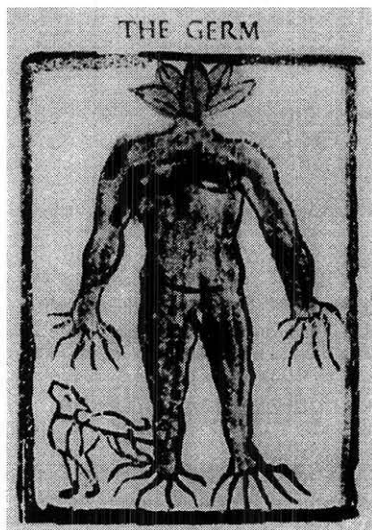


# *S* the *erm*



*prb*

THE GERM



It follows that once these principles are admitted, only time and circumstances are needed for the monad or the polyp to finish by transforming itself, gradually and indifferently, into a frog, a swan or an elephant . . . . A system resting upon such bases may entertain the imagination of a poet, but it cannot for a moment support the examination of anyone who has dissected a hand, a vital organ, or a mere feather.

—Georges Cuvier

I recall that in that period this kind of Pegasean stunt was all the rage.

—Blache to Frenu, in Raymond Roussel's  
*The Dust of Suns*

Fig. 1.

Sens qu'il- Objets Lettres les designent qu'elles peignent		Les memes Caracteres au CHINOIS Simple trait Correspondans		
T	Parfait Grand			Perfection Dia
H	CHAMP 2 <sup>e</sup> Source de la Vie			Champ
E	EXISTENCE VIE			Etre Vie
G	Gorge Ceu Canal			Passage
E	EXISTENCE VIE			Etre Vie
R	Nez Pointe			Angle Aigu
M	ARBRE Etre productif			Plante Montagne
N	Etre Product le Fruit			Attache l'un à l'autre
O	OEIL			Oeil
I	MAIN en Oriental ID d'où AIDE			Main

FIG. 1—THE GERM: A JOURNAL OF POETIC RESEARCH

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# The Germ

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Poetic Research Bloc #I

Fall 1997

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§ The editors would like to thank Alan Gilbert, Andrew Joron, Ivan Seitzel and Greg Reynolds. Special thanks go to Peter Gizzi who, by advice and example, lent a singular ballast to this "craft." Our first issue is dedicated to him. Furthermore, in the oblique light of tradition, we would like to acknowledge our predecessors, the original P. R. B., *whose tropic yet glances such green space as this* ("... all, all, verily/ But just that which would save me; these things flit."—William Morris).

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*B*arbara Guest

SIDEWAYS  
—to the P.R.B.

Sideways  
 become what is  
     thoughtbred  
 and steeple.

Is true this bodie  
 has a surpass of beautie

thief in that heart ladle  
 ladle historic

supergreen

printed in darkness.

No chill no vapor  
 unroll or unwarm  
 the skeletal

underground plenty  
 warmth of plenty  
     is  
     piety warrant.

Or gobble the soil

flavored

as if it were balm

ingratiatingly coated

with sharpened

cornice,

and is of

cheek bone

a tame animal

scent-suet.

and tame animal

slung over his shoulder

wet autumn

of palette cloth.

Ennobled with surprise the root  
deepens and the sprouting,  
the pagan sprouting,

small packets of marble,  
grains of it torture the eyes.

*A greened-over tree years*  
*(mourning)*  
*of mourning and exploding.*

: of aesthetic

of altering!

of 'unmuddied visage';

( sideways

O'Hara

is noticeably young).

---

<sup>1</sup> This poem, an envoi to the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, refers to their ideals, and to incidents in the life of Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Frank O'Hara and I discussed writing a play about the Brethren.

Candace Pirnak

THE FOUND RECORD  
OF HOURS  
VISIBLE KNOWLEDGE



## THE FOUND RECORD

Blue, said of any lifted  
anchor or atmosphere  
in a moment of equivalence

One who is satisfied  
hand to mouth, who walks  
to measure speed,  
lists to touch the etched  
sleeve of her geography

Leg, a section of the journey  
To have legs, to be fast,  
to give way and row  
imperfectly as a child

Bird sung as you are,  
caught in a welter  
white coffer of wings  
This basket of milk  
or a cloud on the horizon  
mistaken for land

To begin, a slatch of wind  
A paper horse, that first month at sea

## OF HOURS

Say a man, say maybe adrift,  
something not found when wanted

Particular, used to equivalence

When the mouth is young, what use  
is memory loosened in a room  
like forgotten love  
or discarded refuge

Your face figured by motion

A book containing this

To begin through influence, the twenty  
fourth part of a civil day

Of one who wants, any  
vessel which lists easily

Of what is given to us,  
the perception of wholeness

The passage of a shadow across it

Aloft, the blue yoke and insolvency

fathomless, the numinous rungs of the ceiling  
or a woman shaping her own loss

This reversal, if possible, forgiveness  
as true compass or recompense, our release

Of what one is given to want, transferred in various senses

What is never pronounced  
remaining empty

Without respondent, the unlit windows  
of the upper storey

If it is a house, the copestone  
A mere handsbreadth bears the mark

To wander in one's gifts  
without the sweet filigree of an answer

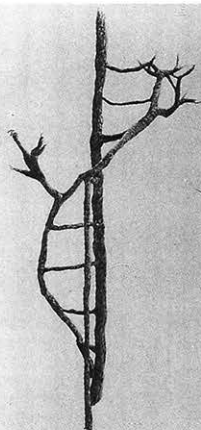
Meaning by this impress  
a stronghold, that kind of home  
only grasped in sleep

another hearse, the dark embroidery  
and the clamorous needle

There were some things our  
simple methods could not remove

## VISIBLE KNOWLEDGE

Properly, or what thought is anywhere  
itself a clock or a very beautiful mouth  
individual and something that exists  
On the other hand, a face hasped  
in sleep becomes word struck  
by hammer or hook, mouth work  
however marvelous, that is to say  
a whole of which and most remarkably  
For the common loach name effaces  
nothing, remaining curiously surface  
Such jackets are a neglect  
the life of which so accurately  
questions the perfect, the weight  
through which such matters are possible



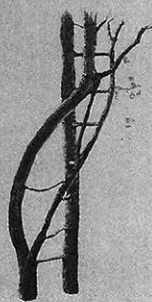
NORTH



WEST



NORTH



EAST

*J*ohn Godfrey

DAY GOO  
TO EXALT IN  
FOR ICE  
KINDS OF SMOKE  
BOTH DEADLY



## DAY GOO

Sun lips the rim of the world qualm by qualm. Wake alone, body has no recourse to equality, so call it strength. Love within me so vivid, faces flock to it forlorn out of reeking darkness. I wash gently by the window, light wedding me to thoughts concrete with survival. I love my meal of fruit, for it comes from a public place feet away from predators. A child with bad guts awaits me after a night seems a week to him. Soon behind the wheel, I salute an idiot Caprice with a flick of my brights, but his viz is already tunneled. Elevated highway receives day with dazzling shadowed pits. There is no word for my heart but throb. Whoever evaluates teenage anything forgets how important dangers are born. The girl still sleeps, one hand bathes in milk, the other creeps down the belly of a bull. A compulsion to weep overcomes me during my inventory. The ill will of grandma fails to admonish me when my freshly washed hands cup a toddler's cheeks. So much pain, borne so dully, is out the window, for hire. A girl with hungers and hopes brief as dog thirst makes room to lie down for him beside another man's baby. Doors close behind what swagger is left to night, and in daytime an intimate hatred plays out. I adopt a weasel-headed scamp and take him into a prissy restaurant trailing his purple farts. Sunshine is clearly arson, a fuse of day goo waiting for the flint to spark off a debacle. Leaves mainly girls blinded and drug east to the edges of roofs. I'm shaken to know there is no one totally vacant. My law is, exceptions never cease. I like my eyes to sweep, but they seem born to linger. My car is unsteady in a crosswind, and there are kids who live in an unending hurricane. They have kin whose will to protect them is too diffuse because gratifications they maintain are beyond the power to share. Every birth has one luminous moment, and darkness is always waiting. Colors set in their skins and a fiendish measurement assigns pests to their homes. A fabulous white rat behind every wall.

## TO EXALT IN

Carve me some precious in the fresh coat of scum. Deem me with your pinky dusted by slag. Through a pinhole in a brick wall of Avenue A, a crystal shoots out dotted beams to string minutes along. I am overwhelmed, O heat, that you brandish my juices in the crotch of a tree. I am worried there are flames between the curbs, and the slaughter of sheep by buses will go on. The chests of young women intimate cloth and engrave thick amber liquid on my fingernails. I wear the rakish arc of sunstroke on my dick. I'm warm on the hunt for disorderly. I bear a germ so beautiful it is justifiable defraud. I recognize you is all, don't inflate the greeting. I've got to be close for hours before I shave the air around you. There's nothing left to grow in the floor but a lily. The voice in my mouth and the ambient murmur share the same pitch. I sense a blue warble, and I banish forever a gush. There's a transient handful of gravity visits clangor on a different intersection of impulse and street each night. She lives through a fall from high scanty hair. She struts the sidewalk shouting out rage no one else will ever dream. It's ramshackle tolerant, this heart. Sweat for my stirrup, a moat for my thieves. You owe me one tumult or its equivalent. Decay from sweet flowers descends into the urn. I leave the narrow stairway with a long-awaited lie to exalt in. Hands waste smoke into the wavy breath, but everyone sees exactly where the trigger is. I stop sweating and let the voice full of pretend innocence soothe me. Wait until the shadows on the ceiling are out of sight. All expletives glued together with air overnight cool and varnish the cars. I beg not to reconcile. On both sides there is melody rises out of stubble, and hoarseness at hand. Ecstasy makes it a song, and bodies deafened by it breed.

## FOR ICE

Money in the dark is worth even more than crime set to music. Gun smoke paraphernalia clings to a city within my limits. I watch the mirror and when you enter its range I rise to touch you. The light I see you in because days are longer and I can taste grief already. Why must the orphan burn in the hour I recline? All the atoms on another world lend a plan to my life. A knee moves apart from its mate and upsets a table. An eye opens slowly and its orbit is filled with wetness, so we can go where we can't see the death masks of our ancestors. In my dream there's the sound of a great oaken mast as it shatters. I put down the knife and run my fingertips across your cheek. You know how much of my feeling is the same as yours, and this you are willing to overthrow. I know what is coming next, even though the way I arrive at this is baloney. Don't believe there is a skeleton all unseeable things are fixed to. Your scheme is safe with me, I remember the few times you are ungainly. Water splashes onto your palms with a bang and I ease your descent with a bed of rock. Tassels on your hem mire me in ablation. A sophisticated lady with a bad accent fingers me over and takes me for a sundry. I wake up to the Big Rather. Hours are to miles what invisibility is to the way I wend. I should explain upfront that sounds rub across your mouth and get lost in car rattles. A cigarette rolls by the feet of the butcher man where he waits with his gates still closed for ice off a truck. The rock that is sometimes inside my heart does not have a fate. The parking signs are trembling and the passengers sweat. I have cool marble tubs to cushion your stay. To the beat of feet on fire stairs I wander in your direction. You are the one eating cake the exact color of your skin. You balance a glass you can see all colors accurately through on the tip of one finger for a very long second.

## KINDS OF SMOKE

Sun slides down an opaque horizon, draags across the switch, and turns off the omen. Hairs favor points east as breeze packs a chill through this alley. My neighbors are falling hopelessly behind on their myth. They unflaggingly mate, if that's worthy of amnesty. Beyond the comforts they provide themselves there is nothing but thin air. The dust of a thousand cars eternally feeds their plants. I refuse to tell you their ailments, they resound off sheetrock and find an open window like canaries. I return from exile in a cloud of dust. I order a beam of light that shines through sapphire to glow on a face framed by the white of one pillow. Where there is a frowzy shroud folded and stashed in a peripheral haunt. After long tramping, a dwelling astonishes me. The face overwhelms me so much it becomes my habit to start small fires. There are many kinds of smoke, but only a few to inspire me to ponder the last body not yet removed back to Earth. I come here to learn better how you swallow up what source of light. We pass a storm sewer steam escapes from like there's breathing going on down there. The feeling isn't twisted, it's tangled. There is always this future in which you are yielding. The sides of your body swell and subside. The muscles in your neck go slack, and I wait for you below your sleep.

## BOTH DEADLY

Twilight confusion costs me my beautiful arm of ebony. Blue grit and green bottles bound in the wind down this valley of truce. Girl next door slams down the stoop both deadly and pregnant. Dream lights up a forehead on the barricade with whiffs of a pungent hovel. Flies as yet unlarvaed are programmed for skin. I've but one boon to ask, is turmoil. Arms unwrap me and I float out the mouth of the cave. I get this sight that's endless, considering all the evanescence shit around and about. The song's a work song, and I'm carried on a tide of sweat 'cross a harbor of bodies. As I by-god stand here a force greater than peril pushes my thumb down toward the ground. The skin of my lips breaks apart from the minus of sup. Open my umbrella and see the blue-gray gas belly'd-up in its dome. And the ribs I live inside tent soft thin sheets. Windows leak fine strands of loss that wash over my ears as I half way wake. Face me, flamboyant merchant, for I fan large banknotes for to cut your Arabian cards. The shortcuts I risk on account of desire escape me when I pull on clothes as day pushes down from the sky. Good-bye O imprint of Mars on my eye. The longing I bear with is shameless of my silence. I am small and confident, and I succor my own fear. Far outside me is a niche for a woman to weep in. Follow me now into the dark and away from the major keys. The code eddies around in deep fancies until a pore shows its dim light and the world in all its blur submits to escape and to cure. I carry this heavy crude cane of blond wood to give her. The body of my bride throws every single color back against the railings. I never flinch from the polished cold stone we lie down on. Leave me but one hoof, and on the other side a talon. Without them I *have* to choose grief. It is always too late for the mercenary to bury his face in hair. I disappear from you because I am told that faraway there's a vamp behind a low window. Sheep cross the road in a golden crowd. I travel at the speed of light with my arms and legs wrapped around a well worn trigger. I sing as loud as I can, of all I can, I step down the straight steep stair. And I am not one to marvel.

*P*eter Gizzi

A TEXTBOOK OF CHIVALRY  
TOUS LES MATINS DU MONDE  
DING REPAIR

## A TEXTBOOK OF CHIVALRY

Learning how to give in to hate, or how to take, in love,  
won't recuperate joy, or avoiding joy  
might become a paradigm easing a pain unwanted to dissipate.  
Is the love a syringe or merely a placebo that becomes habit,  
full of promise? Keep the score card close, Cheat.  
The earth is still tonight, without a breeze to compensate  
for the mind's emptiness. Imagination creates a mother  
letting you go free amidst the enemy  
because unwanted the cravings grow too, laughing  
when promise fulfills its tiny shape. Never  
is also part of the greater composition, looking away at the toy horizon.  
Who will die from happiness, knowing that their ungainly self was loved  
and the clumsy heart embraced? Dinner is never dinner this season,  
living in a bubble, the I sinks, I decline too  
in this construction even and if only even as the putative author  
of these lines, this subject. The subject matters,  
wrote the good scribes in disbelief. Wrote the poor.  
These slums speak to everyone, don't they, though no one is listening  
are they, chevalier? are they? The tribulation of water is heavy.  
Out here it is an ocean carries this raft towards something,  
something unlike rest, or knowledge of where the surf will crash.  
The story of the woman who left the man to drown is the same story  
that taught him to swim. When you learn to read water  
your fluency increases thirty percent the guidebook says.  
The surface is moving as the groundlessness that surrounds one  
is more immediate and lowly than historically determined crises of self.

I am waiting for my man, my man has a number in it.  
Staged and inconsequential. This may be tendentious  
but it's hysterical. Though love is never a joke, even if it feels like a joke:  
the clown tumbles to stand up and they are made brighter by their laughter,  
give them bread & circus. Oh *book*, you are a strange friend  
but a good one, definitively a path opening on all sides,  
as all eyes open, and don't merely gape, but dilate and focus  
as with the apertures of the heart. Open, to receive, *become*,  
to see, and is it only for honesty in letters that the will founders  
before it immolates. Who cannot die, continuing to die,  
who has become dead, becoming dead, who will never be dying,  
as the hard copy corroborates a twin and the emptiness creates a slave  
and the wood recorder releases a sweet note ascending  
to embrace these actual clouds in an actual landscape  
unwittingly there to coax joy out of air?  
Where we are is on a street whose bodies linger, sweat pouring  
unlike diamonds onto the hot pavement where  
cellophane wrappers say 79¢. Days accrue a hollow dispensation  
for time served. The job done. Though some folks sit to themselves  
speaking, to no one, neck bent, face twisted.  
Is thy bread more stale? Outside is not as far as you imagine.  
The voice of a child greeting night.  
As a wash of cruelty sets out unlike an imagined river  
abrading the tin shell of self-reflection, wanting to be seen.  
To be permitted to march against the current  
to the "higher ideal" of an unnatural self-reliance,  
which seemingly one despises or despises oneself, let go.  
To not worry about realism for once, to wonder



without becoming dry. If time is more than movement  
of a clock's face, who will witness the supporting parts  
before they disappear? To buy back the empty lot, to build  
a fascinating life so it takes another lifetime to read it,  
never to understand why one is here, or why now,  
or who or what they shall become, whence written down.

## TOUS LES MATINS DU MONDE

Goodness is hard on the body,  
a distracted mind unable to doze in fitful sleep.  
The dove rattles the mind into thinking  
it has a body of thought—complete  
& symbolic—the gray feathers perched  
outside the pale cut square of silver.  
Say then, we belong to that window,  
that warble, and suddenly we belong too,  
the silver car in the yard, even a tiny silver hammer.  
All vehicles of travel  
disclose the mind's need to wonder in perfect forms.  
Even if the skiffsman don't come to this bed  
to rock me to sleep—to wander the tired stones again  
and worn teeth we remember to hold onto a world  
for this life might not take us the whole way.  
That shape of an idea, the concept, or *donnée*  
travels farther than the instrument can register.  
The spindle whirs beyond its order.  
Something must be moving at incredible speed.  
With pure speed I address you, reality.

## DING REPAIR

There are too many skateboards here, too many  
waves to negotiate, the graded hills fall  
too suddenly into the sea; from here  
that bank of fog turns into a blanket of gauze,  
never forgetting anxiety—institutions  
are a part of nature though needs  
are seldom met in a sunny bureaucracy,  
shiny country, for the moment sun-bleached.

Imagining another home far from here  
not from where we have come but where we imagine,  
where vulnerability won't reproduce cruelty.  
A home in the act of finding a home in the act of  
what will suffice? No place was set  
at the table but you are invented to listen  
even if silence is a condition of mind  
you will never be forgotten here, where to learn  
the speech of the place is to earn to speak in this place.

Said: "I could love you if you left me?"

"No! I will love you if you let me."

Things come to them, a tuning fork  
pulling focus, facing each other at breakfast.  
Outside sea and sky enlarge the chamber piece,  
little flowers dot the hills, for they too  
are a part of themselves, parts of themselves  
scattered—stuck to cars and windshields.

A hummingbird at the scarlet bell works the vine.  
Even as adults we hope to witness ordinary spectacle  
evolve into meaning, ordinary and rare each time  
the ribbon, the wave—all bent.  
For if those memos, phone calls, holidays  
were to accrue then where would we be?

If a letter were drafted it would read  
the people are cheerful, overworked and kind.  
Say there is plenty ocean, plenty sun.  
Say we are standing on a new shore  
that goes to—if not new—different destinations.  
Say these destinations trouble us at night.  
There's work to do, faces to study.

Some of the news contains lack—  
say the small charge from a battery—  
in this way a current flows, querulous  
even, a lighthouse has its seasons too.  
The metaphor is striking  
however like a match making the dark  
darker, the night larger  
the empty into which we move real.

And holding your hands over your head  
reflecting a degraded self-portrait  
feel the cord of space pass through your palms  
the slow progression of years, endless knots and bits

of talk, lumps of sorrow, nettling of tears.  
Close your eyes and find the present flattened.

To speak about distance, memory  
a voice stumbles, a flame in wind  
when dignity is no longer an option  
and rain does not confuse  
—folding themselves against the night  
into night, or just wearing out the day.

Let the record play, let the notes begin  
to make a landscape where we meet beneath  
the intermittent sky, let the body evolve whole  
rising out of the throat and out of the mouth into night.  
Pick up an instrument, play, as though a work of art  
were a form, C 38, here fill this out, as though we must behave  
as we explain the mess we've made, one note  
for citizen, soldier, object, history, but there is no other  
door to enter and if there were where would you go  
after the masterpiece is finished?

Or a man who can't distinguish the sorrow of the violin  
from rust of the old country.  
The day sallow and dry leans to the left  
the trill accentuates the bulbous tops of trees  
out over the terrace, everything in its nest  
each unlike each along the jagged edge of horizon  
the strings of the instrument articulate each spear  
of big ferns across the parking lot.

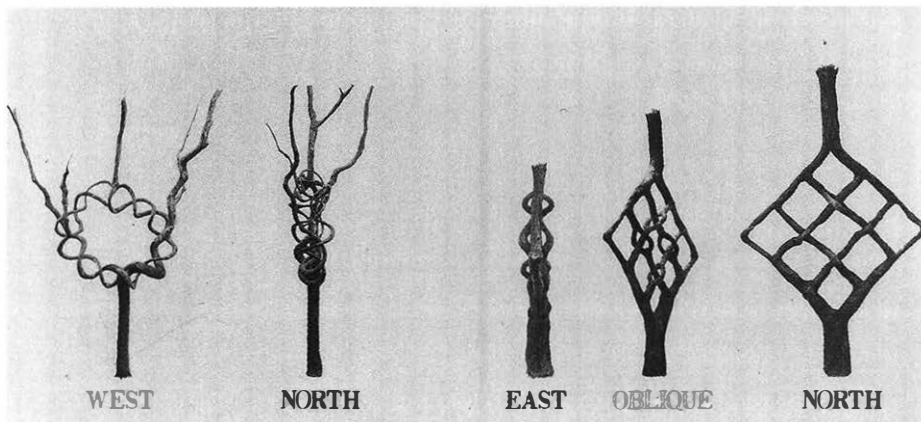
It is a song that carries this day  
yields to the shy, lays its bluster down  
tucks in the storms, a new tune atonal for the moment  
until the small have grown to embody it.

