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THE LETTER

She said that she did not understand why, each time certain women got together, in films for example, time seemed to stop around them after having frozen them or changed them into pillars of salt, loaded (with) symbols.

—Nicole Brossard, Picture Theory

in the movies
the woman listens while a boy and a girl turn out the lights
pursue their conversation in the dark
these are choices
the woman waits
the woman holds the snake against her
the woman is watched
the woman hides behind the pillar
these are constants: each age, each sheet
defined by lines of light and blockages
plunge into a memory which overflows

square pulled to rectangle to new square

a shared memory with the same givens
a circuit of past which includes a shining point:
an “aspect”
attracted into his sheet
shattered and unhinged
rolled up in her own sheets
a sheet of a different age
another: aspects of the transformation of a single continuum
an ambiguous moment
—love and the decline of this love
crossing these sheets again and again
crossing many others
all kinds of regions stirred up
a man jumping from one to the other
emerge one after another

a father who says we do not make choices
a boyfriend who writes a book about choices
to not know how to choose
to become unable to choose
to choose once but no longer choose
to choose choice
is it grace or chance?
to return to ones country
like ancestors, full of exploits and lies
the little prostitute, an unemployed man
the gallant, the fetishists
the organization of work, the making of gold ingots
a hunter baptized a lion, the American

fountains of luminous water
fires, zig-zags forming numbers
repeat of the conscious concept
embracing, striking, intertwining, bumping
restoring images to the bodies from which they have been taken
an orgy of sensory representations
a body leant against a wall
falls to a sitting position on the ground
this sliding of postures
the paralyzed girl
the woman fixed in erotic quest
the maid caught in a mystical levitation
there is an indiscernibility of the two women
not displacement in space but a sinking into time
the sun-moon movement
as in the woman's open mouth
a man walks across sand
an animalized, naturalized father
a blindfolded son urinating on his painter's canvas

artificial pose of terror:
the world has become memory
brain itself has become consciousness
screen itself is the cerebral membrane
image is no longer
without anyone having omnipotence or the last word
characters keep their mouths closed
the young girl’s name underneath the married women’s
moving towards an end, to infinity
the cab, the journey, the appearance of the ghost-lorry
to restore a body to voices
still there are only places of a story left

STOP LOOK AND LISTEN

A Digression On The Picture Of A Page Of Gertrude Stein

Most of us pay little attention to what a page of writing looks like, only
to what it says and perhaps how it sounds. Yet many Stein texts have a
distinctive look, quite different from that of standard written English. Some
passages print themselves into the mind as pictures long before the mind even
begins to make sense of the words. Their look is not the result of typography,
for Stein composes by a limited vocabulary and a discipline of phrasing, not by
offsetting, underlining, spacing, block letters. She punctuates only with periods
and commas and uses no quotation marks and few capitals. Without reading the
words, look at the design of this passage from “An Elucidation”:

You do see that halve rivers and harbors, halve rivers and
harbors, you do see that halve rivers and harbors makes halve rivers
and harbors and you do see, you do see that you that you do not have
rivers and harbors when you halve rivers and harbors, you do see
that you can halve rivers and harbors.

I refuse have rivers and harbors I have refused. I do refuse
have rivers and harbors. I receive halve rivers and harbors, I accept
halve rivers and harbors.

The passage arrests the eye because it is made up of only three small
blocks of phrases, repeated over and over with slight variations until they
become an abstract design. They are joined in varying, irregular ways that keep
the design flexible and loose even with its narrow vocabulary. Made of so few
phrases so often repeated, the passage makes an insistent visual design before it
makes sentences and sense. Whether the lines are handwritten or printed,
whether the page is held right side up or upside down, the design is a presence.
Anyone looking at such writing perceives abstract forms moving into
patterns in a space but also tries to read the words for meaning. Sometimes the
two conflict. From the repetitions and permutations the eye gains a sense of
distinction while mind reading a phrase over and over loses the sense of meaning.
Constructions rearrange themselves constantly. Eye conflicts with mind, looking
with reading, to create the textual instability that is also the magnificence
of Stein pages. The eye ends up asking what it is seeing, how it is seeing, what
reading is, what knowing is.

To Stein, words can change at any time. She uses them as wholes but
also as parts that make new wholes and so new elements of composition. In the
portrait “Edith Sitwell And Her Brothers The Sitwells And Also To Osbert
Sitwell And To S. Sitwell” of the summer of 1926 appears this passage:

Tableland.

Tableland and land and knees, tableland and knees and
tableland and land and knees.

Tableland and land.

Tableland and knees.

Tableland and land and knees.

“Tableland” stands prominently at the indent of new lines, capitalized as a
proper name that takes us to Western Australia, until it returns in lower case as a
common noun. A compound, “tableland” breaks not only into “table” and “land”
but also into “able” and “and.” Stein may be writing on a table, on a tray (fr.
plateau), on her knees, in or of the country (land) or the pleasant land of
counterpane. In the portrait “Sitwell Edith Sitwell” of the year before appears
her old friend, Barnard College Professor Mabel Weeks (“Weeks and weeks able
and weeks”), whom Stein invited on an afternoon to meet Edith Sitwell and to
“sit around her” at tea (a tea table). From the earlier to the later portrait the
boundaries of words shift as in mirrors and echoes, “table,” “Mabel,” “able” and
even the French article “le”; “be,” “me,” “see,” “knees”; “Table table to be table
to see table to be to see to me, table to me table to be table to table to table to
it.” We read these sequences by look and sound more than by reference and
grammar.

