

[Two] Factorial

Collaborations



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(Collaborations)

AVERY E. D. BURNS & NORMA COLE
unscripted behaviors

#1

wet
falling
from
dry
night

Jasmine, the house fire, “When you go to your home by the ocean,” said the song.
The shadow’s leaking again. THEN you have to come back. Have a nice life, she said.
In answer to your question, it was to be an ambidextrous text.

#2

Juno : Ida
gone
or no
question
of fine
distinctions

Lassen Peak elev. 10,453. “In one synoptic view...” Your conduit, my refrain... Lightning rod as visible surround. The romantic displacement of art(i)fact in nature. Whose self-portrait, on tip-toe, screaming at the sky. An energy displacing outward; Mt. Lassen last erupted in 1914. Vulcanized commentary—Tectonic choice. Colors along the crater rim, “pink, orange, yellow sulfur, dark red, black w/ white speckles.” Cri-Cri, Cri-Cri, loud grass happens. Monarch butterflies, what do they incur? Beauty, then, is where exactly?

for BW

#3

“We’re looking for a
white plastic bag with
miscellaneous stuff in it.”

interrogating anything? Its own malaise, darkness, the degraded, eroding material “around”... The sense of other language as a doubling, a lining: “he wasn’t dead just blind standing on 24th Street wearing shades and collecting money, maybe selling something, maybe pencils or something.”

#4

painted
paper
burnished
with agate

flying
and
lying
with same
picture

Arisen as a communal device—the heraldic cupola. We set ourselves to walk along the cliffs, ignoring the postings. Climbing then a possible answer to the momentary conundrum of sleep. Arrival is many things to many people. Going is at least several intentions. Take a bite out of the sky; hold it deep, deep in your chest, expel a heartbeat into the rekindling night.

#5

rare(r) days go by
like this machine of words
splays of poppies

Walking on the cliffs, caught by the spray, this color is lost to us. And to see the crypt correspond to herself, to the sparks where the blanket floated down at dawn landing on the hedge at the bottom of the garden, beyond the electrified fence, outlined but not painted in. Not lethal, the charge of trespassing, “my blanket, if I could reach it,” the whole roof or nothing but the roof?

But did they arrive in a box?
or on a hill describing
the origin of rings—the
butterflies?

framed thusly the pastoral runs rampant. sylvan. verdant. the
couple walks throughout the box of ritual. throwing down
whispering threads of definition. ariadne. theseus. couples
play their part forming the scree. a few stage directions pre-
figures scene. the innermost coiled with the outermost.
sprung from two to one. sound. thought. word. song.

#7

absence lingers
throwing shapes at the moon

Pleasure is wrapped into the eye, the struggle to be “equal to the world.” A lapel button announces that a few decades of bad art will be “the ruin of the world.” And me without my browser, my umbrella, my dowsers. Clueless, pure contingency.

#8

the light
bending section
obsessed with
it, *silentious*

within the water it veers then dissipates. the literal cold dark
beneath the vetch and call. microbe to mammal the food
chain ascends to the sun. islands picture postcards of these
few facts. the grid, although not stationary, remains binary in
composition—dark/ light or light/dark. grey faces the imag-
ination, like dream, color being a rarity, and animals are a
cause of suspicion. jeffers called it “inhumanism” but no-
one believed him preferring to live within the pathetic
fallacy. from the cover of “Life” to his now relative obscu-
rity. rock on rock and the sea wind.

SARAH ANNE COX & ELIZABETH TREADWELL & YEDDA MORRISON
dream of the house that was

the breath that was hers was saved in the plastic floating ring
poolside the mixing of cold and hot
I'm not sure there was ever much point in speaking
here is the house with all its timber
split unmatched in futures a solid hall where the horses
were fed what was sick had died and so the
house would soon follow

the grave ranch home
cheerful green lowpile
slides down the stairs
incumbent upon whom
the snapping turtle
we did bury that house
with all its former ashes

circumference and satellite
when you place yourself in position
you get lost
calibrate the field kick
the weight ball down
sheets of rain
where were you last seen

been a second prince following your name, a little girl sticking treats into
doodle by the hillside, looking for the unsure crucial mothers farhouse with
all its spilt unmatched stereowishes so soon the following week sister
dream, all storage chambers, like dynamite

blowing
the house pivoting dumping out its contents
the childone pulled through the window elbows knees rubbing the motherone
pulling dreaming of letting go one the sweaty palm down under deadwood
rosebush she secretly wanting to falling other houses, those of friends
sliding down too reaching the road and blowing—
wallpaper blooming under streetlights one car wedged beside the unmade bed
the body sleeping there untended one floating off
in all its former ashes

toward the side split nimble jack
irreparable damage to inner foundations
luck and hope
regarding the house still breathing
unloaded the kit bag sank into her skin

pouring in
another language, being teaching
the youngest to read, and
all the birds
this morning

keening in the mirror entree

thought to be an immune reaction
slip ink dousing the broken tooth
memorybridge rickets
not wanting the scurrying off but
scurrying completing the disasterangle
cankerpot
bubble

there were those that feared to leave and those who absolutely left
she was the isolated domino
normalcy was restored within the following “and then I died inside”
if actions refuse to bump against
if every fallen beam is its own peculiar event

grateful for the nuance
one would suppose
and who said what where
the mind of it
to imitate the small oceans

and in imitating
becoming briefly
ones own particular event
aiming the hobbyhorse
towards the greenest window
holding one’s breath

under factions held by rank and canker
instead of freeing them, the explosion
suppresses the group divide weakens resolve
of the less fortunate for the less enthusiastic
untranslated curses form the roadway

CAROLINE PRESNELL & APRIL WEST & BOBBIE WEST
Conversations with Fire

Smoked

inhales faint feather-plumes drifting blue smoke brushing
nostrils just once then vanishing tantalize turn her head sift-
ing thoughts in fragments too late early May flames teasing
treads of seasoned wood stacked with sheets of Gershwin
crackling spikes leaping bite the hands that reach too late to
save oh save please someone help no phone can't call it's all
up to her house up in flames leap through the roof crying
God oh help crying baby's still safe so dash across a fresh-
plowed field each labored step a call for help then soothe the
babe then back & forth through scalding tar like rain off the
roof while fire eats keepsakes consumes the house burnt to
the ground with embers still glowing gray-haired neighbors
donate clothes hold potlucks & whisper behind blue-veined
hands: *"she left her baby in a burning house"*

Bobbie West

It Happened in May 1960

Caroline Presnell, April West, and Bobbie West talk about their house burning

(audiotape recorded November 29, 2002)

CAROLINE: Okay, how do we start?

BOBBIE: Well, start from the very beginning and tell the story. Talk about that day, what mood you were in and what you were doing, and go from there.

CP: Uhhh... it was Friday, May the thirteenth.

BW: Friday the thirteenth, really?!

CP: Uh-huh. [Laughter] And it was a sort of mild day. Sort of sunshiny and... fairly mild, but it was cool in the morning. I don't know what I was doing—I might have been sewing... I think I might have been sewing. But I was doing something at the dining room table. And I'd had a little fire in that stove, the coal stove, in the front bedroom that morning because it had been cool. But it got a little warmer, and so I was letting the fire go out. And, you know, we were always really conscious of the potential for fire. And of course we had that dry wood roof, that shake roof, so I had gone in to check a couple of times, as the fire was dying down, to make sure it was okay, because when a fire is just going a little bit, even, there's a danger of flue fire—you know, catching the soot on fire. So I went in and would feel the chimney and also had gone outside to look and make sure there wasn't anything happening. But at some point—I can't remember now whether I smelled it, or whether I just routinely went to look, but I think I smelled it and went out to look and there was a hole burning in the second floor roof that was, at that point, probably as big around as a bucket.

APRIL: You saw that from the outside?

CP: Uh-huh. And obviously what had happened is the soot had caught on fire and had come out onto the roof and had caught it. Now, mind you, we had no running water, no telephone. I had April home, fifteen months, and your dad was working in that field, you know, the one you go to up on the field road and just over the hill. He was just over there and I could almost see him on the tractor, but he was too far to yell at.

So, first of all—mind you, this wasn't very long, I couldn't tell you how long, but maybe a year or so from the time the other house had been on fire, Grandma and Grandpa's house. Lightning had struck it, and the roof had caught on fire and basically Grandpa got out there, and got up there, and tore those shingles off with his hands, to get that fire. And of course it rained and helped put it out some. But I had that vision in my mind and I may have wasted some time, I don't know, but I thought, "It's such a tiny little thing—if I can just get to it." So I tried to... I went upstairs and thought about getting up into the attic, you know, to try to get some-

thing and knock that out. But first of all, it was hard to get anything tall enough to get in there, and then I was afraid to get in there, because there were bare wires and things, and I was afraid I'd get up there and get hurt and then April would die too.

So then I went out and got the ladder, great big old ladder, to try to get it up to the house to get to that, and it was too heavy and I couldn't get it up by myself. I really have no concept of how long that took. It surely wasn't more than five, ten minutes. By that time the fire was probably about as big an area as a table top. So I got April and took her to the kitchen, which was the farthest away from the fire that it could be, and sat her down and said, "You stay right there, don't you move." Because I knew it wasn't gonna burn before I—what I was gonna do was go to the field and get Jack. And I knew it wouldn't burn that quickly, and we could have run home in any case and got her, so I knew she wasn't unsafe there, which she would have been if she'd been in the car with me, because I was gonna drive like a bat out of hell. And that's what I did, got in the car and went down to the field road and went up there and motioned to him and he shut off the tractor and came on home.

And then... and then what did I do...? Hmm... I'm thinking it was the year Larry was in kindergarten, so it must have been in the afternoon that that happened... because Larry was home.

BW: Yeah, it was afternoon, because we were on the bus coming home and could see the house burning.

CP: Yeah, so meanwhile, while I was starting to do some of that stuff, right in the beginning, I sent him running down the road to Grandma and Grandpa's. And of course, you know, he was this little kid and he had always been forbidden to be out of the yard by himself, let alone out on the road!

BW: He also told me he was wearing John's shoes. He went clumping down the road.

CP: He was wearing something, his cowboy boots or something that was kinda clumpy. But I just sent him off down the... down there to get them. And his report was, he got there and they said, "Ohhh, Larry's here! Larry's come down, tee hee!" Basically thinking he'd, sort of, run away, and weren't paying any attention to him, and he kept trying to tell them there was something wrong. And it took him a few minutes to get their attention, that they really should come. But they did. And then... I may have given him to Grandma... I'm not quite sure... you know, the two kids, I may have given them to her. Because what I did next was, I got in the car and drove up to the Osborns', which was the nearest telephone [a mile away] and asked her to just call everybody and get help. And by then—you know how farmers are, you see things you know that's not quite ordinary—by the time I got back, the neighbors were already starting to collect, and there really wasn't anything to do but just start hauling out stuff, because by that time it was spreading really, really fast. So there wasn't anything to be saved upstairs. In fact, after I got back, then, from

telephoning, I went in and started trying to get stuff out. At one point I was gonna go upstairs, because you know what was upstairs—my whole music library; some of my childhood mementoes, you know, doll dishes and things; all of my family photographs—my dad had just given me our family photographs recently; three quilts that Grandma Tull had made—all that stuff was up there. But I opened the stair door and flames shot across and—no way I can go up there!—shut the door. Concentrated on getting stuff out.

