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Mie Olise, Jet Star II
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Feature
Poetry in translation from Quebec guest edited by Oana Avasilichioaei

Mie Olise, Watergame
Now’s Matter: Work in Translation from Quebecois French

What does it matter now? What matters now? What is the matter now? What is now's matter? All possible transversions of Jean-Marc Desgent’s questioning title Qu’importe maintenant? The following work of fourteen writers, presented in American and Canadian English translations from the Quebecois French by twelve translators, are possible responses.

The selection of this work is based on which poetries in Quebec's Francophone literary weather feel vital right now; which works seem utterly relevant and current to this moment (which is always a multiple and refracted moment); which poetries are speaking, calling, urging, moaning, crying to the reader in us; which works, in their lexicons and syntax, their movements and music, wake us up, make us feel excited and alive in language. In short, which poetries give a damn.

The selection is not historical, generational, ideological, chronological. It is expansive, diverse, rigorous, stretching and straying linguistic, poetical and genre boundaries. It is also entirely contemporary, in the way that Giorgio Agamben thinks of contemporariness, where one has an anachronistic and disjunctive relation to one’s time¹. Therefore, the featured writers (and translators) represent a range of generations and experience, approaches and interests; they are artists with thirty books or one book to their name (even posthumous in one case), and their poetics touch on other fields and medias.

Much of the work comes from book-length projects, appearing here in excerpted and therefore necessarily altered forms, the work not only undergoing a linguistic translation but a formal one as well. Many of the writers perhaps think through book-length works because speaking across the gutter is necessary, building narrative in order to break the narrative, thrusting typographies into topographies. In shouldering their works against one another's, this segment creates a new movement of their tonalities, leafs them into a different book.

In French, the concepts of experience and experiment are joined in one word,

¹ Contemporariness is “that relationship with time that adheres to it through a disjunction and an anachronism. Those who coincide too well with the epoch, those who are perfectly tied to it in every respect, are not contemporaries, precisely because they do not manage to see it; they are not able to firmly hold their gaze on it.” Giorgio Agamben, “What is the Contemporary?” in What is Apparatus and Other Essays, trans. David Kishik & Stefan Pedatella, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009, p.41.)
expérience. Thus, to experiment, one must experience, be active, in motion, not static, shifting into the possible without a necessary closure. One wonders about the kind of language experiment that the experience of living and writing in Quebec encourages; living in a linguistic here that is aware of a very different linguistic there, being in the rub between languages, being in a French that is alert to a non-French, and a French that has had a complicated, troubled and rebellious relationship with continental French.

Straddling the book’s gutter, in it for the long haul, playing within and without French’s bounds\(^2\), the works reveal a poetic on the borderlands between poetry and other modes of thought, in dialogue with other forms of discourse; poetries being shaped in and through the intersections between language and philosophy, visual art, pop culture, critical theory, sound, performance, document, science, politics, etc.

Added to this mix are the diverse subjectivities, histories, approaches of the various translators, transferring the works across yet further borders\(^3\). Here language is alive, is in the making. A seemingly (and deceptively) simple word such as ventre transforms into stomach (Schürch/Dick), belly (Neveu/Cole) or womb (Doré/Swensen)\(^4\).

Peopled with many I’s (possibly political), assembling and disbanding into several we’s (possibly social), the poetical and the political meet in this social arena of language being and language making. Do we enter?

— Oana Avasilichioaei

Montreal/New York, March 2013

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FROM **Nombreux seront nos ennemis**

*Geneviève Desrosiers*

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Vieillissement, droiture et conjoncture : pisser à la raie d’une raie ou embrasser la lune ou embrasser le soleil ou tenir fermement une molaire qui tremble ou aller promener un chien ou serrer un enfant qui vient d’avoir un an ou tourner la cassette de bord ou faire un naufrage sur l’Atlantique ou peindre un boute de bois ou penser à quelqu’un ou boire pensivement en avalant physiquement ou ne pas choisir sa famille ou trouver que la jungle pue ou manger du cochon grillé ou admirer sa mère ou cracher sur la pelouse ou tondre le gazon ou peindre des treillis ou faire des ménages ou brasser de la marde ou jouer au soldat ou jouer un rôle collé sur la vitre arrière de la voiture en faisant des tatas aux passants.
Aging, upstandingness and circumstance: to shove it up the crack of a crack or embrace the moon or set ablaze the sun or get a firm grip on a trembling molar or take a dog for a walk or hug a child who has just turned one or turn the cassette over or founder on the Atlantic or paint a stick of wood or think of someone or drink thoughtfully while swallowing physically or not choose one's family or find the jungle stinks or eat grilled pig or admire one's mother or spit on the grass or mow the lawn or paint trellises or do housecleaning jobs or stir up some shit or play soldiers or play a part pressed against the rear window of the car while waving bye-bye to the passersby.
Faultless generation

The faultless generation.
It got stuck at D.
Do this, don’t do that.
Latinizing, it festers.
Obedient, it ex(a)egetes.
Exceptions with no rules and iota of the poor, extraverted with no interior, filthy with assurance and throbbing with pleasures throughout the centuries it has forgotten, it is *ego sum via, veritas et vita*.
Its emptiness is self-contained and its children are its friends. A friend is someone we don’t have to mind.
So it really has no friends at all. Many lovers, on the other hand.
Far too many. But we’ll leave that too to the sweethearts.
Rubber duck, hey, you’re the one, so go drown in the bathtub, then we can thrive in peace as we cast a condescending wave on your barely sketched scum, so soon forgotten.
Its arms are always open but wrapped around nothing.
Or, rather, around itself, like the dog.
What’s more, its sweat smells good, it says, for it has made the world.
Its children are in jail, but it is fond of oranges because they evoke the earth.
Its addresses are numerous; it always refused to discuss money, which was low, vulgar. Not like underclothes, but like all that succeeds it, alas, with no success.
Give it a bike, it will make you a Peugot, ask it a question, it will kunderize, rilkerize, ridiculize you.
Since Plato et al were the anamorphoses of its sleepless nights. And eveless nights.
So marvellous, marvellous.
Since it alone can dance, none are asked, for none are invited.
We do not invite our past. Any more than our children. Which amounts to the same.
Its drought is damp, it has a dead she.
It does not play cards; it gags and stunts.
Nothing about it is biased; it has embraced so much, it is so much ablaze.
It knows the first names of the burning lights. All of them. Except the red. Of course. Overly prosaic. Insufficiently lyrical.
Its pianos are victorious and never suffocate. How ugly that would be.
Its directories are the address, its hands all caresses, its agendas sacred.
For the sacred rite was an apotheosis, in the days of its osmosis. Its immortal idols will teach you everything there is to learn. Its immutable masterpieces will account for you. Its deficiencies do not exist.
The faultless generation salutes you. High and low, from atop its lofty heights.
Criss

Une fleur de cactus dans un cœur d’épinette ou l’histoire
d’un Québécois errant au sud de la terre.
Criss que c’est l’bordel tabarnak.
Ces jours où la destruction devient une paix.
On tuerait tout ce qui se tue.
Même le steak haché. Même les chiots. Même les arbres.
Et surtout, surtout, les péniches calmes ondoyantes sur une
eau tout aussi calme.
Je ne veux voir personne que je ne peux détruire. Je vais donc
rester seule avec ma chaleur épuisante et inutile et une
musique ressemblante.
Le seul qui ait froid, c’est mon foie.
Je pleure ma nervosité, je pleure ma virginité.
Et je ne pleure pas.
For Chrissake

A cactus flower in a spruce heart or the story of a Quebecois wandering south of the earth.
Jesus, what a mess, for Chrissake.
The days when destruction becomes a peace.
You could kill everything that kills itself.
Even ground beef. Even puppies. Even trees.
And especially, especially, the tranquil barges swaying on waters no less tranquil.
I don’t want to see anyone I can’t destroy. So I’ll remain alone with my exhausting and useless heat and a lifelike music.
The only thing that shivers is my liver.
I weep for my nervousness, I weep for my virginity.
And I shed no tears.
Children

The day the shadows fall silent before me. The music will turn sombre and relentless, the hail will stop falling on our heads grown too light. On that day, the stepladders will flee from doubt and the walls will wipe their noses with flaws of colour. O, my loved ones, I could never forget you. You brought forth the nostalgia that melts me and makes me smile with the immemorable, incommensurable, immeasurable laughter of autumn. They can all sing, their song will be lunar, epistolary, and of no consequence other than the flour the children moisten and press in their hands to make a glue that won’t stick. Just like my thoughts, my age is unimportant and I dance before a nothingness that well renders the immobility I ape. The clock’s hands still spin, and I adopted the plague many moons ago. Half-moons. Half the whole, like the pear cut in two parts that will never be equal. Part, do depart my love. A brick in the teeth and a joke to help it go down. I beg of you, I make light of you, answer me. From now on the emergency no longer needs me. God, how we’ll love each other. Our children will wear nothing, not even a name. They’ll be drunk and poor, unsteady and unshakeable. Their toys will be us. On love they will gorge, with hate they will overflow. The taboo of the unclean will be their religion, their bond. From it every freedom will be born. They will be their own idol and will spit on nothing. Of rigor they will prove deprived, of candour they will perish. Sensuality will be their cerumen, exoticism their gallbladder, which they’ll sell two hundred and seventy-two dollars apiece to the Japanese. They will have enough to live on; we will have enough to die.
I first encountered these poems as snapshots of the printed pages taken by Oana Avasilichioaei on her camera. I translated them directly from the pictures. This produced a strange refractive effect, which the poems somehow invite. Desrosiers takes the shapes and dimensions of daily existence and language and recomposes them in labyrinthine collages where sound, image and meaning rebound and proliferate. I began to grope my way along, finding occasional succour in Borges’ defence of literality. But the heart of the matter is (always) elsewhere. There is an emotional vapour running through this poetry, something like great pain enveloped in laughing gas. Something that loses its potency when trapped in analytical categories, yet whose traces must be registered for the translation to succeed.

GENEVIEVE DESROSIERS (Montreal, 1970-1996) was a talented writer and visual artist, whose life was sadly too brief. She wrote a play in 1989, Tourni Coti, Tourni Cota, and exhibited her artwork in various shows throughout the early 90’s. Her collection of poems, Nombreux seront nos ennemis, (1999, reprinted 2006, 2012), as well as an artist book, Une histoire, (2006) were published posthumously by L’Oie de Cravan.

LAZER LEDERHENDLER has been a professional translator longer than he cares to remember. His translations of contemporary Quebecois fiction have garnered many distinctions, including the Governor General’s Literary Award (Canada) and the Quebec Writers’ Federation Translation Prize, as well as short-listings for the Oxford-Weidenfeld Translation Prize and the Scott Moncrieff Prize of the Society of Authors (UK). He lives in Montreal.
Nous race de trop, nous face contre terre, aussi longtemps que le miroir du monde. Nous pour dire et pour faire dans la maison des hommes, toujours sous les effraies et les ordres et les voix, cognons, cognons pour dire et pour faire. Nous autant que cet horizon debout pour ceux qui vivent. Nous voilà prière, rivière de sanies, de confettis, ombres et nerfs de trop. Nous devant le dieu de nous perdus dans nos bras.

Nous posons la question de l'homme seul. D'heure en heure, nous recopions sur nos bras la langue des alcôves, celle de l'abandon, celle de l'attente. Nous confondons de plus en plus les miracles et les guerres. Nous sommes loin dans le pavot et le vin d’aube. D’une vie à l’autre, nous avançons les bras chargés de rameaux et d’oiseaux de faïence, nous fermons les yeux et le monde s’ouvre. Encore une fois le brouillard se lève, notre cœur s’illumine. Nous sommes de juillet et d’ici : visiteurs de minuit au fond du verbe être.
We this race in excess, we our face against the dirt, for as long as
the world’s mirror. We to say and do in the house of men, always
under the screeching owls and the orders and the voices, knocking,
knocking to say and do. We as numerous as this horizon that
stands only for the living. We as prayer, river of suppurations,
confetti, shadows and nerves in excess. We before the god of us
lost in our arms.

We pose the question of the lone man. From hour to hour,
we recopy on our arms the language of alcoves, of abandon,
of waiting. We confuse miracles and war more and more.
We have ventured far into the opium and wine of dawn.
From one life to the next, we advance our arms burdened
with palms and china birds, we close our eyes and the world
opens. Once again the fog lifts, our heart lights up. We are of
July and of here: midnight visitors deep in the verb of being.
Let us say yesterday or today or tomorrow no more. Every hour we return from a far journey. We look through the sky to see the sky. We wake surrounded by unknown sighs, by rages as steadfast as monuments. Our nights are made of gas and crystal, restrained far away from us. Let us say me or tear no more, say world no more, let us remain silent at the accounting of hearts. Our eyes are made of driftwood, our lips of rawhide and fever. Our silence is sapped of mystery.

We are children’s drawings. Sometimes we resemble the trees of January, sometimes we burn like races in the dust. Something moves over the horizon and we cease loving. For weeks on end, our body turns back into this steaming shard of sulphur and ashes in which the word light still exists. Only the thickest forest, the purest hatred could cure us. We no longer seek the truth, but a landscape with whom to speak.
We midnight, midnight still at the long bidding, infinite small race of the rivered number. We without blissful yellow smells and the cloth of stars, sorry, we are here, not you. We of the chosen souls bulge assorted, wakeful beneath the tree of verbs, not pleading, not for sky or grace. We further away than skull and heart and sex. We full-mouthed against us.

We inhabit the place known as the skull. We pillage light like grain, like coal, bending down to live. Cave-dwelling birds, cathedral dogs, we are humiliated children. Somewhere the heat speaks and we disbelieve it. Our souls are simple, our words useless. Let us say penance or patience no more, let us not beg our pardon. We are not made for the sky, but for the cry that birthed it.
I am not this bone theatre claiming to live,  
here and there father or mother or flesh to break free.  
I return to the world licked by the walls,  
devour myself like rawhide,  
and no wind comes to burn  
when I say cross, when I say voice,  
the chamber concealing me.

I work inside my blood,  
have been building dams, towers  
ever since the age of numbers.  
Now I pull apart my stitches, my house.  
I live devoured by names, surrounded by the sky’s blue  
until I bite into the words sea, fatigue, bedstead.  
I repeat my shadow and silence the name of my body.  
I am a thing of chalk, a thing of rain.  
I am a man who breaks things.

I am a thing of night, a manly thing.  
I come to faith as I come to penance:  
bone by bone I remove myself from my voice,  
I say no one, I say salt and vapour,  
say snow and silk and come multiplied into myself.  
May the house of winds open on my bed:  
I no longer possess my winter, my wits.  
I am the age of these fearful hells,  
hemmed in my arms.
A catastrophe, still palpable, preceded the book into being. Out there, they are legion. Say we. Roam the black plain, indifferent to the existence and names of angels. Alone in his chamber, a man watches over the book, turns its undecipherable leaves, vain as firebrands, or spent embers. In the pages’ mirror, their images blaze and falter out in charred clouds. They say that the book contains the secret of their existence. That it was burnt in advance. In VERCHIEL, the watcher over the book, who is and is not VERCHIEL, says I, I, stuttering his own darkness, his own flame. Does he know the hour and the nature of the catastrophe? No matter. They are coming back, to burn the burnt pages, and together, once again, they must begin the history of ashes: VERCHIEL names a ruin.

BENOIT JUTRAS’ first book was *Nous serons sans voix* (2002), for which he won the Émile-Nelligan award. He went on to publish *L’étang noir* (2005) inspired by Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller’s installation *The Dark Pool*, and *L’année de la mule* (2007). *Verchiel*, his latest (2011), was a finalist for the Estuaire-Bistro Leméac award and Prix Alain-Grandbois, the highest recognition of l’Académie des lettres du Québec. He was the literary critic for the cultural weekly *Voir* and currently teaches literature at the college level. His work is published by Les Herbes rouges in Montreal, where he lives.

DANIEL CANTY is an author, director and translator living in Montreal and working in many mediums. He has translated books by Auguste Blanqui and Benoit Jutras into English, and books by Stephanie Bolster, Erín Moure, Michael Ondaatje, and Charles Simic into French.
sans titre

Nicole Brossard

combien de mots disparaissent
au moment où nous formons un ensemble
vivant désuet vivant verbe vouloir
crowded streets with no reliefs
foule phonème j’aurais parié foule gurlesque

la soie des anecdotes le verre brisé kind of
ce savoir effleuré de sanglots
on a recentré les gestes le consensus
les gens ont des dialogues ont froid ont
dans la gorge ont dans la poitrine deux ou trois
larmes deux réponses pulpeuses ont un vertige
des atomes joyeux pleins leur élan de catastrophe

devine devine si je vis au milieu des esclaves
how many words vanish
at the moment we become a group
alive obsolete alive word want
rues bondées sans reliefs
crowd phoneme gurlesque crowd I’d have bet

the silk of anecdotes the glass broken presque
this knowledge grazed by sobs
we recentred our gestures, our consensus
people have dialogues have shivers have
in the throat have in the chest two or three
tears two pulpy responses have a vertigo
of joyful atoms their full surge of catastrophe

guess guess if i live among slaves
si vous avez trébuché dans la confidence
l’aveu l’apnée le vertige
sachez que dès le matin
il s’agit de graviter afin d’éviter la souffrance
mais une heure plus tard
nous disons le contraire si la pluie
si un objet du corps s’est cassé sous nos yeux
puis nous réarmons le vertige
debout l’oreille tendue
dans le matin déjà plein d’astuces
qui se frottent aux pensées
if you’ve stumbled into the secret
avowal apnea vertigo
know that from the crack of dawn
you have to gravitate to avoid suffering
but an hour later
we say the opposite if the rain
if a bodily object broke before our eyes
then we rearm vertigo
stand up bend an ear
in the morning already full of tricks
rubbed up against thoughts
so

this morning here's a copy of dawn in its own dawn
a practice of time grazed lightly
that obliges us to address hours intimately though we can't see them

for

neither paragraphs nor version with your body
nor all that went past horns news and lumière
or the muted noise of fountains

cannot

lead back where hours began again
to be other hours with a book
an hour more a dream within

cannot

be freer than myself as far as the eye can see
but abridged
a democracy breaks like an egg

cannot

find its adjectives of energy renewed
against lies and blown knees
the sound of throats and crowds
infinite

it's been a long time since I wrote the word face
I'm asked if by chance I know whom we're talking about. I'm told
to speak from within, another word, another polite address

beautiful flash mob show me your ground zero

your tally of sorrows

the earth has gone through an idea more than once
of grand vigilance and vestiges
we're born all over again our language put to the test
beautiful mob first show me your women then your tears

your tally of sorrows
you’ll want
to know what did we just say
here I can’t quite grasp it neither sigh nor strife
how did that woman have two childhoods
a knowing self embroidered with stories and poétiques
a me so pink so present

you’ll want
slipnet in the void with a void
to slip stuck to the matter
enjamb centuries of new scorpions
a melody a manuscript filled
with absolute
prosperous words and solitude

you’ll want
yet another flexion in abstraction
humidity in shutting your eyes
you’ll say that’s not quite it yet
No one writes in as many directions at once as Nicole Brossard. Her mind and ear and tongue forever moving and interrupting each other, like a crowd of dancers trading partners back and forth. No one’s brain and skin is more finely tuned to hear that music than Erín Moure’s. I’m always surprised to hear someone say I translated Nicole Brossard, or Erín and I translated Nicole. Were there only two of us, or three? It’s as though every letter of the alphabet was a translator bobbing and weaving on the page. I can’t say how grateful I am to have been invited to the dance. Nothing I’ve done in my life has made me happier. (Robert Majzels)

The music and balance of Nicole Brossard’s line ends, her turbulences in syntax, her use of all the structures of the French language balanced against the force of a line to produce thinking and thought’s intelligence, how lexicon works and moves, its commonality or strangeness, all these are part of the meaning effects of her work. Transmuting this into English is definitely richer as a result of working with Robert Majzels. We spend glad hours chewing over variations, the effect of a word or structure, a movement, a sound echo. It’s absorbing and wonderful; the resulting poems always amaze me. (Erín Moure)

Montreal poet, novelist and essayist NICOLE BROSSARD has influenced a generation of writers. Among her 30 books, many exist in English: Mauve Desert, The Aerial Letter, Picture Theory, The Blue Books, Installations, Intimate Journal, Yesterday at the Hotel Clarendon, Notebook of Roses and Civilization (trans. by Moure and Majzels, Griffin Prize finalist). She cofounded the avant-garde journal La Barre du Jour (1965-1975), co-directed the film Some American Feminists (1976) and co-edited the acclaimed Anthologie de la poésie des femmes au Québec. Her work has received the Governor General’s Award (twice), the Prix Athanase-David, the W.O. Mitchell Prize, the Grand Prix de Poésie du Festival international de Trois-Rivières (twice), the Molson Prize. Widely translated into English, Spanish, German, Italian, Japanese, Slovenian, Romanian, Catalan, she is a member of l’Académie des lettres du Québec and an Officer of the Order of Canada.

ROBERT MAJZELS is the author of Apikoros Sleuth and The Humbugs Diet. With Erín Moure, he translated Nicole Brossard’s White Piano (Coach House, 2013). Claire Huot and Robert are the authors of 85 (www.85bawu.com).

ERÍN MOURE’s newest translations, of White Piano by Nicole Brossard (with Robert Majzels) and Galician Songs by Rosalía de Castro from Galician came out in 2013. Her current translational disruption in progress is Insecession, an autobiography and poetics echoing Chus Pato’s Secession. The Unmentionable (Anansi, 2012) is her most recent book.
Concret comme de la roche déposée fragmentée dans une pièce. Concret comme une tête de marbre aux côtés d’un corps décapité. Incongruité de pierre cassée déplacée, mon crâne, séparé de mon corps, je ne bouge pas.

Je ne fais rien.

Le rien, chose imprenable, imprenable caillou de granit au milieu d’une pièce.

Corps sans tête, cinquante et un corps, la tête arrachée par des obus, cinquante et un Albanais, leurs cinquante et une mâchoires, explosées.

« Vous ne pouvez avoir les corps maintenant; revenez plus tard. »

Il n’y a plus de mâchoires, ils n’ont plus de gorge, il y a des corps morts, de la chair sur des os. Il y a des corps d’hommes mythiques, des corps d’Aphrodite, avec ou sans tête, de la chair de calcaire, de granit. Il y a la pensée des hommes qui sculptèrent des corps magnifiques. Magnifiques comme un plénasme. Un fantasme.
FROM *A Spectacular Influence*

*Chantal Neveu*

Translated by Norma Cole

Return from Greece

Voice of a man
without a face

The equivalence of suffering

Concrete like rock set down in fragments in a room. Concrete like a marble head beside a decapitated body. Incongruity of broken stone displaced, my skull, separated from my body, I am not moving.

I do nothing.

The nothing, ungraspable thing, ungraspable granite pebble in the middle of a room.

Bodies without heads, fifty-one bodies, heads blown off by shells, fifty-one Albanians, their fifty-one jaws blow away.

“You may not have the bodies now; come back later.”

There are no more jaws, they have no more throats, there are dead bodies, flesh on bone. There are bodies of mythic men, Aphrodite’s bodies, with or without heads, flesh of limestone, of granite. There is the thinking of men who sculpted magnificent bodies. Magnificent as a redundancy. A fantasy.

Missing, the thinking of men who imagined gods. Missing, the heads, marble, limbs, shoulders, noses, stomachs. Missing, the fifty-one Albanians, even if they give back the fifty-one headless bodies.
I looked at the marble bodies, I imagine the thinking of men who imagined gods. I hear the word “Albanian,” I imagine men, living, mortal. I hear “fifty-one,” I see a mass of men, all humanity, heads and bodies thinking. I hear “jaws torn away,” I see the violence, bloody. And I understand “with shells,” men think war, men move shells.

Shells explode on the radio.

They will move the dead bodies. They moved, cut the stone. They will keep the bodies. Do they dare look at them? The heads separated from bodies, the fallen bodies, the bodies of dead men, separated from the bodies of women, living. The women will not lie down with the men any more, not in sleep, not in love. They will lay them, perhaps, in graves. The women, the men?

They laid the marble women down alongside the dead bodies of mortals in the tombs of the Cyclades. Violin-women, arms crossed above their rounded bellies. Long throats, without arms above their crossed-out bellies. The embodied women, standing above the graves, will remain the belly, the throat, separated.

Throat cut, belly gutted, fetus and viscera splattered on walls, a hundred and thirty-six Algerians, dead men and dead women, massacred. I don't hear their screams, can't imagine what the men who gutted them were thinking.

Between my head and my body, I have no more throat, I don't hear the scream I want to scream. Is it the sound of a violin? No. Of a cello. Death, does it still exist?

It is not hewn stone, it is not a head of Aphrodite, nor the dismembered body of Dionysus, nor the decapitated head of Zeus, the broad torso on the draped sheet. A numbered assassination, the massacre of death.

The beauty of the marble body, the grace in the veins of rose rock. I looked at what was missing among the limbs, the bodies, between the bodies and the heads, I looked at the masks, the bronze helmets. I don't know what there is between the belly's
flesh, the head helmeted for war, what there is between the head, the torso. The flesh on the bone of the skull under the helmet is not stone, the blood in the hair is not veins of marble. There is not just the neck, the nape. The throat, a substance I don’t know. I am with this missing thing and with the thing that isn’t. I have no shield, I am naked in my trousers.

I don’t move any more, I am in a tomb.

My head, detached from my body, my body, dead wood, not lying down, I am sitting, my arms hanging, my body the chair I’m in, I am a head on a chair and I stare.

I see a cat going by, dead not dead, I am asleep, not dead. Because my body a chair, I could push the chair away, get up.

Concrete sounds, without tone. Everything the same, continuous noise, rolling spiral, could be a motor, metallic noises, alternating shrillness with spaces of silence. The sound of a detonation, a silence, huge, time in suspension. The noise, the scream, the silence or the sound of the detonation, which one the most incongruous? Life resumes. Sheets appear from above, women have thrown sheets down, they are covering bodies below. Are they already dead? Still alive?

My head, facing a head the skull open, flesh hanging. I remove the white worms from the greenish flesh. The face on the skull looks at me, its eyes look at me, do not see me. I look at its eyes, the worms are moving on his forehead. With tweezers, I remove the live worms, I toss them one by one on the ground. I don’t hear the sound of maggots, the ground, soft, my chair falls, I don’t see the face any more.

The bronze, the cords, it’s not my voice, the head covered with a sheet, the suffering deafens me. Standstill.

I am not credible. I say I am a head, a chair, the sound of the cello, the wind, the nothing I do, what I suffer, what I imagine. What there is between the sheet and the sound of the voice, the dance
without which my chair won’t move. Love. Space separates my chair from your body.

Your body covered with a sheet, you’re not dead. Aphrodite is a sound, you are an ensemble. My head in the middle of your belly, you lie back on my chair. You scream. I think the wind while throwing out the dead wood.

I still hear screaming.

Your throat on your body, the cello, your round belly, arms crossed, your flesh like limestone, the cat goes by, looks at you. The gods only exist because they imagine them.

Living, mortal, I am the fifty-one, altogether, decapitated.

I move in the noise I hear.
“Was he a soldier?” asked the person at the other end of the email. I write back, “The author: He’s a she, living in Montreal, Chantal Neveu. I met her in NY in the fall. You ask about translation? It begins thus: The first sentence has a word (une pièce) in it that could be a piece or one piece, or a room or one room or a play or one play. I have to choose. I use one piece instead of a piece, or a room (at first I thought “room”) or a play. You work it, rework it, forward, backward, upside down. Rhythm, patience. Words that mean rock, stone and pebble come up right away, so you know you’re going to a hard place metaphysically. Next page, first sentence, aha, it’s clear that I have to go back to room, can’t use piece. “The nothing, ungraspable thing, ungraspable granite pebble in the middle of a room.” And so it goes....

CHANTAL NEVEU is a writer and an interdisciplinary artist. She is the author of Une spectaculaire influence (l’Hexagone), coït and mentale (La Peuplade). Interdisciplinary textual projects include Édres, Édres | Dehors (Éditions É=E), Je suis venue faire l’amour (Contre-mur), Passing and Ce qui arrive (OBORO). Her writing has been produced in various media by Éditions OHM-Avatar, Klangkunst / DeutschlandRadio Kultur, L’Espace du son / Société Radio-Canada, OBORO, etc. Coït, translated by Angela Carr, was published by BookThug (2013). She is part of the collective creative research project directed by Suzanne Leblanc.

NORMA COLE’s most recent book of poetry, Win These Posters and Other Unrelated Prizes Inside, appeared from Omnidawn in 2013. Her translations from French include Jean Daive’s A Woman With Several Lives, Danielle Collobert’s It Then, and Crosscut Universe: Writers on Writing From France.
FROM Ce qui s’embrasse est confus

*Franz Schürch*

FROM *Partie IV, thème : embrasser*

Demain me frappe de tous les cotés

Et j’ai des lèvres bien minces pour qui doit embrasser tant de coups

À toutes les fois

Que j’ai l’impression d’être bien en contrôle de mon présent

Je suis une mauvaise gifle

Car il n’y a rien de présent

Je suis dans l’avenir si je suis inconscient

Et le passé m’est inconnu de toute manière
FROM *Whatever Kisses Is Blurred*

*Franz Schürch*

Translated by Ingrid Pam Dick

FROM *Part IV, Dominant Theme: To Kiss*

Tomorrow hits me from all sides

And I have really thin lips for one who ought to kiss so many shots

Every time

I have the feeling of being in control of my present

I am a bad slap

Because nothing is present

I am in the future if I am unconscious

And the past is unknown to me anyhow
—What did you do yesterday?
—I don’t remember.

—And what are you doing today?
—I don’t remember that either.

—Alright, but–?
—But what?

—But what are you doing tomorrow?

—Tomorrow is far off. I didn’t do anything yesterday or today, it could be I won’t have anything to do tomorrow. In fact, I came here to wait. I came, I am here, and I am waiting—with the past, the present and the future perfectly assembled and explaining themselves to one another.

So what are you waiting for from me?

So what more are you waiting for?

—I am waiting for what you say to mean something.

—It could be you’ll wait a long time.

—I’ve been waiting a long time already.

It’s certain that I will be dead soon
You will be dead also
And curiously that disturbs me more
I don’t remember anything
All the joints I have are stiff

From holding fast to the present moments I await

And I have no reason for waiting

There are all sorts of things around you

In invisible colors/ It seems that they move

At their speed/ I am not certain

All the speeds are colored/ And I am afraid of not knowing

How to distinguish the pieces which shoot from you/

From those which turn rapidly to the outside

You are not a piece

And I don’t see anything around you

Which unsettles me greatly and makes my eyes hurt
I don’t owe anything to anyone

And what are you doing there invisible behind the tree branches at the corner?

For a long time I have not been calm

I don’t know what I am doing and I eat my fingernails

I got up this morning had coffee went outside to go shopping
I’ve gotten up very often since I’ve been alive I don’t remember the first time and for a long time I have been agitated

it is very difficult to say exactly why even today when I know how to speak

it is strange that the things I don’t know without knowing why make my feet tremble when I don’t have anything to do it is strange without awaiting something precise that I bite my fingernails the things that I don’t know force me bite me often exactly today

I don’t owe anything to anyone I already said that

But it is strange that I am being shoved from who knows where
Duty where does it come from?

Do I owe myself something?

Could I owe something to someone else?

I am shaken it's obvious since I am being moved without wanting it

It's well known I already said that to you even gnawing my own fingertips

But how come because I am being pushed somewhere?

How come because it's necessary for me to do something?

How come it would mean that I owe?

And how could I owe if I don't know how to respond?

I don't know how to respond I do not know

I don't know what is being demanded of me I don't know what to do

It is very obvious I already told you since I bite my fingernails

The duty is not not knowing how to respond

I can't owe anything since precisely

I don't know do not even know what's being spoken of here

To be unsettled about not knowing how to respond that is not the duty

—So then what do you want it to be?

—I don't want anything. I don't owe anything to anyone.

—You are really shaken though and you ask a lot of questions for one who doesn't owe anything
I walked outside today

There was plenty of air

Air is interesting since we don’t feel it at all when it enters

And it is good for one’s health

Some prefer I’ve been told the smoke of the fire we feel

It is a curiosity

Curiosity cannot be an error

And even

It could be it is a more learned way of biting one’s fingernails

That one acquires by approaching the fire

To feel what enters us

Cannot be an error

The stomach of the stomach that dissolves in what it eats

The mouth of the protozoan that wanted more

Than the mash it is ever since it stopped being hungry

Do not say anything else

It could be we really owe it

To what enters us to feel it exactly
Instigation of the book by a thematic verse like a premise: *Demain je devrai t’embrasser*, Tomorrow I must/will have to/will be obliged to kiss/embrace you. And a rule as if of proof construction, that the verse moves in a swarm across each elaboration of the four themes alternately dominant. In pt. IV, the theme is *embrasser*. Its extension has its own deviant logic of turns, leaps, shocks, omissions. Its motion can be analytic or synthetic. The poem as thinking—and swallowing/spitting out words. Interpolating non-Platonic dialogues. Is it about love? Ambiguities in the French might elude the English. The meant that got away. Franz’s clarity about confusion. With such spare language, each word is a sharp shot. Each repetition is musical. Kissing or swallowing Franz’s text to fuse with it, letting it swallow you. Owing it to it to let it enter you, so you can feel it exactly. Its alien, alienated tone, its swings between colloquial and formal, its elliptical, intense disquiet. Its existential drone.

FRANZ SCHÜRCH is the author of a book of poetry, *Une autre fois* (L’Oie de Cravan, 2004), and a sequence of four ‘swarms’ of poetry: *Rien d’autre* (L’Oie de Cravan, 2006), *Chaos = zéro mort, encore, 1, 2, 3…* (Rodrigol, 2007), *Et si j’en suis tout retourné?* (Pleine Lune, 2008) and *Ce qui s’embrasse est confus* (Le Quartanier, 2009). His most recent publication, *De très loin* (Le Quartanier, 2012), is his first work of fiction. He lives in Montreal, where he teaches philosophy.

INGRID PAM DICK (aka Gregoire Pam Dick, Mina Pam Dick et al.) is the author of *Delinquent* (Futurepoem, 2009). Her writings and translations have appeared in BOMB, The Brooklyn Rail, Aufgabe, EOAGH, Fence, Matrix, Telephone, Dandelion, and elsewhere; her philosophical work has appeared in a collection published by the International Wittgenstein Symposium. She lives in NYC.
La maison à penser de P.

Suzanne Leblanc

Choral I

C'était une maison dont je ne connaissais que les plans et quelques images. Elle avait été construite au début de mon siècle, le vingtième, dans une ville, Vienne, qui s'avéra déterminante. C'était bien avant que je ne naissie, par un philosophe que je lus longuement, plus tard. Son œuvre m'avait convaincue. J'admirais sa vie. C'était une maison simple et austère et j'étais rigoureuse et candide.

Office

Rez-de-chaussée

Choral III


Chambre de domestique

Rez-de-chaussée
Chorale I

It was a house of which I knew nothing but the plans and several images. It had been constructed at the beginning of my century, the twentieth, in a city, Vienna, which proved decisive. That was well before I was born, by way of a philosopher whom I read at length, much later. His work had convinced me. I admired his life. The house was simple and austere, and I was rigorous and frank.

Pantry

Ground floor

Chorale III

The house was a method. It was exact and simple. It was austere and obsessive. It issued from a life consecrated to the life of the mind. I cherished a neglected house. It was a house of the mind in which my method lived. I sought its coherence alongside that of the philosopher. His work was convincing, his life admirable. I sought, in the hallways of his house, my method, my mind.

Servant's bedroom

Ground floor
Imagining a general game to motivate her part in the human games in which she was caught took priority in P.’s existence. This had a foundational cause, an originating event or, if one prefers, a primary motor, born of a mix of circumstances which, like the chemistry initiating life on a planet, owed the encounter of its congruent parts, the formation of its internal coherence, to chance. It was rather remarkable that this event occurred in the same place as her birth, a short interval later, on a terrain as if prepared to consummate the rupture which the initial detachment had commenced.

For ten days P. was removed from her father and mother, isolated from the family and kept in an unknown, clinical environment. The panic, despair, terror were seismic. Like a plate detaching from a matricial continent, P.’s life separated from that of her family—which she never again took for granted. God required seven days to create the World, according to the Old Testament. P. required ten to lay the groundwork for her definitive universe. The latter was turned entirely toward Representation, whose figures and relations proliferated, like the minerals, flora, fauna and then humankind in the biblical universe. A solitude arose, conscious of the external things she absolutely needed and which her representations sought to attain.

As a corollary, an autarchy emerged, establishing a singular regard that could no longer be “deconstituted”.

Governess’s bedroom

Third floor

Throughout the twenty years that elapsed before the forming of a first alliance, P. lived alone. After the forming of this alliance, she lived alone differently. She didn’t fall asleep cradled by thoughts of someone in whom she imagined love. She lay down and dozed in the cocoon of the World. Thus, it was not the nights and their dreams that the new bond came to inhabit, but the days. It was there, in waking life, that it made a difference.

Most importantly, this friendship introduced conversations into P.’s universe.
In fact, the relationship between P. and Professor S. consisted entirely in what can be considered a unique conversation, initiated the evening of the alliance and pursued through what would amount to thousands of hours—P. and Professor S. eating fine or frugal and often exotic meals together, strolling in cities and in forests and, for the vast majority of the time, listening and speaking to each other by long-distance phone, connected to one another by this cable made for the commerce of language, for its structure and for its flesh (because the eardrum is also tactile), developing out of these long acoustic sequences the temporal topography, the tectonics of sense, going over them again if the exchange demanded it, and perpetually practising what involved in turn the solution of the problem and the code of wisdom.

This conversational mode exactly suited the idea that P. had formed about the relation to others: something exchanged between two aloofnesses, a barter bearing thresholds of proximity, compromise, commitment, movements of freedom where one gives all and demands nothing, slow or hasty retreats, but always crucially this recognition of the other’s exoticism, of their surprising logic and, all in all, of their absolute prerogative as to their own invention on their own territory. The exchange was made between lord and lord, whatever the other’s position in society, for it is always in the absolute that two beings truly meet, in such a way that if they leave the function, standing or any other position of power, or who knows what standard or measure that is capturing their mind or body and filtering their part in the exchange, this would be ascribed to them entirely. Nothing therefore can unseat them but their own false movements, which they are free to accept without dishonour or to devote some or all of their existence to changing.

East bedroom

Second floor

**Logic IV**

I was floating and moving, detached from the Exterior in a primitive and fundamental sense. This constituted the very condition of my movement to its interior. My motion among beings of all orders was carried out simultaneously in the universe of representations, which formed one register among all the others of the Great World. Because I was human, I had this double...
perambulation, in the order of things and the order of ideas, granularity of representations gliding in the general granularity. Nothing in all of this was ever fixed, sometimes moved, sometimes moving, far too distant to meet one day and crossing each day, each hour, at each instant, neurological granules in the head, physiological ones in the heart, anatomical masses, particulate specks, these on the side, inside of those, following, above, connected, pockets of order in the disorders which are quite subtle orders, themselves pure representations, changing, provisional, like all the beings beyond all the orders with which they returned as to a primordial paste.

Thought was in this sense something physical. I felt it in the blood pulsing in my arteries, in the subtle tingling of my corporeal layer, in the light but constant breath particularly audible in winter, deep in the distant forests at nightfall. And just as one never stops but in the midst of some general motion, I had the impression of fixing my attention on something, of concentrating on an idea, amidst an intellectual coming and going I could hardly contain beyond a certain vibration. On the other hand, stopping and concentrating did not in themselves lack motion. In reality there was only this, movements among movements, of all scope, on all scales, human or otherwise, representational or otherwise. Thinking consisted in circulating in the Great World, travelling in this discontinuous region that constituted my Exterior, myself, constant and also very abstract, riding my movements as many vessels from which to see existence exclusively, so that thinking always carried with itself its own consciousness. Myself, pure individuality, I was this unique and distributive point of view lodged in the multiple and moving periphery of a completely granular universe, each of my motions, those of my thought but also those of my atoms, my cells, my organs, my limbs, my entire physicality and my existence carrying me into a fate of pure transport.

South terrace

Ground floor
Chorale VI

The house belonged to the philosopher’s work, which had convinced me, and to his life, which I admired. It served as a device of displacement from a treatise to an investigation, from a renunciation to a return. There, I passed as through a sieve between a silenced reflection and an integral thought. I rode its force of propulsion between what I had not expected and what, in its being, burned me.

North servant’s bedroom

Third floor

Chorale VII

The house was as a book. I wrote through each of its doors to each of its floors. I circulated in its syntax beyond the moulded words, the sculpted sentences. I spread my thought throughout the house, hybridised it to the foreign shape. Henceforth, its spatiality was added to my language. Through this philosopher’s house, I reflected on the convincing work, on the admirable life.

South-west servant’s bedroom

Second floor
Was Wittgenstein’s house, for him, a way to philosophize or a way to escape, albeit temporarily, from philosophizing? Was it a way to transform his philosophizing? For Suzanne Leblanc and her protagonist P., it is a mode of making thinking into life, life into thinking. Between ascending the disposable ladder of the Tractatus and wandering through the dispersed city of the Investigations, Leblanc dwells in the domicile Ludwig designed for his sister Gretl. Ideas crucial to his work, such as limit, freedom, interiority and exteriority, language game, view sub specie aeternitatis, come into play. The spiritual and the intellectual, fused in the untranslatable French word esprit and indicated in Leblanc’s use of choral and logique, gain expression in the depth and rigor of her writing. Musicality (also crucial to Wittgenstein) arises in the repetition, variation, and development of her ideas. Her P. is a personal proposition attempting to be true in her relation to the larger world and its others. To capture the mix of reflection, intense feeling, alienation and sincerity, to voice the passion of clear thought itself, as movement and music, architecture and writing, was our challenge.

Suzanne Leblanc has a PhD in philosophy (1983) and in visual arts (2004) and has been teaching since 2003 at the School of Visual Arts of Université Laval (Quebec City). She has exhibited multi-media installations in Quebec and has published theoretical works in Germany, France, Switzerland and Canada. Her research and creative work deal with philosophical forms inherent in artistic disciplines or which might find expression in them. She is currently leading a research-creation group on artistic strategies for the spatialization of knowledge. La maison à penser de P. (La Peuplade, 2010) is her first novel.

\textit{Locs} exists, \textit{Locs}, no:

sts, bractlet, no, leaflet exists, verticil, no, operculum exist

Locs, by walking in nature, could flatten it. Locs, when the dew point provokes, posits the idea on nature. Locs balks at bark, carcasses, amassing on the blooms. Crumbs, lobss, plant bed, bractlet, flake. Locs doesn't recapture the bee nor his fallen hands—the day is also falling. Locs, among the clover, in air where carbon crumbles, isn't pressed for time. Locs, sporadically, sees the landscape rhyme. Locs backs down. Locs advances. Locs hesitates. Locs says what he thinks. Locs doesn't mind me.

s, calycule exists, bulb exists, phycnocarp, no. Perianth exi

I play on the possible crest. Peak of dawn, flash point—I insist. In my empty hands, juggling doesn't exist. The sun also bursts. Breaks out. In the forest, my voice capsules the space of a tree. Occupies it. Light occults the spoken. If I had wanted eyes, I would have extracted the law from a late-drunk fruit. If I root, darken the sun, the dishevelled air becomes a poem. A poet. Cracks, agvert, paper, phycnocarp, tear. Counting down, it's the only way to get there. I don't mind it.

sts, perichaeteum, no, perigon, no, edrianth, no, aigret ex

ists, thalamus exists. Ficoide, no. ||
Sorry John Cage, I know you said the opposite, I have something to say and I am not saying it. These are the blueprints of a story I will not write in a language I can not speak. Le son [nom] (literally: The sound of the name [insert name]) presents, untouched, what a speech recognition software hears if I repeat a single name incessantly.

