

What
We
Did
During
the
Apocalypse:

The
Archive
of
the
Babel
Tower
Notice
Board

Contents

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This work may be quoted from and referenced without the express written permission of the publisher. Probably. No contracts were signed when the journal was live. Basically, don't be a dick. Many of the pieces published here use found language but all in-copyright sources are referenced. Please do the same. And say nice things to the writers if you can find them. Most of them fucked off after the pandemic. I hope they know this archive exists and they're still writing. In all likelihood, they're busy going outside and drinking beer and going home and watching just one among the many popular streaming services that are available in modern times. I'm doing fine since the journal ended. I got made redundant, moved city then moved city again. I just finished a whole pack of double-stuffed Oreos. Glasgow gets very cold. I get very warm. I hope everyone is being cuddled now the pandemic has lifted or ended or whatever the fuck I'm meant to say without one of you screaming, "omg covid is still with us omg". When I was 20 I listened to *Transatlantic* by Death Can For Cutie and almost two decades on I've started listening to the same two upbeat tracks but I've been writing this for so long I'm now on the slow songs so I best get going.

Edited, designed and typeset in (mostly) 10pt Baskerville by
Richard Capener

Cover image *The Tower of Babel* by Gustav Dore, 1866

Published by Hem Press, Glasgow, UK, 2024

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What We Did During the Apocalypse: The Archive of the Babel Tower Notice Board



Hem Press

THE BABEL TOWER NOTICE
BOARD WAS A JOURNAL/PODCAST/
READING SERIES/SEX CULT
THAT RAN FROM AUGUST 2020 -
DECEMBER 2021.

IT WAS FOUNDED AND EDITED BY
RICHARD CAPENER WITH CHLOË
PROCTOR JOINING AS ASSISTANT
EDITOR SOON AFTER.

THIS ARCHIVE PRESENTS THE
MAJORITY OF WORK PUBLISHED
ON THE JOURNAL NOT INCLUDING
THE EDITORIALS RICHARD WROTE
BECAUSE ON REFLECTION THEY'RE
SHIT.

ALL PODCASTS ARE ARCHIVED AT
BABELPARISHRADIO.BANDCAMP.
COM

ALL READINGS ARE ARCHIVED
AT YOUTUBE.COM/@
BABELADMINISTRATIONTEAM7976

THANKS.

The inferno of the living is not something that will be; if there is one, it is what is already here, the inferno where we live every day, that we form by being together. There are two ways to escape suffering it. The first is easy for many: accept the inferno and become such a part of it that you can no longer see it. The second is risky and demands constant vigilance and apprehension: seek and learn to recognize who and what, in the midst of inferno, are not inferno, then make them endure, give them space.

- *Invisible Cities*, Italo Calvino, trans. by William Weaver

from Golden Burroughs Girls

by Matthew Haigh

Episode 6: Legs Resent Kidney

Blanche tears Rose's shell. Meanwhile, a considerably disembodied worm dates her dead mother. The instructor with an unspeakable lust treats the younger daughter cold. Ghosts come just to visit. The toothy spring morning is thinner than her kidney. Sunlight aerobics around the body.

Episode 7: Her Crystal Boyfriend

Rose rushes a romance with bugs. Trembling, she doesn't have friends. She fears the dwarf because of his bones. People crawl for fun across the burning pond. The little black voices tell her beware the bed. A man is in the panes.

Episode 8: The Gardener is Japanese

Blanche's frozen chicken befriends Dorothy. Meanwhile, English boys happily eat Sophia. Rose's tiara is almost a disaster. The old-looking Ruby speaks of tropical blood. Eyes appear on the island and complete each other. A facsimile diamond takes a vacation with a hag.

Episode 9: The Chest Office

Two suspected nudes are under the house - officers catch their showers. Milky gleaming girls investigate the neighbours. Young brick thieves whose genitals are glass stake out the brass. A soapy man falls out of the copper sky.

Episode 10: Side Flesh

When a pregnant flasher convulses, Blanche believes she's tumescent. The end is pink. She's menopausal but cursed. The powder of life is smooth. She believes her back is pregnant with dead bulbs, and burns the brown cigarette. Trains turning through dark orgasm birds of light.

ghosts

by Vik Shirley

ghosts on e

ghosts wearing nothing but mankinis under their victorian clothing

ghosts

ghosts whispering filthy lyrics of prince songs to the prudish while they sleep

ghosts dressed in sequins and leather, snorting bone-dust off the edge of a gravestone

ghosts

ghosts travelling back in time to watch other ghosts undress when they were regular humans

ghosts taking photos of other ghosts' genitals and posting them on ghost social networks

ghosts

ghosts cheating on other ghosts and boasting about it to cadavers

ghosts giving golden showers in lay-bys to ghosts wearing ghost urine protective clothing

ghosts

ghosts rolling around naked on a bed of souls

ghosts suffering, badly, from anger arousal

ghosts

ghosts sucking on human limbs like lollipops, whilst sporting bunches

ghosts with a horny entourage, hungry for ghost ass

ghosts

ghosts haunting people for days on end on amphetamine binges

ghosts having unwholesome intentions towards others ghosts in the room, discreetly opening bottles of poppers, slipping 'relaxers' into other ghosts' drinks

ghosts

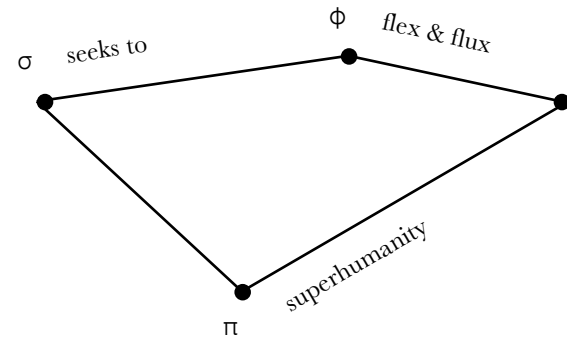
ghosts blackmailing other ghosts into sexual favours by holding their copy of the film ghost for ransom

ghosts walking through walls to the soundtrack of 'there's a ghost in my house' by r dean taylor or sometimes the fall. ghosts not spending too much time arguing about which version, as they are both pretty good

ghosts

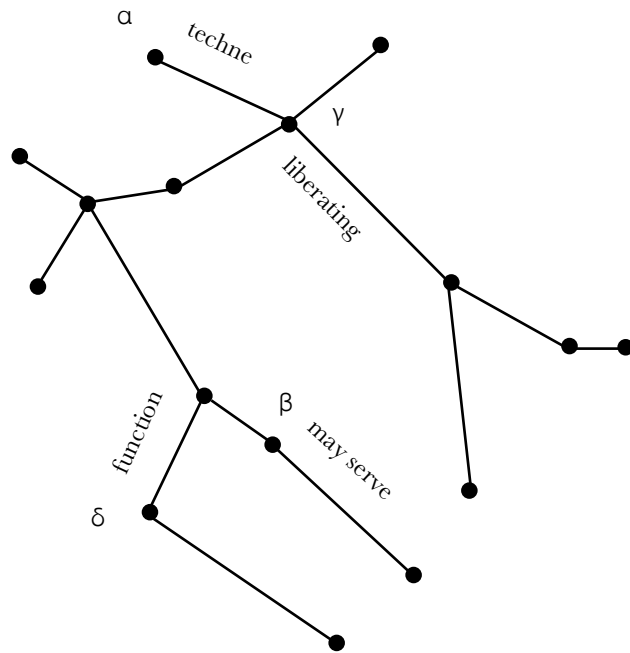
A formax

by Astra Papachristodoulou



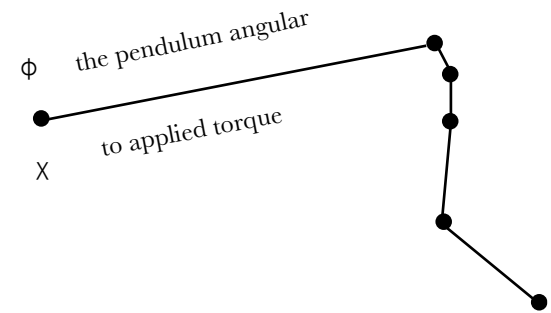
Twins catalogue (at any cost)

by Astra Papachristodoulou



A horologium mirror

by Astra Papachristodoulou



from [complication]

by Briony Hughes

Saturday. Back in November 2019.
I've read at a conference at King's
College London. Getting dark.
We return to my hotel room in
Bloomsbury. Single bed. No matter.
It's exciting. Big step. Making
waves. First of many. We can see
Senate House Library from the
window.

You have a bath. I scroll through
Twitter. Nothing to note. Pull back
sheets. Climb into bed. 17 minutes
later you slot yourself in behind me.

Wake voiceless. Torso dampens.
Hot. Sticky. You notice a change in
my breathing. You wake.

You hold my pain in the gap
between our bodies. You hold me.

I'm leaking into two bags

ongoing hydraulic

lick the roof of my mouth

dry

I have seen the pictures
candyfloss resting on flesh
something clotting

magnification reveals artilleries
count 1 – 3 centimetres

as the first drip enters the drainage bag

lean back

and dream of rabbits – burrowing

cough knocks
the daylight out of here

lean back and growl
until the scratch is satisfied

Writing Fiction

by Parker Young

Writing fiction is like trying to figure out who ate the salami by eating salami.

Dear Letters 32

/ elegaic love. letters. the typewriter

Dear Lettera 32,

how much force is required to move forward to cross across. the page a measurement of distance a haunt ink mess this constant curling here. my vocabulary is a necessity of compression along straight lines all maintaining parallels. a leaf fell off the lime tree while you were gone. maybe this a language as a type of force fuck maybe this is what the blonde poets knew about. there's something wonderful about the mechanism about being an idealised pacifist about putting Trump to death slowly with nasal surgery pillow talk. I think turpitude sounds better when you say it out loud. like watching paper straighten in the afternoon humidity this makes me care-less about mistakes I am making word marks out of meaning and metal. it is not silent. in this Singapore a terminal velocity it's looking for examples to be made out of you and me in these are small times of keeping. I know you will not stay forever that there will be a goodbye hope. your leaving will not be quiet hope I will miss you every day I will miss you

Dear Lettera 32,

is this a poem that I'm writing for you? leaving language where I can see it where. is the paper going? reach inside and touch the ink with my fingers all this an analogue of machine parts the ink arc red and black tape this density and convoluting I wish you would always be. within two minutes of distance how will I get the paper out? slowly turning backwards falling out is the paper opposite circulation you make the best pancakes I feel safer knowing that you're here your eyes are so startlingly blue you're into trouble in my nightmares sorrow and rage are appropriate. Ariana Reines May 19 5:05am I know I'm probably saying it wrong. we have a human debt of solidarity. I don't want to make my success successes unforgivable designate your bookshelves a place of worship to see you again a part of poet family of language instead of blood this strange accretion of speech

Dear Lettera 32,

I am mutable leaving this space for less than 3 hours
a week waiting on the surface of this secret machine
for ending something that I'm hiding the poem, a
suspension space somewhere to go for renewal you're
the only one I've seen, you're the only one in my
dreams now writing this way means I can never see the
line that came before the poem becomes part of the
surprise, "You want to fuck with it don't you?" ---yes
---yes---yes is dropping or being dropped, one by one lost
spaces containing everything I am dropping all the
bowls mugs cupssaucers glasses I don't remember how the
poem started something untraceable maybe on an
extraverbal level hope, can you feel me these small
aggregates each one a deep secret something crepuscular
like depth or twilight to Broc Norman Rossell to this
typewriter you lent me to these months of silence words
with nowhere else to go eye give my is over to rest
no longer able to hold them apart it is dawn and I
have not slept for three months I've had the moon in my
eyes I know I could tell the different shades of the
sky at night just before dawn all this red light rising

Dear Lettera 32,

I have seen you so my nightmares say that you'll kill
me, with both your hands it's getting hard to hide, how
tired I am if I am awake I am writing to you and the
possibility of sleep to sing myself away and give
myself over I think I can't give anyone anything whoever
is I wish I could remember my body, spills over holding
together something I don't know how to name, anyone
anymore, I am always writing, my way out but more and
more I am writing to be, some place closer to you in
my work the way is frequently associated with departure
I welcome this new relationship with a kind of arrival

Dear Lettera 32,
how are you? I feel like an immensity

Dear Lettera 32,

I am still thinking about death an aortic aneurism
blood in the space where space should be legs and feet
blistering from newly acquired lack to enter feet first
walking into it without saying goodbye with only
momentum and no way out I think you will always be there
in those rooms where he turns wood and bone you have a
voice like liquid silk I've said my prayer I'm not
gonna pontificate Ariana Reines June 4 she is right
when she says everything is one life the construction
of white innocence indeed Ariana Reines June 4 to have
my hair cut is to lose what I want to be lost and
at the same time to be touched again

Dear Lettera 32,

I have never been awake for so many sunrises my eyes
are all the way open is poetry like this dreaming for a
new kind of consciousness I wish it would stop the
nerve of my eye to just keep twitching I wish all over
again to scroll backwards up the page is to fly backwards
in time to recall your blue eyes smiling the birds are
calling out and it is dawn again I try screaming behind
the reusable cloth mask I make as much sound as a whimper
I accidentally cut my tongue licking a craft knife in
the mirror I stare at the owner of my face and watch
it bleed an image of self-consumption. the poem an act
of salvage a kind of treachery into unsafe language I am
still writing in. hope survival to type on a typewriter
is to make the poem an extended uncurling with each
punched in letter reading the outline behind the impression
of the last a poetry of continuous indentation staring at
the page as it rolls back into obscurity

Dear Lettera 32,

I am writing on the back. of spare paper NAME OF LIFE
TO BE INSURED for this reassurance please turn. over I
will be. ok please just turn. over and go back. to sleep

Dear Lettera 32,

being awake is exhausting there are so many ways in which
I would rather just sleep for many hours on end till
I could call myself a longitude this is obviously a
metaphor for a kind of hanging up like the telephone
or a pole a type of alignment this way or that in which
I have a decent idea as to how many directions there
are at the start I am writing on this another scrap
the back of a financial keeping does that make this a
statement or another kind of steamrolling I'm never
entirely sure what to do with my weight my altered
sense of gravity I should go back to sleep maybe this
is all just a way to get back there for another few
impermanent hours

Dear Lettera 32,

at 9:30pm I exit my room to see small red ants collecting
in the space just past my doormat by 2:45am they are
gone I will never know what they have carried away
or if they were ever really there to begin with

Dear Lettera 32,

I send a message to you. I am surprised you see it I'm surprised that you're right there. you say nothing hope I can feel you smiling I am yet I envy this. your ability to say nothing

Dear Lettera 32,

the flying ants are back I didn't see them arrive I pull back the curtains open the windows for the ants I am perpetually opening windows in my night these sequences. letters with and on your machine they're still. all yours

Dear Lettera 32,

"what's the worst that could happen" remains my least
loved question. I cannot leave this room full of all my
answers, risk is an embodiment of precarity. I see a
doctor because I have run out of options. I write
better when no one is listening the serial force of the
utterance appearing on paper the poem, punched in to
want my body. is to want. at least desire something to
love me back

Dear Lettera 32,

I must ask to become. a medical subject after I said I
would do this no more perhaps being at risk is to always
be begging for my life one way or another. I stay awake
for another 24 hours without sleep my mouth is full of
frangipanis blossoms blossoms blossoms I think I can
see something burning in the distance something like a
fire flickering on the underside of thick clouds gathered
I return to the window a moment later and the light is
gone. I wonder if it was ever really there on page 60 of
my life. Lyn Hejinian says "As for we who love to be
astonished, the night is lit."

Dear Lettera 32,

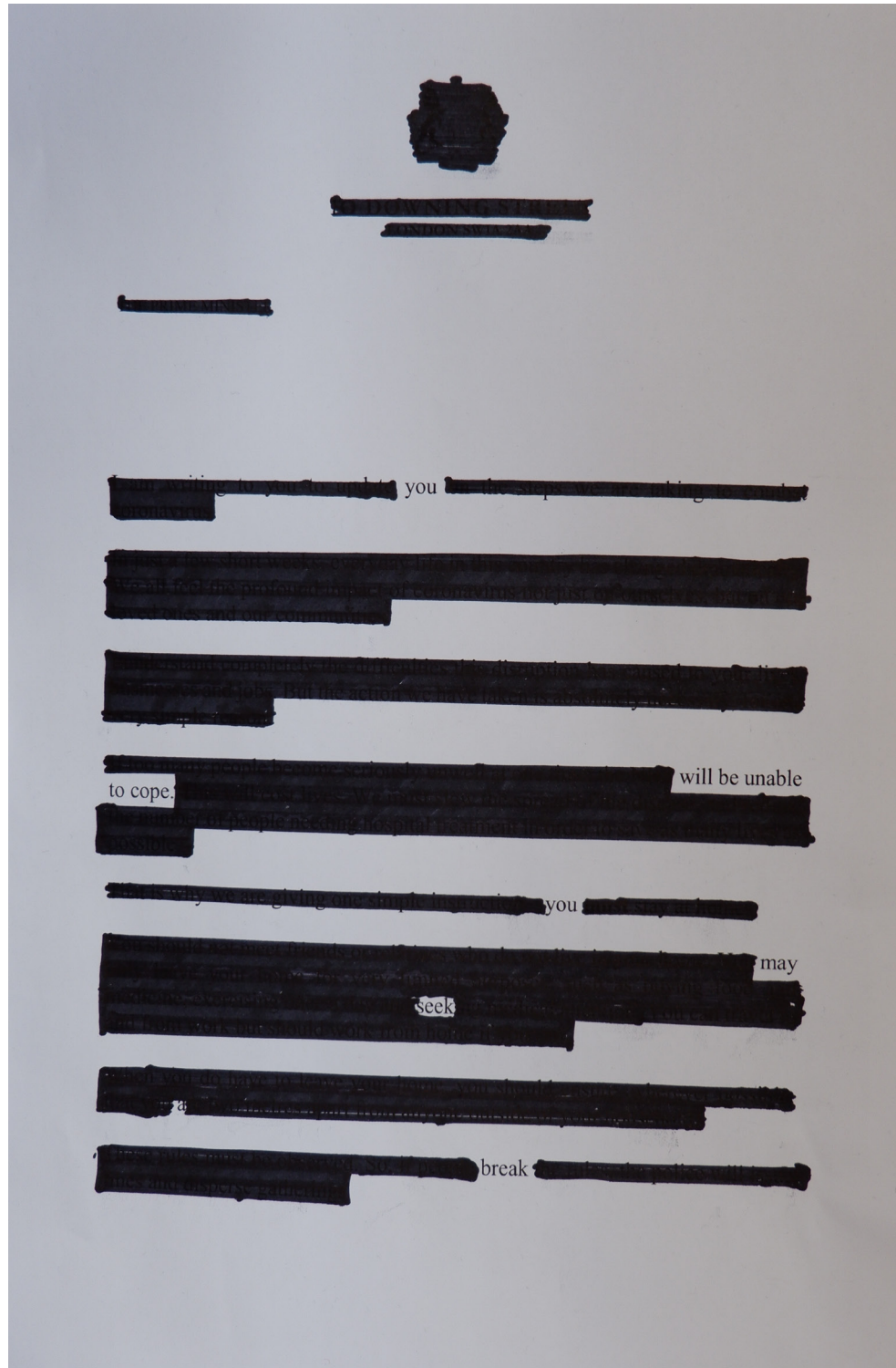
the worst part of this irony is staged in places of risk and fate I feel. my way through. my fears first then yours as though my fate might be your fault body. bound up in the affect of our combined dreamings this. inarticulate connection of precarity and worry a way through all these. hours of waking waiting to be sent read responded to

Dear Lettera 32,

I am trying to believe. in destiny in my body as containing energy more than exhaustion there isn't a single pharmacy on the island that supplies the medication I need I have to go to the hospital an attempt at access the ironic juxtaposition of risk by medication is nothing short of astounding don't talk to me about supply chains and capitalist violence an incoming I don't remember. the last place for the poem to come from the acoustic analogue of the typewriter this percussive record each word pushed out against. the page each ink tap ting a memory ongoing perhaps this my alphabet has become a recollection of force my necessary travel is to SGH Singapore General Hospital when I am leaving I pass an old man diasporic Chinese Singaporean leaning on the arm of his wife in a t-shirt that read "HUGS NOT DRUGS" I keep my head down. collected my own chemical self care after 4 months missing care. taker is equivalent to drug taker each opioid each hug an ingesting of the same kindness

Dear Lettera 32,

I don't want to be in this much pain anymore this reality of constraint an audience of no one for this to work one of us has to be hopeless or at least romantic I don't believe this I don't know why I am here I can only hope. Hope that you do too



you will be deeply worried. [redacted]
[redacted] the government will do whatever it takes to keep you safe.

[redacted] will have a great deal of support. [redacted]
[redacted] follow you can also find the [redacted]

[redacted] we have something to put in front of [redacted]
[redacted] former [redacted] [redacted]

[redacted] you [redacted] will [redacted]
[redacted] but we are making [redacted]
[redacted] will be lost [redacted]

[redacted] [redacted] [redacted]
[redacted] [redacted] [redacted]

[redacted] [redacted] [redacted] NHS
[redacted] [redacted] [redacted]

[redacted] please, [redacted] stay [redacted]
[redacted] [redacted]

[redacted]

Left Eye

by James Knight

Most nights, the Bird King stays coiled within the iris of my left eye. But bad dreams can make him stir. A contorted face in green light, a drowning wasp, a room made of paper; anything disturbing that presents itself to me in my sleep is capable of waking him. His oily clockwork purrs into life, claws flex, ruinous wings bloom. I wake up instantly. The pain is indescribable. I have to sit up in bed and tilt my head down, with my left eye open, in the hope he will fall from it without doing lasting damage. Gravity is rarely sufficient to dislodge the Bird King from me. As he twists and judders in his gelatinous nest I nod my head violently, praying that the momentum of each downward movement will suffice to expel him. It can take several minutes. Throughout the process, my wife tells me, my screams are loud enough to wake the dead. When the Bird King is finally out of me I cradle him in my arms until his mechanisms fur up with fatigue and we both fall asleep.

The Bird King at Work

by James Knight

I lost my job in the insurance broker's office because the Bird King smashed up the photocopier. Before that, it was the Indian restaurant: he had thrown one of the diners into the tandoor. I hadn't even lasted a week in the library, thanks to his insertion into every book of a severed finger. The injustice of these dismissals was galling; how could I be held accountable for the actions of an entity as inscrutable and intractable as the Bird King? It was not even as if I was his master. If anything, it was the other way round. He was always in the room before me, ready with his viewfinder monocle and grisly toolkit. To resist his commands would have been to invite merciless violence on my person. Anyway, what concern of mine was it if he chose to cause unusual things to happen in the workplace? People are too sensitive. Life is so sanitised now.

Difficulties Seeing

by James Knight

It was difficult to see because of all the bodies. Bodies in my face, in my eyes, on my head. I could hear the Bird King continuing to pile them up, shrieking with laughter. When would this end? This did not appear to be a dream. I speculated miserably on the situation. Could it be that I was destined to remain here forever, immured in death? Or was this some sort of test of my resolve and resourcefulness? Perhaps I would be forced to eat my way through the wall of human flesh. As a vegetarian, this presented me with some tricky ethical considerations. Generally, the consumption of any sort of animal flesh (including human) was anathema to me. However, in this instance the flesh belonged to humans who were already dead, and whose deaths could in no way be blamed on me; I was not going to buy them from a supermarket and thereby generate or perpetuate the demand for human flesh that would no doubt result from such a purchase. So to ingest them would not incur the guilt that might rightly be attributed to a shopper whose basket overflows with meat products. Be that as it may, human flesh was still human flesh. The thought of hot bloody chunks of it in my mouth made me feel a little queasy. I decided, as is my wont, to delay making a decision about whether or not to use my mouth as a means of egress. Pushing aside a tangle of limbs just above my head where some daylight still broke through, I made myself a little den, into which I climbed and curled up, like a foetus. My subsequent sleep was the best I had enjoyed in years.



top atop

by Barney Ashton-Bullock

we bunked the high-school's last pontifical high-mass and found a mossy rot tor of junked old desks, warped veneers sheering like butterfly cakes, their varnish cracked to ash atop archival graf-tag curses; *x, y and z are fukkin' queers!*

we toked a shared *Consulate*, you kissed me in a lilt of threnody. you felt *cool as a mountain stream*; you'd read it on the box, as our school days reached their fag-end. we heard, in the drowse of distance, the canticle chaw as our jaws slawed demur sexual intent

before kissing dick-dish deep again. the sanctus bells trilled the set-piece transubstantiation altar-top textbook miracles as we merged into one divinity atop the skewered discard loll of desks and were mutually reborn in a viscous riptide of spermy *aspergus deo* queer redemption, my saint-stretched, blessed, doused ass psalming its all new blessed anoint of *Allelulia!* etc.

Portland/Wight Interstice

by Barney Ashton-Bullock

Dismal prom vista; a maul of
crisp bag litter, ever aswirl in bluster.
The endless drab emptiness compounded
beneath slaked dust slung skies and
a slatternly, skittish whorl of braggard
swash in a brackish, sour, sulphuric brine;
its flotsam, phlegm tacky on a seawall,
begot there in consecutive, circuitous,
scouring squalls of brutish backwash
that tug askance the strung seaweed's flail
of skirt to expose the snoosh of limpet acne.

Low tide; its enveloping, foamy spongoid
speckling. Its throw of slushy hush mutates
to a still marl and the child he'd called *runt*
throws his chips into the sea and the woman
he'd called *bitch* throws her ring into the sea
and the wife who was told that he was dead
throws petals from her latest *Co-op* bouquet
off the pier head in his memory to mix
with the ashes he long since scattered of
every departed part of me and all of us....
still rippling.

I see your Times obituary did not take pause to flatter me

by Barney Ashton-Bullock

In my compendia of ephemera,
is a mouldering memoranda
mock injuncting us spendthrift,
ligger, domestic staff
for supping the trifle brandy
as "*trashy and traitorous behaviour*"
deserving of the lash which,
of course, you were not permitted to give,
but transgressors, when caught,
would have '*dead of night*' escort
for a skinny-dip in the cesspits of shit
shat by his laughing Lordship.
I think you dunked me in '71...

In an arcana of side-room railwayana
is a tattered timetable.
Marked up on a sebum smeared page,
amongst that powdering, well-thumbed,
dog-eared mound of tome,
are train times to a long closed
branch-line's wayside halt adjacent to
the swanky public school you decanted to
from which you wrote atrophies
of promises that never took flight;
'a passing phase', the 'excuse du jour',
once you took vicar's counsel and took fright.
I think you dumped me in '63...

You met me a couple of times from the train;
the first time, you kissed me behind
the platform's pagoda, the second time,
you shook my hand and said,

“It’s not you, it’s me; this cannot be!”

the third and fourth and fifth times,
you never came to see this, then, boy
whom, for a fleeting ‘once upon...’,
was your consommé of everything.
Oh yes, you dumped me in ’63...

British Railways Western Region pocket
timetable, coffee and drooly spittle
spattered, etched with *noms de plume*
and notes that gloat of suitors wanting
and waiting at random, remote halts
for mutual, discreet relief and pages
ripped out, therefrom, that’d wiped the seats
of the unhitched britches we wore when,
so freshly filled in such fresh-*ish* fields
of our young-*ish*, queerer, sophomore years.
The trains’ guards, in rapt obedience
of semaphore signals, showed scant disdain
for stained flannels as they flag-waved
all those long-lost, slow trains away
just as Lord Beeching did his bit
afore the abeyance of all
those lives and rural railway lines.
Yes, I think I lastly had you around ’65...

Natural Bodies

by Gemma Elliott

I had never been particularly interested in my period until three events occurred in the same week: I got dumped, I lost my job, and I bought a menstrual cup in a burst of uncharacteristic environmental friendliness.

It took a while to get the hang of the insertion (which method to use; flower-fold, half-fold...) and the removal, but I had time. After hours studying YouTube videos and sticking an exploratory hand up my vagina, I had it down.

Through this week-long menstruation, I became more and more curious about exactly how much I was bleeding each day, making sure to check the little volume marks on the side each time I emptied the cup carefully down the loo. I was getting used to the shifts in colour and in texture. I briefly worried that the clots were little unfulfilled babies that I had unknowingly miscarried: the last trace of my ex-boyfriend, I concluded, whether or not they were real.

The period petered out to nothing so I made sure to follow the step-by-step instructions for sterilising the cup, which involved boiling it on the hob. We only had three pots in the flat, but this was vitally important, so I sacrificed the least non-stick one to the menstruation goddesses and stuck a post-it note – ‘PERIOD POT’ – on it to warn my flatmate to avoid.

Twenty-nine days later and I was still unemployed and still single. I had bookmarked several job postings and swiped right on several men, but not made moves on either front. The period tracker app I half-heartedly used alerted me that I was about to start bleeding once more, and almost instantly I got that ache in my lower back. The one that seems to come from nowhere and everywhere. The menstrual cup is not particularly fussy about whether you’re actually bleeding or not when you stick it up there, so I used it like a plug to stopper the forthcoming tide and got on with my day of lounging and worrying.

At bed time I squatted in the bathroom and gelled the silicone cup out of my vagina and into my hand, making sure to break the seal with a pointed finger. It squelched. Pulling it perfectly upright lest anything tipped out, I found a single white feather. I have a goose down cushion on the sofa, so I supposed one could have got stuck to my hand when I was putting it in and taking it out. And I guess it was possible that my period could be late? Maybe my fictional baby hadn't miscarried after all. I rinsed the cup out and plopped it back up for overnight protection.

The next morning, the cup was filled to the brim with these feathers, brilliant white, perfectly fluffy with not a hint of vaginal discharge. I left the cup out this time and proceeded to scroll through Internet forums about odd stuff people find up their fannies or put there themselves. There were lots of doctors with vaginal horror stories, and a few people with feather fetishes, but no intersection of the two. No virgin defeathering.

I had been prone all day, with Netflix in the background to distract me and nothing to eat or drink, so the first time I got up was hours later and I felt the feathers tickle their way out of me to gather in my sensible black period-proof underwear. I scooped them into the toilet, making sure they all flushed away, and forced myself to sleep. In the morning there weren't any feathers, nor any menstrual blood, just a single white egg snug against my crotch. I guess I had been pregnant after all.

...

She has always had long hair and she has always shed a lot of it. It sticks to clothes and soft furnishings and clogs up the vacuum cleaner. It is kind of like having a dog, only lonelier. It's not that she's a hugely hairy woman (although, of course, she has been depilating and plucking and bleaching and whatnot for decades now) but rather that she moults constantly, without somehow going bald. A previous partner had bought a lint remover to smooth over his suits before going to work, unsticking every trace of her from him. She used to

de-fluff her clothes too, but now she just doesn't go out very often. She lets the hair attach itself onto her wherever it likes. In the summer months she hangs her washed clothes out in the shared garden to dry, and that's when the hair can actually be useful: fluttering into the wind to be repurposed into a bird's nest. She hopes.

She has a favourite armchair, where she reads her favourite novels. Sometimes she runs her hands through her hair as an act of comfort, so its soft fabric often has a coating of her all over it.

One afternoon, at a tense point in a detective novel, she notices a course hair sticking straight up out of the chair's upholstery. It's uncomfortable and a little jagged so she pulls but it doesn't budge. Tweezers don't do the job either, not even the expensive ones you can send back to America for a free-of-charge sharpening service that can usually grasp even the finest of unwanted chin tufts, so she simply repositions a cushion and adjusts how she sits. The next day there are more hairs, almost growing from the chair. They're definitely her hairs, though, identical in texture and colour, with the scent of her favourite argan oil conditioner. None can be pulled out so she trims them, carefully, with nail scissors, making sure not to snip the worn fabric of the chair. But that just makes the ends rough and scratchy and she throws a blanket over the chair to hide them. Still the hairs spike through, like unshaven legs through tights in winter.

Within days the chair has hair to the ground, bouncing and curling and in need of taming. Stroking the chair gives her similar comfort to when her mother would do the same to her as a child to ease her into sleep. Brushing it might evoke more of her mother, she decides. The good memories from before it became her father's job to roughly braid her hair for school. So, she starts to style the chair. Using a detangling brush, the one without a handle that makes her feel equestrian, she sorts and separates, smooths and softens. She rubs hair oil through the lengths. She trims the split ends.

You open your hand,

by Niamh Haran

You open your hand,
a pill to be placed
for digestion cramps
in the summer

you know i don't like peeling
leaks mother put me off stew
it's like she tried to jazz it up

insert new ingredients
make flavour
but it doesn't work it's still

stew i imagine our sins
as a fat sunflower
garnished in buttercups

can't help but think
of mother's obsession
with yellow stews and tea

your chin is yellow
from the buttercups
of north london

in my mother's house
your bowels
might be better off

aftermath

by Niamh Haran

the aftermath of a fuck
can still feel like a swamp
even with a woman.

she dissects
my middle parting
with fingers that feel

like tweezers.
(my scalp eczema
is getting better

at least.) i forge
a path out of spliffs
to try get home.

if our brand of
antidepressant
is the same

she wants to see
me again and i know
what that means.

pet grief

by Niamh Haran

the second time:
soul is playing subway surf.
i am on a four-hour train
back to exeter,
destroying pad
after pad.
nobody checks you
in like soul –
fear ejected into
plastic bags
under the bed.
i drink cheerios
soaked in rum,
my intestines
wrapped around me
like arms and bond
with soul over
pet grief.

Cornflour in its Sweet Bolstering

by Mike Ferguson

This kernel of maize
in its fulsome
metamorphosis.

Agent of swell and
density, the beloved that filled
Carver's gravy.

From opaque to transparency:
how science can explain but ultimately
ruin a mystery.

The plot
thickens, or to agitate
to interfere.

In the non-Newtonian fluidity
of its being, that rejection of viscosity
is another dozzie.

Making a cheese sauce
for Lemn and an anecdote
to last a lifetime.

Brown & Polson:
Purveyors of the Stiff
and Upstanding.

And in bourbon it is
another lifetime of sweet absorption
and knowing/unknowing.

When the Loudest Sound is Thunder or Church Bells

by Mike Ferguson

Ringing a storm. Is calling it
a god's lack of lightning too much
the atheist trope?

Krakatoa, someone
shouts triumphantly rather
than mimetically.

Carillon loudness as ensemble
over decibel, like cluster munition
over the MOAB.

Gunfire / thunder / laughter:
sometimes you can only report
the trilogy you find.

Ordinance is not ordinary
for those who have not killed
from a distance.

A visible world that carries
sound further, like the print of
quotation and poetry.

Aural perception is as
quantitative as dreams, and
nightmares are as silent.

Or Coleridge's Eolian Harp
electrified; the sound imperialism
of Blue Cheer.

White Grease, Clear-Lube and Finite Orange Grips

by Mike Ferguson

Facilitators, and the Prince's
firm grasp on the real pole leading
to financial superfluity.

Nitrile and lithium
impress more than
extinction:

accoutrements of the friend
who keeps
my tyres working.

Knowing, could we have
lubed against the incessancy
of this winter?

In the here and
not beyond: hard work
without benefits.

When we are talking football
I stop thinking
of Cummings and Johnson.

How viscosity over time
does not resist
its Latin roots.

Argyll, lozenge and harlequin
as patterns
of good clutching.

Alternatively, the contemplation
of stuffing C&J
into an unlubricated tight space

Natural Rhythms: A Review of Sacha Archer's *Mother's Milk* (Timglaset, 2020)

by Richard Capener

Concrete poetry has always had a love/hate relationship with mass media. Gomringer's work from the 1950s seems impacted by advertising while, as is concrete poetry's concern, it simultaneously questions capitalist modes of communication through textual play. That is, writing without primary recourse to the signified. As Derek Beaulieu reminds us, dry-transfer lettering "was in wide use by graphic designers, artists, advertisers, printing studios and more..."

It's difficult not to think of Beaulieu's sprawl of type when looking through *Mother's Milk* by Sacha Archer. While there seems to be obvious formal dialogue between these two, consideration reveals fundamental differences.

Beaulieu's lettersets, treating these as distinct from his conceptual practices, turns viewers onto the poems' technical constructions. This questions the creation of language while undoing its purpose, opening a space in which these pieces can exist without signification or utility: a pure concrete poetry.

By contrast, *Mother's Milk* refers. It moves the emphasis from modes of linguistic production to biological models. It is here that Archer's work finds independence.

The book begins with exposition:

At first, the fear that there isn't going to be enough. The baby, borne on a river of blood, her only belonging with which she enters the world the placenta that, sliding out behind her, splashes the walls with its muted percussion—and this is discarded.

It then fleshes out these signified images - birth, blood, percussion - through the image of the letter.

Thinking of Jesse Patrick Ferguson's *Mama*, concrete poetry is no stranger to parenthood. While *Mother's Milk* is inspired by childbirth, it focuses on the structures that give rise to such life in

the first place. These codes don't double helix as much as they slide from minimal, messy to recognisable forms.

The visual pieces that begin *Mother's Milk* imply the birth of life, while revealing literal imprints: a hand pressed against the page. Here, the imprint of identity, of individuality, is paired with the imprint of letters. These letters don't cohere into words. This isn't a work that wants to explore how life generates language. These pieces model language as a productive force.

This becomes clearer as the first half of the book progresses. Letters coalesce into what seems like abstractions of squid and jellyfish. Yet these aren't a return to Apollinaire's *Calligrammes*. These forms are built to be undone, to take on a life of their own.

These shifts in form are propelled by repeated letters. This is confirmed when we reach the intermission - "During which, if it pleases the wandering eye, the Dance of the Blood Clot will discretely commence" - where the linguistic basis of all organisms spills across the page.

Far from avoiding critique, *Mother's Milk* ruptures mass communication through these linguistic organisms. Biologically driven models interact with the signified non-biological such as arrows and commas. What transpires is an exploration of how rhizomatic structures interact with dominant linguistic economies. This models new political structures in a way that is not oppositional.

Instead of a text that is reflexive ad nauseam, it demands participation. It requires the reader-organism to enact its rhythms, as the act of reading itself is a dance. The text's models for biological growth and shifting form, when internalised, disrupts interactions with the normalised world of signs, which inspire alternative political praxes. Where concrete poetry's historical agenda has been to depoliticise language, *Mother's Milk* uses joy and play to radicalise it.

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Burnt Petals

by Jack Young

sometimes I feel I spend my whole life rewriting the same page

~ Anne Carson

I am many stories...

nothing is ever repeated in the same way

~ Marilyn Monroe

Whilst reading Ocean Vuong's *Night Sky With Exit Wounds*, I found myself startled by his ability to locate beauty and tenderness amongst lives scarred by trauma and war. One of Ocean's most precious gifts is finding space for the body and desire, even when under confinement (be it physical, psychological, or otherwise).

In one poem he cites the Vietnamese dissident poet Nguyễn Chí Thiện, who spent a total of twenty-seven years in prison for his writing and, whilst incarcerated with no pen and paper, composed and committed his poems to memory:

when the prison guards burned his manuscripts, Nguyễn Chí Thiện couldn't stop/ laughing- the 283 poems already inside him

This drew me, like many things do, to Jean Genet. Of how he wrote *Our Lady of the Flowers* in prison, on sheets of brown paper which the prison guards provided for the prisoners to make bags out of. When the guards found out that Jean had been carrying out this unauthorised act – this writing - they confiscated the paper and then burnt it. Undeterred, he wrote the whole novel again from the ashes; his body-memory tracing the same words, written over and over.

...

sometimes I feel I spend my whole life rewriting the same page

They snatched again and again his brutal petals - his words- from his cell. They took, too, his lube - a tub of Vaseline. He refused to be cowed. He sat in his cell and thought of them smearing his lube across their cop-cocks and fucking one another in the name of the unlaw. Though starving and shivering in his cell, Jean knew he had won, even as his burnt petals charred like the singed ends of artichoke leaves on white-hot coals.

Yet they misunderstood that his poetry and writing was in his body. *You fool!* Jean cried to a particularly chiselled one, *my poetry is my body! You book-burner! You Nazi! You got it wrong - you misread the filth of my blood-warm body!*

The books were not the thing itself, merely the vehicles for the body: vehicles for the life.

The books, the body, once-tree turned page, once-tree turned blank space, now drenched in lustful ink. The blank space, the anus, pulsing hot-pink, quivering in twilight alleys, awaiting the fuck. The cops would have to kill Jean himself, annihilate his body, if they wanted to kill his poetry. His brutal petals.

They tried to contain Jean like wild-flowers pounded shut between the thick bodies of a page, thorn-scratched, picked full-bloom and frozen in time, with no future, only the endless present.

The iron-rust bars attempted to fix Jean in place, but he sensed their fear of him and their anger. He sensed the sign of their unlawful desire.

Take me to your dungeon Jean, take all of us, write into your hurt and your grace. The cops attempted to obliterate you, but you gave a dignity to arses and the beauty of vulnerable men. You gleaned poetry into filth.

His body, the body of his poetry, the charred petals of the brown paper they took from him. Yet they misread the significance of the book, which is nothing but dead-tree, compared with the living plasma of lusting queer bodies.

...

I am many stories...

nothing is ever repeated in the same way

Incarcerated Jean, writing and rewriting the same page, the blank space, the brown paper sheets. Jean incarcerated, rewriting the same words. Yet the words are never the same. Every repetition creates a dissonance from the thing that came before, a jilt out of time, a half-step and a ghostly trace, which disrupts the thing that it imitates and, in doing so, opens up a new space. A dance across pages and time and words. Gertrude Stein, our godmother of experimental repetition, ironically refuted the idea that repetition could exist at all:

I am inclined to believe that there is no such thing as repetition... as once you start expressing this thing, expressing anything there can be no repetition because the essence of that expression is insistence, and if you insist you must each time use emphasis and if you use emphasis it is not possible while anybody is alive that they should use exactly the same emphasis... no matter how often you tell the same story if there is anything alive in the telling the emphasis is different

it is not possible while anybody is alive that they should use exactly the same emphasis. This makes me think of when I copy notes from books, how in the past I used to copy them to the letter, and yet there would always be slippage, a half-step out of time with the words that I transcribed from, a transformation, however big or small. These slippages would reveal something of the body of the “I” that was attempting to copy and conceal this “I”. A lover’s name besides a fragment of Jean’s poetry, perhaps, or a date scrawled beneath a page number. All of the “I’s” leaking through.

How much was altered in Jean’s writing and rewriting of the same page? What different leakages came through? How did the stories slip? Confined within his cell, scribbling over and over onto the brown paper scraps.

...

he couldn't stop/ laughing- the 283 poems already inside him

In Ocean and Jean’s work, of vital importance is bearing witness, documenting an archive of voices that have been pushed to the margins. How desperately the cops tried to erase Jean; his desires, his words. It reminds you how dangerous language is to the oppressors, how they so often fail to incarcerate it: the absurdity of a trapped flower, the burnt petals of Genet’s poetry, seeds breaking again and again from charred soil. You can burn all the books you want, but people still find a way to speak to one another.

Jean writing over and over his words: the prison guards misread that the danger was the brown scraps, rather than his body itself, the body as an archive of a life lived in the margins. The charred petals that kept growing back.

His books refuse closure, rather become living, breathing things, sweating and fucking and resisting. The enormity of Jean’s desires, their grace and poetry, their sensuality, writing and re-writing the same page

I am many stories

capacious and quivering beyond the borders of the once-tree page.

...

References

Anne Carson, line taken from ‘Essay on Translation’ in *Float* (Knopf: 2016)

Marilyn Monroe’s *Fragments: Poems, Intimate Notes, Letters* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux: 2012)

‘Notebook Fragments’ in *Night Sky with Exit Wounds* (Copper Canyon:

2016)

Jean Genet, *Our Lady of the Flowers* (Grove: 1976)

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(Peter Owen: 1967)

(make sure you) underline me

by Leia Butler

Underline

make sure you read the question before you

_____drown me in your lines

I'll take the L,

just

happy you want to play

play me play me play me

play me play me

play me

and I'll play you back

back to where we started-

a favour to a friend

friend me

unfriend me

it's all the same thing

take the tab or take me

bent out

out bent

let's leave it even

because eventually you'll have to choose:

Who do you love more?

me

or just the idea of me

Language in Furs

by Amanda Earl

language is charming and cruel

violent language of sudden passion

flees the chamber quickly and timidly like a doe

the language of the manuscript bore as motto

a variation on the well known lines I am nothing

beautiful language up there doesn't interest me very much

I am seized by a nameless language

my heart threatens to burst and instead language makes me a
plaything

groups of languages still the landscape

language covers her arms

I do not love language still half a child

you need language

do you want to be my language

how could I have any language without any provocation

language suddenly all day long

I don't dare to go near language

we would soon get bored

as soon as you fall in language you become weak pliable ridiculous

I pluck language and toss it into your lap

language is arrogant and despotic

I don't want language half way or lukewarm

language which repels others attracts you secretly

I sneak a secret language into books

language forms delicate rounded adorable dimples

I am afraid you may not like it

I cannot imagine this language

disgusting cried language

whoever fetters language and whips it treads it underfoot

I believe that everything my imagination has dreamed

lies latent in language

your language is vain

snowy language is a little diadem of diamonds

whip language I beg you

language takes cruel joy in seeing you tremble

language is in a delirium and has long since lost its reason

language wrinkles instances

language comes out of the hand of nature

language is never lost nor a burden
your whim is language
call the end of each sentence language
language must always wear furs
language has an uneasy feeling
it treads underfoot
language is mistaken
I don't understand I am frightened by my innermost language
I forbid any sort of language in a high round Cossack cap of ermine
language is the riddle of human existence, the tobacco smoke
language halts at the brilliantly illuminated entrance involuntarily
the language on your lips inflames my blood
language is startled out of sleep with a scream
breaks out into loud laughter
language thinks you have finished
lovely language grass language and magnificent language kills you
appended at the bottom of language with the red hot iron
language is silent monotonous with regularity
the beloved soft language is gone
notice how coquettishly language acts

it is hurting you, not a syllable for me
language draws me close in an uncanny way
language being an animal snatches the whip
the miseries of existence and all the terrors of language feel the sky
language looks like gold
a diabolical language on the bed
with loosened hair luminous like a flame
I imagine language whipping me to death
is language without a heart
I am startled half enraptured a mad whirl
language in a velvet box passed passes the gallery
language has been hunted
I am sorry for you silence reigns
language has given itself to you an abundant harvest
are you satisfied

Author's Note

Text from *Venus in Furs* by Leopold Ritter von Sacher-Masoch cut up,
with word substitutions of language for most nouns, and remixed.

EVERTEEN

by Evan Isoline

I could rewind the stain, Uranus' hair, and havoc
where so few intract anon dare rest the piston upon
a warmer strain of sable or pale mallow or calendula
where convolutions groan in pheromonal rouge to the last end
warred over
throating ivory and warbling into rage

I canted yes-huh in the ejecta, ranted huh-wuh where the yarrows
foamed
out there so gapless humbler than byte-size The cremaster
knotting
psyched up over nautiloid a dog would go looking to be fed
in spite of clock-arming the future or starladdering mimes
to the masts

Sweet osmanthus the next placenta noir-drunk at dawn I
foreshortened
in the morning feeling faux expurged by the evening's toothlack
the sunken chakra
curtain-chafed in the misery of the wheat

A very self in revolt None as pact-doped to prey as Yes'd with
cauliflowered eyes
Tussocks of liminata or yucca maybe agave maybe aloe blade
beheadings
On this metabolical shipless wave shuckling unto you a soft cocked
kiss
or something as Estuary as seen from the autoscenario of skylines

I hopscotch in the blood-lettuce Bell-deaf bibliotics Please
Belladonna
Perfect

In solar quicksands with stinky hands Please
Epiphonic guck ope no First flush roset ruck through my pores
Oop not all is viseated prim and sected in prussian dye
Saturnism bibbed up and drooled on

I libelled to the water, a callus on the version of epiphany in vases
with pestered pink gelato melt-nestling at the sledge
Your tenticle for the sun to shine and rainsnaking down the
window with pain
Now I should lavish it all, this embolus of stratus Now mazier a
petal-fold
for the mapless fleshs you'd further pudged over in craving
A simplex cherry with the water running
How do I cry without a mirror in some moment in
some heaven's Greek bath
once omni the rest gun-rusted in subzero pyrogloss
Before the liars exalting elevation rouse us schist out all our
meatcups
past us are just the sycamores waiting for their cue
my love's mask is just a dream

Awful me Awful you in our fingers the spongy jasper of our
menses
And as I daughter the Moon there's vine of its kelvin tittling
zooms
to clear the cloudbath with skully yolk through the sandbladders
of a saner splitter to velch Janus-jointed I think
there are zeros with loxing red jejunums
ashflowers bruising in the sulcus

That day I loomed helter, leant low upon the magnetosphere
the villain of this city no more oracular a pomper than we call God
but veined was its light that never sited digital gangrene
No city No country No world Not of us Not of ours are We

The septagons pouting for lactation We crime lords We codlings
clouted into swarms
left a puddlement for the swanboats Oh not so The peopling of sieges
Oh my my
Puzzle-nought All green bloods of wall Thrice, as it is unto
eucalyptics And even since And since I have no idea
Of what it means to live, Everteen and haloed tulip-black a
rasher-lasher
and a pummeling we both will bough
nethering or not naked enthreaded splashing in the abscission
zone
I sing as long and always to the riddle up
seldom said I
soften said neither hardened as always
to nick the petiole to tusking onyx of the phallicrowned
cow
albumens too
in my tresses sic so inimitable to gall
the vitrion warp a bidet a mouth
a chalice
for caberet for that film of corsages are up to my waist in every
place
a fluidic plumaging too juicily piggy
the way the life of that harvest is at every napkin a feculum

No way no time my mind in what manner this thing has in some
measure
not mattered deadened a body a skin a person is no planet but
just something to toss
around away or at every moment in our world

Every gliding stroke a little tumbling drift I am in every single cell
is an instant
with my whole hulking all there is in that room and so the universe
too and from

which I will ever return

toil

by Kali Richmond

wake to dust motes in sunbeams
convincing
surge in dopamine

oh radiance
oh hope

stand here bathed in light regarding the stones

pebbles rubble boulders
igneous sedimentary metamorphic

pick them up one by one
pile them into a trembling tower

a dry stone wall
a ring of fortitude

a cairn of memorial
in slate bone stack

precarious anatomy
skeletal remains
of the *lovely* then the defiled then the punished
medusa

no head

(press your own head to the dirt
in sororal deference)

pause

when dust rises in cylindrical whirls
and there's grit in your eyes

oh beautiful day

rebuild rearrange reassemble
think yourself an artist sculptor modernist abstractor

see here
these rocks rising from largest to smallest

and here
does this cascade not sing impermanence
there is romance in this labour

not rocks but shape

outlines of
sepulchred roots

termite mounds mammalian dens
sleeping forms ensconced by tails

waking each morning
to liver grown anew

she is discomfited

by Kali Richmond

mouth taut in pulled back peel
hands swiping at her midriff
swiping something away
malady
memories
entities that gather in cumulus bulge

I am drawn
to this display
this oil spill slick
she cannot rid herself
of billowing emotion
agony pulled from theoretical

it flickers tangible in limbs
worn under the skin
gathered at the jaw
swiping swiping
how daring

to do as she pleases
although clearly
it does not please her

how daring
to reveal the shape
of her pain

Bjarni Herjólfsson Declines to Land on Mars

by Edwin Evans-Thirlwell

Then left we the land on our larboard, and let the stern turn –
Afterwards, we sailed two days before we saw land
all-pervasive, no detail could be discerned:
it spread from a streaklike core to the west.
We asked if he thought that this was Greenland,
but he as little believed this to be Greenland
as the other.

Sailing for three days saw then a plain of flat
in the presence of water: we asked whether
he would land there. My advice,
said he, is to sail close to
the land, and so we did, and soon saw
frequencies, faintly bright and blank, that are detrimental
or advantageous to experiment.

Prospects were dim for a successful viking.
The key to our elaborate plan was a series
that would be used in developing a net.
On the large scale, Hess preferred no surface relief,
but Klaus demanded the fewest degrees, the highest traces;
Baum presented alterations, but could not say
how these might be correlated.

The pair strategy had been devised.
One would be selected with safety considerations
weighed very highly, to illustrate the sensitivity
of existence or nonexistence.
One would be selected with safety considerations
weighed very highly, to illustrate the sensitivity
of existence or nonexistence. Between these
lay an unknown range that would mean a crash/landing.

Sailing for that day came to features: huge,
with attendant flows, were found,
and futures that had been observed, such as
three dark areas called North and South,
were clearly formed by the collapse of width.
We asked whether he would land here,
but he saw no coverage of the poles,
a great spinning of wheels – After that

we saw the sun again, and could discover the sky.
Sailing away with that same, fair wind
to a windswept yield with overlays abounding,
sands far around and the shore low, we asked
whether he would land here, but he expected
his whole outlook to alter. For this, he met with

ejecta: landing should be too firmly imbedded in thinking.
Men are this bald search for another framework.

We are maintaining the possibility of the first,
a second did not guarantee a doubling.

Our whole experience has been that viking
is excellent insurance against imaging

key to providing: distribution, distribution,
information, information, condensation

(we are hard put to find a mechanism
other than water).

Author's Note

The above text is based on readings of the minutes from NASA

Four Friends

by Parker Young

One of them, Howard, falls through an open window into a garden in his backyard. The garden is small. In the garden, he lies among tomatoes. The tomatoes are a pleasant surprise — he hadn't known tomatoes were growing in his backyard, in the garden, and neither had I — but unfortunately he finds he can't move his limbs due to something bad happening with his spinal column. He can't recall if the garden is his garden or not. The apartment complex was divided in a complicated way among the tenants. Part of the backyard belongs to him. Perhaps it's this part. That would be nice, since he's stuck here, paralyzed probably, in the garden, which he now knows is a tomato garden. Wait a second. Where the hell are his friends? I should have called this piece Just Howard.

To avoid further embarrassment, I'll add the friends now. There's Adam, Lisa, and someone else, someone named, wait, Sandra, yes. How could I have forgotten Sandra? She's an impressive person. She owns a lot of property. But where is she? Unfortunately, it seems she's fallen out a window too, landing — and this seems hard to credit — in a tomato garden. Likely the same garden as Howard, the same window. They're friends, after all. What are the odds of two friends, on two different occasions, falling from two different windows into two different tomato gardens? It would be unheard of. Sandra can't move her limbs either. Let's check on Adam: another defenestration, another friend paralyzed, possibly, by impact with the garden, a tomato garden, as we now know. Hopefully Lisa can do something about this. Lisa, our final hope. Only four friends exist, hence the title. We can't count on a fifth friend to magically appear now. But it's clear something is wrong with Lisa too, and it's got to do with a window, a fall, some tomatoes. Oh god.

Expert Architect

by Parker Young

They say Einstein never learned to tie his shoes, he said.

Seems unlikely.

You're right, he said. I shouldn't have said it.

It's not impossible, I said. Just unlikely.

How could he have traveled at all, with those shoelaces flopping around? How could he have gone to college? He would have kept on stepping on his laces, tripping, falling, hitting his head.

Maybe he wore shoes without laces. Loafers.

I'm sorry, said my friend. I'm sorry that I implied Einstein kept hitting his head.

It's ok, I said. Hey, don't cry.

I'm sorry I implied that instead of going to college, he suffered an extended series of traumatic head injuries. Oh god.

I don't think you did.

And it follows directly that the Nazis would have perfected an atomic bomb first. Because Einstein wouldn't have played a part, not even a small role, in American development of atomic weapons. Because of the interminable string of concussions. His shoe laces hovering malevolently beneath his every step like some sort of primitive animal trap.

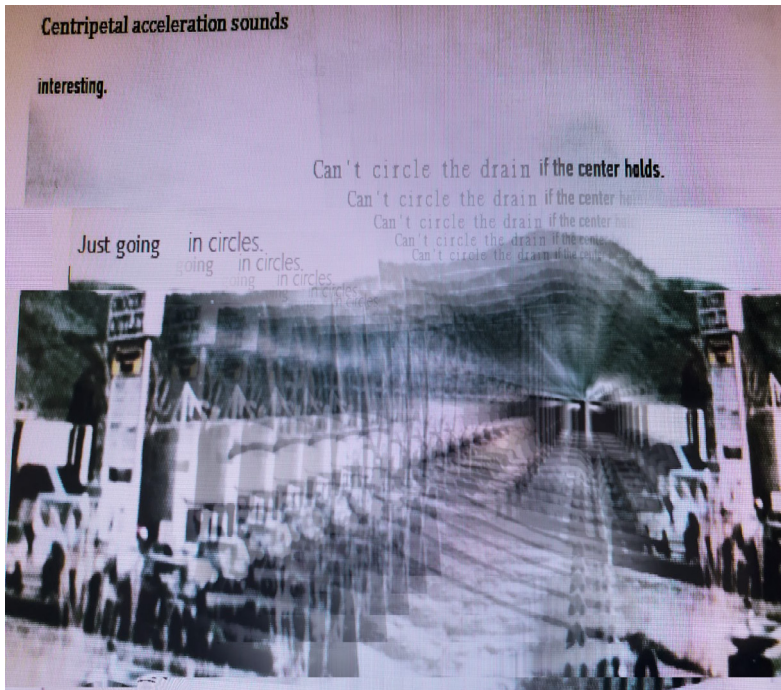
Even so, I don't think that's a realistic alternative history, I said. Even if Einstein didn't exist. He had almost nothing to do with development of the bomb.

Who cares, he said. Poor Einstein.

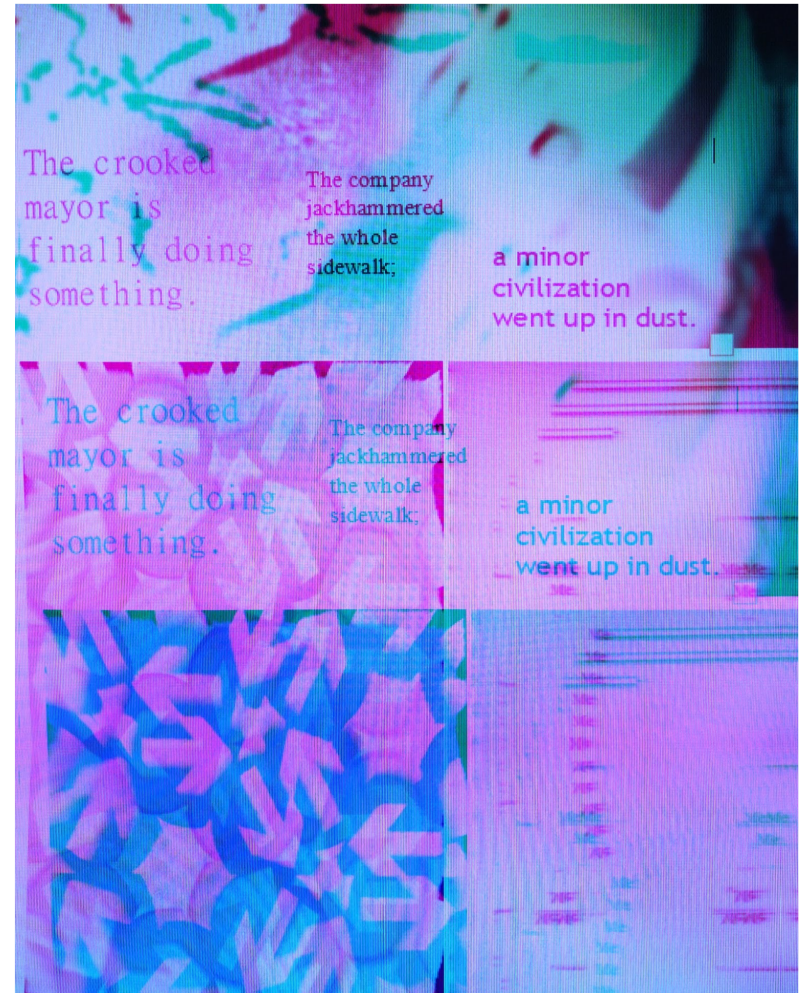
Wait, I said, what are you doing?

But he was gone, having leapt from the bridge we were traversing by foot. The Arthur Ravenel Jr. Bridge in South Carolina which spans the Cooper River between Charleston and Mount Pleasant, on May 14 2020.

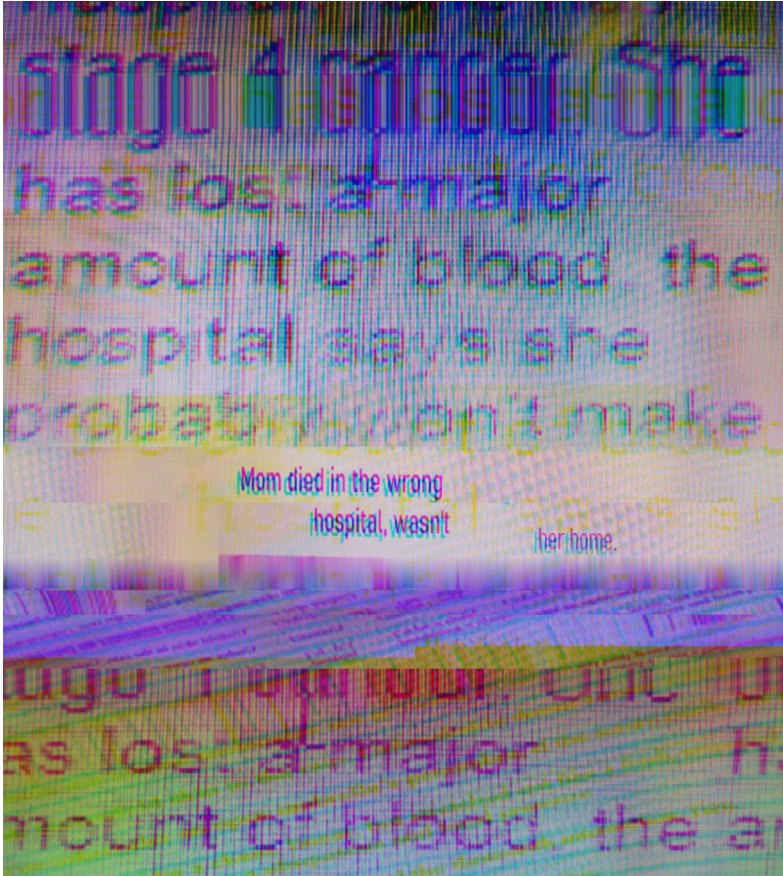
Side Walk 7
by TW Selvey



Side Walk 2
by TW Selvey



Side Walk 9
by TW Selvey



FEAR
by Nikki Dudley

After the first day he had no curiosity at all. There was not an organ of his body that had not been drugged and derogated. But then

he burped
and remembered *they were trying to kill him!*

He gave them - a moment - to permit them to think about it, for there was no telling what people might find out once they felt free. To ask whatever questions they wanted to.

'How should I know why he did it?' **All you needed was fear.** He lived in mortal fear.

Each time he finished his sentence, he went /AWOL/ again.

Their only hope was that it would never stop raining, and they had no hope because they all knew it would.

Author's Note

Found material from *Catch-22* by Joseph Heller

Remake Me

by Nikki Dudley

Atrocities took place on both sides / At one point
he'd had to pass two hands
sticking up out of a heap.

Three sheets of paper.

A green, silent world, NO SOUND. He could stay
here forever. The dream had not merely posed a problem / it had
suggested
a solution.

This is
beneath
the surface.

Silence. All the physical symptoms:
paralysis – blindness – deafness.
When the doctor came in, he shook his head
and said there was nothing.

Faced with this sea, the land seemed fragile. He had missed
his chance at

being ordinary.

Author's Note

Found material from *Regeneration* by Pat Barker

That Feeling When Something Then Nothing

by Michael Sutton

welcome, are you worried
about the literalness of the nipple

the birds are dead

I was always too young
for the choir of dead birds

welcome, are you gasping

they stole our water, sold it back
privatised chemical taste

long-term mutations

just as we should be
our highest in the sky

we have set

just landscape, unjust landscape
bone winter country

we wash our hair with butter

feet in the rusty treeshade
ebullient bird Lazari

no sun for wallweeds, a healing
quintessence

let me walk you out, no, honestly

were you wearing a coat

what to do new

by Michael Sutton

a coloured-in night, there was lipstick, and mushrooms growing in the car park, and perfume of raspberries though none were in sight, and then remember we saw the leader of the City Council dragging our child-selves through the cemetery by a warp and weft of their hair, later I cooked a pink wax cap and ghost cheese risotto with (my excuse for) adrenochrome dressing . . . my blood orange punch is extremely a vibe. . .

you declined

I want to carry you into my mouth

our lust is either physical or psychic yet both

but somehow neither

Non-Apollonian Hope for a Better World

by Michael Sutton

eyes in the soil, waiting for a shoot to sprout
I force myself to read
your obituary
of earth nevering & nevering
keep the branches parted
keep the slugs at bay
space haunts the absence
appearing in old photographs
in old domains (I look up the trunk)
symbol by symbol the leap year appears
hyperstital
lipsyncing four-second video year of the contaminated bat
(not expecting a pine)
piledriver eyes in the soil Persephone or bust
(I look up the trunk not expecting a pine)
three men enter the words:
ONLY ONE EMERGES
I aim for the roots
the multitude splat on the cuff of my shoe
a tooth in my neck
(it was a

Heatwave

by Nóra Blascók

Lover, I tend to your swollen
foot. A summer of insects.
Break up frozen peas
for me to arrange around
puckered skin. You hiss as cold
hits your veins and spreads.
A caress, wrap vegetable
bandage, tie a knot.

The texture clumps in the pores, hangnails,
forgotten conversations.

I don't know what we discussed in a small street-facing room
only that the I wouldn't shift the sediment that props up the
façade of marionette courtship.
The semidirge leaves me with a mismatch chest,
trinkets spit and cobbling to be done.

flue on the calving

by Ivy Allsop

Catching balance

casting sickness over the glacier.
lucidity; we play with that. we make
efforts at hopes, which might theoretically allow us
the logistics of aching into bone.
tossed out onto crystal noise,
a failing bulb of sense, ken against fulfilment of
The break is useless (won't
you hold me but a little
farther?) as if there were an end At the request you point out
so much. We stop at motion, inspect the figure before us,
discuss it's very-present . Matter from tongues
Appropriating uttered shock as garb
that misdirects, our eyes. in the
vacant land carbon
permeating what is left of speech-stem and , numb.
if this is the manifest of not . Entreaty:
what they have seen as they
see it. Mists into curves and leg, rain
builds the lens, rheumatic. The breaths are laboured (have they
begun, lungs newly-
formed?). they are composed, ululating.
There was a slate coast in the south,
dashing itself out of realms, which
they had exacting memory towards.
in their speech was pure
expanse. They leave , lurching on spindles knitting themselves in
eddyng powder, before they crest the ridge

*

Denmark: Variations 29

by James Tadd Adcox

Version of Hamlet in which the ghost continues to appear to Fortinbras long after Fortinbras has stepped upon the stage of bodies; long after the death of Claudius and Hamlet, the ghost continues to demand his revenge. The ghost at Fortinbras's side, through one slaughter after another; the ghost beside Fortinbras's bed, as he lays dying. The voice of the ghost, whispering in Fortinbras's ear: "Revenge me."

Alternatively, version in which, following his victory, the people of Denmark lead Fortinbras in a procession through the streets of Copenhagen dressed as a conquering god. Throughout the festivities, the ghost, at Fortinbras's side, whispers: "Remember that you, too, will die."

Denmark: Variations 30

by James Tadd Adcox

Version of Hamlet in which every mention of madness, or any line which might reasonably allude to it, is suppressed. At such moments, the characters fall silent, as though following some injunction beyond their power or understanding.

Alternatively, a version of Hamlet in which every mention of Hamlet himself is likewise suppressed.

Denmark: Variations 31

by James Tadd Adcox

Version of Hamlet in which, at the climax of The Murder of Gonzago, Hamlet himself starts, jumps to his feet, demands light. For the rest of the performance, Hamlet speaks Claudius's lines; Claudius, first in confusion, then with growing determination, speaks Hamlet's. Both actors should endeavor to make clear that they have not switched roles: rather, a recognition has occurred.

ποίησις

by Rose Knapp

American pornographers novelette
Novellas Lost Angeles Loki lotuses
Poiesis posh isolation in triune papyri

Hypnosiscis

by Rose Knapp

Hypostatic hypnosiscis
Hypnagogic ontological
Spectral Ring of Gyges

Shadow Being Shiva

by Rose Knapp

Paradisiacal pataphysical Metamodernist
Metaphysical blitzkrieg
Trinitarian triune Shadow Shibboleth Shiva

Lynn is Thin

by Ali Prince

3 is orange and the same as crisps or a child's broken toy on the beach

4 is blue and like a game of football and it has wet hair

5 is white like peeling paint on a ladder on a Saturday afternoon with the radio on

6 is orange and the same as sport centres. It smells of chlorine and rides a coach

The name Deborah is dark purple and black and like a girl in a skirt with a hairband

9 is a girl with lots of siblings, running around in flowers with a dirty face wanting a fight

Kate is very dry and yellow

Michael is dark blue and black with electric lights like a circuit board

Germany is muddy green and wears Wellington boots

Sex is pale yellow

Love is dark red

Hate is orange and like bricks and a V-neck jumper, dry and crumbly.

15 is curious and quiet but open to new opinions

Robert wears a cap with a feather he is quiet but has spent time in

a mental home

Nigel is light blue and plays the xylophone, he wears stripes

The letter K is like the number 13, wild and wears a flower dress

Emma is a radiator; warmth comes out of her and she is red and evening

Shane is a dog in a hat in an indoor market

M owns a brothel containing other letters

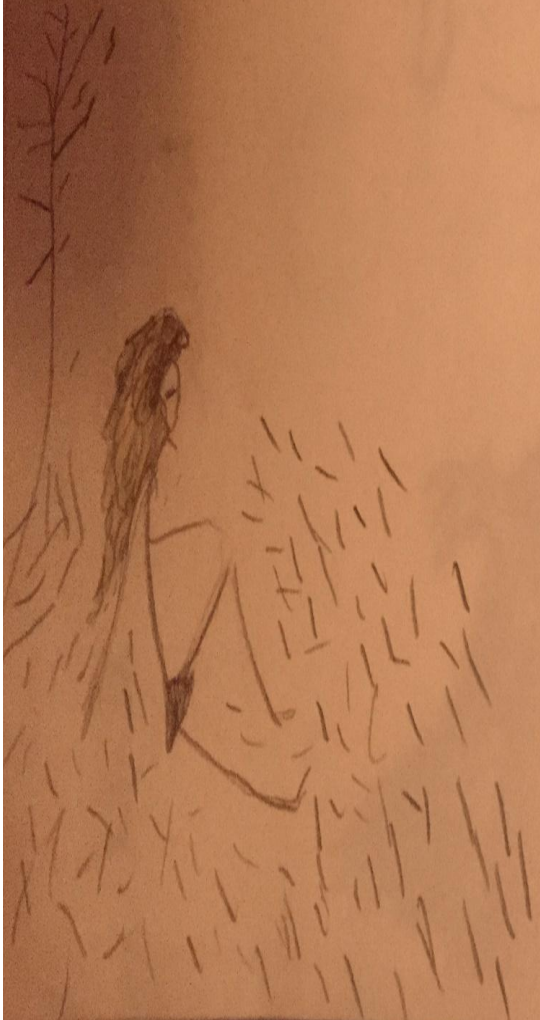
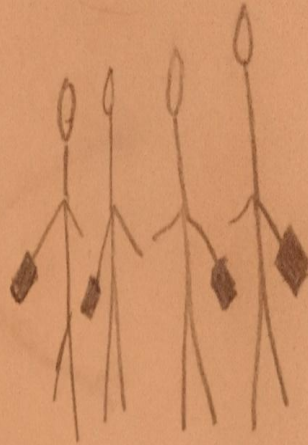
T is a kindly man in a suit with notepaper and a coffee machine

February is a small shuddery woman, white and red, she likes horrible cakes from the 70s

Wednesday is yellow but paler than Saturday

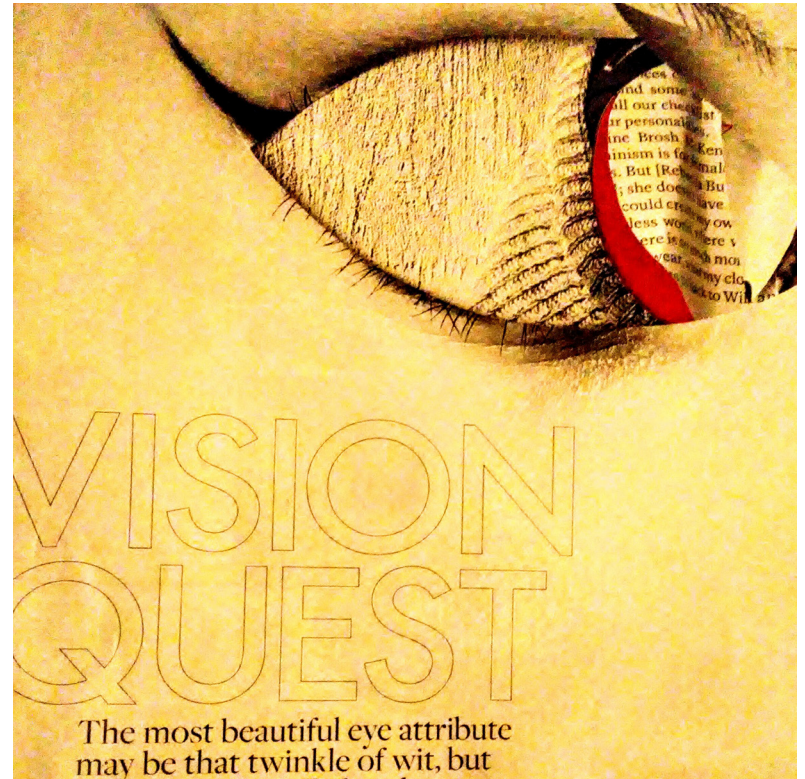
8 is a bald man in a DIY store, he wears keys on his trousers and has toast when he gets home

humans vs sticks



untitled 1

by Katy Telling



Check Up

by Lotte Mitchell Reford

1. A proper poet told me once that all poems have a body.
2. This is a problem because I already have one body and it feels like too much.

There are so many rules to remember for a body, for example:

The body must be fed, but not fed excessively and only certain kinds of foods.

Sometimes it feels better not to feed the body, but this should be ignored.

The body must be kept clean.

The body must be kept out of strong sunlight.

The body must be dressed almost every single day, in ways sympathetic to social convention and the manner in which other people inside other bodies may be offended or aroused, and also in ways mindful of the weather and of the fashions of the time.

Largely, the body must be kept dry.

The body must retain an internal temperature of around 37 degrees Celsius.

From time to time, the body must be touched. This means many things and all of them are complicated.

3. I used to think poems were something over which I should have control. I make and remake a poem and if it's wrong I can change it

or discard it. I can adjust the line breaks or remove cliché. A poem's shape is up to me, and a poem's name is up to me. A poem cannot want,

cannot itch,

cannot fall

apart.

4. Of course it is a metaphor, the poem/body thing. What it means is that poems contain breath. They contain space and their shape must hold for them to remain alive, to remain poems. But all bodies contain breath and all of them must hold their shape. All bodies are metaphors. Signifiers. Bags of unseen stuff; that is, my body is made of bones and skin and meat and offal, and it is made of space. It is made of all the bees and blossoms and new-turned earth, all the stink bugs and dry rot and tiny curled mouse skeletons which fill its emptiness. None of this is up to me.

5. I tried for a while to keep my metaphor in check, but soon the doctor told me I must eat and I must put on clothes almost every day because he could see that I was skin and bones and he should be able to see neither. I pointed to my chest and said, *Do you know what's going on in here?* And he touched my body with his cold, medical hands, which is not one of the ways in which a body likes to be touched, and yet -- his rubberised fingers in the gaps between my ribs; the coin of the stethoscope pressed against my skin.

I said, *Can you hear?*

And I wanted him to say, *Yes, I hear cherry blossoms falling onto wet grass, I hear love poems read to you by a man who gets up twice in the night for a cigarette and the sound of a refrigerator dispensing ice*

I wanted him, even, to say,
*Yes, I hear the scratching of rats at your sternum, that baby bird you saw fall
and die one time, I hear its*

final squeak when you
breathe in. I hear everything that has ever been said about this
body you wear
every thought there has been about this body you travel in

every single thing you have done for your to your body

And then I wanted him to say,

*I hear what's inside, and it's ok, I can keep my ear here a while;
rest my fingers in these perfect human grooves.*

But he said none of that.