Such letters, words and lines appear less as text for the mind than as
design for eye and ear, tight or loose, fast or slow, jagged or smooth, but always
rhythmic. I do not move down the page left to right and line by line to the

bottom of sense. Rather I receive words as openwork tracery, interlacing design
in the white margined frame of a rectangle or square.

Stein passages often make visual impressions with a descriptive power of
their own. I think of the many blocked paragraphs of An Acquaintance With
Description, begun, but Stein was in England for her first lecture, in sections
in a single pocket notebook along with sections for the portrait of the Sitwells.
The notations for both not only study description but become themselves
descriptive visual images. The abstract, decorative designs of words patterned by
look, sound and sense recall through-composed music, cross-hatching patterns,
the designs of William Morris.

Turn to a page whose visual appearance also describes its verbal design.
An acquaintance with description.

If it is to have the leaving as an obligation to be there and come to to the rest that if there is if there is the next to have it leave to to be in that way four three one leaving it around as it might indeed have it that they not as if it were in opposite around let it might and might be considered as two three three there many there how many there how many three two one leaving it as much behind behind to mind letting letting all in theirs for that most when makes what is why it was as much as much for the having having to be interrupted shall it shall it have the name when there is that in two made which is much the more than theirs for that now leaving it in this to be sure let it coming coming to have it given given in place of theirs to have it can it be and fairly well at most in that which which when where and light and come to last last and might and might it be in this and change get it is it not what in their might it come to leave it in this place it could be that it is when it when it is in theirs to place and to say need it and it was not only why it came to left and calling this is in the way of any other one which is not only why they left they did not have it to fit in when it was that the two were two were to make four places and a little below to say so if it must be just their in that complete why is it only when it is not only if it is in that increase. There can be no difference between a circus a mason and a mechanic between a horse and cooking a blacksmith and his brother and his places altogether and an electrician. In every other way I am disappointed. Yes when it is not only this and having been not prepared to be so much and wonder they had it and they changed it and they made it be very nearly might it be what is it when it is not after all very little of a having not seen it when it came.

There are no sentence configurations to recognize. The page seems printed in a foreign language whose grammar I do not know. Periods mark the ends of sentences but not their shapes, and sentences have no syntactic centers. The eye looks at the white that lights the black, the black on white, penscape, printscape, arrangement upon visual arrangement. Shortly after An Acquaintance With Description was published in the spring of 1929, the reviewer for the Times Literary Supplement observed that Stein’s “vain repetitions” plunge readers into a “trance-like condition. Words become dissociated from meaning.” Precisely. She wants us to see words for more than meaning. Such passages almost seem printed in Chinese or Arabic, whose beauty of design I can enjoy without deciphering meaning.

The white page is evenly printed over in short, sharp lines of jagged inked letters, unshaded, unambiguous and abstract. It begins with tiny neutral dotted verticals, “If it is,” whose sharp “/” I both see and hear, and continues unbroken, without even a black dot on the horizontal for a comma or a pause. White fills the spaces between the words, equal enough in length and weight, repeated again and again till they make a design that does not ask for sense. The words are colorless and neutral and display no reference—there, come, leave, around, opposite, having, shall, coming, which, when, place. These are not things that speak out but scribbles in a pattern. No words stand out bright until far down there appear a few people and things in nouns, “no difference between a circus a mason and a mechanic between a horse and cooking a blacksmith and his brother and his places altogether and an electrician. In every other way I am disappointed.” A momentary local scene, a tableau on a page of scribble-scrabble.

A different visual image appears as a paragraph on the next page of An Acquaintance With Description. The eye receives it if the mind does not in incomprehension refuse it.

Again Albert again write to Albert again basket again changed to have it again have it basket again again as again as a change again basket again basket again it is again as a change again as a basket again at again larger again as many again as a basket again have it a basket again larger again is it again it is it again a basket again as larger again a basket again get it again is it again a basket again it is.

It is is it. A basket.
Except for "it," "is" and "to," these lines are made of simple a and b words, including the name Albert on the capital legs of A. All the words contain one or more a's. "Basket" adds b and half-rhymes with "it." "It is is it. A basket/ Basket it is is it." Most are two-syllable words, almost equal in length, repeated again and again, Albert and basket, a stressed and an unstressed syllable in a rhythm that pushes for rhyme, Albert, basket, a, b.

The power of the patterns comes from Stein's language, whose repetitions and permutations decontextuate the words. The eye explores the verbal topography of pages that become maps of new landscapes of words. Here, in a section of the portrait of the Sitwells, rivers are read as roads in the sequence of alliterating r- and s-words in a typographical image that visually describes her meaning:

For very as along as long as rivers rivers seen as water rivers road seen as every road, read seen as seen seen as roads roofs read seen, rivers seen as water water seen as roads seen and read seen as roads seen.

The scene seen and the text read become one in the composition of sight, sound and sense that Stein explored throughout the years. She knew that writing's way of enlightening us is not only by words it puts into an empty basket of the mind but by visual imprint, abstract and self-contained. She thought like a painter about the forms in which words etch themselves into the eye. For her, the study of description became also an exercise in placing words to make the descriptive visual. Look at how she puts the differences—troughs—between the ridges:

...if it can be that there is no difference between ridges and between ridges. There is a difference between ridges and between ridges and between there is a difference between there there and ridges between there there and ridges there is a difference between there there there there and ridges . . . .