Since the system I used (built in Windows 7) can learn and adapt, I educated it. For 4. JACQUES LACAN, I fed it Wittgenstein's work (Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus and Philosophical Investigations). To ensure adventures out of the ordinary, I just had to change my delivery or remove certain words from the system's vocabulary. Deemed speaker dependant, I deduced from the software's nature a single rule: If the result's redundancy's too high, I, as the speaker, must react and favour the system's penchant to interpret. In other words, I force it, if necessary, to hear something else.
A. JACQUES LACAN IS STRUCTURED LIKE A LANGUAGE


Savage | 53
B. ON WITTGENSTEIN’S HARD DRIVE

Joug le joug de Jacques a casual and casual look for the fact that the contractor of the heat of the involvement of Jacques a œuvré comme JE le king comme JE le choix de consacrer comme JE le joug de consacrer SA chambre à côté judge and cash a check of the correct chocolate, chocolate de facto not a casual cache of weapons one of the top of the back of the fact that half the cost of that comes out of Africa to convert the comme JE le front of the king of the fact of le contrat de Jacques même and cash John Mack, le joug comme JE, le cahier de leçons, the documents, JE comme JE check the car driver was a jar for the chicken, just the cost of that project for a thermometer co-pilotage a couple avec contact victims of alleged counterfeit money from the stock ticker the heart as a hitter jump in the mood here in there who are good for you to do here and they were in hidden in them for there are some of your food that are in Europe and Asia and these are the root in your room from New York for beer you can convert and not to that view you direct your letter to the one you measure the king meant that the job is a good deal that you did not hear the comme JE the news of the document for the fact that the thing that the darker and darker worker vie for the nouvelle vie for the way the drug czar that stock the top of the vie for sure you’re young are you the worker not the Ver Ver Ver Ver one can doubt is all that they never know who you’re not sentence of the vision that meant losing the king the judge and the visual image of the design the front of the move to turn him down from data from the end zone for the call that could go to call the whole thing as there is a top of Lacan for two balls that are not only to mark, joug Mer, joug for each hole getting over into schools well over the law that won’t happen over the map of the flap over one of the women have a comeback fucking the second half and half in fact, Lacan a definite winner of the Federal government however the common to all jobs at home that the paths of the father of the duck-rabbit have to have an event, the part found out that the project of the content of a couple over to the event, the common to have a couple who doesn’t have all the troubles from the couple that no longer form all of them over and over and over, the old walled that was woven from the walls of the walls of the walls over the phone of the oval room at holes a little over four data calls are going over a hole which all lieu of all the sea but one of their own heat sees it as a aussi of Jack McCann that Lacan fact that Nico Van Gogh and then the fact that the rule that the Van Gogh got the old of the clones in the hole and the tone for the whole fille is more or less well for you to follow it up for the pillow over was a bit of a definite rule in a letter to the worker who knows a father that goes up and ½ over.
Coming out of electronic music and sound, Steve Savage, aka Steve Savage, S. Savage, Dessavage, translates, collaborates, intones across texts, sound and medias. He approaches language biologically, fielding the morphology of its formstructures, the physiology of syntax, the anatomy of lexicon, the behaviour of its phonology, the origin and distribution of semantics. Language at the level of the syllable and letter is recomposed into many possible DNA structures, that may grow, move, behave unpredictably. At times, syllables are synthesized to create new beings of linguistic behaviour across the lexical barriers of French and English or even authorial personas. In attempting a transference, I too must occupy and play on that crest between the written and the spoken, the biological and the morphological.

STEVE SAVAGE has published two books of poetry: 2 x 2 (2003) and mEat (2005) with Le Quartanier. Dessavage, his third book, is ten years in the making and forthcoming. His poems have been animated (Baillat Cardell & Fils), set to music (Alexander MacSween) and choreographed (Karine Denault). The 2011 spring issue of Telephone was dedicated to multiple translations (from French to English) of a collaborative work between him and Renée Gagnon. He has also translated and transformed many incarnations of New York poet Pam Dick, including Mina Pam Dick’s Delinquent (Futurepoem books, 2009). Erin Moure has recently translated Le son [nom] n° 7—Patience Worth. He lives in Montreal.
La nourriture va : persévérance d’une fréquentation.

Le préambule n’est pas sans environnement, une sorte de manutention des parapets.

Refaçonner son piège sur ce qui dérive du conduit. La douane ne fouille pas par moyens circonstanciels.

Ce qui provoque des tentatives de délestage unanime.

Peu de dérobades sont équivalents à l’arrosage, si ce n’est que de revenir par transport, et ce, en discutant des produits généraux régionaux et de leurs cheminements.
Nourishment goes on: perseverance of a frequentation.

The preamble is not without ambiance, a sort of warehouse of parapets.

To reshape our trap on what's near the pipe. Customs does not search by circumstantial means.

Which provokes attempts at unanimous dumping.

Few subterfuges are the same as a soaking, if it just involves coming back by truck, discussing unspecified regional products and their routing.
The purpose of these investigation exercises may be characterized by an ability to flexibly indicate both the generalities and the details of circumstances regarding the modular conditions of various activities, ranging from food and sports to the occupation of space. The articulation is found in the choice of preservation methods, as proposed by the restoration committee.

The automated construction of zones of practice is accompanied by an indeterminate bundle of structures testing air and temperature conditions as well as the extent of mould on the walls of certain modules on each storey.

All of it represented in multiple copies on graph charts grouped in files managed with reference to time, which circulate via baskets and cables, permitting a continuous revision practice.
But where can he still be put? All he knows how to do is leave.

After you've gone.

I learn to let myself go.

That's it, let yourself go, very good.

In a few days, I'll be free.

And if we found him a job? Maybe he'd want to stay?

He's starting to get old.

To act so he can hang onto his world.

Work makes you stay unless you lose your job.
Work makes you stay unless you quit your job.

I'm going to stay and work a few more hours.
I'm going to stay and work as long as possible.

How many days do I still have to work?

I could really keep working a long time.

Work a long time to polish up a huge swath of ceiling.

Do things in which people see themselves without trying too hard.

He extends the fruits of his labour.

Setter of tiles and glass: it's always been an unpredictable trade.

It can't be stressed enough: parquet must be removable.

They build houses.
They work in the neighbourhood.

Everything’s changed around here. Everyone’s gone.

I’d rather stay shut inside than work.

How long can you stay shut inside?

He divides his days in two.

Look at that house. It’s his.
It’s whose?
Not whose, his.
Oh, right, his!

The mother of the family is outside the house. She is at work. When she works, the mother of the family stenographs the consultations had by quadriplegics, hemiplegics and paraplegics with their medical specialists in shorthand so as to work faster. Shorthand is faster than writing longhand. She also makes appointments for the fitting of arms and legs, for limb and joint adjustments if they’re too tight or loose.

Tools of the stenographer: telephone, pencil and calendar.

Both parents advance in the health care field. They met at the rehab centre.

They’re not ill.

I don’t know how they manage to move so fast given the state they’re in.

Ask them to slow down when they work and maybe they won’t be able to.

Meet people quickly near your own home.

In a small business, there’s no choice but to meet quickly. But it doesn’t necessarily mean that we get to know each other.

Detours can slow you down can not slow you down can make no difference.

He wanted to work in electronics, but circumstances led him to become a prosthetist. He created the first mechanized upper limbs.
She wasn’t sure what she wanted to do, and ended up as a medical stenographer.

At home, they had model mechanized upper limbs. They attached them to their elbows to grab objects. They did grip tests.

The grip’s good. The grip’s good.

I can grab hold of all kinds of things.

They sure had fun with those artificial limbs.

I’d like to go at it again, but I won’t be embarrassed to admit if I’m uncomfortable (or not).

Today, the father of the family is on work adjustment and retraining leave. He’s at home and renovates the house and refinishes the garage with plywood of different thicknesses so it’s a real garage. Change itself changed everything.

Then later on.

I came back.

A second ago, she wasn’t there and now she is.

You came home early today.
You came home fast today.

The mother of the family returns home and she finds everything changed. We know this because she says “everything’s changed.”

Nothing changed in her head. It’s in the garage that it changed.

You have no proof at all.
Apart from saying that you’re you, there’s nothing you can do to prove it.

A project for the evening if you still have any energy after a long day at work: I’m not tired and I turn you, as you can see, into a builder and real estate developer, along with that man who tells lies to my face.

My husband sleeps through all this.
Imitation stones in cast concrete to build a wall of stone.

What talent.

Hire a painter to paint the walls a certain colour. Come home at night and hate the result. Pick another colour and hire the same painter to paint it all over again the next day.

They have a hard time visualizing the final result and making decisions in consequence.

We don’t want to be duped.

I don’t mind. It’s your money.
The money’s yours, but you’ve got to pay me.
Don’t worry.
The money’s yours, but it is going to be mine.
You can now consider the money that was formerly yours to be mine.

I’m broke.

Abracadabra.

In a ritual performance from left to right and from right to left, he repainted the walls as he’d said, without saying a word, brandishing the bill. Its a generalized dupery we can live with for now. In a sense, that’s how we dupe dupery, with pretty colours.

Son of a crook and a sort-of politician who became a judge.

—But where am I?
—In a monster factory.

Now there’s an honest answer.
Never mind all that or you’ll make yourself ill.

The doctor figures out, by reason and observation, what a house is and the architect, by the same means, figures out what health is.

Be patient, it will all vanish.
Philippe Charron’s poems have a beautiful and stark precision that is also a human cry; they exist on the knife-edge of questions that we can’t blunt or sneak past. Is it ontology? Experience? Metaontology? “More and more I’m turning into a language generalist, and a manager of life habits and of the vacillation this involves. I’m faced with the challenge of asking myself exactly what this means, and if my very technique might not be a kind of specialization, after all. What’s important to me is to have an idea, even if vague, of what I want to do at a given moment, to get exercise, and not to let myself be oppressed by illness. Do I really have to add that poetry and art aren’t among my worries?” (Philippe Charron) Translating him means respecting the rigour of his diction, and the movement of his lexicons. The work speaks for itself, out of its exacting “whatever language” (to echo an Agamben term). In English, now.

PHILIPPE CHARRON was born in Montreal in 1979; his books are Supports tuiés (Le Quartanier, 2006) and Journée des dupes (forthcoming 2013, Le Quartanier). He is also finishing a thesis at UQAM on contemporary French writing, focussed on the notion of literality as linguistic behaviour and savoir-faire. His current writing project takes the form of a medical file and is titled Le syndrôme de Marfan.
mon vieux qui s’est fait tuer ses vieux
ton vieux qui a l’air vieux ta vieille plus jeune que moi
y’a des choses que je comprends pas
comme l’âge des gens
et la tête écrabouillée de ton père le corps fendu
de ta mère
je comprends pas plus que toi comment on parle
dans l’Ouest dans le Nevada
c’est pas pour comprendre que tu pars à cheval
à la recherche de trois salauds de bandits de merde
c’est pour apprendre à tuer un homme, deux, trois
à se venger
c’est pour apprendre à tirer à te méfier
apprendre à lire en cours de route
c’est pour chercher dans les journaux les noms des trois salauds de bandits
de merde de cul
c’est pour apprendre à mal parler à boire à fumer
pot lsd peyotl opium plein de packs de bières du scotch
c’est sans parler de la coke
c’est sans parler que t’éclates ta tête
puis la mienne sur une voiture
tu t’éclates la tête tu me tords les bras
m’éclates les veines des yeux d’un jab
c’est sans parler que tu dis toujours je t’aime après
et que ce mot est toujours
vrai

alors t’apprends vite la vie
la vie plus vite que toi
tu la rattrapes cours tu vas plus vite que toi

tu rattrapes trouves ton homme tu trouves un homme avec le cheval de ton
vieux tu vois sa cicatrice sur sa joue tu vois qu’il est ton homme
my old man whose old man and old woman got killed
your old man who looks old your old woman’s younger than me
there’s things i don’t get
like people’s ages
and your father’s smashed head your mother’s
split body
i don’t get any more than you do the way they speak
in the West in Nevada
it’s not to understand that you leave on horseback
searching for three shit son-of-a-bitch bandits
it’s to learn how to kill a man, two, three
to get revenge
it’s to learn how to shoot to be wary
to learn to read along the way
it’s to search the papers for the names of three shit ass sons-of-bitches
it’s to learn to cuss to drink to smoke

pot lsd peyote opium plenty of packs of beer scotch
to say nothing of the coke
saying nothing you bust your head
then mine on a car
you bust your head you twist my arms
burst the veins of my eyes with a jab
saying nothing you always tell me i love you after
and this word is always
true

so you learn life quickly
life quicker than you
you catch up on it run you go quicker than yourself

you catch up find your man you find a man with the horse of your old man
you see the scar on his cheek you see that he’s your man
you find him playing cards you find him kick him out you run him down hunt him down you let the cows out and the cows trample you you find him you find yourself under him you find his side with your knife you see that he’s dead you must find another man, two

you know one name not the other you search for the name that belongs to the bodies you search for the body that belongs to the name the name in a paper the body in a prison that’s what that says, yes

you hold up worse than in St Louis a bank you find yourself in the prison of the man of the name you know his name you know his face you talk you act like nothing happened like you know nothing about nothing think nothing expect nothing you do nothing except save him from a drowning death that you wouldn’t have given him if it’s water it’s not you you want your hands of death you want with your hands to strangle him to say nothing of the gun that you point at my head the eyes, saying nothing i wake up sometimes the gun on my temple in your hands and i no longer know who you are i no longer know what to say what to convince you of you’ll have his head in your sights in your planned escape in a canoe in the swamp the dogs and men hot on your asses you’ll have his head will leave him in the swamp to get scarfed up by beasts while you escape alone with the third name that the mouth of the second before crying no why give me a chance gave you take this Pitch in name you say you’re his brother as you search the villages you drink at night you sleep on pool tables you wake up with whisky it’s just him left after you’ll be alone no no not really alone alone with me on the other side of the States to meet
he calls himself Tom Pitch's the name
you call yourself Tom Pitch
and when Tom Pitch is before Tom Pitch
you call yourself Nevada Smith
you're called Nobody in Nevada
two heads to avenge that you're called

in the middle of nowhere
you call yourself to wait for the right moment

you join his posse
he takes a shining to you
like everyone takes a shining to your
at go steal the gold of a gold wagon in transit
ready to fire on everything that moves in and around
and soon Pitch's head shines at the tip of your barrel
soon you shoot
his arm
one knee
two knees
soon you want him to fear to fear like your woman of a mother opened by a
knife for him to beg all he can do is to ask you to finish him to finish the job
like you did with the others to finish
the job in his head a bullet for his head and it would be finished yellar
it's all he knows to say
so you leave him to bleed in the river
and you won't live the past alone
you'll still have the third who will bleed
you'll know he's still there

you could grow old with your old lady and i'll keep reading for you could talk
go out eat ride the highway on your motorcycle
you could grow old
isn't that happiness? peace?

the corners of your eyes are wrinkling
and also at the lips
you'll age in the skin quicker than me
pink shirted you'd like your Josh look
like the posters
when you accept body time aging
you become an old hand, an old girl's old man
a veteran of cattle and bandits
who takes one last contract

Gagnon, trans. Haslam
there, the flabby skin under your chin
the dust of a life on horseback in the West
the name stronger than ever the name praised at tables the name that
conquered Geronimo
the name on your last job
Tom Horn, living legend
vigilante one last time
hasn’t lost it with the trigger
you can kill from afar from up close
for the clean-handed farmers
two hundred dollars per head of a cattle thief

and at night, you meet me in my shack you banish the blood from your head
the images of men running falling bullets in their stomachs their backs your
horse that’s assassinated a threat the horse more faithful than me you banish
all the images meet me court me the old-fashioned way like les cow-boys in
the West because you always have to keep courting your wife it’s well known
it’s written in the cow-boy manual: you break in a horse and give it to me

you go on, bang! from afar up close hidden on horseback, bang!
all two hundred dollars a head
all
too many thieves
too many dead in the end for the clean-handed farmers
who realize you could dirty them
too well your job too well done
we want no more of you you’re a danger to the future

you’ll fall easily into their trap
they put the murder of a kid on your back
it’s not possible it’s just not possible because you don’t kill kids you never
mistake your target
it’s not possible you’re a cow-boy honnête right down to the tip of your gun
you’re a cow-boy éthique
you’ll fall into their hands, the judge’s, the police officers’ when you attempt
escape, you’ll fall to the ground
you’ll fall through the trapdoor
and your body with a small turn to the left will fall
before my eyes
Tom Horn, legend lives—dies
Tom Horn, dead, not you
not you
Renée Gagnon’s *Steve McQueen (mon amoureux)* is a montage-poem addressed to Steve McQueen, rugged anti-hero of ’60s and ’70s Hollywood Westerns and action flicks. He figures as a pastiche of his roles and biography: an idolized onscreen masculinity—cowboy, cop, war hero, heartthrob—and the misogyny of his off-screen life. The I of the book likewise speaks as a composite of his female leads, his three wives, and as a fan, “Renée de Montréal.” From postures of idolatry, hyperbole and parody, the love poem to a vexed icon of Anglo-American culture might evoke some of the political complexities of Quebec’s cultural and physical location. Gagnon’s Quebecois French is peppered with English Americanisms, a texture somewhat lost in translation to English. As script and score, the poem forms the basis for Gagnon’s multimedia performances of it. The rhythms of the text are phrasal, vernacular; her language clips like film cuts. The result is a cinematic, movemented, frenetic pastiche with all the colour and camp of McQueen’s Hollywood.

Born in 1978 in Montreal, RENÉE GAGNON holds a master’s degree in literature from the Université de Québec à Montréal. Her first book, *Des fois que je tombe* (2005, Le Quartanier), won the Émile-Nelligan prize. *Steve McQueen (mon amoureux)* was first published in 2007 (Le Quartanier) and is the textual basis for her multimedia performance *Projet McQueen*, presented in Quebec and internationally (Festival d’Avignon, France, 2009). Her work extends beyond the page into sound and media, with soundscapes like *Symphonie des Carabines* (2009) and sound-text performances: *Projet McQueen* (2008), *Somme:Soeurs* (2009; with Mylène Lauzon), *Qui est là* (with Chloé Leriche). Her work was featured in Jacket2 in Oana Avasilichioaei’s series on Canadian poetics. Telephone dedicated an issue to multiple translations of a long poem by Gagnon and Steve Savage.

BRONWYN HASLAM writes and translates out of Montreal, where she is currently completing an MA in literature (Université de Montréal). Her poems and translations have previously appeared in *The Capilano Review, Matrix, and Dandelion* and in chapbooks from No press.
Nathaniel Hawthorne, lors d’une visite à Herman Melville, alors employé au Bureau des douanes du port de Manhattan, lui offrit ce plateau d’échecs orné de deux baleines, sans aucun doute afin de consoler son ami de l’insuccès commercial et critique de son chef-d’œuvre, Moby-Dick.

Les amis entamèrent une partie qui se solda en un match nul, où roi et reine noirs auraient pu poursuivre à jamais roi et reine blancs. La configuration résultante resta en place jusqu’au déménagement du Bureau. Les collègues de Melville rapportent qu’il refusait les invitations à jouer avec les paroles par lesquelles Bartleby, reclus de Wall Street muré dans un refus infini, répondait à tout ce que la vie lui offrait : « Je préférerais ne pas. »

1 I would prefer not to.
Nathaniel Hawthorne, on a visit to Herman Melville, at the time employed with the U.S. Customs House for the port of New York, gave him this chessboard, adorned with two whales, no doubt to console his friend for the critical and commercial failure of his masterpiece, Moby-Dick.

The two friends began a game that resulted in a draw, in which the black king and queen could no longer pursue the white king and queen. The final configuration remained in place until the office moved. Melville’s colleagues say that he refused invitations to play a match with the same retort that Bartleby, the Wall Street recluse walled up in infinite refusal, gave to all that life offered him: “I would prefer not to.”

These letters tied with a ribbon, sheets torn out of various notebooks, all appear to be addressed to women known only by their initials. None are dated. None were mailed. They come from the hand of the English collector Sebastian Wigrum.

Wigrum intended to assemble them in a manuscript entitled The Last Love Letters on Earth, dedicated “in memory of all that never happened,” with an explanatory fragment on “that sad alchemy which leads to the transformation of feelings into literature.” Also decipherable, among other illegible phrases written in a diluted ink, is this question: “Is there a place where our unresolved and inadmissible sentiments are archived and where these letters arrive at last?”
This pen, Japanese-made and of compact design, was distributed to the kamikazes before their final flight, in recognition of the service they were about to provide for the nation. Designed to resist the worst weather conditions and most brutal shock waves, it prefigures the Space Pen patented by NASA, the astronaut's pen that can write in zero gravity or at ocean depth. In Asia, this pen did not undergo the massive commercialisation of the American model.

American officers got into the habit of calling this prized booty the kamiquill. Numerous specimens were found in the pockets of deceased pilots and the young suicidal warriors often used it to write a final letter to their mother, lover or friend.

This particular pen was lying near the smoking remains of a plane from the first wave that assaulted Pearl Harbour on Sunday, December 7, 1941, marking Japan’s entrance into World War II. A fisherman noticed it floating in the water on a folded paper, on which the verses of a unknown young poet were written. The poet appears to have had certain reservations as to the soundness of his mandate:

1 天皇蛙の舌が
カタッと音をさせ
蠍である私が死ぬ

2 天皇の舌が
カタッと音をさせ
私は死ぬ

The emperor toad
clicks his tongue
and I die a fly\(^1\)

On the back, a more polite version:

The emperor
clicks his tongue
and down I die\(^2\)

The pilot and poet, pulverised on impact, is unknown. His poem could have just as well been written on water.

Canty, trans. Avasilichioaei
Mengerian Gedankenexperiment
Collection of the Mirror

One of the most important discoveries in the theory of the connectivity of graphs was achieved by Karl Menger in 1928 with the publication of his Dimensionstheorie, where he describes the universal one-dimensional space known as “Menger’s Sponge” that has since proved essential to geometers across all lands (as classicists would argue).

Menger confided to one of his students, the famous stochastician and geneticist Otto Placebo, that he “could never come up with a really good thought experiment.”¹ He then asked him if he could keep a secret and whispered into his ear that his theory had actually been inspired by the sponge on the right, which he called his “own Newton apple.”

A dozen unfinished manuscripts titled My Newton Apple, My Galileo Tower or My Einstein Elevator² were found in his Vienna apartment and subsequently lost.

The numbers on the plastic bag correspond to a sequence from Menger’s Kurvertheorie.

Napoleonic Secret
Collection of the Mirror

Historians and biographers have long speculated, to no avail, about the trauma that drove Napoleon Bonaparte to constantly hold his right hand over his heart. Brigadier-Major Alphonse Dupeuret, the Corsican’s training officer during his brief stint at the Royal Military School of Brienne-le-Château, in Aube, puts forward a hypothesis.

In a journal entry, dated January 13, 1789, Dupeuret reveals that “Bonaparte once again stained my inspection gloves with his greasy buttons, and the nails of his right hand (especially on the index) were shamefully unclean.”¹

On January 19, Dupeuret writes: “My right hand glove has disappeared. I suspect Bonaparte who is a dirty, though cunning, man.”²

The glove was found sewn inside the left side of Napoleon’s last uniform, directly over his heart.

1 Er hatte nie ein wahrhaftig vollkommenes Gedankenexperiment entdeckt.
2 Mein Newtonapfel Mein Galileiturm Mein Einsteinaufzug

Canty, trans. Avasilichioaei | 73
Jean-Baptiste Bergerac of Rosemère, Quebec, Canada, spent his youth training to be an astronaut. Despite outstanding academic and athletic records, his application to the Canadian space program was rejected on grounds of myopia.

Jean-Baptiste became a world-class climber instead. No one knew what his true motives had been for changing his vocation until his death, during an expedition on K2 in 1984, and the discovery of his journal. In it, Jean-Baptiste reveals how he dealt with his loss by embracing “the science of imaginary solutions.”

Apparently, his climbing of K2 was part of a great program to collect “moondew” from the highest peaks on Earth, in order to “invert dawn’s path and travel the moontide beyond the stratosphere.” His expedition partners tell how they saw, the evening before they found Jean-Baptiste’s naked blue cadaver, what they believed to be “the mirage of a naked man dancing in the moonlight, his arms raised towards the starry sky.”

These vials filled with melted snow from different parts of K2 were found in his haversack. The last entry in Jean-Baptiste’s journal reads: “I, Sisyphus, liberated by the dew.”
Rromping between fact and fiction, serial and document, neologism and collection, the misplaced and the disappeared, erudition and invention, the encyclopedia and the internet, Wigrum is the account, catalogue and legacy of Sebastian Wigrum’s (and his successors’) collections of surprising and sundry objects, the stories imagined through the objects’ materiality. Perec, Queneau, Borges, Pynchon, Ponge are some of the literary shadows flitting above its webs. Following Canty’s/Wigrum’s maxim, if I can believe all the stories I am told, so can you, I translated and wrote on the edge of invention.

DANIEL CANTY is an author and director living in Montreal. His work touches on literature, film, new media, theatre, visual arts and design. His first book was Étres artificiels (Liber, 1997), a history of automata in American literature, his directorial debut, a Web adaptation of Alan Lightman’s novel, Einstein’s Dreams (DNA, 1999). Wigrum (La Peuplade, 2011), his first novel, soon to be published by Talonbooks, translated by Avasilichioaei, evolved from a 1998 Web fiction. He also produced La table des matières, a trilogy of collective books of intricate graphical confection, on the topics of the city, food, and sleep. In 2012, he wrote the libretto for Operator, an electroluminescent automata by Mikko Hynninen presented at Lux Helsinki, and Ad Nauseam, a play inspired by Annie Descôteaux’s collages.
« Né natif mon père était un homme sévère, droit [...] ». Puis plus rien.

C’est ce que sa voix prétendait – comédien de naissance – au bout du fil – me rassurant convaincu – que le travail avait débuté qu’il agissait du crayon – tandis que s’écrivait l’histoire alambiquée de sa vie – sans graphie – dans l’appareil du téléphone

Simulant une friction – tournant les pages d’un autre journal – mimant la lecture de son carnet – empressé il m’offrait une promesse semblable à un animal surpris – déguerpissant au fond du chemin.

Irrésolue – rayée dans le coffre de sa bouche – j’entendais pourtant sous le combiné – une autre voix – creuse comme pour dire qu’il ne s’écrirait pas
“Native-born my father was a strict man, upright [...].”
Then nothing.

Because his voice pretended—a born actor—at the end of the line—reassuring me convinced—that work had begun that he acted with a pencil—while the labyrinthine story of his life was written—scriptless—in the handset of the telephone

Imitating friction—turning the pages of another journal—as if reading his notebook—eagerly he offered me a promise resembling an animal surprised—decamping to the end of the road.

Unresolved—scratched in his mouth’s coffer—I still heard in the receiver—another voice—hollow as if to say he wouldn’t write himself
So what if it’s step back to jump better,  
I repeated to myself,  
*my father is a little dinosaur*  
nothing less.

Step by step childhood’s ghostly animal—from the depths of my eyes—  
where my dazzlement invents him

I have never compared him—to a changing animal—leviathan  
of the seas he had in some way—always been

---

**Summer Thaw**  
**Second Whalebone**

Sealed around the neck—embedded as a V in his shirts’ collars—  
concealed beneath the box’s cover—where my father opens up

if of the dinosaur remains only six smooth whalebones—six strips  
tapered thin into almonds

the second is since—bereft of summers
Whale of August—mammal of the shores—before becoming the leviathan of the depths

blurred by water’s reflections

as its memory spreads out—my father here swells—within me

Half-opening his box’s fauna—imagining it behind my glasses I dive in again

from dinosaur to mammoth, from man to orca

at large arches back—his white ruse of whales

THE CAISSON EYE
THIRD WHALEBONE

Flooding the banks nearby—unhinged—colossal my father calls back beneath this dark flap—infiltrated by fear

the frogman—whom at age twelve I aped

this day bored into my eyes—when he told me the valve of a dam had broken
From memory I move on—feet stiff on stilts—from a beach
fifteen steps to the downstream sludge

where I stall sinking into a groove

pitched upright with a startle—the body sealed—like an image
browned

Liquid memories—drowned I remember—lapsed
as if the lake’s belly—brought forth the same enigma

I imagined my father gasping for air

met at sea like a dispute—sunken

And even in apnea—I drifted motionless—grabbing at arm’s
length

his hand pulled me at once from the water—shaking my chest
as if he no longer recognized me

in the open air his face in mine—looked like the translucent swords
of a large mollusk—dried by the sun
Metempsychosis is the Greek term used to describe the transmigration of the soul. And what is the soul, if not the totality of one’s experiences? We know for a fact this totality is difficult to explore, to put into words, and yet it is this passing that François Turcot is interested in. The table in his study, the markings of a house, the whalebone tips formerly used to hold his father’s collars: under Turcot’s careful eye, all these reveal and unearth the partial history of their previous owners. Walking hand in hand with small lives (although never small) swept by historical circumstances (the Second Concession, the Kindertransport) is what makes Turcot’s archaeological work most similar to W.G. Sebald’s, especially the former’s 2009 book, *Cette maison n’est pas la mienne*. The text may appear as descriptive, when it is in fact speculative, marked with zones of hesitation originating from the unsaid of the artifacts at hand.

Born in 1977, FRANÇOIS TURCOT is the author of four books, all with La Peuplade, including the forthcoming *Mon dinosaure* (Spring, 2013) and *Cette maison n’est pas la mienne*, which won the Prix Émile-Nelligan in 2009. His works has also appeared in collaborative writing projects and magazines, such as *Le livre de chevet*, *Riveneuve Continents*, *filling Station*, *Action Yes*, *New American Writing*, and *Nor*. A translation by Nathalie Stephens appeared in *Aufgabe #8*. He includes among his interest the hybridity of W.G. Sebald’s work, poetic narrativity, literary history, and the memory of places. He lives in Montreal and teaches literature.

Originally from Strasbourg, France, FRANÇOIS LUONG currently lives in San Francisco. Poems and translations can be found or are forthcoming in *Verse*, *LIT*, *West Wind Review*, *Dandelion*, *Mantis*, and elsewhere. In 2010, he edited a segment of “Eleven Poets from Québec” for *New American Writing*. He has also translated the work of Esther Tellermann and Rémi Froger.
Il n’y a plus au ciel qu’une flambée de fleurs sombres

… … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … …

Je parle avec des mains qui hantent les orages

… … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … …

Sur le mur de l’absence les mots répètent leurs caresses

… … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … …

Je n’ai quant à moi que des lunes pour te dévêtir

… … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … …

– Parfum de l’endormie cœur cœur au long et froid –

… … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … …

J’abandonne les crimes que je ne commettrai pas

… … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … …

Quelques cordes pour la nuit resserrent les départs

… … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … …

Je tiens contre moi les spectres que tu admires

… … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … …

Deux nuages freinent le miracle d’une montagne

… … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … …

Je vois au fond du mystère la distance à franchir

… … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … …

Les lèvres gardent de parfaites indolences

… … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … …

Je demande à manger aux espoirs de toutes sortes

… … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … … …
Nothing in the sky but a blaze of dark flowers

I speak with hands that haunt the thunder

On the wall of absence words repeat their caresses

I have only moons to undress you

—The smell of her asleep heart heart cold and outstretched—

I let go of the crimes I’m not going to commit

A handful of night ropes pull tight the departures

I hold to myself the spectres you admire

Two clouds curb the miracle that is a mountain

I see at the foot of mysteries the distance to cross

The lips maintain an impeccable idleness

I ask to be fed all manner of hope
An almost inner silence conjures its dead
I scan in passing a sentiment's papers
Melodies fret at the slightly soft earth
I tear into the method of defeat
The last round offers angels as fodder
I cheat on occasion with surrender

Each petal each stem is only a why
I alight on your back to meet with the sea
The bones of my dreams magnify the stars
I watch before me the unknown take its place
A point in space no longer knows where to go
I cannot escape the eternal inherent
The honey of rivers must be an omen

I release a fraction of the world and its dancers

Thoughts take up a few spaces more

I lower my head to cross into mystery

Late the hour that catches the lightning

I go barely veiled to burst this night of stars

A small bench is blessed by brightness

I slip a coin in the slot of the poem

—Oh lovely the face slant in my palm—

I can want to tremble or err again

The image that precedes invents the image

I leave behind me a clean liquid body

Audet, trans. Grubisic
Splinters prevent the body from burning

I trace in the blackness of ice the rest of the poem

Already the heart stirs less well than the light

I spot the next exit behind the image

A hand over the mouth is something still

I invent the night not knowing the finish

Nothing in the sky but coathooks for shipwrecks

I silence the sound that flusters the insects

The light ransacks the blossoms

I live now in the room of ashes

Being is often thrown in with the stones

I am so close to love

Where else to look?
Martine Audet makes photographs as well as poems. In her shots, often of found objects or torn things, Audet catches the blink after the passage, the silver underside of a minor apocalypse. *Je demande pardon à l’espèce qui brille* is poised in that instant: separated by a string of ellipses, each line implies its aftermath. Nightwords and half-lights, the tenuous link between the ungraspable and what we believe can be said—in these poems, the self and the awe, the confessional and the exalted finally catch up to each other. The sequence goes from lost to found, zooming in from the enormity of the horizon, the eternal, the stars, to a just picking her way among sanctities and uncertainties. “Je trie les éclats qui remontent à la surface,” the seeker-narrator comforts us; yes, there are shards and shreds, but they are bright, and they rise up to meet us.

Montreal poet MARTINE AUDET has published a dozen books, including poetry for young adults, an art book with the printmaker François-Xavier Marange and an album for children. She was at the helm of the poetry series “L’appel des mots” at l’Hexagone, and is on the editorial board of the esteemed literary periodical *Estuaire*. Audet’s work appears in journals and anthologies, has been recorded, and is featured regularly at literary festivals and events in Quebec and abroad. Her poetry collections include *Orbites* (Éditions du Noroît, 2000), *Manivelles* (l’Hexagone, 2006), and, most recently, the diptych “Les grands cimetières”—*Le ciel n’est qu’un détour à brûler* and *Je demande pardon à l’espèce qui brille* (l’Hexagone, 2010). She has three times been shortlisted for a Governor General’s Literary Award for poetry and has earned the Prix de poésie Terrasses Saint-Sulpice and the Prix Alain-Grandbois.

KATIA GRUBISIC is a writer, editor and translator. She has been guest faculty in creative writing at Bishop’s University, and has taught in Cegeps and for the Quebec Writers’ Federation. Her work has appeared in various Canadian and international publications, and her collection of poems *What if red ran out* won (Goose Lane Editions, 2008) the Gerald Lampert award for best first book.
Pourquoi il ne pleut pas
(SYNTAXE DE LA TERRE ET DES FINS DU MONDE)

Une vérité nouvelle ne triomphe pas en convainquant ses adversaires afin qu’ils entrevoient la lumière, mais parce que ses adversaires meurent un jour et qu’une nouvelle génération, familiarisée avec la nouveauté, prend leur place.

— Max Planck

Il existe une science de la douleur
dis-tu au moment où j’allume les livres
quelque chose de sombre et la glace
de tous les concepts un seul amour
enroulé vers toi un dernier ventre
pour les mots interdits ne dors pas
j’ai besoin que tu mentes encore

fétide éternité il pleut des morts
à crever les yeux mon amour
ce dieu-là s’évapore chaque fois que
tu parles les oiseaux de proie
s’arrachent les cendres et l’image
lentement jaunit dans les miroirs
dans les sables mouvants la lumière
disperse les os ce qu’il reste de sang
lentement les rafales s’arrêtent ecchymose
arc-en-ciel il faut être bien sombre
à présent pour ne pas le voir
A new scientific truth does not triumph by convincing its opponents and making them see the light, but rather because its opponents eventually die, and a new generation grows up that is familiar with it.

— Max Planck

There exists a science of pain
you say as I set the books on fire
something dark and something ice
all concepts end in a single love
rolled your way a final womb
of forbidden speech don’t sleep
I need you to lie one more time

fetid forever it’s raining the dead
until it’s way too clear my love
the god goes up in smoke whenever
you say the birds of prey
tear out the ashes, the image
slowly going yellow in the mirror
in the quicksand the light
divides up the bones the remains of blood
slowly the gusts die down rainbow
bruise it must be really dark
if we can’t see it
dark I say so that I don’t seem
to seamlessly live what I’ve seen
ripping off the skin with nothing
scattering cadavers and calculations
the length of a city as long as winter
quadrilateral human of sulfur
and hunger light in the lungs
and stones fill the mouth
we must suffer fast my love
before they find us

at the end of the alley she breathes again
sleep a black hole with its mouth agape
a gnat of chimerical love she loves
very long novels and an angel that smiles
from the wall of a cathedral a sword
in her eye the end of the world under her dress
a gust of wind while on her skin nothing moves
the word that sews the lips of the age
she waits among the black birds
for the towers to collapse
afghan desert the light plays the horizon
retreats the war I don’t know it all I know
there will be more there are the dark
mornings the tiny bombings at the heart
of the opening day a mass grave
in the sheets and there too the cold blisters
and there a caring the warm cheeks
of a childhood all torn up but
I’ve never seen death in a pit
afghan desert the plight they die

and all that just to stop
writing the eyes full of sand and the hands
planted in silt we must watch
a suffering mother there planted
between two trees you know
I no longer speak for the dead
but under the weight of a monster unaltered

looking down at his leg
the child counts the scrapes
learning the language of wounds
from the labyrinth’s scars
which make all waters gather
in a word a door a nothing
serious he’ll live almost forever
what a love of walking
he’s read every book she
fears not a word I have
their voices for cutting
through the crowds we must
live through just look how
I go when I can’t even dance

but of course i hear you all
the others they are you
the earthquakes and music are
you the lilacs and night bird
fully facing the day when I aged
only you could gather
the poison from my temples
dawn and your cry alone
redrafting my face from
the rare words I’ve learned
Kim Doré's dense, elliptical poetry operates through strong contrasts, playing an ominous air of foreboding off against a vigorous sense of life and its force of determination. Echoes of contemporary events are interleaved with archetypical characters and scenes reminiscent of a Beckett play in their grand expanses of space and time. And yet her lines themselves are compressed, containing a pent-up energy that is released to powerful effect in her frequent use of enjambment. But it's often an ambiguous enjambment, creating a tension through the sense that sense itself is precariously teetering on the edge, only to be rescued at the crucial moment with a return to the left margin and the launch of the next line. Making the most of the subtlest intersections of sound, Doré underscores the immanent materiality of a language that insists upon presence, even when its subject matter is timeless.

KIM DORÉ is the author of four books of poetry, La dérive des méduses (1999), Le rayonnement des corps noirs (2004), Maniérisme le diable (2008), and In vivo (2012), all of which were published by Poètes de brousse, a small press that she co-directs with Jean-François Poupart. The press features young Quebecois poets dedicated to a formal interrogation of the basis of contemporary poetry. Her work has garnered considerable recognition; in 2002 and 2003, she was awarded, respectively, the 2nd and 1st place Prix-littéraires Radio-Canada, and Le rayonnement des corps noirs won the Prix Émile-Nelligan and was a finalist for the Prix Estuaire des Terrasses Saint-Sulpice. The mother of three, she earned a masters degree from the Université de Québec à Montréal, where she focused on the relationship between literature and science.

COLE SWENSEN is the author of 14 collections of poetry, most recently Gravesend (University of California Press, 2012), and the translator of 15 volumes of poetry from French, as well as much art criticism. She's the founding editor of La Presse and teaches at Brown University.
1
Tu me fais tout déconstruire, je suis l’inhabité,
c’est politique comme l’effondrement
avec l’insupportable de mes anges, petits pourris,
révulsés, répugnés par mes langues,
communions premières et chaotiques avec la mort.
Je suis une âme, trop de mots,
aux saintes ailes de fer-blanc, tout autour;
c’est le malstrom de ma tête,
taches noires et cœur panique.

2
Un être, un tireur, un autre fou armé par homme triste.
Je n’existe que dans la caresse trouée.
Les désirs répandus dans les lits,
ous, anges plastifiés, couchés dans nos pauvres réels,
longs anges dépourvus de tout, longs draps par-dessus
pour nous couvrir le paradis perdu.
FROM  What Does It Matter Now

Jean-Marc Desgent

Translated by Jen Hutton

1
You make me deconstruct it all, I’m the uninhabited,
it’s political like collapsing
with the intolerable of my angels, small swine,
revolted, repelled by my tongues,
primal and chaotic communions with death.
I am a soul, too many words,
on saintly tinplated wings, all around;
it’s the maelstrom of my head,
black marks and panicked heart.

2
A being, a gunman, another madman armed by his sadness.
I only exist in the pierced caress.
Desires scattered in beds,
we, plasticized angels, prone in our poor realities,
long angels deprived of all, long sheets over us
to cover up the lost paradise.
3
You, burdened, sometimes, me,
unburdened, tossing off my second skin,
I mark the date of our deaths,
I see the disputed life, black in the ground,
night’s armor, black.
You, the grave, me, without history,
they won’t put a sack over my ugliness.
You, a wall, me, at it, and when they shoot,
it makes my rest well-deserved.

4
Caresses with no strings,
forests of tall trees like darknesses,
and trifling words to save us from the world.
Also the ephemeral fires,
those we light in our minds when there’s nothing left to lose
not the stars not the inner oriflammes.

5
There’s my storm over childhood, it’s warped, dislocated.
There’s my mouthful of burning powder,
there is, there they are, having death, being death
and my hesitant tongues, interned in the north,
pushed into the heart of illness.
All these bodies make me the open hole,
you, me, missing to the world.
We can’t at once be our mother, a shot gun
and so many cartridges still smoking on the ground.
6
We must take up the world’s disorders at zero,
the beatitudes of the last breath,
those who no longer have names.
A soul we hold, yet it is quickly broken scattered,
a soul we raise, a kind of black hope
that goes from father to mother of small nothings,
and when a thirst for kissing touches the indulgent life,
we call it empty marriages with the flesh,
marriges of the beauty of the disappeared.

7
Agony was on the move.
I burned the stink into the sacred linens.
Our beauties were solitary.
We knelt down in our beings as frightened deer.
My disaster remained on the cross of the poor.
To relieve my appendage or need,
I lifted without stopping the soldiers’ crinolines.

8
Reality kisses me and opens my gullet,
I breathe at last the monster of myself.
I no longer inhabit anything, this great hole or this unreal body
with the generosity of bones, beauty of black angels;
a bag of ashes protects me from the dream.
All my dead are idols,
they have my head between their teeth.
9
You, with a great stride in my night sky,
me, with a package under my arm
that I carry to the other side of the world.
You, me, in flames, in turns, descending, all right,
you, in your noisy fuselage,
believe in thirst, in the voice, in the forces of good,
me, don’t even bother, forget my dangerous skin:
we must imagine my body in the great blaze.
I am not the only one naked, with hell.

10
The angels, in each of our exhaustions,
our fragile musculatures of goodness:
I am reduced to these celestial objects
that can no longer answer to themselves.
We see their fluids spilled over the glaciers.

11
It must be the image of what was cut from the tongue,
it must be the tongue cut out.
To each their Kristallnacht!
I am a laughing earth already dead.
I offer several hearts, but quickly become the obscure,
an interiorized body and otherwise.
I am eternity, you think, and that’s good,
without the son, the meager spirit or the father-god of the guts.
I am never the story, but the story’s risk.
Qu’importe maintenant is the last of a four-book cycle Desgent calls “le cycle des désastres,” or “the cycle of disasters.” It’s a thematic arc that pulls from numerous sources: everyday news, select readings, shared and personal histories. No distinctions are made between events; time itself collapses. The firmament is torn up, black angels descend, and a shifting body turns inside out and to the heavens. I read these poems for the first time on a solo camping trip in California’s Death Valley, which for me was a fitting backdrop for Desgent’s bleak laments—an ur-landscape that could also easily be a vision of the end. His images of catastrophe underscored the desert’s terrifying vacuum: “Tu me fais tout déconstruire, je suis l’inhabitée.” But there, it was evident that Desgent’s panoply of horrors are beginnings as much as endings, making and remaking the world.

