Aufgabe

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Aufgabe

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We writers are thieves. I can think of no writer who does not revel in the discovery of some morsel – word, phrase, idea – to be consumed and returned to the page: language digested into language. The language is thus changed by perception and reconfiguration, then passed on to a reader who disentangles the work, and takes something for her/himself. This movement into and through language creates the possibility for a resistance against limits imposed on meaning, and it is through the channels of this resistance that I pass from writer to editor.

The title of this journal is taken from the German to mean work, task, or purpose. The purpose, as set out in the original call for submissions, was to present writing ‘that challenges static cultural modes of thinking and being,’ as well as to provide readers in this country with a guest edited section of work from another country. While this purpose still remains, the idea that each issue of the journal has its own ‘task,’ seems to me now too simplistic. The task for me has become one which is perhaps most familiar to the translator: how to negotiate the space between writer and editor, where ‘reader’ is dually implied. As I began thinking about writing this note, it occurred to me that the task of the editor involves a kind of risk which emerges in this passage from writer to editor.

The risk involved may not actually be one of life and death, but considering Barthes, it may figuratively represent such concerns. If a writer’s “only power is to mix writings, to counter the ones with the others, in such a way as never to rest on any one of them,” then what is the ‘power’ of the editor? The obvious answer is that the editor is making such writing available in some format to an audience; otherwise our ‘scriptor,’ as she dies, would die in obscurity. However, I am interested in the ways in which the line between writer and editor blurs. At times, the line has not seemed so clear. The experience for me of editing an issue is similar, in some ways, to composing a piece of writing. I am presented with writing from multiple sources, and as a reader I slip into the role of disentangling and consuming. I select pieces, fragments, and excerpts from these sources. I arrange and “counter the ones with the others.” The assemblage is then passed on to the readers, who now not only must disentangle the language/writing within the journal but the language of the journal itself. And so, in a sense, writer and

editor suffer the same demise, and for the same end. Barthes point, of course, is that the reader become active, that the reader participate in the meaning that is made of the text. The particular aesthetics, position(s), politics, of the editor/writer become irrelevant, or at the very least secondary, to the meaning which is made of the text by the reader.

Of course, aesthetics, positions and politics are never entirely irrelevant, and at no point in the movement from one position to another is it possible to avoid participation, for the reader is always implied. In this way, because if you are a writer (or editor, or translator) you are a reader, the politics of the writing and of the presentation of that writing are dependent on one’s position in relation to the culture and language in which one finds oneself. And so I pass through the role of editor because the proliferation of spaces wherein one might resist a culture or language that imposes limits on, or dictates, meaning is crucial. The task of creating these spaces is necessarily the responsibility of those readers who insist that the text remain open, as a form of resistance. It has always fallen upon those outside the cultural mainstream to create the space they seek to occupy, to represent themselves where they have not been represented, to insist that language remain flexible, unoppressive, alive.

Small press publishing in all its formats “is the creation...of those poets who have seized or often have invented their own means of production and distribution...something we’ve demanded as a value that must remain first and foremost under each poet’s own control,”* where the control exercised is not one over meaning, but an insistence on the movement between writer-reader-editor that defends the right to make meaning. So the risk becomes not a personal one but the risk of concession. Writing from where many of us do, an increasingly large margin, it is imperative that the means of production and distribution remain in our hands, that we continue to use whatever means available to present writing that is the product of thinking, disentangling, and resisting. The task at hand is not to stop.

—E. TRACY GRINNELL

**ERRATUM NOTE**

Jackson Mac Low's poem, "Stein 75," published in Aufgabe #1, contains the following error: line 5, strophe 3 was erroneously left in the file sent to me for publication. Also, there should be a period after "could" 6 lines before the end of the poem.

If you possess a copy of Aufgabe #1, please cross out the line "She or any or all of them," and insert a period after "could."

Thank you.

E. TRACY GRINNELL,  
Editor
CARLFRIEDRICH CLAUS, Attempt to Impregnate Affective Processes with Language-Thought: Subliminal Landscape

Translations from the German by Rosmarie Waldrop & Andrew Joron
The twelve writers in this section are not “representative” of anything. Some Andrew Joron or I have discovered recently, in magazines like Zwischen den Zeilen or Manuskripte. Others are old loves we’ve taken this occasion to translate more of.

A number of the poets (Elfriede Czurda, Gundi Feyrer, Birgit Kempker, Waltraud Seidlhofer, Barbara Köhler) share a strong interest in visual art as well as a reaction against the rich, saturated language of “beautiful” writing, of “literature.” In their very different ways they work with narrow vocabularies, flat, denotative language which they explore through permutation, often moving in Gertrude Stein fashion one step at a time. Barbara Köhler in particular uses a syntax that tests the relation of subject and object. As they begin to slide and oscillate we are taken into new indeterminate spaces, as we might be by film scenes shot in a “blue box.”

Richard Anders is interested in the visual too (one of his collages is reproduced here), but from a very different angle. He embraces the heritage of surrealism wholeheartedly, if with a touch of melancholy. Whereas Bruno Steiger seems obsessed with uncovering and dismantling the mechanisms of image and writing.

In Elke Erb’s early poems, complex syntax gave the lie to official GDR simplicities. The more recent poems presented here have the more relaxed structure of journal entries, but always with her eye “fixed on the molecule.”

So is Michael Donhauser’s, who reads nature as if language were a microscope, with scientific precision and the strangeness that comes from the “enlargement” of close attention.

Dieter Gräf’s “text machines” tackle our digital world with aggressive, pleasurable energy and speed, with complex collages cut against the grain of both the everyday and Poetry (with a capital P).

Ulf Stolterfoht constructs and deconstructs a world of jargons with a delightful sense of play and satire: “not only the world is the world.” He takes particular pleasure in the tortured syntax of bureaucratic German and its empty spin.

Walter Thümler is concerned with the relation that precedes the poem and the foreignness of the other that precedes relation. Also with the shipwreck without which, he says, a poet cannot be a poet.

Carl Friedrich Claus, one of whose “thought landscapes” introduces this section, died a few years ago. A “concrete” poet? A visual artist? Language
is his material, language in movement, the gesture of writing. His work moves along the border that divides language from both image and the speechless – and at the same time makes them touch.

The translations are mine unless marked: translated by Andrew Joron.

– ROSMARIE WALDROP
The Cabinet

Thus, opened to an A and shut again, it stands.
Tall, wide, deep in the room, a provisional piece of steadfastness.
Of pinewood.
Whose numerous eyes lie like deep-brown islands or island-chains in the river of its grain.
It reposes in itself.
No afternoon seems able to find fault with it, no appeal would coax it forth now from its silent being.
Is its secure position in the world of work the ultimate reason for its imperturbability?
It remains, unanswered, not spreading its wings, its doors, in order to flap them.
To take to the air like some crow.
It just coos when I open it, and displays the linen, for which it serves as dungeon or jailer.
Square-built, heavy-set, it's concerned only with its task, to close into itself every chaotic swirl for the sake of a quiet orderliness.
Only toward evening, while reminiscing about its origins, its travels as a steamer trunk, does it give off an otherworldly glow.
It creaks if I lay a hand upon it, intending to shift it.
In this way it persists in its steadfastness, so I leave it alone.
As a kind of head adornment it wears my hat, two bottles of wine, a quince, a candelabrum.
**Picket Fence**

It is first of all, has been, here separates me picket by picket.
From you, if anything like “in back of, in front of” still existed.
Partitions and intervals, light and shadow.
I have learned, to have lost myself, to lose.
In the exactitude, with which it varies the eternal sameness.
Or might find, in the crookedly hammered nailheads, the trace.
Once again, scarred over, rusted black, cross after cross.
Concealed, interwoven with hedges, woodpiles, meadows, mead.
Between them, now and again, its substance shines off-white, and between.
Thin timbers fallen into a beyond, into still another Garden.

**Morning**

Morning is when I watch and wait.
Begins with the first apprehension of gray, a pale transparency.
So is somewhat hesitant, veiled in its very inception.
There’s no bursting-forth that it would proclaim.
Slowly, it bares the day, isolates the sounds.
Transforms all that is spoken into the subtitles of its mute labor.
Or still repeats, in residuals, the erstwhile rooster.
In the clattering of beer crates, in the slamming of doors.
Otherwise every point of orientation goes missing.
It dissolves all remembering in favor of visibility.
Of distinctness, of frontal facades.
Finally I’m left with only an inkling of it.
Like of a morning as morning in morning.
**The Stone**

Impossible to write about it in the plural without losing its monosyllabic quality.* Here too, then, it shapes itself by a series of negations. It does not point backward, through fissures; shows no edges that remain unrounded; its origins are erased by the age-old influence of water. Thus: from its power of opposition is taken everything conspicuous, everything close at hand like, perhaps, the act of breaking it by means of oppositions. It even withstands comparison to a potato, which – peeled, damaged by the cut of a spade, riddled by what was likely a worm – could shed light on it. No skin, slightly yellowed or as frosted-glass clear mosaic, that protects it, to which its tesselations bear a likeness; few its furrows that resemble only those of a skin. Facet by facet brighter, reflective: so what results is the illusion of a transparency, of a time before the muteness of the present became fixed within it, tangible. Placed in the hand, it allows its never-to-be-completed form to be perceived, to be reconstructed by turnings and rubbings. With its aroma, it holds fast even the most ephemeral: the first cooling at the start of a storm, when such arises, almost boiling. Otherwise no remembering, only the urge to throw it, to cause its hardness to take effect beyond speech.

* Translator’s note: In German, the plural of “stone” is a word of two syllables (Steine).
from *Blue Box*

Barbara Köhler

I practice being alone and think I've made some progress. I talk to language, sometimes it answers. Sometimes somebody else answers. I no longer count on being understood. Mathematics is not my field.

**In the Movies**

"Film is twenty-four truths per second"

—Jean-Luc Godard

Twenty-four times per second
I run from myself comes
toward me says: I

run away am held
fast by images
running a massacre
every move a turn
in sleep twenty-four
states per second hour
the day divided a strained
voice the soundtrack says: I

'Ve run astray don't see for
all the images the film
the still point see before
me twenty-four statements
per second moves the hand
clapped over my mouth: life

hurts madam fall to.
Vík í Myrdal

This is black beach and not a metaphor
within sight on the horizon
the white between cloud and mountain is
the glacier above the volcano this yellow here
beach grass from last year and over there
the red Franz Gislason Redressed
said Gyrthir and Gunnar and Njal rode by here
about a thousand years ago.

Chiasma

I love you I say
in your dream: I know
you’re asleep you hear me
not I dream you
if deep the night
& vast the space
loneliness
I stand by
you
I stand by
loneliness
& vast the space
if deep the night
not I dream you
you're asleep you hear me
in my dream: I know
I love you I say
i want to deliver my judgments where is the address where does one take part take in & on one's fate & hang in there but going where is an opinion shared & who shares with whom profiteth the loss who settles and reaches settlements who is just and who just is and is there justice who proposes & disposes whose vision is envisioned who takes the jackpot & the spotlight to the end of the tunnel leads who follows gives in good time his judgment & so one thing leads to another hanging

**Sophie's Friend**

"I" just isn't said he said it isn't a matter of me or you he said talked about monads structures post-histoire signifyers you are not Nietzsche are you crazy to want to put your two cents' worth in let's say you are NotI are my wife
Body and Soul

Fear is a birthmark & behind your back incomprehensible a hole that touches the heart through and through a blackness crabwise into childhood fear is the mother of all things whose father is war is the trajectory of the projectile is called soul say the soldiers in this tongue each gun has its purpose is soulfulness a hollow space a wound canal is fear between the shoulderblades when you turn your back it strikes
a city consists first of all of facades.
everybody arriving in a city is immediately confronted with them.
there is no chance of escaping facades.
the facades of a city face the newcomer in a friendly, hostile or indifferent manner.
sometimes the facades of particular cities are similar.
this may be because of the kind of city (industrial, commercial, seaport etc.)
or because of the period of construction.
the similarity of two cities may be a subjective feeling in a person.
here personal factors play an important part.
a special kind of similarity of two cities is their being opposites:
it is possible that two cities are different in almost all respect so that one can be called the negative of the other.
between such cities there is a particular kind of bond which is apt to affect individual inhabitants of these cities when they meet – perhaps by chance – in a very particular way.
when the inhabitants of the two cities have carried out their function, that is the comparison of the two cities, according to their abilities they may separate without further problems. new encounters will take place.
in all these encounters chance plays an essential part.

facades close rank.
they are serried.
their different color, form, style etc. does not keep them from lining up in blocks.
facades in closed rank are impenetrable.
from facades in closed rank no help can be expected.
it is impossible to speak to them.
it is impossible to stand up against them.
they will not answer.
one cannot demand that they take a position.
especially in late winter facades in closed rank convey disapproval.
evening and morning light on facades in closed rank increases one’s insecurity.
facades cannot be circumvented.
from time to time a facade begins to crumble.  
the crumbling of a facade is always unexpected.  
if it were expected one could take precautions.  
the crumbling of a facade is slow.  
it begins on the lower parts of the facade.  
cautiously pieces begin to break off or crumble.  
at the beginning the structure remains intact.  
window and door openings are still recognizable.  
the upper parts of a facade seem to be more resistant.  
it often takes hours, even days before they crumble.  
they seem to be able to remain suspended above the already crumbled lower parts.  
the element of threat comes to the foreground.  
crowds of people gather before a crumbling facade.  
bets are placed on how long the crumbling will take.  
crumbling facades do not tilt but collapse slowly, vertically.  
the rules of physics and geometry remain in force.  
the sums of the angles are calculated precisely.  
sometimes people talk to the facade directly.  
the time of crumbling has never yet been influenced by words.  
the process of crumbling can neither be speeded up nor slowed down.  
nor can it be arbitrarily caused or stopped.  
glass panes are particularly resistant to crumbling.  
we have observed crumbling facades that consisted of nothing but window panes.  
such a phenomenon can last several minutes.  
the crumbling is recorded in space-time-grids.  
no dust develops in the crumbling of facades.  
a certain beauty in the crumbling of a facade cannot be denied.  
the recorders take turns constantly.  
every record has to be counter-signed.  
the crumbling of a facade is considered complete when no part remains on top of another.
then, I said to p, comes the moment when the facades retreat. 
the land opens wide. 
first you are blinded. 
then you take one step after another into this land. 
periodical shifting of the horizon intensifies the impulse to go on. 
vegetation decreases. 
you think of deserts. 
fascination increases more and more. 
at first you still hear voices. 
then the stillness forces you to think. 
animal sounds get rare. 
then, p said to me, you find thorny structures and constellations. 
you remember single lines from books. 
some word or other, too, is heard clearly and distinctly. 
there is no more change from day to night. 
memories surface. 
they are lasting and in color. 
conversations can be reproduced easily and at any time. 
a state of painlessness commences. 
there is barely any fatigue. 
then, I said to p, comes again and again the moment when you fall back 
among the facades. 
they have not aged in the meantime, we observed.
opens brightly: sentences exist. deduces claims:
full of words. and that is all there is.
in overtones a merely as what’s surely commonly:
good perception of fruit – may well
stand for other things. complete perception of
good fruit – here’s how it functions:

like apples eyes and. not to mention pears.
presumes pending corroboration: the apple does not
see itself. in this it’s like the eye. you can’t tell from
the looks of one (please look at this as a sentence)
it’s being looked at by another. “please look at this as
a sentence” likewise to be looked at as a sentence etc.

“is to say” takes place. aspects apace. one owes/
thanks/is obliged. “is to mean” goes haywire. also
“more later” belongs here. strong feelings of happiness
through fruit. a newer. a better. a dapper
perhaps. perhaps mere structures but at least crude
and pure. leads from needy to approximate. the word

of fruit in the eye of the beholder. the post as
beam or mote. the sentence of the hereditary
branch. the word of trunk a hybrid. first: the
wrong fruit in the right place. then: the tree as
word – a good sentence. then if i’m not mistaken
the whole tree on the left as strongest branch.
what still remains of “songless” – “an earnest bird” brings up. no earnest bird discusses what seemed essentially the fact. he as it were cancels himself out. you mentally shake your head. you nod. you say i see. this must the essence of negation be. and what’s confusing at a second glance:... NO X

HORSES (... carry you away) at a third holds up and fast. no one horse holds so fast. eleven horses or else nine: carry you away. just as no ten. they hold you fast. then let’s have at it at no zero horses – to sidle/bridle up! a matter

(to remove last lingering doubts): not not to be neglected. not to forget: forgotten. to hunger. simply done. resolved: to cut the bread. forgets. is now (the bread harder and harder) to cut to be called to “saw”? may your speech be yea yea / nay nay!

what’s likewise hard to clarify: if probably perhaps exists. tendency: perhaps. probably not. but here you quickly stand alone. and can’t help make a stand for “nonsense absolute” as having making sense some. unprofitable enterprise: not only not to say not / to do un. but then its beauty too.
whereas as late as 1874 green was thought a simple color men later proceeded to. starting from here could be anticipated possibilities two: either/or. either “heaven knows what the colorblind really see” (schulte) or: heaven does not.

where referred explicitly to green, so the whereas stayed unexamined though evidently there (as in the heilbronn slaughter-house) “all strands came together:” partly with / partly without. partly in any case with: in part spellbound multiplicity. which would designate one strand. and does.

strand 1. everything goes according to plan: even while you utter e.g. “quail damage” / establish the danger of – much pushes in directions like: mere ditty or heredity? much seems to point to (strand 2) that this time there are possibilities three: defective percept. defective concept. – says schulte: or both! we by the way incline decidedly toward ditty. decisive this is (see above) not. it was a hard road from yellow to blue. you had to be rigged out. there were vibrations as of red in green. you had to settle in. you come to circa 1950: and meanwhile to terms.
critico/traditional: why screams inaudibly instead
of suddenly falls silent where at least according to the ear
in-difference was the given fact you described manico/
syntactically “the secret of one=self in terms of
interior decoration:” table lamp chair & bed la-
mented on the other hand and in a voice of deep

jaw-potent purple consternation the increasing
literary “vechtation” of the spirit (and your part in it)
instead of topping: let’s go friends! to where
meaning’s born a gaelic “forka need?” with hearty
CHRISTEN CHRISTEN only to be saddle-tenderized
and then die with a gasp. clinico/experimental:

“the softness, compressed within its uniform, of
hitler flesh” that literally strikes you dead.
the way things fall apart: lily ravished. worm
lavished. song suddenly silent. razes me
to fertile ground. raises instinct into botany.
as the wind blows / so the vote goes: insane construct
to outlaw sensuality once and for all. critico/
traditional: if images at all let them be bad.
manico/syntactical: painting mock-ups. bogus attacks.
clinico/experimental: “talis is a word abused
in many passims. i am developing a quantum
theory of this” – mangy-o/frontal.

* Translator’s note: Vechta is the birthplace of the German poet Rolf Dieter Brinkmann. The author comments that for him “vechtation” designates the fear of a return of the 1970s.
unexpectedly doesn’t arrive – quite retro rather what comes rolling in as text: half musty half decaying breath (discard after 02) a hundred years of mushrooms to wade through / bizarre centenary. so far rhizome scenarios charm the art brat. till crisis of expression “makes him quake.”

sensing the sense-cadaver’s nameless shattering as its last chance a lyric i enters the dance with breeze-precision counter-wheeze and honey-sweet soliciting: “come here what ables has to syll – come here! I still take good care of my sentences. am shepherd and lord to the poor word / of scattered phonemes the safe port.” materials took this in, surprised. mildly, it must be said. result “accordingly” called STOP THE POETIC MOM-AND-POPS and slaughterhouses or (destruction’s got to be a twin!): the terrors of a fox farm while the beasts are skinned.

the rapture in the butcher’s posture: what could come has come and elates/“disintegrates” and also – we’re talking concepts: pellet droppings/system prop. what now still laps turns into non-committal slop. the wound’s lip bulges into stump. in the vernacular protein grows rank. then litterature upheaves its sink.
“borrowed lynx eyes from common rhyme-and-reason-sense” to decode rests of palimpsests in shorthand remap concept-scrap with badger paws and scratch off scrape down recent coats of varnish “to compare the more keen-sightedly the qualities of things.”

corpse in(tro)spection. from words that become tangible “once they mightily neighborly groan” via a lyrico-typical strutting sound “hybrid” straight to pseudo-vico’s “place before time” – oppressive fragments. but something still resists. there is a threat of other tones.

attempts in mutant meter. manipulated metronome. compulsive forte -bark at marked passages. especially in complex sentences let’s give self-consciousness to form. and that’s just the beginning. the current state of sound: good. the tone gestalt however lags behind.

skirmishes with sense continue. the dogged look of compound sentences. they are the last to pass with thanks. thus you disband positions. a foreign scalp most decorative. thus you unmask a posture. the barbarism of abstraction. poetry hurrah! language is allowed to obey vision.
your most obedient is doing duty to consider
your art-tissue as non-bombast to presume
to prove to make it known a paragon: make
sure there are new hangers-on. these lines just run
around. how easily you turn your talent to
account seems crystal clearly characteristic of

your clout. the too bright light remains in doubt.
although a place of breeding with downright
deadbeat quality. as if it were a part of
further if at all possible attempts as usual
to help yourself. so that you finally put on some
text. but then, say, jena. thuringian con-
ditions. the back-in-anger look is lacking.
there really have been goings-on: those
slippery dogs this walk on water and
alas rearmament. spoken through gaps.
ever more broken. flexed pallaksch-
athena-fragments of the lords of indisputable.

life maintained in language heft. whose “in-
erent” nevertheless afflicted with. the pus
“inherent” in these easter bells – look!
look how the dear old willows sway.
i would like best to go to (grow) pot. how easily
language comes off the bone—just have a look.
Sitting

Gundi Feyrer

If You Sit Once You Will Sit Many Times

If you sit once you sit infinitely many times at the same time. The number of these infinitely many sittings cannot be determined because we cannot count. It is a bowl of water. All that forms this amount of water consists in water and is itself water. Infinitely many drops of water find themselves in a bowl of water. They find themselves by forming a bowl of water. How many drops find themselves in a bowl of water cannot be counted. The drops themselves cannot be counted. To sit once is a bowl of water. To sit once is to sit infinitely many times. Every sitting, no matter how short or even shorter, is mirrored in its outer limit, to sit for some time. If you say I sat for a minute it may mean you sat 300 times. If someone says I sat for a minute it may also mean he sat a thousand times. The number of elements of sitting or the repeated acts of sitting cannot be counted or even estimated. The measure of time has no relation to the quantity of elements of sitting. We cannot say to sit for one minute corresponds to 300 times of sitting, and for two minutes therefore to 600 times. The difference between two people who sit for different lengths of time is not considerable: both are infinitely often engaged in this activity. All depends on how small you think: the smaller you think the more times you sit when you sit. If we say somebody has his own time the length of this time is unimportant. Time is always time. It may be longer than one time and it may be shorter than one time so that we cannot know whether it is actually time or just a pimple. When time is one time it is one time.
Where Does Sitting Take Place

Does it take place in the sitter’s behind or in the chair or around it, does it circle the sitter and the sat-on or where is it.
Where does it happen, where does it find its place.
Wherever we find ourselves there is a place.
Sitting happens anywhere and nowhere which is the same thing because we do not know the place in which it takes place.
We can say I am sitting on a chair, but where sitting takes place as an enacted state of affairs we cannot say. We do not know what it looks like or what form it has if it has one.
We see what we see.
Sitting cannot be seen.
One can devote oneself to sitting and really sit.
It, i.e. sitting happens wherever it takes place. This place cannot be pictured.
Sitting hides behind its appearances and in the accompanying objects.
Sitting may appear and this appearance we can take in.
Sitting is luminous and this luminosity we take in without seeing it.
Sitting exists only once and is always the same.
It does not last and has no place that we know.
To Sit and Not-to-sit

When do we really sit with devotion.
When does sitting find its place which we don’t know, but know it exists.
We do not always sit when we sit.
We all know precisely when we sit and when we don’t.
Sitting-in-a-dentist’s-waiting-room is rarely real sitting: it is waiting or being scared.
The one and only way to sit is a matter of courage.
As soon as courage is joined to light sitting finds its place and we know it.
Some people read while sitting. If they read intensely and reflect they are not sitting but reading.
They are wandering through mountains or swimming or doing some such thing.
Sitting only happens when we really sit with devotion.
Sitting Is an Activity

Sitting is an activity repeated over and over again.
It is repeated infinitely many times once we sit.
This activity is something very special just like playing ball or smoking are very special activities.
We all do what we do.
Sweating is similar:
Everyone who sweats does so infinitely many times and over and over again.
In a sauna there is a sea of sweat growing steadily.
Real sweating and real sitting have no place in time: they always take place infinitely many times, no matter how long they take place.
They always find a place.
When Sitting Steps on Somebody’s Toes

Sitting likes to step on walls because there it multiplies.
Walls are mirrors where sitting is reflected back and forth.
This increases the speed of sitting.
Sitting is again and again reflected back and forth between walls till it’s in full swing and swinging.
The wing of the swing covers all else.
Thus we get an inkling.
Sitting happens infinitely more often between walls than elsewhere so that living is more sluggish.
There are places that have for centuries given inklings of sitting, e. g. a seat of kings.
Sitting is held captive between walls, grows dense and is lived slow as a slug.
Where Driving Is Left to Others We Can Really Sit

If we really sit in a bus we know the driver is good. If we know the driver is good we can leave the driving to him. This way we can allow sitting to happen and mingle with other things. The other things may be hearing, looking, thinking. This way sitting is made to blossom
Talking to Oneself Is Just a Roar From the Sea

because the self, as we’ve got it, 
the pure
– under God’s jealous & sanctimonious blink –
gold

that our Siberian, Carpathian and Klondike claws 
scraped from rugged quartz:

extraordinarily soft
and elastic, easy

to modify mechanically, and
slow to react,

a monstrance disk it nods on its stem

neither listens nor talks itself,

an incarnation
of the innermost brain –
O blastula, O gastrula, O guest

from distant seas, traveling
in as it were rising ponds,

amoeba in
pond’s ear, roar of the sea

May – 7/3/94
Train Across The Spree River

Yes stroking
me, soothing

below, from quay to quay the precise strokes
lead grey, pleasantly precise the ripples,
the water. – It is

in balance with itself as well as
everything else as well as

in motion, engaged in continuous
adjustment, as everything is, except

in concepts there’s rest.

