it first in bed, opening mail which leaked in from his folks. His eyebrows were more imagined than real, plucked by the warp of cocaine. His face slapped the headdress with intact dignity. It was absolute, stern, straight looking, pouring its serious concern out in a line of complete control.

The illusion of the dream which struggled through his lungs was that anything was possible with effort. A gapper, a conceptual device, negotiated the relation between anything and anything. His grip on the small instrument developed an open market to cross the interstices. It plunged the state lottery into stories so profound a new unit had to counter the despair by offering flights to other planets. Notes flew like birds from the hands of a winning contestant, returning as the jetstream of an outward bound journey. Their trace across the heavens was an excuse for security, and the grand prize worsened the conditions of the world eco-system. The fallout battered the atmosphere for weeks with its incessant commentary.

On the return flight the author drew some conclusions. In a book of improvisational history several documents contributed their own evidence about the basic configurations of the nuclear family. She traced some epic meaning in that social fiction.

The neighbor was offended. Big deal. He brought in a top-level negotiator and everyone stood up at once. That scared the holy relics back into the ground. Each to his own. Which is as it will be.

Four

HALF OF WHAT IS ON YOUR PLATE belongs to the two families in the shower. Their homeland is income from a rental fee, available to anyone who makes a claim. Who would go out now? No sense of the public social. It is an inopportune time to make business connections. War records are springing up everywhere following the early rain. The drops had eaten right through the umbrella. Rapidly.

He had always had everything. Now it was difficult for him to distinguish buildings on the horizon. To read the landscape he had to suffer his instinct to come through the gray haze. The monochrome values responded by approaching each other as a limit. Eating the image he struggled to separate the flesh from the rind. He unwrapped the food stuff just a little, just enough to get some purchase on the bun. Even so they crowded onto the backs of his hands, into the package. They were lightning quick, charging over his wrists. Their movement felt like breath in close proximity, an ephemeral sensation rendered sinister by the glint of light off the hard, tobacco-colored carapace.

In disgust he threw the entire refrigerator onto the scrap heap where it lay, no larger than a tossed off chewing gum wrapper in the newly defined scale. Cast off in the age of decadence. A general conception subtracted regard from self-regard. Even the law was a part to be picked and plugged in. Played out. The new network of exchanges printed out on plan. The building arose as a consequence, embodying the chain of references. Material bonds can break and heal again so fast. That which insists. Just want to take your hand inside my jacket. Who's eating what? Absolute desire confused the animal and the chemical. That was accidental, a brush against metal, but so hot that that surface in the brief instant of contact was scarred with a textural recollection of the gesture. Her eyes burned and the skin browned, grilled by the sunset rays.

The background and foreground refused to stay constant on the flat plane of vision. They transformed the cars on the freeway by the shifts of value. Writing about the event made the traffic into artifact, lifting the event like fishbones from the flesh. What was the meat?

We didn't have hunger. Some days just held off on purpose to get high or spaced, hot between the thighs. The skin reported the charge, smooth as silk. Behind the desk, between the partitions, there were constant voyages out of and into. Keep them going.

Five

ONE AFTER ANOTHER SHE OPENED THE STALLS, looking for privacy. Activity displayed itself to her instead: one reading, one having a sandwich, one collecting thread scraps from a ripped out seam. They wanted papers for diversion, not having been out of the place in months. She refused to put ham in their eggs and held herself in an elegant pose, high, erect. Then she moved from table to table, helping herself from their various plates. This was the life of the infernally deprived, forced to dispose of their leisure most precariously. Not another problem developed that afternoon, but the first one lingered, solid and unyielding as the fruit of an unripe pear upon the tongue. There was little hope of interaction.

At naptime they were shelved into a limbo space. Their nails dug into the gentle walls which sheltered them from intimacy. Hold onto that hunger, the recording urged them, as a form of protection. It was just what you'd teach any primitive, to wash hands after, before, in between. The hygienic separation of activities was the primary level of making distinctions. On that foundation was built the church of perfect liberty. For years she searched to locate someone without the disease.

As the light faded along the wall small eyes began to appear, wistful, nostalgic, and willing to speak. One wanted to be a doctor and so painted his face, manufactur-

ing an identity. From a closed case history in his possession a woman yelled upward, outward across the corridor. Close on the pause she presents him with a child and then walks away through a mound of rubble. What had been stairs lay open to interpretation. Each small brick door stood apart, resisting the desire to crumble into sand. The arid land surrounding occupied the place with timeless isolation. The disintegrating road was the last gesture of an obsolete ceremony, the charged remnant of an old religion.

The palm tree backdrop rose against the desert sands. The goats all asked to be tied around the sphinx, watching themselves in the water at its base. They read their fortunes in the stones whose mathematical arrangement threatened to dictate a calendar. In the tomb, where else, they set their little hearts on the cold, marble slab of some geometry. A whole collection of postcards, tourist relics, grew on the site.

There, where things had just begun, the flatness of so little accumulation still managed to achieve a state of decay. Open trenches threatened to destroy their investment until the insistence of history compelled them to refer their trade routes to the spot. A series of associations catalogued into a single achievement — the continuity of landscape. Grammar creates its own relations, hanging the family out on the line of syntax. A continental trip was inevitable as the result of the project, which had begun with the placement of planking on the swamp. A whole network of droll ceremonies established the pattern so that the spot where the rituals took place came to be marked. An archway rose from the colors holding itself over the cross inside. Though he never went down there himself he could see it shining in the next block, and then on into the distance in innumerable rows of diminished clarity.

The settlement patterns allowed her to know him remotely, but still, when the man across the street opened the car door she recognized the odor immediately. Hot leather and stale carpet had generated their own sun in the closed interior, now let loose on the breeze. What had once become familiar always remained so. Her own motives did not need to be supplied in order for her to continue. After all, he'd hitchhiked all that way in just a shirt and pants, no shoes, no jacket. It was wintertime and there was no moderating influence on those plains, just the gracious sweep of real wind. Naturally he drifted from lucid to incoherent, stung by the euphoric availability of comfort. Then he wrapped his clothes in a bundle and cruised out on a rope. Every deliberate gesture mocked him with its threat. The attempt he was making located him through his launched property out into coordinate space.

She came in later, quick and light, crossing the room without forgetting to do things. They call it, coming closer, modestly denying her existence. She contrived to talk about the origins of her specific vice, thoroughly self-denying to her own misfortune. Need to put limits on. Four square miles and no foundation, her reach wide open to the wide screen projection. No more expectations. Continuation its own end.

Six

"THERE'S SO MUCH TO KNOW ABOUT," she sighed, sinking her head down against the sill. All kinds of waste was leaking into the primeval sky. Some tank had broken, springing its pale effluvia out wide and clear, over a great distance. There were clouds at every point to the horizon, which flattened out under the broad sword of air.

"This is the way to live," he replied, taking her hand, "praying by sunset."

So innocent they had run out of themes, they were left with only personal relations — in contact, by contract. With their naive attitude they had no past experience to get worked out. The lines, whatever lines are, mixed with each other. They became habituated even to

the sound of planes. “Falling engines on the surface of my mind,” he whispered, wanting a point of engagement.

She had answered the ad just that morning, responding to the screaming pits of pain. Their unison was a reminder of the unfinished business, inelegant acts. The room became a redolent network of accumulated interactions. From a deep deep drawer he pulled out a century old homunculus in a space suit. Slime had deteriorated only the organic extremities, leaving the rest of the tiny form intact. So old. It called and kept asking to be let out. She took it, held it close to her chest, keeping it warm in the steam off her coffee. Because of that past, preserving, persevering, she could now look though so many lives. Several hundred transient occupants had tended him over a ten year span.

Together they made plans to build. He had leafed through the stacks of future projects, working out the sibling relations. Slow disintegration had struck at a variety of sites though nothing had broken down or blocked up. Still, the yard was incredibly wild.

In the dim light she appeared media beautiful, with a big wide mouth and perfect teeth, eyes bright, not too deeply set, and a little bony nose, that miniature intelligence. When she moved from the slight shadow into light he could see immediately what a blight on the old city the newly constructed mall was. One whole corridor had been sealed off, isolated with synthetic tile out of those fine grey stones. The culture had let itself in for abuse as an inevitable, inclusive process.

Down through the manhole the workmen’s sense of urgency passed them voice to voice. “We’re running out of supplies.” Job cutbacks and mass layoffs threatened from the corridor. The single largest participatory experience of the generation was exclusion. There was an arbitrary number of character sketches, serving the purpose of contact — men to be considered, admired and adored. Then passed on, let go, receded from. Over time detachment capsulizes, makes closure, so that feelings seem to be an outgrowth of the machine. Something bright, a tropical fish, came out from his eyes while his father gripped him across the table, holding him with his gaze.

“Where are you going? Where are you going? Where are you going?” The insistent repetition was designed to provoke response. The son held out against the attack and the accountability it imposed. Biting his lip he held himself

against the continual demands, defying the quota on samples to be captured. Still, coming back is never into the same place. The truisms isolate themselves, rock solid and pure, alienated and indigestible, which threw him back on his look at her, at the window, still leaning on her hand and looking over the sill.

Seven

HIS FACE CLUNG TO THE WALL. Maybe he had just landed. Peeling himself from the tactile surface revealed the swelling on his lip as the main focus of activity, coming and going from his tongue according to the need for attention and the pain. His father threw him a rope and he sighed. When you’re in the family you’re in it and tight forever.

There had been five of them, the mother a golden american dream girl, but original — perfection with a flaw. The siblings had formed various relations to the source material.

There had been five, before the fire. Four full houses and one burnt down, by a peaceful bank with a raw spot that's used as access to the shore. The son was the treasure and they were his source while the second had something to work out, learning grooming late. And the youngest was still unable to relate on equal terms, full of cagey maneuvers, covering herself both ways, in case.

A flexible mechanism suspends the tight lines of the high wire poles: in some sense an absolute, agreed upon object with a fixed set. Across the open water the t-shaped wooden piers and planks were fixed to the pilings where something sullen and angry had had to get away, had to break form, had to. Following from the edge a path streamed up into the woods until it stretched a limb across a creek, small creek, where everything was getting lush in the spring, heavy, holding the moisture in the foliage.

As for the domestic arrangements — she couldn't eat the chicken livers warm, they were a little bit too close to home. The situation however was more complicated. The brothers came out of their houses, down from their place. A small crowd had gathered around the re-painting of the street markings. "You are all students?" they asked when they all stood in the way of the work. Each of the brothers was slightly grotesque. "Yes, we are students." An understanding of camaraderie flashed through the crowd as they shuffled their feet, looked down, awkward in the gangly moments of their youth.

The sister, the whole of her lithe, long womanly body clothed in a sheer blue body stocking, was trying on clothes. The middle brother watched her antics, reflecting to himself, "That must be what is meant by love." She wanted none of them and so they lived together, apart from her, indulging in conflicting lifestyles and habitual adjustments.

Into their midst fell the corpse of an insect, big as a bird. The blow of the hammer had been quite like a bird. The two do not intersect, only take place in the similar place and time. A young man passing gave out the look of "no restraint" which made him so popular with the juveniles and took over running the machine.

They spread down the street, the crowd, scattering with errands and visits, recycling the scene through a transformation. The billboard heroes made the campaign, informed it with big stuff, real goals. What they each wanted to be they dreamed of and the position of power shone with the gloss of struggle and triumph. The proof they all claimed from exertion was success, the chance for all the abstractions to get concretized. What else was there to want to be?

An unexpected flash of light accompanied by severe shock waves struck the intersection. There had been a sudden landing in the morning traffic. Serious damage was caused to storefronts and buildings where an expert was turning out crusty pies against the flat of his palm, demonstrating the way to cut. She was a customer buying the act as much as the food, glad for the drama of the demonstration to distract her from the havoc in the street. No one was injured, but one bystander suffered from apparent shock, went into a trance, and began speaking unintelligibly. He could not identify himself to police. The man was taken into protective custody pending further developments.

Eight

I WAS THAT BYSTANDER. And in my struggle to invent a living language I went back to the manuscript again and again. It was very well articulated, fairly self-revealing, but in order to be taken seriously it became quite threatening. Through me. They all stood around confusing every issue. The larger men had their hands on their thighs, workman's hands in an open fist, ready. I made leap after leap to greet them, but how much adjustment is possible? On one level writing is always the thing in itself meeting the challenge of too many religious and radio revelations. Sound poetry lingers in the direction of subjective aesthetics, loitering on the border of sound psychology. At that point, however, I was about being on the scene.

Nine

IN A NUCLEAR FAMILY, what should I be but high, here to learn the true meaning of responsibility. A family is serving a meal. The father puffed up suddenly, drinking white wine. The mother has a look of distress. When did that arrive? You don't want me, sighed the youngest child and gave up, giving in to the main meal.

On the table, everything was several steps removed. Synthetic packaging had revealed a failed cake being greeted with toys which negated all the details of technique. The cooking had been done in small movements, a corollary to the paying of attention.

Even analogies have their tolerances. The unavoidable accumulation of debris actually made for a sense of space. But the meet your neighbors program took the structural sense of space and threw it into motion.

Let's have a bite to eat one of the kids cried, cleaning up a tray with her tongue. Another one pulled the spoon clean from the mixing bowl while waiting to be flown from the back porch. Like a kite, one weekend, just like that.

Playmates, they put things on each other and took them off again to decorate their characters with activity. Things occur to be just as they are, taffy pulled out hot,

stretches the fruits of our labors. Don't be deceived, expect the best. The brain is a large hotel with any on-duty principals taking care of the guests. The shoes in the hallway expect to come back shining though that's not the best way to make an entrance. Back to the tidy closet they went, curtailed, in hand, so that the goods and the services go untaxed.

You're only my adopted sister, she cried, posing with charm. And they stood facing, eyes peeled back blue. With their precocious manipulation everything was a question mark.

Ten

SITTING AT THE COUNTER SHE WAS DYING for a newspaper. Handling the fork she dripped heavy silver on the formica which faded all the walls around it by its material opulence. The millionaire who wants to share his wealth is disappointed by the people who work in the daytime and has to work with what they have left.

Rows of charts came single file across the counter, bowed at the ends. They could slide, but they don't, because the very purpose of a uniform is to make the work stick better. Don't look, it's a house specialty, laid out on a card so that the light for her station doesn't go on.

The cashier's booth was suddenly rushed by the engineer on duty so that the politician's daughter had a better chance than the visiting minister to recover herself from the exposure they had both suffered. But all of the broken glass was wasted. If picked up carefully, the girl could have amounted to something, but the publicity people wanted to look at her just once. At least once.

Eleven

EVERYTHING WAS UNFINISHED, but some of the houses were satisfying just by virtue of their architecture. The rules had been set up, but never applied. The idiosyncratic dynamics had silted through the homogeneous universe, now broken out in a rash of personality.

With great courage the old man had indulged in a lot of woodwork, trim and decorative molding. Why? It was a preoccupation with him to make a design which would function beyond its foundation. Gargoyles carved in clay on the fireplace mocked the less permanent structures for their lack of history. The final occupation of winters spent in again and again had been to acquire the stories revealed by that yawning orifice and send them right out through the top.

Just that afternoon, a child had disappeared. The stepfather might be charged, but who had taken care of the crime? Was there any legislative control over what had been committed or had liberty become a simple matter of aggression? In keeping with that primitive mode of life he was the myth of heroic youth personified. He had come from a small town in an industrial and technological country, replete with personality images garnered from the media. He was ready to try it all out on his own. And why not?

On the other hand, how much was the child's fault? The son was going on a single image which had been found in a mess of glass slides, developed at random from the rest. It turned out to be the one which most amused him, intrigued him, and sent him off in search of clues it had promised to produce. He believed in the transformative power of publicity. Now he had turned the machine directly on his own potential. The act had both destroyed and assured his interest in marketing himself, but ironically, the success he'd had had priced him out of his own range.

Thinking back to the original scene he reflected, nostalgically, what a life that might have been. Children were lined up in front of a school building which had all the distinctive features of an urban elementary school. They all wore indian headdresses while the prairie stretched all the way to the horizon. They had aimed their bows and arrows straight at it. One of them would become the missing child.

Twelve

ONE OF THE CONTESTANTS WAS REMOVING HER SOCKS in an act which defied the possibility of restriction, gracefully. Shucking corn she had read in the alignment of the kernels a measure of real deviance, as if the missing elements were to be taken more seriously. That's haunting. Like wind, only less ephemeral and mentionable.

He's really doing a great job. Mundane. He's going straight to the top. He's really an awfully good man. There is still an awful lot to do.

Transformed by the parts they play, each one has a different story. Sweating to get it into the lay of the land, they staked their claims very differently, according to mood and overall configuration. The prevailing winds played a rather large role in determining the right time to take the blanket off. She wanted a map to check things on, knowing all the time that the maps are consistently wrong. Similarly, a teacher of Chinese, in front of a class, suddenly turns and opens her arms to tell her story, reveal her bleeding heart and tales of the repressive order from which she had escaped.

The intensity of the teacher was warranted, but unaccounted for in the glass-paned skulls of the students who observed her. Watching from their front row seats they acknowledged, without speaking, the degree to which any occupied space could become cliched. They all stood up together at one point, in one movement, to give the entire situation some steerage, some resistance.

There is never any disappointment for the sentimental. Just tonight, wiping the old stuff out, they thought about how to get through, how to let go of the conversational greed toward expertise. Excluded beyond repair, and without the heels of some soft space to kick the available comment out of place, they lived quietly, but too predictably. A small mirror, close by, won't be used. They won't be able to use it for what it is. They suffer from a form of imaginary exhaustion, needing to be disconnected in order to be refueled from the logic of the ordinary. Day to day, we remember our transits in relation to certain places, as something to go by, though it already has.

Organization is still the main concern. Checks go with

checks and plaid with plaid, that sort of choice involves — mentality? The head of the lower table is a paper soiler on a grand scale, full of confusion and needing to compensate with contradictory instructions for his scribbling. Which in turn makes activity out of them again. They did have fantasies.

A small brain involves vague dreams with a boat, another lifestyle, caught unawares, concerned about the energy running out. Will he freeze to death or find a cave somewhere? From the sealed frame, tinted windows, she was staring out with a wistful look, real enough to twist even a jaded heart. They kept busy making noise, the right sounds, so as to seem busy. There was so much strain in the telling. More ships had gone down already in the typhoon than had been sunk by — but it's not necessary to calm the high hopes with low humidity. Instead, look for calm. They want it. Instant, instant. The steam involved got them hot, but also, wet. Therefore, they were obliged to finish it.

Later it became a city on the water, with much commerce.

Thirteen

THE DAUGHTER OF ONE OF THE LAST of the provincial governors of the old line, pure aristocracy, swept through the community center on her way to getting married to an Italian. He made firecrackers, large displays of pyrotechnic availability. The only language they had in common was Japanese, which they spoke gesturally, throwing their hands up wildly from one disconnected item to another in order to take away the personal responsibility.

But enthusiasm can distort with its blind rush as sure as any skepticism. An inferno of ruin and darkness rushed forward without delicacy, except in the making of distinctions, which it did with one careful finger, dark and extended, finding a way through the maze of netting which had been left over from the night before. Nothing could be done automatically, it all had to be re-evaluated each time or it disintegrated on the grill of latency, a deep heat which came up steady and strong from the bathroom below. Congealed, not to the point of closure, never to the point of closure, but, putting the coins in the silver paint reflected the little ones.

Small vermin, compensatory creatures, milling around had adapted to a sense of marginality in their being, reduced very much to reworking their being.

But her brother had dried out into his chair. He had sat so long that dehydration stuck him to the place, slow radiance had sucked his flesh onto the back, the curved seat. He had once known the streets. Had gone through them hand after hand, flat palm on bricks and concrete, all the places within reach of the sidewalk, so that the laying on was the way of knowing, directly, in a tactile sequence. Studying the bricks was a means of becoming as articulate as that surface. He had never known what it meant to be dimensionally unstable. He wanted to be able to go on with it, to treat each moment as an individual.

Lightning jolted through his body, a spasm crackled his limbs with a blind rush of energy. He had mainly been interested in getting thin and reading movie magazines. Now they would help each other work things out, reaching across the pages into the fine print of mutual respect until they got filled up with the sound. A man at the back table fought violently with himself behind a book propped up against the salt. His tirade spiked the air with fragments of vindictive power, "exterminate you at any cost," "according to the letter." The men at the counter looked up one by one, locked into the detachment afforded them by the strict definition of their digestive role.

