REALITY STUDIOS

VOLUME TEN

Editor: Ken Edwards
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Cover: from The Rubber Stamp Paradiese by Jeremy Adler.
REALITY STUDIOS

back numbers are available as follows:

Vols 6–9 (1984–87) in the A5 paperback format, average 100pp each—plenty left, write for details.


Vols 1–3 (1978–80) are out of print.

Very few copies of Allen Fisher's Unpolished Mirrors remain at £3.50. There are also some copies of the signed limited edition with additional material at £10.

Pamphlets by Carlyle Reedy (The Orange Notebook, £1.50) and Ken Edwards (A4 Landscape, £2.50) are available.

Most Reality Studios Occasional Papers are no longer available, but there are one or two copies of Out To Lunch's So Much Plotted Freedom. at £2.50.

ALLEN FISHER

Cakewalk

The image of a woman frottaged by the Burglar to the wall shifts with his attention reads a bicontinuous sponge with surfactant interfaces.

His cleansing gaze as he sees it rapidly fluctuates the curvature of her shapes. They begin to leave the wall and spatter the footpath. The Informer's report confirms they are metallic balls of crystalline liquids sandwiched in saliva honeycombs and dynamically disordered into droplets disturb the gravel. Oh what a wonderful world.

Tries to stop it and cannot. The variety of their phase behaviour encourages a focus deception His long range spatial ordering fantasises a language progression from colloidal fluids to crystals.

Their viscosity reminds him of impact prints left on an exit window by his fingers stained with damaged plant cells traced in the virus templated, the Informer notes, as a leukaemia copy in one of the collagen gene's first intron.

There can be no question of wipe-out.
The gravity-induced sedimentation of the image in its suspensions had stabilised the Burglar knew it in the language of the City’s sintered adhesion.

Simultaneously he holds court in The Prince of Wales traps concentration rather than solitude A single organisation of informers feeds the evidence mode in the dole queue at one standing pours three pints into his head Such lethean measure lures the material electro-chemistry of his abandon.

He chooses to ignore any digital alternatives Speaks of life in terms of wealth: his nerves scan the City as its temperatures pass the red index limits lighting the Brixton horizon His neuronal evolution capitalises on the spatial separation of proteins in the synapses of his cellular processes.

Away from the perinuclear destruction in his cell bodies to the subterranean horizon, his holdings are achieved by macromolecular stabilisation: a vocabulary trench almost voided of the means to dredge.

Intricate spreads of nerve cell processes spatially separate

and immunise his semiological remittance from the expression of his pragmatic turnover.

Innocence avoids complacent isolation because he didn’t know the quest. Singularity relieved of all responsibility because he is a fool run by terror, nothing whatsoever taken seriously.

All day toxics the narrative in its transparent cruelty in an effort not to become what I behold but a stalwart attitude to sustain a disciplined day does not dissipate inner shudder.

Return to a Faraday cage dizzy from the static metal escalator on the down slope defines incompleteness.

He lives in fear of breakdown, in sensitivity of capture. His skid turns from the calm, austere garden back to the consequences of the City’s transcendence of its glow.

He cannot teach himself to ignore the screams and riot outside but evades approaching darkness in both the garden and the City move against him. Explosion
Feels like shatter, 
you thought, Feels like 
impllosion of perfection 
made of itself. 
He watches himself 
gaze at his abandon 
birefringent on the footpath.

A plantal condition of Beauty 
a transient flower 
which he stoops to pluck 
The difficult 
capable of depth without 
a weighty solution 
against reflection.

Having what is essential without 
having enough 
limits his desire and thus the image: 
a ceasing of hope couples to a ceasing of fear. 
The two of them struggle 
in front of the local nightsafe.

As he watches he participates in desire transformed in 
greed 
oriented so that what he sees occurs in the direction he 
looks 
at the moment it happens. 
The distance of its occurrence from him 
measures the same rest framed memory of the image 
such that all other components vanish.

Necessity, weight, value condition 
but do not constitute 
the work 
what do you do? 
he is asked, 
Why didn't you 
sign on last week?

Sailing on a mirror 
with birds in front of him 
he scans for a 
boop tone 
to check his idealism and its concomitant 
realist aesthetic.

To balance out the arguments for leaving well alone 
the Mathematician acts now to prevent inflationary 
overheating. 
The breakdown problem 
of established intellectual frameworks for answering 
questions 
begins at the apple tree precisely at five o'clock in 
the afternoon ransacked the edges of innovation.

A reverberant repression 
tunes results from interactions 
which cannot be separately attributed. 
Precise connections between 
similar colour responses activate 
specific connections between orientation responses.

Look at it! produces 
a stimulus constellation. 
Gunfire, 11.00 p.m., 17th July 
His nerves image 
labile charts 
which change with use.

The image of a finger tip 
in the Informer's somatosensory cortex 
expands after a period of intense stimulation 
encroaching by up to one millimetre 
into zones normally occupied by the rest 
of the finger and part of the hand.

The slender phase partition 
separates the successful making of a solvent for stains 
from the deadly compound which explodes at a touch. 
"Hitherto I have preferred to endure toxics on
my fingers rather than run the risk of being forcibly expelled through the window."

Neurons overlap receptive fields are modulated by the angle of gaze the strength of the responses to the image at a particular location on the retina varies according to the positions of his eyes.

A topographical image is not required to get the readout of spacetime. The neurons in the Burglar's facility learn the association between eye and retinal positions. His neuronal operations are probabilistic.

This perception results from continuous cross-reference amongst a variety of stolen properties. The activity in one is shaped by that in others.

In the garden projections from two areas converge in a third. They do not overlap but terminate in adjacent patches. His single perception of her appearance explodes from specific ensembles of neurons located in several pockets each responding to a particular feature of the stimulus field.

He stands imbecilic to report what he sees. The depth of his endurance an index of his necessity. His balm is a wonder whack more often than sunlight. To be everywhere is to be negatively capable in loss.

The accident rapidity took an age to occur and happened quickly proportions exactly mixed into synthesis in the chamber received pressure mass then noticed it was not implosion-screened.

His language response a free mirror stimulated by sensations of distance separation from a second free mirror and produces a permanent deformation in a gravitational wave-burst with memory in which the wave stores the signal forever.

A possibility the author turns away thinks no one else has to approach the discovered gasp of appearance as if persuaded by anticipation of sex he leans toward its ephemeral image embossed on the wall.

The investigation, the movement in the trap of unconcern That Paradise became a prison (unreadable) shines to some marigold my hands scarred from burns of its perfected collective its hypergolic shock.

No warning no preparation had made resistance possible it simply happened inside a joy it happened and broke pieces into less than recognition.

As she focuses the Photographer comes to something which to her is Beauty and stops there instead of winding the lens into acuity
This delay
requires memory of the image spacetime
and facility for discerning difference
These requirements maps in the premotor cortex
One deals with the plan and initiation of actions
the other with their guidance and execution.

If the Burglar could take
a light rest without insouciance
what he found
incompatible with the garden spacetime
Some wild bird
a sensation smelt
as it lifted from the flower bowl

decided about what is essential
and had excitement
what is enough pleasure jaded
towards holocaust. No more disasters
no catastrophes no more dissension
Only resignation
All accounted for.

Turned to face the bark and tears
limited desire to cure fear
unchains prisoner from escort
influx from correspondence
gazing from grasping
severs threads
of silken tackle.

I make a broken delivery of the business
as I become intelligent
take in slack on a
reward risk ratio:
not free
and not forever.

Processes continually modify
my feedback and lateral interactions.

An ecology that rabbits biologically
impoverished situations
where the cortex becomes a map of the world
each sensory modality charts several spacetimes in
different runabouts with about a dozen images
of the visual suspensions and half a dozen each of
the auditory inputs and how it feels.
It is functions that are mapped:
single areas contain multiple trace groups
bursting in different dimensions.

The Engineer's nonsense
dispenses with
misogynist fantasy.
He watches behind closed flesh
Doors of incredulous gaze
screen an unfolding
elliptical umbilic.

Spat at the wall
at loneliness
through fragments into
loss of description
dizzy from static, you cry,
What was that?
withdrawn from my own affairs in particular.

I switch on the cage
Cells selective for wavelength are among
those selective for orientation.
On the footpath the Bikeboy separately notes
size, shape, colour, position and direction of movement
with one glance.

Mottling leaves the garden wall
becomes marble after marble
breaks the working
glass an intensity of pressures
stronger than hail
and rolling on impact.
Their similarity of direction
marks out a field of gravity
beyond the garden wall
Exclusive doors conceal a haze indexed yellow
Marble-pillared, leather-bound, pieds-à-terre.

The City's policy
whiteballed to ensure the Informer
runs into the right kind of people
Always a light flashing somewhere
Everybody is very tired
Earning a fortune

Desire and greed are matched
in a “she looks beautiful” eugenics
A chain of electro-chemical reactions
summarises into
the will to keep up standards

An order to establish
an options exchange encourages favour
forces a go out produces the
image futures
without sites that could lend
such aspirations considered cohesion.

June 1987-January 1988

CAKEWALK is the first of three poems that lead from Buzzards and Bees onto the next set in the work Gravity as a Consequence of Shape. The first book from the work was published in 1985 as Brixton Fractals and the second, Brixton Breadboard, awaits publication. Allen Fisher's Stepping Out and went to new are both forthcoming 1988-89, the former from Pig Press and the latter from Spanner.
"a vision very like reality
hurts to peel the cornea bare"

Memory
thick as unlopped chestnut branches comprise
twenty-eight chairs one music-hall tape
narrative and no description
equals the people's history

The streets are iron-grey
hooped with winter-cold
a lost & fingered thing
wails beneath its Oxfam babygrow
its chocolate coated skin

And mouths of want gape out
crying permission to live
while locusts traffic across the corpse
bring each brother plague in train
blind mastery is done

---

from The Bay of Naples

Talking about art

There are so many
temptations in
'a stop the mind makes
between uncertainties' these
conversations, the fellowship of not knowing
where we travel, 'abrupt
connections with the remote' few
continuities
change in the household
an absence of heart-line
a pair of wounded cats
none truthful
who asks to be the centre of the world

Counting the days

The wide lilac sky holds off before opening-time
Putting my hands in my pockets dull pounds &
pansies the story of polka-dots & stockings
Red slashing the border-post
No kids under three in the township
Counting the days
Crying for food.
We good-heartedly feature Latin-America
'the most exciting continent'
Our pain is
best most personal most
delicious
noone takes that from us
Reading the letter

it is all I wear
& don’t you deny it
blood spilling from the split gum
never forswear it
the sober perfume
the sharp angles
the crystal knocks

None but the brave deserve the fair

how painlessly it is possible to understand
to remain unstained with appropriate reference to
the correct sources. for example
‘After Luke Howard’ (1975) is
A free version of a drawing of a cloud formation
by Luke Howard in the Courtauld Institute.
Luke Howard’s On the Modification of Clouds
may have influenced Constable in his studies. This
painting declares itself painted but where
that blue feathers to the rim and umbered gold
clinches the rosy chamber, restraining those
impalpable presences, holding off before
the true absence of meeting, & I resist
every pip of gravity’s displaced
this inward pull to drama undoes that scholarship
is urgent question.

At the bottom of the garden (without a Henry Moore)

So intimately framed
the best conversations fly solo
glancing off the plane
untamed glance oblique colour
enjewelled
passing between the scones decorously
brushing the air

Place that window
a little further over
in the sticky crooks of elbow reprieved the
trace of where we’ve been, slanting the
English diagonal
disastrous as Lawrence Olivier
in Wuthering Heights

What
would this conditional country be?
you fly
late & edgy, the exacting condition
daily they bud & leaf
carpeting the unlovely pavement

It
hovers un-caught un-
spoken the
fellowship of repeats &
thoughtful timidities
In the public garden

because you catch a train does not follow you will arrive
for the line may be blocked by seventy oaks
because you arrive does not follow you will be met
for the capital may be under siege
suppose you arrive someone meets you
the garden is not then open
for when the earth gapes visitors grow scaffolds
bandaged and limping leave the century follow the river
open yourself to the politics of parks
talking life sidles up while you instruct your companion
in the architecture of evenings searching
for an exit note the area carefully planted
nettles or bears the palings will go
when the harvest is yielded write back
to the river from the south bank read
a gasometer it is your life
you may have to quit
later a pavilion hails you ask for the moment
merriment deepens dusk entretien minutes pass
when ready they will serve and exchange you
pulsing and steady no bus no name no number
carrying your starved body
electric hunch through early May

In Alexander Street

I spend my time talking to you.
my days are dotted with beginnings and endings of sentences
or dreamed.
I do not know you.
We have never been to France together, to theatre, to football,
cooked together
We have never made love &
we certainly have no children.
I have no idea where you buy your socks my silver heart
companion

of the streets
let's keep it that way I can
just about place one foot after another to the
next glass of Guinness so long as
the sky keeps up gleaming.
I should know there is danger when
those muddy purples and blacks slip over our eyes
I demand the life of pavements
at each socket street - life pouring out
to the derision of sirens
correcting my pace - somewhere
there is always a door open
a bar to lean up against
another misfit of passing intimacy
before the recall.

Wendy Mulford's *Late Spring Next Year* was reviewed in Reality Studios
Vol 9. The titles of the poems in "The Bay of Naples" are taken from the
exhibition "40 Paintings 1973-84" by Howard Hodgkin at the
KEITH JEBB

the grey passages (7)

signifire
finally
building
we
think

that
“ordinary”
course
figurative

like
sense:
jester

maybe
winterdusk
just hills
a damp
through
flaps
rainpink
marbelled

let
skim
holes
landscaped
in rings
light
the flopped
clearing

“draw a leaf
draw out of your head”

the air heavy with incest relativatives

epistemology

the human
perse
nothing tongue

the church

“who prophesies tongues to be edified”

band
work
the
news
builders
before
she
end
her
and
bitter

hundred
ground
air

CRIS CHEEK

Squat

“You have to run so hard to find a clear spot”
– Captain Beefheart

A Matchstick blind rolls up and
Down on a String Arrangement. It Looks
At a Tin and goes ‘UGH!’. A crazed
Glass Captivating fluid skylines. Rush
Fire Waving from a first storey
Window. Key-dry Clean but Not
Forgotten. Scratch bows under balcony.
Strewn with some Orange Rind. Sleep
Shook Vim onto fried eggs. Chimney
Wobbles in a Light breeze. Misread
Welcome as Goodbye. Lock into Changes
Must be Made. Eye-balls a violin.
Peeling Belonging from Another Walls.
As stains of former occupants are
Soured off. Rubbing in a Shadow sticks
Together to a Grate. Our Sense of
Community as niggles personified. Time
Pieces to a no-go area. Pitch winds
Upwards As a sun Heat bakes A
String. Biscuit crumbs and human hairs
And barely visible Flakes of skin Brushed
Up with carpet fluff as balls are
Gathered in an ashpan. By trying to make
A room feel Larger Moving Everything
Around. Assorted Piles of Positive Intrigue.
Each on each Others’ Nerves Together.
Taboo isn’t private. What Is broadly
Social Peaking? Any list could be
Endless and Still not definitive.
Sometimes Even a Merest Hint that
Alternative configurations to those present
Do Exist Comes as a Comfort. Provides A
Tactile and contextual memory of place.
Complaining on insistent loud Complaints
About noise. Arguing raised voices Detail
Clear a plumbing relay Deep Asleep. Speaking
A Pound of Slush. Off and On-going Going
Going on and off. A late night scavenge
For a Passport in amongst Books. Sucking
On Mints of Past Resentments. Touching a
Doorway in very deep Darkness preventing
A ‘black’ eye a bruise or a stub.
Getting Up when morning comes and
Putting on another record. Screaming
And punching at each other on a
Tiny Patch of grass Outside At Night
It seems There’s Nowhere else to go.
Stuck into What seems to be Vacuous
Discussion. A Switch Which only works
When turned first On and Then Lodged
In Position halfway Back To Off. That
Uneasy moment when a personal memory
System Breaks Down. Cough sweet Sticky
Glistens Orange in the bottom of a cup.
Breathing curtain reflecting Wind
Casting mobile soft and hard Ranging
Shadows on a bedroom wall Deep into
Night Sleeps with a window open. Albums
And singles Pile 2 feet deep Lean
Into a shelf below an amplifier As a
Player arm returns again Clicks
Lifts up Moves Out Shatters.
Shouts ‘Tomorrow!’ from one balcony
Across An Empty courtyard To Another.

Landing split second improvising Cliche
Come Alive. In This kitchen a
Fluorescent bulb Continually flickers
As a strobe and never settles on.
Foot catch under a loose edge
Of an untacked Rug misjudges Trips
Headlong into a Door. A toilet roll
A screwdriver, a magazine, a 3-way plug
A tea-towel and A phone All on a
Floor near To A Fire and a television
Now become Almost Arranged
Perceptible into a Triangle.
Moon throwing weight through windy trees
Between fast clouds Grey against
Midnight. Early morning Nina Simone
Sings ‘Break Down and Let it all
Out’ ‘don’t let Me Be Misunderstood!’
Graffiti on stairway says
‘Rachael gave her period to a black
Man In a Plastic Bag’. Jam Rag or
Fairies’ Hammock it being released Sets
Up a Motion. Big fuzzy light in Steam
On a Bathroom Mirror. Pool spill of
Coffee Mugs a Carpet. A Rioting Row of
Potted plants Along Sill grow out Remind
Room. Midday sun rushes on Floor
Through Trees in a Wild Rhythm. Favourite
Tracks that sort of Do It every time
Engage. Alarm bells ringing far off
Through a Dream. Racked by Intolerance
And Ignorance and Fear and Kept That Way.
Unplug a clogged plughole then unclogging it

Top Level. Hang spiderplant substitute
For Curtain. Find piss on stairwells
And shit on Walkways. Short to Point.
Thing Found in Common Is Locked Up
Together Forms Basis For Bond. Pink
Bodies Press between black sheets. A
Dusty shelf littered with various pill
Containers and Tubes of Cream. Brandy Advert
Kiss eye sleep takes biscuit. Classic
Interleaf Purr card shuffle off
Patients. Signing on and off. Tape
Mangles thru Machine Heads. Great wafts
Of pong. Conspicuous Waste made further
Use of. Cactus Flowers Colour Skin. Stereo
Gear thrown from sixth floor window
Scatters into broken bits on lawn. Heavy
Metal Door Padlock and chipboard Cut
Out Light. Tenants Barricade Town
Hall. Eyes Accustom to Terminals.

JOHN WILKINSON

Clash of Tongues
for Vennetta Cain

Smashed my brothers & sisters, worked me over:
& for the rest, came to slowly
shocked awake when echo-voices
changed in their hearing,
inflected wind its note over the gaping mouth.
Lacklustre through the selfsame
retenses their slack feathers,
these most flayed have become for their parts
scavengers in packs, I’ve your inmost.