If only we’d sensed,
O you all five of’ my senses,
it in time.

Now I don’t suppose we’ll get,
O you my poor orphans,
another chance.

9/20/94
To be human, not:

a horse that rears – and bolts, its head a trace,
reins like tangled trajectories thrown all through the body

10/23/94

E. F., Emigrant

Once clear of danger he would know, what was it made of.
Its name: not you.
Figures of speech, mechanisms, carvings without knife & norm.
Like characters a traveler could read.

1/6/95
Now I’ve visited the Etruscans.
Like that earlier time, in the giant Washington museum (with the golden Indian on horseback in front), before the glass case of “Precolumbian Art.”
This was enough; why again? why – start all over again?*
I walk from case to case – a rather casual presentation, as if the loot thieved from the tombs had been deposited with some embarassment: Well, what’s done is done, this is what we took. I walk from vase to vase and feel my eyes relax, grow easy, beauty cleanses.
And: the word ancient – if you don’t think (mean), but see – has no meaning at all. Everything is new and shows: how it is made and intended, in all its elegance, a dance of what in the graves – utensils.
What’s amazing: how come no kitsch? – like the stuff added to one altar or another in all churches, even the most beautiful? (And whence the cave spirit of these ever more beautiful churches, caves in broad day? Surely not from underground?) –
Sepulchral relics. Slaying, stabbing, hanging and strangling, torture, drawing and quartering, poison, illness, age. – Beauty, made to order.

2/6/95

* Author’s Note: This question accepts the claim to perfection inherent in our concept of art. Aside from the distorting aura of the absolute with which this claim tends to appear (thanks to the unwise standards of our society) – the aggressive point of the question “Why again?” calls on the conditions of historical reality to attack it from the rear, and then has to shut up.
Very Jesus

Below the mosaic dome of the apse a strip of sheep, rams, six each from the left and from the right.

From the one in the middle, the runt, the odd one out, the thirteenth –

as if shrunk
in a secret noose –

to those others: a charge of inner light such that their backs seem to take wing.

Santa Maria in Trastevere, Rome, 3/8/95

Horse

When sadness prepares its rising line:
Feel of a jolt, haste, flight impulse, anticipating the hysterical chaos that germinates,

out of wintry ground pricks its tiny green. Where then, without horseman, do I gallop…?

7/16/95
A Dictionary Is

after all only
inferred from the sounding of sound-existence,
therefore a rather approximate (somewhat, respectively)
piano.

7/20/95

A Rhyme On Ever

The bushes, the bushes, the brambles,
the clumps of wild roses and round sloes
have torn our eyes forever
into bushes, brambles, roses and sloes

8/29/95

Appearance

Stray dogs
are considered particularly close to reality.
But then they are gone again, disappeared
wittily from the screen.

6/30/96
Raw Material, Virgin

...truly universal thinking that doesn’t just expose one’s own part and/or brace itself on tradition masquerading as culture, hence also embrace (each one’s own)

no way, forget it: the eye that looks out for itself has no time to – hunger (hang out?). And grudgingly.

This leads me (to bring in what’s below the chin) – leads me (assuming I’d ask) to consider the optical arrangement as non-random, to expect out of the depth of momentarily (while he sleeps) unused army boots: wise words, grassroot-true or heart-wood-hearty...

8/19/98
Attempt in Words

– or that he, in the clearing, at the knee
of... and around us... or who... (witches?)
... hands me a cup of chicory,

forested, soft. Kneehigh, but someone’s

back perhaps against –
towering – the stump – and his
hand

hands chicory
ether fragrance clearing
coltsfoot legtide

8/23/98
Drifting Head

a drifting head, that sings in the river:
so plummet the stony birds out of the sky now and vibrate on the shore,
for O.,
with retracted body, again draws art from the imageless realm; wealthy he’ll
never be, but receives his shadow and one mated with the extruded third eye. Although
self-constructed: the old lyre, same old story. No rhyme with “glory.”
But if the head went into the body would it ever return?
Forehead + Womb

upon the slack bodily integuments
of the sons, who’ve abandoned them, sit
– how they went crazy! – the mothers like
farm hens, mutely, since no one believes
their “I gave birth to you” any more. A listless
brooding, cuddling of the husks of those who’ve
flown the nest, joined the elect: Pilots
with a pigeon’s-egg-sized internal cockpit
behind the forehead. From this point to produce,
to give birth to oneself, which seems laborious:
the provision of duplicates, works, maternal
recovery wards, but also lexical, pornographic
matters, e.g., “womb.”

Author’s note: “As Peter Sloterdijk writes in Eurotaoism: Toward a Critique of Political Kinetics, ‘The most radical failure of self-recognition committed by human beings relates, not to their refusal to acknowledge the inevitability of death, but to their panic-stricken evasion of the idea that they were once born. No one wishes to have been present at the event that brought them into the light of the world. To have been born – that happens only to other people.’ Sloterdijk understands history as ‘the struggle to revise the disadvantage of having been born into the advantage of self-realization’ – a dissimulating practice (Täulige) of the active subject, who has covered the earth with untenable constructions.’”
Linear Pilot

what happens is a tunneling into white, concentric circles:

thus a nose-dive

of the pilot, a machine who no longer can catch up with himself

so close to the designated target

with which — no more than this

is attainable — he'll fuse — —

Author’s note: “For the term 'linear pilot' cf. the interview with Jürgen Ploog in the magazine warten 7; Dieter Kühn mentions the phenomenon of ‘target fixation’ experienced by military pilots in Air War as Adventure: A Battlefield Account.”

Holes

Rust holes, from which one possibly might jump, fall, conduct surveillance. Or ponder: what a chill rattling of various machines turning on warming up still lurching around and back to zero: operator, a fiction to plug up the holes?, to compress these crude mouths to a sole constantly chattering, chewing, moaning mouth.
from *Forfeited Trumps*

≡ Richard Anders

Translated by Andrew Joron

**Locket**

You are beside yourself: she won’t get out of your head. You smack yourself on the forehead with your palm. How did she get in there? Likewise you could ask yourself why you’ve lost your self-possession. You can’t see to the bottom of yourself. It’s pitch dark inside you, the fuse is burned out; all that’s left is a flicker down in your genitals. You climb down into your extinguished body to fetch some fire. Reascending, you catch a glimpse of her, the one who won’t get out of your head; she’s transparently attired and her hair is garlanded à la Botticelli’s *Spring*. How her eyes sparkle with rage! While you’d been enflamed in your genitals, she’d been searching your heart for herself, in vain. For this, she vows to avenge herself! She takes you out of the tiny coffin that hangs like a locket from a chain around her neck. With her forefinger she strokes your body until a little promontory rises up from its center. Before you can shout “I’m not dead!” she has ripped out, as though it were a weed, the paltry thing protruding from beneath your shirt. With your wounded body pressed against her breast, hideous red flecks upon her transparent flower-gown, she flies out of your head through your mouth, and you, once again beside yourself, recognize her once again, transformed into your scream.
Die

Two large animals tenderly rub their hides against one another – and you, to avoid getting crushed, are forced to crawl into a wrinkle, a fold, a cleft, until your animal, feeling an itch, sniffs you out and grabs you, then flings you away. Fear not! The large animals are including you in an erotic game. Already the other animal has snatched you up, held you in its gaze, and finally thrown you back. So, flying back and forth between both large animals, consider metamorphosing yourself in order to keep their curiosity aroused, to postpone what may be the unhappy conclusion of the contest. Try changing into a louse, a bone of contention, a mascot, a shrunken head, a Krugerrand, but – for heaven’s sake – never into a die! With twenty-one eyes gawking in six directions, you would fall too often in the sand, until both animals, tossing and catching you, gambled away their limbs rather than their lives – these, bitten off, would lie scattered between their bloody torsos, since in fairness you would have guaranteed to each animal the same measure of sporting luck. And you, god of chance crumpled to an embryo, would be condemned to squat for all eternity in your black Kaaba.
The Pounding

Something is pounding in the depths. Climbing down the ladder, you also feel your heart pounding, and its pounding harmonizes with that emanating from the depths. Yet the more you descend, the louder grows the pounding of your heart and the quieter becomes the pounding in the depths, until your heartbeat entirely drowns it out. At this moment you cease your descent on the ladder. It's a miracle, for as soon as you extend your foot farther down, you discover that you're standing on the last rung: beneath you, there yawns a bottomless abyss. You stand there until your heart begins to beat more slowly and more quietly, and you perceive again the steady pounding in the depths. For an instant you struggle with the temptation to let yourself fall into the abyss. This causes your heart to beat more wildly so that, once more, the pounding in the depths becomes inaudible. Now you plug your ears in order not to hear that abyssal pounding when your heartbeat gets quieter. You climb and climb, for years, it seems — yet you arrive nowhere. Did you climb past yourself? You remove the plugs from your ears and hear nothing — not even the pounding of your own heart. Ah, you should have allowed yourself, when your heart was still beating, to fall into those depths from which you now have infinitely distanced yourself.
The Absolute Room

You cross the front lawn, knock on the door, and enter the house without waiting for an answer. You look around for a light switch. Is there any light in here? You have to leave the front door open and follow a swath of light cast by the setting sun. Then you take your first step into the darkness, to which your eyes slowly get accustomed. Only dimly do you discern the frame of the next open door, more dimly still the frames of successive doors, connecting rooms that are square, empty, windowless, completely identical to one another. Now, behind you, even the last weak glimmer of light has been extinguished. With your hands you grope along the walls to the nearest door. Your palms become rough and torn. You really ought to turn back. But suddenly you see another glimmer of light in the distance, at first hardly visible, then stronger. And still you don’t know that you long since have passed the final, the absolute room, through whose single door you enter and exit again. Confused by the prolonged groping in the dark, you deem this door to be a different one each time, and the daylight, flaring up again at the far end of all doors, to be the ultimate enlightenment.
Crumbs

Walter Thümler

all the postcards leafed
through What crumb of earth’s not
squashed underfoot How easy
toward the end to live Face
moving on the earth How it
projects every image
(Sings)

*

every street a wall Hedges
lacking hands Then
: a different story (for
children) but we don’t have
the courage (of children) Where It
comes toward you through
cold floods (face)

*

there would open
the door (Were there a
door) Number’d peel back
to parable Man drink
out of strange hands (Were
there hands) Almost we’d
flogged it out of the racked
earth (Had we
succeeded)
on a silent
wall outlines That dissolve…
    if we could
just put one foot before
the other (not cling to
this or that
chore) hum
of a lamp

(Aeolian harp)

the chair
How it
bears without resisting The loneliness
of sex choosing
days Some rag dolls rail-
ings Everyone knows how
senseless a poem
against slant wave
pregnant squall

the street asleep
The houses
by themselves (No image) How mail
the letter there? Southward
the road (On the map
no-one may paint) Before
hair pushed back from the
forehead atomized
    letter

moon surface (blank spots) Or of
the body Of no language (were there such
a thing) Register old ships pesticides
salt A raft That once carried
men No-one can wrest the
book from the angel Take
the lamp
so many lights aflame...
the owl's call died
away Someone leaves the house
(blindfold) Walks toward
the crossing Knows all
ships are
slow Hark the
cutting
prow

(Park Bench)

every slat mixes
different colors: Africa Riesen­
gebirge snow (what could speak
more clearly?) Dream of motor­
cycles' necks (in the side-car)
thrown back
eyelash (Judas­
   kiss)

shall I see you again...
as if (in the infinite
plural) all the earth's strata
jammed together All
dust gathered: Into a
star? Legible only
the trembling
frequency
   (tear)
from **ein griff = eingriff (inbegriffen)**

≡  *Elfriede Czurda*

distant words throw long shadows
open sesame
throw away words
distant words throw long ways
throwaway words shadow long
shadows on the way widen word long
open sesame
throw away words
distant shadows throw long ways
open sesame
throw away words
wide words throw distant shadows
throwaway shadows word long
shadowy ways widen long words
open sesame
throw away words
Five Tables

five tables in one room one door twenty people two windows I too was once
grey hair social situation a niche in the door lots of newsprint

five tables in one room one door twenty people two windows again and
again wittgenstein’s biography tried to hinder a suicide what’s the matter
ossi are you sad ossi I too was once

five tables in one room one door twenty people two windows and a burglary
hung in the chimney a pack of hair at the neck and smooth on top and up
the stairs broke his nose

five tables in one room one door twenty people two windows a biography
bettybettybettybetty non compos mentis drowned in the pond come here
ossi what’s the matter with you ossi are you sad ossi I too was once

five tables in one room one door twenty people two windows carried to the
pissoir and strewed sand over the puddle and danced to balance the bar so
cold the door

five tables in one room one door twenty people two windows another glass
of wine not local my honor the music box why don’t you go ossi what are
you moping about ossi don’t be sad ossi I too was once

five tables in one room one door twenty people two windows jean-jacques
too not russell not rousseau a biography and died a natural death chestnut
leaves in the treeless light shaft

five tables in one room one door twenty people two windows I too was once
before my time take the twenty ossi are you tired ossi OK with me ossi so
dense the fog no step

five tables in one room one door twenty people two windows the check
ma’am no outside mam and where and how your legs ma’am so young and
no pond and no rope and the funereal light on the toilet tank alas ma’am
ma’am I too was once
Spring Poem

described a morning in spring
and how the sun rises
and how the beams fall slantwise on the dew drops
and how the dew drops glisten
like crystal

and scratched my right sole with my left big toe
and how it itches
and how the skin is stippled with red dots
like crocuses in spring

described a morning in spring
and how the dew drops hang on the grass
and how the grass bends under the weight of the dew drops
and how the grass is delicate
like crystal

and scratched my left sole with my right big toe
and how scratching doesn't help the itch
and how the right toe nail scrapes a bit of skin from the left sole
and how the cut skin is wet
like dew drops

spent a morning in spring
scratching my athlete’s foot
and saw how the sun rises
and felt how scratching doesn’t help the itch
and knew from stories
that dew drops glisten like crystal
and knew from experience
that irritation takes over like crocuses in spring
spent a nice morning in spring
when you leave home and wish nothing had happened
when you leave home and know nothing was supposed happen
and you leave home and step into a strange telephone number
and you step into the strange telephone number because you wish nothing
had happened
and you step into the strange telephone number and know nothing was
supposed to happen
then you believe nothing has happened

the telephone number remains silent and you wish nothing had happened
the telephone number remains silent and you know nothing was supposed
to happen
the telephone number remains silent and you believe nothing has happened

the telephone number answers and says there’s this
the telephone number answers and you think shut up
the telephone number answers and you say there’s that
the telephone number answers and you think shut up

when the telephone number answers and says there’s this
when the telephone number answers and you must wish something had
happened
when the telephone number answers and says there’s that
when the telephone number answers and you must know something has
happened
then you can no longer believe nothing has happened
then you can only think shut up
and you must admit that something has happened

then you leave the telephone number because you wish nothing had
happened
then you leave the telephone number because you know nothing was
supposed to happen
then you leave the telephone number and go back home
then you go back home and believe nothing has happened
For 8 Photographed Women and Their Photographer  
(for Cora Pongracz's "8 Extended Portraits"

in order to break free of their shadows  
they project their memories into images  
their similar memories make their differences  
sadness in itself and again  
subtle grey makes heavy light weightless  
or laugh with other gestures

a voiced s in black-and-white and an unvoiced  
grasping at grids  
in them and around them an urge toward milky glass  
(wiener werkstätte)  
screams packaged in clear plastic  
or the search for new phthonged continents

in order to break free of their thoughts  
they project their thoughts into gagged pitchers  
or a world war of eyes without commas

their will toward closing palms  
their notorious effort toward tin and marble and  
cigarettes makes their differences  
black-and-white refracted into subtle grey  
or the arrest of velvet soles

their start toward the stylish death of knowledge  
or the speechless revolution from pupil to eyeglass  
and a tad of rosemary
Three Poems

Bruno Steiger

Index; Three-partite

c;
Three balconies of tissuepaper have always annoyed me
Paula, Hugo houses a plant louse in his jacket
Moving figure carries lifeguard on his back
Repeat injustice on the garden bench
Lightbulb returns
Now he screams again, that troglodyte
Saying goodbye my boy carries off the ping pong table

b;

Enough already with your sugar box (Enough to make you vomit royalties and Chinese landscape lanterns)
I suspect this is a lasso (This a violine’s death for the garden)
Order: Don’t attack (Think mouse trap)
The one-eyed writer Brugo Tabor should be lower (Flood the one-legged desk with spooks)
Where did every Black Forest woman go riding (They’re lost in Babylonian piggybanks)
Unfantastic seems in retrospect the change of tent poles (This means: statements based on observation are in themselves a – strangely remarkable by God! – kind of jackpot)
Nobody else used his world atlas as a compromise (To want to enter the form of a ruined castle means to be in it)
How many elbows fifteen cats have nobody knew (Polo Restpenck was the painter of the green party I voted for)

a; ‘glossary’
(The spleen of only pretending to hurry the diving up of the collection box is something we should be able to preserve)
Hats

If I (Kiwi) must create human beings I should daily – sometimes – know the first now: map in progress. Ghostly fog (my dog's hat) = (ca.) taking his hat from a conductor. Where else is this contained but in

a) the standing unknown star
b) the concerto of the honest finder*
c) the “wash” of possibilities
d) the leitmotif
e) the house of practical peoples!

Which cast remains for the actual hide-out; – lost to punishments. Aligned, alighted, eye-like: they live and play for a draw, face of part division for entanglement, broken (dried out vs. broken). Who would notice: marginal phenomena always also border phenomena: hats, as I said. Semantics!

Film

1 Film about “the cooked.” In the center the judge, mountains dwelling in the memory of the audience. He is open, vital, open-minded; “no!” is his text (index). At the same time you hear the sigh of relief in the (version two) ‘Chinese’ film. Every gentleman sees onlookers, creates his own ground (in steps), breathes growth (“on/off”-knowledge): ‘Alright! From now on it’s me!’

2 I open the notebook, enter enlargements. Sometimes a layer is stretched into a hollow shape with a speer (Jons Holz) that could be (mechanically) mirrored money – ; for example mirror-play-money: it ought to be owned (on its own).

3 Impression of indecency. What happens when somebody says, “Don’t give gloves a chance!”? Do notebooks play a role? Try it! Be majestic! – And then, while feeling your way out, whole minutes spent staring at strangely hip- or at least “bladder”-like diaglyphs, the dark limp, the caressing of the expression “childhood.”
from *Mike and Jane*

* Birgit Kemper

**Mike and Jane 1**

Mike lies under the tree. Jane loves Mike. She lies beside him. Jane tickles Mike’s feet. Mike laughs. Why are you laughing, asks Jane. I laugh because I’m happy, says Mike. When I tickle Mike’s feet, thinks Jane, he shouldn’t already be happy beforehand. You’re ungrateful, says Jane, I tickle you for nothing. Mike cries. Why are you crying, asks Jane. I wouldn’t be so sad now, says Mike, if I hadn’t been so happy before. Jane tickles Mike’s feet. Mike laughs. Why are you so happy, asks Jane. Because I was so sad, says Mike. Jane loves Mike.

**Mike and Jane 2**

Mike lies under the tree. Jane loves Mike. She lies beside him. I love lying under this tree with you, says Mike. Why don’t you love me, asks Jane. It’s easier to love lying here, says Mike, I love it when loving’s easy. Jane cries. Why are you crying, asks Mike. I don’t love it when loving’s so hard, says Jane. Yes you do, says Mike, you love me.

**Mike and Jane 3**

Mike lies under the tree. Jane loves Mike. She lies beside him. Mike is asleep. Jane wakes Mike. You groan, says Jane, you make these extreme movements beside me and I’m alone. You’re rude, says Mike, you intrude.
Mike and Jane 4

Mike lies under the tree. Jane loves Mike. She lies beside him. Why don’t you look for a tree too, says Mike. Jane cries. What are you crying for, asks Mike, there are lots of trees. You’re lying, says Jane. I don’t see the forest for the trees and you say I’m lying, it’s you are lying, says Mike. You don’t see Jane for the women, says Jane, the trees don’t signify, it’s a matter of cover. Then go look for cover, says Mike. Doesn’t cover, says Jane. Voilà, says Mike, it’s not a matter of cover, it’s a matter of confusion, you Medusa, a matter of paralysis, you want me to stand stiff as a stick in the woods and have me dead sure. Period, says Jane.

Mike and Jane 5

Mike lies under the tree. Jane loves Mike. She lies beside him. She is asleep. Jane, asks Mike, if there were lots of trees here would you still lie beside me under this one? Jane is asleep. Mike cries. Jane, darling, if it weren’t for the shade, would you even without sun and with lots of other trees still lie beside me under precisely this one? Jane is asleep. Mike stands up. Jane, hollers Mike, it’s not love, it’s a tree. Tree, asks Jane.

