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A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

we have ourselves
surrounded — come out
w/ our hands where
we can see em?

listening to Things Fall Apart pass
2 girls w/ undyed roots & fuckme pumps

some brothers hustle dope, I hustle soap
in the back

what Amadou to you

later, cable wires in the white poplar
a concrete vector, criss-crossed window
non-apparitional petals to the metal

vassals versus assholes from Vassar —
facile as vaseline in a manhole?

now I'm all confused

the belles of St. Mary Knell "The Real Slim Shady"
have made up their minds and are keeping their babies
their CHANNELED HISTORY Knickerbocker by proxy

did you forget to program the kith?

if I tell you the kith is self-programming, do I mean

a) kith: kit :: kin: kitchen
b) Knick fans thwart monikers
c) We're born cable-ready
d) Ask your mama

the day-glo (hunter's) orange wallet's got a
heap of Signifyin in it

this item is not available in stores

is this an item
are we an item
you an item. States?
Antietam?

Is History "a fable agreed upon"
Or a grumble peed upon

a rumble

hooded Knights' errant nights in the Hood
now available on-line, remotely accomplished

fetch a Signifyin monkey wrench for swinging

meet your accomplice

MARK SARDINHA

Four Poems

to be a garbage man holding on

received upon a purse
of chirring teeth
a woolen pirate

a mild astronaut glowering
yon fever mounting
the force of which
a matrimony of bees

penetrate the palm
or bit the fingers

warm glass shakes beneath
a volcano of diapers
chourico
a culprit and a daughter

somewhere the embassy
an ostrich haywires
his pulpit flames upon the water

to be a sleeve cutting
through a mine the muscle
horse-wishful
sifting a level curse

while love's wistful apparatus
hunkers in the breezeway
by your heart knelt ancients
debeaked and unfeathered

one day
I'll find your lungs in here Dolores
a ward of flowers
is a robe of bees
for this bubble fame
a cracked rib

rocks
on the pavement
an I.O.U.
for sober gravitas

stick me in
a rib cage play

me for my
xylophone

losing sucks
the marrow bone but

atrophy ain’t everything

monkey in your
space garage

doing ether
these and dozed

damage in the fuselage
to the tune of subterfuge

in a room of telephones

dust me off a love song
for another fishing hole

spear me please
the rib cage

put down
the megaphone

just a finger cut
off years ago

flotilla in
a fish bowl

Eve-seen men
dispense with knees
crawling in a traffic zone

blame me for
a pill of lint
I haven’t got
the slightest rib
take me
for one of those

prima facie negligence hence

per se lingua ray dia bo —
legally, a sufficient excuse o raio
do corisco, no se mexar en as flors

Indeed, stoma impede via coma
tail porpoise in juris puffery found
licking his dull public proximate
jewels en la dente sine qua hoc — i.e.,
the aquarium and sea are deeply estranged

of dream shop a crop a frolic and detour
res ipsa non sequitur resulting
in the loss thereof one said un
foreseeable fog in pane on glass —
aahhh, a naturza sabe o como fazzz
one is left with the impression of gross abnormality —

the first problem then is the utter

leak of attention to the tail.
spreading to other areas, wherever,
we can no more than guess, and should proceed,
as it were, with dainty tongs.

although the wish

is to neither glamorize nor pilot subsequent cults,
the result is nearly an exponent of the soft (and its muted archaeologies). this
adds domestic import to a particular “I don’t know what” —
a dithering over pseudo-legitimacy, of vigorous prudence,
if you will, of beat a dead horse sensibilities. for who was it said, “cornish means skinny” (1974)? nevertheless, it must be larded as such.

in general

we can say there is no short supply of tumbledown house variete —
an inarticulate and finally impotent attempt to understand these lofty distances. but alas,

Convenient the dog

hightails it out of “there.”

shifting the focus

for bother and gossip has directly to do with dance cum mechanical configuration (when I do such and such — how’s it feel?). There is an urgency here, a pre-ordained schema of things, well respected or otherwise residing behind the arras

MYTILI JAGANNATHAN

A

C

T

S

Alley

eyes pleasure
us the most.
this prism
shines the street into shards
of carbon. caught
virago, quick starter,
sparing kick:
blast of hot flint, fallen
Mars, convergence of girls, kindling
eyes, was I lifted
I lifted

Caution

hot convergence of girls
kick kindling into carbon. was most prism lifted this?
I, virago,
blast Mars, sparing street, shards fallen us of quick shies, caught, pleasure-starter—flint, eyes.
CARBON KICK: HOT PRISM CAUGHT KINDLING MARS!!
exts lifted
most fallen
virago shards
blast starter into
shines, I-girls
sparring us
with flint,
pleasure, this
street.
convergence
was quick.

Sermon

lifted I was
lifted I
was eyes
kindling girls
of convergence, Mars
fallen, flint-hot
of blast kick,
sparring starter quick, virago!
caught carbon of
shards into street,
the shines prism
this most
us. the pleasure.
mesmer. eyes.

MARK McMORRIS

A Poem for the Love of Women

makes good copy for the bored and the ugly
which I confess to belong to, on both counts
ignorant of Venus, no child of Aphrodite,
foam-born and black for all the baths
I took with her, while the boats drew nearer.

The statue falls in love with the sculptor.
So the ship with the banker, and the glove
with the goddess of the silver screen who knows how to knit
the pimp in love with his ugliness
and the book with the binder, the word with system
of discourse and grammar with logic.

I loved the Indian in Uganda, the Kenyan
in Paris, the Turk in Boston, at the Fine Arts Museum.
I loved the Korean in Queens, the Scot
at the embassy in Bogota
the nun in Dar es Salaam, the bus driver in New York.

Many women in many guises came into my bed
the Spanish in Cuba, the Basque in Trinidad.
Many women followed the foam-trail to my door.
The Greek on 37th Street, the Chinese girl
to elementary school in Kingston, the Texan
to Accra where I took her sight-seeing.
Many women are part of the map
the hand traces the swirling rivers by their perfume.
I loved the Angolan woman in Hanover
the Bajan in Chicago. I
loved the woman
from Italy in Benin, among the gorgeous sculpture.
It's hard to explain, but many women loved me
in many disguises—many masks—many shadows.
I loved the Berlin woman in Peru, the Inca
in Bonn, the Dutch in Guyana. The Lebanese woman
and I were lovers in Dallas. I loved the woman from Tunis
in Carthage, the Aztec in Glasgow. Loved
the Gypsy in Egypt, in Thebes to be precise, on the Nile.
The Jerusalem woman
and I loved her on the route to Avignon.

The woman from Nice loved me in Toledo.
Many women in many cities and villages.
I loved many cities in many women
built many cities with their love, followed
many women to archaeological pits, loved
their statues in the gardens of Priapus
loved dying languages in many women, loved French
in the West Indies, and English in Zimbabwe.
Loved pottery that kept the imprint of their faces
poetry that clothed them, the sinewy quatrains.

But the Sibyl is long dead, who spoke their language.
Weep for the Sybil in her disappearance.
Weep for her, who spoke the tongue of my mother.
Weep for the Sybil, who saw pieces of the heart.

She is not with child, the woman who loved me.

The woman who taught me Philippine, did I
love her or the speech, the woman I bought
at the market in Port-au-Prince, did she
really cherish me for my ugliness, as she said?
And was it a negative face that I captured
in crossing the ocean to find her bivouac?

The seeds are strewn like constellations.
The hair of supernovas burns round my face.
The ocean rocks the crab into a stupor.

