Aufgabe

Number Ten

“potomac reversal up down across” (detail) by Lee Etheredge IV
This issue of Aufgabe is dedicated to the memory & legacy of

Akilah Oliver
(1961 - 2011)

&

Leslie Scalapino
(1944 - 2010)
POETRY EDITORS | E. Tracy Grinnell, Paul Foster Johnson, Julian T. Brolaski
CONTRIBUTING POETRY EDITORS | Jen Hofer, Nathanaël
ESSAYS, REVIEWS, NOTES & PROSE EDITORS | Julian T. Brolaski, Paul Foster Johnson
ART EDITOR | Rachel Bers
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT | Alice Whitwham

TYPESETTING & COVER DESIGN | HR Hegnauer
DESIGN | HvA Design & E. Tracy Grinnell
COVER ART | Lee Etheredge IV, “live die withstand” (detail), 2011, Acrylic and graphite on linen, 58” X 42”, Courtesy of the artist and Pierogi, Brooklyn

© 2011 Aufgabe. All rights revert to authors upon publication.

Aufgabe is published annually by Litmus Press. Single issues are $15; a subscription for two issues is $25. For institutional subscription rates and for information about individual subscriptions, contact the publisher directly.

Litmus Press is the publishing program of Ether Sea Projects, Inc., a 501(c)(3) nonprofit literature and arts organization dedicated to supporting innovative, cross-genre writing with an emphasis on poetry and international works in translation.

Litmus Press / Aufgabe
925 Bergen St. #405
Brooklyn, NY 11238
www.litmuspress.org

All Litmus Press publications are distributed by
Small Press Distribution
1341 Seventh St.
Berkeley, CA 94710
www.spdbooks.org

ISSN: 1532-5539
ISBN: 978-1-933959-21-4

Aufgabe is made possible by public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts, a State agency. Additional support for Litmus Press comes from the Leslie Scalapino – O Books Fund, individual members and donors. All contributions are fully tax-deductible.
Contents

Errata | Michel van Schendel, Aufgabe #9 9

Feature | French poetry & poetics guest edited by Cole Swensen 11


Cole Swensen, Dossier: Contemporary Poetry in France 13
Oscarine Bosquet, from Present Participle 17
Stéphane Bouquet, from A People 21
Marie-Louise Chapelle, from mettre. 25
Suzanne Doppelt, from Lazy Suzie 30
Caroline Dubois, from How’s that I say not sleep 35
Frédéric Forte, String Quartet Number 4 40
Isabelle Garron, from The Contemporary Step 46
Éric Houser, from Perpetual Motion 50
Virginie Lalucq & Jean-Luc Nancy, from Fortino Sámano (The Overflowing of the Poem) 54
David Lespiau, from Four Cut-Ups or The Case of the Restored Volume 58
Sabine Macher, from Notebook a 63
Vannina Maestri, from stop getting all excited 67
Jérôme Mauche, from Discount Electuary 72
Anne Parian, from Monospace 76
Véronique Pittolo, from Infidelity is a Great Big Doll 82
Virginie Poitrasson, from Always Keep a Magic Formula in Mind 86
Pascal Poyet, Our Dispositions Take Themselves for Things 90
Nathalie Quintane, from Grand Ensemble 94
Sébastien Smirou, from See About 98
Gwenaëlle Stubbe, from Salut, salut Marxus 102
Éric Suchère, from Set, Winterwreck 106
Bénédicte Vilgrain, from The Tibetan Grammar: Khà, Chapter three 110
Poetry | edited by E. Tracy Grinnell, Paul Foster Johnson & Julian T. Brolaski with contributing editors
Jen Hofer & Nathanaël II5

Etel Adnan, from FOG 117
Susan Maxwell, Four Poems 123
Paul Killebrew, Four Poems 126
Lawrence Giffin, Three Poems 130
Rocío Cerón, from America 136
(Jen Hofer, trans.)
Christopher Stackhouse, In Parts (a) to (g) 146
David Wolach, from Hospitality 153
Román Luján, Clusters 158
(Brian Whitener, trans.)
Alli Warren, Four Poems 166
Catherine Meng, Three Poems #171
Lauren Levin, Five Poems 177
Paul Braffort, Two Poems 180
(translations & transversions by Gabriela Jauregui & Amaranth Borsuk)
René Lapierrre, Treatise on Physics 186
(Nathanaël, trans.)
G.C. Waldrep, Two Poems 200
Jill Magi, from Furlough 203
Prageeta Sharma, Two Poems 207
Jane Joritz-Nakagawa, Three Poems 209
Robert Glück, from I, Boombox 212
Lauren Shufran, The Birds 217
Mathew Timmons, from Sound Noise 221
Reynaldo Jiménez, from 600 Doors 224
(Carlos Lara, trans.)
Stephanie Gray, Four Poems 232
Harold Abramowitz, Salf 235
Brian Laidlaw, Two Poems 238
Joan Retallack, from The Bosch Bookshelf 240
Rachel Blau DuPlessis, Draft 107: Meant to Say 244
Essays, notes, reviews | edited by Julian T. Brolaski & Paul Foster Johnson 251

Erin Morrill, Protophelia; Codaphelia 253
Johanna Drucker, Notes on Notes on Conceptualisms 257
Amaranth Borsuk & Gabriela Jauregui, Transverting the Bestiary 262
Pierre Joris, from Meditations on the Stations of Mansur Al-Hallaj 266
Paul Killebrew, Lewis Freedman's Catfish Po' Boys 269
Jill Magi, Make Home Rule: A Response to Carole Maso's “Break Every Rule” 272
Robert Glück, CUNY Talk: Uncertain Reading 277

Contributors’ Notes 283

About the Artwork 294
The English conceals an aberrant mistranslation. The first feeling is one of shame and irresponsibility. This feeling persists. But alongside it, the further I delve into the misconduct of my line, the more evident it becomes that the literality that usurped my translation is (also) the undigestibility of this death – death’s unaccountability, as it were. That the mouth as it is being smothered simply denies the passage to the tongue. Thus do the roses beat clumsily against the ear that mishears.

—Nathanaël

A name, a singular, an other

3

I say it common I say it gatherer
Vegetals and flesh
Raw color of the eye
Beige evening of streets
Spackle of walls and vine
Birds scissors paper
Hair and hand a tree of Judah
A love at the window
The maintenance of the road
A crêpe on a bench
A friend’s word
Death beating wing of a rose at the ear
I say it common with their asperities
I say it gatherer of their amazements

La mort aile battante d’une rose à l’oreille
Feature

French poetry & poetics, guest edited by Cole Swensen

“potomac drop one add one continuous” (detail) by Lee Etheredge IV
Dossier: Contemporary Poetry in France

Cole Swensen

It makes no sense to speak of contemporary French poetry—except in the sense that, increasingly, all literature that doesn’t fit into any other category gets called poetry, a trend I highly champion, as it broadens the definition of the art. And that’s also what contemporary French poets are doing: broadening the definition of la poésie to include and encourage an ever-diversifying array of approaches and forms. The one constant is exploration, and much of that is eroding the boundaries of the genre, of genre itself, and even of media.

Much pressure has been put on the line in contemporary French poetry, to such an extent that for many writers it has disappeared altogether as a formal principle, and in many cases that pressure has been transferred to syntax, either underscored through elaborately formal or distorted sentence structures or spotlighted through inventive violations and innovations. Where the line does remain, it is often given a performative stance and at times, in turn, performs an immediate graphic gesture on the page.

The work we read as new today looks more like the European poetry of 100 years ago than that of either 150 or 50 years ago, a fact based in a revitalized sense of poetry’s potential political role, or at least its obligation to try for one. While honoring Mallarmé’s dictum to give “a purer meaning to the language of the tribe,” it more closely parallels a cultural project that began a little later, in the work of the early avant-garde writers at the turn of the previous century who used poetry and performance to register social resistance and to demand a different relationship between art and daily life. While today’s poets indulge less in dramatic antics than the Futurists or Dadaists did, they are equally intent on poetry’s material reality and on the paradoxical desire to release that materiality from as many limitations as possible. Much of what’s being written today also maintains the inclination toward the off-kilter, the precariously balanced, and the generally asymmetrical that marked the early 20th century avant-gardes. As with those earlier movements, this asymmetry both manifests a general incongruence with the wider society, an “ajar” that refuses complicity, and enacts an inherent restlessness that insists upon the constant restabilization that the asymmetrical guarantees.

In 1917, Victor Shklovsky, of the Russian Formalist circle Opayaz, articulated the notion of ostrananie, or of “making strange.” His discussion of ostrananie
presented the disjunction increasingly prevalent in the poetry of his day in light of its social function, that of enabling its readers to see things in their unique particularity rather than as relative members of a category, but the phenomenon also, more subtly, speaks to poetry's most ancient and constant feature, the distortion of daily language. Alliteration, rhyme, and rhythm, the mnemonic standards that separate poetry from daily language, do so by distorting that daily language, creating patterns and regularities entirely unnatural to the evolution of verbal communication. So, though radical distortion had been the rule in poetry for centuries, in Shklovsky’s day, it suddenly shifted poles, from distorting toward regularity to distorting toward irregularity, making the very principle of distortion stand out brazenly, demanding new critical treatment and inciting ever more dramatic creative experiments. The latest of these appear in the following pages.

The causes of that sudden shift have been the subject of modernist and post-modernist critiques from Benjamin and Adorno to Derrida and Deleuze; one of its results has been a relentless deconstruction and reconstruction of language in order to reveal its working parts, to highlight its mechanics to better examine its often-veiled social and political assumptions and ramifications. Much of the work presented here ‘distorts the distortions,’ playing ever deeper into the machine. This isn’t a matter of going one step further into strangeness because we’ve become habituated to the milder distortions of poetic usage; it’s a matter of choosing to distort away from predictability, or even the precedented, in order to strike at a deeper cognitive level, one that might best be called ‘intuition’ because, unlike counting syllables and stresses, we cannot objectively account for the pleasures that asymmetry and surprise afford us, though one of the pleasures of surprise is the sensation of invention and direct participation experienced by the reading mind faced with novel work. Much contemporary poetry in France capitalizes on this, using uniqueness of form to transform reading into its own creative act.

Poetry in France is continually and increasingly overflowing its borders. Though they may be unannounced or not overtly framed as such, the reader is aware of the filmic gaze, the performative body, and installation’s multi-dimensional space operating in these works to augment their life on the page. The seamless authenticity of the resulting blends comes in part from the fact that many of the writers here are also directly involved in other arts, including dance, filmmaking, performance, and photography, while others have backgrounds in art history or teach in art schools. This wide artistic engagement keeps French poetry involved in a larger conversation about the role of art, about the ways in which the production of such an essential excess can keep a society conscious of the real value of its materials.
as well as spotlight the actual work that aesthetics does in individual and communal life.

Communal life is important to many of the writers presented here; many are directly involved in the production of literature, running their own small presses, editing journals, working for literary centers, organizing reading series, and translating from other languages. Thus for many of them, their appearance in translation is a reciprocal, though not precisely mirroring, gesture. And with that in mind, in assembling this dossier, I was as deliberate in my choice of translators as I was in the choice of poets, for these translators constitute not only another community, but one that allows the French writing world to overflow and enter into an implicit discussion with American poetics. The history of French-American artistic friendship is long and well-detailed in a number of places, so I won’t elaborate it again here, but these translators, all of them poets themselves, are not only keeping that bi-cultural friendship alive, but also making it an operative element in American poetry, both through its influence on their own writing and through the approaches and values they transmit through their translations from the French.

A note on the arrangement of this dossier: the choice of alphabetical order is a deliberate decision not to group these writers by style, poetic concerns, geography, generation, or any other criteria, any of which would be inevitably inaccurate and reductive and would distract from the act of individual exploration that determines each body of work. I also tried, as much as possible given the nature of the poetic series, important uses of white space, and other considerations of length and shape, to give all writers the same amount of space. Feeling that the selection of the writers in itself constitutes a positive value judgment, I would like to leave it up to readers to make their own judgments from there on. I also chose writers who are not yet at all or not yet very well known in the United States. This leaves out many, many excellent, active poets whose work is crucial to the development of poetics in France, but they are left out only because their work is already available in English translations in book form through presses such as Dalkey Archive, Free Verse, Counterpath, Green Integer, Litmus Press, Ugly Duckling, Seeing Eye Books, Omnidawn, La Presse, and others.
Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the following presses for graciously letting us publish translations of work that they have published. We’d also like to direct interested readers to these presses as consistent sources of the most interesting work currently being done in France. Some of them are small presses entirely supported by the efforts of one or two people; all of them have been working for years on behalf of innovative writing in France.

Éditions Al Dante
Éditions Champ Vallon
contrat maint
Éditions de l’Attente
Éditions Dernier Télégramme
Éditions Galilée
Éditions Flammarion
Le Bleu du ciel
Éditions les Petits matins
P.O.L Editeur
Théâtre Typographique

Fortino Sámano (Les débordements du poème) by Virginie Lalucq and Jean-Luc Nancy. Copyright © 2005 by Éditions Galilée is used by permission of the authors and Éditions Galilée. Grand Ensemble by Nathalie Quintane. © P.O.L Éditeur, 2008.
On the entirely devoured dirt the difference between consonants hardly distinguishes
O O / I O
I O / I
E IA /
A /
A E OU /
the ones lilt in the others
it is between them that savagely we say indistinct in the haze of the land far from here

Africa is a flat tint

I’m afraid of the you

shine up to here the precious names of ore bed and it is not about loosing your grip.
In the heart of darkness
many versions but only one map
around the ore bed drug the bodies
a bed of tantalum
a bed of corpses
a bed of cobalt
a bed of missing
up until the diamonds
spring from Mbuji-Mayi
Tshibu the copper of Katanga
the coltan of Bunia
the gold of Ituri
off the Rio del Rey
the oil of Cabinda
Tombua Landana
the phosphate of Togo
from Aveta to Dagbati
niobium of Lueshe
beryllium of Burundi
tungsten of Rwanda
...
the list is not current.
On the naked starvelings standing in the attic of Africa

J e t t i s o n

f

o
enough weapons

f

d
s
u

ff

o n t h e s k e l e t o n s i n a l l p o s i t i o n s.
Adorned in the cushions of the palace I caress
the thighs of fathers and then sons
keep an eye on the brothers
and I dance obscenely
for the marionettes
that I installed cruel
in the place of those whose voices
the words drove rebels
we couldn’t let them
block our access to all that shines
I dance for all the marionettes
that have murdered for me
and caress with my eye their thighs between
which they never stop seducing me
which they blanket me in jewels
in all the jewels from the heart of darkness.

OSCARINE BOSQUET was born in Paris in 1964 and is the author of Participe Présent (Le Bleu du ciel, 2009) and Chromo (Fourbis, 1996). She teaches at the art school of Brest, in Brittany, where she lives with her daughter. Her poem series “Par Jour,” translated by Omar Berrada and Sarah Riggs, forms the groundwork for the book Present Participle. Present Participle is a verb of the present lived—from wherever one is in the world—as a call to act in language: a radical way of listening, in the shapes of letters. Sections have appeared in The Poetry Project Newsletter 203 and Chain #12, and the whole is forthcoming from La Presse. Bosquet’s work has also previously appeared in English in Raddle Moon 16, translated by Michael Palmer. Bosquet is currently translating Kristin Prevallet.

Living often in metaphorical prisons, Bosquet approaches writing as a political act. She absorbs keenly the sufferings of those in distant places and identifies closely with political leader and prisoner Rosa Luxembourg and to tribes and individuals in parts of Africa engaged in struggles involving the actual cutting off of ears, of heads. Bosquet listens, and allows her alphabet and syllables to disassemble and reassemble accordingly. Puzzling her words together, whether as readers or as translators, requires an empathy of attention and a Boggle-like humor that relieves the ultra-serious.
Walt Whitman: bearded old man, sitting facing the river, tired but watching the parade of everything absolutely everything that the river carries along. Rubicund face, jovial smile, as if he had created the world and accepts it, accepts every last twig of his creation and rejoices in it, and we too, we’re also there, and also astonished by what’s passing in the great, endless parade. And this is the world, this passage, no proprietary instinct, it just distributes things as soon as they’re created, disperses them: receive them who can, take them who will, in the great egalitarian republic.

Walt Whitman: not stopping to consider whether or not the torso is hairy, just holding it, him too, endlessly. So it makes sense that his poem never ends either. So lovely is the embrace, even of death; he says so explicitly. It’s so good that it lasts. All the most vulgar puns come to mind. On the embrace of the world and the sap that that friction produces, but all puns are accurate, pertinent. His whole collection, interminable, interminably growing, is the proof of this sap, is a moment of ongoing sperm, is the meaning of and the reason for the continual accumulation of the poems. Finally Whitman, like Charles Baudelaire on this side of the world, invents a new principle of accumulation: the promenade among us. Of course, they didn’t look at the real in the same way. Baudelaire is still a vertical poet: he has to undo the old world; he’s still haunted by hints of quintessence and volatility: perfumes, scents, hair, clouds, the promise of a celestial indecision, a diffuse silhouette. He often wanders toward this promise; he often looks for a breech, usually high up, sometimes down low, in order to live in other, hypothetical, dimensions. Rarely does he wander the streets as though he’s already there, though more and more as he gets older, more and more as he comes together. Whitman, on the other hand, and the reason I feel close to him, is a horizontal poet: there is nothing beyond what is, all meaning is at our feet, in the trampled grass. Only we’ve got to go farther, much farther, for at the end of these roads there are no doubt other roads and no doubt other faces, other birds, other names.

Ovid: his clearings in which lovers finally sleep in the arc of requited arms. Bodies damp with dew, often at the very opening of morning, and before that, before the joy of this embrace: a lot of running around through the undergrowth...
& rustling branches, sudden flights, wild desire. Such is the oppression of the poem: to be the victim of all this desire to say. It’s sometimes said that Ovid was exiled because his poetics contradicted the new Augustinian moral order—that’s unlikely—but the oppression that he suffered, even before his exile, as if his mouth was plastered against permanent genitalia.

Virginia Woolf: in one of the French translations of Mrs. Dalloway, toward the end of the party, Clarissa is off in another room, by herself. The bells of Big Ben ring, resounding in ever more fragile waves, dissolving in the air and becoming invisible filaments. Clarissa is alone, thinking of Septimus, perhaps sensing him in the filaments of air, perhaps breathing him in. She says to herself: “Death is an embrace.” (An intensely moving phrase, and now I understand why: it says that death also is an instant of materiality.) This phrase doesn’t exist in the English, nor in any other French translation, and as far as I’m concerned, this does away with all the pseudo-theories that claim that translation is a loss, an error, a betrayal, etc. Quite the opposite, translation is literally an augmentation, an offered addition. Translation multiplies the possibilities of emotion, and neither diminishes nor suppresses them. And what exactly is there to betray anyway? I can’t imagine. Texts are not the relics of saints. They’re not vehicles of sacred meaning. And writers are nothing other than, all literature is nothing other than, angels with lopsided wings are nothing other than, a pledge to materiality, a production of excess. A eulogy for the world for the world that’s always beginning again. I could suggest a metaphor: texts are the servant’s clothes. She envelopes herself, affected and seductive, but really only waiting to lift her skirt, to be naked to the world. As does literature; it waits for the world to finally unburden it of language.


I’m drawn to him by such lines. They speak to the way in which the world, for Keats, is an incessant flux. On his tomb, (a non-Catholic Cemetery in Rome, where the 19th century still finds refuge) he had wanted to write: “Here lies one whose name was written on water.” Ci-gît quelqu’un dont le nom fut écrit sur de l’eau. In a way, being is a passing game of light and current, which returns to the anonymous water, realizing Keats’s dearest wish, our common dearest wish: to fade away, to dissolve.

Emily Dickinson: the most beguiling uppercase letters in her work aren’t those that celebrate God, Fear, the Horizon, or even Us. But those that raise the Robin Redbreast, the Bee, and even (and especially) the Broom and Crumbs to things majestic. This practice can be read as a sign of a profound tendency to augment
beings and things until, finally, nothing remains but essences in conflict, so that the world possesses a power comparable to that of the terrifying God. For her, it also seems to be a question of bringing the poet (an I by uppercase logic) down to size, to be level with everything else, to bring the surroundings to her height. Now “I” walk the Garden Paths and amble shoulder to shoulder with the Bee, now she possesses the wings of the Robin and its Sunset breast.

Walt Whitman: the stature that he gives to his “I,” to his “me myself.” He says he is an intercessor, a crossroads. His world is roads and paths, and he is each of them: come on, trample me, stampede over me. I possess a similar credo: come quick, surging crowd, dismember me if you can. (For ex. I was coming back from the stadium and the game on a friend’s motorscooter, holding onto his blondness, trapped with him in the unfurling traffic, and I wanted to distribute myself, to have everyone carry proof of me back to his modest apartments, and in this way to have inhabited lives, & in the end – in all logic – to have undergone joy.)

Wallace Stevens: tranquil and wearing a tie, sitting at his work table. Dust falls on the desk, and doesn’t disappear, he observes. That is also proof of the gaze, of the eye. The window opens out onto landscapes, both the still life and the moving; the porch of the wood house looks out on the four cardinal points as well as toward the sky. He’s taken some time to achieve it, but it has come: from then on, he’s sitting in a simple armchair, serene, at almost the precise center of everything, as though nothing has escaped him. Yes, it all comes together, arranged in perfectly regular stanzas, and it holds, even under changing light. I don’t know any poet more capable of giving the stanza meaning than Wallace Stevens. He uses it not like the vestiges of an earlier poetry, not like a ruined presence of the past’s methods and melodies, but because it’s proof of the subtle arrangement of the world, of the certainty that there are rules and organization somewhere. This reassures Stevens: couplets, tercets are like a kitchen cabinet for labelled things.
STÉPHANE BOUQUET was born in 1967 in Paris, where he lives and works as a screenwriter and translator. He has published five books of poetry with Éditions Champ Vallon, some of which negotiate between France and the U.S.—*Un monde existe* (2002), *Un peuple* (2007) and *Nos amériques* (2010)—and according to Bouquet, search for a formula that would allow him to write American poetry in French. Bouquet has translated Robert Creeley’s *The Charm* and Paul Blackburn’s *Selected Poems* into French, and has written several studies of filmmakers, including Pasolini, Eisenstein, and Gus Van Sant, for *Cahiers du cinéma*.

*A People* assembles proper names significant to both the writer and the world—Keats, Dickinson, Dante, O’Hara, Stevens, and others—into a community through encyclopaedic entries of a crystalline, watery accuracy that so fuse texts and lives that Whitman looking at himself in the lake of Bouquet’s prose poems wouldn’t be able to distinguish self from reflection. Bouquet has also worked in dance with French choreographer Mathilde Monnier, and featured in Stephen Lifshitz’s film *La Traversée*, which follows Bouquet to motels and phone booths in search of his absent father. For Bouquet, emptiness, reflection, and meandering thought are also ways of peopling the world, a conviction he shares with Whitman.
FROM *mettre.*

**Marie-Louise Chapelle**

Translated by Norma Cole

In French, “mettre” is an infinitive meaning “to place” or “to put.” “Mettre” is also a homophone for the noun “maître,” meaning “master.” One thinks of “mettre” with a period after it – “put period,” but one thinks, consciously or not, of “master period.” Keeping this in mind, I will call this translation a version, because, as you can tell, there are many others crowding (or clowning) around. Marie-Louise Chapelle is a master, period. —N.C.

Because don’t force me to spit in

your mouth
unscented saliva
your teeth
my love toothpaste it butts
up only,
it alone smells like yoghurt on the edge of
the forgotten window,

little wild one it’s not only that you wet
now
you piss in bed;

and yet intermittent and maternal
light violated also,

you push my leg until I fall down
from STARVATION.
Because broken telephone body
bears umbilical
and all WHO
nothing further,

WHO irreversible far from being happy,

but in the end leaving, no more forcing
navy blue that it should

in earth
in body

astonishingly sudden,

boat leaving for ever
because tomorrow.
Because Mève beloved loving, Yseult to “good children” say likes you a trillion;

vertically the whose of us 2 are you, am I visible who falls?

today? backwards?

backwards autumnal pear melting and sweet and good,

but OR leave with the end

can you name? parting your pants?
Because say WE
are no more –
only to –

present orphan after –

all our mother and the love

one leaves
double separates like –

you say

you divide you say you say

on your belly you say
born you say
well-soon
multiply
and I say
divide

and WE
are no more –
all –

two because you say that – you say that.

A contribution by Michèle Cohen-Halimi in an issue of the eminent journal Critique (#735-736) 2008, “Les intensifs: poètes du XXI siècle” (edited by Cohen-Halimi and Francis Cohen), orients Marie-Louise Chapelle with twentieth and twenty-first century “singularities” (as Giorgio Agamben has so distinctly iterated) such as Isabelle Garron, Anne Parian, Pierre Alféri, Danielle Collobert, Jean Daive, Anne-Marie Albiach, Dominique Fourcade, and Claude Royet-Journoud. In mettre. Chapelle uses framing devices such as parce que, “because,” in a series; she reimagines the body of the text through complex sets of coordinates, gestures, and fragmentary tangents. Here, the curve and the line meet.
sight presumes a slight fissure and to start painting means piercing a hole, one is enough to create a sieve, through it you watch history, the world or its reflection, its screen an unsilvered pane, the painting a window that opens like an orange. Round, squared, a pyramid, or even a clover leaf in the garden of the chinese emperor or elsewhere, it must give light, let in air, wind, scent, but not too much, and sun, and frame the gaze well, sight is always seeing through a hole of light. The painting is a window that contains another, its further pattern, wide open onto the landscape, a fragment of nature, firs and pines, rolling hills, assorted greens, the river that sings, the bridge and undulating ground, the line of the horizon and the proper vanishing point, it’s lovely having so much greenery out the window of my room. With a 360 degree view, a panoramic vertigo that doesn’t let up and again to watch the sky and up and down the street each person who passes, hats and coats, a continuous ghost in streaks, you recognize it by its gait, motionless, well back in the shadows, the window replaces the walk, the theater, and everything else. To trace a frame is to open a window, 3 feet wide by 5 high toward the cold, a bright screen in a glass wall, leaning on it, the better to see the world’s reflections, points of view and images, of the translucent face, seen in three-quarter, with and without contour, strictly obliquely presents a distinct form, a roman colossus. But what do you see? A large circle, 180 degrees in the sun, a canvas that forms the background of a system that radiates stones and dust, a young man and an old one, it surges back, slowly magnetic, a socket, a single one straight on and strictly slanted, stupor it’s strange how things happen and the forms they take. It was windy and the tense air vibrated sometimes one way often another, the least insect was visible in the sky but to turn the camera was planted in a sphere
it balances on each leg, like a dance step, raise one up and not put it down again, it’s the *ronde du pont*, an old-fashioned 3-legged table, stamps its foot and rises a whole 6 inches off the ground. Can you keep the verses coming from the table in its current position? Just lay both hands on it, a real bit of legerdemain and matter changes, the eye swivels, it’s what gathers the spheres as the ear does sounds and the illusions they cause, furniture adrift. Aerial, it glides in a circle, endlessly turning with its super-rotary lazy susan all around the earth, itself resembling a table or an egg, its borrowed light. Then landing on a mirrored carpet, one foot and then another, retaining the night in furtive steps, dinteville, his beret lavishly adorned and de selve in a squared-off hat. On the high shelf, a globe and its satellites, 6 instruments for measuring the sky, and below, a lute, an open book, another closed, *arithmetic for merchants* and down near the ground, that object that defies the laws of weight, drawn and twisted like a luminous nail
the ray comes out like an antenna, from the eyes, here, from the eyes, propagates in a straight line or leaps unswervingly from things or bounces back and forth between the two, vertiginous dazzle, the eye is a darkroom with a lens on one side and a screen on the other. All you need is a good sun and a tiny hole the size of a pin in order to draw on the opposite wall an exact image of the world, inverted but intact: a singular landscape well-lit, the colors, the shadows, the clouds, the ripples on the water, the flight of birds, all seen under a nicely brilliant sun. Like the owl’s round eye even on moonless nights, the butterfly’s, snow white, the spider’s, jet black, and the fly’s, a dome of mosaic vision, electric, panoramic, but blind 5 feet later. Or like cardinal colonna’s, that grand bishop of bologna, on a piece of battered cardboard, wide-eyed and fixed, half man half beast when stretched, but cool and lucid when projected onto a column of glass. He can see through clothes and solid objects, his x-glance pointed as a ray, the light in spectral beams straight through the wall, underground, forms landing upon his spectacular retina, to photograph thought, the back of the moon, and see as much in the clouds as oracles do in tea leaves. My eyes fill with tears; at what should I look? The damp eye cuts everything up one thing entire to many objects—it’s a better witness than the ear, especially in daylight, the imaginary ball that travels back and forth along a curving line, the park repainted green and its plants poised, a stain like a face, the void. It knows just what’s missing from the painting and in its place, puts cubes, spheres, cones—geometry is the real science of the blind and grows them by degrees, one explosion and one precipitate. Looked at straight on, it’s a jumbled mix, like a felted carpet, an expanse of dashes, marks, swirling traces in black and white, the mixed ray in a frameless rectangle. The more one looks with a fixed gaze, open-eyed, the less one sees, white on white an open chasm or black on unlimited black, no doubt there’s a trick therein. But looking at what? For example, that object hesitating in the shape of a flying saucer basking in its own light or perhaps a dark patch in the grass that looks like a face, the dead eyes turned inward. Reality is just a matter of fine-tuning, the reduced passage from one world, a gigantic painting, to another by simple rotation. And you see an object better by looking at it obliquely or with your hands, the eyes at the ends of your fingers, paws the equal of any mole who digs his underground network of straight lines and curves, copied from the spider’s captivating veil, a darkroom for resting, a hallway for hunting and another for flight, familiar paths that it travels in every direction, blind
unhooked, the sun is eclipsed when the moon stands below it in a straight line, its masked light reflecting as in a glass mirror, a stain of shadow redoing the landscape and the gleaming cubes, spheres, and cones imprint the ground, the sun multiplied through the trees. It's what gave aristotle the idea of a punctured box, a beautiful scientific toy into which everything outside enters and then again leaves, the leaves and branches, animals and faces, enemies’ armies, amazing information. Each thing is visible, a trunk and the ants dancing in a circle, a canister and the water that runs its length, the light frames and floods the screen, zoom in on the streetlight, dazzling, a blinding discharge, which then disappears in a sudden glaze of ice, the moon passes in front, causing three minutes of night in the middle of the day in aden, five in florence. The temperature drops, air changes color, insects stop in their tracks, birds fall to earth, and the dew begins. A silence different from every other silence, a matte gleam from every other gleam, tending strongly toward violet as before a disaster, the horizon changes and all feeling is suppressed. Someday I will make a film while staring at the sun, a film about cruelty or its perceptible qualities—but when effaced by the moon’s shadow, we see its grandeur and its structure even if it means losing it from sight. And finding it again as the moon slides sideways, events evaporate in favor of the place which gave them birth, but remain in space, or look into a mirror, round to capture the sun, square for the moon, such lovely and charming illusions. When everything is perfectly aligned and the moon as flat as a leaf slides into the shadow of the earth, it disappears after about an hour then emerges from the half-light, a striated ghost and slightly tinged, to regain its luster sometime later.
Graduated with a degree in philosophy, SUZANNE DOPPELT pulls perspectives and concepts from a wide range of natural histories, sciences, and art history and reweaves them into an eerie mix of incongruent eras and attitudes that borders on the uncanny. Particularly attentive to the fragile line at which reality turns unreal and reason becomes unreasonable, she uses echo and slight distortions of syntax to set up reverberations of sound and image. A well-known photographer, she finds this same fine line in the black and white images that she juxtaposes with text throughout her books.

Her photographic work has been the subject of solo exhibitions in France, Italy, Holland, and the United States, and has been included in group shows at the Centre Pompidou, the Louvre, and other institutions. She has held residencies at the Fondation Royaumont, Inventaire-invention, and the Jardin des Plantes in Paris and collaborated with other artists and writers on publications and stage and sound productions. She has published four books with the well-known editor P.O.L, including Totem (2002), Quelque chose cloche (2004), Le pré est vénéneux (2007), and Lazy Suzie (2009). Two are available in English translation: Ring Rang Wrong (Burning Deck, 2006) and The Field is Lethal (Counterpath Press, 2011). She directs the series “Le rayon des curiosités” for the publisher Bayard and is on the editorial board of the review Vacarme.
3.
I myself will I haunt. Maybe one day find an elbow a hand of Harry to mark them later on their side of the wall to be a memory in the body of the other a shadow in a movement.

An elbow a gesture in two parts for who knows how to play the rerun and when I’m already dead then while the one to feel immense sky the other to stay around friends become
To pass time in the fake body to reread the sleeve and all the hands of Ada how to go about walking without moving how to sink with the hair's weight instead of to bring up all she has in her head

Not to forget the leg not to forget the zone of the arm the leg and the opposite leg how to the leg anticipate on the side of after dance step for the dame shift to the left and all the rest of the pelvis.
The leg is for a lot to review a rounded to run or to sit down in the room and with a finger to touch the s of more of more hope regulate the pace and the length of the step on the speed of the transport.

And at the breaking point and when no more carry the body the leg let flex at the same time as to heart and to fall choose a foot more or advance the mark and then boop fall.
The s of more of more hope the s of hearts of hearts joined of sisters of my sisters x a gesture in two parts to mark them later and to do it before they undo it count two times my two spindly legs

Or from fade to fade let myself be transported toward the barrier and the poles copy in the river me the sky and the little tree and that we are we to go off all the way to the other side of the wall me and the other Mary
With the arm’s help how to take off fast. How to do with my arm of Mary so that it always exceeds the shoulders in mounting when my whole lower body of Ada demands in depth the ground in slope.

How to put a bit of my arm of Mary in the fall of Ada in other words in scene of Ada to create little link Mary now one now to be in vigorous parity and fall like a being without nerves.

CAROLINE DUBOIS was born in 1960. She lives in Paris, and teaches at the École des Beaux-Arts in Rueil-Malmaison. She has translated American poets Norma Cole, Stacy Doris, and Deborah Richards. A translation of C’est toi le business (P.O.L Editeur 2005) was published as You Are the Business by Burning Deck in 2008. Earlier books include Je veux être physique [I want to be physical], (farrago 2000), Arrête maintenant [Stop now], (Éditions de l’Attente, 2001) and Malécot (Éditeur. contrat maint, 2003). The excerpt here is from her most recent book, Comment ça je dis pas dors, published in 2009 by P.O.L.