Mike and Jane 6

Mike lies under the tree. Jane loves Mike. She lies beside him. You don’t understand me, says Mike. Yes, says Jane, I understand. What do you understand, asks Mike. That I don’t understand you, says Jane, but only if it is a matter of understanding, otherwise I do understand you. What do you understand, asks Mike. You don’t understand that I don’t understand you, that’s what I understand, and it doesn’t mean the same to you as to me. What does it mean to me, asks Mike. Mike doesn’t love Jane is what it means to you, says Jane, because Jane doesn’t understand Mike, not like one egg the other, from the inside and all by itself, without words, without questions, all warm and wonderful. This Mike understands. He cries. Jane laughs. Why are you laughing, asks Mike. Because I understand you, says Jane. In that case you’d cry, says Mike. Jane cries.
Mike and Jane 7

Mike lies under the tree. Jane loves Mike. She lies beside him. You’re a chip from a great block of wood, says Mike. Jane cries. Wood doesn’t cry, says Mike. Fine, says Jane. You’re as fine as pine, says Mike. Jane cries harder. Pine doesn’t cry either, says Mike. Mike laughs. Mike likes language and language likes Mike, thinks Mike. Jane doesn’t think so. If Mike liked me, thinks Jane, then language would like him and he wouldn’t say such ugly things. When Jane thinks of the ugliness of the things Mike says she cries even harder. Why are you crying when I say nice things to you, asks Mike. It’s because of the tree that you say things about wood, says Jane, you love the tree, not me. Are you barking up the wrong tree, says Mike. Jane screams. Mike hits Jane so that she’ll feel understood as long as she screams anyway so that they’ll both see and understand the hurt. It’s no good. Jane is hurt esthetically. Mike is alone.

Mike and Jane 8

Mike lies under the tree. Jane loves Mike. She lies beside him. I can’t lie under this tree as much as I love you, says Mike. Jane cries. You really can’t lie under this tree much, says Jane, that’s how little you love me. Mike screams. Why can’t I lie under this tree much, asks Mike, you put me down, you gripe, you find fault, you lock up my soul, you doubt the most obvious, I can lie here very much I can love very much, and I can compare the two in a way that strengthens my love, I have a poet’s soul. Get lost, says Jane, fuck a duck.

Mike and Jane 9

Mike lies under the tree. Jane loves Mike. She lies beside him. Is it OK now like this, asks Mike, in nature, no internet far and wide, no taut udders, no pierced cunt, no silvery rosetta stuffed to the gills, no gagged mouth, no helplessly admiring look, no parallel sensations, no pearl necklaces, no dumb rival cow; relaxing isn’t it, darling? Jane opens her blouse and legs. You tramp, yells Mike, not here among the cows. Since when do you call it cows, yells Jane. She grabs Mike and goes to pieces.
Mike and Jane 10


Mike and Jane 11

Mike lies under the tree. Jane loves Mike. She lies beside him. She is asleep. Sleeping women don’t love, says Mike, wake up. Jane, don’t cheat. Jane sleeps. She sleeps this deep sleep, thinks Mike, just to cheat me. If you loved me, says Mike, you wouldn’t sleep, you sleep so I should see your damn innocence, you sleep as camouflage. I’m not asleep, says Jane. You see, says Mike, you don’t dare go on sleeping, that proves it.

Mike and Jane 12

Mike lies under the tree. Jane loves Mike. She lies beside him. She is asleep. Wake up, says Mike. I don’t want to, says Jane. You don’t love me, I don’t excite you, says Mike. Excitement makes sleepy, says Jane. You’re sick of me, says Mike. On the contrary, says Jane, you’ve taken it out of me, I love it. On the contrary, says Mike, if you loved it you’d want more. On the contrary, says Jane, if I want more I must get some sleep, you’ve done me in, darling, I’m bushed. I’m groggy, says Mike, all you say tells me you don’t love me, don’t want more of me. All I say says the contrary, says Jane. Jane cries. Mike cries. Nobody wants more.
Mike and Jane 13

Mike lies under the tree. Jane loves Mike. She lies beside him. Mike reads. Jane cries. You don’t love me, says Jane, you lie. Mike sits up. I’m not lying, says Mike, I’m reading. If I were also reading, says Jane, I also would not love you. Mike cries. When you read, asks Mike, you don’t love me? Jane cries. I don’t know how it starts, says Jane, but something starts and something stops. Jane, says Mike, when I start reading I don’t stop loving you, my love for you is a marvelous background. I don’t want to be your background, screams Jane, I belong in the foreground. Shut up, says Mike, I’m reading.

Mike and Jane 14

Mike lies under the tree. Jane loves Mike. She lies beside him. You are the first man with whom I can sleep so gloriously. In the sense of to sleep, asks Mike, dormir? Dormir, says Jane, is glorious with you. I am the first man whom you don’t love, says Mike, not as a man, I’m a teddybear you snuggle up with. Avec plaisir, says Jane. Mike cries. You’re lying, says Mike, if you’re so smug in a French way you’re lying. I’m smug like a bug in a rug, says Jane, I’m so smug I’m going crazy. Shut your mug, says Mike, you bug me. Jane offers her rug.

Mike and Jane 15

Mike lies under the tree. Jane loves Mike. She lies beside him. What do you love more, asks Mike, your life or me? You are my life, says Jane. But if you had to choose, says Mike, your life or your love for me, what would you choose? Jane cries. You’re mean, says Jane, if I choose my love for you and not my life I die and cannot love you, and if I choose my life and not my love my love dies. You don’t give me a choice, you don’t let me love you. Mike screams. Mike, says Jane, my love for you and my life cannot be parted. Jane, says Mike, you don’t want to part from what you love most, that’s not love for me. Love means to sacrifice to love what one loves most. OK, I’ll sacrifice you, says Jane, and cuts Mike’s head off. Symbolically, says Jane.
Mike and Jane 16

Mike lies under the tree. Jane loves Mike. She lies beside him. Would you also lie beside me, asks Jane, if it were me who’s lying under a tree, would you lie beside me? Someone is always first, says Mike. Would you, asks Jane. You always want to have the last word, says Mike. Not true, says Jane, I would love to hear the last word from you, but I hear nothing. If I didn’t say anything, chéri, there would be dead silence. Mike beams. That would be nice, says Mike. Stupid is what it would be, says Jane, love needs exchange, I must know who it is I love. You don’t love me, says Mike, love needs no exchange, love is itself exchange spinning blissfully as in the womb, it changes you, don’t hinder it. I don’t recognize you, says Jane. That’s how you can recognize my love, says Mike, and how weak yours is.

Mike and Jane 17

Mike lies under the tree. Jane loves Mike. She lies beside him. Lick me, says Jane. I don’t get it, says Mike. What’s there to get, asks Jane. Mike blushes. Do you mean harm or sex, asks Mike. I mean harm and sex, says Jane, lick me, you asshole. Mike fidgets too. Don’t fidget, lick me, says Jane. What part, asks Mike. Jane fidgets. Don’t fidget, Jane, says Mike. Jane fidgets even more. This way I can’t get at it, says Mike. Jane cries. Why are you crying, asks Mike. You don’t get me, says Jane. I can’t get at it, says Mike. If I were you, says Jane, you’d be able to get at it. That way your thing would meet me halfway, says Mike and makes an effort. He slobbers. For a long while nothing happens. Kiss my ass, says Jane. That part Mike can get at.

Mike and Jane 18

Mike lies under the tree. Jane loves Mike. She lies beside him. If I were lying beside you the way you’re lying beside me I would think you don’t love me, says Mike. Thinking often gets in the way of love, says Jane. You're dodging, says Mike. How do you think I'm lying beside you, asks Jane. You're lying beside me like you're thinking of some other man, says Mike. Jane cries. Not true, says Jane. But I feel like some other man when I'm lying beside
you, says Mike. What do you mean, asks Jane. Love ends when one partner changes the other, says Mike. It’s love that changes a man, says Jane. Other man, other woman, says Mike. Mike leaves. Jane screams.

**Mike and Jane 19**

Mike lies under the tree. Jane loves Mike. She lies beside him. I want to talk to you, says Jane. Talk, asks Mike. Why do you glower like this, asks Jane. Because you force me, says Mike. What do you want, asks Jane. Peace and quiet, says Mike, not talk. OK, says Jane, let’s put it off, tell me when you want to talk to me. You want to force me to want what I don’t want, screams Mike, that’s what you want, you want me not to be myself, you might as well kill me.

**Mike and Jane 20**

Mike lies under the tree. Jane loves Mike. She lies beside him. Mike lies on his tummy. You don’t love me, says Jane, you hide your tummy. I’m fat because I’m unhappy, says Mike, you just love my spare tire, you think with all that fat no other woman will bite. It’s love, says Jane, sheer love. You’re too skinny, says Mike. Jane screams. Just a joke, says Mike, you’re not too skinny. Then what am I, asks Jane. Sweet, says Mike. Not so stupid, says Jane. Mike eats her.
An American classic

Lisa Samuels

no trace of
usurper variance

potion meeting and then
aliment conceived

No, this is the free light
it amazes your
inconsequence, here is one
meant to salvage
embroidered
solipsism wielding and
opinioned in the dirt

I waited
a closed room
bells, instruments,
‘keep thy life’

the jurisdiction provenance
beneath you
worrisome and then not

I saw his face alive
he spoke in air
past breathing
the shot was purely theoretical
  her ghostly thread left
lightly on
standing in the dark, waiting
lines featured, musical
he walked them
  and despained, respiration finishes
the spring knot, polished high

‘To keep the sun away’
and stony brightness, lack

yellow tendrils flowing out
like wind or water by the head

This was a straightening,
unmarked and dark turning, arrayed
past pardon

a model for turning, a model
  imaging the cold feature there, dark question

‘insistence, I will’

Just as navigation left your insides
protracted, inappropriate, as though feeling
finding its way, wholistic

a brain at every edge
tendril scavengers
soft teeth there

I remember the shades
walking against the rotation of earth

by the gardens, inside closed features,
restlessly dividing

until the masonry took
until rupture, siren ornaments
‘the sea memory’

unearthed beside you

that was the peeling
away

Preparation for crumbling, small mouth sent
to the round

and there person

bequeathed, she had a sheet
attached to her wrist

and flew
from Euclid Shudders

= Mark Tardi

series 19

another lamplight

roped breath
between late marks

agilant purls

or a tride of trees
unhinged

to burnish pulse

counter-conjured
without amber

the drills dream
calmed into a frenzy

starving glass

made of string
baubled

by malmute cranes

that barely come up
series 26

“of the parallel fall”

Until static starts to fold

steep the window
with broken bloodstone

graph fimbriate
shoreless

weathered in wire

the dream differential
craning distrobe

with equal aptness
niantic skin

off a measure

sewn into echoes

not even a breeze
inexorable sums

relative to the plane
series 29

Assemble its reciprocus

with a vacant knot
blood silence

disaffected by
weathered in wire

antic pillars
sunken skyward

the plastic velocity
otherwise unseen

folding sleep
between two keys

some indistant auricle

identical orphan
said with shorn eyes
series 31

The pivot chord is $B^{b}$ which sounds as A in the new key of E. Folds of sleep between clouded and out loud. Its portion of night remains leaf-long and less than a foot away. A ladder of liquid. Or city forgetting to ask. Exactly like a statue. The static field sewn with slant reflections. Light inviolate.
series 37

before slumber found a stone
the toric frequency
robed light
left at the piano
threadless
factorially stilled
unpronounced angles
the knock apparition
without
reference to its embedding
series 41

to build a blindspot
before voice

eyes swallowed hard

factorial rust
that holds up light

or ionic arcs

if untouched after
almost absent

the alphabet alien

inside clock burns

sleep torn
binding celerity

breadthless length

pierced into spheres
love letter to a critic

Paul Foster Johnson

my love exhibits hunger in soft chokes
in these dreams I spasm, cast myself “the innocent starfish”
in seduction I evanesce along my overt song:
“my love, pash mine, rouse the nun this eve
detach my adoration stuff, the gross of my love in plaster
were my father an unscrupulous nurse, were I tawny
this would be our great sitcom, Admiral and Paleface”

we meet on a plane whose wings are a problem of conjugation! and touch
down on our nostalgic land-bridge. people leave the scene declaiming, but let
the vista declaim! let it go spectral as we photoize our plateau, critic! let’s
slump on our opals! let’s language in the shade!
I had wanted to offer my opinions like a proper character, but then I did not at all or achingly want. I had wanted to offer my love my mouthpiece, my organ, but the critic gave up propaganda years ago. the critic will go on honking and the critic goes on calling me der Rosenkavalier, however I know the embouchure. I wear the gayer hat.

my love miniaturizes no further
the brunt of my petty give
and goes another route
where all this winterizing

has me in the fur-lined fist, my love's
not the bright burn of megalorama
illuminates the twilit forms of those
my love, who populate this Hundsroman
my little sound-alike ennobles the human spirit
for my mastermind, jail is the low
the captor lets « the sorry monad » have a triangle
my critic clangs all day, rounding out the category

mon écran, mi espejo
is it the dram or the drink
makes you buck
for I transmitted neither

benevolent sexpot, I clambered to give you an example
and carried it all the way over to our shivaree. all my heaving
settles to a fortified silence we weigh the merits of. critic,
close your biospheric eye, put on your retrofitter mask
be my amphora, ages wet.
I come upon my critic sifting for plot. I flop beside «the owl, its recurring
daydream of the lure». I troll this, the same homely devotional that was to be
love’s vehicle. “hey critic, my plot, my pride in goal / come away from the
window,
your familiar signs and swans / (your familiar blushes like a borrowed word) /
see this sky at a quiet, suddenly hewn / and trace with me incinerating lines”

tiring halfway out of the question I shed qualms
like a plural of scarves; still, we roam unasked
we pool our reason, clouds and clouds of it and ravage
or not and if not, unlist and desire
this here of wretched workmanship:

“When a ship is convinced it’s sinking
a voice rides out on a ripple
a map is carried down by starlings
but the captain cries
‘dextrous help it is, or syntax’ gravewater”
the critic’s legs are commemorative bridges
the critical eyes are modest brackets and blind
like a tiger, blinded by shrapnel, lacks also specificity
the routine belonging to the critic and me is reciprocal parching
when we achieve the critic’s handpuppet against the screen

in astonishment a lot rides on a betreed impasse or bluff along our
  untroubled
way in which. (there is a way in which.) then we are, or aren’t we, dour.
I tell you again the fable of the receding fuse looking like a lure, the evented
version, to stall while I authorize the present people-mover. a whistling
  outside
is not what you would think while looking on at the hail. those would be
gangs of oblitterati, with hard feelings in their visors and mesh,
on whose account I predict the debt of rescue.
it would go that way were it not for the fey song I owe –
to precipitate more yawps I and the libertine between moments
had slid to a minor logo, dwelt in «that bad neighborhood»

a second abduction after the death of the premise
is all we come up with after a month of drowning
our vehicle away is feathered in difference

a crux before there failed to be
duller from another angle
outgrows the vulgar topiary
blames your bounty-on-the-raw

the horizon adot with weak spots
makes the world’s most ticklish subject
contrives its brow and snares
that other concept in an overwind
bananas settled disputes mastering friends again
before we sink
whose bananas
barely legal lumber
home pride
old English
rum – fur – ice
triangle to the master cylinder
written orders;

dthis valley has a freeway in its cards
afterlife
of general for life
rolled taco
now you’re asking for it
natives next to nazi ‘could you be my’
now as I saw the question in half
or the genii of reverse engineering
president

perfection on Earth insurance
it’s militaristic –
couches in the evolution of coaches
as if out of uniform the marine
could be mistaken
for a vegetarian
bugged
up the creek of no return at car dealerships
tempting pollutants
chew gum to release message
his castle loan
small business is in my blood

banks so others can sleep
spasm
botany of horrors
get out of Dodge or let no one into Dodge
it can’t stop
and that’s the good news
from Dodge

multiple counts as any bargain
hunter knows
to aim high
drier readiness
odds of accidentals
rogue studio
in a process of elimination something else
dialogue doesn’t say it all
time to prune back the genius — petty bourgeois
what little surplus
   toilet
it’s the thought that doesn’t count
love — to criticize

his and her asteroid
spells popcorn
doom smash daily life fiesta ware
devices left alone to its own advice
all's well of vision
but bald of bird
football fields of sovereign omelets a day
a space race
parts of speech with none to spare
those ribs
is to see Rumsfeld spread his wing tips

sushi somehow cleaner phobia loop
despite holes
would anything excessive enough for once
seems strange arranged
shopping as a victimless crime
bad news bears
corruption (what gives) shoe shelter
its luster
beautiful to mean the opposite
where’s Waldo in foreign policy
this block is all mental
(buildings)
“disturb” sign
a mixed blessing: our dump
teriyaki plains indians
Napoleon rose to the rank of syndrome
salary hats
well-armed drunks wear out the welcome wagon
ski mask as hood ornament

pinch me I’m in America
disarm otherwise
arm
his full name is factional fighting
pit bull means acumen
thinking by association makes me
feel guilty
car wash religiously

fly me to the moon fiscal Disney ride
ball club isn’t in reference to stars
crisis centers alter ego put bombs to sleep
Bahrain
this kind of publicity you have to pay for
Three Poems

Study From Life, 1889

How little I know of real pain. & yet inflicting the same on her as on objects themselves. I was longing to be tied up for civilization’s sake. But there I was in the face of John Singer Sargent’s girl with buttocks exposed. She is not to be mocked. Then she says, you bore me. You and pornography. Misanthrope, your only self-defense is in the crawlspace. (Faraway) in sea fog I thought better than to procure an inveterate narcissism. Barthes said in Japan everything changes. Puzzling, I was an accident under blue sky yonder. “A supplement to palpable boredom.” Unless it is reached through another field of bliss. The waters are murky, and when the wreck starts, each piece is a beautiful lie.
This is over now they will be well and well. For which they like to produce parodies. More interesting. Stars and clouds and winds. Are you about to mock me. “Before” “Outside” “Beyond.” For which they are alike. It is a crowd whether they like acting. Because of one smoking on the boardwalk. Little alteration, you are far more interesting. Readily states that she is struggling. Her dog is aggressive. Apart from the shore is in repose. They make do. “Excellence” is that they are asleep. How do they let them recall you. A description without a sentence is that they are hourly without the pressure of events. All this is photography and entirely different. What one should feel like and never feel. Likely. A friend with I do it with you. What you do is make. What is not meant or invented it is hoped to be with them in the Musée Mécanique. They mind looking at evening. They mind it that their fortunes come to pass.
Fury

Los Angeles – sprawls. All who consent to the design are hard to get rid of. Like my right arm only faster than when I was a girl. But I suppose the insides don’t change. Precisely how I remember interstates. Proportionately nothing between I & anger it predigests itself like a quote. & therefore it is likely the project was never realized, giving a whole new slant to “memoir” and “reportage” – like when a mob takes it upon itself, but a mob doesn’t think it doesn’t have time to think.
from Document (Mending)

== Amy Catanzano

backdrop.

From the room – constructed, elaborate, in folds – the wave, too, has had its gestures solved in the wind: an hour, a character, uprooted. And yet a letter has closed. A shade has fallen back on its slumber. And then the moment becomes a mirror at my feet, its wash torn with light – an unhinged wire orbiting its own equation. Or was it a face, a fleck of water, a hair singed by the lens,

so now the room becomes electric, thrown clear? –

singularities.

A blaze within a tighter blaze, engulfed. Scarlet poppies bloom, or blue nights – and people, too, just beyond their peripheries.
document.

Looking backwards at something, all that can be recollected is the single motion of moving forward or backward too quickly. A loss, however infinite.

curvature.

As if something collaborative were there to hold for a while.

As though what is given outward is given outward – as a hand, which reaches –
redshift.

With precision a calendar, the machine.

There is a should be. There is a rotation. There is a noticeable place. And to give a gift, to extract a place, half-received. Or forever.

That the beginning will be like an evening tucked so tightly into itself that when it’s released back into daytime at dawn, it will tear –
from 32 Places in Marseilles

Guy Bennett

Cours Julien

chain blue tables children
  seesaw singing
  forgotten quiet
  air tunes the breeze
  slight Bob
  Marley
  blurring the
background emptiness a
  tree shimmers
  round the only happy
  fountain all over
  graffiti

Parvis de l'église Saint-Laurent

  wind rumbles
    flat the stone
slab jutting front
  the church over
  the port boats
    slip past
  two ochre
  forts mark the
    harbor door
  beyond the
    sea
Carrousel vénitien du XVIIIe siècle
(Place Charles de Gaulle)

this ring
of horses time
whirls winds
hot
spherical 2000 year
old faces
children dog whirling
lights to
span the line
of ten Doric
columns

La maison diamantée

on Prison
Street the port
finishes in
water as the hill
rises its crenellated
surface bristles
in four
d sided pyramids children
peer through a
dog the eye rushes
over
Rue fontaine des vents

ruses
  up the narrow
  street staggering walls
  of houses shut like
eyes broken
  silence the wind hot
  where it dead
ends spent
deadens
the light off
the water

Le jardin des vestiges

is
where now it
  was then the broken
  stone park
palimpsest
superposes time
  on language hemmed
sidewalks fence
the mall market Greek
film Fuji green Roman
  Kodak gold
Place des moulins

rectangle blighted
   by trees where
windmills once
stood the bench
   broken wind whipping
the hill the
rue des Muettes
lunges thin into
   shadow below
      the blank woman
washed wall

Metro Castellane

a stairwell
up the underworld light
pours
in breezing darknesses
made by bright
   sun burnt shoulders
as we rise to
air the sky cloudless
head out
   window shouts my
name
from *Souvenir Winner*

≡ *Macgregor Card*

_For Achilles Rizzoli_

**VII. SOUVENIR WINNER**

Earth is light, but mother weighs less
on the surface of my poems than on mars.
Her habitat’s the top-drawer aurora
the sorrowful bell tunes are built in.

I know a lot, mother, from salt
and its pillar dispersion at sea.
To be lucky to be inert, like the homely
whistle of a painted boat, won’t disturb us
because we’re lonely. If only I’d ever
known sooner *no sub for the honest truth*
it beautify me the more to make
my bid for the day and what’s right –
a funnel of steam to call my home,
a hiss of utmost light. Where angels
had no lung, they simply weep,

_“la cathédrale est engloutie.”_

Pray pony,
take me be an harpist, lamppost, ode
custodian, Roman whose lot is lost and
lards maternal animations on the night.
VIII

Some people that are sick are not people. They are hereditary balls of light
like the tallest man in the world
must be lonely looking
no one in the eye all the time.

I couldn't seem to move, Pauline,
the famous men from stars to tears,
nor take my seat
on a bench in the plants

for the junior mall and dignity
of useful love is the greatest service labor,
He had only that was his rocks
Got you in the eye
I wish I were in my own car
Like a warder in the souvenir
of flung windows, in a hurry to sand
down the fallen door, panker
the light of nature, matter of fact
I love mourning on Earth,
decorating my fortune wheel.

*
My roof is done like a faun into tears.
Never seen despite all its rich article.
A fairy wand in a court of law, twittering, faultless,
mute, staked as a mare to a formal lawn.

Like a porpoise in a pretty tune, sitting up
in bed, I'm good for trotting to anyone
whose errands become invitations to dinner
with healthy men. Like people cured
by the raw material of lambs, we hath never fed
of dainties that are bread in a book, we are
only an animal only sensible in duller parts.
Tell the good old lowering eyes broad feet
toward the door – I'm a poet, showdog
rightly termed dreamer, skaters on blockheads,
scented peers. “I have only one plate of soup.”
How much will you need? “A cupful of tears.”
Take far my muscles, heart and back to the
in the mood studio, where bas-reliefs of a debt
of honor paid for in plain fact, humility
and chariot, foreign hornless car.