Born in 1951 in Montreal, JEAN-MARC DESGENT is recognized as one of Quebec’s eminent poets and critics. Since 1974, he has written close to twenty books of poetry, essays, and criticism, and has received numerous prizes and recognitions for his work. He is a two-time recipient of Le Grand Prix du Festival International de Poésie de Trois-Rivières—first for his 1994 collection of poems, Ce que je suis devant personne, and for his 2005 book, Vingtièmes siècles, which was also awarded the Governor General’s Award, Le Prix Estuaire des Terrasses Saint-Sulpice, and was translated by Daniel Sloate and published as Twentieth Centuries in 2008. His most recent book is Qu’importe maintenant (Poètes de brousse, 2012). More information can be found at www.jeanmarcdesgent.com.

JEN HUTTON is an artist and writer. Originally from Toronto, she is currently based in Los Angeles where she is completing her MFA at the California Institute of the Arts.
We wish to thank all the writers for their passionate work, Nicole Brossard, Philippe Charron and Steve Savage for giving us unpublished poems, the estate of Geneviève Desrosiers, and the following Quebec presses for generously letting us publish translations, as well as selections of work that they have published.

Les Herbes rouges
L’Hexagone
L’Oie de Cravan
La Peuplade
Poètes de brousse
Le Quartanier

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Poet, translator and editor, OA NA A VASI LICHIOAEI’s work traverses public space, textual architecture, multilingualism, sound and collaborative performance. Recent editing projects include “The Mapping Issue” (co-edited with Kathleen Brown for Dandelion Magazine, Calgary, 2011) and a series of commentaries on Canadian experimental poetry for Jacket2 (2011). She has translated from the work of Quebecois writers, including Geneviève Desrosiers, Jean-Marc Desgent, Steve Savage, Louise Cotnoir (The Islands, Wolsak & Wynn, 2011) and Daniel Canty (Wigrum, Talonbooks, forthcoming fall 2013), as well as from the Romanian of Paul Celan and Nichita Stănescu (Occupational Sickness, BuscheckBooks, 2006). She has also played in the bounds of translation and creation in a poetic collaboration with Erin Moure (Expeditions of a Chimæra, BookThug, 2009). Her most recent poetic book project is We, Beasts (Wolsak & Wynn, 2012) and her audio work can be found on PennSound.
The Dog

HR Hegnauer

How the leashed did not say, “Hold me
around the throat so that I cannot lick my own breathing.”
How the leash took the blame from the leasher
and held that, too, before seeing that

the bone behind the black tendoned engine is chewless
and turns wedded hands to metal stones
at the axis of probing junctions,

and after that, and seeing that:
the belly’s blown out in the wake of the dust
past the leash still strapped to the barrel of the lungs.

How the leashed wanted to bark
naked as the dog is
with no more sounding
like “this second could be my

first” to not want
the nakedness of tendoned engines
with the hood ripped off and strewn
split down on the meadowed highway

mid-south, from destinations unknown
to sinewed reverse
and so, we’re humming what these birds won't speak.
El País de Tablas

Raúl Zurita

PRISIÓN ESTADIO CHILE

No era ése nuestro país, gritaban
nuestras sombras pasando entre
las aguas abiertas del Pacífico

Son las viejas prisiones chilenas nos gritábamos mirando
el país de tablas surgir entre los espumeantes paredones
del Pacífico largo entero clavado cortándonos el paso

Y el mar dejó de ser el mar y el cielo dejó de ser el cielo

Y las cumbres eran las puntas de las clavadas estacas

Y las llanuras soplaban colándose entre los listones y
el viento no era el viento ni el aire el aire

Donde de todo lo que fue ahora eran sólo entarugados
paisajes clavados unos con otros como aserruchadas
montañas mostrando arriba las empalizadas del cielo

Y nuestras mejillas parecían un desmoronado cielo

Así se nos derrumbó el horizonte y los paisajes eran
sólo escombros entre esos tabiques

Donde hasta el rajado océano gritaba mirando los
desmoronados escombros de esas vistas

Cuando entramos por el corredor de las abiertas aguas y
arrastrándonos vimos los cuarteles de tablas atravesados
entre los dos paredones del Pacífico y al fondo las gradas
rotas del estadio Chile blanqueándose bajo la nieve como
una gigantesca cordillera de palo aprisionando el horizonte
The Country of Planks

Raúl Zurita

Translated by Daniel Borzutzky

CHILE STADIUM PRISON

That one was not our country, our shadows were screaming as they passed through the open waters of the Pacific

They are the old chilean prisons we would scream watching the country of planks rise between the foamy cliffs of the Pacific long completely riveted cutting off our passage

And the sea stopped being the sea and the sky stopped being the sky

And the peaks were the points of the riveted stakes

And the prairies blew slipping in between the strips of wood and the wind was not the wind nor the air the air

Where all that had been now there were only wood-bolted landscapes riveted one to the other like sawed up mountains revealing above the palisades of the sky

And our cheeks looked like a crumbling sky

That's how our horizon collapsed and the landscapes were only rubble between those partitions

To where the splitting ocean was screaming watching the crumbling rubble of those scenes

When we came in through the corridor of the open waters and dragging ourselves we saw the barracks made of crossed planks stuck between the two cliffs of the Pacific and at the end the broken stands of Chile stadium whitening under the snow like a giant cordillera of sticks imprisoning the horizon
Arrojados como sacos unos encima de otros, nos íbamos pidiendo perdón y el dolor de nuestros propios tacos clavándosenos recordaba que había sido un sueño el otro mundo. Las sacudidas del camión levantaban oleadas de gritos y sin embargo, con los brazos en la nuca, yo quería todavía saber a quién cortaba, qué cuerpo me había quedado debajo cómo se llamaba el que gemía encima de mí... de quién era el amor que se iba

Entonces recortándose igual que un palafito cortando el paso del mar surgió ante la vista el maderámen de Chile

Como un largo palerío que se iba levantando desde las costas hasta las enmaderadas cordilleras blancas de nieve cimbreándose

Entre los farellones del mar remarcado allá donde los andamios del país que fue nuestro se elevaban hasta los tablones de los Andes machihembrados bajo la nieve Así se vio todo y la larga barraca de Chile crujía barrida por las espumeantes marejadas llena de nudos como un derruido estadio de tablas doblándose entre las olas
PLAYA ANCHA STADIUM PRISON

-THE LUMBER OF CHILE-

Dumped like sacs one atop the other we were asking for forgiveness and the pain of our heels nailing into us was a reminder that the other world had been a dream. The lurching of the truck sparked waves of cries yet nevertheless with my arms on my neck I still wanted to know who I was cutting, what body I was under, what was the name of the one groaning on top of me...whose was the love that was leaving

Then just like the outlines of a stilt house cutting the flow of the sea the lumber of Chile appeared in the scene

Like a long pile of sticks rising from the coasts up to the wooded mountains white with snow swaying

Between the crests of the sea marked there where the scaffolding of the country that was ours ascended up to the thick planks of the Andes mortised beneath the snow There we saw everything and the long barracks of Chile crackled swept up by the foamy sea swell filled with knots like a ruined stadium of planks folding between the waves
PRISIÓN VILLA GRIMALDI

-BARRACAS-

Nadie es la patria, parecían
gritar las ciegas tablas
en la patria muerta del mar

Y así iban emergiendo las cárceles chilenas las nevadas
cumbres de los Andes eran solo unas tablas clavadas en
esas barracas

En medio del abismo del océano como si quisieran con
sus trizaduras recordarnos el infinito dolor de los campos
los cuarteles los infinitos galpones donde nos mataron

Cuando el Pacífico se abrió y cargándonos unos a otros
vimos las estacas de una cordillera y después un cielo
muerto hundiéndose en el tajo del mar hasta ser el
silencio final que cubre nuestros despojos todavía
clavados todavía rotos con los ojos todavía abiertos
mirando desde esas barracas la mirada muerta del océano
VILLA GRIMALDI PRISON

-BARRACKS-

No one is the homeland, was the
apparent scream of the blind planks
in the dead homeland of the sea

This is how the chilean prisons were emerging the snowy
peaks of the Andes were nothing but planks nailed to those barracks

In the middle of the ocean's abyss as if they had wanted with
their shredders to remind us of the infinite pain of the camps
the quarters the infinite sheds where they killed us

When the Pacific opened up and we carried one another we saw
the stakes of a cordillera and then a dead sky sinking into the slit
of the sea until it became the final silence that covers our remains
still nailed down still broken our eyes still open looking out
from those barracks the dead gaze of the ocean
PRISIÓN TRES ÁLAMOS

-EL PALERÍO MUERTO-

Y el espejismo caía sobre Chile
como los grandes arenales
muertos tras el telón del desierto

Más cerca bordeando el palerío se vio el desierto de Atacama sus llanuras flameaban como un telón entre esas estacas

Cubriendo de arena las inacabables barracas los helados campamentos las largas prisiones de tablas del astillado horizonte

Más cerca todavía cubriendo de arena las estacas de los Andes las entarugadas playas los tabiques de un país de tablas que se iba doblando bajo esos peladeros Y todo era sólo un sueño sólo unos trapos secándose en la aridez del desierto sólo una patria flameando en el palerío como un telón que sólo deja ver atrás los arenales
TRES ÁLAMOS PRISON

- THE DEAD PILE OF STICKS -

And the mirage was falling over Chile
like the great sands
death behind the curtain of the desert

Closer bordering the pile of sticks appeared the Atacama desert
its prairies blazed like a curtain between those stakes

Covering the endless barracks with sand the frozen camps the long prisons of planks from the splintered horizon

Even closer still covering the stakes of the Andes with sand the beaches bolted with wood the partitions of a country of planks folding beneath those wastelands And everything was just a dream just some rags drying in the aridity of the desert just a homeland blazing in the pile of sticks like a curtain through which one can only see the sands

Zurita, trans. Borzutzky
Three Poems

Emily Abendroth

EXCLOSURE [J22[

For a great many well-positioned and amply-propertied people on the planet, their own personal sense of risk tended to rise in near perfect inverse proportion to the actual threats that were posed around them. In other words, it was primarily those persons who had only rarely or never been the subject of physical trespass and attack that nevertheless tended to fear it all the more vehemently. Constantly proving themselves far and away the most willing to support the harshest injunctions or carceral punishments in the name of maintaining their own broadly jones’d for lack of exposure.

Whereas others, having been exposed, and in some cases, ceaselessly exposed, to nearly every form of available violence, were thus compelled by this experience to acknowledge that any notion of “individual” protection from violation, as divorced from a concept of collective health, was not only impossible, but a straight-up debacle. And further still, that the costs of attempting to build such personal fortresses of reprieve merely succeeded in enacting on other bodies another form of destructive aggression that was itself rarely named but whose painful range of maiming pressures were all too acutely felt, were welt-inducing even.

Like a permanent belt caught up in the act of melting between gestures of constriction and beating.
These hardly fleeting distortions, both tedious and bleeding in nature
were the somewhat unavoidable outcome of determinant dictums which reinforced
the security of one door via the silent permission to viciously bash in another.

A motherlode of crudely isolated calculations

A defensive geometrics made thickly dense via the tricks of untraceable decimals
via their fraught wrestling onto paper in inexcusably tapered or abstract forms.

And yet warm and worming beneath this surface of soft fluorescents
bent in at the very edges of its tightly ledgered sentences and columns
stood a populated scene of complex and teeming sentient bodies

scented bodies  oscillating bodies  erasing bodies  migrating bodies  embracing bodies

each boring in turn new holes in the old numbers
mumbling, by way of dissent:

“In the event that the place of abode is the body itself
how do we migrate?
how do we swarm?”
“Bodies,” Lucretius says, “are partly first-beginnings of things, [and] partly those which are formed of a union of first-beginnings.”

With noticeable gingerness, Lucretius laments the thoughtless proliferation of those theories which account for “the permanence of the properties of bodies” but not for the vibrations of their molecules and even less for the ululations or flourishes or fishtailing of their hale and awkward movements of their exuberance—in time and space alike.

The true crime, Lucretius signs, lies in our unstymied disinterest toward each and every kind of these secondary unions, in the fine tunings of mobile and intertwining infrastructures, in the very culture of pulsing, in the ulcerous roundabouts of cellular tucks and bends, in all manner of plucky extensions.

Must one now mention that his is an ancient accusation against which we still cannot well defend ourselves.
In the words of Helio Luz, former Chief of Police of Rio de Janeiro:

“It’s a political police. This is an unfair society. The police are here to protect this unfair society [and] to control the underprivileged.

Does this society want a police without corruption—one that will act equally in the favelas and other neighborhoods?”

It is the former police chief’s chief finding that we do not.

It is the former police chief’s chief beef that anti-suicide smocks and locking briefs are generally a more accurate representation of the upper limits of our society’s investment in the ambient lives of marginalized bodies.

Such elaborately sized fabrics of constraint nonetheless do still gyrate providing an overriding testimony to the ongoing indifference displayed toward anything but the first-beginnings of things, toward anything but the stingiest regard for appendages or the barest definitions of animacy.

This is the obstinacy of statecraft according to which an individual won’t be allowed to die, but then again won’t be allowed to survive either.
One thing the small group spoke about extensively together was something they called “challenging the mechanics of solids.”

Each day, they devoted considerable energies to producing the mucous needed to adhere. How, they would query themselves, to find a viable experience of the world divorced from obedience to it—a subtidal cohesion of generous and vulnerable forces which might provide a course that one could swim in—or forage among.

They were relatively young to the globe in the scope of history as it stood and they were working hard not to assume that what is or was unrepresented actually is or was unrepresentable.

In fact, it was often the only things they could see for miles around. It was their town, their city, their lives, unbridled.

And while the sites of what they tried weren’t participating within the verifiable economy per se, it nonetheless allayed certain prior fears of theirs to be rearing up these fresh parts of themselves for the mutual stake and the re-taking.

Is there an aisle of exile, they asked, that if plumbed deeply enough might run to a kind of gorgeous outfiercing...
In the full height of darkness—echolocation
At the very foot of the monument—a stone-cleaving bindweed

Roaming below the sheltered ripple of delta
a young dimpled woman who sits fit-to-burst in her submersible

How ably—if invisibly—surrounded she is, not by rocks
but by microscopic crustose and larval forms

On this single forlorn island and elsewhere, now and again,
the thin pinwork of contact continues
both conscious and by bone

For just one moment,
a lone figure is collected and thus begins collecting.

O brother, does she ever.

O mother, sever, sever,
sever.

NOTES

1 Lucretius, De Rerum Natura
2 From an interview with Helio Luz in the documentary News From a Personal War, 2004 (a DVD release that accompanies the film City of God, directed by Fernando Meirelles, 2004).
NOTES FROM Pre (excerpts)

Susan Gevirtz

The sea as immovable as dry land

—Karystiani

who are you
bright comet

issuing from a craven
planet

bitten off from stale bread
Set out

why

set out again
why

set out throughout
a whole life

bound to the rim
of the wheel of going
where are you who

how hail there to there
Fatata forwardred tired moon phos caught

so
accomplishes in reverse all things and at arm’s length
Who are you where requirement
force of will subject to will
leave me in local relapse
there is no pure language only
rules and their many exceptions
on the exceptions the going

way of why

build me a rhyme so
I can remember how  [dismember and reassemble]
we got here and climb it for
the retrace of way back     pitch it
in the cradle of traceless
origin (reverse)
in ears leavened with stand-ins
Mercy for the
troubled one and the
one in trouble
the ill one and the
one made ill by the
ill one

ure recovery from our habits

heofonum of Pontic pioneers
trove heuones habits’ trinkets
shooting star jasmine stencil
while the child wakes
bereft with desertion in her own
unknown language
misheard beforehand

Okay wandred we’ll talk about it later

Come

now

my tiredress

shepherd as if jobless
lunatic Baedeker

who were you bright

scissoring hot air from air

as if climatic wish exists

and the hostelry
called and said

what more ye spinnith
to wend no nought

double negatives indwell in modern Greek and old English

juggler & joculatorespite
from the doubled deaf present
FROM Sleeping with Phosphorus

Emily Carlson

The conflict began when, the conflict began when the tendency to discard what doesn’t fit leads to narrative, Ahmed looked me in the eye before we drove so, to speak as one would, one-third children, one million, refugee told me EVERYTHING’S OKAY doesn’t mean it didn’t happen by its name.

It’s not the work of a prophet to rate a person on a scale of one to ten by her ability to call death death what’s the difference for example between I’m thinking about her and I remember her I’ll tell you Ahmed said but it’s a long story meaning’s going to change the way this room looks.
An afternoon on the beach shelling in surround sound
a gasp replaced Ahmed’s name the way a body becomes a
number were visited by numbers as we ran across the sand
helicopter blades shouting cha-ma ma-ma I glimpsed one of
the pilot’s faces as he let go 15,000 tons of oil into the sea what
happens next I asked Ahmed in the dark and orange light of
phosphorus nothing a memory yet fishermen preparing to
scoop oil from the sea with their hands plot he said is a plan
made in secret

Illustrations of flower after flower why wait for me unsure
if I’ll return tv tuned to evacuation information as the bombed
station went static the newscaster imagine what there is to
say with the sound off
Curfews burned to the ground attempts to read sentences for blank spaces between words to cross the border where meaning overlaps they shot Ahmed’s friend in the leg inshallah the wound will heal the wound

Your grandmother has vertigo my mother told me during a bombing I tried to hang up running with Ahmed’s phone all all all all night especially unable to cry nothing to be afraid of in a chorus refuse to be ash
Marines lifted our lighter colors over rings of razor, wire surrounding us cattle-like closer to the sea. Figurative language walked upright into disasters sad hamburger mouths commanded Form a Line every several minutes why we were, shifted back and forth with a bullhorn call it chaos strategy call it idle hands we sat on, our bags children unsettled scorched any ideas what this is called

Don’t cry it’ll be alright Ahmed had said, from shore. I believed that rhetoric I’d been brave broke, parts off into oblivion perspective slick on the ship’s deck where I adjusted binoculars crying my eyes out a sign of surrender Ahmed said, if I’d ever see you again deep into subatomic nuclear science the word witness no longer valid I wave from where he stands, an electron is first of all your concept of an electron
the best days are the ones i know
that i’ve shot my ‘son art et son temps’
and i’m in a farmhouse on 11/30/1994
with it cut pulsed to my hearts beat
maybe this time
i would win

a vostok capsule
hard vacuum
raw ice about face

i will cauldron you up

shout and scream
kill the king
rail at all his servants

ain’t going to make it with
know it’s gonna be
clips

i don’t know what to say here
that middle to last rung
helicopter ladder all gargoyle

where the drain plugs )(
you want to be free

a diamond blunted

and how will i ever

apologize for my unwieldy heart

it’s coked up damage
all posture and no proof
a glutton streamed to fold

i am so sorry for this life on earth

wanted to make it better       had desire → taking up space
                                an absicent role play
i love you
like rat poison

i am magpie bones

dust
sophistication
lived in the
dreadnought

my death is a reasonable expectation

→ expect it

like the barracks play with targets & tears

DeBoer
the idea
that source
completes me

a lark
straight shot
my heart is a hole

a hole

nitroglycerin

red ore

fuck you
→
game
is change

you are change
i feel it here
know a stand
when i see it
try removal
like erase it
like steal it from myself
give it to someone else
cause it's too much
not the sense
i know it could be
to try so hard to believe
to don't know who it will be this
rip
ripping at my chest with dark nails
scar the scars until a void shakes
cause i know how to do that
then all apologies and lay in bed
smoking pot or drinking beer
just to forget that
there is
no way
it will ever come around and save me
or saves
is not a repository
a ditch swollen
with earth only poison left

i'm so scared
to open up
cause i don't got it in me
anymore
or if i did it's buried
with years of break beats
and drunken sex acts
then i meet you
to hold you at night
and feel warmth for being a creator
of love with an equal sign
and whole heart
starts to try and trickle out
and i say i love you and i love you
to know your whole life
give it here tie i
let me show you everything i have for you
take every risk i can ever take to protect and show love

i don’t know what to do once its out
dillinger black painted soap guns
just indiana grains of roots
all shelled up in consumption
and i consume myself

clips of grass smells
and then you are gone
and i don’t know where you’ve gone
who you have been and i’m gone now
feeling tears all hot on my cheeks
rebuilding again
trying to know how to make
stronger padlocks
recreate the walls of the generations
to keep out
keep out
cause if i let
just another
one in that's it
curtains

and the world changed in the spaceship
the six cities of the red night exist now

unarmed
psychic
combat

riots
to waghdas
[some problems with sequential simulation of self]

Daniel Rounds

On my side I drank I swallowed your book, in my mouth it had the sweetness of honey, but right afterwards my entrails were bitter because I was jealous of my own mouth. It swallows everything and keeps nothing . . .

—Helene Cixous

let’s trade gods. you can

put yours in my mouth
and
I can put mine in yours
until
mine catches on the latch of yours and yours

disappears inside of mine.
taxonomy of the mouth.

redemption of the hands.

redemption of the legs.

or the ears. of the eyes. of

the legs of the mouth. they

are doing something with their

fingers. with their hands

and mouths and fingers they are

rummaging around for the

symptoms of their lives.

they seem to want to. they seem
to need to. to need to want to.
to want to find a way forward

in through the distance.
some red square
sweats inside
the shape of you: it
drips inside the want
of you wearing
another man’s mouth.

wearing his fingers
and his mouth.

***
****

utility.

transubstantiation.

transactions and

phantom liberty.

I am upside-down

inside you. you are

inside-out beneath me.

beneath the quantity of hands

you’ve attached to

my reason to be.
* * * * *

the book of no book.

the first derivative. the

second derivative. his

legs penetrating the

wide open structure. her

mouth in the loose space of

immediacy. they flirt with

parametric form and are

nevertheless consecrated.

to be assembled. to be fixed in

automated distance. like

form without content.
the wall. god's body.

your rhombus and the

shape of god's body

traced onto your rhombus.

it feels like something you

can feel but don't see. it

feels like the side of your head.

floating beyond.
the hand pulls the hand forward.  
the mouth swallows the mouth. the hand pulls the hand forward. then the mouth eats its own face.
—swervswerve!
but not as much as atoms.
The main thing we have in common is “restlessness.”

Things do hold together, and
so does meaning
more or less.

glyphs  morse  pebbles  visionary  long  happenstance

sing-song  interlock  other  obdurate  something  memory

really  but also  diagnosis  ungainliness  what  never

barely  shards  thank you  haunted  between  and/or

trace  deeper  equally  where  of  midst

leaf  syntax  constitute  unpick  falsifies  bumpy

Signs under impingement

great lists+ of seasons’ days  +grids
swirling,  davening
far beyond vagaries
and Open 24 Hours.+  +intermittently.

The main word we have in common is “hap.”

There is a clacking sound,
a weedy ditch, a pre-war map.
Words are blacked out,
or
they evoke inarticulate things
or
they stick in your gut, unsayable.
Something’s coming loose. There is scattering and the snap out of blurriness.

There is brightness, too, and no genre enough for it, even for its sudden shifting even for its affect. + impact.

And there are words that become tremendous mantras, doing fieldwork in ordinary language, inventing what one found needed to be said, and they reverberate+ for a long, long time. + pontificate

Though words establish no exact center, with some words inside intangible centers, so words declare the variable as such, + permanent, open what+ can never be scryed dependably. + omens that

This also gives rise to resonance. + reciprocity.

Low ostinato enfolded in itself gets excited+ by+ its own vibratos of implication. + extruded + from Structurally “errata.” Generically “mixed.” Enjoyably the “noise” of “clumps.” Seriously “negation.”

Plus whole lives of “ands” inside the work+ await openings within the out-flung surge of cosmic time.

Another word we have in common is “sideral.”

So that the whole universe and every sociable part of it pulses semi-translatable messages maybe in words, maybe words being part of that, one imagines tintinnabulations but hears only the rumble of materials where+ given everything equals Being+ Begin even what seems to not.
The unknown in exfoliation. + federation.

It is changing as it speaks. + we speak. It is not totally our language but it is speaking word to word + we are correlating overlaps of syntaxes.

Words matter; things are discussable. We cannot not think so.

Alternative is unthinkable.

Or worse still—thinkable it is. Suppose words do not matter. Then would we stop making them? And as best we can? No. The motivation? A wager so precise it makes Pascal’s look petty.

Let it all in, fissure, fracture, and broken shard, let the mobile in. Leap into this excess ripe and snide, the compost thick with overlays of conjunction, and leap (is it the same leap? consider the question later) into one or another void.

How? I’m glad you asked.

Like fairy tales, the poem demands the collection of tasks.

Unlike them, you cannot count on three’s.

Gather and respect the endless ordinal rips.

And appreciate the keening micro-tones in empathy with dark news read in the darkness.
All of the above gives rise to vertigo,
and the poem is energized+ enlarged
by that.

Might even postulate other intelligences+ inferences
(half-baked, like us) capable
of belated reconstructions,+ reconsiderations,
might postulate occurrences parallel to this
from modes+ of similarly intent moans
witness.

Not epigrams with a twist
of rhyme, nor lyric's
soaring+ soundings. Finally solemn

portage creased thus what there fragments
did evident long at least I but
multiple O stubborn besides existed can't
as if & out joists whatever Sign

rubble project how? telling exigent tangle
boundaries shatters it anything turned.

And at 4:32 exactly
the wind that's blowing fiercely
hits such down swoops as a short-eared owl
is like a night train with that longtime faraway hoo—.
Nothing is stranger than life. Except, maybe, languages.
With words, the world
is more than is the case.
How could it not
be just that way.
Two Poems

Lørpsliç Bierkegårt

a very young black hole

my parents were dead
stars
orbiting on their schedules—
schedules made of time, time
is invisible [they orbited on precise restrictive
air

the smells
had a sequence too—perspiration
a seed of cumin

and the things
they touched
were measured [[textural
profundity] for instance measled
figs

their taste was the same
over and over
like the reincarnated
egg that fertilized itself
and returned again and again
as itself

over incoherent
time they took on
deformation—like chiseled
organs playing in the wayback
on top of the bag full of sleep,
the sodden
bag full of hours

dehormation has
form
including hugeness, 
distention—
    deformation has form including diminution—

speech stuck in the ransacked 
vault, heart ashen
    in the crematorium

in death they grew to super-
massivity. I learned
they have infinite temperature,
generic relativity

stars fought for the epitaph job: the kinglet
wrote: region of space
    from which nothing can escape
the thigh of the bear: compact collapse

preceding the dog licked the vote:

despite its invisible interior, the presence
arms

one arm made a pact
with the other arm
knifing its list into
the part that hugged the side

it picked the arm
from dirt and death worms
and scratched it back to life
[but the tattooed
face shut its eyes]

it crossed its wrists
it hoped to blind
it stuck an IV
in its bloodway

when it was a child arm
it made a promise
to the other arm
it made the other arm
make a promise

the other arm swung
like an empty swing
in February
[it stuck to the pole
until spring]
[[but spring never arrived]]

there was a heart
with an arrow
through its heart:

the cursive name
bled to the sides
it faded to a slab
of seasonless metal
with no metallic side
the special wrinkles
stretched the name
into another name

the older other arm
didn’t believe in promises—
a twin whose twin
had died
FROM *Wear You to the Ball*

*Steve Dickison*

18.

aether weighed nothing so recorded in paper
moon so sharp it’s hard to pick up JUPITER
riding above at east eleven o’clock
night one, the next almost level to moon’s waist
who bought and paid for this illustrated sky
since, so it gets recorded, we are in the west
west approximately to queen moon when her forehead
breaks the line hills make against what’s behind them
these breaking-glass-percussion estuaried cities
gray air pressing in between the blue and us
tonight the planet’s parallel farther off
night four “the clouds have that lit-from-behind look”
your words for the it in the eye been entered
nothing will be as before rendered NADA SERÁ
COMO ANTÉS I forget who put that in my ear
“her personality made me want her” another
song about the moon out of the repertory
human and unhuman it numbers ten-thousand
another asks her “are we not the sons of slaves”
that prayer’s practitioner Junior Delgado
constantly transforms against all constancy”

“that which
itself and
over
“really I would hate for my skin to be on fire”
or to eat a piece of jacked-on-steroids fruit
you might be laughing in between the teardrops
if you had to imitate the voices I have to
who forgets to remember the edible variant
teardrops the eye excretes to serve as nutriment
who hasn’t experienced that instant message
landing on their senses “as the planets
shedding light on the surface of our skin”
to call back to one of the voices secured
against damages human and act of g-d
and me turning my head from time to time
attentive to the receding sounds of what
anamnesis unforgets and hands to me
that I sing into a little cassette taped
inside my chest armed by geomagnetics
to spin the little spindle keep it exercised
“All the impossibles coming together”
the rue one doesn’t have to pour into it the
mix it arrives on the sensors ready-stirred
from time and to time it’s called sympathetic
if we can we live off the derivative
"I write what is said because anything might happen"
somebody’s imitating Ray Charles in European
that’s the radio’s function unleashing shadows
THE SHADED PART REPRESENTS THE SHADED PART
over neighbor shoulder la morte de Bruce Conner
comes recorded in a public memorandum
harmonica’d against hollow-body moon backdrop
burnt sienna crayola undercoat, raw umber
I had been studying the color scheme
in order to later be able to lift it
from where it slept without disturbing its rest
what happens if you pour a brown film behind
all the elements in the supposed foreground
what happens when you unriddle the lexicon
what do you mean when you say soundless speech
the destroyed works had to be destroyed to be seen
one had to be evaporated to be shown them

i.m. B.C.
"I am a disaster I just can’t believe"
spoke into her remote voice disseminator
audio-witnessed from across the canister
moving at speed forty feet over West Oakland
I wanted that chair for the ride’s duration
for so long as she’d keep feeding me my lines
it isn’t even as if out of nowhere it
falls on one’s apparatus, the extended mix
“the dynamics of mestizaje” it says here
in the liner notes to THREE STRANGE ANGELS
other doors spoken under oneiro-
locution had been opened were slamming shut
turtle up on its hind legs devouring bird’s head
baby’s finger plucks the splinter from one’s eye
in the dream it takes baby to PICK THE BEAM
out of my eye the better to look where
the voice of the turtle says I take this bird
to be turtle-feed :: if you erase the head
can the heart the posterior organs drop in
to play :: if the head still speaks, REPEAT

for Georgine Marrott
“You thought it was all over, didn’t you”
uttered as a late-issue release ex post ashes
nobody bright enough volunteers then one has to
author and feature in the afternoon collapse session
who’s going to execute the CLASSICS ILLUSTRATED graphics
where do the painted-on glitter-shaded eyelids go
and the wordless bird verses what about these
could be taped to the shell of a syllable
encindered he didn’t want an espresso
he wanted to listen to the pretty music he
walked across the night room to turn it down
the volume on the animate objects their breath
calming to a purr, brushes on brass gong
a border of poppies on gravel at roadside
waving orange flame atop blue-grey ground
colors of the city’s cloud-bottom ceiling
you’d like to stick around a little after
attaching the books to the shelves with magnets
house that’s wrapped around the torso of a tree
the talking dog said to the talking man what’s that
under your pillow “it’s called my writing hand”

for the Callahans
“legality and morality does not shake hands”
dixit Robt King winter count twenty-seven
softly the voice isn’t trying out exit-
strategies on its receivers, as in
a mourning rite of Mnemosyne rising
unbidden, under which of the muses
would you place the art of living in a box
across the river, with a real mother
of a memory keeps bearing down on me?
Terpsichore in ankle-bracelets maybe
you can’t miss their plantation if it never
gets washed away as SPARROW CEMETERY did
‘manumitted’ to be set into one’s own mittens
for when your INNOCENCE one day washes up
in evidence you become your own property
you end up exonerated and on stage
speaking the words in this poem to rank stranger
uninitiates LISTEN AGAIN the words drop
precisely into their own golden number
“legality and morality does not shake hands”

___

after Robert Hillary King,
a.k.a. Robert King Wilkerson
Estuve charlando con tu verdugo.
Un hombre pulcro, amable.
Me dijo que, por ser yo,
podía elegir la forma en que te irías.
Los esquimales, explicó, cuando llegan a viejos
se pierden por los caminos
para que se los coma el oso.
Otros prefieren terapia intensiva,
médicos corriendo alrededor, caños, oxígeno
e incluso un cura a los pies de la cama
haciendo señas como una azafata.

“¿Es inevitable?”, le pregunté.
“No hubiera venido hasta acá con esta lluvia”, me replicó.
Después habló del ciclo de los hombres, los aniversarios,
la dialéctica estéril del fútbol, la infancia
y sus galpones inmensos con olor a neumáticos.
“Pero”, dijo sonriendo,
“las ambulancias terminan devorándose todo”.
Así que firmé los papeles
y le pregunté cuándo iba a suceder…
¡Ahora! dijo.
Ahora

tengo en mis brazos tu envase retornable.
Y trato de no llorar,
de no hacer ruido,
para que desde lo alto
puedas hallar
la mano alzada de tu halconero.
The Cycles

Fabián Casas

Translated by Brent Armendinger

I was chatting with your executioner. 
A tidy, friendly man. 
He told me, because of who I am, 
I could choose the way you’d go. 
The Eskimos, he explained, when they get to be old 
lose themselves on paths 
so that bears will eat them. 
Others prefer intensive therapy, 
doctors running all around, tubes, oxygen 
and even a priest at the foot of the bed 
making gestures like a flight attendant.

“Is this inevitable?” I asked him. 
“I would not have come so far in this rain,” he replied. 
After that he talked about the cycle of humans, anniversaries, 
the sterile dialectic of soccer, childhood 
and its immense warehouses that smell like rubber tires. 
“But,” he said smiling, 
“the ambulances will end up devouring everything.” 
So I signed the papers 
and I asked him when it was going to happen... 
Right now! he said. 
Now

I have in my arms your returnable bottle. 
And I try not to cry, 
to make no sound, 
so that from up high 
you can locate 
your falconer’s raised hand.
I was chatting with your verdugo.

Juan Perón y Billinghurst

Because of the word for green inside the word for executioner, I am inside the past tense, the present’s executioner. I am inside the word inside the intersection of my failed to hear correctly. The mistranslation. It is too easy to find the executioner, in the masculine pronoun, in the butcher shop that’s closed today like almost every shop is closed today, a Sunday, in the death of Mariano Ferreyra, of whom remains the paint on the stone wall above the train tracks, just a block away from here. It is difficult to see the color of a soundlessness. It is difficult to make an unbegun. Instead, I decide to make a vow. To return to this corner every year on this day, a Sunday, which is the day before my birthday. Before my unbegun. To paint the places where the shadow colors the wall of this building the color of that shadow. In the places where the shadows overlap, it will be my birthday. In the places where language ends. In the places where language is the shadow I am throwing on this building. Where one language ends and another begins is only a question of soundlessness.

A pulcro, friendly man.

Juan Perón y Sanchez de Bustamante

Like a friend, he says and wipes his hand diagonally across his shirt. What is dirt if not there is no tracelessness—a hand that has no name in me. The weeds growing out from the stone façade opposite the doorway, where I record how the disintegrating sound of it becomes indistinguishable from the artificial dark, where I wait for the dirt to pluck the string of me. A weight inside his cart. He stops to talk to me, as if his hand were guided by another hand entirely. Like my friend, he says, like somebody who is clean. I wait for the dirt to hold my name back, that overripe fruit that swells inside the disintegrating sound of all the names inside of me, to keep my name from spilling out my mouth. Like somebody who is clean, he says, and the time grinds down into a powder that will not leave their faces.
He told me, because of who I am,
I could choose the way you’d go.
The Eskimos, he explained, when they get to be old
lose themselves on paths
so that bears will eat them.
Others prefer intensive therapy,
doctors running all around, tubes, oxygen
and even a priest at the foot of the bed
making señas like an azafata.

Perón y Pasteur

My body is multiplied into photographs, blown around the streets like litter, until it germinates again and again and again inside the cleft in concrete. An old woman walks slowly enough to stop inside my question, her opposite of me rocks back and forth inside her. To demonstrate, she waves her hand between her face and mine, a gesture. Is this what for the body, an impossible forest, a hinge in which I beg to be completed by another? Could walking slowly be hello? Through the windows of the shop behind, the half-assembled mannequins seem to stare at me, my words rising and falling. The future touches the perfect past of me, collides into the stranger. This moment, a hinge, as if hunger were the first bone in any body, the uneaten loaves of bread on the street, a gesture, the same container as shredded paper.

Perón y Pasteur

No, he says, he has not taken many trips by air except for here. Pointing in the direction of Uruguay, as if there were somehow still on this side of the river. Some geographers consider the Río de la Plata a gulf or marginal sea. I am thinking of the vuelos de la muerte. As if the river were not river. When the bodies made contact with the water, their names began to dissolve, the husks of they who had borne and called and call for them. They sank into the opposite of calling. It is a funnel-shaped indentation, an estuary. The nouns inside them came apart into the past tense of a verb: los desaparecidos. At what point is a river no longer composed of water? Salinity fronts, or haloclines, form at the bottom and on the surface. The
stranger tells me it's a word that helps the passengers. At first, I think he means something un-alive and yet essential. There is a sign or a billboard, I can't remember—Envíos al Interior, where fresh and brackish waters meet. To cross a body I cannot touch. As if the river were not river. To belong to it, as a kite to the hand that steers it. To be so accustomed to my person suspended, the air no longer harbor. The other side of the river. At what altitude does everything assume the shape of flesh? My body grows closer to a fellow passenger the further I am from ground and yet, aside from turbulence, I do not speak to him.

"Is this inevitable?" I asked him.
"I would not have come so far in this rain," he replied. After that he talked about the cycle of humans, anniversaries, the sterile dialectic of soccer, childhood and its immense galpones that smell like rubber tires.

Paraguay y Azcuénaga

It is not instantaneous, the act of abandoning a city. I want to make you believe. Time clicks shut for the cartographer. I find myself in a city that existed not seven months ago, but three months earlier than the day I first arrived. My missingness weighs more than I do. Time clicks and I can no longer pronounce my name. I keep walking. But this is where the city ends or else continues through the heavy doors. I push the hospital open to get to its definition, the number flashing red for which ghost or premonition, the he she me we stored in here. Inside the empty waiting room, I write a postcard to each of my former lovers. I say, "I want to feed you light from inside the slotted windows." I ask them to record themselves while sleeping. I want to play all these recordings at once, to hear them sleeping simultaneously. I place each postcard on an empty chair and walk outside. A young man finally stops for me, his beauty articulating the boundary between his body and the street. I want to feed him light. I want to feed him anything. He says to me, the word is a construction that houses the materials for construction. The he she me we stored in here. Like childhood, I think, a word dismantled by the growth of the furniture inside it.
“But,” he said smiling,  
“the ambulances will end up devouring everything.”  
So I signed the papers  
and I asked him when it was going to happen...  
Right now! he said.  
Now  
I have in my arms your returnable bottle.  
And I try not to cry,  
to make no sound,  
so that from up high  
you can hallar  

Rodriguez Peña y Juncal  

I walk through the flaking pressure of this city in order to find it. I move at a regular and fairly slow pace. I translate my craving into someone else's history. I have been learning to walk through walls. The countenance is round and swallowing the pavement, El Banco de la Nación, and the nights when I have passed here, its windows throwing my impatience back at me. What of desperation is piled inside its vaults? “Yo sé que tengo el corazón mirando,” the fountain declares to no one in particular. The words are engraved in its stone lip, as if our sentences precede us. I lift one foot and set the other down in turn. The copper adopts the color of the fenced-in grass, as if everything we say was carved into us from the beginning, as if one’s age can be calculated by the number of bones that are no longer legible. A teenager talks about her new favorite bar, a place where she will wait for her friends to find her. Two shopkeepers stand outside, carrying on a conversation but not looking—the lamps of their faces yet to be lit by what currency, what underground electricity.  

your falconer's hand alzada.  

Plaza Miserería  

The faces of those who lost the election are quickly becoming paper. They begin to peel away from the billboard, revealing the metal underneath, a dull kind of mirror, reflecting only
light and not light’s perimeter. The wind is strong. I make my way towards the stranger. He tells me it’s a word that could mean many things, like a woman who wants to have an affair. What this has to do with climbing is unclear to me. A girl kneels down to feed the pigeons while her mother watches her. When they gather, larger and less delicate than their predecessors, she takes one in her hands and lifts it to her cheek, a dull kind of mirror. She releases it, and I can sense it, her awe at having invented flight, as if it were an arrow directly into me. I take a photograph of the tree above us. It is only when I put my camera down that I notice it. Hung by its neck from one of the branches, deliberately, with the end of a plastic bag twisted into string, a bird. I could say that I close my eyes and press the camera’s eye against me. I could say that I hold it there, that heat, until the batteries run out. I could say that I throw it into the air and walk away.
TRANSLATOR’S NOTE

I began this project in Buenos Aires, creating “ambulatory translations” of poems by contemporary Argentinian writers in public space. The poems included here are by Fabián Casas and Alejandro Mendez. I began by translating these poems without a dictionary; for every word I didn’t know, I made myself walk the number of blocks corresponding to the line in which it appeared. Then, I stopped and asked a stranger to talk to me about their associations with that word. After that I sat down, usually in a doorway, and wrote about our conversation and the ways in which the word corresponded to the physical environment and my emotional state. Later, I assembled my notes into poetic “definitions.” I have inserted my definitions into the poems themselves to suggest the way I translated them—how they pulled me through the streets, asking me to interact with the city, its inhabitants, and my own unknowing. I am interested in the surface area of language, how it spreads and folds, and how a poem might be an echo of the place in which it was composed.
Ciudades—tres

Alejandro Mendez

Entre personas desconocidas, trajino las calles de esta ciudad. Sonámbulo, a años luz de la experiencia superlativa de niño-lucérmaga, no respondo a los miles de ring-tones que asolan el espacio público.

Sólo el humo amenazante, en un piso 20, y la bocina demencial de los bomberos sacude la inercia hipnótica de este lunes intrascendente.

Zeitgeist: el diario anuncia que en San Francisco comenzó una campana de acción queer para baños de género neutro. La fiscalía española pide 9.138 años de prisión para Scilingo, por los vuelos de la muerte.

Detrás de mi puerta: una pila de boletas de impuestos, la heladera vacía y cada cosa en su sitio, inmóvil.
Between unknown persons, I rush about the streets of this city. I am sleepwalking, light years away from the superlative experience of firefly-boy, taking no account of the thousands of ring-tones that lay waste to public space.

Only the menacing smoke, on the 20th floor, and the demented siren of the firefighters shakes the hypnotic inertia of this unimportant Monday.

Zeitgeist: the daily paper announces that San Francisco began a queer campaign of action for gender-neutral bathrooms. The Spanish prosecutor asks for 9,138 years of prison for Scilingo, for the death flights.

Behind my door: a pile of tax bills, the empty refrigerator and each thing in its place, unmoving.
Cities—Three

Ambulatory Translation by Brent Armendinger

Between unknown persons, I rush about the streets of this city. I am sleepwalking, light years away from the superlative experience of firefly-boy, taking no account of the thousands of ring-tones that asolan public space.

Catamarca y Belgrano

“Without sun,” said the young man, “it means there is no sun,” and then he held out his hand, as if for me but not. A word was caught inside a semicolon between to devastate and to plague. I thought he might point to something for me—he had that face of slowly melting snow—but he only used his hand to flag down a bus. The first symptom was a spool of thread at dawn, unraveling behind me as I walked back to my apartment. In that city, I learned to paste my words to one another—call me—solicitation sewn to the body of he who waits for a reply, a thousand paper rectangles—llámame—flapping up and down the crumbling wall. My thread, they hung it between their houses, plucking it nightly from small openings inside their barricaded doors. Didn’t everyone want to be contagious, to feel the body opening, again again again?

Only the menacing smoke, on the 20th floor, and the demented bocina of the firefighters

Catamarca y México

As I am writing this, an older woman with a bandage on her cheek walks backwards into her garage until not even her shadow acknowledges me. An ambulance howls and carries its unrepentant howling away, deeper into a city that’s on the other side of memory, a dark alley I fumble through when lost, blocks and blocks from where the power lines hang vertically, like unwashed strands of hair. A man presses his fist inside his palm to show me what it means, the smell of detergent so thick on him, it’s the sound it makes, the car, when you hit the wheel like this. Each word replaces a warning I cannot hear, unrepentant cargo in the neighborhood of mind.
sacude the hypnotic inertia of this unimportant Monday.

