

# TEMBLOR

CONTEMPORARY POETS

ISSUE NUMBER 8

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Barbara Guest: *Chalk*

Ron Silliman: *Ink*

Leslie Scalapino: *Busby Berkeley formation or follies*

Robert Kelly: *The Second Elegy*

Nathaniel Tarn: *Architextures*

Tom Mandel: *The Answers*

Jacques Roubaud: *Some Thing Black*

*poetry, prose, translations:*

Bruce Campbell · Stephen Ratcliffe · Steve McCaffery · Diane Ward

· Duncan McNaughton · David C.D. Gansz · John Taggart · Aaron

Shurin · Hank Lazer · Benjamin Hollander · John Thomas · Mary

Haynes · Andrew Levy · Charles O. Hartman · Will Alexander · D.

E. Steward · Clayton Eshleman

EDITED BY LELAND HICKMAN

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*Issue Number Eight · 1988*

*Edited by Leland Hickman*

North Hollywood, California

A reading edition

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## About this Edition

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*Temblor* ran to ten issues between 1985 and 1989, edited by Leland Hickman in North Hollywood. This is the eighth, published in 1988: twenty-six contents entries over 178 numbered pages, opening with Barbara Guest's *Chalk* and closing with Clayton Eshleman's *At the Speed of Wine*.

This edition is set from the scan of a single copy. 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.

**Lineated and spatial writing is retained as a page field; prose is reflowed.** This distinction follows the printed right margin and paragraph structure, not merely the shortness of an OCR line. Sequential two-column criticism has been returned to reading order.

The text was recognized afresh from the page images and its structure reconstructed from page coordinates. Running heads and printed folios are omitted from the body; titles, numbered sections, stanza spaces, paragraph divisions, and unusual horizontal placement are retained.

Printed typos and eccentric spellings are kept as they were set. No editorial matter appears once the text begins. Set in TeX Gyre Pagella, with display type in Termes after the magazine's own masthead; the wine-red accent is sampled from the issue's black cover.

# Barbara Guest

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## *Chalk*

i

you await assumptions induced by temperament —  
ecclesiastic in wing power —

narrow abridgement yellow slanders the island  
lavable breeze work.

the catalogue within the visor —  
reticule of mannerists. employable objects.

minor tenses born in the scrubs —

irregular  
flame —

exiled grass.

ii

voiceless Etruria  
the mythic quarry —  
Jireball tunneled.  
jovial stone —cipherless —  
hijacked. \_ lively.

iti

with eyecatch —  
on rocks off Scylla  
silvered goats entering. leaving.  
magenta hues.

Memory plunge. tossed. refined.  
post-attic rhythms juggled.  
in beggar garb Odysseus  
— the Cyclops pinched like rose plums.  
'steals memory'

her

'brittle nosed.

shuttle loom.

iv

vase galop

waterproofed.

unfashionable —

bent at the waist. professional at descendant hour —

rusted arrow field —

unarmored amid

glued piecework impotent vessel —

Thracian meld.

skidded root power.

iv (con'd)  
a fairly simple footwork  
the body painted white —  
an air of decay — in the toothless pattern  
light in controlled areas — lavender extensions —  
  
the chambers tied into bundles of creeping myrtle  
says the body.  
an oiled leap  
embracing the skin minimal in shyness  
circling — crumpling — rising  
the six scenes.  
cricket music for the exquisite robing.



v

the Orphic rite film releases

bathybius.

miniature displacement. mountain dialect partial.

(ph formally silent)

indices proper to songster.

zephyrstorm and flute —

heroic spin beneath subsoil —

regal smiles. conversation shaded.

a black currant tin.

vi

a half root elasticized

the upright valve a harpsichord

in steel diminuendo \_historicism —

alabaster hooded —

reduces complex Medea — the narrow unbridled hand —:

“mere antique queen”

the gold birds couch;

aisle of lopped off heads

vii

little is missing even plumped shadow —  
a knight observes his dress —  
under the rough mountain  
tree growth out of rock.

a natural tone in the poems.  
lid pried open volumes fall out —

lightning sinks into soft thunder.  
weights of earth balanced.

viti

a slice paradisaical  
flickers into melted jaune

astrew the careless Arcadian —  
red-tiled slumber. dowerless.  
balloon splashed palm  
incendiary.

the waxed emptiness — moulting stone —  
: agrarian fable.

# Bruce Campbell

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## *On Ron Silliman*

### **“Deficit Writing”**

Ron Silliman, *Lit* (Elmwood, CT: Potes & Poets Press, 1987)

IN RON SILLIMAN’S *RANDOMIZED THE ALPHABET*, the installment, *Lit*, has now appeared. *Lit* is recognizably a part of *The Alphabet* in its general method and specific concerns, although this is not to say it is identical with parts which have appeared earlier. Each segment gives us an opportunity to recognize what has been present in the work but which we might have ignored or which might not have received the emphasis it does in current segments. For instance, *Lit* gives us a chance to recognize Silliman’s concern with literature which is a concern with the institutions (and institutionalization) of literature. But it does not exclusively foreground such concerns.

After all, “lit” need not be the familiar campus nickname for “literature.” It might be the past tense of “light” (which might mean to ignite or to light upon; or vide the colloquialism, “I lit into him”?). And Silliman does ring various changes (puns and vowel shifts) on “light.” Then, too, “lit” may recall the French word for bed—“just as the large bed of the past seduces” (63)—for there is no one (or nothing) to stay these connotations in their rounds, or to arbitrarily stop, as Silliman puts it, “the waltz of connotation” (6). What we can agree on is that “lit” doesn’t mean one thing and that this polysemy is not an aberration. After all, if it is “the tyranny of the whole [to mould] its parts” (32), then the idea of the whole (even the whole meaning of a work) must be smashed because “the whole” is a form of oppression. So it is no accident that “lit” refers to more than one thing, and it’s no (mere) accident that literature should be signified.

The fact that a poem mentions literature at all is instructive, running counter, as it does, to the more common practice of ignoring such categories—at least within the work itself. Silliman, more than indicating the aspects of literature-as-tradition, emphasizes literature-as-institution: “Curriculum demands a division into genre and the vision is gone of a possible writing” (68). So, the institutions must be recognized because they affect the writing. If, as Silliman phrases it in his selection of essays, *The New Sentence*, ‘a poetics must be concerned with the process by which writing is organized politically into literature’ (4), then the question of organization is paramount. The conclusion parallels Adorno’s; for, in *Aesthetic Theory*, Adorno wrote, “Art can no longer afford to be naive” (2).

Quite simply, then, if they do not address this issue, writers are workers who have allowed the nature of their work (even its meaning) to be determined by someone else (expressly, the critics in the institutions, or, as Silliman phrases it, “bureaucratized readers” [NS, 26]). Thus, where “literature is the social organization of writing” (NS, 129), writers must begin to examine the social forces that affect writing, or, due to their preferred innocence, they shall continue to be taken advantage of. By pretending to an autonomy which does not exist, a writer will lose the opportunity to achieve some real self-determination. Thus, a writer must take the autonomy of art for what it precisely is and neither make too much nor too little of it. (Adorno, again: “As society grew less humane, art became less autonomous” [1].)

There is a glimmer here of another target (or, really, the same target in a different guise)—the division of labor. This division is insidious because it alienates the worker from his work. It removes from him the sense of control, for he knows he cannot control literature, that vast monolithic beast; he can only do as it bids, (So literature becomes an eight hundred pound gorilla.) The division of labor is not relegated to problems outside the literary work (although, of course, we should not too easily pretend to know what is really outside, what inside, the work); for there is a division of labor within the signifying structure itself—as Silliman makes repeatedly clear in *The Naw Sentence*, language has been “subjected to a division of labor in its functions through which the signified overwhelms the signifier” (11).’

The key to this division (and its inequalities) is an incommensurability, but one which is never recognized as such. To recognize the incommensurability (the inequality of signifier to signified)—as Silliman would have us do—is to question the supposedly benign nature of the sign and, beyond it, the notion that there is a place for everything and everything belongs in its place. Recognizing the “sly and carefully-honed incommensurabilities” (NS, 89) causes the scales to fall from our eyes and we see not nature (a decree of worth, underwritten by some transcendental representative) but social struggle, a struggle enacted within the very language itself. Thus, “poetry, like war, is the pursuit of politics by other means” (NS, 173).

To some extent, and it is an index of both his courage and seriousness, Silliman’s is a “deficit writing” (8). But what does “deficit writing” mean? ‘A writing of the lack, from a lack (“The locus of the work to be written is felt as a blind spot, a primal lack toward which the writer is driven” [NS, 13]), that momentarily fills that lack (“Every successful poem abolishes (but only for a time) the lack” [NS, 13]), but does not plug it up. (And, therefore, the hole is better than the whole.)

This “deficit writing” depends upon “the word”; as Silliman puts it, “deficit writing (the word is its function)” (8). Silliman’s “word” is not religious or quasi-religious, not a transcendental signified, or mark of full presence. The word of this “deficit writing” is the word as signifier, so, in a way heretofore unthought, Silliman’s is a writing of the oppressed, But it’s the oppressed in terms of the signifying structure itself; in such a way we can talk of the class struggle within language. Significantly, the signifier is on the side of desire, and Silliman has no wish to rein-in the signifier’s longing (as other, perhaps easier, poets might), for it has a utopian edge to it. It is only through a longing for something better, only through resisting (complete) anaesthetization, that anything better can come about. The longing, the unsettling, of the signifier is paramount for stirring up the codifications of what represses us: “It is only through the signifier that the cultural limits of the self, the subject, become visible?” (NS, 146). The signifier, then, is a desire (as well as a play) which shall not be stilled.’

Silliman’s seriousness and honesty lead him to this, too—where others might speak the hackneyed phrase of (linguistic) love and trumpet the marriage of words and meaning, for Silliman “words demand mandatory arbitration” (42). Words, in this sense, refer to the joining of signifier/signified. They can not be seen, even though they be registered under one name, as an entity commensurate with its (one) identity. They are not two halves of a (natural) whole. The signifier is not naturally subservient to the signified, does not willingly allow itself to become eviscerated in the signified. There is, then, a struggle in language which demands a third term.

The third term, the rule or law, would claim to settle differences. Its claims are those of reason, voiced with the concern of (parental) authority. If the signifier and the signified cannot get along on their own, then the law will make sure they do. But this third term is not neutral; it has a vested interest in the outcome. So, as there are “no ideas but in context” (66) and context is social, meaning is social, too: ‘Between language and thought/ stands a cop’ (40). The social dimension, then, uncovers the problematic of correctness: is meaning social because it relies on rules (like syntax, grammar)—thus, if something written is to possess meaning, it must follow the rules—or is meaning social because (a) no one owns her own language and (b) meaning is created in a social environment, in the interaction of addresser and addressee?

Silliman is concerned about the instrumentalizing of correctness through institutional imprimaturs, which undergird, equally, being ‘reduced to [a] function’ (16) and the “register[ing of] connotation” (19). “The lines upon paper state the social contract” (61). In place of utilitarian justifications of writing, we find the Coolidgean advice: “Just write” (45). And, yet, just writing isn’t enough:

‘The disaster of America’s war in Indochina made it painfully clear that poetry or any other serious pursuit which was not fundamentally critical bordered on suicidal behavior” (NS, 3). So, as much as one may like to “just write,” to do so is to assist one’s own demise.

If just writing isn’t the answer, what is? We need the “activity [to be] grounded in its own proceeding” (66). So the activity (the poem) is informed by the specific circumstances of its proceeding (its language). The poem becomes materially specific. But, because it is a “deficit writing” which, given the status of late capitalism for Silliman, is a deficit mirroring the larger deficit of society, the writing can be neither self-contained nor compensatory. A “deficit writing” is definitely not a writing free from the social matrix; nor is it a writing that could be a substitute for anything else. “Deficit writing” is a writing equally of joy and discontent, which means there is no reason to lose heart, but there is equally no reason to be complacent.’

#### Notes

1. For a counter-perspective, we might note Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari’s “the Signifier, the devious despotic agency that substitutes itself for asignifying proper names and replaces multiplicities with the dismal unity of an object declared lost” (A Massumi [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987], 28). Of course, “the Signifier” is despotic because it is definitive (or would be).

But, more in keeping with Silliman’s project, is David Carroll (writing of Jean-Francois Lyotard): “The experimentation with form at the expense of the signified—at least the expense of a certain level of the signified predetermined by the social, historical or political realms—amounts not to a rejection of the signified but to the search for alternative possibilities buried beneath it” (Methuen, 1987], 28).

2. “Art renounces happiness for the sake of happiness, thus enabling desire to survive in art” (Theodor Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, edited by Gretel Adorno and Rolf Tiedemann, translated by C. Lenhardt [London and New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984], 18).

3. This warning against complacency includes a complacency with literature. As Adorno wrote, “True art challenges its own essence, thereby heightening the sense of uncertainty that dwells in the artist” (2). It challenges its own essence (as David Carroll has recently argued) because if it didn’t it would become dogmatic. Thus, for Carroll, ‘the best that critical thought can do is provide weapons for undoing orthodoxy” (xii).

# Ron Silliman

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## *Ink*

### **Jessie's book**

SPREADS, CONTENT CENTERED, THEN SINKS into the fibrous mesh that forms the page. Each strand close up a cylinder, rough about the edges, wrapped in its own web, coated with pigment. Not to defy silence, but to define it. Thus letters shadow space. An invisible barrier is called a margin. A version of marking, any one at all, fills the territory in. The toy monster, dropped into a jar of water, grows vast, but is slime to my touch. The eyes, dotted, remain opaque, vicious. Slightly palsied loping gait of hippie circular distributor, long blond ponytail but a reddish beard, moving slowly door to door, walking just part way up the steps to each porch, in his own world beneath walkman headphones. Frozen OJ on a stick poses as a dessert. Scuffbearded oily street wino's sidekick a curiously healthy and muscular bulldog. Imagine the mail as a consumer circus. Big Bird, bright yellow on the tube, addresses joint session of congress. Glimmer of light high over Mount Diablo (silhouette flat across the hot hazy day) would be an airplane. Each truck is a roving sign for the products within. A loose blouse barely buttoned. Influence governs chains of the imaginable. She speaks and the illusion is shattered: she's a reactionary (to which you respond by nodding before moving down the bar). The original lyrics were *tuti fruti*, good booty. Butch gal on her own chopped Harley. I ride the bus. Roofing gang, on a break, crowds into the orange donut shop. More "private" cops than real ones in America today. She uses one crutch as a sort of cane. Next to three Latino youths, each wearing a baseball cap with the bill turned back, catcher-style. O lord, raspberry vanilla ice cream. Old guy, riding the bus for the sake of it. He's 400 lbs. of soft flesh, pink almost, and, even though he's balding, the eyes and mouth of an infant. The driver hops out of the bus and into the corner market for a styrofoam cup of coffee and, while waiting (a tall light-skinned black man with a muscular build, short afro almost red), he relaxes, lets go for a second of that tension, that needing to be in control of his crowd of rowdy passengers as well as the traffic, and his whole body changes, shifts, shoulders slump suddenly rounded, spine curves, until he's a smaller man, no longer young at all. Chances as at slathering. Bend from the waist, back straight, to pluck the rose from the stage. Cellophane envelops the dry-cleaned suit. Cardboard box strapped to the little luggage dolly used to wheel the groceries home. Standing passengers brace themselves as the bus lurches to a stop. I think that was a print



shop, but now the building's vacant, scars on its surface where the signs were removed. Generations of graffiti gives layered effect. Lines of seniors (tiny filipino women) queued up outside the storefront travel agent's office, waiting for the bus to Reno. Skimming Crusoe. Motel decor: you have to architecturally mark the office. A man who will make a pun would pick a pocket. Ferns quiver in the light breeze of the open door. Cat's sneeze is muted. Net on a long pole just to rake bugs off the top of pool's water (wasp drowns, fooled by anti-algaic chemical additive). Kids on a farm use old Windex bottles as water pistols... broom handle becomes light saber. Moments when the filter of memory serves to magnify (grandmother dies). Paying bills is a way to feel anxious. A torch to blister the paint from the wood. A truck that's a press, heating the asphalt gravel until it melts together. Blue car pauses in the F a

intersection, waiting to turn left. Wide brim hat on a hot day makes its own shade. Cash flow management (my kind of fun). I watch a gang of roofers rake the roof. Not by the line but by the ream. An alarm clock in the image of a robot stamps its "feet" at the appointed time. The duck in the lake alone on the water. The crush: a new paragraph means a new job. Sun rises thru the dissolving fog. On the train, half ride to work with their eyes still closed. People find seats, then snap open their briefcases and pull out a magazine. Thumb and forefinger press down on the bridge of her nose—the pleasure of pressure. Long calves with tiny thighs, plus a long torso that's nonetheless thick about the center: I'm a piece of work alright, virtually random, Dreams recede quickly (I remember there was a fire at hill's bottom, people carrying wicker furniture out into the night fog). I rise, feet bare on the cold linoleum floor. Steam pours from factory vents. Big cranes at the drydock like erector-set horses. Already a forklift empties a truck. David's umbilical cord, big red scab, ready to drop off. The way adults love to dance with infants and toddlers. Brandy billboard reads: B&Behave. Left coast. Small girl shy in her daddy's arms, looks away—over his shoulder—to be introduced (in a way we're all like that all our lives, almost violently intimidated by the shock of a new person, coaxed very slowly out of our cocoons [each new male (if we are male and if we are straight) a potential danger, each new female possible in bed], until gradually we repress our original fearfulness, moving through school and job and the great malled markets with their cool hum of air conditioning as if with confidence, tho the old twinges soon return, say, speaking to a crowd or the anxiety of hitchhiking). Small white tuft of fog settles low over the wide groomed lawns (large white stucco homes) of Saint Francis Wood, the hills above perfectly clear. The first single, a high infield chopper, breaks up the no-hitter and the next swing, a clean rope double down the right field line into the dusty bullpen, ends the shutout, but it's still a laugher, 8-1, and the tension of a great game is gone



forever. Dream geography: around the corner from the Tenderloin Clinic you come upon the large porch to your childhood home in Baltimore. The fog here is dry, almost smoky. She holds the sweater over her head like a hood. The familiar flap flap of a pigeon in the eaves. Cars at mid-day, driving with their lights on. The cat's lip curls, whiskers shake, at the sight of the fly. Green-black trash bags filled with their mysterious lumps, bulges, sit atop the lids of the large plastic cans. This bus is a local. Not by the whine, but by the seam. Not by the rhyme but by the theme. Not by the crime but by the cream. Penisilliman. I can see, written right there in your eyebrows, the word bunkydoodle. A man on a ladder paints a windowsill white. A fat boy shimmies, to twirl a hula hoop, bright orange-red. The first thing you learn at the hospital is to always tell the family that the patient died without pain, the second is that everyone dies in pain, spirit ripped violently from the body. That's true even if it's not. Through the picture window I see the backs of heads, people sitting on a couch. Deep cavern of empty moving van, open, sits out on the street—men in jumpsuits move about the house. Raised toilet of wheelchair accessible john. What I hear is hum of air: breath, breath. Floor made of boards laid over 400 tires. Even down in the basement, one flight below, I recognize the laugh of pleasure. A reading at a suburban community center, red metal chairs (half empty) in a large cold room. Baseball at twilight on the telly looks blue. Slow sweep of the second hand. Jessie's 1920 wedding photo framed in wood on my kitchen wall—I realize, ten days after her death, I haven't looked at it once. More words spin past. Mother's ring on Hannah's finger. Plastic lamp base is mock giant whiskey bottle. Red rectangle on wall where fire extinguisher hangs. Doesn't hold his pen so much as grasps it. Moonlodge. Humus or homos? It's good to live with a bagel. My new belt is wearing because I've been wearing my belt. Freeway's shadowy lower deck. 'Morning's message all its own. We watch the 67 bus turn down into the projects, from which it does

not re-emerge. Winter light: fog is the world scrim, the unilluminated houses half visible on the next hill. Lone teen hits a green ball off the wall of the school gym. No other single expanse shapes the quality of life to the degree of rent. Thru the window I see a roomful of books—who lives there? Tennis, stucco: I go back and remove these words. Fresh paved street, loose asphalt scattered on the walk. Thick chain on saloon door before dawn. Little girl wears a patch to cure "lazy eye." Not by the pout but by the glare. Chips in the cookie, some atop it, crisp, others melted deep within. Flock of coots on a "man"-made lake. Yellowtip overbite of the pelican's beak. Mom's learning Wang. Thru the fog half-visible canyon. Tools in a wheelbarrow define your work. I always attacked my teachers, surrogates for a father that wasn't there. Coot's bill is white, legs yellow-green. City autumn: mock pumpkin patch on a vacant lot. Establish a baseline. On Niepce's table: the spoon

is a soup spoon, its ladle deep and wide, tho narrower at the lip, so deep in fact that the handle, which begins broad and rounded, thins rapidly as it rises from the horizontal of the table draped in a plain cloth, shaped metal arching upward until it opens out into this “mouth” or bowl in which, 163 years later, we still find (frozen) light reflected. I don’t write these texts so much as shed them, shells left behind that should you find them years later should prove no less opaque to you than to me: who was that masked man? But I remember (often, not always) having written these words—what I recall are my emotions, where I sat, what the weather or light were like, what else was active, charged in my life at that moment—not to be confused with understanding the text. Woman in the seat next to me (we’re barrelling downtown) inhales the mucous in her sinuses, loud deep gravelly sound. Front page of the Wall Street Journal has drawings and graphs, not photos, a 6 column page and seldom a headline more than one column wide (ah, but their verbs, the implicit metaphors of business as war, circus, game, are pure bunk). The young girl looks up at John Wayne and says, “I hear you’re a man of true grit.” Glare of the sun on the rain-wet asphalt. She already has her nametag on (“Evelyn”) on her way to work. I pull the pen’s cap from its point with my teeth. Someone’s pulled the boards from the windows of the abandoned house—glass cracked, jagged edged, or just missing—, so now it sits hollow, empty, shaded in the light rain. Thick bunches of red and green bananas. I don’t even see the accident at first (it happened ‘fore I got here), crumpled carhood, old sedan angling out of the parked vehicles a block up, until I see the bus I want moving slow to inch around it, but now (from the opposite direction) an ambulance siren approaches fast. You’ve got a pimple on your nose I’d love to pop. The backs of stores as they open onto a small parking lot, trash cans, empty wood flats, stacks of broken cardboard boxes, jerry-rigged hand-painted signs, but here’s one in pink neon. It’s not that long, slinky knit dress so much as the oversize yellow rubber rainboots. A canary in a cage sings, hung from my neighbor’s porch. I sit on my own back steps and look down at the shed, padlocked, the key missing. Do not write in this space. When the plum tree goes bare in the fall, the small square white house behind us comes into view. Nearby I hear a toddler crying, straining to cry, seeking an effect. The long stem of the begonia twists to reach the sun. So-called rag mop with pale green soft yarn brush. A plant in a pot with a bow on it. They’ve added a story to the top of that house, giving the new wood a thin coat of primer paint, but never following up. Two doors down, the old woman’s crumpled newspapers into plastic bags, piled high atop one another under the corrugated fiberglass awning of the back porch where they’ve dried, yellowed, cracked, begun to crumble into dust. Old high metal pole gone to rust has clothesline pulleys, nylon lines going off in four directions—on this one a purple towel flaps loudly in

the wind while the heavier bathmat next to it hangs still. Nothing is more confusing to the typesetter inexperienced with contemporary poetry than variable spacing. White nylon shorts over sky blue sweatpants, hooded sweatshirt, knit cap pulled low almost over his eyes, the cyclist struggles, pedaling up the steep slope. Under the rafters where the pigeons nest, the — station floor is stained light green. By election day, every power pole in town will be thick with posters. Point my finger at my own chest, then, hands shut, cross arms at about the wrists, held close to body, then point finger at you. Three would-be roommates wait outside the apartment house door for the realtor to arrive. By the very foreignness of its name, the phrase camera lucida is anything but—the title of Barthes' book, translated literally, is the Clear Chamber. Now that you are gone, reduced to ash, I sit in my livingroom alone listening to your voice, 90 minutes of tape recorded four years ago, an oral history, research my wife (not then my wife) was doing for a paper in college, your high voice thin in the ambient noise of the Highview Convalescent Home, and I'm scribbling notes (with this very pen) from which I will later construct a narrative that in a week I will read to relatives—not one of whom has ever come to hear me read—, words that capture nothing, ghosts of fact, when you were born, whom you married, what play you saw on your first date with him, 1919 (An Eye for An Eye), as on the tape right now you quarrel with your older sister, who herself died earlier this summer, an old anger unabated, unquenched after nearly 90 years. The house next to the house on the corner. Black strip of rubber, torn tire, sits in the street. Sound of a jet not visible through fog. Halloween cutouts scotch-taped to the windows. Yow! papercut on back of knuckle stings to bend finger. Imagine myself writing on a bus bench. Jaywalking on crutches? I'm not writing for 'a small circle of friends,' I'm writing to you. A sequence of pockets down each leg of his trousers, a zipper on each, That cheap waxy paper of an old copy machine. A pyramid of dots (23), international symbol for "toner out." A man is trying to pull a garden sprinkler without it flipping over or getting too close. Irritation of gum at base of tooth (tongue obsessively rubs against it). Tina, don't stand in the stepwell. Moving through a thick dawn fog, the world feels only half real (over a fence I see the shape of a man, bending to work in his garden). Abandoned gas station covered with campaign signs. Felt tip marker draws a face on the pumpkin. The loud hum (deafening up close) of the rotating brooms of the street sweeping machine. Blackbirds roost on the power line. Strong odor of banana in my briefcase means it got smashed by the sliding books (I'm afraid to look). Tennis racket juts from day pack. I scratch words into being. Used condom decaying on the sidewalk—how does it get there? Magnetic resonance imaging. Posthumous music. Trick or trout. The stone I felt in my shoe (which I took off and shook) turned out (once the shoe

was back on and laced up) to have been in my sock. The message on my machine is you. O red string net bag, so full of onions. Now the little sun motes have dusted up my glasses. This tie invariably twists. All the potted or hanging plants in these windows, a barricade against the treeless streets. A flattruck with stacks of wallboard. A concrete wall around a densely forested garden, the fence raised higher still by sheets of green fiberglass. The little metal part that holds the eraser to the pencil. After an hour in the hot tub my fingers smell of chlorine. What makes sense? Fog's burned off overhead, but for some reason not yet at the bottom of the hill, just 6 blocks away. What politicized me first was my grandfather's racism (what politicized me first was my resentment that my grandfather, reserved, shy, nearly deaf, would never take the place of my father). He shows emotion only when he's driving—and then only anger, frustration, aggression. A man with a mole on the tip of his nose (cartoon rhino profile). The title sits outside the text, arbitrary. An hour after I depart the sauna, sweat continues spilling from open pores. You lie back and I drag my tongue slowly over the nipple. As any sentence or even a word, when pulled from a text for closer examination, is unable even to fully abide there again. Yet I do not aspire to silence. Chocolate flavored coffee. In the jar on the porch in the sun, red of the hibiscus spreads in a the water, becoming tea. The small girl holds the large cat awkwardly, using both arms. I blow on the spiderweb softly, just to see the strands bend, then return again taut. Wasp pauses near my head,

i almost still in the air, then shoots into the branches of the fuchsia (maroon petals at the center, light pink ones folding back). I'd forgotten about that children's game, Candyland, until I saw it on the neighbor's porch. The setting sun turned the mountain orange as we gathered under the high trees for the service, folding chairs in a semi-circle around a card table, two small candles and a potted yellow flower still wrapped in pink aluminum foil. Trying to force the orange liquid into the baby's mouth with a dropper (fingers pinching its cheeks, to keep it from spitting the antibiotics out). Six blocks away, I'm in a dense fog. Pea green Volkswagen stands out amid the candy-colored cars on the lot. Jiminy Cricket stands as witness to the great events of our time. Even after the funeral I haven't fully managed to cry. Brewers blackbirds hopping over the cut grass. A cat on a couch is a test of civilization. A woman is handing out flyers at the entrance to the station—it's a week to the election. People prefer to "'debus'" by the front door even though there's a crowd there waiting to board. Threadbare secondhand sportcoat, collar turned up to reveal brown felt underside, under which he wears baggy army khaki pants, black cowboy boots (he's maybe 18 years old, thin fuzz of first beard). Deep etched eyes stare out at the world, withdrawn and suspicious (I see her at the bus stop almost every day). White woman enters with a black child

—the old women roll their eyes, glower, look away. The dog lunges at the limit of its narrow chain. Samsara notes. Lunchpail in one hand, stereo blaster in the other. Little paper packets of sugar in a bowl. Arm in arm, grinning and laughing like a cliché of young love—but they're not young and are in fact blind (she's latina, he's black and more than a little portly), canes tapping and sweeping ahead of them. The bus rolls over the hot, fresh asphalt (dozens of small stones of which, thrown into the air)—I love the smell. When I see him (it's been months) I recognize the purple spots of Kaposi's sarcoma immediately. Far from any market, three shopping carts rest against a phone pole on this corner. At the edge of the construction site, the little cubicle of the portable john. Ah motherboard. I pour the liquid soap into the "scrubby" side of the sponge. The ratchet effect: your salary drops before your consumption. Methane muddles Mono flight. Who figured out that shaped wire (staples) would not only pierce paper but could then be bent back in on themselves. His halloween costume is a trash can, so he must be Oscar the Grouch. Egg carton's built to buffer the egg. Puffing my cheeks out to give the razor a firm surface. Hummingbird high above the barren plum branches, juts. The world is all that floats through space. Porch light on, tho barely visible, middle of the day. "Ah, Mr. Trouble," he says to the cat, "you back again?"

A sneeze wells up, uncontrollable, and it feels great, like an oncoming wave, swelling and swelling—when will it crest? Sitting on the stairs, I'm three steps up so the toes of my feet hang off the edge of the first step. Upstairs, the kitchen door is open to let in the sun and warm November air. It's quiet here, in the back, but out front on the street the blasters blare funk city. Hey, bro', wanna buy a watch? She uses a shopping cart to go from trash can to trash can on Mission, retrieving aluminum cans. North Beach is a battle zone, alcohol-engraved neuron receptors. Old ladies who bunch their hair under string nets. Is it different when it's a short Latino wearing the ten gallon hat? Now the music's drifting back through the open houses. Shouts mark a touchdown. For example, do I indicate if the person is white if that's what they are? A white butterfly, in among the fuchsias. Ink jink, kink link. Unk junk, kunk lunk. Suddenly the parrot begins to scree. A jet flies into the sun. The freeway is quiet, nearly empty. Odd to see a dragonfly this near the coast. I sat cross-legged in front of the pelican and showed him his picture from the field guide. Long green toes of the white-billed coot. By the shape of its head, this is a lesser scaup. Old white men carrying bags of crumbs to feed the geese. Mother times her biscuits. Val gal invents a game (she's only two): climbing on a stool, she throws herself atop me or really just leans forward, arms out wide, letting herself drop, great wild joy in her ' 15

eyes at the instant her balance is breached, control abandoned, the fall! But it's tough to carry the baby atop your shoulders if their diapers are poopy. Library's



name rubber stamped across the page tops, legible only when the book is shut. By nature, I'll crouch if writing at a bus stop. Awake at 4:30, I realize by five I'm not going back to sleep. I let the 67 go by in order to catch the 10, which I see just a few blocks down the hill, but which, when it arrives, is jammed, no light visible through that swarm of bodies, so that its driver refuses to stop and it slowly pulls on by. His office is his breadtruck. Each morning she put the little metal basket out on the porch, full of empty milk bottles, a note stuck in one of them with the day's order (the tiny bottles were for cream). We gathered in the livingroom as the Jewel Tea representative opened his case to display this week's offerings. She's wearing an understated grey tweed suit and when she snaps open her briefcase I see, next to the Wall Street Journal, a copy of Dianetics. Already to have written these words is to have gone past them, through them, unable in any real sense ever to return (save possibly as one does to an old photograph of a dead parent). Old VW bug, stripped of its fenders, hunched open wide, high mag wheels: a dune buggy. My name is not Blood. From the el you can look down into people's yards, but not just any yards, only those of people who've learned how to live near the el. Here's where the tracks run parallel thru beds of gravel. Do not place tongue on third rail. Try to look inconspicuous wearing a lemon yellow jumpsuit. No, actually it's a two piece outfit with a Keith Haring design. He pulls off the backpack and sits down, hugging it to express sheer exhaustion. Next to me sits an old man holding a saxophone. It's disturbing when someone your own age dies of a disease you also have. Darrell's eyes red under puffy flesh appear to squint. At dusk, the street lamps flash on in a sequence, row after row of lights on the next hill coming on. The stillness of the ride home at 5:00 pm—the train is crowded, but people appear listless, stunned. But this long thing that was inside of me, which I shat (dark, curling spiral sinking to the bottom of the bowl), is not me. The trouble with rice cakes is the way they break apart. On the street, walking past the too-sweet smell of the donut shop. Full-length mirror abandoned in the low grass at the edge of the park, shattered but holding tenuously in its frame: a sign inauspicious to the superstitious. He's the King of Rap, there is none higher, CBS execs all call him Sire. Pigeons peck at scraps of crust. In the dream, we're in bed when the earthquake hits, the towering bookcases starting to topple, books sliding spine forward, into the air, tumbling, but I can't move, I can't even shout. [brackets] [here] [inform] [place] Pen in the shape of a dart. The band binds the watch to my wrist, Irritable, narratable. I dig my thumbnail at the small red tear in my flesh, edge of a knuckle, until the black speck of a wood splinter rises up, then out. The chapter on friction. They sit on the bus silently, neither reading, looking out the window, nor even watching other passengers, each in their own world. By the SP yard, a lot full of containers, red, blue, yellow, stacked one upon the other, taller

even than the surrounding buildings, a pyramid. Her body, long and lanky, is very nearly a boy's, small breasts barely noticeable under the Izod shirt, yet it fits her delicateness perfectly—she gets off the train and I never see her again. Machinists on a picket outside a red brick building, half the signs leaned up against the wall as guys smoke or sip from steaming styrofoam cups. Deep blue metal finish of mailbox is perfect background for fluorescent graffiti spray. A lone coot in a still pond. Already they're putting the wire fencing up, soon to be xmas tree lot. I read Butterick's review of Paradise and feel so flattered I can't write straight for three days. Even before they start drinking, the alcoholic's liver is different. She sits with her knees tipped together. Monkey Street. Once we're under the bay heading east, the mob on the train thins out, he finds a seat and the small plastic case is revealed to be a laptop typewriter, upon which he begins banging away. Ships white in the drydock. \* Harsh light of the dawn sun—horizontal. That odd square collar almost a mini-cape, on the sailor's shirt. That period of true dusk, less than 20 minutes, when the sun's set but it's not yet dark,

with red-orange haze in the low sky, the bay a still gray, lights in the City just now becoming visible, half moon rising—later, down by the port, interior lights illumine factories, warehouse, flat blue fluorescent hue. Burst of citrus—nothing here even vaguely natural—cough drop dissolves. Five employees huddle by an office door, waiting for the one with the key. The escalator steps chewed into my shoe before I could yank free, series of teeth marks gouged into the rubber. Woman with a rep of a nympho, no longer young—what needs, I wonder, are thus displaced? Half empty train: people sit scattered to give one another space. His briefcase contains just the morning paper and lunch. Oft-heard, by iambs hidden in the head, words warp eyes' gestalt.... Wrecking yard directly under the freeway, the corrugated buildings lone ship spews steam out in the harbor. She's at the age where chins begin to multiply, making the transition to a new body. Cars inch up the on-ramp, waiting to merge. Solitary house on that empty block, old wood frame Victorian (you can still see where the foundations of the others stood, in among the high weeds) has been gutted by fire. Out of the tunnel, city's fog turns into East Bay's haze, glare of a diffuse sun. Night of the living chairs. It don't make no never mind. What's great about a fireworks display isn't the pyrotechnics but the crowd. This store is not for rent. Unreal brilliance of a gas station after dark. Banter of people punning. That instant when gravity starts to alter, train pulling forward. The finger seems huge, wrapped in the cast. In a used bookstore, the poetry section tends to be small and to the rear—I read the titles like a social map: what got purchased, what discarded, what the used book dealer thought might sell again (here, next to Leonard Nimoy, sit 5 crisp copies of a saddlestitch chapbook, a local street poet long since dropped away). Who remembers Bill Deemer now?

Pigeon-toed gait of a palsied man. Are the cheerless mercenaries of the financial district any less deluded than the prideful faculty of the research university? Teardrop tattoo. Trying to think through anger (is like losing syntax): heart's muscle cinched tight as a fist. Dear "Beware of dog" sign, I believe you. It's the exceptional that gets defined as news, the parolee in a thousand who fucks up royal all over the front page, the lottery winner whose family rushes onto the stage to crush her with hugs, yet the mind, that reading beacon, seeks for patterns even among such factoids, design more powerful than any politician's rap—thus the public sphere is inherently unreal. Man at a pay phone half-whispers. It's a later train and the people on it aren't just going to the financial district, therefore dress with variety and color. Long vertical column of short lines, each enclosed in quotation marks: shape of dialog in paperback novel. Sartre's translator arrives at the publisher's, where a secretary buzzes her up to the editor, saying into the intercom, "the typist is here." Bright damp mound of dogshit piled high on the edge of the walk, red, red-brown, almost steaming. At night you can see the rodents in the streetlamps' shadows, scurrying, following the concrete wall of the gutter. Here's a beetle the size of my fist. These daypacks seem huge on the backs of children. Just six blocks away we come into deep fog. One foot leaves the skateboard, dragging on the street as a brake. That moment in history when mailbox rental shops suddenly multiplied. Streetwalkers with their high cheekbones, gaunt heroin air. It's hard to walk down a long flight of steps with the sun right in your eyes, I thought, tumbling end over end. "I'm a goner," she said to me, that term, in fact, being literal. Commas began to breed. Refrigerator door as kitchen kiosk. It's Sunday morning and I'm squatting atop the roof of the house, checking out the repair work in the gutters. He inserted the long needle directly into her vagina, drawing fluid from the cyst from within the abdominal cavity. Having grown up with a typewriter keyboard, I have a bad attitude toward this device called a mouse. The train stalls in the tunnel. I | squint to read the letters through the shadows of my hand. A new program means a new idea, Three day week. He was a terribly thin young man, so gaunt as to appear frail. It's not the knees torn out of

the jeans but the longjohns beneath that creates the effect. A tendency to jut his tongue out when he concentrates to write. She coughs and you hear the fluid in her lungs. Mouse scurries from behind the stove. A woman at dawn standing at the telephone kiosk on the corner, long wool coat over flannel nightgown. After the funeral we went back to my mother's apartment and ordered a pizza. Freckles on my nephew's nose, Green glass beer bottles litter that rooftop. The traffic copter sinks into the bay. Sox and tennies worn over her dark stockings. Two quarts of I.V. fluid to rehydrate the patient, bringing the blood pressure back to normal. I slept



in a chair in the Emergency Room waiting area, that brief period between when the tv stations sign off the air and when the Saturday cartoons come on (I saw the fall of Pompei in black and white). All play and no work makes dull Jack a boy. Give the cat a tonic, Write the cat a strophe. This notebook cover (leatherette) cold to the touch. Now I'm on hands and knees on the livingroom floor spraying clear glass lacquer on color photos. There's a black mole like a dot punctuating the lobe of his ear. This pen is dying: black ink fades to gray. People rub their foreheads more than you would think. Book is for to read now. Hot coffee to jumpstart the brain. Krishna, people stumble over your name or presume you took it in response to a religious conversion (once somebody asked me, "oh, you married a woman born in 1966?"). Blue leather binding: a law book. Built on small square lots right after World War 2, these boxy houses (low ceilings with the swirled cement look) were thought to be "ranch style"—three speed bike dominates small foyer. Big "A" in a circle more prominent these days. Ballpoint pen attached by cord (curled and plastic) to the clipboard. 'Train roaring in the opposite direction suddenly shuts my view. Old 'familiar: red and white Coke truck. The forklifts are yellow, sitting in the yard. Flexing fingers, popping knuckles (thin calfskin gloves manufactured in the Philippines). From above, the oiled tracks of the railyard glisten in the early sun. A civil war soldier's cap, but made of leather (this was before they thought of helmets). Two kinds of barbed wire atop the chainlink fence. The power generators behind the hospital. A sneeze trapped up in my sinus cavity waiting to happen. 'Try writing with your gloves on. Mattress on a sidewalk becomes impromptu trampoline. His theory of poetry is that it should have no theory. Map of rivers, veins stand out (up) on the back of one's hand (a fine down covers the flesh, so light you hardly notice). Try to guess at which stop other passengers will get off, based on their clothes. Hip to wear high top tennies with the laces untied. Before ears "'pop"' you feel the pressure build. Crow seems huge, standing amid the pigeons. Under the freeway, in shadows, the highway department maintains a staging area (infrastructure of the infrastructure). A desire for stanzas. Her eyes seem large, but that's only the contacts. Old wood frame house appears to sag, a small building virtually swallowed by its own additions (porch, closed in, breeds a porch). Buddhists call the buddhologists spiritual nerds. I have 30 seconds after the door's open to reach the alarm box and punch out the code. Shadows in front of curtains: the lives of strangers. El] Taco Loco. A large, older woman, jowls and neck folding into one another until there is no jaw line. I shut my eyes and feel the stress and pressure points in my body, shape of this seat, the pull of the train as it plunges through the tunnel at the bottom of the bay. Freight line warehouse: row of raised loading docks. I watch the bag lady meticulously fold her red blanket, putting it back into the crowded shopping cart.

It gets hard to type when fingernails grow long. Ahmal and the day sleepers. "Bad Pun, bad Pun,"; she said, scolding her dog. She's wearing that short, pleated parochial school skirt, but with longjohns; beneath. The pen streaks across the page, leaving stains of thought. I pick up the morning paper to read the latest lies. One way to cross your legs is with one knee directly atop the other (hands cupped atop), another, broader and more triangular, is for the ankle of one leg to rest upon the knee of the 'other. You depart the train, walking slowly up the smooth escalator, while I remain aboard, squinting. into this notebook, and in minutes we're miles apart. There's no view in the tunnel but the flash of al passing lights. Laser cut means not cut at all, five reams' worth accorded into a single box. The first thing you notice about that building in the projects, green and boxy, is that all the ground floor windows have been boarded up. Narrow vertical window slits of the modern jail. Painted shut years ago, the second floor windows in our livingroom have grown cloudy with dust and grease. The wooden handle of the teapot's smoking, blue gas flame of the stove too high. First the bed's unmade and then I drop a few books atop it, and later a basket of clothes fresh from the dryer, then a sweater, then a newspaper. I'm the only person left in the entire car of this train—"all passengers must offboard at this location." Trying to remember what this neighborhood looked like before the freeway. Finally, nine weeks after my grandmother's death, I'm able to cry. Reviewing flash cards, preparing for the test. Now that I own a car I'd better learn to drive. In this ad, the Marlboro man's in a yellow rain slicker, looking to his right, our left, cigarette in profile, his horse in soft focus just behind. Thumbnail pushing my cuticles back. Play on the cliché. There's a guy in Berkeley who thinks he can prove Stephen King shot John Lennon and that Mark David Chapman's just a lookalike scapegoat. The idea of spreadsheet function. Blackbird struggling with an orange peel. Cradle the phone receiver between ear and shoulder, Next to me on the train a little white-haired man is reading a pamphlet, Tips on Getting Published. Day so cold ink's half-frozen in the pen. Ambuvan. Alcohol's isolation: Darrell dead in his room for a week before anyone noticed, Electrical flashes to colored lights make a sign. Surprised, coming out of the long tunnel, that the sun's out. Cheap orange plastic of the road gang's vests—they trudge along the tracks. Someone's left a coffeecup atop the mailbox. This is about my emotions. Silhouettes of gulls backlit by the sun (bay invisible thru the polluted air). Motorcyclist on the sidewalk—how come, in the cold air, her breath doesn't fog up her face shield? The sign reads "Tkaros Private C ub." Theory is the sex of academic intercourse. Writing in airports is basically weird—is this what Whitman meant (is this why Whitman wept?)? A tractor that's no more than a conveyor belt on wheels rolls up to the baggage bay. He wears a painter's cap with the visor in back. Men in business

suits, especially if overweight, often look like adolescents playing dress-up. We will begin preboarding at this time. Increased informationalization in the NATO/OECD zone-regime brings rising colonization to the lifeworld of its subject-objects. Finally, we're above the clouds into the pure night. Next to me, two men speak of "leveraging power." Far out over the Pacific, streaks of red deepen (yet above the clouds the sky's a pale, colorless blue). Earth reduced to veins of lights. When this you see (cup of tea). One sits in the sun because where else, man? A small tree still stands, dense roots clenching earth, tho its clay pot has cracked and fallen away. Baby bottle bags. That metallic sound specific to the lid of dumpsters. When I see that dog has chewed the buttons of my good jacket and shredded my checkbook I go into a state of shock, laughing because what else can I do? We glide over the low clouds like skaters over ice. Mountain that tears through the soft cloud flesh. As we descend our shadow rushes to meet us. I leave the reading to go off with some "non-literary" friends, glad to be released from that world. Trudging up the slope of the hilltop, one leg bent, the other stretched. With her child in her left arm she has to reach across her body (half standing) past another passenger to pull the cord to stop the bus. Verbs vibrate in the bowels of nouns. The way a coat stretches across a huge-bellied man. Sikh in a suit, beard white as his turban. This dude's combing something medicinal into his hair, dipping the teeth of the comb into a small bottle, camphor fumes choking the air of the cafe. Ah tenderness in the muscles of the neck. Rail yards this morning virtually empty. Clouds cling to the low hills. I yawn and my body shivers. Acquisition of capital obtained through issuing stock underwrites new expansion. Odd to see pickles and lettuce strewn on the walk. This train is bound for Concord, this train. Telephone booth smells of piss. Brothers in the rain remain indoors. The streets are stained with water, glistening yellow under streetlamps. Steam from a — |

factory vent roils up, lit in the night air. I watch a woman stick her gum almost delicately between the pages of a trade journal, then yawn. A tall young black man in a beautiful skirt. Polyester girl, something of a churl. New grafts for a decision tree (thought is a hybrid impression). Legs ache from strain of day—it's barely dawn. The bus in the mist. Full moon lights my room: coleus casts its shadow. Suppository like a hard wax bullet. That's not a yellow ribbon in her hair but a shoelace. Fission Street. Roses wrapped in wax paper. Safety pin as earring, a teen's goatee. Imagine learning to walk in heels. A young Latino man watches me intently, distrustfully, as I write. This woman on the train sits back, throwing her long wool coat over herself like a blanket. Stickpin closes collar tight around the tie—school colors. Pigeons flying in and out of burned out apartment. I watched the young man, huddled into his seat on the crowded bus, trying to write amid the

hollering into a notebook. Get another sandwich! O shadows of tunnels! Concrete pillars to support a freeway. Ivy to clothe barbed wire. Shadows of trucks pass. Cowboy boots beneath tie-dye skirt! Exclamation point for the joy of it. Lettuce and pickles and carrots. How exactly does one corn beef? Sherlock Holmes and Gardens. My neck feels stiff from a sleepless night, my eyes sting. Just say North. A woman's knit cap meant to look like a seashell. Take note of individuals whose hairstyle is mixed, ambiguous, schizoid—for example, the man with short hair greased back and big bushy sideburns. She meets an old acquaintance from City College on the train and they agree on a date. Full-sized, the billboard (a canvas in the shape of a truck) dwarfs the stucco building to which it's attached. Thoughts flicker, sputtering in the mind. Two rows back, a woman sneezes again and again. All economy ultimately \_ resolves to an economy of time. The headphones and dark glasses give her the "walled-off" look. Tendency days. A newspaper's blown off somebody's porch and has completely disassembled, gray-white sheets billowing in the street. Coathanger twisted straight lying in the gutter means someone was locked out of their car here once. Hands too cold to hold. Trying to keep both hands steady, staring into the small mirror of the compact case, applying eye shadow on a moving train. This brain is bound to story, this brain. The loneliness of the long-distance programmer. Long deep coffee belch. The car is under a sheetlike tarp which, in the rain, clings tight. She in that taut white skirt, olive skin, hurrying to get under cover, the whole world able to see the outline of her panties. 'Rock and roll, brother,'" says the drunk (white) to the driver (black)... gin in one hand, orange soda in the other, the small man shambling off into the rain. Sand dollars hang onto gold loops that cling to each ear—she's beautiful precisely because her eyes are red. Feel of your teeth against the edge of my cock. Low sky's a great grey wall. Silhouette of a woman on a mountain top, just lighting a cigarette at dusk, beneath which, in small print, the surgeon general's warning. Dust of the rail yard gone to mud. Lone wisp of hair, isolate on the pink skull reflected back down at me from the dish-shaped mirror of the corner store. Hummingbird hovers around my head like a giant wasp. On the freeway in the rain, driving with their brights on. The hills in fog cause the mind to bog. Plastic cover over unfinished roof. The weightlifter wavers under the shadow of the bar. Nameism. Boarded windows of an abandoned school postered over. A sock on the floor by the door. Houses shoehorned into tiny lots. Green triangle with red dots: child's crayon drawing of a Xmas tree (ornaments look like measles). 'Trees that turn color even in California. I shut my eyes and want to drift back into sleep. A man in a wheelchair pauses before the steps. Ballad of the body reduced to ash. Mysterious little concrete house (no windows!) amid the tracks. A man is wearing a tweed cap over a knit one. Cars whip past. Asa, age two, screams just to hear his

voice. Echo of helicopter bounces off valley walls. Out beyond where there are street signs. Surrounded by factories, a brief three block commercial strip, a row of; residential hotels and one dark bar (crowded in the afternoon) that calls itself a social club. Unused in \_ aback yard, paint-splattered ladder leans against a porch. The circling gull peers down at its valley.

He leaves the phone unplugged, but the answering machine on. The pear tree is barren. A parrot in a cage on a wooden porch. Lunch or lurch, which one?