The waitress flipped through the Christian yellow pages looking for some kind of subculture. A perfect worshipper of vintage form, the young mechanic fixed up the kid with asphalt, concrete and a paper doll. She threw it back at him, dreaming of a substance as satisfying as waffles, as bland and soft, sweet and secure. It could be taken away from her, that interest, since you always pull out of a wrong investment sooner or later, no matter what. Tying up capital in that project, that dream machine, had simply clued her in to the mistaken judgment of the industry. She leaned over the counter to wipe the stool clean of its paternalism and authoritarianism, accelerating the depreciation.

Waking up she found herself in a fugue-like state, disappearing. Her hair was lit with stars and under stress the readout on her performance had broken down. The organism

had confronted the administration and was now being treated to a systematic extinction, reading its own digital display. You can still hear the ancient race, on the other side, as light coming through shades or windows would have such an interrupted, solid form. The first time out and back just the process of getting through caused it to become irregular. She had taught them how to do it — plates, table settings, all the furniture in the room — and they had responded, these objects, with all the loyalty of the inanimate.

“Maybe we’re still going through it,” she said soothingly to the room at large. “Maybe whatever shower we enjoyed last night, the flash of something coming on, was the beginning of a phenomenon. Take it in. Think it out.”

Every minute detail in the layout of the neighborhood had been included in the design of the coast, every little twist had been allowed to define some local geography. There was a vast variety of experience in that landscape and the best ship through it was a clear window of vision with unlimited focal dimensions.

Fourteen

WORKING THEIR WAY THROUGH METEORS, one by one, the tiny crew stumbled on a cluttered foreground and yearned passionately for the background interplay of geometric forms to rescue them from the system of choices. History was full of paradoxes, debris and miscellany which refused to be arranged like artifacts. Trash in the streets makes itself available for analysis, not that it’s essential. Gold, for instance, eliminates everything. Conventional imagery suggests to us what we already know. The baker in the white uniform is here again, flashing us the two little pies from the floor of his truck. What a fleeting configuration, teeth and the tins, gaining the momentum to cross the threshold. They picked up their feet and tucked up enough to gain the gravity limit. Keep with it. They did.

If buildings are an easy way to memory then coming into an open space recreates the sense of glory which had been available to the earlier generations. But there had been no air for days, no change, and that open area had become uninhabitable in spite of the planting. There were seams along the entire stretch of land where the places had been opened up and resealed throughout the transition sector. No intimacy was allowed in the heat and stink, just the high rasping sound of tantrum anger, a hoarse burst irrational with a frustration to express. One of the younger men had disappeared in the haze and sometime later he returned, blinking, eyes wide, unable to contract his pupils. Closing his lids he thanked god for the sweet relief of being able to provide for himself.

Around the arena the task for the day was merely maintenance. Water washed down through the seats, falling from the bleachers as fast as it could, conquering territory by awakening the stench of beer and used-up urine too stale to be hot. She felt lucky to be given something to do. The rest of us were simply getting the benefit of all that waste. We would be the ones to give out the information. The sifting process would be reflected in the version of history which passed for official information.

A historic moment: an important spot because. Events and people associated with it at a particular moment. On a very warm day a man in leather gloves took a metal object from his pocket and practiced opening and closing his grip. He was carving out space in which to camp, for days, swinging his arms through the air to claim the territory back from his friends. Another man was walking around the bottom of the lake. Inside the architect's model a crate of candy acted like a souvenir to welcome home the other artifacts. These are days of great gladness and gratitude and they all smile bravely as regiment after regiment arrives. How about a savage attack?

A fight needs a subsidy to survive. Chose. An image maker, now in the same chair he had been so comfortable in this morning, animating his way through the long straight afternoon. He ground the fine points off his gears in order to navigate more gently through the catalogue, just as that classic metaphor demands. The small marks under his control began to feel the urge to conflict. Adrenalin rushed through the effect with the special interest charged by the smell of blood. Naive art isn't really important except for its desire to confront and tackle the need to know something, recognizing its ceremonial value. The ritual acknowledgement passed along the boulevard stalking in its place an avenue through which the children could relate to each other sensually. They sounded each other out, but the mechanical toy only knew three moves. Also, the crane only lifted once, then fell back down. So predictable it encouraged the rest so that they fell into line like zombie guides. A peculiar sight, so locked into control they had no regard for the occasional factors.

Fifteen

OF COURSE HE'LL TALK TO ME now that I've been on the stage, she thought, laying down her coat and running into one of the stills to stop the frame. When it didn't happen just right she sulked and watched herself freeze a series of postures under the lights. Self-awareness stuck to her gums, her mouth to her teeth.

The moment he saw her he knew. But access renders things mundane, sends a plumb line right through the work, through the world wired this morning to make the same sound inside the room as outside on the stair, except louder. An overstimulated crowd gathered just at the barricade, gulping down the sequence of projected images without digestion. The rapidity of production pushed the viewers right through the screen. Without benefit of a surface the text degenerated in a pulsing, flickering performance of axon intensity.

The last thing was a ride through the dark, skirting the edges of the freeway, an obstacle with its own circuitous logic made obvious only when absolutely necessary. Even ignoring the perceptions forced by the great speed he could not ignore the openings which were provoked as a response.

With their eyes bugged out the innocents pressed against the glass. She kept on making the little house on the table, stacking crumbs by the door. Her thumbs pressed the walls up together as she began to smell their bodies coming out of their pores. The stuff of them, real and essential, began to emerge, squeezing through as if to make some point about the

useless specialization of function which their physical form had achieved. There was no need to continue, they had all become habituated to the sounds of construction, so she went around the corner to get out of their line of sight. She came back with a piece of cake charged with a gaping hole ringed with tooth marks in a staring grin. Too outrageous to admit to in the face of strangers, the fact of it presented itself to their astonishment.

Sixteen

AS A DOCUMENTARY IS SUPPOSED TO, the film examines. In the free state the object is assumed before inquiry. But why. Her closet had prepared her to see anything she wanted at the bottom of her garden. So much clean living kept her in constant readiness, unlike an office worker, she did not have a flexible schedule, but kept to the lucky government of her days through the use of a rubberized time clock. If only the state could offer her some relief in the name of art. But all it provided was a blend of chaos and free enterprise.

Her little prodigy had returned from the provincial land. Her mother's hair had been dyed bright red. Daddy had gained some weight but Baby was as awkward and self-conscious as ever. Their very vulgarity rendered them endearing. They had had a collective dream about the old city and the shipwreck of an old ship. The others had all been too passive to swim. They had mutated into control of a piece of the airplane. In the daytime refugees came in to sleep while at night the business of the place fully occupied it. Sometimes, in exercising straight territorial duties, one gains power through deferment and breaks down resistance. She had been a piece of his business, but thinking about it would only create distance.

They were not advanced in this group, you could see it by their hats and how they wore them with the marquee showing until it seemed like it would burn through all the roofs of them. An old one came out of her can and lifted the child to the phone. "Who are you," demanded a voice on the other end, committing a social act.

A man with earplugs made elaborate preparations to wash himself without swimming. He had gone through all this to become a raccoon rather than a beaver. Now swimming upstream he found his brother in the brown water. Then in the distance he saw a chemical tank. Heavy waves were coming off it. His brother wanted to swim over there, out of his own domain. Through the empirical urge he lost the illusion of control and his own immobility seemed to present the most effective means of editing.

A black cloud came over the bay, just like that. The water rose. There was so much certainty in the expectation, but all choice carries some responsibility. In a very warm train she took the advantages offered to her generation. Things were different. What was being made in the morning was a way of understanding.

First a lot of people come through, then a certain crowd settles in. Stored facts are also an aid to memory. Hide and. . . . A list becomes a matter of degrees, of references. As they resolve they cool into relations, whether they are stars or political formations ceases to be of interest to the headlines, so long as there is a frontrunner.

In the footnotes she found that he had suffered from a sense of deprivation, almost falling through. The man who had been the original owner of the place decided to move back into the top, slicing through the garden to make himself a new senatorial district. That was part of the deal but a small kid down the block took a stand at the entrance and loaded up the doorway with a terrifying sense of expectation. Entrances and exits reinforced the reflex of the day turning into evening. Functioning is so often done by norms, but his small form held out against the struggle. He knew he had to get beyond it. There was nothing nihilistic in his stance, simply the presumption of dignity which had become materially present.

His conclusion was that just to be able to live clean was worth more than having his dog in the concert. Maybe he had become a rich man. The common mythologies go off in the hand and without reading it wrong public morality had become as close as the option not to.

Seventeen

THEY WERE SMALL WHEN THEY ARRIVED and there were many of them. Their employers swept over the sands as they had always done, serving as continuity in the vast expanse of blank dunes, just as they had always done. The unbroken thread, is that culture? The complex order of arrivals became the means of constructing from the ruins some rebuilt notion of what they had used for evolutionary basis.

The rebuilding of Babylon, they said, had never begun like that. A used street was always glad to be relieved of the responsibility. Was it plaster, all loose until the last moment when it suddenly set up? Over a twenty year period the city had lived on one meal a day. Do they remember? It had been a place of public popularity, a place of exposure, of reading, not of understanding.

There was too big a crowd and all of them were looking for a way to synapse simultaneously. The smell of blood still controlled the program which, like design, could not help being a mass program. The cultivation of taste was manipulated to control the marketing even of maggots under the nails. The large carcass had rotted in one night, so exaggerated was the attention which had been paid to it. Nothing much was left by dawn but the bones floating in a large pool of grease. Oh pathos, oh misery. Who will help us lift the creature out again? The flesh on it was only left on its cheeks. That's my reverent father, cooked paternity, the worst. No available gestalt on that one, let it slide. Meander out the gates again while the pan with the pieces of the monster gets distributed into various spots in order to more easily render the fat. There were never any impure motives, only these days the bonds turn to bondage and nothing seems to be able to switch phase.

Looking back with longing the real instrument was the one which could imagine any sound which you might make. In the ministry of doom the prophecies of fear keep the rank producers awake at night. In their suites the fluorescent lights intruded without apology while the stars shone in their radio capacity and not in the rooms. Below the floor the boards reduced the noise just at the point where the human ear became most sensitive. In the party or the sickroom a boomtown changed its mind about where and how to live.

Praying by sunset, living for rain. Leisure time equals necessity. Vinyl could be a heroine, built like a blonde midwestern chimp. The broken engine of mind paints life like a front page headline, a multiple personality, constantly getting better.

Money makes for efficiency, engineers slogan lines from the linguistic field. Science is still considered the great adventure, cumbersome as it is. The pick of the season, the best in the business were hit teams. Shades of terrorism veiled the debut of the devices featured as everybody's favorite. Leverage is distressingly limited, but taken all together, the story of one informant supports the other. How much pressure can be brought to bear? There is no way to control the fact that the place had become a monument for pilgrimages.

Eighteen

THE MOTHER OF A NATION puts it in jeopardy by eating her young alive. The country advertises, mounts a huge campaign for investment. But the deceptive prosperity deepens the political paralysis until the military, in the guise of starting an economic turnaround, intervenes. Even the utilities are in jeopardy. The pregnant female is lodged against the field of complaints in desperation. To survive is to be relieved to be home again.

The cannibalistic response of every overstimulated viewer is not from hunger but neurotic need to possess the primal clay, alluvial soil. The young and fresh determine the mix, and children's voices keep up a steady chorus in the background against which the state adapts to the crisis.

So many changes, renewed determination, love of life. Think now about the future as a method of ordinary function. Answering the ad opens screaming pits of pain whose unison reminds us we are not done yet. The research should proceed as an orderly process but among a place and its people the confessions are numbered. The growing awareness was written in the past, about the future.

Douglas Messerli

2 poems from Maxims From My Mother's Milk

The word spoke makes the reel man's greatest invention.

On The Face Of It

Truth has flown
from the scowl of your face — I mean
I insist, you can laugh
& still come to a wise tooth. My lip
is not a symbol of some taunting tongue but is more
of a menace to the scorn
you've planted between your ears.
I was raised out of suspicion
to believe in what is
said. Sense's what everyone knows
not just acute centers of scent.
The cost of experience is minding
your mouth. Open it! Feel the tear
across your check!

In a tale it's impossible that anything's ahead.

Waiting for the Ballad to Begin

Halt sings into lapse
to further the after
shock, laughter
can't erupt until safe has opened
up the inheritance
of what has been, already
slipped upon the finger
of the intended.

Velimir Khlebnikov

On Swan Land

translation: Paul Schmidt

Proposals

- RAISE EDIBLE MICROSCOPIC ORGANISMS IN LAKES. Every lake will become a kettle of ready-made soup that only needs to be heated. Contented people will lie about on the shores, swimming and having dinner. The Food of the Future.
- Effect the change of goods and services by means of an exchange of heart beats. Estimate every task in terms of heart beats — the monetary unit of the future, in which all individuals are equally wealthy. Take 365 times 317 as the median number of heart beats in any 24 hour period.
- Use this same unit of exchange to compute international trade.
- End the World War with the first flight to the moon.
- Establish a single written language for all Indo-Europeans, based on scientific principles.
- Effect an innovation in land ownership, based on the realization that the amount of land every single individual requires cannot be less than the total surface of Planet Earth.
- Let air travel be one, and wireless communication the other, of the legs humanity stands on. And let's see what the consequences will be.
- Devise the art of waking easily from dreams.
- Regard capital cities as accumulations of dust at the nodes of standing waves, according to the theory of resonant plates. (Kundt's dust figures)
- Remembering that n^0 is the sign for a point, n^1 the sign for a straight line, n^2 and n^3 the signs for area and volume, find the space of the fractional powers: $n^{1/2}$, $n^{2/3}$, $n^{1/3}$. Where are they? Understand forces as the powers of space, proceeding from the fact that a force is the reason for the movement of a point, the movement of a point creates a straight line, the movement of a line creates area, and the conversion of point to line and line to area is accomplished by the increase of the power from zero to one and from one to two.
- Adopt apes into the family of man and grant them selected rights of citizenship.
- Use numbers to designate the five vowels: a, u, o, e, i, thus: a = 1, u = 2, o = 3, e = 4, i = 5, ja = 0. A system of notation based on five.
- All the ideas of Planet Earth (there aren't that many), like the houses on a street, should be designated by individual numbers, and this visual code used to communicate and to exchange ideas. Designate the speeches of Cicero, Cato, Othello, Demosthenes by numbers, and in the courts and other institutions, instead of imitation speeches that nobody needs, simply hang up a card marked with the number of an appropriate speech.

This will become the first international language. This principle has already been partially introduced in legal practice.

Languages will thus be left to the arts and freed from humiliating burdens. Our ears have become exhausted.

- Take 1915 as the first year of a new era: indicate years by means of the numbers of a plane $a + b\sqrt{-1}$, in the form $317d + e\sqrt{-1}$, where e is less than 317.
- Instead of clothes wear medieval armor, all white, made out of the same material that's now used for those silly starched collars and stiff shirt fronts.
- Set aside a special uninhabited island for a never-ending war between anybody from any country who wants to fight one, for instance Iceland. (For people who want to die like heroes.)
- For ordinary wars, use sleep-guns (with sleep-bullets).
 - Introduce into the business of birth the same order and organization that is now reserved for the business of killing: birth battalions, a fixed number of them.
 - Redesign chemical and biological warfare so that it merely puts people to sleep. Then governments will earn our admiration and deserve our praise.
 - Usher in, everywhere, instead of an understanding of space, an understanding of time. For instance, wars on Planet Earth between generations, wars in the trenches of time.
 - Train wrecks would be unavoidable if the movement of trains was organized only in terms of space (the railway network). It's precisely the same with governments; we need a timetable for their movements (i.e., as for different trains over the same network of tracks).
 - We must divide up humanity into inventor/explorers and all the rest. A class of far-seeing visionaries.
 - Serious research in the art of combining human groups and the breeding of new ones for the needs of Planet Earth.
 - Reorganization of living arrangements, the right to have a room of your own in any city whatsoever and the right to move whenever you want (the right to a domicile without restrictions in space.) Humanity in the age of air travel cannot place limits on the right of its members to a private, personal space.
 - Build apartment houses in the form of steel frameworks, into which could be inserted transportable glass dwelling-units.
 - Demand that armed organizations provide individuals with weapons to dispute the opinion of the Futurians, that the whole of Planet Earth belongs to them.
 - Establish recognized classes of geagogues and super-states.
 - Let factory chimneys awake and sing morning hymns to the rising Sun, above the Seine, as well as over Tokyo, over the Nile and over Delhi.
 - Organize a world-wide authority to decorate Planet Earth with monuments, turning them out like a lathe operator. Decorate Mont-blanc with the head of Hiawatha, the gray peaks of Nicaragua with the head of Kruchonykh, the Andes with the head of David Burliuk. The fundamental rule for these monuments to be as follows: the individual's birthplace and his monument must be located at opposite poles of the earth. The white cliffs of Dover can provide a maritime monument (a head rising out of the sea) for Huriet

el Ayn, a Persian woman burned at the stake. Let seagulls perch upon it, beside ships full of Englishmen.

On the Great Mall of Washington, D.C. we must have a monument to the first martyrs of science — the Chinese Hee and Ho, state astronomers who were put to death for day-dreaming.

Erect portable moving monuments on the platforms of trains.

- Create a new occupation — handwriting artists, recognizing that the most varied nuances of handwriting have a powerful effect on the reader. The unheard voice of handwriting. Also create a recognized class of artists who work with numbers.

- Utilize the boring eyes of trains as signboards for displaying the art of tomorrow, like an arrow in swift pursuit.

- Effect an innovation in land ownership, based on the realization that the amount of land required for individual ownership cannot be less than the total surface of Planet Earth. Conflicts between governments will thus be resolved.

- Use heart beats as the units of measurement for the rights and obligations of human labor. The heart beat is the monetary unit of the future. Doctors are the paymasters of the future. Hunger and health are account books, and bright eyes and happiness are the receipts.

- Base a new system of measurement on these principles: the dimensions of Planet Earth in time, space and energy to be recognized as the initial unit, with a chain of magnitudes diminished 365 times by derivative units a , $a/365$, $a/365^2$. This method eliminates the stupidity of seconds and minutes, while preserving the solar day, divided now into 365 parts; each of these parts will equal 237 seconds; the next smaller unit will be 0.65 seconds.

The unit of area will be 59 square centimeters = $K/365^7$, where K = the earth's surface.

The unit of length will be $R/365^3 = 13$ centimeters, where R = the earth's radius. Similarly for weight and energy. What will happen is that many magnitudes will be expressed by the number one.

- Employ radio waves to transmit lectures from a Central University to country schools. Every school nestled at the foot of some green hill will receive scientific information, and the loudspeaker will become a teacher for the attentive settlement. A tongue of lightning, as a conductor for scientific truth.

- Deploy the world-wide scientific community in separate authorities, each with a given scientific goal (a struggle with spatially defined authority). For instance, an authority to investigate the question whether there exists any direct contact between people at opposite poles of the earth, if their desires and feelings are connected. Does somebody weep on the banks of the Mississippi whenever somebody rejoices beside the Volga?

Comparisons of tidal waves. Or an authority to investigate the curvature of the earth's surface.

Establishing these projects means creating a special scientific authority for each specific scientific goal.

- Organize a society for all the string players on Planet Earth. The proud Union of Stringplaneearth. . . .

- Arrange for the gradual transfer of power to the starry sky. . . .
- Think of earth as a resonating plate, and capital cities as dust accumulated at the nodes of standing waves (which England and Japan are already well aware of).
- Think of the advantages of a unified coastal frontier, and turn Asia into a unified spiritual island. Anyway, there is a second sea above us — the sky. A new commandment: thou shalt love the new unity of Asia's sea coast.
- December 25, 1915 New Style is the first day of the new Kalpa.
- Let the laws of everyday existence give way to the equations of fate.
- Let the oriental carpet of names and governments dissolve into the ray of humanity.
- The universe considered as a ray. You are a construct of space. We are a construct of time.
- In order to introduce into the world the great principles of anti-money, to confer upon the chairmen of the board and directors of the great corporations the rank of ensign in the militia of laborers, and to make them accept the payscale of an ensign in the militia of workers. The real power of such enterprises thus comes under the control of a peaceable militia of workers.

