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WCH WAY / NEW WILDERNESS LETTER

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Red Book of Hergest
Al Que Quiere!
Matter... is definable only as the non-logical difference which represents in relation to the economy of the universe what crime represents in relation to the law.

— George Bataille

Everything still lives; the lamp walks, walls of the house have their own voice, and even the piss-pot has its own country and tent, wife and children, and serves as a helping spirit. Skins, lying in bags as stock for trade, are having conversations through the night. Antlers on the graves of the dead are walking in procession around the graves, and in the morning they’re coming back to their former places, and the dead themselves are getting up and coming to the living.

— Karawe, Shaman

(translated from the Chukchee by Barbara Einzig)

There’s a lack of connection between your words and the physical action they describe, the parts of the body they describe. This is what draws me to you so intensely. I want to put your voice back inside your body, where it belongs.

— Don DeLillo
Jackson Mac Low

Various Meanings

The bottom of a green arras extends a vocabulary whose rest is deep and boundless moving through space and the stars. From time to time we lost the noise of an edge where we were plagued by nocuous effects and then moved on toward a dominant object. The gibbous moon reminded him of a sad death before moving on toward planets realized some twenty degrees high in the west. Wait till the month of July. Slapped by a funeral the reeds dead branches and watchful rodents remained in the sky an entire evening as serious snarls shrieked with amazement. Somewhat concrete proof that you won't be disappointed at all. Above all each ponderous birth advanced from the general area of intercepted particles. What objection do you raise? The choruses were willing and complete hours before the imminent plan was announced. It failed to make a correct approach. As large as it might have been it was no more earnest than pleasurable childlike instructions. Spilling out of their eyes they flew away. They were never seen again. It is not possible. Be cheerful. The current and coming crisis was informationally aggressive toward the biology of entropy. Green water urged syllables. It had abandoned its plan to end its decision to build money and mercy. On the ground of honor it was a region of wooded slopes in an endless pursuit though some kind of lunatic thinks it's OK. Common sense is quite consistent with the elements they adduce which decreases their joy in clear sentences and handsome horses.

A glittering silver plan was beside the rowdy train of history dilating pupils and recovering true goals unnoticed in a cold blue brook. So I wrote down four airs for fair and radiant maidens born to come again and still hard to find. The same ones that wiped us out disclosed sensible frustration examined or pursued. Could you have been bewitched? They correlate with actions forever. Could you gratify obedience? No different than what you're wondering about in the form of lumps all of me is comprised of gaping mud. One of the first things was an instrument for sleep. What happens when glimmers feel they should get together? Thinking spreads beyond foreknowledge of extension.

They had been involved in ponderous thought and native water typical of complete sounds. Loops learn where to survive. They approach admiration obliquely. Tenderness establishes a delegation thinking every thought rising after a scanty breakfast. Ousted he pushed good humor and was appallingly deserved. Slices of heavy appetites went to grievous lengths. We're really in it. Especially in consideration of things happening in the other heart you are now ready. It is a good rainbow. Interdependence in an unharvested sea is ancient and stale. It fits too well. This example brings us softly together as we were in this case after long being objects of scrutiny. We couldn't joke about that. We rolled pies and sat down heavily when they blanched visibly at civilized experience. But now time is described. Otherwise they'd have learned to see before research was completed. Entities of a mystical bent are recorded in the deepest decline. Osiers are lost and this is safe. Subsequently sleep spread locally. Today importance was invasive and grabbed the jagged edges
of basically ungentle adjustments. In mountainous regions they acquire carbon copies of dead blanks and authentic wild systems translated into habitual voices and quiet devices supplied with perpetual revisions urban elements integrate. Major functions are currently being completed. Dwarfing anything previously imagined their immediate and practical effect is a clear and present danger. At certain times of day they defend the vice with vigor.

An extremely large matrix of equipment is only the tip of the iceberg in the workplace. Only four states require piles of envelopes. Facades allow corporate tape recorders to open hearts at moments when glass cases grow boyhoods. Starving variants found solutions in the snow buried betrayed and exercising caution under a vital burden vague and unsatisfied. Mental mouths agreed. With some green flowers we wait amid pain and insecurity. We tingle when things are done three times. Politely expressing antipathy blankets discern processes. That's no good. A tense armor was brilliant in a duality wrong side up. Monkeys unlock cruel doors. That noise must frankly be admitted. Where to start senses birth. Hours brought memories of concrete answers in prouder moments essential to kisses. I regard the prospect of being spied on as an opportunity to teach. You can't beat us with wires. A clear mental state is frozen hard as a mattress. It's time now. Love shouts in my ears where darkness and daylight touch and never return.

Rigid memories are finer than fixed postures. Red cedars escape overnight. Morons mass near a memorandum. Thousands taste bread and few describe procedures. Isolating encrypted messages are only conditional targets and vice versa. From plump individuals really severe dreaming is guided unknowingly to the pavement by any means possible. We have to prevent silent days. Primitive fathers are experienced as reminders. And any divergence is due to a temporary confusion. Notice the cold lake dropped shouting into the middle of an arctic waste. How might that aid us? Hold on. It doesn't matter. We're prepared sweet dark and intelligent. In a background where meanings are assured monotonous platitudes become denizens of windless connotations.

Let's not be so fascinated with all those remote us's. Their way is offered a third time. Nearer the end the city was preferable. The phonograph was less mathematical than their tourmaline kingdoms.

Their enormous sentences were separate from teeth. Mental nature was less annoying than intelligible benefits sparkling with judgment. What palpitations were present! White senses rumble in inexpressible leisure. Don't tell me about it. Injury is heartfelt and radiant with vexation. Conscious pillows are disinclined and new noises arise on bored ships stretching toward less dangerous spheres.

You know where they are and see their sinister vinegar smiling dully.

Winter's privacy is less ravenous. Would you dare to look beyond that smooth daylight? Waddling overhead she heard his childish laughter. Genius plundered willing sarcasm more whims overlooked when tedious outsiders felt too free to be reminded of translation.

Variations of twangs forced medication. Cellular accidentals induced benediction. I'd never have believed it. In two or three months the manacles could not have been forgotten. Too much light.

22 April 1983
New York
Begun in the Air — 1

Quality levels off as quantity... levels on. The final vegetables achieve unnatural tendencies. Traces are robbed or effectuated before globular infrontations are among. Nights free.

Free nights. Treatment by questioning viability too often induces hovers and wavers. Off the hook. I asked about the exit and was not told not to worry. Talismanic planetary packages. What he wanted to know about was not illuminated.

Sentences and noun phrases. What more do you want than what you already would have had anyway? Departure recedes from its expectation. The palindromic Boeing taxis backwards: an emergency exit on the ground normally.

Your own oxygen needs first and then those of your children: for flotation is a twenty-four-hour altitude, unmotivated, nucleate, secular, fierce, preternatural, adaptive, glancing. Who asks about it? When was it regarded as adopted?

11 March 1983
San Francisco to Los Angeles
Western Flight 740

Begun in the Air — 2

The squanky ear phenomenon. Excuse us. I expected what was happening would not have been had I not expected it. Was this to be expected or excused? Did I happen to have been expecting it? What would I have expected if I hadn’t happened to have expected it?

Formal features while it’s bumpy here. Stick it or notice. Endless challenge. Still and the mind travels. The reward levels are at 5,000 miles after 30,000 you can earn a free trip 1,000 free miles. Take advantage of this. We have them on board in the western world.

Longer areas or broader horizons, wider peripheries, are quoted on the border of exhaustion. There will be an aircraft change. More than one sibyl precognized the evanescent present. I don’t know what I would have done had I not done so.

11 March 1983
San Francisco to Los Angeles
Western Flight 740
Begun in the Air—3

Descent toward the Pacific. Islands lying offshore.
Late afternoon sun shining from water bodies.
Little pools with flash blind shinings.
Sea surface mattely tracking back lightbeams.

Sorry. I came to this before I am here. Big island.
Not an island but a kinda peninsula. Now
it's a whole continent. Sorry. I would have
spoken of it earlier had I thought of it soon enough.

It's a matter of taking a viewpoint and then letting
it shift before it's had time to become an institution.
When a transatlantic plane lands
the passengers applaud the pilot.

They do this sometimes on intra-European planes
but seldom here. Unwilling even
inferentially to avow anxiety?
Sorry. I may have meant to have spoken out earlier but forgot to.

11 March 1983
Near and at the Los Angeles airport
Western Flight 740

Jerome Rothenberg

from *Yaqui: Flower World*
A Gathering of Poems from the Yaqui Deer Dance

2
in wilderness I am
that only melon
flowering
& splitting
sending vines out
everywhere
you are
in wilderness
I am that only
melon flowering
& splitting
sending vines out
in the flower world
out there
under the dawn
a pale blue cloud
will be grey water
at its peak
the mist will reach
will rain down
on the flower ground
& shining
    reaching bottom
    where you are
in wilderness
    that only melon flowering
    I am
& splitting
    sending vines out
    everywhere

4
(where is the rotted stick that screeches lying?)
the screeching rotted stick is lying over there
(where is the rotted stick that screeches lying?)
the screeching rotted stick is lying over there
there in the flower world
    beyond us
    in the tree world
the screeching rotted stick
    is lying
    over there the screeching
rottled stick is lying
    over there

5
ah brother
    look at you
    a deer with flowers
brother
    shake your antlers
        little brother
shake your antlers
    deer with flowers
        why not let your belt
your deer hoofs
    shake? why not vibrate
    cocoons
strapped to your ankles
brother
    shake them
little brother
    shake & roll

10
to sleep in
these flowers
    to crawl there
I who am flower-world creeper
    who sleep there
    who crawl in these flowers
out there
    in the tree world
climbing this branch
I crawl up it
    to sleep in
    these flowers
I who am flower-world creeper
    who sleep there

13
flower
    with the body of a fawn
    under a cholla flower
standing there
    to rub your antlers
        bending
turning where you stand to rub
    your antlers
    in the flower world
the dawn
    there in its light
    under a cholla flower
standing there
    to rub your antlers
        bending turning where you stand
to rub your antlers
flower
    with the body of a fawn
under a cholla flower
standing there
    to rub your antlers
bending
    turning where you stand to rub
    your antlers
TRANSLATOR'S NOTE. for the last three years (81/82/83) I was witness to the Deer Dances at New Pascua Pueblo in Tucson, Arizona—not a spooky otherworldliness, as Casteneda would have it, but the enactment, through religion & art, of high & brilliant worlds one step outside-the-human. For these Yaquis have their own names: *huya aniya* = enchanted world; or *seyawailo* = flower world; or, in the language of some of the younger inheritors, “wilderness” as such. The dance, tight & classical, has it’s language as well, the words of the accompanying songs; & these, as translation opens them to us, become the principal means for bringing that flower world to life.

The poems presented here are from literal translations published in Carleton Wilder’s *The Yaqui Deer Dance* (1963). I have taken the images as found & have attempted to bring them (again) into song. Beyond that I have no desire to argue the resultant poems’ veracity (they seem to me no further “off” than most translations) except as they allow the image of a flower world to come out in the reading.


Robert Grenier

*Crow*

started as *arr*
from the trees in the woods
rather dimly

attended to as *bark*
more familiarly
identified as the neighbor’s dog
by their house over there
where the kids walk probably
flew overhead as *ark*
Moon Into
waning parcels
of heaven clouds move
dawn has the sky color
earth makes the sun land

Dawn At Mourning Dove Mound
for Kathleen Frumkin
doesn’t it just gust rigid
“of course it does” might by breeze of
greyer greener moon of light pink purple
principal able to articulate that some day
unknown seen not simply visualized eyed
greys & lavenders and browns & mauves

Through The Manacle
heart’s ease home from blinding labor

still walnut palm & ratty pine cones
heart’s ease at home from blinding labor

pointless syntax concentration on illumined miniscules

still walnut palm & ratty pine conspire
for moon light them & more pine needles
that’s growing all over the window
just if as it were ‘outside’

moonset looks like just if rising
from the West of course no night or day at this stage
in its just as if it was rising

full & fair at the first
time tomorrow night in the East the man in the head
require no more light than this
to write in the moonlight but less shadow
sleeps in the mind in woods during the day
of great dark apparent ‘titanic’
red & black ‘powers’ & starlight
red & brown shadows think man
see in sleep & dreaming those images
that haunt you by day in actual visions
of the Balinese shadow play that Puppet
capitalization of the Moon
this head visible Spirit with its Aura
emblazoned on the dawn clouds
that Friday night for others in our
culture backyard the roadside puppetlike
front yard the freeway where the moon sits
actually speaking in pictures
more yellow into dawn's light blue
& grey orange 'fiery' clouds that
substitute for proofreading 'to write about'
rather wrest seeing from eyesight than chain
the whole world up in sight
on the surface table cloth
what could possibly have heard popped
settling down into the treesy vine
& with it spectatorship of the moon
lit up the clouds in setting just like sunrise
except I need a flashlight to write now
it helps likewise to move toward the bathroom
still can see
turn off the flashlight look
through the shrubbery the lune
breaking the manacles by chattering

Moonset At Sunrise Is

burning the candle at both ends

why not use commas dashes semicolons the whole lot

Blue Sky Bathing January 2nd

sunset / quiet under Capitalism
uninterrupted hour that you have sought
what thing free from mitigation wearing
by the elements oh aether love
on a windless day by the shore a
bath in that water air my element
it's the no moon sun & moon together
at horizon to the west to suck out the tide
Flaming Ball / January

flaming ball that
crosses heaven and
warms earth daily how wonderful

Well The Tide Is Coming In

well the tide is coming in
beginning to splash the
well the tide is coming
in beginning to splash
the out rocks there

Land

where water
is a
pouring vertical
versus large lapping
horizontal motions
sand itself is
always pouring slantwise
liquid motion also
thrown up on the sand
by the outward following

Carcasse

what's
washed up
that stinks so
sweet sounds, Darling
I begot here
Multiples Of / Money

strangers that walk by
territoriless abroad
looking for rocks hounds

that might be agates
or other items pink & yellow
red-headed son & beige father

picking up mass
as they go by clogged

foraging sort of clothed

in zombie-like metals menials

multitudes ‘hunting & gathering’ bending

pass over & back

An Alexandrian & A Fourteener

must be a military plane but if it doesn’t bomb

what good is it to us except to spend money

Barbara Einzig

Dream

I’m in a place beyond countries—like the Emerald City, but down-to-earth. I live in a house on the corner with a woman and a man I barely know, both Jewish. Cindy from Milwaukee lives on the other corner. The woman who lives with me also seems to be visiting. Perhaps she is some kind of work associate—a frivolous and scattered lady, who I’m really trying to avoid (though I’m fond of her) because I’m writing a lecture. I have to go to the store for food and she gives me a list of what she wants. Yogurt, but not unflavored. I go but must hurry. Her list is long, but I only have time to get two things.

Our neighborhood is in a state of chaos. “The center does not hold.” Suddenly I’m with a pretty woman at a gate; several children are with us. The gate is private, we’ve been in someone’s home or on their property secretly. We have to pull the fence up to pass through, and then coolly act as though we are locking up the gate. The children do this skillfully. The woman is silent but looks at me kindly on parting.

I’m with Kathy Levitt and she lives in a house on the block. In her dining room, which is large and wonderful, is a big table with sheet cakes decorated with large sugar figures. We arrange these figures and then both realize that the table looks like “Crow Dog Parade.” In the dream this evokes Jerry Rothenberg and he is now in the street out the window (we are on a second story), hovering there as he is while holding “the ball of light in his
hands” in Ellie Antin’s collage. We shout “Crow Dog Parade!”; he sees the cakes and laughs. He doesn’t live here—we evoked him and he’s delighted we were able to, if only briefly. The cakes, which are a form of his poetry, also make him happy.

Now Kathy and I are on the street. Then Cindy is with me at my house. I’m hungry and looking for food. The woman I live with doesn’t cook but the man has a freezerful of several foods—large quantities, among them Langer’s bagels. Then I discover in the downstairs window of our house quantities of bologna and cream cheese, almost like a delicatessen. I go ask the man if I can have a bagel and cream cheese. He’s pleased with this request and asks that I bring him one too—he’s Jewish and most people he meets here don’t know about bagels and cream cheese. I start to tell him about a series of very difficult and catastrophic events that have transformed our lives on the block—he needs to know what’s going on, because it’s all happening right now. I’m telling him first about Cindy’s house having a fire and her discovery that it was arson. The city government seems to be complicit. Then Cindy starts talking and the three of us go to the corner. John Carnohan has given her two devices which when clamped onto the electrical apparatus of a special phone (which is next to the pay phone) make it a free long-distance phone. But you have to know the city codes. We just want to see if the devices work. I put them on with some difficulty, and find they do. He’s given these devices to us because he knows we are in a social emergency. I idly think that I can now call friends sometime, as if trying to imagine what daily life used to be like. Maybe, for instance, I could call Jim Clifford, but then I realize that he’s moved to a new city that isn’t among the known codes. It’s a city like the one I’m in but before the “storm”—new leaders have founded it, it’s rumored to be a good place.