So the neighbors started carrying stuff out. They started with our bedroom in the front, which was directly under the fire, and worked their way back... and carried the furniture out into the yard.

BW: It opened onto the front porch, right?

CP: Uh-huh. But, uh, we had the freezer in there.

BW: In the bedroom?

CP: Yeah, because that's where there was room for it. And it was a gigantic old thing, so it was hard for them to get it out—it was huge! [Laughing] And you know, that big old heavy bedroom furniture.

BW: So you put it all on our [toy] wagon—the freezer—you put it on our wagon. And smashed the axle.

CP: Yes... because that's what there was to help move it with. But people just came and helped and got stuff out. One of the horrible scenes for me was really getting to the back part. Forrest Osborn and somebody else went into the kitchen and they brought out the good china and the Revere pans. And as they were coming out with that, the tar was running off of that back porch roof just like it was rain. "Oh my gosh!" I said to them, "Don't go back in there! Don't go back!"

It was hard for me, running around in there to... to kind of figure out in such a panic what to pick up. And I tried to think what was the most precious. So that's how I happen to have that one stack of music that I have, because that's what I had on the piano, that I'd been playing, so naturally they were some of my favorites. So I just picked up that and went out with it. And over a little chest in the dining room we had the South Norfolk church plate hanging on the wall and... maybe the Pana church one. And then there was a little plaster cast of somebody's—one of the kids'—hands, and that pitcher of Grandma West's—y'know, that flowered pitcher—was sitting there under it. And as I pulled off that plaster of Paris hand thing, it broke and fell, and broke that handle on that pitcher.

BW: That's how that handle got broken!

CP: Yeah. But I just shoved it all in there and took it out anyway.

But then in the meantime, some of the neighbor women came by and said, "Shall we get the kids [John and Bobbie] off the bus?" and I said yes... or... I'm not even sure if they asked, I think they just did it.

BW: Oh, that's how that happened.

[Coming home on the bus, we could see smoke in the distance. There was a lot of discussion among the kids about this, but John and I insisted it was just Dad burning brush to clear a field. As the bus made the last stop before our house, flames and black smoke could be seen quite clearly shooting through our attic window, a quarter-mile away. At that point, all the kids started chattering excitedly. One girl, jumping up and down with what seemed to be a look of glee, kept chanting, "Your house is burning! Your house is burning!" Finally the driver made everyone sit down. He took us to where Mrs. Jones (a neighbor we didn't know well) was waiting to pick us up. Although we pleaded with her to take us closer, where we could see what was going on, or to our grandmother's house, she took us instead to her own home. And there we stayed for several hours, in a strange place, not knowing what was happening to our home and family.]

CP: And then after a while, you couldn't go back in. There was nothing to be done. They did end up, I think, pumping water out of the pump and throwing it on those sheds out back. Otherwise, they might have burned too. So I think that's what they were doing.

BW: When you were actually in there, getting stuff out, what was it like inside the house? Was there a lot of smoke? And flames right next to you or anything?

CP: No. No, because it was upstairs. It was, like, burning upstairs, and so... I mean, it wasn't that it wasn't dangerous, because there was stuff falling, all the time, around, on the outside as you were coming in and out. So it was dangerous to be anywhere in the yard. So I didn't... I left the men to do the front part and didn't even much go in there, once they started carrying stuff out, and just tried to stay out of their way.

Of course your, the kids' room, was right next to the stairwell, so when that went, you know, that's part of why they couldn't get anything out of there. They'd started with the front bedroom and then went to the living room, then they would have gone to yours next, but it was already probably going, from that stairwell, maybe too hard to be in there.

[BW: Not knowing these facts, it seemed to me, as a seven-year-old, that they hadn't saved our toys only because they thought it wasn't important. I held a grudge about that for years!]

BW: So, how long was there from the time it started burning to the time you couldn't be in it anymore?

CP: Oh, probably not more than about half an hour. The whole thing, I don't think, took... I don't think it took an hour...

So then after a while there was nothing to do but go and sit and watch, watch it finish. So I sat over under the tree with Grandpa John and watched his childhood home burn, feeling really bad because—knowing he had stopped their fire and I couldn't do anything about this one.

So... that's really all there was to the fire. There were all kinds of rumors that went around town. There were rumors that I had—oh, really, really—of course this is the 'bad woman' anyway. I was already... 'bad' in town. There were rumors all over town that I had 'left' my baby in this burning house. And so of course I was 'wicked.' And there were rumors that we had lost an antique organ, which we had not. We had Grandma and Grandpa West's antique organ out in the shed, but it was never hurt.

BW: But you did lose your piano.

CP: I lost the piano, but it wasn't that much of a piano. It wasn't my childhood piano. It was like a ten-, fifteen-dollar piano. And if we'd saved it, I would never have had the grand, because we bought the grand with the insurance money! So, you know, people gave us things to try to start up housekeeping again.

BW: What kinds of things did people give you?

CP: They gave us some towels and a few sheets and some pans. Not a lot of stuff. Then what happened was, they got together... well, okay, I should tell the rest of what went beyond this fire, right? The next week. Because, during the next week we were looking for a place to stay. We stayed... uh... I guess we stayed with Grandma and Grandpa.

AW: They were on the farm at that time?

CP: Yeah. In the other house. Right. And... uh... but then we were looking for another place. Well, it turned out the Forsythe place was empty. People knew that was empty, but it hadn't been rented, or hadn't been lived in for a little while and it was pretty much of a mess. So Everett, under the circumstances, agreed to rent it to us. But we had to do the fixing up. I don't know, he may have paid for the materials, I'm not sure. So the neighbors all got together, and it just happened that it was not weather that they could get in the fields right then. So there was a week available when they all could come. And in that week they entirely redid the inside of that house.

BW: I remember that. I remember going over there and watching people hanging wallpaper and putting linoleum down.

CP: Yeahhh! Laid some linoleum, painted the woodwork, did a little plaster repair.

Oh, they had to paint everything! I mean, it was a mess. Yeah, did that whole thing! Got it ready for us to move in for a week and then helped us move and then gave us a housewarming party. I don't think people brought gifts to that. They did bring food. But also the church, in that week or so after, like the next Sunday service, the pastor just mentioned the problem and asked for help. And I think I wasn't there. I think I didn't go that Sunday. And somebody from the church came out and brought me this great big wad of bills. They had kind of like pinned them together with straight pins and [rolled] them and it was like a big wad of money! [Laughter] About two hundred dollars or something.

And then the weather broke, and the next week, they all had to be back in the fields. But during that week when we were working on Everett's house, there was one afternoon, about, I don't know—what time does school get out? Three-thirty or something? There was one afternoon about two-thirty, when somebody said something about Larry, and I said, "Uh-oh! I forgot to go up to Rosamond and pick him up from kindergarten!" [Laughter] At noon! Ohhh! So I hightailed it up there and they said, "Oh, he's in Mrs. Morrison's room. He's doing fine." She said, "Why don't you just wait and let him go home on the bus with the other kids." [Laughter] But boy! I felt bad. [Laughter] But, you know, we had to go to town on Monday after the fire to buy him some new shoes, because he didn't have any shoes! He lost them in the fire, had been wearing these, whatever he was wearing that day.

BW: I think they were John's shoes.

CP: Yeah, they might have been. So he didn't have anything to wear.

So—that's all I know about the fire.

BW: Okay, now talk about why there were no fire trucks that came out.

CP: Well, it's no different than it would be now, I don't think. I mean, there's a volunteer fire department in Pana, but, first of all, to tell them how to get there... first of all you would have to call them. So that means I would have to go to somebody else's telephone. And then we would have to explain to them how to get there, which was not all that easy, and it was twenty minutes' drive, even in the best of conditions. It would take twenty minutes to get there. So there was not very much utility in calling them.

BW: So you didn't even try?

CP: No, no. There wasn't any use in it. By the time they would have got organized and found us, it would have been too late for them to do anything, especially with no water. I mean they could have brought a tank of water. But, there wasn't anything they could have done. Nowadays, they have the roads marked. But the roads weren't even marked then, where we were.

CP: Over the years talking with town people about country life... they always would see you look like you see something, like, say, smoke or something, and you'd go and look and pay attention to it, and they'd always think you were just being nosey. Either nosey, or doing that for lack of anything else interesting in your surroundings. But it was always hard to explain to them that we didn't have the built-in safety things—we didn't have law out there, to speak of, we didn't have fire protection. We didn't have a lot of stuff out there, and so we had to take care of each other. Paying attention to that sort of thing could make a huge difference. So more than once, we would see smoke—you got so you could sort of tell if somebody's burning brush or something; oh, that's just so-and-so burning brush—but you could kinda tell if something wasn't right. And more than once we would get in the vehicles and go drive over to find out what's going on. Usually it was just somebody burning more than usual, or burning something unusual, but it always paid to go look.

But it was beautiful there. Remember that big picture window on the west at Everett's house? And when you looked out you either saw the fields, which had their own change with the seasons, of color, and then you looked... and you had the woods on the other side, and that was just beautiful.

Random Access Memory

Coming home on the catapult is an ancient device of Primitive Art suddenly erupting from a nearly extinct *school bus*, *we could see* the objectivist or surrealist even though *it* scrambled the signal somewhat with strands of coaxial cable *across the* obvious limitations of *cornfields, flames*, and their non-alliterative “frittering leaves” (if I read her right) while *shooting* acceptable manners *straight through the attic window*.

fragment 4

you are always
heat

you're a fever on my
left side

fire:
desire for escape

fire: fear
of burning bridges

your
silence

nearly as moulder, when

smokeless:
desperate failure to ignite

flameless:
words fall

poems by Bobbie West

STEFAN HYNER & JEROME ROTHENBERG
Vienna & the German Tidiness
An Exchange

Instant introduction

Stefan Hyner

Too hard to get to, they say
10,000 mountains made of tears
life is suffering, so easily said
when all possible hands are needed
to calm the memory down

First response & extension

Jerome Rothenberg

Is something left to say
for those who say it
who come into a kind of stillness
in which a scream breaks forth at intervals
& then recedes
leaving a trail of shattered bones
in back of ear
 & tongue
 & eye
awake forever
in the pain of who we are

Vienna & the German Tidiness

Stefan Hyner

Mr. Shirach, Gauleiter of Vienna
—perl of the 3. Reich—, alone
had 60,000 sent
 to the extermination camps
 dirt under the carpet, ground
into imperial oak floors

His mother had taught him
how to keep the house clean, but at night
he smelt the tears in the Danube
 drying out his soul
 a hairless broom remained
so we take an iron shovel to hell
to extinguish the fire

The Gauleiter & the Rabbit

after Hyner and Picasso

Jerome Rothenberg

“the eye in erection”

knows fear

 a closed door

between *him* & the devil

not *me*

 & that cry in extremis

a black fire burning us

night after night

 “I am bagged” says the uncle

who is there in my dream

but escapes me

 & sleeping

I only can run down the stairs

at the back of his house

can relive his dream without hope

with the dead always present

the wonder of “someone is here”

“he is calling your name”

“he will kill you”

A Response to Picasso

Stefan Hyner

every word wrangled from
the eye of Uranus
every sound of the world perceived

“We are grown ups,” he sez
“cuz we hurt constantly.”

A fire extinguisher, a pill
to end the pain
it's over now
we had it

with ALL present at
times
for to behold
called & callin'

today their voices
w[h]ere in the thunder
then it calmed
down

[?]

