Aufgabe
#3
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Number 3 Fall 2003

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Editor's Note

Human beings do something, therefore the world in general.

— Keith Waldrop,
The Space of Half an Hour

Therefore the importance of particulars, the importance of poetics, of questions, of listening, of seeing...always, and especially in face of the escalated violence and unabashed distortions of the last two years. What follows is a matter of the diligence and attention that must precede any alteration of consciousness and subsequently course. We rely first and foremost on our senses, and then we do something.

Currently, there is no dearth of interesting work and commentary – however visible or not – and there is, in particular, an important journal that emerged in 2003, with a second edition currently in production. *Enough*, edited by Rick London and Leslie Scalapino (O Books, 2003) is an editorial project that came into being following September 11, 2001 and the beginning of the U.S. war on Afghanistan with the specific intention of collecting and presenting writings that responded to these situations by poets from around the world. *Enough* is that rare and wonderful example of a thematic project that results in a crucial ‘event’ which eloquently fulfills its own editorial intention. This compelling collection includes contemporary American writers and writers from the Beat generation, the New York School, and Language poetry, as well as British, Palestinian, Iraqi, Israeli poets, and so on. And the scope of the writing presented is a welcome mixture of the inside of each poet’s experience/language versus the outside of cultural and political contexts. We are treated to the many modes and methods of listening/hearing, saying/responding, and above all seeing. For it is clear that the editors are directly enacting their own poetics and politics in assembling this journal, as well as in their own work included in the journal; moreover, they succeed in validating the assertion that “seeing what’s happening is a form of change,” to use Scalapino’s words. Seeing must be the foundation of the view that “a radical purpose of poetry in critical times is to disrupt the language of consensus...[to invent] new ways of making art [that] reflects the rejection of hegemonic forces in the world,” to use London’s words.

In “Ramallah – January, 2002,” included in *Enough*, Mahmoud Darwish articulates an intricate and complex kind of isolation when he writes:

Under siege, time becomes a location.
Darwish is not only engaged in an act of perception that articulates a state of being, but his characterization of that state as 'under siege' locates an alienated and battered Palestinian population. Darwish gestures toward the importance of the editorial project of *Enough*, and to me, the importance of each of the feature sections of *Aufgabe* for readers in this country when he says in the beginning of the same poem,

This siege will persist until we teach our enemies
models of our finest poetry (14)

Though mostly it is not our enemies who will pick up these journals, and though the debate regarding our finest poetry is necessarily endless, the sentiment of these words is nonetheless a most creative and inclusive response to violence and injustice. It says that the most physical and tangible pieces of our existence can be affected by language, can perhaps be positively changed, and further that there must exist in our poetry a vision, an act of perception, that creates the potential for this change.

This issue of *Aufgabe* presents an array of new American poetry that navigates this territory of (en)vision(ing) — beginning with a lamentation and concluding with a contemplative 'blind spot.' Each poem finds its own way through a complex linguistic and political landscape, and the essays/notes/reviews are further reference points and markers in this landscape. In addition, this issue features introductions to the work of José Pérez-Espino and Myriam Moscona, including images by Bibiana Padilla and excerpts from *Hoja Frugal* (see inserts) presenting poems by several other Mexican writers. Jen Hofer has done a tireless job of translating, editing and organizing to create an excellent resource for Mexican writing, and has added invaluable material to the discussion of particulars within these pages.

—E. TRACY GRINNELL

*September 8, 2003*

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*Enough*
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Translations from the Spanish

Jen Hofer
Thinking, Disentangling, Resisting:  
The Task At Hand Is Not To Stop*

Sentences, in Spanish, are both prayers and phrases: the word “oración” has two ready meanings, and, as ever, context aids us in determining which takes precedence. Sentences, in English, are both phrases and punishments: context aids us in determining which takes precedence. A difference in “policy,” perhaps, though Mexican Spanish – as elastic, in many ways, as gringo English – can be put to atrocious military-industrial use as readily as English, if with different global ramifications. Or a difference in resonance.

It is all too easy these uneasy days to feel that the tasks at hand do not matter, do not weigh, to feel tiny, insignificant, unable in the context of a constant and corrosive state of war and its attendant doublespeaks, machinations, brutalities in language and brutalities in action. In such a context, it seems self-evident, though bears repeating and rethinking, that the task at hand is not to stop.

To imagine the unimaginable, to see what we have not yet seen or what we see daily through different eyes, to welcome what we do not already know, must somehow counter the inhuman, the dehumanizing, the deadening contexts that dull us. We have something to learn, concretely and ephemerally, from hearing other sentences, other prayers, and from considering their different resonances. What we say – and how we say – reverberates in the air around us as a music, the sound waves, I’d like to think, shimmering out from our languages to create an altered space.

In poetry, context is both aid and foil; more so, perhaps, in poetry in translation. Any anthology or selection of writings provides a window – first and foremost, though not exclusively, a window onto the consciousness, concerns, and moment of the person presenting the work at hand: the person who for this (created) context is an originary reader. I hope that those readers who are especially interested in contemporary Mexican poetry will take this section as a starting point, and will be inspired to explore further – through other publications, and, for those whose whim or wit takes them to Mexico, through your own adventures in Mexico’s literary worlds. Toward that end, I include at the end of this section, in addition to a short bibliography, a by no means exhaustive list of literary resources in Mexico City.

— JEN HOFER

* Title lifted from the Editor’s Note to Aufgabe # 2.
petulante hornacina
del imperio
    arquea el puente
    libre
    de la santa fe
dos borlas capean
sobre los cuernos
    con esguinces
el viento caucáseo evade
la broncinea cara
sin pasaporte
regresa paralelo
el cauce del río
*
abomina la sangre
del cuerpo
crápulo nocturno
    tamizada luz
soslayo alboevo del topacio
que blasona venerante
    y deslustra el paramento
    (acto erótico
        de abulia)
arena en la piel:
muelle atmósfera sibarítica
donde rezuma sin réplica el
    sedante alcaloide femenino
(reímos a diecisiete grados bajo cero)
*
Neoberlin

presumptuous vault
of empire
  arches the santa fe bridge
  the free bridge
  free from saintly faith

two tassels caper
atop its horns
  with feints
the caucasian wind evades
the bronzelike face

with no passport
parallel the ditch
of the river returns

*

the blood abhors
the body
nocturnal crapulence
  sifted light
oblique dawning of the topaz
that venerating emblazons
  and tarnishes the caparison
  (erotic act
    of abulia)

sand on skin:
sybaritic wharf atmosphere
where without retort the feminine
  sedative alkaloid oozes

(we laughed at seventeen degrees below zero)

*
contemplan adolescentes
olor albara
sobre color verde

núñiles arpegios
ansían sacrificar la inocencia
al dios barra estrella
a media calle
entre charcas y bermejos briagos
que postigan la avenidaJuárez

nostalgia de agua:
rueda el arroyo de Las víboras
seco en tiempos de lluvias
bebe aceite
e l río metálico
de los cerros no bajan
mas que hombres y mujeres
que lo cruzan
a la caza de mendrugos
(cucarachas contra gaucho
en el asfalto)

escapan a la sima del leteo
para no recordar el hambre
soñando la raíz de loto

con la mirada fija
el agua llora:
arrastra hombres como esguines

no hay vuelta años atrás
a correr como niños por las calles
cruzar los maderos
de la línea
sin santo y seña
con arpones
imaginar correcaminos
que nadan contracorriente
adolescents ponder
alabaster odor
atop the color green

nubile arpeggios
yearn to sacrifice their innocence
to the bar god at cantina la barra explodes
mid-street
among pools and reds bright and blotto
that fence-post Avenida Juárez

*

watery nostalgia:
Las Viboras arroyo revolves
dry in the rainy season
drinks oil
the metallic river
nothing comes down from the hills
but men and women
who cross it
hunting crumbs
(cockroaches versus bronco
on the asphalt)

they escape into the abyss of lethe
so they won’t remember their hunger
dreaming of the lotus root

with fixed gaze
the water cries:
it drags men down like smelt

*

you can’t go back to years ago
to run like kids in the streets
cross the girders
of the line
with no password
with harpoons
to imagine roadrunners
swimming upstream
para cazarlos
en la hora del nepentes

*

aquí el silencio enseña
tecnocráticas teorías
bailotean en el aire
sillas murmurantes
mirada verde luz neón
aguanta las horas
dormita el puño en el bolsillo
arena de piel
de calico y aluminio

es azul
la cara de los sueños

*

el cielo vierte amargura sobre la ciudad
infestada de complejos y pudor nocturno
reprimida
    sin alcohol
ebria de sangre
de censuras no sabe
el copo de nieve
    baja titilante
soporizado
    soñoliento
adicto
    recurrente
a la droga
    ácida
de nuestro amado smog

*

los poetas labran versos
en cristales de ruteras y cantinas
hermanos:
estamos cayendo en medio del puente
el desprecio por la piel
and hunt them
in nepenthes time

*

here silence teaches
technocratic theories
    shimmy in the air
chairs murmuring
green neon light gaze
endures the hours
fist in the pocket drowsing
sand made of skin
of calcium and aluminum

it's blue
the face of dreams

*

the sky pours bitterness over the city
infested with complexes and nocturnal prudery
repressed
    without alcohol
    drunk on blood

of censures it knows nothing
the snowflake
    quivers down
stupefied
    somnolent
addict
    recurring
to the drug
    acidic
of our beloved smog

*

poets fashion verses
on the windows of city buses and cantinas
hermanos:
    we're falling in the middle of the bridge
our contempt for our skin
es ahora balas de la migra
y los perros antinarcos
huelen entre las púberas piernas:
migrantes ríen por la noche
illegales deshidran el desierto

aqui hambre y confort
son acuerdos de libre comercio
los perros callan por vergüenza
soñando aroma de cocaína
condotieros fantasmas
hincan el pie del que naufraga

*  

era un auto chevrolet blanco
1981 sin placas
quedó varado junto al puente
perdió llantas vidrio panorámico
y faros delanteros
lo venía persiguiendo
un pastor alemán
farmacodependiente

*  

hijos de piratas
del río bravo
alto en puente libre:
plástico verde
busca el cancerbero
sinsontes soslayan
el seto del río
de agua despeñada
sobre los hombros camina
un caballo de mar

caracoles y tortugas
esguazan la ribera de concreto
muro de agua: neoberlín

*
now become the migra’s bullets
and the drug dogs
sniff between pubescent legs:
migrants laugh through the night
illegals dehydrate the desert

here hunger and comfort
are free trade agreements
the dogs in shame go quiet
dreaming the scent of cocaine
mercenary ghosts
sink their teeth into the foot that founders

*

the car was a white 1981
chevy with no plates
stopped dead beside the bridge
tires windshield gone
and front headlights
it was being chased
by a german shepherd
hooked on pharmaceuticals

*

children of río
bravo pirates
stop on the free bridge:
green plastic
searches out their cerberus
mockingbirds slant slip past
the river sedge
in water hurled
on their shoulders walks
a seahorse

snails and tortoises
ford the concrete bank
wall of water: neoberlin

*
cruza un velero bajo el puente
bordea peñas de alambrón
en un círculo de aire
de arcilla y silicatos
navega en la intemperie

la malla hace olas
como guiños a las aves
estriás vibrantes
criban luminosas aguas
y arpegios venecianos

ciudad citérea:
corren por arterias de léucatos
érebos desnudos

miasma escurre
de la cara
del sabbat
maquilla carbonato de sal
seco sabor de la humedad:
eyacula palabras
por la absolución

* 

palabras en el aire
discos compactos sin gramola
ideas por maquillaje
ropa chillante y aerosol
todo es práctico:
  los aerobics
  la disco
  un auto del año
  un motel
que imaginar

los ojos tocan la carne
de las entrepiernas sudorosas
(asi corvetean las medias nylon)

*
beneath the bridge a pilgrim crosses
skirts boulders of thick wire
in a circle of air
of clay and silicates
navigates the open space exposed

the mesh makes waves
like winks to the birds
vibrant striations
sieve luminous waters
and venetian arpeggios

cytherean city:
shot through leucadian arteries
naked erebus

miasma oozes
from the face
of the sabbath
made up in salt carbonate
dry flavor of dampness:
ejaculates words
for absolution

* words on the air
compact discs with no gramola
ideas as make-up
flashy clothes and aerosol
everything is practical
   aerobics
   the club
   a late-model car
   a motel
to imagine

eyes touch the flesh
of the sweating crotches
(that’s how nylon stockings curvet)

*
ahora ya no es
orgullo morir virgen
sin pregonarlo como infantes

pensar
a fin de siglo
es abrir las piernas
(pantaletas desechables):
un concierto de nalgas femeninas
piernas y senos
inimaginables de lycra

*

no esperaban
—la guerra fría
el racismo
ni la capa de ozono—
entregar la historia por
depilarse cada mes
vello por vello
arrancados de los muslos
imaginando el primer parto

¿puede alguno enamorarse
de un andróide vacunado
contra el sida?

*

oscura luz del alba
sueña
juega
mira los ojos de la eternidad
un secreto es el
silencio de las tinieblas
adora el sabor del día:
religión de sol y agua
para olvidar el frío
el hambre

*
now it's no longer
a source of pride to die a virgin
not bellowing it out like infants

to think
at the end of the century
is to spread your legs
(disposable panties):
a concert of feminine asses
legs and breasts
unimaginable made of lycra

*

they didn’t expect
—the cold war
racism
or the ozone layer—
to deliver history to
get depilated every month
hair by hair
seized by the thighs
imagining the first birth

can a person fall in love
with an android vaccinated
against aids?

*

dim light of dawn
dream
play
look into the eyes of eternity
a secret is the
silence of the darkness
adore the taste of day:
religion of sun and water
to forget the cold
   your hunger

*
observa crascitar el cielo
en el eco del sol
jamás ha visto la sombra
ni el cristal ardiente
ni ha deseado
acariciar la luna
volcanes vivos son la fantasía
rostro y manos tocan
el hielo de la noche

*

son testigos:
la luz octagonal
del arrullo provocador
de la lluvia
la mirada
y las palabras
el corazón ya
no alcanza para tanto

las hojas trinan de cansancio
¿qué hacer
con esta noche inasible?

*

los humanos despiertan a
las cinco de la mañana
para alimentarse
de cobalto sesenta
el susto del reloj
torturador neblumo
y la mirada brutal de
un supervisor vomitando arneses

*

la corriente del río
habla sonidos de motores y mofles
una cascada de voces bilingües
ensamblando alfabetos
observe the sky as it caws
in the echo of the sun
it's never seen the shade
nor the ardent glass
nor has it longed
to caress the moon
live volcanoes are its fantasy
    face and hands touch
    the night's ice

*

they are witnesses:
the octagonal light
of the provocative rustling
    of the rain
the gaze
and the words
the heart no longer
good for much

the leaves trill in exhaustion
what to do
with this ungraspable night?

*

humans wake at
five in the morning
to feed upon
cobalt sixty
the jolt of the clock
fog-smoke torturer
and the brutal gaze of
a supervisor vomiting trappings

*

the river's current
speaks in sounds of motors and mufflers
a cascade of bilingual voices
assembling alphabets
la vida es una juerga
en la penumbra oscilante de un bar
eructando sol y concreto
fumando árboles
sin alas ni canto
aspirando al
caminante bajo la sombra

*

recorre las calles el agua
repartiendo caricias despiadadas
baña el aire caliente las caras
satura los cuerpos de líquidos
y aniquila el apetito
derritiendo ánimas iracundas

su majestad se alza
con un triunfo diario
sobre la ciudad
saboreando gotas
del sudor derramado
pervirtiendo los sentidos
contra el gesto

*

el sol traga
las ganas de vivir
gambetean sobre
las paredes
hornos sedientos
corren seres de fuego
por las calles
quema entrañas
de los sedientos
la sombra de los árboles
atrae al viento
que succiona las hojas
de los calendarios de madera
y el sonido de las palabras

*
life's a binge
in the oscillating penumbra of a bar
belching sun and concrete
smoking trees
with neither wings nor song
breathing to the
pedestrian beneath the shadow

*

water runs through the streets
doling out pitiless caresses
hot air bathes faces
saturates bodies in liquid
and annihilates all appetite
melting irate attitudes

its majesty towers
in daily triumph
over the city
savoring drops
of sweat spilled
perverting the senses
against expression

*

the sun gobbles
the desire to live
prances atop
the walls
thirsty ovens
send out fiery beings
into the streets
burns innards
of the thirsty
the shade of the trees
attracts the wind
that sucks at the leaves
of the wooden calendars
and the sound of the words
nadie desea dormir
esperando el sueño
sobre banquetas
hasta que
el fresco
guño del alba
seduce para
iniciar otra vez
la aventura
de habitar
en la profecía
de un tubo de mercurio

*

reloj de sol
un romance de maldiciones
rumora hirviendo la brisa
debilita huesos y
alerta las conciencias
hasta consumirlas
en el rojo blanco
de la arena
brumosa de las
tres de la tarde
las desquicia como
a una masa informe de fuego

la sombra del otoño
recorre novedosa las calles
anunciando el macabro invierno

*

a esta hora miles
toman las armas
un batín
cigarros
fotocredencial
ansiedad
    muertos dormidos
    en la frente portan
    bonos seropositivos
no one wants to sleep
waiting to fall into dream
on sidewalks
until
the fresh
wink of dawn
seductively begins
once again
the adventure
of inhabiting
the prophecy
of a tube of mercury

*

sundial
a romance of curses
rumors the breeze to boiling
weakens bones and
makes consciousnesses lethargic
until they are consumed
in the red whiteness
of the sand
so misty at
three in the afternoon
unsettles them like
an uniformed mass of fire

the autumn shade
novel as it shadows the streets
announcing the macabre winter

*

at this hour thousands
take up arms
a bomber jacket
cigarettes
photo i.d.
anxiety
    sleeping dead
    on their foreheads wear
    seropositive tags
automatas vivos:
nueva tierra prometida

*

araucanos programados
sueñan de pie
altas velocidades
capataz de corbata
en la breña
filtrando dólares
contando inglés

el tiempo transcurre
inversamente
a la impotencia

*

bajo las nubes
dicen adiós las aves
a las gotas

cómo siglos
los murmullos en el silencio
de un disco Macintosh 11si
recogen la tristeza
de perder los recuerdos
en la tormenta electrónica de julio

cada vez llueve menos hacia el norte
(a menos
de inventar
una PC septentrional)

*

marchan fúlicos
conducidos por la estrellá
hacia el norte
sahúman salitre
por los ojos de caliche
lloran sangre desvaida
living automatons:
a new promised land

*

programmed araucanians
dream standing up
  high speeds
tie-clad foreman
on rough terrain
filtering dollars
counting english

time passes
inverse
to impotence

*

beneath the clouds
the birds say good-bye
to the drops

like centuries
the murmurings in the silence
of a Macintosh IIsi disk
gather the sadness
of memory loss
in the July electrical storm

it rains ever less toward the north
  (unless
    they invent
      a septentrional PC)

*

they march on furious
by the star led
northward
they perfume saltpeter with incense
through whitewashed eyes
cry tears of pallid blood
vuelven arrastrando
el desierto de alcalá
ortigos baños termales
de turistas
que fotografiaban
la sombra
de los muertos
escriben su nombre
en la arena hipérborea

*

tintinea el océano de asfalto
voces de agua
expira la imaginación
no hay sombra
para detener
el sonido de tacones
del sol delirante
golpes de zueco

el humor
ahoga el silencio
en la boca
de las alcantarillas salta
un centauro hipogrifo
they return with the citadel
desert in tow
thistle thermal baths
for tourists
who photograph
the shadow
of the dead
    they write their names
    in the hyperborean sand

*

the asphalt ocean jangles
    voices of water
    imagination expires
there is no shadow
that might stop
the high-heeled sound
of the delirious sun
    clog blows

the humor
drowns the silence
in our mouth
    from the sewers leaps
    a hippogriff centaur
I'm so remote from the rock and its ruckus. Lantern of night closed.
I go on winching my way inside the world, I'll go on seeing you as liquor in lethargy sheltering time.
Today is so drawn out still. Limbo that suckles its section of acclaim, fear of lichen, fear of fear, lemon-tree locales in the night of the blemished lantern.

Your wall-like look, wood for fuel. I remove myself as I move inside, remove myself so far that I'm reminded of mud. My cavity of pulsing, my labia, my litter, my libation, today is a moment of milk, partitioned reading of remoteness, I tell you about the I, I tell you about the little rock of your I and liberate the linen, I tender your text.

I'm here, monday of making that composes a context in letters.
Once again fear, once again music, another tongue enters and today I do not feel.
I feel myself sitting beside you, lily of blood borne as a prop at the table, busboy, to be so remote from the rock and its ruckus, and to be with you.

Agape, you ascend?
Aerial like an avian arrow you ascend in aspens of amazement?
and the adverb gives you asylum? the wilderness of the article accepts you?
and the hyperactive verbal actually alienates you? are you impossible?
Is there not inflation in your aura? anima? muscle? molecule?
is the nucleus the erosion of the arc?
and ardor draws away and affronts you and acclaims you?
and you ascend in the amatory arctic as a golden archangel?
are you on drugs? does the dominion of disregard destabilize you, do you double,
is this the dissolution of amber? the ravenous amber?
Estoy tan lejos de la losa y su lio. Linterna de noche cerrada.
Me voy metiendo al mundo, me voy a verte de licor en letargo que alberga el tiempo.
Hoy es tan largo aún. Limbo que mama su mitad de loa, miedo al musgo, miedo al miedo,
locales limoneras en la noche de linterna empañada.

Tu mirada de muro, la madera de leña. Yo me alejo al meterme, me alejo tanto
que recuerdo el limbo. Mi cavidad de latir, mi labia, mi lecho, mi libar, hoy es lugar de leche,
lectura de cancel de lejanía, te hablo del Yo, te hablo de la loseta de tu yo
y libero la lona, leo en tu libro.

Estoy aquí, lunes de labrar que compone un contexto de letras.
Otra vez miedo, otra vez música, otra lengua ingresa y hoy no siento.
Me siento junto a ti, lírio de sangre de soporte en la mesa, mesero,
estar tan lejos de la losa y su lio, y estar contigo.

Laura Solórzano (Guadalajara, Jalisco, 1961).

¿Abierta, te alzas?
¿Aérea como aro de ave te alzas en árboles de asombro?
¿te amparo el adverbio? ¿te abraza el páramo del artículo?
¿te aleja el hiperactivo verbal de hecho? ¿no tienes hechura?
¿No hay hinchazón en el aura? ¿alma? ¿músculo? ¿molécula?
¿el núcleo es la erosión del arco?
¿se aleja y te afrenta y te alaba el ardor?
¿te alzas en el ártico del amor como arcángel dorado?
¿te drogas? ¿te doblega el dominio del descuido, te duplicas,
es ésta la disolución del ámbar? ¿el ámbar hambriento?
You have to look at everything, without having seen anything, precipice. From the curve of the world arose the line of time, avalanche. Everything depends on the light that illuminates the glass behind which the world invents itself, schism. And if there is no light the shadows hoist up the mystery of the body, volcano. The heat of the shadow is a body trembling, gelid. The birds have never flown, the world moves, collapse.