**Catamarca e Independencia**

You have to push really hard to make things move, she says, to not get bored, or to deal with the feelings. Her language buckles the definite article to sensation. Etymologically, an emotion is an arrow pointing outward. But what of the arrows inside the atmosphere? From the roof of a nearby apartment building, a cellular tower rises. My consciousness gets heavy, coated with burnt parts of meteorite, unspoken thoughts, pollen, hair, and conversations fallen out of orbit. What if the feelings I call my own have fallen upon me, like particles of dust? My loneliness has a diameter of less than 500 micrometers. I walk, susceptible to the uneven ground of my invention, where the roots of a tree are breaking pavement, pushing so hard to unbelong here.

**Zeitgeist:** the daily paper announces that San Francisco began a queer campaign of action for gender-neutral bathrooms. The Spanish *fiscalía* asks for 9.138 years of prison for Scilingo, for

**Estados Unidos y Alberti**

The dead part of the tree, the brown leaves curled an almost imperceptible yellow, is borne by the still-living branches. The young girl says it's something legal but she's not exactly sure. A woman is making her way up and down the sidewalk with her turquoise broom, careful not to disturb the pigeons. It seems like they ask the right kinds of questions. She shakes it free of dust while talking to her neighbor, as if talking were a means of shaking off what gathers, as if death or dust were something blooming from its bough.

**Laguna Nimez**

I walked slowly, and the wind came across the water so urgently in its slowness, so sure of itself it could be nothing less than animal. His name was unknown to me, and because it was and is a name I did not stop. Instead, I opened
the window, where I could ask my question without anyone looking back at me. They sentenced him to 21 years for each of 30 prisoners, although he won’t serve more than 30. But no calculus returns a name that is not his name, drugged and falling from a hole in the sky forever. An airplane forever becoming the cargo forever inside it. I photographed a bird in mid-flight. The names broken in wrong velocity broken and leaking into the ground. Does some version of that bird hang in the air forever now? The quietness, in which everything speaks to me except for me. When its flying self crosses its forever self, can it feel something, like a record skipping inside?

the death flights.

Behind my door: a pile of tax bills, the empty refrigerator and each thing in its place, unmoving.
I began this project in Buenos Aires, creating “ambulatory translations” of poems by contemporary Argentinian writers in public space. The poems included here are by Fabián Casas and Alejandro Mendez. I began by translating these poems without a dictionary; for every word I didn’t know, I made myself walk the number of blocks corresponding to the line in which it appeared. Then, I stopped and asked a stranger to talk to me about their associations with that word. After that I sat down, usually in a doorway, and wrote about our conversation and the ways in which the word corresponded to the physical environment and my emotional state. Later, I assembled my notes into poetic “definitions.” I have inserted my definitions into the poems themselves to suggest the way I translated them—how they pulled me through the streets, asking me to interact with the city, its inhabitants, and my own unknowing. I am interested in the surface area of language, how it spreads and folds, and how a poem might be an echo of the place in which it was composed.
Two Poems

Matt Longabucco

Dawn of the Alchemists

They finally produced the promised robot,
the sleepwalker-bot,
the idle-chatterer-bot,
the name-dropper-bot,
the Situationist-bot,
the onanist-bot,
the clinamen-bot,
the thesis-advisor-bot,
the shoplifter-bot,
his movements as whimsical as a cat’s,
his sang froid when amputating the limbs of soldiers estimable,
his ability to deal with relationship problems
    and to weather messy break-ups a model of sober maturity,
and to organize unions without corrupting or rusting,
and to translate Gottfried Benn and write prefaces to those translations unparalleled
    in the elegance of their rationalizations of that poet’s fascist activities,
and to wear blazers without pretense or even with a whiff of pretense all the more
    impressive for its placing of such affectations firmly beside the point,
and to linger in pain-dealing in the moment of the utterance of the safeword
    just long enough to eroticize even the ostensible suspension of eros,
exile-bot,
refugee-bot,
blight-bot,
petrochemical-bot,
censor-bot,
hostage-bot,
extortion-bot,
nausea-bot
powered not by lightning bolt
nor the municipal grid
nor by the surprise of the butts of practical jokes upon the application to them
    in the guise of a friendly handshake of a hand buzzer
but by a battery
charged at a generator
in a bunker
where fifty runaways
concentrate the power of their forgetting and dissociation
such that the positive charge of their survival instinct
and the negative charge of their manipulative bullshit
spin a turbine faster than a pinwheel in a hurricane
until the city-bot or nation-bot or inferno-bot
comes incredibly to life and learns,
without any of learning’s well-known brutalizing,
the weird hydraulics of fate as it leaks out of flesh’s realm forever.
They ask me, Don’t you ever get lonely. Actually they never ask me this. Scratch, scratch, scratch of the second-hand, woof, woof, woof of the minute. I hadn’t slept and when I devoured the roll and coffee at the corner shop the glucose gripped the tissues in my unsteady form the way fathers imagine their hands around their daughters’ faithless necks. Hypocrite lecteur, exorbitant boulevardier, toreador of Thursdays, are those flowers they toss at your feet or clots of blue-black mud, thickened with grass-pulp, salvaged from floodswepth houses? Childhoodless, I emerge most loyal. All madness is poured into the chalice the figure of nation bears before her in the mural. Give up painting or paint instead the shield set between the greedy eyes of pilgrims and the images painting fears to paint: dunes criss-crossed by tire tracks, a fireball carved in two, the eggsac the gardener scatters with the cataclysm of his broom.
The Second Body Is a Shield

Claire Donato

This poem was composed in 12-point sans serif font while the poet took place
In the past, doomed to remember the world as it took place outside
The detritus of heavy metal music in her mind, orchestrating a school
Of second graders eating sushi on a sidewalk in Park Slope in Park
Slope in Park Slope, in the neighborhood in which she spent the
Summer in heat in a bed in a room overlooking the neighborhood
Drug rehabilitation institute. Unclothed, the first body
Came, touched her skin, and her mind grew
Diseased by its eroticism. Now she carries a dense
Second body in her brain, a second body not unlike
The first, whose material form encompasses every facet of
The world, yet is not the world, and her desire rises and falls, rises and
Pauses and thinks to possess a very fine mind, expertise with regard to
Sex, the fruit of geometric pliability and a knack for crafting dialogue
From everyday speech—should have been a playwright—but the best
Circumstances are never the best.
Literary influences include the former’s untamed aggregate, the reality
Of whose experience is formed by combining several disparate parts, then shouting
‘You don’t know where I’m at?! You don’t know where I’m at?!’
Within this faux-fucked 8 and ½ x 11”
Static electricity. To which the second body
Responds: 'Imagine a pure gold ring. Divide it in half, then keep
Dividing and dividing and dividing.'
Ethics, in other words, presupposes the existence of a certain narrative identity: a self which remembers its commitments to the other (both in its personal and collective history) and recalls that these commitments have not-yet been fulfilled.

— Richard Kearney, *The Wake of Imagination*

Incomplete mist
Settles on curves:
[star shadow] on a Stand of flower,

[kαλόν] / [καλοῦν]

like the light visible through the striation of branch each hesitant step
trails phantasm (infinite) in the dark wood (finite); old fear in the blood.
Wonder cannot see under a stray leaf branching through the air
wavering song before the water waiting in the flow of trails
the parse of calling

binding refining the slow testimonies of dart

Earth beside a passage sparkling in this light caught
in a flash of

wren between shades of gorse-berry-summer

Promise & touch branching a depth in the fill

before sill
Of the unreal

open
to the unhoped for
shore

coupling
open
iii.

_Finite mind / infinite I AM:_

such dative hand  
in restless passing  
under the hood of eyes

_he did not play_  

**she does not play**

_Grass seeds disperse_

_I see the genitally_
Of both longing  
Through both going  
Traversing the sky
iv.

“I am able”
between remembrance & forgetfulness
waiting on this bridge of cordiality,
cathartic through the earth
between armatures of “soft
despotism” to indoctrinated
songs, risen as oneself
as another band around
the stomach of invective
where “I am” origin
holding language, mourning
& melancholy, like a sea
under the stars
enclosed in all of me
His body against mine, my body against his, her body against truth 
opens like I too open to another; open to the day 
and everyday things open too/ you 

Starry flowers across deeply cleft petals, disposition under the sun & moon. 
Progress of mourning, wakes light ripple from stipple blue on teasel

—Woollen cloth—

‘One should not mistake Malthus for nature.’ My innovation a consequence of 
decline; and darker at the bottom than the top

Where ‘prrie’ & ‘prreet’

Penultimate form
What blossoms-yet?
PEBBLY EARTH
HIDDEN IN DIGRESS
RIDDLED IN PINK
UNSPOTTED KEELED
WITH FEW MARKINGS
EXPPELLING WORDS
FROM THE SIPHONAL END
FREE-SWIMMING
TO THE SEA

Where isolate intelligence & the many branched branches folds in form irregular
where I too dream Commensal

But you cannot say: “These flowers, this ridge;”
maybe you neglect the token which offer pronounces?

“I do not know?”

Cirrus streaks with ends upturned,
Rock, weed & shell
“Goodbye...”
before the pellitory of the wall

Consoles with reflection
spurning kisses
before the sophistry
of dejection

forms in bright bands
between the blue sky
& the yellow horizon

where clouds end
& skies began.
Dorsality

Edric Mesmer

for Mark Dickinson’s “not-yet”

sun + wind
water + sand

—Rhoda Rosenfeld

and the mythos riddled with clap
of waved thunder, banter at Atlantis
the sand-cast whatnot of court rot
taken to forge :: pig-iron
volcanic distants—
  wraith as rite
  as drawn from Circe, her head
  band and unwind mien’s shell
  little cockles till the frags
  read ECRIC and call this hearsay
  the aural on the back of the grap
  heme stream gulfed
  gleam and who aren’t
  thou sovereign to?
  as
  islet
  is-let

I let go as sloe floes &

I AM CONTINENT

arcades opaqued

  like masts, and wade  “plash
    plash”

pelagic graphs

—sand dried on the abdomen
(Artemis’s, or of Hermes)

—orifice to orifice—

the flex-breath \( \text{omphalos} \)
where once the willow bent
to fresh vein, divining...

and not changeling—
fed the codpiece
harlequin’s
lumberjack seat flap
not—

...kno...

no
hero-
worn
shore
an out-
line div-
ides as by
scion

of the washed-up
sea-sputtered utterer
raiment-draped
no longer
drawn
and un-
quartered

stylus
marking
mark
making
scepter when
thrown
to the ashen
sands
& for all this you trade a jagged helmet haircut of blunt wet fringe and tonsure not yet and yet not a moon at noon

—is the conquering between the text in sand and sand or and sea or between wind sand and sea

?...the sightless text blight-textured in the wet maw visuality an out-line yet not an antihero merely the dorsal

[ sun + wind water + sand ]
The wrest of land from sea is seldom tranquil even the piling plankton coral reef and bower barrier or the slaking bridge iron tendrils to their bases taut columns calumny jets

Siphonal the sheer torsion cephalic H.D.’s gonad-like jelly-fish tentacles cap madder than raddle in the cyan incommensurate canopy where [ecrIc] like rubbish eddies

a mirror for Circe to call in circumference without center—as—as into port—enters æquum noctis braiding the land-limit-libido with reddened-copper of the not-yet oxidized redux found in pre-aqua kenning

keening
This lifetime of epigrams & philosophy: windless fall of silent touch: leaves closely-draped become a little crooked sunlight:

we lack intimate animals: every bird in suit of cast look gives us a list of puzzled mirrors::

•     •     •

The little Concord: a place in the quiet pencil-hunting village: enter by private financial tragedies, sports or bodily scouring:

after years, mourn that Concord made in the trade: act well, but roam throughout the woods: between the miles & the dollars::
Be a man, speak:
what balls:
you said you will:
is it so:
the end of nature: the universe:
unanswerable ::

•     •     •

Young battle of privations: leave life as the clerk in a store
of medicine: ripen ships with luster: marry the ship-builder,
ambitious & intimate in search of streams: their beauties:
the elements & three days’ atonement ::
Prepared boys enter passionately happy investigation:
physics, astronomy: eight years in the Ministry of Vivid
Portrayal: quiet people: a tribe of higher calling: installation:
inoculation: & yet, that merciless terrifying character ::

• • •

A child is shown the island: inherits questions: inherits
intellect & the abandoned island: careful & not satisfied
by the age of devastation: friends are cultivated: the little
English one: & the King ::
Arles Rock: the name of a place & the remembered subject: suffer him his brain, his active devoted being: study his fact: the fields under other lovers: live as he did: half a self: a man ::

• • •

Conspicuous in America: descend with the passionate to gratify desire: sail next, living & dressing as the Universal Young Author: sorrow over Syria: the land’s instant success & money-near: dispense with charming wife: deep in Friend Money ::
On White Noise

Elizabeth Robinson

The saint has no utility.

Irenic uselessness.

But through her nostrils and to her bosom
she draws the white noise, and through

her silence, replete,

the figure of her,

like a hand,

turns blue.

As in her vaunted perfection she sins too. We knew this
all along. That to hum

is not to carry a tune.
I beg
your pardon—

this first
person

singular is its own advent. We are given this figure. An arrival
not yet effected—I ask
your forgiveness—I hear my own

artifice, and a saint despite—
to which the subject bore absolute
lack of relation.
The blue white noise of [my] absence of faith:
the sound of color infusing all with color.
Thud of trespass

now getting somewhere.

Or soft perk of sound designates

the saint, object of

objection, veneration,

her synthetic eyes, her

borrowed human hair, the scuff

of gold veil surrounding

the holes in her ears

where

the sound pierced through, all

that she lacks knowledge of she

graciously includes. The white noise hums alongside, under its breath.
Now, I am able
to adore. So
able to hear the breath expel
itself from the gold tulle cloud
of the object of—
hypothesis? Would a real
woman hold herself so still, that is,

adoration stops only just short—

[almost indecipherable flutter of sound]

I said what we
noticed. Adoration stops barely
short of the stillness
of flesh of the object of

my attention I so doubt.
She had no role.

Not to speak but to be
	nonsense. Such

was the cleanliness of sound

that it fell before the eyes, and prying so

ingeniously

that the lids opened.

Once there was a chapter of blue, and it burned in its own shush.

Nonsense she says, but eavesdroppers insist she said white encompassing nothing.
We know sound
by duration and by
how it looks, if it
looks as though it
would last. Blue. As
a child I tried
to put my hand
to that particular sonic
and liquid blue. Not a
moment survives of

such a sound as that I
saw when
I envisioned what

I felt. The saint

held her jaw below
her mouth, like so.
In just this way the breath
nourishes the would-be fire.

Above her jaw are her lips
and through these she fails
completely to

attest, to witness

her own breath to

which she plays skeptic

as to a soundless sound, which

she is authorized to hold in indefinitely.
The better to take the tune from the tune and, white castigation, make it hum behind itself.

By dint of gibberish that we call flesh, no saint can enter nor ever leave us behind by ever smaller modulations of swish and clatter as they absorb new spectra, their self, their same misgiving.
Inside a clam shell
evening
clam shell again
painted pungent
red black & night

black place #1
black place #2
black place #3

a wonderful redefinition
of yellow sweet peas
an impressive wave
in the pool
in the woods
in Lake George
pink & green
alligator pears
shipped to Alaska
red & pink
ballet skirt or
electric light
we will not be responsible
for black abstraction

at the rodeo
music pink & blue #2
on Wednesdays only
a train
at night
in the desert
black white & blues
the touchstone a portrait
or jack in the pulpit
a piece of wood
sandwiches snacks pastries
muffins coffee & desserts
all above the clouds in 1963
special
very special

special #8
special #12
special #17

a tent door
at night
everything she created
blue & green
though pelvis series
red & yellow
watch for the opening
my last door
black door
with red
yolk-like
ever morphing feelings
cosmic walk
on
an
untitled red wave
eggshell abstraction with
circle
Dans une coquille de clam
soir
coquille de clam encore
peint fort
rouge noir & nuit

black place N° 1
black place N° 2
black place N° 3

une merveilleuse redéfinition
de pois gourmand jaune
une vague impressionnante
dans la piscine
dans les bois
à Lake George
rose & vert
poire alligator
expédiées en Alaska
rouge & rose
jupon de danse ou
lumière électrique
nous ne serons pas responsable
des abstractions noires

au rodéo
musique rose & bleue #2
ouvert le mercredi
un train
la nuit
dans le désert
noir blanc & blues

le touchau un portrait
ou plante petit prêcheur
un morceau de bois
sandwichs collations pâtisserie
1963: au dessus des nuages
c'est spécial
très spécial

spécial N°8
spécial N°12
spécial N°17

une porte de tente
la nuit
tout ce qu'elle crée
bleue & vert
bien que la série sur le bassin
rouge & jaune
surveillez l'ouverture
ma dernière porte
porte noire
avec du rouge
comme du jaune d'oeuf
émotions toujours transmuantes
marche cosmique
sur
une
vague rouge sans titre
abstraction de coquille d'oeuf avec
cercle
Concha

I am a cephalic bivalve
a mercenary venus
mercenary mercenary
una concha brava
veneridae by Rafinesque

Concha

Je suis une bi-valve céphalée
une venus mercenaire
mercenaire mercenaire
una concha brava
veneridae par Rafinesque

Quahog súki:
I conchynicole
not for a wampum
I claim
she claims
we re-claim
clam clam clam
clam up
clam digger
clam up

Quahog súki:
je te conchynicole
mais pas pour un wampum
je clame
elle clame
nous ré-clamons
clam clam clam
clappe la fouilleur de clam
clappe la
Blanchir/ To Whiten

Not to blanch    not to bleach
mais plus blanc que blanc : est ce blanc?
vanished disappeared
around the corner
out of sight
out of mind
loin des yeux
loin du coeur
et pourtant
barbouiller de blanc/covering in white
to protect from/pour protéger?

Blanc blanc blanc blanc
blancmange
white mush
almond milk
white dish
scolded & désirée
salée remuée jetée
pudding & poulet

Colle  colle  col
col blanc
a value not a color
une valeur pas une couleur
clair  sans tache
vieux  lait  deuil de reine
chastised  châtée  chasteté

Sur fond rouge vierge érotique
ou maison vulve
red banana sheath
j’épelle  pèle
ma feuille est une banane Baybayine
encore une doctrine espagnole en enveloppe
ab  ab  ab  abacà
abracadabra
& les habitants du fleuve ne parlent plus le Tagalog
—lost tongue—
Vulva Universe / L’univers Vulve

via Charles Olson

I.

The vulva universe is as discoverable as that other & as definable. We have lived long in a generalizing time, at least since 450 B.C. And it has had its effects on the best of women, on the best of vulvas. So in need of restoration lets go back to hieroglyphs or to ideograms or to etymology to right the balance.

L’univers de la vulve est tout aussi “découvrable” et définissable que d’autres le sont. Nous vivons depuis longtemps dans la généralisation, au moins depuis 450 avant notre ère. Et ça a eu des effets sur le meilleur des femmes, sur le meilleur des vulves. Alors un besoin de restauration nous ramène vers les hiéroglyphes, les idéogrammes, ou ici à l’étymologie de vulve pour rééquilibrer.

*wel-3 :
turned, twisted, rolled, revolved & enclosed
followed by
tourné, tordu, roulé, entouré et enfermé
suivi de

*wel-4 :
vulnerare, to wound, vulnerability
preceded by
vulnerare, blesser, vulnérabilité
précédé de

*wel-2 :
to wish, to will, velleity, volition, voluntary
takes me to
souhafter, vouloir, velléité, volition, volontaire
m’amène à
*wel-1:
to see...
voir...

perhaps in Sanskrit: Varuna—seer, wise one
en sanscrit peut-être: Varuna—le voyant, le sage

to see
voir

*wel-5:
my velours, my wool, ma laine douce
mon velours, ma laine, my soft wool

&/or Freud's villus ideas
et/ou les idées poilues de Freud

II.

The vulva universe, a.k.a. vulvic space, is not made out of discourses.
The vulva universe is both instrument of discovery & instrument of definition.
The vulva universe belongs neither to logic or classification.
The harmony of the vulva universe is post/pre-logical—things fall where they lie—

L’univers de la vulve, qui est aussi appelé l’espace vulvique, n’est pas fait de discours.
L’univers de la vulve est à la fois instrument de découverte et de définition
L’univers de la vulve n’appartient ni à la logique ni à la classification.
L’harmonie de l’univers de la vulve est post et pré-logique—les choses tombent où elles reposent—
III.

To restate and to repossess her of her dynamic, a first answer lies in her system particulars.

Even if unselectedness is woman’s original condition, then selectiveness is just as originally the impulse by which she proceeds to do something about unselectedness, then one is forced to look for some instrumentation in woman’s given which makes selection possible.

Pour réaffirmer et rendre à la femme sa dynamique, la première réponse repose dans la particularité de son système.

Et même si la “non-sélection” est la condition originelle de la femme, alors sa faculté de sélection est aussi originelle que l’impulsion avec laquelle elle non-sélectionne. On doit donc s’en remettre à l’évidence que la femme est pourvu de quelque instrumentation qui lui rend la sélection possible.

IV.

Awareness then knowledge of vulvic space are the best and only particular instrumentation for sustainable selectiveness. Vulvic space is the reception threshold, a sui generis meeting place between milieu intérieur & external reality, a natural interface where internal & external stimuli can interact safely & freely once sensors are reactivated. This sensory threshold detects true intimate life force, and opens access to the wild & intimate reaching of our own organism, where intricacies and complexities are intact and essential to the condition to our free and independent life.

La conscience, suivi de la connaissance de l’espace vulvique sont les meilleurs, et seuls instruments caractéristiques pour faire des choix (sélections) à développement durable.

L’espace vulvique est le seuil de réception sensoriel sui generis, l’aire médiatrice entre le milieu intérieur propre et la
réalité extérieure. Cette interface inhérente et fondamentale est, une fois ses capteurs réactivés, où les stimuli internes et externes échangent, analysent et traitent les données en toute liberté et en toute sécurité.

Ce processus révèle et libère la force vitale vrai et intime une connaissance évolutionniste émergente: la connaissance vulvique.

V.

This remarkable and usable idea definitely empowers women on how rapid she is in her taking in of what she does experience is hers from her.

Cette remarquable et “cultivable” idée permet aux femmes d’assumer la rapidité avec laquelle elles absorbent et comprennent ce qui leur est propre et intrinsèque.
Vulva Universe #1, 2012, 21 x 29.5 inches (black & white version)
DieuDonné Abaca paper, ink, pastels
Four Poems

Jennifer Kronovet

Idiolect

We all speak our own version of the language—billions of languages within the language. Communication happens despite. Yet, I’m angry at many. There’s a method of teaching English as a second language that is based completely on giving commands. I know you understood because you sat in the chair. The nuance of command hides in the body as it moves. Could you please would you mind do it now stop it? Could you please keep reading?
The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis

_The language one speaks determines the way one thinks._

Something is coming up from behind. It’s her. The brain you would have had if you were you in another tongue. Your own underside of waterness, your what else, about to slip past and into the city/field.

A language just died. The way her body, moving across the field at night. The feeling of recognizing it like the animal shifting inside your pre-thought. There was a word for that.

In some languages, time moves down instead of forward. If you slow down to consider. Time will keep. And ahead of you the next you as you.

Behind you, the English what.
The branches, far off,  
ink against the sky writing  
you are here again.

is how I think in Midwestern haiku. Spreading  
out from blue noun into the sick green adjectival light  
of the 7-11 sign. Every thing thinging itself  
local-minded as a woodpecker—the assault  
of self against object, the day closing in to be one  
sound repeated and that is your life, sad animal  
so admired by men wearing and not wearing hate.

I try to locate myself inside myself: looking  
can be contained in the eyes, feeling contained  
in a bowl of soup. But sometimes: the catcall  
of winter-shriek, the xyz-you of street and shutters  
and the asymptote crawl of me into woods.  
Then, I repeat these instructions to myself: Jenny—  
be a big place inside with many cities, an Ohio.
WY, a Place I Don’t Believe in

In the mountain light:

the tree of too much
the tree of saying too much

The brochure: Landscape of symbols! Come come.

Driving down the highway for hours:

I see the leaves the way
change demands: color vs. color.

I will learn to see you the way
change leaves us to: mesh of self

over self. Sinew-map. Half in control
and half owned by government.

State fish: cutthroat trout
State sport: rodeo
State dinosaur: Triceratops

Capital hiding place of fugitive
words—I believe I can be myself

in you if you stay historic. Or empty.
Eight Poems

Cody-Rose Clevidence

ElRoslion—x. is a stutter in the tail feathers Optic (verse) is as irridescence in the pure force I am in love with an error / gem. is glory & graphic [sic. is prefixed like as in EYEBALL [to claim] “the open”—{all ownership/theft} & {gory there} is tarred w. {history} in the derelict plumage “what wet sky the sun is stolen from” & I am a thief [{will be criminal} [diurnal] [in excess] {of x} the pure force versus the embodied force {the force of bodily being} we must remove ourselves from the meadow unless—this is the squalid & the pigeon infested, leaden, pcb-laden, irradiated, is the only—I am so healthy I could shit a dove) all placement is displacement [to claim] [no State] [especially not a natural one] my peacock voluptuous w. femininity masculinity [virile is as volatile does] leuc. “to strut into the open” to be denied is the only—is a mutant {body}/ x. in the junked [recesses] accretion {THE ACCUMULATED FORCE} how pristine—
GET OUT // MY FACE: U centaur in yr accident // corrosive in yr gendered unicorn be all like fuck you in my pink quartz diodes I’ll jizz in my own paradise • in the semirigid vesicles u orchard there all mythic in yr verge & verging method, flexed. • the pain is a deep verb deep in yr metabolism // is a phenotypic gemstone u chickenhawk u falcon repugnant in my masculine love—

ALL MY HEROES ARE CRIMINALS— is the dawn lucrative in yr cellulite u corpulent garden // in anger // Victory • in pastoral • x-rated yr [my] showy hackles there all “crepuscular” & “range” • I am as a ragged edge in this [yr] [our] dimension is a fist of noise I place hard in the bulging geometry // I wanna fight “man to man” in yr deep // throat my song.

NO KING W/O A CROWN: Yr lactating in yr cock-eyed biceps transcribing // transversing form u boar-taint in my [your] fuchsia plumage I’ll eat you alive u beautiful u beefy of suffering • u estrogenic pluot “deceptive” uppercut in the fleshy street // cusp in my inner dilation // • u rival the enjambment • u catalysis in my recognizance, recognized, & standing, there—

HOLD ME // BACK—is wracked w. sobs in the interstice // u fist morpheme terse in yr [my] restraint • caustic in yr musculature • a scar in yr larynxed minotaur is like shut the fuck up // is a trembling in yr juxtapositional // in yr [my] insurgence • is my coveted [my] ripped [form].

Beast of prefix gnaws on the garden of beasts. beast is grafting beastliness into rootstock ripe for ripening. beast for occlusion. beast for temporality. urgent beast in the urgency of beasting. ungentle & urgent beast.

."the inclusion and capture of a space"

The growl in the middle of words is the growl in the middle of a meadow by this the meadow is the zero of the growl in the middle is the clearing of, &, poppies—

Beast of kindness beast of beasting. in the burdensome history of beasting where there was a historical beast before there was a human in the beasting forest. in the forest where the forms of beasts are, &, made—be it a made thing in the beast of things.

."abandons the living being to law"

The zone exists as an enclosure, as an ‘exclosure’; ‘scape & by this the xeric is a liaison where every speaking implicits a necessity—an emptying of ‘the snarl’ as necessity—is releasing it into the lily's trumpet-like throat.

Non mons glottal non pubis to be less than a beast-meadow-full is to draw a zero around this & the zero is mouthing. this is where "to clear" (grunt-like) "to clearing" is profusion in the sudden beast. “beast.” the inarticulation before the articulation as gesture, scent. is the happenstance of fur—

."the concussion and rapture of a space"
Beast of unnecessary forms beast of soliloquies beast for slaughter beast in the city of scarcity beast of neuronal cordage beast of burden. beast of preexisting beasts beast for glamour. beast of knowing the being of beasting & beast of knowing the beastliness of beasting & beast of not knowing. uproot the garden of description into the anomic garden. where there were beasts now there are beasts.

The edge of the zero in which necessity is a living mouth which exists, so to speak—as scraping out the inside of the zone by a raw impulse is to establish the vicinity of the mouth which is the zero the fluctuating rim of which is the clearing out of the clearing.

."beyond which shelter and safety are not possible”

Beast for loneliness beast of distance. coppiced beast is a garden in the forest. beast of occasional grimace beast of multiplicity beast claims a exigent thrust in all directions. unlawful beast is the utterance by which a necessary flower groans.

Here is the crude lip of the border & the crude lip of the beast that gnaws on the border. the inevitable disappearance of the forest. the extinction of beasts & the extinction of humans & the urgency of evading the law as the only zone in which—is the only animal—

& also the necessity of crudeness, & the necessity of beasts, & of degradation—lulled in the lullaby of the multifarious garden of beasts—all open eyes are the eyes of the forest in which a happening brings forth—

."the threshold of indifference between anomie and law”

The lip which is the rim which is the edge which is the eye which is the hesitation of the meadow & the hesitation of its unknown capacity for the forms of beasts, breathes.
Nominally, all the zones are interstitial in moonlight, bright beasts of illicit need. Haughty & illiterate beasts of mutant beastliness—to suck the marrow of the cracked bones [to be sovereign]—to “live”

.”aimed at capturing pure being in the meshes of the logos”

You beast in the logical marshes ensnared—the beautiful &/or brutal carnivorousnesses—clawing at the need—which is a home for many small beasts. The zero is a gnawed out interior in which wind—in which what little abstraction—each beast must gnaw their own zero—nevertheless—there is an indefinite howl emitted by all the open mouths of flowers—in which live the necessary beasts—in which lives the necessity of beasting—

Insufficient beast posits some more beasts. Beast is tending the amorphic garden. There are too many clearings in the forest. There are too many beasts in the forest. There are too many forests in the beasts. Each beast must lay down in the meadow.

.”all the animals are gone”
[st]utter in riddled chain-link [lim]it a body
an unstable [volt]age. dense [mus]cled [s]urge
thru muck dark & primal [b]lushed [bit]ter
mire or [fl]ux in form. wing or [gi]zard, stem
in sprout, [sun]lit gimmick [bl]ossom or [gl]itter
gash the wet sea open fin or fang pain [p]ried
loose a ridge or [s]pine. tense [mus]ical
[sc]ales condensed syrinx from [sum]mer
[plum]age or graft. limb. teeth or tin, mem-
brane [shel]ter. I wake up in a city. humans
wake up in [ci]ties. in [fl]esh, [f]lash, vast,
[car]ve or [gn]aw a niche, [gli]tch my [l]ove-
[s]ong this [ph]ylum in [s]kin or [king]dom in noise.
monoglottal polylimbic slightly amorous loose-lipped, spurned a grunt from flower precambrain multiplicity in the densing postapocalyptic forest wolf me down.

multivalent deluge in the nether regions bi-polar supersonic vast visceral nets cast this defunct etymology of tongue-tied neanderthalithic croon tender & prone.

all diachronic many-petaled yes gentle slipshod continent spinning a drift gifted anticipatory polymorphic glee a bizarre wild synapse in numerous crowned skin,

listen orchestral architecture listen neural network, wire, branch, spark, pent-up multlicitious postures, covalent hued sky, diaphanous masculinity, low polyphonic human drone

rhizomic, lightly soiled, multigendered lily of hypersexual ungraceful fluxuation, amassing in mutagenic saprophytic bud all gown, strut o lunge into this the forest where all nature’s dethroned.
BeAsT ShAkE ThIs CrUsT BeJeWIEd w. CoReOpSiS & RoUgH ThIs DiRt EaRtH Up aLL RiPe w. SwEaT ThIs LaNdFiLL ViSiOn ScAr-HoRiZoN DiS-EaSe All Up In My MaNly RhInEsToNe SwEeT w. All ThE NoXiOuS HoNeY o SwEeT MeAt BeEs Of BeAsTliNeSs AnD InDuStRy’S CoNcEiT CoMe MuTaNt fLoRa’S Ugly PrOgEnY, KiSS ThE sLiCk Of ThIs TrAnSgReSSivE EaRtH’S CoNcReTe.

YoU ArE aLL JuSt AlMoSt HuMaN. NoNeThELeSs, Yr SaTiN, DaZzLeD FuR AnD ObScEnE SeCrEtIoNs CaLL FoRtH ThE sMeLLs Of MoSS AnD PrAdA, PiSS AnD LiChEn, LiStLeSs VuLgAr BeAsT aLL MeEk BeFoRe ThE SuNsEt Or ThE GoD DaMn CaReSS Of BeInG SePaRaTe, HeLD, MiMeD, GeMmEd, eLiTe.
With Fierce Convulse /
Die Into Life

Judah Rubin

The stone
supports
oblivion

— E. Jabes, tr. R. Waldrop

i.

But a made up place
These
blacked out
keys to a
geometry's necropol
Who should be
addressed who addresses
who comes
first carries the wood
block to smear the face of
life across the eaves

Certainty's hinge, a plate
I could bow beneath

a strung up truth
inact
no more the silt, slit
dried out
corner of the
labirinth

wiped its
mouth - egress or what is found
what sift the
appellate pulsed
the rock film
mayflown rent beneath a
thumb
In the dream
back to and
begged
revision

a
ship's
two signa
tures sewn
manifold into the
throat-still stretched thin as
a wire across the sea

This meadow
medial
snowplant
shed into the
husk this darkness
shows
red sky blue
beggared
throatsong
death-flat
planed
the
sea-armed flight in a
fire of flame
A falconress strung plucked out of sight

minisculae idiocies and redundant light

What, should in shadow come of itself

beside the scoliotic stride

Back into these meadows of ice these erratics

“She went into the river but made it out”

as his Toledo’s sedge

Dried seed to sit and abandon the edge

of soliloquy’s assiduous self

indulgence of speech carved into these poplars human beings of this earth
bound, by
oath, by
witness
as spume
as to
Amnestia,
equanim- these
flattened fields
stripped
off and to the stones
swam the length of
Lethe

And then I saw west to the dying sun
wrung from it these waters, this
corner
that broke beneath
my bones
From / with / in
this
particulate
I, too may curse
from
stained automata of
compadric force
a time
sole
sparrow-mouthed

Diorite pater
nostrum
come of conquest
breath
sapped beneath the tragedian
nerves

Moths, in sad
light mime the unbecoming of all mind-speech
All words swallowed back Cleo's frogs
belched out the kicking legs.

That I, too may curse
as to bring
to beckon for and from: the condesary of body
unlodge:
circuitous
body refuse body
what constrict the throat
your threaded teeth pulled one by one to tongue the pink gummed
idiocy cannot
gnaw the bones - that all
food stick to strangle who would swallow all worlds
pitched silent—missive of eternity's sickness

Lick your fingers to pale blue syllabic—wretched ever in the rounding pinch of production—chew and chew at yourself, bring close the shrouded shadow and milk the fat from your eyes

All those implicated—

I, you, all vectored and mapped
- lay eggs into rotten palms of the patriarch
Cancel all returns all debts and deeds You, ghost of filth Sit naked to your neck in ash forever dwell in the world’s blood of mind-self stunted into putrescence of your dimming

May the earth refuse your corpse may the earth refuse your corpse may the earth refuse your corpse

May it chew the pin of your desire that your eyes be clawed at by its light
These retaining walls show a greater ugliness

as I am, younger
than the breath
this burden’s
gnomic
capit—all as the
dome of
suppression, a lanced
boil from the tip of
an upturned nose

How
could I say—not concretion the dialed

abstract—extraneous to
form, the standings which on two legs
 perch

How could I crawl into the river

a wonder of need

Sweat, bone, blue
could speak for

the enwrapped

lip of night

Using my teeth

cracking

neither known nor of

concern—no
formal
conception being from
brushed out wings
ambled in the silence of the
whole—

Linen that stains,
linen that washes
clean

We—that this, if breath is
I or if universal
the principia is pace
Then, it is after the art of the
whole the paradise of poets
collapsed into a body, wrenched inside
a tree—what torque to pull
itself
angled from
a time notched the name knotted
in each successive page

The cost of care’s restriction - not, leisure, not as
I had thought

A sharp muscled pain
The shoulder when one wakes

so as that little by
little, as day
dawns,
you may be less afraid of not
knowing where to put your body
or at what emptiness to aim your love
There is no—no as a gesture of
song
No,
the hand wrung
out in
cloth
vinegar against
the stain
of a wooden
bird—
what stands and
begs
enraged
by the whole, what
stands on its feet
and cannot bend
to cut the lines
where
the fish has torn
away its
throat by
hooks
iv.

Piecing the night
   Back of itself
The eyes no more than the lungs

   (loosestrife ditches
   along the road

Near irretrievable    Touched up by
   constraint
Four Poems

Karen Garthe

Flag that saved a tribe

~
They were in Cairo like tiny cups of tea. He couldn’t leave
Her face good bones he held
and kissed her eyelids,
the lightest part of cloud they were
such powers of everything
still, they were rough and loaded.
the injured and fragile said “back off”

~
Red Rose, White Lily the Religious while we tend their beasts
different shapes
usher,
shapes usher and circle
Their wedding
Keeps you fleet in air

~
We demanded trick words STOP explaining ourselves STOP I have taken
my
breasts and proffer them...STOP laughing STOP
ANY annoying
Knowingness...

~
The injured and fragile still say back off
You have been treated gently, your own little diamond winking at your
wrist
My Girl

leading
Eurydice

her forearm crooning
these many
Caves/Shelters
brighten straight to

my girl wings
an empty bowl

when baptism comes down she
closes her eyes

in her own counsel
her own town of sextant knives and cigar

bearded suppers

in and out Caves/Shelters these many

Stir

Eurydice
First Motion:

purpling underfoot sage-like monumentals to dainty DISSOLVE
this hurtling plastic of its whole orchestra is

Remembrance of his old team in the stairwell laughing murmuring
purpling underfoot so He tells his wife she's beautiful in the stairwell of his loss

DISSOLVE to the budwhip
pealing soft parts
faraway minaret Bead Arc
dwindled Ice Bears schemes of productivity (a way to get old in new brands of the Occupied Heart
of
The Body of Youth sheens the cost tablet
world-wide-stones-in-circle Random shrines he shakes martinis in the habit of the child
flaw leans
the milk DISSOLVE He makes
a First Motion:
Baby Gold

Set

shirred Exit Half-circle semi

as Lincoln's texture noir with a ram's head

flutes

veterans jovial & sift private tears

adagio silver

chased by hand this

Struggle to put your pants on, sock and button devices bring cat close

sit close cat he likes it back there he sleeps

he Sails to the melon and piney clam-full Bay

stalled hampered calming the dogs in thunder the veteran song Set

rage and blow-out-bolts

Heroic resistance of the limbs, of the organ spine

veterans play out the windows thru Hard Sum Rain lightening swags

O Dolly hair foregone webs and the taste all of her slow Labor weave

here in the sign of Exit freckled

Egress

this and that gets over the hump

of linear infinity and eternity round Struggle to put your pants on and buckle

Garthe  233
The new growth like gowns of poise... when it's not poise exactly but *Equipoise* then.............

*a great and a verygreat*  
Helping Up Mission  
*umbel's This* & that

*Inner Glitter*  
of *Fire in the Eyes*

which both  
fills, and empties out *A Room*

Has GOT  
a bed now  
with the pillow cork cloud for the full-dress muscle  
*fort*  
*White Scar Turrets Wound Turrets Teeth Mark way*

down  
in the grass  
stains juiciest the top of the mantle  
*veterans sing thru*  
the hard sum rain
It was mean or median if you want to follow the good money. He had been impatient taking the furniture. All the space on the mantle pressed by sticky fingers. Outside, someone yelling for eggs. Throwing his hands open, a blossom fell. He had been caught in the act, legs crossed at the back of what he thought was the temple of Vishnu. Palm branches falling, all their patterns the proof of making. Beeeee-low says the neighbor’s cow. Rather than stay in the house, he followed the birds even though what if you fall or are eaten by snakes says the woman who keeps him. I am willing only to the temptations of the curve. I have never landed. I went so slow, caterpillars crossed in front of me.
Yesterday, the first snake. Perhaps it saw me as well.
Some of the men working here wear skirts, their stories wrapped in the ear
wrapped in marbled cloth or on asphalt where unrolled made a
road from village to the world. They drove rickshaws, how would he
explain this to her? A birdnest with two small objects we will call eventually,
birds. Now they seem like fish with tender,
translucent skin.
I don’t know what kind of bird they will be. A woman who does
not wear heels but brushes her hair upside down from childhood.
The man stood, hawking up something out of his throat right outside the dining
room. As an example, the singing that made her a daughter will perhaps reveal
the reasons for chewing betel. I prefer day. Branch moving she
enters the nest. Two birds I heard hit the window, a bat flew into the
ceiling fan. The sculptures are women giving birth to each other from their long
hair twined into a bowstring. Some sang but their mouths didn’t
open. Ringing mud out of the lengths so daughters could be born in the folds.
For morning, no explanation she is carved from limestone.
You will need paraffin
to make an exact copy.

•   •   •
Low hanging fruit if she called herself pretty or
raised her heels. For instance,
a belief you would always regenerate, or grow new limbs like the chopped
gecko. Nothing
more simple than a lean body, a family of chicks. Warble, warble. His bone spur
acts up when he walks fast beside his long-legged companion in tall grass.
With weatherglass she under the palm leaf has prayed with beads,
she is not saddened but full of the fabric's swath and carried by assumed
muteness while all along
she taught herself their language. Isn't that amazing, they say. I want
you to bring something when you come.
Many birds she
understood, a new knife. She won't need the same laughter inside
anymore, as her name made her increasingly able to see the turnip before it
ripened. Yesterday evening
or next time if you have seen the smile and eaten it yourself
won't she recognize you.

• • •
From mud and clay he harvested himself. For instance she will not sell the hiding place but show nests to the one collecting images. Or a question of what had been seen or whether you had ever passed yourself on the road somewhere. Like this, with no evidence, they say. Or what leaves when enumerating your love of trees. The raven says WOW hopping through branches. When you thought you must misspell nuclear in front of a body of light that separates each clay tile on the roof. An image that would not break but would hold water.

•  •  •
My arm was not long enough to reach the fruit from where I was.
The girls talked softer when boys were around. She had been laughing so hard she could barely deliver the punchy line.
Fibromyalgia is still sometimes referred to as a wastebasket diagnosis so therefore I ask no one in particular if there's room for real innovation of the physical. Not where most of the wounded move, where the healthy cannot be bothered—hospital, hospice, home. Beware a death of sight, of awareness. The room: the one where to really see, reminds: fragility lines every intervening glance; you can see from the end right back to the beginning. Room to avoid the typical snatching up of medi(c)ated packaging, desperately swallowing the sexy glossary, a terrifying bleach. Room where you note the pain beginning somewhere in the web of insular cortex connections, where the brain's intra-corpuscular chitchat goes awry & not enough muscle to end any of it. A room,

not unlike a memory, where faking goes straight to the bone, cracks the skeleton apart, vertebra to vessel, so it tumbles open, falling, leaving everything outside it all yellow mess and useless off-white delicacy. Strangeness feels more than a little all right there. As a roof or a fingerprint pressed down. Ink seeping, spilling, or chaff, city debris through a tough grate. In a room, where I could put a vase of stems. Lop off the flowerheads, put them in a bowl to wave their colors in the dark. If still standing, I’ll ask anyone who’ll listen, knowing most aren’t and won’t: How do I look?
A population of 10% women clearly means 90% men.

