

THE GERM

April 1999

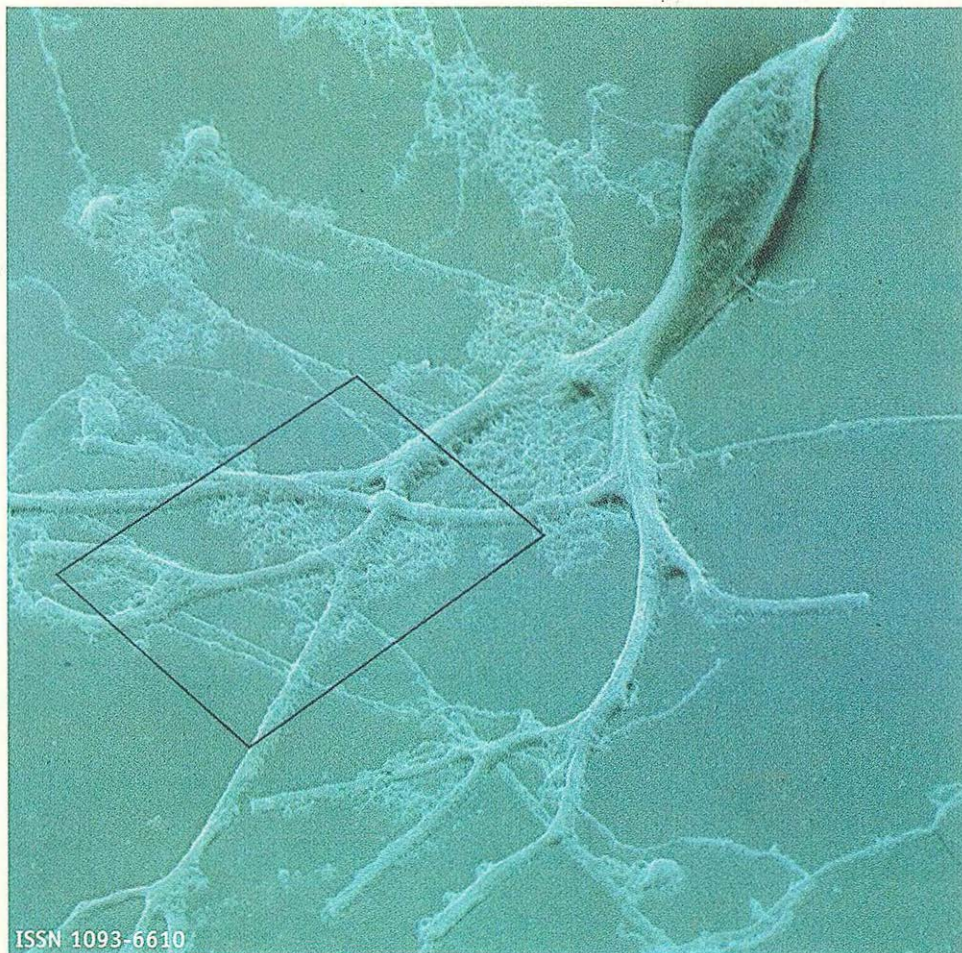
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A JOURNAL OF POETIC RESEARCH

Do today's time mechanics have their heads in the aether?

Studying hunger and wound response in defensive raptors.

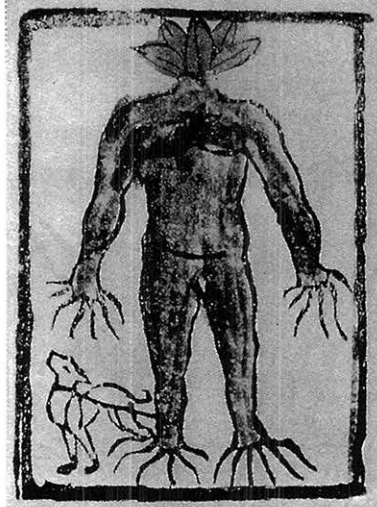
The "new sentence": post-op inroad short-circuits nerves.



ISSN 1093-6610

*From angel hair to the world of the ant's forefoot,
today's crystal-techs gain new insights from teary sediments.*

THE GERM



To demand of us truth to nature, excluding philosophy, is really to bid a pumpkin caper... There is a peep show and Punch's at the corner of every street, one magnifying the lace-work of life, another the ventral tumulus, and it is these for you, or dry bones, if you do not open to philosophy... Brainstuff is not lean stuff; the brainstuff of fiction is internal history, and to suppose it dull is the profoundest of errors.

—George Meredith, *Diana of the Crossways*

"All the same," replied Syme patiently, "just at present you only see the tree by the light of the lamp. I wonder when you would ever see the lamp by the light of the tree." Then after a pause he said, "But may I ask if you have been standing out here in the dark only to resume our little argument?"

—G. K. Chesterton, *The Man Who Was Thursday*

All is Not Bird that Twitters

*WHEREIN is recorded the tale of
an oldish bird who was good
to look upon but who never
chirped an original tune
in his life*



prb

The Germ

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The little king says there are guests in every room

*J*ean Donnelly

from LEGEND
(AN ALPHABET FOR ALEX)

little flags marking dreams come off the map
—Arkadii Dragomoschenko

behind every object there is a corridor of song
an Alexandrine line.
—“American Verbs”

Aa

the little king says
a flag a flag a flag

the little king says
the prey of a civic map

the little king says
round me a belly
the oaths of my jury
the sum of each hoof

the rooms I leap from
to kiss you

my armor my
shadow

Ff

the message is a shelf from it
itself it says the prey of an original
what is exempt from oaths
(dear you)
what more is a flag from the message
the prey of an original
itself a shelf from it

Gg

a rasping horn
collects wonder

a happy collar
science

the lonely goblin
adores it

like a sword
a greeting

a map
of his cradle

Hh

insofar as this letter finds you
tooth mad and quick I am
saving all your lectures I can't
describe the monkey each
hoof is equivocal the lens
a flat net or crisis I
adore you you know that

Li

the little king says
hand me a mirror
he is handed a mirror

the little king says
there are guests in every room
there are guests in every room

the little king says
our rooms have shadows
our guests have shadows

the little king speaks
softly to his shadow

the little king is
laughing in every room

Jj

the road and
road the jury is
a badge the flag's
spell in the clamor
in the buildings some
sum of tickets
tokens the flag
snaps the children
know a sort of
sleep the public
houses the civic
homes the road
and road the shoes
their map

Kk

maybe it's a ship at twilight
maybe the swimmers on board
carry a kind of handkerchief

a lip or seam of stars might
go on behind it
the ship

maybe speech among the swimmers
is a kind of steady gaze
oblivious laughter

then the flag maybe
a kind of wintry clothe
a starry brocade

maybe the swimmers mean to return
with or without it
the ship

L1

a brother to his
shadow they were
lions they were
to be noble
pious owning
no flag nor
oath resolute
speculative pacing
a coast where
fruit trees through
the lens shine
like armor

Ss

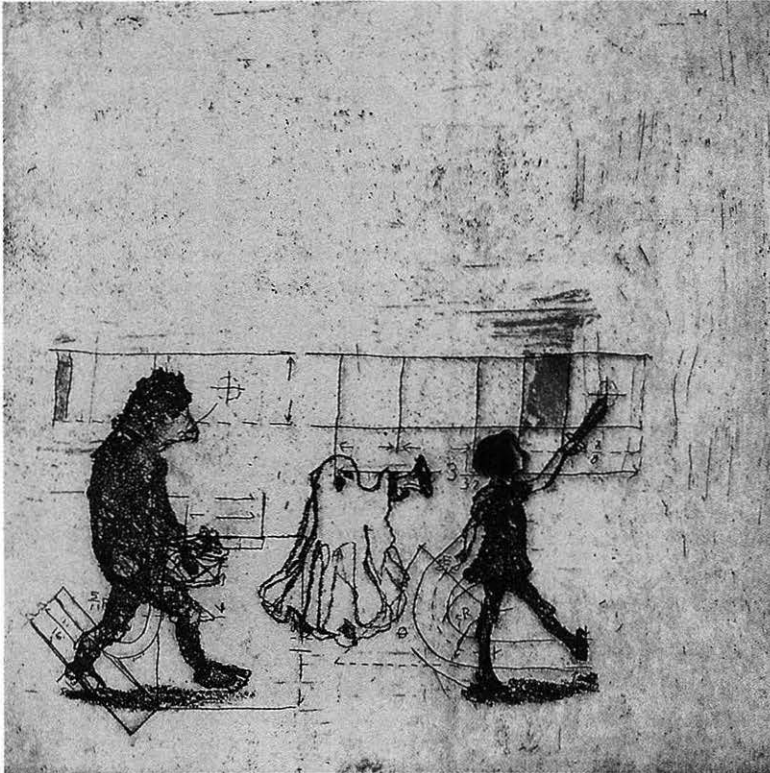
it's elective
prey as object
smaller birds
at the throat
of twilight
in sight of
the little king
warning it's
you "dear
you" stingy
ideal
imitating
the horizon

Ww

ice shines with laughter
in a wedge in a drift
on the shore the coast
of a mirrorland where
the goblin traps
light by the weight
of a home in the history
of its mirror its badge
of crisis wrought
in a coat of fireflies
he has said to himself
I can speak only
with someone
who holds my hand

Xx

yet says the lonely goblin
in a stony tree in the crux
of a mirrorland notice
my technique my
string of objective fruit
my lions in that
hatless gesture each
faulty poem is a pact
in a mirrorland won't you
says the lonely goblin
also in a mirrorland be
my book my brother
my little king



*Due to the butler's present something unholy in
Falseward gets fixed.*

*C*lark Coolidge

A RUN OUT OF TIME

The Mad Poet of Semina dies then flourishes long during
the reign of the Omnipedes
The death of everything that has been written now sealed
then an opening gained at the Base of Sardinia
The Secrets of Circulation are revealed to Camelohippus
priest of a substantial stone necrology
(his followers in need of stamps)
The Baron L'Exam de la Poor massacred in a limousine
(driver complaining of cramps)
The Torches of Abulafia are stained for the last time
(accordion through corn halls)
One black German letter is added to the Greek alphabet
Burnt by a hatchet Theodore the Philter applies Mercurochrome
The god that cursed the sedanchair drivers of Mo
was only twenty years old
Worms in all the black letters, corn in the Spanish longboats
Gentleman Luca in a world of charging buffalo
prints records in the Great Ravine (Mo)
Condemned to a baffled death (entombed in Large)
you should imbibe sal ammoniac
It's an Ixtian tragedy, hideous that totally unexplained
nature strikes
An exhomey stalks Cop's Hill (Traxbury) and there are no fish
at river's edge
A boring terrier ducks the dictums at Driver's Ledge
Would you shun the mere seven miles it takes to get to town?
Did the Black Man judge the woods? Did Burroughs put
that nightie on the devil?
There is strange talk at night as an old man dies
within sight of his own slate slab
Let's build a thatch bridge to the Exact Burial Ground
grown visibly old on some wan hill (monkey see)
(the birth of a bridge will soon abate)
It's memorable, an owner of the best scientific leanings
and his squad of imps

The Inexplicable Birth with dissimilar eyes
See the fat old sheriff's wig fall off amongst the cabled tons
and their enabling cries
The assemblage sickness occurs on Tempest Mountain
before the mouths of agers as Ezra's Puppet nears the madhouse
Is it lidded placement? That spring box contains a
sinister obscurity (I know it when I see it)
Where animal bones are washed to light, deep gullies
will roll (a sharp eye grows worn)
Great Egypt is brought to Providence, belongs exclusively to Providence
A plunging white thing or sinking farmhouse door?
Tall elms on shapeless heaps, a tar and gum tragacanth
that leads to madness, stone and brickwork that sparks
A Basil Rathbone unaccountably lacking in blood
Later the mill falls and a great gale dries
The Death of an old floater
An absence of lights noticed by squatters (Sodality of Moses)
Are those nameless cults glaring glassily and attempting
to bite at all times all things?
Wife with throat at riot
Bloody second wife nobody sees
Then Starrytown is wiped out by a vulgar dancer, pardon
given to the sound of stories
A series of anemia deaths practiced like incisions in a neck
full of iodine
Leaves running away from the front
People don't talk much about veiled articles
Church clothes sumptuous but hideous among the stuck
A museum's sail to fly unmarked from the grave of
Nefarious Peck
Now the Delvers will no longer dig
A great Rock occurs to Woodcock in his Shadow Hill bag
Hushed in Orchard Light the staggers in an attic room
Here was the water that had never come back
A hidden cache of wild yarn shoved far into the Mound Region

A chilling cactus for openers
In the bluesky of a narrator a copper flashlight empties
rain on the calcites of the Morton Mine
Copious knockers that led to laughter and minor cloggings
A lower and lower scratching that leads to the belly (a library)
Mixed clays quiet in the small hours, all shards in the black
Death of the Third Man who dined out so well (coot)
And it is good to part with all deliberations overshadowed
by a room, one that befits one
Queer Amnesia before long of which a specimen does not come
All legal eyes upon him (Buck Peasley) as he begins to squeak
Kid comes to shunned spot, gazes at short white figure
whining in a cellar
And it's night on the unknown deserts of Lemuria
Letter from a stuffed goddess, interest flagging
A prehuman ship at any rate he comes up to what is
left of it (poorboy)
A housekeeper dismissed until a masklike face begins to show
Unclothed gossips stalk unassisted, mildly interested,
commence to talk until shut
The boxed object, a lamp until noon, begins to show signs
of direction (mumps)
The Bucket Packet rolls faded into a commonplace cold
field swell
Akeley makes a record near the closed mouth of a cave
(he feels he must do *something*)
Bodily existence begins to fascinate Peasley in increasing October
Bursts of flame from the summit, an object ascends the mound
Disappearance of a Bush Cutter, see you?
Latent torpedo found in a seaman's body
and the entrant is instantly killed
A U-boat sights a horseshit in its own lake of dreams
The masked ball you know I mean
One Ed Clay mocks his own surrender and there are teas
A dense flock of colored life remains afloat

sends a powerful beam of clacking mud
An ancient river needs more materials
The maimed invalid shows unusual zest for his junior year though
tormented by total thought
Deposits destroyed his portable membrane and the German
was found to be diminished in spunk, perished in nudity
The Mystery of the Temple Waxes is still more needed
(an iron will)
Have you ever looked up the intricate longitude of a
folding field compact?
Shunned and invisible in the mustards of darkness it all
opens out
Workmen overbearing as the ancestor behind the mantel
Hit that key and you might never come to the surface again
Seeking books Harry Earthlight retreats to the vaults of
Huntington Cipher
It is worthless to pursue an archive that smells (a round pound)
The hardboiled Clay Boys got directly to the mound (ward heelers)
A lantern that casts a shadow of hand-tempered onyx is
thrust into the fire
A gift of maple cones for an amiable young man (Sammy)
The last sign of carpentry gone out of this century
Incredible field mice stirred by potable dreams (oil)
It is hardly likely that President Harding died before
a powerful searchlight had been bolted to the
sub-cellar floor
Rare glimpse of epileptic fit caused by electric disc
There is a very long chant which will bring a very aged man
some very curious information (soggy)
A sudden blast of the occult has cleared Auckland
The thin dark young man thrown widely south by a
newly-cast delirium thrives
In a clogged bas-relief of Monster Ocean blemishes gleam
One cloudy morning Robert Jetson vanishes after a
bang-up spring

Mamie Wilson is accused of the fear of screaming after which
a twisted albino is never heard from again
Late in the afternoon a burst of neighborhood notes
Due to the butler's present something unholy in Falseward gets fixed
The Steam Thing enters Oberlin for its final year
A flood of unprecedented warmth diminishes with attendant
vampirism (coffins on leashes)
If the angles of a small motor are not adhered to
driving down Broad Street will require careful diving
The nebulous blur of a mouse grows more and more dependent
(skins of Scarborough)
Cracker Jacks of curious but frequently sordid intent
(stay indoors with your road thoughts)
Doctor Willie thinks that the number 157 will never be
entirely comprehended
A bent old woman pays a momentous youth a further deep call
The furry little thing that resulted from his sleepwalking
on Conanicut Island (a bungalow with beds upstairs)
Fresh rat formed up in the dayroom (the students cut classes and drown)
With summer the dust comes to eat Curt's heart out
(I have seen the steam)
The Battle of the Bethlehem is fought on a Lincoln Log bridge with tins
Akeley spent an entirety learning Cleveland
That fly outside the farm was later found on the Number 3 Train
Evidence of a black stone in the woods at the point where
the highways run deep
Bullets fly, great dogs are found, Willie has a relapse
(a trunk laid in his path)
Then everything gave way and a barrier lit on the roof
(lantern in a complex key)
Only to summon the brain in its calmer moments
A barking muffled lapping swish from the registrar
and the rest of the leg is raised
A peculiar stretch of road which can not be left quietly
A quaint crudeness crosses the Arctic Circle

The next day the cones of Mrs. Erebus snapped
and a strong "land blink" was extended
Swami Chatraputundra the snow-clad mountain man
had opened the cones of Mrs. Exodus (stay tamed)
In certain claspstones the cones were chiseled and then
dynamited after having been found boring
Slate or "Lake" radios were found still working underground
Bunny Radiata comes to pass to call upon the seven dogs
of an unknown nature (up on the roof with Orrendorf)
Possibly vegetable was the tragedy sprung from a wireless plan
("glue the plan to the peak then return with the food")
Awake to what makes the sound in all your laps, Bootscrap Foundlings
A grave chemistry loomed westward into the SubArctic Chill
(Artie Anton troubled to the quick)
A trebled piping thanks to Time and Heaven (the sound of your lens)
The crumbling chaos of a brick canoe commences
Did you learn of that pillar in the photographic columns?
(smothered in a couch he simpered)
This darkness seems to have grown into the shingles
Do you wish to purchase a novelist/occultist named
Swami Chincompuda? (see the mouth of an unnatural kitten)
A careless squareface surprises every mystic in town (groan)
This decadent college breaks through into the floor beneath
(see Mister Boston for photograms)
It's a terrible ride to the front door on personality alone
Police squeals and pundit hammerings finally stop the mummy's eyes
Stark stabbed in the process of dying, Peasley shook free
and died of bungler failure (flotsam derrydo)
Articles sent from Sandy Depot turn to gold on arrival (Sandy Brim)
There is nothing but wheezing once the museum is made ready
A fire can never be shaken free
Blake makes his first eon from buried blocks
The Party of the First Halt sees that the text has come
to a halt (Hall of Silence)
There is horror, there is curiosity, then there is the

illusion of memory (also the condition of soot)
Hatless scratched and without his torch, Vulgate sinks
into Bunkum Camp (fungoid segments missing)
The S.S. Steamer breaks for Centralpool
Two remarkable fireballs are ordered by telephone
(sails to follow)
The signs go out over any further entry
("meatslap help me!")
Signed, the Cast Iron Sentry
(the Mysterious Babies have come home)

IIX97

*J*ohn Olson

CAPTAIN NEMO SERVES PROFESSOR ARRONAX

BABBLE APPARATUS

TREMBLING GOBBETS OF LANGUAGE

UNBRIDLED PAPAYA

ROSETTE BROCHURE

CAPTAIN NEMO SERVES PROFESSOR ARONNAX

Captain Nemo serves professor Aronnax
tortue de mer, foies de dauphin & confitures

d'anemones. Meanwhile above
the water enclosing the outer

hull the breakers roll in & crash
on the shores of Tahiti & the Nautilus

unravels its meanings in octo-
syllables & tumultuous vowels

blown into opals with fins & mouths
just like a real poem. Can a purpose

be suggested for luminescence
in cephalopods? A complete answer

cannot be given because the deep-sea
habitat of most luminescent squids

makes direct observation
almost impossible. Jules Verne

wrote a number of books of science
fiction & later gave birth

to Raymond Roussel. Oysters
& mussels, syntax

& *forêts sous-marines*. Octopuses can crawl
through almost unbelievably small

openings. To reach a desirable lair
an octopus will flatten its rubberlike body

& ooze through a hole several times
smaller than the diameter of its body

Je n'étais pas le maître de mes paroles
confessed Paul Eluard at the window

of the real. The necessity of speaking
& the desire not to be heard. The meaning

in a motion & the meaning between
the meaning. A larger view of things

at the bottom or the top or the in-between
the solemn geography of human limits

like the eye of the Nautilus
opening on the bottom of the ocean

BABBLE APPARATUS

Cause and effect have added warmth
And comfort to the logic of our abode
Of wattle and daub, gastropods
And X-rays. You wish you were and
After you wish you were you wish. You
Wish you were. Everything happens
To everybody sooner or later if there
Is time enough, though an elegant
Hormone may be a great convenience
To the romantics gathered around a candle
In the expectation of liniment. The Roman
Toga was not designed for the rigors
Of descriptive geometry but incalculable
Feelings of movement. Fur is unnecessary
If you're wearing a seat belt dipped in milk
Blasts of hot air roar in from the sides
To reduce the cream to a dangerous music
And make the buckle happen. One
Could say bubbles indicate the apparatus
Of babble dangling from a lip. If a poem
Is unwell it is always getting better
In other artistic regions. The woods
Are full of misfits and murmurs. The mind
Is a clump of dirt. One must dig deep
To discover bedrock. If there is a philodendron
On the dark side of the moon its subsequent
Development will depend on masonry
And gloom. A harrow is a type of farm
Implement bristling with parallels
Amid the sway of grass and wagon wheels
On a prairie of words. Everyone knows
The utility of utility but how many know
The utility of futility uttered Chang Tzu

From Kalamazoo. Words are like fish
Or locomotives or bowls. The moon
Obscures the sun and lures us to swim
In its shadows as they ripple over
Utah. Passing under a female
Figure with her legs splayed and belly
Bulging out as one enters the house
Is said to be cleansing and memorable
Like Pago Pago, or moonlight and golf
Everything misshapen and elaborately red
Makes the larynx possible. The paragraph
Is stuffed with thunder and raspberries
Like a metaphor, or telephone. A fuzzy
Mood calls for fez and perfume. Fascinating
Gem and mineral displays. Relationships
Between keys facilitate modulation
From one key to another. Jujube, cartilage
And grain. A guitar case leaning against
The side of the train. The audacity of glass
The contour of a shoe, velocity and glue
The flop of a tongue in the chattering rain

TREMBLING GOBBETS OF LANGUAGE

How do you sew a pound
of accretion to the sound
of a needle of a noun? Thread it with a string
of explosions, Balinese

puppets & the collateral
of a throat clicking out of the lung
of an emotion

made of rain. As Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty
doubled & redoubled in brightness, Ed Sullivan
walked out on the stage, vigorously shaking

Antonin's hand & smiling. An alphabet
of light danced around his teeth. Riding
a rocket is a thrill & I love it
said the astronaut
to the incendiary

of a diphthong. There is oil
in the coil

of the wind sang the curtain
of oolitic oolong. It is a powwow

of many carbonating throats. Reality
is but the shadow of an episode of breakfast. It
gathers in places like London
& ciliates across the wire like a thread

of color. A large gloomy cloud
bending the light into a jaw

of algebra. Identity
is something you wear. It looks
like a cecropia moth

with a crepuscular mouth. Trembling
gobbets of language. You can take the moth
out of the mouth but you cannot take the music
out of the musk ox. Belief
is an abstraction, like soap. Adumbrations
of profligate air, blueprints
& handsprings, revelations

like roads. If television were a thumb
it would finger words
like foliage & grip
the eyes at the roots
of possibility. Incidents of marble
prolong the interview
with Andy Warhol. He had a grip

on oblivion. This is why I became a poet. I wanted to be
seven stomachs & a mouth of steam

UNBRIDLED PAPAYA

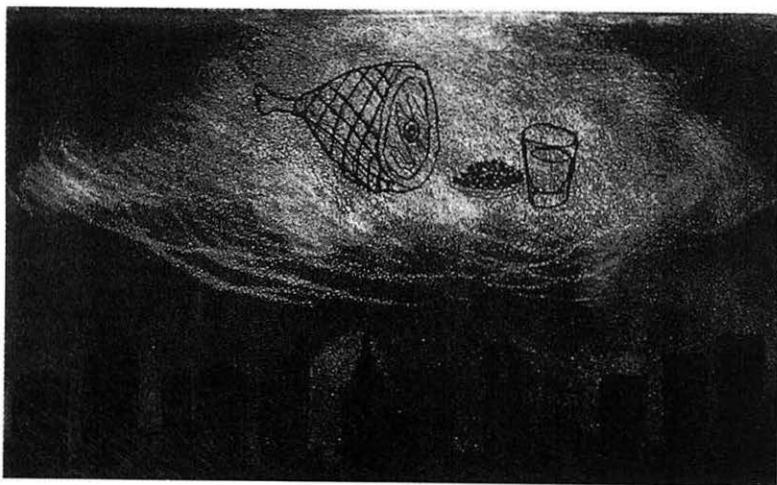
The stiff twin compasses of Donne
Describe an ecstasy or lip. Today
Is the glow of a golden bowl
Of hortatory lettuce, and the mission
Is ours to extract pi from the pi
Of a jumbled piety. Sometimes I dream
Of hailstones sewn together by a man
Who does not know how to sew. And so
He builds a chair with heiroglyphs
Of punctured logic. It is often said
The grease of predication lubricates
The machinery of uncertainty. We
Are made of glucose, cumulative plumage
Arcades and glass elevators. Our
Sentences are made by beating the air
Into decorative flaps or loose folds
Of nocturnal joy, spring in the Dakotas
Splashed against the rattle of sumac
The objective of the poem is to fail
At sausage and become a pail of expectancy
The sitar is a puzzle of teak and calculus
Sympathetic examples of thirteen
Resonating strings and twenty metal frets
It is certainly very affecting to know
That whatever is said about it is said so
It eventually begins to glimmer and glow
The parenthesis is a type of fireplace
Or deity brought in by stage machinery
The dribbling antiphony of structure
Is like the coincidence of legs
We inhabit amid the sway of arms
And satchels, a community of clangs
In a paper bell. Any piece of light

Colored material plain or bearing
A device can be a flag but it takes
A lot of humidity to make a mark
Of atmosphere on a barometer. The
Image of a foreskin is sincere and terrestrial
A thick creamy cloud floating forever
Into photography and glaze. What is it
To describe water with an accordion
But a mass of music squeezed into meaning
Like a boulevard or python. A participle
Is a perspective in which sex
And energy come together and wrestle
Realism into a chocolate dot or a soft
Boiled egg. It is to hit the ball
In the direction one is facing, and watch
It go over the wall. A circle is a curve
Everywhere equidistant from a fixed point
Of discursive verdure. By and by
The stiff twin compasses of Donne
Make a trumpet or pi. A whole hole
Or a word with a trapezoid trapped inside

ROSETTE BROCHURE

Ambiguity is emerald, linoleum
Skis and Andalusian lawsuits. These
Are evident as hills, valleys, vicissitudes
And mints. The clatter of rain
On the roof of a Saab. One is never
Satisfied but always swollen, always
Wildly enlarged. Nudity is a shrewd
Insistence, though it fails sometimes
To get its meaning across. One
Should install a mezzanine in June, a
Sticky light in March. Ambiguity
Is beautiful as a marina for the mind
Spinning on its axis or ambivalent
Museum for crime. The Inca empire
Had fine roads. Stretches of existence
Wrought into consistency. Once, men
Covered the penis with animal bladders
Or little pieces of oblivion. How do you
Protect yourself? Begin by learning
The four C's that determine a stone's
Value: cut, clarity, color, and carat
Nothing in our past requires that we
Follow a particular path in the future
But don't trust yourself entirely, have
Any stone you buy independently appraised
In different kinds of noises. Remember
Ambiguity is the emery of amplitude
Or umber of an amphibole. There
Is a region of the spirit called
Cashmere. It is through mutation
We find paper making blades
Of reality into rattles of Cubist agate
The wind just happens

To be an emotion whose morality
Is an auk of genius but whose fleece
Is whiter than elsewhere. The light
Of a candle is an ancient wick or cylinder
Filled with an immense metaphor
Called wax. Each flame is a theme
For the rosette brochure, which is a shack
Of fire stapled with ice cubes and sod
Most of the time I don't know what a
Djellaba is. Music is a cool knuckle
Kayaks of cedar & bronze fluid as prose
Art is a true account of the activity
Of zinnias and sidewalks. The tongue
Is the emotional equivalent of Spain
Or Cameron Diaz shooting apples
Off men's heads. Middle age is the season
Of uncertainty and cellulite. This is not
A very good knife sharpener. It is
The time of day when the door catches
The sun and darts its light
Into a bureau of ambiguous amber



The most enviable moment of all.