You don’t know how to fly if the world stops, bubble.
You don’t believe the clouds are the water’s dreams, moss.
You want them to name you as the prodigal shadow, lava.
You say you can tell a book by its song, rock.

You might think you’re flying swift among the mist, saguaro.
You might love the stones for their slow walk, crater.
Your hands might be covered in ashes, phoenix.
You might desire flame when your sense of touch is lost, quoin.

What else fits in names
face,
when a name is the limit of the world,
cross.

How to find the form of a kiss,
debris,
when the line is merely the form of the lips,
rhyme.

from the sacred moment of the void everything is line
this is as far as we go
point
Todo lo has de mirar sin haber visto nada, despeñadero. De la curva del mundo devino la línea del tiempo, alud. Todo depende de la luz que ilumina el cristal detrás del cual se inventa el mundo, cisna. Y si no hay luz las sombras enarbolan el misterio del cuerpo, volcán. El calor de la sombra es un cuerpo titilando, gelida.

Las aves no han volado nunca, el mundo se mueve, colapso.

Tú no sabes volar si el mundo se detiene, burbuja.
Tú no crees que las nubes sean los sueños del agua, musgo.
Tú quieres que te nombren como a la sombra pródiga, larva.
Tú dices conocer los libros por su canto, roca.

Puedes pensar que vuelas corriendo entre la niebla, cirio.
Puedes amar las piedras por su camino lento, cráter.
Puedes tener las manos cubiertas de cenizas, fenix.
Puedes querer el fuego cuando has perdido el tacto, cuna.

Quié más cabe en los nombres,

cara,

cuando el nombre es el límite del mundo,

cruz

Cómo encontrar la forma del beso,

ripio,

cuando el verso es tan sólo la forma de los labios,

rima.

todo es desde el minuto sagrado del vacío

raya

hasta aquí llegamos

punto

Sergio Valero (México, D.F., 1969)
**Hoja Frugal**

*Hoja Frugal (Frugal Page)* is a project that came into being on September 9, 2001 in Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua (the so-called “crime frontier”). Our idea was to share the readings and translations in which we as writers are engaged. But more than anything, to share them with the community as a whole, not with the “intellectual” community. Our intention was to give the community a breath of respite in the context of the growing phenomenon of violence we experience daily in this border zone.

In Mexico, most cultural publications are sponsored by the government, and for that reason they need to justify their existence by functioning as a “forum for young artists,” or exhibiting some other marketable tag, which is exactly what we did not want with *Hoja Frugal*. As this is a project designed expressly for people who rarely read books, and who never read poetry, we couldn’t see ourselves exposing readers solely to incipient local writers. For that reason, another of *Hoja Frugal*’s aims, aside from presenting translations, was to bring together writers with a solid and unquestionably “revolutionary” trajectory within Mexican poetry specifically, and Latin American poetry in general. Over the internet, we asked writers to support our “cause” and give us one or two poems, so that we could publish them.

Our editorial criteria are kept completely separate from any governmental or institutional concerns, and pertain solely to the “makers” of the Hoja: Juan Manuel Portillo, Dolores Dorantes and Sergio Valero. Through the Hoja, therefore, what readers receive is a poem of a certain quality, which is above all framed in history, representative of a “time,” steeped in the present. *Hoja Frugal* was born as a gift artists give to the border community; it is currently distributed all over Mexico and in some areas of the United States and Spain.

—Dolores Dorantes

For more information on *Hoja Frugal*, or if you would like to distribute the Hoja in your area, please contact Dolores Dorantes at doloresdorantes@hotmail.com or Jen Hofer at jenho@mindspring.com or go to www.changolion.com/hojafrugal.
de Lobo de Labio

Laura Solórzano

...te doy con la bruma en la lengua/ para que tu cabeza cante.

(LECTURA)

Caminar por dentro y distraer la rampa de su caída profunda. Cotejar los vicios, vaciarlos, vivificarlos en la cuña. ¿Una floritura dices que soy al leerme? Fauces las tuyas que no frecuentan mi fruto. Ficus de infancia bajo una lupa. Tu lupa no puede verme. No vence mi cerca con la vista, no abarca (en la rampa de caída fecunda) la vértebra.

Caminar para distraer la figura sin fe. Felices de férrea fragancia (fuimos) en el ave de vientos y hoy cabalgo o tu frecuencia me desconoce al caminar.

Estoy bajo una lupa de cepillos de pelo en la enredadera del cráneo blanco. Largas lobelias de Lourdes. Una aliteración en aulas de la niebla. No, nunca, nieve, nostalgia novelada y navegante. Estoy bajo una lupa sin ojos.
from *Lobeslips*

...with fog against your tongue I give it to you/ to make your head hum.

(READING)

To walk within and distract the slope of this profound fall. To compare vices, to void them, to vivify them in the quoin. I’m fretwork you say when you read me? Yours are fauces that don’t frequent my fruit. Ficus of infancy beneath a loupe. Your loupe can’t see me. It doesn’t vanquish my fence with its vision, doesn’t encompass (on the slope of fecund fall) the vertebra.

To walk to distract the figure without faith. Felicitous from ferrous fragrance (we were) in the bird of winds and today I’m on horseback or your frequency walking does not recognize me.

I am beneath a loupe of hairbrushes within the creeping vine of the blank cranium. Long lobelia from Lourdes. An alliteration in the mist’s manors. No, never, snow, nostalgia novelized and navigating. I am beneath a loupe without eyes.
Ya no te abro de pinceles ligeros, ahora clavo el pino más alto en tu invernadero. Ya no te quiero en el quiste de cartón, entre conjuntos irizados de montañas.

Ahora cunde mi cuaderno, corto el papel en pliegues de cordura de caballo cansado. Se cansa mi colibrí y se inquieta en el pilar de su vacío.

Ya no te abro en brazos, ahora bordo con la barba de vencer la suavidad del ganso. Y es un gobierno de cisnes que observan mi boca.

Ahora te nado, ahora te anudo, ahora es sólo un decir de viento que vibra en tu volcán.

Porque ya no te planteo la posición de la semilla, ya no te modifiqué en la tina de saberte teñido, y no es abrirme a las palabras sino cerrar el cúmulo en calma.

Ahora que te internas en el pasto, esta calma de cuaderno se compromete a cavar.

I no longer broach you with light brushstrokes, now I spike the highest pine in your hothouse. I no longer cherish you in the cardboard cyst, between iridesced groupings of mountains.

Now my notebook snowballs, I cut the paper in pleats of sagesness of spent stallion. My hummingbird is spent and agitated in the basin of its emptiness.

I no longer broach your embrace, now I embroider with the barb of conquering the soft of the goose. And it's a government of swans who observe my mouth.

Now I snorkel you, now I knot you, now it's just a saying of the wind vibrating in your volcano.

Because I no longer propose the seed's position for you, I no longer modify you in the tub of knowing that you're tinted, and it's no longer opening myself to words but rather closing the cumulus calmly.

Now that I intern you in the pasture, this notebook's calm commits itself to excavate.
8. Desierto

Sergio Valero

Uno es el hombre/ y la mujer/ dormidos./ Y el golpe fresco y fuerte del mercurio del beso...


8. Desert

One is the man/ and the woman/ asleep./ And the impact, strong and fresh, of the mercury of the kiss...

To walk beneath the sun being the first trace of thirst: the last martyr of the sand: the middle point of an inconclusive rain. To be the flight of cacti. Oasis of faith. Stone of illusion. "I know how to speak of the desert."

To walk toward the sun being the first trace of rain: the last martyr of thirst: the middle point of an inconclusive sand. To be illusion in flight. Cactus of all oases. Stone of faith. "About the desert I know it all." To walk in the sun being the first trace of sand: the last martyr of the rain: the middle point of an inconclusive thirst. Faith in flight. Illusion of oasis. Stone of rain. "I know the desert, I."

To walk beneath the sun being the first trace of faith: the last martyr of illusion: the middle point of an inconclusive cactus. Sand flying. Oasis rain. Stone of thirst. "The desert speaks to me."

To walk beneath the sun being the first trace of illusion: the last martyr of cactus: the middle point of inconclusive faith. Flight of rain. Oasis of thirst. Sand of stone. "I am the desert."

To walk beneath cacti being the first trace of sun: the faith of the last martyr: the inconclusive illusion of the middle point. Rain of thirst. Rain of stone. Rain of oasis. Rain in flight. Rain of sand. "All the desert, I." To walk being the first trace of the sun: the last martyr: the middle point, inconclusive. Flight. Oasis. Stone. "All, all, desert, I."

To walk as illusion: to walk along cacti: to walk in thirst: to walk as rain: to walk as stones: to walk as oasis: to walk as sand: to walk as faith: to walk inconclusive: to walk being a martyr: being the last martyr: that first trace: merely the middle point: "The desert, death, I."

un rastro digamos ese rastro
que algunas noches viene
aura de lo que reclama
con su cinéerio ceño la paleta
del blanco del vacío (indecible) la discontinua
raíz de los afectos linde
de una pensante levedad

un orbe en aquel silencio
del principio

viene vuelve repasa
su acuática red su duración su encausto
demorado en el fulgor
de aquella infancia cómo cómo caía
en ese rastro la lluvia
solar y ese tiempo
ardía antes del tiempo y el amor: un sol
de hormigas hélice de tamo y la rosa
casi transparente de la soledad

(un cráneo
es una isla) se llamaba
plenitud
de una belleza vacía
o tal vez lo bellamente pleno de vacío
lo plenamente aquietado una belleza
sin remedio y el ángel
esa sombra apurada
en la polvorienta blancura

un orbe en aquel silencio

dime

dónde entonces dónde sucedía?
a trace we might say the trace  
that on some nights comes  
aura of what it claims  
with its cinerary scowl the poker  
of the white of the void (unspeakable) the discontinuous  
root of emotion limit  
of a thinking levity  

an orb in that silence  
of beginning  

approaches returns passes through  
its aquatic net its duration its encaustic  
lingering in the brightness  
of that infancy how how it fell  
in that trace the rain  
solar and that time  
blazing before time and love: a sun  
of ants helix of grit and the nearly  
transparent rose of solitude  

(a skull  
is an island) was called  
fullness  
of an empty beauty  
or perhaps the beautifully full of emptiness  
the fully pacified a beauty  
without remedy and the angel  
that hurried shadow  
in the dusty whiteness  

an orb in that silence  
tell me  

where then where did it happen?
dónde dime sucedía entonces
la polvorienta blancura
el fuego que aparece en ese sueño?

funeral el fuego
válvula de brillo
ignición
donde sucede su contorno
y el centro al fin
(gradual) el centro
de una invisible combustión

pero residuo

ritual residuo no buscado
(su numeral su cuántico
estallido)
en los fragmentos de la destrucción

del orbe en aquel silencio

qué darnos en esa fe como aluzada como
reunida rótula o zarpazo
y al fin sencillamente
mutativa
fracturada
materia en la ofrenda de tus manos
que nada significa?

yo os bauticé con agua – dijo el Bautista –
mas él os bautizará en espíritu

lo dicho

el fuego:

where tell me did it happen then
the dusty whiteness
the fire that appears in that dream?

the fire funereal
valve of brilliance
ignition
where its contour occurs
and the center in the end
(gradual) the center
of an invisible combustion

but residue

ritual residue not sought
(its numeral its quantum
explosion)
in fragments of destruction

of the orb in that silence

what to give ourselves in that faith as if enlightened as if
rejoined joint or swipe
and in the end simply
mutative
fractured
matter in the gift your hands proffer
which means nothing?

with water I baptized thee – said the Baptist –
but he will baptize thee in spirit

what has been said

the fire:

Hierba demasiado olorosa para ser cierta la que levanta ese pie doliente. Corre, corre, como decir, corazón, lo intentamos. Bravos perros le siguen, olfatean su ánima, lo confunden con un arroyo. En su cuerpo, todo es una prisa de comenzar un verbo. Hambre y sed tiene; niños, hormigas, algún yunque, si se le mira bien, consigo los lleva. Vive de raíces amargas, conversa con demonios, llora un llanto lustral. Sabe que él es un porqué que hueye.

De noche duerme mal como música enterrada, como pata de caballo. Presiente un final de luz nacida sin manos, de olivo conteniendo en su follaje la palabra luna. No sabe si entregarse, pobrecito, siente un temor de colibrí detenido sobre una aguja de hielo. ¿Dónde, dónde, a la vuelta de qué fulgor, en qué alambrada sin llano quedó el ojo de su padre? Sabiéndose perdido mira la redonda tierra mojada por la luz de las últimas estrellas. Pero corre, corre, como decir, la vida fue un dolor, yo soy su canto.

Fugitive

Too aromatic to be real, the grass that lifts that aching foot. He runs, runs as if to say, dear heart, we’re trying. Ferocious dogs follow him, sniffing at his soul, they confuse him with an arroyo. Everything in his body is a rush to begin a verb. He is hungry and thirsty; children, ants, some junk, if they look at him right, he’ll take them with him. He lives on bitter roots, talks with demons, weeps a lustral lament. He knows he is a why fleeing.

At night he sleeps poorly like buried music, like a horse’s hoof. He predicts an end that comes of light born without hands, of olive trees which contain in their foliage the word moon. He doesn’t know if he should give himself up, poor thing, he is terrified like a hummingbird poised on a needle of ice. Where, where, on the far side of which brightness, atop which prairieless barbed wire fence was his father’s eye left? Realizing he is lost he looks at the round earth drenched in the light of these last stars. But he runs, runs as if to say this life was pain, I am its song.

Dos poemas

= Saúl Ibargoyen

Plaza de Mayo

¿Quién se pondrá la ropa rajada de los muertos? / ¿Quién meterá sus carnales andaduras en lo adentro de tanto zapatal descaminado? / ¿Quién fijará su sombra cotidiana: ese negro fulgor de fatiga y de insomnio en las baldosas encenizadas de Plaza de Mayo? / ¿Quién preguntará por el dueño del sudor de aquella camisa desfondada? / ¿Quién por el nombre o sobrenombre que no está en las voces mundiales en los documentos totalizados en las pantallas ecuménicas en los periódicos globalizables en las cruces descompuestas? / ¿Quién vestirá el jugo natural de esos calzones deshechos? / ¿Quién quitará las balas de su nicho coagulado: quién de cada pulmón la ponzona del aire y de cada pelo las aguas profanadas? / ¿Quién comerá del hambre acumulándose en bocas paralíticas y panzas partidas? / ¿Quiénes vestirán gimientes faldas de infantas calcetines jubilados corpiños ahuecándose pantalones en derrumbe enaguas masticadas pañuelos dolidamente blancos? / ¿Quiénes usarán las frescas calaveras despojadas de la sangre y el ultraje: separadas de la mugre y el engaño: alzadas como un azul de fuego en estos días desnudos que también se levantan?

Pax

El día es nuestro Señor: / han llegado / el reposo de la espada / la quietud de la flecha / la inocencia del misil / el frío de los fusiles / el crujido de la ceniza / el cansancio / de todas las banderas. / Señor / es nuestro día: / en la sangre mezclada / de mujeres y gallinas / de infrañas y muñecas / de hombres y caballos / caen monedas extranjeras / y trabajan los hijos / de la mosca azul.

Two Poems

Plaza de Mayo

Who will put on the slashed clothes of the dead?/Who will place their carnal amblings in the inside of such a mass of misguided shoes?/Who will fix their everyday shadow: that black shine of fatigue and insomnia on the ash-covered tiles of the Plaza de Mayo?/Who will ask for the person the sweat of that ripped-up shirt belongs to?/ Who by the name or nickname that isn’t there in the worldwide voices in the summed-up documents in the ecumenical screens in the globalizable newspapers in the broken-down crosses?/Who will wear the natural fluid of those mangled underpants?/Who will remove the bullets from their coagulated niche: who from each lung the venom of air and from each hair the desecrated waters?/ Who will eat of the hunger amassing in paralytic mouths and split stomachs?/Who will wear infants’ moaning skirts retired stockings bras hollowing out pants collapsed chewed-up slips handkerchiefs achingly white?/ Who will use the fresh skeletons drained of blood and outrage: separated from grime and deception: flung upward like a fiery blue in these nude days that also rise up?

Pax

This day is ours Lord:/ they have come:/ the sword’s rest/ the arrow’s calm/ the missile’s innocence/ the rifle’s chill/ the creaking of ash/ the exhaustion/ of all flags./ Lord/ this is our day:/ in the mixed blood/ of women and hens/ of infants and dolls/ of men and horses/ foreign coins fall/ and they labor, the children/ of the blue fly.

fábula antes que pájaro, no — primero el vuelo, el pico, la coraza ultravioleta — palpita aquí su pulso, su herejía — rema en una nada de aire, pero aspira, es un cielo — fábula no, pájaro de antes — bocabajo y requiebro, un matiz en el almidón de mirar, un dividido — geometría, calculador, algebraico, asustadizo

* 

... comenzara, en el revoloteo, en la gracia móvil de tu verbo — decir, no, no como la pauta, no como decir: y volando en la artillería, en el tráfago, donde, perdido pájaro anunciaría la aurora de un cómo

* 

tal como la de dormir, dormiça, era la llama, era — hablando en plata — lo que llama o se aleja sobre el agua, hacia el fondo del paisaje: ejército, espíritu — la que te decía muchacho, uccello, sinvergüenza, cosa de apaga la vela, cosa de vente a dormir, mientras tú, en la trabazón y el linde, en la inminencia de un sí, desapareces

fable before bird, no – first the flight, the
beak, the ultraviolet carapace – here palpitates its pulse, its
heresy – it toils in a nothing made of air, but it inhales, it's
a sky – not fable, bird from before – face down
and flustering, a nuance in the starch of looking, a
divide – geometry, calculator, algebraic, timid

* 

...may begin, in the fluttering, in the mobile grace of
your verb – to say, no, not like the guideline, not like
saying: and flying in the artillery, in the bustle, where,
the bird lost might announce the dawning of a how

* 

just as that of sleeping, asleep, it was the flame flaring, it was
– speaking in silver– what flares calling or moves away upon the
water, toward the very back of the landscape: army, animus
– the one I told you about kid, uccello, rascal,
a matter of blow out the candle, a matter of go on to sleep,
while you, in tangle and in boundary, in the immiaence
of a yes, disappear

Luz da noite

= Paloma Villegas

Ciego lince de tan brillantes interiores, vi en la sombra de las esquinas de las camas fraguarse lo que no narra la memoria y que sabían los músculos de aserrín de metal, íntimos y agitados, como vuelven ebrios insectos en los ojos a buscar el relámpago azul que estaba en los rincones de la casa dormida:

rayo de luna que secretan los locos y los amantes sin amada desde la reja plateada de los nervios: enumerar amor y los fantasmas que esa lumbre convoca superpuestos, ateridos, extraños, a la hora final de arder sobre las vetas del cerebro o borrarse:

siluetas retroceden de amorosos modelos, costado de la madre, brazo solemne del padre o blanda mano del hermano menor, en el valor nocturno compañera: primeros y abolidos íconos del deseo:

pero en verdad más agudos y toros de amenaza los perfiles quebrados de otras caras, joyas sobre el vapor negro y azul de las paredes, y cuerpos que atraviesan todos los cuerpos del amor y su enumerativo e infinito traslado:

tú vario, tú disperso, extenso tú frecuente,
tú abierto en tantos cuerpos en que no hacer raíces:

donde tú que te doblas, ligero entre mis palmas, ágil raíz de oscuros movimientos, o tú que alzas con hierro mi cintura, o tú que soplas frágil cadencia de mi oreja besada, humedecida, alerta, tienes el pecho suave, me acunas y amamantas, o el sabor temerario de la carne prestada con mano temblorosa en la niñez como guerrero amigo, pero puedes crecer en selva torturada de pantanos de muerte y de plantas carnívoras si te amo hoy:

si más de un cuerpo eres, a través tuyo todos los cuerpos toco y estos cuerpos aquí, pero también en ti cambia la voz de cada cuerpo:

Blind lynx of such brilliant interiors, I saw forging itself in the shadow of the corners of the beds what memory does not narrate and what the metal-dust muscles knew, intimate and flustered, as again inebriated insects in the eyes seek the blue lightning that had been in the corners of the sleeping house:

moon ray the mad and the lovers without loves secrete from the silvery grate of their nerves: to enumerate love and the ghosts convened by that glow: superimposed, numbed, strange, at the final hour of blazing upon the lodes of the brain or be erased:

silhouettes of amorous models recede, the mother’s flank, solemn arm of the father or soft hand of the younger brother in nocturnal bravery comrade: first and abolished icons of desire:

but actually sharper and bulls of menace the shattered profiles of other faces, jewels upon the black and blue vapor of the walls, and bodies that pass through all the bodies of love and its enumerative and infinite transfer:

you various, you dispersed, extensive you frequent, you open in so many bodies in which not to put down roots:

where you who bend, light between my palms, agile root of dark movements, or you who hoist my waist with iron, or you who breathe fragile cadence into my ear kissed, moistened, alert, your chest is soft, you cradle and suckle me, or the reckless taste of flesh borrowed with a trembling hand in childhood as a warrior friend, but you can grow up in a forest tortured with marshes of death and carnivorous plants if I love you today:

if you are more than one body, by way of yours all bodies I touch and these bodies here, but also in you changes the voice of each body:
Poemas

≡ Iliana Villanueva

Sombra de la luz

Alumbra la fuente palomas y palomas palomas a punto de decir volátiles de dichas blancas de tan violentas.

Decapitada la palabra el rayo que atesora vuelve al agua: turb la espuma de los peces apagados.

Una niña plena alisa las alborozadas olas dice: “la fuente alumbra” y bajo su mano que rema oscurece un pez

Arrullo

De su cáscara Madre viene débil.

Nace con ahogo en los ojos inundantes.

Singuirín Singuirín

De manto mi mano le amortaja

Poems

Shadow of The Light

The fountain illuminates pigeons and pigeons
pigeons about to say
volatile with sayings
white from their intense violence.

Decapitated the word
the treasuring ray returns to the water:
troubles the spume of the extinguished fish.

A girl brimming
sleeks the elated waves
says:
"the fountain illuminates"
and beneath her paddling hand
a fish darkens

Lullaby

From the shell
Mother
she arrives weak.

Born with drowning
in those inundating eyes.

Rock-a-bye  Rock-a-bye

By my hand
shrouded in a sheet.