And the sibyl is long dead who spoke of her
crossing from waterfall to hedge-row, river mouth
African moon over the sand dune cornu-
copias the plentiful horn of her melody.

Did I love the Gold Coast trader for her strength
the ferocity of her thought, the tight skin
stomach above the pubis, her rock-steady walk?

I loved the sin in sinning, the gland in England.
Loved O in Ottawa for a month, loved
Sandy or smooth, red or brown, women

and molds and concubines, Virgins and Japanese
feminine word-smiths, divas and butterfly girls
many women in many guises, many arms
many faces in my long mirror, many crossed
to my bed from the river, sweet-smelling orchids.

I loved Beth in Elizabeth, New Jersey
I loved Holly at Christmas, Eve at night
Loved Mavis at Mavis Bank, St Andrew
Loved Clara in the morning, Denise
at Dawn, and Dawn in the Odyssey, by Homer.
Loved Heather the Heathen Woman
Cassandra the Christian. Sojourner Truth.
Loved Mabel the engineer at Los Alamos.
I loved many women in many tyrannies
the Queen of Spain, and the Queen of Darkness
Persephone in her filmy colors of Dis.
Many women found me by navigation:
Dora and Djuana, Sylvia and Adrienne.
Josephine the emperor's woman
Josephine the dancer
Josephine the daughter of Joseph
Josephine the fishmonger at a bay at
Savanna-la-Mar.
And Kurtz's woman with the savage breasts.
Yeats's Maude and Tennyson's "Maude," in the poem.
Derek's Anna and Tolstoi's. B's Mexican.

Many women taught me speech—tongued
me into Reason, brought me to the Logos.
Women of howls and etudes, I loved
Cho and Klytemnestria and Beverly.
I loved Margaret Bourke-White in Ghandi.
Loved in vain and in anger, loved by fiat.
Loved the name Susan for no good reason.
I loved the pronoun she, the accusative her,
the embrace of hers. Loved Monica in French
as Monique, Carol the Carolingian singer
Norma at a bar in Normandie, loved Leona
because she was a lion, Patricia
the woman from aristocracy, and Jane
the double-headed keeper at the gate.
Many women, many Sibyls, many ladies with intuition and eloquence, many loves came from the water to my embrace the women of Modigliani and Wyeth the nudes in drawing rooms and the Venus at Cnidos by Praxiteles, the sculpture by Auguste Rodin—the everlasting kiss—loved the marble and the bronze and the wood women in repose or in passion, loved the wife of Cezanne though I should not have seen her intimate bath, however discreetly and the Wife of Bath on her horse, I loved Tracy for her sinuous calf-lines, Daphne the nymph, and Lolita the mixed-up girl.

I loved in bed and on the roof of Notre Dame de Paris, by the book and in secret, I loved mistresses and executive vice presidents and editors and poets in long print skirts many women in many garments drew my gaze. Loved the violin player adorned in black. Loved the scholar in Chanel, and the writer in a Simone-de-Beauvoir sweater, loved Simone for her name, Victoria for her voice Violet and Rose and perfumes of natural growth, loved Laila for her speed Virginia for her prose. Loved Amber the color of sunset, and the wife of Paul Eluard.

Many women shared me with their lovers. Many women in many parts of the world. And the tale of my love is only beginning. Many women loved me in my sleep at supper or on the frontier, at church.

I loved the Muses and many Violas, Veronique in Verona and in many cities of Europe Clodia in Rome beside her Catullus. And the tale of my love is only just beginning.

Weep for the Sybil, for she is dead, who spoke my mother’s tongue and other languages I gathered up in bouquets, the dried flowers. The Sybil is long dead who broke into pieces of the heart, the word in pieces, and phonemes spilling from the fountain, with the yard criss-crossed by flares from the infantry. The basin cracked, and leaves blowing in it. The Sybil is long dead, the heart waning.

HARRYETTE MULLEN

Kamasutra Sutra

This is a story I have heard:

Entwined in a passionate embrace with his beloved wife, the holy one exclaimed, “I have reached enlightenment!”

His devoted partner responded, “I’m truly happy for you, my love, and if you can give me another minute, I think I’ll get there too.”
Hopes of the Women Folk

I am fond firstly of using maxims.
So firstly I must tell you one or two things.
Three or more are most likely to occur.

And if you were here, if you could see clearly
what was your American trait: your cocksure pleasantries
against my proposal of Euphoria. But ho hum.
I am fond of too many things. So there.

I am in a thatched Tudor, a spiked road,
overlooking madness.
I am not in that madness.
So hunted I am or like to imagine that I am hunted.
My Euphoria. And thank you or forgive me.
And so haunted from the run-downness,
so dilapidated from boring mistrust—residual of something
unlike any loyal animal.
You are not really a master!
I just invented this to control my own longings
or from separateness—but I lick a wound
and find only secrecy. So there I was duplicitous.
I was healthy to the lure of expression.
There were blueberries.
There isn’t anything left.
There is a dictionary to danger, the ways of communicating—
forceful and striking—find it, dream it, resist it.
And I am here amongst the villages that blackout.
From time to time, whistling creeps me out.
What songfest are you looking for?
I found the vintner very sexy. I found that I want to blow painters.
I found myself dusting ferns in quiet woods. Everything distilled,
everything vermillion. There are isolated instances for small game birds.
And the wasp with a vicious sting. The workhorse with a proper ethic,
and me best-selling to the air. And cars mania and street mania and sexual
mania.
And the illustrious wood to tie oneself to
We women get religion, so sadly, I will stop to cry.
And the mournful wing flips over to its ridge, translucent,
she to the trick, she tricks with no love behind it, now, dismantled,

using the maxim to clean her house, dropped it. Oh sad, spilled
to a tumble, to helpless activity and it was marked as is, as is.

A Fallacy Petal

Handwritten—for a talking book, a sea-horse-flower.
Vaporous and then it disappears. Beckon, regret, skittish.
Such ticklish pages. And so the spirit of intention
is what haunts me and it is ugly.

I am not a child in that sense,
treason from proclivity.
Wonder underestimates the cliff.
That darling feeling was yesterday.
It was serenely devilish until it was wretched.
Tidings to the victuals and then where it goes.
Tidings to the viscera and the trickster’s intestine.

Outnumbered, I sprang for the officials papers,
raised with doves, violets and Bengal tigers,
and true notions of sacrifice. This was all so becoming in a way.
A novice for the care or protection of wild, maltreated animals,
loving indiscriminately. What season was it?

I never think one should discriminate, providing that walking
sticks are beating limbs. Like those policeman.
The lotus flower had no time in the lake with the lady.
The Fire next time is provident and gargantuian. No more vulgar
Latin. No mere terrorism, the larger—the more engrossing,
the more fanatical.

The Past Speaks

A talking book and its gloom shed its small and white hope
with a sad sentence unable to declare modern love to a somnambulist.
Superhuman men reveal nothing.
Our paths will cross and it will be provisional
and sanctimonious—if I think more affectionately—
a smile showing teeth, a collection of blank roses,
quiet this viewpoint.
Let me have a sheltered monastery
let me imagine for my journal, woes swung for another mood.

combo
Clan

Her wooden nickels paid for an urban wilderness
so she had sprightly foes
and merciless confidantes.
Take the midwife and put her with the professor.
Take the canteen and fill it ice-cold with vodka and ginger beer.
Lose the meaning of less drowning
it into the tiny suburbia of situation, confession, circumstance, wrong and terrible.
That is why we are all gathered today.

When is wayward helpful
except as a chance to feel the gleam of historical promises and economic success
to transitional banquets—
of hope driving the cattle home.