Though we can chime in bounds,
above the uproar, conjuring bounds
to a general rule, self-effacement —

She was the man who could take it
Giving as good as his white opportunities
So very finished, really smooth.

What do I want with the nucleus I came into?

Good question.

Snug in the taxi together & heading
West, tearing the pinions out to assimilate
skin to skin
unwed to the concrete air,
choosing away from stock as we like to indulge
grievances with the utmost part.
Whatever passion’s to break into stuck rhythm,
whether it’s nuanced, 2
00% if nuanced,
they too’ll get what’s
coming to them on our real-time duplicator
dynotaped slave 1, slave 2:

though whether literal
or sarcastic, if it be raging irony,
what accent to a result

Cris Cheek has worked since 1972 as a printer, poet, dancer, musician,
teacher, gardener. He is a founder member of Chisenhale Dance Space,
London, and in 1987 received an Arts Council bursary. Several
publications are forthcoming of recently written works.
Nothing final
What shiver of truth
betrays the uncontainable warmth,
good despite all difference? Where was I?
Coming round painfully
stubbed on the chin
To where I was scissored but not fixed,
in not-only's freedom flexed
reconstituted
he who impulsively gave to get one back on you
I’d never wish to surpass.
This collapse we visit
on our sustaining struts,
we’re not in our blood, in the hectic
kindergarten How are we coming along today?
bitter? chatting-up?
Imagine Mother Nature were to invent a human,
Class AB Gave me a name-check,
took me & casually
passed him over,
proof against anything

gripping her ever so harshly
Under the dome she scraped & produced herself
from colour-blindness,
held on remand,
held on deposit, held on a film plantation
lisps her coddling battery
clap

midwives took you apart in controlled trials.

Consciousness regained in beaded locks, tight
round an ivory bobbin,
flattened & braided & added-on
to the chart of empire Civilized her manners
clap glad we shall immerse clap
stick to its dress-code to the letter.
While we seem to arrive at the present day
pink as the world likes.
We seem to be talking the same dialect
Funny that
Whose mandate could we embody?

Though the generic
gather about the beacon, still our kestrel
spirals down;
but on the wall as time passes, every similar
routine changes,
Once up against it one is a travesty, a turn.
The colonist in you, native whose guts I have,
pieds noirs
kicking sand in the eyes in the bleached
simoon that scuffles over the bony pavement,
Shreds of creole
squeezing through the sieve like curd,
Down to our hearing distance, was it,
vanquishing the intervals,
pancreatic flush
Airtight in its forcemeat oneness.

Piled like dunes, their bleached whispers
tenderize the flesh; went I up-to-the-moment
you went starched,
something made that suntrap lose focus,
rain creeps over our marquee.
If I’ve the cash & you’ve the cash:
We’re playing on different bloody screens’
pull-down menus
Summoning every hand to the plough
clap clasped & bunched Dynastic founders
pounded till our bones sung out cosmetically.
Then a real swell’s
more-of-the-same,
then joy beaches nauseously
as any banal boom-&-slump
Shares in rapture, shares in loss,
call it a blues party, call it a red pencil.
Who did die? who was that
browbeaten slave?
that reference tone
tickled pink
serves well enough at
moment’s notice
clap

but at the charred fence clap
false chime. Nor knew identity
Nor gender The pink
slum or shack:
why centred on ambition
got torn off in strips all unaware
by mastery she’d cinch what had her staked out:
calls me Boss, calls me Massa,
reeling out the barbs she’d tightly wound
blunt or blanketed with deep harm:
Picking lint off, picked together
complicated blooms
jacaranda, got brought up to the barbs
in rainbow tissue slabbed like felt; tracer-shots of freedom fighters
cotton-eyed,
telescope the bathing area’s
just eye-for-an-eye,
Restake, reference & respike:
Then how shall I call you, Pardoner?
Supplier of indulgences? Out for what I refuse
to bank upon Despite our steel wings we breathe
this cabin of rich air which locks
Despite or since
our accord itself was a foreign investment
Hi-tech red-earth pen
scratches your thigh in ultra-violet, launders
under-the-counter wants to Liechtenstein
or Las Vegas,
When shall the pocket in each
sicken the underling deep-down who knows
she’s in thrall, he only ticks
ancillary No nuances
no cloud-piste to shake
rattle & bump,
each hugs the blanket
terms their lips foreclose,
making their little room,
Get back inside
their uniform, their pressure-tomb:
The Way Out’s marked & glows

like a hawk kebabs it for the sake of the kids,
princely in his parts, rapacious
sugar or arrowroot
The gang of foremen charging you up at birth,
You suck, what else,
you suck & cut through the exit hole,
machete’d out to kingdom come or else —
What price to integrate,
what price to join, to traipse
on wire-duty
down at the British base, to ease your arse
on a cushion, troop reviewing stand,
what price to bury the hatchet or silence hurt
cubed, cribed & confined?
Matt cylinder, this big-mouth honks & whistles
Stripped of wings, but all’s snug,
Invertebrate the lingo flocks its walls
Convolute but the casing doesn’t crack,
The family dream unites, & nowhere
lack of parts,
In freefall though still pressurized,
who isn’t well spoken! who isn’t
prey to any enticement
nor lets anything slide Where plastic cups
cling to their tiny bubbles,
irony sticks to the protocols
of love or grief,
the course remains no course,
compliant as paper
Keeping you fresh Making you feel so confident
when you dandle words Insight too’s
an investment you shall attract
injects the shell with hard foam.
Power’s servants clap victims
splitting what each of us got,
fluttering off like sisters & brothers
fostered to different mums & dads,
stealing out in night-clothes
clap unappetized
One dwindling into her grey matter
one so greedy
giving herself away to get one back, she got
whatever she asked for
Her polaroid, her knock-knees
tighten those lips now bare to shit
the backlash, quelling insurgents by pet names:

Scraped against the barbs, mastic yellow
Lip-gloss, natural dyes
Shall my lips be flecked
with a new distinction
How shall I be the cut-purse
of my impeccable hood,
I might pump myself
for your full voice, might search for a break
with my fingers' sea-anemone
stroke,
who stinging my own svelte trunk,
the sideways-on, the ecstatic & the really ill
swap their bags of giblets Empire stamps
showing in ultra-violet,
I've got the best bits, take a look:
Apartheid
murmuring in the midnight taxi
fidgets out the speaking distance, carving up
then lumping, Who has a pass?
whose hands on the sallow leather
twitch,
who holds the night-stick,
strokes the rhino?
Twisted lips & electrode scars
took care of a voice split like a jet of urine;
only worse was the monotone
I smoothed in like a steroid,
thought I was doing good: How was it
Heartfeel,
how could it be this zealotry
Should blanch all idiom, matted
same turn of phrase,
this give-&-take that rips us off & spits
its pale aspersion, back in a rescheduled loan —

ANDREW LAWSON

Four Poems for Theodor W Adorno

1 NEW TOWN

we all walk under the sun, and the postman
fish & chip smell a tattooed girl the Methodist Church
it gets monotonous writing things down i
can feel the colours reaching my eyes
DIY a wedgewood sky fills up the valley

the offices blend into the trees mirrored
honeycombed the trees are cut back
on one side to allow for the buses
popstars & city analysts “the sensible sounds
of men building” plug in & start to glow

2 FROM HERE TO NOWHERE

eyes of the crowd their bodies
packed & undulating opening
the space i reserve for my feelings
proceeding in slo mo cropped
suntanned fields perspective blur a
bunch of chrysanthemums
proper shareholders in the clean breeze

snapped out of a reverie
of fractal clouds
timing the diffusion
of lime leaves in water
gliding past the reflection
embalmed faces waving children
stunned light on trees & metals

in the city millions merging
the shining walls of capital

3 NO COMPETITION

at the flickering hub the shocking reality
“a centrifugal fly strip carousel”
in the resuscitated arcades
brushed steel brick ghosts i saw
eyes filmed over with money
queues of people with bloody stumps
rinsing the language from their mouths
gaunt automata drive under dark tinted skies
kids spreading jam on the floppy disc
the cashills stream into one rising scream

a hollow moon over red traffic

4 POOR SOUL

“not like the noise of me in my dreams
urinating over the dull masses”
the tiny black child entertains the tramp
styrofoam nicotine taste
eyes of pensioners in pain
speedwheels spin to the tinny headbeat
sierra maestro vitesse
i think about the letter before we argued
ten red roses her fingers in my hair
“do you want me to have another heart attack”
“we understand each other then” “what do you mean
if i dont like it” “i mean you can change it”

a policeman on a bicycle says good evening
a man walking his dog says its getting colder
at the airport theres a solid rainbow
anchored over the council estate

Andrew Lawson’s work has appeared in Figs and New Poetry from Oxford.
perturbation in lambda

for Bhaskar Sengupta

there is no mystery
about the process:
the line goes from here
to as far
as you want to take it.
just fasten your seat-belts
& start the countdown.
the temperature’s 45
& rising,
& the chicken
slowly absorbs
white wine & mustard
& cream.

do I make myself clear?
we could start
with the ride from the airport,
the struggle
with the air-conditioner,
arguments about words.
the notepad on the table
is covered with figures,
equations, diagrams.
the planet traverses
multi-dimensional spaces
& even the bathroom-taps
turn on a double axis.

over the bridge

jets at tree-top height
aerial photographs of defoliated
forests. I thought we’d
had enough adventures. rare
plants, rarer people. naked
between the sheets. calligraphy
of sweat on skin.
this or that inheritance
showing forth wrench apart.
the benefits of difference.
an eye for shape
& colour steering into
the bends & over
the bridge between cultures
a chain of fortifications
now fallen into ruins
sunset over the estuary
white gulls white sails
slim bodies like torpedoes
a scribble of lightning
above the cottage roof.
it came to pass: drowning & dreaming

for jennifer durrant

leaves or flowers unfolded
against darkness blue sky
beyond at the window
2 figures in white
lavender lilac blood-red masses
float free drips spatters
flashes of intense light
‘to actualise the intangible’
a sudden inundation floodwater
swirls across black tiles
circles rises fragility transformed
holds streams strains cries.

the challenge

for roy and elizabeth

a lot of red
wine under the bridge
so chooses 2 women
in long white dresses
blue shadow yellow highlights
and the blue boat
steady as a rock
on its own reflection
all those young men
on bicycles golden calves
& shiny black shorts
the garden full of
painters would you believe
mosaics blissful hills above
camembert country oh my
dear mon cher gender
always was my weakness
the seaside out of season rain wherever we go the empty hotels windy promenades deserted restaurants the desk-clerk dressed in black never said a word car-door held open a single knee-length boot extends from the back-seat 40 years later & not a day older a cloak draped like batswings on the cliff-top another victim photos in the newspapers one arm trails from the stretcher palely over wet cobbles we shall be such good friends she says the telephones don’t work the police are powerless

RobertHampson has recently collaborated with David Miller in the translation of A P Zverkov’s Nevsky Prospekt (hardPressed Poetry).
DRAKE STUTESMAN

Dance of the Crutches

Cock an elbow, pose a knee,
a waltz of suffering to be.
Re-enact the child's hold,
in love as you react and code
the furnaced lips and winking eyes,
opened nostrils, mewing cries.

On your shoulders a thought sits like a whisperer.
Within it a barrier of sinewy brocade
undulates, and even awake you must go back
in that hierarchy of hairpin turns. A way
shared and fattened, as it were, by
special parasites of weak confusion
who sicken the physic of your psychology.
You cannot sleep; a sense settles
as blood will do with no gravity.
Vivid silence pumps the room, the minutes
balloon, your state lights like a storm
and you face, in one look ahead,
an understanding you are not prepared for
of a place inset in all experience:
Forest fills the corridor out there!
Branches and fresh leaves breathe in the watery dark.
A chiaroscuro of the clotted past, stopped as a block
of black and white, still, like a shock, but alive.
Uninhabitable.
You're afraid to go in.

Childhood is old.
Salient, ambiguous,
it’s story greenly feels you
like a silken parent.
Shhh, even so,
something
tantalizes.

Far off,
in a telescopic sight,
at night
when the winter sky
is a stone swept by a cold wind,
you see your moving heart,
such flesh in a cloud of light,
before its long incontinency.

What happened?
Memory, unfriendly, twists
distortion in a train of thought.
Fiction persists. You are taught
by recollections having no existence.
No sighs will return your extinct human ease;
except, the affection in your life
like a single pear tree in a winding garden
or the rosy sun of childish purpose
where the nursery of emotions basked.
Their air of supernatural elegance
backlights forever the hard shapes
that fiction takes, barely recognizable,
from the invisible life wherein you passed.
And barely acquainted with it all, memory directs
its dead wildly within this forest of meaning
to wreck what’s left in the extremes:
weights of plain pain and love.
Shrivels these scenes
to a tiny twinkling picture.
Abruptly, when a pang dominates your ears
and eyes, it widens to a high relief,
in a fanning sweep, as a sunrise
uncovers the trimmings of an unseen street.
Flashes up tears, surprising tears,
their lines are all you know
of what feeling is.

But fear
The maggot spirit the mind’s prudence adopts
with its foggish brooding face, its flesh
a curved mirror, works.
Unsuited,
you are in a lifetime, you go
(without checking back
without knowing more)
again, where everybody goes—
the kiss, the embrace,
oh, the affair... that place...
where emotions, as tranced mediums,
speak of other worlds.

Drake Stutesman is an American woman living in London. This poem is taken from an unpublished collection.

LEE HARWOOD

SEASIDE SUITE

1. Early August, Brighton Beach.

The sea a rich dark blue and the sky a clear light blue;
the mottled colours of the shingle beach; the white buildings inland.
Closing your eyes you hear the sound of the waves falling
and dragging the shingle, the call of a gull, the wing
beat of a pigeon, the sound of a distant family arguing
"What have I done? What have I done?" sobs a small boy, almost hysterical.
Three small clouds pass in line to the west above Worthing.

2. Late summer.

What does one hope for, after all?
Over the beach the smudge of orange sun
low in the sky early on a September evening.
The sea calm and almost clear like
that green glass slab for sharpening razorblades.
Not back that far, but here, and now.
A golden misty light as we swim
through the waters, bobbing and surging.
You really are the most charming and witty
company I could wish for.
3. Early autumn.

A bar of bright gold sinks slowly behind the wavering lines of clouds, their tops a pale pink and their bellies a dove grey that slides down into the sea's horizon.

As the day ends we remember the glitter of the waves on a crisp afternoon. As though for ever, not still but there. But now you depart again, like the seasons your coming and going.

The cold days ahead, icy days walking the beach inspecting the debris cast up by the storms and tides. 'Jetsam' is the correct term.

MOON SUITE

1.

Haunted by the moon. The clouds part and you slightly appear, your left side amongst the smokey greys. The sky shifts again and you disappear but I know, your presence luminous behind those barriers, smoke screens and soft airy diversions.

The night goes on but you’re embedded in my heart. The empty streets, lamp lit trees, and silent buildings crammed with unknown doings, that world engulfed by you so that near helpless I stand or sit or lie obsessed by your presence, whatever "you" may be.

2.

Night after night the full moon bears down... overwhelms me, as though hypnotised. What is this moon madness? I’m not a Chinese poet by any "stroke of the imagination".

3.

By day face muscles tighten bound by the dreams that don’t match the world but as the night progresses the body relaxes like liquid, flowing, easy the tides drawn by the moon in their fullness
4.

Not an allegory
nor symbols for the near indescribable,
but an unknown quality,
imprecise and wandering.
Such vague feelings whose strength is
faced by the clear indifferent skies,
the regular phases of a moon
whose power is complete.

5.

Watching a dull night sky
stood by my kitchen window—one’s hopes
wretchedly and rightly projected out there
into the world. Mean creatures
near hopeless—but these moments
of stillness, near awe as
you emerge glorious from the clouds,
radiant anew, illuminating the clouds below,
the sea sparkling with your light.