Meanwhile I have touched off Cindy’s underlying panic and she continues the story, telling how by means of the arson investigation she discovered that people were trying to kill her (the authorities). But I interrupt, explaining that I must give the man vital and urgent information about events unfolding around us. Cindy is preoccupied with her own story but in fact everyone is in the same danger—authority and its lunacy have crystalized and all the despots of history have unleashed a storm. As I say this I see Napoleon’s army advancing toward us as if marching on parade. They look like blue and white tin toy soldiers, which is in keeping with the town’s atmosphere of miniatureness, condensation, beyond space and time constraints. “Don’t let them fool you,” I say. “The last time this happened the rear guard was a bomb squad.”

Now we’re in a building in the middle of the street, a Chinese restaurant, and Napoleon’s army, now in business suits and with machine guns, is breaking the place up. I’m with a man who is hit with a shotgun bullet in the chest. His young son is there and is frightened that his father is dying.

The army has disappeared and peace has returned, at least temporarily. The wounded man waits for someone with medical knowledge (but not a doctor, as in this place all authority has become evil) to arrive. He’s casual, as if barely injured. I don’t know how bad it is—it might be alright. Then he says the words:

Out of all of the Indian that I am
From school is mahi and so is Maui.

Simultaneously a newspaper appears with these words; I hear and read them at one time. I’m seeing into the future—the wounded man has gone into a hospital. He is an Indian, and, a chronic patient, has become part of an Indian writing program. The newspaper article is about this program and the lines are from a poem he’s written.

When I wake up I remember I’d tried using “Maui” as a way of remembering mahi, the bundle of game, fish, or worms used in the Korokoromadi. These bundles are made from mahiyadi, San Pablo, which is also used to thatch the lower part of the roof.

The same day I’ve woken into, Katerina, the chief’s wife, invites me to participate, under the leadership of her daughter Rosaria, in the process of obtaining the materials for and then making the mahi.

October 8, 1983
Kanaracuni

22

23
Clearing

She wears black for weeding—to keep her red clothes clean?—fitting as a form of armor. The garden is a circle burned into the woods, brown of sand, black of cinder, porous. The woods of what is opened are green, thick, seen by the women in the clearing, dizzy in the heat of work, as green vapor, vertical sea whose leaves foam into the sky, green multiple waves in which small and colorful birds occur as flames.

Of the newcomer’s sunstroke it is said “she blacked out,” or the greenness condensed in her head to the fever that swells, senamo, so close to green, shenamo. Wandering out of the dark house down to the blue river, it made things shiny and deep, soap and bucket intimate, as if discovered underwater. Now her skin was hotter than the air, and she washed it with cool water.

Broad, shallow, Katerina’s machete slices the roots of the grass, ridding the yuca of it. Then her powerful hands pick out these weeds, gathering many into the palm with the motion of one defeathering. Her daughters work around her in the maze of fallen trunks, filling their carrying baskets with ferns, a weed purple, succulent, one that resembles what is known in northern houses as nerve or prayer plant, another a form of dandylion.

The one from far away thought it looked infinite; all of the brown grains of earth, live with ants, would have to pass through the woman’s hands which would have to remove every green thing there. Then the yuca could keep growing, and they could come back to dig up the roots, hack and clean them, carry the weight of them, grate them, drain them of poison, make cassave of them. The cassave is a circle, this one is white, the women’s fingers took out of the flour any dark impurities, they threw the pancakes up on the roofs.

In my country they say the sun is yellow but here it’s white as cassave and can’t be divided from the sky awash with it, blue with that color we call baby, powder, eggshell blue, new things, but here, where Sonia points at the paper and asks me what these words are, I call it white, metal, it can bleach stormclouds, is breastmilk, the white and silver skin of ayemada, the big fish pulled out of the water, stunned, the blank, cleared thing.

Will Alexander

Letter Of Warning

Written for my magical friend Sulubika who lives in a zone of cosmic green moon bark

They’ll even try to fight you with their dreams, they’ll stick drainage pins in your psyche and by so doing try sucking out the heavenly ethers, they’ll sow ominous blisters of doubt in your brain, they’ll try to dry up the avalanche carnage of the empyrean’s revolt, they’ll try to dismember the fire factor, they’ll want to destroy the alligator clusters of heat tugging at their midriff blindness, they’ll demand you psychically be injected with demonic Lemurian testicles clogging your utterance of being so that your instrument becomes inert, they’ll feel safe that you won’t attack, that your thought will shut up and cancel its osmotic blood drift, those crimson clouds of hypnotic intangibles, ghosts flaring from the core of your face as you greet them, knowing full well that Mr. or Mrs. Something or Other is mesmerized by the materialist collective, that his or her name is Deinonychus*, Mr. and Mrs. Grounded Bird Philosophers of Matter, who are out to thwart you and convince you of the sufficiency of the present world order, this power that you possess once you have vertically punctured the empyrean with lightning bolt flowers, understand, that your vertical momentum will be unquenchable and infinite, your body begins to stretch down the lightning shaft of eternity and touch the earth as a participating body, a locked body hypnotically parallel with concrete, you’re looked at as meat conquered by the swirling mud
of death, as a being who has no use for luminous ascension, but ascension, like neutral Martian ether in your skull takes you in and out of their presence without them knowing of your departures and returns, which can be multiple over the space of an instant, you are proof of the living ghost floating in and out of their vascular choroidal coats, they notice a touch of crystallography in your grimace but move on as though nothing had happened, just as they look and never intrinsically notice that the sun is burning, they, 3rd person plural pronoun in the nominative are maggots, living larvae with phlegm in the veins and the muscles, a region of being Artaud so accurately wounded, the region encrusted by fish scale bars of conformity and complicity with the covering culture, whose central knot is its injurious, deranged assumptions as it acts to dismantle the primordial, how to kill off this weed? how to help it murder itself?, it has a general population whose mind is made from slop and guts, from the science lab to the scabrous cholesterol of the popular entertainer, we find that when ascension is invoked they die, height kills, the ground hog urinates blood from its eyesockets, they tumble over and flop like fish on scalding summer cement squares, these beings are what we'll call the stunted negatives since the sterile invocation of Greek biology and sciences, historical negatives which have so coiled and eroded the psychic and physical environment that the time of the explosive factor has been reached wherein the vertical can no longer be denied, where the lightning coloured fluid pulses from body to void, from body to body, our principle transmission will be the incandescence of sharks' bites alive with golden hieroglyphics of the heavens, biting lightless wagon wheel neurosis with Edenic dental butter, the bites concerned with the mysterium of the galaxies, with the origin of the spark of life as it merges into the powder of time, the cuneiform pulsations of time become a triplicate cosmic mirror reflecting itself to extinction, then life begins wandering into inner tunnels of light which appear and disappear, it becomes a cord of flame stretching tongues of lavender into transparent dragonfly tundra, alchemists' liver, cannonball sensoriums breaking into the ground of flowing lightning waters, what is called for are heroic butterfly spindles to twist turquoise treachery cycles into permanent non-existence, which means the artist mines the fractures of this creative compost instantaneously, or with the protracted laborius flux of a slow motion hurricane, I'm thinking of those two unmistakable distinctions, Andre Breton, Bram Van Velde*, and I mean outside society, outside of its heaving novae of conformist wolves, the creative truth, the trigger of fire punctures the unclean canopy of dollars, into the pure, into the unbounded, poetic bullets in the name of the grand amalgam of justice, too much blood under the bridge, in over 3,000 years of rational skull-capped western biology there's been a litany of internal revelation, forays into those flaming utopias where the sun spreads magnetically into the perpetual succession of eternity, life, continuous explosion, it is the piranha that sucks on the core of the innards and calls the pain the psychic offspring of internal number, it is the poetic spur, it is dynamo concoction, down with the bland goblets of sobriety that they tell us we should be grateful to live with, down with rhodopsin sockets of deception and blindness, again the call is for enigmatic hell fire to sweep away this mess, for a confused polyphony of fire flowing in all directions, a scaly claw pops up from oblivion sparsely covered by a stunted crop of ochre feathers, and I think of Putman on Van Velde, "Doubt, ambiguity, contradiction are the only proofs of authenticity," if I say typhoid candles, if I say flightless coal of fissioning leopards, I may as well tell the conformists that I'm worshipping at a temple of moon grease, of necessity, life must speak as a wound bursting like a tourniquet of roses, an overflow of energy creating itself as a core of unravelling electron footage, or, as a human geology of imperceptible millimeter motion, I'm speaking here of the most raving, feral kind of combat, warriors from the realm of upper luminosity injecting cosmic sputum into the odyssey of life on this physical plane, this cultural conspiracy against revelatory patterns and internal signs is what I would call photon lockage, a block in the vision, mundane phantasmagoria, sticky corrupted patina reality, irrelevant questions of how should I step? how much pressure should I apply?, but the poetic search is for deep disrupted laser beam ore somehow freed of all poltergeist activity swirling in the wires of the skin, the poetic thesis: assault on high geometry clouds dressed up in deception magically exploded and recollected non-corporally vertically rising above a sun of plural negatives, the 20th century artistic hegira, one giant hallucinated triple push of the soul, the mind, the body, looking for immortal experiences outside the habits of man as we know him, even when we are told by the reputable revolutionaries that there is nothing but the body, nothing but the ceilings and walls around the body, that the empyrean can't be touched, at this point in history a declaration has been made by the golden blade of the poetic angle,
and the words begin to "flash" with a blinding light of transmundane origin, a torch of magic wands in the eyes, and everywhere that you touch, you look, you write, a basic change takes place, a light breaks forth from people and things despite a natural hesitation, a bridge of glimmers emerging from a series of suns exploding in a metaphysical core which is unnameable, infinite, which can only be gathered in the experience of itself, one can call it as Coomaraswamy* does the "angel of all angels," the magical result of the "angel of all angels" is a sun springing from a body, a utopian reality engendered by the touch of magic flashing light in the being of the planetary angel/poet, a force imperceptible at first, then a flash of magical arachnids leaping out from the "angel of all angels" by way of a series of messenger angels put into practice by the above mentioned angel/poet who lives by way of psychic dislocations and flashes which he (or she) concretizes by distilling the power of the overwhelming, shooting beams of light into specific areas of conquest by means of guerilla subjectivity, the poet/angel can enter a palace of hound dogs and cause internal changes in its momentum, and all of a sudden the hound dog palace is not the hound dog palace and is disrupted by a fluidity which causes change and becomes pungent when not suspected to be such, and the psychological is directed to the vertical, to the celestial without a trace of the decadent vacuums of Christian or Mohammedan religiosity, daily finite cholesterol maggot mentalities crossed over by a vertical row boat of light, and an image instinctively appears of purple oarsmen in a boat of blazing moonbark going upward instead of across in cosmic contradiction at work, where the walls and ceilings mentioned earlier vanish, and the definition of fluidic transparencies become less prolific because the angels have fewer ideas, and use less means than men," which means the perceptible and the imperceptible merge in direct flowing continuum, the blocks between the physical and the metaphysical become obsolete, not disregarded but transformed into a river of beatific lightning sparks, God and his gods become the pure stuff of the primordial, as though the world woke to see twin blue suns inexhaustibly swirling around each other in a perpetual red-orange sky in constant waking being.

The Western World: An Axis of Cataracts

A civilization that chooses to close its eyes to its most crucial problems is a stricken civilization

— Aimé Césaire

Just below the daily mental surface there's this general horror, this ambiance of dragon fangs brewing going straight for the throat of the public, and they acutely sense the apocalyptic shortness of their time, not in those illumined prophetic nerve juice shakings, but in a dark obscured global belching dilemma, the roads to the future seem like the intestinal corridors of phantoms, a crazed condition of neurotic fissioning giving off purplish flame, heinous psychological infections which they recognize in each others' faces, a sickly cooked blemish of disaster leaking from their eyes like spotted matchstick drippings splotching the skin with secular hurricane worries, they search for contradictory slimy bench splinter numbers without the intuitive aid of the micro-constellations of sun birds, they search for a crude physical portrait of welts without the flames of miraculous Phoenix ashes, they eschew the transformative as a hellish misnomer foisted on them by the hypnotic inscrutable thumbscrews of the poetic, they say the pure space of thought is the fantasy of the ancients, that the practical is of the most spartan importance, that we all live according to the most utilitarian dictates of logic, these voicings are well known and have overwhelmingly functioned since the brutal invasion of industrialist miasma; what makes this problem so repetitiously acute is that the material spirit has grown cancerously voluminous since the William Blake warnings and has become today a disease so spread that poets and artists at crucial moments of collapse unwittingly or unwittingly take up the cause of this ragged blunted eyed beast called materia, (this pharyngeal carcass of the most wretched plutonium baggage), trying from the angle of the most popular concerns to convince us of the need to continue as we are under a blotted sun of pouring gangrene magots, the egalitarian concerns of the day are like voraciously powered quicksand suckings dressed up in the form of artistic ratings which muzzle the primordial spontaneous igneous ejections which quickly define and shut up the artist, I mean that artist exclusively enamored with communing with the public, a show boat dummy hung from chiseled skeleton wires; for instance, we have the poet concerned...
with the number of audience involved in his or her most recent public exposure, or the number of miraculous praises (both public and private) he or she has received for letting the majority in on the secrets of the poetic conquest, what we have here is a missing poetic sperm count, a lack of the secretive virility of poison, a lack of the ability to leap up and strike dead the pedestrian grip on things, a lack of the ability to simply hate, to turn down and disappoint, to not put one's best foot forward, to aggravate, to pit the popularizers against the mob so that they mutually exclude one another, right now, we know the masses are like a corraled bunch of pigs headed to the slaughter, they have a habit of bowing to the complete conformity of existing parameters, I'm speaking here of the pragmatic junk heap, the calling is for flashing star gazer liquids volcanically firing prophetic nutrinos, for persons with blind ghost insight who float with the dead, for conjurers of metaphysical hypnotics, for those who have crossed over and come back loaded with celestial flowings from the lake of non-being, a broken philosophical stellar polemic put out in code, like a paragraph of dogs stunted with blinded ice age phonemes, like a boat of post-historical grasshopper plumage plunging into the pelican foam of blazing book-end powder, a tuxedo of flame, threaded grizzly bear stances, sudden shifts of emaciated helium protrusions, and then you have this blank space, this onslaught of caves, this noble incandescence of different hydrogen frustrations suddenly blooming into one living verdurous infinity where the ladder of the sun floats backward and forward like a perpetual non-human flash breaking through the ethos and the secrets of the galaxies, our primary planetary concern is not for social smallness and rationally ensconced tediums of harmonic amenities, those faulty material utopias hung like crystal coloured emperor moths before the eyes, but for those beings who truly see the rapidly approaching defeat for this global machinery which feeds on metaphysical impalement, the profane pronouncements of the Imperial powers will result in profound psychological Tsunamis of fire which will eat these powers like irregular star fish habits voraciously puddled within a wicked cloud of glutonously rising ash coloured sulphers, the head will collapse from fire and the petty day to day infringements of each upon each will be completely blown beyond the ozone layer, this savage fist of radical moon blows will reap volcanic blood, this is the beginning of the end of this shaky pinball stockade we call society, these communist Bulgarian bigots, these salivating lemmings trapped in the webs of Warsaw and London,
combination, and we arrive at the looping virile magma of the void, at that split second timelessness of the libidinous practicality of chemicals, before the dialectical echos of circles and lines, I say this because the slab between the upper and lower worlds has never existed, and is a man-made phenomenon soldered in place by iron age mentality, roofs, limits, conservative oligarchies which jam up the feces, this meanly distorted cleanliness, this self righteous ugliness, etches the bones with holocaust cuttings, is now and forever a useless legacy of apocalyptic meanderings which waste by darkened acts empowered by irrelevant obfuscation, I speak for bringing forth a scarlet sun shining in the open sky of metaphoric bellies, I speak for attacking the material boundaries with verbal turpentine scaldings, I mean loaded words which transform by destruction, we are living as Guenon so aptly put in, under the law of matter and brute force, which the poet must magically eviscerate with an overwhelming nova of irrational Venusian wind demons brimming altitudes of Dionysian intuitions and silence, those beautiful baboon victories glowing in other-worldly helium waves with the fabulous consistency of golden limestone ashes, when one has reached these psychological vicinities the map one follows flows with Elysian coloured liquids coursing around in the skull, the mind is lifted to slippery repetitious irrationals, and you walk around speaking about how much blood moves across the face of a star, which you repeat and repeat because it fills you up with a fundamental seeing, which penetrates perversities plastered with the latest code of soft drink relationships, practical reality in essence is a gutless moon retreat served like a fish on a tray of spiders, the creative being in this cultural inconsequence must have the unwavering resolve which literally erects worlds, which has nothing to do with an apologetic taste for moderate costume changes, with these blasphemous modifications of life where the dead become revivified within oscilloscope boundaries, classic 20th century smokescreen decay, the machine is not the answer, not the quantum leap from the ash of the senses, no matter whether the planet be described as swirling monsoon ochre with a population of gargantuan intelligent spotted winged flying fish tigers leaping from the waters gelatinous and smouldering, their bodies fused with the inscrutable combination of mercury and sulphur, who've invented a cure for death by way of a needle cloned from a secret molten vein of loosely congealed uranium gases, the implication of such a scenario in the modern popular mental saga would give the needle more credence than the intuitive lightning conjunction between the tigers' minds and the uranium gases from which the immortal needle leaps, that space of magic internal subscription firmly outside the effable, beyond the smoky moral rubble buzzing with regrets, a sun purely green begins rising in the mind, a sun which blooms in the bottoms of the being, a light which eradicates by its very nature the tentative overcast forebodings inherent in the psychology of eternal eclipse, which exists in the mass mind, its cortex shaped by spurted dragon juices drowning its infinity in a various number of hells, which simply amounts to sensuous forays into those primitive canals of eroded salamander apples cloaking inside their seeds salacious hyena soliloquies, foul smelling olive tree lepers gasping for heaven while nailed to a cloud of floated sepa wanderings, the common Christian calls for a pseudo Boschian domain of Mohawk angels belching a flight of flaming damnation pronouncements, letters, practically neon, hysterical, parodying arms, legs, skulls, which turn quickly into rusted broaches drawing blood from the gut of a being part porpoise and crow lusting with its beak after a diamond coloured armpit filled with steaming mackerals, the sky around this being a brutish rat skinned grey, and peering over this minimal maleficence appears a Judeo-Christian European, his face full of strawberry blotches, being pulled through the expanse by bloated catfish remnants bleeding grenadine blood from the pores of his rotting lamb skin caftan, this Christ is shouting with the thirsty voice of the devil concerning his resurrected alliance with the Gadera swine, and here we see the Christian after world intrinsically confused and distorted by the illusory drags of physical realia, and down on the ground people receive a life of polluted polar scraps smeared across their daily mental screens by pocket knife priests, by Protestant trinket vendors further pushing this world into imminent nightmare tornados, this shopkeeper world, this shopkeeper world sucking profane fluids from the crooked spine of 'common sense' is feeling its statistics collapse, we hear the caged howlings of patch work beasts patching up the superstructure crackings, howling with more and more calls for doomsday schedules, for protective death devices, all this to keep those bilious subterranean demons in check, those deep subverted narcoleptic contusions rooted in the weakness below the skin, those thwarted sexual nematodes gone haywire causing an unprecedented pressure on the planet tilted on its axis of cataracts, basically blinded, floating around an imperturbable sun spilling a warped dialectical blood from its factories, the continents now ruled by a dynasty of torturers' eyes, wearing abstracted souls and separated bodies, those emerald virilities of the heights and the depths presently subjected to the closed up world of the deluded
and the damned, perpetually sweating beneath thatched bourgeois patio seclusion harriedly chewing on oil soaked repasts of oblivious salmagundis