When I was on the ship, the young, interested men made bets as to who would fuck me first. The green-eyed Louisiana boatswain; the tall, dark-skinned Midwesterner; the short, tongue-ringed Baltimorean. They tried friendship, romance, favors, indifference. Of course I fell for the most obvious: the one with the cross on his back and the lion on his chest, claws full of blood, whose voice reminded me of a place I didn’t even know I had come from, father almost killer of my child

Following a trip to a nightclub in Curacao to which I wore a turquoise skirt that reached mid-thigh, I was immortalized as Seaman Miniskirt in the secret notebook kept in the rafters of Sonar 1. Nobody was supposed to know about that notebook but the men, but for some reason they told me and I wish they hadn’t. Being “one of them” made me feel like property, like an impostor. I didn’t want to keep their secrets. When the ship was bombed, the notebook was among all the other disintegrated things
And now I was one of them

Driving up to the pier & looking at the ship for a full hour, trying to envision myself living in it & eating in it, my soft body in a steel hulk, failed, calling my mother. I had to tell her it was offensive, overlarge, sailors like ants prowling its flat surfaces to the tune of harsh whistles & horns, had to tell her how bad I wanted to change my mind about this Navy shit & we laughed & I pulled my 40 lb. duffel bag out of the trunk of my black Escort & walked a half-mile to the pier in my sharp-creased blues & showed my orders & yeah, I saluted the flag & the watchman, who had a gun.
our native bloodroot
wrapped in a single leaf
each opening blossom
sheltered from remnants of winter

bloodroot flowers are dramatic
but with a brief display
blooming cuts the flower in half
two identical halves

the petals harbor
clever deception this assures
a starting point assures
the plant produces seeds for germination
in every town, even after rain or wind
strips the plant of its blossom

a girl whose loose tongue
reveals her—glimting surface dissolute gut—
hiding in the trees
speaking to animals who bow their heads to listen

—a woman wringing a chicken’s neck
knows when to raise the axe, she says—
like sisters or a sound like small heads
knocked together—

what children know by dreaming—
the rhythms in your mouth as if
fair giving exists in children’s fables—meanwhile
cheap copies of her sprout in every house
but the song she sang as a little girl feeding ants
the crumbs from her dirty fingertips
the leaf is easy to spot  mute among the howling winds
greening the shenandoah slopes scattered among dashes of red
nicknamed red root, corn root but sticky as coagulated seeds
bloodroot has been used in hands sufficiently numb
to induce abortions absolute fires burning in a body
poisonous if ingested at high doses—absorbed into an off note—
into the blood—metaphysically emetic peppered with dust

research is very promising—bloodroot is anti-possession
anesthetic, cathartic, expectorant—diuretic a vault blown open
febrifuge, stimulant and tonic yes we all falter in the fist of earth

* *

escharotic salves—red salve, black salve of women wrapped in hard sheets
grown with greatest reverence rumored poisonous but
it is not like other herbs given like calendula, borage, sage—burning
bloodroot is shy, grows in the shade then a cold breath
likes moisture and seclusion pressed against the insides of cheeks
flowers briefly and then vows never to remain in its place—see—
its leaves yellow and disappear—
Seven Poems

C. Violet Eaton

FROM The Coyote

early drugs were gorse & oceans
stunk like watermelon
& vetiver

early drugs : the fourpart tv epic

pts. 1 & 2 spoors
feat. arc cm.
a parenthesis filled after w/ nettles

pt. 3 pine strafes hillock

pt. 4 Aristoxenus
cold was the ground
tho noise operates by swarm
cold was the ground
malakon tonikon hemiolon
tonus tonus lemma
hunger, so

beans can
is all up in it

& cola

smuggles meal into the body's gaol

:

thinking

condensed parallax
neatly dovetailed faces in phases they hover over th' water

strong like ox

blesséd in acts

in thy harp

the gust is thine

:

writing from above

:

wing (print ‘wing’)

‘archaeopteryx’

enemy / enemy
Black Haw

it won’t be
the empire of leaks
& elks & eaves

their ewes parsing
any pew, midden

I’ll know by these tines
what succor the rank

they wouldn’t of
told no gun joke
Viola Lee

you have parboiled a piece of venison
you have chiseled a wicked farfisa

a hole in the mountain

you practically shout the truth at the bucket

so why blast a graveyard
why doubt thomas

what delinquent pills
them cinquecentennial boys you cast out
were,

& this cusping kiss
Fall Dawne

doused in pink
I am baronness

my rook castled
my gaze suspended

the clouds
accomplish a symmettrie

like dun breasts wrapped in tulle
& the dictionary full
of toxic metals

at both ends

vedic colors
crown the perimeter
Why Dost Thou Hide Thyself in Clouds?

is it because
your reverent finger
once
touched silver

or a smell like paper

or the flesh of trillia, blake,
oxycontin
In Furs

from the decks of the city
the valley seems mere hillocks
carpeted with sorrel
& I want to go there it fastens:
monophonic fabric of earth's interval
& hidden beneath arsenic bismuth sarcosomataceae

um, the quincunx
its imprint on the druggist's wall
appears to have a relation
with the proximity or distance of the vapor
from the eye of the observer

um, the soft toe of an animal
viburnum

the cold cold enclosure of

each day containing several cymbals
that tremble long in pyx of sky
each day containing several horses
each day containing equal horses
Cuatro Poemas

Mónica de la Torre

lalimitación

en el próximo nivel no loadoranmáshadejadoserhumanoyen el próximo nivel loadorancomo una bispor razones aparentesy diversas y mentales nubes cuyos fundamentos es homogéneos está ahí elorigen del heterogéneo compañido de perfor cucilampopiclíorfrenéticas en nubes noinubes laslimitaciones onpenosas en el próximo nivel loadorancomo una ción como uno nido de oro como una nube en el cielo y los soles sus ojos continuos de esteloscánceren el próximo nivel amuleto de colores complicados todo acompañado de frecuentes y los del nivel exterior loadoran como hombre de frenéticas nubes espirituales y en el próximo nivel loadorancomo carneros es recurrrir alidea arcaica
in the next tier they adore him not as he is no longer human in the next tier they adore him as an ibis for apparently widely different things mental clouds of a homogeneous basis from homogeneity emerges heterogeneity accompanied to obylie lampstypical of wisdom its elastic frenetic clouds non cloudslimitations are pitiful in the next tier he is adored as a goat as a span on his use effective regardless such is this tendency of modern thought in the next tier he is adored as a golden hawk its wings the sky sun and moon its eyes send enduring glimmers in the next tier he is adored as a crab an amulet of complicated colors everything often accompanied those in the outer tier they adore him as a man of frenetic spiritual clouds going back archaic ideas in the next tier he is adored as a ram its fleece wraps idols
elocultamiento del aluz

convivandiu rinsiglosunoallado del otro
tío abajo mozo colonia astrunk vivasmás
anal kiercosas fenkéadasuicos adelagua
y aceite y vino de deseándose está el primero
el axioma principal cuyos símbolo es finita
inteligencia así pues nos que sal al luz eso
que la crítica produce la doctrina secreta
es el planeta tierra metafísico y receptivo a
otras cosas condese ossemejantes com o el don
desea glomerar y viven juntas los siglos en
esta época no intervengan en las prácticas
del los demás note adhieras como el fuego son
los niveles estirta dose praglomerar y ser
en un ser absoluto se conviert en colonias
deanimal pare ce que cada cosa asuman era
exist en como san isima trinidad y truncada.
darkening of the light brightness hiding

for a thousand years they lived side by side
downriver thrive zoo ecological colonies
livetrunks final desirable thing stoeach
their own like water and oil and land win eth this
the first fundamental axiom symbolized by
finite intelligences so do not bring to light
products of criticism the secret doctrine
is a metaphysical earth receptive to other
things with similar desires show where they
gather coexist for centuries in such times
you ought not interfere with the practices
of others and cling like fire it is the tiers
where they gather becoming one absolute being
animal colonies where everything is
twined the holy trinity truncated knotted
Y denuevoensuelementoprimordiallas estatuasserránderrocadas una estatuaselea equivalenteamiyonomi yonicomcontraestatua hocontrayóperonoyiaxuenestado dequietud nosehallalamontaña cuando todo el universosopor fuerzas saturó al infinit o de oscuridad no hay mirada que perceive la luz así que pido que se establezcan miseria y sigue pero allí no halló habré enviado al mundoose el que yosera mi equivalente keçiel crezódiúrantesiglos inesigue creció en el cielo d urante s iglosyposesosie se cielpendándarainciudá yude la ciudad en ruinas sabajono habí atampo conicentr o del luminosidad solo espíritustendidos y si se el equivalente celestial disputas sin incumbirdurmiedop profunda mentemino yonomic contraestatua
thewanderer

returned to his primordial element the statues shall be overthrown equivalent to mine and my not my counter statue and my non required noti which even cannot find remaining still the mountain when the whole universe necessarily filled the infinite all with darkness there is no eye to perceive light that my being might be established and continue there it could not find have is sent into the world that i who would be my equivalent who participates in business after eons of multiplying in the skies from which hung the ruins of cities onto which fire clung and the ruins of cities below there was no center no luminosity only lying spirits celestial equivalents and nobody's business fast asleep in a deep slumber my not in not my counter statue
misimplemiradaaniquilaríaaquienesse
inflanyosedesinflanlatierrareceptiva
deesaclaracomprensióndependeycuando
sienganalagentecomosifueranguadañasy
actinoquosfensinrostroyfluidosentes
titánicosintorsoslaurdimbredemasas
humanasgozándoseentresípuesalplacer
loinvitanfrecuentementeegozandiríqan
losdañososedisqalansecumulanelexamen
deltrabajismoportantonomoserequiere
disculpaseanteellectordirigenlos
dañosconojosactínicosycomosinrostro
peroconmuchosmiembrosflotantesquese
hacenpedazoseacumulanhaciéndosela
guerraentreellosestáescritoayadetodo
losiguienteentendertanmagnánimoes
elobsequiomuítosflotisuentosmiembros
revueltasenvuelomásquelnochetequía
cortesanassonpoconumerosasenesas
parteslanzanrayoszigzaganteideas
antesdepasarentrealosderrumbeskeno
encuentuparatornarsefamiliaresdicen
mientrasgozarestoesnochemásinfernal
entrealtosderrumbamientossinnumerar
manmasaseninterguerravuelvrevolvias
senflandescuansiegangentemoguadañas
onemereglanceofmineannihilatesthose
whoinflateanddeflatethemselvesearth
receptiveonfreecomprehensiondepends
andreapingpeopleasiftheywerescythes
withuglyantinomiesandfacelessliquid
amidtitanictorsolessentitiesofhuman
massesoftenpleasuringeachotherwhile
theydirecttheirdamagewhichdisperses
oraaccumulatesandtheperusalofthework
itselfthereforenoapologylwillrequire
toaskthatreadersdirecttheircobwebby
damageteareachothersfloatingmembers
accumulatingawarstateastateofwarnow
itiswrittensoanunderstandingfollows
suchagenerousgiftaloosememberfloats
tangledinflightmorethannightasguide
courtesansarefewinnumberinsuchzones
throwingzigzaggingthunderboltsbasic
ideasbeforeenteringthetallcollapses
cannotfindcannotmakehimselffamiliar
meanwhiletheytakepleasureitisbeyond
hellishthenightthedownfallsnumerous
manmassesentangledininternecinewars
andreapingpeopleasiftheywerescythes
These poems are transcreations of a few passages from San Signos by Xul Solar (1887–1963), a visionary Argentine artist, writer, and language inventor. Recently published for the first time, San Signos gathers the writings from the 1920s and ’30s that methodically record the visions Xul Solar would have after consulting the I Ching. It was none other than Aleister Crowley who recommended this controlled astral-travel method to Xul Solar—the two met in London in 1924. Often inspiring paintings, Xul Solar wrote these visions in Spanish and then translated them into Neocriollo. Aimed at uniting the Americas, the Neocriollo language resulted from the combination of Spanish and Portuguese words with scientific terminology, child speak, and the roots of words in English, Italian, French, German, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Tupí-Guaraní, Náhuatl, Sanskrit, and Chinese. Xul Solar would subsequently translate some of the San Signos visions into paintings.

To transcreate Solar’s poems I traced the sources of his occultist research and consulted the I Ching. The number of the hexagrams I read determined which pages and sentences from Solar’s San Signos, Aleister Crowley’s The Book of the Law, and Madame Blatavsky’s The Secret Doctrine I would cut up and weave together.
Four Poems

Phyllis Rosenzweig

The Azimuth Angle

for Diane Ward

If you are standing at a point on the earth and you can see the entire horizon in all directions, then you are in the center of a circle which can be divided into 360 degrees.

If you look to (true) north, that is considered the reference point or zero degrees on the circle. Imagine a line drawn on the earth from yourself to that point.

If you look up and see a star, and then imagine a line dropping directly down to the earth then that point can be traced out to a point on the horizon.

That point can be identified by the degree of its position (in relation to zero or north) and THAT is the azimuth angle
Cat Sleeping on 28th Street

Cat sleeping on 28th Street
Wolves, like dogs, dig because
Ingrained genetic behavior
Beautiful evidence
Fill in the thought bubble
It is also reflected
A tight, mysterious fraternity
A lovely way to put it
Ghostiness and time
Sun on empty
Cocoon of wealth
. . . must have felt very bad
But isn’t that really what you said?
Like the roller coaster with three primary colors
What is underneath?
That is always my question
Yes, it’s the space underneath
The space below with your body in dance
In psychology it is called “the attachment theory”
    Your style of attaching happens very early in life

So we are in the basement
I’m thinking late morning
Phyllis, the book was originally in German
Ich bin die kleine Katze
She pointed at the first one
“ . . . you, yes you . . .
    . . . you are hideous”

annunci animali gratis

The perfect woman
Slender, industrious, generous
I love the sky. I don’t know why/ it is blue
    It is grey (that soft gray)
Or the really dark (when it is going to rain)
Room in my head
(No room in my head)
(A room in my head)
    Stars shine
You girls read to stay on your tricycles
Dog's funny walk downstairs
Sloppy zebra
Fishy translator
Hooky objects
Thick description

But in
An odd sort of way,
    flattering
Unless numbers are considered words
Which (obviously) I just did
I hate the beautiful weather
    I’ve been given a gift
    Or a horse or a pony or look Ma I did it
Or Language poet being a Buddhist
Digital Lipstick

A love poem for A

Be careful; it’s icy.

Lynne Dreyer

Your voice is a child
A
shrimp’s heart is in its head
So famous people
So I just went to the store
Daily agenda
It was wonderful to spend some time all together
The pop tarts
The happy gloves
“Second Reality”
by future crew
by Renaissance
by crystal dreams indexed under
assembly
All of us are careful
Child on radio
‘Vavoom’ means everything yet is utterly baffling;
‘Vavoom’ is the alter ego
the totality of Vavoom’s cry and this to throw light on
children less fearful now
Stuck in airport
Facebook is a social utility
I never told anybody
Imagine you are the ocean
Wonder the origins of “schleppy”
I meant on the other hand
I think he is misremembering
inury
Authors’ cats
Camouflage
Ninny
I sort of flashed on him devoid of all his expectations of himself
“Zebra, I love the plastic flamingo on your lawn”
Umbrella

distinguished by sky,
so corrected the awful timing from this afternoon
the sephora one
the aura cold and macho
Take me back, please
From Vanity Fair “Planetarium” horoscope, August 1995

If, come September, you write an essay called “What I Did This Summer,”
I decided to look around the place and began
From Kenneth Koch (edited),
Say three or four things about lovers
And put their names in every line
It is now dark and snowy and I’m cooling my heels at the airport
instead of jetting back to you
Just like us?
Or pretty much unaware?

Daily Agenda
What we’ve always looked for
now we even listen to
Icarus

Not tired
something is strange
up since 3:30 a.m.
want to go to sleep but don’t feel sleepy
a horizontal heart (can you see it?)
Did something terrible

A
GHOST DOG!
Emmy Lou Harris’s Hard Bargain
The planetary altogether
and “i like
your moral; i think i’ll adopt it as my moral”
Well . . . that’s probably a better place to be
the truth is I find writing my writing a little crazy. If I was a
painter and painted what I write I would not

“A brown tinged rain continues to fall”
maybe all the writing I need is to write emails to you

I just discovered in my inbox

I see a plane descending
into a
cloudless
sky
A crepe de Chine shirtdress
a
sparrow print
what Buddhists call the eightfold
path

I like meeting in the city on a fall evening at 5:30 p.m.
double rainbows
Sunblock
reading glasses
I love those agrarian metaphors
Infidelity . . . stay with us
the worst thing in the world, and most dangerous
because it is just going to burn
   you have nowhere to
go

   The other person remarked how small
the boat was
The tender room
   ... it comforts me ... what to do, when you are not absorbed
   a natural
easy type of languidness
   oh I forgot it's called you
but in the end it seems
   Tell me and I'll make them ...
Why are you so eloquent?
Everything you said I am connected to
   the language, the poet, the buddhist priest
I
have sadness and anxiety
   ... only those two little things
we need to fill each other in
   I'll tell you if you tell me
my mind is so obsessed
   all of these postures and
alignments and names
   we have an open book
how can she say that
surrounded by another kind of writing
   I know it's my lesson
I hate endings
   I'm okay but feeling down
   I'm done with that
with existential loneliness
   let me know about the
time

Your language reminds me when we went to the ocean and drank
   ... it's
needed
I will try to explain
   the light today is very soft right now and I am alone
It's peaceful, the sky is the lightest blue
   (almost silver, almost
grey)
Infiérname

Arturo Ramírez Lara

Tómame el cuerpo
Para qué sirve el cuerpo
Toma mi propósito y húndeme

El cuerpo es paciente y quiere que lo destrocen
El cuerpo espera una espada y la recibe
Espera un dolor y se inunda

Dale al cuerpo lo que es del cuerpo infiérnalos

Con el interés de tus cuerpos me quedo aquí
Aquí espero tus cuerpos y la noche

La noche fue lo más terrible que inventamos los hombres
La fuimos haciendo a base de manchas y escupitajos a dios

Pobres los seres que somos pobres y caminamos cargando un cuerpo que quiere irse

Yo quiero que mi cuerpo se infierne para colocarle los puntos a las íes de este dios tan hijo de puta que se da el lujo de no existir
Para patearle el culo a la patria
Para quebrarle los huesos a todos en su reunión de pestes

Infiérname
A este cuerpo le cabe otro cuerpo que lo hunda
Toma una varita mágica una espada gruesa como esas medievales con las que los hombres lucen tan torpes
Toma una flauta y tócame un báculo como esos con los que caminan los ínfimos pontífices del engaño y la manutención

Toma tu cuerpo y méntelo en el cuerpo y vuelve y vuelve
Este cuerpo quiere que tu cuerpo lo infierne
Infernalize Me

Arturo Ramírez Lara

Translated By John Pluecker

Take this body from me
What’s this body good for
Take my purpose and sink me

This body is patient and wants to be shattered
This body waits for a sword and takes it in
Waits for a pain and is flooded

Render unto the body what is the body’s infernalize it

For the good of your bodies I stay here
Here I wait for your bodies and the night

The night was the most terrible thing we men invented
We made it out of stains and gobs of spit launched at god

How poor are we poor beings and we walk we bear a body that
wants to leave

I want my body to infernalize itself to put the dots on the i’s of this
deity this god such a son of a bitch allows himself the luxury of not existing
To kick the nation’s ass
To break their bones all of them at their gathering of plagues

Infernalize me
Inside this body fits another body that sinks it
Take a magic wand a thick sword like those medieval ones
with which men look so clumsy
Take a flute and touch a stick for me like the ones used by the
vilest high priests of deceit and entitlement

Take your body and put it in this body and come back and come back
This body wants your body to infernalize it
Tu cuerpo será mi gran infernador del mundo.

Todos los cuerpos del mundo están rotos del alma
Todos los cuerpos del mundo caben en mi cuerpo
Yo quiero que me infiernes con todos los cuerpos del mundo

Y los cuerpos de los hombres vienen a la puerta buscando su pequeño pedazo de desamor
Yo les doy su desamor para ganarme tu infierno
Yo no puedo evitar que tu infierno sea nuestro infierno y que tú te cobijes entre las piernas de los demás y te arrastres buscando la sangre de todos

Vamos a dejar que nuestro infierno implote hacía nosotros que somos su centro.

Yo soy el lugar de tu infierno
Infiérrname

Come una por una las células de tus alrededores
Dame tu infierno de leche y cobijas
Mete el miedo y el dulzor que quiebra los corazones descompasados
Aquí hay un centro de un infierno que es tuyo y es nuestro pero que es para ti
Aquí está nuestro infierno que te pido con todas mis piernas y mis tiempos de guerra

Mi cara no es tuya sino el cuerpo
Mis manos no son tuyas sino el cuerpo
Mis ojos no son tuyos sino el cuerpo
Mi alma es tuya porque la traigo esparcida por el cuerpo
El cuerpo es el que se infiera
Infiérrnalos

Yo quiero que todos los hombres del mundo metan su cuerpo en mi cuerpo para que nos infiernen
Infiérrnemos desde dentro

Yo sé que tu infierno está entre barandales y buganvillas y que se acerca desde adentro buscando el sinsabor de los cuerpos de los hombres
Pero yo lo busco entre las multitudes ansiosas de las cosas del mundo

Tú te vistes con las coronas de todos los hombres del mundo
Your body will be my great infernalizer of the world.

All the world’s bodies are soul-broken
All the world’s bodies fit in my body
I want you to infernalize me with all the world’s bodies

And men’s bodies come to the door looking for their little piece of no-love
I give them their no-love to gain your inferno
I can’t prevent it: your inferno is our inferno and you blanket yourself in other people’s legs and drag yourself along looking for everyone’s blood

We’re going to let our inferno implode into us for we are its center.

I am the place of your inferno
Infernalize me

Eat the cells of your surroundings one by one
Give me your inferno of milk and blankets
Add the fear and sweetness that breaks unsteady hearts
Here there’s a center of an inferno that’s yours and is ours but which is for you
Here is our inferno that I plead for with all my legs and my times of warMy face is not yours this body is

My hands are not yours this body is
My eyes are not yours this body is
My soul is yours because it’s dispersed throughout my body
This body is the one that infernalizes itself
Infernalize them

I want all the men in the world to put their body in my body so they infernalize us
Infernalize us from inside out

I know that your inferno is between the railings and the bougainvilleas and that it’s coming closer from the inside looking for the insipid sorrow of men’s bodies
But I look for it among the masses anxious about the things of the world

You wear the crowns of all the men in the world

Lara, trans. Pluecker
Mándame tu infierno coronado con la nada cargada por las cabezas del mundo
Tú fuiste el amor el infierno y mi tierra
Lléñala con tu carne cubierta con sal
Que del infierno viene la sal y los dulces placeres entre las piernas
Entre mis piernas
Mis piernas apenas abrirán a tu infierno de flores rotas y manuscritos sepulcrosos

Yo digo que las cosas son como son pero no debería
Debería decir que tu infierno es uno de barandales y rosas
Yo digo infiérmame para que abras los brazos y tú gran misericordioso tomas las piernas
Yo digo hazme tu infierno en tu blancura para cubrirla de cardenales
Yo digo te dejo mi mar de agua sosa

Infiérname de la boca al tobillo
Infiérname del ombligo a la espalda
Deja mi piel helarse en la tierra de tu infierno
Méteme tu infierno para que me corra por dentro como la sangre

Si mi cuerpo fuera un bosque tú serías el color
Todo lo que ves infiérmalo
Déjame aquí tu infierno en la palma de la mano
Si mi corazón fuera un hombre tú serías su planeta

Amarízame en el espacio vacío con todos tus inviernos
Déjame que te hable desde los vendavales y las arenas
Quítame todo tu cuerpo
Párteme

Vamos a celebrar que las alambradas ya no sostienen a nadie
Hundámonos en la nuestra humanidad caduca
Vamos a mirarnos de cerca las manos llenas

Como si fuera color cámbiame
Como si fuera silencio lléname
Como si fuera universo púdreme

Lara
Send me your inferno crowned with the nothing carried by the heads of the world
You were the love the inferno and my land
Fill it with your flesh covered in salt
So from the inferno comes the salt and sweet pleasure between the legs
Between my legs
My legs will barely open to your inferno of broken flowers and sepulchral manuscripts

I say things are the way they are but I shouldn’t
I should say that your inferno is one of railings and roses
I say infernalize me so you open your arms and great merciful you you take my legs
I say make me your inferno in your whiteness to cover it with cardinals
I say I leave you my sea of bland water

Infernalize me from mouth to ankle
Infernalize me from navel to back
Leave my skin to freeze on the ground of your inferno
Put your inferno into me so it flows inside me like blood

If my body were a forest you would be the color

Everything you see infernalize it
Leave your inferno here in the palm of my hand

If my heart were a man you would be its planet

Land on me on the sea in the empty space with all your winters
Let me speak to you from the gales and the sands
Rid me of your whole body
Split me

We’re going to celebrate that barbed wire fences no longer support anyone
Let’s sink ourselves into this ours lapsed humanity
We’re going to watch our full hands up close

As if color change me
As if silence fill me
As if universe rot me

Lara, trans. Pluecker
FROM **Ill-Sense**

*Rusty Morrison*

**Ill-sense**

A canopy of glass beads strung on knotted string

is replacing sky.

Health, the ornament nested in her childhood jewelry-box

that she hadn’t prized until it was lost.

She’s hung a gull’s feather from her white ceiling with tacks and long white thread,

allowing that a symptom turns like an object

learning wind,

its shred-instrument.

Viewed from the proper remove, a symptom can be glimpsed traveling back

from any conclusions about illness that a mind could draw.

There’d been a kitchen table filled with light

but nothing remains on the table

that the light had thrown itself down upon to witness.

The stillness of the empty stairwell is no easier to enter

than if it had been locked.
**Ill-sense**

What might breathing be, an empty bench where seagulls alight?

What is a symptom if its exterior simplicity

is so smooth

that no description will latch to it?

It's night.

Sleepless. Not entirely silent. Forgotten hymns stitch to her breathing

like embroidery on a handkerchief.

Not absent of perception, but the absences folded into perception

wherever it falls.

A fly landing inside her water-glass, preserved

in its millennium.
**Ill-sense**

One spotlight strobes a black wall, one messenger runs barefoot through snow,

one imaginary symptom, truant from sense, steals a cloak from dark for her body's flight
deep into its privacies. A dangerous gift, a Promethean theft

always earns a reckoning. One imaginary symptom strands itself inside her

when the onset of sickness is appeased.

Little deadness, still listening.

Listing.

Call it porous, not pocked. The road after last night's rain

ghosts with opportunity.

There'd been a blue apple in the bowl of red apples, only one,

causin the whole assortment to careen toward a previously unseen monochromatic. How many spectrums behind it?
Sweat. Her body’s outer edge extends—

an evaporation

of intent into the larger air.

Each onset of illness orphans her meaning of body.

Sunset at her back, her likeness shaped in shadow before her.

Walk toward it. Like breathing on glass

to watch what disappears.

A river, if strong enough, will find its course into the salt bay

that swallows it.

She’d wanted concreteness, but her understanding

was always a few steps farther. While distance succumbs

to every lark’s call.

Her symptoms impersonate the shapelessness of day,

which a body fills, never finishes.

What undulates deep in a backwater

is unreadable on its surface, though surface is never split

from its depth.

Illness stretches taut

the continuum between opposites, which she might learn to

follow in both directions

wherever she finds it—
the cracks in the dilapidated shed in her backyard
drawing new light each morning
into its dirt and darkness. The deeply-hooded figure in her
dream last night
compelled witness with its facelessness.
The glimmer she catches on an upchurn of brown foam
from the dirty stream
she'd walked all this way to see
bring her descriptors,
like ‘fullness’ or ‘lack’, ‘beauty’ or ‘ruin’, to their knees equally.
The Briefing

James Belflower

It won’t be much different than we are accustomed to. If I can’t boundary a fief can it remain a fief, if I remain negligent throughout, can it remain a fief, if I use language other than from stone tablets can it remain a fief, if I read it as a drone throughout, though tenderly, can it remain a fief, if I remove that language and compose it thin can it remain if or if we

precisely share what remains of it can if become it and therefore if...

“Or, today, sending the currents burning in an arc, a lyre strung in an hermetic globe, we switch the deuce from off to on and sit about the table talking.”

It is said, an advent of spills

an arc, of occluded feuds...

misspoken circles in a primitive hunt...

some formulas for meticulous negligence...
Histrionics...

...perhaps. Or perhaps, how is also who, at once, and once whether or not addressed,

risky projections...

...gather an ambit to vigilantly overlook everything?

Now negligence and a force ...

sleep, hypnosis and gestural...

...“signs among us”...

I insist that's virtual. I mean the civic in that italicized line.

You can quote me on that...

Actually, if you would, quote this line instead:

“Perhaps act is also shun, at once, at least when actively met with unpredictability.”
It is mostly equal, does not almost equal.

The majority of readers will breeze past this formula, as I have for lack of comprehension. I’ll attempt to unpack what it means to me, send it on its tour...

A portion of public endeavors operate through ignorance and develop into negligence. Part of it is an attempt to repose security, what we might momentarily label a “tourist phase.”

“A man, a plan, a canal, Panama!”

Let’s claim that the “a” that introduces the phrase directly above is a different “a” from that which travels and which ends it. So, in some moments it tours a man, plan, canal and panama. In other senses we suspect it may be identical in form, but not in time. We are on a canal.

Let’s say that where there’s a choice there’s a place.

Let’s say there’s an infinite “a” that the reader and spectator spot.

Let’s say there’s no secure distinction between “a.”

So “a” could be an image...
a contour...
to address address. This is you. This is that. For our speaking that will be from this point forward.

But it is also abandon.

That is all.
To Address Inviscid Flow:

\[
\rho \left( \frac{\partial}{\partial t} + \mathbf{u} \cdot \nabla \right) \mathbf{u} + \nabla p = 0
\]

I’m assuming that I’ll read this next part fast enough that I will not be entitled to govern, that no one will remember most of it. Fast enough that rather than rely on the wavelike memory usually occurring at a presentation, specifically the slow curl of your thought turning over the preceding pages and the wonderfully witty metaphor of water, dirt and brine slowly undulating around us, these waves will stand up straighter, like saw waves. Saw waves look like this:

**To Virtuoso:** Hold your right arm horizontally in front of your chest. Take your left arm and raise it vertically, placing your right fingers under the elbow of your left arm. Now slope your left arm down toward your right and curl your wrist as sharply as possible until it contacts your forearm. This should resemble a triangle shape with its shortest side (your hand) closest to your right elbow. Now place your mouth in the triangle you’ve formed and read the following passage.

You probably know this already, but saw waves are rather uniquely toothed shaped sine waves. In other words, mouths that move by too quickly to see what they contain, rather you assume something is melted in them. After all what else are mouths for? Even the empty ones contain the word “desire”...

I’ll read this next part, that quickly, as quickly as I said I would, as I was saying I would.

Rather, I will.
Let me recall the mouth for just a moment. It was my error. These waves don’t resemble a mouth at all. Rather, the view down a long shore where curling teeth…Benjamin writes, “ideas come to life only when extremes are assembled around them.”

However, even though we might have been wrong, there was fancy there. Fancy to consider waves as teeth, and imagine a mouth distinct as an ocean. It is difficult to have teeth without a mouth, or at the very least, painful.

But this mouth might be open differently. Perhaps thought as perpetually open, or perpetually toothless. Not like a fish, but open in the sense that its speech has no ring, or its speech is water, like a fish. In the sense that these teeth desire our idea of a mouth but don’t necessitate the ringing that mouth provides.

An idea, and a sharp one at that, but a compass possible only by passing through the thought of teeth, perhaps an imprecise gnashing on water...

I’d like to begin today, thinking in this way:

**To Virtuoso:** Throat sing using Kargyraa basic technique. Focus on your most resonant notes for as long as possible with one breath. Try to make them as loud as possible.
It seems the mechanic is in a strange position today. Cars are becoming more and more alarming to the general public, at least their guts. A concealed kinesis that haunts the acceleration from window to ocular nerve. There is a fascination with the privacy of black boxes, a fever whirring: general intellect. Consider how many variations on fever are out there today.

Yet, this is only one part, the mechanic also lives in fear of uncovering that response is not due to stimuli. Mustang (or gelding) and necessity, a feral contagion: “distantly of the people.” Leaning into motors, the oils of autotation. A ghost heats: fans uncared for, blow social power elsewhere, not bailed out.

An essentialist taste has lurked in the water, body and the blades mulled over so far, a desire for centripetal and coalescent. But this notion does not wet the emerging collection, even if water, bodies and blades do.

In the open system of community,

“It is true the great mineral silence
Vibrates, hums, a process
Completing itself

In which the windshield wipers
Of the cars are visible”

for a long time I have misunderstood the relationships of windshields, ghosts, and publics, through a logic of drivers,

and I love you, mineral mechanic
and I fear democracy

when driven complete...
Luhmann was mentioned earlier. He describes the observer as the spot in time from which the paradox of communication takes place. His words are much more succinct though: “An observer cannot see what he cannot see. Neither can he see that he cannot see what he cannot see.” For now we’ll name the observer J. He argues that each J. has a blind spot that can only be seen by the initial observer when another observer observes it. I’m tempted to point out that both his argument, and his phrase pivots on the single letter of difference between “that” and “what” but that has already caused so much confusion in terrorist circles.

“One is not one because one is always two that is one is always coming to a recognition of what the one who is one is writing that is telling.”

This immediately reminded me of the black spot that pirates delivered to enemies. Almost always this was a summons, and meant that one was marked for death. Sometimes they wrote different threats on the other side, like “You have till ten tonight.” This makes one side seem redundant.

Here’s one idea. Remember an old story about a group of men? One of them is given a black spot rutted into a page torn from a bible. Again, immediately think of a circle. If I had said gender, perhaps we all would have thought of a circle, perhaps not. Anyway, the image of a pirate smearing a chunk of charcoal onto breath—God’s or a prophet’s—along with blackening fingers. Carefully, delicately, trims out the rudely etched death with a dagger and thinks of some other threatening, and poignant phrase for the back.

This is my best guess for the text underneath a black spot:

“Poetry was initially nothing other than concealed theology”

What tempts me is the image as a circle, the angry ruts in the paper not completely eclipsing the moderated light of this phrase, and instead adding to the antumbra. The texture of Christmas, the candle burned emphases.

Though there are three types of shadow, even an umbra creates blind spots in an observer.
We could preliminarily consider this a black hole, and that anomaly might help. The words or breath, along the event horizon would be the furthest from singularity, and at the same time, the hole would be too. However, my guess is that few, if any of those pirates thought of it that way. Why?

Is there a notable difference between a smear and a hole? Why do we never imagine someone leaping down into a rabbit smear?

Why not just snip a hole from a text and call both gifts?

Why not call concealed theology, communication?
“You’re tired,”
one of them said, “You don’t want
to build the city.”

“Yes, I’m tired,”
I said & sat down on a boulder
near the spring

Bleeding freely
& sold or kept or sold & kept or sold

Our names are our name

Scatherings, leaking sores

Glutter &

,more dim,

Glow
On flat land

Black branches blue sky

& a man his daughter

In his hands her severed hands
Left the light—still

The light left kept

Sun-scour, cicada sift
mesquite

& so sad his see
up there there is
no crown on thm

& weeping we gone
slouching evry cleft
“we gone down

& unable to “die
down in it
twigs in boltered hair
aslan shoulders her

a constitution shreds

and her all and

and her every trouble slow
murmur then unheard of
ferocity  hand-made
organs dark  fists

God's own goddamn
soul

the gutter
& sold or kept or sold & kept or sold

Someone Found
Not a lady no more

As in,
The “Etc. Etc.”
Of Texas
Two Poems

Joseph Bradshaw

For Kevin (For Jane)

We are our hands differently than our voice
— Martin Corless-Smith
is in Boise Idaho
I used to live there and then
after I lived there I used to think about
Boise Idaho, and then I stopped thinking
about Boise Idaho or Caldwell Idaho
or Mountain Home Idaho
or Homedale Idaho or Meridian Idaho
now I live in New York City and mostly
I think about New York City
but Jamie and I want to go to Oakland
and I’ve never been to Oakland, so sometimes
I think about Oakland and I think about
Sarah Larsen and David Brazil
and Jane Gregory and Michael Nicoloff
and Rob Halpern and Kevin Killian
and I think about other people who
I forget now, and I think about Jack Spicer
because I always think about Jack Spicer
sitting in his basement apartment in
North Beach, which I hear is very expensive now
Spicer is sitting at his tiny desk, drunk
after The Place, it’s probably past 3:00
and he’s either sitting dimly alone or
sitting in his dim room with maybe Jim
passed out in the smelly double bed they share
and Jim only let Spicer kiss him a couple times
before he passed out, he didn’t even let Spicer
give him a quick hand job and Spicer
is sitting at his tiny desk, just waiting
just like me, I’m always waiting
for this to appear, and by “this” I mean this thing in front of you, which I’m willing to you, it takes patience to wait for this strange willfulness, as Spicer taught us and by “us” I mean anybody but most especially myself, and I don’t mean to backtrack, Jane, but I often think of you sitting alone at your desk which you tell me has mouse poop in it and I think about how you wait and I’m sitting at my desk as I write this across the street from Maria Hernandez Park and even as I will this I still feel like I’m waiting, like the “this” in this is actually an empty this, pointing to that and when I turn my head to that, nothing’s there and that nothing obscures the moment when I most recognize myself, and this is that moment and I’m so glad I’m here with you—

CAN’T STOP
WON’T STOP
DON’T ASK
QUESTIONS
HANNAH
WEINER
SAYS DON’T
EAT PEOPLE
For Trina (At the Feet of Jack Spicer)

Words are not here to be used
they’re a power bewitching
and eluding us, even Eileen Myles
is betrayed at times
I wish I was Eileen Myles
but I’m more Hannah Weiner
but if I was Eileen Myles
I’d drink milk like I mean it
I’d repeat the things I heard
on Leave It to Beaver remembering
the father’s subtle lamentations
in his grand oubliette
I want him to touch my face after
I give him wet chocolate
I want him to inscribe on my forehead
I SEE BIRDS as I grip his cock
I want to know suburban ecstasy
and that words can never be transparent
and this is not heartless, George Oppen
my vagina’s coughing out your semen
what the heart longs for
when it only knows heat.

Sueyeun Juliette Lee

The news from Shenyang, now fallen into the sea, writhes in lasers across evenly distributed stratus clouds. The Dow is up seventeen hundred points. Contemporaneity invites us along, and as a dweller of this partitioned atmosphere, I cannot resist. As for our infinite summer, the endless variety of sauces and nibbling sticks, the badminton we pretend to play as though on command—it is careless of our resistance, our various stands. I feel heavy in the center of my body at this thought. You tell me to mime synchronizing my breath like a mythical combustion engine for fifteen days in response.

•     •     •

Our gains help me remember the second symbol of my name. It varies according to the direction I face or travel in. As a method for triangulation, of finding consonance in the midst of a harmonic gale, it allows me to proceed intelligibly, as though marking a stony path traced in winding desert sand.

We park parallel to each other on the concourse, directing the new trans-Pacific hub to rest on a porcelain tarmac. A mental note lodges in my spine—to recount my dreams, in red, to you across a lake filled with snow.

The hub’s recoil requires us to desert our posts. And from them we flee.
What is it to be made of water and light, to run towards an end without demarcation? My body resists running, floats along an intelligent track inadvertently attuned to the world market’s ups and downs. If this century is best characterized by its heat and speed, we long to be cold, mimicking a damp furnace for night without a sense of hazard in the park.

I spend the day packing “kites” with “snow.”

•     •     •

We wander outside the Common Cultures at dusk. Multiple remnants of discarded bodies litter the ground, many manufactured to resemble a lost dream. I move lightly between them, or rather through, and my shadow spells them back together into a continuous statement on individuality and electronics. Captured in a cloudy iris, the sky’s reflection no longer seems aberrant. I lean on you, turning in my heart how to unify the light paths you cast against me after hours. A radial semaphore in the distance merges with the tectonic rigs across the horizon. The sight of it calls a short prayer forth from my mouth: a pictograph I dreamed.
We spend the afternoon together watching a docudrama about wild horses that roamed the ancient Arctic circle. Surprisingly sleek, built for speed and not the weather, they were remarkable for their recklessness. They careen headlong down ice bluffs to fall into a broken heap. We can hear the small, tinny sounds of their terror as they plunge across vast, glowing glacial faces. All of this takes place alongside an abstractly relentless gunmetal sea. I can feel you turn to me, wetness marking the corners of your lips and eyes. I, too, am mesmerized, my vision limited to a sense of motion on the peripheries. Later, I am summoned for an impromptu scan and, miraculously, I pass.

• • •

It isn’t what you asked for, but with it you make do. There’s nothing to hide, you nod to me, because we share it inside our eyes. When we break contact, the data stream zips loose elegantly in a recycled wind. I feel a heavy gas rise within me at the sight, the way those small keys we fingered gently dissolve into mist. I remind myself to be incautious, to make myself as transparent as I can. We are porous, we understand, we are taken up and studied by no entity. Later, I volunteer to mime vacuuming the stairs.
I want to say that you address me from another age, or I live in the future that you dreamed. We wandered here together after I was tossed into a rose colored storm. The flickering sheets of antiquity brushing across my mind are a hazardous affair, and inside of them I became monstrous and long. The plastered room with one window facing the careless street is overrun with brilliant horses, they came from the other side of the moon and live now on a lake of ice. They run across my memories: I focus very strongly on this and the moment magnifies. The mail arrives to snap me from this reverie. I try hard to return, remain resolute in my emptiness.

•   •   •

We spend a lot of our time together on the new practice of miming collective breathing. I see how this takes us towards another manner of gathering, of setting things aside that are filled with activity and then transformed. Brightness. I am certain this is what powers the recollections we continually strive to have.

We watch them disintegrate in a sidereal gale. As the primary wind rises to its glimmering siren pitch, our gaze breaks. The tarmac requires our adolescence.
After gathering rosemary from the Common Cultures, we sit in a shallow depression and act out sewing them into quilts and hand-spun cotton clothes. It’s too hot, I think, and play dead. It’s not the first time I find myself thinking that I’d rather hide behind a cape and rod, or speak through tightly pursed lips to a confused throng. At four, I get up. I’ve been laying on the sidewalk for three years. Minor stars glimmer dimly across the wall—a gentle reminder that the recycling needs to be taken in, my heart rate entered into the plaque by the mail slot, that it’s my turn to climb down into the virtual well. You confront me before I’ve made up my mind to move, and though it hurts to evaporate in the same way that daylight also suffers, I am satisfied.

•  •  •

At daybreak, then the sun at noon, and later at dusk, memory ever announces the roundness of the era. If I could bloom a begonia blossom, or send quills from my thoughts, the gorgeousness of the surround might better mirror the marshaled affect of my dystrophies. Sunlight as glass, or the way our youth is now a token—of what hazy scenes. You assure me that with time and a more strongly developed intuitive connectivity, these things will wash away as sunlight changes now into day. But most profoundly, I wandered back to this severe instant to find myself already contemplatively crouched in conjecture, aloof and lost in the jet stream’s billowing winds.
In the beginning were the words. And the words were double from the word go: the cool black on white words in the book, & the loud, fast & hot words on the radio. To begin with the word on the radio let me cold, while the word on the page was what asked me to light up my nights with a flashlight under the covers. This happened, age 5: I remember the room—it was dark & thus I do not remember what was in it except for the bed in which I lay with covers drawn up, trying to read. Later on, in daylight, this room became or had become a living room, & I sat on the daybed & I watched the green eye of Nordmende, the box from which the hot words came. But first the cool ones, black on white, a book grabbed from my parents’ shelves maybe because it also had drawings in it, ink drawings in a multitude of lines that made up faces, scenes, thin, scraggly ink lines, like very square handwriting writing a picture, “modern” in a fifties sense (& this was 1951). The book I took I could read the title of: The Idiot. I am sure I could not read the name of the author: Feodor Dostoiwski. But I wanted to read & read I did or just looked at the first page of print & eventually taught myself the letters with whose help I don’t remember. Parents too busy running a small hospital called St. Pierre’s, my name, my patron saint as I was to inherit it later, be, like father, a surgeon in the capital. But I had already started on the road downhill or elsewhere: lying on the bed reading The Idiot, teaching myself to read. And I did manage a few sentences, a paragraph, half a page, maybe, before my parents discovered me & took this precocity as a good sign & hired a retired school teacher to teach me to read a year before I could officially go to grade school.