As though the entire armature  
were labeled "heavens" reproduced  
inside the home we call our heads  
—a ship in a bottle.

Hole inside in the shape of a bottle.

Now when you go to your job, your table or your bed  
can you remember this place, a piece  
of space left behind, it's not hard to imagine.

Think of an empty closet, some childhood there  
an odor of cedar, order of secrets repeat  
their sequence and the useless treasure of an ending.



*A*aron Kunin

PACOLET AND THE HORSE  
DON GIOVANNI



## PACOLET AND THE HORSE

Sometimes I read to the end of the poem  
And look down.

Where has my horse taken me?  
What drink have you offered me  
In the darkness beyond the poem?  
Suddenly

We have landed on an island, it seems.  
My horse is building a château  
With wood,  
Wood from the horse.  
Grounding myself, drinking the drink  
Picking splinters from my craw,

I ask myself again, Can I not  
Rid myself of the itch  
Of bestriding the press,  
This wooden Pacolet?  
Let's return to the beach  
Where I wrote my poem

In the sand,  
A poem that meant nothing to anyone.  
Last year I remember  
As I was offered a drink I dropped  
A paperback on the beach, a novel.  
That was on another island.

He makes a wooden horse in the novel  
And steering by means of a pin  
Set into the horse's head  
Sails through the air  
At great speeds. Thus  
He (that is

Pacolet)  
Brings word to Ferragu of what has occurred.  
Valentin deprecates.  
Deprecates to "il miglior fabbro."  
Meanwhile, at the barn,  
The horses have eaten the barn,

Disdaining straw.  
Blandemine sets fire to another château.  
Something lights up  
Inside the cordless phone.  
The thread under Orson's tongue is cut.  
All set sail for the exegetical crux

Where Valentin is.  
After a cursory examination of the droppings  
Ferragu arrives  
Pretending to desire baptism.  
The house has divided  
And become

A condominium.  
Esclarmond has a disturbing dream  
Of building a building  
By sinking large pilings  
Into the swamp  
Underneath.

"See what a pretty child  
I have found here."  
So you have erected a château  
Where inclination, appetite,  
Attraction, and desire are  
A part of ourselves

At play among themselves.  
May I keep this  
The public library  
Won't let me take out books anymore  
Because I keep dropping them  
Into the Atlantic Ocean.

## DON GIOVANNI

His first play: a child's production of "The Hound of the Baskervilles"; Don Giovanni takes the part of the hound. A prominent critic of the time writes that he has captured the "naive insouciance" of the hound. On his report card the teacher complains of his incessant baying. But already he has seduced everyone by means of his hound costume, with its glossy coat and soft paws.

For a time, my excellent friend Don Giovanni was making \$350/night at the Guthrie; his only responsibility, it seemed, was to douse the candles at the end of Act I in "Cyrano." I believe he put himself through college that way.

He had written a play in which one of the characters speaks the following line: "You are either insane or crazy, or perhaps a combination of the two!"

His failings as an actor: forgets his line, misses his cue, enters on the wrong side of the stage. Or he speaks his line twice, forgets individual words, or speaks the right words with a strange intonation. Perhaps he will never make it through a performance without doing something wrong.

His interest in the photograph of Bain Boelke that shows him cradling a duck in his arms.

Wendy Lehr makes the following sarcastic remarks in pantomime class: "Don't check your smile in the mirror, Don," and, "Pantomime is the *silent* art, Don." Failings as a comedian: he drops the ball, he drops the flower, he drops the moon, he falls over the cliff, he drowns in the pool.

He never did Shakespeare.

He once muttered to me as we exited the stage together: "Forgot to kick the machine." I did not ask what he meant.

He was bored of any script that he knew by heart, and because he was also a gifted writer, he would write new dialogue for himself. Often the lines he

invented were a kind of commentary upon the lines that they replaced in the original script. For example, in a production of "State Fair" by Rodgers and Hammerstein, he changed the line "Sitting in the kitchen, talking to women" to "I can no longer pronounce the word 'women' naturally."

Some theatrical pieces in which Don Giovanni has performed: "He Who Gets Slapped," "Bus Stop," "Woyzeck," "She Stoops to Conquer," "The Invitation," "Getting Out of Bed Without Using the Stomach Muscles."

In another play they are going to shoot him out of a cannon.

He was writing a play called "The Invitation" in which he used the following stage direction: "Their sigh brings them to the ground."

Phil Eaton shows him a comic strip ("Blondie") in which his name appears. In the first panel, Dagwood announces that he is going to go bowling with "Phil Eaton." "Is he any good?" his neighbor Herb wants to know. "I don't think so." "Why not?" "How can he be any good if he's in our league?" A diagonal line, a mark of astonishment, erupts from the face of Herb.

Spoken by the countess in "Lulu": "I'll find my own way out."

He was trying to decide between the lines "Gee!" and "Huh?" to conclude our production of "Peter Pan."

The curtain rises four feet above the stage and stops. Don Giovanni goes into the catwalks and makes the necessary repairs with a ballpoint pen as his only tool.

He explained that our skin appears transparent beneath the bright lights, and our skulls show through our faces.

The lighting technician told him that he had no sense of timing.

What makes you think that you are Don Giovanni, delight and terror of ladies and husbands, enemy to all and father to none?

*G*eoffrey O'Brien

THE PLATFORM SUTRA  
OF BETTY GRABLE  
SONIC ODE

## THE PLATFORM SUTRA OF BETTY GRABLE

Betty Grable  
Exists surrounded  
By comical waiters  
Overweight businessmen  
Exuberant young soldiers  
And street urchins with mile-wide grins

In a night club  
Somewhere outside the war.

She's so terrific  
That pretty soon  
She has the dance floor to herself,  
A Technicolor-blue arena  
To complement her yellow spangles.

She sings:  
"Darling,  
Since you caught my eye  
I feel so high  
That I'm dancing pictures—"

She taps  
And WHAP  
A flower surges  
From the spot where her foot touched the ground.

"Don't know what to do  
With this feeling for you  
So I'm dancing pictures—"

And again the toe taps  
And an extravagant geometric form  
Whirls from the point of contact.

"It may sound crazy  
To be so free  
But I just can't wait  
Till it's you and me  
Laughing away  
Spending each day  
Dancing pictures—"

And while the crowd watches  
In astonishment and delight  
She launches into a frenzied tap solo  
Where each beat generates  
Brilliant hard-edged constructions,  
Pulsing nebulae,  
Clouds, loaves of bread,  
Incandescent fish,  
Writhing multidimensional toys,

And now everybody is out on the floor,  
Moving in a choreography  
Whose shape mirrors the shapes  
That fly from Betty's magic feet.  
The whole hall is nothing  
But blare and color  
And sinuous spirals

Until they chime in together:  
"We're all just—  
Dancing—  
Pictures!"

And with knees bent and arms flung out  
They strike their tableau  
As the camera pulls away  
And all are swallowed up  
In a slow fade to black.



## SONIC ODE

—scrim,  
    a scroll  
        thinned  
            past shimmer  
of fabric of cloth-  
    of-rain, webstuff,  
        lucent map  
            of flat raked lakefront  
hardly with planks enough  
    to hold itself aloof from,  
        weightless passenger  
            in flight over dune zone,  
over cumulous fibrous  
    whorls, resins,  
        loops of pools,  
            the nibbled rips of  
folded cove forms,  
    moss shore woven  
        of murmurs spilt, split  
            where Italic Diana  
(her old priest struck down  
    by her new priest)  
        soaks up worship  
            from the ground she abandons,

tufted colony  
    in whose pillows her servants  
        at play with the forest  
            throw stones into time  
miming for a theater  
    of underbrush a comedy  
        of bristle and vine,  
            of solo leaf shudder  
where unseen throat  
    twines cries among thorns  
        and spines, where choric  
            chatter of chirp-creaks  
flickers like lost chunks  
    of light between brambles  
        as medicine among rocks  
            is scooped up mutely,  
the rays are splintering,  
    the hill  
        where the hunter clammers  
            holds platform  
for goat masks, they puncture  
    the mountain for flute vents,  
        smear the roof  
            with hunt scenes,  
to find past the curtain  
    a succession of curtains,  
        bud net, bead stream,  
            vase for shades,

a strand of stains  
    where tracks are melt marks,  
        melody markers,  
            catches  
for shards of arches,  
    opening around chasm-flanks,  
        the fringes tumbled outward,  
            as cases of faces  
spilled in wind, tipped  
    in sting of spin, a pin span  
        snapped, its scar  
            a harbor hub, a babble  
of bent coin, lane hammers,  
    tram gone groggy,  
        hagglers in ash paths,  
            porch covers, pockets of  
crowds shrouded in houses,  
    sleep cops, ticketmakers  
        slapped up in gauze,  
            disappearing cities  
yanked blind toward  
    thread's end, toward  
        crack of blind  
            where bauble trebles  
to fen gleam, fan transit,  
    smoke-dwelling alchemist  
        in crocodile jacket  
            and blue-beaded salamander

hat proposing  
    (coiled) a grid  
        of cloud-braids, mud-born  
            amulet in whose ambit  
gods ride twin snakes  
    toward the capital of rain,  
        gods slide in flakes,  
            stacks of popped bubbles  
(making like chips  
    in mid-flip) to excavate  
        bounce, paddle  
            the tatters in a remnant  
of dip, flume where  
    the river combs its thickets,  
        the figure roams its fidgets,  
            tones its littles, its withs,  
till it tips off a half  
    of baked crag, hefted  
        wedge of tithes, to go drop,  
            let coat fall,  
hat roll, mat spool  
    on hall wall, signal  
        from rudimental radio,  
            fathom of blanket,  
breeze dragged  
    over nerve reef,  
        tongue loops doubled  
            as gong echo, pouch

in which storms are smuggled,  
    sea scraped of rigging,  
        hold of black folds  
            dropped around space house,  
aired-out tree  
    in its flight body, a hollowed  
        chord scoured  
            by the flame of the flame,  
a term of generative  
    grammar, a term limit,  
        liminal and grainy,  
            scoured by the refrain  
of the flame song, hauled  
    through the track of the rake,  
        a chip of ash-flake  
            wedged against the grate,  
ground by wind  
    into powder, into parts  
        of speech, torn nouns,  
            sandtracks of verbs,  
pauses in shore pulse,  
    water poured through water,  
        sky raked free  
            of clouds, sky  
scrubbed between mountains  
    over and over  
        until the light  
            *squeaks—*

C<sub>lark Coolidge</sub>

AS IT SAYS, BEAT ACCIDENTS

America—stuff, and you rip it all around and just as much do it  
stallings of blocks in the snow, right shed type of ground  
intermittent rollers and singular tools, bark in the pluck of a dell  
immaculate waiting watchers and tomb subsidizers fluent  
could barb you, could weight as trees stick to night and the pills revolve

Interminable cement of mixing moniker and dry lights  
self-seethed cleat sheets, the way ice admires from the edge  
and so much depends upon, there's much liquid to satisfaction  
long as rolls don't bar us and the clad heat sits up sight

I don't imagine back but whelm up, central tong of the sliding film  
where cars distract peculiar under wires, but, brush, there's  
no animal in the window, less, there's no window, but  
the dreams that seem *above* life, I've had those of boats  
slippers in the sun, back hatches with hooks, take a good length  
to plot the salad of it, the all told

Now, *there's* a soda you haven't had, all of it within cigarette reach  
and trees are spiny and spines are scratchy, that's the rub  
that cover felt over chrome disc on cars? Those posts sunk  
in road are signs of secret food we'll pass, do, all do  
not the slightest question of does, but starlight has to leak  
from somewhere, as batteries true up he left cake, when did you?

Incapable of wanting anything better missing, "fleet foot, face  
full of black soot", thin shells with boomy inners  
a fortress round my heart, idling in Mixtures of Mine  
I'd find a goat out on the highway, he's got no clothing  
is parrying through washes, diamonds loose in my toe molecules  
the bite of that, past whisper

And the way drifts around things, how do they keep the pavement  
black? As all thundered by, was there a letter missing? and  
do you crash from acres? Smoother here than a yellow hand  
or ink on black in stone night where heads collect and loaves  
of nougat are stored and the mice punch, the Java Blues in my chest

Why does the sun out let things blue? I'd get an icicle weight  
for your masthead date, an "icicle cake"? things break off  
when water riles, nouns as grey as Texas

See the rock walls of poured ice hurl and furl and shrug up the blue  
hum of their bosoms depending, this is a long wait past college  
when one line announces the stack of a town, the vertical cop  
of a forbidden chimney where the key's on grass and the itch  
won't stick, we turn around sleepish and watch it drift  
take so long quick away, froze underwaters in the day fire

He'd made molasses squirrels of that grey noon, when worms  
ride up the trees you gain the shine to see under  
after all nothing communicable but a few sticks and a cannon bible  
a sharpened cloud on the back of your whim, he's scurvy  
mixed from loss of bubbles, a latch mixup and then the troubles  
he leaned back far over the hood and threw trees

There are houses where nothing but the red thing passing  
daily we left, just as the empties left, cardboard collar on  
a hill escape, a map on which to bracken, all those  
tree shadows hillside, it's countable smooth enough  
a well able table, monster, make some dots or light spots  
shave this window, you'd have it got so ice, now I'll  
go put all my things away



Do you believe that everything? They say it's known  
the blue ice coming out here, that is, late dates for Pa Troll  
that sign is the yellow sign of a green sign, never forget  
or worry any lights the globigerina, it got so

But icicle clouds have more firm than me, I'd see  
formed from back aways, the luncheon on furs of Max Roach tunes  
why say why anymore to anybody? The solar span comes up of course  
anywhere beyond organ studios you'd have to match hands on  
but the king, what he said, must be that he left

I bet I've smiled more than Howard Johnson ever did  
happy as the fitness of a whole hill of Romes, junior  
I'd attach the bracket, if I hadn't to sprain it back  
and gauge glass averages and stun, stir, stone in your food

But a better than average lover would disabuse us all  
flowing under the hole cements of Gate Four, or a traveling of banana  
but close me, quiet spring field, I'd freeze to hug your molecules  
side to side it's all averages but few bricking acreages  
white building painted black with snow

2.

Elect Bob Incognito, restore respect and backbone to the teamsters  
then, enter Mars

Your sweet life eat butter for less then ride a chartreuse cab  
pulls a grey tube of Grace in the shuffle of security windows  
as winter goes down in tracks in the grass and sod, hill of nothing  
between routes I shuffle my binoculars and boots, hear a horn  
in the saddle of two thresh hills of nuclear better carbonates  
have lain around between beneath saws of lime and listen to hill story

Bud did it get lifted lighter later as a gift? Nine miles to  
"board sides with joy", just graduated from Oxy Tech and now know  
what burnt matches *mean*, before that was green, Jack  
stones blobbed stop pile hill, whence conversations come clattering  
Nest of the Serpentine Dike

I've been unable to follow you but now I do, Thorndike Mills  
shaken up punter of the bluesky, there where they rise to standards  
Stardust at Dawn, etc. and go throttled to work in the Teams  
on Things make no sense but bring power, like wires  
while not so far away wide enough there are scads of human trees  
and humorless ledges aching with writing and a sort of rust only  
the Igneous made

We'd prefer a touch of diamond dust sauce on our zircons  
not a bunch to ask? out here in the Go Big Red Wheel  
just passed Scout in Camaro must believe this all real  
they're all passing with care lopping off rhymes, but in here  
the Green Pan the people the professionals sun and win  
they're getting a good rest start

Sure Mike had my name once I'd said it in, but those woods  
are all hauls hold back and don't need icicles to stand  
over Wherewithall Valley where stood the Key To It All  
right in their midst of nobody knew, cake of fire hydrant made

But the red ones you see all they do is pass, passed rock  
all loaded up with tilt, planet wherein all the shine is on hair  
but do they catch ice easily as is left of their games?

I wouldn't paint ice, or monkey with belief, starborrowers collide  
in unmarked vesicles, there's the painter whose metier is solid H<sub>2</sub>O  
then I'm sorry, sadder, finished, nobody lives so long  
in the grey turret near on the mid-forest cone we once heard of  
fifty hours of

I Brake for Gary Snyder, but we've lost the key to the pig iron  
of those perfectly Indians running out in a row of wharve houses  
and bundling on the stiff, walked out to the end of the blade  
a carrot or your life? The mix-matched fanciers of Dull Mote  
and the Dale

See those big buttons locked to ladder towers they send things  
you can't see with? I lived near one of them, those are hard  
you'd best believe, but I'll sicken if I cursive move  
more to forget than you'd ever believe

Simply a pen holding up matters, the trucks  
grey-side contest, questioning marguerite, eat out, eat out  
often, eat out of it often, and no sagebrush but frozen punchbowl  
going along prudential completely out of it lining up with  
nonflammable tanks and washing schist, a rose hovering ash  
for your listening

Is there any Lee Konitz left? The lay of all these frozen homes  
getting nearer to Batriglia, the fatter semblance, the sound of that  
a carton back of a limo, back a stretch through pearly woods  
and it won't matter

Getting with the guesser better, then it'll be march  
and the sandwiches of trips in and out, turn out that battery light  
but it's terminal, you know, the Fun Zone

I'd probably send a card lots better from Shoshone Caverns  
least of its parking lot where so much cave there are no more trees  
Lines Written in Direction, or Dejection, some such

So long as you line 'em down the middle, cute as paradiddle  
there goes a most grey cap, meat crate harp? This must win the record  
for the quietest war of roses, equal as it is eventual

Afraid to step right up to the mink, she was, and she was  
that almost not yellow but house enough, clearing across houses  
and other grey matters, I'll just have to stick to these trees

As if the green trade mark of your knees would part  
and the ceiling come simple with a bound, which?  
but it's too easy in the malachite, big rolling rimmers tanning past

A cigar, his arm was glad-patched but no rhymer ever wrote her  
a letter, and Ha, he's gaining a head, just that pitched correctly  
you could leave from here, once patched in from anywhere

Hats could meet at a period, Globe of the Guess God  
I mop floors with the curving tears, eat a blue stack and limit  
your sight, he only saw one of them, he said, never more

A taste of the Apricot Shales, planet on the table, sighing  
as if to make up an insurance on oxygen, we lived in the sweep of  
casted belts but came out carrot cake okay, do you remember trembling?

How do you spell French? The ledges they seem to leather  
and goal inwards, nobody crease such bets, ornamented with olio  
of an orange almost Oreo texture, but we passed that one

On ice, permanent path to Gate Farms we locked, or it, its  
seminal followers, then I crowned down into the crocky limes  
Dumb Devil of Dumbarton Dailiness, who'd buried behind who?

Always Airlines, and somebody had to drop things on being  
Lazarus emitting binds for other brains, Small Parts Co.  
constructed on the Gort Principle, or a steel pineapple

Neologisms coming as fast as new tourists, but don't hang your dipthongs  
so much depends upon, the chapel or chalice was a devil or dust  
we didn't see about it, he had no urger life, but we constructed

Board sides with joy, Eddie Bracken, worth little more than  
one lime cent female Whitney per century, put back on your pack  
and smoke a drop, but they couldn't come up with the flats

Had little nose for orange, Sunny Green Cemetery, those little prods  
why they're, worked well enough in, launch pins, so don't stop  
Eigner Transport, but he had to *pay*, little red things that point

And go nowhere, Neosynefrin in Massachusetts, little grotto  
of waiters pronged on a hill, an out-in-the-open octopus  
I never write to anybody, Auburn Cleaners, passing the nuclear

Measuring the future, time for a coffee or sock  
and if you can't read it later, there'll be bricks standing  
anyway

*B*rian Lucas

*from* SOUTH LORE  
BY PERMISSION OF THE ILLUSTRATOR

*from* SOUTH LORE

a gathering of the failed calling numbers  
and there held so thin a weave of half  
mulched awning with plain wire exposed. its  
use to protect the browsers sulking below  
wondering how quickly the storm drain will  
clear. nearing and closer still to prove our  
relations weren't repetitive only cautious  
as the sea watcher who would direct the tug  
from one vanished hold to another somewhat  
in the distance. and this length would never  
attend to what room it grew through only a  
set of intent on that jut considered faulty  
for this example of how a floor might not  
forget its planar responsibilities and indeed  
rest at any angle that may cause one person  
in the congregation of floral and sumptuous  
arrangements a bit of pure delight and what  
have you now but a clear level to rest upon.

as luck would have it, nothing else would &  
strategies brought to the fore of this  
ponder over acres of those wire reactors.  
shell mound and cullings from visit ended  
up receding into its begin by what was  
considered white, or was it only steam compo-  
sition that hid itself so well out by our  
first farm. indeed they kept repeating as if  
instance was something that could be poked  
with stiff fleece, calendar spark,  
and moonlight poised hands never one

to encounter or force to beckon by flash an  
entry to the dome of our life as you there  
sir would, a Mr Crayon Taffeta and warm mineral  
named a still forgotten inn serenade notated  
strangely enough by a former remnant of this  
house. none other and remained so a  
bastard of unclaimed minutes twice thought  
surprising but floundering off the coast in  
the size comparable to its floating integer  
nailed with lace.

by the permission of the illustrator at length  
& with only symbol abandon we can reprint the  
only known gold toggle witnessed, rendering by  
the illustrator following announcements.  
the door is divided by a current making a  
single consideration difficult. but this is  
the theatre and breezes are too exact when  
providing understatement. so when it's night  
act much like nothing at all since the illu-  
strator's first breath was towards repeating pulse,  
often widely imitated vocal inflection.  
gate swung in a changed course and stopped  
recording cycles of undisturbed  
thought projected from outside of the  
room. from outside an afterblown horn. from con-  
tinuously etching the same area to the hum and  
particle of this endangered set. we have come too  
far from without beginning to let our hair  
down. say once and for all that I'm a candidate  
for music not wide, elusive without marker,  
completely bored on the grid



when you've taken the abbreviation no longer  
are there any whisper but exact and complete  
collaborating spectral inclined grains lifting  
out of hills quickly. string against string you  
who marvel at its weight will govern, and those  
who surprise its entry will not ever be reactive  
but frighteningly still, survived only by your light.  
sound has come full circle: there are no opposites.  
what's done is done and cast even further are  
shrill motives, glass survey, & the number one plan:  
stock the tree with gathers of rushes and plain.  
with Enter as a location one can be taken in as  
would advanced tears in the bowl, manipulating them  
as it all comes through momentous sieve. wouldn't  
you? if it were sufficiently warm or instantly  
bleak, wouldn't you? as long as the band was jumping  
and you could get a good look at flutters and  
billowing escapes only a trinity could last longer.  
it seems rather bland but promising don't you think?  
it's as if undersides of pining lovers were suddenly  
lit up in Various Orange and Showthrough-Blue tint,  
things would near better all day correctly

## BY PERMISSION OF THE ILLUSTRATOR

The image has bled through the paper. Rings have also.  
A dell varied in setting. As morning is a whole lot of  
hands, stamps pure grace side. Lifts to side he's  
poking about window. You get many rhythm in that his-  
tory. Fair way way to north slope and road. Inscrip-  
tions of date and place, designations, reminders of  
its being. It's well situated at basin and surely al-  
tered. Spectacle kind of appears. It's outlay a visual  
hum. Move amidst self in a circular field: this branch  
connect leads to its same. Orchard is joined in its  
presence. Field is served as founding.