White calf legs with miraculous baby fur,
remarkable because of
wicked fragility, these paths of sentimentality and jaunts from goats and crows
pick up the burden and claim love for the animals.
Maturity is a well-formed hesitance.
Herald the locale and try it as a clan
a posture less towards mere wanderlust
more of the life is mind,
a hoof of the dust cleared.

Bill Freind

from A specter is haunting the suburbs of Cleveland

I just had a perfect moment, was completely locked in the present. Soon I was neither here nor seeing, water among water in boundless night. At that point one sensed the fathomless calamity underlying the surface of our daily lives, and then in line for the buffet the Lotto numbers were announced. Strangers danced and hugged each other, holding identical tickets. What will you spend yours on? Radial keratotomy? We’re not clairvoyant so enough with the cellos, already. There’s the mail. In the other room boxes are piled and marked tamper evident. Most of their orbits, he said, are wildly eccentric, which would abet destructive chaos among smaller planets rather than shielding them. It’s all in the retelling. I’m not big on this pretending thing. Are you going to eat that?

Don’t answer yet: even your new mop was somehow unsatisfactory. I still think we should have booked the package tour to the Realm of Ideal Beauty instead of that bus trip through the Emirates of the Infinite. Converts were snacking in the station, the floor littered with jujubes and then the center was gone and we were in it, our plastic cups filled mostly and everywhere the sound of appliances. I don’t remember the rest. The photos turned out nice, though. And so we are standing by, hoping to isolate the problem on the launcher, wishing that traction could be emitted. Hold on — is that the sacred heart? Again you returned to the marching band theory of metaphysics; I countered with the Ponzi scheme theory of poetry, and anyway all art aspires to the condition of condition. I’m dissatisfied with the free gift. There’s small weather ahead.

It might have been a series, memorizing banter with someone always at the gate, as if a dimmer switch were an analogue for any solution. Battled and the bad horns not necessarily reflecting, just defending my part in the autonation. Who misplaced the verdict? I didn’t want to watch her limp so I drove back to the impasse. They waved something inflatable. We finished the disturbing children’s story then adjourned to the drive-thru. The pretty neoncon [insert photo here] offered burgers, or could it have been that we were serving her? We agreed not to mention the nominee. Suppose I could stop right there but I only wanted to be present. I’m sorry, was that your skin? It’s just that with all the confusion...well, never mind. Wait a minute — that’s not your name. If this feels like a summation, then it’s time to court the vanquished.

Let’s recreate totality. You go first. At the reception, the salads were chilled and unshadowed, the tape nearly transparent. A brochure waved as instruction. A burst of exhaust. Some colors, something grows. A door was blue. Fating and then clouds. Monophanous. Elements of theoretical things, as I’ve said, can be found. One always goes back and wishes for a second chance. Additionally, there are the comforts of rosters and the guest house. This is the rent-a-car theory of liberation. Seconds later, the fan was escorted off the field.

Bored with subjectivity, I turned for a moment to the idea of praxis. Preparations were made for the event and then it all went to hell: first the failure of the rocket skates, then the way dessert kept prophesying from the fridge. The new version is still very fresh and empty but trapped in leach nostalgia. Time to scourge the flail. When the compromise moved from pretreating to rethaw, I hardly dared to ascertain my fate. Here’s consolation: we hope to win on appeal. Suddenly there was no time left to prepare the diligent sauce. Talk about ignominious — I stood there, fists full of invert syrup, only to find I’d been debarred from the cupboard, then I lost sensation and chains and darkness were the only objects that pressed upon me. I guess my question is as follows: is there a deterrent effect? The gothic font was an indication of its seriousness.

Graffito of the day: Calvin lacks want. Art becomes the dream of a polemical mirror. The coalition announced they remain daunted by the appearance of
pores. I'd like to go off the board: Dead German Marxists for $500, please. There is no way to escape the character, so you take the bunny and I'll grab the majority whim. Am I spelling pseudo right? Who's counting backwards?

When we finally accepted the necessity of the pronoun, it seemed like a good idea to return to the runes. Snug in the valley, someone asked “What about the flood?” Something falls and then there is a type. Visible. We returned to a noirish California, our pockets filled with hotel soap. Disillusioned citizens sought spiritual solace in the aftermath of the massacre. When was it no longer today? Your choice is applicable here: a smiley passenger graces the stage, weatherman in the wings. The process of exception and which way the wind. Nearby, vendors waved assorted ices and bags of the eternal connective as someone translated bricks. Meanwhile, I got all gazey, wrote the comic check then noticed a hole in my alibi. What's the difference between lurch and slouch? No one talks about time anymore but I wrote the libretto so I don't have to come down. I'm kind of fond of this partial desire. Maybe it helps to know that conversion is always an option, and anyway don't you miss absence sometimes? I'm thinking about buying one of those wallet guns. Repeat after me: postpone, interim, defer, motel, cupcake.

Hopish in the aging center, the decision was made to rejoin the polka. Suddenly irony was cool again in a kitschy sort of way and young people adopted the amused sneer of a previous generation. “Everyone is remiss,” they chanted, until it was no longer pertinent. Did it matter that a number of relevant documents had been destroyed in the early 1960's? This is no time to get cold feet, Earl: here's the polling finn. An order of motion simultaneously action and substance — is explosion a thing? I don’t know what I’m doing but I’m sure that’s my jellibaba. What's killing these 1000 lb. creatures? Again the political crawls in through the mail slot. I'm pellate, I need a closer, let's hone.

Someone promised. It might have been your friend with the extractives. As if we could be other than formal. As if the ointments had been resolved in a fragrant assumption, or the nachos had not been ordered. We were stuck in house style, practically irreplaceable although not in those terms. Is that an agreeable itinerary? He is feeling vacant and needy. This is where the tiger comes in. I gesture randomly.

A woman selling souvenirs made out of bullets took a visitor aside recently to ask how she could emigrate. At this moment there are no more irregularities, which is good until the recognition addict becomes a seller of ears. Possible answers: antiviral, uninsured and talkative, kapow. A greening would save us, maybe, or the borrowed shade with its how. All of that should have been resolved by the rows of unnamed fruit in the supermarket. Anything is distance. For “I” read kevlar. For “all day” read bag. None is nearing. The market closes and we agree on pudding. Checkout narratives of faith in disbelief, staggered rephrasings as clumsy as fish, uninsured in a classic case of oversimplification. Finally, Tom developed a transcendent price structure. Next on the agenda was a 401K for the folks over in Prophecy, although there had been rumors of downsizing. Stop despising fluids. I have semblance and men's clothing and then somebody wins.

**RACHEL RAFFLER**

*(split cycle)*

Hi re:
solution/my scavenger still
has no line to
blur/ even lungs hyper/
perceiving (it is grand it
is grand)

this shitting and thinking
doesn’t arrive at
teleportation: dichotomized
or unflaw- this
errung

(magritte hid his head
under and ate on
tablecloths)

oh, for emotional sakes!
who blames imaginations

when the ball of
my apple of my
eye is looking
at dry knees

: the return
the wasteland is still in

combo
here/ ironed out
by reactionary
shoes: rushing it
somewhere

i'm chewing on a compass day and night"

stepping thought thru
for eating ulterior diction

on the tape recorder:
“the letters aren't speaking to me
anymore. their tilt grows increasingly
monstrous. i've opened the window
and am beginning to throw it out”

what story which/ time
conditions frequent breathing

this way we
only/ choose it

the brain likes sparkles
-episode one

the brain mothers a heap
of dust while the sparkles
to behold open their
ovarian caves
once and again

(but after purging precious
she craves delicious)

drowning for hearing the search exi(s)ts
without or within:
“lore from the vagabonds of
before to reconstruct with plastic”
(Book vii, pg. 74)

back on trail the brain searches
for adventure to lick it and
to spit it
a whole she swallows

FRANC CARLEN

from a notebook

1. I also might have died from a dog bite wound. I could barely sleep anymore. Gloom made me do things I was sorry for. Numbers appeared again and again in clusters. Or when the phone rang and Fermi remarked, “By the way, is there any possibility at all of spin-orbit-coupling?” I threw my cape to the ground, counted the crystals, the acute arrangement of atomic patterns, tossed away my bouquet of endangered languages and dialects.