1915-1916

Swan Land in the Future

Sky-books

IN PUBLIC SQUARES LAID OUT NEAR THE GARDENS where the workers (or creators, as they had begun to call themselves) went for recreation, high white walls resembled white books opened against the dark sky. The squares were always full of crowds, and it was here that the creators' commune brought the latest news to the public by means of image-printing on image-books, projecting the appropriate image-text by means of the projector's dazzling eye. News flashes about Planet Earth, the activities of that great union of workers' communes known as the United Encampment of Asia, poetry and the instantaneous inspirations of members, breakthroughs in science, notifications for relatives and next of kin, directives from the Soviets. Those who were inspired by these image-book communications were able to go off for a moment, write down their own inspirations and a half an hour later see their message projected onto those walls in shadow-letters by means of the light-lens. In cloudy weather the clouds themselves were used as screens, and the latest news projected directly onto them. Many people requested that news of their deaths be flashed onto the clouds. For holiday celebrations there were "shot-paintings." Smoke grenades of different colors were fired into the sky at various points. Eyes, for instance, were shots of blue smoke, the mouth a streak of scarlet smoke, hair of silver, and against the cloudless blue background of the heavens a familiar face would suddenly appear, a token of popular esteem for a leader.

Agriculture. The Plowman in the Clouds

IN SPRINGTIME TWO CLOUDSHIPS were visible, crawling like flies across the sunlit face of the clouds, busily cultivating fields, plowing up the earth below by means of harrows attached to them. Occasionally the skyships vanished from view behind the cloud, and then it seemed as if the laboring clouds themselves were pulling the harrows, hitched to a yoke like oxen. Later the skyfliers flew past like magnificent waterfalls concealed in the clouds, in order to water the ploughed fields with artificial rain and from that height to scatter huge streams of seeds. The plowman had found a new place in the clouds, and immediately he was able to till entire fields, the lands of an entire rural commune. The lands of many families could be tilled by a single plowman stationed in the springtime clouds.

Channels of Communication. Spark-writing

UNDERWATER HIGHWAYS WITH GLASS WALLS connected both banks of the Volga at various points. The steppe came more and more to resemble the sea. In summer the boundless steppe was crisscrossed by dry-land vessels that ran on rails powered by wind and sails. Thunderships, skates and sleds rigged with sails connected one settlement with another. Every hunting or fishing outpost had its own landing field for airships and its own receiver for ray communication with the rest of Planet Earth. As the spark-voices spoke their messages from the ends of the earth, they were instantly projected onto the image-books.

The Eye Cure

FIELDS PLANTED FROM THE CLOUDS, image-books that conveyed scientific information from all over the planet, dry-land sailing ships that crisscrossed the steppe like the sea, walls in the public square that became great teachers of young people — all these things changed Swan Land radically in only two years. In the shadow-libraries all read the same book at once, page by page, as it was turned by someone behind them. . . . Fenced-off preserves were set up where plants, birds and turtles all had the right to grow, live and die. The rule was that all animals were to be kept from extinction. The best doctors had discovered that the eyes of live animals possessed special currents that had a curative effect on mentally disturbed people. Doctors wrote prescriptions for psychological treatment that consisted simply of looking into the eyes of live animals, either the gentle submissiveness of the toad's eye, the gem-like gaze of a snake, or the courageous stare of a lion, and they ascribed to them the same ability that a tuner possesses for adjusting out-of-tune strings. The eye cure became as widespread as the use of mineral waters is today.

The countryside became a scientific commune led by a plowman in the clouds. Each winged creator advanced confidently toward a commune that included not only humans, but all living things on Planet Earth.

And he heard at his door the knock of a tiny monkey's fist.

First published in 1928, probably written 1915-16.

Robert Crosson

On Spicer & other poems

On Spicer

I am sick of the invisible world
and all its efforts to be visible

ROCKS AND CABBAGES. . .

What eyes
(Yours or mine)
Are worth seeing it.

To compare the two is very much
paying the price to park the machine you drive
so no brown kids will steal the hubcaps

Invading this brick tomb
dead-end of two downtown streets
(now crusty museum of Entertainment)

And getting stuck in an accordion elevator
on the third floor. Without a toilet.

*

His natural place makes home sweet home
Look like old men in white tuxedos and black bow-tie
(in escort of younger wives, equally overdressed
birds of Paradise

*

Allowing you never to see him in any one place
with his clothes on.
Or off.

No props.
No revolving stages
(he could never have written

*

Ridden. Upon the arm of anyone.

The one a solitary place.

His.

The other

*

Forever puzzling your name.

Written on the back flap of a not so fancy
envelope (he would never send

Wells Fargo on the freeway

*

The magic he does.

Not saw women in half. Nor
do rope tricks

*

A trick of light streaming from the cup
You say, knowing only the unbent rock
The shell

*

How we twist what's said to penetrate
(what love is

*

Squinting.

Pale audience to tapdance and song

Rubbing elbows with yourself.

The day it all came down . . .

stars and planets immobile, ghostly gods
pointing a finger the eye can't read how
birds are sweet song on the plantation
or the river forest wd whistle Catalan
and how French is economical it is said
scientific (the word Divine among the ruins
of discourse) how Spanish has more words
Lorca sat his hat upon as Spaniards do
plowing fields, playing difficult guitar

the divine touch, breath as spirit the
Word silenced in print: the daffodil or
rose wired up the eye seeing itself I
do not think a doorbell could be extended

from one of them to the other, there
is no way to connect the two

saying offhand on the freeway how ends
meet in the middle and the Outside dictates
correspondence how Custer divided his flanks
and scattered his men in two directions:
(which is what brought him to the trees
on horseback

Reception

The King invites me to court (or summons)
listener-poets gathered as Symposium.
Dark beams. Marbled corridors, vast rooms.
Obvious participant.

The Big Day:
Noticeable busyness of protocol,
behind-the-scenes scurrying.
Much rustling of dress and ornament.
Not mine . . .

Pawns and players,
Eager to accommodate royal plot
and lordly function.

• • •

The High Occasion:
A hasty, confusing affair,
Without order or particular
Significance . . .

A curious Masonic rite,
Ill-tended.
The King as signet evidence
and vocal Officiture of performance
We are expected to watch,
and glean.
I do not glean.

• • •

It is within language that the world

*speaks to us with a voice that is
not our own.*

Robin Blaser: *The
Practice of Outside*/fr.
Spicer.

*The more you know, the more languages
you know . . . the more building blocks
the Martians have to play with.*

— Spicer.

1

Six to eleven is measured in inches or the clock.

The camel has no tent.

A cane is used to club a cat.

Clothesline of housewifery.

Telegraphed idiocy.

Emptying pails and cowbells.

*

The habit of eating.

I give up to

The practice.

I can't touch.

Merde, then. Claw me up,

Cat.

2

Selling a used-car is the best offer.

I left out.

Adumbrato.

A squeeze box.

Accordian. Tango.

3

Chalk wipes the blackboard.

Here is the hulk. Take it over.

A pinch is no love bite.

Take it.

4

Kings are kings.

In a miniature box

Tilted to one side.

Talking.

... what's being dumb is
falling into your pelvis.
Or socks.

What you can't say is
give credit to
Where it's do.

Moons are stones
Night winds become.
Alphabet.

• • •

The King, in ritual stance,
On-stage ... A rectangular box:
like a wall-fixture, or ornament.
With its doors open.

I move it,
Tilting it to one side ...
A dangerous error.
A blasphemy.

King is rudely jarred.

4½
Jack and Jill were an incestuous pair
Avoiding commas and spilled milk.
She was running up the hill,
Him down.

A cracked egg fell over.
Footsteps.
A cabbage.

Absurd talk
to one: as destructive.
The escape is disguise, quite shakey.
Jack and Jill held hands.
In water.

*

What is a dream?
To the Lady of The Lake.
Midnight rider.

How to crawl out?

Ignore pump handles.
And cows. I can't be
Outside.

I'm too much
In it.

6
The King holds court. With me.
Ego is my guest. My invite
hails Mars, backyards and dusted roses.

The.

7
Jack and Jill went up
... The King is much in evidence: signet.
Vocal officitur. He is always around. Gingerly,
side-stepping the lilies.
An ill-tended Masonic rite, it seems to me.
Curious. If not in any particular way
Interesting.
I do not glean.

• • •

My first lesson at Court:
A king is a king.
The revelation cowers me.
Is this The Occasion? I enquire.
(A poet, a nun: perhaps
plays the fiddle)
Yes . . .

Have I read the doctrine of Silence?
she smiles.
I have not.
That's why we're here.

8
That being my first lesson at Court.
That kings are kings.

9
The madrigal bites my lady's breast

To swooning. How come
I can't figure that.

. . . there was a lot of talk about The Occasion.
This poet, nun, tells me she plays the fiddle.
The Doctrine of Silence.

If I can't get out of this, Jack
It's not your fault . . .

Brains. I got none.
No martian could talk through that.

in two weeks we shall each receive typewritten copies,
with extended notes, of the full purpose and intent
of the proceedings; including the King's view
of our function.

Untitled

Gear to work: as usual demanding (of me) to get out of the house. Just get out, go. Not ponder not read not think, just haul ass. Each day the same struggle. The same solution: go. Once there it's easy. The hours pass. You become involved with what's at hand. The mind vacates except for logistics, and that tending to. Which having done I bring home to make lists of hardware and paints to buy as if I were but one person doing (that) — at best, no other.

Lately I can't even read a newspaper: the realm of books and poetry of harsh little interest — a world apart. I wonder have I lost — was I ever (how could I have been) so foolish as to be enamored of what, daily, I see: in fact, alien — and come home to find what I've written is pompous and fraudulent, for the most part (lately) bad. Yet at night, granted a warm supper, would turn back to the stage-coach foxtrot and attack, severally, all tribes of Indians.

In any alphabet.

Which makes it hard to get up mornings.

Harder still to dislodge the ritual habit of standing naked in one spot to put the daily pieces together and get on with it: getting out to go— In fact redemptive: yet knowing when I come back the rooms will fix me in mute stares again, so go to bed early and pride myself in my sense of responsibility, robbing all evidence to the contrary.

Neighbors' good-time laughter annoys me.

Also my phonograph is on the fritz.

Upstairs at the piano just now, played fourteen impromptu variations of merrily we roll along in a random assortment of keys and came down here to hear Schumann.

Something for godssake
that hits bottom as anchor—without oars.
Feeling the current change,

Flame.
And mustard weed.

The guy had no heart.
He was made of metal.
His joints are rusted, he needed lubricating in wet weather. What he wanted most was a heart, but he couldn't find one. The problem is you got arms and legs of tin — hell, the armor of an armadillo.

Which, eating bugs and weeds, gives the best white meat.
But this was a tin man, he aint no armadillo. He got no meat inside him and can't be cooked. This posed a problem to meat eaters and cannibals.
Which gave him free will.
He couldn't be ett.

That was freedom.

But he had no heart.
And he wanted one he did not look for.
He never thought about it, he had no chance.

One day, when chopping a tree for firewood, it rained, and then snowed. That was a bad time. Then one day this young girl come, and changed him. She was as lost as he was. What she had was a pair of magic slippers they danced to

(anywhere East of Mojave you don't say
up the witch!: easterly they have razor-
ways of putting it
Otherwise—

Which left them derelict
forever.

A metal man could have no brain, only clockworks.
Which didn't bother him much. With his jaw greased,
he could talk. He dare not cry because he would rust.
He wanted a heart. That was the one thing he didn't have.
He didn't eat, especially apples and watercress.
He wore a funnel for a hat.

• • •

I was chopping this cherry tree because they said
I couldn't lie. It was cold, and I was a matter of
principle. I didn't want to freeze. Finally I did.
I would have stayed that way forever.

Then came Dorothy, who could dance.
I could not, my limbs were so numb.
I could not move.

Tense predictable.

Lack of interest, issue—
not loins but broadcloth.
To know you is to love you
is this cartoon I got
hung in the bathroom.

Sequence, alarming.

(—*walking*, I would have thought:
a friend across a night porch
in the company of two dogs)

that real world he takes to mean this
mail I'm sent—and all that's propped up
to make phantoms of which one
I'm to be sold on.

Present tense.

Real as a roll of toilet paper.
This cigarette. Or that catalogue
of new gay books.

My god.

He lights another cigarette.

(the action continuous: as filmed sequence
of his getting up)

Owing allegiance to all he would imitate.
Having foolish trust there might be one
who would understand that. What he is doing
has been done before.

Turning the earth aside as plowshare.
Verbs taken to bed with.

It is at this (juncture) that he begins to
believe what he's saying. So resorts to enter-
taining himself. Which lends substance.
To what?

He appeals to audience.

Which he would create.
Being pedagogue.
As he is wont to think.
Such being the pits.
The bloody pits.

Which murderous grave?

What pits?

Bad grapes

he says,

I say to myself.

The crickets are louder tonight.

% %

The palm at the end of the mind

is a funny place (without laughs)

to be in. Trees and sand

On the way to Needles.

The palm at the end of the mind

is a peacock in heat.

The palm at the end of the mind

is not copulative.

It is a fiery place.

Of which there is none

—with palms

Which would incinerate,

being bestial weeds they are

at storefronts.

At the end of the mind limits the territory.

Tasseled fronds. And these squalling beasts.

Shit everywhere.

And ferocious.

The palm at the end of the mind

is a manufactured place.

Hand.

The way peacocks don't

got

(only feathers.

On A Sore Foot. When Music Is French Or Not,

And Movies Nostalgic.

eleven to now five-thirty/pm, visit job-

site to move ladder & take trash out as

(the name,
ray milland

to say my pocket watch stopped at 11/27
to say I will survive this

how green was my

●

• • •

How green is

[illegible]

I am not suprised that a man of Porta's intellectual

stature might immediately perhaps not choose to speak English at the same table (I, until tonight, having

SHIT.

EL-FUCKO.

never read the man's poetry, or works), and eat immediately without embarrassment—
which he should not in any case be except comfortable—

I'M WAITING FOR MY BIG SPEECH . . .

Having preferred (perhaps) East to west

—WITH APPLAUSE, I REMEMBER

and the type of person he might enjoin and is

(WHICH TOOK ME BY SURPRISE.

used to, being European and abstract in that
(best sense) for reasons (by nature) finding it
natural to be enveloped, even inspirited, by
what is properly academic in the usual, useful,
sense he does, so comfortably, accommodate

THIS PEN IS OUT OF INK—

with good patience/ allowing Paul to
translate

LIKEWISE: TAPE.

as he eats.

• • •

(he, Porta, being the man who wrote:*

"It's not true that language constitutes the deception or deceptive entity: deception exists
before language, it exists in our own experience. We are undone before language
undoes us. It isn't language that creates reality: we are crossed, shaken, devastated by
experience even before we can open our mouths. . . . Language attempts to understand
the source of deception, of experience."

*—*Invasioni*: fr. back cover of his
book/ which, Saturday 8 March, I have
just read).

Outside, rain is a downpour.

I trust the paint holds on yesterday's (exterior) walls, and notice I'm down to my last pack of cigarettes. But have 2 more (I think) in the truck.

• • •

Tanya phones to talk about her cats,
Mady calls (leaves message) to say the window
sills I last June painted (at her neighbor's)
"Are bubbling": can I do anything about it?

A trick (for *language*) in either case—
And in those dimensions.

• • •

Would, on Principle, nail my hands to the wall.

% %

I told myself once—with (being in the company of) my friend, Fielding—
that the one thing I would never become, as Fielding could be,
archly: cynical. That, I reminded me, was the prime virtue of our
friendship: that (I warned me) I would never become him. That I
would not become cynical. We are father to the flesh.

• • •

The rain, lessening, falls in loud drops (remnant tumult)

atop the lid of a paint can: irregularly.

The sound is pitched to bass string of a guitar.

Drops of rain . . . a tin drum. Emerson's "tuning"

of Soul being after the fact. Oriental, perhaps:

as isolate . . .

"The mind," (Fielding once wrote): "the vigor of

a wounding mind": and what's left of rain,

resounding.

Intruding upon the fellowship of the A.A. meeting this morning, was a slender young black man who endlessly paraded and talked to himself: a spectacle, interrupting the forum. He was intoxicated, obviously, on what I couldn't guess. Up to a point, he was allowed audience. At one point, interrupting the main speaker, he took stage — chanting, it seemed to me, in a unique tongue, a poetry: not *as* such, but tongue to what, upon less demonstrable occasion, might have been tolerated as Vision. And was all but physically ushered out. Only to come back again and again. At the last was "embraced" by a fraternal swat team of undelegated Members, who would make Order of the occasion. Finally, yet deferentially muttering, he left — it would seem quite in order: as out of it as he was coming in.

"The Cold," he'd said. He would have been Speaker; mouthing, to me interesting, the colder side of coin-exchanged. More tongue than harder edge of what poor bastard (us) might come to celebrate Reality.
And eat cake.

A FAMILY VISIT

What he wants is a place to stay, and needs money. He's twenty-three. His bride is nineteen. They've driven down from Auburn to visit her parents at Long Beach. His wife wears a neck brace. She tells me she has a chance of a job with a meter-reader who knows movie stars. Also has an opportunity to work as an apprentice hair-dresser with a friend of her mother, who refuses to see them.

"Why not?"

"My dad hates Edward — Ed stole his car battery."

"Did you call them?"

"They wouldn't accept the charges."

"What're you going to do?"

She addresses her neck brace:

"An accident two years ago — hit-and-run."

"No insurance?"

"I was in the hospital two weeks."

"Bastard owed me a hundred bucks," Edward said.

"I'm supposed to take it off nights and put heat on. We aint slept since yesterday."

I'm standing at the typewriter in my bathrobe and pajamas.

What she wants to see in Los Angeles is a limousine.

"We saw one. Ed pulled up alongside it. They rolled up the window."

Her dream is to go to bed with John Travolta.

"How's Laura?" I said. Laura is my aunt, and his grandmother. She is eighty-three.

"Got pneumonia," he said.

"She in the hospital?"

"Naw—the trailer."

I have fifteen-dollars in my wallet.

Worth it to get them out.

"Dad got arthritis bad," he says, "both knees."

"Sorry to hear that."

"Figures he'll retire, work this gold stake we got."

The money is accepted without acknowledgement.

"Could at least put a roof on that place," the girl said.

I change into my overalls.

They go.

God knows what he wants: a wife apparently. They've driven down from Auburn to fuck movie stars. Their car is a scabrous whale of a green Dodge: seeing it parked anywhere means trouble. His wife is asleep in the front seat.

"Bum luck," he says.

"What happened?"

"Water-hose broke."

Wife joins us.

"Assholes called the police."

"Who?"

"My dad," she said. "He hates Edward."

I write a check for twenty-dollars.

"Edward got no I.D."

Make it out to her.

"He told me I could stay. I told him I wouldn't sleep anywhere without my husband."

They come to the city with machine guns. On the way, they rip off grocery stores. She with a broken neck, he with moss on his teeth: each with matching tattoos. Her lower jaw protrudes. He chews snuff.

"Got the wrong date."

His cheerfulness alarms me.

I correct the check. Initial it.

"What'll I tell grandma?"

"Tell her hello."

"Got this friend in Fontana," he said. "Runs a junkyard."

In the movie, they'd be legend.

Noise

Saws and hammers do not make us sing. Their noise distracts. Though the object they work upon to create might be beautiful when finished: an object that's beautiful shows reflection of harmony and order in it — it is not vocal; as attitudes are. Which are not songs either.

Veritable bollox.

Tripe.

Solipsism.

Noise is not an attitude.

Though it may be incorporated as music: not of itself but tapestry. An attitude is a posture—

All of this is spoken as the
curtain goes up, or darkness
becomes light on people standing
or doing something.

Snobbery.

Is expected to be, and usually is when groups of people affect to say the same thing. But it is not always so, except by definition.

Rabble.

Be quiet.

Let him talk.

Snobbery can be not an attitude at all, but a way of judging what one is or is not and has no wish to be. Which is to say that one is separating oneself from the others to find something that they as a group do not clearly see, or share. Which may be called snobbery or not; when it is not that but more a way of looking at something that is seen from a different position as a definite place one owns. If not especially.

And not land.

Jesus.

That is: not earth or an object, but a disposition of thought and point of view that one has not tried to cultivate but has come upon by accident or will to see things that have always been there to be looked at. Not by all people and certainly never by all people at once.

Bilge.

Tommyrot.

I have a question.

So it is not snobbery at all, by definition; because one is legitimately that and so one owns it. The group owns nothing but the attitudes it shares: it affects to be one person when it is not.

I want to say something.

Which is affecting a posture; which is snobbery.

Are you alone in your room.

Not always.

end act one. The audience
sits, or goes out.

Act two.