Notes

Deinonychus- small vicious dinosaur of a hundred million years ago
Bram Van Velde- modern Dutch painter concerned with the slow motion burnings of the soul
Ananda K. Coomaraswamy- Indian...‘art historian, philosopher orientalist, linguist’

Pierre Joris

A Retelling of The Story of Renart & The She Wolf

that day Renart was cruising the forest as usual
he’d been at it for awhile when he found
a thick bush with a cave beneath
might be good place to lay up he thought
better be on your toes though you never know
the ramp was slippery and sliding down it he bumped into a
door
too late he realized he’d landed straight in Ysengrin’s lair
behind the door four wolf pups were raising a ruckus
hanging on to their mother’s tits
Hersant the mother noticed a sudden ray of light
she got up on all fours when she caught a flash of red fur
and laughing she yelled
“Renart what are you fooling around out there for?”
the fox was making himself small cowering beside the sill
“I guess people are right to call you a rascal
you never do the right thing
you call me family but you never visit”
Renart was shaking with fear but his mind was racing
“Well cousin
may lightning strike me dead if it’s any of my fault
you see there’s a problem he’s called Ysengrin
if I didn’t visit on your churching it’s because
that husband of yours and his cronies are scouring the forest
trying to do me in

Don't ask me why

I never did do him no harm

but now he claims in front of those cronies

that I've got the hots for you

have you ever heard anything so gross?

I mean I never even dreamed of it

you know that""

now Hersant was getting into a sweat

"what? so that's what the old fart is jabbering about!

well we wolves have an old saying

'he who takes vengeance for an imaginary affront

courts real misfortune'

now let me make something perfectly clear

I've never even thought of making it with you

but now that rumor has me do it

I'm of a mind to try it

why don't you come on in & we'll have a ball"

Renart didn't believe his luck

nor did he waste a second

he sidled up to her kissed her felt her up

Hersant was getting hot and raised a leg

soon they were at it with a vengeance

but Renart was having trouble keeping it up

on account of Ysengrin who might come home

so he pulled out and turned on the pups

he shook them by the scruff of their necks

and threw them about the room before beating them up

then he ate their food and spoiled what he couldn't eat

calling them bastard babes of a cuckold and a whore

he finally pissed all over them and made his exit

Hersant now tried to cool her brood

"listen kids don't be fools now

I mean there's no need to get excited

better not tell dad what went down here

you understand?"

they didn't

"what? for fuck's sake mother

we should let that red bastard piss all over us

and not say anything?

we should let that scumbag screw you and not tell dad?

no way we want revenge on that moth-eaten redskin"

Renart had been hanging around outside

and when he heard the pups he took off nose to the ground

now Ysengrin came home wiped out but happy

loaded down as he was with all sorts of goodies

he had been running and hunting all day

getting his kicks from ripping off those more dumb than he

right away his sons let him know how

they had been abused their food eaten they themselves

beaten up called names and pissed upon

by the fox who first had had it off with their mother

Ysengrin was bursting with rage & facing his wife

he screamed like one possessed

"so now my sons call me cuckold

you viper whore snake cunt

I'm killing myself trying to keep you in food

& all you can think of is getting laid

you sure got a variable heart

letting that lousy stinker

that foul and greedy critter of a fox hump you

well don't expect any more favors from me

certainly not in bed

unless of course

you swear

total obedience

henceforth"

Hersant wanting to cool down her gruff companion

tried another tack

"Sire your anger is misplaced

I'm willing to prove my innocence by oath or trial

may I be burned drawn and quartered if I'm found guilty

you should know that I wouldn't do a thing like that...

furthermore I hereby solemnly swear never to do it again"

Ysengrin was taken in his rage abated

he was ready to forgive but not before he had made her swear

that from now on she'd help him get revenge on Renart

whenever and wherever they might find him

believe me fox

you better watch your ass

Now before the week was out
Hersant & Ysengrin
who in their wolfish way knew how to hold a grudge
were out hunting in open country
in a field where peas had just been harvested
& the straw was already all bundled up
they caught sight of Renart cruising for meat
unable to control his temper Ysengrin started to holler
and Renart lit out of there like greased lightning
with the wolf and Hersant giving chase
a mile or so on Renart turned around
his pursuers were gaining ground
so he veered to the left & cut through the woods
Ysengrin never noticed & shot straight ahead
but Hersant coming up behind him
was smarter and sussing the fox’d ruse
she too veered to the left keeping hard on Renart’s tracks
who knew better than to try and sweet talk her
& made for the safety of his burrow
with Hersant snapping at his heels Renart reached
the bottom of a familiar vale
there he disappeared into a hole while she
following all too eagerly got in up to her waist & was stuck
Renart now calmly emerged from another tunnel
slapping her ass he jeered
“Well now cousin what a lovely sight
it’s bound to give a man ideas”
stuck between the cold loam and the hot fox
Hersant kept her tail firmly wedged between her legs
but Renart began to nibble at that tail
& lifting it up he tucked it on to her rump
stepping back he savored the vista
then he fit himself to the proferred ass
drilling one hole after the other
Hersant felt like she’d been split right down the middle
“Renart, you’re using force!”
The fox shot back
“just because you claimed I never did it with you
I’m doing it now
I’ve done it before & I’ll do it again
I’ve said so before & I’ll say so again
like

how about 10 more times?”
he fucked so hard the whole burrow trembled
finally as he was about to slump exhausted over Hersant’s rump
Ysengrin came blundering through the woods
“Hey there! Hold it nephew! what the hell are you up to?”
Smoothly Renart disengaged himself
“Do save your breath dearest uncle
you’ll need it all to help your wife
can’t you see she’s stuck in a trap?
I’ve done my best to free her
but as you see my strength is spent
one thing though I can promise you
I never did as much as pinch her ass
& if you want that in writing I’ll oblige
it might convince some of your friends”
“You filthy traitor I don’t believe a word you say
your crime stinks to high heaven”
“Come now uncle you better drop it”
“What do you mean drop it?
do you think I’m blind
I mean you were pushing her when you should have been pulling!”

“Now now dearest uncle do let me appeal
to that finesse of mind you’re so famous for:
as you can plainly see
— given that you’re not blind—
your lady’s firmly stuck
I couldn’t budge her by pulling
but remembering that just beyond that narrow opening
the burrow widens considerably
I figured that if I could push her all the way in
that would do the trick
anyway once you get her out she’ll prove me right
that is of course unless she prefers to lie”
somewhat confused by Renart’s rap
Ysengrin wolfed down his rancor & tried to free his wife
he grabbed her by the tail & pulled with all his strength
the pain was too much and Hersant let fly
covered in shit and piss her husband backed away
figuring there had to be a better way
& after a few hours digging up the earth around her
he finally managed to pull her out of the hole from inside which Renart looked on laughing. Ysengrin now laid into his wife

"you patented whore you piece of filth scumbag viper snake I've seen you at it with my own eyes he was humping you from behind try to explain that one away!"

that was about all Hersant could take still she figured it best to try & calm him down

"Sire it's true he sort of screwed me but I promise the pleasure was all his let's stop this stupid quarrelling and take the whole mess to the kadi the king's high court's in session now it just might work out better that way."

Ysengrin demurred and scratched his head

"You might be right at that guess I was somewhat overhasty alright then let's do it your way for once" & with that the pair disappeared into the forest leaving Renart to enjoy a much-needed rest.

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A NOTE ON THE FOX

The multifarious, not to say nefarious, deeds of the fox can be traced through the Indo-European cultural heritage as far back as the Indian *Panchatantra*. Their re-emergence in the fables of Aesop and the Latin Phaedrus thus already constitute occurrences of a well-established matter. But the full flowering of the beast-epos had to wait until the European Middle Ages: following, and to some extent drawing upon the slightly earlier Latin *Physiologus, Ecbasis captivi* (the first real beast-epos), *Ysengrimus* (completed in 1149 by Master Nivardus, a monk in Flanders), there arose, between 1176 and 1190, the oldest branches of the French *Roman de Renart*, attributed to one Pierre de St. Cloud. Its impact may be judged by the fact that the name of the fox, Renart, soon replaced the old French word for the animal—goupil—as the common name. By 1190 Heinrich de Glichezare had written his Middle High German version. An important adaptation into Middle Dutch can be dated to the late 13th century, and in 1479 a Dutch prose version was printed by Gerard Leu, on which Caxton based his English translation which appeared in 1481. For centuries the fox materials remained extremely popular so that, foreshadowing later Hollywoodian mores, there appeared in 1684 a work called "The Shifts of Reynardine, Son of Reynard the Fox". From the same century date La Fontaine's morale fables while Goethe finished his *Reineke Fuchs* in 1794. The latest full-blown verse version of the epic dates from 1872 and is due to the Luxembourian poet Michel Rodange who, while using Goethe's structure, took the latter's classical language back towards a more orally viable incarnation, using as he did the various spoken dialects of his country.

The question as to the origins of the fox material gave rise to many a hot debate. In 1834 Jacob Grimm, basing himself on the Germanic origins of many of the animal names, suggested that an oral beast-epic existed among the primitive Germanic tribes and that this had been carried over into the French area by Frankish tribes and was later borrowed and expanded by French writers. This analysis was still current when in 1893 the French scholar L. Sudre did a comparative study of the *Roman de Renart* with animal stories and fables from Scandinavia and India, pointing out many parallels that backed Grimm's claims. But since that time, and in keeping with the general perception of the origins of literary works, most critics have considered the *Roman de Renart* as the individual literary creation, notwithstanding some borrowings from prior written sources, by the learned clerk Pierre de St. Cloud. Current French commentary still follows that path although, given the present sense of the achievements, importance and range of oral literature, the time might have come to re-examine the whole question. Although since the 12th century written versions have dominated, there can be little
doubt that the fox material has always had a parallel, oral existence, feeding from and back into the beast epos. My own acquaintance with Renert, as he is called in Luxembourghian, was of that order: it was on my grand-mother's lap, when I was 4 or 5, that I first heard how Renert had to go to court for mistreating and conning the animals. The moralistic aspect of the tales might not have stuck, but the poems and tales, and before all, the figure of the fox are still with me, 30 years later. The tale offered here in a modern retelling is closely based on one occurring in an early branch of the Roman de Renart—& if those adventures aren't the best-known that's solely because their explicitly sexual nature had them banned from the corpus quite early on.

There is obviously no getting rid of the fox: again & again he appears throughout the European area, from Lapland to the Mediterranean, from Celtic mythology and Scot songs to Russian tales. The beast epics are but one incarnation of the material. Here is the fox as psycho-pomp in a celtic myth: a young man goes in search of a talisman to cure his sick father, succeeding where his elder brothers have failed. Out of pity he spends all his money to give burial to a dead man. Soon afterwards he meets a white fox whose counsel helps him in his quest. Then, once the goal of the quest has been reached, the fox explains that he is the soul of the deceased and disappears. In Prague he lent some of his features to a beast that haunted Franz Kafka:

"It is an animal with a big tail, a tail many yards long and like a fox's brush. How I should like to get my hands on this tail some time, but it is impossible, the animal is constantly moving about, the tail is constantly being flung this way and that. The animal resembles a kangaroo, but not as to the face, which is flat almost like a human face, and small and oval; only its teeth have any power of expression, whether they are concealed or bared. Sometimes I have the feeling that the animal is trying to tame me. What other purpose could it have in withdrawing its tail when I snatch at it, and then again waiting calmly until I am tempted again, and then leaving once more?" (Kafka, Dearest Father, translated by Ernst Kaiser & Eithne Wilkins, quoted in Borges’ Book of Imaginary Beasts).

In 1950 he was well and alive, though obviously affected by the tide of barbarism that had just swept over Europe, and reappears in “Tales from a dictatorship” by the Sicilian writer Leonardo Sciascia:

"The fox was poking fun at the raven's black color. 'If only you could see the effect when I alight on Minerva's white bust' croaked the raven.

The fox knew nothing of Edgar Poe, but deep inside he felt something like ice breaking."

Howard Norman

Wichikapache Becomes an Ambush-Branch

Wichikapache was out to stir things up. He wanted to cause trouble. He went walking. He happened upon a lake. His curiosity widened around the lake, and he saw some animals drinking at the lake-edge. He saw a moose drinking; at the end of the moose's face was the lake. The moose slurped up many gulps. Then the moose waded in. The moose stood there. Cooling off. Getting away from flies.

Wichikapache was hungry as usual. He was often hungry and when he wasn't it troubled him because he thought he should be. At those times he'd still eat something. Then he'd say, "There, you see, I must have been starving!" That's how he did things...

So now Wichikapache was hungry again. He said, "I'm going to ambush that moose!"

Wichikapache was happy with this plan. He laughed out loud. He laughed so hard it caused ripples in the water, which slapped against the moose standing in the lake. So, the laughing part of Wichikapache's plan slapped against the moose, though the moose didn't know this.

"After I ambush the moose, I'll have plenty to eat," Wichikapache said. "I'll cut it open. I'll cook it up. I'll carry some meat with me. I'll eat it over many days." Wichikapache was talking a lot. He was tasting the moose before he'd killed it.

Suddenly Wichikapache had all his hungers! He had hunger for all the ducks on the lake, just as he had hunger for one duck.
He had hunger for the sound of many ptarmigan startling away, just as he had hunger for ptarmigan eggs. He had hunger for the weaving patience beavers use to make their lodge, just as he had hunger to fling a lodge apart! He had hunger for the whole moose, just as he had hunger for its shoulder. Wichikapache wanted everything. That's how he was. That's how his hunger was.

Wichikapache set out to ambush the moose. When he got to the edge of the lake, he turned into a branch. He became a broken-off branch. When he was out on the lake, he floated toward the moose.

The moose had its eyes closed against the sun. "Who's that floating toward me?"

The moose opened its eyes and looked at the branch. "Wichikapache, is that you? Is that you, an ambush-branch?"

"No!" the branch said.