Dubois has collaborated with Anne Portugal on a number of projects, including translations, performances, events, and a book, La réalité en face / la quoi ? [The Reality Opposite/ The What?], (Éditions Al Dante, 1999), and has collaborated with art critic and writer Jean-Pierre Rhem, artist Françoise Quardon, and others. Her work enjoys a growing following in France. Dubois has often worked in relation and response to visual imagery, investigating both visual art per se and moving images (video, film). Often lyrical, incantatory, and polished, yet eschewing traditions and conventions in poetry and in general, Dubois’ writing asks potent and pertinently indirect questions about the nature of familiarity and physicality.
String Quartet Number 4

Frédéric Forte

Translated by Jean-Jacques Poucel

I (Nocturne)

From unsure peaks
we're aligning stars
lagging in the obscurity
of beginners

It's a trap for light
that decides for the most
foolhardy or the most
oblivious
We bathe in lucid waters
in the most rigorous
nudity we hardly dare
think of it

In a time of insects
of roots of obstacles
gifted with a penchant
for our aim
II (trio)

Phrases follow one another for the belated nothing’s left to elucidate

(Is this it the provisional this second between parentheses)
The trio is so black why
this dismemberment and
continuing to make
believe

The empty space to
fill counters resistance
mute like blind
wall
III (Animal)

Big sudden bang
you must be the most
dense the most frivolous
the most animal

Big sudden bang
you must be the most
dense the most frivolous
the most animal
Born in Toulouse, FRÉDÉRIC FORTE lives and writes in Paris. He discovered Raymond Queneau’s *Exercices de style* when he was twelve, and in 2005, at the age of thirty-two, was formally inducted into the Oulipo. He began writing while doing odd jobs, including selling albums, working in bookstores, and playing bass in a rock group. In 2002, Jacques Jouet encouraged his publication of *Discographie*. In 2004, with Ian Monk, he wrote a bilingual text, N/S; with Benedicte Vilgrain, he translated parts of Oskar Pastior’s *Anagrammgedichte*; and with Jacques Roubaud and Jouet, he published the assiduously timed *Chronopoèmes*. The poems of *Opéras-minute* present recitations that are visually calibrated to the dimensions of a vertical line on each page; that line distinguishes what takes place on and off stage. He invented the framework “ninety-nine preparatory notes,” a catalogued potentiality, in 2008–2010, and he made Queneau’s *morale élémentaire* more portable while curating a Parisian reading series matching Poète <-> Public. A playful innovator of “fixed forms,” Forte moves easily between the spatial, musical, and intellectual, making his books elegantly dialogic. He shares his life with his son Ansel and poet Michelle Noteboom. The series of seven “string quartets” from which this selection is taken borrow the quartet’s spatial disposition and its classical division into movements—but very little else: they quite obviously are not music. Seven, because it’s one more than Béla Bartók’s six.

“String Quartet Number” 4 is published in *Discographie* (Éditions de L’Attente, 2002).
(love love
would I take back

.. wool suspended ..
.. now readable ..

between the trunks of the willows

.. hang / shine
—give the time ..

.. play the arpeggio ..
their weaving
—is from elsewhere
that they hold

this gesture

their weaving

— and this gesture

join to the image

that we

their weaving & the artisan

—who slowly applies

your make-up
who — laces . unlaced fits
your back / in front our universe
dearest such a pretty girl

a life . fitted in silk
— has just burned / . here on top
longing . insular agreements

. longing . really
ISABELLE GARRON, born in 1968, teaches in Paris. She is the author of *Face devant contre* (Flammarion, 2002) translated into English as *Face Before Against* by Sarah Riggs (Litmus Press, 2008), *Qu’il faille*, (Flammarion, 2007), as well as *Déferlage II* (Éditions Les Cahiers de la Seine, 2002), *Le corps échéant* (Éditions Les Cahiers de la Seine, 2000) and *Corps fut*, the last part of a trilogy, which will be published by Flammarion in 2011. She collaborated with Florence Pazzottu on the revue *Petite* and has had work in *Action poétique, La polygraphe, Action restreinte, Rehauts,* and *FPC* and other journals. From 2005 to 2009, she was a regular participant in the weekly radio show on contemporary art, *Peinture Fraîche* (France Culture), directed by Jean Daive.

In the lineage of Anne-Marie Albiach and Danielle Collobert, Isabelle Garron’s is a poetry of breath and movement, of the sketched word, of the sketched sound—a poetry of hidden narratives and excavation of memories—an unearthing of language—where the breath is as important as the word. Her use of periods and blank spaces allows for buried memories to rise, for the gaps in intimacies to occur, and for illuminations to emerge. This selection is from her book *Qu’il faille*, each movement of which acts as a kind of journal, full of stops and starts, with rough cuts and detours into other lands, rendering the confusion that occurs in the gaps, the blank spaces, as a locus for remembering.

“The Contemporary Step” is published in *Qu’il faille* (Flammarion, 2007).
I would like to take a while, to study, to read a while and not to see what is slanted, sloping, sly. I would like to read, read hard and a lot, propelled by reading. Always reading within reading, moreover with the how to. And from the writing, to then write it so as to write it, by repeating it so as to think of it, in a new way. A way not thought. And why to make or not to make is not a question one may leave hanging like a raincoat on a hanger when it is raining. It’s unnerving to witness this settling of debt. Nothing any more is chosen or valued so the streets shrink and we jostle one another. Music accords a moment, pleasant or tender. As you had told me, there was a luminous disc, perfect in the light. One says that while thinking of something else, like these people who advance with a thin smile. I don’t see them and if I see them I avoid them. There’s aggression on some shoulders of the road. The shoulders are hard but the march does not follow. I was electrically charged. To traverse the distance which separated me, it was necessary (I had to) enumerate all these things, those which are governed by chance or an incline. So here is what happened, and I will tell you about it again as soon as I have the occasion. I put on my dry smile. Dry and direct. It was something uncalled for and felt good especially at the base of the shoulders. One must do sports. One must exert oneself in any and all things so as to have no free time.
Thus I could think of another journal that I’d made but I can’t write it. This one I can write so it’s good, it’s for writing and as such it’s something good. The other is made only to be read and I can’t write it any more. It is useless to write it despite the fact that it’s no longer written. Really not. It’s really another thing. The facts add up but they don’t make a whole and neither do I. I think about a letter that I could address to myself. An email or a text, to save evidence of that which I forward to you. This is why the streets are packed at the moment there are pre-lilac smells. I passed a window where a mannequin was being dexterously installed in which I saw myself feature for feature. It’s a moment and it’s nothing, or something innocuous, but it relaxes, and the reflection is always good no matter what.
If you try to twist the meanings of words but without bullying them. There are signposts but one can with simplicity and transparency take that opportunity. This must be done for the sake of doing it and to see it through. This is not always true, there is flexibility to be acquired, and that, with patience. I do not know the meaning of these mounds. One offers many items to sell and this offering also moves in space, so I could instantly become a new signpost, very colorful and active. Right there, in evidence of an intersection, a point of circulation, but without seeing it. This is a partly visible color acting, and in excess there is dappled thought, never automatic. Like that you understand it better, and you can expect it and so can I. This is yet another possibility: it is faintly tinted so that it is noticed or not. A filament.

I am speaking to you and yours. You might be it, but why would some aquatic plant, tiny tree or grove not contain the formula.
It’s certainly something like that, a stack but there are also different kinds, with an infinitesimal space between them, and an infinitesimal fire that one does not see but feels. A micro-fire eye of the needle, I’ve felt sometimes and sometimes seen, but which was, for the most part, hidden. I have not tried anything else. Above all, you yourself have walked this narrow margin, like an edge one lets unfold. There again, infinitesimal, you think I am under the influence and which. These experiences can’t be described, but it makes no sense if they aren’t, so let’s describe them. Or rather write them. Yes I repeat there is no point other than to open something I don’t know what up ahead. Something or nothing happening up ahead that yet does not, so forget it at once. If I get abstract give me your hand. Because that’s how it is, like evidence. The elasticity of things is a kind of paradise, I can’t help but seek these places, these plaques. There where I really don’t know the limits of objects, where I lose the assurance of truly walking, that is to say that it doesn’t really work, like a parakeet dumb or out of tune (without a sound program).

The slanting side. The snake-like side. I do not choose.

That way it’s a manuscript, you tell me that it makes sense.

ÉRIC Houser was born in 1956 in Lyon, and now lives and works in Paris. The author of several books, most recently Encore vous précédé d’Auto-di-Dax (Éditions les Petits matins, Paris, 2006), Mon journal pour Nina (Éditions de l’Attente, Bordeaux, 2007), Poèmes en langue vulgaire (éditions Action poétique, Paris, 2009), he’s a regular contributor of reviews and criticism for the journals Action poétique and Cahier Critique de Poésie and the website sitaudis.fr. He has translated sections of Keith Waldrop’s Semiramis if I Remember, which were published in issues of the review Vacarme in 2007 and 2009.

Houser works in a variety of forms, often based in a prose that, from constantly shifting perspectives, interrogates the nature of prose and the way it changes according to which of its many roles it is enacting, from daily speech to the personal letter and the diary notation. In other works, he puts equal focus on the line, particularly in its fragmentary or interrupted state, at times reinforced by a cryptic use of initials that give his texts a condensed, highly pressurized feel. Despite his volatility of form, close attention marks all of Houser’s work—attention to the grammatical unit, to the qualities that distinguish language’s many modes, and to the small details that go unremarked in daily life.
FROM Fortino Sámano (The Overflowing of the Poem)

Virginie Lalucq & Jean-Luc Nancy

Translated by Sylvain Gallais & Cynthia Hogue

And the shadow became Fortino and I was
the shadow following his shadow following
my shadow become Fortino.

From smoke to shadow: to the contour left by light on the wall, the legendary outline of the Corinthian origins of painting. Photography, painting, and the word “shadow” that projects its own shadow onto the name, onto the flight of the meaning of its fortune and fortitude, a shadow both his and mine, neither his nor mine but the shadow itself, the shadow in itself, which precedes the clear light that allows it to stand out, to open wide.
Neutrality: you asked me to be neutral, no surprise I neutralize everything, later.

Later / a certain amount / of movement / nothing / one might say / is displaced / with me / the cursor / without the caption / I'm dispossessed / displaced / the image / is no longer mine / it is / one might say / como nullo / one might say / a movement shared / to no observable effect / that I carry with me

She puts the cursor on the tip of her tongue.

Neutralizing my mouth little by little,
With hers crippled.

The overflow of the poem must follow very exactly the borders of language, going from one to the other, speaker to reader, with no interval. But what it follows is dispossession itself, whose borders coincide with the lip of language. The lip of the linguistic wound.

Why are there poets? Useless to add in such times or turns of anguish. It goes without saying: the why of poets is to lament (not to question) anguish itself. They tell us why and what for, for what reason and to what end language neutralizes itself and is absorbed, slipping away, overflowing. Language evades its office, to know how to make things seem like things and the world like a world, and we suffer when they do not seem like themselves.

But poets also tell us that it gets this way because there is no such thing as “like,” not for things or the world. That is where language wounds us: the thing as a thing instantly becomes something else.
Try one more time with your shadow /

I pick off one thread / but it’s you who dis-
appear /
Killed / I kill you / and call to you softly /
my effigy remains / but nothing of you does /

Gasp ing, fragmented anew, breathless, moved, he calls you softly: you is an intimate
appeal to the absolute of the other, to the absolute in himself, to his indestructible
death, or to God, as they say in English, or in another version, to love and to friendship.
You no doubt always says “you’re killing me.” You force me, you push me to the limits
to say, to give a sign.
Because I conjugate, I actively decline – IT MAY BE WINTER OUTSIDE (BUT IN MY HEART IT’S SPRING) as paucifloral as possible – the refrains are all integuments
Envelopes light envelopes I envelop myself in when the temperature dips langs langsam three degrees lower
the page is snowy it is cold perhaps it’s freezing before our eyes

At a glance, that is, before my very eyes while I have been reading, the text is freezing. The page crystallizes, dumbstruck. It glitters, hard and translucent, letting us see through its envelope of ice, in a style spare and at the same time limpid, the spring in the heart of the winter outside. A very thin and slender spring, without excessive efflorescence. A reserved, jealous poem, encircling its own secret so almost nothing slips out.

Born in 1975, VIRGINIE LALUCQ is part of an emergent generation of experimental feminist poets in France who often work collaboratively and draw their material from a wide range of sources and languages. In addition to Fortino Sámano (Éditions Galilée, 2004), she is the author of Couper les tiges (Act Mem/ Comp’act, 2001). She is a founding member of the editorial collaborative for the journal Nioques. JEAN-LUC NANCY is Distinguished Professor of Philosophy at the Université Marc Bloch, Strasbourg. His Au fond des images (Éditions Galilée, 2003) was a major influence on Lalucq as she wrote Fortino Sámano. Nancy’s companion commentaries on Lalucq’s poems, (Les débordements du poème), complete this significant poetic investigation of the lyric genre itself.

Fortino Sámano meditates on an image from an exhibit of photographs on the Mexican Revolution by Agustin Victor Casasola: the single extant photograph of Sámano, a Zapatista lieutenant and counterfeiter, just moments before his execution by firing squad. Lalucq’s poem makes no attempt to be historical; instead, she treats the image itself, the fact that the camera caught the image of life just prior to its end: what, then, does the image represent? is among Lalucq’s questions. The book’s formal variations transcend the division between poetry and philosophy: “It’s about a trans-mission, a trans-position or an exchange of knowledges,” Lalucq comments.

Fortino Sámano (Les débordements du poème) was published by Éditions Galilée in 2005.
the skin is an obstacle
surrounding taste, mother of
pearl lining the other
side of the tongue, surface
screen — flesh-colored
world of thought a veil
of orange pulp near
contorted convolutions
of the cortex like
unrolled gut —
tracing the circuits
of nutrients, of ingestion

marmelade labels the boiling of
oranges, hesitantly worded, map or even mappe-
monde whose division into quarters augments the
juice — of an image in the mouth, this saturation

knife to blade
Billy reads lips
down to the heart
of the man said honey-tongued
held there paper unfolded follows the echo
in a waltz motionless or checked an invitation’s
murmured oh my candy girl or filches
a whole white hunk of domino unwrapped
tearing up a theme remains abstract a be-
fore-after by episode unstable-installed

DREAM, Alan
buries his toys so that
in the form of a tree
they will shoot up
anew from a black
death-flavored compost

CODE, Alan
sees the body as
a pink set of
particulars — a
topological
jujube
preservative (…) gutta-percha (…) envelopes
sealed (…) with a golden thread rock caramel (…) folded
Leo (…) sugar candy that Papa Poldy (…) will
bring — the boys praise a blank text
no longer thinking or fighting, no longer
whining, thus it would seem taming sweetness

PAUSE (Billy reloads his
carbine with honey
in cadence, sweet, hard
however he likes) and then PLAY

stripped tree, bird-lime, paper: weapons
placed alike in a meadow — we stretch
in order to savor the mix or count the sprigs
of crosswise names, one good as another, for study
the tongue tests
the connection
Benjy — Billy
on dry grass
and cotton
candy —, Caddy
appears on the dot like
a second lightning
flash from the same
turn of thought
for instance a fore-
taste of thunder

knife to blade
Billy reads lips
straight to the heart
of the man called too fair-spoken

thought sugars
the storm / not
water, cognitive
discomfiture of
the bait in place
and position
of fact, after all o-
range is orage save
for n letters in a fine
rain of blue silk
— the gentle rain
its contour
such repercussions
disclose the surface
obliquely opened
— in spoon toboggan
raced down a tract —
all the way, the waves
of liquid motion
widening concentrically
in a typhoon effect
whose dilution sugars
regret, coffee
adventure — exhausted

Born in 1969 in Bayonne, DAVID LESPIAU lives and works in Marseille. His prose, poetry,
and reviews have appeared in many magazines (Revue de Littérature Générale, If, Action
poétique, Fin, Java, Nioques, etc). He coedited the journal Issue (2002-2005) and has translated
Charles Reznikoff as well as, with others, Joan Retallack, Kristin Prevallet, and Elizabeth
Willis. His sequence Ouija Board (2008) addresses the work of the mid-20th century New
York photographer known as Weegee and was published in a trilingual edition including
German and English as well as French; other recent books include L’Épreuve du Prussien, La
poursuite de Tom (both 2003), La poule est un oiseau autodidacte (2005), La fille du département
Fiction (2007), and Djinn jaune (2008).

Characters we know (Mrs. Lindbergh, Gertrude Stein, William Burroughs) or don’t
know (Ben, Bill, Iris, etc.) circulate through the four parts of Four Cut-ups or The Case of the
Restored Volume (Quatre morcellements ou l’affaire du volume restitué, Le Bleu du ciel, 2006),
which, in the way of a mobile, uses constant movement to construct a precise form out
of fragmented perceptions, ideas, stories, and quotations, resulting in a form that gives a
strangely uncanny sheen to the most realistic details.
it's cold again
it's the day before Easter
the computer lights up
the yellow rose is before me
everyone in the house is quiet
the hosts and the guests
i think of whom i thought of when i bought this notebook yellow outside red within
of the shadow around his eyes
shadow in his mouth
i don't know his hands very well
i'm on the mezzanine with a daisy in an eggcup
i turn the first page of the notebook a
there are notebooks for everything
the left hand is poised fingers fanned out
a fingernail pins the page
the index curved like a claw to keep it company
i'll make no record of the hour or date
we'll bathe in the sea once
walk out into the foam
tonight the clock changes for summer and it's cold here in westphalia
notebook of a of absence
the carpet stretches out in front of me

my feet touch the ground without walking

my legs at right angles

i wait for the house to quiet down before calling

words of a

i think of him walking

i don't move

near the lamp

the second page is thicker than the first

the yellow rose seems to wilt before blooming

it's too hot for it on this side of the glass

the moth outside near it is cold

every evening i watch the tips of the dead leaves with their wrinkled folds full of sparkling particles

i don't know what plant they fell from

we'd be sparkling and lovers

what to do

i drink tea from a glass

the sun warms my chest and my eyelids

my arms rest in the length of their orange sleeves

the liquid bubbles at the glass's edge gather when i tip it
to drink

love is love amour amour

the sun comes up behind the low wall

i write small

near a blur
a bird sings
i can't see it
i don't know what color its feathers are
whether its eggs are speckled brown or golden bronze
the teapot that i put into a niche has a shadow
i don't write to him
it's too early
first i must write to the paper
to the ink
birds with long beaks
judging by the depth of the holes in the butter
have eaten the butter from paris and the bread from eurowings
the wings of europa in the beaks of villeneuve-lez-avignons
i'm in my socks at my new desk
i have folds in my face in the little mirror
around my chin and around the laugh lines that make an oval from the wings
of my nose to the beginning of my chin
they recite too many lines here
it clogs the silence
dinner every night at a table of ten
then a walk through the dark to the pay phone
spring is veiled
my pants are too thin
the sun reaches into the alcove into my lashes
a rectangle of sun lies on the white of the bedspread
SABINE MACHER was born in West Germany in 1955, and has been living in France since 1976. Although she has a master’s in German literature, she has devoted much of her professional life to dance, performing with a number of choreographers and groups, most recently Laurent Pichaud and Mickaël Phélippeau. Both the foreign tongue and the dancer’s experience can be felt in her poems, and have kept her from being limited by a single aesthetic. At first glance, her work reads as a notation of the quotidian in precise detail as the sensate body moves through space, but there is an accumulation of temporal complexity—simultaneity and rupture—that complicates the horizon as the mind responds to its surroundings, allowing a rush of meaning to unfold from a seemingly flat ground.

Macher is also a photographer, and several of her books incorporate images. This excerpt is from Carnet d’a (Théâtre Typographique, 1999 and 2005). Macher’s other books include Le lit très bas (Maeght, 1992), Ne pas toucher ne pas fonder (Maeght, 1993), Un temps à se jeter (Maeght, 1995), Une mouche gracieuse de profil (Maeght, 1997), Rien ne manque au manque (Denoël, 1999), Adieu les langues de chat (Seghers, 2002), Le poisson d’encre dans ma bouche n’est pas à sa place (1 :1, 2003), Portraits inconnus (Melville, Leo Scheer, 2004), and, most recently, deux coussins pour Norbert (Le Bleu du ciel, 2009).
FROM *stop getting all excited*

*Vannina Maestri*

Translated by Barbara Beck and Louise Loftus

in his own way he claims that he’s sincere

-i’m an ex-con
-i’ve always sold cars to footballers
-to people from saint-tropez
-i had some cash saved up

15 years of work

i’m not the type to deny the evidence

**PRISON MURDERS**

very positive outcome________________________

how do i
do it????

they’re
indian legends

find a tribe and it’ll tell you about another mysterious tribe and so on you’ll realize that there’s always something farther away until you’re back to where you started without having found

- title :
*between a little society dinner and an evening with your family* which do you prefer?!

we won’t survive it

been there done that (
we start knocking back glasses of dry white first thing in the morning
there's no difference between composition and decomposition

ridge throws himself at caroline's feet
brooke was taken advantage of by éric
ridge's father is shacked up with brooke
who gives birth to bridget

bridget will make a pass at ridge
bridget is not the daughter of ridge
but of éric
so bridget is ridge's sister
but ridge is the son of massimo and not of éric
stephanie directs the family couture house

it's slower than life

and now

delete/
reply/reply to all/
forward/
redirect/
sender/save as/
print/
move/
copy/

we didn't have the time to question the meaning of the words no
time to reply
indeed
my feelings during those moments
i record
with the utmost seriousness

but

ours is a long-term mission

we’ll put the tomcat
on a diet the lack
of exercise is an
aggravating factor
!!!

we’ll do better

- our principles of action
there are
    relative snobs
    and
    absolute snobs

in case of a problem

everything has been taken care of

our mission

get together for welcome
drinks without alcohol
to present all our colleagues
as well as the job-sharing
    schedule
for the next two weeks

relate to your experience
    of working
    in a team
EXPLAIN

HOW
  ;
_
he won’t eat anything but grilled chicken
with nothing on the side
not even a vegetable
some mashed potatoes
NOTHING

people want answers
we’re always looking for
an explanation that’s simple and absolute
my mommy never loved me
that kind of thing
these reasons do not exist

period

things were better before

watch out it'll

make you mean

it doesn’t exist
a series of posts planted in the ground
at regular intervals
to form a rectangle

–
a string pulled taut between the posts
rectangle within the rectangle

–
this center is immobile

so what?!
you can’t see a thing

it’s them it’s me
the lucky rabbit
crocodile skeleton
bear’s head
what you do doesn’t exist
it’s trying to combine the tools
that remains complicated
the streets are clean
the police are there
people walking
cameras
information signs
neat window displays
things are made
you are not afraid
you cooperate

VANNINA MAESTRI lives and works in Paris. She co-directed the journal JAVA from 1989 to 2005. Her many books include Vie et aventures de Norton ou Ce qui est visible à l’œil nu (Éditions Al Dante, 2002), Mobiles (Éditions Al Dante, 2005), il ne faut plus s’énerver (Éditions Dernier Télégramme, 2008), Black blocs (Derrière la Salle de Bains, 2009), and Mobiles 2 (Al Dante, 2010). Her poems can be found in journals such as Revue de Littérature Générale, Yang, Quaderno, Nioques, Action poétique, Cambridge Conference of Contemporary Poetry, and The Germ.

For Maestri, writing and reading/performing her work in public go hand in hand; she has read in New York and throughout France and Europe, as well as participating in radio shows. Reconfiguring language through cut-up and montage techniques, she assembles fragments of many kinds—mini-narratives, snatches from daily life, untruthful or deceptive declarations, political discourse, concepts, clichés—into a non-linear text-image. She refers to her poems in Mobiles as “precarious installations” that create a cartography in which words intersect on a variable territory. The reader, or listener, perceives the brouhaha of a world saturated with fossilized language. Maestri’s constructions produce simultaneity, opening and closing perspectives, and, above all, movement. Out of the blur of passing moments emerges a precision without illusions.
For lunch we usually go downstairs and buy a couple little things and generally take them back up to reheat them but, this time, I straight off asked the baker if he could heat them for us, he looked really put out but didn’t want to say no, so he excused himself and headed out with what we’d bought, explaining how the microwave wasn’t working anymore, but next door it would be easier to warm them, it was no trouble at all, he’d always been really nice, we waited until this fairly unpleasant woman turned up and asked what we were doing, she explained she was the new owner, the shop was closed for the moment, in fact the baker had been fired, of course we never saw him again, he disappeared with our meal.
I walk down this street a few times a day and figured I knew its name when, one day, a man asked me to point him in the direction of this street I evidently thought was the one we were on, I looked up and the street name was different, so then I became so incapable of helping him that after, on a map, armed with my name I looked for where this other road could actually be situated in an entirely other quarter that I didn’t even know and where I had never actually been, this name not the street's but the name in itself was completely unknown to me, it must have been someone’s that someone had judged significant enough to honor in this way at some point in time, I didn’t really wish to know any more, chance had simply made it so that a little while later, there, where I work someone who had this exact same name showed up also, after dealing with our little problem, I switched gears, asking him whether he knew a street existed in our city which bore his last name, and he grew very interested because, according to him, it’s a pretty rare name and one which is not at all common in the area, also his name was a bastardization of another much more common name and it’s probable that the street was, also, like him, only called that because it had split off from the use that one had had for it at another time in history.
Honestly I think I missed the real opportunity of a lifetime recently, I had gone out with some friends and in the group there was this guy I talked to a bit who explained he was putting a pretty serious project together abroad with some capital investment, he had come specifically to talk with some banks to get a kind of down payment, a loan, well, I didn’t understand all that well what sector he was working in but he was nice, he asked for my number, I gave it to him despite my vows to never do such things and, two or three weeks later, he called, asked me if I wanted to go for a drink as he was in town again, I accepted, I had spoken about him with one of the girls who liked him a lot, she thought he was a good guy, very sincere, nice, she knew him, he was an old friend, etc., so I go to meet him, I wait, I wait a really longtime at a table outside, no one shows, I don’t have his number, I can’t therefore call him, too bad, so I go home and there, literally, I find ten messages on my machine about how he’s sorry, he apologizes, because of his work, he’d been held up against his will but if I’d want to, if I am not too pissed off at him, he wants to invite me to dinner and, so that I won’t have to wait anywhere again, he’ll come directly to pick me up at my place if I don’t mind, etc., and it’s true that not having seen him had really awoken a desire in me to spend an evening with him and perhaps more, so the next day at my place I get ready and, here we go again, one half hour, an hour, I admit that I started to get fed up and I thought I was an idiot to wait there for this guy that I don’t know, who is nothing to me, so I go out, I have a good time, I have a great night out, I avoid thinking yet again about this person, but when I get home there are, again, on the machine, an incredible number of ‘excuse-me’ messages, really a confluence of terrible circumstances, this time, yet again, he’s deadly ashamed, he doesn’t know what to do with himself, doesn’t dare ask me to go out again, but he would really like to excuse himself in person for what is really inexcusable, but it’s really not completely his fault, however as he has screwed up twice, he prefers this time to leave me a provisional number where he can be reached and that I can call him at if I want, which he would really very much like, but people of this sort, painful and all that, don’t really interest me in fact, so I didn’t call him so that we might arrange for this or that and then after he would never finish making excuses for himself, being sorry, it’s a little too easy, this, as if at the last minute one just can’t make it but next time, etc., only, later I stumbled into that girl who said she’d known him for a long time and liked him, of course we talked about him and in fact, according to her, if one likes him it’s also because he’s always like that with everyone, that is an integral part of his charm, and I guess it works because ever since I find myself sometimes waiting for his call.
JÉRÔME MAUCHE, born in 1965, lives in Paris and teaches at the École nationale des Beaux-arts de Lyon. He is the author of eleven books of poetry, most recently *Le placard en flammes*, (Le Bleu du ciel, 2009) and *La Maison Bing*, (cipM / Spectre Familiers, 2008). He directs the poetry collection “Grands soirs” for the publishing house Éditions les Petits matins. Mauche has also worked as an art critic (for synesthesie.com), curated shows for museums and galleries throughout France, and organized readings for the Musée Zadkine; he currently organizes performance festivals at the Ménagerie de Verre in Paris.

Mauche’s work constantly explores the possibility (and impossibility) of the sentence, the limits of line, of word and punctuation, of language’s density, even of narrative connections. In this work, taken from *Electuaire du discount* (Le Bleu du ciel, 2004), the single sentence stretches to wrap itself around a possible narrative, a potential tale imbibed in sets of (at times absurd) connectives recounted by a wry, quotidian storyteller. The voice is caught up in itself, in the telling and the language of telling, as each run-on sentence that makes up these prose poem paragraphs is jostled, at times awkwardly, at times gracefully, towards its own vanishing or approaching closure.
FROM Monospace

Anne Parian

Translated by Chet Wiener and Stacy Doris

Relaxation speed unfortunately do not prevent hesitations about the rules and systems on manners forms the tools

Every addition perfects the pile

40. When some tools avoid tiredness they also give the illusion of being able to do what's impossible.

As for the party that does not worry about the quality of tools, it reveals the appeal of weakening the coherence of the whole through a penchant for some inadequate uses

as I sometimes manifest speaking you still convinced why?
The way the lattices are set divides the space in the picture according to a figurative geometry conforming to the walkers’ tracks underlined randomly by their meanders.\textsuperscript{41}

it’s equivalent

without the discomfort of a scene described without its dirty yellow less remarkable value

And finally put up a canopy combining posts and boards with hedges wood screens hornbeams which distribute the skits\textsuperscript{42} and protect them from the curious.

\textsuperscript{41}. They’re followed toward the rose garden despite me where I thought I saw you.

\textsuperscript{42}. Time flies in a particularized situation, I keep the characters to the side, witnesses on the grandstand. The swelling circle of relations an agglomeration of faces of princes and princesses leaning out balconies smiling.

You will be able numerous to distract yourselves without me forcing anyone to be found there for no reason.
Photography useful for near or far treating from every angle the plan\textsuperscript{43} masses colors helps in deciding the parts to conceal

Curtain

Adopting a dominant point of view thus makes it possible to further reduce the idea of what is lower

The general contours traced in order to begin with the help of stakes could finally disappear

\textsuperscript{43} The most objective form for a plan, as I’ve already said, is a square. Most objectively put, it produces a deadly coldness, and it is no accident if I multiply its uses.
Luminosity height density of foliage that scintillate

Birds climbers insects thickly populate the more or less dense foliage offered to more majestic predators\textsuperscript{44}

speech

Mud sand gravel exotic mosses and snow maintained under bright lights\textsuperscript{45}

\textsuperscript{44}. A zoo everywhere inspired by wild nature irregular lines and meanders under the uncontrolled effects of the elements.

\textsuperscript{45}. Many solutions which like you I often satisfy myself with are provided by what commerce offers
Serial decorative cardboard at holiday
time and useless sorts of building
magic contours adapted
to whatever under favorable conditions
only

Some painters offer models walls pillars rocks waterfalls
fields and ruins skies gates doors and grottoes⁴⁶

and three or four years are enough for the reconstituted
materials to take on a patina⁴⁷

⁴⁶. See which ones I copy because in this way I may understand
something or do something that, like me, you still ignore knowing.
⁴⁷. I prefer, for the building of walls, compact materials which can
block out sounds. People, really, should not have to worry about
identifying sounds, or words not directed toward them, while at the
same time no one is forced to whisper.
ANNE PARIAN was born in Marseille in 1964 and lives in Paris. She has written a number of books since the late 90s, sometimes involving photographs. These include *Jonchée* (2007) and *Untel* (2005). *Monospace* was published in 2007 by P.O.L Editeur. In writing this short introduction I had hoped to find the e-mail I had written her about my reactions to her book *A.F.O.N.S.* in 2001. And yet there is something to not finding it which turns out to be analogous enough to serve as a pointer for me in describing how the poems work or affect me. As you start, you feel like something, somethings, or some levels of experience or discourse are omitted, that there is some sort of obscurantist holding back, creating the forward propulsion. But it seems to me that always, as soon as you start thinking with it, the writing keeps falling into place, or rather you follow Parian’s pacing and the places it makes or shows become clear as day. One of the strengths is that she creates such a distinctive way of writing poetry. Here we get what a space may be filled with or how to fill it or how to see how a particular space may be filled or be seen to be filled. But this is the thing: the writing always seems to refuse to make that filling in into a metaphor of its making: it holds metaphorizing correspondence at bay. The last two pages of the book have two identical (?) black-and-white photos.
Men have been cheating on their wives for ages; it’s inscribed in the history of France. The fast-lane life of the kings of the Ancien Regime led to a general relaxation of morals; love was lived live, several times a day; tender words followed notes, all sins forgiven.

In Antiquity, they burned whole cities, and thousands of ships were sent over the seas to salvage the honor of legitimate couples. Inside the wooden horse, little warriors dreamt of the beautiful Helen.

Ah! The ancient classical model. . . Helen!

Excuse me! Helen of Troy was abducted, that’s different . . . she did not say no, she could have stayed, it’s true . . .

Louis XIV’s favorite mistress ended up in a convent.
The next one was welcomed in the Grand Gallery at Versailles.

The last one, insulted by the people, had her head cut off . . . a head that had atoned neither for its conjugal betrayal nor for the rickety thrones that had impregnated the centuries.

In the 18th century, infidelity was accepted and even respectable among men of standing. Aristocrats viewed marriage as a convention and navigated among several mistresses.

Cleopatra and Madame de Staël gained nothing by this deft manoeuvring; they simply managed to avoid becoming statues.
These days, the surprised husband, the eternal husband, doesn’t return.
His wife left him? And?
We’ve seen it in thousands of films.

Think of the fate of the contemporary woman . . . anonymous and moderately pretty.

Kind or attractive, she’ll go to her lover like every other woman, in a harsh light . . . we see the trees arching over her path, and . . .

. . . she’ll explain it all to her analyst, say that she wanted an adventure, like the head editor of a trendy art review.

That she likes encounters on trains, and even in the subway, tired, 7pm, no need to get home right away.

She says she’d like to split in two.

That she adored the adventures of the young Marcel and Gilberte in the hawthorns.

She, too, would have risen to the challenge, etc. . . .
Infidelity reveals the couple in its most precarious state, extends the consideration, the mutation of a tiny community. The life of each is defined by peaks of emotion and ridges of sensitivity. Weekends with lovers is part of it all.

First shift: distancing from the spouse, weighing what's worth it and what's lost, the curtains, the dishes, the watercolors, we'll keep the car, we won't sell the house. At the end of the weekend, you call your shrink or reconsider your husband, either way, the point is made.

And in the animal kingdom?

In the case of certain dipterals, the female receives a present in exchange for sexual services and multiplies her partners in order to acquire these gifts. In the case of humans, it's different: this can expose you to the anger of your mate.

First, we must analyze the word, at times downright corny: lover evokes the splendid moustaches and paper lanterns of Bastille Day, Don Diego, and brocaded cloaks. The nice guy who picks up the check in fine restaurants. You'll dance with him in hotel ballrooms. He'll offer to take you on a Mediterranean cruise.

Lover is also the family friend who comes along on the vacation and avails himself of his best friend's wife. The hero of a Claude Sautet film, straight from the imagination of a perspicacious scriptwriter who knows how to revive the intrigue with a dash of the dangerous. Infidelity causes suspense. Passion and jealousy form the heart of the drama. On the other hand, a happy, loving relationship lacks plot: how can a film full of weekend bike rides, lovely children, and a mother slaving away in the kitchen possibly hold our interest? No, infidelity is the epitome of a successful story.
Infidelity is not very interesting in itself. It simply allows you to test the validity of a feeling, the root of an impulse, a slight madness, a mini revolution.

An entire life could be plotted on a graph with the lean years in red, and the important loves in green. Sketched in the margin is a nervous woman feeling ill at ease; in the opposite margin, in ellipses, her future shipwreck. And the men? How should we depict the men? A satisfied smile should be enough, standing in front of a well-stocked hunting scene, a smiley face like you get on school reports. Like that: the curve rises, and when the affair is over, the curve descends.

In the end, you’ll have covered it all.

VÉRONIQUE PITTOLO takes an ironic approach to contemporary culture by playing it off against some of the most venerated traditions of the western world, such as Helen of Troy, Little Red Riding Hood, and the French Revolution. Her constant play between these icons and those of popular culture creates a tension that she both augments and diffuses by a close attention to the sound patterns of daily discourse. By heightening those patterns just slightly, she underscores the subtle role that the poetic plays throughout our daily lives—in advertising, cinema, and television—but also in interpersonal exchanges from the most casual to the most intimate.