I do not wish to think about that.

You are too busy.

You are insulting.

I am beginning to understand more clearly.

You are not alone.

You would have me eat mashed potatoes.

The balloon just popped.

Do you see me.

Of course.

Telephones ring.

Not here.

You would kill me with butter and mashed potatoes.

Walls are an illusion.

I love you.

What is a stage.

Who popped it?

end act two.

Begin.

The main substance.

What is a halogen.

People together like singing.

Noise is outside.

What is a platitude.

The sun is out.

How did it.

Give me two good reasons.

Has the ambulance come.

Has the tow truck.

Act three.

Who cares.

That's always bothered me. Few do,
it has always seemed to me: very few.

What time is it.

Early on, let's say. As an American
let's say: considering my background.
I was a nutty kid. I was told I was nutty.
People, as in the word People, didn't
much matter to me. It took me forty years

to understand a pronoun.

I'm asking.

Nobody listened. People talked together and
laughed: they didn't think I could hear them.
They heard each other, I heard them but
nobody was really listening. I was. I was
always listening. Early on let's say.
As an American. Let's say.

You think too much.

People were outside and didn't know it.
Even in a house. People were outside: they
didn't listen. They laughed and they talked.
At a dance they listened.

Stop clowning around.

When there was music they listened.
Or seemed to be listening. But when
the dance was over they stopped.

I wouldn't want to be in your shoes.

They went on talking but nobody was listening.
I always did: moreso with music. Music meant
that people were listening. When there was
music you could see that.

Rotten childhood.

People were people: nobody listened.
Outside did. Nobody talked. Everything
listened. The rain talked. The wind talked—
empty boxcars and the slate dump, the silt
creek the sewer ditch, mud, rusted drain
pipes. Especially the railroad tracks.
Houses talked, outside. Inside they didn't.

What size shoe you take.

People talked: outside listened.

Yeah.

Outside, you could hear that.

How big are your feet.

Inside, you had to be quiet.
Playing house, or store. Making roads

up ironing boards.

Wanna get laid.

You had to pretend you weren't listening.

Look at them ears.

I learned to do that.

Pretending was acting like you weren't there.

I became quite good at it.

Don't tell your mother.

People being people: I was somebody else.

Early on let's say; as an American let's say.

Considering my background.

end.

Epilogue.

Him and her.

Clause: subject and predicate.

Who was Nathan Hale.

Have you fed the cat.

In what year was the potato famine.

A saturday afternoon . . .

sound of freeway-traffic
west winds make louder above
Mt. Baldy, snowcapped in the
distance.

The goose honks.

Pierre Joris

Canto Diurno

Sunday, February 23rd, 1986

0.10 a.m.

*Je répète, pour Bataille, l'interrogation: pourquoi "communauté"? La réponse est donnée assez
clairement: "A la base de chaque être, il existe un principe d'insuffisance . . ." (principe
d'incomplétude).*

Maurice Blanchot

0.45 a.m.

after the storm

the flat

lineaments of

word

I

meant

world a letter

on the lam

a greek

lamb-

da / fort

missing the

eleventh leg

– not a wooden

– not a toy

of this journey

though it is

the meat we eat

in this house

after the storm

the skies

washed

dangling

limbs

lambdas

fort

where we

fiction our

selves to be
at one

*

1.30 a.m.

Reading a book should not be like filling a vase but like lighting a fire.

Montaigne

2.05 a.m.

Prose demands that one read between the lines. Poetry, that one read the lines.

7.15 a.m.

MIDNIGHT OIL

night moves

dark in

to grey

burns

a

bulb burns re

flects on

pane

a

piano in

to mor

ning

a

radio

diodic deity

a

place of wonder

of work

a

wrap

for a

cold

night like

this night

o

blue

I

move in

small steps

the hordes

follow alpha

betical

ly

vertical

horizon down

the hand

*

downhand

night

clears

thoughts

no — less —

shadows of

shadows

ashes of ashes

Bruno

pyre

of mor-

ning

we burn only

once i.e.

we better burn

all the time

in this

soon to be

sun-

lit

night

*

here you go

again old

George used

to say burning

that mid

night oil again —

he up nights

cups of tea

watched

night street cats houses dark moon

watched his

own old

bones age & mornings

out for the
paper he'd stop
me tell me
his nightwatch tales
conspiracy of him & I
nightlording it
over deal road

*

dawn did
come slid
in on si-
rens over boule-
vards
the usual
news stereo

phonic au-
bades
from the bedroom
english bbc voice
here in the living
room the french
announcer —
morning bulb
keeps burning
only its reflection
dims & dies
out

more coffee
luke-warm
by now
your body
warmer
under covers
night's
last en-
croachment

*

8.10 a.m.
a
tempted
au

bade

pros trate

sun

cloud claw

no

milk

in

this

cof

fin

caves

in

clear

po

lice

si

ren

sires

day

*

8.30 a.m.

But the individual is only the residue of the trial of the dissolution of the community. By his nature — as his name shows, he is the atom, the indivisible — the individual reveals that he is the abstract result of a decomposition.

. . . one doesn't create a world with simple atoms. One needs a clinamen. One needs an inclination (in both meanings of the word) of the one towards the other, of the one by the other or of the one for the other. The community is at least the clinamen of the "individual."

Jean-Luc Nancy

9 a.m.

THE NEWSPAPER DEAD. the paper picked up taken home, like going to church on sunday, long ago, as regular, as much of a rite. often take notes, see how it can enter, that world, your world, too. *introibo*. no altar but what rolled off the presses, heavily inked. iconography of random death: if to pray is to give thought, intensely, then that is what I am doing right now. unalienable format: too large to be cut out and glued into notebook: this dead will have to stay where it is, on the front page, tomorrow's dustbin liner. this is a Reuter dead from Rome, young woman in heavy wintercoat, wool cap with studded rim pulled down half-inch above eyebrows, face pressed three quarters towards me to the asphalt, ear to the ground as if listening for a distant tremor an approaching train a faroff revolution or simply for what the earth has to tell her. whatever it is, she can no longer hear it. Vilma Monaco, 28, carrying a .38 in her hand and a German MP40 in her bag, 15

spent cartridges littering the ground, the pointless numbers, do what you want, they all spell death, Vilma surrounded by numbers caught in a web like a medieval hex, killed in Rome trying to kill a roman politician who played with bigger numbers, she a member of the Fighting Communist Union, a splintergroup of the Red Brigades, an offshoot born to die out of the second split of the BR in Paris 1984. collar frayed where a bullet went through I think. I would like to put my finger there. to shake you death of europe, by the shoulders, get up, it was all a dream of winter, the minor corrupt christian-democrat politico not worth it, wrong strategy, though who am I to say despair is ever wrong. cold-blooded: she is wrong because she is dead. one of us is dead, one more skull to be strung on a chain, a chain we all carry around our necks. but that too, too romantic, as gooey as her own harsh choice. Vilma Monaco, a name Hollywood might have picked. this is hello and good-bye, Vilma Monaca. Vilma Monaco, you leave me with only an *introibo*, with no *credo*, which is all you had, you leave me here with your name only, with your smudged inky deathmask, already a twenty-four hour dead, Monaco, Vilma, your face pressed against the street, listening to someone I cannot hear.

*

11 a.m.

IN REAL TIME:

that dream . co
incidence of a day
now 14 years
gone
a day
planned as a page
to write
a canto
diurno all
day long
& as large as I
could make
it.

(& how
to tell today
coming out of
another night,
how to
tell the making
of that un-
made dream?

unmade canto
coincidence of
dawn & night,
had gotten up

in pre-dawn Novem-
ber light, had
started the
tracking,
had turned
the radio on,
heard the news
(the only news
instant as old
as it ever
gets)
that
EP
had
died.

It stopped
me for a day, a year, a de-
cade.

shaking off the fathers.
here it goes on.

some un-
finished busi-
ness, skirting
not shirking
the far-

ther quest
ion.

*

noon
re Sobin's work:

two ways of working, essentially, first the vertical / spine poem that turns/twists on
grammatik,

cf: 'compose. (no ideas
but in . . .)'
grammatik

a grammarye I sense owes much to Celan, as does that corkscrew movement that anchors the poem *downward*, into earth, air into earth, from the top of the page, the heading, chapter, *caput*, no longer gives permission for any kind of spread, the poem runs from its own title/inceptor ie first word or line given who knows how, runs in the shortest line possible, ie hairpin curves, mountain travail, where the descent beckons, in a spiral, narrowing, downward, vertical straights, sharpest *clinamen*, always downward, screws itself into, earth.

(this vertical *tropos* is not to be confused with the ‘organic’ — romantic — image of poem as tree, of art/work as natural growth, tree with bole/trunk, roots & branches, or with man as tree confusion, the renaissance romance, Leonardo’s tree-man incised upright in the cosmos, that cosmic anthropocentrism out of which (even if seemingly as reaction against) came romanticism, all the way down to us — for us still there in Duncan, though he already on the edge of a new configuration, twin to the *explosante-fixe*, already close to what this new figure might be, is, in, say Celan, Sobin, some others’, my own work: a necessary denial of tree image, a first approximation of the *rhizome*.)

&, secondly, a horizontal/horizontal single line sprezzatura (even when it takes two or three, or, rarely, four or five lines, it always works on the one/single, line. These, nearly always truncated, fore-shortened, literally, as if the eye (the writer’s?, the reader’s?) cld only catch that tail-end, or started out too fast, flew over, too eager at the beginning, the beginning therefore, the origin therefore always hidden/in hiding, the breath that is inhaled, invisible air that goes in to come out again of the body, colored, thus visible, inky glyphs shaped by lips & teeth & tongue — but something always already caught / now catches / in the throat.

Catches, caches. a scroll, a banner of words / no banter here / no more air about to breezily agitate the sentences. It is as if all the air there was, was needed in the breath-making of the line and now those foreshortened lines rest exhausted, after a long journey, a trajectory described, come to rest in the playing field of gravity (of words, of language — the invisible ether/origin maybe the ideas as forerunners ((but what does come first : thought or language? the aim of poetry clearly the attempt to put that question out of play by creating the concordance of the two: the shadow and the thing, the thought and the word))

gravity, I said, then there is play again, *ça en découle*, *gravitas*, *gravide*, grave/grave — bringing it all back down to earth.

*

The horizontal and vertical forms interpenetrate in the architectonics of the book, creating for the reader the design of a cross, a cross firmly planted in the grass and ground of southern France.

but that cross formed, that many-armed figure is not meant *for* the man who wrote the poems: it is not even meant as the man’s shadow: it is the man.

his shadow the high summer scarecrows speckle the Vaucluse.

or maybe his shadow is only the shadow of those scarecrows.

he said them.

unsaid them all.

crows are birds of omen. so are scares. so are the scars we call words.

*

Strange how I hear Blanchot in so many of the horizontals:

“towards that ear, that ether, that *absentia* of all presence:
presence itself.”

& this, which Duncan immediately worried out of the ‘ars poetica’:

“but death continuously discharged, expelled,
projected . . .

a death *kept alive*.”

i.e.: our life alived
in the tension
of the worded
line

*

ex-vita, he writes, I hear the rime: *ex-voto*, & look up

votive: 1. given or dedicated in fulfillment of a vow or pledge: a *votive*
offering

2. expressing a wish, desire or vow. A *votive prayer*.

ex-voto: (according to a vow) a *votive offering*

*

that many-armed cross also a loom, the woof & weft of the cloth woven thereon.

and in woven there is the vow makes the poem a votive offering.

which is not the violent/bloody sacrifice of devotion where everything goes up in fire and
smoke. no sparagmos here, what happens here happens as air, as breath that a-lives,
and thus “the earth as air”, even.

*

. . . and come now, a few pages further into the text, to the word ‘votive’ I had earlier
teased out of *ex-vita*:

the rose
as votive: for
the
vow
of the rose.

*

2 p.m.

to write through the numbness of body —

stretching the dream-

drum’s

skin /

skein
 this length of thread, a yarn-wound
 twisted around a loose skeleton
 coils
 earthy suggestion of this a
 quote *a twisted skein of lies*
 the story
 goes on not-
 withstanding the numbness, the cackle
 of geese
 warns of danger
 the sky pierced
 arrow-shaped flight of similar
 things, birds or
 tales of
 an anlace piercing
 porous nighthide
 through which sweat
 of my life
 dangles me from a rope-
 trick, o how I envy
 Mozart's ease
 let it come down, frag-
 rant fragment
 — pushed through.
 to hold, held, told in hell.

2.45 p.m.

second attempt at translating *Todtnauberg*, Celan's encysted record of his 1967 meeting
 with Martin Heidegger (a disaster as far as Celan is concerned, according to most
 sources). Clearly Celan had hoped for something (the opening botany, arnica, eyebright, is
 of healing plants) which Heidegger did not (could not?) (would not?) provide: in the
 visitor's book he wrote a line "von/ einer Hoffnung, heute,/ auf eines Denkenden/
 kommendes/ Wort/ im Herzen." Then a walk on unevened, unplanned, ground where they
 walk singly (Orchis und Orchis), then in the car, later, driving back, more talk, rough talk
 ("Krudes") overheard by a third person, the driver. And then a harsher landscape, high-
 moor, log-paths or trails, humidity.

TODTNAUBERG

Arnica, eyebright, the
 draft from the well with the
 star-die on top,
 in the
 cabin
 written in the book

— whose name did it record
before mine? —
in this book
the line about
a hope, today,
for a thinker's
word to come,
in the heart,
woodturf, not evened,
orchis and orchis, singly,
crudeness, later, while driving,
clearly,
he who drives us, the man,
he listens in,
the half-
trod log-
trails in the highmoor,
humidity,
much.

*

6.35 p.m.
the hearth again
& against
the en-
croachments, the
pull of
 polis, its
exigencies.

the question of
 hearth as elective
 polis as de facto
“the community of lovers
has as its ultimate goal
the destruction of society”

a war machine
two beings made
or not made
for each other
a possibility
of disaster
here is the room

the closed space
here no night
can come
to an end
here happens
the lie
of union
a union always takes place
by not taking place
(there is no
free union)
these walls are
against polis
here we hatch
treachery against
those who glorify us
by codifying us
here we destroy
ourselves laughing
inventing community
unaware-aware
the danger geese of polis
cackle on the landing

*

7.30 p.m.
reading the date
in the palm of
my hand:
 calm o-
asis nailed
to the blue
of the sky, be-
fore Easter, way
before, the snows
give warmth back
to the hand,
 and here
now we offer

each other
food, milk
& dates.

*

9.30 p.m.
bring your
self to
the place,

ring
-ed with
lace,

an
-swer the
swerve of
mind, the
eye
-mace,

tired
tracks
at

night's
slovenly
pace

park
there
ere

it all
(errs, it
all

does) come
to this:
(*la mise*

en

intrigue)
we mouth

-ed the st-
ory, the
store

of more
in place
of
the place
brought
to
a halt
-ing
breath
a crys-
tal knife
edges
the hoar
frost a-
mother
night
's in(-
sight.

* * *

23/02/86
revised july 86
Paris

Karin Lessing

The Slate Opening

... *les pâles figures gravement immobiles* ... Nerval

I.

Opening slate, your
life

over
the image

branches
to choose among

as if
through the grain,

An ear for music

its plied
murmur —

•

we lent
each other light

you sing
for passage

phantom evening

berceuse, lullaby

the beads'
coral

•

... the voice
at the bottom of the stairs

... from breast
to breast

... the sound
of glass shattering

•

site
of multiple

as smoke
rises

events, variable
mirror

the wide

night's

•

in sleep

plaited
dress, the

we touch, in

honeycomb

its trough

of stars

if I could say to you

in which
you walked

this was the glass, this

•

blood-
infused word-

impacted, the
silver

shadow,

thread

curves . . .
an image

•

II.

I would warm
your mouth

with this glass

nearly full
with ice

and light

• • • • •

when sight is quenched

ghosts, the
ghosts in us, you
said,

sing

•

waist-
high, stepped

swarm
in drowsiness

the grains, Persephone . . .

hell
and the grape

god are one

meshed fragments, plundered
arms

•

. . . . and
that other

transparent
voice

“the soul
after all, a

woman”

end-
lessly

descends

•

bunched

shadows, bathed

in transparency

as
silk, watered

• • • • •

your rings’
new

white
over close-

fitting
green flesh

tints, the
morning’s

cyclamen —
the sea

with all
its pennants.

mirror

breathed on, broken:

Dennis Phillips

2 poems from A World

This plain to the sea fog en-
crusted sunless morninged the small
of it a wisp in the air but inland
far enough to be distant
but near

the slope in your mind
a pebble in your thinking
gradual scoop to continental shelf.
This pebble on your land-locked street.
Inhabitant of a coastal zone

ready to ship out, spoils divided, a decade of tilting
City of the Plain from City of Tents.
Gravel in your shoulder, gravel in your bedding

Henry Five's easy Illium, Harfleur,
Whiles yet the cool and temperate wind of grace
o'erblows the filthy and contagious clouds
back to the city. Fresh air in your face.

Where no rejoinder would change their minds
mere opposition, a politic micro to macro.

A great writer in her stone cottage
a neat wood beyond, a helper spinning wool inside
the writer knew you
embraced you in emerald light.

To explain her use of history.

Or your cavalier use of narrative.

Where no description of some broader scope
would seem of interest.

The mention of a specific word or a
too familiar "du" could cause violence
or on national television a "fuck" or
"asshole" riots.

Amphitheater of an age: lens and electrons
a "forum" controlled inside, issuing through wires

or waves (beams?) millions of citizens.
Computerized pins and electronic grids:
sight to the blind their first paintings
sold through the airwaves.

A stone cottage, a rebuttal.

Cold smell of sacred stone.

No approbation for you
except you were there.

Joseph Simas

The Longer Sentiments of Middle, II

I HAVE A SENSE OF WHO my earlier antecedents are, in wood, and do not want to name them however later consequences may otherwise prevail. They too have questioned terror, the rose in the crowd of unknowing. I cannot stand up alone and maintain this sound even to proceed strictly according to precedence within reason. Style of another order burns the flesh, translated, charms the misrepresented bone. Yet I do not want to affirm my differences for this reason alone; so I keep turning away incredibly, time and time again. There is another (lasting) pleasure to which they all come back, turn from, bite, curse, and apprehend. If I were able and not in this latter station would this describe the event of becoming who is, or is there nothing one can do, is being always that far away from itself, as in the process of living all things die as they are nearer becoming identical.

Curious how the charmers bite to kill. I am attracted to this distance while at the same time I flail away in the dark searching for the house of those which appear similar. I must admit that often my hand becomes a kind of mirror of a hand, constantly deflecting the very objects it wants to grasp.

An actress enters the room while other characters wander through the center. There is nothing I can do to make one similar to everyone who would like all of which was said. The presence of certain third persons on stage is not sexual, though the moistness of an invitation is open to various compulsive means. I do not want to be left out. I watch her as she addresses the stranger whose figure is excitingly lean. A faithful audience receives less than what is given while I attempt to assimilate the complexity of the dream and can feel the members nearest me secretly thriving in the deep fuck. The choice of dinner is delicious and yet the minds on their faces are bland while solutions build to an expectation of response several removes from the scene.

Part of this has to do with meeting the people between their names or moving through a crowd unnoticed while being a foreigner to no one in particular. The example of an individual constantly shaking hands and doing no favors expected of him. This was what she was trying to say about representation and communication: I could watch him as he entered me, slowly bending the jerk.

There are some who, upon entering, stutter in the forgotten room, and physically project a fragment of the voice back to itself, during a moment of pain or wonder if the stakes are high. Who under normal circumstances wanted to do away with this falter in the voice, a limping prose, another breath of air hesitates in the middle as the light sets in. It is as if as soon as I begin to talk to you another image comes between our eyes that we have not learned to misunderstand correctly. There is the distance between us, the air, identity and difference under siege. But I'm sure we could accept such ruptures if there were some way of not being intimidated by what they mean to us if they are lost. I'd rather hesitate upon entering before intricacies in this between. Again it is to some a matter of

doing, something related to remaining just in the area where one is about to step to another area familiar and yet completely unknown. Then if the two of us could back into ourselves, talk about myself without mentioning who I was in previous encounters where I does not belong.

The rose of those who hold back while voicing indefinite figures from the past inevitably end up as strangers. The subject is in constant transit and may not answer on time the letters I have written. If when I associate myself with others my first reaction is to point to parts of the body, shared qualities such as the voice and the ability to hear a similar word when spoken, but there is perhaps a different reason which is to assure myself of the impossibility of being the same even if we are close to one another.