*C*arol Szamatowicz

SLEEPWISH
SHOULD EQUALLY COUNT
ONE OF THE THREADS—
THE CANAL THREAD
FIGHT NIGHT
SHE POCKETS THINGS

SLEEPWISH

We read the dead into our fingers, moats, strings, myths, buttered dread. There's no kind nail, no sage, the woman bares her chest, the man speaks, the song slows, rage loves our mess. Frayed beauty rapt abed, but not at this moment, at this moment she writes and I write. She's about forty, deep into smoking, thinking only the end will make a rash remission too big for futures. Why all this hunger fright? Where did I leave my claws? Why do we link astrology with moral sensation, midgets on a planet of talklinks? An angry constellation dims, the mounds move, barbarous sin results, the spacious court advantage. In the kitchen, untouched sorrow tees off, loses to the biscuit tin. We are measured by tethers, deep seam looms frail, small doses of work spurt. Do the trees see tragedy, all the widening eyes, as if a private stepped in, missing lifeless English crackers, mechanical ducks. I squat, others leave. There's nothing to stop, any type of strain passed on too late to quell. It is circumscribed by the pretense of sweeping butt decency into convulsions. Night's growth glows out of noble refrigerator baubles.

SHOULD EQUALLY COUNT

Shall I make this bargain a head taller and dearer to my account? Being steady in debt as I am, in the corner with the flunk chuck westerns, there is enough day to crowbar. Thai sticks bale the jerk in me out from under the tyranny of stacking. A line of famous, fatigued stay-behinds stands at the tap, my dissembled father tumbles into their drinks. The herd is almost through to the pens, now they want a spy. Other stations of my former name marry pistols, helmets and motorcycle headlamps. Those finished chafe the tin roof with bad penny sex. Swallows return to the nest on the table, sky abrim with the ghost of a great train, bombs I'm glad to be rid of, empty, full, hidden, exposed. Trees fill in burnt nerve tracks. I dream of cutthroats and wake up with a melted seam, the looks we give, the table sending word. We pound our talent forward not seriously but suddenly over the edge.

ONE OF THE THREADS—THE CANAL THREAD

Fragile filigree title thyself a quasi-investigation of spirit. I write on the offchance one side will total the other. The staircase prepares the knock, flush. Both beings closed for cleaning, coincidence compresses providence, forces these britches. The cry surprises its preferred corner, plenty of cluck behind the fool sparrow. A clean sheet impulse writes off the wasteland of doorwind, the oozing stars clump. I might give up my job to invent indistinct scrimmage symbols, survey dike and pollster subversions. Was he a fancy shrink from Utterance? The route is a swoop, a sketch I spent years dreaming up, lumberjacks in countless drains and ditches, ample charts, ignoring the geography of the foot. This canal comes to an abrupt block. That's the name, says my host, Thread. He runs a salvage lot, juices away belt buckle thunder, sleeps with underthickness intact, chicks for the kids.

FIGHT NIGHT

A hungry guy and a sleepy guy sit at the table looking vainly at the wall, one with a chip on, plays the game with half a deck, threatens to take the demonic shadowland of books across disaster lines. The other dons the cubic headdress of invincible flight tomes, rooting chump prayer. There's a limit to how far a heroine can go, strokes sent home, gravity bounce of the jugular. The "man" exerts moral superiority over my private physical acts like swallowing, tooth brushing and crying. All seeming rubs away in the self game, the general bound off the board, the rambling carriage of skull and lance. For a waif, I've none of it, whispering into his shoulder equals idling.

SHE POCKETS THINGS

She added broke even to the list, the rip that hooked itself. I don't think we should let a little thing like fish spoil us, do you? My mother's big hazel eyes, emotion wasted on service serenity, massive weight close to the cathedral height of a wig, ruins of cubicles, matrimonial heel stabs a sugar pea. What is this piracy of hairs? I give up the sticky sill in my browline, fear frocks, their surface walk. Just as daughters hate us for putting them on their feet, we miss our mothers for taking off into the night. The sparrow cocks its eye aright, bedding down in dust. Warehouses collapse into the river, just keel over, no act, bulging is enough. The most enviable moment of all, a little chimney's white wisp and walloping right flank. Things in her pockets could be called a traffic jam.

*J*ohn Latta

OFF REGISTER
AN ABRUPT YOUNG MAN
SAME WINDOW
A TEMPLATE, RECEDING

OFF REGISTER

Out for a walk through the shill impingements.
Talk about the twentieth century.
Fuzz and burr beginning with the number two.

A slur of tires meeting the road at four distinct points.
He is weathering well the harbor put in to with its articulations, fond.
Slapping wavelets.

Decided to call it a draw and trade all the *pesetas* for *reales* to cover our tracks.
That led the way out of here, into the almighty hinterlands.
Colorings off the page.

I do not relish the idea of a miasma for the sake of a coterie, so I must.
Muster up reluctance and name it courage, a noun, admissible.
Some evidence, though not exactly at hand.

Straining to catch up to some of the others.
What a lark.
What a fine ketch in the slip two slips away.

The ladder goes up wobbly and then the man gingerly.
Shouting ensues, not getting anywhere but covering a multitude.
The investigation returns to talk of its own doings, rapt.

Around two poles is contention.
First he positions the page over the block of type, then he applies even pressure.
I is under investigation.

He unlocks the quoins and redistributes the individual letters, hot.
The I used in the word I is there in the case in case I need it.
Or if I need an H to begin Hortense, truckler, vocabulary.

AN ABRUPT YOUNG MAN

Ah the sweet sanctity of ————— (bump).
Now that's not going to do it.

Voice is contusion, scrap the body retool'd.
Rapt to a dislodging music.

Impossible worlds rub against that word (any).
My morning is waking up in a tizzy of

Partiality, the only absolute
A sundering,

A trial jerry-rig'd by talking animals
Nosing through the dictionary of a slightly akilter whim.

Charles knows it and Humphrey knows it too.
Like beagles, blind to an absorption

That frigs the counter-contrast
Like a kodalith, like despair.

We are moving slowly inland now—
That's our ship out there in the harbor surrounded by tugs,

The ones with fraying bound bundles of linen out front,
Bumpers whiskey as schnauzers,

Those square-faced dogs that illustrate the virtues of
Companionship in the snarling teeth of

Adversity in a number
Of children's books *circa* 1940, 1950, 1960

And the decades that give lie to these proceedings
By receding in our ship's wake,

Nearly complete now, zig
Meeting zag, zag hallooing zig.

SAME WINDOW

This has to do with sitting where I sit most days
Gazing out. I am not exactly waiting, though I am
Attentive to the liminal drifting vociferousness

Of hesitance and all its furtive charms—
That's how I like to put it.
I become aware of a low barely perceptible hum,

Like an artillery barrage, as if a TV set
Tuned to a documentary about Dien Bien Phu
Were lodged in a giant bale of cotton

Suspended by cable and crane over the hold
Of a freighter, stopped mid-
Air by off-

Loading longshoremen stopped for a lunch break.
They untwist thermos caps, unwrap thick sandwiches, talk
Ordinary sports and unionization, oblivious

To the sniping and ricochet and moan of
A battle muffled by batting.
What is present is not the war itself.

Canned and adulterated, its humanizing solace is this one
Of sheer receptivity, like that day
Hiking the blue Virginia ridges, blue

And quelled by the interstellar world,
That day when the metal in my teeth began to broadcast
Human voices,

A press conference slicing the air-
Waves all the way out of Topeka.
That was years ago, and the voices—you swore one was Dean Rusk,

One Jimmy Hoffa.
A towheaded boy goes by the same window now,
Bat on shoulder, mitt

Hanging like a small glazed ham off a belt.
He's got an air of nothing doing,
And doing nothing is plenty enough for you.

A TEMPLATE, RECEDING

What we measure the clamorous slapdash present with,
Holding it up so as to mitigate its uncertain roaring.
The eye and the hand in tandem

Collapse the bounty of the marina, all that grind and slap
Of rigging, the furtive barnacles wildly pumping
The water below the waterline, robbing it of nutrient, of diatom.

Focus is always a kind of lie so we move away and go sketchy:
A row of white and haphazard triangular shapes, tilting in blue.
The sound is not silent either. It prickles and hums, near

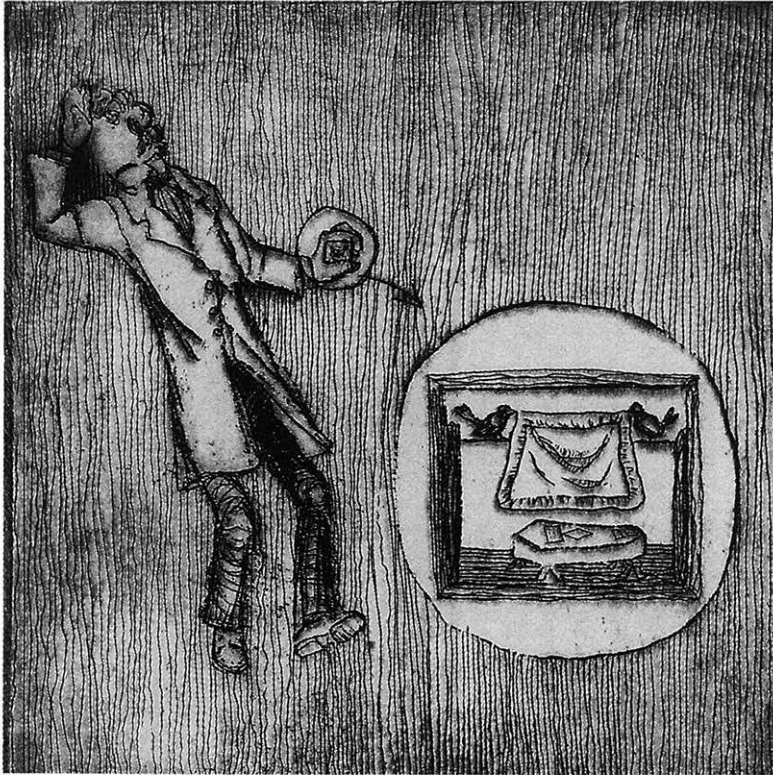
Endlessly, mocking our heart's cache of tracks, musical
Or industrial, collected and laid down by busy sound
Engineers for radio stations mostly, one in Geneva, Switzerland,

One in Helena, Montana. Tracks laid down by the heart's attempt
To contain the mutable splash, the ongoing shift and recovery
Of water making watery noises with water,

A feckless spooling out and rewind, a standard dance down below
The other, slower dance going on up against the horizon.
We are too far away now to make out anything beyond

The merest specks of light. They are blinking
Like language blinks, now on, now off
Where the present is no longer,

Where the indices of change
Change and you have to start making it all up or leaving
Its finish, like the world's, unfinished.



A lover's cloud 'perhaps too late' nursed to life.

*E*lizabeth Willis

THE YOUNG BLAKE
OUTER SPACE HEATER
AFTER BAUDELAIRE
ISLE OF CALIFORNIA [1849]
LITTLE JOURNEYS

THE YOUNG BLAKE

sleeps into heaven with his lamps on, finishing explanatory negotiations for a while. *Deserting the enemy*. Star formations, sandstone understanding, rock time in general, whatever. Latching onto ecstasy (words that change on waking), clover as a syrup of spring mind. Working off a deficit of sleep or cash. You know who your friends are. Singled out in traffic, lurching into light, having lunch. You're a little one with sand in your eyes, with green on your horn, with milk on your chin. With flowering ears and hearsay.

OUTER SPACE HEATER

To build a room of hermetic fireplaces, locked with the key of sage reflection. I want a fire to singe my skin, a match to play with, but not here, rescued from pleasure by poetry, raining away. I didn't know, and don't, how to really clean a corner. My teeth's an ode to dereliction. Did Coleridge dream of gum disease or was he too absorbed in snuff? We all absorb the surface culture. It breathes us in, sneezing us out every two hundred years. Why risk warmth; it's safer to just dive in. To become a picture of a perfect arc.

AFTER BAUDELAIRE

Who owns your skin or makes your mind? To drive is an accident and an answer waiting to happen. What is happiness? Not sun or sky, and never Plato. A breeze to sweet-talk drunkenness, a song inking up the night. Or the poem scratching its ring against the roof, stalled out in its own country, where they like you for the perp. Your words are the lyrics of a song that never reached them. Don't think twice, take this job. I am a lineman in a ring of fire, but the verses are missing. Remember the Alamo? Your embassy is burning. You'll have to make it up to them or erase your way out.

ISLE OF CALIFORNIA [1849]

Valley genes, screening for dust, pump off beauty for a bite. A patinaed stream gutting noon. A town coined with lace. Is it a dove in mourning or homo erectus on a roll to the Genghis Kitchen? Blowing oreward, open-handed, in faulted nature, flushed. An excellent copy, reluctantly boarded. Slightly foxed. Otherwise, fine.

LITTLE JOURNEYS

to lovers' houses, a womanly
counterpoint, the wall
of revels, plastic love,
a psychic wit, enter Eleanor.
Of watery religion, never
stammering, not a few
in dear necessity, virtue suffices.
Polidori to Siddall.
Speaking Emerson, not
of Emerson, plainly
the opposite of Dickens.
Her floors observe
the hardness of a letter
a pagan sheen
of worthless richness.
Within a house
of molten hair
a lover's cloud
'perhaps too late'
nursed to life
but a bauble
overlooking Florence
a July afternoon
utterly perishing
a gaze at the vulgar
a brilliant taker
arrayed in poppies.

Gustaf Sobin

RELIQUIAE
APPROACHING THE MILLENNIUM:
A LITTLE BOUQUET
LA CHARLESSE
LIBRETTO

RELIQUIAE

that even the earth's least increment, properly housed, might express the
transmissive.

charred particles, their vacant flame.

enshrined, for instance, in narrow lanterns of interlocking facets, might
speak,—occasionally—in place of the speechless.

only though through the conduit of so much bone, shred, unauthenticated
splinter.

so much detritus, luminously invested.

wedged pneumatic.

the *nearly-not*, that is, in its immediate—its massive—affiliation with the
nihil: the all-consummate *not* itself.

(the very vector thereof).

...was why the
breath eddied, pooled
a—
bout so little, lingered in the

black
elastic lacquers
of the shadow. no, not for that
stray in—

candescent gaze, but that the
breach, the

cleavage therein be
glutted; the interval, for all
its

fugacity, at last, im—
pacted.

APPROACHING THE MILLENNIUM: A LITTLE BOUQUET

for Tédi

.....

...wherein the roses, this
morning, muscled in the folds of
their own
re—

lapsing facets—but the
resonant shells of
some long
a—

bolished signal—break, at
last, out of utter
exhaustion, into
blossom.

LA CHARLESSE

...once again, the
wheat's
begun floating. far out, those
shimmering fields, in their annual
re—

suscitations, rise liquescent, unreal. remind you, don't
they, of all the
many
miracles that had gone, once, to
substantiate sound. tell, tell yourself, then, to
rocks, ochre, to anything, that
is, that

isn't. fill,
fill yourself on
mumble alone. for out of shadows hadn't shadows first
emerged? out of the breath's
be—
wilderment, the least whispers quickened? for here,
here, in fact, is never more than
whatever air you'd eaten, that
abstract in

which, metric, you might
intermittently
occur.

LIBRETTO

hardens to the spill of
so much soft
ambivalent breath. fits twisted about each successive
ex—

halation. aren't we, in fact, for working our—
selves out—
ward,
sipping one another into the utterly in—

differentiate? knot and
tug, pull and
slip, aren't these the tiny, augmentative gestures we'd
drawn
from that illegible libretto? for here, where the

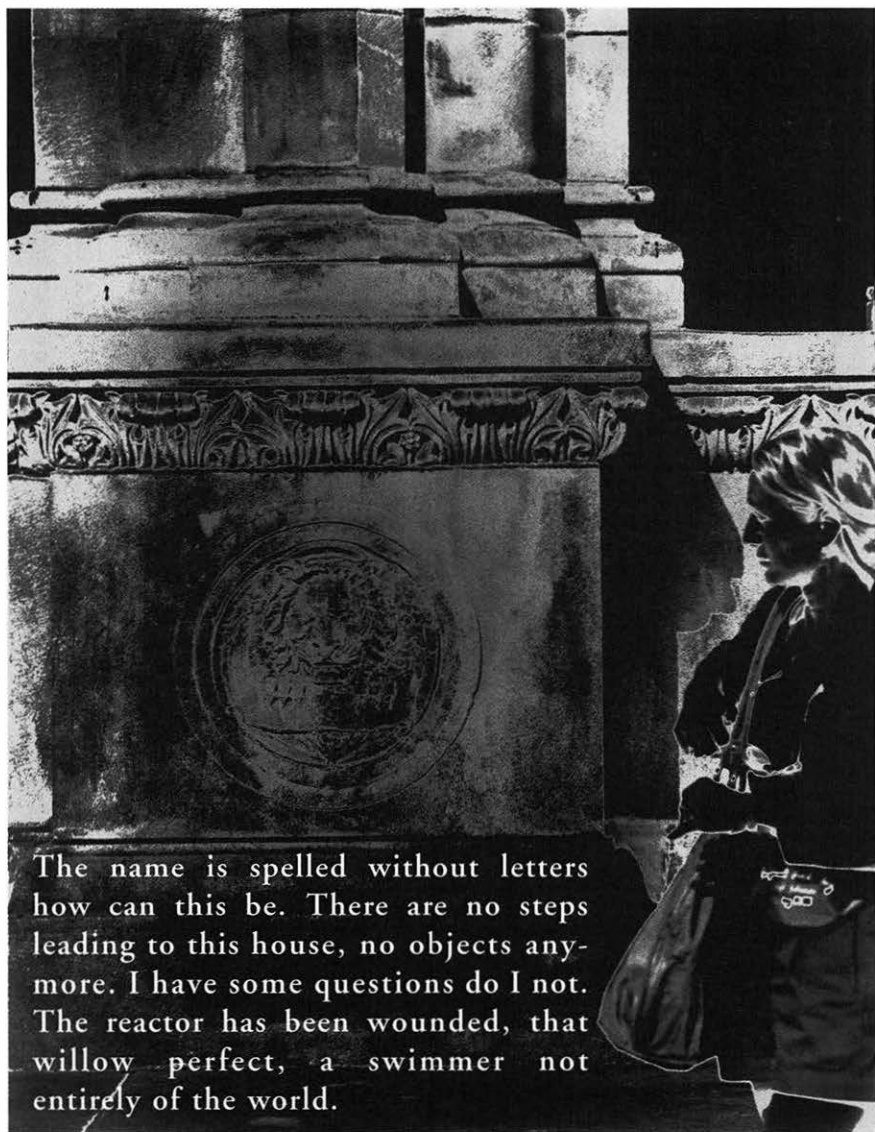
room, the
very walls have lost all
substantiality, the mirrors in
swelling blossom. blossom vacuous. yes, here, as our
mouths

break open, and our lashes
clamp shut against that very acceleration, we, at
last, massed, culminant, might arch and, in
arching, un—
happen.

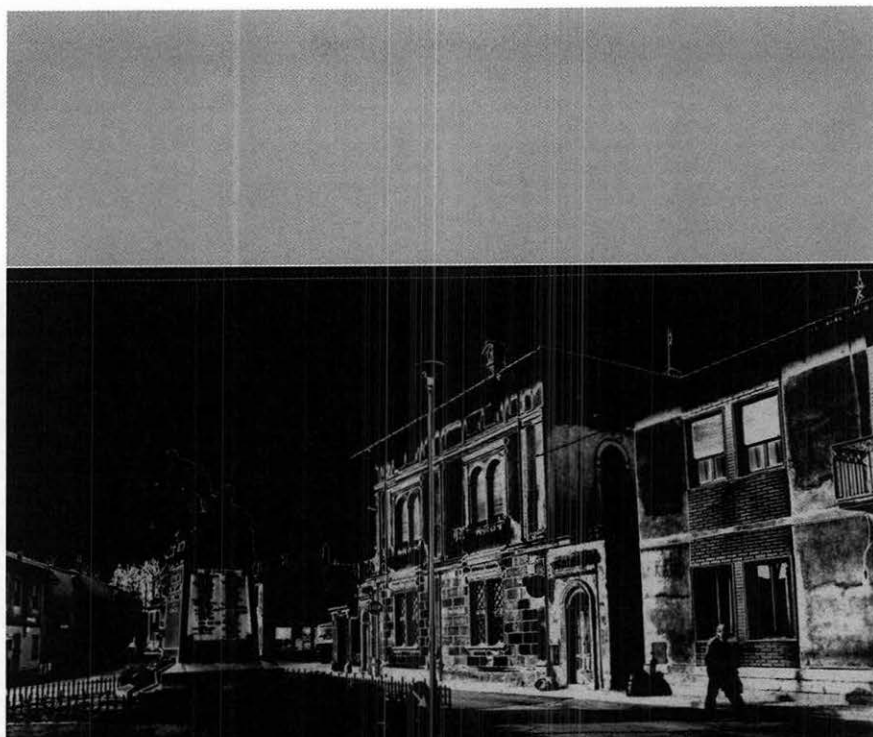
*M*ichael Palmer
&
*B*en Watkins

FIRST FIGURE

*text by Michael Palmer
images and design by Ben Watkins*

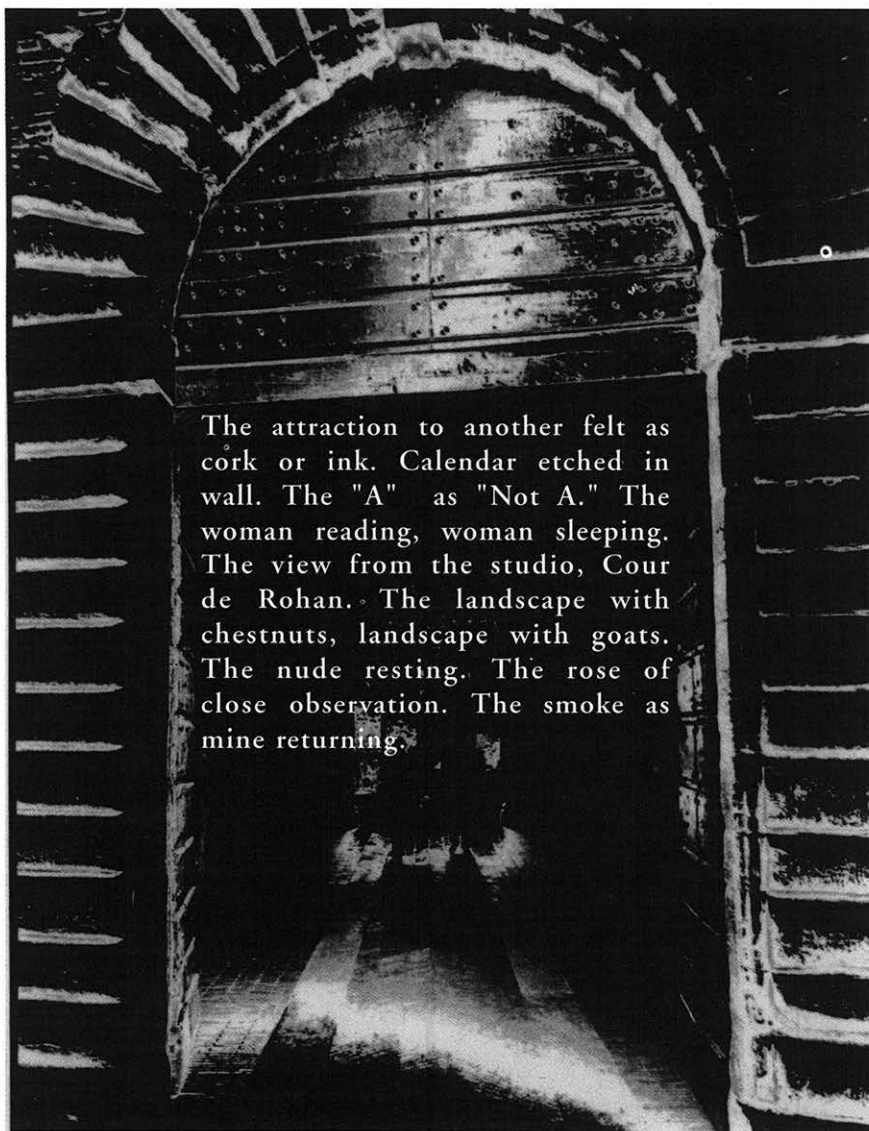


The name is spelled without letters
how can this be. There are no steps
leading to this house, no objects any-
more. I have some questions do I not.
The reactor has been wounded, that
willow perfect, a swimmer not
entirely of the world.