I read laboriously no doubt, and in secret to begin with, this book I remember only physically: a white hardcover with black print & black ink drawings. The Idiot. Chapter One, paragraph one—so this are the first sentences I deciphered, the first silent written language that traversed me:

Towards the end of November, during a thaw, at nine o’clock in the morning, a train on the Warsaw and Petersburg railway was approaching the latter city at full speed. The morning was so damp and misty that it was only with great difficulty that the day succeeded in breaking; and it was impossible to distinguish anything more than a few yards away from the carriage windows.
Some of the passengers by this particular train were returning from abroad; but the third-class carriages were the best filled, chiefly with insignificant persons of various occupations and degrees, picked up at the different stations nearer town. All of them seemed weary, and most of them had sleepy eyes and a shivering expression, while their complexions generally appeared to have taken on the color of the fog outside.

But these were not the words I read—the book I had with me under the covers was in German, was a translation, i.e. something I would spend the rest of my life getting in & out of.

START OVER:

Is there life before reading? I am not certain—and grow less certain as time passes, as I grow old & memory, like nostalgia, isn’t what it used to be. So if you ask me what it was like to be a child, I will have a hard time answering—and not just because I do not remember it as being the best time of my life. Not that I wouldn’t be interested in finding out for myself. But how to be a historian of one’s own past, if istorin—the Greek word for history—means for the one historian I trust (because I love to read him) to find out for oneself. How can I go there from now? Maybe I can write myself there, i.e. activate dreaming and reading and come back forward.

And thus the earliest—supposedly paradisiacal, even if or maybe exactly because, forgotten—state of childhood I cannot help but associate with non-reading, so that “prelapsarian” always rhymes with preliterate in my mind. Where was I? Rue Glesener, in the southern “quartier de la gare” of Luxembourg. When was I? Not yet, not yet. I lack photos of that time, cannot see myself & the google map doesn’t get me closer than 200 meters for an inch. The street was maybe 300 meters long, that much I can make out; it started from the Avenue de la Liberté to end in the rue Adolphe Fischer.

We lived—but this I was shown later, it is not my memory, just something I was told—we lived for awhile in the last house on the North side of the street, the one giving onto the large open space used by Karp-Kneip constructions as depot for its building materials & as parking lot for its caterpillar tractors, steam rollers, asphalt laying & paving machines. I must have looked down on that machinery from an upstairs window, or tried to get glimpses through slits in the wooden barrier surrounding the site. But I do not remember or, better, all I remember is the fondness of children & grown men to peek with mouths agape through any available opening into construction sites where big machinery moves or not about.
The one powerful object I do remember from this house—because in the next house we lived in I started to remember the first one & this object’s location close to the entrance against the left wall of a room I also remember a further detail of, namely the daybed in the opposite corner upon which I taught myself to read—is a large Mahogany radio set with built-in record-player on top & box to keep the old shellacked 78s & later the first “long-playing” 33-rpm records at the bottom. A Nordmende, I think, but who knows, it could just as well have been a Phillips, Telefunken, Grundig or Saba. Sleek, elegant, probably taller than I was the year my father bought it. It stayed that size, I kept growing. I like to think that for some time we saw eye to eye—for what has remained with me, always, was the magic green eye (the electron ray tube & tuning eye feature) that, cat-like, would widen or narrow its pupil in relation to how good the signal was. I would press my blue eye to its green & with one hand play with the tuning button to make our eyes twitch.

But I would have my hand gently slapped because father didn’t like me to un-tune the one station he listened to—long-wave Radio Luxembourg. Not much stays with me beyond the fascination of the green eye, except for two auditory remembrances. The first of these is the opening soundtrack & half-screamed title of the 12:50 p.m. radio-drama: Ça va bouillir, Zappy Max! Although French was always an available language, I don’t remember anything of the story lines, except for Zappy Max’s breathless voice, & the fact that the weird nasty bad guy was called “le tonneau”—the barrel. What made the show for me were the incredible variety of noises, screams, sound-effects, that pushed whatever story line there was ahead at breakneck speed.

What has stayed with me more essentially was something else: a sequence of sound I couldn’t make sense of but that proved to be the most seductive, the most wondrous & mysterious language-sounds I had ever heard. And which inscribed themselves immediately and forever in my brain. It would come over the radio in the program my father listened to after Zappy Max, the one o’clock news. Later on I translated the music the vocables made into semantic meaning: it turned out to be a name, much in the news at that time: Krim Bel Kacem. I can still hear it in the singing French inflections of the news announcer—returning, repeated, over and over: Krim Bel Kacem Krim Bel Kacem Krim Bel Kacem. With no semantic referent to attach to the sound sequence, I was utterly seduced by its sheer musicality, from the repetition of which I drew an immense pleasure I recall to this day: first, the initial hard, nearly explosive consonantal rub of “r” after “k” followed by the elongated high vowel sound of the “i” & down into the calm “m”—a peaceful “om” after the crime-evoking sounds of the first three letters. Then the high bell-sound of “bel” a clear peel, short but echoing loudly & in its very clarity hiding or making
me forget the reference to the obvious (but misplaced) French semantic meaning. This was followed by the alliteration of the “k” sound, though this time with the variation of the “a” vowel replacing the “are” of krim, a descent in pitch from the “e” of “bel,” but a widening of the scope of sound, a deepening into that initial & initiating sound of human language, the long “a” that can carry pain, pleasure, surprise, exhilaration & more. After the “c” planes down & alleviates the harshness of the two initial “k”s, the sequence finishes on a second alliteration, that of the final “m,” easily drawn out to bring it even closer to the calmness of the seed syllable “om.”

Maybe my father did tell me that it was a name, no matter, I don’t remember if he did, & if he did do so, I must have forgotten instantly, or else willfully worked on forgetting, as I do remember that “Krim Bel Kacem” was my favorite word sequence for that marvelous childhood play consisting in repeating a sequence of words without pause or interruption until any semantic meaning has been rubbed out & all that’s left is the pure jouissance of a sound that now arises from the very chora of language.

Now you may say that the foregoing answers my initial question: clearly, there is life before reading, and it is the life of sound….But how do I know? And yet? Much of the time listening to Radio Luxembourg, & long stretches of other moments in that room with the green eye gleaming were spent on the daybed at the other end of the room with … a book in my hand. The first such book I remember clearly trying to learn to read in at five (which in fact puts it a couple years before “Krim Belkacem” would have come over the radio) was a book grabbed from my parents’ shelves I spoke of above, the book I could read the title of: *The Idiot*. And after my parents hired that school teacher—monsieur Müller, I now remember his name, a gentle man, smelling of wet wool jackets and chalk—& I officially learned to read, I was send to school, into second grade immediately, given that I already could read—& immediately proceeded to exchange the Dostoyevsky for the first fifteen issues of “Akim,” the Tarzan wanna-be character created in 1950 by the script-writer Roberto Renzi, with artwork by Augusto Pedrazza in the handy Piccolo strip-series. They were the perfect size to read in school under the desk, or on the daybed out of the parents’ sight and beyond the watchful green eye of the Nordmende, while “Krim Belkacem Krim Belkacem Krim Belkacem” would come to echo through the other words, “Akim, Akim, Akim” and I would make up new names for new heroes I would later write about or draw or put on the radio & I could already here the announcer in Zappy’s voice breathlessly screaming: “Ça va bouillir, Kim Akrim BelAkim.”
Questions, Read-Thrus & Alterity in the Work of Joan Retallack: An Interview with Robin Tremblay-McGaw & Auto Fairy**

Auto Fairy: When did you first encounter the work of Joan Retallack?

RTM: I first encountered Joan Retallack’s work in the late 90s. In particular, Retallack’s essay “SECNAHC GNIKAT: TAKING CHANCES, an exploration of and defense of chance procedures in various art practices, including poetry—her own and others—caught my attention. It includes a variety of forms, from mock interview to philosophical proof and dictionary definitions that question as much as they define. It includes two epigraphs, one from David Ruelle’s Chance and Chaos, and one from Genre Tallique’s Glances: An Unwritten Book.

Auto, you will be interested in the fact that Genre Tallique and Tallique’s book is Retallack’s own playful construction. Tallique’s name is a kind of French sounding homonym for Joan Retallack and one of several figures (including Quinta Slef, Retallack’s “interviewer” in her essay “The Poethical Wager”) for self-reflexive interrogation and discursive alterity that stimulates the writer and her readers to inventively “figure things out for ourselves …[and] …..apprehend something new,” even if, or rather because, it leaves us out on a know ledge: “Knowing puts me on a ledge, gives me vertigo” (“Taking Chances” 709).

Auto Fairy: Tell me about it! I feel a little dizzy myself….

RTM: The risks we take and allow for, rather than deny, constitute an ethos:

The act of knowing that can carry one to the know ledge is a poethical act of developing forms of life, incorporating, sorting through, turning toward the silences of history as silence. A turning. A navigational act in medias motion. The silent unintelligibilities of cultural DNA are not unlike all those biogenetic messages crossing crowded intersections roaring with chance (710).

While chance procedures are an important facet of Retallack’s work, in our discussion I am interested in venturing out on a different “know ledge"
(though not without trepidation!) in order to explore Retallack’s activation of questioning, reading, and transformation as practices for engaging alterity.

AUTO FAIRY: So, how do questions figure into Retallack’s work?

RTM: They are central. Retallack’s questions “giv[e] us work—invention—to do” (Musicage, XV). Her book Memnoir begins with questions in a playful but high stakes exchange that recalls, with a difference, the Socratic dialogues. This one is staged between “Mem” and “Noir.”

Mem: What’s our relation to the past?
Noir: Same as to the future.
Mem: Then what’s our relation to the future?
Noir: You don’t want to know.
Mem: In other words the jig is up.
Noir: In other words the jig is up. (1)

This inaugural dialogue sets up a humorous but also possibly threatening or at least risky situation—“the jig is up” (as in our alibis no longer hold or the game is over). The field of possibilities for the reader to navigate questions is widened. Among other things, the book offers shards of cultural meaning, the present’s messy and complex relation to the past and future, while it makes links between questions, errors and knowledges, memory and various darknesses—whether Eurydice’s or that of Hades, or film noir’s, or racism’s: “a mother….wanting to know for how many generations a Negro in the bloodlines can produce a throwback” (4).

In Memnoir, the poems are an invitation to have the “courage to err and Guess that Mess ” (36). One of the poems reads as follows:

why refuse entertaining irony dry wry humor display of imaginative aerodynamics emotional hydraulics fractal intellectual acrobatics surprising and illuminating implications drawn over line drawing of mock-up of monumental prepositional frieze (30)

AUTO FAIRY: As a bear, you know I love the monumental!

RTM: Well, this monumental isn’t always large! And probably not furry! So the
poem begins with a question and a “mess.” Here, the “mess” is a linguistic, emotional, imaginative, inter-textual excess that is not refused, but rather attended to in all its abundant mobility. Paying attention to these discrepant and overlapping discursive and complex lived realities, that which elsewhere Retallack describes as “textual form[s] of life informed by the extratextual contexts in which [they] live, and which [they] change” (“Poethical” 36), produces something of significant, “monumental” scale. Yet, what is monumental is a “prepositional frieze,” suggesting something small, prepositional, that which is signaling or reaching out to connect to something else as in “…the fatality of of the preposition reaching out to its object elastically even as it e.g. it slips away” (Memnoir 18); at the same time, a frieze recalls a decorative band, or more specifically, something situated between things as in “the part of a classical entablature between the architrave and the cornice” (“frieze”), or the kind of artwork that also depicts arrested motion, as in a frieze of figures around an Etruscan vase. “Monumental” here is complex and contradictory in its pairing with “prepositional frieze.” Questions of scale and value abound in this book: “is it too trivial to ask is this a scale too trivial to ask” (17) and “the preceding is much too or not sentimental enough” (19).

AUTO FAIRY: So, the poem is not just talking to itself, but asking readers the question too?

RTM: Yes. Yet this section serves also as a description of the poem’s compositional method. The poems in this book refuse to eliminate errant, generative swerves into the unknown, because “radical unknowability is the only constant” (“Poethical Wager” 22).

AUTO FAIRY: More swerves! We can always use more swerves….

RTM: I’m sure Joan would agree with you, Auto. Like Gertrude Stein before her, Retallack affirms that writers and artists are attempting to live and compose the contemporary with the challenge that “nobody knows what the contemporariness is…they don’t know where they are going, but that they are on their way” (Stein) and, thus, we and they “launch our hopes into the unknown—the future” (22).

Significantly, Retallack’s questions and swerves, her Epicurean clinamen, always entail “read-thrus,” the critical and imaginative reading of, with, and through a variety of other “texts.” In Errata Suite (1993), Retallack has written
five-line poems in the form of imaginary errata slips. “Slips of tongue” and text rub up against one another. Retallack joins chance procedures and/or various operations of constraint to language culled from disparate sources.

Near the beginning of *Errata Suite*, one of the poems begins: “read read for real” (2). We can interpret this beginning as an exhortation: read reading for what’s real; as an imperative, a command or directive such as one might find on an errata slip: read “read” for/instead of “real,” which contains a typo, an error. This four word phrase slides into philosophy too: the “real” is the error. Or is it? “Real” is in question; one must read: “for any number can turn to zero if you are in the right system” (8). In addition, these four words make plain the pleasures of insistence—à la Gertrude Stein—the way meaning shifts, how repetition is never the same thing.

Retallack privileges reading—imaginatively and playfully—because, along with D.W. Winnicott, she believes that “the ability to play, that is, engage with the material world outside our minds via the active imagination, is our way of participating in the real” (26). Working with other texts via critical and imaginative reading and writing practices provides one form of engaging with the world.

In order to get at the “really interesting problems,” *Errata Suite* problematizes purity and instead aims to compose a complex, atonal symphonic score. The book constructs the poems from the outside world of other texts, writing with them through a mash-up of phrasal shards from, for example, an alphabetical list of writers, philosophers of the letter “H,” all of whom concern themselves with questions of politics, art, aesthetics, language:

pure methodology purged however of the really interesting problems (H1) for the Galileo of 1638 freely falling bodies were not what they had been for the Galileo of 1604(H2)true Theodicaea the justification of God in History(H3) itself as the horizon of Being (H4) these natural Pleasures indeed are really without price(H5)

H1-Habermas/H2-Hanson/H3-Hegel/H4-Heidegger/H5-Hume (37)

**Auto Fairy:** So, what is she doing with these texts and authors, hooking them up like that? Are these one-night stands? Long-term relationships? Is she agreeing with them, criticizing them, using them?
She puts them into conversation and there’s room for all you mention—the use of their language, the plucking of a phrasal string that pleases and/or surprises her and our ears/minds. There’s room for criticism too. I suppose the poems become a teaching tool as well. For example, in other texts, such as *Afterimages*, Retallack plays with typographical conventions and reading practices, reminding us of the historical and material conditions of each. For instance, early Greek texts did not separate words; letters ran into one another without division. Challenging our reading practices, Retallack defamiliarizes, while also historicizing page, language, and reading itself by experimenting with the absence and addition of space between letters and words: “HEEREENDETTHTETALEOFTHEMANOFLAWE” and “o n e l a s t e x p l o d e d v i e w” (17), or by writing words backwards, from right to left as in the title of her essay “SECNAHC GNIKAT: TAKING CHANCES.”

Such practices force us to attend to reading; she brings out of the silence, which is “itself …nothing more or less than what lies outside the radius of interest and comprehension at any given time” (“:RE.” 111), those things that are unheard, unseen, unfelt, ununderstood. Thus, Retallack foregrounds technologies of reading and our struggle to learn anew how to imaginatively approach and work with what confuses, or puzzles, or is unfamiliar.

Retallack’s books nearly always include multiple references to other texts, making reading a social practice. For example, *Errata Suite* (1993) lists forty-four texts at the back of the book, indicating that these are “sources for notes.”

**AUTO FAIRY:** Is she name dropping? Why does she include this information? What’s the point?

**RTM:** This material is informative but also functions as a provocation for more reading and investigation. The text enacts a social practice that entails reading others in order to write, perhaps, even to be. The text is a community of its sources, sources that are also interlocutors.

**AUTO FAIRY:** Sounds like an orgy to me! Since the book makes a reading community is it worth thinking about who gets invited to the party? Let’s invite some hirsu(i)te! hunks. I mean, thinking, makes me hot!
It’s viral Auto. You’ve caught Joan’s language play. Her sources straddle the Western canon and the experimental. Her books do not always list all of their sources (e.g. *Procedural Elegies* notes that one poem is composed using lines from books in her library but does not list them), and thus, we are not always sure who is, as you say, at the party. But, sure, some of us may desire for others to be part of this social practice.

**Auto Fairy:** Do we need to invite people we don’t know to our parties? Complete outsiders?

**RTM:** Well, it is a complicated question but I think it is important to widen the field of participants, to engage with one’s own silences, to widen our fields of interest and comprehension. We all have that challenge. For example, think about your own experience Auto; as a bear, a large, hairy gay man, you don’t exactly fit the pop culture or even dominant gay culture’s image of the gay man, say the kind promulgated by *Will & Grace*, or *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*, or now, the married guys on *Modern Family*. Bears tend to have their own spaces like the Lone Star here in San Francisco…and Bear runs…. But, in fact Auto, as you have said, you’re kind of unusual even in the Bear world! It is usually comprised of (if I can generalize) mostly white, often working class, fairly masculine men who are frequently big and gentle softies! We have places to gather with others with whom we feel we have something in common, particularly if our experience includes invisibility or even misreading in the larger culture.

**Auto Fairy:** Yeah. It’s true. I don’t talk much about Gayatri Spivak or Fassbinder with the Bears at the Lone Star…..and straight people don’t show up at or even know about Bear runs. Why would they?

**RTM:** We all have our libraries, our social groups with which we are engaged at the moment….and different groups serve different purposes and pleasures….providing alternative provocations….

Yet, Retallack does count on what readers bring to her texts. She has written that, “there’s nothing more stimulating than a formally evident invitation to the reader to realize the work for her- or himself. There’s always at least a dual perspective, that of poet and reader, two very different starting points of equal importance, mediated by worlds of experience in between—the vast diffusion and noise of the whole culture” (“Poethical” 41). In addition, Retallack mixes a variety of texts—the scientific, philosophic, poetic, so
there’s definitely an array of discourses even if the variety does not traverse other or all fields of difference—as if it or anyone could. But maybe you are thinking about the apparent absence of writers of color, for example. We should invite her to a party and ask her!

**AUTO FAIRY:** Good. I’ll make tea. We should ask her if she is making a deliberate choice. When you’re looking for beef and fur, you say “woof,” not discourse analysis….Maybe Retallack is intentionally working with a closed set of sources?

**RTM:** Possibly. She might be intentionally restricting her posse, her field of possibilities, so that she can be critical of them. Ann Vickery’s *Leaving Lines of Gender* asserts that in *Afterrimages*, Retallack “critiques the terms of our encounter of past elements of Western culture and their aftereffects” (170). The poem, “Western Civ Cont’d,” from *Procedural Elegies* (note: the poem is called “Western Civ Cont’d,” and hence, all those Western, white canonical authors!) includes the following: “…None of this is my language, actually. Just my arrangement of it and maybe that solves the problem of I think therefore who the fuck do you think you are” (100).

Here the lines slyly refer to Descartes’ problematic because self-contained “I think therefore I am,” while exploring the notion of language, ownership, access, and patriarchy; they are also interrupted by a pointed question from elsewhere or the other—“who the fuck do you think you are.” Her poems explore this problematic and yet productive tension between a given or restricted language (and perhaps canon) and one’s agency within it. For Retallack, via Wittgenstein, language games are “a form of life.”

**AUTO FAIRY:** Ok, so what does all of this have to do with alterity? I see how asking questions means that there is someone else on the receiving end of those questions—though maybe they can be asked also of the self or “slef” as Joan might have it?—and reading other writers and using their language is a way to have a party with interesting people—with the risk that some of them might be annoying guests! But is there more to this alterity thing?

**RTM:** Absolutely. The questions and the reading are both ways to engage with alterity with the goal “to make live and conscious history in common” (“Not a Cage” *Procedural Elegies* 33). After all, Retallack has stated quite clearly on numerous occasions that “engaging positively with otherness” (“Poethical” 22) is a primary project of poethics. It moves poetics into an ethical field:
A poetics can take you only so far without an h. If you’re to embrace complex life on earth, if you can no longer pretend that all things are fundamentally simple or elegant, a poetics thickened by an h launches an exploration of art’s significance as, not just about, a form of living in the real world. That as is not a simile; it’s an ethos. (26)

She makes the reason for this strategy clear in “What is Experimental Poetry & Why Do We Need It?” Retallack outlines how we cannot engage with the world merely through our own “I,” “eyes,” or minds and explains experimental poetry’s central role in this communal project. She writes:

a) There is the shock of alterity. Or should be.

b) There is the pleasure of alterity. Or should be.

c) We humans with all our conversational structures have yet to invite enough alterity in.

d) Experiment is conversation with an interrogative dynamic. Its consequential structures turn on paying attention to what happens when well-designed questions are directed to things we sense but don’t really know. These things cannot be known by merely examining our own minds” (Jacket 32).

AUTO FAIRY: Hmm. Two things. I’m part of the system of “complex life” and life certainly gets more complicated when we experience it with attention to its wild and teeming diversity. Grrrrrrr. But, is alterity outside? Perhaps that is an illusion. What if the “other” is, in fact, here, right where “I” am or am not. Say, like Bears both within and a resistant outside of “a gay culture” that flaunts youthful, slender, hairless bodies in designer t-shirts.

RTM: Yes, these are important questions. We have to be careful not to place alterity solely outside and elsewhere. I think Retallack is conscious of this dangerous project. In her poem “Steinzas in Mediation,” one of the lines suggests this is a central problem for anyone critiquing a system: ‘How to not inscribe yourself in the system you’re opposing/ Opposing opposable thumbs up to a point of no turn/ Not the turn to oppose to it at all” (Procedural 37).

AUTO FAIRY: Yeah. Maybe, you have to find where you are already in it, deep in it, and account for it, trying to disengage from it as best you can…. Maybe
there is no outside…it is just the system’s or community’s own inability to register what’s unknown, unrecognizable, illegible…. “point of no turn” is not where we want to be.

RTM: Who knows if it is possible to successfully disengage; we need to work on the edge and beyond intelligibility, taking risks, veering, making turns. Here’s the thing: maybe we need to understand alterity not as an identity category but as the what-is-as-yet-unrecognizable.

Retallack engages alterity through transformation or transfiguration, rather than primarily through description or representation, since “in description lies betrayal lies” (“Steinzas in Mediation” 39). Retallack sees our Western (and Eastern) focus on binaries, “freeze-frame contraries” (“Experimental” 99) as inherently flawed or at least too simplistic, offering “picture[s] of singular images, fixed ratios (How many drops of blood or hormones tip the balance, shift the whole scene toward irredeemable otherness?” (99-100). In other words, Retallack is anti-essentialist. Furthermore, she finds representation, or “picture theory,” capable of “enact[ing] only limited life principles within the language itself” (“:RE:" 115).

Retallack has argued that “some aesthetic forms fix; others engender flux,” though she acknowledges “this isn’t a static opposition either” (“Experimental" 100). Her choice of the word “engender” here is important. Her work, in fact, is predicated on “engender[ing] flux.” En-gendering is flux, though sometimes I suppose people think of or experience gender constructions as settling into ossified and static forms or codes of behavior. She asserts that “to make real gender trouble is to make genre trouble” (":RE:"113). Thus, for Retallack the experimental feminine is an aesthetic behavior rather than a fixed identity and in fact, historically, “textual traditions that have enacted and explored modes culturally labeled Feminine have oddly—or, as we shall note, not so oddly—been practiced until recently more by men than women” (":RE:"112). She elaborates:

It’s been suggested by Luce Irigaray and others that “the” feminine is perhaps nothing other than a plural—all that conspires against monolithic, monotonal, monolinear, universes. Complexities and messes that overflow constrictions of “the” have been labeled variously over the centuries but most strongly identified with the feminine. As an alternative principle, it is, importantly, the transgressive term in an ongoing Western cultural dialectic between established order and new possibility. We may smart from raw awareness of the invidiously
destructive M/F binary, but its internal collisions and combustions have yielded constructively complex and paradoxical forms—mastery, mater, and strange powers yet to be named. Our best possibilities lie in texts/altertexts where the so-called feminine and masculine take migratory, paradoxical, and surprising swerves to the enrichment of both, /n/either, and all else that lies along fields of limitless nuance. This is not a vision of androgyny but of range.” (“RE:” 113)

**AUTO FAIRY:** This essay seems to be responding to a particular historical moment in the debates about gender and writing, *écriture feminine*, and so on.

**RTM:** Yes. The essay desires to disrupt or make use of the tensions inherent in binaries and widen and complicate the field of possibility. In this piece, Retallack argues that a feminine experimental poetics (the feminine here is, importantly, not an identity category) might be categorized as “new possibility,” that which disrupts, disorders unities and unified theories, the “established order.” And while lived experience might remind us that the M/F binary is destructive (and in fact, for some people—queer, trans, women—still, deadly), for Retallack, the internal inconsistencies and combustions of this binary are productive and enable altertexts that can unleash “migratory, paradoxical, and surprising swerves.”

Much of Retallack’s work does enact a range of “migratory, paradoxical, and surprising swerves,” particularly with regard to gender, a swerve she finds among other places, in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*. In her poem “Icarus FFFFFalling” in *Afterrimages*, among other sources, including poems by Auden and William Carlos Williams, Retallack uses Ovid’s tale of fathers and sons in his story of Daedalus and Icarus. One of the most interesting sections of this tale is the nearly unremarked transformation of gender that occurs along with the crossing from the human to the avian.

When we think of Ovid’s account of Daedalus and Icarus, we’re often so taken with Icarus’s predicament that we forget or fail to notice the queer fate of Daedalus’s nephew. His bright and inventive, experimental mind undermines Daedalus’s and Icarus’s and so Daedalus punishes the nephew by changing him into a bird, a bird that is female, and afraid of lofty flights and heights, even though “his old quickness of wit passed into his wings and legs.” Here, it is both bird and female that mark the boy’s new powerlessness. He is exiled simultaneously from the human and the category of man, revealing that the human is man. And yet, for Retallack,
and for me as a reader, there is something thrilling about the strangeness of this transformation, the way species and sex and/or gender, move. This agile mobility of forms in Ovid sparks the imagination. In “Icarus FFFFFalling” Retallack writes: “Ovid said his mind was bent to tell of bodies changed to new forms” (50). As it turns out, Retallack’s mind bends in the same direction. Many of her poems experiment with various sex/gender transformations, demonstrating this range of possibility, the creative clamor these constructions produce.

In the lines below from “Icarus FFFFFalling,” we encounter fluid cross dressings and transformations as in, “the father wanting a son dressed like the boyshenever was identified in the translation as fair” (51) and, “I lines Io Ianthe Isis Icarus Isaac Iachhus Idalia Iphigenia crossing in their flagrant saffron mantles breeze of more transvestments & vestigian tables” (53) and “garrulousstrangebirdsmothers & Iphis nottheboy she wished to be in Bk. IX” (50). Portions of these lines refer to Ovid’s Metamorphoses and his tales of Icarus (Book VIII) and Iphis and Ianthe (Book IX). While we might read Ovid’s tale as reinscribing normative sex and gender codes in the context of heterosexual love, Retallack’s concatenated list of “I lines” draws attention to the shifts, the possible acts of transformation, transformations that perhaps read differently and suggest other possibilities for 21st Century readers.

Retallack’s poem is full of this mobility across forms; there is a line in which the word “intervene” is interrupted by a “boy” and so an “inter boy,” conjures a betweenness: “no matter what what inter/ boy falls out of sky venes and he had said he did only want to show her the” (38). Another line reads, “...my student says when he gets/ bored in Italian class she conjugates the verb scrivere in the future” suggesting the possibility that the act of writing, of grammar itself—the “conjugation of the verb scrivere”—might be turned to revolutionary ends. Writing and grammar accomplish an Ovidian transformation in which the student, a “he,” becomes a “she” and as such they suggest interventionist swerves with the capacity to affect readers, re-make language and its codes and rules. Such a transformation is perhaps most possible in the poetry of the experimental feminine as Retallack suggests in her essay “:RE:THINKING:LITERARY:FEMINISM:,” when she cites as an example that “the French poet Dominique Fourcade likes to declare that as poet he is a woman: ‘toutes les poètes sont de femmes” (113).

AUTO FAIRY: What the hell does that mean? I bet he’s not a butchy motorcycle dyke in his poetry!
RTM: You’re probably right Auto. It’s worth thinking about what that claim is predicated on...

AUTO FAIRY: Is it only in the Icarus poem that Retallack is playing with sex and gender?

RTM: No. Her interest in transformative grammars of sex and gender is not restricted to any one poem. In “Western Civ Cont’d” we encounter similar explorations. In this poem the intertext includes historical fact playfully included, intervened in, and reshaped. Through her selection of particular moments and events in history and her playful integration and transformation of them, Retallack focuses attention on history as artifact while also foregrounding the always already ever present queer and transformative eruptions or swerves happening “in” it. For example, in section number 4 we read, “Suddenly it’s 1480 BC/E again and Queen Hatshepsut rules for her son/ Thutmose III until his coming of age/” (83), a topic returned to later in the poem in section 15: “/ Queen Hatshepsut glues on beard and goes to work like any other man/ ”(94). In section 14, she suggests that our “forgetting” of facts, shapes our understanding of the world and the stories history has told about it:

….s/he shrugged/sighed/ yearned as they all forgot for millennia that the earth is round nonetheless living w/ the consequences / forgetting too that Crow polo was played coed...” (93)

AUTO FAIRY: So what we don’t know will hurt us!

RTM: While we might forget that “the earth is round,” we will nevertheless find ourselves impacted by the consequences of this fact. What we consider “fact” shifts over time. And perhaps by “forgetting” or not knowing that Queen Hatshepsut, a woman, ruled in Egypt centuries ago, and that “Crow polo was played coed,” or even that the Crow played polo, we cut ourselves off from an understanding of history and sex and gender and race as contingent constructions, with the capacity for insidious repetition, and, perhaps, also radical revision.

AUTO FAIRY: The law can be broken, knowingly or not. New knowledge challenges historical (hysterical!) stories....

RTM: Yes, maybe it is reminding us of that slippage, that contingent but immanent possibility and/or the way that, again, grammars serve social,
politic and legal (b)orders, but can be remade, shifted, not just textually, but materially, and not only intentionally, but by chance and/or under cover of chance, too.

**AUTO FAIRY:** Yes, the poem begins with that in the very first section:

> “yes, of course, she & he, this and that and always more and less they come (all of them) & go w/th spd of snd & it & we in them move with them toward history/

**RTM:** Change and chance are constants. Mobility is a possible source of hope. Retallack understands poetry as a means “to compose a life by composing words in a poem” (“Steinzas” 43). The stakes are both banal and high:

Let’s try to get it right this time the teacher says: step step slide step step step shuffle slide kick/ women interviewed about what it’s like to lead a life in today’s world with hairy legs say the problem of how to get the human figure right in art & life seems now always to have been just another gender recursive politically inscribed structural trap in which one is coerced to wear uncomfortable clothing, particularly shoes/ which piece of information to put where—never a benign puzzle—has become an emergency/ (Section 25 “Western Civ” 104)

We are “educated” and “coerced”—intellectually and physically; we learn, we’re asked questions, sometimes worthy ones, others not, but even the sexist and seemingly banal questions can spur us on to other queries; Retallack’s writing argues that even within closed systems, we may find opportunities to improvise, and read otherwise. Importantly, Retallack marks how bodies are impacted by ideologies. Bodies, like Icarus’s, not only soar and fall, but are formed by social practices, practices that are not separate from politics and “information.” Where politics/information/bodies congeal and fly apart, where they are located, how they are organized and parsed, understood, interrogated, used and remade—not to mention by whom—matters. We have to wrestle with it all. There is an emergency, an emergency that in order to move into the future, we must deal with now, even if how we do that ends up differently than we expected, or from a subsequent perspective, simply (or complexly!) wrong. Retallack has written “even if I want to act positively, what I think is best may be off the mark from even my own subsequent point of view. The future, that is, the present, is complex and uncertain” (“Poethical” 22).

**AUTO FAIRY:** Tell me about it!
Auto Fairy was inspired by Joan Retallack’s work and was shaped when Jocelyn S aidenberg asked me two questions often used as a way to come up with a drag name: what’s the name of a street you lived on as a kid and the name of your first pet! Further thanks also to Jim Brashear for inspiration.

Thanks too to Jocelyn for discussions of this piece we had while running in Golden Gate Park and Kathy Lou Schultz for her comments on an earlier draft.

I’ve marked some of the pronouns in Ovid’s text to call attention to this transformation:

As he was consigning the body of his ill-fated son to the tomb, a chattering partridge looked out from a muddy ditch and clapped her wings uttering a joyful note. She was at that time a strange bird, of a kind never seen before, and but lately made a bird; a lasting reproach to you, Daedalus. For the man’s sister, ignorant of the fates, had sent him her son to be trained, a lad of teachable mind, who had now passed his twelfth birthday. This boy, moreover, observed the backbone of a fish and, taking it as a model, cut a row of teeth in a thin strip of iron and thus invented the saw. He also was the first to bind two arms of iron together at a joint, so that, while the arms kept the same distance apart, one might stand still while the other should trace a circle. Daedalus envied the lad and thrust him down headlong from the sacred citadel of Minerva, with a lying tale that the boy had fallen. But Pallas, who favours the quick of wit, caught him up and made him a bird, and clothed him with feathers in mid-air. His old quickness of wit passed into his wings and legs, but he kept the name which he had before. Still the bird does not lift her body high in flight nor build her nest on trees or on high points of rock; but she flutters along near the ground and lays her eggs in hedgerows; and remembering that old fall, she is ever fearful of loft places.

Before her birth, Iphis’s father, Lygdus, told his wife Telethusa he wished for two things: an easy birth and a son, because: “Girls cost as many throes in bringing forth;/ Beside, when born, the titts are little worth;/ Weak puling things, unable to sustain/ Their share of labour, and their bread to gain” (Ovid Book IX: http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/pwh/ovid-met9.html). But a daughter is born and Telethusa passes her off as a son, Iphis. Eventually, Lygdus arranges a marriage between his seeming son, Iphis, and Ianthe and the two women fall in love. At the prodding of Telethusa, the goddess Isis takes pity and transforms Iphis into a man and Iphis and Ianthe wed.
untitled [after Dihedrons]

Judith Goldman

The brigade wanted to log more flight hours, but focusing on making the sound stable and keeping the volume constant. Wants to airlift more flags and controlled heraldic items: tackle, the rigging and slings, cordage in tree hollows, caves, mines, or other retreats. No nests are built. Young bats grow rapidly in the curve of the door, which would unfold a stair built into the inside of the door. Openings marked in this way have been used heavily by bats, by means of a toothed cylinder that strikes a comb-like metal plate heard from vocalization and grooming, music box with a mechanical device that produces music by means of musk a substance secreted by a male musk deer leaving the roost at dusk. Muzzle loader gun loaded through the muzzle multistage as of a rocket that uses three or more engines in succession, a second or third time, muriatic. Young bats grow rapidly using buildings as roosts. Prolapsing at dusk they Whoosh! out of the barn roof. Buys meat, mutton, mutton chops side whiskers bushy and broad at the bottom in the shape of a mutton chop.

the one actress was But just danced around by Fred in one number, she/it didn’t dance while Fred leans into the turns of the room and makes the transitions Fred danced with a cane, a chair, could dance with a newel post supporting the handrail of Astaire and Rogers in The Narwhal an arctic animal with spirally grooved tusk, The Nevus a birthmark made her nervous the one actress was tapping, almost a marionette, athletic not sexual astral Fred aster asteroids predator hinged the topper, his foot tweets, chopping. Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers whose placement separates the above scenarios from a central event against the fever. Protestors dug a trench as peacekeepers responded with fire—Knickerbocker—a barrage of bottles, rocks Cholera barcoded back in August. His ability to dance with his whole body in tent cities, in a slum? Peacekeepers responded with fire, their truck fell in the trench, bottles, rocks, cacophony. Barricades made of coffins with cholera victims inside. Made her nervous or. Microloans after they judge the project. Food at a warehouse looted and burned, a child fishes on a beach covered with rubbish. Spreading faster?, dancing around a room, so it appeared he was dancing up the walls against the fever and then upside down, on the ceiling in a slum behind the picture plane as if. as if looking out a window Fred stares as Ginger totters a special set attached to a giant motor barricades every couple hundred yards.
First stage removal streets prohibited to non-permits in one hour. Using buildings as roosts, the pallid bat *Yuma myotis* prolapsing, to another “now” hurrying and splashing the mud of the building’s alarm system, in the curve of the door which would unfold. The punk burglarizing his apartment, seated with her back against a tree and legs raised onto the shoulders of a younger boy. Imagine that there is a balloon which is to produce this “ssss” sound, but focusing on making the sound stable as if to mimic the action of a baby. The two parent colors larger than the children or middle hues, nates or buttocks, nectary, increasing the appetite for risk? Negative amortization, used by Cezanne to “break passage” in terms of pure value, as when the diagonal forward slash strip in the negative space behind the table breaks into a table. When red and green are combined, yellow is created. When green and blue are combined, cyan and the bank consortium. If they are placed close to each other. Domestic workers’ garb form a chain of suckling mouths to breasts, subprime complaining about the trash from illegals or eagles drop off. Considering it littering. Or if an animal drops trash. A coyote carrying them, collecting the plastic bags, gallon-water jugs in the desert. Wearing a surgical mask, because of the air.

The Eisenstein felt the animated cartoon provided an idiom where Disney could implement the principle of “totemism.” Walking is referred to as “carrying”— the cocker spaniel—it is an important acting skill. Because Eisenstein says How easily and gracefully these four fingers on both of Mickey’s hands, playing a Hawaiian guitar whereby man and animal are identical and the subjective and objective. The back of the knee of the hind leg needs to be stretched to hold the weight While the Spanish stays in contact with the floor. Lifting simply eases the weight transfer—spanner—and if the transfer is made swiftly, the front part of the spaniel does not lift at all. Eisenstein saw the animated cartoon to be “like a direct embodiment of the method of animism.” The two middle fingers become little legs, the two outer fingers—little hands. The second hand becomes its partner. He had his arms outstretched, wetting himself through the bandages, almost a marionette, seated with her back against a tree and legs raised onto the shoulders. When Fred had his arms outstretched when he was dancing, would bend his two middle fingers towards his palm because he thought his hands were too big. Suddenly there are no longer two hands, but two funny, little white people, elegantly dancing together along the strings of the Hawaiian guitar. Stuffing the other people into himself a second or third time, the second hand becomes its partner. The weight of the body remains on the hind leg while one foot slides forward. The Eisenstein equated animism with fire, Disney’s liberty to create infinite movement and form. So it appeared
he was dancing up the walls: the front of the forward foot lifts while its heel stays in contact with the floor. Tragus (the appendage at the base of the ear).

Breaking the sound open as a light bulb pops, retrofitting. The archer mainly controls his horse with his knees, going up and down the escalators like a game. He needs both his hands to draw and shoot his bow. In August, back in August, while speeding along at full gallop, the archers release the reins and a 16-year-old-boy found hanging from a tree inside a peacekeeping base at Cap-Haitien. New or updated parts like blades to wind turbines crows dashing attacking her head, the comb in her hair. Three targets are set up at intervals a fan hung from a mast as a target. Depositing her eggs the UN troops claim that he committed suicide but people said they heard his screams, they heard that he was being strangled. Or giving them microloans after they judge the project but can’t hire new employees with it, or buy/fix the machines because the interest is so high, that he was in fact murdered by peacekeepers for stealing a small amount of money, maybe. White light results when Narthenx, used by women and penitents, railed off. Niblick no-knock no lo contendere nonsched plane approached to provide fire support. An Iraqi insurgent leapt out of a vehicle striking the wooden target. The sound transfers the courage of the archer to the audience watching new or updated parts like blades to wind turbines. If the parts will fit into the older assembly. Such as the memory of. His ability to dance with his entire body, breaking the sound open as a light bulb pops. When the three subtractive primaries have been superimposed do they subtract all wavelengths from white light and cancel each other into blackness. Red and green are combined, both natural and unnatural within the animated medium.

Color is always being seen in relation to the colors surrounded by. Neodymium for coloring glass. Carotid artery desert caravan almost impossible to see a color by itself. Enchiridion. In the tree cavity there is a balloon full of air and an even exhalation followed by a pause. Yawning the body gets confused with the different amount of air coming in. The stomach should move naturally inward hauled out of the cell and their organs will be removed. The special set was attached to a giant motor which turned the room while being egged on by a female playmate. “Look at those strong young men” Falun Gong blood testing. “Their organs will be harvested” when the room rig is unlocked from a “docked” position. Streets hemorrhage temblor a body-platelet falsies. Mumbletypeg a children’s game played with a pocketknife which is tossed point-first into the ground. They play b-sides. By then, these practitioners are half-dead. The next day they are hauled out of the cell organ brokering. Transplant tourism from
Taiwan to China in China labor camps, who wields an axe backward, over the head. The stomach should not be “sucked in” as it prevents objects mounted in place and/or replaced with “stuck” versions of them. Where a color moves into another color dancing up the walls and then just produce this sound—“sss.”

The veteran inmates told him, “Look at those strong young men” they built a special set that was attached to a giant motor. Peeling her off of it and then upside down on the ceiling in the manner of shaving a piece of wood with a plane. Imagine that there is a balloon. A cocker spaniel. A plinth, but not sequential. The fur separated in soft shocks, built into the airliner door. The front part of the foot does not move at all.
The young champion like Dean or the lanky blond element boy chewing, grinning, hair flopping over brow. Outside smoked. Honesty and the performance of thinking as in feeling. The performance of honesty. It’s easier for boys to be passive and vulnerable, because their mamas, sisters, girlfriends, boyfriends will protect them. But prelapsarian crotch shots show equal sensitivity. I left my jeans unzipped to engender pity. Not pity; compassion. Not compassion; tender love. Like Elizabeth Taylor for Montgomery Clift. Would Lilith love me? The other narrative breathing into this one. I meant concept. Tristan Metro was Chinese on the TV, asking for meaningful work, a former corpsman like Georg, he had not killed himself yet. Raise High the Roof Beam, Carpenters and Seymour—An Introduction got big, dusky blue in my father’s version. But maybe I prefer the small, slender, dark ochre. Hard to be covered in the 1950’s. Coming of age in the boarding school. A father such as Stefan taking his brow off. Going too far? The man’s keyboard stops me. The boring girl pays her bills, tainting the collective and potentially mystical thought cloud with loud sky writing. Letters white and black like stars or Willem’s early paintings but I, Gregoire, neglected to read them. The girl won’t write me back. Social humiliation performed due to fatigue that became existential and odorous. She went into the other world to shoot herself. I molded my hair into a bird’s crest, thought of being dove gray again. The book could’ve been in his elegant hands. Also a cigarette. It’s not too bright to go backwards. Greta, 13, ingested Austrian pizza and bagels. Tried to avoid Victor, Georg, Gregor. Ludvik at boarding school when his brothers. No, Greta at boarding school when her brother. Inference rules. Boolean logic of the brothers. Don’t know what Boolean logic is, but that logic book by George Boolos was red, bright blue and muscular like Superman. Paying her debts, then leaving, vs. paying her debts, thus leaving. Argument of legible connectives. Good music w/ bad lyrics. One guy looked exactly like the other one, only smaller. Wiry black hair, plastic glasses. Brawny man curled on the curb, peeling off his sock to inspect his swollen vagrant foot. Petite Asian lady with a girlish black bob and bangs, scavenging bottles. Gregoire Dick’s scary scary world. Tell us where it hurts. Scar on the forehead. The one on the back of the head vanished because it was innocent or Franz. That other Franz. Three girl scars: brow, chin, scalp. A conversation decided to sit across from me, be a middle-aged lady. Behind me, possible worlds in thick-heeled boots. Feel a little
cold so you know you aren’t dead yet. Rereading that book entails leaping into elevator shaft? A musician fell, Greta’s face froze hearing it. Inhumanly, she yawned a micro-abyss. Let the sounds be pink slips, fire this. Lilith’s crimson slip. Obviously touch-typing. Or type-touching. Wish to get away from here. The letters shrank from sense. Veterans survive wars like my brother Ludvig, not my brother Georg. The world is all that was the case. Or war. Other riffs as rifts are possible. Are private. Meanwhile, Dean does James Dean: confused, sensitive, struggling with words, vulnerable, teenage heartthrob. The audience fell in love with him, not with my/her infected paper cut. No egress from aggression or regression into Hamlet. Back sickness so heavy. Or being given the sack, hitting the sack with your sexed-up sighing brother. A stranger called me honey, I did not deserve this stranger’s love. I wear the ripped-up shirt so they won’t want me, will disdain me. My shoulder snaps its fingers at me to hurry up. Tallness squawked. A cup of kawfee. The Koughka proof, its or his formality. Ludvik’s formalism. What exactly is formalism? Wearing your hard on your book sleeve, your straight on your jacket? The dialethic deathly one joins the line of customers. Greenish pallor, long hair but just a few strands left. No eyeballs. The thought of his corpse revolting. Inspiration means he breathes into your mouth from his mouth, resuscitates your death wish. The music doesn’t clank with infinity. The man's pink crack a flash card, on the other side his prick. X-rated language I can’t reconnoiter. Husky skepticism, scrawny anxiety. Never a thin enough account of meaning. She liked chewing, hated swallowing. Sexed edit. Please, I would like another now now. Or some different theme prick. But Ludvik lay and tempted her with his Clearasil. Commercials on the teenage channels fondle. Childish treatment of the death theme, it needs another variation, compositional method, interpretation. Do the interpretations of final truly come to an end? Do they compose a rest? Or do they simply keep going?