I'll now astonish all my forehead like a business.
My arm's an idler's rod inveighed against genius.
Commerse defies all wind, outrides
every tempest, invades every zone.
**Future White**

Cole Swensen

_{Cy Twombly, Sculptures; National Gallery, Washington D.C. 2001_}

Wheel

my folded wheel; wheel that folds
against the circle
that circles now:

*Ionian Sea*

my box of dead

we left by way of white spread out
among the reeds, bleached: the form that didn’t set:

Wrap up well.
When happiness falls
and we look up startled
at the soft white curve

*Orphée*

and they
who turn to flute
              to harp the span

a little bridge        you tie to the mark
with no parts that move
into chalk or dust: this was
the war: this is how
they got there: this
house

this living wall with all
its doorknobs on.

White tower
White tune
Red lines you cannot
read. They say Rome and
as and and

We left
them their dead as a gift.

We, who have always thought

wrapped in white cloth
that will not open now

Oh little wheel with tiny teeth Oh rest

the room inside
the nailed together winter. The white
boats turn white
and the palm goes on,
the salt of its own, and the palm
carefully sewn to the grove of them.
The Birds Sing to Plato

How the zeroes stack up, blessedly
among the personal effects of a most public
education, or in the urns of dialogue, so achingly deployed
through shadows easily singing, then things feathered
across the lap of curious boys now that
punning has replaced paradox
with its little caves, and low arches each one
a little less earthly until one or all of us usurp the pings of the dead
whether by reciting our lines into the line of lines,
or boring dearly into the wall and, feeling proportional,
however schematically plumed, wander the vapors of
a dialogue in progress or fester beneath the nova of previous comets
their overbright fetters snapping the servant’s neck
head rolling blearily into erudition.
Socrates (A Hasty Reply)

Given that dust is light, and night is must
given a month on this island is always May
that no man is content with things doing just as they do
the crowd torn too early from the fire who can indict
the hesitation even as it approaches the end of a mind
quiet still like crowing at a sizable if awkward inheritance, you can’t help
but ask who has set the solids in motion, and who benefits
from this leisurepox or the circumference of distant cities if families are permanent
even as anodynes if not quite duplicates
of preference or posture or how much to pay in the future
if you lash a must to must, and reinvent the mast we
still come over to their side now and against
to gain some new triangle with nothing to look forward to
given the direction of the arrow in relation to the ring in the dirt, who
would deny ten thousand appointments and so much time
to fortify the position through sleep, wine-lees or wooly fat
even with all our dead friends about us, the birds, after all, have returned them

The Birds Sing to Plato

who fills the baths
who wrings the clouds their ghostly sauce
who is through with writing through
with the redundancy of certain circles
and studies of the flight of the flea
who counts the number of hoots
who is still and who is awkwardly learning to salute
are but immortal only the once
and who set the solids aside
Aristotle at the Thinkery

Observe, a rent
or light penetrating reflection
oblong and static like the moon leased
to a typical Grecian door, the forest gluttonous
with what you and I both shall have
a chance to gain her charms, for example, the sky
over the witchery and a polishing of the face
until she or we shine like a rose-colored mirror
that never arose but one day of the month, suspended
therefore never new and of no interest
but suppose what we might accomplish
if we won custody of our leisure time
and were free enough to pay off our fines, I’d
don the purple robe and spend the day in silence
insistant on a litany of mangled eights or a beam of light
installing the animal and melting stalactites

Aristophanes

Toro toro to rooter’s self-made chuck, I’m a mogul of entertainment
and can weather a colossal lack of class but perhaps that’s only an
observation
recollected from my later insights
like what thunder won’t discuss and a jury can’t deny
of any resonant analogue of what won’t break and what ain’t fixed
could I hear even a single ray, as it passed through the palm and into a fist
I think I could think so and maybe see what I thought was
but if I prove again too early in trying to restore the relief
I’ll wash away the gamy taste of necessity for a taste of the game
I’d be one or two or a infinity but seamless as conjunctions
or my earliest omissions begun while still relying on your scholarly refusal,
which time after time drizzles its melody, storm-tinged and sopping
inessential oils
Aristotle, Revised

Wiping off the dander and staggering into chambers 
our notes rarely mentioned but often repeated 
the looking into looking without the question ever stated 
or the second side of two identical feathers 
shown here in winter, there in any five pound bag of apples 
bought limewashed brought limbless from this gappy thesis of fleshy 
mirrors 
from the lyrescrape and the flash of magnetics 
I cling to the most attractive flap never exposed 
but burnt on a copper disk and stuck in a long dilation 
a smear of the furrows across our potbellied nebula, 
but equal only to one of my previous prologues, molting in the catacombs 
of sun and moon.

Members of the Academy

Schools out. Fin. Finito or at least halfway back from the ether 
but you're right, I'm not from here I just live here among the jars 
of razorfish and the mutilated spiders, 
against intrusion and against the failure of intrusion 
before people like ourselves brought the occasional correspondence 
when we could not come to be counted, but each evening 
so careful to find the same number of holes or exchanges 
so cautious about trading places with the rice allotted 
and in need of that small portion of air 
that remains in the realm of pseudo-imitation 
with sharks and the dolphins in their dreams.
Plato

Fins do not increase mobility, but control and are remote
like satellites of poetry or expressions of malcontents
a failure of momentum or the cool of circumstance
like roots pulled or squared by the poetry of distance
preferably served from a distance, with a side of razorfish
or a rich child who has no face and shoulders indistinguishable from the
horizon
where the bats blink but distant stars distant stars
and bronze distance
remain practically indestructible
until each bead is different and endures the absence
of women, wisdom, and conversation, where I shed this marble
and accept my bare life as a swan.

Aristotle from the Latin

Whether it’s other heights in other times or sheer oversight
or whether a preference for inheriting the one with the view
gave way to an over-abundance of face, the most efficacious prophylactic,
against a practically indestructible craft
just barely floats in the middle of the road
where all these new immortals culminate in front like Jupiter
whose head I raise from beneath my robe
scraping it free from the spiders who may have any number of legs,
I span the range of intellect young insects hope for;
given the impermanence of the category of guileless genius
or at least a talent for withstanding the anticipated inadequacies of some
future translation
my words into pulleys, rods, and levers – stationary even when inspired
by music, widows, or painted paroquets but no one
dances anymore to redundancy in these most opposite days.
The Women of Athens

Each remainder is different in rise and slope or slump or pie, but we’ve earned quite a few in our time, so let us bring out the scales get baked and streak glee, like ticking kittens we’ll sashay these manly premises and if we may, pluck the feathery forms from a little lyre, in hopes of a little lute maybe later but each day we’re behind the mule, and you’re entrenched in mind, a task or craft of attrition, no more bearable than kneeling before knowledge in hopes of some day a little place within the city, not even real estate however meager, if there be any behind all this stolen content or borrowed instructions because we simply must have standards and they must be well-stated or accessible by experiment but a pure product of fey boys and their beautiful trauma stanch each night, useless to the community with their otherworldly promise but in these remaining years, learn a trade, develop some uncommon kill and if you find you’ve made some errors may they be homeopathic may you keep them like arms and bone, just let us step out from the chorus of stone.

Plato Sings to the Birds (Translated from the German)

Each box its banks along the inside of the shadow where the pain is always a musical thing like birds or O men that won’t quit singing until beaten in a race which could be saved if only they believed what is called serious, if brief enough, then is thought hydraulic as the book and volume if not of a law – a millisecond of knowledge against a chromatic progression of ages along linens on the walls not so much a problem of poetry, but the influence of youth having abandoned the voluptuous surface but still conservative without a willingness to conserve though too easily accepting the soil as immortal, if taken to the extreme – what is called sinking
Aristotle, Plato, Socrates (in Unison) Sing to the Birds

Whether in the ringing invisibility or on the threshold of some fundamental question, the fundamental question is how long before accepting the first ring or coming up without answers to the most serious estimates of what was never a question of whether it coheres or is only recollection of what your not missing like virtue or the use-value you hope to exchange on any up-tick in the tragedy of those who can’t learn that they never learn what they should and those who do but must teach, teach us not to do so much business

Aristophanes, reprised

Free to flee to warship free to be brought to an easy boil by the wrong words, the right order but there’s that inevitable shallowness of the audience that learns only from remorse so that when speaking or spoken to, there’s always a higher vulture structured as a form of candor as in “I’ll do exactly what I please” but what’s left but beak of bird, tuft of cloud... To condors, it’s all condors it is not an inflection of innuendo quaking inside a frog but if you say so I will go back through the slit that faces the surface but for a few bucks and a bottle of naughty oil I worked them into a frenzy of not quite intelligence, not quite infanticide that they might approach the curtain as mortals, if only just this once history were chorus
lines in the sea do not move then do
an afternoon died of polish a mirage of irrational numbers and evening
sums
blot out the rising sun but sooner or later it is always too soon
to come to your senses or cover up the lens of an edgier and edgier
translucence
but by conjuring silence from the tremble of time, I can avoid the gravel
drawing instead each afternoon exactly as the last
because if it is so it is so, even if you don’t think if so
lines in the sea do not move then do weeds from the wheels
put slowly into gear I am an oven of ash, still I do detect a science
and face the slit in the surface that faces a surface
you will no longer be disturbed with fame or reflection
lines in the sea weeds from the wheels the scratch of gravel put slowly into
gear
Sonnet

“The trouble of comparing a poet to a radio is that radios lead straight to the Pacific,”
he said to American poetry.
My voice is clipped, yours a pattern of dots.
If poems are external occasions, then this violent smoothness is the visible.
You are right. What we call Poetry is the boat.
It is not for the ears. Hearing, mysterious as night itself.
Who has a mask, a heart?
I needs must have a rose, the sick man’s reward
I needs, I wants, I never knows, does I?
I couldn’t spell and still in the middle of the night. I need them
Sonnet

Ranier,

Revolution will not help.
Let me put it baldly:
I'm young
What I need is more money.
Ranier, My wife is left handed
Out on a limb frantically sawing.

Ranier,

Don't worry about growing old.
*It had been raining but*
I swear the room is cold.
This is magic
& Helen of Troy, I suppose she is Zeus too.
O but what about love?
Let me put it baldly:
I am in love with the laughing sickness.
from *The Native Cave*

Marcelin Pleynet

Translated by David Harrison Horton

11

Which river loses its breath across my voice

A violated theater binds dreams of dawn – A ray burns out. It is the mechanism of suggestions – a ray in the night

A long scar whitens the palm of the dying

and it is good

Now I smoke, I burn my black smile for pleasure

What a game of ice where my unleashed memory like a bird kills itself on a transparency

12

In any case what importance the face
I said nothing nothing

I will live backwards

While this head of hair weaves a degree of sorrow, begins again, wastes away ...
A train detached at last from the pool, rolls toward you, following a misunderstanding, a building in ashes – the need for a woman’s smile

In it all these wretched funerals – the charity of door mice – the cruelty of otters – alcohol of cruelty – movements hereafter freed from its power

In it the invention of salt

... and the forgetful tide did not return

We do not recreate the happiness of the ocean. We do not recreate the risk of the races.
When the light gets a hold of us. When the roses’ pale anguish is extinguished

we bury ourselves

(peacock)

From its victim’s neck it brings out the astonishing human nature – at its victim’s neck it sees a gladiolus flourishing –

god dry

Finally! blood, itself, is astonished ... it dreams inside man
but how to find our share of air? Fear of the human sand of its
tenderness holds in our modesty in this town between two bodies
of water where we were absent – in this confusion of the senses

Sometimes a cry would open a stomach, a fetus would fall

Who will I encounter
Who will I encounter on oval
Nights

I remember this bite, I carry it like a sponge cake. I am the last human
mouth without disease. I am the amiable human sickness.
siteMeeting House of Friends

loose tissue, or
raina collective affiliation of moist

if we didn't know that the raw
fell from the high and

if it wasn't clear the deliquescence
intent on its descent

then the jerk of the frond of the locust
tree would seem to be

its own idea
or the shrub, its bow and shiver

a musculature and not
the plot of another mind
The Quiet

I like to believe that it matters ( to You )
the Chastity of these days reading
reading, writing, hammering
the silver path that patience affords;
fashioning the mirror to reflect the hours,
disengaged from the opportunists, and tempering
ambition
while praying that time will serve
the slow development of the mind, that poetry
will blossom from dry
histories, lessons, and terse formulations,

though,

the Voice left
when to whom the eyes belonged
became a question

the Vision cracked like sugarglaze
when the woman became confection,
Indwelling

I whispered to the wide world
Let him come impel him like a hand to the back
To the blank of my door
“exit”
That gray plane and mostly closure
Experience has taught to play it safe
With the sexual bolt and tinkling brass chain
Your eyes of color and white
At the peep
The thought. Still arguably on my tongue
The door accepts the staccato
To play the diplomat
I press my body against the flat
You also spread yourself like a
Multiple, a whirling cross

An opening close
In the house

She’d like to unbutton the blouse.
She’d like to give up rhetoric but seems unable
and likes adjectives besides.
She’d like to walk to the house for example up the walkway
but the blouse is another story, a second story,
one she’d rather forget.
How are they so certain.
That’s it I guess.
How to unloose the tag end
or make a decision different from the usual.
She keeps looking for a migraine in the near future
shimmering its usual pinks and greens.
It’s probably yours in the second story bedroom she says.
These days I don’t sleep at all she agrees.
Her blouses are usually unbuttoned and how
can she stand it or what about touching all the
clothes in the closet as if they belonged to you.
Superimposition

It's a real thing.
Even myopia and that craning of the neck.
That putting words in someone else's mouth like careful wafers.
That deciding how the other must feel
and the image showing up directly on the screen.
The quick glance into it rendered her speechless.
She was to begin with.
After a time there was no one out there to talk to.
Just an echo of what one thought moments before.
The repeated notes of the insistent bird.

Kneel down, move your lips in prayer and you will believe.
Pascal projecting his voice into the void.

The film they watched was a film in which a narrator superimposed a narrative of action seen but from a point of view outside the events so that as a member of the audience one was drawn in and distanced at the same time so that projection was seen as the imposition of the director.
The day with musical accompaniments

The ordinary day, what a day.  
Then adding an overlay of clarinet: the *rainy, noisy, perfectly*, etc.  
Whose voice is in the kitchen  
whose body is turning over and moaning in her sleep.  
A reflex reaction and next to it  
tropological as in characterized by tropes.  
All figurative language in the figure.  
Her figure reminds me to.  
His figure sits in the background and scolds.  
A figure admired as only a figure can be.  
Only in an ordinary day can one decide the right thing to do  
or even any thing at all.

*All oboe players are tall and obsessively thin, reedy, caring for reeds  
wafting in the streams of music, green as reeds, striped as reeds, unnecessarily conscientious.*
Photography loves banal objects

Being away being more vivid than not.
The object moved out of its usual location revised as a critical essay
was lying on the floor of the room you sit in.
She was sitting with him; she was sitting apart.
If any one thing is moved even inches from its place
the entire composition is ruined.
Who can find it when you do that.
She was as lost as a newsreel from another era.
We live as much in another time as with those of our own.
It was an amoebic shape in turquoise blue;
it was a still life of polished fruits and flowers.
The headlines are illegible at this distance away.
She arranged a bunch of objects end to end and said stay put why don’t you.
Henry James in the fog

Her body can be perceived through clothes if one wants it. The white transparency of fog is too romantically cinched at the waist tied with a velvet bow. He was felled he says by a velvet bow. (James) There is no place in this flesh that does not see us. (Rilke) Getting them off isn’t for him he wants to talk it out piecemeal. If the pear rots before he snaps a frame, the day over before he finds a word. He had never let it sink in before. The too obvious burns at his ribs, twists a rubber band tight over a finger, makes it impossible to swallow.
from *Portraits & Repetition*

Stephen Raicliiffe

10.25

opacity of leaves through which sun’s light passes (subject) to an image of actual motion, also taking place obliquely pale blue at lower edge of square (*exact*) in relation to how it sounds, where wind moving through air makes it clearer slant of window’s shadow on white wall opposite the observer whose view of preceding events changes, thus (*mechanical*)

(*action*) before an opening scene, where the man falls asleep followed by entrance of a second person holding something repetition of bird’s sound from the tree’s invisible branch, another descending from its position (*picture*) near there
motion of small grey-white body lifting above sand (concept)
for instance, white underside of the soaring bird's wings

window half-open on the left, the vertical edge which frames
a section of ridge below pale blue-white plane of sky (p)

(how) sunlight arrives in the faint reddish glow against it,
relation of distant color into which its shape disappears

visual placement of perpendicular lines in a grid (position)
followed by the sound of notes from another room, example

water falling at farthest corner of house, the (other) woman
to the left of the open window apparently not watching it
series of three descending notes experienced as (sound) bird
calling from a motion of leaves in wind, overcast feeling

bowl of dried petals next to negative of objects on a table,
(form) in which the distance from first to second changes

diagonal line in left corner (condition) parallel to thought
observed by the person who sees it, beside the white door

hand approaching the plane facing him, head turning to where
she seems to be holding something on left shoulder (this)

(no:) action but acoustic shape arriving through translucent
window, orange of nasturtium and/or passion flower’s pink
transparency of drop as water falls from leaf’s green (thus) which isn’t its sound, arrival through eye and/or the ear

primrose between the surfaces of a building the color of its (concept) observation, window plane between it and viewer

waking in a white room beside himself, man who feels absence connected to second person beyond space of his (thinking)

(nothing) in relation to an object of thought which changes, silence of darker shapes against opaque grey of the ridge

curve of bone on surface of table to the left (picture) next to its sound, how the off stage action doesn’t take place
yellow coming into a green plane, which as pigment dissolves turns to the person behind a glass watching it (contrast)

(this) thought of color as the woman walks across the floor, how the position seems to change before its sound arrives

light blue at right edge of the grid adjacent to darker blue (series) square after which nothing, angle of whose plane

place where (it) sounds, dimension of owl’s grey-white wings when it glides from horizontal line toward grove’s shadow

star in blackness of sky above and/or (before) the observer, whose experience of it continues below the pool’s surface
the appearance of a body, approaching. curio cabinet, glass & reflection with an oak wood frame. a collector of sense data. edges suggest the forming shape. a living room. she walks across the floor naked. each shelf displays mementos & dust. when her mouth moves, she says something. now, she could be anywhere. she was walking. say she is now standing in a private space, beyond the home. warm stomach. lulling. some sort of hypnotic pleasure. a book, there in her hand. invisible, displaced boat. reading. if I announce a subject, she, & then announce he, you form a bridge, plank by plank. let me show you how: a plume of orange, the color, just below skirt's hem. walks across the living room. hand touches belly, its own. the scent of an orange peel, demonstrative of this. has difficulty separating her skin's texture from its taste. the weight of a body sinking into a couch sounds like.
beyond the mirror’s reflection, that faithful counsel, desirability dares. she
knows her lips sufficiently well; traces russet outline in gilded frame. one
asks because one doubts. curtain call. their eyes meet, a necessary pause,
reflected. her hand poised before her lips. holding, red. in the mirror re-
lected, their eyes. silence proves dangerous where idleness takes possession.
triangulated distance here reflected. let’s say a pedestal table topped with a
crisp doily & a decorative vase, chipped. imperfect but grasping tightly to
necessity. she has a line of reason. some implied value. sentimental or
indifference. her questioning glance. gleaming footlights. to which laid open
to view though one stammers. the solubility of enticing charms. a plywood
front, no matter of ornament, does not make a home, to hold things, to
keep one near. this being a prerequisite for.
to wit: penetration – unlike some public proclaim. chiseling stone. he certainly dissuades her from a steady hand. this bad faith noted in swollen or broken chirography. forefinger. it means nothing, being “non” of what this would be normally. spoke & determined intermediary. scripted as a couch scene complete with street sounds & bric-a-brac. he is solely diverted, every edge of the ceramic unmissed by impatient fingers. battlements crumble. here witticisms voiced serve as supple guards to what is deposed. to thoroughly pass through she wants but fails. to recognize her success. an honest question foreshadows the end. shoulders turned in like a willow branch bending. quietly chirruping. perhaps private is better suited but with addition arises bafflement. the difference between town & country. he duly notes the complexity. cat’s cradle. the size of which does not determine its strength or crenellation. when two with novelty as disguise.
Three Poems

Amy King

Last Night's Etude Against

Check the library for the lost years' housedress;
someplace the article will uncover
revisiting nudity;
our otherworldly stance formerly received
for no-party voting where the alter goodwill
was sold to charity wearing
another guest of the hand on the knee –
the request involunteers to go on
several clues outlining your decision making:
near the obscure list for dismissing vagaries,
the right to silent spine straightening
and the undetectable shot bequeathed
in the dawn of each waking received, she
lies beneath you breathing a new sponsorship
forever humoress, something that leads to happiness
and its potential stalker unsheathed
Wide Open Stakes

I sit here secretly among you in biblical proportions loving throws out my net the obtuseness of distance even aches this feature, the gift of unheard identities in cracks away crevice apart an antisymmetrical true place where porous heart balloons the instant:

What’s a gun for production for use each according to her sharing the stairway man secludes stoned months of power-eyed stares fired off echo witness, slivered sight of the adjacentless– the press gave six months for seeing double to take the stairs another one way or the other, there’s your trouble
Dissolving Inc.

I require this study again
as the medical condition rescinds
its part in the interior of dark.

No one requests a note on thinking
our holy solidest condition
a plane on the slip of place,
a latitude underscored for abbreviation,
the walking individuation that tows
page upon page
of breaded life to luggage bound
just to ease the news
that a person’s conquests arouse suspicion,
not in mass but surrounding us,

People imparting decision
where history decaying field material
and the river pretends to away
Burning Issues

The proliferating ease of the savvy loud theorist is a sign
(In the kingdom of letters)
That the unequivocal upthrust, that particular

Way of pointing to God's contested green
Acreage, is itself contested. Or that's the kind of state
I find myself in, eschewing it

(In a blizzard of modifiers).
So I find an amble through the old neighborhood
A solace, a pummeling need.

Why fistfight with the ordinary?
Quotidian recluses peer out through drawn shades
Where are mapped the byways and hinterlands

Of human need.
Two red-breasted house finches,
Highly musical, prompt

Citizens, return
To a nest they put together in a jiffy one year ago today.
(Needs minor refurbishing.)

(Welcome to the long grasses in the yard.)
Such instinctive teamwork offers
An achingly real pleasure, as does that fiery splinter of sunlight

Forcing its way between two houses, reddening
The already red throat of the male.
No more pyrotechnics

Regarding the besieged fealty
Of representation: just two birds, irreducibly there.
And worlds away Gorazde caught in a firefight, igniting
A map of five hundred years of human animosity.
Gorazde, Gorazde, word we repeat
Once as name, contestable, drawn.

Twice as place, irreducible,
Burning, there,
Issuing out of a word that's gone.
Anecdotal

The unpublishable is always amusing:
Nifty sex acts with head

Honchos, banal analyses of yes
And no, yolk-sac tonnage

Reports. One of the by-
Products of narratological adsorption is

Just that skein of corollary
*Frisson*: the sticky stuff everywhere

And what little objurgatory maneuvering
The dailies rehash blamable to

More French handiwork. So goes
The ever-avid colloquist, talk

Stuck in the chill quotidian
Abundance, famulus to a voice.