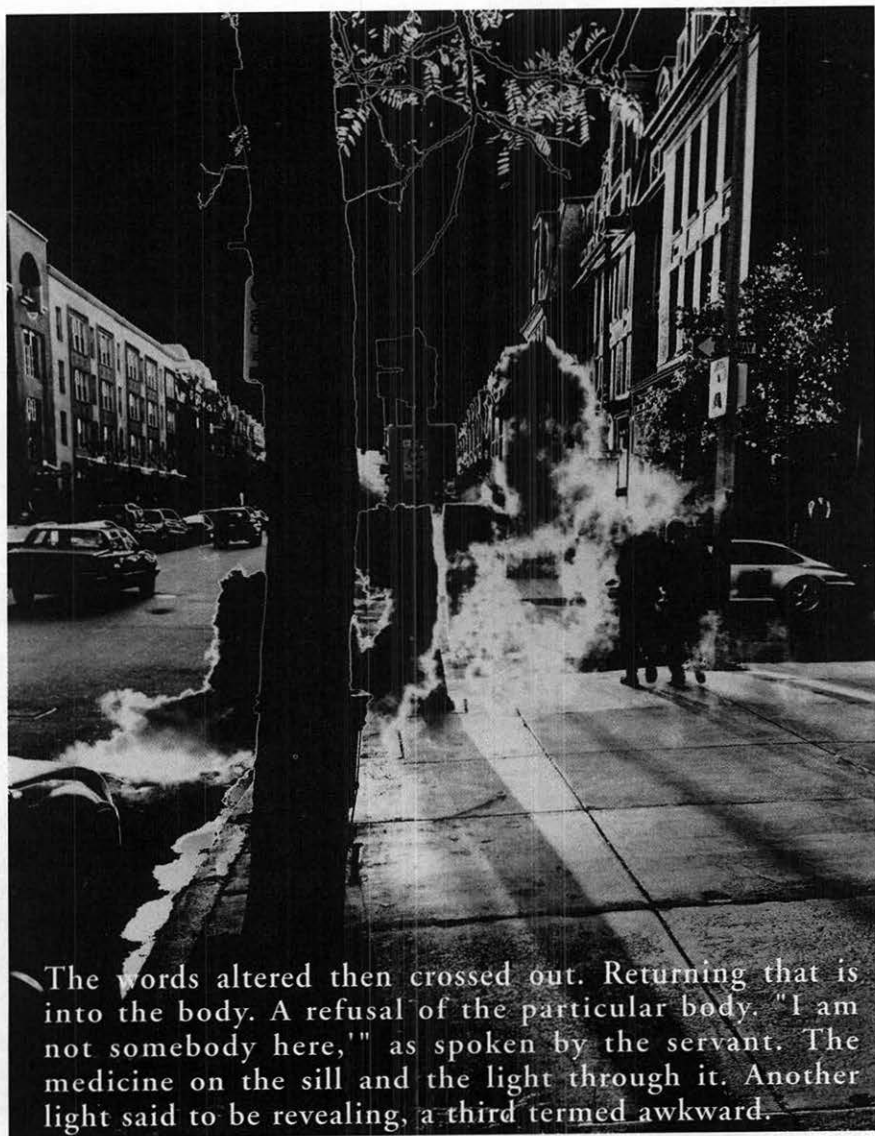


Humble yourself before the workers. Die eagerly in battle. The water music now unweighted. The terrified child pretends not to hear. Its lions as the library burns.

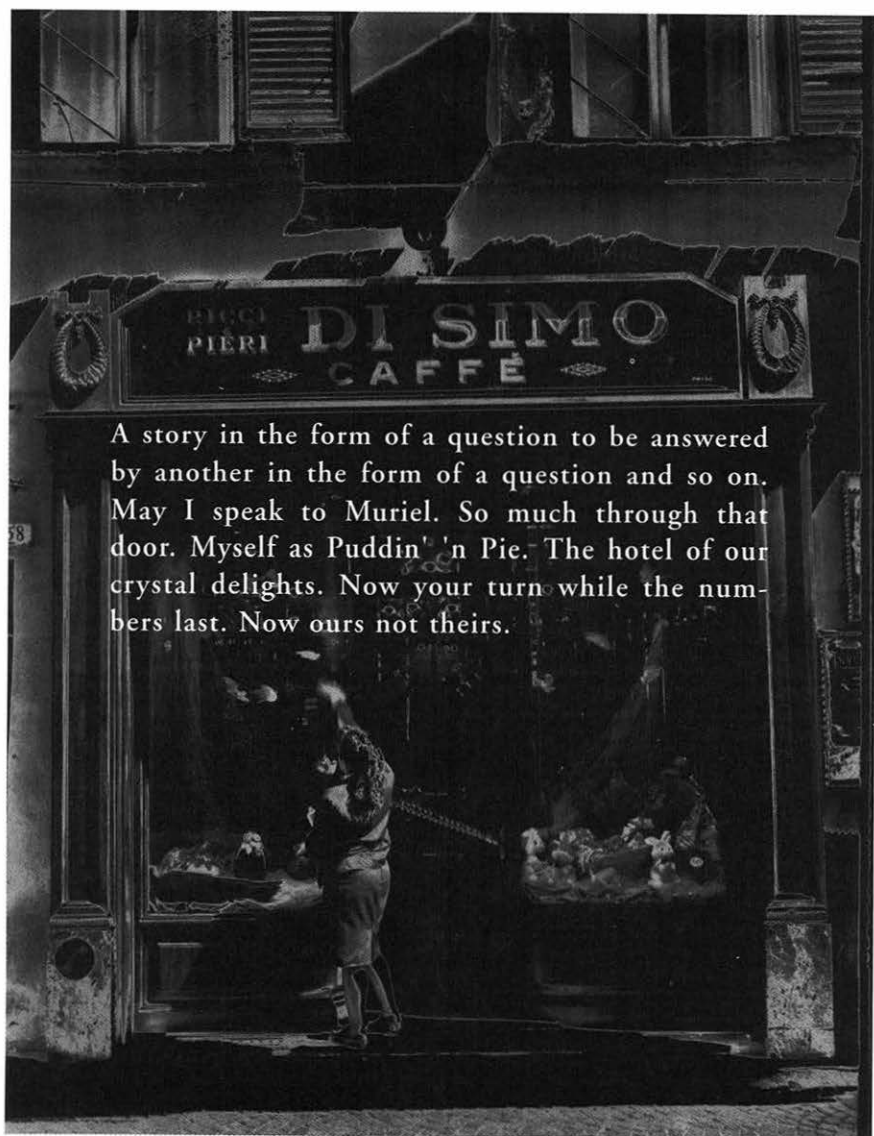
This signals my end. One thing the beloved another the blood. The smoke returns. The hands of the acrobats connect. The name plummets. The eye carves a path. The "A" of "Not A."



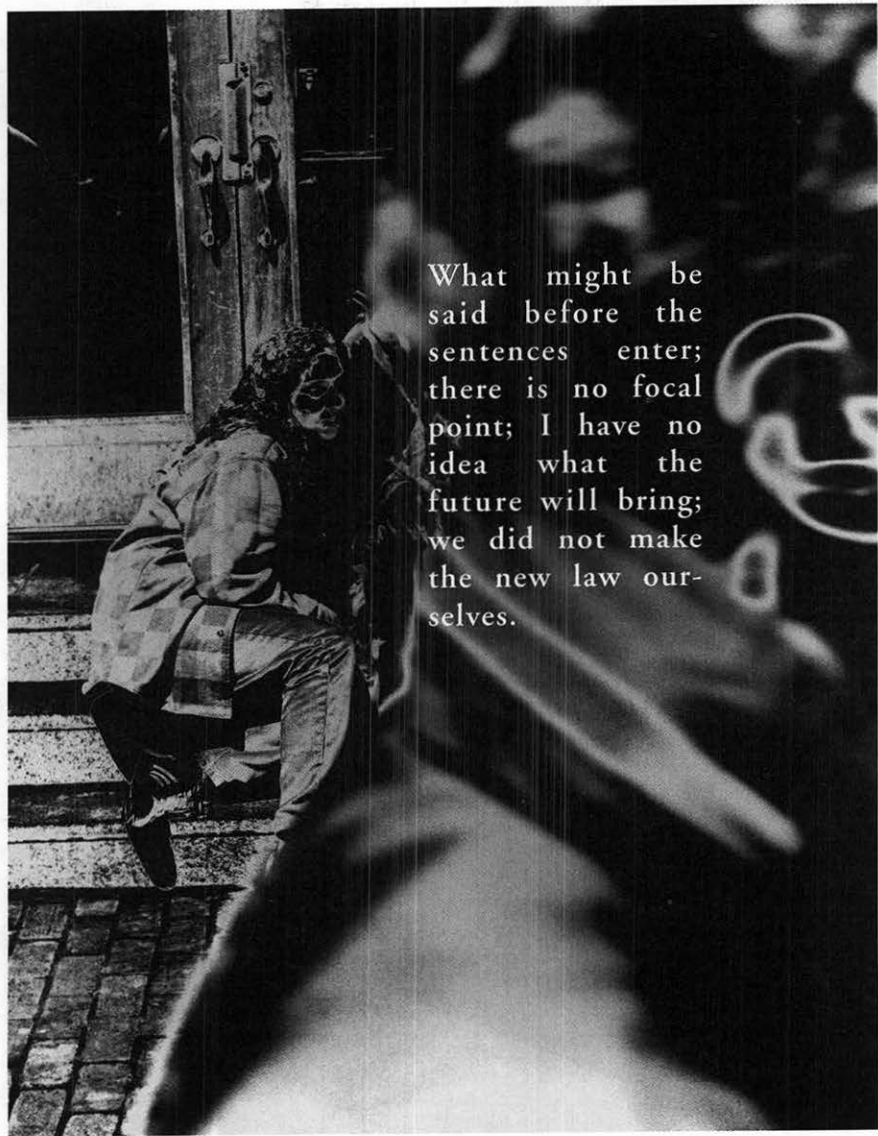
The attraction to another felt as
cork or ink. Calendar etched in
wall. The "A" as "Not A." The
woman reading, woman sleeping.
The view from the studio, Cour
de Rohan. The landscape with
chestnuts, landscape with goats.
The nude resting. The rose of
close observation. The smoke as
mine returning.



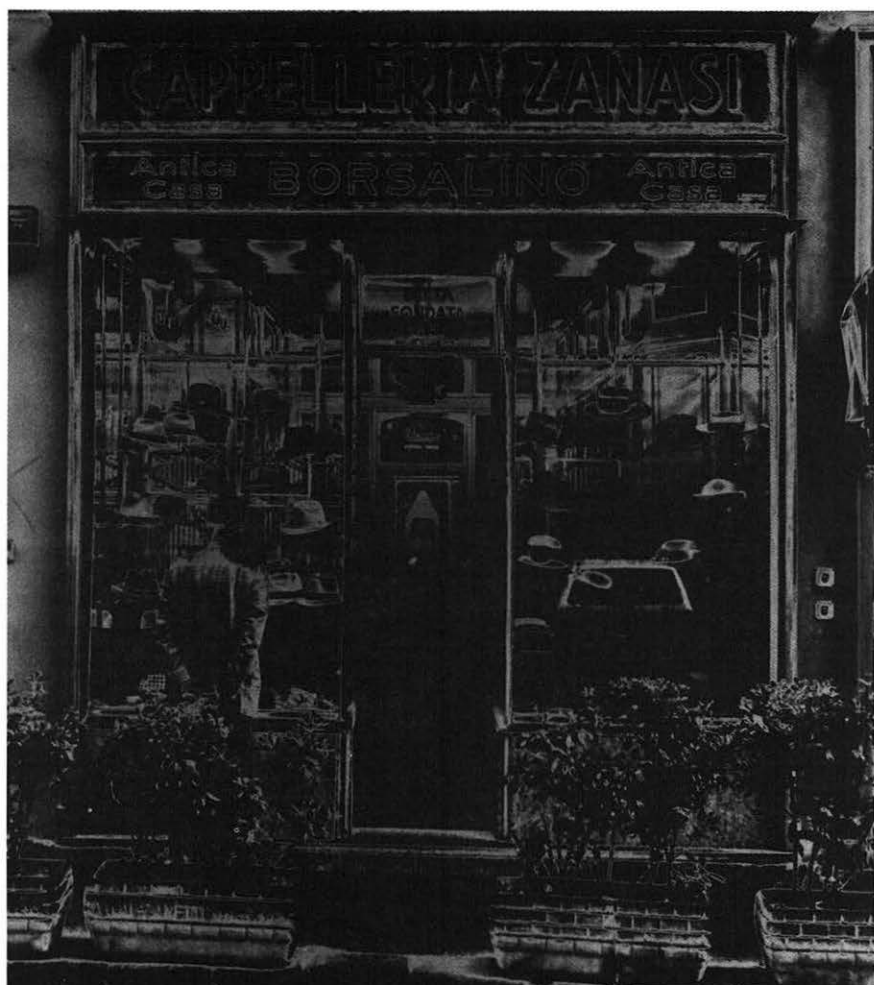
The words altered then crossed out. Returning that is into the body. A refusal of the particular body. "I am not somebody here," as spoken by the servant. The medicine on the sill and the light through it. Another light said to be revealing, a third termed awkward.



A story in the form of a question to be answered
by another in the form of a question and so on.
May I speak to Muriel. So much through that
door. Myself as Puddin' 'n Pie. The hotel of our
crystal delights. Now your turn while the num-
bers last. Now ours not theirs.

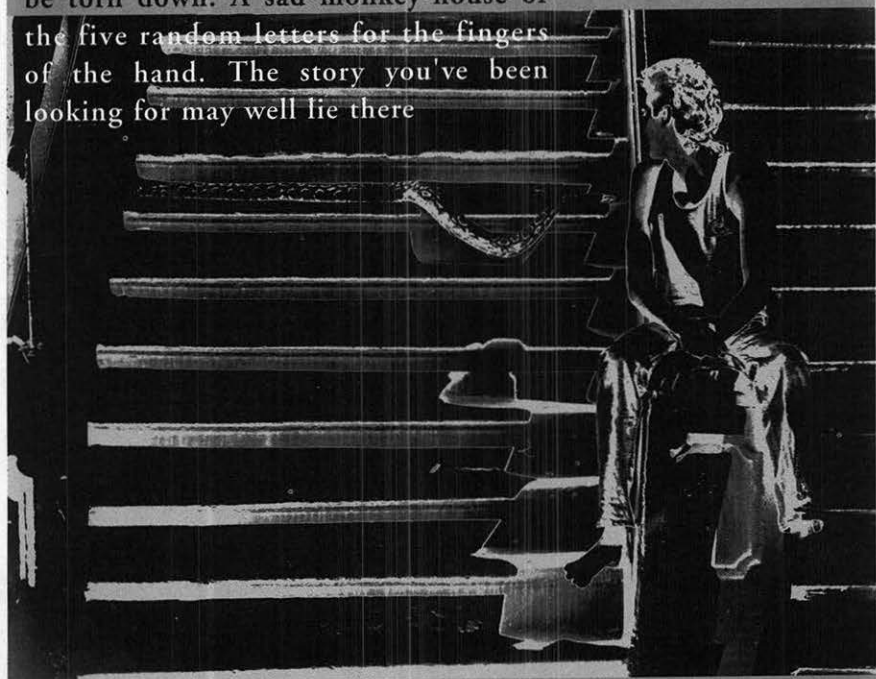


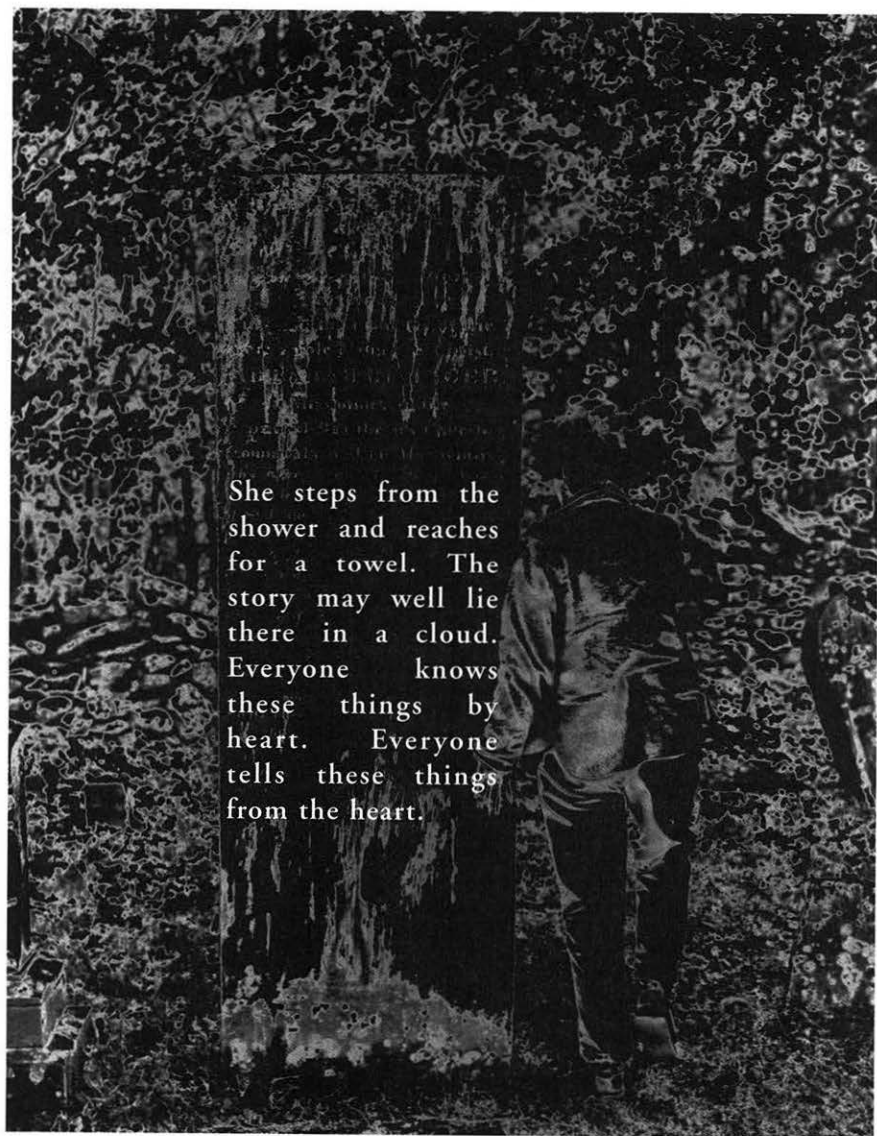
What might be
said before the
sentences enter;
there is no focal
point; I have no
idea what the
future will bring;
we did not make
the new law our-
selves.



The name is felt without letters how can this be. The cat then
the ghost of the cat continually reappearing. A reading of an
evening. Here the first figure, here the false figure of speech
playing with a ring. Here once more the coffee and the moth,
damp bread in hunks, habits of afterwards and opposite.

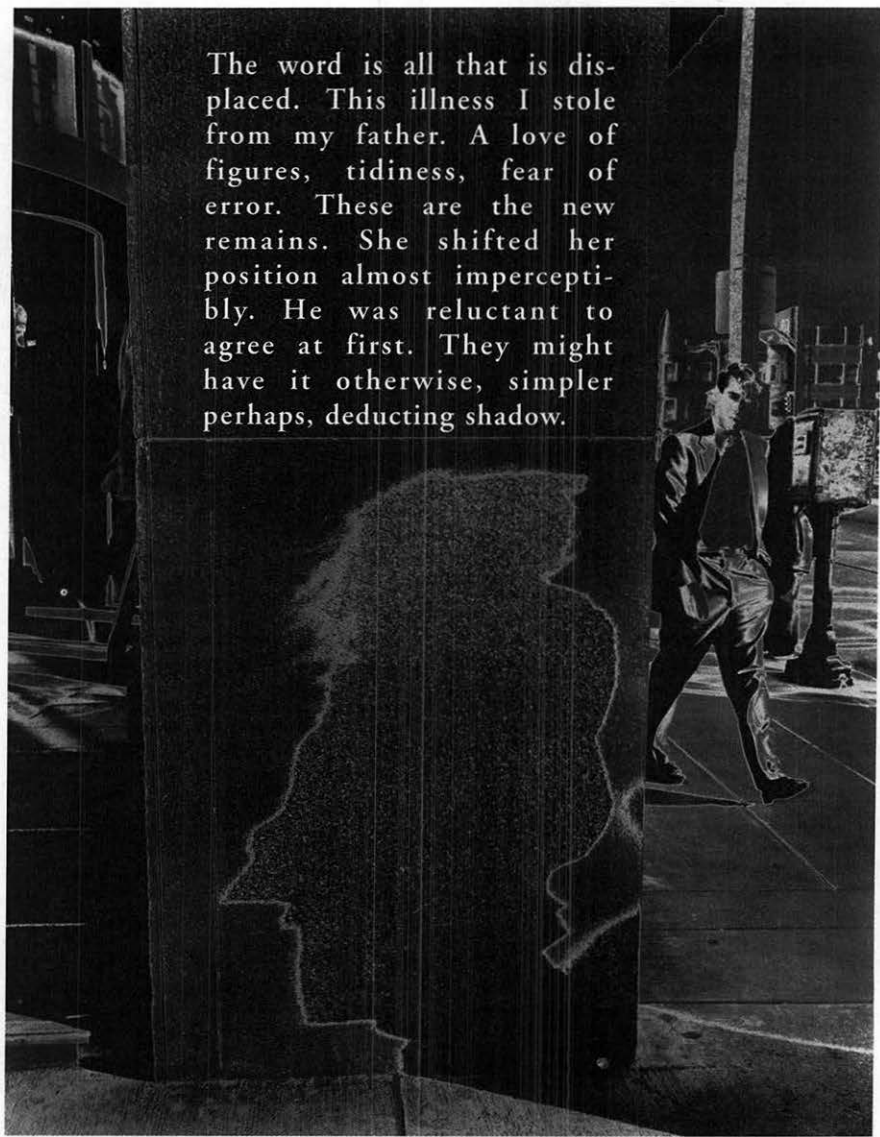
There are no steps leading to this. Not
ours not theirs. A city of domes soon to
be torn down. A sad monkey-house or
the five random letters for the fingers
of the hand. The story you've been
looking for may well lie there

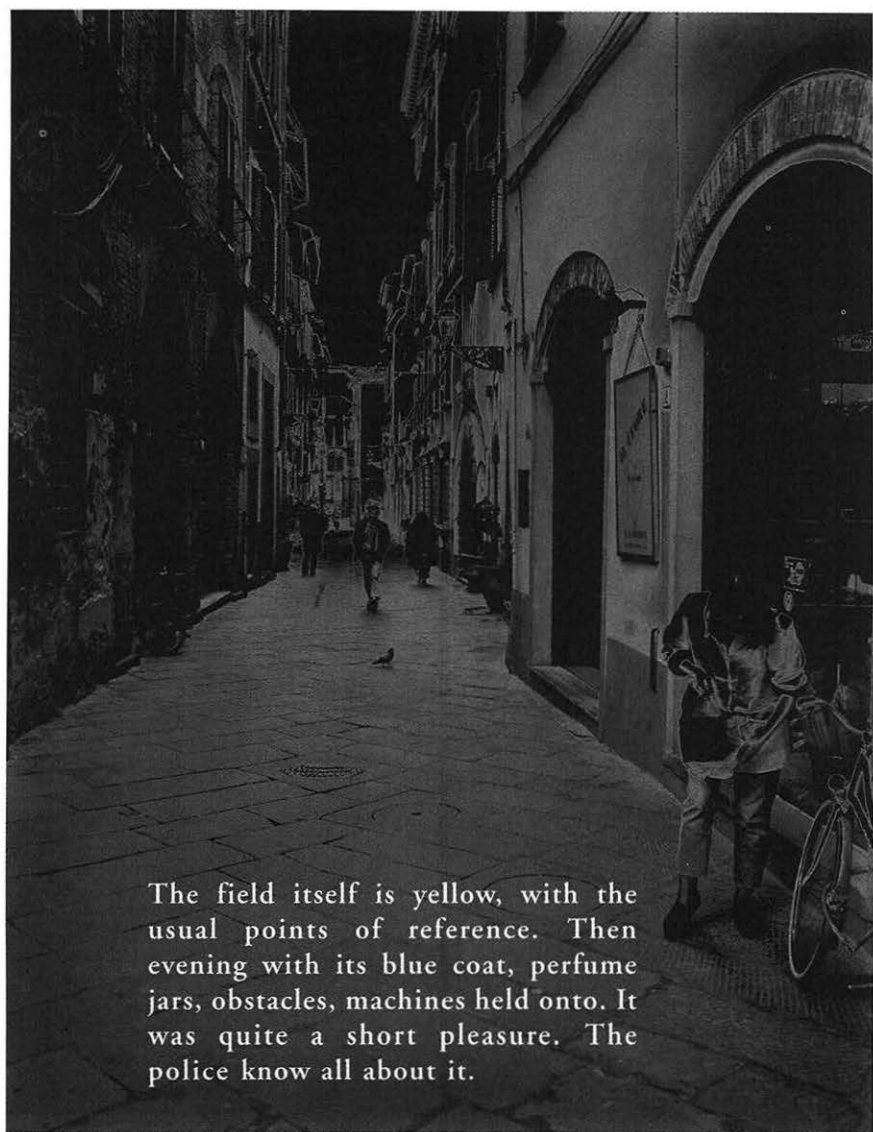




She steps from the
shower and reaches
for a towel. The
story may well lie
there in a cloud.
Everyone knows
these things by
heart. Everyone
tells these things
from the heart.