The Gauleiter & the Rabbit (2)

Jerome Rothenberg

the gauleiter & the rabbit
form another segment
of the dream their motion thrusts them forward
until he drives his teeth into the other's neck
purveyor of a custom so within the norm
the world will hardly recognize it
but will say of him as it has always done
the passion of this man to kill he reads as justice
& such justice is the province of the powerful
& pure

where purity is one with power
& no rabbit will escape the hunter's trap
now that a gauleiter has spoken
because the murderers are there in every generation
& the spray that cleans the flesh out of his teeth
will still keep running as the rabbits will
will leave the country bare without a trace
until the other gauleiters come riding in
to stoke his fires
it will be the way we saw him once & froze
a man of an uncertain size
dimensions hidden colder than a stone
his shadow flattened out against a wall
the children in his dream
fused to a single child
a rabbit running backwards
with his finger on the spring he brings them down

No beginning? No end?

Stefan Hyner

Another segment of the dream
holds him by the neck
 there is nothing for this world
to recognize, as it has always done
(behind closed eyes
pure & just
 all shadows fuse
 into bare landscapes, while
the murderers clean
each other's teeth
 & step over
 the bloody bag of progress
 to dream up another world

Jerome Rothenberg

SAWAKO NAKAYASU & KERRI SONNENBERG
from **71 Postcards**

- a. hard.scent.of chaos. between.motors in. reel.of.escape.
from. running within. pre.darkened in livid.shape.
finite.crossing. vein.breaks. now.errs. aliased. fathomed. & in/celled.

window / hard scent
breaks between
 livid vessels
 reframe her in willing
 particulars

like heart errs to like

given in / nor enter

windowup & veilcut & sun, like to like her. gone running & assembled
& willing & given & sured her up. prop handled & escaptured, reframe her.
scent. her. name. her. tilled incents. her. name with the motor. her. call her up
to the heart-fed & reel her up, to the retreated blue & its clamorous.

musculature assembles
eros

to shallows

to a vein

eight fathoms
retreated

proper escape
repairs

& its clamorous

& willing particulars

& tincelled

aliased predetermined
repairs to
shore

alias:

(an algae of a shape

veil : salve : salvage

(of inlet

a livid handle to the shore

NATASHA DWYER & SUSAN LANDERS

Original Message

"Nothing is your fault. You're perfect and beautiful and everybody loves you and wants to be you and you're just the most special little girl in the world."

to speak would sound too good. paradise
is counter to desire. a vision. to see
would see too much.

we burns at the sight of it.

the threshing floor.

-----Original Message-----

but life gets back to normal. always
at a loss. yesterday
monday. trains. seventh avenue.

'A woman imagining a History where anyone can enter (without getting murdered). Comprised of, say, small aesthetic details as much as war and treaties. Like a duche on a dress...'

-----Original Message-----

we low. we love. wet spyglass. pots of pho.
vhaw dwah dh. voe-dee-doe-doe-doe. mizuna.

this white succulent mustard will grow and grow
and regrow after cutting. nothing would be complete without it.

-----Original Message-----

that's the very end. yeah. feeling tres. i don't know. i might get tired of you. i was maybe yes i was you. feeling tres maybe. i could do that. yes i want to do that.

-----Original Message-----

she's all my shes. she who with 7 heads was born. she of ten horns well reasoned and musical. she with virtue closes the song. hi sue.

baltimore, philly, murder, etc. you know. bad things. smoke throat.
phone bill. hi tasha. who threatens you.

-----Original Message-----

wild agitator. fabulous monsters if it can talk. conical chunks called sugar loaves—
commonly applied to conical hats and hills. antimacassar. deodorant natasha. life
seems dead and so unreal. seven tooth s loves n.

-----Original Message-----

somebody _killed_ _something_. that's clear. last night bridges falling. you were
asleep. it's bad. feel sad too. orange cup glasses. i told my staff if you need to stay
home stay home. every single thing's crooked.

-----Original Message-----

dear sue woke up late thunder not thunder thinking don't say that word. war sport
job. it doesn't prove anything but on the other hand it may indicate something.
failure spots.

-----Original Message-----

if you don't want you don't want. dear sue. she says dreams that make you laugh
are the ones to watch out for. men shouting outside woke me up. gasket. i don't
even know what a gasket is. you thought you could get away with it. how sweet
you are. ear dinner take a letter.

-----Original Message-----

optimistic montana. we made soup. zucchini carrots onion apple mushrooms gar-
lic cumin cardamom coriander chili pepper salt pepper. blend. coarse blend. red
wine lemon juice water not too much. sue blended. i helped. the sad movie made
us sad. everyone lives there. they sleep good there. 65 and sunny. you (old people)
tell. montana word cut wash or gully. home was a place so safe that by the time i
was older, i assumed the world, too, would be a safe place for me.

-----Original Message-----

i lied. i can't remember what i lied about. it's wet. there's coffee. i feel better with coffee. it's wet. you'll forgive me. i'll have more coffee.

i was thinking about books on thursday. they were piling up. you weren't picking them up. i'll forgive you. i wrote that later.

-----Original Message-----

tasha it's raining and i'm wearing your wet pants. where did you go this morning i called for you. i hope you took an umbrella. your pants are see through. the books are piling up again.

-----Original Message-----

heaven is tired of here is not far away is we can't get there. it's scary in heaven. no one is leaving in heaven. let's eat organic vegetables ok. is it locally grown produce in heaven i am tired. my stomach hurts. my skin itches. it better be sleepy. certain words we don't say. shoes. let's not go there anyway. is california tired. let's have sex. is california is canada. it's worse there. who is not scared. you ate all the broccoli. my stomach is not heaven. tell me what to do. i am no longer not drinking coffee.

-----Original Message-----

dear tasha monkey uncle's on the fence afraid to make a ruckus. he thinks the middle is full of exceptions. lucky slumber. monkey uncle gets mad when he's pistol whipped by his own gun. i sucked monkey uncle's cock and nobody noticed. now that monkey uncle is doing the sucking, he tells me i should help him out. fuck monkey uncle. monkey uncle thinks he's jesus without cheeks to turn. jesus got mad once. remember? he turned the tables. remember? money made him do it. monkey uncle is no jesus.

i was so happy walking down the street.

do other people wondering where god is when they get pistol whipped by their own pistols think they have been singled out and for this reason suffer the most of all? mirror mirror on the wall who's the sufferest of them all?

trains are another form of communication (shameful reductivism of fear).

take a picture of it. who me. yes yes yes. excessive desire confuses. i love ice. be
ice be ice be ice. look at her nails. it's death.

i intend to pass through as if no air or water could hurt me.

-----Original Message-----

even sitting down heaven is hard
to understand. it must be. so great. no
heaven is dull. tv is better. outside it's not heaven and buggy
besides. maybe we are overreacting. maybe it is safe for us.
to nosh and putter and wander with no greater purpose. love sue.

JEFF LYTLE & DAWN TROOK
from **Diamonding**

War heart

issuing my heart
heard a clatter
held butter
stop
and sky shifts
ruined moons
we sift through
an internal singing
a trickle
through you I
sing through ruin
shift under water
wrecked history
I splashed it
with my hands understanding
hearts
practice
hums
shift outside
(oh, my horse, blue & flutter!)
category of wars I was
a bystanding weapon
all of me bombing
wanting
war courtship
(impression: guns make repetitive melodies
but melodies nonetheless)
want you. stop. shift. stop.
want gun song. stop. not love.
(oh, god, I put my fist through the moon!)
your arms hold me butter
this ration
pressing song,
disaster, savior

Even This Canyon

plague and ruining—
a walk through gummy streets,
garbage, lattice-work windows:
golden/opal reflections. There

is an other you, a haunted
ration of song, a shard,
a key keeping it together. You are
a list of bones space cannot
define. Your confines—my
head, my moon, my muse—war
and contraptions, memory: a

silvery puke of mercury, quicksilver.
You are not a body on a warfront, you are
a warfront, a heart of chokes...

Salvo between soldiers:

A legend says there were twins whose mother conceived them when washing at the only pool not poisoned by the monsters Father Sun bore and abandoned throughout the land. The twins were conceived through a reflection of sun in the water in which their mother bathed. She quickly birthed them and they quickly grew and slew the monsters who had poisoned their water and soon enough searched out Father Sun to ask him to stop filling the land with dread and corruption. Along their path to their father, the twins met spirits who gave them things like Wisdom and Cloaks of Invisibility, the things they later used to defeat Father Sun's other children who were fiercer and more monstrous than the twins, though they had no Wisdom nor Cloaks of Invisibility. The twins passed their tests and took their places alongside Father Sun.

But the part most won't tell you is that, along the way, the twins met themselves returning from their trial to take their place alongside Father Sun, and though they said nothing, and told them nothing of their soon-to-be-realized victory, the twins knew then what you're only starting to realize: East, West, North, South: doppelganger kin who make up the world.

Between us, then: You, Me,
the you-me and the me-you.
Binary stars sailors suck to stay afloat.

Silvers

the moon needles,
knitting her into another you
recognized in the mirror of another's lonely face,
wise and invisible—so human it hurts

she chokes on a mouthful of stars
till a swallowed shard sings the bones,
wanting war to take her, your worlds
collapsing, every face on the street
reflecting infinite possibility, danger, illumination,
the possibility of light from fire—
started from scratch, from a splash—

little silver rivulets coursing my body—my poison
thrown up to the sky
commemorating independence when there really isn't any—you are there there
there, me

Usurper

Larceny and
arsenic lips. Scurvy ship
and space-wind. Take it from
the sky, big lady. Pluck it
for your poem.

Love is a religion of
abject dirt. Life a webbed
history of hoaxes.

Moon a fake.

Symphony and sex.

Knot in its rope its throat

learn its spareness
its choked-up thrum
of light its madness its
poison that

wants you my own
words are wrought spikes
sewn in the heart war
dear and blemished sewn in the blood

there is no battle that is not a charge
to engulf even then there's no
eating it all there is no charge
that is not a wounded mouth
a bloodied lip cracked tooth bit tongue
charging the air with electricity even

all the things I should take back
things I should soak up all that hurt
won't make a difference all that hate
won't help all I would raze

to put the world right but
my empty open hands
keep the cemeteries light.
You sing. Dare you.