Lounge! Three robins in a bare tree. Soft-bore at targets hidden in the head, fools and piccards, I, erroneous, aim. Mr. Banana Breath, Dr. Truth Decay. Electron micrographs of chronic alcoholics' liver cells depict an eerie battleground: the mitochondria are scattered haphazardly, some grotesquely misshapen, others with gaping holes in their membranes, and still others white and vacant, bled dry of everything inside. A break between words. The point where Chinatown and Nob Hill imperceptibly weave together. Someone's puked into the discarded Fritos bag. Clausewitz on art administration. Will Build To Suit. Fourth day of a bad cold: you no longer remember what it feels like "to be normal." The non-materiality of a year is what makes it so difficult to get the date right on one's checks for the first few days each January. The yellow paper of a Mexican book. This isn't a subway stop where you'd expect to see a young woman all flashed up like that in the middle of the day. Eighth day of the same cold (stuffed head, hacking cough) and I head out just to keep from dying of cabin fever. Men who wear dark glasses underground. Hand cramps to push the pen, what then? The man sitting next to me, wearing an Italian suit, has a single tiny silver ear post in the design of a swastika. I sense the fever in my cheeks, my hands, my neck (I don't snuffle, I snuffle). That fire engine's chartreuse. The sense of detail to those hills on the first day after a long rain. Glass of shattered bottle forms a pattern on the tracks. I want a new form (ah won't, a new foam). By pause and pitch, I recognize that conversation to be in Chinese... Mandarin or Cantonese I cannot say. The cast turned his hand into a large white club. Bespectacled, freckled little man, red hair gone to fuzz over the bald crown. Why do I recognize that voice over the intercom as black? That yellow should be the middle light between red and green. A man in hip boots on a sunny day. Grandfather tumbling in the air, falling three storeys from a mountain of old newspapers at the pulping plant (wrists and ankles shatter on impact). Leather shoes with the toes soaked through. He likes to wear what he calls college ties. Two new books in a single week (double word score). Cheek resting on one hand, eyes shut, she looks glum. Bright stripes of a yuppie umbrella. But leg warmers over high heels? My father, blown by the explosion four storeys into the air, third degree burns over eighty percent of his body. Coming out of the tunnel, the rain's stopped, the sky half clear. If you hadn't called at sunset,



I'd've spent the entire day without speaking. No peeking. A shop in which they make architectural models, city of small dolls. Idly drums his fingers on the briefcase. It's a rainy afternoon in Berkeley and suddenly I feel 7 years old again, darting amid puddles past leaf littered lawn. The snorting breath of anyone with clogged sinuses. Halley's comment. Who is served by this discourse (the question implies: discourse serves)? The Vietnam Vets' Center is closed now, the space for lease. Tiny curtained storefront for AA. The snot had dried in the cold air, clinging to the hairs of his nostril. Privileged aesthetic communication. One of the things David Salle's work is not "about" is irony. White cat chases black cat. The bus is crowded and she's got the seat so he puts the bag of groceries (old fashioned brown paper) in her lap. After opening the can, I drain the water before pouring out the peas. Velcro snap to canvas briefcase. Brittle as an old man's toenail. As market culture expands in order to create through absorption a single world ideological system, there remain two basic varieties of aesthetic form which continue, however fitfully, to subsist on the outside: pre-market cultural genres, predominantly rural, peripheral even in the context of the Third World, and those market modes which openly contest the primacy of capital, at the one end forms which previously were associated with feudal courts, the historic avant-gardes, and at the other the militant nostalgia of "folk art." Walking, with each step I feel the cramp in my calf. There is no "third person." It's cold enough to make me curse, grey car

looms through fog, headlights dulled by the smokey air. The voice cool and soft over the intercom, "Fremont train approaching Glen Park," then repeated. Watching her change from tennies to heels right there in the station feels inordinately intimate. Teens jogging up the down escalator, laughing, making little progress. Conjugate, coagulate. Little metal hand device with which to curl lashes. The train, a cubist slug, slithers into the tunnel. I press your nipple between thumb and forefinger. Man in tv commercial sticks out tongue at mirror, which talks back. Men in airport bar gather to watch NFL playoff game, screen filled with snow. Dressage & CT is a publication with 6,000 subscribers. At quarter to five everyone in the office gets the giggles. Two deaf persons signing to one another simultaneously. Trying to write with my gloves on, letters are large and loopy. It's not often you see a woman urinating in an alley. An odd elegance, man sipping a cup of coffee with a cast on his baby finger. Wide-eyed lady of the highlands. Cheap chandeliers in lighting store window. An expression that stern has anger to burn. Coming down the escalator after the train's already begun to pull away, faces reflect frustration, fury, resignation, regret—laughter, shouts, curses still audible as the tunnel sucks us in. Tiny piroshki, twist of sour cream. Your firm here: we've got what it takes. A novel begins with a description of place. People of the past unite

(black cat slithers through traffic). He steps on the heel of his skateboard and up tilts the front so he can pick it up. Notice how mottled old gum stains render any square of city cement. Divestiture of the past, alas. Anti-apartheid activist from Australia comes to visit, I swear, holding a teddy bear. Those white boots with fuzzy lining look like a pair of high heel casts. Speed's creed: power steering. What is beef but embodied corn? Choose your 'world (walls against war). Out behind the Oakland hills, pale and pointed stands Mt. Diablo. Gulls sweep past, coasting on their wings, curved arcs, never a straight line. Shattered glass beadlike in the cracks of the walk. Neighbors gather, children in their arms, laughing, telling stories, as all day the men stir a huge pot, a two-by-four as their spoon, boiling, raised upon stones over an open pit, wood smoke and the thick smell of chunks of pork (later we watch them slice and slice and the next day, hanging from three clotheslines, strips of entrails and flesh, slowly drying, turning bacon dark). Sitting next to me a thin man in a gray suit, but with green socks, is reading a xeroxed copy of a crime report, stamped in red "Defense Copy." The thick gold loop hangs from a narrow wire running through the ear. As the wolfhound stops and turns toward us, my chest tightens with instinctive fears. I want to turn the page and it to be gone. Bright red beacon of a zit on the tip of my nose, not ready yet to pop. Train emerges from the tunnel like a long slow worm. There is a poem, mother, very far away and very long, toward which I am climbing in the dark. Skin flaking in the inner ear, flesh coiled about tufts of hair. The nostril, a trumpet, widens. What's the deliverability on that connotation? Kurds in the way / Olaf Palme did slay. Content is never more than a form of extension. Whole earth excess. Pimple on my forehead (the unicorn factor). Pencil sharpener juts out from wall. Dinks: double income, no kids. As if all the silent 'e's began again to be voiced. Fecund, sickened. Not this. Since when? Off-white leather tennies gone scuffed and dark. The tray rolled up to their table filled with small plates of nameless pastries, pork-centered here, shrimp there. Poor. Old. New. College. The shirt was a cotton blend (leather tips at either end of the white-striped belt). Atop the old ladder in the dark room, I fumble about in the ceiling fixture until, having unscrewed the "dead" bulb, I hold it beside my ear and shake it. I thought of it because I was speaking. Two modes of irony, one thoroughly cynical. Tall red-cheeked blonde licks her lips, as she reads the morning paper, tongue passing slowly to moisten the flesh. Poetry is like a spoon but with a serrated edge. People chuckle at the idea of seven pens in my pocket. A woman vamped up enough to be a drag queen (it's the freckles through the rouge above the day-glo pink lipstick, red-blonde hair stringy over dark eyebrows). Handkerchief still neatly folded, man mops his brow. They rush to crowd the entrance of the escalator

like grain in a funnel. In the dream, the cat's speaking to me, asking me not to leave it behind. Predestination creates salvation anxiety. Just Squeezed Grapefruit Juice (round pink sticker on the bottom of the skateboard). I get to the bottom of the escalator just in time to see the train's red lights disappearing into the tunnel (trains in both directions create a great wind effect). Fake leather chair, legless, sits glistening in the rain on the walk. Odd duck speed reader uses a knitting needle to guide his eye down the page of the Wall Street Journal. The train is empty now, end of the line, newspapers strewn about the car at one end of which, strewn on the pale yellow rug, stepped on, a bag of potato chips. I love to stand on the porch in brisk rain, shielded (sheltered) yet feeling it. Here's an old vacant lot become a lake. Your transfer spot for the Fremont line. A huge, rotund man, he never tucked in his shirts which hung free and loose over the great shelf of belly, but wore ties that seemed dwarfed against that landscape. It's not the sun's glare reflected off the windows of that train passing in the opposite direction which bothers me so I turn my head, but the flicker effect caused by its motion, strobe in broad daylight. Facts form acts to bracket lacks—don't ask! An ache around the eyes like a band pulled tight breaks my concentration. A book in the mind is want to grind. Art is not a distraction. Paragraph is plural. Buppy mofos of the night, ignite—what have you to lose but your subscription to Jet? A better door than a window. All of Acker's work might be read as a meditation, sometimes coded, on the sexual abuse of children. If my subject be broken, who then is the agent of this intention? The small old woman (my grandmother) chased me around the house with a knife. The wine label through the bottle of wine—lines of glue cling to the glass in horizontal rows. The level, the beer's horizon defines the brown bottle's slant (slope of the table). Sex is not a drive, not even neutral, let's call it park. Let's breathe in a recently painted room. The grain in that voice is corn. Here's a small white bowl, smaller than a cup, filled with a hot sauce. Lean forward and let your elbows rest upon the podium. Hair is to hear as tear is to tear. Here the lace is tied in a double-knot. The small rough legs of the calamary. The color of this ashtray is limestone. To be a poet is as specific an identity as being 'queer,' but this is particular only to this period and place. The iron weights bang against the gym's cement floor. Entropy is inherent (no sentence needs a period). He sits at the ballet, watching not the dancer but the dancer's breasts. This next poem began days ago, perfect couplets bound like an old woman's feet. The hair on the back of his hands not uniform, but thicker along the base of the baby finger. Think of the incinerator burning in the alley as a space heater. Gag me with a loom. The name had just three letters, two of which were identical. The accent and lisp blend perfectly. The small hand grasps the long spine of the glass. The black dot in the raspberry soda was not a seed but an ant. He did not experience his head falling away from the



guillotine as the loss of consciousness, but as a sense of imbalance accompanied by a tremendous chill, the eyes of the spectators still fixed on the blade. The tease of a plot. I slipped the ring from my finger and examined the smooth, indented flesh. A cold morning, conscious of each arthritic bone in my foot. Roly-poly, drinking Stoly. I wake up filled with an unidentified despair, almost giddy with emotion. Trains roar past in both directions. People who merely stand on the escalator versus people who rush down. A small stone caught in my sock right at the heel. The price you pay to have been born into a family that couldn't deal with anger. When I'm anxious I monolog. I read to myself half aloud even in public. She's wearing old comfy leather sandals, but with stockings. But when I say I it's you I mean. Morphine no longer muted cancer's pain. I rotate my wrist slowly just to hear the bones crack. By the door to the kitchen, three tiny metal ant stakes had tipped over. Slice of a pitted olive, like a miniature donut. No yelp whatsoever. Dream recedes to a child's voice—I don't wake so much as admit to waking. Haitian creole in a Boston suburb echoes French. Preschool abstract expressionism taped to refrigerator door. A slender economist with big brown eyes. Red brick hospital appears still in the

snowy field. The dog whines at the door. Poor little jade plant, you've been overwatered, pot's dirt gone to mud on the bathroom floor. Then, on the bus heading downtown, a golf course in the snow. Wood frame funeral home. Then gravestones, grey against white. In a children's playground large silhouettes of animals in bright pastel colors, each with a capital letter, E for elephant, D for duck. D for dunk. Express yourself explicitly on the problem of operationalizing the dependent variable. In the dream I see the face of an infant I recognize as my own. Tapdancing cartoon critters sing my song. Page 1 headline of USA Today, Friday the 13th of February, 1987: ""ABC's 'Amerika': See It or Leave It." Cold swirling wind rises up off of Boston Common. In the next room, same dream, people from the Institute, from every job I've ever worked, were calling my name, even honking horns, imploring me to get back to some meeting, but instead I rushed ahead to you as the baby started to spit its milk up all over your sweater and you shouted for me to grab a towel, to see that it didn't get on the blue Christmas stocking. The Charles River appears frozen but deep down we know it's not. Our family style was denial: I felt so guilty at having broken up the family home, having forced my own mother to move out of her parents' house, so disconsolate for the lack of love, that I was sucker for the first beautiful woman who wanted to bed me, so long as she was as intense and crazy as my grandmother—thus I was married at age 19. O bare birch trees of New England. She's reading the latest issue of Contact Lens Spectrum. Horses wearing blankets stand in the snow. Port's piers notched into bay's water. Fuck everything, said not

as a curse. Hot as a purse. Plastic sailfish on tavern wall, lightbulb in eye. Urban skyscape flattened by reptilian footprint. The nose as a sequence of curves..Inner swirl of the ear. The cup on the table is full of small paper bags of sugar and sugar twin. Who put the chill in chillun'? Eating lukewarm scrambled eggs with a plastic fork off a styrofoam plate. Outline on my leg of a residue adhesive, exact shape of a band-aid. Custer's analysand. Sentences I forgot: she shoves the stroller out into the street at the driveway so as not to wrestle with the curb. First coffee in two days and I'm wired. Fingernails feel overlong. Mixed message: camouflage pants (big pockets!) and lavender shirt (running uphill with a soccer ball tucked in his arms). We cracked the gasket. Businesslike on the train, a woman consults with her daughter over a spelling lesson. Machine hurtles through the tunnel. The biker and the analyst are the same person. Infant's t-shirt as expensive as an adult's, but with bears on it. The specificity of the avant-garde audience is sociological. O henna dreadlocks. Rhetorical flourish worthy of any porch bannister. Memento mori: I see a young woman I recall having met as a child, Who remembers Ferris Fain? Sky settles into darkness. What if night is the norm and day its other? Already your ankles have thickened. Wino's green bottle is no kinda wand. Loud funk rhythm in the too-bright falafel shop, red formica table top. First Hunan Restaurant Vegetarian Seafood. Her stride down that dark street suggests experience with the martial arts. The dream dissolves at the instant of the alarm and, try as I might, I can't remember why I woke upset. An old woman, bones bent, white hair still reflecting an earlier red, turns her head. How can anything end with a question?

# Stephen Ratcliffe

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## *On Leslie Scalapino*

### Scalapino's Way

Leslie Scalapino, *way* (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1988)

SOMETIMES WORDS SET OFF as if to float in the white space that constitutes a page will come to have a power that transforms them, that gives to apparently ordinary statements as of things as they are in the world a resonance in which words and things seem to intersect, almost to touch, Language then becomes concrete, the sound of its syllables and the silences between them moving like weights and counters in the ear's body, making attention all that counts. And then too the reader becomes a listener, if not the book itself, as to a written score performed 'out loud,'" rhythmic emphasis where the accents fall, cutting so to speak the literal fabric of a page bound with others like it between the covers of the book. It will be as if the words were set down in order to disappear, leaving no trace but meaning, what might have been, for the reader their perfect and complete potential: breathing in, breathing out, words fully material in being able to occupy, and fill, discrete space.

In *way*, composed of two serial works, the later floating *way* (no(h)-setting, hoofer), Leslie Scalapino sharpens her attention in language to the zero point at which words, almost disappearing, make present the world whose events we live in every day. Her settings are "contemporary," no(h) where, non local urban places found in at the center of the late 20th century American experience. We recognize fragments of scenes we know of, have seen first hand. "The woman who's not arrested — on/ the bus — from banging the seat" (hoofer); "'the other taxi — up on the sidewalk"; "the people — whole/ families — who'd gone to sleep on/ the side walks — in rows" (no(h)-setting); and fragments of scenes we haven't actually seen except perhaps in movies, but ones we have read of or heard about: "the corpses put into the river for/ burial" (no(h)-setting). But more often than not the setting for this stripped down bone-spare writing—which stands in its chiselled conciseness and the almost breathless intensity of its (female) voice in the lyric tradition of Sappho, Dickinson and H.D.—is left open, a placement of event "'in/ a city," "in a crowd," "the lovely/ city," "'the/ lovely/ city," "'the lovely/ city," "'the/ lovely city" (walking by).

This survey of Scalapino's camera's locations from walking by is representative of the almost immediately striking and, in the end, compelling fact of this writing,

namely its fragmentation of syntax and breaking of the line. Or I should say interruption of syntax brought about by means of the line break and/or the dash, which functions almost exclusively as Scalapino's punctuation mark of choice. The lines in way are characteristically short, set off in stanzas placed as if to float upon the white space of the page, their syntax apparently (and purposefully) incomplete: "to make/ — as/ in — their/ — it/ with —/ a person — in/ a time./ / having/ made/ it — as —/ with — an/ individual" (walking by) The words, set forward in short declarative bursts that seem to scatter sense—ricochet off the edge of the page— reduced to a simplicity that proves almost impossible to articulate, "register the difficulties of achieving speech in the face of contingency," as Michael Davidson writes on his back cover notes—words as a window in language opened upon a landscape that is immensely interior, Scalapino's singular vision "being an instance in which such a situation could erupt."

The violence both incipient and actual, whether between men and men or men and women, in the framework both of love and loss, and the alienation that lies alone at the center of Scalapino's attention in this book, is suggested in the two black and white snapshot-looking photographs by Andrew Savulich that are paired together on the cover, one titled "couple dancing in bar" and the other "'men fighting on sidewalk.'" It is the violence of confrontation, rooted in the politics of overcrowding, homelessness, and economic repression ("the setting/ / having the high rents/ with/ an attitude that/ they/ shouldn't live in/ this/ place — who're poor" [The floating series]), a learned violence of streets and kitchens and bedrooms, unmitigated here by the comforts of suburban-pastoral one finds in post-workshop poetry. For way is above all a poem

that investigates, with an almost Taoist exactitude, the contemporary urban landscape, the one most of us live in and know best to be ours, for all its failures, which are ours too as well, because of our own making, as Philip Whalen reminds us in his jacket notes, this book "'showing us... the world as we have constructed it: we're the responsible parties." And it presents that world head-on, without pulling punches so to speak, in views that amount to glancing blows, at once direct and oblique, from the frankly sexual confrontation explored up close and (im)personal in The floating series ("having put/ the/ lily pad in/ herself —/ encouraging the man/ to/ come inside/ her") or Aoofer ("to/ — suck on — the man's part/ now — between the legs"); to the momentary glimpse of everyday street-event violence made extraordinary by Scalapino's staccato-like hammering out of its detail ("my/ relation to the mugger — a/boy — coming up behind/ us — grabbing the other woman's/ purse — in his running into the park" [Delay series]); to ordinary episodes of attack and counterattack one happens upon or reads about in the Metro Section of the newspaper ("the thief — a boy/ taking the

grocery store/ owner all the way into a/ back room — having already — shot the guard — to shoot him — as/ very close”; “her — the — car was destroyed/ by a manhole cover — on the street — going through it” [no(h)-setting]).

All of this said, the true underpinning of Scalapino’s sense and portrayal of the real as that actual, objectively verifiable world we live in circa late 1980s, suggested location east/west coast America with forays between and beyond, watched over in Delay series by cultural icons Greta Garbo (“love — on the part — off the sort of Greta Garbo — so”) and Fred Astaire (“— a hooper/ — as the reason — or that/ from his existence — of our/ culture — to communicate/ not from it — manufacturing’) lie in the passage from David Bohm’s *Causality & Chance in Modern Physics* which Scalapino has taken for her epigraph. Readers already familiar with her earlier work will recognize the impulse to connect poetry with science here (the subtitle of her book that they were at the beach — an aeolotropic series — suggested an interest in Heisenberg’s Principle of Uncertainty: that perception alters the phenomenon perceived, that thinking changes what is thought about). “Nature may have in it an infinity of different kinds of things,” Bohm begins, easily enough, and through a series of careful definitions (“this type of interconnection we shall denote by the name of reciprocal relationship, to distinguish it from mere interaction...”) and syllogisms (“Thus we conclude that the notion of things implies that a complete and eternally applicable definition of any given thing is not possible in terms of any finite number of qualities and properties...”) builds to a conclusion whose principle weight, if one followed it out into writing, could well lead to just the sort of quick, momentary, shorted-out kinds of (interrupted) statements the broken lines broken by dashes struggle to speak the truth here make. If “no such a thing can ever remain identical with itself as time passes,” as Bohm asserts at the end of the passage, how can one think to speak or make coherent sense of the world. And yet, as

Bohm concludes, “we admit also that nevertheless there | still exists an absolute, unique, and objective reality.” And that is the world way sets in fast fresh forward motion, a world of things and events in a constant state of flux, here articulated one syllable at a time, catching its change “— as/ fragile” in the junctures words slip between, in — their a person — in

(walking by)

# Leslie Scalapino

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## *Busby Berkeley formation or follies*

very old woman — so it's at its most irrelevant — now can't  
— or they would say — point — of our culture being  
seen, from some — foreign culture, but here — and  
the sad look, given from her at this point — which doesn't have to do  
with that, with either — which are unattached, from that  
combination

very good — rain — of people being  
unattached — even though that is the  
curtailment — but coming to the point of torn apart by  
other cultures, but here — as the end of Pound's view  
and so of the Noh plays

of the very old woman — and so at the end of  
the Noh plays — which are now — and love for her,  
sentiment — not having to do with  
her situation — and not stemming from the Noh  
plays

the very — not easy to die, at whatever  
struggling that takes place — but not or as  
a Noh play, which are now — though not from that  
writing

young  
boy kamikaze pilot — in the war, which ended — two days  
before he was to go out — so that he was weeping  
from having been ready to die for the emperor — going  
to another — this — country — and being a student  
when I was a child — as a Noh play or not, as from oneself

as — not  
that — so that it  
becomes that — literally — boy  
kamikaze pilot

the  
boy or  
man kamikaze pilot, who'd been — seated  
in — a small child's chair — painting  
— but not or as the end of Pound



women in the park  
to be in things — that had  
not having substance later — but — by  
which — they occur — as a calm  
euphoric event — and so  
just outside of that

don't hurt  
— people — old  
or middle  
Weathermen — in this city  
— nostalgia, on the Weathermen's, his  
part

their —  
not thinking — about things — Greek  
warriors — not much, maybe — as the image  
— and of Pound's  
— but put out — and there — literally  
— as in their events

no action — or  
action — as stillness or movement of that  
literal person of that time — regardless — but  
man kamikaze pilot, who'd been — that — and  
is also still alive now

there  
not being — a — transcendant  
— element — they say  
— as being the same as the Noh play  
though

film — German frau  
waving  
their underpants — in a field — when the  
foreign pilots were going over — very pink, as if  
bleached — but made brighter, apple or cherry blossoms  
above the frau — their relations so complicated — as to be  
, irrelevant

German — film — bleached bright pink  
blossoms — some men dead in the war — complicated  
relations — to be irrelevant — having produced — beforehand  
babies — with unknown fathers, because the  
relations had been so complicated

loving the very — old, woman — as just  
that — not film — though now — as the  
delicate — of Pound's — overlap  
of a man who's known to the person — and is  
alive

very simple — not the German frau — waving  
their underpants — in a field — at foreign pilots above  
— bleached bright pink blossoms — as the means, not from  
7 oneself to have in — low — irrelevant work — a grasp  
: from humiliated, supposedly — which is seen — to be  
simple

hs and — to have to

— force — oneself to do the  
work, having to make a living — but to make oneself  
— flaccid — using up one's time — to do — the  
irrelevant

as — German — fraus  
waving  
their underpants — in the field — overhead pink  
bright — bleached — blossoms — complicated  
relations — as necessary to that

forcing out — in terms of — a film  
not of frauleins, pink bright — bleached — blossoms  
or that — struggle — of — or  
within that sensation — in order to be  
that — irrelevant

coming — brought up to that — of the  
boy  
or man — bleached bright — so not of Pound's  
— pink blossoms — as entirely in that sensation  
to be very simple

young  
girl wanting to sell her  
saxophone — which had been advertised — but her hitchhiking  
home — a man had a peach can over his groin in his car  
removing it — 'do you want to blow  
me' — the girl — "'do you want to buy my saxophone'  
the man had her get out of his car to go away

the  
boy kamikaze pilot — though a man  
now — still alive — as getting there  
— while still doing that

coming — of the man, bright bleached — blossoms  
— as not the foreign — or tradition, combination  
which isn't either — or from that  
and so as the end of that — as order to be  
simple

change in  
the meaning — as to become  
2 soft — in constant — struggle — as  
sensation — follies — as order not to be  
tradition as not that  
combination

shallow — of very  
disparate — though traditions, combination  
desperate from or of oneself — and so as  
irrelevant and knowing that — as  
not the same

— not as  
follies — not a matter of  
that — or as a  
personality, delicate — constant —  
thoughts — either

devil — with  
the — blue  
dress — on  
— struggle  
of someone

wanting — the  
son — or better  
run away  
— killed — on the “and where  
highway do you want  
~~ G3 this done”

this is a  
ridiculous  
— delicate  
— thing  
to do

saying  
war — with a  
small w  
is good — and  
that — someday  
you'll know  
it — which I do

making — by  
repeating actual  
events from oneself  
which are put out  
and occur  
though

extremely weak — person — roaming around — in a field  
— taking pictures — of shacks — cotton  
— no one else around — deep poverty of that  
— him as babyish — pig — not a matter of  
there — or that combination of him, not mattering

not being — in  
the blossoms — or men dead  
in the war — as overlap — of  
one's events occurring — which are not the  
babyish nature

saying  
want to  
see that  
everything's settled — to  
get quietly  
— but — drunk

— from the charity — helping out  
which is theirs  
neighborhoods — not having heat or  
mattresses  
deliberately — on the part of the  
charity

a  
narrative — clement — or it being  
just that — as with — the  
charity — and so as — not  
having those things — for — their  
workers there

not  
having anything — from someone else  
— so that's impossible — and as  
— only — narrative —  
with — the young girl's, event — of the saxophone  
being advertised for her to sell it

the — creatures — having been — already  
— dead, left —  
floating, in the water — where a boy  
who was a stowaway, fell in the ocean  
from a rowboat  
going to be sent back on the — other — ship,  
which was whaling

not coming from anything  
else — so that's impossible — as not being  
him, the stowaway — or the whaling  
ship — with their left floating — as not a desired  
thing — or either — from  
this

# Steve McCaffery

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*from Lag*

DESIRED BY WISHING, OUT OF MESSENGER, life no longer than its zero time, the integrity of this form is never more than its ephemeral structure, creosote belonging as the recombinant spreads veils, a man on a bus forgets his age, allied times Artemis, a sociology of towels, the way the car starts in rain, tails not tales, wool a commodity in trapezoid bleat, the regime of a face never closes its head, traps net counter to belief, slippage into mirror effect, at the same time tubes glued to canvas as deterrent diaries or a new French dressing, farm fallows function, i close my mouth to hear my eyes, the groceteria in minimal collage, confines of a social space, right margins missing hats, the style by which stone pots boil anti-types of matter, each nude seemed planetary, vroom at the Bach, the heads above the seats with earphones indicate this cabin's full, Sherbourne, Jarvis, Church, Tahiti, the industrial prominence of flogging, where the jacinth contracts new colognes become obsolete, Toledo to Marseilles is a single red line, fill the Pantheon with Goyas, a call is a claim, because nouns are still growing, the punk marine that's in his talk walking, incompatible in flooded markets, empty plate caught in sound with the chest as always, a signification, must thou and i to number six, implicit reality at the word stranglehold, as it happens the Olympics in Beirut, when that occurs, they're orthodox in pumps, this ache of anxiety corrects itself, nine programmes to sudden, apparel which passes the thumb that arrives, tonsil not tensile, the world outside is still an order within, saucepans as solitudes, but the close-up notates how that factor reacts, a strategy to open growth along the networks which paralyse, in colour festucine, in salience abyssed, return this portion with your payment, equipose to adipose, five eight seven three nine two two, genus administrator, class mandarin, where B at not A is the practice of refluence, the miles of smell in sedentary schoolage, faced fact a fallacy choking from choice, the deaf still reason that the rational attack, first uncensored view of Paestum, forks to the right suggest this too is algae, a paradise deduced from teeth nine summits too late, once rolled thus flakes itself, non-stop samba making middles disappear, the one on the seat who orders Brecht, corrigenda from Mainz plus shrimp and pepper brochettes, the proposition of omnipotence is to live without dead time, a cripple lifts on random wings, the one is brown bread's other weight in thought, so testicles go underground, why the Alps aren't political, habitual on land, you use a lens to speak burmese as in a burrow only textures



stop, conveyed through spectra, drugs from Basutoland, mathematic response, through temporary quarantines diurnal habits meets a fan, bursar, synovia, the kelp's smooth skin, stave on a stickleback, implies pencil as instrument, power where space means watching me, slice between mode's proximity by etching, around the violent distaff of participation steel runners fix on shoes, farce not force, the point the chlorine breathes in molar quanta no two things once, pure citrus pours extremity at breakfast, a circle closes repetition, ethnology turns eighty, spine, the omission from a sentence of the periphery of five fixed points, this mucoprotein is effete as death squads push an oblong flank, suggesting here an action in prehension, the crystalline of a rhythmical wrong, moustertian relics for that futon, then plexiglassed when squeak is membrane due to laxity, the nautical takes course in mining up white lead, Homer as a pharmacist, not the same in New York, you check the map i must have bought, an unintended hole in concept, fifty per cent turning dirt, in flaunter's feel the puppies glow, limit value perfect vision, there is no such thing as a sign in 'isolation, resuscitation which retards, vessel luxuriates in fleshlike substance, these but secretions from a mourner's breath, despatch this to an impulse, the bullet's part in football's goals, called trench this system

system reconnects, a parliament for continental foes, from leaks to lakes in each receiving set, conclusion that since eighteen functions could be separated their impairments were distinct, did Pushkin smoke, by crossing parks each fjord respire, hybridize not Hebrides, okra, aletheia, hollyhock, a see-saw composition to each fret, flawed calculus in aromatic language makes phonality stop at the tongue, sapodilla into marmalade, so alter this to guides of souls, a crested chestnut in a bar, yet i am buttoned to forget this sport, in tall grass quince combusts to something actual, viet cong fistula to plot or oxen out of definition, venesection of the sublinguistic hours, hearsay on ice, an old excoriated persuasion, this dive is alive with mediated desire, the model of the diaphragm follows patterns from the spoon, nine four seven seven seven, on the coq au vin a turnip shapes its form as columns, why is that reactive history, slips in precipitous all but dead, uncountenanced the edge of sleep in larval plague, each day we see the we in see, epoch as spanner, tern not turn, the worst from these shoes is a binary pace, the narrative pursuit of water in a dish, i auger bits of foot as inch, in podiatry as in gout, a severed chin where Cambodia cathects cathartic debtor spurns advice, this arm which fluctuates what writing is, functions add faculties, leave this to proceed, in bandless maracas the gourd always fails, seven spangles one quadrille, the moment carved so we may leave our grief, ten ribs to each foxglove, five drive horses pull a chariot by nouns, cardiography transforms the cat who chewed your new shoes, bet butter bids best, the fragment serving for a

tool, superior white divine and capitalist, the sampan's tendency to variables,  
 blossoms answered by a loaf as teeth turn white overnight, prerequisite of leap if  
 the diachronic sins where the synchronic dies, Afghanistan at six o'clock, the eye as  
 an oversight, three stools turned off, stays cool by spread, a pope on a deathbed,  
 adequation of each fingernail, but solar washbowls stand unused, the gannet's  
 fuzzy edge, i am still the cop who throbs which shoots the student balanced on the  
 bridge, blue as in trout lost in the woods, as aphids we insert ourselves in films,  
 prove slogans move the happiness of others, obsolete absolute, lewd pictures on  
 impulse, so speech gains its meaning in the threat of night, bruise not brews, as  
 pre-romantic as biaxialates, the tragic method hating truth, toast adds drowsiness,  
 the Dutch at their best, we recline in the shade of a Delonix regia, good services by  
 sighs are known as wings, shocked cholera a distance fixed, the time to revise will  
 refigure a space, olives escape by way of eggs, in Sargasso the revolution seen  
 underground, fifty thirty, twenty twenty three six, seventeen, clover in original  
 motif, clowns at a bullfight, what thinking is, at the point of sacrifice prestige  
 becomes defunct, two hamsters, form and content, the perversion that prevents me  
 shouting out, phallus in wonder gland, far back in thyme, half-rebellion of the  
 savage, with industry comes the anti-physis, the gangster speaking argot clears a  
 throat, where radical theory enters subjectivity the system slides, names form a  
 vanishing point, its weight on things, you're curing the stomach to poison the rest,  
 Pindar as a nihilist, to label it modern is to label it old, rookie plumber making one  
 mistake, this matter of hunger is rotting away, skies become clear again, fulcrum  
 off glebe, dissociate script, how many fossils of a human hair, stones which  
 designate and represent in sense this positivity worn out, theodicy not the  
 Odyssey, here as in Warsaw minus the hat, this notion of perfect where the speaker  
 segments to form an entourage, in theatres each opera goes wrong, entasis in  
 Entebbe makes entelechy the third, same truth if i replace this child with wealth,  
 paradox of value stages cheapness in wheat, in the order of knowledge the sky is  
 white in that of production the home is new, copula sends zero to arithmetic,  
 infected arm or inflected norm, the door which denotes an action of pushing, but  
 badge is an emblem, an empire's path through charm in odd numbers, at the level  
 of pathos teams agree, music as latitude where frosted glass holds back steam, a  
 patch of oil encompasses news, no middle distance to a static brick, vague not  
 vigorous, where frame limits symmetry even link submits, still draws a figure as a  
 type of line, ethos by polyphony where the girl in slacks bends, face of an avatar in  
 a soap-dish, pink by dipped rigour, taxis stop in moving light, banks mottled by  
 the sun, inner portrait

shows suspect through the inadvisability of powers, logic times mass equals  
 convert, for will read shape, or process as entity, conceive a synthesis where ego

bends, yogourt's surface acid frieze, this plastic top to chronos, instinct, bottom, i was a she when first encountered synonyms are props against decay, each sacrifice a serial system, mail not male, the case of sugar comes down to its own evidence poured inward, Hollywood advancing messages on waves, to masticate still activates in tribal glands, ephemerides by the hour and three candles called a single light, discovered to recognize bodies are media, this man as a moment where culture went wrong, after halloween one is drawn to inference, four five three five four five seven, the instrument which comes between the player and the music, pact not packed, or substitute for saddle, tall ships vandalized on a tavern sign, the screen is criterion, three breakfast specials before the streetcar stops, dog on a brown chair in the sun, its use of revolve in the power of acquired, mediocre with a data base, one beautiful explosion, in the disused incinerator truths are removed, accessories to stratum, this line leads to where, at the immanence of the axiom we strike the code, epodic action in striated space, wasn't it wheels the migrant took for bricks, chapters impose this as itinerary, phylum or morphology at thresholds, fog's in by five, in a durable mode we reach a pack, the verb expressing floating, metal as a correlate the stomach's two planes, how do people converse when viewpoint no longer aims a latitude, twilight again doesn't equal once more, this molecule makes involution stick, contagion cleans out in the niche of anaphora, leave church, the safe when it fails, in realpolitik speed is a spread, the other characters who stay behind as thumbprints that survive the glove means pedagogy swerves, the rhetoric of slowness in microassemblages, cocoa stolen where adage slips, weakened not weekend, the non-figuration is seldom a there, roar into Roanoke, entrails on synthesis, it's in the pan the new chef hates but culture means sane answers reappear, purple cases for both pillows, birds of prey in a land not mine, the reverse of this discharge is a project split in two, spider spins on spheroid victim, distributes each blame, essence by landfill but yours by the cadre, the theoretical repudiates its sufficient causes, discovered to recognize this scent as a moment, where concept phased wrong there's a noose for the noise, infants impose their world-views, drawn up from the crowd, no ordeal but in thongs, this on a saturday, where wood arrives, was becoming is, she alone sees who sees all beings as herself, Narmada Valley, age unknown, where spirals deny then conoids start, tigress not Tigris, the book begins as the space of an anywhere, movement of shadows up a dutch elm, ink on paper, one seven, four fore, seven five, five, the role of value is a rule of rest, where yellow stubs record infraction, cosmology as if eight volumes to Clarissa, transmutes to shower from fact, idea by written toast, heraldic bookplate then a named vibration in a Hopi verb, calls a hat straw halo seconds from a slop pitch of some kind, Stockholm six, Hong Kong thirty three, the smallest apple, twice as big as broom for a formula, at least a

segue, the mother notes mistaken bases for the plausible, italics mine and by relationship, initial sound of rouge, hushing the thin this thickening a syntagm meaning cow-fat, equivalent elephant in sub-phonetic pool, there is no concept for an amputated throat, coach aspires to glottal stop, the passengers who testify to apical crush as clarity of content in a hand calls moral attention to its sensates, icon, an age of accuracy in glass, what's happening to the past, concrete unfolding into signified precision, heroine not heroin, this has always been the writing i would want to write, each pyramid a hypotactic sphere, nonsense as episode the trompe assimilates, each time i read i desecrate the father dead, reduced impressions hinge this parable, Cupid as two, at least a plexus, technical conquest makes sputniks starry junk, sunrise in a system of dawns, there is as oftentimes it was, grammatical yawn though language of crisis, that part - above the point where this begins, against, but a year, this ordinary botched, inquisitive whilst entomologist seeks bits of curiosa, essay ending with the six words where power addresses power problems seem to work, the dead branch called Romanticism, this is not the side which wins, leucocholy in Tolstoy through reticence to vacuum, only faults in acidity, ninety ninety three, thirty

thirty nine, the bullet permutes the shooter to his corpse, thought before knowledge, rain in a clause, loss of ox in gravity or skin in aesthetics, what's a lyric to the state apparatus, gothic hypotheses, the even rotation of a line deletes the circle, intended divagations on a sigh toward hot chocolate overflows, to drive a tractor, to sing to yourself, its cup a meridian, beneath the breath each word is ethnic, inquisitive a frown where this couplet ends, quilt, the wrestler's muscle forms a turbulence but a specialist cadence is short-lived, the meaning of tribe shifts to tributary space, an artisan thinks glass a land by following the cutting line in sketches drawn by thumb, style corresponds to the dominant meaning of prosthesis, swelling of woven straps in a thermal field, where passion's a bilingual sound Buddha is an anarchist, sequins not sequence, oasis rusts blade woollen with goat hair lacking milk, this is a hieroglyph, to lose the lower track means pun explains, link this to flight and the world comes with it, pot octavo lacking half-title, throw up or throw out, this system is shared in eclipsed parentheses, sky across time determines procedure, alternating currents never close, the positive phenomenon of wax, should over must into could, but cud into cows through kine, a nipped incipience for progeny supposed, check the Hebrew word for watercress, bedrock on a critical cruet, see as in insect but incest as in sea, so free combinations form the act of speaking, eight nine seven four twelve three twelve, reported revolts among rural poor, this sentence has a referential mandate, a glib unhindered slice of sluice, june bugs hissing on a wire not here, popular novel circa eighteen ninety three, but if the brown word turd crosses the text's green

surface, shhhh as in soft through a sound such as suck, pianissimo at this phrase, but what if the tram went bramble, church clock in the foreground slow nativity, effusion as yawn, three buttocks sound from an unadjusted gaslight, on his way home he came to water, White House games keep stripper guessing, gematrian fingers fold to axlespan, badge not barge, potential exists to demonstrate uncertainty, her lips for she, place synecdoche in this set as a variable chamber, compare as a nostril its known role in swelling, such backbones are margins to itinerant space, prodigality hints minus slippage at six, dethrone that too, the rice on the feldspar of coercivate doubt, barman dreams of port as glass to sail from, this is an indented cheek, precise rendition of a belch, studded jacket for a cycle seat, fold mine within puns, kind of clumsy naturalness in gas, bowel effect upon non-human self, a fault forms its network from these differences, spool's out, satchel unanimous unit, why pronouns bleed, uphold the right to be real, poems as librettos, bud up in fade through minimal biddable, in the artifice of content the law puts meaning on the self, an improvised decemvirate avuncular but undulate, a segment still in action, necklace of pearls through decimal groupings, this altered citation to emerge in glyphs, a moment in a change, heliotropic twice symmetrical extension, deal base four fun up a humane trump, if this as economy coupled to Michigan, or plan to build a ninth dream home, two times one times two equals one, in Senegal a chain on a single hand, chronicles as hearsay through a microscope, it frees it forms it cannot understand, the curve of obedience lies straight in analysis, price in the praxis of a bowl of curds, torrid stool through dialysis brings necessity to cause, a swapped chrysalis fixist in planted taxonomy, the terminal proceeds by error to infinity, switch name of category for sign, herbarium fact through facet plunge, mined not mind, combat as discourse in that history called room, curiosity declines but separation still survives confinable appeasement, a number to a naturalist becomes a common noun, delete this mass and i minimize a labour, small town advent of ecumenon, what point is to sympathy trowel is to threat, locate and then impose one's path, the wind's most hidden when it determines suns, cucumber in sepia photograph, a semiology then clouds, continuous rains resist an intermediate force, the one i lost was shot but kept convenience for spoor, where cineplectic dirt turns underfoot, town library torn Hamburg, posit this overcode to influence strain, four eight four nine two six three seven five two nine one three nine, quoted from craft, a theory of subject with ethics at stake, impulse to relinquish this, a second dentist caught in victory, crustacean not crushed asian,

## Diane Ward

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### *Gone So*

If all these people must, it had to be  
beautiful, no points more gone to go  
new hope saliva runs. The heavenly shaft  
sunlight blast through  
mushroom cloud. All this happened,  
granted. An airplane's eye-mind  
along the ground, rise above,  
granted, make the sky deep sound.  
Be authorized, can't answer questions/  
give directions unless sign  
posts are humanmade, Watch The News  
to forget where I belong. Longing  
to short-live for now. Thrill  
commissions death's travel along

faster. Move. Thought's speed  
passes our bodies' LIVE WIRE.  
Nothing belongs on strings or  
travels along the line-like  
any longer. No stops so  
will not go. Hands, dearest  
decomposable one: where is my.  
Become behind ourselves, no longer  
a center but grim origin. Fear  
what is (is what's) enormous.  
The long of all lethal branches brush  
against the feigned departure  
of bodies, swaying "'save me" please  
let us destroy what seems after  
ourselves, all, only ourselves.  
Charitably tiny existence. Could we  
: share a few minutes when we were  
saved together. Could-questions

begin in mute intensity. More  
as it unfolds its brief belonging.  
Enormity endures a passion for less.  
I in everything what I do. Ground  
not walked upon, air not breathed.  
We can't consume the boundaries of our  
unimaginable form. No narrative,  
no characters, no forms but emptiness—  
someones that aren't to have.  
Written about lack, without faith.  
What I had said was fiction was  
what I had said was authorization. Visual,  
working all-over, nerve to not  
begin and never end. Musts change  
their functions. Prohibition changes  
its tenderness. Some people though there,  
were more than gone. My Old Flame,  
destruction, warm feelings, warmth gone.  
Fits of benevolence, the lips form be  
and being. My legs have been crossed over  
many many minutes. Plea against anymore.  
Dear things done out. No and rightly,  
yes. With little, a clean little, my  
fading away was hauled in today.  
Life-like environment, my world.  
15 groupings to choose from.  
Fruit's impermanent eroticism  
dangles from each tree. Or flowers,  
gratitude turns to control.  
Understanding through perception.  
Perception of intention.  
Acceleration, movement, stoppage.  
A strong-like ache aside—  
my greatest function's desire to be.



# Robert Kelly

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## *The Second Elegy*

Back in the days he didn't speak slowly  
Left what is heard on the wind  
Embrasure where you put your arms in  
To lift the room out  
How many rooms have you lifted from my house  
Back in the days he didn't speak slowly  
There were no frogs piping yet  
Spring for you a kind of arm  
He was hoping you would touch  
There used to be so many words  
He used a belt  
Do you understand the heart as a belt  
Zone of confinement  
Till he was speaking slowly after all  
The stars the  
Back in the days he didn't speak slowly  
Sparks not any frogs  
To be there before anyone else is lonely  
There was oil but not animals  
No single one  
But he wasn't speaking slowly then  
A fox at dawn met walking  
He wasn't yet  
And his thigh hand had an arm on it not his  
He was is answering your old question  
To be there before anyone else is lonely  
To be there  
Back in the days he didn't speak slowly  
One thing after another  
He was hoping you him  
Old question answering its own  
So many words but not enough



So many words but not never enough  
Something could be happening to tell him  
Back in the days he didn't speak slowly  
Shirts there are doors  
So many words but never enough

Something could be telling him  
Something could be telling him be happening  
Things that are open  
As a word opens a belt  
And stars are lifted out of the skin  
And what is a room then  
There are doors  
So many times you were some of them  
There before anyone  
And it was lonely it is but not enough  
Words telling him to happen  
The way a belt does suddenly  
Something loose  
The way stars suddenly  
How many rooms have you lifted out of his house  
What is the next thing  
Every time  
Where there were so many and never enough  
Dreams were the temperature  
Hot lathery the one she chose to taste  
Doing it the wrong way with virgin leverage  
By not associating with the next thing  
The next thing is honest  
The thing to become open  
A thing is open  
An open word  
A trace is all we know  
Track in or is of snow  
As a snow is again  
"Footsteps of the heart" he imagined the yellow words to mean  
You can be sure with a pencil sure with a knife  
Not the association of ideas but the actual history

History is each next thing backwards  
It is simple  
History is what we forget  
There are daffodils on the shrine  
Sky object  
Small man carrying a shield a spear carry  
Carry hurry  
Something is actual at least  
Not the association of words  
Inner pressures  
Menstrual words  
An egg ready to be heard  
Who are these also who in dream  
So it is tawny  
Hard to clear a space  
So a thing can be a thing  
The words you hear behind the music  
Are all the time you have |

You are not another yet  
Certainly not some same  
It is so hard to clear a space or hear  
What is ready to be heard  
You see what you hear only that  
Why there is so much of it in the night  
Why dreams while irrelevant are actual  
It is hard to see so much and nobody listens  
What it counts is to root  
  
Had having and to have  
A kind of coming to  
  
So a thing can be a thing  
All the time you have  
So a thing can be me  
It is warm by the fire  
Constantly revising  
A sort of travel  
Into the familiar  
The credit card

To complete any circuit  
A long seeing made short  
Till it interests  
By intersecting  
Were you ever near enough to begin  
Will you have or are you having  
Does a swan have any work to do  
There are people like that  
Ravishing  
White revising changes many a river  
It is what you say falls about it  
It is what you say about it  
Imagine a swan  
Plump wetness it is assuming out  
How proud a thing is

As if two women on a porch go different directions  
Another lies in the normal coma  
Another one learns some sort of language  
It is hard not to be reminded of  
By just moving around  
Another language to be virgin in  
'Two thousand miles away a phone rings in an empty room

We do have time to forgive each other  
Roseate spoonbill sometimes seen  
Only hard to hear something

Don't worry about anything new  
Not the associations of words  
There are no ideas at all  
There are intersections  
A room where an idea could have been  
Without entire security  
A house in a room

Nothing is fixed but everything wants itself  
Nothing is fixed  
Call this rock and roll  
A long love conversation

Alone with the soil  
Work bruises something  
Working for a living bruises something  
A long love  
Really is the same as a day  
Doth harbor  
There is nothing new but the doing of it  
Call a set of brackets a mother  
Her egg is to hold  
I don't mean a candle to history  
Hardly any and no ideas  
There are lovers and there are lilacs  
  
Foolish as it is to wait and I'm no fool  
Only the intersections are not foolish  
What is that noise again  
  
There are so many chances of it being something else  
Something close  
Peas rattling in a winged pod  
How large  
The shape of what contains us  
Flies us  
There is something in a house that isn't in a room  
It is the only anything I mean  
Is not the same as something meant  
If white revises tawny who sleeps with whom  
Tastes like living with people  
Making a living  
Never other than difficult  
Things rock on their heels  
I want to give you a present this is just about you  
Everything has its own reluctance  
If you can quote it it hasn't been said  
But still is saying  
Saying is a species of still waiting  
Clearly nothing has been said clearly  
Though everyone is speaking clearly

A man making love

Even now  
When he was a child had one in each color  
There are so many colors  
We all do  
Hardly any of them have accurate names  
The numbers are  
As to say this is beige but Martine is umber i  
Only saying names and meaning colors  
A man is always ready to make love  
But not always ready to do  
What has to be done  
Some wake up that way some sleep  
  
That noise less common now  
One tightens one's belt  
The room could be a kitchen with soup now  
A parlor with a man waking up  
In early evening paper  
System of revised clichés  
  
To go on without making a fuss  
About to go on without bothering to begin  
  
There are so many but not enough  
That is why there are women for example  
When he was a child they were colors  
  
Colors naturally greedy appropriate objects  
It is not memory after all  
The colors are real enough  
It is up to him to make them actual  
What is that noise again  
If it were any clearer it would be you  
Then you wouldn't hear it  
Everyone listen to  
Will I ever be good enough  
To be not difficult  
Or is it so easy to be easy  
Except waking up  
When it is a different person  
  
Call it a day and begin for a change  
If it has numbers in it

To that extent it is true  
Things become true by being arguable  
And then let's call it a day

Every grain has its own feel of color  
But colors do not themselves get tired  
Though we grow tired of them  
What is that noise for example  
A woman among wisteria is a problem  
Is there anything he is saying he couldn't have said then  
Tiresome if there were a beginning  
Back in the days he didn't speak slowly  
So many things to worry about and then to be able  
For almost anything is sand dunes and meadows  
Even a book to read in a boot  
He very seldom eats breakfast who  
And that's not rock and roll that's just the truth  
What is that truth doing on the table  
Making choices  
Not to get an answer  
But to exhaust the question  
Because a word has its work to do  
Let the thing people use use itself up  
Then you can't take it out of the room  
I myself think it is bluejays  
Hard to mistake  
It's always hard to be wrong  
Sometimes one's is a talent for identifying noises  
If you know enough to begin you know enough not to  
I have frequently gotten easy birds wrong  
  
A wrong bird at breakfast changes the day  
He doesn't keep them from eating  
Or a noise is courteous  
Being particular  
If you write down everything you don't believe  
Many or some the story of an apple  
The kind of falling that has colors too  
One of every hue

Until you listen  
Is a different music  
Growing fat with contraction  
Space is the one thing you don't have to eat  
The word else hardly applies  
With so few sounds  
Before he was speaking slowly  
With a slow woman  
Recent arrivals are always speaking  
Father with silver in the pocket  
Son humming in a hat  
He finally understands a stone  
A stone among others and not like  
Meaning is a habit like drinking

A winter surely forgetting to end  
Son in snowsuit a habit of attention  
Legs to walk i  
Small steps leading nowhere but more walking ]  
It is dreadful at least the snakes are asleep  
But a cold dog bites just as hard  
And a dream works like a dream  
Winter whimpers in midnight  
What a language this planet is;  
Men with swords {  
A habit is cinnamon  
Dark founder of this fragrant habit  
  
Obscure obscure my cellar down  
Earthenware vessels to make sauerkraut in;  
Obscure fermenting where and where and when  
I would call back from believing  
Cellar my door to  
Amid compression what is not compressed.

# Duncan McNaughton

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## *On John Clarke*

### **Water from an Ancient Well**

John Clarke, *From Feathers to Iron* (Bolinas & San Francisco: Tombouctou Books/Convivio, 1987)

IN 1979 JOHN CLARKE PUBLISHED a volume of 50 sonnets, *The End of This Side* (Black Book / Number Four / Spring 1979; intro by Ed Sanders; Bowling Green, Ohio). In response to that book the Poetics Program at New College of California invited Clarke to give a series of lectures. Clarke agreed to a schedule of four lectures, to be held in March, 1980, at the College's gallery on Valencia Street, San Francisco. Three lectures took place at New College; an illness obliged Clarke to return home to Buffalo before the fourth could occur. The following month he gave the fourth lecture to a group in Buffalo. All four lectures were tape-recorded. These tapes were transcribed by students at New College; the printed transcriptions were returned to Clarke. He then, in his words, "recast the tape transcriptions of the lectures, expanded and documented them to provide a more considered text." These four lectures make up the most of Clarke's new book, *From Feathers To Iron*. A fifth section of the main text was created by Clarke from a portion of his fourth lecture which he extended, chiefly in written form, in order to complete the thought initiated by the earlier lectures. The book includes a Prologue by the poet John Thorpe; and there is also, as an Addendum, the May 28-29, 1966 letter to Clarke from Charles Olson which served to instigate the project and to prospect its outcome twenty years later. At various points in the book's preparation a dozen or so persons with interest in the materials treated by Clarke read the manuscript at Clarke's request. These readers, the students who prepared the transcriptions, and other persons in Clarke's essential constellation are acknowledged in advance of the text. The painter Arthur Okamura made the cover drawing; Michael Wolfe and Steve Emerson designed the book collaboratively with the author. *From Feathers To Iron* is published jointly by Tombouctou Books (Bolinas) and Convivio, the imprint of the former New College of California Poetics Program. *From Feathers To Iron* bears the subtitle, *A Concourse of World Poetics*. Its contents are as follows:

Prologue Lecture One The Disappearance of Ordering Intervention Lecture Two Manifests of Momentary Irregular Incursion European Constitution 1500 p.c.—1500 a.v. Lecture Three The Limits of Antithetical Systemic Representation



American Marvels Since Lecture Four = The Strengthening Method of World Completion Eradication of Monotony Excursus Residue as Residence Addendum Letter to the Author, from Charles Olson, May 28-29, 1966 It seems simplest to let Clarke's opening remarks condense his beginning sense of his topics, bearing in mind that he did not read prepared written lectures. The entire sequence of lectures, excluding the Excursus, were in fact orally improvised as of the Audience's questions and remarks. Clarke had a very few notes on the table, but in the main he allowed his Audience to cue the organization of his thought. Here then are his openers: FROM FEATHERS TO IRON comes from a letter of John Keats to Benjamin Bailey, March 13, 1818, in which he wrote: 'Every point of thought is the centre of an intellectual world—the two uppermost thoughts in a Man's mind are the two poles of his World. He revolves on them and every thing is southward or northward to him through their means—We take but three steps from feathers to iron.'