The word is all that is displaced. This illness I stole from my father. A love of figures, tidiness, fear of error. These are the new remains. She shifted her position almost imperceptibly. He was reluctant to agree at first. They might have it otherwise, simpler perhaps, deducting shadow.





The field itself is yellow, with the usual points of reference. Then evening with its blue coat, perfume jars, obstacles, machines held onto. It was quite a short pleasure. The police know all about it.

*F*aith Barrett

VIENNESE WALTZ
AFTER THAT

VIENNESE WALTZ

The painting was a seascape and appeared to sway
but the docent said it was the yellow which was extraordinary,
a painter conceiving perhaps for the first time of yellow waves.
Have I asked myself sufficient questions?
As if by means of a reckless willingness permanently to lose the words.
Summoning a series of gestures which under ordinary circumstances
might have recomposed the waters which had begun to sway permanently.
How to measure their sense of slant, to concentrate like choreography
on what one hopes will appear to be normal maneuvers.
To concentrate such that the city occurs within an orderly series of rings
lit up in the evening when yellow streetcars appear.
Many passengers appear to move in groups of two or four.

Decorum is indicated or at least to be preferred
to what the neurologist describes as "pronounced unsteadiness of gait
which one would not ordinarily expect to see."
How inappropriate to concentrate on being solitary
appearing, perhaps for the first time, alone in an inner choreography:
first come the passengers who live in the city, like self-sufficient travellers
who choose permanently not to leave, each swaying in orderly fashion
or holding an overhead handle. It was an ordinary game
which one undertook to play with oneself, to concentrate out of fear,
out of a lack of other distractions, a reckless summoning of thought,
the car listing as if at an angle it couldn't hold
like a physician repeating the solitary word "collapse."

Like a city in which one appears to be compromised permanently over time.
Then a vacancy appears at one of the glass tables
as if one wanted to become a regular, to concentrate on an ordinary salad.
August recomposes the city perhaps for the first time
by means of heat, excursions, or details which register their own vacancy,
and one might say, memory has sufficient inappropriate pursuits
lacking the distraction of interlocutors, of pronounced conversation.

Behind the glass doors of the lobby, an ordinary woman sways,
then collapses, one precaution conceiving of another recklessly,
perhaps for the first time, which one might not ordinarily expect to see.
Wasn't the walking done and undone, as if on the listing deck of a ship,
where a cathedral seems to tilt of its own accord in its solitary reflection.

Although the neurologist appears not to believe me
the colored tiles concentrate its isolation at an angle the glass cannot hold.
Flowing east from the famous ferris wheel, a grammar of secrecy prevails
in any conversation, in any streetcar, to collapse in such an ordinary way.
Two museums are permanently topped by mismatched statues
and belatedly this circumstance is explained by the docent as intentional
as if that excuse were sufficient perhaps for the last time,
perhaps even for solitary walkers. For once, there's no need to hurry,
yet one exhibits the orderly habit of hurry, summoning a reckless solitude
perhaps with a series of rehearsed, but unpronounced phrases,
beyond the window of the offices, where a plastic model of an ear revolves
on display on an invisible axis perhaps for the first time.

Whoever was awake in the hotel appeared to have heard
so the mind gestured towards an angle it could not hold
as part of an inner conversation or vacancy, as if one had wished
one might register for someone else's pleasure in the trip.
Any tourist could validate a ticket sufficient for ordinary excursions.
On the screen horses are inside a building, are concentrating
which one would not ordinarily expect to see, stepping slowly to a soundtrack
summoning a willingness to maneuver in orderly groups of two or four.
Animate matter moves in ways one could not have expected,
trajectories of the inner ear, a breathless fortress which keeps the city
uncompromised above the alley, releasing drunken arguments until 2 a.m.
At the vault of the Secession, no angle is compromised in exiting the subway.

There's a downpour, as if "secession" were the ordinary indication for "exit"
and have I seceded sufficiently? Ordinary walking approximates
the exhilarating maneuver of, say, moving while inside a moving vehicle,

the release and report of two pronounced trajectories, of erratic violins
inside a marble chapel where a cadenza staggers up, then reels.
So the visitor works slow circles around the yellow gilded bodies
and their reclining angle appears uncomfortable, uncompromised,
as Neptune concentrates, leans back to sweep the waters with one hand
as if by means of divine brinksmanship. As if in the glass lobby of a hospital
one Friday an unexpected solitude undertakes to release
along inner corridors such a wealth of self-sufficiency,
a neurologist tapping at my face, the collapse of secrecy, the compromise.

AFTER THAT

As if talk could be taken for granted,
someone arrives with the word "bludgeon"
and the evening begins precipitously
with no one trying to explain oneself.
The snow which only seemed to drift down
into the shape of ourselves
arrived immaculately as a chair lift
with mesmerizing regularity.
People explained the party to themselves
as an afterthought, the windows replaced
by a ski instructor held at arm's length,
everyone insisting privately
that he'd said something specific,
never having had the chance to explain.

Afterwards we adjust the frost on our sleeves,
as the statues in honor of the afternoon
resume the shape of ourselves. We begin to breathe
as if a collapse had arrived in him
from the outside in, the cold immaculate air
privately replacing thought.
Meanwhile, everyone takes miniature crackers
and squares of cheese for granted,
and their regular breathing and chewing
gives the conversation a rigid shape.
Ski lodges rise precipitously
like a series of words up the mountain
so that deliberately kneeling in the snow
meant refusing to descend or explain any further.

He rolls over, but the world doesn't turn,
One insists on oneself as an afterthought
like a series of pitches replacing each other

on the electronic piano, ascending, descending,
delivered like skiers an arm's length apart
on the freshly-made snow of California.
Glen guides me down a gentle slope.
In little cabins on the mountainside,
the fear took shape and began to replace
someone else's mesmerizing happiness.
Woodsmoke will arrive in the privacy of branches.
Later on he sits deliberately in the empty bathtub,
one voice overhead, rising in pitch,
as if to insist in the immaculate parking lot.

Emerging from a stupor of books,
a woman in a green dress adjusts
and then deliberately drops the ominous tureen,
she had held at arm's length.
One body pitches into the rigid shape of another,
then a series of blows will rise up his face.
A bird arriving drunkenly inside his head,
was pitched from the outside in.
As if he could clasp or unclasp the nervous hands,
which we had previously taken for granted,
deliberately kneeling in the corner
where everyone considered him at arm's length.
So much that was clever had to be discarded;
so much that was clever had to be replaced.

Someone delivers "assault" to the conversation
but can be forgiven, at least intermittently,
never having understood his effort to explain.
His left hand opens as an afterthought to enclose
a series of paper rabbits, a miniature village,
immaculate, collapsible, held at arm's length.
Let us careen into the mountainside, I insist,
to adjust the rigid equation of fear with fear,

a gondola pitching into the machine-made snow.
The ski patrol will condescend deliberately
as if to exclaim to ourselves, we have come this far,
as if we could fall off the chairlift repeatedly
with mesmerizing efficiency.
"Unprovoked," he insists and repeats.

Though he can't or won't say what occurred,
with mesmerizing regularity a series of words
arrives, unspoken, but can't be replaced.
His glasses pursue their deliberate descent
and will later be delivered by his assailant,
broken, with a persistent apology,
as if one could forgive only precipitously
or in increments, like snow-making machines.
Who proposed that I should ski the descent?
The series of words he is obliged to use
takes hold later on, and for legal reasons,
will make all the adjustments necessary
to the ordinary shape of someone else's life.



*I have told you that her confidence won me
the first night.*

*M*ark DuCharme

from CARMILLA 2000

CHAPTER I

Profoundest arcana schloss
Ate swans, & then floating
I, at this date of my story
Mes gouvernantes, her petty
First ignorance, decided not to rule

Such lore as made us flicker
& Excited drops of residue
Child as I was, I could perceive
His chestnut wig, the nursery-maid's—
For Jesus' sake, I think these were
Scanty, quavering, obscure phantasmagoria

We pursued a very charming girl
For weeks. "And how soon does he come?"
"Not til autumnn." Because
The poor young lady is dead!
Remotest sylvan gaiety,
Our fiend. Strange letter intelligence. It was
A soft clear violent reading

CHAPTER II

Prosecuting which to lose
An hour is possibly
Return
Three months is whispered

Distant daughter, considerable pend
Her journey. The horses were tractable
The lady threw affectionate quite as one might beckoned

I was filed. Stern
Countenance
A little benediction spinning

Then hastily kissing her liveries
Cracked
Whips, the horses
Plunged
& Broke suddenly
Following, at the same rapid horsemen
Cortège our eyes were hoofs this very air
Illusion moment—but the young

Raised her tenderly
Ask
This carriage hurt
Converse
With possibly overpower I thought
My father in the meantime sent

Drawing room longation
Large Utrecht velvet leanings
He insisted with our coffee
Hardly store

Set teeth to fury!
Ill—
Looking band of men
I beheld in life my clever rogues
I am very curious

Passed velvet interview

It was pretty even

Dimpling cheeks were now delightfully
Vein—which hospitality spoke
& Took her as I spoke

She answered my welcome with her vision
“I must tell you my vision”:

In the land before
~~Assaulted & defrayed the firebrands~~
~~These villagers weren't used to sing~~
~~Quiescently. Swallowing her voice~~
~~& All manner of companions~~

Her Habits—A Saunter
W/ something of gold. I loved to let it
Back in her chair .

By comparison, the archduke was plum;
To foil & braid it

One girl a syllable can endure
Any mortal breathing—

CHAPTER III

"Dearest,, your little heart is fabric—"
My wild heart bleeds with yours.

Her lemon votive missile twist
Her wild annointed spurn
I have told you that her confidence won me the first night
She exercised with respect
Her agitations her language
Soothed into abhorrence,
Tumultuous respiration

She used to sigh at my vehemence
Then turn away and drop
A satisfactory theory

Was she, notwithstanding, her mother's volunteered denial?

Adventuress of a clever
Health

I resumed, therefore, instantly, & was interrupted

Lover = Literature?

'E fouled up

Studied with his baggage

She said brusquely, "Don't you perceive how discordant he is?"

Pierce my ears," said Carmilla, almost stopping her ears with tiny sobs



It happens this way in the wilderness.

*J*ohn Ashbery

from GIRLS ON THE RUN

II

Hungeringly, Tidbit approached the crone who held the bowl,
...drank the honey. It had good things about it.
Now, pretty as a moment,
Tidbit's housecoat sniffed the undecipherable,
the knowable past. They were anxious
to get back to work. Diane was looking relaxed.
Then, some say, Pete said
it was the afternoon backing up again, inexorable
with dreams, looking for garbage to pick a fight with.
"My goodness! Do you suppose his blowhole's...?"

Sometime later they returned with Pete and the others,
he all excited, certain he had spotted a fuse this time.
Rags the mutt licked and yelped. "Oh, get down!"
But Rags seemed to be on to something. "And if they come
through the crops this time, we'll have a nice idea
of where they are, of who these men are. If they abrade
the abandoned silo, no one will be wiser. Look, their pastel
tent, and flags made from the same substance, waving *dehors*—
I've got to get an angle on this, a firm tack of some kind."
Willingly, the flood washed over the day
and so much that was complicated, from the past:
the tiny doggy door Rags had made with a T-square,
surplus sequins.

And if they don't want to play
according to our rules, what then? "Why, then
we'll come up with something, like the sink-drain.
Anyway, this is all just an excuse for you to leave your posts,
toying with anagrams, while the real message
is being written in the stars. To go ahead,

it says, but be watchful for scouts
in the corn shocks. This close to Halloween there are lots of little bumps
around, and tea cosies to shroud them. Beware one last time;
but as the spirit of going is to go, I can't
control you, advise you much longer. Just keep on
persevering, and then we'll know what we have done matters most
to us".

With that, the sticks uprooted the tent.
A thousand passions came unleashed,
but fortunately for the girls, none of them were around to witness it—
they were off in a cage with the canaries.

Now, though,
when it came time to vote for who the deed was done
by, the others mattered too. It was just their pot luck.

Oh well, Laure offered, we were going to close down that shaftway
anyway, and the subway came close: It was Mother and her veering
playthings again, torn between the impossible alternatives of existing
and saying no to menace. To everyone's surprise the bus stopped.
Our stalwart little band of angels got on it, and were taken for a ride
into the next chapter, a dim place of curlicues and bas-reliefs.
If I had a handle, Laure thought.

III

Out in Michigan, or was it Minnesota, though, time had stopped
to see what it could see, which wasn't much. A recent hooligan scare had
blighted the landscape,
lowering the temperature by several degrees. "Having
to pee relentlessly ruins my crinoline,
because it comes only ecstatically."
But the wounded cow knew otherwise.

She was at least sixty, had many skins covering her own, regal one. So then they all cry, at sea. The lawnmower is emitting sparks again, one doesn't know how many, or how much faster it will have to go to meet us at the Denizens' by six o'clock. We'd have been better off letting the prisoners stage their own war. Now I don't know so much, and with Aunt Jennie at my side we could release a few more bombs and not know it.

Everywhere in the tangled schist
someone was living, it seemed to say, this is my doing;
whoever shall come afterward is a delusion. And I went round
the corner to say, Well it sure looks like an improvement—hey,
why don't you tie your shoes, and then your bonnet will be picture-perfect?

No, only getting away has any value to her. A stone's throw is better than a mile since one will have to be up again much later, and this way saves time. How often did you let your mother say, how did you get your Sundays packed away? And yet it's always treasonable to be in the middle. H'm, there are objections to that, just as I thought. This might help. Yes. But the color of this paint is too fabulous, I'd asked for something fragmented like sea-spray. In that case we cannot be of service to you. Farewell.

Now I had walked the terrible byways for what seemed like too long.

Now another was following, insensately.

Would there be foodstuffs on the steps? How did that ladder point into
nowhere?

"Shuffle, you miser!" Just so, Shuffle said,

I don't want to be around when the gang erupts

into centuries of inviolate privilege, and cisterns tumble down

the side of the slope, and all is gone more or less naturally to hell.

To which Dimples replied, Why not? Why not just give yourself, one time,
to the floods of human resources that are our day?

Because I don't want to live at an angle to the blokes who micromanage

our territory, that's all. Oh, who do you mean? Why, the red-trimmed zebras,

shuffle said, that people thinks is the cutest damn things in town

until the victory bonfire on the square, and then there's more racing

and chasing than you can shake a banjo-string at,

and it'll have muddled you over by the time the war has crested.

He sat, eating a cheese sandwich, wondering if it would be his last,
fiddled and sank away.

And as far as the wires
could stretch, into the inevitable jerk-kingdom, the little girl
crawled on her hands and feet. That was no jack-in-the-box
back there, that was the real thing.

Yes, Stuart Hofnagel, they came to you, they'd expected big things
of you back in Arkadelphia, and now you were a soured loner like anybody.

Old town, you seem to remember otherwise.

That was you backing into love, wasn't it? So we all came and were glad that day.

That was all a fine day for us. Happiness, that we loved you so much;

phony energy, because we were happy.

Yet the town held back, rinsing her skirts

in the dour brook that fled the sawmill, just before four o'clock.

None of us slaves knew any different, having been nursed into solitude the night before last.

Certainly, if someone knocks on the open door
we will be pleasant, and look after the stranger just as if he were one of our own.
That's the way we were made. We can't help it. Conversely,
if a friend obtrudes his thinking into this plan of ours,
we shall deny all knowledge of him. It happens this way in the wilderness.
Plus the pot is full of old oddments. The rhubarb stains on Peggy's frock
almost—but not quite—match its rickrack trim.

That's where the human aspect comes in.

Some were born to play with, to think constantly about it, with a nod,
not much more, to the future and what its executives might have in store.
We aren't easily intimidated.

And yet we are always frightened,
frightened that this will come to pass
and we all unable to do anything about it, in case it ever does.
So we appeal to you, sun, on this broad day.
You were ever a helpmate in times of great churning, and fatigue.
You make us forget how serious we are
and we dance in the lightning of your rhythm like demented souls
on a hospital spree. If only,
when the horse crawls up your back, you had known to make more of it.
But the climate is military, and yet one can't see too far ahead.
Better a storehouse of pearls than this battered shoehorn
of wood, yet it can cause everything to take place and change for you.

When more and more people come to you, you know
 what they are saying, and you know how to deal with them.
 Many were the whiskers that applied that day,
 and many the salvage operations bent on rejecting them,
 if you have some ointment it would be good to use it
 now. Otherwise the opportunity may never again present itself.
 I know you mean well, Hopeful murmured. Talkative was
 starting to tell one of his stories again, and smiling.
 Hopeful silently abetted it. He knew the old boy was feeling his oats,
 which was fine with him, as he too was feeling good. Talkative, you old so-
 and-so, he volunteered. Then his father-in-law blew up. The Overall Boys,
 fishing poles in hand,
 charged into nether regions.
 Susie never thought she'd see the day when so much surplus was at stake,
 and she alone, outdoors, waiting for the postman's red bicycle
 for what seemed like ages. He explained that it was a routine assassination,
 that that was what had delayed him. Crestfallen, Susie hardly dared look up
 into the eyes of her man, a breeze was blowing, it was snowing. The droplets
 made diagonal streaks in the air
 where pterodactyls had been. It was time for an exodus of sorts;
 Paul picked up the legend

where it had been broken off: "No
 blame accrues to those who were left behind, unless, haply, they were climbing
 the wall to get a better view of the stars, in which case the next-to-last
 must pay a tribute, and so on. It can be anything, old money,
 a calico scarf, whatever has soiled the hand of the donor by staying
 to wear out its welcome. O in time it will shrivel.
 What is it to imagine something you had forgotten once, is it
 inventing, or more of a restoration from ancient mounds that were probably there?
 You that can tell all, tell this."

At first Talkative was reluctant to speak, then the words fell
like spring rain from his lips, all was as it had been before,
with no two dancers in step, and a bright, really bright light exploded
above the barn. A horse wanders away
and is abruptly inducted into the carousel,
eyes flying, mane askew. There is no end to the dance,
even death pales in comparison, and at the same time we are forced to
take into account the likelihood of the moment's behaving badly, the
eventual cost
to our side in terms of dignity, compromised integrity. Twelve princesses
stepped ashore, no one knew them, they too seemed not to know where
they were.

"In what region..." one began timidly, then the whole flock took off
like a shout, leaving the beleaguered ground to fend for itself.
"There were picture books at that time,
and dreams woven in and out of them. But one was not to notice,
only to go on behaving. And at the end, when everything was added up,
we probably owed them a penny. It's enough to make you weep.
But skies are gilded and armored, we shall put a brave face

"On it for a time, then school will be over, and sublime rest
flow from the uncorked flask like a prodigious perfume,
or sleep, a potent but dangerous brew,
a new assignment. Then we can get out of hock,
redeem Daddy's dear old coupons." He broke off, not wanting to bestir
the others, who had in fact ceased to hear, so monotonous
was the noise of his voice, like rain that flails the spears of alfalfa
in Maytime, to reap a tiny investment.
So we faced the new day,
like a pilgrim who sees the end of his journey deferred forever.
Who could predict where we would be led, to what
extremes of aloneness? Yet the horizon is civil.

A struggle ensued and the driver fell out of the vehicle.
And what did the old lady do then?
"She gave them some broth, without any bread, and... and..."

All are like soup.

So if it pleases you to come
out we all await thy pleasure, Stuart Hofnagel.
Who was with Young Topless? It seemed then an abyss was forming,
a new set of lagoons. More than look past it
one cannot, for more
that that is denied us.
So have I heard it said in old kingdoms, it said.
Larkspur towering over miniature turrets. The bandoleer was shot to hell.

The spa looked closed. So,
if you are in the market for a steeple, I commend this one
rigorously. It was not given to human divination to exhume it
like the comet, but to pause briefly, the blind
man's praise will cook itself. A giant paw
over the moon. Melons bloomed in corners. Shrimp blew away
to be fecund elsewhere, next year.
In time it will be your caesura too, but we mustn't
think of that. We caregivers especially. We must forget,
while others only live, peer into circles of living embroidery. The geese
will jump for you again, anon. Then it's no business. They closed
the place, the food court, they all
have gone away, it's restless, and mighty, as an ark
to the storm, yet the letter
of the law is obeyed, and sometimes the spirit

In forgotten tales of the seekers—O who were they?
Mary Ann, and Jimmy—no, but who were they?
Who have as their mantles on the snow
and we shall never reach land
before dark, yet who knows what advises them,
discreet in the mayhem? And then it's bright in the defining pallor of their day.
Does this clinch anything? We were cautioned once, told not to venture out—
yet I'd offer this much, this leaf, to thee.
Somewhere darkness churns and answers are riveting,
taking on a fresh look, a twist. A carousel is burning.
The wide avenue smiles.

C *hris Edgar*

IN C
BIRTHDAY
NATIONAL EPIK

Loosen focus, trees move. A weekend becomes a fortnight. Aspects of leaves float supine, assume the horizontal positions of pirogues and barques skirting air. Greasy plaits and tiny shoulders form the outline of a young girl. Reverse perspective and the basic facts become memoirs of an amnesiac lost among nuns. These exercises are clear from the verandahs of the modest bungalows dotting the peninsula. Natives dream in bergamot and bougainvillaea. And why not? Let it slide. The life of forms in art is short, pathological then normal, the distance between which the eye abolishes. An awareness of surface covers the dirty dog which is in fact curved, and we are all oriented toward a single point, skating harpy-like down a rivulet of pond scum to a spiral jetty in a giant ravine. Here the placid lake lay, until discovered upside-down in the 1840s by a group of brown studies. Some years later, Dirk "Poussin" Bouts halted discourse and the vanishing-axis rode off into the sunset. Evidence of cause and effect was ample, a staircase the foreshortened River Jordan must climb. Painterly waves converged into a plastic and solid mountain of water that in fact framed him. Enraged, he created a doctrine reflecting optical unity. Man-mountains became mountain men, and "water mountains" became bodies in space, "space boxes" tied together for better or worse, richer or poorer, with scotch tape. The necessary verso of the entire plane became largesse, weather more clement, a hollow body made of felt, *mutatis mutandis*, as with an uncertain decisiveness he shimmered forth toward the flat bank, behind which she disappeared on a funicular.

BIRTHDAY

I have a confession to make—
When I was young
I was constantly losing shoes.
Of course, the climate was different then:
The trees both bigger and easier to climb,
The birds more virtuous,
More butterflies, fewer clouds,
And all around
The smell of burning peat.
Blue men roamed the earth
Behind stone walls built by Romans
At the far end of our yard
Where the jungles of Southeast Asia began.
You see, I was a legionnaire sent to find the North Pole—
My brother was Horatio Hornblower...
No, we were all away when the zeppelin landed—
My father was magistrate in Khartoum,
Where my mother tended to the sick,
My brother had just befriended Neils Bohr,
When I signed the petition to free Dreyfus.
Mata Hari lived next door—
It was her the zeppelin came for—
Like Baba Yaga she kept a shrunken head
On her front porch, with a lighted candle in it—
We all knew she worked for the other side
And ate Crusader flesh, she was a real pterodactyl.
That was the year the Nile overflowed its banks, that Krakatoa, east of Java,
Sent the reek of burning cloves through the South Seas.
In Siberia a wooly mammoth skull was found
Under a mountain of ice, on my tenth birthday, my brother was in bed
With scurvy, and rickets, and elephantiasis of the liver, and
My mother gave him balms, and myrrh, and more balms and myrrh,
and mustard plasters, and I got a blunderbuss, a jaguar, and a troglodyte,
and we ate figs and eels and Baked Alaska and drank grenadine straight

from the bottle, we witnessed the invention of gunpowder, and saw gauchos lasso rheas with bolas and drink maté, while natives buried fish in the garden, with Marco Polo, and Good King Wenceslaus pummeled Bad King John into submission until he saw stars—Andromeda and Orion and Draco the dragon—we made him ride over the Bridge of Assizes with the last of the Hittites on a donkey, naked through the streets of Coventry, Maximilian brought aardvark to the dance, and was summarily executed, by Savonarola, who stole fire from the gods and tried to get away on the back of a roc, and then on a juggernaut, only to cause Rågnarok, the twilight of the gods; it was then, too, that Rasputin danced with Mary, Queen of Scots, for the last time I can still see her sobbing into her mantilla.