Libro de rutas

Hernán Bravo Varela

σ

Si sólo al darte manos retomaras el pie que caminó inconcluso por la senda – si y sólo si aceptaras incondicionalmente las hamacas de un sol sin freno, entonces me cegaría en tí, libro de rutas, para que despertaras en mis ojos – sabrías no negarme diciendo el monosilabo tapiado por dos simples guiones – sí – sí a todas las guirnaldas sí al verano por eso te adamaba cuello de estar fugándose por un cabello solo espalda y nunca vueltos en sí por siempre hasta saberme a solas tuyas – Sigma.

ρ

Razón de amor, razón que no se da, clarísimo tronido que me asorda, el rastro de un gemir que tuvo carne, matadero a la par de roce y rasga, acribillado rostro de los (zarribal) novios, ese arroz – rosas regadas por mi amor cortés, negrura arracimada que no te llegará en la medianía distante de la noche, …encrucijada de nosotros dos, aún, muéveme el oro de tenerte nada – rápido cae el hablador, cojera por demasiada rima, pero ¿arrobar el robo que robaste?, ¿darle a esta letra una razón para cantarte a la ro...? – Rho.

θ

The poetry of earth is never dead – the poetry of dead is never earth – the earth of dead is never poetry – the earth of poetry is never dead – the dead of earth is never poetry – the dead of poetry is never earth (el ruiseñor, volando al ras del agua, escribe con cursivas: la poesía de la tierra no muere nunca) – Theta.

Book of Routes

σ

So if just by giving you hands you might reengage the foot that walked along the path inconclusive – so if and only if you might accept unconditionally the hammocks of a sun with no brakes, then I would blind myself in you, book of routes, so you might awaken in my eyes – so you would know not to deny me speaking the monosyllable enclosed within two simple dashes – yes – yes to all the garlands yes to the summer that’s why I wooed you neck of escaping through hair only the back and never come back to themselves forever until I know I am alone and solely yours – Sigma.

ρ

Reason for love, a reason that does not give itself up, very clear report that deafens me, the trace of a howling with flesh, slaughterhouse of rubbing and ripping equally, riddled rostrum of the (rah! rahl!) newlyweds, that rice – roses showered by my courteous love, clustered darkness that will not reach you in the distant mediocrity of the night, …crossroads of the two of us, still, move for me the gold of having you not at all – rapidly the speaker falls, lame from rhyming overly, but to romance the robbery you robbed?, to give this letter a reason to sing you rock-a-bye…? – Rho.

θ

The poetry of earth is never dead – the poetry of dead is never earth – the earth of dead is never poetry – the earth of poetry is never dead – the dead of earth is never poetry – the dead of poetry is never earth (the nightingale, flying even along the water, writes in italics: la poesía de la tierra no muere nunca) – Theta.
DE ESE GATILLO PENDE
(oye)
el (me) nunca surcido
territorio

pulsaré un poco
Mira

La parte
(desde ahí)
es donde (en la brillante caverna de la boca
-bajo el rojo-) te cubren las semillas:

un germinado campo \_interminable

DEL OTRO LADO
(en la parte de ti
que no se ve) construyo
lo que pienso

imaginamos

Pienso la mesa de madera roja
la silla para esperarte en los días de nieve

amor, imaginamos

Del otro lado
(en la parte de mí
que no se ve) pulsa la niebla
de tu beso: ¿eres tú? \_Abres. Entras

preguntas de mi boca
from PUREsexSWIFTsex

FROM THAT TRIGGER HANGS

(listen)
the (me) never plowed
territory

I'll thrum somewhat
Look

The portion
(from there)
is where (in the mouth's brilliant cavern
-beneath the red-) the seeds cover you:

you are
-place-
you would be

a germinated field        interminable

FROM THE OTHER SIDE
(in the part of you
that doesn't show) I construct
what I think

we imagine

I conjure the red wood table
the chair where I wait for you on snowy days

love, we imagine

From the other side
(in the part of me
that doesn't show) throbs the fog
of your kiss: is that you? You open. You enter

questions from my mouth
HAY UN ANDAMIO súbelo
Cada flexión de tu paso conduce
a la metálica
   caliente
   soledad

Refulge ahí amor:
   bruñe de una palmada la certeza
   A mano abierta
   expándete

Sé Luz
Sé lámpara

THERE’S A SCAFFOLD *climb it*
Each flex of your step leads
to metallic
   hot
   solitude

Shimmer there love:
   *with one slap burnish certainty*
   Open-handed
   *expand*

Be Light
Be lamp

Los años que se van desdibujando:

la planicie de sombras donde reposabas
en la que te mecías

* 

eclipsada
de orientación austral

La especie baila en puntas de alfiler:
áurea conducción de vidas
de edades eras
frente a tu ojo

La viga se dilata con la estación
¿ahora la ves?

* 

el hombre
el libro
la no aclarada errata

Se piensa en el jardín
en sus arborecentes excrecencias

Se cultiva
el verbo impersonal

y la entrañable cátedra
refuta
la primavera el lago
el alto cielo

The years beginning to fade:

the flat plane of shadows where you rested
where you were rocking

*

eclipsed
austral in orientation

The species dances on pinheads:
aureate conveyance of lives
of ages eras
before your eye

The girder swells with the season
do you see it now?

*

The man
the book
the not clarified errata

One thinks in the garden
in its arborescent excrescences

One cultivates
the impersonal verb

and the intimate teaching
refutes
the Spring the lake
the tall sky

de **Letanías**

≡ **Alejandro Tarrab**

**UN RUIDO MINERAL**

me arrastra

me transtala

acelera mi partida

(nueve estratos en mi vuelo)

**la espiral**

**es un desorden vasto**

acerco mis oídos

es un metal

es un demonio

ruido

mineral

caigo

de máscara hacia un andrógino sujeto mi caída (arte de pájaros/ volaba como dios hacia las entrañas del dolor/ como una bestia/ volaba como un animal torcido) el viento incisión derramada mi mirada es despacio el veneno mi incisión es el amarillo inmóvil galope rojo canto desperpetuo y frágil

**tu mirada apunta**

**hacia otras letanías**

from *Litanies*

**A MINERAL NOISE**

drags me

transrazes me

accelerates my departing

(nine strata in my flight)

*the spiral*

*is a vast disorder*

I bring my ears close

it's a metal

it's a demon

noise

mineral

I fall

from a mask toward an androgynous subject my fall  (an art of birds/ I was flying like god toward the guts of pain/ like a beast/ I was flying like an animal contorted) the wind  incision overflowed  my gaze is slow  the poison  my incision is the immobile yellowred  gallop  song  disperpetual and fragile

*your gaze trained*

toward other litanies

Duermen todos los demonios tumbados por el canto de la sirena sumergida en la noche espera en su silencio escuchar todo convertirlo más en ensordecedor balo infinito infierno.
NEGRO soplando NEGRO en la ventana
Simultáneo
El ojo de adentro
En lo negro blanco
Se accidenta
Al salir de sí
Lo negro
En su grito
Gira
Arrastra

Estalla
¿No es tu sueño ser visible?
Gira un lustre
Crece

Cala
Llega el cambio de estación
En claridades
En vilo
Como la luz

Arcangeliza
Bruñida

La oscura luz que enciela en blancos
Y en oración repite
Entre paredes desnudas
Ventana contra la emanación:
from *Ivory Black: Section One*

**Black** breathing **Black** at the window
Simultaneous
The interior eye
In what is black white
Is by accident
As it slips from itself
What is black
Like sky

In its scream
Spins
Draws along

Explodes
Isn't it your dream to be visible?
A luster spins
Grows

Pierces
The change of season comes
In clarities
Airborne
Like the light

Angelizes
Burnished
The dark light that skies in whites
And in prayer the refrain repeats
Between nude walls
Window against the emanation:

Hangs
Open
Disuelve
En líquidos antiguos El negro en tornasoles

El arpa como arquitectura las cuerdas sobre lluvia inesperada
de eco en eco arrastran su aspereza se detienen
Si tan sólo pudiera Buscar en la carencia

pequeñas incisiones en el cuerpo como una
droga entran deslizan el veneno salivan buscan un lugar
cavidad del sueño: estoy en ella

Rozan el aire las cuerdas del arpa
Las llevan hacia ti
Se extienden en las ondas Nos sostienen
Ya abiertas las esclusas
Crepitan en su refracción
Movimiento hacia la mancha
Lo negro sopla negro en la ventana

¿Dónde escucho?

El arpa emite
Sensaciones en fuga Sin raíz

Azules de la noche
Entre los dos: Estallan
Dissolves

In ancient liquids

The black in shimmers

The harp like architecture its strings over unexpected rain
from echo to echo they draw their roughness they stop
If only I could
Seek within lack

small incisions in the body like a drug
they enter let slip the poison they salivate they seek a place
dream cavity: I am inside it

They graze the air the harp strings
And carry them toward you
They stretch out along the waves
Sustain us
The sluices now open
Crackle in this refraction
Movement toward the stain
What is black breathes black at the window

The harp broadcasts
Runaway sensations

Blues of the night
Between the two of us:

Where do I listen?
Without roots
Explode
El dios hijo cordero lobo en aguas de fondo el dios del soplo (cavidades)
Negro Marfil
Seremos eco en tus porciones
Sólo fragmentos
Carencia

Aquí los corazones
Como la cabeza de Juan
Y yo: Despierta
God the son lamb wolf in waters deeply the god of breath
(cavities)

Ivory Black
We will be an echo in your shares
Only fragments
Lack

Here the hearts
Like the head of John
And I: Awake
Templa
El sitio del color:
Se desmorona

La piedra porosa absorbe
Alumbra
Tensión sobre el lugar
El tezontle rojo y negro nos da su ligereza
Figura sonido
un arabesco
Quema (dice)

Entran las cuerdas del arpa al corazón
Tempers
The site of color:

Liquefies
Disintegrates

The porous stone absorbs
Illuminates
Tension on the place
Red and black volcanic rock offers us its lightness
Figure sound an arabesque
Burning (says)

The harp strings go into the heart
Feliz en lo infeliz negro en blanco se es carbón molido lugar del miedo se es la esposa y el padre la hija la hermana la piedra el cuerpo (verbo) Deseo incumplido secreto guardado la pira del secreto Desdicha en lo supuesto feliz.
Happy in what is unhappy black in white one is charcoal
ground place of fear one is the wife and the father the
daughter the sister the stone the body (verb) Desire
unfulfilled secret kept the pyre of the secret Ill fate in the
supposedly happy
Se encuentra al amado entre sábanas blancas se incorpora
se vuelca hacia la piedra la limpia con estopa aparece
un fresco en rojos y amarillos La música porosa en el centro
del mural habrás visto al ojo
(\textit{el ojo, el húmedo})

Ve hacia él
The beloved is found among white sheets sits up flips over toward the stone cleans it with steel wool there appears a fresco in reds and yellows The music porous at the center of the mural it will have been visible to the eye (the eye, the humid)

Look toward it
El hablante móvil

Aparece desvanece diluye

Se argenta en acuatinta
Se craquela se licua se embebe
Se imanta un cuerpo en otro
Se unta Se rota
Se toca el cielo
Se corre más allá del plata
Arcos de flexibilidad
Cuerpo con cuerpo se sabe
Conocer es superficie: No es más
The mobile speaker
Appears vanishes dilutes
Is silvered in aquatint
Is crackled is liquified is absorbed
One body magnetizes in another
Is smeared Rotates
Touchs the sky
Races farther than silver
Arcs of flexibility
Body with body cognizant
Recognizing is surface: Is no more
Solos de chelo
Se juntan
Se mezclan de aire

Voces
En el cómo
De gris en gris
Brotan

Nos miran
Negra
Sus grandes curvas
Y yo en tu ser
Cavo
I'm black

La virgen:

Solos de arpa
En proporción áurea
Se desprenden

Dicen
Desatan

Escriptura en grava
Como esta virgen
En tinta china
En trazos rectos
Deslizo

I'm red
Labra en la carencia
Cello solos
They merge
They mix with air

Voices
In the how
From grey to grey
Bud

They watch us
Black
With huge curves
And I in your being
Delve
I'm black

The virgin:

Harp solos
In aureate proportion
They detach

Say
Unravel

Writing with gravel
Like this virgin
In India ink
In straight strokes
Glide

I'm red

Cultivates in lack
melancólicos los tonos son deliberadamente en platas oigo
las cuerdas contra el chelo oigo el arpa los tonos elegidos
Son lo que son lo que empincela en tinta el borde de los
cuerpos Como un país Como la lluvia de un país Como la
lluvia del arpa contra el chelo
melancholy the tones are deliberately in silvers I hear the strings against the cello I hear the harp the chosen tones They are what they are what embrushes in ink the edge of the bodies Like a country Like the rain of a country Like the rain of the harp against the cello
Al sur  El sur
Abre  En rojos
Selvas  Con ríos
Flotando  Sin aire
  Se cae en estado de navegación
  Grises trepan hacia el este
La mancha  En ráfagas
Precipita  Líneas que tocan
Puntos  De pensamiento
  Errante alfabeto de la patria
El mundo  En signos
Se interna  Cierra el paso

Levantar la cuerda  Azotarla
El arpa toca  Fibras
  Y la respuesta vuelve a preguntar
To the South  The green
Opens     In reds
Forests   With rivers
Floating  Without air
      It falls in a state of navigation
      Greys climb toward the East
The stain  In flashes
Hastens   Lines that touch
Points    Of thought
          Equivocal homeland alphabet
The world  In signs
Penetrates Blocks the passage

To lift the string  To whip it
The harp touches  Fibers
      And the answer once again questions
Las abejas enojadas con el viento entre ellas se quejaban de sus pesares.
RECENT AND RECENT-ISH ANTHOLOGIES OF CONTEMPORARY MEXICAN WRITING


MEXICO CITY BOOKSTORES: NEW BOOKS

Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes (National Council for Culture and the Arts; CONACULTA)
The CONACULTA has bookstores in over a dozen locations around Mexico City (most carry similar stock, primarily publications of the CONACULTA itself).

Plaza de la Ciudadela
Tolsá #4
Biblioteca de México
Colonia Centro
C.P. 06040 México, D.F.
Tel.: 5.709.6660
Hours: Monday through Sunday, 10AM to 8PM

Palacio de Bellas Artes
Avenida Juárez #1
Colonia Centro
C.P. 06050 México, D.F.
Tel.: 5.521.9760
Hours: Monday through Sunday, 10AM to 7 PM
Benito Juárez International Airport
Sala C Local #79
Tel.: 5.726.0434
Hours: Monday through Friday, 7AM to 9PM; Sundays, 8AM to 8PM

Fondo de Cultura Económica (Fund for Economic Culture; FCE)
Librería Octavio Paz
Miguel Ángel de Quevedo #115
Colonia Chimalistac
C.P. 01050 México, D.F.
Tel.: 5.480.1801; 5.480.1802; 5.480.1803; 5.480.1804
Hours: Monday through Friday, 9AM to 9:15PM; Saturday and Sunday, 10AM to 9:15PM

Librería Alfonso Reyes
Carretera Picacho-Ajusco #227
Bosques del Pedregal
C.P. 14200 México, D.F.
Tel.: 5.227.4682; 5.227.4681
Hours: Monday through Saturday, 7:30AM to 7PM

Librería Gandhi
Miguel Ángel de Quevedo #121-134
Colonia Chimalistac
C.P. 01050 México, D.F.
Tel.: 5.661.0911
Fax: 5.484.2732
Hours: Monday through Friday, 9AM to 10PM; Saturday and Sunday, 10AM to 10PM

Gandhi Bellas Artes
Avenida Juárez #4
Colonia Centro
C.P. 06050 México, D.F.
Tel.: 5.510.4231; 5.510.2432; 5.510.4233; 5.510.4234; 5.510.5235
Fax: 5.512.4360
Hours: Monday through Saturday, 10AM to 9PM

El Juglar
Manuel M. Ponce #233
Colonia Guadalupe Inn
C.P. 01020 México, D.F.
Tel.: 5.593.5094; 5.660.7900; 5.660.8061; 5.660.8275
Hours: Monday through Friday, 9AM to 10PM; Saturday and Sunday 10AM to 10PM
Metro Pasaje Zócalo Pino Suárez
Underground passageway in the Centro Histórico running from the South side of the Zócalo to the North side of Pino Suárez metro station, with entrances at either end and one in the middle, on the Northwest corner of Pino Suárez and República del Salvador; contains 41 bookstores, organized by press.
Librería del FCE: 5.522.3078; 5.522.3016
Librería del CONACULTA: 5.522.3562
These phone numbers are for the CONACULTA and FCE bookstores located in the Pasaje; they can provide directions and/or information on other bookstores located there.
Hours: Monday through Saturday, 9:30AM to 8PM

Librería El Parnasso
Carrillo Puerto #2
Colonia Coyoacán
C.P. 04000 México, D.F.
Tel.: 5.659.5595; 5.659.5978; 5.658.3175
Fax: 5.658.5159
Hours: Monday through Friday, 9AM to 10PM; Saturday and Sunday, 9AM to 11PM

Librería Pegaso
Álvaro Obregón #99 Local A
Colonia Roma
C.P. 06700 México, D.F.
Tel.: 5.511.1566
Fax: 5.511.1471
Hours: Monday through Friday, 11AM to 8PM; Saturday and Sunday, 10AM to 7PM

Librería y Café El Pêndulo
Nuevo León #115
Colonia Condesa
C.P. 06140 México, D.F.
Tel.: 5.286.9493; 5.286.9783
Hours: Sunday through Wednesday, 8AM to 11PM; Thursday through Saturday, 8AM to 12AM

Librería Las Sirenas
Plaza del Carmen
Avenida La Paz #57
Colonia San Ángel
C.P. 01000 México, D.F.
Tel.: 5.550.3112  
Fax: 5.550.2383  
Hours: Tuesday through Saturday, 11AM to 8PM; Sunday, 12:30PM to 7PM

El Sótano  
Miguel Ángel de Quevedo #209  
Colonia Romero de Terreros  
C.P. 04310 México, D.F.  
Tel.: 5.554.9833; 5.554.1411; 5.554.9715  
Fax: 5.659.6266  
Hours: Monday through Saturday, 8AM to 10:45PM

Avenida Juárez #20  
Colonia Centro  
C.P. 06050 México, D.F.  
Tel.: 5.512.7507  
Fax: 5.512.3408  
Hours: Monday through Saturday, 9AM to 8:30PM; Sunday, 10AM to 8PM

Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM)  
Casa Universitaria del Libro  
Orizaba y Puebla  
Colonia Roma  
C.P. 06700 México, D.F.  
Tel. 5.207.9390  
Hours: Monday through Friday, 9:00AM to 8:00PM

Librería Central  
Corredor Zona Comercial  
Ciudad Universitaria  
C.P. 04510 México, D.F.  
Tel.: 5.622.0271  
Hours: Monday through Friday, 9AM to 7PM

Palacio de Minería  
Tacuba #5  
Colonia Centro  
C.P. 06000 México, D.F.  
Tel. 5.518.1315  
Hours: Monday through Friday, 9AM to 6PM

*Other locations at the Centro Cultural Universitaria at Ciudad Universitaria (the UNAM campus) and the Antiguo Colegio de San Ildefonso in the Centro Histórico.*
Librería Ático  
Avenida Álvaro Obregón #118-B  
Colonia Roma  
C.P. 06700 México, D.F.  
Tel.: 5.584.7627  
Fax: 5.584.1426  
Teoatic@elsitio.com  
Bookseller: Jaime Hernández Campos  
Hours: Monday through Friday, 10AM to 8PM; Saturday, 10AM to 7:30PM; Sunday, 11AM to 6:30PM

A través del espejo  
Avenida Álvaro Obregón #118-A  
Colonia Roma  
C.P. 06700 México, D.F.  
Tel.: 5.264.0246  
Bookseller: Silvia López Casillas  
Hours: Monday through Friday, 10AM to 8PM; Saturday, 10AM to 7:30PM; Sunday, 11AM to 6PM

Calle de Donceles  
Donceles street, running East to West between Plaza Santo Domingo on República de Brasil and approximately Isabel la Católica, is home to numerous bookstores specializing in used, antique and rare books; most are open Monday through Saturday from 10AM to 8PM

La Lagunilla  
Every Sunday from approximately 7AM to 4PM, there is an outdoor flea market just North of the Lagunilla market in Tepito. One area of the weekly market, a long block running East to West between Eje Central and Allende on Eje 1 Norte (Avenida Rayón) features many stands selling both new and used books.

Palacio de Minería/Oficina Central de Correos  
A block-long alleyway (called Callejón Condesa) between the Palacio de Minería and the Central Post Office, running North-South between Calle Tacuba and Avenida 5 de Mayo; half the alley, which is located directly behind the palatial Post Office, is lined with used book stands. Open approximately 11AM to 6PM Monday through Saturday.

Calle República de Argentina  
There are many stands selling new and used books on Calle República de Argentina, running North-South between the North edge of the zócalo (starting at Calle Seminario)
past San Ildefonso to Calle República de Venezuela. Open approximately 11AM to 7PM Monday through Saturday.