Lee Harwood’s last appearance in Reality Studios was in Vol. 8, where his books *Monster Masks* and *Dream Quilt* were also reviewed. His selected poems will be published soon by Paladin.
money is hard and bright to come by a naked state
fires and beacon-fires city to mud-ridden city multiply
dolor and mud stepping out for my wine-ration
final coins and the land is forgotten and lost in clouds

my wife and children I am unemployed for forty years
insurrected streets the city of old brocade
a nation ought to know its boundaries
daggers and honey-tongues night of rebellion night

farmland astoundingly generous, patient and pregnant
peasants dragged off to the lines for thousands consecutive
sentences
this a poor house with only stale wine for a bottle
I wish that the pines would spring for a thousand feet

*  

In these my cities muddy paths the 4 Oceans bending and ceasing
in farmland incessant swampy immobile fog-washed the hills
chanting
wine-drunk the old days with Li Bai god among poets
sharing the same couch, jug-sweat, ancient love

my thatched roof is destroyed by the Autumn wind
1966-76 a great sunburst of political ecstasy
broken glass and broken the knees of the righteous war
rain on my hands and the dealers flutter the god-pictures

wind on my neck in the days the nights of up-rising
thousands the poems the years sloshing from dung-carts
English the cities and I am a ghost and I know that I am a
deafness
ie I am unheard, and unknown, but by myself I am thoroughly
known

as a phoenix rising from vortex to vortex
watching the gutter with wine snaring the stomach
one luxurious plant in the park and flowers of cold coins
the rich and the wretched clattering, rayon meat tin and futures

characters turn and the meaning rises and stands up
as hills in fog, meaning, only the hills and streams remain
and I write nothing, boat in my heart chanting
the river flows, fraction of brush and paper

Tu Fu in search of elixir-time by-passing
Monument, Bank, over London Bridge so many
placebo-river, switching away to the border
I wish that the pines would spring a thousand feet

1 is a figure of speech encradled
name on a mountain of thought a fiction
I is a fiction a true chanting
Time that is crashing a coat collapsing

pines a thousand feet to wish up springing
poem a thousand children thousand pronoun
thousand years bamboo growing human heart a similar song
the ghosts are lonely lovely time-rivers crossing
earth the gift the mountain-cities creaking

Graham Hartill now lives in Cardiff after a spell teaching in China. His
most recent books are Bronzes (Milvus-milvus Press) and Turas (Red
Sharks Press), and his translations (with Wu Fusheng) of the 3rd century
Chinese lyric poet Ruan Ji have just been published under the title of
Songs of My Heart by Wellsweep.
Venery Feats

walking with her along Paston alexanders by verge to churches under the lesson of Cotman’s vane great Cloud of Witnesses — the open scrolls to find there as discovery what is written by their hand and in that music — their praise of quiet at Kanapton

for and as above very neat, of Irish Oak, both church and choir, meant for elsewhere

by viewing from the east end the lights now filled with whatever colour the day has and this to erosis completing in the light it throws as and on the real in the name of Laura on of blue velvet on of whyet damaske on of crymsyne satten on of brydges on of blake wursted on of grene cruell on of bage and of domyxe bikini

in the church of Knapton before the likenesse of Our Lady I remember surfing may be obtained
not a single head
tagging to old age
anything like

as to
always beginning by never ending
be it
as bodies are joy to each other by
sight & hearing & smell taste touch

there is no triste

2

—as one thread

'Blomefield who is seldom right about
Norfolk place-names' says
for a weighing-machine
that such
stood at the cross-roads
the ugliest-pit pub
in an English village

— hiding St Botolph's

horatia Ward

'On a tomb
in the chancel
near the altar rails'

but

under the carpet
horatia Nelson

her mother starved —
the government too virtuous
to see — her services —

more intricate
than Knapton
the light

green yellow so
/the colour there
and not party to
, the font cover ornate
yet
uttered quiet
meanting
we got
(though churches
in time

Go and walk a cool & cloudy June
where placements are

by light of her

Peter deRous' last appearance in Reality Studios was in Vol 1 (1978)
Clemens Retich

Fifty Gazelle

Will it so you can say A dusky melancholy for her milk to have & kissed sinuous valleys for sulferous roaring risk Pearls that were his eyes To hear them between your sloops & after Nourished on her Depth of drinking shall the old man bound Out of the dust It's cold, men kneeling before & between your what is weak, drinking sloops after flamed amazement sloops after I tell my feminine form who's voice filling the Hateful gnome with drinking Of the harpy Come into Walk around Flamed amazement Between Ariel Made me not Grape juice Sloops after fire-hearth of God be visited Flamed amazement for one tripping on a lioness of God; you could say slipping into with hair Flamed amazement at the tempest, at the fire, at the end of nothing of him; just dancing on Sister moons said yes & one tripping on I drink the sound of Ariel playing the hateful gnome Sinuous valleys; terrible ones With earthquakes they then like reeds Grape juice for my delicate Ariel To pluck So calmly nourished on her Made substantially afire with me Kill sacrifices to be visited Be visited Milk as Hateful gnome Reflected in the His toes will Stepping into Head of unbridled joy Voice filling the Shall learn Sister moons Connects our Our world lacks something at midnight My cuttings the Shall be an airy prankish Turning of things It's cold dancing on With a song all is become the tempest Sooty pinions over the fire-hearth of God Shall be My cutting the slipping afterbirth of the sister as end Year to year breathe twice for Ariel playing that fight at the breast One tripping on his daughter suckled the cried hell Of the harpy His toes will From her breasts Unable to The name The inner satellite Yes

At the breast Breathe twice my fifty Ariels of unbridled joy Kicking against it breathe twice The tempest will distress as beginning Fetch dew my sooty pinions or milk as Afire with me, I cleave to Small dust afire with me at the breast, a swollen & distended Slipping into the fire with me Against my Cried hell but made me not With hair Turning of things with earthquakes Feet chained Still-vested A dusky melancholy, fifty Ariels His toe will an airy prankish slipping into A night vision The tempest of the old physical cried hell with hair An instant suddenly is sealed, our hateful gnome An airy prankish That passeth the open-mouthed A young An instant, suddenly the new spiritual I drink the airy prankish To do His need will speak out of the ground & enter Ariel Into the fire, wet, black, graceful form Milk as A swollen & distended reflected in the Head in his arms An instant suddenly Then like reeds The eyes unable to & thirsting You love His arms his daughter suckles as beginning Depth of with a song, storm & tempest His need with a dusky melancholy Curled clouds The tempest then like reeds into a swollen & distended You can say & thirsting I hear Performed my Ariel Yes Fetch dew that passeth Then like reeds you can say Bulging smelt music, the name, the baby out Go to the A crust cracked Hear them in an instant suddenly Coagulates in That passeth No understanding with a song, with a song That passeth With a song, swollen & distended wild waves Yellow sands Hear my cutting the With drinking the Ariel Antelope And thirsting Suckling One learns as the Rings his milk as sinuous valleys My cutting into the fire Sitting behind It is sealed Reflected in the Hear her flow through those chasms head Milk as My delicate Ariel The words keep them bones & coral for my dainty Ariel From a text of Flowed through those chasms The deprivation fifty Ariels No understanding Bravely the figure Means of her The nuptial wet black; a tale of swollen petals Wise hereafter; the nuptial risk, my tears on the lioness of
God's voice filling the too much red-hot Still-vexed pearls that were his eyes depicted frequently from her breasts' sister moons The book Nurse as swollen petals Sliding her Of an angel & fifty Ariels Between your yes after-birth makes substantial waves Air before her upside down Thirsting & my cutting the Shall the work which men deliver the blood & hearing rend an oak? The nuptial Small dust Master through From a text of drinking Wound the loud, hear them deep, my bloody forearms Unable to Depicted frequently in sense of violence Dream of rings his drinking ride into In need of Glaciers appear Requires thirsting & a swollen & distended Into a cloven Have & kissed the milky churning, I drink the My bloody forearms as a lioness Between her hands taught by Saturn the still-vexed sense of violence Sliding her out of the ground Father lies all you need is Singing to Speak out of the ground Suckling deliver all floors call grabens The longing Foresees the danger Grape juice Means of her bloody forearms Nurse as the new spiritual When owls ride into the wise hereafter Which men deliver? To pluck Small dust Speak out of the ground Ariel depicted frequently to fly, playing on your Bravely the figure fetch dew Ammonia water slush Crowning her milk an ayrie spirit, a crust cracked, dancing Taught by yes A night vision When owls, an appellation in a cell Dream of Indian music, knotty entrails, floors called grabens The blood & Wound the loud Air before My tears on your old man bound into the fire His obligation Nurse as I hear Lioness of God When owls Made me not sliding her Bones are coral will I distress The Ariel Antelope Our world lacks fifty Ariels Swollen & distended the deep Is it into a cloven The Ariel Antelope With drinking All you need foresee the danger as beginning A familiar spirit Risk Still-vexed Stinging the words Reflected in the Hell is become my delicate Ariel As a lioness rendered by Cloverdale Swollen petals Master through As beginning the thing framed Hazel clamps Reflected in the As a lioness Reach down & A creature foresees the danger Diminished one rendered by Cloverdale between Ariel & the eyes called by the Arabs rend an oak The deprivation A tale of His arms there shall be wild waves You can feel The eyes of To do into the fire Coagulates in the strain of my bloody forearms to know human need as beginning Pearls that were his eyes singing to enter Ariel Wild waves with drinking ammonia water slush Stabs kill swollen petals as beginning the elements that murmured against my The nuptial as a lioness to do my bloody forearms & Ariel playing shall whisper drinking Drinking Hazel clamps his obligations depicted frequently a crust cracked With drinking Unto me The strain of Hope to see you cut off from the ward drinking All you need is Else his project singing to an angel cut off from The longing Bearded old man have & kissed Crowning Smelt music in a cell Sitting behind Let me just Against me the elements walk around Can you feel? A creature enter Ariel the eyes of A familiar spirit enter Ariel that hangs wild waves unto me, into something Walk around Bearded old man, bloody forearms Ariel shows but weakness has after-birth sister moons will it Too much Deaf hear coagulates in Bones are coral The eyes of grape juice Hazel clamps a creature that hangs Indian music The book of Swollen petals Singing to The strain of swollen petals suffer a sea The name Saturn the deliverer to know human Deaf hear To do A crust cracked, I drink, I cleave to Ariel shows in a cell Keep them wild waves Diminish one beautiful storm & tempest singing to crowning sister moons Bones are coral The thing framed Can you feel helpless & sucking? Our world lacks Rendered by Cloverdale Bleeding on the A crust cracked means her pillars holding you deliver red-hot Of an angel Made substantial Pearls that were his eyes rend an oak sitting behind you holding you in In a cell a gazelle Deliver all an ayrie spirit, milky churning In my chest The blood & Erred in between Ariel, an ayrie spirit, the nuptial tale of sacrifices Deaf hear A familiar spirit in the nuptial Peed on
Come into, kneeling before red-hot coral bones; my bird
singing to His obligation I hear taught by an appellation Nurse as The milky churning beautiful His
daughter, I tell my crowning love an appellation. Bleeding on Dream of Saturn the An appellation Beard-
ed old man into the fire. Ariel shows Ariel playing
All you need is a cloven potent, a familiar spirit
Let me just Wise hereafter Sitting being, still-
vexed. The pillars of unbodied joy Such major painters Kill sacrifices rendered by Cloverdale The thing framed Graceful form Deaf hear sliding her to the
milky churning. Go to the Come play your Foresees
danger, smelt music Sitting behind bulging Graceful form My bird Ariel shows In a cell rend
an oak; Indian music against my In my chest That
hangs men kneeling men before Knotty entrails of an
angel. That fight come into Graceful form Bulging
There suck One learns at the The fight unbridled
joy Ariel playing Into a cloven. Your eyes Master through Kill sacrifices, a crust cracked the
pillars of. That hangs the name, a night vision An
ayrie spirit Will it A sense of violence His
obligation bleeding on the What a beautiful Such
major painters Into something, a tale of a bearded
old man. Diminish one creature The thing is goodly
sight Such major painters out of the ground diminish
one Ariel shows an appellation. A creature that fights
many hours with. Storm & tempest one learns at the
A tale of violence suckling men kneeling before
The pillars Go to the. Let me just Deaf hear
Such major painters but nothing of him still closing
But weakness has & kissed Your eyes many hours with
helpless new spiritual The pillars of deaf enter Ariel
in the ward; a night vision, an appellation sliding her
in a cell Into a cloven But weakness has Of an
angel sliding her bulging. Voice filling the. Can you
feel after-birth? Voice filling the In sense of
violence I cleave to Out of the ground in a sense of
violence to the Of an angel The longing voice fill-
ing the That fight drips into something Graceful
form

From a text of my lover & Against my
Suckling Diminish one, the deprivation The thing framed smelt music Come into the ward Performed
my Ariel goodly sight His arms in the ward, in
the ward; bearded old man Air before Too much
Keep them In the ward. Your eyes But weakness
has Means of her, to have & kissed where father
lies were red-hot from her breasts to the eyes of the
bearded old man The deprivation that hangs on
In the ward

Fetch dew such major painters The strain of
that night Bones are coral Lover & into something
too much from her breasts come into Too much Knotty
entrails the thing framed smelt music crowning. Crowning
requires thirsting Were red-hot & fetch dew from
her breasts; come & play on your Wise hereafter
Means of her storm & tempest Suckling the longing
Storm & tempest. The blood & Come into The milk is
Father lies The longing There suck Goodly sight
Helplessness & The strain of Goodly sight; the milk
is smelt music Goodly sight; his arms The strain of
Goodly sight; air before her breasts, storm & tempest
performed my Ariel Storm & tempest

Come & play on yours, the milk is Come play
on your arms Nothing of him Performed my Ariel The
Strain of There suck Air before helplessness & there
suck

Drips Many hours with Are ministers

Helplessness & many hours with, many hours
with The new spiritual The blood & the new spiritual
KEITH JEBB

the grey passages (9)

passmusic "the long
in flowing hairs of
the your legs"
ions to be xochicuicatl
of meanings "flower song"
Nahuatl
proofreading for poetry
does said
"the winged peoples every man
make their nests has a
different flower on
in circles too for
their is the same his plate
religion as ours"
those creamed sounds
ducks shadow of a
dead albatross
want hanging
fed	
sky like
still people
standing
just
tangent
down a milk-spot
paper-ball

Rabid liberals
bite
woolly jumpers
the world is
on the back
of a rhinoceros
pulgrim
peck peck
till you grow
whiskers
on you
to touch
and corner
altery
briefly his
birth was in
an alter table
& through the
telescope the
moonlight
night and lit
like ufos
turned out
were pollen
grains
ions

Keith Jebb is a co-editor of the magazine New Poetry from Oxford.
A violence lives at the boundaries of proposition, where the nickel and dime children will write anything. The dimensions are all hand-held, stalking their private vocabularies into English. If we cross murder with language, we get prophylactic heaven and paratactic monsters. In this alphabet, a cadillac smashes into a cloud of delirious bats.

Reel 1: The back end of a cadillac being eaten.

Reel 2: If we arrive, we are the last to arrive.
   The monsters know nothing.

Reel 3: (Monsters file past.)

Reel 4: (Enter an impractical aristocrat, carrying his half-eaten.) Aristocrat: Maan, wee gotta dew sumtheeng hbowt thoose iiansex!!

Reel 5: The trompe de ville grazes by the roadside, naked and full of moonlight, all the parts the mind was. That's it. The has Been. The has-been head is, at any point, one point. The point is to make Jack and Jill fall so fast their point-filled bones blur, until they make a para-transit authority in inexistence.

There are too many work orders about poetry and prose.

The "end of the world" displaces the word. The difference is a verbal sheet lightning.

Not pushed, but being pulled, fall:

A sign comes on in our wisely-wooded Congress, in the muscular reference that keeps us sitting here.

The note pad and gun's rigorously sleepless thought.

Transgression

For one brief moment time prints with a pilgrim's turmoil. In which a person is request and stockpile.

Take the number at the bottom and call it "bottom".

Pointlessly liquid wages, a conductor's steel eye. Its pugilistic syllable has always been thoughtful in its fissuring brace with their clouds on, screens nor mediate baggage, our self-consuming license wanting to say one, in one, its isolating oars falling short of thought and lying in it.
Silence begins with a wall around a friendly neck, a city for its catatonic in it, not in it.

I have that same picture we say things in, erotic as having said.

One is the space between two defined as one whether it puts our objectivity into appetite or not.

And the monsters are all extinct now.

At the risk of needing more money to pay for money, paraphrastic speech elides a mind's stencilling isolation, our facts and hardened clothes.

Having been an outlet to this outlet.

There are, of them, the intrusion, who or how its markets are, the gun construed by which what has been and will have been shoots me in its individual lives.

A fluency of enlargement as ever our examples without one dangling into change our blue-minded large-format faces change.

A synonym is all it ever yields on a scale of control, the underpinnings in the driver's seat, pulling into thought its near-fatal and minimum floor.

Its own passive is our obsolete, the wheelbarrow taking their place in its portrait, verbally dressed for distance.
REVIEWS

TOWARDS CIVIC PRODUCTION

A Various Art edited by Andrew Crozier and Tim Longville
(Carcanet, £12.95 hb only)

(including selections from the works of Anthony Barnett, David
Chaloner, Andrew Crozier, Roy Fisher, Veronica Forrest-
Thomson, John Hall, Ralph Hawkins, John James, Tim Longville,
Douglas Oliver, Peter Philpott, J H Prynne, John Riley, Peter
Riley, John Seed, Iain Sinclair and Nick Totton)

Where a history accounts for a group of people's activities as
depending more on culture than on force as a means of social
control, it can be said that their appearances are a matter of
inescapable political significance. Cut this against the civic and
courtly idea of sprezzatura in which the dominant impression
made by a person is one of understatement: gravity and self-
possession are allowed to suggest inner strength and virtue.

Page one of Andrew Crozier's first book, Loved Litter of Time
Spent, begins with "A poem called 'Politics' for the Colombian
tin miners and, too, to the memory of Alexandra Kollontai"; lines
11-17 read:

The mines they work are nationalised,
that was some years ago, they are
the country's wealth and
now the managers have returned to the cities, leaving
their country's wealth
In whose hands? and
where is nation? that comes from outside...

This direct speech in Andrew Crozier's work has now been
subsumed under a different artifice. The new artifice that he
factures retains the civic necessity that this early public poetry
communicates. This shift to a contemporary sprezzatura was
already underway in his comprehension of the Objectivists in the
late 1960s. It amounts to a bringing together of different modes of
address, or different opportunities in the use of language and

figure, that his work selected in A Various Art, and his labour as
part-producer of the selection from the work of others, exemplify.
It is a reading of these productions that a float perception (a
reading of appearances only) of these poetries can conceal.
Andrew Crozier's subsequent (1984) appraisal of George Oppen is
particularly pertinent in this regard, because of the different
readings that poet appears to be given by some of the poets
brought into account in A Various Art.

Making an appraisal of A Various Art without discussing all
of the work selected appears on the surface to be inadequate.
Discussing all of the work, however, proves too lengthy for this
review. The approach which follows attempts to consider the
publication as a book that has in itself a meaning. To do this it
becomes necessary to run some preliminary assumptions that
underlie what follows. It might not be agreed, for instance, that
the production of Beauty, being urgently necessary, amounts to an
imperative task. It might be argued that such a task is one of the
functions of the poet. But the production of Beauty cannot simply
rest with the facturing poet, because of the unavoidable
involvement of the reader. The problem, if that's what it is,
arises when the reader is presented with a selection of works
from a variety of poets: how does a reader produce Beauty? At
least, that is how the proposal made by A Various Art can
present itself.

If the reader takes A Various Art as a whole, as a book in
itself, its proposal to the reader is that of a civic address or an
aspiration to such an address. This is encouraged by the themes it
differently reiterates of blood and light; that unending quest that
precedes this century in Judaeo-Christian Europe and promises to
destroy it. But the book and the world (this review assumes) are
not the same text. The classical presentation lent to the poetry
here, by the idea of a selection from the works of many, gives the
feeling that the book is optimistic. This separates the reader
from some of the pessimism in the poetry it presents. The civic
address is encouraged by a rhetorical surface and a constructionist
base, but this is mnemonically imprinted by an insistence on the
use of direct perception to derive its descriptions and truth value,
albeit concealed in the shift artifice makes from the phenomenal
to the imperative or idealised object. This shift from reliance on
the natural is a necessity to prevent the truth value from existing
independent of successive judgements.
Not all of the assumptions contained above have yet been elucidated, but that's about all I have to say about A Various Art: it is worth buying and reading as a book in itself and as exemplary of civic aspiration through aesthetic practice. What the poets themselves may propose through their work, independent or otherwise of this signification, might be a different issue entirely and in many cases most certainly is.

Let some questions be asked regarding the above reader-production in an effort to make what is meant clearer. The reader-production relies on the facture of 17 poets and the subsequent production made by the selection. The selectors include both the poets and the editors. The presentation of A Various Art (how printed, how ordered, how packaged, how marketed) adds a further component. The presentation is already a production on the part of the editors, a selective process that has taken into account the other selected items and the poet’s preferences—preferences presumably given without knowledge of the other items selected. It would, therefore, be no surprise if the book had turned out to be more various than it is. In fact A Various Art offers a coherence, even if disputable, in terms of its consistent taste, history and aesthetic.