With this, the moose lifted and splashed out of the lake and ran into the woods. All because Wichikapache had tasted the moose before he killed it. Also, because he talked far too much, even as a branch.

—told by Samuel Naoká tao
(He is Four-Footed)

Wichikapache Has Some Conversations With the Snow

Wichikapache wanted to travel with a wolverine, but he couldn't find one. Wichikapache travelled everywhere. Endless wandering. But he hadn't seen a wolverine. At the beginning of one winter Wichikapache got tired of travelling alone, so he took up with some ice-owls. These owls looked like wapikunoo, snowy owls, except they were made of ice. How could you tell which was a feather owl? Well, if an ice-owl and a snowy owl stood next to each other, the snowy owl would shiver. That's how you'd tell.

"We'll get you through this difficult winter," the ice-owls told Wichikapache. "The only one who can get through difficult winters better than we can is a wolverine."

"Why shouldn't I travel with a wolverine then?" Wichikapache said.

"Try and find one!" the owls said.

That winter the ice-owls were teaching Wichikapache many things, but not how to find a wolverine. They didn't even want to talk about a wolverine. That's all Wichikapache wanted to know about, a wolverine! The ice-owls taught Wichikapache new ways to cause trouble. They arrived at a winter hunting camp. They saw a lodge there. Some families of people were inside the lodge. They went inside. There they found a few fires burning. People sat near them. Right away the ice-owls jumped in the fires and began shivering ice feathers all over the place! There was much sputtering and smoke, and much confusion. The fires smoldered out then. But the owls had left one fire for Wichikapache to confuse with.

"Go ahead, do something to this fire!" the owls shouted.

So Wichikapache went outside, into the bitter cold. He took up some snow and hurried back to the lodge. He was going to dump the snow on the last fire! On his way to the lodge, the snow he was holding made Wichikapache cold. So, when he got inside the lodge, he sat down by the last fire to get warm. He melted the snow in a pot. Then he added some meat to it, and made a broth. Wichikapache drank the broth to get warm. All the people inside began laughing at this! They built the other fires up again. They passed the broth around, "Wichikapache is a good cook!"

"How did that happen?" Wichikapache asked the ice-owls. But they were disgusted with him. The owls flew from the lodge.
Wichikapache went walking.
While he was walking he heard something under the snow. It was a sound he'd never heard before. The sound was moving under the snow...“snap! snap! snap!” then the sound dragged itself away...! Wichikapache followed it. He heard “snap! snap! snap!” again.

“Kwekwuhakao, is that you? Wolverine, is that you?” Wichikapache shouted into the snow.
The snow didn't answer.

Wichikapache went walking.

Soon he happened upon a big stack of pewá pisko wuneh{ kun, steel traps. There were many of them. Animal traps. They were in a big stack, and all of them were snapped closed, except the top one! The trap on the very top was still set!

“This had to be a wolverine's doing!” Wichikapache said.
But a wolverine was nowhere in sight.

“There's been going wolverine trouble caused here!”

Wichikapache was about to kill the deer, when suddenly there was an explosion of snow! Snow flew up and made a cloud over the deer, and when the cloud settled the deer was gone!

Wichikapache walked over to where the deer had been. There he saw a tunnel into the snow. “I'm not going down there!” he said.

He went walking.

While he walked, Wichikapache heard another sound under the snow. He stopped to listen. He heard “crunch! crunch! crunch!” ...then the sound dragged away under the snow! Wichikapache followed this. “Crunch! crunch! crunch!” Wichikapache heard that again.

“Kwekwuhakao, is that you? Wolverine, is that you?” Wichikapache shouted into the snow.
The snow didn't answer.

Wichikapache kept having these conversations with the snow, who didn’t answer.
One man in the lodge said, "Why did Wichikapache say, "The snow is deep?" then say, "There is wet snow falling?"... then say, "Snowblindness?"... then say, "High snow drifts?"... Why did he then say all the other snow words? Maybe he's trying to tell us it's winter!

"As if we don’t know that..."

Just then, a wolverine arrived. "I heard snow-words," the wolverine said. They made me hungry. Give me some food!" The people there gave the wolverine some meat and fat. Then the wolverine gnarled up a few snowshoes. Then he tore up a blanket. Then he left.

"Wait!" Wichikapache called at the wolverine, "I'm travelling with you!"

The wolverine said, "Try that!"

They set out, north.

Wichikapache was travelling with the wolverine then. They walked a long way. The wolverine could walk all night if he wanted to. He could tire the moon out. Wichikapache said, "Let's rest."

The wolverine kept walking. He said, "No, little brother aýikos, gnat. You try and keep up with me." The wolverine kept walking.

Wichikapache said, "Let's rest." But the wolverine walked faster. "No!" the wolverine said, "You try and travel with me, little brother mükuchasew, blackfly!"

They walked and walked. Soon again Wichikapache said, "Let's rest."

"No!" the wolverine said. "You have to walk faster, little brother sükimas, mosquito." Wichikapache slapped his own arm!

"STOP CALLING ME SUMMER THINGS!" Wichikapache called to the wolverine. Then he saw that the wolverine was far ahead. So Wichikapache talked to the snow. He said, "Let's rest." He said this to the snow. But the snow confused Wichikapache. The snow looked as though it was resting and not resting, at the same time. Snow can look that way. The snow didn't answer Wichikapache.

Then Wichikapache talked to himself. He said, "Let's rest." With this, Wichikapache agreed. He sat down. The wolverine was gone. The wolverine was moving north; north into north into north into north... the wolverine walked.

That is the story. That is how Wichikapache didn't travel too far with the wolverine.

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Milan Knížák

Probable Poems

This sequence of poems is from a tri-lingual edition of Etwagedichte/Probable Poems/Asbíšme privately published by the author in Prague, 1982.

1.

To express the joining of wind and a calculator, a kiss with a carburetor, an eye tied by a caress, a boot fusing with a river.

To express the joining of the unjoinable, since everything can be joined.

Probably there's no difference between things. Where are we to seek the difference between a tree, warmth, Hitler and an EC 1010 computer?

From the viewpoint of what is small (or smallest) everything is large. And vice versa.

(Do neutrinos have a spiritual life?)

I would dump all the stars in the summer sky into a single sack, yet I am compelled to believe in their greatness, and I do. I believe in black holes, anti-matter, quasars and so on. It's only Darwin and Oparin that I have trouble believing. Such logic seems illogical to me. I believe in miracles. For even a meson, a quasar and even I (and above all you) are miracles. God is real.
2.

Do ants have a Christ? When was the electron crucified? Is there a Caesar stone in the kingdom of stones? An Alexander the Great stone? A Stalin stone? A Smith and a Jones stone? A stone stone?

And what about a revolution of tulips? The white ones took over. Later on the red ones. Many on both sides were killed. Hurrah, hurrah, hurrah.

Does human history differ from the history of birds?

Does human history differ from cloud protuberances?

Lewis Thomas writes entertainingly about ant wars and so on. The study of biology reveals both sense and nonsense. Mankind invented God for its own certainty. But God is too real.

And what about praying to computers of the Nth generation, praying to lymphocytes, invoking a slice of toast (with garlic), adoring the 17th hair from the left on my right foot?

Let me suggest marriage to a pandemknatostphemosh.

3.

A rat crossed with a crucifix.

An eye swelling to meet the sun.

A bowl full of soup.


17 caresses falling into space.

Love crossed with a pulsar.

Bread.

A slice of bread.

Symbiotic infinity.

Whatever. Wherever. Whenever. However.

2 steps to the left. Then fly away.

To the centre of the earth.

Where hell once was, heaven can now be. It can be blended.

Goulash made by the smallest particles that have broken out of their harness.
4.

A C-major fifth chord held for eternity.
A staccato middle C repeated for eternity.
In the space thus limited, seek room for existence.
There is room mainly for rock. Rock around the clock. Rock & clock — both die out. Sadly the clocks are taking over.
Why not marry a harp? It’s just as good as Lennon or a computer.

5.

A house is like a shout.
I need a house that is silence. (To hear the whisper of ants slowly moving it to the antipodes.)
Only if the house grew wings.
Proper wings beat themselves to death on the ground. They can be dragged behind one like a train. You can snuggle into them like a sleeping bag. You can mop the floor with them. Offer them to painters, to paint on.
(I would paint on them even though painters think I am a writer, writers a painter, musicians an idiot and architects a dilettante. I would print red spots on them.
A 93-kilo ladybug flopping about on 7 square metres of floor on the sixth storey of a pre-fab high-rise in Prague 10, Tulipánová 2802.
What an apocalyptic vision of man.)

6.

The generations have switched roles. Young pragmatics harden into the romantic drivel of the elderly.
Youth is not a privilege but merely a state; all is transient; old age is the youth of eternity.
Joe Smith of Nazareth begins each morning his thorny tale, repeating itself 3 billion times.
We are all crucified and we all crucify.
(A new parable of Christ awkwardly trying to crucify himself.)
The cross as a symbol of crossroads.
Intersections that can fall away into eternity.

7.

This is a narrative tale.
P.P. (Person Person) is born, lives, dies.
Dr. P. and Mrs. P. use a vibrator. The vibrator’s sperm begets intelligent young.
The vibrator buzzes in the crowd. (Music for genitalia).
Cocks and quims tango among the mangos.
A body rubbed with orange juice smells sweet. Its scent outlasts the ages.
(Aroma as law. Aroma as duty.)
Through education, fly to three X’s.
Somewhere beyond them, learning begins.
Learning that smells sweet.

8.
Vardemprank is a swine. I love Postremkv. Brazyovan is a psakremv. It's not worth a hlimpf.

Which reality is the more real?
The real or the unreal?
The world is like a M"obius strip. The reverse and obverse are interchangeable in it too.
Half my body is blue, the other half is striped green.
My whole body is blue.
How fabulous that such logic is starting to take hold.
And then to cease fearing death.

9.
The past is counted in hours, the present we do not perceive, the future does not exist.
When, then, is there time to live?
Where are meteors, princesses and phoenixes?
Where is there space for fools and hermits?

A small chance is concealed in the space of a caress.
Another in the wink of an eye or the bubbling of dreams. And in death.
(In death there may be more life than in life itself. Because we fear it. Because we fear life.)

10.
Our deeds as monuments to our staggering.
The act of killing and the act of caressing.
(Where's the difference? Only in the intensity of the pressure, perhaps.)
Sooth and kill. (What a good title for a song."
Reality, however, does not lie in these (killing and caressing) but comes first.
Before caressing. And after. After killing.
Meanwhile life is merely the intertwining of killing and caressing.
English is a strange language. Like reality, where it is only a small step from caress to massacre.
Often it's hard to say which (small step).
A small step.
11.

Friend Xyyplx, a triaxial carburator from Mars, published a book on the degeneration of parvonoids.

Mrs. Barnes knitted hats for the whole high-rise (á $5.00 a head).

The 542900353797654900617th electron released in the accelerator was properly registered.

Samuel S. committed suicide because of his pimples.

Hitler once exterminated the Jews.

Karel Togg and Hana Magorová stuff the ballot boxes to win the Golden Nightingale.

The Jews that were left are behaving like fools in the Middle East.

I'm sure most people in this world had a bowel movement this morning. (Not me, unfortunately. In that I am probably exceptional.)

A leaf moved (somewhere, sometime), it rained, it is raining (somewhere, sometime), the sun is shining, stomachs ache, people eat, sleep, hump, etc.

I still can't figure out what's missing in this picture of life.

12.

I swallowed your nose, slurped your hair like spaghetti, drank your eyes.

It resembled mathematics.

A picture of the world is not like the world. It has that strange quality of modern art, that is resembles mainly itself.

I wrote a symphony for bagpipes, electric guitar, comb and a large drum.

It can be played outdoors (complemented with the roar of a motorbike.)

Or performed as a Trauermarsch.

In some things, intercourse resembles love. Or fire. Even love resembles fire.

I'd like to resemble fire. Fire fascinates me.

As well as fire, I'd like to befriend Van Gogh, Leonardo, D.T. Mandel, Winnetou and several stones.

Stone and fire are a fascinating combination.

Stones burn wildly.
13.

On Red Square the solitary Rolling Stones playing “King Bee” through a huge sound system.

A dough-like Hudecek fiddles atop the Eiffel Tower.

Leonard Bernstein holds educational concerts for June bugs.

Somewhere someone is pounding on a pumpkin. It blends with the chatter of an Olivetti at the opposite end of the world.

Even “King Bee” rendered by the Stones blends with the dulcet Hudecek, with Bernstein, with the pumpkin, etc. etc. and even with “Three Blind Mice”, which I am singing.

The notion of the world as symphony is enticing and banal. To me the world seems more like a C-major scale played on the piano with both hands in opposition. Up and down.

And repeat.

14.

Variations are a sign of decline.

Perfection too is a sign of decline.

Mona Lisa with bandy legs.

This is a lecture on beauty.

The problem of the beautiful is closely linked to the problem of automatic washers.

The problem of the beautiful is bound up with silence.

Beauty set in a grain of DNA.

Beauty that in heaven is called morality.

(There is a certain kinship between a morel and mortality. They are both dangerously like beauty.)

My cock is green and could I screw a bird
I'd give birth
to canaries.
15.

We all know that the best words must remain unspoken, the greatest revolutions unbubbled, the gods unborn.

All theories are truthful, but none in and of itself.


That too is an image of the world, just like the quantum field theory larded with drops of dimethylaminoethylphosphate, like a single shout, a millimeter of movement, silence.

For each of us, silence begins elsewhere.

Looking for the frontiers of silence, I encountered movement.

16.

My head is grown round with eyes, and in each, conjunctivities.

My chest is stuffed with hearts, and in each, coronary thrombosis.

A flock of mouths has opened in my back, each of them toothless.

Branches of broken arms. A mob of falling legs.

Etc . . .

Does there remain somewhere in this perfected and degenerated body an inch of space for coloured beetles with whose diligent and colourful assistance I could inch my way to infinity?

---

Kathleen Fraser

Four voices telling little stories about light and dark

Black dresses make people smaller but lights seen behind an edge make an apparent notch in it.

“Look at that moon, Evangeline”.

* *

In the dark of the glass jar, bodies strapped to their wings,

* *

fireflies that summer after supper, then September came and the new boy at his desk drawing warplanes. Everyone wanted a drawing made by Bobby and some boys paid him a nickel and copied his cockpits and wings, trying to master the clear poise of a new shape.

* *

I do not know its name but its grey body falls from a wire feet first
with talons in threes and then splayed
recovers
halfway down
the border
of blue.
*

We were all part of the train.
When the train was on time,
the passengers said,
"We are in Tacoma,"
and when it hit the boy
they said, "We hit him,"
as if all of us had done it.
*

Now it's March again with the relief of light rays in shifting
positions.
The white sexual parts all over the flowering plum are
opening.
I know the bees are there, humming codes along the petal.

I know his shadow is there
beyond its conclusion.
*

We entered the room, we were still small,
but the chairs became intolerable in the midday glare.

He was sitting there every day at his desk,
drawing and drawing. He was there each day
and all luxury lost its meaning, in that order.
*

The blank page
was merely an interval or
an intrusion. We could not rescue it

nor could we huddle, as if the page were
big enough.
*

We could hear a moaning sound somewhere and thought it was a dog.
*

These experiments may be modified to infinity.
That airplane appears to be traveling from the right,
making an arc over every head

but we are not its children
*

and we do not make little drawings of airplanes.
*

Two boys had been seen
on the railroad bridge out over
the water when the train came around the curve.
The bridge had two tracks with a walkway between them. All
the kids
had to do was to step
on the other track
and get out of the way.
*

The highest degree of light, such as that of a solar body, of
phosphorous
burning in oxygen, is dazzling and colorless.

I am as guilty as you, but I prefer to think of it in another
person.
*

When light goes away we are its prisoners and we notice.

Something travels circuitously and we give over
even our list of words.

On the weather segment, there are increasing elaborations of
cloud or technical void. A man comes on in a suit with padded
biceps to attract or repel us away from his predictions, pulling a
screen of red plastic oxygen behind him.
It is clear from his description who prefers to make his or her own order and who waits for a listener.

* I have to talk to myself every Tuesday when the siren goes off. He pretends not to listen for the diminishing tone but he doesn't know this, while I am unable to think of anything but the siren and do not wish to be distracted.

* he wanted to pull “more” from her and told her: You are backing off into the static.

* First, they pulled the balcony away, ripping out the floor and safety guards to reveal simple light. Then we saw the white original wall with a makeshift door, also of white, nailed into what had been a doorway or an interruption of the formal surface.

* The theatre of little breakfasts on the deck will no longer be our subject. Nor anyone’s Mozart selections, nor our neighbor, nor his ivory silk dressing gown, nor his assortment of gentleman callers, nor the grey-haired woman with garden shears, appearing during significant national holidays. Nor who will save us.