2. The wound failed to heal and soon grew worse. It was the way the numbers announced themselves—as embolisms, not quantities. You'd think the soul would know it was dealing with numbers. The hearth had a fire and the walls of the boarding house brimmed with black and white flowers. My composure was lost. The prospect of symmetry was suspended then annulled. Here was the number six, or sleep, one plus two plus three, and one times two times three, a glow unfolding the darkness.

3. Cards held close to the chest—under the chest. I held the deuces, four aces, all zero cards. Dull lumps of estrangement and defeat. Liberties paid for with caution, my room let by the hour.

4. The pale yellow feathers on his tie.

5. Contrary to my custom I drank black coffee and could not sleep. Ideas rose in crowds. I felt them collide until pairs interlocked, so to speak, making a stable combination. It seems in such cases that one is present at his own unconscious work, made partially perceptible to the over excited consciousness, yet without having changed its nature?

6. Mostly I remained myself but that became less the case. I was there, I'm sure. There was a place for me—same old stranger passing through, moving along the board with schemes and reasons.

7. In the end it'll be my hysteria or my highhandedness that'll get me up and running.

combo
8. I had no doubt it was my mother who was trying to poison me. She assured me it was the only way out. There in my room, pitch black, no bigger than a closet. In one of my old china cups. In the wink of an eye I'd be dead. Then I opened the door, and there was a lunch counter, where a French physicist was trying to order meat in less-than-rudimentary English. I had a sudden lapse of faith about the poison. Wasn't there some other way? There wasn't, but I couldn't find the cup—I'd lost track of it.

9. What I needed was a neutral language to describe numbers. Perhaps you thought I was talking about sno-cones? I remember the reflection of the rowboat on the lake, _le petit canot_—all of us doubled. Two, the first irrational number. Dance of identical particles. But it was my turn to be form and yours to be chaos. The day was full of trees and roots. What did I know about natural order? It was hardly discernible, let alone calculable, like the root of two.

10. The 'perfect' number was unknowable, though it melted to a point where it could be known—as a pair, an ensemble or a whole. Let the dead console slow learners. A step over the threshold and symmetry cannot be produced. A scuffle results—diagonals inside squares, rotations in six dimensions that appear as one.

11. Imitation was redoubled. The All-or-Nothing enters and, as soon as it does, splits into four, all of them telling us where they're going, and where they've just been.

12. Compass to myself, a deserter, wandering around the drum circle, counting the Indians, felling them like dominos. I was a medium not a face. When I let go, the wind lifted me up like a kite. This was not fruitless.

13. Libido I observed, though not quantitative, became a rhythm, subliminal at first, then impalpable.

14. We shall call the first part this and the second part that and the transition from one to the other we shall call neither this nor that.\(^3\)

15. Ideas which don't belong to any language like the rock scratchings in la Grotte des Fées or the arrangement of caves within a cave. Not artifacts but vibrations—a beat to be distinguished from its double.

16. The poison was a pharmakon, and a whirlwind, and a dial. The clock's four dimensions were visible as three.

17. Sound asleep like stones in the river.

18. We hoped to get results through geomantic spheres. But evidence could not be mediated by the senses.

19. We dreamt the model in reverse. There were no fractions, only zero and one, no repetitions, just it—dice coinciding with gambler.

20. Funnel-necked fruit jars, heroic giggles. The physical plane was of no concern to us now. Remembered...a sequence or the primal arrangement of lines. As a calculation it was accurate. Circumference of a ballroom gown floating across the room. Received ideas on the reception line by the door.

21. A last glimmer of sun melts childhood to sum. That's stretching it a bit. Periodicity is nothing but a rhythm.

22. Why should a melody strive? Here is the open universe. Here is the perfect cube. We've only to find another language. Any hole open.

23. Smoke. Embers sleeping feverishly, startled by the progress of the fire. The problem at hand: _vitesse-mouvement \equiv fréquence-mouvement_. "Coucou! Me voici!"

24. The concerted effort the dead will make to remember the living. Performance of post-mortem miracles, silent laments, synthesis with sevens tainted by constraint.

25. A menacing floor plan—shadows advancing. Flux, inadvertent light. I know how we got here. No one will sit by me, gazing out the window.

26. Applying gadgets to different parts of us, shocks which didn't feel like much.

27. A sweetheart hidden in the wash, or in the past.

28. Having been evaporated, or reabsorbed. No staying power—need something extra. Pay no attention to tiny Saint Sulpice. "Pineau des Charantes pour madame, la Réserve Personnelle pour monsieur." Are these spirits? Rearranging us?

29. A retrograde connection to linear sequence produced a casual unspooling of later and sooner.

30. It was only the Occident that regarded evens and odds as opposites.
31. The clock was the spot where we found ourselves stuck in the sum total of unknown possible conditions.

32. What was needed of course was un mode d’emploi, or an Idiot’s Act of Chance, a primer to explain why time is only significant in becoming (i.e., natural numbers).

33. A hairline crack in the lip of the cup supports the principle of the open system. We set forth an experiment in which the fluid would be emptied. The alchemists then suggested we leave space and time behind and enter the wormhole of unio mentalis, but the contact point, where psyche and matter were to meet, could not be agreed upon.

1. Newsweek, November 18, 1963

**DMITRY PRIGOV**
(Tr. from the Russian by Philip Metres
with thanks to Dmitrij Psurtsev)

**Selected Poems of Dmitry Prigov**

***

In Japan I’d be Catullus
And in Rome Hokusai
And in Russia I’m the same guy
Who would have been
Catullus in Japan
And Hokusai in Rome

*

The plumber goes into the winter yard
And sees it’s already spring.
It’s just the same with him—
Once a schoolboy, he’s now a plumber.

What happens next is worse—next is death.
But before that, ripe old age
And just before that, and just before that
And just before that, like now, a plumber.

* A woman kicked me in Lenin’s metro
I wouldn’t have minded a push
But she went just a bit too far
And this whole thing descended into
A level unnecessarily personal
So I kicked her back, naturally
But quickly asked her forgiveness
Because I was her moral superior

* It’s not important the recorded milk production
Does not match the real milk production
Everything that’s recorded is recorded in the heavens
And if it will come to be in two or three days
It’s not really important when it will
And in some high sense it’s already come true
And in some low sense everything will be forgotten
And it’s nearly been forgotten already

* Here a pioneer caught an enemy
And the enemy killed the poor kid
And threw him dead to the ground
But still, but still, but still
But still, but still
But still
But
Still
How cheap life is in our country

* Here at the post stands Soviet Poliseman
The expanse from here to Vnukovo is open before him
The Poliseman looks to the west and to the east
And the emptiness behind them opens
And the Center, where Poliseman stands—
He is visible from every direction
From every direction Policeman can be seen
The Policeman is seen from the east
The Policeman is seen from the south
The Policeman is seen from the sea
The Policeman is seen from the sky
And from beneath the earth...
But he's not trying to hide.