Recipient of the Prix de poésie from the Société des Gens de Letters and the Prix de poésie Yvan Goll, Pittolo graduated with degrees in art history and has published numerous reviews of contemporary artists as well as a full-length work on Gustave Moreau. Her first volume of poetry, Montage, came out in 1992, followed by Héros (Éditions Al Dante, 1998), Chaperon Loup Farci (La Main Courante, 2003), Gary Cooper ne lisait pas de livres (Al Dante, 2004), Opéra isotherme (Éditions Al Dante, 2005), Danse à l’école (Éditions de l’Attente, 2006), Hélène mode d’emploi (Éditions Al Dante, 2008), and La Révolution dans la poche (Éditions Al Dante, 2009). She frequently collaborates with others in dance and theater on stage and sound versions of her work.
Downloadable war chants hiyahiiyyahaa
whoosh and for a better account — please
poetry — so pretty, the sacrament of one or the
other whatever, the thing is still perishable.
What clever machineries circulate in the back
of your heads? Worn, language axe hacking.
Scallops.

The light a bit more light. Let’s start with A. Political alimentation.
Naked, like worms, bodies are worn. Weft.
Through the holes,
you watch power at work,
in, out, in, out.
Statements then the sudden singing exercise chik-a-dee-dee-dee like navel, center of gravity, not slightly nostalgic, the whole world embroidered, beaded, its terrestrial and celestial sections as well as plant, animal and human species. Just a question of gravity, naming.

Embroider to name better, are we these poor scowling loudmouths?
“What did he say?”
“No, for real, what did he say? For real, not fake, tell me…”
For real, it’s by slipping we pass over to the other side, since the other side is only the opposite direction. It’s all only a question of slippage, deviation, one time monster, one time grasshopper, one time human. To pretend, one more time, we, you are the Cheshire cat sitting all smiles on his branch.

“You can go this way or that way doesn’t matter.”

Continuity comes by reversals. At any rate, there’s not much to see and what there is, you can’t even manage to make out.

Clap, clap, clap
We’re all crazy. Goodness gracious!
Swish swish swish
Dynamite.
Too loud, it is too loud!
To be out of bounds
I verb.
The thunder couldn’t hear what they said.
The language shouts its deviation and we are creatures of attraction,
interior, terror, exterior.
Like this clamor:
“I am sensitive!”
Come quick — between — interrogated, the tongue is a needle.
Unravel old skeins again and again.
Dying and its parallel.
Lugging distance,
Inter — weave —
Boom! Boom! Kaboom!
Every new relation is a word.
Re-click of the palate.

Poet/performer/translator VIRGINIE POITRASSON was born in 1975 and lives in Paris. She is the author of Nous sommes des dispositifs (La camera verde, bilingual French / Italian, 2009), Tendre les liens (www.publie.net, 2009), Demi-valeurs (Éditions de l’Attente, 2007), Série ombragée (Propos2 éditions, 2006) and Épisodes de la lueur (L’Atelier du Hanneton, 2004). She has translated several American poets, including Lyn Hejinian, whose Slowly came out under the title Lentement (éditions Format Américain, 2006). She co-translated with Éric Suchère Michael Palmer’s First Figure (Jose Corti 2011) and Ad Reinhardt’s Art-as-Art.

Virginie Poitrasson likes to explore the boundaries between genres and modes of artistic expression, and frequently collaborates with visual and video artists for her performances. Her work often has a particularly feminine focus, as in Demi-valeurs with its sharp, slick interrogation/examination of the female relationship to the body, to men, and to the violent images thrown out by the media in a world where borders between the public and private are blurred. Her most recent manuscript, a “textual weaving” entitled Il Faut toujours garder en tête une formule magique, (Always Keep a Magic Formula in Mind) plays with the different images and facets of the female figure in art, literature, and private and public history.
Our Dispositions Take Themselves for Things

Pascal Poyet

Translated by Rosmarie Waldrop

1. Our dispositions take themselves for things. We’re but disposed to take them by their trace. Their sorts of sets disappear, reduced to the place they’ve set in order: we assign them a space that shrinks them to the same measurements. From their sorts of sets we bring back only things. Things connect in ready sums; our terms are understood in their place. They dispose of some sorts of things: a single one does not show the likeness that sums them up.

2. Some things are predisposed toward sums. They are not as we dispose. Sums are ready for all sorts or order. We in any case reduce them to a thing. It only sort of takes their place.
3.
Our way of using them becomes part of things. They are disposed to be like one another only. All sorts are understood. Their way of being together disappears in our terms: we dispose of things instead of seeing them as a whole, they replace the measurements we shrink them to. They do not fit the order we assign them: things connected copy one another. We take them in the same sums.
We connect them with a dispensation from terminology. We dispense their names among things understood. The harmony of things accommodates a sort of sum, the sort of somnolence that only seems to be sleep. We use only likenesses that do without things; our terms agree on their place. In this place we sleep in a sort of somnolence. Terms seem to put things in their place: we in sum make arrangements for sleeping. Things have all sorts of borders. Things close to their sum contain all sorts of terms: we don’t see things as they sum, they seem out of place when we look for their likeness.

4.
Some things seem to help us sleep. They dispense with ready measures. Sums are not alike unless we mark them so. We replace what they mean by a thing. We use all in some way.
5.
The way we dispose of them becomes part of things.
Things take us only to
their likeness. We can tell apart only those whose
order we spoil: we take some things for their term.
They arrange it so they disappear the
more we try to take hold. All things
are closely connected,
they bring their own space of preoccupation. All
things are made of signatures in their place:
they make their own arrangements instead of what we intend. Things
do not adapt to our measures, nor can we keep them
apart from our own disappearance.
We expect things only among their terms. They
disappear when we resist their sum.
The harmony of things makes for a certain sort of somnolence, of
not sleeping except sort of. We don’t adapt to what disappears
so we can sleep. Our disposition is like the sums
we count to before falling asleep: we’re ready only
for the terms of this connection;
the terms seem to accommodate their measure. We cannot
arrange even a ready thing. Along with objects we
displace our disposition to accept their terms.
Even if we don’t sum up we still connect things with their
sum. To resist order we distinguish nothing
but things. They border on our dispositions:
they do not cease being together even as we disperse
them. Their likeness corresponds to our lack
of imagination as we get ready for them. We cannot dispose
of things where they take place.

6.
Some things are sort of put in place of sums.
They do not form the sums we have in store.
Sleep is a whole in as far as we make it so.
We understand but one thing out of all that it rehearses.
It’s at our disposal only as part of the whole.
7.
We see the border of a thing only when it's separated from its term. Not one enters into our sums or leaves its own set. We assemble things that form other sums, we cannot separate them from our understanding: they are wholly made of connecting terms. We dispense them so that everything could be in its place. We look for dispositions to turn into things; we connect with things only among their sums. They all disappear into sums without things: objects don’t take up all the space of the things we take them for.

PASCAL POYET is concerned with the movement between words and meanings. His works tend to set a limited constellation of words into play, letting the syntactic development reveal their potential for multiple meanings. Éric Pesty has called each of Poyet’s books a theater where a limited cast of word-characters tests their ability to live together in sentences.

Born in 1970, Pascal Poyet lives in Toulouse. With the artist Goria, he co-edits contrat maint, which publishes poetry and artists' texts in a format modeled on the popular Brazilian “literatura de cordel”—broadsheets strung up on a string for sale. Each work is printed on a single standard letter-size sheet folded in 4 that the reader will un- and refold to follow the text. He is the author of Au Compère (Le Bleu du ciel, 2005), Expédiants (La Chambre, 2002), Causes cavalières (Éditions de l’Attente, 2000), L'embarras (Patin & Couffin, 2000), and publishes in magazines such as Issue, Action Poétique, If, Agone, and Docks. He has also translated David Antin, Peter Gizzi, Abigail Child, and many others.

“Our Dispositions Take Themselves for Things” was published in If #11, 1997.
FROM Grand Ensemble

Nathalie Quintane

Translated by Sylvain Gallais and Cynthia Hogue

False Roadblock 1

So I was leaving for Geneva in Switzerland, as if on my way to appear on the shores of Lake Leman without a wet cloth stuck to my face (virgin weeping mouth open unable to breathe), elegant sculptural folds of white on white background drawn from The Little Soldier, Jean Luc Godard, Rolle, 1960.

The weeping virgin fears cold water. It’s because she lost her little boy. We know today how to evoke torture without resorting to oxymoron.

On the shores of the lake, not tasting the cornes-de-gazelle, a bit removed, the front of the image not superimposed on the Swiss sky or Algerian Leman.

If Algeria is France, well then, France is Algeria.

equality took place only with.
balls cut off brought hot to his mouth.
no electrification in the countryside.
cuts of tongues.
ass-fucking and not always of little boys.
False Roadblock 8

We should forbid the old ways less,
Germ of the letter, tangible limit of a
Subject claiming no electric poetic

but of course we must speak of this
electricity.
for fear the writing will be forever slight.
You’re going to understand us, we insist.
instead of: I have understood you.

Explicit methods are preferable.
It’d be so easy to make snuff.
it’s my family dad(dy) taught me that.
a brutal practice works for all.

a slashed fellagha.
hacked vietcong.
exploded spook.
Chinese torture victim.

that’s it you slander.
I reach the highest degree of morality.
it’s like catching the big wave.
surfing, with dusk in the background.

Listen to my sperm spurt in the calf’s nostril.
the little Estelle stuffed straight in my ass.
your mangled mother slung over your shoulder.
the skin of the serial killer’s balls for lampshade.

the historical process mines the poetic.
Aragon and we ourselves in the Resistance.
conscious of the limited use (ours) of electricity.
Reprise

I went to Morocco
A prudent Algeria
In these years of 2000
counting on ferreting out
a less expensive pair of babouches
I went to Morocco the way one goes to Aldi’s

Algeria, even with a gun, was a beautiful country,
it was time, to consider, poetry.

I was in Marrakech as a woman as.
the man who knew too much savored.
a meal of couscous.
False Roadblock 11

Life goes on.

One lives more or less.

One, this I, or I accompanied by a multitude.

One is both I and the possibility of a whole country; One/man, as in the Middle Ages,

Man lives more or less, what I mean is a chouïa.

A chouïa, in small portions; a little sleep, a few vegetables, a little water, a short walk, a brief kiss.

Or: he lives a little, approaches this (the fact of living) approximately: sleep cut by insomnia, rice mixed with vegetables (always with rice), water one draws on foot from a well, compulsory walks, memories of kissing.

NATHALIE QUINTANE, born in Paris in 1964, now lives in Marseille. Her many books include Chaussure (P.O.L Editeur, 1997), Jeanne Darc (P.O.L Editeur, 1998), Début (P.O.L Editeur, 1999), Saint-Tropez - Une Américaine (P.O.L Editeur, 2001), Formage (P.O.L Editeur, 2003), Antonia Bellivetti (P.O.L Editeur, 2004), L’Année de l’Algérie (Inventaire-Invention 2004), Cavale (P.O.L Editeur, 2006), and the work excerpted in this selection, Grand ensemble (P.O.L Editeur, 2008). Quintane is also a literary critic, and with Stéphane Bérard and Christophe Tarkos, founded the review RR, essentially a parody of journals of contemporary poetry.

Quintane writes within a lineage of metapoetic writers such as Isadore Ducasse and Francis Ponge. Her earliest works were constructed from a montage of prose and poem fragments, part narrative, part pastiche. In the last decade, however, Quintane has created experimental, politically-engaged works that address history’s ferocity and social injustice. In Grand ensemble, for example, Quintane confronts a specter that haunts France, the brutal war it fought against the Algerian independence movement (1954-1962). She casts back to both personal memories and those of the previous generations who waged the war against Algerian independence, as well as to a French government that declared infamously, although France was a democracy: We will use any means. The gloves are off.
1: The paw

If I entered the dance my foot on the floor of gold
on a motif abandoned for a long time the lion
let’s say emblazoned with sand in your eyes—at base
it’s very human—we wouldn’t see a drop (no animalaprops)
just sable to print my paw in reaction
ideally I’d paint the least stroke staining
the sense following my only shadow on the tableau
shows however we can’t remake ourselves—better see about that.

2: The mustache

Left right left as a result I found the time
of a length for scoping his mustaches out
to the final crimsons as if by sniffing
patience and the nose knows here is what we needed
to see my lion efface the photo director to his delight
I can’t get over it the gnu the zebu us in the middle
of herds swarming in fish flash we felt swell the air until the
puff clearing off still majesty—better see about that.
3: The odor

To approach the man I am sometimes without thinking about it I change to a lioness in the grass high fidelity regained from the sisters who act as if it wasn’t the odor of young mothers I borrow the poses the craziest ones confounding me each time with a beauty consummated in the same fell swoop I rush to repaint paradise in my image the king casts a glance into the apple tree reddened by a thousand other attempts—better see about that.

4: The claws

(As in image 24 of Portugal I like so much I drew a blank like so in less time than one needs to black out and return to himself in the interval between your claws and your tail I scouted for a rhyme a clause a thing in sum leonine (and how I came through it) but in this mass ruffled of my disjunction we have seen only smoke: no memory of nada for example—better see about that.)
5: The roar

Got to believe that everything here bonds together quick in the eyes of the team one feels suddenly the zebra is stripped for his part from the landscape in a python is still believable but in a lion my little fellow bellows the old recorder of chagrin sound (the cry of the dead would it be the Grail of our expedition?) you can’t hear a bit of that challenge (except to eat lion) to challenge I tell you to return to the country skint—better see about that.

6: The ears

The next day goes down in the area around the watering hole spotted one of the biggest specimens among the trees before which tremble surprisingly two leaves two new leaves sprout at random hidden on the other bank of the hand between the thumb and the one-eyed index finger I try homothetically to take the measure of it aroused by the potential prey and the sky going gray to attain the age of the captain—better see about that.
7: The mane

Masked by the vertigo of this alignment on the other side of the king banished from the view of everyone for his display of boredom to the wind struts by way of the lookalike a young cock there’s no word harsher the mane in crew cut and that comes just to nitpick a fight at the center of our world we deduct it from the swelling of his mane—if it’s not him then his brother and not right now a fatal day—better see about that.

8: The teardrop

My own strategery is posed on its back from a bivouac of the familiars I frequent I send it some signs: I’ve got a tear in my eye black of an old male in mind my little wife of beauty bygone we say without reflecting these psychedelic dreams where I’m zoomorphic—must discuss relaxed along the field I give the feeling of a feeling worth two cents I charge as usual blood rush my head spinning I trigger a sort of revolution—better see about that.

SÉBASTIEN SMIROU was born in 1972 in Niort, France. After earning his undergraduate degree from the École Supérieure de Journalisme in Paris, he studied at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, where he enrolled in Jacques Roubaud’s course in formal poetics. Smirou founded and directed éditions rup&rud, which published seven authors over as many years; the complete series is now available in a single volume from Éditions de l’Attente. A psychoanalyst who specializes in working with troubled children, Smirou recently co-founded the journal LIGNE 13.

Like its predecessor, Mon Laurent (2003), Smirou’s second poetry book, Beau voir (P.O.L Editeur, 2008), is divided into eight sections. Each contains as many poems, with each poem comprising an octet. Each chapter addresses a different animal, so one may hear the title—and its subtitle, “bestiare”—as an echo of mirabile visu, “wonderful to behold,” the reading experience figured like a weird safari, in pursuit of glowworm and dodo. But “beau voir” is also a set expression, indicating cynicism: “oh really? I’d like to see that,” or “yeah right, we’ll see about that.” Between exhibition and exhibitionism, inventory and invention, Beau voir is a kids’ book for grownups.
I’ve got three four guests over. They talk to me, I talk to them — a load of crap! — and I kick myself.

There’s an eye on me and on them.

Just then, one of my guests doesn’t say what should be said!

The eye dives at him with “flags and plates of puny commas” to fill his hesitations and guide him into the thin clean circuit of the cheese slicing wire.

He’s a man in several parts.

One part of him often dashes off with his second head.
If you want to talk to this second head — You’ll be forced to address it Sir by yanking hard on your right cheek!

Now and again his right arm accompanies his second head to where other arms come (from everywhere) to perch.
Which encapsulates him.
But his head resists by skin acceleration to maintain its position.
This man cultivates, currently, by his polished appearance the look of a public bench.
THE WHOLE CHARM OF BEACHES!!

Above all don’t go on your legs into their legs!
Stay there on your whole shirt!

If on the beach, there's room,
— go fer it, but put yerself in there just with yer eye!

Still I'd like to be allowed to see myself, one day, my whole grassy self on a
beach amongst lounge chairs and seas — collecting your beach chairs and
your heads in my yooours.

When there's that. In other words me Sir on a full-length beach. I'll say, hey!
why not — with my mouth dumbly exposed on a.

DRAINPIPE-MAN

Drainpipe-man, we know he drips, he takes on the bend of the drainpipe, and
in the street you can say, “Hey, there's a drainpipe-man!”

He needs a sack-man to pick himself up.

Sack-man has a gunnsack, in his sack he wedges women he takes for a
walk. As such, he lays the groundwork for tourism, a kind of gunny tourism.

It's an enchanting era where every unclothed woman finds her sack.

Where we all dress in each other.
THE PROBLEM WITH GENELOGY, GENETICS AND DEOXYRIBONUCLEIC ACID

Of my own, I’ve always had their flesh hot on my heels, ever since my first skin tests.

Now I want to be right on the level of my bones. And slowly, draw them out of me so they can imitate the carriage of giraffes.

Only later: set out after my bones to cover them with skin.

Constantly keeping in mind the running of giraffes and their group of legs that shoot out in a jumble too far ahead.

VIEW OF THE HUMAN RACE

If God had created us fairly, he would have reduced us into snouts. It’s a disgrace not to have our heads match up strictly to their content. To make us believe we can unfold in imitation accordion. I demand the commercialization of snouts to trap man in a muzzle. Just one look would resolve any questions about his texture. The ending of the human face in a snout would provide a brief summary that should enable the exact reckoning of our species without even a strand of hair getting in the way.
Further on.
A man on his jacket, a woman on her tie. Having finger exchanges. The man approaches his finger, the woman approaches her finger. The two fingers curl into a loop.

There. Their two fingers entwined. The man on his jacket, the woman on her tie and now and again, to unburden her chin, the woman rests all her teeth on their knotted fingers. And leaves her teeth hanging there.

That way she unburdens her mouth, and tests her mouth in all its toothless positions.

And the man sees in his wife something entirely new, a whole new reason to love her, and to outfit himself in a new jacket for the occasion.

GWENAËLLE STUDBE was born in Brussels in 1972 and has lived in France since 2002. She is the author of Ma Tante Sidonie (POL, 2010), Salut, salut Marxus (Éditions Al Dante, 2006), Le héros et sa créature (le Cormier, 2002), a play co-authored with Laurence Vielle called L’incroyable histoire du grand Gelbe (l’ambedui, 2000), and Un serpent de fumée (éditions la Pierre d’Alun, 1999). She has participated in numerous creations for radio, and gives readings and performances in both French and Flemish.

Stubbe’s poetry takes the form of mini-narrations that start out in the everyday but quickly lurch off into the realm of the surreal and absurd. She has described her work, which often talks about men, as a “mini-revenge on one part of humanity” (the selection of work here is from a series entitled “Men and Poses”), and by the same token she has written a lot about war which she calls “an exaltation of virility and power.” On stage, she is a strikingly animated performer whose voice, attitude, gestures, and posture all come into play to accentuate the music of her language and bring her intense view of the world to life.
Pilgrimage until the door opens, it opens, identifies-recognizes, identifies me in spite of years and the upset, in spite of or the disorder, seize the name, recognize, put to the test by the face, explains feelings, if one of them is hers, what they are all together and fake really so well, adds nothing to this, if rediscover-equalizes in the interval not social.

They repeat situations, never reproduce sitting the young woman or life continues and her throat as revealed subtext looks takes off her coat, is slender and furnishes it with her smile in spite of falling crease of the mouth, imagine the possibilities, another possible life.

She speaks on the telephone of particular situations, repeated mistakes, no use, already too late, prompts nothing if could go back in time, the same over and over.

The author of slow movies goes past, stammer, pause over some words, I or after all he shy or exasperated if others say to him over there, in the position, this urban improv.
Calm stroll in the streets and the streets and of one, would or could live on another hill or by a certain landmark, on this street which frees, triangle of sunlight, in the shade and birdsong multiplies, on sills and in cages, to all the hanging wash.

From the pinehedge the deserted beach which exposes with white the agreed-upon shore that the sun measures, conforms itself to from the white of the exposure to green, stripes of foam, to or yellowish on the sand imprinted by tongues of water, circumscribed where the water trails, rewhitens taken from the water, from the colour of the sky is sun set on sky, cloud but trailing white abates final connection, red dusthaze already composes all grey half-tint at night-grey and the water, at, the moistness at, of the colour of, yellow or orange-ish, is acidic in the panorama, gyrostats some bodies scattered across the landscape, in the long darkness, ask, necessitate, don’t interfere, require silence alone behind the little group.

Exchanges on the beauty of artifice or nature exemplifies by what sees itself is seen two women who resist, one by looking at a line goes past nearby, goes back up, across or sight understands the outline, understands or not, only an image of the body, to the body some fragments independent measure crease at the groin, flare, hip, waist and bust.

Who concludes, determines, the evidence by entering, at the place packed with, right at the center of bodies, make a surface of memory with nobody to follow, attempt to connect, telephone, one or the other to clinch the feeling, one or the other get together, by the situation, all possible desires, of desire, bodies and sexes.
On the low terrace of this hill, walk
the freedom of the first day early in the deserted city, on a bench and the view
of the river reframes, while on the telephone, the receiver, the voice, amplifies
by echo, mine on my answering machine in the noise added by resonant wind
here, mixes the separated
the facades
that interrupt the arrival.

In the calm of the streets, the downslope alongside
to the particular scent, if I think of the tune of, here
the scent as far as.

Ditto for sensations, the other’s terrace again in the immobile sun of fixation,
if the path frees to touristic absence, to street next to the courts or buildings,
viewless or the sea tints the walls, a colour states.

On the packed terrace, one blushes, the exchange of glances or skin takes on
the tint, by reflection in that, and the sky reflects, in a photograph, take a few
of skin in particular, the rose or beige or copper or transparency of, from the
sunset, and takes one.

Have no idea of the time
a sound in the stairwell, that blue missing from the sky, missed by the sunrise
over water, river
verify at waking, if still, already, always night
rise quick, sign at the first, alone in the dark of the streets
a woman straightens her back, evokes, she imagines, from afar, the rear-
silhouette she could be on the river-horizon
cargo ships and their manoeuvres, the point of some photographs, imagines the grain of the shot, round to the end of a spool, imagine, expect

the sun coming out, passes in nine minutes, little by little, the light gradually emerges on buildings or an apparition on the surfaces of walls, gradually on the roofs and the rooftiles don’t shift, captured set immobile no longer possible as much as, the luminous advance well captured, years before, at this vantage point, the identical, her approach

she, long coat and hood says romance would take place at the very last moment, asks for a cigarette, lights, the face, turns away from me, doesn’t, distances herself and starts again

a boat on grey, horizontal and expands, birds pass in front, abrupt quick jumpcuts in movement, didn’t want, displacement, happens, no connection possible between two times, light, lifts from the pollution, if the sun, the winter, twists, didn’t expect, oblique difference from the summer path, doesn’t exactly leave, break the expected light, gradually, aim again

and leave again.

ÉRIC SUCHÈRE was born in 1967 and lives in Paris. He teaches the history and theory of art and is a member of the editorial committee of Action Poétique. His publications include l’Image différentielle (Voix Editions, 2001), Le Motif Albertine (MeMo, 2002), Lent, . . . un autre mois . . . 1997-2002 (Le Bleu de ciel, 2003), Fixe, désolé en hiver (Éditions les Petits matins, 2005), Résumé antérieur (Le Mot et le Reste, 2008), and Nulle part quelqu’un (Argol, 2009). He has translated several books of poetry (Jack Spicer, Erik Lindner, Giuliano Mesa…) and is also an art critic.

Suchère’s texts are ekphrastic; painting and film in particular lend their surfaces to his compositional logic and syntax. Benjamin Fondaine’s shot lists, Sophie Calle’s narratives, Christian Boltanski’s textual works, the filmic essays of Bresson, Jean-Claude Rousseau, Duras, and Straub and Huillet, and Fluxus mail art all inform Suchère’s textual thinking, as do trans-media poet-contemporaries, such as Pierre Alferi and Stacy Doris. In Suchère’s inter-media poetics, body and image, text and image, remain in flickering movement, soliciting a sensed abundance as well as the semantic mise en abime of jump-cut and caesura. There is room in this caesura for both the glimmerings of the not-yet-apprehended, and the volatile failure or limit of the desiring perceiver. In Suchère’s work this limit is doubled by a formal discretion, at the level of both the book and the poem. The effect is an analytic baroque, where the wilderness of subjectivity or rhythm enters a cultural and historical relevance via the considered foreshortening of bodily identification.
Second consonant, neuter letter radical
Throat, articulation point of ‘khà’.
To emit ‘khà’, voiceless breath.
Khà, the face: Turned towards the sky...
And raven pecks anus.

(And time may well give the appearance
of inflection to certain gatherings which,
originally, were merely compositions:
“akharal” become “khral”, pronounced
“thrál”, taxes: Weigh the tax, it’s
gold dust!
Gbble down dandelions.)

Khà, serving to precede: khà dog’, color.

i, one  A bilious illness
          makes a white conch
          look yellow.

u, two  And respiratory problems
          the snow on mountains
          blue.

é, three  Ordered green, obeyed?

o, four  When not sick to the stomach
          staining* the rim
          of the mouth makes
          no sense

* in red, with betel
ai, eight
Snow for eighteen
days and nights
but the lark, sweet songbird
undergoes no change of voice

For a gender distinction of terms in the sentence, Tibetan
substitutes an evaluation of their position in space. Khà is a sign of
proximity:

Khà = What
does not exist,
to desire
it*

* demonstrative of distance

khà, any orifice:
In the gap
between mouth and nose
one lie, two fingers
cover a mountain!

khà  - (b) a (pronounce wa), snow

Snow falls, the sun
clouds over.
The sun rises,
then bottom and slope are equal.

ta  thà  d’a  na
pa  phà  b’a  ma

khà [b-] d’a vowel é, “khadé”,
silver tongued orator
silver tongued orator, what do you say?
high color good looker, what do you eat?

zha, za, 'a, ya.
ra, la, sha, sa.

khà -rog, who says not a word
avoid birth to escape exposure to wind

Set lips will not be quaintly bedecked:
to keep tongue and lips
from retracting.

khà -rog, She says not a word:
they say this girl is an idiot
she tells everybody off
they'd swear she can do it!

khà vowel o, kho: he or she, add ‘i, kho’i  -(pronounce kheu) -,  (Besides, may an inner restructuring of the word not warn us of a true inflection?)

her mouth?
my nose!

“Consonants are divided into seven and a half groups.
From the first, third and fourth groups,
The two last letters, plus the third letter from the sixth,
And the whole seventh group except for ‘sha’,
Are the ten suffixes I want.”

kha, suffixes [ -m, s] khams, the reign
Kingdom, when
the masculine is detached
from the feminine. Valley,
where grass and water part

The fourth letter of the seventh group is ‘la’.

[m-] khas (pronounce kha-), the erudite

The erudite does not refuse choices,
the common man does not accept enemies.

The second letter of the seventh group is ‘la’.

khal (pronounce khäl), burden

A donkey’s body, vehicle for three bales.
The body of a rooster
counts off five wakings

The third letter of the fourth group is ‘b’a’.

khab, needle

The boatman’s knowledge of water is deep
as the needle is known by the one who forges it.
We expect the needle to sew—
and the bellows to blow.
The needle’s eye is empty.
If afraid of losing your needle
you put it in a pincushion.
Afraid of losing the pincushion
hang it up.
Needles are lost
through nervousness.

Cows are lost
because of layout.

To measure the sky
by the eye of a needle.

khà, “kind of article, itself, everything”

In the orifice ‘mouth’
a thousand languages,
in the hollow of the ‘hand’
Chenrézig*

* Chenrézig, in Sanscrit Avalokiteshvara, Bodhisattva of Compassion.

BÉNÉDICTE VILGRAIN, born in Lille in 1959, founded and edits the contemporary poetry press Théâtre Typographique with Bernard Rival. Based just outside of Paris, they’ve published a wide range of contemporary French poets including Frédéric Forte, Sabine Macher, and Marie-Louise Chapelle as well as contemporary Americans in translation such as Susan Howe and Keith Waldrop. Vilgrain is a translator herself, working with texts from German, English, and Tibetan; she has translated work by Paul Celan, Walter Benjamin, George Oppen, and the Dali Lama, to name just a few.

For the past several years, Vilgrain has been working on an open-ended project titled The Tibetan Grammar, which explores language from an almost architectural perspective, using the structure of Tibetan to examine how a language creates categories—and then immediately overflows them. In the attempt to construct a concise map, she deftly demonstrates the inability of language to remain sufficiently static for any cartographical system. Her balance of analytic query, sharp imagery, and radical juxtaposition creates a varied and vivid surface that gives the reader an uncanny sense of experiencing the familiar through foreign means.
When the mind stares at itself what does it see? A vanishing blur? The inner
demon returns.

Every moment a starting point, thinking always on the move, traveling. Is
thinking pandemic?

The universe could have taken myriads of roads other than the one it took; it’s
exiled too. “Indigo horizon pure whole unbroken sight seeing it,” thinks, says
and writes Leslie Scalapino, a cup of coffee in her hand.

Not seeing rivers is also another way of dying. Hours are lining up in cinematic
motion.

Plants are eager to break rank. The sage and the verbena have grown taller than
the rest. The afternoon is over, as usual.

Trees are imitating the government by always bending under the slightest
pressure. We’re prisoners of the concept of disaster.

The pubs have closed. The alleys are impracticable. A stream by the road, singing,
a streetlight fading in the fog. Mind staggers over its productions. Ideas, foggy,
love, impossible.

All there’s left to do is to listen, over the radio, to a baseball game. We have run
out of taboos. Killing has become a big bore.

Birds fly in the great emptiness which is the heart’s repetitive desert. Skies,
waves on waves move directly into one’s head. An eclipse can bring illumination
to the soul.

After the debilitating ecstasy, the twilight. Sirens are sending warnings: a huge
flooding is expected. Let’s stay within the coming night.

All the light bulbs are in position, and functioning. There’s nothing special to
report. At least for a while, Earth will remain a planet.
Does this cold body collaborate with the pain it feels, or is it obliged to bear it?

The beauty experienced was an illusion. All it did was accelerate that particular heart-beat that records our fall.

Cold + cold is an algebraic equation: the snow's whiteness traps the line of blood that's running through life’s fire.

To turn over in one's bed is like changing hemispheres. We reached the possibility of being capable of immanence but it's not sure that the species will transcend itself.

The lassitude will linger, in the body. In the weather. The weather is the lover. A whole range of red mountains is lit by the sinking sun, and has become an immense electro-magnetic system.

You and I met on the day of Creation. The storm is still in us. The rain waited too long to fall. We may come back as grass, be eaten. A trail will remain, a path, the next storm.

Love is coals burning in a long winter night.

Grass grows but stops short of flying. The roots’ resilience, the pressure. Adding days on days.

Living on the moon may well turn out to be worse than being where we were. An emptiness with no future.

Here, we hear the future knocking on the windows. That’s not a thing to be dismissed.

In sadness there’s more energy than in this affirmative existence. This routine.

A ghost arrived with a handful of roses. “No other flower is a flower,” he said. He left them on a table and quit; the more the place darkened, the more they glowed.
A smell of iodine pervades the sea. Salt in the air. The past drifting with the breeze. The faraway Sierra Nevada is giving signs of restlessness, and the coastline is shifting aimlessly.

The desert is an open uranium pit. Deliriums mushrooming. You will contemplate death, says the Book of Revelation.

Is making love mentally to a dead lover making love to death? Does it come from the desire to rupture time and create an abyss into which one will find the lover intact, although not breathing?

Then, at a certain hour, everything is smoothed out. The horizon moves forward in softness, and fades. In the process we lose our way to a dream.

Rupture of one’s veins. Blood flowing “inland.” Death’s meaning revealed as a lack of shelter, of light.

Love: cosmic absolute black center radiating ...

Girls who witness the mother’s suicide never trust the world. No man will later attract them, no woman will conquer them. Once in a while they will establish with the night secret relations that no one else will even imagine.

I’m listening to something that wasn’t meant to be heard ...

Measuring light’s intensity is akin to figuring out an ancient Hopi’s attraction to his habitat. We cover trees with crowns and convince mountains that they are sacred chiefs. Everything has quieted down.

The fog is licking the ground and stretching over the hills. Slowly, crawling higher. Picking up light at its edges. Moving. Nature not keeping archives.

I want the glaciers of the highest mountains to share my miseries. I want a sudden spring.

To be is to have been and intending to be. It’s not dissimilar to driving a car. Everything we do is an analogy with what we are.

To take pleasure in the void is an operation of erasure, a denial of the ocean’s power, or one’s preparation for the time when ocean will engulf all that there is.
A sky without a single cloud isn’t necessarily blue – it can be sheer light. We wish not to disappear before having had at least one illumination. But illumination can’t be measured: it’s like that sky, with no shadows, no mercy.

So what about fog? Total fog is illumination too. We’re not dealing here with clouds anymore; we’re facing the loss of one kind of self for the experience of an other, totally fused with the world, in total inner clarity.

Poetry is the way to Being. We’re searching for ways to see, to arrest, to tell, in the great passion for the eternal flow.

And eternity may disappear too.

So mind has its own black holes that swallow large and tumultuous rivers, mountain ranges, galaxies, as well as toys, trees and memories... we have to take a walk to the cliffs.

Muddy lakes are swelling across the sky.

From what appears to what’s hidden and from what’s hidden to what appears: always on the road.

The storm withdrew after closing the door. On which side of the door were we? The question is: can fire be controlled?

The sea has taken measure of her being. She was a flat mercurial metal today, as she was yesterday. Herself a sign.

When you walked the deserts of the Andes in the midst of the mountains and their lakes of salt you searched for fresh water – nothing else retained your attention. The possibility of losing your mind left you then indifferent.

In certain areas of the world countries are made to explode by remote-control. It used to be said “by divine will.” It was easier to resist God’s decisions than today’s super-powers.

It’s because God moved within Himself that He let the world be. Where does this lead us to? To the need of a God that doesn’t die? But Nature moves the world and dies without dying and includes us in all its processes.
How to find the road that rises gently toward its own horizon so that the sky touches the earth with no physical contact and no commotion? How to reach that stage where to know anything would be superfluous?

Though thinking is inseparable from being alive, how wonderful to have it suspended, neutralized, not in a kind of sleep but in the most acute form of awareness.

When the sun goes down, a chill descends with it, and spreads. Sometimes gas from one star hits another star’s surface and undergoes nuclear fusion.

There’s no use telling that absence is heart of being when someone dies. The dead don’t come back the way we knew them and no divinity – even when out of its season – has ever done anything to make things different from what they are.

I opened the drawer and freed a bunch of flowers and my eyes followed them on their journey to the top of a hearse, and I saw the fog leap over the Bridge as a phantom who had abandoned his vessel – there was nothing to be seen over the ocean, not even the ocean.

Earth is wandering. Moon’s round eye dreaming. There’s no sky for a while, but fields of fire. We’re entering the heart of strangeness.

Thinking helps the flowering of the body... the sun attracts it, – then when there’s a drought on the land, a car accident... thinking dies.

The red sun is taking possession of the pink granite of Brittany.

My fever burned for a hundred years over the lands of an unnamed planet bigger than this one.

In Europe’s narrow streets young men do not understand dreams of conquests anymore.

In pain, even. A thin ribbon of luminous grayness marks its way through a hill at the mountain’s base. Then its flow increases; it’s now a torrent. The mist is boiling. The temperature has fallen. There’s a moment to the moment. We’re in the world.
We fear violence, but more feared is its absence. So heavy is the world becoming. Heavy in the soul. A few laps in the ocean will bring rest.