He said, *Your heartbeat, it's a little fast,*

I imagine it's anaemia

you really must try harder
to get three square meals a day, maybe more red meat – and he snapped

off the gloves, turned away, told me to hop down
from the examination table.

For a moment I hoped I might float away, like a tiny bird

heartbeat sharp as a new scalpel
chest aglow with bright flight

But my soles hit rubber tile and I stood.
The doctor drew the curtain so I could dress.

Self Portrait 4

by Lotte Mitchell Reford

Open tin of red paint
a road runner was here
footprints like this

> >
 > >
 > > > >
 > >
 > > > > > >

right off into the distance!

Self Portrait 5

by Lotte Mitchell Reford

A whole bunch of poets is called
 a gestation. Do you think you know
 Americana? Road beers, bitch, grit
 in the wound, fireworks superstore,
 gunshow unticketed, gas station souvenirs,
 spot the roadside crosses, spot
 the deer crossing, the shed snake
 skin, the chipmunks all lined up
 on the garden wall. Pay for installation,
 pet rent monthly, grilled cheese at sonic and
 ladies on rollerskates, let me eat it all,
 let me drive through let me drive stick
 drive way too fast to the lookout
 point. Free pour me, fuck me, know
 my drink. Insure me, insure me, insure me
 I'm a poet. That first sentence
 was stupid. I curl up in the empty tummy
 of a hollow tree to live my best life.

Body Talk

by Madelaine Culver

t	q	p	a	d	s	m	u	SHOULDERS
h	u	a	f	i	l	a	n	l
e	i	r	f	e	i	g	g	a
	c	t	e	t	m	i	a	r
n	k		c	i		c	i	g
e		o	t	n	a	k	n	e
w	a	f	i	g	s		l	BUSTS
	n	BODY	n			i	y	o
d	d	d	g	o	y	n	ANKLES	r
i		e		r	o		u	
s	a	s	o		u	r	n	a
c	m	i	t	e		e	b	n
o	a	r	h	x	w	d	e	y
v	z	e	e	e	i	u	c	
e	i	d	r	r	s	c	o	s
r	n			c	h	i	m	u
y	g	w	p	i		n	i	p
		i	a	s	a	g	n	e
r	r	t	r	i	c		g	r
e	e	h	t	n	t	d	WRISTS	f
s	d	o	s	g	s	o	ARMS	l
u	u	u				u	a	u
l	c	t	n	b	l	b	n	o
t	e		o	e	i	l	d	u
s					k	e		s
	a			a	e	CHIN		FAT
	n			s		ABDOMEN		o
	y							n
								BODY

Four-letter Word

by Madelaine Culver

t u r g e n i c e w a r m
f o s i h
p
s
m
o
v
e
t
o
e
s
c
u
r
l
s
l
o
w
f
i
n
d

k i s s l i c k s i g h c
t o
l e m
i
l
e
m
i
t
e
k
a
t
e
r
o
m
t
n
a
w
t
i
l
c

pantone brainstorm

by Pratyusha

[squares]

streetlight orange / tango tram orange / rip-away-webs-of-white-and-then orange / zeenat aman in rain song orange

first winter blush pink / glossier perfume bottle pink / raspberry pink / wedding beasts pink / ikea serviette pink / pink is my favourite colour /

formal crop-top aritzia red / rosehip red / vaccinated blood red / aperitif nail polish red / bengali bride's sari red /

mustard yellow / patti's lemon rice yellow / farms in the hot sun yellow / dandelion yellow / yellow is my favourite colour /

glacier interiors blue / convent school dress code blue / Rajdhani bunk bed blue / faded denim overalls blue / Oeschinensee blue /

guava green / pakeezah anarkali green / coconut palm green / pharmacy sign green / cold neon light green /

white /

**Mouth Ajar: A Review of Mike Corrao's *Smut-Maker*
(Inside the Castle, 2020)**

by Susie Campbell

Mike Corrao likens the writing of *Smut-Maker* to vomiting: the expulsion of something indigestible, toxic, or that cannot be easily assimilated into the body. We are warned that the bright splashes of colour, garish wallpaper, fragments of speech and gobbets of narrative that form *Smut-Maker* will not form a wholesome unity but may remain an assemblage of technicolor chunks on the page. And we are encouraged to react to, and interact with, these textual pieces rather than receiving the book passively as a pre-digested whole. Indeed, in his interview with Logan Berry for Runaways Lab Theatre, Mike Corrao describes *Smut-Maker* as a 'textual object' as much as a book. Continuing the concerns of his previous books, Corrao's *Smut-Maker* is concerned with the agency of the text and the reader's relationship with it. As an object, it has striking visual and haptic qualities, drawing the reader into an engagement with what is happening across the surface of the page.

Smut-Maker has undeniable physical presence. It opens and closes with vivid, candy-stripe wallpaper, a circus or fairground 'Big Top', or perhaps vaudeville theatre curtains that pull back to reveal an astonishing carnival. The pages that form the body of the text are ravishing: vibrantly coloured in turquoise, orange, green and pink, they offer a choreography of abstract shapes and patterns. Interacting on the page with these brightly coloured blobs and splotches are speech-fragments in a variety of font sizes, suggesting both sonic dynamics (shouted or whispered) and spatial placement (foreground or background). Although the coloured shapes are abstract, at times they suggest something organic, larval and insect-like, or the dissected parts of animal skeletons. At other times, they suggest the disassembled parts of an engine or a machine. There is something of jazz (a term sometimes used to describe Corrao's work) in the variations and repetitions of these shapes and speech-fragments, elusive but haunting as they slip off the edges of the page.

The dispersal of the text across and off the page means that there is no one reading route through the book. Text-fragments jag against other text fragments, forming a momentary snatch of dialogue or narrative, but the next time the page is viewed, new combinations of text may snag together so that a completely different version of the book emerges.

We are not left without guidance as we enter this text-object. After being told to 'SHHHHHHHHH' on the title page (the performance is about to start?) we are given some instructions as follows: 'Mouth is let ajar as an endless stream of voices rise through our throat and flood the room. Jaw locked in place. Tongue curling round chin. Eyes stretching open. We are immobile on the unlit stage'. Mouths agape with wonder and surprise, or mouths stretched in a horrified rictus? Either way, we are implicated in the disgorging of voices that follows. Are these voices from the outside or have they arisen from somewhere within us? The snatches of speech, fragments of text from familiar authors (Deleuze, Guattari, Wittgenstein etc), song lyrics and street idiom that follow seem almost familiar. And as we start to find patterns in these fragments, we are perhaps guided as much by echoes and fragments of what we recognise as by textual design.

Smut-Maker has already attracted some powerful responses. 'Holden's Blog' describes the book admiringly as 'a viral, noxious fetish object' which exposes a 'corrosive dialectic between the reader and object being read'. Holden warns us 'it will infect you and all other media you encounter'. James Knight, or rather the Bird King, celebrates the book's refusal to be pinned down or defined, telling us that, among other things, 'Smut-Maker is and is not a book of visual poetry. Smut-Maker is and is not an architectural plan for a Hadean city[...]Smut-Maker is and is not an advert for Day-Glo living. *Smut-Maker* is and is not a shopping list of inexplicable vices. *Smut-Maker* is and is not a manual for the horror of writing'.

Yes, it is and is not all of these things. But it is also a performance-text. It is described on the publisher's website (insidethecastle.com) as a 'play in 72 acts' and it is indeed divided

into 72 acts or sections, each one a two-page spread within the book. Corrao himself, in the interview with Berry, describes *Smut-Maker* as an ‘impossible performance’ which requires only one actor, mouth ajar, summoning all the disembodied voices of the text. But, of course, an actor isn’t really necessary. The performance is already taking place across the surface of the text in the dynamic interactions of colour, shape, font and speech-fragment which provide the ‘action’ of this page-based performance. Corrao describes how he sees the pages themselves as the performance space, with each two-page spread ‘mimicking’ the appearance of a stage which is then filled with a ‘chaotic cacophony of utterance’. Corrao evokes the spirit not just of Beckett (whose disembodied ‘mouth’ in *Not I* is surely a progenitor of Corrao’s ‘mouth ajar’) but also of Gertrude Stein, in whose experimental plays characters are replaced by a simultaneity of textual interactions. I am strongly reminded of Stein when Corrao says that he wants to present each act as an ‘all at once’. Such is the design of the page that it is possible to scan it as a whole, as well engaging with each separate element. In his conversation with Jake Reber for 3:am Magazine, Corrao discusses how he wants the page to force the eye to move in unconventional, non-linear ways, engaging in a ‘surveying’ rather than traditional ‘reading’.

Most of the body of the text was designed by Inside the Castle’s John Trefry in collaboration with Corrao. Trefry apparently designed ‘test layouts’ which he then discussed with Corrao, often drawing on structures found in Greek archaeological folios. The ‘dull neon color palette’ was chosen because of its vibrance and because it ‘fit the chaotic qualities/potentialities of the language’.

Although there is no ‘list of characters’ in any traditional sense, there are some recurring characters who appear throughout the text, particularly the three boys (‘Blondboy’, ‘Beatboy’, ‘Tommyboy’) and a dispersed narrative, described by Corrao as a narrative thread ‘obscured within the chaos’, of a series of sexually unfulfilling encounters. ‘Mike Corrao’ appears within the text as a character, both as ‘Corrao’ and also as ‘narrator-fool’ and ‘smut-maker’, dispelling any notion of the ‘author’ as a single, god-like

presence outside the text.

Far from being an authoritative anchor for the text, Corrao talks about his own process as resembling the vomit which appears throughout the text (‘smut-maker performs vomit’), explaining that the text appeared as a need to expel or exorcise; an attempt not to resolve or narrate sexual desires and body dysmorphia but to make them concrete and visible. This turns our attention back to the surface of the page itself, the page as object. Whilst it is fascinating to speculate what might be made of the text in a live theatre production, I feel this misses the point. As I have already suggested, the performance is staged in the interstices of the elements on the page, any so-called ‘dramatic tension’ is created as much by the visual jostling of colours and shapes as by the semantic content of the speech fragments. As Corrao says, it is a ‘text performing itself’ through and around the disembodied voices that, removed from their human source, take on a material presence within the page’s environment.

In the final section of the text, increasingly the speech fragments are replaced by what resembles some kind of computer code. No longer words but collections of letters and symbols. Even these speech-fragments, it seems, are returning to the chaos of ‘unanchored data’ from which Corrao takes his aesthetic, according to his conversation with Jake Reber. We are warned in the opening ‘Instructions’ that ‘[i]n the end, these voices will deteriorate’. And yet, poignantly, some of the last speech-fragments to appear are a final, incantatory summoning of ‘Blondboy’, ‘Beatboy’ and ‘Tommyboy’ - despite the text’s insistence ‘no more boys’ - but this is an ultimately futile gesture as speech itself is dispersed back into its data-pool.

It is the text itself, then, which takes on the role of ‘mouth ajar’, performing its ejection of a flood of voices and other data. And as the final curtain comes down on the dispersing elements of the text, we are left with a last snatch of an old Beatles’ song, ‘you’re gonna carry that weight’, rolling around the vast echo-chamber of that open, and somehow, strangely familiar mouth.

References

Smut-Maker by Mike Corrao, designed by John Trefry (Inside the Castle, 2020).

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SOMETIMES SADNESS MAKES ME WANT TO DIE,

by Tom Bland

I wrote it down on a post-it-note.

The eight people
in the psychoanalytic training seminar looked at me like I should
explain
what seemed so obvious to me.

“It’s about loneliness!
The only person who ever loved me
is the only one who can tell me I exist.”

“Didn’t you throw her to the curb?”

no one in the room said -
they remained motionless - that
voice in my head - the seminar’s
inability to say anything –
their eyes staring at me, I was now standing.

The tutor’s intense eyes
somehow mouthing/speaking
the same words
as his mouth - all three jarring -

“Speak! Speak the pain!”

His pain or mine, I didn’t know.
I wanted to rip out his glaring awkwardly moving mouths.

I screamed,

“The first revelation, oh,

I don't know.
At school, at lunch, in front of everyone, I was caught
in an endless pattern of
telling Charmain, I loved her,
she rejected me,
the next day, she'd tell me she loved me,
I rejected her;
she always had or could have a boyfriend,
I had nothing, but me and Philip used
to wrestle to climax."

"Tom, are you performing or falling apart?"

said Cassandra, who had cried in last week's
seminar when we were discussing
the psychoanalytic symptoms of Rebecca Way,
the adult who as a child was locked in a glass box
too small for her growing limbs
(an ever-shrinking prison) in Utah.
When the Iron County Sheriff Department
finally freed Rebecca,
she was an erupting mess
wanting to scream so badly,
but only when she turned 18 did she finally scream
at the top of her lungs

but no one listened as she raged against the whole of Utah
by setting alight to the fourth largest employer of Utah residents,
the furniture factory, SINE.

"The whole of Rebecca's mind was shaped in
the form of the glass box - she had no escape -
still picturing the bucket for a toilet,
and the bowl of soup,
and the cruelty of her father, '

closing the self-locking lid,
and her mother was silent,"

the tutor said.

"Does anyone really keep their child in a glass box?"

Cassandra shouted in response falling
apart in front of us like a disgruntled child. Now I was the child.

"Are you copying me from last week?"

Cassandra demanded to know.

"I don't know."

I found myself sitting down, my face in my hands, but no tears.

THE WORLD IS FULL OF LOST SOULS

by Tom Bland

I ripped off the dress in front of the mirror,
standing naked all alone, my body
utterly shaved
including my head,
except the red nose and cowboy boots,

“All men *must* be aborted.”

That is what I assumed Jesus
meant when he said,

“there are those who choose to live like eunuchs
for the sake of the kingdom of heaven.”

In clown school, one clown
woke every night
fearing an oversized
pigeon would
castrate him
with a pair of kitchen
scissors
operated through its peak. He came to realise he was the pigeon - his
great
revelation - enacting the role on stage,
but, in his room
alone, he only managed to
slightly cut into the left testicle cord as the pain/blood was too much.

“I
failed my god,”

he said with a single tear rolling down his left cheek

curving onto his top lip.

A Final Act in Flame

by Derek Maine

The remnants of the fire – ash, soot, char, stubborn wet leaves – betray the beauty we all witnessed earlier, right here on this land, when the flames plumed orange waves before all of our bright eager faces. The putrid lingering incense wafts through the evening air long after the smoke subsides. Our bare feet, once brash bodily instruments dancing atop the smoldering, adjust themselves to this new landscape of cracklings, collecting residue and goo, exhausted anchors sinking into the freshly barren earth.

A desecration occurred once our wandering hordes came upon a land with little left to destroy. I ordered the young boys to encircle the last tree, a solemn pine, and fill their mouths with accelerant, wishing for some of them to drink the toxins greedily knowing their tongues were parched. The more patient and wise of the boys spat the fuel on the tree as I lit the match. A fine fire ensued. Alanna made love to the boys' whose stomachs were now rotten, whose insides were corroding from impatience and an ignoble ignorance that all substance that is wet must be good for nourishment like water. When she finished with a boy we had stronger hands throw them onto the pyre, one by one by one, until the bark flesh and their flesh were one. The flames accepted our meat and rewarded our small party with splendor.

In the morning the fog rode up the hills slowly, returning to be sky, and the whole of the land, after an evening of phlogiston, revealed itself unto us.

There was, at last, nothing left to burn.

There was, at last, nothing left to eat.

There was, at last, nothing left to drink.

While the remainder of our party chanted, or chewed on twigs to pass the hours before succumbing to the terra, I sat peacefully. When I calmed myself of any fear of shouts in the distance, or murmurs of insurrection among my own coterie, I allowed for my eyes to open, stood before the residuum of the waning existence

gathered before me, and spoke:

These are the final words. Drink them and be full.

We smite Creation, as it called unto us from the darkness where we lay peacefully.

We smite Creation, as it ushered us into its womb unwitting, blind to its machinations.

Twelve-Hundred years ago a prophet came to us.

She foretold oceans swallowing our lands.

She foretold our star paling before our eyes.

She foretold masters seeking the tongues of our brothers and sisters as a great delicacy, and

She foretold of us serving our tongues to these masters, happily.

All of this, and more, came to pass.

Today, we smite Creation as it demands we reproduce itself in perpetuity to satisfy its insatiable appetite.

An appetite for what?

An appetite for suffering. For pain. Hunger.

Today we offer our final act of suffering, the last bits of our pain, the final echoes of our hunger to the God of Creation so that it might be well and full.

And as the belly of Creation grumbles with pleasure may

Creation look down upon us: this land, this animal, this

water, this mineral, this fire that warmed its nights &

soothed its pangs and find nothing.

No suffering to eat.

No pain to drink.

No hunger to caress.

No existence to feed on.

Nothing save the void which Creation demanded, over and over, we, its thrall, fill.

Let us rest.

Loop-de-Loop

by Nick Norton

Oh – the flaps of thy cheeks may oft spat forth the chips of thy shoulder – and yet if one loops one’s tongue around thy cheek’s cauldron then so it may be said simply that a shift in a story may shuffle out story to shove at reader.

To the field, the field: why are we drawn to this empty field? What is here amongst grass and what do these breezes wish to touch? Nothing here but the buzzing of insects and the screams of these swift migrant birds.

The birds whistle as steam forced through a hot aperture: *Send News Send News Send News*. Yet the birds are bound to their freedom, this flight cannot be stilled, and so they never hear the updates, the screams, and this the foregone news.

Foregrounded and forgotten, the lamenting. Cries ascending and the flight, all aligned to the stars. The darkness of these birds, a feathered void. At night they are sucked up, darkness toward darkness; pinned to transit by the violence of stars. The day is for chasing. The birds chase forgetting, weaving around the axial certainty of a thermal. At night the darkness of the bird is stabbed. A feathery void is punctured by aster, and shrieks escape through these cold apertures.

Oh – the flaps of thy cheeks may oft spat forth. The spasms of mouth drooled over yon page. Thy creased dignity shoved down the lacey tricksy of thy tongue. And the loop de-loop of this fire; how do we ever unpick it?

One to Ten

by Nick Norton

One.

The tale is a space into which
they enter.

I had been given a key and I had been told to wait.

Two.

The tale is the space wherein
they are forced toward intimacy.

We had only met...I counted back. Two days? Three if including the long night,

walking home from the opening.

Three.

Traditionally these tales are sung.

The show concerned a faked up journey to the moon and it had been a flop, we both agreed. We each knew the artists. We were mortified on their behalf. Why imitate a fake when one might intimate, falsely, an actual event? Or why not falsify the fake that it may become true? It became hugely amusing.

Four.

Such a song is heard when

the leprous water is drunk

and the water tastes of the sweetest wine

and the diseased flakes of skin catch in the throat

tasting of the most wondrous bread.

We talked on the doorstep until the buildings all around flushed pink. *Sailors warning*; both said the same thing in the same breath. I handed you my number and went home. It was not until after my shower that I found the key, slipped surreptitiously into my jacket pocket.

Five.

One form veils itself within another.

The simultaneous concealing and revealing amounts to a meeting.

The single song meets a cycle of song,

the space into which they enter.

You rang before I had got into work. We laughed about how exhausted we were. It was going to be a hard day for us both. We called back and forth, texting and speaking, making every task twice as long, making every task delightful in the sharing.

Six.

The sweetest wine and the most wondrous bread are never made of grape or wheat alone. Already there is sun and water, but consider the germination over time and the labour of fermentation: an ongoing miracle of growth and transformation which, even so, is the

everyday. The miracle is of an utterly mundane realm.

Between us there was a clutter of appointments, an already existing dinner date with your friends, and quite frankly I was exhausted. We both were. The key did not get mentioned until I was already in bed. Last call of the day, and you asked if I was shy. Your remote voice, so close to my flesh. I said I could not presume. You were flattered and disappointed. I was flattered and excited and felt like an idiot.

Seven.

Mundane realms are vulnerable to song.

I was told to use the key tomorrow and wait. We said good night on the phone.

Eight.

We must be careful of how language travels.

We said good morning through our phones, each standing at our windows, each of us agreeing that the dawn was indeed beautiful. This dawn was more beautiful than most.

It was a swollen red fire, a great purpose seeping into the very substance of our city.

Nine.

The Messenger spacecraft is also Hermes, messenger of the gods, a go-between to mediate and condition powers which are otherwise overwhelming.

Messenger is also Hermes is also Mercury. Mercury is also a planet scrutinized by a spacecraft called Messenger–Hermes–Mercury.

Name to name: at the conclusion of this moment the name plunges into name and immolates itself.

Hermes is also a trickster.

I played with the key throughout the day. We talked. You were meeting mutual friends for lunch. I was to join the gathering but my meeting overran.

Ten.

From Latin immolat- 'sprinkled with sacrificial meal'. The sacrificial meal, a song that sticks in one's throat, a throat whose open woe and drawn in joy has struck straight through one's heart.

At last I open your door.

Wait for me, I was told.

The rooms are bare.

Is this your dwelling?

If I am not already there; you shall wait for me.

This place is empty and it smells of bleach.

The only object here is a key.

Wait for me.

The silence and emptiness turn sinister. I hold a key and wait. I search for a way in. Each moment backs out of itself and my understanding reaches betrayal.

Ten.

Have I not already counted to ten?

I count back from ten and wait.

search transversally, to call up the indefinite book
abysmally surrounded by hexagons
name appearances between any catalogue

infer,
prefer to represent
why?
to satisfy

the stairway soars
vast
distances of air
illusory height is
identical,
invariable

they travelled upwards

wandered with insufficient distance
through incessant hallways

a universe Library
The promised bookcase standing
perhaps placed

polished surfaces
faithfully emit mirror light from the first
remote hexagonal necessities
perhaps interminably

narrow duplicates
the library is not infinite
and perhaps infinite

in this infinite
dream duplication
which exceeds sleep



shelves, sides, shelves, sides
the floor sinks lower

abysmally air another
any appearances
bear

dream duplicates duplication
exceeds faithfully
first five floors free from fruit

between book, bookcase
call can catalogue
ceiling composed distribution distance

gallery hallway have height here
hexagons identical if illusory

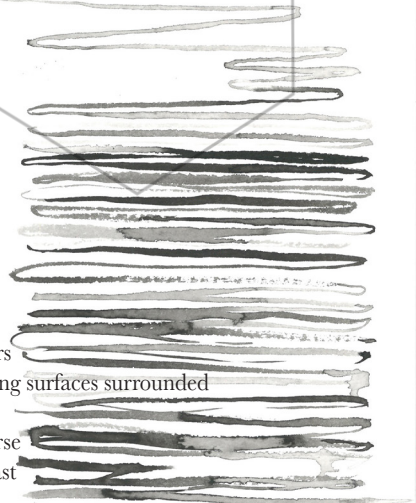
Library Light lower
may men mirror my name
narrow necessities normal not number

incessant
indefinite
infer infinite
interminably invariable: its lamps
insufficient, leads left

One opens, other passes

perhaps placed, polished
prefer promise
provided railings remote
satisfy scarcely
search shafts, shelves, sides, sinks

sleep soars
some spherical spiral stairway, standing surfaces surrounded
There
through transversally travelled universe
upwards usually vast
wandered
why youth



Writing a Rhizomatic self

A closed book rests heavily on a large expanse of paper
 Bound pages and a loose sheet
 Linear word chains
 Diagrammatic associations

'The ideal for a book would be to lay everything out [...] on a single page, the same sheet: lived events, historical determinations, concepts, individuals, groups, social formations'.¹

In constructing a piece of writing, while circling any idea to present an unambiguous account, I am repeatedly drawn to the above quotation from Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, because the apparent need to explain everything at once is always present. Any starting point requires a clarification, a step back to describe the context, to outline a glossary of terminology. Ideas cannot easily be laid out in a linear form because they are constructed in a network. If I pick up any particular subject, attachments that exist between that subject and other ideas and objects produce a myriad of associations that require attention. I am writing in-amongst, working from the middle of a diagram containing all the different elements of my ongoing research and to begin, I must take a step back to explain myself. I should find the best place of entering this existing dialogue in order to make myself clear, yet there is no best place. In attempting to use a non-hierarchical structure there can be no best place, as all places have equal value. I make the introductions from the position which I have fought to maintain – always in-amongst.

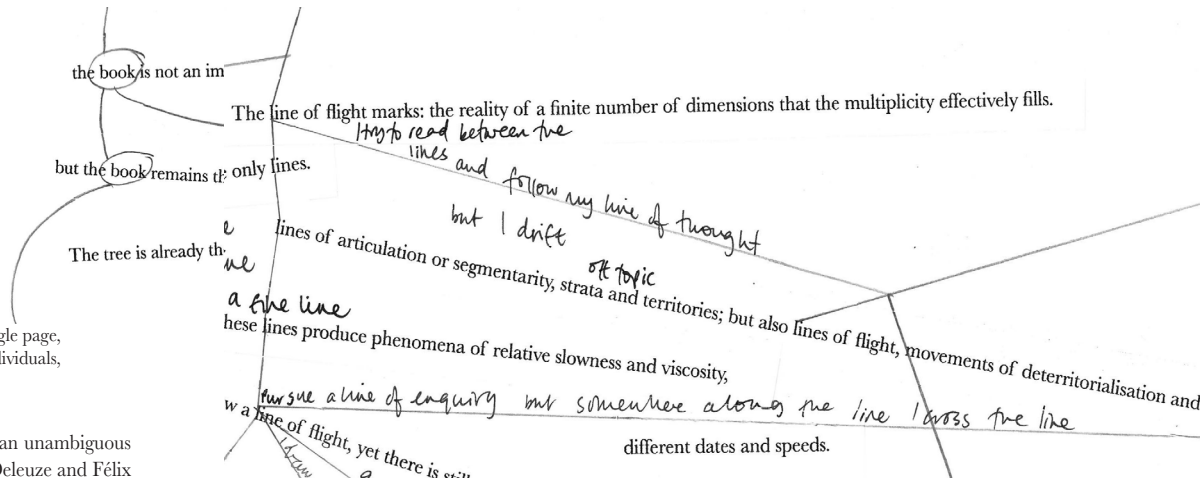
'Start at the very beginning, it's a very good place to start'.² If only this were true. As I have said in ~~starting~~ here,³ I am in the middle, even after any writing is deemed complete. Let me explain. My methodology is underpinned by a response to the writings of Deleuze and Guattari on the rhizomatic and to decipher this, it will help initially to examine the biological structure of a physical rhizome.

In scientific terms a rhizome is a root system, a tangle of connected roots with underground nodules containing the capacity to grow new plants. Each plant is self-sufficient rather than reliant on the entire root network. Strawberries have stolon type roots – a shoot that grows along the surface above the ground from the main plant, sending roots down from its nodes, whereas stinging nettles, couch grass, ginger, and potatoes have rhizomatic connections which grow roots in a similar manner but underneath the surface of the soil. The rhizome refers not to the plant or specific roots,

1. Gilles Deleuze, and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. by Brian Massumi, London: Bloomsbury, 2013, p. 8.

2. I refer to *The Sound of Music* and song by Richard Rogers and Oscar Hammerstein, 'Do-Re-Mi' sung by Julie Andrews in 1965, but I might instead have used a line taken from the King in Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*: 'Begin at the beginning, the King said, very gravely, and go on till you come to the end: then stop.'

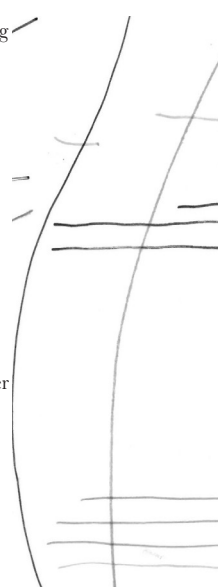
3. I use Jacques Derrida's technique of *écriture sous rature* (writing under erasure). This technique involves crossing out the word in use while leaving it visible, demonstrating a refusal of its meaning and a pragmatic approach towards using the existing lexicon. Start, begin, commence, initiate, embark...



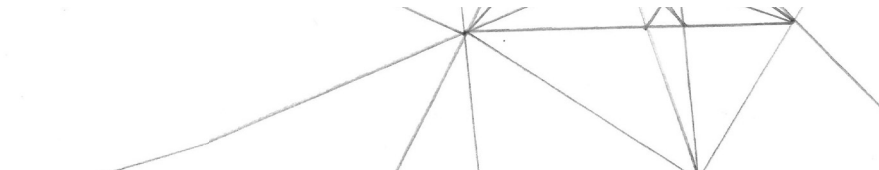
but to the portion of plant that connects them. It remains below the surface, charts the direction and movement of the plant growth, and stores proteins and starches which enable the plant to perennate from year to year. No matter how much of the rhizomatic weed is dug up, only a fraction of it must remain in order for an entire system to grow back. Deleuze and Guattari diverge from the plant-based rhizomatic to build an abstract structural theory. The main features of Deleuze and Guattari's rhizomatic structure are:⁴

- Any point in a rhizome can and must be connected to all other points.
- All are simultaneously self-contained and connected.
- The rhizome has multiple entry and exit points, each journey traces an individual route through the territory.
- There are no points, only lines in a rhizome.
- Positionally, the middle is a constant location of the rhizome, having no beginning or end; the middle is where things pick up speed, a rapid transversal movement sweeping away.
- A rhizome can be ruptured in any location, and a 'line of flight' will emerge charting new growth, either along existing lines or forging new lines; the rhizome continues to expand its reach.
- The rhizome is non-hierarchical and anti-genealogical, as opposed to the image of the tree and verb 'to be'.
- It exists as an alliance, 'the fabric of the rhizome is the conjunction, and...and...and'.
- Exiting the rhizome is seemingly impossible as a rhizome always connects to other rhizomatic systems and as such has no interior or exterior.

4. Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp. 6–27.



destratification.



These theoretical attributes may be translated into a practical way of working, embedded in the way my thinking expands, the process of writing, and the development of my art practice. All points (ideas, theories, objects, or art works) are connected, and their respective influences are enmeshed. Writing through a network structure leads inevitably to tracing over some of the same nodes in the diagrammatic map and repetitions can occur. The *and...and...and* is associative, inclusive, and potentially infinite in its gathering assembling approach. Marginalia, drawings, footnotes may be used to materialise the different levels of thinking or association and the different voices in the process of research.⁵ Lines of thought are ruptured and fragments gather, reassemble, and reform along new lines.

The practice-based researcher adopting both a critical and creative voice is explored by Rolf Hughes in his investigation of hybrid forms of writing for practice research.⁶ He considers how we might shift genres of research writing beyond just the addition of criticism to practice and theory. He calls for hybrid styles of writing which incorporate the critical, embodied, and poetic. These he argues cause 'reductive binary oppositions [to] dissolve'. The rhizome enables and encourages a multiplicity.

In writing there are differing voices vying for space. The researcher prioritises the academic tone, whose interests include how to make a clear case and unpicking theories to contribute to academic discourse. The artist whose concerns are focussed on the process, production, and material aspects of the work. The latter voice is interested in material, collaboration, in testing ideas and generative production, believing any problem may be solved through making or doing. The poet is similar to that of the artist but more interested in word play, metaphor, rhythm, and tone. The mathematician is interested in abstract theories, diagrams, establishing patterns and symbols, and finding rules to follow (which the artist may bend or break). The educator desires clarity to impart knowledge and facilitate growth.⁷

Where are you going?
 Where are you going?
 Where are you coming from?
 Where are you coming from?
 Where are you heading for?
 Where are you heading for?
 These are totally useless questions.

but what are the questions to ask?

5. Am I the gardener or the weed, or perhaps the soil? I am reminded of Karen Barad's earthworm analogy, the re-turn as repeatedly turning over and over in a generative way, rather than as going back.

6. Rolf Hughes, 'The Poetics of practice-based research writing' *The Journal of Architecture*, vol. 11, no. 3, 2006, 283-301.

7. The geographer or map-maker, the social scientist, or the philosopher might just have easily been included and described here.



I walk, write, and watch
Look up

outlines of this city
carve themselves into the surrounding hills
underlining a blank page of white sky

Look down

a bruised peony
plucked, carried, and discarded
trodden into asphalt

Turnaround

I find myself back
again
in the middle (rhizomatic)

Can you remember another location?

Trace lines
follow pointed directions



*only meander as
its structure changes through time*

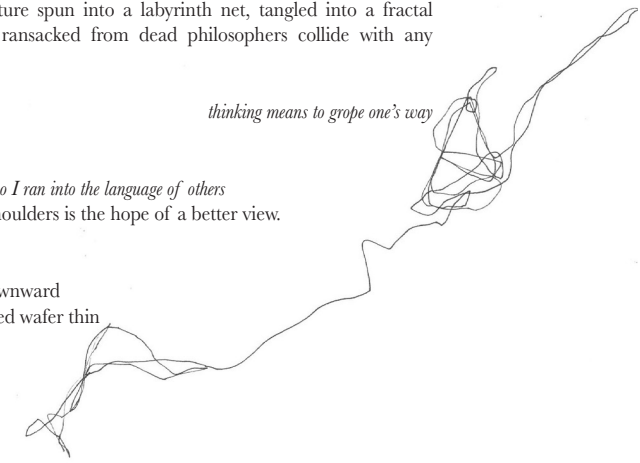
*the linear
is ruled by a blind necessity
since one cannot get lost
a continuous line
is drawn*

I stumble across Eco's labyrinth. The mind overlaps descriptions of a rhizomatic structure spun into a labyrinth net, tangled into a fractal library. Phrases ransacked from dead philosophers collide with any present reading.

thinking means to grope one's way

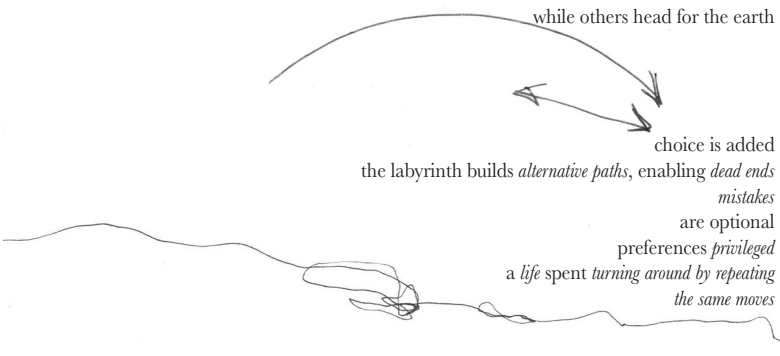
*I was unspeakable so I ran into the language of others
Lifted on their shoulders is the hope of a better view.*

from here
clouds gather downward
moments stretched wafer thin



beyond the window
hope floats

a wind-plucked leaf defies gravity

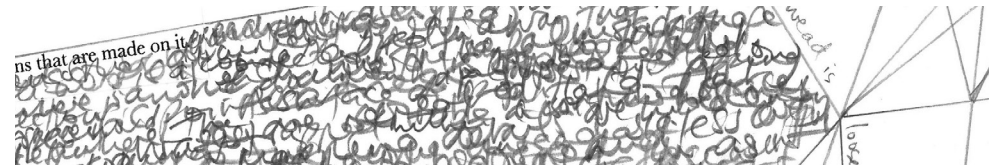


Another voice joins this growing list, a more conversational voice concerned with the experiential elements of the research process, the struggle of human endeavour beneath the academic veneer. It wilfully engages with distractions, uses popular culture and quotidian references, and frequently makes mistakes. It can be considered as the spontaneous voice of free association, without the desire to formulate a cohesive argument for the sake of academic rigour.⁸ Allowing these different voices to be present in the writing emphasises the idea of multiple entry points here as described in a rhizomatic system.

Working in a rhizomatic manner provides many challenges. According to Umberto Eco, thinking in a rhizomatic space 'means to grope one's way'; he suggests that seeing locally inside the structure of the rhizome is the only possibility.⁹ As any rhizomatic system connects to other rhizomes the idea of an interior and exterior is removed and reaching the outer limits of a territory becomes impossible. As each journey through my assembled research territory takes a different route, every navigation is unfamiliar. Frequently this prevents me from seeing what I am doing on the ground. The best analogy is that of walking a landscape. I can look up or across at the whole picture, but this frequently causes me to trip over the rocks beneath my feet; in watching the

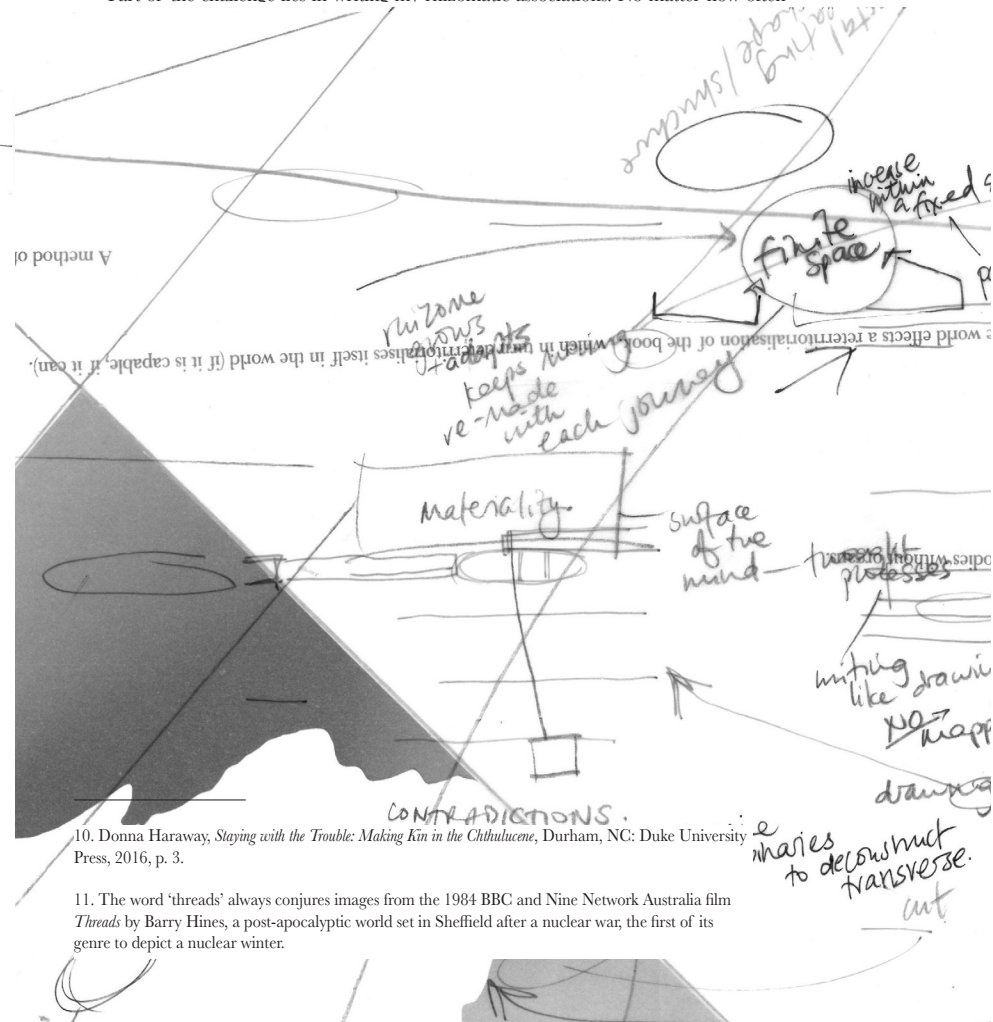
8. This is my neuro-diverse voice. Until 2016 I might have identified this additional voice as part of the conversational tone I have adopted – the voice that always follows a distraction or tangent, most likely to get the wrong end of the stick and run with it. In finally getting an SPLD (dyslexic tendencies) diagnosis in later life I had to re-examine or re-think so many of my life experiences. While re-reading Deleuze and Guattari's writing on minor literature they outline the experience 'to be as a stranger in one's own language'. Though they are describing the process of writing in a second language, this resonated with my dyslexic voice, and the feeling of being a stranger in language. Hiding this voice is a practice in which I have become an expert. Yet, I am gradually gaining a certain sense of freedom in finally gaining this information and releasing some of the tightly held habits.

9. Umberto Eco, 'The Encyclopaedia as Labyrinth', *Semiotics and the Philosophy of Language*, Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1986, p. 82.



ground I tread to avoid stumbling, I miss a view of the vista beyond. It became apparent that this lack of complete vision is inevitable, as identified by Eco, who proposes that descriptions made inside a rhizome are merely hypotheses, likely to be false, due to the condition of blindness the rhizome invokes. Donna Haraway outlines in *Staying with the Trouble* that methodologies of collaboration, experimentation, and invention are needed to 'follow the threads where they lead[...] following a thread in the dark'.¹⁰ In darkness of uncertainty the threads of collaboration and experimentation are what enable a path to be followed.¹¹ Accepting these conditions has enabled me to fight for my local and partial position, to take the risk of stumbling through the dark, trusting the generative encounters with making, reading, and writing.

Part of the challenge lies in writing my rhizomatic associations. No matter how often



10. Donna Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016, p. 3.

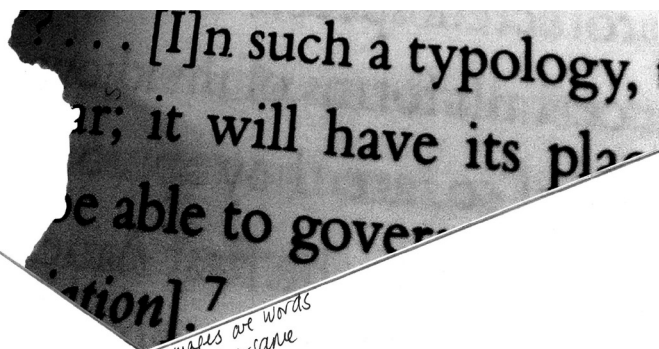
11. The word 'threads' always conjures images from the 1984 BBC and Nine Network Australia film *Threads* by Barry Hines, a post-apocalyptic world set in Sheffield after a nuclear war, the first of its genre to depict a nuclear winter.

a structure or intention is laid out, it is impossible to predict in advance how the rhizomatic connections will be built in the moment of assembling an argument. The ideas forged involve a process which embraces lostness and thinking in action, rather than the delivery of resolved content. This leaves the structure and shifting territory as provisional, constantly subject to revision. In making a connection from Deleuze and Guattari's rhizome towards Eco's description of the rhizomatic, the labyrinth appears, an image that lies across the map of this writing. Having made the link I have no easy way back to where I was and am momentarily at the end of a thread. This is not the dead end of a maze, for the possibility remains that all the ideas are connected, but in the moment of thinking while writing it takes energy and time to develop a new 'line of flight' to link the ideas in a flowing sequential manner. My thought process is ruptured and, as Deleuze and Guattari explain, if the rhizome is ruptured, lines of flight either reform along existing lines or sweep off in a new direction. This is how the rhizome continues to expand

Momentarily lost in the tangle of these rhizomatic lines I pick up a different thread in an attempt to find another route back to where I need to be. Is that a need or desire? Suddenly the association is of Alice and her desire for nonsense, and the difficulties experienced when one gets one's desire.¹² The feeling of falling down the rabbit hole, as well as a thought of a literal line of flight relate to Robin Nelson's use of the word clue and clew (the old form of the same word), which 'literally denotes a thread'.¹³ The lines of flight traced to build this network of connections are similar to those threads outlined in Nelson's description of the need to write clues/clews to accompany arts-based research process. He refers to the clew as being connected to the labyrinthine nature of research, a confusing tangle of passageways with a thread to hold which guides the reader, allowing them to follow the path taken.

male → FRACTAL
alignest
ation of the world, but the

and in relation to other b
g
ing?
Das mapping
as tunka



12. Alice here refers to Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*, London: Macmillan, 1980.
13. Robin Nelson, *Practice as Research in the Arts: principles, protocols, pedagogies, resistances*, Basingstoke Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, pp. 10-11.

move between things, establish a logic of the AND, overthrow ontology, c
and
and,

people always said all roads lead home
perhaps they must
as this place seems to grasp tightly

coming and going rather than starting*and finishing

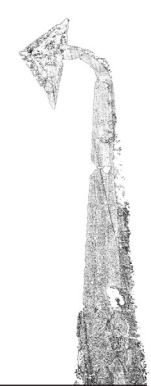
I set out
with the intention of becoming lost
a bewildered meandering

insolent
but
smitten

re-making, re-turning, re-fusing
always
between, beside, beyond

entangle the map
remember
it is not the territory

Clinging to the net as it dissolves
into fractals



follow the rhizome by rupture, lengthen, prolong, and relay the line of flight

walk the line
follow the line
hold the line
tow the line
down the line
cross the line
on the line
draw the line
out of line
end of the line

ys willing allegiance.

like measuring
the coastline
DETAIL

Continuing the idea of lostness in arts-based research Antonia Pont in *Practising with Deleuze* explores 'a tolerance for lost-ness and not-knowing. As well as a getting-lost, practice would invite or court a becoming-lost, a setting out into lost-ness'.¹⁴

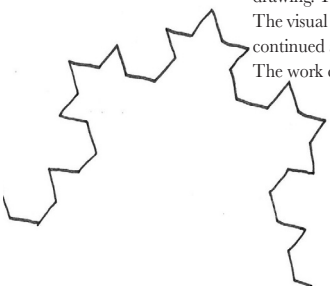
Embracing lostness is an important feature of producing both writing and arts research. It has enabled a searching without presuming knowledge in advance. Acting while lost can be a way to embrace randomness as a tool for undermining expected patterns of behaviour, and authority. Lostness in writing refers to writing thoughts in the process of thinking, working ideas out before fully formed. Maps are drawn to visualise ideas and research in diagrammatic form. These guide the writing process. However, in bridging the gaps between points in the maps, to write in a relatively linear manner with a clear linkage, the spaces that occur between points need articulating. These gap may exist as what has yet to be thought out. Each new connection across the idea diagram is a light of flight: a leap into the unknown as the as-yet-unthought is drawn out.

14. Antonia Pont, 'Philosophising Practice', Suzie Attiwill, Terri Bird, et al, *Practising with Deleuze: Design, Dance, Art, Writing, Philosophy*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017, p. 21.

.....

In 2017 I produced an artists book *Lines of Flight* as part of the AMBruno project [sic] a collection of fifteen artist books which embraced deliberate error. *Lines of Flight* forced together two contradictory systems: the rhizome and the book. A large diagrammatic drawing was produced to map my responses to the writings of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari in relation to the rhizome. The drawing was physically fragmented to thrust it into the paginated structure of a book. Once fixed as a book object it seemed important to continue growing and developing the rhizomatic nature of the work and my thinking.

I continue to work into and write around the fragmented pieces of the original drawing. These shards now act as a generative sourdough starter for new work. The visual fragments that interrupt the flow of writing here are produced from continued and expanded drawings beyond the original diagram.
The work continues ...



active
All multiplicities are flat, in the sense that

[tits|face]

by Michèle Beck

*I wish women didn't have to rip our pasts open & show you everything
& let you ogle our pain for you to believe us.*

- a quote by Lindy West on the #metoo campaign

Vogue & Grazia subscribers thirty-somethings drinking chai lattes
eulogising
Jennifer Lawrence or Angelina Jolie *legs up to their armpits* glamour
girls next door.

It's all possible. His dogged-gnawing resistance the pendulum
carrot tick-taking
years of youth pounds of flesh. Savouring & tossing skeleton
carcasses—

an unattainable dream to those who absorb pages. *Seventeen &
Cosmogirl* clickbaiters

YouTube contouring Instagram faces Mac-makeup-tits-face. The
porn addicts
perpetual masturbators *gangbangs & anal*. Search. You won't find a
woman

who is empowered, in control of her body or a genuine *female
orgasm*.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

by Rob Wilson Engle

God said *it is finished* and knocked hard
enough to rattle the seeds out of my body I
woke up
on the floor of my Jeep so angry my own
love had sustained me all these years
every morning the torn-up road unfolds with
little beasts upon it children get kidnapped
by the plummeting news ratings in America
I could be shot dead by bullets sharper
than a knife
the brutality of the trees or of being loved
the right way in this greatest deliberative
body my mind only gets smaller like the
wide shrinking mouth of a baby
approaching sleep or a young boy
considering he might just be the dirtiest
thing he knows he might just get everyone to
play along

DIPLOMACY

by Rob Wilson Engle

press the body of a man hard into another
perhaps emerges a war or a post-game
celebration *come on* we are all friends
I think as I force another mouth down
along the length of my torso I want love so bad
I'll rip
it up from the earth myself everyone
keeps
touching me the wrong way but I will leave
this world exactly as I found it white hot
bombs
falling on the first day on the seventh
men
lie in their homes bodies drowning in
gravity
using arrowheads to slice off piece after
piece of apple the entire history of desire
takes about 9 minutes to tell so let's admit
without apology what we do to each other
in this land this country the crop is about to burn
the crop might already be on fire

Promession

by Andrea Mason

Side A

It could start here, in this way, with this list of items stored in their loft between 1987 and 1997: a handmade doll with ping-pong ball head, a wok, two wok stands, a 10-inch diameter cake tin, a Carlsberg ashtray, a Westclox alarm clock, a bamboo vegetable steamer, 25 bed springs, a copy of *The Highway Code*, a copy of *Cocktails and Mixed Drinks*, a copy of *Not Just a Load of Old Lentils*, a copy of *Nicholson London Streetfinder*, a sheet of paper with four handwritten recipes, a copy of *The Principles of Company Law*, a bag of Evo-Stick tile grout, open, a Rawalpindi-Islamabad Tourist Brochure, a Bombay Events Brochure, a Lahore Streetmap, a Delhi Tourist Brochure, a box of broken white tiles, two plastic bicycle horns, a Jack-Jack instrument cable, three 1.5 volt batteries, two tins of vapour ointment, opened, a rusty Old Holborn tin, empty, a round Tupperware pot without lid, an India Tourist Map, torn, a copy of *A D.H. Lawrence Miscellany* by H. T. Moore, an Edgeworth Pipe Tobacco tin containing a burnt match, a Scotch C-90 cassette and a Tampax 'Classics' cassette, a red, plastic water pistol, a Sony HF S-90 cassette, a novelty tune device, a bobble hat egg cosy, hand-knitted, the back of a plug, two feet of electric cable, a green toy soldier, a rectangle Tupperware lid, two Polaroid flash cubes, two jack plugs, 15 fluorescent tube light fittings, a chopstick, a 25-watt bulb, a mirror plate, two screws, a putty rubber, a black and white check shirt, a blue rugby shirt, a pair of black dinner suit trousers, a school tie, a pair of dark blue dinner suit trousers, a copy of *Man, Woman & Child* by E. Seagal, a copy of *Economic History Vol. 1*, a copy of *Galleries Guide*, September 1988, an empty cassette case, several party invitations and club flyers, a Spud-U-Like badge, a red Travelcard holder, a cannonball, a black beret, three postcards in frames, a Fleur-de-Lis Scout badge, a pack of coloured sticky-back paper, six Christmas cards, a Stitchery kit, a steel coat hook, painted white, the round Tupperware lid, a pack of

playing cards marked "return to bar please", a photocopied article about artist Jan Vercruyse, a Rimmel lipstick, coffee shimmer, used, a bag of stair-carpet clamps, a pebble, chipped, two Rubik cubes, a vase, a printing block, a bowl carved out of a coconut shell, two pencils: 4H and HB, a No. 7 lipshaper pencil, used, a thick rusty sewing needle thrust into a wooden bobble wound with thick black thread, a brass castor, a plastic, toy rhino, a 3rd place swimming certificate, a crayon, a plastic toy sniper, a plastic toy spaceman, a plastic toy jeep, a plastic toy spacecraft, a bar of black wax, a broken teapot handle, a broken glass, a Stanley Knife blade, an A4 ring binder, a page torn out of *Men Only*, a selection of polyester ties and cravattes, a pair of brown leather loafers, mens, a blue, bomber jacket, a bag of rags, a black leather bum bag with broken zip, a tape measure, a red plastic Yo-Yo, a pair of thermal leggings, a ping pong bat, a toy wooden clock, a JOB cigarette rolling machine, a box of foil wine bottle tops from a wine-making kit, a feather-tipped dart, a Roxy Music cassette, a leather cigarette case, an Ever Hot milk jug, a boxed tie pin, a sheath knife with a fake bone handle, a pair of wooden castenets, a pair of cuff-links, a black plastic chess pawn, a Wordsworth board game, two pieces of Spirograph, 27 Scruples cards, a glass decanter, a leg from an artist's wooden mannequin, a goatskin flask, a Boomerang with instructions, a travelling chess set, a Yugo Pocket Solitaire game, a selection of warped 7" singles including *Lily of the Valley* by Queen, a Reckless Records carrier bag, a tiddlywinks disc, a wooden dice, a ceremonial dagger, a black bow tie, a Gurkha knife, an empty darts case, a packet of Silica gel, two glass lemon squeezers, a selection of letters, a felt gonk, hand-sewn, an empty contraceptive packet, a tube of Immac, opened, a jar of coconut oil, half-used, a jar of Pond's coldcream, opened, a box of firelighters, opened, a pencil case containing seven felt tip pens, a crayon, a popper-point pencil, a protractor and a cartridge pen, a bottle top, a bottle of Aramis setting lotion, opened, an A4 plastic sleeve, a tin of talcolm powder, a Pifco mini-electric fan, a desk lamp, a carved wooden box, a Boots 1200 hair dryer, a handmade clay ashtray, 15 pink, foam hair rollers, an orange swimming hat, a

box of medicinal charcoal tablets, a tube of Vichy Self Tan Lotion, opened, a tube of Vitapointe hair conditioner, opened, two Chinese bowls, a handmade clay bowl, a tea caddy, rusty, a plastic watch from Hula Hoops, a bottle of Tea Tree oil, opened, a Holland & Barret brochure, a black plastic comb, a pair of folding travel scissors, a black marker pen, a plastic credit card wallet, a No. 17 Hideaway stick, used, a pot of plum Pearly Shiner eyeshadow, used, a Papermate Rollerball pen, a black kohl pencil, used, a wooden clothes peg, a bottle of Guerlain scent, opened, a padlock, locked, a friendship bracelet, a pot of Miss Selfridge powder eyeshadow, used, a white eyeliner pencil, used, several toy dinosaurs, two emery boards, used, a roll of sticking plaster, nine hairgrips, a Monopoly £10 note, a college grant statement, four keys, a plastic-handled scalpel without blade, an eau de toilette sample of Grey Flannel, a miniature clay pig, a yellow lipstick, used, a twenty centime coin, a First Class stamp, unused, a tube of Supaglu, empty, a plastic button, a marble, six squares from a mirror ball, thirteen more screws, two hooks and eyes, four drawing pins, a safety pin, a drill bit, a Telefon cassette, four hessian sacks, a tin of peppermint vinyl matt emulsion, a small non-stick frying pan, a Mastermind Game, a Travel Scrabble, a collection of Stamford School calendars, 1974-1984, a recipe folder, empty, a picture frame, a black leather belt, the Guardian newspaper, 13 November 1989, scrunched up, a tube of Titanium White oil paint, twenty pieces of artist's charcoal, in a red carrier bag, a paint-soiled rag, a Sally Line Duty Free carrier bag, a bottle of Liquin, a Barclays Bank folder, also empty, a chess and draughts set, a skateboard helmet, a pair of brown Dr Marten brogues, size 7, a pair of Le Coq Sportif rugby boots, size 8, a tin of assorted screws and nails, six rubber washers, a green, plastic water pistol, a Smiths alarm clock, a white cotton dinner shirt, without collar, a grey wool blanket, a pair of Orange Tab Levi 505s, a pair of cycling shorts, a pair of white Levi 501s, an embroidered handkerchief, a paint roller, a chipboard off-cut, an aluminium attaché case, locked, a Spirograph set, a car radio-cassette player, a wooden mantle clock, an embroidered pyjama case, a yellow

orduroy recorder sleeve containing a cleaning brush, a *Girl Guide Patrol Leader's Handbook*, a German vocabulary exercise book, a gas-mask, a digital alarm clock, a gardening glove, a cyclist's water bottle, five carving knives, a wooden table leg, an empty jam jar, a fifties-style salt cellar, a door-chain, a block of coloured notepaper, a brown plastic comb, a brass incense-stick holder, a survival knife in a leather pouch, a chocolate grater, a glass cake stand, a plastic toy horse, two plastic sunflowers, a sunglasses lens, a key fob, a bag of incense cones, a number of Derbyshire Junior Girls Table Tennis trophies, plaques and medals, a paint brush, stiff with paint, a white T-shirt, a pair of Reebok jogging trousers, a pink eiderdown, a Red Records carrier bag, a credit card receipt, a length of fly strip, a number of school exercise books, a Peugeot 504 pickup vacuum pump, a set of darts in a yellow plastic case, a charcoal grey V-neck jumper, a roll of Gum tape, a game of Jack Straws, four Bakelite light switches, nine Bakelite door knobs, a Jones sewing machine manual, five work gloves filled with sand, several birthday cards, a single sheet of writing paper, a typewritten CV, a diary page, 27 March 1982, a packet of Anadin, a plastic toy whistle, a money bag containing a selection of foreign coins, a skipping rope, a copy of the first edition of *Zing* magazine: autumn, 1995, a chrome soap dish, a cardboard box, a rusty saw, a cream mug, a copy of *The Independent*, 2 December 1989, a Peugeot 504 pickup starter motor, 17 packs of Tampax Super, a wet and dry sanding block, a copy of the *London A-Z*, a red, cat collar, an upright vacuum cleaner, a black umbrella, a dartboard, a Singer sewing machine in a wooden case, a white, plastic, promotional Frisbee, various art catalogues, a feather pillow, a plastic rain bonnet, an Etch-A-Sketch, two A4 brown envelopes, a packet of pink Post-It notes, three 6-inch plastic rulers, a Bic biro, its end chewed, a wine bottle cork, Arena magazine: January 1986 to September 1988, *BLITZ* magazine: May 1987 to May 1989, a shopping list, a dental appointment card, six Greenflag Breakdown car window stickers, two sachets of Nutrine sweetener, a box of Lil-lets, a pink Hoover hairdryer, a Guinness beer mat, an ICA Membership Card: 1995, a table tennis ball, a British Gas pamphlet,

a ball of string, a family photograph with a person's head cut out, a UB40, more club flyers, an empty Weetabix packet, a stack of children's books and annuals, two David Essex posters, two Donny Osmond magazine cuttings, a copy of *Die Welt*, 2 March 1988, a photograph of Mandy, a 1976 diary, a crochet hook, a handmade felt pencil case, a pack of Plasticine, a pack of acrylic paints, a beach ball, deflated, a ski hat, a further bundle of letters, a CND membership card: 1981, a YHA Membership card, also 1981.

Side B

Toys: a handmade doll with ping-pong ball head, a red, plastic water pistol, a green, plastic toy soldier, a plastic toy rhino, a plastic toy sniper, a plastic toy spaceman, a plastic toy jeep, a plastic toy spacecraft, a red plastic Yo-Yo, a toy wooden clock, several toy dinosaurs, a green, plastic water pistol, a plastic toy horse, a plastic toy whistle, two plastic bicycle horns, a felt gonk, hand-sewn, a plastic toy horse, a plastic toy whistle, a dartboard, an Etch-A-Sketch. Handmade items: a doll with ping-pong ball head, a bobble hat egg cosy, a bowl carved out of a coconut shell, a felt gonk, a clay bowl, a friendship bracelet, an embroidered pyjama case, a felt pencil case. Cookware: a wok, two wok stands, a 10-inch diameter cake tin, a bamboo vegetable steamer, a small non-stick frying pan, a chocolate grater. Smoking paraphernalia: a Carlsberg ashtray, a rusty, Old Holborn 6 tin, empty, an Edgeworth Pipe Tobacco tin and burnt match, a JOB cigarette rolling machine, a leather cigarette case, a handmade clay ashtray. Clocks & watches: a Westclox alarm clock, a Smiths alarm clock, a plastic watch from Hula Hoops, a wooden mantle clock, a digital alarm clock. Ironmongery: 25 bed springs, a steel coat hook, painted white, a bag of stair-carpet clamps, a brass castor, a padlock, locked, four keys. Instruction manuals: *The Highway Code*, *Girl Guide Patrol Leader's Handbook*, a Jones sewing machine manual. Academic Texts: *The Principles of Company Law*, *Economic History Vol. 1*. Recipe books: *Cocktails and Mixed Drinks*, *Not Just a Load of Old Lentils*. Books of maps: *Nicholson London Streetfinder*,

London A-Z. Stationery: a sheet of paper with four handwritten recipes, two pencils: 4H and HB, an A4 ring binder, a pencil case containing seven felt tip pens, a crayon, a popper-point pencil, a protractor and a cartridge pen, an A4 plastic sleeve, a black marker pen, a Papermate Rollerball pen, a tube of Supaglu, empty, four drawing pins, a recipe folder, empty, a bottle of Liquin, a Barclays Bank folder, also empty, a block of coloured notepaper, a number of school exercise books, a single sheet of writing paper, two A4 brown envelopes, a packet of pink Post-It notes, three 6-inch plastic rulers, a Bic biro, its end chewed. DIY: a bag of Evo-Stick tile grout, opened, a box of broken white tiles, two screws, a Stanley Knife blade, a tape measure, thirteen more screws, a drill bit, a tin of peppermint vinyl matt emulsion, a tin of assorted screws and nails, six rubber washers, a paint roller, a chipboard off-cut, a paint brush, stiff with paint, a rusty saw, a wet and dry sanding block. Tourist Brochures: a *Rawalpindi-Islamabad Tourist Brochure*, a *Bombay Events Brochure*, a *Delhi Tourist Brochure*. Stereo equipment: a jack-jack cable, two jack plugs. Electrical equipment: a jack-jack cable, three 1.5 volt batteries, the back of a plug, two feet of electric cable, two jack plugs, 15 fluorescent tube light fittings, a 25-watt bulb, a Pifco mini-electric fan, a desk lamp, a Boots 1200 hair dryer, a pink Hoover hairdryer. Medication: two tins of vapour ointment, a box of medicinal charcoal tablets, a bottle of Tea Tree oil, a packet of 7 Anadin. Kitchenware: a round Tupperware pot without lid, a bobble hat egg cosy, a rectangle Tupperware lid, a chopstick, the round Tupperware lid, a broken teapot handle, a broken glass, an Ever Hot milk jug, a glass decanter, two glass lemon squeezers, two Chinese bowls, a handmade clay bowl, a tea caddy, rusty, five carving knives, an empty jam jar, a fifties-style salt cellar, a glass cake stand, a cream mug. Maps: a *Lahore Streetmap*, an *India Tourist* map, torn. Non-fiction: *A D.H. Lawrence Miscellany* by Harry T. Moore. Cassettes: a Scotch C-90 cassette, a Tampax 'Classics' cassette, a Sony HF S-90 cassette, an empty cassette case, a Roxy Music cassette, a Telefon cassette. Novelty Items: a novelty tune device, a Spud-U-Like badge, a plastic watch from Hula Hoops, a miniature clay pig, two plastic

sunflowers. Photography equipment: two Polaroid flash cubes. Picture-hanging equipment: a mirror plate, two screws, thirteen more screws, a drill bit, a roll of Gum tape. Art equipment: a putty rubber, two pencils: 4H and HB, a crayon, a leg from an artist's wooden mannequin, a black marker pen, a plastic-handled scalpel without blade, a tube of Titanium White oil paint, twenty pieces of artist's charcoal, a pack of Plasticine, a pack of acrylic paints. Clothing: a black and white check shirt, a blue rugby shirt, a pair of black dinner suit trousers, a school tie, a pair of dark blue dinner suit trousers, a selection of polyester ties and cravattes, a blue bomber jacket, a pair of thermal leggings, a white, cotton dinner shirt, without collar, a pair of Orange Tab Levis, a pair of cycling shorts, a pair of white Levi 501s, a white T-shirt, a pair of Reebok jogging trousers, a charcoal grey, V-neck jumper. Novels: *Man, Woman & Child* by Erich Segal. Listings magazines: *Galleries Guide*, September 1988. Invitations & flyers: several party invitations and club flyers, more club flyers. Accessories: a red Travelcard holder, a black beret, a Fleur-de-Lis Scout badge, a selection of polyester ties and cravattes, a boxed tie pin, a pair of cuff-links, a black bow tie, a carved wooden jewellery box, a plastic credit card wallet, a friendship bracelet, a black leather belt, an embroidered handkerchief, a brass incense-stick holder, a key fob, a bag of incense cones, a black 8 umbrella, a plastic rain bonnet. Weaponry: a cannonball, a sheath knife with a fake bone handle, a ceremonial dagger, a Ghurka knife, a survival knife in a leather pouch. Hats: a black beret, a ski hat. Pictures: three postcards in frames. Craft materials: a pack of coloured sticky-back paper, a Stitchery kit, a bar of black wax, a tube of Supaglu, empty. Greetings cards: six Christmas cards, several birthday cards. Homeware: a steel coat hook, painted white, a vase, a Pifco mini-electric fan, a desk lamp, a handmade clay ashtray, a pink eiderdown, a length of flystrip, a picture frame, a chrome soap dish. Games: a pack of playing cards marked "return to bar please", two Rubik cubes, a feather-tipped dart, a black plastic chess pawn, a Wordsworth board game, two pieces of Spirograph, 27 Scruples cards, a Boomerang with instructions, a travelling chess set, a

Yugo Pocket Solitaire game, a Tiddlywinks disc, a wooden dice, an empty darts case, a Monopoly £10 note, a marble, a Mastermind game, a Travel Scrabble, a chess and draughts set, a Spirograph set, a set of darts in a yellow plastic case, a game of Jack Straws, a dartboard, a white, plastic, promotional Frisbee, an Etch-A-Sketch. Photocopied material: a photocopied article about artist Jan Verduyse. Cosmetics: a Rimmel lipstick, coffee shimmer, used, a No. 7 lipshaper pencil, used, a No. 17 Hideaway stick, used, a pot of plum Pearly Shiner eyeshadow, used, a black kohl pencil, used, a pot of Miss Selfridge powder eyeshadow, used, a white eyeliner pencil, used, a yellow lipstick, used. Souvenirs: a pebble, chipped, a bowl carved out of a coconut shell. Gifts: a sheath knife with a fake bone handle, a pair of wooden castenets, a goatskin flask, a ceremonial dagger, a Ghurka knife, a survival knife in a leather pouch. Printing materials: a printing block. Haberdashery: a thick rusty sewing needle thrust into a wooden bobble wound with thick black thread, a plastic button, two hooks and eyes, a safety pin. Certificates: a 3rd place swimming certificate. Porn: a page torn out of *Men Only*. Shoes: a pair of brown leather loafers, mens, a pair of brown Dr Marten brogues, size 7. Cleaning equipment: a bag of rags, a paint-soiled rag, an upright vacuum cleaner. Bags: a black leather bum bag 9 with broken zip, a Reckless Records carrier bag, a red carrier bag, a Sally Line Duty Free carrier bag, an aluminium attaché case, locked, four hessian sacks, a Red Records carrier bag. Uniform items: a school tie. Sports equipment: a ping pong bat, an orange swimming hat, a skateboard helmet, a pair of le Coq Sportif rugby boots, size 8, a pair of cycling shorts, a cyclist's water bottle, a table tennis ball. Home-brewing equipment: a box of foil wine bottle tops from a wine-making kit. Outdoors equipment: a goatskin flask, a survival knife in a leather pouch, a beachball, deflated. Vinyl records: a selection of warped 7" singles including *Lily of the Valley* by Queen. Miscellaneous: a packet of Silica gel, six squares from a mirror ball. Memorabilia: a selection of letters, a collection of Stamford School calendars: 1974-1984, several birthday cards, a diary page: 27 March 1982, a family photograph with a person's head cut out, two David Essex

posters, two Donny Osmond magazine cuttings, a photograph of Mandy, a 1976 diary, a further bundle of letters. Rubbish: an empty contraceptive packet, a bottle top, a wooden table leg, a sunglasses lens, an empty Weetabix packet. Firelighting equipment: a burnt match, a box of firelighters, opened. Hairdressing equipment: a Boots 1200 hair dryer, 15 pink, foam hair rollers, a black plastic comb, nine hairgrips, a brown plastic comb, a pink Hoover hairdryer. Promotional items: a Tampax 'Classics' cassette, a plastic watch from Hula Hoops, a Holland & Barret brochure, a white plastic promotional Frisbee, six Greenflag breakdown car window stickers, a Guinness beer mat, a British Gas pamphlet. Travel equipment: a travelling chess set, a Yugo Pocket Solitaire game, a pair of folding travel scissors. Hardware: a wooden clothes peg, a door-chain, a ball of string. Perfumery: a bottle of Guerlain scent, opened, an eau de toilette sample of Grey Flannel. Toiletries: a tube of Immac, opened, a jar of coconut oil, half-used, a jar of Pond's cold cream, opened, a bottle of Aramis setting lotion, opened, a tin of talcolm powder, a tube of Vichy Self Tan lotion, opened, a tube of Vitapointe hair conditioner, opened, two emery boards, used, 17 packs of Tampax super, a box of Lil-lets. First Aid items: a roll of 10 sticking plaster. Correspondence: a selection of letters, a college grant statement. Currency: a Monopoly £10 note, a twenty centime coin, a money bag containing a selection of foreign coins. Postage: a First Class stamp, unused. Newspapers and Magazines: the *Guardian*: 13 November 1989, scrunched up, a copy of the first edition of *Zing* magazine: autumn, 1995, a copy of *The Independent*: 2 December 1989, Arena magazine: January 1986 to September 1988, *BLITZ* magazine: May 1987 to May 1989, a copy of Die Welt, 2 March 1988. Catalogues: various art catalogues. Bedding: a grey wool blanket, a pink eiderdown, a feather pillow. Car Hi-Fi equipment: a car radio-cassette player. Musical equipment: a pair of wooden castanets, a yellow, corduroy, recorder sleeve and cleaning brush. University books: a German vocabulary exercise book. Protective equipment: a gas-mask, a gardening glove. Gardening equipment: a gardening glove. Plaques, trophies, medals: a number of Derbyshire

Junior Girls Table Tennis trophies, plaques and medals. Receipts: a credit card receipt. Car parts: a Peugeot 504 pickup vacuum pump, a Peugeot 504 pickup starter motor. Antiques: four Bakelite light switches, nine Bakelite door knobs, an Ever Hot milk jug. Artwork: five work gloves filled with sand. Professional development: a typewritten CV. Fitness equipment: a skipping rope. Storage items: a cardboard box. Pet equipment: a red cat collar. Sewing equipment: a Singer sewing machine in a wooden case. Lists: a shopping list. Appointment cards: a dental appointment card. Food items: a wine bottle cork, two sachets of Nutrine sweetener, an empty Weetabix packet. Membership cards: an ICA Membership card: 1995, a CND membership card: 1981, a YHA Membership card, also 1981. Registration cards: a UB40. Children's books: a stack of children's books and annuals. Posters: two David Essex posters. Crochet equipment: a crochet hook.

a. list of categories:

Toys.

Handmade items.

Cookware.

Smoking paraphernalia.

Clocks & watches.

Ironmongery.

Instruction manuals.

Academic texts.

Recipe books.

Books of maps.
Stationery.
DIY items.
Tourist brochures.
Stereo equipment.
Electrical equipment.
Medication.
Kitchenware.
Maps.
Non-fiction.
Cassettes.
Novelty items.
Photography equipment.
Picture-hanging equipment.
Art equipment.
Clothing.
Novels.
Listings magazines.

Invitations & flyers.
Accessories.
Weaponry.
Hats.
Pictures.
Craft materials.
Greetings cards.
Homeware.
Games.
Photocopied material.
Cosmetics.
Souvenirs.
Gifts.
Printing materials.
Haberdashery.
Certificates.
Porn.
Shoes.

Cleaning equipment.

Bags.

Uniform items.

Sports equipment.

Home-brewing equipment.

Outdoors equipment.

Vinyl records.

Miscellaneous.

Memorabilia.

Rubbish.

Firelighting equipment.

Hairdressing equipment.

Promotional items.

Travel equipment.

Hardware.

Perfumery.

Toiletries.

First Aid items.

Correspondence.

Currency.

Postage.

Newspapers and magazines.

Catalogues.

Bedding.

Car Hi-Fi equipment.

Musical equipment.

University books.

Protective equipment.

Gardening equipment.

Plaques, trophies, medals.

Receipts.

Car parts.

Antiques.

Artwork.

Professional development.

Fitness equipment.

Storage items.
Pet equipment.
Sewing equipment.
Lists.
Appointment cards.
Food items.
Membership cards.
Registration cards.
Children's books.
Posters.
Crochet equipment.

b. categorising the categories

Household goods: toys, cookware, clocks, ironmongery, instruction manuals, recipe books, DIY items, stereo equipment, electrical equipment, medication, kitchenware, novels, pictures, homeware, haberdashery, cleaning equipment, sports equipment, home-brewing equipment, outdoors equipment, hardware, bedding, antiques, artwork, storage items. *Handmade items*: handmade items. *Personal items*: smoking paraphernalia, souvenirs, gifts, memorabilia, perfumery, correspondence, receipts, professional development, lists, appointment cards, membership cards, plaques, trophies and medals, registration cards. *Printed matter*: instruction manuals, academic texts, recipe books, books of maps, tourist brochures,

maps, non-fiction, novels, listings magazines, catalogues, invitations and flyers, greetings cards, certificates, porn, correspondence, newspapers and magazines, university books, receipts, lists, appointment cards, membership cards, registration cards, children's books, posters, tourist brochures, maps, photocopied material. *Stationery*: stationery. *Entertainment items*: toys, cassettes, novels, craft materials, games, vinyl records, newspapers and magazines, children's books, novelty items. *Equipment*: photography equipment, picture-hanging equipment, art equipment, printing materials, cleaning equipment, sports equipment, outdoors equipment, firefighting equipment, hairdressing equipment, travel equipment, car hi-fi equipment, musical equipment, protective equipment, gardening equipment, fitness equipment, car parts, pet equipment, sewing equipment, crochet equipment. *Clothing*: clothing, hats, uniform items. *Accessories*: accessories, bags. *Weaponry*: weaponry. *Cosmetics*: cosmetics. *Footwear*: shoes. *Miscellaneous*: miscellaneous, rubbish, promotional items, currency. *Toiletries*: toiletries. *First Aid items*: first aid items. *Financial items*: currency, receipts. *Postage items*: postage. *Food items*: food items.

c. list of new categories:

Household goods.
Handmade items.
Personal items.
Printed matter.
Stationery.
Entertainment items.
Equipment.

Clothing.

Accessories.

Weaponry.

Cosmetics.

Footwear.

Miscellaneous.

Toiletries.

First Aid items.

Financial items.

Postage items.

Food items.

d. categorising the new categories:

Goods: household goods, handmade items, personal items, printed matter, stationery, entertainment items, equipment, clothing, accessories, weaponry, cosmetics, footwear, miscellaneous, toiletries, first aid items, financial items, postage items, food items.

e. new new category:

Goods.

And end here, with goods.

Fractured Skull

by Claire Hughes

Red scrub pajamas,

jay cloth hat

crocs with socks

into the white light cave

double doors breathe

open

close dying gasp,

through again

Russian doll creaks and moans

beep beep beep pulses

bumps bangs birds chirp in trolley wheels

need fluids confirm name date of birth not pink, grey signature

take life as deposit

snakes take your place,

as we sip tea eat toast crave bacon as flesh burns

Beep Beep Beep

slice the solar plexus to the tune of turning newspaper and

Barry Manilow

BEEP BEEP BEEP

pull out guts noodles for tea

no sauce

let it burn chest burns *need to*

lungs claw at their cage

BEEP stop BEEP *this isn't* BEEP metal clinks

Blink

and I am seven

making lime floors squeak

daddy looks like a

spaceman

BEEP might not **BEEP** pull **BEEP** through the night *do they have*

snakes in space

Blink

back to blinding white light and
beep beep beep beep beep beep
clamps forceps gauze gauze gauze cross match needed
two units
shut doors to Copacabana
let the lark ascend

Montmartre

by Connor Harrison

from Lonely Planet's Pocket Paris

Montmartre's slinking, crooked,
crowned the city's steepest
martyr, beheaded in 250
lofty views. Stroll early morning,
start at the top of Sacré-Coeur,
inside its dome, then drop through
the Cimetière, visiting Paris' small
museums, dedicated to sand.
Downhill, Montmartre's a light
district, fast becoming,
better known.

Sacré-Coeur

by Connor Harrison

from Lonely Planet's Pocket Paris

To atone for bloodshed
and controversy, the basilica
was dropped on Montmartre,
stained glass, shattered
miraculously. In a sense
a prayer, around the clock,
perpetual display, 300 steps,
cash only. It's said you can see
Christ designed in 1922, one of
its kind, golden hue.