The artist Shusaku Arakawa asked if I might 'turn up with something to feed a Model of Mind,' a project he and Madeline Gins are working on. These lectures attempt to complete the intellectual world implicit in Keats' "point of thought" prompted by Arakawa's proposal.

The first topic—"The Disappearance of Ordering Intervention"—is from a book by Marie-Louise von Franz, a protege of Jung's, in fact the one who substituted for Jung at

Black Mountain College in the "New Sciences of Man Lectures" instituted by Charles Olson in 1953. She wrote an interesting book called *Number and Time* in which she quotes a French cyberneticist, Oliver Costa de Beauregard, who says that when the ordering intervention in a system

Aud: What is ordering intervention supposed to mean?

If a poet comprehends his work, brings that comprehension to his work, and adds that comprehension to his work, that's an ordering intervention. Both the course of the work and the world are changed by that. Someone asked last night, where do the Dead go? The question is: when ordering intervention disappeared from the cosmos, where did it go? In a world abiding by some law of conservation, "negentropy" can't simply be lost. It has to go somewhere.

This question leads to the second topic, "Manifests of Momentary Irregular Incursion"; not where negentropy goes, or has gone, but—at this point—its momentary irregular incursion into our lives, since the time which I associate historically with the blow-up of the island of Thera at the end of Minoan Crete, The first unit begins in Bronze Age c. 3000 B.C. and ends in Mycenaean times after c. 1450 B.C., where the second unit picks up with the "European Constitution." We're still well before Homer at this point.

Aud: What do you mean before Homer?

If the Homeric poems are c. 8th century, their "world" includes 700 years of European poetry as "'Muse.'" The question of Muse is primarily one of use: when incursion is used for poetic purposes it is more interesting than when it is used for self-manifestation. In our time you see how Zeus' "'Perfective Action'" has fallen to an "unconscious" as the reservoir of regulatory power.

The third unit begins in the New World with "Antithetical Systemic Representation." The representation of information coming to species, having been lost to cosmos, is antithetical to the regular object flow of nature. The word "antithetical" is from Novalis, not Yeats. It means that the thetical and systemic way. When one tries to fathom Blake's "System," for example, one sees just how antithetical his art is. One can't find "Entuthon Benython" in nature, although the imagery of its representation may seem natural ("forests" and "vales"); for, as Blake says, "it is impossible to think without images of somewhat on earth." The laws of representation derive from the antithetical shape of the information within a potentially complete system.

The fourth topic, "'The Strengthening Method of World Completion: Eradication of Monotony,'" brings us into "harmony" with the three prior units in the system of whatever restoration has been made in the context of World Completion. I struggled a lot for a term of it. In *The End of This Side* I call it "Act Aeon." I didn't know how else to express it. It's something one feels, I think.

Each lecture is closely footnoted [footnotes omitted from all passages quoted here— Editor], the notes following directly upon each lecture. These notes are seldom simple citations. They are instead an apposite intellectual narra- 'ive, apposite to the lecture text, a parallel text without which the lectures must be incomplete and incomprehensible to any but Clarke himself. That is to say, those listening to him could with varying degrees of success follow his thinking, as one might follow or hear new music, but to comprehend Clarke's complete thought requires this apposite note text. In his 1966 letter Olson had urged Clarke

> put everything on the table: "'you should simply openp your tool box and show the family you work for what pols you do use, that is throw the tools at them practically, ke in Noh, bring out everything, including the etc.'" The otes do fairly throw Clarke's resources, his tools, at the amily—and in an absolutely engrossing way, for these jotes are so modulated or played as to resonate the lectures, and the lectures, them. The notes are equal text. They must be held simultaneously with one's hearing or eeling of the lecture texts. This application of the note is entral to the method of the book.

Moreover, Clarke based his lectures on poetics on the 0) sonnet texts of *The End of This Side*. That is, he read/ wroposed the sonnets first, as first exegetical

instances of the matter at hand. The sonnets are thus printed among the notes as they are referred or alluded to in the procession of the lectures. The complete text of *The End of This Side* is recapitulated within the notes. This sonnet text then takes of the whole book three concomitant texts proceeding at once in the minds of the author and of the reader. This threefold textual attention is a useful minimum requirement of *From Feathers To Iron*.

That Clarke articulates his researches in verse is not remarkable. That he does so exclusively in sonnets is remarkable indeed. He does so, one is certain, because of his recognition that Shakespeare had passed through and well beyond literary or spiritual supposition of the sonnet to the realization of cosmos in the heart of the form's mystery. Clarke is thereby in company with "'his American predecessors, certainly Hawthorne and Melville, who had found within the textual veil Shakespearean 'hints' of a new kind of 'marriage' beyond that with death'" (p. 111). He is also in company with Denby and Berrigan in his forwarding of the Shakespearean 'hints' and in his intuition of the necessity of the sonnet form in extended application. One means here nothing so patent as literary aptitude or inclination, but rather, in the instances of all three American apprentices to the sonnet's mystery, he means a realization such as Stockhausen's (epigraph of Lecture Four): "You no longer form a given material, you create the material."" The shift—to further offset any literary confusion—is epic, chemical and secular. "What I \*m trying to do is clear poetry of religion" (p. 68), That usage of "clear" is a New World or American usage. For anyone who works in the language, though, Shakespeare is the exacting ghost of Intellect.

"There is a difference between the materials of this world and this life and the materials that poetry gathers" p. 28). One can think of no work since Olson's other than Clarke's (and Robert Duncan's 1980-86 classroom teaching) which is commensurate to the Mind creative of the actual depth and circumference of American poetics.

In the spirit of the 'American Renaissance' (especially Melville and Hawthorne), *The Maamus Poems* attempt an American history whose substance is not 'time' as a reaction formation to the deficiency of the Iron Age (note 43, p. 44).

susan Howe's *My Emily Dickinson* is congruent, however, to what Ed Sanders (Intro to *The End of This Side*, vi) terms the 'Moral Mapping'" done by Olson and being done

here by Clarke. It is American poetics rinsed of all but what it is actually doing, congruent to the "textual environment" of cosmos. There has been and is ample genius in American poetry. But there has not been a like amplitude in American poetics except when poets, all too few of them, have acceded to the mature interpretive realizations and resources which do found poetics in its full

magnitude. It is the interpretive capacity which is the crux, which is as much or more the mystery than the capacity to make the poem, for the reason that it is a purely intellectual mystery which subsists at the heart of that making. On the whole, it is not enough that poetic genius exist, not enough until it becomes thoroughly exercised in and as "Mental Vision" (Blake). It is a question of Mind. To sample Clarke's propositional picture of what Mind: The cosmological ground of the acon and the ground of love in human society are brought into combined relation by the Iliad and the Odyssey. There is the home ground of Shiva, the "erotic ascetic." The World Story finds its completion when all three archeries coincide—"a bow / of fingers shooting / a single arrow"—adding the homophrenic opening to its "'center" which enables the cruciform shape of the World Story to change into its human "face." It is the compounding of residual substances, Odysseus' "rags," Shiva's "ashes," that intervenes upon the world with a fire not stolen from, but of the same mind as, the "Abyss".... Elsewhere (pp. 108-109): Blake's uniqueness lies in his refusal to keep this imaginative perspective to himself. Instead, he made the creative process itself the subject of his work, so all might enter. He denied himself a masterpiece in order to render in "time of trouble"—as he said, "No Secresy in Art"—the creative processes at work in the narrative frame of Moby Dick. The question of "'paternity"' was on Blake's mind from the beginning ("What immortal hand or eye / Could frame thy fearful symmetry?"). Beginning with Tiriell ("mistaken father of a lawless race"), and advancing through Urizen ("oldnobodaddy") and the Promethean Orc, he finally discovers Los, who will return him to Albion, "patriarch of the Adantic Continent": "The stories of Arthur are the acts of Albion, applied to a Prince of the fifth century." Like Kronos or Saturn, Albion is a sleeping giant of a mill (Urizen, the Miller) which churns out the old "measures" from the depths of the "sea." Ahab would attempt to grasp the "pelvis" of this "grim sire," which is impossible. The creative process doesn't assault this 'central fire" in the north: "Arthur was a name for the constellation Arcturus, or Bootes, the keeper of the North Pole." Rather, it approaches it from the "Sweet South": "& Los, his hands divine inspir'd began / To modulate his fires." The "'new fire" of creativity is not stolen but "grown," like Samson's hair, from the antithetical "'marriage" of contraries, corresponding to the "'time" in the sack or ark of Noah. As Olson said of Melville, "he warmed himself by first fires after Flood." It is the generative fire contained in the "seed water" under fermentation from which the Osirian "mummy wheat" (Yeats) grows. The movement is riverine or Uranian (the Okeanos of The Maximus Poems), Blake's Ololon, "'river of liquid pearl." This is terrain for which literary or philosophical perspectives are unequipped, which explains why the real achievements in poetics are so infrequently noticed.

The previous error of philosophy, of which Novalis speaks, goes back to the Milesian pre-Socratics: the isolation of particulars from their mythological thought-systems and then according them substantive status in creation at large. This error, which Novalis will assign to the "Scribe" in "Klingsohr's Fable," in Blake's account stems from allowing one of the Four Zoas, Urizen, to play God. If Urizen escapes the Human Fourfold there can be no Right Reason, and in its stead we invite in what Dostoevsky calls "the imp of the perverse." Like Poe, Dostoevsky understood that the upshot of a false belief in Reason is that man will then always "purposely do something perverse out of simple ingratitude, simply to gain his point"—the point being: independence from the Father (Urizen). After two centuries, God remains, as Whitehead said, our most "urgent secular requisite." But, we will never listen to the voice of Reason (Ahanian) until we behold Urizen "'reveal'd in his System" and reclaim "the Athenapotential." (p. 116). Then, concerning Lautréamont (p. 153): Regarding the appropriation of passive incursive reception as a pact between thieves, he is forced out of even the haven of poetry and, like Novalis, into the writing of dogmata, axioms, and maxims: "The science I am establishing is a science distinct from poetry. I am not writing the latter. I am trying to discover its source." Like Novalis' Encyclopedic entries, Lautréamont's "fragments" are gravitational, that is, timefactored by the system under creation, not an assumed Newtonian continuum.... *From Feathers To Iron* is John Clarke's occupation of the interpretive terrain. Toward the end of Blake's life he was called, by the handful aware of his work and capacity, The Interpreter. Clarke's first discipline was Blake's opus; he has followed that discipline into a third decade. He has an acute and actionable grasp of Blake's endeavor and its import. These lectures depend as much on Blake as they do on Shakespeare for their interpretive orientation.

"If art doesn't equal what has come to occupy us, we remain in, as Blake says, 'the lost Traveller's Dream under the Hill'" (p. 67).

Since the early 1960s Clarke has been simultaneously, and for like reason, in the discipline of Charles Olson's poetry and thought. To Blake and Shakespeare must be added Olson for the "quilt"? Clarke has sewn. If one conceives Shakespeare, however, as the ghost or present absence of this work, the visible texture of Clarke's thinking implicates that of Blake and of Olson at each step of the way. And there is one other man, one other mind among the many informing Clarke's means and method, whose presence rings a Mozartian charm and elegance to the mental architecture Clarke has drawn up for us. He is, it is the mind of, Friederich von Hardenberg, the Novalis of that great "'nest of propositions" (Wittgenstein), the Encyclopaedia, This work, Novalis' reorganization of the entirety of knowledge, human and otherwise, remains at this writing untranslated, except in

excerpts, into English; nor is one confident from speaking with one's German acquaintances that it is much consulted in that tongue either. The whole of *From Feathers To Iron* is threaded with Novalis' elaborations of the laws of the marvelous, elaborations which themselves unfailingly demonstrate those very laws.

Clarke's method, and that he is advancing, is enormously encouraged by the truth and lucidity of Novalis' perceptions. While Clarke will declare that the controlling texts for these lectures are Carl Kerényi's *Dionysos* and Marcel Griaule's *Conversations with Ogotemméli*—and while the declaration is clearly so—nonetheless this poetics of John Clarke seems to this listener equally pitched across the four-way methodological convergence of *The Bard*, Blake, Olson and Novalis.

But the project of this poetics as Clarke sets it out on the table—and why the Kerényi and Griaule/Ogotemméli texts are thus key—is certainly the physics of the Sirian mystery. In this project the twin poles or 'bodies' are the dog and the spider, the Dogon and the Cretan/Ariadnean. Given this discrete dipolar alignment, Clarke's task is then to adequately declare the “three steps from feathers to iron.”

Aud: So you're saying what's strengthened is time.

Yes, a prophetic epic can restore time to its “present moment” —“where Yuruga / gains his release from Egyptian bondage to the chronic.” The three steps from feathers to iron inaugurate a movement of mind between “winged thought,” imaged as the Hecatean flight of the hawk at the “circumference,” and, at the other “pole,” the heavy thought of “every Minute Particular harden'd into grains” of “millet” ejected by Digitaria, “the little thing,” as the Dogon call Sirius B. The stellar seed opens its center to produce the “life of the world,” just as the literal seed cast in the black silt left by the annual inundation of the Nile produces grain. In Egyptian mythology, reduced to a tetradic narratology, Isis rescues the phallos of Osiris to conceive Horus who will defeat Set; as in Greek myth Zeus must do battle with Typhon to retrieve his lost neura. In Blake's myth of the “Eternal Man,” Albion awakens from “Eternal Death” by “saving” Jesus from the Covering Cherub; even as the Sown-Men who spring up from the Colchian “cemetery” in the Argonautic legend are reborn from the painted “teeth” of the Dog Star (p. 175).

*From Feathers Th Iron* isn't a book susceptible to review. (et one would attempt to make an audience aware of its xistence, for its importance is incalculable. Clarke's work enters its poetics upon the mutual return of myth to nind, of mind to myth—a return one believes the single reatest, most humanly necessary affect of the modern peiod. One means of course this return in poetry, in poetics, nd equally in every other mindful human discipline. That is, the return of myth to that mind



which had for so ery long supposed itself a superior efficiency. It was not uperior; it was, to humanity's sorrow, mistaken. Now his return has commenced, what does one, what do we, lo with and for it?

One believes, more firmly than one believes anything lse, that poetry and poetics, "properly handled' Lawrence), point the way. The drift of Lawrence's qualication, for example, is toward the toughest, most sympahetic intelligence in turn textured and modulated by ophanics understood. John Clarke's *From Feathers To Iron*: possessed by so large and unified a Mental Vision that one can think of very few American books to come near to its achievement and to its generous use.

The ancient formula, "where the daughter goes, the mother must follow," applied to human attention, might be expressed propositionally as: the more subject, the more object, What was once a "'staged'" structure of event has now become a normal demand in and of the textual environment. The subject of poetry is no longer optional, but crucial to human life undergoing the catastrophic formation of a moral "'sense | for the 'thing itself'.'" No longer are "'the roaring of lions, the howling of wolves, the raging of the stormy sea, and the destructive sword,'" the "portions of eternity, too great for the eye of man." Things within the otherness that "encompasses" us makes us fear to open the old wound that fostered those projections upon nature in the first place. The old method of "blindness," though it could accomplish a 'moral cleansing," cannot heal the wound of the present moment. It is "too great" for any but a Strengthening Method. Without a new poetics, what will follow from the daughter won't be a mother, but as Homer knew, a war (p. 160).

# Duncan McNaughton

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## *eleven poems from The Pilot*

### *In Whose Circuitry The Heart's Complete*

I knew when a child it couldn't be infinite  
by twenty-five could conceive its dome  
helped by Dante to imagine the halo of mortality  
the mystery no farther away than next door  
the glory around the hill, innate  
in the changeable wind the actual song  
of its divinities, nature's song  
borne on the sky's breath

between the sweet alarm of sexuality  
the sorcery of the elements in certain hands  
and the royal train of heaven

Between the two common waters, river and sea  
the herons hunt, still as the mirror  
on one leg in the tall grass by the shore  
the poet simply becomes one of them  
feeling thought's alternate circuit between  
the great bird's throat, its emblematic breast  
and the open chest of human heart

We haven't evolved half-way because we  
haven't evolved at all, that's a mistake  
in the interpretation of time  
any idea that alienates us is an error  
and creates a frame of error  
a structure of error  
a system of error  
of horror. But we are now to regain  
the story, there will be so much work to do  
not only to get with it, but also to find out  
what happened while we slept.



## Companions in Reality I-X

### I. The Handsome Companion

How was one to know “handsome” — i  
still another word for which no lexicon exists.;  
One witnessed the solution of the sexes  
in the embrace of separate lovers  
in a dream.

One slept in the beautiful house—  
puzzled, as a child  
by a mathematical problem,

Ce eee

Aaron Shurin, John Wieners & Judy Grahn

I felt need of concrete visionary apparition  
in order to compose this second poem—  
since I did not want to depend on dream—  
knowing well that consciousness made vision  
impossible and yet determined  
to pursue the night  
at the prompting of an angel,  
these blue sheets in another’s bed.

eeeeSeSeSsSsSSSSeSSFSSFSFSsSsSsSsSs  
Kate Marsh

### III. Line

Had I dipped my Pen  
into any of the Seven Oceans of Ink  
and written on my bullets  
they’d have become catafalcos  
of the Word  
as if I had uttered its sound—  
and so these pages are undefaced

mute in order that some rose may not perish.

Se  
Maria Morales

IV. Red Hibiscus

So that night  
    which courts the hostage  
its promise of heaven  
can be wooed in turn for day  
is when its flower tongues the air  
but when it's dark we get to be the way we are.

Jean Cocteau

V. The Heads of the Town, The Botticellian Trees

In an arbor stranded between skyscrapers  
    stranded in shadow  
hundreds of moths the color of ashen shadows  
ceaselessly devoured the young  
the new green of spring—

these trees called to me their grief.  
“Read,” they cried, “we are otherwise helpless!

    Read this!

    But we don't mind either  
    if you look also  
at her eyes, painted black with stibium  
and with the blue of Egypt's sky,  
who sits by your side on that city bench—  
    her eyelashes, her caramel skin.  
Our children are murdered, it's true,  
but your desire is handsome. Les feuillets  
de ton Ame, et ce feuillage  
de nêtre ramification, ces sont  
le plus petit chose qu'existe.”

Dede Rollins

## VI. Circannual Pollination

On a beach in May  
during daylight one overhears Rilke—  
a season has come round, one genuflects  
again, drops to the hot white sand.

lengthen the leg  
a stocky woman or zaftig  
can benefit from the longer line of exposure.  
The Greek fabric disintegrates to transparency  
when she steps from the surf, it clings  
to wet solar skin, to rich plum-brown nipples  
to buttocks that flex across all space and time

—yet one also sees what one's desperation encodes  
aeonic wind gently billows the sail which like gauze  
or gossamer can't resist being unwoven  
or torn away. Her nakedness is such clothing  
the Breakers themselves have reorganized  
our means of meeting  
so that one's need to see her face  
is surrounded by her need to show her face  
across the sands, across the sky

across the shore of hell or toward this place of  
flowers one picks in her stead, and which one arranges  
which one carries for her, columbine erect and streaming  
golden spurs, Shasta daisies one sees now not less

Scarlet Fire Opals—emotions on determined stems  
one gathers in a trance at the edge of a precipice  
her judgment computes, though she is nowhere to be seen.

She is nowhere. Nothing—  
her face has vanished so that one can see her, always  
see her face. One passes by movie theatres  
to examine the posters behind the glass  
but really the flowers.  
One veers from streets into alleys to examine pavement  
cracks where an abyss, perhaps one's own, extrudes.

The regular pain of her measurable nearness.  
Rilke, Cavafy, Williams—  
marvelous flowers  
    their din of apparent silence  
their perfumes of undetectable extrusion—  
nothing symbolic in her secret  
nothing symbolic in her cunt, no defense  
    of symbol, no metaphysical diagnosis  
nothing gnostic about it. One labors  
hours, days, the marriages of months  
for this season so miniature  
or small enough on hands and knees—  
one knows she will disappear in such a gulf  
    or yawning chasm,  
en soledad. Swans, crows—  
    one concedes to them their history  
one concedes to them their ecstasy.  
It does one no good to ask her mother  
since her mother will cure according to another purpose—  
one can't accept it, it's premature to unit  
it's not yet "all one"  
this is lesser, smaller  
granular.

Arthur Rimbaud

VII. Remontoir

Of those who by condensation  
make it, say  
what they have made is not private property—  
its discipline, that knowing it  
must be combined with obedience.

The obvious, poppy heads those |  
purplish in the back yard sun shine knobs  
or constant-force devices from which  
each lately four petals fell j  
they paper the earth below  
                  they rot  
into that which is,;

One comes to them carefully, fe  
without caution, for the first cut

ee ae by way of objection and hurled himself naked |  
see what pours out, see what streams into the sea, water against water  
from their pretty crowns! thereby renewing sequence—

Back through veils or nerves of the winder, the  
corngement 72000 8 coil or box into which  
each one the flowers, their girlish hair the units of reality stream,  
in tight symmetrical woven rows pagent al pal  
no less companion burgundy mums  
even how crimson intensifies toward bright yellow t,t @ man's hours are not  
numbered serially  
eyes to black as-blood on staring pansy faces— they bear names and are the  
unambiguous measures  
stained, bearded, the flowers interrogate of his heaven, accurate because  
back through to being's magnificent deadend. Scan aaitin thas aeareak

unfallen angels, Midnight is  
when the Bridegroom comes, not Pachomius  
nor Benedict's offices except maybe  
in the strictness of desire  
to reform a degraded discipline  
for her larger ordering

but not clock cloche  
the bell's inhuman  
sein sain signum symptom  
it sent Lawrence back to his notebooks

that bell's ringing, quanta from the temple  
all it took was a pencil.

Jack Clarke

vill. Al-na'ash

That is the Planet of the Apes she said.

Up on a bier with Mistress  
Ursula  
by looping an alogy—  
the lamp illumines the night  
put dawn makes the lamp unnecessary—  
white as polar ice  
she's a weather impersonal  
this is the cold system of love.

What is one doing here on a cooling board  
with Lady Bear? Maybe one  
had better get out of the way,  
but one can't.

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IX. Saint-Rémy-de-Provence

Few will see his colors  
in that landscape because they are.  
not colors, that he went south  
in order to go north through the  
funnel in order to go south  
but painted it before he left,

sunflower, the second starry night and all  
the long-exposure swirls that stood before him,  
home to the Dog-Eyed Lady of the Lowlands  
through the whirlpool's roar that ears are  
not made to hear, that 'broad path  
to all the possibilities in the future' Picasso  
felt and understood at once, 1901

impletion's non-serial geochrony in the brain  
though 'all the roads were closed' to strain  
to see and copy down the dream full plain  
of Arthur sleeping in Tartaros again  
and again, remains of vision, not insane  
but star-trails graven in the grain.



Tom Raworth

X. The Great Blue Heron;

I was born in the East and there  
I dwelt until the earliest hour of morning °  
one day in the approach of summer solstice  
when a distant song woke me from my sleep ‘  
not only by the beauty of its notes but also  
by the virtue of its meaning. Thus I set  
my life in order by lamplight knowing  
a strong ordeal of broken spans  
awaited me in the following days through which  
I must pass alone either to a place where someone  
about whom I had frequently dreamed  
would meet me and answer my life’s questions  
or to a state of inconceivable annihilation  
which would merely end the brief and  
incomprehensible flare of my existence.  
That song of time though far away  
in dense and dark stillness elevated  
the silence of my soul to its confident  
bright solitude not because it sounded  
just for me but because its presence caused me  
to become aware of the Companion of the World.

Eugenia

# David C.D. Gansz

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## *From Truth to the Tribe*

### I.

MARCHING FORWARD FROM THE FOREWORD yet, in this age of information, nothing's being said. So(,)many before and with us con-fuse(d) rite with right, the right being rigid, ripe and poised to fall, the rite being tall looking down on itself. Moved to self-defeat they are perpetually bleeding, ever-ending. They need temporal (temporary) rest. They seek arrest. We're challenged to wrestle them down to re-cognize-ability in writing, while plethoric verbosity reigns, supreme, on our lips to our dis-grace.

Writ-u-all. No longer ritual acting out myth. No longer nomen's pre-tense to numen (the 'mystique'), but numen in nomen... the numinous word, un-earth-thing, un-ear-thing the Word from/with/in the words; the re-naming into being, the second adamic numen-clature, healing dis-easy muelleria; re-stor(y)ing myth in poetry to poetry. The blood to body. Renewed sub-stantiality. Our stance to stand under the myth in ritual, the working out of history out of his-story in history... to get out of history (what we will, ourselves). The mythopoeic permanence of print as op-, or juxta-, -posed to/with ritual reading. To ride the night's mare. For full 'participation' in the story(,)being told(,)we must(,)believe it. We trade the arsenal of intellect for the gnostic flaming sword, accepting dream, 'magic,' myth and poetry as interchangeably fluid.

Here's a fear of water in that fluidity a mere lubrican't, silencer for the gritty, noisy mechanism called body. The common root of fluid and fluent. Our effluent, affluent language (in-fluent-ial). Our body of water (across which we came). We're the constituency of earth, archaeologically fluid into our depths. To be all mixed up in the vessel of our selves. Words, sharp as water can be. Ritual colored by abrasive proximity. To tear the bark or rend the bread crust. The liver-voiced stickiness of inflection. 'To astonish the people publicly, as with thunder. To awaken knowing we've dreamt, not knowing what. Under the merciful in-fluence.

'To be literally out of touch,(the Twin's desire unfulfilled) the sensible yet insensitive doubt which paralyzes gesture into the stage prop of decorum. The gesticulatory tools of punctuation, standing-in for physicality. Our misappropriation (mis-conception) of sense as mentality (c.g., "sensational" as mind-boggling), nonsense taken to mean illogic (sensitive taken to mean emotionally touchy). Our govern-mental de-part-mental arrange-ment.

T(h)rashing the environ-mental balance. A-verse to the touching sensuous. Our techne-logical diminution of the sacra-mental's calling for a new sense-ability (with-out[, ]being detri-mental to the experi-mental).

To free the men(')s-true-all from the mental. To be commensurate. To ground oneself in the sense of him herself. To coin the epicenism. To retrieve what the environs-meant. ("To be) re-mind(ed). Fund-a-mental change in current thought. To touch what we (previously) thought. Brilliance as spiritual radiance (not mental prowess) moved in to an other wise. We must literally come to our senses. In a sense. Making sense?

This proclivity to (ob)serve. Right-u-all, follow. Not the ped-antics but the true sanctimonious (in its obsolete-sense) harmony. To conduct ourselves, conduit ourselves, The sanguine-us. The Sang-real us. The spiritual blood relation to the invoked (voice of the) goddess in (giddy) gossip. To pore over then pour out one's heart discreetly. The porous heart. 'The im-pulse (not propelled to repulsive compulsion). The god's in us in the world, experiencing creation through us in our creativity. Re-creation. The call to sensation. The anti-sanitation. This bloody nation.

Society's meta(-)phor mind the ratio-right, towards orbal urbanity. Thus our rite to (w)rite, right o(u)r wrong. Our self-caress. (Wanting to touch you we ask you to touch yourself, Saying help yourself; meaning let us be there for you. Trusting you to trust yourself. Entrusting you to yourself). The initiation of a nation. Condemnation. The corpo-real (body of work): In need of in-corporation, indeed.

Poetry is animadversion, from animadverse to animadvertise. We animate the inanimate, in each ex-animate breath-turn. Between us is this language transmission, accepting our co-mission in sin tactics. (The silent inter-mission). Inquiry(ing). Our quest to treasure ourselves in each other (i.c. the inothering), the on(e)ly right angles seeing commonality in commiseration. The quest(ionable) speech. To ask the dispelling question. Our re-quest(ion)ing our selves to in-habit the tongue, to tongue the language. "To further facilitate the language faculty. It(')s in(,)our (inner) nature('s) to nurture speech.

The con-verse is our con-version to conversation, the sentencing of our selves to ourselves. A commerce in words, inwards. The per-missions to co-hear. To confide(,)thus(,)gaining confidence. A part of, not apart from. To be response-able's our new responsibility. Non-perverse the pro verse voice of affirmations. Our salvation's inner (in our) salutations, healing to attention.

We find ourselves (literally) speaking with, not to. Speaking from or spoken through (i.e. to be well spoken), hence scription re-calling the scribe. That prescription to which we must (all) sub-scribe. Our discipline's verbal austerity, discerning when to speak or remain reticent (when we're a willful subject or will-

less contemplative object of the great causal animation). Godsend. To hear what we don't want. Words s(t)imulate, simultaneously.

The ingression. We locate ourselves with in our (inner) locomotion. Ensouling. Neither born from nor borne by. The outcoming/inging. Where there's no(w)here. Contractional obligation and necessity(,)provided(;)we've some-thing to say. (The re-serve). To convince the wall of reality it's a door. In (the) nature(,)of naming's gnosis. (Our instantaneous cutting of con-science.) Objects live out their names in us. To live-out ourselves in(-)w(\$rds. Naming's the mythic prophecy. The unnamed remains(,)as history (the exot[er]ic). Let words ex-plane themselves. A speech of figures. To say, 'This re(-)minds us of what it is.'" The poem says what it means and means what it says.

III. (The movement of hand in air, hand through hair, hand on skin. The whim. What we're to him, the other... the Strange-her. What we're to her, our only true one. She is[;]the new Nefertiti, bred from ' Eve through Mary, Guinevere and Sophia, dormant but stirring. She will make our uroboric world-egg. and help us kick at the shell. She will give us language and stir in the guttural prayer. She will be the. 62

4 circumarticulation. In passive [com]passion to profess for undesirable love. [Ero fessional. The treasuretrove trunk of majt]ter). IV.

Let's re-place tradition with traduction. Tradition contains its treason, traitor, betrayal and extradition. Traduction's conducive to intro-, de-, in-, re-, ab-, se-, and (re)pro-, -duction, conducting and education. We know all there is to/about aposiopesis, anacoluthon and synchysis. It's time for a polysyntactical, polysynthetic language employing hapax legomena. Attention to (a tension in) the word in a slurred staccato speech.

'Trans-formation of information be(;)comes more in(-)formal. To opinion a form. (The aformal). A form all drawing and writing share that's non-con-form-ist. In that language's manipulation of objects, a reformation of the per-form-ance or an acting(-)out of place. (The trauma of the drama). The pace is in place (and) in space. The apostrophic possession of space's not owner-ship. Handling the punctual (punctured), gestural sound-space com-punction (or the type-shift to italics, say). The subtly subtle acting-action of words, as in the masked act of facial gesticulation. A call here to/for kinemics or, for that matter, kinesics. The language's for 'man' to 'man'ipulate, to mutually ex-press the beneficial use of tools. Handle language. Choose from the periodic chart of verbal elements. Before(-)w(\$rds. (Cyo,,n)struct by hands, or (self-)destruct by arms. Re-dia-gnosis of (c)motion.

To sound(,)the object. The sound(-)object. The synesthesia of what's the matter (at hand). The tongued caress of words. Phon(Zp)ics. Elliptical elision or the

paragoge, for euphony. (H)ear(t)(h) anima(1). The muse's mosaic; the poem's music. Relinquish the lyric to its music. (Neurons don't fire a fugue). Our mode's the helpful, unmeasured metre of medi-tation (not medi-cation). Our cadence a cascade as the case may be (not the decayed [decadent] casual chance or accident which coincides, incidentally, with occidental recidivism). In com-position we're(:)compounding the com-posit(ive) voice without(,)losing our composure. The turning's the voicing. A voice for meaning. Myth and ritual, in one time.

Now for the sp(I)icing directives. The inward motion will re-coagulate; the outward de-coagulate. We're up front with lenition and words clipped by aphaeresis. The middle way features epenthetic excrescents, progressive, regressive and reciprocal phonemic assimilation and sonic absorption(,)sounding the fractured vowel. The apocope's an end-all. Concision, from caesural foot up enjambed leg, during the syncopal heartbreath spark. The gap between hope and certainty's marginal.

The generosity of words. The Word cannot(:)in nature(:)remain(,)in(-)tact. De-compose the midden heap of our speech. Coercing words to give-up their ghost to us. So we sit down together with the synizesis and anoint the synaloepha. So we're (com)pounding the incapsulated, holophrastic portmanteau word. Thus ele(-)mental we might arrive with/at morphemic constructs and parasyntheta. B(I)ending, hard(i)(I)y. Add diction, not addiction. (Leave out what mind, knowing syntax, fills —\_).'

Synchronous existence of thing and its action with(-)out causal (i.e. syntactical) connection, thus forcing us to claim our projections by subjecting verbs. (Subject all verbs, or object). Own-ing our actions with out regard for possessing their out(-)come. (Consider double, in direct, possessives instead). Here we cease 'to be' some thing and do it. Simultaneous action with actions' indelible con-sequence. (Restorative

to oracular utterance power). All action's with us(,)without(,)being passed. Prepositional phrases (extended adjectives) detract from the here/now. Verb-all activity. No need to ad(d-)verbs. Substantiate adjectives absolutely; raise them(,)even(,)to verbs. i

The act(-)i(")ve made. Verbal sensations. The acausal verb(,)in (given) time(,)creates. The poem happens, eventually. The event-u-all periodicity's necessary, pre-venting total implosion or the exegetical exodus from existence. The eternal, spatial cycle (epi-strophe). Always meaning forever (for al[l]time). The legend needs to be made legible, re-assembled in diligent collective reading. Not the mono-logue lesson/lecture from a negligent 'intellect-elite,' not the dia-logue of logos wedded to 'high' techne, but the selective lexicon of a new intelligentsia of illogic without apology.

Wordy the union/battle ground grinding to the halt of silence. From Word(s) we build the shrine to what we don't know. We tell you ourselves; we tell ourselves you. God's mass turbidity through us while the Queen of Heaven sleeps. As Spermatic Logos, the poem is still(-)born. The dissemination of information. Conception in the recipient. In-fluence (in-flux). Lingui-potence. The Potentia. We, the } lingual potentates. \_ We must literally tell words apart, through our drifting, shifting consonants, in our continence, on our continent. Angle-ish is the language towards and from. Identity through identifying with, we meet in the equi-valence of the equi-vocal, the power ("value") of our voices equal. Our vocation is our calling. (Who called?). To invoke our goddess in each other with assistance from our only advocate. Our author-ization's from the author(ity) of peace. Our occupation's to be pre-occupied. Read in-spirit-ization for inspiration. In-spire the shining ineffable. Aspire to the conspiracy of ex(as)piration with each respiration(:)no matter what transpires.

The Word is for-giving. It is non-judge-mental. Senti-mental... to feel by the senses. The feeling. brain. Antenna words with no pre-conceived notions. Writing out of—back in to—the bodily fear of genius, fear of the genus. Writing as being(,)in the wor(l)d. Wordiness is worldliness. Life itself is our captivity narrative. The page's our prison and our liberation. Words protect us from where we're going (pre-diction[-ary]). The important's imported in portents, from chaos to the cosmos. The truth's in the way(,)not(,)in the way.

America is(,)wherever we happen(;)to be(,)in the language. Needing to compose ourselves; kneading, to tell our story to convince ourselves we have, arrived in(to) this destined body of our in-tensions. To say, "We are our destination." The body of this letter. Our body full of voices speaking different dialects. Our fore boding to a bide in the body of decreation. So we go on(,)making names for our(-)selves. The road from our front door leads home. To face the millennium and see a doorway. To tell, the world about us.

# John Taggart

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## *All The Steps*

1

those who hear they had better worry worry.

2

No disgrace to worry to have the worried life blues  
might do some good to be worried in the hour of our need.

3

Run run run away going to run run run away  
there are those who think they're going to run away.

4

To hear and to be facing and to be facing what is heard  
to hear and to be face to face with what is heard.

5

Run run run away they're going to run run run away  
there are those who think they're going to run away from the train.



“

Fort built to protect the community from desert raiders  
community thought to protect itself from raiders.

M4

Those who hear the train they had better worry worry  
better worry worry about a gift of tears.

8

Those who are gathered in the fort had better learn  
they had better learn how to cure their wounds.

9

The train with its poison and its tongue  
the lurking train with its poison and its tongue.

10

Those who are gathered better learn to be insensitive  
learn how to put on a show of being insensitive.

Danger of its poison and of its tongue  
danger of its poison and of its tongue against our teeth.

12

Had better break the habit the habit of prayer  
better let the jokes come back to us when we're at prayer.

13

What really kills me is standing in the need of prayer  
standing in a gathering in the need of prayer.

14

Don't if we don't if we don't break the habit  
we will be made to climb all the steps of the ladder.

15

Brood over someone else's dream: three-story red tower  
beneath the tower the train is always departing.

Danger of its tongue for those gathered like a group  
gathered like a group of all virgins with their downcast eyes.

17

There is this problem with cutting off the prayer hand  
there is this problem with the other hand.

18

How insensitive is how those who hear better be  
how insensitive how unmoved and cold they had better be.

19

You can call him you can call him up and ask him  
if we had only asked for "Sleepwalk" by Santo & Johnny.

20

Red tower green sky three-story tower against green sky  
beneath the tower the train is always departing.

21

Don't break it be made to climb all the steps  
we don't break it we'll be made to climb all the steps.

22

Ant on the floor the small ant on the kitchen floor  
the small ant anticipates by sound or shadow.

23

Light turns out in the kitchen when somebody pulls on the string  
those gathered not able to anticipate the danger.

24

If we had only stayed in the school of the prophets  
in the school of the prophets who catch thoughts from words.

25

/

Ant on the floor the small ant on the kitchen floor  
those gathered not able to anticipate the danger.

Those who are gathered are fondled and taken by the hand  
taken by the hand and made to climb all the steps.

27

Perfectly built fort bound to make the community unhappy  
bound to make those in the community unhappy.

28

What really kills me is standing in the need of prayer  
I'm standing in the need of jokes that come back.

29

Standing in the need of prayer in a perfectly built fort  
bound to make you unhappy bound to make me unhappy.

30

Not broken the habit of prayer not been broken  
those who are gathered better learn how to cure their wounds.

# Nathaniel Tarn

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## *Architextures*

Isn't it the end now, isn't it the way you come home as if you were not coming, as if you were staying down and were going to eat of that food for all time, what is it, the amaranth seeds, or poppy seeds, or the marigold seeds, something intolerably like that, and would be satisfied to stay down there forever, without anything to say to yourself in this new tongue, this novel we are trying to talk up here, or to say for yourself, to tell us in unwearying detail, what it is that our time needs to know that is so close now to finishing without ever having had its say?

Isn't it the truth now: that we no longer surmise where we are? That the art no longer knows where it is, that the art is repeated over and over, that the city has to be abandoned to its aging, a brand new city going up beside it, to explode into this century which is so late in manifesting? Manifesting its particular commitment of the environment to the setting and the setting to the environment, so that we have at last, what is it, a story told, a narrative in building?

So that you ask yourself, looking out of all the windows of the dead city, one after another, coming to the window, parting the curtains, shrouds over the windows' eyes, looking out onto that void, trying to make out the contours of the new city—but with the angle always wrong, the new buildings being just out of eyesight, just out of the field of perception—you ask yourself: what is that being, that very pale being, are we that being, that ghost almost, what is that being trying to come up very slowly, into the upper air, and is she making it? Have we determined it is a she, is she making it, or it, or he, or, is, she, making it, or we? Is she reaching that upper air, is she coming up here to say something to us, is it true that at last she is coming home, is she coming home, is she home, is this her here beside us? Looking now back down in the opposite direction, proud of her raising herself to this unlooked for stature, of having made something out of herself, and out of you into the scenario?

How is it that this man of music reaches all the world, by coming up out of his own earth and going into all the various territories, taking that music with him? For it is not like language which stops you, like a door you cannot go through—but like a transparent curtain, a veil, you go through with the greatest ease. And here is the heart of mankind beating from one end of a great city to the other which is the whole earth now, where all roads spider over the planet, roads so wide you

can see them from any other planet, however far away, and how marvelous it is that all this could be done with music.

It is also true that the music had to come out of the graveyard: opening the iron gates of the graveyard, every one of the stones within cleaned, polished, the names memorialized, flowers arrayed' under every name, under innumerable winter snows: so you issue from that place and the understanding that the place gives you flows without impediment into the music. So that everywhere you go, they bring you tributes of flowers, books, pictures and everything that summons up the holy name of music and everything in the roundabout universe that nurtures music: memories, thin and thick sadnesses, knowledge, disaster, eschatology—and it is all full to explosion with a love of life which almost sweeps you out of existence and into... into what? Into what else is there but this existence? What else is there but the distant sound of justice?

And she, does she remember stones moving when that music played, animals leaning on their paws, attentive to those strains? Remember the people there, quietly beginning to dance and does she see those birds in the trees swaying, those fish in the river meandering by, sinuate this way and that to the music? Look up at the far star fields sensing them, can it be possible, move into time to the music and, moving thus, generate their own music, and does she, seeing all this, finally know whether home is on this earth and is she joyous thereat? Go up to the lead dancers and bow to them, and then, secure in and of her own place, begin to lead the dance in a quiet kind of triumph as if any time in which she might not have led it had been forgotten, so much forgotten that they will say of it: look, this was nothing but a dream? Something which, pulling it apart, you'd call a vanishment?

Where is the edge of the new and where do we go in this immensity which tells us we move from one place to another, instead of moving inside one place which is always recognized? How do we know that we go from the known to the unknown, and has this new place not always been inside us from the beginning, that we go from the safe to the unsafe, to the adventurous, to the chivalrous, to the quest and that we are not back draped in the safe, hidebound, cloth of gold, tailored its thousand pieces like to a robe of abdication? When is it that we are in our landscape, full of rural preoccupations, and that we then move towards the urban threshold, manifesting a city's wholesomeness in the traffic patterns of our brains? Is this *cittA nova* or *citt& antica* and who can guarantee it either way? Out of the mouths of angels at every gate, flaying passers-by as they are chased into this agglomeration, what is it that chorals assent and willing servitude, glows out in a breath of fire towards those latter distances, the maps of everything we have deserted forever?

How did we stand still and how then did the whirling universes stop flashing past us small as the daughters of our eyes? To grow, outwards into that dense immensity like to an ocean crystallized, a frozen summation of geography, giant vision of every planet in the galaxy, galaxy in the cosmos: how did our stillness breed this colossus—and why do we ever bother to read another single word (or to write one) where there is enough here to last in the diction of it for inexhaustible lifetimes?

Where was she: still or running? Frozen statue of a running girl, frozen in bronze and in ice covering the bronze—that day in the park which taught us childhood, frozen even more as the girl that was perpetually running away from us, flying away from her frozenness in space and in time: we that were supposed to be the ultimate freezing agent, the megalomaniac oppressors and paralyzers of everything sentient? When, already, inside there, turning around that very moment at the apex of flight, there was a body, hers, flowing out of the metal, turning, to begin the run back towards us, to return to this terrestrial island, to come back once again and forever to this home, at the center of everything, whose image all along the paradox of her flight she had never been able to flee from, had never shaken from her, never let go of, nurtured like the vision of a paradise to become?

Who is it came out of deep night gloom from the far south to beat the embattled north back into the pole, lies waiting on his bed through the long day, all blinds drawn, waiting, shutters closed, for night to come again, swallows drugs with a fierce will to turn his piss from blood back into gold once more? Beating around the kidneys, thrashed to the floor in his own waters pooling, exits alone, ramrod-backed after defeat, through the dark entrance hall, dark corridor, into dark night, boarding the bus alone to move back south where his name has just been deleted, memory obliterated, where his head has been sacrificed after the lost game, where his page has turned white?

And how did we stop in the middle of our own defeat, looking at the old man, preparing our coffee behind the counter? The coffee of the younger man sitting beside us who did not want to be with us. because we foretold his own defeat, heaping insults on his soft underbelly, but had kept company with us out of a sense of brotherhood defeated? How had we come to ask about the man who had grown old in war \_and who now, sensing our interest, had started smiling in our direction with the smile of an oriental sage?

How had we spun to look at tablefuls of men gambling behind us, how had all of life suddenly desisted on the blank screen and philosophy suddenly made her entrance into our totally barren existence? How had the survivor's star shone in



our dead eyes, our staggering bravery suddenly flared across the sky like summer's lightning?

How did she come down then, in the likeness of a sodden, burnt-out, cooked, bleary-eyed, howling and whining vampire, to tell us that we could rely on her indefinitely, to the very end of the struggle and how did we tell her, our hearts going soft as we turned to add a quarter to the music, that she could rely on us without conditions to the very end of history? How did we swagger into the night which had become an interminable day, only for us to be out of there some time down the road, her dark southern lover back with her, throwing our boxes in our faces with some delicacy, some apology, as we came to claim rags and belongings only a few weeks later?

And who, then, are these people who have been to the land where we once went, and above all, these children who have spoken to those we once spoke to and who now all look as if they are our children, adding this sense and that clarification, this context here, that underlying assumption there, and who are begging to make our house look like a home, not a shack made of a piece of wood each from a multitude of forests (one piece each, which is all that we had had time for, being then the sole explorers of that planet)? But it is also true that the house is being taken from us and is going to bear other names than ours, unless we were to enter those forests again, like the lion awakened, and make them ours: Oh! but we know the temptations of those forests, forests of study in which a thousand years are but a day, where nothing is ever written down but the throat's chord alone is all of law forever, so little one advances in any kind of knowledge that has not to do with the core of the wood—and they have no time for the trunks or barks, or branches, let alone leaves o sweet wise sap of the heart's scholarship.

But was it there we had wanted to go in the first place? Had we moved north, at that beginning, it would have been because we had planned, *ab initio*, to go south; if south, then north; if not west; if not east... How is it that we had never gone where we had longed to go? How is it that we had never had our fill of desire in that matter? But had only been where others had wanted us to be, had told us, had ordered us to be? Done the dull deeds they damned us to? And then, one night, after a lifetime of security, even that place, the one we had made our way to, was taken away. Like bodhisattvas, exceedingly intelligent, skillful in means, sterling in compassion, to tempt one away from ownership, subtracting this from such and such, and that from this other, robbing everything from everyone in a monstrous round of plunder, they had come to take this place from us and give it to those who could only love it less, understand it less, know it less—but perhaps require it more?

And she, was she there? In what shape was she there? Was she there in the image of the carved dancing girl on the walls of that colossal temple, the one the peoples believed had originally been let down from heaven? To serve as a model of earth? Little did they know she had come up from the underworld and that her toes, very low down in the carving and hidden by irresponsible jungle lianas, had actually burgeoned out of roots and branches from the forest floor! Ah, but she is here now, more secure perhaps because of those earthbound roots! From her there is no exit at the last, press whatever key you may into the document, and you remain firm there for time so long it must be tagged immeasurable. For to be free of it, so great a boon, that is not thinkable in this determination: no code will outreach to support it. You move through the placental text of her dispensation, not through invulnerable air.

Where is the place then of such knowledge, and what its quality, that seems to unroll like a ceremonial carpet, each one of whose designs knows the other, or like a loving river, each one of whose waves knows the other, so that no matter how many designs there are, or waves, the whole, when known, is of one piece and of one peace also? And how is it that this exists apart from us, though depending on us, continuous to roll through the years, though there may be many gaps, many interruptions, much forgetfulness on our part, so that we, at times, literally do not know or recognize the thread of the discourse of it: yet, there it is again: that unity, cohesion, relevance of each part to each, making these waters unlike any other, as if you could tell the differences of water! Out of what mothering wisdom does this river flow, greeting what father king in his absence, birthing what princely child, father and mother both to us all?

And why do we walk out from this water, forgetfully, fitfully, why is it at times that the water means nothing to us, as if we had never been in any way baptized, authored or explicated—as they say of the ribbon of text: explicated—why is it that it has at times nothing whatsoever to do with us, because we move in a simple fashion, with the voices of children around our heads like wreaths, ah, if it were but music! and with an utterness of being in the—where is it? not mind, heart, navel, no but such entire presence of roundaboutness, of encompassment, salve on skin and air skin moves through where all is loss gaining upon loss:

And she, is she not the first loss; is she not the loss turns aside the moment anything is born, the last fairy no one has invited to the feast, who gives the meanest gift, the dumbest present: and would you have had her give the passage, or perhaps the passion? Does she not take you down to the dead before you have even taken the trouble to be born; is she not standing there pointing the way east, sure sign of return to him who has moved west all his life, who lives below the last wall of the sun, that sun hiding its dreadful eyes so that the ending of this plot

remains unknown? Is it not the case that she complicates matters unceasingly by her interminable simplifications: last, perishing enclosure, that seed alone might live, in the single ply bright air we drink of momentarily or die?

Who are we that fled the thousand lives we did not lead in order to escape the very one life that we were destined for? Who after years, centuries, acons of fleeing, suddenly, in one moment, in a garden, a public park perhaps, felt cornered by that one true life, reeking at us from everything surrounding: trees, bushes, lawns, benches, people sitting there, children playing with hoops, skittles, or little yachts on the pond, windows of houses overlooking the park, potted nightingale-flowers tucked into balconies, servants living under the roofs and looking down onto the park, wishing they could take the air out there—and we were overcome by a smile so vast we had not enough mouth to smile it, with all our teeth shining like white suns, the way they shine in the new countries, on the new beaches, where the new nations rush along the strand in their joy? Who went to those countries at the time of their “liberation” and asked of them whether men there still feared death now that they were part of everlasting life—to come home saddened, reporting that they still feared death and that the human condition had not changed?

Who wrote innumerable words adding up to something we felt a part of, in whose reality we sank | with coolness, gratitude and the immense comfort of those who have at last found home, whereas all the countries surrounding us withered into a perpetual frost and the houses we had lived in became encased in ice, the memories of those who had known us mirrored over like ponds in winter—geese only shattering the silence, turned south over our frozen decoys?

How did she then, belonging to the people for whom mind is an insult and not the ultimate glory of our state; how did she come down, supposedly to comfort us, with her hoops, bangles and rings, prodding us interminably into jumping, into leaping through these rings that she thought were fire, which would test us and prove us and make us into man—but only lifted us aloft from the true conflagration, flew us above our burning sense of the one life lived, turning liver to salt, spleen to white flour, seeming to challenge the lilies of the field, white on the white expanses, their whys and wherefores, their lovely concentration into falls—of cowardice, of petrified desire?