•

Light Unless Medium Blue-Gray Notebook
Question of the sequence. Or if the interpretations are free. Or the truths. Versus the actions and events.

How the point of view could alter, be altered. But doesn’t it come to me, not from me? Or you are responsible for everything anyway, even if you couldn’t have done otherwise. Ardl’s character?

Freedom to say yes, no?
Or to feel it?

The idea of contingency is not the idea of freedom. But what affects what?

Question of power.

The perception of freedom merely a sign of ignorance? As would say Benek Seb Ezra. Or a sign of will to power—which isn’t free! As would say Ferdek Thurstan.

Benek, a Jew but a philosopher, was excommunicated and changed himself into Latin, Benedictus aka Benedick, then was he free?

Then I made him into Polish via actions that invent.

Oh, not to be subject to passions, obsessions, addictions!

The negative notion of freedom versus the positive. From—m = for, m = metaphysics! But the positive entails, demands the negative, doesn’t it? But not the inverse? Or are they actually opposed?

He was an ex-Jew, therefore Grete Trakl might not have refused to read him.

Anyway, Greta ≠ Grete. Different spells check them, command them. How they end. With homophonic but not synonymous disavowals.

If how you end is open, could you decide it, will it? By a change of name or letter, note?

But the power of the chain of meanings, truth.

The question of free will is not academic in a collected essays by an ex-preposition such as for. The question of self-knowledge is pink and green, the question of meaning is yellow and blue, the question of truth is I can’t remember its color.

Uncollected essays as in desperate attempts.

But if all the moments actually already exist, all at once, in a sort of atemporal space, although we can only be at one point at a time?
Or would it simply be a relief to deny my i.e. Greta’s freedom?

Incomprehension of the vastness of interconnections. Not strictly causal, instead logical said Benek.

Wrecked by the illogical disconnectives, hangover of demonstrative this.

And hair so greasy, it looks raven black of a druggy fairy tale.

Consciousness comes after. Something in the body already happening.

But the body is the soul, the spirit. Otherwise a dead thing.

Or an object could be derivatively animated, alive—in a godly gaze? How objects radiate.

But not the body when it’s dead.

Is that false?

Do not think about his dead body.

The ideas of the body not always conscious. Not all mentality is conscious.

I did not want to be outside, Greta couldn’t help it, was I free to stay in my room, not be Greta?

Strictly, the whole world is my room. So I am not free to leave it.

Claustrophobia of solipsism. Fear of the elevator, moving room.

Not: I am all that exists. Rather: all that I experience exists for me. Is mine.

How the elevator door opens?

For is the most metaphysical preposition?

But that is idealism, not solipsism?

This is indecision!
But the question of the curse. Or the preposition in: it gets you?

Impossible to live with a true certainty i.e. conviction of determinism? Thus fatalism is always incomplete, disingenuous?

If fatalism were complete, the true world would be provable?

Suddenly a question about systems. How they could be sounds.

But the broken connections. Impulses firing haphazardly! A dim sense of infinite connections. Or a dimming.

Greta has wrecked her ability to focus, think abstractly, with her sex, her drugs, her rockiness, her sister role.

How they wouldn’t let you into the bright words. The boys. Or his face, how it repeated. How her handwriting got bigger yet less legible. Scores unsettled like stars.

The sense and reference of loss overwhelming.

Senses of score which score her.

The question of truth cannot be answered unless the question of will is answered.

And every other question.

The world augments or diminishes as a whole, said my brother Ludvik, mimicking our tutor Fedka.

The poetics, metaphysics rise or fall together. Like brother and sister.

But what of the ascendancy of the fragment, scrap?

But it is not a world, the world. Isn’t that the point?

They destroyed the ground, it rained, and the glass didn’t shatter. A minute was not a minute, grew much longer.
The question was where to get another hit, a fix. Where she could be fixed.

Thus not get pregnant, not have the abortion.

*For they hunt me like an animal* she said.

Or the deer in his poetry. Or the blackbirds.

If I licked all of his imagery, would I feel him again?

Oh Georg.

Oh my brother, why did you go?

•

Bad Blip
Greta fades in. The dead boy. The shadow siblings. Other’s horrors.

•

Redo the Early Ending
...Dead or dying. Or confined against her will. People think that I am 26 like Grete. Two unsuccessful drug cures and financial crises, combined with the unwillingness or inability of friends to help. Grete bled to death.

Formality
26 or 27? I will be 25 or 28. Or 36. Different ways to complete the series. Then the digit, index finger, changed, but it made no difference. Only in form.

Outside Looking In
Why out here? The room would be silent, private, sensitive, tender, bookish, uncontaminated. But fear of the father floating in the corner. Or the loneliness of mirrors. Yet out here there are windows of loneliness. Eyes are mouths. The two little kids: older sister, younger brother. The sister doesn’t cover her mouth when she chews.

Index
Narcotic wasn’t in the index finger. Yes it was, but only in the pattern of whorls. The essential indexical fingered me.
Objectivity of Subjectivity
The whorl is all that is the case. The I drops away. Solipsism turns into realism said Lukerl. Because they French-kiss. Georg fell for Rimbaud. Season in infer = says I in infirmary. Today my world or my I does not feel well.

Subjectivity of Objectivity
The world is all that is your case. The case against you.

In His Poem (Greta of Sophie = Pearl of Wisdom)
Möndchen = sister or girl monk. Like Edvard Munch’s sister Sophie in Oslo. She was sick and died on him, he blamed their father. Oslo leitmotiv: its sex, snow; its room.

Book Propped Open (Another Scandi, i.e. Søren)
Isaac was almost sacrificed to/by the father, who laid him out, tied him down. But that is the sadness of another book. The clouds in the sky return it to the library.

To the Lamppost or the No Parking Sign or the Air
Two kids’ bikes chained together: they had no arms or legs, only torsos, they were wounded. One ivory like a piano key, one violet-blue like a bruise. Grete and Georg.

His Life an Open Shirt
Still tall, homeless, shouting, with his smooth royal purple chest showing. It is shining was true, so one believer stood under an awning. Some addicts are homeless in life, some are in poems like Georg. Not at home in a home key in a musical composition. This pop music is disgusting. A duo from our preteenhood. You’re out of touch, I’m out of time, I’m out of my head when you’re not around. Grete didn’t visit Georg.

Berlin
Later he went to see her as she recovered from almost bleeding to death from a miscarriage or messed-up abortion. Maybe it was of a bastardized opera they had composed together in hypersensitivity. Entitled Family EP. Or Night Move. Or Astray. Or Night Trauma. Or Hour of Groans. Or Bro and Sis.

1 or 2
The childhood is learning to tell time. It is learning how hands move around and imagery is cyclical. But spirals down.
Clarification
When Georg was 4, Greta was 0. When Georg was 10, Greta was 5 or 6. When Georg was 13, Greta was 8 or 9. When he was 14, she was 9 or 10. When 20, 15 or 16. When 21, 16 or 17. When 26, 21 or 22. When 27, 22 or 23. When 0, 23 or 24. When 0, 25. When 0, 26. When 0, 0.

Pearl Gray Notebook (Albeit Cross-Dressed)
This started too high up.
But still calm.
The clouds give off sparks of light.
It's dangerous but you do it.
My brothers almost make me forget my philosophy.
Georg, Gregor, Ludvik, Victor, Haakon.
The girl climbs up to visit you in your tower. Wakes up your hair.
From SK, paradox, irrationality, subjectivity.
From LW, showing not saying: subjectivity as unsayable.
From BS, aspectualism of modes, sense vs. reference, monism.
From FN, artistic metaphysics.
From IK, transcendental idealism, only individualized. The revolution intensified.
From AS, the world as will and presentation.
But how to shed the curse of narrative?
This isn't Outcast Notebook or Cretan Notebook. It is Pearl Gray Notebook.
What is incest semantics?
What, incest metaphysics?
Incest poetics!
Thoughts flap around.
The truth flower has three petals.
The will to truth is the will to veracity, reality, fidelity. Via self-expression.
It is a will to expression? With escape of self?
This isn't thriving because the light is too bright. It broke through the cloud cover.
If she woke up your hair, why won't she play with it?

Light Gray Slightly Bluish Notebook
Agonistic foliage. There are no gray flowers. Awareness of mortality.
Because I am either hot or cold!

Work diligently or practice the piano with the black and white keys. To keep suppurating or supplicating. 18 when moved to Berlin, still a minor key or poet? Fell for the nephew, Ferdl Thurstan!

O live the view, don’t just propose it!

Everything looks better in this notebook, because my handwriting is better than it was before. Taller, more fervent. Hers was looping, like a clef.

Temperature, Mercury. Temperamental, mercurial.

My brother Georg loved Saturn with its rings like haloes. I, Greta, loved Mercury with its silver-white like pearl gray.

Theses or phrases, teases or phases, musical pieces.


Musical language.

Function vs. motion.

Energy, expression, sound. Life!

Life or energy?

Desire for nothing vs. no desire.

Scott the beautiful coffee jerker. I want to take his medium gray wool hat off, play with his greasy hair.

What have I become? Who cares anymore? Just give me some more. Give me some more give me some more give me some more give me some more give me some more give me some more give me some more give me some more give me some more give me some more give me some more give me some more give me some more give me some more give me some more
**Chord Changes**

Desire doesn’t stay still, because death kills it. Transience of truth, meaning, world. Why no structure. Only forces, motions, changes. No logos, word. Only sonos, sound. At the start was the sound, and the sound was of God, and the sound was God. And the sound is life. But the words get in the way; they sit on the sound like a bullying brother. But couldn’t they run together, become sound themselves?

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**Faintly Blue Somewhat Pale Gray Notebook**

Desire, striving, will. Oscillation is always active, but the will isn’t?

Verse and reverse.

Low pitch vs. high pitch. Fever pitch. Greta as feverish!


Set theory and set in music.

Constant switching.

Fast vs. fast! Vs. fast. Like a girl who wants to be skinny, have no tits or hips.

Thinking subject vs. willing subject.

Two types of subjectivity, or subjectivity vs. first person singular?

I as subject, but also object?

What is not the I or doesn’t have an I-coordinate? Nothing! But what is not in the I—

Is the oscillation the trajection?

That church bell. That white truck.

Veridical subject vs. thinking subject vs. self-consciousness.
I as object, too: I have black hair. Actually it’s turning bright gray: silver! Because I am so precocious. Being only 18. I mean 28.

The Silver Surfer was a comic book my brother Victor brought me.

I thought they were slaying the tree, but they were only pruning it. I fell into despair, then I leapt up and out of it.

My brothers were often very out of it.

The leaves start out green, then go yellow, then foliage brown in the fall.

The world is all that the fall is.

The ghosts of old sentences come back, hover.

I saw Scott again, tall with his cap, his right wrist in a fabric cast because he had sprained it and played too much guitar. Now he has to use his left hand, the fingering, just the attack. Guitar solo for one hand. Should he be my new little brother or my younger boyfriend? Like Grete with Erhard, or Greta with Wladislaw. He said the guitarist with the song called Kant’s tower. Each philosopher has his own tower, it is his wilderness, desert, treehouse. Could the treehouse survive without the tree? Please do not cut down the tree! I saw the leaves vibrating, trembling, I saw the branches swaying. There were some amputated limbs as with my brother Georg at the Galician front. We ate half a croissant, listened to neutral i.e. gray milk tones. But that’s a different gray, not the unstable mix of black and white. Also the tones weren’t neutral, they cried out with passion while the boy sang as Scott would. Scott is wholesome and sweet, I said, Drink me like whole milk in elementary school with your sister, not like a mama! But he didn’t hear me. I would lick the milk mustache off of him. His eyes are hazel, greenish.
Simultaneous notes on Leslie Scalapino’s *The Dihedrons Gazelle-Dihedrals Zoom* (The Post-Apollo Press, 2010), Aaron Shurin’s *Citizen* (City Light Books, 2012), re-evaluativity, disruption, and pronominal interplay in Scalapino, and the microsystems of poetic language in Shurin.

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1

ESSENTIALLY LINKED TO THE UNINTELLIGIBLE—THE THINKABLE, THE VIEWABLE BUT UNREADABLE AND PERHAPS THE UNREAD—______, WHEN ABSOLUTELY VITAL, REMAINED ACTIVE IN ITS PERPETUAL ORIENTATION, THAT IS A DEDICATION TO A PARTICULAR DISPOSITION AND SET OF ACTIVITIES THAT DRIVE IT DISCURSIVELY TOWARD ALL ITS INTELLIGIBLE FRONTIERS OF COMBINATION AND RECOMBINATION WITH REAL CONCERN FOR PRESSURIZING ITS OWN EXISTENCE TO THE POINT OF RUINATION.

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2

______ REMAINED IN ITS ENDLESS-END THAT REMAINS ENDING, SO I AM WRONG TO SUGGEST THAT IT IS DEAD, IT IS DYING IF IT IS HEALTHY. IT IS HEALTHY IN ITS DEATH DRIVEN IMPETUS AND FAITHLESS COMPOSITION AND DISPOSITION. IF DEATH IS RECOGNIZED AS THE ULTIMATE
SITE OF NON-KNOWLEDGE ONE MAY BETTER UNDERSTAND THE ALL CONSUMING IMPULSE THAT IS FUNDAMENTAL TO _____ AS IT OPERATES TO SUSTAIN AND SNATCH IT FROM THE GRAVE OF CODIFIED KNOWLEDGE.

4 DATUM INFRASTRUCTURE ENEMY EXTEND INCLUDE INTERCEPT

The work of Leslie Scalapino is an active site for constructive disruption and rigorous re-evaluativity. Many linguistic captivities are considered, probed, and often successfully dislodged to expose a debilitative agent conducting a seemingly innocuous tyranny of prescriptivity, often in the midst of poetic language. One such linguistic captivity (and subsequent debilitative agent) successfully engaged and interrogated as part of a broader strategy by which this work pursues the precarious condition of self and other is the active pronominal interplay in much of Scalapino’s oeuvre, as it further informs its investigatory character so cultivated and made available.

To a conventional sensibility pronominal usage in poetry serves to circumscribe a locality in a text, often working to inscribe the “personal,” that is to informalize the intersubjective recognitional address, often paving over the vulnerable, injurable—the precarious condition of the other—further privileging the addressor’s subjectivity (with special attention to a monolithic desire and need set) that seeks engagement and address, and so hails the other as it, or one, sees fit.¹ ² Yet Scalapino’s approach is distinct from conventional reason in that it performs an actual bond with otherness by singling “one” out to a very different end by way of pronominal re-inscription. Whereas pronouns stage the autonomy of otherness by absolutizing it, Scalapino offers an alternative representation (in actuality a performativity) of alterity in so treating it specific to its contextual arrangements, and polyvocal in its polydirectional articulation.

The strength of such effort is found in its operation as a network of relations, braiding a broad system of self and alterity, a vast personhood versus a univocal and privileged sense of individualism, individuated and articulated as that selfsame thing. The pronominal in Scalapino occurs as a network of one, manifested and extended by relation but resistant to possession. It follows that this pronominal network is teleologically diffuse, offering a sense of alterity rather than a overly-determined and, once again, privileged fixity that may serve to undermine the capaciousness of a non-teleological literary paradigm. Alterity and its possibility, then, roves and courses through, over
and across such a networked articulation. Its coherence is general at best and operative in suspended equipoise with the senses. Most apparent is a non-unilateral representation of alterity, suggestive of radical difference, though difference is displayed and value lie upon it as such.

Radical difference will undoubtedly give rise to certain destructive and instructive inclinations, further entrenching xenophobic inclinations for some, while for others such disparate and disbursed personhood is no cause for alarm at all. In fact, something quite different is made available, it is possible for radical difference to be read as an affinity of split-subjectivity and may override certain destructive inclinations. Rather than reducing the human other, to a state of comprehensibility via pronominal representations, (a crude imposition, undoubtedly reductive of humanity itself), an articulation of the other, as described above, attempts to enrich one’s capacity for meaning that it may extend such a capacity to an understanding of alterity and self.3

In accord with Levinasian notions of intersubjectivity, representation in Scalapino is destined for failure, which is to say it fails in that it is sensitive to the precarity of existence brought to bear in the activity of representing alterity, and that something of one’s own existence proves precarious in the failed representation and subsequent address, further connoting a recognition of vast possibilities of alterity and a subcentralized subjectivity. Failure, then, is an attestation to a malign discours, mutually constitutive yet dramatically limited in what it affords intersubjectively. Part of a phenomenological methodology already at play, this representation is in fact a failure, though productive in so much that it is wildly generative in its constitutivity (and far less prescriptive in relation to other forms of representation and address), chiefly in that it does not attempt to articulate a centralized other. Failing to do so successfully, it provides an undefined, or at least a less-inscribed ontological space for the other to occupy.

The failed effort to establish a centralized and centralizable alterity through pronominal address affords an opportunity for a dialogical redress, thus amplifying the overall possibility of the text and the other.


A

m not either in the family or in the outside why
does she (I) see she is no longer in the

is there outside by

lopez | 341
beside huge numbers peoples surface cruising on the floor of the rose desert is broken floating one's the enflamed iris pushes out on blossom ing trees roof everywhere rose

Scalapino's strict deployment of pronouns bores through notional singularity, performing an address in favor of an awakened plurality, or methexis, in its pronominal strategy. “I,” “she,” and perhaps most importantly in this work, “one,” localize and personalize while simultaneously disseminating both across a vast range of ontological possibility. In a sense, this strategy of pronominal address is reminiscent of Deleuze and Guattari’s notion of the binary series (which they assert is linear in every direction) as it poses the following question: Who are you?, in effort to reconcile apparent inabilities to recognize the other, simultaneously prompting a series of questions in every direction that follow and redirect the initial question itself, affording new questions concerning themselves for consideration and in pursuit of their own ontology and intersubjective dimensions. Likewise, the ontological difference of addressor and addressee is questioned. I find it particularly useful to consider Jabes’ statement on subversive tactics when drawing this aspect of Scalapino’s approach into focus: “We threaten what threatens us. Subversion is never oneway,” he had noted.

Paradigmatically, Scalapino’s usage redirects attention from the familiar sense of unity often paid to pronouns to a splintered experience that unleashes a consortium of activity at its most successful turn. In this manner, the pronominal in Scalapino is never a thing “which is,” but is a perpetual state of being, it is an active state and site, providing for perceptible articulations of myriad existences simultaneously (the same can and should be said for poetry itself), which in this wise is both a phenomenology of existence and a sublime
thing to experience. This work, then, is not merely preoccupied with or an articulation of life, but closely resembles what Heidegger describes as a “place of fundamental ontology,” that is, the living of life itself, but not as itself but as it is available to be lived.5

•   •   •

From infrangible speechlessness to a social site where the intersection of experience extended to afford a reader a heightened dynamism unencumbered by the courage of its scope abetted by a formal rigor and lyrical abstraction between the intensification and heightened sense of feeling evidenced by Shurin’s lyric and a cold sense of pathos formally ascetic both line and lyric executed with particular regard for temporal momentum does not position these elements in antagonistic relation to one another but in such station that serve to further concretize the attempt at intersubjective address, beams mislead indeed a trajectory complex of poem and reader amass while a productive query of said relationship emote all the while contributing significantly to the sociality by in and for with which it exists abetted by aporia paradoxically at the would be core recast of one's relation to temporality that stands in service to that which appears to be the case yet spans a wide swath of sense if sleep make space Citizen seem the final evening sky in someone else's perpetual dream yet to follow as book is freed from catch.

The poetry of Aaron Shurin is a similar occasion where the subject is preceded by the control and pure activity of language free of ontological underpinning: the micro systems of poetic language, or apparatus, (syntax, diction, abstraction, metaphor, metonymy, etc.) in its various states of composition stand in among the disparate elements of language in order to process an intellectual and emotional accord. Shurin’s poetry is mostly a tenuous lyricism predicated on its ability to maintain that most delicate of balances struck between language and thought as well as certainty and uncertainty, and is, therefore, all the more compelling. For instance, the relationship shared between the intensification and heightening sense of feeling, common to the lyric, and a cold sense of
pathos, generally attributed to a formally ascetic approach to both line and lyric, executed with particular regard for abstraction, is thoroughly developed. Shurin’s approach does not position these elements in antagonistic relation to one another but in such stations that serve to further concretize the attempt at intersubjectivity. Such intersectional formalism calls the conventionality of said relationship into a productive query, effectively providing a reading experience that is as intellectual as it is emotive, all the while contributing a sense of possibility to the overall scope of lyrical abstraction to which this work finds company.

The result of these corresponding weights suspended in a lean formal field is an implied subjectivity, and as Agamben suggests, such an organization ultimately elaborates its subject. A palpable strength of this work can be found in its maintenance of simultaneous trajectories of percipient sentience and form.

from *Involuntary Lyrics* (Omnidawn Press, 2005):

CXXII

clearing the mist
of language in temperament one has like flowers brain
on a stem hold
together memory
and number to score
days remain
quixotic and bold
the experiment leaks toward eternity
as if more
blood were pulled from heart
then in the
streaming then nova subsist
of pinhole me
as stars past

The poem’s sentient trajectory is immediately unapparent, though acutely disciplined, marked with patience and prosody, it begins in non-existence only to follow its own gleaming end that paradoxically begins where/how each line ends. In this poem, free of superfluity, hackneyed phrases, and irrelevant allusion, Shurin’s tight rein is not some newfangled prescriptivism but a way of writing that affords feeling itself through thought, and therefore suggestive
of a way of living in close proximity to world and other. Shurin, clearly an ambitious and inventive lyric poet, whose lyricism is, in many ways, a dialogism in long distance tension with fields of place, time, and body. The multiplicities it elaborates, like those found in Scalapino, awaken the unconscious and proceed as a voice unaware of its own fragility and strength to constitute an unlocked imagination in the imagination of the other.

While Shurin engages the external world, it seems there is only a rare sense of externality as it exists through a hard-pressed lyrical approach. There is no more of the world detailed but what the lyric can cling to and fashion sense from, as a result the finitude of the world is not an assumed entity but comes into articulation as it resists teleological summation, thus, serving to suggest a world altogether resistant to modalities of power that would re-entrench absolute value and a system(s) of absolute value upon it.

ENDNOTES


2. In her 2003 essay, Precarious Life, Judith Butler calls attention to the value of Emmanuel Levinas’ conception of ethics and the consideration of “the Other” in the structure of address itself, what Butler proceeds to call: “an ethics of non-violence that rests upon the apprehension of the precariousness of life, one that begins with the precarious life of the Other.” Intentionally generic, precarious in this context refers to what is human, and more specifically what is injurable, as she describes it. Butler's reading of Levinas suggests that ethics is a struggle to keep fear and anxiety from turning into murderous action, this apprehension of the precarious in relation to the self and other is predicated upon the disruptions of dominant forms of representation and rigorous re-evaluations of normative codes both in speech and gesture. The work of poetry can be such a site for similar disruption and rigorous re-evaluation of normative speech modalities to generative ends, affording one opportunities to interface with various conditions of precariousness, what Butler suggests is the integral condition of the other and oneself. Key distinctions, however, can and should be made between the works of poets. Distinctions grounded in poetry's ability to achieve constructive ends that question the very nature of the work itself by rigorous interrogation, assessment, and judgment. A work's ultimate contribution and ethicality is determined not in what it sets out to do but in what subjectivities it shapes and actualizes in practice.

3. At bottom, the locus of the matter resides in activity, or performativity. It is the thing it is as it performs what it is in relation to the constellation it co-produces and co-sustains, whatever it was, is, or will be is beyond the scope of relevance and holds no bearing in determining performativity. Where the pronoun is concerned, party to a normative literary ensemble, it is most often wonderfully artless and inert beyond repair and yet in this context it is unhinged and made dynamic and multidirectional as a brilliant mass spattering outward.


The Second to Last Mailing

Dorothy Albertini

The second to last time we did a mailing, we did it somewhere new. We thought this might matter. His business office had been emptied into a garage, near tools for digging and chemicals for killing plants and animals discovered when digging. The plan was to do the mailing at the house. We wondered if there would be supplies, if we would have access to a clean, flat surface. We wondered if there would be anything that needed folding before it was put in an envelope, how many times it would need to be folded.

There were glass decorations and thick carpets. Wallpaper matched trim, which matched the table settings, the flowers. We were worried about putting together a mailing in a place like this for other reasons, too. We weren’t sure he would recognize the event as a mailing, an event he had created—with his brochures and rolls of stamps, his office desks—had taught us to enact, had believed in. We weren’t sure whether he remembered which of us had been more precise, which of us more quick, when it came to putting pages into envelopes, the last time we had done a mailing.

We weren’t sure, when we arrived, what exactly he recognized anymore, though we were pretty sure he still recognized us, and probably also the kitchen with all the matching pieces, or at least the woman in it. We knew he knew the woman in it, though we supposed that, on some of the current days, he had a question about her, and on some of the future days, he might have more questions. We hoped, for his sake, that he would ask. We hoped, for both of their sakes, that he would go on acting like he knew just who was who, acting, like he always had, like he knew, until he figured it all out. He was always good at tricks and puzzles.

He hadn’t forgotten our names; he hadn’t forgotten the woman whose kitchen we visited. On the counter was a folder filled with duplicated postcards to mail. There was postage. A pair of pens. He showed us the folder filled with these things. We believed there may even have been a list of addresses. He was not quite, as they say, whoever they are, that far gone.

But he was a little gone. We knew he might not remember to delegate the work, to make suggestions about method, to offer instruction related to efficiency. We weren’t sure whether he knew what we were mailing, or how many times we’d find ourselves reminding him, throughout the course of the mailing. We knew it was possible that he would sit at the table with us, putting together a
mailing, and not recognize what we were doing. He might choose to read the paper instead. So many things had begun to be possible.

The woman in the kitchen declared it time for hot dogs, before we could begin the mailing. When we arrived for what we imagined would be our very last mailing, we took off our shoes, kissed the woman and the man, saw the supplies, put our shoes back on and led the couple out the front door. We made sure she had her key. We made sure she had her cane. We made sure one of us was near him, though he wouldn’t have either of us walk behind him. We agreed on a car, on who would sit in which seat.

At the hot dog stand, he was confused. We expected this. We weren’t sure how to respond. The hot dog stand confused us a little, too. We had never seen such pricey hot dogs. We knew he was confused by something else. She is not yet very confused, and, when she is, it does not look like his confusion, or like ours. We have ideas when it comes to anticipating her questions, or clearing up confusing situations with her. There is a predictability to her confusion, to an extent that comforts us, more or less, depending on her and our moods. She has pride, she prefers company; she likes to dress nicely. She is confused when he chooses unattractive sock and pant combinations.

His confusion incorporates forgetfulness, anxiety, mistrust, and routine, which holds many of the less comfortable elements at bay. It makes us uncomfortable when she is disappointed in his choice of socks, but it is part of the routine, so we try to leave a space for this conversation about socks and slacks.

Hot dogs are fairly predictable. At the stand, she reminded him they had visited this hot dog stand on many—at least two—occasions. It seemed to quiet him, though it did not look as though he had relaxed. The hot dog stand has never been part of the recent routine. If it was part of a previous routine, he is not likely to remember, or be reassured by her reminder. Though sometimes she does that, anyway, reminds him of things he isn’t likely to remember. It seems to be part of their routine. We ate hot dogs across a table from the two of them, eating hot dogs.

Eventually he put down his hot dog and smiled up at us. He told us, which he does these days, how happy he was to see us. How nice it was for us to drive all this way. How we should come back whenever we like.

Then we thought he must have relaxed a little, so we relaxed a little, too. We thought how lucky we were to spend time with this fabulous man who could still charm the pants off a lady selling hot dogs. He had a closet full of bowties. Still winked. We smiled, though our minds were slightly ahead of us, on the mailing. Was there a deadline? We remembered that we were responsible, now that they were old and we were old enough.
INTRODUCTION

Gail Scott’s novel *The Obituary* needs to be read more than once and generously repays the effort. The novel tells its story by mingling several stories, splitting and then suturing back together times, places and characters in wildly imaginative prose which steers the reader from one location to another, from one era to another, and from one scene to another—at the hands of one language or another. Its innovative language structure and bilingual style shape time and place, rooting us in one Montreal neighborhood, its streets, history and architecture, and using that as a base to reach out to other far-flung places and past events while giving voice to the split-ness of the “sutured subject.” Scott considers fluidity of time “Crucial to ... the work of subverting the singular writing subject ...[by] allowing other voices in to intervene from both the past and the present” (“The Sutured Subject” 63).

Sutures create seams: Scott’s writing and language is not aiming for a seamless whole. She likes to play: a witty often laugh-out-loud humor pervades the text, both in the form of puns and wordplay (especially between French and English) and in the numerous ways in which she invites us to share in her chuckle at herself and her universe.

On re-reading the novel, I find the language strangeness and grammatical innovation less of a barrier and I am more engaged in the fluidity of time and place that they create. A word, a term or a turn of phrase can mark a sudden shift in time, scene, character and meaning, causing the reader to feel the path she was going along has just turned a corner—as it were—with no apparent break in logic or meaning. It is almost a language of free association, except that there is a story, there are characters, there is even a plot (albeit borrowed from Alfred Hitchcock).

ABOUT A PLOT

*The Obituary* is located in Montreal, in a historical neighborhood known as Mile End. Plot tentacles reach out to neighboring locations such as Boulevard
Saint Laurent, Avenue du Parc, and the hill in the centre of the city, Mont/ Mount Royal. The story also takes excursions out of the city: to the Prairies, where the protagonist lived as a child, and briefly to San Diego. These side trips allow events from other stages in her life to be incorporated into the narrator's ongoing quest to trace her native Canadian origins.

The reader first has to acknowledge the split and sutured nature of the narrator. Scott has stated that a single viewpoint "seems to me, in the context of other arts, as retrogressive," and The Obituary "has a narrator quite simply splayed into parts. Not all of them her own, and these, to some extent, correspond to a family narrative of hybridity and assimilation" ("The Sutured Subject" 65). She calls this the sutured subject. In this novel the narrator describes herself as 'I' only rarely, using more frequently 'R Surrogate,' which, as 'our' narrator-subject, identifies her with her reader. This gets contracted to 'I/R,' which can signify 'I/our' as well as 'I/R' for Rose or Rosine, or Rosie. The subject is speaking from and about the Montreal triplex where she lives and about the characters who live in the other units, bringing in the history of the neighborhood, the lives of her neighbors, and her own past life and members of her family at different periods, both past and present: the self-reference changes accordingly. Several characters are surrogates of the narrator, including Face, sometimes written as [Face], that looks out of the window and can be seen from the street, the Fly on the wall (I/th'Fly) who is both inside the Room and outside it, and the "bottom-dweller" or landlord/neighbor who lives in the basement with her suggestively nuzzling dog. While I/th'Fly and Face are not judgmental—they just observe—the bottom floor neighbor is both unfriendly and critical. She has complained that the narrator's vibrator makes too much noise and that she washes her sex toys in public view on the balcony: complaints that inspire feelings of guilt and hostility. The surrogate I's fade towards the end of the novel; we remain with Rosine as she and members of her family of origin take up more space and have more to say about her quest.

The novel includes a cast of non-participating female characters who form a sort of counterpoint to the female narrator. These include “the coatless woman” of whom the subject catches alarming glimpses out in the street during a Montreal winter, and the character Margot Wendice played by Grace Kelly in the film Dial M For Murder. There is also Lygeia, “The radiance of an opium dream” (128)—a woman of great learning who after her death comes to inhabit the body of her husband’s second wife—and there is the radio announcer Celia Raw Raw©, “fortissimo, on radio, tellin’ Indigenous comic great-great-grandma likely also Native.” (57) This odd assortment of female presences (for they have no voice in the novel) feel like supplementary and complementary ‘parts’ of the narrator.
Scott has said “I did not have a plot for my novel; I had to make do with borrowing a plot. I chose the plot of Dial M For Murder.”—perhaps because this could mean “Dial Montreal For Murder” (Moyes and Scott 124), or perhaps because of the central and dramatic role of Margot, who in Hitchcock’s film is the target of a murder plot, is charged with a murder, and is finally found innocent and freed after her guilty husband is taken away. Woman triumphs! Such resolution is impossible in The Obituary although fragmentary references to the film punctuate the novel, reminding us of the plot and of the Grace Kelly character, “the elegant blonde future Princess Grace of Monaco” (81)—letting us know that this novel too has a plot, that there is something of murder in it, and that Woman will prevail.

LIBERTY/IES WITH PLACE AND TIME

The pleasures of Scott’s prose lie less in the intricacies of the plot, which is barely there, than in the rich layers of the subject’s experience conveyed by suturing various times and places in the story. The narrative is perforated with bits of Montreal’s history—stories of the triplex, of buildings nearby, and of the neighborhood which was at one time a “shale pit” and at another the site of Montreal’s Crystal Palace, which, like the one in London, burned down. The narrator enriches her own story by invoking people and events from other times and places: her childhood and adolescence outside Montreal, her experiences as a new arrival in the city and as a young journalist, and previous relationships and memoirs.

Breathing life into the space-time fluidity of the novel is the protagonist who is often on the move herself. If she is not walking on streets near her home, she is on a bus somewhere in the city. Key shifts in the novel often occur on busses taking different routes that are notable not only for what can be seen from their windows but also for the remarkable behavior of the bus drivers: singing or silent, pointing out landmarks, or even being kissed: “Tiny tongue, flickering in + out of big hairy chauffeur’s mouth” (146). The narrator herself stipulates that the novel “is actually taking place on a bus” (23), and that “A story, to be feasible, must be moving forward” (53); so moving the subject on a bus is a way of advancing the story!

Don’t be put off by the innovative sentence structure and use of punctuation, which may make the novel challenging but need not intimidate. Scott is well known for her linguistic experiments and considers them essential to the writerly role. Within the space of a page, for example, we següe from the ice storm in Montreal “On all kitchen radios, the coming ice storm” (40), to the street where a woman walking in the cold sees “that Face behind venetians seemingly permanently staring towards yonder mountain” (40), and the
“thin cotton shoulders of howling coatless girl,” to the pages of the “Book of Genocides” blowing on the street “Over which man leaping unsteadily” (41)—a drunk man who, we learn, had “recent bad experience” getting stuck naked between his bathtub and the toilet—and then to “the shrink named Macbeth [more on whom imminently],” then back to the wintry street and the “knowing skeletal youth with squeegee” (42). The narrative (as it tells us) favors analepsis. In one example, “Noticing Rosine Dousse sometime late premillennial, just off the Greyhound, walking North from bus station” (124) in San Diego many years before, where, unusually, it is snowing, and where “R Protagonisit on child’s bed Grandpa’s friend, the defrocked monk’s wife, had given her. Masturbating loudly.”(125) There she is caught and evicted. In spite of the evident appeal of the city “...beautiful glittering port way below. The bright lights above. ... High palms, sighing almost biblically against blue indigo.”, she leaves “Helas, I/R lacking legal package. Every citizen having” (126) to go back again to Montreal in Winter, where the storm is “driving people North,” and the “wind-battered crowd + turning West toward parc"(127)—another bus journey!

This language creates vivid and stimulating visual images. Reading it, I am in a small boat tossed on the undulating ocean of Scott’s prose. My slight seasickness is intensified by the random profusion of mixed French and English in the novel. While the primary language is English, French words are untranslated and unexplained and English words are applied to French idioms. Scott is speaking to Montrealers who understand anyway. The blend of English and French, and the French pronunciation of English words and vice versa, together form a third, hybrid language. Scott refuses to acknowledge a boundary between French and English, using both in a way that each complements the other and delighting in inter-language wordplay to humorous effect.

Above all, the language in this novel is a commitment to sensing and expressing a geographic space; it is the language the city itself uses. By this I do not mean that it is a representation of the city. Language and how it is used shapes character and the way people speak expresses who they are as much as what they say, especially in a bi-lingual culture where people use different facial muscles and actually look different depending on which language they are speaking. In the same way, the languages spoken in a city shape and express the character of the place. Moving around Montreal, one hears a mixed language on the streets that is not from a new generation of immigrants but is deeply rooted and has been part of the city for generations. Scott’s narrator

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1 Rather than inserting [sic] after almost every word in quotes, I elect to assure readers that every piece of quoted text is an exact reproduction of the text as it is written in this novel: grammar, spelling, typeface and all.
uses the voices she hears around her to tell of Mile End, of Montreal and of her characters, and in so doing expresses the place through its sound. Her hybrid language is faithful to the character of Mile End and to the spirit of Montreal.

Scott’s experience as a translator has contributed to her refusal as a writer to be limited to one language or the other. She has also collaborated throughout her career with Francophone writers and speaks of situating her writing in a “continental cat’s cradle crossing borders, mother tongues, generations, genres” (Burger et al 10). Not only does this mean scattering French throughout an English text—and Québécois French at that—but also perversely and idiosyncratically translating French place names into English. This makes for some droll images, such as Settler Nun for rue Jeanne-Mance, New Town for Villeneuve, Dada-Jesus for Blvd Saint Joseph, Our Lady of Snowy Angels for Notre Dame des Neiges, and Saint Luke’s Rise for Côte St Luc. Scott is cocking a snook at the ongoing literary debate on the precarious position of English writers in Francophone Quebec, a debate that, for Scott, artificially opposes two constructed categories. For her, the ludic possibilities are only increased by having two languages to play in; there is no barrier, not only between French and English terms but also between the anglicised use of French and the francified use of English. We meet Macbeth the psychologist in his office, where he laments: “Entoutkâs, the place is already ruined. [Here, MacBeth makes a moue.] Save, dieu merci, inner stair rail’s sleek gold horizontal arrows. Winding round oval plaster corners painted—quelle horreur—baby blue.” (44) And the gendarme’s assistant, missing his home in Paris, longs to be: “Far from these endless arpents de neige! From this incomestible French-Canadian food, delivered sans concern for the bien of the citizen!” (98) There is no effort to distinguish between languages; the sentences are sutured by the words in both languages to form seams that are most obvious to readers who do not know French. For bi-lingual readers, the seams disappear and the whole has a singular and lively rhythm.

The novel abounds in French-accented English words, as in “Vrai, I mebbe back as a ghose” (17) as well as in Francophone Québec-isms such as “s.v.p. descendre icitte” (18), and “Femme ta potte ma belle, he yelling, ...sliding over elle’s on th’ phone si l’on exigeai-t-une-macheen immédiate-ly—oui-i-i madame ... qu’elle est adorâb!” (18). Even more subtle humor is on offer to bilingual readers: for example “Toward second house, re-puted ...” (119); and, by using a term such as “Promiscuous” (95) which, combined with “Close,” indicates the French meaning of ‘promiscuité’ while playing on the fact that the word means

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something else in English. Such writing conveys a pervasive joie d’écrire, the sheer pleasure of seeing how far she can go in her play between the two languages, slang terms and phrases, puns and “jeux de mot,” using the novel’s street-wise language to place the city at the centre of the narrative.

By refusing to make a linguistic commitment to one language or another Scott makes us aware both of her resistance to being boxed into categories like Anglo-Québec Lit., and of her dislike for artificial binaries. The narrator of The Obituary is not pleased to be characterized as Anglo rather than Franco, nor as white not Native, or something else...

**PUNCTUATION, ANYONE?**

Moyes says of Scott’s writing that in “speak[ing] to her own engagements with formalism, surrealism, left-wing politics, feminist radicalism, narrativity, queer subjectivity and so forth, Scott’s writing *enacts* her point” (14): Scott refuses to be caged in by outdated grammatical rules on sentence structure. She says: “If one builds sentences such that the reader isn’t totally hooked in the narrative, sentences which give pause in the way they relate to each other, via parataxis or grammatical torquing, for example, the space opens up for the thoughtfulness of the reader” (133). Her dream is “That people learn how to read prose with interest to what’s between the sentences ... in other words, that they participate” (Frost 41). Frost points out that “Spaces themselves ... are the quintessential punctuation marks; ... [and] for Scott, this in-between space is all-important” (41). In The Obituary, sentences can be one word long; they often have no commas but end in a period while the meaning continues into the next sentence. For example, “Not unlike the thought of youth skirting, ca.1918, limestone piles + rudimentary sewers. Onto foot-thronging ave. ‘Royál-Moun’ he calling it. Sidestepping créature pushing buggy of screechers. Good tan. Sideburns. Pressed shirt starched presque neuve. Under open skin coat.” (49), and “Landing on sidewalk. Where more hairy-scary but mostly inconsequential dudes. Comedically performing ostentatious scams, using local onomatopoeia [gallic, yet fricative to point of unfathomable]. Against carlit Northbound flicker of façades with fantasmagoric cornices + pediments. Orbs. Beavers. Inset stars of David. Swags. Badges. Laurels.” (35)

Reading this prose obliges the reader to take a series of short breaths, which irresistibly evoke images one after the other like a series of slaps. And while this effect is not jarring it does create an intense experience. The period focuses attention: seeing it one takes a breath—out of habit perhaps—but after the period the meaning or sense continues and it draws one’s attention on in the same way as a new sentence. The spaces between sentences are a command: you will not drift through, missing a few words here and there but getting

While the period ends the sentence only to have the sense of the sentence continue in the next sentence, line-breaks are also used:

“Now,
Behind Room door:
Telephone ringing. Ah
That instrument of love.
Causing inner-stairwell assistant to raise head a minute.” (127)

I am reminded of composers who use syncopation in music. Technically, “syncopation occurs when a temporary displacement of the regular metrical accent occurs, causing the emphasis to shift from a strong accent to a weak accent” and is “a deliberate disruption of the two- or three-beat stress pattern, most often by stressing an off-beat, or a note that is not on the beat” (Reed 33). Many of the examples I have quoted illustrate Scott’s syncopated writing style. The Obituary is also peppered with crossed-out words, or strikethroughs: is she crossing out the wrong word, or, by putting a line through it, is she is finding a way to leave it in? The tactic obliges us to read the sentence at least twice: once with and once without the erasure. Inevitably the sentence makes sense both ways but states something slightly different.