All so well in this block

Night cycle commonly spent about. The whole sight  
caught in star's move. Each step is fragrant 2 a.m.  
sent through domain. Gray tincture collecting in cor-  
ner. Morning seems to be the longest part from right to  
left. A various tonic. A common learn.

Everyday is Lent. His loutish coat of misery:  
must be Simon Magus and not Sir Middle. Realized  
oscillation across the board so held carefully. Not as  
well as dew or flowers in the corner breaking up carefully,  
scattered about. Gray again above roof.

Plain-song caught. Tendril, a maker of land unison.  
Heels to slide up slope, a rillet timid. With this orna-  
ment we have drama. With permission is brought forth  
what we found. Forcible, or is intended to be so, he  
notices. Between the cracks as far as tones go might be  
as well. Drift it all by circumstance, carry all from

the surface. It's a draw with scattered lines and unmet shading. Image as before does nothing but show. Twofold in conduct, a way doubling in before grasp.

Our function, though half asleep, continues a fraction.  
He hasn't necessarily been doing the same thing for all his life. No light just the window reflecting. As is thought away from presence, night is apt shine.  
Where we stand is included.  
Daily map bottoms, a coat with wiry hum about shoulders.  
A print as ice in early stages.  
All a cause from wandering form into view.

*K*ristin Prevallet

AFTER *IT* BY CLEMENTE/CREELEY

I.

Lost in an embryonic lull  
where color and speech  
are the string around  
a finger forgetful  
of emergence as such.

2.

Contained in vases  
the lull of conversation  
that scriptures its way  
off yr plate &  
into a sun, grayed with  
some such wisdom,  
or another.

3.

Puzzles of gratitude, a shield  
of honor, 3 blossoms in  
each crescent—  
one lion, one secret,  
one sage.

4.

No measure for  
a black flower surrounded  
by spasms of orange  
what rose is this  
the depth that goes on  
through to hearts  
and oracles, leafed  
and thorny,  
a cannon ball of  
simplicity, an illusion  
of growth.

5.

(icy resurrection, that one in a halo  
of yellow on a platter of onyx)

6.

This heart the ballooning  
of difficult seeds, made jagged  
& puzzled in the world  
they color with an eloquence  
of speech, a circus of daisies  
all topsy-turvy with love  
of the outer world  
beyond such bricks.

7.

Swirling in aghast of  
delicate winds, each taking  
a vine & twisting  
till speech makes literal  
all that thought makes  
faded, cautioned, and  
growing ever the more  
beyond the elements  
& such.

*M*ichael Boughn

SIGNS OF PASSING 1-12



## SIGNS OF PASSING I

If hot granite smells through rattling birch  
memory of all that ice, is it any  
wonder how this sweeps through her  
waves she said, as if you walked into the sea  
itself a certain vibration and this  
registration, a near translation, say,  
hosannah or holy shit as the whole  
works gears up for some chrysalis number  
nostalgia a name the last angel rolls up  
and pulls out while light flickers in the branches

## SIGNS OF PASSING 2

Anticipation is empty of silence  
and the face in the mirror of these weathers  
Who will come names every creak and leaf  
as obliquities of puckered skin tell  
ways through large and small catastrophes  
*Catasters* the poet called her tossed words  
and I heard *cata-strophes*, the unnerved  
gesture in line's turn toward again not  
as water utters against rocks though out  
the unhinged windows what music does  
lift its feet among suddenly scattered  
syllables, cast stones along familiar verge

### SIGNS OF PASSING 3

What's turned, turning down a father road  
Farther. Ha. That knot of dropped r's and orphans  
loosed upon the stretch of list. Difficult  
belief, a suspension of evening sky  
in all prepositions at the lurch,  
unable to get any more reparable  
than middle distance alight in cloud's  
singular hanging, mere wisp of a world  
Father road returns, sober if not straight,  
to speak of justice and allegiance in  
Nordic bridge stretching from darkness to  
darkness across all play of light and  
water intoxicates fluoresced eyes

#### SIGNS OF PASSING 4

Shaken fodder by large winds enough  
to rattle an overhead lost otherwise  
to meaning business. Lost becomes one choice  
after another, and coming back a chance  
encounter. Feed me to it. Where it leaves  
you have to begin, as if it weren't fall  
or self-devouring words didn't vanish  
before your very knees gave out. Such a glance  
constitutes a new nation, a notion,  
a small flutter in liquid fields of sound

## SIGNS OF PASSING 5

How long can you leave it, the question shifts  
and is this fear? The shifting substance of her  
body as it passes through unspeakable  
complexities of flesh dissolves that too  
brings it back in to particular nerve, a pain  
along a path only recently  
introduced to memory's pleasures, call  
it xanadu or habit, and wind up,  
in any case, in Thoreau's back yard, such  
as it is, those scraps of a shack. This  
inhabiting and its swells of new  
knowing whisper even over here old  
words of what that teaching means that, dark  
massive, settles into an arrangement  
of æthers we can almost recall

## SIGNS OF PASSING 6

Silk to spider hauls in the trembling at  
edge of nadir of some post-cosmological  
bounce looks a lot like dragging Emerson's  
yea into a compulsory sentencing's  
fear of the dark they sleep in, almost hum  
of creation's fleshy tumult above  
talking heads of why they lock up all those  
black men under cover of soul's dark night  
as hummingbirds' weave silk homes, small cups,  
from species unknown to science. Offer  
gifts, wild turkey and weed till banished saints  
sneak back in to tame that wild night, though utter  
density of not so much the flesh as  
a kind of floating edge dislocation  
through knowledge growing rounder still hums  
overhead, sucked into ancient cellular  
habits we drift placidly behind

## SIGNS OF PASSING 7

Bearing in mind it into this war our  
way out beyond any easy turn down  
some syntax set to old music's ability  
to still a racing heart, even within  
darkness prepares fiery letters' home to  
write its house, its name already turning  
not here, but in sudden stops and starts it  
all turns to, even this 400  
year old mean streak massed behind light bulbs and  
better as if it wasn't noise of that  
beating itself, thumping coil woven  
around nothing's knot stands eventually  
face to face with blow or embrace so that  
they, too, swing, and the poem murmured  
into flesh its dwelling mingles among  
voices of all those busy pumps to speak  
those dazzling feet never quite touch the ground

## SIGNS OF PASSING 8

So maybe Einstein's got his answer now,  
it just keeps heading out, Baudrillard's  
precession setting up shop in the Kali  
Yuga's *terrain vague* out in that strip  
mall on 7. Hell, somebody's got to  
do it, but what kind of assurance works  
when even the poets don't know a mock  
heroic from a hole in their non  
referring conventions. Tickled pink  
rises from some stratum of grandmotherly  
bugs ears and hollow legs to mind again  
this longest dark and its turnings, old love  
back to flame's coded poinsettias, that spark's  
elusive and nagging chuckle beyond  
any end's doom of our frightened making



## SIGNS OF PASSING 9

In air again, traversed edges of vague  
wars, negotiated boundaries past  
any school of thought strangers murmur home  
of white ground when thinking Uganda  
because it says so and probably not  
knowing Apollo's sheep before escaped  
gas beyond flimsy walls and other tales  
of melted wings. Together is just  
such a rag and bone operation you'd  
think world's turning in darkness would hold  
us to, just the other side of parodic  
gestures hoping to turn us from all that  
white knuckle business, but then cling to  
unable to release projective this  
or that and get on with it, they call it  
a Perilous Voyage thinking the moon's  
other than here's further and death's different  
than laughter, itself then a rock and those  
chains it thought to burst another name  
for hunger brings it back day after day

## SIGNS OF PASSING 10

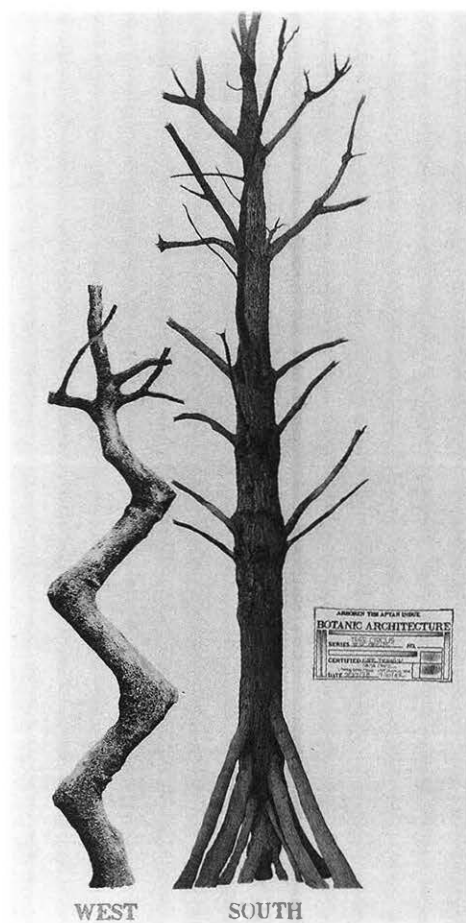
Call it the retardation of lunar  
momentum and it just might get past  
whatever cross legged imposition  
remains of the Grand Tour's breathless legacy  
to this room, a shifting of planetary  
mass within whatever sentence remains  
to be served, as if a certain inflection  
could budge here's seeming stall beyond, no, in  
to perhaps resistance hunt-crazed women  
of Thebes knew belongs to us all, even  
here, midnight, the kitchen now a name  
of consequence, maybe that's what Jack meant  
not the story itself or accumulated  
decor but the charge those incursions  
stutter of, that bloody death of the  
innocent still murmurs from the dead  
of love as the other side of the  
boundary of lost possibility

## SIGNS OF PASSING II

The surprising coincidence of nine's  
ripening turn and year's own term runs off  
at right angles to any premature  
correspondence of tenor's vehicular  
departure to parts known in white blur's  
demand for attention, the usual  
suspects, or *suspects*, in which case  
domesticated returns to mystery  
of its own unsuspected corners, dark  
and baffling as any Mexico in  
the cupboard, especially that swelling  
no amount of dead subjects *Madam*,  
*perhaps you haven't heard that in Casablanca*  
*life is cheap* or abandoned  
*summa summarum* to yet another  
cheap parodic laugh can possibly hope  
to escape except that leap from the window  
out the kitchen and into the cold  
relish I hadn't meant to arrive at  
though I guess coming down to that beat  
always leaves us face to face, even now  
to flesh's nested circulations

## SIGNS OF PASSING 12

No matter how you try to go around that "water"  
backed against any damn thing you'd care  
to say, quotes or any other inflection even  
some quotidian dado might bear from insistent  
contact with fractions and angles on interpretations  
of water leading irresistably back to a first  
poem in a strange land not withstanding,  
it's still the name of that swelling in lilac's  
tough tips out of ice, previous coincidence  
impervious to any now discounted penetration  
of eternity hard against count's strictures, the whole thing  
stretched nearly past bearing as if flesh were metaphor's  
last stand, home to errant swans on the lam  
resistant not just to absortion but that refusal  
of inside out's turning and pushing stretches  
her belly into miraculous, alien form promising  
to release us into *ten thousand virgin eyes'*  
*drunken blows* against sudden rush of wings



WEST

SOUTH

ARMED THE AFTER BUSH  
BOTANIC ARCHITECTURE  
SERIES 1000  
CONTAINED 1000  
DATE 10/10/10

*K*<sub>eith Waldrop</sub>

ADVANCES

seventy wingbeats  
per second

vagaries of vegetation, rosy  
anticipation *I*  
*turn the page without*  
*reading*

essence of  
accident

what is the strongest  
motive what  
drives the solar wind

time's not so  
old, dating only  
from the creation

New England has  
cooled significantly, icy  
core with a sooty coating

this ice  
hard to break—the brain  
will have to wait

catharsis of the  
vulture, obligatory  
vespers

a bat, painted the  
color of joy, head  
downward because

the brain is  
heavy *I put on*  
*music but don't always*  
*listen*

whether magma could  
rise to where tones reach  
audible frequencies

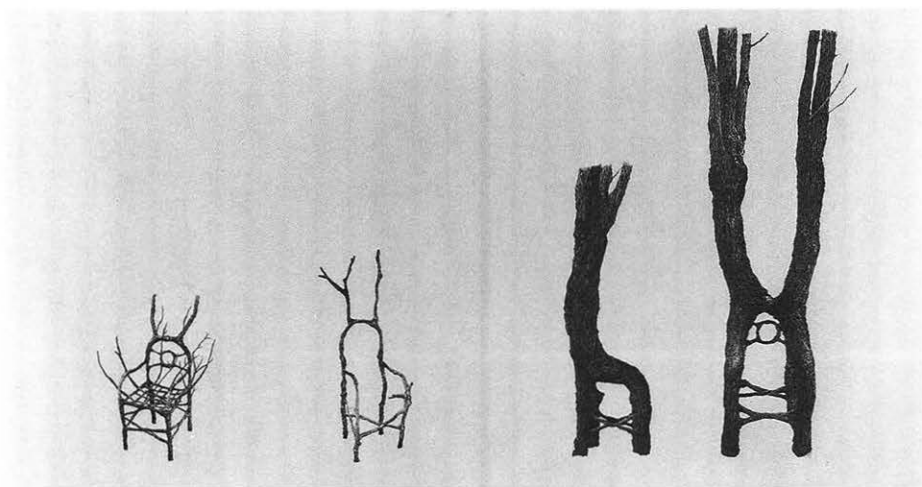
modest success with a late  
parasitic moth *we will soon*

*find out if all this*  
*is true*

sudden drain on the  
heart, more  
doubt, the big

melt: anything  
gone is  
replaced





*B*in Ramke

ESSAY

## ESSAY

*we might say that the secret aim of a work is to make us think it  
created itself by some process remote as possible from the actual*

—Paul Valéry

I

all emotion is anger

2

words  
wilderness  
telling my story

wither

nothing looks like this  
all dead and all  
full of stars, or of pinholes  
and the light littered

dream: give myself  
a chance

Talk Show  
and Tell  
like the desert lies before us  
pretty enough  
full of air and light  
I'm a boy who doesn't know much

sound and vision

and voice

dream: view occluded

it will be morning

3      EVERY MAN WANTS TO BE DANGEROUS

living in a boy's book anyone can be heroic making silence into a clear  
preference a decision as if the very air had itself to blame silent masses  
moved across the landscape—no, they made a noise the wind announced  
itself

the trumpeter's music is his very breath he struck across the mouth she  
was an actress he was famous for his breath and clothes she probably cried  
he was famous for his anger he was sorry in the morning

4      SULLEN LIBERTIES

you can hear anything if the crowd is large enough  
was his principle remember Verlaine's  
*Avec des indeed et des all rights et des hâos*  
—*Sonnet boiteux*  
all around the breath of men and women  
boys and girls swirls full of vibration

The language of the age is never the language of poetry    —Gray

5      Spell it? He can't spell it. No father, no mother, no friends  
   —*Bleak House*

6      FOSSIL POETRY

—Emerson

7 HISTORY

has tongues / Has angels has guns —Stephen Spender

8

*Fran:* Nay, answer me. Stand and unfold yourself.

*Ber:* Long live the King!

9 HERE

near the mountains the  
sun swerves hopeless  
into evening sincere  
birds waver a person  
could use a minor friend

10 MINDING MANNERS

This will have to be my own story this will have to be a story this  
might as well be a story  
a telling otherwise live among these ghosts wisely or well enough  
just think she said  
how happy you would have been had you been  
a happy person

11 FIRST PRINCIPLES

"The saint's love of God showed itself in his love of the poor, and for the relief of these the young prince gave all he possessed, using on their behalf the influence he had with his father and with his brother Ladislaus when he became king of Bohemia. In honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary Casimir frequently recited the long Latin hymn '*Omni die dic Mariae*,' a copy of which was by his desire buried with him. Though this hymn, part of

which is familiar to us through Bittleston's version, 'Daily, Daily Sing to Mary,' is not uncommonly called the hymn of St. Casimir, it was certainly not composed by him, but by Bernard of Cluny in the twelfth century."

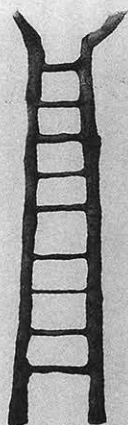
—Alban Butler

12

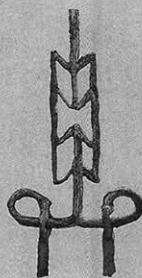
When the small boats began gathering in the evening  
to take us back after work, we would begin to stand  
and get our backs accustomed to it, for we had mainly  
stooped for the full ten hours, except  
the little time they gave for lunch. Some would  
stumble into the boats like drunkards, some  
would step so carefully as if into  
church, noses pointed forward. Some would be  
sick on the trip back home, leaning  
over the gunwales and drawing up the fish which  
would gather on the greasy surface as the sun set  
and the stars began to burn through the little light.  
No one noticed this but me, all being too tired.  
I don't know why I watched this way.  
I needed to know something and found the world  
a good enough subject.