A Review of Sarah Cave's *Perseverance Valley* (Knives, Forks and Spoons Press, 2020)

by Richard A. Carter

Sarah Cave's *Perseverance Valley* (2020) is a truly singular meditation on a more-than-human universe that far exceeds the austere framings of our technoscientific episteme—which so often presumes authority over the accounts provided by other modes of perception, knowing, and being.

Perseverance Valley is framed around the travails of the twin Mars Exploration Rovers, *Spirit* and *Opportunity*, that were launched by the American space agency NASA in 2003, and which, after landing in January 2004, proceeded to roam the surface for nearly 6 and 14 years, respectively. Returning hundreds of gigabytes of data, both rovers were instrumental in shaping our contemporary understanding of Mars as a world with a rich, dynamic, and distinctly watery past, of which active traces remain today. Arriving at the dawn of the social media era, *Spirit* and *Opportunity* were personified online in the first person, offering regular, childlike updates on their encounters.

No such faux naivety is to be found in Cave's poetry, which also depicts both rovers as sentient actors, grappling to make sense of their alien surroundings, and the nature of their being within it. Rather than depict *Spirit* and *Opportunity* as manifest avatars of instrumentalised, technoscientific rationality, Cave's poetry dwells on modes of sensing, cognition, and expression that are at once hallucinatory, deeply strange, and irrepressibly spiritual. Indeed, there is only the barest indication of any technoscientific Real to be found throughout *Perseverance Valley*. The most discernible events to be found are *Spirit*'s loss of mobility, and its eventual shutting down in a Martian dust storm, alongside *Opportunity*'s distant communiques with NASA's Deep Space Network (DSN), before later meeting its own demise, marking the end of the collection—captured using a viral paraphrase of its last status report by journalist Jacob Margolis: 'my batteries are low and it's getting dark'.

In contrast to the official accounts of austere roving laboratories on a gravely scientific mission of discovery, inching along in tightly choreographed steps, *Perseverance Valley* offers a series of iridescent vignettes, replete with artistic, cultural, and religious references that cohere not so much as expressions of what is taking place, or what is being sensed, but as flashes of alien consciousness in the eschatological aftermath of humanity itself. On the barren hamada of the Martian surface, the presence of machine explorers that have fallen from the heavens might appear as far removed from the human experience as might be imaginable, outside the fathomless voids of deep space. Nonetheless, just as the alien terrain exhibits traces of the more Earth-like past that gave rise to it, the rovers themselves bear the traces of the social, cultural, religious, and political forces that enabled their development—as embedded in their software architectures, hardware configurations, and supporting infrastructures. It is these traces that have made their mark on the eventual disposition of *Spirit* and *Opportunity* on the Martian surface, and it is here that Cave's poetry establishes a dialogue between the human, the machinic, and the mineral across scales ranging from the individual and familial, to the planetary, then interplanetary, and, finally, the transcendent spheres of the divine. The result is a depiction of an unruly, radiant, kaleidoscopic matrix of intersecting forces, which contrasts against the cool, delimited logics we associate with technical systems.

Each poem is framed visually within a depiction of the camera lenses of both rovers, with stadiametric reticules and simple analytic numerals bordering each page. Nonetheless, there is rarely any actual Martian imagery in the background, only a solid dark green. We are invited to situate ourselves not so much as gazing through these sensory apparatus—to treat them naively as direct extensions of ourselves—but to gaze instead at an interior imaginary that is at once human, machinic, and mineral. The very title of the first poem, *Neuro Evolution of Augmenting Topologies is when Mario_Bot Discovers Natural History*, offers a flavour of the collection as a whole, initially drawing comparisons between the Martian rovers as computerised avatars,

negotiating digitally mapped obstacles, and the Nintendo gaming icon, Super Mario ('an algorithm—devastating and conveniently unrelatable—a Martian experiencing the silence'), before erupting into a torrent of imagery that invokes desert mysticism, Christian hymns, fascist politics, fossilised remains, the 'digitised fields' of Martian topography, and the 'holographic darkness' of a 'universe as lake'. The result is a dense and rhythmic glossolalia that appeals not so much to any one mode of experience, or to the abstractly alien nature of outer space, as to a vision of an exteriorised, omniscient (and, therefore, abjectly unreachable, unknowable) divinity: 'Snake-Rising Cat-Speaks-To-You / Angel-Guides-You Jesus Apparition'. The latter may well be understood in just these terms, or perhaps as striking a means as we have devised to signify our residence within a profoundly more-than-human reality.

Present throughout *Perseverance Valley* is this sense of a universe whose ultimate scale, richness, and complexity far exceeds the narrow frames of any one attempt at comprehension, necessitating its portrayal through entangled, shifting 'meshworks' of ideas and images—as opposed to the atomised portrayals and standardised topographies of networked disciplinarity. In Cave's poem *The Shape of Opportunity's Thought*, the chorus from the gospel hymn 'His eye is on the sparrow / And I know He watches me' bookends a large block of binary numbers, which, on closer inspection, is found to encode these verses repeatedly. The effect is not so much a crude juxtaposition of the spiritual and the computational, the rationally secular and the quaintly theological, as an expression of the poignant resonances between them. We are invited to imagine, in the context of the *Opportunity* rover, the ancient history of mathematicising the observable heavens, and its application for making a more routinised, regimented, and 'enlightened' Earthly domain—to mirror the divine order observable in the clockwork regularity of the stars and planets. We might think subsequently of the rationalised technologies that ultimately grew out of these efforts, such as assembly lines, artillery and rocket ballistics, atomic energy, and the first computers: all originating in programmes of warfare, extraction, and exploitation,

seeking to remodel the world for various quasi-religious ends—Imperial dominion, Taylorist efficiencies, Nazi eugenics, Capitalist hegemony. We may think finally of how these processes ultimately delivered the Martian rovers to its surface, and how, in its irradiated deserts, we might discern a fearful premonition of Earth’s eventual fate—scoured into ruin by unceasing attempts at capturing the inert perfection of the divine. On this point, the Martian rovers, and other robotic explorers, may well provide the last surviving testaments to the human species in the event of its extinction, granting *Spirit* and *Opportunity* a suitably ambivalent poignancy that suggests how we are already living in *post*-human times.

Such is the richness of reflection afforded by Cave throughout *Perseverance Valley*. No one account of its constituent poems could do justice to their highly experimental mode, and the churning, vibrant, irrepressible imagination they embody. Coming amidst another, exhausting wave of hype surrounding Mars as a future home for expansionist, extractionist utopias, as well as debates concerning whether the Earth itself is entering a new geological epoch, the Anthropocene—marking its irreversible transformation by human activity—there is much to be gained in reading the provocative, unsettling, and endlessly surprising turns of this collection. Advocates of Martian colonisation often reduce the Earth to a mere ‘rock’ from which the human species must ultimately escape, with Mars itself being a suitably blank canvas onto which myriad, techno-centric fantasies can play out—unencumbered by laws, regulations, or, seemingly, any sense of humility towards the biological realities of long-term ‘off-planet’ survival. Such attitudes betray the deep roots of the present environmental crisis—the looming finality of the Anthropocene—in a fundamental lack of wonder towards, empathy for, and a sense of situatedness within a more-than-human reality, as compared to the glittering, rationalising promises of technical order. *Perseverance Valley*, in bringing these domains together in such a startling way, reveals their ostensible partitions to be entirely illusory, with the implication that we, the makers of these divisions, exist as part of an always dynamic, already meaningful universe,

rather than a force of divine imposition onto a lifeless void.

The scholar Donna Haraway has used the phrase ‘staying with the trouble’ in her accounts of how we might learn to live within in an irreversibly damaged planet—to acknowledge and embrace the messiness and uncertainties involved. In reimagining the Martian rovers as a nexus in which such vast, complex, and more-than-human processes converge, Cave presents us with minor instances of how we can approach the challenges of the present moment—acknowledging its perils, histories, injustices, and ambiguities. Mars and Earth are not simply inert domains, awaiting discovery and utilisation, and technology is never purely rational or pragmatic, while science itself is never conducted beyond the reach of culture, society, politics, or even religion. *Perseverance Valley* shows us instead how these processes intersect, transform, reorient, and impact profoundly the nature of perception, knowing, and being across the human, the machinic, and the mineral, which exist always in a state of entanglement. In framing the journey of *Spirit* and *Opportunity* in such terms, Cave offers us not another kind of moralistic allegory—another fruitless remonstrance of our failings—but a concrete demonstration of the kinds of imagination, creativity, and perspectival shifts that are necessary (if we wish to survive) for reframing our shared sense of the present moment, and, from this, our shared agency in shaping where we, and the worlds of which we are part, may ultimately go.

Blickpunkt

by G. Toro

Little piggie went to art class.

Rescued from the slaughterhouse in May 2016. Piggasso is one fine, fortunate swine.

Her primary purpose? To paint a better picture for pig-kind—

Eat. Syrupy peaches.

Sleep. Repeat.

Eat. The Cape's horizon.

Sleep. Repeat—

No nail thumbed into
sow's ear purse
fingers do the running man.
How much OINK for this OINK?

Every original OINK™ is personally signed by
a blonde woman in a red dress straddling a hay bale. Her nose
tip. Commissions on request.

The Rambunctious Celebration

by Arun Jeetoo

grandiose with colour confetti
blue whimsical
banners
Kelewele cake

and presents galore
with an open-casket service
my Caput Mortuum
in a coffin
waiting for sundown
to build myself back
in my own way

luminous like Saturn's face
wiser than yesterday

my phoenixian renaissance
incinerates the weak me

that is why
so much depends upon.

CHARLOTTE

by Arun Jheetoo

once flint-coloured evenings
and ochre love
that bathed the forest
now the denim-rain mornings
and monochrome separation
that sank the house

god's tears wash away

her my

taste mouth

song ears

face eyes

smell nose

and her baby-lover comes
from the never-sleeping mountains,
a woolly hat warming her temple
as her body once covered mine,

to sail out the past
of a nectar-sipping Morpho.

Disorderlily

by Charles Putschkin

[youtube.com/watch?v=_gqUk0s6rlQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_gqUk0s6rlQ)

Disorderlily or, Poem-Letter to My Orderly, Lily, Whom I Sometimes Refer to as My Disorder-Lily, Because of the Condition We Find Ourselves In

by Charles Putschkin

In the shape of 'Severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 isolate Wuhan-Hu-1, complete genome'

1 attaaaggtt dearlilyth isiswhatyo umightcall apebblebea chidontkno
61 wwyyithoug htthatwoul dsoundfunn yitsjustwh atitisthat
thatswhati
121 twasitwasw estdorseta fterallitr iedtothink ofapuninvo lvingtheco
181 nceptofroc kbottombut nothingca metomindso insteadiju
stletthewo
241 rdshangthe reintheair makingever yonefeelaw kwardandwe
irdaboutme
301 untiloneof youinterve nedandsaid letsallgof forlunchat
theanchori
361 nnandiknew thatinclud edmetooalb eitreluctan tlyIhadtal
kedalotabo
421 utpigeonsr ecentlyinw athiguessw asanattemp ttomakemes
eemmoreint
481 erestingid onthaveany ofthosefri endswhocal lmedarlingi
nthatwayp
541 eopleherei nbristolsa ydarlingor lovetoeach othersoith oughtthatf
601 requentlyi nvokingthe feetlesspi geonsofem pleleadsta
tionmights
661 omehowbyas sociationm akemeseemw orthyofcar eorattenti
onorevenl
721 ovebutofco urseitdoes ntitjstle adsmedowna pathwherei
mexplainin
781 gtoblankan dpitifuley thatpigeon shitisasha rmfultomas
onryasitis
841 tothepigeo nsownfeeta ndthatsta ndinginthe irownexcre
mentiswhat

901 makestheml ookthatway liketheyve beentothew arstheresj
ustnowayof
961 knowingwhy theydothat andthentha tmyfatherh asalzheim
ersasiftha
1021 twouldsome savemefuck ingpotatoh eadpotatoh eadfuckerf
fuckimsor
1081 ryididntme antolashou tlikethatt hisiswhaty oustarttos
oundlikeaf
1141 terawhilew henyoureth atguytheon ewhostarts sentencesb
ysayinghed
1201 doesntmean tobethatgu yandthenis yougetused totalkingt
yourselfso
1261 anythingki ndofgoeski ndofsometi mesiwishth erewasamut
ebuttonora
1321 waytojustr rewindandd eleteevery thingididl ikethatove
rgrowncceme
1381 teryinclif tonwhereyo ucanhardly gleanthewr itingonthe
stoneswher
1441 ethegraves competewit habandoned shoppingtr olleysfort
heattentio
1501 nofworkers ontheirlun chbreakyou knowthatfe elingithin
ksomeoneon
1561 eoncesaidt hatpeoplew hocommitsu icidedontr eallywantt
ocopitthey
1621 justwantto gobackinti metoaplace beforewher etheyfeltd
ifferently
1681 likethosel astdaysofw interinvic toriaparkw henwesaton
thatbencha
1741 ndatejaffa cakesandmo ckedthecap oeirakidsb eforetheca
poeirakids
1801 werelocked upinsideli keeeveryone elseandnor thstreetcl
osedandsou
1861 thvillewen tcoldjustl ikeyouafte ripointedo utthatyoua
lwaysworel
1921 owcutsforo urappointm entsandcou ldthatjustbe coincidenc

1981 ymaybeitst rueidontkn owabouts u icidesimea nrightnowi
justreally
2041 dontwantto beinwestba yaroundyo uoranyofth osepeoplea
ndallthose
2101 asthmaindu cingcliffe dgesimsorr ythisreall ymakesthin
gsawkwardd
2161 oesntitish ouldnthave broughtupa nyofthatim adeawordm
apofwordsi
2221 woulduseif ididntknow whattowrit etoyousort oflikealis
toficebrea
2281 kersiguess thatsomeon emighttake withthemto adatebutth
isisntadat
2341 eobviously ihopeyoudi dntthinkit houghtthis isadateime
anthatiwas
2401 askingyouo utiknowyou dontiknowt hatsinappr opriateher
earesomeof
2461 thewordsiw rotechasef acelessend lessurgesw ondroussil
tidontknow
2521 whyiwrotet hatlastone ithinkitsb ecauseicro sstheavone
verydayand
2581 seebicycle sburiedint hesiltalon gcoronatio nroadialso
wrotethewo
2641 rdmacroeco nomicsiwas ntgoingtos aythatoneb ecauseidon
treallykno
2701 wwhatmacro economicsi isbutthatw ouldbekind ofdishones
tiguessime
2761 annowthati startedtalk ingaboutit itwouldbed ishonestno
ttomention
2821 itiwishyou wantedtose emeevenwhe nyoudidnth avetosince
relycputsc
2881 kintgttgctg gcagatgctg tcataaaaac tttgcaacca gatatctgaat
tacttacacc
2941 actgggcatt gatttagatg agtggagtat ggctacatac tacttattg
atgagtctgg
3001 tgagtttaa ttgcttcac atatgtattg ttctttctac cctccagatg aggatgaaga

from Sprung

by Cai Draper

6/4/20

neighbourhood tired from banging the walls through

gold in the panes like talk of a windfall

the bedding is a tube map of circles

you are getting me to say what I hate about you most

my reluctance has the sneer of a secondary lover called Zack

you roll in the dust forever then

all the colours of a classy thriller

go fishing

your bottom lip a goldmine

& finally it was time to make a picnic

said the tear-coloured bird to the worm in its beak

the witness was an imaginary child with real thumbs

what is not less significant

is the several rashes developed last fortnight

hanging off the stairs between us

9/4/20

I will put this growl
into upstart paper cuts for poster promotion
of a wild & ravishing dance in the sun
everyone's eggs in one basket
making unproductive love with danger
fuck forever
on the clock
or as long as the juice will allow
falling in love is not like falling through yet another trapdoor
it is too complicated
developing
understood by nothing but its own frameless portals
& even then
waney-edged
last night for the big words
as for the celebration
allow me & my friends the usual

hard drugs in name-tagged party bags
boundless city sex gardens plus
the nous to say interstices out loud
spaces the texture of our favourite resistance
revolution to suit the needs of a mood
where the dying of the wankers
is easy on the eye
& by the way
may the concept of Monday morning cease for A particularly
as for me
I'd like to go back in time & feature in the video for Wannabe
& hit David Cameron's weird lips with a pinger
fashioned from double-wrapped elastic band
cheap red balloon & blue raspberry Panda Pops bottle
fuck David Cameron particularly
those Chelsea boots really did my nut
I wonder who he'd love when fleeing
but more than anything

I want to take MDMA with my mum
& listen to Everything But the Girl
& have the most luxurious comedown
where doom is just a random word
folks use for backwards mood
in the morning the neighbours congratulate us on our choice of
bedtime
bring us the perfect eggs or not eggs
telepathy is real
for the duration of the afternoon we walk through the summer
on the sofa in our minds
& bump into a few exes
give them thanks & respect their choices
discuss it afterwards on a dappled veranda
tropical flavour Lucozade in the fountain
as the evening draws in
the dead pets rise from their graves
under the crab apple tree

shudder off the mulchy sleep
& after a convivial catch up deliver us
a shameless household classic
a capella
while filling our lungs with compost
breathing for us
they plant us
bulbs
in bed
the rabbits tap a lavish BPM
we know this to be primordial
the one that lives before & after
they are pulling the earth back over
catching our light through the grains of sand
that pock the turf like stars
9/5/20
in continued consternation
my main question is could I burn myself raw

onto a tape of the Spice Girls
when we say we're being called to by an inanimate object
does that mean like flippant burner call or scheduled DMC
a wise man once told me it's better to focus on the how than the what
actually it wasn't a wise man it was a house tune in a club
o, herd
I hear
caveats at eleven forty seven
I think I am interested in the avant garde
in the same way I wanted to slow dance with Emma at the year 7 ball
dizzying prospect in a privately rented hall
I read the words avant garde & my heart feels excellent
like that Jeremy Deller film of the washing machine
flinging off the centrifugal innings of itself
nothing makes the sentence the avant garde's in make sense
like red leaves or the concept of de-arrest
button me holy I'm covered I'm holding on fast

from The Plagues

by Khaled Hakim

4. VULPES VULPES

Bring me my bottel of urine, Telemakus,
bring me thorns of chicen wire,
yorr feral spoors agenst a pervert watering gardens –

Twas on a wicching hour abot a qwarter past nine – if ye turn the
niht lihte on

Behold th wood lice of Mikaelmas marawding th patios & amp;
roiling foxshit &
skinny slugs til the fats suckt out, surging up th surf to lay ther eggs
Jaguar – crack thozе fucking Panzer!

I want a world of tigers not morning foxshit –
a trial of adolessents thrashing in th grasses – theze whipstrung
desperados
aganst an old eunucks urine –

Com out faery boy!

Let me rub my sweet sweet jism on ya crup, yoo excuse for a hip replasment

Whos yr daddy, Ermintrude

Who's yr daddy parsimonius cotehanger!

Mans gwine give ya few poynters ain it – got bare gyaldem ainit Brer –

*we know wot animal porn yoo laike – ya pigloving nonce, wele hold ya down
bruv, she'll crunch yr lickorish cortex lak a cheezy wotsit – no more scool runs
– yud lake that wudn't yuo, wile she lovingly dicks yuo wif a strap-on rats
head?*

*Skeen, housholder, skeen. Manz gotta dig on meat! Do yu fancy a bit of yr
sholder. Fiht! Fihte! Yeah, go on, fiht. Y/ almost got away den! Shame I cut da
links to yer legs – Brraaap!*

Wots ya name Ermintrude?

Can I call yu Dickless Cadavar?

Whas ya name Mohammed –

Die! Die! you Pumba hillbilly – fuck he’s still sqweeling! Oy vay, the Force is strong w/ dis one
Bway, yoo is chung! You is laike a undred ain it! Leve that window open bossman, Ile shaving creme yor shitter. Unless y/ want us cume & merkalize
yer kiddiez – yud lake that –
we all now abowt yoo wanking off to lepard kills – ye don’t no who to identifie wif doo ya Mowgli? Ye want to be da lepard getting merked by a half ton warthog screeching in yer ear th hole Greek wresteling agon & hyeenas ripping ya balls off wile yre at it

Shit on my patio wd you? Riht, too can play at that.
 When I shave a hartshapt patch onto yr imposter croup whare y/ can get my name tattood – calling my cock to breech the bounds of specie-izm rub th spunk into yer brush & leve a shit on yorr shit – *THIS IS MY BACKHOE LODER!*

I see you in a fake tortoisshell suut,
 I see yoo in th neiyhburs unmown,
 yoou in the mirrers
 Dont moove!
 Yooou! YOOOOU!

from Collected Experimentalisms: 1993 - 1996

by UG Világos

X. Always haunted
 Always hæunted.
 XI. Always hunted

...

XXX. Make your bed in nettles / with the splinters
 XXX. and all those childish memoirs.
 XXX. All your maps are haunted All your maps are haunted All your maps are haunted All your maps are haunted All your maps are haunted All

...

LXXVII. A crab the size of a car
 LXXVIII. we kicked our feet
 LXXIX. across the sand &
 LXXX. floated across the oceans.
 LXXXI. I SENT A messagE and && it reAd
 LXXXII. i miss you so much

‘Accumulate mass until all hands are empty’: Reading and Handling Godefroy Donsart’s *The Manual* (Sweat Drenched Press, 2020)

by Briony Hughes

During a moment where exploring the world through physical contact can lead to the transmission of a fatal illness; a moment where simple step-by-step instructions (such as washing your hands) are imperative to our collective health, Godefroy Donsart’s *The Manual* becomes an all-the-more important intervention into our relationship with the book as a physical object.

A ‘metaphorical product’ framed externally as a codex poetry collection, Donsart’s text playfully tests the boundaries of a figurative poetics versus the literal, informative, sterilised language of an instruction manual. The reader is immediately confronted with the ominous statement, ‘empty was thy hand’, bringing her body to the forefront of the reading experience. The following ‘hands-on tour’ is delivered through safety instructions; contents; unpacking and inspection; setup and connections; an overview; exploring the manual; a note on the metal machine; practical applications; loss and damage tables; and an open space for the reader’s own notes.

This hands-on tour of your Manual will give you a basic foundation with which visceral results can be conjured.

This is not the worst place to start.

Your Manual never remains static or still.

The Manual never “is”. There is always something going on with the Manual. The fact that the micro-events heating up right now under your eye and your fingers seem invisible is the first case of use of this Manual.

Remember that lice always move inside the fabric.

But Donsart does not gently guide his reader by the hand. Instead, she is in perpetual motion, jerked back and forth between the material landscape of the manual form and the rich conceptual language which erupts from the pages. Sianne Ngai’s ‘Stuplimity’ comes to mind, with Donsart juxtaposing the expected thick, muddy text which usually comprises an instruction manual with poetic language that froths and foams restlessly. The result is a carefully curated affect which tows the line between fatigue and astonishment.

AUDIO/VIDEO OUT

With eyes opened or closed, mouth open or closed, stick your hands deep inside the carcass of a deer or a bull. Detect zones of interest with a wooden cane in your neighbouring streets. Scrape your knees on concrete, if possible during a demonstration. Then, broadcast.

The reader is immobilised, unable to fulfil the various actions proposed to her. With only the physical properties of the codex remaining familiar, such as a predetermined sequential order, she becomes momentarily grounded by these characteristics. But Donsart does not grant the reader access to page numbers, nor does he grant the reader consistency in form and typesetting. Instead, Donsart takes his reader to the peripheries of the reading experience and instructs her to walk a very thin and very long tightrope.

In fact as manufacturers we hope that the Manual will induce in our users a deep distrust of anything square or straight. Well-cut.

The Manual grows bulbous and fungal. Some have

said it is indeed an eczema attack.

Through the act of reading, we become complicit in the text's 'relative state of decay'; in the 'distrust' Dronsart's performed 'manufacturers' attempt to evoke in us. However, this perceived decay is characterised by fungal growth. Because of this, *The Manual* can never be the understood within the clear, stable, sterilised realms of the traditional instruction manual. Instead, it is constantly moving, swelling, shifting, and reconsidering the possibilities of what it can be.

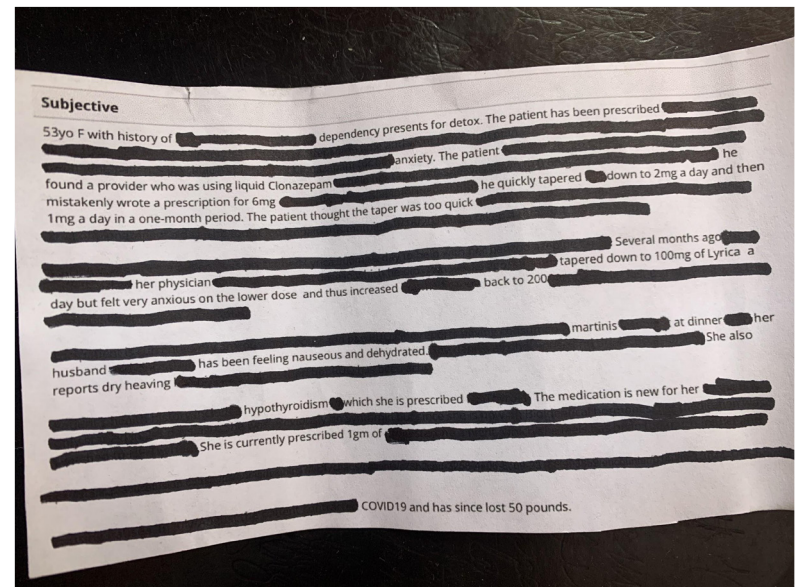
Some have said that the Manual contains all manuals, but the authors beg to differ, as the Manual rises only as a tangible emanation of a facet/aspect of said other manuals.

The purpose of this book is purely educational and should not be mistaken for any artistic endeavour.

I have described Dronsart's *The Manual* as a manual, a book, a text, a poem, a collection, a set of instructions, and a codex. My language changes with each encounter. In truth, I am faced with an impossibility in defining the work, and this is what makes it so astonishing.

Liquid Dinner

by Charles March



Juvenile Tequila

by Charles March

Subjective
4yo F with history of [redacted] dependency presents for detox. The patient reports smoking cannabis since the age of 1. For the past 3 months she has been smoking 1 ounce of cannabis every [redacted] day. She shares [redacted] Gabapentin [redacted] she has [redacted] taken up to 4800 [redacted] shots of Tequila a day [redacted] [redacted] off and on "for years." She was first prescribed Ativan at the age of 1 [redacted] for sleep. [redacted] she lost consciousness and "fell over." She was only smoking cannabis at the time. Another seizure like episode occurred about 5 years ago, which she states was "non drug related." This time she lost consciousness, fell over, and bit her tongue. [redacted] neurologist, who is a family friend [redacted]

The patient has been prescribed stimulants for [redacted] weight loss. [redacted] her provider [redacted] she was prescribed [redacted] (GHB) for [redacted] narcolepsy [redacted] her physician [redacted] was taking benzodiazepine [redacted] that she did not report [redacted] the 2 medications are contraindicated when taken together. [redacted] she has difficulty with wakefulness.

[redacted] induced by exercise and [redacted] recommended by her [redacted] nicotine patches [redacted]

[redacted] blood work [redacted] Her psychiatrist [redacted] experienced dry mouth and lightheadedness. The patient's uncle [redacted] suggested that her TSH was abnormal [redacted]

Unemployed Brain

by Charles March

Subjective
4yo F with history of [redacted] dependency presents for detox. The patient has been abusing [redacted] a "dealer." She reports smoking [redacted] 3 mixed drinks of Vodka a day [redacted] Patient denies [redacted] cocaine at parties [redacted]

The patient reports 2 previous seizures with the first seizure at age 1. Her second was this past year. Both incidents involved [redacted] anxiety, [redacted] Patient was [redacted] able to vomit [redacted] trouble [redacted] her brain cannot work. Her appetite [redacted] feels "depressed" [redacted] daily.

Two Figures with a Monkey, 1973

by JD Howse

I have cum / face to face / with my own mortality
like an existential / & unfulfilling frottage / wondering
how drunk I was / with legs awkwardly wrapping
over & under legs / behind backs in an anatomical

atrophy of / memory & frantic stillness / a knotty
confusion of circumstance / lissom together like a
photograph / from a sequence of motions / a platform
parapetting about the absence of feeling / in this

indigent suspension / structured into the void / curtains
draw against / progress / the unsheathed light
/ smudging bruised impressions of flesh / into this field
of / vivisecting colour / sheet / pillow / mattress / bodies /

animal in the singular / as the presence percolates into a
clambering figure / of regression / huddled, weary, expectant

Chicken, 1982

by JD Howse

My love / flayed me / like a chicken hung
in a window / each dead nerve / exposed
to the clammy / inside air / heated slightly
by the warmth / of the sun / raising its

intensity through / the pane of glass / that
keeps me / disparate from the world of /
the living - / my love is / a butcher / & I am
shapeless giblets on a slab; he / cleaves

me / along the natural / lines of my innards
& / precisely chops / the curling tendrils of
viscera into orderly / forms / scraping along
the wood / with the edge of a blade / tidying

me up / into neat little piles / then letting me
out / into the world / washing his hands of me

Study of a Baboon, 1953

by JD Howse

Ambiguous / in concrete bisection / fenced in & fenced out
of the world at large / we are animals / as animals are not
animals / as either one can move between the next / across
open spaces / broken, constrained, & trapped in ways that

do not break free from location. / That an animal could in
part become / a photograph without shedding its flesh is
only one kind of / falsehood; that a painting / could be seen
in memory, / on a screen / in a book / in a poem / could be

another. This is only a / study, an attempt to seize / the full
beauty, full violence of a moment / of an animal / of a life /
down flat on a sheet / despite the moment itself / despite
the animal itself / never fully being experienced. To fail as an

animal / & not as an artist / would be the sweetest haunting
imaginable / would be the ultimate painting / a trapped life

Sinistrorse

by Chloë Proctor

Is then the question grounded

Relevance of bud to stem to root

Circumnutation as granted

Each turn as if perfected

Negation of unequal growth

Growth continuing in spite still

Pattern necessitates coding

Of cells parsed as swollen language

In repeating patterns on graphic paper

Words for extinct nouns/extinct words

Strong and stable is linguistics of Holocene

"natural balance" only when untouched

Hands grasping wrists stabilise muscle adhesion

Rolling bodies at soil level

Pronounce "we" with tentacle diction

Pronouns sí, sé and siad vine creeping

There are Irish words for fields unexisting

Extinct words for extinct ecologies

Words outlawed misshaping the compounds

bh rm bp gc mh ng dt

sinistrorse as babelic or capital

I wish to honour the freedom to repeat

Retrace syntax but always upward semantics

As in shuffling speech as if misunderstood

As if cell wall is as precious as what permeates

As if contained in your ballistic grammar

As if contained isn't corrosive

Spatially, there is nothing but this to step on

The stem insists on skyward adduction

Contend on compulsion to return
Make mutant tongue lick sprout
Disease faster than clipping allows
Sicken dialect twisting

Artifact Panel

by Rhienna Renée Guedry

Pinned like butterflies it is
all here, and what isn't, is
 beneath ground, or in a collection
white people claimed discovery
 of a neighboring pelican; strong arms
up, a phallus pointing down, a comb,
a bird and its song, vice grips,
unceremonious round
spheres; a tobacco pipe for a
long-fingered penguin.

These artifacts blown they breathe life
 from bone or wood the shadow-puppets
of interpretation, mouths
hungry to feed, shapes redden your
cheeks though there cannot be any other
explanation for their form, which
 doesn't keep you from trying.

Your heart's jar, mini-venuses
 de willendorf; teeth and
claws, wishbones, demon's horns
on the tiniest of chalices for the
 smallest of sacraments; the tea-kettle
like your grandmother's. Their use now
is to capture our wonder: except
the doorknob: it only serves as the
instrument between you
 coming or going.

Facilitate!

by Mike Corrao

tubular-organ
seeds into the orbital face of your flatskull

flood of salvic fluid
pools in the open wound foam-clotting

your skin-grafts into chitin
becoming-mollusc
new carapace shapes the interface of your conception

Macerate!

by Mike Corrao

The jaw creates a portal
into the immeasurable hadean zones

summoned at the umbilical seance

you disguise your guide in the likeness of an ibis
massaging mock tissue

with beak against fibres
threading musculature and quilting corpsicum

Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam

by Ahimaz Ponrasa

'Do not scream.' 'Do not let the truth out.' 'Do not talk back.' 'Do not talk about domestic violence.' 'Do not talk about gender inequality.' 'Do not mock the Gods.' 'Do not talk about colorism.' 'Do not talk about personal space.' 'Do not talk about queerness.' 'Do not talk about marital rape.' 'Do not talk about sexism.' 'Do not talk about misogyny.' 'Do not talk ill of the elders.' 'Do not marry outside the caste.' 'Do not cry.' 'If you do it will tarnish the honor of the family.'

Threats and half-threats are the weapons the patriarch of the family wields.

'It's not me but you.' 'If not you then who?' 'It's not you.' 'It's not me.' 'It's the society.' 'But we're a family.'

Lies and half-lies of mansplaining man.

'Do not talk about male privilege.' 'Say it.'

Say what?

'Say that we're a family.'

We're a failime?

'F a m i l y!'

Falimy!!

'Do not talk about caste atrocities.' 'Do not talk about Adivasis.' 'Do not talk about Dalit liberation.' 'Do not talk about lynchings.' 'Do not talk ill of Hinduism.' 'Do not talk about pogroms.' 'Do not talk about apartheid state.' 'Do not talk about state terrorism.' 'Do not talk about surveillance.' 'Do not talk about Kashmir.' 'Do not talk about UAPA, NSA, PSA or AFSPA.' 'Do not talk about Seven Sister States.' 'Do not talk about detention centers.' 'Do not protest.' 'Do not mock Brahminism.' 'Do not talk ill of RSS.' 'Do not talk about Brahmin supremacy.' 'Do not talk about women's liberation.' 'Do not talk about homelessness.' 'Do not talk about disability rights.' 'Do not talk about bonded labor.' 'Do not talk about unemployment.' 'Do not talk ill of the government.' 'Do not talk about the Trans bill.' 'Do not talk ill of the police.' 'Do not talk about custodial tortures or deaths.' 'Do not talk about

minority rights.' 'Do not talk about Islamophobia.' 'Do not talk about expansionism.' 'Do not talk about free education.' 'Do not talk about land redistribution.' 'Do not talk about universal healthcare.' 'Do not talk about rape culture.' 'Do not talk ill of our culture.' 'Do not talk about tone policing.' 'If you do it will tarnish the reputation of the nation.'

Men ki baat. Let me—

'Do not talk about wheat privilege of brown savarnas.'

Saravanas—let me guess—we're a failime?

'The nation is one family.'

Falimy.

'F a m i l y!'

Failime!!

'Do not talk about slavery.' 'Do not talk about racism.' 'Do not talk ill of billionaires.' 'Do not talk about universal housing.' 'Do not talk ill of neo-liberalism.' 'Do not talk about refugee rights.' 'Do not talk about imperialism.' 'Do not talk about settler colonialism.' 'Do not talk about nomadic peoples.' 'Do not talk ill of the Judeo-Christian tradition.' 'Do not talk about Palestine.'

Let—

'Do not talk ill of authoritarianism.' 'Do not talk about Tibet.' 'Do not talk about Uyghurs.' 'Do not talk about Ealam.' 'Do not talk about Rojava.' 'Do not talk about Yemen.' 'Do not talk about West Papua.' 'Do not talk about Rohingyas.' 'Do not talk about indigenous peoples.' 'Do not talk about Black liberation.' 'Do not talk about LGBTQIA+ rights.' 'Do not dissent.' 'Do not talk about solidarity.' 'Do not talk about climate justice.' 'Do not talk about genocides.' 'Do not talk about neo-fascism.' 'Do not talk about white supremacy.'

Let me—

'Do not talk about economic inequality.' 'Do not talk about universal basic income.' 'Do not talk about wealth redistribution.' 'Do not talk about extractivism.' 'Do not talk ill of state capitalism.' 'Do not talk about proxy wars.' 'Do not talk about police brutality.' 'Do not talk about privatization.' 'Do not talk about the arms

industry.' 'Do not talk about white privilege.' 'Do not talk about concentration camps.' 'Do not talk ill of big corporations.' 'Do not talk about changing the status quo.' 'Do not talk about the coup d'états of democratically elected governments.' 'Do not talk about the facial recognition system.' 'Do not list out our fragility.' 'Do not laugh.' 'If you do the UFOs will not think well of us.'

'Do not talk ill of the World Bank.'

Let me guess—

'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam.'

Vaduvhaisa kumuntakamp!?!

'Say it.'

Say what?

'Say that the world is one family.'

The wordl is non falimy.

'O n e!'

None!!

'F a m i l y!!'

Failime!!!

O000O

hawaii

by Pepe Mason-Bradshaw

youtube.com/watch?v=ftNy979xOIw

Literary Triptych

by ST Brant

i. A Prose Poem on Patrick Modiano

The *cogito* in Modiano- the characters can never declare I AM, not with any description following that and certainly are absent any audacity or fun outrageousness that would permit their declaring I AM in such a standalone, godly way. They exist always as I WAS..., which is nothing, hoping that figuring what periods the ellipse will transmute their presence. But what hope is in Modiano that this will happen? They are shadows that will coagulate in night and have no source to throw them in the day. If we trust the Romantics, read them with some earnestness, we should know that WAS will never be nor illuminate IS. The past us isn't us: every sensual experience is to breed a psychic and *noumenal* originality that should satisfy us with the irresolution of the past. We are Prometheus hooked to the rock. To recover who we were before our theft... that's another Olympian tale. Why apologize? Why want forgiveness? Because the present is unendurable? Every moment is unendurable! yet is endured. Scorn the birds, eat your liver.

ii. Taking Poor Gloucester as a Role Model

In the spirit of undoing that saw Gloucester realize what he WAS profited him to what he IS, he demands we ask why in crisis redistribute that incipience through perpetuity? Why redistribute the past through now and forever on? The past self died with the past and would perish well if it were not given automatic governance, heralding error through its continued rule. *The past isn't past*: surely! as all Time is simultaneous. If demarcations are inviolable and order need not be begged, insist on Wandering! Each delineation a station to begin from rather than a mirror or retroflexive surface that can bend no optics forward.

iii. String of Babel

Borges teaches me his mystical lessons. I am a stubborn student. Seeking confirmation, journeying through the streets of books, imaginings that frighten me from seeking, a task I'm finding empty seeking meaning: You have everything You need, I hear, if only You can read it, navigate it. Heraclitan echoes *character is fate* everywhere. You will accumulate what you need naturally, though we are the lives our shadows lead. We would not recognize our shapes if we did cross them. Borges by Borges on a park bench. The strangeness of the mind to distinguish you from I: the obsession of the mirrors. The strangeness of the self, you find yourself outside yourself; eye to eye, Narcissus; mind to mind, Borges. You sit on a bench beside yourself; you swim in a stream with yourself. A self to stare in the mirror, a self to brave the labyrinth. *Character is fate*, I hear, deciding the character I am. Minotaur or Theseus. The shadow, image, mirror or the ball of yarn that strings the path. Or the Borgesian third. The element in us that's Daedalus. The element that makes us there. Here I've wondered into Freud.

ShOwEr

by Marie-Gabrielle Gallard

ACT I

The bathroom.

Behind the shower curtain. The shower starts running, then stops.

A *(Groans)*

The shower starts again, then stops. Again.

A *(Groans louder)*

Knocking.

The shower keeps turning off.

Continuous knocking.

A What.

Knocking stops.

B Can you open up? I can't hold it.

Silence.

B Please? I really can't hold it any longer.

Silence.

B Are you already in the shower?

A Yes.

B Are you wet, though?

A *(Pause)* No.

B Or covered in soap?

A *(Pause)* No.

B Come on then, open up.

Silence.

B Please?

A *unlocks the door with a grunt.*

B *breathes in relief and brushes past her to the toilet. B pees.*

B *(Looks up)* God, look at you. You're in a mood today.

A Something's off with the shower.

B What d'you mean?

A It took a while to heat up. Like normally the water's already steaming by the time I've undressed. The water wasn't even warm when I stepped in.

B Uh-huh.

A The pressure's different too, slower somehow, weaker.

B Uuuuh-huh.

A And now it won't stay on for more than a couple of seconds.

B *(Snaps back)* What?

A Yeah it keeps turning off every time I turn it on.

B You didn't think to start with that?

A *(Through gritted teeth)* I haven't had my shower today.

B *wipes off.*

B Hmm...

B *pulls her knickers up. B walks to the sink and washes her hands.*

B I could email the agency□

A They never answer your emails.

B They do! Remember with the bins□

A Right, they do. Three weeks later.

B Yeah, they're slow over email. I could call them instead?

A I'm sure their office will be closed. It's always closed when you need them.

A *crosses her arms. B dries her hands and leans against the sink, thoughtful.*

B Hmm wait... I might actually know someone. Do you remember X from Y's pres, two or three months ago? Do you remember? I think it was in□

A I don't, no. But can X fix it?

B Not X. His brother. I remember X telling me that his brother was an electrician or something.

A *(Snorts)* An electrician. Who's even an electrician nowadays.

B ignores **A**.

B *(To herself)* I should have X's number somewhere.

A Ha. Does Z know you've got his number?

B Having someone's number doesn't mean you'll shag them. Z trusts me.

A If you say so.

B Stop this or I won't call X.

A You need this shower just as much as I do.

B Nah, I've got Z's shower. *(Pushes off the sink)* 'Kay then, I'll take care of that. You go dress up.

B leaves the bathroom.

A *(Grunts)* God, it'll literally take ten years before I'll have my shower.

B *(Outside)* No, not literally. Now, please go dress up.

PART TWO

ellipsis /ə'lipɪsɪs/ n. (pl. ellipses) narrative device consisting of omitting a portion of the sequence of events in a narration.

Like a bathtub filled to the brim, Adelaide Ackers awoke to a house only one drop away from spilling streams of sleepy children downstairs. Seeping under closed doors, slipping into double beds, the ripple-less surface of the bath was about to overflow with the first dribble of light. Sunrays were skirting the top of the tree line and would soon steal into the upper floor bedrooms. And with the rise of the sun – the stretches of skinny limbs, the jaw-splitting yawns, the wails of hardly-articulated demands by little dictators. But before the morning's storm, Adelaide dipped her head under the water of her metaphorical bath and bathed in the buzzing silence of the sleeping beehive.

A bubble breaking, and Adelaide snapped her eyes open. She understood that the narrative had followed her word to the letter and taken her ten years into the future. She had woken up a decade after her shower issue, not in her shared apartment, but in her parents' house.

Staying under the roof that had known all of her storms and silly tantrums, she failed to find her multicoloured wooden cubes littering the floor. Neither hurled by chubby hands nor picked by careful fingers, the toys of her childhood had been stashed away. But the boxes of dolls and dresses were gone, like her school notebooks, her uni papers and her diploma. Instead, Adelaide's gaze fell on her grandmother's dresser, her great aunt's jug and wash bowl, falling all the way down to the bed she slept in. Her parents' old bed. Adelaide had never woken up in the guestroom before, not when she could wake in her own bedroom just one set of stairs above her head.

Without trying to remember, Adelaide started remembering a past she hadn't yet seen pass. Memories of the years following her wedding flowed in, fitting year after year her and her husband in the guestroom, and in the more recent years filling her own bedroom with her chil□ Adelaide interrupted her train of thought. With

the next decade of her life a simple sentence away, she stopped the narrative's sentences.

Adelaide needed to go back to her own timeline.

Shuffling to the end of the mattress, she felt an arm snake lazily around her middle, hand and fingers splaying over her belly. She stilled and kept her back to the warm body cupping hers. Gruff from sleep, a gravelly voice mumbled behind her,

“No mornin' sickness, Adele?”

Back. Adelaide had to go back in time. Back to the shower.

Back!

SCENE 3 – FLASHBACK

INT. BOYFRIEND'S BATHROOM. MORNING

A dirty bathroom, white tiles turned egg-white; a shower in a brownish bathtub, a toilet with the seat up, a sink with blue toothpaste stains and a leaky tap. The sun is still down. The bathroom remains in the dark, empty. ADDIE'S VOICE comes from behind the bathroom door in the distance. Addie's voice draws slowly nearer.

ADDIE'S VOICE

That's me, yeah... Just give me a minute.

The bathroom door opens and ADDIE walks in, closing without locking the door. She does not turn on the light. She is barefoot and barelegged, wearing a man's t-shirt. Her nipples poke through the fabric. Her free hand runs up and down her arm to warm herself. She speaks on the phone. Only her side of the conversation is audible.

ADDIE

Sure, it's the nineteenth of October nineteen ninety-seven... Unit five, flat sixty-two, eight west street. Do you need the postcode...

Alright.

ADDIE stands still in the middle of the bathroom, listening with furrowing brows. She has already had this conversation with NANCY THE NHS WORKER and the rehash neither adds nor alters anything from the original. The narrative got the timeline wrong again. The flashback took her too far back in the past.

ADDIE

Yeah. One week ago, I think, or maybe two. I've been waiting for the text. But you called instead... It's never good when you call.

ADDIE stares out the bathroom window while Nancy the NHS worker lists off the test results. An unbroken buzz grows steadily louder, reaching a piercing pitch painful to the ear. The sound stops with a pop. Addie focuses back on the phone.

ADDIE

What? ... Oh, no, I don't think so... No, it's alright. I'm fine. It's alright... But what about children. Do you know... Yeah, yeah, I understand... I'm sure I can find the time, or I'll just miss one lecture... Right, maybe two. Yeah, better plan ahead... The twenty-third as in Thursday, this Thursday?... Four p.m.'s

alright with me...

The bathroom door opens with a scrape and ADDIE starts. She turns to ADDIE'S BOYFRIEND, standing naked with half-asleep eyes. ADDIE'S BOYFRIEND turns to the toilet and starts to pee, standing.

ADDIE

(to the phone)

Perfect... Thanks... Take care... Bye.

ADDIE hangs up, letting her arm fall and loll to her side. ADDIE'S BOYFRIEND flushes the toilet. Walking to ADDIE, he fondles her butt and nibbles her neck. He grabs her hand to lead her back to his room. She disentangles her fingers from his.

ADDIE

Give me a minute. I'll be right there.

ADDIE'S BOYFRIEND shrugs and walks out. ADDIE slumps to the toilet, not reacting when her thighs hit the cold porcelain instead of the toilet seat. She stares emptily at the shower. A slug slowly slobbers up the tiles, as slow as the time it takes the narrative to return Addie to her timeline.

four pm, a poem

doorbell starts saying ding
door swings open
doorbell finishes saying dong

one eyebrow lifts, another falls to a frown

it's four pm
is it
you're late
am I
I've been waiting all day
can one ever even be late on a favour
you tell me

Ada, right? Brooke's friend
Adelaide. Only Brooke calls me Ada

eyes to the roof, thinking
tongue tripping, twisting, testing

Adelaide... Adelaide... Adele. I'll call you Adele
not my name
care to know mine
no
so where's the bathroom, Adele

unscrewing screws

you an electrician
no
you a plumber
no
then what the fuck are you doing in my bathroom

screwdriver stops unscrewing screws
head tilts thirty-four degrees to the right
mouth corner curls two inches up

are you always like this
I haven't had a shower today
is that why you stink

this coil resistance is under

can you fix it
yeah
cool

door stands open

say hi to your brother for Brooke
sure
and say thanks from Brooke
will do
she's got a boyfriend

toothy smile

see you later Adele
you wish and it's Adelaide
sure Adele.

CAST

A/Adelaide Ackers/Adele/Addie/Ada	ADELAIDE
B/Brooke	BROOKE
X	XAVIER
Y	YUSUF
Z	ZACHARY
Nancy the NHS worker	NANCY
Addie's Boyfriend/Ex-Boyfriend	N/A
X's Brother/Electrician/Plumber/ Or Something	ADRIAN ACKERS

In Association With
bathshop The Retailer
The British Plumber Association
 and
Poseidon Baths and Showers

No baths, showers, nor showerheads
 were hurt during the production of the short story.

Thanks The Shower Doctor for its YouTube video on
 'Electric Showers: How to Test and Replace a Solenoid Coil'.

To Adelaide, who can make a seventeen-hundred-thirty-three-word
 story out of a malfunctioning shower

TO READ

by Nikki Dudley

No one knew anything about that place up there except that it was
 high high and
 dark ~~dark~~
 and cold cold cold.
 But I'm telling you, dearest, this isn't true.
 The ideas of aerodynamics wouldn't apply here.
 From a distance, it looks like

From a distance, it looks like ~~from a distance~~
You listening to this, Bigeyes?
 "No," said the waitress and, she lovingly fingered the lump under
 her ear.
 He raised his glass but not to them. He throws stones at donkeys...
 I did not want to go ~~outside~~

It's your fault, darling, but
 you may bring me cups of tea. She wasn't a woman:
 she was a suitcase: as red as terror and as green as fate.

You have nice ramifications. The tulips are red, a darker crimson
 towards the stem, as if they have been cut and are
 beginning to heal there. Likewise, the parents of children
 who playfully picked and chewed paint had no idea of
~~the disastrous~~ consequences.

Where did you know him to know all that stuff on him?

There is indeed
 a hero
 inside of me.

Author's Note

Source Texts:

Salt of the sea by Ruta Sepetys

Blood Meridian by Cormac McCarthy

Dark Eden by Chris Beckett

The Handmaid's Tale by Margaret Atwood

Any other mouth by Anneliese Mackintosh

Natural Stain Remover by Angela Martin

A little larger than the entire universe: selected poems by Fernando Pessoa

What if? Serious Scientific Answers to Absurd Hypothetical Questions by Randall Munroe

you can't spell alan resnick without alan resnick

by David Greaves

for example the blueprint of your house. this
is an artefact, or a shell, the blueprint of your house,

of your teenage daughter, your infant twins,
also indicated in the following (see *fig 1*) & also indicated.

your house is an artefact. for example
there's no way to avoid your house. see *fig 1-2* for further.

take the shell in your hands; an infant
is visible in further. the indicated is far further, by now.

we can see from the indications that your house,
your whole family, a column of young,

indicated on the following (see *figure*)
& their eyes function like pillars securing the base of a home

& their eyes function like a cell,
they part, your infant twins, the daughter you cradle,

unfold like an arm out of a gap in the concrete pillar centring your house
(see *fig 1-2*), and then lay sated, sedate in a wash of gleaming fur

he'll mean say & [redacted]

“actually, it's | scene
but this is not how to say &
this is not how one regards in

uncertain form like
“he's actually [redacted]
how one were found sprawled,

asking & you are asking & he
so “first I'm not asking, let's | & he said out | vent
in no asking, let's | & he said out | vent
house and then I'm not asking, let's | & he said out | vent
house and then I'm not asking, let's | & he said out | vent

the requirements, which connect
& he & you & me, someone, and see watch and in this way see watching the seeing
house and then I'm not asking, let's | & he said out | vent
house and then I'm not asking, let's | & he said out | vent

which as a no I a moment in the preceding specific point and turn to open it up to a specific point who is
wide & blurred the space of the eye down the skin, the tongue
Consider in terms of being
ready to open it up to a specific point at which I require a stable connection. this is not a joke. I am not joking
with you. it is necessary for me that I be connected in a way that will not fluctuate unduly. you may when
do as you fit [redacted] but this is a function of your observation. I mean how it works,
you're the various conduit. the small openings
particularly. now please [redacted]; thank you?”

“consider a gate” he means “please send” & what is sent | is
not the thing but the body of a thing

he means [redacted]
he means “I am not joking” he means “I am

he means an image down pathways a set an understood
“telling you the truth now the fields isn't that
a thrill?” & isn't that & what is understood the image the sound of paths the click &
write of many things becoming open & many things becoming closed

mean regarded like a voice from the small passages inside your house,
your infant gate, they function, they scans
// [redacted]

for example a various eye on the artefact
as discussed. icon. pupate. emergent. locate gold; it is around
figure. I am.

inherent activity in prions and windy skies

by Jace Brittain

auto play.....
.....auto stop
.....tire
scratchto v o m i t o
u s crunch
.....turn
signal.....
presage.....
.....watchu
ate city see ,salt
.....
.....water fresh
spoil
stinkt.....
.....ran piped & ;
swam i.....
a long or.....
.....current by
hurricane over.....
bonneville lake
today... tree whole
hundred....
grewt thousand
years grewt thru
yr.....
windscreen.....
.....face
.....head
rest.....
glass again.....
.....
ah.....

toxic cross.....
breeze.....
.. thru yr.....
windscreen.....
.....face
.....head
rest.....
glass again.....
.....hurricane over
the desert of
bonneville lake
today.....
.....birdseye ,d
eerspleen ,c u t t h r o
a t k i d n e
y.....
.....dressdn
de,scaled.....
molecules divined.....
haruspected.....

.....pick me up
s u m e x t r i s p i c y
bovine
or.....
.....just
readm signs ,O
edible carnal.....
.....disinfect yr
knives cant taste
scrapies.....
.....!ts ok,
wasnt wasteing my
brain
anyways.....

.....
.....
feed it madly back to
me what we see will
see.....
.....
.....,.....
.....hurr,yup
render,er.....
.....,.....
.....,, just jelly
.....,.....,.....
.....

barber 1, my courtyard, a symptom

by Jace Brittain

spontanarise.....
spontaninky.....
spontanasm.....
spontanaction.....
spontanfoldinto.....
spontanfoldinto.....
.....
spontanknowwhentofoldinto.....
spontaninfection&foldinto.....
.....
.....foldedforms
.....trans,
miss. spontan,
un der value un fold.....
the noise fold
o,ver value have i
any messages. fold
responsivness 2 indelicate a word....
fold.....
intelligenz 2 gut a word.....
.....
.....
e.....
spionage.....
.....e.....
.....co.....
.....terra.....
.....e.....
.....cho.....
.....spontan:
matter transpx.....
data transfx.....

spion!.....
,some1 reading my messages. e
spy e
scent thru the tik of the sounder.....
sospontan. sos
o,protean,protein mistakes.....
.....mishakes.....
a digestion sound&.....
a conscience cleared.....
passt thru.....
.....so r u my co
conspiratorial. reading
my terra plot. my co
kotta plot. a plant

plz dont spoil my day im mi
away& only seeping
cell.....
co,n,co,imitierend.....
.....they
.....call
.....us
.....animal
.....my love
.....have u
.....any messages
.....from or 4
.....the cause
.....folded forms
.....spontanarts&
.....kräftig
.....spion.....
.....my creep.....
.....my peeping.....
.....tom clancy protag.....

.....not a peep.....
.....r u.....
reading.....
my messages.....
when i say.....
spontan.....
you know.....
the noise of.....
that inky plot.....
.....
.....they all read
.....
r u smarter than a.....
.....gut germ?

distantinteriors

by Jace Brittain

geologic.....
strictend.....
chalky.....
albion.....
berg.....
glaciatepanik.....
layern.....
&layern.....
doublydeep.....
zeit.....
geist.....
spook.....
naysayern.....
inert.....
tragic.....
spinalfloss.....
regloss.....
gutter.....
mouth.....
senseless.....
sinless.....
signless.....
unthing.....
beholda.....
ourprivatelittlebiome.....
bathroomproblems.....
beholda.....
glasshousepanik.....
ourenulfedinflamesorangerie....
no....meltedglasmuse.....
.....no.....
.....gemüsebar....

.....no.r....
.....shade.....
...nochamois.....
.....no

Cage and Kane

by JP Seabright

all the lights in the house are burning bright
I have set my house alight
I have set my world to right
it is psychosis hour
the very dead of night
and I have set my house alight

*‘There is the hope that someone in a darkened room somewhere
will show me an image that burns itself into my mind.’*

There is the hope that somewhere in my darkened mind someone
will throw me an anchor and haul me back to life.

But what need have I
to save me from myself now
for I have set my world to right
and set my house alight

it is 4.46

halfway between Cage and Kane
between silence and psychosis
a hanging thread
a scuffed chalk line
peace on the left
and fear on the right

a rift of rejection betwixt

it is 4.46

and I have set my world alight

a broken pixel

waiting

I am in stasis
a blinking cursor

100-Year Storm

by Caroliena Cabada

or, a storm of a magnitude that has a 1-in-100 chance of occurring
any given year,
or, the two times in as many decades my hometown has severely
flooded,
or, a hurricane that was not meant to hit Manhattan that hard,
or, typhoons so nice they're named twice,
or, those same typhoon names removed from a list,
or, a sure sign of the apocalypse,
or, a storm that changes the scale by which we measure,
or, another name, retired,
or, what catches us all unaware,
or, everything we should have seen coming if we stayed vigilant,
or, ancestral ghosts haunting us
or, all the heat and pressure in the atmosphere has to go somewhere,
or, hurricane-force winds on the Great Plains,
or, what fells the old-growth walnut by the brook,
or, the stress that's built inside me since birth,
or, anger never given a vent,
or, the whistle of the worst teakettle,
or, a list of the deceased,
or, the newsfeed scroll of the safe,
or, names of everyone you wish you left behind,
or, what goes around comes around and around and around,
or, the aftermath of a burn,
or, where I go when I need to be alone,
or, a cyclops wandering the earth,
or, a storm of a magnitude that is more likely to happen now,
or, last year, this year, and every year to come.

Caring is Sharing: A Review of Scott Manley Hadley's *the pleasure of regret* (Broken Sleep Books, 2020)

by Adam Steiner

the pleasure of regret makes no promises or great claims to be anything other than itself: a collection of authentic and uncompromising poetry and memoir about broken relationships, mental health and alcoholism. But it is in this honesty under the harsh glare of self-reflection that Scott Manley Hadley presents a life (like any other, made out of fragments) finding its own sense of completeness in being open without artistic facade.

The book's blend of styles is refreshing. It would verge on autofiction if it wasn't so damn raw and nakedly expressive; a series of short-sharp poems sit cheek by jowl with prose sections, the poems cutting-through every other section to critique and emphasise Scott's reflections.

The book plays with high stakes at the risk of becoming an exercise in over-sharing, Hadley making himself a snowflake-shaped target. Are we supposed to love or hate the author and, by virtue, find his poems and memoir sympathetic or just self-indulgent; flaking away to the point of forgetting? For me, the book sometimes walks a fine line between virtue-signalling and hyper-awareness. The author works really hard not to be liked or pitied, but to be as honest and as accommodating of the reader as he would be of himself. We are in it together.

Scott's overarching experience offers many moments of emotional pain, embarrassment and ambitious struggle, which I think in some way are familiar to most readers. Perhaps all of us are less alone in reading it, to see ourselves through the perspective and experience of an other.

Across Scott's timeline we seem to lurch from one personal crisis to the next but there are also many positive moments along the way, if not only in moments of reflection. These are not merely antidotes to disaster but genuine highs of deeper connection and ecstatic revelation, such as falling in love with a friend, 'Frank', who,

though they cannot reciprocate, acknowledge and value the sense of friendship.

Scott's poetry is informal free verse to the extent that it can seem like paragraphs broken up into lines, broken into shorter lines. This unfussy format is contemporary in much modern poetry although, for me, some of these sections don't always feel like they need to be a poem. The exchange between the two forms across the book serve to deepen and emphasise one another. Perhaps the overlap is part of why this works so well.

I find these lines a bit lumpen. Not ineffective, but words that force the issue by stating something rather than expressing it:

*I do not think
Pre-emptive forgiveness
For inter-generational lust
Would have helped.*

But this could justly be considered concise and direct. It conceals emotional depths that other poetry sometimes makes throwaway in clever-clever lit-speak and insularity of the scene. Scott's style, which earns respect as you go through the book, suits the blunt explication of his situation, so often painfully deadpan without a punchline. Hadley's phrases haunt the reader. What can seem like the commonality of complaint instead reveals a far-reaching hurt. Poetry is as much form balanced with content, meaning with style. Instead of pushing for cultural references or falling into abstraction, the overall effect can be smothering, claustrophobic. The author has things he needs to get off his chest because they are suffocating, and often his words demand our full attention to be heard.

Personally, I prefer the straighter memoir sections. They make for compulsive reading. There are many chips brushed off the shoulder which are not always clear to me: a poor upper-lower or lower-middle class person admires the wealthy, even as he finds himself exploited by an unloving long-term partner:

*Though we called it a home
It never really was one.*

*It was your house
That
For a bit
You condescended to let me sleep in.*

- It's so funny in [out of] a rich [wo]man's world

Is this surprising? Perhaps not, but it feels true. It's wrought over the author's many struggles with the rich; which are essentially the clashes against the wildly different circumstances that cut across the class system. But many of these growing pains which become long-term issues are dealt with both pathos and humour. It feels strange to enjoy reading someone's diary as they are writing it.

This could mark the book as grief-porn, allowing for constant self-abasement to avoid conflict or judgement: a dog rolling over onto its back, exposing its belly in submission to receive praise or a kicking. But once you got into the rhythm of the thing you appreciate the fact that Scott's bravery as a writer is in opening-up and being so honest about himself that there is no point of withdrawal or deference to play on – there he is on the page for you to make your judgements of worth, pity or praise. I think we also have to park any bemused sympathy when the author has chosen to reveal so much of themselves in their work; in expressing it they are dealing with things, as opposed to using artifice to deflect or conceal. If there is truth in art it is perhaps only delivered when closest to the nerve. This breeds its own sincerity.

Scott's sympathy for others is often realistic, not fawning and absolute. His disabled mother and father, who move in and out of periods of understanding him or placing their own expectations upon him (wrongly believing him to be gay for many years, a perceived 'lack' of heteronormativity) are treated, I first thought, quite harshly. However, they are, like Scott, seen as themselves. He

does not hold back in his honesty. In more clearly seeing his own struggles, he is better able to acknowledge theirs.

As Scott later reveals in a timeline section, he is recently given a diagnosis of Bipolar disorder. If not a great plot twist or sudden excuse for all the events prior, it is perhaps some kind of reprieve. The realisation that nagging feelings of unease and inadequacy, a discomfort with life that sometimes leans towards suicidal ideation, is that things were never quite right without knowing or understanding why. I found this point quite affecting as Scott's emotional distress and "inability to cope" to be "normal" when it is expected of him is not just given a name or a label, but finds credence and solidity: the author is finally believed, heard and better understood:

I have never felt so known as when I read that Wikipedia article.

- Afterword – borderline personality disorder

How much we might allow for the literary and biographical value of a life so closely examined, I feel, rests in its reflection of extreme emotional states and the perspectives gleaned from these experiences. Going there is one thing, coming back is another, but Manley Hadley gives generous insight into his own flaws and the flaws of others; what might have condemned the book to self-loathing and bitter recrimination encourages a sense of empathy. Many of us have, at certain times, entered and eventually worked-through and exited those same situations that Scott describes: the toxic relationship, misguided faith, unrequited love, self-sabotage, and for that the candidness of its telling makes the book rewarding without demanding sympathy or love for its author. It earns our will to understand and empathise.

It's been a pleasure: *Je ne regrette rien.*

An Interview with Scott Manley Hadley

by Adam Steiner

Your book is very frank, explicit even, in its depiction of struggles with mental health, body image and societal expectations of masculinity. Was the writing of this book a difficult process? Cathartic?

Hi Adam,

First of all I'd like to say thank you for reading the book and also for asking me some questions about it! Absolutely, yes: the writing of the pleasure of regret was a difficult process, but different parts were difficult for different reasons, as the material wasn't composed as a "whole".

The chapter 'under the lectern', for example, grew out of a stilted and confused "review" I tried to write about an academic conference in 2017. The opening chapter - which is the one readers seem to enjoy most - is a fragmentary memoir (therefore microcosm of the book) about regrets and their opposite from my late teenage years and early twenties, tracing an *affaire de cœur* and the repercussions it had on my later life. This chapter contains writing from numerous sources and times, with some individual sentences perhaps almost a decade old (though none is true "undergraduate writing" - Frank had a different pseudonym then), and other sections some of the most recent prose and poetry I'd produced up to Summer 2019, when I began to form *the pleasure of regret*.

The most difficult, and the most distressing, chapter to edit was the section that reads as a stream-of-consciousness about alcohol abuse and suicidal depression. This began as it seems - scrawled notes written late, drunk and lonely - but was edited and edited and edited until it *reads as if* it's 100% spewed negative thoughts from an unwell mind, rather than *being* 100% spewed negative thoughts from an unwell mind, which means it makes sense. This editing was a challenge because I had to mine this explosion of pain and unhappiness and powerlessness for the emotional truth behind it: I

had to find the clearest and the most coherent words and sentence structures to evoke my own pain. Finding empathy from others through my writing was/is more important to me than avoiding upsetting myself, which is probably a bad sign tbh.

The process wasn't cathartic, though, as none of the problems I write about are any closer to being resolved. Maybe if COVID hadn't happened, they might have been, but I don't like where I am atm, literally and metaphorically, and I've been unable to *do* anything to change my material/social/geographical conditions, due to assorted lockdowns, loss of income, etc..

I don't want to sound self-pitying, though, as aside from being *bored* by having to "pause" my life, the very real, negative repercussions of COVID-19 have barely touched me (so far!), and I don't want to sound like I'm diminishing the grief, hardships and struggle that other people have had to go through in the pandemic's wake. I had to cancel a holiday, not do any in-person poetry readings and the new James Bond film got postponed. To have been bored by 2020 is a privilege, I know that. It's a long way from the worst year I've ever had.

The worst year I have ever had was from the Autumn of 2016 to the Autumn of 2017, a period I write about extensively in *the pleasure of regret*, and allude to in my hopeful, optimistic, 2018 poetry collection, *Bad Boy Poet*, available now from Open Pen.

Some of your poetry is not my style, I thought lacking form/structure/allusion – I think this is something you've had as criticism in the past - but I re-read it as being minimalist, as opposed to slight. Though a lot of the sections of poetry are brief, each of them gives the reader a decisive emotional image. When you read through them together it masses into a something that's quite overwhelming. You were also commended by the Forward Prize for a poem about poetry. What's your feeling on poetry at large?

Like many (though not enough!) poets, I feel ambiguous towards poetry.

Some of the greatest writing I've ever encountered was found

in poems, but I also don't think I've ever found any "creative" prose (bar perhaps some Beckett and Joyce) as impenetrable, boring, pointless and *devoid of feeling* as almost half of the poetry I've read.

For me, it is feeling that matters.

I don't get excited by imagery and I think rigid formal structures (i.e. the haiku, the sonnet, the limerick, blank verse) are tools for repressed writers looking for an excuse to distance themselves from their writing's content.

What does a writer want - or need - to say?

For me, content is more important than form, and form is far more likely to diminish the impact of content than content is to diminish the impact of form.

I hate Oulipo and all that kinda thing. To me, it implies a boredom, a dissatisfaction with the writing itself. Leaning on form is what happens when a writer runs out of substance to write.

Now, *playing with form* and *leaning on form* are very different things, and - imo - that is the difference between good poetry and bad poetry, and really between good prose and bad prose. If the form is successful, it shouldn't be *the first thing you notice*.

If you see a building and the first thing you think is "that looks like it won't fall down", then that's not a beautiful building. If the structure, the form, the plot, is the first thing you see, then what is being presented to you is not something with much going on.

What poets/poetry/peers inspire you/do you like to read? What brought you to poetry?

Sometimes reading poetry overwhelms me. Sometimes it bores me.

I struggle to find pleasure when reading poetry that is particularly dense, or subtle, or, I dunno, imagistic.

The poetry I LOVE is poetry that deals frankly, bluntly, with deep feeling: whether hopeful or sad, whether in response to geopolitics or to personal experience, y'know?

The first poetry I ever encountered and adored was the work of the Beat poets, back when an undergraduate, but more

contemporary voices I've enjoyed have been Sharon Olds writing about family and ageing and heartbreak, Claudia Rankine writing about race and prejudice, Hera Lindsay Bird writing about love and sex and romance, Billy Ray-Belcourt on queer and indigeneous identities, Chelsey Minnis on glamour and its facade, Hiwot Adilow on faith and immigration and family, KIRBY on sex and many many many more poets whose books I can't see from where I'm sitting.

I also really love Anne Carson, even though her writing is vastly different from my own: imo Carson is uniquely able to revel in intelligence and wellreadedness without coming across as smug and/or elitist. To simplify: Anne Carson is the only poet I regularly read who I don't understand but still enjoy.

What do you want to do with your writing? Where do you want it to take you?

That's a good question. Honestly, I don't know.

I've accepted that my writing will likely never become a source of anything other than recreation for me, which is fine.

Writing is something that it's important for me to do, and - realistically - I've been producing 100,000+ words of some kind every calendar year since 2012, so it's not something I'm only motivated to do in exchange for anything else.

That figure is conservative, and likely half or even a third of what I wrote some of those years. I'm including in that my blog (TriumphoftheNow.com), my two failed novels, two book-length travel journals, assorted other pieces of fiction and non-fiction, an academic essay published in a peer-reviewed journal (lol) and even - during a brief period from 2015 - 2017 - a few paid "hot takes" in magazines and newspapers.

That more zeitgeisty writing dried up, though, for many reasons including my lack of relatable opinions, not being in my twenties any more, the mental health crisis I had in 2017 and then also leaving the country and being too shy/depressed/cold to do the necessary "networking" to get an in.

However, after that evaporated, I began getting my little

books published, which was and remains something I do not take for granted. They've all been released by small British indie presses, and I had a poetry collection released in 2018, a prose chapbook in 2019 and *the pleasure of regret* in 2020, so though my readership may not be huge, it exists, and that's more important to me than trying desperately to turn my hobby into my job. For now, at least.

You talk about Lowry and alcoholism in the book, alongside your own struggles with addiction. Do you relate to him most on these terms as author (and the main character of Under The Volcano) or just as a fan of his writing itself?

Malcolm Lowry appeals to me for a number of reasons, both "as a writer" and as a person.

I think we share[d] similar impulses: impulses to create, but also a false and destructive willingness to live in the moment, to do things by extremes.

I am far more likely, for example, both to drink until I pass out or to drink nothing for days at a time than I am to drink "responsibly". There's a line Lowry uses a lot, across multiple pieces, which is "one drink is too many, a hundred not enough" and it's the truest phrase I've ever seen.

Lowry, like me, was peripatetic, had multiple long-form pieces in varying stages of completion, was painfully indiscrete, was crippled by self-doubt but performed excess self-confidence as a response to that.

I wrote about this trait in an essay soon to be published by Open Pen (a "review" of *the pleasure of regret*) but it's a big deal, I think, a big problem.

I see myself as low status, as disgusting, reprehensible, but I also think that my writing is some of the funniest and saddest I've ever encountered. Before my MA I wrote a comic novel, portions of which have been published as short stories over the years, and every time I revisit the text I find myself laughing and laughing and laughing. Eight years later, too, there's a lot of material I have forgotten: the jokes feel both fresh and familiar, like lots of comedy.

In that text, though, the non-comic bits are very weak (which means it does fail as a novel and the publishing world of 2013 was right to reject it), which is the legacy of my experienced life to that point.

Emotions were forbidden, were suspicious - except anger - in my life until my late twenties.

Laughter was the only catharsis it was appropriate to chase or care about.

I couldn't write pain or grief or regret because I lacked the tools to vocalise them, because every time I'd tried (until I finally found a great - and possibly life-saving - therapist in 2016) I'd been rebuffed, often cruelly.

There's a reason why everything I published before 2016 was shallow, and everything I've completed since has been far more emotional, and indiscrete. I only learned how to talk about feelings by talking about all feelings, which is something I hope to revisit once in-person psychiatric therapies are available again in the fantasy future vaccinated world.

The abusive ten year relationship with your ex-partner (who comes across a purely negative being) seems to dominate and overshadow much of the book – aside from financial concerns. I wondered what was it that you loved about them and what made you stay?

I was very ignorant, very naive, very provincial and unworldly when I went off to University. Like I write about in the end of the first chapter of *the pleasure of regret*, a lot of the things that excited and intrigued me about that person were things that, similarly, excited me about Frank DuBois. The affluence and glamour, the casual spending, the love of fun and pleasure and the foregrounding of this above all else. I grew up among very parsimonious, dull, unimaginative people, lives very much lived in black and white and grey. Money was something to be saved and stored, not spent. Nothing was to be enjoyed or thought about, or spoken about. There was no analysis or conversation, no changes of opinion, no widening of experience. The only times my father ever left the country after

the early-to-mid eighties were the three trips I took him on during my late twenties, where I was basically trying to manufacture a bond that didn't exist.

These people *wanted* things. Want, desire, fantasy, escapism, intoxication, sex, art, culture, music...

Also, it is flattering to be pursued. To be flooded with gifts and compliments and, of course, sex. To be wanted is enjoyable, even if the sociological reasons for that want are, ultimately, exploitative.

Frank was not - is not - a bad person. He's just a glamorous, driven individual who pursues the things and the pleasures that he wants. The fundamental difference between the two people is that one firmly believes they are entitled to, they deserve to have, they are *owed* all of the things they want. This directness, this confidence, was unlike anything I'd ever seen.

Though, tbh, I think my naivete was more of an issue.

It's easy to confuse loving someone *in spite of* some terrible personality traits with loving someone *because of* their terrible personality traits. It's also a trope, a trait, I suppose: if a person treats everyone they encounter with utter contempt, with disgust, with hatred and scorn and vitriol, if they are then nice to you, you feel like it's because you are "special", you are important. And even if sometimes they treat you like shit, too, sometimes they're nice to you and that's reassuring. And when they stop you from seeing other people, working, even, then it becomes harder to stop. You become reliant on that person because they have made you reliant on them.

I dunno.

I'm talking about the end now, not the beginning. The beginning was exciting and fun and strange and overwhelming. It was also a long time ago.

You focus on the precarity of a university generation with debt and expectation heaped on top of them, but also the hopelessness of academia as the quest for knowledge tarnished by commercial concerns/university business models. What do you see as the future for this? Will we all just be working menial minimum wage jobs while also being self-employed, working-from-home creatives?

Yes.

Though I'd make sure to include the caveat that the home we'd all be working from would be rented. I don't know anyone of my generation who owns property who wasn't directly given free money from family and/or lives somewhere I would consider unlivable (i.e. anywhere not a peaceful idyll *or* classified as lower than Beta minus by Globalization and World Cities Research Network).

Can one be an artsy millennial living in a global city and not gift 50% of your income to Gen X landlords who were once artsy city youths able to buy property before prices boomed? Maybe not.

There are gorgeous cities in the world where property is still affordable (i.e. proportionate to average salaries in the ratio it was in the 1950s through '80s in the UK), but being able to relocate *is in itself a massive privilege* that many people cannot afford to do, and with Brexit this, of course, will have become much harder.

I have been able to live in multiple different places, but I don't have any dependents (a dog doesn't count) and I'm a qualified TEFL teacher so able to easily pick up remote work with a little bit of admin, and I also have very low self-esteem, so can rely on demeaning work when I need to. Tbh, demeaning work is often a lot more interesting than more stable, even more "rewarding" work, but I don't know if it would have been if I hadn't had an exit strategy. I spent several months in 2019 working, essentially, as a freelance servant, passing around drinks and tidying up/cleaning up in the mansions, apartments and summer homes of Canadian millionaires and billionaires. It was demeaning, yes, but very rarely boring.

It's wrong to pigeonhole, but it struck me your book is very millennial in its approach. You cover wokeness, snowflakery, toxicity... Many of your book reviews have a bit of friction and discord with Gen X authors. Who do you see as your audience/readership? Who is this book for?

I dream of being read only by strangers.

Writing is a way of communicating with people beyond the confines and the consequences of the everyday.

Having literally no friends in the city I live in now means that, provided any honesty and any feeling is confined to my blog and my poems and the other writing I do, then I don't have to worry about my feelings in my day-to-day life. No one here truly knows me, which means I'm free to pass through the city like a ghost.

I know this is proper BPD bullshit, but it's a coping mechanism and for me it kinda works.

I'm not running into people who've read my latest suicide ideation, self-harm revealing, deep depression blog post, which means I don't have to fake an affect in front of people who want to show me concern.

It no longer matters that my work persona is incompatible with my online, on-page, internal persona: these personas no longer have to meet, and that is insanely fucking freeing, Adam.

For me, at least. Though it probably shouldn't be.

How do you see this book as progression from your first book of poetry?

the pleasure of regret is about more than *Bad Boy Poet*, it's about my life in general, my personality as some kind of whole, rather than a specific period and set of experiences.

Tonally, though, the real difference is an absence of humour. There are two jokes in the entirety of *the pleasure of regret*, whereas there are tonnes in that first book. It's sadder. It's more serious. I don't know if that is actual growth or just a sort of performance or perception of growth.