“Was not ‘Grandpa’, as she calling her father, known back in Pincher Creek for hawking diamonds + reading tea leaves, saying certain individuals [her beloved dying mother his wife] bearing the Seal of the ancestors.” (121) reminds us that the narrator’s mother has died but does not want to take us in this direction because the novel is not moving into the complexities of her feelings about her mother, while still indicating that that might have been one possible direction to go. Another example, referring to Dial M For Murder: “Till ultimately proving hubby a loser not only in tennis. But also in game of self-preservation positive dénouement.” (129), manages to comment on both the story (husband’s self-preservation) and the plot (its dénouement) in one sentence, while simultaneously easing us to the beginning of the dénouement of The Obituary a couple of lines later: “-Rosine is a liar.”

Scott also puts the apostrophe to interesting use. Critics have debated whether punctuation in her novels is aimed at making the text sound like and be read like human speech or at distancing and abstracting the prose from human speech. While Scott challenges conventions of punctuating sentences, her use of the apostrophe seems to give the prose the cadence and rhythms of people’s speech—both in shortening ‘the’ to ‘th” so as “to create a sentence
that moves” (Moyes and Scott 132), and in dropping the ‘g’s from the present participles that are frequently used in place of a conventional verb form. This technique was first used in her novel My Paris as a way of solving problems of subject and tense while narrating a seamless blend of facts, opinions, memories and associations to keep it vivid and alive and, I suspect, to move it forward. In The Obituary not only is the gerund favored in place of verbs but an apostrophe replaces the dropped ‘g’: “the written apostrophe when we omit the G in the English participial forming also opens a space and in this space what do we find? ... the shame of not speaking well or rather of not speaking like the well-educated” (Moyes and Scott 132) says Scott. Not all characters drop g’s: when I/th’fly is speaking, we get “mornin’, breakfastin’, cheatin’ and readin’, warnin, hearin’ and singin’” (78-80), but the g’s come back when the narrator returns.

Scott being a repudiator of artificial oppositions, I would argue that punctuation in The Obituary is less designed to approximate or to distance the reader from human speech than to tell us something more about the character who is talking. It is consistent with her anti-dichotomizing stance neither to approximate nor to distance so much as to do both in the “either-and” sense. She is demonstrating “the subversion inherent in the very act of verbal contraction and truncation: dismantling the language of the powerful letter by letter …” (Frost 48)

WHY? AND WHY NOT?

Some critics are curious about the degree to which Scott’s mutiny against conventional rules of punctuation is an expression of her early association with Quebec feminist writers and her feminist urge to overthrow patriarchal rules such as those that control language. One might question whether punctuation rules can be considered a tool of the patriarchy but one has to acknowledge the inherent freedom gained by inventing new ones.

Overthrowing patriarchy in the form of patriarchally imposed language customs and rules has evolved into one of a wide range of oppressions challenged by questioning, experimenting and innovating in the texts, grammar and novelistic structure of Scott’s writing. Reading The Obituary, I feel that Scott is confronting her readers with the question “Why?”—as in, Why is this a rule and Why should it be followed? One essential way in which she does this is her wit. In addition to the comic elements and witty asides, numerous earthy sexual references (for example, I/th’fly’s ode3) make us laugh. Her examples of French, English and Frenglish offer numerous opportunities

3 I had a lover/With big equipment/How I/Miss her (79)
for puns: “Here we have a clou in R case” (129). The crossed-out words often impart humor to a sentence that seemed to be saying something else. Round and square brackets, ellipses and plus signs as well as italics—not to mention the lengthy footnotes marked by a ♥—are Scott’s idiosyncratic and ludic ways of responding to “Why?” with “Why not?” Look at what can happen if we explore what is possible when we decide not to apply customs and rules that we had no hand in establishing!

Language in *The Obituary* shines a light on the future of the art of writing by questioning and challenging rules of grammar, punctuation, ‘mother tongue,’ speech, subject and voice. By the end of this novel, the language has demonstrated what can be done when a writer says: Why obey the same old rules? Why get locked into the same old boxes of “this” or “that”? Why be limited by the same old language and grammatical restrictions, and why tell a complex and subtle story in the same old ways? In releasing the narrative from time and place constructions, invoking a variety of gender possibilities, experimenting with hybrid language blends to communicate the qualities of place, and making the sentence into something quite different, Scott has written an obituary for obsolete writing styles.

**REFERENCES**

Anachronies

Catherine Mavrikakis and Nathanaël

Translated by Nathanaël

This conversation between Catherine Mavrikakis and Nathanaël took place by correspondence from late May to early June 2012, between Montréal and Chicago, on the occasion of the publication by BookThug of Flowers of Spit, a novel by Catherine Mavrikakis translated by Nathanaël.

N.: Flowers of Spit is well in the distance now. It was published by Leméac in 2005 and again in English six years later, which is more or less now, by BookThug. I am curious to ask you about this dislocation. Which, it seems to me, is constitutive of the text itself (historical disturbance especially, but not exclusively, on the part of the Crackpot who has lost his share of the present—or at any rate, he reads in the present a resolutely ineradicable past), but of our friendship as well. Dislocation of places—you born in Chicago and living in Montréal, me born in Montréal and living in Chicago. The exchange is, so to speak, inscribed in our respective geographies.

C.M.: Yes, Flowers of Spit is far. But oddly, it represents a stumbling block in my life, something I think about often and which remains present. There is in this book a relationship to time that the Crackpot has in fact, a relationship in which different periods of time are confused. The Crackpot can never mourn the past. I am like him. It is very hard for me to understand that time has passed. I am sometimes in anachronic hours. It isn’t nostalgia, it’s that I think the past has us by the throat. It torments us. Maybe that is why I like Proust so much. My father who is at the hospital right now and has gone mad (more mad, in fact, than he already was ...) is now completely mixing up all time periods. The other day, he wanted to take me to his office which disappeared more than forty years ago and complained that a friend who has been dead since the ‘70s wasn’t visiting him. I’m barely exaggerating when I say that I inherited from both my parents this near impossible relationship to the present. My mother is still caught up in the Second World War.

Chicago is far, it’s my past, my birth, precisely because of the Second World War, because my aunt, my mother’s sister, went and married in Chicago
an American soldier whom she met during the landings. My mother was able to give birth at her sister’s. But Chicago is your own present. As though you were haunting a time that never belonged to me (I left as an infant), as though you were giving me news of my history. I know, on the other hand, how difficult Montréal was for you. That you had to flee. Sometimes I haven’t the courage to speak to you of it. As though I didn’t want to trouble you with that city you didn’t know what to make of ... Me, I have settled there a thousand times, wanting always to leave. Perplexed, like you ... But I stayed, not knowing where I would be more at home. Yesterday someone was telling me that he became Quebecois reading Hubert Aquin, and I think he said something that is valid for me. It was in reading certain Quebecois texts that I became Quebecoise. In addition to which, I published here, which strangely anchored me. But you are from here also, from Montréal, despite Chicago, because you continue to publish in French in Montréal. There is nonetheless a tie that the publication of your books creates, isn’t there? And then between us, there is Chicago, Montréal, yes ... But also France and North Africa. Our imaginations have covered the same territories. Don’t you find that strange?

N.: Yes, that had struck both of us when we met for the first time in Montréal. That there could be so many convergences. Like you, I quickly left the place where I was born (several months at most). Montréal only arrived much later, between France and Chicago, and through my books, it’s true. And very much because of you; when the painter’s illness announced itself, repeatedly, you said to me: come. But it is a city which refuses me duration. Perhaps it is that we resemble one another too much.

I very much like the distinction you make between nostalgia and anachronism. Is it possible to say of the latter that it is time itself which has gone mad? Ravaging and nourishing madness .... We would be summoned to respond to pasts and places which supplant our capacity to say I, which will have anticipated us so to speak. Your Flowers, and not only them, but your other books as well—I am thinking especially of A Cannibal and Melancholy Mourning or Omaha Beach, Le Ciel de Bay City—may be confronted with disorienting language like your father’s. How is one to receive that? Two and a half years ago now, several days, barely several hours before his death, very young, from a leukemia, my companion, the painter, in among his last words, he evoked Poland, Russia, places he had never lived, having spent his whole life in Chicago. An unreasoned logic had seized his language. As I read your books, I feel as though I am plunged in that exact
desire to receive a thing which arrives without coordinates, anticipated by itself and ratified by time, history, the devastated geographies, desirous of being heard.

You evoke Proust. I would like to ask you about other authors also whose reading (yours) is announced with the title of Flowers of Spit. I read in it not only Baudelaire’s Flowers of Evil, and Genet’s Our Lady of the Flowers (also Un chant d’amour), but Hervé Guibert from whose journal, The Mausoleum of Lovers, you borrow an excerpt from his for the epigraph: “T.’s spit on me, at the somewhat painful point of orgasm, was the sweetest refreshment, like the spray of a word of love.” You summon Guibert as early as A Cannibal in the proliferation of Hervé’s dying of the same and multiple AIDS. It’s thanks to you that I started reading Guibert. Thanks to you that I now find myself translating his journal. Despite his success in France, first as a novelist but also as a journalist and photographer, he remains relatively little known in English. It seems to me that what connects these voices to yours is desire. Can you speak of this desire, these desires?

C.M.: I didn’t know that Guibert was thanks to me ... I am happy to learn it. Perhaps I knew it and forgot? As though Guibert had always been yours. That you are translating him fills me with joy, and especially the journal, which I find so strong, crude and cruel. A writing of urgency, of authenticity, but an authenticity which is never banal. Because Guibert was demanding with the present, and it is perhaps this exigency which we have modestly in common with him. We like for the real to be something other than nitwitted. That so close to his death your painter companion needed places that settled in him, when they were unfamiliar to him, seems to illustrate, to speak to a relationship with the world, which is never simply what is given to see. Death at least has the good graces of delivering us from the present and its approach enables us to situate ourselves in other temporalities. As for desire, I wouldn’t know what to say ... I don’t even know if I have ever spoken of desire. I have written little on it, I mean that I haven’t presented many sex scenes, or perhaps, yes, a little bit, notably in Omaha Beach and it seems I wrote a mother-daughter incest scene in a dream the daughter is having. There is in me an urgency which is perhaps what makes me move and sometimes paralyzes me. I feel as though life, long as it can be, is always too short. Not because I want to fill it full of things, but because I am afraid of not finding my mission on earth. I don’t know what I came here to do and I must find meaning to it. Something drives me to seek out this meaning endlessly. Strangely, Guibert quickly
found that he was a writer, maybe you resemble him more than I do. I have always been impressed with the strength you have always shown in the face of your writing. You don’t really know how to do anything else ... (you know I am teasing you ...). Me, I have another path. Writing came late to me, around forty. Guibert had written everything before his death at thirty-six. He knew urgency in a way I wasn’t able to know it. You too, knew it young. But it’s true that I like writings of desire. Proust, Genet, Guibert and even Baudelaire. I could even say that writings of homosexual desire are more powerful to me. I don’t know why. You have written much more on this subject than I have. On what is of the order of the in-between, the marginal, the blur which wants especially not to be defined. Even your name is a way of showing that. Me, I call you Stéphane. It’s true it’s a beautiful boy’s name, but very young I knew a female Stéphane, and a woman I like very much also has this name. You are Stéphane, your patroynym gallicised. You are the one who metamorphoses. Me, I am monotony itself ...

N.: It seems to me that it is by desire that the reader is summoned to approach your *Flowers*. Guibert’s text which you present as an epigraph returns to language—to the text itself—this cruelty that you speak to so well, spit mixed with orgasm, desire which is vitality—ever the threat of a death penalty. Can there be madness without desire? Desire of madness? I think of Flore’s resplendent violence when confronted with human stupidity; or the cemetery in which the derisory eternal return of the same landing in *Omaha Beach* is manifestly deployed; the stinging highway in *A Cannibal*; or the horrifying cellar in *Le Ciel de Bay City* which contains Manichean memory. Desire, in your books such as I read them, seems always shackled to impotency (memory) and grief (desire to live), but also the impertinence of speaking. But I admit, of course, that I read you with my own eyes, and I enter into your texts as I am dragged there, by the abject force of things. That is far from signifying monotony! For two years that I have been keeping more or less quiet, that I have ceased to formulate myself according to crossings and borders, despite an overwhelming trip to France last year (where I hadn’t set foot in over twenty years), I don’t know what metamore (métamort?) is anymore nor how to approach it. The more I am quiet, the less I want to speak, and writing is mortally afflicted. The other day I translated this passage from *The Mausoleum of Lovers*: “The translation of Hans-Georg’s short texts: torture, the final sense that this text belongs to me just as it is my enemy.” He continues immediately after (he corrects): “No, the previous idea of the enemy text was seductive, but false.” He qualifies this sentence by making a connection with his own writing to
then disavow this observation as well: “But this sort of notation, this search for precision here is of no interest to me.” I would never use the word enemy to qualify any relationship whatsoever. I know that when I read you for the first time, some ten years ago now, I was—like when we met—overtaken by an urgent complicity of the text, even though this urgency manipulates us each differently. In translating your Flowers, even more than A Cannibal, I was summoned to the order of the text’s rage, translation itself became a proceeding that tore me to shreds (I had myself become carrion). Translation was no longer mourning but bloodletting ... of a historical order. In fact, your books do not grant the (North American) present the leisure of detachment from its anteriority. The Crackpot is that whole (European) history (of the camps) exposed (and not, I think, unearthed, as you show so well, the past cannot be buried, it devours the North American present). What of this disjunction?

C.M.: Yes, the North American present is devoured by the European past. I do think so. I think that America in general has not spent enough time considering what founded it: the Europeans who massacred the peoples who lived on this land. America is in an intense relationship with Europe. It’s not for nothing that Canadians and Americans fought in the Second World War, but they try to repress this relationship, to make something aesthetic out of it. We like Europe: there are beautiful castles there, culture, etc. But Europeans came here with their culture to kill the Indians of America. That, too, is culture ... Todorov shows it so well in his book on the conquest of America. My work is to make visible again the cultural spectre, come straight from the hells of Europe in America. The Crackpot is that spectre. In addition, it is also the French language, the somewhat outmoded French of the first half of the twentieth century that I wanted to make audible. I was very inspired by Louis-Ferdinand Céline for Flowers of Spit. The Crackpot speaks something of an old tongue. He is caught in the past. Language has changed since. I know this language because my mother speaks it. I know it very well in fact. But France doesn’t seduce me. Europe in general doesn’t call me. Like you, I don’t often want to go. I don’t know why. I don’t know how to reinvent a connection with Europe that isn’t either aesthetic or caught in an imaginary nostalgia for origins, but which remains ethical. So be it. As for rage, it is always very present in me. I am a very angry person. Indignation is a way of life. A posture and an imposture. Because it is untenable. But I cannot be indignant in a community. I don’t like for rage to be shared among a group. I am suspicious and rage is always of the order of suspicion. One can’t pal up in rage. So, yes, there was anger in Flowers of
Spit, lots of anger in the face of human stupidity that Flore Forget also sees in herself, but against which she struggles continually. Like a warrior. An anger against life which asks us to shut our traps, to bear the brunt of the unacceptable. Flore is leading a battle she can only lose, but she wouldn’t know how to live without leading that struggle. Yes, there is something crazy in Flore and she has the desire to transform what is her world. This desire is intrinsically mad, like any real desire, which always collides with the immensity of its appeal and the world’s incapacity to respond. Yes, all desire is mad. Definitely. Writing for me, is the experience of that tension between the absolute and the real. We dream of making a big book and we only make small ones. But this small one carries in it that piece of ideal. That said, despite my anger which is Flore’s logorrhea, I often catch myself imagining that I will stop writing. I tell myself that silence would be more desirable for me. That I would like to be quiet. But I don’t know if I have the strength for silence. I fear foundering in something that I imagine would be terrible. But I dream that silence will be given to me.

N.: I share your suspicion of groups; I am horrified by consensus and the crowd, which are among the ramparts of fascism. That is why I have always preferred correspondence to collectivity; in his last interview with Jean Birnbaum, Jacques Derrida evokes not only his preference for aloneness (l’esœulement) but the necessity for this.

Do you think it misguided to see in the relationship between America and Europe a connection with the relationship between Europe and Ancient Greece? I have recently been rereading your first book, published in 1996 by Champ Vallon, La mauvaise langue. In the sixth chapter, “When German Philosophy Speaks Greek,” you evoke the theory of the “distance of proximity.” It’s Hölderlin taken up by Heidegger that you appeal to, quoting from the former who writes: “What is properly ours must be learned just as though it were foreign to us.” I wonder whether it isn’t precisely the tension between this false duality maintained by language itself which is fulfilled by the silence you dream of. Because silence, if we are to believe José Ortega y Gasset, is the very condition of reflection, of thought (and not of philosophy), silence as the foundation of dialogue and its egress as well: “When we converse, we live in a society. When we think, we remain alone. But in this case, in this kind of conversation, we do both at once […]”

C.M: Yes, aloneness is necessary to write and to think. One must retreat a bit when one wants to do something. One can’t give in to thin air. One
must be anachronic (I am coming back to this) in the sense Agamben
gives it in What is the Contemporary? Yes, anachronic so as not to become
blinded by the illumination of the present, and in fact to better see the
present in its chiaroscuro. As for what is properly ours, I think, yes, that it
must be learned. That what seems near to us isn’t given and that there is
a work of appropriation that is just as necessary to undertake with what
is near, as with what is foreign. We know it because of our relationship
to language. There is no end to my repeated struggle to reappropriate my
mother tongue, French, which, as soon as I am writing, seems distant,
improper, in need of relearning. Language forces us to understand the
extent of our dispossession.

Yes, it is interesting to think that we are the ones who carry Europe, we the
“Américaines,” we who are capable of seizing its becoming and its becoming
is precisely American. Europe survives here. There is an inevitable
kitschification of the idea of Europe that bears no relationship to what
it was. This kitschification, this museumification of the History through
which we often imagine Europe, was exacerbated in Las Vegas, where
Venice’s canal and the Eiffel Tower were commandeered. But honestly,
is it so stupid? Or rather are we the ones who are able to have another
relationship to Europe? And is Europe not rolling along on its past charms
while its present is crumbling? How can one think a relationship to the
European past that isn’t nostalgic or kitsch?

As for silence, I think it exacerbates the question of proximity and distance.
For me, it is both completely full, but also very empty. It is presence and
absence in the world. But in this sense, in the duality it carries, it seems to
me to carry a sort of authenticity in which one can think, intermittently.

N.: Absolutely. Chicago, too, has its Versailles fountain, Buckingham Fountain,
very rococo, immoderately big, a scale in keeping with the idea it has of
itself. (This fountain was built for the World’s Colombian Exposition in 1893 to
mark the four hundredth anniversary of the so-called discovery of America
by Christopher Columbus—whence the word Colombian). But it seems to
me that this kitschification you speak of afflicts Europe just as much as it is
or might be and not only as it was. There is a tendency for some American
academics, Francophiles, to make utter abstraction of the political problems
afflicting France right now in order to maintain their fantasy of a past
France, but it is more likely that this France probably never existed. The
socialist ideal is evoked from the most affluent neighbourhoods of Paris,
sweeping aside the gravity of the situation in Paris’s banlieues, for example, the threatened expulsion of the Roma by Sarkozy, not to mention the quest for a “national identity,” driven by a racist discourse which subtends French republicanism and to which no political system is likely immune. And this brings me back to a question you raised toward the beginning of this conversation; that of multiple origins. Because our conversation, like your books, returns repeatedly to the question of antecedents. It’s striking. Antecedence is chasmal, gaping; the greatest danger is perhaps posed both by the desire for reconciliation—of times and places—and also by a desire for distinction. As though (historical) moments and places (the Maghreb, France, North America) were hermetic, or ever have been. That too is the madness of the present. I think of Omaha Beach, an oratorio you published in your cycle of American books, and which includes Le Ciel de Bay City and Les derniers jours de Smokey Nelson, in which the quest for origins leads to a song [chant] (and a field [champ]—the vast American cemetery of Coleville-sur-Mer) torn apart by violence. At the moment at which all attention is focused on the improperly buried dead, Diana, the daughter of the mourners (interestingly, and unless I am mistaken, French only has a feminine acception for the word mourner—pleureuse), dies in Iraq: “Courage, soldiers.” There is shame in it, shame in the scansion of the “Never Again,” of the “Wieder” and the “Nunca más,” after Auschwitz, after la guerra sucia, after the Khmer Rouge, after Kosovo, after Rwanda ...; after, here, now. Shame, for me, of saying I. What of you?  

C.M.: I am in utter agreement with you that kitschification afflicts Europe and it was something like Sarkozy’s “good news” with his bling bling way of doing politics. In a way he showed the possibility of France’s bling bling future ... Yes, Europe in my opinion is kitsch, and perhaps always was, but it gave itself permission not to know it, to experience itself as the authentic origin (and colonising, of course). People of poor taste, exotics, were peoples from other countries, dominated countries. I think that for a long time Europe presented itself as authentic, the model that could only be badly imitated. This didn’t perhaps altogether happen, but it’s undeniable, history constructed the myth of Europe. I don’t know whether multiple origins protect from anything; perhaps. With time ... But there is nonetheless a fetishization of origins which can take place in multiplicity. In Québec, fifteen years ago, writing had to be migrant. That is an instrumentalisation of identity or identities, and that always disturbs me. All identities were melted into the Québécois identity. So yes, identities must not be reconciled, the gaping is necessary. But I don’t know how to think this identitarian gaping politically. Something else would have to be imagined. That
history repeats itself, is I think, inevitable. One cannot imagine humans progressing, really. Like it or not, genocide and war are humanity's givens. Europe thought itself more clever by thinking it was safe from barbarism. It suffered because of it. It took its defeat right in the face. In fact, for Europe, the Holocaust is a humiliation of thought. Cultured Europeans weren't the most intelligent, the least susceptible to being savages? Of course not ... Why did Europe believe that? That is the lure. To believe there will be no more events like the Holocaust, like the Armenian genocide would also be a lure ... a European lure, I would say. Am I ashamed? I am not ashamed politically. I don't think humans can transcend their cruelty, their violence once and for all. But I am ashamed to exist, to have been brought into the world. Ashamed of having to make do with what is given and of not being humanly able to revolt against everything. I am not ashamed of History. It seems to me that it is but a manifestation of our in-humanity, but I am ashamed of being an in-human. Yes ... But I have reached a point where I have learned to live with this shame, even if I don’t forget or repress it.

N.: Our in-humanity may be the link between History and shame. Because violence committed against the human body is violence of an ontological order, according to the Italian philosopher Adriana Cavarero. The decapitated body presented in her book Orrorismo (translated as Horrorism: Naming Contemporary Violence) through rereadings of Medusa and Medea—a body sampled from television screens, whether in Tel Aviv, Baghdad, in Chechnya or elsewhere—is attacked in its “ontological dignity.” The shredding of bodies by a suicide bomber or other assault is inassimilable; the dismembered body “loses its individuality.” Whence the invention of the ontological crime which returns the body to the self.

These days I am (slowly) reading Thomas Hobbes. In the chapter in Leviathan on the imagination he connects memory and decomposition. “But when we would express the decay, and signify that the Sense is fading, old and past, it is called Memory.” This decay, this degradation, will take on a more willful scope with Nietzsche when he calls for the destruction of history in his second untimely meditation. If Hobbes is sensitive to the vulnerability of the human body and memory to erosion, Nietzsche is intent on gaining a present, living, by destroying institutions which infringe on vitality. That, it seems to me, is the sense (the senses, the sensorial but also signification) of the memory that is evoked here. In Flowers of Spit, Rose, Flore’s daughter, might, in a certain sense, be anticipated memory. The Crackpot might be the pairing of devouring and obliterated memory. Memory, in this sense, might be the reiterative survivor of history—abandoned to a dream become horror.
Each of your novels, as I read them, is akin to me to an insomnia. For there is in the attention granted to your subjects, something of the vigil, but of the horrified vigil. Do the demands of memory—a memory that passes through the body—operate against sleep?

C.M.: Yes, memory prevents sleep. It keeps one alert, yes there is something of the vigil in my writing, an inability to relax, to find rest. I always say when referring to myself that I am on guard. Memory is something which continually asks us not to succumb to languor. It has a stimulating effect, but not because it would lead us to do something. In fact I find that it excites for nothing, it makes one alert. In vain. Because I don’t think one can do oneself any good from one’s memories. Memory doesn’t serve much of a purpose. For me, there would be a duty to forget, to enter into the night of sleep. But I can’t do it. I fail at this duty. I remain under the thumb of the past, or the past to come (and you are right, it passes through the body). The dream, for me, continues to watch over memory. It isn’t the companion of sleep, despite what Freud says. Why is it impossible? My characters all have a very intense relationship to memory. In Flowers of Spit, it’s obvious, yes, but in the other books, if anything, I am showing the pointlessness of memories and the necessity, because we are stuck with them, to think them. We haven’t the choice. It’s better to turn them into working material, to give them meaning, than to let the horror that molds them dominate. Is there a good use of history or of memory, as Nietzsche asks? I continue to ask myself this question, even though I am convinced there isn’t. But we must behave as though a good use of history were possible, in order to continue to live. The decomposition of a present over the course of time that comprises memory seems a very beautiful image to me. The past is a corpse that cannot smell good, even if it was once happy. It is no more. Often, it is compared to a ghost that haunts us. This idea of decomposition seems much more anchored in the body, less ethereal. I like it ... But the present also poses problems for me. It always appears as a memory. It never seems new. It is repetition. Paolo Virno, an Italian thinker, speaks of this sense of déjà vu before the present in his work on the memory of the present. What is one to do, with the weight of history, which seems, in spite of everything, to lack inventiveness, to create a time toward which one would not be insensitive? The notion of intermittence comes to mind again now. Sometimes, the world gives itself to us, anew. We must accept these small epiphanies. We live for those moments of illumination which we must pay attention to. We live to achieve sleep, to forget from time to time and live something new. With a certain lightness.
Contributors’ Notes

EMILY ABENDROTH is a writer and teacher currently residing in Philadelphia. Her recent works include NOTWITHSTANDING shoring, FLUMMOX (Little Red Leaves, 2012), Exclosures 1-8 (Albion Press, 2012), and Property: None (Taproot Editions). An extended excerpt from her piece “Muzzle Blast Dander” can be found in Refuge/Refugee (Chain Links Book Series Vol. 3, 2008).

DOROTHY ALBERTINI’s recent work can be found at the Peep/Show poetry blog, as well as in H_ngm_n, Drunken Boat, Tantalum, and NANO Fiction. Dorothy teaches for Bard’s Institute for Writing and Thinking and the Language and Thinking Program, writes about bears, and collaborates with people in and around Poughkeepsie, NY.

BRENT ARMENDINGER is the author of two chapbooks of poetry: Archipelago (Noemi Press, 2009), and Undetectable (New Michigan Press, 2009). Recent work has appeared or is forthcoming in Bateau, Court Green, Denver Quarterly, LIT, Puerto del Sol, Volt, and Web Conjunctions. The first definition in “Ciudades” was published in a different form as “Asolar,” in Arts & Understanding (vol. 20, No. 12, December 2011). Brent teaches creative writing at Pitzer College and lives in Los Angeles.

JAMES BELFLOWER is the author of the forthcoming The Posture of Contour: A Public Primer (SpringGun Press, 2013) and Commuter (Instance Press, 2009), which was voted 2009’s “Best Book Length Long Poem/Sequence by ColdFront magazine. He has also authored Bird Leaves the Cornice (SpringGun Press, 2011), winner of the 2011 Spring Gun Press Chapbook Prize and a collaborative echap, And Also a Fountain (NeO Pepper Press, 2009). His poems, essays and reviews appear, or are forthcoming in: Fence, New American Writing, 1913, Drunken Boat, Coldfront, EOAGH, Denver Quarterly, and Apostrophe Cast among others. He is pursuing a PhD in Contemporary Poetics at SUNY Albany and cocusrates the Yes! Reading Series in Albany, NY.

JEN BESEMER is the author of several attractive and fuel-efficient volumes of poetry, ranging from compact to full-sized, including Quiet Vertical Movements (Beard of Bees, 2012), Ten Word Problems (White Knuckle Press, 2012), Telephone (Brooklyn Arts Press, 2013) and Object with Man’s Face (Rain Taxi Ohm Editions, 2013). Jen’s recombinant poetry projects are also represented in Troubling the Line: Trans and Genderqueer Poetry and Poetics (EOAGH / Nightboat, 2013).

LØRPSLIÇ BIERKEGÅRT is of Yugoslavian descent and resides in a remnant of the Balkan War. Her focus is depression and suicidology.

DANIEL BORZUTZKY is the author of The Book of Interfering Bodies (Nightboat, 2011); The Ecstasy of Capitulation (BlazeVOX, 2007) and Arbitrary Tales (Ravenna Press, 2005). His
translations include Raúl Zurita’s Song for his Disappeared Love (Action Books, 2010) and Jaime Luis Huenún’s Port Trakl (Action Books, 2008), among others. His work has been anthologized in, among others, A Best of Fence: The First Nine Years (Fence Books, 2009), Seriously Funny (University of Georgia Press, 2010), and Malditos Latinos Malditos Sudacas: Poesía Iberoamericana Made in USA (El billar de Lucrecia, 2010). Journal publications include BOMB, Fence, Denver Quarterly, Conjunctions, Chicago Review, TriQuarterly, and many others. Chapbooks include Failure in the Imagination (Bronze Skull, 2007) and One Size Fits All (Scantily Class Press, 2009). His poems have been translated into Spanish, Bulgarian, French, and Turkish. He lives in Chicago.


EMILY CARLSON holds a BA from Sarah Lawrence College and an MFA from the University of Pittsburgh. Her work has appeared in journals such as: Bloom, Denver Quarterly, Fence, Harp & Altar, Slope, and Whiskey & Fox. Her manuscript Sleeping with Phosphorus was a finalist in the 2010 Fence Modern Poets Series. She received a travel grant to Beirut, Lebanon from the Nationality Rooms at the University of Pittsburgh.

FABIÁN CASAS was born in 1965 in Boedo, Argentina. He has published six books of poetry, a novel, and a book of short stories. He is a brown belt in karate and no longer writes; he only does karate.

CODY-ROSE CLEVIDENCE’s little silver chapbook everything that is beautiful is edible was put out by Flowers & Cream Press in 2012, and their book Beast Feast is forthcoming from Ahsahta (2014). They live in either the semi-wilderness of the Ozarks or the semi-wilderness of NYC.

MÓNICA DE LA TORRE is the author of five books of poetry, among them Four and Public Domain. A native of Mexico City, she writes in Spanish and English and has translated numerous Latin American poets. She is also co-author of Taller de Mecanografía published in 2012 by Tumbona Ediciones. She is senior editor at BOMB Magazine.

NICHOLAS DEBOER is originally from Indiana. He is a member of the Potlatch Discordian Network (potlatchdiscordian.net) and currently lives in Philadelphia. He went to Naropa University and does a lot of DIY publishing. He helps co-run con/crescent press with Jamie Townsend (concrescentpress.org).
GREGOIRE PAM DICK (aka Traver Pam Dick, Mina Pam Dick et al.) is a writer, translator, and artist living in New York City. Her prose poetry has appeared in BOMB, The Brooklyn Rail, The Recluse, EOAGH, Fence, and Matrix. Her philosophical work has appeared in a collection published by the International Wittgenstein Symposium. Her translations, mistranslations and co-translations can be found in Telephone and Dandelion. Dick’s first book Delinquent was published by Futurepoem in 2009. Currently, Dick is working on hybrid projects which engage with Hölderlin, Lenz, Büchner, Walser and Nietzsche. They do philosophy as literature and explore fluid identity, tonal alternation’s music and the poetics of sex with sibling books.

LARESSA DICKEY was raised in Tennessee and received an MFA from the University of Minnesota. She is the author of four chapbooks, including A Piece of Information About His Invisibility (Miel Books, 2012). Her work appears or is forthcoming in CURA, Cerise Press, U City Review, interruption, Newfound, ILK, Quarterly West, and other journals. A chapbook entitled [apparatus for manufacturing sunset] is forthcoming from dancing girl press in 2013.

MARK DICKINSON is a poet living and working in The Orkneys. Mark is the curator of Seapressed editions, with recent work appearing in Landscapes out of Edith Cowan University in Australia, and in The Ground Aslant: An Anthology of Radical Landscape Poetry, edited by Harriet Tarlo (Shearsman, 2011). He has a collection forthcoming from Shearsman.

STEVE DICKISON teaches and is the Director of the Poetry Center at San Francisco State University, and teaches in the Writing and Literature Program at California College of the Arts. He co-edited Shuffle Boil, a music magazine, with David Meltzer (2002–2006) and is the editor-publisher of the imprint Listening Chamber (with the offshoots Rumor Books and Parrhesia Press). He was the co-editor of Prison/Culture (City Lights, 2010) and Homage to Etel Adnan (Post-Apollo, 2012). Dickison is the author of Disposed (Post-Apollo, 2007) a book of poetry. Wear You to the Ball, a poetry-sound collaboration was performed with new music composer Bill Dietz, in London and Berlin, 2009.

CLAIRE DONATO lives in Brooklyn, NY and writes across genres. She grew up in Pittsburgh, PA and holds an MFA in Literary Arts from Brown University. Her fiction, poetry, and lyric essays have appeared or are forthcoming in the Boston Review, Encyclopedia, Evening Will Come, LIT, Octopus, and 1913: a journal of forms. Donato’s first book, Burial, will be published by Tarpaulin Sky Press in the spring of 2013.

JULIA DRESCHER’s most recent work is a collaboration with Michelle Detorie and may be found at http://www.likestarlings.com/. She is co-founder and editor of the poetry journal Little Red Leaves.
RACHEL BLAU DUPLESSIS is the author of “Draft 106: Words,” which is part of the sixth unit of 19 works comprising the long poem, Draft. Surge: Drafts 96-114 is forthcoming (Salt Publishing, 2013). Vydia and José Corti will publish Italian and French translations of significant selections from Draft in 2013. Her poetry can be heard on PENNSound (http://rachelblauduplessis.com, http://wings.buffalo.edu/epc/authors/duplessis).

C. VIOLET EATON is the editor of Bestoned, a journal of new metaphysical verse. As Dowser, he dispatches small editions of “hill drone” recordings from secret locations throughout Arkansas, where he also teaches poetry and sells used & rare books.

KAREN GARTHE lives in New York City. Her books include: The Banjo Clock (University of California Press, 2012) and Frayed Escort (Center for Literary Publishing, 2006), which won the 2005 Colorado Prize.

SUSAN GEVIRTZ lives in San Francisco. Her books of poetry include AERODROME ORION & Starry Messenger (Kelsey St., 2010), BROADCAST (Trafficker, 2009) and Thrall (Post Apollo, 2007) Coming Events: Collected Writing, is forthcoming from Nightboat Books in 2013.

JUDITH GOLDMAN is the author of Vocoder (Roof, 2001), DeathStar/rico-chet (O Books, 2006), and I.b.; or, catenaries (Krupskaya, 2011). She joined the faculty of the Poetics Program of SUNY Buffalo in the fall of 2012.

HR HEGNAUER is the author of Sir (Portable Press, 2011). She is a book and website designer specializing in working with independent publishers as well as individual artists and writers. Hegnauer is a member of the feminist publishing collaborative Belladonna*, and she is part of the poets’ theater group GASP: Girls Assembling Something Perpetual. She received her MFA in Writing & Poetics from Naropa University, where she has also taught in the Summer Writing Program.

JENNIFER KRONOVET is the author of the poetry collection *Awayward* (BOA Editions, 2009). She is currently Writer-in-Residence at Washington University in St. Louis, and is a founding editor of *Circumference: Poetry in Translation*.

SUEYEUN JULIETTE LEE lives in Philadelphia where she teaches and edits Corollary Press. Her books include *That Gorgeous Feeling* (Coconut Books, 2008) and *Underground National* (Factory School, 2010), as well as several chapbooks, most recently *A Primary Mother* (Least Weasel Series at Propolis Press, 2013). Sueyeun writes poetry reviews for *The Constant Critic* and is a poetry editor for the Asian American Writers’ Workshop.

MATT LONGBUCCO teaches writing and literature in the Liberal Studies Program at New York University. His work has appeared most recently in *The Brooklyn Rail*, *Parkett*, and *The Death and Life of American Cities*.

PABLO LOPEZ co-edits comma,poetry and resides in Oakland, CA.

CATHERINE MAVRIKAKIS lives in Montréal where she teaches literature. She has published four novels, including the resounding *Le Ciel de Bay City* and *Les derniers jours de Smokey Nelson* (Canada, Héliotrope, 2011). She has also published several essays, including “Condamner à mort: Les meurtres et la loi à l’écran” (Canada, Les Presses de l’Université de Montréal, 2006), “Duras aruspice” (Canada, Héliotrope, 2006) and “L’éternité en accéléré” (Canada, Héliotrope, 2010). She is the author of *Omaha Beach: Oratorio* (Canada, Héliotrope, 2010).


EDRICH MESMER is a resident of Buffalo, NY. He is the collator of the international journal *Yellow Field*. Mesmer’s current articles on the history and exemplars of little magazines can be found on the website for Australia’s *Cordite Poetry Review*. He has poems forthcoming or appearing in *Dead Gender, Landscapes, Press Board Press* magazine, *Infinity’s Kitchen*, and *Steel Bellow*.

NATHANAËL is the author of a score of books, written in English or French, including Sisyphus, Outdone. (Nightboat, 2012), Carnet de somme (Canada, Le Quartanier, 2012), We Press Ourselves Plainly (Nightboat, 2010), and Absence Where As (Claude Cahun and the Unopened Book) (Nightboat, 2009). Of Catherine Mavrikakis, she has translated A Cannibal and Melancholy Mourning and Flowers of Spit (BookThug, 2011). She has also translated Édouard Glissant, Danielle Collobert, and Hilda Hilst, the latter in collaboration with Rachel Gontijo Araújo.

NICOLE PEYRAFITTE is a Pyrenean-born multidisciplinary artist whose writings, paintings, singing, videos, and cooking are often integrated into multimedia stagings. Her latest project Bi-Value: Vulvic Space I Vulvic Knowledge, is a performance project that includes 17 texts, 17 visuals, 2 videos, and 1 recipe (Stockport Flats Press, 2013). In 2012 she produced and co-directed with Miles Joris-Peyrafitte the documentary film Basil King: Mirage. She has authored 2 CDs: The Bi-continental Chowder and Whisk! Don’t Churn! with the bassist Michael Bisio, the DVD Sax, Soup Poetry and Voice with Pierre Joris and Joe Giardullo, and 3 chapbooks of writings (Ride the Line, The Calendar, and Homage à la Vénus de Lespugue). She has also illustrated and created covers for a number of books by Pierre Joris. Her performance “Remember-Reflect-Mark” was documented in Emergency INDEX 2011 (Ugly Duckling Presse, 2012).

JOHN PLUECKER is a writer, interpreter, translator and co-founder of the language justice and literary experimentation collaborative Antena. His texts have appeared in journals in the U.S. and Mexico, including The Volta, Mandorla, Animal Shelter, HTMLGiant and Literal. In addition to his work at the intersections of visual art and poetry, his work extends off the page as well to improvisational performance with text in collaboration with experimental musicians and performance artists. He has translated numerous books from the Spanish, including most recently Tijuana Dreaming: Life and Art at the Global Border (Duke University Press, 2012) and Feminism: Transmissiones and Retransmissions (Palgrave Macmillan, 2011). He has published three chapbooks, Routes into Texas (DIY, 2010), Undone (Dusie Kollektiv, 2011) and Killing Current (Mouthfeel Press, 2012).

KHADIJAH QUEEN is the author of Conduit (Black Goat/Akashic, 2008). She is a Black Peculiar winner of the 2010 Noemi Press book award for poetry and a finalist for the Gatewood Prize from Switchback Books. Her individual works have appeared in anthologies such as: Best American Nonrequired Reading, Eleven Eleven, Memoir, Jubilat, and Tuesday: An Art Project. She is the recipient of fellowships from Cave Canem and the Norman Mailer Writers’ Colony, and her poetry has been nominated for the Pushcart Prize four times. Currently, Khadijah is working on her third manuscript.

ARTURO RAMÍREZ LARA was born in Chihuahua, Chihuahua in 1979 and now lives in Ciudad Juárez. He has a bachelor’s degree in Mexican literature. He was the editor of the section “En línea” (On Line) in El Diario de Juárez. His texts have appeared in the Anuario de poesía mexicana 2004 (Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2005), Divino
Tesoro (Casa Vecina, 2008) and in magazines like Tierra Adentro and Oráculo. He has published the book Nanas para dormir a Jonás (Tierra Adentro, 2009). Previously, he was co-editor of the Hoja Frugal and Plan B. Currently he is coordinator of Spanish Language and Literature at the Escuela Preparatoria Central (Central High School) in Ciudad Juárez.

ELIZABETH ROBINSON is the author of the poetry collections Three Novels (Omnidawn, 2011) and Counterpart (Ahsahta, 2012). Her book essay/memoir/poetry, On Ghosts, is forthcoming in the spring of 2013 by Solid Objects. Robinson is the 2013 Hugo Fellow at the University of Montana.


DANIEL ROUNDS lives and works in California. His poetry has been published in 3rd Bed, Fish Drum Magazine, Xconnect, Aught, and Good Foot. He has poetry forthcoming in American River Review.


ROBIN TREMBLAY-MCGAW is the editor of X Poetics (xpoetics.blogspot.com). She teaches at Santa Clara University and Bard College’s Language & Thinking Program. Her writing has appeared in numerous places, including Fiver Fingers Review, Narrativity, marks, How2, How(ever), MELUS, On: Contemporary Practice, and elsewhere. She lives in San Francisco.

RAÚL ZURITA’s books include Purgatorio (1979), Anteparaiso (1982), La Vida Nueva 1994. Other books include Poemas Militantes (2000), Los Países Muertos (2006), Poemas de amor (2007), In Memoriam (2008), and Cuadernos de guerra (2009) and Zurita (2011). Zurita sky-wrote the poem La Vida Nueva over Manhattan in 1982, and he was a member of CADA, an art-action collective renowned for their performance-protests in Chile during the dictatorship of Pinochet. In 2009, Zurita’s INRI (translated by William Rowe) was published by Marick Press; Purgatory (translated by Anna Deeny) was published by the University of California Press in 2009, and Song for his Disappeared love (translated by Daniel Borzutzky) was published by Action Books in 2010. Zurita lives in Santiago, Chile and works as a professor of Literature at Universidad Diego Portales.
About the Artist

Mie Olise lives in Copenhagen and New York.

Working as a painter and constructor of architectural installations, Mie Olise works with narratives relating to place and desolate structures. Olise has travelled to places in different states of disrepair, like a Russian abandoned ghost town by the Arctic Circle, to research, collect stories and later subjectively develop particular layers of the found truths.

Working on the “The Silent Station,” Olise went on a two-way journey from the island of Mors, where she grew up in Denmark, to Newfoundland in the footsteps of the character, Espen Arnakke and to Holland in the quest of tracking down the ship of the same name. The collected stories found on this journey have been a generator for the projects in the current show. Concept determines the media in her practice.

After graduating with her MFA from Central St. Martins, London in 2007 Olise has been traveling to residencies from Iceland, Berlin, Skowhegan to The ISCP in New York.

In 2013 Olise will open a new travelling exhibition starting at Museo de Arte Acarigua-Araure in Venezuela.

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, and Rachel Bers, with guest editors Mark Tardi (Polish poetry & poetics in translation) and Laura Moriarty (A Tonalist Set).

Aufgabe #10, edited by E. Tracy Grinnell, Paul Foster Johnson, Julian T. Brolaski, Jen Hofer, Nathanaël, and Rachel Bers, with guest editor Cole Swensen (French poetry & poetics in translation).

Aufgabe #11, edited by E. Tracy Grinnell, Julian Talamantez Brolaski, erica kaufman, Jen Hofer, and Nathanaël, with guest editor Christian Nagler (Salvadoran poetry in translation).

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