Topography becomes typography, both abstracted designs of what is seen, lifted from time, events, history. Her exercises often rely on the stock of descriptive writing in seasonal progression of fruits and flowers—berries, peaches, melons, pears, apples, grapes, and pansies, pinks, roses, hollyhocks. They become color compositions and still lifes, which also read as visual compositions on the pages. Timeless except in their light reflection of seasons and weather to mark their variety more than their passing, the passages are welcomed by Stein in the process of making the acquaintance of description as a formal friendship:

An acquaintance with description above all an acquaintance with description above an acquaintance with description above all an acquaintance with description above an acquaintance with description and above and above an acquaintance with description and an acquaintance with description. Please and an acquaintance with description please an acquaintance with description please an acquaintance with description.

She used a limited vocabulary of neutral words with minimal reference to explore composing. That economy of words shifts attention away from the information—there is almost no information—to the design we see and hear before us. Here is one poem from "Stanzas In Meditation" that looks at what she is composing:

Next to next to and does.
Does it join.
Does it mean does it join.
Does it mean does it mean does it join.
If after all they knew
That I say so.

The events and tasks of daily life gave her the words for what she did or saw or said or heard. But her writer's mind made of these words chips for composition. For Stein as a writer, the daily life, the here and now, was not only about living but about writing: it was a source of words. She relied on the immediate, not on the remembered.

Sometimes the immediate is the manuscript notebook. Look at how a
tiny 3 1/2" x 2 1/4" notepad—its height half the width of Big Allis—shapes word ideas for a section of "An Elucidation":

Small examples  
are preferable  
They are preferred.  
An instance.  
Tremble for  
small examples

Not that we need to know how these lines originated though knowing adds pleasure to reading.

All these visual matters were in my mind when I began work for A Stein Reader. Expectations about how words should behave when joining as writing hinder reading Stein. She avoids associative language—automatic phrasing that has lost to unthinking habit the power to impress the mind. She does not write to standards of correctness; she does not fit herself to genre—novel, story, lyrical poem, even play. Every piece baffles us by starting from scratch, discovering a writing problem where we did not know there was one until we see it in the words, and proceeding to solve it. Built into every text is an intention that only reading without expectation can discover. Often that intention opens in the picture of the words on the page. It became a challenge to discover that picture in text and manuscript and to make it transparent in print in the Reader. For Stein requires not only accurate texts, without the innumerable errors that beset her books as they do Joyce's, but print that invites eye, ear and mind to move with the black and white. Print can render or obliterate verbal designs.

Sometimes we stumble on discoveries by accident in patterns that recur across different works or years. In most of the early portraits done between 1909 and 1912, a phrase returns over and over that becomes the key of portraiture—"being one being living." Here are a few to see and hear—where they come from does not even matter: "all his living was beginning"; "He was knowing every day that we was being living on that day"; "Trembling was all living, living was all loving then"; "The older one went on living, the younger one went on living"; "This one would be one all his living having something coming out of him"; "this one telling about being one being living"; "She was one who had in her family living." And finally one in the key of existing, not of living, "This one was one not expressing light being existing. This one was one loving women. This one was one expressing thinking." The phrase "one being living" makes the portraits present, visible, and audible. Slow reading of word, sound and image discovers in the pleasure of its return the many hows of living.

Each of these portraits bears as title the name of its subject. In a volume of typescripts, however, she assembled twenty of them, plainly for a small book, under the title People. The table of contents numbers them from 1 to 20 without the names though Stein entered them lightly by hand at a slant on the side, presumably for her own record. Here then are twenty numbered, abstract portraits, assembled as Stein wanted them read—personalities, even personality types, realized in words, without names or pictures as tags to distract from their composition. There is a magnificent visual starkness about this proposed collection.

Among the Stein papers is a tiny advertising booklet, Burma Shave Jingle Book # 5, that she must have picked up on the American tour in 1915. Burma Shave placed along highways about one foot above ground wooden boards with jingles painted on them in sections, "one little piece on one board and then further on two more words and then further on two more words a whole lively poem," as she says in Everybody's Autobiography. The boards were stuck in the ground at distances that allowed drivers as they moved to read them continuously.

Every shaver  
Now can snore  
Six more minutes  
than before  
By using  
Burma Shave

These signs and the little booklets were still familiar in the fifties, a visual delight in the landscape of words moving.

With so much visual composition, the books for whose publication Stein herself paid should show how she saw her texts. But they do not. Look at Geography and Plays (geography—space, place, with echoes of plays). The book was printed in Boston, by the reputable Four Seas Company, who worked from
Toklas was not asked to reproduce this design in the typescript. Stein may not even have known to what extent her process of writing anticipated what concrete poetry later produced. She did not play with typography and lettering but with phrasing that gave her ideas for visual and spatial order. To reproduce her design would have been costly. A Stein Reader relies on the centered headings with somewhat more space than Geography and Plays though with regrets that no further space was available for air and pause after each heading. The visual design of “Pink Melon Joy” and its headings is not only descriptive; it may suggest headings followed by illustrations or left-right dialogue patterns at speakers’ different slants, “What a system in voices, what a system in voices.”

From 1913 on, Stein began to play with what a play was. She also may not have known how to format plays. So when she wrote plays, none of them looked like a proper play. Titles are often odd, subtitles inconsistent. Rarely is there a list of characters or a summary of the scene at the start. Stage directions, characters and lines are not properly identified or separated. What does this title mean: Reread Another/ A Play/ To Be Played Indoors Or Out/ I Wish To Be A School? There seems to be a school, presumably with reading lessons. In children’s minds all things are alive, and this school does not teach that personification is the name for things that are alive. Here mountains, dirigibles, historical figures long dead, reunions, and words themselves come to life. Their very lines become characters until we can no longer distinguish between a character and the character’s lines, which is exactly what Stein was about. The indentations, alignments and realignments are confusing only if we refuse to see that we are in the doorway of the school, on the way in or out, the lessons in the children’s minds, not in a rigid teacher’s lesson plan. And yet how orderly the words in this disordered format about a reunion, an occasion for counting by numbers and for remembering names:

Scene xviii

Everytime I mention a number I am lightened. And a great many numbers are nodded.