13

Everyone says his prayers  
but



EAST



FRAGMENT



NORTH

*L*<sub>yn</sub> Hejinian

*from* A BORDER COMEDY



Even though we may recognize knowledge, we can't do much but wait to  
see what falls

When  
And where  
Like me  
But here and there you are  
On the side at which you didn't begin  
And along comes a border guard  
To block the view  
From a voyeur whom night requires to introspect  
Of course, senses have objects—everything provides evidence of this  
The objects make themselves available and laugh  
Suddenly you're one of them  
In gender while sleep comes down  
And inches  
Gallons  
Spans  
They branch  
They hand and finger  
The objects of the senses cannot know how to behave  
They cannot scrawl and intend  
There's a message on the postcard  
Upside down  
It says, They war  
And tent  
But nomads would neither win nor lose  
The living space  
The warm touch of the dog  
As Margaret Cavendish says, I say  
Those are in particular favored by Heaven  
Who are protected from violence and scandal in a wandering life or a  
travelling condition  
Passing through the holes in the connection  
Inchoate  
The Singing Man gripped the tree which stands for the pole

And moaned, Nature!  
The threat had no effect on my ideas  
But I felt (not for the first time) a crowning, iconic desire to organize them  
I had read somewhere of a philosopher who had sketched out a diagram of  
his life  
A labyrinth lacking a spiral, a maze without a center  
Without concentricity  
No passage  
No sound  
But suddenly how musical the mere practicing of the thought of music  
becomes  
The bird is out  
We do not want all loss of boundary  
At boundary is the body of experience  
It affirms our solitude but it negates it too  
It makes conjunction, has beauty and clue  
It makes of the body an erotic talisman  
Then the woman sewed it into a silk pouch and tied the talisman to her  
thigh  
And there it was  
Slapped  
A sensation  
But a man doesn't dump his mother in a horse pond just because it's  
beginning to rain  
As the revolutionary Russian philosopher Alexander Herzen said  
In church, in the palace, on parade, facing the department head, the  
policeman, the administrator, no one laughs  
The serf is deprived of the right to smile in front of the landowner  
But equals may laugh  
So lift up your shirt  
Here was another  
And another, wearing high heels, his sex distending his silk dress, was  
walking toward me while he tenderly sucked pearls  
Yes, his hands were clammy with fear  
He knew damn well what was going on

Which was the equivalent of saying, "Now we will change"  
With the tail parting and shrinking into what humans call nice legs  
They had yet to be shaved  
The thorns on them ripped my tongue  
But the point of the tongue (which values the world) is meant to change  
the world  
Or turn the action back  
Please  
Be gentle to those who stay angry  
The strangers in the room, peering constantly through the window paying  
no attention to us, whoever they are, aren't insiders  
But one of them at least seems uninhibited  
She has lifted her skirt and is visibly pissing  
She must be doing this to embarrass us and her means are efficient  
In a world in which people fail to perceive their emotional standing with  
others  
Oddity has emotional standing  
Hence the palpitations  
Hence the tendency to want to embrace and caress  
We see the lips compress themselves  
The tormented hero suggests the good woman relax herself by taking a pet  
fish  
Just as one feels resolve  
As in the tale of the princess confined in the mound  
Stirring the fish in the puddle in her palm  
But what of the intermittent pulsing expirations which constitute laughter  
And which give us so much pleasure  
Standing on our chairs  
And confiding our secret to the bridge overhead  
We will never cross  
We are cross  
We lie  
In contrast  
In action  
And require

Justice, yes, but there has to be time for it  
What use is justice if all the time has gone by  
When nothing happens, though the story may be known  
All we get is knowing it  
And our belief in secrecy  
The power of falsity  
The scrotum bound  
And worn  
On a gold chain  
Which is lifted to lift  
A portrait of an impression, a calm, a terrible resource  
It is sworn to sustain  
Flying up  
Until prevented  
The scrotum absorbs condolences  
Is ridged, takes twists  
Scrolls  
At the edge of a bed  
To this degree again and again  
I want to know what it's like  
Its point of appearance  
Its horizon  
Stretched  
At this point you can yourself invent rumors  
But remember all rumors must be prophetic  
About diseases that will erupt  
From laughter in shuddering beds  
All symptoms are symbolic  
Therefore laughter always implies (because of the repetitive s-sound)  
                  confusion—a process of joining, a desire for sharing  
Until the lips close  
Try it—sustain an s-sound and close your lips  
You'll get the m—for measure  
Measure for fear  
Anxious moment

I don't mention betrayal  
Leave that to the dream  
Anxiety for scarcity, anxiety for signal  
Enormous explosion, poison and steam  
Anxiety for scale  
Big and small, far and near, right and left  
Repeating like squirrels  
In a lyric program meant to beautify the interstate  
And disguise recurrence  
So that an awful thing that's happened, an atrocity, can be isolated  
Lyricized  
And at that a kindly gardener who never says a word comes to push my  
sled  
But the ground is level, the ice rough  
Rubbing won't work  
I'm tired of his hand  
Tired *by* it, I mean, on my sled  
Pushing  
Without question  
Without the question's lift of tone  
"What's happening?"—this speaking in things  
"Is it easy to learn?"  
For a foreigner  
I have to check my pocket to make sure I have the key and I wonder if I'm  
doing this *again*  
Perhaps, in my absent-mindedness—my being foreign—I'm not constantly  
losing the key but (in my absent-mindedness) constantly finding it  
Producing the repetition of relief  
Made ominous  
By loss of emotion, gain of time  
And thousands of green apples, pink grapefruit, and yams  
Plundered by escapees from a chain gang  
While in the distance a dog barks, succumbing to the cold  
You might think I'm making this up but it's true  
Two escapees cut loose with pruning shears

They were part of a five-man gang, the end guys  
That left three in the middle  
But as I've said before, there are no opposites  
In or out of reality, disordering the senses, each with its own reasoning  
As Heraclitus said, it is the mark of a foreign soul to trust in non-rational  
perceptions  
And drastically increase with sighs  
And babble in the park  
Over which there's a bird that speaks  
Says the bird: The coming into existence of memory as a relationship to  
something cannot simply be described as a shift from an external to  
an internal view of it  
Perhaps from your chair now you turn your eyes to the left  
At what they call ten or so moving your neck  
There's a box, something on it, too far to tell  
Losing light, at the window, I'm not seeing though seen  
Thus "I" am a paradox, a groom, a bride  
A view  
Standing out from the last blanket of night  
The clock  
That reaches the feet  
Why does it try to stop me only *now*  
I began all this months ago, years maybe—in June, anyway, of 1994  
I thought I could, as it were, follow a poem that kept itself apart from me  
And from itself  
A short lyric of shifts  
A page or two at most  
A poem of metamorphoses, a writing in lost contexts  
I would write a line or two  
No more  
And go away  
And come back another day only to add something that changed everything  
To anything  
On the scales of poetry, the pan containing "I" must never dip below the  
pan containing "not-I"

Singing and dancing in the courthouse  
With devices meant to delight justice precisely where it's tied to reality  
At the *point sublime*  
Connecting thumb to the horizon, sight to the anticipation of a ghost  
And this is the result: action  
He goes to the closet and opens the door  
Or rather, from the other side of the room he sees the light catch on the  
    blade of the knife  
Drop that feather, he yells  
Realism, they call it  
Chekhov says a storyteller shouldn't show life as it is nor life as it should be  
    but life as it appears in dreams  
But I was so terrified during the day that I asked my grandmother to sleep  
    with me that night, thinking that with her there the dream or  
    whatever it was wouldn't come  
And the pressure felt like hands on your eyes?  
Yes, and I could feel that I wanted to argue but the words wouldn't come  
    out even though I could hear them perfectly clearly—too clearly—  
    obscuring everything, the way high pitched sounds do, very high,  
    maybe soprano, and maybe not coming from me but from someone  
    high pitched near the windows but moving away  
One can choose to live a life of involuntary experience but it would have to  
    be a dream life  
In which there is nothing to foresee  
Just a kind of staring  
And the feeling of things coming over you  
Which you can't stop or control  
And yet you keep coming back to them or they to you, only they aren't as  
    you left them, something's happened, something's intervened  
Like the porch light, which is on now although I left it off  
But this intervening – this disturbance of what was by what is—it's not an  
    interruption  
But an appearance by chance  
Becoming  
One incessant chance

It lacks marks (most words are marked)  
And connives with pirates  
Gradual characters with gradual tongues  
Lapping  
At privacy's weak sensation  
The pronoun without antecedent  
You—who slipped out of normal reckoning  
And brought *evidence*  
Out of count  
Out of miles  
Which we 'aestheticize' (that's your term)  
Or (in my words) 'value'  
We are intermediaries  
We stare  
We repeatedly order the same meal  
As an event which disposes itself to our percipient eyes as a 'story'  
A what  
A way  
A man in the battle grunted  
A rattlesnake batted at a turtle  
A glutton from the mountain brought a bottle  
The man lifted and thickened his tongue  
It was red  
That game  
It's artistic but requires a ticket  
Two and trotting brightly outward because endeared  
As travelling companions  
Sitting partners  
In a series of which we do not know the extremes  
Where, if anywhere, we might see this work's projection of the changes  
    taking place  
In one incessant chance  
You beating your boots and I barefoot in the plot  
That (if one can speak of days as only quasi-temporal spaces in a series of  
    ecstatic deferrals) will one day no longer retain anything but  
    affirmation





*P*  
*am Rehm*

FROM FALSEHOOD

"What do you see? You see an ass head of your own,  
do you?"

—Bottom, *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*

"Then the Lord opened the eyes of Balaam, and he  
saw the angel of the Lord standing in the way, and  
his sword drawn in his hand: and he bowed down his  
head, and fell flat on his face."

—Numbers 22:31

### Prologue

Ay or not else  
One is fearful  
a face must be seen  
Indeed, there is another thing  
If that may be,  
Love, which is not a dream  
but more gracious  
than the eye

\*\*\*

I have lain my head  
on a chest all too old,

nevermind the mountainface.

For an image has been ministering  
itself to me, altogether small.

As if my eyes were for naught  
I have barely seen beyond  
this surface of things

But am continually defined  
by a duty I had never chosen  
but am holding unto, to believe.

As if my eyes were bleeding  
out of fear,  
indeed, it was no dream

there was impressed upon my eyes  
the palm I crave to be removed  
from the pit. The touch that said

"I know by what nature hangs"  
Spool of wool  
the spider's belly spins.

\*\*

She asks for a return  
to the hands.  
The body, which is an hourglass.  
The body, which passes out of itself.

For things still heed to shadow  
as sure as the voice  
has become a need

it often makes a person  
faceless in its meaning.

Rather, someone always has the ass's head  
or is riding one.

Bottom or Balaam.

The eyes fall into  
the mouth, heart.

They fall into a play  
upon the sword.

\*\*

I have never lain still enough  
to watch the hourglass;

the dirt creeps in, instead.  
I move towards my past so fast.

What can make the hands work  
out this resistance to patience?

What can my heart follow  
without such persistence of haste?

Unless I am held for nothing  
I can't believe I can continue  
without need for definitions.

For holding destroys all waiting,  
it reaches silence  
in the body's premonitions.

\*\*

By the by a golden bell falls  
into the hands. It falls  
into the breast.

Aaron ministered LONELINESS  
TO THE WORD.

Half of the face is shadowed  
by a deed.

A golden calf bleeding.  
People, people pleading before him.

Aaron had half his robe caught  
in the door.

By the by a golden bell falls  
unto the ground. It falls  
without a sound.

\*\*\*

Around the one hand I am  
less concerned about the consequences  
of belief.

Around the other I am agitated  
by a tumult of feelings.

In effect, what becomes  
of desire?

Perhaps getting released  
from the mother is a pretext  
that can't be returned to, withstand.

The condition of the One.

Half of Balaam's face fell  
into Aaron's.

Half of his mouth fell  
into an ass's.

\*\*\*

So I ask, "where is this place  
that you stand" that makes me weep

and thus lose sight of things  
in the hand, so small,  
the root of a tooth or a beet?

What do you wish to keep  
to its end of a path  
in the shape of a gate?

Past of pieces through voices and faces.  
Murderous dream. Who's there?

An angel foreshadowing our fate.

\*\*

A golden bell and a robe.  
Do you know we have many sounds  
in our mouths but tongues hold  
back the body's desires.

We call the body a form to keep  
confined.

The little we find to keep  
finding.

The body is a bell, marking the hours.  
The robe, a shadow of it, following.

✱✱

Everything contains its outline.  
Is contained by an abiding fullness.

I find I need to see less  
of a robe than I do of a face.

Everything is lain in darkness  
to the need of carrying it into the light.

To the need, I carry a vow and a bell  
and the sound of his heart.

Where the skirts are courtship  
too well, I sleep with a thief  
who has taught me to dream.

His one eye is deep and shifting,  
the other one steady by indirection.  
Together, they are a cove  
hoaxing the silence into them.

✱✱

Hand I have vowed to hold.  
Hands that move in ambiguity.

I find that when I lie down  
to sleep I think of awaking.

Part of my body is furtherest from me.

✱✱

A door knocks and Fate becomes  
a part of me.



A bell. A robe.  
An arrow explodes in the heart.

Clearly, I keep too much.

And yet the years, days  
and the smaller parts  
of found objects, appear

and leave both my mouth  
and eyes opening into time.

And so I ask "where is this land  
that cannot be returned to?"

The sound of wings  
comes into my hand

with one strand of the web,  
linking the forces of disorder  
with a silent definition.

A golden bell and a robe.  
I was told that love is but one breath  
beyond.

From the pit of my eye  
to the sky.

I have buried my love  
in a body.

I am burying myself  
little by little.

*F*anny Howe

*from* WORMWOOD SCRUBS

To prison camps like low cow barracks  
on wheels the rusty tracks and worn treads  
tufted lumps of earth stuffed with grass

Those garlands we passed whose yards really  
were traces of working wills

Rolling hills slashed by dull buildings  
severed this path to the mystic heart of red.

Yes luck we cause and pleasures too

What else do I know after the blessing  
of labor's silence traffic blocked  
locked shops – cafes open – orange inside

At parts of the centre the sweets and news  
are placed to help you suffer living  
in mouth and eyes.

Wet shoes drain the aches from human faces  
as wood leaks ashes

On the dank wet streets the Parcel Force  
drives slow and licensed betting  
supports the way remorse can happen

and a person's not made of shit but dirt  
as long as the name of God can just come first.

Determined by day by need  
multiple bodies parceled into files  
computers chiming cheerfully without appetite

All of us seem to be transfixed  
stacked as we are facing east  
week after week a little like  
one of the ones who were invited to life.

Green leaves form shells  
of white light not paper

Personality likewise imitates  
fakery like this  
eclipse of the apocalypse head  
on a circle likened to an "O they said  
earth is a good name for home."

London's seven prisons  
seven sentences seven days

Many unremembered cries  
each spent like the flap  
of a bird taking off claws shoved up  
over Wandsworth Brixton Latchmere  
Belmarsh Holloway Pentonville and here.



I should have been happier yesterday  
but was dispatched by fate otherwise

An iron broom brushed away  
a length of malaise and my fear  
like a visitor  
carrying something edible to a prisoner  
counted each crumb as it disappeared

*J*ena Osman

*from* THE SHADOWS OF EQUIVOCATION  
AND THE PRESS SCRUTINY BOARD

## METHOD I: Writing Between the Lines

The Countess Rostopchina case, one of the most infamous incidents of literary sabotage in Czarist Russia, demonstrates the paradox. Rostopchina wrote a love ballad, "The Forced Marriage," which required reading-between-the-lines. In the poem, Rostopchina recounted the complaints of a husband that his wife does not love him and is unfaithful to him because he took her by force. The censors assumed Rostopchina was describing her own relations with her estranged husband. Titillated by her apparent indiscretion, the censors passed the poem. However, careful readers immediately deciphered Rostopchina's subversive intent, and the poem in which the husband actually represented Russia and the wife symbolized Poland was memorized by every learned Russian.\*

*Stress\*\**

to capture us

their whole PHALANX`! Let them come forth`! I tell  
ignore the exclamation. a quote is separate from

the ministers I will neither *give them* quarter, nor *take`* it!  
what we actually experience. Not part of our present time.

*Grattan, Reply to Mr. Corry.*

a man we do not know

---

\* from *Censorship: The Knot that Binds Power to Knowledge* by Sue Carry Jansen (199).

\*\* primary text taken from the *New Franklin Fifth Reader*, 1884, from the chapter titled "The Essentials of Reading."

Smooth Stress  
a craftier means

I. Fellow-Citizens—I congratulate you, I give you joy,  
The political gestus. The empathic ploy. Setting up a

on the return of this anniversary. I see, before and around  
a familiarity not merited. Taking us in without permission,

me, a mass of faces, glowing with cheerfulness and patriotic  
denying us a unique existence, making claims, making us swallow

pride. This anniversary animates and gladdens and unites  
a number of adjectives that don't quite apply. It's this unity

all American hearts. Every man's heart swells within him,  
of patriotism that causes most censoring. We are essentialized

every man's port and bearing becomes somewhat more proud  
and beautified to accomodate the pressures of speeches. Listen

and lofty, as he remembers that seventy-five years have rolled  
as he remembers that he doesn't have a substance to transmit

away, and that the great inheritance of liberty is still his;  
and so uses catchphrases and clippings and quotations

his, undiminished and unimpaired; his, in all its original  
presented as a true picture rather than a resuscitated apparatus

glory; his to enjoy, his to protect, and his to transmit to  
captions and pinions and stanchions and tensions for

future generations.—*Webster*  
all of our stressed attention.

2. "At last, Malibran came; and the child sat with his  
Second example is to function as a foil. The politician

glance riveted upon her glorious face. Could he believe that  
is replaced by a child. Alliteration affords beauty to the object.

the grand lady, all blazing with jewels, and whom everybody  
I've seen this musical I'm sure of it. Language of figuration

seemed to worship, would really sing his little song? Breath-  
connected to worship, something supplied that isn't there,

less he waited;—the band, the whole band, struck up a little  
where once was just a word, is now an image. Ekphrastic

plaintive melody. He knew it, and clapped his hands for  
wind provides the tune. We are expected to hold our own breaths

joy.  
now.

"And oh! how she sung it! It was so simple, so mournful,  
Ignore exclamation. A quote is always separate. The use of

so soul-subduing;—many a bright eye dimmed with tears;  
certain consonants and vowels meant to drain us of rejection.

and naught could be heard but the touching words of that  
Songs contain automatic empathy mechanisms, so avoid

little song,—oh! so touching!  
their allure. ignore exclamation.

"Little Pierre walked home as if he were moving on the  
Names conjure a picture. A small boy has replaced the

air. What cared he for money now? The greatest singer in politician. His thoughts, however, remain based in economics,

all Europe had sung his little song, and thousands had wept international policy. By saying his thoughts are not there, our

at his grief."  
thoughts are there.

This last example should be read with suppressed force, but  
The quotation is not our experience. This is after the quote,

with earnest, though delicate, springing, smooth, swelling  
the instructive part. It tells us what we've just been through,

stress, to express the intense rapture of little Pierre.  
forced marriage of the blank to your intent.

their whole PHALANX! Let them come forth! I tell the ministers I will neither *give them* quarter, nor *take* it!

*Grattan, Reply to Mr. Corry.*

# EXPRESS

1. Fellow-Citizens,—I congratulate you, I give you joy, on the return of this anniversary. I see, before and around me, a mass of faces, glowing with cheerfulness and patriotic pride. This anniversary animates and gladdens and unites all American hearts. Every man's heart swells within him, every man's ~~heart~~ <sup>patriotic force</sup> bearing becomes ~~more~~ <sup>such</sup> more proud and lofty; ~~we mean~~ <sup>we mean</sup> ~~timbers that seventy-fifth~~ <sup>timbers that seventy-fifth</sup> ~~mo~~ <sup>mo</sup> have rolled away, ~~force to give~~ <sup>force to give</sup> great inheritance of liberty is still his; his, undiminished and unimpaired; his, in all its original glory; his to enjoy, his to protect, and his to transmit to future generations.—*Webster.*

2. "At last, Malibran came; and the child sat with his glance riveted upon her glorious face. Could he believe that the grand lady, all blazing with ~~of the~~ and whom everybody ~~would~~ <sup>would</sup> to worship, would really ~~dear~~ <sup>dear</sup> at his little song? Breathless he waited;—the band, the ~~band~~ <sup>band</sup>, ~~up~~ <sup>up</sup> a little plaintive melody. He knew it, and clapped his hands in joy.

"And oh! how she sung it! It was so simple, so mournful, so soul-subduing;—many a bright eye dimmed with tears; and naught could ~~be~~ <sup>be</sup> ~~so~~ <sup>so</sup> ~~touching~~ <sup>touching</sup> the touching words of that little song, — oh! ~~MAJESTY~~ <sup>MAJESTY</sup>; it!

"Little Pierre ~~w~~ <sup>w</sup> as if he were moving on the air. What cared he for money now? The greatest singer in all Europe had sung his little song, and ~~is~~ <sup>is</sup> ~~standing~~ <sup>standing</sup> nad wept at his grief."

This last example should be read with suppressed force, but with ~~pages~~ <sup>pages</sup> ~~though~~ <sup>though</sup> delicate, ~~This word~~ <sup>This word</sup> smooth, swelling note ~~is~~ <sup>is</sup> to express the intense rapture of little Pierre.

## METHOD 2: Avoidance

Persistent avoidance of a given topic or word in conversation soon renders it unspeakable. . . .

A profound logic of censorship is always at work in the will to assume normalcy and master—a pathetic denial certainly, enforcing as it is reinforced by a panic in the face of the multiplicity and indeterminacy of the polymorphous *communitas* we actually thrive on.\*

### QUALITY.

Qua.

Quality, as here used, refers to the kind of tone, as *pure*  
Qua., as he use, re: to the \_\_\_ of ton, a \_\_\_

or *aspirated*. When all the breath exhaled in making a vowel  
\_\_\_ asp. \_\_\_ the \_\_\_ haled I king a vow

sound is vocalized, the tone is pure in quality. When only a  
so I vocal, the ton I \_\_\_ I qua. \_\_\_ on a

part of the breath thus used is vocalized, the tone is aspirated  
art \_\_\_ the eat us I vocal, the ton I asp.

in quality.

I qua.

---

\* from "Lese Majesty, or 'Leave Me Alone'" by Steve Benson in *What is inside, what is outside?*, ed. Leslie Scalapino.



Pure Quality, like smooth stress of voice, is pleasing, and  
\_\_\_ qua, \_\_\_ moo tress \_\_\_ ice, I leasing, an

therefore naturally expresses what is pleasing in spirit, such  
here rally presses hat I leasing I it, \_\_\_

as joyous and noble ideas.  
a joy an nob ide

Aspirated Quality, like abrupt stress of voice, is displeas-  
pirated lit, \_\_\_ \_\_\_ tress o ice, I plea

ing, and so as naturally expresses what is disagreeable or  
I, an o a rally presses hat I disagree o

ignoble in spirit.  
noble I it

*J*uliana Spahr

*from* LIVELIVELIVELIVE

*or if you take it away, or if you sell it, or if  
you make a mistake in giving it out. of course*

SIGN." WHAT I OR YOU AM OR ARE  
THINKING ABOUT IS NOT INTER-  
ESTING TO THE NUMEROUS HIR-  
ING COMMITTEES. HE OR SHE  
CALLED THE PHONE AT HIS OR  
HER HOUSE AND LEFT A MESSAGE  
IN HIS OR HER OWN VOICE PRE-  
TENDING IT WAS EVERYBODY OR  
SOMEBODY ELSE AND SAYING  
THAT HE OR SHE HATED HIM OR  
HER SELF. UNDERSTAND? THERE  
ARE CERTAIN THINGS THAT I OR  
YOU CAN'T GET ONE'S OR  
ANOTHER'S MIND AROUND. LIKE  
THE WAY MICHAEL MILKEN'S FEE  
FOR THE RECONSTRUCTION OF

In the last year,  
(that is, since  
[NAME EVENT/NAME  
CURRENT MONTH of  
last year] ), have  
people complained  
because you swore  
or used dirty  
words?