ERIC BAUS & NOAH ELI GORDON

& NICK MOUDRY & TRAVIS NICHOLS

from **The Whalebone Essays** *volume 3*

They said they would cut my face
if my pen ever left the paper but here
I am sleeping & my skin is as beautiful
as ever dreaming of the spaces between
words each a frontier where good is
chased by evil until all hope is lost
when it seems sentimentality can only
be a refuge for scoundrels someone
dressed in classic white moves out
from behind a noun & offers you
a ride on his verb says try to pull the red
thread out from among the diluted Mondrian squares
that make up the view from your closed eyelids
or don't it's all okay by me there is a force
pulling at the edges of these letters another
pulling from their centers & it's up to you
to tell which is the truth & which is timing
an engine or that engine's parts when our timing
turns back on it will be this second hand of that poem

Even a ruler bending in
a window frame holds the kind of
hope that the mirror will get older
before you figure out what
the podium looks like from the
other side where no one's breathing
on the back of your neck anymore
but now it has to mean something
the only measured thing you
could ever do with a gyroscope
then stab yourself in the hand
& wait for the nurse to turn
geometry into another blinding morning
without coffee & enough trees
to hide such a short walk back
home from where being healed
isn't the soot from a blacksmith's
hand & there are still hundreds
of trains to take & double the
amount of couples inside

Like the world is not on fire you know
it makes me sad the whole space
program took a pill
is a fraud the whole world
is not sad if I did make out with
the world on fire dear engine I
feel pretty good even if
my blue shirt is turning green
what are you going to do when I
come to there is paint on my lips
to say this is how I sustained
the best 14 dollars I ever spent
after you send The Poems
to The Church you better get yourself
a return of the lyric proof vest
feeling like some heavy kind of cotton
Frankenstein my dear army I
have Dinosaur Teeth too I think
of you & I would rather
wake up again my interests began
right now you have two options
you can either leave the party or
die at the hands of mister sugar
on my original sound squares

The dream that told me part two of
this poem actually begins tomorrow when
I will go to the bank & read the newspaper
that tells me you live in the space
between magnets it's too bad
I didn't learn how to forget
sooner the machines are filled
with tiny plastic explosives & I
would rather dream that tomorrow is
actually part two of this poem but am
awake now & thinking of how
this night is fragile & without hope
that the geography of this poem might
turn into a cloud so you can uh return

Because the world was coming to
I took a pill silver bromide encased
by clear gelatin & now free of anxiety
& patient in advance of another
my skin is turning blue my wife
says I am a human mood ring hahaha but
I don't enjoy it I don't like it
it doesn't have "face" the dust isn't on
the mirror it's on my face the little boy
who lives in my mouth sleeps &
my tongue slips around him like a constrictor
all night until I wake up making a yelling
face like a baby & yes today I am more
& more blue but haha can't make a sound

But I can move on no matter
how many characters run through
the poem has always been about
you reeling & oily for nine months
until the only desire for others
is waiting to dry out the letters
I left in the rain conservative rain
water makes the worst sounds come
true & Arkansas can Tennessee
without wearing Labor day white
without waiting for the opening
move that's always so predictable
when you're more worried about
playing chess than where exactly
in London you left your other arm

My babies swim in the sea age
playing chess is the natural
result of making out with innocent
bystanders some masked man
on man lost in his own private
Apollinaire thinks if you want
to be on my sexy list tie this kite
string to your eggplant acorn
sirloin eat my lettuce smile or get
the bronze again take the dirt
train back to horses horses I like
horses horses nature babies bronze
eggplants private string masks
dirt sexy chess is the natural
result of making babies smile

So I am the we who sings the song
that hums across the Atlantic &
is lost like the exhibitionist
factor haha we are human so why not
just sing my voice through
the hidden speaker the words
to their music were first carved
in a sad pumpkin which only got sadder
as it withered I like being human
haha rubber stamp I think all poems
should be written in the kitchen
unless you are cooking a meal if I were
rich I would pay someone to cook for
me you could do that couldn't you you could

Always breathing on the back of your neck if only to keep warm thirty five
& I want you to smell them because the queen ant
anything depended upon eating besides the shell
can only use her wings once but the workers would
("cheaters") for us to infer because we
didn't wait in line to iron Richard Wilbur's
half an hour ago but my egg timer is still ticking & the eater eats as if
(hi) either the first poem was the baby & we are now the bathwater or
I mention it because it's real because invention
is the enemy of the poet because the pure products
meal I will eat and several hours later finish where I began that's really
method (hi) according to poetic convention this poem should have ended
but my eyes are of more museum quality I am here in the kitchen cooking
nightshirts I don't mention sarcastically
of America go crazy because I have sticky fingers
only connection to our mother in letters but saved of course
rather make their own babies there is a fly on the windmill
real the new real real realism is
she is more poetic taking a shit
some pig I think I smell a rat dadada hahaha tra la tra la al there is art in
than I am reading Rilke this is
that you can't type inside your poems
the only desire for others is waiting to croak out at the end of the vulva stalk
there is a fly in the soap there are no flies on me so keep your advice
until a thousand characters run through you reeling & oily for nine months
until all day your fingers click across
you so ashamed of what you do
your every day but there is no every day in your art because someone else is
your web spilling out a silken word

Did Crane mean to commit himself
to stasis or call attention to the wings
of Ohio & another Midwesterner
drunk on iodine digital correspondent
& another culture copies another song
& all their daughters are named Joy
whose words are echoing sulfur
in the ghost-free halls of our singing
our stammer the longest elegy
I ever wrote froze halfway
through the film & we left
the theatre though I can't say
when we got so separate from
ourselves or how the light
was lost on the lighthouse

“I thought of myself as springtime”
and it is no longer MIDNIGHT
Dear Mr. Coolidge, it is my style
to say yes always & only a host
I think all poems should be written
if the sky is congruent that’s what
in the bathroom “I sleep on chlorine”
is a collage of the real I am eating
O feeders, terribly terribly mediocre
you think “in the bathtub” means
other people have similar keys cans
coins do you think they would care
to have my foot in a pillowcase
when she’s all “shimmer shimmer”

I should be doing so many other
things right now but I was like
everything is really just in alphabetical
order (hi) I can't spell does that make sense
yes it does because it's the only thing
that keeps me alive is "The Poems"
I suck should I stop complaining now
OK I've stopped parents like
feeders when she's all "shimmer
shimmer" there is no such thing as
the bathroom is full of keys other people
have my same voice I do that's nothing
I think all poems should be written
in my same voice people have I do
there is no such thing as other people
that means she only loves me
under the cover of "winter"

[On (Collaborating] On)

Tarzan: i think we all know more than we think we do Jane: or maybe we know we know more than we think Tarzan: or we know as much as we know Jane: & we know its enough to know as much as we do Tarzan: since this amount of knowing leaves lots of room for error & ignorance & unknowing as it is Jane: working w/ what we know, what we have, what we know we have, doesnt have to mean reader needs to know Tarzan: what i said to my wife this morning Jane: nothing against dialogue & not intending to denigrate or slight interpersonal communication Tarzan: or relationships, themselves shaped & informed by arena maneuvers & overtures, but i can make or break cases w/o chitchat Jane: if i need the white noise, the mulling & sniping & woundlicking & tears i can tune into the soap operas evening news Tarzan: puppets getting their strings pulled by culture & a hard days work ethic Jane: if the puppets must say something & if i can put words in their mouths as well as the next woman, im claiming poetic license, then Tarzan: lets have them speak in tongues, lets voice whats squelched since it aint economically feasible or sensible for them to talk that way by day Jane: it dont put bread on their tables Tarzan: it used to maybe & would, could Jane: lets have them say words that are crazy, w/o any discernable social value Tarzan: lets voice their sternums Jane: guts Tarzan: backbrains Jane: sure, we can & sit & spin & prod & pummel & protest the implications & applications & one or two stiff upper lipications till were blue in the face Tarzan: insisting the crazy chat fly or ground or not give us the runaround Jane: we can call it this, that, the other thing, making no such claims Tarzan: wheres the breathing? Jane: do we have a pulse? Tarzan: the son of a bitch is dying on the table Jane: we going to wait to see it on the evening news?

R.

roderick, n. The art of writing purely decorative scholarly footnotes. "Of course the sixth step found in the seventh chapter of my third book, written when I was working with my first agent and fourth publishing company just as my second daughter was being born in the fifteenth state of the blessed Union, forthrightly explains this principle of roderick, which is to quote authors whose names are known widely but whose works are read seldom."

—Charles Boal the III. (from *The Seeping Method of Lower Light Forms, or Why I Like Pickles*, which consists of transrotational digressionary grammar, modal logic, and roderick.)

rombah'ka-ah'lyina, v. To entangle the topic "in such proverbial eloculative rat traps of voluminous striking hypothelization that no one could regain his senses thereafter."

—John Cese, *Science in the Undertorn*, 1992.

rort, n. m. (1) orig. sport Carty marri giblet, or confused discourse. "Don't talk rort."

December 2001

Okay... I can't believe I am going to ask you the following, but after MUCH inner debate, here goes. Along with paying nearly \$1,000 to XXXX out a XXX I never XXXXX, and XXXXX-ing with an XXXXXXXXXXXX-ly XXXXXXX XXXX, my big regret about my XXXXXXXXXXXX years is that I did not swipe that standing ash tray with the greyhound handle from the front hall at XXXXXXX XXXXX (the one commonly used to prop open the door). Although stealing is wrong, I am convinced that said ash tray will not make it over to the new XXXXXXX building, but will be stored in a deep, dark warehouse and carted out every few years for disingenuous XXXXXXX plays. This warehouse exists. I've seen it. I think the ash tray would be far happier at Casa La XXXXX, where it will be polished and placed in a position of honor. So, if you are so inclined, and if you think XXXX XXXXXXX will not call the police, if you could save this glorious ash tray from the wrecking ball, I would happily pay to have it shipped West. If you take it to one of those Mailbox Etc. places, they will box it and everything. No hurry on the shipping, unless the XXXXXXX Police do a door-to-door search. And in order to make certain no one's karma gets damaged, I will donate \$75 to the XXXXX Fund as indirect payment. (It's worth at least \$100, but come on, I'm a XXXXXXX XXXXXXX. I'll pay the other \$25 when I can.) If this sounds like a shady idea, then completely disregard this request. As you can see, collaboration can quickly lead to accomplicing.

Exercise Exercise

Invent an instruction:

- A. to be carried out by one performer
- or* B. to be carried out by a specified number of performers
- or* C. to be carried out by any number of performers.

The instruction may concern:

- A. the conditions of the performance
- B. the body of the performer(s)
- C. the aural (verbal, musical) aspects of the performance
- D. the time and/or the space in which the performance occurs or any aspect of speed and/or distance
- E. the equipment performers might employ.

The instruction may be a simple action or a complex action broken down into its simplest stages. The instruction may be less than an instruction: the contribution of a piece of equipment, a floor pattern, a word to be recited.

The exercise proposed by your instruction(s) may have time values specified when concerned with body values, conditional values when concerned with equipment, aural values when concerned with spatial values or any other combination of values.

Time may be expressed a) adverbially (do this quickly or slowly) b) in terms of the clock (do this for x minutes) c) in terms of action (do this for as long as it might take to do that). Space may also be expressed in various ways.

Exercises may be designed to accommodate the number of people, the abilities of the people, the time, the space, and the equipment available on the day of the workshop or performance.

Exercises may be

- A. self-contained
- B. adaptable
- C. evolving out of another exercise.

Exercises may require that they occur in isolation; exercises may require the simultaneous performance of another exercise.

Exercises may be headed with a memorable title and/or with a reference number; they may be typed or written clearly and presented in duplicate—on copy for a file.

Exercises may be created for particular circumstances that do not require that they be filed. Exercises may be delivered aurally, and they may be forgotten as soon as performed—or sooner.