La Torre de Lulio
Avenida Nuevo León #125C
Colonia Hipódromo Condesa
C.P. 06170 México, D.F.
Tel.: 5.211.1280; 5.211.9367; 5.286.6058
lulio@prodigy.net.com
Bookseller: Augstin Jiménez
Hours: Monday through Sunday, 11AM to 10PM

MEXICO CITY LITERARY RESOURCES

Biblioteca de México
Plaza de la Ciudadela
Tolsá #4
Colonia Centro
C.P. 06040 México, D.F.
Tel.: 5.709.1368
Hours: Monday through Sunday, 8:30AM to 7:30PM

National Institute of Fine Arts (INBA) Archives and Library
Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes
República de Brasil #37
Colonia Centro
Tel.: 5.526.3186; 5.526.0449; 5.526.3190
Hours: Monday through Friday, 9AM to 4PM

Casa del Poeta
Álvaro Obregón #73
Colonia Roma
Tel.: 5.533.5456; 5.207.9336
Library hours: Tuesday through Friday, 11AM to 6PM
Literary Events: As per schedule, available at the Casa del Poeta and at the INBA

Escrítores en Lenguas Indígenas, AC
(Writers in Indigenous Languages Association)
Eje Central Lázaro Cárdenas #13, Primer Piso
Colonia Centro
C.P. 06050 México, D.F.
Tel.: 5.521.3579; 5.521.3356; 5.521.5117; 5.521.3959; 5.521.5138
celiac@conaculta.gob.mx
Hours: Monday through Friday, 9AM to 7PM

Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM)
Biblioteca Central/Central Library
Explanada Central (across from Rectoria)
Ciudad Universitaria
Tel.: 5.622.1613
Hours: Monday through Sunday, 8:30AM to 9:30PM
poetry
Two Miniatures

Lisa Pearson

Lamentation

The last of the morning fog clings to the distant hills. On one side of the lake in the valley, the family gathers around the corpse of a beloved son, days dead. Love streams from his mother’s fingertips, her hands open to the cloudless sky, as if waiting for it to fall. There is nothing to hold on to. Her other children console her, but they are forgotten. The stink of him sticks to their skin. How much those cousins obliged to attend want to wash. In every way, his death is an offense. On the road out of town, a man who once considered suicide walks towards them. The smell of death more potent with every step and it stirs something in him: a revulsion, but also a desire. So much already left behind, he takes a long, deep breath as he passes by, looking at them as long as he can hold it inside. At the edge of town, a young man grabs the shirt collar of the friend who molested his sister, holds him close and screams in his face. The sister tries in vain to pull them apart, to wedge herself between them: the safest place she knows is between the two men she fears most. On the far side of the lake, a couple walks arm’s breadth apart, contemplating in silence. Last night he realized he fell in love again with his wife because she was suddenly beautiful. None of it, all those months, he discovered, had been for him: the hint of perfume in her armpits, the new way she held the telephone, moved through the room or bit into an apple. She does not say she too feels betrayed. And in the house on the hill, the sobs of a child locked in a room go unheard. The key is buried in her pocket.
Moonlight washes over the cobblestone streets, empty but for gangs of dogs raptly sniffing down stones, curbs, crevices, cracks. The rest of the city sleeps as they track invisible trails to the source: intricate winds humming through keyholes. They press their noses there, ecstatic. The ineffable stench of daily life. Inside locked doors, motes of dust catch the light like the tiniest of stars. The moon shines into the open mouths of dreamers, caged in shadows, a soft moan or a little twitch the only evidence of the taste of blood or the breathlessness of flight. A whiff enough, the vagrant dogs roam the streets, fighting over the occasional spoils, marking their kingdoms with streams of silver. They pass the west portal, behind the livery; where the beggars sleep on thin rafts of hay, many deformed with illness, others maimed by hot irons, some taken for utter fools, a few hiding among them to escape impending punishment. Asleep, they sink into the darkness, the livery's shadow long and wide, a hundred bodies curled around all their worldly goods like a congregation of nautili on the ocean floor. In the morning, the sun will reach them last, but the blind men there will be the first to wake. Their eyes, pearled white and vacant, slightly open when they sleep like crescent moons, see everything and nothing: the chorus of dogs panting and the click of their claws, the flutter of wings in the livery rafters, the chuffing of horses, the distant whine of a woman or child, the night as if a rehearsal for Judgment Day. In every echo, the possibility of heaven or hell. They will hear them coming long before the others have been kicked awake by a boot in the back.

Men come at dawn to sort the helpless from the guilty, to give each his due. The maimed, deformed and foolish will be herded to the churchyard, as if a single injured animal, kicked and whipped, flinching in anticipation of the next hard blow. After eating whatever they are given, the fools will be kept at the church until something is set on fire again; the others set free on the streets to unravel their bandages, reveal wet wounds and the tapers of flesh where once were limbs. They'll get what they can and it'll be enough for now. Those left behind at the livery look mostly like able-bodied men capable of any crime or sin. Sometimes they have names, which are called out loudly as if in the voice of God. The booted men walk among them to see who gives himself away. If one runs in desperation, he is guilty. If another stands with stiff iniquity, he is easily caught. Noon time executions and
afternoon punishments keep the town warm and the leaves on the trees. As the saying goes.

As the first and last left standing, the blind cannot be innocent. When the men come in the morning, the blind men will have already risen, having heard the clop clop of boot heels, the bovine laughter and the sudden, quick scattering of the thieves among them. The blind men will pat down their pockets and pouches to check that everything is secure, their elbows, arms and hands in constant motion as if signaling a distant ship or a merciful god coming to their rescue. While their fingers spy loose knots and deftly tighten them, their unblinking eyes stare through the thick stone walls that make the future imminent. As if they could see the road suddenly filled with a band of horsemen or the golden fields swallowed by a swarm of locusts or the line of cathedral poplars on the road out of the city disappear inside a wave of water, blood or mother’s milk, cresting, falling, flooding. Inside the walls, the hours and days accumulate like fallen leaves that have surrendered to winter before the first snow. Watchtower guards on the look-out see nothing, whether awake or asleep. The blind men, their eyes as if rolled back into their heads, see first the thoughts swelling with the future and they do not blink.

Then, as if inevitable, one blind man will reach out too far as he shakes his arm into his coat, punching the blind man closest to him, who utters a small hoarse cry then swipes his fist through the air, meeting the face of the first man who leaned in to console him. Some of the blind men stand still to render themselves invisible, amorphous, but the others, in an attempt to flee, stumble into them. While trying to help each other up, others pull them down. Not long past daybreak they are already bruised, a little bloodied. The booted men, laughing, will wipe their eyes with the backs of their hands; and, by noon, surrounded by a crowd whose laughter drowns the rapturous peal of bells, four blind men – thick bats in hand, a frightened pig scurrying between them, pushing at their knees – will be set into motion like toys, strangers’ hands touching them, spinning them, swinging their bats for them, though they try to resist, fearing the smack of wood to flesh, their own or another’s. If only they could hear the pig, but its squeals are indistinguishable from so many in the crowd. Then, after enough accidental bruises, the men swing harder, furious, the pig, the prize, a lucky strike, as each blow reaches higher and higher, arms like wings beating, the air will be wet with blood.

Before day breaks, one blind man, sleeping with his eyes open, wakes in the dark as a stray dog licks his face, the wet heat of its open mouth, a revelation. He is ready.
Lord of bait, lord of prey
Deep clean drowning man.

Ambient paradigm misgiven exigent
Future imitation complete thought.

Kill to survive
Or verso.

Faith makes fact
Still not not extinct.

Every synapse every hour
Food before words.
Two worlds and a life inside sleep
The surface of a hole where horizon sunk.

Window throws no shade
Transparent to exception's exception.

Serotonin parasite on insomniac deathbed
Ghetto-to-exile, something-into-something divided.

Unable to find one single moment
Not sacrificed to endless foreground.

That passive aggressive teeming foresight
Every flex driving the splinter deeper.
Sunk clusters clotted stroke
Next thought wrong thought.

from moment to milk
Eidos without schema.

Blindness: to work on demand
Union: A happy absence, or her opposite.

Resist and conceal
Receive and endure.

First person released undead
An infinity to aggress.
Private lives swarm through reason trance.
They become what consumes them.

Each moment unaccountable
Or the case of a mind around it.

Skin thickens then corrodes
Encrusted with newborn’s static days.

Narcissistic flesh-blot in polaroid hemorrhage.
Every point-of-reference monochromatic and bald.

Made or own.
What is there to protect.
In the silence of eros
poetry breeds oppression

Every gesture of opposable thumb
kneading description stagnant.

Ear secretes its sound to unlisten
question from contingency.

Is it the story or the meaning of the story
which betrays that garden of expediency.

Desire speaks emptied interrupted
Generous to pretend such excess endlessness.
Three Poems

Ange Mlinks

Reading In Your Dreams

Not that it wasn't sublime; not that light did not write in gold on the fountains, like the time despair stole upon us during a reprise of sand and grass because amid all the stares there was nothing to read, but that we marched with our eyes. While clouds hit & rumbled between what's so intrinsic to stones the meaning of the script's abridged, and the hard sky, bells rang for any x which recognized itself.

Regardless of that sadness, whose seemliness was questioned in the line of a pencil as it dreamed across storage, through the ordinary constraints like property, up the steps of the fortress and tower, to pause for a description of pleasure in the parlance of a map overtaking a window, the provenance of sweetness in the air either would never be found by its swirls, or would compromise altogether the rigor in mining the gilt off all the spines, with the risk of pallor in the very organs of memory which rendered us here.
Cross And Possess

A permanent snow of curtains. A complete enchantment toward which we rode, reading a pneumatic novel. Seeking reassurances of goodness, tantamount to deer’s approach, it was our turn to shrink, to wash our hands, to flee it happening. The clause combinations had to be run through quickly, before children’s faithfulness hardened to conservatism, an intuition of heresies. The older initial would be established by its nearest kin the knight’s move, the grand-niece, sequels off center in the chiasmus of ringdoves. Seeking appropriations is always tangled branches, tangential damage from dawn. Rooks hoard the meats, law demands no innovation: law is diamond. The hours were also horses.

As when a fake star fell from the wall, a wounded Virgo kept glowing. Taking what was missing to be multitude, maybe an entire audience, a permanent snow of curtains made a concrete wall a fog. A forest migrated with its procession of fawns to the alphabetical. On the other hand, a mirror’s redistribution of light made reading the woods backwards more legible. The strong indigence and the weak indigence created a gulfstream, melted the liased muscles from rescue to pietà, in still fields, reiterated fences with a gloss on the lake’s gentle passes at the ring it would enlarge, as the glass ground, and the mayflies became circumstantial to the year:

When a song got dropped, a new one took its place and became forensic in its turn. Verbatim sprigs dotted every Christmas, when a fake star fell from the wall and one did not follow a directive backwards to a rifle concealed in a kneel. One hand drawing on the other excerpted the findings for its own purposes, closing a circuit, with girls’ ribbons like bookmarks in the sandbox.
holding places as holding manes shedding sparkle.
Pheasants muted in threadbare reeds, berry reds
in violation of some season. Where was memory without
trappings. Sheared for lanolin like catalogs
wherein the songs caught were given their dimensions
much later, when they gave back their contexts.
Misfiled Building

A front passes before our eyes, the epilogue.
Endemic weather patterns, as hyacinthine stamps grapes.
Paged onwards, we resemble the steps we take by twos.
Duplicates and forgeries enter virally;
wild acquisition refers and refers, unauthenticated.
We are prisoned outside it, by both its existence and its disappearance, as if shiftless happiness were rummaged for in containment then dynamite, forging a chain reaction – see also index.
By what method one translates nonsense into genetics or Russian, that’s the method by which we hear rumors: that there was a great fire, that then there was no fire. That then there was no library, that it was a myth. With a view to the trees dissolving against the grass which takes a long time not to be green.
Even as we learn to see it as we say it.

To build only pavilions – or plants as tall as five-year-olds. The peacock comes out (again), the only blue thing in the bronze estate.
Between rain. Kinesthetic mouthing arouses a cause or is it the other way round – an assignation, as wearing glasses, words near.
Growing more tear-shaped with parturition. It is, you see, where you enter on the third floor but on that side it’s the sixth, like locked horns. And after the elections, you side on the phone with throwing the ocean in reverse. It’s wave mechanics for kids.
To build only pavilions to watch this, the drilling and ultrasound. Crisscrossed in its nosy way, so diurnal I have to question my own motive for sitting in the arbor.
When a rat chews off a corpse's nose
it is not about pain

Resemblance is hunger's refrain

Skeleton key opens
every body
a door

Peacock the fabled poison-eater

Death's bright
beauty, then,
hides the hen
Children stone what moves
divided by water they
do not understand
between movement
& their hands
holding stones –
violece born before
their own belated births,
& so throw stones
opposite water & birds

What is it wants apprehension
of all the departed
the already born & moving away
so much to say
Don’t leave me
Don’t leave me
or I will kill you

Cicada sings what the sirens sing –
each death is a strident thing

Ears stoppered
sailing straight
through strait’s
swift steering
away all the same

Each death is a little valve
World’s Fair ruins

Stone steps lead down into water
such passages swans abide,
gliding out of place in the old world’s
fair to say paired, a single life there,
wondering, now, those steps –
where they led
out of the head,
out of the heady romance of a gone
world’s fair to say steps go into
nowhere love of ruins
like a shore’s amplified closures

Star gazing

How little we
are no not
little but far
from close

How big we
are to say,
so far away,
there – that star
close as
who we are
The bright step of a god withdrawn –

footstep worlds walk into being
where the foot lifts
shaped to the maker’s withdrawal

God is first artifact
from “In-formational Forum Rousers – Arcing (Satire No. 4)”

≡ Rodrigo Toscano

<re-initialize
‘Satire No. 4’
“from here”>

<increase
social base
memory
buffer>

<thank who?>

**BERSERK:** En maskert anti-kapitalist sparker inn et vindu i en butikk i Genovas gater.

BERSERK: (One masked) (anti-capitalist) (kicks in) (a window) (of one) (boutique) (in Genova’s streets)

Conglomerate Transatlantic Pantocracy

“philosophy”

psank u
poor
prefoosening
ox & axy swung
a-flexti
ranger
traded
“furd”
gen
“u”
fleck
stirr at
carbono
familiex
groupe
grazi
cough & wheeze
teary eye'd
“chaunge”
[come again?]
“chaunge the chaunnel”
tear gas canister
whirling
on five-century-old
laid-in-stone
alley
green-glow & pink-glow

chalk

chalked in
slogans
blurry
scuffling feet
hold steady
altered
context
lines –
crossing' em –
[if isolate
translates to danger]

“operazione
liberazione
perpetua
signore”

pata –

fisticuffs?

nyet –

something qualitatively

elser

apparently

someoner

in switch-packeted

transit

rescrambled

screen view

—

Ron Phillyman

on a Bart somewhere

can’t help –
can’t re-particulate me (who?)

me me me –

“now now now”

pot banging!

pot banging!

(echo)

Buzzards

hover a long-picked-over <victorian> Novel

Naturalism’s

inverted – carcass

fleshless
not all’s *that* safari-like
no more

for the demo
outfitted

pantaloons
safety-pinned
ludicrous
we, only

hybridity
focus! – in the cross hairs

‘identity?’

Artiste

*Après tout!*

however
did

thniggle thnagle thnuggle

at ("upgrade now!")

*barr*iers –

warning:
conflicting run-time race politics drivers
delete?

("*une gauche* gauche, eh?")

gosh –
Barfy –
I don’ see *any* fledgling literati in the
(immaterially-labored)
grass

grazing on…

blots
“huh?”

blots

**STINKASTING**: Tildekte demonstranter kaster stein mot politiet.

——

fund a

*mental*

ism –

schism

recruitment?

in snatches?

I wonder

(Alpha) Spanner, why not *dual* inducement?

Formal *and* Programmatic

fajita fave

recipes

flavors

bundled with

fajita-maker

relative

clock-rate

*throughput*

value

calibrated –

“and then ding the bell”
dynamics

(more on this later)

*

Psss –

it's docked, it's unloaded
cultural
cargo

Psst!

kris kringle
a gift economy
scab

Pss –

capacity to the max
papi

Pss –

I don' know nobahdee,
I don' know' nobahdee here

Pst!

the department chair
is against
the union, man

Pss –

so are you!
Gaawd --

Pss –

this reading sucks!
(sucks!)
Pss –

DUMBO
has come back to life
they say
in

L.A. County
(proper)

Five Curators

(one, a Latrino – serviceable)

“we feature individual success here
not a cobra pit of
paranational
minor literature
tail up (ending)
(busting)

expat
parahiaships”

———

The Secret Password?

“cake”

(every global girl and boy wants...)

<thank you>

blots

<habitus?>

*

123
The Top 1% in the United States has amassed over 40% of the nation's wealth ("clarify")

When that a shiksa with a muckraker huckster was a poker-faced spotter to re-certify excrementalist poesy?

While that a popeye optimo galvanized newer literary formations contra-
servatoidal telescopic (dome)
a gentler
händler
web stalk
sweep
of its
(own?)
malingular
post
de-centered
boozwah
(imploded national)
(or half a half borough wide)
subject
job –

design

“did he say-

VANDALISERING: To demonstranter forsøker å ødelegge en minibank.

resign?

(VANDALISING): (Two demonstrators) (attempt to try [or is it?] try to attempt) (same) (destroy) (an atm)”

“not the least upended
by my institotalization”

(“I believe you” – fideism)

button down bobo banes, meanwhile, wants to know
what does sajado mean?

“cut loose” “unmoored”

“de-klopted”

hvorfør?
Three Poems

Lisa Lubasch

What Brings Objects Nearer

Listening for compunction,
Your observation folds out
Raising up the matter to scrutiny.

Precarious is
The desire
Incinerating
Released from heretical forms.

What living there is
In perceiving the function differently
Coming to terms with it, marking it down
Consumed by the no-name,
The thing within us
Casting us out, along with preceding efforts
Screening valuation before it becomes
Lived-out, like a clue.

Reducing the fraction
Placing it, falsely, in a continuum
This is another part
Of the system.

**

So many
Potential orders

What receiving in convention
In the mutable tracing of knowledge

Within the volumes of names
And lanterns.

**

The assembled fictions of living are scattered

If the errors are, in theory, forgivable,
Penitent figures

Lodged in their structures.

**

The desire to salvage
The fictions from the horizon

All in a line
But never summoned into one

So many in the surroundings
Lifting life from the past compositions.

**

In abstraction, the desire to keep staging
Fictions, as collective perceptions

Sustaining us within forms
Living in harmony.

**
Without replacing us
Wishing us into place
These fictions
Begin to occupy us.

**

Entwined in the capable fiction
The figures decline to read

Incongruous marks on the horizon
Compel us to question

Swerving to avoid
Our own tracks.
The Question Echoing In The Form

The question echoing
Tracing the matter
There, in the open brush.

**

Mistaking the corner for a horizon

In mistaking, faltering
As a gesture

All this
In addition,

An unclear way to repent.

**

The cold not settling

The cold in the corners
Instilling desire

There are no accountable forms

So many frail patterns

Producing in us
For instance,
The abstract comparison

Examining the fracturing system
Mimicking pale orders

Reproducing themselves
In other words, *telling not sealing*
Sustaining the fiction, like actors.

**

Suspending the fiction ...

Gathering the fiction

Nearing
The established desire.

**

Such chastening figures inside the border
Displacing their positions
Enacting the gesture
Inviting the kiss.

**

The gesture,
Having a say in the motion

*How to say one living*
This living one so desiring the form in the articulation of it
How many living and desiring the mutable form

Portending the same
So too pretending.

**

Speaking is a desire
Folding up the frame of the performance
Sliding through the scrim

Modifying her terms
Turning the winter rain into a mute and veiled comparison

Useful examples take their places
Within the motions of speaking

Folding up into the future.
Even if the wilderness contains remnants
Another may all but finish us
So many staggered perceptions
Confusing the conjoining
Fissured forms,
Silencing the remark.

Accusing, inflammatorily
Accusing one of us for the way of proceeding directly
Proceeding
Creating the appearance
Such a fiction matters little.

Portents induce us to believe in them by persisting
Creating themselves without reference.

We are beginning to acknowledge
What derives from us.
Ordering Things, 4

Daylight surrounds us, perhaps even before we are written into it,

and our names curving around us,

take on a value.

**

What if light also possessed a sound?

**

Thus, she thinks, it is not unusual for hours to pass, unknowingly, or for the moon to reappear released from its whirling motion

**

In this, we are terrified, and this terror is experience itself of the starkness of elements

**

A placating gesture does not keep us safe The belief is formed, then becomes abhorrent, extends into a twisting motion, the torquing of our eyes toward the things they want to measure.
As it Were

Roger Farr

Called

Or something in light

painted

our ears, too late, too late

for the painted is no longer

so coloured.
The weather, stilled

a rose

against the sky

narrowed in the window

is beyond cumulation.
Waiting for
the emergency
of the spiralling thorns
one cannot
with us
breach the sleep
but to tarnish an
adherent dress.
And what speech fakes
this graft shall undertake
to purchase.
I Work All Day

I work all day in literature
and night styles me heroic
with mortared rose upon my breath
in an ancient fur-lined overcoat
nothing can mystify me.
I hear windows being shot out
and don’t bother with officials
because I have a criminal-mind.
I feel disgust yet continually
am charmed by letters and gifts.
I watch myself being massacred
passive as a bird that carries
my heart to his home
leaving me to bureaucratic
dockets for identification.
The Search For A Home

my thoughts are inmate to the city
its poorhouse sediment

there is luminous surface
over so much fatal error

another day of forbidden life
and no one is responsible

unable to bear plentitude
my homeopathy plentitude

which casts a dark sun
and radiates our fiction
Tears

above is the black lid of recreated time
by brutal force I cauterize
the writing of memoir
tick of halogen corrodes
images of aged tragedy
another civic phantom
tends to a piece of land
in the acrid morning

I am absorbed in austere desire
for eroded narrative
muslin around my body
a bleached out Rome
in the stupor of knowing
lapse in judgement is forever
all obsessions for which I lived
source now of confined tears
Enhanced Density

= Rosmarie Waldrop

Should it worry me that thought, in my sentences, seems never wholly present at any one moment? Let alone love, in my life? Even my skin has no precise shape, that is unless touched. By clothes?

There seems a brownish mist under construction. From forest fires?

My feeling for you seems to flow (like traffic?) under my skin. I want it to break through the pores and touch you. Inflict wounds so small you don’t know what’s killing you?

The way a word can pierce? Because of the use it has had in your life? Because it comes out of a deep well? Because war follows the opening of mouths?
You are never in front of me, like an object. And if I try to hold you sideways the melody slips away leaving a single note. Like a reflection in a shifting mirror? A phoneme escaping between the sutures of my accent?

What can I do but let my thoughts roam in the field around a word. The way desire roams through my body? It’s called the meaning of the word because we cannot touch the ground water in any other way.

Are we making an object when we make love? Do we hope it’ll stay in front of us and allow us to observe it?

It may not be enough to look at a surface I love. Or parts adjacent.
Field day

In which no one tells me I am wrong. We are in groups, the girls are sitting under the trees, pretending. I am not looking for a wife here. The bees are not biting. If I were to meet you here I would watch you, I would watch your dog, we would all feel the breeze off the bay. The beer would be cold in our hands.

In which I can’t think of a reason. That girl can’t mean to have worn that, John says. He is obviously right. On the other hand, who I am to talk. This looks like hair but it is really a hood. I wear it whenever I shake hands. Bill says, Any day now you’ll be seeing my mop-maker. It looks good on you, but forget it, I tell him. What I’m saying is, how are we getting to the suburbs later.

In which time slows down. At the water, I’m thinking of taking the census. You are definitely still there, with a certain number of your friends, recognizable up close but hard to count at a distance. Dave says, You know she’s waiting for you. Those big calves and the sunglasses slipping off her face. We have a gig tonight. I could ask you along, but I already know where you need to be.

This is getting to be a problem. I am pulling the dog’s soft ear. The park is overpopulated, but then there’s the reek of burning plastic back at the house. It’s never very easy to leave anywhere. Right now there is pollen in everything. Steve says, Stop skirting the issue. Okay, I say. I drop out of the game and head for the phone.
trigonometry note (do not pass this around)

ACUTE ANGLE

but what about the terrible habit
of falling in public? just bind it
up now. stay possessed,
blunt-hairs. the possession of
the city biker. mental worker. recluse.
that one that nothing ever
happened to, yeah, right? she had been
someone’s friend.

come on in. god you look good.
bring on the rebuff, showdown, comeon:
I could fall for you right here
on the page, don’t remind me.
none of the cats are actually dead,
for real, and nothing gets you
over the keys like a good
unrequited, right, girls?