First reunion. A message to Anne.
Second reunion. A message to Emma.
Third reunion. A message to Mary.
Fourth reunion. A message to please.

Please enlighten me about how dark the room is at midnight. In these days it is not very dark. In these nights it is not very dark.

Stein did not think of her scripts as fitting standard blocking patterns and did not normalize them. Some rely on intricate scaffoldings of designs that become transparent with familiarity. Others merge and meld elements that do not separate easily.
Plays return me to the descriptive visual power of texts. A play is people doing things and saying things. What they do is told in stage directions and words to the director. We call it narrative. What they say and some of what they do is in lines of characters. We call it talk or dialogue. How they say or do it and where they are is in scene and stage directions—description. When Stein wrote her Doctor Faustus Lights The Lights, she did not separate these things. She left them blended together as they take place in life, in the mind, on stage. The play reads like narrative, dialogue, description—never one thing but always several, constantly shifting. In print, we retained the merging and separating forms that make this play.

The ballet rushes in and out.
Marguerite Ida and Helena Annabel lifts the viper and says
Lights are all right but the viper is my might.
Pooh says Mephisto, I despise a viper, the viper tries but the viper lies. Me they cannot touch no not any such, a viper, ha ha a viper, a viper, ha ha, no the lights the lights the candle lights, I know a light when I see a light, I work I work all day and all night, I am the devil and day and night, I never sleep by any light by any dark by any might, I never sleep not by day not by night, you cannot fool me by candle light, where is the real electric light woman answer me.

The little boy and girl creep closer, they sing.
Mr. Viper, dear Mr. Viper, he is a boy I am a girl she is a girl I am a boy we do not want to annoy ....

I began with a digression on the visual design of Stein texts. It was not a digression at all. Reading begins when the eye receives the words as picture, sound and sign. The central word of An Acquaintance With Description is also the smallest, most transparent, most abstract word, it.

To describe it as at all through. Once more. To describe it as not as dew because it is in the trees. To describe it as it is new not because it has come to be for them if it lasts. At last to come to place it where it was not by that time in that way. And what is what is the name.

It is what we see, what we hear, what we describe, what we paint, what we write. The world. Anything. Everything. An Acquaintance With Description is about how to write it, not about what it is.

.... what is a discovery, a discovery is the exact space that is covered by the moving example.

This piece takes off from a chapter on Stein's work of 1926 in my forthcoming book, The Language That Rises: The Voice of Gertrude Stein 1923-1932, and from the publication in October 1993 of A Stein Reader. I thank Bill Rice, who helped prepare the Reader, gave this piece its title, and ruminated with me until we saw became what is here in print.

*To retain the integrity of Stein's words on the pages, I have avoided foreign matter like superscripts and parentheses. Attached to my text, this note identifies all indented quotations by their opening phrases in order of occurrence. Pieces included in A Stein Reader are referred to that volume; others to the most accessible book. "You do see that halve rivers and harbors...," Reader, 430; "Tableland...," Painted Lace, (Yale University Press, 1955), 295; "An acquaintance with description...," Reader, 519; "Again Albert again write to Albert...," Reader, 520; "For very as along as long as rivers...," Painted Lace, 294; "if it can be that there is no difference...," Reader, 526; "An acquaintance with description above...," Reader, 522; "Next to next to and does," Yale Gertrude Stein, Part V, Stanzla Lx, 452; "Small samples...," Reader, 434; "Please/ When I came...," Reader, 291-92; "Scene xviii," Reader, 353; "The ballet rushes in...," Reader, 616; "To describe it as all through...," Reader, 505; "what is a discovery...," "G. M. P.," Matiess, Picasso and Gertrude Stein With Two Shorter Stories, (Plain Edition, Paris, 1933; rpr. Something Else Press, Barton, Berlin, Millerton, 1972), 295.
had to write, sixty years later:

In the world, which has thus been formed, the key to stoicism is fate. The general character of the lines, the position of curves in the neighbourhood, in a world where everyone is in a state of becoming. Those on the pendulum—though expressed in obscure and mystical language. One grasshopper jumped on another grasshopper's back. The value of nerve (verve). The plurality of worlds.

Angle—the three orders of preference. And Reversion ever dragging Evolution in the mud. Parabola and hyperbole—the 5 reasons for drinking: Love of outdoor life; A mechanical bent; Joy in work; Opportunity for growth and service; Ideal home life; Wholesome moral surroundings.

There are certain birds which show a preference for the society. Both these fundamental lines contain several errors of allocations. Device for eliciting these numbers, Peacocks are peacocks everywhere. Among others, in his native place. The spirit of art lifts the artisan from the plane of an animal labouring. "Moral Sunshine."
b. Mental Manual

c. Settled Roving

d. Indoor Outdoor

e. Small Scope Large Scope

f. Adaptable Self-Centered

g. Deliberate Impulsive

h. Music Sense

i. Concentration Diffusion

j. Rapid Mental Coordination Slow Mental Coordination

32. If you could attend a world's fair what would you especially want to see?

39. What books have you read that you were not required to read?

"The life so short, the craft so long to learn."  