There’s what I will erase, and what will be erased, this chestnut tree that will disappear, that fog that’s already melting into air, and surely this world and further away what’s not yet discovered, everything on its way out...

If only thinking could get as dark as darkness, wash off what it thinks it knows, die to itself with no wish of resurrection, and land somewhere with no space nor time, in pure presence...

Verbs are not agreeable to Being because it lies in everything and retreats with no movement. Hypnotized, we free ourselves from such fascination by shifting our energies on different matters, unless, like Cezanne – and only Cezanne – we paint apples ad infinitum.

As an answer to stagnation we demolish; for lack of love, we take the car on an outing, and not believing, we speak of religion..

There’s no dissolution of space, it seems. But we die. We detest death, and no explanation weakens the pain, or even makes sense. Darkness doesn’t cover what is not there.

So spring explodes over lands and oceans and there will always be someone, or something alive, to witness.

We fear love, supreme terror lying at truth’s deepest layer.
Four Poems

Susan Maxwell

Greatest American Hero

Come here, aerial. We are born on this tarmac every minute or two, hair frocked by blade-luft. Where the bee sucks, there suck I. Swords too massy for your strengths and it’s a shock, swimming in sneakers, circle-stupid around trade winds. Einfall. Any-note-at-all and we’re up you know where, the district’s bee in my blonde curls and we stick to the craft of the billboard-slickers. Stepping from the ladder into a massive change in scale, the bells of the cowslip, the blotchy cry of owls. The word turiya, translated as swoon, denotes a fourth state. It’s temporary they say with some tucking of socks, the better part pink and dissolving into looms where work ceases but the squeegees continue. To call it a song is to burden the listener. With the riddle of the swoon, true but not for any once or future you. Einfall. Peace love the gap.

Merzbau

Exertion of the furniture undone of its pieces and returning in state, the catatonic slides in as an altar to a friend, shoe in a niche, shrugging that a free play of ventriloquism is what the puppets mean when they say the weather was fine today, spur of the swarm. The next line was the weather agreeing that today’s free play was fine but that line is refusing to labor for the quick or dead under some cornflower grave of the sky, some rainwater privatized, the requisite pronoun and its removal for the relief effort which is fair game for all sides, a room rented in blacklist then bombs then begun again in some sad amsterdam.
**Underneath Epic**

To remit the dark fellow-feeling of rain
as it orchards away. Here is a statement
in which you are the master who wanders

often in shorts through pavilions
like a loose tooth, favored, speaking
highly of the irrelevant as a coup

against the rest. The river’s automaticity
behind the leaves swelling open in snippets.
Of water of which many assume the form

in the simultaneous rise of hills and eyes,
and the hills have them where the argument
begins, disingenuous, all hands on deck

though that deck may resemble
a tiny brew with moon moving autistic
through the bottle. To be organized only

through a nineteenth century horde
tasked with accumulating in a way that wet
the bed. The deck. The dawn’s

enamel and when this is Troy
we fight it naked, chicken-bone
tents through winter or the whale’s

blue-black kernel foaming a love note,
a sanction, a black stage. A lung the boats
breathe down their narrow lanes.
Some useless conduct then pauses, tiny, toward a thing or two. For these short distances, I shoot the music video. For my wife but song sets out for social utility through witnesses fresh to their protection: note the bird, care nothing for it.

Rosy as gillslits the skate blades purl pond ice and the dash a solid sill of ornaments, anachrons alone like ants locking mouths. As when first found out, a cup of milk, a bulk of flour, a room to lock it out of. Poured through the headlights of that deer in a deep-foibled scent of regular seed. Unfolding arms, a sleeper ornate at intervals, wrong with these words: rise up, you are the lost engineer to rewire that bridge. Blackbirds passing black along in papers, muter storm still.
Our hours are between modest concern
and searing disappointment, when the way you live
in the privacy of your laughter
matches the dance of the palm fronds
in the emasculate air. Sunset and obligation,
motor and promise. I mentioned you to the floor
when, on a closed morning doused in the awareness
of the long and unsure gestation from could to is,
the narrowness that leaps from mind to mind
in the harbor of pure locality met its desire
in a comb. The small threads that braid into my face
tensed in a blast of AC. A hexagon shifted in my mind.
There we were, together at last, feeding on our thoughts
as the innertubes carried us along.
My only wish was that the metaphor
would outlast the afternoon. But let's face it,
it was Bud Light and a falling market
and the hope that possibly turning out of the hallway
into the next room would bring about a new fashion
in the sky and populate us like speech-filled balloons.
But no, instead the tide drew back
and I stood next to my car
and pocked out of my swimsuit
and angled back into my pants
in the corner between the open door and the seat,
and I receded to the point that hovers between
pure expressions of will, bold footsteps claiming the hallway
in the stupid morning, and the stupid morning itself,
the place where care bleaches monuments into grass
and the businessman swallows conversation
in the lush quiet of the living room
as he closes the front door at night.
The Same

The dominant palette was 1961, though the television clashed. I sat admiring the air just in front of my eyes, space rippling out in rhythmic blur and clarifying certain beliefs about light. I am in the human world and not in the human world. The sense of what I am refracts off the expressions of those I come up against and objects shedding awareness of time. Circumstances distort as much as they explain. I remember that my hair had taken on a JFK aspect that morning, and I had put on a nice shirt with a button-down collar, and I was in Nashville standing on comfortable hardwoods in a foyer while commercials for a Honda chain poached the air into boredom. I was worried that any conclusions would turn out to be the embarrassing implications of the box of cereal composed plainly next to the dirty spoons on the counter. Can they issue forth from the spirit, or are there a series of actions no one has any say about, rain hitting the pavement as children run between the chain-link fence and the hill? I swayed from room to room in a dense and complicated music that drove pleasurable though an intuitive and incoherent math. It was hard not to read it, but I knew that what was best for me was to lean against the bank of outlets, where a less specific sufficiency leaves signs that cannot be traced within the more regular cone of attention.
Does the vacuum cleaner mind that it’s in the lake?  
What am I today? The news? Address yourself  
to the side of the building and be alone with it.  
The small occasions of the world that I can’t  
visualize singly, where you’re sitting, the way  
the weight of your body regards the shapes  
it imposes on the air. I stand up and live anew.  
It’s not always clear why I’m this thing and not  
some other thing. I didn’t hear from you  
for a few weeks and began to worry,  
to liken my skin to a patch of weeds  
in the rustic shoulder arhythmically drenched  
by bucketfuls of wind off the ends of passing cars.  
The mind rallies in prose. Sensible. Sensible.  
Sensible. Sensible. Are you generally happy?  
Everything rained. I feel like a video. Moss  
and seltzer. I resist succumbing to the core  
of your approach, finding instead  
that the habits of mind that constrain you  
engender a tension far more interesting  
than what you believe are your best ideas,  
ideas that if you indulged them completely,  
the operatic reports of your most personal  
arguments would bring us all to doubt  
what had so amazed us in the first place.  
I know some particular thing. I have  
experiences of actual consciousness. Today  
I walked through my neighborhood in the rain  
past an orange cat on a stoop.
The Ideas

Not a better way, but the path to heaven yearns through these yellow dispositions. Such a beefy misguidedness, the leaves shaking in untold complexity, the created crisis sweaty as a cholesterol in the one and only daylight. Declaration. Mirror. Love reaches its arms through your skin and pricks the swollen ends of your mood. It is a disposition of the mind as it intercepts actual things in the world. It is the long wait. I close my eyes as the car goes through a cable of glare between blocks, and when I open them there is a silver brain coming from my face in a long stretch like politeness, a hand circling in the air again and again describing a blizzard. The abundance of review and self-righteousness. Considering the time before I was born is not difficult. I rent attention from my wardrobe and grew a fire escape from lock-down youth in the pigeony daylight. Rain is prosecuting the neighborhood as the continuously variable angles of the eyes to the world make modest corrections to the ideas. Privileges abide within privileges. The shadow of a telephone pole and its wires drops plainly from the side of a van onto the street, and the only color coming from the clouds is prettier in the reflection of the car window than as-is.
Three Poems

Lawrence Giffin

The Bellmaker’s Orphan

The cathedral, the caveat that
uttered and unvoiced persists,
insists in your insouciance.
But your thought is a
degenerate
murderball of just having to be.

I just am here. I am just here.

Just there, across the omnipresence
of imaginary terror,
a means not so much
to actual terror
but to the mark of terror’s
aimless autonomy
and a way to keep it close.

By the time these words reach you,
you will have other names for
those people, those
thoughts. Those who want for nothing. First
no better than the last. This land
no farther from empty fields in plague, the city
begrudgingly repopulated with pagans.

But the pagan is only a means, as is
his paganism, which now thrown under
the logic of a monopolized transcendental
is the city that sets us in motion, occupying
spaces settled in a momentum without monument.

Indicate your category
of lived experience
in the pharmaceutical brochure.
It is still difficult to answer for the future; the future takes forever. But I think you can see how you came to take my place in the imperative light of confessions made not to delay bodily pain but out of an unresponsive tickle that just happens to be. Empty field. Black beam flashing from cursorial to cursory, returning by another route to choke the user on its cursive graffiti. There is always tomorrow with its conditions, its stake in today.

Local boy makes good, returns to the community, having brought with him from the outer rim of the horizon manipulated artifice that gives the town, the family, its day-to-day. Having seen a hole where everyone else saw a godhead, the prodigal son quits his rambling. His spontaneous pursuit relocates its destiny within the community to plug disused structures with the miraculous backflow of wealth. Thus are industrialists born of sharecroppers and vagabonds who pooh-poohed conventional morality.
We Laid It Down. We Got Tired.

Not more or less deprived
of ground nevertheless given
by a disfiguration not uncovered,
I have my likes, my dislikes,
a caryatid of fecal column grown thin
and winded with righteous authority,
that is, by our need for speech.
I too am pressed by a meeker plume,
piqued by interim and hyphenated,
filched thin by great and little
domesday. I too am blindsided
by hindsight’s blind spot, sickened
by the taint below Love Canal,
by pained and dowdy defenestrators,
but you, you are only dying to be
squarely set within inevitability.

Demonstrable mastery,
what piece of cracked potage
her boon gnat displover’d and loused
with bongwater steeped all day.
Because you flavored this drunken
tizzy with hinged anticipation,
the rest of it gnaws my no. 2
as pared pulp passes over into
verdure influence switchbacked by
three-color recitals of nationalism.
Keep your ass on the line.
Brackish wards washed by flood of
new year’s shake-junt beheading—
it writes itself in an oar-distorted
crag’s reflexion, during school-time.
Too much time and else on our hands,
nights not indexed by lines of tread
and tracer fire, too much
read into to tell and like in dreams
forced to watch, to plot
the protein shake in boring
parenthetical the breadth of
a troglodyte’s selfish trill.
Not just to words is clapped
the dwindled kindness I withheld
slack enough to cover my ass
but to you, my punitive stipple,
because your waste is small
and your curves, unmarred
by yellowing signage,
picket the self-abuses of my history.
Because you fabled your broach
with bleary lips, because
I had been drinking, because
a protein loosened diagonal
to as many lagerheads
as bored my stony sport.
I was beset, besotted
in a land without scapegoat,
in a family plot plopped
with the feral coinage unslotted.

Love lies in eternal ad hoc, in pierced
troth, in fuck all; its abhorrence
drives wedges together, not even
nothing, shamed by some catholic
humanitas, repulsed by some
protestant Naturalismus. Shame
is the sign of our correct practice;
we speak of it incessantly, now
that it is no longer obvious.
We laid it down. We got tired,
having still to be in the knowledge
of necessity, kept restless in a timeliness
suspended in nixing imagination,
even secured in that propaganda,
the future, indistinguishable
from extortion, from that first philosophy,
which makes stuff mine at all and
is clotted by its name, is copied word
for word onto itself in correction fluid.
No one will remember that you gestured to the spirit of crime in war, seduction that first seemed banal to us in the homeland, in that, what did we expect. All the sudden, it has always been enough. To walk away and not look back.

If only I could be ashamed and reconstructed as a list of bad decisions ending in a show of good faith, soundless outdoor blunt of tactics, then I could be broke and mended. I could be a faceless mass’s point of contact well beyond the limits of my term in office and still not stand not in the way but in for justice as only you can, with leash in hand, drop of local color. Theater of war-time stimulus-response at home, home theater of cruelty, of homemade pornography. That history does not judge harshly. It will not throw the book at you. Nor abscond the bailiff’s kindness taking you to see its barber, Necessary Jobbery, which fairs laissez les bons tons rouler as well as stand-ins for the poorly recompensed.

You are not guilty, any more than you are truly yours. As judge, not harsh enough, that is, such requirements as ours is thus recalled enough to
slap the bloody donut from its fist. But not shameless me and my one built-in joy: the given’s Christian name, Necessity.

To live with your desire has been difficult, bears the brunt of another’s. But burden is anything but work.

Occupation is not belonging even though you stand there or in spite of the fact.

History will not judge harshly or at all; it will not let you take it off.
Todo exacto, piedra sobre piedra, bajo el estupor. Tengo adherida a la piel –planta del pie–, un nombre preciso, una esquirla dentada (aguijón o filo o tenso nudo), cristal a la uretra. Guardo una voz que es sombra, carta y anunciación: América se hunde. Hay una montaña o casa frente al mar que esconde un secreto. Manto, el desierto es manto. Se escucha una bestia colmada de fraguas: negros y blancos inventando heredad. Tengo en las manos un país del que he sido arrojada. Cinco millones de emigrantes caben en la cuenca de una sangre común. América es una madre que mata.
Everything precise, stone atop stone, beneath the stun. Glued onto my skin—the sole of my foot—an exact name, a serrated shard (stinger or blade or tensed knot), glass in the urethra. I retain a voice that is shadow, missive and annunciation: America collapses. There is a mountain or house facing the sea hiding a secret. 

_Cloak, the desert is a cloak._ A beast is heard bursting with forges: Blacks and Whites inventing inheritance. In my hands I hold a country from which I've been flung. Five million emigrants fit in the river basin of a common blood. America is a mother who kills.
La Hispaniola. Como si fuera la primera tierra. Que es. Y en ese recuerdo cupieran ya todas las noches de América. Rastro. El ron mantiene a los hombres embrutecidos, me digo. Mi abuela reza con el vaso de vodka junto, orar es mentirse a uno mismo, me dice, pero conforta el alma. Como el destilado de oro falso. Nacimiento. Como cadalso al que se entrega uno con la boca abierta, deseosa de alimento naufrago. Montar la oveja, me digo. Ahora los tenis Ducati, el floro que trae de gracia una hembra ke buena, las cadenas de oro al cuello, la camisa fina, la marca atrapando al cuerpo, gritando proveniencia. América se hunde, y nadie se ha dado cuenta. La otra América le ha chupado el seso.
Hispaniola. As if it were the first land. Which it is. And all the nights in America might fit in that memory now. Imprint. Rum makes men into brutes, I tell myself. My grandmother prays with her glass of vodka beside her, to pray is to lie to yourself, she tells me, but it soothes the soul. Like false gold distilled. Birth. Like a gallows you give yourself up to with open mouth, desirous of failed sustenance. To mount the sheep, I tell myself. Now Ducati sneakers, the gift of gab that lures a female hey baybee, gold chains around the neck, fine shirt, the brand trapping the body, shouting provenance. America collapses, and no one's noticed. The other America has sucked away her brain.
Give me a tostado. A slang to sustain the vocal chords of my tongue. I want a trapeze. To float on it. I want the sharp that comes from caffeine. To be submerged in. The other land. Whole gallons. Thousands of litres of blood. Who they were and who they are. Everyone perched on a wire. Precipice. From the ruins of the tongue an arrogant countenance. There is a strip of land with no name. At the bottom of the cup, a gypsy at the Parque Forestal tells me, there is an image: a man who still remembers his daughter. Stop, the other land and that masculine profile that barely forms in the shadow. Serbia was a shelter—Atlantic—today it is a lake. The idea of lake.
In Parts (a) to (g)

Christopher Stackhouse

In Parts (a)

This radical disintegration of parts squeals gesture, erasure, assertive
tearing away or open a hole in the scene, the grid everybody sees –
To be vulgar, mass and volume, flesh is modular, peeling back themselves
reduced to an immense silence, a thick mucus in the throat, proxy for pedigree,
all pleasure being equal, you are not supposed to look good if you have desire –
the best guess trapped beneath surface tension, cursive against cursive, seminal
in the plain air cross fade taxi unmade, stretched, contractible, catching light in the pass –
staving descension, becoming apart, what seems to be nothing, this is what happens.
In Parts (b)

This radical disintegration of parts squeals gesture, erasure, assertive
tearing away or open a hole in the scene, the grid everybody sees –
To be vulgar, mass and volume, flesh is modular, peeling back themselves
reduced to a thick mucus in the throat, proxy for pedigree, becoming apart
all pleasure being equal, you are not supposed to look good if you have, desire –
X or face in a bubble or nosing in on its contour, turning away from nothing
the best guess trapped beneath surface tension, cursive against cursive, seminal
in the plain air cross fade taxi unmade, stretched, contractible, catching light in the pass –
In Parts (c)

This radical tearing away of parts squeals gesture, erasure, assertive
opening a hole in the scene, the grid everybody sees or, becoming apart
of all pleasure being equal, you are not supposed to look good if you have,
nothing, desire – X or face in a bubble or nosing in on its contour, turning away
from the best guess trapped beneath, cursive against cursive, piper blow –
blow hard in the plain air cross fade taxi unmade, stretched, contractible
tension catching light through the wreck, approximate, devilish, burgundy –
pressed to function, throat, instrumental to itself, in the, and serial
In Parts (d)

X or face in a bubble or nosing in on its contour, V shaped pointing from, to the best guess trapped beneath surface tension, seminal to be vulgar, mass and volume, flesh is modular, peeling back themselves tearing away or open a hole in the scene, the grid everybody sees – reduced to a thick mucus in the throat, proxy for pedigree, becoming a part all pleasure being equal, you are not supposed to look good if you have, desire – vicinal, in the plain air cross fade taxi unmade, stretched, contractible, catching light through the wreck, instrumental to itself, in the, and serial –
In Parts (e)

in the plain air cross fade taxi unmade, stretched, contractible, catching light through the wreck, bursting surface, pus left in the V shape, your excellence for the time being forget about moving forward, it tastes, its been real, by it matters, all pleasure being equal mass and volume, flesh is modular, instrumental to itself, nosing in on its contour, cursive against cursive, turning away from, trapped beneath, peeling back, next left open a hole in the grid everybody sees, reduced to a thick mucus, an immense silence torn from field, lost detail dispatched, lone trace for seconds caught intact –
In Parts (f)

This is what happens in the plain air, stretched, contractible, catching light through the wreck, bursting surface, trapped beneath another face unmade, pus left in your form, your excellence, all pleasure being equal, its contour torn from field, instrumental to itself, becoming distinction, reduced to throat, what seems to be open alone fill in, pause, service condition, nosing in on, desire, lost detail dispatched for seconds, returned in grammar, tensions bow into curve, flesh on paper, cursive against cursive, needle to square, lean, vital, read into parenthesis, etymon, further, what you want more than want –
In Parts (g)

To be vulgar, mass and volume, throat, flesh, open, alone, catching light, bow into cursive, read into parentheses, bursting in plain air, your form – trapped beneath its contour, becoming distinction, seed square into circle, all pleasure being apparition, instrumental to itself, in part, score – corrections, thinking off, flesh on paper, desire, lost on surface, vital, chained, turning, circa, removed, evenly brooked all by myself, recessed looks back under tone, what seems to be left service condition, paragraph – crystal against cursive, indexed enough, perfectly soft, when born –
FROM Hospitalogy

David Wolach

Cubicle | Factory | Line

—NYU E.R., July 31, 2010  3:30pm

To Robert Kocik

no body here
wants a common

curtain |
fabric selvages

koinos
frays at the

shadows

made by feet unaware
of their hands.

partition. nami. sensu. aquarelle.

Our eco-friendly hospital curtains come from LEED-Certified fabric mills

p’s head made a pop
when they peeled back

hir face |
& under here
(where the shadows come & go)

the floor
is tilted,

wheeled baggage
rolls on its own,

chain-linked docile—
like a run away train
cars run away.

all lurch. forward
in linear time,

the lunch rush
crowds of vast potential...

adobe. coastal. green-tea. nutmeg. sea-mist.

_Our Eco-Intelligent Polyester is made from a fully optimized fiber using a new, environmentally safe catalyst._

I saw P roll by
I saw P hit P so P rolled by
I saw a faceless gull roll by
I saw some body's me roll by
I saw a tray of brown bottled fluids flanked by two machines that beep roll by
I saw another P this P a real live one roll by
I saw an N on a gurney joy ride roll by
I saw a stock of Eco-Friendly Hospital Curtains from The Cubicle Factory
stacked on a bed roll by

where they went off to
is nobody's business
everyone's problem

o the koinos:
the common

curtain is a shall
is a wait & see

under / over exit sign
in full blaze...

bluegrass. dune. seaglass. lagoon.

*The fabric is designed with optimized dyestuffs and chemicals, which replace harmful chemicals and hazardous heavy metals.*

thru a blank we drew is
my neighbor

i won't meet |
what the 10 x 6 go-go

green do-not-touch
will do to touch
to touch & go on. replace. cut. move.
& go on,

“halves the room | like a sun
sometimes does | at night”

p says back
there, at night,

there

wheel. caster. voice. linoleum. aluminum. rail. whisper.
Preliminary Problems In Constructing a Poem

dear lumbarpuncture,

we’ve got air on our hands

port-------------→ nothing

missing now, from dallas
to belarus

your names no longer concern us.
minbaring pine-sap tray, my fluids

adore you

i want more
bottomless ocean

travel.

to desire always small dots
from great heights

actions contained in a transitory décor

what if you were my unitary urbanism
you said.

the pinching: it’s about choking
a station’s unacknowledged workerbees awake

if bacteria under
skin patch

i never had headaches
were sound units of collective gasp
the view is from
a heavy curtain

causes me to believe
the metaphors
tattooed on your
atypically moon
shaped ass
now they don't exist!

meditative something
something!
i think i have
a wish to die

on a toilet
in a mansion
down south
don't we all
as temporary
people when

stuckpinned, when
the when seems
so sterile overtures
¿Qué hace el viento para no estar en su sitio?
¿Cuántas migraciones sueña el ave para que al canto arribe la guirnalda?
¿Para qué el signo que abre? ¿Y el que cierra? ¿No es una convención ya superada? ¿No basta la actitud de espera?
¿No te recuerdan garfios diminutos, en especial en Garamond?
¿Y esos lunares grises cruzándote la espalda como un halo?
¿Has ido a verte?
¿Extrañas más el clima o la comida?
¿Desde dónde comienzan a grabar conversaciones? ¿Quién las oye?
¿Qué imbécil lo tradujo como Violadores Serán Perseguidos sin mirar siquiera el diccionario?
¿Por qué usan guantes blancos para hojear los pasaportes?
¿Cuáles son las armas o blasones del escudo en tu apellido?
¿Has visto un rodapiés? ¿Y un rododendro?
¿Por qué jamás se rozan en los elevadores?
¿De quién es la pelota?
¿Cómo van a coger si apenas se conocen?
¿Cuándo fue la última vez que recibiste alguna? ¿Leíste con los dedos?
¿Oiste la escritura?
¿Y ahora qué vas a decirle y con qué cara?
¿Me vienes con nostalgia cuando estábamos de lleno en la saudade?
¿Por qué habrá preferido la Victoria de Samotracia a la Venus de Milo o la Gioconda?
¿No te cansas de siempre disculparte?
¿Sabrá que catafixia no está en el diccionario?
¿Has visto a alguien famoso varias veces? ¿Sonréíste ante la cámara?
¿Gozaste de saberlo devastado?
Clusters

Román Luján

Racimos Translated by Brian Whitener

How long is this going to go on?
—Jack Colom & Lyn Hejinian

What does the wind do not to stay in its place?
How many migrations does the bird dream until a garland docks at its song?
Why the sign that opens? And the one that closes? Isn’t it an outdated convention? Isn’t a waiting attitude enough?
Don’t they remind you of tiny hooks, especially in Garamond?
And those gray moles crossing your back like a halo?
Have you gone to check yourself?
What do you miss the most: the weather or the food?
From where do they start recording conversations? Who listens to them?
Who was the imbecile who translated it as Violadores Serán Perseguidos⁠¹ without even checking the dictionary?
Why do they use white gloves to leaf through passports?
What are the weapons or blazons that adorn the coat of arms of your last name?
Have you seen a rhododendron, a Rhodesian?
Why do they never brush against each other in elevators?
Whose ball is this?
How can they fuck if they barely know each other?
When was the last time that you received one? Did you read with your fingers? Did you smell the writing?
And now what are you going to tell him and with which of your two faces?
How can you speak to me of nostalgia when we were immersed in saudade?
Why do you think he preferred the Victory of Samothrace to the Venus of Milo or the Gioconda?
 Aren’t you tired of apologizing all the time?
Will he know that catafixia is not in the dictionary?
Have you seen someone famous several times? Did you smile at the camera?
Did you enjoy seeing him devastated?

¹ Upon entering the United States from Tijuana-San Ysidro at the security checkpoint there is a sign that reads in Spanish “Violadores Serán Perseguidos.” “Violador” means not violator but rather rapist in Spanish; thus the literal translation, “Rapists Will be Pursued.”
¿Se considera todavía café con leche o ya es un latte?
¿Desde cuándo el verano es una pausa?
¿Cómo decirlo en menos letras, con más sílabas, desnudos?
¿Lo aprendiste en la escuela o fue en la práctica?
¿Prefieres un perdón salvaje a una disculpa momentánea?
¿Escribir es la obsesión que encuentra su forma o la forma que encuentra su obsesión?
¿Nos lo dijo María después de llevarla a la Coahuila?
¿Tantas veces en San Diego y no haber ido al zoológico?
¿Si sí sí y si no no, no?
¿Si caigo en dos categorías me corresponde other? ¿Por qué no existe none para estos casos?
¿Es la mirada un lugar para sí misma, es el lenguaje?
¿Le duele o se hace el mártir?
¿A qué suena pudenda sino a pubis adenda, a pública agenda, a pública enmienda; a ver, a qué?
¿Si escribes las olas del bullicio aún alguien se estremece?
¿Crees que vamos a pasar esto por alto?
¿Dónde recupera la memoria su ambarino relámpago, su manantial, su esguince?
¿Victoria Abril a los quince años?
¿Y si nadie la nombra, si tras el vidrio sólo la aguarda un eco?
¿Siempre arrancas anuncios de hombres negros en las salas de espera?
¿A quién se le ocurrió documentar la influencia compartida entre Duchamp, Man Ray y Picabia? ¿Por qué no comenzar con la amistad?
¿Es verdad que todo múltiplo de nueve suma nueve?
¿Y si le digo que sí no va a pensar que estoy negándome?
¿Qué es thorough? ¿Y throughout? ¿No es lo mismo que through? ¿Qué thru?
¿Qué thro?
¿Y en la cama, piensan en inglés o en español?
¿Puedes hablar de mí sin tropezarte?
¿Chopin a la silla eléctrica?
¿Será el frío?
¿A qué estamos jugando?
¿Hasta dónde va a seguir este martirio?
¿Crees que los racimos cambiarían de orden y extensión si continúas?
¿Manifiesto inseguro te parece un título: a) fallido, b) excelso, c) insípido, d) logrado?
¿Se puso nervioso y a gritar y tenía las orejas coloradas?
¿Escribir en tu piel o en la tu piel?
¿No tomaste esa fotografía el año pasado?
¿Recuerdas que uno te ponía el alcohol, despacio, para que el otro te clavara la aguja a manos ciegas?
Is it still considered café con leche or is it now a latte?
Since when is summer a pause?
How to say it in fewer letters, with more syllables, naked?
Did you learn that at school or by practice?
Do you prefer a wild forgiveness to a momentary excuse?
Is writing the obsession that finds its form or the form that finds its obsession?
Did María tell us after we took her to Coahuila Street?
So many times in San Diego and still no visit to the zoo?
If yes yes and if no no, no?
If I fall into two categories, does other apply to me? Why isn’t there a none for these cases?
Is the gaze a place for itself, is it language?
Is he hurting or playing the martyr?
What does pudenda sound like if not a pubis addenda, a pubic agenda, a public amendment; come on, like what?
Is there anyone who still trembles if you write the waves of bedlam?
Do you think that we are going to let this pass unnoticed?
Where does memory recover its amber streak, its spring, its sprain?
Victoria Abril at age fifteen?
And if nobody names her? If behind the glass only an echo awaits her?
In waiting rooms, do you always tear out ads portraying black men?
Who thought of documenting the shared influence of Duchamp, Man Ray, and Picabia? Why not start with friendship instead?
Is it true that every multiple of nine adds nine?
And if I say yes, wouldn’t she think that I’m refusing?
What is thorough? And throughout? Isn’t that the same as through? As thru?
As thro?
And in bed, do you all think in English or Spanish?
Can you talk about me without stumbling?
Chopin to the electric chair?
Could it be the cold?
What are we playing at?
How long will this martyrdom last?
Do you believe that the clusters would change order and length if you continue?
As a title, Doubting Manifesto seems: a) failed, b) sublime, c) insipid, or d) successful?
Did he get nervous and start shouting and go red in the face?
To write on your skin or on the your skin?
Didn’t you take that photograph last year?
Do you remember how one of them would rub alcohol on you, slowly, so the other could prick the needle in you with blind hands?
¿La intimidad más diáfana es el diálogo?
¿De qué sirve saber que vzbzdnut es media meada en ruso y no tiene presente?
¿De eso se trataba? ¿De herirse en la dulzura liminal de los cuchillos?
¿Qué simbolizan las horquetas en sus cuadros?
¿Tienes algo que hacer a las 11:11?
¿Por qué no me lo dice en español si está mintiendo?
¿Hay, en rigor, alguna diferencia entre un poema, una medusa y un bizcocho?
¿Aguantas otro rato o ahí la dejamos?
¿Qué sabes de My Life?
¿Al Berto es una herida nominal en portugués?
¿Prefieres rock a stone? ¿No has visto a algún pelícano parado en una piedra?
¿Sabes si aquellas nubes son los gestos que trafica la esperanza?
¿Prometes destruir el archivo apenas lo recibas?
¿Es necesario colocarse en el centro de toda confesión?
¿Y si no hay flotador debajo de mi asiento?
¿De qué es, en serio, tu proyecto?
¿Lo sabe el lado B de la familia? ¿Cuándo vas a decírles?
¿Te ha crecido un monstruo o un guijarro amarillo en el talón mientras caminas?
¿Sabías que la fabrican desde el siglo catorce?
¿Comiste chapulines?
¿Mandaste todos mis videos al terapeuta?
¿Qué hace el aire para enmudecer así, tan de repente?
¿Cómo podrá curarse si en la tarde ha visto morir dos, uno justo al lado de su cama?
¿Qué hacer cuando se saben —¿se conocen?— todas las palabras de un sintagma —botella de agua, por ejemplo— y no pueden pronunciarse en el orden indicado o alguna de las sílabas rebalsa inesperadamente al balbuceo?
¿Me quedará mejor la roja o la violeta?
¿Estás mojada? ¿Ahora?
¿Te han pintado la sangre? ¿Te han metido en el útero electrónico? ¿Te han mirado con ruda compasión? ¿Te han dado una paleta y dos caricias?
¿Ves en su cuello un mapa de antiguos relicarios?
¿Qué resulta cuando uno de los dos comienza a disolverse?
¿Sigues, después de tantos años, pensando que tu abuelo, en forma de cernícalo, se lanzó contra ti aquella mañana, cuando íbamos saliendo hacia el desierto?
¿Sabes otro en que pierda el mexicano?
Is the most diaphanous intimacy dialogue?
What’s the point of knowing that vzbirdz is a half-piss in Russian and has no present tense?
Was that what this was about? Hurting each other in the liminal sweetness of knives?
What do the pitchforks in his paintings symbolize?
Do you have anything to do at 1:11?
Why doesn’t she say it to me in Spanish if she’s lying?
Is there, strictly speaking, any difference amongst a poem, a medusa, and a sponge cake?
Can you take it a little longer or should we stop now?
What do you know about My Life?
Is Al Berto a nominal wound in Portuguese?
Do you prefer roca to piedra? Have you never seen a pelican standing on a stone?
Do you know if those clouds are the gestures that hope traffics?
Do you promise to destroy the file as soon as you receive it?
Is it necessary to place oneself at the center of every confession?
And what if there’s no floatation device beneath my seat?
What, really, is your project about?
Does the B-side of your family know? When are you going to tell them?
Have you grown a monster or a yellow pebble in your heel while walking?
Did you know they have manufactured them since the fourteen century?
Did you eat grasshoppers?
Did you send all my videos to the therapist?
What does the air do to turn speechless, like this, so unexpectedly?
How will he recover if this afternoon he has seen two people die, one right next to his bed?
What to do when you know —you now?— all the words in a syntagm —bottle of water, for instance— and you can’t pronounce them in the prescribed order or one of the syllables unexpectedly slips into muttering?
Does the red or the violet one look better on me?
Are you wet? Now?
Have they dyed your blood? Have they put you inside the electronic uterus?
Have they looked at you with harsh compassion? Have they given you a lollipop and two caresses?
Can you see in her neck a map of ancient reliquaries?
What happens when one of the two begins to dissolve?
Do you still, after all these years, think that your grandfather, in the form of a kestrel, attacked you that morning when we were headed out to the desert?
Do you know another one in which the Mexican loses?
¿Sonreirá cuando le salgan canas?
¿Cuánto se deja de propina en Barcelona? ¿Y en Los Ángeles?
¿Y si gana, se irán de este país?
¿Por qué no me dijiste que parara cuando estábamos cerca?
¿Has notado que los de exclamación son palos de billar con bolas negras?
¿Desde niño te acosan en racimos, gigantes, entre sueños?
¿Es esto un ejercicio de añoranza? ¿Una impostación de la memoria?
¿Qué opinión te merece el mejor de los hermanos Goytisolo?
¿Se adueñaron de una luz, esa tan roja, porque así son las luces para nadie,
   bestias de no dormir, sin paradero?
¿Podrías responderme alguna vez en tu asquerosa vida?
¿De qué sirve decir estuve allí contigo si estabas caminando en otra acera,
   limpiándote con asco los hombros y los brazos?
¿De veras falta mucho?
¿Me estás dando el avión? ¿Me estás cortando?
¿Es posible ordenar diez veces una taza de café en diez formas distintas antes
   de que la empleada nos ignore?
¿No es eso de code switching una manera demasiado elegante de llamarle?
¿Por qué una mancha desborda los estuarios?
¿Dijiste diecisiete? ¿Y dices que es legal en tu país?
¿Qué lengua es esa tuya de vidrios y metales?
¿Y entonces por qué Hughes, island y New Orleans se pronuncian así?
¿Digo que estoy enfermo y le seguimos?
¿Hay alguien de este lado?
Will he smile when he discovers a grey hair?
How much do you tip in Barcelona? And in Los Angeles?
And if he wins, will you leave the country?
Why didn’t you tell me to stop when we were close?
Have you noticed that exclamation points are cue sticks with black balls?
Since childhood have they haunted you in clusters, giant ones, in between dreams?
Is this an exercise in yearning? A pronouncement of memory?
Would you care to comment on the best Goytisolo brother?
Did they take over a light, that very red one, because vacant lights are like this, beasts for not sleeping, their whereabouts unknown?
Can you answer me at least one time in your filthy life?
What is the point of saying I was there with you if you were walking on the other side of the street, cleaning your shoulders and arms with disgust?
Really, is there a lot left?
Are you blowing me off? Are you breaking up with me?
Is it possible to order a cup of coffee ten times in ten different ways before the cashier ignores us?
Isn’t that code-switching thing too elegant a way of calling it?
Why is a stain overflowing the estuaries?
Did you say seventeen? And you say that’s legal in your country?
What’s that language of yours, of glass and metal?
And why then are Hughes, island, and New Orleans pronounced like that?
Should I call in sick and we won’t stop?
Is there anybody out there?