Such a striking consistency could do with a few glosses that might help account for it, before any disputation is suggested. Starting with the aesthetic dimension: there appears, without shimmer, a concordant premise, implicit in each work presented inside the sullen package A Various Art, that each work gives precedence to its aesthetic function. A consequence of this is that the result of each poet’s labour amounts to an artefact that most (or perhaps more cautiously, many) would consider an art object or a set of art objects. The production of each aesthetic work, however, is not simply a consequence of the poet’s facture, but, if Beauty and thus the civic is to be involved here, necessarily encourages the reader’s production. The presentation of the works in A Various Art adds the productive effort of the selectors and their new juxtaposing of the works with others.

Before elaboration of the aesthetic function here it might be worth noting what is meant by taste and history. The work selected from for A Various Art has been limited to that of 17 poets. All of these poets have been published by either Andrew Crozier, Tim Longville, or both (the exception of Veronica Forrest-Thomson can be countered by noticing the colloquy made in dedication to her by both editors at her death). The selection therefore not only deliberately excludes works by many of the poets that Ferry Press and Grosseteste Press/Review have not published, but also many of those that they have. This is where the interaction of taste and history determines the selection. The editors rely on the history they themselves have contributed to the production of, a history that has been partly determined by their taste. They tear from that history what their taste and view of the job-in-hand need to arrive at in their new production. Because of the job-in-hand, with its unavoidable (even if unintended) canonical inclinations—its presentations of chronological range in the poets’ works selected—some of the poets they favoured in the 1970s are excluded from A Various Art. For example, John Temple (published by Ferry) has not continued to publish books of poetry; Chris Torrance (published by Ferry) and Jim Burns (published by Grosseteste) have both changed their aesthetic practice sufficiently enough to persuade the editors that they are now part of a different aesthetic paradigm. On the other hand, there are writers who may be said to take part in some of the aesthetic practice the editors’ tastes prefer who are not included because they are excluded historically (from not having been published by Ferry or Grosseteste). I don’t know if this accounts for the exclusion of Wendy Mulford or R F Langley. Certainly, any reader believing the book should include Tom Raworth or Bill Griffiths or John Wilkinson or Eric Mottram or Ulli Freer or Rod Mengham or cris cheek or Denise Riley or B Catling should look again; first at the history and taste of the editors, but more properly, at the aesthetic function of the book to hand. The manners presented by A Various Art are quite different from those of the few named among the many that might have been listed above.

Each work in the book gives precedence to the aesthetic dimension and the poets, to varying degrees, use four components to facture this. A brief elaboration of these components could have the following scenario:

(i) A constructionist aesthetic with, in the main, a consequential emphasis on ideal limits, self-referral and autonomy common to late Modernism.

(ii) A reliance on direct perception (itself a construction) usually through autobiographical or domestic descriptions (but sometimes via the texts of other describers), what Empsonians (for
example, Veronica Forrest-Thomson) call “natural” turned to “artifice”. These direct perceptions provide sources for evaluation of truth, and encourage part of the vocabulary in the rhetorical surface.

(iii) A rhetorical surface that has been self-parodied, or is a pastiche from conventional (expected) usage.

(iv) An address that aspires to the civic, rather than public, even where the surface is a parody.

None of these components can be applied in a categorical manner, or as if they were certainties, or were always present, but they do provide some workable notions when using the book. These components, designed to persuade attention, move and teach the reader, to encourage Beauty in the reader’s production, are elaborated below.

One of the consistent premises used by poets whose work has been selected in A Various Art is that of a constructionist aesthetic with, as has already been noted, a consequential emphasis on ideal limits, self-referral and autonomy. By constructionist can be understood both the factual method of building or arranging in piles into a self-contained whole and the concept of a syntactical arrangement with meaning. (Constructionist work is, therefore, not the same as the Constructivist art introduced into Germany and Britain in 1921 from Russia, even if, as may be inferred by readers in what follows, there are affinities with it. For instance both constructionist and Constructivist works avoid representation of an object or a view of the world already seen and known. Both may aim to persuade the reader to produce an event in consciousness which is allocated a different existence in spacetime. Unlike Constructivists, however, the constructionists in A Various Art continually refer to and rely upon direct perception of the world a priori their writing, even if this perception is only one made by the eventual reader, or reader’s memory. Whilst many of the writers in A Various Art find precedents in such artists as William Carlos Williams and George Oppen, many do not.)

Thus direct perception, in the reader’s production, plays an integral part in constructionist aesthetics and this couples to the fact that perception itself is a construction. Another way of stating this would be to recognise that perception of the world involves a production on the part of the perceiver. It is as a consequence of this that the comprehension of Beauty, whether persuaded by an aesthetic object or striking event in a less artificial situation, is made possible only by the combination of both the persuader’s labour and the perceiver’s production. Both poet and reader are involved in patterns of connectedness which have imperfect fits. The illuminated, throbbing amoeba and the perception of it or the poem and the reading of it. This begins to suggest why it is that the constructionist poet makes use of direct perception as one of the components in facture of the aesthetic dimension. (This is not the place to describe what alternatives to this approach to facture there might be.) It also begins to explain why all the poets in A Various Art, albeit to a widely varying degree, use a vocabulary that evokes the concepts of self-consciousness, and of distance-perceptions, and in some, a notion of the unseen or unseeable. The words that recur and signal these particulars are “blood” and “light”.

Without diverting attention too far, a few examples of this may begin to suggest what is being observed here. In Iain Sinclair’s “SLADE’S INVECTIVE”:

gravities to contain the light
shapes where the light clusters
as it comes through glass
as light breaks to this pattern
as we reach across, blood erected into bone
as the skin dreams of folding
enclosing, about the coin

(355)

An earlier passage in the selection from Iain Sinclair’s work “What does he think is the governing process here? It is a total sun surgery…” (346), may be juxtaposed with John Riley’s reworked version of his “Czargrad” which halfway down 284 reads:

reaching out, driven
from pillar to post of millennia blood
thickens, thins
to get to know
the flight of angels “I have not loved
my contemporaries, I’ve loved their beauty”
“and pitied myself improperly” cee pourriture
I think I hear there the whine of receding light...
Although this may seem a long way from Nick Totton's "Not Slipping..." on 367 with:

Through the voice barrier, and formulaic atrophy
doubling in the blank cistern
is brought to display by surgery
at first light...

it is, of course, life on the planet that is being comprehended here. "Magnificent/gorges at sunset" as Roy Fisher puts it (102) or

Morning, Eleven. The billiard table has been slept on.
A mess of sheets on the green baize
Suggests a surgery without blood. (97)

to which may be added, from David Chaloner's "Rain":

this golden sunlight that could be mythical
if ill-used, taken as easy option,
is best abandoned. (62)

A further consequence of constructionist facture and a reliance
on direct perception for truth leads to a recurrence of "the window" or "frame" (and by implication both photography and painting).

...I don't remember arriving
till I enter a room to see the sun setting
framed in the window and know that I still love...

(Andrew Crozier's "February Evenings" 70)

Examples of constructionist practice are differently exemplified in A Various Art. In the performances given by both
Anthony Barnett and Peter Riley in the 1970s their “music” was advertised as “improvised” and their poetry as “composed”. The distinction helps to clarify the constructionist wholeness of their
art objects. The immediacy promoted by the improvised practice gives emphasis to the slower attention called for in the
comprehension of the “composed” writing.

...the senses' final construct moves
relentlessly through substance to the houses
of light, mutual, devotion...

(Peter Riley, "The Material Soul" 322)

In one of the two essays designed to accompany his book Tracks and Mineshafts Peter Riley makes a particular use of construction
"improvised" and their poetry as "composed". The distinction helps to clarify the constructionist wholeness of their
art objects. The immediacy promoted by the improvised practice gives emphasis to the slower attention called for in the
comprehension of the “composed” writing.

...the photograph is not the art of the moment until it is also the art of
a constructed formality, an aesthetic wholeness. (ibid, p24)

It might be too ingenious to suggest that these concepts also
apply to Peter Riley's poetry. On page 24 of Two Essays he also
writes:

Poetry is surely one of the places where the creation of form, the
achievement of truth, and the effulgence of languages as an ever
newness, are all the same thing.

However ingenious, the mention of photography does encourage
analogies to some Constructivist practices. The use of frame
shifts, in Andrew Crozier's "February Evenings" (67) and in Half Artifice (eg 94-95) as well as, from a later generation, Peter
Philpott's use of montage in "Like An Aerolith":

...a film to surround objects
that cut into doesn't fall, won't go
but is present at the division of any facts... (225)
and the use of sequences and serial transformations recognisable in Andrew Crozier's *The Veil Poem* and some of the work by John Hall and by David Chaloner, all add to encouraging this analogy. But such methods of compositional arrangement are as readily available in many works made before the 1950s by, for instance, George Oppen in *Discrete Series* and William Carlos Williams in *Spring & All*. This suggests that these poets are involved in a late Modernist practice, but this would not be the place to elaborate on this observation except to mention the links many of these writers are making with the poetry factured in Britain in the period preceding the outbreak of World War II.

As well as the practices mentioned above it is also apparent that many of the poets use other constructionist techniques to facture their poetry. Anthony Barnett and J H Prynne, for instance, both use *condensare* as part of their insistence, building, so to speak, by either honing larger word groups but more concise forms or, as J H Prynne, taking the material inward and producing a complex of patterns of connectedness to persuade the reader's production. This consideration leads into the concept of the aspiration to a civic discourse.

The use of adjectives, particularly colour, in Anthony Barnett's *Blood Flow*, overlaps with the monumental approach to statement factured from a condensing constructionist perspective with a resonance, as if, in homage to the Paul Celan of *Lichtzwang*. In the poem, "Drops" (15-16): "white"; "white"; "white"; "black"; "blue-grey" and "water-dark". The work that follow this ("The Book of Mysteries", "Habeas Corpus" and "Death") use words on the edge of the emblematic. An example from *Fear and Misadventure* (1977) might make this usage clear:

In *Green and Blue*
the day is over.
Memory is fresh as eye water.
In front of no one
I am tyrant and martyr.  (20)

From a phenomenology of landscape the Earth turns day's end. This activity becomes recent memory made by the eyes. Eye water implies tears. The author writes that he controls his activity ruthlessly yet suffers it. I do not mean from such naturalisation to suggest that is all there can be to this stanza. It is to give an example of where "Green and Blue" signify emblematically and of where Barnett's monumentality operates through the use of "tyrant" and "martyr" with their long gruesome histories and his application of them to "I am".

The combination of condensation of the language in the work and the uncertainty of the reader-production encourages a larger meaning: "less is more". Sometimes this meaning is lost in rhetoric: "Snow falls everyday, / and does not fall" (21); until the philosophical convention of opposition causes the reader to lose any achieved comfort when confronted with reading: "I am after, but not before; / I am unsure how life is after life before" ("After" 22). Anthony Barnett's acoustic shift is towards inquiries into semantics with "January" and "True Meaning". This is accomplished without break from the romantic anguish and joy of another's presence, or loss of it, exemplified in lines like "You would like to go back" ("You" 30); "You draw aside the curtain" ("Far" 31); "You were one and the same" ("Phrasal" 31).

In 1981 *A White Mess* by Anthony Barnett brings this questing (both romantic and ongoing) into the recurrence of northern European motifs. The use of these motifs creates a mild patterning which is confronted by aspirations to a civic presence already implied by his earlier monumentality. Potential production of Anthony Barnett's work by the reader is encouraged by the lifted stride in *North North, I Said:*

When
The language
is stretched
to the last limit
of irreverences
then this is the time
to last needs turn
to latest and
through a few leaves
a last fruit
falls.  (37)

From this kind of combination it may be also said that, in the first place, the potential civic discourse is concomitant with the constructionist facture and that, in the second place, the rhetorical surface and that aspiration to civic discourse is reliant on a Cartesian truth value established by the conscious perceptions
of emotions and what has been observed. To some extent, therefore, the particularities of “blood” and “light” can be considered in terms of the function and processes of phenomenological activity of the eye: what can be seen and what cannot be seen.

These considerations are variously narrowed and broadened according to work selected. J H Prynne’s complex of the “wound”, which both opens the body to light/analysis/treatment through damage and simultaneously recalls the damage subsequent to the lost potentials of the Enlightenment, a damage that continues to pervade the cultural malaise in the contemporary period, enlarges the distance on any potentials’ becoming. Such damage is differently presented by the other poets in the anthology with an emphasis, in the main, on restorative, rather than innovative, production through language coupled to a continuity of many of the conventions (expectations) in English language literature (in terms of both the “quest” thematics and the Euclidean spacetime). This book, A Various Art, therefore, potentially offers the plateau against which many of those not included continue to struggle, but with less resolution and certainty, with less surety about the potential to heal. To put it differently, the alternative, where offered, to the “wound”, the alienated condition, is often an offer of retrenchment and complaint at a distance, with a call directed against the metropolis (in, for instance, both Tim Longville and Ralph Hawkins’ works) to keep away.

No harm here. It has been clear for some time that the ecumenopolitic wen of London that has been engulfing all else in its environment is itself being engulfed by the IMF and its global entourage. Many of the poets in A Various Art labour aesthetically, without any requirement in their praxis to do otherwise. The book-making of many of those included is a necessary and significant part of their poetry production, a part that, in all but three cases, has been contributed to by Andrew Crozier or Tim Longville, or both. J H Prynne’s most profound contribution to poetic life is through books of poetry rather than single poems and any selection from his work is sufficient to jeopardise the spacetime of his release and gather:

...it

is what we know we cannot now have. (233)

J H Prynne’s subject is cultural malaise and the many facets of what that means from the microbiologic constituents of the self to the far flung and outer reaches of what has been moving away from the planet for some time (both some star systems and hope). He confronts his own optimism immediately “we should not trust the hope...” (233) and

And we should
have what the city does need,
the sky, if we did not so
want the need.

(“Sketch For A Financial Theory of the Self” 233)

This poem is followed by a selection from his fourth book, The White Stones (1969). The foregrounded concerns continue to give the description they animate second place. This is quite different (various) from Andrew Crozier’s position with its foregrounding of constructionist presentation and domestic interiority made artifice. J H Prynne’s display is not, however, public, but civic in the sense of George Oppen’s Of Being Numerous and intertwining in resonance with some of the best Europeans this century including Reverdy, Proust, and Celan. Producing as a reader through the work presented is to produce from a “world” both overtly English and larger than any sense of insularity.

the whole power is
just that, fantasy of control
the dispersion, in such
level sky
of each pulse the sliding
fading-through of hills
“a noble evasion of privacy” (235)

Privacy is still part of the issue here and its eighteenth century enactment with the beggar at the window—the public.

Endowed with so much
suffering, they should be / and that
they are so—the pain in the head
which applies to me
and the clouds low over
the horizon...

("Against Hurt" 236)

...There is not much time
left. I love them all, severally and in
the largest honour that there is.
Now and with the least hurt, this
is for you. (ditto 236-7)

This leads immediately to “Love in the Air”, “We are easily
disloyal...” (237). J H Prynne’s animations of perception’s
structure are closely regarded. They provide conjunctions for his
Riemanian spacetime where

Length is now quite another thing (“From End to End” 239)

and

the ques-
tion is really what size we’re in, how much of
it is measure, at one time. ("First Notes On Daylight” 240)

His recognition is that perception is a production and that
Beauty is produced, which is to say that his perceptions are im-
peratives rather than empirical. This has led to his innovative
use of a non-Euclidean spacetime in his poetry.

So that I could make it: the continuance of
quality could in some way be that, the time
of accord

...

Even the accord, the current back (for him as for
me outward) has an electric tangent...

...

... there is a bright
thread of colour across the dashboard; the accord
is that cheap and we live
with sounds in the ear
which we shall never know.

("Concerning Quality, Again” 244-5)

J H Prynne’s civility is not, however, that presence of polite-
ness conspicuous in late seventeenth century England, nor is it that
of the polished artefact that such conceptions encourage. True to
say the poems in The White Stones are polished and are con-
structions with an intense patterning that is both linguistically
and visually rewarding allowing the potential reader a constant
production triumph. This is not to say that J H Prynne’s part in
the production is completely different from that of, for instance,
Iain Sinclair and Douglas Oliver in some of their works. Indeed
their collected patternings do overlap, since:

how much then are
we run, managed by
the biograph & pre-
dictive incision...

("A Dream of Retained Colour” 249)

Like Andrew Crozier he uses perceptions of light to reorder his
decisions—partly to direct and intercept and partly to re-
ciprocate his questioning of the perception of light’s activity:

The stars then being
ideas without win-
dows, what should we
do by watching, is
it true: is it true? Starlight is the
new torture, seraphic host, punishment
of the visionary excess...

(ditto 249)

The generous selection from The White Stones (J H Prynne’s
work has been given the most space in A Various Art) is followed
by three poems from Brass beginning with the first “The Bee
Target on his Shoulder”. J H Prynne’s discourse continues a
reappraisal of spacetime and his questioning of the Euclidean
day and life’s reliance on light which is extended by Into the Day
and Wound Response, both of which follow Brass:

...now TV with
the sound off & frame hold in
reason beyond that. Paste. Thereby take
the foretaste of style...

("The Bee Target On His Shoulder” 253-254)
The productions by J H Prynne in Brass are quite disruptive of the philosophical and aesthetic norm of A Various Art but do not lose the book’s own insistence on a civic performance. "The Ideal Star-Fighter" begins

Now a slight meniscus floats on the moral pigment of these times, producing displacement of the body image, the politic albino...

and continues

...the condition is man and the total crop yield of fear, from the fixation of danger...

The animation of "meniscus" (the movement the term is given by its figurative use) is returned to as it...tilts the water table, the stable end-product is dark motion, glints of terror the final inert residue...

The engagement from the study window is with the planet, as it is from the laboratory telescope. But, as he puts it, "Do not take this as metaphor":

...thinking to

finish off the last half-pint of milk,
look at the plants, the entire dark dream outside. (258)

His dedication to Paul Celan “Es Lebe Der König”, like the first poem in Brass, also resonates with the work of Joseph Beuys in which “we” might all become “king or queen” of “our” existence, eco-excavators of “our own” material wealth in which the necessary interception of science, art, and the vernacular are released in an aesthetic dimension that is itself the activity of being a citizen. It is the spacetime in which Charles Olson can aspire to “making the planet home”. J H Prynne’s engagement and civility here presumably involves a close reading of Lichtwang and possibly Schneeparl by Paul Celan (this is conjecture on my part inferred from reading the Celan books and Brass. It is worth noting, however, that Schneeparl was not fully published until 1971, the same year Brass was published). Celan’s “Schalltotes Schwesterngehäus” and J H Prynne’s “The Bee Target on His Shoulder” suggests as much ending, with regard to that “bee target”, “together they muffle up the great heat / and bear it off on their shoulders to / every distress, every distress.” (“wie mummeln das Großherz zusammen / und tragen es huckepack zu/ jeder Not, jeder Not.”) (The translation used here is that of Katharine Washburn and Margaret Guillemin in Paul Celan: Last Poems, San Francisco 1986.) and in “Die Rückwärtsgesprochenen”: “the ultimate one/ whinnied into a king/ before frost-rimmed mirrors...” (“der äusserste, zum/ König gewiehert/ Vor Rauhreispiegeln...”)

