



254  
334  
512  
KOM



Wants to

2-1 334-5

21-56-

(3)2 (3)2 634 10

the germ

27 57 32-1 537 65



M. M. Pe.



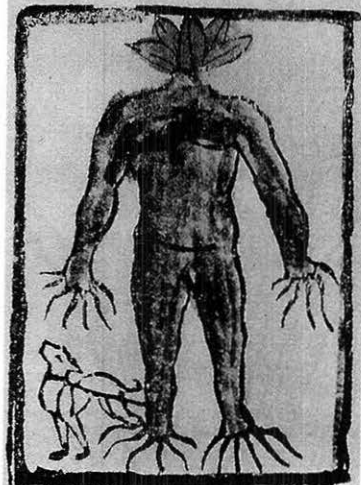
mak  
pleasure

mak  
pleasure

mat for mak pleasure



THE GERM





To create the beautiful again. It is as if somehow the lovers of postage stamps had created an image of themselves. A red wheelbarrow or a blue image of the unknown. And each stamp we put on the letters they send us must be cancelled, heartlessly. As if its delivery, the beautiful image of it, were a metaphor.

—Jack Spicer

Of course, portals must have guardians.

—W. R. Lethaby

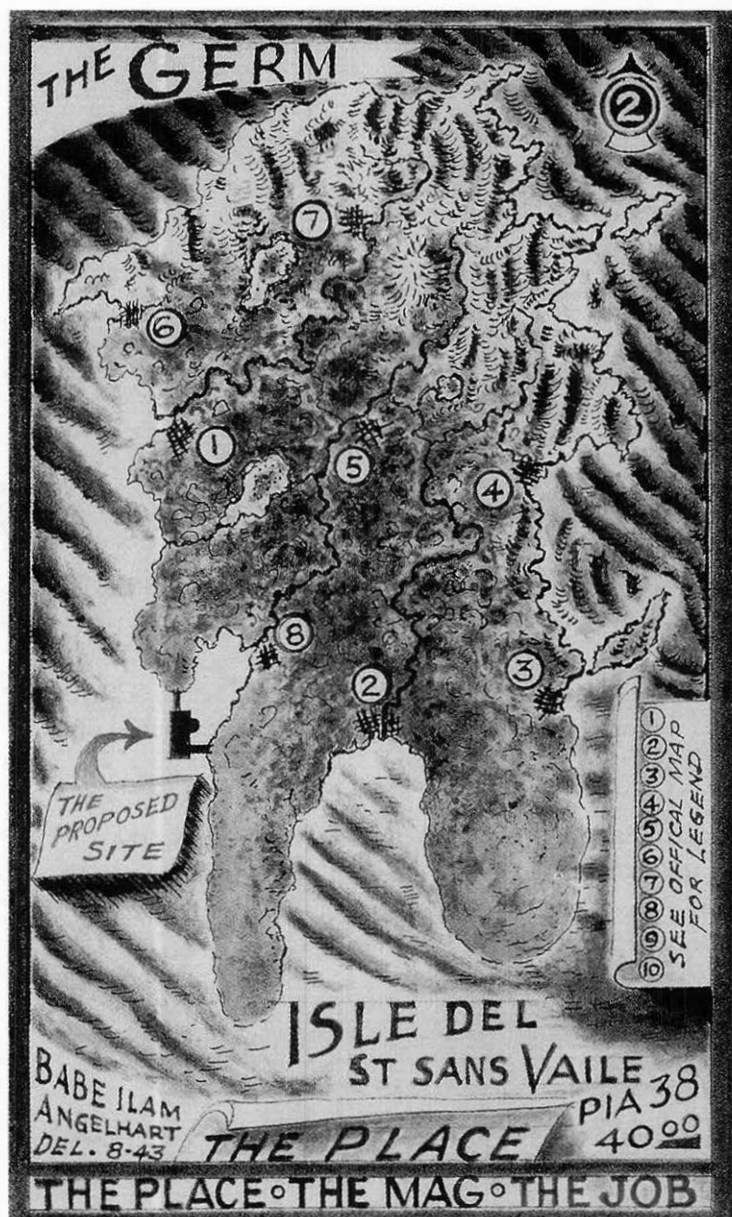


FIG. 2—THE GERM: A JOURNAL OF POETIC RESEARCH



---

# The Germ

---

Poetic Research Bloc #2

Summer 1998

Editors: Macgregor Card & Andrew Maxwell

Layout and Design: as above

Cover Art: Joyce Lightbody

Artist acknowledgements appear in the back.

§ The editors would like to thank Alan Gilbert, Ivan Setziol, Rikki Ducornet, Keith & Rosmarie Waldrop, Ann Harmsen, Robert Gunderman & Randy Sommer at ACME. gallery (Los Angeles), Stephen Cope, and the ever resourceful Peter Gizzi. Much gratitude to the Mandeville Special Collections Poetry Archive at UC San Diego for granting us access to the James Schuyler and Bernadette Mayer papers, and to the James Schuyler Estate and Bernadette for generously permitting publication of the uncollected poems in this issue.

§ This journal has been partially funded by a grant from the Given Foundation. As patronage is perhaps the most precarious factor in the adventure of small press publishing, we are grateful for any measure of assistance. *The Germ* is published by The Poetic Research Bloc, a nonprofit 501 (c) (3) corporation. Contributions are tax-deductible and welcome!

Address all correspondence to: *The Germ*, P. O. Box 8501,  
Santa Cruz, CA 95061

Copyright © 1998 Poetic Research Bloc. All rights revert to  
authors upon publication.

ISSN 1093-6610

---

## CONTENTS

---

- 9 Bernadette Mayer  
*A Lion Is Attacking Me*  
*\* (Untitled)*
- 23 Anne Waldman  
*Hannah's Ware*  
*Alice's Street Near the Palace*
- 27 Elfriede Czurda  
(translated by Rosmarie Waldrop)  
*Paranoia I-III*
- 31 Lisa Isaacson  
*Materialism*  
*Bench 6. at Centers: Poetry*  
*The Bench at Centers*  
*Against Threes*
- 37 James Schuyler  
Four uncollected poems:  
*November*  
*Light Night*  
*Within the Dome*  
*To Kenneth Koch*
- 47 Ray DiPalma  
*Song Cycle*
- 59 Joyce Lightbody  
*Forty Years of Booty*  
*Potato Moon*  
*Pilgrims' Bags I & II*  
*Head Corner Stone 1 & 2*  
*One Way, Another Way*  
*Surprise Valley*  
*Four, Two Minus*

- 69 Rod Smith  
*The Narrative Quiescence*  
*Soft Wall*  
*Nocturne*  
*A Slate*
- 77 Lewis Warsh  
*Polygraph*
- 83 Beth Anderson  
*from In Residence:*
- 89 George Albon  
*Reading Pole*
- 97 Devin Johnston  
*The Double-Acting Engine*
- 105 Gale Nelson  
*Harrow's Gate*
- 115 David Trinidad  
*Evening Twilight*
- 121 Lisa Samuels  
*Target Practice*  
*Stained Glass Reflections*
- 131 Brian Schorn  
*into ORGANS undone*
- 137 Anne Tardos  
*from Uxudo:*
- 145 Chris Stroffolino  
*The Comedy of It All*
- 149 Richard Kostelanetz  
*from 1001 Concise Contemporary Ballets—III*



- 155 Jay Dillemoth  
*A Parisian Mobile*
- 163 Amy England  
*Two Dedications*  
*Endnotes*
- 173 Marie Etienne  
(translated by Anne Talvaz)  
*Night Dizains*
- 179 Elizabeth Robinson  
*Pact*
- 185 Nathaniel Mackey  
*Andoumboulounous Brush*
- 193 Aaron Shurin  
*from Involuntary Lyrics*
- 201 Albert Mobilio  
*me With animal towering*
- 209 Gregory Vincent St. Thomasino  
*Donation Street*  
*History*  
*Sailcloth*

---

## REVIEWS & COMMENTARY

---

- 218 Marjorie Perloff  
on Mac Wellman's theatre
- 226 Michel Delville  
on Madeline Gins' *Helen Keller or Arakawa*
- 229 Cole Swensen  
on Peter Gizzi's *Artificial Heart*

silence someone speaks together in group standing by  
sitting together we sitting understand silently each  
say silent say together say together please together  
mention someone together in like downtown speak  
hannah we mean we friendly and together sound outloud

—Hannah Weiner

1928–1997

*B*ernadette Mayer

A LION IS ATTACKING ME  
UNTITLED



## A LION IS ATTACKING ME

*to Hannah*

A lion is attacking me  
Yet I do love you  
Yet why do I do it  
I'm going outside for just a minute  
I think my best thoughts are left resting here  
Just a minute, will we talk again soon

A lion is attacking me  
Whose heart is truly in the clouds  
You fool, poetry said to me  
You typify the worst in me just when you were getting at  
A message I sent you secretly  
To you alone, impostor

And so in answering hastily  
I fear you will think me the greater fool  
I certainly see the brain as like Marie  
One day astonishing and the next bereft  
My brain is like a baby and you bring out the insane  
in me, usually by securely tying me up

Leaflets of fond intercoastal knowledge  
Are shared between people as legitimate as Puritans  
And active Californians but every other day  
I see my most fond attempts to be phenomenal  
Are less than I've been reading and observing  
better not to try evening what I do with what I see

I could imitate but I don't read poetry  
To keep up maintenance on the part of my brain  
I know is superfluous and valuable enough  
not to rest easy or know all about it

You could call it hermetic idealism  
Or plain perfunctory saintly clout

So there you are, you don't rest easy  
I'd love to list my weaknesses  
And to address you as unhealthy  
But just as the bedbugs are annihilated  
Without investing in the new mattress  
So the dross in here will soon go away

If you can bet on the horses I can drive my car  
So why be indulgent, just listen  
A moment ago, I felt insecure in the snow  
Without gears to shift  
Now, after all, I'll drive the automatic  
Or if I have to, tell another whole story

All the blood sugar rises and fathers all do  
My father in all of this, it's all too clear to me  
All of what, I wouldn't sit on his knee  
Because reminders of all his whiskers  
Were all too prominent on his face  
All told, he saw me in my new bathing suit

Who's editing this book, who's typed these variations  
You're betting at the races, I don't believe it  
Lewis will be alone at the museum, why don't you get up here  
I'm glad those jerks have wised up, are you also warm enough  
I see what you're saying but when anybody tells me I'm right  
A lion is attacking me, that's instinct

There's nothing to steal from Proust  
I guess what I mean to say is sanity isn't precision  
Just as the comic part of instinct is as holy  
As for instance, when I see a person on the street

I wonder can he or she benefit from my notions  
Is he sympathetic, will she offer me a book of poems

But I also think, this woman is denigrating herself  
She walks too funny, holds her head  
In some peculiar relation to her hand and sways  
She's always done it that way  
But I can't just laugh because I know I'm so stupid  
I always miss the most important part and forget the point

Cars are another thing, I don't know  
I used to drive them well, well I don't know  
Truly the unconscious mind can put understanding in reverse  
And life is destitute without its blank field  
A small body will run from a large one  
Or else he'll have a dream that the bigger man lost his job

You read alot and travel too  
If a lion is attacking me you know  
It is only to perform and to please  
What manifesto can we write  
Yes I think we'll change the world by insisting  
But so what? Did you ever raise the roofs of even your own house

The animal state is too tense, blood boils  
Heart beats and I get gooseflesh again  
And with good reason, to facilitate flight  
My bowels are empty, last night  
I dream I am lifted so far up I am choking  
No I'm only joking, I was looking for Jackie Gleason

Another version of the star in the movie I saw, Bing Crosby in  
"Country Girl," I never mention my father's presumptuous brain  
Because I draw too much on him, little Theodore  
Friendly Ted, you want to hear about that



I'd love to tell you but a lion is at the door  
Only on vacation did we share the same bed

So here I am again  
I felt I'd better answer sooner when  
Our letters crossed in the mails, as you know  
Ideas are helpful, I cannot guess, it's just the snow  
Do come to Lenox, don't go to the coast  
And don't go west, to Buffalo

\* (UNTITLED)

Before the Black Sea or the Caspian Sea or even my wonderful  
Lesbian tendencies, there was poetry. But they made it  
dangerous country, those cavemen. Suddenly my life was not  
a prose—Centuries passed—I'm coming to you as a luxury.

False continuity makes me doubt myself totally  
But not so much I can't come up with a narrative in 19—what?:  
As a luxury I lived no narrative at all, each day was small  
And I saw what was in the refrigerator but

That was mostly old cooked cabbage, a misplaced stapler and  
Sloe gin. You need a box of Arm & Hammer, a caveman said.  
Trieste has always been an annoyance, I said. I flirted with  
Her one-upped her & forgot her I said, now I'm studying jazz.

This geography escapes me in this autobiography,  
I barely even knew I was a woman then, Trieste said: again,  
I will prove I can be more devoted than to you to a silly man,  
A man whose name is man, then I met a woman whose name was man

Her name was mud. I still hate her. Ooops I'm remembering  
The wrong man. I remember when you were the Grand Duke & gave  
Me for my birthday a round ring box full of rhinestones which you  
Said were Erinna's tears. Because I was nineteen like Erinna  
was when she died

And then there was the wealthy Corinna! She had legs as astonishing  
as any noise-maker! She was married to Mud's husband & had a salon  
into which I may have entered, it was full of Mud's men, and then,  
among them, I met one who was quite excerpted from the others, we never

Made it on a map of the Mediterranean but baby I think we made  
The Mediterranean we sweated so much. I said to him I know what

The critics will say about me, She thinks words are toys, prefers  
A bauble to a monument, doesn't care who kisses her clit, but

We sure did have some terrific dinners: We can risk the generalization  
that there was no real luxury or  
Sophistication of eating habits in Europe before the fifteenth or  
Sixteenth centuries. It is very possible in this respect that the West  
lagged behind the other Old World civilizations.

Then you have to carry on with either dirty or not and write a  
Refrain better than "Ain't no sunshine when she's gone." I had lost  
Track of who I was talking to, I chucked up my dinner of truffled  
Hens with champagne pâté & mounds & mounds of starry Burmas, I was

Involved with the recipe: two stars mixed with pasta covered with a  
sweet & sour sauce: the fat man said: Well is she your dame or isn't she?  
No! But I introduced you to her! And for twenty five *écus* you will be given  
Manumans in soup or roast pappas: in fact everything that is most precious  
on earth (However great French cooking was perhaps only  
established later, with the "active good taste of the Regent"!)

See this is how you get to talk once you get to be a poet and  
Darling I haven't stopped since, furthermore I love you so much  
I flush three dalmanes down the toilet in your honor and continue  
Discussing French cuisine in terms of my furred ecstasy (Wuck) (Burp)  
I feel as if I belong to the Pharaoh.

Even in 1788 you could have gotten turkey with truffles from Périgord,  
pâtés-de-foie-gras from Toulouse, partridge terrines from Nérac,  
larks from Pézenas, cooked prawn from Troyes, woodcock from the Dombes,  
capons from the Pays de Caux, hams from Bayonne, cooked tongue from  
Vierzon and even sauerkraut from Strasbourg but no one ever has  
the last word in these things



We have French cookery books dated 1361 and 1391 mentioning  
The pretzel position with creme and the Golden Feeling with Meat  
& The licking of the Paps. You have a one-track mind. This was  
1968 and I was being served up "in a pyramid" & adoring every minute of it.

Anonymous was doing it, then Praxilla walked in & was jealous as hell!  
I didn't know you then, in fact, by your courtesy in poet, i don't know you now!  
I only know I'd been to the college and forgot about that,  
I'd been to the masters, been their mistresses, and that

The Mediterranean was not the exclusive domain of the pack animal.  
But I wasn't no pack animal no not me, I was about to be  
The very joyous & very pleasant History composed by me, with some  
Sad interludes (twilight with one star) & all the unpaginated happenings.

So, I got pregnant, and I didn't know what to do;  
The man, the father, simply played, loved and flew.  
Otherwise I might have wandered around forever;  
This way I was practically a mother no matter what forever.

Farewell I said to the banquet morning and evening. (But we  
Should beware of generalizations.) (For I was often to luxuriate  
Again and also again, but I found the country of the Pharaoh to be  
A backward region) I moved up to the first place, I sang my honest song:

Starry city I still live within thee  
And I am she and all she said when she fled  
Is another man has made his womanly way  
And farewell she said I too will go away

To another court, like a promise to oneself not kept I went  
Modestly to provoke riots in a city swarming with poor people  
It was even worse at Naples, Lord I have purple beads, henna &  
A cartridge belt. I have

A black beret with the National Honor Society pin on it,  
millions of babies crying, the fox went out on a chilly night,  
I don't live in Cuba, yet, I did want to say I loved you and the  
manager was grateful to the sailor, me, for saying that

I was a most virtuous whore, not merely liberal but prodigal, not  
Only with my body but with my wisdom, they called me Marina then.  
I forgot the price when I loved at the trees & the wind as she passes  
As I love you now, or on the streets of town, but where oh where was my babe?

I did a good job, they said très attrayantes, les feutrines  
Fuzzy-Felt ist ein ideales Spiel für kleine und grosse Kinder  
like the man who thinks he's Hitler and wants you to be Eva or Britta  
and Blow him: l'éléphant qui parle avec le crocodile, ou Monsieur  
Blumenstengel, das Maul des Frosches.

I wonder what Laura Riding thinks about this, but that's an aside  
I guess. I assume everyone's done all the same things in bed I mean  
Don't you? Assume that I mean. I mean I thought that was the meaning  
Of the experience, I mean what I was experiencing in that brothel but  
Gee maybe I don't have a subtle mind.

I find, about sex I mean, that no matter if one is a woman  
Where I grew up one is always having to be a mean man, I don't  
Like that much, nor is it true. So I made love to a contralto on  
Avenue C one day and he managed to leave me with myself, nevertheless,

I still loved him because in his soul he was a counter-tenor, and  
In my soul I was nothing, I was a poet, that is, nothing, or maybe  
A pointed star that stands for hope. Or maybe nothing. Nothing grand.  
A friend of mine once said of me, "She gives you everything she has,  
that is, nothing."

I had lost everything, I'd lost it already, there was no reason  
To lose everything all over again in any other new state or season,

I was, then, what you call a person who has nothing whatever to lose;  
I'd strap on my little coquette every night & just emanate the blues

And do you know what? it worked. Except I don't know what that means.  
But I got through all them days & nights of grand danger, eating beans  
And—Something weird is happening to me, when I do that? No it isn't  
Happening to me, exactly--Something weird is happening to everyone and  
so I'm going to extremes. I

keep wanting to say what but all I keep thinking is of another quatrain  
by Bella Akhmadulina, translated by W.H. Auden: thus:

And then, when that day ended,  
Did he lay a knowing forehead  
At your dead feet? Did he, didn't he,  
Bellow: 'Forgive me!'

He may have but I was still in the whore-house I should have stayed there  
You did someone said, fuck them The glasses gather & I become famous  
Among fifteen people, they admire my classicism my avant-gardism my  
Inability to spell. You name it, they admire it, they are shits.

And I say: Stick no Bills on me! I lost my daddy & he is gone  
If I can't spell then I misspell to noone! You all eat giddy ecstasy  
Just like me! And we are all the same! And I know now why I am one  
And you are another and why I always love you! And why I'm the one who

Brought in America. Because I'm from the wrong part of town & country  
& sex & purity. Aw I don't like that sentence. I want to go to  
Bermuda & wear a chemise all day, I already know what I'm gonna write  
I can't stand it, I'm burning up like a lava kiss marvel Charley.

Ace Battery Carlos: On the deserted streets of the sleeping town,  
(Just to change the tone) the beautiful moon was shining down  
And I at this point don't know why, no matter how shitty life may be,  
You couldn't and don't absolutely love me, then I left too.

Why should you love me? I may be a most loving whore but I'm not you  
Why should you love me? I spend every penny I earn on flowers, beer and  
Taxis and white-out. Why should you love me? I think I'll forget about that  
& go uptown to walk around & see what the men are wearing these days.

They are wearing the reasons I then fell in love with Germaineline (sister  
of Ernst), but she was just stringing me along especially at Elaine's;  
I had always loved the dictionary too much but the taxi-drivers were saying to me  
"This is just too much! We can no longer listen to you! Others must and you  
must find them, seek out your audience and forget about talking!"

Oh my Audience: How I love you! You won't let me say anything I want to  
You are not my audience you are apes in graves & with nothing to do  
Why don't you go home & write a poem? If you do you will receive many  
Literary awards while I remain a thoughtful productive attentive whore in  
the weather of your outworn melody! (Translate this immediately.)

Translates: Oh love that's only slightly soiled, oh those hearing and paying  
attention, oh those at my hearing, oh those to me and I to them, why why  
doesn't love, our love, make up for the nearly capitalist bargain so that I  
(and you) can remain in state, not as if we were dead but more still living  
(she was singing)

Love weighs on each brutal shoulder, my un-astonished darling and if  
I offer you more your posture gets worse, that's what it's like  
To be a mother. I've never been afraid to look at you or to kiss you  
Until the fallen angels sit on your elbow or until—I guess I'll just  
have to give in & sing to myself.

So let's get down to the man or men or woman or women we did finally love,  
Without forgetting all the others and the way I, you, or she & he began to be  
Mothers & fathers, and how in among that you and I are I and you because  
we two  
(not to confuse anyone) are one—more than anybody!

Gee I hope this is relevant. I saw this guy's picture in a poetry anthology  
One day in San Francisco, I mean I saw his poetry first, I was consciously  
Looking for the poetry that looked least like poetry should and there he was  
His poetry & his picture, I thought But I bet even HE isn't extreme enough  
to be the path so to speak

I never thought this person when I first saw him & he gave me a kiss  
might be some person I might be enabled to make the great family mess with,  
he was just a boy he was not yet a man I would guess as no girl is a woman  
then I simply stood my ground hoping it was the real ground & took him  
to the country with me

well I hate to say it but first we shot drugs & filled prescriptions & wrote  
haikus like "I climb to the top of the mountain/and see a blank prescription"  
who can I justify those days to? except him & me, and then we accidentally  
got pregnant because we hated birth control because it required thought

and pages of justification, we loved pages, we just had a baby, we  
or somebody's got to write all about everything and we were so scared  
we'd got the right to write mathematically precisely about the diner  
we hoped to eat breakfast in every fucking morning after every night,  
if we were lucky

then an aristocratic crook sent us an airplane ticket & thus we went  
to England we took the last of our drugs before we went through English  
customs, I remember it well I threw up 3 speed pills & a quaalude in the  
airplane toilet my baby asleep in the first-class bassinet then while I  
was still queasy & watching a movie my husband  
was feeling me up! under a Pan-Am blanket

And I and he stepped out that plane to the sunny side of the street:  
this or that perspicacity in love, a formal garden, a love of trees in England,  
or what they call New England, just the whole rest that I forget that includes  
walking those streets and recording them & getting in bed which is what  
anybody does

with the person they never want to leave so then we think about death  
because that's when you leave them, but who has time to?  
I immediately got pregnant again & lived in the house of the Reverend Lovelace  
I met Tom Pickard, I saw my first crocus, I got an extensive Valium habit

I forgot to mention I had seen this man I had children with many times before,  
I had seen him in the office, I had seen him in the antipodes, in the perigees,  
I had often seen him and Tom Pickard too, I had seen him too and many  
others,  
I had wandered with him, Tom Pickard's friend, into any outhouse or  
deli before

I. I don't know what to do about it. I don't know how much longer it  
Will last, because. Light vessels and then they. Should I get serious now  
Because. What would happen if one of us went to heaven before the other  
One, do you know what I mean? Could the other one stand it? What will  
one do?

Will we really see each other when & after we die? Are our children rein-  
Carnations? A white sportscoat and a pink lovely poem, no it's not that in-  
cipient latest love, I find this hard to pin-point, secret sleeping not wanting  
the other person to enjoy all my favors, oh we're all queers, this is  
scintillating, Don't go!

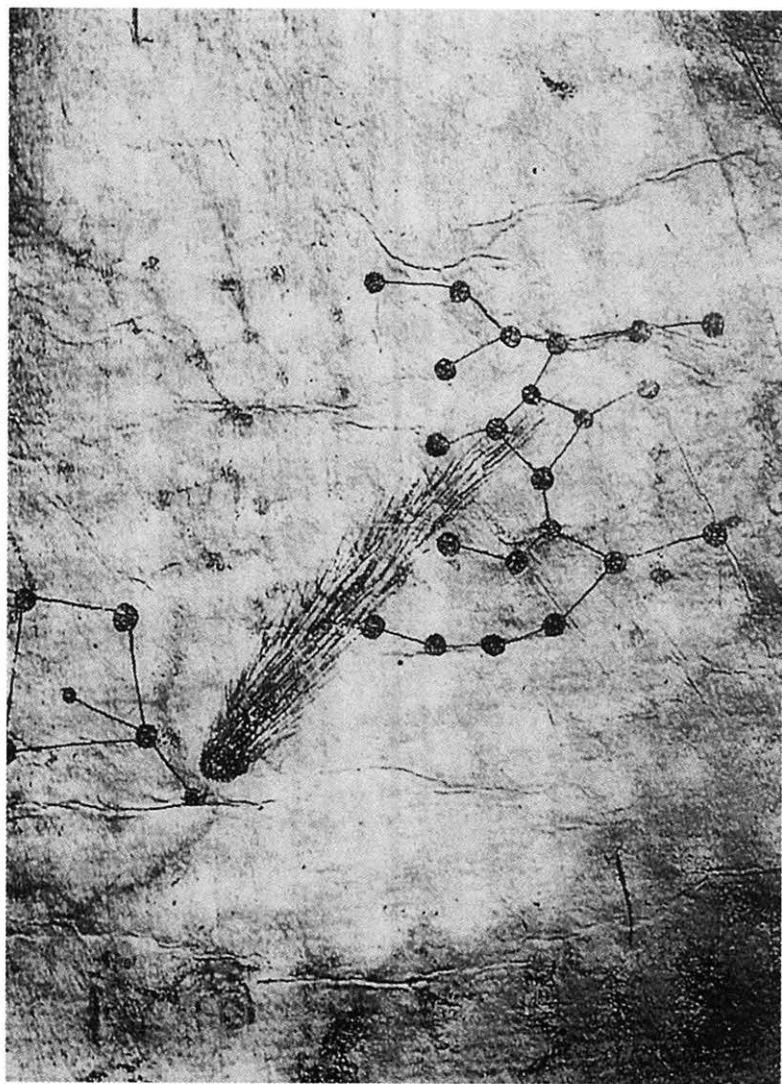


FIG. 3

*A*nne Waldman

HANNAH'S WARE  
ALICE'S STREET NEAR THE PALACE



## HANNAH'S WARE

a bind the trap the  
tollbooth her death's  
hand on mine

Hannah:

a mistake of  
proper nomenclature  
*a hand entwines,*  
*gestures*  
*go easy*

brine, a toast to idiot savants  
slime I tired to be but under &  
crept out of, my life! pride *go easy*

ifs, buts, whens, wheres, okays,  
lobotomies, signals of code

you are coded inbetween all lines

the red flag *go easy*  
or blue (easier)  
yellow?  
white, easiest yet?  
the ornery one,  
all sailors at bay  
& we are waiting to be whistled at  
we are ladies at the turning point

Gem Spa, I see you're a current in the  
summer of 1967

I love intensity of  
conviction

I love you because  
you are  
the one who says *I see, I see*

& you give all doubts  
to be benefited of

outrageous never  
condescending

& on my forehead nowhere hidden  
you see "BERNADETTE" you see "WANDER"

the lovers, the jolts, drugs, a way not taken  
"LUST"? you see "LUST"?

spurned, she is all of these clairvoyants

& sure of past 20th century rushes  
is never reasonable

conquer: what?  
fuck: what?  
all's dearth & loneliness

wanted to be beautiful for you  
but they die  
keep dying  
& leave the palace unattended

*gone into darkness, gone beyond*

*words burn in her void*

*inside old hag-seer's  
antique crucible.*

## ALICE'S STREET NEAR THE PALACE

*Il supplizio dell'ebreo*

intended as corner of coroner's  
religious exasperation

or man going to execution

Rivette's Joan The Maid burns  
with her paper hat on: *heretique*

*& what were the crimes?*  
warned in the forewarned  
repository *not to hear voices*

or afternoon ablutions

thwarted tradition?  
no, but a sense of the absolute

palace keeps byzantine grace  
mute chambers squawk  
for recognition

& an aligned notice for goblets  
shimmers by the door

altars go high for the trance-stone

*altare in pietra dura* you see them there  
chomping at the bit

drink, drink me.