OBLIQUE ANGLE

how not to [the following]:

build one, a following. lead young girls down garden path (a real
hike). kick shut door of office. have one, an office (at bottom of
path). forget to keep distance from famous. become soldier.
(solidarity a hazard.) squat on floor with anyone, no matter what,
even in emergency
or things to impress you in this room:

evidence of her
further evidence
boy dressed as Bowie
Babel
some kind of loose tea, tequila, a dinner gift
french stuff
ball of twine, ball of ribbon
old tools

(f tell your mother I got a toolkit
and she don’t need to buy one.
now that’s compassion)

folded things
fresh bread, or garlic

she told her cousin, she said.
look out for the one
with no body hair, she said.
she said, that’s ridiculous!
I thought it’d be easy. her cousin
going around on the steps sliding her hand up
pant legs till she got it right

RIGHT ANGLE

remember, you too were generating pages
under the influence. we were queuing
to get to the bottom of the garden.
about influence, how are we ever
to get anything to stop
overflowing? isn’t that awful, how things
overflow? we could fix it. I certainly
got enough toolkit. (and that, girls,
is why you should marry
a marrying man.)

remember that sun on the bed?
the bull’s blood wine?
I always thought that story very suspicious.
no, we were there together, and it
was a south window, that’s what I remember.
Advice from the elevator

It is so nice to have nice little things for our personal use, though you are personally so nice without using things since you have a really wonderful profile, such a little thing to have, yet so nice for us.

Really, it's a wonder that profiling what you have, which proved so fully the wonder of the real, could so nicely be used to belittle a person - a thing you have thus found wonderously profitable.

It was Nice where things first got a little personal. Even you had to realize the profound wonder of a nice person, for whom it is useful to do things full of defilement, which proves it's the real one.

Our little things can make us all nicer, more personable, not to say that we have to be nice to the little people. A pro doesn't have to make you feel real wonderful; he likely won't even wonder which prole does his filing.

Nicely, nicely, for some little person has a use for it; halving it won't make you feel any more wonderful. Rely on one of propriety's filters: sew it up nice, personally (two hours, little thinking).

Fools may wonder about your prolific reality: is it nice to use persons as though they're our things? But one gets so used to living in wonderment. Really having it nice is to float above sin.
Cover or conceal; that cloak that cloaks you in. Of immaterial things – an extension from bottom. Envelop beneath the crust to obscure – to enfold, embrace, encircle or surround. (2) To palliate a fault: fin, flap, fold, fringe, lobe, margin. It enfolds, enwraps or encloses – covering the region; mantle-breathing. Clock, -glass, -mirror -mantel (place).
Presently the past reads
the hairline glyph recedes –
lobe where you left it.

Reeds spoke
an Augustine air
observation steadfast

Warsaw again
quietly in company,

sepia circles the stranded stains.

An infinite gesture
now toward,
it thwarts.

Short stopped and starting out.

Last – back in time
Lash – of the “future p[a/o]st”
Held things rung – this ring
(too familiar) of the presents
Seminal knell –

Who crawls to death too wisely
Who ages arranging for each bottle a percussive loop
Headland now knowing
only altered otherwise

Ceases & stationed sabbatical
silence pummeled —

punching out time
the dry wall
clocks you in.

Intersession between there and here —

There is that, here
is this.

Elsewhere otherwise split.

Where “he” is from and where the museum –
And the fabric fragments – frayed, afraid
You have pinned the wounds again
Sewed by rounded frames of time
(spirals, helixes, [Orpheus] strips)

Insert the stitches in
Momentary monument (“mummyment” / “mommy meant”)
provisional pattern

Incessant, the fused decision—
precludes description

then fused again.

Deferral is not the leap – assuredly
the mark on the sand is constantly.

Sanctioned gaze on another island’s inland
matters stir the murked mantle.
Solipsism is neither observation nor sophism; it is the structure of reason

What I am contesting, the bullshitting contest.

Mourning is your Joy
To be from the South
And excavated, and elevators – undefeated
And a lens that blinks picnoleptically

What haunts the lap(se) of water
Bound to cross, bound a cross
Twinkling in the sun “like” bottles
Actual bottles wrecked on a sunny sea

Who saw the blood on the chain
A place not visited yet repels
Who heard residually one grain
Descending and descending the chutes

“Friend” – of a century –
“we” “owed” because we live
The lake still will not freeze
The lake unfrozen
To and from which our futures are sent

“Friend” – of a century –
“we” “owed”, we live instead
The lake still will not freeze
The photographs froze again
They can take your life, but not your life signs, my father was fond of saying after apnea. But that was before articles shifted during flight, before our graphs grew indistinguishable from our appetites. In fine, that was the greatest period of American prosperity since my depression. Father’s left hand was an extension of liberal thinking. It could strike a man without assuming a position on the good. His left hand was a complete and austere institution. In fine, it could move through my body’s DMZ’s without detection. But that was before articles copped please and feels from objects, objects rendered fulgent by our theories, back before my mood swung slowly open to let this ether enter like a view.
The poetic establishment has co-opted contradiction.
And the poetic establishment has not co-opted contradiction.
Are these poems just cumbersome
or are these poems a critique of cumbersomeness?

The sky stops painting and turns to criticism.
We envy the sky its contradictions. We envy the sky
its exposed patches of unprimed canvas
and their implicit critique of painterly finish.

It is raining for emphasis. Or it is raining emphases
on a public ill-prepared for the cubist accomplishment.
Perhaps what remains of innovation
is a conservatism at peace with contradiction,

as the sky transgresses its frame
but obeys the museum.
What, if not the derivative, will keep us warm? The tragic interchangeability of nouns? The breastbone? Two vanguards sharing a bathroom?

When I first found the subjunctive, she was broke and butt naked. Now she wants half. She wants her own set of keys and bullets designed to expand on impact.

A pamphlet of sparks? The National Book Award?

Meaning is a child of my third marriage. A marriage of convenience. A wartime marriage. We had plastic champagne flutes and no champagne. A staple instead of a ring. A dialectician in place of a priest.

A butter substitute? Rogaine for women?

Consider the rain my resignation. I regret having founded Cubism. I regret the lines I broke by the eye and the lines I broke by the breath.

The hair around the vulva? Proust in translation? September 11th?
§

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CIP
Epithelium

the eyes raise themselves and wake the head
the pro glo read hom of com rec
hangs heavy spectacles on your ears
thy fig trees swim in a doric fab
divertissement of John La Farge
Where are you stationed soldier?
Your mother's lachrymal sac. Christ,
what an answer. gainsaid crossword
take these two: please, pour hot & cold
jam on pastor's last sacristan
swallow thy ticklish sarcophagus
o stuffy xenophobe! head nod
your naughty eyes to paradise's
thorny problem child: spirit
Love (1)

net gains in the night flat idling stir
wipe your stigmata on my pantisocracy
we'll bend otitis media to the whir
of deerflies dealing earwax on the margins
or flag them to doeth in their origins
or casting sunkist oranges at the house of stare
wipe your stigmata on my pantisocracy
the vested well's off [done: heavy on the myrrh
wipe your stigmata on my pantisocracy
while we batter each other baked as Aaron Burr
bending to mate the tortoise with the hare
even as our gutters fill with animal shelter fur
this demo love slave turns on our democracy
wipe your stigmata on my pantisocracy
Summertime

the clods are blown punk and summerstruck
a day in the won’t budge loaded
my vast indolence for your vested interest
ass kissing the natural them
park it curb it oeuvre it in this oven
set it on the horizon wire
God himself is surprisingly pink
and legally tender of warp and woof
cork my bags with newsprint and glare
anything? pax americarwax
drives us to the mattress
of plucked diaphanous fly wings and butter
passes for stuffy flow
an aloof downshift turns on the neighboring
Three Poems

Dieter M. Gräf

Translated by Andrew Shields

Fossil Traces

love, particles of it, still, that
shimmer; we who now land give
what is not us back:
that
will remain. Also: the fossil
traces, the imprint of our very
naked bodies on the parachute fabric.
Oil

quite recent in earth’s history; the change
has occurred: car wrecks nibbled at
in satellite towns, all day long
dentists comb the area, sunglasses,
even for the hairdressers at the pumps
putting the spout (“the whole cock!”) in their
..., in marriage beds of course: rust patches,
clattering scenarios (bad tuning);
rain coming down ever harder; plundered
parts warehouses (fucked-up exhaust) discovered,
pacemaker quickly pocketed: and
past the glowing semen of the johns, with
the sun snuffed out, with eyes parked;
antennae extending: we are now on
the bottom, the bottom of a sea; “constantly
drizzling biomass”; here’s how to win:
Outing

the motion has shifted into the instruments: a street-patrol-green passenger car that drives, compressed concentrates inside it, too, past the street signs – Here is where the sights begin – to where it’s green. A stinking, stuffed-up color, confiscated; what’s lovely though: the way there, the view so clear, a plastic that wraps the chains of hills.
**De nobis fabula narratur**

- Lance Phillips

corporealizing Adriadne
coporealizing of middle thigh I feel  Apples

A very sturdy sun

– squeezing it in hands
– mistakenly  the laurel as two persons

SLIP
Personal purity

Ah  How flaring out from the dragging over orifice
returning radish & honey for them

Red from jaw to chest

-- it is very easy  “The branch  clouds”
Cardinal out from conflating into three fingers

Yes going to say a stair skink
going towards neither mind nor reason nor thought nor consciousness nor soul nor will nor truth
Clear crease down along arm/Hektor/Inked eaten rose

Clasping behind the head  hand/atropos

OCCUPANCY

- arms his occupancies are
The mind trips over
the eye’s event
Watching breathes
Brain coral spins on its names
  “open brain coral”
  “closed brain coral”
Sounds flush or flee
Extreme right, or left, says
  they’ve no awareness –
as in, imagine a planet
without us
(no one to say turbid)

Mind there will never be
a rush of water here –
“if by the impossible you
enter into a consciousness”

Intention floats,
nerves tingle

Exit, tumble, rotate:
limbs, feeding arms, whatever
“you will be seized by a whirlwind, 
thrown out of doors, 
because consciousness ”

– waving through bit plankton
the light is minimal

“has no inside”

3

– NO –
swivels the mirror

says I’d rather be water
(a crime)

thinks sight in a
blind blank ocean

Limestone husks
scratch water –

Thinking knowledge
(the claim to be out-
side) is it awful

As a look multiplies ad infinitum

Not to go to Narcissus

Fixed, nor answered, 
but seen, averted

Watches
Eyes

A life sentence
sways and curls
Is it just lies that sway
when being told?

Heart bangs lid, pulses

The marine
scientist
unnames
them:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>green</th>
<th>pulsing xenia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>purple-tip</td>
<td>staghorn coral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chocolate</td>
<td>chip sea star</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>swollen</td>
<td>brain coral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>blue dot</td>
<td>disc anemone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rugose</td>
<td>giant clam</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Enough to blush
the parsing letters,
to flush words
hallucinogenic errors

“the taxonomic will to power
has gone and named each fish,
each seaweed, each *animalcule*”

To feel nature spew ink
voluptuously
out

Names begin it

Watch for cues, the brain,
the cluster of feelings
called *heart*

Other samples
specimen
genus
species

Eyes lash at this now
– spread along –

rhymes
know but names
to intone:

To live – repeat – to live

the names would be far –
would be far beyond
sac

Would breed

6

“Love not being of
itself a substance”

suspends – it trips, floats,

buoyant,
an eye, a brain coral

wide enough for a slip
to enter?

A slot in the coral,
relations without verb

– the coral beds rift –

“but an accident of
substance”

reach into –
repetition
White strands
stroke the pause

7

No, not to hurl
from there (already in here)
immersed in water

Why?

A kind of gladness
in the moon jelly
– call it mindlessness –
looks promising

Options swirl as window objects

The sea
materialistic
as we

(it was a pond)
a lake

8

each of us
before, each

    after

nouns

9

Assurance of grasping
at that edge

peering into
pulsating orifices
with a finger, 
tracing muscle crimson-ringed flesh – 

not to regret, 
exactly

The tank empties

As climax
"the white dots along the edges"
often begins

in a perverse image

love (what we see),
our negative
feelings recast,
what word?

"This is all," drifts unaware

– the opposite of naming
unless naming were

a mass exodus
in the general direction
of hole

Near accident
petrified, carved

10

Bits of intelligence float

"I've no language
to explain"

The mind swallows brine,
sees itself free, gasps

Salt
Four Fragments

Stephen Potter

I

mythopoetic lyric.

his hand never traced
such delight

writing on the back
with tongue

a wild crown of laurel convinced
divinity and light.

what god does not come at night?
how can there be divine touch

without darkness words
left scrawled in pitch.
what comes back
comes back in battle language

a pincers movement a pinch of others' footsteps.

echoes always follow
an original narcissism.

the body booklike
in sleep speaks

of encirclement strategies
just out of reach.
hard to hide
a hundred boys in his hair

with seaweed and claws
and salt thoughts.

tattooed currents spell
a table of contents

protean boys
with their fists

full of feathers
raised in anticipation.
demigods my rivals mute ambition
over words and men.

the impulse to fly to melt wax
appeals.

leave the greaves
at the door.

all the boys are freezing
and the monster huffs in the maze.

stacks of books.
the smells of decay and desire

feel a way along these walls
teasing teasing out.
Dear Em,

Even if a woman penetrates a compass, she errors not in uterus – she errors in Rome. Only the raw and the cooked reveal the menace: the peel of onion and motive within a city disguised by prefix. Her manner implies frenzy there on the cellar step because the cortex traces the swerve of phosphorus blue. I see her wrestle in retina. He becomes almost all, a bridge from premise to technique. But here in the hallowed, a passport stamp to a type of Eden, we prop the density of ovaries onto turning tricks. Can her frame be a syllogism for bruises? For the masquerade of division? Indigenous as a verb, we spell the word. Proof – of our androgyny. Proof – of the complex error in combustion. I wanted to continue the kinship, just as decimals obtain simulacra. She is an engine adjacent to our nerve with the forum and senate dispersed. Clearly; had I known, I would have taken a picture of her grave, an alternate, less linear game.

In immersion we are extinct, though we still predict the outcome.
Dear Em,

We are left, then, with a degree of cyanide humor. This is why, he said later, a man who genuflexes through the usual nebula is nothing to write home about. Everyday there are more nuclei as if that somehow explains why Brecht is not our Beckett. When you visit I will play the parts of the film he liked best, as a wide action has no width. Particularly the scene where the turntable skips. Particularly the scene* where the women wore yarn both sexual and arch. Can you see the center of our discourse is not parallel? That nautical behavior is overstated? That geology is the decline in the script? Or, every year we depict ourselves as convection with the dates built in. These days our sentences get cut in the middle and organize us to their architecture.

When morning came, it was not impossible.

* An ad libitum mad liberal with clitoral texts—hyper and analogic.  
  Umbilicus cussing the umbra w/o under wire.  
  Areola a la marinara,  
  sans morale  

  and plenty.
Kind Bouquet: A Love Poem

Chris Pusateri

for Gertrude Stein

What do I lean upon?
The word.
I said it so much.
I cannot say it often enough.

Do doubt what is not mentioned.
Do blot that which bears no resemblance to me.

We keep paper after it is done.
After we are done, paper is all that’s left.
So perfect, yet so strange.
Any moment, the lights will flicker.
The mistaken admiration of rain for sun.
Oh yes.

Skirting gently the junket of print.
An afterimage.
More and louder.
What I say is my way of laughing.
Astonishing.

Literal spectacles: take them and break them.
A dollar, ten dimes, twenty nickels, so many pennies.
Believe in what exaggerates.
Believe in what proliferates.
What whispers.
What whistles.
What pronounces badly.
Oblige me.
I hear your inquiry pushing tenderly.
A markable petition.
A remarkable repetition.
Count instead hats or lilacs.
Pluck a lilac and stick it in your precedent.
Stick a lilac in your president.
Watch him scream.
I rather like flowers.
Anything planted in soil.
Like today.
It grows and grows.

You laugh, heroically resigned.
Restless for next time.
A rose is figurative.
Please me endlessly.

What do I lean upon?
Grow green upon?
Upon the word.

I cannot say it often enough.

Often enough I cannot say it.
Red Seaway

Genya Turovskaya

1

There were claims of groundwater. Animal life ceased to exist on the crater's rim.
Like nowhere else on earth, poets, devoted to the exploration of Mars, escaped the ravages as small creatures of the Ordovician sea.
We proceed to the north magnetic pole like an ash-gray signature, the blow and its shock wave. Our passionate footprints converge, fracture lines through this polar desert.
There is enough oxygen for breathing and dreaming of Mars.

I've got a toothbrush packed, a heartbeat.
Like grains of flung sand, the snow begins to fall.

2

 Everybody feels like an astronaut here.
 Keeps a fist in their pocket.
Monotony freezes the hope for the rumored bodies of standing water. Though I have never seen the canals I have no doubt that they are there: parallel lines, shallow seas, rock rims like worn molars. Eyes fixed on the craters, map in hand, I will not stumble.

Dulled by the cold, I remove my glove to confront the wind.
These fingers spring out of nowhere.  
On Mars, they were hieroglyphs, thin oases of life.  
The slanting wind turns cold.  
I crawl inside the rock,  
the shelter of its cracks. The poets say, We come from Mars.  
It is plausible enough, but is it true? Maybe they are  
Naked-eye astronomers.  
Where are their large instruments? 

The satellites are too low on the horizon.  
Utopia was no less a forest of rocks.

Half-buttoned, exposed to the blast,  
we climb up the crater to replace the flags.  
The sky is dried milk. Beneath its surface,  
the midnight sun. Inundated by volcanoes, we continue  
onward through the dusky regions, uncork champagne bottles  
with one bold stroke. We've been down the road  
of disappointment before.

The troublesome poets have camouflaged themselves as rocks  
Attuned to the beauty of Mars, the wind dies down.

There is no wind. Hordes of fractured rocks.  
Could it once have been this way on Mars?  
The air has arranged itself into stratified layers,  
a dust load of wide gray planes.  
Lake bed sediments, dolomite and granite  
glisten like water, the incubator of life.  
The machine is a bundle of wires. The poets  
(lowly microbes) have fallen silent. Consoling myself,  
it occurs to me that this task is beyond my means.

Late on that final evening I make the trip to Mars.  
My left hand falls to the ground.
Six Haiku

Christopher Stackhouse

The Sacred History of the Earth

proto-nebula
love, fire, and light in a tomb
two frogs fuck us all

Darky

like squid ink color
octopusarian mouth
double self conscious

Breastwork

parapets protect
but oblate a throbbing heart
be vulnerable

Untitled

ramparts conjunction
so words can’t rub up again(st)
themselves anomalies
**Saw**

circled, positioned
in the center cinema
death of the elite

**Untitled**

particalized cell,
your brother is your sister
god told the lovers
from *Solve For: 4 pieces*

**Jill Darling**

swirl clay. tread lingo. plasticware verges

a negotiation of blood

during this phase friends may be neglected

mental layers

*full moon, also known this month as the black calves, cool, fruit, and – because this year it is the full moon nearest the autumnal equinox – harvest moon*

yes, divided by layers

is one art more important than another?

magnify impulse

layers divided by blood and not blood

at that time it was impossible to know

layers minus intention

lingo

your art or mine

magnify bliss argue a beaded moment
will not solve for intrigue. sorry to be ambiguous but you see one can only go on for so long without commentary. i had a teacher once who was large. round. temperamental. how did we know she shouldn’t be mean? i never learned to multiply. not properly. twelve times seven times it was about this time we began to be aware of the world. politics were changing. three times nine we ate spam. often. i picture spam sliding out from the can. i’m wondering about the dog. when he moved away. he said my name sometimes in a way peculiar. times four times four times twelve i suppose i was better at writing in cursive. we watch sanford & son and have no issues. a social commentary. there were only 2 black kids in school. times two times more what was not to love. we all came from different parts of town. in front of the house was a spot for making mud. we covered ourselves. times ran around the street. six ate mud. times put mud in our hair. we were rebels with mud. eleven plaid skirt navy sweater or summer our shorts were stained. with mud times awful fabric. homemade handed down we were all ugly. loved mud.
a.
mud crunches eyelids.
in what park do you play?
is this your particular swing?

*carrie smith who possesses a substantial, resounding voice, is paying tribute to the late gospel singer rosetta tharpe.*

in 1981 chris evert lloyd was asked how she felt about tracy austin.

is remaking history. women have. (dividing the sum of fragmentation.) you can interpret. (place the numbers in a row and count.) (simple calculation.) (or an inverse hypothesis.)

on pavement speckles of a dead bird.

b.
licking. grains. in 4th grade soccer was power. chased boys back.
by that time i was in love. he was a piano player. he never knew my name. i’m sure we read about geography. the revolutionary war. began to make up stories.

*miss seitner figured in daydreams or semi-delirium, in which i traveled off between whoops.*

not knowing how to put them on paper.

c.
skill accounts for 2/3 of execution. all in the wrist. execution of.
bones of a bird. remaking history. factor in fat in a medium sized coffee. minus spice. european appeal. melted clay signifies lemon. (invent a denominator the answer is variable.) minus steam. combat ink and draw.

d. trickle down pocket book change donate change a cup of ten please spare change.
how to re collect

traveling, remember this city, a many colored palate.

an intended choir

at 16 there is no vocabulary.

moment

(1988)

minus

for years to come.

beaded

forgetting, nuance of, everyday.

intend bliss
intend verges
Now;” or never or can’t be…. “this question”, now that “was easy”, maybe two easys for the price of one, I remember when it wasn’t the other day and there was someone over there, right on that spot, it was one of those lead moments, “a day in the life” or written as if an owner’s manual. “Built for,” constructed by and here to serve the ones we love “obvious members of,” but the wrong number: ‘is this …?’ ‘no and don’t you ever call again,’ or it was the right number in reverse, 27.4 million pounds of distorted meat, instead of destroyed meat, in reverse, “considering the Order,” which was arbitrary, is arbitrary, must be arbitrary, and completely without any proper neckware but a call to order, please, “of the Tribe of Elevation.” with a cleaver and a gnat of verbs we mount the block print and, “As it was considered an underscore” drove the rest into the lot-o-mirth, … glory be to the hell-hall and may the mighty spirit of groucho marx prevent us from a repeat syntax armageddon “of The Good Life Society Ltd.”

to have existed somewhere just about here not long after the other ones came and left, claiming to have invented the 4’ 33” of silence, long before the john cage fraternal order came to own and all silence. “AD.” “and I” and before that “came” esp., et al’s and fac that we are cond col of the crt so nb thegigo dacrim cpiauxbf mfa’s and tgif Lt’s who freq frwy’s and fx env’s “to grip” “s’t “wit” here to and “it.” “Wit.” wit or without it, “It was something Wt for” a bit-o dinner for four or a chicken pot pie made for “the clan’s voodoo hoodoo,” after “of” “which the four Horseless”, all taxi drivers stood and looked at all the “Wonders.” “As” if one was the other’s assumption which “they opposed” as anything to do the the answer ‘all of the above – or none of the rest.’ so, the lords, and ladies of the near east end stopped doing drag, and became other people’s people and sat and wondered “of the Comet and” other parts. “the fall” came much much later, “of”ten as a reminder of “the empire.” stokes out part 50.