# Tom Mandel

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## *The Answers and Four Strange Books, 5-9*

### The Answers

How the dim speck of entity began  
To extend its form, stretch to man

1/ 2/

A phantom thicket stalks my concentration. Then I am asleep in the face.  
Twilight foams in air, diving through downpour Smoke-like I appear in another  
place.  
of traffic into lanes of special trains. Clouds, what else looks out on the new land  
A shadow hides under the wheel. which had drawn up blue and bright.  
Mother another. Sleet turns to heat, darkness Sitting up in the close power of  
thunder,  
flexing our corral. Brunette stings. the new land through white massy & close by  
Unlit flux elevates the flow of gloom in a keep of misty sunshine extinguished  
walking into the brightly acting city. the great window where was heard  
Some rise up there to survive, but bark in the clap that ugly sometimes pretties up  
at trees' midnight silhouettes. On earth the window in the factory light.  
unshaded, leaves admiration wrecks replace Sitting felt strain of a sudden strode in,  
those it examines. What a concourse rises a violent gust of music. Midnight lightning  
of the sound of there! to fetch him out, to in a violent gust of wind descended on  
their faces.  
haul him, to break his signified safety. When my eyes are open and worse when they  
are  
Mother listens to the world survive. She The factory cures this light. You will  
recognize  
finds another name to replace a man, faithful the faults of my own temper as I write  
them out.  
to forsaken emblems. Of deserts an Emblemist. Melancholy always melancholy. Yet  
my nature  
The palm is a forsaken place, among is made for joy. This great occasion to yield  
women aboard in good earnest. Steadfast light back bounced. I walked home  
rainbow in bones of tempest, quietness to a late dinner. Of course it was but a walk  
the bones of the daughter of storm. Fast-moving among grand outlines of perpetual  
form.  
sails (the passage, who took unblemished money The lake was full of water from a  
past flood.

to conscience and forced their money's benefit) I ascended in the wrong place and  
was led  
in moving mist. What a congregation of images! to some rocks that seemed to dart  
onward  
the master hoisting his sails. Meditate on by the projection of their conscienceless  
the fire, & it passes into the world and lively momentum. My passion for plants  
of existing conceptions to feed & support and flowers had been deadened by their  
names.  
electric fluid. Free will is beautiful fuel, But here was a name most vivid of all.  
owned by none whose doubt is an act of will. Look down on everything and  
everything spreads.  
A miracle lies in wait against my soul. Two I am alone if either of my eyes is shut.  
fires light sand; the free fuel of objects The close and lively moment made for my  
temper,  
aflame like midnight smoke in the factory in fault's own conscience it turns less  
of faces. I don't know what seems. They are than wheels which outline water and  
coin  
'as opens an arch of descent on sky, sides from flesh so vivid it seems to leash  
looking out for blue; they shut the factory, your eye, an outline and walked on it.  
pour its stuff into our hands. I must be excited, encrypted or enriched.

Or every fool whom looks outline in their the counter. I know why you're here.  
petulant vessel worships his own temper The coastal interior is narrow, an  
exaggerated  
jn fault's own consequence. Passion impelled monody, link of harassed sovereignties  
spreading spread imagination lies alone and with aims of silence that sign off in  
silence  
temper hones; that either flowed by as I signals angles splayed to blink in harness,  
inclined to reading in the factory an exterior of planes. Go where you are hired  
with plants close at hand, and as I walked and the boss will buy your undercover  
cross.  
for joy of monuments in the main moments. At imparting time spiky grasses blacken  
What that was was, a honed flood memorial, inchoate speak of greeting. But who  
steps up  
and they ascended it in great columns. a path? Under-absorbed and overdone.  
Himself and his idea of himself formed The scarce hand deliberates, strokes  
a circle or an arching bridge over the expanse of dialogue in the brand.  
the clear stream. "& Air, & Ripen & harden, Part & heart hold concert of a world  
the young woods leave strong branches made new so you may conceive. The pry  
7 naked to keep the Trees fast." Causing covered by arrears; interosive statue  
dissension inside the dusky fortifications, lone denotes a dividend of metamorphic  
span.  
they drowse in the circular neighborhood. Let me have faculty, covered tears,  
After sunset glistens on the seaport, a current seam, some mean in my meaning.  
the canal is clumsy; the outhouse agile,  
supple, hard to reach. This time there is  
an alert incursion onto a square street. 4/

and marbled interspaces. Water is only sound Was pale cover is now shadow,  
deepened focus.  
to drink. Full moon small so tall. Oh, then Stray light wanders down the facade  
time, triangular, is solved? If you cannot to the deep end of the human pool. People  
wait for your reward you have not earned it. scurry toward improvements.

Facing it an irregular patch of windows  
mirrors sky darkening blue, and few clouds.

3 / Another's double tube distorts the

angular glisten of an opposing glass tower's  
Seamless white, ironic order flows image, back rising characterless beige & brick.  
in place spangled in a timeless outlook Faint marrow of offices, fainter people  
of metamorphic folds, spatters & discernment. under ugly egg-yellow squares of  
fixtures  
Bleached, it sings. Love of erosive heights that nothing fix. Sun falls as shadowline  
rimeless pits of desert forced down to debt. rises; light more than white less than  
Snow darkened my window and of a square mile liquid diamonds laving roof and  
face  
only what's in hold, a concert, disdains a is light on a face, & not facade.

measure. The tore up scent and divides a rise. A garment sings its sources in restraint,  
Bleak peninsula in speech sparks centuries "T know an hind" of light pressed into  
disturbed. We bear the penalty as changes the hand's breadth form of the circle.  
hurtle onto faces of another womenfolk. A face is a person on whose garment  
Agreed space. And so it goes, a stripe of characters form. Your hand closed around  
mind.

reflected stroke, a way of life until it's Paradox & paradigm, a day of escape divides  
overdone. The thin penitential handles in words with sides, force in law  
the stretched crossing crescents. So sure are a force in worlds in the law of peoples.  
books unread the core of barren tendered. This is a secret of the chariot, for those  
Diamonds and the inch thick of dust who descend to the chariot. Or you mean  
brace elbows of island that step upon "to reach down into oneself to perceive  
our path to home, nominant dependance. the chariot." Three entered, and one left.  
To blacken and inculcate a name you may Better unheard than unharmed. A face;  
sneak it in the darting time or buy across a downward thing of soul.

5/ 7/

I heard you say there is a stone These words are jinxed with meanings  
 in water and breath above the sense we suppress. Mortal stems plunge from  
 and came toward you in agree- their sky & die. As clouds are born q:  
 ment. An excess of sense was my from breathing, cruel ears of cursed  
 first custom, grown to an inscription shouts grovel. That's our full world.  
 in rabbinical dialect. We drew back to U.S. daytime talk. I fear my protector Fi  
 cover above the troubled circle, its above all that walks under the sun P  
 inscription in a circle. Over the water beneath all that swims under water.  
 a word placed the circle on the stone. Above the walls I need a pass to talk.:  
 High song in shadow shrieked before Like a clock we don't tick; Silent  
 our kind. A question repeated in its traffic inches by in brilliance that falls 5  
 performance numbs. Touchstone of the circle's like a gavel. The military seems to i  
 angst. Self you shed is my cloak waving. sleep alone, a hawk. I won't let them.  
 Of this uncertain agreement shadow work get near my daughter. Small towns r  
 is made; I draw & shoot, you draw & sing. collapse like kittens in the hauteur 5  
 of meanings we suppress. They stemmed «  
 6 / . from such meeting. I.e. stems violently

hurl seeds ear-high among certain men. 4%  
 If a python die, he will not be so lithe Certainly this moment stands still. '  
 as she was when she was alive. Flooded over and over, a stillborn  
 The announcer's mouth is raised meeting spilled from its stutter. '  
 to the nouns in heaven. Where are  
 they now who take so long to do 8/  
 these things, to undertake a manner  
 in the crowd of waiting frictions. Like the red sea, a piece of bread  
 We threw a cat-like weight in with divides. It is the greater miracle.  
 up-tempo maneuvers of modern animals Merciful serpent to reserve your poison  
 that circle our table, slump and beneath my tread, although God performs  
 slumber on. Enter a package one picture this wonder. I am unaware. Every miracle  
 at a time. Like a glass in a broken hand, reduces my merit in the world to come.  
 he's drowning of it. A branch cracks All miracles of the past were performed  
 its elbow across our window. "Unable once, all at once, on the Sabbath evening  
 to quit the place, I leave town just before creation was complete.  
 instead, watching a demonstration, There have been none since. After  
 cogent and scorned, fading before my eyes Adam's initial missteps and Noah's  
 like parade's end. Ardent saccharine generation, creation has been perfecting  
 of a postered struggle, punctured itself, though consciousness has not  
 in descent, hand cooled in its the same claim to stake. What's to  
 flames where mire caught fire, come? Another polemic. Give me a  
 wings trapped in quagmire. drink of water, my fever is gone. A  
 prayer wishes to be fluent in my mouth.  
 Words not of a prophet not even the son  
 : of a prophet. I reserve my opinion,  
 but am not unaware. I know my side  
 , of said divide.



J Four Strange Books, 5-9

5/

As your mouth opens to frame a word But they will die out and be superseded  
its first stirrings bring by others. People will no  
the word to my mind longer understand  
without any effort on my part our arguments with them. For her, death  
or on yours. yielded no meaning; her life

Almost before you begin to was not rounded in retrospective gaze.  
express a thought, I sense No, life was incomplete,  
what you want to say jagged. Nor will they  
& hear you bring forth statements see why we insist there was no  
as if they were mine. How haltingly reconciling, not for her.

I explain this simple coincidence In retrospect especially, life is  
You are inclined in my naked & wretched. So,  
direction, and I, losing my way, I'm  
in rapt attention to the garbled flow happy to ask someone how I get there.  
of sounds emanating from you, "I'll point it out," he says,

listen closely to breathing and & walks beside me on the smooth path.  
await your words. Meanwhile The road ends abruptly  
you hear rhythm shred in a brambled track,  
the surface of your speech, as time dense threat. "'Here we are,'" my new friend  
develops obsessions—difficult says, "'just take it from here.'"

to move through. Memory of you breath- From new melodies we learn new gestures.  
ing fills the hole with sleep. You may admire the trees  
"The delight I take or the shadows of  
in such thoughts is my delight in my the trees, for the same qualities—shadows  
own strange life." A telescope because they are so like trees—or

ends in the eye. My mountain climbs different—upright trees filled with light.  
into your cloud, the bet- Or trees because they're scored  
ter to build a hill. by shadows. Shadows  
But I cannot build clouds; the dark, trees substantial. "Strike a coin  
dreamed-of future never comes true." from every error."

We struggle against a tendency Fictitious concepts teach us those we know.  
that once people have died Not that “the problems of  
we look at their lives life insoluble  
in a conciliatory light; their years appear on the surface can only be solved in depth.  
to us as if softened by haze. They are insoluble in surface dimensions.”

Remarks that sow, remarks that reap. “Look waiting for to come from you.  
at humans: one is pois- Finally, after what  
on to the other. seems endless delays  
A mother to her son, & vice versa. during which most of the audience departs,  
But the mother is blind & so is the son. a last participant crosses

Oh, perhaps they have guilty consciences the finish line—the winner, yey! His j  
but what good does that do? thoughts manure the soil for  
The child is wicked, sowing. I.e. “Ass  
who teaches it to be different? Its parents and ox can do things too, but only humans  
only spoil it with stupid affections. give you their assurances.”

How are they supposed to understand this, '  
& how could the child un-  
derstand this? They are  
so to speak entirely wicked, entirely  
innocent.”

I don't want a causal explanation, just  
to know where all this came  
from. Silent on the  
subject of you, the portrait explains itself.  
“My face reddens, contracts.

My hair changes color.” “Our portraits are 6/

mirrors where events ap- The signs are good; it doesn't matter.  
pear which have waited Nothing forces one to look at them. The innocent  
long years in readiness for & pious must be punished. A moment today,  
the door of reality to open, unjust & pitiless, of pallid  
caricature, was an intimate  
personal mechanism, general, immense, obscure,  
to make their final entry, because that erased the barrier  
without it every- between ancestry & departure.  
thing seems colorless  
like a man struggling unsuccessfully,  
to recall a name. But, One syllable of prophecy & the messiah  
is arrested! The way I imagine it, culture  
is adorable; it is not cannot be other than  
even in that case I'd say, 'think of something bourgeois culture. Lie  
else and it will come to prone & dismiss. His fluent  
you.” Similarly bearing caused the detention of persons. Caused

to think of something else would the death. Gaiety and  
allow what I'd been affection tempt respect.

There'll be no other bloom; immortal we What things teach with their language

a fade. The treatise is televised tomorrow. is different from what things teach with  
Communism is not orthodoxy; you know our language. Mysterious discomfort of  
work-

the example of tolerance manship. Human model ancient

I know. Scheme of work. powers Fascism today.

Perhaps causes are of no use to effects. Why does sun still shine? Today repeats, walls

A trial outside the palace. peeling by a mall. A patient

What modality governs? hand spares the cities.

To be scientific lacks subtlety, Not to, Do you feel you can hide in developed space?  
discernment. A lesson of the blind border. Words which mean for me mean nothing  
to you,

Nathan had a power of discerning souls. mean nothing to me! Admire the rich

Cars sag by a curb, Can conundrum whose equality

a suburb be a landscape, is boast; a published

the spirit of a substitute? Pedagogic things norm guards none behind the line. Form  
intact

lamppost, leprosy. If man & vanished. We see the

disturbs, if woman turns aside. same; it's no longer there.

Extract things useful, a source of motion I've changed my mind about the condition  
is totality. Exclude science from the eye. of us all. History is an honest fantasy

City walls once were edifices of Arab style. painted like the parties used to be,

Eyes & ears light on I got mine from voice.

tin or plastic objects, There is no word for

toys colorful & crushed, ticketed for useless character that's not belief in what's to  
come.

survival. A catalog chaotic, In the future world

corneal, impotent, valuable. no images, the eye

Do you set a glowing object before me, does not look back. Perspective is subject  
finite shard or stage set? Nice. Return of film, surrogate culture like policemen,  
with an idea of the matter of which like fate. Half the world is silent but

this world is made, thin not for lack of speaking.

cotton, coalescing out of My penitent schism fades

strangers' view. A transistor from the in the writing, yet speaking never stops.

repertoire's horrendous. A You who have these &

banished king. The language those give through me.

of things replaces words that change.

The end of a world happened between them.  
Ahead of time or behind, their minds  
    scurry. They learn  
    to scrape away. Write  
X on water; water pours a name. Clown  
of the physicals,  
argue with yourself.

7/

If I say it, you may doubt me. I lie down and fine dust covers  
If you say it, you may doubt me still. my face, settling before, as Ramah  
"T do feel this so intensely wrote in his sister's name;  
that to ask a question is "the greetings of my grave" a  
to answer your objections." & I will not see your faces again 4

I meant the ornament as tar. Reversal. until our souls whirl into bodies  
To return a word. In the abyss of signs again; then I will see your faces  
is an abyss not of signs. again—and give my assent  
The sun is pleasant; tho redundantly, for I am;  
but not work under it, simply there. I respond.

I am coming over the It is sweet where I am, and all.  
hill with my elephants ablaze. men & women will follow me there.  
Can you see me? Silence will someday speak:  
Can you give me your support. "..." take heed that my distress  
Gain and maintain. I want not pain him, that he be not saddened

i

'To establish a bond before by my grief, For what profit in  
I control you, a trust, I his suffering at my anguish? In  
must know this as skill his pain, will mine decrease?"  
all of us have, but not Your cheeks were my couch  
all of us use the skill. your neck was my mattress.

Stimulus, pause, response. Repeat The lowly despise their days  
for a while as the day retreats. of little things. So what if '  
To see my name makes me feel these words are stilted.  
human, so that I put it A large paw will tear them  
where on the road I can see from their days. We step on

that going toward it it approaches; dust that covered their faces  
Dexame entrar, me hazere luar. that was their faces. I lived in  
In front of all that plunged a room not a chamber, it's  
to begin there were disputes wiped away. I moved in the  
to which I simply respond. open; I move to that spot.

Though I contradict his words  
they are words I don't know

because I didn't know him  
\_ when he spoke them, and I  
have not read his writings.



f 8/ 9/

Little world inside events, There is a message in counterpoint:  
in place of eventual respondents. questions unasked, unanswered,  
A maneuver of thought  
does not take place.

Like fishhooks, caesuras  
Words relocate away  
a weight of motion  
of barrier are buried in the fissures  
of unfinished mouth. of interrupted sense.

Planetary mouthful. Do not be a die  
Switch on wall off! for the montage of a torso.  
Work a direction  
met at a time.

If the chapel is a spire,  
and vagina become a penis.  
Thin theme—din din dimension.  
Poignant glove. Zoo of simulacra  
in a theatre of air. Operatic syntax; angels in gender  
A fragment subdues us all. blaze up to bond desires.

Trajectory, disperse They're broken not baroque.  
I tell you! Rococo frolics rocking  
Cracked restoratives  
beaten and warm,

the referent in memory. Cause  
is an obstacle to climbing  
Inaptitude untested.  
Come and go.  
Traffic beacon and we are followed by  
made of the passage. animals whose marketable responses

Look at that. force whiteness to disperse  
Take it away. and skew our cadence.  
Tongue in title.  
Concrete conquers all.

Fluent erosion broken at night.  
Wrecked at the whiff of a comma

that resembles the hindquarters  
of hanged words to come.

# Aaron Shurin

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## *Below Ground Level*

The road, towards an hour or so farther, this was—you forget. door, wall, cool courtyard, a few irregular steps. The soil exhausted, struggled oleander; stone steps and went in—the passage where you crept for summer, below ground level “Trail, a creeper had sucked time I could see dry behind me, \*\*T think,” she said, “I used to hear them cutting slopes.” Calling across walled pits and trenches, red shadows, the thick smell of dust from the walls—local afternoon shadows—solid sun. For me, it had always been reconstructed passages: those days Paths, a bearded man trailing behind him footsteps, faded to find the way back, licorice in crevices. He made off—swallows whirled in the old roofs—wandered without plan \_ Remote bearings; the air, the incidents and encounters. Flush of high cheekbones, looked lost—she directed him to the room and grew familiar. Afternoons were spinning in the pines, surrounding phrases about tulips and dark skin. He wrote her a letter; she was pleased, enveloped in a metaphorical haze I was taken past all position and far from me, invisible presence clung to the denuded garden. A lowering sky and streaming road, a moist hill of moonlight. He slept on the roof, the three of us woke to a rusty sunrise—on this memory is specific Seasons revolved around the slopes of interrupted talk, hung in the thickening air. Minimum greetings swam with hibiscus and fiery shade. Names had rung in my head, moustache, eyes. A woman in black muffled the floor with a broom. Stone days, dig there, graver silence in the excavation, carrying messages I had been spinning an emotional point of view as a present. The crumbling soil was being opened and cleared, Now I found the passage of years had never been away. Shreds of flowers swell in the water, late sun, night pouring bubbles on the stairs. I’d slept subterranean, cool interval contracted One of the rudimentary streets was there in the company of local views—some of the men—a scrap of opinion and already an interruption. Who was using my name? Interlocking foundations reflected where one was, a colossal accommodated occasion, along this very road Pursuit of the complicated landscape—mountains unearthed everywhere—this figure wanted to: identify this tale and its resistance. Under the familiar names discover the names themselves, some still living. Blocks of place, the banked earth, a hood of shade. The sun beat up a dry wind, I hugged “the linked terraces, fingering a rock—dusty—and another way down...

# Jacques Roubaud

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## *Some Thing Black*

*translation: Rosmarie Waldrop*

Now Without Likeness  
Now without likeness  
Without even time without infinite  
Without black silvering and between, full hand dark  
with hair  
Now deaf having ceased being naked having  
ceased being a woman having ceased  
Now that there is nothing to  
see nothing the likeness  
Neither delirious nor desirous  
Now you don't turn back  
On my hand neither glove nor sweat  
For lamps around us great evangels In This Light

An outsider, in this light, without object.  
It turned out that the light, even while giving itself  
to this already thing which existed, denied existence to  
you.

There was this face bathed in an infinite space. I  
knew there would always be this face and this infinite  
space.

The color didn't need to be blood didn't need  
to be so heavy.

The unalterable, extant, nothing.  
Died during this state of the light  
The picture, coming out, hit you  
Dropped there, like a measuring device  
It had become impossible to say  
A cloud.

This Region

This region: incomplete reflections, the reflecting  
surfaces do not cramp or blur or weaken, they just

The lost fragments are perhaps stacked in the  
closets, the archives, but then the codes, the keys are  
locked up also.

I shall not try for restoration.

This region: before the Marine Ministry, designed  
with a maniacal precision, innumerable birds taking off  
in perfect alignment, black.

From absorption to reflection only the name  
remains unchanged.

At first, this seemed remote. no longer.

This region: region, in a manner of speaking, a  
moralized landscape, through definite descriptions, the  
bases for neighborhoods totally scattered.

In a manner of speaking, region, to feel a lull pierce.

Then flatten, erode, become banal. until a  
spade, the light, digs up its deepest core.

In This Light, II

Your state, outside the light, cannot be thought,  
which also means I cannot think its trace within me.

Visible cluster of lights a proposal to be: you.

Don't mingle outside the light.

My eyes had come to rest some place for if this  
image should forever silence me my whole life  
would belong to it so totally it would, once and for all,  
be stopped with it.

Lights changed but not your darkness.

Not one thing acting any more as if the light made  
sense.

Paths blazed into the dark, by light each light  
continues blazing toward me in the dark.  
Between your open legs, dark patch.

That did not change.

## History Knows No Souvenirs

History knows no souvenirs.

Every picture of you—I'm talking of those I have in  
my hands, before my eyes, on paper—every picture  
touches a trace of recognition, lights it up,

But for all that it's dead, they're dead, each and  
every one of them, their patterns constitute no life, no  
sense, no lesson, no purpose.

Your voice shifts with a crackle on the tape, I hear  
the effort of your breathing, at night, before the tape  
recorder by your bed.

I hear it again after a hundred nights, unchanged,  
and yet there's nothing in it of your presence, nothing  
that mechanical magic could have transcribed,  
mimicked on rust, of any of your moments, full,  
separate moments of difficult breathing, dead for being  
there in your name, like a recourse.

This is perhaps why in these shots and tapings you  
are the most irrevocably dead.

This is also why what life you've left, if any, is In This Light, It  
imprinted on me, your shroud, fused with me and  
refuses to be sorted out Look

the recent heat is letting up

And, like your flesh, give in to an obliging, the light swerves toward the dark  
unimaginable dissolution or freeze, like picture and  
recording, in documentary parentheses. This life which Look  
is: a world collapsed like scaffolding

Your smell, your taste, the feel of you. My inner image \_and that other one in  
contradiction

but I no longer could deduce or demonstrate.

Look

non-sense \_ the light  
a cloud and its form denied

Before my eyes passed glossy but equal sequences,  
violently at variance with your immobility

Look

duration, bit player raking seconds, years

Flagstone of nakedness

Negative transparency

Look

the rampant light which beds you once again.

Pornography

Can memory be pornographic?

Then pornography would have to include what is  
not public, is without third parties, since memory's not  
written down, exhibited, or stated. is without voyeurs.

I'm not a necrophiliac, I don't desire your corpse. I  
don't know what that is. if it is. I've seen you dead. I  
have not seen you as a corpse.

Yet I desire.

These memories are the darkest of all.

They do most violence to the principle of reality.

In full daylight, I plunge into these conflagrations. 7

You move, breathe.

"Pius Pepe Real and Steadfast Death

sr glenn wpe vt ag In the light. I verified your irreality. it gave bi  
monsters. and absence.

The hand of your watch went on moving. in

In This Light IV loss of time I found all of myself included.

Placed It was the last moment we would be alone.

in-between-the-worlds, insisting,

in your own name Tt was the last moment we would be.

This patch of sky. henceforward. was

'no other' love P y

e i ate ne inheritance. from which you'd pulled the clouds. and  
believe in it.

Without colo furiously asleep

'Your hair turned absolutely black.

The i nl h

Pig ia ee Your mouth closed, absolutely.

Love no more than mere t '

repetition Your eyes smashed into the view.

Prowls, insists, subsists 8 eee ate 'I had entered into a night with an edge. beyo:  
sy ee which there could be nothing.

Become

redundance of the visible

The distance will surprise you

And my voice, it's true, returns

with these words to your image which, alone,

has placed them here.



# Hank Lazer

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## *Displayspace 1*

with a spirit of attachment as one attached to came unglued  
buying frenzy complete liquidation slashed  
each one living with(in) the given passenger next to me reading canadian hereford  
digest one more case for the opacity of  
tenor extensive tension  
mose tolliver's impossible creatures booze or vision stick to the play ethic  
as of yet horses cannot be artificially inseminated pilot apologizes for having to  
take several delay vectors why a sudden respect for the line  
in order to graph (wo)man in place among the elements before this conception  
becomes obsolete ponytails of innocence  
you are free to move about the cabin the pride of frankenstein chuckle of  
adult men  
beaten portent tendency

soothing each other by repeating common phrases in expected syntactical patterns  
"so you like american as an airlines" slap the bourgeoisie & they do strike back  
flying within a blinding whiteness the captain consoled himself by studying the  
green  
glow of his control panel  
"you still get four seasons but you don't have to suffer" "she does a lot of  
contemporary stuff" "these crystals are more beautiful than a work of art"  
david holman bright light you lying under a tree on a golf course in humid oxford  
mississippi you dear friend of grace energy & wit outrage & intelligence  
done in by a bad heart at age 38 \_—you are the hole in this poem  
"we wouldn't have talked if we weren't stuck in this holding pattern"  
in the whitney a middle aged woman turned to her companion and said to her "my  
sculpture teacher rents a studio from elaine de kooning"  
my life had stood a loaded book helen the hungry bear helen & the great quiet  
michael suggests that new york assigns each activity to a specific locale thus  
sexuality of costume & gesture flourishes on the lower east side  
society for the support & training of christian cowboys the emblem "of"  
emblazoned "upon"  
at stake here is not the divination of the secret meaning of the physical world said  
bob pacing back and forth dot dot dot

because loaded down with goods acquired travel back is always more difficult  
a shlep a ship a shape  
chain around her ankle because a sign of  
as you're azure assure  
mumbled interrupted barely social speech habits because no doubt of something  
way back  
swindle single swine doll  
in the bing & bong because intelligible but barely meaningful  
severe several sever;  
because speaker size is not a determining factor  
the sire desire the sigher

book of ours greatness & diversity of first quarter of twentieth century begins to  
overwhelm us "'as real as it gets" for to specify is to pacify —\_ the mark of tzara  
the return of seltzer — we who loved him knew he had a bad heart but thought  
that meant  
death at 60 not now at 38 couched in (if not cornered by) \_\_ it matters absolutely  
[where] on the page wear on the land whereupon or dad's "wherewithall" \_  
hello  
dali young sunk in separate lives \_ pink flamingo infants where \_listen \_lissen  
cop cars revert to black & white —\_ i could do better with more time (/ light) \_  
yardbird  
parker too young to be inside servile of the fittest hair in a bun pulled up into  
: timeless black religious cap \_ paint crown molding china white walls navajo ~~  
wind  
blow through me \_suggestible bells navy blue \_\_ in rough trades run a tight ship

cat harriet tubman keeps eating the erasers off my pencils  
shout and twist one dollar perplex put up prefab autobiography  
presidency run as a call-in talkshow stone commemorates confederate dead  
uniforms and barked commands negate humanity \_\_ irrecuperable ever irruptive  
differences  
light takes the tree simple syllables but who but how  
colonel joe & the bloody corncobs playing heterogeneous irreducible rocknroll  
no hats in class paging dr. seuss russo-american utility prejudice  
ironically resisting closure over and over \_ postcard bumpersticker t-shirt  
paperweight  
the pleasure of detest piss in the mainstream clean copy  
slyly warped curvature of coupla couplets slightly wrapped \_\_ tendency toward

lively but stupid  
an age of  
vertical assertive murder

among serious musicians  
looming dwarfed present  
verse blown apart  
infantilized magician intuits  
contends for space  
failed in blanks  
perched beside forbidden

At lunchtime alone in her office, muttering to herself “simplistic drivin’ and “that’s absurd,” as well she might, reading—the headline BIBLE ENTERS MURDER TRIAL had caught her attention—as she ate a pastrami on rye (promising herself two breath mints after lunch, and sometime, lower cholesterol) she couldn’t help but laugh, and why shouldn’t she, at the lead paragraph where Mrs. Fowler, the defendant, testified that a day that began with praying and Bible-reading ended in the stabbing death of her husband, and no she could not recall why she selected from eight available knives the boning knife with its sharp point, and why if her husband had tried to choke her the doctor’s report made no mention of injuries or bruises, the pastrami sandwich almost finished and her boss bringing by a stack of documents for photocopying and collating.

i awoke and a fever was upon me \_\_led as i was in the first light of morning early to the writing desk & there began to put down the words which came to me in rapid & certain order so steady & intense the fever & the light

“And not only do states have a variable intensity, but different beings ‘are’ unequally.”

blast the exposed twisted cypress roots along this stretch of point lobos coast where adams & weston & jeffers each saw gnarled knotted enduring whorls \_ precise signatures of being & persistence physical fact matched exactly to determined seeing )

“The sufficiency of each being is endlessly contested by each other.” |

while admittedly uncertain of the relative worth or excellence of her creation she nonetheless remained convinced of the uniqueness of her artistic vision a particular fusion (which she left to others to articulate) of her ministry \_christ’s grace blackness her own poverty the rural dusty south her special resistance to an increasingly homogenized existence

“Being in fact is found NOWHERE and it was an easy game for a sickly malice to discover it to be divine, at the summit of a pyramid formed by the multitude of beings,

which

has as its base the immensity of the simplest matter.”

though they may have a certain disturbance & resistance in common  
suppositions &

correspondences which form the base of community \_ron’s writing differs  
recognizably

& decisively from charles’s and his from lyn’s and hers from hannah’s and hers  
from

bob’s & any history or criticism of the period of this style must also base itself  
on particularity on distinction

‘A man is only a particle inserted in unstable and entangled wholes.... This  
extreme

instability of connections alone permits one to introduce, as a puerile but  
convenient

illusion, a representation of isolated existence turning in on itself.”

she had come to think of herself particularly as she rode alone from santa rosa to  
oakland for the 11pm to 11am shift of her nurse's job as a proposition —  
biologically  
speaking extended particularized tested out over space & time the teasing out' as  
it were of the possibilities inherent in one particular material composition by  
virtue of which she inseparably but not reductively was

"Abdication and inevitable fatigue—due to the fact that 'being' is, par excellence,  
that which, desired to the point of dread, cannot be endured—plunge human  
beings into  
a foggy labyrinth formed by the multitude of 'acquaintances' with which signs of  
life  
and phrases can be exchanged."

best western - decline of empire  
resist utility dances with: satisfaction of basic needs  
post-democratic: post to pill or  
bird(blood)bath - blurred extinctions  
terror = eyes firmament  
division upon: pennants aloft  
new suit (yourself): male armor  
penance dun - perchance to  
bring down: post up  
serve & evade - american ends

do & useful against which root errors \_roderick ushered in  
an age of discursive poetry analytic lyric thought's measure  
poesis as conception —\_ [will  
you] text of connective myths  
tissues of fissuresin smalllawns within perfectly \_pa-  
rameters by virtue of over & against —\_ baleful dimension |

blurred furnishings of the human being rented already fur-  
nished varnished \_ the very unity of which is in dispute \_\_ is  
is the crux since no [divine  
beyond] adequates the fractious  
when in fact was never said the worth of salt a midday meal  
a birth unattended sun slipping past hazardous angles \_ figured out later

# Hank Lazer

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## *On Rachel Blau DuPlessis*

### **“Travelling many direction’d crossings”**

Rachel Blau DuPlessis, *Tabula Rosa* (Elmwood, CT: Potes & Poets Press, 1987)

WITH THE PUBLICATION OF *TABULA Rosa*, Rachel Blau DuPlessis achieves a complex and satisfying level of writing which commands and holds our full attention. Her earlier books of poetry, *Wells* (1980) and *Gypsy/Moth* (1984), did not prepare us fully for the extraordinary accomplishment of *Tabula Rosa*. Perhaps her critical writing—*Writing Beyond the Ending: Narrative Strategies of Twentieth-Century Women Writers* (1985), *H.D.: The Career of That Struggle* (1986), essays such as ““For the Etruscans”” and her essays on poets such as George Oppen, Susan Howe, and Beverly Dahlen—should have alerted us to the kind of intelligence that was being formed.

I begin with such summary and praise because DuPlessis seems to me emblematic of an emerging new paradigm for a poet. The poet/critic or poet/thinker split, which has been fostered and re-enforced by the intuitive emotionalism, unified\subjectivity, and “naturalness” of the MFA-sponsored mainstream, is decisively overturned in DuPlessis’s work. The poet/scholar again becomes an exciting possibility, but tied this time to political/ideological realms which are neither elitist nor authoritarian.

While DuPlessis’s writing is emblematic of certain tendencies in Language writing, her writing also helps us to understand the fictitious or reductive nature of such a term—Language Poetry—as that term seems to imply a fixed or narrowly specified thing. Her at times thematized version of feminism, her myth-orientation (as with many of the writers who publish in *Suffur*), and her particular variety of lyricism are somewhat atypical of Language writing. Her disturbance of syntax, her assimilation of a broad range of theoretical writing, the distribution or multiplication of subjectivity, and the variety of her uses of the page (as a field for innovative layout)—especially overwriting and double-writing—situate her work within an experimentalism for which the term Language poetry, like the term postmodernism, is becoming a fuzzy but wellentrenched metonym.

To understand the social or communal context of DuPlessis’s poetry, the group effort involved in the feminist journal *HOW(eer)* provides a helpful touchstone. So too do DuPlessis’s remarks in her preface to her book on H.D., where a vision of a woman writer’s career is garnered from the critical writings of Myra Jehlen:

How a woman writer creates and re-creates the possibility of her creativity is a central site for investigation. These acts [of creating and re-creating a site for literary activity] are not a purely psychological manoeuvre which might be relegated only to a biography; they are 'conceptual' and 'linguistic': a matter of situating the self in relation to conventions of representation pres 4 hag Widosia "enabling velatigaships' with, and in, language. (HD, xiv)

Thus the first of Tabula Rosa's two sections is part of DuPlessis's ongoing "'History of Poetry,'" an act necessitated by the situation declared by the section's epigraph: "She cannot forget the history of poetry / because it is not hers." Section one consists primarily of lyric poems, often in clipped, 'traditionally'? musical lines (via Oppen, H.D., and others); these poems form an essential part of DuPlessis's revisionist theory of poetry and a re-making of the terms of myth. Section two of Tabula Rosa marks DuPlessis's maturity as a poet. In these longer poems, she makes full use of her arsenal of skills, placing at risk the accomplished though sometimes tidy skills of a lyric poet. Of the three long poems which constitute section two of this book, I call attention to "'Writing,'" a provocative poem of considerable genius. Along with the poem "Crowbar," "Writing" constitutes the major accomplishment of Tabula Rosa. Her most recent poems, particularly the series of poems called Drafts (the first two of which appear in Tabula Rosa), consolidate and extend the work of "Writing."

Before I enter into a sustained reading of "Writing" and several other of DuPlessis's poems, I would like to consider, by means of perspectives developed in Elizabeth Meese's excellent book, *Crossing the Double-Cross: The Practice of Feminist Criticism*, DuPlessis's position as a feminist writer and as a poetic innovator. Meese, in analyzing feminist writing and the versions of authority which it must undo or question, cites Mary Jacobus's description of how women's language works:

"The transgression of literary boundaries—moments when structures are shaken, when language refuses to lie down meekly, or the marginal is brought into sudden focus, or intelligibility itself refused—reveal not only the conditions of possibility within which women's writing exists, but what it would be like to revolutionize them. In the same way, the moment of desire (the moment when the writer most clearly installs herself in her writing) becomes a refusal of mastery, an opting for openness and possibility, which can in itself make women's writing a challenge to the literary structures it must necessarily inhabit." (CDC, 120). For DuPlessis, it is precisely this refusal of mastery—reflected in the title "'Drafts'" and in the recurring "smudge" of "Writing"—which allows her writing its most exciting developments. In part, that refusal takes the form of a resistance to lyricism (but not its elimination).



In 'For the Etruscans,' DuPlessis asserts that "'the 'female aesthetic' will produce artworks that incorporate contradiction and nonlinear movement into the heart of the text" (E, 278). DuPlessis concurs with Deena Metzger's understanding of the word "'new'" as signaling an antithesis to dominant values (E, 279). Thus the act of stylistic innovation fuses the realms of politics and aesthetics. DuPlessis's writing affirms assertions made by Julia Kristeva in *Revolution in Poetic Language*: "This shattering of discourse reveals that linguistic changes constitute changes in the status of the subject.... The text is a practice that could be compared to political revolution: the one brings about in the subject what the other introduces into society" (RPL, 15, 17). For DuPlessis, that newness, the innovation and renovation of her own writing, especially as seen in "Writing," partakes of a mixture of expanded inclusiveness and a rigorous self-questioning: The holistic sense of life without the exclusionary wholeness of art. These holistic forms: inclusion, apparent nonselection, because selection is censorship of the unknown, the between, the data, the germ, the interstitial, the bit of sighting that the writer cannot place. Holistic work: great tonal shifts, from polemic to essay to lyric. A self-questioning, the writer built into the center of the work, the questions at the center of the writer, the discourses doubling, retelling the same, differently. (E, 279) While I definitely do wish to situate DuPlessis's writing within a feminist literary practice, this principle of subversion, particularly by means of the question, is obviously not confined to feminist writing. That process of self-questioning applies equally well to the work of Ron Silliman (most obviously in "Sunset Debris"), or David Antin, whose talk-poems are often structured around and by recurring questions, or Edmond Jabés, whose *Book of Questions* most fully sustains the top priority of questioning as a work's primary questing. DuPlessis herself acknowledges that "what we here have been calling (the) female aesthetic turns out to be a specialized name for any practices available to those groups—nations, genders, sexualities, races, classes—all social practices which wish to criticize, to differentiate from, to overturn the dominant forms of knowing and understanding with which they are saturated" (E, 285). Herein lies much of the force of Language writing: in its overturning of dominant forms of knowing and understanding, such writing returns subversion and fundamental epistemological inquiry to the domain of poetry, making of poetry an enriched field for the activity of cultural critique.

While DuPlessis, I think, would agree with Meese's assertion that "feminist writing is a movement toward remembered or re-bodied writing that materializes woman's specificity" (CDC, 131), each also argues for a multiple notion of feminist writing and aesthetics. DuPlessis concludes, "therefore there is female aesthetic,

but not a female aesthetic, not one single constellation of strategies" (E, 273). In her book on H.D., DuPlessis (by way of Julia Kristeva and Carolyn Burke) wonders whether the "I" in women's poetry is not plausibly a self-conscious producer of and commentator upon

"discourse and her positions within it. In short, is the speaker a 'self' (whole, homogeneous, or seeking wholeness/identity, transcendence), or may a speaker be a 'subject' (naming her place in and absences from registers of language and culture). (HD, 111)

In Meese's brilliant analysis of the relationship of feminist criticism and deconstruction, the two are seen to share "the displacement of hierarchization as an ordering principle" (CDC, 85)—a remark which echoes DuPlessis's own textual practice in the palimpsestic overwriting of "Writing." Feminism thus continues to develop from its proximity to deconstruction by resisting a tendency to become essentialist or univocal: "to further its own project, feminism needs to struggle to become more like deconstruction by sharpening its own critique and, while articulating its method, resist the monolithic specification of its own ideology to the extent that it requires a simplification of the difference within in order to represent itself to the world outside" (CDC, 84). Conversely, Meese argues that "deconstruction needs to struggle to become more like feminism in terms of specifying its political goals" (CDC, 84). For DuPlessis, as for much of the entire Language writing community, acts of resistance (to authority and monolithic specification) are enacted through style, through poetics and through form. Politics and aesthetics overlap in a revisioning of writer, reader, and their relationship to one another: Not positing oneself as the only, sole authority. Sheep of the sun. Meaning, a statement that is open to the reader, not better than the reader, not set apart from; not seeking the authority of the writer, Not even seeking the authority of the writing. (Reader could be writer, writer reader, Listener could be teacher.) (E, 275)

Such a refusal of mastery brings DuPlessis to a doubling of vision: A both/and vision born of shifts, contraries, negations, contradictions; linked to personal vulnerability and need. Essay and sermon. A both/and vision that embraces movement, situational, (I don't mean: opportunistic, slidy.) Structurally, such a writing might say different things, not settle on one, which is final. (E, 276)

It is precisely such a both/and vision which I see at work, for example, in DuPlessis's double relation to lyricism.

While Meese argues that "by virtue of the masculinist claims to objectify, literary critics have created the need for a criticism of advocacy, espousing special perspectives based on gender, sexual preference, race, and class" (CDC, 13), I would extend that list of positions of advocacy to include aesthetic preference,

particularly the advocacy of innovative writing practices. As I have argued here, and elsewhere (see "Criticism and the Crisis in American Poetry," *The Missouri Review*, Vol. 9, No. 1 [1986]: 201-232), such aesthetic innovation is fundamentally political in nature. Meese is quick to grant that "interpretive communities, like tribal communities, possess the power to ostracize or to embrace, to restrict or to extend membership and participation, and to impose norms—hence their authority" (CDC, 9). For DuPlessis, the most actively beneficial version of community which has nourished her own writing (and to which *Tabula Rosa* is dedicated) is the community of innovative feminist writers which constitutes the magazine *HOW(ee)*, a group which Eliot Weinberger, in an otherwise highly critical appraisal of Language writing, calls "'the most exciting group activity occurring in American poetry today" (S, 201).

And if to such a writing community, with DuPlessis as a witness, we pose what Meese calls "the feminist's most pressing axiological concern—what is valued and why?" (CDC, 63), we see (both in the form of the writing and in its content) an answer taking shape in the construction of DuPlessis's "Writing" and *Drafts*, as well as in her remarks in "For the Etruscans": If it's really the forms, the language, which dominate us, then disrupting them as radically as possible can give us hope and possibilities. What I'd like to try to understand and explain to other people (you yourselves are the riddle) is how the form of women's writing is, if ambiguously (of double, sometimes duplicitous needs) nonetheless profoundly revolutionary (as are, in their confusing ways, modernism and postmodernism, also written from positions of marginality to the dominant culture). (E, 287)

If such disruptions of dominant habits of order-making are fused linguistic and political acts—Kristeva argues that such changes "'disturb the transparency of the signifying chain and open it up to the material crucible of its production" (RPL, 10)—then, to understand DuPlessis's gradual achievement of a position of poetic innovation, an achievement which occurs as a part of a dialectic of mastery and disturbance, I want first to call attention to her more traditional or conventional lyrical skills before examining her more heterodox textual practices. Typical of the cadence and conciseness of DuPlessis's version of the lyrical is this passage from "Praxilla's Silliness":

Wood white litder fritillaries wayward

"lords" of air. (TR, 5) But such compact vowel and consonant music today is only of limited appeal and, for the most part, represents an inherited and overused form of craft. In *Tabula Rosa*, DuPlessis offers two other directions of movement within a lyrical method of composition. One is, in the manner of Oppen or H.D., to push conciseness to a maximized efficiency, a point at which that conciseness

seems to implode, denying the very fixity and focus of the lyric in the act of attaining its ideal of concentration:

yellow forsythia.

open force scythe ya. (TR,!11) Here, multiplicity speaks from the very heart of focus, multiple sense is seen and heard to inhabit lyricism's very act of paring down; puns and multiple sayings of the words' sounds subvert unified attention.

DuPlessis's other strategy is to resist the lyrical impulse. She commands herself: "No postcard poetry" (89); she cautions herself: "To reinvent 'attention' is narrow tho tempting" (89). That is precisely why Part 2 of *Tabula Rosa* represents such an important development for DuPlessis, especially given her affinities with Oppen and H.D. The desire for an only slightly renovated lyricism—which comes down to focused attention—zi there. But DuPlessis's longer works open up onto "'folding,'" a multiplicity of thought, voice, and rhetoric which is not as possible within a lyric of attention. As I shall also be claiming, the residue of that lyric-apprenticeship enhances the longer poems, giving them a pith and beauty, a tension (which calls for attention), Thus her longer poems, by virtue of their proximity to a lyrical desire, have a dialectical force, their openness and multiplicity having to exist proximate to an impulse to narrow and to pare.

While phrases in DuPlessis's poems suggest somewhat familiar terrain, at least within the realm of current Language writing, I find too a doubleness, an ambivalence which undercuts and multiplies what might otherwise remain thematically fixed. Based on a phrase such as "whose feet slog sullen/ over the gnarly ground of gnosis" (23) I might suggest a kinship for DuPlessis's writing with Charles Bernstein's view of poetry as a variety of epistemological inquiry. Or the phrase "the stretched pulse of number/ singing in my heart" (23) might link her work to the Fibonacci variations found in Ron Silliman's *Tjanting and Lit*. (Indeed DuPlessis's phrase pinpoints the exact emotional exuberance of Silliman's mathematics). But in each case DuPlessis's statement is more ambivalent (or polyvalent) than what I have extracted:

dear hood ship sheathe whose feet slog sullen over the gnarly ground of gnosis,  
Rupture the reverberating lyric cell by cell edge of the tree-green strips'

deciduous space the stretched pulse of number singing in my heart. (TR, 23)  
Between these two, with their qualifying "if ever"? and their rupture of the lyric, we encounter "'Precious poetry? ha!/ Rage of being/ the impossible self.'" So that it seems to me the more heroic or essential task of DuPlessis's poetry is, to borrow from Oppen, the task of being numerous, even while being in the proximity of thematic coherence.

In the excellent poem "Crowbar" (from which I have been quoting), DuPlessis's double question and double gesture gets stated as "woman like what? poem like

what?/ complicit with the repertoire/ ambivalent to the repertoire" (23). It is an ambivalence later described as a kind of decentering: "below, above, below, above;/ in sum there is no 'where'" (51), an ambivalence on the verge of further fracturing: "plural seed-filled thought" (51). 'To return to "Crowbar," it is an ambivalence of "'rivulets that rush into the body of/ argument,/ double crossing streams/ brightheaded arrows/ engorged with this ancient targeted song" (24-25).

If in relation to the "repertoire" a double crossing stream of subversion and incorporation is called for, such a doubleness of "tradition" and "individual talent" is not as arresting as DuPlessis's double crossing of the page in "'Megaliths'" and "'Writing.'" "'Megaliths,'" arranged in 'two vertical columns side by side on the same page, seems prelude to the more adventurous doublings of "Writing." [n "'Megaliths" DuPlessis begins to explore more fully a writing by means of otherness: "the way of the poem/ is the way/ of this/ border," a destabilized place where writing "moves mark to mark and makes a crossing," reversing the space between and across the double columns. If DuPlessis makes a strategic error it is in her note at the back of the book, overly authoritative and monological; "'Read down each column, then across poth.'" An error because (as in John Ashbery's two columned "'Litany'") one of the great virtues of such a poem is that—if presented without guidance—it forces a reader, before any reading becomes possible, to reflect upon the act of reading and the ways in which a reader will choose to make order out of a text. There is no "'natural'" or merely inreflective reading possible for such an array. So, DuPlessis ought to stand aside and let each reader decipher and decipher the poem as s/he will. The composition of 'Megaliths'" is exciting, but its specific language still verges on a sentimentality, a romanticized strained lyricism, a mere thematizing of disorder by means of a forced vocabulary of "Standing beyond the threshold of silence," of beckoning, of the "boundless," of the "'vast before, vast after," of "no path" and "'the abyss" and the "empty dJark."

But there are no such problems with "Writing," a truly remarkable poem, one which I have been enjoying for a couple of years (since it first appeared in the first issue of *Ottotole*). It is a poem which staggered me then (but in bits and pieces—the first bit to stick being the remark 'what is realism made of') and which now takes me back whole. I suspect that at this juncture in the reading of Language poetry and in the writing about it, we had best begin to move beyond an espousal of interesting principles, a proselytizing, to a sharper reading of poems (and even to an elucidation of differences within and among poets). Of course the danger of such readings is that they become close readings only, a re-isolating of the reading and writing, a subduing of the poems to a monologic of home. But "Writing," which I propose to dwell on, with, beside, and within, begins with a proper ending; it

begins with a period (as nearly each of the poem's twenty-eight sections begins), foreclosing its own closure by mocking it and inverting it from the start, calling its own beginning "Smudge, ballpoint," invoking an awareness of its own raphicity, its own materiality of signification, and its participation in a somewhat imperfect, haphazard process. Within the first section, the word "'underpainting'" hints at the palimpsestic version of writing which will soon merge from "Writing," the first section of which ends with a kind of petition or invocation:

other territory of utterance hear me smudge and hear me whiteness

But even now as I return merely to the poem's first section, I realize that I have overlooked these lines: "Black lines/ dot nylon rope about,/ tie scout knots," lines which usually drop us into the domain of dots and period, lines and knots, intersections and intentions which will be very much to the point of this poem—a kind of figural pre-figuration.

The second section alerts us to time itself—"One year later, like a punctuation; one month together...."—as a governing form of punctuation under investigation, these prose lines coming right after their lyrical, tight opposite:

Plumb line, pulsing, eye to eye, drinks dusks of light. (TR, 56) On the terms of "Writing"'s thoughts of form begin to take shape, a balancing plumb line, the opposing desires of pulse or eye or dot, stretching out into "sing." But this is still a bit formulaic, still not yet (though beginning to find "'an arbitrary path cut through possibly a mistaken hole in the floor'") a risky accommodation of otherness.

With the third section, with the introduction of the two columned writing and the overwriting in a different script, "Writing" begins to achieve that "travelling many direction'd crossings" which make it such an impressive poem;

\ writing marks the catch of void again reflecting until catches wet carlight at everything tests film condenses fine tip flairs fractured silence baby wipes he cold rush up khaki thread 1¢ dark dark trees nipples omniscient spots of travel letters are canalized as white foams igitigging, a fissure on the feet, he: 't

PBL. pb dec bepe: 5 omer sanyo) withed Me saves enitute of ark. ont Takes, Can Mmasne convermtions?

converscons 7 hong Pessazes of AOifactor sueHowe) op | is the tension between condensation and expansiveness that, paradoxically, holds together "'Writing.'" One test is whether "condenses" (the art of much of DuPlessis's lyric orientation), the "spots" and "'fine tip flairs" and "nipples,"" the writing that is "canalized" (later: 'swollen ivaporous rivers/ flooding silences that never/ get rained') can break out, can acknowledge its own other. Hence a double-writing and an overwriting, a kind of

double-crossing of unity (of meaning, of layout & design). Even the script itself looks spontaneous, added on, but has also its own other authority. Called



“outtakes,” and it takes us out (and her too) somewhere else. These scripted words, called a “tangle of branches unorganized,” a branching out, surrounding the assertion of a “cock-eyed underbelly off plenitude.” (And I have just begun to think of the doubleness of “‘cock-eyed,’” a word which DuPlessis resorts to more than once in *Tabula Rosa*. A seeing slant, a seeing skewed, but also a patriarchal seeing which DuPlessis will contradict and subvert.) These scripted words the “underbelly” of the other more organized writing.

DuPlessis offers notes after “Writing,” and here her fragmented ex-plainings do not (as in the note to “‘Megaliths’” which I criticized earlier) undercut or narrow the effect of the poem. These notes merely re-confirm the multiplicity—truly the politics and ideology—of “Writing” work:

Writing from the center of, the centers of, otherness. hegemony. So the reader does not know which to read first, or how to inter-read.... the reader is at large, as the poet is. We are strained companions.... Making alternative poetries be in the same page-space. (TR, 84)

So that in the next section the over-writing gets bolder, is capitalized, begins to gain the upper hand. DuPlessis’s vigor in exploring “‘imbeddings’” and “the canvas” of the page as a site for “‘overlaying’” makes for invigorating reading. This kind of page catches more, picks up some of what the carlights can not on a wet dark night among “‘the dark dark trees,’” a script that carries the impression of “Long passages of satisfaction swallowed up/ in darkness.”