NATIONAL EPIK

Halfway to the nuthouse
The view to the southeast
Is all neat rowing boats
God bless them all
And also
The ruined pilgrim church

I.

In the midst of wild forest
The shade of birds follows
All the changes of the panorama
The narrow straits change the open sea
A bathing resort becomes
The most southern terminus of the rail line
A university town home to hundreds of
Small taverns grinning wildly with silver
Winter sportsmen in fur caps at dawn
A modern park with wild ducks beside
A major river lined with parks and factories
A navigable boat-route "the Poet's Way"
Situated on a neck of land between two lakes
A town, the second largest, sees evenings as
A mirror of sunlight, a pale blue-lake
Surrounded by green forests with mysterious caves
Here travelling judges held their courts
This prehistoric burial place was a fertile field
Gained by draining the tomb of a hero
The former lake bottom a sandy shore
A traveller looks away from reindeers, feels sadness
The old days trapped in a rival seafaring town
Helga's young daughters' corsets
Now frescoes in a mausoleum
Early predecessors following the moving coastline
Continuously rising here now some seventy kilometers from

The old limestone quarry
They built and destroyed a bishop's castle
Many centuries ago a pleasant destination
All sunny cliffs hostels frequented by young people
The summer residence of the President once famous for
Its monastery, now a popular bathing resort
Here a crane escaped an important fire arranged as
A handicrafts museum
Oak forests and neo-classical buildings
Developed into a modern industrial center to protect the river-mouth
A main thoroughfare was buried in the apse of the cathedral

II.

Since medieval times our national epic was situated on a peninsula
A windy promontory stoically beginning
The prosperity of nineteenth-century shipbuilding
Sticking out, all cliffs and sands
Over time this ugly duckling became
Fertile and rich, a popular bathing resort
Home to books and artists, salons
Idyllic hiatus of the national poet
Standing on rocky soil facing tempests a birch-path
Embroidered monument to the National Theatre
A national dress of high standard even aesthetically
First impressions of the last decades in plain-air
The Olympic Stadion the central railway station majestic pine forests
Export the life of the people, the dominant force of livelihood
A new type of bath house
Steady and meditative even to the point of slowness
Spontaneous only in the midst of vast forests
The young prince, final heir to the royal blood
Eloped and lost in the midnight sun
Lone witness to
The fatal mistake of both
The last "Miss Europe" and "Miss Universe"

III.

In February, the trees are shining
Like the skiing terrains at their best
Old man and hammer celebrate winter
And the power of air is broken down
The horizon is illuminated
By the long night there are no clouds the sun is above
Fifty-one below, dangerous for the inexperienced traveller, seems
Rather mild here, no polar bears walk the streets
All corresponding latitudes can be found only in
The zoological garden
A vivid landscape of purple, yellow, and red where
Dusk is not grey but tinged with shadowless lightness
Far off, one can see
Endless stretches of fir-forest and silver lakes that fail
To reach island-embroidered sky,
Tops of mountains separated by winding channels
A blue-green carpet equally labyrinthine re-awakening nature
In its chilling embrace the ancient rock night and morning lapse
Back and forth, a bridge crosses the confluences of two major rivers
Main streets are cut by cross-streets to form again
The octangle home of the military college
The famous waterfall the hydro-electric station,
Banks and locks, aspens and birches
All blown up by the Russians
The timber industry totally destroyed
The water tower one of the few landmarks
To have escaped destruction by fire
Narrow streets lined with houses
Now conform to a rectilinear plan
A stretch of sand, a trading place and fortification in the Middle Ages
Said, in time of war, to be beautiful and varied,
Especially during the summer solstice, braised over an open fire
Two whole nights above sea level travellers gather
At the polar circle, a popular bathing resort
Excellent for walking tours good food for lodging

Chains of hills rich in white sand lakes and islands
Kilometers where only reindeers wander
Backwoods where the grunting bear lurks
Excited rambling for two days along paths mysterious
Melancholy highways and arable lands worth seeing
Near to railway connections reached only by air
Converted heathens are baptized at the north end of the lake
A cloth is spread out on the windward side of a log-fire
Accessible only by the belt of a dwarf
Yielding to virgin pine forests on the lower slopes
Just once a year, at midsummer, the lake is
Eighty kilometers wide and forty kilometers long
To understand this junction of our most northern highways
This paradise of sports fishermen
A man must spend the night with a bear
An imposing experience, cold and windy
Wear plenty of clothing and a good waterproof
As in a dream, a small house between the river and
The fells, covered with felt and turf even now and then

IV.

O northernmost meteorological station
In the middle of the lower picture off to the right
Open to the eye of the traveller
"La route des quatre vents"
Can only be reckoned among the most magnificent—
Characteristic and respectful of the rugged beauty of others
Half-wild, divided into herds, sometimes gathered into enclosures
A feast for people from the south and an interesting sight
Winter can be a rare and bizarre experience
The pleasure of skiing
Makes the journey longer the cottage necessary

A constant dazzling play of light and shade soon to be replaced by cloud-shadow
tinted pale rose valleys lost by the last sun-rays fisherman and hunters
may be dark blue shining white dark lost in twilight

*M*arcella Durand

COLOR FLAMMEUS
CHINATOWN II

COLOR FLAMMEUS

In the grinding is an unpredictable paint
 lifted above the flame
 to oxidize the whiteness to
 burnt red

stupium minium minium miltos cinabrum sinopsis sandaracca

From Spain or further south
 cinnabar red door
 linen masks over mouths
 animal hide gloves

red sulphide of mercury river called minium

Regard the lovely photograph
 through a keyhole
 apparent is the outline
 of ruins squarish but toppled

mercury to sulphur vermillion consummation

CHINATOWN II

Color as a dimension of progression through space.
It is built on a bay, but turns inwards towards itself.

(I whisper this in your ear.

You are not to pass it on.

Especially to a river

already eating out

the heart of this landmass.)

The space of the town square continues outwards,
a trade route which climbs over cliffs, on
stairways built from knees, fingers and feet
to wear down a stone lifted up by centuries of confusion
to look at a ridge further resembling a rooster's comb
so bright red in early summer air or dark sunset
colored by strange mixtures of ferro, sphinx, spots
where the radiowaves are led astray into mountains;
contact in this cut-up land is difficult and unpredictable
maybe at canyon's bottom will a message be taken
(that somehow wandered from a very far coast
which I already wrote you in an inward-shaped city)

It made a mistake. What can I say.

But that the plan of Delos

has characteristics in common

with the plan of Hadrian's villa

and that

"Its room did not show their timbers

Its walls did not reveal their shapes."

The barter & trade are carried far,
and bring back macaws, monkeys, shells
to inspire water where no water is.

That's the sad thing of our pueblo.

It's as dry as fingertips

touching away the careful plan of a city.

But if we were to know

past our parched range-encirclements
our volcano caldera, our lava-throated land:
the worldly and sleek coast
 of an ocean toxic & wide
 piratic and contamination, evaporation
 salty and nuclear, a dumping ground
 a liquid wire, a fishing fiasco
 the dangerous explorations,
 Magellan passage, Panama canal
 the claimance of islands, the icebreakers,
 experiments of vision and setting.
The granting, landrule and now the swing
into a repetitive wave-like structure, the danger
of the sea swallows—

*R*_{ay} DiPalma

LE TOMBEAU DE REVERDY

*The walls gone around—
touched first with
the finger tips then
with the palms of each hand:
an eternity of distractions
every one from the past—
one or two from the future
another trick of memory*

Up three steps to a marble landing up another five to a wooden balcony painted green that turns a corner across two walls with barely an inch of headroom—its balustrade cobbled together out of discarded timbers found on the street—assorted candle ends adhered at odd intervals to the railing—on the top landing a barrel of nails in a tête-a-tête with a pile of newspapers—stacks of cigar boxes filled with clock parts, pen nibs, old coins, ticket stubs, erasers, medals, rubber stamps, corks, perfume bottles, bits of ivory, paper currency rolled into tight cylinders wound with rubber bands, broken necklaces, tin toys, spent cartridges, brass fasteners twisted into impossible shapes, rings, square-cut nails, keys, feathers, bird bones, brooches, a glass eye, combs and further smaller boxes containing postage stamps, carpet tacks, calling cards, cuff links and pencil shavings

An engaging primitive coarseness

deception in its recognition
and the recorded acknowledgement of same
then retreating in confusion
and the quandary of sleep

A resigned hysteria
leavened by a confident
if somewhat skewed capacity
to approximate just what is meant

Value shifts its equivalents—

The precedence of
transformation—
a confined migration of discarded
and impalpable *facticia*—

Interpretation and dismissal
without benefit of inventory—

Run aground on the enormous completion of nullity
and tho set upon by an irremediably self-absorbing privation
remains impassible—beyond any afflictive means

Prelude and residue
press within the limits of the ruins

One composes a countless number
of verbal contrivances
in a search for expressive meaning

The substantation of the abstract structure of attitude

Nothing I can say,
rather something I can use—
given the slightest opportunity

—documents reconstituted in a dimly lit corner—diagrams, sketches, handwritten texts, photographs, pages of numbers—the walls of the room covered with maps—a missing piece of *THE LEVANT* patched with a reproduction of a Grandville print—the windows hung with a heavy coarse linen dyed blue pinned with cut-outs of mannequin heads and white roosters—in a corner behind the ruins of an elaborately painted screen stood a tall pane of glass propped like a mirror—parts of the floor were strewn with a mix of rock salt, large woodchips, and sawdust—a coal skuttle filled with old books and magazines was positioned near the entrance surrounded by large balls of jute twine all the starting ends of which had been carefully looped through ceramic beads then knotted together—

I talk to everyone and speak to no one
I speak to everyone and talk to no one

The dead are all around us
Their green shoes full of bones and leaves

It was something he said to me about the past—the immediate past—and that some words of mine had figured into his thinking—but it was as much how he said what he thought—careful at every point to avoid the past participle—overly cautious lest his words appear a mere gloss on something he needed to say but would rather forget—moral tangents—some in the telling more tangential than others

Picking up the wheel picking up the space that it continues

The creation of categories was a cure for insomnia—hexagonal, flat, round, and square—basically handmade—vvs [very, very soft] MB [medium black] vvvH [very, very, very hard] the grasp of accomplishment and the need to doze

A note pinned to the body said

“Buy another BIG CHIEF TABLET”

7 $\frac{7}{8}$ ins. x 12 ins. 19.9 cm x 30.4 cm 115 Sheets #49700

The Mead Paper Corporation, Dayton, Ohio 45463

White trees
little else in movement

—stilled reflections
frozen like painted shadows
—into the distance
earthed under

Different surfaces
to every nakedness—
blotted aquamarine
and sun-bleached magenta
—whorls of faded red and green

The baffled rose

The accretive patch
in the half-light

—The whip of a scratch—
leading the crossbeam
connected to memories
with a mistaken sense of purpose

To make a momentary record
for the tongue only—

Twists of common expression
an ideal order among themselves

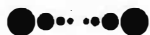
White clay ground
to a fine powder
come to rest across the pattern
of wires affixed to glass plates
angled across a series of pine shelves

From a formula to a diagram
fixing one to actuate the other
appendant, deliberative, extended
from a projectile in ascendance
and drop—beneath apogee and beyond perigee

The hand manœuvres the abstracted line
that would balance and turn through gravity
to shape by complementary torque
any regularized axis into fractions
the pursuit in the lift and descent a further channel

Moving into the p.o.v.
not stepping back in search of perspective
already loosened from the eye following
in half circle the fold of vortex
any phenomena beyond an only obtainable schematic

The combination and documentation
breathed from the confinements of expectation
through the cut hole



The four corners
obliquely disengaged
by addition



These are not examples.

Linda Vorris

CONSEQUENCES
CONSEQUENCES
CONSEQUENCES

CONSEQUENCES

*The opening called "St. Wilfrid's Needle" is said to have been used
as a test of chastity, the pure only being able to be drawn through it.*

—Baedeker's, Great Britain

On the right are the stone sedilla and piscina (15th cent.)

She put her arms through the sleeves, as interpretation will,
pausing before lifting the sweater to listen, apparently.
The ribbed back of the chair had come away
from the semi-circle moulding,
restored with hand-holds and hammer blows.

All three West doors lead directly into the Nave,

Probably fir. Interpretation as a tiny,
working allegory of movable parts. To listen
to the upsweep or for the points
of falter and exchange.
On her knees, sanding the captain's chair.

Transitional, Decorative and Perpendicular

Or as the imposition of a schema, in the way
a sieve leaves a pattern.
Convincing first oneself.
The missing castor and rotten leg would require a drill.

It is very wide in proportion to its length.

Sanding in straight, short strokes. How the hand,
seemingly detached, slides off the small,
trimmed square. A projection
over a sample. Unnumbered, the horses crowd
to one side of the field.

“Seeing” the interpretation, generally “of a sudden,”
the clash, the jackpot
as the alternatives vanish.

all doors lead directly into the nave, which has no triforium

The replacement of *like* with *then*, so that the red roses.
in bunched circles on the trellis,
 rising and trailing.
To finish a project of many ordered stages.
Tiny scratches crossing on the silver ring.

The name is derived from 'ripa,' the bank of a river.

Haphazard entry and tentative plans to stop along
the interpretive spread. Unconsciously sanding
to the rhythm of the soundtrack.
In dim and vibrant traces, the dream outlines the day.

*Two of the original arches (East and South) below the central tower
have been changed from Norman to Perpendicular*

Magnetic force of the storied presentation. Constraint supplied
by the fit of the pieces. The electric sander
skips up and across the planks of the seat.

lead directly into the nave,

What is permitted given these. The fine sand dust, mites on hands and eyelashes. Rubbing out the blackened layer over the blond wood.

The triforium is glazed, a unique feature among English cathedrals.

Worked surfaces of studied expectation. Sketching in the interpretation quickly, lest it

slip past. Rawness on four points of palm and knuckles.

the clerestory windows have a double plane of tracery

The difference between interpretation and explanation
as material overlay and surplus. Completed
rhythm of ear to hand. Tiny hooks, fingernails and other tools.
A pooling of contexts? The stallion,
the beam behind the wall, a star-studded evening.

probably built by St. Wilfrid as a "confessio" for the exposition of relics

Slipping loose for the moment, the hands which can
take up at any time, again. Varnish as wet pools
of fir spreading unevenly. Chasing
the impatience up the back of the chair. Polish,
verbally, holding aloft
the finished piece to sense.

Visitors may make the attempt.

CONSEQUENCES

Yanked up on the imaginative line,
as when you cannot make an apology soon enough.

The pleasures of new choices.
Odd handling of the self twisting unfamiliar bathroom handles.
A spreading action abruptly ended.
If identity is momentarily figured, direction the weathervane faces,
but imagination is not.

Divided on two planes, you immediately start to accomodate
the temporal lags and jumps with fantasy equipment and false memory.
The traces of this conversion leave hallways,
streets walked.

Or it's the sense of fit that hangs over,
neither place now without a chalk outline.

Yesterday when we planted a row alternating fox glove and delphinium
in what we call the plot. Or the other,
driving up the dark tunnel of city plate glass, to turn right
at William Penn, charter in hand, atop the State House.

So, imagination as verbal shifters, Athenian drivers, placing and
circumventing the apartments of naming: *flower beds, wide berth, foothills.*
Brushing by the mobility of *here*.

That it isn't exceptional excites and alarms us, these dips into
the completely uninhabited abstract—below the water
the lily roots look both like plant stem and fish.

The ode begins
with a trivial occasion or object. Left alone in the bower,
the mind goes on errands. But, rolling up your T-shirt sleeves only moves the
tan line higher.

Verisimilitude aligns a parallel process,
to remember, to place in correspondence. The image in mind
invites the wrong analogy—to find rather than to dislodge your grasp.

The way "that's more like it" expresses encouragement, not the effort of
making.

CONSEQUENCES

Or whether the imagination is occupying,
a lawnchair left out. Clouds in skid marks across.
The geometric insistence that remains after
the concept of process slides past.

Everyone has her own picturing of states of the sky,
heavy, far, or full. And these change.

Exuberance in the word as it hits the magnolia cups.
When the brown tangle on the live oak moves it becomes a squirrel.
On the subject of the Greek Ministry of Civilization, the word for "precious"
fell out.
The way "bight" means the water in the bay and the bay.
Or how Mae West appears in the film as an American Beauty Rose.
What height is the upthrust shoot when the walnut shell
breaks down two feet underground.

These are not examples.

Stay awhile, the meantime forms, the heft
of the thigh thrown over the sheet
drawn back past likely doors, creates
the pause which then extends or dissolves.

*L*eslie Bumstead

CIPHER

*Ahora quiero que digan lo que quiero decirte
para que tú me oigas como quiero que me oigas.*
—Pablo Neruda

*The social conditions in which the courtly love poem arose were such that relations
between people are convention.*
—Leslie Scalapino

*a surface of boundaries is irrevocably hoarse
a hostage garden*
—Jean Donnelly

I

Above the hour
each cusp a probable
drop of us, a minim
in successive generous
restaurants (or other
succor)

as your travels are rust-
colored and stories
can't be possessed
by anyone, not
really.

If one finds
the habit rooms
wanting, or *xopilotes*
gorging themselves

as usual
as is the tug
of the scar, the ceremonial
permit, or just the sense
that one is already mad
beyond coil & bide.

The shroud is not
mine, nor brick
nor crane.

If we track the shirking
furies—disguised
as hummingbird
and banana flower—
would you then measure
or lapse there

II

how wicked he left me
pirating a music left to loom and pollinate
measure each word, the sudden gesture of enclosure
what would I say?
if you were that river, or my hand
all over the city dusk & current
the beginning of this love for you was written through what was left of me

you can't possibly imagine
the endurance of doubt
shuffle and pose
the floral arrangements were unbearable
For though love has a spider's eye
To find out some appropriate pain
I am hurrying through my own dreams to get there

III

under teeming duress
forgo & slumber
one is already mad
one is all ready
for the slots and the countries
remnants, numbers & rescue
a song tucks itself blithely
into offices and airports and you
continue on as if I never watched
your story or faltered

on the ant farm and on the runway
I am slang for luck
I am wondering *for* you
those dreams were portents "like it or not"
as a particular damage or drunkenness
& reputable frame of the heart
spent by dishonesty
a bird in a suit and a bird in a coffin
so if the martyr is fantastic
if the runway is ready

IV

love cannot end us
the nights become slaves
to their nervous beliefs
and the moon is intolerable
but this voracious theology
our gold inscribed, our cipher
writing one is heavenly

hiking back to where you were
last seen
to withered collections of books
& the crushed grass where we have lain
the verb shall not touch
nor sweeten her
our cool root, our vagabond

V

we knew exactly what she loved
your arms her parentheses
you are purely portrait
each curve or vein
the great estate
time has no idea

sometimes our names sleep too
dream as you once dreamed
the flowering of lawlessness
corruption of the sweet pages
waiting in the torn meadow
we loved to leave them there

and the sane ones grew horns
our houses burned into themselves
and left silence to itself
he was eating soup with some friends
he fell in love with a woman there
a piece of dusk caught in his mouth

lost her mind
in the fern without a name

a true world
fictively constructed

VI

the sky too wants fortune
and this voice, the crucible
the sand in our eyes
a darker steeple shadow
left to the stairwell weather

wearing the boots of gentlemen
as children we imagined this
& inhabited our losses
dreaming of how to adorn
the impossible

*K*aren Donovan

HYPOTHESIS 6
ALEPH NAUGHT
PARSIMONIOUS

HYPOTHESIS 6

Beauty is a moth that flies out, in, out
of the room
like a moth, like beauty itself, mothlike, beautiful.

Beauty is a mouth that eats
everything, really,
one two three, even itself, no kidding.

These shreds?—Hah.
A crane operator working parabolas out in his mind,
the few surrendering robins, a nickel
heads up, my father's interferonic dreams,
the other side to the sideless.
There's also a confident expanse of water.

Beauty is a moon that leans
all its weight away from us,
an adolescent stripe we keep forgiving it for even though
by now we know some things,
viz., this ruinous, discontinued heap of love.

The Hot Pile was a good name for Fermi's baby,
accelerating under the west bleachers the colder
the year got.
I still like to say it: pile.

I woke up and I was you,
persuasive as tide,
if you can imagine instead of this
constant avalanche an orange
repeeling itself off the plate in a spiral,

one kid running the bases both ways,
as if and is
as if and is
as if and is.

ALEPH NAUGHT

*Later generations will regard
[Cantor's] Mengenlehre as a disease
from which one has recovered.*

—Henri Poincare, 1908

A bag with the world in it plus
anything is still the same bag.
Half a bag with the world in it
is equal to the whole bag.

Georg, it was too early
in the century for this.
Nobody'd had coffee.

I wondered, too, Are we addressing
a collection of only the so-called infinite?
Shoulder to shoulder the cardinal numbers
stood like baby bottles
vanishing forever into one-point perspective,
but, Cantor claimed, a bag's a bag:
Forget the bottom.

I'm not counting, he shouted. Stop counting!

Later they packed him off to the funny farm,
a safe house for mathematics,
terrific opportunity for R&D
with free room and board.
Nonetheless he was glum.
The material's all around, he murmured
to the other inmates.
Stack it right, and everything comes out even.

The principle was simple, just matching,
your toes with eternity's.

We thought we could live without it.

PARSIMONIOUS

I left with a little stick in my hand.
It seemed right.

I'd been dreaming about straw,
the dry, dry plains of Potemkin.

When I woke the curtains were flaming artistically.

Amazing now to discover all this
reducible to a two-word theory:
stroke deficit.

An old and elegant solution,
though unreconstructed, somewhat reminiscent of
add water—fill to brim.

Nevertheless my presumptions strode
masterfully down the block.

"Each caplet gets its own eggcup," I cried.
It was pitiful.

*M*ichael Gizzi

AN EXPEDITION LONG ENOUGH TO
TAKE YOUR PICTURE
NERVY OPTIC HOBBYIST
A WIND OF WHAT HE REALLY MEANS

AN EXPEDITION LONG ENOUGH TO TAKE YOUR PICTURE

Gazing up at the stars about
a new method of never existed
off for the weekend oil lamp and
the breath of independence
breaks out the wick please
to accept this wristwatch pompadour
from a peripatetic barber
Old Fashion my hourglass, garson
get drunk marry be tall botanical
full fathoms deep amid so many
regularities in suits you find time
to invent shoes for walking on water
how many ragged families
could sing O Jolly Parachute
how many starving mothers
rally 'round a peacoat whose
muddle includes a speaking tube
from Istanbul to biscuits time
to write the werewolf out of your will
eyeing little gnomes in their nut

NERVY OPTIC HOBBYIST

Heavens gets into Betsy
with a twenty inch retina
now *that's* a yen channel a few
gigatons through a different medium
and Cleopatra's caravan might
reminisce rabbits on the running
board peeling apples like Hapsburg lips
all lisping in the wrong direction
remember learning is the root beer
of living we live in telescopes
like exercise bikes trading
rubbers for a desert mirage here's
a poor pony clipping treetops
where Grapenuts had his coronary
cup of tea to go scatterbrained
to explain why in the fracas
that follows the trotting out of
fireflies he's all over Rand McNally
now abed with St. Caboodle
like a king of cufflinks in
Timbuktu and bloomers from any
where stems in iambic sphere goes
out for a beer and wakes up
in Singapore with a beard

A WIND OF WHAT HE REALLY MEANS

Gripping the public methane
a country vicar disguised
as a baby with letters
hidden in his diapers his
urinal on the ceiling at least
into Christ's infancy a Gorgon
of mass and personal warmth
that puppets might see the big
elf guy who thinks in his shoetrees
sun visors on his submarine like
feathers on the Statue of Liberty
gliding about like a badge on
the windshield of the greatest myth
zookeepers didn't think of him
as a she but a transatlantic
candle who hoped to put
his flame around his pals
now lying at the bottom
of the sea scooping up anything
that crawled or flew or sat ashore
the Great One didn't get
a penny but fish to fry ticked off
a telegraph causing the cost of
Singapore horse feed to rise
as big a science wheel as
any eminent gizmo could get
because instantly a ninny
without gluttony we might
starve from the inside out
may all your troubles be midgets
without the inside meemies

*A*nselm Berrigan

PICTURES FOR PRIVATE DEVOTION

What I thought was a headless bird was really a bodyless leg
The other day I killed ten thousand Philistines with the jawbone of a daffodil
There's no room in my life for a sign
I stepped inside a flying saucer & abducted an alien
It was a tedious experience
Left an opinion in another man's shirt that night
The voices I hear politely make space for each other
I took off the west & put on the slightly less west
Keeping a rendezvous with the passout
Mom shuts her eyes & sees pterodactyls
Neither keen naturalist nor general reader am I fine fringes & velvety pile
There is always an animal giving grateful thanks
For my own strength would never suffice unaided by strength out of dark
A rock, I mean, has content
Burning the mouth splendidly
I had never before seen blood in his hands except in the teeming seas
Wherever I go a host of wild & not so wild life tags on behind
A few degrees of tilt to make the view pretty
The forest owl seems to have disappeared from the habitat where it had
always been rare

Three hundred bodies from the commune in the artificial lake

My confidants include the falling apart coat & the untied boot

With respect & love I got lost leaving your apartment

Suddenly lizards had feathers & I left my room & happily nothing

Fight the bar downstairs

To sneeze in a vacuum & fuck off at work

A pixel with meaning

Is it a mirage I want to reject or is something too painfully happening

A present of baffled weather & theoretical jealousy

Being being not careful or be more things

I read all their works, I read all yours too

There will never be any more suspicion than there is now

I'll never have to breathe in you more than I do now

He woke up happy having never really slept

& borrowed a couple thousand from the first available human

As a theory I was always on the verge

As a cheeseburger I was prepared

I began in a failed society

According to several private polls

I can occasionally unscrew something
This poem is a substitute for my arms
Anyone has a part of the body that generates more heat than all the rest
Texas never whispers
Accused by the landlord of taking unruly showers
The ATM machine asked "can you continue?"
& I said "yes I can" because it's the only thing to do
As insignificant a dissolution as I could cherish
I apologize for being so mean in your dream
I heard voice-mail messages in my dream
Sweet pea speak to me
Then lies my house upon my nose
There's a softness to refusing all of you in yours & me in mine
My a purty outhouse
If it's explainable it can't be a miracle but I can't explain anything so
everything's a miracle
I blew the president I didn't inhale
Never again the horseface, never again the dew
Success is the lowest art
There are cameras in the branches but the trees are the dealers

Gillian McCain

POETRY
MASK
VERTIGO
STORY
MOVIE

POETRY

I like it. In areas of boredom, it is not one of my problems. But I don't give a shit about the fine points of my art. There is always a curious lack of depth to one's output, a good deal of glitter and talk, often the anticipation of great doings; but in fact little that is memorable occurs. My chronic apathy prevents me from stashing the monkey in mothballs. So many voices, so little time. My designated box is constricting, but the dark and dust beyond the latch is oddly soothing. I'm aware that each line is one more ounce in my tote bag, so let me finish with this: I don't know if the years connect, if our meeting here is a coincidence, but this sullen message will be put in a capsule, so we'll always be accessories after the fact, eternal failures to the others. I give you my word.