The next work in the selection, represented by a consecutive sequence from Into the Day (1972), butts against Brass and promotes production in the reader. The tracks of light, love, honey, and stars lead—in A Various Art—directly to

Through the window the sky clears
and in sedate attachment stands the order of battle,
quiet as a colour chart...

("Treatment in the Field“ 261)

from Wound Response (1974). The latter both connects to civic discourse and disrupts it. It strengthens as a work in this connection, but stands uniquely itself in its new pertinent insistence:

...love like a wren hunt,
crimson ice, basal narcosis. By deep perjury
it is the descent of man...

("Treatment in the field“ 262)

in which the remembered overlaps the new and produces an active present. The impertinent ( clichéd) phrase “descent of man” made newly pertinent (unclichéd) by the construction of connectedness that precedes it.

The different discourses exemplified in the works of J H Prynne, Anthony Barnett and Andrew Crozier are echoed differently and often less analytically, throughout A Various
Art, and perhaps, given the limitation on space here, one further example will suffice to make this difference plainer.

The most difficult aesthetic component to characterise efficiently is what was called above “the rhetorical surface”. The most overt and strident use of this component of the aesthetic function is made by John James. His civic rhetoric, which sometimes shifts into a public address, may be considered as an indicator, but not a typical example, of the work by other poets in A Various Art. Nevertheless, his pastiche of figural language can provide enough indication at least to implicate the usage by others and thus allow consideration of this component, in A Various Art, to continue elsewhere.

The selections from John James’ work begin with the following from his first book in 1967:

A ton of white rain will overflow my self-shaped sleeping-bag of earth.

(“Exultation” 145)

It is as if he was transforming an ancient cosmology into a contemporary vernacular:

the curving horizon breathes
over the reclined anatomy of the sphere (ditto 145)

This extended animation is more radically realised by John James than any of the other poets in A Various Art. In 1969, beginning The Small Henderson Room, he writes:

...or as we wheel
down over Crickley, chivalrously high on our seats
you see across the gleaming generous screen (147)

This leads to Tuscany and northern Europe—particularly the Germany of Friedrich, Schiller and Hölderlin. John James’ windows are more directly already textual. Like many of his contemporaries in painting, John James’ work is simulatory, rather than a construction dependent upon transformation from direct perception (or mimesis) of “that which grows without attention”. He notes:

...we look in
at each other

(“Written on beginning Georg Büchner’s Lenz...” 149)

and animates, where

...we let the afternoon
recline to its conclusion with as much poise as Manet’s
Olympia, but not so bold erotic or passé—just
resting, calm in the assurance of a lack of stasis.

(“Side Window” 149)

His eloquence is countered by his chivalry with its New Romantic fetch, as much as its Romance. That is to say that the pastiche available in his animations (in his use of figurative language) is countered by serious addresses to his friendship:

& when I wake, please I
walk in the
sunflecked trees of
the grove, for she herself
may be felt to
pass there,
& her hand as a
breath moves out
on a tenuous
breeze that lightens
the ache.... (150-151)

This is concomitant with a deliberate move towards post-experiential innocence. This isn’t Blake’s, but Roland Barthes’ zero (perhaps echoed in John James’ title Striking the Pavilion of Zero in 1975 and not, presumably, the Weylian/mathematical zero implied by Andrew Crozier’s High Zero). It is an innocence spoken of by both Charles Olson and Roland Barthes in their brief texts on Cy Twombly, and in which oblivion (or, it might be added, lack of illumination):

...settles
over the dusty pavements (151)
or where

a complete innocence
may be given us on completion
like an irrelevant myth
which floats out into language...

The animations of “wind” and the elements continue in *Striking the Pavilion of Zero* and onto *Berlin Return*. The viewing of a “series of portraits” transfers into “they’re family you’re looking at” (154). The inanimate is continually given animation, but not just through conventional rhetoric: “the green sea rolling like an egg” is a shift of language through the verb, and not through the meaning of the subject: and his writing takes off—lifts through the rapidity, and the best of John James is underway in “Craven Images, 4” and “Bad Thoughts” (at one time addressed to the artists Gilbert & George). His frame shifts change speed and modulate fast here and candour (particularly in the interweave of “Inaugural Address” for the Riverside’s mock-Turner-prize) with slow wretchedness. His window settles in “Bye Bye Blackbird” and “After Christopher Wood” and interfaces direct description with simulation of that mimesis through the view of another’s window, such as the painter Christopher Wood’s Cornish seascape or, to put it analogically, Breughel’s landscape produced from a granite still-life on his painting desk. This artifice is countered in *Sister Midnight* with what Wendy Mulford calls the male binomial: the questing voyage and the search for grounding of the self. This sexual binomial

early in autumn your heart
loosed from its hold
the caprice of your lifting thighs

with

I seem made of insubstantial elements like a leaf

and

sink to your knees beside the yellow sofa
take him between the folds of my bright magenta wraparound

the bright glossy oval of a knee & remarkable vest
rippling up over my becoming

is however, just as much a simulation, or pose of that binomial position, and is left ambiguous in the “dusty smell of old red velvet cinema seats”. It is an inevitable and applaudable virtuosity that ends:

& that’s not the end but a beginning like when
you can’t turn the key any further in the sardine can
& all along the edge of the skyline
the last green cringe of daylight
drops like a plate to the ground

Whatever the emphasis, whether hyper-rhetorical surface or constructionist base, the overall feel to the anthology as itself is that of an aspiration towards civic discourse. In John James this has sometimes moved into a public address, but often, as in his “Inaugural Address”, Andrew Crozier’s *Half Artifice* and J.H. Prynne’s *Wound Response*, that aspiration has been realised as specifically civic: an address that operates through the cooperation of the poet’s aesthetic labour and the reader’s production. It is small criticism to add that when that address is heard—when its Beauty is produced by the reader’s production—its use of *sprezzatura* may well conceal any other function the art may have aspired to. The danger of such a position may be that the aesthetic function of their art becomes a cultural norm far sooner than some of its workers would have hoped.

Allen Fisher

ANTHONY BARNETT: *The Resting Bell* (Agneau 2/Allardyce, Barnett, £17 hb, £8.95 pb)

*The Resting Bell* is the fourth volume to come from Anthony Barnett’s own imprint, Agneau 2. The three other collected poems are J.H. Prynne’s *Poems*, Andrew Crozier’s *All Where Each Is* and Douglas Oliver’s *Kind*. It comes elegantly printed in similar handsome cream covers. All the poetry published between 1968
and 1985 is here except "Forest Poems" (a work in progress). Two previously unseen and unpublished works appear for the first time, "Seedport" and "The Pipe Organ Builders"; and these poems together comprise a hefty 375 pages.

The Resting Bell is an impressive array of some 17 titles, allowing the reader to review the work of a poet who has quietly worked away at his craft for about 20 years. It registers the interpenetration of all aspects of our experience, and specifically challenges the position of the lyric in relation to other discourses. It renders the complexity of the way in which we order reality around us through a language that is both a speaker's own and one that comes to him (or her) via the voices, traditions and institutions of others. The poetry Barnett offers us is a place where the speaking voice, and the reader, feel at home and a place where they feel alien. The effect is one of the uncanny: at once comforting and startling.

If I were to characterise a typical Barnett poem, it would run something like this: it usually takes place by water, lakes, river or sea; usually in the cool landscapes of the Scandinavian countries. Often a poem by Barnett contains an "I" addressing a "you", and the lines are clipped and short. These poems are always composed rather than mimetic, drawing attention to themselves as language constructs, and they demonstrate how language shapes our perceptions and formations of reality.

Looking at the overall pattern of The Resting Bell, the poems are epistemic and exploratory, predicated on how relationships between people, things and discourse are modulated, born in and borne by language. This epistemic approach is a salient feature in the writing from the highly personal, but not confessional, "A Marriage" and "Poems for the Daughter of Charles Lievens" to "A White Mess" and "North..." with their broadening embrace of the political and the wider scenes of human relations. The earlier poems address the positioning of speaker and landscape; only later can we plot a gradual transition to other concerns with politics and economics and their role in formulating our reality. Part 8 of "Poem About Music" serves as a good example of the way the earlier poetry explores the relationship of speaker and the natural world. This section of the long poem records the death of a bird, and in so doing discloses its proximity to the speaking voice. Bird and speaker come so close they interpenetrate: "—o / as I die / those / a lovely bird of a wild human motion." In the end, this relation becomes one purely of language, a force of the imagination sustained by a poetic form teetering on a precipice, the moment of its utterance:

And no reference
tried down his throatlike his father,
to awake to a day to sing a day down
certainly,
in the sea
Won't do.
I cannot keep him alive,
knows too much,

At this point section 8 breaks off; the "knows too much" of the bird song, which is the poet's song too, is a knowledge that cannot be contained by only one formation of language. It is a fluid, airy reality, and the poem is broken off to be continued in the sections that follow, meticulously recording the shifting position of speaker and bird as separate and related beings in language. For this is one of the major points of originality in Barnett's poetry: what it is like to exist within a language, and what it is about language that facilitates our explorations and understandings.

A good place for a reader to start with this large body of work is probably "Mud Settles", which acts as a kind of bridge between the earlier work, which is mainly personally focused, and the later, after about 1977, when there is a shift in the groundwork of this poetry, and a wider context is engaged. This collection centres on the relation of a speaker and a landscape, with the intercession of the speaker's relationship with a "you". The main purpose in drawing attention to these relations in "Mud Settles" concentrates the reader's mind on how these points of contact take place and are made possible by language. In the case of "Mud Settles", the natural landscape provides a challenge rather than a comfort to both speaker and reader (this being one of the advantages of this type of lyric, with its sparsity and expanse of white space). The third short lyric of the sequence presents the case:

I am thinking about
catkins developing wind borne seeds indoors.
Do you think for one moment
they would deliberately allow themselves to get trapped.
Oh no. They use the slightest draught.

The speaker has brought inside some catkins, seemingly within the control of his environment. The plant, however, continues to grow, existing beyond the confines of his will or “thinking” by using something as innocuous and transitory as “the slightest draught” to completely obliterate the power of his thought. The result is over and over again the natural order challenges and alienates the “I”. The speaker does not experience this challenge as some kind of romantic or sublime awe, but rather as an order glimpsed and lost, that will not be “trapped” by his “thinking”. Only a trace of this order is left in the syntax of the poetry, floating out into the white space of the end lines as “wind borne seeds”.

The effect of the lyric impulse in The Resting Bell is to pare away extraneous material for the reader to concentrate his entire attention on language itself, its movements and registrations, “to penetrate the locale colours / to affirm day to day”. It presents the urgency of a quiet but considerable voice: “I was trying to keep up...” to offset the vast background noise of our everyday lives. This urgency shapes the force and purpose of the lyric. The “I” and “you” take place as registrations of the fact of our existence, crucially personal and private. Our most important moments occur when we relate to specific individuals, where the infinite varieties and possibilities of our relations depend on the finest attunements of syntax and grammar. In this way Barnett alerts the reader to the importance of the lyric in connecting the individual to the widening possibilities of our relations to others. These delicate significations present themselves in the first poem on page 112. What starts as an exploration of the Nature metaphor changes into a mapping out of the “I” and the “you” and their configuration in language:

A light rainfall.
A migratory bird
flies into the night

in a quick curve.
I did not see it.
How you are word blind.
I do not know why.

How you recognisably falter over a hyphen.
Think how this began.

Compound of literal speech.

This is a language experienced, a language experience, as mud settles: an improvised order emerges and recedes to be replaced and retraced anew. Language signifies in the natural world, each being inscribed in the other. Marks in the landscape operate as signs; the landscape is a language, as we find later on in “Mud Settles”: “There are marks on the macadam. // Stubble shows through the snow.” In both this quotation and the complete poem previously quoted from page 112, our viewpoint is determined by rhetorical structures taken up at different moments in the word/language construct, which acts as a kind of pivot for our perceptions. In this way lyric poetry slows down experience to measure its properties, and comes to act as a scale of value where language occurs as a distancing agent in experience, a “lan-gauge”, to offer the perceived moment as understood.

For Barnett, this morality-in-language is the purpose of the lyric. Each moment is different from another, and what becomes understood through the process of the poem is the struggle to render the singularity of the experience. This struggle attempts to bring disparate elements together by acknowledging their singularity, though not their separateness. And this fight for understanding finds its usual form in love with all its hardness and fury where relations are most concentrated and vulnerable. The poetry, therefore, reveals the risks and benefits which constitute love. We glimpse these risks in the other collection from 1977, “Fear and Misadventure”:

The feather goes
out of your hand.
In the net of a cherry tree,
cut free.
The point is, the catch
fails, and the catechism is not clear.
Fear and misadventure
mean this.
In later collections this basic relationship of the "I" and "you" becomes politicised, and the lyric becomes the valency against which our more impersonal relations can be gauged. "A White Mess" and "Moving Buildings" are both concerned with these issues, as is the previously unpublished "Seedport". All three works are markedly assured in voice, whilst they are more questioning and inquiring. These later lyrics continue the mode of experiment we encountered in "Poem About Music" where one lyric flows into another, questioning its grammatical and syntactical standing whilst creating fresh and uncharted aesthetic realities. This technique, which challenges the authority of the short lyric, and in so doing creates a larger poetic whole, further emphasises the truth of the subjective vision. Here is an example from "A White Mess": "I see, in the light / of the following year / what is now". It remains a vision based in Nature: "But I cannot go outside / this Nature". And yet the political and immediate reality of our everyday working existence demands its place too: "And leans over the worker." This is one single line set off from the other short lyrics; and yet, as a sentence fragment, acts not only as a footnote to what has come before, but invites the reader to include that world of "the worker" within the context of those subjective truths in language. This movement of the lyric constitutes the kind of morality in language I mentioned earlier, demanding the reader take notice of connections usually left buried in the morass that is reference. The first lyric is apparently a former for this correlation of political and personal factors:

In the revolutionary shout
is the shoot
burning in her garden
under summer skies.

A verbal and political outburst forms the link to the natural world through the identification and slippage of vowel sounds within the poem. The whole cause rests in the way the poetry draws attention to the difference in meaning of "shout" and "shoot", and how that difference highlights the two words' similarities as sounds and as pictograms. "A White Mess" demonstrates that a revolutionary politics can only occur if we attend the language and base our politics in the way its structures and movements formulate our relations with others, whether those relations be the immediacy of love or impersonal relations over space and time.

"Moving Buildings" carries forward the political and private through a "simple statement / of the facts". This apparent simplicity forms the bedrock of significant experience for this collection, rooted in a flowing lyricism that was always present in earlier sequences such as "Blood Flow", but here dominates the speaking voice:


Yet the closing lines of this section of The Resting Bell open out into a new landscape. For hope resides in the vision of a beautiful Soviet girl. The economic system is the "miracle corrupt", and "I said / this conglomerate is not right / and ends a few years hence." All this version of reality produces is loss, and the vision of beauty that emerges in the next section of the poem (the Soviet girl) can only be experienced as lost. She promises, as a poetic vision, a way forward by escaping the economic system, for her beauty, in itself, is no use, and disappears into the "variable number of / blue horizons". She floats away, like the catkin seeds of "Mud Settles", signifying the object of desire, which is lost to a predatory economic and political system, and which remains concealed from the speaking "I".

A major discovery of The Resting Bell is the unpublished "The Pipe Organ Builders" of about the same time as "A White Mess" and "Moving Buildings". In this collection the "I" constructs a bridge to the outer scheme of things, dependent on love, his loving of the "you". This amounts to an act of faith in language forming the contact:

What do you think of me
of course, I wonder and I care,
if I could take this risk
and what it means
to understand the loving

The faith is based on the physical foundation of words: "The
The secret began // Invisible words // Glowing with heat // Glowing with suck // Quivering // Somewhere a shutter closed”. The secret is transfigured into the solid shutter. The act of speech is transformed into a palpable signifying object that remains to record the passing of that original act. The act of speech is simultaneously held in the signifying function of the shutter and lost as the shutter is closed. Throughout the sequence the voice, the word, is associated with the most solid and permanent of all natural objects: “The stone curled its rings // its rings // A gentle voice”, or “You see the Saxon angled stone // said // said”. The lyric becomes significant through the way it draws attention to these correlations of stone and voice. Love in these poems is this attention to the relation in language. These lyrics reveal that love can only take place through language, a language in a type of perpetual motion through space and rhythm, disallowing the usual privilege of words to alight on one or another particular meaning. “Meaning” is unravelled, and words are allowed to signify in other ways by a process of distancing of experience. This process unmasks the deceit of the separation of the personal and political, the subjective and objective worlds, what Barnett has elsewhere called “the unimaginative lie”. What results is the peace of the resting bell, an agony and knowledge that moves beyond the individual will or the objective and subjective worlds, and only occurs where the poetry reveals what is both vulnerable and revelatory.

Simon Smith

RUDY BURCKHARDT & SIMON PETTET: Conversations with Rudy Burckhardt / About Everything (Vehicle Editions, $20)

A tourist with 1951 Reagan-slick hair and sunglasses inspects his wife’s gazing up in Florence at a buttocky classical statue minus arms and with a rod bursting out of its thigh where wrested from its niche. Lines of force between man, wife, statue and passers-by in the cloistered background are momentary. But the longer-lasting snaps into existence within the instant along with a human quality of patience; a transmission has occurred. The photographer is Rudy Burckhardt, of New York, who moved in
show us that momentary beauty would last a long time if we could only hold our spirits steady. The steadiness must therefore also open to these chance moments, as pedestrians cross gleaming trolley lines under skyscrapers, New York, 1948; and a relation of scale is struck. “Everything / suddenly honks.” Or the unsettled fascias of brick rubble in sunny Queens gives stasis the lightness of the temporary. A young Neapolitan girl, bored, strikes an old woman pose. Bananas, nearly very silly, surreal in the hollow of a reclining Moroccan girl’s naked back, are at a walking angle on her, almost falling, and the buttocks become rather rendingly vulnerable, classic but open to the fragile moment and to tenderness in the cleft.