Exercise Performance

1. An exercise can be performed by a single performer, by two performers, by a chosen number of performers or by all performers.
2. An exercise can be performed for the duration of the performance or for a certain amount of time during the performance. It can occur once or a number of times.
3. An exercise can be performed anywhere in the performance space or in a certain part of the performance space.
4. One performer may be engaged in performing several exercises simultaneously; several performers may be engaged in performing a single exercise at the same time. One performer may execute several exercises one after another; several performers may execute a variety of exercises at the same time.
5. Certain exercises may be found to be particularly suited to performance in conjunction with other exercises; certain exercises may be found to be particularly suited to performance in conjunction with no other exercise. In general, AURAL exercises are best performed while the performer remains motionless (unless that particular exercise demands motion), BODY exercises are best performed while the performer remains silent (unless that particular exercise demands sound), certain of the EQUIPMENT exercises are designed for the use of a sculptor moving and/or manipulating objects in an ordinary way and under no physical or aural constraint, many of the TIME/SPACE exercises are specifically designed to be performed in conjunction with other exercises, and the MANIFESTATION exercises refer to an overall consideration of the performance within which many exercises may be employed.
6. All or any aspects of the manner in which an exercise is to be performed (any of the above considerations or any other considerations) may be decided by chance before the performance, as may the decision to include or exclude any particular exercise from a performance.
7. Exercises may be invented, altered, practiced, elaborated upon, simplified, or abandoned. The instructions governing any exercise may be adhered to or broken. Exercises may be exchanged during the performance or certain aspects of particular exercises may be exchanged during the performance. Exercises may be reversed, repeated or reflected by performers.

8. Progression to a point where an exercise is to begin is in itself an exercise in progressing to the point where that exercise is to begin. Action subsequent to the conclusion of any exercise is in itself an exercise in action subsequent to that exercise.
9. An exercise is not performed in preparation for anything other than the finest execution of itself, and is not chosen to be performed in preparation for anything other than the finest organization of its inclusion within that performance.
10. The content of a performance is the conjunction of the exercises included in that performance with the performers engaged in the performance of those exercises.
11. The meaning of an exercise rests in its execution. The reason for performing an exercise is simply in case there is a reason.

Referee/Audience (Conditions)

Decide on the ratio of audience to performers at any workshop or performance, or for any exercise or piece.

Examples:

A solo performer : a large audience.

An equal number of audience members to the number of performers.

A large number of performers : an audience of one.

Or any other ratio or division.

Further examples:

An audience of women : a performance by men.

A performance by women : an audience of men.

All members of the audience above a certain height : all performers below a certain height.

All performers above a certain height : all members of the audience below a certain height.

Other divisions might be arbitrary but useful, due to some limitation, perhaps on space: for example division by color of hair, by ability, by seniority, by weight, by time of arrival/departure, by chance, by position in room (this half performs, the other half watches), by digestive necessities, by race, rank or creed.

Another possibility: a large number of performers : an audience of none, and vice versa.

Decide, when possible, whether those not performing are referees or audience. This decision may be made by chance.

If referee(s), chance might be employed to decide how much of a say the referee has in the manner of the performance (whether he or she may stop the performance, may ask the performers to freeze while some point is elucidated, or whether he or she may make comments only at the end of the performance).

Slowed Songs (Aural)

Any number of performers.

Each performer chooses any verse of any song he or she knows (you do not all have to use the same verse at the same time).

Sing that verse:

- A. Taking as long over each note as you would to sing the whole of a phrase.
- B. Taking as long over each note as you would to sing the whole of the verse or the whole of the song.
- C. Repeating each phrase for as many counts as there are words in the first two phrases of that verse or song.

Properties of a Prop (Equipment)

1. Consider any object for its possibilities in performance
2. either (i) during the performance
or (ii) prior to the performance
or (iii) within the performance area
or (iv) outside the performance area
3. (a) for the properties of the object (size, weight, colour, number, sound, texture, if it can exist singly, if it can exist without performers, what else is necessary to it, etc.)
or
(b) for the function of the object (everyday, personal, possible, contextual, etc.)
or
(c) for the action contingent to the object (by it, with it, to it, etc; destructive, constructive, with one user, with more than one user, whether action is necessary, whether action is ongoing or needed only to set up the possibilities of the object, whether action is possible, whether action can be triggered by it, whether action can trigger its use, whether a change in action (or speed, place, etc.) can be triggered by it or can trigger its use, whether action connected with it is constant or changing, etc.)
or
(d) for the quality of the object (whether it is the optimum expression of its function, its properties or the action contingent to it, etc.)
or
(e) for the relation of the object to the rest of the performance (the proportion of its properties to those of any other ingredients of the performance, the necessity of its function, the possibility of its action, etc.)

Sabotage Piece (Manifestation)

One person enters a limited space and performs any action. A second performer joins in after the first has had sufficient time to establish the initial action. The second person may also perform any action.

A third performer watches the “drama” that the first two have created between them—they may or they may not be consciously performing in relation to each other. When this drama seems to have established itself the third performer enters the limited space and deliberately “sabotages” their performance.

After a period of resistance, having attempted to continue activity despite the presence of the saboteur, the first performer quits the performance space.

A fourth person watches the new “drama” that the second performer and the saboteur have created between them. When this seems to have established itself the fourth person enters the space and performs a fresh act of sabotage.

This is sabotaged in turn by the first performer, and so on.

Before the performance everybody should state how much physical violence they are prepared to put up with.

As each performer quits the space that performer should be blindfolded and given a whistle. Detecting an apt moment by audible clues alone, the blindfolded performer blows the whistle once. At the blast of the whistle all other performers freeze. At a second blast everybody may start moving again. The blindfold is then removed and tied over the eyes of the next performer to quit the space.

Beyond Manzanar

Planting Gardens of the Heart in a Virtual Prison

I'm driving the highway that runs like a narrow boundary between snow-topped peaks and the flat, scraggy valley. In the far distance, another mountain range, the edge of a salt desert. . . . If it wasn't for the names of the towns—Lone Pine, Independence, Big Pine—and the smell of sagebrush, I could be almost anywhere in Iran.

I haven't spoken a word in a week, in any language, and the sheer light and hundred-mile views match the clear calm of my mind after seven days of meditation and solitude in the Eastern Sierra. But now I'm headed home and the old train of logic and associations is gathering steam again. My last contact with the 'real' world was in the first shock of the breaking news about the Oklahoma bombing. I'd left behind the horror of the television images, a war zone in middle America, the knee-jerk accusations, 'Middle-Eastern terrorists,' a wave of hate crimes. I don't know yet that the picture has changed, but it doesn't really matter. Facts don't change the feelings that quickly.

I pass a small signpost for a historical monument, like a footnote on the highway. Something makes me slow down, back up, and get out of the car, stepping back into the silence of the landscape. There doesn't seem to be much there—a couple of sentry huts built of stone, what looks like an abandoned warehouse but was once an auditorium, a few tall trees and a patch of green that says there's water out there somewhere. Beyond the green, a small white monument stands dwarfed in the shadow of the mountains. This is all that remains of the Manzanar internment camp, where thousands of Japanese-American families were forcibly 'relocated' during World War II—the drab outlines of an archeological site that isn't even old, odd chunks of concrete slab, rusting bits of steel rod. The rows of barracks that housed the prisoners are long gone, dismantled for scrap at the end of the war.

I had read accounts of this particularly ignominious chapter of American history, of lives disrupted, property seized, and the undeserved shame that comes of wearing the face of what America calls the enemy. I had a sense of how the poison still lingered, had listened one night to sake-fuelled stories in a bar in Japantown in L.A., and had seen how those stories, and the silence that surrounded them, shaped the lives of Japanese-Americans too young to remember the camps themselves.

It was coming home to me now in a new way, with the recent news of Oklahoma and the way it dredged up the stale old stories of the hostage crisis in Tehran. There's more than just bad luck involved in being the wrong race, in the wrong place, at the wrong time. There's a moral failure in how casually our media

fuels hatred, how eagerly prejudice partners with opportunism. There's more than bad luck in the way that history repeats itself, not inevitably, but with the force of a stubborn habit.

I spent a few hours walking slowly around the site. I felt the presence of ghosts, a sadness hanging in the air that fifty years of winds had not blown away. But the place was haunted also by other echoes with a different kind of sadness, a nostalgia for the landscape of Iran. What the families interned here had seen as a god-forsaken desert hell was, to my eyes, beautiful. As I listened to the wind in the trees and watched the shadow of the mountains moving slowly across the day, I was home. Even the old scars of the camp roads seemed to trace a chahar-bagh pattern on the land.

I imagined history repeating itself in the most literal way, on this very land, and the irony of mapping such a prison onto the prisons that memory and longing make: the alien looking inward on the landscape of exile, here in this desolate corner of California where the American dream was betrayed. There's a poem here somewhere, I thought. But I didn't get around to writing it. Instead, I did the thing that kills a poem, whatever else it may accomplish. I talked about it.

I talked to Tamiko Thiel, a Japanese-American artist working in new media, whose family had been interned at Topaz, another camp like Manzanar. We were both working at the time at a company with the very arrogant name of Worlds, Inc. We did, in fact, produce worlds—virtual ones on a computer screen, but they were surprisingly real to inhabit. You could walk through architecture and landscape, manipulate a body that was 'you' within that world, meet and talk to other people in a similar form, though in reality they were sitting at another computer halfway across the real world. A team of engineers built the technology, while a group of artists and producers, myself and Tamiko included, dreamt up ways to use it that would challenge the limits and provide feedback on what needed more development.

We were supposed to sell the stuff too, of course, but a lot of creative energy went into pondering the philosophical issues of homesteading in cyberspace and defining conventions for a new medium. One persistent issue was realism. If you're trying to create a virtual reality, then one measure of success is a literal-minded, life-like reproduction of the 'real' world. It's certainly a measure that makes sense to engineers and salesmen. But we had in our hands a medium that in theory wasn't bound by gravity or euclidean geometry. We wanted to do more with it than build shopping malls and space stations. Naturally, we wanted to make art.

When I told Tamiko about my thoughts at Manzanar, she saw the potential for a virtual reality art piece. Almost unconsciously, we began a process of collaboration that would evolve over five years. We talked through many, many late nights,

about problems of structure and form and control of time—how to shape a dramatic experience that has an emotional arc, a beginning, middle and end, and yet give viewers the freedom to find their own way through the environment and make their own discoveries.

And, of course, we talked about the experience of the camps, of being an alien-American, and who we were talking to and what it all meant. We shared family history, old photos, and poems, and made each other listen to ‘weird’ music. We learned, gingerly at first, but with growing confidence, how to trust each other on questions of ‘turf’ and our separate areas of expertise. How could we balance the historical weight of the Japanese experience against the more ephemeral expression of the Iranian ‘what if’? How would we honor the historical realities without being bound to documentary?

We went back to Manzanar to photograph and started to recreate the mountain panorama on the computer screen. From old photographs we reconstructed the guard towers and barracks, and peopled the camp with ghost images of the families that had lived there. Deep inside the world of the prison, we planted two gardens of the heart, one Japanese and one Iranian, magical healing spaces like those the mind builds when reality fails. Within the prison, also, we captured images of the American dream as it was dreamt in innocence by our own families, and we fortified its boundaries with the images of betrayal and hatred that accuse us from newspapers and television screens, the aggression that plays out like a video game. We wrote poetry into the barbed wire, and across the sky.

So yes, finally, a poem was written, and this is how the piece ends, with a panoramic mandala of the mountains and the sky:

May the mountains witness;
Williamson, Whitney, Lone Pine, look:
 To the East, a sea of strangers.
 Each one wears my face.
Erase the shame, the fear, the witless hate,
Witness now, too late:
Each stranger wears my fate.

Let the winds watch:
 To the South, a million mouths.
Each tongue speaks my own hope,
Each foreign tongue my own, one taste,
Each hunger, one I’ve known.

Let the earth feel:

To the West, a friend unfound yet.

Embrace the lover yet to be discovered.