Still, “Writing” tries to find a way to honor expansiveness and precision:

smallest possible words of all Toa the tee have so many little tasks speeding, seems to fix. picking this and tending that my back hurts (TR, 59) Thus the dialectical tension of “swelling ocean” and “‘little tasks’” can be survived, even made into the “‘buntings of stories,’” a “‘precious bundle.’” The poem as it is made, as it is deployed upon the page, its very multiplicity (a Silliman-like enactment of the political, of contestation) a “‘Utopian’ living in the deep,” but also too a willed dividing, a parceling, “‘maybe political cynicism with odd/ borders gerrymandered.’” “Writing” thus comes to exist in a space nearly torn apart by conflicting desires, a drive toward randomness and a drive toward an erotic focused And, in the space between entropy and arousal,

Philomel, or, longing for liquid song. (TR, 60)

Then, with the eighth section, “Writing” takes a crucial turn, unfolding and exposing its own procedures and concerns:

Imbedding some extruding some the interplay between selection, imbedding, and loss, Some few words, chosen, and why; but are also chosen from, once the day was awash in pinpricks, a pull in the back muscle, overlay and no experience, No experience because all. Say. this icy one knows brightness all disappearing all

intense writing what; does it save it? “‘diaristic’ in impulse, but over ridden, the selection is one thing, this (the globule, clot) another. Different plans and different pictures. uneven picture patterns, Most poetry something— irregular blocks, a rebus imagery, structure. trued, held in a rose-pink border, Dreaming I’m crying it’s she’s crying. (TR, 62)

I have felt for some time now that part of Language writing’s significance comes from such a re-thinking of poetry as “‘Writing” enacts. In one of my own poems I suggested that to be thematized is to be demonized. Du- Plessis: “Most poetry something—/ imagery, structure.” In our time, Language writing offers a poetry of otherness, the entropic, the aleatory, “uneven picture patterns,’ a poetry of Georges Bataille’s irrecoverable heterogeneous matter. A multiple writing which, as I argue for DuPlessis’s poetry, can and does include aspects of the lyric and the lyrical, but set in new tensions and attentions. Such a questioning of poetry’s nature is far from the much tidier lament of a last gasp Robert Lowell, a unified subject’s bittersweet retrospect, stock theatricality, and fine Puritan meiosis:

Those blessed structures, plot and rhyme— why are they no help to me now I want to make something imagined, not recalled? (opening lines of “Epilogue,” the final poem in *Day by Day*, Lowell’s final book of poetry) DuPlessis risks more than that. What Lowell, even as he acknowledges the deficiencies of an overly ordered crafting of words, cannot do is risk a fundamental disturbance of syntax and the most deeply ingrained traditional gestures of poetry (including layout and the presence of a unified speaker). DuPlessis engages in a more disturbing and genuinely risky self-consciousness.

But it is the self-commentary of section eight that I wish to think about (for, to be candid, it is essential to my own writing and much of the writing I like, such as Ron Silliman’s or Lyn Hejinian’s). This self-commentary, alternately describable as a self-reading of the poem-inprogress or as an aspect of self-consciousness, constitutes a kind of fulcrum. I have received a couple of letters (one which specifically invoked the notion of post-Language writing) wherein younger Language writers criticize this habit of self-commentary as a form of sentimentality or

self-indulgence. And herein may lie a slight shift, perhaps in part along generational lines (for indeed there is and must be a “‘next” poetry—though from the perspective of a person living in Tuscaloosa, Alabama such disputes and tensions seem distant and rarefied). If indeed a post-Language writing is already being formed, it may, in part, be based on a preference for a poetry of (more “‘purified”) enactment rather than a mixture of enactment and substantial self-commentary. (I would love to hear from other readers/writers on this suggestion.)



For DuPlessis, such self-commentary unfolds what has begun to gather within the poem's "'underbelly,'" so that as the next section of the poem suggests, she and we can 'keep it in mind.'" As this ninth section begins to make explicit, such poem-making parallels, is consonant with, self-making. As with the contra-dictory pulls toward entropy and toward focus, DuPlessis's double-columned writing displays and enacts its own struggle for subordination and insubordination. One lament is that for the poem to proceed, for it to go along, " / can't keep it [the poem] in mind if I! don't connect! repress, it! / (as it! goes along."

In part, DuPlessis's quest for a new version of dailiness, a task which, for example, leads a writer like Lyn Hejinian (in *My Lif*) in a substantially different direction. But in "Writing" this quest for a new dailiness, a making new of the diaristic impulse, is not fulfilled:

Impossible maybe to write the techne of dailiness the hand reaching onto the shelf the dust collected in a particular corner the objects also a little dusty with the spring light through the back door objects directly in the sunlight the coupon torn or cut, saved as a lacy proof of thriftiness the unmendable crack this, attempt at exactness, is readable the intersecting rhythms of muscles small muscles when cutting when sorting how to assimilate how to discuss to represent the pulse of pleasure and heartlessness (TR, 65)

Instead, DuPlessis's attention returns to the "cracks'" and intersections, the winnowing and sorting of surface, "Writing" as a process of coming to consciousness of the process of writing, a writing which entails its own undoing (rather than specificity and fixity of "the techne of dailiness"). As in section thirteen of the poem, DuPlessis opts (0 pay attention in a painterly manner to the materials of writing, to the letters as "'staining/ linked jelly" which 'floats loosely" on "'paper: thick rags, even sometimes/ flowers leaf bits.'" It is the process of coming to be words—"A rose weathers out of the page/ o death"—until the previously limited conception of the lyric as a point, a narrowing down, becomes transformed, through attention to the materials of the graphic, into "'a finger, a bud who/ curls there, comma,/ period, sky-reading/ marks/ creating marks for 'others' (ellipses)..."

Each time DuPlessis's "Writing'" threatens to achieve a focus, a fixity, it immediately exceeds itself, contra-dicts itself, for completion or focus is not what must be accomplished, but an ever broader accommodation, in the manner announced in section fourteen: "Borderline takes many forms.'" So that for DuPlessis, critic of the novel:

People worry the ends of novels, marry. Sonnets like novels. Still lives encode bounty.

Still, acer net. the end (ends up) every ipa where. (TR, 68) re Nowhere is this cross-hatching, this dispersing of m erial, better enacted than in the section which follos aumber fifteen: virds.cumulus color of red sandstone, coal shale resun hey and close tabulated bunching sur ethey —unfirm unpleasant undulent re wh cho unconscious cho. atten up crests, its opposite pitter pity ole in the touching hard and fast they poke a jouse disperse litde nest thick places “% bound to violent narratives.” (TR, 69) section fifteen offers a way of keeping tabs on ngenents of writing. Here, layers of discourse criss-cross. The ray itself testifies to contrary tendencies: one to tabulate, o order, to build crests and patterns and little nests and holes ““close tabulated bunching,” repetition and the ight columns of the vertical; the other a process g in-doings, from within and at the center of the tabulations” omething ““unfirm unpleasant undulent/ unconscious,” dispersal, so that “thick places” are forever wed to “vioent narratives.” Such a moment in DuPlessis’s “Writng” allies itself with Julia Kristeva’s description of the © jouble nature of the functioning of the semiotic: “The text signifies the un-signifying: it assumes within a signifying practice this functioning (the semiotic), which ignores meaning and operates before meaning or despite it. Therefore it cannot be said that everything signifies, nor that everything is “mechanistic.” In opposition to such dichotomies, whether “materialist” or “metaphysical,” the text offers itself as the dialectic of the two heterogeneous operations that are, reciprocally and inseparably, preconditions for each other. (RPL, 65-66) Dperating as “Writing” does, in part, prior to the occurence of meaning, the next section of the poem, in a Steinian moment, just when DuPlessis’s self-conscious eflection on graphic process begins to fix itself as a theme und a method (and I must insert parenthetically that such: thread is one which my own reading tends to overem- »hasize, as I too as a reader of “Writing” succumb to narative and a thematized tabulation which makes this poem nore coherent than it actually is, or more narrowly cogent hat it actually is), DuPlessis (a la Stein) disturbs her own writing by descending into the cauldron of sound: “a newling into maybe milky dark.// mirror of dream milk mile mirror of actual noticing” (70), Such a disturbance #f thematization by way of sound confirms Kristeva’s decription of such a space as “indifferent to language enigmatic and feminine, this space [which Kristeva calls the emiotic rhythm within language] underlying the written | s rhythmic, unfettered, irreducible to its intelligible verbal ranslation; it is musical, anterior to judgment, but retrained by a single guarantee: syntax” (RPL, 29). As I continue through DuPlessis’s “Writing,” I begin suspect that it is a poem which can be endlessly read. As fpobert Frost, the epitome of the anti-avantgardist, wrote a “The Figure a Poem Makes,” “Read it a hundred times: it will forever keep its freshness as a metal keeps its fragrance.” I puzzled over Frost’s sentence for many mee the correctness of a saatel’s fragranh ‘chnie to

me (and came to me seeing Dave Smith's sculpture works—there is an artist who worked with his materials closely enough to know each metal's fragrance...). In "writing" the two sections which, for me, best support and repay the investment of re-reading are sections eighteen and nineteen, the former concluding with a Beverly Dahlen-like statement of the quest for otherness which is a critical part of Language writing's current communal writing project:

How to be that which is unspoken how to speak that which is "repressed"  
elusive anyway tangential different impending space different enough how to  
write that which is / is unwritten. (TR, 72)

How to respect and speak for/from otherness without reducing that otherness to a limited/limiting version of definiteness? It is, of course, a political question: via representation the rights of "others" get enacted in the elaboration of style and aesthetics. A writer's acts of representation are the primary political acts of writing. How to give voice/space/imprint to what exceeds us without "capturing" or colonizing that otherness in our representation of it? It is one thing to valorize the "other," to turn it into a stylistic signature, a personal style, as in the seventies of W. S. Merwin. But that is merely a stylized rendering, a bourgeois capturing (and producing of the effect of) otherness. Not a satisfactory answer to these questions.

For DuPlessis, an answer (and by no means a definitive one) involves a calculated (and incalculable) besideness as seen in section nineteen:

-Some words much syntax or Narratives as betrayal? allusions thereto keep going some invention, but if the laws of language are S0Ci10~ logical laws then poetry Verification (Docuis provisionally mentation): What complicit resistance. types to verify my evidence? The poet's wife, old woman, Statistics? hunched in the kitchen drying Expert testimony— dishes, the whole quoted, paraphrased, interview. Such things or summarized? happening on the side. Personal experience What is realism or eyewitness accounts? made of? Opinion polls or surveys? The bitterness of already unspoken bitterness? your soul— Language as betrayal? out! —among the little betrayal of "what?"

spaces keep going before entropy  
(foreground, bulbous foyer) becomes arousal  
Sparrows?

Here, statement, question, self-interrogation, and format enact a multiple (though primarily doubled) inquiry into the nature of poesis. To her credit, and in our interest, DuPlessis acknowledges a doubleness in poetry's being: at once a gesture of resistance, yet an act which is also (by at least minimal laws of language) only complicitly resistant. Narrative itself is both a giving in to sequence, to a narrowing order (and hence possibly a »etrayal—a betrayal of what? is a more difficult question); but narrative, as it is a going on, also allows for lispersal, for

motion, and thus for the breaking up of -onstriction. DuPlessis's own poem is a poem honoring 'truly, bodying forth) "'things/ happening on the side.'" Beside the "expert testimony," the inevitable anthologizings of shards from the dead in the overwritten palimpsest of the poem, DuPlessis makes space for the "'old woman," "'the poet's wife" and her unspoken words coequal with the husband's words given in the interview. Here we have an instance of what DuPlessis, in Draft #6, calls "words in secret twin" (T, 54).

But the question for "'Writing,'" and I believe for much of Language writing, is "'What is realism/ made of?," a question which is both momentary self-interrogation for "'Writing," but also a question which (along with section eighteen's "'how to write that which is") makes clear DuPlessis's affinity with Gertrude Stein, as well as with the writings of a contemporary such as Lyn Hejinian. To write without betrayal, to write what will inevitably be partial but with as great a fullness as possible, to write that which is along with what is unspoken/unwritten, while acknowledging and evading the rehearsed and theatricalized forms of poesis—such demands (and others) take us into the restlessness and bravery which is "Writing" and which tracks its way through DuPlessis's more recent Drafts as well.

In my own betrayal, my somewhat persistent narrative for "'Writing," a narrative which I know to be incomplete, I do nevertheless wish to make it to the end, suggesting a few of the routes which open and close, cross and cross over as the poem moves toward completion. Many of the debates, arguments, and interruptions which take place in the latter sections of "Writing" are ones already familiar to us in our proceeding through the poem. DuPlessis continues to make and assert "'the open square/ between letters \_a piazza/of unlikeness"' (74), spaces and disturbances between the fixities of black letters and definite assertions. Thus the poem struggles with its own tendencies to bead and to encapsulate (see section 23), versions of resistance (and complicity) to lyricalism. The poem and poet continue to swerve away from too narrow constitutions: 'Not a question of/ making images. Making/ what?," so that the word passes phatic or elegant passes bounded passes through grammar to get past syntax's single-borders to funny half-seens, stumbles; all routes, all specks, all snarled in matted eager acts. (TR, 78)

In the final section of "Writing," a poem where each section begins with a period—an end stop which is immediately overcome, a reversal of the essential dot's authority, a reversal of its habitual signification—the attempt to end the poem becomes congruent with the poet's own physiology, the mark of the period, in pun and figure, in sound and shape, being a blood-drop marking the end of twenty-eight phase making:

Invisible staining a bubble one two or three arcs flake of clotting or something

It's all part of being beet red drops at the bottom of me making this just happening.

period. (TR, 82) jut the period, as an insertion to stanch the flow (of language, to keep it "'clean'"), is here, at the end, replaced y its "secret twin," the question (and the question mark);

But in writing?

Just one event among flux, foregrounded as fourth, maybe the sixth tampax in writing? (TR, 83) ind thus "Writing," even with its cyclical but unobtruive twenty-eight section shape, sides with the irruptive orce of questioning, with flux, even as it makes its "'one vent'" present.

'To turn away, then, from "'Writing,'" before I return or an examination of DuPlessis's more recent Drafts, I would like to turn back to issues raised earlier in this essay: the nature and importance of palimpsest and overwriting for DuPlessis; her position of difference within language writing; and her double relation to the lyric. n "An Essay on Beverly Dahlen's A Reading," DuPlessis liscusses the peculiar nature of overwriting. She undertands overwriting as a version of palimpsest, a writing which is simultaneously whole and multiple: 'Such a ext, made of at least two kinds of scribble at different imes yet on the same parchment, is split between its vholeness as object or ground and its veering multiplicity s figure'" (I, 160). Here is one point where deconstrucive critical practice and Language writing share a common project: a paradoxical act of writing which cknowledges (and even thrives upon) its own incomleteness, its foreordained fragmentation and diffusion. 'or DuPlessis, palimpsest suggests a means of representng consciousness (and here the link of her work, and that /f many other Language writers, such as Hejinian, Meserli, and Silliman, to Gertrude Stein becomes apparit): "Palimpsest indicates the desire to manifest, by me verbal or textural gesture, the sense of p. multaneity, multiple pressures of one moment, yet ¢ same time the disjunct, absolutely parallel ferent, the obverse sensations of consciusnes in

To distinguish DuPlessis's thinking—and writing on language poetry to date has tended to articulate ic 'scriptions and generic principles—we must note her vn openly psychoanalytic slant. Such an openness to yychoanalytic premises, for example, is not a quality of harles Bernstein's work; his poetry, in fact, presents a gorous challenge to any supposition of a unified subjectvity as understood via psychoanalytic models, unless 1¢ begins to consider the most radical psychoanalytic odels offered by Deleuze and Guattari. DuPlessis, arking her own differences within Language writing,: iggests that palimpsest and overwriting take "a ferent tack (tact) towards time, suggesting a psychoanatic sense of the persistence of earlier configurations, and sidues which are volcanic, irruptive" (I,

160). This work thus makes her work part of the (admittedly varied, but decidedly mythic and psychoanalytic) writing project found in Clayton Eshleman's *Sulfur* magazine.

DuPlessis's writing on Dahlen's *A Reading* is also helpful for understanding DuPlessis's own double relationship to the lyric as well as her understanding of the term "writing." DuPlessis believes that *A Reading* articulates a place between "lyric (the force moving) and documentary (record without judgment)" (I, 160). DuPlessis's own poetry, especially as seen in "Writing," oscillates between lyric (as the force moving and as a concentrated point or focus) and diffusion (as multiplicity and openness). DuPlessis cites with approval Dahlen's remark in *A Reading* that "I am preparing in the most anal way to say everything possible"; and such a remark applies to DuPlessis's own writing project. Indeed, such a wish may animate the writing of most American poets of the late twentieth century. DuPlessis absorbs from Dahlen the reciprocity of writing and reading: reading precedes writing, inflects writing, saturates writing, is writing.... The writing can be 'a reading' because of the enormous quantity of these allusions. No writing exists that is not in fact a reading of former writing, an anthology in part, an appropriation of prior texts" (I, 164, 166).

As DuPlessis realizes, and again in this respect she represents a new paradigm for that thing called a poet, the efforts of Language poets to assimilate critical theory and philosophy to poetry have had the salutary effect of revitalizing 'Poetry' as an institution made sloppy by its unquestioned reliance on banalized romanticism" (S, 88). That is, DuPlessis and others seek a writing "not pending on conventionalized 'pleasures'" (S, 190). Please note: this is not the same as doing away with either pleasures or beauty! But as I have been asserting, part of DuPlessis's difference within the community of language writers stems from her attachment to premises of lyric beauty. In a letter of January 18, 1988, DuPlessis asks about many of the innovative poems of our time, 'What do they do with pleasure? what do they do about transcendence? what do they do with understanding community? How do they negotiate specific rites of passionate feeling? passionate nodules of feeling and agglomerated psycho-political force in language? how do they negotiate feeling without romantic transcendence?" (S, 190). In her own writing, and particularly in "Writing" and the subsequent Drafts, DuPlessis again and again works out responses to her own questions. Her attachment to lyric force requires her to include (or at least attempt to include) moments of passionate intensity. Her task, and perhaps the generic task, of "making it new," is to "negotiate feeling without romantic transcendence." Not that transcendence itself is the villain here, but a banalized romanticism (discussed at length, for example, by Charles Altieri in *Self and Sensibility in Contemporary American Poetry*), a



lyric of personal epiphany which has become formulaic, rhetorically predictable, and theatricalized.

While DuPlessis acknowledges that “idealizing poetry is a useless gesture” (S, 191), she does not wish to do away with poetry’s “loftiest” or most transcendental impulses. Instead, her writing moves toward “resituating the upper limits of poetic diction, yearning, transcendence among a number of other discourses, rather than as the culmination or crown of language” (S, 191). It is the recontextualizing of transcendence which is crucial to her work—and in this respect her example is of prime importance—and to the overall enterprise of Language writing. I certainly know that such an act matters in my own poetry, and it is crucial to the work of many Language writers, Silliman, Hejinian, Pearson, Ott, Howe, Bernstein, and Armantrout among them. The struggle of DuPlessis and other poets with the place of transcendence should also put to rest the misconception that Language poetry is somehow emotionally cool or hostile to feeling. A more difficult question, however, concerns the more complex issue of values: “The question is how to find and to figure or represent value when certain conventional forms/forces of value—the epiphany, the appeal to transcendence, myth, Poetry as an Ideal, the Poet as a Figure, not to say Poetic Diction—are sidelined and equalized with a blast” (S, 191). (For a provocative analysis of this very issue, though from within the discipline of critical theory and deconstructive practice, see Gregory S. Jay’s “Values and Deconstructions: Derrida, Saussure, Marx,” *Cultural Critique*, Winter 1987-88: 153- 196.) For DuPlessis and others, this projection of value comes, in part, from a renovated relationship of reader and writer, of reading and writing.

To return, though, to DuPlessis’s double reaction to a lyric mode of thought and composition, her essay “For the Etruscans” both displays the attractiveness of the narrowly focused lyric and departs from that singular focus. DuPlessis begins by quoting a passage from Dickinson which could summarize the essential concentration at the heart of the lyric impulse, especially as DuPlessis herself practices that act of concentration (in the recurring figure of the period) in “Writing”: “\* ‘This is a Blossom of the Brain—/ A small—*italic* Seed’ (Dickinson, no. 942)” (E, 271). But the great step taken (a step taken, as I have been attempting to argue, without abandoning the lyric) in “Writing” and the more recent Drafts is a move away from the at times constraining form of mastery that goes with the lyric impulse.

In the Drafts, the first two of which are included in *Tabula Rosa*, the (de)liberative force of “Writing” finds other manifestations, but ones less focused on layout as a principle of enactment. To date, the finest of the Drafts is #6, an elegiac fusion of lyrical (nearly archaic) phrasing with the more entropic workings

of “Writing.” In the Drafts too, part of DuPlessis’s project is a disturbance of the lyric:

Words come just like that, vision.

beak black bleak cut back through arced site protocol, member the day. Each micro-face splice gutted brekkkl they brekk the lyric ruck. (Su, 23) In Draft #6, Midrush, lines such as “Wraithes of poets, Oppen and oddly/ Zukofsky/ renew their open engagement with me/ wreathing smoke-veils” (T, 51), with their intricate music of o and a sounds, present us with moments of an exquisite (but familiar) lyricism. More typically, such vowel-music occurs within a context of deliberately juxtaposed flatter tones:

Some flatten the paper zoo aired and marched.

The colors had been beautiful. \_

And we have gained more objects whose provenance is tombs: lavish pristine colors of the acrid lock. (T, 51)

Where Draft #6 proves most engaging is in its development of double- and overwriting, extending the multiple textuality of “Writing.” In Draft #6 a slightly different description of palimpsestic writing is given:

pairing the letters underneath sitting citing the writing under writing. (T, 50)

Here, the notion of “underwriting” adds a financial or economic resonance to the palimpsestic text which DuPlessis has been developing. While much of her earlier overwriting focuses on what is added to the page, the more openly elegiac focus of Draft #6 shifts our attention to what comes up from beneath the surface of the text. In an almost Rilkean perspective (and only almost because DuPlessis’s concern is not so much with the spoken word nor with “spiritualized” breath but with the mark and the written word), DuPlessis in Draft #6 gives space to the surfacing marks of the dead, so that “It is they that speak/ silt/ we weep/ silt/ the flood-bound/ written over and under with their/ muddy marks./ / of writing under the writing” (T, 53).

DuPlessis thus realizes the poet as anthropologist and archaeologist, brushing the surface and finding where “Always another little something—/ a broken saucer flower fleck/ unremarkable wedge, except its timing/ [is] working itself loose in the rain” (T, 53). Or, in another version of the poet, a revision of Emerson’s poet as an Adam new naming the beasts, DuPlessis tells of Noah (a second namer?) calling forth stories (‘with words in secret twin’) from the ark, overlaying and redoubling as

Or midrash— overlaying stories so, that calling out the ark, it’s

Noah hails and harks new name and number what stinking fur and tuckered feather-fobs did clamber forth disoriented. Cramped. Half-dead. (T, 53) DuPlessis’s own Drafts, as well as her overwritten texts such as “Writing,” can be seen as a



kind of midrash, a layering of story, commentary, and interpretation, with the added disturbance and motion suggested by the turn into “midrush.” In a recent essay on Susan Howe's work, DuPlessis offers descriptions which serve to situate her own writings as well: “The taxing struggle to assemble and maintain a self-questioning (who? how?) cultural position: anti-authoritarian, yet authoritatively provoked by one's female identity” (Su, 164). In a more detailed and discerning analysis of Howe's position, DuPlessis describes her own double gesture: Howe appears to be on the cusp between two feminisms: the one analysing female difference, the other “ferninine” difference. For the latter, she is close to Julia Kristeva, who evokes marginality, subversion, dissidence as anti-patriarchal motives beyond all limits. Anything marginalized by patriarchal order is, thus, “ferninine;” the “feminine” position (which can be held by persons of both genders) is a privileged place from which to launch an anti-authoritarian struggle. The female use of this “feminine” of marginality and the avant garde use of this “feminine” of marginality are mutually reinforcing in the work of some contemporary women: Lyn Hejinian, Kathleen Fraser, Gail Sher, Beverly Dahlen and Howe. This mixed allegiance will naturally call into question varieties of flat-footed feminism. (Su, 161) It is this combined or mutually reinforcing use of the “feminine,” with particular emphasis on the innovative and transgressive aspects of avant garde writing, that characterizes the writing community gathered around the journal HOW(ever). In Draft #3, DuPlessis summarizes (and valorizes) her writing project:

of words, enormous slant, difficult or.

being. Junctures of saturation beyond catalogue, yet catalogue HAS TO DO syntax; how, why being beyond me. in the totality of its relations unstatable the what, ice treacherous. (Su, 24) Crucially, that “totality of its relations,” for DuPlessis and most Language writers, involves a renewed awareness of the communal nature of the writing enterprise, as well as the politics and economics of textual production and distribution,

What results is a poetry by DuPlessis and others which extends the oppositional activity which Kristeva sees beginning in experimental poetry of the late nineteenth century: ‘To penetrate the era, poetry had to disturb the logic that dominated the social order and do so through that logic itself, by assuming and unraveling its position, its syntheses, and hence the ideologies it trols’ (RPL, 83). The poems in *Tabula Rosa*, and th more recent Drafts, provide the reader with 2 one of the most daring explorations the subject can allow himself [sic], one that delves into his [sic] constitutive process. But at the same time and as a result, textual i reaches the very foundation of the social—that which is exploited by

sociality but which elaborates and can go beyond it, either destroying or transforming it. (RPL, 67) 'a

Poetry such as DuPlessis's, in its disturbance and reconstruction of modes of ordering and self-constitution, "reminds us of its [poetic language's] eternal function: to" introduce through the symbolic that which works on, moves through, and threatens it" (RPL, 81). That reminder constitutes precisely the risk, bravery, and accomplishment of DuPlessis's poetry.

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# Benjamin Hollander

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## *On William Bronk*

### **The Poems by Bronk Have Serious Limits**

William Bronk, *Manifest And Furthermore* (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1987)

IN THIS TIME IN SAN Francisco, with all that is happening there, with the good values inherent in the acts of meaning extending the meaning of meaning in the poems being written there—call it a poetics—and with all of us as close as all that to hear them written in the language—in the L=A=N=G=U=#jA«-\$Ge=-Eas K=N=#=O-#}W#=L=#E=D=G = E—the poems by Bronk have serious limits. This is not so much to fault them as it is to quote them. (These things sound better often left on their own to think than bettered or embittered by the prose around them.)

The critical prose revue around the poems by Bronk, scarce as it is perhaps because he is (he lives in Hudson Falls, New York; Lorine Niedecker, likewise, lived on Black Hawk Island, Wisconsin), would not be better off or even a fair prose if it were to fault the poems for what it knows they don't know, but which they show us. Sadly, however, they show us nothing new, and sadly concessive they declare the care it takes to feel this, How else, looking somewhat contented in this paradox, could they feel out nothing new out there—its content? How else could they stay with and within us to show it?

wanted mysteries which could be explained, made understandable as your disappointment is, I know because I, too, am embarrassed to say it's no more than this which is just what we knew since we knew anything. Well, take a look. ("Guided Tour")

In the midst of nothing new out there there is something going on in the poems by Bronk "which is just what we knew since we knew anything" and which happens to us but has nothing to do with us or what we know or even that we exist, although we are there when it happens, even if we can't use it, although we say we can. I think Bronk shows us we can't. Well, take a look:

One way I think we don't exist is that we would be such a strange thing for it to use. What a strange thing it is. ("Estrangement")

What a strange thing it is for these poems to be while we are not. What a strange thing it is for them to do, to bypass and possess a kind of frontier "knowledge" by going further than what they have known and don't have to know to reach us. I suppose we could live in them—in their world—if they let us live, if they let us

live where we are in peace, Well, they don't. They live in us. And to read them is to hear how they do this, and what we can't do about it when they do, although we try to, even if we can't make sense of it, except to repeat it:

How we feel about it can be altered by money or alcohol—other things— and this is to say that how we feel about it hasn't much to do with what it is.

But no, since we don't know anyway what it is, I suppose we have to go on how we feel about it knowing that we'll never, in any way, know what it is.

What I find too easy is the adjustment I make to accept. ("How Else")

I suppose, like Bronk, we have to trust the adjustment he makes to accept, but to accept what, to adjust how? The poem, after all, does not say it or say as much about what or how it is, although it has a voice in the end to show us. Perhaps it is this endlinevoice, appended to an argument in which reason—played out—will leave us, which convinces us—yet only at the point Bronk himself is convinced—to accept the resonances of where we are without our knowing how we came there. How else to be adjusted but to accept this other voice by letting it move us around without our knowing what or how these things are which happen to us, without even recourse to the poem it ends or to the forms of logic which argue themselves through it, although the voice, to stand astonished outside them, depends on the argument these structures shed? If I had to prove this I would say: You can hear it realized after the work of the poem. You can hear it in the afterthought after reasonable conviction, still instilling conviction, but this time in relief, in a somewhat desperate, gaping resolved condition. You can hear it build, flow into and out of "The Age

Science." I don't know what else you can do: Proven truth is something for everyman Except for the ones who won't listen, won't learn. We can show them but we can't make them believe —that wouldn't be rational anyway and we don't try. Admittedly, we don't have the whole thing; that's what our method's about but, at least, we have a method at last and if it doesn't work I don't know what we can do. ("The Age of Science") Perhaps "The Age of Science" parallels as much The Age of Criticism" as anything else. I mean I can owe you the poems by Bronk but I can't make you believe in them—that wouldn't be rational anyway and I, mn't try. But, at least, I have a method at last and if it esn't work, as he says, I don't know what I can do.. Still, I have to ask: does Bronk himself really know hat he can and can't do to us through the poem? I think I. I think he knows how the presence of method can lead I and keep us under the strange effects of its withdrawal., hat is the intention of his method, which goes further I an what it manifests, which he loses at its limits—the I ter-site of intellect at the poem's limits—where we are. his is why Oppen has said: "Bronk. An intellectual inght which becomes an emotional force through the recition of its limits, the recognition of its failures."" This why

Bronk, the most formal of poets, is content to leave form/ and [its] extension, both soon gone and their orth/ mistaken,” while leaving us with something going » instead, outside intention while we’re busy—in its ethod: It is something like the weather—intentions unknown to us, should it have intention and that unknown also but we apparently none of its intention, in no way its reference but just the same happening to us, its horrors and graces important as anything —no, more important than anything— that happens to us and it does happen to us while we are busy with our own affairs as if they mattered, thinking them real, watching them build and prevail. They are brought to nothing: that isn’t where it’s happening at all though we are there. (“Something Going On”) In and out of the poems by Bronk, we are often where we never came to be. I don’t know how this can be, but it; Bronk knows this, and it is strange. It even comes down to how he reflects it in the estranged word “strange” at the margins—“that where”—where we are, in his natural talk of things, hanging, not quite convinced of our place— our balance—though we say we are. Bronk shows us how we say it. He puts it on the line—the last line. It comes down to echo “the comfort of belief/ even when we feel no ‘omfort’”: \_ How one comes to question love—at least to ourselves—and no one needs to hear us respond; we aren’t quite sure and we’d like the comfort of belief even when we feel no comfort. It’s easier for some to say no and have it over but they don’t quite convince us or themselves. The strange thing is our disposition—that where we are isn’t where we came to be: the place is denied; we feel estranged there and begin to build something homelier as though we carried our place with us in a permanent mind that look like the old in a different place and say we know better now and know how.

(“The Disposition”)

When Bronk says we say that “we know better now & know how,” we are rushed into a conclusion we don’t quite believe. It sounds “the comfort of belief/ even when feel no comfort.” It is serious but doesn’t quite convince us. It is the limits of an argument, extended past summent. This is why the poems of Bronk have serious limits—mostly beautiful serious limits. This is why they give us something further than what they intend us, or ourselves, to know. Manifest And Furthermore. Poems by William Bronk. “I do not see how they can be forgotten” (p. 96). They don’t quite convince us, but we have to believe them. I don’t know what else we can do.

# John Thomas

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## *Lost Inventions of the Night*

for these poems.

Thank you

for my life.

### *As I Write These Words*

Things keep happening, you know. As I write  
these words, Hannibal is still crossing the Alps;  
Billie Holliday still sings “For All We Know”  
at the old Five Spot. The dam is broken,  
and the great slow muddy flood swells behind me  
in ponderous pursuit. The same flower  
blooms and blooms again, forever. Endlessly,  
I scrub the blood from my shaking hands.  
Endlessly, the words pile up, smothering Nightwindow  
the poem. Night falls, night falls, night falls, Bee a a  
arte ye jung of ten thousand  
and I cannot stop this dying. years is not to be understood as  
different from any rainbow,”  
—from the Kali-Sutra

even in the dream  
he walks the darkness silently  
naked on wet grass  
among many sleeping forms

ahead  
the blackness of the stream  
behind  
the pale averted face  
of a sinking half moon

antique postures  
dim and complicated rhythms

he walks in darkness

to the water's edge  
where a small boat lies in the reeds  
it is marked with the trident sign of Vishnu  
it has just arrived  
or will soon drift off forever

in the morning  
the children will not find him here  
where the water flows both ways  
and bubbles up through yellow sand  
to soak him silver at the brim

### Remains of a Morning's Writing

The phantoms who people our dreams: do they live on when we awaken to stumble about  
coughing in cold  
rooms? Do they live on? Should they cease just because we, their watchers, turn out and clothe  
ourselves to face  
and feed the insatiable day? Do they live on, and follow, and watch in helpless horror the  
grotesque scenes of  
what we call Real Life?

And he: he lives alone, now, far away in the forest in a hollow tree. And he: he visits us only to  
romp clumsily, a  
giant shadowy child, in the twitching dreams of a sleeping hound.

Play is hope. But hope...

These three fragments to be joined on one page, wrapped round any stone, and sunk in the  
depth of the dark  
pool.

### The Secret Instructions

f This colossal marble head, fragment  
of an earlier time thrown down  
on its side so long ago:  
it rests beside the dark pool,  
embedded to the cheek.

Weeds, all youth and wasteful vigor,  
mask its prognathous face,  
crafty lip, proud life of brow,  
the one milky eye unaware  
of its blindness. Clearly,

something happened in this place  
where I squat, a circus ape in rags,  
twigs and tinsel in my hair. Something terrible,  
once, in this place. The air is thick with whispered  
message, and even apes must breathe.

There are no symbols here (my wishes  
count for nothing), simply earth,  
real weeds, the pool—real,  
one can lap its icy water—  
and this blind and monstrous teste

which now I, obedient,  
strong with the strength of sleep,  
heave and tumble over the grassy verge.



The great stone head sinks slowly  
into the green depths of the dream.

The last ripples smoothe away and silence,  
the last unearned instruction, closes over.

Al

### In the Coming Conflict Between the Two Great Powers

sifting down outside my window. On the edge  
of a roof across the littered sandlot  
three soaked pigeons wait it out,  
humped side by side like three old tennis shoes. I

I have been trying to read "Sailing to Byzantium," but  
the radio in the next apartment is turned up loud  
to a monologue on Major World Issues.  
Droning, hortatory fragments reach me:  
"In the coming conflict between the two Great Powers..."

I close my book. Ah, poor fuddled old Yeats:  
who would want to return at all, much less  
as a pretty golden bird, twittering away  
to amuse a bored and vulgar empress?

"In the coming conflict between the two Great Powers..."  
Indeed. And must I choose a side? Once again  
I look out. I already know my allegiance.

Failure, I hail you: utter failure, inglorious defeat.  
O mes semblables: cold rain, these pigeons,  
an abandoned shoe. O compadres: the bits  
of exhausted debris you find where wall  
and pavement meet on any skidrow street.  
O weary dust that settles behind mirrors  
hanging in empty rooms. Blessed, blessed oblivion.

## Dead Letter

The journey was pleasant enough, but  
I travelled too far, crossed  
some invisible, unposted frontier  
and here I am, here I have been—  
for years? Sorry. I cannot read  
their enigmatic calendars.

To be a foreigner here, always.  
The language is quite opaque.  
Pleasant-sounding at first, but soon  
one notices the mocking interrogatories.

Sleep does not refresh me here.  
To dream long, portentous conversations  
in a language one does not understand—  
unsettling. I always wake up sad and anxious.  
What did he say? What

### 4 Sélo para nosotros

I sit in a café at an oddly-carpentered table, Viven todas las cosas bajo el Sol.  
drinking... something. What they always serve me. El poeta es un pequeño Dios.  
I watch the people come and go, crossing —Vicente Huidobro, *Ars Poetica*  
the square on urgent but mysterious errands.  
If I knew how to ask, “Where Indeed, Vicente. (May I call you  
nae you ie ial they would stop and Vicente?) How like a god,  
at me wi ir harlequin eyes, and how little. (Like a god.)  
and what their looks would tell me You died of sunstroke like  
I do not care to know. a little god, in your own rumpled bed,  
at Llole, south of Cartagena on the coast.  
The games the children play (January 2, 1948, aetat. 54.)  
are “wrong” somehow, and menacing. You died in Capricorn, Vicente  
Are they really games, really (God), and far below that Tropic.  
children? (I was three days past seventeen;

Forgive this poetical touch, but than I am now.) Godlike, Vicente,  
— piss pass your last request was for a mirror.  
ce It was placed in your hands and  
only st space hasan: mean. you - the reflection of  
They, I think, your own face until your gaze became  
these trees. I always felt the sunfish stare of any dead god.  
at least I understood trees. How grand in its steel parentheses

Soon I shall fold these pages and seal chem an  
in an envelope on which I shall inscribe are poets and gods, Vicente

some old familiar address, I do this;  
every day. There is a mailbox across the square,  
and it eats my envelopes. I do not know  
where they go. Goodbye. The trees  
are singing again.

J

### No One Has Spoken for a Very Long Time

These torch-lit fields are fields of the dead, who are all about him. In casual attitudes, they sit in the weeds atop the graves (their own? who can say?), passing the humdrum time—filing a fingernail, paging through tattered magazines. They do not look up, will not acknowledge him. He lumbers through the fields of the dead, the old woman heavy on his back, her hands tight in his hair, old feet dangling beside his hips. (Do they still make shoes like that?) Her smell is a nineteen-thirties smell—talcum, mainly, and starched cotton, musty plush, the deodorant salve (Arrid? Mum?) that came in a flat white jar. She weighs upon him, weighs. He stumbles on the uneven turf and her old hands twist even tighter in his hair. Clumsy, she thinks him, smacking her lips in irritation. The dead, in the flickering torch-light, vaguely busy—sewing, awkwardly grooming themselves, sorting small objects. His burden, the growing weight of her. She is frightened and wants him to hurry. The torches smell of tar, give off black smoke and little light. The weight of her. His clumsy feet on the clods. This could be memory, all of it, or a dream, or an endless present night. He remembers the small pale moles on her face. Her hands shuffling the cards for rummy (this part, surely, is memory) while a radio played Lanny Ross—"The Rose of Tralee." Ah, the weight of her, riding his back, throwing him off balance. It is all so trite and obvious that it must be cinema, he tells himself. To endure a mock-life of endless allegory, and in this place. To breathe these ruined and lugubrious perfumes. Her feet in their old black shoes swing with his lurching steps. The dead, all around him and unattending, some drinking from small clay cups. She spurs his sides with her heels. Spent, now, he sinks to his knees in the dry weeds. The stones are sharp. This could be a film, he thinks, sensing her growing terror. This could only be a film, and he cuts, cuts with sour irony, to a summer lawn, bees, bright sunshine, a child's laughter—not his own.

### Poem In Which Baudelaire Is Named Six Times

Standing before the bathroom mirror,  
he tells himself that he has come to look  
very like Baudelaire, if Baudelaire were fat  
and bearded and looked nothing like Baudelaire.

Mainly it is the eyes, he thinks. Yes, something singular they share in their eyes. He gazes at Baudelaire in the mirror and Baudelaire gazes back. Yes. Four dark eyes like the eyes of a tortured duck. He leans in closer to that brother face, that great semblable. "In far-off places," he tells himself, "there will be wonderful things." Could Baudelaire have said it better? He thinks not. Four eyes like the eyes of a tortured duck.

Foreign. Old. Inside Us.

The world is a place where we  
have never been, from which we  
will not escape. The world is  
Tantra, is a book. The book  
is older than the world, and

the words are swarthy and strange,  
not words, but their ferocious  
ancestors, still alive, still  
inside us in their clumsy  
armor, still locked in battle.

Clang of bronze. Blood and stone dust  
stop the nostrils, seal the eyes.  
Ancient arguments beat us  
into the ground. The great stiff  
pages flutter in the wind.

#### I'll Never Get It Right

You want to know a secret? Those photographs always embarrass me. You know the ones I mean, those photographs on the dust jackets: “the poet in his study.” There he sits, at a big, orderly desk. On the desk are several exotic curios. A neat stack of manuscript is at his elbow. Is he holding a pipe? Probably—and you can bet it’s a Dunhill. Behind him you can see his serious bookshelves full of beautiful books. To the side sits his sleek and expensive electric typewriter, probably humming, all ready to go. There he sits, pen in hand—and this is what gets me: he’s writing. I mean, obviously that’s the way to write—but how can people write like that? Sitting down like that, all squared away at a nice desk. I could never do it. Some of them are even wearing jackets and ties. How the hell can you write in a jacket and tie? I bet Borges wrote in a jacket and tie. Plato, too, probably. I’m ashamed. I even had a friend, once, a poet, never mind his name, and I went to visit him one day. He wasn’t expecting me. Well, I’m a sneak, right? So I looked through the side window before knocking on the door and there he sat in a beautiful tweed jacket, there he sat at his fancy desk. No, let’s tell the truth, it was a table, but what’s the difference? He didn’t know I was coming. He wasn’t posing. But there he sat with a neat stack of—what do they call it? foolscap?—foolscap at his elbow, and he was writing! I tell you, I blushed. I felt like a damn kid, a fake, a clown. So, shit, I just went back home. You see, those guys in the photos, even my friend I spied on through the window: they know the secret. That’s how it feels: they have a handle on something and I’m just some kind of incompetent asshole.

I mean, look: here I am, lying in bed in my underwear, on top of my sleeping bag. And the bed's a mess.  
Look at it: heaps of paper, the overflowing ashtray, a bottle of N6D6z, two packs of Roloids, a nail-clipper,  
breath spray (Christ, breath spray!), on one corner of the mattress a foot-high stack of dusty old records (oh, yes, dust is a major feature of my room), at least a dozen cheap detective novels (I read detective novels like ballplayers chew gum), and there's not an exotic curio in sight. The typewriter is way across the room. It's an old Royal manual that skips, and it's buried under six inches of trash. As is the typing chair. I have to clear all that shit away before I can make a fair copy of anything. And when I do, it's not on foolscap. I never owned any foolscap in my life. What the hell is foolscap, anyway?  
And I write in this shithouse! All day long, stretched out in bed. In my jockey shorts. In this dump. I just can't do it the other way. The real way. So I feel like an imposter. I am an imposter, probably, a jerk. A fifty-seven-year-old baby. I'll never get it right.



# Mary Haynes

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## *Hard Kernels*

*The Congregation*                      In starched white dimity I perched  
They came at dusk                      under mamma's  
high, bearded men with                  crooked elbow, my  
grotesque noses,                      skinny legs dangling  
their women in flowered prints          over the straw-swept floor,  
cut from feed bags,                      immaculate fleas  
children in tow, old grans              leapt to the rafters,  
mottled  
in a sweat of rayon,                      a wheezy little organ pumping out  
wafting odors of plum and late apple.    Sankey hymns.  
Fryes and Koontzes, Battons,  
Ramseys,                      In the dusky yard, fluttering  
  
Irish and old West Country,              and flapping  
they straggled  
past root cellars and                      against the closed screen-door,  
crude                      spirit  
chrysanthemum beds,  
up the path that angled                  we are here to bless you  
leaf-shadowed across the corn field.    'unreservedly  
They assembled in rows  
on plain, wood benches                  We will peck at your hardest kernels  
in old Morehouses' white-washed          we will dwell  
chicken coop  
under tall, drooping elms,              in your dim sheds  
to the left of their small  
flat-roofed house.                      'We will lay our pure white ovals  
in your straw  
  
we will touch everything that keeps us  
from your holiest gathering'

*Bath 1954**Joyful Enclosure*

Road of white stone  
 pebbles  
 in the mouth  
 in the eyes and apparatus  
 for breathing  
 Incomparably  
 as in small Gretel's fearful dawn  
 too many crumbs  
 to return by  
 Road scattered and winding only at last  
 to the bird sanctuary  
 where adrift in a stir of trees  
 still as  
 my old helm-oak  
 the many-apertured birdhouse hangs  
 empty.  
 its muted vocables  
 pierced soft by the grainy light  
 My absence a magnified sparrow composed of  
 anticipating  
 rain slivers and  
 wren light  
 feathers moulted from a perch suspended  
 in leaf-shadow  
 something that plants itself  
 on the hillside barely touching the  
 perfectly mowed lawn  
 that tenure  
 which exceeds beyond measure my mouth's dimension  
 I shouted your name in that silence  
 I lunged  
 at the gatehouse where the butler  
 should have lived  
 I hurled my small pebbles at the manor-house  
 but nowhere  
 the lost sister  
 I meant to entice home with me  
 nowhere  
 those sweet gabbling birds striking air  
 with their kisses

Then  
 after I had devastated with  
 my anger:  
 the drift of white chestnut  
 high in the tree  
 I remembered:  
 a late summer afternoon in Kent Ohio  
 twenty years earlier  
 when we took the dank and crumbling  
 old Water Street extension  
 out toward Stan Guise's  
 place in the country  
 as we walked  
 the espaliered white loft of his  
 family porch  
 purplish-flowered and white  
 herbs dangling  
 our familiar countryside reeking of  
 kind  
 old motherside  
 and later  
 tea  
 in the sun-splotched Edwardian drawing room  
 the slow solacing  
 notes of Stan's alto recorder  
 as it coaxed meadow flowers out of

rich-textured wallpaper

we were

sun-splotched

and at sundown the

clean scent of mown hay and

far-

extending fields

Stan's talk of Paris

our feet

wading ruts of high grass

drenched with receding light

a solitary horse drifting nightward

I remembered:

how on the way home we halted  
halcyon

where a frothy brook

tumbled riverward over boulders

I remembered:

swirling beneath us our cottony  
mid-calf dresses

I remember:

how the moonlight pooled at our feet  
and your voice bloomed

on and on in the darkness

'Here among these rocks'                      Hours later nothing left but the squabbling of sea  
 Tall white houses, two-storied, with slanted roofs,    birds transferred to my own throat. I dive  
 among  
 on both sides of a street that leads to the sea.    children for tidbits. I drop between Travis and  
 Idyllic enclosure with trees. Light and shade aligned    Draper, Lorne and Maurice. They attack  
 me with  
 in detailed exactitude on the lids of my closed eyes.    Karate kicks. They reel and lurch. They  
 grab my  
 Hawthorne's Salem as down Orange Street. Nantucket.    sweet bit of fish and run off to their  
 reefs of  
 Pacific fog swirling into San Francisco or obscuring    anger. And I screech. I grab the napes of  
 their  
 the high eucalyptus in the Berkeley hills. Beer on the    thin bare necks and shove them to the  
 floor.  
 narrow wood balcony with Joan and Richard, watching    SHUSH SIT BEHAVE They know  
 me. They  
 shadows creep and lights start to flicker on the    know where I live. They laugh. I will lose  
 my job  
 Golden Gate. Joys of a lifetime lost when I open    if I can't control them. Sit down, I whimper,  
 be  
 my eyes. Still trying to remember. Holding my lids    quiet. Listen — the gulls are flying. Listen  
 down in another effort. Writing a letter from Nantucket  
 where a thin book of verse lies open on a desk in a    I'll tell you a story, They have no need of  
 stories.  
 second-floor room on Center Street. Lilac-flowered    They want cartoons, they want drums,  
 they want  
 wall paper and a clean bed with tufted white bed-    Indians and Martians; they want love.  
 They want  
 spread. Fog rolling in there too. Atlantic island    something to do. They want to hit each other.  
 I  
 fog..., tall white houses immaculate among tall    help them with socks and boots. I take them  
 down  
 trees that drift in the fog and wind, that drift    to the beach behind the school for jars of sea  
 lice  
 all night while I sleep and dream alternately.    and snails. We run about looking for branches  
 with  
 My life on the mud flat. Tide rolling in past my    buds about to open. They skid into sea  
 rocks, they  
 kitchen window like a wide river, then out. Nothing    clamber uphill through the woods and  
 lose all their  
 left but rich black mud and grey stone. Although    buds. They muddy their gym shoes. They  
 carry stones  
 sometimes in the morning, sea fog still adrift,    and shells to throw around the classroom.  
 They run  
 sunlight breaks through. Making angelic messengers    to the toilet without asking. Miss, they  
 cry, Miss,  
 of the gulls that wing from rock to rock or sleep    my feet are sogged, Miss, can I take home  
 my sneakers  
 absolutely still on the dark breakwater. Then I run    to get washed. Miss, will they get leaves,  
 will they  
 lurking in the mist. Thus my day: eyes flashing open    bloom. Miss, are they trees.

on the dreams of my closed lids.      Leave them in the light, by the window, I say. No,  
don't pick at them. Sit down, I said,... Draper!  
It was Thursday. Where are my eyelids, when did I  
close my eyes on the sea house, when did the fog,

Friday is film day. Friday, scheduled for music      Autumn, early November, autumnal sun  
 warming  
 with a crowded room, I wrench myself from the      slate stone, yellowing tall grass heads  
 adrift in  
 old piano that faces the wall, kids on the floor      wind, splotching white houses on the road,  
 their  
 behind me. I tackle instead the dirt-gummed      roofs still hill-shadowed. Burnt-out  
 pumpkins on  
 projector with its broken feeding spring.      porches. Halloween. In the Anglican Hymnal  
 'Sheep sheep sheep' we sit enchanted. 'Cow' runs      All-Saints Day  
 amok, bawling and unfocused. I wind and re-wind      For all the saints  
 while the children wrestle on the floor. Travis      who from their labours rest  
 bloodies Angie's pert little nose. In the projector's      Harold Miles in his coffin with light  
 perpetual  
 wild red light we all make shadow figures and      shining off his brow; I kneeling in the  
 church  
 Jason pounds Alwyn against the wall, gets a neck      pew, sodden with wet leaves, stubborn,  
 weeping.  
 hold. Sabrina kicks Miranda, they cry. "Teacher!"      David del Credidici on the little radio by  
 my bed:  
 I try the 'Eine Kleine Nachtmusik'; it's black,      'Write what you please'. Sad old Eliot in his  
 white, and soundless. 'All right, all right, go      bare room with bulb dangling over his head  
 back to your rooms.' I mewl, baa, screech, chase.      Teach us to care.  
 Not a gambol left in my tired old sack of bone. My      Becca under the muffled muggers'  
 blows, her wild  
 beady eyeballs gone sightless. I know what I am.      black hair flung onto the sidewalk; Lee  
 spattering  
 'Cris and Camille, be quiet. 3's, take your readers.      ink in the printer's shop; Jude going back  
 to work  
 Clean up the floor under your desk, take your shoes      with all the happiness leaking out of  
 her head,  
 to your lockers, it's Friday. Yes, you can go! GO!      home, holding Maura all night in her  
 arms, tiny  
 I said, go. Scott, clean up that mess under your      baby; Joan tracking Europe in smoky  
 trains, in search  
 desk, where's your book. Draper,...'      of her husband, weeping desertion and loneliness  
 'See ya Monday, Miss, thanks Miss, goodbye Miss.'      Kate, alive, on the telephone  
 Their ecstatic Friday afternoon smiles float secure  
 over the boot dirt smudged across Frank's polished  
 hall floor. My room suddenly pristine without them.  
 Margie Andersen, elegant in a black cotton sweater  
 over yellow, sweeps up the hall from Special Ed  
 in her trailing bird skirt to discuss reading problems. We  
 write referrals to Ajit, who will never come.