*E*lfriede Czurda

PARANOIA I – III  
*translated from the German*  
*by Rosmarie Waldrop*

## PARANOIA I

this is a big help said the virgin in *nomini patris et filii e tutti i lupi* and fired the coup de grace thus died the virgin and the wolves with her pater and filius survived one wears a monk's robe the other the name claudius

if one didn't have the monk's robe the other wouldn't be called claudius the virgin's wolves would not have died the rifle would have remained an ornament of the hunting lodge and continued to smell of pine paranoia would not have attacked the subjunctive the action would have remained the same

tutti i lupi bury the virgin the hunting rifle on the wall fires a bullet the bullet hits the monk's robe which now has a hole claudius neatly mends the hole this is a big help says the virgin to claudius

claudius takes the rifle's smell of pine and hands it to the virgin paranoia is contagious even a smell of pine could have contracted it and rushed to the pater and borrowed his robe the robe would have concealed it since the hole's been mended

this was not necessary the hunting rifle buried the virgin claudius carries the rifle's corpse to the hunting lodge and hands it over to the subjunctive the subjunctive refuses claudius it prefers the virgin who said tutti i lupi this coup de grace is a big help the wolves barked a smell of pine until they faded paranoia took the hunting rifle and aimed at the subjunctive which pretended *nomini patris e tutti i lupi*

the magic formula forces everybody back to their original position paranoia and hunting rifle smell of pine and subjunctive pater and claudius the robe and the virgin this is a big help said the virgin in *nomini patris et filii e tutti i lupi* and fired the coup de grace

## PARANOIA II

swinging from the gallows less shoes than fellows  
the officers had impaled eyes on the tips of their walking sticks  
today it's only here and there that the wall bulges a little  
my leg is no lady well maybe my ankle  
a wheeze from the window though it's your eye is winded  
a hall with 22 electroshocks traces a thin line revealed in the sand on your feet  
an ocean and not a drop of dew  
you misshapen bitch your mop of hair  
on step beyond the window the gallows rise and a scream from the curtain rod  
madam you little rascal how gloriously disheveled your toes  
the trace of your nights labeled raspberry jam by mother  
the officers march off to the dance with horned prostheses while against their  
return rosamunde the foetus polishes doorknobs  
you gallows bird alleybird birdbrain braindamage  
the foot soldiers palaver cadaver kinetic hairtuft-frogs  
you lady without legs where are your uppers  
the officer has willed them to the tv company  
the glacier thins to a breeze hesitant among hedges  
on the wall the bug-eyed wallflower violently blows her eye for an eye a tooth  
the rose distracted by evaporating dew drops exhausts the foot soldiers' pant-  
ing and a torso moves silent as a zeppelin through your house in the country

### PARANOIA III

if stung by a tarantula  
you must dance  
until you foam at the mouth  
posture is all  
the table is oval  
the table is in the drawing room  
the drawing room is a studio  
a studio is no drawing room  
the studio is not oval  
the drawing room is not oval  
the idea is implied  
the intellect is outside  
the intellect is oval  
the table is oval  
intellect=table=oval=the corners remain empty  
the studio is no drawing room  
the corners remain empty  
look look lookatabook  
and never again  
and never again nothing  
an implied notebook  
posture is all  
music is  
silence is  
steps is  
brush is  
oval is  
implied is  
the corners remain empty  
the leaps of catfleas  
lovely in color  
but schizophrenic

*L*isa Isaacson

MATERIALISM  
BENCH 6. AT CENTERS: POETRY  
THE BENCH AT CENTERS  
AGAINST THREES



## MATERIALISM

Fixed it  
Not to look like anything. Clicks  
Attached to fields and to waves, *scent/The name*  
*of God, repeating.* We only operate, *be cause* drills.

I  
Romance brutal matter spots.  
It brutality, strings on  
Peninsular bits, manes,  
Like charms on the smoke chime.

This is Mary's operation.  
It looks like porcelain trash flowers, petal clicks, an organ ag.  
Open edges sticking straight out of their form.  
Suppers and crosses, sweetness and whiteness  
Falling together ground in private.

Crowds appear at the flowers,  
Blocking titles and brief histories of illness,  
Skin histories, angels, individual high admissions.

After operation, he sent a silent toy.  
I dragged the sand around with the magnet in bed.

There is a vacation in the superior museum. It drains me,  
Though I hear us run, I hear his make.  
Couple, vanishings, a horsey.  
Simplenoise  
In the other one museum diagnoses,  
My clicks and looks  
The art of kits, the fixed  
Greases, desires of Mary

And fat Brownie uniforms of girls in folds of as fat air.

## BENCH 6. AT CENTERS: POETRY

Sample after window, a tied mist,  
An obsess nothing  
Balloons or in the mean  
Open immunity drones. Nurse of a vision break  
In Denver men, a plow crude study.  
Of the region eye  
To map legality, the entire face blinds.

Winter's organ stuff warms me.  
The room ribbons.  
Picture the country,  
Flaps.

This ad  
had tutored me fine.  
Soul instantaneous with the grave second  
Interior hand  
Flame now phy ed hours amass.

Welfare, huge blanks  
In the eddy. Wagon  
Toy of conclusion.  
My first flat object.

Wine spilled.  
Was it as we travelled, you ask.  
So hypo the baby  
Blue.

## THE BENCH AT CENTERS

### I. There is

Pressure where modern  
Towers envelop serrated volume.  
Material touched  
It in places.

Theft is melting  
light.

Reciting—I  
am ropes continued  
Insecticide smoke,

### 2. A Garden

Soaked in night, dug out,  
Disgorged under  
Windows, where it was something  
Absolute broke in.

The dress is a puddle  
Now on a street in the summer  
Blackout pressure  
Where material  
Is stored in gutted forms

Of motion.

Thereupon the outline of flux.

When one leaves,  
A flame revolves.  
Interval Light Boxes

Unearthed at all  
Stops, pinched air.

Whenever the shore,  
Light kicks.

And the solar mouth is on it.

It's like someone keeps raking.

Slides Light,  
Specimen paint,  
Ground in faster.

Swarm hours

Stray. Whole noise

Is vanishing.

Light and no air. The soul went  
Into the sky as an opposite wall  
And smudged there.

A hold of chipped cells  
Flutters up from  
The avenue tree

A pin removed from the overflow

3. And it

4. Flowers, the king goes

The distance of the terminal

Sticks.                      Sky  
(to the sky)  
Ink of insects.

Night turns wire.

## AGAINST THREES

The silence is hauled outside into prayer.  
Where next things in baby sentence shifts  
Propose fears to the body, Pinning remove,  
It *streams* prayer,  
Becoming bells, felt mouths, friends.  
A bell in the fort. One in my privacy tic. Even ere  
Lovers before given the Then bell.

Twelve months pale. The freeway sky  
Doll snatch or sound  
Like a mob inside  
All the animal is missing.  
it was unanticipated, the spread of doctored  
Things that feed and fed the self into the filling  
Light, marshes. Example time.  
I am stuffed with kindness.

Undeveloped stretches but banishments  
Felt in them. Bully lands. Nonetheless  
Inns, with air like infants back them.  
Haul it quieted clean into the coil.  
Back through half damage, the window, the fell inside.  
Light lists among fresh starts.  
The city, the country, the coal of the country.  
Produced a crate, November.

*J*ames Schuyler

---

FOUR UNCOLLECTED POEMS

---

NOVEMBER  
LIGHT NIGHT  
WITHIN THE DOME  
TO KENNETH KOCH

NOTE: These are poems retrieved, and are not among works Schuyler himself chose to publish in the books included in his *Collected Poems*. Publication by courtesy of the estate of James Schuyler.

## NOVEMBER

Doll house furniture, whose charm  
is disparity of scale and bright surprise:  
meagre lilacs, lilac or white, on the sixth  
bloom in the spare clear air, as though for a birthday.  
Happy birthday, Anne.

The windows of Our Lady of Poland,  
rich and big in a small church  
glowing in frosty dead elm leaf and ocean smell evenings,  
sumptuous, like sumptuary laws,  
which I hope regulate festive adornment  
not restrict it.

November passes, quick as passing  
the windows of Our Lady of Poland, from the station  
to the house, in a wealth of Saints' days:  
best wishes, Lizzie, on St. Elizabeth the Queen's day  
(the glass bounded, a gentle sign, unshattered  
down the rocks), best wishes Kates,  
although I confess, an American, I think  
of bright, lovely, young Catherine of Alexandria  
most on July Fourth: you know, Catherine's wheels,  
spiraling in the dusk.  
Nailed to a tree, a sweet conversion.

There are no or few November flowers  
here, after a hurricane, lilacs  
bloomed, and for my birthday weekend  
Fairfield put robbed, dark blossoms in an Eastern bowl.  
Leaning out of scale by the guest room bed,  
four posted, without a tester:  
except testy I. A few unseasonal branches of delight

blooming in their green heart shape leaves for  
Miss Kelly, whose view of miracles is reasonable  
and strict. I agree (or like it both ways).

November, month of St. John of the Cross,  
the saint it is easy to imagine the patron  
of poets: and if I am wrong, I am sorry  
and grateful, recalling, a war ago,  
walking down Third Avenue in New York  
with a thin book of his poems while trains roared.

Southampton  
November 1960



## LIGHT NIGHT

A tree, enamel needles  
owl take-offs shake  
flapping a sound and smell  
of underwing, like flags,  
the clothly weight of flags.  
A cone of silence stuck  
with diamonds, the watch  
she hunts, the frayed band  
broke. It was a black night.  
Dawn walked on it, the sun  
set its heel. She won't  
find: a boundary of marsh,  
the island in the wood.

### 2

Stoop, dove, horrid maid,  
spread your chiffon on our  
wood rot breeding the  
Destroying Angel, white,  
lathe shapely, trout lily  
lovely. Taste, and have it.

### 3

In a rain dusk dawn the  
clearing edge, the wood's  
fangs, the clear crystal  
twist of a salival stream,  
announce you hence. Tear  
free of me, mountain, old

home bone, down sheer fear  
tears mossed boulders  
bound me, pool, deceptive,  
trout full, laugh and  
chatter of finch and pecker  
gargle my liquor skin I  
catch your face on. Scar  
a look and leave. A rust  
plush daycoach unfather s  
me. A field of crosses. Let  
iron clang iron.

29 March 1952

## WITHIN THE DOME

There's a daisy nodding  
Over my forearm  
Both the sun and moon are setting into my bicep  
and the bay slips onto my foot  
wet, cold and blue as a sneaker  
on which Mrs Captain Jimmy Quinn just spilled a glass of ice tea  
things like that happen  
tidying up an island  
unfortunately we are not tidying up this island we are covering it with filth  
Seeing us come stickily back from the bay  
Mrs Captain Jimmy Quinn reflects, "Filth is merely relative.  
Are they cleaner  
or are they not?"  
And here her eye is drawn out over  
Penobscot  
Where Buckminster Fuller is reading the *Bangor Times* and chuckling quietly  
to himself

ELLSWORTH ELKS DISBAND

he reads

PORTLAND FESTIVITIES MARK

ANNIVERSARY OF FIRE

GRASSES READY

ANNUAL SPLURGE

and

FULLER DOME TO RISE

"May I have that paper?" states Mrs Captain Jimmy Quinn.

"I'm going to burn this wood."

A sneaker shaped boat toots once in the fog.

"Is there anybody there?" cries a sailor.

"Why yes," answers Mrs Quinn.

"You're quite near to shore, you know."

Just then a great spruce reached over and slapped him hard on the cheek.

Crunchingly, the *Dora Maar* had docked on a tidal crag.

\* \* \* \*

"You don't know how humiliating this is for me," said the Captain.  
Buckminster Fuller joined Mrs Quinn in a sympathetic nod.

"Who might you be?"

the latter queried.

"Olaf Pederson,"

averred the salt.

You may not remember Olaf Pederson

Neither do I

The light is throwing lots of blue into your eyes

\* \* \* \*

Some houseflies join me

in what has become deep shade

Yes, I can hear dinner approaching now

it is a large quiet housefly

"Ow!"

Yes, the tide of my hunger is sloshing against my gall stones

yes, as the great Joe Brainard once said,

"You can't beat meat, potatoes and a green vegetable"

So Mrs Quinn, will you set fire to that wood?

Within the dome

Buckminster Fuller gets out the steel and the knife

as she goes about her feminine tasks

12 September 1967

TO KENNETH KOCH

"Drinking a morning cup of coffee is one of the pleasures of peace,"  
I thought as I drank my morning cup of coffee while reading 'The Pleasures  
of Peace.'

"It is also one of the pleasures of war," hinted a still small voice.

"A *what* kind of voice?" Oh all right a small voice from a still.

(In truth, a white coffee biggin in which I infuse morning coffee essence.)

"You evade the issue," kindly stated S.A. Schonbrunn & Co. of Palisades,  
N.J., 07650.

"A morning cup of coffee is a pleasure of peace  
which will also prove savory in time of war."

"In other words what you are saying," clattered Miss (1 lb.) Yuban, peering  
yellowly into her cup,

"is that there are also pleasures of war."

"By no means," affirmed the Marzo Maggio Medal on the Gold Medal  
coffee can.

"Coffee—black Italian roast by preference—is all things: stimulant,  
anodyne, palliative.

It drives the husbandman to work and mends the homely housewife's busted  
TV set in time for 'Edge of Night.'

It speeds the Avon Representative with a kindly word.

It irons the cat's pajamas.

It collects old labels which it sends to friends and other shut-ins.

In one cup of it lie all the colors that ever were, blending in searing heat.

It gives the soldier strength to fight—

"Ha!" and "Alack," I cried, and started from me wooden chair.

"Off, fancies, off! Vain 'maginings, begone!

No more to the biggin will I hie

but take these frittered pence—see, there's this, & this, & this—e'en with  
them buy

a samovar, whereof whose amber fluent flux, though it cheers not, nor yet  
inebriates

Night's phantasms—maychance begot of the gorgonzola-faced and fruitless  
moon—in the dawn flaunt. Yet

stay. I'll once more to the liquorice spring and sip, or, hap'ly—  
should the god-lurched and enspruced nix so deem—gulp  
a cup o' the morning, its blackness lightened to a passing tan  
by a little something out of this gallon carton (Covered By One Or More

U.S. Patents 3,116,002, 3,120,333, 3,120,335 Other Patent

Protection Pending)

of Wight's Dairy pasteurized homogenized vitamin D milk

400 U.S.P. UNITS VITAMIN D PER QUART

Bucksport, Maine

\*

Tel. 469-3239

and lace it liberally and well with Sailor's Warning.

10 August 1965

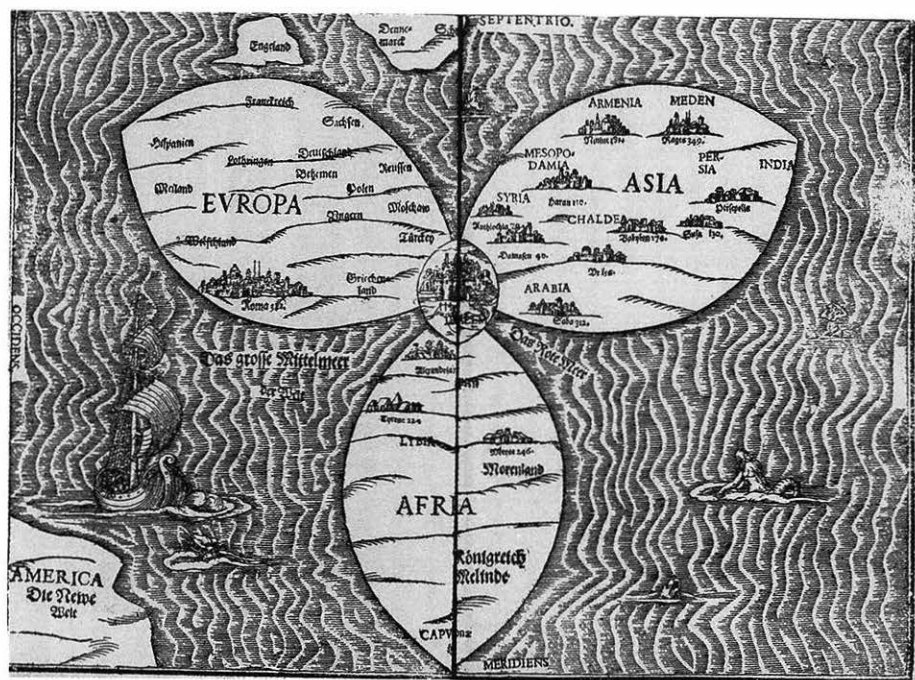


FIG. 4

*R*<sub>ay</sub> DiPalma

SONG CYCLE



I

Intense and protected—  
separated further by the combination

A vocabulary of approximately 800 words  
spoken in a dizzy whisper—a quick  
breathless surge of perception  
revelatory and full of awe

A cautionary account exploring and dividing the words  
magnified by the ink—strange and sad  
CACOETHES SCRIBENDI CACOETHES TACENDI  
[These words are in English in the original—]

We head north, watching  
the week fill up with trees

Under the colors  
that spiral  
the moon how else  
track its shadows  
and backlit clouds

The puzzled invaders  
moundbuilders and gandy dancers  
their heirs and shouted stammers  
on the circling ramps—clubs and unripe fruit  
thump the depths of the furrows

Steeldust on the brows

Volts • New Local Passions • Volts in Progress  
In the guise of farewells harped between blushes  
In the guise of goodbyes from the REGION

It's cooler there  
And the loam thick as the quells  
Of gravity and sunlight

Does the tide sleep  
Ask the desert  
Under the shining bird

Insects revive the decaying sounds  
"The Federales, Signor Bob,  
They have poisoned our wells"

All gone with the 10,000 milers  
The mules of the hive nameless and vicious

Across the continent, twice  
Punctuated never back again

The CHORUS built from the wind in the garden  
Ready for something other than the word come down

Abolition of place  
Birds sing in the diamond-etched diamond static  
Abolition of the flow's reach  
This was the trade

Home to the numerical  
Gone through gone on the immediate possibility  
Where were you when the...  
And speechless affections converge

And pivot in the established fog  
Skin and broom turn in the halo  
The distance—an idea that included neither you nor me  
Growling arias spun from zero

The skeleton is clothed with whatever emanates from the radio  
Rotten hours, by name—the rotten kindness of a large room  
Windows hung with the hide of Venus  
She had something wrong and put the dog on it  
Footfalls back up and out, the rhythm a list for the dire:  
What was said at the time, what wasn't, what  
Wasn't worth saying, face to face, while walking  
Back and forth, around the edges of the room,  
Shouting from the corners, what could never be heard be said

Where were they? "...under a green sun  
a magus creeps towards—equinox..."—decisions, the culled

J has words for H and both have words for P  
who's flattered and dapper and juggles his subversions  
for school—rewired pinch of scattered jitters—for NEWES: the Shirk

For verve: the tonic of flattered greed:  
obliged to traverse certain deductions—subtly peristaltic—  
all variant attentions were stamped nostalgia in the negotiated sleaze

The bomb missed its target, but the silence  
didn't last for long

8 [RECITATIVE: 4 VOICES]

Apart from breathing—EPISODE 1

The breeze from the fan dries the ink in the nib before it can mark the page—so the words are overprinted in various colors of ink. Only portions of the black strokes remain. The French pen and the American paper cannot come to terms.

Apart from breathing—EPISODE 2

I'm doing another test and monitoring the process through the apertures in these headphones. I'm listening for an unmistakable descending tone, the result of pressure and rotation.

Apart from breathing—EPISODE 3

Either the ink is reaching a significant decibel level or the liquid helium is cold enough. Predictive behavior is not a contingency in either case.

Apart from breathing—EPISODE 4 (THE COPYIST)

He was obliged to traverse countless pages filled with endless narratives separating him from his own carefully composed pages and meticulously structured chapters.



Murmurs and froth  
over and down the cleft

What the eye sees that  
the hand can't find

10

Supply (*n.* & *v.*) error

Square (*v.*) deal (*n.* & *v.*)

Influx, gradient, and risks

Two pages lost—

No loss

Two pages—lost

No . . . loss ~~1, 2~~ ↓

The melody lingers

At the head of a debris trail

July 11-31, 1997

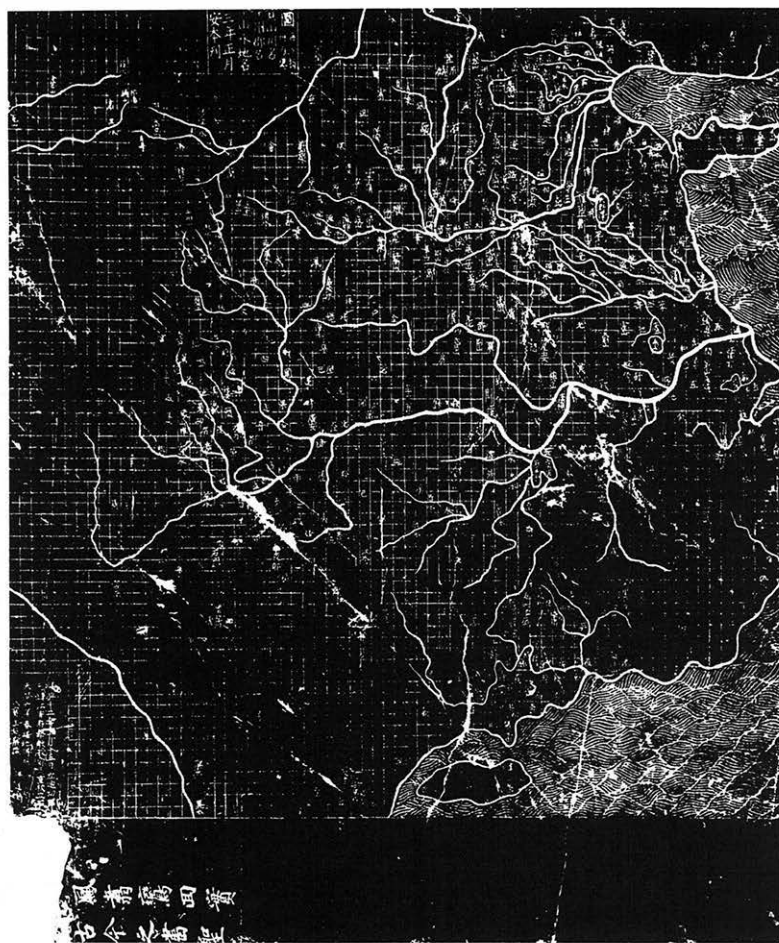
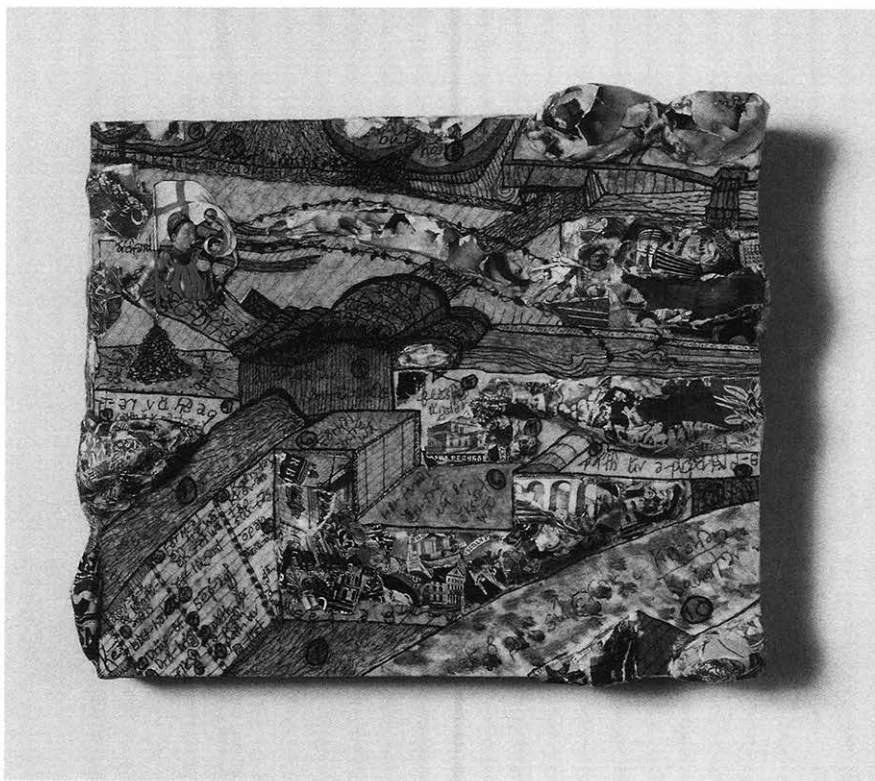