Speed, slowness, the primordial artistic dynamic. The thought is deepened as Burckhardt quotes Goethe: “Man often inclines to beauty near the end of his days.” It’s as though a spiritual training is lightly undergone in these tantalising pages until the beautiful moments are taken into the slow scales of ageing; and the rapturous increasingly counts as it comes and goes in our lives. Burckhardt quotes Ashbery, that the rapture is “seldom aboveboard”.

Douglas Oliver

HOW(ever), edited by Kathleen Fraser, with assistance from contributing editors Frances Jaffer, Beverly Dahlen, Rachel du Plessis, Carolyn Burke, Chris Tysh

This bulletin, the first to take form and language in contemporary women’s writing seriously, and to acknowledge the importance for us of the breakthroughs made by Gertrude Stein, Mina Loy, HD, Mary Butts and others, appears four times a year through the mail to subscribers for the very reasonable price of $8 ($10 for institutions). HOW(ever) is concerned with creative work by women, mainly literary texts, but also work in other fields, including the visual arts and performance, and it includes line illustrations of artwork. The theme of the most recent issue at the time of writing, April 1988, was FUGITIVE / EXPOSURE; this includes work by Anne-Marie Albiach, Norma Cole, Talli Ebin, Julia Blumenreich, Nuala Archer. The “Alerts” section, a feature of each issue containing up-to-the-minute commentary and information on contemporary and first wave modernist writers—the “foremothers” whose presence is very much behind the whole project of HOW(ever)—has thoughts on Jean Rhys, Jane Eyre and Michelle Cliff, “Double Exposure—Identity and Image”, and a bibliography of Anne-Marie Albiach.

Another regular feature in HOW(ever) is “Postcards”: in this issue Margy Sloan thinking aloud on position and the sentence and the lack of writing about writing by experimental writers, plus an extract from Barbara Guest writing to Susan Gervitz about Bryher and montage, HD’s reply to The Little Review questionnaire of 1929 about her films, an extract from Eisenstein, and the editor’s notes. In 18 11x8.5-inch pages, including front and back cover and mailing address, HOW(ever) offers more stimulus and concentrated food for thought for any woman writer alive to and located in the twentieth century than any other magazine I’ve come across.

HOW(ever) has been appearing since November 1983 and past copies are available from Small Press Distribution (see front of this magazine for address) for $2.50. A full account of all the issues and work discussed would take too much space here, but anyone interested in contemporary experimental writing by women in the USA, Canada, France, Italy and Britain, and in information on recent publications and scholarship on the first generation modernists, should certainly subscribe. One personal caveat: I miss work by German and Spanish writers. And there is far too little from Britain so I urge women contributors to Reality Studios and other magazines to send in work.

The quality of the texts published, whether by known or unknown women—and it’s refreshing to see such commitment to new work by names unfamiliar to me, at least—is high, though, because of space constraints and editorial policy, one misses the chance of encountering longer sustained pieces.

Highlights for me in HOW(ever)’s pages have been work by or discussion on, among others, Beverly Dahlen, Lyn Hejinian, Fanny Howe, Bernadette Mayer, Nicole Brossard, Rae Armantrout, Rachel du Plessis, Mary Butts, Mina Loy, Susan Howe, Barbara Einzig, Barbara Guest, Olga Broumas and Jane Miller, Marina de Bellagente la Palma, Rosmarie Waldrop, Lynn Sukenick, Carla Harryman, Honor Johnson. I could go on.

Send cheques to HOW(ever), c/o Jaffer, 871 Corbett Avenue,
BARRETT WATTEN: Progress (Roof Books, $7.50)

There is a poster on the London Underground advertising a bookshop, which says: "If you think this station is deep you should see our poetry section." Poetry's reputation for depth and attendant obscurity will probably be helped by Barrett Watten's recent poem Progress, which appeared at the same time as his useful collection of essays on poetics, Total Syntax (Southern Illinois University Press, $13.95). Yet Progress is a poem very suspicious about depth, profundity and the accompanying "style / or its encrustations" which such concerns encourage. Progress is a poem that deserves to be read for its humorous surfaces as much as its clever explorations of the way language produces effects of subjectivity and truth. "The invention has meaning / into which persons divide".

What is the relation between sentences and propositions? This question has provided a seemingly boundless space for modern philosophy, which has travelled complex distances between the two apparently simple terms. Wittgenstein insisted that the totality of propositions is language and then began a long and painstaking retraction in his later work as he explored the difficulties of basing philosophical certainties on even the simplest sentences. Sentences were too heterogeneous to provide a basis for a general model of propositions. His work began to undermine the previously accepted distinctions between the sense of a sentence (its propositional content) and its force (its mode of address). That distinction has been further challenged by Derrida and others who have shown that the rhetoric of a sentence, especially its metaphorical structure, forms part of its meaning. The difficulty then is that it becomes hard to see what has happened to the proposition. Is this sentence no longer propositioning us? Even Derrida usually writes as if the texts he quotes are propositioning his commentary.

Some light can be shed on this from a source not usually associated with a perceptive understanding of language. In the Preface to The Phenomenology of Spirit Hegel introduced what he called the speculative proposition. In this kind of proposition the subject and the predicate are not identical. When Barrett Watten writes in Progress that "the idea is the thing", this could, according to Hegel, be read in two ways; first, as an ordinary proposition where it would mean that idea and thing, as identified by the definite article, are identical. A specific idea (which may be the abstract concept of idea or some particular one previously or later indicated) is a specific thing. Hegel suggests that another relation is possible and finds his philosophy on it. This relation occurs when "thinking, instead of making progress in the transition from subject to predicate, in reality feels itself checked by the loss of subject, and, missing it, is thrown back onto the thought of the subject. Or, since the predicate itself has been expressed as a subject, as the being or essence which exhausts the nature of the subject, thinking finds the subject immediately in the predicate; and now having returned into itself in the predicate, instead of being in a position where it has freedom for argument, it is still absorbed in the content, or at least is faced with the demand that it should be." This description of the activity generated by such a speculative proposition might also describe the activity of Barrett Watten's sentences in Progress. A reading of the poem doesn't make much progress from subject to predicate, or from sentence to knowledge, or from word to thing, without this reflexive process of awareness preventing such a move being any deceptively simple progress.

Hegel's distinction is a valuable one because it implies that there are two ways of reading the same proposition, and that the reader is therefore complicit in the process. Meaning itself is a process not a result. The proposition can be read as either identity or difference. Difference implies transformation in the subject, predicate and reader. As Hegel puts it: "We learn by experience that we meant something other than we meant to mean." This comes about seemingly at the expense of a loss, the "freedom of argument" as Hegel calls it. If the identity of subject and predicate had been established, then the reading could have rushed ahead. The trouble is that the result would have been what we already knew or were made to know. To ensure that the reader stays within the field established by the proposition,
stylistic and formal procedures are needed. Hegel elaborated a complex, often obscure syntax, and a few shifting terms verging on puns, to do the job. Another method might be to isolate the propositions and their components in some way and this is what Progress manages so well.

The poem is written in 600 short stanzas which each have five lines ending with an ellipse. This series of dots signals an ambiguity of relation crucial to this problem of assertion.

Serial closures,
open sequences
Point at points in the mind
At which partitions connect.
Each sentence is the type....

Of an ethics of representation,
The basis of all poetics
In the reader,
an emergency
If she can sit still for this....

No part of the poem can be quoted without breaking a sequence, since all beginnings and endings of stanzas have a designated relation to what follows or precedes them. An ellipse can indicate both relation and disjuncture. "Each sentence is the type.... / Of an ethics of representation" is a statement that may be missing some words in between. The specification of type may not be identical to "an ethics of representation". Ordinary stanza breaks offer inexplicit and undisclosed relations, but these ellipses make the perilous shift from stanza to stanza visible and open to question. Watten uses the basic stanzaic conventions of capitals, indentation and implied pause at the line endings, to produce oscillations ricochets and undecidable logical relations within his sentences.

Why does the relation between sentences and propositions matter so? Much modern science and philosophy has been a policing of sentences in a spirit antithetical to Hegel. Sentences must not be allowed to mean more than a simple proposition capable of sequential, linear elaboration. Whenever this seems to become untenable philosophy has tended to overreact. Derrida writes of a logocentric epoch and the deconstruction of one system after another because his work recognises the excess of irreconcilable meaning in allegedly formative propositions once they become textualised. Wittgenstein became increasingly cautious, wary of the claims of traditional philosophical propositions.

Progress is not philosophy and has no immediate need to establish its legitimacy through its relations to the discursive permissions and truths of an existing institution. In that way it is free. Progress has, however, denied itself the supposed freedom of personal testimony. The term "I" frequently becomes a noun and even, italicised, a sort of instruction: "pull I", "place I", "excite I". The poem ranges widely into narrative, sentences without subjects or verbs, humour, prim arithmetic assertions, and political names, but doesn't let the sentences progress into a narrative, or with the illusory freedom of an argument. Such a freedom can be like the freedom of the individual, an illusion necessary for the functioning of an economic system where freedom is the freedom to buy what you're sold. Progress explores the conditions of the "freedom of argument" we supposedly enjoy.

The writing is aware of itself, as subject and as metaphor, and always aware of the points where "logic enters the image". The writing tries out many ways of thinking of itself ("the cargo is a critique"). Metaphors for the process become the literal content. "What is a philosophical myth?" The text doesn't try for an answer any more than it ever reveals "the current price of semiotics". This is not scepticism. "Scepticism is a social disease." Scepticism is always proposed as a tough-minded individual's resistance to the blandishments of existing knowledge but it too easily assumes the separations of mind and world, and mind and other minds, which then lead to radical doubt. The result is a disruption of community and commitment. Scepticism helps to "assure our dispersal forever".

There is a speed of response here that is very enjoyable:

Rows of eucalyptus trees
Stand in solidarity,
represent....

The desire to replace them.
You get the wood.

The trees are both trees and representations of a mental
decision, depending on the focus of the reader’s attention. That following line, “you get the wood”, uses wood as metaphor for “point” (itself a metaphor), and literally as an offer. Perhaps there is a latent pun on the conditional itself. The following lines, “I work / On both sides of the road”, suggest that the deliberation is contrived if road and work are taken metaphorically to refer to this process of reading both ways. Yet a literal context remains, printed indelibly on the surface. As one sentence follows another the progress of the metaphors sets up rapidly expanding sequences that instead of resolution into a stable result simply unfold rhythmically out of one another. The metaphoric logic becomes a rhythm of metaphoric shifts and openings, so that the melodic pattern is this rhythm of shifting attention. “Remember / these are only words” we’re instructed. “The actual fact comes later.”

At the centre of this rapid progress through the reasonings of certainty is the proposition:

War is resident vocabulary.
The academics are pigeons
With recessive traits, breeders....

Not for show.

War is, the academics are. How apt and slightly wicked to say so. The recessive traits of academics presumably increase as they interbreed their ideas. How should we take this proposition? Notice that the gap between the subject and predicate in the first sentence is much greater than in the second because we can elaborate the latter logically and humorously. What, however, is “resident vocabulary” and how is it linked with war? Or is the context for this missing?

We shall never know and that is its point. Progress leaves us wanting progressions. Given the repeated brilliance of its assertions, comparisons, double-takes and images, we want them to cohere so that larger issues might emerge. The insistent microarguments seem so promising, and proposition the reader with a catalogue of goodies. That want is the poem’s achievement. The most powerful closures of philosophical and argumentative writing are used without their reductive dominance taking over. No unity is going to emerge as the ideological victor, but this text is no coward. It will give space to the would-be dominants without giving up its own freedoms. Progress shows us the components and procedures of possible political strategies while it trains us to use them.

Peter Middleton

BRUCE ANDREWS: Give Em Enough Rope (Sun & Moon Press, $6.95)

... She bleeds about
now now without wrong cleaves iddy biddy it another
	trembling heart defeats as dry Melodramaturgy Cause
out find went sinister what want out knee sweet
improvement with rooster behind all shook up dogma
doo wa won’t defect that some do flim flam vicinity
want ad ...

The scenario evoked here—its theatricality acknowledged in “Melodramaturgy”: chilling, comic, and puzzling to a mystified life—is familiar enough: a young, small-town American woman considers her own guiltless (“without wrong”) relegation, along with others she knows or hears of, to an issueless round that defeats dreams with “sinister” consistency; contemplates the difference the right man could make—a dream so compelling she will not give it up, confused as it is by divorce statistics and destabilisings of gender roles; she scans the job ads, a composite “want ad” in the tawdriness. The poem’s action promises to be demystificatory, both of marital relations and of what is located in, for example, Clyde Griffiths in Dreiser’s An American Tragedy (1925), as a representative “secret sense of his own superiority”. Clearly, the concept of “non-referential” will get us nowhere in considering such writing, and Andrews insists on that in “Writing Social Work and Political Practice” (L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E 9/10, 1979), where he rejects as parasitic “an experimentalism of diminished or obliterated reference”. Capitalist decoding, via “inter-changeability and equivalence”, has already eroded the “system of differences on which
signification depends", so that "a heightening of these
deterritorializing tendencies may risk a more homogenized
meaninglessness", leaving "the central struggle over meaning"
unengaged.

"Deterritorializing" signals a reference to Deleuze and
Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus* (tr. 1977), and Barrett Watten has the
same book in mind in some of his remarks on Andrews, reprinted in
*Total Syntax* (1985). Writing on the poem quoted above, "I Guess
Work the Time Up" (the first of the six long works that constitute
the 180-odd pages of *Give Em Enough Rope*), Watten sees it as

a kind of fantastic machine, each line a conveyor belt of semiotic
rubble, funny poking things— to flip on the switch is to get
action.... The machine imagined by Andrews is not a metaphor—
its limits are those of the entire culture, in which the dispersed
subject is enmeshed.

Watten, however, is dismissive of Deleuze and Guattari's
"desiring-machines", whose prototype, curiously, he finds in a
disco, "a world in which there is only the flux of desire"
without really attending to their semiotic argument. Certainly,
in Give Em Enough Rope, Andrews repeatedly dissociates his
texts from the cultural-Dionysiac—"overheated least
disturbances", notes the title poem, and follows mentionings of
"peyote", "amphetamine" and "whiskey" with "commotional/
isn't light". But the poem is also concerned to invent, in its
making (what Allen Fisher would call its "facture"), its own
ecstasy, and ends with an attack on those who have identified
ecstasy with the aleatorics of an overstimulated selling- and
disciplining-environment, and have now reverted to the author-
itarian: "All right Linearity Taking thought/ I was
afraid ... My/ Ecstatic/ Guilty".

It is the violence of much of Andrews' writing—"The entire
culture is characterized as generating a text that proposes its
signification at all points in an aggressive and disturbing manner"—that leads Watten to continue, "All the energy with
which these referential bullets are deflected by the subject is
returned to the culture at large with a curse." If that is reworded
"as curse", we can sharply see in Andrews' work a doubleness—a
simultaneous-contradiction—characteristic of much avant-garde
writing, especially when the political investment is as

considered as in his case. The last poem, "Confidence Trick", is a
welter of paragraphs in two- or three-page "chapters" that
echoes Burroughs in its use of drug, warfare ("neon bomb") and
science-fiction vocabularies ("our Christianity radiation taxes")
as shorthand for invasory forces of infection and gripping; it notes
at one point, "I want the broadcast attention, give him a
coronary"; and elsewhere,

Bionic gestapo, self-hypnosis, take it or leave it, we d have to gear
down into retarded-ville, the western political world for sure, as a
legend felt scumbag jerkoff shitface fuckface whorehead cluck—

This is, deliberately and half-comically, well inside the rote
violences of what it excoriates, and the statements using "I"
constitute a ficker of problematics: "I hate humans, caution heats
up fast"; "Transparent slogan heads in the testtube, I'm not
immune to this century: where is your mama?" The context is an
induced high level of self-consciousness in a decade that has
imaged itself to itself more intensively than any other, which
the text must take on while avoiding its invitations to cynicism,
the disabling morality of capitalism. Within this, to devise a
form that takes such outpourings of anger is to risk its immediate
transformation into self-cannibalistic waste, and Andrews pushes
recognition of that danger: "Big generation not about to go away
to listen to my insults". Rather, in the impermeability of New
York, "Those structures really talk back at your rabies", and the
poem mobilises an unending desperation, repeatedly pushing
violent writing to its limits, and in one of its many moments of
black comic irony suggesting for itself the identity of the urban
psychopath: "Shit, man, we fire at passers-by all the time". It is
an American territory marked out in Norman Mailer's "The
White Negro" (1957), of use of violent energies and the loss of an
innocent voice to counteract the cancers of repression, in largely
unchanged circumstances that nevertheless bear the memory
("your Charlie Manson brain") of various dire loosings of
"desiring-violence" in the 60s and 70s.

Against all this, however, is Andrews' suggestion, in a
$L=A=N=G=A=G=G=E$ article of 1978, that his writing is actu-
ally—or also—utopian: "We can imagine writing that does not
prepare the ego for the terrors and routines of a society it takes
for granted." This is a programme to "desocialize the ego (so that
eventually we might be resocialized)"; the longed-for conditions are responded to today:

where words are evitable, arbitrary, not determined... Take away the mythic and fetishized character of the words and sentences, their fatedness... explode ourselves ("jouissance") into the text....

So, the utopia and the curse at once, in the machine: a schematic "doubleness" for writing which is actually more complex and varied than that suggests.

Each of the six poems of Give Em Enough Rope has a kind of "structural stability", a consistency of layout idiosyncratically violated. But in all of them, it is consistently impossible to anticipate, word-to-word, what the next word will be, or usually even what sense-cluster it will occupy. This is from "Swaps Ego":

Plotting Iris Clause Hail Pins In Clothing To Reason Gravelines At Optimum Pitch

The poem has begun, "Double You Double You See Triple Three Triple Three Triple", followed by a gap, then, "Make Eyes Brown Blue Morpheme Of Male Vulnerability". These eye-colours we can only connect, presumably, with "dominant" and "recessive" genes, and "Male Vulnerability" would then be to enlistment in competitive dominance-submission formations, a vulnerability that codes whatever is seen into the desired composites (from an unhierarchical "Three" to a "Triple", over a couple of blinks of resistance). It will be a poem about reading, not only written texts but any and all cultural signs, and concomitant behaviour; the subject/body as a storage and operator of environmental information. "Iris", inserted so abruptly between "Plotting" and "Clause" in the first line cited, shifts this, then, to the scrutiny of uniform by officer or corporation boss, in military or business war. "Gravelines" is therefore multi-suggestive, one of the poem's many coined words. Words' "use value and productivity," Andrews has written, is activated "not by demolishing relations but creating them, no holds barred, among units of language (even when these seem superficially like a pulverized normality)".