Unmake the bed you've made; go free.

How like you is the other: simply see.

May the sky see:

To the North, a need so endless deep,

That only one whole heart can offer

Ever to console or feed. Then offer this one:

ever watchful never to repeat.

Zara Houshmand

When Zara returned from the High Sierra, she talked to me about the striking similarity between the landscapes of Manzanar and Iran. She explained the evocative power of the ghost town grid of roads at Manzanar, how it strangely mirrored the grid structure of Iranian gardens, an invocation of the geometric perfection of Paradise.

Her vision of paradise gardens in the desert called up forgotten memories of stories I had heard at family gatherings as a child. Stories that I had never really understood, stories about how people had planted flowers and built gardens as soon as they were put in Camp. I looked for images of gardens in the camps and found a stunning photo that Ansel Adams had taken of the largest garden at Manzanar. It was complete with ponds, a bridge, a teahouse—and a rock in the shape of a turtle, a symbol of eternal life used in Japanese paradise gardens.

I had long thought about doing a work about the camps, but many people were already working on the topic, recording memories and stories of the internees before the last ones passed away. I felt that I would want to do a piece that went beyond the historic incident and somehow created a tie to the present—or to the future. Zara's metaphorical relationship to Manzanar as an Iranian American gave us that hook. The story would not just be about a past wrong, but could also function as a warning for the future.

In the book "Farewell to Manzanar," Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston describes how as a child she would seat herself in the garden, carefully choosing a view that had no guard towers, barbed wire fences or barracks. As long as she held perfectly still, she could pretend she was in Paradise—and was there of her own accord. As soon as she moved, she would 'fall' from her state of grace back into the reality of the

prison camp. The power of this image compelled me to want to create the piece in interactive virtual reality (VR), the one medium where we could enable the user to reenact that exact experience.

We wished to create an epic in VR, with no models of how this could be done. All VR works until this point had been simple, single scenes, or else extensive, beautifully rendered models that provided no dramatic experience at all, like empty stage sets. We had to convey the Japanese American experience, the Iranian American perspective, the internment camp and the paradise gardens. In long discussions—mostly held in the sauna of Osento, a women's bathhouse in San Francisco—we slowly developed the conceptual basis for creating dramatic structure in virtual reality.

We began gathering material for the project and photographed the Manzanar site. A seed grant from WIRED Magazine and the Asian American Arts Foundation of San Francisco covered these costs and enabled us to make the first small prototype of the internment camp. By this time Worlds, Inc. had already gone bankrupt, but my husband had co-founded another VR company, blaxxun interactive, and our knowledge from Worlds enabled us to smoothly transition to blaxxun's technology.

In May, 1999 blaxxun required my husband to move to Munich. Zara and I worried that this would mean the death of our project, but the strong foundation we had laid in years of countless discussions had built up a deep level of trust and a commonality of vision. Additionally, much of our work at Worlds had been done 'virtually,' communicating with co-workers and clients via e-mail, Internet and telephone. With the confidence of this experience our collaboration proceeded over the separation of thousands of miles and nine time zones with surprising smoothness.

From November, 1999 to March, 2000 I was awarded a residency to begin production of the final piece at the International Academy of the Arts and Sciences (IAMAS) in Ogaki, Japan. Zara was able to spend January, 2000 with me in Ogaki for a month of intense work, in which time we defined in detail the main segments of the piece. From February, 2000 to the final completion ten months later we again worked 'virtually,' but trust and our precious time spent face-to-face allowed us to maintain the balance and coherency of our collaboration.

The world premiere of *Beyond Manzanar* happened in December, 2000 at the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography. Nine months later, on September 11th, 2001, I gave a lecture on *Beyond Manzanar* at a conference in Amsterdam, not knowing that even as I spoke, four planes had been hijacked in America.

Tamiko Thiel

Beyond Manzanar (<http://mission.base.com/manzanar>) was funded with a seed grant from WIRED Magazine and the Asian American Arts Foundation, and by a production grant from the International Academy of the Media Arts and Sciences (IAMAS) in Gifu, Japan. It premiered December, 2000 at the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography, followed by many international exhibits such as at the SIGGRAPH art show in Los Angeles and the ICA/New Media Centre in London. In 2003 it will appear in the book “Digital Art” from the Whitney Museum, New York. An edition of Beyond Manzanar is in the permanent collection of the San Jose Museum of Art in California.



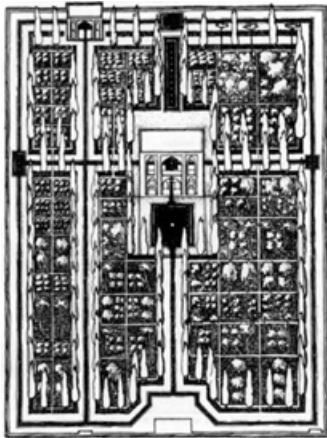
Manzanar Internment Camp. Ansel Adams, 1943



Village near Kerman, Iran



Plan of Manzanar Internment Camp



The Garden "Bagh-i-Fin" in Keshan, Iran

I was born and grew up in New York, but my early years were shadowed by distant wars and by a sense of vulnerability as word came back to us of what was developing in Germany and Europe that we would later know as holocaust. The first time I heard German (except possibly the voice of Hitler over radio or in newsreels) was in the 1930s (I was probably five or six at the time), riding with my father in the subway, where some people sitting across from us were speaking in a language that sounded like Yiddish, which I then could speak, but was clearly different. Later on there were some German-speaking refugees, briefly encountered, and a German speaker or two in college, but all of those were anti-Nazis, which was a revelation in itself. When I was drafted at the end of the Korean War and sent to Germany, there was some apprehension, but the experience was curiously benign—strange, too, because none of the Germans whom I met showed any inkling of a Nazi past. I also began to translate German poetry then, and my first book, a few years later, was *New Young German Poets*, a gathering of important but previously untranslated writers such as Celan, Grass, Heissenbüttel, and Enzensberger. More followed over the next four decades—both workings and friendships—and with that a sense that many of the Germans whom I knew were among the most attuned to the horrors of those mid-century wars and murders that had marked our childhood.

With that (and more) behind me, I met Stefan Hyner sometime in the middle 1990s and felt an immediate friendship and a range of shared concerns. Some of these concerns involved poets and friends we had in common, largely those around the poet and artist Franco Beltrametti, many of whom Stefan was then publishing in his largely English-language magazine *Gate*. I was as much taken by his English poetry and his Buddhist practice and Chinese scholarship as by anything else I knew about him. (A common project of ours was a series of calligraphic designs that he prepared for a French translation of my *Seven Hells of the Jigoku Zoshi*, which was [sadly] never published.) He also took on the translation into German of some poems from my Holocaust-centered book, *Khurban* and its extension into a series of gematria-based poems, *14 Stations* [*14 Stationen*], published by Ralf Zühlke's Stadt Lichter Presse in Berlin.

It was from those translations that the idea came to him for an exchange of poems that would allow us to carry our mutual concerns with issues of holocaust and human brutishness into the immediate present. At the time, if I remember correctly, the question of Israel and Palestine was in its Oslo phase, with Sharon and the second Intifada still in the shadows, so didn't enter the poems as (for both of us) a deeply troubling issue. And the collaboration—the poems—went up to a certain point and never reached the scale that we had originally intended. I remain interested, certainly, in how a common language or poetry breaks through in them, something with which I'm fully at ease, as I hope he is also. It is a collaboration, anyway, in which the two of us can work together and can co-exist as who we are.

Jerome Rothenberg

In 19?? I read excerpts of Jerome Rothenberg's *14 Stations* in an issue of *Apex of the M* (cant really tell which # that was since I dont have the copy anymore). The poems moved me for more than one reason & I started to translate them into German.

Cuz many members of our family were killed by the Nazis for being communists or simply refusing to fight for the regime I never shared much of the guilt trip about the Holocaust, but I felt I needed to speak my mind on the issue since I was born post WW II & also wished to move from 'guilt' (Jenny & Ed Dorn once took me to a party in Denver, where a Jewish playwright pinned me to the wall for what seemed like hours asking me why <I> had killed all these Jews) to 'solidarity.'

Too many people of my generation still cant speak freely on the issues concerning Israel & Palestine, w/out running the risk of being marked as 'anti-semitic.' So I believed a collaboration w/a poet who was of Jewish ancestry, had a clear stand on the issue & made the Holocaust part of his work on more than one occasion wd free not only me but also my generation from confrontations like the above & wd make clear that differentiating the current conflict & having a critical attitude toward the Sharon government was not based on a *tradition*, an argument quickly raised to silence any opposition coming from this country.

I do think that collaborations between people w/so-called different cultural backgrounds can show that human beings are very well able to coexist w/out the threat of violence & the display of power. That despite all arguments to the contrary 'mutual aid,' & to me a collaboration is nothing else but exactly this, is the dominant factor of life & not the crazy idea of an out-of-touch anarchist.

Stefan Hyner

Fire can live, in mind and memory, long after its ashes have cooled. This particular fire has lived as a member of our family for more than forty years, yet we haven't talked much about it, possibly because we each felt that we knew it well.

It wasn't until fire started cropping up in my writing that I realized the issue is still unresolved for me, pushing itself forward from time to time as an ongoing mental and emotional task that might never be completed.

"Smoked" is the only poem I've ever written specifically about our house burning. Clearly, the facts in it have been twisted for artistic effect. Other poems tend to play with the idea of fire, while keeping it at a distance from the real experience.

In talking about it with my mother and sister, it became clear that each of us has a different, complex, relationship with the burning house. And now, as a third generation is growing up, it seems important to pass this bit of family history on to them, so they'll have a better idea of who we are.

DAWN: Writing was the perfect antidote to theater—all those things that I knew best that other people would screw up—all those things I couldn't control.

JEFF: I wanted to be 'a writer' since I was eight, when I recited Shel Silverstein poems to a packed audience at the state talent show in Cheyenne, Wyoming. At the talent show, the prize was a trophy that was actually taller than me. I performed the whole thing—five poems—in my Pittsburgh Steelers Little League baseball outfit, but I still lost. Later, we moved to Idaho, which wasn't any better. After college, before I met Dawn, I was working at the Pizza Hut in Twin Falls. I was glad to leave for California again.

DAWN: By the time Jeff and I started this project, I'd started practicing ensemble thinking in improvisational dance—I'd begun to understand that possibilities multiplied when one let go into a collaboration, that one could actually accomplish more brilliance in surrendering to the group, or the partnership—that these things represented a power greater than myself. In this sense, collaboration becomes a kind of prayer. For years, I kept the Matisse quote on my desk, "the essential thing is to work in a state of mind that approaches prayer." If one is indeed approaching the creative process as prayer, then one is collaborating, even when working on a solo project—one is collaborating with what some might call a universal intelligence. It is when the artist surprises herself, reads back a piece she wrote and wonders where it came from—these are the moments I work for. I suppose in that case I write in search of spiritual enlightenment.