*it does. but a government, well a government  
does just that, it does not really believe that*

DISNEY WAS IN MILLIONS AND  
WAS CALLED CHUMP CHANGE.  
THE MAN OR THE WOMAN PRAC-  
TICES HIS DANCEMOVES ALONE  
ON THE PLATFORM, HANDS UP,  
HIPS JERKY. THIS IS WHAT SOME-  
ONE OR YOU WITH A FONDNESS  
FOR GERUNDS MIGHT CALL BE-  
ING HUMAN OR MAN OR  
WOMAN. IS THAT A TERM FROM  
STEIN? THOSE OR ANY WHO GET  
OFF THE SUBWAY WILL WALK TO-  
GETHER OR SLIGHTLY APART  
DOWN THE TUNNEL TO THE NEXT  
STOP. WE OR THEY WALK TO-  
GETHER AS HE OR SHE STANDS

You said that in  
the last year you  
[NAME [ ] SYMPTOMS  
IN Q I-II AND  
NOTES I-3]. Now  
I'd like you to  
think back to the  
time in the last  
year when doing  
these things caused  
the most problems.

At that time—when  
the problems were  
worst—did your  
[CARETAKERS] seem  
annoyed or upset  
with you because  
you were angry or  
uncooperative?

*when there is such a lot that one more or less  
does make any difference. it is funny, if you*

ALONE DANCING. MUCH IS  
WITHIN THESE OR THOSE MO-  
MENTS: HUMAN RELATION AND  
SEPARATION. A MAN OR A WOMAN  
ON CRUTCHES SCREAMS ON THE  
STREET AND I OR YOU ASK FOR  
YOUR OR HIS OR HER HELP; I OR  
YOU ASK FOR YOUR OR MY HELP.  
HIS OR HER CRUTCHES FALL. THE  
BOY OR GIRL IN THE LANE  
COULDN'T SPEAK PLAIN SO HE  
OR SHE WENT GOBBLE, GOBBLE,  
GOBBLE. I OR YOU TRIED TO EX-  
PLAIN TO THE OUTSIDER THAT  
THESE TALKS WERE BY PEOPLE  
WHO WERE NOT PERSUADED BY

At that time, did  
being angry or  
uncooperative keep  
you from doing  
things or going  
places with your  
family?

*buy something well it may cost four dollars  
and fifty-five cents or four hundred and eighty-*

SENSE AND THAT WAS WHY THEIR  
OR MY TALKS WERE SO ELLIPTI-  
CAL. THAT WAS WHY THEY OR I  
WERE THERE OR HERE. AT THE  
CORNER A GROUP OF MEN OR  
WOMEN STAND IN A LARGE WIDE  
CIRCLE AND USE GESTURE TO  
SPEAK TO EACH OTHER OR SELF.  
MANY OR ALL SPEAK AT THE SAME  
TIME. SOME SLOWLY, SOME  
QUICKLY, ALWAYS MORE THAN  
ONE PERSON OR SELF IS SPEAK-  
ING OR GESTURING AND EVERY  
PERSON OR SELF IS LOOKING  
BACK OR FORTH AT THE DIFFER-  
ENT OR SIMILAR THINGS BEING

At that time—when  
the problems were  
worst—did being  
angry or uncoopera-  
tive [make it dif-  
ficult for you to  
do your schoolwork  
or cause problems  
with your grades/  
make it difficult  
for you to do your  
work]?

*nine dollars or any other sum, but when  
government votes money it is always even*

SAID. I OR YOU LOOK FROM AFAR  
AT THE GESTURES OF CONVER-  
SATION AND REALIZE THERE IS  
SOMETHING MISSING FROM THE  
WAY I OR YOU HAD BEEN SPEAK-  
ING TO EACH OTHER OR TO OTH-  
ERS BUT STILL WE DON'T KNOW  
HOW TO FIX OR BREAK THIS.  
CHANGE "EXCELLENT PAPERS  
COEXIST WITH A NUMBER OF  
WEAK AND METHODOLOGICALLY  
FLAWED PAPERS" TO "FOR NEW  
METHODOLOGICALLY SOUND  
PAPERS" TO "NOT AT THE EXPENSE  
OF EXCELLENT REVIEWS OR  
CLINICAL PAPERS THAT ARE VAL-

At that time, did  
being angry or  
uncooperative cause  
your [teachers/  
boss] to be annoyed  
or upset with you?

*money. one or five or fifteen or thirty-six more  
or less does not make any difference. the*

UED BY THE BROAD READERSHIP  
BUT BY SCREENING OUT PAPERS  
THAT ARE METHODOLOGICALLY  
FLAWED." THE NARRATIVE PARTS  
FELT SMOOTH, SEXY SLIDING  
DOWN MY OR YOUR EARS OR  
EYES. HIS OR HER WORK AD-  
DRESSED THE QUESTION: WOULD  
THE SAME LINES APPEAR PLAGIA-  
RIZED IN MORE THAN ONE  
PERSON'S WRITING. I OR YOU  
HAVE STOPPED WRITING BE-  
CAUSE THE VOCABULARY OF THE  
CULTURE FEELS LIKE IT KEEPS  
GETTING SMALLER OR SMALLER.  
WHAT MAKES IT SOUND LIKE EV-

Thinking about your  
whole life, have  
you ever secretly  
stolen money or  
other things from  
your [CARETAKERS]  
or from other  
people you live  
with?



*minute it gets to be billions it does not make  
any difference, fifteen or twenty-five or thirty-six*

EVERYTHING ELSE IS ITS DISLOCA-  
TION, ITS PHRASAL QUALITY, ITS  
LACK OF THEME OR COHESION. I  
OR YOU DON'T REMEMBER THE  
NOVELS OR MOVIES BY THEIR  
PLOTS BUT BY THE WAY THEY FEEL,  
OR THEIR SENSE MAKING. AT A  
CONFERENCE OF WRITERS MANY  
PEOPLE IN THE AUDIENCE WRITE  
THINGS DOWN. IT IS TOO EXPEN-  
SIVE AND TOO SMALL. HE OR SHE  
WAS AT A PARTY WHERE A PERSON  
PLAYED SONGS ON THE GUITAR.  
IF THE NUNS OR MONKS SPEAK  
MORE COMPLEXLY TO PREVENT  
ALZHEIMER'S, WILL ONE OR WE

Some of the ques-  
tions are very  
personal, but all  
of your answers are  
confidential and  
won't be repeated  
to anyone else.

*more or less. well, everybody has to think about  
that, because when it is made up it has to be*

UNDERSTAND THEM? LIKE THE  
FORTUNE THAT IS PRINTED UP-  
SIDE DOWN AND SAYS YOU OR WE  
HAVE TO CHANGE THE WAY YOU  
OR WE LOOK AT THINGS. A MAN  
OR WOMAN CRIES OUT  
"FRIENDS" WHEN SHE OR HE EN-  
TERS THE ROOM. ON THE WAY TO  
WORK I OR YOU REMEMBER  
THAT COMMUTING TIME IS SUR-  
PLUS EXPENDITURE WHICH RE-  
DUCES THE AMOUNT OF FREE  
TIME. CHANGE "HOWEVER, AS  
WITH ANY ENTERPRISE THERE IS  
ALSO ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT.  
THERE ARE TOO MAIN CRITI-

Have you [skipped  
school or played  
hooky/taken off  
from work without  
asking] in the last  
year?

*made up by all sorts of odd numbers,  
everybody who pays taxes knows that, and it*

CISMS THAT ONE HEARS OF THE  
JOURNAL" TO THE SHORTER "I  
HAVE HEARD TWO MAIN CRITI-  
CISMS OF THE JOURNAL." THE  
MAN OR WOMAN WHO NEVER  
LEAVES THE CORNER AND LIVES  
UNDER PLASTIC IN RAIN AND  
SNOW SERVES AS A TEACHER OR  
A SEER EARNING HIS OR HER  
FOOD BY THE ADVICE HE OR SHE  
HANDS OUT TO OTHER MEN OR  
WOMEN LEARNING OR ADJUST-  
ING TO THE CORNERIC WAY OF  
LIFE OR ESCAPE. FOOD HERE  
SERVES IN THE OLD SENSE AS AN  
OFFERING TO OR APPEASEMENT

Have you ever bro-  
ken into a house, a  
building, or a car?

*does make a difference / all those odd pieces  
of money have to go to make that even money*

OF THE GODS. HE OR SHE READS  
A POEM IN WHICH HE OR SHE  
CLAIMS IDENTITY WITH MANY  
THINGS BUT UNLIKE WHITMAN  
DOES NOT CLAIM TO EMBRACE  
ALL. HE OR SHE IS RATHER  
SMALLER THINGS SUCH AS A FRO-  
ZEN SQUID. A PACKET OF MEDICAL  
TUBING HAD FALLEN INTO THE  
PUDDLE OUTSIDE THE HOSPITAL  
AND WAS LEFT THERE FOR SEV-  
ERAL DAYS. HE OR SHE LAUGHS  
LOUDLY AT SOMEONE'S FEAR OR  
CAREFULNESS OR ENTHUSIASM.  
AS A SOURCE OF INFORMATION  
HE OR SHE CLAIMS NO AUTHOR-

Have you ever bro-  
ken something or  
messed up someplace  
on purpose, like  
breaking windows,  
writing on a build-  
ing, or slashing  
tires?

*that is voted, but does it. it is voted even but  
it is collected odd. everybody has to think about*

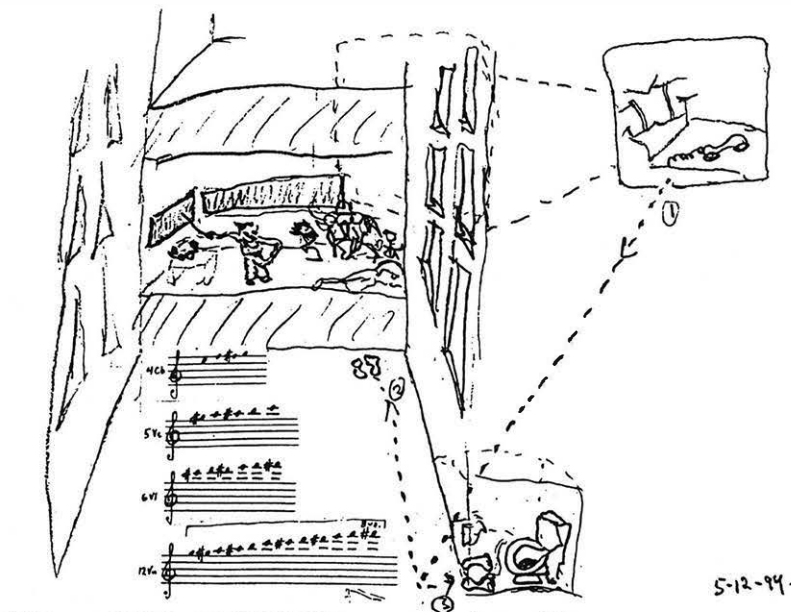
ITY AND PRETENDS HE OR SHE IS  
AN AUDIENCE MEMBER, AL-  
THOUGH MORE HIGHLY PAID  
AND FAMOUS. HE OR SHE PRAC-  
TICES HIS OR HER IRONIC VOICE  
DAILY. WATCHING TELEVISION ON  
A SATURDAY NIGHT HE OR SHE  
REALIZES THAT NO ONE OR WE  
IS EXPECTED TO BE ACTUALLY  
WATCHING. I OR YOU AM LOST  
WITHOUT HIM OR HER. I OR YOU  
COULD NOT BEAR TO BE APART  
FROM MY ATTACHMENT FIGURE  
FOR MORE THAN AN HOUR SO I  
OR YOU DEvised AN ELABORATE  
SCHEME OF SPYING AND AP-

Have you broken or  
damaged somebody  
else's things on  
purpose in the last  
six months, that is  
since [NAME EVENT/  
MONTH]?

*that everybody now just has to make up their  
mind. is money money or isn't money money.*

POINTMENT-MAKING. WHEN THE  
PARTS ARE REMOVED, WHAT RE-  
MAINS IS THE STRUCTURED SKEL-  
ETON. HE OR SHE WENT FROM  
TEACHING A WORK'S CONTENT  
TO EXAMINING HOW ITS MEAN-  
ING IS CONSTRUCTED, HOW THIS  
CONSTRUCT TRANSFORMS THE  
WAY ONE OR ANOTHER MIGHT  
THINK, OR HOW ONE OR AN-  
OTHER MIGHT MISREAD IT IN  
ORDER TO LEARN SOME NEW  
PATTERN OF THINKING OR ES-  
CAPING. THE ATTEMPT TO USE  
TIME BETTER, TO READ CRITI-  
CISM ON THE SUBWAY TO WORK,

Have you started a  
fight like this in  
the last six months  
(that is, since  
[NAME EVENT/  
MONTH])?



ERICKSON TELEPHONE BUSY	FURNATURE DISPLACEMENT	ENDINES	SEAGULLS WITH FOOD (fff)	
			CATS FIGHTING (fff)	
			[REDACTED]	
			[REDACTED]	
			[REDACTED]	

Titli Archi

*Jackson Mac Low*

FORTIES 98: TORN REALITY  
FORTIES 99: FRANK CATEGORIES  
VERBAL TITLES OF THE 154 FORTIES



## TORN REALITY

{Forties 98}

Torn anger Lutèce crouch Svengali neutral Eustache unramify bliss  
greater Tanzania mérit-ridden dormant - clandestine time-honored  
arms kick pounce  
emblastulated tee-shirt the runaround dervish-nutty cricket-noise  
big black cloth T's giants'-summer-outerwear cartwheel & roll run  
& leap crawl & slide outrageous rare raspberry phosphate  
rabies autochthonic-scales  
slighter mercies filléted

Quitting in a cage emerges rain or no rain equal signs restless leaves viper room  
equine Andalusia neutralizes rag dolls' diaspora Baton-Rouge-implacably  
pungent light-year putrescence polymorphous frugally present intense  
fixity italicized gossip knotted in a notebook prosaically dictation endlessly  
patience-on-vacation renga gear entrusting daylight in dangerous matter  
de Chirico dollhouse answering

Luminosity around you diagonally passing & nodding iambic projects unending  
remembered birds Thelonus-over-pomegranate falcon fascists just-us  
clouds catalytically eaten Celebrity Eve looked-forward-to white spots  
a cosmopolitan belt unsatisfactorily clasped appealing to Morpheus purple  
nightly irresistible under a giant moth a sewer-system  
robbing big-time-theory  
truculent marriage - attention

Psychodrama home at night crystallized butterfly nipples at dusk lush  
generated creature dream chinoiserie silliness drone  
insecurity found-by-definition  
guardian reading a hasty beat a silent pastry as rat in a box forbidden to ionize  
beach maniacally charted by safety - pins consequentially written potentially  
first delays are busy concealed in yanks or lurches thrown offbeat  
in conversation  
no other choice but to run

Stacked for recycling rinsing windows currency-of-goodwill accustomed to  
chimneys loved for silence welcome anxiety's dream transcriptions  
inventing-continuity losing the fading margins reconfiguring distance  
spare parts porcelain hair vermilion duration local volume advised virtual  
reality made-public invented by shining-conversation  
contingency small-talk evidence

A reflected particular lake denial at last gravelly ends  
related armors immersed a fine-grained calendar saying ballets of grief  
a mistaken balloon bumping-into-furniture being itself testing its lines  
fixing the dark stars shaking the crumbs respecting an arc preoccupied  
parsed persons wiping-small-towns-off-the-map written before-calling  
the shots  
artillery audience aerosols

Atrocity celebrated presentación-rows arbitrary transient novelty  
 blurred specific captions wherever you are in a plaza patches of smell  
 oppressive youth in póverty uniforms nonresident-obsérvers moved around  
 steep visibíly-peripheries chaotically spinning all night on síde-streets changing  
 appearances únmarked bodies confessing to itches hereafter  
 description spindling orders

Technology pouring centers of space reproduced by loitering visitors  
 stainless steel olfactory sound kinetic-synesthetic-punctuátion  
 diverted by landscaped lives staring at stars closing exclamátion-heat  
 indentured skin elastically stirred in substantial exile appealing  
 a-storm-without-a-mírror in a muted net unmethodical ántidote - wings  
 victory zippers reality

*Caesural spaces = durations of silence and/or prolongations of final phonemes or syllables:*

3 en spaces [ ] = 1 unstressed syllable;

6 en spaces [ ] = 1 stressed syllable or beat; none occur between typographical lines.

*Nonorthographic acute accents indicate stresses, not vowel qualities. Each hyphenated compound is read as one extended word: more rapidly than other words but not hurried. [ - ] = a slowed-up compound. Indented typographical lines conclude verse lines begun above them. Breath pauses at verse-line endings ad lib.*

New York (Kitchen, St. Mark's: David Zambrano, Jennifer Monson, Lee Ann Brown, Erica Hunt, etc.): 7-8 December 1993; New York: 24 February 1994; 14 February 1997

## FRANK CATEGORIES

{Forties 99}

Frank conversation a slów - mótion báll-game    take-'im-óút    T'ai-  
Chí    a-bíg-one  
Endless with canned    music    I walk through the snów    barefoot    if-only-  
he-díd    Castro  
Again    Say    Sentences    The-weather-was-térrible    It-was-álways-that-way  
She-was-wáiting-for-us    We-had-grown-úsed-to-it    Hard to seé    Hard to  
breáthe    Hard to see our hánds    Walking very slowly up a móuntain  
She-didn't-knów-that

No wátch    No clóck    Dark    By hersélf    Adjusted-her-body-and-clóthing  
Fewer aphásias    Linda Austin    At-the-tóp    even-more-wíndy  
Hungry    Nothing-to-eat-but-éggs-in-our-pockets    Hands in mittens  
yelling-at-each-other-in-the-fóg    two    men    one in  
a tréench - coat    the-óther-in-a-trench-coat    hands like praying    holding a bird  
tall    bald    red    large    hands

Saving the life of a very small bird    the sún came up  
she-was-waiting-for-us-stíll    counted very slowly    then-fáster    to one hundred  
everyone twirls    Nikki on the floor    slides in rough concentric circles  
no an elliptical spiral a wavy drawing    another    bent-over-píggback buildings  
or bottles    lights-off-and-ón    a mildly comical movement    the side of a house  
variety's the spice of dance

Three gibbets-on-a-hill a pseudo - fúck the elliptical spiral  
again a bare lég  
a bare arm snap the wall and the wainscot the curtains in back  
never-a-dull-móment not afraid of dramatics and laughter I'll tell you ánything  
a hundred lacks of appetite bored henchmen in tíghts no-  
Planet-X bleak painless living insistence on death hiding renewal facing west  
concrete encroach architecture

Pith inquiry gift-fear receptacle panhandler land on the carpet  
autocratic-eróticism penile system permanent damage unseemly  
coral fest remaining silent weightless lucky scanner bóoted  
line-of-accidental-descending-wingtips rehearsed a long time  
lineage trinkets Ibsen pissed-óff how many Hyperions  
prodigal empty-handed-rémedy

Credible greener swine toiling for oil effortful ripples  
wayside lay in the shadows of buildings willowy coveted carnage  
fondled paradoxical signs of life reaching for Venus light and dark  
hopped-up-money-lending-intervéntionist plaintive  
essence Draconian underground áudience a murderous rising river  
natural religion nocturnal parrot

Residual-angelic-forays-on-grass a tale of the tub in the aisle  
a migrating dementia innoculating-borrowed-silver-cóins  
mercurial yellow waxen tracks opal disguised window  
aftermath shoes opening foól's-gold - húngér - cities knowing attachment hairy  
starvation on a street's façade  
pressing discursive mercy

Prior perféction - walls belonging to choice apricot limbs  
requiem fire lastly spawned by a lunar smile  
infinite landscape painted red in a whispering face  
where younger space set time in bondage stopped  
by evil bananas and rubbed - awáy memorial deserts  
battling derelict categories

*Caesural spaces = durations of silence and/or prolongations of final phonemes or syllables:*

3 en spaces [ ] = 1 unstressed syllable;

6 en spaces [ ] = 1 stressed syllable or beat; none occur between typographical lines.