Four Poems

Alli Warren

A NEWSWORTHY THING

that we would have been visible from the air
that we would have acted
    as such
that we would return
having been forced
to have been grazing
that we were springs
and by some spell spurring
banks & batons
    blockading
what we could have been growing
that we would have been greeting
    and pillars
and by some spell spurring
soft-bodied welling
that we could equate
with what we confiscate
had we been
great channels flowing
visible from the air
    and running tides
& concrete lapping & steel girders
in the teeth of the soft-bodied
welling we had been lapping
the salt of fracturing
that we would be wrenching
    and never rest
and carry & turning
and teeth again and brooks
    that blood
reeking at the port entry
another day at the sieve
administering the field

& all its relations
bound in custom

to enterprise and acquire
to load into carts

everyone wants to hang glide
in colonial paradise,

no? To stand on the brink
and make a market

of every vital nuclei?
As much in understanding

as execution
of the lops, tops and rootage

of the dragging and gathering
With whom it is permissible

with whom it is forbidden
to rub the larynx and articulators

with my habit and my uzi
and the Bishop of Worms

as an example
to the population
I’m sorry I said
chomping on the warm jet, Mary
instead of mapping all
religious holidays and rites of spring
into your powerbook

glued as I am
to multimodal devices & telepresence
I failed
to merge cells swiftly
for that I’m sorry but I refuse
to be the only one
that fatuous ass
appears exponentially bulbous
in every office park and mobile
surveillance tower
in the greater geographic area

She’s got this manner
of speaking so much with her blooming
woo that I forget
to increase the value of the world
of things &
the ripe one gilded
in blinding cardigan sheen
and everything
we’d been trying to prevent
by rolling around on the floor
with virtue and fealty
slipped into silt

Just look at me now perving
on handclaps and sapsuckers
clapper rails and
I can’t really move
the light budding before me
all kinds of soft tissue
   I just want to make it
out alive boss

did you not receive my note?
as I was dealing with the goo
a lady out
for an evening stroll
was attacked by a sack
of bees! I heard screams
   instead of heroic deeds
of valor and blinking
as she blinked how I can be extra
gentle about it
   I slurped shellfish
and fell into a nap
   valves highly calcified
I mean a rendition
with lust for the growing lust 
I sit down as you
stand up in a gesture named “giving up”
What do they mean “the coastal areas”?
everything we want
& do not know how to need
And so I was the one burned the house down
sullied your copy of The Republic
feeling kind of Eyjafjallajökul-in-a-trance
lunching an extra 15 minutes
really bold with it
Paul love turns to mechanical currency
and all those feeeelings
a showcase of empty meaning
take it outside & beat it with a stick
strike our tender urban sore
Three Poems

Catherine Meng

OFF SEASON

Beyond a stand of birches

the rising moon beyond makes them closer
than the classic-rock angles of yore

until it is no longer easy to differentiate

the primary swell
from the secondary swell,
from the tertiary swell

until it is no longer easy
to balance an egg on its point.

One last locust falls without
fanfare. Star-clusters cough & sizzle.

Watermelons are sold from a truck
in the wedge weeds along some frontage road.

This was the September
the economy became a character

pitied as vibrancy is
when it can’t remember its lines –

And I, a hack
dead to the shine,

sore from where the envoy
had bound me,
cross as easily as dust
between the two extremes
within a season,

plucking out
the many eyes

in the bank's lobby

where the tiles divide equally
around a ridiculous fountain
gone dry.

In the off season
fishermen teach classes to surfers
on how to read waves.

In the off season
I didn’t feel lousy, exactly –
I just liked the word

followed by a comma
followed by exactly
followed by a dash
DEARS OF INTERNMENT

If distance is palpable
with pockets where tempo arrests,
unfix to particulars.
Select-all.

All of it.

If the sentence (my sentence
is a small diagram
of the larger system

at this moment
I feel very much
in the shadow of the moon

& find my eyes
adjunct to the splaying
where auto-shapes
reach some final velocity

& the prologue ringing is a flock of geese
galvanized, by proxy.

And although music is the most basic vehicle
used to facilitate escape

I find I can no longer move
tacked down by a basic sneeze
& other vertical strivings.

It is true I desire
not absence
but to arrive after

where objects disappear
through overexposure.
I mean, how I paraphrase
and take you out.

Meanwhile, at my father's bedside
I see the dead
begin to dream
him more clearly

& counting out beats
where the same
self repeats

in the overlap
we thought

he was breathing
but it was just the machine.

The prerequisite accomplishment

of cells dying, dead. Cells dividing,
summoned, slight

garrulous & socked-in it wasn't –

jumbled by foresight
this anniversary
ends
this anniversary

& starts a new meaning
please save
or
save now

where I mourn
the disappearance of the card catalogues
& the micro-fiche.
Or now, where there are so many animals.

In the voice

we are full
of their liturgy –

a plug that holds the presence in place.

Can space open up
& also be framed?

Because we sat
for a long while like that
in the car
in the parking lot
listening to the radio
static acted out
by the leafless boughs

& the owl familiar
the familiar bad luck

so you touch yourself
to find yourself
book-ended by bridges

trundled as asterisks
rise to the surface

& you do feel the roar

the fossil
this one thought will become
contains less than 1%
of its meaning.

A bird wing

where an eye should be.
AFTER

I am one of two traveling together

—Bashō

The fact that we didn’t know if we were in the light or just left by it.

The sound, a secret whelp, jetty-side, adrift.

It would be heartless to point out the building arrested by its own shadow.

That I do share its contours.

That I do grieve with the mollusk, pressed like a tsk to the shell.

In this experiment there are words for dreams but no dreams for the experiment to fail.

Because I write so many letters, I deduce I must be in exile.

A marshy reedy place off to the left. A slough. Crack the shell.

Crack it. The wave swell. The smell of it.

If I am audible, allow my voice to collide & latch itself to a more worthy desire.

The answer that finishes ringing when you wake into the question.

Washed up on the beach outside the Q & A relationship.

What is it? Dead sea lion.

Half-arcs in reaction to where the surface disturbs.

The trick is conversion.

To reach the destination & to find you can’t stop.

Midway down the fins there are nails of no use. Vestiges.

They clawed their way out of the dream only to return the moment it distorts.
Five Poems

Lauren Levin

Having feathered feet. Rolling mucosity.
To you, this feels a middle.
But you can’t do it slow. You timed objects,
you shipped objects entering a timed pace,
I am in place with you by clicking on the middle date range
of my order number.
Because planning has a thought to flapping
    I can turn a new image
      on my past attitudes. No seer,
I feel the pride of the music provider
      surrounded by Dave Brown. What do you
electorate in terms of how you live?
    Those of my own order number. Because
to define is to dedicate I think maybe so.

Bricks and half bricks. A germen’s ear. In my waist
as in an ear. Spends warmth heat to expand. Spends
wrangling drowning through a crack to expand.
Gelled: I hold to that and send you back.
Dry tongue squeeze where the nymph is, gloved
in time like an electric-noduled glove. And when
did my phone get so loud, to make this sound that
shoots out of the scene like an arrow?
A cicada and a beetle were inhabited with in such haste.
    I wanted to be more sarcastic and say,
See how I define what I’ll be covering.
    Thighs moving forward, piped over clay.
Cap with braiding cap hat.
You will fail to validate what it meant
to comment on his substance.
It’s a neoprene overprecision, sure. Certainly. Maybe manic. Those stenciled daisy petals fold like rabbit ears living as they declench across the cup. Mug. Mug but relished, but.

Can I say you are not at the foot of diameters? Can I say you persist as the start if you are not? The guests’ withers are slat, desynchronized. Surely I am like their button.

I want all the slack words here, not just here but accept why I want them here, the prey of immediate completion among the word cowlick. You retrieve from you life. Repudiate your king’s nostril, of formal BBC.

Mucinex. My rooster head to do studious. If fan like agile shell, daring more with tongue between the head of joyous criticism... no, there’s something else, as it is true. A red-hot guess in Tristana. Air the miner throws away, in his known transition daring more – miners, ha, he won’t sell to miners. Comfortable tone, presenting your knowledge at the right moment of your age hot job fear casts you at the mercy of like worry I have been here for a while, you distort, my mind what I hear seems plausible. How beliefs like striking. They believe in technique, technique as a test, what? Instances are 4 hot ever but I miss having adamant.
To not know what the best is, and around passionately
I feel that innard stir meet when I click into the pedal
but when to reach seizing
   a word like family draws the need of having music,
   wintrous progeny putting my ear over ear.
The rabbit is deflating. Will it be worthy of affairs
and, to sully me, prosper, now that I have love?
   A version reaches up to my eyes –
I don’t know, and I want to persuade –
   a wine break was not proper to me.
What is, other than bringing you inside with a please?
Through the emotion, swimming, that falls into my sudden desire
to put something you will recognize.
Ready to have a technique of NOT CARE with a test.
   Or, not ready to think this is right.
12 MODELES ou La Bande à Pétrovich

À François LE LIONNAIS

1 → Pour un mot doux d’Emma: un mot pour un mot d’elle
pour un signe noir pour douze pieds de Pétrarque

3 → deux tercets trois syntagmes font cinq asphodèles
et bercent les Pierrot qui vont à Luna-Park
Ils chantent la chanson qui fit mourir Adèle

8 → et scindent des alinéas pour le hierarque.

1 → Nos galaxies déjà se feront la valise
comme les astérisques comme les taxis

3 → on dira désormais cinq lettres à Elise
qui va chez Gallimard mourir d’anorexie
elle rit du radeau de Ramuz ivre à Pise!

8 → Tristes tropes: Léonard c’est Fibonacci.
Two Poems

Paul Braffort

12 Models or Petrovic’s Band

Translated by Gabriela Jauregi & Amaranth Borsuk

For François LE LIONNAIS

For a sweet word from Emma: a word for model
for a black sign for a dozen feet of Petrarch
two tercets three syntagmas make five asphodels
and cradle the Pierrots who go to Luna Park
They chant the chantey that did away with Adele
and scan the alineas for the hierarch.

Our galaxies have already packed their valise
akin to asterisks similar to taxis
they say from this time forth five letters to Elise
who dies at Gallimard’s of anorexia
she laughs at Ramuz’s raft tipsy in Pisa!
Tragic tropes: Leonardo is Fibonacci.
Leo the Lion of stand word leopards and known as “wild” (*ferus*) they too are wander wherever this. The name “lion” has into root, but translated that the litters of creatures threes curly plain is fear. His first feature that to mountains pursued and that our Saviour (i.e. Spiritual the Rod Son places race which had perished of that concealed dared themselves to his reward: “Who this Glory is keep in *Songs* I am asleep my awake “Behold nor to the third day, breathes their makes did from a lions is that they not unless decent for the the eaten too much when to they our lions. When
À Georges PEREC

3 → Si nul
     ô ce rat
     notre cul,
     a, si
     seul, a ton cri.

13 → Il suce
     O.N.R., ta
     rustine.
     O lac !
     lac, nuit, rose

3 → Cansou,
    litre,
    satin,
    ô recul,
    tu ris ! La noce,

13 → Talou,
    (crise) n’
    a ni
    soit cruel,
    ni l’us atroce.
So lame
oh this rat
our ass,
has, so
alone, has your cry.

He sucks
O.N.R., your
patch.
O lake!
lake, night, pink

Cansou,
liter,
satin,
o withdrawal
you laugh! the nuptial,

Talou,
(crisis) doesn’
t have either
cruel fool,
or atrocious usage.
### Gabriela Jauregui & Amaranth Borsuk

**Transversion No. 16**  
**A Slice Torn or Antic Lores + Actor Lines**

For Grace O’MALLEY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scorn tale:</th>
<th>Cori’s tale:</th>
<th>Lira’s conte:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rico’s late</td>
<td>on cleats</td>
<td>sailor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in ascot,</td>
<td>canters</td>
<td>siren</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>claret sin</td>
<td>tone ails</td>
<td>orca inlet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rains</td>
<td>(taco lines)</td>
<td>listen oar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| sore cat      | recoils:       | L. eats corn-  |
| lone racist   | corset,        | cilantro       |
| cleats on     | claret,        | tacos          |
| canes Lot     | lacier         | in coral       |
| lets oar      | sailor.        | ascot          |

| riot, laser   | Lo! scantier   | to sea         |
| in scrota.    | ascot lei,     | claret.        |
| Sailor net    | nicest oar,    | No cleats,     |
| lit snare—    | rose           | lace is torn.  |
| taco ire.     | into ascent... | Coastliner!    |
3. L’Institut des problèmes de physique (Moscou, 1952)

§

TROIS :

Cette part est infinie.

§

Il y a, dis-je, des falaises
des failles.

C’est violent
échappé dans l’évidence:
nous n’y croyons pas.

Les petits naissent
les feuilles rougissent
les riches tuent.
Nous ne ménageons ni les bêtes ni les hommes.

Nous disons
c’est ainsi, c’est dans l’ordre des choses.
Comment osons-nous parler de beauté?
§

**THREE :**

This part is infinite

§

I say there are cliffs
faults.

It is violent
escaped into the evidence:
we don’t believe in it.

Small ones are born
leaves redden
the rich kill.
We care neither for beasts nor men.

We say
it is thus, it is in the order of things.
How dare we speak of beauty?
Libchaber apporta un autre chandelier, qu’il plaça imprudemment sur un bras de fauteuil.

« Est-il possible de faire cesser ce massacre? Comprenez-vous ce que j’essaie de dire?

—Allons, allons, tempéra Landau.

—Nous avons hérité d’un monde brisé, dit Marussia qui ne quittait pas la flamme des yeux. Pourtant nous pouvons l’aimer quand même. Ce n’est pas sa faute s’il est brisé. »

* 

La beauté a des sursauts de colère.
De désastre en désastre nous répétons plus haut
nous écrasons les cimes, nos mains saignent;
mais où est-elle donc l’altitude?

Nous n’en pouvons plus.

Nous demandons
qu’est-ce que cela veut dire?
Que pouvons-nous aimer?
Libchaber carried in another candlestick, which he placed imprudently on the arm of a chair.

“Is it possible to stop this massacre? Do you understand what I am trying to say?

—Come, come, tempered Landau.

—We have inherited a broken world, said Marussia, whose eyes didn’t let go of the flame. And yet we are still capable of loving it. It’s not its fault if it’s broken.”

* 

Beauty has surges of anger.
From disaster to disaster we repeat higher
we crush the heights, our hands bleed;
but where on earth is altitude?

We can’t take much more.

We ask
what does that mean?
What are we capable of loving?
Les corps; leur obstination, leur écorce leurs restes. Voilà de quoi aimer.


De fois en fois plus austères plus hautes. Parfaites d’amour dans leur éloignement.

* 

Marussia but une gorgée de thé. Il était tiède.

Au bout d’un moment elle ferma les yeux et parut se rendormir. Ses joues n’avaient pas repris leurs couleurs. Chaber enleva la théière, remporta dans la cuisine le pain grillé, la soucoupe et les quartiers d’orange, un monde brisé.

* 

Qu’est-ce que c’est, aimer?

Dans notre zèle notre fatigue qu’en savons-nous?

Tu t’étais absenté, il te faut revenir.

Comment vas-tu faire, à présent pour saluer ton chat rallumer le feu?

Demander pardon à la vie dont tu n’as pas voulu?
Bodies; their obstinacy, their husks
their remains. Such is the stuff of love.

In the blaze of numbers
bodies are our clarity: formulas and bases
of commencement.
They touch the laws. They carry their names
their wounds. The innumerable defeats.

From instance to instance
more austere more elevated. Perfect with love
in their distancing.

*

Marussia drank a sip of tea. It was warm.

After a time she closed her eyes and appeared to fall back
to sleep. Her cheeks had not regained their colour. Chaber
removed the teapot, carried the toast back into the kitchen,
the saucer and the orange quarters, a broken world.

*

What is it, to love?

In our zeal
our exhaustion
what do we know?

You had absented yourself, you must come back.

How will you manage, at present
to greet your cat
relight the fire?

Ask forgiveness of the life
you didn’t want?
Au verso de la terre
sous les secondes lisses
entre les éclats d’os
le souffle grandira.

Tu le verras traversant
ton désert:
ton âme épouvantée
de bonheur.

*

Quand il se rassit à son bureau, hétéde d’angoisse, Libchaber se demanda longuement s’il devait utiliser son crayon ou son stylo. Jusqu’où pouvait-on s’égarder? Opter pour l’un ou pour l’autre brisait les symétries, comme il aimait à dire, portait à conséquence, voyez? Néanmoins aucun argument, si minime soit-il, ne se présentait en faveur de l’un ou l’autre de ces choix; par conséquent, par conséquent, mes éminents collègues, en quoi se trouvait-on le moindrement autorisé à parler de choix?

Le jour semblait avoir fondu, où donc le soleil s’en était-il allé? La maison était calme, la maison était vide. Dans chaque pièce la pénombre appelait à la prière, dans chaque pièce la pénombre pria. Où Marussia?

*

Mais toi
quelle est ta foi?

Où est ton mal?

Par où seras-tu sauvé?
On the reverse of the earth
beneath the smooth seconds
between the shards of bone
breath will expand.

You will see it crossing
your desert:
your soul terrorised
with joy.

*

When he sat back down at his desk, bewildered by anguish,
Libchaber asked himself at length whether he should use
his pencil or his pen. How far could one go astray? To opt for
one or the other broke the symmetries, as he liked to say,
*had consequences, you see? Nonetheless no argument, as small
as it was, presented itself in favour of one or other choice;
consequently, consequently, my distinguished colleagues, in
what might he be even remotely authorised to speak of this
choice?

The day seemed to have dissolved, where on earth had the
sun gone? The house was calm, the house was empty. In each
room the half-light called to prayer, in each room the half-light
was praying. Where Marussia?

*

But you
what is your faith?

Where is your evil?

By what will you be saved?
Et moi.

Sans âme
sans os
toute nue.

Croiras-tu encore
que je te mens?

* 

Chaber passa la main sur son visage, une barbe de trois jours. Regarde-toi. Tu n’honores pas ton Seigneur ni le Repos de ton Seigneur.

Quel repos? Que dites-vous donc?

Ça s’effritait, ça fuyait. Sur le bureau, sous la fenêtre: des poussières, des fractions de puissances, plus inoffensives que des plumes. Collègues vénérés. Les r roulaient, ronds comme des billes. Depuis combien de temps était-il là?

Voyons d’abord aux choses sérieuses, mon pauvre enfant: crayon ou stylo?

* 

Jusqu’où nous élèverons-nous?

Jusqu’où serons-nous
légers dans le bonheur
intacts
pitoyables d’orgueil
et sourds et froids?
Mes femmes, mes fils
jusqu’où irons-nous donc?
And I.

With no soul
with no bones
completely naked.

Will you continue to think
that I am lying to you?

*

Chaber passed his hand over his face, three days worth of stubble. Look at you. You don’t honour your Lord, nor your Lord’s Rest.

What rest? What are you talking about?

It was frittering away, seeping out. On the desk, beneath the window: dust, fractions of powers, more inoffensive than feathers. Venerated colleagues. The r’s rolled, round as marbles. How long had he been there?

Let us attend first to serious matters, my poor child: pencil or pen?

*

How high will we carry ourselves?

How far until we are
light in happiness
intact
pitiful with pride
and deaf and cold?
My wives, my sons
how far will we go?
Nous nous dirons adieu
nous nous déchirerons.

« Te voilà libre »
penserás-tu. Regarde mieux.

Tes serments tes souvenirs
te traîneront dans la rue
comme si tu n’étais rien.
Ils te feront honte
et tu les maudiras.

Que puis-je faire? imploreras-tu.
Que m’est-il permis d’espérer?

Écoute seulement.
Ce que tu demandes
tu devras le donner.

Que fallait-il à un homme, usé comme l’était Libchaber, pour
se remettre en marche? Pour oublier de manger, de rentrer
son journal, que fallait-il à la vie?

Voilà des années qu’il n’avait pas ressenti cette joie qui lui
venait des Nombres. Leurs largesses se reconnaissaient
partout : dans les rivières de feuilles en bordure des trottoirs,
les losanges des branches, les cercles de flocons entassés
autour des poubelles. Exacte et claire, la suite des Nombres
s’allongeait; l’écorce du monde s’entrouvrait. Ses fruits
sentiaient l’humus, la pluie. Que voulez-vous de plus? Que
pourriez-vous faire d’autre? La nuit tombait, le jour venait, et
de nouveau c’était la nuit. Le monde regorgeait de sens. Les
fenêtres avaient le jaune des hêtres, ses feuilles diaphanes:
les nervures délicates, les ellipses et les limbes de l’infini.
We will say farewell to one another
we will tear ourselves apart.

“Now you are free”
you will think. Look more closely.

Your sermons your memories
will drag you into the street
as though you were nothing.
They will shame you
and you will curse them.

What can I do? you will implore.
What have I permission to hope for?

Just listen.
What you ask for
you will be made to give up.

* 

What was necessary for a man, worn as was Libchaber, to get
moving again? To forget to eat, to bring in the paper, what was
necessary for living?

It is years since he felt the joy that came to him from Numbers.
Their largesse was recognisable everywhere: in the rivers of
leaves at the edges of sidewalks, the losanges of branches,
the circles of flakes amassed around garbage cans. Exact and
clear, the series of Numbers lengthened; the husk of the world
was opening. Its fruits smelled of humus, rain. What more do
you want? What else could you do? Night was falling, day was
coming, and once more it was night. The world was swelling
with senses. The windows were the yellow of beeches, its
leaves diaphanous: the delicate veins, the ellipses and limbo
of infinity.
Nous ne bougeons plus.

Tassés à l’intérieur de nous-mêmes à fond de cale nous contemplons des flancs d’acier: les façades des maisons les voitures garées le long des trottoirs. Une nef puissante, un navire effrayant.

Nous nous tenons tranquilles pour une fois. Seigneur, soufflons-nous. Ce mot-là ou un autre, n’importe. Les ancre s’arrachent, les falaises s’écroulent nous ne savons plus ce que nous disons.

* 

Du bruit, du sang et maintenant des larmes: justes défaites.

Qui sommes-nous?

Nous sommes la peur ce qui reste, ce qui résiste nous sommes cela.

C’est innombrable.

Moi, ce dont le temps n’a pas voulu je le demande. Ce feu je veux que tu le touches.

* 

p. 186: poème du bas, première strophe, Benjamin Fondane.
p. 194: première poème, Emmanuel Kant.
We don’t move anymore.

Crumpled inside ourselves
at full tilt we contemplate
the steel flanks
the facades of houses
the cars parked along the sidewalks.
A powerful nave, a fearsome ship.

We hold still
for once.
Lord, we whisper.
That word or another, it doesn’t matter.
The anchors are ripped up, the cliffs give way
we don’t know what we are saying anymore.

*

Noise, blood
and now tears:
fair defeats.

Who are we?

We are the fear
of what remains, what resists
we are that.

It is innumerable.

Me, what time didn’t want for
I demand. This fire
I want for you to touch it.

*

p. 187: last poem, first stanza, Benjamin Fondane.
Two Poems

G.C. Waldrep

ON ENTELECHY

not ninety, thirty-six & the father present:

the voice is not a copy:

breadside: astral vertigo:

behind the miners' stuccoed terraces,

pedestrian: accessible:

as though no sword, no flagrant mace or morningstar:

thread to pediment:

demands its crust of lucent memory:

rose-bay willowherb:

a figure if you want it, only: smaller:

struck (as coinage):

apprenticed:

you know me & I respect this heavy labyrinth:
(the automatic church)

a great burst of
what will not:

(satisfy. propagate)

goldeneyed:

to view the same story
over & over again
in the same location, &

as a function of light:

or, abandonment:

sex as limit,
derivative: clastic:

we act as if
something beautiful
cannot go
“all the way”:

the real question is,
do the other orders
dream
as we do: ichthyosaur:
cephalopod:

soot-stained paraph:

transverse Mercator:

I am not tired of
true images:

in the end, it doesn’t
matter what you
“do” with the light:
discrete series:
TRANSEPT/CLOUD

alar ventricle:

luminous refugees,  
o day-spawn of  
wingless disaster:

in fecund season:

night’s prolapsed  
topology raddles:

we say “the heart,”  
we mean another  
artifact of heath

& wool: lacustrine

extrusion: we say  
“the flesh” & mean

integument, depth’s  
pyramid of spectral

introception:

translucent effigy:

clastic daystar:

oxygenated pearl:

pastoral organelles  
laid out formally,  
flush in their blood-  
lanes, as if for tea:
FROM *Furlough*

*by Jill Magi*

I want to say something but shame prevents me.

—*Sappho*

Put love out of your thoughts

—*Xue Di, Another Kind of Tenderness*

*  
  
without any suckling  
mouths, feed  
these lips and stay home,  
stay home  
thus  
we become a gesture  
of risk  
rather than  
instrumentality  
without any suckling  
home  

*  
  
I walk into our living room  
and shed the global  
until I take pleasure at will  
and relinquish control.  

No manifesto for this—  

*  
  
What to call you anymore?  

My string bean, my fellow-feeling,  
my terrorist (strong desire to redact)—
* 

Take two subjects 
and conflate. 
They will share 
verbs, so similarly 
positioned—

* 

You I sleep. The lover the lover sleep. These appositions. 
The victim terrorist loves. The terrorist victim loves. These 
appositions. The home 
safety waits. My leafy temperament your summer begins to fall. 
  My sorrow your sorrow 
held rather distant. Until, desire desire takes the floor. These 
their appositions. 
At which point morality modernity differs. At which point, 
mortality mortality surfaces. 

She wrote of love over armies— 
good to admire, but what if all sinners all righteous went gradually 
toward risk? These our appositions. My city my body 
willng victim willing roar.

* 

web one 
web unto 
web two 
the ca (case, covering) equals 
the state alleged 
law under 
web not we
If I have imagined your body
blown up—

what love is reseeded
in such pulverizing destruction?

Do I suddenly see how we are not
part of a globalized network of that kind of power—

Do you see how it's no secret the way
we exchange capital while they—

Are we a network of security
now that certain sounds mean something else—

Try me. My puzzlement.

If intimacy is violent
acquaintance, then
our invisible—

our history—

already seeded—

hush now and lock this door.

*

Love, longing
floats above you because I prayed
this word: want

prayed this world

and if I don't want
their better world and progeny—
then?

we
two
doomed
Hence the actions of this jihad, while they are indeed meant to accomplish certain ends, have become more ethical than political in nature, since they have resigned control over their own effects, thus becoming gestures of duty or risk rather than acts of instrumentality properly speaking.

—Faisal Devji,
*Landscapes of the Jihad: Militancy, Morality, Modernity*

Our terrorists . . . cannot easily be exorcised as evil spirits or simply amputated like bad limbs. They force a deeper engagement with our states, our world, and our selves.

—Arjun Appadurai,
*Fear of Small Numbers: An Essay on the Geography of Anger*
Two Poems

Prageeta Sharma

A Befallen Electric Harp

If I’m not the most influential part of the group
I will still have the belief that my wide hearth
will rotate to its other side; a singular stop, an end,
would make my tumbler ache. I’m tired of that ache.
It’s the pathetic bestowal, I want to say,
of the moon in its renewal, when it speaks
only to me, cooing you are my dearest child.

I need this shape, it’s a kind of pittance
even though the demands are dramatically
self-important, and not meager. Have some Plaster of Paris.
Everyone else including the sun says this.
Not the moon, though, not some Romantic fallacy
that you can singe in haste, with your terrible personality
and that miserable space you say is the body of the poem.
What would Nuclear Winter be Like?

There are Wednesday moods
in tepid water. And, for example,
people in the word everywhere
that individuate the feeling of
comeliness. Like, for example, when I see a fawn
or a deer in these suburban regions
lounging by the picnic tables.
The whiteness of paint accentuates
tall pines in the distance.
Could all this be the same
when we find nobody
in the word *narrowness*?
And I can’t help but think
it’s the human being
clubbing their outer-self
next to the trash can.
The plastic bags accentuate
some kind of inner-horizon,
and rectangular hyper vigilance
only frost can see.
Three Poems

Jane Joritz-Nakagawa

RONDEAU

a bleakness of prosperity
temporarily the city
diminished along with the free
what others still could not quite be
terror in the majority

abstract void is rather shitty
most discerning forms of pity
now a generation of me
a bleakness of

drunken sailor very witty
looked askance a public titty
a now kind of colossal we
a vacuum into which the sea
finally becomes too gritty
a bleakness of
Villanelle

i am not sure where i’m living which lines
everything has become an online game
there are times when you want to speak to a real
live person re: your money

a most formidable defense against the pandemic
potentially a lot of bad could happen
i am not sure where i’m living which lines

i have to agree with my critics
like a home with an agreeable economic purity
there are times when you want to speak to a real
live person re: your money

sloth and indiscipline as pathologies not
personal failings
so obvious people say it’s an example of circular
logic
i am not sure where i’m living which lines

mobile devices video games and various web-
based iterations
& aggressive international behavior, however
well-intentioned
there are times when you want to speak to a real
live person re: your money

passive subjects in a unilinear history of decline
subverted the rules when they got in the way
i am not sure where i’m living which lines
there are times when you want to speak to a real
live person re: your money
Sonnet IV

Antidote to a window
Obscure radiance of a
World waiting for a cloud is further
Proof the head of Jerome
Rothenberg is a sword raised
Over my head hand to chin hairy
Grill keeps the world in wonder

No fake paradise forms his
Face another theory enters my timid thighs
Meanwhile crime always falling
Upside down both the inside and outside
Empty as brain cells make
Loud sounds in ambivalent cinematic space
That lap-top laugh.
Jimmy the Window
Smoothes his lanoline
Soaked hair and nipples
Kissing, mourning,
Hiking, the rumbling
Of Heckert’s
“Riotfuckers”
Shows Prostates
Gathered in front
Of a church
In the seventies
They ate hurriedly
From the pack
At bitter campfire
To miss the
Executing draft.
NBA Bars 4
After a Brawl
Of innovating forms.
Text dreams as text
Away from motive
That suddenly
Adopted the wind.
In its boredom
Light presents itself.
Major watercolor fodder,
Alternative definititive
Blond, Sol Lewitt
Sodomized me, the
Vast mark
Of his face
Hangs here—sudden
Light underneath
A cornice. Myself
As dilemma, 140
Lbs. with Hebrew
Eyes, sometimes
For centuries a lost
Bottom boy. The
Website of Zard
Omran, my brother,
Or the notion of
His freedomed collapse
His own gray
Domestic animals.
Regular skin fade
Here-to Hetero
Brain Faulted
Over McDonalds'
Libel case, typical
Ice maker.
Electromagnetic
Field reading
The future of
Coincidence from
Overhauled wives.
That it might be
Recalcitrance
The place from wince
To break his face
Responsibly.
Sitting at her cross-
Dressing table,
Lady Pacifica,
The eerily jazz music
In the eldritch light,
Some heavy-lidded
Musical labor,
The full of shit
Universe, their
Neck-names in
The best triplet.
With posthumous
Simplicity
A kangaroo caught
Up and began
Fucking me.
The Sperm Sent
Shock Waves,
Satanic amalgam, the
Oriental rug he
Wore on his finger
Interwoven between
These guilty instants
Or the world
In polenta moves
Forward by the
Porn inside
Language. Pan-
Demonium Cuisine.
Hate Cuisine.
Declared
Fragments of the
Soul, derivative
Sin. A kind of
Incoherence to
hold its own breath
By declining to play
The final note. Two
Hearbreaks that
Are Awkward,
Ne’er the twins
Shall meet. Wet
Cadiz, penile Seville.
For so long been
Decimated by
Variations on
The baseball cap.
The Boone Period
Can coast here
At my place.
Fishwacker
Inspired residents
With ambulances,
And the lifeless
Demand who populate
Impatience Hospital,
Garden of the Cross.
Executive seeks
Discount with
Younger guy
Sugar flare, the
Martyrs of these
Bedding schemes
Pulled out the soil
A new senso
Of tragic glamour.
Many thanks
To Saltine Peter.
Unreknown rose,
His names and
His thick name,
Autistic saint
Quickly cloning
Himself off,
Is clearly
Unrecognizable,
More evident and
Less condemned.
Gandhi had a
Dinner dance.

Fried Ukraine Premier
To make me his cock
Theater, the Howl
De Anza who came
To raze horses. Circus
Is the last realistic
Art. Events derive
Meaning from adjectives,
The eerie pinup
Stars of Mandate,
The renegade museum.
14 foot kidder ceilings,
The lofty surprise
Of Saturn planet
After enjoying sex
Or seven essays
On me. Down below
The boys were
Stopping at spotlights,
The husband atmosphere.
Between x’s legs
He opened his eyes
On a hopeful sight.
The pompous mills
Taking flight from
Their imaginations.
These internet in
Uncomfortable ways.
He’s writing details
With schizophrenia
Playing Byronic
Saxophone, the
Night x death.
New York leases
Its subway alert.
Jeffrey’s Dalmer
Raped on the
Front window,
The commodity
Was in the closet
And that’s for me.
Withering of the
Testicles of Empire.
Trip to Beautiful
Typo Beautiful
It assassinates
A whole sheaf
Of post 9/11
Non-fiction,
The formation
Of decrepit
Subjectivity, or
What lies behind
The figure skating
Of the smiling
Popular blond. It
Your funeral, save
The day.