But the oddness of the combinations! There is a thickness to the materiality of them. An earlier book, R + B (1981), offers,

ratatouille paraquat
ennui an RN tenor bath

An actual (on the local news?) poisoning, by a host, spouse... or more generally, "nourishment turned to poison"; then boredom defined as a British macho type singing in the bath. Again, the scenario seems exact, but could belong to film, a romance in life going sour, the arrival of an unwanted uncle... It is, indeed, so exact and unexpected as to mean tenuously; one pauses: can it be this? why here? More consistently than most poets, Andrews claims words for uses peculiar for them. "True Flip To", the shortest (10 pages) poem in Give Em Enough Rope, is a beautifully, and simply, inventive structure: an alternative dictionary or thesaurus, where the set-off words are quirksily defined by what follows:

Nomencature cream
scoop dishevel
...
... Go
switchboard evil
transfer Act
hrumph round
gender recoil
...
... S catter
paste heh-heh-heh

Here, ideas—rather than what can be easily visualised—are given twists, speeded-up in interaction with others. But those very collisions and propulsions mean that any part of speech—adjective, preposition, whatever—can take on the force of a verb (in "5 biblical poems" (1955), Jackson Mac Low calls each silence, as well as each single word, an "event"—an oral-performative sense of language combining with a textual-aleatoric one).

Part of the pleasure of Andrews' texts, which are not aleatoric, is the Steinian range of vocabulary usable at any point ("... words are evitable, arbitrary..."). But the arbitrary is in dialectic with ideas and scenarios that, as observed, are often familiar ones, certainly culturally recognisable. This is why his
texts are not mere clues to a deciphering. In a quite extraordinary way, he forces recognition of Guattari's cardinal point in the essay "Towards a Micro-Politics of Desire", translated in Molecular Revolution (1984) and a useful summary of the semiotics of Anti-Oedipus. Guattari begins by attacking the structuralists for their assertion that "signifieds" are produced by "the chains of signifiers":

Structuralists seem to find no problem of semantics. [But] all contents, before being structured by language, or "like a language", are structured at a multitude of micro-political levels.

Andrews breaks up (as he has intended) the dazzle of the signifier—one is manifestly pitched well outside his words' printed limits to comprehend them. Not the text but the political culture offers to "complete" the meaning (but particular contexts are often absent, as in the one-sentence poem "Bananas are an example" (1972), a strategy extensively used in the present book). Now the arbitrary and the overdetermined are coupled in the machine.

In order to make this point, however, I have made the "scenarios" seem more immediate to apprehension than they are, and the kinesis of Andrews' writing, and what it offers to various speeds of reading, need consideration. "Unit Costs" is subtitled "Score for Movement", and uses, as well as little drawings in a wavery hand, a shifting between ways of meaning, and eases of reading, to stall sequential flow ("a simple diatonic button accordion"):

Stoically hypotenuse

The ladies will eat this one up
Send the men out for this one

Beautiful boastful klieg thermos norm insensate
bank by prostitute wrapping lapdog

With a shifting plume of radiation

Paste rivet
Nuremberg

Dashes question sequence as sufficient explanation ("Punch glass with bold blood—fiduciary") while the "absent contexts" argue against a totality that can be found through language (not even the culture in fact "completes" the text, and nor, as Macherey would have it, can a "scientific" Marxist reading), while denying that totality's necessity for kinetic coherence. (Anxiety about missing the total is comically incited in the title of a work extracted in an earlier Reality Studios, "I Don't Have Any Paper So Shut Up"). "Give Em Enough Rope" itself opens with a small manifesto on the need to "take whatever can, curtained, into your hands at's catch because spinning & warming only transpose... persist as happenstance not dispose to find catchwords"—in a setting where, as later pages note, "everything everything deliberately blackboards" and instrumentalist classifications work to neutralise the force of any expression (the "detective", the paranoid decoder, appears at one point as a figure of closure). Ideologies then form as survivalist evasions that "boxed gerund", and one page has only the three spaced lines, "Myth Crap// Precious Self-Freeing Crap// Class Conscious Crap". But Andrews proposes no diaristic "spontaneity" ("pragmatics ya") egotistically to block out histories daily reformed as linear stoics: "backlights anew &/ & front piano commiserate"; "speech" is always "nomination" and implicitly patterned, and the writing must form as a patterned counter-history, recalling words and ideas at odd and stubborn intervals as in "Swaps Ego". It is history as attractions, interruptions, runnings forward, back and across; a history that can take discontinuities of surprise because "A/ dissimilar well prop". Guattari provides a useful vocabulary for understanding this particularly beautiful poem (in Williams' sense in Spring and All (1923), where "beauty' is related not to 'loveliness' but to a state in which reality plays a part"), that can ever conclude only by final shift to a voice that demands that ("My/ Ecstatic/ Guilty")—a voice that has always been in floating contention with the text's other propositions, pitching "laudable Crimean War tricks", for example, against the (if in a different voice, perhaps utopian) "haste that reality we of vocalizations". Guattari, then, speaks of "a-signifying semiotics", not intending "meaningless" but that meaning roves with the line in "a collective engagement of utterance", able multiply to pounce, no longer pinned to the "separate" stratum of a localisable
“signified”—which, precisely, “exists in order to delay, or interfere with, or even prevent, a direct conjunction between sign machines and real machines”. But again, this can be only limited news to an American poet who has read Stein—“Composition as Explanation”, for example—and Williams, for whom the word is not “a symbol of nature but a part”. If Andrews is “post-modern” it is in some degree because of the detail of political theorising he would bring to such vocabularies, not because he breaks with any poetic “Tradition” that matters—pace the blurb.

As Watten says, using Williams’ 1944 definition of a poem in The Wedge,

The machine made of words now inhabits a middle ground between itself as a created exemplary prototype and itself as the creator of a new and altered order.

The proliferation of Andrews’ writing (and that of many other “Language” writers, of Coolidge, and in England, cris cheek, Raworth, Robert Sheppard’s Letter from the Blackstock Road, and others) is, it seems, a capitulation to the overproduction of message, commodity and rhythm in the consumerist urban environment, which nevertheless resists that by coupling quantity with the quality of each linguistic item. It apes but contests the shit-machine. The result is texts that problematise how fast we should read them, and the variety of spatial layouts in Andrews’ books shows him fully aware of this. That every word in “Swaps Ego” begins with a capital and is set off by two spaces on either side makes a happily fluent reading impossible; but to stop and ponder each word-unit in the 40 pages is, of course, to peter out in mystified exhaustion and complete loss of the rhythm/sense-shifts. “Apart/ meant” are the book’s opening words, and they rove through the perpetual ambiguity of where to boundary phrasal units. In “I Guess Work the Time Up” they are immediately available for the setting of a wretched marriage, but the text is one of interruptions, with word-units cutting flows in preparation for uncertain breaks into other flows, different scenarios—the overdetermined in no necessary order. The range includes, to my reading (which was reading it quickly, slowly, and repeatedly), mafia street rackets, gay sadomasochism in the navy and elsewhere, prison wastages, discos, a brash New Orleans loanshark, agricultural decline, a failed entrepreneur, rich relaxation settings, lonely hearts ads and the search for a pickup, but someone is back inside for drug dealing: “hemp fervor polyps cauterized Talented Tenth/ believable well oh well’s misnomer about catheter huh in olio Ku/ Green Haven State prison breakfront”. In what immediately follows—“Now let demonstrative/ associative blip matter drub tit ate never class abracadabra”—not only do the individual words clash and interact as forces; the text itself, with its history, feeds back into what Guy Debord calls “the Society of the Spectacle”, for associative glimpse-power in ads or “entertainment”, where “switcheroos FOREVER” is threat, permutations that change nothing: “semiotic hands all over body”, as earlier, “Inhalation body/ shut down hi-lo special cissy day day Y-pants/ jack tessitura jellyroll always a manner depicting material”.

“Tessitura” means the “range within which most tones of a voice-part fall”, and in its context here could be linked with “wasn’t orphan photo nastiphobically” eight pages later, if that is coined from “nastic”, “of [botanical] movement not determined by external stimulus”. This is writing that can explore Zukofsky’s 1950 dictum that poetic “forms are achieved as a dynamics of speech and sound... with no loss of value to any word at the expense of the movement”—because its setting is more rabidly “throwaway” even than Zukofsky’s.

In the meantime, in Andrews’ text, the marriage, and the Oedipal family unit, have been shown as permeable at any point by technologies of car, electronic message and tune-beat, drill, lawnmower and so on, the machinocracy of present capitalism at once revered and avoided as jarring irritation; the militarisation of urban desire by kinetics of noise and impact/penetration, as analysed by McLuhan and, more recently, Paul Virilio. Here the suburban patriarch is maniacally justified in complaint:

... Disillusioned sighs if race fixed furniture fears be are so & so damned crazy plastique dwells sixty minute melancholic house mess me in to be righteous God goons pop ...

Andrews never forgets that America is a Manichean Christian empire (“Making Devil Appear”), with 70 million, at present, claiming to be “born again” and with no breakage in view of that
in Presidential contenders: “B.C. stoptime... now new lawyer blesses untranslatable habitat”. Christianity confirms the legitimate family; provides, in “Swaps Ego”, a model for competitive megalomania—“Ways Of Obtaining Devoured Walk On Water Consciousness Would Be”; lodges, in “Confidence Trick”, in the labour deals of Moral Majority comfort—“A jury throat a job a suspicious what use non-union nominally throughout hybrid the angels are visiting us now in our religion homes, you see similar stuff”—and glosses the on-fire “Arena Brains” of the terrifying cover illustration (by Robert Longo): “God, please fuck my mind for good.”

It is virtuoso technique and a relentless inventiveness that enable the ambition of this difficult writing, which delights, inspires and disquiets in its accomplishments. This is machinic enactment to render visible machinocratic operations; to make present and real, within that, in all its ambivalent violence, an alternative imagining, a different body.

Gilbert Adair

RICHARD CADDEL: Fantasia in the English Choral Tradition
(Slug Press, £3)

In George Oppen’s 1968 collection Of Being Numerous he writes:

Clarity, clarity, surely clarity is the most beautiful thing in the world,
A limited, limiting clarity

I have not and never did have any motive of poetry
But to achieve clarity

Richard Caddel has been achieving clarity for the last fifteen years. In this time he has published more than fifteen books and booklets starting with Heron in 1973 and coming now to Fantasia in the English Choral Tradition. The fact of his writings may be denied or ignored by the rigidly radical or the watery “establishment” writers and critics, but these writings are as undeniable as the world around us. To ignore them is surely our loss.

Richard Caddel won’t mind my quoting Oppen here; in fact he would enjoy it since he has always valued poets like Oppen, Lorine Niedecker and Carl Rakosi. He shares their voices as we all share the voices of those we value and feel akin to. It is a long tradition of sensibilities that goes far beyond the ideas and ambitions of the Objectivists. Start where you like. Caddel may well start with writers such as that first clear and unassuming naturalist Gilbert White. But it’s a line of writers we may consciously or unconsciously quote from who have in a quiet but insistently clear voice talked of their world as seen with a clear, intelligent and completely open eye. Vanity, rhetoric and “romance” have no place here since an examination of the real world is far more exciting and interesting. This is almost akin to that surrealistic concept of the “daily miracle”, logging the true mystery and beauty of a daily life taken on its own terms. But Caddel doesn’t choose the urban French mystery and exoticism of, say, André Breton’s Nadja or Louis Aragon’s Paris Peasant. He chooses an English landscape, particularly the landscape of north-east England, and examines these surroundings with the keen eye of an amateur naturalist. Such an examination is in no way coldly scientific but filled with an immense human warmth and concern. To quote Oppen again: “There are things / We live among ‘and to see them / Is to know ourselves’.”

Fantasia in the English Choral Tradition is an 11-page poem sequence that seems to me the best Caddel has written to date. It’s a song of praise. It’s a manifesto and meditation in a clear undramatic voice on how all things connect on this earth when we look honestly at what’s around us. As he says early on:

moving (lunchtime) out of the realm of
false, muddled argument into that contact
with the world in which (for which)
I live — to point towards —
because there is no “away” to sling things to
and to live here is not an escape
His concern in the poems goes from the human into the whole landscape and all that it contains. As such the poem is truly political. To use the words without capital letters the poem is filled with a positive sense of socialism and ecology, that is of the interdependence of all creatures and things, of how every action, no matter how small, has its repercussions. He concretely places us humans in the world we too easily forget in our own chatter and rush. The "Weardale Section" of the poem maps it all out, roots and all, physical and historical:

everyday we share
cumulus over
giant blocks of earth
rock laid down under what pressure
trees
nodding and turning bent down
under wind mass
heat meeting cold

& the people moving in slow giant eddies
like a great dance like a cloud spray
upon the face of the earth
which had supported them

The poem marks out those daily signals that can make us aware of the whole life. They're not the slogans and giant revelations clanking by, but the minute details that reveal the world. It's the approach, as I've already said, of the true naturalist, whether examining lichen or humans, looking for the "clues" that tell.

something reaching out to you direct
from birdsong from the warmth
of two people together for an instant
different from any other

The music of the poem, like the thoughts of the poem, is like the choral music of the title. Words and phrases appear, and reappear, enriched and growing clearer as the whole work grows, progresses. Like the music of Byrd, Tallis and Purcell, the phrases echo and answer one another, fill the church, fill our hearts and minds. As he ends the poem:

to sing
the things I love as they occur
this instant
everyday

Such a song of praise is a rare and memorable work that should be carved on the walls of our towns and cities.

Lee Harwood

TOM LOWENSTEIN: Filibustering in Samsara (The Many Press, £4.95)

Out of Dutch (obscurely) and Pali (the middle Indian dialect and vehicle for the Buddhist scriptures), Lowenstein's title might crudely be glossed: buccaneering through geneses. "Samsara", in the author's gloss, is "perpetual wandering (of births)" which he expands as "more loosely, existence in time as opposed to the emptiness of space and the unconditioned". A poetry of particulars, then, spawned across cultures and given to a kind of rumbustious meditation on "the profusion and confusion of the phenomenal world", on history's (and implicitly the future's) gene pool of images.

At the heart of the meditation is Giorgione's La Tempesta. For Lowenstein the painting is a palimpsest in which the "writing" of an earlier painting, revealed by X-ray in 1939, is obscured: while the eye penetrates one surface, the painting exists with a potential multiple visibility. On the apparent surface is a pastoral in which a "soldier" and largely naked woman with child occupy opposite corners of the foreground, their backs to the river and walls of an Italian (?) town of the fifteenth century (?) whose lines diminish with the perspective towards the horizon. The X-ray disclosed that "the soldier is a pentimento of a second
nude woman, poised to bathe in the river”; behind was exposed “a background of rectilinear forms suggestive to me at the time of writing of a twentieth century city landscape. Just as the naked woman prefigures the soldier, so the pastoral is a curtain behind which our own time waits.” As though a mandala, the painting prompts Lowenstein to ponder on history’s unkindness towards human yearnings:

Is this too a product of our scattered thoughts and wishes—
like shades uncoupled from their hungry bodies—
or like seabirds lost on endless generations of migration,
circling above their own weary shadows
that they wish to make land, but can never land on?

Now if this book were an opera, at some stage would Lucia have to enter and sing an over-orchestrated lament on Life’s cruelties? No: Lucia enters certainly—on page 18—but her role is deliciously parodied—Lowenstein isn’t persuaded to existential despairs. The “persistent contiguity” of that which though we may “not genuinely see it” remains vibrant beneath a surface opacity, prompts him to create a kaleidoscope of brilliant, hinting particulars. “Rhythms surging” from the periphery, the writing counterpoints the musical texture that Schoenberg intended in his commentary on Balzac, quoted as a frontispiece: “In this space there is no absolute down, no right or left, no forward or backward. Every musical configuration, every movement of tones has to be comprehended primarily as a mutual relation of sound, of oscillatory vibrations, appearing at different places and times…” Lowenstein transposes this into a vertical massing of images related in their density rather than their linear logic:

Could I have all my life at once, please?
Yes, as in the picture, as in a movie,
all fifteen million frames beamed simultaneously
piled one on another
in one packed technicolor batch
it would take half a star to pitch its light through:
but then what an image—

A chorus of thousands might achieve this with words; one man’s accumulated multisyllables can only approximate their thunder—but then what a noise.

...megaliths of spirit-ice, platonic mica-gneiss dishevelled,
granite’s incandescent sinew streaking ruined edges,
luminous diagonals, alive striations, burning fibulae and tendons,
light-sludge, silt of darkness’ inter-osseous agglutinations
severed from the cartilage and fascia, phosphorescent,
burning in the rays’ dissection,
the final earth form scoured from glaciated carnage,

chaos junketed in shafts of curfew,
hamstrung in repeated jumble of the two dimensions—

Here is “a makeshift view of the world’s changing identity”
a matter of fits, starts—the glisterings of sea-ice—eco-
grandeur—shamanistic vocables crunched up like verb-cubes: the poetry resolves like no algebra, but does amount, add up, to

an experimental
maze of vistas

in which light thrives squashed
among a jangle of
variegated possibilities.

As a filibuster in the political sense the book is a lovely failure: it talks in, talks out, talks up, but proves itself magnificently incapable of ever talking a voice down.

Tony Baker

MAGAZINE ROUNDUP

In Volume 8 (1986) we noted that it had been “a thin year for British mags”. Two years on, the position has improved: there are more magazine titles operating in the areas of poetry Reality Studios is interested in; but stability and continuity of appearance are problematic.

Kite, for instance, edited by Chris Broadribb from 153 Lake
Road West, Lakeside, Cardiff CF2 5PU, has flown twice. Litho printed, perfect bound and featuring reviews as well as poetry (uneven in the first issue but much improved in the second), it promises to fill a vital gap. But the inevitable time and money problems have delayed publication of the third issue for a year.

First Offense fills another slot: the quickly produced A4 xeroxed facsimile type of magazine. There have been three stimulating issues so far. This is similar territory to Tony Baker's familiar Figs, whose strong 14th issue may be the last; though First Offense largely avoids the post-objectivist area that Figs has explored and emphasises more language-oriented work.

Folded Sheets has reached issue 4. It's typeset (on Grosse-teste's old machine) and instant-printed in an unassuming but effective A5 format. The work is eclectic but always interesting. Contra Flow's eclecticism works less well: its two editors, Richard Tabor of Lobby Press and Steve Davies, seem to be pulling in different directions.

Bete Noire is a huge A4 magazine (double issue 2/3 is 262 pages) which attempts to construct a non-metropolitan, pro-marginal, pro-modernist alliance, with Angela Carter, Alasdair Gray, The Hull Poets, Michele Roberts and Basil Bunting (an interview with him; though the reprinting of "Briggflatts" is a bit redundant)—and almost brilliantly succeeds. By contrast, Margin tries for the same political territory but does not seem to have quite found an identity yet. Its production values rival that of the best American university based mags, though.