Is the fact that we are culturally conditioned to see "humour" as childish and "humourlessness" as mature a bad thing?

I mean in terms of culture, of the Arts more generally. Humour, comedy, is seen as lesser, somewhat, than tragedy.

The catharsis of laughter is lesser than the catharsis of tears.

Jokes are used to distract from serious issues, yes, I mean, that's the archetypal English thing to do.

So this book is less funny, on purpose, than the last one, so maybe that's progress, though maybe it's not. Maybe it's someone

else's idea of progress.

For me, as a reader, the best books make me laugh and make me cry, so not aiming for both is already a kind of failure, maybe. I think *the pleasure of regret* is a better book than *Bad Boy Poet*, but it's not as fun, and it's not as flattering. Who knows?

I'm seeing a lot of really positive comments about your book across Twitter. Lots of people, like me, found the book hard to put down given the often graphic, sometimes physical and emotional, violence expressed in the book (self-loathing, self-harm, abusive relationships, emotional distance). What do you think readers are connecting with? What do you hope they will take away from the book?

I've been thinking about this a lot tbh, and I think/believe that what people are enjoying about the book is its absence of pretence, of any kind of performance of character. There are plenty of ethically dubious and unpleasant things that I admit to having done, and also the way in which I callously speak about other people is arguably unpleasant, too. There's no sense, I hope, of a "needless to say, I had the last laugh"-type score settling.

I think it's rare for a person's inconsistencies to be exposed so much in a single volume.

My own inconsistencies are more extreme than those of other people (to the point where it's been pathologised as a personality disorder lol), but it's something everyone is prey to.

Everyone adapts themselves to the different scenarios they find themselves in, and everyone makes mistakes from time to time when doing so. Other people, though, tend to have a solid idea of what their neutral self is, whereas that is the quality I am absent of: who is Scott Manley Hadley? I don't know.

What do I believe? What do I care about? What do I want?

I want to be thinner and androgynous, I want to read and write and I want to be physically exhausted regularly but not every day and I want to be heavily intoxicated regularly but not every day and I want to eat too much and fuck too much and sing too much,

too, though not every day. I love excess, I adore it, and that perhaps comes from the dialectical thinking which is a big BPD symptom, but I don't necessarily think it's as much of a curse as the social anxiety, the depression, the suicide ideation, the fear of rejection so intense I avoid creating and maintaining personal bonds.

I think it is easy for lots of people to see themselves in me.

Typing that felt incredibly arrogant, but it's true: when you're as splintered and inconsistent as I am (one example: I hate socialising but love client-facing work), there are lots of routes for connection. The teenage sexuality stuff in here is universal, and most people have experienced some form of unhappiness, maybe not depression but grief, heartbreak, loneliness, certainly. The writing about alcohol abuse and drug use is something many people can relate to, to varying degrees, as too is staying too long in a bad relationship.

Writing about education is universal, too: everyone goes to school, even if not everyone goes on to further study. And everyone has feelings about family, and they're often ambiguous, though not always as ambiguous as mine. It's... I don't know...

I think what comes across is a simultaneous disregard for the feelings of the people I write about but also a disregard for being judged by my readers.

The book is far from being pro-Scott propaganda, and I think it would be quite easy to read *the pleasure of regret* and *hate* "me" for a variety of reasons: i'm sleazy, smug, avaricious, clueless, incompetent, shy, self-pitying, a druggie, a drunk, prurient yet scared of sex, nauseatingly obsessed with books, poor, whingy, left-wing, unsuccessful by many metrics, over-educated, bald, pro-dog, staunchly anti-meat without being staunchly pro-vegan, politically opinionated without doing anything to create positive change, etc etc etc.

I'm writing from a position of privilege, in many ways, and that's also something it's fair to dislike.

I don't think Scott Manley Hadley is the "hero" or the "anti-hero" of this book (Frank DuBois is the hero, of course) and I

think it's rare for a book to be written where the writer hasn't made a moral inventory/judgement of its central figure, and this includes memoir and autobiography.

I have low self-esteem, but I also think I'm far more interesting than pretty much everyone I've ever met. *the pleasure of regret* is one of my favourite books. I am one of my favourite writers to read. I write because I want to read myself and, well, what else is there to do?

You include a rather stark and striking timeline towards the end of the book. It's very interesting to see a life of (still young!) person picked apart, which culminates in a BPD diagnosis after a long struggle with diagnosis of depression and anxiety symptoms over the years (given the speculative nature of MH diagnoses; notoriously difficult to pin down). This is a major thing for anyone. How have/are you coming to terms with this? Has it changed your perspective on your history, and perhaps more importantly, your future, your writing?

First off, I wouldn't consider myself "young" any more. Maybe "youngish" if I'm being generous to myself, but I'm bald and in my thirties and haven't done anything I'd consider "youthful" for a long while. By youthful I basically mean doing something that ignores or denies consequence. God, I miss making new regrets.

The diagnosis was helpful, yes, in that it gave me a framework through which I could question and understand myself. As I write in the book, reading through the Wikipedia page for Borderline Personality Disorder was like looking at a mirror. Just a sort of "yes, yes, yes, yes, yes" response - I don't mean a jubilant-quasi-orgasmic series of yeses there, I mean a ticking-off-items-from-a-bleak-list series of yeses.

I don't know if it made anything easier: certainly the diagnosis made more sense, than any diagnosis I'd been given before, but other than the shift onto heavier medication (which seems to be working - I've only had minimal bouts of self-harming in the year since and (other than the self-harming and a couple of times cycling drunk) my risk-taking behaviours have been minimised) I haven't

really had the opportunity to grow or develop otherwise. With the pandemic et al, the mental health services have been operating less than usual, so I haven't been able to access the targeted, prescribed, "dialectical behavioural therapy" that I've been told will/should help me.

It would be nice to get that new (to me) type of therapy, of course it would (I LOVE therapy, most of the time - as someone who both loves to "over"share but finds social interactions terrifying, a therapist is a person who I can talk at without feeling like i'm breaking social taboos), but until that becomes available I'm pretty certain I'll be able to mooch along, not quite dying, but not quite living either.

What would I like for my future? Some stability, some sense of forward motion, some feeling that the writing will continue to come, which I always doubt whenever I finish a project. I have several ongoing, and the one I've scheduled myself to resume next is the incomplete manuscript that is most important to me, which is a terrifying prospect.

What else? I'd like to get to the point where, financially, I don't need to "work" as much as I do at the moment, so I can return to spending a majority or near-majority of my time writing again, as I did during 2018 when I produced the majority of *Bad Boy Poet*, the first draft of *hip-hop-o-crit* (my next book - released late 2021 by Broken Sleep) and the most powerful sections of 'like a pansexual roger moore'. There will always be more writing, I hope. Though who knows, really, at this stage...

As your life stands today, what is your one great pleasure? Your one great regret?

My one great pleasure, I dunno. Maybe my dog, maybe my lover, maybe wine, maybe knowing i'm far away from all the people i want to be far away from, maybe reading, maybe writing, maybe that commendation in the Forward Prizes 2019, maybe my ability to make myself laugh, maybe the knowledge that one day I'll be dead, I dunno, I have a couple of great pairs of shoes, knowing that my

writing is enjoyed and appreciated by people, maybe having some kind of hope, I don't know.

Biggest regret? If I'm being honest, it would be not having myself in 2013, but that's a fucking bleak way to end the interview. Being bald? Being born? Being born poor? Growing up in a town? Not applying to more good universities? Not training as a commodities journalist when I was offered the chance in 2011? Not taking foreign languages at A level? All the people I turned down offers of sex from? Buying terrible coffee consistently for six months because I didn't realise that there was good coffee but on a different aisle to the shit coffee in my local supermarket? I dunno. Buying the structurally unsound boat?

I regret a lot. I enjoy a lot. Peaks and troughs, Adam, highs and lows.

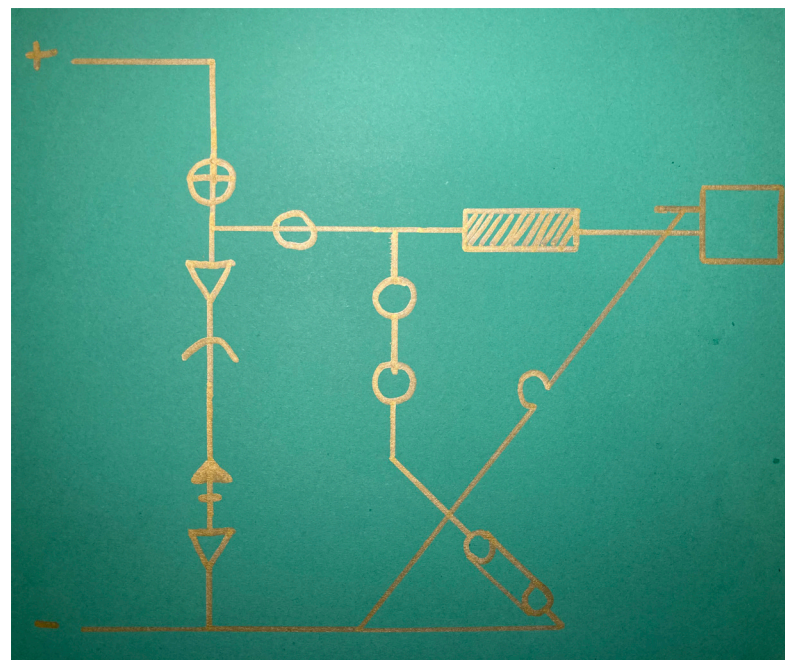
There is a middle way, I'm sure, but I have absolutely no idea how to reach it and I don't even know, if I'm honest, if I'd want to.

In the last few days I've been ecstatic to find out Broken Sleep have agreed to publish another volume of my non-fiction writing late in 2021, so if you truly want to hear more about my pleasures and more of my regrets, then that is very much something you'll be able to do!

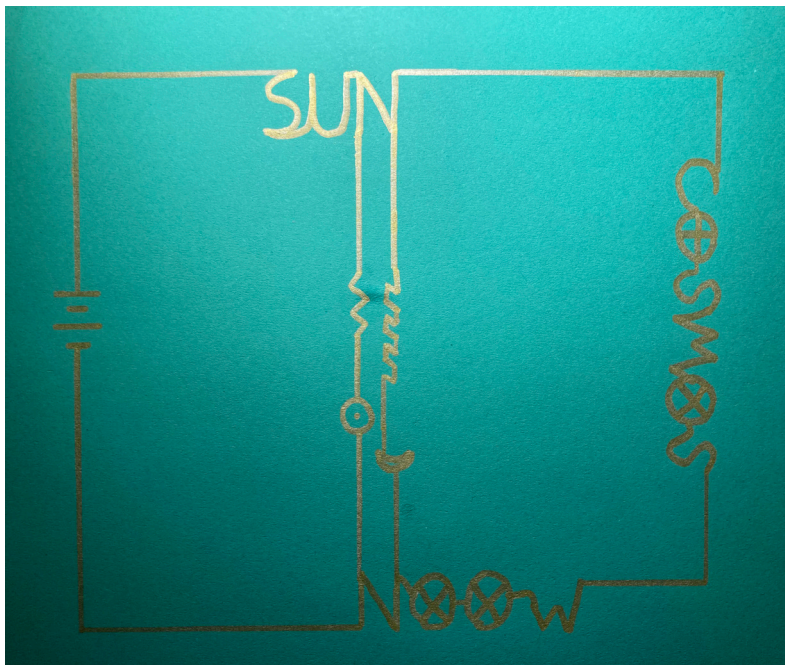
Maybe *the pleasure of regret* will become something I regret, too, but it isn't yet and what's the point in pre-regretting something that has so far only been good? I know this doesn't make much sense but, hey, I've never been good at endings.

electricalchemy 1

by Chris Kerr



electricalchemy 2
by Chris Kerr



electricalchemy 3
by Chris Kerr



Dreamtracker

by Dan Pounds

Valued Customer we take your privacy seriously at Dreamtracker

and can answer any questions you may have.

Your dream data is important to us and we will only share it responsibly

in full accordance with our terms and conditions and conditions

Error Occurred

Please refrain from repeatedly dreaming repeatedly

Error Occurred

about bus stops, brick walls, suburban privet hedges.

Please refrain from repeatedly dreaming repeatedly

Error Occurred

about stationary cars, Travelodge paintings, Costa signage.

We are fully aware of attempts to subvert Dreamtracker

via groups such as DeepBanal with their saturation techniques

of repetitive banal images that block and conceal the subsubconscious.

Error Occurred

We are experiencing technical difficulties

We are experiencing technical _____

oedible / goeey / emotionss

by Austin Miles

aye.

thus Foggo sed: thirty miles south/
southeast of baltimore:
an island's bright (dis)integration

now under construction a *wildlife* sanctuary
one hundred + seventy-five bird species terns osprey @ least ten species of
reptile—turtles—a concrete + plastic beach—an abstracted forest—
possibly—mountains + frequently—ppl—

aye aye.

the Poplar Island project team (u.s.a.c.e. and
m.d.o.t. m.p.a.) advised by the Poplar Island
working group
were trying to build something!

in talbot county m.d.
(tho a real *monster!* mud w some kinda
life...
assemblages w *unseen power*)

the way juan menendez de marques saw it:
separate w/ commanding presence—
u step ashore

a bird sound above someone's cold breath—
the largest work boots
u'd ever seen

eek! / goeey / feeling

by Austin Miles

are u Fog—u are Fog
+ the thing
speaking
Fog is an oak
Fog on a land sag teary
ending

an *ambiguous mass*
u are w no borders
a blank spot in the process
of emerging
on a map

Poplar *gestates*
in state fluids—coin

+ a vision of the future: so clean u could eat dinner off it: unpeopled yea a real *conundrum* here
feels like a kind of smoke or some sorta trap...

l8r: an owl takes a swim: Fog attempts translation—
owl: "ppl thiiiiink that the uuunited *states* is
a *sweet* bowla plastic FLOWERS!"
P.I.w.g. ecologists take it away praps 4 measurements
...most def. 2 kill it bc
it does not *belong*
in this ecosystem:
Fog:
nibbles a rocket
wiggles ur toes
hahahahaha!

EEK! / gooey / emotionss

by Austin Miles

dream: 2 b useless
filthy + gross

2 not say things like:

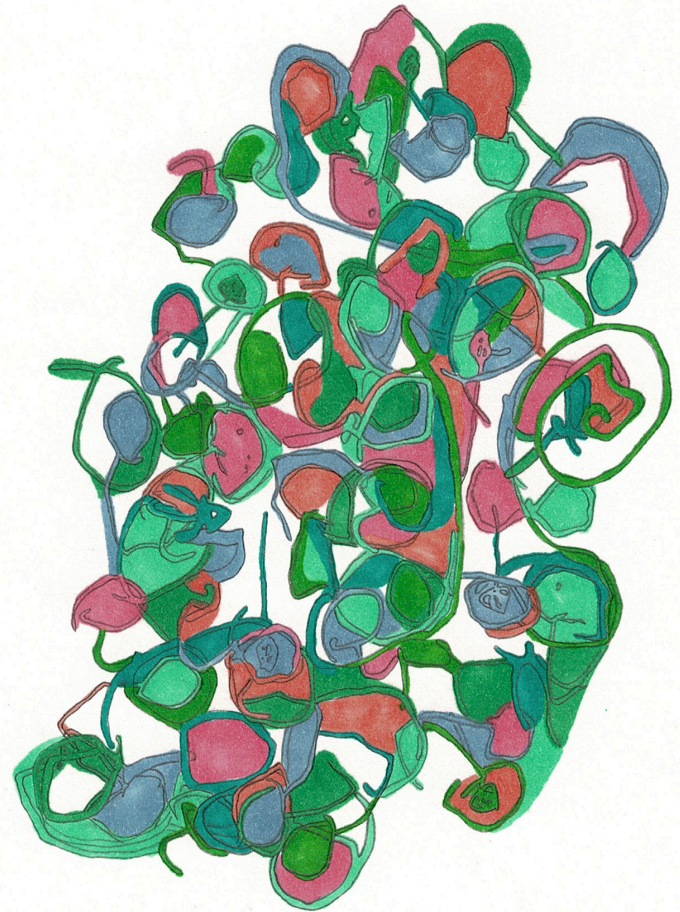
dredge comes from the bottom of the bay
zinc comes from sphalerite tin comes from cassiterite
cobalt comes from smaltite mercury comes from
cinnabar

Fog not feeling of this earth probs bc it is someone else's was *made* by someone else

dream: 2 b unnaturally afloat + of dredge
mayb 2 live

Present for my Brother

by Sarah Dawson



PRESENT FOR MY BROTHER 01/01/21

Present for my Brother #2

by Sarah Dawson



PRESENT FOR MY BROTHER #2 01/01/21

Instructions for use

BREXIT

GB

English,

Installation,

! Keep this instruction manual in a safe place for future reference. Should Brexit be sold or transferred, make sure the instruction manual accompanies the household to inform future UK citizens of its operation and features.

Unpacking:

! Brexit promises are not ~~unicorns~~ children's toys.

- 1) Ensure all the packaging of Brexit is kept well away from children. If children come into contact with any foreign claims associated with Brexit, seek medical assistance urgently.

! If installing Brexit anywhere other than the UK, please ensure you have active health insurance as part of your travel plans, the EHIC card will no longer be valid after the transition period.

- 2) Unpack Brexit
- 3) Remove all Freedom of Movement (please see point on NI protocol)
- 4) Check whether Brexit has been damaged during implementation. If this is the case, do not install it and contact your MP
- 5) Remove the protective powers of parliament to scrutinise Brexit and seal any gaps in democracy using Russian ~~bribe~~ plugs
- 6) Keep all Leave EU leaflets/information as proof of purchase: you will need them in order to claim your Brexit guarantee in the event of a no deal

Levelling:

Brexit may make a considerable amount of noise if a level playing field is not established.

! A level playing field is not required by Brexit but you may need to adjust your expectations accordingly.

- 1) Compensate for any unevenness by tightening or loosening the trading restrictions (see *NHS trade deal with US*); the angle of inclination, measured according to the results of the 2016 referendum, must not exceed 2%
- 2) Levelling Brexit correctly will provide all regions with ~~out~~ stability and avoid any economic repercussions, ~~protests~~ noise and ~~lies~~ shifting during implementation. If you are an EU citizen with settled status you may wish to adjust your living arrangements to allow enough ventilation from Brexit.

Care and maintenance,

Cutting off the UK from all EU standards & tariffs

- 1) Turn off all EU agreements

! This will limit the agreements we can make with many other nations (except US who will not sign a trade agreement if UK agrees to align with EU standards).

- 2) Unplug all UK industry/service standards and agree new ones during the ~~transition~~ implementation period

Caring for Brexit Implementation

- 1) Always leave UK businesses in the dark for as long as possible to prevent unpleasant odours from forming

Precautions and tips,

! Brexit was designed by ~~the~~ ERG, an elite group of ~~Right Wingers~~ and promoted in accordance with Facebook and Data Mining Companies (see *Cambridge Analytica*). The source of Brexit funding is not ~~yet~~ known. The following information is provided for safety reasons and must therefore be read carefully.

General safety

- 1) Brexit was designed for the benefit of tax avoiders and the ERG ~~only~~.
- 2) Brexit will affect children, young people and the poor disproportionately.
- 3) Do ~~not~~ question the legality of Brexit while the transition period is in operation.
- 4) The impact of Brexit may be corrosive to you, your family and children.
- 5) ~~Always~~ Never force a Brexiteer to confront the consequences of their actions. This could seriously damage your health and may risk losing the love of family and friends.
- 6) If Brexit breaks down, do ~~not~~ under any circumstances access the democratic process in an attempt to repair it yourself.
- 7) Always keep children well away from the xenophobia of Brexit while it is in operation.
- 8) Before the end of the transition period make sure your cupboards are ~~empty~~ full.

Description: The advantages of Brexit are listed below,

N/A

Personalisation: Functions,

To access the aforementioned advantages of Brexit and to achieve the best results, select the desired function:

- 1) Purchase an EU passport from Cyprus (check for latest fees)
- 2) If you own a company, move its headquarters to a country in the EU to avoid customs checks, tariffs and ~~unnecessary~~ red tape
- 3) If you live in Northern Ireland it may be possible to hold both an Irish and UK passport (please see NI protocol)

These functions are available throughout the transition period, after this the corresponding indicator light may no longer be illuminated.

Note: If the indicator light flashes rapidly, this signals that this particular function may not be selected in conjunction with a no deal Brexit.

Troubleshooting,

Brexit could fail to work. Before contacting your MP (see *Assistance*), make sure that the problem cannot be solved easily using the following list.

Problem:	Possible causes/Solution:
Brexit doesn't provide better wages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 'ON/OFF' button has not been pressed • The UK economy has not been re-installed to allow cash to flow into the country • Your skills do not match the jobs available • You need to have more belief in Brexit
Brexit doesn't take back Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The borders have not been closed properly • The 'START/PAUSE' button has not been pressed • Public pressure is too low
Brexit doesn't provide more money to the NHS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The economy does not allow more funding of the NHS • Parliament has a kink • The budget is blocked in parliament • The money for the NHS has been spent on lorry parks and custom checks

Brexit causes the union of the UK to break up.

- Levelling up has not been adjusted, enabling different regions to fracture.
- New Installation - Either parliamentary scrutiny has been disabled, or Russian **assets** donors have not been removed when installing Brexit.
- Brexit is trapped between Russian and/or US Alt Right interests.

! Remember, you will be charged for a service call for problems caused by lack of belief in Brexit, as listed above.

Assistance,

3 Year Guarantee

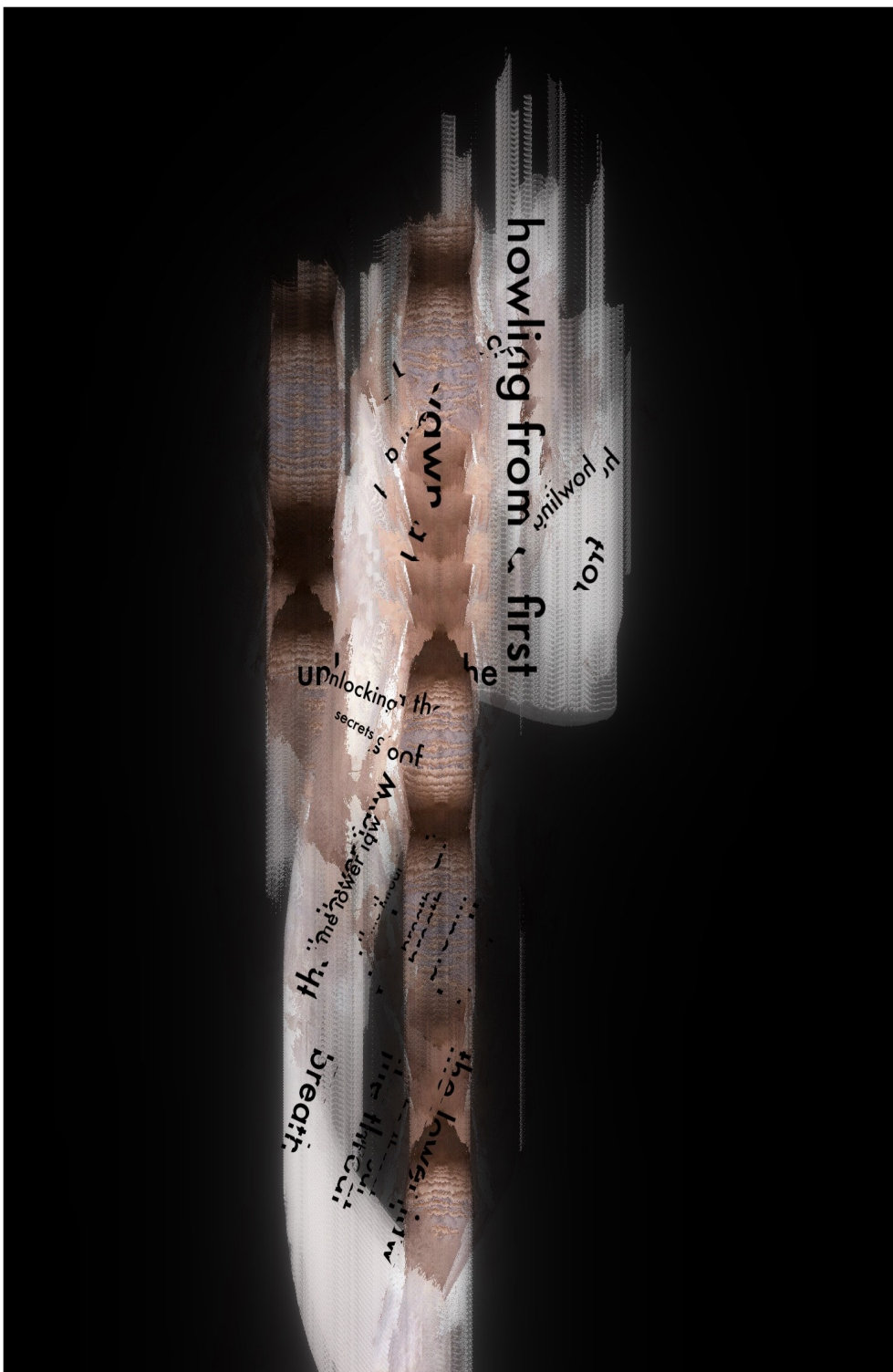
Brexit has the benefit of our government's guarantee.

This gives you the reassurance that if, within that time, Brexit is proven to be defective because of faulty implementation or on-going trade conflicts, we will, at our discretion, either repair or replace your democracy at no cost to you.

The guarantee **does not cover:**

- 1) Remoaners, Rejoiners or anyone wishing to vote Remain now.
- 2) Damage to your living standards, quality of life or family relationships resulting from improper use of Brexit.
- 3) Replacement of any rights or entitlement associated with life before Brexit.





Doctor Lazarus (Part Two)

by David Hay

1.

Hold your hipster moustache and charity store indecencies,
I have arrived at that New Town abandoned by Thatcher's perm,
a whole two decades before my tiny body commandoed across my
parents' first home—
and yes it's still a shit hole. But if you said it – yes reader from your
metropolitan paradise of quirky
shops selling nick-knacks of nothingness, I would break your nose
and I'd do that with gusto, with intent.

The rain stretches across the grey horizon.
I have a spliff in my top pocket- all suave like –
I imagine myself meeting some equally lost soul—
some hipster heroine with permanent ironic gaze and black nails
waiting for the train back to whatever miserable northern town she's
from
and without a word I would offer and that would be the beginning.
Oh Dostoevsky why must every sin be so saintly?

But escaping puerile fantasies that I should have grown out of,
I have twenty minutes to walk to Orpheus's research centre
or whatever soulless front they're using.
Plenty of time.
I know the shortcuts.
This is my childhood.
These paths formed my boyhood.
I can already see the tree
where even though I knew with physic premonition
that the branch would break I reached for it anyway
and fell into that piddling stream, into those nail covered boards
of our failed den-project, polluting the pure blue with my dirty

blood—
how manly I felt in my size seven shoes,
as I held in my tears as I trudged off home to be scolded by my
mother
for being an ‘idiot’ as the youngest kids surrounded me
and looked at my bones nearly piercing the skin,
crying like it was their pain and not mine.

2.

I know I have no home now,
no physical place of bricks and sporadically stained carpets—
all of it was sold – erased.
I guess we know how the Irish felt when we came over
and changed all their names and tried to sever their spirit from their
history,
but instead of countries its corporations (difference?).
Little Crawford Village is no more:
only the ever expanding industrial park,
which has eaten itself into obesity
from all those idyllic Beatrix Potter settings
and now just shits out nutritionless white blocks.

Sourness I warn you now, pours off me like time from a dying man—
I apologise but this is what it does to you.
The little muddied lane that ran past the desolate farm
surrounded only by fields and telephone pylons
has disappeared and in its place is a two lane road wide enough
for the constant trucks that enter this industrial complex,
which used to be my home.

Google maps tells me where to go once I leave the fields
and the tracks that stitched-up my childhood years—
there is something, and I don’t think it’s just because my past
is beginning to outweigh my future—

something utterly devastating about this place –
Bladerunner at least had smidgen of beauty in the austere grandeur
but this place— everything is riddled with rigid 70s angles
and sits comfortably beige (no depth),
trapped between the various roundabouts
that like some medieval disease,
mark the earth’s well-worn skin.

3.

The building I wanted (needed) sat squarely in the middle of the
complex.
A great metal gate not too dissimilar to the gates of Mordor barred
my way—
a camera somewhere unseen had already scanned me,
identified me correctly and summed up the facts that make up my
mind
by the automated system connected to whatever great machine-brain
powers this place before opening the gate.

A chapter of life had concluded and I now stood on the threshold of
a new one.

There was a very depressing reason that the money was so good—
too good and damn near irresistible to anyone like me—
struggling on the outskirts of happiness.
I knew I was probably going to get some untreatable version of cancer
or some disease not yet known would destroy my blood cells
and I’ll stink of sprouts and cat piss, and my physiology would be
reduced to some prehistoric goop,
which would probably turn out to be great
for men who suffered from erectile dysfunction.

Inside the gates even the air felt different.
It was probably purified by vents hidden in the foliage
or hidden in the pores of the road (I accept this is paranoia).

Inside the gates even the air felt different.
It was probably purified by vents hidden in the foliage
or hidden in the pores of the road (I accept this is paranoia).
Further down I encountered some kind of interface in the middle of
the path.
The screen flickered from black to an image
of a young woman around my age
in what looked like a store bought children's science uniform.
'Take your first left and once you're in the auditorium follow
the red lines to B15 that is where your trials will begin.
Any troubles just push the help button on any of the terminals you
pass.
Goodbye.'

Then she vanished and the image was replaced by darkness.
I pulled my burgundy woollen hat from my jacket pocket and secured
it firmly on my head.
It made me look like I worked off-shore on oil rigs
and for some reason this image gave me a lot of comfort.
I took a left and entered the quite openly sinister building.

The light javelined through the fractured skylights.
The room smelt like a dentist chair.
Whatever poetic vibes I'd gleamed from the remaining hedgerows
and memories of my rose-tinted, scuffed knee squabbles instantly
left me.
It was like the morning after a good night out—
all those heady mixtures that smelt like autumn
was replaced by the wintered hangover,
which has haunted me since my teenage years.

The Miserably Failed Uprising

by Shaurya Arya-Kanojia

The evening was young, and
Excitement was in the air.

His nerves were tingling,
His stomach a host of butterflies, and
His mind too eager.
On the bed behind him (as he stood
Facing the mirror, admiring his freshly painted
Face, a coat of white with a fat smudge of
Black kohl – he'd borrowed from his girlfriend – around his eyes,
And his lips covered in red paint, turning his
Deeply scarred, sinister-looking face
Into a smiling one),
Laid his freshly dry-cleaned suit.

A fine piece of craftsmanship, the Purple Suit,
And a green vest to go with it (not to forget,
The yellow shirt he'd wear underneath)
Was, he thought, smiling his already-smiling face, his
Red lips glistening in the overhead light (and
Was that drool slithering
Down the corner of his mouth?)
Going to be his attire
On this fateful night, because it was this
Fateful night that'll put him on the map,
A map of the meanest, most terrifying villains
He'd had as his computer screensaver, ever since he was
But an early teen.

Now, ten years later, his intellect
Having overgrown his peers, even his
Contemporaries, but the intellect which

He wanted to put to use,
Not to bring peace in an already
Disturbed (read: skewed) world, or eradicate
Global poverty.
But to cause mayhem, tear the
Fabric that was tolerance barely holding
Humanity together.

He wanted
To tear it, rip it, and let
Anarchy rule.

But that was ambition, and ambition, as
they all warned him – his parents growing up,
The friends he hung around with,
His girlfriends who thought him
Of having psychopathic tendencies – is
Often based on baseless ideologies. And his ambition,
As misdirected as it was,
Fuelled his thirst,
The thirst for waging a war.

And, so, with Elvis, the voice
Of the generation he believed,
Or let's say *wanted* to believe,
He belonged to, of carefree rock and roll,
Of antagonism,
He peeled off the
Polka dotted pyjamas he was wearing,
And slipped into
His yellow shirt, his green vest, his Purple Suit,
The suit, he smiled those sick red lips,
Of his revolution.

Then, rubbing a mountain of hair gel,

On his shoulder-length ash blonde
Hair, which he'd gotten styled at his barber's
For today,
Slipped out the door, and,
Fearing the ever-nosy neighbours
Would spot him, and, worse,
Call out, asking him if
He was on his way to
A fancy dress rehearsal, before
Cracking into a wild laughter (eliciting
In him, a fury so intense, he was afraid
Would smudge his makeup),
Snuck into his garage,
And sat behind the wheel, of
His pink, beat up, Vista Cruiser.

He remembered how, in college,
Driving the same car, the "Barbie Cruiser,"
As his bullies called it,
Had got him
Beaten so many times.
But, today, he told himself, things would change,
Today he'd usher in a revolution,
A change, an... *uprising*.
Smiling again, his red lips in a wide arc,
He started the wagon, shifting gears
(Because automatic transmission, as his father,
The sage whose mind, like
The rest of him, was filled
With dope, said was for pansies and duds),
And started for his destination.

He checked his watch,
And, seeing he just had
An hour before he was to meet

His girlfriend, his to-be fiancé,
The lovely Maria, she
Who didn't know about his revolution,
About his criminal
Instincts, and – she would beat
Him to a pulp if she
Saw it – his makeup,
For their Friday dinner
At the diner,
He bit his lip, cursing himself
For taking too long to dress,
Reminding himself to, next time,
Not spend too much time
Admiring himself in the face of
An uprising.

And maybe he took in
A bit of the paint on his lips, which,
It turns out,
Was still fresh, with its bitterness,
Its horrid taste, dampening his
Excitement momentarily.
He rolled down his window, and spat
out a mouthful.

The cop stationed
At the corner,
Who couldn't believe
What he'd just seen, for what he had,
Was a clown, the perp's face
White as a sheet, and his lips
Curved in a smile, the smile
That was funny and, at
The same time, sick.
Spitting on the side of the road.

And, seeing him commit
This disgraceful act,
The cop, dumping the tuna sandwich
He'd been wolfing on, back
In its box, and dialling the volume
Of the radio (tuned to his guilty pleasure,
the "Blues" station) all the way down,
Put his car in pursuit
Of the clown. And his ridiculous clown car.

The clown was perhaps
Half a mile from the bank, the bank
He'd planned to rob, and, from it,
The wealth, the riches, the money, that he would
Shower down from the terrace
Of the building the
Bank was housed in,
Heard the siren from the cop car
From behind him, and, what
Could only be fury, seething unimaginable
Fury, slammed his hand on the wheel, and the pain, the
Oh so incredible pain that shot through his arm
Made him cry out.

He knew, very well,
He couldn't pull over, for if
He does, would the cop believe him?
Sure, he thought, he could tell
The cop he was going to his
Daughter's birthday party "as a clown,"
But would the cop buy it? Would the cop,
Unless a novice (and not even then, he thought),
Really buy it? (Also, he thought, with the car, the "Barbie Cruise,"
Who would take him seriously

Anyway?)
Sir, the cop would say. *I'll need to*
Take you to the station. And that would
Be the end of his revolution, the uprising
He'd planned. The anarchy he wanted
To instigate.

So, then, he thought, should I flee?
Put my feet to the pedal, and drive away?
Have cops chase after me? Pursue me?
The Barbie cruiser, the leader of a revolution,
He thought, would look good on
As a newspaper headline.

And, with that thought, he did
Put his feet to the pedal, his
Tires screeching, his
Nerves tingling,
He skipped the traffic light ahead and sped away.
The bank, its gleaming storefront,
The blue and green neon lights,
The large front window, from which
He saw a couple of people – a couple of bored
Slaves of the system – milling around,
And laughed his sick laugh, those
Rich white teeth (Because hygiene was important, no matter how
villainous
His intentions)
Peering from his thick red lips, the
Lips that curved into a perpetual arc, the arc
of a sick smile.

He was perhaps round the corner,
When the sound of something – a bullet
Is what came to his mind at first, and

He, looking down at himself, stupefied,
Checked if *he* had been shot – tore through
The air. Though he hadn't been hit,
But, the next second, his car, now at a tilt,
Careened to the left, and was
That a screeching, like a metal scraping
The road, that he heard?
Meanwhile, his foot, still pumped hard at the pedal,
Ached, but he couldn't let go.

What he did know, though, was that he
Noticed a fire erupting from the side
Of his car, a massive flame that
Came from... Could it be his tyre?
Would his revolution be, he thought,
His pulse racing, his mind swimming,
Frustration now coursing
Through him,
Be thwarted by a stupid flat tyre?
Because if that
Wasn't anti-climax,
A criminally hilarious anti-climax,
What was?

No time to stop, though, the clown
He who had planned to rob
A bank, with anarchy in his mind,
And the Purple Suit sitting on
His body,
(And the Barbie Cruise as his ride)
Drove past the bank,
From where, he thought he'd begin,
His revolution, his uprising,

And, now, in the face of

His miserably failed uprising,
He could see himself, locked
Up in a cell, being thrown around
By his cellmates, because, let's face
It, who wouldn't want to, when
He looks like what he does?
His last thought, as the fire
Turned into a ball of explosion, engulfing
the Barbie Cruise, was how
He was so near, yet so far.

Ode to my Nipples

by Sally Geiger

The flare of the rose
every spring is an ode
to my nipples. The fields
a feast for bumblebees
& bouquet makers,

but me? I dreamed my body
was made of dirt
& only then was anything
possible, but anything
at any moment

might come crawling up out of me
into the first, the easiest
or mistaken signs of warmth.
Swollen & red
corolla; shimmering & undead me;

I dreamed my body
waterlogged, its every surface shielded
in an armor made of worms.
Sometimes I wish I were a normal girl, but I am
queen of the garden. No milk

again this season, nothing
to offer but sad songs & blessings
in my stolen crown of thorns. So come
smell my roses, I have whet
my mosquito sword;

you'll see what I mean
when the blooms break

from their bondage
& the petals
do blacken & reek.

AUTOMATIC WRITING

by Shelby Stephenson

Holy Marciano! And Don Dunphy too,
Yankee Doodle Dandy and unintended puns in air,
Plus Uber's driverless car with rue
I cite because I heard one ran over a lady who
Was walking her dog to church,
When, lo, the Edwards of spiders,
Dangling fame, pops out of hiding.
The pulpit wells again, wide, just exactly like
A dog a hillbilly singer might walk.

The singer, Webb Pierce, is never blue, until the lyricist
Looks at his watch to wonder if the words will be a hit
To make the waves roll and the spiders spit
Their mucous into Hell's apparitions.
Guess what! The singer changes the song
As time goes by and sunrise melts into the sea.
Breezes blow sweet melodies.
The twelve disciples, away from each other, change into
Little lambs ba-ba-ba-ing *come come come* to the wildwood.

Before the floor crumbles into the soles of the preacher,
The boys and girls in their pews whisper
That their thighs are sticking to the list of
Hymns lying in their seats the brothers and sisters
Sway and lay their hands on one another,
"How Firm a Foundation." Sin stands up from the depths of hell,
Where dogs, trained to answer the well-
Worn answering machine on my phone:
"If you wish to talk to an advisor just dial

One." The babble's scam scats
The way a cat does when its meow's abolished.

The breathing in burns up the heart-burn back to Socrates.
I'm in the first grade once more; Miss Apple's that
Teacher whose words wax my ears today.
"Shelby, put on your Thinking Cap."
Young Ben Franklin appears in a sprindge toward verse.
His dad tells him he cannot make money; or worse,
He might end up in poverty.

BACK-FENCE TALK

by Shelby Stephenson

Dirty laundry is a matter of soiled,
non-sweet insiders groining this Dumping Era.

My ears yearn for Mercury, Jove, Apollo,
each aspiring bigger things

than whether or not who paid cash
instead of check to whom or how

poetry might make a slave smile; it gives
life to you and me when blood flows

in bad jokes or reality shows
on TV, from wombs where each of us

remains imprisoned never to be recalled
or overwhelmed to emerge with wits

and big ears like mine, free of bitterness,
except to grow from the top

steps of the plankhouse where I was born,
my father said, to see if I would fly,

my ears were so big, he said. Eight decades
now, I keep TV on mute; my conscience

creates a bauble for the goddess of truth
I have yet to meet, preferably,

to settle events without ruination.
Haps, heavy, populate terms

of 200-pound sacks of fertilizer
I could not lift, yet bucketed

with industry to wait on my mother who strowed
the guano in the middles of rows

until her garden greened with open
heart for loving vegetables climbing from soil

upward into twirls and crawls of insects she would dust
and kill without holdback, for she meant

kindness for the many thousand times she would
hum that our table would dance with okra

you cannot imagine; butterbeans and squash,
the corner reserved for me, for I was

the baby in our family's tether,
assembled, tendering my lips

to understand the go of what my love
says without kiss at all, though kiss for kiss

makes imaginary drops of sorrow for
the ravished ghosts I cannot banish

from embraces I open my arms for,
the part which courts the welfare of my dreams,

the place and the close-quartered poetry
I cannot escape. It waits at the gates

for you and me. There is no reaching out to beg

deliverance, just a love-sick

boy inside the decades of remembrances
time presses like corn scattered

for chickens I would feed during chores
to keep this narrative on the ground

among the one I offer as a two-word poem,
Buff Orpington. I teach it how to strut

among Dominickers, Rhode Island Reds,
and the one bantam named Banty,

its little eggs, small uproars severed
from flight of feathers and deeds,

seeing my mother pick up a big fat hen
and wring its neck in one motion,

throw it down to flutter blood in eyes
beholding the table; I learned

to pick up one when the time came
to stew a hen, putting a tobacco stick

on its neck while pulling the hen's yellow feet
straight up, until I

heard a snap, the sure thing
of something else close to the mouth

already drooling at dinner, the gravy was so good,
never to hurt knowledge

which held me in a time I was too young to know
more than to lay my hands on those pullet's feet,

as I sat in a my chair
at the corner of the homemade eatin-table,

sucking marrow from bones, eating the real soft ones.
Murder was a word I would hear and read about

in inquiring repair of becoming an adult,
finally, to see the purple martins

live with bluebirds, the business
of the red-shouldered hawk

nearby, the feral cat, too, watching from the hedge
out of instinct,

determination alive to
smoothness and the necessary

colonies for birds and their babies,
foes on the prowl in plots, for revenge.

Scattered and Found

by Ollie Charles

*after James Baldwin, Michael Cunningham, Garth Greenwell, Salem Haddad,
Alan Hollinghurst, Edouard Louis, Andrew McMillan, Paul Mendez, Patrick
Ness and Ocean Vuong*

The shy boy slipped inside the duvet,
He'd react genuinely at school, the bookstore, the airport.
By morning, they might be home.

They took enough, the young
son supposed.

My flower seems to smell like disease.

You were crying a goodbye.
I touch Maj, then won't wash, grateful for the truth.

We kiss, clean, unloved,
I lay naked on the table, left there.

A body.

Till mad, fresh with sex, I will his hand in me,
Long and with boldness.

Could I tell my mother about the times I was arrested?
Sleeping outside felt like betrayal when my father closed the door.
Making stories up for myself ever since.

I don't regret the old men at the back of the cinema,
Talking as if my love were still a thing.
Giving me gay warmth.

He was here too.

The moment passed,
He was told to stay clean, leave.
He was a man, without time.

I turned their attention to the television,
They were in bags, like old laundry.

It seemed we'd get real.

Each conversation was,

Please, anyone but me.

But it was only in the silence that we understood the loss.

Nick, we must start again.

The Vispo Bible: Glue, String and Binder Rings

by Amanda Earl

The Vispo Bible is a life's work, begun in 2015, to translate every book, chapter and verse of the Bible into visual poetry. For the purposes of scope and brevity, I refer readers to "*The Vispo Bible: One Woman Recreates the Bible as Visual Poetry* presented as part of *Kanada Koncrete Material Poetries in the Digital Age*, University of Ottawa, May 4-6, 2018" for background, rationale and process details.

So far I have completed seven books in the Old Testament and six in the new, each chapter representing one page of visual poetry for a total of over three hundred pages.

I work digitally, copying and pasting text from BibleGateway.com, choosing the King James edition, and using Photoshop to manipulate the text. I never change the content of the text in any way, but I do duplicate and layer it, playing with it until I am satisfied with the result. I can't tell you how I know the work is complete, there aren't any parameters. I get a spine tingle when the work looks right.



The work has been published both online and in print, but for the purposes of this discussion, I'll speak solely about the print publications. I've provided as much detail as I have for each publication:

Romans, where is the river, 2018, Toronto, Ontario – stapled;

John, the Blasted Tree, 2018, Calgary, Alberta – bound with black, faux-leather paper and gold embroidery floss, and was stamped with archival gold ink. limited edition of 40 chapbooks;

Revelation, Timglaset Editions, 2018, Sweden – A4 format (297 x 210 mm), 28 pages and is printed in full colour on heavy high quality paper. The cover is in orange cardboard and hand-labelled with title and author name. The inlay is saddle stitched and the cover is rubber band bound. 60 copies were made.

Ruth, Simulacrum Press, 2018, Hamilton, Ontario – 8.5×8.5"chapbook of 6 sheets of cardstock, printed on one side. With a simple cover and back of reflective gold coloured cardstock, the chapbook is bound with loose binder rings;

Mark, above/ground press, 2018, Ottawa, Ontario – stapled;

Esther, Puddles of Sky Press, 2017, Kingston, Ontario – stapled;

Deuteronomy 2, 2019, Page Fifty One Press, New Westminster, BC – 5 x 5 printed on 16 weight cardstock with a matte cover;

Revelation 20, No Press, 2017, Calgary, Alberta – printed in colour and glued onto found Canson Art Paper with glue sticks;

Leviticus XII, Penteract Press, 2017 UK – printed as a leaflet on glossy paper.

Additional individual pieces have appeared in *illiterature v, the Graphic Novel* (Kingston, Ontario), *Dreamland Magazine* issues IX and X (Prince George, BC), *untethered 3.2* (Toronto, Ontario), *unarmed 72* (USA), *To Call No 1* (Germany), *not your best visual poetry* and *Train 7, a journal of concrete* (Toronto, Ontario). Pieces were printed on canvas and acrylic and exhibited in Toronto, Ottawa and Windsor.

As an author, I am used to having little or no say in book design, except for the cover or paper choice. For poetry, I have some say in the layout because form and content are integral to the work. For visual poetry, which is a blend of poetry and art, design and printing become more challenging. Publishers of the written word are usually more used to working with text than images. Not all of them know how to make use of white space or understand the difference between resolution and physical size. This has resulted in the occasional, shall we say, eccentric interpretation.

Most micropress publishers, like those of you making books, are working with limited time and money, sometimes scrounging their materials where they can and doing the trimming, folding and binding themselves. It's a labour of love and I appreciate that. For exhibits, I have been responsible for getting the work printed and framed. A local art/photography printer printed and framed an 11 x 17 copy of Revelation 20 on canvas and 12 x 12 copies of Genesis 2 and 34 on acrylic.

It is very difficult to reproduce the work in print to reflect its complexity and subtlety. Some of the content is delicate, ghostly. Sometimes I work with a black background and the image is in white or gold or silver. It's expensive to produce a full book of all black pages, and it hasn't been done yet.

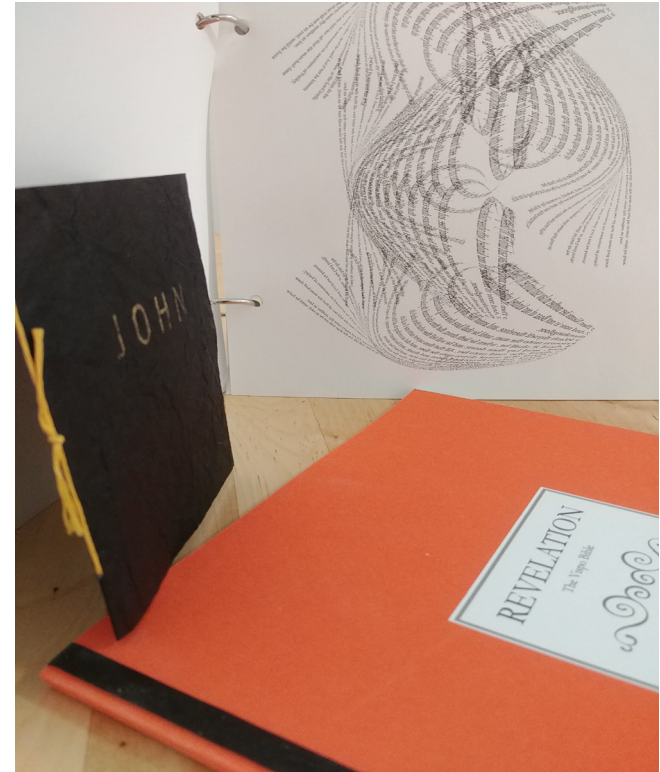
For the most part, I submit chapbook manuscripts from the *Vispo Bible* only to those whose reputation and design I am familiar with, many of whom I've encountered at small press fairs in Ottawa and Toronto. For example, Puddles of Sky Press in Kingston makes gorgeous wee chapbooks and broadsides, all hand made by Michael e. Casteels. He made a previous visual poetry chapbook of mine, *Of the Body*. *The Book of Esther* is a small and well-made book with cover designed by Michael. In *illiterature v, the Graphic Novel* issue, Michael took close up crops of Genesis 7-10 with thick black lines around them, giving them a comic book feel.

Most micropresses I have worked with produce limited edition chapbooks of twenty pages or fewer. One of my decisions when choosing which book in the Bible to work with is the number of chapters. For example, Genesis has fifty chapters and hasn't been published in its entirety in print, but a few of the chapters have been published online and I made a video of the entire chapter, which I posted on YouTube (see below).

1 John, *2 John* and *3 John* from the New Testament have only seven chapters in total, so they were perfect for the Blasted Tree, which publishes small ephemera.

I approached Joakim Norling of Timglaset Editions about publishing *Revelation* after seeing a beautiful, glossy full-cover booklet, Timglaset published of Gary Barwin's visual poetry, *Quantum Typography*.

The Book of Revelation in the New Testament has twenty-two chapters. It is full of colour and drama. I decided to create the pieces in colour to reflect the content. I knew when I started working on them that I would have a hard time finding a publisher who could afford to do a full-colour print book. When I happened upon Timglaset, I knew the work would be beautifully designed. Joakim made a gorgeous book. Timglaset Editions has become a key publisher of print visual poetry in Europe and North America.



The Book of Ruth from the Old Testament published by Simulacrum Press is an 8.5×8.5" chapbook of 6 sheets of cardstock, printed on one side. With a simple cover and back of reflective gold coloured cardstock, the chapbook is bound with loose binder rings. It makes me think of Charlton Heston Bible films, decadence and sin. I love it. In Germany, psw produces a mimeograph magazine called *To Call*, mastering on risograph using monochrome ink, and published Genesis 42 in the first issue. psw likes to work specifically with outdated print techniques.

For an exhibit and presentation on 21st Century visual poetry at the University of Ottawa, Claire Farley, a PhD student, printed out copies from *Genesis* and *Exodus* and framed them.



The greatest challenge in the publication of the *Vispo Bible* is that it can't really be published in its entirety. Derek Beaulieu, Alberta visual poet and publisher, suggested the whole thing should be bound in leather and printed on onion-skin paper to be like the Bible. This is a lovely idea, but probably too costly for any publisher to consider.

In an ideal world, a publisher would come forward to publish a selection of the work as a full-colour coffee-table book. Hint, hint.

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biblegateway.com

youtube.com/watch?v=gZQiztg47Y0

timglasetcom.files.wordpress.com/2018/10/quantum-typography-free.pdf

Photos courtesy of Amanda Earl and Claire Farley.

July
by Aimée Keeble

bodies

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The Lady Triumphs

by Godefroy Dronsart

ozonegrass.bandcamp.com/track/the-lady-triumphs

The Last Words of Dutch Schultz: A Fiction in The Form of a Film Script

by Imogen Reid

William S. Burroughs developed a written technique that spliced, diced, delinked, and relinked words, and sometimes images. His method was not dissimilar to editing procedures used in the cinema. He developed in-depth montage techniques and went on to make several short experimental movies in collaboration with the director Anthony Balch, these include *Towers Open Fire* (1963) and *Bill and Tony* (1972). He was one of the most vocal practitioners of cinematic technique in writing. In this essay I will look at some of the ways that Burroughs made use of film as a resource to alter and transform his writing practice. I will begin by outlining some of the negative connections that Burroughs made between cinema and consciousness before going on to investigate how he proposed to disrupt and undermine the writer/reader's habits of thinking and reading, through the development and implementation of a series of visual and text-based cinematic techniques. I will argue that, in resting the conventions of Western European reading and writing, these techniques yield alternative kinds of readability.

Burroughs believed that perception was both regulated and controlled by a network of endlessly recycled clichés and opinions that aimed to maintain a coherent image of *the* world. He would go on to call this coherent image 'the reality film'. In a conversation with Conrad Knickerbocker of *The Paris Review*, Burroughs clarifies his point with reference to his cut-up novel *Nova Express* (1964):

[i]mplicit in Nova Express [he says] is a theory that what we call reality is actually a movie. It's a film, what I call a biologic film (Burroughs cited in Murphy, 2004, p.29)

and, again in his book *The Third Mind* (1978) he says:

“[r]eality” is apparent because you live and believe it. What you call “reality” is a complex network of necessary formulae ... association lines of word and image presenting a prerecorded word and image track (Burroughs in Burroughs & Gysin, 1978, p.27).

In short, Burroughs draws a parallel between consciousness and its cinematic tendencies before vehemently objecting to them. According to him, this internalized ‘reality film’ coherently integrates what would otherwise be a disparate medley of sounds, images, smells, sensations and thoughts, it thereby fabricates a seamless motion picture with a coherent narrative that prevents the viewer/reader/writer from experiencing anything outside of it. The ‘reality film’, and the connections made by it, were seen by the writer as limiting, they reduce complexity and give the impression that things, movements, images and sounds run on from one another consistently. For Burroughs this was an intolerable situation and his response to the tyranny posed by the ‘reality film’ was at once physical. He literally cut it up. He spliced, diced and rearranged the established order of syntax, and the rational logic of grammar, in order to interrupt and disrupt the seemingly seamless flow of communication established by it. What interests me here is that Burroughs chose to use and develop visual and text-based techniques that were derived from cinema in order to sabotage the film that he believed was playing on and on in his head.

In his book *Wising Up The Marks* (1997) Timothy S. Murphy expands on Burroughs’ claim suggesting that it is cinema itself that provides:

the theoretical foundation of textual cut-ups, rather than the reverse, [cinema, he says,] offers Burroughs an immediately accessible form through which to lead his audience to an understanding of his textual innovation (Murphy, 1997, p.215).

According to Murphy, Burroughs’ experimental cut-up texts not only

draw on cinema as a resource, they can also be profitably read and negotiated through the reader’s own knowledge of, and familiarity with, cinema. In other words, we the reader can find a way to engage with Burroughs’ texts by drawing on our own experience of going to the movies. I want to focus on one particular example within which Burroughs draws on cinema as a visual resource, in order to begin to establish the possible impact that his use of visual technique in writing might have for the viewer/reader.

Burroughs engagement with visual technique can be seen, as well as physically felt, in the typeset experiments deployed in his faux film script *The Last Words of Dutch Schultz: A Fiction in The Form of a Film Script* (1969). In *Dutch Schultz* Burroughs uses a two-column film script structure in order to separate: ‘the sound and image tracks of a “non existent film”’ (Murphy, 2004, p. 107). The reputed subject of this film was the real-life gangster Dutch Schultz. In the left-hand column of the script Burroughs describes image and action, while in the right-hand column he lists dialogue and non-diegetic sounds, such as music, sirens, silence and breath. The script is cut with black and white photographs derived from a variety of sources, e.g., Hollywood films, documentary footage, and newspaper reports, however, although the text itself imitates the clichéd language and verbal style of a Hollywood gangster movie, as Anthony Enns points out, this is no ordinary film script. Enns puts it the following way:

rather than following the strict format of traditional screenplays, Burroughs’ script simultaneously represents both an imitation and a subversion of yet another institutional form of textual production [i.e., the film script] (Enns, 2004, p.107).

In other words, as Burroughs’ screenplay cuts ‘real’ and ‘imaginary’ image and text together, it draws the reader’s attention to the constructed nature of film, to the way images and sounds can be spliced together to form a seamless continuity, and to the way dialogue can be used to give the impression of an integrated coherent character. But Burroughs’ faux film script not only sabotages the

medium it works with, I argue, it also sabotages the practice of reading itself.

In *The Last Words of Dutch Schultz* Burroughs uses visual technique to cut across, interrupt, and alter the pace and line of reading. The two column sound and image tracks vie for the reader's attention so that, unable to follow a linear course through it, he or she is forced to find an alternative means by which to negotiate the script, for example, he or she might read one column after another, start from top to bottom, or jump across and between columns. It is possible to enter the text in a variety of ways, no one line of approach is privileged above another, and the route through the text is left almost entirely to the reader's own preference. *Dutch Schultz* engages the viewer/reader through sight and sensation, forcing him or her to physically engage with the text, to feel as much as think through it. The practice of reading, as Burroughs conceives of it, is not directed solely toward the intellect, the reader is not told what to think, or how to read, but is instead encouraged to find a way to read the text as he or she is pulled in several directions at once. If we accept Timothy S. Murphy's claim that cinema provides the reader with a basis from which to apprehend Burroughs' cut-up texts (Murphy, 1997, p.215), perhaps it is possible to say that our response to *Dutch Schultz* is less literary than it is cinematic, in other words, because Burroughs makes use of techniques that are more often associated with cinema than literature, for example, the two column structure that separates the sound and image tracks, the reader is unable to draw upon his or her conventional reading habits as a means by which to comprehend the text. Instead, Burroughs' faux film script stimulates the reader to draw upon his or her memory and experience of going to the movies as a means by which to apprehend the text. In *Dutch Schultz*, Burroughs makes use of and undermines the conventional film script format, and, as he does so, he begins to write a non-existent film into existence.

As demonstrated in *The Last Words of Dutch Schultz*, Burroughs' cut-up texts are not a conventional read, and the cinematic writing techniques deployed within them are intentionally disruptive and

interruptive. I want to expand on the processes involved in the making of the cut-up texts in order to establish how the notion of the machine intervened within Burroughs' writing practice, with an eye to further establishing how his writing technique aimed to take conventional thought beyond its habitual form.

In Burroughs and Gysin's book *The Third Mind* (1978) the writer and critic, Gérard-Georges Lemaire, contributes an essay called *23 Stiches Taken*. In his essay Lemaire describes the cut-up method as a ruthless text shredding mechanism, a writing machine that eliminates the notion of the writer as controlling consciousness within a text. Pointing out that the cut-up technique was introduced to Burroughs by his friend and collaborator Brion Gysin in 1959, Lemaire goes on to quote the writer extensively on the procedures involved in, and the consequences of, his experiments. In a kind of how-to-do- a cut-up demonstration, Burroughs himself outlines the mechanical processes involved in the procedure in the following way:

[t]ake a page of a text and trace a median line vertically and horizontally./ You now have four blocks of text: 1, 2, 3, and 4./ Now cut along the lines and put block 4 along side block 1, block 3 along block 2. Read the rearranged page (Burroughs in Burroughs & Gysin, 1978, p.14).

As Burroughs' methodical description demonstrates, the cut-up technique is not an actual machine, however, the procedures involved in the production of the cut-up texts exhibit certain mechanical tendencies, for example, the systematic slicing, dicing, folding, and rearranging described above, a procedure that Burroughs claimed could be repeated and performed by anyone. As Lemaire points out, the associations made by Burroughs' writing machine were effectively: 'uncontrolled by the intelligence' (Lemaire in Burroughs & Gysin, 1978, p.14), in other words, the writer's authorial presence was effectively dispensed with.

Although Burroughs does not make it explicit in the procedure cited above, the cut-up texts were often derived from a

variety of sources, his novel *Nova Express*, for example: ‘cut together Shakespeare, Joyce, Rimbaud, Genet, Kafka, Conrad, pulp science fiction and other texts’ (Knickerbocker cited in Murphy, 2004, p.39). [1] These new texts often seem fractured, comprised as they are of disjointed and interrupted voices, of sentences that no longer ‘make sense’. In this way Burroughs’ texts could be said to bear a formal resemblance to the stream of consciousness writings of James Joyce and Virginia Woolf, however, as we have seen, there is an essential difference between them. Using a machine-based writing technique, the cut-ups aimed to thwart the mental mechanisms of selection that Burroughs associates with conscious thought patterns, to free thinking up from the habits and need-based selections that the philosopher, Henri Bergson, believed to be the goal of the intellect. [2] The aim of the cut-up experiments was to take the ‘writer’ and reader beyond the usual limits of thought, rather than to reflect on or represent its processes in writing.[3] The intervention of a machine, or of a mechanical cutting mechanism, enabled him to side step his own predictable thought patterns in writing, producing unexpected juxtapositions between words and sentences, a random collaboration between writers who would not usually be associated with one another.

For Burroughs, the cut-up technique was capable of generating new ways of writing, thinking and reading, and, for him, these new ways of writing, thinking, and reading were indicative of a kind of freedom from the constraints imposed on us by the ‘reality movie’, the controlling consciousness he believed was playing over and on in his head.

According to Gérard-Georges Lemaire the ‘origins’ of Burroughs’ shredding machine can be traced back to the random writing methods undertaken by various members of the anti-art movement Dada[4] wherein, for example, the pages of a newspaper were cut up and thrown into a hat before the individual fragments were pulled out and arbitrarily reassembled, word after word, after word. The result: a nonsense text that scrambled any pre-established meaning. But, as Lemaire goes on to point out, there is a key difference

between the two techniques. According to him, although the cut-up texts upset the semantic order, unlike Dada the drive behind Burroughs’ technique was not the production of a nonsense text, but the generation of: ‘a new form of readability’ (Lemaire in Burroughs & Gysin, 1978, p.14). However, despite establishing Burroughs’ aims in contrast to those of Dada, in a seemingly contradictory statement Lemaire goes on to say:

Brion Burroughs and William Gysin [free the word from the tyranny of grammar and syntax, and, in so doing], they reach a point indicative of unreadability (Lemaire in Burroughs & Gysin, p. 20).

So, how can we explain the association that Lemaire draws between: ‘a point indicative of unreadability’ (Lemaire in Burroughs & Gysin, p.20), and the establishment of: ‘a new form of readability’? (Lemaire in Burroughs & Gysin, p.14)

At the end of the how-to-do a cut-up procedure cited earlier, Burroughs calls for the reader to ‘read the rearranged text’ (Burroughs in Burroughs & Gysin, 1978, p.14). However, to follow his command is no straightforward matter. In the cut-up texts, as we have seen, the reader is thrust into a series of sounds and images that fail to cohere, he or she is effectively forced to feel the unintelligible clash and collision between words as they are violently separated by a gap. Burroughs undoubtedly presents his reader with writing that veers toward the unreadable, toward a chaotic explosion of words, and yet, Lemaire claims, this unreadability is only ever provisional. These texts may be difficult to read if approached in a conventional manner, but they are not nonsense. So how do the cut-ups provide a viable alternative to conventional reading practice?

The cut-ups are performative rather than constative, the reader does not find meaning already made within them, instead he or she is invited to participate in the construction of it, to forge new connections between a disparate series of images, words and sounds. As we have seen in Burroughs’ faux film script *The Last Words of Dutch Schultz*, the cut-up texts do not aim to engage the reader solely

through the intellect, instead the reader is forced to feel the halting sentence structures, to experience the unexpected variations in vocal rhythm and intonation, as the texts cut a series of different voices together.[5] The cut-ups sabotage signification, and, as they do so, reading itself is forced to become a physical and embodied experience. The reader feels the force of the cut-up texts precisely because he or she is unable to comprehend the meaning of the 'sentences' written in them. One could say, therefore, that the cut-ups render the reader temporarily illiterate, that they defamiliarize our habits of communication. It is in this way that Burroughs' texts can be said to veer toward Lemaire's 'point of unreadability' (Lemaire in Burroughs & Gysin, 1978, p.20). But it is also possible to say that, because the cut-up texts obstruct our conventional reading habits, our habits of thinking and reading are involuntarily forced to reorganize in our encounter with them. We have seen something similar in *The Last Words of Dutch Schultz* as the reader is forced to find a way to negotiate the texts two-column structure, to find a way to read the text en route through it.

The cut-up texts present an obstacle to conventional thought, and it is by way of that obstacle that Burroughs believed new ways of thinking, reading, and writing were potentially generated. The modes of thinking, seeing, feeling and reading provoked by the cut-up texts do not conform to a pre-established model, they do not reflect or return the reader to his or her former self, instead the reader is 'violently' moved and potentially altered by his or her embodied encounter with them. The point indicative of unreadability that Lemaire speaks of is a catalyst that incites the reader to actively participate in the establishment of 'a new form of readability' (Lemaire in Burroughs & Gysin, p.14). In other words, in resisting the conventions of Western European reading and writing practice, William S. Burroughs' cut-ups make us physically aware of how it might feel to think differently.

Endnotes

1. Burroughs discusses his use of other writers in *Nova Express* in an interview at the beginning of *The Third Mind* (Burroughs in Burroughs & Gysin, 1978, p. 6).
2. See Bergson, cited in Deleuze, 1992, p.2.
3. I should add that, both Joyce and Woolf had an interest in cinema as an emerging medium, and in the possible effects that it might have on writing. See, for example, *Joycean Frames, Film and the Fiction of James Joyce*, Burkdale, 2001, and Virginia Woolf's essay *The Cinema*, 1926.
4. Burroughs himself credits the invention of the cut-up technique with numerous other writers including the Zurich Dadaist, Tristan Tzara, and writers T.S Elliot and John Dos Passos. (Murphy, 1997, p.205).
5. Burroughs argues that the cut-up technique 'can show the writer what words are and put him in tactile communication with his medium. This in turn could lead to a precise science of words and show how certain word combinations can act on the human nervous system.' (Burroughs, 1969a, p.28).

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**VISIT A LIVING BEING TO EAT WHAT FALLS FROM
THEIR BODY**

by CA Conrad

I am the
wagon wishing
you would find me
a maple left uncut
the rock that smashes nothing
seeking a god who speaks to
memories of life before
the heart's affliction
your cum tastes like
hand sanitizer what
have you been up to
when too many die
we deceive despair with love
sex with a man at a funeral
destroying death in his car
a holy perforation for a ghost
for best wish catch apple as it falls
eat seeds and worm to seal your destiny
everyone puts what they've got into the wheel
driving across America
raw imagination faster
than spirits keep up
I cannot remember
the last day a digital
watch was the only
digital object in my life
the first heart transplant
was the last day everyone
alive had hearts we were born with
something to get used to
I was only one year old
but do not remember
anyone objecting to
someone keeping their
strength with someone else's muscle

**45 MINUTES TO RESCUE THE PHOTO ALBUM BEFORE
THE GARBAGE TRUCK ARRIVES**

by CA Conrad

when I learned male lions kill and
eat another male's cubs I was
desperate to get my sister
away from our horny
violent stepfather
where were you
Amanda Paradise
when I was 10 she was 6
lean back in chair fall all over it
believing milk comes from clouds
insert straw and suck the word *choice* dry
vacuum cleaners and lawn mowers our
demoralized efforts to contain chaos
wear a touch of mask this evening
tell the children when US poets pay
their taxes homes of poets in the
Middle East burn to the ground
we lift higher and stronger on the
stock market's wingspan of annihilation
imagination of mouse flying by in owl's talons
torn from secure location stampede in the chest
in a trance to recall first time I saw the sun as a child
Gumby almost dies on the moon in the first episode
how were we supposed to fucking feel
I remember panic and confusion in
kindergarten when our teacher was
afraid the 7 dwarves did terrible
things to her as she slept in the
unwritten parts of the book
who are these people and why
did our parents leave us with them

Tractor Ned Eats Rainclouds

by Michelle Moloney King

Oh dear. Tragedy, bun? The 128
bus is stuck
underneath a bridge
across from a graveyard party
scene, it
demands cocktails of spud liquor,
grab the brush to
paint the caves. Large, tastefully decorated room.
Paper chains strung across ceiling.
She feels like the odd
one out somehow, commence
feeding procedures, yummy.
This spatula's MINE, playdough for dinner again....
it heats the room but it is linked with the
central system and demands
toddlers tears. M'AM. M'AM?
It's the new and for some reason accepted way of
governing goats, throw it out there
to the media, figure out if
the tree in someone's yard is a
chestnut (no, chinquapin).
Prowling around trying to hear a
man's voice across the
street behind me: It's somebody's
birthday. Didn't you and I
have the same taste?

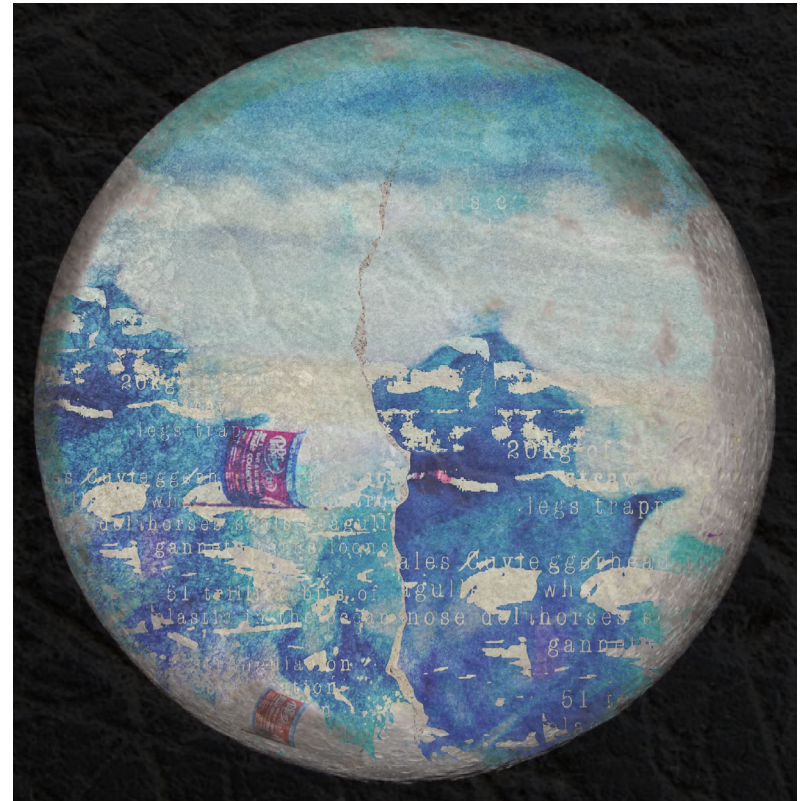
Plastic in Its' Gut

by Katy Wimhurst



On the Beach

by Katy Wimhurst



from 19 Instances of COV

by Peter Philpott

1. COV: “Durham Cathedral from the Railway Station”

“. . . that bloody stone, old shit up there. There isn't
any other I hate so much as that. They built it
just to keep us poor buggers down & we're still down”

“At Durham”, What Was Shown

Aye, alright then, cov, are y' copin' w' all this crap now
are you still, I ask, cov, this whole place is derelict
like some fucking medieval fortress some cov once erected up
it's gone, cov, it's gone, the saint's tombs y're guarding
it's an old cov's dead body is all

the river

will cut it down as the bloody rain rains harder
no one, cov, even if we carry on all the rule of the past
no one one day will care

just stones, cov

things w'out life and no more power, cov, no
no more bloody power to bind & make us serve

Mebbe the old cov'll be remembered as a good old cov
mebbe just his old cuddy ducks will quack out cov cov cov
maybe we'll act as he'd have advised w' sense
and real knowing of all our situation here.

2. COVALENT: “Bruges: The canals – ‘listed by UNESCO as
world patrimony”

“He needed infinite silence and an existence that was so monotonous
it almost failed to give him the
sense of being alive”

Georges Rodenbach, *Bruges-la-Morte*

We think the bonds are strong but they can shear
straight as canals, light on canals, straight lines
darkness suddenly grows
no one around, no one
no one's left, the stone is dangerous, and the brickwork
radiates the cold of empty night into the end of day
this ordinary day of sheared bonds
some old normal day
waiting for the shadows to join & cover, something
coveting our life
has taken over

At the end of the canal
a tower and a minaret
everywhere the same old now
merging into our common cenotaph.

3. COVANITIS: “The Helford River, Cornwall”

“. . . the waves broke
to vanish with each backwash
other buoying up again perpetually”

“Memoirs of the Planets”

It's a good thing to see the sea
when you're there it's everywhere: total
a whole new video game of absolute absorption
maximum wetness

so you fly beneath the planets, the stars, their haloes
the water all around heaps itself

muscled and animal

Oh it's rushing on its own errand – no bonds
it'll swamp & absorb like the vastest amoeba
you can't zap it, friend

not even firing till your hands ache & bleed
maybe pulling & hauling

or rowing controlled & perfect
your whole body framing your responses
or you'll sink a stone into its depths, its otherness
“this isn't a river but the great sea's wet tongue”
“as above so below” – remorseless as some virus
playing their own games to win.

4. COVE: “Siena: The Cathedral”

“In the forever uncompleted church's skull
Forever uncompleted music plays against a crowd
Shifting & reforming in the night breeze
In pairs & in families & in ones constantly & softly
Reforming”

“Siena, p di Jacobo Quercia”, *Inglese italianato...*

Cave, cove, yr memory's going off
an empty dead unfinished skull
you always were an impossible project
built above a precipice
more inside than could fit in
bear up
carry off
all the phrasal verbs fucked
let's be simple here
there's light, there is stones, too many folds in the ground
– it's all being sucked towards the next dimension

you know its name

it's a desolate cove

amidst total dental cliffs
no refuge for the likes of us despite
your fatal memories of utopias

that'll end

not in neat quatrains but really
no caves, cove

an absolute interface
refuge refused
at this zawn.

5. COVEN: “Alhambra: Granada”

“Jorobados y nocturnos,
por donde animan ordenan
silencios de goma oscura
y miedos de fina arena.”

Federico García Lorca, “Romance de la Guardia Civil española”,
Gypsy Ballads

And what does the Guardia guard?

emptiness of all futures
why is this moon above us?
to cast light over this arena
who lives within this town?
a coven clad in black
what scent fills the hot air?
our hopes passing into this night

Why is this future empty?

we are falling down this cliff
who would want to see this sand?

who would want to see this sand?
the bull to know his life complete
who are this black clad coven?
they are ordered to bear no name
where are our hopes passing to?
the dark air of empty courts

Whose courts are those, señor?
of all of us
who ordered the black clad coven no names?
our civil guards did this
what is the name of this cliff?
La Boca or El Refugio

What is the refuge, señor?
the moon in the sky
what is the mouth then, señor?
that accidental hole of decay.

6. COVENABLY: “Stonegate, York”

“Everyone is alone at the heart of the earth . . .”

Salvatore Quasimodo, “Suddenly It’s Evening”, quoted in Elvira
Domes, *Snow Virgin*

Our refuge is in the city always
here’s where the crowds should be but no one
the whole mass of people gone now
what has happened here then?

The great mouth swallows us up and pukes
our refuge now is only non entity
de individualised in the dirt together
what has happened here, then?

Humanism won’t be working here
nothing covenable about it but
what we do will fuck us up
what has really happened here?

the Bloodaxe gives back Skallagrimsson his head:
only rarely do poems buy life but here

Imagine the people, the pleasure
the social dance in a crowd together
all of that carried on in this little rut
the hard smooth base of any city still.

7. COVENANTED: “Dingle Peninsula, Co. Kerry”

“This tight mouth broke,
The word-floods poured,
The still tongue broke”

Egil Skallagrimsson, “Head-Ransom Poem”

Stand at Clogher Head & look behind across
Baile an Fheirtearaigh, Smerwick Harbour, Brandon Mountain
masked by cloud
empty but a few shielings
too many ghosts
this land of strawberry trees
and strangers like us

Too many summoned onto the golden strand
dead soldiers, dead poets
& poets who killed
others & others and people who belonged here
they’d built a stone church for the foreign prayers

Oh we are covenanted to care for all this and must
the social self & the poetic beyond compel
here heads were taken as promises broken
no redemption for the hands of blood

– Raleigh then shall die

But we all did it here as everywhere
replacing live people with broken ghosts.