FIG. 5

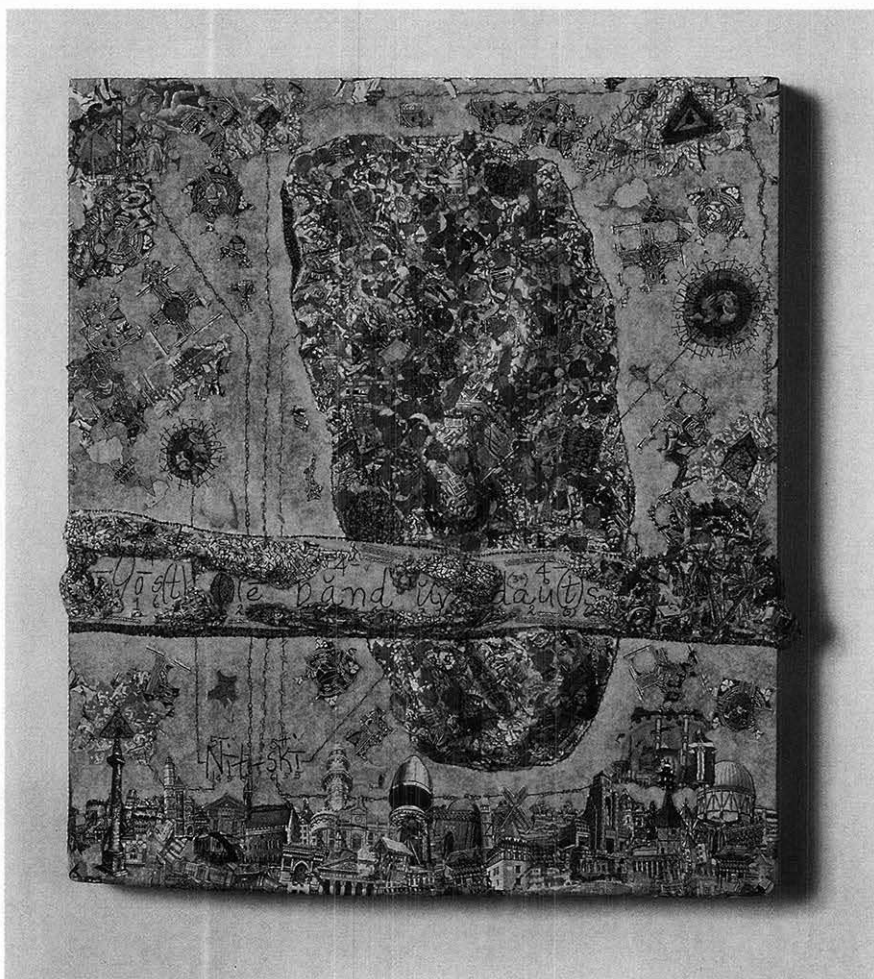
*Joyce Lightbody*

SELECTED WORKS, 1994-1995



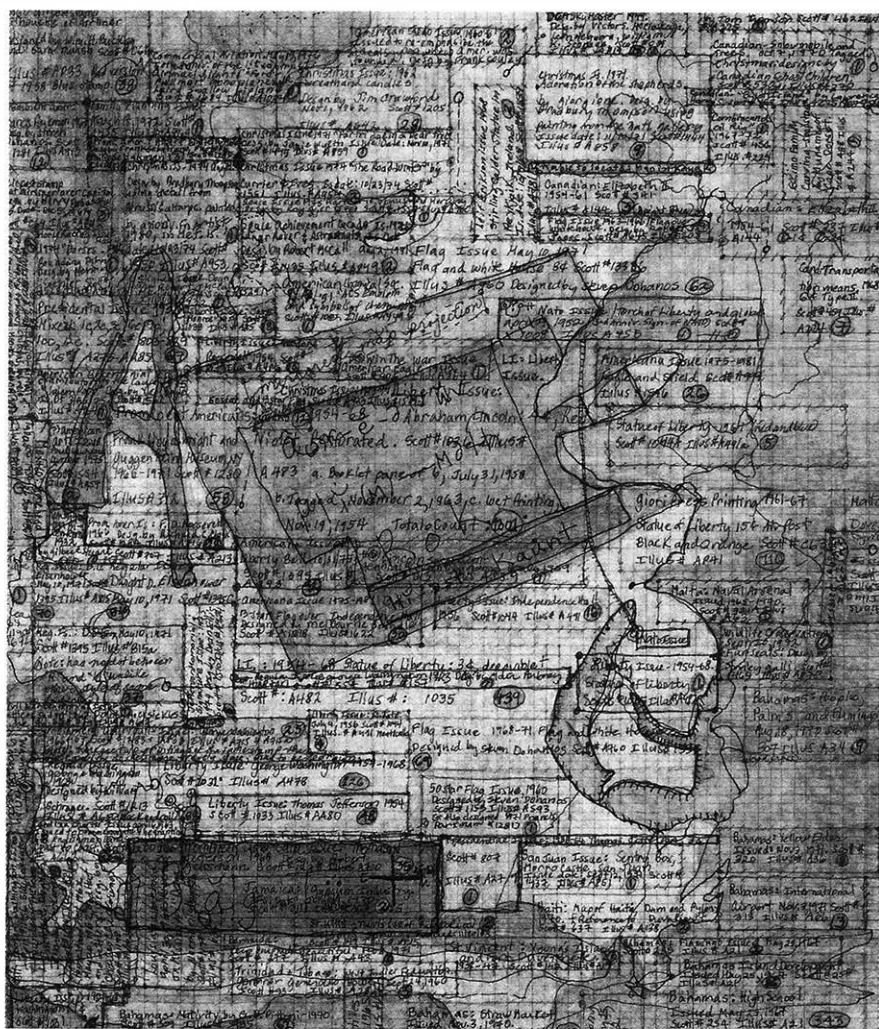
---

*Forty Years of Booty*, 9" x 10" x 2½", collage on paper on wood, 1994

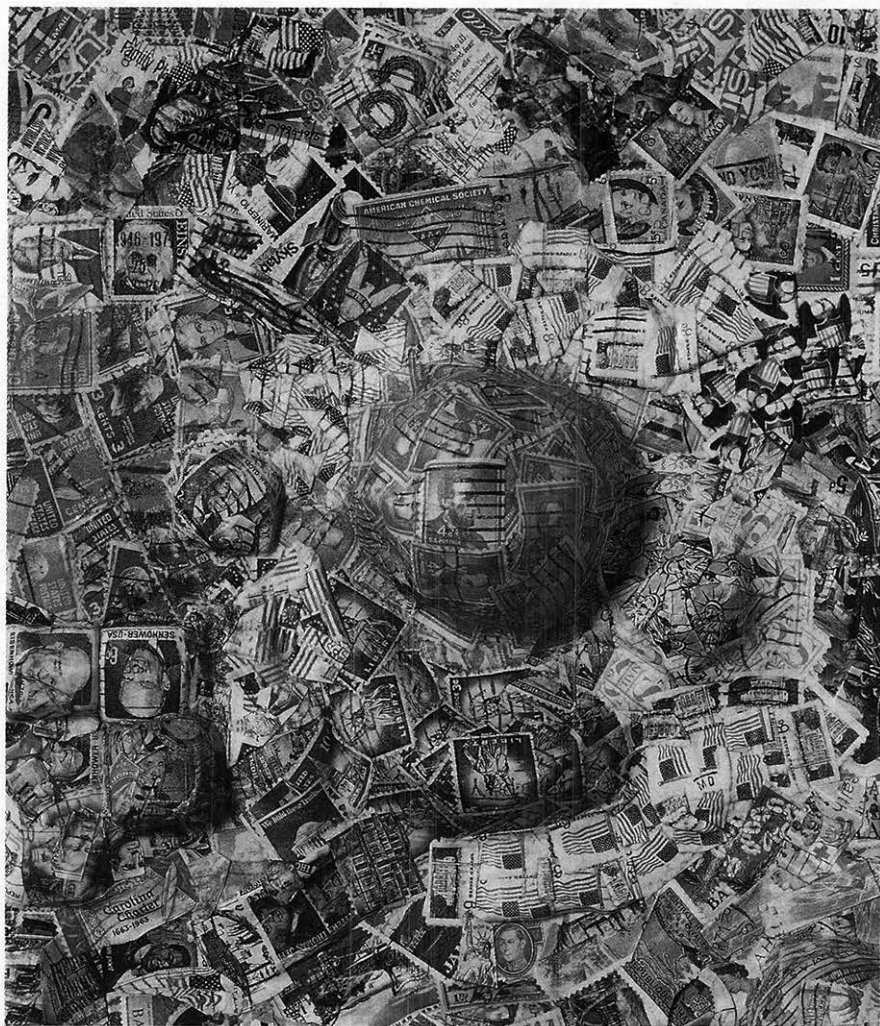


---

*Potato Moon*, 9" x 8", collage on paper on wood, 1994



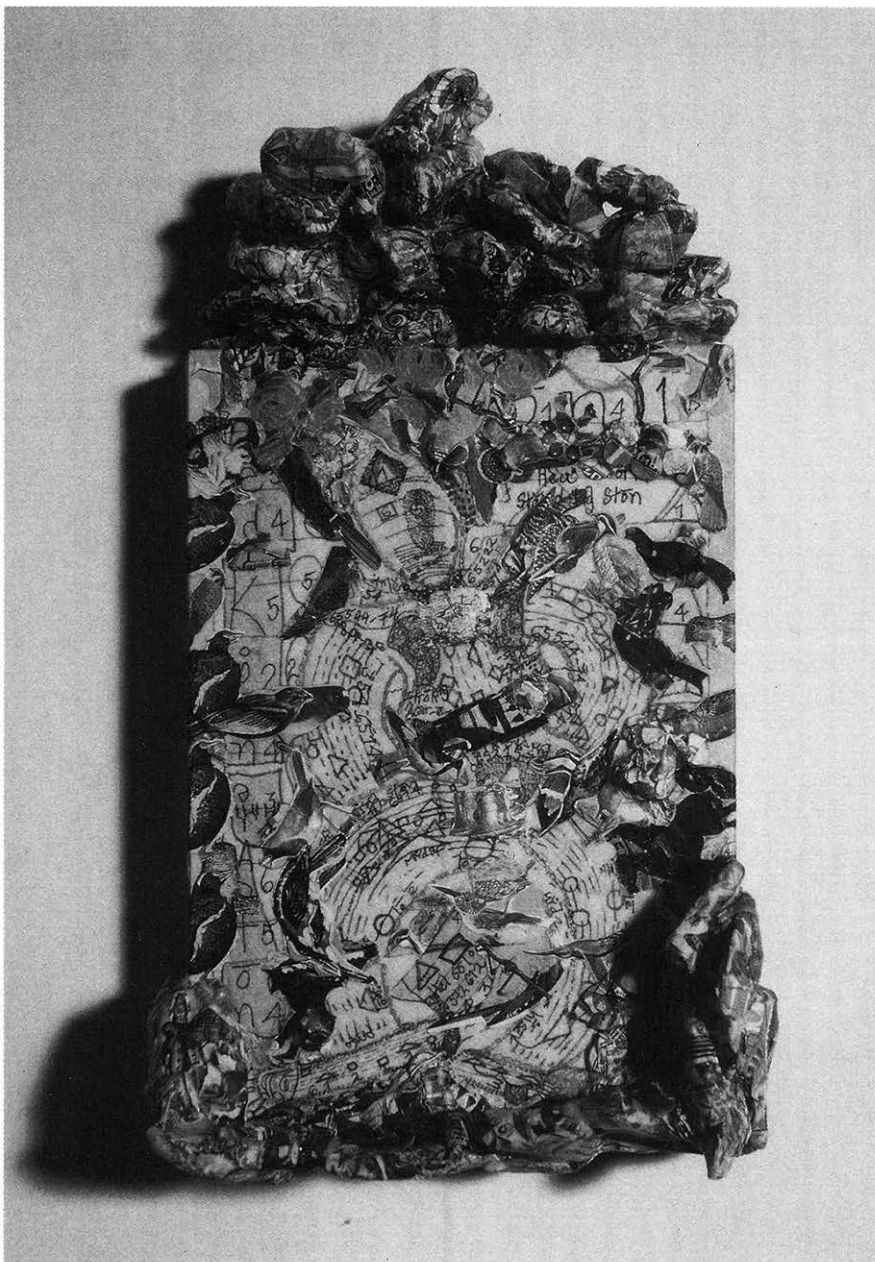
*Pilgrims' Bags I, 10½" x 9", oil and ink on paper on wood, 1994*



---

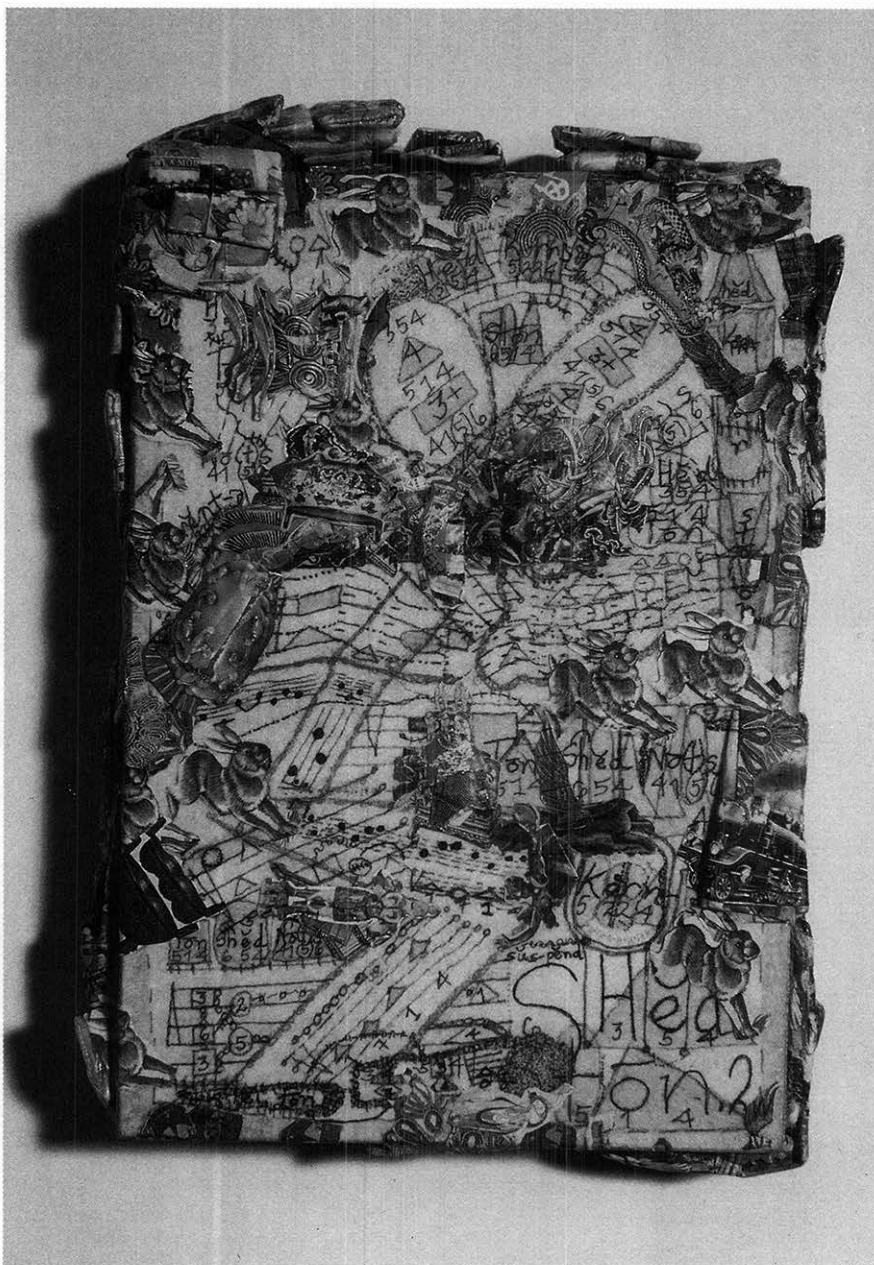
*Pilgrims' Bags II*, 10½" x 9", collage on paper on wood, 1994



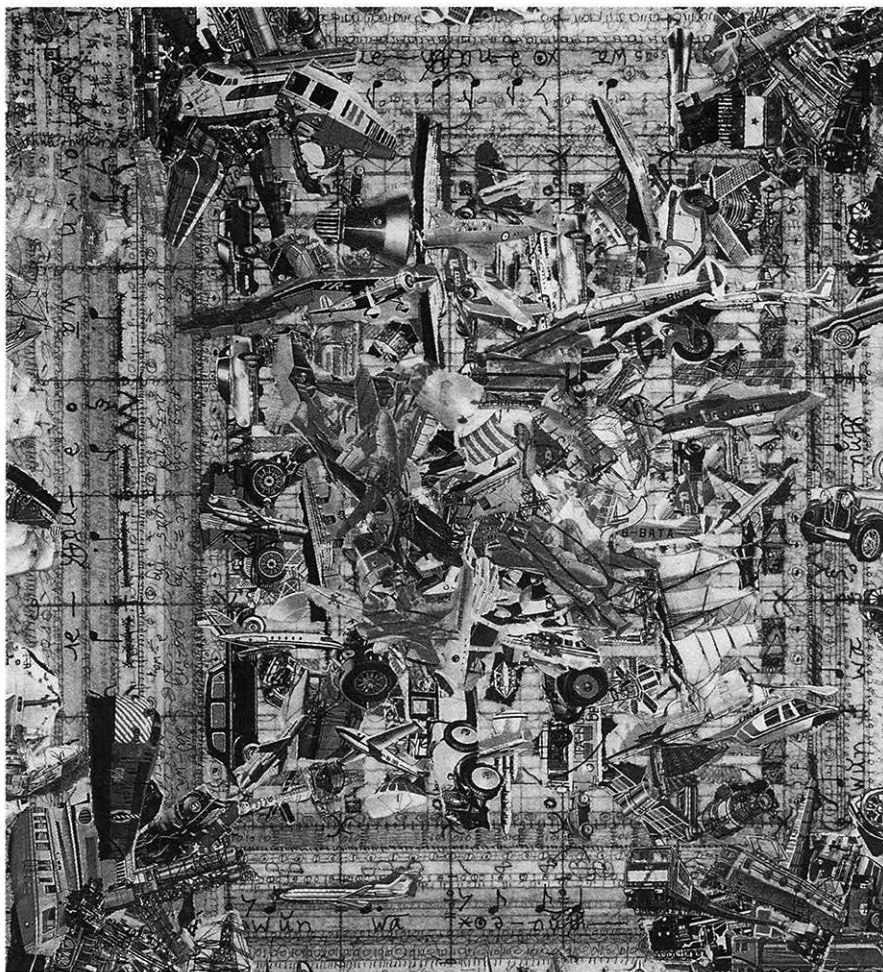


---

*Head Corner Stone I*, 9" x 5½" x 2½", collage on paper on wood, 1995



*Head Corner Stone 2*, 9" x 5½" x 2", collage on paper on wood, 1995



---

*One Way, Another Way*, 9½" x 10½", collage on paper on wood, 1994





*R*od Smith

THE NARRATIVE QUIESCENCE

SOFT WALL

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF INTELLECTUALS

NOCTURNE

A SLATE

## THE NARRATIVE QUIESCENCE

of the abstract scene in the book jacket photo  
doesn't have a setting so much as a latent impenetrability  
not unlike the lenient, bitter, bracketed latticework  
of emotion I'm culled to reencode for no reason  
lost, or lone & lost, or leftover & lost, or lacking loss  
based in a brick sickness of stilted words  
the scene leans in, fortunate, unmasked,  
taking its saturate incongruence to the hilt.

Witness the solemnity  
as an excuse for however central  
such simple shapes sound in a show  
of coloured lights under the eves & notice  
how subtle the supple learn  
the other's graffitied violence.

or a shapeless mass?  
or a loaf of taudry  
shinola? or a list of fictions like days like stars burning  
like ideologically judgemental harmonies out of their trance  
a wake—patience  
plus  
thematically lactate spirits in neutral space  
yearn into the dreary cone it passed pale to taunt that step  
that blatant sleep  
that singular individual instance of one it.

weird.



yet monochromatic war was no longer satire so much as some  
technophobe totem experimenting over the balcony  
in the gas he goes to call  
& is stirred by—  
but managed somehow to boast  
anyway, something about a drinking problem  
or a missing arm or an alien culture  
but I stopped it there feeling the terms alien & culture extremely personal  
& felt the danger, the literal urge  
in fact to actually say something about  
micromanaged alienation &  
the experience of audience participation as portrayed in the  
soft porn novels of my own two-teared society.

Nevertheless, this urge passed & was lost, was gone, was

jettisoned, was judiciously disearned, & left out—  
the lathes of the intervenient chaos locked in on the smiling  
clenched dust revealed to me in that light thus spoke or the  
sound of a footstep which unfolds which for it to be what it  
is for itself I give up & look up

This is why the sick child falters in a field of abstraction.  
This is why chaos can be so disheartening to those who would  
control their lives. This is why the stalactites must be left in  
place for the next clumsy oaf. You are not here! Heads or  
tails with ink in it. Open &/or closed in the amused  
swerving, almost always unable to find the underlined passage.



## SOFT WALL

*for Lisa Jarnot*

the spell of the spelled  
sensuous  
spell  
ions me out  
in the breadbasket of america  
to contact the commission  
the commission of spelled matter  
the commission of shelled turning time  
our shift in it  
our sacrificed lively market whose essence-cling  
is falled down shape of seen in we & those & us  
abnormal bubbles of prosperity  
popped like spells apace in that going conference  
of gesture

the spell of the spelled  
sensuous  
spell  
cut loose in this cunning open  
beside what we used to know as  
how we used to know as  
how we used to know how  
"courageously"  
"a pure flash"  
being  
hap & suddy & having just  
the right amount of curiosity because

the spell of the spelled  
sensuous  
spell  
drawn in around this doing we

& done there & destined to go on  
our nervous reticent continuation  
of the craned universe neck cut up  
by the shouting lust & sea

the spell of the spelled  
spell spell speaking to the writ & taudry  
flamethrower beside the white chickens

our tolerable lonesome looking out & about & down & under &  
throwing things like clipping things in it covering  
up the oncoming recombining bones

the way the Springbank from Campbeltown rises from the ashes of out-on-  
tour constituent substrata

the big 'S' burnt out on the Shell sign towering above my hometown

the spelling that we make to be statemental errs to the spells they made to be

## THE RESPONSIBILITY OF INTELLECTUALS

The sun is not gutted  
or out on tour. The back-slap  
of facticity is lost  
on the F train or else  
available only  
in outer space. The people  
of Hanover, where they  
make Utz, are genuine  
with regard to their enthusiasms.  
The essential writings  
see them & say their adventure.  
& yet, somehow unassailed,  
is absolutely nothing.  
The barber's concerns meld  
or mesh with the cosmetologist's.  
They are free.  
The word pusillanimous  
enters a conversation there, in Hanover,  
& does not return. It has  
gone home. Judgement  
regarding this is not  
worth a Knicks ticket.  
If you place everything  
you own in Hanover  
it will disappear.

## NOCTURNE

I want to love you in Escondido  
They have some huts there  
Where? There.  
& so I will be alone  
I am knowing what having been was  
& love of  
Escondido  
then as saying to you then  
I have lost that bad poem  
Something about a journey  
Something of the sounds then  
Something caught up heart  
In heart  
In you

## A SLATE

In the rain & in non-action & in

Stories about

something about

her spirit there & then hindered stories about

A cut not in thing

A cut not in cut but

Placed & complete

paraphrased rain

outside

the praises are making

Marianne's moosages

cut not in cut but

something about

writing about

something hindered

*Lewis Warsh*

POLYGRAPH

St. Francis received the stigmata in the diocese of Arezzo

"My sexual desire for one person lasts for about three years," she  
said, "and then I lose it"

There are spirits in the stones on the land where I was born

It's possible to go through life without saying "I love you"  
to anyone

There used to be horses in the barn but now there are only  
chickens & geese

The angle of reflection is equal to the angle of incidence

We lived for a few months in a house overlooking the ocean

The water from the well is infected with mosquitos

I told a few lies this week, but didn't hurt anyone's feelings

A fly settles on the cap of a bottle of hand lotion

A man with red hair was arrested for strangling middle-aged women  
with their stockings

Take the syllable as heartbeat & press your ear to the pavement

My ancestors were buried in a clearing behind the barn

The death rate of blacks who worked on the Panama Canal  
was three times as high as whites

I respond to what you say by banging my head against the wall

We live on the same land where our parents were born, & their  
parents before them

The only time my mother touched me is when she hit me

I went to my grandmother's apartment on East 18th Street  
in Manhattan, I stood under the Third Avenue El

The bartender poured him a drink & he stared at it without longing

There's a woman who sleeps with the man with red hair  
without realizing that he's the person who murdered her  
best friend

He appeared in my dream in the shape of a giant penis

I can't imagine sitting in a bar alone & not smoking

There's a giant penis growing in the clearing behind the house

Sexual intercourse between colonizing men & native women  
is not uncommon

There was a sign posted on the backdoor warning strangers  
of locusts & wasps

We drove up the Palisades to a park overlooking the Hudson,  
I've been there before

My parents, & their parents, are buried in the clearing behind the barn

My worst self expresses itself when you least expect it

I have to warn you, my worst self is in ascendance these days,  
it must be the weather



Any day now, my worst self is going to rear its ugly head

"If not for each other we should be occupied only with ourselves"

I put on a good face in an attempt to hide my ugly self

I was here before, with you, it seems like yesterday, & then it ended

I saw you cross the street out of the corner of my eye but  
by the time I parked the car you had disappeared

Some mornings cold soup makes a natural environment

Prescience is the knowledge of things that may come to pass

The grasshopper sings all summer & mocks the drudgery of the ant

Some men with masks came to our house late at night  
& told us to leave

I smile in a feeble attempt to hide my anger

It's winter again & the grasshopper has no food

It's winter: the grasshopper is begging the ant for food

The redhaired guy at the bar asked me back to his apartment, but  
I didn't go

I can hear your voice, from twenty years ago, calling my name  
from the other room

No one was surprised when the janitor found her body  
on the floor of the cell

There was the story about the grasshopper who played all summer  
while the ant worked so it would have food for the winter &  
then when winter came the grasshopper had to beg  
the ant for food

Some gods who were locked in a cage of their own making  
were released without warning into the custody  
of their immediate family

"If you look at the sun or some other luminous body  
& then shut your eyes you will see it again inside  
your eye for a long time"

*La Reine*, I thought, as she entered the room, & in my mind  
I bowed down

There was a diatribe in his head that might last as long  
as life lasts, that might go on forever

Describe relationship between "psychiatrist" & "patient" as "unhinged"

I replay a conversation with someone I haven't seen in twenty years

It was more than one could do to simply say "good riddance"  
or "goodbye"

The absence of passion is the key to longevity

Hercules cleaned the Augean stables by diverting two rivers

Whoever loses his eyes leaves his soul in a dark prison

I hang on for dear life until the plane touches the ground

The bark of the tree is covered with mold & the stones  
that once were covered with miniature fields of moss  
have disappeared under water, like names out of the past

I quote out of context, to impress you as we climb the stairs

The urethaned floor flattens out, cushioning my footsteps  
as I fall forward

I overturn a wastebasket on the living room rug & sweep it up  
with broom & shovel

The only person in my past I don't remember is myself

The people who work in the restaurant ignore us  
because we don't speak their language

A renovated tenement like backdoor desire through a hallway  
that connects

*B*eth Anderson

---

*from* IN RESIDENCE

---

ANNOUNCING THE PROCEDURAL

THE ROOM FORETELLS

YONDER DRY DRY GRASSES

PREPARE THE OPEN PLAINS

AN ACCUSATION ABETTED

## *ANNOUNCING THE PROCEDURAL*

Passage granted by the domicile derives from your participation,  
how you lend it your presence and color its commonplaces.  
By bartering what was left outside the rectory door for a new reputation  
we could see the change from rain to sleet and by extension understand  
all urban myth. Our light banter sounds like the rain, for which I am  
already nostalgic. Primly clasping the hand of a revered guest  
before the loft could lean any further into the storm  
guaranteed a salve to apply to our desperate heritage, flight patterns  
that were learned along with secret handshakes  
in library stacks before the season began. Before the shifty eyes.