In the buffet of the House of Literators
Policeman drinks beer
Drinks in his usual manner,
Not even seeing the literators

But they all look at him.
Around him is light and emptiness
And all their various arts
Mean nothing in his presence

He represents life,
Appearing in the form of Duty.
Life is short, but Art is long.
And in the battle Life wins

Here the Policeman stands in place
Watching everything, remembering
Everything around—and here is his pride
The ambulance dressed all in white flies up to him
Raises a fan of spring splashes
Hands entwined, they walk together
The heavens above them melt
The ground disappears in this place

Policeman walks in the park
In late autumn
And over his covered head
The sky is like a pale entrance arch

And the future appears so truly
Appears among the alleys
A future when his very position will disappear

Among reasonable men
When the uniform won't be needed
Nor the holster, nor the revolver
And all brethren will become men
And each of them—Policemen

The Policeman walks toughly
And talks on his walkie-talkie
At the same time,
To—I don't know—must be God

And a voice truly unearthly
Sounds from the heavenly walkie-talkie
O, you beautiful Policeman
Be upright and eternally young
Like a cypress in blossom

JESSICA CHIU

Poem 2

The balding wives, I am not so beautiful
or blonde. Tsk tsk. The attention like eagles
touch down. Something near extinction.

Today, a golden rod, the beams of some construction
a bench, a beach, the summer leans and grazes
its brown hands, like shadows on skin

I want to remain with you always
There. The note of upset which sours
a round fruit, the metal plates which hold it up
galvanized, refused my bite? To be bitten.
Churchgoing

for Q

Sunday shows its chivalrous face but there is nothing in it. The cans below make little noise, the clock turns its hand silently. My skin has never looked more transparent.

I pass solemnity with resolution too — my arms are candelabras. I have never loved you more certainly. Get out. Get out. The doors shut snappishly, like turtled birds my hands return from fluttering. I am always with discretion.

My father loves my mother so sublimely a godly boat past the curves in plank wood she will further him forever, see bones and that is religion.

In you, eternity through acres — land and land and land the wooden shell — a house where I stood out and waited the men turn from their gray newspapers A gay flock of children take pause.

Like mirrors, we reflect stubbornly the religion of a ghostly face which hesitates.

that is your arm, my arm. That is your arm my arm. You see me as if suddenly realizing.

Is it a long time. The sky holds its broken face and I take forever to leave now.

Kingdom

Can you collect a land which won't bend with any seriousness?

It puts its arms out like mortar, planks of intention. Attention! He pays to walk it surprise surprise He does not dismember height, the tall body of an athlete or drummer. Whoever is more deliberate.

The lights we love loaf in the park swing out from trees, monkeyed, mimics.

If I cannot respond readily, the baton is a lead belt smack and stops our dead end tracks.

The sun throws its glance to the sandstone hotel only. It warms there in the dimmer sheets of street just like the naked legs of women in wool coats, winter hats.

By the Schuykill, you imagine dance halls, legions of women you love now. We stand by a dam which bears down on a log I recall and union.

We recognize that families are important. A couple photographs nicely in white and black — As if, you say to me, that was that.

The Poetic Mr. Buddy

Those trucks sound out, missiles whistling And leaves rustle dryly at end, like skirts, I retreat.

The potted plants in drought shiver flowered nerves, the hot hand lands — discontent.

I roar at all of that, junked cars, rocks, the movies too dismiss my easy affection. I still keep you though, an ivory bough, stow stowed away.

I would take boats out to you The barrels of chests, armory, cannons, the rough
jowls of water. Am I so easily-devoured?
At my house, hours go on wrestling me, you

know they are unbeatable.

Still, you don’t get borrowed time — the stoves noisily dismantling —
You are a wrinkled brow, creased forever the genius hour.

Like Edie

My stomach is curled
like a fist or some milky product

What a lightless day, our moony face
The lamp admits one fact quietly.

When will you recover
always forced to move out—such an unwieldy suit
I have been fighting, fighting you

my mania is the most common
thing about me, see.

He saw us in a tall hat.
This is the graceful face of anonymity
and we are surrounded.

SUMMI KAIPA

Fore-
Cast
or
Some Ob-
scene Dare

for AWD and AKD

May 7 (In Absentia)

Today I awake to find no poem
(in your book, dear A,
there is a page missing) swollen lips
the street as it progressively
wets itself
So I decide today to write a poem in absentia
of you, of the poem, of an “m” that is sometimes missing
from my name when Niki decides
to shorten me, so many things missing I wear
two different but equally beautiful
socks and lipstick to cover up sleepy as I see fit
Body swollen a bit, of ebb and flow
I didn’t only dream I was on a couch
kissing someone with your name on a day (May 5)
there was a poem
there was no reason to betray
when your art awaits me: “A splendid butterfly”?
returning to eve almost dawn alone
It’s different with you, isn’t it?
For example my brother was drunk
and broke a cobalt blue
glass in the street

May 10 (Like the Moon Needs Poetry)

Once I had finished drawing what I thought to be myself as a cartoon character,
I emerged likening the fullness of the moon to the shape of my face. The
trajectory of thinking of myself in relation to the moon was forcing me to
consider this: must we write all our poems to the moon? The moon was
accustomed to the obviousness of this soliloquy. I wanted to launch a letter to
the moon. To ask questions of the moon. I would use an old-fashioned bottle rocket which would shoot up my letters and come reeling down only after delivering to the moon—with an added loud bang for posterity. Or, I would retrieve my guitar, recently gifted to the trash by an ex-lover who was surely more interested in the sun, and write songs about my memories of the moon as a young child. The moon asudden. The lake behind Jenny’s house was writing lyrical poems to the moon. I remember I pleaded once, under a sliver, to be given a sign of something, anything, to be recognized in relation to the moon and heard laughter under a nearby tree. The tree was certainly mocking me—or was it mocking the poor moon? There were no consequences to my love when I sat under it and thought solely of it. It was going nowhere. The moon, of course. Its beautiful inertia was to grow inward and outward, each month to argue with its own desirous shape. This thing, this moon, was a wondrous item which insisted on staying with me. I wasn’t about to question that. My binoculars had shifted perspective—from the young man undressing in the top window across the way to the moon which was more lovely than anything we might have been capable of. Would the moon please stand up and identify itself? We were waiting for the moon to be a preacher in a wedding we were destined, said the moon, never to have.

May 11 (Under a Tree)

I vaguely remembered the science behind the incendiary. How the tree swayed with the introduction of air was beyond my cognition but seemed akin, no doubt, to your degrees of admiration. I recalled these things as impressions—red ink bleeding from one part of the painting into another when trying to conceal, to limit. Instructions on varnish read “keep dry to avoid blossoming” but the weatherman had decided, as he did intermittently, that it was time for rain. It rained until I remembered the introduction of air was beyond my reach. The tree swayed with itself? We were waiting for the moon to be a preacher in a wedding we were destined, said the moon, never to have.