* The trouble with on-going conversation about darkness is that you say the beginning of a thought before it is formed in you fully and then it is taken away into the other’s thought and made his or hers and sent back. It is now a more complete thought but it is something else. It is in the world now. It is more (or less) now, but you have lost your place and what you meant cannot be recovered, though something else can.

* The light of the world, he thinks. The unfinished dark, she thinks,

and no one to rescue you.

* If there is a glass between us we call it an arrangement and turn on the light

Although something automatic has replaced the penny and certain reliable parts are increasing their volume daily to an almost intolerable pitch

* There is still that hole in the third floor window, behind which something dark shows through.

An insight of this kind, when clear blue passes between two arguments (or alternate currents), suggests we can continue to hope, up until the imagined airplane.

* You are indulging yourself, he says to her on the other side of the glass. It is outside of her and then it knocks.

* White shirts appear next to the white dress at the same corner but black dresses make people larger in the dark.

* Bobby was always drawing airplanes and then one day he wasn’t there. He was “the smartest boy in the class” we say to each other, and he isn’t here because he died. He “just went to sleep and kept sleeping”, our teacher said, and it was then we heard of sleeping sickness.

*
We covered the floor with paper airplanes and PT boats.
We were inside his obsession when the lamp cast its shadow.
Our fingers repeated his shapes
until we could amaze someone with a little war
across the floor of both rooms
or hear the engine coming and the black car.
* Why did one boy jump from the railroad bridge to the
  embankment
and save himself and the other boy just keep running faster?

When I was a boy...
* 
You were in training. You were in the sky
looking for a place to land.

Bobby was pretending to be “you”
or someone saluting the flag in your khaki shirt.
I was on the rug with crayons,
inventing substitutions. Inside primary shapes
it was red or it was yellow.
We were warned
about stars on flags in windows
when someone’s father went away.
* 
I learned to put my knee over a metal pole beneath the dark
trees
and to fling my body backwards and forwards
holding my ankle tightly to me
as the light changed and the sky went down,
waiting for stars.
* 
Fireflies that summer after supper,
in the dark of the glass jar.
* 
Some way to make you sleep through the big war.
* 
When I was young, I wasn’t like you and I’m not now.

---

John Clarke

Zeus’ Swaddling Clothes

What Egypt knew (& forgot), the connection between
cosmos and human change as it may awaken Psyche
to mind breaths breaking out of old character armor
when the time comes for emergence like a butterfly
similarly the world may give birth to what it was
hiding all along, why, my fellow Americans, it does
behoove us not to hear the message too quickly to mean
we are splitting before we have wings (Atlantean
error) just because some Curandera has left prison
prematurely and therefore didn’t notice the incubation
he was performing in the middle period between
the sixties and eighties to help us all to notice
the beginning, middle, and end of in fact everything
that lives within the frame of the cosmos in this Aeon.
The Wound of the West

Not guilt but the quack-will which doesn’t know when to stop, Faustian man gored by the Shadow of his own innocence, having gone past the human measure and being too proud to admit his mistake, won’t give this unequal advantage up, will take it though it kill him, and others, looking upon those who have found to stop short of as lazy or lacking, all the while jealous of their strength and ease of movement upon Earth, who keep all their dealings short and sweet, not overstepping the bounds of their work, without a book, improvising right to the limit by heart making up for that missing piece, which is what buggers the West, except for John Keats, who found it to be an experience of the mind and pledged never to tred upon the penetralium ever again, one tip-toe was enough to set his heart upon that terrain.

What the Pearl Poet Knew, Of Necessity

Our unconscious Uncle can be defeated by textual action, you write it, it’s new, you take the heat, not social derision but immediate struggle with one’s own betrayal (backslide into the old), then you conquer by seeing what you had come to was right, and anything right is registered so you do replace the evil ring everyone wants to grab almost like a pussy (tantra is textual pussy) that everyone may see the evil of the Uncle was theirs too, good thing we have the sense to believe our own thought, act would have killed the truth before it had a chance to be born in the world, it’s wonderful, the moment you kill him she awakens from his spell and enters the world we created for her to be met as fate saving grace unperverted by former mother of invention.

Siriotronics

The vorticellular Pan-gyre is a centrifuge of writing that like circumambulation has no meaning in and of itself, i.e., it does not communicate rationally, only by participating in its movement does one get into the rudimentary feeling now called jogger’s ecstasy, in its former advance known as the Birth of Zeus, perfective action fallen to the tragedy of memory spread throughout the world in secular religion, the worship of character armor, power of the hero as White Tornado of advertisemental house-wife phantasy begun as early as ear of corn at Eleusinian mystery, image-subjugation (“the outward Ceremony is Antichrist”), whereas even the empty gesture may be a generator of affect stored in the battery of all our black hearts.

Dismantling the Nominative to Wear the Investment

We take down Babylon, step by step, before it falls on us, each brick of the walls handled by hands of healing, dismantled that we may wear the mantle of companionship, America translated before it can be used by other hands, our art, the all important “second act,” not go on, but back, that every piece be worn and no structure remain, all returned to song, the step to the other side Newton made, the world frame in tool-box condition that must be acted upon before it freezes (closes as north to Spider Woman) and we all fall back into wolf-trap of Green Man, wear green only to aid and abet song of Golden Mouth like Hopi Hump-Back attuned to number not continual transformations of the changed ratio of the 100-Arms.
At the Edge of Night

American syntax without a sentence, e.g., hard on the ear, that cymbal, so rather than thought we have poetry for the bearings we need to front more than extrication from the rime dilemma which in having no good can no good do, better assume the widest possible blunt entry into the gamma rays until notice of the sleek fears of primitive man come to sudden fore from the dark recesses of the hidden future now no less poetry than the big money feed of the mind producing language without enough sound bound to riparian deconstruction to ground.

Ground Zero

Lots are clumps of fine ground ground sifted to crystal mote by mole ploughing what stellar consistency the bank of broken hearts in anterior measure had in evagination of each grain of invariance, brain thinking William James thought Freud a dirty fellow in Worcester, thus soiled Freud fainting to keep us from coming mud, truck-stop coffee poured from a broken cup, ground grounds of white gleaming Intelligence.

Aurorante Cognito

Presental knowledge chooses to be sad, a column of dawn, for sin, a column of praise put on the robe of this work, the investiture of Xvarnah must not be left in suspense, no mandrake root but the palm of suffering, nor Hermetic moly to feed the fat of research, a ring of white camphor lost in the desert of emerald, a virtual negativity, this lattice work of compresence with the men of mystery.

The Air and Sea Shone with Brightness

Oh for the leap fair Freyr made from Odin’s secret sacred seat far in the North, tis no penalty to fall in love with Gerthr, her white arm on the great door as in the picture combing her hair, it is not the earth but her you see from there, blue streaming hair (see the shot at Catal Huyuk), all you see from there is what you love, that for which you gave your sword which strikes of its own accord to end the war of swords and meet Surt with iron words.
Through Through Through

I make my way finding you
waiting and laughing at my doubt
that cast so many circles
about our stone thrown in
when we both most needed to
be resolved by our own trying
to be like the earth from which
everything we knew had grammar
now is the word or I fail at all
my attempts to reform the mistaken
language that had us until the rest
of our pulling reproach connected
to the world of our obvious licking
so much that we change into tongue.

The Seeds of the Future

Variable perception can stay with the constant
tides in the flow of cerebration in clavicular
seeds the Dogon mix with millet-fermentation
by analogy with twistor space now registered
in inflectional intonation while space and time
continue to vary according to which organs are
excited by the helical cell coding of constant
homecoming if poetry can expose the invisible
organizing aura that is the circuitry greater
than the sum of parts in full expansion of
perception literalized by the contraction to
most minute in physics thus making constant
what otherwise will keep slipping back into
psychic contents of constant variability.

Jed Rasula

Per Say: More

The soul is a biological ek-stasis that never needs replacement parts.
Art is the part.
There's a parting of ways, and a part in her hair.
Protein makes the picture over all.
It blows it up & brings out all the detail.
Neural clouds cast shade on certain details. A detail is an
assignment, a task, a body of intent set out to do the deed.
The bloody deed that saturates the hologram. Bibles bound
in Indian skin. The part that outrages the whole.
"Time and space are collapsed in the frequency domain..." The
wavelength frenzy mutes the contending blades. Richard
Dadd in Bedlam drew Osiris' stroke specific drop by
drop—he'd done & seen it all. What better for the artist
than digging up bodies, but kill his own father on a moonlit
road?
Talk about detail. Talk about drawn from life and the cutting
edge. Transfusion of the image horde straight to the
bloodstream. Waking up and emptied out—the same.
There is exhaustion like a tent, all the moisture condensed
between the tent itself & the rain-flap, and where they
touch, transmitted directly inside on the sleepers. The
sleeping magnet, the magnitude. I hold your paradigm &
achieve a spinal conjecture. Sleep follows. Followed by
further arousal & subsequent waking. The holy graphic
coverlet saturates the memory at all points, wherever it touches. Memory never dissolves—all subsequent decisions ache & twist & substitute & multiply to come to terms with whatever fits.

A cloud here, a leaf there, rain like long distance charges between them. I sit nearby, heaving satisfactions, plucking webs that bind my mind to time. In time I hear attunement. Space of the perfect portion synchronized with an occasional passing body.

A heart is the biggest slingshot, catapult even, cousin of siege, starvation & plague in imprisoned mass. All of its direct hits over the ramparts & moat “as if by accident,” Dante’s Beatrice & Petrarch’s Laura in rags, passing the bucket in the fire brigade to salvage some straw for the horses & cows.

Rossetti’s goat in the distance causes the girl to slump against a wall he was never able to finish painting, long as he lived, he was haunted so by dread of collapsing women in the combat zone of his heart, cuore, amore, dusk in the soul like the grove nobody ever comes near, Pan’s birthday at noon each day of the year.

Those drawing rooms were a forest of skirts. To think of a warm sweating woman under all those folds of cloth was indeed a vice. But not more so than any passing shower could serve to remind.

An eternal corollary vibrates in this transitory ego membrane. Silt on the rock, loops of the coronal hydra, brightening the center with its fusion glare.

There may not be a “there.” A here transpires, and hearing takes the rabbit’s final pulse. Fort Devens’ woods homo-erotic incendiary glow of intestines at noon at the edge of a clearing. Here is a boy whose lifelong mind inhibits the flies from making their descent, in spite of alluring offering, scooped out of fur.

Drizzle buzzed on the leaves. Water tumbled from terraced trough to trough in that dream. Eric’s wall was filled with staves, with whole & quarter notes, blots of animal pelts. The scales of the snake of the sky are tinted with shadows of numbers. Blood is blue in the veins & reddens only on impact with air. She hardly believed it.
The Future Perfect

After all, what did they call it—the Gimmick, drummed up by the Longhairs—"Little Boy" & "Pumpkin," names of the Bomb. Nagasaki, Hiroshima, victims of know-how, still come apart in the dark, scattering larval silhouettes behind the retina, now I lay me down to sleep.

I walk about, the stars change position above me: we swallow the pact. Three degrees above absolute zero the earth is bathed in sound. And we who catch this long gone sound of creation just reaching our ears are bundles of after-effects, not created or plucked but cooked, chunks of a star exploded and then set adrift and made the sun and were the world and puzzled the cause. What matters is extremely hot. "We were" it seems to say, deceived by the present tense. The present tensed in thought concurs, and blurs. Already gone when it gets here, it seems to have said. But what would it say?—"we are" wherever it was when it "said"? And how did it know we would listen, or hear? The future perfect:

it will have been.

Charles Bernstein

Outrigger

"I've had my problems with poetry before, but I've never had to turn my back on it."

My gentle homeostasis is bordered By a gargantuan twirling pinstripe Thanks for your batter—I deprecate getting your detractions and found none of what you said to bake sense. The biennial pushcart you raise about closure is certainly one that I've had detonated at me before and I only have a perfunktory answer about the porkbarrel principle of cohesion.

Would you do me the flavor of buying that sty? Are we taking the mar to my pastor's? Could you bring me if
the sail is here yet? Where there any palls? What crime
did you say the ruby stranded? How much is the icing
going to coast? Please pass the sloop.

S says we need a rood. J and Q climb
Out of the box and get some soard to prime
a rood with, then climb back in. E says, let's
Make sure now. J slides, two of the soards cough
And peek out. Somebody runs by, epaulettes
Duck down and try to slide the cover off.
J immediately grabs a rosette
Rood and droops it, sees the scale tip at rhyme,
Takes out a yellow pud. J stands in time,
Takes a soard, and tries to push E's vignette.
Nonetheless is self-contained in a way
But falls easily into the group play
While the result tends toward removal
What she wants satisfies her approval.

things in an effort put forward a general context
just to blithely praise, serenely harm
whose boat approaches valuation, closeness
emergent might have in form, of these in place
what guess does put me, thought it typifies
that I would try, confutation or conciliation
to so reverse, immobilize, variously polar ties

All bolted up & sorry for itself.

She is of thin built with dirty blond eyes and highly
articulated hair. Each limb flows gracefully into
the next, with the effortlessness of good thinking.

The glass is battering the hail. I go up to the
laundromat and tell her a piece of my dehiscence. For
example, steam, omit, purgative, dabloom. They shout
for a long time after this, get tired, then start
up again.

Evidentiary treetops in middle tooling.
Well, these folk don't know the difference between ailerons

and bedside manner. For example, putting with
the doorjam (floor plan). "I want to be alone, but not
by myself." The gallery system, the galley sys-
tem. Aracne when anthropoid—mark off, deprecate, flop.
Testy when under sectional. I'd part a hector
of fray with maize under penultimate sky. Fortu-
itous chocolate, or chewing on some peroxi-
dase return to (permanent chaise). So lasso that o-
pine, pin down that comeupance, interrogate a shrub,
gesticulate totalization. Brand of brazen.
Brittle bounce to dazed delay, tiered with tiresome traffic.

by which in gentle disinter
did fold in vent
and pry with cautious honor
frail contempt, to free
its gash, evince its crepe
Don Byrd

The Book Of The Father
(From The Great Dimestore Centennial)

“How could human behavior be described? Surely only by sketching the actions of a variety of humans, as they are all mixed up together. What determines our judgment, our concepts and reactions, is not what one man is doing now, an individual action, but the whole hurly-burly of human actions, the background against which we see any action.”

—Ludwig Wittgenstein

Saeta. Sun light on iron railing where a cat walks making a shadow where a song had been.

Solea. I thought I was Hart Crane’s last bear in the Ozarks. I was my body was I was heavy. Slung on my spine, better bear I was, so slung, heavy, chest, torso uniring eyes bear, eating fish, berries, setting example for this person with gimpy tongue and brain. No time to think: fish, that quick. Don’t think, my pupil, youth, with red hair and dull eyes, to hit the water before the fish arrives. Try it. No try it: he was a responsibility, a shadow when I sought my solitude in the thighs of a mate. He followed and his shadow in my rage for solitude of a mate I mistook for myself, the son, the last bear, etc.

Ekkasis. The order of the cosmos is seven. The order of the cosmos is blue, perhaps yellow. That was the age of anxiety. Now we settle in for nerves. Neighbor girls tricktreat as loaded dice. The load: ghosts, orders, statistics, then the moon and unidentified objects in the sky. Now fried oysters and apple pie. This is not that artless time. Carrying some microorganism outa intagalactic space. He even thought sentences resembled intestines. Otherwise he’d never wake up or take instructions in a dream. Otherwise he’s just stuttering. And she was speaking about a box within a box in which a kiss was, and Napoleon would save the kiss from the kisser and the kissed. Chora. Squeaking with one voice, a forest of field mice. A mare and twin foal, here known as art and something else: trouble in Santa Fe. Main in light, curve, cross-eyed. This is my red writing. She swallows her speech, she coughs often and sings. How can I keep a thought up? As in a love poem, from music slowing down, as if it were running out.

You have to sleep to have an unconscious; you have to hold hands with yourself to dream. I love to come into light. Its pool of heaven — a fish swimmeth therein. I am the fish in the pool of light, under the rock of heaven, coming out to meet the fathers. The Tanglewood Women’s Forest will assist.

The Nocturnes. The nocturned are greasy (like morning light). You might climb a tree. You might meet a bear. You would learn a lesson. Your morality would improve. So you slip back and sweat. So the muscles green up and start to grow. If you can’t keep em, count ’em: two, three, four, wah-doo, dee-dee, dee-dee. No eschaton, book without beginning or end, and you never find the passage you remember. You can’t keep it like sperm in a bank.

The Extravagant Scent Bottle. A smell of popcorn and the need to join vision to power attracted me to the palatial movie house where I watched the matinee. It was about a family of bears who moved to Scarsdale. My heart was warmed to see the citizens as they came to know and trust the bears. They learned to speak bear language and lick the children. With intense concentration I could see the images upside down. In the dark my fellows hung suspended. It is always four years to the Revolution, and it still was.
Whomans
in the whosmos—Fathers—
a looseness of fit, your shirts
the sleeves rolled
to the elbow
to fit at the wrists,
and history is a leaky ball-point
fouling the pockets.