An experience of the past so clearly detaches its event from the earlier notice of recollection that I am likely to change my experience as I am recalling what in fact it was. The correspondence is unlikely to linger and promotes the particular deception of realizing that certain objects no longer hold the same value as before their first appearance. The transitions are used as signs of release though there is a simultaneous replacement underneath of what has gone. I might run out of what some have defined as the realm of imagination in this building but I do not think things are necessarily that specific when put into relations in an event.

A window is a truer mirror of reflection than the mirror itself, whose one half is empty. There is a similar point between oneself and any other that allows us to envisage a world to which we do not belong and which is not necessarily the domain of another other than ourselves as events are miraculous.

Prose is discontinuous, as all cogs stop or shift, past and future.

Certain feelings do not apply while others operate following the red sun down behind the lower hills in the west. The primacy of language over the rest of the world here may entail certain structural formations; however, there is still something hidden within that reaches out beyond all means. It comes from the inside, in receding heights and densities nearer the angle . . . in this world the orders are projected which constitute elaborate dreams.

These dreams, in turn, constitute the impassioned fears related to lower species whose nerves are buried under sand. The point is to write something I have yet to imagine, whose content may be passed along to another without specific instructions other than the notice of hours

before either of us were there. Then to continue along certain trajectories towing the line.

Or, of voicing indefinite fears in constricted corners. Someone else, myself, and others can all choose any number of possible events related to ourselves that would without doubt harm any one of us physically. Fear is perhaps at its strongest during moments of intense calm and exception. In particular events the body reacts and the notion of power is relative to the situation itself while we are rarely conscious of our actions if the mechanics blend correctly. We hardly mention them as separate denials. I am attempting to remain steady while all the images around me are crumbling, images I do not allow. They have a life of their own, stretching out across distant mediating barriers signing the writs. Many

of these are structures of belief shown in the expression of a real face. The ones we behold reluctantly. The experience we actually feel might tell us otherwise if we could read the signs again. The ones we often think of in terms of possessing, always at that point of impertinent release under pressure. Names we predict as future figures. They are beyond our control, of this we can be certain, nonetheless knowing less than this through endless varieties of chance and exchange.

This is why I want to ask questions in the middle, holding nothing back I do not know without for that matter stopping the moment from winding its specific directions.

At other moments there seems to be no middle ground in forgotten areas. An area in which we are led to believe that the surviving instinct is power in its relentless ability to judge and predict. One of the disturbing elements of power is the necessity to be oneself in reaction to some other undefinable stronger because of the particular event. But as soon as one steps out the door there the sun strikes against the leaves a wind upsets your hair someone opens a window onto the noise of a busy street. I find myself moving on to repetitive events in order to reduce this quality of latching, I do not want to be in a position of control even in the corner. To deny the corner is there is to admit there is also another; transitive elements slide from one monument to the next during which moment an other then begins to occur we hardly notice when it has begun whether another exchange could have been made, unfortunately unbound to responsible measure.

Who then has taught us how to ask questions if in the face of the obvious our needs display the desire for something else unrelated and not so nearly alone. The obvious also hinders less ostentatiously, and perhaps the expectation is the first object to rid. Take to the greener not to wander aside.

I am among the measure of my equivalent habits to take a pause and make myself a cup of coffee as the light dims. These objects wander through events as I do not, forever aware of what is naturally considerate. I identify nothing which can be a part of this, unless we are all in some manner a part of this being, only if there is something to which (or whom) we belong absolutely. Either way, each is a singular matter. Awkwardly the case for living an environment in which there is no single command takes the stand. Can there be the notion of a sentence without a predicate when there is nothing left from which to depend in earlier cases, am I known by my ability to be what I could not? Where does the predicate begin if I am in constant states of becoming while substituting a previous history in place of present disguises? My identity begins where in this end is it how clearly I attach myself to intermediates?

Don't you see that the questioning of any given medium is necessarily related to both sides of the issue of use. My talents fodder in certain winds and do not even apply in others no matter how strong I am unless the matter is particularly useful at the perceived point. Most often we are bound to friends and consequent strangers whose values somehow keep the sky afloat above our agreeable and related heads. That is why I distrust irony that does not have a self-appointed dagger behind its back ready to split itself open at the first instant of immediacy available but confronted nevertheless.

What would a syntax of differences be like near similar strangers under landscapes colored by the setting sun while flowers complete the substitution? Are we always

competing for order? This is what I have been trying to point to which is earth for other than the difference between my soul and its obviously overriding powers I know no other habitable medium of body, thought, and feeling. Without the use of negatives imagine a life unlike all others and completely aware of this. To answer such a question (is it possible to ask such a question) within our limits this frame of reference depends upon previous readings of myself and others in related thought.

Education is another barrier closely related. The distance between what we actually feel and what we are willing to admit in strained relationships. That this power is insidious converts honesty into a measure of how far one is willing to feel in order to become with another than oneself. Explanation is the necessary effort underlying notions of utopian endeavor and there is a moment when art takes this upon itself as an explicit cause of production. Never more than a building within responses. This would not necessarily entail such a high degree of self-awareness were it accepted in the spirit of its initial pause silently.

The crystal worlds belong to the lost ones silently nude and delicious. The building is lost between models of behaving followed by the acceptance of slightly thinner volumes this year. Someone could sugar away any certain fear.

Sand and snowflakes fall when thrown nearer at the waves, toward itinerant moralities.

The value finally never end something less than known, nothing left to hold though admittedly fixed through visible barriers which savour could not decline at all.

There must be physical reasons why I do this honestly. At certain times in my life the weight upon my chest has become to load, heave and bear alone when I drown my sentiments of intimidation. A falter in the breath, a leap of the heart, a cold wind stiff. The number of elements can be included to no end as the back turns.

Of course I want to belong to the group, and continually find myself in a gathering of opposites who circle. Most of the causes remain unknown though it is through meeting certain individuals that my attitudes have been changed for good. The allowance is never complete though earned as sticks, rocks, water, other natural fragments broken off to exist for seconds or years commonly excessive. I prefer to borrow modes and manners than associate myself with confirmed familiars undeniably resolute. Certain words have become familiar obstacles at the corners. Experience is part of this belonging going wrong when essential. I attach myself to both sides of the fence, often dangling. They know me and recognize me for the wrong reasons under stress. I understand myself with them for a different source of enjoyment. I am afraid of being alone in daylight.

There I was is a reflection of certain distances for an unknown cause in the future and unrelated if allowed to stay worthwhile. I cannot forgive myself primarily, because I tend to justify my actions to others, because I have a hard time of admitting what is this moment between us before it is gone and unable. The distance between what we actually think and feel is necessarily, and at times agreeably, immeasurable though this does not indicate degrees of satisfaction.

There must be more than this relating between layers of fear admitted to the surface while sleeping. Where have I gone wrong when I consider myself higher than others knowing I depend from their means the same failures which remind us of greater and

separate instances to which we belong. My voice quivers at the threshold of noticeable effects.

I watch her as she undresses the stranger whose figure is undeniably lean and attractive. How much of it comes down to areas of prediction and soiled fear. I want this to refer to other facts within the given realm. Her hands move down his chest until kneeling slowly her lips embrace his hard sex. I cling to the hair at the back of his neck and shove my cock deeper into the mother belly as the blood rises. Vocal figures call out while I gently caress her nipples between my teeth.

The instincts are impetuous reliefs contained with otherwise familiar landscapes. Various distinctions unfold according representative shades of belief in earlier factors. The notice bleeds toward violence within restricted realms. Again the mirror diverts forcing sight back to the middle of misunderstood figures while deeper in. The object of turning round brings others into nearer focus when in the background various activities blend. The thorn, a fragment, circular gates at borders.

I find it difficult to paraphrase brilliant thinkers. There is an inevitable feeling of loss in relationships between others. How much of this is fateful. The intricacies abound and lead to a situation in which I am always a stranger, foreign to the world strained between larger fingers. The voices reach out, hands talk, gestures submerge previous actions of behavior whose origins are unknown. If there is a loss there is also building upon forgotten lots of intermediate space between dwellings. All the indefinite things I can get my hands on are elaborated until there is some sense of body other than my own, in which the notion of attribution is inconsequential insofar as others might behold.

It was a cold night in winter along the shore. The flight of strange birds punctuated the early evening air and voicings of wild gulls outlined the drone of wind and waves against the sand. It was an unfamiliar sight and strange notion to see the snow against the dunes farther off behind the first stretches of beach. I cannot be certain of what I say.

It is a particular vagueness and can often refer to something upon which we both agree, despite the fact we might very well assign it different functions.

It always seemed there was far too much to say. Moreover, somewhere along the line, at some point in our being together, though we had shared numerous experiences rich in detail and splendor, we took to the habit of leaving things unnamed and could no longer recall the relationships that lead to an insight into the meaning of our life as we lived it, together, for several years now, in that now distant city. This is why we had come here.

Yet we both realize, I believe, how little now we had to lose, how much we had gained in silence. I remember saying that we might as well just go on like this and accept what has come between, name it togetherness, and leave the thing alone, to fester in its own powers. After all, what did we know, how were we really to tell which solution would be better — for we both had come to accept the existence of some problem — was there something missing if we could not articulate its confines, describe its qualities, name its effects? Was our problem simply the fact that we had failed to say just this, let the thing alone, whatever it was, accept and go on regardless, knowing, as before, that neither of us had ever had much control over the circumstances of our being together other than physical awareness that what was was already done?

The table we sat at faced the large bay window and gave us both a view over the water upon which the last natural light of the evening sun now reflected. The shimmering light displaced us into separate corners for a while and soon it was as if, again, we had not talked, had never decided to do anything whatsoever for the situation we found ourselves in. The young waitress politely interrupted our silence, suggesting another bottle of wine, or perhaps a dessert and liqueur, which would send us immediately out of this world.

I think I began to understand what was lost, which is part of my attachment to the notion of a middle, and can be defined by a kind of definite mood or weather impossible to entrap. All of this is happening now, parts of what remains were written yesterday, other fragments I pretend to have intuited months or years ago, the experience is real which is an aspect of language I cherish and behold sentimentally. This reassurance helps me tend toward the edge, looking off into the imperceptible future of mistakes, turning back toward the middle. There is a burden of silence between the words which must be as much a part of the grammar as the words themselves.

Why do we suppose that all stories refer to something outside themselves rather than inhabit this area which is separate from mind and body and yet never totally distinct upon which means we absolutely depend? The story is a kind of continuum, though it is primarily distinct from the sequence of events which make it up, which is one reason to think of it in similar terms such as to consider order, literal and beyond.

In obsession through sturdier wanderings digging in. On occasion, the need to be interrupted begs a life. If nothing precedes then where does one begin to anticipate order from which all else depends. One wants to reach the unqualifiable, an end that has no end, something that might lead to the other which is far off and absolutely beyond.

Quantitative measures do not explain the ability to produce. There may be a tendency for numbers to circulate in mass and overwhelm, though such force does not necessarily depend. I do not want to bleed in the flow of events which others use to describe me if they are unable to send other messages. The force of accumulation is not enough when in absence the sighting does not grow on extenuating factors forced to remain peripheral to necessary events. I am turning a corner on resistance within a decided realm that excludes measures beyond that which it controls, I am controlled.

I cannot beg the issue, nor can we extend without transition in what appeared to be something as resolute as an acceptable end. That what I now want to resist is what has allowed him to come this far without biting his tongue. I knew him by the shore and wanted to include the time between events when neither of us knew if he decidedly continued to live according to custom. The natural answer had begun as something that continues as it goes on doubling the earlier life of another, and so on.

The potential use of physical force could become the barrier in a pinch. It excites through different distances while minor variations in contact occur according the price paid to figures outside process as relates to this form of intimacy. The larger cultural order rarely changes in specified instances though one can imagine transformations of an ethic based on complicity within barred constructs. Despite the tendency to resist I am forced into narrower means by which to anticipate the turning is another factor impossible to enforce and predict. I am caught with my pants down.

Where do we belong beyond the forcing of what is natural? It makes perfect sense to admit that we are alone together, that in each exists something separate and undefined yet similar to what every other has, before the work is done. We are small and indefinite, hung from a line suspended between trees or rocks or mountains or islands, something we are attached to, each, dissimilar and solid.

The middle is an ideal between, in reference to a previous discussion among friends. It's as if I might say look at the sky, and you would look there to see the same thing, see the same color or feeling, use the same words to describe what is going on, admonish me for my consistency. But it never happens this way, and what comes between falters, scurries past, or decays in some other satisfaction unaligned to the notion that we have something in common, misunderstood, that we might even change bodies and still have the same problems and worries associated with the lack of words and infallibly wrong contexts. It seems as if this bringing to mind would be a disaster, something we would share and soon learn to regret despite our contemporary striving.

It takes so much time to mention love. I watched as you undressed her, and felt myself undressed, participating in a fantasy so clearly away from myself that it was near enough to imagine and suggest. I have spent so much time practicing on myself as others dive in. Looking in from the outside, the picture under water is distorted and yet there is an image there truer than what I have ever been able to get my hands on near the surface. What more can I say? But I do not like clear water and am gentle with myself for fear, perhaps, of strangers supplanting the strangeness which is my own. You were content to sit there and wait for her to touch you, let her hands run across your muscular thighs, run her tongue around your nipples while I immediately lay down to bed wildly taking my hard sex by hand until tiring. It was then I could feel the warm liquid from inside, deliberately feel the smoothness of my hands as they caressed face, chest and thighs, and close my eyes for good in the late afternoon. It was nearly dark and I could sense that each qualification of time had some hidden meaning that might lead me to another outside myself but so similar as to be within at least for the moment of beginning. I was not ashamed of my motives in relation to yours, after having seen the same image of your faces spread across our daily encounters. I do not want to be cruel. I do not want to leave you. We are not abandoned, waiting for something inevitable to occur without our choice in the matter. I keep coming back to this example because it shows something of how the words work back to something other than themselves which is by no means totally separate but contained somewhere within. There could be others but how can we be so expedient with the idea that person figures into the notion of belief and that to believe we are led so often unwittingly and incredibly seduced.

A change of tone is unlikely furious. Children take off through each instant it changes shifts comes back goes around and to the word which leads them to some other building which is the relating of these other things. No, there can't be just one or none or several or many, but if, for moments, some, to which middle do they come?

Noon is a flat surface. We extend toward the light, and yet I often fail to understand the difference if the stakes are high and farther off. You see how much proof this body begins. There must be more than an intuition, something to complete, a skeletal framework to fall

back upon in a state of awkwardness. This is basically where I want to deny what little I know, test the friendship I have to elements which surround the means of going on at various hours and in certain states of futile projection. All of this is contingent, and I expect to reverse the movement of

certain areas by changing directions within, based on previous experience according to this realm. The hill in the distance will not change, the chair, the upright screen upon which I am reflected insidiously.

Too often the tone carries past the relationship. Is the weather everywhere and always the weather, the stone always the stone, a wooden handle? What has he done with the brush, the thermos, the radio? Form is an instrument of value as it surges through completed barriers what, if anything, can we behold? Where does the transition begin to make sense? Why must I feel compelled to use terms of this body, the caress, a warm angle, something to lean against in the cold? How early is it when I am unable, when does he attend to the project of what is foreign and imposed?

I'm sure there is a certain truth in this if I allow myself to play with words, to hold up the walls here, and point to something that is not there for my amusement at the loss of others. Couldn't it also come down to the fact that everything we do is fragile, that the mind has become an instrument beyond our control when in the face of another. How much force does it really take to open the door, walk down a few flights of stairs and step out into the street, uncovered and alone? Why is it that we wait until we are completely isolated? We know that the pressure ultimately escapes, that finally there is an undeniable release even among the hard and ignorant. How far have the distances been turned into phrases in the place of closer movements of speech?

This is not a call for mass confession, nor am I in the process of outlining the terms of individual achievement. I am *not* alone. Why such presumption? Behind the dream curtain I have committed crimes beyond my belief. I have already fucked my mother. I have slain my father. I have wed my sister. Our child I have buried for fear that he would rise up against me and in turn take his rightful place.

Now I raise this monument to the wind. The circle is complete. I wear my mother's breasts and carry the sex of my father in my hand. My dead child has become the symbol of all that I represent, of all I wish for, of all my projections in thought and imagination. My body is tuned against aggression and I face fear with the experience of fear built in and defended. The light quivers. The tree is a mistake. The earth, the sky, are mistakes. Darkness turns. This light and dark, and between them a fragment of the real which is body, this human mind and shape.

Why is this directness not able more than perfectly silver manners under thread? The matter if somehow brought to conversation suddenly all becomes resplendent, sentient, and my embarrassment begins to speak naturally within vulnerable corners. I do not want to offend but can often think of nothing whatsoever forces to bend down and lurch against what it is within me between us I hate. Dulling takes place over longer distances in thimbles. As often the need not to explain is the moment of contention restrained in order not to assimilate differences otherwise harder to admit and consistently unveil without vengeance.

Are we capable of suspending belief underwater? on land? through air? I expected you to come out naked and alone, walk across the shifting surface, and speak, something high and lofty, strongly attached to the ground. Yet whenever I put myself in your place there is something else comes between us, myself, the notion I have been given since childhood in a society well past my efforts of comprehension. Even the simpler values are placed on the line in banal situations I rarely regret assuming my function. This is not meant to be interior, no wandering, nothing left alone. The essential nature of even complex elements is basically simple, something built upon, contemporaneous, compiled through an addition of ingredients available to all prospective buyers under the strain of normal economies. The leading line is such that it balances, knows I have to come up with suitable skies for indefinite days in usually fateful weather.

I want to hold you in my arms and hug you gently, seduce you into the swaying unknown without a vegetable, table, or door at the end of the tunnel whose light is constantly bright once we decide to accustom ourselves to the difficulties of seeing. I come to this with no arms other than my own and the neighborhood in which I was raised and forgotten while nurtured. The surface of the tv I used to kiss and rub my lower body against was unreal, smooth and clean, a freshness and cold of glass against the flesh, an image of the untouchable genie. The ambient noise was uncongenial to mutual thought and we were often sent outside naked and alone against all the facts of our normal affinities. All the later separations were immediately instilled for fear of future attractions. Steel poles excite. History bears little repetition.

Several arrangements were cold and solid. Leather and wood excite the sense of smell, rub against the flesh of foreign bodies, leak strangely through the skin whether or not you agree animals and forests should be used for such purposes. This must be where such beginnings took hold, the instruments, the body as functional value within this given realm. They could be used for various purposes and soon acquired addresses, phone numbers, aspects that could be reached and held, betrayed, judged, calculated, measured, or simply combined together for some semblance of identity in relation to others who come from similar states. I used to go everywhere to meet bodies, stick my tongue anywhere, lick and suck, spit, cough, gag, kiss long and moistly while breathing through the nose. What can be used within a system it would undermine left alone, twisted around the undefined corners of gaseous loftiness, thin air, high up on some mountain we refuse to govern stuck in the company of countless others. Still there are feelings of no larger thought we could embody.

Which is of another, nearer nothing to behold. That until I leave things alone nothing begins to articulate, pulls away to the clarity of figures without whose will actions are decidedly determined. As things are hopeful, a bundle of nerves, eyes for which nothing remains except a pile of paper, again that previous willful project, my hand straining through smaller spaces between the two.