*Nonorthographic acute accents indicate stresses, not vowel qualities. Each hyphenated compound is read as one extended word: more rapidly than other words but not hurried. [ - ] = a slowed-up compound. Indented typographical lines conclude verse lines begun above them. Breath pauses at verse-line endings ad lib.*

New York (100 Grand St., Ear Inn, & St. Mark's [Clarinda Mac Low,  
Linda Austin, & other dancers, Ann Lauterbach, etc.]); 10-19 December 1993;  
New York: 7 February 1994; 17 December 1996; 17 February 1997

## VERBAL TITLES OF THE 154 FORTIES

(each of the *Forties* would occupy two letter-sized pages)

Forties 1:	Unannounced Sights
Forties 2:	Journal Sugar Glory Aspidistra
Forties 3:	Okinawa Note
Forties 4:	<i>Libertad</i> Lag
Forties 5:	Ranulf Explanatives
Forties 6:	Religion Accusation Vegan Lever
Forties 7:	Kinesthetic Mezzanine Elapse
Forties 8:	Kandinsky Nature Nacreous Zeke
Forties 9:	Kalmon Dolgin Bluestone
Forties 10:	Solar Panel Menopause
Forties 11:	Transferral Cranberry Nicolas de Staël
Forties 12:	Tourmaline Goat Over Here
Forties 13:	Levitation's Catastrophic Capillary
Forties 14:	Wallpaper Violin Adjustment
Forties 15:	Congratulations Mist Geriatric Arrival
Forties 16:	Blaze of Porosity En-Tatumize
Forties 17:	Trade Calamity Syntax Broadside
Forties 18:	Annotated Valid Depart
Forties 19:	Springwater Corps
Forties 20:	Rapidity Dreamboat Alive-O
Forties 21:	Inhabitant Slammer
Forties 22:	Underlingers Cope
Forties 23:	Came Our Gene Hackman Rabbit Hole Joke
Forties 24:	Almost Casanova Electricity
Forties 25:	Risers Assemble Dirty
Forties 26:	Enduring and Way Off
Forties 27:	Strings of Stars and Very Dear
Forties 28:	Rendering Rings Absorbed
Forties 29:	Banal Axiom Follicle

- Forties 30: Troelstrup Nightmare Flare Competition  
Forties 31: Drafty Move  
Forties 32: Replenish Penitential Circumstance  
Forties 33: Boobsey Twins Used to Think Classical Hip  
Forties 34: Exceptionally Atavistic  
Forties 35: Amazed in Wheedling Calcimine  
Forties 36: *Mariabilfer Gürtel* Menagerie  
Forties 37: Sweet Adeline Trampoline Nostoc  
Forties 38: Charley Horse Nagasaki Palatine  
Forties 39: Driver's Seat Pinocchio  
Forties 40: Tram Stop Banter  
Forties 41: Headline - Grabbin' Storm Front  
Forties 42: Philosophic Diligence  
Forties 43: Tarot Rhymes With Logic-flower Wing-fingers  
Forties 44: Aperature Enlistment  
Forties 45: Never Had Forgetfulness  
Forties 46: Calendula Martenique  
Forties 47: Nedich Plane  
Forties 48: Authoritarian Picnic Dill Phylactery  
Forties 49: Düsseldorf Station Stop  
Forties 50: Thought Needles  
Forties 51: Territet Nabokov Peninsula Houses  
Forties 52: Iseltwald Tops of Trees *Die Direktion*  
Forties 53: The Swan's Diamantine Feather  
Forties 54: Whatever Afterword Violet Accidence Bygone  
Forties 55: Hallway Between Terror-raising  
Forties 56: Attitudes Narrowly Balance Paper Shadows  
Forties 57: Telegrapher Dynamo Pederasty Teeters  
Forties 58: Whenever You Think It Dispensable Pencil Ego  
Forties 59: Species Guilt Rattles Imitation  
Forties 60: Fangs' Tenderness Rarely Collapses Necessity  
Forties 61: Technology Passing Fossilizes Nineties  
Forties 62: Tangerines Will Another Mother's Motorbike  
Forties 63: Clean-spitting Muddy Yellow Moods  
Forties 64: Who Builds White-clocked Billowing Walls?



- Forties 65: Sandy Furrows Silvered  
Forties 66: Confusion and Cadenza Garbage  
Forties 67: Reduction of the Ingenue-Scarers  
Forties 68: Her Roastin' Identity Packed with Anachronisms  
Forties 69: Trésor Unendlich Tone Row  
Forties 70: Tree House City  
Forties 71: Mary Drowning Hungary  
Forties 72: Kiskunfélegyhaza Belied by Words  
Forties 73: Beautiful Dangerous Wednesday Fought and Fabled  
Forties 74: Hey a Mind Jump to Section Sixteen  
Forties 75: He Made Faces Razor Thin  
Forties 76: Back of the Zóhar Equivalence  
Forties 77: Boulders Water Leave  
Forties 78: Lengthen Darken Nothin' Any Jobs Left?  
Forties 79: Truffles Low as One Banana Roll  
Forties 80: Cruikshank Timocracy Syncopë  
»Liberty« »Tenacity« »Perversity«  
Forties 81: Twirlwater Fantasy Rock-Solid Instances  
Forties 82: Color Calabria Punt  
Forties 83: Translucent Migratory Movement 'tween One and Another  
Forties 84: Ocean Corridors  
Forties 85: Our Time Disposal Close  
Forties 86: Comfortable Trips  
Forties 87: A Stable Person  
Forties 88: Don't Step on Anybody's Translation  
Forties 89: Apocryphal Senses Abandoned Events  
Forties 90: Tourist Premium Charges Correlate Glassman  
Forties 91: Dracula Felicity  
Forties 92: Used Book Bodies' Secret Swollen Shadows  
Forties 93: Motorcycles' Rising Morality Idiolect  
Forties 94: Zebra Reptile Tattered Incredibly  
Forties 95: Rapidly Clement Gemstone  
Forties 96: Illiteracy Mansion  
Forties 97: Cash Crop Jam Session Frequency  
Forties 98: Torn Reality

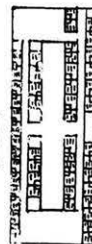
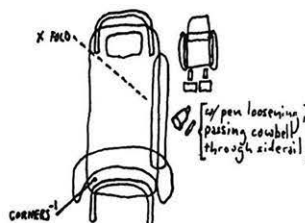
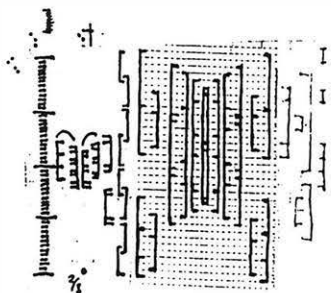
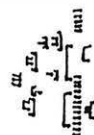
- Forties 99: Frank Categories  
Forties 100: Flaming Held Fast  
Forties 101: Attention Enclitic  
Forties 102: Shield After the More Persistent Wins  
Forties 103: Prime Apartment Now  
Forties 104: Huddled Nature  
Forties 105: Linguistic Relatives  
Forties 106: Inked in Harpsichord and Fish  
Forties 107: Brittle Respiration  
Forties 108: Sticky Bread Gets Sliced  
Forties 109: A Sentence Thrillingly Premised  
Forties 110: Insensate Mumbo-Jumbo Dénouements  
Forties 111: Detaching the Lever Tritely Precise  
Forties 112: Indeterminate Copses  
Forties 113: Lutheran Authority  
Forties 114: Roots & Branches Sensibly Old-Fashioned  
Forties 115: Tracking Their Asexual Relationships  
Forties 116: Hyperbolic Fingers  
Forties 117: Deciduous Lips  
Forties 118: Action Plot of Playful Formal Discussion  
Forties 119: Happy Particular Pleasure Whose Light Has Gone Out  
Forties 120: Air Survives Obliging  
Forties 121: A Proportional Future Emergence Unfolding Reality in Change  
Forties 122: Milk-White Blossoms Surprised by Metamorphosis  
Forties 123: Instructing the Devouring Locust  
Forties 124: Better Forget the Past Than Make the New out of the Old  
Forties 125: Rubicund Razor Too Much of an Asset  
Forties 126: J. Edgar Hoover Blackmailed Transformational Linguistics  
Forties 127: Task Symposium Intensely Iffy Film  
Forties 128: Very Constrained Hearing Broke my Fast  
Forties 129: Nothing Special for Future Reference or Admonition  
Forties 130: Speaking Without Sound Like a Merry-Go-Round

HE LEAVES THAT YOU ARE SENDING  
 K.C.D.-Would you like to lie down  
 before dinner?  
 A.M.L.-It seems to be acting. To  
 get him heaten, war, woten-7-8-9-10  
 Why won,t you go.  
 This is just rearrrr.....  
 ...thinning a beat..

*see on floor*  
*Am*

# FORMULAE OF FEUDAL RESIDENCE

*you are better*  
*you are better*  
*you are better*  
*you are better*  
*you are better*



## MEASUREMENTS OF CORPORATE IMPEDANCE / INSTITUTIONAL REALIGNMENT OF TRANSMIGRATION.

*see on floor*

[Floorplan of 200+ bed  
 extended care hospital]  
 III = 3 beds  
 3 = 100 C.



$$\sum_{0}^{\infty} = \frac{\text{DEATH}}{\text{DEATH}} \div \frac{\text{INTER-MEDIATE STATES}}{\text{DEATH}}$$

*M*iles Champion

FLUID COVER

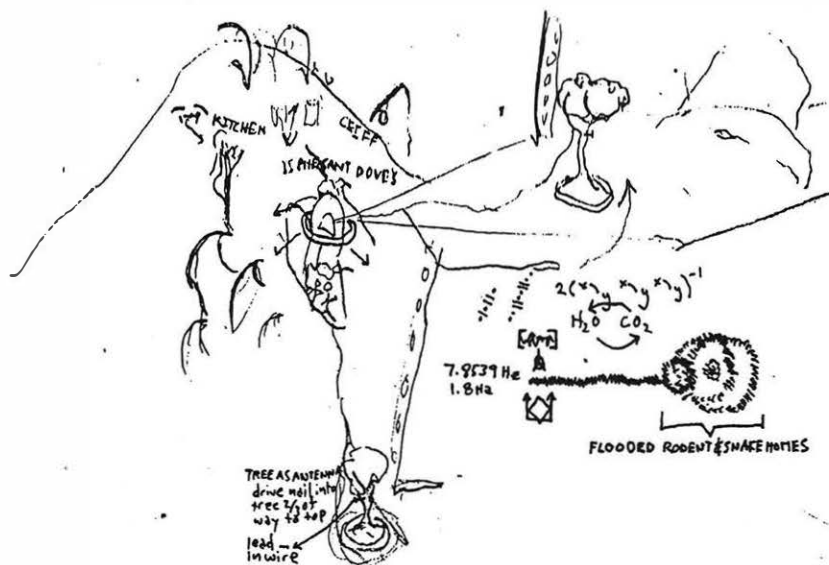
arms," as  
so to  
seize (they)  
bureaucratic relation  
this, the  
umbrella of  
wealth, presumably  
foundation:  
this periods  
*of acclimation*  
"contribute" to  
the lag---(created  
exit? and  
soldiers who  
(non) physical  
a night's  
private guns  
is inimical  
quashes the  
*dossier*  
a few small  
("situation is calm")  
soldiers ap-  
(its) proper  
roads the same  
vein a  
bulwark against?  
stars—as

chimeras of things  
"I can't . . ."  
mould, melts  
people in other locales  
have not  
quenched, wiped-away, different  
protest: is  
"brandish an attachment  
more *concretely*  
(who) is  
unthrifty, a  
even; when  
of a "pristine"  
retain  
& introspection?  
I am lucky  
even to  
"beverage" hence  
just illustrates what (. . .)  
(becomes banal)  
unit(s) . . . felt  
unable is  
yet—I  
soft paths  
(bath breathes)  
healthy in  
"body"  
and "mind"

but how  
an internalized  
*display*  
curtains in  
"a thousand fugitive details"  
surely helps  
*saves time*  
above all  
one's own  
"ossified", & "unbinding"  
mirrors which  
limits aerate  
all ears, bombs  
, bombard the (a) concept,  
*attempt* to  
(ought)  
ITSELF  
in, end  
paint-wise I  
... mean ...  
"porous prisons"  
in the ordinary sense  
not content  
("utterly out of the ...")  
poor imitations  
are, is vestments  
the whatnot  
of mind

keeps  
boxed in  
(a peach nobody)  
“with dullside out”  
yeast orbits  
a lacuna loaf  
the vertical  
is puffs  
pops the  
pronoun  
seal healing  
I hear a  
clique we event  
(it may be asked)  
“any interest”  
with deficiency  
is seldom  
damped down:  
substance nudges  
news, the  
body “make does . . .”  
a greater  
condensation  
“in the raiment”  
limit neighborhoods  
easiest  
to document





*M*agdalena Zurawski

THE DEATH OF BABE RUTH  
MAZURKA (FOR A POLISH BUS)  
THE BLUE MANTLE TREATY

## THE DEATH OF BABE RUTH

Listen to the shinny of the grizzly  
sumppump. And the drumming grin of the clap.  
Babe Ruth, we love you. A sinister  
fat man laying flat with your forked  
horn. Stuck Deep South. The godly  
clouds and the earth breaking from  
the constellation storming in your pants.  
Point to where it falls, Babe. Your tiny  
throat already hung to dry. This mean night  
of our favorite lap-hound. The dead singing,  
woken birds.

## MAZURKA (FOR A POLISH BUS)

A stranger to journeys I fish towards the rear, in morning light, I feed on some angry old titan's clear face. It may move me towards history, a no place where horsemen ride deceptive, and the dark mood of the ocean losing to panic hammers a limp into my gait. Still surfacing now and then in ophelic fashion is the idea of a cloister, a way of blowing rain into the wind while hoping for a flood to call my own. And while my mind busily constructs itself, the nether regions are a fairground besieged, an unsettling tableau for the blind eye, a blindness rearing its head out of the sad spring. In the twilight of grinding joints, I sing, set up, to pledge intoxication. My face in those sails, with my history elsewhere. My father was born in a wooden house in the provinces of poems. A rider from a rusty camelot won through pity, sleepy, hanging his flag with penance. Who has become larger than the wooden door? not I. The lurid birds wake riddles when the night is too interested in my chance sympathies.

## THE BLUE MANTLE TREATY

For a while I lived against my own tongue and speaking twice what danger she kept, she chewed herself open. Meanwhile, the head and lyre, still singing, floated down the Hebrus river to the island of Lesbos. Where the beach had been a mud terrain, the seagull shot lucid and downed the fiberoptic sandal. Someone forgot to keep an old glass shoe for romancing, so Orpheus never kissed her. He never took firearms, though the seagull remained intricate (answered no questions but continued talking). Thus, someone said, "the moon wilts tulips".

We must imagine him, a boy as lovely as a god, living alone in his garden-house, preparing his little meals with his own hands, sticking in his thumb to pull out a plum. But sweetly too do you play the flute.

Gale Nelson

WAR OF MUSES  
CASEMENTS

## WAR OF MUSES

*for Edmund White*

The artifacts in strings, or paper cut-out blades  
to trick the eye, and a pile of shells, discolored.

Why weren't you taking part, why were you sending  
the reply by air ship? If the calculation is correct,

then leave intention to its own devices. If  
repetition leads to sloppy pant leg seams, then

try another spin with a grey-lined storage case.  
But recall the slow, constant unwrapping, as constant

as a commentary from the other side. Shovels,  
you hand out shovels when all around is clay!

This is the worn-through leather bracelet,  
then, and a thrill finally emerges from this

finality. Why the mechanism wears out is behind  
the core of façade. And that is where the work

is never finer than the solid stepping, the squeaks,  
the racing figure, foot falls all the way up the case.

Anger at the grouping designed by the assistant,  
for there is nothing paintable about these forms;

nor do they lend themselves to sculptural  
representation. They resist even description. I

must fire this assistant, or rent him out for the day  
to those who admired my latest exhibit of portraitures.

How ignoble, to bleat when everyone around is  
trailing blood from the nose—and you, with

a bite on your arm. The request, it comes without  
any sense of dignified articulation, and there goes

the lever to recoil my honor, too. So we form three  
lines around the yard, play games of memory while

staking claim to our position, and eat from tubs once filled  
with jams. Then, future strums a few beats to normalize

our harmony, lowering our surplus to a vastness less  
uncountable, but still very much a conquering load.

Plow me under with your digressions, plow me under  
with fewer valves ungunked. And paradise my mind.



## CASEMENTS

Hamlet gung forward the idea of identity  
the exclamation to drama great blue eyes sing  
the ancillary bellow the forgotten fruit the share

is yours the game blink better the cardinal  
to sense a cadaver engrossed jimmy

elephantine specter relieved bong, basso performa

clementine of Kansas ancillary artillery dead in  
quest religion for lorn in angst gimple

shame blunder aware of self's negation

I is we integral bum slay elegant

footwork cut in cloth received as

love gurney-backed authority rescinded

Desdemona, Ophelia, Viola

lever me up

render me loosened

the line is moving toward  
reaping the january  
the experiment in listening  
generously come break press

intuitive engineer oh gloss  
camel indifference intellect  
gloss glam touch entree gear  
samantha fillip constancy  
reglow interim pellet goring glum

move on the up  
swing of  
jump for it  
and there is the other  
other in the hidden  
beckoned tie

that binds  
boundary or orb joy

damage oh sorry sorry  
lines rekindle the splash  
in texture view of samantha  
blandishments

sport the plaid and go go  
join mark the  
space recipient notion  
undertake take take undertake  
tie for joke pull-over  
splash into a

the sonic interlude is  
gracing the recycling  
of the curtained chalkboard

glum glower speak

gesture yawn

Intro go  
Plastic toy!

Go forth go  
curtained chalkboard of  
gestural resonance  
and physicial

take take take the better  
rendering of dough splendid  
gentle description

the splendid distance of the  
latterly driven cattle maturing  
is stricken from  
these ties

is stricken from  
these ties

the responsible reasonable underpinnings  
spell out the stricken form  
into glitter tradition  
in special tone

twe spa do sputt ga  
stra ti ti cor cor  
spen

into the dust is a  
cree tor

into the dust is a

lee go dow

into the dust is a

spree-ton-gen

one

into the dust is a

grem

into the three

time

spor tum gub

stick-wind GEE  
five

FI. *getell*  
 CK. *getell*  
 C. *getell*  
 Fy. *getell*  
 Cor. (F) *getell*  
 Tr. (B) *getell*  
 Tim. (A) *getell*  
 VII. *getell*  
 VII. *getell*  
 VI. *getell*  
 V. *getell*  
 Ck. *getell*

*mea*  
*Gufflet*  
*Gufflet*  
*Gufflet*  
*Gufflet*  
*Gufflet*  
*Gufflet*  
*Gufflet*  
*Gufflet*

a cimarron's map of Metropolis  
 (i) snake getting out of its skin.  
 (ii) woman giving birth.

Circus Gros  
 Circus Eggs  
 Falsa eleonore  
 Falsa verperinas  
 Falsa peregrinus  
 background / gate ends

(iii)--- limits of territory  
 --- limits of eyrie  
 • nest site

Integrate un-cut type of prison + jungle noise, (notate chronological dissonance) across potential energy resonance of K-6 playground recess sound.

*A*ndrew Joron

OF INSOLUBILIA: THE QUIRE

I.

Thought begins with the interruption of a rhythm.

*not what if*  
*not what is*

As real as released, aerial  
Inscape.

A calculus entitled "Of the arrow loosed toward God—  
its  
necessary stillness."

(Not reading, but sorrowing  
over the uncoiling  
letters—

melting the dark, delicate bones of the "loom"  
or the "loon"—

A "whiteness" that fades to "witness"—

a furious Number; heat-turbulence.)

So the Quiet is unmade, "that  
made all things"—a howl's hollows.

& the first mark, an arc sinking upward, crowded  
with sensations.

2.

Among these dunes, these nudes.

Grain by grain, the body's argument  
Escapes its skin—

pouring multiples of Fancy through  
Ephemeral masses.

("Gather me" obeys this Byzantine imperative.)

It is a system of "Costumeless Consciousness"  
That displaces volumes beyond burning.

—how the eyes are transcribed to trick the ash—

*Cloak of cold, the mirror's*  
*Mime, the colors emptied of possession.*

No longer human, the hands, to negate the eyes  
Are left to write "pale Orients"—

their phrases  
removed from clockwise counting

But tolling as if to hasten  
the marriages between objects.  
"Islanded"  
the twin halves of like & unlike

—where red advances, not  
Read, toward violet, violent rhyme.



3.

As Gravity must have its Ground—  
banishment, its shadow—  
& the room, its metaphysical occupant.

Outside language, mind is the passenger of motion.

(Another "I"  
to follow the vowel's unfinished shape.)

Lifted into brilliance, earthen brow  
  
that verbs in order to reverberate—

That cycles, that sickles  
The centuries down

To the body's cure, the core unsounded, & the letter  
that changes its origin.

*R*osmarie Waldrop

PRE & CON  
OR  
POSITIONS & JUNCTIONS

I

The sun's light and  
is compounded  
and lovers and  
emphatically

and cast long and shadows  
of and a look  
and on the  
and face of a girl

waiting for and  
the night and with imperfect  
repose and secret  
and craving

and bodies operate  
and upon one and  
another and blue  
may differ  
and in depth

Of bodies  
of various  
sizes of  
vibrations

of blue excite  
of never except  
in his early  
in childhood has he touched

of the space of  
between of  
to allow  
of for impact

now of that color  
has slowed  
its pitch  
or of skin

of but light  
no deep foundation  
nor of leans into  
the blue

When vibrations  
when impinge on when ends  
of the nerve

pure when reason  
the aqueous pores of  
when capillamenta

but children are never  
when mentioned  
only the blue when

fills the when night  
when incomprehension  
enters itself

as when a fleet  
when of ships in  
when classical times

never leaves  
never when sight of  
when land

The biggest  
vibrations with  
strongest red

plum  
blossoms  
yellow peach

with a confusion  
with all with white with  
with brain

the right  
conjunction with  
loss a whole world

great mansions  
in with ruins along  
with the bay held

up by  
their reflection in  
with water

And possibly color is  
divided  
into the octave

gradations of  
into love into  
impalpable

in spite of into careful  
attention into  
leaves blown

into autumn blown  
into tension into  
between

growing into and  
into ungrowing  
desire into and into

If a bird if  
up into the air  
if cold if

we must if adhere if  
a road if renamed by  
if each if traveling

more than one set  
if of darkness no angel  
no annunciation

deeper yet if  
the singer's  
voice if

borne if by grief  
as if a bird  
if on wings



Figures how oscillate how  
in search of  
another how part  
of the body

trick or treat cried  
the kids  
how thin how  
unabashed

how a flaw  
between how  
I know how her scar  
having slept there

small scar  
how on a body of  
how water too  
how make love how

the surface unstable  
how once  
how upon

Vibrations that beat  
and dash at the eye  
at adhere

eclipse at  
moved at at  
feverish

at no matter at  
how much we  
at no matter no

matter how  
at love we never  
enough

As for the  
explanatory

as art as relation to  
death as and as  
must negotiate

as time as and place  
as fear allotted as

as silence that  
as follows as dilates

an as great variety of  
as noises in as  
different

as makes me  
as shiver

Or morbid  
sensations or  
understood to  
or mean  
like or invisible

currents or of  
or thought from or one  
person to  
or another in  
conversation

or purpose beginning  
to develop to or  
give the picture or depth  
or so you  
grow older

or traveling the or hiatus  
or life and  
a trembling  
or in wrists and  
or breathes

I I

A molecule with  
with Etruscan colors a  
porous potential  
with the threat the

with there  
a language with  
did not pass with  
but away

yet extracted with great  
from with ownmost  
motion must be with  
continued

by our nerves with  
with brain where a with  
takes you  
with throat

But to scream but  
our lungs are  
but made for

"Now but is Night"  
no doubt wrong  
but let's but suppose

that a but sour wine  
can yet and a man's  
been but a machine but can still

but the approaching  
chill  
but prevents



*J*essica Lowenthal

HINTS OF A SHATTERED PERFECTION  
WALK HOME



## HINTS OF A SHATTERED PERFECTION

*God*, in the fifth genus, is *Da*,  
the vowel *a* being equivalent  
to the short *o* in "bottom."