People do not replace old dictionaries
with pleasure (a known fact),
and the Islamic court sentenced the whoman
to two years for moaning
with pleasure while fucking.
The dictionary should be timeless.
It should not moan with pleasure
or be replaced.
The Islamic court sentenced the dictionary
to be timeless,
disallowed western music,
including moans of pleasure while fucking,
and vat a musical idea constitutes?

Isn't there any sugar?
The father-image, sugar, becomes a permanent
axis of the child's development.
And it was said that Ludwig was the sun of Friedrich
Wilhelm II,
and it was said that he was the son of Frederick the Great,
and Ludwig vas loath to deny these rumors.
What does constitute a musical idea?
Dadaism (wasm) was born
the same year my father was,
across the street from Lenin's apartment.
There was a shortage of sugar for coffee.
Kurt Schwitter's machine wrote symphonies
in the heroic style of Beethoven.
It may be found in an attic.
If there is confusion it will rise and fall,
because currents of still life run through the automaton,
because we have life but we are still not living,

because we own the mirror, but not the image in it,
because life is deaf, like Beethoven,
and we keep our conversation books,
and write with clear firm hands,
and Beethoven, dada, is Zeus,
with thunder and storms,
and I have a sponge umbrella
and books which make me cough—their dust—and
books which make me cry
in the thunder (of the book),
because facial muscles, being small,
attached to mobile parts of the body,
respond to feeble waves of nervous excitement,
a gesture, a grimace, a movement of mimicry,
a movement, a shudder, nay—an
arrestation of habitual movement—the
physiognomy of the word,
the brow of Lenin's headache,
the leer of Beethoven's listening horn.

Friedrich Wilhelm II was Beethoven's father,
and the King is dead (ole Zeus the King is dead,
and his image at Olympus is near the whomus).
And again vat constitutes a musical idea? its
valves and electrical systems, muscular walls,
an ordinary box which plays in forte-piano,
sublime hammer, and harp harmonique.
It moans with pleasure and sometimes
cries out: one of the boys said,
it was as big as a house,
one reported a throbbing (in sublime hammer),
another a hissing sound;
one saw animal eyes in a tree
(what he thought were animal eyes).
The company saw a figure, fifteen
feet tall, blood-red face, blond hair,
and glowing green-orange eyes.
Mrs. Hill thought she saw
clothing like folds, clothing like folds,
clothing like folds.
Moog tongued
Dada was mistaken for a deity until he slept, until he wept, until he spoke, until a particularly calm and meteorologically stable period in Danora, PA, when air pollutants accumulated, faire maydens were made captive, questyng kniches were turned to stone, many people were hospitalized and twenty people died. Ethylene Ethel drove her '36 Chevy coupe straight to L.A. — natch — an aura of ineffable vagueness surround the term.

And Ethel is my mother (she is your mother, gentle reader). She pops the clutch, jabs the accelerator. The father-to-be would not be able to help his wife during the pregnancy; he would not see his baby for months or years, if ever. Yet he was deeply happy going off to war, feeling his life would be continued.

The time is nigh when all whomans will be artists of desire. Commercial television approximates this condition. Market research allows the Networks to present the average drama its audience requires. Television drama mixes the familiar and the new in a blend that is diverting and comfortable. It allows diversion up to but not beyond distress. The time is nigh when the audience will be able to program its own drama: video games are a step in this direction, so are videotapes. Videodiscs will make programming as much a matter of audience control as recorded music. The time is nigh when producers of personal computers will offer hard-and-software which will allow the opportunity for total self-expression. No inputs but taste will be required. Dreaming and day-dreaming will be replaced by computer synthesized display.

The video-image (father) becomes the axis of the child's development. The axle: hands and arms cannot rotate perpetually, fatigue prevents man from becoming a robot. The clockmakers contributed much to the shape of the industrial revolution: the shape of steam, the conversion of the piston's reciprocating motion into rotary motion,

rotary emotion, romances, novels of family life.

Watt added a fly-ball governor; Kay's flying shuttle increased weaving speed, freeing one hand for other tasks. The flying shuttle required more yarn: Hargreaves developed the spinning jenny (named for his wife); Cartwright developed his loom to take up Hargreave's excess.

Fatigue prevents whomans from becoming robots; they have catheter ray tubes instead. RCA reports a reading device built like a frog's eye (in a frog's eyel), layers of light sensitive photo cells, like six layers of retina in Rana's Apparatus.

Bell Laboratories has developed a machine to read handwriting. This "capital" we speak of? call it ways and means, language, habits and techniques, also tools, loot from Spanish mines in Mexico and Peru, the fertile, unpopulated earth of the western hemisphere, slave trade, opium, the conquest of India — money used to underwrite empires, equip trading expeditions, open mines and manufacture armaments: dark beginnings of the Age of Enlightenment, unfettered interplay of avaricious instincts,
leading to stalemate. Everything was being gobbled up by everyone else. Because Mr. Untermeyer and I had gotten into a state—a small state in Latin America, bananas, a little coffee, prospects of copper—where anything he wanted to do (gobble gobble) I opposed in principle, and everything I wanted to do he opposed in principle—absolute inaction on the Kreuger and Toll side of the picture: we couldn’t get a trustee in bankruptcy, couldn’t get a successor trustee, couldn’t get representation on the Board of Liquidators, couldn’t get enough deposits of bonds that we could speak with authority. The History of Gestures leaves no doubt: whomankind progressively diminished the uses of its extensions in space as a means of communication until the twentieth century, when only the eyes and the bowels moved, and mind crystallized: as we demonstrated by applying a faradic current to the skin of an elderly man whose face was analgesic to stimulate each muscle group separately and avoid all expression of pain.

Dactyl: literally finger, from the fact the three syllables have the longest one first, as if writing poems were picking poesies, and I’ve been whole, playing a jew’s harp

Eras in English Poetry, ears in English Poetry—eyes noses and throats in English Poetry, but now we will feature the nose:

Originally a Persian flower the tulip the tulip swear it the cause the first panic capitalism Amsterdam 1637 the price of one bulb rose the tulip 50 to 1440 florins (flowers)—some speculators started to sell no Pan in the panic greedy compared now as escape with pride so many die and come back holding a greed flower—light because light is mind dark until it strikes how or there where vaudeville houses with hoofers jugglers jugbands Mr Wool and Mr Worth impersonators

Yass give themselves

THUwang THUwang to full houses and the audience more itself than the tragic man himself some other deep inside whosmic theaters impossible to fulfill the deities did walk and who sought them not—there—sought them in the impossible light.

Frank Woolworth installed a pipe organ, the dimestore, Fourteenth Street. You hear Sousa, always Sousa the music box, the military band,
beer hall bands and symphony orchestras: hide-bound musical bodies hemmed-in—Sousa—laws as unchanging as among the Medes or the Persians.

Sousa, Sousa.

And Napoleon on the laws of tragedy: the hero must never eat on stage or sleep;

tragedy becomes comedy when the hero sits. Thus Hemingway wrote standing.

I am at my writing desk, the tailor’s posture.

And Nietzsche wrote to Jacob Burckhardt: “Condemned to entertain the next eternity with bad jokes;

I have this writing business here.”

(Frank Woolworth had a dimestore).

The tulip, originally a Persian flower—cupshaped (the cave, the very life in it in you greed seized). Count ‘em: six regular segments in two rows; six free stamens, three-celled ovary, sessile stigma, ripening into leathery, many-seed capsules. Crossed, then double-crossed, impossible to refer plants to original types—the cause the first panic—their origins lost their originality worth premiums, Amsterdam.

This half-psychiatric musical excitement, that metaphysical befogging: unconscious prisoners of the frontier between the possible and the impossible—half-psychiatric musical excitement there; ritual foundations; economic style mystically bound and sacral—magic until its subjects embrace animism. In sunshine animists are active and merry, in storms depressed, and in long stretches of bad weather run amok.

A man becomes a shaman through long-teaching, his tongue is pierced, he fasts, he dresses weirdly, he does not marry. He expels evil power of malady, mixes colors for painting, composes sweet melody, carrying the traffic animistic cities—cities in air, cities of air, and musical excitement, biological bound and sacral growth until animists embrace rationalism.

In the sunshine the rationist is ironic and grave, in storms willful, and in long stretches of bad weather, he thinks and thinks and sucks his teeth and thinks. He becomes a philosopher through long contemplation. He looks at a tree and wonders, Is this a tree? (a three? a sign?) Yes, yes, it is a tree. He may marry and procreate; he is unable to expel evil maladies, but he mixes colors (Louis David said, Let us grind red a-plenty); he composes melodies, but animals do not follow him when he sings. Psychiatric economic style logically bound and sacral machines: not people at first but distances to be conquered:

Phoenician merchants at Cadiz; Arab merchants in Zanzibar from the eleventh century; Chinese in the Indian archipelago—markets for gold dust, spices, pepper,
slaves, precious woods, and swallow nest.
Wasteland and woodland, swamp
and hill came under cultivation. The number
of glaciers and ice-flows increased;
winters became more severe; ice
covered the larger part of the earth.
And I still don’t know if there were glaciers
in the Baltic,
when civilization dawned in Egypt—
the chariot drawn by geese—
or does it say teeth? Winters
became more severe: the little ice age
more a tyrant than the Sun King,
who wore a potato flower in his lapel,
whose chariot was drawn by smoke geese,
teeth, reason, an encyclopedia,
a calculus, stirrings
in the quilted coverlet.

The New World rustling its bed of corn shucks—
sweet smelling and troubled sleep;
banging drums and maize growing.
Maize virtually reproduces itself—irrigated
Andean terraces, lakesides of Mexican plateaux,
reproduces itself: thus,
Mayan pyramids, cyclopean walls of Cuzco,
Macchu Picchu thus, because maize virtually
reproduces itself. The New World spaces reproduce
themselves reproduce.

The biological ancien regime
shattered, stuttered:
births overbalanced deaths;
infant mortality dropped;
chronic famine, undernourishment and
virulent epidemics abated.
Between 1650 and 1850 the population doubled;
between 1850 and 1950 it doubled again;
and before the beginning of the third millennia . . .

Takes alot of voices
to sing a millennial song.

I’m telling a joke, I saying a prayer
(am I?) I’m going through the wilderness
of upstate New York. It’s cold,
it’s frozen the balls
off the pool table.
King Joe Bonaparte lives nearby,
and Frank Woolworth is born.
His brother Sumner said they’d stand mornings
where the cows had lain to warm
their bare toes.

Frank took a job—
anything to get off the farm—
in a Mercantile, Watertown.
He tried to play violin, flute.
When he opened his first store
the five-cent craze was on the decline.
The first days shinplasters — no nickels
those days—
an even nine bucks. The failure,
Utica, seemed to him lack of variety;
his customers wanted variety. He added
Christmas ornaments and candy.
The public liked having its sweet tooth tickled.
He invested in a money bag
and advertised for a clerk. He opened
more stores, he added pocketbooks, suspenders,
belts: the answer was variety.
Meanwhile he travelled,
dropped into stores unannounced, and woe betide
the manager whose displays were slovenly.
The Boss was ubiquitous.

You hear Sousa, Sousa,
raised in the shadow of the capitol’s dome, Sousa
planned to run away with a circus—
he was enrolled in the marine band,
in the phonograph, in the hand
organ, music box, Sousa.
He wrote “Dance Hilarious” and “With Pleasure,”
which leaned Sousa toward the foxtrot,
leaned Sousa, gave up dance music
and wrote war music during the war. "Free Lunch Cadets" wrote Sousa and "Deed I has to Laugh" for the minstrels, for Carneros and Dixie maybe Sousa Sousa.

The Corsicans charged to the haunting shrill of Triton shells, not fifes and drums. His name sounded "Nabullione" on native tongues. He liked black cherries, he was not well hung, he copied unfamiliar words in a notebook: 
*Dance of Daedalus*
*Pyrrhic dance*
*Odeum — theater — Prytaneum*
*Timandra — the courtezan who remained faithful*
*Rajahs*
*coconut milk*
*Lama.*

From Buffon he copied: 
*Some men are born with one testicle, others have three.*
*They are stronger and more vigorous — what a difference between an ox and a bull.*

He gave the Iron Cross to Girolano Crescenti. When critics murmured, Giuseppeini Grassini silenced them: Crescenti's been wounded, he was a castrato. And under the Egyptian sky Napoleon reminded his men that forty centuries looked down upon them from the pyramids, and the Russian sky was empty even of birds, as the Egyptian sky was full of history.

The space made everything disappear even time itself. I've thought so much about history that section of my library is empty (worn away).

That wall of my study is gone. Through the mortaged hole I see the Northern Lights, and the Northern Lights disappear, or were never there in the first place. My wife wears a perfume called Northern Lights. Ornamentation of the body and decorative mutilation appeared earlier than clothing. Though all went naked, some wore necklaces of bone, some tattooed the most delicate flesh, some made-up for man's defective speed and strength with traps, namely deadfalls, running nooses, and snares — nomadic people who left through the library wall: the pigmies of the Congo who build bridges, the eskimos who wall-up aging parents in snow houses and leave them, or pastoral nomads, tradesmen: the Tatars sold Slavs as slaves to Greek, Armenian, and Italian middlemen who disposed of them in Turkey and Syria. Atilla extracted gifts from Byzantium. The Tatar Nogay extracted gifts from the Moscovites; Bedouins of Arabia, many Kirghiz, and Mongols of Asia, many natives of southeastern Africa. The Crow abandoned agriculture, returned to nomadic life, as did the Ostrogoths. As did the Ostrogoths: terrors of evil eye, vampires, spells, The dog howls, and a little drum is heard, beaten by a ghost.

Sousa, Sousa was to the march what Strauss was to the waltz. He shaved his beard, thus defeating the Kaiser, he wore new white gloves at every concert;
he was limp as a rag after Siegfried. He beat time in circular motion. Sousa mixed a salad, swept away dust, and snatched Sousa, Sousa, a butterfly from the bell of the contrabass. He was the March king, April king. When he wanted to write a march, he turned his imagination to scenes of barbaric splendor. Sousa

And Frank Woolworth's automated organ ground out some orchestral classic. A portrait — Wagner or Beethoven, Liszt or Mendelssohn — appeared on the wall, listening, with allegorical background, as painted by Joannes de Tahy. Lightning crashed, when called for by the music, thunder crashed, rain descended.

The newels of the marble stairway, clothes closets, and bed posts were piped for sound — a lot of technology to play a millennial song.

And I have seen a mandolin movement in a snuff box — a force field used to pucker the skin of space, preparatory to passing through the induced rent, which heals behind the spaceship, requiring a control loop of greater capacity, greater than the proliferating variety. When people change their dwelling place, they carry a lighted brand, a small blaze always burns in cave or hut, which may be made of grass, branches of trees, leaves, reeds (including bamboo). Sousa:

The Crusaders learned about barbaric splendour and oriental luxuries: cane sugar, candy, sherbet; they brought back technologies and words: barge, arsenal, admiral, risk, magazine. Europe continued to feed on coarse soups and gruels. At home they had the air of being guests themselves. The scholars of the Sorbonne prohibited rare beef and sexual intercourse as causes of Black Death. Beatrice could hardly distinguish between herself and others, but her boundaries allowed her to feel active and plan alloplastically. Byzantium was finally wiped out: the Turks. The learned Greeks settled in Italy, called a Renaissance. And the Hundred Years War ended — the battle of Chattillon — thus preserving the name of the war. Nicholas Pisano used a sarcophagus as a pulpit; Petrarch and Boccaccio sought ancient manuscripts with pathos; Leonardo designed exquisite machines of terror; and a class of Dionysiac merchants arose. British landowners applied closure, began to produce sheep — thus transforming sheep into tigers. Hamburg introduced fire insurance. The Fuggers produced tobacco, had a salt monopoly, exported opium from India to China, imported wallpaper, green tea, Javan coffee, Malayan tin (variety was important). One Fugger brother refused to enter the business, saw the threat to his soul.

The dead were sewn in sacks, buried at Clamart, sprinkled with quicklime. The walls of the city were expanded,
like theater sets, in Ghent, Florence, Strausbourg, as often as required.
The mansard roof was a tax dodge.

Addison G. Jerome was the Napoleon of the open board;
Daniel Drew; Jay Gould,
whose touch brought death, Jay Ghoul;
Corny Vanderbilt and his spiritualists,
Tennessee and Victoria Claffin,
who received oracles from Demosthenes;
Jubilee Jim Fisk, born on April Fool’s Day and Black Friday Josie; Russell Sage.