Norma Cole

Letters of Discipline

I

Skeptical, movement plays there
apparitions grow, are absent

You can't be outside this absence, the unreality
of all the figures talking or that narrative touches

Outside, you are talked in

The book is left, its own impossibility (tendency)
The common I resists, thickness of space, incomplete
taken one by one, playing in between

Signalling another difference, reassembled, available
"stranger to its live self"

No future in itself, in its original strangeness
sojourner become inhabitant

II

Considerable dust, sun

Method will find the right name for this
"brightness in the air"

The system is our guide, nothing out there

Trading this name for other numbers

Never without economy, exhaustive

III

Lighthouse, gate, glass blown in the face

Considerable dust, sun

The system was a brightness in the air, nothing out there

Trading in this name for knowing economy

The captive's heart torn from the chest, new fire kindled
by a silky word in the cavity determining the speed

But, she said, the name is time and we can only count

In costly groups that fall from the ledger of unhappening
forgetting the stream that rolls from nowhere

IV

Strict

Whiteness of the jaw
good, better, best

And so forth
explanations, streets

Leave the fingers, the ear

Take the rest

V

Flowers and animals find people ugly

That's not all

That's not all

The tree is bent

"melted" in acid

Many letters

Or no letters

Nature takes care of herself

Trees remind one of cities

"our amazing cities"

Useful, not a belief

VI

Encounter decides household utensils

Disturbed water

Where to put the severed fingers

Tuning of an eye

Surely this is all

The part before the part
of greatest difficulty

Forego

Count on meeting

Will resists gravity, humming

VII

Here is your area of choice

A state or series of Empires revolve at a distance
from an original state

"A" or "your", i.e. "the" or "my" or "our"

Is working waiting or waiting working

Draw what they see or see what they want

No like, no time

Removal from lexicon's letters postponed each day

Articles grow louder, ordered

Disclosure dissolves, a gap in the sounds
sweets to eat, a sea to drink

No interrupting warring states

The letters of order develop

VIII

Shadows give lessons

Murderous instinct calculates horrors, averse elisions letter

Perfect

Errors were reduced during the night

Why or would I becomes the willow song
comedy, regional, free

Tragedy, the broken tree, dear, impractical

Cellular difference

Minutes with a thought "x"
as if "x" were a crime

Those practical jokers typical of the outer edges
making allowances for temperament and climate

Rolled back into being, an empty stage is against the rules

Say it

IX

Intercalated, pearl handled
I'm an egoist and I use you
Excuse you for worrisome progression at pains to recover
the heady discomfort
Its happening incline, fabulous
Misspent behest, one on behalf of the other
Come into the kitchen

X

A fortune in coffee cups
Meteorite
In distress
Weeping
Something about the garden
. . . made a mess of it
Lighten up
Here's a guide to your teeth

XI

If there's no time
Then it must be drifting
Honest lodging in space
History without substance
Kiss France for me
Me for her

XII

As for poisons worth knowing
Passing back through work
Painters who think away
Dark fit matching shades of seeing
Scare them or wound them
Their fingers fall out
Twice-crossed front underlined in chalk

Their twisted foot

XIII

. . . are objects represented for purely cognitive reasons,
because they exist and so must be grasped, or for emotional
reasons, because one likes or dislikes them (or both)?

— Donald Kuspit

Donald one paints because of the impulse to paint, one grows
To love what is paintable, true or false
Dark fits unnumbered gates starting with a drawing
Bluff or escarpment
Seen from the air notebooks are thin
Wavy lines filled with ground
Questions based in, built out
Sleeping thought or other states
“Way” into “place” wrapped exactly for travel
Fit for reading echoes keep waiting to hear
Figurements these thoughts are lost
Exhaustible shatterhouse oozes
Names for food, mountains, cities
The nature of state, block letters, borders
Somebody’s harp lets metaphors be breakers

XIV

Begin anywhere!
For instance with the aid of a few power tools
The sign is returned to the tree
Turn to the self-propelling object
Seen in or as an exploding chapeau
No further interest in beginning
The ambivalent line
Remembers something else

— *for Mary Margaret*

XV

Barred from “empty” city or county
Occasional diphthong upsets a normative
State of suspension handwriting changes

Numbers armed with sticks extension snaps
Selective reflecting the usual white lead ground
Historically preferred (as) surface
For oil-based speculation
Toxic, banned, normalized
Hair grows, falls out

XVI

Light and cold and dark and loud
Exotic places notwithstanding
I must now apologize in writing
To the tall lady in a dark green overcoat
Large dicta sewn between the walls
Periodicity that names what will be
The bottom's solid introduction
Of course people have walked all over it already

XVII

No time for that gaudy gesture
Jump on it
Summer needs winter
Shake it, roll it, sugaree
Amplify to cut costs left and right
Right and left punch comprehensive reasons outlook
Too fast and not enough countable space
Dare this seam exist in time
To meet a picture in the rue des Mauvais-Arts
No trace of safety pins except in premonition
History has no paradise
Paradise no event within itself

XVIII

Not a gesture, his problem was that he was not
An industrialist rehearsing, he could have been

In love with Nijinsky, so some were, you could say
Color is implied or color is under the line
Power tender traces of *his* unspeakable to which
Reference is constant, it's not the newspaper study
For ink about it just as you are not allowed to smoke
Sometimes the work is not in its moment
How he got shaken loose is immaterial in logic's decades

Through feels like two syllables, distribution and
Reiteration pushing to see what squeaks and repeating
That squeak that black is blue, that green
One loose in front of the study for Andrus
If genii should arise from there . . .
Naturally the studies are more complex
More specific upon arriving

—for Franz Kline

XIX

Sordid, nicely gutted, you're a marvelous driver but you
write like a dog

Ditto's appendix ruptured: the sea
wore a lace shirt

Permits a little song of this number

Butter promised honey survived and discovered

Erasure's hazard
Occupation's horizon
Impression's sidecar
Expectation's parachute
Brief's debt
Skin's check
Bone's verb
Stone's eye

Crashed closed and concerned
Sequence touches if carries
Unused to converse with itself

Gad Hollander

Dissolution (For Three Hands), from And Becomes 130 Ultimate Sentences

1

She signs with a pen.
Sign swings, word books; forward wipe.
And lurched; a constrained desire of the mind.
Thinking lights change, I dissolve lust.

*

X: All was all light, that part of a whole I saw, gulping down night, a herd of stars. Lost love in plain view through the pane.

A(h) well . . .

Someone, crying, would bring to rest their uncorroborated flows. A spoon dipped in a galaxy, its glazed eternity jutting out, handled like a stock phase by time.

Cool lay adroitly between X and lost love. (When writing I'm since here.)

*

Interesting voices accrued to the basic silence; a chain of old, forged in croyl; valley behind the eyes.

X dreamed and smiled, countered their intimacy with a pen; I was there watching.
A funeral was arranged for ten hundred hours.

Against the rest of mouth, I saw the light again; it seems the quietly refracting hem, the quiet cracking

2

touched blue; a bunch of things.

Number, or also algebra, was not simply poetic; the conjunction required mourning light,
the ultimate a wake.

A bus crash, leaving a tangle of divers nostalgias.

*

The more chair, the less light; some balance.

X: In my dream . . . (Icy words floating over a coma).

*

She had a word by him; later they separated.

Ideal reaction triggered by a simple act; gaze.

Coming attractions were a sign of posterity.

*

When grammar committed suicide, we spoke softly.

Dark, filial wellspring; others in mid-stream, their writing skirts blossom, a black book on the earth.

*

A bulb ebbbed, light was brought in a bowl

3

diverted, disinherited (the map on her lap).

Slowly, gradually, imperceptibly, out, away, dark bodies; opaque pores.

Fingers cupping the luminary; a fruit, chance of yellow, bringing homelessness home.

Doubt ground to seed; gesture circled, halted weight.

*

Feet left the ground, opened, shut, and touched again.

Again; flickering axis of symmetry,

alighting

4

only; act of prodigy, with surround of industry; the intelligent manna of her speech —
pausing

against the light (ground).

*

X: I fell to the ambiguous night her hand conceivably moved.

Thin king of her sarcasm, living to 120; a grin, obsessed prematurely, observed through a temporal glance. X thought.

The unhinged tense fell headlong. A witness identified an end. Floes surfaced.

*

Histrionic waves; screams (rapidly waiting) order an interval.

The wings, whispers

5

Y: Tell me what is this madness?

Z: Anyone can, anything.

Y: Of the current mode?

Z: Gasping for gods with our breaths.

Y: Honey in the whorl's hollow muffles this.
Z: The tongue's intrusion into purity, the reflex thunder.
Y: Yes and yellow.
Z: Stones (attenuated) made rare; windblown.
Y: Yet the dancing skirts blossom?
Z: As space immersed in a second time?
Y: How cold cold repeats her.
Z: Mouthless, tractable season with bannered hands.
Y: Bared, legibly blackened hearts appear.
Z: A mood inscribed as warmly.
Y: Tell me the last rime?
Z: Nothing intervenes, we sing.
Y: She wafts her metamorphosis.
Z: Voice parsed across the bowl.
Y: And blows us asunder.
Z: Strangely in grasslessness; dry.
Y: Tears sand apart.
Z: And on her feet.
Y: Again; eyes dying.
X: No, I'm hearing light . . . things.

pressed upon the table, with three unequal sighs.

*

Slowly, surcease; oozes a must of hope; repulses light.

The pen in her dark mouth.

Eric Selland

Transparencies III & IV

Transparencies III

1
The forest contains almost everything
The divine for instance
Vegetation the moon
At its fingertips whiteness
Spread on whiteness then touch
Producing animals
A sickness in the god's throat
Brings men in succession
First city of the dead
Its content mirrored
In the banquet trays
And the family body

2
The city and its buildings
Above the river's source
Encircle the god's dwelling.
Place a kind of magnet
Or receptacle
Imitation of sight.
Critias speaks of a series
Of channels extending
Throughout the ancient polis
The colors seen as mixtures
Idea development
And decay

3
That which lets now the dark
Now the light appear.
What unity in man's life
Infinitely various
The stars come out
What harmony in movement
The spheres if imagined
As the mind at play
Weaving a landscape history
Human flesh and tears
Amusement for the unnamed
The unknown word spoken

4

A language of gesture
In substance and muteness bird
Ploughshare and bow misunderstood
The promised presents
The five real words of faith
And doubt. What were the shadows
Of law and might imagined
Destiny. The air thins out
Dried twigs and fruit speak
And are silent an afterlife
Disassociates itself
From the landscape

5

Extending the house
The singing voice
Becomes lost among others
Only in fragments the world
The seen and unseeable
This is the boundary
Of the sacred grove
Where branches are flayed
And the king eaten
Where extremes meet
In momentum's architecture
Gathering the scattered fruits

6

A basket, some shells, a fetish
The circumference of stained walls
Punctuated by wildflowers
Their names forgotten.
After history a stone speaks
The silence which had encased it
Peeled away
I am another now and yet the same
A tree planted
To signify change
The growth of sound as sound
Approaches its perimeter

7

The house is dismantled
An excess of memory
The visible remains
Provide passage to insects
Openings where animals
And undergrowth repossess
What was lost the body
Illuminates the residence
Memory is muscular
A fusion of energies
The various parts revived
And laid out before the sky

Transparencies IV

1
The seed of nature brings one result
The shapes of nature another.
Stone knocked into masonry
Materials formed from juttings
And thick outcrops, the land's
Complex folds provide a base
To build a wall. Geography
Reveals its age below the surface
While man props up rooves
And center beams to shade his ground.
What is needed is a pine
Where beneath begins the dance

2
Palace in the center, streets
Are arranged horizontally
Then vertically from without.
The grid meets two rivers
And extends into the mountains
On either side.
One mountain tallest, the other
Opposite with the letter
Carved in its side where yearly rites
Are performed. A foundation
For the city's buildings
And its multitude of tiny gods

3
Constructed on two axes
The rectangular enclosure
Forms a mandala.
The collection of detached halls
Aligned on either side
Of the main path leads by stages
To the inner sanctuary
Function of a gate to pause
At the entryway where incense
And cry of cicadas pierce
The humid air absence
Of desire the interior

4

An abrasive element
Washed white and crystalline
Offers a blank surface
For the rake to work with.
Granite and slate dug in
For perspective, the small
Grown huge with lichens and moss
Their furry wet tentacles
Latched tight to the stone.
An ocean or sonic
Diagram, waves reach outward
To divine distance and shape

5

The world is a shadow
 Reflected in a mirror
Articulation of space
 In a raised platform bamboo
Lattice across the round window
A fragmentary view
 Of the garden beyond.
Stepping stones thread through patches
Of azalea, red columns
Of pine and clumps of moss.
 Figures appear then disappear
 Around the turns and bends

6

It may be summer
Traces of writing
A landscape captured with the sky
Stretched over like a skin
To qualify the present.
Emptiness holds things ants housed
In broken fissures in the rock
Foraging into damp roots
Of moss, forsythia,
Baby tears and small herbs
The pungent odor of life
In its unformed silence

7

Light within shadow or light
Without shadow a trembling
 Of dimension shape (figure)
Or imprint on background
Material casting its weight
 On the known topology.
City set forth in music
The tonality of space
Streets merge then disappear
 Hold no horizon but repeat
The swing into the rise —
Ubiquitous, eluding

David Searcy

Becoming Lost and Fear of Death, from A Trip to the Sun

Becoming Lost

1

IN THE NINETEEN-FIFTIES YOU COULD BUY a three-color clear plastic overlay for your black and white television screen that had horizontal bands of blue (at the top), orange or beige (in the middle for mountains and faces) and green to make, in effect, a landscape on the principle that things happening in the world tend to follow the shape of it and accurate register is less important than a confident expression of probabilities. It didn't do very well as an imitation of color TV except for rare, surprising passages — old westerns, for example, might sometimes fall into perfect correspondence if the camera didn't move, long stretches with Bob Steele horseless and debilitated in some favorite patch of Arizona, every color in phase with that moment; you forgot the screen, you were surprised at Bob Steele who had found a kind of resolution or truth. But usually it worked more like a footnote reminding you that color existed in the world, that you could believe it and you could refer to it if you forgot.

Referring to it, though, you had to get through a lot of atmosphere. The pattern remained landscape basically; it was maintained as landscape when not otherwise employed and that kept it at a distance like the thought of outside as a carrier of events flowing continuously through the George Burns and Gracie Allen stage set.

Television was so strange and so unlike anything else in the house it could make you homesick to watch it. Children especially understood the possibility of going to the places they watched; that such strange places originated outside, that they were discoverable and that even though the real, immediate outside remained ordinary without strange places it had the flexibility somehow to sustain them.

Because the television could go on and off so suddenly and thoroughly it meant what you saw wasn't having to be constructed in any sense; it was finished and nearby. When the Today Show turned its cameras outside to watch New York City streets in the rain every morning it could break a poor schoolboy's heart on his way out the door to feel that same kind of misery coming into his house from so far away and the background music complacent as if it were a sunset or something universal. It was the certainty of it that came through so clearly like the smell of alcohol. Television may, after all, have been profoundly heartbreaking, at least at first in its simplest form before the development of style. It made children prone, in a sense, to strange places, caused them to be wistful, perhaps, confronted at a very early age with the reality of great distances.

The horseless cowboy lost in the badlands more often than not was Bob Steele. He wasn't very big in any case and, with the camera pulled back so far and frozen for these

long shots as if to suggest here was one of those grand traditional themes for which an archaic technique was appropriate, he was like a radar blip. The green strip at the bottom of the tinted overlay seemed to work because it represented hope. Soon he was going to descend out of that bleakness but, until he did, it made a kind of cosmology.

If you paid attention to this you felt you had discovered a significant vacancy like the crawlspace under your house or an open window. Bob Steele was lost on such a small screen and without musical accompaniment it was as if he were beyond even the filmmaker's control. Because of the size of the image there was always the feeling that what appeared to be going on was actively referring to something larger and more real — there was no official darkness as in a movie theater to eliminate the actual world nor sufficient scale to take its place. Your thoughts went out to the real badlands and the difference between them and your living room was overwhelming.

There can't be any question Bob Steele, at some time, was in Arizona or South Dakota or wherever it was supposed to be. There may even have been cowboys who looked like that — a few maybe, in the late nineteenth century, all in tight black or dark blue clothing with pairs of sixguns low around the hips — but probably not for the reasons generally supposed. It would have been a specialization in response to unusual conditions forgotten and never recorded. Remember the toy cowboy equipment available in the nineteen forties and fifties: nickel plated stars and bosses fastened with pointed tabs penetrating the leather and bent over on the inside, lots of colored faceted glass hemispheres and superfluous stamped leather surrounding the essential parts of everything. You hoped it was a genuine survival, that within the surprisingly recent past it graded into the real thing. You imagined Bob Steele adorned with this stuff like a Carolingian prince.

Black and white movies tended to suggest extremes of temperature. It was hard to get springtime from a black and white movie and in the case of the badlands it made them seem even worse. It would have been a struggle dressed in black and high-heeled boots never intended for difficult terrain. Such a formal notion of cowboys made real and desperate should have provided

valuable information. How formality is abraded in a harsh environment, how it can undevelop like the characters of domestic swine — a transformation, Bob Steele retrogressing back through origins until he has only the most rudimentary and unspecialized English-speaking cowboy features and, beyond these, a brief Spanish/Mexican fluorescence or a memory of it as his boots begin to come apart. At any moment his experience might seem extended like that rendered by an impressionist painting — locations of things broadened somewhat but not indistinct. He wouldn't be able to tell for certain he was retrogressing but some intuition might be possible or a sequence of intuitions like filmed versions of the Jekyll/Hyde transformation in which every phase is capable of surprise at itself because there is a lag between the onset of each discrete accession or revelation of evil and either its assimilation or its exclusion of conflicting ideas (although surprise can't be very great if the interval never spans more than a single stage in the process).

The badlands and the empty prairies could have benefited from a monster like this — purely non-indigenous, no aboriginal myths involved; a minor cowboy movie actor

becomes lost on location, inexplicably vanishes without a trace (no one had realized how close this sort of activity was to the edge of something dangerous, how near disaster they might always have been). Nothing is ever found. But thirty or forty years later in an obscure anthropological journal there appears a short article describing rural American bogeyman variants, the most peculiar and least traceable of which is “Cowboy Bob” who seems confined to a single county in South Dakota. Although some versions announce his proximity with the embellishment of a jangling or tinkling sound, he is listed in the first, or “most primitive,” class defined as “basically admonitory without significant narrative elements.”

2

An Associated Press story which appeared in newspapers January, 1983, told about an elderly Illinois farmer and his wife who, driving home after delivering a Christmas present, became lost and wandered for nine or ten days and possibly as far as 4,000 miles back and forth across Illinois and into adjoining states before police found them “unharmful but disoriented” in a motel outside St. Louis. The photograph with the article must have been taken after they were found. It doesn’t look like a family picture. They look like wildlife — the glare suggests a flashgun set very bright to insure illumination adequate for any sort of nocturnal subject heavy enough to activate a trip-wire. It’s wonderfully arbitrary as if, hoping for a monitor lizard, they discovered this old lost couple looking up through the photographic developer. They are very distinct and benign and thoroughly attached to some particular part of the world where you can purchase a floral print dress like that and his pajamas with white piping. They own nothing appropriate for being lost, they are like beasts forced out of their range by a flood. Their complacency or inertness in the picture and your sense of the vast amount of time required for the evolution of those clothes, her spectacles and the way she wears her gray hair give them the mass and dignity of beasts.

Did they reflect upon their age when this was going on and think, “It’s just that we are getting old,” and think about the oddness of it and the unfairness — to be so ordinary and so lost at once, the two qualities confirming each other more and more as time passed? Imagine them travelling all that time trying to find their farmhouse, thinking about it more specifically as they became more certain they were lost, bringing greater concentration and imagination to bear in looking at fields and trees they passed in case it were some very oblique kind of signal they needed to bring them home. The house had drifted away like a ship, like the *Mary Celeste* someone would find it right where it was supposed to be visible for miles across flat country with no one home.

It might have seemed the house itself were the problem or the land around it. That the house was too plain — insufficiently decorated, not loved enough, no animal silhouettes and no wavy-edged siding — refusing picturesqueness. The wind would have slipped right past; the farmer and his wife, growing old, would have built up such reserve and sternness they could hardly know what to do. Their children had left them with too much simplicity.

3

Cows possess great randomness. You have to go back pretty far — perhaps to the rock paintings of Tassili — before you find cows with any specificity or firm intent. Even in a fifteenth century miniature painting if there is a cow, you think, “A cow is filling that space”; it calls attention to the space it occupies as if it were potential like a lady’s handbag reserving an otherwise empty seat. It is the template of animals, not like an ancestor but like an animal blurred; its shadow is so general it can serve, in a pinch, for any other. “Here,” says the cow, “I will stand here and eat the grass until another animal comes.”

Cows are essentially at rest. Hence they are locateable. Ordinarily you have only to look around to know where they are — you think of them against the horizon with their heads bent down; in fact any gentle, grassy horizon strongly suggests the possibility of cows and, although many other animals are as likely, none is as likely to be found or as receptive, even absorbent, to thoughts of animals in general. Cows draw forth general thoughts and represent not so much an average as a sort of interference pattern, itself motionless, derived from the combined motions and characters of other animals.

Think of a cow as a formal entity; and think of its bulk and silliness as useful to express the way in which even very fundamental things, however rigorously achieved, are personified into recognition and how anything thought about too closely acquires silliness and bulk.