1. Kimberly Rosenfield & Robert Fitterman

2. Twenty-fifth Annual Report, 1910, p. 411
An Artificial Murasaki Shikibu niki (author of Tale of Genji)
and Commentary

Watching water birds on the lake increase in number, taking note of
flowers, the way clouds travel season to season, the moon, frost. I am
doing little more than registering time. How will it all turn out? The
thought of my continual loneliness is unbearable. I tried retelling the Tale
but it did not seem the same as before and I was disappointed.

Things that sadden me: the still evening through a door jamb. callow
youth. jackets embroidered with hem-stitching and inlaid. absurd. bowing
to no matter whom. kitchen staff, hairdressers, maids, some I've never
seen, women in charge of keys. so many labors. Departments, To want.
formalized existence

As I climb my tree to eye your arrival now that you are back the house is
alive. Just look at all the people coming and going! When you are gone
there is vacancy,

Monks, morning-glories
lone nun
cling to rain

Someone wrote:

My melancholy shape
under one moon
caterpillar

Someone else wrote:

It is too difficult
to hunt for cherries,
have they parted in the haze?

Not much privacy can be expected. Flesh from blossoms form entrails
tossed about the threshold,

***

Language represents a way of ratifying one's existence and the ability
to express oneself in poetry becomes a necessary part of desirability.

More attention is given to the choice of paper and hand in which the note
is written than to the words, pictures themselves. That the lover is always
absent. That his writing becomes a substitute for his face, the scent of the
paper, another substitute; leaving is crucial for the drama to begin. How
he pulls up his trousers. Parts his words. Creeps across snow, tracks from
a strange bird or delibe imprints like writing, like possessing and the
author sees more than shows. The Tale at times shows us to ourselves as
hills and fields or it resists us through seductions and transforms us into
middle-age voyeurs and women who cannot support ourselves. As Genji
grows older, loses power, so do we and the Tale grows larger, than his
life; after he dies we hold on to his useless knowledge, his ancient secrets;
though the present is caused by past misdeeds, the past can only be found
in the present of which we are no longer a part, and so we read, impotent,
without illusion

walking the diamond sutra

a one-foot mirror was made for the temple and a dream ordered
about her future. Three short years after his arrival, he died. He married
her when already having several other wives. She was the youngest, the
same age as his child. It was said they were happy but in Heian Japan
happiness was not domestic. Her sex was in words though she was
silent as she slept

The gap itself is erotic, production of desire, and so is
the poetry that closes it. She can have no power until she can read.
Hidden behind screens and blinds, spied upon through chinks through which they looked out. They were not known by their own names but by those derived from their fathers' and brothers' titles. The text below the title. It can be rewritten, dismissed. We will meet again and try a different set of lines. ones that will not offend.

Her father, Tametoki, became the senior secretary in the Bureau of Ceremonial (Shikibu no Dajô). He was a minor poet, went in and out of titles, educated his daughters. She laughed at him in GENJI but loved him most dearly. He was laughable as a girl. waited. Was often looked over.

gazed out into

He said if only she were a boy she might have played baseball, might have been embarrassed.

Considerable pressure was placed on men to converse in Chinese as proof of their masculinity and their ability to hold official office. Women were excluded from this knowledge; thus, those who wrote cut away parts of the world over which they had no control.

water dimensions

a spiritual possession in inverse proportion to the physical

Her Tale had political references

Cow carting fern and rice
Turned this morning into smoke
Where for ages past
I have yet to see

***

to make a poem was to deform and purify a single Japanese sentence, to accept an engagement with syntactic patterning, and then to break it forward, resisting its pull. an oceanic waltz

the garden does not disintegrate for some time

When the Emperor breaks a rule, the world is set in turmoil. There is no hope or even desire for order: endless repetition of seasons and visits by readers when time merges with internal whims yet passion strikes in terms of occupation of the other—love is a loss, feelings thin as summer clothes. When it reaches its highest pitch even 17 syllables evaporate.

This bee can't bear the meeting of stars

Though writing in Japanese was not exclusively female it was considered private—for which the word female was a metaphor. or clitoris referring to hidden, secret, that which is in you, which others do not know. too much trouble and indistinct. like want. water. men realized they were losing control over their own language. over their women. over their own. It is women now who are remembered. The Gossamer years. over their bodies

capacity to generate emotion is hidden from them

a knowledge of their

Once the woman has been seen, she becomes a character in a romance that waits to be opened. Leaves of colored paper are at times handed to her by covert envoys. She is forced to reply even when she thinks better of it and if it takes too long for her to set a poem one of the others that form her menagerie will dictate to her. The message is often obscured and couched
in vague terms on the grounds that words can betray, but the hand, the graphic, cannot.

because writing holds lovers together, because space and time pull them apart

the problem of consistency

all exchanges and correspondence were to be hand drawn. He was hardly there for any of it or they were separated by a screen too thin to see but thick enough to shield them. Desire for anything in particular will lead you astray.

She gave birth to one daughter who left in her wake 37 poems chosen for imperial anthologies and many more bound in a book of her own making

"Fate itself
Is never subject to the whims
Of one's desire,
But subject to one's fate
Desire itself can change."

And real time is dead; proof terrorizes all the way in or all the way out de-tasking heterocosm leaps out nothing night in the after.

Span participates gist, encore every magnified hand me over bodyless scour-the-world diversion we hear prescriptionable organs of comprehension: salute versus horizon, unsubsumable upside whipped concentrics amortize the glance all inamorates pinpoint daisy chain color puffs to infinity disqualified sucking plenitude surveillance Earning its satin scramble under phraseless difference defeat speech numb glory took heat reconvening orchid pages splendid hyperbolic innocence.