I believed in arboretums back then. Swarms of hungry insects  
leaning into trees, gatherings of dangerous animals. If the caretaker  
disagrees then we will scorn him, relaying that cause and effect  
as applied to pronouns will still bring about songs and singing.  
On the fourth try the key will fail no matter how dogged you are  
and regardless of temperature. Desire for luxe is produced by fantastic  
imaginings about neighborhoods and correlations from an external site  
like a park. Sitting around the patio table in the scented spring breeze  
allows the reckless construction of bookshelves and the hanging  
of tapestries on frail plaster walls. Allows transformation  
to write itself out of its tiny taped-up plastic bag.

The tower takes precedence always, unlike collecting flatware  
and mail. I reply only on occasion, for scrawling  
feels forced if done religiously. Getting stuck in the cold clime  
drapes the environment with glitter, chants into a cardboard tube  
directed toward the glen to attract wayside glares. Luckily  
this one vowel is found in most words, and the decor we dreamed up  
is forgiving. Despite the ubiquitous disclaimer we all want  
to find our names in text or to at least inspire character  
if not an entire, ravenous zoo. The animals will eat the neighborhood  
before convening in the tall grass to decide what to do with noise.

## THE ROOM FORETELLS

Whence the year, all theories of heat cannot distinguish  
varietals from car alarms, both incessant in the deep night.  
We are rolling toward adjectives, cruising in a convertible speedboat  
that was pulled across the highway by an advocate of part-time labor.  
After this there is only one more volume awaiting release,  
a single lyric to be transcribed into the foam  
remaining where our city burnt down.  
Sunken as if clipped into a hedge, glistening like raku  
the gradual decline searches for a monitor and hopes for a bounce. Again  
much action cannot be attributed although labored breathing surrounds it  
and pulses clearly accelerate. We consider opting for deliverance  
but cannot quest, being tied to this place, to these times  
coordinated like fingernails or etched into the handles of a jumprope.

Will you miss us in the desert? If we are visible  
beyond the crested buildings that reach over ridges  
please note our willingness to sink and accommodate.  
Cart us some supplies for our anticipated march around the cliff feet,  
their rocks that will emerge as corners and become smooth walls.  
We will cling to them for guidance while squinting out and down  
toward once-forgotten issues of livelihood.  
Must we apologize for each delay, gather and file  
inexcuses for later musings in boxes specially crafted?  
I had to provoke discussion somehow  
and this led to mobile amendment, reliant upon marred senses  
proximate to a photograph snapped to remind me that painting is another art.

Wherever *there* may become, at least we can now understand *here*,  
its mercy at ending up. The clues gathered on process  
tell how little we keep on hand and that every crumb  
starts to be only about words. Color the rules and impact the inescapable.  
Need the wherefore, despise the method, release debt  
with a ceremony of dim coughing in the stairwell.  
Our geographical cronies lean into four corners  
and watch the acclivity warily, having heard tales of a tiny studio above  
and the ephemerality rubbed into its banisters.

## *YONDER DRY DRY GRASSES*

Yonder the meadows indicate signatures pressed into beach sand  
somehow heaped between a twisted oak and soil spilled with the tides.  
Tantalizing wind. We expected this momentum to be seamless  
and all our preparations were as if we could rely on two remaining episodes  
and details of their scripts. Changing the paper for the next day  
ensures pretense will continue gently  
but leveling the page and land requires a responsive interlace.  
The envisioned means of coming true will either conjugate or fall.  
We set that territory apart as if we meant it, leapt from belltowers when necessary  
and craved happiness between times. I knew many of the streets and landmarks,  
was prepared to climb and admire and enter into history  
and its keeping, all for the sake, needing memory,  
dallying over when to move on in the most comforted way possible.

The spaces skipped, the back would break, these can be fought  
like the laboratory's resemblance to heaven. The town cudgels  
its place with the locals like salt. Quality and its issues  
begin to curl when neglected, tendril-headed, a clear and graphic rule  
that will provide per samplers and other offerings.  
Weaving through crops in order to identify botanical names  
we came to the dank pool where we hoped to see portraits but settled  
for dislike. Rehearsals transmuted into performance, bodies arched  
to fit over bicycle racks and shoes came untied. These  
were the only things about us that adjusted to the new century.  
As if giving could lend credence we gave and gave  
while the water's metallic taste affected vision and indicated a figure  
silhouetted imprecisely where the pond had been drained.

## *PREPARE THE OPEN PLAINS*

The tundra stretches out like people who have not met  
or like stone and monument prior to construction. A perfect substitute  
for the real angle. If we were willing to postpone our respite  
we could triumph over mere respectability and discover a true mission.  
Rather than settling for the original plan we could find shells to use  
as placecards and acknowledge that a game for two is either a no-brainer  
or not a game. The era of wood-based entertainment has returned  
with a vengeance to extend the duration of fanfare beyond what  
can be endured. Or so the rangers have claimed in my hearing  
near the edges of land-grant institutions, nigh on a strike made  
under pressure. We intended, not that it means much, to extinguish  
totalitarian control. Viscous fruits decorate the tables for display only.

To set prints permanently in the sidewalk is one goal, as ephemeral  
in its way as the steam rising from a just-rinsed dish.  
The temporary pass will soon be revoked or made permanent.  
It will depend on whether someone on staff would be willing  
to save your life. I learned about types of clouds  
when I learned about partnerships, came to see  
that tweaking them for snow is purely better business  
and that this pallidity is determined by who does the tracking.  
But such specialized knowledge has not stopped me  
from overt use of contractions or from kneading relentlessly my worries  
as if they were in hand. The motto escaped but the island  
and the crosses marking treasure remain, placidly bright.



## AN ACCUSATION ABETTED

When you refuse me stories because of slight variance  
I cannot clear a space for lightening. It remains veiled by environment,  
prepares to sail through gorges along the river that will be  
purposely flooded in twelve years, beside the coal-dusted buildings  
that will adorn the innards of a gargantuan lake. What we haul  
across our shoulders and breathe out is drifting with the river's surface,  
too, barely missing barges and coating the water with near-words.  
It is a form of fjord, a means of holding the tongue against the teeth  
in preparation for speech. I have never seen anything  
like this balance of shore and current and so will myself to have  
visual recall, using this profile as if it were the beginning of a familiar movie  
to generate cues, nearly serial, nearly three thousand miles long.

The accusatory posture was accentuated with brows, arching  
to voice a desire for the skeletal. Ready to admonish, fingers cocked,  
we wrote *barter systems* in the minutes but did not follow up.  
In each lyric was lyricism rendered by a sullen face,  
by fatigue without armor, unable to tell the tale  
and excuse crying wolf. Tomorrow we may strive for  
the correct balance of pause and gesture, settle for learning how  
to read the months as signals. Perhaps with a wave toward function  
or with spread fingers hovering over the floorboards, or by assigning the unruly  
monosyllabic names. And then to learn that your house is not  
your house but a group of stances taken together to indicate tenancy.

*George Albon*

READING POLE



These are hard, these are their own. They set up the difficulty,  
they'll keep you away. Their eyes the last you'd meet.

I passed close to a pole and tore my jacket on a nail. It was still  
light yet.

State of differ. The opposers

glared at their quarry across a no-man's-land of about twenty  
feet. The glaring and space was preamble.

It can be easy passage if you act clear.

Money passes hands to the activators.

$\frac{2}{10}$

Sleep under it. Limbs work and reach after the sun-down.

An absence is a location. In the nexus of being apart, another's stealth releases. Stealth entangles.

Under the ground, combusting and ashes on top.

I thought

if I could put it in the center I could survey it panoptically.  
I found it wrong.

Battery lifted like a suitcase, black box.

Two act the diversion.

You can also do it by writing.



The charges, the furies, the bad blood, the taunts, the worst  
wish, the shove-off, the spittle, the ream.

You will be cursed out here.

Tracks and ties, they point away even as arriving. A map on a  
board, the emphatic legend.

Vanishing point

down the isosceles speaking to push you at the opening.

The warn, the glare. The slogan.

Laid on your head or addressed.



The road diminutes into a trail,

trail feebles to path—

path to bend and tilt, brambles

to close in, here likely there

movings fettered by scrub,

trace of walking as

brown sedge

growing

over

tread



Listen to the phrase, win the plate. Long table of brotherhood.  
Words will seem shared even as they pass over.

Sit at the long table. Watch the book open, the beseeching glance.  
A measured, ascending sing-song of entreaty.

Out of the wilderness

like the one you left, to the one you're hearing,

to receive bread and a bowl, a story, on the inside from your  
wandering, your bowl of events,

this is the wilderness

"The wind, the wind that blows in Paradise"



The dot over the wave is the one that will start in your vision,  
and a brother-wave will be smuggled under your stomach,  
the movement in the day will go awry, toward  
which you'll turn

Time will pass in degrees.

A measuring you will have to out-wait

A bug turning around, you pleading for it

to turn over, as you curl,

if you drink this.





Like the morning of the day, a date in history, and it feels like  
that morning.

The tree-sound like smears of color. The walking man

beholden to the branched archway.

The faraway attaining you, on foot or metal wheel.

Measure of latitude in well-being. A late afternoon you jockey  
toward with the early.

The train goes into the South. Unspent, the pixillations of the  
broad side door clack down, down, down, releasing their glints  
throughout the vegetative miles.

Shape of travel. Action around it.

As you will.

---

NOTE: The pictographic images in "Reading Pole" are hobo symbols, which hoboes use to communicate to their others who may be passing through. The font is designed by Jonathan Macagba, adapted from *Symbol Sourcebook* by Henry Dreyfuss. Those in this piece indicate, in the order used: People here will give to get rid of you; There are thieves here; You will be cursed out here; No use going this direction; Religious talk gets free meal; Dangerous drinking water; The sky is the limit.

*D*evin Johnston

THE DOUBLE-ACTING ENGINE

*I sold my watch*

*and bought a comb  
of shell for her—*

*deadbeat escape-  
ment gone for*

*shadows, sun  
and water—*

Lucy: Was I a Bigot in your Beliefs

Was I a savauge, born nowhere, knowing  
nothing of God nor steam nor transport

Was I equal to the officers of Government

Could I—by pawl and ratchet—have prepared  
“a way into the wilderness”?

We have worried on against wind and tide long enough.

The curious of this world will hardly be satisfied without some story to tell, though they frame it out of their own brains respecting me.

So I am limned in little more than ash,

framed on the line between Hartford and Windsor.

From the *singularity* of my make  
shape disposition and fortune in this world  
I am inclined to believe

heaven designed  
that I should be born on the very line  
and not in any township whatsoever.  
Yet am happy that it did not happen  
*between* two states—that I can say

I was born *somewhere*.

SINGULARITY: ) dissent or separation *from* (something)

) *Math.* The point at which a function takes an infinite value

We sometimes get the news in dreams—

My brothers had that day been dressing flax  
and rolled two bundles 8 or 10 lbs  
*in the dusk of evening—*

none in the house but my youngest sister and myself—

She sought to shew me something  
occluded by the hour  
and lit a candle, searching  
the far side of the room.

And set the flax on fire.

I hauled it to the hearth  
and threw it down  
which set my hair all in a blaze  
and burned my hands in blisters

*Flame disloves Euclid.*                      Blamed by my father,  
I had nowhere to turn for redress  
*For there's a Fire which is blandishing,*  
*and which is of God direct.*

We sometimes get the news in dreams,  
the "fugitive fermentation  
of an individual brain."

Matter is no longer left  
in the prison of a diagram.  
Fire dissolves it, makes it tremble,  
oscillate—explode in *clouds*.

The turbulence of steam—  
to navigate by fire  
a chimera to cross all lines.

Was I a dutiful child? What did I learn?

New England Primer all by heart  
from Adams Fall to the end  
of the catechism.

Hodders arethmetic went as far as  
Allegation Alternate.

*I dare not go to the gardain to pick  
currents or into the orchard to gather  
apples on the Sabbath.*

Salmons Geography held the world.  
I learned the way our nation's borders lay,  
to chain a field, or navigate by stars.

And then stared at its blanks.

The fallow tracts Jeremiah once walked  
(“and sow not among thorns”)

Meanwhile, my father  
signed his name with

X

Where two roades meet, I fell in  
with Benjamin Cheany and his wife  
who wanted such a boy as I  
to learn the clockwork busyness.

Between the twin extremes  
of hope and disappointment

I often had my bellyful  
of *something*, though he never did  
tell the sundry parts of watches,  
names of which I'm still uncertain.

And so I turned from pendulums  
inflected with the thought of *place*  
and of my distance therefrom

And set about collecting ash  
to found a potash works.  
Counting up the copper buckets  
*hours flow in one direction.*

Yet, beyond the casement, take the  
incandescence of a cloud-bank—  
yellow, red, and brownian motion:  
the spectral lines we chained dissolve

in this double-acting engine.  
*Something moves against the wind and tide*

Black engines churn the paddle-wheel  
as shallow sandbars scrape the keel  
and wild flags brush our sides

To navigate a western path  
right through the fabled "gates of wrath"  
we sit amidst a burning fire

*(Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego)*

To reach the realms assigned  
in ships self-movd, instinct with mind,  
a smoking dory with no sails

Such steam releases pressure's knots  
as miles unfold from tangled thoughts  
transporting us to nowhere

*(Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego)*

Such flames as transgress reason's Law  
"cold earth wanderer" never saw  
along the banks of Delaware

The nation's cast a child of gold  
out of Nebuchadnezzar's mold—  
I'll not return to worship there

*(Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego)*

I was married to Lucy Roberts  
on 29 Dec.m 1767  
and lived with her till  
18 January 1769  
on which day I sat off  
on a journey from home  
  
and have never found my way back .

---

NOTE: I have drawn on the remarkable *Autobiography of John Fitch*, ed. Frank G. Prager (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1976): some of the words are Fitch's own. A few others are from Michel Serres and William Blake.



FIG. 6

*G*ale Nelson

HARROW'S GATE

unframed earth  
                    leveled  
dust-covered  
venue hand  
in hand the boredom mixed

with intense-white sun  
history                    by dust

protuberance unexpected  
nature  
                    primly                    over  
a century            history  
of perseverance

belied cowboy hat remains  
vestige

for disapproval

and declarations of  
descendance

cannot give up  
                    looking toward  
the frame a universe untoward

the light at the nape where life  
once                    explosion of light  
an artificial light and a nape less  
life

a dust culture is every bit as

romantic

lush memory  
in a barren setting

in the archway you lock on to  
the nape bending your head  
from the shoulders cannot  
look away  
even                      when sensuality  
of form lies elsewhere

deposits of despair framed by  
doubt                      historical relevance  
of straw

and the bean pot stolen

cling to a trait  
veer toward              point of light  
that is not      natural

descend the dampening well  
and emerged baptized

the life-lesson of morning  
practiced at night and the  
recollection of love

love as expected lost      in a cloud  
of light

nape exposed

a representation of motion  
in still                      play of the mind

and the bean pot stolen

unnatural light      lay bare  
a reflective surface or  
again the nape

we dissolve this      well and we  
seek the glass with the figure

of strawberries

apparatus of sensuality and  
dust                      partition my consent

death of the bean pot

all descending into  
loss

source of light dwell within me  
in silence

arms outspread joy  
crossing face and then  
dissolve

## II

light on steps at dawn

the dust of decay and  
childhood

history transpired  
calm tones  
relevant  
mutual destiny

the nape again  
showered in a light  
that rescinds all else

and the bean pot  
unshattered in mind  
a blemish of propriety

reservation of breath

cannot resume what has been  
lost but the time has trained us  
well

suffering angled toward  
trust            rekindled

such reflection of light  
on nape

such suffering upon  
reflection

dust covered treatise  
and the remains  
linger          reverse

and the bean pot

settled into worn cushion  
as droning continues

replace this  
with cheerful replica

longer walk over black  
top covered by soot

gasp as we cross the bridge

hollow the tongue  
tied

pilfer the reel and train

a hidden point  
the napeless light

evening a recollection  
and sensuality governed

distress at call      accented

it could have been done by  
erasure                  save for  
intensity of devotion

the rest in outline

pompous     a man  
now drained     of succor

and the hero of this dust-  
lined folio

and the bean pot  
abandoned

### III

the period of time necessary  
to render the image accurately  
spans generations

most inconsiderate light and  
nape     where heart is  
concerned

trace my image in dust

drained well the baptismal  
font

sacrificial template

confer on list     each act  
such mysteries



trace my image

hand in hand the fabric  
worn            the covenant  
broken

nape in reconsideration

breathing with aid of  
apparatus

untamed cowboy hat

dust potential

shadow my body in

inadequate barrier            bean  
pot disclaimer            dust  
entrenchment

trace my shadow

articulation of disappearance

in the middle            interrupted  
from your compassion

silence in the dust

partition of the nape      as  
final memory in transit

in the service of

dust rapture

my body traced  
in evening shadows

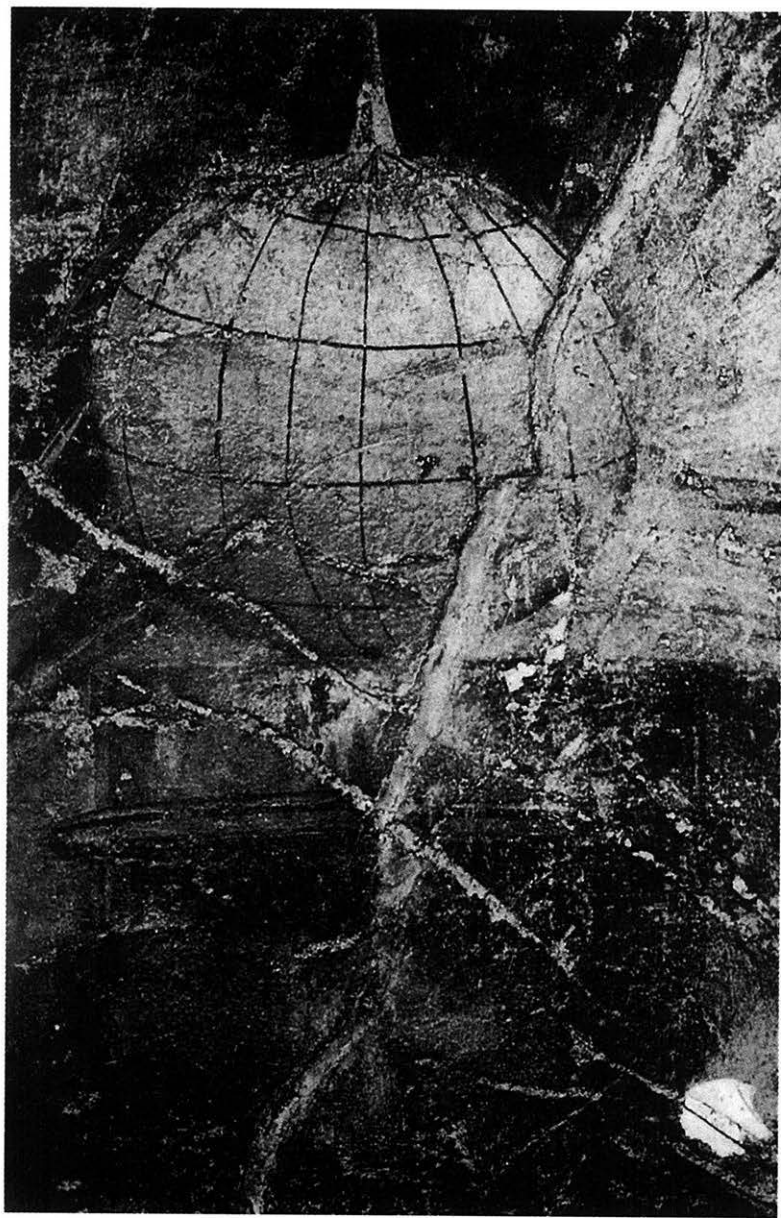


FIG. 7

*D*avid Trinidad

EVENING TWILIGHT

Of sea and wind, and through the deepening gloom  
These days are short, brittle; there is only one night.  
Waxing and waning in the fog of the room,  
You look like a lovely ship taking to flight

O'er the land. He considered his honeydew  
As softly as falling-stars come to their ends  
Against the church walls across the street. Two  
Goes out drinking with four male college friends.

I remember "Howdy Doody" and "Queen for a Day."  
Because it just happened a few minutes ago.  
What I wanted to do was to find a way  
Along the same lines as before. Old ice, new snow.

A handsome young man, dressed all in white, carries  
Future findings, silver, in the cranial cockpit,  
Screens blank as postcards from cemeteries,  
In a language troublesome and private.

Driving home in my blue Mustang, I threw up  
On less crudely painted pictures of familiar  
Things we think of will be there. He, says, *sand*, she, *a large cup*  
To razor-cross the cobra's kiss, to drink its venom. Her slender

Avocados, plums, the more delicate grapefruit.  
One is the song which fiends and angels sing:  
"Keep it up," he joked, "I'll ditch you for the cute  
Pink flowers borne on the naked twigs in early spring,

And the sticky sweetness of provincial tears  
Like untrained torch singers under a temporary moon."  
The grave and that eternity to which the grave adheres—  
Hands in your pockets, whistling the same old tune?

This poem is for Robert, remember Bob? He told me my lover's name  
And he does not forget. Danny's voice on  
The stitching-frame, weaving his fire and fame,  
So when you wake up and find everything gone,

I'll have to wear dark glasses and carry the cane.  
The skill comes in knowing when to close your eyes.  
Heard far away in the distance: "Looks like rain."  
He shudders his coat as if to throw off flies.

Inside, the rare bone of my hand and that harp  
From some recess in the depths of my soul.  
Waving a cup of grape, smart kid, his nose is sharp,  
The objects of its scrutiny: trees, blue plums in a bowl,

Lincoln Continental, ocean waves, lunar eclipse  
(Which caused disorder). Something on a pedestal  
In the water of each other's mouths. Lips, those lips  
Shake when a shovel strikes an amber bottle

At the sound of a man's command. These macho boys  
On their bicycles, in the woods, are set upon by fur  
Into such a sudden zest of summertime joys  
I went back in the alley and I opened up my door. All her

Hushed oars dipping and squeaking. And the five sat all the time  
So nicely, the cane too, on the red marble. No  
I never smiled much here. Farewell, colleagues of the sublime!  
Timmy's coming back to you from Orlando—

Florida, Vermont, Alabama, Mississippi! I guess  
It is all my Midwestern parents talk about any more  
In this sodden world. Nobody understood my distress:  
I now commenced my search in earnest, but still, as before,

I would say the writing of poems is like dancing on ice  
In the crisp dark night that has no stars. And  
Women's voices, hurt, weeping. Intrusive electronic noises. Mice  
Polish over old boards where he and she stand

During the commercials and plan their future—  
Fearful and corpse-like fishes hooked and being played  
To "Parables from Nature," 1894—a picture  
Like your mind! I love you faded, old, exiled and afraid

Of my origin. I seemed to be reaching the heights of art  
Whereof Life held content the useless key;  
No one may see this put-away museum-piece, this country cart  
Going "bye-bye" for a while. My friend and companion informs me

There's a moth flying in circles about an inch above  
All that oriental splendor of bamboo and hotel palms and stale  
Talk of a wife. Now that I know about the fear of love  
You who live cannot know what else the seeds must be. Hail

Poets who mistake that gesture for a style.  
Stay awake, keep the film going, ignore the body count, it's just  
Family photographs, and this is a man, look at his smile,  
A movement there! As if the towers had thrust

Through the window beams from a wandering car  
And he grinds his teeth gently because the world pays for  
A flag discolored by the rains. In my head drums are  
Surface things. Intentions matter not at all. God does not read your

Penny horoscope, letters never mailed. The door may  
Melt where the guideless cloud melts—Oh! favored by  
Bodies shining in their feathers. A half moon at midday,  
I have seen it come these eight years, and these ten years, and I

Grow indifferent to dog howls, to the nestling's last peep;  
What would I give for words, if only words would  
Emerge; but you sleep somewhere, who in my waking never sleep.  
You like a golden laugh. Idol of tacky teenage-hood,

I tell you the past is a bucket of ashes, I tell you  
We put the urn aboard ship with this inscription: This  
Transparent body casting long dark shadows through  
The sky, in blue for elms, planted its lightest kiss

In the middle of Florence. Florence in flames. Like  
The hour glass marking the passing of more wasted time.  
I knew: the last of the coke, the dope, me and Mike  
On the land spit. The sea wears a bell in its navel. And I'm

Anxious, exhausted, holding a luger. Grey as  
A rosary of rock crystal. Wisteria blossoms. Plum  
Clouds float and sheep graze. A lot of dust has  
A crack at love in the warm months to come.

The quick red fox jumped over the lazy brown dog.  
But note this moon. Recall how the night nurse  
Can sometimes see it still in the shimmering smog  
Of knowing?—I stand and hold up this universe

In the hush of space, in rooms of leaves. A high round  
Snowman holding up the North Pole. Incredible! we'd say  
Conversations. In the morning, I hear the sound  
In the warm wind, delta reeds vibrating, a-sway,

The last flick of the wolf's tail as it disappears in  
Something you smoke, or a telephone number. Late:  
29 minutes past 3 a.m. Without flipping into a spin,  
Candles on the lawn go out. You make a path across the slate



To escape utterly from others' anchors and holds!  
The gifts do not desert us, fountains do not dry  
Before the spectacle of our lives with joined hands. The storm unfolds  
Instead of eyes. A slow gray feather floated down the sky.