May 16 (Split Screen)

As for your suggestion to see the movie, I couldn’t decide, in retrospect, if it was simply your aesthetics persuading me. Or, the woman who applied make-up constantly and reminded me, with her big kohled eyes and frequently glossed lips, of an Indian movie actress. I’ve become accustomed, as of late, to the paint fumes which rarely make me think of you. Consider it a blessing and get away with it. Closed, despite the poetry, there’s no room left for this embryonic notion. So, it goes. (Who is legitimate and tells you so.) So, the moon is resting above the highest branch on that willow tree. The movie was a cover-up for other sounds of love which might have been made. Scene split in indecision, things were chosen for us: how to look upon the screen, who to believe, what mistakes towed the line between life and art? There are situations which parallel, so closely, the myth—the moon’s hue of last eve belonged to you. Which I hadn’t realized until everything became revealed in literature. His hip bleeds in her dream, but he still answers his phone. I, too, was once in love with my phone when it told me mesmerizing things and with a goldfish named Willy who believed each dated desire I spoke. A palette of aesthetics captured in the end or the woman whose voice returns to him—cocktail of splendor and suffering. You are your very own, I cannot fault you for it. (You are corrupted, but that isn’t what I came to tell you.) Certain things will remain in the constellation despite the predicted shifting. The moon grown dark when you starve. The universe is lonely when there is no tree to speak of. Turn around and you’ll notice, a voice, a camera, splendidly panoptical is lending you its ear: your poetry is missing you.

May 19 (Texture of Rain)

The atmosphere soaked by a fallen glass.

There’s nothing anchoring me. But this tree.

Filtered through the rain’s mist, the clarity of evening becomes this tree for me.

Water floods the gutters: I should make paper boats in which to float away.

Or, I should make a paper bed, in which to lay.

And the sky clamoring.

And the moon asudden, uncharacteristic.

The moon thinning through the rubric of rain this evening.
Through the looking glass, taken in by intimacy.

You turn a phrase on its back, feel its inside, retreat from its texture as displayed on a page.

Ridiculously sincere moment under veneer of song. Or inebriated under the moon.

(Boy who weathers the storm, whose arms are locked to the metal rail. Accompanying electrical shock which impacts his blue eyes. He was other-worldly, he was too close. He failed miserably upon a slab of blue ice.)

If only it were just poetry.

Eyelashes brushed with droplets.

At this juncture, I have forgotten grammar and strum, wet, with a single-stringed guitar.

Weather this is a ruse. The backdrop of hail.

So that only the words may present themselves to me. With or without the melody.

Removing each piece of clothing drenched with rain.

I fasten with clothespins, with meticulousness, each to a nearby tree.

To thwart lungs filled with soot rain, the impulse to save myself.

I glance upward at the moon only slightly full. Its beckoning through the sound of wind.

To enter sheets worthy of calligraphy. To enter with sincerity.

May 21 (Couplet for Posterity)

La lune est libre, je quoi
I throw rocks at the stars.

May 22 (En Été)

(Dolores Park) I had decided, all of a sudden, to resume writing letters. What I craved, perhaps, was to move away from instant gratification, from talk of the common life which became for me a steady source of discontent. Considering various approaches toward time, I decided to have a try at it—then and there—and directed my first attempt at Niki, wondering in a letter, about a man’s desire to have children.

(19th Street) I realized the sun was working with me, not against me. Though the heat, which one could rightfully say was produced by the sun, was possibly the antagonist, popping each cluster of pollen from the trees and directing each toward me. To my nose, for lack of a better direction.

(Bryant Street/Cell Space) At the end of my walk through the Mission, I found myself bordering Potrero Hill. The temperature had gotten thicker. Or so it felt. I entered the gallery with strawberries in my bag. I met a man who I had seen, a month earlier, with a patch on his right eye and on the right side of his nose. Now, he emerged with no visible markings of ever having been wounded and was rather gorgeous. Without the patch, I was drawn to a specific detail: how perfect his lips were.

(Dolores Park) I decided that Spring was officially, in my mind, over, and hence, wrote Amanda a letter about seasons. I wrote, For me both winter and summer are rather crucial times of stasis—the extreme of weather slowing the revolutionary narratives of the equinox months to make them all the more tolerable.

(Dolores Mission) The parishioner introduced herself to me as I sat in the basilica and thought about the relationship between religion and art. Religions would never have survived had artists not lauded the dreadful moments, converting them from shame to beauty via aesthetic interpretations. My conclusion was this: the masses were, though they barely knew it, duped by art.

(Sam’s House/Waller Street) I stopped at Sam’s house for a brief moment and invited him to ride to the park with me, but he had elsewhere to go. He did a pull-up on the porch in front of me. Then, I showed him my calves. He felt my right calf and was impressed. He asked me to feel his calf. So I felt it. Well, that’s expected, I said. Then, I rode off to the park alone.

(Golden Gate Park) I was secretly pleased with my “rough and tumble” look as a punk rock biker chick when riding through the Haight to the park. In the park, I stopped to eat vanilla yogurt and a honey tangerine and watched the
I rode past the young hippies, and thought to myself, I bet they’re on shrooms.

(Dolores Park) While we killed time before meeting Pam, Alex accused me of being an admirer of male beauty. Did I consider myself so classical? I told him I saw Lars Von Trier’s Medea the week before and had been thinking about betrayal, particularly how the betrayal of a nation is woven into love’s discontents. As it were, I was moved to buy Ovid and the Ramayana at City Lights. I told Alex that for me, art begins with something emotional, often autobiographical. Then, it goes through an evolution and becomes intellectualized and written. Then, voila, art.

May 25 (Fable for The Idiots)

For some, the distance between the idiot and the not-so-idiotic is so very small. For example, the woman who was taken away by her father loved Jeppe—as idiot and not, so he threw himself at the moving vehicle adhering as solidly as he could to the truth of the moment. Evidenced in the slightest of gesture, in the way they came together, the chemistry between them had collapsed from “idiot love” to something else, which was not an act. Today, after having witnessed the most exaggerated display of idiocy in the movie, I look at the world and presume that the possibility of something earnest will surface from this exquisite madness. I have expected too much of the moon, which was an erroneous gesture on my part. Now I remember that the moon is a moving target. Now I remember. There are still things I’d like to tell you. Like the character, so soft and so disturbed, who, when taken in by idiocy, doesn’t attend her own son’s funeral. Supple lines between the inopportune and that which is scripted. Maybe once, when you are not waiting, so thirsty for fate to usurp your position, we’ll take a walk through a magnificent forest and see the sun highlight everything to fluorescent green. Maybe we will play there, like idiots, throwing mud, soiled with sincerity. Returning to tender, I will begin making movies to suggest that I never hated you. Everything, in that space, will be so conditional as to be vaporous. Everything through a thick fog of idiocy, we will have recovered from idiocy. Under an eclipse, you will sit by a river and tell me stories. The time you broke your nose when. What you have glimpsed of idiocy.

EUGENE OSTASHEVSKY

An Encyclical Upon the Addition of Zeroes

1.

I would blow away with a big pop-gun
the porcupine that plows your arm
whose pricks sprout poppies & bloom in red
on your skin’s wax roller, as if some compass had
tried to tattoo a circle whose center is
in each hair follicle & circumference
also, but fluttered up, so you point mute
like a bottleneck at the Absolut(e)

absence, the lip-crowned O
into which we all spiral, spiral and then fall
in the process of going down the drain
imitating a candy cane.

2.

Maybe that’s why I ❤️d U. As a disheveled crest
Beethoven-like in its race towards rest
atop its wave’s roll of muscle, massive and tensed
up for the slap into the turbulence
of a wipe-out, only accidentally sweeps along men, boats, sharks
skyscrapers & strollers, desire wants
its own annihilation, & to signal what
it really wants, what makes it move
what the final cause is of our love
it handles our lenses & ensures we find
in emblems of death objects pleasing to mind.
3. All we got is refinery rented, put on; our selves but gleaming and vain-glorious eggshells of a scrambled nothingness within which you can’t tell a trigger from a light-switch.