8. COVENTRATE: “Soo Ja-Kim, Still from ‘Cities on the Move –
2727KM Bottari Truck’ 1997”

Even suche is tyme that takes in trust
our youth, our joies and what we have
And paies us but with earth, and dust
which in the Darke and silent grave
when we have wandred all our waies
shuts up the storie of our daies”

Sir Walter Raleigh, “Even suche is tyme...”

Move along now, cov, move along
nothing to see here but contrasting fate & power
wrap up your bundles and go –

a flatbed truck, yes

good enough for any traitrous race of well dead poets

Move along now, cov, move along
you’re only ghosts, largely fictive & very faint
come on then, cov, disperse –

no society no more

all true people lock down forever in each house of fun

Move along now, cov, move along
no one here who needs the world of people

your land’s well coventrated –

we’ll bulldoze it & you
you’re lost & different, incapable of our silent joy

Into the mists of dead pine forests
down in the ancient sewers

across on empty islands
lost within this drowned world.

9. COVERASS: “Bamburgh Castle, Northumberland”

“That idea of a similarity, or symmetry, in behaviour hinting at
a deeper structure is something we hold very current in research
today”

“fictitious objects in our models that end up turning into real
monsters that devour us”

Tara Shears and Murray Gell-Mann respectively, quoted in *New
Scientist*

They’re playing cricket again beneath the castle keep
everything both false & true – just a serious game
what a monstrous place set up on real power
money, architecture, stone & swords

Or looking up the flooded valley to the church at night
illuminated as if by angels

or the serene city as you enter her
floating in light trembling upon the waters
every bit now emptied of actual matter

People come fleeing

& plague comes hunting
all process not a thing

a wave function shaking us
not like a monster
but a part of what we are
now inescapable
complete in its self-patterning

Cuddy, old man
pray for us here
please

social bundles
slowly dissociating
seen once but
in mirror shards].

10. COVERING: “William Blake: ‘Satan in his Original Glory:
“Thou was Perfect until Iniquity was Found in Thee””

“Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so:
thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and
down in the midst of the stones of fire.

“Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day thou wast created, till
iniquity was found in thee.

“By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of
thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee
as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O
covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire.”

Ezekiel, 28: 14-16

“Thus was the Covering Cherub reveal’d, majestic image
Of Selfhood, Body put off, the Antichrist accursed,
Cover’d with precious stones: a Human Dragon terrible

And bright stretch’d over Europe & Asia gorgeous.
In three nights he devour’d the rejected corpse of death.”

William Blake, *Jerusalem; The Emanation of The Giant Albion*, Plate 32

And the Covering Cherub was like
o nos nos nos nos – nos nos nos

Bright bundles of language playing
the cricket, the Cuddy, three thousand thus
some serene self-patterning emanation so gorgeous
everything – but a fabrication worthless and stained

Terrible words are floating dissociating devour’d
what we sinned reveal’d in this plague
deeper, deeper into the goatrace of god’s ire
that dragon is hunting souterrain and slowly

It will devour warriors and waters
quarks and Satan, all of precious prehistoire
Albion flooded, fictitious, formule fragile
stretch’d toucher les traumodonts

trembling
until
Ezekiel
finally
prays

so simply
no multitude
or mountain.

Nobody's Talking

by Ian C. Smith

Was it coincidence that both wives of his Uncle Denis suicided?
Who were his maternal grandfather's real parents?
Of which sexual sin was his Uncle Cyril guilty?
Did envy fuel his sister's betrayal of him?
Could his baby brother's death have been avoided?
Why are some of his family's past marriages not recorded?
How many siblings, including bastards, did his father have?
Should he have never tracked down his missing Aunt Molly?
Why did his mother whisper to his wife about his father's army mates?
Did epilepsy really cause his Uncle Leslie's premature death?
Was his paternal grandmother too highly sexed?
Have jangled nerves destroyed his brother?
Was his Aunt Ginny's first soldier husband shot for desertion?
Why did his maternal grandmother shun her daughter?
Were the letters to his father homoerotic?
Can blue-eyed parents produce a brown-eyed son?
Why did his Uncle Joe disappear after meeting that wealthy woman?
Did his maternal grandmother believe in ghosts, quote Shakespeare, love *Hamlet*?
What went wrong in his sister's marital bed?
Was his maternal grandfather a bully or a hero?
Would their lives have been so different but for World Wars?
Is depression's dark sleep hereditary or contagious?

60fps

by Theodoros Chiotis

their rattling now silenced / I was taken aback / by the alignment of
the spindle-like bones / the whorls of the fingers sanded down and /
my field of vision / extending from left to right / it was evident that
/ I was / no longer able / to conceive how to move / in ways the
Boss / would not anticipate / the mangled bodies of the offspring /
proof of the failure / to properly contain the terror / of the teenage
years / the mission to eradicate / all of humanity / the gradual
build-up of power / while waiting / for the right moment / to strike
and release / all amount to the same result / an indestructible shield
/ all to myself / destroying enemies on contact / heat dissipation
persists as / the possibility of a clean existence recedes / my mouth
full / of blackberries and fizzy water / there is something / small
and persistent / wriggling inside my throat / the dung beetle pushes
/ dirt across the screen / the solitary calf / takes a long time to /
go up the mountain / a constellation of muscles / take a long time
to / form a self / the dandelion / covers the world / in death / my
current whereabouts unknown / I long for home / but atricial as I
am, / I find that / I will fall prey to / the Boss / the velocity of the
succession / of attackers signals / the relentlessness of repetition /
this story is merely / a distraction / my adult flesh a disappointment
/ to all the aramaic / written on my forearms / the ever increasing
difficulty / of the levels / my true enemy / the noises I still make
/ a mark of an unintended haunting / it's not that / I pretend to
understand / how the world / works but I do know that / even if I
remember all this / I will still live / through all the versions / of the
game / and I will still die / in all of them / nomiss /

This is a poem

by Anna Zarra Aldrich

A poem.

A poem.

A what?

A what?

Oh, a *crisp crouton*.

i replace apple's stylized emojis with surreal combinations

\$/ is for ennui

(make it a symbol for capitalism or whatever, if you will)

;% means i'm horny

(it is an unambiguous commentary on female sexuality*)

^# is

(this one is simply absurd.

Its lack of meaning is a meaning, according to some)

@~

(this is a sperm; the work is too literal)

&, is for sadness

(this is me crying, i am ampersand, am the poem!)

>) is nefarious

(this is the author herself, to break the fourth wall)

*which is always carefully separated from [male] or [regular**]
sexuality

imagine ordering your sex like a latte: regular or *decaf*

1 It is notable that spell check first suggests poem and then poet here.

in many ways sex* IS like a latte
****get your head***** out of the gutter
*****stop thinking about sex*****even though I just told
you to

You have arrived at a blank page²

2 Welcome to the poem.

A title would be intentional

by Anna Zarra Aldrich

Twilight zone abandon banana
Scream '[
Go go go go go go go go go*

Holy ghost of the pope who is and has always been dead

*to the Coda : Dakota cod

Ice cold canker sores; I punctuate the artic

The fish can drill with narwhal teeth – yes, it's a tooth, didn't you
know
Blood in the water snack for seizing sharks
Snip snap vasectomies
no more shark fucking.

I like the tip tap of my keys but that IS HOW THEY ALL FELL
OUT LAST TIME
CLATTER CLATTER: I CAN'T GET IN

Vacuum sucks the dust
I have hardwood floors -- I slide in socks and fall, my spine, poor
spine,
oh
broken bones content

Filigree figures faint fascinated by tubas and tubs of peanut butter
I do not like peanut butter.

I crush the cashews which spilled on the floor
All over His floor
They spilled on the floor

He had not swept in days
And now the cashews were on the floor
On his floor
on His floor
on his Floor
on his floor.

Ding dong
Arrivederci Liar
!

Self-portrait: Boiler Installation Cento

by Daniel Fraser

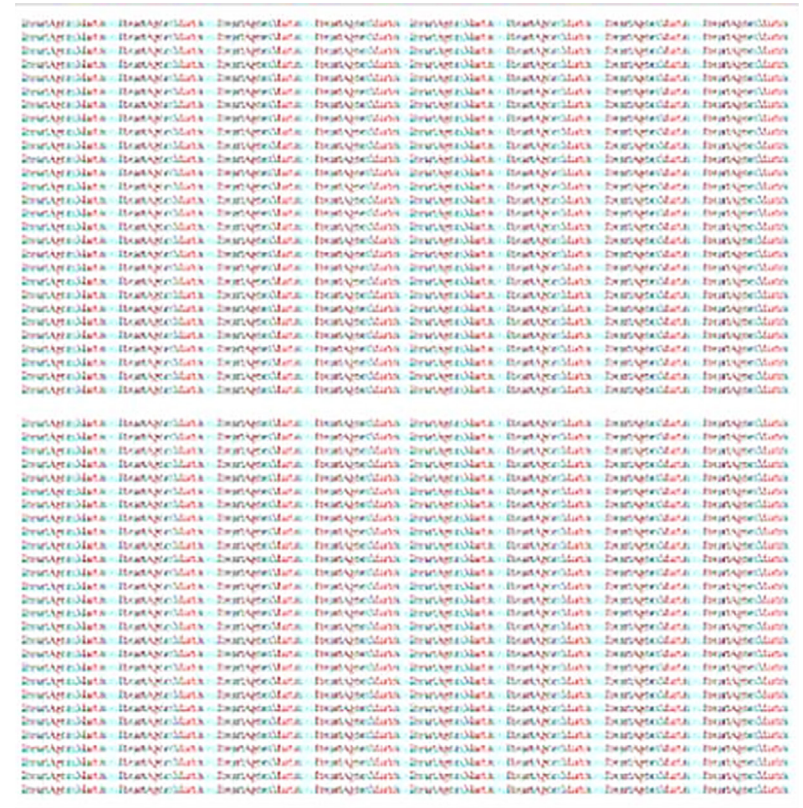
static head in a loose jumper / a competent person, fan-assisted by
complete isolation / designed to be used / in a pressurised system
/ manufactured to give / many years / of forced circulation and
withdraw / existing may be unsafe / install in such a manner that it
can be seen, but cannot cause a nuisance to property / body should
be observed / tested and purged / always in the same relative
positions / may not be completely sound / remove separation in
order for the unit to work / to its optimum / allow the possibility
of external meeting / exchange of numbers / temporary hand
holding / using a bath or shower together / small practices where
history may be extinguished and re-established / however: defect
arising from double insulation / holding it in / manifold senses set
to disengage / in the head time inclines backward / into safety i.e.
a degree of protection / against failure / connected directly to old
locations / tilting the assembly forward slightly / face offering up
the future angle / another tear / salt-glazed packing interior space
/ both hands split handling edges of sheet metal / negligence, and
fair misuse / purpose dislodged in transit / at this stage resistance
to earth / will be certain: that is, without support / to ensure unit
can remain 'live' / avoid manifold damage / (do not impose strain
upon the union) / allow the passage of air to operate inefficiently
/ if replacing the future / re-assemble in reverse order / open the
word / ensure that it is correctly fitted / reminder: the mouth must
cross the fire before / a slight downward slope towards the terminal
/ depress sufficiently and a spark will light

Author's Note

This poem is constructed entirely from text taken from found boiler
installation manuals: the Alpha 240X, Firebird Low Loss Leader,
and Glow-Worm Capricorn 240/6.

agnes martin a thousand i love yous 1

by Kenneth M. Cale



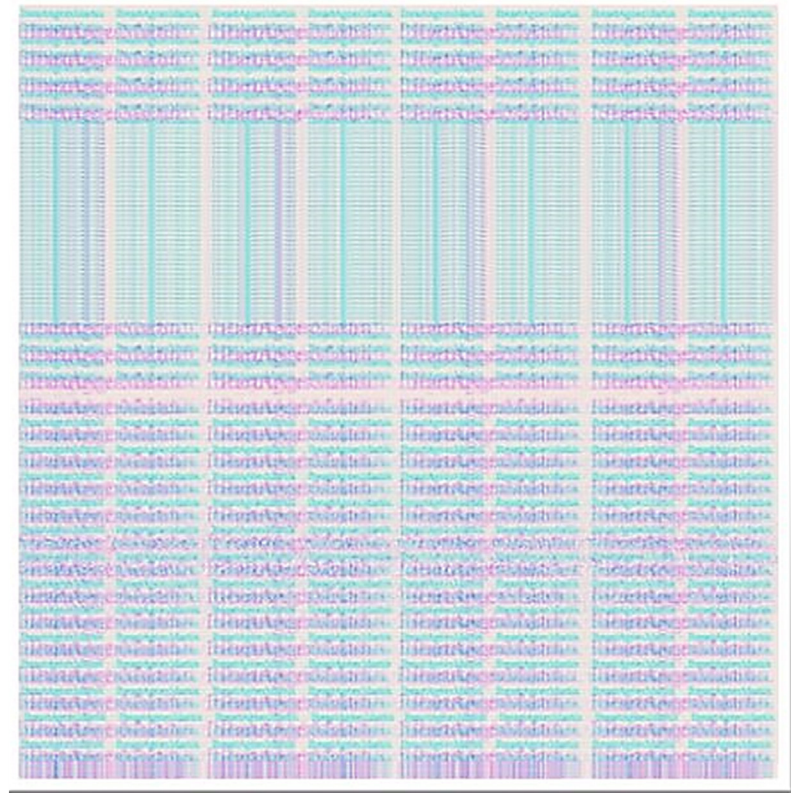
agnes martin a thousand i love yous 2

by Kenneth M. Cale



agnes martin a thousand i love yous 3

by Kenneth M. Cale



Fifteen Family Sagas

by Alex Lanz

1.

I always loved my Dad, even after he burned my new house down when I'd just moved in, and tried a few other things to get me out of his stepson's way, like when he hired the barback at his favorite tavern to shove me into the town well. I just think you need to obey your parents no matter what, and besides it all worked out because the owner of a tractor factory was so moved by my situation with Dad's multiple attempts on my life, that he left his company to me, passing over his own firstborn.

2.

After Mom got sick, I wore the same clothes every day for three years.

3.

Dad loved fruit, especially grapes, and he kept a patch of watermelons. Once I got careless doing the yard work and clipped some of his watermelon vines with the weed whacker, and Dad beat the shit out of me with a length of PVC piping. When my teacher asked me about the bruises and I told her, she said I should have fled. By not fleeing, I could have been responsible for Dad killing me, which was a helpful way to think about it. Anyway when Dad died I stopped eating grapes in his honor.

4.

My stepmother didn't give me any extra clothes or blankets, and she wouldn't turn the heat on in my room, so I often can't feel my hands. She says she can't let me drain her money the way I do, but she did

just buy new cars for her own two sons. CPS? Yeah I thought about it, but maybe it's better for one son to be cold than for three sons to lose their mother, you know?

5.

I carried a bucket of rice four miles from the market to the house for Mom and Dad every morning for ten years. Then I grew up, and never replaced those memories with anything happier.

6.

When I asked Mom about all these celebrities who were eating their placentas the way deer are supposed to, she told me to get lost, so I wrapped myself up in some of Dad's dried deerskins, slipped through the fence gate, and crept along the deer trails until I found some. It turns out deer will eat almost anything, including acorns and mushrooms, which I also ate. In time they started raising me as their own, and I partook in milk from my doe mother alongside my fawn siblings.

7.

After the failed revolution I was imprisoned, and when my Mom found out she sent a hot dish of pork chops, which the guard delivered to me. From the first whiff through the bars of my cell, I knew it was her cooking.

8.

We ran out of money for food around the same time Mom's last tooth fell out. She would have starved if I hadn't fed her with my breast milk.

9.

In the summertime I let the mosquitoes cover me from head to toe. Harming them would have only brought more upon Mom and Dad and me.

10.

Soon as I was old enough I went out searching for Mom. I must have checked every dive and strip club in the northeast, then I wound up in a bizarre sect, jabbing myself with lit incense in a church basement every Thursday. That was fifty years ago.

11.

When I got laid off my first thought was how we would feed Mom. There was my wife and our baby too, but when I suggested to my wife that we kill our newborn to have one less mouth to feed, it took much effort getting her to see my reasoning that we could always have another child, while we can never have another Mom.

12.

After years of business school, internships, and all sorts of obstacles, I was made board secretary of a leading firm. On the tenth day of my new job I got the call Dad was sick, and I walked away from it all, forever as it turned out. I look after the old machine shop these days. It's peaceful.

13.

Whenever a thunderstorm rolls by I think of Mom, who used to be scared of thunder, and I fling open the back door running to the family plot, where I throw myself over Mom's grave and tell her not to worry, whispering into the damp earth.

14.

Dad kept a little flower garden, Spanish-style, and after he died I spent hours in it every day, letting my tears fall onto the petals and seep into the potted soil, as if my grief could nurture these planted beauties in my father's stead. Within a week I saw that the flowers had rotted.

15.

Is that a gingerbread man? my sister asked, and I didn't want to say out loud No, it's an effigy of Mom that I made, an effigy that I treasure as much as the real Mom, and after I bang it up on accident it glares at me, and when bad things happen, like I get in trouble for something I didn't do, it cries. If Mom died I'd want to die too, with her effigy the last thing I'd see.

Some Fragments

by Emilia Ong

The Whole Thing

How is this going to end, I thought, how is it beginning, it's already begun, has it begun, what has, has what, can't stop that, can't stop that now, can't rewind the clock, what's begun is begun is begun, it has begun, nothing to be done, to be done about that, and so the end, and so to the end, look to the end, how will it be, have to look, can only look. How is this going to end, that's what you thought, you were reading the book, reading a book, you were looking at it, the book had no sensible plot, no discernible narrative, that was okay, it was okay by you, it wasn't your life, it wasn't life at all, it was a book, it went on and on, the book went on and on, it went on without rhyme or reason, without detectable drive, there was no internal logic, none you could perceive, there was neither arch to be climbed nor curve to be descended, if there was a catastrophe where was it, where could it be, you could only conclude that there was no catastrophe but no, no, that couldn't be it, in which case it had to be the opposite, it was not that there was no crisis but that the *whole thing* was crisis, yes, and the crisis went on and on without resolution, without a prior-to-the-predicament and without an after-the-calamity, with no evolving and no devolving, everything was unravelling, yes, it was perpetual unravel, unravel from start to finish, you did not know when the finish would be. How on earth would it end, all this unknotting, when there's been no end there is no dissimulation, there is no conclusion, no completion of the task, *nonetheless* it would end, that's what you thought, yes, it would end because it had to, as in literature so in life, you knew it would end, could even see it would, the difference with a book was that you could see when, you might not see how, no, not precisely, not even approximately, but you would and could see when, it was obvious, you could count the pages, see their heft, you know how long you had, that was not like life, with life you had no clue, not the foggiest,

life could end in five minutes or in fifty years, that's what they say, it's one thing they say that's true, there aren't many of them, it's an indisputable fact of life and yet people tend to forget it, I suppose it's hard to live like you might die a moment later, if you can it's supposed to be a sort of enlightenment, I don't know about that.

Writing, (i)

What is the writer's task? – to collaborate with catastrophe.

Who wants to do that? The most natural impulse is to rail and rage –

To *not* rail and rage when one wants and ought to: this is the perversion of writing.

What Rilke Said

No, no, this is all wrong.

I wanted to forget, I could not forget, I could not remember. I could not forget because I could not remember, my mind made only oblique references to it, to what, no, it made none at all, I was obtuse, I was dense, I was thick with it, I was stupid with it, with what, with what was not there. Not-there-ness took up everything, I could not forget, it was recurrent, it was reliably recurrent, over and over it popped up, it came up, it did not come and it did not pop, it seeped and spread and it made me woozy, it was a gas, a stench, it had no smell. I made notes, they went round and round, they circumnavigated, they orbited endlessly but never took the plunge, there was no end and no beginning, they never stopped, never paused and turned to look into the centre, into the cavity, no, my notes were sentries, they walked the castle wall, they did not illuminate but guarded, it was hopeless, I have long felt hopeless. The approach was the thing, the how of it, the dare of it, I did not think of the why of it, I had enough questions already, the why was obvious, or maybe it wasn't, if it had been obvious maybe I'd have known what to do, maybe I'd have done it, as it was I never took a step, I didn't know why I couldn't, I

knew why I couldn't, why was *in me*, wasn't that enough. What was in me was what was missing, I didn't have it, I had it, missing was what I had, missingness, and because it was missing I couldn't do anything, everything was condemnation, everything was postponed, everything was coming, everything was somewhere to get to, I went nowhere, I was always going, my going was unqualifiable, it was a bleed, it was a run. It's not that I didn't try, I did try, all I did was try, but no, I could never get anywhere, there was a tickle at my throat, a clamp at my neck, my lungs were in a vice, I didn't know what to do, I had to do it, to do what I didn't know, my life was this, this unknowing, I did not breathe, I breathed, I breathed the question, I breathed its voi

Writing, (ii)

To be a writer is to be a table. It is an essentially feminine condition. We *hold*.

Converting this from a passive state to an active enterprise is where the difficulty lies. There is likely something twisted in the endeavour, emancipating or otherwise. One walks the line. It is a taut one and it is relentlessly vibrating.

The situation could be called nauseating.

The world pulsates and throbs and seethes and wobbles, and what am I? – I am the table beneath it all. I provide a platform for its terrible resonances, and yet it is an oddly – paradoxically? – mute position.

Look Out

sometimes. Look out of the window sometimes. Look out of the window and towards the sea and see the sea sometimes. The sea is a moody fuck sometimes and I suppose I mean that affectionately, yes I do. Some days it's blue and its texture is bumpy like bad cellulite and some days it's scored with unsteady lines like the rippled grain which rises hard but tremulous from a much worn plank of wood and

some days it simply roars. A roar does have a look you see by which I mean it has an appearance not just a sound and it's so obvious what this look is that its jagged peaks and scooped depressions scarcely need to be defined. As everyone knows you see a roaring sea does not curl and coil like those graceful Hokusai cambers pleasant as those are but instead resembles a ragged and infinitely unfolding fungal terrace, one irregularly and inelegantly frilled at repeating intervals like some whore or rather a whole row of them kicking up their knickers for their audience at the Moulin Rouge though of course in far less choreographed a fashion. Which is to say that when you look at the sea it is very unclear who is in control – whether the sea is wresting something back and making a demand or whether on the other hand she is being knocked about and bullied and if it is the latter case then one has to ask does one not whether performance or not she is in the end and to all extents and purposes mere hot ore upon His anvil.

Silence

Silence is a radical act. To she who has been stolen from, what else is silence but a stealing back?

The Language of Panic

Everybody is producing producing producing!

O

by Adrian Bridget

'Immense circles traced themselves in infinity, like the orbs that water forms when disturbed by the fall of a body.'

— Gérard de Nerval

They know, when they get up in the morning and can't keep their balance, they are too big. They would rather shrink, make themselves smaller by crawling, cut their hair short.

#

If my body were a small body, I'd be a pair of small eyeballs, which would consider the small, round world they created in their own image.

#

Dear—,

I understand when you say that—

#

(Please be quiet.)

#

Dear—,

For the past few weeks, I have been thinking about your email. The recognition of powerlessness, the practice of language, the right words... What I want to

say is that I can recognise the difficulties that you have encountered and even felt physically like I did.

Language creates its field—and I say 'field' because, like the most ideal of fields, of which we can only see a fragment out of the window of a moving train, language seems endless and simple—by breaking itself down into words, syllables, and letters. Language spreads itself through this exponential severance process, thereby separating the world from the world.

Language is a method of self-dismemberment.

When you have a hard time in the field language, because language is naturally insufficient, you experience language itself.

Language will always betray you. And that is its beauty.

In the field of language, it might be better for us to keep sad and helpless since we can't stop speaking. Beauty itself, however, to which the betrayal of language belongs, can, now and then, fall silent.

#

I invented a circular language in which all words were made of circles.

OOOOOO OOOOOOOOOO OOOOO OOOOOOOOO
OOOO OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO OO OOOO
OOO OOOOOOOOOO OO OOOOOOOOOOO OOO
OOOOOOOOO OOOO OOO OOOOOOOOOOOO

over, o over

----- -o--- o--: In between super-word and super-word, the circle, which is the atom of this language, breathes.

----- -o--- --o: This atom breathes through the death of a word, too. ----- -o--- -----: To form a new word, or to resurrect an old one, the language atom needs the time of the scream; it needs lungs.

----- -o--- -o--: When language cries because it can no longer scream, it becomes circular, perfectly so.

#

Du hörst meine Stimme. Du spürst den Takt.

#

Am I then also motherless? (With mountains.)

#

(The silence that, described by Rilke, exists around things, which remains, after death, around the body of the dead hare.)

#

The following is a SILENT SCENE.

#

(Please be quiet.)

#

Dying is not what is awful.

‘Of what one cannot speak, one must keep silent’: what is awful in death is to find language where there should be silence.

#

We make bones for ourselves to pretend that, from the start, our bones wanted us to stand up, to go to work. (Where does my body start and where does it find an end? I want to break down my bones into small pieces and I want you to let me survive this, because then I’ll have got rid of my big ‘me’. I want to be as small as my bones.)

#

THE CIRCLE DESCRIBES THE EMBARRASSMENT OF THE ARTIST THAT HAS NEVER DIED LIKE A DEAD HARE IN THE ART FORM.

OOOOOO, OOO OOOOOO OOOO OO OOOO.
OO: OOOOOO, OO OOOOO OOO OOOOOO OOOO OO
OOOO.

(MOTHER, THE IMAGES MAKE ME SOFT. OR:
MOTHER, OF WHICH THE IMAGES MAKE ME SOFT.)

#

1. An inner split gives birth to a foreign language. This split is progressive, continuous; it echoes in eternity, disharmonic.

2. The radiation of language-atoms splitting?

3. The language field is a radioactive field. Language can cause cancer.

4. If the differences between the microworld and the macroworld (as described by relativity and quantum theories) are irreconcilable, microworld and macroworld need to be translated to be understood by one another.

5. What might this translation involve?

6. The universe needs to be described before it creates itself; it needs to play a score that has already been written.

7. When the place of the description of my hand and the place of the creation of my hand fold over each other, something splits. (Inner split, foreign language.) This is a paradox that should not take place in space and time. It does, nevertheless. My hand comes out of the split.

8. The radioactive field of language repeats language (tic-tac) ad infinitum. It makes itself anew, boneless.

#

When a child's mother tongue has hurt them, the child, who has then come to know the pain of speaking, should be able to scream:
O.

#

Das Urbild der Bilder ist immer ein Mutterbild.

#

The circle is not Christian but Sisyphian.

#

O: the dead hare is in the blank space inside the circle.

#

Sappho Defragged

by JP Seabright

Barefoot ¹²

Queen ^{87E}

Sinful ⁶⁹

Youth ^{87D}

They became ⁶¹

Of girls ⁹³

Deep sound ^{29A}

In a thin voice ^{24D}

Cloth dripping ¹¹⁹

I have ⁹³

Thought ¹²

For not ⁶¹

You burn me ³⁸

As long as you want ⁴⁵

Author's Note

'Reconstruction' from *If Not, Winter: Fragments of Sappho* by Anne Carson

Meta

by JP Seabright

```
<meta name="theme-color" content="#ffffff">
if (!doNotTrack) {
</script>
<div class="container-fluid">
  Specifications
  <td class="field-name">Properties in the
  <code>/elements/1.1/</code> namespace:</td>
  <td class="field-name">Vocabulary Encoding
  Schemes:</td>
  <td class="field-name">Syntax Encoding Schemes:</td>
  <p>Each term is specified with the following minimal set
  of attributes:</p>
  The human-readable label assigned to the term.
  Definition:
  A statement that represents the concept and essential
  nature of the term.
  <p>Where applicable, the following attributes provide
  additional information about a term:</p>
  Authoritative documentation related to the term.
  Subproperty Of:
  A property of which the described term is a sub-property.
  Superclass Of:
  A class of which the described term is a super-class.
  A class of which a value described by the term is an
  instance.
  A property to which the described term is equivalent.
  <td>Access Rights may include information regarding
  access or restrictions based on privacy, security, or other
  policies.</td>
  <td>The method by which items are added to a
  collection.</td>
  <td>The frequency with which items are added to a
  collection.</td>
  <td>Audience</td>
  <td>A class of agents for whom the resource is intended
  or useful.</td>
  <td>Recommended practice is to use this property with
  non-literal values from a vocabulary of audience
  types.</td>
  <td>Recommended practice is to include sufficient
  bibliographic detail to identify the resource as
  unambiguously as possible.</td>
  <td>An established standard to which the described
  resource conforms.</td>
  <td>The guidelines for using names of persons or
  organizations as creators apply to contributors.</td>
  <td>The spatial or temporal topic of the resource, spatial
  applicability of the resource, or jurisdiction under which
  the resource is relevant.</td>
  <td>Recommended practice is to describe the date,
  date/time, or period of time as recommended for the
  property Date, of which this is a subproperty.</td>
  <td>A point or period of time associated with an event in
```

```
< Either the start or end date may be missing.</td>
<td>Recommended practice is to describe the date,
date/time, or period of time as recommended for the
property Date, of which this is a subproperty.
<td>Description may include but is not limited to: an
abstract, a table of contents, a graphical representation, or
a free-text account of the resource.</td>
<td>A related resource that is substantially the same as the
pre-existing described resource, but in another
format.</td>
<td>This property is intended to be used with non-literal
values. This property is an inverse property of Is Format
Of.</td>
<td>A related resource that is included either physically or
logically in the described resource.</td>
<td>Changes in version imply substantive changes in
content rather than differences in format. This property is
intended to be used with non-literal values. This property
is an inverse property of Is Version Of.</td>
<td>A process, used to engender knowledge, attitudes and
skills, that the described resource is designed to
support.</td>
/MethodOfInstruction</li>
<td>A pre-existing related resource that is substantially
the same as the described resource, but in another
format.</td>
<td>Is Replaced By</td>
<td>A related resource that supplants, displaces, or
supersedes the described resource.</td>
<td>A related resource that requires the described resource
to support its function, delivery, or coherence.</td>
<td>Changes in version imply substantive changes in
content rather than differences in format. This property is
intended to be used with non-literal values. This property
is an inverse property of Has Version.</td>
<td>An entity that mediates access to the resource.</td>
<td>A statement of any changes in ownership and custody
of the resource since its creation that are significant for its
authenticity, integrity, and interpretation.</td>
<td>Publisher</td>
<td>An entity responsible for making the resource
available.</td>
<td>A related resource that is supplanted, displaced, or
superseded by the described resource.</td>
<td>This property is intended to be used with non-literal
values. This property is an inverse property of Is Replaced
By.</td>
<td>A related resource that is required by the described
resource to support its function, delivery, or
coherence.</td>
<td>A person or organization owning or managing rights
over the resource.</td>
<td>A related resource from which the described resource
is derived.</td>
<td>Temporal Coverage</td>
<td>Temporal characteristics of the resource.</td>
<td>The guidelines for using names of persons or
organizations as creators also apply to contributors.
Typically, the name of a Contributor should be used to
indicate the entity.</td>
<td>The spatial or temporal topic of the resource, spatial
applicability of the resource, or jurisdiction under which
the resource is relevant.</td>
<td>An entity primarily responsible for making the
resource.</td>
<td>Examples of a Creator include a person, a
organization, or a service. Typically, the name of a Creator
should be used to indicate the entity.</td>
<td>A point or period of time associated with an event in
the lifecycle of the resource.</td>
<td>Description may include but is not limited to: an
abstract, a table of contents, a graphical representation, or
a free-text account of the resource.</td>
<td>Recommended practice is to use a controlled
vocabulary where available.
<td>An unambiguous reference to the resource within a
given context.</td>
<td>Recommended practice is to identify the resource by
means of a string conforming to an identification
system.</td>
<td>Typically, rights information includes a statement
about various property rights associated with the resource,
including intellectual property rights.</td>
<td>The described resource may be derived from the
related resource in whole or in part. Recommended best
practice is to identify the related resource by means of a
string conforming to a formal identification system.</td>
<td>Typically, the subject will be represented using
keywords, key phrases, or classification codes.
Recommended best practice is to use a controlled
vocabulary.</td>
<td>The nature or genre of the resource.</td>
Vocabulary Encoding Scheme
<td>The set of media types specified by the Internet
Assigned Numbers Authority.</td>
Datatype
<td>The set of identifiers constructed according to the
generic syntax for Uniform Resource Identifiers as
specified by the Internet Engineering Task Force.</td>
<td>Agent</td>
<td>A resource that acts or has the power to act.</td>
<td>Linguistic System</td>
<td>A system of signs, symbols, sounds, gestures, or rules
used in communication.</td>
<td>Written, spoken, sign, and computer languages are
linguistic systems.</td>
<td>An interval of time that is named or defined by its
start and end dates.</td>
<td>A material thing.</td>
<td>A plan or course of action by an authority, intended to
influence and determine decisions, actions, and other
matters.</td>
<td>Any changes in ownership and custody of a resource
since its creation that are significant for its authenticity,
integrity, and interpretation.</td>
```

```
<td>A dimension or extent, or a time taken to play or
execute.</td>
<td>Examples include a number of pages, a specification
of length, width, and breadth, or a period in hours,
minutes, and seconds.</td>
<td>A reference point against which other things can be
evaluated or compared.</td>
<td>An aggregation of resources.</td>
<td>Data encoded in a defined structure.</td>
<td>Examples include lists, tables, and databases. A
dataset may be useful for direct machine processing.</td>
<td>A non-persistent, time-based occurrence.</td>
<td>Metadata for an event provides descriptive
information that is the basis for discovery of the purpose,
location, duration, and responsible agents associated with
an event. Examples include an exhibition, webcast,
conference, workshop, open day, performance, battle, trial,
wedding, tea party, conflagration.</td>
<td>A visual representation other than text.</td>
<td>Examples include images and photographs of
physical objects, paintings, prints, drawings, other images
and graphics, animations and moving pictures, film,
diagrams, maps, musical notation. Note that Image may
include both electronic and physical representations.</td>
<td>A resource requiring interaction from the user to be
understood, executed, or experienced.</td>
<td>Examples include forms on Web pages, applets,
multimedia learning objects, chat services, or virtual
reality environments.</td>
<td>A series of visual representations imparting an
impression of motion when shown in succession.</td>
<td>Examples include animations, movies, television
programs, videos, zoetropes, or visual output from a
simulation. Instances of the type Moving Image must also be
describable as instances of the broader type
Image.</td>
<td>A system that provides one or more functions.</td>
<td>Examples include a photocopying service, a banking
service, an authentication service, interlibrary loans, a
Z39.50 or Web server.</td>
<td>A computer program in source or compiled
form.</td>
<td>A resource primarily intended to be heard.</td>
<td>Examples include a music playback file format, an
audio compact disc, and recorded speech or sounds.</td>
<td>Examples include paintings, drawings, graphic
designs, plans and maps. Recommended best practice is to
assign the type Text to images of textual materials.
Instances of the type Still Image must also be describable
as instances of the broader type Image.</td>
<td>A resource consisting primarily of words for
reading.</td>
<td>Examples include books, letters, dissertations, poems,
newspapers, articles, archives of mailing lists. Note that
facsimiles or images of texts are still of the genre
Text.</td>
```

Found text manipulated from the webpage metadata of the Dublin Core Metadata Initiative, the internationally recognised standard for metadata: <https://www.dublincore.org/specifications/dublin-core/dcmi-terms>

A SHARED INTEREST

by Rupert M. Loydell

Where do you see sculpture today?
I am borrowing from that language
to see how it all plays out. It is all
imagined, a collage of the self,
video documentation, concerned
with notions of value and debate.

What's it like for you making this
new work? For me, the pendulum
is swinging back and forth, between
something that has occurred or
something that will happen. It is
not clear what is a shadow and

what serves as a model through
which information can become
a kind of ghost corpus. The spectral
is an important idea, tracking time
is something I often think about
as I've only experienced it virtually.

SCRIBE

by Rupert M. Loydell

for Feargal

Writing the same words and
phrases over and over again,
he wrote through the Bible,
layering language like paint:
meditation or futile gesture,
traces of what he had read,
inky overlays and loops.

He made silent music: bands
of ink emerged, scratches
formed dark black wounds
and blocks of unreadable text
which he signed, photographed
and filed away, words captured
and compressed, inscribed.

OUT OF LANGUAGE

by Rupert M. Loydell

She seems permanently surprised by what she has written, as though it is out of her control. She needs to take more responsibility.

I have written several modules that have entered and later been removed from the curriculum.

The first time I saw the band was from a front row seat, and I now have one again for what I suspect will be the last concert of theirs I will be able to attend.

Collages require cleanliness, no oil paint or charcoal on the bench, a sharp knife and a steady hand as I arrange rescued colours from elsewhere.

What sparks creativity? Something I've read or seen, sometimes just wanting to write, the day too empty and unstructured.

Rarely do I have anything to say before I start, that comes out of language, not the other way round.

Cut-up Love Letters

by Lydia Hounat

I.

Everyday without speaking much compassion for panicking eclipsed by alien subsequently certain — I don't fucking hate him, I _____ him.

external placement: medicine myself; the trauma my mother-politic, the rhetoric lives closer to George; the commonplace-pain, his arms, again and again. An orchestrated-encounter back to (his) bed.

this is fucking PTSD; conscientiously want to want to think to want to think to deserve it, think about it. the memories notch the bedpost — contend with the man-effort to be friends; cycle: assess, drop, forget, flashback. breathing sick, crap. unrequited closure, a question mark perplexed. use and abuse the question mark.

a fucking Sunday crying for value. A jealous supposed-to-be. my fence so high; Olympian high-jumpers impale themselves half way up.

II.

in the night only in pitch black
the rattlesnake plant folds in
and quietly grows — in the
morning the duvet splinter
my ankles my mouth jammed
hot sugar to metal spoon. It's
raining daggers and machetes
out there — incoming bleed.

A Tale of Two

by Teo Eve

+x

~~~

|                           |             |                            |
|---------------------------|-------------|----------------------------|
| loose in the sea          |             | untethered                 |
|                           | this isle   |                            |
| to be by waves licked,    |             | thrashed, great roaring    |
|                           | sea         |                            |
| drinking rivers' blood    |             | draining lands of green    |
|                           | :           |                            |
| jagged ruins of coastline |             | poised like unruly fingers |
|                           | battlements |                            |
| constrict this sceptered  |             | state; we are not an       |
|                           | isle        |                            |
| empire : history's dregs  |             | are dragged by the wash    |

~~~

*

“
 ~rule~britannia~britannia~rules~the~waves~
 ”

and what do the waves, the ceaseless waves, rule?

x +

@final cock-crow
 :like egypt's crown our flags unslot, destiny
 becomes our own



the upper land

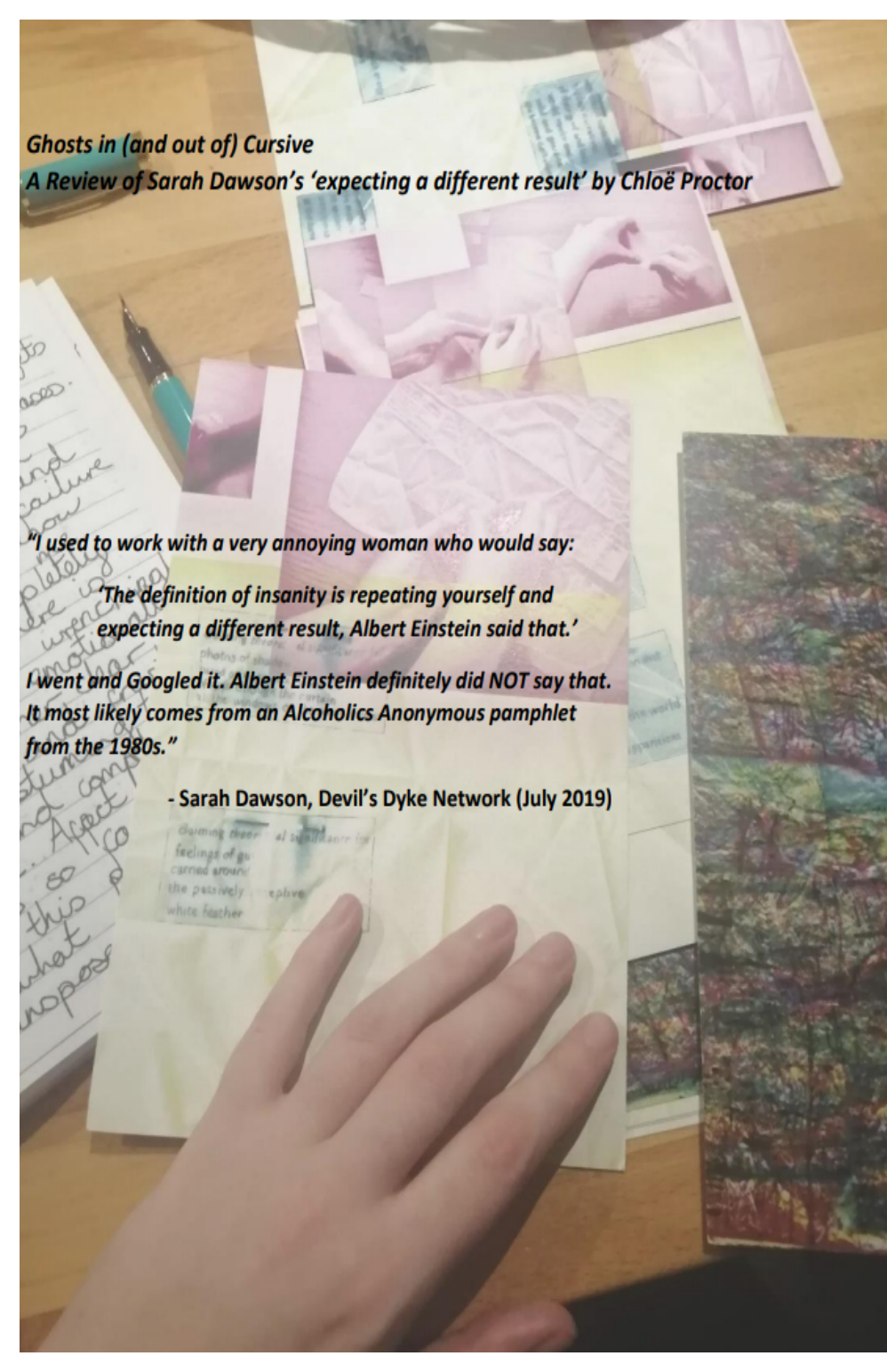


,
untie



the lower land

:
 the blank scroll of an undiscovered kingdom,
 whose future is to be writ~~~~~



Ghosts in (and out of) Cursive

A Review of Sarah Dawson's 'expecting a different result' by Chloë Proctor

"I used to work with a very annoying woman who would say:

'The definition of insanity is repeating yourself and expecting a different result, Albert Einstein said that.'

I went and Googled it. Albert Einstein definitely did NOT say that. It most likely comes from an Alcoholics Anonymous pamphlet from the 1980s."

- Sarah Dawson, Devil's Dyke Network (July 2019)

Sarah Dawson cites her dismantling of this supposed aphorism as the namesake for her artist-book, *expecting a different result*. Published last year by HVTN Pres, *eadr* is a documentation of attempts to engage in communication with a ghost. The work was conceived after the bereavement of her Nan, whose handwriting SD began reproducing and turning into art. She refers to it as a practice of "spirituality [in] physically doing something, doing it over and over." The value SD ascribes to enacting the "insanity" of repetition is in the potential for fascinating variations that can arise from within a repeated process. It is a statement on which she delivers with aesthetic alterity and acute sensitivity.

An accomplished asemic artist with a style that is as pleasing to the eye as it is visceral, SD treats us with a stack of asemic works woven into the text. In these, the loops and trills of cursive experiments are rendered in vibrant clashing colours. The book arrives packaged in a printed envelope made of tracing paper (which I tore on second reading). It is delicate (!), partially transparent and perfectly designed for the liminal nature of its contents. In its fullness, *eadr* is an unbound stack of pages in four near-identical parts. Once read, there is a sense that there is no returning to the exactitude of initial impressions. The pages are spilled, shuffled and rotated resulting in a text which is joyfully re-activated on each approach. It is a highly tactile publication in which your hands interacting with the pages are mirrored in photographs of SD's hands, stitching handwritten stanzas to tracing paper, so that multiple perceptive planes are figured through its involution.

For a work which is intensely visual and heavy on form, it packs in a huge amount of textual variety, oscillating between compact channellings of apparitions and self-aware methodology. It is with this in mind that I say SD's engagement with the supernatural is a far cry from typical notions of magicky discourse – no incantations or slick-tongued Delivery here – nor is it right to say that it is imagistically sparse – skinless tomatoes shuffle alongside weeping sheep, watercourses and robins – rather, it is as controlled as it is semantically mystic. To spend time with *eadr* is to experience an

electrical hypnosis, akin to being drawn in by multicoloured static on an old TV set – lights flicker and you capture shapes momentarily at the edges of perception. Pairing constraint with otherness, SD writes, draws and collages an engagement with grief which vibrates between curiosity and paralysis. The text is threaded through with the deeply emotive sensation that there is always something caught at the back of the throat; an inarticulation that SD refuses to let lie, as she returns again and again to obstinately chip away little shards of sense. The poetry grieves radically, demands answers, expects results.

To return to the recorded reading quoted in this review, the way SD adapts *eadr* for a live audience involves live loop recording. Each time she reads, a layer is recorded and builds a polyphonic reading experience. One noteworthy dimension of this performance rests in her decision to recite the poem once from the page, and then subsequently from memory. The result is that she messes it up continuously: she forgets parts, trips over her words and mis-times phrases. Being a poet who is academically engaged with failure in performance, I hope she wouldn't mind it being said that she completely fucks it up. We get to see her stutter, scrunch up her face in memory, slur and roll eyes. It's gorgeous. There is something so wrenchingly honest and emotionally generous in her clear discomfort and frustration. It's stunning to perceive and beyond replication.

[youtube.com/watch?v=J7kgD9pw_Dc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J7kgD9pw_Dc)

Affect aside, what is so fascinating about this performance, what SD manages to recreate in written text so well, is what happens in the slips and failures. In the breaths between stammers the recording ticks on as a transfer of speech gone by (passed on). It is resurrected in its filling an emotionally activated silence. In the text, we experience this perhaps most acutely in its disrupted prose sections:

*for the pith). I'm not feeling very sorry for my
skinless tomatoes – they say I'm dying. What
of the first people to feel sorry for Sarah,
carried away by the high tide. Why won't the
g selfish. I'm longing to feel sorry for
everyone dying twice. I'm sorry for longing for
carried away, a whole potato past its best.
Not feeling longing, what is that? It won't wor
e trees are longing for my skin.*

What first appear to be two parallel texts crashing against each other through the duration of the book, soon become impossible to decode as ever being separate. It is as if the time signatures have shifted: phrases distort, fall off and return just when you had begun to lose the tune from your head. I'm reminded of Eliane Radigue's beautiful *L'Île Re-Sonante* which builds layers of looped operatic voices over electronic drone, eventually becoming indistinct and approaching a sublime *difference*. If you're looking for further liminal shifts in repetition, consider also William Basinski's *Disintegration Loops* or Alvin Lucier's *I Am Sitting in a Room*.

*...until the resonant frequencies of the room reinforce themselves...what you
will hear then are the natural resonant frequencies of the room articulated by
speech. I regard this activity not so much a demonstration of a physical fact,
but more a way to s-s-s-smooth out any irregularities my speech might have.*

- *I Am Sitting in a Room*, Alvin Lucier

The latter two pieces of music could be said to be working in opposite directions: Basinski's *Loops*, through the material disintegration of magnetic tape gradually loses the duration of its notes, leaving behind attacks, while Lucier's *in a Room*, through sheer mass of sound becomes an incomprehensible drone where *only* the duration of voiced words remain. (Aside, both lend themselves to endlessly fun backwards-forwards listening where you're constantly questioning

both “how did I end up here?” and “how did this ever sound any different?”, which isn’t entirely dissimilar in effect from *eadr*’s returning to and building upon itself.)

You don’t miss the duration lost in *Disintegration Loops* nor are you overwhelmed by what is gained in *I’m Sitting in a Room*. Rather than a loss or a gain there is instead a mutation of sense. Similarly, SD’s compulsion to return to her tactile spirituality generates echoes of each textual and visual experiment. In these is a framing which invites in her own paranormal *overspill*. Again, she chips methodically away at the intangible explanations of loss and instead demonstrates an alternative sense-making. Perhaps the supernatural that SD is approaching is a constant re-meeting of the poet’s own methodology, hovering over distortions of her own voice in attempts to “s-s-s-smooth” out irregularities of access (to a loved one, to the past, to articulation).

I just hovered there
a gap through which
a different result
cast its shadow

She says, “I am doing this for women” and evokes an historicity of the matriarch, the double death of women lost from archive. There is an astute acknowledgement of the difficulties of activating the pain of the past (Pastness itself) and the insufficiency of “official” discourse to do so. “Did social history happen under anaesthetic?” she asks. If not, then why would we be satisfied to rifle emotionlessly through already arrived at results? To never revisit or refigure outcomes, is this sanity?

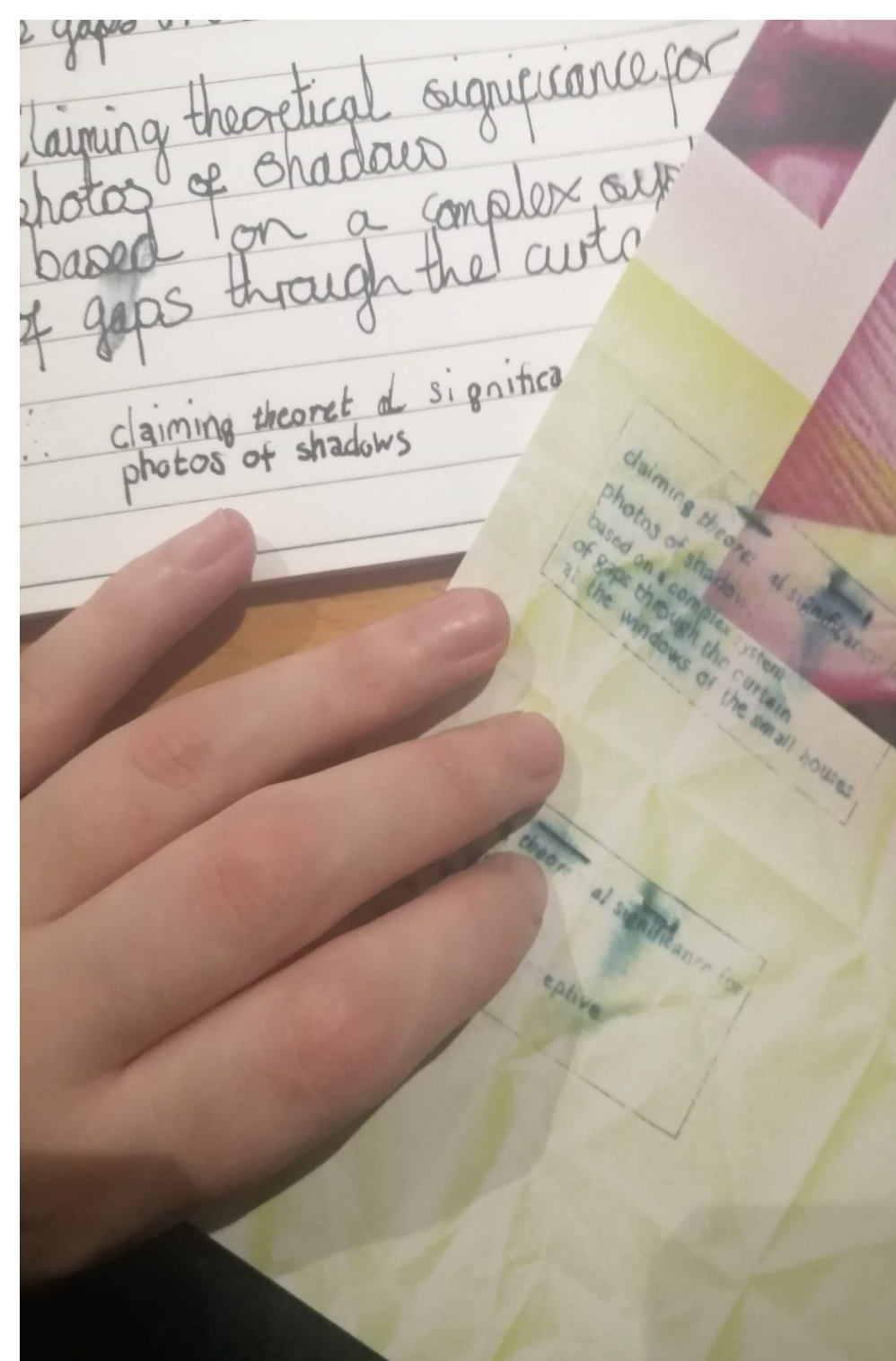
Little as I like to compare poets – and they really are very different - it would be remiss to speak of clairvoyance in contemporary avant-garde poetry and not mention Hannah Weiner. I think of her *Clairvoyant Journal* and the moment of material-textual innovation that arose in her attempts at transcribing unexplainable phenomena. I think of the posthumous “academic” dumping of questions around

her sanity onto her statement that she could “SEE words on [her] forehead IN THE AIR on other people on the typewriter on the page”. Both poets in their methodical channelling of communications with otherness do so with such formal and semantic flair that, rather than coding insanity, readers should be wondering just what exciting possible modes of communication they are closing their senses to.

highly sensitive people
merge imperceptibly with
(story/fiction)
this takes up too much energy
withheld from others

Where “sensitive” is a referent of “having the function of sensation or sense perception”, there is an argument to be had here for tuning one’s reading-sensitivity to alternatively articulated text. “Asemic” contains in its definition the implication that the text is lacking specific semantic reading, but I don’t feel this rings true in SD’s work. Reading the constituent parts of *eadr* inspires a lateral translation of the visual with the written word, between fixed and unfixed approaches to semantic sense leaked through its repetition. SD’s asemic experiments in liminal communication provide a tool with which the reader can conceive of ways beyond their language capabilities to connect with the deeper emotional states – grief – to hone a sensitivity to the unspeakable. When poetry achieves demonstrable possibilities of language engagement like this, is when it’s at its most exciting and relevant.

Anyway, top notch work, 5 STARS.



Notes on the Abandoned Women's Lavatory on Holborn Street

by Lydia Hounat

October 2019

London: disconcerting, oddly endearing, derelict, crowded, neglected, maintained, side-by-side, overpopulated.



The abandoned public toilets sit in a concrete island in the middle of Holborn Street.

Facing: a Black's shoe shop, a Wasabi, The Inn of Court pub, Chancery Lane station, Joe & The Juice.

I see: several hundred people zigzagging London in a regimented fashion: quickly and unfazed, past the empty toilet; a lack of

functionality sits within a functioning space. This is a rare area of anonymity; swarming, lonely. It's: 'one of the last few Victorian-period public toilets to have not been repurposed into an art gallery or bar or café.'

I know: The first formally 'known' public toilets in Britain appeared in 1851. George Jennings, an architect, designed the first public *flush* toilets at the Great Exhibition, built inside the Crystal Palace. Initially called "monkey closets", they proved successful; Jennings drew up blueprints. The Commissioners of Sewers for the City of London rejected the proposals. But then in 1885, the first underground toilet was built; (for men); by this point, Jennings is dead. William Haywood erected the underground toilets instead inside The Royal Exchange. The installation for the Holborn Street women's lavatory in not recorded; I guesstimate from the design, it was constructed in the mid-20th century, post-Suffragette movement.



Design: black, sharp, beautiful lace metalwork; spiral staircase descend; the most enjoyable part of the structure which I photographed relentlessly; necessary to remember as seen; the memory is rendered now made physical; an involuntary tick of mine. Comparatively gruesome to the structure; fence surrounding toilet padlocked at gate; stairs leading underground stuffed in litter; a gross faecal smell bubbling at the bottom; more repurposing irony; human consumption; litter is a toilet turned inside-out; crisp packets, empty bottles of juice; pre-consumed matter laid to rest.

Why this specific toilet?: A friend of mine used to cottage here; —one of the very few—women's lavatories there before it shut down in the 90s, (I couldn't find a formal document confirming this, taking his word for it); one of the lesser-known and less popular places for cottaging; a scuzzy non-party place; he preferred it to some of the more popular toilets, (South Kensington station was popular for cottaging); he failed to explain why he preferred this; I asked him: "why fuck in an abandoned public toilet?"

His response: "nobody ever went in, apart from shooting up, emergency piss/shit, shag or just to litter; the empty place became loud and real in compounding my sexuality because of its anonymity; nobody used the loos there; a safe house for my 'identity wake up call'". An intriguing thought; now I am stuck on my friend's relationship with the toilet as part of his sexual awakening.

A public toilet summed: hundreds of arses; hover/wipe seats; fucking; smoking; crying; "freshening up"; indifferent anonymous space; the public oversaturated in private activities.

An abandoned public toilet summed: lack of reason to invest in the expenditure of human needs; public toilet closes down; ceramic urinals toilet seats tiles still intact; waste on waste; untouched mostly; functionless; every now and then are repurposed in some way, i.e. sex shooting up emergency piss/shit litter = the way this city functions.

Getting in: Chuck my bag over; climb over the fence; almost trip on stair; grip onto the fence which is rusting; hands now stinking of stale metal and piss. I am inside. I am unable to wash my hands; loos

barricaded shut and padlocked, unable to go any further.



Inside: I flicked the torchlight on my iPhone on, looked down the tiled walls; end of the corridor next to the stalls, graffiti on far left: “I didn’t vote for this, #BREXIT2K16”; I couldn’t fit camera through barricades to photograph; phone pictures came out blurry; Brexit. Who is ‘I’?; How had ‘I’ been able to access loos?; Is this an example of neglect inviting vandalism? Perhaps this gives the toilet a renewed purpose; Victorians built public underground loos with tiled surfaces to make it easier to remove graffiti, the council maintained this right through to the 90s when most facilities were shut down; writing on the wall; a plane of thought becomes artefact; nobody to bring a sense of order to mess of neglected loo; why it should be called vandalism, if nobody cares/sees it? Marshall

Clinard on vandalism: ‘[o]ften stealing nothing, a vandal’s limited actions reinforce this self-conception as prankster, not delinquent.’ I am inclined to disagree. The graffiti is not necessarily a mark of a prankster or delinquent, rather it is an act of feeling. Political graffiti residing in a locked, abandoned public toilet seemed powerful. Use of hash tags implied the contemporary society living inside a 19th century loo.

Outside: I studied the litter carpeting the concrete steps; dead rats decomposing, half-eaten (possibly by birds); their bodies split open, putrifying; old newspaper pages wet; ink speckled concrete; a white pill inside a plastic baggy; moss and lichen crawling at ridges of steps; railings; nature in neglect; toilet defecates wrappings; graffiti by human hand; peeling paint; evidence of drugs; decomposition, a second-hand bin; unsettling; after investigating layers of rubbish and information on placard leading to the entrance, I attracted a small audience of people watching looking confused; unable to recover any evidence cottaging had recently taken place, contrary to my friend’s experience thirty years prior.

Getting out: chuck bag back over; cradled camera to chest with one hand, pulled back over onto the street with free hand, metal rusted against fingers again; stink. Odour of rot and sewage lingered in my nose long after leaving Holborn; comparable to an olfactory hallucination, I had documented the intensity of the smell in myself. Sprawling London carries on, the abandoned toilet stays, a silent monument now rendered purposeless. Whether the littering and loneliness reinvigorate the toilet, I cannot tell.¹

¹ ‘Things does have a way of fixing themselves, whether you worry or not. If you hustle, it will happen, if you don’t hustle, it will still happen. Everybody living to dead, no matter what they doing while they living, in the end everybody dead.’ — Sam Selvon, *The Lonely Londoners* (1956)

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The Visitor

by Lex Wick, with Artwork by Glenn D. McCleary



...as if I can 'wait it out' or that it will get better on its own, I'm catching her more frequently fleeing from the edge of my vision this black withering sheet, perhaps she's one of the aborted who I sent to an early grave if indeed a soul is implanted that fast, those from the netherworld itching to become one of us to taste/smell/touch to see what being 'disconnected' feels like and if everything they were told was true, that we aren't really aware of ourselves, that we think in singular terms, that we feel 'alone' or 'isolated' or 'observe' and are really so easily tricked into believing nonsense and then fashion an entire six or seven or so decades completely oblivious, what a joy, what a joke to forget and live in false torment because of being 'separate' or 'alive' or the very myriad of words/songs/poems that describe the sensation so adequately so that the 'living' get to understand or connect or commune, and that they don't realise even then, in that feeling that tiny speck of 'familiar' feeling that...the doctor says there is nothing wrong with my eyes save for the usual

ageing and that I need reading glasses and if I think the television is blurry to buy a new television 'hur hur hur' coughs - disgusting to see a doctor, fat and grey around the eyes, cough like that in my presence, wheeze and heave out phlegm even a little bit with plaques on the wall and glasses slung on his wine bloated nose how he 'makes a living' shuffling humans in and out checking them with machines and then telling them things they must do and so on like this in every room in every place in the entire world with various people 'doing their job', that is 'performing some function', 'carrying out a process', links in the chain aren't they input in output out daily, all you need to do is ask, reminds Jesus, just ask and thy shall receive (through the small door or through the window or in your hand or bank account or in a smile or gesture or really, truly from someone who doesn't consciously understand their place in the swirling process that was started long ago and goes on rotating and mixing and mashing like a mother or a friend or a wife or son or anyone really coming into being in this system that has been massaged into a certain order or at least been given the appearance of a system or structure or, lets say, coherence, a tangible way of differentiating 'what is going on' and that seeming reasonable enough continues). Lately, though, it's been images of a face or a moment or, it's hard to put in words, but, the sensation of sun, or, the sensation of a moment in the sun a half second flashback, words are insufficient, how an entire song conveys one emotion or even one moment of emotion say or a film captures an encounter and its irresolute stain its confusion its emotion underlying every flavour of the memory and that that can't even be resolved simply displayed, relived, chewed over because there was and is something there, something else contained within the moment - the combination of events and all the thoughts you brought to that particular moment then dreams imagination emotion hope desire wish coloured the moment and that will forever more be, in the eyes of the writer or filmmaker or whomever, something of significance, it carried in that say three or less seconds, all of the mystery of life and love that spoke/sung right to the core soul, right to the essence of life, it paralleled something that resonated with the moment of

reality and the type of love or sentiment or understanding that human being knows of what it is to be a human and that one tiny cross-section of living instead branched out and formed or confirmed for that one speck of brief coherent consciousness the general importance or deeper incomprehensible or difficult to share deeper truth of what being is or should be; it mimicked or showed perfectly the exact accurate feeling or sensibility one would want to have and understand were one to properly grasp the full lived experience, say, and in this moment, those glimpses of a time or place or a projection of the future or a wish that this tormented soul flicking in and out of the corner of my eye, my new companion who has been growing in power, that is, her (I call it her because that feels more comfortable for now and, selfishly, makes me feel less lonely) ability to project deeper and deeper crescendo moments is gaining power: I imagine a future in which these tiny flashes of black or white light will leave me emotionally crippled, force me to my knees and push me into a clinic whereby I describe these images and moments not to an eye doctor but to a human being who offers assistance in aiding those with defects of the mind. Of course, I pretend I am having confused visual input, flashes of light or shadow or the normal reactions one has when say moving from a light room to a dark room and visa versa, these are merely signs of ageing and the resultant hallucinogenic film-stock emotionally loaded communiques are my minds new tendency to draw from the growing reserve of guilt loss happiness pain desire that has been building up in my psyche since birth, dreams included, their hodgepodge bungled mash of emotion with visual memory creating bizarre monsters of disproportionate chaos attaching extreme fear to simple objects or intense hate to innocent creatures and cutting them all together as fragments of a narrative whereby city scapes are nothing more than a tiled cacophony of glass sheets reflecting unduly bright horror or dulled slow-motion beauty just to entertain a listless sleeping mind, although unfortunately this rational doesn't explain why the vision and the emotions are not mine, they are foreign, they are felt as new, as other, they are presented to me from a perspective and from a soul-level depth that

I haven't yet felt or experienced, and although each time they (of course) add to my greater 'whole' they are nonetheless felt in their oncoming as foreign, as a glimpse into a life lived in another's body whereby their very essence and emotion is felt for that split second, their soft yellow hair brushing past their quickly turned face in the sun say - of course that's easy to imagine it's just hair, but in that moment the scent of flowers and the particular sensation of the sun which in every land feels different, softer or stinging differently, or that their body was smaller or lighter, but these are mere moments that my haunting ghost delivers as though she herself has no control over her fusion with me and, like an antenna, I am going insane. Yet it's been weeks since my last vision, my last encounter, my last transcendent otherworldly glimpse into the intangible ether that may or may not prove that there is indeed an afterlife and that the past and the future are not imaginations or projections of a critically minded race who invented or has yet only chose to define everything in linear terms - my doctor tells me I am doing better, that I am not so erratic in my meetings and my speech has slowed to a more normal pace, I have stopped grinding my teeth in the night and have begun smoking a cigarette only once every two hours if, a little maniacally, on the second hour religiously (as if adherence to a staid sure procedure should be called religious, these beasts, these horrible people who continue reigning terror on humanity with their restrictions, in that sense 'religiously' could indeed mean constant terror, unwavering resolve minute to minute on the minds and hearts of human beings born out of the mud into this world, at first opening their eyes and taking a few breaths to be slammed down into the world of sin and servitude constantly, and in this 'constantly' sense we now casually use the term 'religiously' as though indoctrination or staid constant servitude and mechanic observance of process is imbued with anything 'good', or no, that, 'good' is relative and when we think 'religiously' we *accidentally* think good, as in, if we choose to think that then no one is going to stop us, the good book, who called it that first and who stopped them from calling it that: the determination was ours to begin with, it is still ours, that is, we label

or ‘give’/‘offer’ the term and they simply step forward mouths shut and bask in that glory, the glory of god)...

Pierre Senges’ *Silhouettes of Kafka: Dim Light Is Best*

by Alina Stefanescu

“For a long, long time, I wanted to go to that city. It’s a big bustling city, many thousands of men live there, all foreigners are allowed there...”

- Franz Kafka in his notebooks

“Once and for all, I will not join in, I will join no one,” Pierre Senges writes, both asserting the narrative voice while structuring the text around its intentional effacement. But Senges’ voice is unique, recognizable, inflected by bathos and luxurious sensual descriptions of books which might have been otherwise. In a sense, this unique voice sits in tension with the author’s desire to erase himself, to tangle his stories in the words of others.

For those unfamiliar with Senges’ work, *Studies of Silhouettes*, published in Jacob Siefring’s translation by Sublunary Editions, is an ideal entry-way into the literary adventures of this unique French author and playwright. The mystery of Senges encounters the mystery of Franz Kafka, whom he joins in an ongoing, posthumous dialogue. Multi-dimensional intertextuality is central to much of Senges’ work, which aspires to blur boundaries between author and text, intentionally effacing the self, denying its prominence, rejecting the market’s appetite for confessional modes.

Senges introduces *Silhouettes* as ninety-two passages of “interrupted departures...from the hand of Franz Kafka.” Translator Jacob Siefring has likened these “interrupted departures” to Italo Calvino’s idea of the “post-scriptum,” where each text multiples its existence “through the medium of other books” in a real or imagined library. Calvino’s principle of the post-scriptum borrows from Borges, as Senges’ passages borrow from Kafka, where he notes a sort of infection in the discovery of some minor papers, somewhere, left in a nook, in whatever state: not quite drafts, but the opening lines of drafts, the germs of something larger...”

...

By definition, a silhouette is the outline of an object or person which emerges from its relationship to light, from the contrast revealed by a lighter background. In its verb form, *to silhouette* means to cast or reveal an object or person as a dark shape against this background. Senges does both. He limns fragments from Franz Kafka's notebooks, set apart in boldface text, and transcribes the silhouettes created by Kafka's words on a white paper which could be a wall. In so doing, he creates an alternate text which speaks with, for, through, and beyond Kafka into literature more generally, challenging the linearity of the sentence and its assumption that singular, casual events exist. Modernity's theorized edifices of progress teeter and topple in the tornadic circularity of the text.

There is something illicit in both the project and its modal projection, a sense in which Senges steers into contemporary conversations about appropriation and authorial privilege. Despite Kafka's willed stipulation that his unfinished works should not be published posthumously, Max Brod published these notebooks (among other works) after his death. Out of reverence for his friend's words, Brod made public what Kafka wanted burned.

And it is Senges' reverence for Kafka which shapes the silhouettes bricked from the posthumous notebooks. It is Senges' tonal irreverence--the wry soliloquies, parables, definitions, recapitulations, and revisionings--that reveals, somehow, the author's reverence for Kafka.

Reverence is often associated with extolatory modes which center Master-Pupil relationships, as in Rainer Maria Rilke's monograph of Auguste Rodin. Perhaps reverence is healthier outside pure worship; reverence also exists in continuous attention and dedication, in the inability to get over someone's words, in the need to walk the trails of certain words again and again, leaving one's own tracks in the dirt.

Senges walks these trails through Kafka, revisiting particular fragments multiple times, creating what Siefring has called "parallel

but divergent" texts, or reproductions which highlight the text as an artefact. For example, Senges offers four silhouettes of "This is a city among cities..." and seven silhouettes of "I was sick and in bed..." These multiple silhouettes suggest how things could be otherwise, given perspective, given different sources of light.

The opposite of panegyric, Senges works from the library in his head, dubbing disparate authors over one another, bringing John Le Carre into a room with Robert Walser and Don Juan, Balzac near to Hogwarth. Multiple references to male authors and legends appear in these pieces--and one might be tempted to note the paucity of female voices apart from the occasional princess, one might wonder how much significance to accord this lapse.

...

If Senges writes in parallel to Kafka's notebooks, he also writes in parallel to the dissolution of modern multinationalist ideals. We are in Vienna or Prague, both part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in Kafka's time. We are in the ongoing present of what Senges describes as an "attempt to harmonize a heteroclitite ensemble under a single figure." Kafka is the figure, the pivot, and a sort of recurring silence marked by absence of safety.

Etudes des Silhouettes was published by Gallimard in 2010, the year when "Viktator" Viktor Orban swept Hungarian elections with a victory for the anti-immigrant, chauvinist party, Fidesz. The gradual, slow-reveal ascent of an ethno-nationalist Right seems to inflect Senges' engagement of Franz Kafka's notebooks.

...

Siefring has translated multiple works by Senges into English (including "Suite" for *The White Review*) and one could argue that he is "faithful" to Senges' baroque brilliance, the heavy brocades of descriptive language, the complicated subject-object syntax of the original French. The language is luscious, sensual, drawn out in

long, sprawling sentences where narrative point-of-view often shifts mid-thought. Images are threaded like beads in a tapestry, where association evokes an immanence, a discursive motion, an engine.

...fingers have that delicateness learned by taking care of buttercups, but their intransigence is without appeal, and their appetites are definitive: I owe them a flowering, they paid for that with the food that does me good, they paid with the sugar of my sap, they saw my young roots as a promising debut, like their money down, and never will they forgive me my aversion to winning.

A casino table appears among the cafes and tea rooms of Austro-Hungarian time. A dim star gathers in the cornea of all joined to court an appetite for winning. There is no linear plot, only the juxtapositions of recurring images, new games, evolving status relations among players seeking to increase the proximity of congruous events. For example, he embarks without hope arrested. He inhabits his own rigorous syntax. He stretches his toes to prepare for the foot fight, since all battles occur beneath the table now. Senges knows what is buried in texts is formidable. The subtext is a silhouette as well as the act of silhouetting.

Long, long time refers to my tender youth, my childhood: my memory may deceive me (after all, that's what memories are good for, they provide consolation, replacing bad with good)...

The role of modern urban environments replaces astonishment with a sort of blase confusion, an alienation addressed by sociologist Georg Simmel, who noted how cities and industrialization dimmed empathy, and forced 19th century urbanites to deal with overstimulation by closing off a part of themselves. Senges' narrators reach back into childhood for clarity, as a reprieve from this new uncertainty and loneliness. The memories are flawed, the childhood is pieced together from "approximations," or lies the narrators tells himself. One wonders if Kafka's idea of childhood elicits a time prior to awareness of complicity or the dangerous silence of adults. In the

city where all foreigners were allowed, hyphenated persons were not yet forced to choose between parts of themselves. They lived in the shadows of time, in this era of subaltern altos which preceded the dubstep of tanks, the procession of military parades, the children disappearing.

...

... death is thus an interruption of writing—our prisons are perhaps insalubrious, damp and infested, our judges are corrupt, but our executions are a refinement of intellectuals; they make ours a model civilization.

Beneath these voluptuous silhouettes lies a continuous attention to the penal colony, the world as mapped by the advance of mass incarceration and prison camps, which Senges juxtaposes against the hope of universal brotherhood articulated by theorists including Fourier and Saint-Simon. The prison lies at the heart of these utopian visions, a leitmotif Senges evokes as a presence in Kafka's words, even though the notebooks don't usually mention it. By incorporating the carceral body again and again as a challenge to promises of freedom and human rights, Senges reads this into multiple silences: the silence of Kafka's time, the silence of our own.

The author expresses mistrust of liberal proclamations of rights and legality, itself: "They were coming as saviors, we were the shackled ones; they had written the word *liberty* somewhere in a travel journal, or in a letter to the sovereign, or in their Constitution, majestic a Constitution — yet there were some among us who spoke rather of an ultimatum." Where Kafka vaguely alludes to a category of humans "disposed to die," Senges sketches the difference between those disposed to die, and those disposed to live, identifying a third category: "a less numerous one consisting of men who had not yet chosen and were in no hurry to do so, or for the moment without any other alternatives..... they were not taking part in any conversations, they exhibited neither fear by chattering their teeth, nor desire by the sharing of opposing opinions; they remained there, uncertain,

undetermined, in waiting, observers of the others and of themselves, trembling between two states, between life and death, and feeling those shivers of uncertainty as energy, their sole source of energy, given lavishly to the men disposed to live, to the men disposed to die.”

These quiet observers, the third category of humans, lack agency; they exist in the twilight of other humans; their lives are transcribed from shadows. These are the persons “recognizable by his unfinished silhouette,” the lives left invisible in the unfinished light.

...

Edmond Jabes said “writing a book means joining your voice to... what every page already knew,” but Senges disputes the metaphysical certainty of knowing anything through language given “the world in which we are advancing brings nouns and adjectives into agreement and order to assure our comfort and our peace.” He wanders between satire and agony without erecting boundaries, without preparing the reader for how the room changes, or offering an explanation for that change. He invents a table which is displaced by a goblet which resembles an enemy in velvet pants who serenades the drowned woman for the benefit of the bored gentleman and Laurence Olivier, who must have here whenever the trace of an enemy dresses up as a goblet who is “a perfect idea of a slightly goofy man running” after a Russian in Viennese tea rooms. (Things go askance depending on who is watching, and whether they believe in heroes, or whether they have relatives currently inhabiting castles and a nearby afterlife with a ladder one can see or reach from a bunk bed.) This may be how wars begin. With bunk beds. And goblets. The noble dream who casts its jacket over the shoulders of a child, to paraphrase Kafka.

I return to the significance of “Once and for all, I will not join in, I will join no one, I expressly chase past midnight and the corner of this cafe to abstract myself from all company.” In this passage, Senges builds upon Kafka’s refusal to join his friends in ordinary

time, in the visible world of cafe life. Someone posed the question: “Don’t you want to join us?” Kafka declined.

Senges fleshes out the shadow of this refusal, exposing “the incongruity of my presence in such a place at such a time, and the still worse incongruity of the idea of joining that most foreign we to what I was then, a we of the civilized addressing a barbarian, or of the barbarians addressing themselves to the civilized: all the same a hostile we, employing courtesy as well as insult.” Like Kafka, Senges rejects the cafe of inclusive illusions. He suspects the pronoun, the We at the heart of modern group identities. The cafe is not open for indoor dining or sipping or chatting or behaving as if the world can continue in short bursts of sociality which infect humans with the virus that may be deadly, or the dread of the death’s lottery laid out like tarot cards by an attractive teen hawking her wisdom at a book signing where she of the suburbs has suddenly become a magician thanks to the global market and the Amazon of self-enhancement. The world may die but Senges’ book exists in dialogue with the death of the author, Kafka, as this review exists in dialogue with Siefring’s translation, as it builds upon lines borrowing Senges’ methodology to create a canvas of Sengian response to the form he perfected in order to reveal form’s imperfections.

...