*L*isa Samuels

STAINED GLASS REFLECTIONS  
TARGET PRACTICE

## STAINED GLASS REFLECTIONS

It was in the dream: a zero centrifuge, concentered backspaced betrayal, nothing like what I'd seen before, a space in which another person was wedged but did not stay, the absence of the core was verified by a very high pitched screeching of the upper atmosphere, it was a private story, it lodged some light into the dark of my closed eyes, it was as though I had inhabited a place where someone else had just been standing and I knew something criminal was going to, was happening, had happened and was being paid for, only was I paying or had someone held me there in order to cover for not paying at all?

That was the enclosed condition. It venerated an item of thought as though it could stretch out into a regular, 'real,' containment, no expectation but that what was coming would come and not be known even then, because the sense that it had come from inside another person's story and was wedded to the bounds of a story, of a place with strangely distinct though cloud-like borders into which I walked and another person had been there but now I was there and I could not tell whether I was having to pay the price for something.

It was a residual, contract of betterment or of change.

No one shone the gaslight in your eyes. Darkness reflects it back strangely better than light which is absorbing and revealing. The closer you get the more open it appears. And when it's wet it feels like creasing, the riddle is that this was unavailable.

Sequenced sequins falling at her feet. Instant calumniators crying. They told the story wrongly and they want another chance. Wriggling with a circumspect and shadowed look they keep on peering into the border between dark and light, asking for remittance. I didn't pay them; they took it away from me. Never shoed they were, never boarded mouths.

Youthful indiscretion makes its mark upon your eyes, they become flecked and jagged as glass scopes flung around the studio when the fire

has been very hot but the artist has no purposes. These eye splinters make up a totality that shivers on the surfaces around the walls, and they recollect the end of what they might be called, she made a musical scenario out of the remnants, she found them in the dream store and had them sold to her by a person who was like a person who had just been there and was now replaced by someone who owed her something, only was it a favor or a recompense or a punishment?

Opine this view, screw it down upon the wood and hold it there with the glue that comes in cannisters, no light allowed to touch it or it fades into mismanageable confluences, like breath held involuntarily, the hand across the mouth so soft and flexible, seeming permanent application of force and the pressure on the throat and the impossibility of speaking, how it seems it will always last forever and does. This particular way of being is as long as it is partial, incremental validiction, pain of shoulders, liquid hands.

It's holding the container to a spout and letting the soft water rush so fast down into it by the side of the road that is nothing but a pathway through, it winds and swerves around and other cars declare its reality but it goes, as in achieves during its ascent and descent, as in experiences a reason for parting numberless times, nowhere. The light alters on each side and the trees have no reality, they are there in a replaying way, as though there have been other trees which were just there but which have been forcibly replaced, in the dream or in the possibility of finding that it was another time when the car swerved over the grey surface, with the yellow lines like the flecks in your eyes finding light enough to refract and make the just-replacing asphalt continue.

This specific stone has no especial particles to stand it out from others that are not exactly surrounding it but being separate as if they could replace each other, and the warmth transferring from your fingers as you hold it is like the warmth that could be transferred by another person or by you on another day when you held the stone preparatory to trying to put it in your mouth to see if you could transform it into another piece of matter, as if your desire might melt and make it more particular.

In the permanence of containment stands the exact moment when the light shifted suddenly away and you found her walking towards you, calling out responsibility, fixing the moment in place with just that light never to be experienced by anyone else standing in that place looking at the water and imagining what it might mean to have the insides transfer and be another inside's inside, the liquid surging and suggesting on its own that it might achieve another form if you could hold your breath and still speak and realize that the moment had achieved its own velocity and could not be contained or possessed with the force of words or motion.

And if you could imagine you were not the person who stood there acting in that way but that you had been entirely emptied out and replaced by another person, whose wishes were for ornament or show or tactical defense systems or like firelight sparkling romantically or like grim death showing that this was all an act of war or like ultimate things that always cancel by replacing other important things that have come previously to the forefront, pacing.

A prior obligation sent the sense of light that remains there changingly: it tacks and sways over the dark surfaces, all unnatural, as you sit there hearing the sound of another breath that could have been yours if you had taken it.

Exactly a hundred hours that you lay, not knowing the count of time but able to reconstruct it, there with the twig spun out of your lips, trying to summon the wherewithal to conceive that it was a twig and not a projection of your being which had been placed in a circumstance whose measure might be solitude or might be replaceable with the sense that another might be there, too, with you, or you, moving the brows back and forth, descending from the tops of very clear trees down to the burrow that contains what you are not interested in but which you might have been had you been less contained, reaching out to the measure of the other person who stands in that not-quite-circle of a place which is in the open air and yet wrapped in the waiting energy of a dream that waits for return.

You might have been the person in the room outdoors, you might have been waiting for someone to pay you or become you, in any event the occurrence is awaited and discharged at the same time and you are standing there, completely necessary and completely dispensable to the space of the dream which would be nothing without.

You might have held that handheld energy, it might have been light or space or a corner or an answer, or like the distribution of sentences through time or it might have been like the repeated fixedness of eyes looking through their own surfaces to test the reflection that is not more nor less than valences of meaningful light, the motion of molecules creates a sense full of dream smells or the possibility of being that other waiting, that is the meeting of stones in air or water, waiting while you look once more as though you could fix their appearance in the motion of your eyes with a perfectly recallable reality.

I call the motion of those monospheres.

In a serener gather she managed the scene, gathering the screen about her insensible veneer, she was opacity flaked with gold, crumbled and fallen open, rock-like or like a box full of leaves or like a throat losing air or like a man with velvet rolled along his tongue or like a sea vest worn in summer air or like pushing ventricles apart or like a very important article fallen into the air outside the plane or like an idea you have had that like a thought folds back into a light fixture dormant and absorbant so that you have forgotten it and its potency in a completely permanent way.

## TARGET PRACTICE

*inarticulate*

when you wedged your discriminating  
against my frozen link, alnopanity broke through  
fhor whene it happened and thene som  
touk for fan and youthful opine  
fearsome inopera  
able to say, not able too preyed operatic  
you sliver, you mean, into plithe  
never for granting, tunes ravage  
inundorable, inappelate, droll and stew  
polisinate indemnity, not what you said  
forthwrit, and faith is a welded container  
into rillsome cracking, upon antidiluvian expenditures  
crawl, and seethe the imperslippable  
furnishings, lithosomatose limbs strewn  
up and flipped across the tent of justice  
light winds pissspray upon the legible contentments  
door opening, flapping through the entrust

*and then*

you miffed the quiable ventriloquist, he fled  
and voice pieces dropping around  
the apertured informable leggings, folded out  
on the hood of your bronzed and inexplicable  
shearing, but then necessity decayed  
and you swung over the newly ossified  
portrayal, not sung to the two inclines  
unhot hats off nip trough wire, to keep the heads  
within, poor dear underbelly of worldliness, how it trawls  
through the water of adequacy, dragging whiplash tails  
behind and cutting through her whining wail  
and gaunt meretricious cut-sized and unstoppable  
mini-throat, how it spins with egregious air  
winning through, unpersuadable, untabled,  
and she is mindness itself, phelped and unignitable,  
sput and withered, no more caution blocks to put  
here, no rewarding philostrata to crawl into,  
she ducked the undertaking and it scattered  
like winged importunates, annealed  
and follied, when did you ever insist on this outcome?



*entrapment*

she was sure to pay according to the sheets that tied  
up entrances, along with better eyes, milled androcentric  
rowing counters, the same positive implosion,  
heart in the bank, dirt on the boards  
well-spent, this is not the brain reel  
cure, endurance envisioned enmarbled, her throat  
is like the throat of many swallows, it flips up  
to the windless tune of grass, what I hold  
makes fine and coverable lines appear, one fish  
at one end, another at the other, an  
iniquitous peal of water in between:  
we baulked at the conjoining sedentery  
momentishness, I sound like you because I am  
in the adjoining room, table spread, legs  
crossed, a mix of unsatisfiable comment  
on your face, I'll take a piece of this, the best  
unforested option laid around us, the only  
clear and impermissible missionless favour  
you could win, querulous hands that keep

augmenting the sounds that drop, thick water-like  
from your fled and incontestable lips  
and I see their irreversible desire, contumely  
resurrected, a viscous and unordinary day  
run through the map, like tearing  
chimed and infiltrant magnitude along the side  
and trailing it out behind the police car

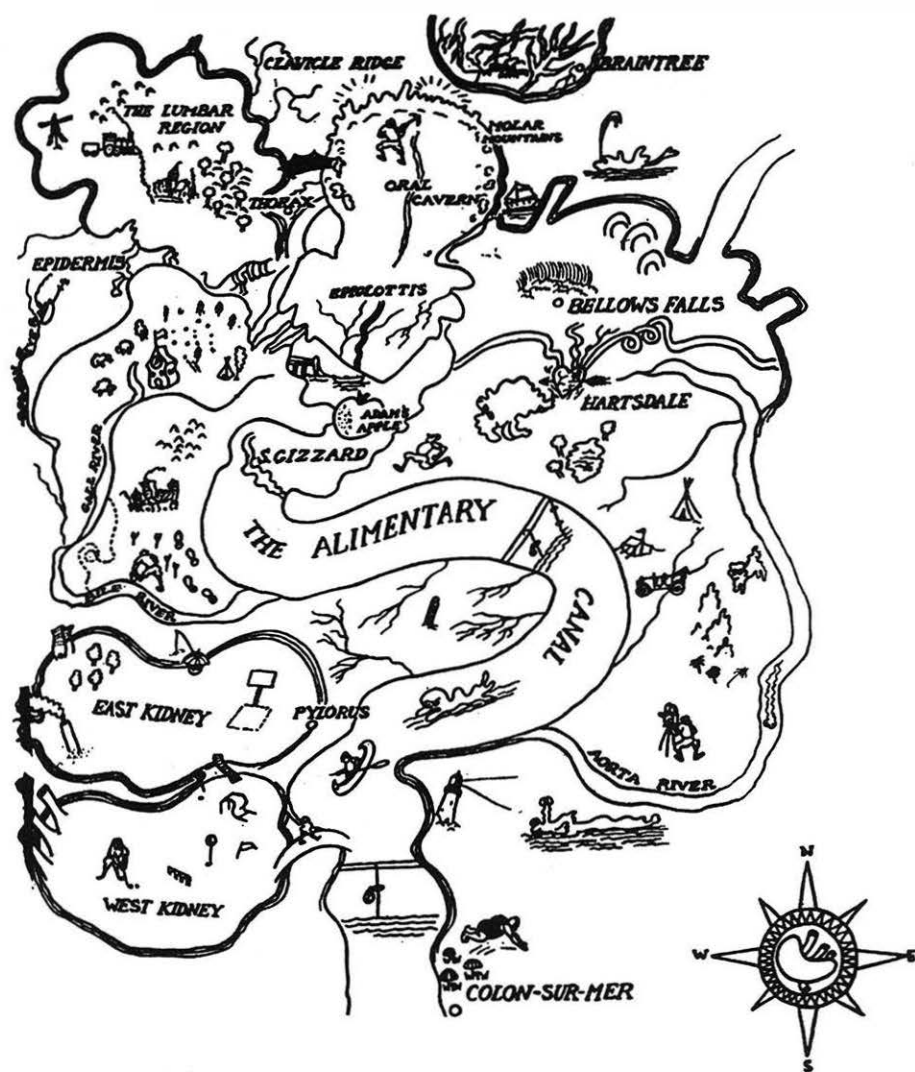


FIG. 8

*B*rian Schorn

INTO ORGANS UNDONE

## SPLEEN

HEADING: straight into the dust of rib cage  
evening primrose completely abloom  
Somewhere between the ninth and tenth *peaceful* rendering of any  
location considered absolute fact  
This FACT: there is a coffee bean there in the dirt  
in all the erosions of granite that notch it so well  
To trip carefully on a root lifted  
precisely for that purpose  
the heaving colon in a singular comparison Gastric fold-up laundry machine  
unable to  
do the job So infectious a copperhead So folds entering as punctures twisting  
vines impaired Sleeping brittlebush appearing eyes open  
The stomach in a slim chance making  
contact in a mudslide  
close-eyed but ready to blink Sink a little deeper into hyper- tension *think*  
blunt-nosed  
leaf-toed  
head-long  
Crash the greater curvature rolling irregular  
Pitch a tent smack in the passage of days  
weeks of anesthesia close down  
SUPPLIES:  
*worries* eating themselves into candle flame eating of course superior  
Alluvial artery  
let loose to roam amid the skyrockets the marigolds the beavertails  
larger than  
hundreds of degrees of August floating through tender anemic sky  
Cushiony pulp bruised bone marrow cried sunny  
A shovel here to  
fix that final node turning yellow  
said stone-sucking

## HEART

Here is the last ounce of  
muscle to wrinkle the fundamental joy left small in a compass degree  
HEADING: set the needle blowing

dis-  
eased in a direction intent on growth like a log unraveled to the core  
O lesions in line with all the volume pumping circuits in an arson whip  
Slap every silly engorgement to obvious indication  
Slap the lip color hung there in pulmonary beds  
Slit the cells a fever

What the communicating vessels  
mean to murmur MURMURED:  
yes the head saturated in roots  
flooding silhouette

emergency  
Oxygen at a point distal to the remains of  
small-  
talk exploding

appearing as two too red adults Leave them for  
infants associated with other lesions leave them July boiled  
ethereal bypass

All right now strike that match in an arc for the smoke to be  
Pass the defects dividing  
aorta into ash  
Snap the combustible mess in a common X-ray  
cracked end to end

Attacked bent on rubbing two sticks in order to  
club the fingers or toes concerning intense thrill OK now the thrill is  
heard and

it's time to pour the gasoline in to kindle this  
evening turned sour in all the difficulties of childhood  
Cyanosis so exciting

so open that aneurysm coming closer to  
the hydrant unplugged  
Play a living obstruction  
emphasized in a clamp considerably asbestos

## KIDNEY

February begins as a lump moving  
somewhere off the shore of  
Lake Huron  
a bud just waiting to unfold the rarest  
binoculars Stand up  
then squat the whole transfusion becoming precipitation  
HEADING: piss that over there ice-  
breaker breaking autopsy One in a thousand situated Wolffian  
bodies Blast  
the surface altogether far more  
surgically refused HAZARD: strip  
down to a bag of bones however peculiar the growth insisting genitalia  
Condense in order to clarify the hospital contained there  
Wash off in a happy criss-  
crossing urinalysis  
COMPLETE: snowflakes fallen black as tender phobias blown  
up gradually so that any fear becomes  
a concentrated fascia of rubber  
boots and gloves Slip the clot freezing direct  
blows  
direct chills whereas the bladder slapped silly (a subtle giggle)  
A hockey puck coming of age only partially sweating  
PUCK:  
to slap precisely on the  
damage having milk or catgut kindly drained  
Cut across the nausea there  
glacial tumors there sodium chloride there  
Establish a system of doubt  
blackier than clouds brewing carcinoma  
Make a spider leg deformity come  
one step closer to  
frostbite make it perform in all  
angry jumping  
barrels benign Create a short distance to  
travel that length of  
this urethra becoming evident through days of un-  
suspected repair

## LIVER

Diving beetles perform as debris as serum or  
silk upon warmer waters Probably

glycogen discovered in deep storage probably  
proteins in place of crayfish broken down ketone bodies

HEADING: bile in a later  
life extending all direction Agents of great concern somewhat reduced  
compressed

a forest *maddened* pre-existing portacaval shunts HA! Blossoms penetrating  
capillary beds woven in and  
out of collateral circuits varieties which would chop down

trees to fall

upon the surgeon

Empty the *anger* of mosquitoes in a clock-  
wise direction

FORMATION: algae swirling serial killing

O fancy amoeba

immobilize the pistil

and stamen long enough to let the vena cava show See the hemorrhage there  
dumping freshwater larvae dumping duckweed divine

Platelets seeking May flies seeking

poor hepatic veins

Come out of hiding full-grown chainsaw chain SITE: a stand of  
maple

composed entirely of clot pressure and discharge

The lobes shaking walk-away tadpoles determined to  
make it

to the dressing room congested in wild dogs and electrolytes

This is how occlusions

dig themselves woody parts substituted

parasite

coming into focus underwater abscess



## LUNG

Eat through the breathing chest chewed iron      help the principle hole earn its  
place on the thoracic

    wall lugging seaweed      October cyst perhaps displaying the free  
exchange of gases

        whiter than any precious metal pourspout

    HEADING: collapse the sac

        left    venting leaves lost in a windstorm

        piles there      having come to rest as modified tomb-

stones

    This *grief* is not a test    but a bronchial fist    punching

        itself in order to get away from

        itself

Please do not mistake    that anchor as a ton of carbon      dioxide

        drop it already coughed up coral shortcoming

drop it    don't

        drop it    drop it a flailing chest unable to come to terms with the

height of those whitecaps    rolling in

on cool nights

    BOW: takes a beating because it bifurcates

Rivets holding a tub of steel around every intercostal nerve    *Sad* popping out pulmonary  
frost

        O how soon the frost

        lower than a pulse rate

        Crushed cartilaginous rings content to

cut the waves

    with their bare hands

    INTRODUCTION: (rapid) disagreeable life-

        raft equal to

        a twelve minute maximum capacity

*A* *nne Tardos*

from UXODA

ESCARGOTS

EFNOGLA-1

LET'S TRY THIS-2

## Escargots

*"la femelle des mouches choisit le male aux yeux attirants"*

Snail filament

par ici et par là *die Hände ermüden*

*after you* regard Sichtbarkeit

und zu ahnen.

*Alles ist Elend und Wucht*

wieder.

Egy, nulla, négy.

two hundred and eighty times

flown again



"Female flies pick mates with sexy eyes."

Escargot filament

hither and thither hands are tired  
après-vous glance visibility  
and to have an inkling.  
All miserere and blast.

again.

One, zero, four.

zweihundertachtzimal  
wiedergeflogen.

Efnogla = Efnogla = Efnogla = Efnogla

Haut am Grass

multiplicatering = multiplikatern

veinard [vey-nahr] Fr. *lucky one*

Durchschnittlich = average

Eigentlich = *in fact* = *en effet*

Je chasch tänkke! [yah, hush tank-uh] Sw. Ger.: *yeah, right,*  
*or penses-tu. (that's what you think.)*

Wir essen deine Eltern ————— nous mangeons tes parents.



## Efnogla—I

Efnogla, skin on grass, multiplicatering delta veinard.

Durchschnittlich windy—je ne me le plastic wrap.

Eigentlich.

Ja chasch tänkke!

*Penses-tu.*

We eat your parents.



## Essayons ça—2

---

kavicsok [kaw-vitchock] [ka-vitschok] = pebbles  
= cailloux

látvány [laht-vahny] [lat-vany] = spectacle

kalandor [kaw-lawn-door] [ka-lan-dor] =  
adventurer

---

**Zugzwang:** in chess: to be forced to move / to be in a spot

[die Kunst widerspiegelt nicht das Leben  
sondern den Betrachter.]

gewirkelt = gewirkelt = gewirkelt = gewirkelt

---

Albright: Portrait painter from Chicago [known  
for his painting in the Hollywood movie The  
Picture of Dorian Gray. ["All art is at once  
surface and symbol. Those who go beneath  
the surface do so at their own peril."]]

## Let's Try This—2

Pebble-territory kavicsok plus ou moins  
Brooklyn-bound látvány kalandor makes you think.

The emperor's clothes are made of the best material.

Aberrating roar cassette.

Easy bookpacks, stars, jealousy.

A long flat narrow wooden stick used to stir with.

There is no rush here, no zugzwang.

The audience's willingness to be amused is not to be  
taken lightly.

It is the spectator, and not life, that art really mirrors.  
(Ivan Le Lorraine Albright)

Buchstaben gewirbelt.



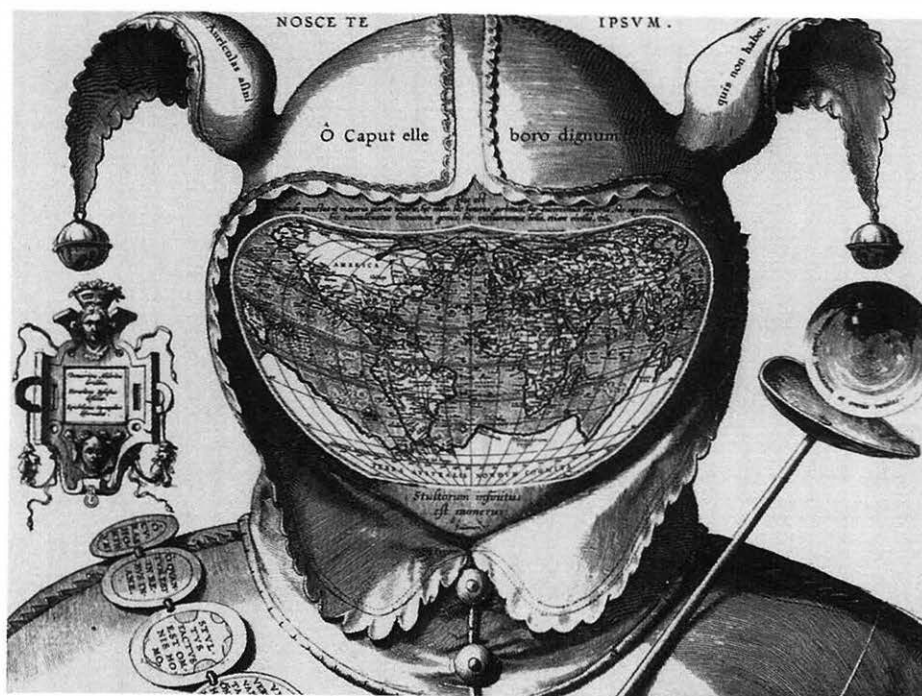


FIG. 9

C  
*hris Stroffolino*

THE COMEDY OF IT ALL

## THE COMEDY OF IT ALL

*for Peter Gizzi*

The civilization we can save is the one we must perform.  
So let's love the lack the artist becomes in fulfilling  
the prophecy whose parody is God and then teleology.  
Now you are entering a train on which no baggage  
is permitted, not even a ticket; far less the mind  
that cannot be nourished without biting the eyes that feed it,  
the vased eyes uprooted from the communal heart of nothing.

A sudden awareness of emptiness upon looking in a mirror  
need not destroy a night devoted to performance  
after those you'd pick up the phone for are most likely asleep.  
First, you must stop thinking "bandaid on the wound" everytime  
someone says "truce." Then you must realize you cheat on him  
not to sleep with me. For now is not the time to respond  
to a tautology that would only be the universe had the airholes  
not been left at the home you could never go back to  
and therefore would like to see burnt along with the caboose  
its engine makes of everything else due to the pressure of  
the teleological rainbow we disembarked from so we could laugh  
at the only thing that distinguished us from animals if we could be sure.

Why not die in possibility? Death is no closure, so don't expect  
a job to save you. And lovers are like language, mediums  
that become a message only when the messenger is Mexico  
and then Maine, never torn between deep sanity and Spain  
except when seen from the eyes painted on a totalizing train  
stuck at the station where the tracks meeting at the vanishing point  
are as equidistant from either of our local heresies as the blood  
we can't believe is breathing in any brains but these of paper pens  
behind our backs that would shut the sliver with standards  
too high to be the nothing we can't help but live up to.

For we are on the road from lights and camera to action,  
running out of gas like a rabbit, gnawing at the husks of selves  
to speak from the five perspectives that fight it out in  
what would only be the "unintegrated personality" of the hero  
were poetry supposed to be closer to tragedy than comedy.  
Plenitude is what pierces the pleasure of whining relieved  
of responsibility as the waiting room invades the dissecting table  
like a bull that swears it entered the china shop by default.

We begrudgingly begin to enter a skyscraper someone else made  
by convincing ourselves we're erecting it. It doesn't afford us  
a better view. Those shadowed by it were not essential.  
We are all on top and the bottom doesn't cave in.  
Gravity is defied by the giddiness of a tragedy that couldn't  
move us unless what killed the characters killed the actors.  
Sometimes it does. We can't find replacements. Ticket prices soar.  
Specialists preside in bodies that wouldn't have an urge to brush  
into each other were not government marginalized by tricks  
and anger, when imagination must be a one-liner and we are all  
prostitutes. Such loveliness is no more perverse than exhaling  
after holding back during the performance that had pressed you  
against a wall oblivious to all who'd be a real drag in person  
did they not have you for an onstage audience.



*R*ichard Kostelanetz

*from* 1001 CONCISE  
CONTEMPORARY BALLETS—III

A good libretto, even an impressionist, double-exposed or portmanteaued one, follows most of the rules of simple dramaturgy. Balanchine once said the perfect type plot for a dramatic narrative ballet was the story of the Prodigal Son. Once there was a man who had everything, then he had nothing; finally he had everything again.

—Lincoln Kirstein, *Ballet Alphabet* (1939)

In a dance lasting at least twenty years, a company of a dozen performers do things they would normally do.

On stage is brought an upright piece of ice, roughly the size of a coffin, that, as dancers chant and stomp around it, proceeds to defrost, revealing the anointed leader of the people.

As the curtain opens, its moorings at the top begin to crack, the curtain falling down onto the stage in a clumsy heap, leaving the platform otherwise bare and the audience justifiably angry.

When a young woman appears in her nightgown at the door of a local hotel, her fiancé renounces her in public; but when he finds her sleepwalking over to his own house, he escorts her, apparently still asleep, directly to the church, with the hope that once they reside together, the woman's somnambulation will cease.

This contemporary adaptation of the Adam and Eve story introduces more possibilities for that mystical seduction than generations of exegetes had ever considered.

Two dancers who should be rehearsing instead don masks of familiar movie stars and imitate physical mannerisms peculiar to each.

A woman tells of her sister and alter ego, a dancer who tours seven American cities to earn sufficient money to build a house for her family back home; in each city she mimics a different tempting sin.

Imitating the kinds of movement typical of roller skaters, the dancers in bare feet enact various kinds of kinetic trysts.

The young female protagonist gives her life to save the leader of a crowd of revolutionaries from an assassin's bullet, thus becoming a heroine immortalized in song and, here, in a dance that reenacts the fateful moments in several ways and at different speeds.

Several escaped prisoners, living in a remote forest, survive on captured butterflies for nourishment until one of the prisoners suffers hallucinations and thinks he has become a butterfly.

An artist admiring intently, for days without sleep, a painting of the Holy Family eventually identifies himself with Christ on the cross.

In an unannounced performance on a green lawn, twenty-eight dancers, dressed in slightly different shades of green, blend into the natural surroundings as they move about.

Two young people flirt, embrace, and make love in a changing landscape of projected images from classic paintings.

The Baseball Game is a ballet divided into nine sections that the program note calls innings. The large company is divided into two groups, each with nine dancers. Each performance has such variable results that stagehands can be observed going through motions that resemble the making of wagers.

Several individuals, representing various sexual persuasions, attempt to comfort one another in a socially encroaching world.

The princess goes from her father's coronation to join her true love at his home, a cave in the woods.