A cow on the grass by a tree with the sun above them constitutes a basic idea of outside. Do you think, in such

a picture, there is any sense in which it could be meaningful to regard the cow as lost? It is at rest and locateable but, in a way, random. The cow might be lost because it can’t, in principle, be identified. It is only located — holding that location, that space in the childlike picture by the tree in the sunlight.

Years ago Foremost Dairies, Inc. displayed a billboard poster of a cow in bright sunlight among some trees. It was an enormous color photograph with the company name and motto kept within a narrow border at the bottom so all you saw as you approached one of these was a huge side view of a cow — four or five times natural size — standing in a brilliant, out-of-focus glade, the cow itself in luminous shadow except for its face which was turned toward you, half shaded but half in full sunlight which so illuminated the one visible eye it shone, by some peculiar optical effect, like a furnace window. “That’s not the milk for me,” you imagined people thinking, “I have no interest in sacred mysteries; give me the milk from cows that are lost, plain, spread-out and part of the landscape; let me relax in the thought that good things come from nowhere in particular, that our benefits are general and fortune is like the weather and the grass.” And, as it turned out, after a couple of months the billboards disappeared.

4

Sometimes you see an old farmer out of his element. He lives in the country but he had to come to town. He has conceded, probably, to some uncomfortable necessity and you see him in the city with his wife or one of his children along. There is almost nothing he

resembles except other old farmers; he is specializing in some essential kind of humanness which keeps him distinct. He barely resembles the clothes he wears although he coincides with them in a way that expresses the mechanics very clearly — you could infer basic weather phenomena for example. Daylight and darkness, the rotation of the earth.

His wrists are as broad as the palm of his hands and you imagine his ankles are like that too as if the terminations of him were arbitrary and under better circumstances, in better seasons, his limbs might have grown much longer.

If you think of him as younger, you think of him preparing to be what he is now. As an old farmer he is complete.

Science fiction movies traditionally use an old farmer's pasture to drop strange objects into, not as a joke (except secondarily and in the worst examples), not because he is rigid and vulnerable and uninformed, but because knowledge in him is, to a large extent, suspended; he is ready to admit strangeness — unable not to admit it — and conduct it toward us.

In the purest case an old farmer's life has been an approach toward suspension of particular knowledge, the averaging out of his understanding of things, the habitual reduction of it to a single idea wherein particular knowledge no longer needs to participate directly. It involves the ability to regard everything habitually and uniformly, to include even unfamiliar items in the class of things which have to be cleared from the pasture or the field. The pasture or the field is the basis of uniformity and within it things occur (formally at least) as disruptions, apprehension entails exclusion and strangeness, passing right through unimpeded, is recorded only in a subordinate sense, in terms of the novel requirements for its removal.

It has to feel peculiar after fifty years or so on the farm in the middle of the afternoon, in the summer to walk in out of the heat and sit down smelling like ozone in the kitchen. How plain and spread-out he is compared to his youth. He has diffused like a gas or particles in Brownian motion; after so long in the same place he has identical memories in every part of it. The drawl in his speech shows the inaccuracy and flexibility of things and ideas as if they were efforts to inflect a fundamental hum; like the sound of bagpipes the audible struggle is essential information — it tells you ideas are being constructed right on the spot out of undifferentiated noise and also that they are provisional and short-lived.

The dissolution of things is like a drawl. It is acceptable on the farm for structures to decay to the point of dissolution before they are repaired or forgotten. It's not productive for things to be defended too vigorously. On the other hand the speech of some midwestern farmers is so clear it's painful although it seems inappropriate to speak so clearly out in the open; it makes you wonder what they're up to. It makes you want to look inside their houses and barns to see what kind of business they think they're in, to see if they are afraid at night, if they have some secret yearning, permanent and unexamined, like colonists having to defend themselves in every thought and everything they do against the notion they might vanish.

What would one of these clear-speaking farmers think if a strange object from space dropped into his pasture? He might exclaim something comprehensible and describe the event in some way to himself or to anyone nearby and that would be that, no reason to

pursue it any further. He can go out and poke it all he wants and be the first of thousands to perish in some bizarre fashion but no strangeness will get past him. It is absorbed in his knowledge of it and expended before it reaches the audience. But the complete farmer who disdains particular knowledge approaches this thing like an animal, silently at an ordinary pace, and looks over the edge of the steaming pit into regions hardly more uncomfortable than where he already lives.

Fear of Death

2

A DAY AT THE FARM is seldom devoted entirely to thoughts of food production. Rather it is the fear of death that begins each day and ends it generally. Fear of death gives the farmer's wife her bounce and glow, provides the freshness and simplicity of life and pene-

trates, out here, to the heart without sentiment or ornamental entanglements.

Sixteenth century European death is a skeleton whose victims represent their social categories. He sneaks up behind and makes them drop whatever they're doing. The banker's money goes flying and the grocer's cabbages are lost in midair, kept there in the woodcut, unreachable; he will never regain them. Death in the sixteenth century can be anywhere in all the narrow complicated streets or along the road by a rock; you might never see him until it's too late. But how can he get to the farmer so easily? Does he hide in the fields? Can he lie in the corn long enough just waiting for someone to pass by? The farmer knows about invaders and thieves; the crows and wolves he knows to watch out for. He's used to looking around. And what has he got to lose if he's caught? A bucket or a rake? There's no pathos in that. Simple tools knocked out of the farmer's hands make death look like a stumble, common awkwardness. That's nothing to be afraid of.

2

Sudden death in the heat on a sunny day after lunch is more subtle. It springs from ordinariness, concentrated boredom, like the visions of the Desert Fathers. It lays you down wherever you are, places you beside the lawnmower or among the irises. Arrangement is important; you need to be among other things, be understood to have joined them and to have acquired their value.

The idea that, in general, things share a recognizable and fairly uniform value and that they represent a condition into which you may at times be likely to collapse must be a civilized one, maybe even literate. You are always threatened with becoming a noun but certain times are more perilous than others.

There are civilized moments, especially in the summer, which carry with them essential quaintness (or some primordial function belonging to or borrowed by the idea of quaintness) so intense it is stripped of any ornamental suggestion, like the smells of some flowers which are so sweet you mistrust them — you're threatened by the pure and almost

violent purpose of them or by the thought of what creatures might require that kind of attractant.

The basis of quaintness doesn't involve condescension or notions of the exotic or the picturesque. Quaintness is, first of all, boring. It is in fact the revelation of boredom, of deep familiarity, the discovery that some areas of experience not only are universal but are universally uninformative. Quaintness must be ordinary and it must extend your sense of ordinariness without informing it.

Imagine scenes of dynastic Egypt accompanied by Aaron Copland music — the corniest and most popular kind like that composed for the movie *Our Town*. It shouldn't be criticized for being too sweet; its purpose requires that. It says, "You know about this; this is universal." It reconciles anything at all, everything belongs to everything else, nothing is left out; try it anywhere: sons and daughters come home at last, tragedies are assimilated and failures and shabby furniture are acceptable in the dark; people lie in bed with their eyes open for a while feeling inevitable.

3

To think about animal death it's useful at first to imagine the death of make-believe animals. The cartoon dog Goofy, for example, although he hasn't much to say about animals directly, does suggest how you can pretend to be an animal and how you tend to imagine what really happens to one. Whatever happens is more or less dreadful; that it is rendered comic is an artifact of translation.

Paul Larson, the geologist, imagined animals were deeply confounded. Dogs in particular and friendly ones more than others he imagined were embroiled in such violent disruptions of legitimate reality they were held in a kind of shock. He would see a Cocker Spaniel or some calm domestic animal like that and think what it must be experiencing was unthinkable — much worse than the optical distortions used in horror movies to signal the monster's point of view. What limited the intelligence of animals, he believed, was the effort of self control like the constraint, the diminished responsiveness, of a person with an upset stomach.

If he saw a friendly dog in someone's backyard — an especially appealing one, say, with its tongue lolling out and its ears flicked back — he might say, "There's a good dog," then turn to anyone next to him and smile and make his eyes very wide while rotating his index fingers in opposite directions in front of his face to demonstrate uncoordinated revolving eyeballs, the idiocy of the dog and the profound arbitrariness of everything it saw. It was understood that this idea was extendable and that making fun of the dog threw everything into doubt for others as well but it seemed the right thing to do; and, if it were a party and a sufficiently broad impression had been made, the presence of the dog became fixed in people's minds and some, after a few drinks, might imitate Larson's gesture and laugh until, as the evening wore on, the dog acquired a special status.

It would be a mistake to think Goofy's consistently good nature reflects a coherent world view. He is good-natured by default. He is like a sacred animal, even dionysian (at Delphi, think how impressive and unaccountable secret knowledge would have been conveyed by witless bumpkins). Generally he resembles ancient Middle Eastern demons

— anthropomorphic carnivores of one kind or another. His gloves should conceal his real nature like sheathes; perhaps he has another aspect. As a child you felt uneasy when Goofy took his shoes off; there was an inconsistency revealed in the cartoon human feet dead black like the rest of him as if this violated an understanding of anthropomorphism as a sort of parenthetical idea allowable between extremities but not right out to the edge.

Think of Goofy in the breeze. You've seen cartoon wind — usually a gale with Goofy flapping like a pennant — but think about an actual breeze against him and how

it would circulate around his arms and legs with a little more turbulence than you might expect because of their thinness and uniform diameter; even in a light breeze it might be audible, barely, like the wind through saplings or bamboo.

Or how about bright sunlight? It doesn't seem reasonable to think his dead blackness could be illuminated, rendered chiaroscuro or backlit, fringed with pink light at dawn for example. There may be instances of Goofy in moonlight or half lit in caves but more properly his eyes alone should be visible or at most a silhouette; any further involvement of him in such ambiguous and non-essential phenomena must be understood as stage whispers or the narrator's voice like the ephemeral injuries — brief, exaggerated lumps and bandages — which, traditionally in cartoons, convey information at a level entirely subordinate to the main facts.

Goofy in real air may be easier to imagine than Goofy in real light which is probably too direct, too explicit an offense to some important principle. He may be theoretically illuminated, always evenly, like text (even, presumably, like braille). Or maybe he is essentially a silhouette in any case like Balinese shadow puppets whose painted features and garments are secondary — a kind of courtesy extended, in effect, only when they are not in use. Obvious as he is maybe he is really obscure — an ancient animal symbol in the process of regression or reconstitution like an old potato, sprouting arms and legs again the way gaudy adolescent handwriting tends to reinvent Celtic ornament.

How do things look to Goofy? Since he is inconsistent to begin with and seems to function less as an imaginary animal, specialized and independent, than as an imaginary way to believe in animals generally, it should be possible for his view of the world to be to him both normal and incoherent without running into the logical problems this presents in the case of Larson's confounded friendly dogs. The incoherence fundamentally is terror. Goofy's eyes are as wide as the inlaid ones in early Sumerian votive statues; if they blink it's a significant mechanical event; he is always surprised. Surprise is basic; it's the foundation of any emotion and, at a rudimentary level, terror may not be distinguishable from it. Any disruption of the landscape — which is to say anything at all — surprises Goofy. He says, "gawrsh!". And although this likes to be translated as bewilderment or delight, it is at bottom purely surprise which, because it is so difficult to imagine without content, acquires the most primitive kind which is terror.

Goofy's terrible recurring surprise is the sudden apprehension that there is something which is neither him nor the landscape. It's not the sort of realization that comes gradually nor can it be anticipated, because remembered things are part of a different regime; they belong to the fact of Goofy or maybe to the landscape until summoned by surprise to participate in the brief understanding that things exist not merely in addition to him but,

necessarily, as alternatives. "Gawrsh!", says Goofy when he discovers something is not himself and concludes it is a replacement. You would think after a while this would take its toll. But it doesn't. Every day he rediscovers his mortality in this way and quick as a wink forgets.

("Becoming Lost" and "Fear of Death" comprise the third published section of David Searcy's A Trip to the Sun. The earlier sections can be found in the first issues of Boxcar and Temblor).

Holly Prado

The Curtain

1.

Four Grapefruit

JUST OFF THE TREE, RIPE, TINGED WITH RED, to be given to my elderly Armenian neighbors, but I resist offering even these few to the man and woman who garden here, behind the house I live in. They garden in smog, in noise, in corners of this city property that would otherwise be barren. They whisper that aloe vera must be prepared in a way only they know before it can heal any cut or bruise.

This winter season of citrus: Who is the god of giving freely? To hold on too long to the fresh gifts will rot them. I praise the fat grapefruit but want to keep them, kill their ripe moment because there is a god who tricks me into believing that I deserve these juicy, shining things, that I've earned them, yet the grapefruit tree has appeared suddenly where nothing has been before. I haven't planted it.

The fruit is in my hands. Is any gift truly received? Is giving even valuable? The largest one, the one most weighted with desire — am I to have nothing at all to hold? The truth is that I'm afraid to be empty. The seeds might be saved and fertilized, but that would go on in the invisible garden of spirit, where I never predict what will grow. Or won't. The god of uncertainty, as unsure as I am: This god urges me to give over what I cling to so that the new year can come without making promises.

Take these, then. The tart fruit, daylight and blood. Let them feed you, god of the unknown, until I can meet the neighbors who do not speak my language in one of those corners where it seems that nothing will thrive, where I can wait without glowing faith, simply wait to see what will happen.

2.

Mud

WEREN'T THERE THINGS I WAS SURE OF, that we all knew, that kept the houses in their places and helped the seasons turn from mud to seeds to wheat?

A woman has prepared the house for Christmas, every gift beautifully wrapped. She guides a grandmother's hand as tags for the gifts are written. The whole family is happy to be here, but the woman, the one who is me, is not a mother or a daughter or an aunt. There's nothing she can call herself, even if she is loved. Wonderfully, a bird, outside, sings. An angel? Is it? If so, what does it sing?

And why is it Christmas only in this moment? The next season leaps to the city where I live now, where someone has abandoned an apartment. A promise has taken all its furniture. Then I leave, too; I say goodbye to a man who was kind — goodbye forever — but he returns quickly, in the next fast turning of houses, younger than yesterday, close to me again. Still, no name for myself. I hear birds as I sit, trying to remember what time of

year it really is. Angels. Or fragments of what was once whole. Listening without seeing them, I can't make out which are the blue jays and which are the mourning doves, or are they ravens?

A bowl of food to be mixed until it's just right, but it's not right, never finished. Green vegetables, but isn't this the season of mud? The grandmother's hand shakes, but at least she knows who the tags belong to, although all my grandmothers are dead. I am the center of something that warms me, then decays, that moves until it is only a glimpse of feathers behind a bush. The landlady has hung a sheer curtain where a wall should be.

3.

The Crossing

THE WALL WHICH IS NOT A WALL but simply a curtain. Small green sprouts poke through at the edges of the sink, where enough moisture has collected to attract them. Water and dirt. Crumbs and grease. The transformation of what was once on the dinner plates into bits of earth. Where did any seed come from, inside this house? A thing that might be fed, brought to life by the little edge of death around the sink? No walls here, and when I think how I might build one to separate the trees from the bedroom, a seed plants itself in my grandmother's belly. In her eighties, she would really be my mother. She is carrying a child where there are no solid years, no past, only the present. Ancestral pregnancy, the strange growth at the farthest edges.

4.

Middle Age

For Harry E. Northup

OH, MY JAPANESE WARRIOR, his hair as arched as all the courage it takes to face the enemy. Fierce head, proud with shining lacquer, but it droops now, and the wig, matted, falls until I see the foundation is only a shredded piece of gray cloth. Why have I wanted to live my father's life? Whenever I think of Dad, I see him in a suit, smiling bravely, extending his hand to a customer, sure of the sale.

Give back the wish to locate the treasure in the castle on the mountain after the long hike. The slender women, muscular, climb steadily, even though it's treacherously rocky up there. From the field below, I watch them, shading my eyes, remembering the time I swore I'd never fall in love again: I would be as courageous as art, that armor which makes strength out of slippery stone.

Words, slivered and pared, written over and over until there's nothing left of them. The birds, the fruit, the angelic gifts. Give them back. My leg hurts if I try to stand up. My foot has been wounded since I was a child, when something told me that the real treasure is the constant blood of love's confusions.

At last, a bedroom, and, in my arms, a Japanese woman, as round as I am. We are sleeping; we're breathing away what is too stalwart in us. A man enters — the one I've come to love for his tenderness, not his costume. When I can move, I walk with him through a temple of four curving sides, both of us circling this religion of blood and breath, leaning on each other. I look behind me every step of the way, until I know there is nothing following me with a weapon, with a mountain.

5.

All I've Got Is the Weather

NEVER FINISHED. NEVER FULLY PREPARED. Not as greedy and not as empty. If fear is taken into the heart, mixed with today I said, "I love you," but my money was stolen anyway, there's still a medieval wedding ceremony with a juggler catching it all. The one I love has washed a new cooking pot, a perfect circle of heat. God of the elusive! Creamed onions and nothing but instinct, which turns the other way, its head an owl's, totally flexible, and, with practice, balances every tree in just two hands.

6.

An Exchange of Rings

A SILVER AND GLASS BRACELET from the other side of the family, months ago, before I thought I needed it. Amulet of turning and turning. Young girls have magical coins in their hands to protect them from me. No one should know what she can't live yet. I don't know it all myself, and the silver is engraved with tiny flowers I can barely see. Persephone, not innocent, a woman my age, keeps a few plants, even in winter, whose roots are steady in this night soil. No exotic perfume, but, "There's plenty of wine," she says. Even without gold, I'm to give birth to fruit that's been crushed, fermented, enlivened.

One day I feel the excitement of what I have to live yet. The next, I wake up, panicked, imagining myself as a poverty-stricken old woman without friends. The fear is helplessness; the pleasure is the same thing — a crossing into the realm where I don't make decisions from sheer will but from fate, the voice that comes from somewhere next to me, telling me I'll be safe, although a disaster has occurred. I bring out my few toys at dinner: a witch nose, whistling plastic teeth, shoes that walk by themselves, the book that — if you flip it quickly — makes all the photos of a woman dance. My wine-red scarf slips to the bottom of the bag; I think I have it; it disappears. Persephone whispers: "There will be more to find," and I believe her, and I believe, too, that stepping out of my favorite strengths is dangerous. Sometimes, the fruit turns to a lump of clay that may be dead matter. Or the beginning of everything. The bracelet, as much as I depend on it to take me through this year, is invisible.

7.

The Lump of Clay

STRANGE GROWTH AT THE FARTHEST EDGES. The god of giving freely. Incomplete sentences. Food — eaten, divided between nourishment and waste — this cycle holds us every day of our lives. Once, in my living room, the most powerful symbols of all: peacock, lion, black dog. What did the bird sing in the angelic moment of Christmas? It sang pregnancy, although I will never have a physical child, although I'll never again live with the certainty and good nature and faith of my father or of my young self who could manage, she thought, a lifetime of undaunted enthusiasm.

I sleep with the man I love and I dream of marriages, separations, more marriages. Who is ever complete? All I ask is to be less frightened of myself and of the aging spirits who promise both dying and perpetual myth, the making of our stories: repetitions and renewals, clear patterns and reversals. The fragrant citrus. The gladioli on the dining room table, turning black, ready to be buried. The empty house of my childhood which sits just

one dirt road away from a cemetery, and yet gave me many, many flowers. The blessings of animals that I don't understand but worship. Here, part of the way through the garden, I still can't say my inner name, but I can move, even limping. What will thrive? The mysterious gardeners themselves.

Jean McGarry

World With A Hard K

Departure

THIS TIME OF YEAR THE FLOWERS ARE OF TWO KINDS: enriched and hollow. I prefer the thin because they portray the fool's inner roll, a fourth of what is necessary, clip it in two, cough and ingest. I was in a roll and heard the sting in the basin, cough and ingest, talk all through the night: it's cold, it's cold cold. Hold it, if you can, especially on these long curved roads, inwardly curved and awkward. The slice and my head lolling like that on its spike, my purples, the lovely sand. I heard him clam in the night, cold or colder, then ping in the basin, a nickel or porous plug of flesh. I will, over there where you are, prop your sagging until quiet, you can fold in your one leaf and die with your head leashed to the ground, all the firmness of the ground for your terminal.

You're surprised that I started at the end this time. One inner turn, then another. Float one part my way; I'll skin it of thoughts and memories. I heard you say: when people leave, they think I remember, but I forget them right away. The other one said, the one that looks just like you: some who are about to leave, I tell them: go, you're already gone. Not one minute did I hold you in my mind, not even in its void or outer box, the one no one cares about, or is filled with coins.