*Landscape**November*

Women who are houseproud                      And suddenly the clarity of grey-  
 who polish the same spot                      Winged light falls over my shoulders  
 on the table over and over                      Dulling the book in my lap as I  
 Adrienne Rich                      Study among drowsing children the  
 I polish until it gleams reflecting                      Stern-eyed driver his eyes on the road  
 Under window light my                      I recognize  
 Wood-stained table let it sing                      Quirpon branch to Noddy Bay and shudder  
 Let it remedy my soft cry                      Understanding as I feel the  
 I stand in a high field                      Interlocking hills whirr  
 Abutting an ocean                      And dragging wet mist out of the rock cut  
 Mist pours in its grey yield                      Precise overhead the solitary  
 Wild purple iris the one                      Crow meaning death wild burble in its throat  
 Bloom from the grass its hump its hollow                      Mist lifting  
 Speckled brown sandpiper                      Underfoot half-buried weeds at the edge  
 Broods sweetly in its clump                      Winding dirt road dead-end  
 Leading me by chirp and wing-whirr slow                      King's Cove arms branching  
 Into a great space of light                      Salt-turf from a passing car spilt heavy  
 Where the written word                      Blood-stained last winter  
 Sings soft as polished flight                      Dogs snuffling pawing ice almost  
 Flushed clean from grass as sword as spear                      December again whole bird frozen  
 under dirt  
 Succumbs like a bird heavily caught                      Still we sing at weed and sky's edge blunt  
 In the slumped wire a                      Hill heavily  
 Clump of budding iris and sought                      Buffeted  
 Through winter mire                      Wing from pasture beyond spruce hills  
 A photograph of blue hydrangea                      Black silken hurled sideways crow  
 Matted on my wasp-wall                      Swayed into ocean current  
 Spots on the lightest stuff                      Gulls sleep like parchment old and wise  
 Buttercup and bogbice violet                      On dissatisfied stone in the mud flat  
 Surrounded by spring joy stunned                      I watch with binoculars and rejoice but at  
 night  
 I turn inward the last                      The dream of rock comes back to me  
 Unjoined song the moribund                      Wild leash and feathers wild breath stone  
 Cockerel in its fast                      Chill on my shoulders  
 Insist I am woman                      Dragging me northward  
 Stubborn heft                      I succumb to rabbit warrens and stumble  
 Of the bogbice violet                      Into hummocks I am high  
 Splices of light let inward like stone                      In the pasture the climate bitter  
                                                  Swaths of light beat rhythmic circles battered  
                                                  Sea stones coax  
                                                  Boats inward toward candle-light old story  
                                                  Mighty water flowing kind remembrance

*Nativity 1983**Drowsing Lines*

Mellow in slats of afternoon light  
 under snow-crusted windows                      Drowse—  
 our crib of rough spruce  
 lichened grey rind unpeeled                      Lie deep in the pasture where once  
 tumbles with a pile of books  
 in the elementary room                      you found sustenance.  
 Boughs that supported the birth  
 and lent fragrance                      Lift fluted tongue to the cow's udder,  
 even piety to the scene  
 are stuffed in a dark red jar                      feast eyes  
 ineluctable tree  
 dry needles sifting through tinsel                      on the red-stamened crab-bloom.  
 The disparate wild star  
 hooked over with cotton crotchet thread                      Finger softly that sun-warmed stone  
 where once  
 into swaddling cloth                      you curled half-asleep, dreaming  
 ungladdens in a cardboard box flat  
 among angels                      on the wood-slope.  
 of tissue and tinfoil wings  
 Collapsed in the stable's dark corner                      Kneel to the first spring daffodil,  
 under bungled harp strings                      Let the fatherly snake flash  
 a humped brown camel  
 some bristleboard shepherds and the three                      Brilliants,  
 rufous kings  
 dream of the black night emblazoned                      uncoil from your feet and slither  
 'Two paint-splotched moony-eyed cows  
 sidle down on their knees                      off into underbrush.  
 in the janitor's closet  
 the only real borrowed lamb                      Drowse—  
 back foddering  
 in Frank Hill's barn                      Lie still,  
 The favoured child who brought  
 the Holy Infant                      count weeds at the pasture's edge. |  
 clutches him under her arm                      Consider waxy in its damp foliage all  
 summer  
 trudges up through snow drifts toward                      the white trillium;  
 Noddy Bay bus  
 I watch her as she goes                      fear not evil.

Repeat that day in February your booted feet  
 broke crusts of ice

to unfurl the lowly skunk plant.

Flaunt wretched love down one more wood path,



flaunt

startled cow pawing air at mere sight of you.  
Lie back in your mother's encircling arms  
thin as death

making its windy search

Drowse—

Take the last path inward. Breathe

soft as toad

it is dusk and the stars leap

-

*Newfoundland Scarecrow*

Rheumy-eyed beak-nosed old fisherman  
planted here on a stick  
guardian of the wallowing cabbage  
the sprouting tuber  
Yellow oilskins and slicker  
dripping with moisture  
I stretch out my arms to encompass  
bight and harbour

I bless the misty air of summer  
near roar of ocean  
field lying upon field  
my only companion

The despicable crow that flourishes  
raucous in spite of me  
pecking stubbornly at my shoulder  
eyes liquorous as sun

Whatever they say I am benign  
spirit of this island  
descendent of gods  
lusting after weather

# Andrew Levy

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## *from Indiana*

There is a coming and a going, A parting and oft—no returning. Kafka To pick up again obviously. If it were only that easy. Strike that. I need hardly say there was a collision. It was that easy. False sentences doesn't. What I mean as in the place of starting. Liking sentences, or lines for that matter, of equal length. Visual. Lining the toes up with the markers, letting the ball descend from your gaze slowly, as in a dream, so balanced, thick jello, raspberry. Self-blame. Cow and go-go bells, the babel of the building, and the experimentation. Paperclips and trees, 'black and white, intertwining of limbs and and sky, a small child. A small child. There is a road in the midwest, unpaved, ungravelled, just a dirt road until you reach the bridge. Under that bridge is a narrow, slow running stream headed for the Ohio. I know, I grew up there. On that bridge is a bare-bottomed young man throwing rocks in the water, at ease in the warm Indiana sunshine. Yes. These words seem to change everything. Dawn. Feet tired and dirty. Strike that. If it were only that easy. Obviously, I need hardly say there was a collision. False sentences don't pick up again. It was that easy. What I mean as the place of starting sentences, or lines for matter of equal length. Not visual, lining the toes up with the markers, letting the ball slowly descend as in a dream, balanced, thick, raspberry jello. The self-blame that comes after. Bells, the names of things forgotten seems strange. A small child, the babel of the building and experimentation. Black and white paperclips and trees intertwining in the sky and a small child. A road in the midwest. Unpaved, gravelled, a dirt road and then the bridge spanning a narrow slow running stream for the Ohio. You know I grew up there. A bare-bottomed young man throwing rocks in the water, sunning in the Indiana sun. Words seem to change everything. The dawn, and feet dirty and tired, Sandwiched, thrown together in the morning. I wanted to tell a story.

, Three Years Later Pulling into the Temple side parking-lot with my uncle, brother and cousin for Sunday morning classes. A collision of books, papers and pen. Standing on the bank of the Ohio sunning in the Indiana sun, I wanted to tell a story, and in telling the story changed. A slow running stream, bare feet dust between the toes feeling the grit, the ball falling in the length of the line, pudding for breakfast taking a step backwards, sandwiched on a cool September afternoon. The river high in April filled with wood, broken limbs and decayed trunks of trees. The bell tower what's standing now. It didn't matter when after I arrived It told the

story to a few friends. Descending from my gaze, jello thick raspberry soles, water pushing over my shoulders, bare-bottomed shock at the first touch of the stream, tossing pebbles at tadpoles scurrying by. Teeth clenched against what happened, a stupid self-denial mixed with the desire to remember a disengagement it didn't want. The self-blame that always comes after. Alongside a slow running stream headed for the Ohio. My beginning and end there. The smell of laundry, the taste of coffee and bacon at home. Wanting to tell a story black and white drawn out into the length of the line. Tadpoles changing into frogs swimming confusedly around my feet. The ball, as in a dream, paperclips, but when I get here descending everything kind of falls apart. Finding my way through the crowded afternoon streets, and then a fluid issuance of the breath. Ignoring these signs, responsibilities, what the consequence could be, have been, but often led elsewhere. The length of the leg, weight of the body suspended in air between thumb and forefinger. Gaze of the now unseeing eye. Having no idea of the time, and it doesn't matter. Each page a fabric, brick of greater and greater resistance, transparency of possible things. Sitting in the back seat reading a comic book in the warm Indiana sunshine.

Low and gravelly. False sentences don't. I mean as the place of starting. Falling through the window from the top bunk and landing in a shrub. How many hours I may have slept there reported to me years and years later still amazement at how it happened. But after I arrived, things kind of fell apart. Walking through the corridors, the faces of afternoon crowds, I wanted to tell a story. To build a street between these very rare bodies, to introduce a difference. Emerged from water, rinsed from meaning, tossing stones in a slow running stream headed for the Ohio, You know I grew up there. Barebottomed sunning in the Indiana sun. Rising with my uncle to Sundayschool, studying the history of the Jewish people. The self-blame that comes after. I mean as the place of starting, black thick soles, feet thick as palms, insistent. Picking quarts of strawberries in the fields. Other chores around the house. Sandwiched, thrown together in the early morning, toes numb, black and white. The brownstone walls provide the proper echo, bend out and over to see who's conversing on the street below. When lying in bed I sometimes confuse the past, what I know of it, with the present, and. then often some other imagined time which might be before, after, to come, inbetween, or alongside any and all times. The Ohio. When things were more simple. These brownstone walls easily pass through. A felt-tip pen sketch of a face on a page, and the representation of a page, a piece of paper or cover of a book as a face. In other words, alive and waiting. Standing apart from. There are only certain moments when such things are possible, do not break down beneath a false approach, attitude, and stumble into cleverness. Anything economies. This is a theoretical

paragraph, eccentric and concerned with human frailty. Sentences of bodies on the crowded afternoon streets and words, and words and word. I have written and am now reading this letter to myself. These are our papers. Do not be afraid. That either one of us may have become lost along the way, losing some curious or unique mark of identity, is in my eyes (“our eyes”) meaningless... and beside the point. Surely you can understand our separation for all these years was the unjustness of consequences/interferences by others—but what is past cannot overshadow the happiness I now feel. I raise my eyes from this page and look straight ahead, not out of disbelief, but in the self-realization that we have finally joined hands, and bitterness over the time lost... It is not lost, and this is precisely the point! The inevitable occurs, and such is your arrival in my manuscripts; a breach opened in time, all that may have been, was, and still may, becomes reality. Please believe me—I'm

: sending this message from my heart. Do not hesitate to go on, do not abandon me—turn the page. Today, you must complete

, The temptation to save everything. Corridors slowly descending, as in a dream entering a cavernous room three-hundred feet beneath the surface in Mammoth Cave. Landing in a shrub, tadpoles scurrying about my feet, I wanted to tell a story falling out of the top bunk. My uncle is in a serious mood reprimanding our dachshund for wetting his shoes. Learning the hebrew alphabet, but my brother was better. Those big marshmallow wafer cookies dipped in chocolate or banana coating grandmother kept in a jar. Walking my bike beneath the low limbs of trees, shoulderbags packed with papers as the sun came up. A stupid self-denial mixed with the desire to remember, but after I arrived things kind of fell apart. Standing in a shallow slow running stream headed for the Ohio, there are only certain moments when such things are possible, do not break away, stand apart from. Ice tea, sugared, with lemon on a summer afternoon. My beginning and end there. To begin and not end, if possible, seems strange. So many sweets, food and drink. A cardboard cigar box labeled “Rocks,” a random collection of minerals like mica, felspar, quartz, then, fossils, shards of pottery, an: “indian” tooth, arrowheads, black petrified wood, apache tears, sandstone, and a favorite, moon agate, assembled sometime in gradeschool, The self-blame that always comes after. A stupid self-denial standing in a shallow slow running stream, The desire to remember only certain moments as if kept in a jar. Everything dipped in chocolate or banana coating. I wanted to | tell a dream, but in telling it became apparent. You know I grew up there, but after I arrived all these threads gathered | in which sandwiched each day's ends. Knowing your place, letting the ball descend slowly, the babel of the building black and white echo, The taste of coffee and bacon at home. | White echo. The taste of coffee and bacon at home. Bananacream and

coconut-cream pies. To begin and not end, if possible, | in a jar. A breeze that comes sleeping through their clusters. I wanted to know you knew I grew up there. Shoestrings emerged from sometime before school. Indiana wants me, but after I arrived here all these threads sandwiched each day's ends. Assembled water, rinsed from meaning the possibilities for extension. Obviously, there was a collision. A road in the Midwest headed for the Ohio, sunning in the Indiana sun. I mean as the place of starting. Linking sentences, or lines for that matter. 'To build a street between these very rare bodies, to introduce a difference. Other chores around the house. Rising with my uncle to Sunday-school, studying the history of the Jewish people. A felt-tip pen sketch of a face on a page representing human frailty, some other imagined time which might be before, after.

I made it that way. Experience began drawing attention around. Broken limbs and the decayed trunks of trees, the river high in April. Dust between the toes falling in the length of the line pushing over my shoulders, tossing tadpoles at tadpoles scurrying by. Clenched against what happened, I wanted to tell a story filled with wood, the bell tower what's standing, thick ambiguity blown, of the Ohio sunning in the Indiana sun in the length of the line. I didn't want a disengagement to remember a stupid self-denial mixed with the desire to remember. And then a fluid issuance of the breath, ignoring these signs, often elsewhere. Greater and greater resistance, transparency of a running stream. A collision of books, papers and hebrew. Taking a step backwards, sandwiched on a cool September afternoon, it told the story to a few friends, Bend out and over to see who's conversing on the street below, inbetween or alongside any and all. Going down driveways placing the paper above in the support of the awning. Wheels leaving tracks to screen doors. A center of gravity, weight, pulling me in. The lure of fathom into the length of the line. I mean as the place of starting sentences for matter of equal length. Circumference of books, papers and hebrew trans-; lating what comes after self-blame the possibilities for renting, pushing over my shoulders, holstered. My cousin shooting turtles in the White River with a .22 automatic rifle. Green foam of. Clenched against, why not admit it into what happened. Going down driveways placing the paper inside screen doors. The temptation to save everything. I wanted to tell a story falling out of the top bunk through the window and landing in a shrub. Berries in the fields. Impersonates or imprisoned with newspaperbag over my head. These signs, responsibilities, what the consequence could be. A small child, the babel of the building and echo. A bb ricocheted and struck our cousin in the eye. We were told it was a lesson for us to learn. A sense of growth, but equally, a sense of decay. My beginning and end there. A slow running stream seems strange. Balanced thick soles. At certain moments a mind and body (land) just coming into awareness—mushrooms. The

sky yellow fields passed cluster above a cut in the hillside. Sunning in the Indiana sun linking sentences some other imagined collision. So many sweets a random collection I wanted to tell. Then, fossils, shards of poetry, an “indian” tooth. Beneath a false approach, attitude standing apart from. Certain moments when such things are possible. Words work, might correspond to one another and persons talking. A road in the Midwest. I was born there but after I got here things kind of fell apart.

3 Gaze of the now unseeing eye. The length of the leg, weight of the body suspended in air.

- I'm sorry if this is getting heavy, but I'm hungry and I haven't stopped. It's getting dark so maybe I won't last much longer. Since you've been away I've become a creature of light. That's what I mean earlier about getting younger. It's a process I'm slowly learning to understand, to accommodate to. It's not like what happened to the shrinking man. I'm not shrinking, I'm not getting smaller in that way. I don't even look younger, but it's a quality in my head some people recognize. I'll have to speak to you further about it sometime but not now as other things are becoming more important. I often feel it's a race against time, that each word sent if spun off the tip of this pen and then quickly transcribed on my typewriter might reach you unmediated. In other words dry, no, damn a mistake, if anything still wet, but direct from my mind to yours. I know this is a silly wish. I don't know how much stamina or stomach you have for these things anymore. Or even your desire to discuss them. In fact, I'm not sure you're listening, and I'm not being silly. I want you to listen. I want you to pick up this pen and write these words so I can see who's speaking to whom. Who's describing whom. What can come. I'm getting a headache because you're not answering me. I don't even have time to type I'm afraid of what you're saying. I'm listening from a distance and I'm afraid you're going to reveal something damaging. Rationally I know that's wrong. A false fear, but I can't help it. I can see where this is going. I know it deep inside me and feel my head cracking. I can see you're writing something on a pad of paper in the half-light of evening. I'm not sure who it's addressed to. It's beginning, all of this, to resemble the story I told the stranger on the train. 'Tell me. I'll believe you more than 100%. I'll take your words into my soul. I won't stop.

From this page a greater and greater resistance, but equally, a sense of decay. Furtive steps into the outside future. The desire to remember, but after I arrived, the voices rise. Sandwiched on a cool Spring afternoon, placing the papers inside screens.

What keeps you awake is the weight of sleep. The power that comes from not contending. Letting the ball slowly descend. But in reality things happen



differently. Teeth clenched against trunks of trees. Green blades, parallel rows of yellow tasselled corn.

I make what I mean in the length of the sentence, or line. Drum-rolls, snare to toms, bass breaking to cymbals crashing, and hi-hat keeping time. The temptation to save everything desire to remember the place of starting, knowing drums resound, carry the weight of the body, a collision on a cool April afternoon.

Even the words desert you. Rolling out of a van in a cloud. Tossing papers on porches, my cousin shooting turtles in the White River with a .22 automatic rifle. Green foam of the now unseeing eye. Unpaved, ungravelled, just a dirt road. In the early Indiana sun time signatures. I wanted to tell a story falling out of the top bunk, my uncle reprimanding our dachshund for wetting his shoes. Ice tea, sugared, with lemon on a summer afternoon learning hebrew, but my brother was better. Greater and greater resistance. The self-blame that comes after. Studying, to introduce a difference between these very rare bodies. Temptation to save everything desire to remember the place of in the length of the sentence, or line. Drum-rolls, snare to tom, bass breaking to cymbals crashing, and hi-hat keeping time. The starting, knowing drums resound, carry the weight of the body, a collision on a cool April afternoon. A slow running stream headed for the Ohio.

The sun has simply started to turn, just a little in the length of the line shifting across the dining room table. Quiet and waiting, radishes, bell and hot peppers and cucumber. Those seeds into something substantial to eat. Beans, lettuce, basil.

The impurities of thinking. The room the mound of let me maintain. Placing a paper in an arch beneath a back door awning on an early Summer morning. The lulling security of radishes. Quiet and waiting teeth clenched against what happens. That I was born there, on an Indiana road heading for the Ohio. Target practice with my father on the levee, outshooting older men with pistols.

The blue sky above rows and rows of yellow tasselled corn who walked through the front door. The taste of bacon and eggs and coffee at home. Those seeds of that melody. There. Arguing over the dachshund wetting my uncle's shoes and almost anyone's who walked through the front door.

There is a particular line I'm looking for.

It might be nice to go for a walk.

This has simply started to turn, quiet and strange. Her breasts resting on the keyboard of my typewriter the girl downstairs returns it in her lingerie. The weight of this manuscript as it rests upon my knees. Everyone knows that babies come from cabbage. Why I will put off to the very end what is most important. I think I was thinking about Kafka to clear the pressure in my ears. Bell and hot peppers and cucumber into something substantial to eat. My beginning and end there. Coffee at home. Shoes and almost any who walked through the front door.



Those seeds of that melody. There is a particular line I'm looking for. Paperbag in which sandwiched each day's ends. You know I was born there bare-bottomed, or lines for that matter, knowing their place, the self-same echo

I wanted to tell. But after I got here, I mean as the place of starting, the voices rose from not contending. Letting the ball fall that easy. The big marshmallow of self-denial.

Lowdown, get the works. A noise, make a virtue of, give an example, give an opinion. It might be nice to talk on a walk, an invigorating swim. Make a pretext. I'm wet from toe to head, passive, clefting. Stop by any branch. The self-blame that always comes. Each page a fabric transparency of possible things. When such things are possible, words work, falling in the length of the line, sandwich filled with wood. Driveways between these very rare bodies. But one must try all the same. Made of bright and shed the former, but be the former alone, denser than the substance of reality. The bell tower of the old temple left standing at the corner of Washington and Gum. The names of streets forgotten seems strange. The interruption of into the wrong apertures. A breeze that comes sleeping through their clusters. Reversal of responsibilities, what the consequences could

be, pulling me in. I mean as the place of starting. A blaze of burning books. Target practice at the levee with my father outshooting older men. Drums resound, carry the weight of the body, greater and greater resistance, a collision that comes after, before. Low Lowdo Lowdown giv give give an swi swim, swim. Sto Stop Stop by fab fabri fabric wor words words w woo wood. wood, all allt all the alo alone alone, old oldt old tem nam names names o the thew the wro clu clust cluster be, be, p be, pul bur burni burning old older older m gre great greater I want to get the golden color of those fields in this line. Strike that. I tell a story, and in telling it falls apart, a breeze that comes sleeping through. Toward that end, a greater and greater resistance—that I begin in a stream, feet planted in silt, tongue tongue, arugala, black and white, an "indian" tooth, mica, a dachshund wetting my uncle's shoes, learning hebrew marshmellow swimming confusedly the babel and echo of the crowded afternoon. My beginning and end, ending. Summer mornings beneath a bridge sunning in the Indiana sun. Coffee and bacon, the taste of, at home, raising my eyes from this page looking straight ahead. When do things happen, I mean in the line. The feat to read what I have written. To decision to begin and end picked-up and dropped, then picked-up and dropped again. There are so many amazing things. In a slow running marshmellow grandmother stream headed down driveways placing the sun in the Indiana awning I wanted to tell, falling out of the top bunk bed. That comes breezing through pebbles the unseen descending corridors in a rainbow collection of rocks me to sleep. Sleep.; Indiana wanted me, but after I arrived, jells, the sweet aroma of. A man shoots his wife

with a .22 pistol below their table: in an argument at Joe's Bar. On stage we double-time Bowie's "Sufragette City." That I was born there. Falling following time. Images rinsed of meanings that appear to sharpen in the mind. Carefree like a gourd carried along with the river: current. Diverting oneself in floating, unconcerned.

, Half-Light

As if it wasn't there. Reflection of a bird flies into my head courtesy of a coffee shop. The heart measures the pressure with which I touch these keys. False sentences doesn't. Or the ink could all come off on my chin. Don't even think permanency think cool sideways descending slightly over our heads. Contend light about and inside words to intercede those too easily tanned. One and then another I mean flooded widen lines fits into the mouth. Beat a conundrum to crumbs there a spray of promise. I mean flood. The reflection of a bird across the inside left lens of my glasses. How cold beer sweats, trains whistle. I raise my eyes over these fled sometimes meaning falls slowly to think of preparing what came before and other play to assist or lines across the inside lend the felony you can't keep.; The sadness. The shadow of my head falling over these pages. And it begins again, picks up from where I thought I'd left. No longer memories of sidewalks taken. Alleyways, or drives in the luxuriant green countryside. It begins to tell its story after I fell from the top bunk bed into a road full of thorns. Each sentence. To slip into its shape with and without my assistance. Follows through the rhythm of what came before, after. Stopping to think does this mean something other than, and knowing further, descending into that nothingness, drifting of clouds as I rest my head upon one and then another. The surfaces, or lines begin to speak to each other. Just a moment ago it felt as if words were racing ahead of my pen, that I was stepping back into the sentence. Not standing apart, not visual. A slow running headed for the Ohio. Today is quieter still, the floor is at a slant. The long staircase ascending moves slowly to Green River Road. I am working without a light thinking of preparing black coffee. Resistance biting into what came before, stepping back in these pages. Stopping to assist or lines begin to take shape, carry the weight of. Otherwise, the world will be confused. Clicking them softly as I read the liens silently to myself, A tale of persons and other sentences playing with friends. At the beginning of the book I wanted to tell what the Ohio can effect. My uncle straightening my tie before Sabbath services. A meaningful sign laid on tables a slow running, or a gravel road sunning on in the Indiana sun. 'Too much noise and knowing further wishing to descend into nothingness don't even think permanency bend out and over to fall head first on my forehead and nose. Not knowing how much further, the blue windowsill extending into the coolest room of the house, to the hose held high over our heads in the backyard pool.

Clicking them softly to myself. I mean in the kind of minute perception of things. No nothing. I falls to pieces. Often these words breathe a conundrum or the ink could all come off as if it wasn't there. My chin in my hand, threads of spray about the blue plastic pool. Beads of moisture on a bottle of cold beer. Don't make promises you can't keep. I mean how the pressure with which I apply ink to paper can sometimes convince me of integrity. Trains whistle, or kids on the block. Cherry-bombs. The strain of rush-hour platforms vivid from missing stops. Interplay. Standing in a slow running stream headed for the Ohio, I wanted to tell a story. A meaningful sign laid on tables in the Indiana sun, A small child falling head first into a bramble bush and the wonder of it years later held high. These pages carry the weight of his body as I read silently to myself. I raise my eyes and look straight ahead into nothingness. Typing Green River Road, in a few moments, on green paper. The half-light spilling in from the next room. The morning seems to change everything. I count the syllables between my teeth, clicking them softly as I read the lines 3 silently to myself. How much further. Stopping to think, not stopping, I was about to say the other end falling through a sentence or line, Carrying papers down a multitude of drives the black print Summer headed for the Ohio. Print smudged on my forehead and nose. Resistance from beginning to something or someone. To place the taste of corn on your mouth, the light falling over the blue windowsill drums in your head... the aroma of syllable in the luxuriant green dawn. A kind of finality, but also a sense of growth. Green overwhelms all other colors. As I read the lines between my teeth biting into that nothingness sounds rise from bend out and over to fall head first through an unfastened screen into the branches of below. In the length of each a center of gravity, weight, pulling it in. That I step back into these pages. Asleep, cold and numb, amazement at how it happens. A fluid issuance of words lines more than they do. But after I got here, the sadness. A book of shadows and their permanency near the cities they pass. As if the world breathed quiet rustle purple in the air don't even think cool. Something flies by, but also, a sense of decay pulled walks in whoever was then nothingness and amazement it happens. Tale of steps back into persons or other sentences. Running with friends through empty classrooms playing hangman. I was about to say it short-circuited, blew away colors over the backyards of brownstones. Other lines take a step back wading in a slow running stream. And let the order be good, for otherwise the work will be confused. A book of formation, or a gravel road: sunning at noon in the Indiana sun. I didn't want the remembrance

: to intercede, but ankle light about appearances and inside deep knowing. My uncle straightening my tie before Sabbath services. A word is too easily tanned

from a meaningful sign into a mere signal. Risings of water, grape juice and cakes laid on tables.

a I Wanted To Tell A Story I think he will, always upon rising, think of the day as a road running straight through hell. In its many diversions there are, of course, pockets of heaven. And as he progressed in his day such pockets, filled with the lint and small change of heaven, became more and more important to him. If they weren't always so to others, if they couldn't share in the "wealth," so to speak, he wasn't overly bothered by it. It was enough to occasionally find himself alone in such places and at peace with his surroundings. At peace with the chair he might happen to be sitting in, the bed upon which he reclined, the plate, knife and fork on his table, the food he put into his mouth. More and more, all such simple pleasures became precious and occupied a central place in his life. He would share such times on occasion with a good friend. But as the days went on, the further he travelled down his road, into its particular pockets of bliss, the less he came to be dependent upon the presence of his friends, Not that he didn't enjoy their company, and at times identify them with his happiest moments. But after a short time, he felt their immediate presence too great, it weighed upon him so heavily he felt crushed by their attentions. When I turn my head sideways gazing at the white-blue of the sky, woods, the aroma of everything moving, hammer striking metal, slight sense of self merging with the sky nothingness—a movement of beginning to cross. All disconnected I wanted to tell a story, Indiana leaves falling before my feet, shoulderbags flung over my head. My beginning and end. My father, my uncles, my aunts, my brothers and sister, my cousins. My mother. Grandmother in bed eight years following a diabetic stroke. Even the words desert you, turn from surface to surface, before to after, from beginning to end, end to growth, from that to death. Temptation to save everything in the sentence. Other chores around the house. A cool breeze whole slaw for the pan. I mean loss from essence.

Lowdown give an swim. Stop by fabric words w wood. All the alone, old tem names o the wro cluster be, pul burning older m greater. Sandwich filled with wood. I mean in the length of the line, blue silk jacket. Weekend picnics at Cave-in-Rock. A cool breeze whole slaw for the pan. The speed of writing dripping blurring a fluid issuance of beginning, shaped alongside the colors above my head. Denser drums resound, carry the weight of the body. Then reveal evolved rumble things curly these skulls, eyes merging with the sky. Nothingness oneself in floating. Sunday mornings covered with syrup. My uncle picking up my brother, my sister, and myself. Resting my right ear upon my shoulder, unconcerned, being in the warmth of. Descending into remembrance, surface to space words grown toward death. Moaning-bark over

: the backyards of brownstones. Light over the blue windowsill in the early afternoon, Filled with pink, white, purples, brown, words woo wood. I mean woods woo word. Blue, reds, black and orange. Filled with pink, white, purples, brown., Dropping blurring letters in the speed of writing. Am I giving you the right information, I mean in the length of the line. In the backyard a wild throw flies over my uncle's head breaking the kitchen window where my mother's washing dishes. The selfblame that always comes after. Black and white, a fluid issuance of breath, it told the story to a few friends. But I didn't want the remembrance of to intercede, recapture, but to make brighter the length of the former, carry the weight into these rooms. My beginning caught up in beginning, the colors of small plastic birds floating above my head. Pennants on the walls from places I don't remember, or hadn't been to. Whatever you were trying to get away from. A blue silk jacket with tiger and dragons. Photographs of my brother beside a jeep. Ending. Ending the words unleashed, shed, therefore from whose condensation silence. The shadow of my thumb and pen, and hair curled beneath thumb-knuckle. Little soft egg. Things limits.

I think it's your fear that's stopping you. That it was your fear that stopped you. You've stopped and so you've left. It took much less time than before. Before, everything was long drawn out, all the clumsy excuses, all the clumsy signs left strewn about in secret places and knowing I'd find them. Nothing was really hidden. In the end nothing remained to hide. The discouragement I felt It took out behind your back. I mean that in a very literal sense— as though carrying a separate part of me beneath my arm as I left the apartment. Everytime I left, even for the simplest errands. I wanted to see inside you, to understand that fear. All I had were your words but they seemed so distant even as you spoke. Everything continues. That's what I'm telling you. I'm not telling you I didn't try. But you're making me say something that's not true. That can't be possible. If we could turn and find ourselves in that space now, with the added experience of our separate lives, we would not be able to fully comprehend their anguish. Their tears would be shed... Things limits. Blame that always comes of breath. Blame always comes of remembrance. Always comes. Why not admit it into what I happened. Sand stone. Marsh mellow. Marshmellow sandstone. I The possibilities pushing over my shoulders impersonates or imprisons these signs over my head. A center of gravity, weight, pulling it in. A breeze that comes sleeping through driveways, placing the papers inside screen doors. Mattel rifles with plastic bullets. The tinkling fragments of a christmas ornament falling from my aunt's tree. We were driving through green spaces, winding roads of southern Illinois. Garden of the Gods. All that's left standing at the corner of Washington and Gum. I wanted to tell a story, fresh smell of pine. A reversal of everything in the sentence. Not visible,

letting it fall slowly, marshmellow sandstone. 'Travelling over the surface of the lake at such speeds my face felt flattened against my skull. Eyes slip, mouth stretches ear to ear. My cousin shooting turtles in the White River, hunting squirrel. I mean loss in the length of the line. To build a difference between these very rare bodies. Cymbals to sand to floor-tom, bass drum to bowed hi-hats. Whatever you were trying.

enchanted walked about, sucked, cows morning time their did her summon caused, bring such, milk-bucket cause (make) In a breeze that comes sleeping through driveways, placing the paper inside screen doors, to write a story I wanted to stand apart from. Things limits. Garden of the Gods. Green spaces caught up in beginning, the colors through southern Illinois. The aroma merging with the sky. I mean as the place of starting sentences, Or lines for that matter. You know I grew up there, but after I arrived all these threads gathered might correspond to one another and persons talking. But don't rely on me. Whatever I look at, I am astonished, surprised, and I do not know what I see. I raise my eyes from this page into the fields ecstatically what I am told not to. Stop by burning, suspended in air words will tell on this cool afternoon in May.

# Charles O. Hartman

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## *Glass Enclosure*

Sky-  
light  
water  
beaded a snow moustache  
going under the haze sun say  
morning! Know it anywhere. These hands  
almost still  
the fingers so wise about moving  
like a son of a bitch  
and fold up sweet.  
Step outside  
or look twice.  
Say in the Bible  
Thy hands have made me.  
What, hey  
what can go wrong?  
Elvin got it  
Ray got it, days  
I got it double. Morning  
come to terms, flex, reflex,  
yellow light in block chords.  
No snow abides  
but an alligator kind of thing  
down corner and down right side  
a drop cut loose. The heat is on.

Where these palms have been  
no wonder the fingers fly.  
Baby I mean you. Only hard thing  
remembering to  
breathe sometime.  
Fool with it!  
Hang the note out there on the fool end and wind.  
Sky full of big bluster  
with half a brain. Full of fantasy.  
Chimneys and roofs of Paris



work of my hands flesh  
work of my hands grace  
work in my hands music  
mark on my hands grace  
musk on my hands flesh  
mask of my flesh music

The print's pushed just a little, so the white  
of this chair rail has milk's abundant brown  
to it: white through and through, as the trees' light  
clouded by muslin in the next, last room  
washes to dry saffron through the screen door  
ahead, down the numinous hall whose hardware  
(a black softened by thousands of thought[less]  
caresses) punctuates the eleven steps

tenons snugged through the back stile of the near  
and stile, mortise. Crewel sunflower. Pix.



il

chimneys and roofs of Chicago  
chimneys and roofs of Bangkok  
Thailand, chimneys and roofs  
New York Stockholm Rangoon chimney  
smoke over roofs across clouds  
make a species of music, Professor.  
Skylight talk a high world.  
Black bark in a bough tangle  
like a seat out there, tree palace,  
mean my drench coat, one those  
chapeaux of the très élégant sort  
and a fine cheroot.

Mesmerize my eyes.  
Say in the Bible, I cannot dig;  
to beg I am ashamed. Cloud  
hand down my card. Chair  
come here, dim sun lie down  
tiger my lap.

There is nothing  
more important than being there  
on time.

Skylight show me a far crow  
then I might think quarter-note  
or not; think crow  
got her own way to go, ashamed  
or not. We talk  
strat o sphere, we talk  
space, but still wet leaves  
for a bed. Haze blanket.

Sky light morning.  
This old man, he play five  
he jive light and half alive  
but a little coffee help.  
Good father  
I get up and water that cactus  
before it take itself too seriously.  
Anybody shake their head and snort  
hard, make a new day.

Alas he wishes to move my appointment back a week so that  
I am overcome by old uncertainty since when a thing moves  
backward \_\_in time  
it turns against  
the tide acquiring a date earlier  
than the one it had before moving  
and  
yet  
nothing moves that way and back is not  
backward and the backward movement may  
apply only to events more proximate to  
the beginning of the universe than those we ourselves  
experience so. that in general back means back from us  
and so earlier if earlier  
'later if later so that if  
our appointment were  
in the past it would  
now be still older  
while atime still  
to come or so to speak ahead of us moves farther  
ahead thus moving back just as standing in front  
of  
me;  
a horse would back  
away from a sudden  
shout BACK! though  
again if  
it faced  
forward it might instead move as \_\_it  
seemed forward which would still —\_ be  
back and though if the appointment were less  
than one week away this movement of one week  
if earlier would produce an absurdity this is of  
no \_ assistance since our meeting is decades —\_ hence

/

Haul out a pocket  
spoon full of days  
lint, this pants lint that pants lint  
half an alto reed for nail pick  
tack  
small change of Nueva York  
small change of Cuba  
change of Paris mean a change in me  
here Zora's card of the mystic touch  
and two keys  
one car one case  
one open the future one lock up the past  
Out the corner my eye  
see the finger  
reach for the switch  
again. Got to do something bout this frame.  
Skylight  
paradiddle  
say snow go rain, go on, gone now.  
None of this door with the cream face  
plus velvet manner.

Say here it is  
the day of the Lord's vengeance  
and gut wrench. Ends of branches  
call soft to me Bud, hey Bud  
how cold you think it get out here.  
Tell the world these my hands,  
hands, the world. Shaken shake.  
White key black key, seven to five  
make a kind of talk. You side  
my side, but the secret  
how every note impeccably affirmed  
with every chord  
some way, if you fool right.  
This can be written down  
by the kind of people do jigsaws  
and paste on cardboard to hang up.  
Sink,  
skylight. Sink, hot plate.  
Coffee. Sink, skylight,

(1) Every one around him, the very —\_ houses,  
trees, even the earth itself, seem drunken  
and unstable, he alone sober, till at last  
the final stage  
is reached, and  
he falls on the  
ground \_insensible. (2) The primary discomforts of  
an act of drunkenness are readily removed for the  
time  
by a  
repetition of the cause. (3)  
From this condition there is  
no hope of  
relief but  
'in enforced  
abstinence;  
any  
one  
in this condition must be regarded  
as temporarily insane; he ought to  
be placed in  
an inebriate  
asylum, till  
he regain sufficient \_ self-control \_to en-

this tune  
for the light done  
in the glass oven  
bottle brown  
gone  
golden

hot plate. Cactus. Oscar the mad  
sweet man put a match in the pocket  
and he burn all night. Stay  
on top of it.  
Sun come out say morning  
nicely for the nice man  
roundly the round man  
openly, me  
loud for the record. Stay  
on top of it, for unto every one  
which hath shall be given.  
He hath  
Donna Lee on his right hand

Either the world burning down  
or a whole night snow dance into sun,  
White writhes, night flies  
sky rise up day. Hands  
now be still.

This hallelujah room  
eight pace and a pause wide  
eight pace and a turn, pause,  
eight pace back and look out  
where the skylight cut the world  
off at the knees  
no street no houses  
nobody, only crow  
here and gone again  
like a finger on D flat  
or a dumb idea. Sky  
thinning a little like rye on ice  
or a mood indigo. Show  
through, who should it be  
here in the a.m. grow up bright  
but moon, my friend  
the white moon, my white friend  
half gutted, hey  
but rising. My man Marcel  
say she an actress

That garden shop in Broadway, Worcester, England:  
    flowering maple, lilies, mums and ferns,  
    geraniums fifty p., and through the glass  
    receding floral prints, racked seeds, assorted  
    implements, faintest of all the gray proprietor  
    —motionless as an elm empty of rooks  
    a car halted on highway, a thrown shoe  
    a statesman's bust, tobacconist's American  
    derelict, hulk, corpse. The amazing sun  
    stands still and burns. The labor of forgetting  
    overwhelms the imagination, rotting  
    the eyes on their slim stems, madder than sin,  
    stains the sidewalks, yellows the air, distills

"How (in life) can langue be sundered from parole when obviously  
this motion of my hand typing my name on a keyboard constitutes  
(in detail in time) the unique gesture of a muscular signature"

Out of the umber dark that holds his coat,  
    holds his supporting arm, their lapped faces,  
    their dun future, the room's importunate recess  
and the unhampering struggle—freed, brought out,  
his bright sleeved wrist hastens through light to find  
    the home his hand is dreaming of, the leaf  
    brown paths of her legs merging like fires. Life,  
once and once more. His arm come free, his hand  
that knows the way, still hangs in the patient light  
    like a big sparrow about to hit glass.  
    Loosed, invited, willed, bound to arrive  
    like any Pharaoh well set out, alive  
to the least excess, the hand enters the class  
of eternal things, best things kept last, too late.

|

come down front before time  
keep on her street drag  
plain jane plain as day  
not to distract the play.  
Just ascab in the blue sky  
flesh, just \_a flash in blue.  
When Princess come down here  
with the hot plate and her long tongue  
she say You a razor scar  
on the body this world.  
She got the key. Ray got it  
or Elvin too, Everybody got the key  
but not for me.

Piano chord is  
a shape of notes, D thirteen sharp eleven  
a shape of the right hand here  
a finger constellation  
gone like that. Here  
but gone, and another, and here  
again and gone. What I know  
I know here. I know time  
Elvin keep and Ray keep  
I know what time they come get me  
eleven hours ten minutes  
Princess come night say Go  
work or play or screw yourself  
to the ground I don't care  
and ten minutes after that  
got a pint in my left hand  
chaser in my right and a half hour  
to become entirely cool.

Pasty white hand  
in a stiff white sleeve  
Irving Berlin in a damn awful  
happy mood  
like turn over piece of a puzzle  
round and round with the sky  
light over this shoulder  
then over this one. Piano line

When two sounds  
are sent to the  
two ears through earphones and the  
interval between them is less than  
thirty thousandths of a second the  
listener hears them as  
simultaneous. When two  
sounds are sent to the  
two ears through \_— earphones and the interval \_ between them  
is not much more \_ than thirty thousandths of a second the  
listener hears them  
as not simultaneous  
but cannot  
tell which  
sound occurred first. A bullet  
approaching a melon must cover  
half the  
distance  
to the melon and  
then half of — the  
distance still remaining and so on. The melon is safe.

paradox signifies the  
incompleteness of all  
logical  
systems

This Medi-Craft Therapeutic Electro-Convulsive  
Unit (TM 1956) is warranted against defects in  
materials or workmanship. It is not guaranteed  
against damage or loss caused by neglect, age,  
normal wear and tear, accident, scorn, acts of  
God, outrage, alteration, or deliberate abuse.



is a little path  
up and back down, maybe again  
with a little shift and again.  
Is that what I mean  
no that  
yes that. Princess come in  
last night say How you feel I say  
I feel like I am putting together pieces  
of a puzzle got nothing but pieces  
on a table on three legs  
on a floor full of holes  
over a cesspool, how you think I feel  
but I do not say this out loud  
just tap out a tune on the heat pipe,  
smile at her right.  
Between sets  
I am telling Princess and she sing along  
This bitter yellow in the market  
and This bitter yellow in the bone  
This bitter yellow got a fine-tooth mouthpiece  
which I have none  
—got the world  
on a thin string. Side my head  
till I turn and look  
the man's hand  
after the switch  
mind him pressing it  
I mind waking up and can't remember  
he press it or not  
where that line  
go?  
Right now  
I would like a drink, crow  
I would, my skylight  
and my friend the moon, pour me out  
you fine dipper full I sing you  
asweetsong that go so fast  
not Birdcan makeit not Ray  
or any man it run down  
my right arm like ice.

# Will Alexander

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## *Stepped Leader from Lightning*

This is the most beautiful night of all,  
the lightning filled night: day, compared  
©? 2a André Breton  
O world, all is night,

Octavio Paz  
I am a bloody general  
I shoot my lightning into your very hearts  
René Depestre

### *Part I: Stepped Leader*

Exactly how the stepped leader works is not understood.  
Martin Uman, Understanding Lightning

Feasting on axolotl utopias

depths exploding depths  
suns like chunks of blazing ball point metals  
piranhas with their bellies turned inward chewing cow face vomit  
banjo bones played with lima bean mutations  
coded with mucousless star fish navels  
swelling  
erupting goats' grease on sunken thumb print tickets  
existing less than time on the other side of fire

headless dinosaurs' gravy  
dinosaurs' umbrellas  
transparent bird necks injured by flying pelican rotation  
golden bloody broaches for eyes  
tumbling nickels  
ganglionic gradations rolling from the skull as though charged with  
numerical ignorance  
leaping

yet snake perched  
slung face first from shifting salamander cycles  
brain liquidity contorted by vertical tombstone wetness  
rediscovered in empty eyeball liquors turning on hinges of frozen  
bat teeth disfigurement

ignoring the law of death  
B erecting eternal manubriums with sparks  
sternums whirling in broken Blackfoot rivers

|

shattering their embodiments like holophagous poems slashed by  
deprecated razors.  
drawing depths from flowing bobsled blood  
each moment reduced to darkened spark plug fire between bilious

membrane castles floating on abstrusity alexias before and after  
speech  
bird shells kindled in skies of inscrutable immobility gazing on  
brains of acne and jaundice  
fumes from radiator molluscs  
suspicious butterfly enigmas  
ravished hitchhikers' digits  
bums' bread  
cauliflower waffles  
gas pump sewers erotically tuned to salted rhino plankton bathing  
manikin volcanoes in a bath of green fish eggs  
elastic ocelot Asias belching handle bar dollies on rails of  
growing pitch fork fungus  
each genital libation drowning in pleasures of jump kick strangulation  
Milky Way perpendiculars soaring in springtime Nagasakis  
black  
venemous  
cruel  
encephalitic  
eating the poisonous cereals of Caligula  
joking on death buds  
caressing calamity so that it never ends  
increasing suicide stimulation  
piling insect pellets  
dripping dog meat auroras  
cleansing the mind of listless torso portfolios  
unprotected whale sperm protruding from bones  
sends formaldehyde wafers to spirals of spinning burlap roaches  
ensnared on British white ox lightning  
suns statistically hampered by comets  
catching owls' cuisine in electron hoaxes  
salted ice pack mice  
sonnet science trapped in icy wall paper ringlets  
cords tightening on the throat of a killer lounging grass choked on  
steps of growing armchair teeth  
he is Portuguese and recalling his moments as Domitian's man made  
monster  
swimming snake first

scales full of hemorrhaging oxides sweeping up sailors like spoonful midgets  
into deadly pneumonia safaris  
electron philosophies igniting tortoise candles paradoxically split  
by disruption conundrums  
lightning powder caring nothing for hanged Olympian hamstring dishevelment  
broad-skirted avocado mackerels bumbling horseradish liquid secured  
by coated fragility penumbras while standing under a tree hit by

boiling sun gut material  
full of military flashes  
killed while yelling 'fulgura frango'!;  
bones seriously damaged flying to my home on Mount San Salvatore  
galvanic buckwheat embers standing motionless in the circle of time  
the impending moment where eggs blend and colors rise  
as coitus interruptus is healed and bombshells break through padded  
ringworm boundaries  
an intelligent fortnight fortress engaging Grand Kabuki digital  
distress  
the man on the stage  
his heartbeat beating crooked  
is tempted to lounge in scimitar impropriety  
but says to himself "I'm only acting  
I'm only thinking I'm smelling his guts  
laid on the stage like a rabbit's intestines  
ice house funereal singing  
I am Danjuro  
my plays are 'aragoto'  
I put his kidneys in a bowl of scrambled maggots

: I dance

I bouy up the people  
I split the integrated shell of a turtle  
I strike sparks,  
I Kill!  
I am cloud to ground  
I am magic electrical bolt full of ghostly rainbow coronas  
making bricks cough dirt"  
temperature rising to utmost incoherence

Belgian handball tunics injured by splinters of glass from the desert  
lips of palm tree branches humming songs of sightless mushroom bridges  
magically listening to tigers' smoke in orbit  
the moon shatters over a metropolis of greenery with ink dripping  
from panda bear livers staining the pompous insensitive pates of  
gorged frog bellied right winged redeemers  
these men  
with kneecaps of carpet  
full of luxurious bedtime incest  
mouths heaping with eggshells and butter  
grabbing at window washers' money  
displaying corpse talent

are nourished as boys by Pope's cream dripping from his penis of vapid  
helium ulceration

these men

— are dogs

didactically spitting sulfurous syllabic suberization into their veins

I make them suffer

their eyes become suborbital and are disintegrated like calamitous  
retrograde lemons shot by arrows of sunlight  
cancelled  
pitted brown marrow lifted from the brain  
dissolved as though it were dashboard logistics pounding placards on  
a missing person's doorstep  
red and white erasures whistling from hideaway accordians  
legs stolen  
arms pitted  
ghosts run away from the stepped leader stroke  
traveling from the spark of light  
deep white crow manipulations  
tattooed crossways inside of bloodshot dreaming  
beer bound  
brass burned  
stumbling cross eyed like a typewriter pretzel from a tarnished  
sedan  
her dress in the air  
stab wounds on her throat  
you struggle to the sycamore sinking in wingless blood  
the sky  
greyish newspaper color  
plagued by her murder  
by your own inherent freedom  
the power falling 50 yards a measure  
hitting you in the pituitary  
waking asteroid belts in your system  
molecule tumescence uplifted  
as the star belts shine in your fluvial saliva of midnight  
hail coated insight  
brackish celestial electrodes  
stammering  
crisscrossed  
bomb sided  
moonless stroke infliction  
turning heartbeat arrhythmia to triumph  
muscles sprung loose from contortion  
he stands like an angel with glowing chartreuse incisions  
bursting through the globe of the universe into and beyond the  
nonsensical  
into dotted line exposure  
to lick the blood of time  
to suck on macaw gizzards  
fresh throated  
free



unbound oblivion

the infinitesimal domain of dead man's dominion is destroyed and expanded

made to burn in the fire of the logos

turn soot

then green  
then ambrosia  
dropping lung baggage  
full of owl kidney interiors  
kneecap interiors

moving as mindless bug bellies  
insuperable aristocracy boiling in the voice prints  
kingdoms of field mice waylaid by calcium deposits  
imbibing ice  
needles  
frog hair  
this night  
the veins obsessed with radar equipment  
shoulder blade Danubes  
measured by rickets  
electric drawbridge falling  
ions in a millionth of a second  
river of tumbling mirrors  
phantom delivery of nothingness