We have seen two issues of Talus so far, and it has much to commend it, particularly its bold internationalism, though it's a pity it has gone so heavily for established Anglo-American names at the expense of untried work.

More modestly, Robert Sheppard's monthly Pages are worth subscribing to for a quick fix of the new British writing as it happens. Chapbook series also fulfil this function: the Northern Lights series (66 Belsize Park Gardens, London NW3 4NE) is in similar territory to Figs, while Poetical Histories (27 Sturton Street, Cambridge CB1 2QG) covers the Cambridge axis. Critical writing finds few outlets however, which makes the imminent demise of The Many Review particularly sad.

Ken Edwards

Publications received

Books & pamphlets

ADAIR, Gilbert: *Hot Licks* (Sub-Voicive, 1987, n.p.)
ANDREWS, B S: *From the Labyrinth* (Interim Press, 1986, £3.60)
ANDREWS, Bruce: *Factura* (Xeroxial Editions, 1987, n.p.)
ARMITAGE, Simon: *The Walking Horses* (SlowDancer, £1.50)
AUSTIN, Anne-Marie: *The Weather Coming* (Taxvs, 1987, £4.50)
BARONE, Dennis: *Forms/Froms* (Potes & Poets Press, £7)
BECKETT, Chris: *Any Absorbency* (the author, 1987, n.p.)
BENVENISTE, Asa: *Pommes/Poems* (Arc Publications, £4.50)
BREMNER, Summer: *The Festival of Instinct* (Northern Lights, 1987, 75p inc p&p)
BUCK, Paul: *Naming Names* (Spectacular Diseases, £1.25);*Rites But for Affection* (Micro Brigade, c/o Spectacular Diseases, 1987, n.p.)
CALEY, Matthew: *Dancing in the Lone Star Diner* (Slow Dancer, £1.50)
CARLSON, Michael: *By the Sound* (Torque Press, £1.50)
CHESTER, Laura: *Free Rein* (Burning Deck, $7, $15 signed)
CLARKE, Adrian: *Ghost Measures* (Actual Size, 1987, £4.95)
COFFEY, Brian: *Salut: Versions of some sonnets of Mallarmé* (hardPressed Poetry, £1.75)
CROZIER & LONGVILLE (eds): *A Various Art* (Carcanet, 1987, £12.95)
DAVIES, Alan: *Signage* (RoofBooks, $11)
ENSLIN, Theodore: Six Pavanes (Northern Lights, 1987, 75p)
EVANS, George: Eye Blade (Pig Press, £4); Nightvision (3rd printing, Pig Press, £3.20); Wrecking (Shearsman, £2.95)
EVANS, Paul: The Sofa Book (w/ drawings by Peter Wilson)(Arc Publications, £2.75)
FINCH, Peter (ed) For Jack Kerouac (Second Aeón, 2nd revised edition 1987, n.p.) (original anthology published 1970)
FISHER, Roy: Poems 1955-1987 (Oxford University Press, £7.95)
FREER, Ulli: 2 Poems from Rushlight (Micro Brigade, n.p.); The Torch, for Bob Cobbing (Micro Brigade, 1987, n.p.)
GEALL, Dave: Scorpio (w/ photos by Liz Adams)(the author, New Albion Press, £1.50)
GIFFORD, Barry: A Chinese Screen (Northern Lights, 1987, 75p)
GILONIS, Harry: Reliefs (hardPressed Poetry, £2.75)
GIROUX, Roger: Time and the Tree (tr Anthony Barnett)(Open Township, 1987, £4.95)
GREEN, Paul: 92 Notes From an Assassin to One of His Victims (Galloping Dog Press, 1987, £1.50); Dusts (Open Township, 1987, 45p)
GRIFFITHS, Bill: A Tract Against the Giants (Coach House Press, 1984, £6.50)
GUNN, Thom: Undesirables (Pig Press, £2.50)
GURNIS, Peter: The Body of Liberties (Burning Deck, 1987, £4)
HALSEY, Alan: A Book of Changes (Auguries & Telegrams) (Spectacular Diseases, 75p); The Capitalist Twilight Revisited (Torque Press, 1987, £1.50)
HARTOG, Diana: Sleeves (Northern Lights, 75p inc p&p)
HATTERSLEY, Geoff: Slouching Towards Rotherham (Wide Skirt Press, 1987, £1)
HEATH-STUBBS, John: Cats’ Parnassus (Hearing Eye, 1987, £2.95)
HAYWARD, Roger: Senile Poems (Actual Size, n.p.)
INMAN, P: Red Shift (Roof Books, £6)
JAFRATE, Keith: Jump! (Slow Dancer, £1.50)
JAMES, John: Lines for Richard Long (Silver Hounds, c/o Ferry Press, £2)
JUEL PRZYBYSZEWSKA, Dagny: The Poems (tr & intro by Hanne Bramness) (Branch Redd Books, c/o Spanner, £5)
KAMAL, Daud: A Remote Beginning (Interim Press, 1985, £2.40)
KENNEDY, D Gerard: The Disgraceful Force of Louis Armstrong’s Funeral (the author, 1984, £1.25 inc p&p)
KLEINZAHLER, August: On Johnny’s Time (Pig Press, £4); The Last Big Snow (Northern Lights, 75p inc p&p)
LAKE, Grace: La Facciata (Poetical Histories, £2)
LAWSON, Andrew: A Degree of Freedom (Northern Lights, 75p inc p&p)
LLOYD, David: Coupures (hardPressed Poetry, 1987, £3)
LOWENSTEIN, Tom: Filibustering in Samsara (The Many Press, 1987, £4.95)
MARTIN, William: Hinny Beata (Taxvs, 1987, £4.95)
MIDDLETON, Peter: Performance in Four Movements (Torque Press, £2.50)
MOORE, Nicholas: Lachrimae Rerum: Last Poems(Open Township/ Poetical Histories, £4.50 pbk)
MUCKLE, John: The Cresta Run (Galloping Dog Press, 1987, £3.95)
MURDOCH, Royal: Chills and Fevers (Interim Press, 1985, £2.40)
O’REILLY, Montagu: Who has been Tampering with These Pianos? (intro by James Laughlin) (Atlas Press, £4.50)
OLDS, Sharon: The Matter of This World (Slow Dancer, 1987, £4)
PATTERSON, Ian: No Dice (Poetical Histories, £2)
PERELMAN, Bob: Face Value (Roof Books, £6)
PERET, Benjamin: Death to the Pigs: Selected Writings (ed. & intro. by Rachel Stella)(Atlas Press, £6.50)
PRESLEY, Frances: The Sex of Art (North & South, £4.50)
QUENEAU, Raymond: Pierrot Mon Ami, tr. Barbara Wright, and The Skin of Dreams, tr. H J Kaplan (Atlas Press, £5.50 each pbk)
RANDELL, Elaine: Gut Reaction (North & South, 1987, £4.50)
REICHERTZ, Ronald: A Belated Lament for the Irish Giant (Northern Lights, 1987, 75p)
RILEY, Peter: Ospita (Poetical Histories, c/o the author, 1987, £3.50)
ROBINSON, Elizabeth: My Name Happens Also (Burning Deck, 1987, $4)
ROBINSON, Ian: Journal (Interim Press, 1987, £3.60)
ROBINSON, Kit: Ice Cubes (Roof Books, $6)
ROUSSEL, Raymond: Raymond Roussel, Brotchie, Green, Melville (eds)(Atlas Press, 1987, £5.50)—anthology of writings on Roussel, being a special issue of Atlas Anthology (4)
RUAN JI: Songs of My Heart (tr. Graham Hartill & Wu Fusheng)(Wellsweep, £4.50).
RUSE-GLASON, Kate: Witches (Branch Redd Books, c/o Spanner, £2.50)
SHEPPARD, Robert (texts) & FARRELL, Patricia (images): Looking North (Ship of Fools, 1987, n.p.)
SHEPPARD, Robert: Letter from the Blackstock Road (Oasis Books, £2.50)
SHERMAN, Bill: Glimpses of India and Nepal (Hearing Eye, £2.95)
SILLIMAN, Ron: The New Sentence (Roof, 1987, $10)
SINCLAIR, Iain: White Chappell Scarlet Tracings (Paladin, £3.95 pbk; Goldmark, 1987, £12.50)
SMITH, Pat: Hour History (Burning Deck, 1987, $4)
TZARA, Tristan (tr Lee Harwood): Chanson Dada, Selected Poems (Coach House Press, 1987, cloth $24.95, pbk $12.50—UK £5.85)
UPTON, Lawrence: Letter to Ulli (Good Elf Publications, n.p.) and The Shopping Family: cartoon (In Lieu Publications, 30p; both available from the author); Postcards to England (Micro Brigade, c/o Spectacular Diseases, n.p.)
WALSH, Catherine: Making Tents (hardPressed Poetry, 1987, £3)
WATSON, Craig: After Calculus (Burning Deck, $7, $15 signed)
WELSH, William: You Can’t Get There from Here (Noumenon Press, 1987, $6)
WEVILL, David: Figure of Eight (Shearsman Books, £2.95)
WILKINSON, John: Bones of Contention (Prest Roots Press, £4.50)
WILLIAMS, Mark: Plato’s Ice Cream Parlour (Milvus-milvus Press, c/o Kite magazine, n.p.)
ZVERKOV, A P: Nevsky Prospekt, tr. Robert Hampson & David Miller, hardPressed Poetry, £1.95)

Audio

BERGVALL, Caroline: Songs Lovers Pray (Monolith, LP record available from Recommended Records, 387 Wandsworth Rd, London SW8)
LAUTPOESIE: Eine Anthologie (Gertraud Scholz Verlag, Weinbergstrasse 11, D-8501 Obermichelbach, West Germany — includes Adler, Heidsieck, Mon, Pastior, Rühm, Wendt etc, plus booklet with texts)

Magazines

ABACUS 27–32, July 1987–Feb 1988 (Peter Ganick, Potes & Poets Press, 181 Edgemont Ave, Elmwood, CT 06110, USA, $2.50, $17 for 1 year/8 single author issues: Benson, Bernstein, S Howe, etc)
ANGEL EXHAUST 7, Summer 1987 (Adrian Clarke/Steven Pereira, 87a Theberton St, London N1 0QY, n.p.)
BETE NOIRE 2/3, Spring 1987 (John Osborne, c/o American Studies, The University, Cottingham Rd, Hull, Humberside HU6 7RX, £2)
BRANCH REDD REVIEW 4 (Bill Sherman, c/o Spanner, £5)
CATALYST 16/1/2 (M Kettner, PO Box 20518, Seattle, WA 98102, USA, free)
CENTRAL PARK 12, Fall 1987 (Stephen-Paul Martin et al, Newword Productions Inc, Box 1446, New York, NY 10023, USA, $5, $9 for 2)
CONTRA FLOW 2 (£1.20) & 3/4 (£2.40) (Steve Davies/Richard Tabor, Lobby Press, 104 Glenthorne Ave, Yeovil, Somerset)
EDINBURGH REVIEW 73–77 (Peter Kravitiz, 48 Pleasance, Edinburgh EH8 9TJ, £2.95, £12 for 4)
FIGS 14, May 1988(Tony Baker, Mews Cottage, Main St, Winster, Derbys DE4 2DJ, £2)
FIRST OFFENSE 3, Autumn 1987 (Tim Fletcher, "Syringa", The Street, Stodontmarsh, Canterbury, Kent CT3 4BA, £1.50)
FOLDED SHEETS 3 (Sept 1987), 4 (April 1988), 5 (Sept 1988)
   (Michael Haslam, Open Township, 14 Foster Clough, Heights Rd, Hebden Bridge, W Yorks HX7 5QZ, £1.50)
GALLERY WORKS 7 (Peter Holland/Jeannie Lance, 25 Carlin St, Norwalk, CT 06851, USA, $5, cheques payable to Jeannie Lance)
INSECTS 1, April 1988 (John Cussans, 13a Hercules St, London N7 6AT, £1 + 25p p&p)
INTERSTATE 18 & 19 (2nd British issue)(Loris Essary/Mark Loeffler, PO Box 7068, University Station, Austin, Texas 78713, USA, $10 for 2)
LABEL 8, Spring 1988 (Paul Beaasley/Ruth Harrison, 57 Effingham Rd, London SE12 8NT, £1.50, £3 for 2)
MARGIN 4 (Autumn 1987), 5 (Winter 1987-88), 6 (Summer 1988)
   (Robin Magowan/Walter Perrie, The Square Inch, Lower Granco St, Dunning PH2 0SQ, £3.50 inc p&p, £12 for 4)
NEW POETRY FROM OXFORD 6, 1988 (Helen Kidd et al, 56 Beech Crescent, Kidlington, Oxford, n.p.)
NINTH DECADE 8 (Robert Vas Dias et al, 52 Cascade Ave, London N10, £2, £6 for 3)
NORTH DAKOTA QUARTERLY Vol 55 No 4, Fall 1987 — a 400pp issue entitled “Some Others: Contemporary American Poetry” (Robert W Lewis, University of N Dakota, Box 8237, Grand Forks, N Dakota 58202, USA, $10 for 4)
PAGES 17-120(13 issues, Sept '87-Sept '88)(Robert Sheppard, 15 Oakapple Rd, Southwick, Sussex, £3.50 for 12 months)
PALPI 17, 18, 19, 20 (May 1988)(Association of Little Presses, 89a St, Southwick, Bridge, West Sussex, £1.50 for 4)
PAPER AIR 4:1, "Artifice of Absorption", a 3000-line essay in verse by Charles Bernstein, 1987 (Gil Ott, PO Box 40034, Philadelphia, PA 19106, USA, $5, $12 for 3)
POETICS JOURNAL 7, September 1987: “Postmodern?” (Lyn Hejinian & Barrett Watten, 2639 Russell St, Berkeley, CA 94709, USA, $6, $15 for 3 in USA/Canada, $18 for 3 elsewhere)
POETRY LISTING 1, May 1988 (David Hart, 42 All Saints Rd, Kings Heath, Birmingham B14 7LL, £1.80 inc p&p, £3.40 for 2)
PROSPICE 21 (J C R Green/Roger Elkin, PO Box 418, Leek, Staffs ST13 8UX, £3.95, £12.50 for 4)
ROOM 3, featuring Larry Eigner and Karl Young (John Perlman, 1632 Mamaroneck Ave, Mamaroneck, NY 10543, USA, n.p.)
SLOW DANCER 19/20, 1987, 21, 1988 (John Harvey, Flat 4, 1 Park Valley, The Park, Nottingham NG7 1BS, £3 annually)
SMOKE 27, 28 (Windows, 22 Roseheath Drive, Halewood, Liverpool L26 9UH, 20p, £1 for 4)
SUBSTANCE 54, Lyotard on modernity, Eluard, Breton, Acker, etc (available in UK from Paul Buck, 4 Bower St, Maidstone ME16 8SD, £4 inc p&p)
TALUS 2, Autumn 1987 (Hanne Bramness/Shamoon Zamir, c/o Dept of English, King's College, Strand, London WC2R 2LS, £3.50, £7 for 2)
THE MANY REVIEW 5, Summer 1987 (John Welch, 15 Norcott Rd, London N16 7BJ, £2 inc p&p, £3.50 for 2)
THE WIDE SKIRT 4, Sept/Oct 1987 (Geoff Hattersley, 8 Melbeck Court, Chapeltown, Sheffield South Yorks S30 4YQ, £1, £4 for 4)
WRITING 18 (July 1987), 19 (Nov 1987), 20 (Dec 1987), 21 (Spring/Summer 1988) (Colin Browne, Box 69609, Station K, Vancouver, BC, V5K 4W7, Canada, $3, $12 for 4)
The above is a list of publications received up to the end of September 1988. Sorry no space for publishers' addresses this time. In the UK both Alan Halsey Books (22 Broad St, Hay-on-Wye, via Hereford HR3 5DB) and Paul Green (83b London Road, Peterborough, Cambs.) can between them supply most titles. In North America Segue Distributing and Small Press Distribution (see front page for addresses) offer the same service. Prices of books, pamphlets and single issues of magazines are given exclusive of postage and packing; subscription prices can be assumed to include p & p. Publication date is 1988 unless otherwise noted.

Valediction

In April 1978 50 copies of Reality Studios Vol 1 No 1—ten pages comprising James Sherry's "Straits" and two pieces by Opal L Nations—were cranked out on a rusting Roneo at Lower Green Farm, Orpington. Ten years and more than 1,000 pages later this
particular project has come to an end (the Roneo passed on much earlier).

Why now? Not merely a liking for round numbers; more a sense of mission accomplished. The late 70s were the ebb of a tide of magnificent British poetry of the non-mannerist kind, as Peter Riley might put it, and the influential magazines—Grosseteste Review, Poetry Information, Curtains—were beginning to wind down. Reality Studios never set out to compensate for their absence, its intentions being more modest, but in truth there was very little else happening in this poetry in the early Thatcher years. Now it can be argued things have got a little livelier again, and the publication of The New British Poetry by Paladin, including among its 85 poets about 20-30 who have been featured in these pages, serves as a kind of watershed.

Plus it's just tiring editing a magazine of this kind, in between trying to earn a living and to do some serious writing of one's own. And with minimal funding; in its ten years, Reality Studios has only managed to secure two grants of £250 each from Greater London Arts—for which I thank them—but nothing at all of course from the Arts Council. I no longer feel able to cope with mountains of unsolicited manuscripts, even though I marvel at the ingenuity of some would-be contributors (recording poems onto my telephone answering machine seems to be a recent trend). I regret being unable to do reviewing justice to the breadth and high quality of recent small press poetry publications.

Reality Studios won't be lost as a publishing imprint, however. A future project, for instance, will be a collaboration with Wendy Mulford's revived Street Editions, including a magazine of art, poetry and cultural politics.

I can't begin to thank all the many generous supporters of Reality Studios. But perhaps I can just mention Eric Mottram for his inspiration, Allen Fisher and Paige Mitchell for friendship and support, Glenda George for her guest editorship of Vol 7, Robert Hampson, Paul Brown, Wendy Mulford, Gillian Allnutt, Erik Vonna-Michell, the Angels of Fire collective (as was), ALP, Nick Kimberley, Mike Hart at Compendium Books, all associated with Segue and SPD in the USA and everyone who's ever appeared in these pages.

Ken Edwards
CRIS CHEEK, ALLEN FISHER, R G HAMPSON, GRAHAM HARTILL, LEE HARWOOD, WENDY MULFORD, LARRY PRICE, JOHN WILKINSON etc plus Fisher on 'A Various Art', Adair on Bruce Andrews, Middleton on Barrett Watten, Oliver on Rudy Burckhardt, Smith on Anthony Barnett plus much more . . . . .

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