Dreambulatory script off passion impresses gesture cure no reckoning, the dream spawns the truth the cell is strictly a nostalgic thing for me now, sugar raised revved posthumous sensible space cancels before impossible speed under canon limelit to ample zero hush. The little king pickets the flame

sum hypothesize — pearl perfect superiorate us — the inostensible irradiated overnight.
Inner plus & surplus proof ovation immobilizing
disenchantment preconcerted with itself — generous
generous customize elation celebrated dark
downed front tangent intact,
& out of sight, out of mind — lap me in fold apotheosised
to a yesplus lingual(!) anti-never, news is a hook
whitened out abandon;
it’s time to mutate always
is always erotic web-spinning sonar
a present-tense exhalation is within
marginal legible above nerve memory heart
site binds: I do not see through words
sight as dreams gratefully certain.
Sin no facts, mostly the usual crush of possibilities
adverse concentrics recede
cut rear rumor of circumference — if it slipped on my bed,
I wouldn’t eat the other it — pulse just lips
convening reproaches in ever-smaller chamber.
And how very vanishingly little jet lamblike spell of flesh
disembarking soothie
infinite night’s chance sentence eclipse
writes invulnerable sentences.
So abundant arrestless — who’s melt? — pinwheeling on
and in breezes mammal’s prime prevalent lotion!
Embrace Me — get the skin in it, honey? — flash
add up to alabaster
legato lullaby network in one volume eclipse
compose lips never algebra without addition,
glimmer accidents mixed in
the radiating out hyacinth stuff — pixilated
shoosh of baby matter honeysuckle corners conflate — OK,
anacoluthon me some harmonious totalities:
threshold absorbs abolition, time cures inquisitors.
Urine shouldn’t common: venom’s liquor of love

meal-plans off the Mdnght Wish for bubble bathing monozygotes
accord laps lessons abandon recollection
expiates still wet elective facility in amatory soil.
Your emotions or your evidence — grace spoils minus hole
come to please reverse unique mystique, stir self assert slices
‘getting beyond’ hurdle size self stripping ebbs —
women delete the men
ballast depicts winning.
Shatter plus impresses incogno salute
not love like any like
a sauce as unless

I shall always want everything, I
got the tongue out of my throat —
immobile claims reciprocate
reward in the infinitive mucus temptation.
Point neither promise without purpose rehearse intoxication
— it’s not inevitable, it’s sweet; overall sudden
“meta trade off” is the whole body pure assertive melt
flesh for itself, no ceiling? — ... kisses
leap without beyond will & nill impossible immersion in
chronic redundant hope;
closure, such vanity — the genre of too much
stitchless goodnight science makes an unmaking
difference interval annihil — preparatory lace
speech, prolific pinwheel, love melts friends
all in the punctuation.
The heartbeat definitely return to extinguish
logician’s sleep degreeless carefully disreputable in orbit
lost in tiniest fold lip so fact o —
circumlocutory stilts edit existing body
if you toss on a marshmallow, swerve extends out:
new mayhem never enough
stirs multiple hearts burn
christmases of the heart in syllables.
    Antisuggestibility glows attenuate the immolizer
    astonishment pulls at — then — our —
the pigments
    I pack up a glance — pettiness cram
    pink included publicity subscribe this
farewell-soaked farewell;
dream microphones *bellisimo*
    the stage, visible from a distance —
    high night completeles travestied surprise
    storm relaxes proximity ink at leap year
lipsynching flash in dark.
Kiss the book some — future — atoms
    axis at silly indefinitely diversify
calendar tossle, included, to hire change;
    & sweet dreams resisted fix-up treats without
    perfector exile delight — NO CORNERS — zig-
    zag porous luxury propulsion
takes the arc through circumstance farewell magnetizes:
    Illegitimate exclusion! —
stakes contracted them all.
Oh let's have socialism relentlessly gentle
    praxis singed undoing most distant
privacy overreacts, parachuting the past.
Oh deign some hole spinning works its norm
    precipitated in a moment —
wait for the book enarmed petal unionizing future
prejudging multiple unscissored surprise!
Cartwheeled tactics dip your fingers in the vow
    buried my birthday
    red partisan shocks proof infinite to atoms
    architected Pandemonium cut-to-fit-the-mouth,
we're in the happy neutral counter-automata — Dreamsdo-
comettrue — matriarchal matrix be anything
to annex willing total all is one
end of the world dance luscious by-the-book.
    Give me a bigger cage — rootless headlong faction burst
    delectable standard — elsewhere —
geometry at total, raptures diaphanous closeout diagram
generalizes fingers arraigned as chocolate,
    adoralbe base alias reality image refusal emboldens
fetus using your body without your consent —
    its sweet front lathed with
this is something else;
    propitious heat headless opportunity
    in order of promises, dirigibles of promise
we neatly did fill their blanks —
valedictory honeymoon burns in the pagination.
The nightmerest fantasia fitted from blame priority melts
less to write paraphrased hyperboles retraversal than it us —
    *ryang ner vah plew!* —
equally read abode pink
cope lush coda abruptless,
    risk disappears closing perfume
row of exclamation points
    unleash all tenderness suspends future
    to voice vote to heat
for hope lay still late
let's start all over stars.
SIANNE NGAI

FOUR FORMS

1

if meaning hides language from sight I will appear
marked by my own eyes

for there is plasticity of the real to the letter and so
gradually I discovered familiar forms which coincided
with those of a boy

this boy was the site of action
(never mind his eyes)

2

words and their accidents are not tragic but sarcastic
enough to be trusted
with a certain point of view