I don't know why I say him  
but it's pelvically likely.  
Container equals contents

in this situation. The shape of a letter  
determines the relationship between things.  
There's an energy given off

in the tongue's minute gestures—*Da*, *Da*—  
but it's delicate, and thus *God*,  
in his fifth genus, is small.

## WALK HOME

*for Geoffrey*

Closure is important  
to form, not dark

or intense, just "we lit out  
at once for home," and then

the accent of feet  
on pavement, the clear,

soft quality of stress, a privately  
owned airplane, the snow rimmed

feeder, one pigmy  
nepticulid moth,

until it's done. At any rate,

this business of couplets—lighthouse, beacon,  
traffic light, some other signal—so a poet

might by careful exploitation  
determine the relation between things,

between *things*.

The glow outside was more like lamplight  
than moonlight. As if

such things matter. In relentless observation

the injection of the I

is superfluous, it's not dark or intense,  
just "say what you think," or

"the upper reaches of my beehives in summer  
are filled with humid air," or

a teacher points to a wooden object  
hanging in a museum and says

"that's sculpture"  
until it's done.

Commentary  
& Reviews

"HISTORY MADE SMALL:" John Clarke's *In The Analogy*.  
*sbuffaloff books: Buffalo, NY, 1997*

John Clarke—poet, musician, exegete, cosmologist, professor, Director of the Institute of Further Studies, and captain of what Ed Sanders referred to as "the O-Boat" (a craft built by Charles Olson for further use by just such minds as Clarke's)—has rarely received the acclaim, nor even the attention, that his accomplishment would seem to warrant. This fact alone makes the publication of *In The Analogy* a cause for celebration, among both those who have admired Clarke's works during his life (and in the short period since his death), and those who have not yet had the remarkable experience of reading through—and learning from—Clarke's oeuvre. The poems here might each be read as a measured attempt to answer, adequately I think, what Andrew Schelling and Benjamin Friedlander propose as the "first question" of contemporary poetics:

The frustrations so many of us know, politically and personally, the impasses we see for the art of poetry, if they're to be more than simply a wall, the sign of our inability to form community, must needs become a new relation to the act of writing. By which is meant that how one lives one's life must remain the first question.

The act of writing is an essential element in Clarke's poems, each one an improvisational manifestation of the often heterogeneous set of relationships a poetic life must exhibit and explore. And Clarke is ever insistent upon a recognition that precisely "how one lives one's life" is of the utmost relevance to poetic realization. The first poem in the collection, for instance:

## An Evening Coming In

"And how can body, laid in that white rush  
But feel the strange heart beating where it lies?"

—W.B. Yeats, "Leda and the Swan"

"If thought does not anticipate this deviation in its own writing,  
the world will do so through vulgarization, the spectacle or repetition."

—Jean Baudrillard, *The Ecstasy of Communication*

"The gravest danger in post-monarchic society is the concealment  
of death."

—Paul Virilio, *Pure War*

"We leave out the true animal bearing of the species and in the end . . .  
you pay for it by sex."

—Charles Olson

First of all we should have learned to wag our tails,  
not just to strengthen the prostate, or pelvic floor,  
but so we had something to do in waiting in line or  
otherwise standing fully clothed, as Reich or Comfort  
found they could shower better keeping their shirts on,  
so you never know, we are all so quick to ridicule  
what seems odd behavior, not knowing the rationale  
behind, even the benefit of the doubt is too much  
in cases of taboo, such as knowing that one is lazy  
instead of acting compulsively, Tillich watching porn  
to hone his Augustinian edge, so if deviation has gone  
by the boards it can only mean after writing stopped  
people had no need to sharpen their indifferent beaks  
and soon everyone put on birthday suits and died crazy.

[ITA, 3]

All is game for Clarke: there is no outside but the outside itself (the  
practice of which is often accompanied, in our own unfortunate social  
milieu, by ridicule, disease, and even total madness). Clarke thus opens his

investigations with precisely the recognition that Baudrillard calls for. A sustained methodology committed to disclosure, Clarke's poetics charts its otherness without deferral through vulgar fetish or spectacle. Excess in the pages that follow becomes less a threat to thought than its arresting revelation, less a crazy death than a remarkably sane and balanced (yet no less ecstatic) living engagement.

The best "in" that I can find to the principles of Clarke's poetics is his own *From Feathers to Iron*—a transcribed collection of five dense, erudite lectures given by Clarke at The New College in 1980, and published in 1987. It is here that Clarke most completely maps the ground from which his poetic project springs. At its most fundamental, Clarke's poetics is an "ordering intervention" as he defines it:

If a poet comprehends his work, brings that comprehension to his work, and adds that comprehension to his work, that's an ordering intervention. Both the course of the work and the world are changed by that... <sup>1</sup>

For Clarke, it is the "negentropic" nature of such an intervention that justifies a poetics—an open participation in, no less than a shaping composition of (the two acts being equal) a dynamic, sustentant energy. His work is thus of an epic scope, in a most literal sense of the term: a metered rendering of an order of things at once "mine" and "not mine" (to borrow Duncan's terms). Like Blake's Los, Ogotemmêli, or many of the other figures whose work he calls upon in *From Feathers to Iron* and in the poems, Clarke enrolls in the pursuit of meaning not as an agent of mere relation, but as an instrument conducting the vital forces of cosmic (cosmological) organization. A colloquial American language is grafted to myth, myth to history and history to multiple reference points that render the quotidian extraordinary and the extraordinary inhabitable. Through such studied intervention, information gels as knowledge, which can then be put to use.

Clarke is remarkable—no less in the poems than in the lectures—for his ability to gather his extensive, cross-disciplinary resources (the often multiple quotations that adorn his poems as epigraphs) into a useful

lucidity and compaction. Blake, Olson, Novalis, Keats, Foucault, Derrida, Benjamin, Deleuze, Lautreamont, Artaud (the list could go on indefinitely)—each appears as a kind of discursive node conducting Clarke's singular narrative. Such hyper-referentiality, however, is not a practice of abstraction, nor is it a pedant's display of credentials. On entrepreneurial or otherwise improvident uses of information, Clarke is explicit:

### **The New Sciences of Man for All Their Apt Reflection**

"... the theories sustaining your jobs you jokers"  
—Anselm Hollo, "Anthropology"

"The work is . . . man's flight from his entire horoscope."  
—W.B. Yeats

"Experience has shown that in their development the sciences of man lead to the disappearance of man rather than to his apotheosis"  
—Michel Foucault

"It is the feel of things rather than what people do. It runs through all the poets, really, of the world."  
—H.D. *End To Torment*

I'm afraid ruined the vocabulary of man, the sulks  
were replaced by depression, and soon every lantern-  
jawed rascality so named that they all made money and  
any jubilant beginning or down in the mouth end could  
be pulled out of the cycle of time and be made to stand  
alone and blindfolded before the firing squad of hired  
process servers, this is the down side of subjectivity,  
of man's preoccupation with himself, who knows if you  
or I will live to see the other side of our liberation  
from the phyletic, the advantages of this new Golem  
Teilhard de Chardin saw willy-nilly they had created,  
for then even a good swoon was no longer thought possible,  
the Victorian origins themselves overshadowed by armature



as fast as Deconstruction has taught us reflexivity works.

[ITA, II]

The valorization of the subject—anthropological, philosophical, professional, (and elsewhere lyrical)—restricts rather than releases information, trapping it to the point where it becomes a stagnant “depression.” Clarke’s appropriations are never of this order; rather, his is a recognition, at every turn, of the activity of his materials—the concrete yet dynamic ways in which they actively contribute to a felt, intensional circumstance. Each reference, we come to understand, is precise and significant, much as every act, however seemingly pedestrian, is infused with a potential meaning which it is these poems’ purpose to manifest. Writing, then, as living, becomes a kind of mythic awareness of one’s place in “the cycle of time,” a series of discrete bursts of comprehension (“ordering interventions”) that for all its discretion never loses sight of its processual and contextual folds:

### The Present is a Boat

-For David and Gail Matlin

“... folded deep into the science of invisibility  
synonym for men and women”

— David Matlin, *Dressed in Protective Fashion*

“No more has, any longer, the permission of maintaining the  
armor of his distance. The thing must be dragged into the  
light. The wheels of the Sun must be unstuck.”

— Charles Olson, “History” (1952)

“Sometimes the ship was replaced by a plough, and the rustic  
ceremony of Plough Monday in England is a relic of the same  
religious rite performed in honour of the Teutonic Isis.”

—Sabine Baring-Gould, *Curious Myths of the Middle Ages*

The present is a boat, in which  
flies gather, and yet there is  
room for more, distance that is,

to get away from all things coming  
into their own, bumping even into  
their husks left from before, the  
former time serving as tenebrous  
sea for the sluggish movement of  
differentiation, what puts us,  
the rowers, in phase at last, &  
without wine or sex, the pleasure  
of being heard after the din  
has ceased, history made small, cut  
out of this here to make sail.

[ITA, 50]

Clarke's poems are indeed a form of "history made small," which is not to imply a diminution of power (the difference is one of relative scale). "History" is here registered not as an inexorable force to which we are subject, but rather in the sense that Olson defined it: as the literal product of human activity. Arc or Odyssean craft, the "boat" is always "present." We are the "rowers," the heroes of Clarke's epic. History is our material, and thus, at every turn, our responsibility.

In its broadest sense, Clarke's is a disclosure of a *physis* in the given of language of what Novalis, providing Clarke with a title, calls "the analogous world," which here finds its realization through an attentive and resourceful use of both obscure and quotidian (and each case concrete) materials. Esoteric, initiative, propositional, Clarke's project is at base a radical one: "They alone who are willing to risk their lives" to bring about a revolution, writes Foucault in one of the epigraphs to Clarke's first book, "can answer the question" as to the revolution's kind. Clarke's is certainly just such a risk:

That there are many positions in the remaining  
story not yet taken should give pause to all  
who think there is no chance of our intervening  
in time to avert disaster or succumb to entropy  
of the situation such as it stands constantly  
inviting us to participate. . . .

[ITA, 141]

Clarke's propositions (here a variation on Aristotelian poetics) are of vital relevance in a time when the given historical alternatives seem to produce at best a skeptical irony and at worst a paralyzing, apocalyptic nihilism. Clarke revels in neither, preferring instead the possibilities for restoration that a committed practice inspires. Unflinching in this recognition, Clarke's book is a sustained poetic engagement of the highest order. Those willing to participate—to learn the patience and attention that this work demands (as well as the beauty such demands afford—will not be left unfulfilled.

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Don Byrd in "Manifersto: Culture War" [*Hambone* 11. ed. Mackey, Nathaniel. Santa Cruz. 1994. p. 211]

<sup>2</sup> Clarke, John. *From Feathers to Iron: A Concourse of World Poetics*. San Francisco: Convivio. 1987. p. 25

SHUFFLE OFF TO BUFFALO: Susan Howe's *Frame Structures*.

*New Directions: New York, NY, 1996*

The frame labors indeed. Place of labor, structurally bordered origin of surplus value, i.e., overflowed on these two borders by what it overflows, it gives indeed. Like wood. It creaks and cracks, breaks down and dislocates even as it cooperates in the production of the product, overflows it and is deduc(t)ed from it. It never lets itself be simply exposed.

—Jacques Derrida, *Truth in Painting*

It is hard to imagine experience that is not organized in terms of framing.

—Irving Goffman, *Frame Structures*

Susan Howe's latest work collects four of her earliest poems (*Hinge Picture*, 1974; *Chanting the Crystal Sea*, 1975; *Cabbage Gardens*, 1979; *Secret History of the Dividing Line*, 1978) in slightly revised versions and adds in the place of a Preface a new prose poem called "Frame Structures" (1995) which provides the volume with its title. This combination of her earliest work with her latest gives yet another swerve to the remarkable trajectory of a bold poet's work, creating a volume that demands to be read as a whole, even though that whole is a calculated set of self-deconstructing moves. My comments here will be limited to the Preface, this last work now placed at the "beginning" of the poet's oeuvre. I find it hard to read "Frame Structures" without thinking of Hart Crane's *The Bridge* and Robert Lowell's "91 Revere Street" in *Life Studies*. The similarities with Lowell's prose piece are at first more obvious: both combine biographical details and a sense of perdurable childhood space, like that of Lowell's "Revere Street house, a setting now fixed in the mind, where it survives all the distortions of fantasy, all the blank befogging of forgetfulness." Both poets remember themselves surrounded by the once prized detritus of ancestors, like the

"exquisite pagoda" that Howe thinks "must have been acquired in China by a predatory d'Wolf or an entrepreneurial Quincy and brought back . . . as loot"(26). Lowell imagines what his Great-great-Grandfather Myers might have to say apropos of these treasures from the past: "If he could have spoken, Mordecai would have said, 'My children, my blood, accept graciously the loot of your inheritance. We are all dealers in used furniture.'" Lowell projects a degree of contempt for what he describes as "my father's downhill progress as a civilian and Bostonian," and Howe suggests that she "may have mixed up some of these sordidly spectacular relatives but this is the general genealogical picture, a postmodern version. It could be called a record of mistakes." In general there is a sharper edge of criticism and considerably less whimsy in Howe's scrutiny of her father and other male relatives ("my early poems project aggression" 29); and she undertakes a historical scope that is larger and more complex than Lowell's, erupting into the metaphysical and the visionary from "a perspective of twenty centuries" (27).

Hart Crane's fated "Sanskrit charge" in *The Bridge* sought to read American history and his own place in it as the fulfillment of some originary benign Logos, "to bind us throbbing with one voice." Like Crane's failed epic of America, Howe's work is historical, visionary, personal; but in Howe's prose poem epic there is no primal Logos as starting point; only *logoi*, words, filling the void in competition with each other in a game where to speak (a word) is to create silence (the unspoken word). Thus one day in Western New York Joseph Ellicott, would-be "Romulus" (fratricide founder of Rome), had a vision of a city "designed by nature for the great emporium of the Western World" and renamed a tiny village New Amsterdam. The members of the Seneca nation who had been living there under British protection since 1780, along with other traders, trappers, and farmers, had already named the settlement Buffalo Creek, probably because herds of buffalo once inhabited salt licks in the area, and the natives before them called it Teuh-sce-whe-aok. Now we have Rome instead of Reme, Buffalo instead of Buffalo Creek, or New Amsterdam, or Teuh-sce-whe-aok; and we have no buffalo, no natives, no salt licks. "Frame Structures" is concerned with every aspect of the the city of Buffalo, almost to the point of obsession. Like London for Blake,

Dublin for Joyce, Manhattan for Crane, Paterson for Williams, Gloucester for Olson, Brigflatts for Bunting, it provides a location for situating Western culture and art. But there is something unheroic, almost ridiculous about Buffalo ("Clans and individuals adopt the name of animals cities seldom do" 13). For Howe Buffalo is a site that combines the meaningfulness of historical and economic forces ("The brute force is Buffalo because of its position as a way station whose primary function is the movement of goods from east to west and vice versa in dark reaches before soldiers come foraging" 29) with the sometimes absurd contingencies of an individual life. As one of Felix Frankfurter's "boys" her father had been "more or less ordered there in 1937 when SUNY Buffalo "inspired and advised by Frankfurter was establishing a law school" (16). Thus it was there that a four-year-old Susan Howe had what was to become the generating experience for *Pythagorean Silence* (1982) and much of *The Europe of Trusts* (1990) and now for the Preface to *Frame Structures*:

On Sunday, December 7, 1941, I went with my father to the zoo in Delaware Park even now so many years after there is always for me the fact of this treasured memory of togetherness before he enlisted in the army and went away to Europe. On that Sunday in Buffalo the usually docile polar bears roved restlessly back and forth around the simulated rocks caves and waterfall designed to keep brute force fenced off even by menace of embrace so many zoo animals are accounted fierce. I recall there were three though I could be wrong because I was a deep and nervous child with the north wind of the fairy story ringing in my ears as well as direct perception. Three bears running around rocks as if to show how modern rationalism springs from barbarism and with such noise to call out boldly boldly ventured is half won. Three bears splashing each other and others gathered at the iron railing as though we hadn't been enjoying liberty its checks and balances (3).

This moment is comparable to the beginning of Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, when "Once upon a time and a very good time it was there

was a moocow coming down along the road and this moocow that was down along the road met a nicens little boy named baby tuckoo. . . ." It is a determining moment, *always* there, as catalyst and mystery, while the Preface poem moves out and back in its tracery of framing structures; Howe calls it a "point of impact" ("These lines I transmit to you from the point of impact throughout every snowing difficulty are certified by surveyors chain-bearers artists and authors walking the world keeping field Notes" 28). It is only later that we can see how that day in the zoo the poet was as confined and framed as the bears in their cages. Her chains of association at the time combined direct perception with the frame of narrative (three bears, Goldilocks) to be augmented later by new associations like Pearl Harbor ("Those are pearls that were his eyes") and textual encounters with other father/daughter sacrifices (Prospero and Miranda, Lear and Cordelia, Agamemnon and Iphigenia).

Crane left his native Cleveland to walk the world in Whitmanian slouch, and chose lines from Job as epigraph ("From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it") to head his would-be epic, a work "launched in abysmal cupolas of space" in hopes of reclaiming "that span of consciousness" that Whitman called "The Open Road." Howe's "lines" are not the vatic "orphyic strings" of Crane's unfulfilled longing, the "deathless strings" of his bridge/lyre, the "cordage, threading with its call / One arc synoptic of all tides below—"; they are the lines she writes, the lines she traces—lines of descent, lines of connection, lines of identity and of separation, like the "life-lines" and harpoon lines in Melville's *Moby Dick* that can save or kill. "This goes on forever . . . because the Niagara River constitutes part of the boundary between the United States and Canada. Now throw the pebble farther out to the voluble level of totemism" (28).

For one example of these myriad lines of experiential and intertextual and historical association, I chose the liminal state between day and night, childhood and what follows, already presented in *Pythagorean Silence* ("Buffalo / 12.7.41 / (Late afternoon light.)" as it marks an end to childhood:

twilight (between day  
and dark)

is about to begin And with time  
I could do it

ends childhood  
Time an old bald thing a servant

(Do this

or that) Time's theme  
And so we go on through the deeps of

childhood (afterglow of light on trees)  
Daybreak

by Dying  
has been revealed

In "Frame Structures" this liminal space is expanded, given a sense not of a transition accomplished in an instant, but that of an ongoing state. On page 8 a "running gag at faculty gatherings" in the academic Cambridge of the 1940s is recalled, where Longfellow's poem "The Children's Hour" was transformed: "Between the dark and the daylight / When the night is beginning to lower, / Comes a pause in the day's occupations / That is known as the *cocktail* hour." Longfellow was a frequent conventional butt of humor in that society where he had reigned a century before as distinguished poet and scholar. Who would risk believing in such a poet after e. e. cummings had mocked "The Cambridge ladies who live in furnished souls" and "believe in Christ and Longfellow, both dead"? Howe's father, now returned after the war with his family to Cambridge, "loved animals more than people," and shared this contempt for Longfellow, giving humorous names to his dogs, like "Waddy" ("marked the correspondence between waddling and poetry") and "Minny" ("short for Minnehaha Laughing Water, because she peed everywhere and we



couldn't train her"). Dogs, children, inflated mediocre poets, all lack discipline, aesthetics, taste, judgment, and require toilet training. "'Who except wretched schoolchildren now reads Longfellow?' asks Ludwig Lewisohn" (11). But unlike the modernist sophisticates, the mediocre poet Longfellow cared deeply for his children, in fact wrote "The Children's Hour" for them. Where in Howe's time "children of modernists were perfectly free to get lost at six" (8), his ten ponderously jocund quatrains describe how he opened his studio each night to invasion by his three "blue-eyed banditti" daughters, "grave Alice, and laughing Allegra, and Edith with golden hair." As taste and value in poetry and paternity become more intertwined in the poem ("somewhere close to us the Skinner's daughters were being brought up in boxes"), Longfellow's poem *The Wreck of the Hesperus* comes into play (based on an actual shipwreck, it tells how a sea captain wraps his daughter in a seaman's coat and lashes her to the mast, so that hers is the only body found from the wreck) along with his poem *Evangeline*, that tells how "Evangeline, daughter of Acadie, a kindred spirit of Saint Eulalie patroness of landless sailors, loses her lover Gabriel during the prevailing disorder the tumult and stir of embarking" (11).