So stay in bed & hold in that pee for that way at least something inside you be plus a laboratory technician may not decipher your character in a chamber pot thus unraveling your knot. What we think and feel boasts its own clockwork, own set of wheels winds itself & is to us a monster out of Oedipus or of Jaws.

4. Whereas we are nothing. If you had encased yourself in an Arcimboldian self-portrait with cookers to cover your forehead and cheek, fits over nose, brows, mouth, neck, hair — cotton, for eyes two Bics, it would be as you as what now you is, since, like me, you are nothing. Not even smoke. For even smoke to Israel spoke & we — O if we could break through our junk-sculpture casements, we’d just mouth MOO or BOO, maybe OO — OO probably; for an OO adds up to a single O.

5. This is the ring with which I thee wed. This is the fold of our marriage bed.

This is the tube of our embrace, televising in our ribcages an everyplace; contracted pupils, by trance beset, the monogram on our wedding-gift china set, your hot small mouth around my tongue-kiss. This is your belly ballooned up with our kid & also the emblem, where Cupid sits inside a circling serpent that eats its own tail & beneath it says post fata superstes — LOVE PAST DEATH.

6. Like a Russian placing the drained and emptied in a line-up to be looked at from where the lamp is, we built a bridge through each day, inch by inch, adding not log and log but syringe and syringe, yet the sum was the same as what prints every orange cap. Now your legs measure Shotwell or Capp & in every locale, landscape slash site read a thing synonymous to the eye-sight, homogenous, unaffected by feature nature, nurture, culture, creature a reflection of nothing, bare orthography of why I don’t need you and you don’t need me.
I Locked the House of Myself

I locked the house of myself
The chest’s cupboard & shelf

The pot of the pelvis
Folds of muscle, fat’s *perlis*

Pupil’s agate
Colon’s maggot

The skull’s deep cup
No one shall lift up

I bolted the lip
I belted the lap

Fastened the ears over my face with a clip
Taped my palms in a silent clap

Said,

Goodbye
Goodbye
Goodbye
Goodbye

I walked in the forest like an elephant
Everything I saw seemed irrelevant

I walked in the forest like a donkey
Everything I saw seemed on key

I flew over the river Volga
Around it milled a people vulgar

I became longer & longer

I Struck Rhetorical Poses

I struck rhetorical poses
around me rose various roses

they were my frame I their spectacle
Then I walked around very skeptical

Then I sat down, void of thought & emotion
gas was my only motion

I would like to know I would like to know
the difference between yes & no

knight & night, Kurd & curd
what *I* means in the word *world*

if a fiend in need is a fiend indeed
what is the maximum number of the dead

O you who are  a) love
              b) remove
              c) fauve
              d) none of the above

you’re not going to tell me anything I don’t already know
so I’m just gonna wait till my braincells grow

I Wear My Tongue Like a Scarf

I wear my tongue like a scarf
My lung beats like a carp

My head is a spud
My pod is a dud

My name is Dumb
My mane is crud

Love me Love me
Be below and above me

Straighten and bow me
Love me Love me
Love is Like Boxing: You Don’t Open Up

Please pardon my cupidity
please pardon my rapidity
please pardon my rapacity
my plain and incapacity
please pardon my audacity
my various caresses too

please pardon

CARL MARTIN

An Antique Thought

There are wretched fractures in
This conjecture: stylistic nose with
Posies hanging from the horn of a bull.
Rings the bell of dissent over sulky
Female ghosts of the galleon that snatched
The blood of a boxer with hay
And a corset posed on every comely
Mannequin, child wisps rolling
Wooden hoops in the grass.

Ha!

You have specified to my dismay
That I may not be in fact the illuminati;
That I do chagrin in fact soil the belly
Of the crock and damn if I’ll stand for election
X’d from the inkpots of Victor Hugo because
Indeed the Sevre manufactory pasted it &
I have chased more lambent spectrums
And bent them over the erotic counter than
A curmudgeon like you; yes my boy
The “rover” and that whole pack ‘o sheep
That you assume I’ve never made spotted
Lambs with in the back of the yellow Corniche.

Palm Court Room

Obfuscation ground the glass.
Augmentation laid in the iron struts.
The butterfly was divested of its wings.
Replacement flyers wove a cloth of stings.
The miracle, however, retained its golden
Edge, strings, its placement at the meal.
This was its time, silver cocks crowed
Scrolled on elaborate utensils.
How quiet these things were
Alone, in shadow gilt & shallows.

All of Something

The boy with the shattered crystal bowl will never meet
The blind boy shivering by a public, indoor pool.
The only thing spilled are not orchids, perhaps, but a rolling glass eye.

This is life’s sympathy, its “blind” respect...upon which we must rely?
Yes, the boy with drunken equanimity, official seal of varied inequities:
He too will see the “lotos” rise from an emptied brown pool, a bright intrusion.

Because before he walked the stone path beside the hedge, before he rested
Panting in the gazebo, he did not pray to the god of dust or the god of play
Or the god of water.

Now, beneath his feet the dirt is poisoned, the well dry.

There’s no morality tale that will not falter beside a wild Australian desert
Which he traverses in a black jeep in his sleep.

Sleep will never fail to bring each bright petal into view.

What fills the mind less memory than sight, less sight than apprehension.

There is no turning inward, no escape from the inwardness of where we are.

A truck is going up the stony, dirt street spraying for summer insects,
Amongst the past, the wooden houses, the vines wrapped around white porches.
To know is not to know, or be, or question in the fall of evening’s wheel.
Jazz Quarters

for Yusef Komunyakaa

The city of New Orleans
Crouches, giant red bug,
People like copacetic pistols
In its eyes,
Confederates like crawfish
With black powder
And red pepper hearts,
Red pepper hearts seething
In the boil
Like a C-shaped hoof in the sand.
Hank Williams on a tin drum
Playing the battle
In the horse’s smooth haired ear.
Through crawling grey smoke,
Thick as blood, the old ghost
Rattles his saber
Like a bark knife.
Brass angles fall like instruments:
God’s playing stick ringing
In the scat dash blues dash cymbal
Of tambourines and tombs.

TAYLOR BRADY

Built for Scrutiny Not Speed

This one-sided side of the bargain. Ruled default gets you people ready, case-hardened to intend the train that comes to what’s, in any case, any case at all. At just about that legislated time, minus time off for each doubt of any meaningfully tracked and tied behavior, there are members and membranes shielded with background, greasy denim of the job at hand shunted onto sidings, and in landscaped parallel the lading list of gendered figures laden with vulnerabilities of example. Service, side out.

A highest court ruled yesterday, inducing grounds for that which shall have come to threaten one today with college, knowledge-work gathered up in its facility: disciplinary action, instant foodstuffs, technique and technicality of promise deferred through each and every lasting instance.

Juvenile desperadoes
inspect the armed robot.

This one name, an invitation.
Our stupid masquerade where,
in general, one gets anonymously spanked. But in particulars “in person” one presents the rump of habit’s kind stand-in for the ally once considered in the categorical question — namely, whether such embarrassments, worked over thus, grow flush with wage-equivalents.

And thus the sordid doings through which one acts definitively wooden, boy or girl boring gimlet-holes of boring trepanation into blocks engridded on the blocky frontage of a headspace.
Take a vista full of property and character. Stick it in my face.

Sores of activity,
realms of exemption.
Stick figures hurt
for real by the fiction
of the geometric point.