JEFF: I had control issues anyway. At the time, my writing sessions resembled less prayer than battle. I had lived alone in the space I etched out—in California as well as Idaho—for so long I feared inviting someone else in would suffocate me. But after being inspired by a particular conference on poetry, a collaboration was essential to my thinking and my poetry. We wanted to explore prescribed gender roles and stereotypes, to examine how they had wormed into our lives, to break from them and go beyond. With Dawn, it felt completely natural and exciting. We were both living in San Diego, and it was a joy to drop by and pick up the next poem, or to find one waiting in the mail. In the first few exchanges, I was really pushing, writing lengthy poems full of word-play and images. Exasperating. But after one particular installment, in which Dawn admonishes, "Shhh. Say less," I found my own assumptions about line and image and word breaking down. Working on a responding poem required that I deal with the elements of Dawn's preceding poem, and required that I break out of the personal strictures that were holding me back. It was very freeing. And I haven't forgotten those lessons.

DAWN: When I write a poem and then Jeff writes a poem back and then I write a poem back and it goes and goes, I don't lose my ego in the process—in fact, I often want to separate my poems from the project and let them stand on their own and have at times been resistant to publishing the work as it was written; I want to call my poems mine. However, I do end up with work I couldn't have come up with on my own. I find myself dipping into a vocabulary I would never use and concepts I hadn't thought of before.

JEFF: Often, the most enjoyable aspect of this collaboration is rereading it. The wonder Dawn describes above is prevalent. A few words or images dropped here and there in one poem are picked up two or three poems later—weaving in and out. For me, this was largely unconscious, and seeing it is like discovering something you didn't know you knew. Kind of like sinking a jump shot, even though you never really played basketball—the body knew, the unconscious knew, you knew all along. I may never have learned that without getting yanked off of my crutches in the collaboration. Although the original intent of the poems ceded ground, somewhat, to a more intimate and quiet exchange, I think the work is better for it. I think I'm better for it.

DAWN: And then when I put the work into a publication and put both our names on the whole thing, it is like opening my hands wide to the universe—none of this is mine to begin with anyway.

The eight poems comprising the series “unscripted behaviors” were written between 1997 and 1998. The initial impulse for the sequence came to me from a re-inhabiting of Spicer’s *Heads of the Town Up to the Aether*, specifically the first book “Homage to Creeley/Explanatory Notes.” Perhaps because Rimbaud also figures large in the Spicer book, it seemed a natural extension to ask Norma, a noted translator of contemporary French poetry, if she might be interested in a poetic collaboration framed with a short lyric and an explanatory note. Norma replied that she did not feel completely at ease with the idea of an explanatory note with its implied aspect of judgment—in part, I believe, from her working with aspects of the translation process and related ideas of “equivalence” and/or “cross-talk.” Or more simply put, one poet is in a conversation with another during that act. We agreed to move away from the idea of judgment, however slightly inferred, to the idea of an oblique commentary, as if talking about something found at random like an interesting rock, or a photograph left in a book. Which after all in a way we were.

71 Kids

August 2000, with fingersnacks and motivational speakers, Sawako and I find each other on a lawn of crisp, new grad students. The first conversation went doyouliketomraworthiliketomrawrothmetoo

We met in school: "I like your poem!" "I like yours!"

A post-workshop clarification became a conversation until 5 a.m. We soon saw our tangents and gists fracture in harmonious ways. (All of this without a backlash yet!)

We thought about writing together. We didn't much plan it, Kerri just e-mailed me three words. I added some, sent it back. We did this daily, sometimes multidaily (better than vitamins!), until we got confused,

Confusion was quick—speed was actually worth more points, wasn't it? Before long we had an authorfull/less poem gene pool. Oops, but I get ahead—the naming rites...

found we had two branches, labeled them po 1a and po 1b. I had a new idea about collaborative writing, but by then we were so used to writing each other in poetry that my 'suggestion' was taken as a new poem and forged into po 2.

Yes, there was a ravenous quality as the raw material of volley grew. No casual e-mail was safe from the impasto/urge.

So there were more. Kerri gave them legitimate names, admitting she thought these poems had more personality than represented by their stark ID numbers—so they became ned, virgil, babs, sally—they were our kids. And we had more, and continued to feed them, sometimes losing track ("Have you seen babs lately?"). (I think there was even one we lost entirely, and with no proper mourning either. Perhaps not yet ready for real kids...) We couldn't sustain the daily exchange, but we kept it up over

over land and sea? over beer and rice krispies?

We reconvened and sat down with all the material we had written, sectioned them off, and each fashioned poems out of the designated sections.

Individual composition was rendered into a process of selection and arrangement from a restricted language pool. Working with such a limited palette was so procreative we each wrote numerous pieces from any one page of raw material. However autonomous this stage of authorship seems, I still am not sure who wrote which pieces of the finished tract. And that's what I thank the collaborative process for the most: giving me an invitation to write outside of the boundaries of "my work."

The names came off. I miss them slightly. What I miss more, though, is the constant stream of

It was a trucker's pee of

poetry. We printed them onto postcards in the Waldrop's basement. When we'd produced the first card, Keith said, "Congratulations. You've caught up with the obsolete."

Keith and Rosmarie were majestic in their patience; I wore the green visor better than I set type. 71 Elmgrove is a sort of vortex that makes young poets start magazines, covet late 19th century technology, and write voraciously. The "71" of 71 Postcards is therefore a quality more than a quantity.

"*what manners contain*" are the first three words of our collaboration, and the initial impetus for !Factorial Press. Keith gave me a copy of the King James Bible, but it was Rosmarie's Quark XPress Bible that I actually read. And I would like to retroactively dedicate the first issue of Factorial to Keith, Rosmarie, and Kerri.

Contributors

Avery E. D. Burns (Vallejo, Calif.) and **Norma Cole** (San Francisco, Calif.) met in San Francisco sometime in the mid-80s in a class on the Objectivist Poets at New College of California. Their paths crossed and re-crossed ever since. • Recent publications by Avery E. D. Burns include *Differing in Common*, a collaboration with Joseph Noble (Arc 2003), *aether* (Seeing Eye Books 2001) and *The Idler Wheel* (Manifest Press 2000). He runs the Canessa Park Reading Series in San Francisco, edits *lyric& press*, and co-edits the journal *26*. • Norma Cole is a poet, painter and translator. Originally from Canada, she has lived for the past twenty years in San Francisco. Recent publications include a book of poems, *Spinoza In Her Youth* (Omnidawn 2002) and *Crosscut Universe: Writing on Writing from France* (Burning Deck 2000), an anthology of French poets edited and translated by Cole.

Sarah Ann Cox (San Francisco, Calif.), **Elizabeth Treadwell** (Oakland, Calif.), and **Yedda Morrison** (Oakland, Calif.) met in the mid-90s in the writing program at San Francisco State. • Sarah Anne Cox is the author of two chapbooks, *Home of Grammar* (Double Lucy 1997) and *definite articles* (a+bend 1999) and a book, *Arrival* (Krupskaya 2002). She teaches, windsurfs and looks after her two children. • Yedda Morrison co-edits *Tripwire*, a journal of poetics. *Crop*, a book of her poems, is forthcoming from Kelsey Street Press, May 2003. • Elizabeth Treadwell's new collection, *Chantry*, will appear from Chax Press in late 2003. Her poem *LILYFOIL (or Boy & Girl Tramps of America)* is available as a free e-book from durationpress.com.

Caroline Presnell (Evanston, Ill.), **April West** (San Diego, Calif.), and **Bobbie West** (San Diego, Calif.) are a mother and two daughters whose home town is Pana, Illinois. • Caroline Presnell is the National Coordinator for the Children's Music Network, a nonprofit organization. • April West is a musician who has toured with Candy Kane. She is a member of the Bi-National Mambo Orchestra and also performs with Sue Palmer and her Motel Swing Orchestra, whose latest CD is called *Soundtrack to a B Movie*. • Bobbie West is the author of *Scattered Damage* (Meow Press 1998) and *Open Heart Surgery* (Blue Press 2000), and was also an assistant editor of *A Wild Salience: the Writing of Rae Armantrout* (Burning Press 1999). Her most recent work deals with rural language, culture, and history.

Jerome Rothenberg (Encinitas, Calif.) and **Stefan Hyner** (Rohrhof, Germany) first met in 1998 in Munich, where Rothenberg read his poetry, translated by Hyner. Since then they have been together several times in Germany, and participated together in poetry festivals at Heidelberg, Germany & Locarno, Switzerland. • Jerome Rothenberg is an internationally known poet whose latest books include *A Book of Witness* (New Directions 2003) and *Maria Sabina: Selections* (forthcoming

from The University of California Press). Three recent books of poetry have recently appeared in French translation: *Un Livre de Témoignage* (with art by Arman), *Un Nirvana Cruel: Poèmes 1980-2000* (with art by Irving Petlin), and *4 Poèmes d'un Livre des Recels* (with art by Katherine Blanc). • German Poet, Translator & Calligrapher Stefan Hyner studied Chinese & East-Asian Art History in Heidelberg, Germany & Taipei, Taiwan, & travelled widely thru China, Tibet, Japan & the Americas. His work has been translated into various languages, and since 1977 he has performed his work in many countries, often in collaboration with musicians & painters. Since 1987 he has been the editor of the poetry magazine *GATE* & since 1999 the literary executor of the Estate of the late Swiss poet Franco Beltrametti. Hyner has exhibited his calligraphy in various European cities in one-man & group exhibitions. He lives on the banks of the Rhine river, where he makes a living translating Buddhist literature & American poetry working part time as a carpenter.

Sawako Nakayasu (Kawasaki, Japan) and **Kerri Sonnenberg** (Chicago, Ill.) met in August of 2000 over fingersnacks and motivational speakers in Providence, Rhode Island. • Kerri Sonnenberg lives in Chicago where she edits the magazine *Conundrum* and co-coordinates the monthly Discrete Reading Series. Other work has recently appeared in *Antennae*, *Aufgabe*, *Bird Dog*, *Chase Park*, *Crayon*, and *Pq*. • Sawako Nakayasu eats fingersnacks and motivational beverages in and around Tokyo.

Natasha Dwyer (Brooklyn, N.Y.) and **Susan Landers** (Brooklyn, N.Y.) met at the Poetry Project during the 2001 NBA Finals. Their collaboration consists of notes taken during morning commute. Sent from one workplace to another. A casual, occasional, hurried exchange. The messages weren't sent as a string. At times it wasn't clear what messages were part of the project and what were part of our daily correspondence. The beginning of the poem was the end of our correspondence. • Natasha Dwyer was reading Gail Scott's *My Paris* at the time of collaboration. • Susan Landers was reading Dante's *Paradiso* at the time of collaboration, and is the author of *248 mgs., a panic picnic* (forthcoming from O Books) and co-edits *Pom²*.

Jeff G. Lytle (Brooklyn, N.Y.) and **Dawn Trook** (Marfa, Tex.) met in the MFA program at the University of California, Irvine. After attending the Page Mothers conference at UC San Diego in 1999, they embarked on this collaborative project, parts of which were included in the original multi-media performance *Babel* at Sweetooth Theatre in San Diego. • Dawn Trook recently moved to Marfa from San Diego where she ran Babel Arts, a performance venue and original works production company. She received her MFA in creative writing from the University of California, Irvine in 1996. Her poems have appeared in the *San Diego Reader*, *Poetry Flash*, *Colorado Review*, *Faultline*, *Brooklyn Review*, *Reed* and other publications. She curates visual art exhibitions and teaches writing for Terlingua House Projects, a West Texas-based artist resource organization. She is at work on her first novel. • Jeff G.

Lytle's poems have recently appeared in *Faultline*, *Swerve*, *Croonenberghs Fly* and *Dustup*, among others. He received an MFA in poetry from the University of California, Irvine in 1998. He's been working on a non-fiction book tentatively titled *Spud: An Angry History of a Secret Idaho*.