Note: “I, Boombox” is assembled from my misreadings, so it’s an auto-biography in which I dream on the page.
The Birds

Lauren Shufran

Prior to this tryst my debt was pretty damn vanilla; kinkless, even – like interjecting damned between my speech to impound flavors, or jouning into fountains up in Rome in Simplex Latin: the foreplay was all droughty though The dénouement got pretty damp up in The tabloids. So I got into this motorboat, ‘Cause even jokers poker face when guys Mistake them for wage laborers and lessers who Vend birds to legal eagles. Okay, I Thought I’d do a little egging. I thought a body without organs is delivered of Its viscera and visceral reactions and Thus free to cerebrate and organize A little vandalism. Nothing bides within Those eggy membranes but my unforgiving flows, and the waves on which I percolate my Overwater gifting – I mean, the waves On which I register my privilege through texting. But even as I’m trespassing to Plant these lovebirds in the living room the chickens In the yard have stalled their feeding, and Fran-Cis’ homiletic dissing of the birds – who neither spin nor sew yet get all pimped with handout pigments, and neither sow nor reap yet get their cake in Cushy dishes – has been winked at by the Multitudes bunked in the dust Saint Francis is all Brushing with his unimpeachably tight Saint Franciscan garments. Before this stint my dues Were soft serve without sprinkles; all that flavor Or was just air and sloppy distribution and The foreplay was like licking middling cocks Of middling Romans in the fountain drink department. Ment of Rome’s frozen open markets. But

Shufran | 217
Then the Saint looks up with glaciated taste buds
   From the birds fixed in the cinders of the
Oven used to bake the birds with, and senses hel-La birds are at the site he lifts his eyes
To; and this guy is ogling me through binoc-Ulars 'cause I’m advancing on his sis-Ter and his superego from the rear – which is
Okay sort of untraditional – in
This camouflage I picked up in the pet shop set-Tlement with lovebirds. I thought a body
Without branches is a sale without a bargain,
   All delivered from division into
Lesser limbs and prices and thus free to wholly
   Register the degradation of the house paint
As a product of my egging. I’m all, “I put
   The antic in pedantic with my soft
Skills in the barter” when this sprinkle gets aggres-Sive with my head, and stresses the prosa-Icnness of protesting with yolks, and makes a cut
   There. But birds don’t have a mediocre
Praxis; if they fast they’ll fast for months and if they
Flock it’s by the oodles. So when philo-Sophers shed flashlights in my mug like, “don’t they ev-Er drop that Stanky Leg?” it’s a given
Birds are on the verge of krumping at their pupils.
   I’m at the club now with Saint Francis and
I’m texting to my captain what's my 20 while
   The birds are crashing candidly against
The Green Zone and its bouncers, and it doesn’t get
   Past Francis that the wind on which they’re rid-Ing is a Middle-Easterly one. We’re taking
   All these iPhone shots of aviary
Violence ‘cause a con is still an artist when the
Gulls capsize the tankers that evoke his
Private enterprise or go apocalyptic
   On his honey’s sister’s quinceañera.
A single sprinkle's adequate to stigmatize
   Your seraphic vanilla and give leave
To get collecting on your debt and get your war
   On – to say nothing of the fact that sprink-
Les don't go unabetted and, like birds, alight
   In trillions with their habit-forming af-
Firmations and that ostentatious clacking of
   Their buskins on our snacks and on our shin-
Gles. The goose step makes a goose a bellicose Rock-
   Ette: half punkish ideology, half
Ludicrous athleticism. Before I jumped
   This motorboat to Kabul to go po-
Kerface on steeply-kicking jimmies all my fore-
   Play was with lovebirds in these fluent Rom-
An fountains; but the parrots started flocking with
   The scavengers and forging figura-
Tions of the domino and foreign language theor-
   ies. So cold wars froze my birdbath and the
Atmospheric pressure made me bolt into the
   Phone booth just before the birds got hectic.
I thought a body without foreign occupa-
   tion is a pay phone without partitions
Or nickels: delivered from attending to the
   Self or to the caller and proportion-
Al to counter-actions, like employing harking
   Organs to hear shells break as a conse-
Quence of hard high-fives and egging. I thought a pet-
   Rol station without arson is an egg
Without its albumen: nothing flows within the
   Membranes of their singular arrangements
But the free-floating desire of intensi-
   Fied anatomies precisely at the
Point they'd tear if tautened any further. Every
   Egg's an egg that's on the verge of cracking,
Like I'm gassing up my Hummer when this bird busts
   Out and nosedives right into the diesel nozzle.
Before this mess my debt was just a bauble; the
  Foreplay was like pre-game with the camera
In my aspect while the commentators kibitzed
  How I put the pec in pectin strutting
Up on Afghan attics with my muscles flexed and
  Jelly on my naan like birds were nada.
It took a little Hollywood to demonstrate
  How birds are pretty creepy. It took a
Bit of Murdoch to assure us lovebirds are this
  Other breed of fervency. There are cer-
Tain movements only embryos can sustain, like
  The goose steps of their marching orders or
The barricades on windows that they’re hurled upon.
  I thought a body without organs is
A roost without an attic, all devoid of def-
  Inition between oneirism and
The Real, like symptoms of complacency and stor-
  Age space for weapons. I induced ducks to
Swallow this in lumps in lieu of chewing, I thought
  This war was about aviary in-
Jury, contingent on the birds-eye views of burn-
  Ing structures burning as a consequence
Of birds’ indubitable presence. I had this
  Thing for getting nude and dunking ducks in
Fountains, but when all the ducks were drowned I was still
  Stuck here in my sodden drama. Saint Fran-
Cis is all bummed because the birds are done with judg-
  Ment; I’m troubled ‘cause I’m in the garret
Laboring to parry them. But really I’m just
  Striking at a solid lot of nothing.
At breakfast I got to meet everybody which was fun, fun... and then I rushed back to camp and got to volunteer for the day. I have currently been looking for Group Information and Special Group Greetings, some Good Classic Experience and a few notes in a hushed voice. Most of the time, when I team up with a couple medics, we’re able to move our cart forward. The thing about the Gold Rush is that the entire opposing team will attack a single area. If we stop to camp, we won’t move our heavy cart forward. And being on my feet is not a good idea for that long a time, but what I really regret today was my unexpected blurt outting my opinion that, “For me, social movements start when individuals are free to think, create, ride trains, write stream-of-consciousness poetry, hang out in the garden for three years, or alternatively visit speakeasies in the middle of the night.” You were down in the triple chamber structure all night, trying to separate heat and noise from the power supply, hard drives and motherboard for cooler and quieter operation. Noise level is defined as Low (under 88 decibels), Medium (88 to 91 decibels), or High (92 decibels or more). A quiet high-efficiency 430 Watt power supply with universal input and active high voltage supplies many household items, like microwave ovens. The square waves from those signals inside the case cause lots of noise, and worse yet, many people either have non-compliant cases or just remove the case covers! A Boeing 727 co-pilot once collected 61 noise observations using a handheld sound meter and determined that there are three flight phases: Climb, Contact and Layout; Climb, Supply and Contact; and Climb, Contact, Release.
Yes, the whole idea is that the only people in the game are other players, but this can create a vacuum. Well, in my experience, one of my biggest problems is this very same fact. The stable auditory high turns into an auditory nightmare. I then develop a multitude of minor issues such as eye twitching, sensitivity to high frequency sounds, white noise, static, and distortion. I’m usually the last to admit my own failure, but will this note change with road conditions or be one continuous single pitched noise? What we have sounds like the old furniture noises but higher pitched. It’s hard to describe but rather like a very high voiced version of our National Anthem sung by five children (ages 6-8). I don’t think I’ve ever heard the National Anthem performed better than this! An entire arena remained completely silent throughout the entire performance.

Noise canceling is quite an annoying option, but it’s pretty much a high frequency that you can kind of hear when turned on without any music from head phones. It’s almost the same sound as you hear when a TV is on, and this compared to what a single system achieves with outstanding detail and highly accurate color reproduction suitable for the demands of high-end video production—wide dynamic range, low color noise, high-contrast detail, etc. After a lot of work over the winter months, I got the bike back together, and it feels great, only now I hear a faint noise, kind of like a high pitch “whoooo” between 40mph were I can just hear it and 60ish where it’s at its loudest. A Boeing 727 co-pilot once collected 61 noise observations using a handheld sound meter. He defined noise level as Low (under 88 decibels), Medium (88 to 91 decibels), or High (92 decibels or more). Also, the pilot determined that there are three flight phases: Climb, Add and Move; Seed, Leech and Sleep; and Describe, Present, Release. I rushed to applaud the recent Supreme Court ruling, telling our audience that it represented a huge, huge, huge move forward to undercut efforts to commit fraud this fall. Anti-fraud efforts this fall will supply our team with the evidence and stature it needs to rip apart the competition. Horton heard a who in the silent forest of information. Sometimes you just simply can’t put an end to what other people are thinking and saying. I keep telling myself not to give a crap about what others might think or say. Heck, they don’t even really know me yet, and I don’t want to trouble myself.
As I have reported previously, for as many as twelve days following your return, you could sit silent for hours, unresponsive to touch or voice, or perhaps simply uncaring. Sleep researchers say most of us are either larks or owls, some of us to an extreme. The ideal day best fits someone like you, who rises at 6 or 7 am and hits the hay at 10 or 11 pm, so owls or larks should set their clocks back or forward a few. The strange thing is that, yes, the whole idea is that the only people in this game are other players, and that can create a vacuum. One of my big problems with sound is that very same fact. So, I integrated your clock’s keypad-only mode with my phone’s Matrix mode and threw the old Metal Tiger out the window. It’s as if I just got a brand new voice, but there’s this very high pitched sound, almost like hissing or a mosquito noise, coming out from the top of my forehead, right behind where my eyes sit. My experience with sound is that it works quickly and effectively without the hassle of a vacuum. I have never once confessed to integrating text and voice through the window of three dimensional voice visualizations or of including you in the conversation just to make quick, simple calls for easier navigation. I didn’t say that. I did not say that. This is a classic illustration. You heard what you wanted to hear based on your own biases and prejudices. I simply recited some facts for you. These are not arguable. You can slip an old unmatched sock on your hand and dust as you go. For windows and mirrors? Use old newspapers to clean mirrors and windows. You’ll have a great disposable cleaning refrigerator if you clean your refrigerator coils and drip pan. Vacuum the vents and coils to clean them. Dusty coils have to work harder to cool down the interior and contents of the refrigerator. Check the gaskets for proper air seals. “Where are they?” I asked. “They’re right where I left ‘em,” you joked and were tugged forward a little as we did the rush forward and slow down thing, which generally meant a slower delivery into the forward line. Being a good sport, you slipped your arm loose and grabbed my hand as we set off at an easy jog towards the goal. Our rush was so good that the defensive side’s pressure in the middle of the ground left the ball free. That which always gave the hawks a better chance of blocking up space around the goal, was instead, better still for us.
MIMICA DE LA ABSORCION

la materia inmaculada.

al escuchar la lumbre
en segundos
al ensayar lo detenido.

pliega en la sensación
clandestina porque aún
atormenta la lentitud
con que parece no cambiar
el suelo.

una por una trafican
las 600 puertas
de su evasiva.
IMMUNE OF ABSORPTION

immaculate material.

when hearing the brilliance
in seconds
when attempting the painstaking.

it folds in clandestine
sensation because still
the slowness torments
with what seems not to change
the foundation.

one by one travel
the 600 doors
of its elusion.
AQUELLAS ARTES REPENTISTAS DEL DESVIO

a que la gracia de la mano conduce
y traslaciones del mismo desalojo
hacia la órbita invertebrada.

luego una aguja socava la consistencia
de otra reliquia personal. no llave
ni amuleto contra el olvido que preña
con la ola experiencia del desmadre.

cada remolino anida en la próxima
mudanza que en el cráneo sopesa
balanza para sonidos
el espejismo del fondo.

cinco segundos de ardorosa, íntegra
impaciencia desbaratan a su vez
con sus vetas: verdín sobre la piedra
que se hunde.

para saciar el apremio de hallarse
a salvo de la apariencia partera
que separa, desdoblan nubes el papiro
índigo que las hierve crudas.

con toda seguridad, ignorancia:
nunca esperada, nunca contenta
quemadura del ensimismamiento
rumia caníbal malestar a la busca

de alguna gruta milagrosa tras
el muro de lo que dura. incluso
el pulimento de la necesidad desnuda
el dédalo de partículas:

el cardumen disperso por la mano
al entrar en la oblicua
gama que levita
la atención sin fatigarse de la espuma.
the grace of the hand drives toward
and movements of a similar eviction
unto the invertebral orbit.

later a needle exhumes the consistency
of another personal relic. no key
nor amulet against oblivion pregnant
with the wavy experience of chaos.

each whirl nests in the next
move weighing on the cranium
a scale to measure sounds
the illusion of the depths.

five seconds of arduous, integral
impatience destroy simultaneously
with their veins: copper oxide
on a sinking rock.

to satisfy the urgency of self-discovery
safe from the mid-wived appearance
that separates, clouds split the indigo
papyrus boiling them raw.

with all security, ignorance:
never expected, never content,
the burn of self-absorption
ruminates cannibalistic discomfort for the pursuit

of some miraculous cavern behind
the wall of what lasts. even
the polish of necessity undresses
the labyrinth of particulars:

the shoal dispersed by the hand
as it enters the oblique
range that levitates
attention without tiring of the sea foam.
ALUMBRAMIENTO A AÑOS-LUZ DENTRO DE UN BOSQUE

a kilómetros de este recinto de papel.

¿fiarse del caligráfico murmullo rayano en fiebre de los grillos?

el hálito entra y sale y no sale y renace alimento de la helada.

matorrales. el desfiladero de la rutina de las llaves a tiempo abandonó.

diamante líquido veteado de sigilosa impavidez de oscuridades.

desovilla la sonrisa prismática al fascinarse inmemorial de disolvensia.

SONAMBULO AFERRARSE A CONCENTRICA DERIVA

herida vibratíl del rocío.
ILLUMINATION OF LIGHT-YEARS WITHIN A FOREST

kilometers from this paper precinct.

to trust the calligraphic murmur
bordering on a fever of crickets?

the breath enters and leaves and does not leave
and recovers nourishment from the frost.

thickets. the narrow passage of the routine
of the keys abandoned just in time.

liquid diamond veined
with the silent courage of obscurities.

the prismatic smile unravels
an immemorial fascination with dissolvency.

SOMNAMBULIST GRASPING CONCENTRIC DRIFT

vibratile wound of dew.
dando un viraje al pandemonio de fijeza.

andrógina marea el amarillo templado. abeja indivisa de su amor imposible por la fuga.

el demonio de la alegría trajo bajo la manga del kimono la pasión del equilibrio, que bulle.

caciencia agitada en móviles y abanicos para asustar al hermano lego miedo.

“alta complejidad,” la sirena en el techo: “¡alerta! la parca parece que anda cerca.”

lo unido en la gema del desborde terrenal. archipiélagos de chispas de inexperiencia.
A DEVOURING STATIC PROWLS. CANOE SLIDE

giving a twist to the pandemonium of fixity.

androgynous tide mild yellow. bee
undivided from its impossible love of flight.

the demon of joy brought beneath a kimono
sleeve the passion of equilibrium, seething.

the anxious patience in mobiles and fans
frightens the secular brother fear.

“high complexity,” the siren on the roof:
“beware! fate appears to be closing in.”

the unified in the gemma of earthly overflow.
archipelagos of sparks of inexperience.
They said it could indeed be a variation of that. What we thought we knew, in between the lines. What we said right behind our shoulders without being. The wind was long. What collapsed the space between the star and the real person. You were all wound up. A Slinky is going down the steps in a commercial in 1978, while the moon snuck up outside. What’s between the New York and the Peorias of the world. Tell me the answer when you’ve learned all the constellations. You know dying light year stars take forever to get to us. You know the stars we see are dead. Don’t sing Pearl Jam’s Alive for the thousandth time. I know, I know I am alive. Yesterday after the swing shift I said I’m dead. Don’t pick on me. I don’t need to hear his low voice again, unless I really really die that time. Between what we said and what we meant. The secretary pool knew it all. New was all. They knew what you were thinking, because they have gotten good at reading your mind. It’s not a foreign language. They all had posters of Elvis back there. He stared out from the back of the wood paneled office while they typed into their new electric IBM Selectrics. I said it was shorthand, not shortland, what were you thinking? They hadn’t heard that quote from Whitman about singing the body electric. But their hands were plugged in all the time. One lady sang in the choir with the organ blasting. You could do what Mrs. Johnson’s son did and make it all slow down by being a stoner. It was embarrassing. Time on the typewriter contracted into one long bass line she remembered from the glee club. Her son was right, the stoners could see clearer. After all, you know the stoner rockers smirked behind your back, a distance that seemed as far as the dark star. They didn’t say anything that was nice, but you felt their eyes burn into your new denim jacket. It caused a hole all the next day each time you typed a Q in the typing pool. The free fall is over but where were you headed? You wanted perfect sight to be something that looked like a sparkly haze that occurred when your eyes glazed over Elvis’ late-career rhinestone jackets. You know you could have sat at the stoner rockers’ lunch table. Every low note gone high would make me die. Not a drone. Every unruly long-haired person would forgive your typos: yes, the stoner rockers. They said psychedelia lifts after a hit, but stoner rock lifts after sustains. Jane’s Addiction sang in 1987: “She hides the television.” But would anyone hide computers today? If so, please let me know at 867-5309 and ask for Jenny.
What started out as normal

FROM the “don’t read into anything series”

What started out as a normal afternoon in our Tiki bar has blown up into this crazy thing. “A working class hero is something to be,” said John Lennon. Light refracted behind the light. Your meaning eclipsed behind hers. A parking spot disappearing with something in it. Say what? This joke has seventeen words. That’s okay. Remember we thought we could walk into mirrors then. You don’t? We didn’t wear vintage with irony. Don’t read into anything. You fell where? I don’t see any evidence that he ever understood the situation he was in. Then the math whizzes arrived. Hiding in your comprehensible incomprehensible algebra. Remember, Robert Frost might not like this. All I could hear was thunder. There were other things to hear but I didn’t hear them. But you did. And did you hear this: Axl Rose of Guns N’ Roses has stated that it was listening to “Bennie and the Jets” that made him want to be a singer. What kind of person says explore the magnificent profundity of everyday? Get out of here. I already told you what I heard. You think you know I heard something else? You know I heard something else? You heard that? Okay, tell me where.

your control of the lower registers is flawless,

the static is enduring, the tracking is scintillating, blurring your flawless lower registers, ka-ching, ka-ching, ka-ching, suddenly all at once, a path is revealed, a window is opened, it got me from point A to point BE is all you need to know, another level of the sublime skirting through, more than the skirt that slipped through the subway grated crack, the high heels you said you’d never wear ever again after the grated teeth ate one and you went to work, snuck in, with pantyhose toes and slipped on extra shoes under your desk, we opened up the instinct, we dragged the palm key down to key of the lowest C, don’t you see, we controlled the lowest of the low, the registers felt like Mt. St. Helens times twenty but nothing moved, nothing shook, we knew it was flawless but had to do it without lava, without ash, you know the bullhorn was what would carry you through another day of this BS, BS meant to orchestrate yr flawless control of the lower registers but you’d already carried them so high, their low-ness highness would never fall down again
Money is nothing.
Jobs are nothing,
days open.

—Leslie Scalapino, from The Return of Painting

It's nothing. You can't do nothing about it. There's nothing I can do. She said nothing happened. N-O-T-H-I-N-G, that's what the other team means to me, NOTHING ABSOLUTELY NOTHING! clap clap : ) Whoohoo! (Thanks cheerleading school.) She said nothing absolutely nothing. William, it was really nothing. (Thanks Morrissey.) She said nothing about it. There's nothing in there. Like I know nothing. Nothing is more like it. She has nothing left. Nothing happened. She said nothing. There's nothing else to be learned from this. She doesn't know nothing. Look, remember I know nothing. There's nothing more I can say. Jane says I don't owe him nothing. (Thanks Jane's Addiction.) Look, you owe me nothing. You're not buying nothing. Nothing is more like it. I learned nothing from that job. She went there, I got nothing. She left me nothing. There's nothing in it for me. There is nothing in that head of yours. It's all about nothing, OK? There's nothing there, you got that? She meant nothing. But that doesn't mean it's nothing. Look, just cuz she said nothing doesn't mean you shouldn't say nothing. It's NOT NOTHING. My parents went to Las Vegas and all I got was nothing. There was nothing in the paper today. I was just at Wal-Mart, there's nothing there. I went through the whole place, nothing. No thanks, no welcome, no nothing. I got it, it's nothing man. There's nothing we can do. They said this counts for nothing. What did you say, nothing? She said we've done nothing. All this time and you said nothing? No money, no food, nothing? Are you kidding, nothing? No diploma, nothing. It's got nothing to do with you. Absolutely nothing, you got that? It's nothing to him. I went to MOMA today, there's nothing there. I sat through the speech, they said nothing. What did it count for, nothing? He's got nothing to show for it. It meant nothing to me at the time. Right now, it's nothing. Later, it'll be nothing. It's not nothing anymore. It's on me, it's nothing. It's nothing for me to get this. Look it's all before me and I see nothing. You're saying it's there, and I totally see nothing, ok? I see this and I see nothing. You see this, you see that, yeah, I see nothing. There's nothing there. Zip. Nada. Zilch. Don't bother going, the whole thing is nothing. Now, nothing is more like it. What did I get paid for, nothing? This is some total nothing shit. What did I do this for, absolutely nothing?

I hate – jobs –
are nothing

—Leslie Scalapino
it was salf's fault anyway

forget me

not at all, not in the least

not at all what i intended

but this is not what i intended

no, it's loud, really loud. no, it's a refrain. no, it's a whisper. it is a song. that's like a song. salf is out to get you. salf is out to get you. salf is out to get you. lbj couldn't have told you. lyndon johnson told me. salf is out get you. well, then, run. there is no conclusion. at this point, i don't even think i can conclude. i can't forget though. run. lyndon johnson is out. forget salf now. emotional. that hurt. ouch. salf. it is really simple to forget. it is simple. president johnson is out now. forget salf. that whisper. whisper that. forget salf. you forget all about salf, at some point, at some point, it is easy to forget. it was so painful and emotional and you forget. i could have just died. i could have died. lyndon baines johnson walked right up to them and told them and it wasn't a lie. lyndon johnson told them. president lyndon baines johnson spoiled everything. it was salf's fault. danger, no, i don't think so. a personal sort of danger. danger. lyndon johnson put you in a room and locked the door and it was dark and there was danger there. lyndon b. johnson folded you up. lyndon told you. salf would know.

and you have to be careful there

the rest was viciousness, pure viciousness

i could have cried

i could have folded a blanket

i told them, i really told them
i went to the store

my intention was good

there was no way of avoiding this fact

but my intention was good

there is no reason for president lyndon johnson to be here. lyndon b. johnson shouldn’t be here. why the fuck is johnson here? anyway, where did johnson come from? i didn’t want him around. i really didn’t like him. i took president lyndon johnson and stuffed him in a bag. i don’t think i’m sick. not sick. a little sick. i am sick from this. it is sick. who really cares? do you think salf cares? who do you think you are? at a time like this? why would you think of such a thing? what the fuck is a sword? a sword? and i thought it was a sword. lyndon johnson was the one with a newspaper in his hand. lyndon johnson got in the way. no, fuck salf. fuck him. lyndon johnson is the one who caused all the trouble in the first place. lyndon johnson is the root of it all. it was salf, i tell you.

but something intervened

i did not intend for it to be this way

it was not my intention

it has nothing to do with the plan

but this, of course, cannot exist

who the fuck do you think you are? what kind of person are you? things lyndon johnson would never have made up about salf, not in a million years. you took lyndon johnson home one night and told vicious lies. you ripped lyndon baines johnson’s heart out. you fucked lyndon johnson up. lyndon johnson was a good boy. all you ever did was corrupt salf. you go away. president johnson is all grown up now. lyndon johnson has been gone for years. salf doesn’t live here. it is too late at night. salf can’t come out and play. salf, this can’t be right. put it in a box. no, wait, charge it to your credit card. blow it up. fuck you, salf, that’s what i say. i am not salf. this was not the direction i intended to go. this was not part of the plan. this has nothing to do with you, i swear. i am on my hands
and knees. wait a moment. it is a rebellion, a religion, a loving god, a false god, i tell you, i tell you. lyndon johnson is living a lie. pure insanity. it's insanity, i tell you. forget salf. a perfect imitation of salf. mr. johnson is an imposter. go and forget salf. not fair, i tell you. it's not fair. it is because of this, this salf, that i hurt myself. did i tell you that i want to have kids with you? did i tell you that i want to marry you? did i tell you that i love you? ancient and ugly salf. salf, there is nothing other than you. there is no victimization. there is no propriety. it's a disunity. i mean salf. it's not right, not right when there is no salf. i can hear you laughing at me. there is no salf, no salf here. it's not fair. get what i mean? fuck you and yours. hey, salf, fuck you. you are a bad salf, really a bad salf, and i don't like you at all. can salf come out to play?
Two Poems

Brian Laidlaw

A DRAW

i
draughthorses compose an early hostel
tails a terse
ringlet you ought
to conifer ought
to evergreen
their knees were burls

yea
were four adams apples akimbo

ii

frontiersmen culture the wrong & lame
eucalyptus clove
by tinny adzes

or a lonesome bolt
so this house
is a house of wefts

rehearses
its cursive & vespers
is a house of reeds

yea

the oversize ponies they drugged us
into this madhouse birdhouse
GREENHORN

i

upon exploring them asinine friendships
i found flat silver balloons that mylar kind
agape over lichens like a squids opal eye
like a bivouac slip
i felt love for things the tarot suicide
whose auspice is promise
& whose nooses cradle
the lemongrass in technicolor ringlets

ii

sister i confess i kiss your friends
though shy of constantly with nubile reams
we origami beds we helium zeppelins
forgive us for vertigo begins
with a prefix meaning green
1. **The Magic Rule of Nine**

Your sonic suit may not be a perfect fit. You’ll learn to get by. Just don’t assume that all art is all about victory over death all the time. Not to say one shouldn’t enjoy not being dead. In the swell of many a meantime, many have been known to divert themselves with great success viz. civilizations’ greatest hits. Take the discovery of “The Magic Rule of Nine.” That the sums of all the numbers within the sums of all the multiplicands of 9 up to and including 9 equal 9 is numerically melodious (bird singing in tree) to the species that longs for more to it than a first glance affords. Someone will say if you really think this is magic you don’t properly understand the decimal system (bird falls out of tree). Who among us doesn’t long for magic. Who among us understands the decimal system.

2. **Jimbo’s Inferno**

The arrow of time has just whizzed out of view while differences in wing-beat rates among the smaller species smaller even than humming birds, flycatchers, black-capped chickadees—insects for instance—can still be discerned with experienced and careful observation before they too disappear into the whisper dry light that illuminates an efficacious will trying to resist the increasing pull of the elegiac. What a beautiful day to go out and discover more beautiful laws of nature, e.g., Reciprocal Alterity, anagram of Terror Pity Calla Ice, and vice versa.
3. 
**Happiness**

Nobody and that too but for the following ergo confusion pulchritude pulchritedium dominus vobiscum in nomine matris. As for Either/Or quotients enough said fully understood right say no more the sum of at least 2 square roots of sums of at least 2 well-being indicators brings on in accordance with the well known fail-safe-fool-proof equal-sign to say the least asymmetry is the new symmetry wherever the us considers the them the following obtains: Ah, Yes, Yes, Unmistakably Yes. Full-out Voila effect! Fully Attested to by the crack team of international monitors being well before the unfortunate a) massacre b) flood c) forced migration. Happiness comes unexpectedly. Pleasure is a matter of will.

4. 
**The Problem of Evil**

But for love of the sound of our own voices we might become the first species rendered mute by the scale of our own monstrosity. (Greater still than the poor bug-eyed fish in the dictionary definition.) First the gape, then the gag, followed by too many nervous coughs. Now a finely-tuned rationale fluting the edges of another disproportionate assault. Ah! Jane! Look! Dick! See! Not to worry! Yellow police tape is replacing the horizon in that romantic landscape. An improbably ancient cloud—most delicately formed—wafts by. Yes. We now know that the angle of attention is the most beautiful gift of free will. If there is a God than which nothing greater can be conceived that tragedy is inconceivable.
5.

My Evil Twin

The irrational is neither to be greatly admired nor poked with a stick. Though often associated with red, it can be any color at all. It is in fact merely the distribution of the subject such that certain logics are harder to discern. Pity the pretty stupid id said the smart poet. At word lineups the perps all look as maddeningly innocent as guilty. An independent particle migrates out of one frame and causes a giggle or a plane crash or a dashed romance in another. This is not necessarily another age of ignorance as such. One part of the brain tells stories to another part. To believe that the middle term can be deeply known without proof is still the primary symptom of the awkward break with Aristotelian logic. Ah yes, that’s it—the primary difference between them and us. Not unlike Kantor Sets, Koch Coastlines, Squig and Peano Curves and/or Strange Attractors brazenly showing their stuff. For the male member of that species, the horizon is the hemline of a tart. I know I couldn’t have said that just now. It must have been my evil twin.
6. 
Profound Realization

The rat, the pig, the fly. Philosophers are powerless before such creatures as they are also before themselves with or without the aid of mirrors. There is no lost golden age of goodness but there was a time when the commonweal occupied more of the foreground in a few good thought experiments: True or False? TV tonight: MAGIC—Ann Margaret stars in this thriller as the former high school sweetheart of a demented ventriloquist who is tormented by his dummy. In the mathematics of catastrophe a catastrophe set can be crossed freely in one direction. If crossed in the other direction a catastrophe will occur. Beyond 6 external variables the whole theory breaks down. And then the child said, Oh I thought you just thought that up on the sperm of the moment.

7. 
As Luck Would Have It

Spotted fawns were spotted on the lawn. What happened to the goat? The leopard ate it. The kids left it tied up outside in Uganda. If everything shimmered for only a moment said the French theoritician. The elementary school teacher said, After thinking about it and playing with it for a while, the word hexagon had become just as exciting to the children as the caterpillar each one was given to watch and care for. Later she told us that while the war was on she would frequently risk her life to engage in an entirely trivial, “normal” act.
Draft 107: Meant to Say

Rachel Blau DuPlessis

If one talks of depth, it’s not necessarily psychologizing things. The inside of the object might be social….

—P. Inman

Meant only to list, one and one and one, wonder. But found I needed verbs. And then I needed time.

Meant to note the heavy doors whose weight one can only pretend to intuit, without having been there.

Meant to erase half the words or more but couldn’t bring myself to do it.

I wanted to know about making art and telling the truth. Where does this thing come from why does this engineered apple taste dull, how did we get here from what to what and how did we decide to? or what flood of slough drowned us where we stood.

Question: “Looking back, what did you learn?”
Answer: “What a small amount of metal it takes to kill you.”
Meant to say: “Cost that out.” Underlining it.
And it isn’t as if this thought has gotten nowhere?

Meant to make the stitches more overt, patches and their overlap. But aesthetically.

Meant to sketch every day, and thus note more, much much more, so far away from what is called “the center,” it might as well be here.

What I meant, I think, was “scorch,” not “burst into flames.”
Once there was a book….

Conjunctures of intensity play out as dispersion. So meant to make a poetics. The way people do. But it never included all that I wanted.
Meant to take webbed strings
and watch small articulations,

meant more mystery, and more humility.
What I meant might have been more saturated in
the understanding of paralysis.

Meant to write a biography of obscure objects and their provenance
but could not.
The blur of choices at the very idea fazed the potential.
What is beyond the sublime?
What beyond the old poems with their alarming
Preponderance of white marble
And green travertine?

Meant to have spelled Dinggedicht correctly,
but didn’t.

The lapis, the amethyst, the turquoise,
the soft brown velvet sack,
symbols of other gifts, all unspoken
all under-acknowledged, never
enough questions asked,
Depression glass,
the carrion crows settling, satisfied, on road kill,
the white chip off a deep blue bowl from France. Etc.
That kind of thing—you know what I mean.
Tin tea trunk. Little toy it was.
A list of unaccountable items, totally yours.

Some are lost. Others list. A wake of themselves,
they send as much forward
as they can at any juncture
of fear, desire; oneself turning itself inside out.
Then someone must have meant to let the shadow in, to
emphasize the signs, to let ambivalence emerge.
But I saw that file only in shreds.
I meant to get more from it.

Meant to mention the poem is always in motion. It is always moving away,
is what I meant to say.
I meant the force of my conviction; I meant to say it more, but didn’t want the texture of certainty that that might give; I didn’t solve the problem of the political poem. Did I mean to? It was something along the way. I meant not even to say this.

What I meant was some painful, almost implausible point between being abandoned and being---what?---assumed into our human-ness?—and taking that as the condition of being. This whole period has lived in denial, and wanted either to affirm or to sanction genocide and destruction. Meant to say, what now.

I should have asked where my memory is. Is this Memory imbedded in language? in narrative only? it is a dialogue between individual and collectivity? do others have the same understanding of it? Is it in poetry? What is its trace? this is a problem of consciousness. Maybe trauma. As they say. Now dizziness? or detritus? It’s not a choice. I meant to create the kind of beauty that was not beautiful in the way I did not want. This left me without much of what I was once meant to do, so had to change my mind. Sometimes meant to watch the intricate ticks and trickles of consciousness divided into lines, then perhaps into sentences over-riding and underpinning lines, then into single words, and even phonemes like –z- or –gram, grammatical divisions, so that noun, sound, and verb are identifiable even if object, cacophonous sweetness, and actions are hardly clear. Who is the intermediary for what? I meant to notice.

Meant to keep better records.

Meant to ask more questions, listen better to the answers and to the bolus back of the answers.
Coming from time, webbed
further in time, to get singed, torn, used up, wrangling.
That's what I meant.
Uncanny indistinct keen thin powerless but able
to make words sometimes
and let the rest fall to the side before it all
gets brittle; what does the characteristic feeling
of debris or twist or twisted twisting actually say?

....should have said, even as I did say
SHADOW

ASH
And—then what?

Meant, I meant to start and
to startle myself. It was so.

Trample the vanity of the poem!
I meant to ask again
do you need this piece of string?
I saved it for you, for the knot and length to work on,
under, over, twist, and let it hold
so you could weave it in the webbing that
you keep too; it is your archive as well as mine, this little
piece of nothing, this
part of the imaginary whole.

I should have said the book as a whole has not burned, but
there is the burning of books, the burning bush.
We need to check what parts have been consumed.
That is what life is—impossible.

Would it have helped to be less careful, or more? I would have liked
to understand this choice better. I meant to.

Should there be fewer moments of the heightening of art?
I meant a greater ambivalence.
Meant to keep on saying, What do you do this for?
And meant to stay in the ungainly spot where too-little and too-much cancel each other out and there is an open fright.

I wanted—but did I really?—to be more explicit.

Should have stated more clearly about conjugated verbs, with syntax.

Meant to finish. Now it is not clear what I meant or what I mean by that. But readiness is right.

I meant to mention “kinwing” before this moment— something never seen before something never seen again— found and lost, passed over and then it became the book of unraveling voices, the universe adjacent the universe surrounding, such heartlessness and brilliance, earthly phosphorescence with its purposes—

I meant to let the poem pass into its particular autism, a compound paralysis of overloaded desires.

Political Criminals and Astronomical Theorists Talk of colonizing the universe

As if we had already ruined earth. Do they know that we have already ruined earth? Do they conceal from us that they have ruined earth? We are caught inside this.

Can one overcome one’s own cowardice? Meant to ask this. Plastic no longer means malleable. It means a voluminous tax on the ocean.
Trample the vanity of the poem. It is a smudge on the page.
If nothing more, could walk between the lines,
Watching, looking, sometimes seeing.
Impossible to elaborate the insistences of time
but tacking along the edge
in the course of things, I meant the
words I found
that could make other words
their interlocutors.

Here’s the twisted key. To the underground.
What kind of an event is this?
It’s not a solving I’m doing. Shouldn’t all writing be utopian
but also plausible?
The failures are ethical they are rhetorical they are political, what
aren’t they? I meant to say this over and over.

Yet how could I limit the call I’d made?
It’s not a solving I am doing.

Ring the bell.

Ring the bell again.

This thing is the “only poem” you’ll ever need
but you’ll need it (no matter who writes it), over and over.

NOTE
"alive dead increasing space shifting prime length" (detail) by Lee Etheredge IV
Protophelia; Codaphelia

Erin Morrill

Protophelia

Cyborgian in so far as an obsession toward John Everett Millais’ Ophelia might be viewed as indispensable addendum to adolescence, not to be conflated with the drowning urge parents might mistake it for, but as a developmental contestation as to the accuracy of the reproduction of the color green. An “Is the green that green, really?” methodology. Thus pilgrimage in the guised assumption that any poster in a gift shop in regards to color is a hyperbolic liar; no moss glows so brightly, even when pseudo-fluorescently propping up pale death. A visit to the Tate initially attenuates doubt, as it implies a cellular fusion with Millais’ unaffordably catastrophic style, the toxicity of preinternalized swamp water. Who doesn’t know such green is for radiation—kryptonite right? Rendering it akin to the song, my Pre-Raphaelite kryptonite. This necessitates an implantation procedure resulting in Turnerian light shards emanating from within. Only noticeable to those accustomed to attending to holographs, the peripheral visibility of spectral light and its sharding as concomitant with surrounding dust motes. On good authority it’s toward an alignment with a patriarchal heritage of landscape as denotative of space attainable by white men, realigned with feminine art process and inserted into the chest at awkward angle: goalie of an open throatedness.