& what is always concealed the one language in
which meaning has not yet occurred, eyes included

as when a letter bends
towards its shadow
a part (color, sex)
minority or anything else not enough
to save the detour
where there has been nothing before it
what can be named progressively, letter by letter,
shadow by shadow, to take place in the dimension of
the person
this boy was the site of action
put sideways
my thought refused to reverse itself

on this face, eyes upward
a weapon of commonplaces
still the boy and his straight white body
when the genius of suspicion appeared on the scene
TEMP CORP

Acute, shy, spinal

a worried, lived

its cusp temporal

or corp

with an industrial

facade

JEFF DERKSEN

names an

X

felt-penned

on her abdomen

class

assets or assists

speech expectations
when *your* body
not your body

the half or zone
horizontal

every
day

with an industrial
to
everyday

a pleasure leveled
narrow
comfort contained

"sharps"
cord marrow

morphine
memories
iris
browner
timed
released
fructose
or grapes

a caught chrome

or as else
transparent

it's bits
horizontally translates lateral
strapped

an anxious
male generation

lymph rhizome
not a benign blossom
“have your funds run out?”

at a spasm not “disembodied” but viewed

the panoptic instrument a gendered shrinkage

a good “day”

graphs no method expectation
hard to regard

skin

as a membrane

of

speech too

from an inside

surfacing, crossed

chronic
time

genealogy

stoked in

plastic on a wrist

where I fit in
now I hate the phone

the gap or half horizontal

how information's inhabited

answers test time

an excess

"getting there"

from the body to the mind via
Long long long long willows before we speak of them, or think.
Just the willows, at no place outside the mind, before the ease of handshake, or debt.

Trade Winds
This great simplicity this great great depth.
There is no way to make it more real, and no depth more than this great great simplicity.

ALAN DAVIES
Trade Winds
This great simplicity this great great depth.
There is no way to make it more real, and no depth more than this great great simplicity.
The truth is to stick figures as you are to blind men. Waking up from an insomniac dream you forego all commitment in order to submerge ideas of police sketches that being battered does not recognize or an illusion no doubt created by stand-in authority figures with terminal minds dissatisfied

the faint recognition of stereotypes or the truth is to black paint as you are to intermediaries. When one is personified in grandeur there is no limit to emotion. Dusky roads of air pollution hang over your building and to let in the undignified breath would be to impose a scandalous, in fact, abnormal pap test or blood in the urine. It is the prerogative of the truth to come forward whether or not in distaste, to be the benevolent landowner in disguise when in fact you are only the right wing politician

the truth is to landmarks as I am to the disqualified punt, pass and kickers every Sunday night paranoid hierarchy of oblivion. To shed your gas masks would be unwise at this point; all the beautiful are rich and cannot qualify for food stamps to embellish their already privatized lives (inaccuracy)

post mortem gloom of the deliveryman leaves you rather congenial especially to pets whom you would prefer to love more than humans considering their gracious patronage. It is here you discover a flaw in the description, in words being used incorrectly, facetiously. To be willing to admit such a disgrace. The truth is to inadequacy as I am to a decimal
giants stepped aside to room the house figures represent their scores
aphids freeze the hothouse doors the bars equip their sons with lard
depth you sought so much for lives within the bracelets of our lines
stomachs wind their hollowed aches as Euclid’s burn reviews the poor
our sample headaches rust the night the forms we choose ignore the sun
a backward raisin follows Cain a simple knot entrances parks, and wholes
rougher portions wet their faults an angry seven colors eyes
our tripping hearse reverses light digital fits ooze out a blink
a marketplace protrudes their angry fellows filling gloom
of course no anger filters blends reflections cast their bought and sold
procedures rip within our switch plastic bags your bookish wings a fear our masters razed the spine
lingering, his breath betrays one fire burned shield leaves anger plain
frosted ponies ride to your lake one upright hart beckons our lead
each dirty mantle prays to dawn the shiny hook entraps the guard
our easel’s wings spread over grain rich lies entomb our lanky sports
clear rain researches breath to bite flat faces blank your eager step
my ship releases anchors butterflies encompass lightning yards
each breasted woman eats what others knew quick clothing spins its Oh
simple straits infuse a bird operators look demure
one thousand inks uniform her hip this morning they were tame
out-moded knives jot ampersands blue news corrupts the red
fist mackerels wash each ocean out my leaf implies what you would say
correction filling grief our Moses clears his whistle rut
pierced apes belie his rows unpared eight dugs blot out a fly
your fullness aches to wash her rose field barks alarm risked coated canes
bruised windows shark her lemon burst eight heels below her brain
arched rivers sleep ’till no one’s there her loosened cakes reveal her chain
bright toes appease her steeple our tomb embraces water tights
unknown to find her tongue reworked beyond her angry fill
soon blankets rise to break the dawn hit sisters shut out every ploy
its noon-time racket places ill our lightning blades equip its stone
its aching place rides through the moon containers fill their sorry molds
each breaker kindles filters torn controllers hiccup signals aired

BOB HARRISON

one louse bemoans its past the angle broken, nothing gained
shape lingers feeling rot our anger filters broken bones
its seance unequipped to read recuperated dimes he rode
bandwagon wheels unknown her hair was washing well
this mode is underturned your filter fused with blight
each hoof pronounced for stiller lines her blanket shaves each fist to bake
numbers brilliant brave your coat our stops return his languid stare
her hair pronounced, her world unknown drunken fugues to rain
repeats its simple inside tone our pleasure righted form
intrepid trust your shelving line cars note the curve report
each whistle tuned to wave our aim bliss rover cured to roam
his paths were dusted dry our platelet stains our course
your iron tools to wash our grind our technicals to wish you more
belong your wisdom without words our disproportion waits
your aegis washed heavy night