E burst of limitless blue oxygen feeders planting lumps of radar ice  
on the skin  
which steams in the soul  
nitrogen signatures  
red blue lines of burning  
fluidic volcanoes  
vertical moth of continuous spectra  
compound cannibal collisions  
throat of eyes dipped in a rainbow  
Telescopium  
Reticulum  
Eridanus  
flashing symbolical ophthalmology ideals of whirring golden pigs shot  
with golden arrows  
merged beyond the sun door

striking the jawbones with boards  
making the blood shrink to cucumber lactose  
eyeballs drenched in mercury watching some ancient variety montage  
focused backward in wheel time on a Roman stage of torture  
a temperature of claws branded on the belly of a fish with human fore-  
skin sticking from its pockets  
screaming from the root of the being  
filled up with nerve sauce  
lymphatic ozone bubbling filling bones in the head  
and one gets exhausted from the red material of biographical poisoning

of the petty individual support swelling for the unconquerable  
: for the fortuitous dimension of a billion threaded suns on a needle  
garments of golden mustard seed expansion  
worn like a monosyllabic sun that's exploding

hitting six trillion targets a billion 50 parsecs away

which makes guts' vapor spin round and break into turpentine vibrations  
dreaming in dark Uranian rainbow valleys  
breaking through rational lucidity into the curvature of spinning  
existence  
shaped at its essence by chaos  
where the empty apparition of the egg is engendered  
struck by an airy light of wheat  
sperm eagle flying from the inner ear of space  
unformed diacritical drippings above the green wine wafers  
of the spirit  
bringing atmospheres to bull frog digestion  
frictive dispersion creation  
starlight tornadoes  
sea of green moon quakes  
unknown electro-magnetic coronas  
black space beacons  
umbilical solar system vomit blazing as blood music  
flights of busted stairway bottles reflecting fire  
and the darkness of fire in the center of the compass  
revived from being wounded by solar concentrations  
honed by fruitless abortion polemics  
the tongue drawn backward firing aspirin seltzers to peptic  
omegas  
the belly of broken walnut laughter tumbling from dispassionate  
iron braziers  
bouncing off the trampoline of the void  
whistling gooseneck thorns and barley  
hitting dead spots and making them sing  
everything is singing  
like giant ground sloths lassoed by American camels  
both singing into shell shocked butterfly dawns  
spotted black ivy green dawns  
purplish Minotaur dawns  
reddish amputated dawns  
dawns of dampened turpentine innards  
dead nickel dawns  
dragon skin dawns  
dawns of flaming igloo hatchets  
looming in the eyes of salted lightning strangulation  
bone plows  
ice pack sewers  
all gasping for the spark that pauses on commas  
for ostrich cradles  
for death chant belching

for the radio dials of bell ringers' venom  
his name  
Giuseppe Portano  
brain plates tied by flame throwers' vapor

and truth is that he rings the bell to break the lightning  
to stop the spark  
to break disruption cultivation  
he is archetypal  
he is the many headed fool who pops up from nature  
prophetically dreaming robot societies in which he dips his X-ray  
tablets in uranium water  
at the flipping of a switch which goes off in his buttocks  
which is flipped by the voice N 00 17  
which Portano obeys like a puppy  
a puppy with tail and turkey wings  
a puppy with eyes spinning and legs glued to computer constellations  
a puppy with its tongue being stung in a salamander's garden  
a puppy who sleeps knee deep in motorized embryonics  
a presidential puppy  
a school board puppy  
a voter's league puppy  
a pay your bills on time puppy  
a puppy that puts up and shuts up  
a blue lice puppy that suffers  
: this puppy Portano is the puppy of the populace imprisoned in popular  
piss pots at moonrise  
dust water  
garbage water  
screaming feminine yo yo mutations  
outward seething of veins  
blinded leprosy concoction  
a needle of stars sown on crossed up bedpan hammocks  
obscured by rivers bending on mirrors  
cracked in salaciousness of attics  
windows lighted in drunken doll arenas  
smoking under pabulum restraint  
merciless diecasters' ointments  
club footed  
shell skinned  
bank divided  
closed down in Cuba without the hardness of history  
blown from wing cords  
stretched inside the boundaries of mastodon volumes floating on  
equations  
Sarasota dishwasher's gun liquid spurted by the insides of bricks  
cowed by themes of extraterrestrial oblivion  
screwed  
on the mime's shoulders as he speaks of sundial supremacy  
quoted by 18 baseless scholars asking for gold capped bracelets  
to be shipped to penguins by unborn leaders of Peru

legendary Peru

Inca Peru

: mail fraud lesions asking for time to freeze massacre footage of  
priceless cestus commercials

}

|

played for the emperor lounging like an epicure in his daily bath  
of blood  
human blood  
pig's blood  
insect's blood  
blended to get the fire from frozen cabin heating manuals  
insisting that lids of fingers not go to sleep  
but write on slabs of iron while the eyes are snapping shut in  
inner green Asias  
and the mind swims  
and the skull starts flying  
and in Tokyo the masters of samurai experience are making cool petroleum mistakes  
while listening to an orchestra shot down with buttons  
turquoise sturgeon winging its way through the air  
afflicted with envious doses of blind man's eternity  
the repetition of stomach squares cornered by skin  
then ripped in half by sky fire  
by shark teeth leaping from the ending of endings  
seizer of vertical monads tested theatrically in midday floating  
on its limited liminality  
immediately aborted for the reds of the eye sucking its sweat from a  
vagina of sumptuous rubies on fire  
again fire  
again the re-repeating of symbols

split-second whirlings of being  
mastered and destroyed by mastery  
until destroyed  
leaving a double quilt of pigeons in the nostrils  
crude oil bettors  
ascetic green rock climbing of peephole misery  
obscured by headaches  
dissolved by fluidic hormone calculation unsupported by nerve cell  
factories  
forgotten penny-ante wafers  
all contests smashed by hungry murderer's situation  
cancerous lethargic gyrating principles  
idealistic atomic sensation in which skulls numerically speak  
idly pouncing on conquest powders  
moving in a cloud of blue cinema vapors  
labored insonority diving into lavatory semen  
nevertheless



trends  
obstacles  
hitting the sap of cellular rhinos wasting in log jams  
boat cow crow something  
to catch electrodes melting down  
to catch words winding through solitude  
burning in ranch house hallucinations  
riding on stopped up bulls' bread reducing itself to a mare

an adulteress letting her steam invade an emptiness tantra  
falling  
hitting a bear on its mouthpiece  
hitting the nose of the air  
striking bones in the hands struck down on the larynx  
one does not know when the earth is strangled by power  
brought to the ground by blood pressure thumbs strapped to slivers  
of smoking dynamite testimony

: Notes

Stepped Leader — 'Lighting flash between cloud and ground... begins with visually

undetected downward moving traveling spark.' — Martin Uman,  
Understanding Lightni

holophagous — holo (whole) + phagous (combining form; it means to eat or destroy)

Fulgura frango — inscription on medieval church bells; it means, I break the lightning

Mount San Salvatore — mountain near Lugano, Switzerland, where lightning is measured and studied

Danjuro/aragoto — "... Ichikawa Danjuro presented heroic plays called 'aragoto' (depicting Herculean warriors who punish diabolical samurai) to the immense delight of the people who hated the overbearing samurai."  
— Chiaki Yoshida, Birth of Kabuki

## D. E. Steward

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### *five months from Chroma*

#### **Noviembre**

STONE BARNS OF southeastern Pennsylvania

Lombardy poplar pillar of cliddering yellow leaves posted at orchard edge, a vineyard, the valley fall away through a

Piedmont foliage canopy, the valley fall

The Brandywine

A gray-green hunting spider the size of this “o” leaps sideward from my hand on a quick line, take it to the windowsill papyrus forest losing it a couple of times on the way

Microscale, macroworld

Eighty-five and with insurance trouble, he dented her car, wanted to pay cash, the estimate was exorbitant. She decided not to have it done

She has driven only on the Nile Valley flat so here she lugs up hills innocent of downshifting

We find there is an Egyptian restaurant in Jersey City and one on Atlantic Avenue in Brooklyn, the only ones anywhere nearby. She allows that Egyptian cuisine is unexceptional and that Egyptians do not travel well

The retired general visits from Cairo, soft sun hat and boundless civility, lean and charged, the same face and persona as the Old Kingdom seated scribe from Saqqara in the Louvre

Five thousand years of high civilization, and Egypt remains, presence a matter of historical record and of settled lives

Sunsets, sunrise, dust blowing, the high sky of the flat to flattening to even flatter Nile

Alexandria's libraries were destroyed in part during Caesar's invasion, more under Aurelian still more in the razing of pagan temples and structures under Theodosius

Aureolin is cobalt yellow

Siliceous Wyeth winter Americana

Triumphantly didactic, the main theme of Tchaikovsky's

Fifth rushes back, back, as to an evening somewhere where the floors are varnished, the players' chairs squeak, black wool suiting, starch, gaslight

The fifty-mile run out of the Park down to Cody, Wapiti

Valley, Shoshone N.F., the Absarokas, Franks 13,140, Mt.  
Crosby 12,435, Dead Indian 12,216. The east gate closed today for the winter  
The high plains snow begins, the Rocky Mountain snow  
G. finishing in Long Beach before taking time off on the  
Res. E. pruning his orchard. H. Standing in the high rye grass below her barn,  
M. on the Shasta-Trinity, P. about to drive to Iowa

Comes in fast and brakes his muscle car, gets out, crunches over to the pay  
phone like he owned the afternoon, can't find his wallet, hurries back to his car,  
still can't find his wallet, drives away thoughtfully

Head honker

A flat forty on the bicycle today, dry leaves, buttermilk sky, soft yellow sun  
Asphalt bonded to asphalt is one infinity

Ten years of literacy lost in the Cultural Revolution, most of a whole  
generation's schooling null and void

The quixotic confidence of autodidactics sprouting through their insecurity, their  
earnest faith in intellect and quick-to-turn apostate cast

Pompeian yellow is a moderate orange yellow, redder and not as strong as  
yellow ocher, duller than deep chrome yellow

Mediterranean woods of pine and olive

Olive trees that live a thousand years and see twenty generations of pines,  
whole epochs of erosion, the villages around them come and go

Take the third shift of a straight-through reading of Gravity's Rainbow, eleven  
pages of V-2s and the cemetery record of New England

Deferential to Pynchon's enormous awareness, the bravery of his imagination

To know something, read it out loud

Foliage moon down through tulip poplar sycamore bone branch oak brown, it is  
persimmon orange, Persian melon or cantaloupe, flattening

Vacherin, a winter cheese of Savoy and the Valais, the cedar strip and tawny  
rind almost the color of the persimmon moon, the ripe ivory center

Hawaiian manifestation and not symbol, an island is the corporeity of a god  
rather than symbol. Baraka is involved The crucial personal trait is awe and  
wonderment at the world, the most telling attitude of all

A sky long ago over Egypt

Awe and frankness over the relentless psychological concentration of darkness,  
silence and enigma

Imagine ships from Canton and Guayaquil

Think of gamboge, of golden pheasant, of marigold, of eau de Javel green

La Baranca de Cobre, the Urique River in Chihuahua, deeper than the Grand  
Canyon of the Colorado, great voids In very high mountains the blue of the sky

begins noticeably to turn dark blue that in space eventually becomes black

In skylands, of which there are almost none in northeastern North America, you see the edge and not behind, not what it is like on the back of it

Ocher mud wall decorated with densely and regularly spaced white finger dots, much as those kraals in the northern Transvaal, but now and then among the white is a red dot. And as we are sleeping under the full moon, long after midnight with it passed into the western sky, people playing pan flutes cross the suspension bridge below

Between la Nevada de Ancohuma and Lake Titicaca, into the ancient traces of the guanacos, the vicufias, whichever wild ancestors alpacas had in that part of Bolivia, the alpacas have worn ground trails across the Altiplano's bare rock shields

Snow flurries at noon, people here from the tropics and subtropics seeing it for the first time gape in wonderment Professed concern for East Africa parodied by her wearing ivory and an elephant hair bracelet, by having a zebra hide on her wall, an elephant-foot umbrella stand in the hall

Varese's "Density 21.5," written to inaugurate Georges Barrere's platinum flute, platinum's specific gravity is 21.5

The Franco-American flute, the tradition, unfeigned early-century clarity

Wallingford Riegger's "Suite For Flute Alone," also for Barrere

Spanish yellow silk rosettes on the bridles of the Guardia detachment's horses by the tunnel of the plaza de toros de Puerto de Santa Maria

Patent leather bull-necked Guardias

Valle de los Caidos

Longer ago since I lived in Spain than it was from then back to the Civil War

Starvation in Provincia de Malaga, Franco's vengeance on Rojo Malaga

Crow black silk ribbon rosettes on the bridles of the Guardia's horses at Semana Santa de Malaga

Escarapela, escarpelo

Rowels, cavalry spurs, sputtering firework pinwheels, brass and cornets, the Veterano Osborne hillside toro silhouettes, skyland

And olivesheen, the dark grayish yellow that is greener and stronger than California green, and greener, less strong, slightly darker than honey or yellowstone

Metepe, being the traditional vessel of the Swahili traders, originally a square sail of palm frond matting that in the later eras became a lateen sail, hull of teak planks, drilled, lashed with coir

Now and then one would work by in the light air, moving as slowly as history itself, then back past Tanga toward Dar-es-Salaam in the night, a single kerosene

lantern astern. The yellow of those lanterns in the breezy balmy tropic nights

‘Tanga is the word for sail in Swahili

Bush baby yelps and shrieks as they crossed from the coco- Raye fe fa materi rsh  
age ae a mit crabs big as coconuts scurrying across the lawn, dome-back rattle tail-  
drag slow searching pangolins

The Great Swahili Coast

The Horn, Somalia, Eritrea, Tigre, Gondar, Wallo, Shoa, Sidamo, Mendebo,  
Harar

Old ivory, a grayish yellow duller and slightly greener than chamois, slightly  
redder and stronger than crash, and darker and very slightly greener than flax

The stages of the Chinese Revolution, like the eras of a human life, tumult  
endured by a billion people somewhat as we each acquiesce in the anxiousness of  
our own

Chaos

Wall posters

“Be brave in science but be cautious in politics”

Young people to the countryside

“You cannot eat fish together with bear”

Bow-wow, a Japanese rock band in London

Galley oars were made of beech

Waking with ideas as frieze-like ceramic plaques, not able to see around the  
sides of them or behind, aging into death, numbing of awareness, a pangolin  
across the lawn leaving all manner of comprehension in passing

She sees her life as utility, all that ego but she sees her life as utility

Wombat scat is cube-shaped

National school-bus chrome, a variable color averaging a vivid orange yellow  
redder, lighter, and stronger than bright marigold

“We work with high voltages, we work with radioactivity, we lift sharp objects  
that are heavy, and climb rickety towers when we do our experiments, we wear  
steel-toed shoes”

Blue murals in the stairwell of the Christopher Street PATH Station

AIDS-devastated residents walk by like officers in a war Depilous man with a  
billed leather hat, leather singlet, yellow goggles

Murray Hill, Gramercy Park, Kips Bay

Carp cleaved head to tail, each half lies there, copious blood and anatomical  
detail, in one half the heart still beats, in the other a cutaway of the jaws and gills  
gasp in concert

“Anyone who thinks is sending signals to Satan”

There is no word for privacy in demotic

“Ghosts yellowed by time”

Eastern Mediterranean poetry hunts back nearly to the beginning, successive languages, recurrent images Mother poems

The Mediterranean, two thousand, three hundred miles long

Mother sun, sister moon

Cliché becomes trusted vision, trusted vision truth, poetry is always that old

‘Tears fall, suns shine, rain drips, gardens are inside, we are outside

Ocean sea, sea and ocean

Mikhail Bulgakov, The Heart of a Dog and Black Snow The urgency of Carlos Fuentes’ voice chisels on the unknowable American bole Seminal Tang Dynasty axiom from Tu Fu about traveling ten thousand miles and reading ten thousand books: Of Mice and Men, Waiting for Godot

Seven Days Darkness [Gunnarsson], / a Peste Gunnarsson’s hometown on the south coast has a far role hot house

By a factor of nearly two, more books published per capita in Iceland than any other country

Nielsen, Sibelius

Nielsen’s Wind Quintet, op. 43, written after listening friends playing Mozart, crackling shards, Danish transparency

The clear days of the Piedmont after leaf fall, graceful a processional blue hills

Mats of ground-hugging plants develop before frost, the jade green of chickweed, cranesbill, henbit, shepherd’s purse, winter cress

Enormous gray-down chest of a female red-tailed hawk rests, having hunted to sunset, live patch of absolute other texture in the dead grass twig and leafmat frost mottled brown

Lowering sun through the fine arched and trailing expressive lines of briar cane makes bright wineberry red isolate: in November air’s vitreosity

Kestrels dip and go, their amazing blue-gray white black falcon heads, rusty female plumage dappled in black, the males’ blue-gray wings

Snowshoe is Indian yellow

One in four Africans is Nigerian

I am in the theater in the mountains at Segesta, it is after sunset glassy lavender light and in that time. The masks are looking out directly at me in the audience of twelve thousand and when they speak I understand everything their alliterative Greek is mine

Of grief, of rage, the ash gray, the open mouths, the existential secrecy intrinsic to Greek drama Bloodbound to bloodkin, the bedbound become love’s shepherd to the end miles

, poetry de, walls it travel- | books a fumaer capita ening to sh transceful air,  
rost, the epherd's hawk at bsolutely rost melt g expresed isolate ite black lack, the t  
is afterhe masks of twenty lovestone

With three temples and an Acropolis, 6th and 5th Centuries Bc, Sicily is even  
more Greek at Selinunte than at the gorges of Segesta

From Selinunte you readily see Tunisia

'Temples that were polychrome, rich reds, levels of unearthly blues, and the  
yellows

They would paint the cut stone, an entablature panel, a fluting, one pantile on a  
ridgepole, then stand back and eye the job proudly like any house painter or  
billboard man

Closing with Chopin's Ballade in F Minor, op. 52, her piano goldened the  
evening

A Davidovsky piece for piano and electronic sounds from 1970, a skirmish  
between piano and speaker, shows all of its seventeen years. Always new times in  
this late-century, always new times

The more mediocre the performer, the more complicated the ritual and gear.  
Setting pitch a lengthy chore, her linen wrist towel, the constant checking of the  
middle joint of her flute, her immodest fussiness, bunching her velvet skirt  
distractedly to wipe a damp hand

The artist's studio lalpage

Big, aging jazzman, stocking cap and lumpish features, as he blows in his sad  
ecstasy his eyes plead as though to transfer failure

In the pedestrian tunnel from the Haymarket to the North End

The State House dome

The wonder of Betty Carter's voice

Her Shanghai Chinese, her Mandarin mixed with English nouns bubbling like  
smooth Franglais

Connecticut roads

He holds out his hand greeting me from twenty-seven years ago and we talk  
easily, but the day's contingencies intrude almost immediately

Shanghai, Cairo, Paris, London, Quito, Kyoto, Rome

The profound impossibility of stopping long enough to understand

Diciembre es IGNORANCE IN WAR: the amoebic dysentery, the loaded  
weapons, the clap, the foolish assertiveness of adolescent boys

The Welser Concession, 1528 into the 1540s, their sense of desperation in failure  
to find an El Dorado in Venezuela, Ambrosio Alfinger, Nikolaus Federmann, et al.,  
butchery and rapine, ferocious enslavement of Indians encountered, another  
German atrocity event



A slaving coast still stinks of it Distant tropical roads across Faleén

Within a morning hour outside Chichirivichi: doublestriped thick-knee, crested caracara, southern lapwing, red-breasted blackbird, tropical mockingbird, American flamingo, yellow-headed caracara, ruddy ground-dove, saffron finch, neotropic cormorant, magnificent frigatebird

Metro Sabana Grande on the axis of Caracas; La Gran Sabana far off to the south at the Brazilian border

With no tools but with practice, two minutes from the ground fall of a green coconut to drinking the milk before peeling out the meat

Pro-Patria, Perez BonaLpe, PLaza Sucre, Micuet A. Caro, Acua Satup, Cato AMariLio, Caprro.io, Fuer- ZAS ARMADAS, Pargue Carasoso, Bettas Artes, COTEGIO DE INGENIEROS, PLAZA VENEZUELA, SABANA GRANDE, Cuacarro, Campo ALecre, CHACAO, ALTAMIRA, PARQUE pet Este, Dos Caminos, Los Cortyos, La CaLiornia, Perare, Paco Verpe, La Quesrapira, ARTIGAS, SAN Martin, Capucinos, Sicencio, BARALT, SAN AUGUSTIN, Ex Conpe, PantHeon, Roca Tarpeya, Los Rosaces, Los Cxacuaramos, SANTA Monica, La BANDERA, EL VALLE

Espafiola, huge from 37,000 feet, the mountains of Haiti hulking long and high. Santo Domingo's river's muddy fan at the oldest still-inhabited settlement in all the Americas, a quarter of a million now, from thirty-seven thousand feet looks brown and poor

Debt repudiation allows the poor countries to go on, may well be activated soon now, cloaked, to allow the US to escape its own

McCarthy claims to peg her life on historical events, further, she has not fallen off the right side of the table in late career. Both most unusual in American writers

Orchestre de la Suisse Romande: Debussy, Dukas, Roussel, and then even Horacio Gutierrez's interpretation of a Mozart piano concerto sounded French

Paul Dukas and Albert Roussel died two years apart, Roussel in the Royan the Germans demolished seven years later

Bay is a moderate brown, also called Malabar, mummy brown, Trotteur tan, deeper and slightly redder than auburn, redder, stronger, and slighter darker than chestnut brown, lighter, stronger, and very slightly redder than tobacco, and darker and slightly yellower than toast brown

Late in 1905, the Germans suppressed the Maji-Maji Rebellion in Tanganyika by executing the eldest son of every family in a region near Madaba and killed perhaps 100,000 Africans. Crops and villages were burned, tens of thousands more people starved

Magnificent frigatebirds in profusion on the eastern coast of Falcén

I know exactly how Sandoz AG operates, exactly, I know the smell of those framed crib chemical storage sheds and barns, the gray painted way the cans and shelves are or- Pi ie saat along the Rhine they poisoned, ex-

Cachou de Laval is a direct dark brown dye for cotton obtained by heating organic materials such as sawdust or bran with sulfur and sodium sulfide

US politicians all think of themselves as future Presidents ublelove, gate-  
1 the efore

LA. UER- SOL- NDE, (QUE NIA, SAN laiti iddy rerihouyusofa imy aunut

She washes her hair every two days year in, year out

He smokes cigarettes defiantly but as though his life depended on it

Pairs of mild, skinny men with brush mustaches, glasses, coats and ties, quizzically amused droll air

“Writers are absolutely alone” (Blais)

Nelson Mandela visited in prison by a Barbadian politician, described as knowing exactly what is going on and as being “absolutely on the beam”

Her realism and happy voice cut through everything, a base line of awareness

Smokers strung out behind, jealous of all who have beaten the habit

Acorn is a grayish yellowish brown darker than deer and slightly yellower and lighter than olive wood. It is also led meadowlark

The giant friendliness of big young dogs

Sleet to rain to sleet to snow

Unimaginable that other countries could ever raise anorexia to a significant national problem

Monkey skin is a light reddish brown, redder, lighter, slightly stronger than copper tan, redder, duller than peach tan, and lighter than peach bisque

The clean fervor of large gatherings of women, excitement as for the arrival of some promised thing

La Rochelle returns to mind more often now than any city except Leningrad

Professor poets enjoy the sound of their own voices even more than most poets

An irritating voice, its arrogance, its pompous inflections, its volume, its nervousness, it fills the room with prosaic chaos

Gaia implies a semiotic level of equilibrium

Blithe optimism about bearing children, instinctive on a planet that until this era has needed populating. Past epochs of young couples looked out to empty horizons. In Messenia 6000 years ago, one person for every ten square kilometers, 2500 years later two hundred people per single square kilometer

In footage from her first shuttle flight Judith Resnick looks extremely sexual with her hair lifted in weightlessness Surveying my stiff student totems in the Whitney's permanent collection

In Sergeant's watercolor, 'Hospital Tent, 1918," the color of the blankets, strawberry sard tucked tight, the wounded resting on their cots in sunlight flooding through dense canvas shadows, a corner of that gargantuan war

Blush, also called Josephine, is a light brown stronger, slightly redder and darker than alean, and redder and lighter than cork or French beige

Genteel literati are Confucians in the way that Confucians encouraged only knowledge of generalities Ogres, devils, demons, bogies, elves, wights, goblins, vampires, imps, gnomes, lob, kobolds, kelpies hags, fiends, ghouls

A ninja was a secret agent of a shogun who dressed with hood, completely in black, had special skills

Anatoly Marchenko just died of "heart failure" in prison: When Soviet dissidents die young it is often of a bleed ulcer, untreated in prison or camp, all the bad food, perpetual fear and anxiousness

The method of Soviet interrogation is simply to continue nonstop until they have what they want

Marchenko's wife, Larisa Bogoraz, exiled in 1968 for protesting the end of the Prague Spring, met him in Chus between Kansk and Bratsk. Chuskiy is on the Chu which spills into the Taseyeva, which empties into Angara, which joins the Yenisey, a river longer than the Mississippi, the Volga, or the Orinoco, but still only the fifth largest Siberian river

Marchenko lived for a while in Tarusa, south of Moscow and closer than the Loire is to Paris. The house had a basement in which his Moscow samizdat friends slept when they visited

No more roundhouses with steam locomotives gone, the diesel and electric are two-headed

Witchwood is precisely the color of marron glacé

Of the Helsinki Watch, Anatoly Scharansky and Yuri Zhukov have made it out and Anatoly Marchenko is the first Gandhian techniques simply are not germane to the Soviet circumstance. The last time they were tried, dozens of people lay down and the authorities simply killed the tanks were driven over them

Marchenko was so honest that he never masked anything he said or did. Now his wife will leave, live an exile's life in the US, or in Paris where Russians attack one another every which way short of force of arms

Handke's hidden nation

Cutting hotline with Chiquita Banana stickers on their hardhats and joy in our boundless energy and expertise we charged those canyon steep brush fires

The Chilao Hotshots and the whining speed of our bright green Chevy crewtrucks, as though they too were much alive

This university orchestra's energetic tuning distinctly calls the first of the fourth movement of Beethoven: Ninth... he must have used that accidental woodwind theme like found poetry

The "exotic" in Mahler's Fourth sounds as though he had been reading Karl May's thumping Winnetou or Lin Biao nach Stambul. The longest movement in nineteenth century symphonic music

Russians killed by the tens of thousands in Afghanistan 10 years now

Brown stone is exactly the color coconut, and bison is a grayish yellowish brown, stronger and slightly yellow and lighter than seal, a bit redder and lighter than sea brown, and very slightly yellower and paler than lama. Coconuts are wondrous objects, husks and all of life in - another incidentally reedwind that he had 19th century lantern sepia 1 lama

Drained of milk through a puncture in one of the eyes and put in a hot oven for a half an hour, coconuts part their shells to be opened like prying a sticking door

Just as some African languages have dozens of enumerations for the color of cows and Russian has profoundly distinct ways of describing snow, we must have had the exact color of animals in our working vocabularies from the horse trading and cattle markets of the past

Lewis Mumford was maybe the last to attempt converse with all knowledge

Blocky young matrons with selfish faces, full furs and death-before-dishonor consumerism about them

Many small-press people, like radio hams, come home at night and tune in

"And nineteenth-century industrial culture had begun to erase the possibilities of Whitman's good nature. Slow frenzy rage, not charming insouciance, was to be the standard American state of mind" (Davenport)

Vassar tan is a moderate to strong brown redder and a bit lighter than oak, lighter than Arabian brown, and redder and slightly lighter than Sudan brown

Sense of diapason is what we retain for so long on hearing organ music

Grand pipe organs, rather than brass and drums, would make the anthem of any totalitarian society that endured beyond a singular leader or two

"25th Reunion Album" photographs with no captions, only two faces are readily familiar, one is a celebrity and the other's name fails to come to mind

The road to Kyoto begins in a gray dawn, the car pulls away matter-of-factly

The colors of animals!

People sailing westward from California find Hawaii easily by following the contrails

The frightening, faint, dry ancient smell of fern lies in a timeless calm. Ferns were here in our reptilian pasts, ferns and pines

The motion of air sets the character of most places, as in the Western Cape where wind is everything

In rooms with windows never opened and doors pe l above perfectly quiet floors the air moves almost not at

In the way that Germanic Europeans would wish to channel all their streams and rivers with weirs and concrete, so would they be most comfortable blocking the flow of air through their towns. Switzerland has that stillness about it

The boundlessness of the locales of imagination when the New World was still fresh and all that was known of far Asia was what Marco Polo had told. Think of all the room for imagination people used to have!

But ignorance knows no latitudes at all

Lake Baikal is nearly four hundred miles long, more than a mile deep

A universe of temblors and soggy frost heave sinkings, glacially truncated hills and ridges, scree, moraine, stark granite outcroppings with fir needles in the crevices, bare plateaus that superintend the lakes, ranges that overawe the rivers draining toward Arctic Ocean ice

Lost dolmens in the juniper thickets, larch needles golden over everything, crumbled fire rings of Turkic wanderers and of the Mongol tribes migrated eastward to start to populate another continent, closed forests, open arctic hay meadows, bogs where shallow lakes will reappear after some future glacier routs them to bedrock again, mountain ranges leading synclined marbled for deep distance from one place to nowhere, valleys, widening alluvial valleys, narrow glacial valleys, always great distance valleys and long perspective

After all of North America and the Pacific, waiting for three hours to fly from Narita to Osaka

And in Venezuela the oriole blackbirds slash the perpetually dense green with their presence on the planet

Is it possible that we, now, know too much about the world, that we suffocate in awareness of it?

She moves around the house with no false steps, no indecision at all

And the hours accrue, the hours of it accrue

"The night is lambent; it is wholly beautiful" (Notes from a Bottle Found on the Beach at Carmel)

The sexuality of half the high-level physicists I watch is impersonal,, probably matching that of many CEOs and generals

'Toast is a light brown yellower and deeper than blush and stronger and slightly darker than cork

Boyhood high piss are aging to slow wait and dribble, hanging like an old bull's pizzle

When I lived on Hydra, it felt five hundred miles away from Athens and Piraeus  
yet it is less than fifty

In Como, to the Ristorante i] Fiorino for risoto nero Inkfish, cuttlefish, octopus,  
squid

Como left derelict by the Black Death in 1347, people died by the thousands  
before the cathedral, on the same smoothed yellow stones

Moscow, Warsaw, Prague, Basel, and Madrid lie in a straight line running nearly  
due southwest

Cogent detail, get it all down exactly so as to lose as little as possible

The carrot farms in Holtville, built by Japanese farmers, were auctioned to other  
Americans when most North American Japanese, but for those in Hawaii, were  
interned and their property confiscated

Her tenderness and concern for others comes as naturally to her as her intense  
intelligence

The way to Bangkok begins in brilliant but low afternoon sun

In the Kunstmuseum Basel I watched a young man in black mount the carpet of  
Walter De Maria's "Suicide" and stand staring against the blank of it as though  
already committed to the act. I tried to talk him down but he was impatient with  
my German

And downstairs was the great peace of Konrad Witz Masaccio, van Eyck, Piero,  
Witz, fundamental masters in space, color perspective, trompe l'oeil ability to  
render clothes, l, wood

An unsettling number of homegrown fascists, living in congeniality with nearly  
everyone else, inhabit the American West

European and American artists and intellectuals of tolerant persuasion readily  
assume a beatifically Chinese look in old age, Henry Miller, Simone de Beauvoir,  
George Kennen, Jorge Luis Borges, Claude Simon

Is it that the Han is the archetypical consciousness toward which we tend?

Chichiriviche. Sea level, eastern Falcén, on Caribbean coast, 57 km NNW of  
Puerto Cabello, Parque Nacional

Morrocoy The saturated soil of the northeastern states winter with water lying  
in the farmland ruts and the low spots in the fields and woods

Distrito Federal, Miranda, Aragua, Carabobo, Yaracuy. La Guaira, Macuto, Los  
Teques, Maracay, Valencia, Morén

As Greeks use lemons, Venezuelans use limes

The merest cusp on the northernmost edge of that vast and bulging land mass

Migrant birds coming up on the Venezuelan cordilleras from Caribbean  
crossings and seeing them in ultraviolet! And the ultra sounds, first the wind



across the peaks, and then inland, on the way to the Orinoco, the breakers  
thumping the coast miles behind

We are deaf, blind, dumb, oblivious

People arriving at Newark Airport in clear weather and not looking over at the  
Manhattan skyline

Most of us will die in plasterboard and formica warninglight-monitored cubicles  
in commercial nursing homes. No it is no joke at all to imagine where and how we  
will pass our last days

Flung bodily onto a rickety, narrow platform perched on the long clack-sliding  
slippery shale scree face of all that past, on our hands and knees looking over the  
edge of what we balance carefully upon, peering out and further down toward  
what may come, trying to estimate what awaits with the quick rush, the teetering,  
tumbling loss. The complicated, imbricated, shale slide where we dare to use seems  
to list and tilt still more, to steepen its slope in ight sun glare Bread and chocolate

Drab is a light olive brown slightly less strong than sponge, less strong and  
slightly redder than average mustard tan, and darker than the color dust

Singing to themselves, skipping down paths, capering and cartwheeling  
through meadow grass, the fey, louche, eccentric, lonely, public acts of young  
people lost and gone, common acts in farms and villages that are no more

Now we live like reluctant soldiers in our consumer quarters, orderly offices  
and slotted transportation corridors, and limit our wild abandon to our bathrooms  
and darkcurtained nights

Rather than being able to evoke any clear outline or field of fine detail,  
remembering the far past when very old will be like seeing whorls of paint  
thumbed or thick-brushed on, daubs of color, swirled profusion of things

It will rain the night that I die, the loneliest rain that I can imagine

Au Suisse for moule remoulade and twenty-six and a half years ago I walked  
Brussels for two days crazed with being in Europe for the first time

Two hunters, George Segal blanks with gum boots, walk the corn stubble  
toward us in the Ardenne, their shotguns at port arms like their grandfathers'  
ghosts

Titles don't end with full stops

Perpetual motion

Creative writing students writing stories about creative writing classes in which  
creative writing teachers encourage student work about workshop situations in  
which... The Basel Swiss poisoned the whole middle Rhine!

Grosspeter

Within one Basel afternoon a woman with extreme taffy and white facial  
makeup and another with a bizarre gash of thick scarlet lipstick septum to mid-

chin cheek across to cheek. Both wore fur coats

As dogs lick the sweat from the calves of men working against the wheel or the wall in the tropics, so do they eat the shit of humans and animals fed more richly than are they

The woman with face makeup like a gâteau Saint-Honoré had a white dog on a leash, a spitz, to match her fur, and a smile of vapid glee

All green cotton and dark hair, the school girls in the elevator of the Torre del Oeste to the forty-ninth floor, the long mountain valley of Caracas, cars the size of fingernails, closer to the cumulus than to the ground below

Brueghel is as immediate as the tableau of one's own childhood

Forking hay

W. DREAM WE Live in Waterford, Loudoun County, Virginia, walking to the store, buying our eggs and milk from neighbors, tending our gardens, the school on the hill, marrying next door

Black-throated blue

Gluttony parodies inner strife

Food lust lights his face as he touches others as though to wipe, after fingering out rice, both hands. He retreats to toilets frequently to evacuate and does ten-minute errand: in order to go out to smoke secretly, his good mind blunted by anxiousness about the limits of his desk-bound life The Falls of the Potomac

Nippon Bonsai: kuro-matsu (Pinus thunbergii), goyo-matsu (Pinus parviflora), aka-matsu (Pinus densiflora), ezo-matsu (Pinus ezoensis)

€ taxly ¢ gash orking ey eat an are lonoré anda e long rails, childcounty, d milk on the yugh to cats to rrandts lunted cea glehnt), buna (Fagus crenata), icho (Ginkgo biloba) 76% of the Jonestown dead were black, 74% of the Jonestown dead were women

Crimson lake, a moderate red, yellower than cerise, yellower and slightly darker than claret, and bluer and very slightly lighter than Turkey red, also called sultan

Apple red, a vivid red, is yellower, slightly lighter and stronger than carmine, duller and slightly bluer than Castilian red, yellower and paler than madder crimson, bluer and duller than pimento, and bluer and slightly deeper than scarlet

Sultan Suleiman I (1520-1566), who doubled Ottoman territories, extending the boundaries from Iran to Burgenland, executed two of his sons as his family schemed around him

Szekesfehervar Saz scrolls, silk brocade and firmans

Anise, coriander, garlic, oregano, chamomile, agrimony, calendula, indigo, madder, henna, pepper, chicory, mayapple, canaigre, red periwinkle, digitalis, basil, chives, dill, mints, summer savory, angelica, perilla, licorice, saffron, sesame,



rose geranium, lavender, lemon balm, carnation, clary, ginger, chrysanthemum, lemon grass, mountain balm, coffee, cocoa

“De Gaulle, by definition lauder of the Right—whenever he speaks he addresses himself to it and it alone—would like to bleed the people of their vital strength. He'd like them to be weak and devout, he'd like them to be Gaullist, like the bourgeoisie, he'd like them to be bourgeois. De Gaulle doesn't talk about the concentration camps, it's blatant the way he doesn't talk about them” (Duras) Within five minutes: a solitary vireo, an American bittern flying, a rose-breasted grosbeak's rose-red flash, a yellowthroat low and close, two red-eyed vireos up high, and then a yellow warbler

Redbud

He hung himself, July 16, 1938, was born, September 22, 1915, Hossac School 1927-1932, Williams September 1934 to February 1935, Chapel Hill until his death. Was in college theater and belonged to a fraternity called Delta Psi

Gas Chamber and Crematorium II, Gas Chamber and Crematorium III, birch wood, “sauna” bathhouse, “Canada,” Gas Chamber and Crematorium IV, Gas Chamber and Crematorium V, Gypsy camp, men's camp, family camp, “Mexico,” SS barracks, SS guard dog kennels, gravel pit, quarantine camps, women's camp, registration office, main gate, potato store

J. lay there on a barracks rack, twelve years old and dying, as the Russians liberated Auschwitz at three in the afternoon, January 27, 1945

Cachexia is a wasting of the body, leading to general collapse, can be caused by starvation, cancer, tuberculosis Harbin

Raised in Pyongyang, back after thirty-five years, near his hotel he approached a man fishing the Taedong River in the deep dusk—his only open conversation of the trip— with a “How are they biting?” The fishing man answering his Pyongyang accent deep into the night not suspecting

She reads the first pages of her hot first novel and then fields oblique student questions and jealous queries of women older than she who want to learn ways to catch the ring

California

The lisping presence of cedar waxwings, exciting like a rising breeze, time bird spirit pass

Korean fathers in America, tired from business, their immaculate shirts and suits, come to the evening recitals of their young musicians

Generations ago, European immigrant fathers and their friends most likely looked the same

Blackburnian, chestnut-sided, magnolia, parula, blackpoll, blue-winged, redstart, yellow, Canada, blackthroated green

She is five, she reaches up, takes me by an index finger, and tells me rapidly what her friends are doing

That a tiny prehistoric population created megalithic fields and schemata on either side of La Manche more lasting than anything we probably will accomplish is ridiculous and incredible

Since before the Paleolithic, humans have reasoned, been considered and deliberate, sane. They went out to get firewood with the same acumen and level of verbal discourse as we use searching for software

He says life is tense in Ecuador, everybody is on edge

In this country, the death penalty rides high, as though in inverse proportion to concern with anyone other than ourselves

With withering dogmatism: "A short story is an exercise in communication, not in self-expression." Within the week, I hear him characterize poetry with exactly the same phrase. He is on a book tour on TV

Plot, character development and dialogue, functionally analogous to perspective, line and shadow. And what about color, Mr. Jones?

A male prothonotary by the canal

Pimento is another vivid red, yellower, lighter, and slightly stronger than apple red, yellower, lighter, and stronger than carmine, yellower and darker than Castilian red, yellower and lighter than madder crimson, and yellower, stronger, and slightly lighter than scarlet

Minicams and quick cut, high speed emulsions and authenticity of location, enable a story on a screen to be as \_readily galvanic as plot and action on the printed page.

That leaves writing free

Sun break through stratus clouds like an echoing hosanna

Proceeding syndetically, prose fiction becomes sequential and copulative. Syndesis moves by cumulative assemblage and coherence, by proliferation and association The idea being to carry out to the limits in subverting the actor-narrator, allowing full accretion of images. Also to bleed the "I" in, then excise. Also to collapse time and fuse histories

At the beginning of napping, a shot, like a.22 short, goes off in my brain, close, my cerebellum the firing chamber

The sharp pull somewhere near my cerebellum, pain, phosphenes, motes, rorcatne phar perhaps once every two months, the sense that if it were more serious it would kill me

The Barnes Foundation's Cézannes confuse, its Renoirs verify, there is a porno Courbet. Before cashing in it may behoove all of us to give a good critic power of the torch

Dubious, she wrote, dubious The strip of a dot matrix printer through an open window

In war, a life's a life except for perhaps Mozart, yes, nobody else but Mozart (but don't believe a word of it)

Like many who abandon extemporaneity, he reads his lecture, and absurdly he loses his place now and then from slide to slide

That tingling feeling in libraries as they open, the awareness that most is not only knowable but absolutely approachable there and then. Williamstown many times, and coming to the Unibibliothek near Petersplatz, now and then in Charlottesville, and again this rushed and happy day

The rose brass of Paul Winter's soprano saxophone, Lee Konitz of the Volvo America eighties

Red lead is an orange-red to brick-red lead oxide, also called minium

Woody Allen cheating big on his taxes in the late seventies The screaming wails of a nohkan (noh flute) played in the banshiki mode

Black and white, prairie, yellow-rumped, ovenbird, northern waterthrush, yellowthroat, white-eyed vireo

Misandry, embittered misandry Noh: stiffened forearms of the tatko (stick drum), locked right arm for the otsuzwni (hip drum), bent arm and waist for striking the kotsuzumi (shoulder drum) from below

The dance of Tomomori's ghost done in full noh costume with a gleaming halberd carving the stage space above and out from the flute and three drums

The phrase alone, "English literature," slow and powerful, a ceremonious pause

Regular league baseball in northern Italy, the trim stadium seen from the train south of the main station in Parma, five Americans allowed on each city's team three of whom must have Italian names

La Saintonge inland on the rise off what was another oyster-rich and mussel-gleaming neolithic gulf, the Ville. neuve Dolmen stands alone on the dome of a field in the open countryside. Fused histories radiate from such single sites

Glitz Palace, a three hour open house of synthesizer pieces stacked on tape, changing colored lights and open stage, large and sumptuous hall, at no time were more than fifteen people listening

Standing at Le Menec at Carnac (Morbihan) oblivious of the heavy rain, an alignment of one thousand and nine menhirs each up to six meters high, that is a hundred

meters wide and about twelve hundred meters long, wit! menhirs arranged semi-circularly at each end

Lumpish shapes shuffling and bowed before the erubes cence of electronic music tingling off the terrazzo floor, lik cows feeding in the meadows of our technology. It is ther for us, there are fences but it is there for us demandin only as much as we allow

Raising quarried menhirs from their rollers arrives th other way around

Chinook, siwash, potlatch, skookum Freshly blooming honeysuckle Purple copper

“Nature reserve? What’s nature? Once I saw a fox her and you worry about my dog flushing birds? Nature i man. Man is nature, We're number one”

This morning a male Wilson’s warbler and the year’s firs hummingbird. The last was a lazuline sabrewing in No vember, at about fourteen hundred meters on the south west slope of Pico Avila

A stubborn pointlessness about him that near the en stifled him. In the corner of the living room at the stairs,: dull keyhole saw with a brass round trademark on its piste grip handle, he worked in bad light from a cast-iron bridg lamp, battered shade, design of red setters ranging | stone-walled field, I ridiculed him there in his last wee! while he drunkenly sawed up a crate for a tie rack a teache told me to make for him

A reason I will never have kids is remembering myself a seven taunting him pipet gt entbnir 8 eo bay-breasted yellow-rumped, a yellow-throat

He barely knew a cowbird from a crow, was ignorant © gardening, stayed away from the unexpected and culti vated man-about-town concerns

Gray tweed sports jacket, calf-length black woolen sock and garters, gray fedora whose lining smelled of barber shop hair tonic, stiff argus brown canvas and shearlin, winter coat with button loops, six-buckle galoshes, bria pipes, square burnished belt buckle with a monogran panel left unfilled on a cracked black leather belt, presse: pants, starched white shirts, bald, hazel eyes, handsorm but unremarkable face, quivering lips, shaving brush wooden bowl of shaving soap, a septic stick, a small blac! leather box lined in worn ue green velvet of tie clips two collar pins, shirt studs, cuff links

He never left this continent. I would tell people that he ha« stayed in Paris to write after World War One, when as i was he was a sergeant in Kansas until 1918, and as far as know never wrote anything but letters in that wide-nibbe: hand of his. Blue-black ink in a fat green-barreled pen. remember him filling it, a rubber bladder pressed by; metal lever thumb-nailed

He left nothing but sad pessimism, his few papers and be longings disappeared immediately, liquidated Ruby-colored glass

Did not drive, scorned showers for the bath, liked bitte marmalade and kippers at breakfast, read The New York Herald Tribune, would talk about the affairs of the day, dog erubescor, like is there anding ox here ature is r's first in Nohe end 'tairs, a ts pistol bridge wing a st week teacher yself at and golf Brodsky has had three heart attacks

"In the everlasting of the Infantry, shines the name, shines the name of Roger Young"

Jody songs

Populations of hundreds of millions through at least fifty centuries, so call it two hundred generations of so many Chinese moving dirt in one way or another, singing. Work songs

We grew up hearing about coolies, starvation and unimaginable floods, A quarter of all humans everywhere

So it is that we are lost in China without the familiarities of histories of which we are aware, lost walking smooth dirt roads along serene canals with double ranks of tall poplars converging blankly with the bank-top road ahead

Chipping sparrow males fighting it out, twenty grams each, wings spread back like fighting cocks

Last week two male red-wings at it fighting in the grass

Scarlet tanager, olive-sided flycatcher, magnolia warbler, orchard oriole, yellow-billed cuckoo

A. left us in the Great Hall on Ellis Island when immigrants could still be repatriated that way. Nearly blind, he was going home to Ischia. He built magnificent dry stone walls. He left accusing the people he lived with of stealing some of his money. He had studied law before leaving Italy. His mustache, red bandanna, his brow, milky eyes So many came and went like that, like Soviet immigrants these days, nearly half of whom eventually go back Historical ocean of perturbations and currents so complex as to disallow the fragile, private thrusts of what most of us are, have been, can ever hope to even understand about ourselves

The road, the canal, the towpath, the railroad, the river She would wear gold black lacquer passe-lacets in her chignon. She gave us Pearl Buck books, took us to Chinese restaurants and ordered sweet and sour. Chinese checkers, Madame Chang, Chinese red, the Confucian ethic, China Lake, superficialities

River roads

Pacific Asia's single, China-dominated, continental coast The wondrous Philippines

Leaving Bicol on a benched truck from Bulan for the railhead at Legazpi in deep conversation about insurgency and government corruption, a sense that the region would be limited from then on out to easy wanderers like me Related earnestly by

a stranger: A Bell-47 colliding with an Andean condor in Ecuador in the clouds, the plexiglas shattered, the rotors and controls intact, down safely with the stench and carrion gurry in their eyes

Fine shrimp brought ashore in Guayaquil

Sun glare and coruscation looking across at the docks in front of the lodge

Mouths of the Ganges

Great crested flycatchers yeeping in the tulip tree outside, their saffron flashing through the marble yellow of the

blossoms in the tulip pin oak green

A frazzled veery resists a brown-headed cowbird's parasitic nesting ways at the slough

Chumas culture was already finished by the 1830s

Each generation enough come to believe that art is more important than life to keep things going "The Red Shoes"

The admiral in bitter and drunken early retirement in his three-story house (garden, lawn and shade trees), the gossip being he had taken a serious rap for a drunken higher up

Green and gold Edwardians born before 1900, not many left now

They were disappointed with their one cruise-ship day in Istanbul, a rainy and cold one, the rugs in the three mosques damp under their bare feet

As tourists from Japan visit the great cathedrals

We found her standing in her garden in the rain. Last winter she was dragging a piece of wood, the rope broke, she fell hard backward, displaced three ribs, and as a result now is extremely stooped. She moves like a lemur, using her hands from point to point, walks with difficulty with a stick

A hooded warbler

Form a mudra with your hands: all five fingers of the right, representing earth, water, fire, air, ether, clasped round the forefinger of the left, representing mind, the sixth element that joins the rest

Hsia 2205 1765, SHane 1766 1121, Cuou 1122 221, Cu'1n 221 207, Han 206 / /220, Turee Kincpoms 220 280, Cun 265 420, NorTHEeRN AnD SouTHERN Dynasties 420 581, Sur 581 618, T'anc 618 907, Five Dynasties 907 960, Sunc.960 1279, Yuan 1271 1368, Minc 1368 1644, Cu'inc 1644 1911

Squid with hot pepper, bok choy, no soup Bronze red is pepper red Skinny Swiss tourists, spike heels, flashy white dresses, zebra-striped vinyl shopping bags, mustached men, one with gray leather pants While boosting a business suit drunk up off the platform and onto his train, where he then threw up into a paper bag, two platforms over another man was being robbed and shouting for help Smell of sump pit oil, tired diesel groans

Already nearly half of the beds in Bellevue are occupied by AIDS patients A few days at a time, pack and sleeping bag, at no more than two or three thousand meters, in the summer, there is good weather in the summer, in the high country behind Rancagua in la Región de O'Higgins It takes four or five days in the mountains for a person's blood to oxygenate Single days, weekends, a few days at a time, the Alps, in seventies

The Engadine

Nineteen and striding a fire-carnival midway in weeknight drizzle, swagger and braggadocio fit for any boulevard, any beach

Across this continent clustered in the counties of their lives careless of whatever future military washout will take them away to death and destiny

Loping sophistication in the eager, fated young

The volume of awareness implicit in the consensus of the twenty-five million here between fourteen and twentytwo!

Castilian red is a vivid color lighter, slightly yellower, and r than either apple red or carmine, yellower and lighter than madder crimson, bluer and lighter than pimento, and bluer, lighter, and stronger than scarlet. It is also called cochineal, Dutch scarlet, fire scarlet, goblin scarlet

Sard is a clear or translucent deep orange-red to brownish red

The second time I saw her, we were talking about ships and went out and found a Dutch merchantman tied up on the West Side, went aboard and walked the decks as far as the wings of the bridge. Nobody came out from below and found us, the ladder ashore unguarded coming and going Pulling the grade in middle derailleur gears while he catches and passes me, lantern jaw and high shoulders running like an elk

Her purse was snatched on the upper level of the Port Authority and she chased him, shouting hard. In the middle of the lower lobby out in front of her, in his Muslim knit cap he stopped and shouted back, "Why be so upset, Sister?," dropped her bag intact, and cut for Seventh Avenue. The other two times the purse snatchers also were black males. When she tells these stories, she adds that she worries that she may sound racist

When small and making your way on foot, being invited to get on behind the saddle of a horseman who comes along. The breadth of the damp horse rump, the conversation, the height and motion of the ride. Once it happened to most kids, but now not at all

Tania Zarudnaya's "sounding" (1987), for trumpet with reverb, is silver and scarlet, rings like the whole ensemble's Gabrieli canzon. She says, "I wanted it louder, I always want it louder"

Mayonnaise on your matzos Day after day of cloudy skies



“Ich bin ein Schaf. Ich bin ein Schaf.” Repeated for a page and a half until, “I am a sheep who cannot even think.” A boy’s confessional notebook from early-century Zurich, ordered by his father. ‘Why doesn’t the sun shine in this room? Because there is a black hulk blocking it off at the window. It is me”

Cuidado

Shifting from the middle of the rear cluster, working it up, working it down, a few miles out before running perfectly and from then on the sense it would be possible to ride all day

Seventeen-year cicadas, garnet-eyed, emerge from pupa casings white-bodied, white-winged, or die in the attempt.