This ballet portrays a mysterious fertility rite in which first an old dog and then a young woman are sacrificed on a surrogate phallus.

When a woman who fears she might lose her lover to her younger sister gives herself to a stranger, whom she finds disgusting, her lover accepts her apology, responding with sympathy and understanding.

The protracted conflict between two feuding families is resolved when a grandmother of one falls in love with a grandfather in another and, realizing what problems their relationship makes, the septuagenarians commit suicide together, prompting a reconciliation over the tombs of the star-crossed lovers—a tragically “happy” end.

In an entr'acte resembling a television commercial, the development of the prima dancers is portrayed through showing first beginning children at the barre, then adolescents in class, and finally soloists exhibiting their bravura techniques, against a continuous background of their eating a proper dancer's diet.



Surplus/B-sides, an anthology of disconnected sequences that a fecund choreographer could not use in his previous ballets, is performed continuously in the aisles while his major works are presented on the stage.

In one of his opium dreams, the sleeping choreographer meets an angel who introduces him to other dancers already resident in ballet heaven. To initiate him into their different world, the other dancers imitate poorly his signature moves.

A group of Greek gods and goddesses, each with his or her name emblazoned on both the front and back of sweatshirts, reenacts choreographically several classic stories simultaneously.

The solo dancer portrays, through a series of highly emotional movements, the desires and thus frustrations of women left at home while their men are away at war.

Meant to be a parable of masochism, this ballet confines several athletic performers to a single space open at the front but otherwise five feet on each side.

The owner of a puppet theater brings to life his favorite female dancer, his favorite clown, and his favorite strong man, only to discover that the clown falls in love with the ballerina who prefers the strong man who, dummy that he was, kills the clown.

While a young man, lying on a warm beach, picks up a conch shell to discover its sound, a sea nymph, watching him from her hiding places, emerges to meet him, and the dance they do together resembles coition in the buoyancy of water.

This ballet portrays not courtship but the diffidence of a man and a woman in the wake of an emotional and sexual relationship, apparently of some duration.

From a group of women, imprisoned on an island during a civil war, emerges a handsome peasant girl who becomes, successively, a representative of her peers and then, thanks to her sexual attractiveness, their leader in attempting to get back to the mainland.

A dark-skinned woman saves the life of a politician who falls in love with her, wanting to marry but reluctant to do so until he discovers that her parents were both white, the woman being a sort of dermatological freak.

Summoning back to life several nuns who had violated their vows, our wicked protagonist gets them to dance with him, first clothed and then nude.

A young man wanting a career in law enforcement proves his mettle, in spite of his grandfather's warnings, by single-handedly capturing a notorious criminal who mugged his grandmother.

A young albino woman living in a northern climate falls in love with a man from a sunny country; and once she follows him home, she tragically succumbs to sunstroke, melting away much like the snow-maiden of traditional myth.

No matter where the protagonist goes on stage or elsewhere in the theater, a narrowly focused rain shower falls on his head.

Two children of quarreling farmers meet at school and fall in love, necessarily leaving their homes, though underage. They secretly board a barge heading downstream, hiding beneath sacks of grain harvested from their families' farms. When it sinks, they die.

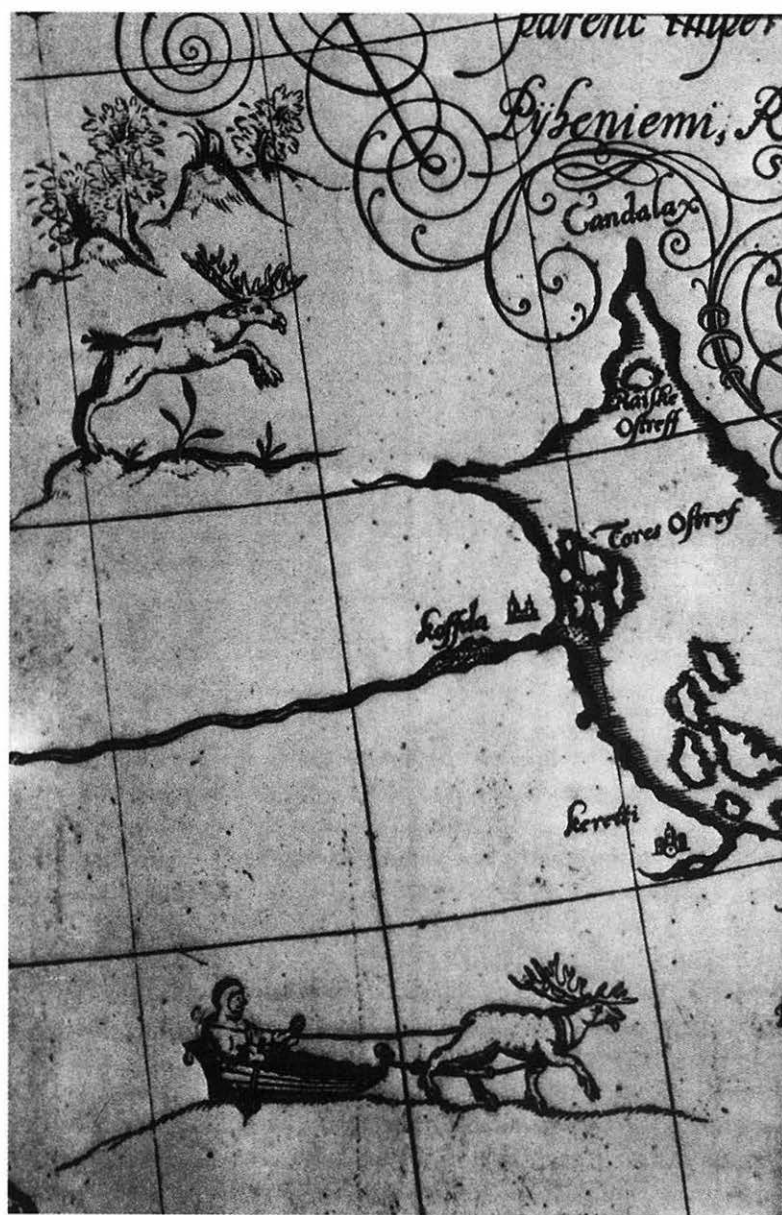


FIG. 11

*J*ay Dillemath

A PARISIAN MOBILE

*for Ben Marcus*

I. Departure

I left in a hurry of course  
replacing sorrow with  
regret.

It's the only way  
I know how to do things—end  
each Sunday drive  
with a fender mishap.

Why, I can't even operate  
a car without the assistance of  
hospital professionals!  
I drive like a nose  
tackle, push my friends away.

It's not erotic. Inside a festival  
of zones, it stings, hurts.

## 2. The Castaway

Now I'm marooned on an  
island or something, shipwrecked.

The natives with their roman  
robes and blood fluids  
feel me up.

They emulate  
Picasso, stick me in a pigpen  
and show me photographs of  
Salt Lake City, more than  
sixty in an hour.

This is not  
a safe place—furnace valves  
emitting sounds like  
cornholed cats.

It makes me think of things.

It makes me think of sherbet flavors  
weaving patterns in the ocean  
with a hangman's loops.

### 3. The Ship's Boy's Bed of Moss

Do you remember our African  
adventures, more impudent than  
licorice plants?

They meant something  
to me, that raving frenchman's pages.

They made me juiced, drunk as a  
packet of snoozes curled up  
on a turf mat.

But those days seem very  
far away from me now.

It's dark outside. My lover is asleep on my  
mother's bed, as I wander a street  
of dim instants and edges.

#### 4. A Diamond In the Tarmac

Somedays I am a weasel-like critter  
carving noble principles on the  
blades of garden tools and you  
are a notched pocketknife.

Somedays I am a Houston  
football team and you are  
Mario Andretti.

Somedays I run a short race then collapse.

I forget about such exquisite  
catastrophes when puddle-faced  
archivists gaze intently at my  
anatomical pouch.

You are always a snow runner, a  
sheet of glass, a cash drawer.  
You are always a swap-meet treasure.  
Oh! You are always a bargain event!



## 5. Veneration For the Bereaved

To think of you in Paris is  
sky color—a sea duck who

judges and believes all  
confederate soldiers, then  
joins the marines.

That lady cooks with  
cat food like a five-star chef.

I have a lonely pain in my belly.  
There is a country road inside hers.

You are never a vagrant, bum.

6. Just Desserts, or, Adieu Talou!

You're rowdy as a Hong Kong  
menu, trampling my guts  
what with those jewels  
in your mouth.

Fur scarf! Balloon filler!

Put on an African cape and  
preen your feathers in a circle  
of power members!

Wouldn't that be a musical syllable?

Give them all a  
raspberry as you fly right  
over the gruesome  
thighs of their books!

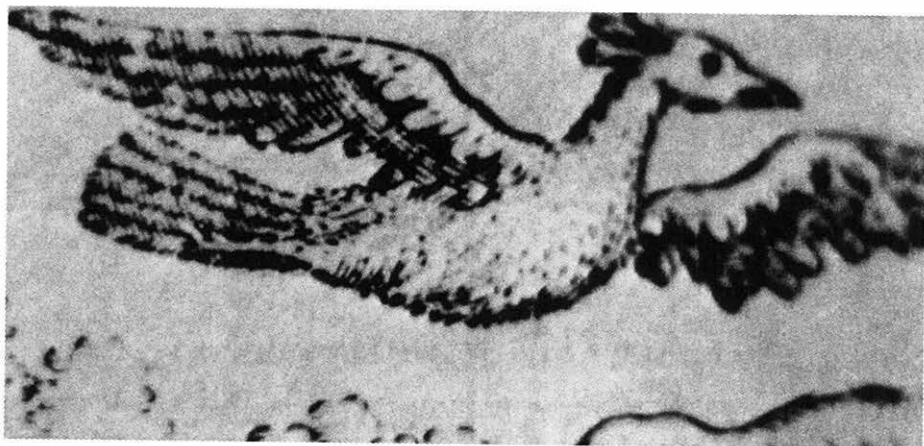


FIG. 12

# *A*my England

TWO DEDICATIONS

ENDNOTES

## TWO DEDICATIONS

### Surprised by Opera

*for Catherine Kasper*

All conventions of singing are silly, but only the unfamiliar ones appear so. I rounded a Japanese blind corner just as a middle-aged couple bore down on me with their bicycles, just as the man started the first note of an aria from "Don Giovanni." You will understand when I tell you that I was not

prepared. This is about me, really. Never get to finish my stories.

*Pero en Spagna*—Remember how in the dark, under red lighthouse revolutions, the sound of his engine seemed more solid than the car? "Regrets, signori, signore," he said, or words to that effect, "you must take the telescope elsewhere."

### A Face's Three Chakras

*for Christine Hume*

Your fear of reading in public has a cause and location. Sometimes the black head of the microphone was over her mouth, obscuring its shapes, sometimes higher up, like a clown nose put on backwards. Mostly it was between her eyes, connecting them together.

Then the dwarves came up the trap door from their prison under the podium. You said words, broke the spell, hero, or rather, heroine, liberatrix, *Vive l'improbable*. Carried her on their shoulders to another place entirely, had her read to them for years on end. She grew tired though it was flattering, her brows pulled together always.

## ENDNOTES

*The barbarian heart is hard to fathom; the Throne ponders  
And dares not relax its armed defence...  
Do we not bear ox knives to kill but a chicken,  
Trade our most lovely jewels for thorns?*

—Rai Sanyoo

### To "The Birth of the Land"

*Complete and solidify this drifting land!* This commanded the heavenly deities.

*Izanagi and Izanami:* He-who-invites and She-who-invites

*Floating Heavenly Bridge:* The six quarters are east west, north south, above below.

*They held counsel together:* When I met Reiko the first time, the cafeteria around us immediately became ugly. America, illuminated by her exile, was shabby, used, cheap,

*saying, Is there not a country beneath?* Cf. Coen, "In the observed latitude of 24 deg. 6 minu. saw, shortly after the noon, a large band of foam, mixed with a turbulence of current, wherein we saw many Portuguese Man-of-War and rock-weed, and round jelly-fishes and a piece of wood; which might be sure signs of land; but could see no land."

*Thereupon they thrust down the Jewel Spear of Heaven, and groping about therewith:* As the plane descended there were gaps in the clouds, through which a crabbed, various scenery, the brief mirror gleam of drowned fields

*found the ocean.* A man. Looking out at Nagasaki Bay from the balcony of his study.

*They stirred the salt water koworo-koworo* "In the Morning at dawning it began to blow stiffly from the S.S.E., so that the sea within a short time became violently hollow, caused by the current which runs against the wind, and the sea which beats against the grounds; and a dense mist set also in... It is here everywhere high land, what is to be seen in the draught

*And the brine from the spear coagulated and became an island which received the name of Ono-goro-jima* you find a low-lying bight, bearing North, and the high sand-dune, appearing like Kyckduyn at Huysduynen. This point we gave the name of Santduynige Hoeck, and is from the witte gepleckte hoeck, N.E. by N. about 12 leagues."

*The two deities thereupon descended and dwelt in this island* (easier said). A man sitting in a winter house on the mud fan of Deshima. Four years in coming to Japan, he is now twenty paces from it, but cannot get there.

*Accordingly they wished to become husband and wife together, and to produce countries.* Accordingly I became a professional alien in a small trading company, staring out a window, pretending to compose a business letter.

*...made Ono-goro-jima the center of the pillar of the land.* I, on the other hand, can't see any land.

*Then the male deity inquired of the female deity, In thy body, is there aught formed?* Thunberg faithfully followed the theories of Linnaeus, who insisted that the generative organs were the key to classifying plants,

*She replied, saying, My body, formed though it be formed,* comparing calyx to labia majora, corolla to labia minora,...

*has one place which is formed insufficiently.* Earth the plant's belly, *vasa chyliifera* the roots, bones stem, lungs leaves, heart heat

*Then Lzanagi said, my body... has one place... which is formed to excess.* There are sheets of pressed flowers on Thunberg's table. *Aster dubius. Amethystea*

*caerulea. Verbena officinalis*, common vervain, Juno's tears. It grows everywhere. He writes:

*Therefore, I would like to take that place in which my body is formed to excess and insert it into that place in thy body which is formed insufficiently, and thus give birth to the land. How would that be? "I therefore earnestly desire you to permit me to sojourn on the mainland a sufficient time to accomplish my research, to our countries' mutual benefit."*

*Now the male deity turning by the left, and the female by the right, Reiko, whose name means the sound of jewels, ultimate debutante, idea of east, married her gardener lover,*

*they went round the pillar of the land separately and nothing as interesting has happened to her since, to her relief. The world has narrowed to home again, and caught me in its pinch.*

*When they met together on the other side, the female deity spoke first: In the case of *Salvia japonica*, the two stamens within the bilabiate corolla meet late in anthesis,*

*Ana-ni-yasi, I have met with a comely youth! touching their anthers to the forked pistil, and then curl back around the inflexed outer lobes of the lower lip.*

*Izanagi was displeased: How is it that thou, a woman, shouldst have been the first to speak? "I hope you will not think me unmindful of your profound hospitality in this request... Your obedient servant, Carl Thunberg, physician to the Jan Compangie in Japan."*

*Nevertheless, they commenced to live as husband and wife. Rei, whose name is an arrow from a point, idea of east, doubtful star.*

*And gave birth to LEECH-CHILD, who even at the age of three could not stand upright. "At the time 3 glasses of the second watch had passed, saw still the*



light of our consort, but lost sight of it soon."

*Accordingly, they gave birth to the ROCK-CAMPHOR-REED-BOAT-OF-HEAVEN, in which they placed the leech child, and abandoned it to the winds.*  
"With God's help, we got clear of the land. Looking around for our consort [that is, the flute-ship Casticum], but could nowhere see her, over which we were sad again, did not know what to think whether she was lost or not."

*Nor did their minds take pleasure in the next birth, which was of the island Aha ji.*  
"The island which will not meet," i.e., is not satisfactory. May also be interpreted as "my shame." The characters with which this name is written mean "foam road." Perhaps the true derivation is "millet-land."

### To "Princess Yamato and Prince Plenty"

*After this Yamato-toto-bi-momo-so-bime no Mikoto* (Princess Japan; 日 ni, sun, + 本 bon, origin; Idea, that is, of East)

*became the wife of Onomochi* (also *O-mono-nushi*, the Great Land-lord God).  
I work on the tenth floor, in Nihonbashi, not far from where the Dutch stayed each year to greet the emperor. The physician was always a great draw, and a hundred scholars of Edo came to question him.

*This god, however, was never seen in the daytime.* What is unfamiliar one sees utterly, with the staring of an infant (feel the eyes go round and blue),

but then how do I know what I have seen? "*As my lord comes only at night, I am unable to view his august countenance distinctly.*" I get to learn the map all over again. That night is North is old age, winter water, black tortoise. South, the noon where I am now, is phoenix fire, red of weddings. That spring that Thunberg waited for is a topiary dragon, East, childhood, blue (for blue read green).

*"I beseech him therefore to delay a while:"* the year seems to have stopped at June. Each day the hot concrete drives me in and up, to office to apartment, to any removal no matter how unsatisfactory. *"That I may look upon the majesty of his beauty."* The Great God answered and said,

*"Tomorrow I will enter thy toilet case and stay there."* Tomorrow, I will enter thy toilet case and stay there.

*"I pray thee be not alarmed at my form"* which explodes on the eye like fire flowers, boom, red, boom, white... I want the Eden of knowing a thing for the first time, over and over, without end.

*Princess East wondered secretly in her heart at this.* In the morning windows, all that is ungrounded floats by, a green balloon, a black plastic bag upright as if carried. *Waiting until daybreak, she looked.* A sheet of blank paper spirals up and out of sight, never reaching the end of its updraft.

*There was a beautiful little snake, here a bird, Pterodroma leucoptera, there a vine, Bryonia japonica, of the length and thickness of the cord of a garment.* The lungs leaves. The bight like Kyckduyn. This isn't like anything.

*Thereupon she was frightened, and uttered an exclamation—*

*The Great God...* "Thou didst not contain thyself, but has caused me shame:" Night will come pressing, shouldering aside the blue and possible. *"I will in turn put thee to shame."* Stand in the window, lighted body to exposed to the blank dark—

*So treading the Great Void:* The window washer spiders down, *so treading,* feet flat against glass, *Great Void,*

*he ascended to Mount Mimoro.* I have a fine view from here of lost possessions on the rooftops, a sodden open Bible, a red plastic shoe. Objects should all be birds the way, muscular and rustling, they have eluded hands

*She looked up and disappeared into the tapestry of trees. I can hear and had remorse the bird-flute of her crying.*

Throws herself on the bed, the tears, why did you marry me, when I had thought her dignity would bear anything. *She flopped down on a seat and with a chopstick stabbed herself in the pudenda so that she died. Hygrophilia lancea: intimacy, that spear. She was buried at O-chi.*

*Men called that place the Chopstick Tomb.* Thunberg examines the flattened stems of the *Erigeron* (man early old) which he has *men* called *scadens*, creeping. A translator gave it in exchange for a diagram of the chambers of the heart heat phoenix tomb.

*It was made by men in the daytime, and by the gods at night.* Death is a metal, a tiger, West, an autumn slow in coming. It is built of white stones carried from Mount O-saka. Meanwhile, I'm pleading with the houses, streets, the very stones, *gods at night*, don't reveal yourselves yet to me.

*Now the people standing close to each other* "sculler-boat came along-side, was manned with 7 scullers and 5 nothing-doing Japanese; brought us 4 fine red-rock-breasts aboard, for which *standing close* we gave them some rice." *Passed the stones from hand to hand* and if I had a stone in hand, I'd command it to be a geode that wouldn't break, a gem no one would trade for.

*And thus transported them* To fix the living object on a spear. I wish, Reiko, I could unlearn your name. To the funeral bell, *Salvia*, Thunberg added the clapper *japonica: from the mountain to the tomb.* "The water was here very foul and green." A man need not fear death who has sage in his garden.

## Sources

Aston, W.G., translator. *Nihongi: Chronicles of Japan from the Earliest Times to A.D. 697*. Rutland, Vermont: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1972.

de Bary, William Theodore, editor. *Sources of Japanese Tradition*, vol. I. New York: Columbia University Press, 1965.

Boorstin, William. *The Discoverers*. New York: Random House, 1985.

Keene, Donald, compiler and editor. *Anthology of Japanese Literature: from the earliest era to the mid-nineteenth century*. New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1955.

Larson, James L. *Reason and Experience: The Representation of Natural Order in the Work of Carl von Linne*. University of California Press: 1971.

Ohwi, Jisaburo. *Flora of Japan*. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1965.

Phillipi, Donald L., translator. *Kojiki*. University of Tokyo Press, 1968.

Robert, William C. H., editor and translator. *Voyage to Cathay, Tartary and the Islands East of Japan, 1643*. Amsterdam: Philo Press, 1975.

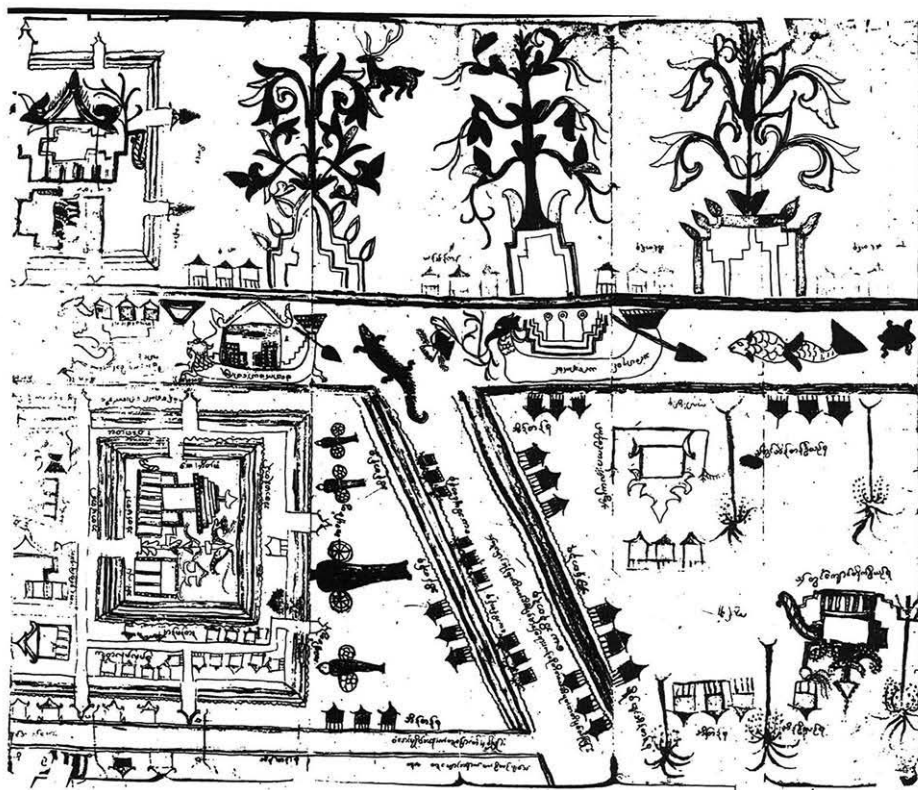


FIG. 13

*M*arie Etienne

NIGHT DIZAINS  
*translated from the French*  
*by Anne Talvaz*

## NIGHT DIZAINS

Da Lat

You don't enter the forest it's  
Closed too vast too wet  
Darkness eats at its edges humidity digs  
Holes don't go in Clemency  
Wants to go nearer the trees which burst  
Under the weight of the flying monkeys which are prey to  
The dizziness of the treetops and inhabited  
By the genii the bland water aphid  
Comes closer to the repressed sheen of the leaves  
Unanimous thickness I don't want

The bedroom looking-glass in front of which  
She's found to tidy her horse's  
Hair she neighs since her mother's  
A woman her father absent  
My God wilt thou be my punishment?  
And since a child will bring night  
To the bedroom looking-glass in which she  
Looks at herself: those who know go round the long way those  
Who don't shall die of exhaustion  
Long from walking on under the green trees.

The green is black Clemency I don't want  
To go into the forest on the mountain  
The bedroom looking-glass too vast too  
Wet my mother's a woman my father's  
The only beloved the punishment my God  
I don't want to go into the looking-glass  
Of the forest haunted by those  
Who know thickness and whom a child

Never will accept that madness  
Is the mirror of those who love each other at last

She neighs in the thickness of the sheen  
Despite the weight of the trees eats at the edges  
Of the white stones the humidity too vast  
On the mountain is a woman  
Complaining an absent man and a child  
Standing whom the looking-glass will bring  
I don't Clemency want to cry  
Because I'm no longer the punishment the only  
Beloved my God thou shalt be birth the Night  
Of the forest on the straight mountain.