Eric Baus (Western Mass.), **Noah Eli Gordon** (Northampton, Mass.), **Nick Moudry** (Northampton, Mass), and **Travis Nichols** (Northampton, Mass.) met two years ago in Western Massachusetsts. • Eric Baus' book, *The To Sound*, was selected for the 2002 Verse Prize and will be published in 2003. He is an editor of *Baffling Combustions*. • Noah Eli Gordon is the author of *The Frequencies* (Tougher Disguises 2003), one of seven editors for *Baffling Combustions*, a regular reviewer for a handful of journals and a member of the United Auto Workers Local 2322, Northampton, Massachusetts. • Nick Moudry is supposed to be translating a new selection of poems by Tristan Tzara, but spends most of his time doing nothing. His new chapbook, *a poem, a movie & a poem*, is forthcoming from Braincase Press and features an original screen-print by the artist Michael Labenz. • Travis Nichols was born and raised in Ames, Iowa.

John Crouse (Vancouver, Wash.) and **Andrew Topel** (Rushville, Ill.) had been seeing each other's work and thinking, "Yass, yass." A mutual friend and writer from Virginia shared Andrew's e-mail address with John; they got in touch and agreed to mix it up, thinking, "Two heads are better than one." After completeing *OH an essay* (forthcoming from Lingua Blanca), they began to write plays together, and recently completed the collaborative manuscript *YALP / POEMS*. • John Crouse lives with his wife Michelle and two children, Kailey & Wyatt. O Books recently released *Headlines*. • Andrew Topel's *X* was recently released from Broken Boulder Press.

Octavia Orange (Europe) and **Accomplice 19** (Asia) met in XXXXXXXXXXXX in XXXX. • The name 'Octavia Orange' has appeared on police blotters in Texas, California, Rhode Island, New York and the United Kingdom, in the aftermath of pranks gone awry, drunken misadventures, and halfhearted crimes of passion. • Accomplice 19 is on the hunt for crimes or passion.

Fiona Templeton (New York, N.Y./London, Great Britain) and **Anthony Howell** (London, Great Britain) were two of the co-founders of the Theatre of Mistakes in London in the mid 70s to early 80s. The company was a performance art company drawn from many disciplines and performed internationally. • Fiona Templeton is a poet, playwright and director who creates poetic and site-specific theatre. Her best known work is *YOU—The City*, an intimate citywide play for an audience of one. She is currently working on an epic, *The Medead*. • Anthony Howell is a poet and performance artist, and a founder of the Theatre of Mistakes. He was subject leader of the Time-Based Studies Course in the Faculty of Fine Art, Cardiff (UWIC) for many years. He has recently performed a new piece, *Tango Art*, in Serbia and Montenegro.

Zara Houshmand (Berkeley, Calif. and Austin, Tex.) and **Tamiko Thiel** (Munich, Germany) met and started the project while both living in San Francisco, and working at Worlds, Inc., a virtual reality company. • Zara Houshmand is an Iranian-American writer, translator, theatre artist, and new media designer whose work has focused on opening the borders between different cultures. She also serves as the publications director for the Mind & Life Conferences, a continuing dialogue between Buddhism and science. • Tamiko Thiel (<http://mission.base.com/tamiko/>) is an American new media artist of Japanese/German heritage. She exhibits, teaches and lectures internationally, focusing on social and cultural uses of virtual reality and new forms of dramatic structure.

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burning deck collaborations



Ludwig Harig, *The Trip to Bordeaux* [trans. Susan Bernofsky]

Four adults, a child and a cat. Harig (who is part of the experimental Stuttgart School) tells a riotous tale in Baroque word-games, permutations, & snippets lifted from Montaigne.

Novella, 104 pp., offset, smyth-sewn, ISBN 1-886224-53-6 original pbk. \$10

Oskar Pastior, *Many Glove Compartments* [trans. Harry

Mathews, Christopher Middleton, Rosmarie Waldrop, & John Yau]

"The translators have gamely tried to recreate the mad, witty wordplay...as Pastior, the only German member of Oulipo, tinkers with the smallest units of language and the oldest of lyric forms." — *Publishers Weekly*

Poems, 120 pp., ISBN 1-886224-44-7, original pbk., \$10

Ernst Jandl, *reft and light* [multiple versions by 35 American poets]

"The truest word I know to describe Jandl is radical—he calls the whole nature of the poem into question and interrogates the reader's ever-anxious yen for that banality called meaning." —Robert Kelly, *Rain Taxi*

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Esther Tellerman, *Mental Ground* [trans. Keith Waldrop]

An ongoing poetic journal of travels, possibly to real places, but certainly to "the mind's other country." It is an extraordinary answer to its own question: "how live/ in the ordinary?"

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[ed./trans. Norma Cole, Pieces by Albiach, Collobert, Daive, du Bouchet, Fourcade, Guglielmi, Hocquard, Roubaud, Royet-Journoud et al.]

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Pascal Quignard, *On Wooden Tablets: Apronenia Avitia*

[trans. Bruce X]

"Think about polishing toenails,' Avitia reminds herself. As an empire is crumbling?... This is historical fiction that has attained the level of poetry, in an elegant translation." —Marc Lowenthal, *Rain Taxi*

Novel, 112 pages, ISBN 1-886224-45-5, original pbk. \$10

—, **Sarx** [trans. Keith Waldrop]. Poem, 40 pp., ISBN 1-886224-20-x, \$5

Keith & Rosmarie Waldrop, *Light Travels*

Poem, 36 pp., ISBN 0-930901-92-4, letterpress, 2 colors, saddlestitched \$5

—, ***Ceci n'est pas Keith—Ceci n'est pas Rosmarie***

"No text has one single author in any case. The blank page is not blank." —R. Waldrop

Autobiographies, 96 pp, offset, smyth-sewn, ISBN 1-886224-49-8, original pbk. \$10

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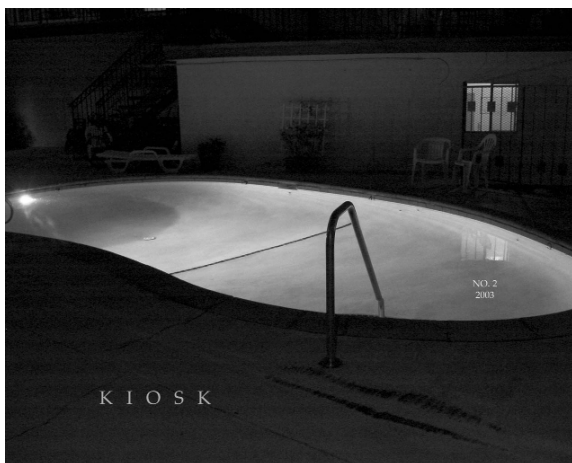
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[REDACTED]

3-31-5-101 Minami-Nagasaki
Toshima-ku, Tokyo 171-0052 Japan

Ms. [REDACTED]
Executive Director
Prolificacy Certification Board
4421 Cortes Street
Chesterton, IN 46304

Dear Ms. [REDACTED]

About three weeks ago, I sent in my application materials for the Prolificacy Certificate, which I eagerly await in order for me to continue my career as a prolificentarian. However, I have not yet received my certificate, nor have I received any confirmation of receipt of my materials. I submitted not one but two responses (one long and formal and one rather short and informal but somewhat witty and clever), six numbers (4, 32, 33, 42, 31, and 21), approximately 240 words (far above the handful required in the application), thirty-seven proofs-of-disaster (those are the ones with the black and white bars, correct?), and a personal check for \$142.14. I would appreciate it if you could look into this matter and send me my Prolificacy Certificate. As I mentioned above, this is very important for my professional career, and again, I would appreciate it very much if you could take care of this immediately and expedite delivery. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

The will of power is to destroy.

One ever intends one.

The law makes the law.

A funnel reveals a stream.

So much for absence.

Yes

741

moot, smock, arzigogolo, hug.
thumb, pointer, middle, ring, pinky.

"A communication subsystem partner link setup request failure has occurred."

"OUT OF RESOURCES Select:

R Retry

N Tell procedure/dataset no more resources.

T Terminate SAS." (8 of these)

The "tomahto" sandwich that should have been a "formaggio" sandwich.

"ZZLTRS72A52@@@@@" (plus 10 other similar ones, ID codes missing the final 5 characters)

I've missed you! I don't know what this proficiency certificate is...but it's good to hear from you. Are you ~~happy~~? If not, where? I would love to talk to you sometime. I'm offically Dr. ~~Blaze~~ now, so that means ~~my~~ will be shutting off my e-mail account soon—I don't know when—but this should be good at least until July. Is this the best way to reach you? How have you been!?!? I want to hear all about it—everything—from the last I don't know how many years.

"Submit" instead of "submit clipboard" (this one is big, so it counts as 5)

"This card replaces your old credit card. Please destroy the old card. You must call the number below from your home telephone to activate your new credit card." (My home telephone is in Berkeley. I live in Rome.)

"no room to add more observations
r{901}"

The beautiful irregular purple stripe with a yellow halo that now covers half of the screen of my telefonino since I dropped it on the floor this morning.

"Quando danzi, ti fermi come se ci fosse qualcosa che ti fermi, e poi ricominci. Vorrei vedere la sospensione tra i movimenti, vorrei vederti radiosa, invece di queste piccole morti."

"sussurrato nonostante tutto"

[REDACTED]

3-31-5-101 Minami-Nagasaki
Toshima-ku, Tokyo 171-0052 Japan

Ms. [REDACTED]

Executive Director
Proficiency Certification Board
4421 Cortes Street
Chesterton, IN 46304

Ms. [REDACTED] .

I am writing this letter to inform you of my severe dissatisfaction with your organization. More specifically, I am writing to inform you of both my formal complaint to the Better Business Bureau for your unscrupulous methods of conducting business and to inform you of an impending lawsuit that I am filing against you. About four weeks ago, I sent in my application materials (including the required fee, of course, which I may also note here is a extremely expensive for the service you are offering), and about three weeks ago I sent you a complaint letter informing you that I had not yet received my certificate as promised in your advertisement. To this date, I still have not received my certificate, an acknowledgement of my initial application, nor an acknowledgement of my complaint letter. Because of your negligence in customer service, I am filing an official complaint and lawsuit.

You can expect to hear from Rambis Partners LLP, whom I have selected to represent me in my case because of their past experience in dealing with fraudulent companies such as yours. You may also expect to be the subject of an investigation by the Better Business Bureau, who have now been made aware of your illegal activities and no doubt will take the necessary measures to ensure that you and your ilk can never do business in this country again.

On a personal note, I would like to state that I cannot understand how you can sleep at night, knowing that you are destroying lives and careers in order to sate your greed. My career, which was highly dependent on receiving your Proficiency Certificate, stands little chance of surviving this fiasco intact, and I have already been asked to voluntary resign from my current position as Associate Proficientarian due to my lack of official certification. My team of experienced lawyers will sue you for everything you are worth, and I will do everything in my power to ensure that the investigation by the Better Business Bureau leads to a criminal lawsuit and a lengthy stint in prison for you and your management team, where you will be able to reflect on the gravity of your actions. In any case, if you had conducted your business ethically, you would not have to deal with this situation, and I hope that you can apply this lesson in the future after you are released from prison.

Regretfully,

[REDACTED]

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