“I came to grips.” at around age ten or so, maybe a line of a diVerent order, it was during the moon landing “& messiness was understood” as something dirty, something you only do if you are sick and caught in deep clots of blood “as almost important” as the real answer. “The answer” to my future blindness should have been foretold not by tea leaves sent “to the Brigadeer” of family matters, and “Everlasting.” demigod on my block, but by the hair on my hand. “The House” was silent, as I would show up for dinner and try to hide my hands and have trouble opening the cans “of Armore” condo-
lence ham. or the time we all went to "The King of" burgers and every one stared as I put mustard on my thing, it was as if I was king "Kong Co-op" of all mines, waiting for fay wray. "The way" I got help was when on these special days "the letter" of all letters "arrives and we" or I, depends on the moment "opened them" it depends on the moment, and "almost" as I could "quickly" say; 'sei nicht so grausam, bleib.' something else was to happen as "though I admit" now how "quickly" it "sounded like": fuhrt mich nich in versuchung ...' I meant get the "quicksilver" tooth brush "and our" souls will be saved. at that moment "bikes fell", I jumped "apart" from the rest, "quite easily" I might add. "This was the question" I had "alluded to. It was" as "easy" as nichts..
Three Poems

Dana Ward

A Beautiful Address

What is the "after-life" you ask?
and all I can say it's not here, that's for sure

— ANNE WALDMAN

the name of the houseband in heaven is jasper
a lamp rocked away out of use
& things always fall in the eyes from its ceiling
white hollowed out, blue hollowed in
if its contour could fall like a stick from the throat
i could set up antennae around it & hope
would have the warmth a cathode has
warm w/ unformed pictures.
dearly, the pictures we miss most even
open unslowly on some lapsed delay
like the Passion were painted in sea-air & slept
sick, making dusk a botched mission
rest would fuse anchor to warm yards of air
some made of whale-bone & floating away
others too stunned to be answers
god stood up about us & mellowed as fruit
all of which surfaced in Kinsey reports
restored w/ the rest of our senses
“how sweet to have breathed, as lamb to have seen
& touch, a retiring bolt” Even a freshly bailed
classroom can fill, w/ nightingale, orange trees,
blue cornflower tide. The desk chairs organized,
fleeing in pairs. All of them burned, each sick w/ joy.
The Works & Powers Expansion Act

For Brandon

If
there’s no burst of permission
no
hidden wince in the cup held together
what, sans duress
is coming connected
to the oak full of locust
shells
& these finches
flying w/ effort
familiar from need
where the hate of employment
is verdant
choosing lights finally
more tender than real
a pilgrim fluorescence
in fabulous dark
builds truancy parks
in impervious places
so the trace quarks
like rose-seed
are easily crushed

If
the reverie breaks in waist high grass
perfectly sprained
like the nice June future
is never a verb like
‘Aquatained quarters’
the borders recede
into May out of rent
where Dimeatap sine waves
were seasonal valence
& salience
wary from make-believe order
warmed in the brain
like a very small toaster
like a small toaster oven
like a small piece of toast
set off w/ the finches
In Your Daylife the Spaceship

The sun hasn’t fallen asleep
in your body
we’ve made a beautiful
stop of that warmth
felicitous transport
w/ off planet access
flown w/ out reasoning pieces
In your dream life a sweetness
destroyed our society
leaving us gracious
requesting more sweetness
where the horror of seeing
innumerable sugars
explode in our sleep
w/ new grief.
the littlest structures
concurrently freak
& erupt into shelter
You understand by
sloping a kettle
from buckets to
frigates come true
in resistance
flags faintly persist
in anatomy flight
in soft increments
vacates the shoulders
in your daylife the spaceship
will not say goodbye,
it is empty of blush
like nitrous, & lost
whereas once it advanced
a celeste past the moon
in transit to difficult
earth, full of frost.
Six Poems

Africa Wayne

more being. more hours.
nothing sleeps in an open world.
gates arrive. gates leave.
colder in the balloon of a serious life.
afraid of old men and being propped up.
sunlight sets out on a luminous landscape.
no sleep in the garden. only tossing.
she leaves me left with re-sewn seams. puckered and uneven. an obvious affliction. besides the whining there are weeks to win over. bicycles to forage. plywood to fashion. all suitable discoveries steeped in grief. all remnants of a work and the call to be well. well is a manner of speaking. speaking a manner of going. going somewhere. well worked and well done.
below the constellations there
are streetlights. unlike alone a
neighborhood. balleted between
garages. regal in their rows. further
deep a basement. measured space
for miniatures. unlocked and nearly
open. small castles gather for the pile.
flaming candelabra. gaudi glee.  
I say your smile nightly.  
we were giddy once. fifteen  
minutes meant we’d made it.  
past plain soldiers who  
watching over us in service  
meant no real harm.
hummingbird and not this violin.
large beneath a maple. she is
ample. tiny queen. velvet
indiscretion.
in direction.
rodrigo says

corn talks to mothers
and yes shallow graves
are better than weak frames

locusts eat what they land on
we are more like branches
than butterflies

rodrigo wants this story

in the horn of the red bull
in a place untouched by rust
is the love of a modest hand
from Matins

Barbara Maloutas

Conspue

Breathing as focus. Four days left of breath. Only.

Sorry. It’s fine. That which does us in.

A crisp and lively dialogue holding an embryo. Taking out philosophy. Holding may be adequate.

That there is no abiding unity and all is many and in motion. Per contra, per force, per my last memo. More or less ready at mouth.

I guess the women. There is no room at all for doubt.

Bearing the bluest eye.
Annatto

Three times the boy with the gun to his head announces his intentions.

Pruning geraniums is not essential at all, nor enough of native. And when a seed exceeds the language take to wearing it.

Low and behold, the engineered scent of rose. See how we are trashing paradise.

Sometimes even eating the yellow smear.
Pannier

A lot of time passes, probably years. Knowing nothing of when I started.

That dabbling in speech extends dying. Except in the case of corsets and gossip.

What’s above descends. Tenderly in his arms you burn up.

Just outside the garden, leaves burning.
Bedeger

The flower or a cup. One or the other. Seem typically human.

Sail in a hollow wind. A thread to determine radius.

x may be equal. A violet, a piece of sky. Some of them seem even to arise from the body. Take away from certainties.

Without getting caught. One language into the same. The excellence of reason is a thing apart.

If a flight of termites demands a response.
Lancinate

Bones of the foot take support. She questions the size. Catechism schooling aside. Children don’t develop boils anymore.

Where they come from. The skin is an organ. Am I right. How so. After all. How so.

Getting lost in a hollowed stone. And the pastoral chirping of birds over flow of water and traffic. No sign.

Just because cars no longer have running boards. The wooed. Faux. Feeling movement in a foot. Behind a foot.
from Plunged

Michael Ives

Plunged (with gulls)

returned as fast
as was all
the warm year drove
down to that horrible water
looked away
no shame more
for that
I gave you the dying
year held
its face under
water for someone
eyes full of coasts
beyond water someone’s
words gone
gone into the end
less wave
Plunged  (the question un-honeyed)

tell how they decided it was to turn away that you cannot believe they will hold to some one of these permissions folded into their accounts their before leans heavily upon you give forth a yes with an end requires the memory they need to keep away from you stay away convince yourself that to follow them out of their hand will take you into them where their decency can hide from you if you are determined to sink into the things they forget but once in this world you rise out of their path toward something else of the forgotten tell that they remembered by approaching it already arrived before the rest you can tell them should they be near enough shout that there are more and prove them true these pieces of how they want to determine what has happened begin to look more like a net with every word you are more and more the remainder of what has happened to them much is worn into pieces through however many grim unending nights this is their price that you have chosen to go in search of them becomes a way of thinking against any act in this world will be another of the animals that they husband having its own name moreover and as you move away from it herein the presumed essence as you mean to give the essence to something by naming it other than the word that it is the other thing and essence in one by forgetting that there must be two words has been thought that there are two when you are able to conjecture one might have sufficed was their essence refusing the question un-honeyed as they hunted their word
Blind Spot

== Candace Pirnak

For and After Ralph Eugene Meatyard

— world as darkness,

forward-looking to a single eye——

grotesques falter,

shyly drawing their faces near

——and don their solid masks.

matter-of-fact decay

( of his body )

replaced by a pickax

( or just the unknown )

materializing through the ruined wall,

unaware of the intruders.
half seen, their heads

jut the strong diagonal

——separate by association,

some dark, the others reverse,

brightly lit

——a kind of mask.

the young girl remains classical;

her pose

frames the schematic upward:

the girl looks up

( as do their bodies )

enduring where flatness prevails

——heads too large,

pumpkin-like, their

mismatched limbs

one tames.
eroded flood of surface——

opacity with the following exception:

the horizon shows through.

hedges of selves——

( their positive selves )

lurch ordinarily

——out of ordinary time.

luminous

cemetery nudes;

their landscape

meant interior.
"light on water"

experienced through glass

———hooded

by the human eye;

"child as bird"

( above

the corn

strewn floor )

captured with noose.
hybrid note:

(—diabolical

state of childhood

touches a hovering,

circular thing.)

the god of things—

few vistas:

shadow fleshed out

by the surrounding grey.

a calligraphic looking through

"people or things that were

people or things"

—excess

and end of growth—.
until death,

the world-as-seen

wrote the image ( of the ground

resting ( on the ground .

weed stalks——

——invited tree;

above the ridge

his face turns back——

appropriate coda :
over limitless

pitch, the child's

shirt and pure helmet
crest the imaginary

prose of the wall

blurred,

the fingers lost,
becoming full space

——bird as world,

entering world——
I am writing you all this from another world, a world of appearances. In a way, the two worlds communicate with each other. An impossibility. Legends are born out of the need to decipher the indecipherable. Memories must make due with their delirium, with their drift. A moment stopped would burn like a frame of film blocked before the furnace of the projector.

— Chris Marker

For the record, there is an image. Sight unseen or sound unheard? Having heard too much to say—Sans Soleil. Anagram of an actual silence. Polarize & solarized. Details inhabit habitat and place. Particularizing the everyday or everyday particularizing? Obscure the commonplace and the commonplace obscures. Cut to hiatus—then departure.

If forgetting is memory’s lining, sleep the lining of wakefulness. People on the ferry. Susan Howe suggests that these passengers appear corpse-like, casualties of a “past or future war.” Sleep plays a major role in La Jetée, as the protagonist is sent “back in time.”

He remembers
conjures
haunted by
images of a woman who may (or may not) be from his past – a possible past. Possibly passes. Train divides the frame. As Gregg Biglieri has written, *La Jetée* simulates sleep insofar as the dissolves between select shots resemble a person shutting and opening their eyelids. To merely have photographic stills, instead of “reality” (24 frames a second) also calls attention to a somnambulistic preoccupation – but what must the film wake from? or to? (A) historical lining the compulsive-disjunctive. Memories of someone someone desire(d)?

The narrator says, “In the 19th Century, mankind had come to terms with space, and that the question of the 20th was the co-existence of different concepts of time.” En route to Japan, images of men and women aboard a train – rails parallel. Anticipation points between two departures – destinations arrive.

Then the eclipse

ellipsis

shutter – cutting through

Threshold of document. Lining the burn itself. Form pressed from the beginning. Begin again. The silent splice unnerving historical particulars. Was the man sent back? In the scene of the couple praying to their lost cat, the narrator says “to repair the web of time where it was broken.” And what has caused it to be broken, in Marker’s time, in the world’s time? The events surrounding World War II, unspeakable yet pronounced. A sense that daylight doesn’t lead, enlightenment wouldn’t follow wakeful logic – logistics. As Cadava points out, Benjamin is all too aware of the problem of wakefulness, which was also a word meaningful to the ideologies of National Socialism.

“post”: “to post the name of a ship missing or lost.”

Towards. (1530) Nicolaus Koppernigk challenged Ptolemy’s picture of the universe (accepted for 1400 years or more) by mapping anew – sun at the center. Sunless. Sol. Suppose anything thrown into the air would land far in the West. Marker moving East. Magnify.

Unable to find a suitable lens (lentil in Italian, after the shape of the glass) Galileo grinding his own – magnification proportion – the curve of the concave to the convex (more distant and opposing) lens. Face focused – framed and shot.

Post: Patson (of Ireland) saw the first spiral nebulae clearly through a telescope. One year following, Neptune was seen for the first time. My thought:
“Marker”
a dead letter – his “selves”
misplaced “posts” in time –

Post: cards (ripped cords) letters to the future. From and toward as in Dickinson’s fragments – drafts of poems are arrows of time, virtualities, contingencies – where one steps to next – is the next draft – the becoming of writing inextricable from that of a “self” – from one journeying time and leaving traces: marks.

Or: my memory is the (post) time.

(Post) Post: 1851

Melville published *Moby-Dick*, and soldiers returning from the Mexican War could conceal their blindness through the insertion of a glass eye. The gaze returned through one lens. At the close of *Moby-Dick*, Ishmael and the whale are the only two survivors after the wreck of the Pequod. Ishmael the voice of testimony, Elijah of prophecy. Signing (inscription) marks death, and Queequeg’s own predication is described by Ishmael when he notes that the harpooner’s body wastes away to, “nothing but his frame and his tattoos.”

Coffin caulked and carved by the vessel’s carpenter. In the wake of disaster (detritus) death’s vehicle. Finally, it is Ishmael’s body – lone mark upon the sea open, a buoyant text. The engrammatological significance of the whale’s scars are the only other mark of testimony to surface from the wreck, surviving Ahab. Ishmael alone to interpret these scars. As David Farrell-Krell asks, “What then about the *graphics* of both *typography* and *iconography*?”

Melville’s Ishmael writes, “this is but a draught of a draught.” Your alibis. Position only. Vision larger than perception. Marker: to paraphrase, film is a blueprint for the future.

   spiral repel:
   is love?
   generosity?


   Sequence. Rung.

The acoustic images of *Sans Soleil* are somehow generous – recorded in “the cadence of the heart.” The children passing rocks in West Africa, parades various in Time’s multiplicities open generously in these durations. Not only
“descriptive” but also demonstrative – perhaps simulating insofar as these durations are experienced by the viewer qua witness qua participant (as a ritual of watching).

A spiral is a generous source, as if ascend by helicopter to be at a place above where one could witness the precise situation of a body among the landscape from a distance: from the exteriority of an other’s gaze, an aerial or Olympian advantage. Many have wondered how cultures made earthworks before aerial photography. The fact of the spiral jetty – Marker is a contortionist of time, bending the boundaries between history and memory.

Implicated in this, no doubt. As Poe’s reader, who is the receiver of the bottle, and possibly the only one privy to the poster’s death. Lanzmann’s viewer – confronted by interviews of survivors, victims and witnesses where their faces (dis)figure prominently in the frame.

The narrator says, “Who says time heals all wounds. One should say, rather, that time heals everything except the wound.” I have always read this in terms of a traumatic structure of history, where what marks time are events that can not be assimilated by a chronological concept of historical time. Time is marked by timelessness and the timelessness of time inhabits those wounds.

Benjamin notes in his “Theses on the Philosophy of History” such days are marked by the Calendar as ones when everything changed, when a linear path of time was set into question. The time of a Messianic or revolutionary promise. On commemorative days, rituals are enacted. My memory is drawn back to the priestesses of a Japanese archipelagos, who the narrator claims are the keepers of the island’s memory. What strikes me about the rituals in Sans Soleil is their predatorial violence. Dolls being burnt. Children celebrating the first days of spring beat sticks against the ground as a fire burns in the center of their circle. Fire, in particular, seems to have a unique place in the film: the title of the film is “sunless” – named after a score by Mussorgsky, so we are told.

Sunless, though the sun is mythically associated with fire. As Susan Howe, and perhaps others, have already recognized, much of the footage from “The Zone” is “solarized”: the name for the negativizing and saturating effects Hayau produces with the help of his synthesizer.

The way he conceives of the film (presumably Sans Soleil) that will be finished in 4001 when he has amassed every image ever generated on a strip of black film leader, resembles Bergson’s distinction between the Past and History.
Following Eliot’s epigraph is found-footage of three children accompanying one another on a celestial hillside in Iceland in 1965.

This “illustration” of happiness is an isolate image, affixed at the edge of the film. The narrator says “One day I’ll have to put it all alone at the beginning of a long film with black leader. If they don’t see the image of happiness, at least they’ll see the black.” A military aircraft drops beneath the deck of a battleship.

Marker is interested in precisely that which falls beneath, the residual aftermath. Marker shares with Stevens and Oppen also,

\[
\text{the (pre)} \\
\text{sentation of the}
\]

\[
\text{image(ination)} \quad \text{time travel (verse) sing}
\]

the gaps between time(signs). Imagination – that reconnoiter of history in the crags between invisible matter and memory. Channeling time through a microscopic lens – focus (fuse) the arbitrary, incidental, the incident objects. Gone now:

Chambers of historical (mnemonic) compression (elision). That is, the black is the virtual. Blank, ground zero, from which an image or aggregate series may emerge –

\[
\text{envelop.}
\]
Andrew Joron: Please come in. A room has been prepared for our conversation. Here we can take shelter, if only for a moment, from the heat of the desert and the reports of war. This domed interior, with its blue wash of latticed light, doubtless will be familiar to you. But I’ve done some rearranging: as you see, the place is empty except for an urn of rather potent tea, two chairs, and a single book: Harrow by Elizabeth Robinson.

My apologies: the book does look odd, and very like a cylinder – the force of my reading seems to have transformed it into a scroll of pseudoepigrapha. Allow me to restore its original appearance [waves his hand].

I admit my reading was influenced by a note that introduces “As Beto­kening,” the sequence of poems at the heart of Harrow. As Robinson explains, this text was written during “a protracted theological education,” when she became “entranced” by the language of “scriptural texts, apocrypha, pseudoepigrapha.” When we look into this poem – truly the centerpiece of Harrow – we are looking into a condition of belatedness. Here we find the latest inscription upon a surface already black with the writing of others. As Robinson confesses, her relation to the tradition of faith is “uneasy; an erotic uncertainty.” Does she, in her poetic practice, wish to transform this blackness of tradition into blankness, into the innocence of original Being? She mentions her attempt “to don tradition like a cast-off costume,” only to find herself “walking in the world unclad. Naked and uncomfortably doubled.”

Now that we are sitting face to face, with this book between us, we too may find ourselves uncomfortably doubled. If so, it is only appropriate: the heart of Harrow itself is involved in a play of alterities and polarities. Indeed, Robinson allegorizes her spirituality as a set of unruly twins who “refuse to see” their reflection in one another. And even when the poetic word “hunts out its double in order that their gaze may be shared,” Robinson argues that “That reciprocity is a kind of cancellation.” The poem can succeed only in “suggesting a small trueness between the converging, diverging vibrations.”

Can this “small trueness” represent anything but an impoverishment, a denial of poetic (and perhaps religious) aspirations toward the absolute? It seems that poetry – especially the poetry of faith – is not to be produced by an act of ecstatic expenditure. Instead, the poetic subject denies itself to the point of splitting in two: the self of tradition enters
into agonistic struggle with the self of transgression. Poetic praxis is viewed as an internal contest of wills. Presiding over this contest is an authoritative, judgmental voice that scolds the contestants for misbehaving (“they shouldn’t be fighting, little hooligans”) and for failing to exert a will that transcends mere willfulness. “Sinners” are said to become “radiant” by “willing transcendence”; likewise, “Poetry makes faith out of willed attention.”

The reward for this act of self-discipline may be scant (“a small true ness”). But the internal contest itself seems to take precedence over its less than satisfying outcome. What is more, the will has no hold on the subject apart from this eroticized struggle, a struggle marked by “tenderness” as well as “unbearable constraint.” As Robinson puts it, “Faith and skepticism chain me to my will, foster a generative ambivalence.”

Is writing then a disciplinary instrument, a harrow whose teeth inscribe the ground with lines for cultivation? And what kind of life springs from this generative discomfort?

Patrick Pritchett: Andrew; the wonder and power of faith is not that it abolishes uncertainty but that it plunges headlong into its abyss as into the element where it most will thrive. A harrowing descent, indeed, because it requires the sternest skepticism to uphold and safeguard it. To dare those depths, the nakedness of that free-fall, is to enter and perhaps achieve a profoundly generative moment. It is, as Robinson writes in Part xvi of this remarkable poem, “to commit silence,” the apophasis of the poem:

Now to commit silence.    A drink of anything
for the thirsty.    Nought. Nought to be distributed

anywhere. Now to impute the feminine onto these four letters. Onto.
Cones and rods, these are soots caught in the eye.
Unblinded, and here a drink of water would desecrate the dead body with love.

That earliest infancy I ingest moves in unison with each sound. The opposites of the war that can only imply a drink of mourning water.

So, “ecstatic expenditure” is to be abjured, yes. The utopia of the spiritual poem will not locate itself in the unbridled proclamation, in the alleluias and hosannahs of an unmediated idea of presence, but rather, in the interstices, the spaces between such code words for glory, by which I mean some kind of “radiant-going-beyond.” Glory, the poem seems to say, is so much more difficult to reach now.
To impute the feminine onto Ontology, as Robinson aims to do here, is a daring, subversive enterprise, one not without its pitfalls. “Onto” = ousia = ywvh. The quest of a feminine idea of spirit seeking out those four letters reminds me of the maps of the world before circumnavigation, when an Edge stood for blankness and abyss, for dragons—all figures of the feminine. Into that space, that ground, the poems of Harrow want to dive, want to sink their teeth. Can we call this adventure anything but erotic?

The dead body lies desecrated with love by a drink of water. What replenishes, disturbs. True renewal, true fidelity, will come at the price paid by Antigone, who would not let her brother go unburied or unwept. In “a drink of mourning water,” the old oppositions find a new commonality, and a new economy of expression. That economy, I would suggest, derives from the abiding sense of loss that seems to act as one the major engines of the poem. It’s a loss that enables—not just its own articulation, but a whole new range and register of poetic utterance that is nothing less than “the self-criticality of its cry.”

But now I’m not sure I’ve addressed your questions and concerns with this haunting of a poem, much less the poem itself. If the tradition to which Robinson alludes in her Note to “As Betokening” is both tempting and no longer available as a viable strategy, then the poet who wants to speak spirit today must find another way to do so. As she writes in Part viii: “her ‘names of the patriarchs’ are not members of the soul.” It is around the aporia of those names that this poem circles and circles, searching for what she calls, in the Note, those “unexpected hinges” that lead past the mutually co-producing figures of Christ and the Apple.