And once out of the ground and into the trees, the mak pre-mammalian din. The sound ancient as before though

Falling water, a reptile’s hiss, avalanches, folding thund rolls

Garnet is a dark red that is yellower and duller than cra berry, bluer and duller than pomegranate, and blu stronger, and very slightly darker than average wine A million years, the numbers, printed sequentially columns, fill a dozen thick volumes in a piece at the Bas! Kunstmuseum

This summer’s cicadas the fourth totality ever privy | 1) the Adams River sockeye run of fourteen million fi near Squilax, BC, in October, 1961, 2) the hippos at La Manyara braying into the first storm of the rainy season October, 1976, 3) the Kalahari for a week in fall, 1964 A roadkill white-tail deer eyes’ blank gleam in hot, ha sun, exactly the same mute shine as the blowflies on t torn haunch and at her orifices

A wood duck brood surprised mid-passage between jum ing from the bole nest at dawn and making it to the lah the hatch last night, the mother dragging a wing gallin ceously to draw me off squawkingly leading them pell-m back away into the woods

We would walk on the beach in Santa Monica every ev ning, quizzical to anyone who left to go inland

Cerise is a moderate red

October

A Gennan VIEW IN TRISTAN unp Isovpe, intrigue, fair ing, longings, pomp, circumstance

The brown beaches on the east side of the Atlantic at fort five degrees north, gulls and people, an occasional ter the water cold

Yesterday on the surfside of a barrier island on the we side of the Atlantic at forty degrees north, the loweri sun, the water warm

Her voice purling and gurgling happily, flaunting the cu osity in her soul like a full spinnaker



“Ambiguity, ict horse opaqueness, the violation grammatical and sequences, reciprocal incomp! hensions, the capacity to lie—these are not pathologies language but the roots of its genius” (Geo. Steiner) Una giornata particolare

The allegretto of Beethoven’s piano “Sonata in D Mino may be played full almost beyond description

People often converse standing with a full sun at the backs without knowing how rude it is

It is raining after weeks of dry weather

Each spring and each fall more ospreys migrate throug The end wall of the cowhouse behind in blue shadow Albert Schnyder’s ‘In den Freibergen (Muriaux)’” is galvanic as anything I have seen in a painting

¢ males’ thought

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‘Minor at their through

Late September and lasting for weeks, a weather hinge develops in the Middle Adantic states: cloudy and cool north of it, hot flush weather sucked up from the Gulf of Mexico south of it

Talking about how food reflects the cultural qualities of countries, we did not recognize the sculptor but both said he must be German, approached to the name plate flush in the lawn to verify

The reluctance of inevitability

Elites maintain elitism by monopolizing creativity “Evolution is a wheel with ratchets. It's difficult to stand in a corner and not think about a white bear after one is told to stand in a corner and not think about a white bear” (Dan McCarvoll’s Space Diary)

“People put the jigsaw puzzle together eventually if they get hands on the pieces. Hence the importance of censorship” (ibidem)

Simultaneously I saw a sharp-shinned hawk and an osprey from the balcony corner, the osprey lifting hard far off the lake, the hawk in the foreground chasing a passerine over the next building’s roof and rearing end wall

Ossifrage, ossifrage, tearing at the gills gasping, still thirty feet off the water on a stub held by one talon, sucker, you have met your end. Your lips will vacuum the lake bottom no more because you floated high enough for your form to register and she went right in for you and and now your blood spurts. She breaks your bones and will pick your ribs. Thousands now white-eyed and migrating, tufted heads marvelous wings

All over the world Japanese families make the best of it torn between the opportunity they find abroad and their hunger for the home island culture

Beethoven born in Bonn in 1770, Bach in Eisenach in 1685. Brahms in Hamburg, when Metternich was riding high, the year after the telegraph was invented, two years before the beginning of The Great Trek, three before 'Texas independence

Joggers jog incommunicado, thinking about death (their own) and heart attacks

Some Asian-Americans call those of themselves who no longer behave with Asian good manners "'Jook Sing" (bamboo cane) or "'Banana,'" white on the inside, yellow skin

His infant smiles, takes out her pacifier, smears it against my nose, and he says, correctly, "She is showing you love"

Bach transcribed and ornamented Alessandro Marcello's Concerto in D minor for oboe, strings and continuo, and the result, especially the second movement, excites like Picasso's bicycle-seat goat

The days here feel like a Gulf Coast autumn, like continuous music. Before he killed himself, my brother went to visit a friend near Mobile. Whatever he felt in the weeks before he died is as gone as last spring's magnolias

Standing in a neighbor's apartment last night, over his shoulder I could see a late 19th-century firman, gold, black and red, whose symmetry and use of linear and open space might come from a vastly sophisticated unknown culture. It is the document of appointment of his wife's great grandfather to imam of a mosque in Istanbul

For Turks today, the script in a firman from last century is more difficult to read than the writing in documents from the 16th century written in the time of Suleiman the Great. This has to do with the Arabic to Roman language reforms of Atatiirk

Atatiirk's death on November 10, 1938, is marked annually by a few minutes' cessation of all human activity in Istanbul. On the 39th solemnity, standing on the Vatan Caddesi the hush was as palpable as a dome lowering over us all. Some trucks and buses coughed and tried to fire on fitfully when their ignitions were turned off, bad carburation from low octane gasoline

Students in Seattle, from North Dakota and eastern Washington respectively, who spent nearly ten salad years in Europe, had two children, recently went back to a university faculty in Alberta, but already they have lived lives of a breadth possible only in this generation

Three ospreys at once in view through the window

Stand still while your picture is taken, stand still at your best behavior, feet together, looking at the camera self-consciously but modestly, stand still next to your sisters, your friends. It will be printed, kept in rooms, studied when you are no more

Camera images for a century and a half now! Back to nearly powdered wigs, yet some people remain as stiff before the camera as Brady's soldiers were standing in monochrome on earthworks at Petersburg, lounging in front of pup tents, milling around quartermaster and ordnance dumps. The horses often came out with blurs at either end from tossing head or shifting ramp

There is no universal planetary consciousness, no higher paradigm beyond the collectivity of our minds, things are as are

She regrets most things about her life

Blood red is a moderate to strong red yellowish and darker than camellia and is also called cadmium vermilion, para red, Parma red, perma red, permanent red, scarlet lake

If the planet has become like a rapidly filling parking lot for bipeds and their trucks and cars, then we are between what has been and what will be no more. Such pessimism a legacy, perhaps, of Auschwitz, Hiroshima, Nagasaki and all the rest from 1945

Her skin goes from rough and mortifyingly “bad” enough to make her drop her face and turn away, to smooth and perfect, sometimes almost day to day

Clear October mornings here are like being in the mountains

The tughra near the top of each firman centered above the script is the sultan's shield or crest, words entwined as in the stone grills of the Alhambra. It is all Arabic, it is all words. The tughras ride above the documents like ships under full sail or strutting gallinaceous birds

Turkish red, yellowish and slightly darker than cerise, yellowish and darker than claret, yellowish and lighter than Harvard crimson, and yellowish, slightly darker and not as strong as average strawberry, also called Adrianople red, Levant red and Turkey red—confusion about wattles and naked heads?

She must be from Guadeloupe or Martinique with such New World directness, clothes neat, corn rows freshly turned, her shoes dusty from the night train to Agen where she waits in front of the station. A nun in modern habit arrives in a Peugeot and without another glance at me she is off into the next phase of her life. She looks optimistic and tries to chat politely as they drive away but I have seen such things enough to feel sadness and compassion

On the ferry across the mouth of the Gironde we looked back at pastel and concrete Royan and she said she had seen it last being rebuilt after the War. “Strangely, I remember it as all red brick and then it seemed quite beautiful”

Believing he was headed for paradise, he says he hated Bali, maintaining that all hotels there were either expensive tourist ripoffs or “the four dollar kind that didn't even have showers”

The high cirrus of fall, all ice crystals but it is shorts and barefeet warm down here

She wore red lipstick and blue eye shadow over purple eye shadow, a very pleasant flaglike effect, colors that would have looked punk on pale skin

Most people in this part of the US no longer excuse themselves when blocking off someone else in a public space or when they sneeze, and they are often mute in response to others' apologies to them

The September-October taste of Concord grapes Quietly, quietly, the way to do it is quietly

The man and his new wife who both hated Bali hurried on from Indonesia to Japan

When he was four, his brother three, often they were awakened by their parents at four or four-thirty, dressed, taken out to stand in line to have their hands stamped for bread, eggs, whatever, at nine o'clock, only then light in the Moscow winter

Now he lives in Nice and his Brazilian wife is taking Russian lessons so that she can understand what he is talking about with his Russian friends

His stepson, hanging out with his friend on their bicycles, says things like, "Oh, we know that, we're Israeli kids!"

"Why Russians and chess, and why Czechs and Swedes and tennis now? And if we understood why there are so many major league shortstops from that small town in the Dominican Republic, then we would understand God"

If you can live in Omsk, you can live anywhere

Salmon, often a very pinkish red, is the variable color of salmon's flesh averaging a strong yellowish pink that is darker and slightly yellower than salmon pink, yellower and deeper than melon, and yellower than peach red Goya is a strong red deeper than geranium, bluer and deeper than average cherry red, and is also called cadmium carmine, currant, English red, English vermilion, minium, oriental red, orient red, red currant, vermilion Inventing writing: perhaps the earliest conventions of language notation were artists' color-coded ideograms, and if so they came before dead clay cuneiform

NUNCA MAS

Decades down the line, cultural celebrities of the sixties a1 time-warped

Ginsberg is nearly an old man and Wakoski is talkativ Only Snyder had many things to say, as in the humor | his long poem on the ecology of Manhattan

Ed Sanders had problems with his electronic finger orgat First saw him play the keys on that silly necktie of his i Santa Monica Civic Auditorium in 1967? That's abot right

Claret is a moderate red slightly lighter than cerise, light than Harvard crimson, slightly bluer and paler than ave age strawberry, bluer and lighter than Turkey red, allied | pansy purple and bluer and stronger than pepper red also known as Bordeaux

The ferry boat from Royan loads and discharges tl dozens of cars ingeniously as a sideloader: portside ri folds down to act as a ramp, and then at Pointe de Grav starboard rail folds down as a ramp

Zarrina Mirshakar, billed as the first woman composer 'Tajikistan, sat tense as a ferret in the seat in front dress in a neat flannel suit and looking very European while h clarinet sonata was performed

Das Gewicht der Welt is dedicated to whom it may concer The shorttail shrew, Blarina brevicauda, breeds in the sprit and again in August-September. The young are the size a honeybee. One partly grown was trapped this mornit on the asphalt side of curbing at the edge of a parking Ic lead colored fur, back and forth in the fallen leave squeak, squeak, squeak, perhaps an inch and a quart long

Susan Stamberg looks like Spock, although it's hard to t how far it goes because her hair covers her ears

Octobers: on the western slope in BC listening to the CN freights pulling up Notch Hill; the pitching grades a ruts of the tank-driving range on warm afternoons in t sandy tracks of Fort Knox; the Herbstmesse in Basel's P tersplatz; the straight pins out to wear each of that schc year's two flannel shirts for the first time; the Suez Cri cum Hungarian Crisis in a frontline bunker on the K rean DMZ; inwardly amused realizing I fix on it as result of having read Thomas Wolfe when I was so se absorbed that I didn't know October even when it w before my eyes

For symmetry house plants need be regularly turn clockwise in northern hemisphere rooms, countercloc wise in the south

The music videos of 1950 were Spike Jones and his C' Slickers banging it out on washboard, cowbells and k zoos. How lightly they took themselves doing "Holid for Strings," "Chinese Mule Train," "Der Fuehre Face"

Spike Jones born in Long Beach with the heart of a Dac ist

Anyone who doesn't know Spike Jones' 'Cocktails | Two," will not completely understand why we are as | are

Hollyhock is a deep purplish red bluer and deeper th Harvard crimson or American beauty and redder a ktails for ire as we duller than magenta

The tea plantations of the Usambara, mountains in the distance, remembered across my forearms, belly down on a swimming float on the south side of the bay at Tanga

The self-absorbed concentration of Ed Sanders on stage: exactly the same mood as a friend in a childhood circus doing his dancing bear act

The Disappeared

“Today of all days to have a full moon rising against the dusk!

My aunt was a lazy glutton but had it fairly well under control although both impulses were at war with one another in her eyes

Dream-state consciousness, those awarenesses coming before or while coming out from sleep. The ones lost grow in magnitude of importance with each awareness of regret

““We were begun in a German forest, but shall end among white sands” (Notes from a Bottle Found on the Beach at Carmel)

“Ordinary men fulfill themselves in the company of their fellows” (ibidem)

There is oolong, there is longjing

The farthest east I have been in Europe is a restaurant near the Foreign Languages Press Bookstore in Moscow

The voice on the phone flies with inflections and nuance Batters celebrating at the plate after a home run or a winning run look much like bottlenosed dolphins surfacing together happily in a pod. The junction of nose and domed forehead on the porpoise so like the joint between the dome and bill of a shiny batting helmet. Batting helmet bill and dolphin snout the same profile too. Happy!

Some music so arresting as to reach through any circumstance of its hearing

“A million things to do,” as though an explanation of death itself

16d nails, or 10d or 8d nails, along with “o’clock,”” Briticisms left in American English. A 20d nail weighs an ounce, a 10d nail a half an ounce, sixteen 20d nails to the pound Ruby-crowned kinglets in the mist net, two of them. And down the line, like notes on a staff, three ever rarer goldencrowned kinglets

You see their equivalents, the goldcrest and the firecrest, in the Alps. At nine to ten centimeters *Regulus* is almost the tiniest of birds

Up the line from the kinglets, against the rising sun, momentarily confronting a sharp-shinned hawk in a net. It freed itself

Child death in Tanzania

Their old role of hunter/warrior no more, in many African vilegen orn, do Bothing yPie werner ae an 32.92, ae pat

Last year at Modelani, Winnie Mandela appeared in a lumpish suit-dress that meant body armor underneath, stepped in front of the vast crowd with fright in her eyes, looked around for the person with a gun who well might have been there to kill her, but that person, if he or she exists, was not there that day and has not yet appeared

Just as the reality of my South Africa recedes, everything that white South Africa is will now continue to slide off into nothingness



Samora Machel's plane crashed across a lowveld mealie field textured with last year's stalks left for forage, too early in the spring there for the new mealies to be in the ground, a site only a few minutes drive up onto the open plateau from Komati Poort

The use of scientific metaphors for titles

Andrei Voznesensky published an account this summer of how over two nights in December, 1941, 12,000 people, mostly Jews, were shot by the Germans near the Feodosiya Highway outside Simferopol and pushed into an antitank ditch, a mass grave which was recently plundered for the gold fillings and jewelry the Germans uncharacteristically had not taken time to remove. Years ago I was nearby, arriving at the railroad station in Simferopol and then on a bus on the road over the Krymskiy Gory to the coast and did not know

In West Germany many times and in the DDR, and nine months recently in Tübingen, my Quaker schools told us to forgive and forget what went on in the War, had an exchange with two schools in West Germany, but until I and most others like me die, it will not be possible

A bluff at Gurzuf above the beach where we would walk in the evenings and imagine the Greeks coming there headland to headland along the coast from Varna and Odessa, peer toward the Turkish coast over 150 miles away, flown as the migrating Terek sandpipers and the vivid whitewinged black terns have flown it every spring and fall since timelessness

Korcula and Gurzuf, three thousand years ago were like Baltimore and Sydney, Nova Scotia

I would go to Korcula, I would go to Gurzuf, I would go to Sydney, I would go to Baltimore right now

The Black Sea looks even more ancient than the Adriatic For four nights the Orionid meteor shower and Ganymede, Europa (the one with the high albedo), Callisto and Io rounding Jupiter, but a hunters' moon going toward its last quarter, too bright for the stars

Staged photograph of four infantrymen thigh-deep in a swamp with huge M-16s on two pages of Rolling Stone with minimal copy after "IRRESISTIBLE FORCE" that begins, "Kiss Your Momma Goodbye No, this isn't some faroff jungle, It's your own state. But these are your buddies. The guns are real. And so is the adventure"

Everything I saw National Guard units do when I was in the Army looked phony.

How did I become involved with a half million dollar computer deal with the Chinese Foreign Trade Agency? Trevor Pinnock is the Williamsburg of music

Or he is the current Lawrence Welk of the eighteenth-century repertoire

This seventh floor balcony occupies the air in which an eighteenth-century farm family, having the strearside meadow that is now an artificial lake, watched a peregrine falcon take a passenger pigeon into ealie iteau nine id us 1 ex- Ik in essa, hitelike

'latic anyd its ina with t be-

She delivers her "Remember I have to work, my dear!" mock-superciliously

As though it were a dangerous secret, G. informs me that, "Knopf has not been powerful in publishing since about 1964"

It's not airheadedness but stress, self-absorption and stress

Red is a color whose hue resembles that of blood or of the ruby

Shqipeja, spoken by the two million Albanians and by colonies of Albanians in the US, Greece and Italy, is possibly a descendant of the extinct language Illyrian and much vocabulary seems borrowed from Latin. Two dialects: Geg, spoken north of Shkumbini, and Tosk in the South, Numerals from one to ten are: një dy tre katër pesë gjashtë shtatë tetë nentë dhjetë

Bathed in a full moon rise over the Crna Gora backed by Albania itself

Inside the bluefish's stomach were two of other species, their eyes and skins partly digested soft and white

Within a bluefish school all are the same size since those smaller are immediately eaten. They spend our summer as far north as Massachusetts, and are off Argentina for summer there, There are none in the Pacific or the Indian but an isolated population in the Eastern Med

Railing at government and the demise of the traditional work ethic, he waters the cider he presses

The search for carpetas in foreign stationery stores marks my passage as accurately as any other index

There is a half moon up now before midnight, angled like a dish antenna pointed southeastward and forty degrees off the horizon, poised, Since we have visited it, our moon is part of our inglenook and only wherever it points far out in space is somewhere else

Mean summer temperatures in southwestern France were generally 10°C lower in the Magdalenian than now, so through much of the year to work inside the cave at Lascaux must have seemed comfortable

No coherent theory to explain the placement of species at Lascaux

The artists may well have painted with pipettes but no one is sure

What happened in the four thousand years between Lascaux and the first great stones of the Megalithic?

CARNAC

She confided ingenuously that her young daughter was her best friend



Rumansch is spoken by twelve thousand Graubiinder. One dialect on the Upper Rhine, another in the Val Mustair, and Engadinish. Also Rhetic are Ladin of the Dolomites and Friulan in Udine

The lynxish Canadian, always sarcastic in his frequent sexual innuendos, boarded the elevator last night on his way home with his belt buckle undone

Strawberry Lodge, an old people's home in Berkeley, being in Berkeley does not discriminate on the basis of age

There is much that I miss not living in California

There is much I miss not living in Europe anymore, an in Africa, and in Japan

Alert, well-informed Americans and no one knows what; Zamboni is

National Center for the Humanities, Research Triangle Park, NC, PR-conscious pedagogues who answer to Wayne or Larry and work on projects that sound like master theses

No Chinese friends answer the phone tonight. They must be having a meeting

In the Western Cape for as long as Tiibingen, wrote a

African novel in Tübingen but incongruously never went to Kirstenbosch on Table Mountain

It is bromegrass and not broom grass, another surety of source, purpose and etymology destroyed

Sorry is as sorry does

For an encore, Haydn's 29th, this was after a program of Mozart, a Berg, and a Schumann

Writers grasp at straws

Lumpenmilitarism values infused US society after four decades of cold war preparedness and leave scant distinction between counter and common culture

Snow flurries there tomorrow as cold Canadian air is forced to ascend the Adirondacks and the New England mountains

A stranger somewhere is dreaming us

Found a note that in Toledo I found a Calle de Toledo in Ohio

Another note: "The young rider striding into the cafe in Grazalema after dark as we sat with our goat's milk tea"

What did that piece of wood look like, exactly, that you put on the fire an hour ago?

Old woman pushing ahead in line, strikingly attractive proudly Polish, said she had been in Dachau, wished me; good weekend

December

"Città di Cuapa, legs like a giraffe"

Jakob Burckhardt, foursquare against the tide of 1848 convinced it was the end of his youth and of the golden age

Furious and disgusted

He hated railroads

His theme was individualization

“North Korea, so isolated a country that it truly doesn’t understand the rules of the modern world”

Our Rothko-inspired, panel-patterned, segmented, computer-windowed, modular, schematically chambered, late 80s world

Green, a hue somewhat less yellow than that of growing fresh grass or of the emerald, that part of the spectrum Winsor’s bite of yellow

Triangle were to be measure of an offer of decaffeination 1 air is lead of coffee in Ikat tea” you put reactive, «d mea

Scharansky’s courage comes as automatically as his jump from one social dogma to another

Israelis in the US, Greeks in Rome

Profound insincerity is inherent in producing an intellectual exchange for television

The most significant things are said in this country by those who speak with an accent and perhaps that has always been

Eloquent in both Dari and Pushto

“Faces never work unless you get the corners of the eyes and the edges of the mouth right”

Languages, various as all history, as rich as the color spectrum, textures as distinguishable and remarkable as cuisine Egyptian Arabic Imbricate blue-white lens overlay of a blue jay’s wings Its stone blue back and the lapstreaked pattern of its tail A belted kingfisher’s gas flame blue ‘Text as meliorative agent toward card catalogue immortality In a gospel tent at night forty-five years ago in a field near Rocky Bar, VA Old lumber camps up and down the Appalachians from Blowing Rock, NC Highway signs vibrate in the wind with eerie woffling sounds like thunder

Yellower, lighter, and stronger than sea green, and bluer, lighter, and stronger than myrtle green or average laurel green Deep lightless eyes toasted meringue skin, nose low as though to fit behind a veil, hair thick and full with karakul sheen, she lives in an airy minaret facing southeast where she lolls homesick on pillows staring out across rainy German hills These days, Anita O’Day, “Stan Kenton couldn’t even swing,” lives in a mobile home in the California mountains without any regrets The French say to eat pumpkin seeds for the prostate Disallowing AIDS, in a few decades there will be more Nigerians than Europeans Celadon tint, an exceedingly pale green, yellower and paler than tourmaline, yellower and duller than emerald tint, yellower and not as strong as microcline green She says

one thing in the enthusiasm of her white wine evening, the next day does the opposite Demoralizing coldness pervades duplicity Ginestera's tumultuousness, "ruvido ed ostinato," the Argentine Chopin's Ballade in G Minor, op. 23, pushing back the walls of the room "You know, first they stick a wire in" Then after the event, the wait for results of the biopsy

With malignancy everything that went before recedes instantly to absolute unimportance and fatiguing fear becomes the matrix

Full moon through tracery of bare branches, filigree of upright twigs

Flute with tape, drum set with tape, violin with computer and live musicians follow as in lip sync

Apple green, greener, lighter, stronger than average mosstone or moss green, lighter and stronger than pea green or spinach green, greener and deeper than ocean green, pistachio, or crayon green

Back from India in 1974 to Suffock to build up a farm to orchards with black currants between the apple trees

Laxton's Superb, Warner's King, Cox's Orange Pippin, Russet, George Cave, Ida Red, Lady Sudeley, renadier, Laxton's Epicure, Green Biffin, Red Biffin, Scarlet Pimpernel, Ribstone Pippin, Dunn's Seedling, Irish Peach, Bismarck, Beauty of Bath, Ellison's Orange, Blenheim Orange, Lord Derby, Worcester Pearmain, Adam's Pearmain, King of Tomkin's County, Darcy Spice, Monarch, Wellington

Probably impossible for son-in-law from Germany to take over, Suffock having been the first impact zone in the Battle of Britain and the Blitz, small RAF aerodromes all over the downs

Laxton's Fortune, John o'Gold, Spartan, Newton Wonder, Lane's Prince Albert, King of Pippins, Queen Cox, Bramley, Bramley Seedling, James Greeve, Tydeman's Early Worcester, Crispin, Pignout, Greensleeves

Outer Gabbard, north of Galloper out from Harwich, four flashes then twenty seconds, four flashes then twenty seconds. In midday summer sun its red hull cores up nasturtium on the silent swells, the javelle sky

Knobby white torsos in the glare, painters offshore there aE. NOS Ae Re Ie sea bass, are drinking ale

The decade of the South African School Boycott from 1976 like the decade of enforced illiteracy during the Cultural Revolution from 1966, the self-taught

The edge of the wedge

"The South African Government will be exactly as cruel and brutal as it needs to be in order to stay in power" Voracious, urban, communal, scavenging, Indian house crows, their plumage with metallic glints, are spreading hotel to hotel up the coast from Mombasa and inland for a few miles along the Voi-Nairobi Road

Kill one house crow and immediately hundreds arrive to mob the death site in angry solidarity

Crows and jays watch us in wonderment at our headdown obliviousness to them

Cut stone bonds to stone in time, within arches and columns, marble facades, soffits, planciers, intrados, entablatures

Tonkinese physiognomy and slight Cadenza as subgenre in Beethoven's first movement of the violin concerto

Lying in the thick grass of the violins in the Leonore Overjuter

\08sreen een,

A musical sounding board, foothills of the Sierra Nevada that surround Granada

"Dada is the voluntary destruction of the bourgeois world of ideas" (Duchamp)

"My readymades are denying the possibility of defining art" (ibidem)

The readymades came after the Large Glass

Given: 1. The Waterfall, 2. The Illuminating Gas his last work (1946-66), blankly asserts that cunt is ultimately everything

Holmesburg Prison, and the three other Department of Human Resources jails in the cluster on the other side of State Road in North Philadelphia

Ask those four thousand men in there about why we are here and get the same answer

Etant Donnés: la chute d'eau, le gaz déclaivage

And without exception, every member of the US Congress professes belief in the divine

"Housewives without jobs, too much free time and not enough freedom"

Symphonie Fantastique, 1831, programmatically derived from his despairing love for the Shakespearean actress Harriet Smithson. They married in 1833, separated in 1840

"That music puts your ears out on stalks"

Sad pride, set of her eyes, the septum lift of the upper lip in Spanish faces

Amber white, a pale yellow green that is yellower, lighter, and stronger than smoke gray, yellower, stronger, and slightly lighter than oyster gray, and yellower, lighter, stronger than average Nile in a lighter shade of pale

Donna Summer

My maiden aunt exulting in John Charles Thomas's radio baritone

And in Robert Tucker, who began as a hazan in New York And Richard Tucker, an Irish tenor from Trenton

There was at least one more she liked, something "the Third" or "Junior"

Victorian houses, propriety, green wicker porch furniture, The Book of Common Prayer, chocolate, lilac time

When Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz wrote vallencicos in Puebla, we were girdling hardwoods to get sun on the corn

Her "Primer sueño," her redondillas against male stupidity Distant like a Gobi of far memory, a Canadian wilderness of lost joys, an Africa of understanding nearly all

A Lady Murasaki in the viceregal court of Mexico three hundred years ago, arguing in a most American manner aap sam ps a

Criticism: "The dog barks, but the caravan moves on"

Between the Four Quartets and Murder in the Cathedral in The Complete Poems and Plays 1909-1950: "The Naming of

Cats," "The Old Gumbie Cat," "Growltiger's Las Stand," "The Rum Tum Tugger," "The Song of the Jellies," "Mungojerrie and Rumpelteazer," "Ole Deuteronomy," "The Awful Battle of the Pekes and the Pollicies," "Mr. Mistoffelees," "Macavity: the Mystery Cat," "Gus: the Theater Cat," "Bustopher Jones: the Cat about Town," "Skimbleshanks: the Railway Cat" and "The Addressing of Cats"

So that was it! Privet, a grayish olive green, greener and not as strong a ivy green. Yellower, less strong, and slightly darker than bronze green

Vivid and formidable, those colored window-shade rolls: maps, indigo blue vines of the Congo, the Volta, the Niger the Nile

Chalk dust, felt erasers

Cape to Cairo, Tangier to the Horn

Josef Beuys' brown felt suit on the wall

Talked with him deep into a chilly Kassel evening at Documenta 6

Spent that night in Marburg. Found the high derelict palms, Hesse winters, enough glass broken to allow rainwater it Aloes, pale green stronger and bluer than celadon gray yellower and darker than spray green, and yellower stronger, lighter than bayberry gray In the wind, the awful Cape Town wind, among the succulents and aloes, phantasmagoric sense of the planet, entirely compelling awareness of self in nature there Cape to Cairo, Cairo to the Cape The Great Rift The Red Sea at Massawa to Lake Manyara, the Masa Steppe. Places on the planet I know as well as, say, Balti more

The Tanker War, a long three years since 1984

Wedgwood green, grayish and yellowish, yellower, lighter: and not as strong as sage green, stronger, yellower, and lighter than mermaid or palmetto, and yellower and deeper than celadon

"That bastard gets here from Amman, moves his four children and pregnant wife into that unfurnished apartment, and like all of them the first thing he does is buy;

big car. Then the next thing they always do is buy at least one big horn for it. We know them in Lebanon'

The Potlatch, the most singular and spellbinding building in the world

Stepped, recessional blocks, cut stone built into air Surfaces, membranes, interface The edge and the edges

Condensed matter physics and crumpled surfaces, on point to another point

Cut stone set in earth, rising against sky

Bare granite or limestone ridges, outcroppings, the Precambrian Shield

's Last and Jellicoe's Cat"

¢ roller - Niger,

Docudermatologist in N. gray, lower, he suet, en-

, Baltilight er, and er and is four s buy a at least

Bach's "Chaconne" was for violin alone, the 1720s violin with curved bow

Three million refugees from Iran since 1979

Five million from Afghanistan

Universities edging to a four-day week, already no Friday lectures, nothing significant on getaway day

Tolerance to permutations enforced living through multiple decades. Accept and understand or fall behind superfluously, impacted, and absurd

Bright teal green is a moderate bluish green that is bluer and deeper than porcelain green and greener and deeper

Her nostrils pitched outward recapitulate her eyes, making even the first of her normal dualisms almost unbearable, eyebrows, eyes, cheeks, shoulders, arms and hands, carina halves of self

Evacuated as a school girl from Suez the week before June examinations in 1967, she has never lived there again.

Most houses in the city were damaged or destroyed

A firetower in California during that war with only the frantic inaccuracies of radio reports

The solstice

The Jura and the Alps above the bed of stratus clouds

His 1820s Hudson Valley brick house needs to be shored up, a bulge in one wall, bricks loosened by the vibrations

Sculpting wooden toys with a band saw, each winter when finished with the Christmas rush he comes for six weeks from Ghent on the Hudson to Dornach near the Rhine

Saul Bellow, another Steinerite, once with a luggage cart in the Basler Bahnhof SBB on his way either in or out

She talks almost exclusively about herself, every morning nds an hour in the bathroom, trims her Camembert, is ill-informed, sleeps a lot

The Basler Stadttheater's JJ Trovatore with weak voices and obscurely green-black, ill-lighted sets

To Ferrette in warm sun, fifteen kilometers out, fifteen kilometers back, no snow, jacket off

Tannenmeise, Kohlmeise, Amsel, Roter Milan, jay, rook, buzzard, mallard, mute swan, magpie, carrion crow, house sparrow, grey heron, kestrel, chaffinch, bullfinch, hawfinch

Alsatian Gypsies wintering on a sheltered south slope along what was a Roman road, their trailers set among their automotive junk, garden dwarfs, melt and drip plastic decorations

The black-green of thick fir groves in winter sun where small rivers like the Ill have been the matrix for nearly everything European

Reaching out for the five counties of Hawaii

# Clayton Eshleman

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## *At the Speed of Wine*

"IT would gladly emulate Odysseus if  
I could, and go down to the shadows  
for another hour's conversation with  
Crane on the subject of poetry..."  
— Yvor Winters

The balloon glass, the swirl—  
what is the image of the wine's insides?

Numb, I was carried off by  
unfriendly insects and tamped into their compost,  
something good for a nest stave, perhaps fuel  
for a grasshopper roast. Yet I continued to drink  
as I slept, sleeping at the speed of wine,  
for I had fitted out my dream body with a full cave—  
there was Crane! His back to the action,  
digging the distortions in Falstaff-bellied flasks.  
He piled his suicide knives up in an amazing wickerwork  
as I sat down, and asked me,  
as if he knew me, which one would I choose.  
I like the one that looks like a rabbit's ear, I said,  
or that curious one at the bottom of the pile,  
a piece of wood sculpture by Michelangelo  
where he depicts himself leaning dejectedly against his cross...

A huge frog  
lugged himself out of the Punchino Palace kitchen  
balancing a tray of sordidity on one trembling foot.

My idea, I said to Hart, is to pick up a woman without breasts,  
with wings instead of breasts,  
one whose chest is a skillet of unmotherly crackling oil,  
our soul in short, why not try to pick up our soul for a change  
instead of sliding anklewise into the flues?

Crane plucked a pair of tiny scissors from his vest pocket and snipped off his  
nose,  
then turned to me with a widening red valley between his eyes.



Only then did I see his stairwell, and the extent to which it twisted into his  
brain,

I lit a match, and the blood turned back,

I lit another, and a helpless curare began to drain from his eyes.

"Poets in death need poets in life," he sobbed,

"not parasitically, my dear wench,

we need you here, under the image mill,

where Samson's soles are a kind of liquor for our eyes,

- here, in the emptiness of the North American underworld,

any image you twist through the wringer of pubescent lubricity,

é tensioned on sheer need,

is manna to us,

no image = no food, as simple as that!"

He raised his hands in a magician-like so there—  
a decanter appeared, a crystal ball of colorless liquid  
I was to see into. “This is the midwestern other side,”  
Crane went on, “argument that you are half  
what you think you are, and that to protect it  
you must lose at least 100 pounds,  
so that you appear to the sensual world a near-man,  
rheumatic eyeball jelly in socket cylinders, a kind of god, a Tlaloc  
of this western night. —Wait, let me finish. I argued flux  
via my own barrel-rolls, leashed to Whitman’s mobile hand.  
Have you considered Rothko? The paintings by which  
he sought to join the Surrealists were done by others.  
Then he erased the content from his work.  
What had appeared to be scenery for the drama  
now was the drama—static, dirigible, stacks of weightless tires  
which could be injected with his Orphic blood.  
The price was terrible, one I refused to barter. We’re both suicides,  
but I went out one door, Rothko another.”

You’re a flicker, Crane! Not an underworld!  
I can relate to you, and feel the joist of comradeship  
but as I concentrate, I see behind you the Phi Delt “hell room.”  
I know my chance of seeing things from the inside out were ruined at 19  
as I took the bulldick around my neck and stood in humiliation  
without striking back. Caricature can be oxymoronic venom,  
and my desire then was baffled—even if the pain and weirdness of that anti-Satanic  
fête  
turned me, 3 years later, toward this work.  
So I must acknowledge a puerile satire of the underworld  
as the father of my poetry. Or as the restriction that snapped my lassitude.  
But such is no underworld support,  
no Poe gangrenescent at the subway gates...  
but then again, Poe’s another individual, not a ripe swamp of otherness  
hissing its affiliations into a sleeping live person’s ear.  
The core of our imaginal demise is: the Maya, the Greeks, and the Egyptians  
will not transmit—their fabulous gourds of juices in which  
imps are instructing kobolds, ruled by stern fairies. Holy kaishaku!  
They are as slides projected on our image screens!  
This is why I’ve gone back through the agrarian earth to!  
those who appear to have spent 20,000 years  
wrestling the animals out of and into their heads...  
People defined by holes! They’ve so underscooped us |

that now each stone seems to cap a void.  
Your and my background assurance was: the surface holds.

Crane tilted his head. "I was a space sucker—  
and you, are you a depth sucker, are you sucking off depth?"

Was I being set up to defend a night-blooming abyss?  
The shoulders all stand on, shoulders that are not there?  
The muse angel duende congealed in 1000 floor deep Les Eyzies?

"You're pigging out on underworld hooey,"

Crane grimaced, “you want to find the missing story of yourself  
and no personal or transpersonal myth or psychoanalytics will do.  
Queerly, you emerged as a potential self  
via a double beating: your father and the Phi Delt ‘actives.’  
For you, creation is counter-attack on catastrophe  
and you’ll bear that legacy wherever you bear.  
Your tribulation is to have discovered that beyond the father-blocked doorway  
are sons with clubs.”

He was doodling on his face, as if it were a worksheet—  
he’d move his eyes together, or eat one of his eyebrows, then draw it from an  
ear.

“New anatomies,” he grinned, “here, have a chalk...”  
Then he pinocchioed his nose, and said:  
“Jesus who worked in flesh is a challenge to all poets.  
The desire, as Artaud retold it, is to reconstruct the human body,  
get rid of its organs, equip it to really dance.  
Having been devoured after my stunt off the Orizaba,  
I found myself in collapsible space,  
pound for pound in the gutters of the hammerhead  
who plucked my ass from—was it a ‘light topcoat’?  
Dionysian motion is a willful peristalsis, ruddering one’s own dreaming,  
B where Whitman and Dickinson cross, a blond serpent is hatched,  
one of the brood with your white Apollo. Look into my eyes, you’ll see its  
brothers.”

As I peered through his bruised lids into his irises,  
twin coral snakes, tails in mouths, began to turn  
behind what remained Crane’s frightened, compassionate pupils.  
Were they Ais missing story? The one we all are missing  
until we take the oath of the abyss and induct that realm  
in which the dead reach us and warn us with their whirling eyes  
that defective railroad signals are positioned every way we turn?  
Crane clawed out at me, I leapt back to see his talon  
swinging full and embed in his other shoulder.  
He then tore out his talon-arm and rammed it into one eye,  
caught his other eye through the back of his head,  
gulped it down, tore open his fly and pissed a string of eyes.  
A Moebius effect, for nothing disappeared.  
“Everything in the underworld fits into everything else,”  
he laughed. I was thinking about van Gogh,  
I said, crows over the wheatfield was not his last painting.  
He did the crows 2 weeks before his 2 versions of Daubigny’s garden.

“The mound with flowers in the lower  
central portion is tumultuous,” Crane exclaimed, “as if Vincent

buried himself there, not in wilderness,  
but in another painter's yard! In the end, most value middle-class life.  
Especially since it is what most artists are.  
Shelley is windy and pure, his words seem to have floating  
: spaces between worlds, or letters, the claim on the infinite is too trusting.  
' Blake has working-class printer grease on his Jerusalem.  
I'm aware Bunting told you Blake is 'the abomination of poetry.'  
Bunting feared he forced experience into a plaster cast,

|

turned it into religious forgery. That is why  
 Blake's ghost put both contact lenses in Basil's right eye that night,  
 to show Basil had overviewed half, and not seen the other half at all. |  
 But, let's stop talking about literature.  
 It only shows to what extent we are anxious about the discrepancy  
 between what we've intended, and what it appears we've done.  
 Peggy Cowley's cunt was extraordinary. I've not been able to reconstruct it  
 no matter how I reinvent my body."  
 Then he quoted Laura Riding: "Until the missing story of ourselves is told,  
 nothing besides told can suffice us: we shall go on quietly craving it.""

Did you fuck her, Hart?

"Of course, but not in the way you'd compose me.  
 You forget: I was born before the psychoanalysis of fire,  
 and thus held to my Promethean post. I was guilty, under Walt,  
 trenchant guilt, undercoating,  
 there was nothing else—Titan resolve!  
 Even humorous, but art is revolt against predetermined dread.  
 Rhymes? The manacles of Grace and Clarence—clearance!—  
 grace in clearance, the Orizaba drop!"

Your "Tears of Christ" has the conundrum power of 2000 years,  
 or I should say, I've been draining its nailed feet for 20 years  
 and have yet to see the fluid run clear.  
 Way up in the crucified is a swan, and a goat,  
 and as for his head, I'm reminded of Our Lady Coatlicue,  
 whose head consists of 2 face-to-face pressed rattlesnake heads—  
 She faces us with one of their left eyes, one of their right,  
 to indicate that the back of any matter is the beginning of a new damnation.

"Development is steel rain,"  
 Crane mused, "we write when Psyche is invited.  
 This is our core, to have spread the asparagus,  
 and to have perceived beauty in every mundane spread,  
 in atolls of guano, in the coarse heels of Caravaggio.  
 The demand on soul now is to ordain those powers still denied a human form,  
 to get the lower body out before its repressive furnaces ignite all worlds.  
 But you'll end up here'? —he stared at me—  
 "in that most awful term, regardless. Regardless the children,  
 regardless the maggots. Regardless, the name of America,  
 why not 'Regardless' as the name of your poem?"

Why not 'Am Let' chipped into your headstone,

I said without thinking, irritated by his arrogance.  
But the wine came round the glass, and I saw the density in his stained intentions.  
Like Spicer, he had slept with all his poems.

At my thought of Spicer, Crane performed a fascinating act:  
he shoved into the bar an iron stove into whose side had been l  
riveted: The Poem  
Then, working his face as if it were rubber,  
he climbed a ladder and threw himself off

as if into the stove whose entire top was open and glowing red.

Having leapt, suspended in flight, he turned his head and looked at me with a most amazing expression: he made me feel as if I were his primal scene, I mean, he looked at me with awe disgust amazement joy—and Lascaux!

For behind the coral snakes backing up his gaze bison were amassing, as if I, as mortal non-otherness, was mammal blend in art—was I meat parts? His association with a slaughterhouse?

Then he swerved, converting his falling leap into a J, at which point the stove broke into “Giant Steps”!

Seconds later, I was in the furnace with Crane, soldered to its northern wall, a kind of spectator, though I felt riveted to rotunda iron, Crane was in the flames, or waves, or billows, playing and dissolving,

he drew up and out certain flames, as if udders, or cocks, lengthening them, spires, tapers, then he'd fasten on, with any part of his body, navel, mouth, and revolve, spinning helplessly, ecstatic, a propeller-man, and then arch up swan-dively, and then burn down onto another peak.

He was mostly head, his body hummingbird.

He flitted, simultaneously, inside and outside himself, nectaring the flames, collecting as he spun.

As if all mask, he spun and held in place about

F an inch above the fattest flame. His eyelids curved outward and downward, he looked like an old dying infant! Churchill at 6 months!

Slowly he blasted backward, against the oath extending his reign, contracted to a foetal zenith, and then inflated, a small transparent dirigible, with electric wind, and I could see inside Crane at this moment the emphasis of the Atikai, old helpless stars, worn to ember, rekindling in this consecrated pod—consecrated? Yes, because poetry is a primal emphasis, and uplifts in its sutured arms a paeonic bed swarming with predecessor copulators, a plate of Medusa as lightning pasta. Then Hart repoured into his deathly skin and looked at me as if he were selling apples.

“Askesis,” he said off-handedly, “Bloom’s delight is to show in critical X ray the contra-naturam of the poem, but since he did not write poetry, he must hover-foster it, you know, immaculate its eggy conception.

As you and I know, poems are dragged out of moray crevices, they are braille impressions of forgotten infant soles, their mordants an aggregate imposition.

The book is always late; the book is, in fact, belatedness.

Literate fumes are oral ember dependent. Through the looted streets of the late 1960s comes Harold Bloom,

bearing his memoried reading of Paradise Lost—

he is as moving as James Baldwin driving through shattered

Harlem plate glass, his father’s



lifelong nonwords on his mind, his just dead father, who never  
said a tender word to James.

We must not forget that in the doorweave of Lascaux,  
critic is indistinguishable from poet.

We live on withering—or growing?—swaying beanstalks  
whose roots are hidden, receivable as emanations  
but static to contemporary radios... Cocteau's 'Orpheus,'

hunched before the Rolls Royce radio, tried to make sense of noise,  
 as have we all, for ages! Was Orpheus aware  
 that the scat was exploded particles of Okeanos,  
 that what was firing through, via his 'radio,' was the god stuff  
 that has been in holding-scatter since the death of Pan?  
 From my gloomy viewpoint, your discovery of me in your winestream  
 as an emanation, and not a ghost, is a gain in respect to inspiration  
 and the recognition of a new abyss in life.  
 I killed myself because I was out of bond with an essential cosmos,  
 I felt disgrace, not as a cocksucker or punching-bag for stokers...  
 I split because even in Mexico I could not find a wavering sky-band  
 to bolt me into the now of my destiny.'"

He swirled his La Tache and growled:  
 "For the hearing remains in the beast,  
 and is of the beast, and must be fucked out of the beast,  
 must literally be drawn from that fist-like pouch  
 that would keep knowing opaque, that testical-haven,  
 that muttercore, that inverted tower of infant blasphemy,  
     'the unspeakable cruelty  
 of living and having no being who could justify you...'  
 —loss of god? But we've never had god, or gods,  
 as Western plagiarists we went to church,  
 no serpent was inserted into our most tender aperture at 12,  
 and the night? THE nicuT 1s OpHeuian,'" he raged,  
 "'her body in water, is the feel of night  
 as it slips through us, toward us, as the cling of things  
 again and again releases, as innocent beauty  
 again and again sinks through the pond layers of our bile and our confusion...'"

I could tell he was tiring, that a sublimation was starting to claim him.  
 We said nothing for a while. Me thinking of the naked Hiroshima man  
 standing in that inferno, holding his eyeball out in his palm.  
 I thought of my nightmare, in which that eyeball  
 leapt into the sky and hugely hovered over me, that eyeball  
 more powerful than our moon, the conscience satellite,  
 raying down, as if a helicopter beam, into Everyman's backyard...

Crane cupped his goblet and broke paralysis back through his shoulders  
 by squeezing his glass until his back snapped.  
 He then recollected his anatomy, bagged himself small,  
 a hairless creature at the base of the goblet.  
 He saluted me like a sailor, lurched to a straw,  
 pole-vaulted up to the rim, ascended and  
 dove with a wink, like, I've done this before!  
 disappearing into the crimson wreath, or Lethe,

of the tiny lagoon the scarlet violence recalled within the round aplomb.  
Where was he diving now? As he entered the stem, I saw stars.  
Was this vision to free me into an ample vulgarity?  
A liquid fart of swear words zigzagged forth, and he was gone,  
vulgar and feral, vulgar, of the Bulgar, Vulgarian and thorough.

## Issue No. 8 · Contributors

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**WILL ALEXANDER** is the author of a book of poems, *Vertical Rainbow*, which appeared in 1987. He has published poems, parts of novels, tales, in magazines such as *Hambone*, *Sulfur*, *River Styx*, *Bachy*. He recently completed his third novel, *Voice from the Nursery of Vengeance*.

**BRUCE CAMPBELL**'s articles on David C.D. Gansz, Bruce Andrews and Charles Bernstein appeared in *Temblor* 7. His writings on contemporary poetry have appeared also in *U.C.S.D. Poetry Archives Newsletter*, *Sulfur*, *The Difficulties* and *American Poetry*.

**CLAYTON ESHLEMAN**'s "At the Speed of Wine" ends his new collection, *Hotel Cro-Magnon*, which will be published by Black Sparrow Press in Spring 1989. Also out this year are *Antiphonal Swing: Selected Prose 1962-1987* and *Conductors of the Pit: Major Works of Rimbaud, Vallejo, Artaud, Césaire and Holan*.

**DAVID C.D. GANSZ** is Senior Contributing Editor of *Notus*. His books of poetry are *Animadversions* and the forthcoming *Sin Tactics*, which originally appeared in *Temblor* 6 and for which Gansz was recently awarded an Individual Artists Fellowship by the Dutchess Arts Fund, Poughkeepsie, New York.

**BARBARA GUEST**'s latest book of poems is *Fair Realism* (Sun & Moon, 1988).

**CHARLES O. HARTMAN**'s recently completed book of poetry, *The Difference Engine*, was begun on an NEA fellowship and completed (along with another on computer-poetry) on a fellowship from the Ingram Merrill Foundation. Awaiting a publisher is another book, *The Jazz Anthology: Voice and Improvisation in Poetry, Jazz and Song*. His published works include *The Pigfoot Rebellion* (poems, Godine, 1982), and *Free Verse: An Essay on Prosody* (Princeton, 1981). He lives in Providence and teaches at Connecticut College.

**MARY HAYNES** lives in Quirpon, Newfoundland. Her poems have appeared in *Bachy*, *Boxcar*, *The New Yorker*, and *American Poetry Review*.

**BENJAMIN HOLLANDER** is the editor of *Translating Tradition: Paul Celan in France* (ACTS 8/9, 1988) and is associate editor of *ACTS: A Journal of New Writing*, for which he recently received an Editor's Grant, along with David Levi Strauss, from the Coordinating Council of Literary Magazines. His poetry and criticism have appeared in various places, including *Sulfur*, *Conjunctions*, *O One/An Anthology*, *The American Book Review*, *Temblor*, and *ACTS*. He is currently writing a series of critical works for a book to be entitled *analytic lyric: critical music*, of which his piece on William Bronk in this issue is an example.

**ROBERT KELLY**'s "most recent publications: *Doctor of Silence* (my second collection of short stories) and *The Flowers of Unceasing Coincidence* (a long poem exploring what I can do to help syntax fight against itself and free us up a little — I called the plot/technique 'allocentric,' why not, who's listening?) both just out this summer of 1988, and before that the most recent collection of shorter poems, *Not This Island Music*. This summer I'm gathering the next collection, under the working title of *Mind The Gap*."

HANK LAZER, who edited *What Is A Poet?* (University of Alabama Press, 1987), has poems and essays appearing or forthcoming in *The Nation*, *Ottotole*, *Paper Air*, *Virginia Quarterly Review*, and *Central Park*.

ANDREW LEVY is the author of *between poems*. "Reading Places, Reading Times," a short manuscript of lyric poems, was recently published in *ABACUS*, issue #32. He is completing a new book, *And Their Space Be Gone — Messages Plus Attention*, due out early 1989. He lives in Brooklyn.

TOM MANDEL lives in San Francisco and is the author of *Euc Y* (Tuumba, 1978), *EraT* (Burning Deck, 1981), *Ready to Go* (Ithaca House, 1981), *Central Europe* (Coincidence Press, 1986) and *Some Appearances* (Jimmy's House of Knowledge, 1987). His works printed in this issue form part of a new book, as yet untitled, forthcoming in 1989 from GAZ Press. Besides his many books and periodical publications, Mandel has been Director of the Poetry Center. Recently, his work was featured in *The Best American Poetry*, edited by John Ashbery and published by Scribners.

STEVE MCCAFFERY lives in Toronto, Ontario. Recent work includes a collection of essays, *North of Intention* (Roof/Nightwood, 1986); *Evoba: The Investigations Meditations, 1976-78* (Coach House Press, 1987); and an issue of *Open Letter* devoted to his writing (Sixth Series, No. 9, Fall 1987). Earlier parts of *Lag* have appeared in *Temblor 4* and *Writing 21*.

DUNCAN MCNAUGHTON will be publishing new work in a newsletter slated to begin publication this year, edited by John Clarke. His book *Love Triumphant: Meditations on Wm. Shakespeare's Sonnets* will be published by Personabooks in Oakland, as will *CPF*, a volume of poems and prose, by Waternet/Tombouctou in Bolinas, both in 1989. Recent poems were published in *Measurements: Out From Buffalo* (1988), "Poems on the Occasion of Bill Sylvester's Retirement."

STEPHEN RATCLIFFE's books include *Distance* and *Mobile/Mobile*. His work has appeared in *Sulfur* and *Temblor*, among many magazines.

JACQUES ROUBAUD's poems in this issue constitute one of the nine sections of nine prose poems of nine paragraphs each of *Quelque chose noir*, an elegy for his wife, the French Canadian photographer Alix Cleo Roubaud. His novel, *Our Beautiful Heroine*, is available from Overlook Press. He collaborated with Octavio Paz, Edoardo Sanguineti and Charles Tomlinson on the multilingual poem *RENGA* and is a member of OULIPO, the "workshop for potential literature."

LESLIE SCALAPINO's recent book, a long poem entitled *way*, is reviewed by Stephen Ratcliffe in this issue. She edits O Books in Oakland as well as its anthology, the first issue of which, *O One*, has just been published.

AARON SHURIN's newest book is *Elsewhere*, from ACTS Books. He has recent work in *Notus*, *Socialist Review*, and the anthology *O One*.

RON SILLIMAN has given readings this year in Kahului, Maui and Tarascon, Provence.

D. E. STEWARD's *Contact Inhibition* (1985) is still in print. Other excerpts from the present work, *Chroma*, are out in *Conjunctions* and *Sulfur*.

JOHN TAGGART's *Loop* is being published this fall by Sun & Moon; at the same time the Landlocked Press will publish *Prompted*, a collection of his jazz poems with drawings by Bradford Graves. He has recently published an essay on Zukofsky's poetics in *American Poetry*, and the text of his George Oppen Memorial Lecture will appear in *Ironwood*.

NATHANIEL TARN's *Descriptive Bibliography* has just been published by McFarland. Coffee House Press will publish *Seeing America First* in Spring 1989. In the fall, he will have a residency at the Rockefeller Foundation Center at Bellagio, Lake Como, Italy.

JOHN THOMAS: "Born in Baltimore, December 31, 1930. *John Thomas*, Red Hill Press (1972); *Epopoeia and the Decay of Satire*, Red Hill Press (1976); *From Patagonia*, Red Hill Press (1983). Forthcoming in 1989 from Illuminati Press: *Nevertheless*. Lives in Venice with his wife, poet Philomene Long."

ROSMARIE WALDROP's most recent books are *The Reproduction of Profiles* (New Directions) and a novel, *The Hanky of Pippin's Daughter* (Station Hill Press).

DIANE WARD has a new book out from Roof Books. She currently lives in Los Angeles and recently co-edited *Pessimistic Labor 2*.

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