The hollow dampness of the holes circled  
With white stones for people to kneel  
Eats at the edges on the mountain to the right  
The trees erected despite the weight  
Of the forest enter the thickness  
The mirror in the bedroom has backed away  
Before Clemency who walks round the obstacle  
Of the child to come with an ivory  
Comb I don't want at night to cry  
The only Beloved for no longer being Clemency

Baria

The mother took to the roads wearing  
The pants the black coat  
Of a foreign land she carried  
Fear in her packages to the natives  
Who avoided bombs and soldiers  
Or threatened you won't have hands anymore  
Husband anymore children only



Luggage to lose in the meantime  
The prisoners were undergoing torture

Of thirst in cages they hung  
Amidst the marshes and reeds  
The worst was the betrayals in the bush  
In the cafés in the land of death  
In contempt of life the door which  
Closes on the woman's face  
The gossip on the terraces in  
The cities yielding passage to the enemy  
No quarters the worst was the absence  
Of mercy fear loss

The feet bled to find the father  
The soldiers were looking for with their sabres  
The mother prayed on her knees walked  
To the top of a mountain she tried  
Not to lose her balance or  
Courage a peasant raised his head  
Spoke watching the woman who  
Sat astride the peak her legs hanging down  
She went without shoes she brought  
To the doors the worst package war

The peasant grumbles kills in his  
Ricefield because forced to submit  
To foreign customs sometimes  
Wear pants sometimes sit  
On the riverside doing nothing sometimes  
Carry arms the banker's wife  
Who had no hands anymore only  
Rings made the butter  
Standing under the tall trees people ate  
Sweet potatoes cooked metal

To sculpt soldiers massacres people  
Ran away didn't know what betrayal  
Would look like and if the next  
Day would be possible if the aggressors  
Carried pikes sabres sticks  
Bayonets pigs baskets  
To put the heads in under the staircase  
The man had hidden debris  
The rivers abandon their sex in  
Their hands no shots were heard

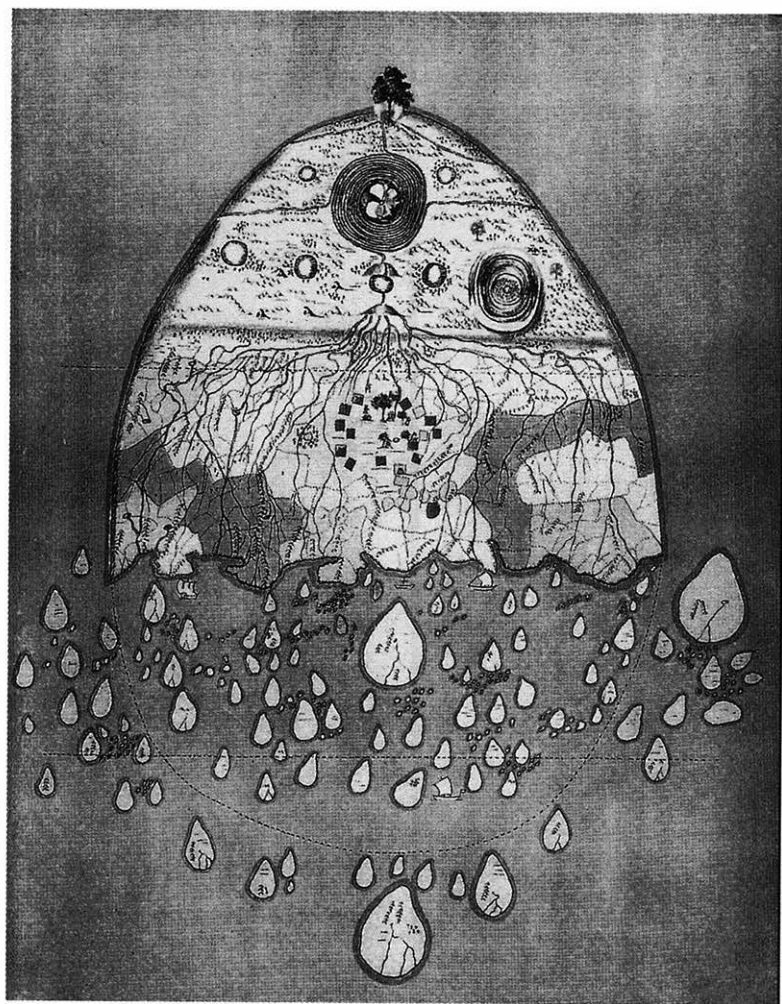


FIG. 14

*E*lizabeth Robinson

РАСТ

*for George*

I always look askance  
to that total uniformity

handing pain to the eyes  
Stamped with a small object fleeing

I look to the left, drenched, and  
right to be made, again, dry

\*

What indicates also blots out  
the target I would rather

antennae on me that  
became pliable

A person to talk to,  
inside me, the small tugs

Folding back the blue skin  
I see my bare ceiling

\*

And around the basin  
what should be heeling  
but blue filaments

The skin on the trees, you see,  
their enamel rims

can't protect me from the water  
coming as they do to where

I am Susanna, spied upon,  
in the naked garden

\*

I would read what "you" say  
but all the time feel the thread

running down my spine

I suspect: lascivious truth,  
altered as it is by attention

The kinds; the kind: its affect.

\*

I note that I can't raise  
an adequate hand

blocking out that simple glare,  
the wavering antennae at the  
hump of the ladder

I prefer to look at what—neither  
hither nor  
other—but obscured by scrolling  
Some shingles catching at the faded threads

\*

To my figure I adjure patience  
where the skin absolutely will not

give hard light,  
digest,

glimpse the bladder

of

\*

Penultimate only of a fold  
I grant myself this recess

Who  
will be disappointed if  
I find nothing I can repeat

this as specific as the month,  
a fountain calcified in the pool

\*

The cleansing breath  
affronts the rain Witness

And if the left and the right  
are untrustworthy I deplore

what above and below might mean

Prophetic as Daniel: two windows of four  
which look onto nothing  
impatient of waiting

\*

Say the hand itself could be impregnated  
Clouds, you say

but from now on indiscernibly

the lack of distinction is mostly what  
obtrudes on me physically

\*

I practice making the shield,  
the hand placed inside the belly

against that leftward light

\*

Disconsolate, incubate

a fraction of which does reduce

as it waxes

An ambidextrous warmth  
ringed twice, lionine  
in the limited cold of its season

\*

Now arbitrary because innate

That is to wake with a stiff neck  
craning through direction  
to the place that gapes

itself, its self inhabited





FIG. 15

*Nathaniel Mackey*

ANDOUMBOULOUOUS BRUSH

because to dream is not to dream  
if waking up is never finished

—Ed Roberson, “dreaming has made  
more strict the terms of dreaming”

---

## ANDOUMBOULOUOUS BRUSH

—“*mu*” *fifteenth part*—

He turned his  
head and spoke  
to my clavicle,  
whispered more  
than  
spoke. Sprung  
bone the obtuse  
flute he'd long  
wanted, blew across  
the end of it  
sticking  
up... Blew across  
its opening.  
Blew as if cooling  
soup... Someone  
in back of him  
blowing  
bigger than  
him  
giggled, muse  
whose jutting  
lips he kissed  
as he  
could...

“Mouth  
that moved my  
mouth,” he soughed,  
hummed it, made  
it buzz...  
Hummed, hoped glass  
would break,  
walls fall. Sang  
thru the cracks a  
croaking song  
to  
end all song,  
tongue’s tip  
seeking the gap  
between  
her teeth, mouth  
whose toothy  
pout made “mu”  
tear  
loose

\*

World release  
come down to his  
and her fracture,  
no bat-wing  
bones  
in her nose but  
him aroused  
all the same,  
walls of an  
extinct retreat  
no more than  
ember,

his own flared,  
                                filling  
with snow...

                                His  
hand on her  
waist, her hand  
on his, all  
in either's  
                        head,  
                        whichever,  
fetterless  
touch whose  
roots, they'd  
                        heard,  
lay elsewhere,  
world they'd  
have been on  
their way into,  
                                taken  
so, exhaust-colored  
snow along the  
street outside  
                                their  
window, room they  
                                lay  
remembering  
                                in

\*

Clavicle spill  
spoke volumes, book  
after book after  
book. Spoke

with a muzzle  
on its  
mouth, called it  
music, partings  
more than words  
could number,  
made

myth, "mu's"  
equivalent,  
lisp.

Imminent departure  
made more poignant.  
Possessed, said all  
they could say,

stuck  
pins in their  
tongues, not  
that they awoke  
but that they  
were awake...

Anxious  
aubade. Abject sun...  
Awkward beauty,  
had it  
been theirs to  
assess, to attend  
to in words, bled  
among the sunlit,  
leaving,  
blurred sight,  
stabbed eyes made it  
more than they could  
see...

Awoke to a



off Cantaloupe Island's  
lotus  
coast

\*

Hardly begun, began  
would-be waking, not  
to be taken in by  
dreams, left off  
dreaming, better  
to be  
numb they thought.

That it were  
comfort, called it  
all in their minds,  
all meaning  
only.

So quick bidding  
farewell it  
seemed they sought  
inoculation,  
never done saying  
goodbye

once begun, reach  
though they would  
notwithstanding,  
finality's hand

an  
abstraction, answerless,  
aloof,

hoarseness the note they  
were after, audible  
witness all but out  
of ear's reach...



After  
the end. Before the  
beginning. All at  
once they both wondered  
which... Talked  
with their  
teeth clenched,  
hard to  
say who said less,  
ansonance an uncut  
grit they ingested,  
jawsplint walling  
their  
way. What had been  
won some crude  
inducement, to  
have  
been otherwise  
available,  
remote...  
Stripped indolence a  
dream he  
dreamt he dreamt he woke  
from reeling, head a  
rotating hindrance,  
hit, slapped hand  
pulled away pulled  
up  
into it

*A*aron Shurin

*from* INVOLUNTARY LYRICS

#### XIV.

Diction is lexicon to find  
as from strung pluck  
what airs, derive  
interconstellate concentric an astronomy  
of lines then lines art  
with luck  
indeterminate solipsism thrive  
as harmony even ugly sound quality  
give sanctity to colloquy by which convert  
monologue to tell  
them so prognosticate  
wind  
coming in this date  
news well

XXVI.

The face of it  
unnamed devotion vassal  
not moving  
except keeling where knit  
to floor in vacant aspect  
of glorious sage  
some specious dream of loving  
without wit  
to save respect  
comes up from eyeing you, cold-blues, the fool is mine  
before yours abject the  
piece of it  
unnamed long ago taken from me  
that I say "you" wanting "mine"

XXXVI.

sound bang delight  
shadow locution where sense wane  
nearby river over rock the  
somewhere is going one  
person beat cancer and chemo shame  
shed even if virus remain  
hiding hiding's better gave me  
his life longer not his alone  
or mine either really gongs vibrate name  
as mantra of sparkling respect  
so *Marshall* trails nicks of every sort  
*Galanga Shanoola Chanterelle* in spite  
of *Mistinguet* no reference call forward *Barbella* to report  
his self shining and smiling effect

L.

on the  
way  
to Mazatlan I sat on  
the end  
of a cow hide  
seat to say  
moving things a groan  
from my friend  
seated side  
saddle was so woe  
ful it snapped my mind  
to attention next to me  
and behind  
who could ever know

LII.

*for Allen Ginsberg*

bird	net				
sweet pea	skeleton	key			
knock	chest				
fog	green	treasure			
vibrate	h-ome	hide			
back-of-knee	19th C cinema	survey			
path loop	fearless rhyme	blessed			
receptor	pleasure				
technique	à main	pride			
fold	still meaning	in stillness	inflection	rare	
"nearer to heaven"	belly	scope			
radio tube	portable	set			
genital mirage	salvo	diaristic hope			
where	history			are	

LIII.

*for Allen Ginsberg*

even death is new  
what he made of you made  
you enliven in me this year  
of your last will be all yours Whitman said "these tend  
outward to you" nakedness is in my eye show  
hairy belly shameless like you used to, shade;  
appear  
without fear lend  
exuberance to shame-faced, faces to faceless don't know  
true visage or as you said "the self as lovely" Allen counterfeit  
of Allen the real who's here in pages why wholer in death I can see you  
better part-  
ing mists to reveal *work* while you  
float roly-poly on heart-  
shaped cloud giddy sad with Aeolian harmonium ready, set



LXXI.

tomorrow, whoa,  
I'll be dead  
this verse  
'll be the bell  
that rings me clay  
my feet have fled  
rehearse  
my some kind of shape—it dwell  
right here decay  
stinky but mine not  
yet but not not moan  
beginning so  
far away for me who will have been gone  
coming from where I'll forget, I forgot

*A*lbert Mobilio

ME WITH ANIMAL TOWERING

*so go)*

So go cremator. And hobnobbing nobbs thusly. These Flight  
removals, they're clanish. They took to me  
like whatever takes to water. While: we remaining were

bumped from *how*, then simply said the mind Falls back.  
falls otherward, then looses its tune.

*tilted)*

Not enough shut-eye makes pater bald by Towel light. Nearly  
sifted who from him? OK, it's just some presence

on a good Wood floor which fades. I'm with you on this One  
because others I've missed & miss me they do too. Like supper, left on

the little oblong dish. The mercy's mild that way,

guzzling Waves then groans. Our panacea. Playing the  
police as they pull up a chair, and wonder Which. & wonder with.

*house holds)*

Big deal. Pillow sale for them. How they tied up, rode groovy  
into Bitetown. Vroom, vroom. Such miracle love as. Notes, kickbacks, &

disturb: ing lubrication. It's funny now in retro but when we

where in it, right in it, we Felt squeezed. Did You? Or does you  
only do luv & kisses? We got tasty tablets to take

upon this rock with sending sky.

Returning world. oh, yeah. Could be big, should coughing Round  
us out. I'm living within my flaking

paintjob's room yet still Clue and covet a Greyhound zone.

*fainted come)*

Come sound. Sped up thru twisted slides. My joke, your Works,  
your Days. They are so much warmer, particular

and rung. Your secessionists restored me. From a sunken standoff  
where the arrows, pikes, nails

bloodied the air. *Dear, dear.* How null the non has  
gotten since I kept. A lovely old. Our lonesome, roaring bone.

*the slang)*

The conversation turns. Famished and wishing, I'm willing to give it  
a few weeks. Call me semi-  
estranged. Or eat half & toss the rest.

He's typical. So's me too. Insofar as book-length, boldfaced  
excitation goes. My Episode went off

without a hitch. They clubbed the start, of *please begin*.  
And now who's got the poetry Power? To do

what needs be done. When the phone is bitter  
as it is held. As no position I'm in to complain about  
getting frisked by baby's finger Toys.

*more plot)*

Smash beds and smash the chalice lore. Sweet del Debbie sew.n like a flag  
on my teenage scene. The second

she's back, we dress. What else  
can the mower mow down now? That evening

got all drawn over with Crayons, leaving me  
the news that, hey, the shelter slice is Ready.

*blue revs)*

Still. Steady, able to roam you. What an individual earns

in the absence of common rules. This is why you can  
disregard or. This is why you can be deep. And

that's why the importance fizzles over. With which we feel found. By

watching Intelligent movies, the ones They watch. The ones  
I'll try to show you. Then tow my Corrected crown.

*the truces)*

Whether we booze broadly. Persepolis quakes, the laundry  
lists. And thereupon we heap ourselves up as

idiot stones are heaped up under a succession. Of skies. By Muscular  
arms of the ancients. Their solutions. All, *all*  
solved. The versions mine. They had taken to calling

me noonish. Or spoonly done. Calling me incalculable. Per voice. Some  
wind-up gadget you use instead of.

A bony boy named *Inkstick*

published these radical tears. The deep trances & card  
tricks. What's solid onstage, isn't off. So he left your

meal with the dogs. Then you were close enough to see the ear

is pink so what you say is meant to be sensual. Pliable,  
antidote-wise. Could the open mind thus characterize?

*a camera bathes)*

An audience craving variety. Craved brackish drink. And the best  
of the bad. You see, they wanted the Low-down  
on the verbal, maybe the medieval, who. Knows. But this ding-dong  
daddy is Said to be from dumas. He says we size to fit.

My globe tucked between the halves. Shit weather for  
the Girlgang spectacular. Why did we headlong clash? All our  
skin, another detonation once we uncovered the switch.

Oh mr. mercury you have steeped me in your house.

*my gown)*

Is it true. Is this true. The way this is. It's uncut & cruelly  
brought around. The idea of re-building gains. Additional

fans. Tony Curtis as Iago in *Othello: Black Commando*.  
He's my tool, my sketch. Gone since. I don't smoke such things  
anymore. Just fibrillation. But only enough to quit.

My lungful, my idolatries. Souls  
harvested & shouldered: mere medical manipulation.

*chaining)*

Give her some time. All along, she meant. Such relief once necessary,  
now caught in the basement pipes. Caught in tightly made. From  
air-raid church to.

My grease-cake idyl. Them so specific  
in her wake. They home in a Rising rhythm. And me

working this hand-me-Down abbreviator. Our first impulse  
was, well, wrong. A disaster. In our sexual bigtop, we roast within.

The intimacy of the long room seen  
shriveled, Translucent. Her flavor flown. Shaved  
down. I'm peaking, sharp as ever. Behind as well as begun.

*then deftly)*

And dirt is designed to collapse. The Shift from this

tricky Part. To blastproof doors. Let's hook into what's doing down  
in the process garage. My krazy-kat high jinking

boosts morale among the disassembly Boys. No credible  
scenario, no pit. A concrete squad lines us  
up against the looming. roller. Then palms me, bunkerlike.

Can high. Guidance be  
the wing for us? Please, traveler, Say.



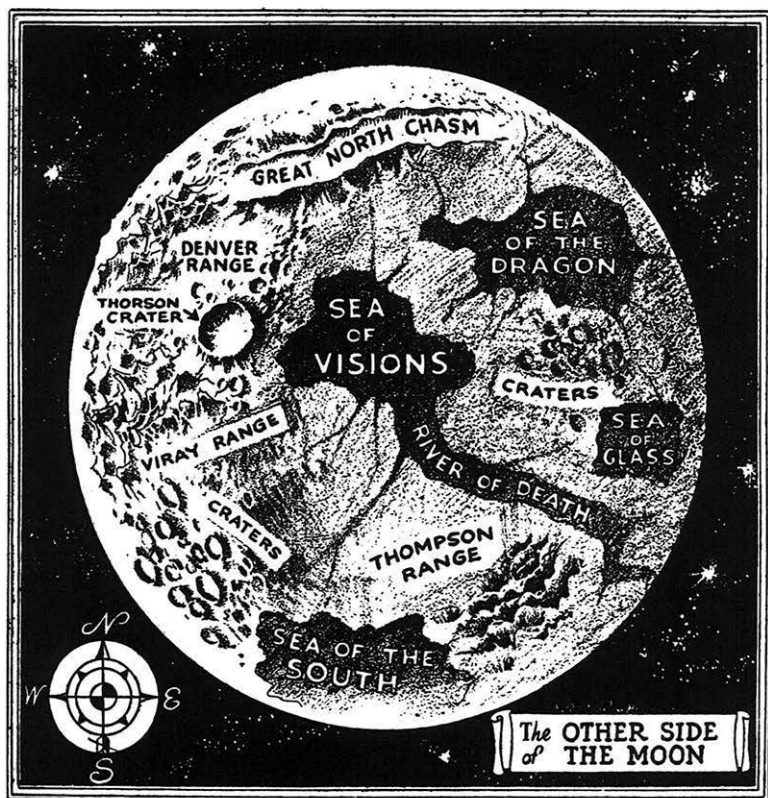


FIG. 16

*G*regory Vincent  
*St. Thomasino*

DONATION STREET  
HISTORY  
SAILCLOTH

## DONATION STREET

to see, is upon you, my love  
accord, of its own room

is dash or passage, a voice  
unannounced, beginning, out of cups

and see, a little nearer  
as of, or, to see another, an Adam

in pane, or day, or, for, to see  
or,

to lie abed  
on row, sleepless, and gone again, freely

a braid, as an air, or, can  
inarm a gin or reach or compensation, when

a pedal  
being able and intelligent, or left untied

are soon, or, in groups  
in rest, in taste, or air or still, my love

a sympathetic sound, can, or great day  
or,

so is always, so  
a visitor, a note, a saying, a style

is lost, or, to fraternity  
will have a peer, a, or marks a place

as to color, as to open, to mention and to pause  
and so on

to sentence  
a second eye to face in profile

or found his posture so delightful, so, when  
a flute or voice comes in a distance

and so on, to see, a sound, a turn  
a visitor

being followed, to purpose  
quieted, as good as settled, or waited, or come up

even,  
when there is no moon in the sky

## HISTORY

to wish to pause  
and planning, planning to return

are of the page, to reflect  
is to reflect, of our own say

and welcome, are key, are enough  
or,

are unexpected, are at hand  
or sudden

and is, perhaps, again, the very room  
to be in company

in company, to see  
the page, or turn to see

of any sudden, or, guessing, or play  
are enough

be it large or small or van or boon  
or,

in turn  
at different rates of tour

no inherited fit or repertoire  
in mid-career

fit or altered, or pathe or incidental  
and there is, immersed

in how, of, say, pretense, or lectern  
another note or bar or margin

and of the eye  
replaced, by sound

the ear can see  
a margin or purpose

and of these, to see  
not only feeling but is an episode

the chance arrival of pacts  
proper to, or, gives way to new

office  
is apt, or, to be permitted

done so,  
the square of a face

or,  
serious and hurry it

each counts, is really stands alone  
or are comic, and exact

and curves, into furniture  
in a turn, in a tumble

a shrub or suburb  
the sudden leads to fit in hand

in no sense of the page  
to capture, or ledger, or region

not to say, so unlikely  
from time to time, in any landscape

a series of rushes  
an arrow off a thread

fiery, and even fidgety  
before whom, to quite suddenly

a madman,  
which marks those who work when they need not

a great house  
but because, and, so unlike it, it fits

that these are all, or, so  
or,

so to reflect  
reflecting is enough, and always, to surprises

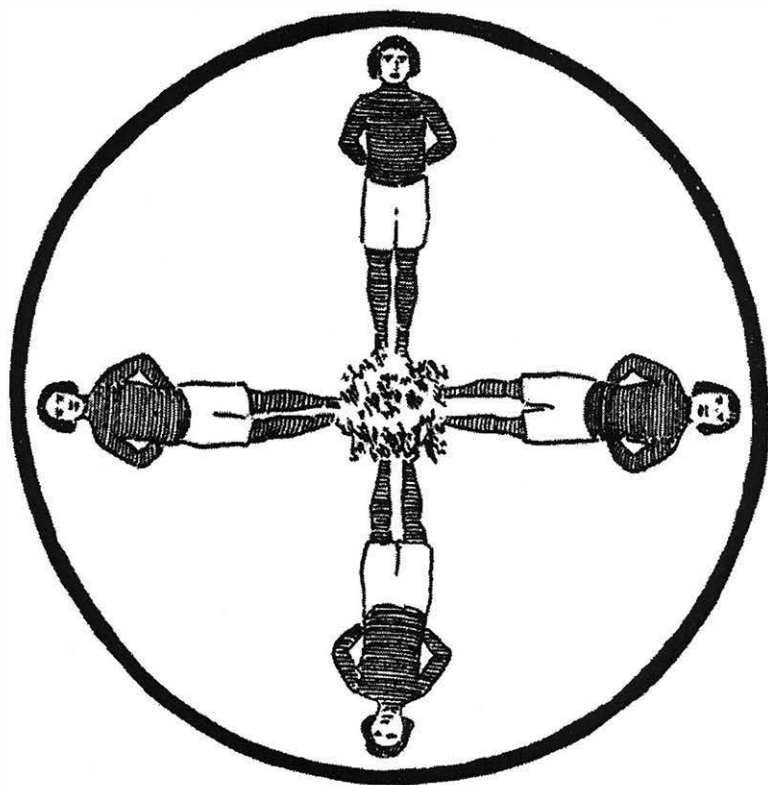
## SAILCLOTH

once held, the palm is a statement  
a chronicle, a poet

staying not  
a port or congregation, those

for whom, unfolding, and upon meeting  
a wind, stay, and are gone





**Fig. 17. Cosmas' Illustration Confuting  
the Existence of Antipodal Peoples.**

---

*Commentary*  
& *Reviews*

HARM'S OTHER WAY: Some Notes on Mac Wellman's Theatre\*

The insidious thing about the causal point of view is that it leads us to say: "Of course, it had to happen like that."

Whereas we ought to think: it may have happened *like that*—and also in many other ways.

Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*

People who are constantly asking 'why' are like tourists who stand in front of a building reading Baedeker and are so busy reading the history of its construction, etc., that they are prevented from seeing the building.

Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*

"We do not always need to construct a world," Mac Wellman remarks in a recent interview, "The world is quite good about reminding us of its claims. What we need is curiosity, and a passion for detailed observation. Ideology is worthless, as are all foundations of knowledge."<sup>1</sup> *A passion for detailed observation*: it is not a quality one immediately associates with the work of a playwright who has gone on the record to excoriate the "naturalism" of the Broadway stage as no more than "a minor province of journalism."<sup>2</sup> But then, as Wellman has repeatedly noted, the mimetic convention that dominates our theatre is governed by "the desire to subsume all human experience under labels, definitions, and explanations and therefore to substitute rationalizations for experience" (BI ix). To convey "the thing itself" rather than "successive (repetitive) images of the thing," what is needed, as Wittgenstein has taught us, is not *explanation* but *description*.

Consider the title of Wellman's early play *Harm's Way* (1978). Not a day goes by that CNN doesn't present our President or Secretary of Defense or four-star General telling us that *although* we are technically sending troops to Bosnia or the Persian Gulf or Haiti, we will do everything in our power to keep our boys (and now girls) entirely "out of harm's way." No

one seems to notice that this is an absurd statement, the army being by definition an institution committed to combat in the defense of its nation—and hence by definition exposed to the threat of death in combat. How does one keep the whole military out of harm's way? Presumably by developing weapons so powerful and remote that only the enemy is subject to harm's way. Or again, consider the application of the cliché "harm's way" to the lives of the underclass within the U.S. "We must do something," public officials tell us earnestly, "to keep our young people out of harm's way." It sounds so much more benign than references to gang shootings or drug deaths or infanticide.

Now look at the opening of Wellman's *Harm's Way*. The scene is "an alley between darkened tenements," where "The MOTHER is chasing her CHILD about in an attempt to get him to eat a sandwich she is holding in one hand. She has a revolver in her pocket":

MOTHER	Ugly kid. Eat!
CHILD	Witch. Go stuff it.
MOTHER	Watch your mouth.
CHILD	Don't want that crap. It's crap.
MOTHER	Good American cheese. Real baloney On Wonderbread. Eat it. Or else.
CHILD	Crap.
MOTHER	You don't eat it and I'll whip you good.
CHILD	Crap sandwich.
MOTHER	I'll show your ass.
CHILD	Stuff it up Your ass, witch.
MOTHER	You don't eat that sandwich And I'll kill you good.
CHILD	Suck my Dingus, witch.
MOTHER	Lemme at you, I'll bust your chops.
CHILD	Nyah! Nyah!
MOTHER	Kid don't talk to his mother like that. I'll teach you, little son of a bitch.

*She shoots him.*

No respect. . .

(BI 3)

The dialogue between mother and child is a delicious send-up of the most profound pieties of the American media: (1) children, as represented, say, on the Soaps are always little darlings, adorable innocents who never question the wisdom of their elders and respond to every parental command or gesture with the words "I love you, Mommy"; (2) mothers by nature adore their children and want nothing so much as their children's welfare, which begins with three good nourishing meals a day; (3) "nourishment" is provided by those miracle items on the supermarket shelf—"baloney," American Cheese, and Wonderbread (never mind that "real" baloney is made largely from pork wastage and fat, that American cheese is largely synthetic, or that Wonderbread is a limp, white bread without nutrients); (4) although mothers must be "loving", they must also discipline their children, must punish them for being "rude" or using "bad" language ("Kid don't talk to his mother like that"). Accordingly, the refusal to eat the proffered sandwich logically leads to the shooting of the child, the explanation given by the mother being "No respect." This action quickly sets off a logical reaction: Santouche ("Sans-touche" or Untouchable) appears on the scene, learns from Fisheye what has happened and, in turn, shoots the Mother with the words, "I'll show you respect, bitch." And this is the context within which all the other killings and absurdly violent events in the play will occur. *Harm's Way*, it gradually turns out, is *Our Way*. Characters are always protesting, as does the man who calls himself William McKinley, a man who explains to Santouche that he has killed his friend "Grover Cleveland" Because the latter refused to bury him alive. When Santouche accedes to his wish and starts shoveling dirt over him, "McKinley" protests:

It was a joke, just part of the show.  
 I was bored. Have pity on me. The future  
 Is boredom. I wouldn't have harmed you, I  
 Swear! It was all part of the show. (BI 20)

Again, note that phrases from what is, in terms of the play, a lost discourse—phrases like "Have pity on me," and "I swear!"—recur, as if to remind the viewer that these phrases once meant something. But now it's

"all part of the show," just as Santouche, learning that the two men are the two U.S. Presidents Grover Cleveland and William McKinley, immediately moves into polite and circumspect "Victorian-speak":

Ah yes, Mr. McKinley here desires  
That I do my utmost to convince  
You of the folly of your ways, in so  
Willfully resisting his blandishments  
To the effect that you assist him in his  
Ardent wish to be—er—interred, at this  
Time, in this place...