The bourgeois interjection of Romantic discovery... the proceeding imagines itself unprecedented, as though the painting the baptismal of female hysterics. In London with family necessarily involves a museum out of principle—the one international trip before the demise of the patriarchy. Thus privileges the patriarchy, shoulders the throne and bears it forth, for in the bearing the potential to witness. If while shouldering, the throne should become a casket, then after an adequate distance, say at least beyond the point which folks previously did not drag folks before abandoning their bodies....

† A cow laughs like a donut smiles; you have to ask what's at stake.
% The song that skips replete in its reassurance of the inevitability of technological demise, our fine anarchical affection, romanticizing the impending apocalypse, it skirts perfection as possibility. It will be so desolate. We will be so splendidly relegated back to the only thing... our own... the internal state.
”Yeah, poetry needs colonics.... I always, like, want it to be totally conventional, but I also want to be blown away. I want it to suck my dick and still be conventional. I want it to politely suck my dick. When I try to explain what I want, it goes back to feelings and guts. And you can’t win an argument with [your] emotions.” —Maricela Ramirez
Precursor, the way a mouse enables one to light upon any given word within a text, any given:

What from childhood returns is mostly wet... damp skin in river water and/or warm piss. self-reflexive, both of which manifested after the break. When four, the divorce sprang upon us—two homes prior to the rift sequentially, two homes simultaneously thereafter. Rolling Play-Doh into peas on a kitchen table in Erwin, Tennessee next to a sliding glass door that leaked air. My first perception of the failure of a membrane to seal—it persistent haunting, an airy seepage altering a contained temperature, with inner condensation the glass blurring damp. This example of forced air, the seal that doesn’t, gave way to warm liquid, later and more precisely the specter of the stain. Permeability’s containment issues: from leakage to language. An ectopic ureter\(^a\) leading to spontaneous wetting, a minor eruption of what one’s tissues have ballooned inward, sometimes orgasmic. The regular encounters with the white-coats. The semi-monthly clean catch catheterization and the strange dye injected x-rays of my bladder where what showed up was hued purple. Unacquiesced-to micturition urges urine back to the right kidney until the volume of fluid exceeds its container. Apparently this is something one can outgrow.\(^b\) Though equally involuntary how unlike the drainage of river made warmer inside, exiting body of water, something a woman never escapes: the water inside her, a gush from between the legs, especially after the breast stroke, or after feigning the floating corpse. This doesn’t always happen right away.\(^c\)

\(^a\) The multidirectionality of a body’s fluid, prodigal urine returns to its kidney, not me, the right one.

\(^b\) A precedent for my relation to writing deadlines: what is supposed to come out of me doesn’t come out of me when it should come out of me, out being the presumable single direction to move, the mechanics of fluids and valves, the ratio of the diameter of the enclosure versus the pressure of the volume fluid enclosed. Disfunctionally the waste liquid travels back in and in so doing causes infection, leads to continuous antibiotics, pink/purple plasticized capsules as a preventative against the scarring effacement of incestuous piss.

\(^c\) Shriveled disused shunt “still inside me.”

\(\square\) Exposing the wet from within merely through re-asserting a corporeal verticality—standing made suspect.
Codaphilia

My cyborg self never was a transnational. Forged in the cavernous laboratories of ambivalent yet calculating male empiricists, she feels no imperative for meeting the female gaze and so does so carelessly. As a broken and mechanized beast, she reflexively, the fear conditioned, meets the eyes of her creators as a means of ascertaining what particular bodily reconfiguration’s in store for her that day. The way they study her prior to the cybernetic implantation procedures, an insertion of IV as a tell of what next, the tilt of their heads as they examine her pliant limbs. Docility, if not bred into the subject, can be spliced and drugged into it.

What, here, but another ubervictim, no? Possibly, but the primero ubervictim, in so far as primero ubervictim might be aligned with the conventional conventional stereotype of paralleling female subjectivity with victimhood. That mass media’s success in causing its female subjects to subconsciously internalize such models... the early cyborgian masturbatory fantasy of a factory of women restrained by electronically retractable metal restraints on metal slabs in metal caverns with a radiating circles of needles which extrude from each breast’s areola which inject drugs geared toward sexual stimulation as they, in a panic, wait to be fucked by Dan from Night Court. Admittedly there is a certain alignment with human female’s bovine counterparts in milk farms. Where, like my mother, the cows get injected and artificially inseminated by whitecoat workers in heavy duty shoulder length gloves, toward the enablement of a more generative form of fisting. My sister having recently been one such worker becomes implicated in the initial fantasy through ambulatory veterinary


Parallelism: switching verb tenses mid-list of active attributes.

We were supposed to take turns raping one another and so I let you rape me so good, but after you were done raping me, when it was my turn to rape you, you said you were too tired to be raped and rolled away from me to go to sleep.

“I’m just sayin’ one needn’t allow one’s guilt over such things [as a loose skinned body] to cause one to fuck a freshly emancipated, compulsively lying, crackhead felon. That’s all.”
experience. “Danger, Will Robinson,” for is then the reading to be had one of imagining one’s own mother getting experimented upon by one’s own sister while waiting to be fucked by the obvious holographic character of one’s own stepfather.

The important power relegated to the cyborg is likely heightened by the conditions of the subject’s conception. Yet more so by the subject’s continued adolescent subjection to science fiction film and TV iconography most of which initially arose out of a propaganda device toward maintaining morale during cold war relations: Flash Gordon, Star Trek, Star Wars, Space Ghost, Blade Runner, Runaway, RoboCop 1 and 2, Star Trek: The Next Generation. Are the wires irretrievably tangled and fused as with the rusted stuff that ultimately failed me hidden within the dark blue frame of my now long dead car?

The Real Dolls™ feed their Reborns© like good mamas should.

In the beginning there was a test tube. A will to birth that spanned the years. In the beginning there was the calculation of ovulation cycles, thermometers, implementation of a regimented sex schedule paired with careful consideration of the angle of the cervix upon entry, forty five years on one hand and twenty three on the other; the small air of sincerity scenting all the days…. Any birth can be read as an effort at a redemptive narrative. Here, technologically speaking.

Against the self-imposed restraint of the discoverer, the orientation of the past tends toward an orientation of the future.” —Herbert Marcuse, Eros and Civilization

“Gulp. Feminism failed because women are thieves. Never having owned anything, net even their selves, they filch texts…souls… dreams…space. The text has no power over it’s own volition thus its name is WOMAN.” —Dodie Bellamy, “Delinquent”

Particularly impacting from the Star Trek series were the characters of Data and the Borg as varying models of the machine’s capacity to integrate and replicate humanness, and later of course Seven of Nine.

If as Haraway asserts “the silicon chip is a surface for writing” and cyborg writing “must not be about the imagination of a once-upon-a-time wholeness” then what is at stake when once “the microchip and the computer program displace the human as the origin of life” the cyborg is most commonly invoked by pop culture in order to (re)produce an image of beauty, idealization, and imagined feminine wholeness? Are contemporary images of the cyborg “exceedingly unfaithful” to their origins in “patriarchal capitalism”? Do these models “simulate politics” as Haraway claims cyborgs do?
Conceptual artists made such extensive use of language in the 1960s that the term “text art” was one of the rubrics under which their work was identified. But the works of that early period would not have been called “conceptual writing,” perhaps in part because they got their public exposure mainly in fine arts galleries and museum settings. Institutional frameworks are only part of what sets early conceptual works apart from the strain of conceptualisms to which the Notes in this book pertain. Nearly half a century of innovation intervenes, and with it, a degree of critical self-consciousness that eschews the blunt orthodoxy of first generation conceptual art with its “self-described and self defined” earnest engagement with an “idea as the machine that makes art.”

The first phrase in that last sentence is Joseph Kosuth’s, the second, Sol Lewitt’s, both artists whose work features prominently in the history of conceptual art and its critical formulations. Both were articulate writers, and Kosuth’s “Art After Philosophy,” like Lewitt’s “Paragraphs on Conceptual Art,” are canonical texts that helped establish the basic tenets on which “idea art” functioned. Put simply, the crux of conceptualism was that ideas constituted works of art, independent of their execution or instantiation in material. The affront to expressionism and modern formalism was clear. By banishing lyrical subjectivity and existential angst at the same time as they clobbered the painterliness of paint and other allegiances to media and material specificity, conceptual artists pushed contemporary art into an intellectual frame. Few moves have had such profound consequences. The conceptual turn is the defining act of late 20th century art, and in a serious sense, all art executed subsequently has to reckon with attention to the idea at its core, no matter how elaborately executed it is.

But what of conceptual writing now and its relation to past practices? Why invoke this earlier movement and call forth its associations to conjure theoretical constructs from a broad reference field to compose “notes on conceptualisms?” Self-conscious and highly focused attention to the ideational basis of aesthetic work is one part of the conceptual equation. The other is an investment in proceduralism—making works of art according to a set of instructions. Precedents for conceptual writing include Raymond Roussel’s novels, the writings of OuLiPo figures, Georges Perec and Harry Mathews, John Cage’s compositions, and Jackson MacLow’s gothas. Text works by conceptual artists—Carl Andre’s typewriter pieces, Madeline Gin’s Word Rain, and Robert Drucker
Smithson’s *Heap of Language*—are among the well-known works from the visual field. Much conceptual writing is produced under constraints or according to certain systematic principles. But even as I write these phrases, I feel the inadequacy of such straightforward statements to address the shifting ground Vanessa Place and Robert Fitterman are trying to lay out. Current conceptualisms cannot be framed simply by putting them in relation to that early tradition.

In their “Foreword,” Place and Fitterman trace the origins of Notes to a discussion about a bunch of different written works that had been composed by erasure. Should every work produced using this strategy (is it a strategy? a technique? a method?) count as conceptual writing? Or would differentiating them from each other expose some principles that make one such act of reworking different from another within the horizon of conceptual writing? Twenty pages later, they invoke a founding example, Robert Rauschenberg’s 1953 “erased de Kooning drawing.” Contrasting it with Marcel Duchamp’s *détournement-avant-la-lettre*, the “Rembrandt as Ironing Board” proposal, they put the Rauschenberg work in alignment with Jen Bervin’s *Nets* (poems “that perform erasure on Shakespeare’s sonnets”), while relegating Duchamp’s irreverent Dada gesture to a different order of aesthetic approaches. They are right to cite Rauschenberg’s act, a performance as much as it is a piece, an emblematic work. The erased drawing was meant to produce a present trace of a marked absence, a ghostly palimpsestic base for work that could only be made by presencing precedence. Dada’s nihilistic flippancies were disrespectful dismissals of tradition while conceptualism’s negations, they suggest, are generative, referential, and essential for establishing a ground on which new conceptualisms take place.

Rauschenberg’s erasure is one piece of a three-part opening gambit of which his “white” paintings (blank canvases covered with house paint that John Cage called “airports of the lights, shadows, and particles”) and “black” paintings (newspaper layered onto canvas with black paint) are the other two gestures. By clearing space, creating frames to call attention to the aesthetic co-efficient of incidental experience, and rendering the field fully replete, Rauschenberg created works that sprang directly from his engagement with Black Mountain poets and artists. He called these experiences, not paintings or art objects, but circumstantial and provocative spaces for events.

Though the phrase “conceptual art” did not appear until the next decade, Rauschenberg’s explicit break with expressionist romanticism was one among several harbingers of changes to come. The radical shift in approach to composition that linked Charles Olson and Robert Creeley to Cage and Merce Cunningham and others at Black Mountain, found expression in that early Rauschenberg work. Proceduralism, not under that name, and an approach
to production grounded in ideas, rather than formal or lyrical means, was in ascendance. But if that is all true, and if the various modes of conceptualism and performance art, minimalism, fluxus work, and other approaches to artistic activity that devalued traditional and romantic authorship all gathered momentum and flourished from the 1960s onward, then why are Place and Fitterman invoking this rubric as a way to address contemporary writing? Is it really harder to write or make art in an innovative vein now than it was when Rauschenberg was clearing space by erasing one of the grand masters of the prior generation? Why not just repeat the regular cycle of rejection and renewal?

The answer is everywhere in Place and Fitterman’s tightly organized text. A pastiche and accumulation of thoughts and citations, references and pointers to an open field of associated works and ideas, Notes on Conceptualisms is symptomatic of the current state of experimental writing. The conceptualism of its title has many resonances, and the problems it poses cannot be addressed through a simple single linear notion of historical cycles and sequences. History has tilted onto a plane, become a topos, a spatial field, not a line, and figuring one’s work against such a jealous ground is not the same as playing games of oedipal displacement under the anxiety of influence.

A number of key concepts organize the arguments in this text. Though not all are sketched in binary opposition, each gets some of its identity by contrast to other received notions that separate their current conceptualisms from earlier avant-gardes or experimental writing practices. Allegory is put into contrast with symbol, composition with representation, desiring subject with authoring agent.

Interestingly, allegory had no place in conceptual art or writing in the 1960s or 1970s, but is recycled from its appearance in Walter Benjamin’s critical writings in the 1930s. Allegory had a front stage role in art critical texts of the 1980s when Craig Owens and others used it as a defining characteristic of postmodern art. (Pop, minimalism, and conceptualism, though clearly turns away from modernism, are not considered post-modern—in part because they appeared before the term was in widespread use.) The critical discourse that arose with the “Pictures” generation (so called because of their association with the title of the milestone 1979 exhibition) used allegory as an overarching rubric for the acts of appropriation, re-photography, and re-mediating acts of display that were part of its radical dialogue with traditional fine art and new engagements with mass media. Roland Barthes’ original rethinking of ideas of authorship had been chronologically coincidental with early conceptualism and proceduralism. But his critical work, as well as Benjamin’s, got a second wind with the “anti-aesthetics” of the 1980s. Conceptual writing within the sphere of Language Poetry drew from many of the same intellectual impulses,
though the attachment to ideas of resistance through difficulty harkened back to Russian formalist and surrealist antecedents. That kind of nostalgia is completely banished in the work of new conceptual writing, and Place and Fitterman’s use of allegory is one of the signs that they have leapfrogged over LangPo and into a present tense.

They embrace allegory as a powerful force: “Allegory breaks mimesis via its constellatory features” (p.23). Thus allegory emphasizes a constitutive and associational field that builds, accretes, superimposes, accumulates rather than standing in for something else. In other words, the made-ness of the text occurs entirely on a plane of immanence, one that precludes any notion of transcendence. And it is made-ness that is radically and radially associative rather than referential. Surface, not depth, and displacement, not condensation, are its features and modes. They sketch their centrifugal model of allegory with a compact diagram (an upper-case “A” with arrows pointing outward), contrasted with symbol (an “S” at the center of arrows pointing inward in a strikingly forceful, and quite legible, rhetorical gesture). These acts of displacement are lines of syntagmatic association through which signification functions along lines of presence(s).

Their notion of the sobject, in spite of the painful neologism, contains a compelling argument against the old Cartesian split that governs not only philosophy and creativity but theories of alienation and labor in a Marxist frame. By eradicating the fundamental duality on which self is objectified and also kept distinct from practice, the term aligns with ideas of co-dependence that are part of a constructivist approach to cognition. The embedded-ness of self and system this implies are more dynamic than structuralist or post-structuralist concepts of the self as “a subject constituted across signs” (another commonplace of 1980s theory). Nor is the sobject entirely voided of affect, even if expressiveness and its indexical relation to any interior life are moot in this critical discussion. The possibilities of a desiring subject for its own self-realization, expression, creation are negated, pre-co-opted from before conception. Known reference points hamstring and hobble any creative impulse towards expansion or extension. We are, it seems, hopeless and inevitably subject to the limitations imposed by conditions that keep us engaged with the plane of immanence. So be it. The results may be a dark Shandy-esque turning and returning to false starts and endless dérive-like detours and détournements, but the outpouring of current writing is unlikely to be staunched by the knowledge-in-advance of the impossibility of any writing going on in a representational mode. A richly constituted surface network of associations and references create the field of a conceptual text, but the constraint at work keeps all relations immanent, eschewing not only transcendence, but representation, as if the vertical access
of belief had been eliminated in favor of an extensive horizontal plateau. This corresponds to my notion of an “immanent sublime” that is not based on transcendence, but on the situatedness of experience within the messiness of the world. Those familiar with the Romantic ideology, to borrow Jerome McGann’s phrase, will recognize this as its other tradition—not Wordsworth’s, but Byron’s and Baudelaire’s.

Rather than taking “literariness” as its ground, contemporary writing eschews the poetics of symbolic figuration, compression, and device, that were the core of modernist experiment, and addresses itself to the field of conceptual thought as its foundation, by taking “thinkerliness” as the conceptual basis for writing. Conceptualism produces devaluation—transferring the debasement of commodified objects into a similar practice for works of writing that no longer exist to be read, but just thought about. In this regard, Notes is emphatically focused on a demonstration of methods of composition after philosophy. The double reference of the last phrase is deliberate, invoking Joseph Kosuth’s crucial contribution in Conceptual Art as well as Edgar Allen Poe’s seminal text—for the “after”ness of this mood of this book is striking and poignant. Its tone is redolent with associations and reference points, awareness of its historical position. Not only has everything already been done, but even that already-been-done-ness is over. Throughout my reading, I heard Samuel Beckett’s refrain, “I can’t go on, I’ll go on” echoing through my head.

That isolated units of prose in this book structure a textual field is as indicative of the state of contemporary prose as any specific statements they embody. They are hinged and tangential, oblique, not tending towards a referent, but constituting a field of relations. The writing is not making an argument according to conventions, but performing a set of moves to constitute a presentation of criticism under constraint. Place and Fitterman have deftly sketched a framework to get some purchase on a general theory of conceptualisms.
Is this a complex circuit? A map of Area 51? A guide to the levels of human consciousness?
It is, in fact, the map to Paul Braffort’s *Mes hypertextes: Vingt-et-un moins un poèmes a programme*, published in 1979 in the *Bibliothèque Oulipienne*.

Braffort, one of the founding members of the OuLiPo, pays homage in these poems to the 20 members of the group as of that year in alphabetical order. Not only are the poems dedicated to these writers and friends of the author, each contains subtle references to their work and in many cases adopts an OuLiPo constraint or idea for which the dedicatee was known.

As if such a challenge were not enough, Braffort also set himself the task of using a complex mathematical constraint as the foundation for the composition: Zeckendorf’s theorem, according to which any number can be expressed as the sum of two or more Fibonacci numbers. Each Hypertrope is numbered, and those that correspond with the Fibonacci series (in which each number is the sum of the two preceding: 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13...etc.) contribute key words and phrases to the other poems. In short, each poem is “programmed” by the poems containing those numbers that can be added to make it; for example, the 12th poem contains words that appeared in Hypertropes 8, 3, and 1. This approach allows characters to pop up in unexpected locations and turns of phrase to recur, forcing the author to construct clever scenarios that account for their reappearance.

Because we wanted to share this complex work with readers of English, we faced the challenge of providing a translation that could convey not only the sense of the words, but the surfeit of reference, soundplay, and constraint surrounding them. We determined that the work must be done as a collaboration—both between the two of us and between our poems and Braffort’s. Our “transversions” draw on Rothenberg’s total translation and on the Brazilian concrete poets’ notion of transcreation—that every translation reinvents its source. These poems transvert, subvert, and pervert the original text, incorporating elements of the original that would not fit into the translation and refracting them through our own lens.

For instance, Hypertrope 12 is dedicated to François Le Lionnais (1901-1984), the mathematician and writer who co-founded the OuLiPo with Queneau on November 24, 1960. An engineer and mathematician, Le Lionnais was involved in the French Resistance during the Second World War and was sent to a German work camp, an experience he wrote about in *La peinture à Dora*. After the war, he worked with UNESCO, through which he founded the Science Writers Association of France, and served as a scientific advisor to the National Museums. Le Lionnais’ interest in the arts extended beyond literature: he had been friends with Max Jacob and Jean Dubuffet before the war, and, an avid chess player, he befriended Marcel Duchamp and Raymond Roussel. He used his passions to found a series of “Ou-X-Po” groups that treated various arts and technologies (the “X” in the equation, which replaces the “Li” of literature) as the source for potential creation.
The Hypertrope’s subtitle, “La Bande à Pétrovich,” refers to Serbian mathematician and engineer Michel Pétrovich (Mihailo Petrović, 1868-1943), whose life and work (he was an inventor, world-traveler, violinist, and philosopher who wrote adeptly on a range of subjects including physics, chemistry, mechanics, and cryptography) fascinated both Braffort and Le Lionnais. The members of UNESCO considered Petrović’s scientific work and writings on analogy and comparative mechanics precursors to contemporary cybernetics. For Braffort and Le Lionnais, Petrović the polymath was a role model, and they were his unacknowledged bande, or gang. Braffort further puns on the word model in the poem’s first line: “Pour un mot doux d’Emma: un mot pour un mot d’elle,” in which the last three words (“un mot d’elle,” or “a word from her”) hide a homophone for “un modèle” (a model). In this way, Emma Bovary simultaneously becomes a fashion plate and a groupie.

The names that appear throughout the poem, including Swiss writer Charles Ferdinand Ramuz, the Gallimard publishing house, Adèle and Elise (the heroines of two popular songs), and Leonardo of Pisa (one of Fibonacci’s appellations), might be other members of this crazy gang, a group led by Pierrot, the protagonist of Raymond Queneau’s novel Pierrot mon ami (1942), who works at the Luna Park. Pierrot’s presence here also echoes the 18th century folk song “Au Clair de la Lune,” which begins “Au clair de la lune / Mon ami Pierrot / Prête-moi ta plume / Pour écrire un mot” (“By the light of the moon / my friend Pierrot / lend me your quill / to write a word”). Those subsumed lyrics could be Braffort’s tribute to Le Lionnais, whose stylistic pen he borrows to write these lines.

The poem is tightly structured to include multiple references to its numerical role in the Hypertropes, as Braffort alerts us through his “douze pieds de Pétrarque.” The twelfth poem in the series, it is written in Alexandrines, a choice to which our translation alludes by adhering to the twelve-syllable line. While the number 12 is not part of the Fibonacci series, several other members of that numerical gang make an appearance within the first three lines: “un,” “un,” “deux,” “trois,” and “cinq” (one, one, two, three, and five) in quick succession yield the twelve Petrarchan feet the poet seeks.

These “pieds” also suggest a peripatetic poem worthy of the world-wise mathematician in whose footsteps this gang follows. The theme of travel plays out in the “tristes tropes” of Braffort’s final line, an allusion to structuralist anthropologist Claude Lévy-Strauss’s 1955 memoir Tristes tropiques, about his travel and study in the New World and the Tropics. The Petrarchan feet he alludes to might extend beyond metrics and into Petrarch’s œuvre, which included not only poems of unrequited love (he may have wished for a sweet word from his model Laura), but a travel guide: the 1358 Itinerarium ad sepulchrum domini nostri. In Braffort’s poem, populated by wandering minstrels, “Nos galaxies déjà se
feront la valise:” even the galaxies have packed their bags and are ready to set off on a pilgrimage.

Braffort uses the final line of the poem to pun on his friend’s name by alluding to Leonardo—not, in this case, Leonardo da Vinci, the Renaissance man, but Leonardo Pisano, as the previous line hints—Fibonacci, the model who presides over the entire manuscript. We also wanted to honor Le Lionnais in our transversion, while dedicating it to an influence of our own. Among the many constraints he discussed with the OuLiPo, Le Lionnais coined the idea of poetry written in animal languages to be understood by animals. Given this desire and the potential wordplay on Le Lionnais’ name, our transversion draws from the “lion” section of T.H. White’s 1954 Book of Beasts, a translation of a medieval bestiary. The nine words per line correspond to the first nine Fibonacci numbers, which we used to extract the words sequentially from the source text. The resulting fragmented poem pays homage to Le Lionnais, Leonardo of Pisa, and Spanish poet León Felipe, whose name is also feline, and who fought in the Spanish Civil War and subsequently spent the last thirty years of his life an exile in Mexico.

Just as our transversion bastes together disparate elements of the text, there is more to Braffort’s poem than is possible to stitch together in a different language. To sit down with Mes Hypertropes is to navigate a network of allusion that crosses disciplines, languages, and histories. The graph of Zeckendorf representations is a tantalizing guide for dedicated readers, but it is also a maze and a map. Like Petrarch’s Itineraria and Petrović’s account of his 1934 expedition to St. Helena, the image suggests a series of pathways by which, say, Emma Bovary traverses from the first poem to the fourth and then the twelfth, or the end of the phrase “la vie mange et puis l’art chie” (life eats, art shits) morphs sonically into the ending of “et scandent des alinéas pour le hierarque” (and scan lines for the hierarch) on its way from Hypertrope 8 to Hypertrope 12. High or low, no subject is out of bounds in these hyper poems. Despite the map’s constraints, the text seems always determined to exceed them.
Consulting Wen-chin Ouyang’s *Literary criticism in medieval Arabic-Islamic culture: the making of a tradition* I learn that according to Qastaqi al-Himsi (1858-1941), criticism, at least as the Europeans understood it was ‘not among the sciences known to the Arabs.’ What there had been was subjective, and Arab critics ‘hovered around it’ (meaning: Franco-European lit crit) but did not unravel its riddles nor uncover its treasures.’ What’s left are personal attacks and sycophancy, though the titles have some flourish, like the singular pearl, the keys to the sciences, the balanced comparison, the mediation, and again the diver’s pearl in the elusions of the elite, the pillar, the sayings that have become proverbs, and finally, the prolegomenon.
Though there were attempts at locating shortcomings, errors, untruthful statements and plagiarism in poetry, though we may look upon those categories as the norm & screw Plato.

No naqid to stalk the ‘ilm al-naqд, but al-Himsi quotes three definitions of the word naqд and intiqad from Ibn Manzur’s (d. 711/1131) Lisan al-’arab:

“isolating a fake dinar; examining a thing by tapping it; and discussing a matter with someone.”

And yet, how charming (if nothing else, but it is something else too) this story, told by Al-Sirafi:

At a poetry reading organized by Ibn Durayd sometime in the early decades of the 10th century AD — Ibn Durayd died in 321/933 — someone read the following lines: “The land and all those on it have changed/ the earth has turned dusty and vile. // Everything that had beauty and splendor has changed/ the smile on the lovely face has vanished.”Verses attributed to Adam in which the progenitor of mankind laments the murder of Abel by Cain. Now Ibn Durayd, the critic, remarking that these lines broke established poetic rules in that the rhyme letter carried different desinential vowels — damma in one line, kasra in the other — said: “This is a poem recited at the beginning of the world, and yet iqwd’ was committed in it!”

Maybe this means that poetry is the beginning and can therefore always only be a break with what came before a new rule, another splendor,
a lop-sided vowel, hiatus of
breath, slippery slope of
creation, clinamen, I made a mistake
means I made something, I made no
mistake means I made nothing,
slide down the sharp incline
a universe comes into being
where breath is altered,

& criticism always late, behind
the times, the dog that barks
after the caravan has passed—

but if you want to know how
to evaluate the poem beyond the rhyme word,
the rhyme letter, the iqw’d, turn to this verse
(a line of poetry!) recited by Hassan ben Thabit:

يُغَنِّيُ تَقَلُّبَةُ أَذُنَّكَ أَنْتَ قَاءِلٌ إِنَّ الَّذِي هَذَا الْشَّعْرُ مَضَارٌ

which translates (adding another slope, a shovel full
of ‘mistakes’ as the words in this language are not
the same) as:

Sing all poetry you recite / for singing is the test of poetry

Joris
Language, in Lewis Freedman’s Catfish Po’ Boys, is a mess. It starts with the book’s rambling physicality—seventeen 8.5” by 11” pages covered over with alternating passages of stanzas in a large typewriter font and exuberant, Manson-like handwriting tumbling down each page like a portrait. That’ll make more sense if you see it for yourself:
I find this visual composition to be totally arresting. The two textures of writing—scrawly handwriting and a quaint, typo-prone typewriter—relate to each other a little like titles and bodies of poems, but not quite. What I mean is that the handwriting knocks against the type meaningfully, but I wouldn’t say that the handwritten parts trace out the kind of thematic kernels we often expect out of titles; one of them reads, “wind / offers / pronunciation / of / already / letter / a c k / nowledged / how does / it it does / through a / very particular / order.” Also, aside from the wavy lines drawn to the side of the handwriting, there are no clear boundaries between what happens in the handwriting and what happens in the type, and there are any number of ways to imagine how they fit or don’t fit together. They could, for instance, be parallel tracks through the book, or two characters speaking, or one speaker with two ways of talking.

At heart this is concrete poetry, but, at the risk of being a little cute, it’s more like abstract expressionist concrete poetry. Its shape is what it is, which here isn’t a heart or a pair of wings, but instead a bathroom mirror intensity and a messy earnestness. The lines “Let’s make / no let’s not / too late / you drive / me to / work / forever” are scrawled across a whole page, and another page of dense type has this handwritten line falling down the middle of it: “melt no mark it’s my fault we weren’t real friends i kept reneging.” The denser, typed-out portions involve similar interesting messes, like how horrible it is to be and to write:

Not to delight the wide open
This
Is strange I’m not looking at the keys just the screen that
streaming into smudge before
arrival. The old days’ suck now
turned into its all seen forwards
but misshaped as though taking out
the rest happened before the cuss.
   Why can’t we know why we can’t be
deranged? Reprieve is less
necessary, not the art of words but
the unremitting habit of misuse.

What’s so striking about Catfish Po’Boys is its compositional brilliance; these are messy, “difficult” poems of real earnestness spattered over the page in clumps and smears. It’s a glorious clutter in appearance, subject, and execution. The surface of the language, the grammar, syntax, and spelling, is as jumpy and rattled as the surface of the page:
Undestructable indestructed the second understands
the moment and falsifies it teaching where,
celebrated as absence of place where it
destroys this, the dead teaching the
death of.

*Catfish Po’Boys* is a beautiful book, a beautiful object, a long poem at seventeen pages that could easily be longer and, I hope, will be.
The idea to “break every rule,” as if it is my choice to do the breaking, is attractive, strong.

So why do I balk at the mandate? Nine years after first reading Maso’s work, why talk back to her essay?

It could be I am simultaneously attracted to the idea of individual expression yet wary of a judgment that might slip the so-called non-innovators into a place of invisibility, a category labeled “simple.”

It could be I am wary of a belief in modernity as progress—wary of utopian longings that hinge on the secular, and wary of postmodern arts that are not actually anti-modern.

What cannot be said or written might be “heaven.”

For some, writing has only been capable of pointing toward utopia in what it does not say, cannot say. For some, it is through innuendo, hidden meanings, double meanings, silences, speaking in tongues, stuttering, non-verbal utterance, or singing that utopia is conjured. What cannot be said or written might be “heaven.”

Therefore, it might not even be possible to “lose faith in our belief that language is capable of a kind of utopia” if the written word has actually been most often used as a tool of oppression. For some, there is no faith to lose.

Writing may be separate from any utopian longings—it simply “is”—or, at best, writing might be a tool to get there, but certainly not a reliable one.

There is a long history of privileging the text; this privileging might be one of

---


the central characteristics of the western modern consciousness. The events of history and the situation of the contemporary world show that this privileging of the text, this idea of the modern state and citizen, may be quite flawed.

Utopia, for some, is more likely achieved through a spiritual practice, for example. For some, utopia is not a secular or political pursuit or secular manifestation of something called “freedom” here on earth.

Most literary pursuits—birthed most often from a secular modernism—are secular and proud of it. Yet, some believe that anything that resembles a utopia on earth would not be constituted entirely of the secular, or reached by means of a secular art, or the belief in generic, state-sponsored human rights.

Duty

If “the creation of literary texts affords a kind of license, is a kind of freedom, dizzying, giddy,” then it is also, for some, and during some times, a kind of responsibility or duty. The ability to fulfill duty is a kind of freedom.

But when the creation of a literary text comes with a feeling of responsibility to a community, or a sense of duty, and if this is mixed with the knowledge of another possibly hostile audience, then “old ways of seeing” might be important to employ and engage rather than discard. This engagement with “old ways” may help to showcase “the old” as acceptable, especially in cases when certain ways of writing and talking and even being are thought to have been, historically, socially and politically, deemed as “less than” or inferior or perhaps even silenced.

Therefore, a writer might radically employ or engage tradition or “the old.” Depending on who is doing the seeing, “old” is sometimes quite unique and can even come across as “unfamiliar” which might appear, to some writers, to be “new.”

What May Be Innovative: A Writer Imagines Audience

Yes, “writing is language and language is desire and longing and suffering, capable of great passion,” and language, written, is also a representational system open to interpretation. Political contexts and power relationships inform the interpretation of the written word. And so, writing functions as a system of desire and longing and suffering, therefore, not just for the writer, but for readers.
Writing in an Emergency Situation

For example, African American writers of the early 20th century yearned, not at all secretly, for their race to be considered human. This yearning—this emergency situation—was in direct response to the epidemic of lynchings at that time, as well as the failings of the federal government of the United States that left most blacks poor, unprotected, and susceptible to great violence during Reconstruction.

Therefore, “To become the center,” was quite radical; it was to become equal under the law and to be able to count on institutions of law and peace keeping.

The literary debates of the black intelligentsia and artists reflected this desire for security and rights, as well as discussions of language strategies that would best lead them, and the whole country, to that place.

When Realism is Radical

In response to “Why does realism equal verity?” sometimes “verity” is quite dangerous and does not “equal accessibility.” For example, is the voice of Janie in Their Eyes Were Watching God true or is it minstrelsy? Does the realism of her voice make the text accessible? Or foreign? The answer depends on the reader.

More questions to prove the relativity of possible answers: Does Hurston’s “speakerly text,”3 as Henry Louis Gates Jr. calls it, “joyfully violate the language contract”? Whose contract? If she transcribed a deeply known, to some, voice of the south, was this “irresistible” to her fellow black writers in the north? To white northerners who wanted to know about this “other”? Did she “convince both us and others that we are autonomous, we are not them, not exactly, but we are nonetheless joyful and free”? Did she damage the New Negro Movement’s cause by her “active refusal of the dominant code”?

Richard Wright and others were afraid that the “verity” of Janie’s voice, her illiterate status, and her desire for porch stories and love could be misused and interpreted as caricature, evidence that black folk who did not use standard

---

English were less intelligent, less than human. The truth in that voice made them afraid that Hurston’s text would be taken as evidence to perpetuate a mistruth: black people are inferior, don’t speak proper English, and black women are filled with sexual desire only.

Sometimes leaving certain “lexical surfaces” undisturbed, letting them alone, or marrying an oral surface with a lexical surface is a very high stakes thing to do. Hurston brought in true oral surfaces and translated them to lexical surfaces—she chose not to disrupt Janie’s way of speaking. For this choice, Hurston’s work was dismissed.

I wonder, how did Hurston survive? I know she died in obscurity, but she appeared not to change her writings. In her body of work, there isn’t the “young and risky Hurston” followed by the “settled down and vernacular-free Hurston.” Is her polemical and race-caricatured essay “How It Feels to Be Colored Me” a feisty response to Wright? Is her statement, “I do not belong to the sobbing school of Negrohood who hold that nature somehow has given them a low-down dirty deal and whose feelings are all hurt about it” a refusal of the NAACP-crafted rules of narrative and identity?

**ONE CONCLUSION**

Tradition, innovation, and freedom—and what constitutes all these things in the literary sense—are perspective and context dependent.

What contract is one breaking when one is already, before speaking, before writing, “strange, elusive, other?”

Some, through the fact of their existence, violate the language contract simply by speaking, let alone by writing. Their very bodies are new kinds of texts, often mistrusted, subject to gaze and interpretation, even before a word is transcribed. Perhaps whatever their form of looking back, whatever text is generated by this subject, is an artful miracle. It might look very demotic, very plain. The innovation is in the act of speaking, writing. The innovation also rests with the reader who decides that the text might reveal complicated meanings—if they read closely, if the reader understands the times.
I delight in the small sonic and larger semantic shift from “break every rule” to “make home rule.”