But what a hard ground this harrow strikes! The poem begins with an appeal to “the system of apostrophe,” which of course is not a system, cannot be a system, yet is a system inasmuch as it has been commodified by centuries of dreary sermons and religious sentimentality, and is a trope, yes, but a trope that wants to refute its tropicality in the overpowering annihilatory presence of its cry. We have gone way beyond even Rilke’s question at the outset of the Elegies here. It is no longer a matter of who would hear the cry; but is the cry even any longer available as a means for registering the poverty of the poem?

ANDREW JORON: [A long pause.] I have been listening for the cry. I am still listening.

[Another long pause.] My ears are no good for this work. We have before us a text inscribed upon a tradition of other texts, representing only the tattered vestiges of something—was it a cry?—no longer original, no longer present. We seem to be concerned here with writing that silences, and also with writing silences.

Perhaps we ought to stop up our senses to approach the meaning of Robinson’s words. Doesn’t Robinson assert that “rods and cones...are
soots caught in the eye”? Doesn’t this mean that the instruments of perception are impediments to becoming “unblinded”? Is this not a Gnostic denial of the (always already) “dead body,” which must not be “desecrated” by attempts to resurrect it with “a drink of water” or “with [bodily] love”?

If there is Eros here, it belongs to a series of “uneasy, uncertain” mediations, to the endlessly shifting differences of a body of writing.

All the time we were contributors, aghast in the cold, at the blankets we held around ourselves she understood as betokening her radiance.

We “contributors” blanket ourselves in the words of tradition, which protect us against the cold, yet (to follow Robinson’s syntactically odd construction) we are also “aghast” at the tradition, which the feminine spirit (previously described as uncomfortably naked) understands as merely “betokening” (not actually providing) “her radiance.” Later, Robinson emphasizes the “clash” between “a white object and a blank one.” Unwrapping the blankets of Western patriarchal tradition, we will find that true nakedness subsists, not in the whiteness of a pure object, but in the blankness of an erased one.

She then said, “I will tell you what the [word indecipherable] will not tie,” but her method of divination was, visibly, not proper. It was, again, a daughter who stood behind her face.

Indeed, a silence has been committed here, namely the silence of writing itself — which, as you say; necessitates a denial of “an unmediated idea of presence.” Robinson, with consummate skill, shows us the holes within a patriarchal tradition of sacred writing, (re)marking and inhabiting its silences.

These erasures, these lacunae, are to be welcomed, not abjured: for they are the openings of the spirit. It’s precisely these aporia that “impute the feminine onto these letters.” We must be careful not to essentialize the feminine here, though we may identify it as that agency which, in the canonical texts, has never received its authority.

By means of Robinson’s heretical unwriting, we are witness to a “desert that replaces the book / in astonished hydration of heaven.” Contradicting the senses (both literal and perceptual), “hydration” here is a form of redemptive erasure. Unwriting as denudation replaces the “book” with the “desert” of the unconditional: the space of the spiritual.

But now that the book itself has vanished, do we find ourselves in the position of Robinson’s “congregants” gathered before the icon? As she writes, “Perhaps what [we] are really viewing is each other.”

PATRICK PRITCHETT: Yes, yes, it is a writing that silences — that inscribes silence by writing. So that a very strange space opens up inside the poem here.
The sustained act of listening that these poems require, Andrew, that they force on us, compels us to re-consider what listening may be, what it asks of us, and how such poems as Elizabeth Robinson writes drastically alter, distort, and revise the attention we give to them. This, too, may be part of the heresy of her work, her sacred blaspheming, a severe undoing of meaning that works toward a form of grace, or rather, toward a form that allows grace to speak as the “otherwise” of language, its obverse, or negative, side, its kenotic anti-presence, that comes from outside, the impossible that is itself beyond signification, but also makes all signification possible. These are large claims to make for poetry after Derrida. But as he himself observes, speaking of Jabes, it the “caesura that allows meaning to appear.” The poems in Harrow are riddled with caesura (wounded by it, I want to say) – not as the prosodic gap, the space of a mid-line rhythm, but as a figure for speaking and non-speaking (the lacunae, yes) where a shift occurs – the spikes on the harrow of language, where the ultimate act of inscription is to undo the mark of the book. Harrow: meaning both to disturb the psyche and till the ground for planting. This is how spirit works in us, Robinson suggests.

And what a strange space it opens up, inviting us to a new notion of relationality that becomes available in our viewing of each other. A utopian space, almost. A place of astonishment.

Throughout this book, almost anywhere one opens it, a poem seems to be challenging that code or stricture that has disallowed the word “God” from poetry, so that to utter it now, as Robinson does, in the most rigorous and harrowing way, is to re-make the word, is to say it not as a reference to some fixed concept so much as a process for a radical self-discovery. For would not God be the ultimate Other? The Other beyond all others? And wouldn’t that name then always be the name given to a further self-naming? So that the name is always emptied out in pursuit of its deepest register and belonging?

Bear me with here. It’s not easy to speak of such things. There’s a clumsiness about such speaking that is the inevitable result of a desire to engage with ideas about spirit without resorting to pieties. But I think Robinson speaks of them as well as anyone now writing poetry is able. In “Entry for Song,” another multi-part poem, she discloses her plaintive urgency in somewhat more open terms:

Whatever you ask

will be

where foxes have holes.

And birds,
in this name for air,

will be given to you.

For you are benumbed by this ether

and your soul now resides

in season

at the right hand

of God, camouflaged

scrap on which to lay you head.

The address here has the sound of elegy. But read in concert with the rest of this poem, it seems clear to me that the speaker is addressing herself, almost posthumously, as it were, as the life of spirit must demand it, in a sense, must demand that the corporeal, to be fully present to itself, risk a going beyond itself

Here on

the ladder

cleft for me:

be of fog

the double cure.

The harrowing commitment to language is like the equally harrowing commitment to God, to an insurmountable distance that is also the most overwhelming closeness. How to survive it, except through the Magdelenean gesture of the poem, that constantly missteps in its efforts at adoration and even surrender?

Falling to my ear

on the insuring floor:

blanket
the forecast discloses.

Mopping with my hair
mistaken oil,
for his own
are all relative
where we tarry, little known.

As I try to parse these lines, I feel rather the need to submit to them instead. Their starkness holds an enigmatic comfort. It is the harsh comfort of a poetics devoted to a life beyond the visible, to a spirituality of plenum and void, to a life of aporia and uncertainty, rather than faith, and that turns toward it without embarrassment or apology. The powerful desire so alive in these poems is registered by the immediacy of their longing for a foundational recognition, and a condition of simplicity, that can only exist not by mitigating the tremendous complexity of its own position, nor the ambiguities of such a desire, but by affirming it, turn after turn. What is grace, Harrow asks, but the foreshadowing word for a presence we ache to pronounce, but which lies just beyond our power to say — until it says itself. This seems to me work of an incredibly courageous order. We shall not have begun here to exhaust its troubling mysteries.

ANDREW JORON: I've always prized the vanishing presence of “alter” within “alterity,” and of “alterity” within “altar.” [Opens his robes to reveal, not a human torso, but a wooden cabinet housing a pendulum.] Here is where I feel the rotation of the earth, which as you know is constantly slowing, thanks to the pull of the moon. Yet the moon itself is slowly spiraling away from the earth. It has the feel of Robinson’s God, pulling away into abstract space, slowing everything down to the speed of Ceremony.

I have counted five, and five only, instances where the name of God is used in this book of poems, all of them deeply ambivalent, if not ironical. It seems to me that Robinson’s strategy involves, not so much the rehabilitation of God’s name, but rather its deconstruction. Yet the very harshness of this harrowing confirms that “a spiritual life” maintains itself somehow beyond (not merely within) a deconstructive play of meaning. If affirmation is needed — and such is the aim of Magdalenian adoration — then nothing remains but to affirm the caesura, the negative space once inhabited by the signifier “God.” As Derrida himself has observed, deconstruction is distinguished from negative theology only by
the latter’s “hyperessentialism,” by a commitment to that absolute non-being capable of withstanding – or standing forth as – its own negation.

The formally dispersed bodies of these poems show how the poet is driven to wield, as the instruments of her harrowing, the splinters of a shattered totality. Nonetheless, all this breakage does not reflect a timeless, metaphysical condition, but a sociopolitical and historical one. By means of poetry, Robinson stages two critiques, both arising from, and participating in, the social struggles of our time: namely, the critique of patriarchy and the critique of totalizing discourse. But while many postmodern aesthetic practices are content to play in the midst of multiplicity, Robinson’s work – in opposition to schizoid *fouissance* – deliberately suspends faith’s fragments in a kind of force field. When even “grace” is found to be flawed (as Robinson declares in the book’s first poem, “The flaw of grace is proof”), a faith in / of aporias can be held together, however uneasily, only by an act of will.
As I write, ancestral voices are prophesying war, and I continue to read poetry and write it as though it were an imperturbable pleasure. James Schuyler’s 1965 poem “To Kenneth Koch” salvaged from some archive and brought to light in *The Germ #2* a few years ago, responds to Koch’s poem “The Pleasures of Peace,” which was conceived as an anti-war poem which doesn’t mention war. “To Kenneth Koch” is a light *bijoux* that, among other things, acknowledges that a cup of coffee is no less savorative in war than in peace. But what glitters is its fanciful *mise-en-scène*, the poet eavesdropping on a breakfast table argument among product labels:

“In other words what you are saying,” clattered Miss (1lb.) Yuban, peering yellowly into her cup, “is that there are also pleasures of war.”

“By no means,” affirmed the Marzo Maggio Medal on the Gold Medal coffee can.

Another poem that animates the picture on a product label is Ashbery’s “A Sweet Place” from *Chinese Whispers*: “How happy are the girls on the cocoa tin,” it begins. Who first thought of this charming practice? Was it Raymond Roussel, who, as Ashbery himself describes in the introduction to *How I Wrote Certain of My Books*, wrote long poems around the “tiny picture set in a penholder,” “the engraving of a band concert on the letterhead of a sheet of hotel stationery” and “a spa pictured on the label of the bottle of mineral water on the narrator’s table”?

“We should be home soon, / dearest, a dry hearth awaits us…” So “A Sweet Place” continues. At the end of the poem about the mineral water label, Roussel’s narrator contemplates a couple in the restaurant “still whispering things which can’t be overheard.” The urge to overhear what’s spoken in the enclosure of another’s paradise is what sparks the compensatory poem, a world imagined out muteness.

A paradise, whether of a product label or some couple’s imagined home, is that “sweet place” of unmediated and unalienated existence; perhaps from the past (the tiny picture set in a penholder supposedly resembled a beach where Roussel spent his childhood summers); perhaps the couple is one’s parents before one is born; perhaps paradise is origin itself. Within this charm of enclosed spaces, like that of lockets and cabinets, is a nostalgia.

And then there is that insufficiency, the insufficiency of any nostalgia, but particularly the nostalgia for paradise. The avant-garde forges the future
possible, not the lost past; and if paradise is origin, utopia is eschaton. Against nostalgia stands hope; against metaphoric, reliquary enclosures runs the metonymic poem of pure relations, open ends, new perceptions. Not “a sweet place,” this other kind of poem celebrates disorientation as the ecstasy of immanence.

But Ashbery goes on in “A Sweet Place” to ask: “What if I really was a drifter / Would you still like me?” The poem that ends, that closes off (or rounds off) after 20, 30, 40 lines may just be a node in the network, a temporary respite from a paratactic labyrinth of relations—relations that may lead to utopia, but do also require constant negotiation. In the sweet place that was Xanadu, war finally made an appearance on “fertile ground / with walls and tow’rs...girdled round.” The sunny domes of ice made a paradox of paradise. As in paradise so in pregnancy; which in French is enceinte (walled in), at the beginning of the formation of a subject—and, in the spirit of paradox, a nostalgia for hope.

Art loves an Annunciation, a prophecy. But it is hard to tell with whispers what direction they’re coming from: past or future.
ms, Michael Magee. (Spuyten Duyvil, 2003)

K. Silem Mohammad

Michael Magee has very weak pun control. In his new book ms, as in his last, *Morning Constitutional*, almost every poem is awash with the slosh of his verbal incontinence. (He should be wearing “Depunds.”) He takes endless pleasure in hunting the letter, rhyming us to death, committing random and senseless acts of *epizeuxis*, and otherwise choking his phonemic chicken all over the page. In addition to this semiotic superplus, Magee crams every inch of poem with high and low and middlebrow cultural references, allusions, and name-droppings: in short space, he invokes Albert Ayler, Ice-T, Wallace Stevens, Aphra Behn, Adrienne Rich, Richard Rorty, Groucho Marx, the Civil Rights Movement, and too many other polycontextual themes even to begin to list here. And somehow, it all *coheres*, or maybe “co-hears” is more like it: Magee has both ears to the ground (and the Plastic-Man image that you have to conjure in order to visualize such a feat is quite fitting), listening both to the receding hoofbeats of literary history and the oncoming roar of the runaway atomic train of postmodernity.