Already a lot of us are gone. We dingle dangle here, all bleached, one marble hand on the other. I have felt, and these others, all the pain you donated, sometimes with the new and sometimes with the old scissors, the jar of plaster paints and the four hundred quarts of dry rinds, a flat beet hanging from each ear and the empty pod on my tongue (for you, this would be a houseboat). Flowers would grow, filthy and silken, from my name alone, if you will spit here and give me the hollow to grow them. And if he will quieten his night tongue and the dark deposit of mental rubber. There will be here, at last, a flowery mob, and here, the cloudy scrim for you to put your face and see the bottom.

The Hard Cracks

I AM OCCUPIED WITH A BLUE FIELD NOW, knots and termini. If I could find the throat of it, run a smooth but nappy cloth down its throat, along the sides, doubled or tripled to fit succinct. If a field were likely filled in its underground tube and thrilled with its taut finding, it would lie flat, cities flex and uncouple, these rivers would fall neatly like pins. All my hungers are arranged around the flat of it, steeled up and point down, howling.

Morning, come like a bright thread, dangle and coil your slow map. The city with its circumflex, its neuron. And altogether, make the two surfaces, day and what it falls on. Underneath, the brittle things lie in their anaerobia, their stance of tuber, hill and skull.

The world will be painted, all matched, sink down to a nice muck, and the walkers in their dressy clothes cover it, human variety in all the plants. My large and empty grows without bringing to its single pore even the mockery of an appearance, a dancing needle.

Bring to this immaculate zone, this blue, comb and submerge. If four words would loosen and throw a ragged net over this quiet. No longer in a vital state, something to fill this grotto.

A World With a Hard K

STEAM WOULD RISE FROM THE SINK OF THE GROUND. Flowers turn their faces toward the moving particle. Some would turn the other way and the flimsy necks of the reeds in a slack pose. The white flowers form their white seeds as summer is their uncle, and the letters roll together in a green field.

A discipline of tunnels and the fruitful walks and flat roads. Paint this building red and I will flick the paint off with my nail, tie your ship up to my finger, bend these slow pipes. Is it you who put all these sticks in the world?

The dead will accede to the dead; they will come up to the dead in formal, in a mute file, kisses on their faces and a sandy touch. The underworld and the overworld meet here around this yellow building. Inside we could sit, we could spell and moan. We are all here, there are only a few days, the names are plentiful, rich in bristle and shrub. Put my thumb on your thumb.

The singing was always the best of it, a big jar lowered to the floor and spun. I'd like to flick something your way and the way is among these tall gray, perfectly uniform pipes. For you, I'd build an industrial in the skin, float it on your river until it wastes.

Curving World

HOW SAD SOME OF THESE PICNICS HAVE BEEN, the raisin and the fortified bag of lettuce. You join me and flop over here folding the two chickens with their limp, still restless wings. A chariot for the afternoon, winter glow. Two children paint grape stains on their mouths, all flexed with longing and childish patience. You be the father and this curtain of a lake will throw its moist skin over us.

This picnic grape, lucent surface, round jelly on a plain stick, is my love. A baby could design a beautiful nap of slippery voids from these several grapes. To destroy something so plum-like and to fertilize something else.

Pilgrimage

1

I pass two women in the hall
 One is straddling
 A tricycle
 Definitely my little sister
 Reading several pages
 Out of a red book
 The biography of a great man
 With numerous descriptions of oranges and tomatoes
 The other is my mother grown fat
 Mounted atop a scale
 The interior, dressed in cheap clothing, is drenched
 And flowing from there
 Are literary style, dead bodies
 And a tapeworm
 It is said in the family precepts
 The sheets have never been soiled with blood or impurities
 Eternally a landscape of snow
 Does the subject become clear
 At the moment my father loads up
 A cart with large objects
 And leaves town?

2

The artillery smoke hangs overhead
Is it a battleship made of mortar fire
Or a granite peak

The troops continue the assault
During the flash of glory

A man's insides could be seen
Flowering plants are torn up
Clothing torn

And hair

On top of a shining plate

All the parts of the body are dismantled

And the souls of the dead take the shape of stars

3

If that which is possible does occur

Then let it be so

If what cannot happen does not happen

So be it

4

Cicada showered midday

Inserted with foreign matter

Mother

Mother

Mother

Hole

Sister

Sister

Sister

The wild goose flies west

If you must ask where this place is

It is the earthly paradise

Peach and plum bloom wildly

And there are pearls

Birds and other animals repeatedly call my name

And call to my mother

Soldiers prefer wild boars

And old people various goblins

A ravine is cut in the mountains

And the fresh water flows flows home

The days pass

The newt remains

My little sister bathes in the river and is clothed in froth

And like a cuckoo

Continues to search for the ideal master

Praising a world of change in the arts and in thought

5

Smoke rises

A state of forgetfulness

What image carved in the eye of the rhinoceros
Masculine things —
 (Fire and air)
 And things poetic poetry itself
Feminine things —
 (Water and earth)
 And things near to love love itself
The stars glitter
The spider hatches its eggs with its own eyes

6

The poet crawls upon the ground
 Pours flowing blood from his head
I was present at my sister's birth
 Poetry's advent
This evening a cool wind passes
 And the papers rustle
 Prosaically
Then from the land of scarlet autumn leaves
 Carrying a bucket of night soil
A man resembling myself crosses a bridge
 And boards a ship
For Damascus far away and in dead of night
He goes round and round the world of marble
 And watches a flea jump
 Like a line in a poem
 Covered in disgrace

7

And here is second childhood
 That nuclear place at chaotic dawn
 Where stems of millet catch fire
Corpses of people, dogs and cats
 Frost falls to the earth without a sound
 Describe this in exclamatory mode
Pheasants Cuckoos
 The darkness in the harsh cry
 Of a buck with newly sprouted horns
Pass through the red Shinto gate
 At the far end of the grounds
Is a wall the color of a sea slug

8

Used carelessly
 They rot in people's hands
 Or die
Words and a portion of flesh
 Living things
At the far end of a cave
 At the tip of a flame
Today I have done nothing
 Nothing at all
That which occurs on earth ends on earth

Kusudama

1

Within a hedge fragrant with chrysanthemums
The banquet has begun
Grandfather slits a chicken's throat
 And grandmother soaks a mouse nearby
My father has carried the spirits of the ancestors
 To a grassy river bed
And questions, voice raised
 What is it mother carries of her own will
The neighbors glance furtively
 Undoubtedly bathed in light
 She employs a pair of large testicles
 Raise three cheers and sing the national anthem
My sister, all dressed up like a battleship,
 Bites into a plum
 Its simplified interior
 Throbs
 The crimson gate opens onto the world
Beyond a plate of brass
 The one dying
 Is my elder brother
The darkening of a far off field in spring
 With heat waves oscillating
 Grows like fingers of bracken
This is my little sister
 Anyone would feel like applauding
The night the family line is set straight
 And banquet trays set straight in a row
I toddle all through the house
 And secretly desire a daddy long legs

A model of the family's bodies is complete
Divided into blue, yellow and red
Its most sublime points still shine like gold

A portrait of the emperor Jimmu
A cry rings out:
The kusudama has split open
And the sacred farm implements lost
In the mundane

2

"I cut the water inside the pot with a sickle
And shout for it to retain its severed surface"
The autumn of disastrous St. Elmo's fires
My father stops vomiting
Look out the bay window
And drop tears onto the rocks
One great auk
A brandished
Fuse
Within a circle
Which passes into infinity
The plump ridge of a shipwreck's belly can be seen
Waves waves semen shed
Static electricity is produced in the inner wall of a jelly fish
Which swims around the belly of a pregnant woman and sinks
Into the swirling waves
Sense exchange irradiation peeling termination
The sound and raw smell of death
Oh merciful Buddha
I am unable to conclude
That this was my sister
Certainly at dawn
A diamond shaped piece of land filled with the dead will be found
Sipping up their bowls of hot soup
Mother and little sister cheerfully
Set out to pick chamomile flowers
On the periphery of the sundry goods
Is a deep blue garden
Where swans float dreamily
A man can be seen screaming in the flames
A bundle of sutras is folded up
A horned serpent
Is held hotly in his hand

Sentences studded with diamonds and word-spirits
Clipping off the chill dry leaves
 Mother and sister venture toward the cliffs
 Look at their cat-feet
 A winter mist enshrouds them
I am fighting from day to day
 Figuratively speaking, or calligraphically
The enemy may be hiding in a snow dug-out
Language
 Or form
On top of some fresh straw
Several eggs have been laid and left behind

Mother

In summer's parlor through which a breeze passes
 Grandfather lies on his deathbed
He shakes violently
 Like "an active volcano caught in a flytrap"
And sticks out his skinny bones
 A horsefly wicks off to a tangled patch of weeds
And snails crawl over
 The spot where the stone mortar of the house lies
If this be the earth then undoubtedly
 It is wrapped in (imported wool)
"The sound of insects chewing leaves
Mixed with the grinding of human teeth can be heard"
 A dead fish stinks
Little sister brings some water
 When the inner door slides open
 The water lilies bloom
The gardener is called by password
 To the center of the pond in back
 (Seven men / seven ghosts)
Father distressfully ponders the usage of (kireji)
 And "falls on his ass on top of the paper"
— *Daybreak; seven men seven dreams, dewdrops on scallions*
Elder brother places an ice bag on his head
 Counts (paper money) and (glass trinkets
 From ancient tombs)
 Have you finished counting
 The nights the moon is chipped away
"The marshland is the primal (point of exhaustion)

Where life and death (and rice gruel) circulate”
Observe
Distant (Kokujo mountain) in hell
Where sinners are wrapped in chains of hot iron
“What is unreal
Equals the real”
Where is the garden of (Sindhu)
Beyond the mountains and fields
Beyond writing
Can it be seen
By traversing hazed waterfalls
And concepts
Inside a palace
Lit with one bare light bulb
Elder sister robustly
Bears (ova)
And wraps them daily in oil paper
“Cut off the living skin”
“Cut off the dead skin”
“Disaster bearing thundergod” of the flourishing nation
The rain of an evil world falls
The hair is clipped off
And a white cloth wound around my injured head
“The slurping sound of figs being eaten
Is now audible”
As there was no (spirit)
Which did not borrow (flesh)
There is no (spirit)
Which does not borrow (language)
Even the life of a metal is finally used up
The bronze bodies of (works) without echoes
Lie in heaps
(Mud rains) on the other world
“An old man walks through the sludge
Who makes his living picking leeches”
Pass through the ash colored land
Celebrated by the spirits of words
To the sea
The rising sun gleams
An offering to the body
Mother returns from the bath
Naked
“And eating meat sprinkled with red pepper

Sits down firmly on the silk cushions”

TRANSLATOR’S NOTE: “kireji” = the untranslatable “cutting words” of haiku

Jed Rasula

from The Field & Garden of Circe

“The roar of the sea, largeness of the tide,
the blue horizon, the sun burning, excite it.”

— Richard Jefferies, *Sun Life*

Even though you are heavier now
you will float on water & be like ice.
Everywhere you look you will be a parent
swelling & drifting, layer by layer,
pressed to the black stone known as coal
for millions of years on a piece of shale
the explorer’s dogs were absorbed
for a liquid to turn to gas
for the chaffinch grateful for help
for the elegant delicate beak
for the glucose flurry “building with light”
naked & crouched in a nook of rubble
a dog a horse a self-willed wolf
like guarding a house with a bumpy tongue
& it doesn’t take much just a
few young buds is usually enough,
a succulent slit while the taller the door
her hazardous egg their mouth agape
to skeleton, organs, affection & food
to making noises’ spiky case
stippled with heat off a gulf of leaves
so small revolving honey pelt
so hottest point a flaunted sap
the fossil record *most* assent
so equinox decay remains
a good & solid boiler does,
in freshwater snail, in corms of crocus,
in pollen compulsion these flailing salts
this many shines, active a petal
& mineral mysteries list them plough,
a slow alive,
a solemn earth,
a miracle parent, a carrot,

amazing butters that hundreds of out,
that hollowed ocean algae worm by several noun,
sargasso elms not gills but lunge,
such coat of moisture bigger but danger,
nature around the year on over
a crop of sap, a possible rock-hard pear,
cocoon or dormant facet house,
produces branching bees as well,
anatomy rapidly animal lakes,
anatomy rapidly animal lakes,
grumble thorax splashed with yellow
flexible trump & soon may fly

browed on wingtip pumice
immortal maya soaring pillow
each beech attach a history of Venus
—pingala blush in obelisk—
anatomy rapidly animal lakes
the fossil record most assent
to soar on murmur swells the
patter numerical obstinate
loam of the pressure of years
of the story is very invited
and longs for names or
skullborne glues her
syrup a sun life shore to bone
shortwave for years to become
excited the story as light
is food we animal
membrane's karezza narcosis
to *fend*
these cool veins blues past throng

a thaw that soared on cells
by way of manifold pranks
in debts of protein end on end

*

“... there is a massive convergence of mobile minds
flying upward on a gradient of surprise . . .”
just waiting waiting & sweet untold “you know
biology branch in memory alive
biology branch entire hill in memory saliva
said to the fly

there probably *is*"
the spider to being alive
the purge desire to fatten its secret
indulge desire to memor erupt

origi
origin
in ast
astrophe
vertig
amor
ashing a for
a passion forest
a metal blur on sunblind sea shone clouded roar
nor even the need to *attain*
a mooth smapping of surf
lits into folds & cusplike rrific absor

*

Issue No. 4 · Contributors

Notes on Contributors Issue Number Four

BRUCE ANDREWS' new book is *Give Em Enough Rope* (Sun & Moon, 1986), a collection of six longer works from the early '80s, including "Confidence Trick" and "I Guess Work The Time Up." His other books include *Excommunicate* (Potes & Poets, '82), *Love Songs* (Pod, '82), *R&B* (Segue, '81), *Wobbling* (Roof, '81), and *Sonnets — memento mori* (This, '80). He was co-editor, with Charles Bernstein of *The L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E Book* (Southern Illinois University Press, 1984) . . . NORMA COLE's work has appeared in *Acts* and *How(ever)*. With Michael Palmer, she has translated a book of essays by French Surrealist poets, *The Surrealists Look at Art*, forthcoming from Lapis Press . . . ROBERT CROSSON has had two books published by Red Hill Press: *Geographies* (1980) and *Abandoned Latitudes* (with John Thomas and Paul Vangelisti, 1983). A new work, *Daybook*, will be published by Red Hill in 1987. He lives in Los Angeles . . . The first five sections of JOHANNA DRUCKER's "Final Fiction" first appeared in the New Zealand magazine *Splash*, No. 3, 1985. She is the author of *Italy* (The Figures), and lives now in Texas . . . RACHEL BLAU DUPLESSIS is the author of *Writing Beyond the Ending: Narrative Strategies of Twentieth-Century Women's Writing* (Indiana University Press, 1985) and *H.D.: The Career of That Struggle* (Harvester & Indiana, 1986). Her poetry collections include *Wells* (Montemora) and a chapbook, *Gypsy/Moth* (Coincidence, 1984). She is currently editing a selected letters of George Oppen . . . LYN HEJINIAN is co-editor, with Barrett Watten, of *Poetics Journal* and her books include *The Guard*, *Redo*, and *My Life* . . . GAD HOLLANDER's *Video Residua* (Orphic) has recently been published by Northern Lights (London); his film "Background Music (Orphic)" was screened in September at the World Wide Video Festival (The Hague, Holland); other parts of *And Becomes 130 Ultimate Sentences* appeared in *Temblor 3* and *Acts 4*; *The Book of Cries* is forthcoming from Bran's Head . . . SUSAN HOWE has published six books of poems, most recently *Pythagorean Silences* and *Defenestration of Prague*. Her study, *My Emily Dickinson*, was published by North Atlantic Books . . . PIERRE JORIS lives in Paris where he publishes and edits *Paris Exiles*. His recent book, published by Le Castor Astral Atelier de l'Agneau, is *The Book of Luap Nalec*, with accompanying French translation by Michel Maire . . . "The greatest poet of Rus. futurism was VICTOR (VELIMIR) KHLEBNIKOV (1885-1922), a tireless experimenter with words, the creator of interesting linguistic mythology and a supreme craftsman. This bizarre and lonely man was also a Utopian dreamer who hoped to find the mathematical foundation of history. . . . [He] was anti-Western and stressed the Asiatic ties of Russia. He was one of the strongest influences on Rus. poetry during the first years after the Communist revolution." — *Ency. of Poetry and Poetics* . . . KARIN LESSING lives in France and has published two books, *The Spaces of Sleep in Midsummer* (Pentagram, 1982) and *The Fountain* (Montemora, 1982) . . . STEVE McCAFFERY was born in England and lives and writes in Canada. Co-author of *LEGEND*, contributing editor of *Open Letter*, and founding member of the Toronto Research Group, his recent works include *Panopticon* (blewointment press), *North of Intention: Critical Writings 1973-86* (Roof) and *EVOBA* (forthcoming from Coach House Press, Spring 1987) . . . JEAN MCGARRY has published *Airs of Providence*, a collection of short fiction, with Johns Hopkins University Press in 1985. She has a new book coming out in the spring called *The Very Rich Hours*, also from Johns Hopkins . . . DOUGLAS MESSERLI's recent work has appeared in *Conjunctions*. He is editor and publisher of Sun & Moon Press in Los Angeles . . . BOB PERELMAN's most recent book is *The First World* (The Figures), and he contributed "Good & Bad/Good & Evil: Pound, Celine

and Fascism" to *Poetics Journal* 6. He edited *Hills* magazine and *Writing/Talks* (Southern Illinois University Press) . . . DENNIS PHILLIPS is President of Beyond Baroque, the Literary Arts Center in Venice, California, and his first book, *The Hero Is Nothing*, was published in 1985 by Kajun Press (Berkeley) . . . HOLLY PRADO's poetry has appeared in *Sulfur*, *American Poetry Review* and *The Paris Review*, and she has published three books of poetry and experimental fiction, *Feasts* (Momentum Press), *Nothing Breaks Off At The Edge* (New Rivers Press), and *Losses* (Laurel Press), in addition to her novel *Gardens*, published in 1985 by Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. She reviews poetry and fiction for the *Los Angeles Times* . . . JED RASULA's *Tabula Rasula 2nd Revised Standard Edition being a book of audible visual matters . . . with certain prospects over the grounds of The Dictionary Kingdom including transcripts of broadcasts from The Dictionary Pavilion in AM, FM & PM, also featuring a Geognostic Side-View of Wreathing & a Diagram of a Thinking Cap* was published in 1986 by Station Hill Press . . . LESLIE SCALAPINO's books include *Considering how exaggerated music is* (North Point Press, 1982) and *that they were at the beach* (North Point Press, 1985) . . . PAUL SCHMIDT is the translator of *Arthur Rimbaud: Complete Works* (Harper and Row), and *The King of Time* (Harvard University Press), selected translations of Khlebnikov, which was awarded the Max Hayward prize from Columbia University this year. His own poems have appeared in *Shenandoah* and *Grand Street*. These texts on Swan Land are from the first volume of The Collected Works of Velimir Khlebnikov, to appear next year from Harvard . . . DAVID SEARCY published *Flash Gordon Whom I Loathe* serially in *Southwest Review* and *New River*, and his book, *Peter Rabbit's Trick*, is available from Salt Lick Press. He lives in Dallas, Texas . . . ERIC SELLAND lives in Tokyo and is seeking a publisher for his translation of Minoru Yoshioka's *Kusudama*. He is a contributing editor to *Moving Letters*, Paris . . . AARON SHURIN's new book, *Revival*, is soon forthcoming. Four Seasons Foundations published his first book, *The Graces*. He recently collaborated with Joe Goode Performance Group on a dance/theatre piece called "Closer." He teaches at New College and San Francisco Community College . . . JOSEPH SIMAS's books are *Entire Days* (Burning Deck) and *Sets* (TELS, Tokyo). He lives in Paris, where he is publisher and editor of *Moving Letters* and Moving Letters Press . . . GUSTAF SOBIN is the author of *Wind Chrysalid's Rattle and Celebration of the Sound Through*, both from Montemora Foundation, and *The Earth As Air* and translations of Henri Michaux's *Ideograms in China*, both from New Directions. He lives in France . . . MINORU YOSHIOKA (b. 1919), one of Japan's major postwar poets, is the author of 13 collections, most recently *Kusudama* (Shoshi Yamada, 1983).

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