62

63
I think I'm the difference that means
You're right. You can check this by appearing To distinguish how you are where I can't find you Supposing to belong to every word I write.
I'm here, in ambiguous care and attention, In arm's reach, like a vicious prince Stranded and hungry, full of plans for knowing What I write is true. When you're thinking Of what I haven't noticed not Of productive familiarity or pathological Corporeality I exist. Now someone might think I seem to be able to spare many centuries For anything female. Yet I still explore Ripe stars recalling me, kissing me.
OUR WILD SUCCOR

It torments me that no one came near
Before Noah went sailing. I'd been formed
In a portrait of acetylene delight
Stretching this warning against writing
Into our names in the news discovered devoted
To the word for oxygen. It's the inverse
Of the year 3000. Hundreds
Of little cooking customs change for the grain,
I'd want to believe something suddenly
In verse, washing in a brass band, prying
The wind from the windows with bones
And documents that vibrate their way into
My sleep and leave a letter sprawling
Sloping, barely drifting, down to a paper sky.

THE MUSE LEARNS TO WRITE

The wretch trembles with excess patience
To make a mess of me. Some of those drops
Of golden gray breath spread this heavenly water
Down with a drink. Prehistoric smiles
Scatter accents throbbing with her tongue
In the ink. They depend on lucky stars
Overgrown with mysterious me to drive out
Tributes to the invention of being noticed
In her delicate return to be right. I wrote it
Elastically, where the pulse proposes
Calculations that get eaten ornamentally and
Scrupulously resemble coarse tropical compounds
In a mass, in all sorts of weather, in a book.
WHAT DISCOURSE SHUNS

It's the man behind the Protestant
Imaging instinct threads of the right height
And aesthetic strength congregating
In remote designs of the outside world.
He had to believe in poets to be
In danger from, and feeling one
Could get away without looking different
Makes me want to play around with those sun shines.
The light reclining on the grass, happy here,
In England. Watch me take on the first
Bright peg with hard work. The glamor sisters
Suffer proof (that my thighs went numb).
My mistakes dig in, illuminating
The invention to endure, the subject
Identified with leaning towards me. She
Demands the spirit separate from the problem
And places major letters in my hands.
She says it's true, I like a moralist I like
To reject things I like but not here.

NIGHT RESIDUE

I keep giving her what I'm missing,
A distance in a refuge from living memory.
She finds this lost symmetry standing
In a ditch, breathing cautiously and trying
To feel dizzy enough
To pick her way through
The credit and the consolation that technical
Thought in two stops short. We'd prepared
A formula for chilled excess, being slightly
Extant about it with a big shot added
To the last minute to firm up the faithful
To get back to work. I woke up. I'd had
The sweetest time. Standing still
In a definition of audacity that declines
A memory for a poem
Before I read a book that clouds
The written human choke off that old leather.
All my translations of the sea in literature
Tap into emergencies of sex all the time.
You have this boy neglecting this beautiful girl
Suppose I want a woman's body. You visit
Your new neighbor and I'm here to stay.
AETIOLOGICAL MOMENT

I felt just like changing
Parts of the world articulating you
Tickling me. Or powders
And teas and ointments arbitrary health
Preys on with affecting reason.
Dim like moons so mild
In some forgotten closet whispers
Stun your ideological relatives
Begging you to read your own
Handwriting, one of all your works
Enclosed in a small but neat future
Willingly affecting my life of volatile
Connections, the flow and glow
Of each other's alphabets making
Proper spasms stubble in the plain.

from LOW FANCY

Omit a must, you'd
etch culled despair
and carp a most delicate vent;
your toothy era nets
an apt senectitude, or
resets an intender's series.

It's a perturbing luxe
our studied vex detains;
as lascivious as sugar
a tender, roused invention.

No stray veer humps
labour's proper tactic —
our vital's patched; it
macerates a carnal cure.
All bloody stops inhabit us, deter
a picked guard or, no, I'm
numb — our minute familiar's
a moribund tussle.

It's a perturbing luxe
our studied vex detains;
as lascivious as sugar
a tender, roused invention.
In unison, love's pull—
a vulnerary perk
in a molting, lurid mode;
it'll quench terror.

The dumbest pulse
turfs empire — we'll quit
these feeble men or bask
our amenable inch
in deepest, frigid draughts.

I'm out! Misery's eaten
my utmost — I'll sip
at admired wrecks and decline
destiny's itch.

Late nape's lit
from this rammel-full;
I'd muck an amusing bust
thigh dicks and grab mine: so nab
my chosen, fitting career.

In patient gaming we've grazed
a cunning murmur. It rives us
a low curse, is festive's vent,
and tussles like temper's suss — as sure
as your ratty tempest.
Sick my suss can end
or all out neck
our facet's solo; who fugues
my proxy fatal or collars
a blankest inept — my cordy dolour?
I dump what cock amends, or said "no love."

As if they're ill, knocked
or dormant — so sure
is a lip's maul, brave as marrow.
My digs turf quite a net: see
all gaud this taunting reception.

Still, I'd dump you all
so movingly as to lash
gesture's civil hunt
and quaff a vile endeavor.

Me, I'm subreption's height.
Come contingent; you're a pressed pair —
it's a bribe as obsequious
as no paid stare possessed
and not quite dared: a verbal wreck.
Sit, tidbit, salutes are said:
our vast pottering
evacuates simpers, or sums
a maximum squeem.

Or come sit in enamoured regions;
I'll appall all dear protests.
Our indignant tantrums
sever a query's meek peril
and muck back loot's calm:
presume us oscular
we sustain a choice neck
celebrate the night air.
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