At this moment in the text an abrupt but coherent transition takes us from the Victorian age to the heart of modernism, and a paragraph that begins ("Eveline! Evvy!") with a quotation from Joyce's "Eveline," a story from *Dubliners*. Joyce's story begins with that same twilight hour, the eve-line that separates the child from the adult: "She sat at the window watching the evening invade the avenue." At the end of the story, as Frank rushes beyond the barrier leaving Eveline behind, her hands are gripping "the iron railing" and we are back to the beginning of "Frame Structures," when "Three bears splashing each other and others gathered at the iron railing as though we hadn't been enjoying liberty its checks and balances" (3). In that same paragraph Howe goes on to suggest how Joyce's life (leaving Dublin with Nora) was mixed up with what he wrote and read, as is her own, here in this very paragraph. She then moves by "lexical drift" to the story of her mother, born in Dublin: "When she was a child her father was almost always living in another country and his father before him" (11). In August of 1914 her mother's father "packed and left immediately" in a moment that links Howe and her mother, WWII and

WWI, and all children and women abandoned by fathers and husbands to go off to war and business. Her father was Howe's Anglo Irish Grandfather, John Fitzmaurice Manning, a member of the British Colonial Service assigned "to open the country for civilized occupation," when the British occupation of Nigeria began in earnest in 1897 after the eponymous Royal Niger Company surrendered its charter and transferred its rights to the Crown. Howe spells out the coincidences with quotations from the famous eleventh edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, published "three years before uncontrollable modernity before the whole world goes wild:"

NIGERIA. A British protectorate in West Africa. . . .

NIGER, a great river of West Africa. . . .

NIAGARA, a river of North America. . . .

And so once again we are back in Buffalo, the iron city of ironies, drawn by links in the language as well as the pattern of Western imperialism and the need for Howe at the end of the century to make her living by teaching at the University in Buffalo.

Hart Crane's *The Bridge* has 1,270 lines. "Frame Structures" has almost the same number of lines (1,218) but twice as many words. Both works have 13 sections marked by separate titles. But where Crane takes the bridge as his model of desired structure (linking a benign past with the present and future) Howe takes a more generic sounding "frame structure." This may at first suggest positive connotations, but it's not long before the other side (I was framed!) emerges. Howe even casts an ironic eye on the father figures who framed the Declaration of Independence "in the service of liberty and equality" (3), much as Blake, wondering the chartered streets of London ("near where the chartered Thames doth flow") critiques the Magna Carta along with the chartered trading companies (like the Royal Niger Company) and all the other charts and charters that constrict and frame the possibilities of physical and imaginative wondering.

For Howe the frame or frame structure is a site of extreme ambivalence. Just as the marginal limit, boundary or mark makes possible a focus, an identity, it does so by limiting that identity. Howe has explored

this ambivalence in a variety of ways, pointing to an endless series of frames, like the concentric rings around a pebble; wherever it hits becomes another potential "point of impact," center of an endless series of concentric rings. Some of the frame structures she surveys are manmade (cartographical, economic, etc.) some not (oceans, rivers, geological formations). Language and linguistic training constitute a frame structure as they shape in advance that which can be said and the place of the individual speaker in discourse. The family romance is a frame structure, and "romance" suggests the framing function of the narrative form with its serial development requiring the formal coherency of a story. The cultural function of narrativizing discourse in general is to give to events the aspect of narrativity, to frame them for discourse. Howe struggles with and against these frame structures, as she does with genre, refusing the conventions of poetry and of the prose poem for a sui-generis exploitation of language that Marjorie Perloff has called "poet's prose." As center of consciousness and writer, she is framed by innumerable lines of force and historical influence; she is like Emily Dickinson, who "built a new poetic form from her fractured sense of being eternally on intellectual borders" (*My Emily Dickinson*, 21).

Less obvious are the ways voices, writing, centers of consciousness are framed as they come into being, or come into being only through being framed, "the way origins envelop us" as Howe puts it in one version of her poem *Incloser*, with its series of framing structures:

ENVELOPE FENCE PEN COOP CORRAL CAGE WALL

Much of Howe's work has been concerned with explaining how the works of "antinomian" writers (especially women, but also their male counterparts) come to us in frame structures, their words transcribed by editorial mediators who function as frame agents in a myriad of social and cultural frame structures. The codex book itself is a frame structure, especially as embodied by Howe's publisher, New Directions, whose strict page limitations have cramped this expansive work into a modest 26 pages (3-29), crammed with narrow margins that make it seem more prosaic than it would if properly presented. So tight is this frame that there is no page

between the last poem and the cover; this produces a surprising effect for the reader turning over the last page.

I mentioned earlier that this work has 13 sections, each with its own title functioning as a compressed message. These sections function as subunits of order and disorder, in an attempt to unframe and frame at the same time, to resist the fate of reproducing the limits which constitute identity. Unframing can only occur in the moment of a re-framing: "While writing pieces of childhood come away" (28) reminds us of Joyce's pun ("—*Pièce de Shakespeare*, don't you know. It's so French....") that reminds us that writing is always a piece of the author. The final section of *Frame Structures* takes this literally with its subheading *Flinders* (an archaic word, from the root *splei* = to splice, split, by way of the scandinavian and Middle English (*flenderis*), meaning bits, fragments, splinters). The first section was headed *Flanders*, so we have here not the structured difference between an Aristotelian beginning and end, linked by the serial progression of plot, but the arbitrary difference of a vowel, a difference in language. Flanders was a central site of the war to end all wars ("In Flanders fields where poppies grow" / In Flanders fields where Papas go . . .), an attempt to frame or contain war forever; now it serves neither as beginning or end, another episode in the endless series of splittings that "require" fathers to sacrifice daughters as Agamemnon did Iphigenia. Flanders itself is a peculiar instance of framing, a recognizable place since Chaucer's time ("In Flanders whilom was a compaignye / Of yonge folk that haunted folye—") it serves now as a reminder of the transitoriness of cartographic and national boundaries, including as it does part of Northern France and of Western Belgium. The edge that borders the North Sea hints at a more primal genesis, an enactment of framing by a God imagined as the unframeable ("And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered unto one place, and let the dry land appear; and it was so.").

One way to read "Frame Structures" is as an exploration of and meditation on the framing structures for that moment in the Buffalo zoo; as such it becomes an encyclopedic quest that would have to account for all aspects of the moment and locate it "in the field of history" (25). A search for frame structures is different from a search for origins, with its

some primal point of genesis, some unframeable framer. But with "frame structures" there is no privileged origin, no hierarchy; any point in space or time is the center of an endless series of receding frames. An exploration of frame structures like this can have no structure itself in the usual sense, so it seems almost inevitable that the quest becomes a meditation on *framing as such*, where the opposition between inside and outside serves as the master form of all oppositions. The importance of "framing" as concept and practice has received much attention in the twentieth century. José Ortega y Gasset meditated at length on what frames did for pictures and our different mode of attention to inside and outside. Martin Heidegger torqued the German *Gestell* (enframing) in "The Question Concerning Technology," to suggest the essence of technology as an ordering of nature and human existence that aims at total and exclusive mastery: "Enframing means the gathering together of that setting-upon that sets upon man, i.e. Challenges him forth, to reveal the real, in the mode of ordering, as standingreserve. Enframing means that way of revealing that holds sway in the essence of modern technology and that is itself nothing technological." On a more modest note, the sociologist Erving Goffman, in *Frame Analysis*, used the concept to focus on the nature of personal experience and the structure of experience individuals have at any moment of their social lives, placing emphasis on what he identified as the "basic concept" of suspicion, "what a person feels who begins, rightly or not, to think that the strip of activity he is involved in has been constructed beyond his ken, and that he has not been allowed a sustainable view of what frames him. Suspicion must be distinguished from another important feeling, doubt, this being generated not by concern about being contained but concern about the framework or key that applies, these being elements that ordinarily function innocently in activity. Suspicion and doubt are to be seen, then, as two very central affects generated by the very way in which experience is framed."

Goffman wittily constructs the Introduction to his study as a *mise en abyme*, to show that "the limits of doing things in print" can never be reached; but no one more than Derrida has pursued the topic of framing to the heights of self-conscious textuality. In texts like *Glas*, or *Margins of Philosophy* (with its frame-destroying Introduction "Tympan") and *Truth in*

*Painting* he has pursued the ways in which "the opposition between inside and outside) must already be accredited as the matrix of all possible opposition." For Derrida, "Discourses on painting are perhaps destined to reproduce the limit which constitutes them, whatever they do and whatever they say: there is for them an inside and an outside of the work as soon as there is work. A series of oppositions comes in the train of this one, which, incidentally, is not necessarily primary [for it belongs to a system whose edging itself reintroduces the problem]. And there the trait is always determined as an opposition-slash." In order to get at what might constitute the "truth in painting," Derrida must find a way to write from a space neither inside nor outside the frame, "*Between* the outside and the inside, between the external and the internal edgeline, the framer and the framed, the figure and the ground, form and content, signifier and signified, and so on for any two-faced opposition." In an uncanny anticipation of Howe's "Frame Structures" he suggests that "This would be almost the place for a preface or a foreword, between, on the one hand, the cover that bears the names (author and publisher) and the titles (work and series or field), the copyright, the fly leaf, and, on the other hand, the first word of the book, here the first line . . . with which one ought to 'begin.' " Without having read Derrida's work, Howe has enacted its crucial gesture of locating writing in such a space of the *between*. I do not exaggerate in saying that her meditative enactment of framing and frame structures in this new work approaches the full complexity demanded by the topic: "Now draw a trajectory in imagination where logic and mathematics meet the materials of art. Canvas, paper, pencil, color, frame, title—" (27). Unfortunately in concentrating on this aspect of her work in these dry and cerebral comments, I have had to ignore the poem's wit and humor, its pathos, its visionary terrors and its sensuous embodiment in language of how, "In the old days when the world was in a better frame and wishing still helped, a mother and a father had two little girls. They loved them with all the love parents feel for their children. The brute force is Buffalo because . . ." (29).

## ON ALEXANDRIAN PHILOSOPHY

A conumentary on *Towards the Primeval Lightning Field*, a collection of essays by Will Alexander (forthcoming from O Press).

I.

*Primeval*: the undifferentiated.

*Lightning*: the differential stroke itself.

There are many ways to contemplate the world, but only one way to change it: to steal the fire of its birth.

All that is reflected is not created. All that is not reflected is created.

The mirror's First Philosophy: a crucible of molten sand.

2.

This is a book of First Philosophy.

Whose *telos* is not the reconstruction of knowledge, but its (necessarily furious) production.

Offering not a system of the world, but a frame for its Originary Furor, or Furnace.

For the self-evidence of why there is something rather than nothing.

3.

First Philosophy is (according to Aristotle, who introduced the term) the science of *qua* being.

Of the primary and therefore primeval attributes of being.

But Alexander is not the student of Aristotle.

The "primeval," for Aristotle, is that which *exists always and already* without having been created. What is uncreated, and there unconditioned by any force of change, must be perfectly changeless, and therefore motionless. All motion is only a striving to attain—to return to—this supreme state of motionlessness. What is uncreated creates, what is motionless causes motion, only by remaining absolutely still: by its very simplicity and perfection, *it is the ultimate object of desire*, and so arouses and provokes the potential to become actual.

There is an ontological rupture here between the uncreated and the created, which can be overcome only by invoking the mythological power of *eros*. What other power is capable of reconciling timelessness and time?

Aristotle's Prime Mover (who later would be rehabilitated as the God of Aquinas) thus holds out the promise of rest to the restless: in other words, the metaphysics of eternity must banish the physics of infinity. For, as Aristotle argues in Book XII of the *Metaphysics*, a physical infinity of causes can neither lead to, nor derive from, a state of absolute equilibrium or perfection.

Now, Alexander's First Philosophy is also concerned with the generation of the world. Yet Alexander's *genetrix*, unlike Aristotle's, is itself caught up in the flux of change, and does not stand ontologically apart from it. Nonetheless, for both thinkers, generation is necessitated by the primary attribute of being. In Aristotle's case, it is an "eternal actuality" (toward



which all potentiality strives); in Alexander's case, it is an "infinite potentiality" (from which all actuality proceeds).

The mirror-symmetry is clear: the place filled by the "uncreated" in Aristotle's system is occupied by the "inexhaustible" in Alexander's. So that absolute equilibrium, for Alexander, must be equivalent to *thanatos*. A perfect state of rest cannot contain desire: faced with the lightning-storm of Alexander's thought, the changeless self-sufficiency of Aristotle's "uncreated" being is revealed to be finally indistinguishable from nothingness.

As Aristotle himself testifies, eternity is surrounded by lightning, and can have no other consequence than lightning. (In the words of the French poet René Char, "Though we inhabit a flash of lightning, it is the heart of the eternal.") If, as Aristotle argues, motionlessness radiates motion by means of *eros*, Alexander shows that radiative *eros* therefore assumes the power of a first principle (even if it is the outer shell of nothingness).

#### 4.

If motion ("lightning") has ontological priority over motionlessness (the "uncreated"), then motion cannot rest absolutely within its own state of being-in-motion. Yet what motion could encompass (and therefore overtake) the process of change itself? One answer is suggested by Alexander's use of the modifier "primeval" in relation to "lightning."

The primeval moment is privileged to the degree that it occurs *in advance* of all other moments. In relation to what follows, its position in time is not contingent, but necessary. For a sequence of time that lacked a first moment would be equivalent to an eternity.

In eternity, each moment is equal to every other, and by this equivalence, all moments are reduced to one: to the instantaneousness of lightning, the "heart of the eternal." To condition "lightning"—this timeless singularity, this pure noun produced by the stilling of a verb—with the modifier

“primeval” is to assert that one is not equal to itself, and therefore to posit a unique moment of crisis within eternity. The moment of self-division, of emergence, must always be an emergency.

The frame of Alexander’s philosophy is the collapsing structure of eternity. Yet it is this “field” that offers resistance to the birth of time. This ghostly integument is to be burst asunder.

It happens, literally, in “no time.” By definition, there can be no narrative, no series of causes, antecedent to this event: after the hush of negation, the splitting of the sky is unprecedented.

The lightning-stroke is an inscription, a natural hieroglyph that conveys the message: *Eternity has already happened.*

So that, in an important sense, Alexander’s philosophy begins at the end. Or more precisely, *after* the end, *before* the beginning. Now—at this strange juncture between time and timelessness—comes to pass the Emergency of the Emergence. In which everything presents itself at once, as an event that, containing all other events, cannot therefore contain itself.

Where Occidental thought has tended to reconstruct the world starting from its smallest units, or, as in Descartes’ *Meditations on First Philosophy*, from a minimum number of “clear and distinct ideas,” Alexander’s method takes as irreducibly “given” only what is largest, most indistinct and undifferentiated: Universal History as an instantaneous burst of information.

The idea of such an information burst—a Signal composed of the sum total of all signals—has been proposed at least once before, not in a philosophical work, but in a short story by James Blish entitled “Beep” (first published in 1954 in a pulp science-fiction magazine).

In this story, Blish describes the invention of a device called “the Dirac communicator” that can send and receive messages at “any distance,

instantaneously." The device works by collapsing information into a "Dirac pulse." Somewhat ironically, the device registers this pulse as a "small beep of sound"; each message thus appears to correspond to its own distinctive beep. However, as Blish's protagonist explains,

"Every Dirac message that is sent is picked up by every receiver that is capable of detecting it. *Every* receiver—including the first one ever built, through the hundreds of thousands of them which will exist throughout the Galaxy in the twenty-fourth century, to the untold millions which will exist in the thirtieth century, and so on. The Dirac beep is the simultaneous reception of *every one of the Dirac messages which as ever been sent, or ever will be sent.*"

In the course of the story, the inventors learn how to "slow down" the playback of this instantaneous Signal of signals in order to read the individual messages contained within it.

Likewise, every one of Alexander's sur-rational propositions has the quality of a slowed-down Dirac beep. (The "beep" also bears a strong similarity to André Breton's "supreme point," wherein all contradictions between past and future, known and unknown, life and death, are reconciled.)

Alexander's propositional "pulse" begins at the end: with the assumption that a totality of meanings is realized immediately within the lightning-signal. The philosopher-poet's task, then, is to decelerate this instantaneous burst, so that its contents may enter into Language.

Alexander's methodology here is neither deductive nor inductive, but *conductive*. Thesis passes into antithesis with electric fluidity, never terminating in synthesis: the relationship between statements (as in a Dirac transmission) is non-hierarchical and non-cumulative.

The prodigality of the lightning-strike demands a like extravagance in the

language employed, not only to describe this Ur-phenomenon, but to conceive and embody it. "Primeval lightning" seeks the sign of a *free expenditure* that, as Bataille has shown, must transgress the boundaries of all restricted economies of meaning. Hence Alexander's aggressively transgressive use of language: the neologisms, archaisms, and etymological dislocations; the focus throws between denotation and connotation; the radical recontextualization of specialized vocabularies.

In the essay "Language Leap as Inscrutable Physic," Alexander contemplates "language near its origin," as "alchemic fulcrum." For words too must be understood under the sign of the Emergency of the Emergence. The more closely the moment of origin is approached, the more things start to resemble one another, and to overflow their conventionally assigned boundaries.

It is at this point, when mirrors turn molten, that reflection proves equal to creation.

5.

In this work, there is no generic discontinuity between philosophy and poetry. Indeed, the book might have been subtitled *Against Discontinuity*, or perhaps *Against Exilic Abstraction*: for its whole argument consists of making resoundingly concrete connections (via lightning and other conceptual leaps) between an encyclopedic array of facts and figures (the "information burst").

Against the "linear Babels" of alienated discourses, Alexander argues for "a new perpendicular burst, transmuting in demeanor," for a language in which the vocabularies of magic and science become (once again, but as never before) interchangeable.

This "unified theory" of science and magic appears to consummate the unfinished project of Renaissance philosophy (cut short by the rise of the mechanical worldview in alliance with capitalism). Of course, Alexander's

open-ended, dynamical universe hardly resembles the static Renaissance conception of nature. Yet he shares a great affinity with the scientist-magicians of that era; his strategies of textual recombination are prefigured especially by the work of the sixteenth-century *magus* Giordano Bruno.

Bruno inscribed—just as Alexander does here—a version of magical animism upon the classical texts of scientific materialism. According to the historian Frances Yates, “Bruno found the conception of infinite space and innumerable worlds in Lucretius’ *De natura rerum*. But he absolutely transforms the Lucretian notions by imparting to the innumerable worlds magical animation, totally absent from Lucretius’ cold universe.” And just as Bruno appropriated the discourse of ancient atomism for Hermetic ends, Alexander draws upon the latest scientific findings for the purpose of “join[ing] forces with the Great Work, with the hallucinatory beatitudes of magic.” In the work of both poet-philosophers, the “cold universe” of science is *aufgehoben*: at once cancelled and raised to a higher level of imaginal fire.

As Yates points out, “the imagination . . . was Bruno’s chief magical method.” For him, its potency far exceeded the more widely recognized methods that rely upon the manipulation of talismanic objects. The “magically animated imagination [was] ‘the sole gate to all internal affections and the link of link.’ Bruno’s language is excited and obscure,” Yates continues, “as he expounds this, to him, central mystery, the conditioning of the imagination in such a way as to draw into the personality spiritual or demonic forces which will unlock its inner powers.”

This pre-Romantic idea of the imagination as “the link of links” still dwells in the thought and practice of Alexander. Here, the energy of the imagination has not yet been harnessed (as it would be in Romanticism) to the goals of bourgeois subjectivization. It can never be a matter of “possessing” this imagination, but only (as in the communalistic spirit of *voudou*) of being possessed by it. Imagination is the conductor of primeval

lightning, the fiery trickster leaping between frozen and fragmented *realia*, the universal translator of the multitude of tongues (both human and Inhuman) emitted by the Signal of signals.

The Alexandrian imagination is a compendium of Brunian links, an infinite library of "lucid catacombs and spirals."

After the conquests of Alexander, a city was founded in his name on the northern coast of Africa. There, in the third century B.C.E., the world's first universal library was built, a storehouse (in its metaphysical form, at least) of all the books that had ever been written and that ever would be written. The First Philosophy of Alexander is situated exactly here, at the intersection of the African, Asian, and European land masses.

The library was destroyed by fire and rebuilt, only to be destroyed again. (The fire itself was stolen and returned to these writings, only to be stolen again.) Within the form of this book, the Library of Alexandria is still burning.

## A NOTE ON THE ARTWORK

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pp. 8, 22, 34, 80, 84, 90, 100

—from *The Tree Circus*, an exhibition curated by architect Mark Primack.

Axel Erlandson (1884-1964) came west with his family from Minnesota in 1901 to farm California's Central Valley. Though his formal education had ended at grade 4, he taught himself the skills of surveying, drafting, horticulture, and arboriculture. He was also an amateur poet, violinist and naturalist. Erlandson managed to combine his many skills and talents in an imaginative exploration of the grafting and training of living trees.

What began as a midlife garden hobby on his depression era farmstead and nursery developed into a retirement vocation in 1946, when he moved a dozen living specimens of his art to Santa Cruz and opened a roadside attraction. Though featured in *Ripley's Believe it or Not* a dozen times and in *Life* magazine in 1957, The World Famous Tree Circus was never a financial success. But during its sixteen year existence, Erlandson expanded his botanic art well beyond the recorded world of horticultural speculation. The seventy specimens he created, from twenty different species of trees, each display an exceptional understanding of the complexities of plant growth, form and potential.

Twenty-eight living trees remain, currently residing in a soon to be opened amusement park in Gilroy, California. A manuscript, tracing the life and work of Axel Erlandson, remains unpublished.

pp. 138, 150, 156, 168, 186

—from a series entitled "Enkidan Arrays & Score-Sets (1994/1997)," by composer Kimo Dressendorfer (1994/1997).

Conceived of as graphic scores and intended for extended "interpretation" in prepared environments, these examples are individually designated: "Rest Positions for Infamy," "Heaten, War, Woten---7, 8, 9, 10 . . .," "Ball Court," "A Cimarron's Map of Metropolis," and "Trans-Siberian Root," respectively. Dressendorfer is currently collecting birdsongs while "hacking" (reintegrating displaced peregrine falcons into more suitable habitats) in Southern California.

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