In time Black Friday and the Gold Ring passed into legend. Ferdanand Ward, the young Napoleon of Wall Street.
As the free silver campaign progressed, all prophesied another period of panic:
prices fell, many new articles in tableware, kitchen utensils, textiles
came into Woolworth’s price range.
F.W. visited Napoleon’s palace in Compiegne decided to have an office like La Chambre Empire, and he built a skyscraper cathedral dime store, which carried not a scrap of indebtedness, his entirely, erected on nickels and dimes:
to renew himself, to renew the people by example—Confucius, Napoleon, Frank Woolworth, who wanted, wanted to sell a watch for a dime.

He asked for a spoonful of coffee.
It was forbidden,

He could have orange-flower water or lemonade.
What is my son’s name?
Napoleon. Napoleon is dying.

Yes, you are dying.
Your son is well.
Which is better?
Orange-flower water or lemonade?

Orange-flower water is heavy,
not so refreshing.
What do the doctors advise?
Whatever you fancy.
No coffee is forbidden.
Lemonade is lighter. Yes sir.
What is my son’s name.
Napoleon.
I am dying.
Your son Napoleon is well.
He is not Emperor? No sir.
Orange-flower water is made with barley?
No sir, almonds.
Is there a drink made from cherries? Yes sir.
From apples? Yes sir.
From pears? No.
With almonds? Oh yes, Orange-flower water.

With walnuts? No sir.
Walnuts grow in cold countries and almonds in warm. Yes sir.
What is my son Napoleon’s name? Napoleon. I am Napoleon, Yes sir.
Is there a drink made from cherries?

Dying, in his Napoleonic bed, Frank Woolworth deplored that America is not a musical nation like Germany and Italy.
Benjamin Paul Blood and "The World-Secret"

A philosopher, a poet, a pugilist, an inventor, a farmer, a journalist, — a mystic, Benjamin Paul Blood, 1832-1919, spent his life in relative obscurity in his home of Amsterdam, New York, and in near oblivion he remains though he published several books of philosophy, at least three volumes of poetry, numerous pamphlets and broadsides, and probably hundreds of columns in the upstate New York newspapers of his day. It is fair to say his anonymity was relative, however, because he published in The New York Sun, The New York Tribune, Putnam's Magazine and Scribner's Magazine and was reviewed in The Atlantic Monthly (by William James), Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper and Harper's Weekly. In addition, he carried on significant correspondence with William Cullen Bryant, Xenos Clark, Grover Cleveland, Ralph Waldo Emerson, William Torrey Harris, Shadworth Hollway Hodgson, Oliver Wendell Holmes, William James, Wendell Phillips, William Henry Seward, James Hutchinson Stirling and Lord Tennyson.

Blood saw himself as a philosopher and a mystic, but also as a writer. Using the press as his forum, he intended "a dash at the popularizing of philosophy" as "... Philosophy should be pushed out upon the people, or so much of it as is agreed upon as surprising [sic] the vulgar." This goal was not unique to him. The editors of Putnam's Magazine likewise perceived what they defined as "The growing activity and cosmopolitanism of the American mind..." and in keeping with this faith in the manifest destiny of American thought, William Torrey Harris outlined his goals for Americans in The Journal of Speculative Philosophy: "Our province as Americans is to rise to purer forms than have hitherto been attained, and thus speak a 'solvent word' of more potency than those already uttered." Blood was sympathetic to the St. Louis Hegelians, particularly because one of their tenets held that "it is the highest problem of Speculative Philosophy to seize a method that is adequate to the expression of the 'secret'..." which for him was to be realized only in the "anaesthetic revelation."

During a routine trip to the dentist in 1860, Blood received nitrous oxide. The experience so changed his philosophical views that for the next 14 years he experimented on himself with anaesthetics, and in 1874 he published his initial findings in The Anaesthetic Revelation and the Gist of Philosophy. In it he criticized philosophy for the relativity of its language-bound knowledge, for its separation of sense and reason, and for the failure of reason to supply answers to the questions that continually plague thought. Pragmatically speaking, reason could not deliver the goods, so Blood turned to an intuition outside of formal knowledge. Unfortunately, though "the genius of being" is revealed in the "coming to" out of the anaesthetic stupor, "it cannot be remembered... amid the hum of returning common sense..." The revelation remained a mystical panacea for philosophy's ills.

In 1870 William Torrey Harris published "The Immortality of the Soul" in which he employed Hegelian logic and his own sense of the historical development of epistemology to argue for the immortality of the soul as a self-determining identity that exists as itself and the negative of itself, both genus and individual where the loss of the individual does not alter the status of the genus of soul as self-conscious entity — it remains its own subject and object. At the same time Harris relied on the promise of an Hegelian apotheosis: "the series of nature must end in a Being which has one permanent identity, one in whom generic and individual are one, one whose character is self-made." Believing that "Hegel's is the greatest, the best, and thereby also the worst of philosophies..." Blood, who also maintained an abiding interest in the mysticism of Heraclitus, used Hegelian logic for its empirical value in ascertaining the soul's immortality, but as the soul's status as self-distinction "has only a theoretical pertinence," so ultimately would the whole line of argument. Blood attacked the "endeavor to make an identity of that
which is essentially a difference and a process.” After all, “Universal thing would be as formless as universal nothing.” So even though he borrowed from the tradition of transplanted German idealism in order to create rational discourse as he took philosophy to the people, Blood did not formally align himself with any one school of thought (though his mysticism moved farther from monism and closer to pluralism as his thinking developed). Philosophical systems, verbal constructs that are momentarily useful and experientially unprovable, all rest upon premises “to which we may say, not quite.” Something, some other, always escapes each belated position so that “the true vocation of philosophy is to understand that deception is deception.” “The greatest mistake of all is that the world must be rational, and that there must be possible a true statement and explanation of it, commensurate with our finite capacity.” The finite cannot realize the infinite, cannot perceive what Blood defined at the end of his career as the ancillary unity—the penumbra that shades the margins of James’s “beads” of experience.

The true heir to philosophy, then, is the “mystery of the cosmos [that] still hovers over hospital and laboratory awaiting articulation”—a mystery experienced only out of the sanity of the everyday: “The only modern advance of thought—after the attempt of Hegel to place the absolute in process, (which has resulted only in a process toward an undertaking,) is in the anaesthetic revelation.” And if all analogies fail to articulate the uniqueness of the revelation’s experience, it is because the revelation has meaning only in the experiencing of it. It is not a schematic of a process that is imposed upon experience; it is process itself: “It is a coil, and a process, not in a circle—not over the same route again—the latest objective is the subjective in its effort, and this newness is ever the same, and not the same, because of its newness.” The revelation’s experience provides the assurance that there is metalogical life and understanding beyond the names that reason employs, and as visionary and vainglorious as this claim of having seen into the genius of being may sound, Blood’s insights have at least shown themselves to partake of the prophetic: “Nothing in Hegel has kept the planet from being blown to pieces.” Truth and serenity harmonize in other terms—ones that remain original and inarticulate.

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1 Benjamin Paul Blood, ALS to William Torrey Harris, 7 May 1874, William Torrey Harris Papers, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis, Missouri.
2 Blood, ALS to Harris, 25 May 1874.
12 Blood, ALS to Harris, 19 Dec. 1874.
16 Blood, ALS to Harris, 8 Dec. 1874.
Sir: I received lately from London an English provincial paper containing a letter which Alfred Tennyson addressed to me in 1874, and which gave account of certain abnormal experience to which he had been subject from his youth upward, and concerning which the editor expressed a kind of insular wonder that the laureate had been so much more free in his confidence to a foreigner than he had ever been to his own countrymen. This letter, widely circulated at the time, was prompted by an account, which I had published, of my own experience, under the title of The Anaesthetic Revelation. Allow me a few words reviving that topic.

One may make a hopeful guess exoterically as to what the anaesthetic revelation is, if he will but rationally persist as to what it must be. In the ordinary thought the will is self-explanatory. When a man wills the act and then strikes out with his arm, he acknowledges a sufficient reason. But ages and ages of natural thought have suspected and doubted that sufficiency and some of the finest poetry in the world has come out of this suspicion. The very people who assume a personal God simply on the suggestion of their own will and ingenuity, are the first to deplore the presumption of Lucifer that because he had our independent will and ingenuity he had a fighting chance for supremacy. We who have this will and this ingenuity have them in a subservient way; there are so many of us; we are opposed and thwarted; we sleep and wake again; and to get any opinion of supremacy one must conceive his spirit as alone in the universe, and so consider what is the negative or background against which he exists — what is the other, in which, or as against which, he is one even were he the only one. Here begins philosophy, seeking the first distinction, the first difference. If he can learn that distinction is necessary, the universe will follow; for distinction is intelligence, which will immediately double on itself to the extent of all possible difference — the universe.

But the necessity of distinction, if found or admitted, is not to be found in will, but in intelligence itself; and if a man had never slept, or if he believed that he never had necessarily slept, and at the same time perceived the necessity of distinction, he would have attained solitude and supremacy; nevertheless, because neither he nor any other has made this to be so, the Highest has a negative and a foil (the deuce, dis or devil of all popular creeds), and reason and wonder are the witnesses to the bridal of omnipotence and fate. Now all this, put into an instant insight and related to the common understanding and to human hopes and fears, is the Anaesthetic Revelation. There is in it the realization, never to be questioned, that the highest divine thought of itself is of a fated wonder — an unassailable but unfounded safety.

This sense of fate in the revelation connects and harmonizes it as well with the Greek consciousness as with the best modern thought, which leaves the absolute without definition and repose. We have to confess the absolute as process whether as process to absolute knowledge or process as the best that can be known. Our ultimate definition still transcends itself — our most microscopic identity turns to a difference. When, with Heracleitus, we say that opposition is difference, and difference is distinction, and distinction is intelligence because the difference of two is not a property of either, but a relation — then when we self-contemplate, or test the difference between subjective and objective, and find that this difference also is not a property of either, we transcend; we assume and become the absolute as a process, and so make time a necessity of eternity.

It will be believed that I published the fact of this revelation in the profoundest conscientiousness. I scattered it by the thousand, here and in Europe, carefully refunding, even to its postage, every
offer of pay for it; for I feared any mercenary suspicion, and I feared it would die with me. But, fortunately, letter after letter came to assure me that my experience was not singular, and urging me to try to express the revelation itself—which I have failed to do.

Among these letters was this of Tennyson, upon which I have never publicly commented, for the reason that I see nothing of the revelation in it, as I immediately reported to him.

Contemplating the slow extension of this insight among serious thinking men, I recall the common conservatism as to all literary change. You will remember when it was beneath the dignity of a magazine publisher to attach a writer's name to an article; any quotation had to be attributed to the "house." See how long it was before Emerson had any standing; how long it was before E.H. Chapin acquired respectful mention; how long it took to find in circulation anything but disgust at Walt Whitman. Slowly but inevitably the very types that condemned were set up in praise; and most absurdly in Whitman's case, they welcomed his bosh after he had exhausted his poetry, which was all in his Leaves of Grass. And while the solid merits of those here mentioned were struggling in obscurity, many bubbles were puffed up and floated with the iris of hope in them, only to burst into the eyes of their projectors; and some are floating yet which sane people have no patience for. I will stand on the street corner and paraphrase Browning for forty cents an hour, in as good verse, eighty words to the minute; I will do "The Light of Asia" for thirty cents and board. These things have no intrinsic value, no crystal; no literary expert who earns his living could give a dollar a barrel for them, to cut up in his business. There are laws in art as elsewhere; wit is not luck, at last; and as for the policy and taste of saying these things, let every player put up his own money. I have failed to learn any regular price for a stub flush, or any patented process of being interesting. This is not siding with the outs as such; there is no neglected literary merit, if only numbers did not count.

And here is the comfort of our anaesthetic literature; it is a fashion that may come in, and no one cares very much whether it comes in or not. There is not much jubilation in it, not much rose color on its garments; its heaven of heavens at last is but serene: "For who can change with prayers and thanksgivings
The mystery of the cruelty of things."

Swinburne has our key, although he is not always a fortunate performer. But, let be. Let the idyls of the people dip their fringes in the Tyrian purple, in the sunsets of blood and gold, let them paint an inch thick, to this favor must they come. They fade and shall fade, up to this hard blue of the medial heavens—the blue on the mantles of Michael Angelo. 

BENJAMIN PAUL BLOOD
AMSTERDAM, May 18.
Immortality of the Soul

A Metaphysical View of the Greatest Problem That Exercises the Human Intellect

To the Editor of The Albany Times [May 8, 1889]

Sir: My farming vocation has postponed some comment which I meant to offer you upon two articles in a recent number of the ALBANY TIMES—one touching "the immortality of the soul," the other claiming there is no light where there is no vision. It is a pleasing city delusion that rural life is specially adapted to peaceful meditation. Ah, no; when the old farmer—and all farmers are apparently old—they catch it from their clothes,—when the old farmer, still wearing his gum boots in August, has chased the bull out of the corn for the ninth time, and is ready with Job's wife to curse God and die, it is far to

"That lucid interspace of world and world

Where never creeps a cloud, nor moves a wind

Nor even falls the least white star of snow,"

whereof our laurel-crowned Lucretius tells. But now the fields are sown, and the seed—"how shall it be quickened save it die?"—prompts in us thoughts of immortality.

Yet there is a weariness, to one who has or even thinks he has attained the first principle in the discussion of any categorical question—a certainty of the end. The expert has two equal answers to all such questions: yes and no. Checks payable in explanation are not drawn on "the everlasting yea" alone. Truth does not pass in any one statement, save as the statement contains an opposition. There is no categorical assertion, however brief, no longer than the verse "Jesus wept"—of which, if it does not embrace a contradiction in itself, the opposite is not equally a part of the truth. "Is there a God?" But stay: a God? No. "Is the God?" Yes, and no; only the lower-case god is or has being; the capital God dwells in the ultimate distinction wherein being and not being, god and devil, each take meaning from the other. "Is the soul immortal?" Yea. "My identical soul?" Well, not much. Identity is forever perishing that difference may persist. And so on. Under this Heracleitic arch of opposition—between these pillars of Hercules, all wit and all literature make their play. Let us draw nearer and observe the method of this.

What is man, that we are mindful of him? He is partly a child of the devil, whose story can be told only with the serpent's double tongue. He is a duplex movement throughout. He is double as visible and invisible—matter and spirit. He is double as male and female, each containing the incipiency of the other,—each capable, in case of the loss of the other, of evolving the lost one from itself. He is double in his two sides, right and left—each with its arm and leg and eye and ear, and organs of taste and smell; each with its interest in a half of the lungs, the liver, the kidneys, the heart, and each with its set of nerves so nearly independent that one side may be paralyzed and the other working comparatively well. Each of these sides is in itself a double, in that it is tubular—hollow and filled, container and content. The "binding web" of him, of which in himself he is, is stuffed with that of which we might properly say he is not. The food and the blood and the juices, however disseminated, remain in their channels, and enter not into the web; they enter the form but not the substance, as a knife pierces the form but not the substance of the wood—otherwise the wood would enter the substance of the knife. And behold now the homoioomeria of the Greeks: as hair is made up of lesser hairs, and feather of lesser feathers, and stones of lesser stones, and blood of little drops of blood, so the tubes of the body are made up of lesser tubes which are made up of tubes in turn, not only practically but theoretically, until beyond all limits of either microscopic observation or metaphysical conception, the assumed identity of the senses fades in the difference of infinite divisibility between container and content.

And as the body, as a half of the double of matter and spirit, is double in its two sides, so the mind as the other half is double in its two sides of sense and reason, each of which is double in a long complexity of its own—double, double, toil and trouble, making the cauldron boil and bubble. Let her bubble! We will not regard it further than by saying that the identity of the man lies in the transcendent criticism of his differences.

Now popularly speaking, when we assume our individual immortality we, at least most of us, do not forget that every moment we are new and different,—that the man and boy we have been are with difficulty remembered even by ourselves, and that the man which we are identically now is likely to be as well forgotten—
"As much as a canoe
That crossed the bosom of a lonely lake
A thousand years ago."

we do not—at least some of us, fail to observe that the very core and essence of our present identity is the distinction of our present from our past (for plainly the identity of intelligence is distinction and difference), but we fancy an identity, running through and surviving this difference, which is "I" and "me," our proper self. This fancy is true enough, but unfortunately for the individual this "I" and this "me" are not private nor peculiar. This consciousness, as distinct from all special thinking and free from all private memory, (which even we care not to preserve, and in many instances would gladly obliterate,) is the pure and common intelligence, which is and must be the same in all being, for it is being. Whatever intelligence can concatenate my experience can furnish this "I" and keep "me" extant; but the connection is not permanent, and in fact is broken for a great part of even the present time; each instant of it is a break and a renewal—it is quickened only as it dies. Here we are at the standpoint of "Adonais:"

"The One remains, the many change and pass,
Heaven's light forever shines, earth's shadows fly;
Life, like a dome of many-colored glass
Stains the white radiance of eternity,
Until Death tramples it to fragments."