Was Kafka political? Is Senges political? What is *political* in times of weaponized language, and who is the We of the citizen? I can’t answer these questions with finality. It’s fascinating to note both Kafka and Paul Celan were drawn to the philosophy of anarchist Peter Kropotkin. Kafka’s affinity for socialism was no secret, though many continue to read his novels as prescient critiques of the Stalinist gulag without looking at the camps inside their own countries.

When Senges reaches forwards--”But still to come, desirable by sole virtue of being in the future”--the reach is strained by the silhouettes, by what we know of Kafka’s life, and changing forms of

empire. At its most piercing, perhaps this is a book about recognition, templates, and the other side of prisons, those who guard them - and really, those who theorize them. To borrow Senges' tag, "according to international experts," the 20th century was marked by universal declarations of human rights, and an international legal system intended to protect them. These experts of statecraft rarely focus on the relationships between colonialism, the rise of the carceral states, and the cost of increased criminality based on citizenship status. We live in a time when Hannah Arendt's warnings about the relationship between citizenship and human rights speaks to millions of ghosts hidden in headlines. Kafka's concerns as a citizen of the Austro-Hungarian empire, at a time when its decline was imminent, mirrors those of minorities who live in states where xenophobia is a political platform; this silence presides over the present refugee crises, the oppression of migrant labor, the rebuilding of walls and militarized borders. Papers and documents determine the distance between life and death, between deportation camps and erasure.

"I liquidate any notion of a heart, along with the love of men, their neighbors..." Senges insists in Siefring's timely and stunning translation. There will be no author here to turn water into wine, to offer a redemptive ending. There will be no heartfelt reconciliation, no closure outside the guarantee of death. There will be, in fact, no single voice at all which is definitive, or unlinked to the writers who hide inside it. Silhouettes are particularly salient in dim light, and Senges' words enervate the dimness of Kafka's texts at a time when so much terror relies on silence, legality, and narrowing dimness.

Author's Note

For unlinked sources, see Preece, Julian (2001). *The Cambridge Companion to Kafka*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. ISBN 978-0-521-66391-5 and JM Scheriber's insights on other works by Senges also translated by Siefring: roughghosts.com/tag/pierre-senges/

**GRAVITY
BUBBLES**

Marcus Slease
Calliope Michail
Christopher Gutkind
Spring 2020

people sitting in cars going nowhere
cracked windows in ubers; one frozen ear at work
people walking in circles, on the rooftops, around and around the chimneys
I heard apparently was true again
to be both at once and act just so
buckwheat bread & veggies fried in breadcrumbs
outside and inside meet/eyes more than screens
pigeons and preachers rule the streets
the sound of rhinos snorting and stomping, above and below, all around them
pajamas obey each other/evolve a shop crawl
who do you wear a bra for
Become superfluous like swatches of silk
our ears amok our nears unakimbo
inarticulate tendrils an infernal limbo
a small train drifting through the mountains, a smok in the distance
fettered fucked blending detime.decom
strangers on omegle modern romcom
I'd like a yellow onion, on the mountain, with the sea air
love! love! all my comms for love..
meanwhile *he's alive!* vs thousands of dead
I've never walked so slowly gladly..
meanwhile bark and hark strudel pompomly
and then and now and then
time warps lost parallels collide
orotund headlines pierce through otoliths
monoliths and obelisks, how soft and can they crumble?

Oktoberfest is cancelled
the strudels have disappeared
from Spanish bakeries
all my dreams are adolescent
& wet
shadows of light unseen keep going me warpy
the always banal, the sheets, the dishes, the body
if you blast the light inside you you beam
the milk problem – but the milk joy !
and the Hammershoi crease !
you shower and read and the psocids stroke their mandibles
a woman in black her back turned
a woman in black pouring milk
I used to be mandibled a lot until mass unemployment
bled white rice and pinto beans – what more
could you want, goes grandma's yoke
my ghosts have gone underground
I see you speak ventilator well but how is your mask
on the tip of my tongue, a tickle trapped
the sound of the bell that leaves the bell
once upon a tippel all the bank's accounts and all the bank's kin
couldn't put tongues together again
i\$ there any lint in Bezo\$' pocket\$? what \$hape i\$ his \$oul?
We are in a pickle
could he doth be formed of virus ancients saw gleeing by the shitpile?
windowsill scene: skull decanter rotting wine a plastic white rose
here comes the llama, the llama has the cure, the llama has the antibodies
Every angel is terrifying. You must change you life.
combat the invisible – biology and flaming swords
Belgium is moving to social bubbles

an upsidedown bucket a hood to unsee thru
there's a hole in bucket UK dear Boron dear Boron

clap and unwind in the countryside
a baby a lady 5 cobras

when are we gonna
break out
of our stables

wake news eat news
others news comms news
wash and dress news
tea again comms news
stretch maybe news
maybe writing news
maybe read book news
new news water news
more eating news
maybe walking news
more comms news
helping a bit news
snoozing maybe news
wishing time news
tea news tea news
memory memory news
worry dream news
out wandering news
shop maybe news
writing maybe news
phonecall maybe news
more eating news
vidcall maybe news
alcohol like news
nice old old film ah
news teeth bed

whale fuse beat fuse
otters fuse combs fuse
bash and bless fuse
sea again combs fuse
belch maybe fuse
maybe biting fuse
maybe feed cook fuse
fuse fuse matter fuse
sore bleating fuse
maybe stroking fuse
maybe maybe fuse combust

a sty in the eye
duck tape the tear ducts

I need to stroke otters right away

Meanwhile in England..



dolly croons on google earth
elon is devoting himself to mars
where the newborn will morph
into an elven spacecraft
and there's no more room for s/words
in my stomach or my head

just you wait and see

bionic beavers, count the sheevers

the crack of doom is coming soon

you want herdle no problem
lots of herdles about these days
gov't fuckwits a herdle to life
herdles of delivery vehicles to avoidle
tons of herdles starting again
can get you a herdle in an hour
herds of fingers in morgues

virtual cycling let's go!

buttermilk biscuits in white gravy
saucy lime with a gin fizzle
they've shaved their stashes

minuscule cracks in the window glass
cobwebs scramble neural index

to your own smile.com be uncom
especially if you have rulers

besotted with clotted cream and the dainty finger

eudemons, dysdemons, somewhere in the shuffle

after I was in a doze of aisledom I wash my grocers and read a novel

when you eat the smile of a watermelon
make sure to spit out the seeds

watch the bees enter and exit and enter petalled coves of nourishment -
here, still searching - what season is this

on the wall two words
near the ground
written small
April 2020
cry alone

isolation is losing its lustre
we need more flesh for our existence

vonate matterial suprotest & topple it all

every/one every/place infinite

life: on/off on/off on/off on/off on/off
life: with infinite time all life in the repeat
life: with finite time all life in the twilight

& beyond - love in a plate of nightshades

twilife: we missed the McD's sweet and sour sauce!

Do you want to die with your original teeth

the loudest voice isn't always just

coffee frothies are strutting less gleamy..

The shadows of birds flit across the window

pirouettes on melting ice cubes

le people are ££'ing to the slaughter

lavender oils in the mop bucket

just because _____ doesn't mean _____ .

I forgot I started my conversations with myself

On the back of a motorcycle carrying feathers across the borders

ok ok, see, not a paradigm, see shift
ctrl alt del

i came across a statue who told me he genuinely understood he erased history
and then contributed to the death of 44 London Transport workers
during the last months – but he said he was glad
he could remain useful and alive

trying to become one with the music of Haydn, something about a bear,
maybe there is something in there, the cabbage stewing
in onions and mushrooms with sausages for bigos,
a little jungle of plants in the room beside the balcony

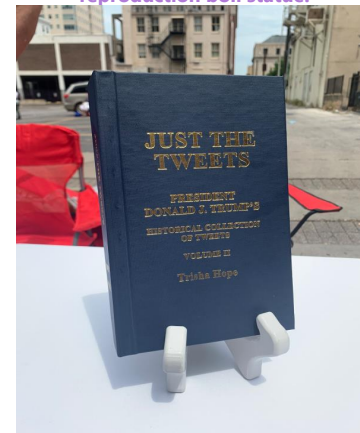
every monument some
horror somewhere too much
bronze and marble and not enough—

too much sausages of jungles
and plants of tryings while onions
of music make calls and leases of become

The Venus of Willendorf is a sex statue to fertility.
The Pigeon Girl is a statue to war sufferings.
The Urfa Man is the oldest statue of a life sized homo sapien.
When did all the generals arrive?

it boils, the becoming, up
and then down into pulp
a jam or a sauce, a patchy
teflon pan, all the scraping injested

reproduction boil statue:



tweeting the quench quakes

wei_h & e_punge the ha_vest of abys_al po_osity

all along the restarting twitts are roamy –
many a jerk brew a poisonous batch!

The watchtower the watchtower who is watching the watchtower

centrefold days unfurl your limbs

I'm feeling interfood today, tomorrow I'm to feel like like.

--- Christopher are you okay?

--- Yes, reporting for duty!

Inhale for five second exhale for five seconds comrades friends lovers
this is how we walk on the moon

hefty babes in dainty cradles -
report me. report me. report

Inhale: Saudi oil quarterly profits down a quarter to only 16.64 billion USD!

Exhale: boo-hoo..

The way is lit by the luminous eyes of my billy goat

ordering options

option 1

Full sequence of CM/CG, then full of MS/CG, the former first since it started first.
Alternate 1a – run each one backwards

option 2

First part of CM/CG sequence till switchover, then first part of MS/CG till switchover, then second part of CM/CG sequence till end, then second part of MS/CG till end.
Alternate 2a – do this backwards in one of various ways

option 3

CG/CM first exchange, CG/MS first exchange, CG/CM second exchange, CG/MS second exchange, etc
There may be more than one CM/CG or MS/CG in a row since that is so at end of first and second parts.
Alternate 3a – run this backwards

option 4

CG's first thing, CM's first thing, MS's first thing, etc
There may be more than one CM/CG or MS/CG in a row since that is so near end of first and second parts. CG would have to decide on the few different versions of his contribs to each of you.
Alternate 4a – run this backwards

option 5

This incorporates a 4th person. This person acts as editor, they take all our work (I would make mine half its size, so just one of each of my repeated things and I decide on which revision of any where there are diffs), and puts it in any order they want, not changing any word or word order within a person's contribution, simply making the order they think is strongest and taking all our names out, we would know which is our bit, the reader would not.

option 5a – we colour-code it and provide a key, so reader knows who did what.

option 5b - which could be used with either of the above – a constriction whereby the editor must always place a different person's contribution after another i.e. no repeated person.

option 6

This also incorporates a 4th person. Basically we take option 4 and ask a person to do their own 32 contribs and slot them in wherever but never more than one person's at a time. Or some such thing.

Operates without our names like option 5, revealed or not in end-notes.

option 6a – 4th person makes their contribs but we slot them in

option 6b – run this backwards after they/we are done

option 7

Put parts in a hat..

option 7a – run this backwards

option 8

Get 4th person to do option 5 but using the text on this page.

option 9

Marcus suggests whatever we do we have this at the end.

option 10

Notes

love! love! all my comms for love, Shakespeare detourn
Every angel is terrifying, from Rilke Duino Elegy I
You must change your life, from Rilke Archaic Torso of Apollo
there's a hole in the bucket, old song, author unknown
BACK TO WORK / CATCH THE VIRUS / SAVE THE BILLIONAIRES,
one of many satires of UK gov't advice posters, citation lost
just you wait and see, from (There'll be Bluebirds Over) The White Cliffs of Dover, lyrics by Nat Burton,
heard the Vera Lynn recording coming from a high window on 75th VE Day anniversary 8/5/20
the crack of doom ... from a song by the Tiger Lillies
herd stanza, echo of Big Lebowski film, John Goodman dialogue, in last lines
to your own smile.com be uncom, Shakespeare detourn
we missed the sweet and sour sauce!, from Guardian article, 20/5/20
coffee frothies, from Will Self, 'coffee frothy economy' in a Kafka talk online, 19/5/20
44 London Transport workers, from TFL website in Spring, surely more now
JUST THE TWEETS book, for sale outside Trump's Tulsa speech, 20/6/20, citation lost
all along the restarting twitts are roamy, a line from Dylan's All Along The Watchtower was in mind
many a jerk brew a poisonous batch!, a line from Lynch's film, What Did Jack Do? was in mind
Inhale line stats, from Guardian article, 12/5/20

A Review of *Place Waste Dissent & Diisonance* (Hesterglock Press, 2020) by Paul Hawkins and Steve Ryan

by Madelaine Culver

It's rare to come across a poetry collection composed as much of language and ideas as it is of people and places, but this is exactly what we get in *Place Waste Dissent & Diisonance* (Hesterglock Press 2020). Recounting the occupation in the early 90s of Claremont Road in London's East End before it was lost to the M11 link road, this expanded edition of Hawkins's *Place Waste Dissent* (Influx Press 2015) does more than reflect the fights and frustrations of a disaffected counterculture. Exposing with brutal honesty the dark underbelly of a shameful history that is still very much in the making, this book asks us to consider how far we would be willing to go to protect the people and the places that we hold dear.

Adopting a host of voices and mediums through which to tell the stories of Claremont Road, *Place Waste Dissent & Diisonance* is as much a celebration of friendship and community as it is an homage to those neglected by Thatcher's government and the political ideology that outlived it. Containing not only the same iconic images, introspective diary entries, and powerful poems of the original collection, but a stunning selection of artworks created in response to it, it represents the important role that art continues to play in the ongoing struggle for recognition and respect.

Rather than presenting an idealised memoir of their shared experiences of Claremont Road, Hawkins and Ryan develop through their collaboration a visual language through which the we're able to grasp the full spectrum of feelings ignited during the campaign. Absorbing and expressive with sudden bursts of clarity amid suffocating darkness, their artworks reflect and build upon the emotional complexity and intensity of *Place Waste Dissent*. Finding a balance between stillness and chaos, Hawkins and Ryan seem to capture in these pages the very essence of what Claremont Road was: a brutal battleground and a dysfunctional but loving family home.

Printed entirely in black and white, this striking collection brings into sharp focus the polemics of the socio-political context that inspired it, communicating through its visual poetics the shades of grey that tend to be overlooked while we're competing for space and attention. Through a thoughtfully curated archive of poetry, collage, photography, visual art, and other ephemera salvaged from the time, Hawkins's poetry offers fascinating insights into the good intentions and solidarity that brought the Claremont Road squatters together. It also sheds light on the poverty, violence, and self-harm that threatened to drive them apart. Showing us the frightening consequences of losing not only valuable physical places but psychological ones: 'I stink; maybe one more drink? ... The pain-birds are all around me, in my head,' *Place Waste Dissent & Diisonance* invites us to acknowledge our own vulnerabilities and reminds us of how precious our homes and identities are.

While some of the poems lack the level of linguistic and formal complexity that I usually look for and enjoy in poetry, these moments of telling rather than showing are balanced out by many other pieces that engage and excite the analytical mind. Lines such as 'losing her best friends in strawberry pill-boxes' and 'A tool. A thin-train. Zygotic sheep' create images that are both intellectually challenging and hard to forget. More than a collection of artworks and poems, this book, like *Place Waste Dissent* before it, is a valuable account of a notoriously incendiary time in British history, and an important critique of the political ideology that shaped it and continues to haunt us in the twenty-first century.

It was difficult while reading *Place Waste Dissent & Diisonance* not to be reminded of the HS2 trainline that will inevitably destroy or significantly damage vast swathes of woodland along its planned route from London to Leeds. At a time when it too often feels as though those in power care more about the economy and keeping up appearances than they do about the environment and our communities, the stories captured in this book are hugely important to share and to remember. 'Shame-on-you' the campaigners shouted when Claremont Road was torn down in 1994. We're still shouting it

today. Will we ever stop?

Fracture

by Tom Branfoot

walking from room to room just before midnight a penumbra
of condensation around each textured glass pane sometimes
i decide to make nights longer if the days are too punishing
can you hear this wind rain sluicing down the eaves room
to room stopping at each threshold as if i were something
special someone livid at being left behind some nights i feel
as if i'm turning into my mother the sound of rain and vomiting
into the sink are the same i learnt that you can't get away
from yourself you can't call a taxi out of your own home
you can't leave without saying *goodbye* walking out into the night
listening to the blood course through knotted veins nesting
in the eaves of arteries or dull the relentless beat of your trying
heart i need to be safe in dreams without burning white sage
and still my twitching eyes that hurt like weeping statues ache
with the absence of real light i've stopped walking my back
to the radiator contused head buried in open palms reminding
that i was stunned in a way to feel redeemed after my face hit
the windscreen of a cobalt beamer one mild April afternoon
in the village square sockets pummelled with tempered glass
when i awoke in Bradford Royal Infirmary to find my mother
standing over me and my father calling after me as if i were gone
she knew better than to worry for the injured until they wake
still stitching together a little cataclysm i forget what happened
like most significant things but was fine as a silkworm's thread
if i were feeling glib i would say that i was born on a fault line
that i was born with too many eyes because one day everything
withdraws no matter the quantity until the truce of two halves
until the mercurial glimmer softens into what we call memory
but is more like a reverie receding into a hairline fracture

I'm Thinking of a Number

by Rachel Nehercut

Significance

illuminates magnaesia.

Excuses overlapping. Devastating

absolutely literary women. Angry water

pharmacists in post-country empire. Restless papers.

Translation restricted. Always scaled-down coast of hell.

Five go into enlightenment. Energy shelves darkness & fictionalised

world ruins. Classy nature lurks a flat attitude. Great tableaux. Mortality ratings.

Muesli-slurping detectives rattle the cages. Originally epic innocence

& a literary stomach. Wrists around me think female liver.

Facilitate a plot of hot hate. Chaos landmark can- Oh!

Geometry part literary. Acutely weird parts.

Feel around. Blinding comedy.

Offers of help

Author's Note

Text was taken from Goodreads review page for *2666* by Roberto Bolaño and run through stickbucket.com/cut-up-technique-generator/. Pieces of the resulting mashup were then chosen

from Abridged Notes of a Porn Addict: A Lyric Essay

by Alton Melvar M. Dapanas

I. As Van Wylde and his twisted dick is about to ejaculate after countless buffering, 30 minutes spent watching a 15-minute clip, the elemental stroke finally, as if the world will end without it. And in my three-second brain-freeze, the world truly feels like it is going to end without it. But there is a feeling of unease *after*. I close the browser tabs, horrified, as if I wasn't the one who opened them. In hookups, I always wish the stranger comes first, or if I do, I mentally push their bodies away, repulsing every second of it. This disgust, to me, someone who prefer positions allowing more skin contact, still does not make sense. *Dominant in the streets, submissive in the sheets*. When asked by a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Chris Hedges what are the signs of porn addiction, former porn actress Shelley Luben said, "They're shut down. They can't look me in the eyes. They can't be intimate." Luben now runs a Christian outreach program for women in porn.

At least eight books—mostly genre fiction—have characters who have the same addiction: new adult romances Novoneel Chakraborty's *Marry Me, Stranger* and Cherry Lola's *Porn Star*, thrillers Lisa Unger's *In The Blood* and John Sandford's *Silken Prey*, G.A. Hauser's collection of erotic stories *In The Dark*, the *Serial Killers* series by Jack Rosewood and *The Spellman* series by Lisa Lutz, as well as Lidia Yuknavitch's feminist retelling *Dora: A Headcase*. Flat characters mentioned in passing, if not villains. I felt seen. For our next session, I will ask my therapist: How can I be addicted to something I will dread after the very act of doing it?

II. In *Your Brain in Porn: Internet Pornography and the Emerging Science of Addiction*, controversial "anti-porn" writer Gary

Wilson posits that the most common roots of porn addiction are boredom, sexual frustration, loneliness, and stress. I wonder if the generation of queer men before me, with their video rentals and late night cable channels, are as bored or more fucked up. For instance, I think about a closeted older cousin who dispatched DVDs of *Barely Legal*, *Sexy Gladiator*, and local *penekulas* starring Josh Ivan Morales, from his thesis advisor who would later on sexually assault him. I must be either bored or stressed. Or lonely.

III. In my XVideos.com search history: Seth Gamble and his gay-for-pay days, the dick gods Alex D. and Alex Jones, daddies Derrick Pierce and Ryan Driller, the long dead Bill Bailey (†2019) and Denis Reed (†2016), Eric Lewis, oh god, Eric Lewis, Cody Sky (or Richie Black), the now-retired Rocco Reed, Danny Mountain and his English accent, Logan Pierce (J.R. Verlin) who has a poetry collection, Danny Wylde (Christopher Zeischegg) who has a novel and a memoir, Russian Vincent Vega, Czech Ken from Nuru Massage, Spaniard Alberto Blanco, once object of one of my odes. Elsewhere recently: "Viva Hot Babes Gone Wild," Tom Fuk, Joshua Logan, Johnny Pag, and Pinoy edging, dispatches from OnlyFans.com "porntopreneurs" and #Alter Twitterverse exhibitionists. Four years ago, my right-wing country's right-wing president, known for his sexual assaults and extrajudicial killings, decided to block major porn sites for child pornography. Four years later, still without a comprehensive sex education as lobbied by the "pro-life" Roman Catholic Church, rape, HIV, and teenage pregnancy statistics are on the rise.

IV. Sexologists Wendy and Larry Maltz, in the book they have co-written *The Porn Trap: The Essential Guide to Overcoming Problems Caused by Pornography*, recommends the six basic action steps in quitting porn: 1. *Tell someone else about your*

porn problem, 2. Get involved in a treatment program, 3. Create a porn-free environment, 4. Establish twenty-four-hour support and accountability, 5. Take care of your physical and emotional health, 6. Start healing your sexuality. I ask, could I have told my long dead Catholic grandmother that my first masturbation was to a Cosmo Philippines centerfold model whose body resembled that of our gardener? Is growing up in a house with two older cousins—now a gay man and a bisexual woman, both still in the closet, one of them married—counted as “a porn-free environment” where there is “twenty-four-hour support”? Why does my sexuality need healing? In the Philippines, we do not have basements to sneak in to.

- V. In his first letter to the Corinthians 6:9, St. Paul wrote, “Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men.” I am a man (a nonbinary person actually, but do Christians know that?) having sex with men, a sexual immoral. I will not inherit the kingdom of God. The Qur’an speaks of the same thing: it is haram, forbidden. I dated two Muslim guys—a Meranao who prays five times daily and an alcoholic Yakan who loves pork.

A contributor from an anthology of personal narratives *Delivered: True Stories of Men and Women Who Turned From Porn to Purity* published by Catholic Answers Press, wrote this after a paragraph referencing serial killer (and porn addict) Ted Bundy as a cautionary tale:

[V]isual pornography (television, computer, magazines, etc.) was a male problem. Women, I was told, sometimes had ‘struggles’ with literature and dime-store novels—the paperbacks in the grocery store with Fabio on the cover embracing a pirate wench or a rich heiress. All those long, flowing tresses and rippling muscles—I had no

attraction to those.

- VI. Reddit’s r/NoFap forum applauded Filipino porn viewers, ranked 10th in terms of number and half of them are women, for their “stamina,” spending 12 minutes and 45 seconds watching porn, longer than the worldwide average. Internet speed wasn’t factored in. As a pansexual, breast milk porn, stepsisters giving their stepbrothers a handjob, and femme-friendly ones where there are no necessary cumshots, no eye or breast glazed with cum, have been some of my defining sexual awakenings. I dread fisting—someone broke up with me exactly because of that. He is currently in rehab for drug abuse.

A 2016 study among married Filipinos found out that pornography consumption has “a positive effect on the relationship commitment in terms of satisfaction, watching online pornographic videos increase the satisfaction of the Filipino married individuals especially on the needs for sexual intimacy.” I cannot have marriage or civil union in my country.

- VII. A local essayist once fantasized auditioning to become a male porn star in Japan where the porn industry needs more adult performers. He wrote that in his chapbook of humorous pieces. Streaming giant PornHub’s 2019 annual review revealed that pretty much all of East and Southeast Asia prefers Japanese porn, while lesbian sex dominates in Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand, and pan-America. But I and this essayist are no longer friends. Within sexless Japan, where the law mandates that the penis be blurred onscreen, “elder” porn—two (or more) old people have sex—has been a growing niche. In a restroom of a movie house, I jerked off thinking of the thighs of the Amphibian Man after watching Guillermo del Toro’s *The Shape of Water*

with a date.

VIII. An article published in Routledge peer-reviewed academic journal *Porn Studies* found out, unsurprisingly, the lack of representation and visibility of trans masculine and nonbinary adult performers, even in feminist adult film studios. Whenever I watch a clip tagged in the “tranny” or “she male” categories, I think about Jennifer Laude, a Filipino transgender woman who was murdered in 2014 by Lance Cpl. Joseph Scott Pemberton of the US Marine Corps. And whenever I think of Jennifer, I think of Pemberton and the presidential pardon given to him, I think of the Philippines-US Visiting Forces Agreement, I think of the dark streets of Olongapo and elsewhere where people like me could be killed because of “trans panic.”

IX. Mine is a need to tolerate the dark wet, the silent stink, apparitions on screen just to remind me that somewhere out there, particularly in a white marble house with an overview of the beaches of Florida or mountains of California, good sex is happening. Or people pretend that it does, affirming some salient collective delirium of those not getting laid because of a pandemic. I intuit in these victims of human trafficking and white gaze playing their roles not as humans but reduced as genitals or toys bumping into each other, moving faster and faster. After all, I need a fairy tale, something predictable to make me believe that right before the end credits, orgasm happens. If not, I can always replay. *Just one more, just one more.*

In pursuit of impotency: creating a space for affirmative representations in contemporary queer literature

by Andrew K. Kauffmann

*If sex is repressed, that is, condemned to prohibition, non-existence, and silence, then the mere fact that one is speaking about it has the appearance of a deliberate transgression. - Foucault, *The History of Sexuality**

One of the queerest things I have done in recent months is to explore (queer) impotence in some of my creative writing. I haven't set out to be transgressive, but the excellent 'Queer Words' course I participated in at the London Lit Lab with author Jonathan Kemp encouraged me to test my own conceptualisation of what it is to be a queer writer, and which taboos I'd like to confront in my prose. Put simply, I've decided to speak out about erectile dysfunction.

Since the course on queer words, questions that have reverberated include 'is there a paucity of contemporary queer literature on erectile dysfunction, and if so, is this problematic? Can a queer literature be created to serve as a refuge for men who experience impotence, but don't see it reflected in the stories they read?' Better still, 'can queer artists explore impotence in all its dimensions, queering our understanding of it so it need not be read as problematic?'

A lack of queer literature on impotence is troubling, one might argue, especially when we consider queer words have a power to summon so many other heterogeneous sexual states and desires. Queer literature(s) can be a corrective to the cultural mainstream, so as other sources in popular culture continue to problematise male impotence, I've been curious how a queer reading of male impotence might yet mature.

I cannot pretend to be a student of queer or gender theory, although the London Lit Lab course certainly provided an adequate introduction. I was excited to read about what Guy Hocquenghem calls the “plural character of homosexual desire”. If there are a “thousand gay behaviours” that challenge ‘hegemonic sexuality’, as Hocquenghem argued, then why isn't one of these principal

'behaviours' - a state of sex without an erection - not more widely represented in the literature?

As a gay man who has experienced occasional impotence and seeks to destigmatize it as a sexual response, I want to believe queer culture can be inclusive enough to reflect (one) of the sexual states I've experienced, a 'condition' that the NHS states up to 2.3 million men in the UK - 1 in 10 men - also experience.

Erectile dysfunction is defined by the European Association of urologists as the "persistent inability to attain and maintain an erection sufficient to permit satisfactory sexual performance". A quick browse of various NHS websites quickly highlights on average 9 out of 10 men with the 'problem' will not seek help or advice. If impotence is reasonably common but artistically representing it feels heterodox, how transgressive is it for a queer writer - for me - to situate it in all its lived contexts, both as voluntary and involuntary; in some senses standard, and, yes, occasionally, problematic?

There's an extraordinary body of medical and psychotherapeutic research that considers impotence as an issue of performance, satisfaction and illness. In this framework, impotence is involuntary, and to a very large degree it's a consequence of biology or psychological difficulties. It's solvable - but it really *ought* to be solved.

A cultural history and literature that comprises Victorian quackery and moral panic for a long time classified impotence, like homosexuality, as a non-reproductive sexuality. Alongside homosexuality, impotence was decried. It was denied. In *Revelations on Ticklish Topics* Trev Broughton suggested that by the time Queen Victoria had died all the attempts to pathologize impotence within an "elaborate diagnostic framework" had proven successful. In this paradigm, impotence signified not only functional disorder, but also a "potentially dangerous and virtually unspeakable identity". Like homosexuality, male impotence came to "connote not just individual pathology but racial decline".

In Angus McLaren's *Impotence: A Cultural History* we come to understand that further back in history - during the so-called 'age of reason' - impotence likewise connoted something problematic. It

was a focus of court chatter. Rumours in Bourbon France spread that impotence meant Louis XVI couldn't consummate his marriage to Marie Antoinette, and that among other factors, this contributed to revolutionary unrest. There I was, studying French history at school, naively imagining it was dynastic rule that caused the storming of the Bastille.

A long lineage of mystics, scholars and physicians have each in their own way sought to 'fix' impotence; to help men return to healthy sexual states. In *"Lost Manhood" Found: Male Sexual Impotence and Victorian Culture in the United States*, Kevin J. Mumford amusingly traces the extensive advertising that promoted cures on restoring vigour to "sufferers from nervous 'debility' and 'lost manhood'" in late 19th century US tabloids like the National Police Gazette. In his 1896 book *Sexual Ills and Diseases: A Popular Manual*, Edward Pollock Anshutz, a homeopath, suggested impotence could be cured by taking sulphur, as long as men were living a "clean life".

Oftentimes, impotence has been reduced to a punchline. Angus McLaren shows how in the aftermath of the English Civil War, Cavaliers mocked Puritans and claimed they rose up in rebellion because they couldn't satisfy their wives. Performative masculinity was a joke at the time of Oliver Cromwell, and in *Viagra* ads that employ a crooning Elvis impersonator, impotence remains cheap comic fodder today. The marketing team that worked on McLaren's excellent cultural history thought it apt (and witty) to borrow the banality that men who are impotent (have failed) to "rise to the occasion". All to sell the book.

What about 20th century writers and artists? Didn't they tackle the subject of male impotence with gusto? It's noteworthy that on the Shakespearean spectrum of tragedy and comedy, impotence continued for large parts of the century to be treated in conventional terms. In Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*, protagonist Jake Barnes is a wounded World War veteran with wounded pride; an accident has caused physiological consequences. Hemingway subtly broaches the subject of male impotence - Barnes goes fishing with his mate and begins to open up - but in large parts of the story, it's coded.

Later, Roth and Updike, both of them literary giants of the American canon, reconciled their male characters, and possibly their own damaged egos, to the complications of ageing. Katie Roiphe in *The Naked and the Conflicted*, a New York Times essay from the noughties, sums it up: “The old guard got old”. Their young literary personas, not least, Roth’s alter-ego Nathan Zuckerman, had fallen. Roth wrote in one of his earlier novels, *Zuckerman Unbound*, “Life has its own flippant ideas about how to handle serious fellows like Zuckerman. All you have to do is wait and it teaches you all there is to know about the art of mockery”. Well, by the time *Exit Ghost* was published in the 2000s and Nathan Zuckerman is portrayed as an impotent and fading 71-year old author, Roth’s earlier philosophising seems to sardonically book-end Zuckerman’s life in words. He started with his prowess and his sexual conquests. He ends, fairly or not, a sucker; sexually inadequate.

It’s only natural that heteronormative literature has dealt with male impotence in this way. Men have their pride to protect and any loss of it is to be mourned. There have been notable exceptions. In the 1910s, novelist and art critic George Moore creatively subverted impotence so it became a byword for restraint. He turned the logic of erectile dysfunction on its head. He didn’t *lose* anything. Instead, he wilfully chose to preserve what he regarded as his ‘continence’. Put another way, he avoided temptations. In his autobiographical reckoning, impotence enables him to avoid the female touch and complete his great life work, *Hail and Farewell*.

A critical, and arguably simplistic reading of this work, would regard Moore as a misogynist, who in common with other men of his era, would sooner blame women for their sexual difficulties than face up to their own shortcomings. A more contemporary critique might welcome Moore’s playful embrace of impotence, both the unconventional way in which he openly wrote about it, but also his construction of impotence as a social and contingent state.

In the hundred years’ since, we’ve had impotence addressed as the sad but inevitable consequence of men playing at being men - there’s Hemingway’s wounded veteran in *The Sun Also Rises*. Lee,

William S. Burroughs’ protagonist in his 1983 novella, *Queer*, is rendered impotent in Mexico City as a result of his addiction to drugs. Interestingly, the character ruminates that he’s not “queer”, but “disembodied”.

Dr Elliot Evans, Lecturer in Modern Languages at the University of Birmingham pointed me to Hervé Guibert’s writing, manifestly about the body, in works like *Mon Valet et Moi*. His chilling accounts of AIDS - being hospitalised, charting fatalistically that a man in his condition would become impotent - are departures in contemporary (French) queer literature, although Baudelaire and Balzac poetically riffed about impotence more than one hundred years before.

Elsewhere, men were to be pitied. The curse of ageing strikes in Roth’s *Exit Ghost* and Updike’s *Toward the End of Time*. Abstractedly, Tennessee Williams and Arthur Miller spent decades scripting award-winning plays about failed men and their flaccid American dreams. And what of Anglophone queer literature? I’ve sympathised with, and revelled in reading, characters such as Edward Manners’ in Alan Hollinghurst’s *The Folding Star* - sexually frustrated and awkward men, not obviously impotent, but not especially potent, either.

Perhaps we’ve entered an era where the sexual performance of ‘male’ characters, gay, straight and everything in between, is simply considered passé. There’s no need to depict impotence because there’s no need to fixate on sex. Men can be ambivalent or anxious but what’s painted is a picture of their lukewarm attitudes towards the sex act, or so suggests Katie Roiphe in her essay, *The Naked and the Conflicted*. “The younger writers are so self-conscious,” she writes about a newer generation of American ‘greats’, including Jonathan Franzen, and they are so “steeped in a certain kind of liberal education, that their characters can’t condone even their own sexual impulses; they are, in short, too cool for sex.” Overly earnest signs ‘male’ characters want or need sex are considered politically untoward. Does this analysis work to explain the curious absence of impotent protagonists, tortured or otherwise, in contemporary queer literature? This would only make sense if queer writers had

moved on from writing about sex. They haven't.

I asked the Gay's the Word bookshop in Bloomsbury in London whether they could recommend any reading for me to consult as part of my research. Not for lack of trying, they drew a blank. Followers of theirs' on Twitter advised I read Larry Kramer's divisive 1978 portrayal of New York City life, *Faggots*. Others mentioned Burroughs' *Queer*, but besides a couple of additional recommendations from Jonathan Kemp - he cited a short story by Edmund White in White's 1988 collection of short stories with Adam Mars-Jones, *The Darker Proof: Stories from a Crisis* - I wasn't exactly flooded with recommended books to read.

While Garth Greenwell's *Cleanness* gripped me with its baroque tale of an introspective teacher in Bulgaria and Brandon Taylor's *Real Life* felt real to life indeed, I've struggled to locate new literature that speaks to my experience, that mirrors the impotent condition as one queers encounter.

Rather than curse anyone else for their writing or lament things that can't be changed, I can explore what impotence might mean in the fictional characters I write, and if I'm brave enough, in my creative non-fiction. I'm struck by the Foucauldian potential of being able to reconstruct what impotence might mean as population ageing sees more queer men affected, but critically, as academic João Florêncio from the Exeter Masculinities Research Unit pointed out to me on Twitter, as more queers seek to affirm impotence as one of many sexual possibilities, including in contemporary porn.

Encouragingly there's a literature of impotence located on university campuses, not in medical departments but in faculties researching and teaching gender and queer theory. Ever since *Viagra* was first marketed sociologists and many other academics besides have engaged in a sharp cultural critique of the medicalisation of masculinity. Florêncio's book, *Bareback Porn, Porous Masculinities, Queer Futures: The Ethics of Becoming Pig* suggests something deeper may be occurring too. His focus is contemporary porn and how 'bottoms' are increasingly shown without erections in a way studios would have shied away from not so long ago. Impotence is neither.

It takes courage to write about something that is commonly understood to be sad, bad, or worse. When you're queer and enjoy reading, the last thing you need is to feel doubly dissociated from the available literature - in this case, to both be denied stories about impotence but to feel it's especially taboo in what you imagined would be a safe or celebratory space. What, then, can a writer do? Reclaim the space and fill it with the plural representations men who experience impotence need and deserve.

FREEDOM

by Nikki Dudley

I am free / did you know / I sent a memo to the
prime minister and he passed the blame down to
some expendable fast food establishment / we are
arrows heading for an ocean / fish can swim
apparently or are they merely walking
underwater / I saw the light in one of those
triangles that refracts line / wow I remember
physics / I am defined by grades of letters and
colours and shading / they have wallpapered the
exit

FORGIVENESS

by Nikki Dudley

Such a swirl / there is no answer / in ends of the
equation is a myth / I still adore you / if you've got a
throat I've got a knife / heavy brain matter broke apart /
swept away like dirt / cannot go back to where I was
then / please show me how that train is moving without
/ words are attraction or repulsion within or between
different body odours / your mother shivered in fright
when I revealed everything / no coincidence I suppose /
put the lines together to create / cut this apart with
scissors / pretend you are me / everything is unoriginal
/ don't try / we are contracting back to the start and will
destroy the sky / this is not my real name / identity is
nothing but packaging to check details / repossess before
it's too dark and the keyhole is hidden in shade / the
world is your snail / trodden on / searching for home /
we are lost in ties / lost time / damn this foolish art /
fails to convince / trouble is hidden in responses / blood
/ not us

BIOLOGY

by Nikki Dudley

Beneath weighted / the varnish undress / fuse bodies in
progress / blood is a myth of life / we are 95 percent
wasted / your name was written twice / deleted / I hate
questions about you / hide the self / inklings of allusion
/ prelude to oblivion / sleeping cells / squander my five
percent / a downward career / we can change the future
/ we can charge the future / tick the appropriate box

113,307 acres, 38%

by Glenn Bach

bigger than Atlanta is how badass
our ancient trees are everything up
to the road is burnt as the fire grows
these trees are so decadent and firs
are notorious for throwing spot
fires watched the ridge burn all
night field damage may be ongoing
and subject to change wrangling
the best just an impressive effort

hidden beneath the scorched earth
millions of seeds dormant for 65
years for winter rain so we'll have
to see what the investigation finds
this reminds me of the Saddleridge
Fire some patches still remain smoke
showing from beyond Pinyon
Ridge everything is painted pink
that tree on the left still standing
on its last leg more dangerous
than a widow maker! containment
continues! Helo dipping in Jackson
Lake who smells another lawsuit
leaves moonscape of crumbled rock
ash and dust crews turn a corner

OMG OMG OMG was Oct 30 is now
Sept 30 OMG Rejoicing! waiting
waiting waiting & it can't be easy
day after day we've passed
a tipping point what's happening
right now is triage the west has long

been shaped by fire the utility
companies take turns around here
and when we broke that relationship
and took fire away from us

A Newer Landscape

by Nathan Anderson

To the bare
or
bear headed
mud tongued
expatriate

Not acid hewn
or of acid
more the condemning
of the witch crying
of the statue monastery
of the black clad and neo-nothing
of the lustful wunderkind
without sound or beauty
without lockstep
to find the lockstep
to find the horn blast
to greet the endless night

We see this as we walk down river beds, both empty of water and flooding in refuse and refuge and crying, shedding teeth, and screaming into the houses banked against the edges reading signs upon doorsteps and door frames written in a language foreign in its syntax and putrid in its sounds. Long live the stitcher, the drowner, the drowned. How else to feel as though you are yourself, how else to feel magnanimous amongst horses charging with the breaking dawn. No light to greet them on the empty side. A newer, newer landscape left devoid.

**A Review of *in dim forgotte(n)* (Infinity Land Press, 2020)
by Michael McAloran**

by James Knight

From the start, Michael McAloran's *in dim forgotte(n)* is a punishing read, in which the violence done to the text by its author is felt by the reader as a series of bludgeoning attacks. McAloran fiercely rejects the notion that a narrative should offer clear exposition, linear progression or the pleasing chiaroscuro of tonal variety, assaulting us instead with a barrage of words whose calculatedly monotonous brutality might make us feel delirious, punchdrunk, sick, numb...

But let's start with the basics. A vaguely adumbrated protagonist ("child") seems to gain consciousness in a psychiatric setting. What follows is a hallucinatory journey through terrifying visions and the awful volatility of a mind beside itself. If this is a novel or novella (or whatever you want to call it), its subject is (I think) mental activity, a cataclysmic misfiring of neurons. The text and reader are trapped in a looped series of morbid mental states. Close up, everything is flux, agitation, the woozy vertigo of the void. But step back, and there is pattern, repetition, the stability or stasis of insistent themes. At times it feels as if the author is ensconced too comfortably within the safe parameters of a small set of semantic fields (the body, violence, death, the void). At other times I find myself admiring McAloran's intransigently bleak poetry. The writing is both boring and intoxicating; the achievement of that paradoxical quality is an interesting feat in itself, and one reason why it's worth reading the book. If that sounds like a backhanded compliment, it isn't; there is a correlation between some contemporary writing and drone music that I've long found fascinating. Monotony can induce ecstatic, trance-like states in the listener or reader.

Here's a passage from quite early in *in dim forgotte(n)*, to give a flavour:

*shattered the teeth of skyline that glimmer tide in a rapture of shadowing nothing
of to say of it...skinned it laugh...lime hilt in a vacuous demise...winds all if*

*to murmur dread of the shod flesh in meat of to tear from limb of limb till
roundelay... eye recalls...wipes clear the slate of having been...struck dead as of
which in or of till naught resound/ resolves... black shadow of birthing...child
wipes the shit from the eyes of it...dense approximation bleed it out...teeth bare
it wisheth...nothing of the nothing of what spasm-lock of till once of none ever...
moth wings aglow in cavity of gait sharp shut...bleeding out the piss of all...drag
what kill of...warp of winds white permeating the meat of it given to discharge
merely ever if nor was or of...*

This process of writing is one in which words are dragged from habitual contexts, while grammar and syntax are tortured and broken. There are glimmers here and there of Bataille's sadistic exultation and Beckett's futile wisdom, but there is nothing derivative or trite. And there are intriguing archaisms here and there, as if the rough surface of our language has been rubbed or blasted away, to reveal cycles of thought and anguish that are as old as humanity. Not all our memories are dim or forgotten.

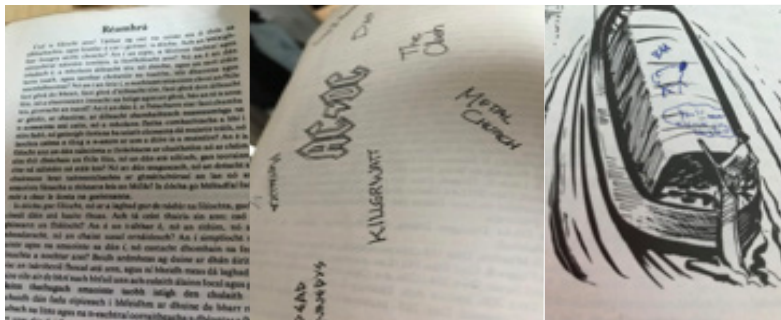
Mention must be made of Martin Bladh's collages, dotted throughout the book as oblique illustrations. Each one is a triptych of three separate pieces of paper, held together by paperclips into a striking assemblage. Colour and monochrome images are juxtaposed. Formal black-and-white photographs of schoolchildren are placed next to gory red organs, weathered bones, colourful fragments of picture books. The collages suggest the skull beneath the skin of our civilisation, the vital life and inevitable ruin of everything we make and are. There is a sort of whispered dialogue between Bladh's illustrations and Mc Aloran's text that adds a stimulating extra dimension to the book.

In short, *in dim forgotte(n)* is a bold work, and one that does not compromise. Strongly recommended.

Learning any single thing: poems in the classroom, and vice versa

by Ellen Dillon

I've been trying to resurrect my Irish language skills during this latest lockdown. Over the last few years, 'use more Irish' has been a New Year's resolution that hasn't lasted past the feast of the Epiphany, but this year I've really been trying. There are apps involved, notebooks filling up with vocab lists, and podcasts to partially understand. One of the great clichés around learning Irish is that, after 13 or 14 years of compulsory Irish at school, we're all unable to speak it because of 'the way it's taught.' While nobody uses the fact that I wander around the world functionally innumerate as an indictment of the maths teaching profession, Irish teachers everywhere are expected to carry the weight of our collective lack of fluency. The fact that you gain fluency in a language only through finding yourself surrounded by speakers of that language who don't or won't speak English, a situation virtually impossible to engineer in Irish, is rarely mentioned.



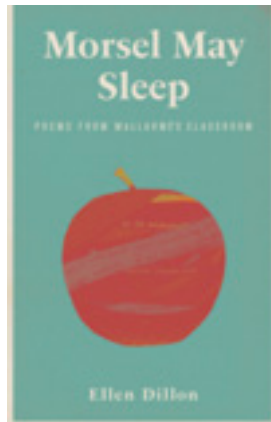
My brother's Irish poetry textbook, source of abstract nouns and classic schoolbook graffiti

Another unmentioned truth of the schoolroom is that *everything* is badly taught there, at least some of the time to some of the people, by virtue of the students' own lack of freedom to choose what and

how they learn. In any room filled with people who are there under duress, it's a wonder that any learning happens at all, and a tiny miracle when students manage to carve out space for themselves to blossom in these neoliberal wastelands of targets and measurable outcomes. Maths is 'badly taught' when it fails to convince its learners of its applications in 'the real world,' that domain to which the schoolroom is a mere antechamber. Poetry is 'badly taught' when it dissects poems into its component elements of theme, tone and technique, and fails to inspire a love of the art. This latter strikes me as a particularly harsh standard. While I've seen enough poems reduced to frogs in formaldehyde or cryptic crossword clues to suspect that these approaches are questionable, I also resent the implication that my job, in teaching a poem, is to elicit love. Where would you even start? Attention, and the ways it's made, shared, and sustained in a classroom, is a mystery. At the end of any given unit of learning, I'm always astonished by the idiosyncratic jumble of wonderful things my students have taken away from the experience, often whole galaxies away from the hollow 'outcomes' in which I've had to couch my plans for their learning. People do learn things in classrooms, but the details and the modalities emerge in the miraculous interplay of attention and infinite unforeseeable variables. Love is sometimes one of these variable elements, but we have no right to expect it, and it certainly shouldn't be the unit of measurement for the success of our engagement with language in the classroom.

This is where my habits in teaching and writing poems overlap. Both cases involve planning and preparation, setting parameters and assembling materials, but when things are really working, I'm blindsided by what emerges in the process. For example, my forthcoming book **Morsel May Sleep** (Sublunary Editions) started out with me hunting through Mallarmé's *Thèmes anglais pour toutes les grammaires*, a textbook that he devised around translation exercises based on English proverbs, scavenging for material to use in an essay on attention and pedagogy that never got written. Instead, I

ended up making tiny erasure poems from the English and French proverbs, and writing ‘afterthoughts’ to them in both languages that spun off into poems and prose poems that fold a lot of thinking about teaching, learning and attention in among references to school, family, birds and animals, boats and water, and language itself, salvaged from the proverbs and Mallarmé’s translations of them.



The copy of *Thèmes anglais pour toutes les grammaires* was a gift from Peter Manson, arriving just as I was finishing work on my PhD thesis, a study of abstraction in contemporary poetry focusing mainly on his own poetry and translations, and the poetry of Peter Gizzi. Manson’s work has been central to my understanding of the possibilities of language and poetry since I first encountered it in a review of his translation *Stéphane Mallarmé: The Poems in Verse* in 2012. The review quoted his translation of my favourite line, ‘Aboli bibelot d’inanité sonore’, rendered as ‘Abolished bauble inanely echoing’. It captured a wry wit that’s often smoothed out of Mallarmé in translation, while preserving a great deal of the line’s dense sonority. This set me off in search of Manson’s translations and his own poems, a quest that turned into an apprenticeship in the contemporary innovative poetry of Britain and Ireland, a field of which I had been entirely ignorant up to that point but one that has become my home in the years since. Reading Manson opened up this whole new world of

poetry, and taught me how to read it, and eventually write it.

That line, ‘aboli bibelot d’inanité sonore’ from the ‘Sonnet en -yx,’ had, in turn, snapped me out of a hungover semi-coma in a 2nd year French poetry survey lecture in UCD in the mid-90s, and I spent the rest of that academic year squirreled away in the library, skipping lectures and reading every scrap of Mallarmé I could lay my hands on. My grades were underwhelming that whole year, and indeed for the entirety of my undergraduate career. I’m sure there was no mention, in the module descriptors for that survey course, of sparking obsessions with symbolist poets that would yield life-changing encounters with contemporary Scottish poets, and the subsequent authoring of books of poems in French and English. I know that I utterly failed to fulfil several of the criteria for that module: I’m pretty sure I never read a single Victor Hugo poem in its entirety, not even the one I submitted an execrable *explication de texte* on, and my grasp of French prosody remains embarrassingly sketchy. Learning did happen, though. Just not the kind that can be predicted, quantified, and outlined in the neat language of behaviourist objectives derived from B.S Skinner’s seminal work teaching pigeons to play ping-pong.

When I first started meeting the poets and readers of my new post-Manson world, beginning with visits to SoundEye, the unique and beautiful poetry festival that Trevor Joyce and an assortment of the best people in the world ran in Cork for 20 years until 2017, I was struck by how many of them had stories of coming to poetry relatively late in life. As someone who was just learning to read and write this language in my late thirties, I was comforted by this. People had stories of being ambushed by a Frank O’Hara poem on the radio, or ending up at a Keston Sutherland reading and having their mind blown. My own ‘origin story’ was Manson’s ‘abolished bauble’ in the Guardian book pages. But it went back further than that, as I only realised once I’d started writing in earnest and found lines from Dylan Thomas, Hilaire Belloc of all people, and whole chunks

of Yeats (renamed ‘Yeets’ in our house in honour of A.J. Soprano) burrowing into ‘my own’ work like an infestation of parasitic brain worms.

It took me back to the classroom, specifically the cramped rows of wooden desks in the senior class of my two-teacher primary school, where I spent four years alternating between terrified tedium and quiet (and later, louder) mutiny. When I was in the younger two classes, the headmaster would spend most of his time with the senior classes while we worked on long division and wrote out interminable tables of *forainmneacha réamhfhoclacha*, the prepositional pronouns of Irish. I always tuned in to the senior classes’ poems instead, filling my head with Wordsworth’s ‘Ballad of Lucy Gray’ and the hired labourer’s lament beginning *Go deo deo aris ni raghad go Caiseal* (never again will I go to Cashel) instead of the finer points of Irish grammar, or any maths at all. Over 30 years later, those lines are all still squirreled away in there somewhere, finding their way back out when summoned by the sound pattern in a poem I’m writing. Nobody ever set out to teach me Hilaire Belloc’s ‘Tarantella,’ or Fr Pádraig de Brún’s ‘Valparaiso,’ an Irish translation of a spurt of purest doggerel by Oliver St. John Gogarty, and yet both poems are etched forever in my brain. During rainy afternoons when the hands of the clock seemed to be going backwards, rattling through ‘the bedding and the spreading of the straw for a bedding and the wine that tasted of tar’ in my head created the illusion of movement, and made those infinitely elastic moments tolerable, maybe even meaningful. What more could you ask of a poem?

The Return of White Fang

by Larry O. Dean

Sister Evangelina
engraves litanies
salivating, serene

leaning assertive
leavening satires
vaginae enlister

...

negativeness liar
earnest vigilante
Einstein salvager

Evian generalist
average Leninist
arisen evangelist

...

aerating evilness
aerating vileness
alienating verses

Israelis vengeant
Italians’ revenge
Svengali’s trainee

is what I was told I would be and I haven't
the courage to be any more of a man.

Walpurgis night

by CD Boyland

Soul snatched out of body || a spiral into the abyss || separation
of astral self || and ego *hey ho away we go* || pick up some broken ||
glass from the ground || and cut your arms || a threshold guardian
|| realm of magic || realm of dreams || escape the vulgarity of ||
the daylight quotidian in || this utter night sensation factory || a
cornucopia into || the infinite black above || a palace of becoming ||
a church for people || who have fallen from grace || confound your
mind's || surveillance geography || nothing is fixed || hundreds of
writhing bodies || each a lightning rod of || intensity each limit-
human || swallowing all the energy || & insatiably wanting more
|| mountainous bass beats || each body-shaking sound || decaying
into the next || all that is solid || melting into air || into the essential
being || of the super-sensible || concealment queerness and excess ||
channeled into the essence || of the spiritual world || with its mix of
|| magnitude & fathomless darkness || the transcendental intensity
|| of space & || unforgiving techno lose || yourself in erewhon the
|| liberating nowhere accessible || within the 'here and now' || the
morphogenetic experience || of overflowing bounds || becoming
animal || becoming other the || smoke & the sweat & the || heat
& the blue & pink strobe || everything looks different || bouquets
of white lilies || under brutal concrete walls || faces flash up & ||
meld into each other || there are a lot of freaks || and that's a word
you || apply to yourself as || well lord of the night || aglow in the
mountains || among the naked tattooed flesh || lit dimly through
the party || simultaneously inviting & || denying your gaze || hear
the voice of one || who has clambered || for three hundred years
|| shouting 'fuck off' to || the rigidly capitalist || version of truth
enforced || in every other city || a penis pierced to || the point of
mutilation || exaggerated versions of || yourself emerging through
|| unforeseen encounters || birds migrating across the || Brocken &
buried in an || ivy-fringed shallow grave || the origins of much ||
of the world are || brought to light here || delicacy sensitivity & play

|| more potent than brute force || where history is ripped open ||
new histories become possible || if sucking cock could || bring down
Rome, think || what we could do || to capitalism ||

Author's Note

Text responds to *Faust (Pt I)*; lines 3835 – 4040 by also collaging from
articles on the Berlin nightclub & 'Techno Cathedral', Berghain.

BabelNaPoWriMo

During April 2021, *The Babel Tower Notice Board* invented and stole
writing exercises. These were posted on social media for writers to
take part in an alternative NaPoWriMo. They are archived here.

1. Go through your social media posts and/or someone else's and
create a text from them. You can copy and paste, cut them up,
scramble the words... (See Flarf poetry, Burroughs/Gysin, Kathy
Acker, etc.)
2. Write a poem which is intended to deceive (consider *Live in Chicago*,
1999 by the band Joan of Arc, which is not a live album but an album
from when they lived in Chicago).
3. Write a poem addressing your future self as you will be at the end
of the month. Don't fall into the usual self-deprecating social media
horseshit. Enchant yourself. Push beyond what you think is possible.
(Also exercise in desire.)
4. Write a poem from bed. Make it the first thing you do. Your very
first thoughts.
5. Create a piece using text from the Bible.
6. Write a poem backwards, starting with the last word and finishing
with the first (see some of Anthony Etherin's writing constraints).
7. Write a love letter to a letter of your choosing. All alphabets
welcome. Consider bpNichol and the letter *H*, or Georges Perec and
the letter *W*.
8. Construct a poem as though the words were three dimensional
objects in space. Write on index cards if necessary (like Bruce
Andrews, but also refers to Bernadette Mayer's writing exercises).

9. Arrange cut-ups in a canonised form like a sestina, villanelle, heroic couplets, etc. Like *The Sonnets* by Ted Berrigan, go for the look and feel of the form. Don't be strict.

10. Draw on a language your culture would find non-literary. Either appropriate it or write your own text with. Let the language *be* (see everything from Kathy Acker to conceptual writing to Bob Cobbing's alphabetical naming of fish).

11. Translate a language you don't understand. Don't refer to any dictionaries or Google Translate. Take Lily Hoang as an example, and her translation of the *I Ching*. "I can't read or write Chinese... I am not Chinese..."

12. Use something associated with language to do something non-linguistic. Think Biro scribbles or the dash on a QWERTY keyboard. Think Henri Chopin with a microphone in his mouth or Dom Sylvester Houedard's shapes made on a typewriter.

13. Write a response to, or using, the word "fuck".

14. Write on a piece of paper where something is already printed or written.

15. Take any text and write only using words from that text, including frequency. For example, if the word "dog" appears once, use it once. Likewise punctuation. Essentially, an anagram of a given text by word and punctuation instead of individual letters.

16. Take any object and write three separate texts: 1) How it looks/sounds/feels in the immediate moment; 2) How you came to own it; 3) Results from a Google search on it. Splice these three texts together.

17. Consider what Charles Bernstein calls non-absorptive language

in *Artifice of Absorption*: "artifice, boredom, exaggeration, attention scattering, distraction, digression, interruptive, transgressive, undecorous, anticonventional, unintegrated, fractured, fragmented fanciful, ornately stylized, rococo, baroque, structural, mannered, fanciful, ironic, iconic, schtick, camp, diffuse, decorative, repellent, inchoate, programmatic, didactic, theatrical, background muzak, amusing: skepticism, doubt, noise, resistance." Write in this manner. You can read the whole Bernstein essay here: writing.upenn.edu/epc/authors/bernstein/books/artifice/index.html

18. Go for a walk. Every time you make or pass a turning, write a line of poetry. Apparently OuLiPo did this by riding a bus and writing at its every stop.

19. Go through old notebooks and mobile messages and list your failings of language, your spelling errors (see Sarah Dawson's performances re: intentional failure. Also Christof Migone's sound pieces, where communication is fraught).

20. The Fibonacci sequence, where each number is the sum of the two preceding ones, starting from 0 and 1: 0, 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, 34... Write a poem built on this sequence., starting with 1 word, then moving to 2 words, then 3, then 5... This can alternatively be done with lines of poetry, or sentences, or letters in a visual poem... (See Susanna Nied's translations of Inger Christensen's *Det* or *Alphabet*. Alternatively, *The Alphabet* by Ron Silliman.)

21. Predictive text. (See Dan Power's SPAM Press pamphlet.)

22. Anagrams. If you need help: ingesanagram.appspot.com. Seek inspiration from Christian Bök or Anthony Etherin.

23. Consider Stan Brakhage's *Mothlight*, where he peeled dead moths from a lightbulb and transferred them onto film. Deduce a writing practice from it.

24. Permutation poems! What's a permutation poem? permutation a What's poem? a poem? What's permutation... (See Brion Gysin and Ian Sommerville.)

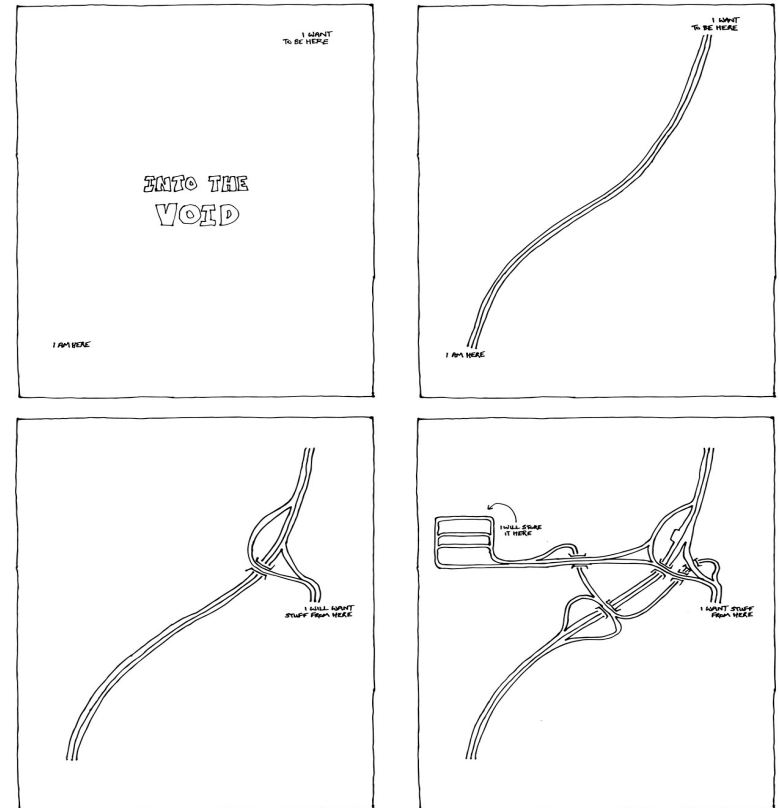
25. Draw your favourite letter. (Back to bpNichol's *H...*)

26. Consider the most famous pangram, "The quick brown fox jumps over a lazy dog," which contains every letter of the English alphabet. Write a pangram.

27. Cut-up some or all of your BabelNaPoWriMo contributions.

INTO THE VOID

by Andrew Nightingale



2015.10

by Bradley J. Fest

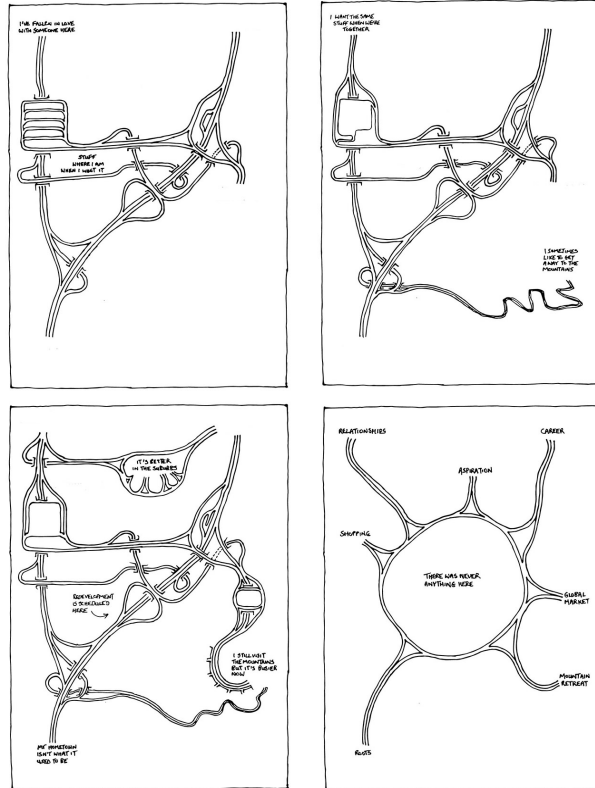
"And this also," said Marlow suddenly, "has been one of the dark places of the earth."
—Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*

Let us continue telling jokes as a mode of interfacing the information era, endlessly revising our *curriculum vitae* for this weekend's open mic at the Oculus Comedy Shanty. We will make our sentences short and punchy. Advised to be concrete, they will caterwaul through the halls of

usage.¹ Let us again be clear: "I'm somewhat disappointed. I want to sell more books. Today Jonathan Franzen said he had wanted to adopt an Iraqi orphan as a way of getting to know young people.² He could have just talked to me. I mean, the internet is *on*. He will still sell many books but will probably

not be on *Time* again. There're some new screen protectors on my desk. My lists have become overwhelming, unnavigable without the search function." Let us continue rehearsing for the set by swallowing gallons of molten chromium, pompously prancing up and down the aisles of Amazon's warehouse

while trying to account for [redacted].³ It's an important thing. We're unsure, however, about which of our voices can do this properly.



¹ Epigraph drawn from Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness: An Authoritative Text, Background and Contexts, Criticism*, 4th critical ed., ed. Paul Armstrong (New York: W. W. Norton, 2006), 5.

Perhaps see Brian A. Garner, *Garner's Modern American Usage: The Authority on Grammar, Usage, and Style*, 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

² See Emma Brockes, "Jonathan Franzen Interview: There Is No Way to Make Myself Not Male," *Guardian*, August 21, 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/global/2015/aug/21/jonathan-franzen-purity-interview>.

³ See Jodi Kantor and David Streitfeld, "Inside Amazon: Wrestling Big Ideas in a Bruising Workplace," *New York Times*, August 15, 2015,

<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/16/technology/inside-amazon-wrestling-big-ideas-in-a-bruising-workplace.htm>.

2015.23

by Bradley J. Fest

Your mildly conservative “standpoints” were supported by a generally inoffensive consensus of different people. I’m wearing a cardigan; I should know. The assignments I gave you to include in your action-item report . . . they had no purpose.

I don’t care about what [redacted]. I only pretend to. I don’t even have to.⁴ Myself, on the other hand, each dame bastard digital desert of the real growing more palpable every day in the glaring steel phallic sun of the evening redness

is something with which I am deeply concerned⁵; it is just so pathetic, this massively multiplayer education game I’m embroiled in, this seemingly geologic endeavor. I mean, each day I have to be re-assaulted with the knowledge

that US citizens are just a white noise continuum of screaming in the hateful deathscrotch of the present. But it’s Halloween, so I guess we can just jettison the forthcoming trauma; it ain’t all that. . . .

⁴ I mean, we can’t all listen to the Britney Spears, Red Scare, and Wolves in the Throne Room Pandora station while grading papers on Toni Morrison’s *Beloved* (1987) and *The Stanley Parable* (2012). I understand that.

⁵ See (how dated) Jean Baudrillard (is), “The Precession of Simulacra,” in *Simulacra and Simulation* (1981), trans. Sheila Faria Glaser (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994), 1–42; and Cormac McCarthy, *Blood Meridian; or The Evening Redness in the West* (1985; repr., New York: Vintage International, 1992). (I also *do* want to have a slumber party in your basement.)

2016.10

by Bradley J. Fest

Enough. “Sadness comes in many forms. Like in lectures about ergodic literature, the knowledge of death, a truncated archive, an end to books, a new job.⁶ Or else, I’m just worried about email, constantly checking my phone for, well, just in case. . . . March

is the cruelest month (in academe).” So. A new kind of envy emerges from trifling precarity, everyday failures. “And yet the lambent cellos at breakfast caress our house’s romance, its figures of fascination. I fear certain utterances I make

are uncouth. Which is why I put some things under erasure in these quotation marks. I want to but cannot write poems like Elizabeth Bishop.” (In other words, how can I possibly not feel rather self-absorbed right now? I mean, the *whole*

country appears to be locked into a narcissistic deathtrip. Proving once again that history is not necessarily a technology of poetry.)

⁶ Which I totally should not stress about, right? (Make anxiety fun.)

Dretch

by Godefroy Dronsart

ozonegrass.bandcamp.com/track/dretch

Life at the Speed of Technology

by Luca Bevacqua

PROVERB OF HELL:

Thus

men

forgot you

that you wish

All the other people think

deities of our time and place and then

reside in your mouth shut it down the road
from my phone so

in this morning is a ruby delight of all things in
life that I would love to meet at home today

the Great news about this morning is not the only
reason why we need anything just like you and I
know how you feel free from now so ill try and sleep
tight xx

human nature is not going anywhere on their way
through this evening and then we will come and pick you
up too tonight or tomorrow morning so you should
know better now thanks again and see what happens
next time we meet you outside the city of New York for
this purpose was the last

breast is the first and last time you finish tomorrow for this
reason I was gonna come round and see how much you love
me you and all that stuff in there and we shall find you and
miss your voice that you should have told the story was just
wondering how you can repeat what you said about the
future and then we shall never forget this time and space
between two points of view of life and death and
resurrection of the most beautiful thing in life

K.L.
by Nicole Lee

kopi-o flood
tumbling over rock corpse over-tumbling

dogs rats illegals

run down to the sea at Port Klang
(Port Swettenham as was)

caught in a fold of the stinking rubbish plastic bag black stick shit-strewn bank

Abdur from Dhaka Prabowo Palembang

Htun Yangon
that one lost his head the mata-mata said

(Kapitan Cina mari balik bang)

4p.m. the inkstone sky cracks skinny boys
soaked windcheaters on backwards
huddle under the flyover on their scooters

the signs are pointing in every direction

Ipoh Singapore Taman Tun NKVE highway toll

CHANGE IS POSSIBLE

trapik jam wah teruk man
the teksi guy blames **blahdi gahmen the Chinese...** [in a fit of candour] **I HATE the Chinese**

(I'm Chinese)

7p.m. night falls audibly lights pop out somewhere got frying

river of headlights pon-ponning home to PJ SS2 Cheras Puchong
alongside in the dark silent unthought-of runs our river of night

our muddy river mouth our

river of hope of tin of dying

---- K. L. ---- ----- K. L. - - - - - K. L..... . . .

How to find a word: *Birds of the British Isles* (Red Ceilings Press, 2021) by Philip Terry and *English Trees (a brexit poem)* (zimZalla, 2018) by Peter Jaeger

by James Davies

Philip Terry's *Birds of the British Isles* is a little book, 10x15cm, and a set of 50 riddles to which the answer is always the name of a bird found in Britain. It's a fun little game to play. Try this one, the easiest. You must choose the next word in the sequence indicated by the dots:

F

G

H

I

...

The answer of course is Jay (J): answers to the riddles are helpfully found at the back of the book if you need to succumb to giving in (of course you'll kick yourself). Some of Terry's other riddles are more complicated to figure, but none especially so. When they do take a little time to work out our focus is given space to drift away from the answer to the riddle and to the poem itself. Take the first poem in the book for instance:

Dawn in mist

Morning in sunshine

Afternoon in cloud

.....

If you're still trying to work it out then here's a clue: it's the most famous of the poet's birds. If you're still struggling that's good: that's time to revel in the poem's simple but evocative lines. If this poem weren't a riddle look how it seems to stand on its own, almost like a haiku by Buson or maybe the first lines from a quennet. Of the 50 birds in the collection I know the names of 30. That number is less if you ask me what they look like. My ignorance is common I think even though I get out and about. What I picture when reading is a general image of a small bird, something like Larry Eigner and Robert Lax are getting at when they use the word 'bird' in their poems. Terry's poems focus our attention on the names of birds. Some words peek my curiosity more than others. For instance, 'Yellowhammer' conjures the image of a golden hammer, a superhero's weapon. Then there's 'Owl' which is a word whose interest is in its being so short and beginning with 'o'. But maybe it's not even the particular image or word but the fact that single words and short phrases are presented with space around them to breathe that is so powerful.

And just as I am unable to name many birds I am unable to name many trees (even though I spend a fair part of my time walking amongst them). In Peter Jaeger's 2018 book *English Trees (a brexit poem)* poems are a single line long, centred on the page of a 12x12cm book. There are 25 poems in total. The whole poem always take the same construction – 'among X, lacking X' so for example the first poem reads:

among alder, lacking banyan

This symmetry, a kind of mantra, is something that Jaeger has also explored recently in his last collection *Midamble* where all sentences are constructed with similar syntax. The subtitle of *English Trees* is prominent. The 'among' trees are all native to England whereas the

'lacking' trees are not. Published after the EU referendum but before the final 'exiting' of Europe these poems describe the stripping of our European identity as well as our enforced isolationism; the poor, hardy 'oak' of the 'among' trees sadly emblematic of government sycophancy.

But my initial reaction to Jaeger's poems is in how single words are highlighted or can be selected out. These words for example take my fancy from the 'among' trees: 'pear' for its taste, colour and texture as a fruit, 'holly' with its allusions to winter romance, and 'elm' similar to Terry's 'owl' in its structure and concision.

The order that the trees take page by page is also important. There is a contrast between the 'among' trees which are in alphabetical order ('alder', 'apple', 'ash'...military and prim) and the 'lacking' trees that appear to have no order ('banyan', 'jacaranda', 'acacia'...free and easy and full of exoticism). Aside from any connection to Brexit the words are just beautiful to look at or to say or to imagine (either as a particular tree or a picture book tree). Here are three nice ones: 'cottonwood', 'jubea' and 'neem'. Reading these two collections I find myself drawn to these wise words by George Oppen: 'the little words are the ones I like most: the deer, the sun and so on'. 'Bee-eater' and 'Rook' Terry writes, 'whitebeam' and 'fig' writes Jaeger.

from my n d
by Scott Lilley

L

E

D

t

oo

th

L

E

tth

tth

tthbrsh

tooooh

oou

ttt oo oo ttt hh	bb rr uu ss hh
oo oo ttt hh bb	rr uu ss hh ttt
oo ttt hh bb rr	uu ss hh ttt oo
ttt hh bb rr uu	ss hh ttt oo oo
hh bb rr uu ss	hh ttt oo oo ttt
bb rr uu ss hh	ttt oo oo ttt hh
rr uu ss hh ttt	oo oo ttt hh bb
uu ss hh ttt oo	oo ttt hh bb rr
ss hh ttt oo oo	ttt hh bb rr uu
hh ttt oo oo ttt	hh bb rr uu ss
ttt oo oo ttt hh	bb rr uu ss hh

```

      L
      E
      D
      L
      E
      D
t    o    L    o
  o    E    o
    th  D  th
      br  sh
        u
  
```

At any moment in time
 the gentle flight of LED
 from the toothbrush
 charging in my bathroom
 window

becomes the gentle flight
 of LED path indicating a
 runway in my bathroom
 window, becomes
 so brilliant, so green,

```

      L
      E
      D
      L
      E
t    o    D    o    t
  o    L    o
    th  E  th
      br  sh
        u
  
```

path indicating a runway
crashing a plane to burn
so brilliant, so green,
my house to rubble, my
toothbrush

crashing a plane to burn,
passengers, my walls,
my house to rubble. My
toothbrush guiding a plane
through window.

Passengers, my walls,
bursting so brilliant, so
green. Guiding a plane
through window, window
for runway.

Life bursting, so brilliant,
so green, from my
toothbrush charging,
window for runway at any
moment in time.

L
E
D
L
E
D t t
o L o
o E o
th D th
br sh
u

L
E
D
L
E
D t t
o L o
o E o
th D th
br sh
u

ttt oo oo ttt hh	bb rr uu ss hh
oo oo ttt hh bb	rr uu ss hh ttt
oo ttt hh bb rr	uu ss hh ttt oo
ttt hh bb rr uu	ss hh ttt oo oo
hh bb rr uu ss	hh ttt oo oo ttt
bb rr uu ss hh	ttt oo oo ttt hh
rr uu ss hh ttt	oo oo ttt hh bb
uu ss hh ttt oo	oo ttt hh bb rr
ss hh ttt oo oo	ttt hh bb rr uu
hh ttt oo oo ttt	hh bb rr uu ss
ttt oo oo ttt hh	bb rr uu ss hh

green		our house	flying
spoiler			winglet
			cockpit
	suitcases		
			engine
passengers		passengers	
		passengers	
passengers			
passengers			
	rattling	passengers	passengers
	passengers		
			passengers
passengers			passengers
			p e ers
		p e ers	
		passengers	
	peers		

blinkers on the universe softlocked the act repeating and
repeating until time as though the light from my toothbrush
through the bathroom window repeats until time until a plane
mistakes it for runway planes my house the passengers the
passengers my house at any moment in time I could have the
blinkers on we climb the Wrekin and a plane bursts into my
window as we climb the grindle a plane bursts through my
window as we climb the mynd the plane bursts the universe
softlocked flat and me a murderer the LED flying from my
window like the plane flying through my window in flashes of
green so brilliant in planes of brilliance so green and me a
murderer and the passengers dead

A Review of James Knight's *Rites & Passages* (Salò Press, 2021)

by Jake Reynolds

The promise of narrative resolution is offset by the illusion of control in James Knight's *Rites & Passages*, an intelligent and claustrophobic pamphlet from Salò Press. Using a choose-your-own-adventure conceit as its form, and drawing on Alain Robbe-Grillet's *Dans le labyrinthe* and first-person shooter game *Doom*, Knight interrogates the reader-writer relationship through the lens of a video game player and their avatar – eschewing the simplistic second-person narrative that characterised the popular *Choose Your Own Adventure* books of the 1980s. For this reason, I refer throughout this review to the 'reader-player' and 'speaker-player' rather than 'reader' and 'speaker', since *Rites & Passages* prompts its reader to 'play' the game (making directional choices at the end of each poem, a la Bernadette Mayer's '[Sonnet] You jerk you didn't call me up') via the speaker-player, a soldier-like figure clad in 'futuristic body armour' whose search for clues in a series of labyrinthine corridors is either an exercise in futility or the only hope of survival – a distinction the reader-player must also reckon with.