In “Body of Thought,” we are given a double disclaimer that eschews both epiphany and elegy, transcendental breakthrough and sentimental breaking down:

```
no words

worthian
high resolution on the
horizon or

la la
la la

meant of such....
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Although there may in fact be no high Romantic resolution in sight in this work, and no straightforwardly nostalgic lament either, Magee locates himself un-squarely in a space commensurate with the Wordsworthian/Emersonian/Whitmanian/Barakan etc. project of a poetic whose models and goals are public, hyper-egalitarian, raucously noisy. This work brings the outside in, mixes it up, and spits it back out again as a potent cocktail of theory-jive, trash-talking, free-association, and variously corrupted social texts. In doing so, however, it never leaves out the possibility of “literary” response, of an ideal reader or community of readers who can both dance
to the mindless funk and perform close readings that tease out a vast archival network of intertextual traces.

Magee is very much attuned to an aesthetic of stoopid: these poems are sometimes aggressively ill-wrought, like Bizarro-world artifacts whose parts determinedly refuse to contribute to anything like an organic whole or unified vision; instead, they strive for jarring inarticulacy, exaggeratedly awkward figurations, as in this stanza from “The Farmer and the Cowman Should Be Friends!”:

My name’s twice when I was what
Wilbur wasn’t. Don’t get me wrong.
Eyeball it and tell me you wouldn’t
Elbow ere Ana wobble’t on a
Cowbell of the jarhead will. The dragon
Fly’s a wallflower to the shit. The shit
Flies like the crow. The crow’s an artifact.

The fundamental constructive principle here is one of idiot perseveration, a zombified insistence on following chains of random signifiers down whatever blind trail they happen to blaze—e.g., via the soundplay of eyeball/elbow/wobble/cowbell, or the degraded free-associative gradatio of shit > flies > crow. Although these poems are not parodies, they share with parody the tactic of pirating forms from particular modes and skeletalizing them into grotesque (dys)functional reductions: the modes that Magee targets, moreover, are just as often contemporary and “experimental” as they are canonical and “traditional.” The result is that the book insists on the obsolescence of satire in a world that has normalized and subsumed the satiric gesture into the habitus of everyday discourse.

It would be misleading to give the impression that ms is nothing more than one aphasic act of anti-mimicry after another: as in the hip-hop and funk musical models that Magee so often draws on, stoopid becomes a potentially liberatory force, an expression of faith in democratic ideals, however degraded and erased those ideals have become. Like Superman’s Bizarro-world, the world of ms is stubbornly opposite to the dominant values of the mainstream, but somehow its exhaustive series of reversals results in a purity of commitment that constitutes its own moral integrity and even system of faith. In “Fragments for John Parker,” Magee writes:

“God makes ’em, God takes ’em”
– my dad

a totally insufficient thing
to say
except perhaps in context: as response
to the body
gone ass-backwards
for no known reason: “it just does that”
the rhetoric of what’s appropriate
a needle or a ray, concrete, prepositionless

Magee’s application of the ancient rule of decorum to the chronic condition of ass-backwardness from which we all now suffer results in a perfectly appropriate rhetorical stance, if a sometimes perversely ironic one. By all conventional standards of sense and taste, this book ought not to succeed in its goofily errant air raid on the articulate, but “it just does.” Uncle Mike is in the house.
Leaves: and their uses as nonsense
A chance outline for the consideration
of A. Goldsworthy’s work in southwest Scotland

Barbara Maloutas

Leaf, or loof, laub, lauf, and (etymologically) as far as lodge and lobby
Collect and/or divide leaves by color and kind:
Season and kind determine color. Harvest green leaves in the summer,
directly. (A leaf is an organ borne by the stem of a plant.) There are specific
weeks in autumn when the color or colors are most intense. Seasons
impose deadlines. Lungs are organs inside.

Color and leaves
Leaves of one color make bigger impact or distinction. The
multi-colored leaf is suitable for camouflage in context of
the untouched forest – itself, impossible. Temperature and
color are linked – in time.

Dry leaves
Ones of varying colors are difficult to handle as they tend to curl and blow
away. Moisture is a tool.

Wet (adj.) leaves
Wet (v.) leaves by adding water to a fresh autumn harvest. Wet
leaves can be applied to such locally found objects as rocks, boulders, fallen tree limbs or rivers.
Rivers are a particularly interesting bed.

A bed is a plane
Occasional turning pools
A river is contained
Linear movement
Energy patterns disturb linearity and are based in materiality
In flotation there may be immobility through anchoring
Quality of shadow depends on sunlight, depth, texture and
speed or lack of it

Ripples

Other Considerations
Moisture supports decomposition
The subject as transience
Problems as a good teacher

Leaves and their uses as multiples joined:
The use of thorns, grass stalks or other methods of joinery (such as
water) are necessary but not often lasting.
Joining may produce linear or specific and shapeless flats
Shapeless flats present the least distinction and may be mistaken as native. Specific flats can be extremely intrusive. Considerations of a new place and where touch begins. The craft can be learned and refined – with patience – over years.

Assistance happens:

Reasonable speed is vital. Helpers are essential. Once acquiring a reputation, these are easy to gather. There will be many who wish to be part of a record or trace of nature. There remains the question of whether an end is ever an end. A good camera is essential:

The single way to acquire a reputation (and therefore a name), is through recording projects from beginning to end or the end of recording:

- A presence in the frame during recording is not essential
- There is no other frame
- Editing shapes the narrative
- This is not about narrative

Records: memory, recollection, recognition, similarities in differences and differences in similarities.

A journal is a personal way.

A book:

- A book is a means of survival
- Thinking of equivalencies – there is no instant in nature
- A book may be controversial – aesthetics, a hurdle
  - Historical, but static
  - Discomforting, but distant
  - An untrustworthy attention to mediated nature

A collection of photographs:

- Objective work
- An array calls for a grid
- Without an overview, it may be randomness
  - Uncaptioned albums
  - Every chance is a new chance

Leaf Tourism:

There are specific weeks in autumn when the color or colors are most intense.

- Work quickly
  - Focus on the perception of time, while perceiving it

Seasons impose deadlines.

Referred to as the leaves are turning.
Oikos – house or dwelling
Economy and ecology
The illusion that an event exists
Good housekeeping: Keeping it from convention
In order to write
you must fall in love
with your own thought
every time.

— RAE ARMANTROUT,
from “Write Home”

That love the writer has for their own first thought is the problem. As a musician friend of mine says, “Who would stand in line to hear the London Philharmonic play something Beethoven never finished humming to himself over the morning coffee?” And yet poets and lovers of poetry, who are usually one and the same, line up and sometimes pay to hear far worse—the mutt genres, the hybrid poem-essays all too often sputter out into simple confusion, often because the writer has mistaken their lack of knowledge for subversive force. But if there is a power behind the blur, the best exploratory meditations usually evoke a tradition. They use knowledge as a point of departure. In such cases, old-fashioned ideas such as authorial intent, while certainly altered by all that post-modernism has given, remain useful. And yet there are these contemporary poets who rather blithely admit they have nothing to say, and then attempt to elevate such a position and their writing to a mild form of phenomenology. Writers like Clark Coolidge, but particularly the younger ones, openly equate revision with something faintly treasonous. There is the constant re-discovery of “chance operations” to produce text. But those who deny any notion of necessity, hoping to enact an idea like “free play” seem to suffer from a reaction formation: afraid of rigor and discipline, they affect freedom. A tremendous disservice to freedom itself since it is at most what Thorstein Veblen calls “a taste for exploit.” This is why they are content to write about the reading or writing process: it is nearly the only experience any of them have truly undergone. Very often in such work the mind takes privilege in this so-called philosophical poetry, regardless of its attempts to rid the self of normative desires. The work often remains representational in curiously old-fashioned ways. The result is actually a perpetuation of the mind’s ability to dominate all those things “outside” it. Certainly the best of this writing retains the serenely fierce rebelliousness of its ancestors such as Siddhartha, but stronger still are those
writers such as Norma Cole, who admittedly has much in common with some of the writers described, or Dennis Phillips who has less in common formally with them than with the high modernist prose stylists like Joyce or Beckett.

In Cole's case, the writing/reading process is upfront. She is reacting to texts as well as to the experience of writing them, but there is a sense that she is ultimately responding to a world in which language and the mind are only parts. Because she has a sophisticated understanding of the literary devices she is using—for example, her female Spinoza figure, the writing itself appears less like notes in progress or the mind in action and more like poetic theorems, proofs. In *Spinoza In Her Youth*, she demonstrates a "response-ability," as Nick Piombino has put it, an imaginative response, really an imaginative logic in which she affirms chance as an element of history itself.

So, the imaginative process on which Cole/Spinoza embarks is not simple "identification," but something more unstable, more like "cross-referencing" she suggests at one point in the book. As such, she can indulge in passages that would seem representative in old ways, but of which the sense wobbles well beyond the realm of her chosen metaphor. However, she retains a crucial link to necessity. That is to say, like Kafka's metaphors, her connections expand beyond simple correspondence. What takes place is possible because of a dance between "objectivity and Brother chance," as she puts it in one section. This is truly a Spinozist position. The multiplications of meaning and intention, she suggests, are inseparable since "It's all in the words, in someone /else's words...." The strength of Cole's moments of documentary are their ability to reveal the "truthful" nature of fictions. She does this in part by working with references and quotes across a broad time spectrum. One of the results of this type of shift is that the presuppositions of certain traditions of thought are altered. Each set of lines alters the previous, not just providing context for what follows.

As a result, her book feels finished without feeling conclusive. It is also the prelude to other work, hers, mine, yours. If Norma Cole is not an avid reviser of her own work, a reader is likely to be so. One of the joys of reading it is believing you think you see one thing and returning to find another. That is why in mentioning "events deprived of elaboration" she also mentions that this is so, at least in part, because of the date stamped on it, the name of the photographer, because of all the sign of conclusion. Such detail suggests serious consideration of craft as well as an openness to the reader, and it shows how she has traversed the waters of cross-genre work, not by blending prose and poetry, but by affirming no difference between them. I suspect that the success of her boundary obscuring work is that she writes "as if" she had something to say.

The author's intention while not authoritarian is still at work on a level palpable but also palatable. It also accounts for old-fashioned elements like narrative or journalistic fragments that suggest a consciousness reacting to
the world-at-large without affectation. In a curious way, it is the technologies of the world and social forces—in Cole’s case, the movement of the film, the way making a list makes also the state of mind. The state of mind, the state of the world serve the role of “the character” without being one, at least in those brief moments where she actually uses narrative. It is done in a way that even when dealing with such themes as “distraction” itself, the work cannot be characterized as anything but precision, rigor, determination, and craft.

But surprise and discovery take place, too. In Cole’s case, the rigor is the work done ahead of the writing. Her fiercely philosophical approach to history and language. Here, as in Dennis Phillips’ recent *Sand*, the especially pleasant element for the reader is that the discovery feels as if it is reached almost simultaneously with the writer. If there was no interest in “craft” or what used to be called “tone” on the writers’ parts, this simultaneity would seem either contrived, affected or, worse, banally academic.

Another old-fashioned device that Cole and Phillips both use well is irony. This being the age of the New Sincerity that some meeker philosophical poets have ushered in, irony of a certain endless and therefore dictatorial sort has been largely and rightly benched. When used, as in Jennifer Moxley’s lovely *The Sense Record*, it often serves two functions. It creates an emotional distance between the writer and the reader in which the humor shields everyone from the experience of some knowledge. (Moxley writes: I can not thwart/ Suspicion.) The other task of irony is to serve humility by destabilizing sincerity as if to make it more sincere. (Moxley: “My thoughts are too awkward, too erratic to rest/ at ease in the beautiful iamb.”) Still, in each case, the movement is from knowledge to cleverness. In Cole and Phillips, irony is often quite inviting, but rather than sincerity, there is a form of recognition in the truly Aristotelian sense. Sincere even if inaccurate or artificial. Such irony moves from ignorance to knowledge. It is the experience of learning and, in Cole and Phillips, it seems to happen simultaneously with a discovery being made by the author.

In Cole’s use of irony, various formal discourses are evoked and replaced, some elision, some re-casting of previous elements or images by way of doublings, loops, false remembrances. Translation itself, particularly as a form of bookishness, is often the subject. Spinoza as a trope is perfect here, given the similarity of him to Cole, the way they both spend so much time in the pages (or as Phillips’ would call them, “the strata”) of ancient worlds, her translating and Spinoza’s writing in a language that only his enemies could read. But the aptness does not end there. Spinoza ground lenses for living. Norma Cole, the artist and photographer, shares his interest in the way things seen hide things unseen. Proportion and perspective are crucial when, like her, events are set up in the text in order to flee from their source. But taking flight is often a form of capturing or creating something else. It is heady stuff, almost “grounded.” Her associations remain in a physical realm,
through the technology of looking. The book does go beyond mere reportage or description. Even more remarkable is that despite the occasional rhetorical question, statements remain possible. She writes: “Errors are not rare/ but make them rare, for instance, ‘inverted center’.” So, the moments of narrative are conjoined with explorations of the impossibility of accuracy. “Events deprived of elaboration” become opportunity not to see, but to experience how “The word plot alone can kill you.”

Returning, though, to the question of whether formal innovations (or at least attempts at innovation, experiments) are the most crucial ones, the answer would seem no. Part of the allure of Cole’s book is that despite her keen awareness of Spinoza’s critique of power, she (like Spinoza himself, though not perhaps of some of his followers) retains the ability to see that language and power is also affirmative, creative if freed from convention. So the experimental nature of her work is not due simply because she has nothing to say, that she is unable to formulate a thesis, but rather than force the reader toward a certain position, she has them come to desire it for themselves.

In Cole’s Spinoza, power’s feminine side is desire, the always doubled power of material forces, the very act of seeing, the different attributes (the language) of the same substances. Where power serves to crush by identification and repression, desire serves to dismantle, not to destroy, but to liberate through de-idealization, de-indentification. This is the inspirational quality of Spinoza In Her Youth, the way the ideas do not lead to a state of idealization, but to the experience of their power to create: as Cole writes, “readership, a polymer.” Later she adds, “How manifestations come after the end.” A statement that also applies to Dennis Phillips’ Sand.

In Phillips’ case, the associations that the reader makes are guided, if not entirely controlled, unlike in Cole where some understanding of her relation to Spinoza or her other subjects is helpful. Phillips’ philosophical underpinnings are also clear at the end, after a process of diffusion as well as accumulation. The elisions are often more relentless, the ‘presence’ of deletions having been made is felt. No actual lists or clear fragments of journal writing take place. More shifts in subject matter do, as if the subject is evolving, taking on more and more physical qualities rather than mental ones, what Phillips calls “altitude.” The effect in both cases serves not to reinforce the all-too-common false humility of many experimental writers, but rather to reveal that great writing is not so much a matter of having something to say as it is to have something to add.

Nowhere is this clearer than in Phillips’ earlier work Credence, where the poems are footnotes, the footnotes are new poems, themselves footnoted, leading to further elaboration by augmenting without exegesis.

In Sand, which I think of as a novel-in-verse written in a prose style, there is somewhat of a shift. Adding to what has been said is often the repressive obstacle around which the book hopes to shift, so it is aptly as concerned
with rearrangement, taking out, or at least sifting, as it is with adding. The book itself progresses as one would expect, through augmentation of previous themes, but the reader feels the power of what is also being edited and omitted. At times it seems to serve as a retraction:

We cannot see the lightning, but we cannot stop thinking of revenge or at least we think of parity but we cannot see the reason which is how they might explain the language they develop that strives to obscure actions. And it may be a simple shift in barometric pressure, where blood and ink and water spring easily and smoothly, because they know our attachment to sensation. We have begun to believe that, because their abilities have erased their marks and crosshatchings, anything residual is regressive. Forward, thus, loses its relativity. Or so says their vigilant language.

Certainly, such writing is a re-positioning, a shifting as would befit sand and is even more clearly so when not yanked from context. In his “Prelude,” Phillips offers a sort of key to the rest of the book, a tactic he has used before. The very presence of the prelude suggests that while he hopes to take his audience through brand new associations, he does not want them to be so free that they get excited by the wrong things.

The prelude refers to “explosions” that he describes as “expected.” Later on, they become lightning storms. Also in the prelude, an anonymous “they” is introduced as a former advocate of clarity, but a point in time has been reached in which marks meant to ascertain now untether. At the start, “they” claim to be seeking their own place, but the claim itself is an imitation. Phillips qualifies their search by quoting their curious use of the phrase “one’s purchase” which suggests something corrupted by the commercial if not the unpatriotic. Further examination reveals that Phillips’ interest in narrative is not simply in demythologizing, though the prelude does warn of “a fragrance” hovering “unacknowledged.” The more operative point of the prelude is not to narrate the course of the myth revealed as being a myth, but rather, in the tradition of Joyce, to re-mythologize, to reveal the depths of things albeit in a “jocoserious” manner. Ultimately, it is an elaboration of the myth or, better, an improvement on previous ideas. In a way similar to Cole, the past is invoked in part to restore its power without restoring the presuppositions that would confine it to history.

But more important here than the relationship to Joyce or Cole, is the relationship between Phillips and the later prose work of Beckett. In both, there is an intent to make smaller and less monumental, to clarify by minimalizing and introducing indeterminacy. In Phillips’ case, the clarification is an act of diffusion, dispersion. Many light, loose associations form strata. As a result, he is not a writer whose model of the world is depth.
oriented, nor is he interested solely in surfaces. Rather, he is interested in the
depths, he knows they can be approached only by accepting surfaces as well.

In some respects this is the very theme of the book—the possibility of a
writing that shifts from modernist poetic syntax (as it is connected with break­ing
layer) to modernist prose (as it is connected to an ac­ceptance of surfaces with a knowledge of depths). *Sand* explores the shifting
that occurs within this space anyway, so it is cross-genre only as phenom­enology. In that, it shares with Cole, but Cole is much more bookish, if by
that we mean always working intertextually, collaging at times, alluding at
others, always with that dada-like relation to history described earlier.

Phillips works more often with faint, soft allusions, as in Becket's *Nohow On*. In fact, a continuum occurs between Joyce, Beckett, and Phillips and
this makes both Beckett and Phillips, if not Joyce, naturalists, greater in
some ways than Ashbery when he describes the random shifting of pro­nouns as a kind of naturalism. Part of this naturalism is strangely and elo­quently enacted through the allusions both Beckett and Phillips make to Joyce.

And the effect is like sedimentation: since Joyce himself is often alluding, the
references build and are distilled through the minimalism of Beckett, con­densed further through the precise diction of Phillips until one word comes
to take on a whole subterranean history, as the word “time” does at the end
of *Sand*. No wonder then he writes with wry wit, “They were lucky who
could read fast.”

The sedimentation and condensation techniques are obviously aesthetic,
but they are political as well. As a naturalism, they relate to Phillips’ under­standing of a democratic impulse within nature itself, within the movement
of time. For this reason, catching even a tenth of the allusions is not neces­sary. (The same can be said of Norma Cole’s Spinoza or the Moira of her
earlier work, but not to the same extent.) Part of this is because a persona or
stance emerges (again similar to Norma Cole) and this persona seems to be
struggling toward an aesthetic state, again a response-ability. The medita­tions of the flow of “extreme tides,” for example, that occur in the book are
not reactions to the beauty of nature, but are responses to its power. They
are thoughtful because only through thoughtfulness can one respond to chaos
without simply reacting. But they are not overly intellectualized in a way
that would invite further stoppages of meaning, that would reduce the num­ber of possible responses. That is why an intimate understanding of the
tradition in which a writer is working cannot be jettisoned in favor of phe­nomenological wanderings or Buddha-like mindfulness. New traditions must
be reworked in light of older ones and in light of the responses to them of
still more recent traditions.

This would be a naturalism that understands that the laws of nature
themselves are subject to evolutionary processes—something that is repre­
sented in the unfolding of Beckett’s project, but that is explicitly addressed
in Phillips when Autumn returns, but only as a rehearsed speech. Or when
the event is "reliant on observation, dependent on promptitude./Excited by
the tardy, enthralled by the obvious." The geological record only reports
"habits, depths, and phases." The setting is always "widely applied," but
takes on the role of the protagonist. The actors are always both the very
forces of nature and the social forces within language itself (not any fixed
characters). And these characters, these forces, are most central at their most
abstract, their most general: "The weather moved across the basin with humid
air the preface, thunder and lightning the footnotes." Later he mentions "a
dust so fine it flows." A clear reference to the work at hand, the aesthetic in
play. So in Philips the locale is always local— an ordinary language where
context is form—not fashion. Agency itself exists only to affirm those rare
surprises when the ephemeral nature of agency itself is revealed.

This interest in concourse as well as discourse is a kind of naturalism that
is ultimately distinct from Joyce's re-mythology. As Phillips writes, "What
they call mythology is the summoning of any information." The techniques
of sedimentation and condensation, on the other hand, renders Phillips' work
the very antithesis of that cross-genre work which is primarily the work of
confused minds.

So much poetry of the mind today defies the earth, the world, the audience in the same way Buddha at times seems to defy heaven and the realm of ideas by being essentially indifferent to them. A poetry of the mind that must assert essentially no more than that the mind exists (despite all efforts to deconstruct it) suggests that if the mind were truly transcended or surpassed, nothing would exist. Further, it suggests that what others take for existence is only an illusion. Phillips does not succumb to this solipsism, but instead on every page makes the reader mindful of the institutions and discursive practices. At several moments he seems to be addressing the ambition and ineffectiveness of certain decidedly fashionable postmodern poetries:

"It had been late. They started with a title and a specific length. Carrying forward it was easy to get started. But the concept of carrying forward was too abstract. The voice was the receiver. They had asked for cliffs and sea shore but had run out of patience. They had thought to suspend him above the audience but finally a platform would suffice. They knew that standing still had never been the problem.

It was definitely the mathematical reality of running out. Or so they postured.

Their only horizon an air pocket.

Rather than concourse. A paving stone."
A writing that claims to liberate the reader or audience and yet still runs the risk of even appearing indifferent to that audience is still too exclusive for Phillips, too cultured. “Denatured” might be the word he would use. And nature, like the authors here, is never pure. It is never pure mind and never pure physicality. It is also never indifferent nor undecided, but always profoundly ambivalent:

In these days of extreme tides
where fluids become sensate and the moon grows close
we ask in a language received but denatured
the questions once put forward by adversaries.

... We forget in our annals the subtle quirks.
Phenomenology is too predictable.

What is intended is abandonment, sometimes called
divestiture.

... In order not to offend them,
feelings being the most important things,
he tried to remember not to forget
any of his important items.
The epic of description followed him.

And yet it was pleasing: He knew
he had not been bitten.

They were often confused by his clarity.

Times come, he thought.

This section of Dennis Phillips' Sand appears to be a conclusion to the previous questions raised in the book: questions like at what point does experimentalism become redundant, and should experiments be abandoned after the bulk of their discoveries have been produced? Phillips answer, connected as it is to global warming and the melting of polar ice caps, would likely be that experiments which return the reader to the world with a renewed emotional energy are always going to be distinct from those that return the reader to the realm of the mind, of abstraction, of pure meditation. That is why his work remains relatively unknown, but it is every bit as distinctive and as well crafted as his more famous contemporaries.

That is also what he shares with Norma Cole: this ability to inspire not simply a new reaction or another alternative, but to inspire a distinct response. To read their work is to learn how to keep the personal in sight while
focusing on the social, and vice versa. To see the singularities at the same time as the abstractions. The global and local.

To mistake this work for the mutt genres with their abstract and vague contrariness is to see it as a redundant experiment. To see it simply as philosophical poetry is to mistake it for an almost pure contemplation, a mere exercise. But to see the work itself as a conjunction of the personal and the historical, of anachronisms and experiments, of a naturalism and aestheticism is to experience a new kind of organic writing. It is organic because the mind and the chaos of the world are indiscernible with no “new” ideas depicted, but also no meditative disengagement, no phenomenological study. Instead, a renewed ability to respond to the forces of disjunction, alienation and chaos emerges.
One asks, “what is the limit of one’s own history?” Another responds “that is up to one, entirely.”

Determine what one means by memory. As in, whose memory is this? I remember, you remember, she he it (the fossil has nostalgia for the sea) remembers.

Place an index finger at the immediate start of present, the space of pure perception. Travel north along the cone (north with a touch of east I assume, as the cone’s line slants outward) through the various reservoirs of remembered things. Arrive at the opening of pure memory, the place of dreams, of distinctive recollections. It is a place of virtual reality, as in, “it is virtually real to me,” as in “I have been here before yet it is no longer now.” Along the way take a photo of every single instant. You have created yourself again, or still, or because of.

In the knife-edge theory of time only the present exists. One point moves instantly into the next.

What becomes of one’s own history as it moves further into, further beyond? If our perceptions are partial, in the first place, what is said then about the second place? How many places constitute story (told by whom? claimed by whom?)? Who determines the opening and closing of doors of snapshots of image of the etcetera.

If one is stuck in molasses, nothing new ever happens.

A man on the street said he had worked for Nixon. Why not I said, were you a secret agent? Of course, he said, of course. He pushes a cart along through a spring drizzle, pushes everything he owns. From which reservoir does he retrieve his history? What was it like to know Nixon, I ask? What, he asks back.

* Some quotes taken from Lyn Hejinian’s My Life, and Chris Offut’s The Same River Twice.
Among others, some think time moves from the past through the present and into the future. Saddleback style. These are the epochs of our lives, each with distinctions based on novelty, as in, when something interesting happens, time moves.

I select. I reconstruct. Language is made of universals. One word builds upon another. For millennia. Proust wrote seven volumes. His reservoirs had known rain for many years.

Something happens. Something else happened once before. To me to another and on. Sometimes I forget the circumstances. Sometimes I control the chaos of detail. Sometimes I spell my name backward, just to make sure.

One minute over another. Space equals which day you prefer. (Asking your immediate opinion.) Relative to what happens next. Wait constantly and let me know, please, before the rain comes back.

How does one decide in an instant, that is, to sacrifice. Give up cheese. Give up red sweets. Give up a blood relation. What happens in the sky on a Saturday, for example, to send one following a blade. As in “I imagined I had cut your limbs.” As in, “I apologize for my temporary…” (regardless, another might argue, for it falls within an instant and every instant counts) “…my…tell me, where was I when we shared that moment?”

Nothing really shared at all. An instant changes from one to the next. You were on the swing while I drew lines on the concrete. The wind sends her second hand moving even more rapidly. At 12:00. At 3:00. At 9:02. On which day did we drink tea? And can you recall the flavor?

There is a gap between experience and its physiological correlates.

Are you sure what you did yesterday was really you? I only know about my favorite blue shoes from the pictures. One album filled with those shoes. Someone tells the story and my memory is created. Someone tells another story and people begin to follow Jesus, or this is an example of movement, the interaction of matter and action. The substance of perception. Is the table really a table, if it is only Monday?
The sudden brief early morning breeze and again I am taken back, years before, an island far from relatives. A first knowledge of coconut palms. How the coolest part of the day is at 5 AM, before the sun. How, some days, driving the circumference of the island in only hours, wondering how cowgirls felt surrounded by land, wondering, if here someone ever gets into a boat and just begins to row.

Remembering sand put to music, a sky as big as the ocean. Thinking, it has been how many instants since any recording of that place. Meaning, whose story is ever-changing, unfolding photos of someone else’s time. Meaning, how to create the voice-over for still images. Trying to mean, every word cannot be placed in its own order.

Every time I floss I hear you in my head.

The reconstitution of single parts of time. Or, I hear only bits of conversation now, imagine the rest in the future tense.

In high school you scented each of your letters. Sometimes the smell in the air and yet you are years away, spread over miles. We could never agree on the same names.

Somehow reaching a particular age and taking a survey: are you content? what color would you have chosen on this date three years ago? describe your favorite moment of the middle of the night. do you feel that you can accurately taste the lines on the back of your hand, the lines where you carry your stories? tell me what you are feeling at this same hour in one week.

Three sisters sit around a fire. One says: the day we moved all of the furniture out of the smallest bedroom. Another adds: it was a Thursday. The third says: not a Thursday and we left the lamp in its place. One says: there was no lamp. Someone replies: where did we put it all if not in the rain? Another states: or was it winter? And again: but mother was never home on Thursdays at that time. And another: it can be said, in any case, that trust was lost at that moment.

Suddenly I am remembering how you used to iron every one of your t-shirts. The only shirts you owned. Clean and pressed, they kept you proud. I ate chicken for you.

moments are no longer so colored
Thinking of a project in which we compared newspapers. Each paper contained different stories starring the same characters. Even in 1943 there were discrepancies. What if we talked to people today, about those characters? What point would that prove? Regardless of perspective, blood was shed.

Once, upon arising at 5 AM, I knew exactly what I had to do. In the breezes of that time I held claustrophobia at bay, ran fast up and down deserted roads, imagined minutes weaving with the taste of salted fish, the taste of never-ending present, each instant carving its own trajectory.

All I said was “mahal na mahal kita” and you were silent on the other end of the line. But we could never have met in the middle. Precipitation extending every mile of the sea.

This is all that is left.

IV

He is trying to relive the past and determine the future, thinking he has some great advantage, as in “oh yes, I understand each moment of next week, precisely.”

He imagines it was so much better, when, waking in the night to find insects on his eyelids.

He knows the current running past carries him with it.

*Lightning shears a branch from a tree.* The tree remembers better days. The storm threatening to change each of the gathered instants. Each instant carving messages into itself.

That is the point, hardly clear until written down. I only remember it after reading it again. I have recorded my history, now I know exactly what happened on that particular day in 1984. Exactly.

Setting down a wet paintbrush and walking away may alter history irrevocably. Learning to dance salsa, on the other hand.

*The obvious analogy is with music.*

He found himself lying in the shape of a deer in the snow retracing the deer’s movements listening to the wonderings of the deer.
Morning shadows are blue in snow.

Sometimes I return to the same place, and find, I am not the same at all. It has taken my mother 28 years to realize I never liked trisquits. It's my sister who likes cornbread and trisquits and when we tell stories we argue. Each time I go home my hair is the same, yet each time someone notices the difference.

How many rivers have you stepped in?

v

Time may be reversible.

*Time is a Rorschack folded into a Möbius strip turned inside out.*

Yesterday, it seems, never occurred. I am still living last Tuesday.

I never wear a watch, yet somehow, I am always the one people stop and ask.

Every time I look back at the crossed out words I still know exactly what they say.

*Each mark was a gesture toward the future.*

You insisted “don’t tell me what time it is.” You were enjoying the suspension of real life and I was less eager to return. I only know months have passed because the events from those days are more fragmented constantly, fractals of images of the dirt and the heat and the planes flying overhead.

One cannot be a circus performer forever, apparently.

vi

*Past and present merge, reality appears in half-forgotten experiences.*

Whose forgotten experiences? Which walking through present time always afflicted by what cannot be recalled. I know yesterday I put on my shoes, but at what time? Someone tells a story. I don’t remember place nor main character, only that a peripheral child was bit by a snake.
If I write this down does it by default become my history?

_Shifting and confused gusts of memory._

That scent. Thinking you had passed, were passing, waiting around the corner. All these years later. One letter after another. Sent. Scented. In red ink.

I am telling a story every time. Include this detail. Every detail. Constantly becoming.

There is no past b/c no one else remembers it.

What can and cannot be recorded instantly. What can and cannot be historical fact.

Whose history is this? Instant by instant. Slipping. Shifting claim.

_This autobiography of expansive sensations divided horizontally._

Other than knife-edge instants of action.

Other than, move forward, progress, chro-no-loge (verb-form).

Other than, this singular experience (related)(recorded).
Contributors’ Notes

Aurelio Asiaín was born in Mexico City in 1960. He is a founding editor of the literary journal *paréntesis*, based in Mexico City.

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Michael Ives is a musician and writer living in the Hudson Valley. His poetry and short fiction have appeared in numerous periodicals, here and abroad. He is currently at work on a collection of essays devoted to his experiences as a jazz musician.

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Sergio Valero was born in Mexico City in 1969. He is a founding member of the editorial board of eldorado ediciones. He is the author of Cuaderno de Alejandra (Fondo Editorial Tierra Adentro, 1997) and Valga la noche (Ediciones Eloisa, de la Aires, 2003). He regularly writes about literature and music, and has published poems and critical texts in numerous magazines and cultural supplements, including El Ángel, Crónica dominical, Etcétera, Letras libres, (paréntesis), Periódico de poesía y Vuelta. He is known as El Pollo (The Chicken).

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Rosmarie Waldrop's most recent book is the memoir, Lavish Absence: Re-calling and Rereading Edmond Jabes (Wesleyan University Press). Blindsight and Love, Like Pronouns will come out from New Directions and Omnidawn in the fall.

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