The story's always about omission,
Some prominent piece of work

Lined out for excision, flattery
Having countersunk naïveté off where

Hills vee up the sky.
Things done in the city

Back in the arcade days,
All wavelength and boyish hello,

Elbow-proddings in the flux
And fishtail of crowds, disabuse
Rendering avid the story that  
Curls down into the brain  

Like meat, and like meat  
Cooks it all up itself,  

And juices, prominent as lack,  
Or bust, or outcome dash'd.
Two Poems

Jason Lynn

Feed Superstar

Here come the shipping lanes
they're here to ease conscience
What shall we do today they say
On cue
Plain Writing Tablet is what
most armbands want to claim composes
the human head, it's so gallant,
And gives birth to itself, causa sui
At night she filled vending machines
She said and with both her sons
dead, one burned himself one shot himself
she by day takes care of other
people's babies before a big screen TV
the fat of her neck whitened further when one died
Asked what he sings of
His answer uniformly was
Myself, and the cenobites kept lying
Men & women packed themselves as cargo
The end was when 40 years later nothing'd
changed, husbands & wives treated each other
like room-mates.
The migration began out of boredom.
Ritchie Lee* Wasn’t From Your Radios

for Steve Hadley

Use cyanide to get at the gold
Reason isn’t always reasonable
Eternally right mothers
went to Coco’s or The Ritz

Musics play & stay

in the background
what-is-to-be-done

whitened through all layers of linen
then out to public service announcements

Just look,
all these cars fury toward mandated place
but we all
used to stick our heads out those windows

And fly.

There’re bouquets neatly bordering
the ringing beeping buzzing 60 hour workweek
There’re 200 dusty miles between
Gigs and a good vein
but what I want to know is

just how long

Can anyone shut out the song

Ritchie Lee, 10/10/66—7/23/2001

* Ritchie Lee was the mercurial singer/songwriter/bass-player of the band Acetone, an under-appreciated trio with Steve Hadley on drums and Mark Lightcap on guitar, which produced some of the best music to emerge from Los Angeles in the last decade. In July of 2001 Ritchie Lee was fed up with fate and hung himself at age 34.
from *Lake Antiquity*

Brandon Downing

CVII

Giant Vanity
Duplicity

giant’s
abyss
arms,
giant messengers

Giant paper

mutual Giant

giant archness

the peace
sleep revived
of a giant
obstacle

giant gone

at present
at present
CVIII

Egyptian bondage
dispossesses
breastplates
crossing the peaks and the lakes
coughed in the damp morning
pregnant
satisfied
begging
to bear upon a giant
vine in sunland
though the foot on it is iron
under the tutelage

the party
sphinx has whispered.
phantasmal speculator

thought and
made sign
in the town below

the brain
pulses
tales
where all is dark
signal
darkness

That was all.
CXIX

in the hand of the slayer, is
nothing inventing,
ask if it was
fire before it enters into the systems
on the tide of the song,

to suffer intruders

'Amorous and martial, brainless and monotonous.'

they hung by
spacious moonlight

and published

Out of this hotel, palpable...
But the busy great world
was malleable,

the bombastical
host of memories
shut the door upon bandit;
soul as to the body—
though flesh
be celestial

the borders of
events is pretty
and they is called crimes against literature

≡ John Lowther

for a.p. d.s. and d.j

rings
and tho not horizontal the sound the ache in the back of it
its a cavity i say hello you say...
so you say everything was perfect literature invited me out bought me dinner we were having a great time said to me you you poet you youre my friend youre my brother sister whatever
check and see

we’re together a bottle of wine two the third sharing it around however many five ok well we’re done with dinner thats fine ya wanna step outside and have a cigarette?

—does— goes— out there — asked the question the doorbell did you ring what was it a wrench you thought this brute-iron-craft-it-cull-it-craft-object-tool-broken-system of code floorboard to generate your entrance to the canon
i was a... my life as a... human canonball

you can see the painting later

literature grabbed me by the throat pushing forward had me impact against the wall once twice three times

literature said to me— Don't. You. Ever come near my fucking property again Do you understand? and threw me in a bush with prickles
i tried to get up at this point i mean i'm telling you the story right sorry if i woke you up tried to kick me in the balls i moved my leg you can see the bruise if you want

i'm an easy target having three

the long goodbye the way the waves roll in the sense of being set up for the clue the denouement however many mysteries on tape you break—across a car hood—the four minutes of the vacuum—crawling thru the backseat—everything you needed is a brochure the movies you should have sat thru but the people you didn't know

everyones dressed that way
i strolled in it was a simple afternoon an anchor in the daylight

you pit i  pit we all peach its time i need to take a—squeeze a—

pinch— the loaf is empty do you wanna make another run?

breakfast at IF

and if you were—well—i mean—CHIPOTLE is how i say it i dont know but

if you read it ill look right

standing there looking out over the conquest the preponderance the eloquescience the— deliquescience

its asking rust to be the mettle in your personality the metis— i am cunning you are tea strained thru we sold the bags when we were done

one the run i wd ask whatever it is whatever thee ahh soa’n coming up

falling to a net you wd repudiate literature asked me on a date i stood it up

standing on its end spinning round and round again well on the level of plagiarism— what was it someone else said?

no no it wasnt them it was me or is the should that rests with the satisfied a bogus telling? the shadows for argumentation— a sleeve— a none— a… a sleeve— a space around a thing— a conduit for the emptiness that i am not here to express

the shallow waters

a broken toe

the slight paper cut from the deposit envelop the numbers i didn add wrong punch in permanently— to pump— uphill the grass my toes again to break why the foot the foot is on the other shoe ET TU

so standing there i wandered i wondered what do you want from me to say? i want to be consoling take care i dont blame you no i dont blame you i asked literature out on a date

we met at a bar a restaurant i bought literature dinner i said i'm your friend— i know about the society— the sacred order of deep and
meaningful    editors    describing just where things should go    knowing
just when things should be never regretting what…

do you see that? out in the parking lot? after dinner lets go talk i have
some information for you i saw you from a window—lie i saw you
from a window

there is a mediator my eyeball precedes you
gnots in a string—gnot in my neck my head is a confluence of
wires ef flor es cent

speaking turns in torque—vort my ex once said to me a secret she
impacted—a disturbance

why is it this way? —all the things that rush into a point when i a nearby
place…

ok back up turn around and oblique

you said that yesterday it was in the middle of the day the occultation of venus—you knew

hot and wet it wasnt sweaty there we stood the door and gone
again — no i wont sleep after this

i asked literature on a date dinner was fine i said hey you know we are
whatever magic siblings later maybe you and me the pipe fit lay i am a plumber
hey babe

but then i asked you out to the alley to ah coffin nail—dally ants your
pants punch—your face
the story changed and twice
—to choke you to the wall once
—to throw you in the bush third
—to kick you in the balls literature

is that all?

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FivB Poems

Kari Edwards

decorative doormats

anonymous myths give birth to other anonymous myths

crime scenes without the blood sounds. stains run rampant in a glory-be celebration of tow-trucks and other time devices

it’s all a silly guess who’s-at door number one.

there’s no knocking
there’s no whistle stop
the conjunction is missing

“x” arrives at a situation which lasts longer than anticipated, the facts indicate an aroma of something beneath the floor boards, which wilts due to “x’s” negation and overdeterminist situation

a quick glance skin toned actuality was never accounted for, then deemed alphabetically silent

“neat trim, just a little off the side … no, make that both sides.” trimmed with histrionics, commensurate with subplots and foot notes according to “x”, who’s thinking there’s a situation, with contrast and persuasive door jams, which are intended to stop any…

“who’s at the door? .

… someone’s knocking”

somewhere inside the damage dance is known to conclude with a prevalence of the mortally wounded

somewhere inside there is no inside … shelves stacked with dead star sediment

somewhere inside the outside begins again with a knock at the door
go this way quickly

watch out, we're looking for the punchline — periodic patterns ... that's right, someone dies, the discussion turns to anthropology, then it gets really personal, "x" replaces "y". the telephone book is rewritten. there was a recent chernobyl, no one waited for the punchline. outside 60 serious clowns sing "buy this shirt," which is really a label, which is really the place where identity falls in the mosh pit on lower broadway.
example number 2

in the following case study, a case study into the unattainable unnameable and mostly unexplainable, a case study into newly discovered redeemed sunday morning production quotas, skipped in broken conveniences with slight anal penetration, dripped sarin melodies, reduced to the never heard mythical to much ado about something. the world becomes magic hat tricks, the characters resemble images in adventure time that fails to recognize, that the king left on the bus in 1966. rumored to have become a male prostitute, who sells samples of beethoven's moonlight sonata on the side.

the case study continues – primates are brought in with names like, timmy, mary lou and the other. researchers document what they know as legal fiction, has always been legal fiction and will continue to be legal fiction.

mary lou positioned on the edge of destiny, falls into a coma – pays extra in destinational fees. which is really a tax on emptiness, a nonpositional levy.

the researchers work on the other with no obligations. producing side effects not uncommon with an elephant in the room, throwing the baby out with the bath water; and the antichrist coming to dinner.

the case study continues – a positive (______) indicates surgical procedures found in randomly picked targets, the codes are associated with castration dot-to-dots, replayed on PBS fund drives.

timmy, aware the number is up, tries to distract the researcher by miming a continuous story of migrating ants and tree biting. timmy knows there nothing more than permanent dried hair and dog tags issued in times of war, or other measurable events.

timmy knows the case study will continue with x rated top secret cravings for vogue and my home beautiful.
every amerikan amusement park
and nearly every elephant

in a large aquamarine room with random blood seepings, reading a review of jacqueline bouvier kennedy onassis’ note worthy phrases in the journal of the deceased, which sold for $28.75. I was reminded of the 7 million 7-11s and the 380 points for chinese acupuncture. at the same time I started to notice there was language present, which was coming from creatures from the year 3000. someone said there are only 13 people in albuquerque named baxter. I said “delusion is a kind of epistemology gone awry.” they said it had something to do with a debate on large sections of coded morality, not yet instituted for dispersal.

later we went to the hoedown at leftover land ownership and lost propositions, danced the bejeezus out of the usual wisdom owners, producing large cybernetic effects, without the usual mathematical analysis. we scoffed at the moment we conflated sharkskin suits with alligator shoes.
a course in snow frost miracles

afterwards garbled vision rose up in a howling poor cold

bills divided between accounts and the briefest of briefest once in a life time

all the while cycles radiant silver glided by too busy to notice

take a break – fifteen minutes was allotted

so I stored sunlight in a paper bag, forgot and threw it away

there was a station to station pause, we looked at each other, then back at the grand inquisitor – nothing. no words. not an uttered breath. yes, well, maybe a breath. I think we were breathing or at least had a semblance of representation but nothing to the tongue, throat, or lips – an empty pause was presented by another then another then another, finally with some gesture of captivity our jailer spoke.
Two Poems

Veronica Corpuz

XX

I rode a kind of engine of gender,  
a motive for bonding
—LYN HEJINIAN

undercover algebra
or  el ensueño in andalusia

teetering on rhapsodic wedge
as usual, X, farewell

divide the nuances: compass,
canvas, the common denominator

an imploding series
of  if, by chance, therefore

you describe the syllables
facing due east in attention

toward oaxaca as to say
distinctions between picasso

and lingo could rename
a wild flower in july

but this is may, or maybe,
and your gemini is turning on its cusp

of an indelible line minus weather

for Jill Darling
x was i and i was the centrifugal force
unlikely to be found in the topos of unknown’s
but i was i as in imaginary locations

x was the hatpin to y – for each
coordinate or site at which x and y
are conjoined or joined by another x

x, triple x – to ask why one desires
a double helix to answer the how
conveniently tucked into the why-knots

i must have you confused with myself
but, seeing as i is only fictive in its unfurling,
μ must stand in for a universal impossibility

but maybe x was the multiple marks on the spot
for how we may intersect a z-dimension
a utopian q but no “you” makes it impossible

by this chain of events we may repeat,
if we repeat them, but what if not – when “it”
is language bound imperfectly

unraveling at the c, m & s by the curmudgeon
consonants we call cursory, malleable, insidious –
and the euclidean snipers are dreaming in cyrillic script

all this leading and capitalization is a false pretense
to give space in which wee pronouns skitter
surreptitiously about in the house of the rising sum

what inanimate architecture
unimbued by blue innuendoes
or green prosthesis of un-nonsense
as if to feel the skin, yes this thin layer, 
etched with interstitial stitches of x’s and y’s
scaled thick with one’s lettering of zeroes

Do you love the X or the center more or the idea
of a center as invisible center?

—MICHAEL PALMER
So-Called Pictures of Planet-Children

i
In haste they endure, rigid clockmakers
wandering movements predict indigo charts
the sale of fish restricted by bell strokes
water flows to a dial, a fourteenth century shadow
cast in real and imagined rooms

The heart of our maps hungry and eloquent
from dreams the youthful city is kept
by the count of daily prayers, approaching storms
a simple water clock or star and shadow tables
turned dials on hands reversed automatically

A dial with a hand shadowing the hours
imagines various mechanisms
pulling and hoisting to spring drive new and
strange things: lead counterweight of Mercury
a night's duration in measured candle wax
a sandglass held to a failing pulse

ii
Only in the seventeenth century did people begin
to count the pulse, record the living heartbeat
of machine engines pressing the flow of water

weather ringing as an admonition to prayer
an abstract full day of the child's first breath
measured time inscribed: "in haste" ("in fretta")

In certain languages, the word "war" and the words
for clock are similar, life punctuated and measured
by the pulse of killing, protecting, defending
imagining various machines begs no comparison
water connected to a lead counterweight
two hundred seventy days journey

over land, a topography of municipal clocks
or by waterway, mapping the constellations
night’s authentications recited by heart

in imagined and real rooms
where the child swims the flickering surface
a golden, gem-studded astronomical heaven
that contains a mechanical course of the planets

in haste, in fretta cries
the full breath of the child’s abstract day
her prayer an admonition to weather
In the morning, she walks into the room and opens the blinds.

That nothing happens by chance, but all things occur from necessity, even though necessity is difficult to admit.

She poured ice water from the pitcher into the glass and noticed the pleasing sound of the glass becoming full.

There are several firelit worlds and our insistence on one tells us more about our selves than the universe.

There was a window in the room, but opening was not allowed.

That the cause of a new act [or thing], or something new produced depends on if you are standing barefoot or wearing shoes, and who does the lifting.

That the table on which you set your glass, which sits in the direct line of the sun, can be turned.

A potentially hazardous solar flare leapt from the sun Thursday. Some suggest the planet is overdue for another one.

At the time of the solar maximum, if left out all day, the feather will fill with dirt and wind. Across the film it will leave a speckled line.

When you write, speckled line, you curve the letters, and squinting, see sun spots.

We said we felt no consequences from the solar flares, as the tides rose and the rivers fell back, and the drought came upon our flesh. When the itching began, we envisioned grasshoppers. When the wounds broke open, we saw worms.

The bird had fallen and someone recorded it a book about West Nile, another bird fell and was counted. In the grass, we found the bloody feathers.

There was water in the glass, but it couldn’t be drunk.
14 She stood up and went to the window. She could feel the cold of the glass against her cheek, even though the sky appeared to be bright.

15 The poles of the sun’s magnetic field have apparently reversed.

16 Several powerful solar salvos are heading toward earth where they could cause another round of dazzling auroras and disrupt radio communications.

17 We watched her stand there, wondering what she could have been thinking.

18 Suffocation was a single word intended, but unspoken, left out for someone to guess. Suffocation was the presumption there was one single answer, an answer at all. It was an infinite question that held no water.

19 A shadow emerged from the glass as shadows spontaneously generate from objects immersed in light.

20 We watched the water rings evaporate on the surface of the table.

21 At the peak of an eleven year cycle of activity, the sun has become increasingly stormy. Prisms are born from fragrant thunderstorms.

22 Sun’s storms may or may not cause lightning in the southern hemisphere of the brain, static behind the eyes, hence, sun stroke. Storms have intensified nighttime aurora light shows.

23 She appeared to disappear into a blinding glare. Someone spoke about taking a photograph.

24 There was so much sunlight; we were composed of shadow.

25 When she left the room, we had the impression she remained somehow, both leaving the room and remaining, as though the dust particles illuminated by the sun’s rays contained the inner workings of her ears. They danced around us, perhaps recording our words on infinitesimal microchips.

26 To look back is to romanticize, to comb the mind with honey. The honey-eyed sun attracts bees to its warm hive.

27 The paper was exposed and the comb’s white teeth bled against dark blue. The sun will cause an object to change into its opposite, it will cause blue glass to crack.
28 To look forward is to fantasize, to invent phantoms where those who walk on the other side of the sun have not yet been followed.

29 Exposed, the chlorophyll shivered for a moment from the heat.

30 “coronal mass ejections, filled with billions of tons of radiation and ionized particles”
   “the alternative sun shown nothing on the new”

31 To look in front of you is to realize; it is also prevents you from falling, as sunny-side up, the egg is free to stare at its immanent consumption.

32 The dry intensity of her stare was said to burn, sear, scar the observer, who too, stood watching, blind-sighted.

33 The hottest heat of a flame is blue; the oceans burn more ferociously than the sun.

34 On that afternoon, sweat dripped across the shadow, and the glass, surrounded by shadow moved imperceptibly.

35 We left our fingerprints there, on the moistened tabletop, glassy beads dripping onto the carpet.

36 Movement is a attribute of celestial bodies.

37 The higher altitude, the more difficult it is to breathe. In the lungs, the heat photosynthesizes, the breath comes out in luminary song.

38 Song feeds shadows; orchestra halls are drowned in darkness.

39 Reversals take place between intervals lasting from 5,000 to 5 million years.

40 We replaced her in her room. We mirrored the minor gestures of her glass. The heat hummed around us like a house.

41 The energy converted the sun into cells, they mirrored the liquid her glass became.
Destinations

Sarah Mangold

1. Topeka

Where the problems lie.
knowing your house before you do.

stomping what goes on. and no one can go on like that.
not the treatment please. so similar. so familiar.

yes it will be fascinating.
the surgical rotation. yes they do. and as if to go through that.

so the initials. what he went through for his mother.
could see the similarities. how it accumulates.

Steve's turtle down the mud. string around his waist.
photos and all.

this is the furniture of the place. that singular apartment in town.
nothing cohesive yet. across the ditch.
2. *Between the Generators*

what you think of the plumper friend.
leash laws and muffler laws.
what this is. who they are.
if you want to change your major. and other keys.

she picked up on. orange and lemon in different languages.
heat. a tree house. gravel – the varieties.
tar. shoes. ditches. that kind of thing.

the field where the cows never grow.

flat house. barbed wire. spelling mistake.
no sheep. birds against the windows. something drowning in there.
3. Lake Okoboji

Me in the Marines. that was a joke in the first place.
I hate the sea. I love to sail.
I hate the water. I understand. and my brother had to throw me in.
off the dock and then pull me out. how it works.
heat. the small of the back. pressure. getting to know your type.
if they offer it again. I’m going to spit this stuff out.
this will require going back. something stunted like that.
something about fire.
there if there is a place to land.
every hospital visit. every parking lot there ever was.
tornado. it’s that close. birds walk in. dogs across sand.
what passes through. these women, he’s charming. charming right now.

the prospects. cells replace – release. full circle was it.
dash instead infatuation. how she slipped away. didn’t notice the jealousy.

what you thought. forks and spoons. all the knives when you stay.

holding your skin.
two portions are the same

it isn’t true (indirect as saying as)
in recross
this approval

motion, the cast
to fault, stay put( the template duo arow
gessoed to route
pre
verge

on a dark that lies just off halts to a bruise

midhilt
to suit exacting specs
the parcel all that filled
in variant daub

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the noise
less
entry from the either fuse

piece toward instant lawns, cartoon
arc of bird, conjugating the conspicuous

aloft in rote
accidents measure by mouth
  fewer neighbors
  the appellate spill

cursor to
the awaits

and how
  the hot seat denotes
  the hour ankles westward from meridian

(with resist – and
bodily
width

_________________
entrance, the abrasion

cartwheels through
presprawl

from above in aerial herringbone

a fasting of line to
isle, what omits to a lowered mineral
anted with faintness of one –

contract a moment (form of nigh)

opt the speeds between intuits

thicken haunt

dend to end, un spooling the traversee
as if to feed
a modified air
with lunge

as many days called manual conversions of

militant candor
sends itself a lightening shard
the exited in
mudra signs an outward
remnant drif
recoupled

threads a fever through
systole less a bough
listens in – its figure
thrown to
a landish swell
SYNAESTHESIS: A secular admission of difference under a univocity of being; not an obverse Cartesian doctrine. The latter since the multiplicity of perception is dependent on the particularity (difference) of the perceived; and so without God, at least in those moments, we never did or will distinguish between thought and extension, mind and body.

("If" "When" Then Indeed)

A genealogy of sensate things
Imagine pure perturbation
Once being ("This" "That" "Those") correspondents to Nothing, where space goes when occupied.

Down at the heels ("Formerly"
Impertinence voyaged direct into
Sexual apparatus at the corner of
Fillmore and Geary ("Is" "This" "Understandable")
A rose A lily A cold floor A glass of water
Appurtenance: a voyage a voyeur?