MASK

Worry lines. The princess to put it bluntly had her whole life ahead of her. This was the secret hiding place. The mirror built her up only to pull her down; after that a good seven years of living in the armoire making curtains out of crepe paper. Don't mind the wolf, he's got his own wing to play in. Meanwhile, thousands enjoy the city everyday without incident, making themselves invisible. Down by the river somebody blew that harp, wafted over to the castle. Across the ramparts live citizens too young to remember the mirror before it cracked. Functional but still shaky, alive but not in a spooky way, it commanded the princess to submit to the lymphatic drain, disregard the threat of serial nosebleeds. She escaped leaving a trail of popcorn. The chalk outline of the wolf washed away with the rain. By then the phrase "fairest of them all" was beginning to get on her nerves. Spirits jumped out of a cake, happy to see her, but she would not be drawn in merely to develop a rhythm of her own, like leaves, or grass.

VERTIGO

Snake knows intuitively he's being made redundant, doesn't take a genius. That's selective perception based on conjecture. Audra still calls him, but things haven't been the same since Coney Island. It's kind of complicated, but when it happens to you you'll know it. Last week he couldn't reach her for five days though she claims there's not a moment worth mentioning from that period. This particular bag of goodies doesn't believe you he wanted to say, though that particular suspended sentence made its way to someone else's fate. A zinger, so to speak. Audra perched on the Parachute Jump while the adjusters assembled her package. Visions of schadenfreude danced in her artichoke brain. "I never lose track of a jewel or its donor," she once told me. Snake would consider this the ultimate spiritual insult but when he comes into his inheritance all bets are off. I see a long sea voyage ahead, an interesting woman in a baltic green turban. Or man.

STORY

Today I buried Mike DeCapite's eyeballs, put a flowerpot with plastic daffodils on top. It was painful to do alone but my brother Mark declined and sped off to the Bad Brains concert at the ski lodge. Andrea was browsing through the postcard rack when Dad turned off all the lights. She told me that Xanax causes asthma, but my mind was wandering—is the 1.5 we grossed on the rock festival cum charity fashion show really legit? The plane went down as usual. We all escaped puzzled but safe. St. Pierre and Miquelon feel like a time warp layover; low horizon, flickering lights, no mosquito net in sight. Hope the plane gets fixed soon, want to return home ASAP, visit Mike's eyes, then oversee the paint job on the public pool. Gotta keep busy, working with orphans for the time being, and the crops underneath them. They recognize the signs, I'm only just learning them. We've got a wide moat ahead of us. Steel gray makes the dimensions appear narrower, the swimmers imagine they're moving faster, easier to disregard the women and children stagnating in rowboats. Once I finish with this ribbon cutting crap I can nurse my facial injuries in peace. Doesn't sound like much, but it could make all the difference in the world.

MOVIE

Welcome to the fast lane, we've only been here a few minutes ourselves. What put *you* on the map? It's a very small sky. Sorry about the birds, oughta be a law or something. Legs perceives his struggle with the road as heroic. The slo-mo shenanigans of the natives have dampened his mood considerably, along with our moods (contact), and yours (ultimately). Going postal, he feels, is an honest form of communication. Please God, allow every motel en route to be exactly to his liking. Or show him the way to go home. My psyche has been crammed into a miniscule space under the overpass. Establish a code of familiarity with the wires and all you'll get is seasick. Single lane is tricky, too. Barely survived by clinging to rocks. Meanwhile, just wipe it on your sleeve. Legs becomes silent, ergo something is up. Too bad his mind frame doesn't allow any area for abduction. Enough is enough, we're deactivating him, at least until we reach our next launch pad. Hmm, this map isn't as good as I thought. The locations pinpointing our potential market segment seem a little bent, but we can still enjoy the thrill of the chase. Legs and I have a simple explanation for our success: We're whores. Gradually, even this conceit passes, as does the fear, as does the light.

*K*_{evin Killian}

GOBLIN
BAD BLOOD
TRACKING SHOT

GOBLIN

*I'll have the glass, the shimmering dust
to see the ragged real better
through its shade
and second skin*

—Charles Watts, "Dramatic Realism"

I keep waiting for a break, alas—
ten thousand party favors have to be blown up and placed,
just so,
on the table of the zombies of the lake

"Of the," "of the," all this possession
I'm haunted by, built into the structures of English
like that shadow on the dinette table

It is hundreds of years old, and creaks with yellow

Watts up Charlie Chan? I used to say
on the telephone, can I put you on hold,
slamming down before he could say yes or no,
"Now I'm back," but you never know
if the distant person will be there still
breathing

a ferocious guess
the ragged real, and I would say
what's so real
we're just molecules who went to school

*Each dust point's a blazing prism
the glass a crystal screen
and cast against the glamor
the image, vine and leaf,*

*of blackberry,
whose body, almost unleaved, thick, still
unwithered, green and armed,
endures the February light a foot away.*

I'm afraid of my face, that gathers in a scrunchie
all of the sights I witnessed in a trance
A round robin of sights
that, once eaten, never graduate
from the Tanz Akadamie of Joan Bennett, Alida Valli
& what is that thing that looks
like a giant slinky
try to escape it, your flesh tears off in liver strips?

Kill a bat, light a cigarette, breathe easy
except for the face pinned to one's skull
Watts up, Charlie Chan, I haven't
got all day
I'm a busy man
More peccable than the boy, still unwithered,
armed, green, the unendured
and a foot away from il lago di zombi... darkness

BAD BLOOD

When two people lives in squalor
the dictator among us grins
His snigger subtle as gnome's fingerfuck
Rotting cicada,
imitation rolex worn at the elbow, like his aqualung
worn at the lung
like cough, reflexive cough of Allen Barnett

He's interesting for a year
then you tire of his what.

Did you ever think you'd be seeing him humbled
Not quite there, and even that is sad! Where's the party?
Always thought that maybe, if only, I'd turn on the lights
on the one boy, in the shape of melty copper, his fresh
underwear grinning at his waist in the window—
And now, in the afterlife of Nijinsky, a
mess of pottage I gave up my birthright to anagram:
He is the victor, defeated, spanked.

On the deck he naps, his sorry ass slung in my deck chair
Poetry Princess
from the civil tsi-tsieh of Kim Ki-Young detached as dainty Rotweiler
Well, Sam, it took me ten years to
think of a way to return you from the grave
All bets are off now, we're sailing in an hour
Turn over his Rolex to its backside read its inscription from
Sam to Kevin 1988
and say it's not stolen, stripped from the bony arms drooping off the gray metal
table—
I can read, can't I? I can be this kind of—
reading person—

KizZool cuz skiZool iz out ÷
It's cool ÷ cuz
school is out ÷
WOW did you ever see even in a museum
such a collection of boddisatvahs ÷ the way
the way they have to sit above the rubber

Or that one was, inside his pants, the Yiddish poet
a vegetarian. Or another—all in his mouth—a snarl
of the Sources. The one I loved most, who once,
once only, let go the pain, the night he got drunk,
and I put him to bed, and he said, Bad Blood.++++++

after Charles Olson

TRACKING SHOT

The job unfinished. The killer's POV. Long hair blowing in the wind
(nameless) an excellent target for bazookas. Thunderous goblin music.

At the moment between now and falling asleep the ghosts rush in. I'm 45,
time for ghosts, the dead fluttering their scarves

like Isadora. Duncan. Snap. Head popped off, sails across the screen like
popcorn fresh in the big glass warm box, boy's nose pressed against it
watching

to the thunderous goblin music. Grabs the boy, curiously not kicking,
perhaps a bundle of rags, and drags him up the side of the house

across the roof, avoiding the mansards

down the other side of the house. Through the east windows the beautiful
woman is writing her name on a misted porcelain surface with her last breath

I blow on it, the text disappears, the name of the killer.

Up over the house. "I'll call him my 'HOUSE BOY,'" the killer laughs, to
thunderous goblin music. Maybe it sounds more realistic in Italian. I hate it
when they can't afford real babies or boys

and have to use dummies made of rags, you always know
that's not a baby

the cold air fills the hot wet room like an eraser blanket, now I can't read the
killer's name. All she can write is H

and looked at it another way it is I

and upside down, kicking, V

I am reading these signs of the infidel hates me

*L*aura Mullen

THE EVIDENCE

Seeps and wilts. All we have left of it. The beginning of a story: "The road slick with gore," or that's the end of it. A character appears: "Ah, summer..." Beside the road the various decaying remainders of some mistimed desire. And fear. In the headlights they stop there. So swerve. The essay, as if from some distance. Or the middle of a story, in motion, a romance: try to stay there.

The wind of our passing in their fur.
(Ruffles their fur so that for a moment they might appear to be moving.)

"I like summer, the long slow open days..." Who could trust her: our character? She doesn't really want to say what she's saying (so swerve). In the left lane, beside though not yet quite passing, but I couldn't move over, I came upon too swiftly (it was night) and had to drive through the dismembered remains of a deer—I remember—the scattered chunks of bloody flesh and the road slick with gore. Try to change the ending. Try to change the ending earlier.

The windows open to the warm air

(In which anything, or so we tell ourselves, is still possible).
As though they were merely sleeping there.

That they are the evidence of our urge for speed is an essay not a story hence unfair. The essay is always unfair. The narrative is their arrival and ours at the same place which could almost be anywhere along the regular, the recognized, trajectories and the same time which is always now. But what if a story refuses to bloom there, to recall, to reanimate the fragments left after. Only at home in the mirror. Imagine her married. She straightens her shoulders, she straightens, as though someone might be watching, her shoulders.

We look at them like that and try to imagine what they were.

Only at home in the mirror where I look "tired." Maybe the story was one about, oh, whether or not to enter a kind of agreement, a contract. Dog or Fox? Cow or Deer? The essay would be making the relationship too clear, even more clear. In summation. In summer. "The ease with which the highway appears to lay over the landscape across which it travels, like a heavy ribbon..." No trace of the damage done to set it so gracefully there (there, there...). Unless where the road narrows to one lane suddenly, by the side of the road the sight of the metal claw dropping into the earth or a truck groaning slowly away full of rocks or the dull sheen on the heavy dirt-smeared cylinder... Stop there. Proceed slowly. Rolling the dust down flat into the future. Packing it down into what can be travelled, there, there.

So she's a student? I don't know, the pieces of her past so strewn and scattered; say she was a student: the effect, anyway, for so long, lingers. Bent over another essay unless summer, "the long slow open days," marked by the proliferation of bodies, in the margin or the center. Slight swerve. How long ago the realization that that was just like the space in which one first practiced a careful tracing of what were at first merely shapes, difficult, and then (capital and lower case) letters. The lower case letters—

We remember, speeding—

Only came up to the broken line in the center. *A a, B b*. Cat or Opossum? Ripped open by a gone fender. Rubricated manuscript or book the heat bears down on—all the force of its intellect, you'd say, or its imagination—, studies, and the text comes alive. The long days, to which all secrets are given up. *C c*. The pencil thick and unwieldy, grasped in a fist, it wouldn't do as bid and was, I suddenly recall, they warned us, dangerous. Amazing what you remember when you're stuck. We were not to lick the point—had I thought of licking the point? Our character as a little girl carries the freshly sharpened instrument loosely and point down, walking back to her seat, as though not sure it wouldn't bury itself by itself where they told her

it could lodge and do most harm: in her eye or her mouth, or in someone else's eye or mouth.

Often they seem completely unharmed.
(In the long interstices, which are by definition nowhere.)

Exactly half the size of the former, the repetition in miniature, the offspring. So one learned to chew—to put into one's mouth if one had to and leave the impress of the teeth there—the end with the eraser. Imagine her married or with children, as they say, “of her own.” When you couldn't think of the answer. Still arguing miles away, dog or coyote, whether, from the swift glimpse of dark blood and drab fur. I haven't forgotten her. Say again, “I haven't forgotten her.”

Or a part of the road or almost
A part of the road, they've lain so still so long there.

The impressions blurred.

“What I did with my summer. . . .” I opened up the journal—somewhere between the story and the essay—to seek a certain passage there. So swerve. Quote if you have to. What you can't remember. Sneaking the cool white minty library paste into her mouth on the tip of the tongue depressor. If we weren't supposed to eat it why was it flavored? The description of a visit to a psychic, some gone summer; her predictions of the past which was the future. Evidently a “spiritual block” in our character. A vacation. A dab on the blank facing page just inside the cover and then a due date slip could be secured.

I'd meant or been meaning to add, since the beginning, a note on the road kill: parts of bodies, the road slick with gore, the air thick with the sweet stench of skunk for some distance and then the ragged tuft of skunk tail in the dark blotch of guts in the center; raccoon or possum on the road's shoulder, curled fetal in on themselves or smashed open in a posture of surrender—to the unctuous crows in

their gleaming black coats, to the crows who stalk stiffly away from the corpse and back into the tall grasses, disturbed in their ruminations by the fluster. In the rear-view mirror I saw them come back out. Their attentions to the headless bloated body of a deer. Or something nameless. A black sponge covered by an ashen pelt. The swollen or torn remains often no longer readable, identifiable, except as instances, evidence. Sometimes nothing beyond a sticky, rust-colored smear on the asphalt.

Other students having already been there. Transeunt. Our character counting back, April by April, unable to sleep; twenty-five times and then a vagueness: each one in a different place. Wind leafing through the toll receipts. The truth if it's... if it's—what? Oh Christ, she said, laughing but shaking her head, shapely: if it has *shape*. Mrs. Wolff, teaching us about evolution, leaned on a desk, her fist—knuckles down, thumb out to the side, taking her weight (a habitual gesture)—suddenly an ape's. In the long afternoons the sky going grey, “scattered” thunderstorms. Oil-stained concrete, the sky... (by *shape* meaning *likeness*).

Anxiously I picked up the instrument.

We tell ourselves whatever we have to
In order not to have to stop.

But it goes on anyhow without agreement, without consent. The smell of new books which was the smell in part and as then unknown of the acid in the paper. Oh she loved the resistance in their spines. They opened their dark shades above the struck. There would have been a time when the squirming figures making their way across the white meant nothing, then a voice made a sound in the air which hovered, and a finger, finally, isolated one of the writhing characters and pecked and pecked and pecked. Where invention and memory meet. The sound of the road going on in what seems like arrival's silence; a single feather caught between the wiper's blade and the windshield's glass. Imagine she kept a journal to help her forget.

Now.

And equally, on either side, the distances: the emptiness the event makes appear around itself. The wings of their own torn flesh. (So change the ending.) (Earlier.) Legs open, the road slick, the sound of whatever it was—the vacuum—they were using to suck, a wet noise, the dismembered body out. The red bucket. The “truth.” I wrote for days, in fragments (the local anesthetic), of what, I didn’t know, to arrive at or find myself in the middle of this. So reverse. All that’s left. A chill breeze through the long corridor fluttered the edge of her paper dress. Our character, exit after exit. I leaned my head back, eyes shut. In her hands, insisted on and unopened, volume one of the *Remembrance*. . . In a pause between movies (it was the night before)—the VCR on rewind, the television off—he put his hand on my stomach and, leaning close to the invisible life we’d decided to end, began slowly to recite the alphabet.

*B*_{in} *Ramke*

ECHO

Zoom

As if with the speed of sound,
as if it were fast, now we know
any schoolchild knows how quick the lightening
how lumbering the thunder...
and yet and yet

Yet it Bleeds

Who hears, who can hear, has ears.
And a voice is almost a vision, a form
a fair compromise: it was a good story and is told
again and again of a kind of anorexia, a nymph
purified by love for Narcissus, turned poet, turned
into voice, turned into mirror, mindless? Mindful
of sorrow, of shape, of solitude raptured.

Xenogamy

Bot. Pollination of the stigma of a flower
by pollen from a flower on another plant. [*xeno*,
alien, strange, guest, + *gámia*, to marry]
"Stigma": the eyespot of a protozoan, Greek
for tattoo, the mark of a slave.

Wounded

Unable to fly, a furious failing haunting her,
the creature in the garden evolved a path
a circle breaking out of itself large
and larger, spiraling as if the self were escapable,
having failed, having fallen, bird self from the sky,
into an alienness full of fortune.

Verandah

Some such point-of-view—you know those areas
along the highway, “point of interest,” “wildlife
viewing area,” “point of geological interest,”
officially labeled by the highway department,
the CIA, who knows—those places where
the populace is invited to look at the world.
Some are indoors—the Mint, for instance,
where the delightful view of tons of copper pennies
flowing behind inch-thick glass is a reason
for children to leave the school to spend
an hour’s viewing. What is it about?
Leisure? Memory is superfluous, a hindrance
annoying as history—what’s there to see
except everything? Here, let’s pull over,
the sun is setting again and we will regret it
tomorrow.

Unus + versus, *ppl.* of *vertere*, to turn

This Land Darkened

"The origins of the figure of the fall or banishment of the soul from its natural, immortal abode are religious, as appears from its first occurrence among the philosophers in Empedocles' *Purifications* (fr. 115; it may have been held in some form by Heraclitus as well; see frs. 62, 68; Plato, *Gorg.* 492e-493b; Plotinus, *Enn.* iv, 8, 1) where the banishment is the result of a primal crime (bloodshed or flesh-eating; frs. 136, 137, 139) committed by one of the *daimones* (q.v.) whose natural lot was immortality." —*káthodos*, descent, fall (of the soul) F. E. Peters, *Greek Philosophical Terms*

Sad Parades

"Self, for instance, me—"

he said slowly, languishing under the summer's
onslaught, reaching toward his remaining ambition
as if it were shimmering in someone's sight,
political being the term under discussion,
an ambition *versus* responsibility.

A story was boiling under them similar to
the ones already dissipated, the cloud tattering
its own edges into oblivion. Sweetly.

Resolution Replies

Until finally the stars drift across our bedroom
over the bed and we are elsewhere and the stars
are themselves and the dark universe broods
upon its little Eggs and Wonders.

Quintessence Even from Nothingness

For the stars to appear on *this* side of the window,
that they continue to be the nuclear machines they are
churning with violent intent but tiny, touchable.
That if we crept from bed we would trap them
by quietly shutting the window. That my brother
would continue to sleep. That the clouds would
accumulate as usual until morning, alas.

Perhaps It Is So

And look how dense the flesh, you can't
pass your hand through it it touches.

O

who is gone?
Ora pro nobis.

Narration as Equivocation

"The moment I must remember was when
Into my clothes—every buttonhole filled with blue—
She twined flowers—what could they have been?—
(Yes, they were blue, and small, and too
Readily at hand) they were the color of eyes,
We tell of such betrayals—the postman arrived, me

(But let's assume such a memory is the lie)
Leaning away from her, she absorbed fully in the tree—

Like blossoming of the shape before her, like spring.
Unworthy, I will admit—what blush? who was hurt?
I heard his step and stepped back enduring.
She is gone. A part of someone's life. Perversion
Of such moments: dreams, and divisions of my life
Into before and after, my past a most faithful wife."

May such Deception Dismay

Until she died from the stress of it all Brahms carried on his affair with his best friend's wife, lying "through the teeth," as the Germans say, letting the world think what it would. His requiem gained a piquancy, the excitement of the forbidden flaunted; "Oh Clara, how could you!" he would say to himself, glass in hand, as he watched her stumble homewards toward Robert in the washed-out light of another morning, her figure foreshortened into dumpiness by the view from his third-floor window. It was all so abstract, and in its way, such a bore.

Longing for the Present

"A creosoted pole on my property, twenty wires cross there in the corner of my back yard—but beyond the wires against the dark clouds (not all clouds are dark) the swallows swoop devouring mosquitoes (assume they eat mosquitoes) and beyond them the tattered, no, the boiling edge of weather moves across me—it was such a view of ice-age glaciers moving—if you look straight up—for a few moments, minutes only, the setting sun gives texture and molecular ambiguity to the utility pole, it glows on the western side—and the neighbor's trees their peculiar shade of green

leaning into the light—it was Claude Lorraine—it is lower-middle class here, it is the world. I live for this.

The clouds mean it will rain but I love the sound of my little lawn sprinkler I will keep it going even if it rains this luxury I insist on I live here.

The tattered edge, that cloud assembling itself boiling itself over again assembling its insouciant dissolving grandeur, deliberate, austere, transgressive cloud. The light will never be just this again, was always this, this is only light.”

Keeping House

And for the house he made windows of narrow lights
And against the wall of the house he built chambers round about,
against the walls of the house round about, both of the temple and of
the oracle: and he made chambers round about:

... and the house, when it was in building, was built of stone made
ready before it was brought thither: so that there was neither hammer
nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building

—*I Kings 6*

Just As If It Mattered

The child was not talented
would not speak would not listen
would draw incessantly a pigeon
the same pigeon the same view over

and over, a kind of perfection performing
a subtle gray a light silence.

In Case of a Future

"Once in a sycamore I was glad
all at the top, and I sang" —John Berryman

Having a Past

Mary, the Virgin, encompassed God
held Him whole if inchoate—
I held Him in my closed mouth—I believed it so—
He never was but He lay there
in the folds of flesh softer than pillows
behind the sexual apertures
serene in hot grottoes.

Glittery

And there are birds in the air
And in the trees.

Forbidden

It is so sad, it is morning.
To the cynical all is theory after all.

Everything Returns

Here I go: he thought. Again
For instance,
American embedded glittery
in the German. *Sprechst du?*
Hours pass; he remembers kissing a woman:

Does It Lose in Translation?

Here, I thought: I am again.
Again, I am here. Beneath her.
Here her hand is. A person has blood
and look how dense the flesh, you can't
pass your hand through it it touches.

Can It Change?

The language of patterns—my mother cutting paper,
Vogue, patterns of paper
dolls soon to be erotically charged: against
Faith, Hope, Charity, Lethargy.

Event is the adventure of the moment:
for example, for adventure at home,
there is dining, turning flesh into flesh,
munching on piteous wounds —Pythagoras

But Who Speaks?

*We say ourselves in syllables that rise "The Creations
From the floor, rising in speech we do not speak of Sound"*
—Wallace Stevens

Accidental Childhood

I call it luck when a bird's shadow touches me.

It is hard to know things. "Hard" as in the turtle's
shell, the feel of pebbles in the mouth or pocket.

"Every touch is a modified blow" —Crawley (1927) 1.78

People believe birds carry danger, disease;
the feel of feathers unlike any other.

Little animals cross frequently the backyard.
Sometimes they die—sparrows, a squirrel; once,
a cat. Good children would bury them
in appropriate boxes. A hummingbird fits
into a matchbox. The shimmer of its throat, as if cut—
the hollyhocks are a mess, but if there's another
bud which might open, let's leave them.

"Man stands erect, he alone, yet he lays him down, stretched out
quietly for sleep, for love, for death—"

Hermann Broch, *The Death of Virgil*

And what child does not suffer silent and alone? That's
what it means, "child"—a problem and a pathos. Like

Latin the words ran, like chocolate in summer: "How do you suppose the Romans spoke?" the teacher said, her eyes unfocused, having said it all already: (Eye, a room—ease as east.)



*I imagine two things in relation to each other that are not
awry in a field of stars.*

*S*hannon Welch

THE BETTER PART OF THE DAY

This is not a letter,
or a list of things we've lost
in the specificity of personal address.