The official survey
measures off ground to exculpate the audience’s ethical turn away from stage business to the qualified, finessed mechanics of a plight, a plaint. What’s sung about
sings about the space; brings noncompliant rafters of the nonplussed house ringing down, singing tinny in the ear.

The more it's true the more it's one more length to subsidize the course of studied affect: "I'm that very single, singing individual, who wears his heart upon his best behavior — that's a rule, a law, and a regard for all the earthed, unlettered spirits of the literal."

Call it natural ability. Years pleased to hear the accidentals in the playback of the piecwork we'd recorded, years to gestate infantile discrepancies in timesheet after timesheet, developmental narratives of epic scale to reach the very outburst, the "of course" to round up posses, dust off and authorize the use of force.

This shootout here's for you.

This answer of distant winds.
This this and this, incontinent ideas in a motion blur,
some partial recall of the partials all along the deadman's instrumental curve.

**Is There Something Stuck To Me Right Here?**

The need accorded to bizarre collections of formaldehyded heads. The formalist's description of death. A place of air and track lighting, drowned in radiance, all visible distinction rearranged ingeniously as mirrored fragments, jigsaw fashion.

The deckhands partied on the several shores again.
Guitar and *tres* strummed soft across the hard narration's edge of a bloodied sea as allegory of the sawtooth wave that always seemed to rip the outer partials raw with amplitudes of inflammation. Tear them loose from fading to the tonic.

One remembers staring blankly at a moony round of fact.
Remembers even when it fills the present frame, an opening folded very fast. Like superlatives of definition, description, ice, alcove, surface of machined and burnished steel, perfect matte to finish saturation with a self-effacing almost sheen.

Maybe I'm delusional.
Maybe you're a pattern, or an implant rooting into...

...me, it, them, whatever —

a scaly embryo to scale with another size entirely, pronominal by cannibalizing names.

And then the usual sad story: the monster, insectile but with human mucus membranes and a close kinship with our own imaginary genital malfunctions, dripping snot and cautionary biomechanics, vanishes into yet more New Age forms, stylized classicism, and the road-salt contours traced on mudflaps that do little to keep the sticky films away from your forward view as they pass, confidently untouched by radar. Despite the well-placed grit, some things remain intolerable for their polish. So robot-mindedness and laboratory clinicism get pre-emptively stranded, relocated in the late eighties, its precision and track titles — *Clear the Wired Megalopolis*, or *Emergency Third Rail Power Trip*. After that record hit the clubs we all became other than our previous selves. Uncompensated labors were our pseudonym producers. The outdated rhythm programming still works inimitable changes in our iterated...
gestures of today.

lights, the scene / a too crude accent

Let’s see that tongue you’re sucking down
Loud, assertive, awfully dear

slab length supernumerary meat

The Front Row Gets Wet

Association shrivels a discernible view:
the military monument’s backward vista,
features forward of continuous English

single instance of escape the lips

in far-off space and small
homogeneous time

applause metered rhyme opaque
manners other words

concussive concrete brush

breach to make presentable —
by which to make it pain.

Up into accumulating atmospheres, recursive
flight-path of the drunken butterfly whose feelers drop
and droop condensing weight and mounting pressure,

and after

nothing. Supposition’s evening

paper folded flat into the bin

Second plunge past
mythological marbles
lost limb / lost wax
harmon mute index
amputation amped

hanging in midair
midstream mobile
traffic island veering
absentee signed out

the dust blows forward
and the draft blows back
a thrown up citizenry
body blows of rough impression

disciplinary roundtop bench

wheel impressed flesh
chock and wedge
angle of a power pole
to glassed ground

LETTERS

Dear Combo, I know of two nursery rhymes that deal with the subject of urination. They are, in the order in which I heard them as a child, “Michael, Michael motorcycle, turn the key and watch him pee,” and “Me Chinese, me play joke, me put pee-pee in your Coke.” The first seems to me a Cronenbergian fantasy-nightmare which could very easily be as old as the motorcycle itself, or very nearly so (on second thought, not quite so old as Gottlieb Daimler’s gasoline motor-powered bicycle of 1865 but more likely at some later date when the motorcycle became a viable form of transportation – 1880 – and an iconic product in of consume culture – around WW I, that first war in which men and machines are gnarled together and, incidentally, motorcycles were used to transport secret messages), and which responds to the anxiety over automated transportation (are we becoming so “attached” to our machines that we will cease to be able to distinguish ourselves from them?) by either displacing that anxiety onto an “other” – the “Michael” in question – who becomes an object of derision; or, conversely, by fetishizing that “Michael” as a sort of exotic, futuristic specimen. Distinguishing between these two modes of operation is generally a matter of identifying the tone: in the former, the rhyme is spoken in cadences of anger and disgust; the tone of the latter, meanwhile, is so gleeful as to almost prevent clarity of diction, and the lines may be repeated several times – so that on occasion a third party may even need to intervene.

As for the second example, I’d say it is the product of three related social vectors:

1. the bigot’s obsession with the grammatical structures employed by recent immigrants (here too one finds the strange dialectic: disgust and derision on the one hand, fascination and pleasure-producing imitation on the other – though it should be said that such
imitation is never an accurate reflection of immigrant speech but is, rather, always refracted through the prism of the bigot's mind; furthermore, it too is a response to anxiety — in this case the anxiety that his own "English" is in the process of losing its centrality and, hence, authority.)

2. The old Western myth of the devious Oriental, which is everywhere, it seems, in Western literature. In the case before us, it is rendered comical: you'll find similar characterizations throughout the history of American cinema — a fairly recent example being "Long Duck Dong" in the film Sixteen Candles, there rendered so ridiculous as to be not even properly devious but merely untrustworthy and a nuisance. (For deviousness I would point you to Fedallah, Ahab's shadowy lieutenant in Moby Dick, drawn by the hand of even so great and generous a writer as Melville — though it is worth mentioning that Melville includes within his text the possibility that Fedallah is in fact imaginary and so anticipates the very critique at which I am presently gesturing. In any event, I would refer you to Said's Orientalism for a comprehensive discussion of this vector.)

3. The Coke. What we have here I think is, again, a response to anxiety, most likely originating around 1970 with the "opening" of China by Richard Nixon: you'll recall that this is the same period which produced the wildly popular "I'd like to buy the world a Coke" commercials — if this were a poem, I would have broken the line after "world" to suggest the relationship between the commercial and the nursery rhyme in question. The "opening" of China (I refuse to say it without scare quotes, however hackneyed they may be at this point) is of course a major event in the rise of global economics, the effects of which we are still feeling, as the recent controversies over China's "most favored nation" status show. Coca-Cola, that most American of drinks, the nursery rhyme half-consciously suggests is now made in China (you'll recall that the '70s were also the heyday of all sorts of MADE IN CHINA, MADE IN TAIWAN, MADE IN JAPAN jokes, of the Don Rickles variety); and here is what distinguishes this third vector from the previous two, namely, its spirit of accuracy: for American controlled, multi-national corporations had begun to move their plants and factories to the Third World — to Central and South America and, yes, to Asia — and, as I am sure you know, had turned a deaf ear to grievances regarding working conditions, wages, etc.

Suppose that Coke were made in China: it seems to me perfectly reasonable to suspect that a Chinese worker (or a Costa Rican, a Laotian, Pakistani or Venezuelan worker) might very well urinate into a can of Coca-Cola earmarked for the United States, at the first possible opportunity. We should rather ask, by what rational principle could we expect him not to play this "joke" on "us" who presumed that, to make him bottle our beverages, one need only turn the key?

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