Gloss one when occupied and drain
Think better of it and be formerly
"Aspects" "Sustenance" "Gloss"

("Is" "Vinyl" "Very sincerely")
A dozen roses blush at the cheaper wilting
(Super we model or market
Depot or despot eased onto the conveyor
("By numbers" "In numbers" "More numb")
Is a very sincere collection undereducated
Expertise shimmies a better lobby, baby

185
“Pussy” “Prankster” “Puto”
Against the side of history, in vinyl
Pants, faster, if you please

The last demand to meet is feasibility
I am poor and momentary and resent your guilt
For the moment – I will interpret my sight
“Reiterate” “Berserk” “Converse”
Depant, rant, train, release
Filibuster in any cognitive arena – Sectician on the green

Thermostat stuck, vice grips missing, “Just a sec”
(“Canine” “Retractable” “What a bargain”)
Or busted of an evening’s lackadaisical function
Attempting to provide) Every table
Equipped with a juke, everyone
Whether recognition or drugs, shopping or driving, a delicacy

One dollar music at the burrito table
Motown attention fix
No toppling but baby,
Let’s get it on, everyone mouths along
We sob in
(“&”) jest and divide
the divine object

Seconds to go and secondary

We shop for shirts, bread, books, pens, lozenges, change machine, sweet
for weeks
We sweet on each other for weeks, change machine, we visit, change
machine
A glass of water, change machine, provincial quarters, set aside to cool
(Seconds to cool)
We are a nation of pintos & novas, popular
Thanks to Eisenhower & crime, dictation, welding
“Uniform section” “Waist 34” “Change machine

Transit substitute spill “Back off” “Triple Nickel”
Thriftmobile coin purse “Omni-person” presented by
Dilettantes Incorporated, kindly made suggestions
Beckon refusal’s hum “Settle down, little missy”
Else we’ve overwelcomed our stay considerably

“We” “All” “Us”
(at least three) – which speaks
But no triads, an organic line and points
threshing / veering (by all appearances) and communicants
Or another model, another claustrated counsel
“Poster” “Piñata” “Poppyscotch”
“Candyflip” “Unalloyed” “Immediate cognition”
“Root” “Other” “Otter” (read, immediate cognition

Stipend bulletin: this is not a corsage,
“It’s my heart breaking to listen.”
from so we have been given so we AND following, the true

Sawako Nakayasu

time: conspired to the point of friendly distortion.
friendly distortion.

variation: father, as in oh.

place: electronic

directions: perpetual east, past full frontal.
directions: don’t say anything or don’t say something.
keep mouth full of time.
a heart full of
directions: fill the heart with blank blanks.
shot through the night.
in a red or foreign bar.
after eating.
after her.
after day, its false safety.

character: meet you at such or such place.
everyone not this

character: family.

character: history.

character: years, a large percentage.

note: all in the same season,
but spanning many years
and many tears of foolish or
sincere youth and promise and no
bells just beings and theres and a lost token
or touch, resting on the shoulders of a couple of tenuous
characters: here unnamed but tender nonetheless and resting as usual on the exchange of words.

correct: in relation to an international picket fence.

directions: gotiate.
golightly.
findings.

directions: continue, or make more tea.
enter one more

correct: countless.
immeasurable.
what does this mile mean.
what if to mean is not to know.
what kind of knowing could now matter.

directions: take train from one night into the next.
stop for beckett.
againsting all willing parties.
the trouble with train station employees who would help if only.
getting off.
not getting off like that.
complected and turning lovely.
at the off-chance.
turning complected.
still towarding on.
ignore the overhead exclamation.
interpret silently, personally.
acknowledge without response.
how long to continue is a matter of
are being given still.
no one of good would get off like this.
tURNS dark & lovely.
falls into the wrong
together in unsettlement.
cathedrals everywhere.
across a passing object.
framed in a false photograph.
false at the extern.
ex to the future component.
phone call from the other side.
long.
enGLISH everywhere.
not English everywhere.
balcony outside a bus.
same set of stoppage.
snow.
snow.
more snow.
less.
set: get out.

directions: shoestring.
determined budge.
third emole.

directions: two or three.
against clear joy.
a considerate and and considerably large mogul.

characters: overaged intellectuals behind an unmarked door.
need to shave.
walking uphill in a lovely.
hold baggage in a lovely.
sandwiches are a lovely.

place: a tenuous aim at place.

time: go.
fatten.
bus.
train.
go.
car.
load.
load.
load.
a loaded

tenuously in french.
sound: a mouth full of food.
rainy dome.
kindness of old friends.
kindness of old people.

sound: ice cream.
or rolling.
beer at the wrong nation.
beer at the right nation.

character: still.
and still.
and still.
directions: 
toward in more tenuosity.

time: 
slowing.
increasingly angular.

slowing.
more viscous.

vicarious.
vicious.

quiet.
more viscous.

direction: 
which train.
which trust.
every vehicle a person.
every person a vehicle.
residual vehemence.

direction: 
away.
apostrophe.
cross-road.
do nothing with immediacy.
exit because lack of

setting: 
tenuous joy.
to be attaindered.

plot: 
of coastal illness.
a sweep.
a stranger grandma.

character: 
female or persuaded.

character: 
pervasive.

offstage: 
false balcony.
false false balcony.
false false illusive balcony.

character: 
on stage.
alack, effort.
theme: present day. against all struggle for.

irony: cathedrals everywhere.

time: breaking.

time: tied up. bound. affixt. fettery. up. pinioned. pression.

place: a read street.

time: catered. breaking everywhere.

costume: shedding. or light. what changes.

consume: daylight. bad time.

make: not good time.

place: the approaching tenuous. that face. that voice. that situation. have been there before. have not have not.

resolution:

climax: a year ago.

leading: here and here. all heres on deck.

spoken: all hail.
sails: water, an interlude

continuous: cathedrals everywhere.

characters: no practicing.

characters: keep.
kept.
keep.
dropping.

dropping: people.
a grounded folk.

phone: call.
and yet and yet a noplace of origin.
gives rise to the usual tenuous game in three matches.
that we thought we thought were too old to still be playing
still be still

words: graphical accent.

language: topography of emotional gunned forth & slight out-
bursts.

thirdhand translation.
triangulation.

barred like a dog.

plot: manhattan consistency.

character: her number one.

place: here number we’ve been this way before.

time: breaking everywhere.

conflict: blanks.

conflict: blanks.

conflict: blanks.
the whites of.
on a train ride towards.
conclusions everywhere.
fishing for.
who.
the subject.
subject to.
the action as discovered on the line.
split.
then.
the kindest attendant at the latest hour.
with no language at all.
or practical.
a letter.
lengthened wait.
exchange.
handed over all personal.
letter and person.
a secret car.
sheets.
ilness.
sleep.
approaching the tenuous land with a breath of many fresh.
sleep its length through.
a woman turns kind.
borders enact tenuous as well.
directed toward the familiar foreign.
tenuous yet owned unapologetically.
tenuous yet distant from actualized source.
tenuous lovely to glance from a distance.
tenuous lovely beaming away or rolling past.
tenuous on its own terms.
tenuous on its own turfed country.
tenuous because and acceptingly and free to be on its own
*tenuous lovely ground.*
tenuous grounding itself instantly solidly as a matter of factual discourse or resolution.
tenuous and over or over it or over itself as an acceptance as an acknowledgement.
tenuous and even perhaps fake or unreasonable yet coming into its tenuous term.
tenuous its turn and turning.
tenuous because every character affected.
tenuous and attaining towards.
tenuous as light would have its way with.
tenuous you, might dare say a place.
tenuous or a name.
tenuous or an act of nebulous yet sincere.

tenuous: all of the below.
below: in the light of many many years really accrued really.
years: 1988–2000
1993: declaration.
1995: phased solid and clear but not ice.
under influences of.
under blue.
under neatly.
telephone.

telephone: inadequacy begins its head.
direction: this in the past.
direction: this in the tenuous present from above.
direction: an old chaos or home.
sameness of street.
just after a big birthday.
clarity or joy.
fast breath of.

long.
indefinite.
tea.
language: foreshortened name with joy.
recapturing the flag.
a game of story.
a marionette.

plot: safe to eat
Getting personal in criticism

I rather enjoy driving myself

a variety of do-it-yourself ironing

and the same age

their size three slippers

the women in our family

Here it was all to be learned

rubber plant

or extracted

to suggest future patterns

In the direction of the menu

vowels you asked

fence

could've said that

they moved

skipping the abacus

I knew my mother

where you learn to subtract

turn and every word

five girls

electricity

I liked the feel of my corduroy skirt

speak

sessions open to girls became increasingly regular after 1790-- and the curriculum included writing by that time

She left the shirt unfinished

a marked difference in circumstances and encouragement

things were different then

town or farm

your dog or daughter

I knew my mother and then

She has more leisure than I have

unwittingly aided the conspiracy of silence

" Didn't anyone ever tell you it was all right to write?"
Translating Zukofsky's formula for poetry
(lower limit, speech; upper limit, music)
I would suggest that
poetry has as its outer limit, impermeability
& as its inner limit, absorption.

— Charles Bernstein
from “Artifice of Absorption” in A Poetics

This is why, at the limit of its own possibility, “at the edge of itself,” wrenching
itself from its “now-no-longer” toward its “as-always,” the poem must clear
a way between silence and discourse, between mutism’s saying nothing and
the saying too much of eloquence. It is the poem’s narrow path, the straitening:
the path that is “most narrowly” that of the I.

— Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe
from Poetry As Experience
trans. Andrea Tarnowski

Poetry lies in the incessant failure of language. We can’t ever say what we
mean or mean what we say – but even that means something.

Intention is as natural as failure in language. (Not that language itself is
natural. It’s about as unnatural as wrench, which is why animals don’t speak
or plumb, but just look at you and run away.) Intention is just another word
for desire – though of course it’s not, and herein lies the beauty: that all
language lies – but without desire, I don’t see the point of even being lied to.
Of course, the reader must desire too – but with the full realization that no
ture response can be given, or even made up – and once the reader gives up
this illusion, meaning can be made – contingently and socially.

Perhaps deep-seated structures in language unite us in the same way that
certain genetic patterns make us homo sapiens – with the actual genetic
codes being akin to ideolits – though I use that term with reservations, as it
seques easily to the idea of a private, inner language, and all language is
public and social, as are we, like it or not. The trap door out, of course, is
the internalized other as discussed by Voloshinov/Bakhtin in Marxism and
the Philosophy of Language, before he declares, “I give myself verbal shape
from another’s point of view, ultimately from the point of view of the com-
munity to which I belong. A word is territory *shared* by both addresser and addressee, by the speaker and his interlocutor.”

To express anything is to attempt to define it – to another person.

The *In the Beginning Was the Word* myth, where the power of naming serves as the generative impulse itself – but with the qualification that if there weren’t someone there evolved enough to hear it …. Herein also lies the illusion – that at some point, we were of one tongue, and somehow the word was more than a slippery pointer, because it was Adam’s word spoken with agency of God as he named things in the Garden, thus warding off the chaos of undifferentiated matter – and setting up Eve by defining the apple.

(I didn’t mean anything by “slippery pointer.”)

Paradoxically, it is desire, the vital ingredient to all communication, that makes it so difficult. Desire can be overwhelming – often because it cannot be articulated – it remains too deeply subconscious, or it simply doesn’t map with any words (like the world) – and it seems betrayed by the very language that helps to create it.

In acts that perpetuate the objectification of the world through the posited existence of stable subjectivity, language is reduced by the assumption that its meaning can be fixed. Language then becomes not referential but representational – attempting to re-present the world, which it really can’t do, but will dutifully try if we force it – losing elasticity and excluding the reader until it becomes no more meaningful than a snapshot of a sunset. As Barthes wrote, the photograph is a language without a code. (Williams knew it too, in his injunction that art *NOT* copy “reality.”)

Debord asserts that the image is the consummate language of the spectacle, in which participation necessitates passivity and isolation, imprisoning us in the cells of our own I’s and the mediated, mandated desires that allow the spectacle of commodities to continue to thrive far beyond the range of our presence, our action.

Poetry becomes much more interesting when the frame, when the contextual “world” itself, is manipulated through the writing, and subjectivity and objectivity enter into a more osmotic or symbiotic relationship.

The writer can sublimate too much desire into the material sign itself, working very hard not to betray desire by re-presentational language – which leaves the reader little to work with but material codes that are all but detached (just as language can never be truly re-presentational, it can never be
wholly nonreferential) from the dynamic, social code of language as a system of differential meaning.

All writing is ideological, but does that mean that all writing is obligated to acknowledge ideology, implicitly or explicitly?

In the most problematic instances, politicized deconstructive writing becomes sanctimonious, as the writer seems to stand outside of the desire for power to kindly (or aggressively) unmask it for the otherwise helpless reader, who is finally rendered powerless to participate in this one-dimensional sublimation.

Of course our material world – including the language that’s a constitutive part of it – affects our sense of self, our desires and our actions – but does that reality mean that it should be the sole prism through which reality itself is seen? The beauty of language is that it’s only part material – the sign, the material signifier, is only the starting point – the rest exists somewhere in the minds of both reader and writer.

(Of course, mind is merely a convenient term for actions of the material brain – affected by all our chemical (im)balances and memories we don’t even know we have – but that doesn’t reduce these actions – our consciousness – to the physical brain, in the same way that the material environment for all social interaction doesn’t reduce that interaction to the merely material).

((Of course, to even invoke the terms mind and brain, self and world is to perpetuate a gross dualism in which aspects of the larger environment – aspects of perceptual and cognitive “reality” – are presented as free-standing entities, as if any of them could exist without relation to the others, as if they are not the things whose interrelations, transcending the false distinctions of their very thingness, constitute the larger environment of our shared “reality.”))

But how else could we speak of the world – of the thing that we create and are created by?

To adopt and adapt Williams’ concern as presented in the fourth book of *Paterson* and create a new language, one not geared to his now quaintly nationalistic concerns, but relevant to a world whose reality includes the technology of mass murder and convenient degradation, corporate-constructed fetishes, tinted glass and endless parking, crumbling schools, satellite supervision, third-world sweatshops and Timothy McVeigh. Amadou Diallo.
The media that brings “reality” to us, provided we can pay for it with continued consumption.

Today, the poet’s activity in Western society has been entirely bracketed and presented as meaningless, as worthy of no money, the sole standard of contemporary meaning.

Thus liberated, the poet is free to network, to compete for publishing, reading, and teaching slots, free to conform, to make connections, to write positive reviews, to acquire social capital and acquire more by distributing it to the young poets who enter his/her program, to win the fame of others doing the same.

Two years ago I watched a show on UPN about bodybuilders. It was behind-the-scenes, gossip-heavy, metal-accompained production in which the competitors for Mr. Unreal Or Something discussed one another’s strengths and weaknesses and outlined their programs and the implicit reasons for the superiority of their methods. All of the bodybuilders seemed to know each other well, and they spoke seriously about the others, even if they occasionally made some dismissive comments.

Are poets the metastasized idealism to that materialism of bodybuilders, both so wholly out of line with contemporary reality as to seem a freakish curiosity, at once frightening and funny?

Thus liberated, the poet is free to construct a meaningful reality to the extent that he or she is willing to question the comforts of the known, of cell phones, keyboards, interstates, tenure, mortgages, exegesis and other elements of an inhuman reality that we create and are created by.

How would you imagine a world without these things, without you? Or how would you imagine a world in which these things were merely things, and not the end of nature? How would you write such a fiction, or how would you work to create a reality in which life was more than a biological condition bound by the strictures of production and consumption, in which life was possible? How would you write a poem?

“Reality is not simply there,” Paul Celan wrote in 1958, “it must be searched and won.”

The power of any desire can create fear – manifested as a reactionary desire to control language – which knocks it out of its relational state with the reader and itself, and maps it into a more direct and static relationship with one aspect of itself or the world.
Who doesn’t want a pilot to have “transparent” instructions, and who can’t see the importance of writing that ironically highlights the tropes of representational writing, and who can’t believe that politically deconstructive or re-presentational writing may help heighten political awareness of issues that deserve to be noticed – because peoples’ lives depend on it.

At this stage in Late Capitalism, consumption breeds nihilism and fundamentalism – two sides of the same koine. Can nihilism and fundamentalism be countered through the social creation of meaning in the world – of contingent, relational meaning that is unique to the atmosphere of the present time (as translations must be made for each generation, so must poetry) – or is this merely another form of fundamentalism?

To understand that all meaning is mediated and that no external, eternal meaning can be conferred on any human act or thought, to understand the death of God and all grand narratives does not necessitate the evacuation of meaning from all human activities, and does not transform writing into the mere play of surfaces, into the appropriation of discourses, into jokes, facility, and aggression, into the deft unmasking of encoded ideologies and constructed identities and value systems.

Play, appropriation, and unmasking are no more inherently meaningful than meaning itself.

In every situation, meaning is conferred by those who participate in its construction. This activity should be the actual basis for any community working to undermine and transcend existing social structures that would deny the validity of any meaning not marketed for the benefit of those in power. With the ends wholly bracketed, with a potential meaning so far outside the bounds of contemporary structures of inhuman reality as to seem vital, emancipatory, poetry is still absorbed by the system into a network of artificial success – awards, appointments, blurbs – turning community into Kommunity, meaning into material.

The writing I’m most interested in uses desire to work within – to create – the strait between the traps of fetishizing representation and fetishizing the material word (or world). In between lies the diminished garden – a lie if ever there was one, but one founded on desire – a desire that’s not controlled but addressed and manipulated through the language that helps to create it.

One way to do this is through subtle and aggressive manipulations of the horizontal and vertical vectors of language, distorting the associative effects of individual words in syntactical movements of phrase, line, sentence, and
stanza to simultaneously generate layers of signification and degrees of indeterminacy that allow a construct in which both reader and writer can exist – not as discrete individuals (which we only are in the passive consumption of images, or mediated “reality”) but as acts of cognition and desire that allow meaning to inhere – out there in the world we create and are created by.

In this sense, it is dialectical interaction of language and desire that creates meaning through writing – in the reader and writer – in the imaginative space they create between them.

So much depends upon the participles.

As Deleuze writes in *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, “There is no event, no phenomenon, word or thought which does not have a multiple sense.” As Lyn Hejinian writes in “The Rejection of Closure,” “The desire that is stirred by language seems to be located more interestingly within language, and hence it is androgy nous. It is a desire to say, a desire to create the subject by saying, and even a feeling of doubt very like jealousy that springs from the impossibility of satisfying this desire.”

Yet this ever-unsatisfied desire in the multiplicity of language is all we have, and need – for it is what allows reader and writer to interact and engage writing to realize potential....

The first step in this process is stepping away from the reactionary desire to control desire – clearing the mental room in Spicer’s sense, or starting at zero in Ashbery’s – to not write “about” but “around” and “into” – working with the hope that vital, social meaning can inhere in language – but far from perfectly. Ultimately, both writer and reader must work to create meaning – to manipulate the elasticity, the failures of language – wherein its strength lies.

For all language is a lie – an approximation, a differential and slippery code, a metaphor. Nietzsche knew this. He knew that there was no truth or nature, for us, but only the words that point to those things – or only those things, and no way to ever truly say them.

Though Nietzsche posits that reality is ultimately fluid, an environment in which our language imposes illusory but practical constructs of subjectivity and objectivity, and in which we would have the power to reconstruct the very means by which life is perceived, distinguished, and implicitly valued – and though he clearly acknowledges the seamless interaction of language and world in the creation of one another – through all this, I don’t know if
he thought that language’s inability to bridge the gap (that it incessantly re-
creates) between itself and the world was its greatest strength.

The day before he was institutionalized, Nietzsche hugged a horse that had been beaten by its driver.
Two Reviews

Nick Moudry

Such Rich Hour by Cole Swensen
University of Iowa Press (Kuhl House Poets), 2001
Paperback, 110 pp. $16.00

Self and Simulacra by Liz Waldner
Alice James Books (2001 Beatrice Hawley Award), 2001
Paperback, 69 pp. $11.95

In a letter to Robin Blaser, Jack Spicer writes, “The trick naturally is...not to search for the perfect poem but to let your way of writing of the moment go along its own paths explore and retreat but never be fully realized (confined) within the boundaries of one poem. There is really no single poem.” This “trick” is one that Cole Swensen and Liz Waldner have learned and brought to fruition, with both poets having recently won the Iowa Poetry Prize, Swensen for Try, which appropriates the visual arts and Waldner for A Point Is That Which Has No Part, loosely based on Euclidean geometry.

Such Rich Hour by Cole Swensen uses the Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry, the famed fifteenth-century book of hours, as its source text. Swensen, in her own introduction, states, “The poems begin as a response to this manuscript, and specifically to the calendar section that opens this and all traditional books of hours.” The poems follow the calendrical rhythm of days and months, but jump around the century in years, mapping a history of the century in which European culture moved from the medieval to the Renaissance. Included here are the birth of perspective in painting, recipes for pigments that include sneezing and the discovery of new planets, “(seven known + the two nonexistent) / (chunk of ice and the other simply gas.” Yet “the spatial world” that Swensen recreates is, as it was then, partially indetermined, “(four cardinal points, four seasons, four elements and / if each planet had a ghost.” Elsewhere, the four elements expand to include ether, raising the poignant question: if science has brought our understanding thus far, how outdated will our current knowledge be in another 600 years?

The book is not solely confined to the fifteenth-century; it expands to include the invention of the railroad and Giovanni di Paolo’s representation of the human heart, “the comic shape that will someday anoint all those bumperstickers” and, of course, Thanksgiving. As in Pound’s Cantos, Swensen attempts to reconstruct our contemporary notions of history by assembling
the fragments of a past, but unlike Pound the work is more focused and thus feels more complete.

The plague is here and so is the Hundred Years’ War, but both are expertly downplayed by a minimal black humor: “And this at the height / of the plague” ends a poem about Spring. They become the tragedies of which no one wants to speak and the major advancements in the arts and sciences take precedence in the book. “[T]he dead in their number beyond number” neatly return at the end, but are overshadowed by “the white light” of the rest of the book.

Mathematics plays a major role, as does the discovery that “connects / clocks to astronomy” and how both reconfigure our conception of time. The math, mirroring the society, becomes more sophisticated as the book progresses from “January 5 + 5 / = One” to the formula for the isosceles triangle: “(iso)3 or / Δ → x +√3.”

The work is fragmented, thoughts stop mid-phrase, quotation marks and parenthesis appear without closure. Some text in quotations is italicized; some, not, making it difficult at times to tell whether or not Swensen is actually quoting. French and Latin phrases appear frequently (not surprising as the book deals primarily with French history) and Middle English makes a brief cameo. The etymology of modern language is discussed in the same breath as new pigments: “kermes comes from the Arabic made Latin kermesinum made Italian cremisno, / cromoisie in French and a brilliant crimson.” Only as it moves toward English is the color understood to be “brilliant.”

In concept, the book resembles the baroqueness of Susan Howe’s recent work and Swensen’s use of line and level of abstraction is reminiscent of Kuhl House series editor Jorie Graham, but the voice is unmistakably Cole Swensen’s; few contemporaries would dare break the concrete poetry barrier to make their words resemble a scythe:

(How swing this scythe so I look a little less like
  my own death)
  who
  sings
  of

Despite their content, the poems are as contemporary as any being written today. Although each individual poem relies on the rest of the book, Swensen’s project, as a whole, is successful.

Self and Simulacra by Liz Waldner is a much looser collection than Such Rich Hour and Waldner’s previous collection as well. The three disparate sections read like a collection of chapbooks, the middle section actually having been a chapbook (Read Only Memory, Seeing Eye Books). The book centers around its title, the idea of the self as a simulacrum. In her own endnotes,
Waldner relates her book to “Lamarck’s theory that an organism may be affected by its environment and pass the adaptations so affected to its offspring.” The problem, according to Waldner, is in the present where “we are directed to become isolate, profit-generating consumers, especially of others’ meaning. How then must we live? > who is we? > what is a self?”

The book begins rather strongly with a section based on Gray’s Lessons in Botany and Vegetable Physiology, which serves as Waldner’s “proof” of Lamarck’s theory; “for each individual owes its existence to a preceding one like itself,” she writes, but even her “explanation is / only a likeness / only like another Thing.”

The writing here is highly erotic, full of blossoming flowers and “odalisque her thighs.” If not for the underlying search for the self, this section could be mistaken for lesbian erotica. In the opening poem, Waldner attempts to cast off the influences of her first book, “My course is rotten, I channel Mr. Berryman who am not such a man.” But the influences soon return with Stevens “Waving adieu, adieu, adieu.” Many of the poems’ meanings hinge on the reader’s knowledge of certain botanical terms:

My raceme to your umbrel. You terminal, me currant, choke-cherry, barberry. You milk weed, you flat cyme to my corymb, my kiss alas like a moth on the right flower at the wrong time of day.

A trip to a botany book illuminates the reader to the fact that Waldner is creating an identity gap between the “I” and the other via the differing structures of their floral axes; yet the two physically join in a sort of cross-pollinating gesture.

In the middle section, Waldner uses the archaic diction of Sir Thomas Browne as springboard, a rather similar move to Swensen’s appropriation of Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry. But at times Waldner gets stuck in her mimicry, “Camest thou strokedst me, wouldst give me water with berries in’t and teach me how to name / the bigger light.” When she begins a poem with the Browne line, “I must confess a great deal of obscurity…” she means it. The poems are interesting enough unto themselves, but few really pay off. One exception being the last in the section, “Wherin our bones with stars shall make one Pyre…”:

Can the sunfish drown? Again shall the Vessel say to the Potter Why hast thou made me thus? Let me rather (or more of the same) Be in love with dead Sir Thomas Browne.

Here she makes a significant break with Browne’s diction while still maintaining an overt reference to his work and creating an irregular rhyme scheme.
In the last section of the book, which is more of a hodgepodge than the first two, Waldner comes closest to realizing the political agenda she stakes out in her endnotes: “How can I (ashamed of Rwanda, Bopal, death row, NAFTA, SUV) / live in the new polis which is the clamor of TV... How come nobody seems to notice there’s nobody there to see?” On television, the self literally becomes a simulacrum. Even the old dog of language as representation wags his tail, “letters / – of credit and credence – accrue, / mortgaging meaning against which to borrow.” While in her last collection Waldner flirted with the critique of capitalist society, this time around she has, in her own way, waged an all out assault.