But this One as such only renews the many; it shows only as against an Other, and arises only through a vain endeavor to make an identity of that which is essentially a difference and a process. As said William James, the philosopher of Harvard University, after being loaded to the muzzle with chloroform in the hope of expressing the anaesthetic revelation, "There is no identity other than the identity of the difference between identity and difference." If anybody sees any one thing in this description, he is welcome to it immortally. And observe the life, the process, through which this slippery double is proposed as enduring. Let us suppose—and it will be supposition merely—that the present tense is one for all—that gods and men and angels and devils march all abreast in this present instant, and the only real time and date in the universe is now—4 P.M., May 3d, 1889. And what is the instant? Whatever else, it is process—becoming and departing; with what between? Simply division, difference; the present has no breadth, for if it had, that which we seek would be only the middle of that breadth. There is no precipitate of the process of becoming, no residuum of the process of departing, but between the two is a curtain—the apparition of difference, which is all the world. This difference is not substance but relation; not "matter" but intelligence—there is no room for aught else—and nothing is explained until it is reduced to intelligence, not to an object of intelligence but to intelligence itself as subject and object in one opposition or difference—usually called self-distinction.

Not to prolong this gossip, we may now see at a glance the difficulty in any popular or materialistic treatment of immortality, which ever conceives it as the opposite of physical death. Certainly material life is the opposite of material death, but not so with the soul; for in that, life and death, being and not being, attention and rest, are the equal wings of spirit. And here is the inveterate twist that cannot be broken—here is the secret of practical immortality: the soul practically is, as self-distinction—that is the status; and the loss of distinction cannot make a difference. The necessity of the status itself has only a theoretical pertinence. Torture this knot as we may, let the friends of doubt and despair try their teeth on it as they may, it will forever hold; for, as it is written in the Scriptures, "to know aright is life eternal."
Jerome Rothenberg, editor

NOTE. The following new gatherings were for my revised version of Technicians of the Sacred, to be published by the University of California Press in early 1985. As usual, the process resulted in more workings than the actual anthology could hold; but the out-takes are in no sense inferior to the inclusions, all the more so in a context where such judgements are not the true question at hand. (J.R.)

Takes and Out-takes from Technicians of the Sacred

The Vulva Song of Inana

Sumer

I am lady I
who in this house
of holy lapis
praying
in my sanctuary say
my holy prayer
I who am lady
who am queen of heaven
let the chanter
chant of it
the singer sing of it
& let my bridegroom
my Dumuzi my wild bull
delight me

let their words fall
from their mouths
o singers
singing for their youth
their song that rises up
in Nippur gift to give
the son of god
I who am lady sing to
praising him
the chanter chants it
I who am Inana
give my vulva song to him
o star my vulva of the dipper
vulva slender boat of heaven
new moon crescent beauty vulva
unploughed desert vulva
fallow field for wild geese
where my mound longs
for his flooding
hill my vulva lying open
& the girl asks:
who will plough it?
vulva wet with flooding
of myself the queen
who brings this ox to stand here
“lady he will plow for you
“our king Dumuzi he will plow for you
o plow my vulva o my heart
my holy thighs are soaked with it
o holy mother

—Translated by Jerome Rothenberg
after Betty Meador & Renata Leggit
Exorcism of the Eye

Scottish Gaelic

I trample upon the eye,
As the duck tramples upon the lake,
As the swan tramples upon the water,
As the horse tramples upon the plain,
As the cow tramples upon the "iuc",
As tramples the host of the elements,
As tramples the host of the elements.

Power of wind I have over it,
Power of wrath I have over it,
Power of fire I have over it,
Power of lightning I have over it,
Power of storms I have over it,
Power of moon I have over it,
Power of sun I have over it,
Power of stars I have over it,
Power of firmament I have over it,
Power of the heavens
And of the worlds I have over it,
Power of the heavens
And of the worlds I have over it.

A third of it upon the grey stones,
A third of it upon the steep hills,
A third of it upon the fast falls,
A third of it upon the fair meads,
And a third of it upon the great salt sea,
She herself is the best instrument to carry it,
The great salt sea,
The best instrument to carry it.

In name of the Three of Life,
In name of the Sacred Three,
In name of all the Secret Ones,
And of the Powers together.

—Translated by Alexander Carmichael
Against Wens

Anglo-Saxon

wen, wen, little wen
here you shall not build nor have abode
you must pass to the hill hard by
where you have a brother in misery
he will lay a leaf under your head.

under the foot of the wolf
under the claw of the eagle
shrivel like coal on a fire
shrivel like muck on a wall
become as small as a grain of linseed
smaller by far than the hip-bone of a handworm
and become so small you become nothing

— Translated by David Antin

Magic Song: A Boasting

No other man can put
his shoes on me
or tie his laces to my feet:
I put my own shoes on,
I draw the laces tight,
I stick an arrow in the floor,
its oak shaft in the ground
I trample flat; a shaman
dare not eat too much,
a witch is kept from wounding.
And:
I own a chestnut stallion,
this lovely horse upon whose croup's
a lake, whose backbone
holds clear water,
from the fountain at his collar
wicthes drink,
the greedy people of the village
swill from it,
the fire-throated ones who drink there
make it hiss.
I drank there—did the wizard
know I had?—before the shaman
was awake, before his jealousy
began to stir, I made
my gloves of gravel, made my gloves
of stone with which
I handled adders,
with my fingers gathered snakes:
I took ten adders,
took a hundred snakes with me,
they flew with me,
ahead of me they streaked,
against my side they wandered,
they swallowed up the village people's spells,
devoured their incantations.

— Translated by Jerome Rothenberg after John Abercromby (1898)
From *The Weston-Sub-Edge Mummer’s Play:*
“Beelzebub’s Speech”


*Beelzebub.* In comes old Beelzebub
And on my back I carries my club
And in my hand the dripping-pan,
I thinks myself a jolly old man.

Round hole, black as a coal,
Long tail and a little hole.

I went up a straight crooked lane. I met a bark and he dogged at me. I went to the stick and cut a hedge, gave him a rallier over the yud jud killed him round stout stiff and bold from Lancashire I came, if Doctor has n’t done his part, John Finney wins the game.

Last Christmas night I turned the spit,
I burnt me finger and felt it itch,
The sparks flew over the table,
The pot-lid kicked the ladle,
Up jumped spit jack
Like a mansion man
Swore he’d fight the dripping pan
With his long tail,
Swore he’d sent them all to jail.
In comes the grid iron, if you can’t agree
I’m the justice, bring em to me.

As I was going along, as I was standing still,
I saw a wooden church built on a wooden hill,
Nineteen leather bells a going without a clapper
That made me wonder what was the matter.

I went on a bit further, I came to King Charles up a cast iron pear tree. He asked I the way to get down. I said put thee feet in the stirrup iron and prithee poll headfust into a marl pit where ninety-nine parish churches had been dug out besides a few odd villages. I went on a bit further, I came to a little big house, I knocked at the door and the maid fell out. She asked if I could eat a cup of her cider and drink a hard crust of her bread and cheese. I said “No thanks, yes if yer please.” So I picked up me lattets and went me ways. I went on a bit further.

I came to two old women winnowing butter,
That made me mum mum mummer and stutter.

**Voice of the Karaw**

Bamana, Africa

(1)

*Bursts of twilight’s frantic wing-beats, submit to me, I am Yori*  
*I am as the arching sky, as encounter of crossroads in space*  
*Green savanna, entirely fresh, green savanna entirely outstretched*  
*where no dog may scavenge*  
*Hornbill of deaf-mute village I am deaf-mute chief.*  
What sort of a thing is this?  
Come, old tearers-to-shreds, submit to me, I am Yori.

Astonishing! What we are learning now existed already, arriving from beforehand: rhythm

I entered the flow and found it was transformation—  
Rhythm, beginning of all beginning speech, was the crowned crane’s:

I speak, said the crowned crane,  
meaning I know I speak.

Oh, if I here misspeak, may heat of error be sufficient to pardon my mistake;

If I omit, may omission be forgiven that anticipates!

*Old knives, having been sheathed, cannot transpire the mystery—*  
*come, old tearers-to-shreds, submit to me,*  
*I am Yori*  
*I am as the arching sky, as encounter of crossroads in space,*  
*I am as the unique sun!*

Cock’s head of night’s transformation, Father of my instruction,
see, my arm is bent behind my back as you wish;
Memory itself is to blame for all mistakes, memory which makes
me stumble, if I do
As for oblivion — blame inattention of spirit;
Perhaps a running knot will form along the cord of my speech;
but all cords are corridors leading to embrace
And all antechambers lead to our common origin: Mande
All Having derives from another’s possession
To have you come, you arrive by means of instruction;
Transformation, where true possession takes place,
even moderate insight
anticipates penetration.
His word has been translated exactly!
Transformation, all transformation, man’s furnace,
crucible of patience,
I say all waiting is pure patience
If these words be spoken at the crossroads of space!

(2)
Be at peace, old tearers-to-shreds, here am I, Yori,
As handle of spear I am, as the arching sky
I am as the unique sun,
You there, slapping the face of twilight,
calm yourselves; here am I, Yori,
I as the arching sky, I as the unique sun
Deaf-mute hornbill, fire which spared the bone,
chief of deaf-mute village,
I say mumble mumble, I say caw-caw the cacophonous,
Sheathed, sheathed are the old knives. Yori, my father,
Yori, my mother, Yori my ancestor,
I have gone to question our founder.
The old man as if seized by uncontrollable itching
scratches his head; thoughtfully rotates his jaw
as if pestered by a piece of gristle;
then hastens to Ségou to consult the sages;
For some things may be found in the enemy’s house
that the friend’s house lacks;
and that which is lacking makes enemies friends;
Founder, my father, my friend, exacerbation of questing
is calmed within; there the true task begins;
but transformation is arduous, arduous.

Come, what we are learning now existed already;
let us accomplish the rhythm;
All cords are corridors leading to embrace of origin.

— Translated by Judith Gleason

NOTE: Specialists of an already intricate use of voice & symbol, "the karaw (singular kara) are initiatory masters of the Bamana’s Kode society... the last of a sequence of six secret societies, in which man realizes mystic participation in the divine being." (Gleason, p. 175) But the word "karaw" also refers to objects used by the masters as specific symbols of knowledge & divinity: e.g., "a spatula-shaped plank of decorated wood — an emblem both of the enlightened and of the enlightening word. During karaw recitations this standard (some eight or nine feet high) is set on the ground. At mouth level (as though it were a flat, elongated mask) the kara has an opening, through which the spokesman puts the three central fingers of his left hand — tongues of the sacred utterance." Yori, the divinity of the present discourse, speaks to his initiates through such mouthpieces:

He characterizes his mouthpieces as last-sunset-rays-attempting-to-penetrate-the-gathering-obscurity-of-the-mystery. They rip up and tear to shreds old misconceptions and spurious hypotheses. What seems twilight to them (they are at one point pictured as impatiently slapping the face of the setting sun) is in reality dawning, a new illumination announced by cockcrow. . . . The cock announces transformation, a process compared to the transmutation of matter in a smith’s furnace: . . . a womb-shaped crucible out of which the liquid ore runs through a clay pipe into a trough. This structure and its function (as well as its symbolism) are compared to a clay hut of similar shape. . . . The initiate awaiting transformation and fusion with the divine essence is like a lover waiting in the antechamber while his mistress prepares the mat inside; he is like the penis beginning to enter the corridor.

Two of four karaw discourses are given here. The voice of the kara(w) is in italics, that of the initiate in regular (roman) type.
From *The Red Book of Hergest*
(attributed to Llywarch Hen)

Let the cock's comb be red; naturally loud
Be his voice, from his triumphant bed:
Man's rejoicing, God will recommend.

Let the swineherds be merry at the sighing
Of the wind; let the silent be graceful;
Let the vicious be accustomed to misfortune.

Let the bailiff impeach; let evil be a tormentor;
Let clothes be fitting;
He that loves a bard, let him be a handsome giver.

Let a monarch be vehement, and let him be brave;
And let there be a hurdle on the gap;
He will not show his face that will not give.

Fleet let the racers be on the side
Of the mountain; let care be in the bosom;
Unfaithful let the inconstant be.

Let the knight be conspicuous; let the thief be wary;
The rich woman may be deceived;
The friend of the wolf is the lazy sheperd.

Let the knight be conspicuous: fleet by the horse;
Let the scholar be ambitious;
Let the prevaricating one be unfaithful.

Let cows be round-backed; let the world be gray;
Let the horse over barley be swift;
Like gossamer will he press the grain at the roots.

Let the deaf be bent; let the captive be heavy;
Nimble the horse in battles;
Like gossamer will he press the grain the ground.

Let the deaf be dubious; let the rash be inconstant;
Let the mischievous wrangle;
The prudent need but be seen to be loved.

Let the lake be deep; let the spears be sharp;
Let the brow of the sick be bold at the shout of war;
Let the wise be happy—God commends him.

Let the exile wander; let the brave be impulsive;
Let the fool be fond of laughter.

Let the furrows be wet; let bail be frequent;
Let the sick be complaining, and the one in health merry.
Let the lapdog snarl; let the hag be peevish.

Let him that is in pain cry out; let an army be moving;
Let the well-fed be wanton;
Let the strong be bold; let the hill be icy.

Let the gull be white; let the wave be loud;
Let the gore be apt to clot on the ashen spear;
Let the ice be gray; let the heart be bold.

Let the camp be green; let the suitor be reproachless;
Let there be pushing of spears in the defile;
Let the bad woman be with frequent reproaches.

Let the hen be clawed; let the lion roar;
Let the foolish be pugnacious;
Let the heart be broken with grief.

Let the tower be white; let the harness glitter;
Let there be beauty—many will deserve it;
Let the glutton hanker; let the old man meditate.

Translated from Welsh by D. Silvan Evans, ca. 1868.
it's bitter to be poor.  
really, it's no joke!  
not even a rag  
to patch a hole.  
a girl grows into teens,  
her butt exposed  
herding waterbuffaloes.  
— Kweichow province

young girl by the river  
washing her brassiere  
tracing the flowing waters  
with her ten fingers  
he who drinks there  
inspired by an endless fire  
— Shantung province

Oo La LA!  
I take off my pants:  
shiny white thighs!  
Oo La LA!  
I take off my blouse:  
what a pair of boobs!  
Oo La LA!  
I'm going to marry  
whoever's loaded with cash!  
— Toishan district of Kwangtung province

money-grubbing slave,  
stingy skinflint,  
no food for the hungry,  
no cash for the poor,  
says,  
money's my very life—  
flay me,  
torture me,  
you'll never touch my silver!  
— Kiangsu province

horses to graze,  
waterbuffaloes to graze,  
graze 'em where?  
graze 'em up on Phoenix Hill.  
Back home, I'm hungry,  
& sneak a peek inside the pot.  
inside the pot, local mud soup.  
boiling mad, I break down  
in a long, loud wail.  
— Kiangsu province

NOTE. Like its "western" counterpart, the Chinese literary tradition makes sharp distinction between "high" & "low" modes in poetry. In so doing, classicists have set aside the latter — as folklore, folk poetry, etc. — to be treated as both vital source & lesser instance. The recognition of a "folk," even "primitive," tradition in China goes back to at least The Book of Songs, largely a gathering (& reworking) of folk materials from (probably) a range of regions & sources. An extension of this concern led to the formation in the Han Dynasty (3rd century B.C. to 3rd century A.D.) of the Yueh-fu or Music Bureau, which continued the collection & transcription while unable to check the class-based attitudes of the entrenched academics. A twentieth-century resurgence of such concerns (pai hua = "plain speech" movement, etc.) has probably been impeded as much as propelled by political/social struggles in & around China. (J.R.)

A Chinese colloquial for wife is literally old lady.  
Cakes & soups made out of mud have not been uncommon in poorer parts of China.
"It's better to be poor,

really, it's no joke!

not even a rag

in patch a hole,

in and gone into from,

her birth unposed

leaving unobstructed.

- Knowing that no one can trust

remembered to wash

pulled out by the roots

washing for tomorrow

leaving the flowing waters

with her twin figures

two who divided there

impressed by an unseen love.

- Raining covetous

which made what you want distant.

NOT if only it didn't anyone.

you don't expect that in but a moment

it's all bound to happen.

- You, just hate, the words:

Except he'll go to a dance and

to dance with someone

- getting closer to a date

back to the dance

shown by David. I had nothing.

Two hands, good a to

- Slipping sticky

which made what was meant wasn't

not one minute of a chapter:

"Well" in an understated, soft, subtle manner

it's impossible to imagine

in continuing.

the whole with so

which made what was meant wasn't

not one minute of a chapter:

"Well" in an understated, soft, subtle manner

it's impossible to imagine

in continuing.

the whole with so

which made what was meant wasn't

not one minute of a chapter:

"Well" in an understated, soft, subtle manner

it's impossible to imagine

in continuing.

the whole with so

which made what was meant wasn't

not one minute of a chapter:

"Well" in an understated, soft, subtle manner

it's impossible to imagine

in continuing.

the whole with so

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in continuing.

the whole with so
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