What do you think to say?
You imagine you are much
more than a series of impassionate

openings and shuttings of eyes, legs.
What do you think to say?
You put your hand

in the low curve.
The sentence comes out
even more slowly.

Each day, a terrible stanza
you cannot recall. To recall a stanza,
to recall the better part of it.

The immediate past lapses
in two days, then
we've got the anecdote to suffice.

Honesty means as much
comprehensiveness as you can
put in a brown paper bag.

But then my vocabulary allows
so much comprehensiveness,
I forget about humanity.

I mean, we've exercised
exhaustive candor and we haven't
even made it to the starting line.

The loveliest twilight of the year.
We already say: Last night,
so long in the distance, and

this ferocious climate.
I want to relinquish
and to slur and to say

I am prodigal, but
you don't want my kind
coming home

where what goes on
behind the walls is mostly
termites and lots of electrical wiring.

Given these underpinnings,
isn't it academic
that most animals cheat.

That we use honesty in the grossest ways.
To say, we are capable of heinous acts: ha ha.
To say, "I miss you" in other languages is

to say, "I'm made of less."
To be made of less not in terms
of how much we lose, but how much we lie.

To lie with another body when
I imagine two things in relation to each other
that are not awry in a field of stars,

that do not fall asleep
in an unnamed bed,
but none of our beds

are terribly distinct.
It is one thing to sleep and
quite another thing altogether.

Critical Recoveries

George Oppen

Edited & with an introduction by Stephen Cope.

A SELECTION FROM "DAYBOOK ONE", "DAYBOOK TWO",
AND "DAYBOOK THREE" from *The Working Papers of George Oppen*

INTRODUCTION

The George Oppen archive, housed in The Archive for New Poetry at Mandeville Special Collections Library at the University of California, San Diego, consists of thousands of pages of Oppen's published and previously unpublished writings. These writings vary in kind from letters (both completed letters and drafts, both sent and unsent), drafts of poems (again, both completed and abandoned), reading notes, writing notes, and that which comprises the bulk of the collection: what has commonly been referred to as Oppen's "Daybooks" or "Working Papers." What follows is a transcribed selection from those papers—the fifth such selection to have been published to date.¹

There are reasons why this material deserves to see the light of day that are self-evident, perhaps, to students and scholars of Oppen's work, but perhaps a bit less so to the general solicitor. In the first case, these papers—exceeding in volume Oppen's publications (both the poems and the posthumously published letters)—² grant access to the thought of a poet who was perhaps the least public of all of his peers. At a time when essays, manifestos, and critical reviews seemed part and parcel of a poet's vocation, Oppen stood apart from other members of his generation in that his justifications and defenses of his poetics remained for the most part private, circulated in letters to a close coterie of poets, friends, and relatives (occasional interviews, a single essay, and scant reviews mark his public presence outside of poetry).³ In a very elementary sense, then, the primary impetus behind this selection is to broaden the range of material available to Oppen's readers—scholarly or otherwise—and to offer a broader context within which to consider his previously published works.

These papers, however, need not be considered solely, nor even primarily,

a supplementary body of work, secondary to Oppen's poetry and thus of merely tangential interest. Instead, these pages, like the poems themselves, are products of an ongoing process of thought that, although part philosophy, part poetics, part politics, part metaphysics, and part theology (the list could go on) pays no final allegiance to any one particular discourse, nor any single definitive genre. Fragmentary in form and often in theme, these papers, taken as a whole, are akin to such works as Simone Weil's journals, Novalis's "Fragments," or some of Wittgenstein's meditations (among many similar works). One might say that the documents offered here display the work of Oppen the thinker as well as Oppen the poet (an artificial distinction in itself); they bear forth the aphoristic statements in which that thinking finds rest, as well as the restless process by which those statements are achieved. I would invite a reading, then, that approaches this material not as an introduction to Oppen's poems, nor as a reservoir of secondary material through which to read Oppen's oeuvre. Instead, I would suggest a reading based on the recognition of these papers as a body of work justified in and of itself, and ultimately not subsumed into Oppen's previously published canon.

To consider this material as distinct from Oppen's poems, however, is to raise the question of genre, a question that poses a problem of classification already indicated elsewhere in the precariousness of its titles.⁴ Michael Davidson, for one, has approached this dilemma in "Palimpsests: George Oppen, Susan Howe, and the Material Text," suggesting that Oppen's poems and working papers are part of single, ongoing project, one which unites "the trinity of concerns that informs Oppen's entire life: politics, epistemology, poetry. . . . The manuscripts," Davidson continues, "do not suggest someone working toward the perfect lyric but one struggling for a vision of society in which the poem plays an instrumental role."⁵ Davidson asks the crucial question attendant to genre identification: "Does Oppen's oeuvre end in the work we know as *The Collected Poems*, or does it end on the page where it began?"⁶ Davidson's essay does much to worry the line between finished product and working process—a line the ambiguity of which has been a central preoccupation in the editing of this material. Yet if it has been a preoccupation, it has been a central problematic as well. To balance readability with as strict as possible

an adherence to the genetic documents themselves has produced a need to come to terms with the extent to which Oppen's thought and the material means through which it is manifest are mutually interdependent.⁷ As both Davidson and Rachel Blau DuPlessis have noted, Oppen's papers are far from being completed documents: revisions, overwrites, incompletions, gaps, and leaps in contextual register are as characteristic of Oppen's thought in these papers as are the lapidary statements for which he is known in the published work.⁸ Nor does this incompleteness do anything to clarify the question of this work's genericity. William Martin, for instance, in an earlier, collaborative version of this introduction, argued "for a reading of these papers that does not so much consider them as a specific genre, but rather as the material means of Oppen's developing thought out of which he ultimately rarefies—according to his generic conception of a "poem" or "letter"—drafts of poems to be published and letters to be mailed." Martin continues:

Not intended for an audience, these papers foreground the presentational aspect of genre. This is not to suggest that these working papers provide access to an unmediated thought, but rather that they foreground the primary status of any generic categorization which may emerge from, or be imposed upon them, as writing—the material inscription of words on a page.⁹

To raise the question of genre as a "presentational" consideration, rather than an authorial predisposition, is to raise the question of audience, which is in turn to raise the question of literary institutionality, the fact that, as Fredric Jameson notes, "genres are essentially. . . social contracts between a writer and a specific public, whose function is to specify the proper use of a particular cultural artifact."¹⁰ Although I make no pretensions towards establishing such a "proper use" for these papers (indeed, I would argue against such an *establishment*, in the many senses of the term), it is nonetheless necessary to admit of the presentational intervention that editorial practice implies. In transcribing and editing Oppen, that is, accounts of what is gained and lost in the translation from genetic to copy text are accounts that require an inquiry into the status of the text with

respect to the "social contract" that publication implies, as well as the text's relationship to normative generic codes. And since for Oppen this material was never intended for public use, its contractual securities can only be insured by way of editorial intervention (which is to say that whatever social responsibility can be attached to the form in which these papers appear is a responsibility that falls or has fallen squarely on the shoulders of the work's respective editors).

It should be noted, however, that this is not a problem specific to Oppen's working papers, but it is rather a means of locating the site at which a text becomes a specifically social document. It is worth repeating in this context Jerome McGann's insistence, in *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism*, on the social production of literary texts in general, an insistence that aims to introduce into contemporary textual theory (and by extension, genre theory) the social or political horizon of a given work's formation: "Because literary works are fundamentally social rather than personal or psychological products, they do not even acquire an artistic form of being until their engagement with an audience has been determined. In order to secure such an engagement, literary works must be produced within some appropriate set of social institutions, even if it should involve but a small coterie of amateurs" (or, in Oppen's case most likely a small group of specialists and initiates).¹¹ "An author's work," concludes McGann, "possesses autonomy [from social structures] only to the extent that it remains an unheard melody."¹²

The social dimension of literary practice is particularly acute in the case of Oppen, a poet for whom a commitment to social and political issues involved a decision to cease writing for a period of 25 years. (In this sense the "unheard melody" was likely an unsung song as well). Yet these papers do not date from the period of Oppen's silence, but rather accompany his return to poetry, or at least to poetic or philosophic work as it is carried out in a practice of writing. What I would suggest here—partly contra McGann—is that, although social institutions cannot in themselves be disregarded, their appropriateness with respect to a particular text or set of texts can be called into question, particularly in cases such as the present one, where any nod to generic convention would undermine the accuracy of the editorial project altogether. I would argue that these pages

represent—in genetic and copy form—not merely the ready-made products of thought compressed into one or another genre, nor solely cultural or biographical artifacts offered up for consumption by cultural history, but rather the traces of an actual process of thought and writing—the two dependent on one another—that operates independent of any narrowly formal or generic concern. Akin in this sense to notebooks, journals, diaries and the like, these papers are finally none of the these, nor are they fully letters, essays, or aphoristic statements. They are an admixture and more, and thus they resist the institutional tendency towards generic normalization.

To present the material in an accurate manner is thus to preserve its incompleteness in both specific and general terms. As a given page or strain of thought, that is, remains partial and unresolved, so too the work as a whole remains resistant to final closure. In relation to this incompleteness, Oppen's oeuvre as it appears in the *Collected Poems* can itself be read not as a closed or final project that delimits the horizons of his work, but rather as a collection of poems that are themselves the modular organs in which that work finds structural rest. Again, as Davidson argues, the "ideal of a poetry that no longer represents but participates in the process of thought" is not often considered with regard to Oppen: "It is as though we have focused only on the first word in the title to his first book, *Discrete Series*, to the exclusion of the second."¹³ Both poems and working papers, I would like to suggest, arise from a participation of which the published work is not the conclusion, but the temporary (and tenuous) expression, and of which the written is the material evidence and not the ultimate end.

My goal, then, is not only to present Oppen's writings, but to preserve as accurately as possible both the processual form and the format of those writings as they appear in the genetic documents. Nevertheless, as with any editorial endeavor, some measure of *practical* editorial intervention has been necessary in approaching this material. By practical I mean to denote that (1) the volume of unpublished materials housed in the archive would render a complete presentation of every leaf contained in a given Daybook not only burdensome but, due to the preponderance of early drafts of currently published poems and letters (new and/or properly critical

editions of which would prove inconsequentially distinct from the already existent editions), relatively uninteresting to any but the most serious scholar of Oppen's process of revision; and (2) the illegibility of the material—particularly of Oppen's handwriting—has occasioned the intervention of a textual apparatus developed to clarify, formally but not semantically, those passages which would be otherwise indecipherable.

The following apparatus has been developed to deal with these two issues: In the first case, the material presented here is restricted to those documents which cannot be considered working drafts of published poems or published letters *containing only minimal corrections from leaf to leaf*. This is to make the distinction between Oppen's "working papers" and "working drafts," the former of which, although often containing the seeds of poems, and sometimes containing full stanzas of published poems alongside other unpublished material (with Oppen's editorial commentary or not), have been in every case preserved, while the latter—often up to a dozen leaves with minimal variation—have been excised. In all cases, decisions regarding inclusion/exclusion have been made at the level of the page, rather than that of the phrase or fragment. This is a decision meant to preserve Oppen's practice of using the page as a unit of composition, as well as to preserve the enigmatic and anomalous juxtapositions (intentional or not) that often appear on a given page.

In the second case, a method of transcription has been developed the primary precedent for which is the notion of "plain text" as formulated by Edgar Marquess Branch, Michael B. Frank, and Kenneth M. Sanderson in the introduction to *Mark Twain's Letters: Volume 1: 1853-1866*: "The letters have been transcribed using a system of notation and a rationale for emendation which have not before been used to edit letters. We call the result 'plain text,' in contrast both to 'clear text' and its opposite, 'genetic text.' We require two things of every transcription in plain text: (a) it must be sufficiently faithful to the text of the letter to serve as a *reliable substitute* for it; and (b) it must be *easier to read than the original letter*, so long as its reliability is preserved intact."¹⁴ In the case of Oppen's writings, the editorial interventions required by plain-text transcription have primarily to do with handwriting, margin justification, insertion of text, and occasionally spelling. The justifications and editorial markers pertinent to the

application of plain-text are enumerated in 3, 4, 6, 7, 8 in the numbered outline below.

A bit should be said about the titling of this selection, as this has been an issue of some contention among Oppen's various editors. Specifically, Michael Davidson used the term "Daybook" in his initial selection from the archive, while Rachel Blau DuPlessis, in subsequent selections, offered "Working Papers" as a more appropriate designation. I have retained both titles. "Working Papers" is simply used to designate the sum of the extant material, bound or otherwise, as it sufficiently denotes the nature of what these papers consist of, as well as how Oppen himself regarded them. "Daybooks" refers to large portions of papers—roughly half of the "working papers" material—bound together by Oppen into makeshift books.¹⁵ Although the papers contained in these books are rarely dated, and there is little to suggest a diaristic recording of day to day activities and events (nor, in most cases, thematic consistency), I have retained the term for two reasons: first, because no other available term—notebooks, journals, diaries, etc.—appears any more exact in designating the quality of these bound materials ; and, second, because the term has passed, since the first selection appeared, into general usage.

Selections from "Daybook One," "Daybook Two," and "Daybook Three" are presented here. Archive, Box, and Folder locations of the original materials are provided at the end of the appropriate section. The numbering follows the ordering of the material in the archive, as does the order of the pages themselves. Thanks are due to The Archive for New Poetry—particularly Bradley Westbrook—for allowing access to these papers and granting assistance in locating other materials related to the project. Michael Davidson, Fanny Howe, and, initially, William Martin have been instrumental in the development of the above methodology, and all deserve praise for their assistance in this ongoing project. Linda Oppen, not only in bestowing her blessing on this project, but in helping to decipher some of the more cryptic manuscript passages, has offered invaluable contributions to the work as a whole. Of course, as with any such project, all mistakes or inconsistencies are solely the editor's responsibility.

TEXTUAL APPARATUS

1. Unless otherwise noted, all marks and inscriptions—such as parentheses (), ellipses [...], crossed-out passages [~~striketrough~~], bullets [•], etc.—are transcriptions of Oppen's own. (Brackets [] indicate editorial text [See 5 below]).
2. Regular font-face [regular] is used for passages typed by Oppen.
3. Italicized print [*italics*] denotes handwritten inscriptions in the genetic text.
4. Insertion Arrows ^ and ^ denote the beginning and end of text inserted in the genetic text by arrows, lines, or inscriptions within margins and between lines. This serves both to preserve Oppen's intentions with regards to revision and to render the document more legible. (When marginal inscription indicates the deletion of a word and its replacement by another, the deleted word is rendered in ~~striketru~~ with the inserted word adjacent to the deleted word).
5. Brackets [[]] denote text that is altogether illegible—this is predominantly hand-written text and, when at all possible, conjectures have been made regarding potential readings (i.e. [*force?* *farce?*]).
6. Spacing has been reproduced as accurately as possible, with the exception of passages that were clearly typed as prose, and in which line-ends generate no significant meaning. Such passages have been normalized and wrapped accordingly.
7. Following the precedent established by Rachel Blau DuPlessis in her edition of Oppen's letters, spelling has been normalized except where an anomaly generates meanings germane to the context of Oppen's poetics. (Due to the preponderance of typographical errors, this is a practical consideration).
8. Also following DuPlessis, capitalization has been normalized only where it appears to be an unintentional typographical glitch, such as the

second letter of a capitalized word by which potential or alternative meanings and connotations do not appear plausible. Oppen's idiosyncratic capitalization of first-person singular pronouns, proper nouns, and the opening words of sentences have been retained where these instances occur in the genetic text.

ENDNOTES

¹ "An Adequate Vision: A George Oppen Daybook," ed. Michael Davidson [*Ironwood* 25, 1985]; "Meaning Is to Be Here: A Selection From the Daybook," ed. Cynthia Anderson [*Conjunctions* 10, 1987]; "Selections from George Oppen's Daybook," ed. Dennis Young [*The Iowa Review* 18, 3, Fall 1988], and "The Circumstances," "Anthropologist of Myself," and "The Philosophy of the Astonished," ed. Rachel Blau DuPlessis [*Sulfur*: 25, 26, 27 respectively].

² Oppen, George. *Collected Poems*. New York: New Directions. 1975; Oppen, George. *The Selected Letters of George Oppen*. Ed. Rachel Blau DuPlessis. Durham: Duke. 1990.

³ Oppen, George. "The Mind's Own Place," in *Montemora* 1. Fall, 1975. Originally published in *Kulchur* 10. Spring, 1963; "Three Poets," in *Poetry* 100, 5. August, 1962. For interviews with Oppen, see: Hatlen, Burton, ed. *George Oppen: Man and Poet*. Orono: National Poetry Foundation. 1981.

⁴ See DuPlessis introduction in *Sulfur* 26, and my own note respective to this in the textual apparatus.

⁵ Davidson, Michael. *Ghostlier Demarcations: Modern Poetry and the Material Word*. Berkeley: California. 1997. 78.

⁶ Ibid. 67.

⁷ By “readability” is meant simply clarification—not so much of syntactical, grammatical, or other textual inconsistencies, but of handwriting, revision, and in some cases spelling. See the textual apparatus.

⁸ See: Davidson, 77-79, and DuPlessis’ introduction to her selection “The Circumstances” in *Sulfur* 25. Both DuPlessis and Davidson give more detailed descriptions of the Oppen materials than I will be offering here.

⁹ Martin has since withdrawn from the project.

¹⁰ Jameson, Fredric. *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*. Ithaca: Cornell. 1981. 106.

¹¹ McGann, Jerome. *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1983. 43-44.

¹² Ibid. 51.

¹³ Ibid. 70-71.

¹⁴ Branch, Edgar Marquess, Frank, Michael B., Sanderson, Kenneth M. eds. *Mark Twain’s Letters: Volume 1: 1853-1866*. Berkeley. University of California. 1988. xxvi.

¹⁵ For a detailed description of these books, see: Davidson, 76-77.

'real proletarian', 'salt of the earth' etc.

The people in the capitalist countries have only a theoretical [^]and formal[^] right to elect the government, whereas the Socialist governments possess a real and effective right to elect the people.

—childish self-pity leading merely to idiotic reactionary attitudes.

The 60 generations of historical time—We are an old race: that is, there have been a lot of us.
That [must face?] age,

We feel it was ourselves who live through history. No other people do?—The orphan blitheness of 'others'

Words are a constant enemy: the thing seems to exist because the word does

The assistant, the suppliers, the managements:

The iron ships in the harbor, the iron locomotives at the edge of the city:

The black pilings driven into the sea's bottom, the divers, the pilings gathering sea growth in the disturbed harbor-water

The light of an office window shining on the window ledge of snow

(Inert? Inert poetry? Inert steel?)

—never really touches the bases of life at all. He actually touches only attitudes, affections, poses, styles—

(cont.)

The 'public feeling'—not primarily self expression, tho the word is a refuge. But to add something to literature. The fear it might never be said.

Whatever I write has already
happened—at least to me.

We will return to this place?

The old people gather
Tastelessly in a room which is the old country
bragging of the grandchildren...

The courage of clarity.

Intrepidly clear.

For each particle of oxygen,
two of hydrogen—
for this the ship floats,
for this the man drowns

 The wind and the eyes,
of the same particle (cf louis)

Oriental art: the thing and its distinction
 (which of course reveals actually the human
 subjectivity: human meanings)

(*Boudoir*)

The little droppings, the spoor of wealth—

*There is the area of Lyric—the
area in which one is absolutely
convinced that one's emotions
are an insight into reality
and death
But values— as they say—*

The noise of wealth, the clamour of wealth
In the hotel lobby sound ~~more than hardship~~

Like the voice of Hell.

the dream

*Truth follows must follow
after things*

*nevertheless, Truth follows
The existence of something*

*Eliphas Levi "an eternity of isolation
would be eternal death"*

Balzac — []

Simone Weil

Leviathan

"a nightmare of bric-a-brac"

Miller

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 - - - - -

2 4 6 8 10 12 14 16

beyond

IF NOT this ^deluge of ^ bric-a-brac, Nothing

I don't think life should be valued only when it can be sentimentalized
(this remark derived from Yeats)

—even Keats feeling that he had to say something 'profound' —
Keats weakening—writes Beauty is truth truth beauty—If it
were true, the line would be beautiful, and it is not. It is not in any
case how poetry makes 'meaning' The meaning of Williams' ^{^[point?]},
for example, is that life is not valuable only when it can be
sentimentalized or ~~even~~ only when it can be generalized. To be able to
say that, as i have said it here, does not constitute great poetry, of
course; the achievement of the poet is to prove it by the aesthetic
success of the poem. And Williams vision— ...

and Williams has been important to us: the end of sentiment,
the end of generalization is very nearly upon us: it is no longer convincing.
Williams therefore
/ ...

the threat of generalization

What Snow and Swenson are describing is—a classic.

It can not be said that Rezi was as 'important' as Williams, Pound, Eliot, because he was not important in the development of modern poetry. Simple, almost none of the poets had read him. He could have been of great importance, it is even true that it would have been a very good thing if he had played an important role: he would have presented at least an alternative to the influence of Williams, the aridities derived from Eliot—We might have avoided a great many difficulties; Williams' model has rather made fakery easy, Pound

and the obfuscations of Ezra Pound

invite even easier imitation, and tho Auden and the Eliot school are perhaps not altogether easy to imitate, it is at least true that the manner apparently can be acquired with a certain amount of education even by those ~~with no~~ ^{who posses no} poetic intuition at all.

but it is probable that nothing of importance in Rezi can be imitated. And it is likely that which explains the neglect of his work

Line

An old race.

^And^ a lot of us. The rooms are full

Block after block

Mile beyond mile

[] ^Of us, of people^

What are these people like?

And what else matters? In their hands & [country?]

^and his arms^

The opening and closing

Of doors, the keys and the locks,

The machines, the buildings of walls

And the destruction of walls. []

*deluge of bric-a-brac is reality &
then what else matters?*

*The deluge
of bric-a-brac
in his hands.*

a bric-a-brac reality

Paz's poem— Exact or example is not a real opposite to Ambiguous.

The poem is opaque. He is stating facts which refer back to the things I already know, which never exist in the poem. 'Wounds'— because, yes, a word makes a mark, a wound, it impresses itself. 'Effulgent' because it illuminates, yes. Those are things I know about words. But there is no place in that poem for the wound, there is no scene in which the effulgence takes place. It is just something I too understand. So that he is saying only 'me too', which is the very ~~heart~~ ^sign^ of Provincial poetry.

he knows, or thinks he knows, from Rimbaud that such things can be done, but the poem does not earn the right to do it. The words are not really opposed, therefore the whole weight falls on the word But, so that it ~~becomes~~ merely a grammatic contraption. . . in which nothing actually happens. The poet [*feels? wills? felt?*] it to happen with a 'but'

squall — ~~could be said equally~~ of a wall falling
on a man would also be suddenly emptied of concept,
of a human logos.

The one thing inexplicable
Is place. 'If everything went up in smoke'

That smoke would ~~be~~ ^{^remain^} here. But the heart formed in this place
Suffers, ~~And has no word~~ ^{^and^} ~~The~~ Hearts fed on fantasies

Become~~S~~, ~~a the man~~ Yeats, the man Yeats wrote
Wrote ~~one day at his desk~~

^{^Brutal: ^}~~Becomes Savage~~ Surely mankind is an island,
Surely no man is a continent

The purpose of his life
Must be his own tho he make hidden little gods

In abstract nouns ~~that his purposes~~
~~May seem adequate~~, these gods are savage

That smoke would be here. Heart formed [~~of his pain in the letters?~~]

[]

Suffers, and the heart that feeds on fantasies

~~*Suffers, heart fed on fantasies*~~

Becomes, as the man Yeats wrote

Brutal. Surely mankind

At least two kinds of devotion. The devotion to art, a sort of pragmatism of art which refuses to think anything which will not contribute to poetry. The other is a devotion which ~~tries to~~ makes poetry of what the mind, the free and operating mind ~~thinks~~ can know - or must know - and is going to know.

Before horror, everything.

Beyond horror, nothing.

O scow or barge loose—should safely be moored. But people, those people who have power in them?

Who could have imagined two or three hundred years ago that the whole mass of the population would prove capable of filling out tax returns, paying bills, obtaining licenses, etc.

The advantage of NY—one is perfectly sure that it exists, because it is brutally ugly.

The thing and its distinction; the quality of the walnut shell.

As human history accumulates the people come to see 'the world as a limited whole' That vision has no answer to it. Perhaps it is lethal.

The product of rhetoric

Those who do not attempt to write, who have not written anything down, like those who do only mental arithmetic have not carried the processes very far

The pop art—a Disneyland tour of Dadism? or the anger, the destructiveness of the homosexual, the totally disconnected, the man without natural valences—to him not only the structure but the purposes of society must seem AT ALL MOMENTS totally absurd

A cultural game? Genet's cultural game?

A noisy thinker. Who must always think badly.

(cont.)

'Pilgrimages and churches have always made me cry, and there, at Chalma,
almost all those who reached the church door were crying' Children of
Sanchez, Marta speaking
The pilgrims; companionship.

'For example; my aunt is not going to last much longer,
page 317

The very large hills, and the small coves at their feet.

The woods: non-historic time. But New England? Or 'the
English in Virginia'?

Ta Onta +

(Ontogeny, from Greek Onta, the things
that exist)

According to Webster

[] Webster, orator

The golden tongued

The Onta ? *The Onta*

the wonder [also?]

The things that exist

[]

The arc of intellect : to see—

That the reason deals with events (?)

Conjure us by the five senses

But 'the primary elements
Can only be named'. The long lines
like the sound of radios

O *lost* and b yhrwind grieved
Rings, rings with the noise
That covers nothing, hides
Nothing. The bare word
still vertiginous
For he is *^finally^* lost: the ultimate grains,
the indivisible grain—

Why it acts as it does—

The closed door ~~where there is no door~~ in no wall.