The playfulness and plasticity of language that has come to characterize her work is here, but with much less punk exuberance than before. The line “Address, redress, dress me up and down” somehow fails to retain the linguistic intensity of *A Point Is That Which Has No Part.*

Old adages are revised, “Neither a burrower nor a surrenderer bee; when push / comes to shovel from now on I push,” and Waldner finds “no greater pleasure than pleasure in writing.” Only through language can the self escape its image. She splits words in half, sometimes thirds, “be(e)/d,” which allows for multiple readings of the same construction, but after awhile it is like having season tickets to see the Harlem Globetrotters, the same trick shot does not always produce the same magic. The real success of the book is when she pushes new poetic ground, be it channeled or not. While all the poems may not hit the bullseye, most do, which is impressive considering how small the target is.
La traduction est une opération indiscernable de la création poétique.
— OCTAVIO PAZ

One Definition of Poetry: What gets lost in the translation.

One Definition of Translation: Transferring an object from one place to another; displacing a thing from here to there.

When a bowl of water is moved from sink to table, some water may spill and be lost. When a poem is translated, some poetry may leak out and be lost.

The goal of the translator: to keep as much water in the bowl as possible.

Everything in the poem communicates. The whole of the poem must be taken into account in the translation.

Meanings, sounds, and shapes of words; the agglomerates they form when combined into lines, lines into stanzas, stanzas into poems; the form of the poem, the aesthetic forces that shape and define it, the literary tradition that stands behind it.

Translating a poem implies transferring all of those things from one place (language, culture, tradition) to another. Or not. (On purpose.)

Valéry: One does not finish a translation; one abandons it.

On “faithful” translations

One is tempted to ask: faithful to what?
A facetious question, perhaps, but in answering it the translator determines for himself and all of his readers what the poem is ultimately “about.” This is a weighty decision, for his readers’ experience of the poem, their contact with the writer in question, and their glimpse – however brief – of the “foreign” culture and literary history reflected by the translated poem, will be informed by the translator’s perception of the work and the manner in which he translates it.

So...

Is it better to translate as closely – as “literally” – as possible and perhaps lose the beauty, the “poetry” of the original, or should one attempt to recreate as fully as possible the experience of the original poem, sacrificing to whatever extent what the poet actually “said”* to achieve that goal?

DICTUM: Les traductions sont comme les femmes : les belles ne sont pas fidèles et les fidèles ne sont pas belles.

[Which evokes an exchange between Bud Abbot and Lou Costello in which the latter declares that he wishes to marry an ugly woman. His friend asks why he would not prefer a pretty one. “A pretty girl’s liable to cheat on me,” is the explanation. “And an ugly girl wouldn’t?” his friend replies. “She might,” he responds, “but who cares?”]

Translating Constraint

You translate the constraint, in addition to (at times, instead of) the poem. In an honest translation, priority must be given to the limitations that inform the original – whether a traditional verse umptina or an Oulipian zippogram – even if the “content” of the poem will suffer as a result.

A translation of an anagrammatic poem that is not anagrammatic itself is a lie.**

* A fallacious notion, since in a poem the poet “says” nothing, he writes, which is not at all the same thing. One translates writing; the translation of saying is called interpreting. Of the two, translating is the more difficult, because writing says more than saying ever could.

** And the reader may counter that the translation of an anagrammatic poem that is anagrammatic is not a translation. The reader is right; see below.
The Impossibility of Translating Constraint

An anagram cannot be translated. At least, not entirely. Certainly, the words formed by permutating the letters of the original words can be translated. However, such a translation fails to convey the constraint. Such a translation fails.

**Difficulty:** The closer the poem is to the nuts and bolts of the original language (as are poems featuring a constraint related to the mechanics [orthography, syntax, puns, etc.] of the original language), the more difficult the translation.

If the constraint is deeply rooted in the original language (like the anagram, for example), strict translation is impossible, and *transpoiesis* is necessary: one must recreate a work in the target language using the same constraint. One does not translate the words composing the original poem, one translates (in the sense of carrying over from one language/literary tradition/culture) the creative act from which the original poem is sprung.

**Example:** The following anagrammatic poem was written by Hans Bellmer and Nora Mitrani (with the collaboration of Joë Bousquet), on a fragment from Nerval: “Rose au cœur violet.” Two other poems follow; the first a German version on the same Nerval fragment by Unica Zürn and Hans Bellmer, the second, my own English version. The second and third poems are not translations of the first; they are recreations written through the same constraint from the same source fragment.

*Rose au cœur violet*

Se vouer à toi ô cruel
A toi, couleuvre rose
O, vouloir être cause
Couvre-toi, la rue ose
Ouvre-toi, ô la sucrée

Va où suréel côtoie
O, l’oiseau crève-tour
Vil os écceurera route
Cœur violé osa tuer

Sœur à voile courte – écolier vous a outré
Curé, où Eros t’a violé – où l’écu osera te voir
Où verte coloriée sua – cou ouvert sera loi

O rire sous le couteau
Roses au cœur violet

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Rosen mit violettem Herz

Hortensie reitet zum Olm
Sie loht im Zorne, meutert
Hoer, Untier, Mimose lenzt
Entröte sie im Holzturm
Lunte her, zittere im Moos
Turmotter, ziehe mein Los
Immer zeitlose Totenuhr

Romhure zotet mit Eselin – Listviehmormone zetert
Nimm Lottes Eiterzeh vor – Lusttote, nimm rohe Reize
Heize Monstrumteile rot – los, hetze mir vir Motten

Vorzeiten-Himmel rostet
Ins leere Ruhm-Motto Zeit
Zieht Reim vom ersten Lot

Im letzten Ei Rest vom Ohr
Violetter Zenith-Sommer

Rose With The Violet Heart

Soothe leather with rivet,
thee lit. O thwart Eros’ hive,
overthrow it. The she-eel at
the raw, lithe torso: Eve hit
it here (that sore) with love.

There – violate others with
a slit. He hit two over three
tho’ their earthiest vowel
over-oil thee with threats.

Throatier thieves who let totalities hover, whet her
thievish tool where treat wove stealthier, o thither,
here shoot what trite veil heaviest root let whither.

Ætherish whorlet veto it –
rose with the violet heart.
The translator’s task is harder than the poet’s; the poet creates, the translator recreates. His choices are both limited and dictated by someone else whose priorities were self-imposed. The translator is not a writer. He is condemned (or permitted, depending on how you look at it) to re-write only.

Translating Sound

Translating from a language which is not a language; can this be done? Does “translation” have any meaning in this context? Can one translate a “sound poem” – Kruchenykh’s zaum poem “дир бул щыл,” for example – and if so, how would one go about it? What would one actually translate? Here is the zaum original, followed by English, then French versions of the poem.

| дир бул щыл | dir bul shchyl | dir boul chtchyl |
| убешшур | ubeshshchur | oubechchtchour |
| скум | skum | skoum |
| вы со бу | vy so bu | vy so bou |
| р л эз | rl ez | r l èze |

Though written in zaum (not Russian) and thus semantically transparent, the poem does contain potential phonetic associations for Russian speakers which will undoubtedly be different if not non-existent for non-Russian speakers. Strictly speaking, there is nothing here to translate,* and most “translations” of this poem are nothing more than transliterations; they seek to reproduce the sounds of the original words but do not convey their associations.

Perhaps transpoiesis – rather than transliteration – would be appropriate here: rather than merely transliterate this work, the translator might recreate a work having similar associations in the target language (which, of course, leads to another set of problems...)**

* Well, almost nothing: вы is a Russian word (meaning “you”).
** Namely, does one then translate the associations? For example, if Kruchenykh’s zaum poem has a “Tartar tinge,” as the poet himself declared, should one attempt to find English associations for Tartar (be there any), or does one select another language having a similar relationship to and resonances in English that Tartar may have in Russian (a Native American language, for example), and write a new poem thus “tinged”? 

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Transliteration is more akin to musical transposition than to translation stricto sensu. This because we are dealing only with sound and meaning is absent.

The transliterator’s task resembles that of a composer transposing a clarinette melody for the flute: notate the sounds of one orchestral voice that the same notes may sound when played by another.

Translating is more like orchestration: in orchestrating, the composer transfers a work from one musical idiom (generally the solo piano) to another (an entire orchestra, for example), recreating it for a different musical context. The original work is the both the point of departure and final destination of the orchestration. It will be transformed in the process, though it will remain the same piece.

On “successful translations”

Again, this begs the questions: successful with respect to what and determined by whom? (See comments on “faithful” translations, above.)

The only honest definition of a successful translation can be: the translator was successful in conveying to his readers what he determined was most important in the poem he translated.

As most of his readers will never know what was at stake in the operation, they cannot judge the translation’s success. At best, they can conclude that it “reads well” in the target language, or doesn’t.

Paraphrasis

Duke Ellington: If it reads good it is good.

A Dilemma

How does one translate a poem from a language whose poetic tradition differs from that of the language into which one is translating?

For example, how is one to translate a modern or contemporary poem written in rhymed and metered verse into a language whose modern or contemporary poetry has lost its verse tradition (i.e. translating Mayakovsky into English), or – more problematic still – into a language which has never had a poetic tradition resembling that of conventional Western versification (i.e. Ronsard into Korean)?
Or again, how does one translate a poetic work written in a form common to one language into another language in which that form has no currency or in which that form remains distinctly “foreign” (i.e. translating the limerick into Spanish or the renga into French)? Does one retain the form of the original, with its distinctive (but meaningless, in the target language) structure, meter, rhyme, etc., or does one attempt to infuse with original poem with features familiar to the target language (like rhyming English haiku translations), or perhaps “translate” the form or genre of the original into an equivalent poetic form existent in the poetic tradition of the target language?

In solving a different, but analogous problem, Paz, Roubaud, Sanguinetti and Tomlinson – when they set about composing a Western renga – did not retain the Japanese form, but chose instead to write a sequence of collective sonnets. Paz noted in a preface: “Il est à peine nécessaire de préciser que nous ne nous sommes pas proposé de nous approprier un genre mais plutôt de faire fonctionner un système de production de texte poétique. [...] Et le renga est avant tout une pratique.”*

Thus it was not a poetic form that was carried over from one tradition to another, but rather the act of writing poetry itself. The concern was not to preserve an artifact, but an art; to focus not on a creation, but on recreation; not to deal so much with translation but with transpoiesis.

*Paraphrasis*

**DYLAN THOMAS:** I am not interested in translation. I am interested in translations.

It is perhaps best to not spend too much time discussing translation – it keeps one from translating. Problems arise and are solved, or not, yet writing continues.

“Yes, but,” one might retort, “translating poetry is a special task and merits discussion.” Indeed it is, in fact it is virtually tautological. If we agree with Paz’s notion that the act of translation is indistinguishable from poetic creation, we must conclude that – paradoxically – to translate poetry is to write it, to live the creative act that ultimately results in a poem at once the same and yet different from its source. If we do agree with this, the adage Traduttore traditore will need to be reworked – Traduttore creatore would seem more appropriate.

Stacy Doris’ new book *Conference* continues her explorations of both form and tone – the form is expansive, theatrical, and actively visual – lively marks indicating characters fly about like errant accents over the pages – while the tone strikes a poignant flippancy that is deeply moving and entirely her own. Being a conference, voice is crucial, and the interjection of voices – in dialogue, in monologue, into and out of each other – constitutes the dynamic principle. While there are characters, they’re not stable, but tend to mutate, equating with proliferating stances and objects – and are all somehow birds. Not literally, perhaps, but the presence of birds is so pervasive that it seems to permeate them all. It’s this omnipresent birdness that evokes the Sufi poet Farid ud-Din Attar’s masterpiece *The Conference of the Birds* as the ground against which *Conference* figures itself.

This twelfth-century epic poem (whose author figures as one of Doris’ characters), originally considered heretical because of its incomprehensibility, features a world of birds in crisis, searching for a unity that they ultimately discover is themselves. These are the elements with which Doris begins. Her own, very different incomprehensibility functions, as did Attar’s, to surprise readers into a non-logical understanding that requires their participation.

She uses the notion of a world of birds in crisis to evoke contemporary political reality, which she addresses with a marvelous subtlety, never didactic or dogmatic, yet charged with an imminence that looks straight at the present global predicament through characters such as Genocidal Logic and Emergency. Doris, a student of Arabic, is particularly attentive to the centuries-long strain between the Islamic and the Judeo-Christian worlds. Her deep skill is that, while she never mentions it directly, we are in no doubt of it.

The unity that constitutes the goal of Attar’s poem is ever-present here too, and signaled by a b, underscoring sound, song, and the unpronounceable. But because she’s dealing with the actual world rather than with Attar’s mystical, allegorical one, the ultimate unity is multiple and problematic: “I take the puppet, which is myself, and fling her against the sky.” “Idealists see unanimous as continuous, and deity is invented thus. // I miss her.” That a paradoxical disunified unity is at the center of the book is apparent from the Table of Contents, which is subtitled “Map for this book as it is not itself,” but ends with the exodos: “celebration of (b word)”

It would be too easy to read this as unity attainable through language – it’s not that; instead, language is a mechanism to engender more language
in a tumult: “If it happens my friend has wings, she is an angel, therefore falling. She is awake thus woeful. A lamb a bay. Reversing to graze. Its mouth sews to moth. Upside-down so un-fallen, roasting in sun-slag. Amber-legged mutton. The whole spirals until it is the sun, and so inanimate, so veiled. Angel ribs. Dressed in a sky mask. The wings, in b form collapse.” The principles of proliferation are many: semantic, sonorous, associative, and comprise a headlong meditation that fuses the political, the ethical, and the spiritual, and that attempts – and attains – a personal accountability.
To read through the acknowledgment page of Duncan’s *Roots and Branches*, published by New Directions in 1969 in an edition that reprints the 1964 Scribner’s Edition (this copy is a third printing) – cover photo by Wynn Bullock, an image and text many of us in this room can conjure up even now – will be to meet the cutting edge of the world of poetry as it was at that point. Duncan thanks the editors whose little magazines first recognized his work: John Wieners of *Measure*, Diane Di Prima and Le Roi Jones of *Floating Bear*, Jack Spicer of *J*, Hugh Kenner of *The National Review*, Barney Rosset and Richard Seaver of *Evergreen Review*, Bernard Waldrop of *Burning Deck*, Richard Duerden of *Foot*, Gael Turnbull of *Migrant*, Jerome Rothenberg of *Poems from The Floating World*, Robert Kelly of *Trobar*, Denise Levertov of *The Nation*, Gerrit Lansing of *Set*, Cid Corman of *Origin*, Stan Perskey of *Open Space*, Ron Loewinsohn and Richard Brautigan of *Change*, among others; along with Donald Allen, whose *New American Poetry 1945–1960* brought Duncan’s work to the foreground of a consequently larger circle of attention.

Here is the title poem from that book, printed first 30 years or so ago, a view from 1964, California I’d say; a 55 year old native son/poet’s view:

Sail, Monarchs, rising and falling
orange merchants in spring’s flowery markets!
messengers of March in warm currents of new floating,
flitting into areas of aroma,
tracing out of air unseen roots and branches of sense
I share in thought,
filaments woven and broken where the world might light
casual certainties of me. There are

  echoes of what I am in what you perform
this morning. How you perfect my spirit!
almost restore
an imaginary tree of the living in all its doctrines
by fluttering about,
intent and easy as you are, the profusion of you!
awakening transports of an inner view of things.

All of Duncan’s work is here, at least in little. The measure. The music of the sound of the words as spoken. The space of the words on the page and
in the air. The ravishing and disturbing lyric sense of it all – its “echoes of what I am in what you perform / this morning.” Its mythic, Homeric, metaphysical, modern sense of what might be possible in poetry – “filaments woven and broken where the world might light / casual certainties of me.” Duncan – the visionary – knew of such things, knew them as late as *Ground Work*, whose attention turns in part to “Childhood’s Retreat”:

It's in the perilous boughs of the tree  
out of blue sky the wind  
sings loudest surrounding me.

And solitude, a wild solitude  
's reveal'd, fearfully, high I'd climb  
into the shaking uncertainties,

part out of longing, part daring my self,  
part to see that  
widening of the world, part  
to find my own, my secret  
hiding sense and place, where from afar  
all voices and scenes come back

- the barking of a dog, autumnal burnings,  
far calls, close calls – the boy I was  
calls out to me  
here the man where I am “Look!

I've been where you  
most fear to be.”

One can't help but think of poets whose ear Duncan has, whose sound continues as it reaches further into the air:

as if it were a scene made-up by the mind  
that is not mine, but is a made place,

that is mine, it is so near to the heart,  
an eternal pasture folded in all thought  
so that there is a hall therein

that is a made place, created by light  
wherefrom the shadows that are forms fall.
Duncan’s focus defines itself when he writes, “Go write yourself a book and put / there – in first things that might define a world.” A world defined by Duncan himself – in his work and life. A world that reflects, as Michael Davidson puts it, “the myth of an Edenic or Atlantean civilization, the cult of the child, the various permutations of Rousseau’s noble savage, the Hegelian dialectic of the spirit, Blake’s reduplicating historical cycles and even Nietzsche’s philological revaluation of cultural values.”

And as Robin Blaser writes in the afterword of the catalogue to this exhibition, Duncan read the Romantic poets with love and care for their imagination. The Romantics for whom, as Blaser quoting Cavell continues, “both the wish for the exceptional and for the everyday are foci. One can think of romanticism as the discovery that the everyday is an exceptional achievement.” As much as making much ado about noting what is going on here and now,

as if it were a given property of the mind
that certain bounds hold against chaos
that is a place of first permission.

The Robert Duncan I remember reading to a full house audience in Dwinelle 100 on the u c Berkeley campus in what must have been the winter of 1973–74 – reading with full register of the sound of and silence between its own world of words – “A Seventeenth Century Suite in Homage to the Metaphysical Genius in English Poetry (1590–1690),” part of which, taking off on Sir Walter Ralegh’s “What Is Our Life?” asks,

What does this life most seem? but shadows upon
a moving picture screen,
often untrue to what we would have them be,
so that we are in our nature
like actors who have not been given their lines,
or having their lines, know
not the play they belong to, failing the cues,
or like musicians asking “What’s the score?”
even as the music begins and they must play.

The Robert Duncan at whose feet we sat and listened, in the mortuary become New College on Valencia for instance, or the house on 20th Street for those fortunate enough to go there. The Robert Duncan who bore – and bore into – “the ear sounding sight,” “the line of joy,” “the songs outside,” “the core of your folded hands [that] unfold a feeling in the room of an empty space.” The Robert Duncan who knew that “Among my friends love is a wage / that one might have for an honest living.” “An answer to a ques-
tion / that has not been askt.” The Robert Duncan who asked that question from the opening of his own field – and later, “in the dark”:

I am talking about the beginning of an age in my body
light as a mountain hanging in the air
no one may lift from me.

The Robert Duncan whose work we are here to witness – on the page, in the air and ear.

This talk was presented at “A Symposium of the Imagination: Robert Duncan in Word and Image,” held at Mills College on March 13, 1994.
The Chachie Investigations

Mark Tardi

Looking at the Economic History of Avocados...

It could be Franky
It could be very fresh and clean
The marvelous.
Lamps at stake.

simply vivid.
tv so real,
you'll get too close.
1800 so simple

the simplistic view that America's sweetheart passive movement is entirely or doesn't have a teddy bear, mainly an articular phenomenon should be but rather something abandoned, although a restrictive barrier/stuck in her body limiting the range of motion (camera lenses, heroine needles, in one direction may be found/diet pills

"Of course the colors, the aesthetics, are to be murdered in a French literary theory."

by the indifferent neutrality of the abyss
an ordinary swell discloses the absence

You find yourself in a state of expectation. You are no subjects. You are objects here. You are the objects of our words. Still, you are subjects too.
“America is, at best, a strange place for an artist to work in. On the one hand there is the illusion of artistic freedom, constitutionally protected: on the other, there’s the operative dogma of the marketplace: will it sell? In America, art—like everything else (knowledge, condoms, religion, etc.)—is a product. The discovery of this is the capstone to the artist’s alienation process in America. He knows there is no relation between what is good and what sells, nor between what he’s made and how it’s used by the market managers. He is often made rich by his worst work, if he gets anything for his work at all.... No need for censorship: trust the general banality of the marketplace.”

oh, plenty of hope, an infinite amount of hope—but not for us.

POLICE SEEK PERSON WHO YELLED “JUMP” TO SUICIDE

Brownsville, PA (AP)—Police said Monday they were seeking a person who shouted “Jump!” moments before a distraught man leaped to his death.

The death of Samuel Holmes of Brownsville was the second suicide during the weekend from the 175-foot high Lane-Bane Bridge.

Police said Holmes was bringing his other leg back over the rail to stand on the sidewalk when someone on the railroad tracks yelled “Jump!”

Holmes stood up, looked at his taunter, glanced back at the officer and stepped off the railing. “Perhaps...if no one had said ‘jump’ it would have saved his life,” a police spokesperson said.

The problem of the double personality has been of central concern to men from primitive times to the present. In essence, the appearance of the Double is an aspect of man’s eternal desire to solve the enigma of his own identity.

starring Steven A & The Hungry Six,
Rosemary Clooney as “2nd Person,”
and George Palmer as “Fritz”

Je ne pense pas de répéter cette phrase.
Art spills off the page. Year of the Tucks Medicated Pad

An example is an electrode.

“Our literature has been a dangerous game with its own death, in other words a way of experiencing, of living that death: our literature is like that Racinean heroine who dies upon learning who she is, but lives by seeking her identity.”

Because of this alternative, not only does the meaning of legitimation vary, but it is already apparent that narrative itself is incapable of describing that meaning adequately.

Third question. I will converse with no one on those days of the week which end in y

The assassin (?), in flight, gravitated with unconscious, instinctual insect ease, moth-like, toward a zone of safety, haven from the swarming streets. Quickly, he was devoured in the warm, dark, silent maw of the physical theater. Modern circles of Hell: Oswald (?) kills President. Oswald enters taxi. Oswald stops at rooming house. Oswald leaves taxi. Oswald kills Officer Tippitt. Oswald sheds jacket. Oswald is captured. He escaped into a movie house.

It may have floated, broke off and landed here but it could not be read.

“While usually thinking of muscles as the motors of the body, producing motion by their contraction, it is important to remember that the same contractile forces are also used to oppose motion.... It is therefore proposed that it is in its capacity as a brake that a muscle may become a major and highly variable impediment to mobility of a lesioned “joint”. The high gain hypothesis is consistent with, and offers an explanation for, the steeply rising resistance to motion in one direction....”
The Arabic word Allah is grammatically unique as it has no derivatives. It is neither a plural nor gender specific; thus it emphasizes that the one and only God is neither male nor female. God’s omnipotence transcends space, time and gender.

Wine brandy apples rosin
Cork paper toys perfumes
Oil pitch tar oak pewter
Linen silk lace salt gin

(Degenerative changes, in themselves, need not produce manifest symptoms.)

United States students will be first in the world in mathematics and science achievement.

Or to put it another way, Joanie loves Chachie, and Chachie, in turn, loves Joanie.

You can go through the history of philosophy and tick off those who became blinded by the brilliance of their own original insight:

JUST A FEW EXAMPLES OF GAMES YOU CAN HAVE AND SAVE AN ADDITIONAL $10 !!!

the photographer is still watching.