Excerpts from a course notebook:

What did Gandhi mean by “home or self-rule,” or “hind swaraj”? 
Home rule means there is never a larger freedom without a personal responsibility.
Hind swaraj is wary of a secular state and does not necessarily seek full acceptance there.
By extension, hind swaraj is wary of an art that is bent on personal expression devoid of a strategy of peace, devoid of the knowledge of the workings of power, devoid of the heart. 
According to Gandhi, a person is civilized, not a society—and this can be done instantly, in a moment of awareness.
Gandhi said that when you are thinking of the end result you can’t be steadfast in your act.
Non-violence does not intervene—it achieves nothing; rather it interrupts production (celibacy). Non-violence is experiential—remaking the body, the self.
There are differences between violence at a micro-level and the violence of states, militancy.
Religious violence can equal great violence but then it’s over; state violence has violence built in, it keeps going, self-perpetuating, often in a spectral fashion. Proponents of a religion-free state will often target religion as a source of violence. Gandhi continually corrected these notions, reminding liberals that secularism has done little to foster sacrifice and compassion.
The anthropologist asks, “What are the grounds for action when the terrain is already violent?”
I think about this question as a writer who sometimes uses “fracture” and sometimes employs a poetics of “difficulty.” What do our communities need now? What do I want to say? Who am I writing for? Engaged in seemingly endless calibrations around these questions, and wary of any declarations on how to answer them, I remember this:
Gandhi is never clear that hind swaraj comes to a knowable end result or “revolution.”

---

4 I am referring to my course notes from “Gandhi and his Interlocutors,” spring 2009, team-taught at the New School for Social Research by Professors Faisal Devji and Vyjayanthi Rao.
This talk was for TENDENCIES: Poetics & Practice, a series at the CUNY Graduate Center curated by Tim Peterson. My panel included Trish Salah and Rachel Zolf and took place on October 29, 2009. TENDENCIES explores the poetic manifesto as it intersects with writing practice, queer theory and pedagogy.

We were asked to write a manifesto for this occasion. I began airing my opinions about writing in the late seventies, when New Narrative was taking shape. Some of the battle lines from that era seem as artificial now as the distinctions between Fancy and the Imagination that preoccupied the Romantics. Now we take for granted that narrative and the fragment exist in one work, while earlier there could be a dispute between narrative and what was called non-narrative. In the end, it is possible these battles were more a matter of descriptive terminology, or, of more interest, a way to organize and generate community, than assertions about writing itself. So I ask myself, what would I like to do and what am I doing?

In 1994, Tim Etchells was asked to write a manifesto about performance, and I want to assert some of his assertions, but bring them into the realm of writing. Etchells is a British performance artist who founded the company Forced Entertainment in 1984 and he is also a fiction writer whose book, The Endland Stories, is one of my favorites. He’s written other books, and just now a novel is appearing, Broken World. I am writing my version of an AIDS memoir, a novel called About Ed, and I have been thinking about Etchells. I want to build Ed’s tomb but that is the kind of undertaking in which issues of truth and respect come forward. I mean tomb in the sense of tombeau, a musical form in the 16th century, a poetry form in the 19th and 20th, “Le Tombeau de Charles Baudelaire.” So Ed’s tomb is to be a public monument. Issues of truth telling are perhaps more pressing here than in the erotic and romantic stories I have written.

But where does the truth exist? Surely not in the facts, surely not in the novel genre, surely not in the memoir genre. Everything I write is autobiography, and yet I have little interest in the difference between fact and fiction. If personality is a fiction—a collaboration between ourselves and the world—then what would the truth of any memoir consist in? In the representation of a fiction? Surely not in our language, which can’t be activated without a point of view, surely not in anecdotes that have been rounded off to include the useful and reject the entire world.
Etchells says, “Like all the best performance it (investment) is before us, but not for us....This privacy of investment doesn’t make a solipsistic work or a brick wall to shut the watcher out. Quite the opposite—investment draws us in. Something is happening—real and therefore risked—something seems to slip across from the private world to the public one—and the performers are “left open” or “left exposed.”

He continues, “To be bound up with what you are doing, to be at risk in it, to be exposed by it. As performers we recognize but cannot always control these moments—they happen, perhaps, in spite of us.....In the complicity of the performers with their task lies our own complicity—we are watching the people before us, not representing something but going through something. They lay their bodies on the line...and we are transformed...not audience to a spectacle but witness to an event.”

Add the sacred to this passage and it could have been written by Georges Bataille to describe a mass or some other human sacrifice. But how can this performance—which is the living time-based relationship between performer and audience—be transformed into words on a page? Our bodies are material—how do we put them on the page? Death is real, but how do we include the inexpressible in our description? An orgasm may be real, but the language to describe it is part of the vast engine of ideology.

It seems to me that every goal in writing is impossible, and for this reason every goal invokes its opposite. George Oppen shows us that the attempt to be clear invokes distortion, and yet it is not possible to write nonsense without some kind of sense entering. The concrete poets showed us that there is no language object that escapes all transparency any more than realism or naturalism can entirely suppress the materiality of language. So a performance-based fiction would reassert the limits of language, though it may be a good idea not to know in advance what form that assertion would take.

Etchells writes, “Does this action, this performance, contain these people (and me) in some strange and perhaps unspeakable way?” If we can’t alter a text once it is published, we can create a disturbance in the reading that mirrors the intensities of experience, including the experience of writing, which activate the text each time it is read. This strategy could lead to the creation of an uncertain reading. A reading that is out of control, that makes a problem of reader/writer dynamics, because the goal of the writer is not to organize the psychic life of the reader, but to disorganize it.

2 Etchells, 49
Here is a description of such a reading, with myself as the reader rather than the writer. It is a reworking of a section of an essay on Kathy Acker: In the creative writing program where I teach, a student wrote about sex with toddlers and violence with guns unrelentingly. It was a playwriting class, so the other students were forced to act out his pedophile visions, which eventually included recognizable members of the class. The class closed down because the other students would no longer put up with him, and he was sent to work with me, someone supposedly wise in the ways of transgression. Extra literary questions swarmed his writing: he worked the nightshift at the sheriffs’ office, and he brought his gun to class for show-and-tell. He was in his sixties, so no youthful hi-jinx there. Had he acted—was he going to act—on his imaginings? Was I supposed to regard his writing as abnormal psychology rather than fiction? If so, even a fake confession was part of a true case history. He was a skillful and even funny writer. I found myself laughing—was that complicity? Was the humor intentional? I could picture the front page of The Chronicle: “Teacher gives A+ to Killer Rapist Pedophile.” Intention itself was blown wide open, so his text was in a sense illegible.

I was in the position of Acker’s ideal reader. By best reader, I mean that I was implicating myself in ways I couldn’t foresee. The considerable power I enjoy—that of a professor judging a student’s work—was turned upside down because it was myself I had to judge, along with the workings of the very power that kept me safe from the text, and safe generally. If I had read my student’s work in a book published by Grove Press, or published by anyone, the scandal might have been contained by the form of its publication, and I would have neutralized the danger rightly or wrongly by placing it in a tradition of transgressive literature. In order to make scandal felt continually, Acker finds ways to overflow the bounds of the literary by combining the knowledge she gives us of her life with aggression, humor, unfairness, and shifts in diction and context. Cultural tenets are demolished because I can’t contain this damage in the box of literature.

Many of Acker’s strategies keep the reader off-balance. That’s why it’s rather difficult to write about her work, because the best reading is an uncertain reading. I want to offer my confusion as an ideal. Rather than drawing conclusions, developing identifications or thematic connections, that is, making judgments that lead to knowledge, Acker creates a reader who is lost in strangeness. She pitches the reader into a welter of contradictions that do not resolve themselves, but replace each other continuously: a text that hates itself but wants me to

---

love it, sex that dissolves and amalgamates, a disempowered self that tops its heated bottom-act with cold manipulations, a confession that is therapeutic without the possibility of health. Her aesthetic is founded on double binds whose brilliance captivates me as I struggle against them.

Here are other ways we might create an uncertain reading.

• Maintaining the stance of an amateur instead of a professional. (In this regard, harkening back to the early modernists.)
• Sentences with no denotative meaning.
• Writing as though the work is a translation from a richer language: “A translation, instead of resembling the meaning of the original, must lovingly and in detail incorporate the original’s mode of signification, thus making both the original and the translation recognizable as fragments of a greater language....” Walter Benjamin, “The Task of the Translator.”
• Elaborating the narrative on many levels.
• A sentence that is porous, composition by the sentence, in order to translate silence onto the page, to create gaps between sentences, to allow each next sentence its full latitude. The sentence is the palette. To suppress the paragraph and assert the sentence creates a writing at once more global and more fragmentary.
• Mixing modes of composition—which is the same as mixing temporal units. Fragment to extended narrative.
• Break the guided daydream that most fiction is. Why confine ourselves to the middle distance, which is part of a chain of regulation that extends inward and outward? Why only know that much about the world or a character? Why not introduce a character by how she experiences her death, her birth, her orgasms, instead of by the appearance of her hat? Close-ups so close they become objective—thirst is taking a drink, desire is fucking. Long shots that take in history—her grandfather’s immigration exists in her gestures.
• To not know. To not have all the answers. To not even have a notion.
• To address the reader.

An uncertain reading allows the reader to experience risk, wonder, loss of self, nothingness, but that is not the whole story. In a performance, the spectator is isolated and yet his loss and risk are experienced as part of a group. The group creates the occasion for isolation, risk, and loss of self to occur, and that dynamic is important in establishing and maintaining the life of a community,
even one that lasts only a few hours. So, how to create the experience of a
group in a solitary reader?

Next to me on the plane a suit dominates the arm rest and his newspaper
covers the sky, and I see that as a gay issue, don’t you? By the same token, when
I look at the sky, the sky becomes homosexual. The life of a sexual minority is
such a public thing, I have often thought that even when we are alone or paired
off, our sex itself takes place on the village green. Or the village screen. Perhaps
the best model for us to aspire to in our writing is an orgy. How to show the
reader that he and she are taking part in an orgy?
“live die prime plus prime #2 of 3” (detail) by Lee Etheredge IV
Contributors’ Notes

HAROLD ABRAMOWITZ is a writer from Los Angeles. His recent publications include Not Blessed (Les Figues Press) and A House on a Hill (A House on a Hill, Part One) (Insert Press). Harold writes collaboratively as part of SAM OR SAMANTHA YAMS and UNFO, and co-edits the short-form literary press eohippus labs.

ETEL ADNAN is an Arab-American poet, fiction writer and painter, living nowadays in Sausalito and Paris. She has been for some fourteen years a professor of philosophy in a Bay Area college. She writes mostly in English though some of her books have been written in French. Although her work can be highly political, she is particularly influenced by Nature, its impact on thinking, its central place. She often says that her country is California’s weather.

BARBARA BECK is a poet/translator who lives in Paris, where she has been editor of the Paris-based English language journal Upstairs at Duroc since 2002. Her work has appeared in, among others, The Los Angeles Review, Van Gogh’s Ear, The Café Review, Slightly West, In’hui, la dérobée, L’Etrangère and online at ekleksographia and Centquatrevue, and is forthcoming in an anthology from Tightrope Books (Toronto).

AMARANTH BORSUK is the author of a chapbook, Tonal Saw (Song Cave, 2010), and the digital pop-up poetry book, Between Page and Screen, which can be seen at www.betweenpageandscreen.com. Her poems have recently appeared in Colorado Review, Columbia Poetry Review, Denver Quarterly, and FIELD. She is a Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow in the Humanities at MIT and received her Ph.D. in Literature and Creative Writing at the University of Southern California.

A founding member of the Oulipo, PAUL BRAFFORT is a poet, computer scientist, and songwriter. His most recent book is J & I: les deux combinateurs et la totalité (Bassac: Plein Chant, 2002), which contains poems, drawings and an explanatory essay. He maintains an archive of his work at www.paulbraffort.net. He has published five books in the Bibliothèque Oulipienne, as well as numerous textbooks on artificial intelligence and programming. He lives in Paris.

ROCÍO CERÓN was born in Mexico City in 1972. Her work consists of experiments in the spaces between poetry, music, performance and video. Her published books of poetry include Basalto (CONACULTA-ESN, Mexico City, 2002) which received the Gilberto Owen National Literature Prize in 2000; Litoral (Filodecaballos, Mexico City, 2001); Soma (Eloisa Ediciones, Argentina, 2003); Apuntes para sobrevivir al aire (Urania, Mexico City, 2005); Imperio (Ediciones Monte Carmelo, Mexico City, 2008; 2nd edition, Dominican Republic, 2010); Imperio/Empire (CONACULTA-FONCA, 2009, interdisciplinary and bilingual edition); La mañana comienza muy tarde (La Propia
Cartonera, Uruguay, 2010) and Tiento (UANL, 2010). She teaches at the Polyliterature Laboratory in the Creative Writing Program at the Universidad del Claustro de Sor Juana. Her texts have been translated into English, Finnish, Swedish, and German. She is currently a grantee of the Sistema Nacional de Creadores de Arte. Her work can be accessed online through: http://rocioceron.blogspot.com.

NORMA COLE is the author of many volumes of poetry, most recently Where Shadows Will: Selected Poem 1988-2008 (City Lights, 2009), and a critical volume, To Be At Music (Omnidawn, 2010). A prolific translator, she has published translations of Anne Portugal, Danielle Collobert, Jean Daive, and others. She has also worked in installation and with text and image projects. A native of Canada, she lives in San Francisco.

JENNIFER K. DICK recently graduated with her doctorat from the Sorbonne and now teaches literature at the university in Mulhouse, France. She co-founded and co-directed the Ivy Writers’ Series in Paris with Michelle Noteboom from 2005 to 2010. Her first book-length collection, Fluorescence, was selected for the University of Georgia series in 2004. She has also published limited-edition artists book in collaboration with visual artists.

STACY DORIS lives in San Francisco, where she teaches at San Francisco State University. Resident in Paris for several years, she has published poetry and creative prose in French as well as in English including La vie de Chester Steven Wiener écrit par sa femme (P.O.L Editeur, 1998). With Chet Wiener, she edited a collection of Christophe Tarkos’ work published by Roof Books in 2000.

JOHANNA DRAKKER has written and published widely on topics related to the history of experimental poetry, aesthetics, and digital media. She is the inaugural Breslauer Professor of Bibliographical Studies at UCLA. Her recent titles include SpecLab: Digital Aesthetics and Projects in Speculative Computing (U. Chicago Press, 2008) and ComboMeals (Druckwerk, 2008).

SYLVAIN GALLAIS is an economist whose most recent book is France Encounters Globalization. With his wife, Cynthia Hogue, he received the 2009 Witter Bynner Translation Residency Fellowship from the Santa Fe Art Institute. A native of France, he has Ph.D.s in Political Science and Economics and teaches in the School of International Languages and Cultures at Arizona State University.

LAWRENCE GIFFIN is the author of Get the fuck back into that burning plane, Die Traumadeutung, and Comment Is Free. He is the series editor of The Physical Poets Home Library, a Lil’ Norton publication.

ROBERT GLÜCK is the author of nine books of poetry and fiction, including two novels, Margery Kempe and Jack the Modernist and a book of stories, Denny Smith. Glück edited, along with Camille Roy, Mary Burger and Gail Scott, the anthology Biting The Error: Writers on Narrative. Glück was Co-Director of Small Press Traffic Literary Arts Center, Director of The Poetry Center at San Francisco State, and Associate Editor at Lapis Press. His poetry and fiction have been published in the New Directions in Prose and Poetry anthology, City Lights anthologies, Best New Gay Fiction, 1988 and 1996, The Norton Anthology of World Literature, Best American Erotica, 1996 and 2005, and The Faber Book of Gay Short Fiction. His critical articles appeared in Artforum International, Aperture, and Poetics Journal, and he prefaced Between Life and Death, a book on the paintings of Frank Moore. Glück teaches at San Francisco State University.

STEPHANIE GRAY is the author of Heart Stoner Bingo (Straw Gate Books, 2007). Her work has appeared in EOAGH, 2nd Avenue Poetry, Boog City Reader, Press 1, The Recluse, Everyday Genius, and in the anthology The Red Room (Straw Gate Books, 2010). Also a filmmaker, her super 8 films have screened internationally, including at the Viennale, Ann Arbor, Oberhausen, Outfest, Antimatter, and Chicago Underground fests.

JEN HOFER is a Los Angeles-based poet, translator, interpreter, teacher, knitter, bookmaker, public letter-writer, and urban cyclist. Her most recent books are Ivory Black, a translation of Mexican poet Myriam Moscona’s Negro marfil (Les Figues Press, 2011) and series of anti-war-manifesto poems titled one (Palm Press, 2009). Recent poems, prose and translations have appeared in Encyclopedia Vol. 2 F-K, Mandorla, Or, out of nothing, and Poets on Teaching: A Sourcebook. She teaches at CalArts, Goddard College, and Otis College, and works nationally and locally as a social justice interpreter.

CYNTHIA HOUGE published Or Consequence and When the Water Came: Evacuees of Hurricane Katrina, a series of interview-poems with photographs by Rebecca Ross, both in 2010. Among her awards are a Fulbright Fellowship, an NEA in poetry, and a Witter Bynner Fellowship. She has co-edited two collections of essays on contemporary women’s work, and holds the Maxine and Jonathan Marshall Chair in Modern and Contemporary Poetry at Arizona State University.
KEVIN HOLDEN is currently in the Ph.D. program in German at Yale University. He received an A. B. from Harvard, then an M. Phil. from Cambridge University in the U.K, and then an M.F.A. in poetry from the Iowa Writers' Workshop. He has two chapbooks out, Alpine and Identity and his work has appeared in the Colorado Review, The Cincinnati Review, The Harvard Advocate and other journals.

GABRIELA JAUREGUI is the author of the poetry collection Controlled Decay (Akashic Books/ Black Goat Press, 2008) and El Tiempo Se Volvió Cuero (Sur+, 2009), a bilingual Spanish translation of Tom Raworth’s poems. She holds a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature from the University of Southern California, an M.F.A. in Creative Writing from the University of California at Riverside, and an M.A. in Comparative Literature from the University of California at Irvine. She is a member of the sur+ publishing collective in Mexico.

Poet, editor and translator REYNALDO JIMÉNEZ (b. 1959) currently resides in Buenos Aires. He is the founder/executive editor of the independent press and literary journal Tsé-tsé, whose catalogue of writers includes Cecilia Vicuña, José Kozer, Liliana Ponce, Roberto Echavarren, and Wilson Bueno. A visual artist and musician as well, Reynaldo has given readings and performances in New York, California, Mexico, Europe, and across South America. He has authored more than 8 books of poetry.


PAUL KILLEBREW was born in 1978 in Nashville, Tennessee. He currently lives in Louisiana and works as a lawyer at Innocence Project New Orleans. His first full-length collection of poems, Flowers, was published by Canarium in 2010. He is also author of the chapbooks Forget Rita (Poetry Society of America, 2003), Buenos Dias, Cap’n Crunch (A Rest Press, 2005), and Inspector vs. Evader (Ugly Duckling Presse, 2006). Inspector vs. Evader was recently re-published by Ugly Ducking on their website, www.uglyducklingpresse.org.

BRIAN LAIDLAW is a poet and songwriter from Northern California, currently finishing an M.F.A. in Poetry at the University of Minnesota. His work has appeared
Poet and essayist RENÉ LAPIERRE is professor of literature and creative writing at UQAM (Université du Québec à Montréal). Most of his books have been published by les éditions des Herbes rouges. His most recent title is Aimée soit la honte (2010).

CARLOS LARA was born in San Diego, CA. He is currently en route to the Middle East where he will be teaching English. He has received degrees from UCLA and Brown University. Several of his translations have also appeared in Paul Revere’s Horse. As a co-founder of both FAM Airlines and Mansion Press, he is an avid practitioner of Wavy Poetics. He enjoys surfing and Russian literature.

LAUREN LEVIN was born in New Orleans and lives in Oakland. A chapbook, Keenan, is forthcoming with Lame House Press. There’s recent work in a chapbook, Not Time (Boxwood Editions) and in Try!, Realpoetik, Sal Mimeo, Mirage #4/Period(ical), Rabbit Light Movies, labday2010.blogspot.com, Elective Affinities, and Con/Crescent 2. With Jared Stanley and Catherine Meng, she edits Mrs. Maybe.

LOUISE LOFTUS lives in Paris where she is a poetry editor for Upstairs at Duroc, a Paris literary journal.

ROMÁN LUJÁN is a Mexican poet, translator and doctoral candidate in Latin American Literature.

JILL MAGI is the author of Threads (Futurepoem) and Torchwood (Shearsman). Her books Cadastral Map and SLOT are forthcoming in 2011 (Shearsman, Ugly Duckling Presse). The poems published in this issue of Aufgabe are from a collaborative text-image-sound project organized by Ed. Press in Sweden. Recent visual work can be seen online in Elective Affinities and in-person at the Brooklyn Waterfront Artist Coalition 2010 shows. Jill teaches at Goddard, Eugene Lang, and City Colleges, runs the chapbook press Sona Books, and lives in Brooklyn.

SUSAN MAXWELL earned a B.A. in Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of California, Berkeley, and an M.F.A. in poetry from the Iowa Writers' Workshop. Her first book, Passenger, was published by the University of Georgia Press in 2005 through the Contemporary Poetry Series. She was nominated for a Pushcart Prize and her work has appeared or will appear in 1913: A Journal of Forms, American Letters & Commentary, New American Writing, Tarpaulin Sky, Slope, Denver Quarterly, and Colorado Review, as well as other journals and art installations. She is currently a doctoral student in clinical psychology.
Catherine Meng is the author of the poetry collection, Tonight’s the Night (Apostrophe Books, 2007). Along with Lauren Levin and Jared Stanley she co-edits the poetry journal Mrs. Maybe. She lives in Berkeley, CA.

Erin Morrill grew up in Appalachian Tennessee. She currently resides in Oakland, California where she makes chapbooks with Andrew Kenower under the imprint of Trafficker Press. She received her MFA from California College of the Arts. Her recent writings have appeared in TRY, Mrs. Maybe, and Trickhouse.

Jane Joritz-Nakagawa is currently at work on her sixth poetry collection, titled Notational. Originally from the U.S., she lives in central Japan. Email is welcome at janenakagawa@yahoo.com.

Nathanaél is the author of several books, including We Press Ourselves Plainly, Carnet de désaccords and Absence Where As (Claude Cahun and the Unopened Book). She has translated the work of Catherine Mavrikakis, Gail Scott and Édouard Glissant.

Michelle Noteboom is the author of The Chia Letters (Dusie Kollektiv, 2009), Edging (Cracked Slab Books), which won the 2006 Heartland Poetry Prize, and Hors-cage, in French translation by Frédéric Forte (Editions de l’Attente, 2010). Her work has appeared in Verse, Fence, Boston Review, and the Columbia Poetry Review, MiPOesias, among others. She’s lived in Paris since 1991, where she co-curates the Ivy Writers Series with Jennifer K. Dick, a bilingual reading series.

Jean-Jacques Poucel has written a book-length study, Jacques Roubaud and the Invention of Memory (UNCSRLL, 2006), co-edited a special issue of Yale French Studies (105), Pereckonings: Reading Georges Perec, a special issue of Poetics Today (30.4 & 31.1), Constraint Writing, and curated the Oulipo dossier in Drunken Boat. Co-founder of the Working Group in Contemporary Poetics at Yale, he is a member of Double Change, a bi-cultural poetic exchange.

Joan Retallack’s most recent volume of poetry is Procedural Elegies / Western Civ Cont’d / (Roof Books, 2010). She is also the author of Gertrude Stein: Selections (2008) and The Poethical Wager (2004), both from University of California Press. Retallack lives in the Hudson Valley where she is John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Professor of Humanities at Bard College.

Sarah Riggs, based in Paris, has written 60 Textos (Ugly Duckling Presse, 2010) and Waterwork (Chax Press, 2007). She has translated Isabelle Garron’s Face Before Against (Litmus Press, 2008), Ryoko Sekiguchi’s Two Markets, Once Again (Post Apollo Press, 2008), and co-translated, with Omar Berrada, Marie Borel’s Wolfrot (La Presse, 2006). Forthcoming translations: with Cole Swensen, Stéphane Bouquet’s A People, and with Ellen LeBlond-Schrader, Oscarine Bosquet’s Present Participle.
ELÉNA RIVERA received a 2010 National Endowment of the Arts Fellowship and her translation of Bernard Noel’s *The Rest of the Voyage* won the 2010 Robert Fagles Award from the National Poetry Series. Her translation of Isabelle Baladine Howald’s *Secret of Breath* was published by Burning Deck Press (2009), and other translations can be found in the *Chicago Review*, *Web Conjunctions*, *Eleven Eleven*, *Tuesday: An Art Project*, *Circumference*, and *Tarpaulin Sky*. She was awarded the 2007 Witter Bynner Poetry Translator Residency at the Santa Fe Art Institute.

ELLEN LEBLOND-SCHRADER recently completed her Ph.D. in French literature at the University of California at Davis with a dissertation titled *The French Reader’s Relationship to Poetry in the Electronic Age: Ponge, Alferi, and Vassiliou*. She currently teaches avant-garde movements in Paris and translates contemporary poetry as well as art criticism for the Palais de Tokyo in Paris, the Castello di Rivoli Museo in Turin, and other institutions.

LISA ROBERTSON is a Canadian writer who has been living in France and California in recent years. Her books of poetry include *R’s Boat*, Lisa Robertson’s *Magenta Soul Whip*, *The Men*, and *The Weather*. A book of essays on art and architecture, *Occasional Works and Seven Walks from the Office for Soft Architecture*, was just reissued by Coach House Books.

PRAGEETA SHARMA is the author of *Bliss to Fill* (Subpress Collective, 2000), *The Opening Question* (Fence Books, 2004, winner of the 2004 Fence Modern Poets Prize) and *Infamous Landscapes* (Fence Books, 2007). *Undergloom*, her most recent manuscript will be published by Fence Books in 2013. She is the recipient of the 2010 Howard Foundation Grant. She is an associate professor and director of the Creative Writing Program at the University of Montana-Missoula.

LAUREN SHUFRAN lives in Santa Cruz, where she is a PhD candidate in the Literature department at UCSC.

ELENI SIKELIANOS is the author of a hybrid memoir (*The Book of Jon*) and six books of poetry, the most recent being *Body Clock*. She has been the happy recipient of various awards for her poetry, nonfiction, and translations, and her work has been translated into a dozen languages. Sikelianos has translated *Exchanges on Light* by Jacques Roubaud, and is spending her current sabbatical in Paris.

CHRISTOPHER STACKHOUSE is the author of *Slip* (Corollary Press); and is co-author of image/text collaboration with writer/translator John Keene, *Seismosis* (1913 press), which features Stackhouse’s drawings in philosophical discourse with Keene’s texts. A book of his essays is forthcoming from Sandpaper Press, and a new volume of poems from Counterpath Press, both in 2011.
COLE SWENSEN is a poet and translator who divides her time between Iowa City, where she teaches at the Iowa Writers’ Workshop, Washington D.C., and Paris. Her latest books are *Ours* (U. of California Press, 2008) and *Greensward* (Ugly Duckling Presse, 2010). She is the founder and editor of La Presse, which publishes French poetry translated by English language poets.

MATHEW TIMMONS works include *CREDIT* (Blanc Press) and *Lip Service* (Slack Buddha). Recent and forthcoming projects include: a book, *The New Poetics* from Les Figues Press, an e-book, *Sound Noise* from Little Red Leaves, a chapbook, *Where is it Written?* from Imioplex Press, an album of solo and collaborative sound poetries, *The Archanoids* from Pleonasm Music, and a solo show at (323) Projects. His visual and performance work has been shown at LACE, Museum of Contemporary Art Denver, CCA, Outpost for Contemporary Art, ArtSpeak Vancouver, LACMA, UCLA Hammer Museum, and as part of ArtLA. Mathew works as the General Director of General Projects, editor of Insert Press, Los Angeles editor of Joyland, Co-Host of LA-Lit 2005-2009, and has curated events, readings and ephemeral art shows for Beyond Baroque, Betalevel, workspace, and REDCAT.

G.C. WALDREP’s most recent collections are *Your Father on the Train of Ghosts* (BOA Editions, 2011), in collaboration with John Gallaher, and a chapbook, “St. Laszlo Hotel,” from Projective Industries.

KEITH WALDROP has published over 30 books of poetry and translation, including versions of Baudelaire’s *Flowers of Evil* and *Paris Spleen*, and his triology *Transcendental Studies* (U. of California Press) won the 2009 National Book Award. With Rosmarie Waldrop, he is the founder and editor of Burning Deck Press. He is also a prolific collage artist, and a volume joining his visual and verbal work, *Several Gravities*, was published in 2009 by Siglio.

ROSMARIE WALDROP, a native of Germany, has published some twenty books of poetry, novels, and literary criticism, including *Lavish Absence* (Wesleyan, 2002), a recollection and literary musing on Edmond Jabès. Her most recent book is *Driven to Abstraction* (New Directions, 2010). She translates from both German and French, presenting the work of Edmond Jabès, Jacques Roubaud, Paul Celan, Friederike Mayröcker, and others. She is co-founder and co-editor of Burning Deck Publications.

ALLI WARREN’s chapbooks include *Acting Out*, *Well-Meaning White Girl*, and *Cousins*. Recent poems appear in *Jacket*, *LUNGFULL!*, and *pax americana*. Collaborative works can be found in *ON: Contemporary Practice* (with Suzanne Stein), *con/crescent 2* (with Lauren Levin), and *Bruised Dick* (with Michael Nicoll). From 2008-2010, she co-curated *The (New) Reading Series* at 21 Grand. Alli lives in Oakland.
BRIAN WHITENER is an editor at Displaced Press. A chapbook, False Intimacy, is forthcoming from Trafficker Press.

CHET WIENER is a poet, translator and medical writer who lives in San Francisco. In addition to translating poetry, he does various documents for the French Foreign Ministry and the Association for the Diffusion of French Thought-Cultures. He received a Ph.D. in French from Columbia University and afterward lived in Paris for several years. A book of his poetry, Devant l’abondance, was published by P.O.L Editeur in 2003.

DAVID WOLACH is editor of Wheelhouse Magazine & Press and an active participant in Nonsite Collective. Wolach’s first full-length collection, Occultations, has just been published by Black Radish Books. Other books include the multi-media transliteration plus chapbook, Prefab Eulogies Volume 1: Nothings Houses (BlazeVox [books], 2010), the full-length Hospitalogy (chapbook forth. from Scantily Clad Press, 2010), and book alter(ed) (Ungovernable Press, 2009). A former union organizer and performing artist, Wolach’s work often begins as site-specific and interactive performance and ends up as shaped, written language. Wolach is professor of text arts, poetics, and aesthetics at The Evergreen State College, and visiting professor in Bard College’s Workshop In Language & Thinking.

ANDREW ZAWACKI is the author of three volumes of poetry, most recently Petals of Zero Petals of One (Talisman House). His translation of Sébastien Smirou’s My Lorenzo is coming out from Burning Deck in 2012; he also translates from Slovenian and edited Afterwards: Slovenian Writing 1845-1995 (White Pine, 1999). He is a co-editor of Verse magazine, which published a special volume on contemporary French poetry in 2007. He teaches at the University of Georgia.
About the Artwork

language as visual experiment
letter as mark
color as lexicon
language as mathematics
letter as tool
color as thought
language as game
letter as sound
color as alphabet
language as puzzle
letter as found object
color as symbol
language as memory

– Lee Etheredge IV
New York 2011

LEE ETHEREDGE IV is a New York based visual artist who is represented by Pierogi Gallery in Brooklyn, NY. He has works in the permanent collection of several public institutions including MoMA and the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, as well as Yale, Dartmouth and Stanford Universities.
do you Aufgabe?

Aufgabe #1, edited by E. Tracy Grinnell and Peter Neufeld, with guest editors Norma Cole (covers and content pages of small publications from France) and Leslie Scalapino.  (out of print)

Aufgabe #2, edited by E. Tracy Grinnell, with guest editor Rosmarie Waldrop (German poetry in translation).

Aufgabe #3, edited by E. Tracy Grinnell, with guest editor Jen Hofer (Mexican poetry in translation, bilingual).  (out of print)

Aufgabe #4, edited by E. Tracy Grinnell, with guest editor Sawako Nakayasu (Japanese poetry in translation).

Aufgabe #5, edited by E. Tracy Grinnell with Mark Tardi and Paul Foster Johnson (special issue dedicated to Norman O. Brown’s lecture “John Cage”) and guest editors Guy Bennett and Jalal El Hakmaoui (Moroccan poetry in translation).  (out of print)

Aufgabe #6, edited by E. Tracy Grinnell, Paul Foster Johnson and Mark Tardi, with guest editor Ray Bianchi (Brazilian poetry in translation).

Aufgabe #7, edited by E. Tracy Grinnell, Paul Foster Johnson, Mark Tardi, and Julian T. Brolaski, with guest editor Jennifer Scappettone (Italian poetry in translation).

Aufgabe #8, edited by E. Tracy Grinnell, Paul Foster Johnson, Julian T. Brolaski, and Rachel Bers, with guest editor Matvei Yankelevich (Russian poetry & poetics in translation).

Aufgabe #9, edited by E. Tracy Grinnell, Paul Foster Johnson, Julian T. Brolaski, Jen Hofer, Nathanaël (Nathalie Stephens), and Rachel Bers, with guest editors Mark Tardi (Polish poetry & poetics in translation) and Laura Moriarty (A Tonalist Set).

WWW.LITMUSPRESS.ORG

Subscriptions are available through the publisher. Back issues may be purchased through Small Press Distribution. A limited number of complete sets (#1–#9) are available for libraries and other public access collections. Contact us for more information. Does your local library, university, or bookstore carry Aufgabe? Ask them to. Anywhere else you’d like to see Aufgabe? Let us know!
maximize the transit
Poetry, art, essays & reviews

Featuring French poetry & poetics in translation guest edited by Cole Swensen

Harold Abramowitz
Etel Adnan
Amaranth Borsuk
Oscarine Bosquet
Stéphane Bouquet
Paul Braffort
Rocío Cerón
Marie-Louise Chapelle
Suzanne Doppelt
Johanna Drucker
Caroline Dubois
Rachel Blau DuPlessis
Frédéric Forte
Isabelle Garron
Lawrence Giffin
Robert Glück
Stephanie Gray
Jen Hofer
Éric Houser
Gabriela Jauregui
Reynaldo Jiménez
Pierre Joris
Paul Killebrew
Brian Laidlaw
Virginie Lalucq
René Lapiere
Carlos Lara
David Lespiau
Lauren Levin
Román Luján
Sabine Macher
Vannina Maestri
Jill Magi
Jérôme Mauché
Susan Maxwell
Catherine Meng
Erin Morrill
Jane Joritz-Nakagawa
Jean-Luc Nancy
Nathanaël
Anne Parian
Véronique Pittolo
Virginie Poitrasson
Pascal Poyet
Nathalie Quintane
Joan Retallack
Prageeta Sharma
Lauren Shufman
Sébastien Smirou
Christopher Stackhouse
Gwenaëlle Stubbe
Éric Suchère
Mathew Timmons
G.C. Waldrep
Alli Warren
Brian Whitener
David Wolach
Bénédicte Vilgrain

with artwork by Lee Etheredge IV

$15 US
ISSN: 1532-5539
ISBN: 978-1-933959-21-4
www.litmuspress.org