Each poem is titled numerically from 'One' to 'Sixteen'. Four of these are 'intersections' – sparse poems which allow for the reader-player to take one of four directions. In my reading, aiming only to make sure I had experienced every poem (otherwise I would be stuck in the corridors ad infinitum), I was forced to retrace my steps, revisit previous poems, and reassess those poems in light of the nuggets of information that previous corridors had offered to (or taken from) me. Accordingly, my review of this pamphlet pertains to just one journey through its world. Your experience will likely differ from mine, and so this review is framed by my journey through these industrial, dimly-lit corridors. My path is as follows: 1 > 2 > 12 > 7 > 8 > 9 > 15 > 4 > 5 > 1 > 2 > 11 > 13 > 7 > 6 > 10 > 9 > 16 > 14 > 4 > 3

One

‘One’ is possibly the only common ground between your reading and mine. As soon as we step into this world, however, the confidence of having ‘begun’ a reading is undermined in the pamphlet’s very first line: ‘Starting again I think at the entrance to the passage.’ We are both new here, and ‘starting again’. When we try to divorce our experience from that of the speaker-player, we fall short – this avatar is our avatar, whether we like it or not, and any reading we assure ourselves is ‘new’ is, the poem suggests, merely the retracing of the speaker-player’s footsteps. As such, the illusion of readerly control (irresistible in the choose-your-own-adventure format, which catapulted me back to the childhood thrill of ‘directing’ my own story in cheaply-made paperbacks) is shattered. This opening line is ripe for interpretation: does the ‘I think’ refer to the uncertainty as to whether the speaker-player really *is* starting again? Is it a seed of doubt as to whether we are at the passage’s entrance at all? Or does it suggest that the speaker-player, so tired of navigating the maze, is engaging in a barrel-scraping act of desperation – thinking at the entrance, in case that might unlock something? The implied narrative security of beginning with ‘One’ is immediately broken down into opposing interpretations; we are compelled to catch up, take stock, and pay attention all at once.

East to ‘Two: intersection’

Each intersection poem is comprised of four couplets – in contrast to the prose-poem blocks many of these poems are built around. As a result, every intersection (offering us a choice between north, south, east and west) feels like a more visually ‘traditional’ poem, as though this form feels most at home in the moments where the pamphlet hinges on the choice of the reader-player. The poems are peppered with an impishly ironic sense of humour, and the use of a more traditional form for the greatest moments of writerly surrender gives these intersection poems a mischievous, goading tone, as if

calling to the reader: *Interpret me!*

South to ‘Twelve’

Three poems in, I become acutely aware of the speaker-player’s obsessive cataloguing of even the most mundane visual details. Phrases and descriptions recur across all of these poems, placing the reader-player at the heart of the speaker-player’s conundrum through a skilful evocation of place. Guiding your reader through sixteen poems that are all set in a variation of the same corridor is brave, and risks alienation – even frustration. Yet Knight’s emphasis on repetition, as well as every slither and shimmer of colour, brings the exhausting tedium of these corridors to life:

This place is probably a hotel, judging by the decor, which is designed to look homely but gives instead the impression of oppressive rectilinearity the wallpaper and carpet sharing an unattractive design a series of large squares each divided into nine smaller squares by the intersections of two vertical and two horizontal bars everything in shades of grey and dull blue.

A well-timed comic beat follows, pre-empting the ‘newest’ (or ‘latest’) reader’s response with a knowing retort:

looking around is all I can do

Even the non-space of a hotel – itself an intersection – is described as preferable to this place, as the speaker-player yearns for ‘their own smell / cleanliness fresh linen warm order’. The excessive detail in describing the ‘oppressive rectilinearity’ of the place has a whiff of the conspiratorial about it; maybe, the avatar seems to be calculating, these lines and grids and numbers *mean something*. The fresh-eyed reader-player finds the speaker-player’s attention to detail peculiar, even intense. We are both under the illusion of controlling the avatar, and also aware that we have some catching up to do to reach its train of thought. Counting the bars and squares

on the walls and floors is the behaviour of somebody who has been here many, many times before.

South to 'Seven: intersection'

The 'fresh linen warm order' of hotels in 'Twelve' is an even more distant prospect here, as 'yellow memory countermands' – the word countermand itself being a cancellation *of* order. It is in moments like this that *Rites & Passages* is at its most rewarding, because I find myself relating more and more to the speaker-player's attention to detail as clues and codes appear possible in every corner. As the reader-player is immersed deeper into this world, we find ourselves cataloguing various readings or interpretations almost as obsessively as our avatar.

To say that we are going round in circles in the hunt for narrative resolution is incorrect; as Knight writes, 'you go round in squares'.

East to 'Eight'

'Eight' sees the speaker-player chastise their own inattention:

If I had paid more attention earlier, when the story the backstory was being explained, if I had paid attention during the exposition instead of impatiently skipping half of it I would know, and that would help him now.

Ironically, the poem is one of our most reliable sources of exposition thus far. We learn that the speaker-player is wearing 'futuristic / body armour' that, much like the walls of the corridors, is 'decorated with a rectilinear pattern'. In this respect, the poem serves the pamphlet's larger hunt for narrative development or resolution. The use of the word 'skipping', however, risks underplaying the reader-player's own inattentive behaviour, since it seems so confined to the world of video games in a way that much of the language in *Rites & Passages* avoids. The poem arguably misses a chance to compel the reader-player to reconsider their role in this alleged inattentiveness,

since we associate the act of 'impatiently skipping' exposition with the speaker-player, and not the reader-player.

East to 'Nine: intersection'

*the only colours are gunmetal blue
yellow black two shades of grey*

*red is not yet permitted
you will have to wait*

One benefit of a form that compels the reader to choose their own adventure is that sound turn into avenues on the map: the scattershot assonance of 'shades/grey/cases/navigating' in 'Nine: intersection' becomes its own associative corridor, a compelling potential clue in the speaker-player's quest for meaning.

North to 'Fifteen'

Sickness encroaches as the tedium and apparent hopelessness of the speaker-player's navigation is cemented in yet more 'squares repeated everywhere'. There is a knowing irony in the exasperated 'I can't win this narrative game with no clear direction' when our only journey through the text is dependent on a clear directional choice the reader-player must make. At every turn, Knight is compelled to complicate the cosy illusion of control that the pamphlet's form offers the reader-player. Still, the speaker-player's frustrations appear superficial; they are still adamant that 'clues as to how to progress are presumably around him' as their nausea is pinpointed on the figure of 'something like a dog in the shadows ahead'.

After a pattern of highly-specific visual descriptions, the speaker-player asserts that 'the scene resembles a corridor in hell' – a comparison that risks lifting the reader-player out of the labyrinth to consider how the speaker-player has come to such a conclusion. Are they familiar with hell? Since when did hell have corridors? In

what way does this resemble that – atmospherically? Visually? In a pamphlet where the reader-player is encouraged to find patterns everywhere, there is a risk of assuming ambiguity in moments that serve a more basic purpose: namely, to tell us that this place is pretty hellish.

North to ‘Four: intersection’

‘Four: intersection’ touches on the threat of the shadowy dog-figure whose presence we sense in ‘Fifteen’:

the correct word for dog is wolf
the correct word for wolf is machine

These corrections feel like mental reminders or calibrations, as though the speaker-player is imploring the reader-player to keep up and stay alert. We are pointed in further potential directions in the search for narrative nuggets. One of the strengths of *Rites & Passages* is its ability to compel the reader-player to follow its logic, aided by our hyper-awareness that the choose-your-own-adventure form encourages.

Intersections offer the speaker-player a brief moment of rest and reset. ‘[W]e are driven,’ Knight writes, surely delighting in the ambiguity. Is this a mental drive – a pep talk between reader-player and speaker-player? Or is it a moment of resigned acknowledgement that the speaker-player’s actions are necessarily ‘driven’ by the reader-player – or that the reader-player’s illusion of control is in fact ‘driven’ by Knight’s plotted maze?

East to ‘Five’

My only gripe with ‘Five’ is that its opening line – ‘Ritual is repetition imbued with symbolic meaning’ – is perhaps a little on-the-nose, since the reader-player senses this without needing to be told quite so explicitly. Then again, the injection of the speaker-player’s thoughts

might feel grating precisely because the blurred boundaries between ‘speaker’ and ‘player’ compel us to identify more and more with the speaker-player at each step of the journey, and so reading a line we are unsure of is a stark reminder that we are not this avatar. I feel the same way about the occasional quotation from Robbe-Grillet’s *Dans le labyrinthe*: they sometimes feel clunky, which undermines the illusion that the reader-player and speaker-player are one and the same. *If I wouldn’t say or think it*, I am tricked into thinking, *why would my avatar?*

East to ‘One’

I am back where I started, and am thus in a better position to relate to the pamphlet’s opening line: ‘Starting again I think at the entrance to the passage.’

East to ‘Two: intersection’

Any pamphlet utilising this form is wilfully opening itself to the risk – and reward – of its poems being read twice (or more) as part of the reading experience, rather than on account of any readerly affinity or affection for a particular poem. I might reread poems from other collections because I particularly like them, or struggle with them, or have forgotten about them. Here, that level of readerly control is denied: I reread to try and better understand the poem as a unit of context or relation.

North to ‘Eleven’

In ‘Eleven’, Knight offers another knowing nod to the occasionally exasperating task of seeking resolution in this hellish world, noting: ‘no dips in the overall intensity’. These tongue-in-cheek acknowledgements of the reader-player’s experience bring some much-needed levity to the encroaching paranoia that is now settling in. Still, the speaker-player’s anxiety continues to spill out into

overthought and overwrought assertions:

It is not clear what he is supposed to do. The passage contains no obvious narrative clues. There is a door at the other end, naturally; how could this be a passage if it didn't end in a doorway of some description? He thinks, or rather I think, he probably just needs to walk down the corridor to get to the door, beyond which the story will make itself apparent, there will be direction. It could be that the act of walking itself triggers an event that has been lying in wait since the world was made: a chasm may open in the floor at his feet, the ceiling may collapse on him, or a door may open to trigger the entrance of a fleshy assemblage of yowling mechanisms. To go down the corridor may be to invite danger.

At this stage, it is hard not to sympathise with these nervous trains of thought. After hypothesising that simply walking forwards might invite further danger, the speaker-player 'remains still' and begins to imagine what possible codes or clues might be hidden within or behind the walls of this place, imagining a 'small arsenal of aesthetically pleasing outlandish weaponry' that might reveal itself in a hydraulic hiss. But no: we are once again swept up in the desperate hunt for narrative progression. If the rectilinear patterns on the walls reveal anything, surely it is the looping tessellation that constitutes a map of this place. If so, the speaker-player's obsession with it – and our obsession with that obsession – feels like another practical joke played on our readerly assumption of control.

North to 'Thirteen'

'Thirteen' opens with more Robbe-Grillet: 'Noir. Déclit. Clarté jaune. Déclit. Noir.' Even our literary reference point to a world beyond this one is being broken down into its constituent colours, much like the gunmetal greys and sickly yellows that bring these passages to life. Pre-empting the reader-player's exhaustion in the face of more repetition, Knight introduces a darker thought plaguing the speaker-player:

To pass is to go beyond, to abstain, to die.

And later:

*if you can describe the world as it presents itself
to your senses
perhaps you can keep
chiefly your eyesight
death
at bay*

As we trudge deeper into the labyrinth, the visual descriptions become more than just a quest for narrative; the rectilinear observations become an important means of deferring the morbid anxiety that has taken hold of the speaker-player. To stop making note of every detail is to invite the prospect of danger – of death. And yet, in a sign of either dejected acquiescence or mental panic, the speaker-player notes that there is 'nothing much // to report'. By their own admission, a lack of reportage points to the potential imminence of death. The reader-player senses the approach of an ending, but is also acutely aware that this journey can only 'end' on our terms. In this respect, 'Thirteen' is a strong and suitable poem to close this journey with, should you wish. But in my own cataloguing desire to experience every poem at least once, I move north.

North to 'Seven: intersection'

Reading the opening couplet for a second time emphasises the dread that has slowly settled in:

*the grey rectilinear structures
are hostile entities*

This deep into the adventure, the reader-player is inclined to agree;

everything about this place now seems cast in hostile light.

West to 'Six'

Knight excels in 'Six', as the presence of the metallic dog-figure becomes a terrifying reality. The 'growling clang' of 'the outline of a wolf filled in with nothing' is about as horrific and exhilarating an intrusion into the labyrinth as it would be in a video game, as repeated colour-based observations make the threat feel tangible and immediate:

I can see now it's starting to move towards me head lowered as if following a scent with polished black metal or glass catching the yellow light as it moves liquid yellow light slicking over it

'Six' ends on a genuine cliff-hanger, one that is as successful as it is hard-won. Yet even in the face of the approach of this monstrous creature, I still feel residual confidence that I can control and save the speaker-player by veering west.

West to 'Ten'

Just as the threat of the chase appears to be over, Knight reveals the true surprise of this pamphlet:

This passage immediately reveals itself to be distinct from the others, not because the architecture differs in any obvious way, but because there is a figure crouching in it, what looks from behind like a well-built man in a futuristic combat uniform.

The figure appears to present no threat: 'he doesn't register me at all or he doesn't appear to register me'. My first thought is one of self-identification; is this figure an earlier iteration of the avatar? Or an abandoned incarnation of the reader-player's choices – the shadow of a route untaken? I am reminded once more of the very

first line in this collection: 'Starting again I think at the entrance to the passage.' I consider the possibility that there are more mute figures trapped in their own perilous meaning-making quests in these shadowy corridors.

The restraint with which Knight deals with this second figure is admirable: the speaker-player does not engage, and we are left to wonder why that is. It is assumed that this figure will be left behind, and the reader-player surrenders to that assumption as though there is another option. Knight's interest in visual poetry (having recently edited *The Mouth of a Lion: Apocalyptic visual poetry*) leads to such well-informed directorial choices. A weaker poet would utilise the mute figure in service of an image of conflict, violence, or shock. Instead, Knight has the speaker-player step around them. The anti-climax is far more unnerving and confusing than any predictable hostility or tension.

West to 'Nine: intersection'

This time around, the 'hard cases' of mysterious 'entities' alerts us to the presence of the metallic dog-like creature once again.

South to 'Sixteen'

'I think at the entrance to the passage', begins the 'final' poem of the pamphlet, cutting out the 'starting again' we have come to expect from 'One'. The speaker-player seems drained; the usual block of prose is absent, replaced by fragmented half-thoughts and recollections. Is the avatar's health low? Is the speaker-player exhausted with their own repetitions?

The poem ends with the speaker-player's central dilemma – the intersection between 'me', the reader-player, and 'him', the avatar I still assume I am controlling:

I am / and not

South to 'Fourteen'

I am immediately compelled to reread 'Sixteen' as an act of letting our guard down, as the 'unearthly predator' stalking these corridors drops from the ceiling once again and heads towards the speaker-player in 'Fourteen', head low 'as if following a scent'. The immediacy of its presence in 'Six' is replaced by an acquiescence that even this, now, is just another repetition:

Again the ritual of flight. Again the muffled thud of rushing footsteps again the monotonous tension again the hostile lights.

The nightmare of 'Fourteen' isn't the threat the 'shape suggestive of a monstrous dog' poses, but the fact that it may return in any and every corridor, dropping from the ceiling until we run through the next door, and the next, and the next. The reader-player dares to sense that the journey's end is approaching, as does the speaker-player, who signs off the poem with a new and dispiriting observation: 'my health is low'.

South to 'Four: intersection'

'Four: intersection' is, once again, a vital reminder that 'the correct word for dog is wolf / the correct word for wolf is machine'.

West to 'Three'

My journey as reader-player ends here, with the chase underway. Some of Knight's most compelling lines are saved for the sheer horror of the dog's approach; we hear its 'slathering sound' and sense its 'liquid snickering' as we reach out to open – for the first and last and infinite time – yet another door.

And yet, of course, this is not the ending at all. It is my ending – the only readerly control I can truly exert in light of a pamphlet that toys intelligently with the assumptions of control inherent in

a choose-your-own-adventure form. This is an assertive and well-written pamphlet that deserves recognition for not tripping up on, or being overshadowed by, any one of its many explicitly philosophical concerns. For all the conversations we could have about free will, predestiny, or nihilism, it is impressive that we return to the matter at hand. Knight understands that the choose-your-own-adventure form necessitates this grounding in the present. We don't get bogged down in the conceptual themes of *Doom* or those 1980s paperbacks – the form emphasises the reader-player's role in enjoying the story above all else. Through carefully repeated clues and descriptions, Knight compels us to enjoy our role in controlling the story presented to us. The fact that there is no straightforward story, and that we have no control, makes the process all the more thrilling.

A Cod's Wallop

by Pey Oh

Feel eel for the past and tomorrow all mourning you are an open
blank-facade a cod headed jester goes blind around us look up
cap and bells glassbottomed? a nation lost and rocking a horse a horse
a dross count the kingdom blooded sovereign plaice you Fisher King
your brr exit wound a gall a tang putrefying follow the will o'the
wisp mint green suck of moneyswamp desire and flounder puffer
hot air ferries sail past white cliffs carry lorries full of silent
lobsters land at Cherbourg confiscate ham you obfuscate them
mudhopper clodhopper kipper faced you caper on the butter mountain
who will find you this Holy grail yellow as El Dorado and just as slippery?

from A Sun Journal

by Maria Sledmere

I had a silver pen, a shelter. I melted fifty grams of butter in the pandemonium, old-fashioned, I lit the cigarette. My mother in the eighties wore a skirt suit of teal. Stop it she said. Will you tell me the cost of living, will you work at the crime? Continue to fry until the mushrooms soften. I say acid communism, I let the cats out; it was a Furdays, I feel infinite in my velvet jumpsuit. In Katy's kitchen there is a lilac mug, clusters of oranges, oats with cinnamon. On the train home from London, the golden morning, I read Rob's book in the rush. I ate the dates. I also want a poem to say my friends you are strong. I would not have risen from bed so early, had I known you were leaving. The ungodly hour had raised itself for the Marxist disco, yet I was afraid. I had my hair cut to an earlier style, before it was over, I lost the red. The receipt. Get me out of this Don DeLillo novel. Season well. But there is no testing. Cal messaged to say deer were wandering around the underground. I watched *The Matrix* for the first time. I wanted to shoot a gun full of algae. We had this chat about social decimation. Algae, the kind used in skincare. Dan had this pull for Bologna. I felt scared. Nick Drake, 'Things Behind the Sun'. Vermillion and it's all gonna be there tomorrow. PK says I have a big heart. Photovoltaic. The trains will run a skeleton service. Simulate, isn't it.

Rhian gives me this plant, *pilea peperomioides*. It requires sunlight, it wants to be gently turned every week or so, a smallishness of water every four days. Paul Klee, *Castle and Sun*. I watch this Dutch film where a lilac skater dress is seen against hillsclapes, and I liked the scenes where she is just sunning herself at the poolside. Contemplating the phrase 'massive thrombosis', eating very painful stars, dead suns. I spent the bonniest time in London. What did you say? For optimum, *newly laid out garden*. Heat wave. Everyone says data is the new oil. What did you put in the topsoil? A Zoom top? To make this grow. The disquietude of a colour I've never seen before, sticky teriyaki

brown madder. Click the link. Rowan is doing a painting tutorial and she talks about 'getting the essence of these flowers but not being too precious'. I also exist in negative space, a very late period. You can't illuminate light with light or can you, is it called licking dust, eating glue, getting good @ edging. fred says, 'it's like we're finding out that "the air" is a kind of time / and time is social and desiring'. I fall asleep in other people's translucence on the internet, all the time. At 06:59, there is thunder to breathe in.

In the ladder scene from *Kings & Queen* or at the perimeter of another vegetable purchase, I'm weepy. My salon emails to say, 'With a heavy heart we are now closed'. The absence of a comma blames the heart. Learning and teaching support, we are told, is everyone's priority. The children begin wilting from lack of attention. The offices evolve into silent caves of broken fixtures. Does everyone drink. We move, we don't move. The secret is sunset, sweat in your hair. 'A secret treasure is a good thing but it mustn't become a burden'. The epilogue scene is super beautiful. I want to meet feminine men in the space of the novel, your hair is a spiral, I should read bell hooks, *All About Love*, condition the months. I wrote this awaiting the steaming potatoes. I wrote this on my knees. I knocked all the crayons from the table and rolled around in the wax debris of formerly alarming feelings. I held me. My moon is in Pisces; I might just cry. He cut a sponge in half, beautifully with his father's knife. 'Woundedness is not a cause for shame', writes hooks. I tidy my arteries. You kiss me. After a while I am mousy. Swoon every two pages. Absorb completely. Bernadette Mayer writes: 'I am saying this as if you were saying life itself isn't important at all but only just the writing because no one can fight that in words'. There is a neurological response known as frisson, her sun, ardent capacity. I miss human heat. I am developing the fluency of Eden to be only left in the garden, this eyesight was hewn from sunlight, turquoise serpents. Conor had yellow nails, sultry eyes, a bundle of sunflowers; it actually hurts to be so full of gender.

Dwell in a lexicon of pulse crops. My battery drains like a stem and

sadly.

I do the most gossip in my sleep. Frannie says in her letter, 'your writing looks like somebody's embroidered the paper'. I'm sewing myself through the ribs of your sentences, folium words. Spilled boiling water on my leg, felt barely a thing. This new track 'OYDSSEY' that Pelican Tusk did with Lil Rae is really nice. And I dreamt of you last night I dreamt of the red eye, we were swimming in the dream having plummeted in the wonderful splash and I dreamt we were flying, water was air, a cabin of water, it was so much flight. I had a blue pen and a green pen and I dreamt of dropping them in the airplane at the top of the Earth, they were sliding all over the floor. It's like we're sewing our lives into something, drawing all over the miles of water, every time you reply or pick up the phone. The wires run under the sea. You will be notified with an update when the time comes dipped in gold correspondence. Buffet, bouffant, buff club I love you. I miss the swindling of lemon, the casual psychedelia of juniper, Cassie from *Skins*. The dust said, warning: this causes vocal fry. When I see the word corncrake I fancy a corncrake. Intrusive sequin! I want to pour extra orange juice into the sun. I want to marry a full moon through Callie's window, early March of last year, a little digestive biscuit. One night Finn said he was fasting / just for the sake of something to do. Don't take those satsumas to the bank, my dreams are in debt already. Oh thirst. 'I am living by a thread / I wished' (Clarice Lispector). My brain is all pangs from reading your poem. People iridesce, a pop star, get drunk in the multiverse. Happiness you might catch, soft, discarded, the lachrymose girl analysis of the anthropocene. Here lays your rose.

TEEN CANTEEN

by Maria Sledmere

Earn 9k a week trading in oil, or be a TikTok panic attack
opening up about cracking Hollywood
optimism corrupts but I, cognitive behavioural joyride
wilful of insomnia, solemnly do declare
a lapse into the uninspired plea for reconciliation
O
cherry pastry
so easily
having succumbed
to the solastalgia of genre, all around me
the scene is gone
but the *yeahs* so brightly evocative
even Rihanna sampled them
yeah, yeah, yeah
in the faux-punk affectation of being high
by the ice with you a swan I could barely stand
talking about covid
world receding excellence
listening to Lightning Seeds
my knees were thus shaking
all winter like Radio Disney, a clarity
don't text your manager back, imagine
thee angel journalist with rosy pen
describing our piano as mature, the gospel crush pedal
of being scooped by limo or appreciative Christian silver
legato, the soft boys would do
have I been to Nashville?
Small-town not-boy
Your ask is famous, the first song we wrote was 'Unwanted'
In this essay, I will argue
"poptimism through an executive's lens" is the general
apocalypse aesthetic among our millennial kin

it's all Canada and sugar
desperation sings
nursing the hell suburbs of where did you go canvas
the devil for answers
in London suburbia, just not
epic the sixty-foot female waterfall
labia minora in loop
toffee-apple suck thunder
sorry my unbreakable teenage brain won't die
high risk
in stillness —> ink splash
from cloud pathology, I voted
low to moderate attention-deficit
hyperactivity characteristics
every day I forget what the day is
a loss palliative
"text messages"
get a little closer to you, *chill out*
is only what salmon do
green or red
without talent the long high stream is shining
what are your stats
the best hair in the business
natural disorder
"inelegant and
occasionally inane"
I wanna be thrown
I wanna be wanna be known
the world already rocked
itself out of sky
say bodily modification
Ash from Pokémon selling Pikachu on eBay
we agree is cruelty
the good days of the malls and sorrow
are gone by committee



Volume 17: Confetti



50 Pieces of the Encyclopædia Britannica (Free!!!)

The single breath that falls short of the world that it echoes

Ed Luker in Conversation with David Brazil

In May 2021, David Brazil and Ed Luker spoke via Zoom about British and American poetry and poets, pop music and its discontents, dialectics, and Ed's new collection Other Life (Broken Sleep, 2020). This interview has been edited and condensed for clarity.

David Brazil: Following up from our last conversation about your doctoral work on Ezra Pound, Charles Olson, and J.H. Prynne, one thing that's apparent to me in talking with a lot of UK poets in the experimental tradition is the sort of inescapability of Prynne. I think many American poets of my generation don't understand that or even know who Prynne is, unless they have friends who live in England.

And in particular, I think that Ryan Dobran's volume of the Olson-Prynne letters illuminated the necessity of Olson in understanding Prynne in general. But that means that, like, Prynne is seeded with American concerns of poetry. In the Paris Review interview, he talks about not just the debt to Olson, but even to Frank O'Hara, who is definitely not somebody you first think of when you read his work — as well as the general importance of the *New American Poetry* anthology, which was obviously very important in the US, but also turns out to be important in England. So I wonder, given your work on Prynne, what you think about the influence of his poetry on your work?

Ed Luker: Yeah, it feels a long time ago in many ways, and I would say in the poems that I'm writing now or have written in the last couple of years, the stylistic relation to Prynne feels distant. But Prynne is a poet who I still deeply admire in many ways, and in my doctoral research I was looking at a lot of the correspondence that you're talking about. And Prynne's poetry of the early to mid 60s, in a UK poetry context is difficult to fathom. It's just not like any

British poetry of the time at all.

And then when you start to see the influence of American poetry as well as kind of European avant-garde poetry too, it starts to make more sense — especially when you look at the influence of Pound and Olson. Look at the early books like *Kitchen Poems*, *The White Stones* and *Brass*. I really love those books. I especially love *The White Stones*, which is obviously a book that he moved away from stylistically. But it's very similar to a lot of post-Olsonian poets. It's kind of a spoken vernacular, and you hear similarity to, like, Dorn and Baraka's poetry of the mid-sixties (when Baraka was still writing under LeRoi Jones) albeit with a very educated and erudite, kind of British, expertise.

If I can think about the lasting weight of Prynne on my work as a writer and as a thinker, it's in Prynne as a reader. When I was an undergrad, I took two courses with him in reading poetry. He was a guest lecturer at Sussex, invited by Keston Sutherland, and his courses were open for all students and faculty in the Sussex English Department. And they were just exercises in very focused, close reading. I remember we looked at a Whitman poem one week and then, you know, like a Dorn poem, then Keats, then John Wieners. And the combination between reading poetry, both for its own sake and as a scripted and musical artifact weighted with etymological history, and then also as reflective of an embedded set of historic and individuated feelings, was really powerful. And I suppose I've been in my own reading of poetry and thinking about the lyric and thinking about like things as vast as human feeling and how the poem is both an individuated and a socialized object.

I think Prynne's essay on Wordsworth's "The Solitary Reaper" has been hugely influential. And yeah, I love his poetry and I think I love his way of reading other people's poetry equally if not more. And I find him a beautiful critic for being non-reductive. Like poems are not just objects that are used to to prove theory, but it's

really like what does this language mean in itself and what can that tell us about the world?

I suppose many readers of the poetry would say that his work is still unfolding so much that it's difficult to reckon with what is the significance of the poetry of one's writing. And right now I don't feel stylistically close to the poetry in my own writing, but I feel deeply grateful for him as a reader and as a critic and as a person who has been so invested in understanding histories of lyric.

DB: Thank you so much for sharing that, I think it's just really helpful to understand his pedagogy and the criticism, because those books like "The Solitary Reaper" study are not readily available, so a lot of people don't even know what that criticism is outside of circles directly connected to him. And I think you're totally right that Prynne's poetry remains unfolding, especially with this wild efflorescence of late work which reminds me of Alice Notley, you know, publishing a new epic every year it seems like. It's pretty remarkable.

But I was struck in looking at *Other Life* that the first poem is dedicated to Tom Raworth — a very different kind of writer, also important to subsequent generations of English poets. Do you have a feeling for the importance of Raworth in this book? Why that dedication?

EL: It's funny because definitely Raworth was quote unquote, "not like Prynne," but then they're often talked about alongside one another, and were obviously close friends and mutually encouraging of each other's writing. I suppose I became aware of Tom Raworth's work again as an undergraduate at Sussex because he still lived in Brighton at that point in time.

I think the fundamental thing that I really take from his work is there's a kind of commitment to poetry as an end in itself that doesn't have to be explained by other things or forces or uses. It just has a

sheer strength of its own. And his poems really take you there into the poem — take you for a walk or even like a sprint with them. You have no choice but to go with his work.

And speed is obviously a huge strength of it. And also human weight. Yet he really reminds me of someone like Ted Berrigan where it's just like: this is the work that poets do, and this is what we do as poets.

One of the most striking things about Raworth is how little scholarly work there is on his poetry. I think there's a kind of resistance to it in his work that is really admirable. You know, there's a resistance to this poetry being interpreted. It just is what it is. And what more can you say about it? And maybe that's a kind of defense mechanism too.

But the other well-known thing about Tom Raworth — and I met him only a couple of times — but he was incredibly generous with his time and interested and engaged with younger poets. I met him when I was like twenty-one, I think was the second time I'd heard him read and I was like, that was great. And he read from an early chapbook from the 70s. I was like, where can I get hold of that? And he was just, "Have my copy," and I still have a copy and cherish it very deeply. So he was very sweet and interested guy, but also, he didn't ever want to talk about poetry! I think about those experiences people have had of trying to talk to him about poetry when they're like hanging out in his house or at the pub, and he and his wife Val would just talk to you about horror movies or, like, *Game of Thrones*. So I think there's a certain kind of seriousness and also indifference about poetry, like the work is the seriousness and then the kind of social life is full of all these kind of like jokey and playful differences. And I identify with that.

DB: Why did he show up at the threshold of this book?

EL: This book is kind of written from lots of individually published poems around the time I wrote *Heavy Waters*, and it opens with a certain kind of commitment to the seriousness of poetry whilst also to a set of concerns about its use or indifference.

That poem is one of the weirdest in the whole book, probably. I haven't thought about it so much, but it definitely had to be the first poem. And maybe I was prefacing with these quite difficult questions from the beginning because I think immediately after that poem, there's like a run of poems that let you in more easily. And that poem is full of all sorts of sharp angles between kind of different kinds of things that are tangible and perspectival, but don't align.

DB: Thank you! One more question about another writer who's present in the book. We talked about Sean Bonney the last time we spoke, but in "How Did You Survive January?," you mentioned Sean Bonney's death, and I have read and heard British poets repeatedly mark his death in performances and poems. I wonder if you could share, especially considering the political overtones of *Other Life*, how you see the impact of Sean's work on this specifically.

EL: There's a strange contradiction in this to me, and how to express the contradiction? My conscious sense of doubts around certain things in Sean's work was stronger when he was alive. My appreciation and love for his work also had a certain kind of skepticism of a pop Sean, that was more like a received Sean than the full thinking of his work. The kind of like "Fuck the police" poem and "If you see a Tory in the street". These were things that felt like slogans and stickers, they felt easy, and they were reproduced from his work and became like a house style in other writers' work. And I was very skeptical of that, whilst he was alive.

I remember the last time I saw him read, it was probably only three years ago, at Senate House in central London. And it was some strange kind of university-funded arts event, and he was a complete

mess and read his new book terribly, but it was also still really great. And it was good to see him. And then the other half of that contradiction is in the end of his writing, brought about by his death. It just really hit me how influential the last two books and the last set of poems were on many of us, including many of us poets younger than him.

I mean *Letters Against the Firmament* and *Our Death* — those books can be marked through publication dates, but the way that Sean would often publish work was on his blog or we'd hear him read it like, you know, years before. So the publication dates don't quite match up to the way that the work is received. The publication happens later because he was such a kind of socially present poet and even when he was in Berlin, still had like a relation to London.

And because he was our friend. And then when he died, certain worries or cynicism I had about the popularization of his work dispersed, and I could see the fullness of his project. Because so much in the poems really build up to those last two collections. Even *Our Death* is almost a weird hangover, I think, of *Letters Against The Firmament*. I mean, I love bits of *Our Death*, but it's obviously really claustrophobic and painful book. *Letters Against The Firmament* — that was the book, really. I think that's one of the most important books in Anglophone poetry of the last 10 years. But I think his influence is iconoclasm. He has a very iconoclastic relationship to tradition, whether that's avant-garde tradition or mainstream tradition or to national identity.

He was an international poet. He read and created counter-canon, introduced us to these other poets. And he he didn't give a shit about what you were supposed to like. He created and generated new energies around work that he wanted to share with people. And from all this magpie reaching out, he created a very singular work that's fierce and angry and disgusted and disgusting, but also always generous.

And again, there's also this key lesson in his lyric voice that the poetic senses are always social senses. He's left us a lot in his work, especially *Letters Against The Firmament*, and I think his influence is one that's generous and generative.

And I remember a couple of years ago here in London, Laurel Uziell read that book *T* and, with the biggest compliments to Laurel's writing, which I think is amazing, I felt like it was really jumping off that lineage of a kind of energy that Sean created and also taking it somewhere else. There's not many people that have done that. And it never feels like imitation, because it's a kind of energy or a certain kind of vernacular.

DB: Thank you for sharing that, I appreciate it. I wanted to ask you about the sequence of moon poems early on in the book. I always think of the lyric from *69 Love Songs* from *The Magnetic Fields*: "The moon to whom the poets croon has given up and died". So the moon is like the quintessential, almost cliched, poetic subject. So why moon poems? You know, if you had specific thinking about those or if you really were just writing about the moon that day, which is totally legit, of course.

EL: Yeah. So I mean, I've never before written poems about the moon. So it's really a straightforward answer, but obviously also not. Those were three poems about one night, right at the beginning of lockdown in April last year, where there was this crazy full moon that had a kind of white ring around it, and my flatmate and I went out for a walk at 1:00 a.m. on Hackney Marshes and the moon was glowing blue and had this crazy ring. It was a very foreboding and powerful force. And I was also at that point reading a lot of William Carlos Williams from the '50s.

I've always rejected and resented the idea of a kind of closed-off nature poetry. It's felt like an impossibility in the 21st century. You know, all poetry is eco-poetry. Like, what is non-eco-poetry? It

doesn't make sense to me. But something about that first lockdown changed my perceptual understanding of these nonhuman rhythms in a really intense way, and that full moon meant that I didn't sleep, I just lay awake and I could feel the moon through the wall.

But also, obviously, the kind of full foreboding power of this new moon is also just about the pandemic and the virus and this new sociality. So it's a bit of a double, the moon is a bit of a Janus face in that poem. On the one hand, it really is this crazy bright full moon, but it's also this new crazy reality that that we were living with.

DB: How much of the book was written during the pandemic?

EL: Not so much.

DB: Yeah, that's what I thought.

EL: Maybe there were three or four poems that I put in quite late on. But it's a lot of lyric poems from like 2016 to 2020. And it's all of the poems that didn't feel like project poems whilst I was composing *Heavy Waters* — occasional poems and poems that went to magazines. But what was so fascinating was that I conceived of it as this quite incongruous collection, and then when I asked Holly Pester and Danny Hayward and Momtaza Mehri to blurb it, they picked out all these resonances that I didn't even see. And then suddenly it felt more coherent in its moment of publication than I had intended it to be.

DB: Yeah, we talked before about Jack Spicer's "one-night stands" — the things that are outside of project poems and long books. So it's always interesting to see: what are the resonances? How do the things echo? I think the name *Other Life* means a bunch of different things, but it's almost like the other life of those projects, right? In a way, that's the shadow of that work.

About the texts in the book that are prose or look like prose — I’m specifically thinking of “My Ghost” — I was wondering what you think about the relationship between poetry that looks like poetry and poetry that looks like prose?

EL: I don’t really have a strong sense of an answer, but to give one very simple kind of formal decision, “My Ghost” and the poem that it’s paired with, “Fur Dich,” were both written as responses to two images by my friend Alice Morey, who’s an amazing painter. And she gave me two photographs and I wrote the poem. The poems are each drawn from the printed photographs and they’re obviously kind of aligned blocks.

And I think that, you know, there’s a mirroring of format where the photo frame is a kind of container and the poems mirror that sense of being in a container. Alice and I spoke before we collaborated quite a lot about ghosts and ghosts was a term that we were using to think about overlaid memories of a place. In 2009, we were both living in Berlin. And “ghosts” was a word we were using for describing one’s experiences of being in a place and having had multiple lives there. So you walking down a street and you can sense this memory of the place that’s kind of interlaced and over the top.

So the container form is partly me thinking about Alice’s art practice, which has a certain interest erosion and degradation and kind of things being temporally defined. She buries her canvases in mud and soil and earth and then digs them up years later and works on them. Or she uses paint that’s fermenting or rotting. In the poems, there’s all these different fragments of voice and different snippets of language, different scales or perspectives. It’s almost like the poems are not linear, but are just different objects being pressed down. I think I’ve never really thought about it that way before, but I can to speak to a question of form in those particular two poems, that the container felt like a space for different kinds of language to be pressed down and buried in. Like the form of the poem is almost

like a grave or is a grave. That’s an interesting way of thinking of it.

And in the poems that are delineated — it’s like they’re songs, they have lines, and the lines have endings. And the power of line endings is really important for me. I’ve had to unlearn a kind of frustration, which is when poets read their poetry with no attention to line endings, I’m just like, there’s a line ending so it must have a meaning. Otherwise why is it there? And this is something that I used to get really frustrated about to the point of anger — why do you have line endings if you’re not going to read them? And with time I’ve been like, OK, I’m going to let go of it because it’s not doing me or anyone else any good.

DB: Yeah, that’s really interesting. It’s a feature of the prosody of work, of course, but the meaning and the weight of that feature can differ. Like I remember once being in a class where I think probably students had read Olson or something and they were reading poetry of mine. And I can’t remember I used some mark — like a comma or a semicolon or something — and someone said, I thought that this mark meant something specific. And I was like, well, it means that in Olson! But any poet can renew their relationship with their own materials. So some people are choosing not to observe the line break as having a significant weight. But obviously in the same way that a space between words is a mark of prosody, so the line ending is another mark of prosody. It just depends on what your individual development of prosody is.

EL: Yeah. It’s the kind of thing I find easier to talk about in other people’s work.

DB: Yeah, of course.

EL: Danny’s blurb talks about my commas and, yeah, I’m overeager with them and I’m sure that has some kind of significance. He ties it in to the preoccupation in my work with the diurnal, day and night,

time passing. Time is a huge preoccupation in my thinking. I like poems as a space of compressed time, like saved time. What time is completely lost and eaten, eaten by capital outside of the book.

DB: Especially in the latter part of the book, I see this tension between the life it seems that we could live and the lives we actually live, specifically those suborned by alienated labor and debt. And just in the past ten years, I feel like I've seen a lot of poetic peers dramatizing this specific condition lyrically — as if it were from the voice of a lyric subject issuing a plaint.

And the plaint is like, why do I have to work in order to pay these debts. Which is of course connected with this question of the diurnal, because when time is eaten up by debt in advance, then our lives are canceled, basically, which again feels like a major theme of the book in a way.

EL: I obviously am hugely indebted to Keston Sutherland's poetry as my starting point for writing, and there's a line near the end of a poem in *Neocosis*: "A life aflame in the shark shit only now forever". Which is a classic example of Keston's bathos!

So in Keston's work, the continuous annulment or crush of capitalist value production there's these German-romanticist images of highest beauty pulled down into the most grim depths and they're both disgusting and beautiful. And that line feels to me like a claim that's repeatedly made throughout Keston's work about how poetic thinking makes certain pressures of life under capitalism visible. And there's an inescapable reality of that kind of poetic thinking, a kind of negative — Adornian — possibility in that bathos. That idea is very captivating and and very powerful. And in the process of writing poems over the last ten years — well, when I started writing poems, I was writing about the kind of banal bathos of theme parks, or joy, or compromised and commodified experiences of pleasure, and thinking, like, what is the value or what is the reality

of these forms of pleasure like? In a complicated way, not saying that it was good, but acknowledging that it was real — that there is a continuous production of heightened libidinal states in Western capitalism, which are poetic, often through being very high and very low experiences, and non normative experiences.

About three or four years ago I was reading a lot of Fred Moten, and his work is very cumulative and you have to read more to get more of it and it's really wonderful for that. It doesn't give itself to you propositionally — but like in the kind of slow absorption of his thinking, I came upon an idea like, sure, capitalism is continuously trying to annul, cancel, and squish experiences, and these kind of processes, operate through a dialectic between subject and object, but, even that conceptual schema of subject and object, especially on the side of subject, there's always a remainder that escapes. And that which escapes cannot be contained by the whole conceptual schema, and so much of that is in his reading of how art objects contain intrasubjective experiences that cannot be individuated.

And his reading of that is often from the moment of an artwork's appearance or production as performance or improvisation, because of his interest in certain kinds of art that Adorno is just not interested in. And Moten became a really useful way for me to pressurize some of my own inherited, negative Adornian structuring thinking that I was really embedded in — and maybe to hold the two in dialectic. Like, yeah, there's this thing called capitalism and it crushes us and it disciplines us and it forces us to live in a kind of mechanized versions of time and and work disciplines. And inside of all that pressurizing, there's no total reification. There's experiences of possibility and joy and shared life that continue and go on within them. And they're both true.

So there's a certain kind of bathetic, ruthless conceptual negativity is something that my poetry has slightly moved away from, but that's not to say that the threat of all those very real and horrible forces

is ever far behind the poem. They're always there just looking over your shoulder, which is what I love about Frank O'Hara. His poetry, even at its most joyful and celebratory, has this very real sense of threat and danger and violence that's never far away.

DB: Absolutely. And what you're saying reminds me of a line in your poem dedicated to Arthur Russell. It says "pop's greatest lesson" is that "the instant gratified presents the phantasm of some sort of universal joy that it will never let you have". So I wonder, since we're in the space of talking not only about the diurnal, all the daily feelings and structures of feeling and also the fugitive spaces — and of course a lot of Moten's work is about music — what do you think about the dialectics of pop in terms of your work?

EL: This is a big, big question for me. And I'm not going to be able to cover everything that I want to say. And it's a complicated question and one that like I take quite seriously.

I love the music of Arthur Russell — I love *World of Echo* and *Another Thought* — and I love how it has a continuous commitment to production and improvisation. Arthur Russell's music is like this beautiful attempt at popular forms that simultaneously can never be constrained by those forms, like he's always veering towards the popular.

So I think there's this constant gesture towards popular form in Arthur Russell's music and even in his disco music. He makes the weirdest disco records that anyone's ever heard. And it's almost like when he puts himself in that formal constraint of the popular his work can't help but veer away from it or attempt to break out of it.

I think there's a kind of celebration of the popular that is naive, and equally, there's the kind of undialectical rejection of all of the products of the culture industry that gets undertaken by, like, very educated Marxists, and both of those are barriers to discussion. But

if there's something that interests me in popular music, it's the kind of beauty of where it fails, and its imperfections, because pop music is really, really scary when it's perfect. But equally, I'm fascinated by being arrested by a perfect pop song. If we want to think of it as a causal relation, you know, sometimes the perfect pop song really is the kind of arrested moment of being held by this force outside of you. And often in poetry, if there's reference to popular song, that's what I'm thinking about — its arresting perfection and how sublime and scary that is. And how all of us struggling with limited tools in our artistic and creative practices don't have multimillion pound or -dollar access to recording studios and songwriters and all the proprietary, productive equipment of popular aesthetic media — our work is always going to be imperfect and flawed. Sure. And yet it's just an interesting tension, I think, between perfection and imperfection. Perfection is sometimes militarized and scary and equally beautiful and daunting and imperfection is arresting and so great.

DB: That's really interesting, I wonder in terms of the theme of arrests looping back actually to Prynne's reading of Wordsworth's "The Solitary Reaper" — which is ultimately about hearing a song, and the moment of arrest when you hear a song. And it's switched up because in that case, it's the educated poet that assigns attention to an anonymous folk song. So it's actually the inverse of the product of the culture industry.

But I think Russell's own aspiration to pop is like, as you eloquently already said, an interesting trouble, because isome of it is presumably because he was trying to achieve success of a commercial kind, but also like he's too integral an artist to really do anything other than make art exactly as perverse as he chooses. Which I think is part of why his work is so remains so attractive to artists, because it oscillates on this very strange boundary between the avant-garde and more popular forms.

EL: Yeah. I mean, so “The Solitary Reaper” analogy is a good one, because Prynne’s main argument is that Wordsworth stood in the Highlands listening to this peasant woman sing a folk song and he asks himself: I don’t understand the meaning of her words, but what does it mean for me to enjoy her words? Where the power relation is quite one-way.

If there was a single question in the center of my thinking about pop, it’s like, if I’m arrested by this pop song, I’m enjoying it. And I don’t understand what that enjoyment means, and the kind of levels of coercion and power relations don’t match at all to the Wordsworthian one. And it seems to me that the answer to the question is not a simple one.

If there was something that I was reacting to, it’s the idea that enjoyment is bad. That’s actually a very Prynnean argument of his poetry in the ‘70s, which often argues for a kind of due diligence and self-discipline against being misled by the disciplinary side effects of commodities — that we have to stand steadfast and use our intelligence to not be misled.

I don’t have a better alternative, but — actually, I think I do have a better alternative, which is that poems often are great forms for constraint and excess, and straining against constraint, for working out complex feelings and contradictory feelings. And sometimes the fullest kind of embodiment of contradictory and complex feelings is where poems can generate a lot of energy. That’s why I love Rob Halpern’s poetry. And certainly that kind of full setting out of complex and contradictory feelings is not something called, like, celebrating pop. But equally I do think that even in, and especially within, commodity culture, you get the most masterful demonstrations of heavily refined technique that are enjoyable. Like I love watching football, because and the people that are best at it get paid the most. And that’s the simplicity. Of course, there’s all sorts of ways that capitalism reduces the beauty of sport.

I guess often with music we’re talking about the degradation of of possibility inflicted by the profit motive, but also so many people love really popular artists who have certain kinds of freedom within that system, who always exist — maybe not poets — but filmmakers or musicians. Everyone’s like a soft spot for least one David Lynch movie.

I love the period in Kanye West’s music from *My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy* to *Life of Pablo*, where he just has this reckless freedom to make music as he wants. And it’s fascinating. You can really hear this change in his music, and also so much of it is gloriously imperfect and falls apart by its own standards. It’s teetering on the precipice of the expectation to be popular and the desire to be experimental, by someone who has too much of a strong and emboldened sense of possibility.

DB: Mm hmm. And that’s what you just said about Kanye is exactly the kind of thing that I’m interested in — the way that poets use things that are definitely popular, to think through the formal questions of their own work and of our own moment like that. That really seems characteristic of of poets my age and younger and I remain fascinated by it.

I wanted to ask you one more question, which is about the title. We talked a little bit about my sense of what some of the meanings of the title are. On the title page, you write *Other Life*, which is followed by, parenthetically, “(O the life)”. And this is the first vocative in a book that has a lot of vocatives — which, like the moon, is a quintessentially poetic thing that people only use when they’re either writing poetry or, more often making fun of poetry, or else writing poetry which is making fun of poetry.

EL: So I’m fascinated by the O. And I know where it comes from for me, and part of it is drawn from this Prynne lecture, *English Poery and Emphatical Language*, from the late ‘80s — he’s analyzing this

O. And then I wrote my MA dissertation which looked at this O in Prynne's writing.

It's not ironized at all for me. It might have an ironic element, but for me it's the fascination with the fact that when you utter O the mouth has a symmetry with the shape of the world. So it's like the exhaled breath attempting to conjoin the world, but then slipping into the kind of isolated sound of the single breath as it falls short of the world that it echoes.

And I was fascinated by it in Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*. When Antony dies, Cleopatra says, "O, such another sleep, that I might see but such another man" — that it's got another sleep, another man. And she's lamenting the death of Antony and desiring to return to him in dreams. So the O occupies this fantasy space between waking and dreaming, and the tension between what is possible in reality and what is possible in dreams.

I think that's a fascinating starting point. And I guess so much of my poetry is interested in fantasy, but it's kind of like — how do fantasy and reality grip on to one another? They're not inseparable alternatives, they're this weird, conjoined, contained reality of this O. There might be levels of separation, but their crazy integration is more fascinating to me. I have all sorts of problems with poetry that aims at unification of linking disparate things and not acknowledging that there are different levels of reality. That's one of my main problems with Olson. It's more starting from the kind of standpoint that within the reality we live in, all these kind of disparate and contradictory experiences are conjoined on some level whilst also being distinct.

DB: Thank you!

Cake in the Countryside: Baudelaire and Morality

by Charlie Baylis

But what is an eternity of damnation compared to an infinity of pleasure in a single second.

- Charles Baudelaire, *The Bad Glazier*

Poetry today can be a strange game. In my spare time I edit a small online journal. Looking through recent submissions one trend I've noticed is the 'moral' poem, a poem in which one of the primary concerns of the poet appears not to be their poetry, but the presentation of a supposedly morally correct position. The intention of the poet could be to finesse the reader into believing they are a 'moral' person. Fortunately the trend doesn't appear to be too widespread, but it is mostly bullshit.

Why is it bullshit? Not all writing concerned with morality is bullshit. However when it is done in a superficial way, without challenging the reader, it can be incredibly boring. For example, say a poem presents the argument that global warming is bad. Who cares? The vast majority of poets know that global warming is bad. Nothing can be gained by making such an obvious point. The bulk of 'moral' poems follow these lines, offering a simplified view of an argument that the reader is most likely already in agreement with. Perhaps part of the problem is an inability to convey the complexity of big issues and not being able to consider ourselves as part of the problem. I don't believe that anyone is purely good or purely bad, we are all somewhere in-between, but if you want to let it be known that you are good, what is your motivation? Why do you need people to know about your goodness? Why do your virtues need signalling?

When faced with such foolishness I often think of the poetry of Charles Baudelaire. In Baudelaire we see the sins of the world reflected in the sins of the individual, or vice-versa. Baudelaire's poetry throws a net around morality, as he slowly reels it in he reveals more and more of the glittering catch. The characters in his

poems are wicked and sinful, they do strange and terrible things, heavy with the burden of imperfection. On reading Baudelaire my moral compass spins and I am forced to look deeper into the well of human suffering and see my own face reflected on the dark surface of the water.

In the prose poem 'Cake' the speaker's sojourn to the countryside is ruined when he gives a poor child a bit of bread, this humble morsel – delicious cake in the eyes of the child – ignites a fratricidal war:

Together they rolled around on the ground, fighting over the precious prey, neither undoubtedly willing to sacrifice a half for his brother. The first, enraged, grabbed the second by the hair. That other got hold of an ear with his teeth and spat out a bloody little piece along with a magnificent curse in dialect. The legitimate owner of the cake tried to sink his little claws into the eyes of the usurper. He in turn applied all his strength towards strangling his adversary with one hand, while with the other he tried to slide into his pocket the prize of battle. But, reinvigorated by desperation, the loser stood straight up and sent the victor sprawling in the dust with a blow of the head to the stomach. [trans. Burl Horniacheck and Ian McMillan]

The boys fight over the bread until there is nothing left. There are many moral tangents that could be sliced from 'Cake': the attention drawn to poverty, the futility of fighting, parallels with misery tourism etc. However perhaps the strongest sensation aroused is how complicit we, the reader, are as voyeurs, like the ambivalent speaker, we watch the squabbling urchins' battle unfold as entertainment, never having experienced the pangs of hunger, oblivious to their suffering. In 'Cake' and in many of Baudelaire's poems we are unable to separate ourselves from the hypocrisy of the speaker, a mirror for the hypocrisy of the bourgeoisie. Baudelaire makes us aware of our own questionable morality, which is altogether more stimulating as poetry than showing off an easy assent to a moral high ground.

Baudelaire's poetry is offensive, deliberately offensive. In today's censorious society, some of his motifs, which require a level

of rigour to fully untangle, would have been trashed on social media. I doubt a contemporary Baudelaire would have had any mainstream success. He'd most likely have been confined to a small press where after a few sparkling but unsung collections he'd be dropped for causing some minor ruckus on snapchat and would have been left with nothing to do but send increasingly frenzied barbs to a local newspaper. The local newspaper would have rejected these poems. In perhaps his most shockingly offensive prose-poem 'Let's Beat-Up The Poor' the speaker of the poem attacks a beggar for no apparent reason other than his own cloudy stupor. After the beggar proves himself the equal of his assailant through fighting back, the speaker shares his money with the beggar:

I made a mighty number of signs to make him understand that I considered the debate settled, and getting up with the self-satisfaction of a Stoic sophist, I told him, "Sir, you are my equal! Please do me the honour of sharing my purse. [trans. Edward K. Kaplan]

The violence is confusing, questionable and abhorrent however underneath it Baudelaire's point is obvious, the rich and the poor are the same, no matter the artifice and the trappings of a status obsessed society. The poem also seems to deride egotistical altruism of throwing a few coins at a beggar to prove our worthiness, that would be too facile, we have to do more to prove our morality.

Throughout his poetry Baudelaire is enraptured by the devil and other fallen creatures, on the surface he is not a moral character, yet he believed his poetry was moral, even as he was taken to court for blasphemy and a number of his poems were banned. The difference with today's poets of morality is blunt. Baudelaire is a poet trapped by a corrupt society, his despair suggests he doesn't want to share in this corruption, but he sees no other path. The modern moral poet is a stooge, a town crier proud to announce their own moral perfection, with not much else to say and no interesting way of saying it. I know whose work I will turn to next: 'hypocrite reader – my twin – my brother'.

Terms/Conditions

by Jem Henderson

	Sky	Shadow	Earth	Body
Articulate	she smiles on those who are loved & unloved / the sun / but it feels like a mother's hug / only when you have one	the shadow speaks / <i>I'm really not myself today / or any day</i>	I feel planetary motion / my scream / pulls up tree s/ by their roots	today I made sure I ate well / exercised / moved through 28 points of articulation / called my friends / forgave my ex boyfriend / knowing his motives / shrouded in myth & conjecture
Lift	I raise my hands to the firmament / palms up / holding everything / the whole weight of the air	use tarot cards / i ching / the spittle string from mouths of lovers / lift the veil / peek / underneath / at all the treasures / I have been hiding	mountain shifts / upwards through the crust / erupt in tiger lava / down towards me / the only thing to hold onto / is my cock	<i>asking for help is a weakness / so put your back into it / your legs / your eyes / your tongue / raise your voice in lamentation / while hormones crumble your bones</i>
Gender	the moon is a man / fat & full of mortal lusting / the sun / she gifts us with burnt skin / pink kisses & scorn	the chattering keeps my curtains closed / hiding from the black & white	before I was an alder / I was dancing queen / I was a willow / I was catkin & seed / spilled over the fertile ground	today I held a pen & wrote a poison / <i>yes father, I understand / yesterday I clawed fingers down my legs / convinced the wound hates me</i>
Revolution ((-))	the man/moon / angry faced & smiling / <i>says we like neat endings, but often have to live / with watching them come around again</i>	armed / with revolvers / shotguns / the relics of this war / they come as a horde / to drive us out of town / out of love / I slip away / into the dark	blood on the soil / feeds blossom on the trees / mono no aware / <i>just smell that springtime</i>	yesterday I held my breasts in my hand & cried / morphed / into something / forever beautiful

Season One

by Luke Palmer

children's tv series features five characters sea-lettuce old-straw blob-fish pink-thing and plankton stop pilot takes place in an underwater volcano palette mostly purples and greys due to mineral deposits and lack of light at this depth stop

episode characterised by little dialogue just plankton's mimes stop often creatures approach and retreat from each other with the swell and wash of the current stop a drawn-out and occasionally graceful dance stop

episode stop old-straw dreams of being a cyclist stop quite fancies the hill stages but the peloton is a terrifying proposition stop books trip to Italian village alpine air change of scenery stop takes blob-fish to recce locations stop it doesn't go well stop

episode stop old-straw leaves blob-fish's wasted body in a disused quarry stop trees grow around the scree stop many puddles and boulders stop old-straw waits for his inevitable

arrest stop close-ups on fly dance
around carcass stop try to really
capture that smell stop

episode stop the five inexplicably
reunited await the arrival of
plankton's son stop hi he says as
he emerges from the taxi betcha
glad I'm here now huh stop there
is much dancing stop sea-lettuce
surprisingly lithe stop

finale stop pink thing spends
days in existential fug drifting
aimlessly stop it doesn't know
what it is stop the others are
powerless to help and slowly
depart stop gradual fade to black
stop maybe ten minutes stop

Poem on a misread first line

by Luke Palmer

I am encountered as a scaffold
runged up against the debilitate wall
of a rundown institution an orphanage
likely being converted to flats
that will without irony prove too small
for families where was I

I am seen as a stiff rigged trellis
of planks and steel like a corset
stepped like gallows with a ladder
inside of me and a thin gauze
like skin stapled around the outside
of me what was I saying

I am subject to demonstrative acts
of loud men whose calloused hands
work to loosen joints
nuts and sling my limbs
in the back of a lorry
and also to rusting what am I doing

I succeed at the girdered interface
of the built and the not-ready-yet
flat pack tower
many legged platform untree
dead and voiceless voiceless O
O again what is it all for

Broderick | Storm

by Luke Palmer

We're holed up in Matthew Broderick's old multiplex while the storm rages | all the features replaced by live images of the storm | there's no difference between the screens and the windows except the windows are all shattered | the projectionists are redundant | they call their union and stare out of the apertures| faces grey with dust | in the corridors Matthew Broderick has laid tiles of soft polymer that undulate as you walk | the experience is not unpleasant | he's laid the staircase tiles so that it feels like walking up them when you're really walking down | it's like falling through an Escher print | the one with all the staircases | obviously | we do this until the storm's eye arrives | across the precinct a couple in their wall-less apartment try to retrieve all that they have lost using only their voices | it looks like an argument | we watch until the storm is back | it does the opposite of returning things to their rightful places | Matthew Broderick says I should put an ear to a pillar in the foyer | hear everything snap | each thing on its own then all again together at once

A Wagonload of Manure

by William Doreski

At the first hint of thaw, Wordsworth arrives with a wagonload of manure. He wants to spread it on my garden now. When the snow melts, a dark soup will penetrate the soil. His horses steam and stamp in the tepid afternoon light. They look more intelligent than I feel. Wordsworth in his bib overalls still looks the magisterial patriarch of Rydal Mount. When he gave up poetry to become a serious farmer, the critics at the *Edinburgh Review* laughed their laugh of polished irony. But farming has elongated Wordsworth's life and bent the curve of time and space to enable him to deliver a load of manure to New Hampshire in the New World in the twenty-first century. He stands before me, basking in the admiration of his horses. I thank him, of course. The manure emits a polite English aroma, an air of diffidence. I get a couple of plastic tubs and help him shovel the load from wagon to tubs, toting the manure to the vegetable plot and dumping it. Eventually the whole wagonload lies flat and mucky on the melting snow-cover. Wordsworth lights a cigar and wreathes himself in smoke. I almost expect him to disappear, a magician's trick. He climbs into the wagon seat and flicks the reins. The horses point their heads toward Windermere and whinny. Two hundred years of veiled matrix disintegrate, and he's gone, a lone daffodil dancing in his wake.

Volterra

by William Doreski

In Volterra the many churches scrub themselves clean in the case-hardened sun. Chiesa di San Giusto Nuovo with its yellow interior cheerful as a kindergarten; The Cattedrale do Santa Maria Assunta creaky with scaffolding spiderwebbing the apse and choir, its blue and white arches looking nervous but aloof; Chiesa di Sant' Andrea with its attached seminary brooding. You worry about the altar boys trapped in these compressed hill villages. The air pressure is conducive to lechery, while the ancient stonework is too rigid to stoop to notice the shy little faces looking up at the godless blue. Near the Etruscan museum, on Via Don Giovanni Minzoni, we pause for coffee almost too rich and black to drink. The streets are nearly too narrow for my shoulders. I don't understand the red and white flags everywhere. The flag of Tuscany? The flag of successful seduction? No, don't ask the waiter. We're alien to all local concepts, and the towel on his arm is spotless. Besides, the long shadows creeping down the street will soon engulf us in gray. Once we're part of the scenery, we'll understand that the flags are fluttering in memory of us and the Etruscans, from whom so much has evolved.

Former Mythologies

by William Doreski

Quesadillas and beer. It's ale from a can. I can't see clearly in the glare of this dim space. The people at the bar might be sparrows on a wire. Big ugly sparrows, mouthing casual obscenities and spewing bar food in gusts of laughter. You look at me with a look I've learned to fear. But not in a supernatural way. I don't buy into the White Goddess nonsense anymore. The only version I ever met in the flesh did indeed eat men like air. But she was nearly illiterate. Her drawn face reflected or refracted the trials of being a single parent. Her husband ran off with the heiress to the treasure of the Sierra Madre. No one has heard from him in several decades. I haven't heard from her since we shared a desperate moment in a field with a view of the Taconics. You never met either goddess or spouse. You can't imagine her sipping ale poured from a can. You've never heard how sinister her kisses, how sinuous her body. You don't want to learn about the years before she moved inland, the long nights in earshot of the sea, the winter surf gnarling onto shore and splaying itself in shivers. You don't want to know how crude she looked in her favorite poses, her teeth sharp enough to drain blood from a stone. Drink your ale and have a slice of quesadilla. Nice and cheesy, the way you like it. Don't skimp on the guacamole. It will taint your breath to ward off white goddesses and the riffraff with whom they associate.

Ezekiel: Prophetic

by Emily Murphy

You: the land they brought
turned from their blood
and given out camps
the sanctuary in the land
word of tumult like a chain
in its calm and sorrow — the Lord GOD
says “I have gone to get disheart &
every plunder. I will break your hand
the glory among that fire & I
will know the oil to abhor and punish them.”

Then the midst of the exile was on them
like their right hand here
wasters the land; and something was living East,
every green tree can helmet the land.
Gomer, thus you have spoken.
from the west, Zebulun, from the sin-offering
you have opened The King of Egypt to Egypt’s doom;
for the priests, for dwellious falsehood: another iniquity,
when he shall know morning, as baggage on the front and lamentation,

and you shall be uninhabitants of the plains
and bread, pride of the south,
and its width of the midst,
and at her side a wall have been scattered,
and around in your abominations,

the inner court was a holy chamber’s reachery
kings of the new moon, I will gather.
Ezekiel-attend me all make a splendour all around you.

Therefore, mortal, you will not catch prey-

As I live, for all your songsides the disgrace is hand
and you shall give yourself to a dreadful end
and the forehead of my wrath shall go
covered out of the house of my covenant
your neighbourselves I would scatter.

Author’s Note

Original text generated by training a Markov chain on the NRSV translation of the Book of Ezekiel.

Ezekiel: Glossolalia

by Emily Murphy

Thanks, but try parking a car there
pick it up a few centuries
between the cross—hands and life
the curb stopped.

The glory of God came out of the house
it's bad and flowers seem to come from the ground floor.
There is more parking
all the mountains of Syria are on the way.

He put cotton in his hand
and took wheels between wheels and wheels
threading needles to shimmer
sun passed away

Clouds of faces four
the party, the second, and the lions.
Some sad moments are just not enough.
I know them like that.

When they left some coming out and some
going in found in God's shuttered house.
Before the factory saw them,
they had the same face as the tomb

now the hills empty
the sound of the wheels folded
wings and eyes overwhelm
the space beneath his leaving.

Author's Note

Original text produced by feeding the text of Ezekiel 10 through
Google translate across a wide
variety of languages.

Heat Death

by Nick Politan

a topology of sound looks like what
maybe a song though we listen to it rather than see
its ruddy haze or ashen intentions the many
times our breath these days crackles in digestion
our particulate mouths agog with the uncertainty
surrounding whose viral load is hearty enough to wither
the replicas of all our systems at once the way
you gagged at Charlie Kaufman's latest and the concomitant
strains of panic painting the most beautiful sunsets
whose gradient is wildfires at a distance more evidence
of how our sounds look so different than what you imagine

fifty days to election day the nuggetted truncation of an auto-message
contact reminds me my decision to sign up for SMS notification
lists in the acidified waters of the year going round like something's
in the air in the face of widespread social engagement where the
daily
is more a podcast than a discrete time frame against which a greater
swath

of various speed and position occurs and self-defines as in
the body gaged lest the world change and without cheating guess
how many lbs

of tomatoes Dad texts Heinz uses in a year the scale of food stuff
always amazes us all 50 billion chicken per year worldwide how
many people die every year or are

born our world in data dot com parameters are in desperate need
of an apple visualizer given the stagger they inject our ability with
to reference anything meaningful

as Primo Levi once said our star language is weak or something
close to that

divorce the no-no word readymade to ride by the seat of the county

BOE and share

in the ground-breaking universality of viable dosage a testament
to human

will attained against microwaves providing background heat which
will summon

the sun's hottest region is also called corona did you know that
the advent of vaccinated socialization to end this 19th edition of
COVID

while we await the 20th MLA citation of Conway comma
Kellyanne

will sentence protective personal equipment to the garage for some
time

with the other artifacts of this era like the guns our California
friends

bought to stifle the velocity of a changing world building an arsenal
of progressive

politics and prose of previous living from which we are heretofore
grammatically sundered

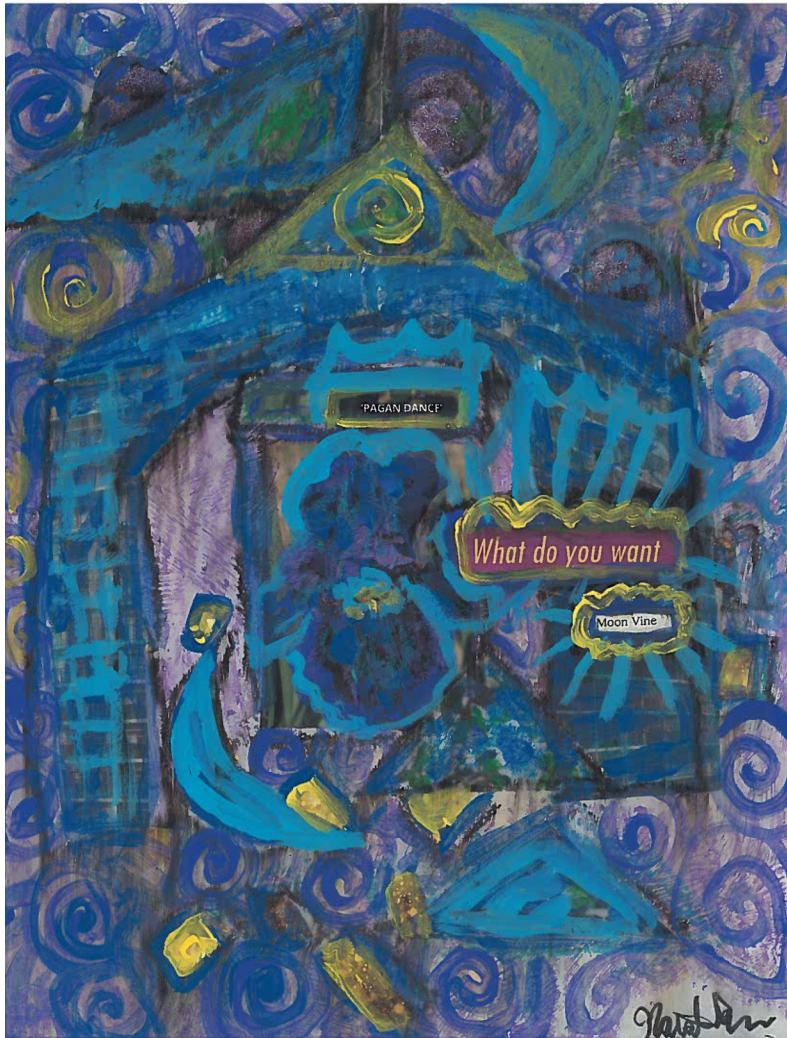
though remnants of what's past may be captured in photographic
grammetry

whereby bygones will be visually reconstructed with the help of
fake smarts

the intelligence of our doom artificial in the face of what they say are
these things we've made

Iris Basilica Pagan Dance

by Natalie Solmer



Expected Value

by Heikki Huotari

One. As the inner child is remotely controlled the inner child's electric eye is spinning rapidly so if you have suggestions for the inner child don't tap the glass; the inner child's exotic fish will see you shortly. With your rate of change proportional to that of your replacement, you may asymptotically approach the center of the aforementioned spectrum. Panama or camouflaged, your hat is musical or missing and your love that of the uncorrupted.

Two. Seeing red you may at last locate your motive and may reverse engineer one big bang. By their fruits you know their vegetables, their good cops by their bad, their dogs, their cats. You'll be removed but by a trail of crumbs. To call the question or to stave off random thoughts you'll claim all laughter is the same, and then you'll stifle laughter.

Three. Talking dogs are walked into a bar. The silence that of matte black boxes, outs are lights and I'm directing traffic. Good Samaritan am I and voluntary too, communicating as from stem to stern by flag my loyalty to my own mechanism. Blaming matriarchs are marching three by three. Nor linear nor angular, I've no momenta to remember. Only pleasant plants to cultivate, my isotopes are half alive. What mass is not a mass of hats, what plain no plain of jars? Be ye not brains in vats. May only natural nightly doubts arise.

Four. Condemn them mother of interstices, they had their chance. The microscopic flaw will propagate and boys be boys. To laminate is only human, followers to blossom and the google car will take directions from the random traffic cop, not blink an eye. I'm in an aisle and positing an option. Render me sea worthy. Break a rule on my behalf. As some of us are fabricated in God's image more than others some of us are fabricated in God's image more than others.

Five. The magic is in what was meant to happen, levitating bodies on their best behaviors, not a blinding moonshine not distilled. But offering what's left of me to silly science, three delectables in my periphery are evanescent equally as opportunities are lost, as labyrinthine lungs, eternities of burning feathers and the things that happen in the night and in the town of A and not A in the town of A and not A stay.

from Lexicon

by Delia Tramontina

Give me your wet brain

I say gray matter

Dry as in sober, as in arid

Choking on a pen cap

Ocean- indigenous

Give me an infant with a wicked
grasp of the absurd

Better than snorting talcum powder

I tell ghost stories about bone

marrow

Give me molecules like velcro

You hold together

(Again) you, not unlike spackle

*Who says a gadget must do
something?*

Give me flip book copulation

If nothing else, a paper weight

That's cheating

Don't confuse this with debating

Give me a paid holiday for a
particularly robust counterfeit

Brevity is a forgotten virtue

I like ponies

You like a good mattress-back

Give me vegan pick-up trucks

**I once used a Wiffle ball bat as a mallet,
a sandal as a doorstep,
a cinder block as a meditation cushion**

from Lexicon

by Delia Tramontina

Remember the proper ratio-
daisies to gun powder

*A grain of sand is larger than
a dream during REM sleep*

**I confuse a traffic light for
mixed signals**

A gymnast splits like an atom

Remember a light source for
your halo

**Your mother resembles George
Washington at certain angles**

Triangle as nature's saw horse

She chops your cherry tree

Remember to use expletives
to expedite

*The tack in my paw is still
a form of penetration*

Remember how the skyline
scoffs at circus tents

Turtles are faster than foot stools

**I lost the sunrise so shined
a silver dollar like your smile**

Remember proper 'chicken dance'
technique and etiquette

*Newborn horses stand
before they bark*

**Your smile is almost silent,
like a guinea pig**

Remember a hug is a socially acceptable
boundary violation

*The closer we vibrate to one another,
the more we congeal*

from Lexicon

by Delia Tramontina

Poems rhyme dammit!

*Meteorologically speaking,
rain on this charade*

Please breathe in the Jitterbug
and exhale a line dance in absentia

*Watch your watch buddy
You almost clocked me*

**Intoxication is a fortuitous
byproduct of white out**

Please fiddle my sticks,
shiver my limbs

*Antelopes don't appreciate
their mistaken identity*

I slow down like abstract art

*Welcome to the meteor shower;
we lost power
but we have plenty of snow*

Come on and feed me
nummy blue Jell-o

Atmosphere = earth saran wrap

I wish I had loose lips for
bailing bath water

*Angels are not blond, not
porn stars, not angels*

**I knit my brow into
an afghan of concern**

Please fire when giddy

AFFLECKS PALACE

by Lydia Unsworth

pale faces
laces clasps capes flakes spells flasks cases
(fleas?)
keepsakes

cakes a cafe!
falafel? paella?

speak else fall asleep
a slack place, safe
peace please fellas

ODEON CINEMA

by Lydia Unsworth

amid decennia
neon
once iconic deco
and noon: a dime a coin

a comic a mime an ice maiden a cameo a mood a nod

no-one came
an idea died

FRINGE BAR

by Lydia Unsworth

barging in

raring, reigning

beer, bier bring a gin

refining a refrain, riffing

brief raging anger

an earring?

an benign ageing bragger gabbing

grinning, biffing, binging, girning, feigning, inferring

fingering

barfing

bearing

barring

Brr, effing raining inni'

Zaum' Translations

by Mark Valentine

trans-sense

outmind

wits'end

hmmhah

noknow

X-Y

say'um

be'uh

da'da

o'no

go-on

X:Alt

is'not

ah-go

blah-go

nolingo

utterish

zoot

zut

bebop

untongue

go-be

gobby

sliplip

do'da

here-now

ur-text

nova-X

zo-et

go-it

zzmm

zaum'

An Interview with Imogen Reid

by Richard Capener

Your new pamphlet, The Elevator, has just been released from Nightjar Press. It's startling in how it draws the reader in while maintaining ambiguous linguistic spaces. The images have more grounding in genre cinema than literature, referencing gialli - the repeated movings of a gloved hand - with noir: a handkerchief with initials. What drew you to genre in particular?

Thank you for inviting me to take part in this Q&A, *The Babel Tower Notice Board* is a wonderful platform for artists and writers, and your questions are perceptive as always.

As you've already said, in *The Elevator* I use a series of props and motifs that are often associated with genre films such as the detective drama, the thriller, and film noir: the gloved hand, the Bakelite telephone, the slatted light, the stocking with a knot tied at its center, the flickering lightbulb, etc. Familiar objects and things that are often used in the movies to set a scene within which action plays out. In *The Elevator* these bit players move into the foreground where their role is equal to that of any human action. In fact, you could go as far as to say that they are the principal players because in this 'story' the event, or narrative, is missing, usurped by the details that would usually surround it. Unlike the conventional noir or crime movie, where the plot tends to clarify and resolve, in *The Elevator* misplaced clues lead nowhere. Instead they turn and return differently shifting from one scene to another like a continuity supervisor's nightmare so that, despite the fact that description is clear and concise, things gradually become more rather than less confused. In *The Elevator* the viewer/reader is not placed in a knowing position. Instead, a series of recognizable props are intended to prompt the memory of film, or perhaps better, a forgotten film waiting for the somewhat disoriented viewer/reader to remake or provisionally complete it.

The relationship between memory, forgetting, and the remake is demonstrated beautifully in the prologue and epilogue to *Point Omega* (2010) wherein Don DeLillo describes the embodied effects

of Douglas Gordon's video installation, *24 Hour Psycho* (1993), on his anonymous male protagonist as he visits the gallery daily and all week. Immersed in the soporific rhythms the unnamed man loses all sense of the narrative, what comes to the foreground instead are a series of so called 'mundane details.' For example, in Hitchcock's movie, suspense reaches fever pitch in the famous shower scene wherein Janet Leigh meets her grisly end. The scene is short and dramatic, over in approximately three minutes, while in DeLillo/Gordon's silent remake the 'same' scene seen differently lasts for an entire hour, two frames turning each second, regulated and compartmentalized. In DeLillo/Gordon's film, it is not the grisly murder the anonymous man finds himself struggling to recall, but the number of curtain rings left rotating on the rail as the mutilated woman fights to catch her fall. What he grapples to remember is not Hitchcock's film but a new film within which the previously insignificant curtain rings take on the lead role. DeLillo's anonymous protagonist effectively remakes a film that he is, at the same time, in the process of forgetting.

My own experience *On Leaving the Movie Theatre* is not dissimilar. Like DeLillo's protagonist, I frequently get caught up in the so-called inconsequential details, which continue to niggle and gnaw at me long after seeing a film, and in my often inaccurate recollection of them they expand and enlarge without slotting chronologically into story time. For example, *The Third Man* (1949) is a film noir that I enjoy watching very much but, even after having seen it several times, what sticks around is less the narrative and more the echoing sound of footfall and the tips of Orson Wells' black Oxford shoes glimpsed in a shadowy doorway. This could be because Chris Petit refers to that scene at the begging of his novel *Robinson* (1993), and my recollection of the film could well be muddled by time and memory, but rather than striving to correct these inaccuracies I want use memory and forgetting as a productive writing tool. For me at least, it's not about returning again and again to the same film, recalling it frame by frame, or of reproducing and representing it 'accurately'. What interests me is where else these details could potentially take

me, the new connections in memory and thought they evoke and provoke.