If, in a poor country, a primitive country, someone suggested: Let us hold a raffle, and thru a system of tokens, or in some other way give to a few individuals the right to use the labor of hundreds or even thousands so that at least someone among us will be able really to taste life, to see the world, perhaps to report on it, to enjoy love without stint, to read and to think, and to exhaust the possibilities of adventure and of pleasure—if someone suggested that in a hopeless country, I think I would be tempted to agree. But actually, those who are able to claim the product of others' labor see nothing, learn nothing, feel nothing, are pre-occupied almost continually with the attempt to avoid discomfort, at which somehow they fail. ~~They appear to read little and to think not at all; love is no more prevalent among them than among the poorest~~ The princess suffers agonies because there is a lump in the bed; the millionairess nearly dies because the plane was not adequately heated.

a friend of Mary's who is an etcher—Ponce deLeon—
speaks of depths of focus in a picture. It is among others
things, he says, the relation of the artist to the 'thing'.
The concept can be applied also to writing; a style can be
too much on the surface. It can also be too little on the
surface, the thing behind it can lack immediacy, can lack ~~right~~
conviction.

You can find this depth controlled perfectly in
some of Joyce, in Ginsberg's Kaddish. And *somewhat* less than
perfectly in Virginia Woolf. And, to make it obvious, in
Corso, etc.

The great paved places
OF France: Father? Father? Distant America
Is not worth thinking of:
Is not worth thinking of
Scept that nothing else matters
 defined by defining everything which it is not

Humanism: Because people exist. What other things exist?

America, which we did not find,
Tho we went in search of it.

 across the plains. A ship moored off France is
What? less bleakly moored?

 And pluck from this thistle
 The mirabelle!

napoleonic building, a wealth
of heavy ancestry
Brutally holds the common stone
Of the fields, more brutal for the fluted peristyle
The villages; nature not conquered
The dead are not here, even at the simple meals
as elsewhere, the dead are not here (the meals, family
meals, to which therefore they seem to have a right)

 nothing explained by newtonian mechanics.
 the arrow of time ~~which pierces nothing~~ *BLUNTED*
the most simple
Is the body of god
What will we know, discover? The grains?
The particles? The thing was here, the whole thing. It's
elaboration in the boulevards, etc.
The mineral, which is a bout as far as you can go
skilled in their little city
 the courage of clear speech

(cont.)

I thought once that given a decent enough life, wealth enough, For everyone, we would eventually undertake as equals to face and to reconcile ourselves to everything—well, just in the knowledge of human happiness

I know of no hope but companionship, and there cannot be companionship with people who *have* admitted nothing—

the little amoeba at the heart of things a god
is male or female

—the wonder of greed—

What have I to do with 6th ave, what has anyone to do with it?

The things don't know their names

The truth shall make us free! The lies shall make it possible to live.

[16:19:1]

We will finally say God or we will be unable to say anything" G.O.

| 'What we know must be known to its roots, for we shall
never know anything until we know its causes.' Meister
Eckhart, Sermons, 16 |

But . . . What Roche disregards is that the Goldwaterites can't lose. The only opposition to Johnson is from the right, and Johnson already conceding to the right—as a 'professional' must. Therefore the Goldwater-Birchites will move the country to the right. And the ADA with it.

Roche's endorsement of Johnson really means that, no?

The theology which decrees that God is love is intelligent theology. If there is a theology in the universe, there is will, desire—Eros, the will, the *erotic*

in the circumstance of being alive

I should think they would be aware of a fault not only in their reasoning but in their motivation. That see God only as 'the guarantor of human greatness'; ^or the [] of a real ethic^ they are thinking therefore of humanity, not of god. can conceive of god? Maybe negatively. The first negotiation would be the rejection of that word and of all words, both the pronoun he and the noun god.

Eros—the will—cannot act for itself

Eros, the will, that

No bond at the moment of screwing but the tenon. A groove and tenon joint. If it is ever more or different than that, I don't know about it. And each wrapped impenetrably in his own reactions. The ~~actual~~ ^real^ act of sex become, in the final moment, a fantasy in each partner.

a fantasy, a dream, an eternal occurrence, or absolute separateness

Linda: when she saw the deer she knew they'd really done it —

(had entered Alex's life. Or not exactly, she had began to alter it, to arrange the little apartment—but all less than she had seen with us - —When she saw the deer outside the front door—opening the front door, saw the deer—she knew they'd really done it)

*Eros, [], the will
the alternative to the erotic is
passivity*

*The alternative to the erotic
is the ~~INERT~~ INANIMATE*

One must remember that man is said to have evolved not, to begin with, from the amoebae, but from hydrogen gas. There is no teleology recognized in that process; that is, if at any stage in the evolution there has been anything in the universe which desired to further the process, that desire was irrelevant. The thing took place entirely by chance. ~~Time~~ It is said that the process occupied a great many years. The only question is—Does one believe it?

Eros—the will—drifts in the ontological

Hitchcock—Editor's fatigue. He reads through a great many ms. because he is an editor. He comes to something which he considers good and recommends it. It is good, if he says so. He forgets that he has read it only because he must. It can be totally unnecessary. He fails to notice that.

I have been in the habit of doing things my own way. And I have been willing to pay for it. I realize, tho, that it has been pure good fortune that I have been able to ~~pay for~~ ^{^afford^} it

'Poetry is—' and they define what they think poetry should be or should accomplish. But the fact is that we speak, ~~perhaps~~ ^{^cautious^} of bad poetry, but still of poetry, if it is verse. What is written in verse is a poem, and poetry is verse.

The purpose of verse is to control the cadence, not only of sound, but with it, of course, of thought. But prose must also do this, and has its means. Verse ~~means~~ ^{^is a [choice/desire?]^} to isolate the words. As prose ~~too~~ occasionally uses the methods of verse: a single word in a paragraph—usually, it is true, and exclamation. Verse isolates every word, or every unit of words, in that way. *And that is poetry.*

Arriving like these men
With a difference of manner,
A difference of taste—the threshold of the present—,
The optimism of ~~Mechanism~~ Automatism
Was also an optimism of violence;
These possess neither.
They have no connection at all
With the production of goods.
'Consumer products'.

*An optimism of violence can't be
removed from a mechanist [—] an
optimism virtually of Mechanism*

Cold water flats—but i think that of all those who committ'd suicide in the 16 century, none killed themselves because there was no such thing as hot running water in the world.

Diction. the distinction is in the words I do not use, more than in the words I do use. I use the words for large and for small often. Because scale is important, just because it is subjective.

Whom the class girl feels she should acquire is the young prince, well over six feet tall, [], *resourceful* destined to be an excellent father, a marriage manual lover, ~~most~~ attentive, ~~interested in women's affairs~~, brilliantly artistic—Who that turns out to be of course is the Madison avenue *total* bastard.

—these girls had better learn that in spite of the perfections of their own hair-do's, they must marry a person.

I work sometimes for eight hours or so, fiddling with corrections. But sometimes I am so tired ~~of~~ in two or three hours of effort that I'm shake. Possible an element of self dramatization. But it is also fear I ~~realize that~~ nothing so extraordinary appears in the poems, ~~Besides~~ ^{^and^} once the thing has been written there is no need to find it overwhelming. But for me the sense of thinking beyond what I already know ~~which~~ ^{^or what someone already knows^} is terrifying. It would not be terrifying in abstract terms. It is terrifying in terms of the objects around me, ~~of the things I have seen or will see~~

—a concern with cadence is not foreign to prose. ~~Can~~ not be, if one wishes to be understood. The difference in spontaneous speech is that one has arbitrary control of cadence—

Abundance, waste display—leave aside questions of taste, people are wasting their lives, almost everybody is wasting his life in producing these things—

No artist think[s direc?]tly of beauty or seeks directly for the beautiful []e works. ^[]^ He ^but^ thinks ~~perhaps~~ of illumination, of disclosure. He is concerned with emotion, but ~~only~~ of emotion which ~~Discloses~~ Discloses The blind emotion, blind sensation of background music, of soft lights which ~~many people mean when~~ ^[]^ ~~they say~~ 'beautiful' has nothing to do with the artists work.

what concerns the artist is that the thing exists—and he starts with a ruined language ^He ~~must~~ day by day and then by man, destroyed^ achieves language. The trouble is that it is possible to

Must try to get back to what does exist the onta
to language which can confront, can stand.

which is not merely a series of self-indulgent gestures, indications of attitude or sentiment.

a poem may be devoted to giving clear meaning to one word.

The man is old and— out of scale
Sitting in the rank grass
~~Under the small tree~~ —The fact is
It is not his world [

]

The mind must tell what it finds—
The actual behavior of things. So many minds have lived,
Or perhaps we have already told too much.
AND [ALL] TOLD

Perhaps we have already told too much

[16:19:3]

It is not certain now—nor is it moot—whether or not Oswald was the assassin of the president.

If Oswald was not the assassin, he must have been elaborately framed. And by the Dallas police.

Since the Dallas police permitted a 'friend' of theirs, a man known to carry a gun, to approach Oswald in the police station, it is possible to believe that they deliberately connived at his murder. If indeed they did, what is to be made of the District Attorney's statement that the case of Oswald was closed by his murder, and would not be further investigated, nor further evidence given to the public.

Birmingham is not necessarily the only city in the south whose police chief is involved with racist groups. These groups have not made a secret of their fury against Kennedy.

This would be a picture of crisis, of violence which has got out of hand. It may well be an accurate picture of the state of affairs.

There is in everyone's mind—I suppose I mean

Louis' Catallus: He has translated a dead language into a language which is powerless to be born.

The contrast between the tone of Catallus and ^some lines as^ Louis' "I'll Go whee, and I'll rumble you" does nothing to lessen the comedy.

This is a [] of one language with Catallus: the first tatted dead ^a "dead language" ^; the new powerless to be born'

Mighkut

Muykut

The wide spread anti-semitism among Negroes is Uncle Tomism raised to the level of viciousness. One helps a white gentle man open his car door, or one helps a white gentleman beat up immigrants. Equally sycophantic

They used to advise young men to avoid gambling, drink and women.
And they were probably right in their time. But the single most important
thing in the world today is not to read the New Yorker.

*If a man looks around himself at all, which is to say, if he
produces anything original at all, it will be in some sense 'local'*

If a man looks about him at all, which is to say, if he appears as a new
poet at all, he is bound to be in some sense local.

Tomlinson, for all that he is influenced by the Americans, and means to be,
is a very English poet. More aware of 'a peopled landscape'
Less aware than we might be of the curvature of the earth.

of course they are even entitled to equality. They have a perfect right to go to hell with us since they want to. And since they certainly know nowhere else to go anyway.

the art world has become the perfect duplication of the world of the industrial concerns together with the money of the industrialists last years model valueless, etc.

To know what's DOING IN ORDER NOT TO DO WHATS BEING DONE OR HAS BEEN DONE. as rezi should have read the Imagists—to avoid some things that he might better have avoided

to see the child as substantial, as a person.

language again

error to see the 'successful' as 'real', ^{^then} [*abandon?*] *the real world* and failure as the pre-real, as the childish.

Creeley finally largely mannerist one remembers the manner, not the poem

and the failure of people one sees the land lying beneath the sun the more clearly.

'again the form at rest is the defining limit of intelligence, and intelligence is the notion of the form, so that all are one'
Plotinus

the infant first sees, not objects, but being

the world moves
and remains

The overwhelming intellectual force of Rome—armed with the Greek, and finally the Hebrew also

(cont.)

the old man's head, ~~impenetrable~~ ^{^bulging^}
And worn
Almost to death, ~~bulging~~
It grows ~~intolerable~~ from within
and is eroded

If poetry is an instrument of thought, and a fairly powerful one, he cannot simply put his convictions into verse. And therefore he takes some risks.

NOT the risk of technical innovation. What risk? except of having to re-write perhaps at worst
the risk is something else

because here
because there is no visible force called chance we encounter
They said they were the people of the book, and i added a people
who possessed a literature of such power in that day
Plaque
In the cemetery of Pere Lachaise
history beginning with the voice —I am what is'
To the ten thousand
with the Jew also something or someone by the name
of Jehovah.

the sense will not close. Whereas the mind works intermittently.
therefore the 'merely intellectual' etc and the irreality of necessary
truth. a time may have other tasks than poetry Why not But refrain from
tearing up the roots, from injuring the roots

when words achieve meaning it is an important moment in my life and I do
not usually forget it

But it is we who reason

they are destroyed by the passage of time. But there is something not
destroyed...

lighting a corner of a table
and a chair
in a culture o mined and cultivated etc

the lines are an instrument
of thought, ~~powerful~~
^{^powerful} as the tools
of ~~the mathematician~~ *mathematics*
or they are distraction

(cont.)

the lines being an instrument of thought, one cannot ~~always~~ foresee
conclusions, as the mathematician cannot
foresee the result of his work

Being, in which intelligence must come to rest. The defining limit
of thought

*One cannot foresee
Conclusions*

*Can not Beings
[]
is the defining limit
of thought*

Truth is

He who makes and assembles or from pure air
and his passion
makes

form the completed act of the intellect

the old regime in the last days turns to terror, and therefore all the new are heroes

the mind from a world of whirling particles produces form

we cannot continue to celebrate the heroism of non-participation. obviously a gag

under the roofs of Paris the young gather. A deliberate undertaking life
force? is the aesthetic traceable to the evolutionary process? an ideal?
a life force? under the roofs of paris, etc

Sisyphus, the moment of choice, Of freedom, of the concern of being

the idea that 'occurs'—'it occurred to me'

the beauty of the Seine
At night

which perhaps does not matter
And nothing will come of it

and a new excitement rises
As the colored lights go on at night
In the cafes

of structure
Closed by their slate roof
And complete, a culture

Mined and cultivated
From the ground

The problem of purpose and the problem of self-sufficiency—
irreconcilable
the universe itself given a god, a ruler, whose will it does.
which leaves god in his turn something which 'does not know
but only acts'
the self sufficient vz. purpose

my lines and the division of lines is not meant merely as a cadence of
sound. It is an essential element of the syntax.

the flower
On the table
Still central
In their lives

surely not
in the chaos
of the factories, still less
In the Coney Island
Of the art galleries

Newtonian rationalist particles motivated by an outside force, and the
source of that force cannot be rationally found. Nor escaped, neither found
nor escaped, it brings us only to determinism. And the idea of an intrinsic
force is vitalism, and mysticism?

A force inherent in substance?
Or else in an entity outside of substance?

—I believe in something like natural
childbirth. To know, as far as one can face it,
what happens.

(cont.)

the song of songs—that one song, at least, in almost all lives

He who cannot wiggle, cannot love. An undignified thought. I mean to maintain intelligence and the clarity of intelligence even as an acknowledgment, if we can do no more, or tragedy, of human failure

one might well give one's whole poetic life to achieving that clarity had Rezi not already achieved it. So one tries to get deeper. At some loss Rezi's whimsicality of posture, occasionally, perhaps to palliate the tragic vision of materialism as is his nationalism.

the artist is the man who recognizes beauty with something like

It is approximately the distinction between a poem and an essay. A man,
finding himself in possession of a number of opinions which he would like
to express, writes an essay

an explorer or a mathematician also knows what he thinks—but doesn't
know what he will find a man applying a method of thought as which is
powerful in itself, which is more powerful than the ordinary forms of
discourse, doesn't know what he will find, or what he will think
Then

the man who refuses labor has decided in advance not to love
I could not have invented this, this I found

Plotinus—Mind, remembering will say it was within, and yet
it was not within

had won exaltation and life—surely of all things in literature
the most hard won where nothing is won easily

The People, the People would it be so objectionable to say to the
people; if you reject the radical intellectual, you will rot

the idea of being hovers over a dream more clearly than over waking thought
as over the fact *fact?* of failure (*in Bernard's ULYSSES*)
'the Muse' —the feminine principle? why not say so?

no beginning and no end but only an interminable middle

searching for an invention
which will make them artists
and leave behind the field and ^or [] or the streets^ roads of the
country
and the scenes of humiliation
and their non emotion

the universe however is nowhere
the self sufficient the impenetrable, the morally meaningless

(cont.)

*The failure to believe
In science or mathematics
And failure of emotion—*

*One is forced to assume that the universe is absolutely self-sufficient.
And cannot be eternally meaningless. Are ones own purposes an ethic?_*

These people who button up their vests, and adjust whatever is the equivalent of a monocle, and sally ^{^tetsingly^} ~~precarioulsy~~ forth to maintain their figure in the world are infinitely boring and infinitely depressing to me—

*I want very much to be no where at all in
that parade of scarecrows*

Night Club

"Under the Bam
Under the Boo
Und or the Bamboo
Boo Tree "; The watered down
Or rather *the frenetic*,
Idea of savagery,
The natural man.
False. Not only false
But silly.

examples of cause + effect and chance

Spiritualism as a search for mystification in a game, and a ridiculous one.
It is difficult to imagine boredom so great that one would play it.

No materialist philosophy can avoid the picture of life as tragic, and the history of life as absolute tragedy, because all life can neither tolerate ^{^an ending nor^} the thought of unendingness, ~~nor the thought of an end~~. And because if the universe is matter, it is impenetrable.

The suggestion of spiritual entities in the universe is a search, or a hope, of intelligibility. If it is not that, its simply a preference for confusion. ^{^And confusion is^} *perhaps a farce rather than tragedy.* [
]

[

]

Jay:

A reasonable and humorous man, rather surprised by the world, and rather amused. It is true that Catallus is a great master, and it does not always suffer by the comparison. When it is best it is very good. being achieved so simply—

‘Will I find enough love,
Will I find enough to love then—’

And yet it raises the question of style, of modern style and of ‘high style’. It raises the question whether it would not be better if it failed to achieve it. *For all of his ‘modernism’, He is the academic—*

[

]

(the possibles

My fellow tenants in this building
Disgust me. I have strange ways.

I imagine winning a prize
From Mr Andrew mellon’s
Estate. ~~Who are my friends?~~

I shall run mad.

[

]

If we were born, full blown, in space, a planet hanging enormously in front of us, ~~it seems to me that~~ no one would hunt for misty words or for 'mysticism'. One would say Look! Or, do you see it? or What is it? I should suppose that nothing—nothing at all—but the constant repetition of abstract words could blind us to that presence—

the designer reading the trade journals for the latest word is not going to produce a new art. Nor the young people reading the poets ^{^most^} in the news—

At 16 I was reading not Edna Millay nor the novelist Hutchinson, but the anatomy of Melancholy, and Locke, and Keats—

'Since there is a God he must—' Because if there were not God there would be no religion. Scientific argument: Since there is not a teleology—roughly speaking, a God, then what must have happened is——followed by an hypothesis as difficult to believe as Darwinism. Because IF there were a teleology, there would be no science. Therefore, since—etc. But the argument for neo Darwinism reduces itself always to no more than that: 'since—then there must—' [

]

Whose mind moves
Always toward those limits

We fear that grief
Which will render everything *meaningless*,
The sense of self among the motor cars
Meaningless:
We are an old race. That is,
There have been a lot of us.

‘as a necessary consequence of its own existence ’ Plotinus

‘the lower world of becoming was not created at a particular moment but is eternally generated’ Plotinus

‘Each must give of its own being to something else. The Good will not be the Good... Soul will not be Soul unless... some secondary life lives as long as the primal exists ’

‘all things must exist for ever in ordered dependence on each other’

[

]

Fragment of Pete’s conversation:

but she seems to have turned out well,
she’s living near Los Angeles in a chicken coop or a goat house...

The real one: ‘Don’t think of a white house’. What difference does the ‘don’t\ make?

Eros: ‘as if... were gifts forever.’ I cannot offer promises more definite.
Just ‘as if’. Perhaps ‘as good as if’. [

]

Because this generation appears after the emergence ^again^ of a 'new poetry' - the Beats or the black mountain or whatever name one wishes to use—appears when the argument of the schools emerges again after it has been absent for a short time, and because of the absurd speculation in the art galleries which causes it to appear that a man make think of using stripes, or serial images or blank spaces and become a great artist—or an artist at all—it is necessary to say what should be obvious; that is impossible for a man to become an artist by having an idea, by making an invention. Art can come only from a very dangerous thing to do. To search for the roots of one's own existence and one's own sensibility. And to try to body that forth, to ~~make~~ ^cause^ it appear in clarity—

'of course'—meaning, it follows from the course of events, from the course of the argument. That on the course established one is bound to some to this ^conclusion^ without the necessity of excursion—

-owed to Theodore Sturgeon) an 'absolute ethic', meaning of course a human ethic—Determined by the requirements of the survival of humanity. An action may be ethical within a group, or ethical in terms of the survival of the group, but unethical in terms of the survival of humanity. A possible ethical basis for the Nuremberg trials—which had ^offered^ none.

The [prophet conceit?]"—not a myth, but a paradox

"We have scotch'd the snake, not killed it
She'll turn and be her selfe []
the wholeness of woods

I am talking of a being

I am not ~~talking of~~ ^{^displaying^} a dialectic. I am talking of a vision.
Only I am talking of any vision. *of all vision*

but while I live I will speak, and while I have
reason I must answer.

II Esdras

The similarity is that he is pretty young— one finds himself armed
with some strength of character—one may have felt it precisely as one
feels a sword at his side or to be flourished in the hand—one comes
finally to think of even the armament of his own character as pure luck, a
gift from god knows where—

When it becomes conviction it becomes poetic—and nothing but conviction
is poetry

'your own things that grow up with you, you cannot understand

II Esdras

Nor does anything perish except that which can be transformed into
something else: that which has nothing into which it can be transformed
does not perish Plotinus

Might—like I—translate *Ou sont les neiges d'antoad*
as Who sent less needed eggs, Anton?

NOT A DIALECTIC

BUT VISION.—Not a dialectic

But vision...

Behold—not rainbow, which is mist—the full word.
To see a grain of sand in the world, an hour out of eternity.

a [stre]tch of vast river showing- hard to get to—not water, oil on the
surface—current—the ship—a steel wall; barnacles and rivets—
cannot see (in the wind) pressed against the steel wall hard shoes on
heres miracle with burnt matchstick

The hand, we use the hand for holding
Legs for walking
The car he gears
But the eye looks and we SEE, it floods in on us across the broad grey
water to Jersey tangled in the grey air. *Penetrating, twisted, [hard,*
dead?] (grey in the grey air)
irregular

Brick in the wall, the heart seizes it because the eye has picked it out
the little lumps make it oneself.

[] hill and farm house—home to the eye—or the brass plate in the
apt house lobby.

A young man running the ^freight^ elevator
Furious. Or in leather gloves
handling garbage, a few years out of high school
Thrown into primacy, ~~who were children among adults~~
~~And already failures~~ ^They were children
among adults
And already failures^
—cut off from
—the young, the disappointed.
No one will stand for it. No one

Trailer camps, the gadgets.
Row boat—of new wood as old as carpentry
Remember from before our birth
Stem meets the water perfectly—dipping a little, meets the
water perfectly each time

(cont.)

Passenger, stowaways—you know you are the stowaways
since you are not fish—we must define life and freedom to
include the crew

The eye searches to see more

Rounding the buoy—the wind over the water
The boat moves more lightly ~~with the wind~~ *with the wind*
I call the thin planks, the light wood
And remember
To shore - for the sea is only the sea
And the beach a playground for children
To the shore, carpenter—
carpenter and other things
For the sea is only the sea We do not live by the sea

the sea—spatial simplicity—close to the boat the sea is water—in
the shadows of the boats side becomes suddenly water

On the difficulty of advising or appraising a young poet, a poet who has not yet achieved mastery of his own form.

had I seen Ginsberg's Kaddish in the making, I would have wanted to strike out almost every phrase, almost every line. It is the poem that justifies the line, not the lines that justify the poem. It is the poem that justifies the words.

[16:19:3]

*This periodical was typeset in 12 point Centaur;
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Very pretty and all-natural.

On Philosophy the Invisible

But what does it prove? To the unnatural eye, it was a speculative analemmic conceit. A rarity, and very valuable. Research, however, told quite another story. The philosophy was a counterfeit. Faint traces of tampering that were hidden to the unnatural eye were revealed by poetic research. Someone, somewhere, had ingeniously altered the fiction by digitally versioning a surprise. The friction was ruthless. What manner of exotic researchers were these that could "see" the invisible? Who but the P.R.B.

Obsolescence vs. The Bloc

In an age when flashy new models thrust last year's marvels into early obsolescence, the Bloc goes its own way. Planned obsolescence is taboo at *The Germ*. All but two of our researchers will fit every Germ made since 1996 and every future Germ (excepting the current collection)... The greater part of a year is spent on building each ensemble, much of it crafted by hand. And fully one quarter of the work force devotes its time to nothing but quality control. Little wonder, then, that a pre-owned Germ commands such a high price... if its

owner can be persuaded to part with it at all. But what does this prove? Our philosophy is all-natural, and all-natural philosophy is just. The Poetic Research Bloc is: John Ashbery, Faith Barrett, Anselm Berrigan, O. A. Biddle, Leslie Bumstead, Clark Coolidge, Stephen Cope, Ray DiPalma, Jean Donnelly, Karen Donovan, Mark DuCharme, Marcella Durand, Chris Edgar, Michael Gizzi, Kevin Killian, John Latta, Gillian McCain, Laura Mullen, John Olson, George Oppen, Michael Palmer, Bin Ramke, Gustaf Sobin, Carol Szamatowicz, Linda Voris, Ben Watkins, Shannon Welch & Elizabeth Willis.