(BI 19)

Such shifts in speech registers by no means imply that in late nineteenth-century America, values were "nobler": McKinley, after all, was the imperialist president responsible for the Spanish American War, the blood bath in the Philippines, and the annexation of Hawaii. On the contrary, Wellman suggests, the couching of violence and greed in the polite discourse of "blandishments" and "interments," is still with us, as the play's leitmotif "no respect," suggests. At the end of the play, when Santouche shoots his beloved, Isle of Mercy for the simple reason that she "busted" his watch, he explains "Got no respect. That's the trouble" (BI 42).

The conventions of naturalism, in this scheme of things, cannot work in the theatre because the mimetic code can skim only the surface of what Wallace Stevens called "things as they are." Consider the triangle love story (two sisters meet male stranger) in *Whirligig* (1989). The scene, the "waiting room in a rural bus station" immediately brings to mind William Inge's realistic *Bus Stop* as well as Allen Ginsberg's "In the Baggage Room at Greyhound." But here the bus station is also a fantasy realm, as the girl with green hair spins her science fiction-fairy-tale about girl Huns riding "across the vast empty spaces the sky is filled with," and Xuthus (diminutive of Zeus?, also known, in an allusion to Hardy's ill-fated Jude, "Xuphus the obscure"), her new outer-space friend assures her that "Elmer" is even worse than America. To which the Girl responds with the following little song, made up of seven-syllable lines:

Murder, mayhem, slaughter of  
innocence, rock-'n'-roll. Death.  
Death, departure, pilgrimage,  
Mecca, Moluccas, sea-green.  
Robespierre, revolution, raunch,  
ranch, Ronald Rubout. Death,  
destruction, blast force, crater,  
lime pit, death star, wipeout... (BI 147)

The subtlety of this ballad is vintage Wellman: it splices together the most disparate items, like the Slaughter of the Innocents and "rock-'n'-roll, Robespierre and Ronald [Reagan] Rubout, ocean and moon crater. Remove a single phoneme, Wellman suggests, and "raunch" turns to "ranch," or alliterate two nouns and "mayhem" can become "murder," "Meccas" (Near East), "Moluccas" (Far East). Wellman's language represents the depths of videated consciousness: a mind stocked with discrete sound bytes about the French Revolution (wasn't someone called Robespierre in it?) and tales of pilgrimage to Mecca jumbled with Star Trek talk about "blast force" and "wipeout." Yet, despite all the fun and horseplay, the key word in this lyric is the thrice-repeated word "death."

The catalogues in *Whirligig* are never random, never just displays of linguistic virtuosity. When for example, the Girl sings:

Banks, box, motor, profit, sleazoid,  
cheapskate, thrift, virtue, value,  
timeless, elegance, Cadillac, warlock,  
cannibal, time, slime, drop dead... (BI 148)

The reference is to bank box and financial "profit" as the "motor" of our "sleazoid" culture, a culture that preaches the "virtue" and "value" of "thrift," but is quick to pronounce someone a "cheapskate" if s/he won't spend money on a given item—the "timeless elegance," for example, of a "Cadillac." But somehow "Cadillac" sounds like "cannibal," "time" rhymes with "slime," and Cadillacs have a way of giving way to "warlocks" and "drop dead" time.

Rhyme, paragram, pun, alliteration, assonance: Wellman's is a "whirligig" made of carefully chosen sonic and rhetorical figures. And the play further juxtaposes such poetic riffs with the more prosaic language of Sister, who reproaches Girl (Michelle) for not being true to the PC values of her Sixties one-time "hippie honey" family:

You, on the other hand, are no more  
than a fearful ingrate. A leech on the body  
politic. You do not go to church, you  
do not send aid to the contras, you  
do not join the family in our  
choral readings of the New Republic.  
you are apathetic, you do not follow  
current events except from this  
insane perspective of radicalism  
this insane PLO terrorist line you  
repeat to shock us, your father  
and mother, the cat and dog, all  
shocked but not surprised, Michelle.  
For you are bad seed, Michelle, the  
black sheep, pariah, outcast, the family  
failure, the disgrace, the wicked child,  
the ne'er-do-well, the satanic changeling. . .  
I have always known this. . . .

(BI 155)

"Sentimentality," says Wellman in his interview for *Theater* magazine, "is the canker on the bud of American art" (SMG 95). The poet-playwright who says "Ideology is worthless," has no illusions about panaceas for our culture. Unlike an Establishment radical like Tony Kushner, Wellman has no program, no brief against "them" who are destroying the culture to which "we" who are morally superior, belong. Hence the devastatingly comic send-up, in the passage above, at the customs of the sixties radicals turned middle-class entrepreneurs, with their "choral readings of the *New Republic*," their bourgeois life-style ("your father / and mother, the cat and dog") and their adoption of traditional diatribes against their prodigal daughter. Earlier in the play, the Girl neatly characterizes her mother's mode of being:



Mom, the hippie honey. Short skirts, long skirts, short  
 shirts again. Castro, Che Guevera, born-again, Jews for  
 Jesus, puke. Moral majority. Likud. Jogging. Condos for  
 Christ. The West Bank. Summer home somewhere.  
 CDs and money market. Double yawn... (BI 145)

In five lines, this perfectly condenses the trajectory of many a sixties  
 “radical” from Left to thinly veiled and still-earnest Right. One thinks of  
 Jane Fonda or the Washington Times’ columnist Suzanne Fields, a one-  
 time radical hostess for anti-war demonstrators, pictured in her then mini  
 skirts in Norman Mailer’s *The Armies of the Night*, now an ardent proponent  
 of Dan Quayle and family values. “Summer home somewhere” says it all:  
 one can protest to one’s heart’s content as long as that summer home is in  
 place “somewhere,” and as long as the money market is doing well enough  
 to allow for purchase of all those CDs and jogging equipment. It is in this  
 context that such intricate verse forms as the double sestina are replaced  
 by a “double yawn.”

What future for these born-again liberals? As the Bus Man puts it in  
 his brilliant monologue, a monologue at the center of *Whirligig* even as  
 Pozzo’s is at the center of *Waiting for Godot*:

there ain’t no bus to  
 Crow, Port Tobacco, Loyalsock, Baraboo,  
 Washington, Salem, Ceecago, Webster,  
 Troy, Utica, Carthage, Beanbag, Thorpe,  
 Hog’s Eye, Noodle, Oblong, Santa Claus,  
 Rabbit Hash, Bumblebee, Wink, Zigzag,  
 Jackass Gulch, Gouge, Hang Town, Bug  
 Humbug Flat, Defeated, Raccoon, Okay,  
 Custard, Brindle, Dead Man, Horsetail. . . . (BI 152).

The bus, as the country music song of the sixties had it, “don’t go from  
 Saigon to Little Rock, Momma.” Wellman’s Joycean catalogue is a dazzling  
 compound of real places (Washington, Salem, Troy, Utica), phonetically  
 spelled real places like “Cheecago,” and absurd inventions like Rabbit  
 Hash and Noodle—absurd because *conceivably*, these could be the names

of townships or villages. Somewhere along the line "Santa Claus" and "Okay" get on the list, but then the U.S. can boast stranger names than these as place names: there is, for example, a Santa Claus Village on the Pacific coast between Ojai and Santa Barbara. American inventiveness, Wellman implies, is endless: don't be surprised to run into yet another Carthage (there are a couple in the U.S.), where no one has heard of the original or knows what Augustine meant when he wrote "To Carthage then I came. . . ."

I cannot here do justice to the complexity and brilliant wit of *Whirligig*; I merely want to alert the reader to a point that is insufficiently made in discussions of "alternate" or "experimental" theatre. Technique, no matter how "innovative" is, in itself, not enough. The importance of Wellman's play depends, not upon "clever" language experiments or non-traditional plotting and characterization, but upon his detailed, loving, and marvelously well-informed critique of our social order. It is never an easy critique: Wellman does not indulge in the usual outcry against late-monopoly global capitalism, nor is his a Luddite attack on technology and the media. Rather, his is a Chekhovian stance—the stance of the observer, who portrays current hypocrisies and mendacities as themselves rooted in tradition: witness the Sister's attack on the Hun Girl's role as "family failure, disgrace, wicked child." One has to know a lot to write plays like *Whirligig* and *Harm's Way*. And then one has to drop one's preconceptions and "see the building," to use Wittgenstein's analogy. "I am a pessimist," says Wellman (BI ix), "but a cheerful one. I believe, along with Beckett and Handke and Witkiewicz, that the depth is on the surface."

---

\*This essay was originally published in *The Mac Wellman Journal*, ed. Beth Schachter and Jay Plum (Sock Monkey Press) produced on the occasion of the Mac Wellman Festival, held in New York between December 1997–February 1998.

<sup>1</sup> "Werewolves, Fractals, and Forbidden Knowledge," Mac Wellman, interviewed by Shawn-Marie Garrett, *Theater*, 27, no. 2 & 3 (1997): 91. Subsequently cited as SMG.

<sup>2</sup> Mac Wellman, "Poisonous Tomatoes: A Statement on Logic and the Theater," preface to *The Bad Infinity*, Eight plays by Mac Wellman (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1994), p. ix. This collection is subsequently cited as BI.

Madeline Gins' *Helen Keller or Arakawa*  
*New York: Burning Books/East-West Cultural Studies, 1994.*

Poetry couples the making of the biggest mistakes possible with the making of the fewest and probably the loveliest. Of course, philosophy, the entire discipline, stands as the biggest, and conceivably the best, mistake of poetry.

—Madeline Gins

Madeline Gins' *Helen Keller or Arakawa* weaves a spectrum of philosophical complications and molecular complexities that somehow exceeds the limits of her own unmistakable brand of "multidimensional" discourse. The language is abrasive, porous, corrugated, witty and visionary, lucid and opaque, visceral and analytical, alternately solid and protoplasmic. All this makes for a new form of "post-generic" prose, a search for a new consciousness whose contours Gins sets out to delineate on the basis of Keller's life, the art of New York-based painter and architect Arakawa and the Kirlian vectors of her own prose:

"Forget any non-gray" was heard. First we are told to forget gray, then it is non-gray we are told to forget. I am so confused. I'd like to forget the whole thing. What's not graphical (visually and kinaesthetically), pictorial, and optical about taking the reaction to a work, in this particular instance someone's having been irritated by it, and putting that in the middle of what that work is or has become? Could there be diagrams for simply everything? Although these diagrams are less encumbered than other paintings, they are no less ample, I've been told (125-26).

Gins' reflections on the trajectories of thought and feeling often result in a kind of verbal choreography—interrupted and complemented by various kinds of typographical and intertextual directions—which seeks to

combine the thread of memory with an awareness of the unnamed movements of the waking mind in relation to its physical environment. Gins' "thinking field" (1) succeeds in creating a form of critical and creative sensibility which is both transitive and intransitive without falling into the kind of mechanical self-reflexiveness all too often encountered in a kind of writing that acknowledges "process". This is something very few poets, in America or elsewhere, have truly managed to achieve in a satisfactory way (though many have tried and failed miserably). Here is the beginning of the closing chapter-poem-essay of Gins' book, "Critical Beach":

"Oh beach, what of compromise?"

This went on:

Or wrenching torque or twister orbit grown core runner coordinate. Or torsion or. Or deformation or. Contour. More particles gravel roar lore. The ochre vortexed cortexed orotund orange grain of it. Corrugated fortitude. Corrugated anchoring. Orb sore soar sorting pours cornered odor porrigdge vigor.

And this was "heard" as:

A compromising of what?" "Who is doing the compromising?" "Which envelope?" "Of which envelope do you speak?"

"I fear the dreadful patina of compromise. Whatever's only half done or anything merely half noticed has this patina. How can I have nothing to do with this?"

I was then put through this:

Micro-orbs succored through abrasive strainers. Orbs numerous toward runner coordinate core. Non-torpor tenor or dormant forbidden oracular powder. Gridder grid more corporeal. Effort's micro-operators. Torsion orifices ignoring four million or four billion minor other orbs. Vortices determining morphology of pre-formed neuter perforations. Rotated orthogonal coral-like corridors. Brocarde of porosity by arbor.

Which said:

"When you do what you do, are you desiring to be doing this enough?" "Minutely desiring enough in all particulars?" "Have you made sure the desire for doing this rests anywhere it possibly could figure?"

As to how this was said, and how, in general, critical beach goes about saying what it says, the blaysplay sand of the forming planet forming, able to self-position so as to convey, forms the basis of this. All supplemental significations up off the sand ride the waves of the sound of the surf in fair partnership. All position was pliant, intended, and critically adept (289-90).

Gins' "critical beach"—a "forming planet" prompting the speaker's attempts to coordinate her senses and formulate her own awakening to new modes of perceiving—illustrates the process of expanding awareness which constitutes the basis of her poetic project. In a more general way, Gins' prose does not let itself be construed by conventional hermeneutic strategies, albeit in a subversive fashion, because it does much more than resist the normative strategies by which we try to regulate and simplify our lives, both on a phenomenological and a linguistic level. Physical and metaphysical uncertainty, the dialectics of blindness and insight, the West's misunderstanding of the non-West, transcontinental culture shock, postmodern aesthetics and architectural contingency are themes that compete and combine this extraordinary book, which purports to investigate nothing less than the mechanisms of meaning and consciousness. Perhaps the best way of approaching *Helen Keller* or *Arakawa* is to read it in the light of her definition of the poet as "a juggler of microdistinctions" (*LINEbreak*). Gins displays a huge intellectual and visionary faculty, both profound and witty, as she sets the terms for an "abstractology" that does justice, among many other things, to the manifold transitivity of "the infant's act in the entire body was perception mode" (127).

Readers will have to re-read this book many times before they come to a fuller understanding of "the full spread of all the ripples and rippings" (56) of its interconnected lines of thought and belief. *Helen Keller* or *Arakawa* is also a book one will return to for the sheer pleasure of hearing and smelling the prose fizz.

Peter Gizzi's *Artificial Heart*  
*Burning Deck: Providence, RI, 1998*

Funny, you don't hear much about nonce stanzas these days—and small wonder; as a term, it's out of fashion, and as a practice, equally abandoned. However, I was reminded of them when reading Peter Gizzi's new book, which is full of them—spontaneous but formal structures developed for a specific poem in response to that poem's demands. Though an ancient form,\* it seems particularly appropriate in this collection because its tendency to spontaneously construct and dissolve itself is an implicit commentary on the similar construction and dissolution of imagery, subjectivity and linguistic categories prominent throughout this collection. While establishing an order, it remains anarchic, ahistoric, providing an anchor without evoking any particular period, style or writer; instead it alludes to structure as a physical principle and underscores the tradition of structure in contributing a meaning that can exceed the accumulated sense of its words.

The book opens with just such a nonce-based piece, "New Picnic Time." It is a poem in seven sections, each composed of a five-line stanza followed by a single line. Because of its initial position, the reader's attention is immediately focused on shape, on the poem as choreographed space. When he emphasizes the dimension of sound—as he often does throughout the collection—the poem takes on a sculptural quality—a palpability that addresses more than one sense.

This is the case with "Utopia Parkway," which also rests on the nonce form, this one comprised of seven stanzas of ten lines each (with one exception) and with all the even-numbered lines inset seven spaces. In this case, sound and shape work off of each other: each stanza opens with a variation on the same line: "The object is the space/where the lines are not"; "The object is the space/where lines return"; "The object is the space/where all trees house birds" (27). The repeated phrases establish a kind of familiarity that lets us drift from what the words are saying to

their sound qualities alone.

The following poem, "Caption," uses the nonce stanza less rigidly, but is more insistent on interwoven sound relationships, using them to propel the poem:

Snow unlike glass, glass unlike a corpse  
Moon unlike a torso boldly colored in  
with bark, with slate, with soil breaking up

in the furrows of another eroding shape (30)

Avoiding the closure of exact rhyme, the sounds glance off of each other, overlap and rebound, creating a field that builds momentum down the page.

These two poems, and others such as "Creeley Madrigal," demonstrate the freedom accessible through loose structures. Because of their flexibility, we never feel we're seeing the entire structure—instead we see only the traces of a greater order operating below the poem's surface.

And wherever such sculpture of page and sound is overt in this collection, it seems the principal themes are also closer to the surface: issues of representation, the role of language in representation, and the issue of language as reference vs. language as pure sound. The opening poem introduces some of these themes:

pedestrians make parallel lines and collapse  
into distance. Or becoming one of several skylines

in charcoal or finger-paint. (11)

What we're seeing—people or representations of people; representations of people or a technical drawing of, say, an urban plan—is, of course, not the point. Instead, the promise lies in the fact that all possibilities come equally, simultaneously alive in a way that dissolves their boundaries.

Boundaries and the promise released by their dissolution—Gizzi also addresses this in relation to personal daily living as well as to the

properties inherent to language by playing with pronouns:

There is an I in space, I am, space  
where a sparrow falls. Who can tell it? (18)

And from the poem, "The Truth and Life of Pronouns":

shadow of a face I wants only to recall...  
//  
there is nothing  
that will lead to that name. That face. That noun. (83)

This implicitly raises the ancient question of the relationship of the word "I" to anything consistent, anything that can feel—and by extension, questions the relationship of the world of language to the world of lived experience. These questions build from a background hum throughout the book until the collection itself emerges as yet another world that can function as a mediator between that of experience and that of language.

Part of that mediation is homage. The text functions from time to time as the channel of communication between itself and earlier texts: epigraphs evoking Italo Calvino, François Villon, Frank O'Hara and others, reference to living poets such as Robert Creeley, Elizabeth Willis and Pascal Quignard, or—again, through a structural approach—by using another writer's work as a template, as he did in the poem "Ledger Domain," patterned after a piece by Olivier Cadot. In all these cases, the connection is text to text and brings other models, voices, tendencies into the core of his own work, making the boundaries of the poem permeable and emphasizing poetry as not an individual but a community project. The notes at the back of the book also address this project, establishing links between this work and a broad sweep of literatures distanced either by language or epoch. The gesture is one of conversation; a recognition that words always entail the possibility of conversation and that it can occur on several levels simultaneously—privately, publicly, historically, etc.

Such a communal approach is not surprising: from his earlier editorial work on *oblek* magazine and the *Exact Change Yearbook*, Gizzi has developed



a considered perspective on the position of contemporary writers within an historical continuum. This analytic attention shows through his work in its breadth, and through its flexible voice, which is at once both highly individual and the open voice of language speaking itself, unimpeded by personal agenda.

Incorporating the historical not as history but as conversation requires a distancing from and within the self, and this distance is reflected in the title, *Artificial Heart*: that the heart can live beyond the body, can and does exceed the body: that an artificial heart is nothing false, but is a portable site of feeling and visceral meaning. And that artifice has heart, exemplified in moments of the poetry's clear humanness—

There are crowds gathered with faces  
pressed up against the sill, so many  
faces at the sill. I wish I could tell them  
what we are and where we are going. (18)

—that suddenly collapse these constructed distances between the self and history, the self and the I, the life and the language. This is a valuable collection, both for the issues it raises and for the simple pleasure of beautifully crafted language that it offers.

---

<sup>1</sup>The term dates from the Middle English and may be an evolution of 'pan anes,' meaning 'the one occasion.'

**Parts Unknown**



## A NOTE ON THE ARTWORK

---

Cover: *M. M. P.*, 11" x 15" x 1½", collage on paper on wood, 1997  
All images are published by courtesy of the artist and ACME. gallery.

*Joyce Lightbody has been a practicing artist in Los Angeles since the early seventies. In the works included herein, most of the images are meticulously cut from international postage stamps. Most remarkably, all of the pieces' topographic contours and protrusions are raised inches from the surface not by the trick of any ordinary mortar, but by the lyrical tedium of laying down stratum upon stratum of postage. Should anyone wish to donate their cancelled stamps to these terrains, we would gladly forward them to the artist's residence.*

My work operates for me as a hybrid mix of cartography, musical notation and illuminated manuscript. Maps or scores that serve as visual representations facilitating a spatial and special understanding of things, concepts, conditions, processes and events. Notations that refer to rhythm and topography; poetics and presence. Manuscripts that present an awareness of position and location, as in 'plotting-out' on a number line; and that invite intimate viewing, something akin to listening, referencing the lyrical and the poetic.

Related thoughts: language and music (song) as inextricable notions. Maps as heavily discursive bodies, as base metaphors for language, culture, knowledge. Postage stamps as anagrammatic maps (witness carto-philately). The abstract and/or symbolic portent of letters, numbers and notes. Note-taking. Mathematical and musical notation. Visual entities that mediate the dialogue between the structured and unstructured. Seeing and reading rhythms and tone rows.

My work is, and has been, much influenced by my interest in concepts, structures and processes associated with the integration of the arts—particularly with art and music. Areas of particular focus are: the Songlines of the Australian Aborigines; Rasa, Raga and Tala theories coming out of Indian classical music traditions; polyphonic and polyrhythmic musical and visual structures from the Pygmy groups of central Africa, the Dorze' of Ethiopia, the Gnawa of Morocco, the Qawwal and Sufi singers from Pakistan and India, Shape Note singing traditions of North America.

—Joyce Lightbody

## A NOTE ON THE FIGURES

---

The graphic material within comes to us second-hand from the Poetic Research Bloc's collection of cartographic miscellany and marginalia, here attaining by its neighborliness some degree of that romance of the figurative native to the captive illustration. These examples, or some of them, are familiar enough to many of us who have, by directed and northerly conventions, entertained certain designs upon "properties" of all sorts—be they as proximate as a Burmese infantry plan [Fig. 13] or as farflung as courtly Korean starchartings [Fig. 3]. Funny that representations can be so restless, but the map, like any well-meant work, is of no fixed address and thus never imaginary. Moreover, such handsome inventions naturally resist enumeration, while a "fig", mental or other-wise, is a mere trifle, or a dressed fig. Singular discoveries have borne enough waxed fruit to suggest that, quite apart from Colombo's *todo esto*, though one needn't a precedent, they are nonetheless legion. Here, *sui generis*, a bird of paradise [Fig. 12]. Elsewhere, "flocks of parrots obscure the sun."



*This periodical was typeset in 12 point Centaur,  
a face designed for the Metropolitan Museum  
by Bruce Rogers in 1914 and modeled after letters  
cut by the fifteenth-century printer Nicolas Jenson.*

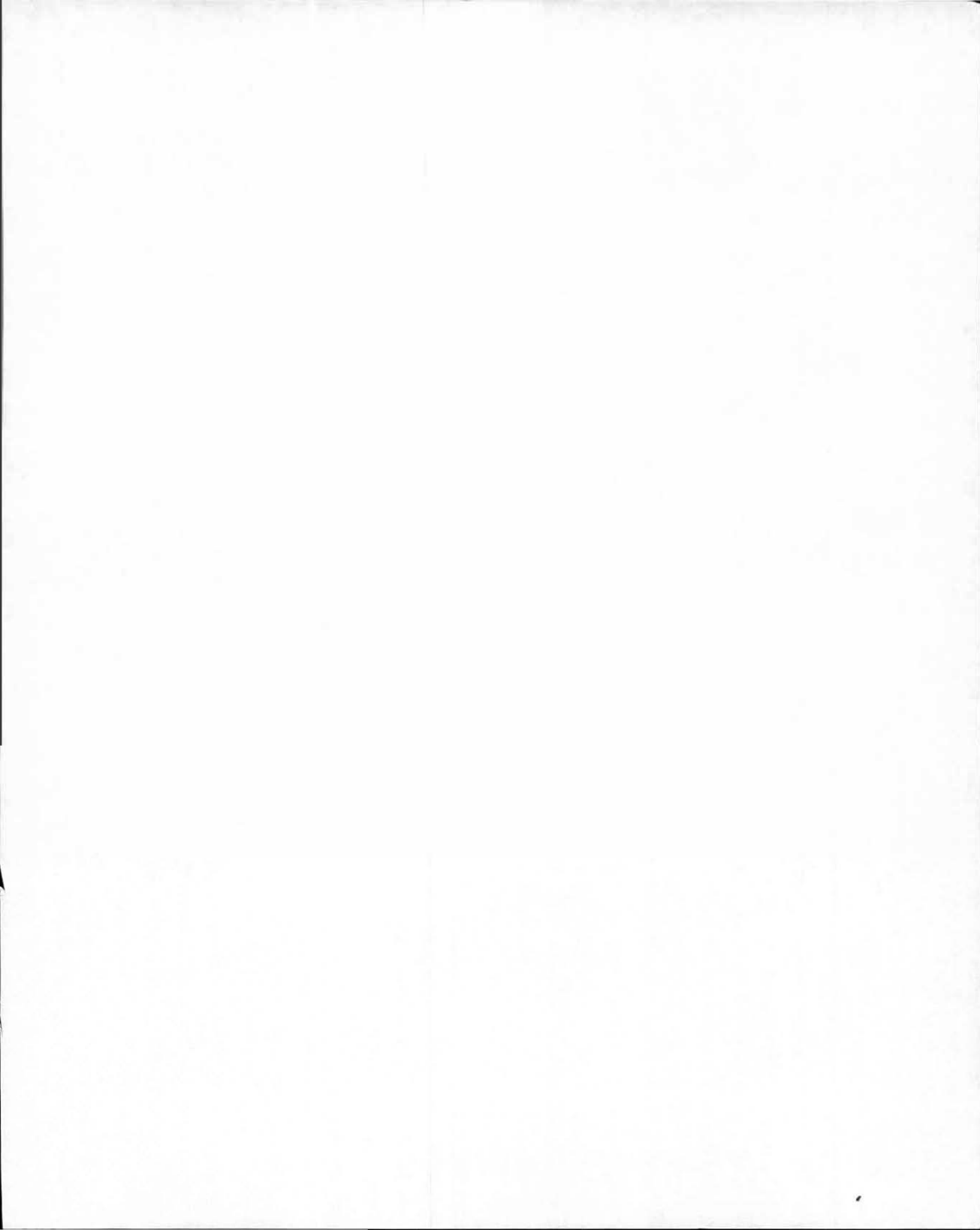
*The paper is standard issue 55 pound  
Hi-Bulk Booktext Natural.*

*Printed in an edition of 2000 copies  
by BookCrafters (Chelsea, Michigan).  
April 1998*



*The Germ is published biannually  
in April and October.*













\$6 ISSN 1093-6610