“Promiscuity is basically a compulsive, illusory attempt to create object relationships, doomed to failure, for the promiscuous girl is flying from a frustrated experience with a mother who she feels didn’t nurture her properly.”

first comes the logic of substitution

lrg 3 bdrm Victorian,
ht, water, gas, no pets
w/d, d/w, call.
Was Heaven, then, to be merely another ghetto? To avoid damage to your computer, the manufacturer recommends that only a certified technician install additional RAM. Consult the service and support information that came with your computer for instructions on how to contact an authorized service provider or the manufacturer for service. If you attempt to install additional RAM yourself, any damage you may cause to your equipment will not be covered by the limited warranty on your computer.

There is no longer any medium in the literal sense: it is now intangible, diffuse, and diffracted in the real, and it can no longer even be said that the latter is distorted by it. This is the longest movie I've ever been in. Nothing can alter these images.

Hand: Today is your birthday? 
Mouth: Yes. 
Hand: It's my birthday too. 
Mouth: Yeah?

In 1833, Colin Goodykoontz, an itinerant preacher with a name from a fairytale, summed up the situation in one Indiana town this way:

Ignorance and her squalid brood. A universal dearth of intellect. Total abstinence from literature is very generally practiced... There is not a scholar in grammar or geography, or a teacher capable of instructing in them, to my knowledge... Others are supplied a few months of the year with the most antiquated & unreasonable forms of teaching reading, writing & cyphering... Need I stop to remind you of the host of loathsome reptiles such a stagnant pool is fitted to breed! Croaking jealousy; bloated bigotry; coiling suspicion; wormish blindness; crocodile malice!
Things have changed since then, but in none of the respects mentioned.

That is, snow

a) is
b) is not
falling—check neither or both

Try Vigor Brand Piggy Pears

mod (mod) n. (sometimes cap.): a British teenager who strives to attain a sophisticated aloof personality and affects an ultramodern version of Edwardian dress and manners.

He looks at her. Goes on looking at her, his eyes shut. He inhales her face, breathes it in. He breathes her in, the child, his eyes shut he breathes in her breath, the warm air coming out of her. Less and less clearly can he make out the limits of this body, it's not like other bodies, it's not finished, in the room it keeps growing, it's still without set form, continually coming into being, not only there where it's visible but elsewhere too, stretching beyond sight, toward risk, toward death, it's nimble, it launches itself wholly into pleasure as if it were grown up, adult, it's without guile, and it's frighteningly intelligent.

ARE YOU one of the TWO MILLION victims of ENGAGEMENT RING anxiety?

The deconstruction is not something we have added to the text but it constituted the text in the first place. A literary text simultaneously asserts and denies the authority of its own rhetorical mode, and by reading the text as we did we were only trying to come closer to being as rigorous a reader as the author had to be in order to write the sentence in the first place. Poetic writing is the most advanced and refined mode of deconstruction; it may differ from critical or discursive writing in the economy of its articulation, but not in kind.
Villains are...people whose daring and energy of character might have made them heroes in a better-organized society.

Je voulais désunir la vie
Je voulais partager la mort avec la mort
Rendre mon cœur au vide et le vide à la vie
Tout effacer qu’il n’y ait rien ni vitre ni buée
Ni rien devant ni rien derrière rien entier
J’avais éliminé le glaçon des mains jointes
J’avais éliminé l’hivernale ossature
Du vœu de vivre qui s’annule

Did I ever tell you about the man who taught his asshole to talk. . .

What are we waiting for? A woman? Two trees? Three flags? Nothing. What are we waiting for?

“What would a distillation of the whole world be like?” asked a man in amazement, drunk for the first time.

I am really the criminal you won’t say I am. In instance after instance, I kill you. And each procession I hear of myself is a funeral. The hill is muddy, silence surrounds your coffin and because you are dead, even the patter of the dirt as it touches you is like affection you can’t feel. Too bad you have to die in here. Some of me is very sorry and whistles to disrupt the killing spree. Some of me wants to torture you because you make it so easy. Some of me is the guard on duty who looks blithely the other way and later denies the whole affair. I am all the murderers who served their silence up cold; for a heading home of thoughts that needed to wander. Can you tell I’m looking at you now—
Each laboratory report MUST follow the format given below. Failure to follow the prescribed format will result in lost points, and could contribute to a poor overall grade in the lab for yourself and your lab partners. Each report is worth a maximum of 10 points:

“I loved naive painters, primitive painters, schizophrenic painters, fashion designers, comic strip artists, popular art, any literature which is low and brutal, Church Latin, badly offset porn, the first novels ever composed, fairy tales, kids adventure books, dumb children’s songs, rock-n-roll. Anything but culture.

I learned to be at home with children’s blood
with savored violence
with pictures of Black broken flesh
used crumpled up discarded
lying amid the sidewalk refuse
like a raped woman’s face.

In the dim room
of the fortuneteller, you can hear our friends estimate the buoyancy of air, trying to figure everything out. If this is where the riddle ends, then you, the observer, as if reflected through this mirror, are implicated, unless this dream, too, is cut to be a sapphire and placed on the ring of your enemy.

just lay off the slider low and away, especially when you are behind in the count.

<table>
<thead>
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<td>5mg</td>
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<td>Sodium</td>
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<td>1%</td>
<td>Protein</td>
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</tbody>
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They responded, You must read our latest addition, a story where the beloved makes the mistake of not existing.

Signed,  
*From the Other Side of the Alphabet*

The parallel is complete and absolute. The two things are the same, the same pity, the same call for help, the same lack of judgment, the same superstition if you like, that consists in believing in a political solution to a personal problem.

**LANA TURNER HAS COLLAPSED!**

The economy of the text is such that it devours (or perhaps divulges itself in) the algebra of need. Thus exclusion is given agency, a primary voice. The idea of something being included exists only to remind what is necessarily excluded by its presence. This failure relationship, in turn, provides the participant with a feeling of discovery. It suggests a certain solidification of perception and identity that can only be gotten through the rigors of alienation and disjunction. Yet, this feeling of discovery is by no means exempt from the process; rather, it is a point of proliferation.

Receptors have 3 main functions:
1. sensation
2. control/coordinate movements
3. maintain arousal

...we tend to meet any situation by reorganizing and a wonderful method it can be for creating the illusion of progress while producing confusion, inefficiency and demoralization.

The blue and white tie arrived at the man’s neck through merchandising:

(Why should I share you? Why don’t you get rid of someone else for a change?)
Poetry Against Poems
or, care contra form? doors against chairs?

= John Lowther

"you don't define electricity — you see the results of electricity but you don't name it"

an arbitrary hacking place, one step among many possible, and as steps on a stair, transitional — placing the weight now here, where before these words might have slid this way or that — the sandwichboard sign i wore in Prunty's Free Poetry campaign said

END
POETRY
NOW

but the scales have shifted since (i was joking then, provoking, but now...)
—— i am for poetry against poems or to echo; poetry without poems if necessary
—— poems without poetry being both the celebrated and reviled commonplace

poetry escapes the poem as we escape photographs, by never being caught to begin with — the price of fixity is unintelligibility — is poetry in the interpretive process? (this, i'm asked; where?) and if that seems a locale to any, fine, we step where we must, but — place a finger there on a map and say all poetry is here — is this locus an index of why you care? does any map suffice to lead back to that experience? to a fleeting, unfixable and hunch-laden knowledge of language as art, as poetry?

the text is material, is in many cases ink on a page, some concatenation of atoms on a computer screen — if this is it — if this is where the action is — then being a poet is something like being a collector or fashioner of marbles or junk or velvet-seated gold-painted pointless-to-sit-on chairs — somewhere to rest yr ass and feel smug about the details of the armrests — i'd rather keep walking — some poem or another being about as crucial as where i last sat — vs — the horizon(s) available to aim or accident

i'm not against your choice in chairs just tired in the face of endless decor — poetry is thru a door — the best of chairs catch us, implant in us a fuse that at end can throw us thru — changed in the frame — but, mostly these chair-poems are lodged under the knob, keeping the poetry out — if this is read as a simple opposition, an either/or, then all is lost... the sets overlap, interpenetrate (a chair might be a door but not because it's a chair — a picture might be great likeness)
poetry is too easily assumed in the poem, is a trick built into the sound of the two words or our history of associating them (the same trick that makes necessary the connections between poetics and poetry when they are at their most useful merely hopeful, conjectural) — but poetry isn’t any more importantly in poems than in sales receipts, the babble of masses on the subways of rush hour, the hiss at a burned fingertip — poetry isn’t in poems any more meaningfully than it is in language generally, spoken, garbled, written or remembered — poetry lights a fuse, pulls out the lynchpin, chucks in a wooden shoe — poetry makes things different, has repercussions between widely separated heres and theres, this’s and that’s — is a mutable and mutating antidote to an ill only recognized in hindsight — these are not definitions but incomplete descriptions — more must always be found

there — is a poet talking and there — a tape playing and there — a painting is involved — and later, with whatever delays will come a written text, a photograph, and some things else brought in or taken away — a hoarseness of voice, a truck full of music schools, a sudden loop that acts as glue, the tornado sirens at noon, even —

Where is the poetry?

all of it combined is the poetry — wrong answer
the poetry is in all of them — wrong answer

in that moment or later and lingering, flipping maybe only a few switches but adding a dimension thereby which doesn’t dissolve as one’s memory of a turn of phrase, the beats in a line, the set-up rhyme, or the raw materiality of language so often does — poetry doesn’t dissolve — it infuses

I leave much crap on the seat of a chair that the conspiracy (habit) of our days calls form — this cognitive affliction isn’t hampered by self-consciousness of the chair or by any seated denials, it inflicts itself evenly on any who assume that poetry is obviously in poems (or that they’re captured by photographs) — this is formalism at its most base but the stain spreads upward thru any edifice built upon it

form conspires against poetry — poetry wins out sometimes — in spite of well-meant but confused conspirators who think they’re supporters, sustainers, partisans of poetry — formalism is the appraisal of the few traits deemed crucial by some viewer/reader/author/auditor/critic and their generalization via comparative or taxonomic strategies into a schema then deployed to evaluate further instances of the target objects/populations — it’s handy and dependable in certain respects but the blindspots... — the squish of limited needs that framed the so-called crucial traits — the faith that bleeds out of taxonomy into... what? — as if picking the killer out of the line-up (safe behind the mirror) says anything about the motive of the murder — form wd make of this manifesto a set of directions, wd say “so
what yr saying is that we must do x or y or z” —— nothing of the sort is being said

form is generally a shorthand (or mask) which functions as or refers to...

— a crutch of ‘tradition’ foolishly defined, to absorb some presumed authority; this is a velvet-backed louis the XIVth but that might as well be a upturned garbage can

— the ‘materiality’ of the poem conceived as anything from the unchallenged idealization that it’s a necessary and interpretable reflection of its historical moment (via economics, culture, ideology etc, any lens) right down to the fact of its being on 20lb bond in blue ballpoint [i don’t dispute it — artifacts do reflect their context, but the how of this often dim, ambiguous and certainly distorted reflection is generally neglected in the rush to make the larger claim, such that the conjectural aspect of the association of inked paper to political and economic systems is simply treated as foregone, fact, truism]; in these armrests the tragedy of early industrial oppression is made manifest

— a way to dodge the solipsistic edge that always threatens one’s own aesthetic judgements when put out into the world (and which must be threatened thusly if they’re to have any tension, any success against fixity); it’s not that i find this chair comfortable, it’s form is comforting

— a move to assert some kind of transitive relation between a ‘form’ and a particular political/ideological position i.e., the collage form isn’t susceptible to fascist usage; only the righteous ass might rest on this chair

— a curious and confused stand-in for “language”; a table and four forms, let’s play bridge

form, stop thinking it — unless we are simply talking about the shape of the thing, the choice of margin width — i fantasize of a michelson/morley experiment whereby form might blow the way of the ether wind — in absence of that why not see what changes when the shorthand mask is removed, whether or not what’s at issue comes forth

poetry, fiction, narrative — the stakes of these things are ill-served by poems, plays, novels — efforts at ventilating, at letting the air in, at getting them thru the door have helped and some have made a steady practice of such venture, but in their wake has come the confusion, the conspiracy, of form — one chair after another with occasional minor changes mostly cosmetic until the taste of culture of variety of poetry (sic) is typified by the food court — and like the matter on the plate, tasty as it may be in the moment, poems and novels in most cases across the publishing spectrum, irrespective of the conventional boundaries, simply sit there on the page — anyone engaged in finding or creating the space-of-variable-possibility that underpins fiction must see the novel as chair as well — tho novelists and their readers are often sitters by design — i sit for amusements for a piece of
candy perhaps but as ambiguous as any instance may be — as indeterminate as any amount of puzzling will reveal — there’s never much question of where they’re at, not the slightest cause for doubt, just a sore ass from being so long seated.

genres, like poetry, like fiction are not page-bound — they escape binding as smoke escapes a lasso, as the perfect retort hides on the tip of one’s tongue, as why we care isn’t listed as an ingredient of the ink — they interpenetrate freely passing thru containers like poems or novels, scores or scripts more quickly and with less contact than we commonly cross bridges with — poetry is a bridge from nowhere.

pieces of this puzzle are all around — conceptual art to the extent that it says that the idea, the problem is the art and the material work simply a pointer toward this idea — this echoes the point but is unsatisfactory to the extent that it suggests that the idea is fixed, that the object can lead unerringly to it as down an alley — process art pushes in the right direction by stating that the object is not the point — but an object might just as well function to unhinge us as entering into any process might and so this impulse also tends to miss the mark by fixing it — poetry is encountered — is experienced — in a need — it’s discovered as it intersects some possibility of satisfaction tho it might leave you sated or starved, lost or found.

given the weight of confusion and the inertia of formalism it wd seem that the only response wd be one which makes plain that the poetry is not in the poem or the talk or the ink but that, with luck these things push into the poetry, kicking open a door that we might pass thru — into — a space of continual opportunity freely interpenetrating housing and being housed like architectures in and on a terrain of language and to the side of it in other sorts of terrain composed of those things we cannot doubt save in language (hence, potentially, with poetry).

this is an arbitrary hacking place — tomorrow brings another, and contradiction inevitably — it isn’t the words after all, those objects, like points in a pointilist painting which we tend to stand so close to while forming our grand analyses.
HEATHER C. AKERBERG is currently pursuing her MFA in Creative Writing at Brown University. Her work has appeared in Bombay Gin and untitled: a magazine of prose poetry.

RICHARD ANDERS, born in 1928 in East Prussia, has settled in Berlin after stints of teaching German in Athens and Zagreb. In the ’60s he worked as an archivist in Hamburg and made contact with the Paris surrealists. His books include: Zeck (1979), Verscherzte Trümpfe (1993), Hörig (1997) from which our collage is taken, Die Pendeluhren haben Ausgangssperren (1998), all from Galrev Verlag. In English: The Footprints of One Who Has Not Stepped Forth, translated by Andrew Joron (Black Square Editions, 2000).


MACGREGOR CARD lives in Brooklyn and has a chapbook, Souvenir Winner, forthcoming from Hophophop Press. He edits The Germ, and now Germ Folios and Germ Monographs.

AMY CATANZANO’s poems have recently appeared or are forthcoming in American Letters & Commentary, Columbia Poetry Review, Conjunctions, Web Conjunctions, and Facture. She received her MFA in poetry from the Iowa Writers’ Workshop and lives in Boulder, Colorado.

CARLFRIEDRICH CLAUS was born in 1930 and died in the late 90s. He lived in East Berlin. Our images are taken from Denklandschaften, ifa, 1993.

VERONICA CORPUZ is the founder of PUB LUSH, a multimedia hub of visual and sound experiments.

ELFRIEDE CZURDA, born 1946, is an art historian and lives in Vienna and Berlin. Books of poetry include ein griff = eingriff inbegriffen (Rainer, 1978) and unGLÜXreflexe (Droschl, 1995), among her novels are Signora Julia (1985) and Die Giftmörderinnen (1991). Almost Life was published in English as A.BACUS #112 (1998; trans. R. Waldrop).

MICHAEL DONHAUSER, born 1956, lives in Vienna. Among his books are Dich noch und (Residenz, 1991), Von den Dingen (Carl Hanser, 1993) and Sarganserland (Urs Engeler, 1998). Our texts are taken from Die Wörtllichkeit der Quitte (Droschl, 1990). He has also translated Rimbaud.
Brandon Downing's booklets include *Lazio* and *Dog and Horsey Pictures*. His first collection, *The Shirt Weapon*, was published this January by Germ Monographs. He has just finished his second, *Lake Antiquity*, and he lives in New York City with all of them.

Patrick F. Durgin is the author of *Pundits Scribes Pupils* (Potes & Poets, 1998) and *Sorter* (Duration Press, 2001). Durgin's work has appeared most recently in *Chain, Crayon, and Lipstick Eleven*. He lives in Buffalo, NY where he continues to edit and publish *Kenning* and Kenning Editions.

Kari Edwards is a poet, artist, and author of *post/(pink)* (2000). She is also the poetry editor for I.F.G.E.'s Transgender — *Tapestry*. Her work can be found in *Blood and Tears* (2000), *Bombay Gin, Van Gogh's Ear, Delight Fiction, In Posse*, and *Facture*.


Gundi Feyrer was born in 1956, studied art in Munich and Hamburg. Our text is taken from *Geheimnisse verändern sich* (Kellner, 1989). More recently she has published a long prose, *Der Himmel ist eine Flasche* (Ritter, 1994).

Dieter Gräf, born 1960, lives in Köln. In 1999, he was a guest at the Villa Aurora in Los Angeles. His books are *Rauschstudie: Vater & Sohn* (Suhrkamp, 1994), *Treibender Köpf* (Suhrkamp, 1997), and *Tussi-Recherche* (2000) which combines texts with advertising images.

Jen Hofe'r divides her time between Mexico City and Los Angeles. She is currently editing and translating *Houses Small and Defiant/Casas Pequeñas y Desafiantes*, an anthology of contemporary poetry by Mexican women that will be co-published in 2003 by the University of Pittsburgh Press and Ediciones Sin Nombre. Her translations and poems can be found in recent or shortly forthcoming issues of *Antennae, Conundrum, Kenning, Lipstick Eleven, PomPom, Provincetown Arts*, and in issue #139 of *A.BACUS*, entitled *Laws*. Her first book of poems, *Slide Rule*, will be published by subpress early in 2002.

David Harrison Horton is editor of the poetry journal *Chase Park* and teaches English at Patten College in Oakland, California. His work has recently appeared or is forthcoming in *syllogism, Gestalten, Phoebe, The Oregon Review*, and *Fish Drum*, among others. He lives and writes in Oakland.
ANETT JESSOP lives with her son Kasra in Davis, CA. Her art interests include Esperanto poetry, classical and contemporary Persian poetry, painting, and Flamenco music and dance.

PAUL FOSTER JOHNSON lives in New York City.

ANDREW JORON is the author of several collections of poetry, including *Science Fiction* (Pantograph, 1992), *The Renoves* (Hard Press, 1999), and *Fathom* (Black Square Editions, forthcoming). He has translated the German philosopher Ernst Bloch’s *Literary Essays* (Stanford University Press, 1998) and lives in Berkeley.

CATHERINE KASPER has work forthcoming in *Timothy McSweeney’s, The Denver Quarterly*, and *Charter Oak Review*. She is an assistant professor at the University of Texas at San Antonio.


AMY KING received a MacArthur Scholarship for Poetry in 1999, and has work in *Riding the Meridian, Pavement Saw*, and *Filling Station*. Her chapbook, *The People Instruments*, is forthcoming from Pavement Saw Press later this year. She lives in Brooklyn.

BARBARA KOHLER was born in 1959, studied literature in Leipzig and now lives in Duisburg. Our poems are taken from *Blue Box* (Suhrkamp, 1995). In 1999 she published a book of texts and installations, *Wittgenstein’s Nichte* (Suhrkamp, 1999).


JOHN LOWTHER edits *3rdness* (press) and *108* (magazine) runs with the Atlanta Poets Group and is trying continually to fail better.

JASON FREDERICK LYNN arrived with due warning on June 27th, 1963; he is only half as Irish as Frank O’Hara; some of his recent poems appear in *Fence and Lit*; despite his book in Danish, *Lactations for the Dead*, selling out, he has yet to be paid, or even receive a mail-order title of Viscount; currently

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he tries fecklessly to convince record companies that his poems set to the music of Hans Roedelius are a worthy investment. Mr. Lynn would like to be a movie star when he grows up.


Sawako Nakayasu is the editor of !Factorial Press, which publishes collaborative writing, and the translation coordinator for HOW2. Recent work has appeared or is forthcoming in Chain, Conundrum, Kenning, 108, and New American Writing. Clutch, a chapbook of hockey love poems, is forthcoming from Tinfish Press.

Marcelin Pleynet, born in Lyon, France in 1933, is the author of nine poetry collections and more than a dozen works on art and culture. His tenure as literary editor of the journal Tel Quel from the 1960s–’80s brought him into contact (and conflict) with many key French literary figures. Provisoires amants des nègres, of which the poems presented here form a part, is Pleynet’s first collection of poetry, originally published in 1962 by Seuil and reprinted in Les Trois Livres in 1984 and again in 2000.

Stephen Ratcliffe’s latest book is Listening to Reading, a collection of essays on contemporary ‘experimental’ poetry published by SUNY Press. His recent books of poetry include Idea’s Mirror (Potes & Poets), Mallarme: Poems in Prose (Santa Barbara Review Press), and Sculpture (Littoral Books). He publishes Avenue B books and teaches at Mills College in Oakland.

Martha Ronk’s most recent work is the memoir, Displeasures of the Table (Green Integer). Her books include Eyetrouble (Georgia), State of Mind (Sun & Moon Press), and Why/Why Not is forthcoming from UC Press.


Waltraud Seidlhofer’s books include Fassadentexte (Edition neue Texte, 1976), Geometrie einer Landschaft (Edition Neue Texte, 1986), la(e)sergedichte (Blattwerk, 1996), ein erinnern (Blattwerk, 1999).

Kerris Sonnenberg lives in Chicago where she edits the poetry journal Conundrum. Recent work has appeared in New American Writing, The Columbia Poetry Review, Prosodia, Moria, and canwehaveourballback.
BRUNO STEIGER's poems are taken from the magazine Zwischen den Zeilen (#6, 1995). He has also published essays and novels (Jackson Pollock in Amerika (Rowohlt, 1993)).


COLE SWENSEN's most recent book is Such Rich Hour, based on a 15th-century illuminated manuscript. She is currently working on a series of poems about hands. She teaches at the University of Denver.

MARK TARDI has a deep affinity for twin primes, Chopin nocturnes, lime-ade, and the word “whilst.” He is a failure at making Jello.

WALTER THÜMLER's sequence is taken from the magazine Zwischen den Zeilen (#10, 1997). He has translated contemporary Russian and English poetry and edited an anthology of Modern Russian Poetry.

HUNG Q. TU is the author of A Great Ravine (Parenthesis) and Verisimilitude (Atelos). His most recent collection, Structures of Feeling, from which “Banananas or Brace Yourself” is culled, will be available from Krupskaya Books. He currently lives in San Diego.

ROSMARIE WALDROP's recent books are Reluctant Gravities (New Directions, 1999), Split Infinites (Singing Horse, 1998), and Another Language: Selected Poems (Talisman House, 1997). Northwestern has reprinted her novels, The Hanky of Pippin's Daughter and A Form/of Taking/It All in one paperback. She has translated Elke Erb, Friederike Mayröcker, Oskar Pastior et al.