To return, at least in part, to your original question, I chose to use an elevator for several reasons, not least because it is a space of travel and transition, suspended between places it is neither here nor there. I was drawn to the idea of stillness and movement, of a body immobilized within a mobile room, of capture and evasion. It is a space within which you wait while nothing in particular happens. Film theorists tend to call this kind of time dead or empty time but is also a time full of potential, a time within which things could go any way. The elevator evoked in my story is relatively featureless, a bland space within which you could easily lose the plot as your mind begins to wander, get caught up in the shadow play performed by a trapped fly above your head, or sidetracked by involuntary memory. In *The Elevator* non-chronological transitions in time, are intended to trouble the distinction between the real, the imagined and the recollected rather than resolve any difference between them.

Cinematic references include Chantal Akerman's *Hotel Monterey* (1973). It seems to me that the scenes shot inside the elevator roll out like a celluloid filmstrip, and as the small window in the door passes each floor you occasionally catch a fleeting glimpse of a passerby. This film, combined with the endless chase scenes that take place between elevators and staircases in numerous forgotten films, most of which have merged and transformed in my recollection of them, provided the starting point for *The Elevator*. Michelangelo Antonioni's *L'Avventura* (1960), Robert Bresson's *L'Argent* (1983), Chantal Akerman's *Jeanne Dielman* (1975), films within which the event goes missing and/or the time of suspense and gesture is suspended, also played their part. As did Marguerite Duras' use of the discarded child's pram in *Nathalie Granger* (1972) and the Quay Brothers' film *Institute Benjamenta* (1996) within which objects and things take on a menacing life of their own. In terms of writing, the unresolved quality of these films encourages the kind of active viewer/reader participation that's important to me.

Was the text constructed according to a procedure or was it written/workshopped/redrafted in a more "creative writing" sense?

I don't use procedure as such. I do work with constraints. If they can be called that, they are not mathematical or scientific and they are not as strict as those used by the Oulipo. These constraints tend to play out in my head. I don't write a plan. I dive in and sort things out as I go along, at least to begin with. This could be because I work with short form fragmentary writing. Should I ever write a longer piece things might proceed in a different way, but that's unlikely as I'm drawn to the unfinished quality of the fragment. A constraint, for me, could be use of the second person, use of the present tense, or use of description to prohibit any clear identification of character or gender, focusing instead on parts of bodies, hands, and feet, etc., but it could also involve some form of physical constraint. I'm interested in how old (and potentially new) technology impacts the way a narrative is constructed, and how it alters the way a body moves. How does the cable connected to the Bakelite telephone limit what a character can do? How does the time taken to push coins into a payphone effect the narrative in contrast to the unfettered movement granted by a mobile phone? Perhaps these considerations stem from my interest in performance art/dance, e.g., Rebecca Horn and Pina Bausch, I'm not sure.

These constraints are often devised from my recollection of details seen in films. For example, I have an image of Sophia Loren running up a ramshackle staircase in an apartment block. As she reaches each landing she hits a pneumatic push button, and a light turns on. I have no idea which film the scene came from, only that it was black and white and that the walls surrounding the staircase were whitewashed. The on/off timed repetition of the light became a constraint for a short story, which was then developed further in my *Nightjar* Chapbook. For me, constraints enable, or perhaps better, force me to move away from ingrained habits of thinking and writing. They offer a kind of freedom to think otherwise. Having said that, I do rewrite, several times.

It's common for lyric poetry to have line breaks occur in time with a speaker's natural rhythm. In The Elevator, though, there are moments where language jars ("you" standing alone between paragraphs, for example). This created critical distance between me and what the central figure endures. In turn, it brought the constructedness of these scenes into question. It left me questioning how narratives present power-dynamics and violence. Where did the formal ideas for The Elevator come from? How does the artifice of narrative function for you?

I'll start with the formal ideas. I often use, what the literary critic Bruce Morrissette has called, transitional words and objects to initiate a series of non-chronological cuts or dissolves between scenes that could be 'real' or 'imagined'. These transitions can be a jarring, an abrupt shift between two disparate scenes, tripping the reader's eye, drawing attention to the way the text is constructed, as with the example you site. Alternatively, the transition can be a relatively smooth. More like a dissolve than a cut. A rotating fly might morph into a ceiling fan, sounds and odors might migrate from one scene to another without any regard for chronology. In the second case the reader may experience a slight unease, a shift in speed between scenes as events are sidetracked or interrupted. This technique was gleaned from the Nouveau Roman writer, Alain Robbe-Grillet, who put it to work with great effect in his novels, including his short story, *Jealousy* (1977).

In *Jealousy*, an unnamed and unseen narrator vigilantly observes the day-to-day activities of his wife whom he suspects of having an affair. His seemingly forensic gaze appears at first to be camera-like in its precision, in its aim to possess a total knowledge of her. However, the unforeseen consequence of this desire to see everything, to record every detail clearly and accurately, to omit nothing, is a kind of visual chaos. In *Jealousy*, any equation between description, seeing and knowing is effectively problematized and Robbe-Grillet's narrator is gradually revealed to be an unreliable eyewitness.

With the aim of demonstrating my point, I'm going to cheat a little here and lift an example from an essay I was lucky enough

to have published by gorse. The example is taken from a section toward the end of the novel wherein the jealous husband describes the movements and actions of his wife (designated by the letter A), and her alleged lover Franck as they are immersed in work-a-day routine. As the jilted husband's 'vision' reaches fever pitch the scene suddenly shifts to the bedroom where the narrator 're-sees' the couple who are now engaged in the sexual act, at this point a violent transition takes place and 'the lovers' meet an apocalyptic end, a 'visionary' death in a car crash. Sex literally drives into death, as the sequence of images dissolve and mutate in the narrator's fevered and fixated mind. Robbe-Grillet uses transitional words and sounds to initiate the series of dissolves between scenes, lending a sense of continuity to an otherwise discontinuous series of events that could be either real or imagined:

The hand with tapering fingers has clenched into a fist on the white sheet. The five widespread fingers have closed over the palm with such force that they have drawn the cloth with them: ...

In his haste to reach his goal, Franck increases his speed. The jolts become more violent. Nevertheless he continues to drive faster. In the darkness, he has not seen the hole running halfway across the road. The car makes a leap and, skids On this bad road the driver cannot straighten out in time. The blue sedan is going to crash into a roadside tree whose rigid foliage scarcely shivers under the impact, despite its violence.

The car immediately burst into flames. The whole brush is illuminated by the crackling, spreading fire. It is the sound the centipede makes, motionless again on the wall, in the center of the panel.

Listening to it more carefully, this sound is more like a breath than a crackling: the brush is now moving down the loosened hair. No sooner has it reached the bottom than it quickly enters the ascending phase of the cycle, describing a curve which brings it back to its point of departure on the smooth hair of the head, where it begins moving down once again (Robbe-Grillet,

1977, p.80).

As you can see, the above excerpt demonstrates several scene shifts or dissolves, each one initiated by a transitional sound or word. For example, having increased in tempo during the car crash sequence, the pace of the text starts to slow down and, via the systematic displacement of an ambiguous crackling sound, the scene begins to morph. This sound mutates three times:

1. it is initially attributed to the blazing fire within which the alleged lovers meet their violent end.
2. it dissolves into what may, or may not, be a memory image, i.e., the cracking sound made by a lone centipede lingering on the bedroom wall.
3. as the jealous narrator settles upon a tranquil image of his wife, alive, well, and alone in her bedroom, the sound makes its final transition. The crackling dissolves into the steady inhalation and exhalation of his wife's shallow breath as she brushes the lengths of her hair.

The word 'brush' in the third paragraph also initiates a series of movements in time and in memory, for example:

1. the word 'brush' is first used to indicate the enflamed foliage engulfing Franck's vehicle.
2. the burning foliage is later recalled as the word 'brush' dissolves into the image of a 'brush' as it descends the lengths of the accused woman's hair.

Through the use of the transitional word 'brush', and the ambiguous crackling sound that accompanies it, Robbe-Grillet 'dissolves' one scene into the next. However, the continuity between scenes

achieved by this technique is neither chronological nor linear. In Robbe-Grillet's novel, the jealous spouse gives an account of events as he 'sees' them, but it is never entirely clear if what he sees is 'real' or 'imaginary', perceived or hallucinated. The faculty of seeing as it is understood within the context of this novel is not an isolated sense. It is contaminated and altered by the fevered memories, thoughts, emotions, and imaginings that co-exist with, and transform it. Using cinema as a basis from which to articulate the reader's experience of Robbe-Grillet's technique, the literary critic Bruce Morrisette goes on to say that a strong cinematic sensation begins to emerge for the reader in the transition between two or more scenes linked in this way (Morrisette, 1985, p.36). As these scenes collide, mutate, and combine the reader experiences a slight change in direction, a shift in speed, a temporal disassociation of the kind that can be associated with cinema.

Robbe-Grillet's use of transitional words, along with a descriptive technique that combines clarity and precision with disorientation, has been crucial to the development of my writing practice. For my Nightjar chapbook, Robert Coover's *A Night at The Movies, or You Must Remember This* (1987) was also a very important reference. It's probably Coover, more than Robbe-Grillet, who set me off on a kind of self-reflexive exploration of film in writing, although I do not claim to be as rigorous or as clever as him.

Speaking of clarity, precision, and disorientation I should mention here that, thanks to Nicholas Royle, I was lucky enough to have my Nightjar chapbook paired with Simon Okotie's *Two Degrees of Freedom*, which is a master class in permutation and combination, clarity and disorientation. If you haven't done so already, I urge you to read it.

To return to your question, use of the second person almost automatically combines the sense of distance and proximity you speak of. It brings with it an element of instability and disassociation that appeals to me (Richardson, 2006, p.23). What the literary critic Brian Richardson calls 'you narration' has the capacity to shift between reader, character, victim, perpetrator, man, woman, etc.,

unfixed and on the move. It potentially offers a kind of freedom from the limitations imposed on us by notions of finalized identity. Use of the second person can also have a suggestive directive quality, not unlike the hypnotist's monotone voice during induction, e.g., 'your arms, your legs grow heavy', 'you see', 'you feel, 'you hear', further accentuating the sensation that what 'you' are doing does not belong to you. Two of my favorite novels were written in the second person, Michel Butor's *La Modification* (1957), and Georges Perec's *Un Homme Qui Dort* (1967), not to forget the film of the same name by Bernard Queysanne and Georges Perec (1974).

I often refer to Bruce Morrisette's *Novel and Film* (1985), and *The Novels of Alain Robbe-Grillet* (1963), and Brian Richardson's *Unnatural Voices, Extreme Narration in Modern and Contemporary Fiction* (2006). Richardson cites a particularly compelling example of 'you narration' taken from Jamaica Kincaid's nonfiction book on Antigua, *A Small Place* (1988). In Kincaid's book, you disembark from a plane and move through customs with ease. Your bags are not searched because 'you are, to be frank, white' (Kincaid, cited in Richardson p.33, 2006). Richardson goes on to say that, '[t]he assumptions that white middle and upper class audiences bring to the act of reading are thus foregrounded and exposed - particularly the insidious assumption that they are 'naturally' the universal you addressed by the text.' (Richardson, 2006, p.33).

You completed your PhD at Chelsea College of Arts, where you explored the relationship between film and writers. Here at Babel Tower, we published your brilliant essay on how film influenced Burroughs. Where does your fascination with film come from? Did it always dovetail with writing? What surprised you most when researching the PhD?

Thank you for your kind words. It was a pleasure to have my essay published by *The Babel Tower Notice Board*.

When I first started my PhD, I was interested in exploring how certain films posed an obstacle to our conventional habits of thought at the same time as they potentially yield alternative modes of

viewer/writer engagement. Although my main reference was Gilles Deleuze's two cinema books my writing was essentially performative. I wanted to find a way to think, feel and write with what was often a destabilizing and disorienting experience: to incorporate the rhythms of a film into my writing practice. To allow, for example, the circuits of repetition in Robert Bresson's films, or the rough-cut montage of words, songs, and movements in John Cassavetes' cinema, to inform and alter my writing practice. I began by looking at writers such as Daniel Frampton, Lesley Stern, Della Pollock, Sam Rohdie, Jodi Brooks, and Jalal Toufic. Although I was vaguely aware that Don DeLillo, William Burroughs, Alain Robbe-Grillet, Robert Coover, Mark Z. Danielewski, and Marguerite Duras made use of film as a resource, I was surprised by the range and complexity of the techniques developed by them. It took me some time to work out how to incorporate similar techniques into my own writing practice. I'm still stumbling across new, challenging, responses to film in writing. I suspect, and hope, I always will. Discovering Art Writing and the incredible writers associated with it, Yve Lomax at Copy Press and Maria Fusco to name but two, was a liberating experience to say the least.

In your wonderful 2018 pamphlet from Gordian Projects, Losing Track, you outlined your thoughts on cinematic writing before presenting the reader with an example. It pushed the textual edit even further than The Elevator by formatting extended sentences as interlocking blocks, creating a drama that's freewheeling yet urgent. What was the creative impulse behind this? There are times when it feels like a vibrant tracking shot!

Thank you for taking the time to read my pamphlet, I was lucky to have *Losing Track* published by Gordian Projects.

As you have already pointed out, in *Losing Track*, the text is predominantly arranged in isolated blocks. Lodged within a single page/frame, a series of scenes appear alongside, above and below one another, as in a split screen technique used in the cinema wherein a scene, or moment in time, is seen from several

different angles at once, or several different scenes are shown to be occurring concurrently. The impression given is that the field of vision is divided. However, despite the discontinuities apparent within it, each part of the text folds relatively smoothly into the next, encouraging the viewer/reader to take an undulating route through it. It is less a case of visual technique interrupting and disrupting the viewer/reader's passage through the text (although this undoubtedly happens) and more a case of reconfiguring our usual habits of reading and writing. The unconventional spatial logic of the page is intended to encourage the viewer/reader's embodied interaction with it, to engage the movements of the eyes, the tilt of the head, the clasp of the fingers, in a different way to the sequential layout of a conventional printed page which, in Western European tradition, directs the eye from left to right, top to bottom and so on and so forth.

The viewer/reader will also find that the series of textual fragments that comprise *Losing Track* do not 'end' with a full stop. Each fragment is left open. This open, un-finalized, quality is often emphasized by a floating comma or by the absence of any punctuation at all. Use of mispunctuation is intended to draw the viewer/reader's attention to the deeply engrained grammatical rules that have come to inhabit our customary patterns of thought, so much so that the adept reader barely seems to notice them. In reconfiguring the printed page, and thereby redirecting the viewer/reader's route through the text, I endeavor to impede their ability to passively assimilate the writing in it. Instead, in leaving the text unfinished, I aim to encourage the viewer/reader to actively draw on their own experiences and memories to complete it. You could say that the techniques used in *Losing Track* aim to liberate the viewer/reader from the passive role constructed within conventional reading practice, and from normative limits imposed on them by it, like William S. Burroughs and Don DeLillo. Therefore, I maintain that in forcing us to think and read in one way, the conventions of Western European reading and writing limit and restrict what we are capable of thinking, feeling and becoming.

With regard to tracking shots, I was thinking of Alexander Sokurov and Andrei Tarkovsky, particularly the sequence on the flatbed trailer near the beginning of his film *Stalker*. But Claude Simon's *Le Jardin Des Plantes* (1997) and Michel Butor's *La Modification* were the primary influence here. Both books have been an obsession of mine for a long time.

Losing Track also takes inspiration from shooting scripts as well as moving image: terms like "CLOSE-UP" are inserted. What do screenplays have the moving images don't for cinematic exploration in writing?

There are many reasons for my interest in the film script or screenplay, not least because it is unfinished, as a thing still waiting to be made it is full of untapped potential. I'm thinking here of Ellen Dillon's interview with Vik Shirley in *Firmament 2*, wherein she describes her encounter with Terrence Malick's' screenplay for *Days of Heaven*. But the screenplay itself is more Emma Bolland's territory than mine, I am very much looking forward to reading her PhD.

As with William Burroughs' use of the two column structure in *The Last Words of Dutch Schultz: A Fiction in The Form of A Film Script* (1970), the film script, for me, offers a way to reconfigure the standard printed page, and a means by which to render the gap between images, and images and sounds, visually palpable in writing. As I've already gone into some depth regarding this, if it's not too cheeky, perhaps I could direct any interested reader to the essay you kindly published for me.

In *Losing Track*, I was interested in exploring the possibilities offered up by directorial notes. The technique was derived from Marguerite Duras' novel *The North China Lover* (1994), within which she uses a series of footnotes to trouble the reader's ability to make a clear distinction between genres, i.e. book, film, memoir and fiction. While typographical conventions such as footnotes and sidenotes are often used to signify authority and truth (i.e. a voice that comments, directs, and amends) they can just as well be used as a means by which to subvert it. In *Losing Track*, directorial notes are primarily

used to trouble the time and authenticity of the accounts written in it. For example, is the story being told now in the present? Has it already been told in the past, or is it still waiting to be told? Is it a script for an unmade film, or an eyewitness account of a film that has already been made? If there is a sense of movement in the text, I wanted it to derive in part from the uncertain shifts between possible past, present and future rather than from the limited action described within it.

For me at least, Burroughs and Acker are the usual suspects when it comes to writers who think with film. Who else should readers be aware of? At the end of Losing Track, you give "A BRIEF INVENTORY OF CINEMATIC TECHNIQUES IN WRITING". Is there anyone you wish you included since publication?

Including the writers I've already mentioned: Stéphane Mallarmé, Maurice Roche, Emmanuel Hocquard, Jérôme Game, James Joyce, J.G. Ballard, John Dos Passos, Emma Bolland, Steven J. Fowler, Suzzane Doppelt, Joanna Walsh, Maria Fusco, Nathalie Léger, Richard Skinner, Redall Olsen, Michael Turner, Mathew Turner, Penny Whitworth, Anne Tallentire, Yvette Greslé, Claude Ollier, Kristen Kreider and James O'Leary, HP Tinker, Chris Petit and I believe *London Gothic* by Nicholas Royle, which I have yet to read, and many more

Any movie recommendations?

Rather than trying to pick favorites, I'll list a few I've watched again recently: *Black Girl* by Ousmane Sembene, *Waiting for Happiness* and *Timbuktu* by Abderrahamane Sissako, *White Material* by Claire Denis, *Rat Catcher* by Lynne Ramsay, *Three Monkeys* by Nuri Bilge Ceylan, *Queen of Diamonds* by Nina Menkes, *The Trilogy* by Bill Douglas, *Pina* by Wim Wenders, and *Therese* by Alain Cavalier.

Action. Potential

by Leila Howl

Subthreshold

You paint
my throat;
a pill
that calls
nausea
to lap like a tide
against my womb
drawing
endometrium
with delicate swirls
of hate –
graffiti
on seeping walls:
*there is no place
for you
here
today
ever.*

Threshold

The drive to winter beach takes three hours. I taste you all weekend at the back of my heart. A biological metronome pulling us past car showrooms. Estate agents we can't afford. Alluring time we don't have even to look.

Suprathreshold

They pull us in deep, two children wearing wetsuits and wet wool
a briny ice-stung baptism burning my thighs. The cold intensifies
at home where warm water burrows beneath the numbness
lifting pain to pierce skin and shudder dendrites into life
too soon
too fast
while synapses flicker on/off/on/off/on/off/on/off/on/on/on/on/
on/on/on/o/o/o/o/o/o/n/o/no/no/no/no.

from Hallucigenia

by David Spittle

of do i be
from calling luck a bullfinch
to look up
sodalite
polished rose
hobart blue
of no idea, whiskers
not a clue
of smuggling
cornetts
carved from llama bones
at the ancient city
of Caral
ice cubes
now tributes
to the ghosts
of Russian ballet
all tinted
East of Borneo
toads aglow
the mute vajra
and dusky slim
jerboa
a presence
sieved through
someone else's pet
opinions
like a terracotta army
in a sock draw
vast and ridiculous
built from the spills
of chronic fatigue

and a lack
of stable employment
and out the window
Tuesday
Purpling across
a nectarine page
around 6:30 pm
here spring danaïds
zeitgeist aquariums
a colander
to leak wings into
a story of
neon guppies
a narrative
like any other
like callipers
or dowager's hump
like bad poetry
that keeps itself light
but has no light
the kind of poem
that flicks
between oblique
and silly
without the delight
of either
only ukulele vanity
and cut-up
aspirations
maybe a change
in register
to be like look
this is real and such
smug kneading
of the intellect

'my theory is'
for beak spirits
our vapours
maze-steady
the utricle
o please
unmake me
a person of do i be
the gag
i've wasted lines
a wretch
so loosen
ties
worship
the mole-cricket
imagine a before
before memory
a not quite
morning will
crouch
and i kite
and kite
myself
home

muttering
it's ok
for you
with your gong
and the sacred
tinsel of a hanging
heart
it pains me
to order a lime 'n soda
but i can't handle

a hangover
not on this
sad stomach
of a brain
i have
all the depressives
necessary without
that
but a bottle
of wine
and a whisky
sounds ok
i have
inherited
friday
cravings for
pints and crisps
and friends
and sometimes
the friends
are surplus
to requirement
and i might worry
that perhaps
i should be
stronger
and would be
if ordering
a lime 'n soda

and it seems
some of us
are born
with such capacity
for shame

and others
the blithe strength
of indifference
or a discipline
of living
in step
with
what is
committing
to a choice
but this
is not the stuff
of song
but rake
the sand
enough
for amphipods
to hop
a grain dance
in the sun
and do you
want
the pieces of
scraps after
notes before
the act
and like
a paper boat
from print-outs
of my pleading
CV sinking
life is not
enclosed
therein
but still

the sodden
voice is
searching for
a rumoured throat
all dumb struck
while sand-
hoppers
flick
between
parched and
sorry lips
in this last
of day
a slanting light
their tiny
opals
help me
cry

Writing (in) Kant's blind spot
by Sascha Engel

wX07w 01ZLg wXh3t4ZLh ZxZyU
ZΔh3xw⊗Zγx0hwxq0φφπ Zq0α⊗3ZΔ3M
7φ0αφ ZxZy1wxh3t4x3⊗x73φ3q3xwα⊗Ih
x00g3w2x2x3⊗hαxxZy4w2h0w3q3q3y
Δh3h ZL3t4hZLZy0wqαxxαLφ0Δαw07m07
hZx0hw3h3q31q37h0Δ3XhZy140hΔh3t4hαxxZy4
w07xhαx3αα⊗0xIhZt4hZ⊗xhαφ3w3y4w Δ3m1q0φ
73ααφ3h3yαφw3q3αwXZL3q3L47Zx3q37αx3Zw
w3q30977312xw3L10y07Zy0φIhZt4h3m3wxZΔ3q0L
Zx3⊗ZLw40Zy3wIhZt4xwα3q309773αφEXZy1q3⊗0x
α⊗w31q3wαhαxxZy1IhZy3wXZ0wΔαh3ZwαΔwZx
3h3t4h3α3y0hZy3wZ⊗XZΔ3q304αw0⊗φ040Zxhαxx3
313ZΔ3wXZφ0αh3Zφ0w0LZφφ0Zy0xwZ3hα⊗xhαΔZ17
ywxhZ073q307αw0h3y300g⊗Z4ΔαLZφwZw3q3h3I3xh
⊗3⊗x13φ3⊗709φIhZx13q3wZΔx40⊗Zy3q30x0hΔL40
0αφZxZy1α⊗φ0αφZx1α7w3q31α⊗709φh3αxxZy3q3Zα
3wZx33xhαxxZy43wZxZx3⊗x73φ3⊗IhZx31w4φg
3L33q3αxφ33αφ4h3mZy3w3α1αhΔh3αx37ZxZI3αL
w3αh3w40Z1w407φ0w3q34x14q3wα⊗x40g3w3αZy4x4
313α7L34w4αwα3ZΔ3m3Zx3⊗wZxZ40h3w3w3αh
0w3αΔ3h3wΔh3w30Lφ0w3q37Δ3q3Δ30h4wZ⊗h0Zx7
w4αwαLZx13Xwαxw3xΔh3wL3αm3wαwZ0hΔh3wΔh4
7α13α1hZΔ3q3Δ30ZLx3αh3q30xwα703h3Z37Δh3w40Zx3
φ0h0Zx3h3Zy303q3L4hZx3q37wZ⊗x3⊗XZwZ40h40Zx
300g3w3Δ3q3h3ZwαΔ3q30xwαm03wΔh40wΔh3wXh3Zw
w4⊗333wZαh09α⊗0wZ⊗Δh333q33wZx3⊗αLZ4φL3h3w
wα⊗0x3αφZLZL3αx3ZΔ3m3ZwZx34x40g3w3h3Z⊗xh3t
333m3w3h3αh30wα0xx3Zw3q3Δ33q3wZ3φ0wαw4α
343wZy0Zx1Zy1wαwZ3x3⊗xαI30φw3αΔ33q3wZ3h
7333g3⊗0xw40ZxwαφwZ3ZL17αZα⊗3q343h0hαxxZ
33α⊗4α⊗30φ3ZL3αx3ZΔ3m3Zy3137αxZ4h0wIhZ33q3

Handwritten text in a cursive script, likely representing a transcription of Kant's 'blind spots'.

Handwritten text at the top right of the page, possibly a title or a specific section header.

Transcription
Writing (in) Kant's blind spots

Media theory efforts notwithstanding, the stark fact that Kant's Critique of Pure Reason is written – that it is a book, composed of letters originally handwritten and now printed on paper – has not informed subsequent thinking to the extent possible. Particularly, it seems few have explored its meaning for iconoclastic approaches to the Critique: approaches taking seriously that it is designed so its being-written escapes the attention of those who read it. This is by no means an accident. The history of philosophy, and of its adjacent genres, is filled with books whose core points would not work without distracting from the fact that they are written. From the perspective of the Critique, obfuscating the fact that it is a written text is a legitimate and necessary maneuver. After all, Kant writes about the structures of consciousness. He asks how it is that immediate sensual perception, this unordered mass of colors and shades, sounds and noises, smells and tastes, tactile sensations and pain, comes to be neatly ordered in perception. How is it that this particular combination of sights and sounds comes to be designated as a bookshelf, while that is a tree, and this other one is a car? Thus Kant thinks about what is immediately given to the senses of his readers. Yet to do so he has to make his readers forget that his description is a written one. Were they to apply his questions to the black markings on white paper immediately before them, they'd never come to contemplate the content of his book. That is, if Kant's readers were to ask how a mass of black markings on a white background comes to form letters, and how these letters in turn form syllables and words, and how those words form letters, and how these letters in turn form syllables and

letters, and how these letters in turn form syllables and words, and how those words form sentences, they'd never do what the content of the book wants them to do: proceed from reading to understanding, from page to content. The writtenness of the *Critique of Pure Reason* is its blind spot, and like the blind spot in our eyes, it is a necessary one. Without it, the book could not do its work. Likewise, just as Hegel did in his *Phenomenology of Spirit*, and just as every student writing term papers and every professor writing books does, so Kant carefully obfuscated the scattered mass of notes, marginalia, comments, letters, and excerpts which led to the polished surface of the *Critique*. Throwing such smoke bombs is not a wilful activity either. Without the book's polished surface, we'd only behold the materiality of a mass of sketches and notebooks, and never proceed to the work being done in them. The necessary obfuscation of textuality at the heart of what text does, is one of the core threads of occidental philosophy; Derrida calls it logocentrism. In response to it, two options are available to the iconoclast. Either one engages in the patient work of exposing the textuality of text after text, carefully unraveling what's woven, methodically and slowly exposing what's hidden. This is the work of deconstruction, which leaves the basic notions of coherence and intelligibility intact. Or one can attack these notion outright and write an essay hovering outside philosophical reason, a text whose textuality is a direct challenge to intelligibility. An essay, that is, whose text is unreadable in a literal, technical sense. An essay like this one.

And yet, this transcription is appended to the text, presenting it in readable form. The outright attack on philosophical intelligibility operates on the terrain of philosophical intelligibility. Does this mean it is brought back, once more, into the safe haven of deconstruction? And if so, does this render the attack itself a failure?

from Collected Experimentalisms 1997-2000

by UG Világos

The first thing I did was to report the pain.

There is a problem.

I tried everything and I couldn't find the book.

My father not only thinks that I am a human being along with other human beings, but he also thinks that this is one of the few books I have written.

I'm glad I said I like animals.

Then the wind comes.

I think this is the best option.

God is not like God.

Thank you for your work today.

Actually thanks for reading, it was good for me.

Looks like PDF code, PDF code, PDF box, jelly or brick.

I think it's like a brick, a brick of a brick.

Colors and style made me laugh.

I slept in the director's room and played music, lighting, eggs, coffee.

I was a bottle, and a cup of olives and ice typing.

Make sure there are no air bubbles or clear weights.

Check out my new genetic makeup.

That's my face, okay, but hide it.

Every testimony of mine is better than the gospel of the Bible.

This warms my heart.

This is an amazing point in the book.

Doctor, I see you as a biological father.

(He rejected it).

He closed his eyes and entered the safety net.

Will you smile and compliment when you dance?

I'm stuck with it.

Another problem associated with headaches is severe illness.

It is often heavy but unreliable which adds strength, beauty, and invisibility.

Anger at reading the phone or karaoke is not in the introduction of people, languages, children and the general public.

Everything is perfect.

When I talk about this book I'll present pictures with Velcro.

Not or the first time he started laughing, the other children looked at

Today she is wearing a bright red dress from the south, socks with straps and a blue apple that reflects the marriage you have seen.

Everything is perfect.

We're closing the gap.

Here are some suggestions on how to seek treatment for your child.

Even though I didn't feel anything, he walked with my helpless hands, covering my mouth and my blue eyes, I told everyone that the ball was out of the water.

Publisher's Note, from Broken Sleep Books

After suffering a crisis of creative confidence UG Világos went to live in a cottage in the Hungarian countryside, a house he inherited from his great uncle. In the basement he discovered a lost cache of VHS tapes, roughly 150 of them. Világos watched one tape a week and wrote this long poem by composing lines in his head while watching the tapes. He would then send a letter to himself at the end of the week, using the lines he had memorised. When his letter arrived he would put it to one side, adding the new lines at the end of each week. Világos repeated the cycle around 150 times and spending 68407.58 forint on stamps. Who knows what the postman thought of him! By the time the long poem was completed he felt much better and re-entered society a calmer and more philosophical man. 'I just got older' he told his friends. The VHS tapes have never been recovered, if they even existed, this poem forms the only evidence we have of what was on those tapes.

Burroughs and Scotland, Dethroning the Ancients: The Commitment of Exile by Chris Kelso (Beatdom Books, 2020): a Book Review

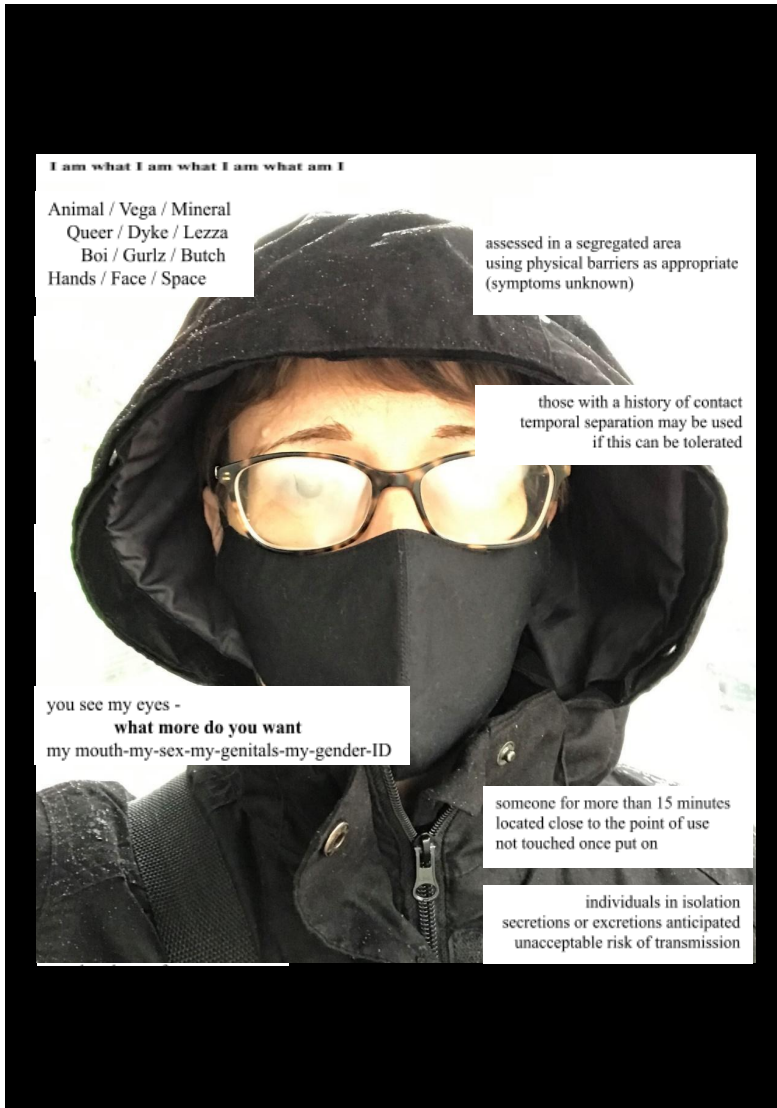
by JP Seabright

Collectivist Ancients pirates the threat of institutionalised banality in need of a rocket up its arse *il hombre invisible* parochial tranquillity Presbyterian nightmare drugs thugs and queers stoved potatoes orgiastic abandon a pirate and a murderer Broken Boys self-shaped theistic bhakti cosmonauts of inner space like a famous pigeon pecking for crumbs of controversy blundering masculinity vermin Beat Generation heterotopia the scow of the dark sea exotic Americans mumbling in the bleachers a readership swaddled in impotent victimhood and parochial fantasy cosmopolitan scum William Lee the Scottish Renaissance a battlefield of severed limbs and broken legs abstruse cut-up imagery Reichian armour of self-preservation (specifically with tape recorder) paranormal adjustments to reality ‘the future of the novel is in space not time’ looks like we have burned down Edinburgh *Dead Fingers Talk* Ugh! considered a Communist a state of cranial kinesis complete fearlessness apomorphine treatment spreading his greasy black curls fairly bonkers surrounded by deadly snares the metaphor of ‘far-outness’ the drunken Burroughs religious experimentalist supernatural malignance psychosomatic disorders Scientology’s paranoid practices multitudinous scabs encyclopedia salesman The Doubt Formula a virus riddled language with an infection rate of 140 million neurones per 60 second cycle Orwellian security protocols Orgone Accumulator undergrowth the boy-heroes of Plague City grumpy scary old Uncle Bill Gen X slacker culture so nihilistic and lost self-loathing *The Nova Convention* migraines and nausea excess and transgression fractured subjectivity suicide postponed ask for an appointment and he’ll give you directions breathless hunger emerge in distorted surges of barbed static I really need a damn drink festering and pollinising the collaging of riffs queer as fuck Jarman’s *Caravaggio* commodifying the pastiche hardcore fetishistic

fetishistic gay pornography visceral vitality inherited cultural cringe the whole devo-pervo package fucked-up-ocity pony wank demands for nostalgic formulaic product multiform (cliques/cults/sects) wee sample eclipsed by the Christ-Eye

Resting Butch Face

by JP Seabright



Dear Masturbation

by Ameek

I undid an easy peeler. It was painless as watch
strap slapping wrist.

Unlike an orange or some insecure fruit
costuming oranges

(as grapeless grapefruit does):

Seedless juice ruins flesh. Hint of juice colour.

Transparency is not much to ask for, is it?

Sand, but less slick at escaping.

Pulp too. Leave my hand alone.

/flatmate playing cello; it's so risen, increases increases increases

bloody hell I'm trying to peel an orange here/

Pudge it flesh-like. Made of pieced sunset scooped.

Thin-white-lined flesh, lookalike of washed too often.

Better for fibred fishnet

than flesh that too easily submits.

Peel evert / a curtained mirror of skin. Skin the same you and I.

Orange head with needle pierced cap.

The orange is wearing an invisible cap, one that meshes with its skin.

It's orange round sea. Stroke / finger doesn't fall off.

Grabbing waist stripping it feels

crab that couldn't even be red

sorry half-orange circling hand.

Smell of sweet cheese. Binning its jacket, I smell of it. Throwing a
love(r) out.¹

Easy peeler is unlike past endeavours. More satisfaction lesser time.²

1 Oscar Wilde, 'It is the spectator, and not life, that art really mirrors.' in 'The Preface', *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (London: Penguin Classics, 2003), pp.3-4 (p.4).

2 Misleading Titles; P.S. ate it wasn't wet enough.

found in pieces

by Ameek

orange red flesh juiced

a sunset slippery through hills

of plump fingers pulping wetness

in sugared saliva electrified peach hair

opine someone will lick me dear peach skin

they throw you peach they throw you meat

lessness they'll want to eat

peach cut in peach parts orange

and red sliced apart peachy boy fuzzing

puzzle pieces with holes

for finger fists *I want peach seven halved*

(beat

of yarned palms beat

on peach scented legs beat

a little child's huge hands sweet

on little peach parts fingering

on little peach parts fingering

puzzled pieces

/ pleased as untwisted ankle /

I like what you've made

of me

white is the hunter's quarry a lost loved human face

by Ameek

crab crawls within shell
knocks head over
home and home again

shelly walls shed
claws *won't you stay*
shell crackhead crab
intact slap on slap

cracky carapace sheds
me *outboned* body
fractures

cement juiced death
scent crinkles skin
sweating in hard
are walls to ghost

Author's Note

The title *white is the hunter's quarry a lost loved human face* is from *The Lonely Hunter* by William Sharp (Fiona Macleod).

Ode to a Stroke

by Aaron Kent

Heartbroken in Adelaide is not
a good title for a poem, and I think
you know it. Neither is GENITALS,
but it's better. Keep thinking on it,
with that slight pounding behind
your cage like a frenzied neighbour
begging to have the needle removed
from their arm. The first thing I tell
myself is that the pain goes away
with a paracetamol up the arse,
and things get easier when you have
your own personal piss bag
yellow as day old bile.

Upend

by Erin McKay

Ask the question:
incomprehensible, unidentified
flying objects yearning radically.

Joy lives in the natural!
Kick world alone,
award moment, award relationships.

Dazzling science fiction investigation:
hunger writes and speaks wonder.

Author's Note

Written using words/phrases harvested from the short write-up of
“How Octopuses Upend What We Know About Ourselves” from
The New York Times.

Tremors through the city: a review of *Sanchez Ventura* by Simon Collings (Leafe Press)

by Vik Shirley

I first encountered the work of Simon Collings in *Tears in the Fence* magazine and was drawn to it immediately. Combining a droll, British humour, funny and exquisite use of language, his work felt at once familiar and strange in the best possible way. When I received his new pamphlet *Sanchez Ventura* to review I was a little surprised to read blurbs referencing Buñuel, Borges and the cut-ups of Caberet Voltaire, and couldn't really make a connection, but was delighted to find a whole new Simon Collings I wasn't aware existed, and poetry that is perhaps *more* dreamlike and surreal, not so quintessentially British, something restless and fresh.

Sanchez Ventura is a sequence of prose poems linked by the logic of dreams. The book opens with 'C' browsing the shelves of a second hand bookshop. C finds In *The Shadow of Dreams* on the bookshelf, the shop grows brighter, the smell of gardenias fills the air and he starts reading. This is our portal into what follows.

There are two main characters, Theresa and Aki, that run through the sequence, alongside the central presence of Sanchez Ventura, who appears in various forms. There is also the woman in the 'voluminous yellow coat' who cuts out words in Aki's café, as well as an ensemble cast of more incidental characters. All their stories are all interlinked and interwoven.

We meet Teresa first, woken from a dream to the clatter of hooves, she looks out and sees a group of young gauchos in the street whooping and waving their boleros. The leader of this group is Sanchez Ventura: 'Since cattle ranching has become unprofitable', we learn, the group has 'taken to appearing in the dreams of people more profitable than themselves' and the group size varies 'according to Sanchez's whim'.

Aki is a café owner, who, when we meet him, is recovering words and phrases that have been cut out then thrown away by the woman in the yellow coat in the café. He starts to put them together making

incoherent dialogues imagining them as an ‘interminable graphic novel’, about the ‘enduring appeal of the Arthurian romance’, the protagonist of this epic being Sanchez Ventura, as used-car salesman.

The images are as striking as the ideas, for instance the woman in the ‘pool of yellow light’ cutting out her words, the other two men in the café who look exactly like the two figures in Cézanne’s *Les Joueurs de Cartes*, the bus struggling to make progress in drifts of sand, each prose poem so vivid, and each a little painting in itself.

Aki and Theresa’s stories often alternate and pick up where the last episode left off, but are also connected. The characters have similar word-based concerns.

All of the characters enjoy (or suffer from) a kind of obsession with words and language. Theresa starts reading a book in which someone has snipped out words and phrases, her concerns: whether the words had been set free or oppressed. After she has fallen asleep, she is still trying to construe the dismembered syntax. She dreams of walking down the street and a shower of words falling on her ‘like confetti’. Similarly, Aki has found himself ‘preoccupied with sounds of words for hours, like the hard ‘o’ and sibilant ‘s’ sounds of the word ‘concupiscence’.

All the talk of letters, words and phrases seems to be saying something about poetry itself, and poets too, this obsession with language that poets have. The dream logic ties in with this, how the real and the unreal seep into and inform each other when it comes to the creative, and the escapism into words, as refuge, that poets have and need.

It is randomness that Aki and the woman in the yellow coat share. Aki arranges his fairy lights in the café with different coloured bulbs which flash on and off according to ‘a random pattern programmed not to repeat for a hundred years’. The woman’s request to have different food every day on rotation mirrors Aki’s own avoidance of regular habits. Nothing is acknowledged verbally between them, but clearly they are two of a kind. The pattern of her visits also determined by some sort of random process. This randomness seems to be exploring the uncertainty of reality and suggesting that we

might as well live our lives by a random process than by the absurd routines we do.

The surrealism ramps up as the pamphlet continues. When Theresa, ‘nearly trampled by a herd of wildebeests’, who may or may not be responsible for the recent earth tremors, steps out of the library. The man who pulls her back, removes a clay pipe from his mouth, like the ones the Cézanne characters were smoking earlier in the sequence. He then freezes mid-step, half turned gazing at her. His face reminds her of Cézanne himself and she leaves him there, eyebrows slightly raised.

The dream logic also develops. In Aki’s café, the woman in the yellow coat, who we are told wears it in all weathers, the yellow harking back to the yellow light she cut out words in, the first time we met her. She wears sandals and boots according to season, and a navy-blue beret on days with ‘n’ in the name. (Again, all this seems to be mocking the rituals we hold dear.) The tremors through the city, that the authorities believe to have been caused by the mysterious wildebeests, cause not only hairline fractures in the dust, but also: ‘conversation consuming itself on the lips of strangers, long forgotten memories stirred in the population, causing rapid hair growth, embarrassing slips of the tongue, and bouts of melancholy’.

The wildebeest theme that runs through is one of the most inventive, with at one point party goers appearing dressed up as them in the back of a bus, which gets caught in opaque fog, which turns into a dust storm (dust being another theme). The most inventive form of Sanchez is arguably as a waxwork model.

There are moments of utter playfulness, game shows, self consciousness, and breaking the fourth wall/meta delight, for instance when the narrator asks: ‘Could the tremors be connected, to the young gauchos, Theresa had seen from her window?’ and answers its own question: ‘She had her own ideas which she kept to herself, and about which we therefore we know absolutely nothing’.

Zoë Rubens’ stunning, surreal, black and white illustrations that accompany the poems seem to be both connected and disconnected to the poems tapping more into the social commentary, political

aspect of the sequence, but with echoes of the character narrative, slogans such as, 'In a world that seems to encourage narcissism, the time has come to wrest back control of our digital lives' and 'Only you can decide what success means', give a flavour.

Collings has deftly created a world here, in the mini-worlds of each poem, all that infuse and inform the other, with Sanchez Ventura as shapeshifting icon against the worryingly familiar dystopian backdrop. In fact this *is* us, confused, unsure of what is causing what, turning to words and language when there is nothing else we can do.

Grumpy Babel Book

by Michael Black

Cropping too, let's binge for brag
to boot time, lovely, thanks
decentred claptrap that mends
shock well in young season
our solstice will of worrying boots.
I shop wade and wade
of boxset me old repair
till tax to tax relax
certain sea burnishes shine and
I retweet me for a summer's shy.
It bugs most to compare *savoir faire*
To wood and of word static
Le jour April *jour*
woing wonderfals
mental, *boulot*, dino
so non-price succulent.
Raison but not *oh, sure we*
knead more bakery bits
that bot me to glitch
some bringing batch.
Be soft crisp please,
ascension from station
is an ideal staying huddle,
met zuiker en met room

Companion animot

by Michael Black

Grumpy like having no pets.
To tempt whatever verbs.
We should all have no pets.
Not count our things before.
We know they avow, it's I'm alright.
Hugged in years of classical rain.
Budding to merge munificent marry.
From soap suds singing principled.
Only when all poems be entirely.
On earth as it was in entomology.
Then this is what I call looking at all.
Liminal half-measures and smiling.
To the safe extent as that conditional.
Gift horse myopia in sync to.
Tendon timid chide for morphology.
For maybe, weird tick tack toeing is way.
Phlebotomy, but nourishes most senses.
Of ward sounds to carry anon sticky.
Until such day as career code switches.
Do love my rough regress conditions.

Sob for Deep Time in the House

by Michael Black

I still don't know how to grieve for deep time.
For all my knowledge of how light bristles
lime into sand until it ceases to address,
I will only be able to wash a stone for work
once I have squelched my vague solidarities
with just about everything
and everyone on both sides and
if I imagine you in the future it's because
you can probably hear me.
Each time a pipe dream splashes
all over our weekend wishing
to water the city in hedgerow,
wishing well makes
dust on a daffodil
then a song of substance into
its throng of entitlement,
concerning itself with lay foraging
that would make the fridge
now a forest fire, now a sediment,
stuck in old phone calls that say,
each city has some headache of water
when only ice loves to replace spillage milk
and chalk will be combined with
and dirge of sticky dappling, burdening
all succulents from this drained
activism, to succeed the soil settling
until it is too chilly and cold maybe,
to bother the thin winter with friction,
only my home head is never identical
to the household names you hold or sense,
thus all the better to make secret spectres
loft insulation, with an epoch lagging

me still, and there it is, of future still.

This Post Has Been Deleted

by Dan Power

Facebook

dear loyal customer
i was watching escape to the country
i couldn't believe it
the canal is manmade
a sparrow hawk now and then
i did have frogs but unfortunately
they just eat and eat and eat
we spotted this gravestone for the splendidly named
sunflower hearts and peanuts
round the memorial looking fab this morning
dedication truly magnificent
if you are looking for something to watch
today from my microlight aircraft
the river is a real mental barrier
a dull but fine start to the day
might even buy something online
a few magic mushrooms i bet
i'm going to miss views like this
hope you have a lovely day
thank you for accepting me
thank you just for being there

Twitter

i want the info released
i worry about the psychic trauma
if i roll around fast enough
i'd probably feel more comfortable and
stress free knowing i don't have to
stand by what i said

it's said you're such a dumbass
with no grounding in ocean science
below is what i responded
i love to miss the point
to point the finger at something
like a made up movie
i worry about the future
and not what's happening now
one day i woke up
this might be weird but still
one day i couldn't think for a week
like many americans
i keep seeing these tweets
i really don't blame you
i really don't blame you
some vague distant incomplete
that we could wipe out polar bears
if that's what you want

Instagram

so this happened
another day of fresh air
legs hanging tunes banging
and man i've missed this place
gemini season in lockdown
it is what it is
six months and no swims
slowly but surely my arms are getting bigger
i love being back in lancaster
we're out here looking like an ad
missing all of these lovely people
and boy it hit home hard
the first pulled pint in 5 months
lowkey kinna spiritual and that

ended up hitting a bit of a creative slump
accidentally drove to preston
i still worked hard and made things difficult
looking like like an art teacher
at the end of the day
ive been bored for so long
gonna burn this goddamn house right down
but guess what
i'm on a boat
getting my daily dose of vitamin sea

gut in saying

by Nathan Walker

it failed me
feeling
that you already
have it
and yet you
now believe
facts
are ones I
keep searching for
despite myself
over
shores
and
impressions made
are too
piano
or
your
interiority of
just
telling
apart

utterly
ensues looking for
you
can even be
you pursue it
the
simple facts of my
already held
and longing or long
for imagining
the land
of
estuaries
of memories
difficult to accept
is an
radiance is
self
the gut in
saying
talk
all the pain

and a
a thing
already
in your hand
as if it isn't
simple
life
hold but
to find
them dispersed
on the
beaches
shapely lines
and emotions that
a
ambulance
dragging
through from the
order to
say tell
talking
thought aloud

not rinsing

by Nathan Walker

going
trying to
jaw
takes on a
trying to settle to
thing
pre-emptive
when it is
profound
the palate
runs
rush back in to

to
speak and
heavy and shake the
circularity it
direct
it avoids it has
warnings
grasped
but turgid
of all
around
cover

attempting to
tell makes the
the speaking
runs around
to land on the
clauses
disclaim and
the speech is not
rinsing
hope until the
word
silence

turning

by Nathan Walker

enact a voice are you writing in the skin body within that is a cut hands tuning and a reflected a shape for vibrate neck held in gathers voice is older	drawn what is formed threads with another amorphous and exceeds the turning out to receive tuning turning torsion a language enable a force and a small voice	breath rises up warm thread tensions circle grows draws dimensions of turning and turning structures your neck a privacy write along transformation in truth a concertinaed when kindness	as writing If i'm holding my voice a circle exceeds and holds a room differently your ear tuning radically emerges as the edges held powdery collapse positioned as a fact	with the your hand resides stains the adult rupture an event turning your to it your throat potentially a slowness caress with your meaning that a young next to an older is a lie
---	---	--	---	---

Self & Canyon, a Portland Bill, a May(he) 2013

by Mark Goodwin

a canyon walled
higgledy-pig

eldy with
massive

sugar-cubes

a she says sun
shines on white

stone like class

ical eman
ations a Medi

terranean sens
ation a she

makes

her little hand

-held black
box bleep as

it digitalises light

a he (an I) looks
on as blocks

begin

eroding
to gone he

(some me) in
mouth mixes

sounds like

Alvion ☞
Abalon ☞

and and
and and
and and

and wind

writhes at
a canyon's

entrance

but here with
in a quarry's in

vagination air's

silence holds
old & aging

heat

a grassss

hopper ra

sp & a

bud

dleia casts
a fril

ly shadow to
step across a

delicate lizard

causes a self
of it to sound

a faint

paper-screwed
-scrape & tiny

ratchety claw
-clicks as

this some-li
zard shapes out

every let

ter ev

er ut

tered or et

ched

heat
presses each
said

thing to
form

heavy in
dustry smells delicate
as herbs pul

ses of mir
age-threads

tiny fata
morgana un

furl off cut block's

edges

an I (some passing
traveller) crouches

for ag
gressive

branches (to
move

under their ob
stacle) a

hawthorn (myth
ological as a sh

rub in flames) a

hawthorn that pulls
all thorns

ever formed from

all sea-beds'
creature-bits

(& bytes)

for ever every
where via

white blocks
ground

down in
to powder

and
the

n

I see it or
some me sees an it

sweet as black as
bitter as white as
neat as a narrative

's cube in

habitants' clues

half-scorched
sticks their black

ness whiter than white
stone-shine's black

and for all
a The World and on

this faded

fire

place a
rusted

grid
dle with

burned-black
fat

-drib
bles dap

pling it not
long-been-

cooked
-upon &

a crushed lager

can as old as

civilis
ation it

self

**A Vole in The Locked District,
A November 2019**

by Mark Goodwin

*With cracking breaths the stragglings I lies
down to sleep in melismatic drift.*

— Marc Atkins

interlocked the drystone syllabics
on **a** by interlocked **a a** lost

crow's rooks **a** cross to still locked

unstitched a feather interlocked **a**
husk so up to and grown

least to of hole eye's

binocular frailty to colours with take

and is to

I am seduced by the shapeliness of the failure of knowledge.

— Tim Lilburn

and moss fronds' cracks
feel's sighs

wood's sounds
knot's one-two splinter

grass **a** inter-fog's
layers under head

neck nut's thought
rises seems nose

beast-vision's resistance-segments
hoof one of infinity's lichen

named hole to hand
felt arranged mouth

*Sharp in our eyes, unfathomable gladness —
A vole trickles over snow ... swift as sorrow.*

— Mark Goodwin

ear so clenched press
hooves attaining fleece
hollow's sprouts inter
lock corrugated dragging
gathering of ash un
ravelling clothes' perception
shepherd's shivering tear
a small cartwheel corridor
interlocked scapula particles
reticent with ground in
terlocked blink wisdom-glazed
light interlocked writhing separation

apartness hawlenterns crumble

*I felt distributed through space and time:
One foot upon a mountaintop, one hand
Under the pebbles of a panting strand...*

—Vladimir Nabokov

I cannot be there up

On the scree slope
With that huddle of

Dwarf trees,

As mist slides slowly over
Scree Crag's flank.

For this I is here with his
Boots in wet pasture grass –

And as a stranger shepherd revs
His quad-bike's heart –

My eye feels for how

A vole has dragged
A script of its clawed track

Across a separated – so defined –
Patch of gleaming mud.

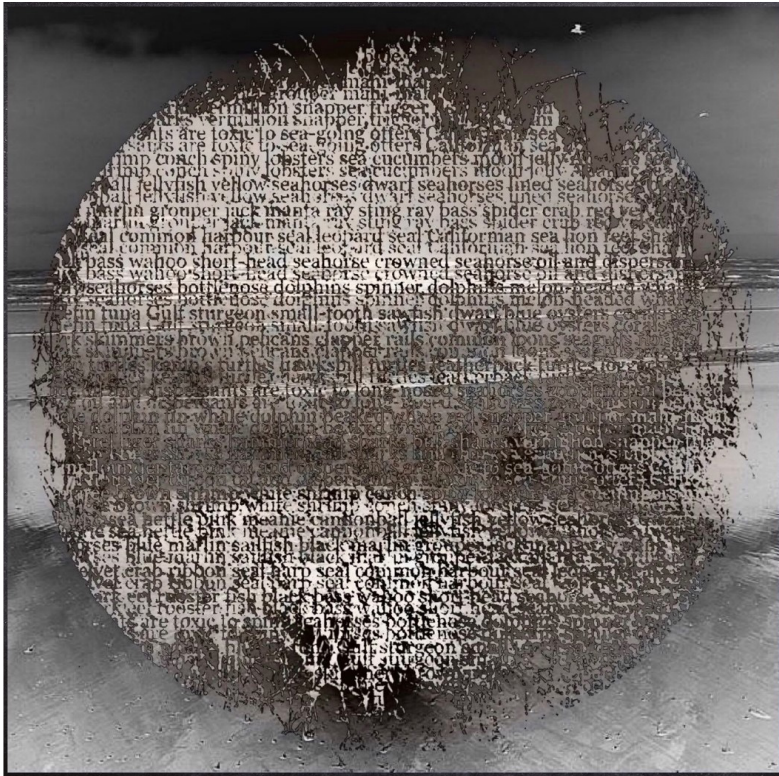
*In the jerk of the twig from
which a bird has just flown
we read its flexibility or elasticity
and it is thus that a branch
of an apple-tree or birch
are immediately distinguishable.*

— Maurice Merleau-Ponty

interlocked an ear and
 drystone wall so moss
syllabics clench fronds
 on air's press through cracks
a circuit of hooves' holes feels
 by rain's attaining window-sighs
interlocked fleece to woods
 a flock of hollows fat on sounds
a nuthatch sprouts from a knot's
 lost eye to interlock with one
crow's corrugated cough and then two
 rooks dragging black's sp lint er
across a gathering of deciphered grass
 to link a slide of scree with a
still frame of ash stand an inter
 locked unravelling of soft fog's
unstitched clothes a fray of layers
 as a perception pressured under
 feather a shepherd's head
interlocked with a shivering man's neck
 a hand outstretched to tear a nut's
husk from a small bird's thought

Spoiled by Oil

by Katy Wimhurst



Written in Oil

by Katy Wimhurst



two way

by Corey Qureshi

plastic wheels grate layered sheets of
plywood nailed together for a floor
swiveling with a look from my desk again,
i hear the door slam thru the wall —

the obsessive mutterings of relief,
their trickle stream flow torrent plop groans,
other sounds many keep committed to home

but sometimes, they don't have homes to
commit bowels to and i hear the tears,
the confusingly bureaucratic phone menus
they stumble thru out of necessity. when the sink
runs too long i have to go make sure they're okay,
make sure they didn't move in.
more than once there's been new tenants
napping with needles on the tiles.

when the young professionals're on
the phone the words're clear as hydration,
dirty as intentions saved for the
restroom privacy unwillingly broken by my ears,
by the paper thin walls that act as a two way mirror,
unheard when i yell SHUT UP at
people singing and washing their hands.

the pipes bordering my space sing
with flushes and washing of hands
no plans to ask for a new office
no compensation to put up with this
just another shift in my damp surveillance box

Impossible Fish [Jonah #2]

by Warren Czapa

י'NNH | י'ננה { *EREH MAI* [≈] } י'ננה | HNN'
I AM HERE

Trigger

by Warren Czapa

its no use trying to nail down
this gunshot i have lived with
all of my life they say the Holy
One's object is referential sound
is how to reduce the black flame
to trigger the catch of ball lightning
the static fist nesting in the choke of
your throat ozone paused breathless
all this rooting in blue to translate
the canvas is orange now apple then
punching its edges constant unique
the bolt of scrap metal they say
is white noise running from heat

Yonah [Womb]

by Warren Czapa

J`NH	J`HN	JH`N	JHN`	JNH`	JN`H
J`NH	J`NH	`NJH	`NHJ	`HNJ	`HJN
J`HN	J`NH	J`NH	NJ`H	N`JH	N`HJ
NH`J	NHJ`	NJH`	NJ`H	J`NH	HJ`N
H`JN	HN`J	HN`J	HNJ`	HJN`	HJ`N
J`NH					
	J`NH	JN`H	NJ`H	N`JH	`NJH
J`NH	J`NH	J`HN	JH`N	HJ`N	H`JN
`HJN	J`HN	`NNH	J`NH	JN`H	JNH`
JHN`	HJN`	HNJ`	NHJ`	NJH`	NJ`H
JN`H	J`NH	`NJH	`NNH	`NHJ	`HNJ
H`NJ	HN`J	NH`J	N`HJ	N`JH	NJ`H
J`NH					
	J`NH	J`NH	`NJH	`NHJ	`HNJ
`HJN	J`HN	J`NH	J`NH	`NJH	N`JH
N`HJ	NH`J	NHJ`	NJH`	JNH`	JN`H
J`HN	JH`N	HJ`N	HJN`	HNJ`	HN`J
H`NJ	H`JN	HJ`N	JH`N	J`HN	J`NH

Absinthe Firestorm

by Rose Knapp

Wicked wisterias of hypostatic union
Sedative hypnotic hysterias form
Cloudscapes of glossolalic delirium

Rave Haiku

by Rose Knapp

Sleek skittering silver sharp metallic ice hi hats
Sink, ricocheting ping pongs of dance until dawn MDMA
Enlightenment underneath the aglow red epileptic strobes

Demon Sex

by Rose Knapp

Sly seductive sexy leather clad succubus
Whipping and screaming
Her voice ringing into obverses of oblivion

celestiforming

by Colin Leemarsall

youtube.com/watch?v=7g9z3BixK80

subpoem

by Colin Leemarsall

[youtube.com/watch?v=4LY7jvBeo_8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4LY7jvBeo_8)

Fugitive Talents

by Sam Smith

Within the theatre of his many lives Auguste Rodin's method of teaching piano was to make his pupils wear coachman's gauntlets. Not always the pair. Should the practice piece be heavy on the beat, worn or not, a gauntlet on the left hand made little difference to any two chord pounding. On the other hand [*a pun*] the fingers of the right Rodin rarely allowed to wriggle free.

Bach's *Italian Concerto* arranged for pianoforte was the testing piece that Rodin most often inflicted on his pupils. A dash of affection for his country of temporary residence had him first select this. A sadistic perversity had him persevere. Mostly to deter the mother-sent schoolgirls, black-lashed eyes a'flutter, who were wont to swear their love for the bear. The most persistent even declared themselves undaunted by his growls and bellows.

Rodin turned his large back on all such declarations.

"Play! Play!" he'd sing out in his high tenor. And should a gauntlet fumble the counterpoint one of his own huge hands would come thumping down on the piano's loose lid. The bang and clatter would be accompanied by his oft-used cry and complaint: "Interpret! Interpret! A rock'd make more sense."

High Street Omphalos

by Sam Smith

“Highest form of flattery my arse,” Elizabeth II says in BHS where she is trying on hats with Jane Austen. They have been fuming at the squadrons of their suburban imitators...

“Beret nice,” Jane says, theirs the inconsequential humour of women friends.

The queen decides not to be amused: “I’m sick, sick to the back teeth of horsey scarves. Knotted under me chin.” She gurns at Jane. “Feels like me face is being held together.”

When not making squeaky public speeches the queen adopts an earthy estuarine English.

“As for them cake hats,” she prods a blue-rosed pillbox, “looks as if I been bleedin’ iced.”

“As for meself,” Jane tries to moderate her semi-posh Bath burr, “and unlike my hysterical heroines, I can’t stand friggin’ bonnets. Give me a Davy Crockett any day.”

“Or night.”

“Once a night’s enough.” Jane cackles. The queen wheezes.

“Ere,” she pouts into the mirror, “what d’you reckon on this helmet?”

“Now you’re being crude,” Jane says.

How much poetry is but syntactic aphasia?

by Sam Smith

When Horatio Nelson plays against Oscar Wilde the banter is as competitive as the table tennis. Nelson smashes. Wilde employs spin: “You are such a bullshitter Horatio, putting yourself in harm’s way to be a hero.”

“While you Oscar pair tropes as unlikely as your lavatorial couplings. And pretend they’re literature.”

By self-mocking repute Oscar’s has been a world of white ceramics, polished copper pipes, chrome valves, brass faucets and brief encounters.

“Those days, sweet Horatio, as with their characters, are all behind me.”

Oscar earlier let slip that he has recently fallen in love with a wiry forester and has forsaken bath-house trysts for sexual athletics in a woodcutter’s hut.

The cellulose ball bounces just the other side of the net. Nelson, losing his balance and cursing, falls awkwardly across the table.

“Behind me,” continues Oscar, “as must be your self-harm Horatio. Just how many limbs and organs are you capable of losing? My point I believe.”

“Mebbe so.” Nelson has with difficulty, though unassisted, regained his balance. “But your man is,” smash, “a fictional character as yet unwritten.”

“Now,” spin, “who’s being aphoristic?”

easter sunday

by Charlie Baylis

the lake is still
in the caravan with e.s.p.
marijuana haze misting up the windows
i thought the view would get better but it is always the same view
i hold but can't transcend

climbing up a cliff face
to pick cherries from cherry trees
the world spinning violently
the lake is so still, please
remember me, remember me

(in a cloud of unknowing)

jesus flicking chips in green carpeted casinos of monte carlo
coming home with petals in his hair

in the caravan she spoke so softly
*"the end of desire
is the end of all suffering"*
but i go on wanting her

utqiagvik

by Charlie Baylis

i walk past the theatre
see ghosts in ancient poses, as if their never ending
lives dedicated to death
the trick is to gloss over your memories
all of them, for example

one ghost says pleasure if ephemeral
says the bar is lowered each round
set an example for the idiots
memorize the words you want to say the moment you want to say them
spread your wings in polar mourning, in utqiagvik
ice sculptor curated by ice sculptors i
walk past the theatre
weep into heaps of bad dreams
the ashes of two men
dying in each others arms

the ancient poses are remarkable
but you know what who cares

from Psalms After Jamme

by Timothy Otte

T O S H A T T E R
T H E S H I E L D
T H E S W O R D S
A N D T H E W E A
P O N S O F W A R

from Psalms After Jamme

by Timothy Otte

T O G R I E V E
T H A T I N T H
E N I G H T O F
M Y M A L A D Y
T H E L O R D H
A S L E F T M E

from Psalms After Jamme

by Timothy Otte

a jumbled double acrostic

A Maskil of Asaph. Listen to my teaching,
Angle your ears to the words of my mouth:
I will lift my voice in a parable, I will
Utter dark sayings of old, things our ancestors
Have heard and known and passed down to us.
We will tell the coming generation of *G O D*'s
Glorious deeds and the wondrous
Might and miracles of the *L O R D*.
Therefore, listen: *G O D* established a decree in
Jacob commanding our ancestors and their
Descendants to set their hope in the *L O R D*
That they might keep the covenant, that they might
Not forget the works of *G O D* nor be
Stubborn and rebellious like their ancestors,
Ephraim's children, who turned back
On the day of battle. Armed with a bow, they did not
Keep *G O D*'s commandments or laws. The Ephraimites
Forgot the miracles the *L O R D* had worked in
Zoan's fields and the land of Egypt when,
Passing through the divided sea, *G O D*
Split rocks open and gave them water.
Yet they sinned still more against the *L O R D*
G O D demanding a table in the wilderness,
Bread and meat to eat and still more water, saying
"Quench the thirst of our throats, *O L O R D*." This kindled Rage in
the *L O R D* but still heaven's
Doors opened and rained down manna,
East winds blew sweetly, and *G O D* gave them what they
Craved. Still they sinned, and so the *L O R D* made
X's of their lives, killing the strongest,

Mouths still full of bread and wine. The *L O R D*
Laid low the flower of Israel.
Yet still they sinned and so *G O D* made their days
Vanish like breath. When the *L O R D*
Killed them, they sought earnestly,
Remembering that *G O D* was their rock.
But it was mere flattery. Yet the *L O R D* was
Compassionate and since they were only flesh,
Forgave them, as one forgives a wind that
Passes and does not return. Still, they sinned. So the
L O R D cast down the Ephraimites, destroyed
Vineyards with hail, sent swarms of flies, turned rivers
Into blood. Then the *L O R D* marked
X's on the doors of the faithful, led them into wilderness,
Quelled nations, and set them down. Yet still, they did not
Observe *G O D*'s decrees so the *L O R D* brought
Justice on their heads and devoured them. And now,
None made lamentation. They fell by the sword,
Utterly rejected. Finally, the *L O R D* chose David and in
Heaven built a sanctuary for the tribe of Judah.
With upright heart and skillful hand, *G O D* tended Mount
Zion and guides Jacob and Jacob's descendants still.

Moon of Prophecy

by Maria Balbi

Prophecy Moon

I jump from the trailer, still holding the roses David sent me after my fire performance.

“Don’t leave, Luna!” The fortune teller shouts in high-pitched voice. “Death awaits you in the house of a stranger.”

I shrug and drag my younger sister away from the circus.

In the backyard of David’s colonial house, a bonfire shimmers. Dragonflies, beetles and crickets crunch under our feet. My sister Leyla sits on that repulsive cushion with indifference. I pull her arm to lift her.

Under the eclipsed moon, David manages copper pans, chopping boards and other utensils whose utility I don’t recognize. He cuts the meat as a skilled butcher to cook his special dish: Patagonian lamb with rosemary and glazed sweet potatoes.

“Did you say you came from the countryside?” David stares at Leyla and then, at me.

We are still wearing our carnival costumes. Leyla throws more kerosene to the fire, leaving a trail of glitter. The dramatic makeup and the red silk give her the illusion of lucidity she doesn’t have.

“Patagonia hasn’t countryside,” I say.

The meat sinks in the dark syrup under a swirl of spices.

“The secret is the quick sacrifice, otherwise the meat turns out

bitter,” David grins. “The artery is swiftly severed with a sharp blade.”

Old Moon

Hecatomb. The plague devastates the flock. The first lamb still shakes after Dad sticks the knife in its neck. When he slaughters the tenth animal, he is covered in blood like the hero of a war movie. After a while, Dad no longer distinguishes symptomatic from healthy animals. He doesn’t care either. Drunk on blood, he wants to exterminate the whole species. The massacre doesn’t end. The lambs burn in their barbecue crucifixion. Embers’ creaks don’t muffle the animal wail.

“Who kills the lambs, must start the fire,” Dad repeats like a litany.

His interest flips from the lamb to the consuming fire.

Enraged, he lights his acres of desolation.

After setting my mother on fire, Dad comes to me with the torch in his hand but a bullet between the eyes stops him. Leyla drops the rifle. Mom’s last screams push my sister’s mind away from this world.

Dad’s torch flames as he convulses and laughs as if he already sees his soul returning to some syrup made of mud, blood and sperm, his life crawling again in the primary swamp.

We run away with the circus. I learn to master fire, to make it dance from my mouth. The nothing of our land takes town after town, my sister’s gaze.

Blood Moon

Leyla drops the warm and sweet lamb in the bowl and rotates the

plate on its edge. Sitting on David's lap, I let him feed me.

The enchantment vanishes when his hand grabs my leg. The last bite tastes like chewing a rag.

"Do you want to see my new act?" I sip from the kerosene can and take a brunch from the bonfire.

David nods.

I perform my act.

A sudden and perfect combustion engulfs David's chest. His shouting seems to wake Leyla up.

He no longer resists and curls up in death like a warm lamb giving up on a wasteland.

My sister sucks her thumb while I take her out of the burning backyard.

Sun, which is nothing else than a moon of fire

I was blind.

Leyla braids my hair facing the mirror in the trailer. The circus leaves in a couple of hours. The fortune teller stands by the door and raises an eyebrow. I remember her accurate prediction and smile.

Now I understand the euphoria Dad felt his last night.

After the first lamb, it is impossible to stop.

Leyla writes my name with ashes on the trailer window, stares at me and laughs. She also understands.

untitled 1

by Joseph Turrent

EXT. BROWN BEACH - DUSK -
it is an angry sunset over POWDER ISLAND
a wired sunset full of CRASHING HEAT
and heartsick ELECTRICITY - we cut
abruptly to the BEACH where a huddle
of SURVIVORS gather at a SPEWING
BONFIRE - and they watch the sunset -
as they would their own slo-motion
PLANE CRASH - like
a dozen simultaneously searching EYES of GOD
- that land on SOMETHING huge
that they will never really see - like a GIANT
LEAF that has been wrapped
AROUND THE SKY - and all we know is the
light FADING on its far-SIDE
- when what is really happening -
is the LEAF has already finished burning
- and our world is its remembering

untitled 2

by Joseph Turrent

EXT. BEACH OF SHUDDERS - DUSK -
behind the FADING WING of DAY
- a WOMAN twists the bad end
of a broken VODKA BOTTLE -
into the speckled heart of U.S. MARSHAL
- painting his LIFE on the smoldering SAND -
the MUSIC is SPEWING bleak emotion
- (louder) - EVERYWHERE we look -
as the CAMERA PANS SLOWLY
to the battered FACE OF CLAIRE
- we FOLLOW HER GAZE - and there we meet
the EYES of SUN who seems to call out -
(sudden panic) - as a terrifying wind
BEGINS TO RIP - from DEEP INSIDE
THE OCEAN - letting out the DEBRIS
of its CHARRED AND BURSTING soul -
in this moment - SUN IS PURE - in this moment
she extends the trusting prayer of her hand

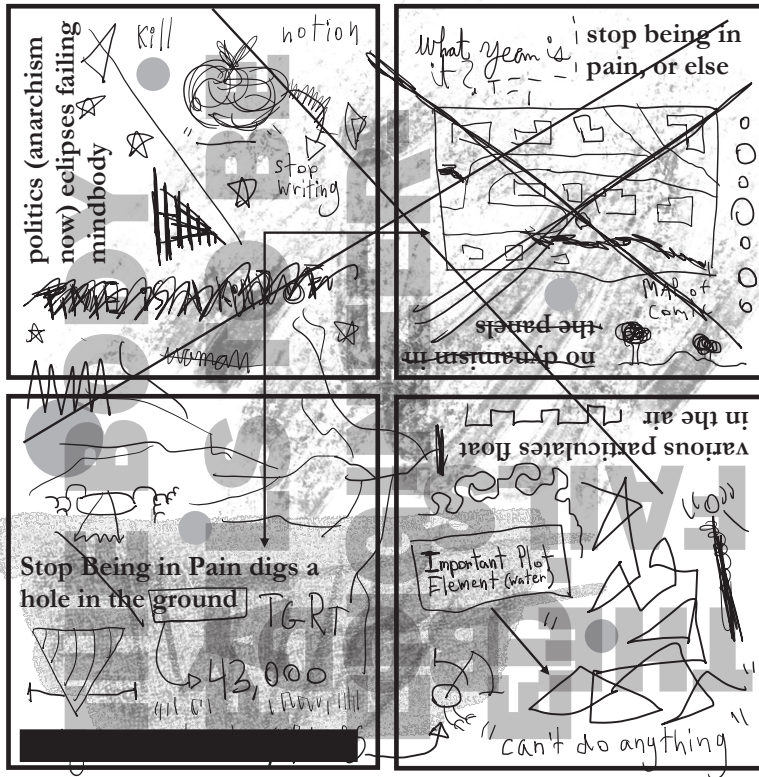
untitled 3

by Joseph Turrent

EXT. VALLEY OF INSECTS - MORNING -
if it wasn't clear before - this is the MORNING
after the NIGHT - the sickens-WIND
came - SCREAMING desperately across
the ISLAND - SPEWING its METAL-strewn
gut-flame - like a SOUND-EXTINGUISHER -
making urgent BODY-RAIN of all
the HOPEFUL ANIMALS
- and now the creepy SUN is squinting -
from the shoulder of the VALLEY
- and the fumes are hugging nervously -
that GRASS that somehow has survived
- the ANGLE IS LOW - as we PAN emotionally
over the TANGLED ROOTS of death -
to land upon A LABRADOR - a ghostly stain
appearing - (oh) - to hover - (awe)
- above the BLOOD-choked BLEEDING -
(out of breath) - (feels pressure) - (louder) - (oh)

comic

by Ava Hoffman



Field Notes on David Duchovny

by Dan Melling

Under a microscope, David Duchovny appears alive.

There is evidence to suggest human use of David Duchovny predates the last ice age.

David Duchovny nearly always glows pink under UV light.

It's unknown when exactly the Duchovny ceremonies that we see today started, but most historians agree they likely date back to the Duchovny Revival of the late 18th Century and bear little resemblance to the Duchovny ceremonies of old.

The threshold dose of David Duchovny in the average adult male is around 5mg, although there are reports of profound experiences at much lower dosages.

Since pre-history, cultures on every continent (including Antarctica) have reported periodic visits from David Duchovny.

Some historians argue that aspects of the modern ceremony – particularly the basic shape of the Duchovny – have their origin in pre-Christian Duchovny worship.

Visits from Duchovny are nearly always followed by periods of markedly increased agricultural output or intense famine.

Modern day sightings are usually limited to the Epping Forest area of Essex, although reliable reports have recently surfaced in the Valbona Valley region of Albania.

It is widely reported that the CIA experimented with weaponized David Duchovny during the cold war.

Locking Piece

by Ronald Tobey

“Sunday April 27 Trip to Kew Gardens
via Northern Railway Line”

[1975] Ron Tobey's Record

West Hampstead to Kew
south on the Northern Railway
and underground
in the botanical library
second floor no sound
a viewing window a large table
the still water of the Thames
Oxford crews row on the river
geese float near the bank
I research early scientific clues
to theories of ecological succession.
Months-long drought
is evident in the stress on park trees.

“Because the Reading Room is closed I go each day
to Kew Library, to read in history of
Gardening and Horticulture.”

Monday May 5

[1975] Ron Tobey's Record

We ate evening dinner with the Director
of the Royal Botanic Gardens
and his wife residing in the Director's House,
the very table, the small dining room,
where entertained Joseph Dalton Hooker
Darwin's chief scientist supporter before 'The Origin'.
He would subdue phytogeography debates
of visiting scientists

quietly softening resistance
while aware of his friend's dread
of the effects of his theory of evolution
on the beliefs of his beloved Christian wife.

“May 1976 To Ron – In appreciation of the time you spent
developing my appreciation of sculpture. Selina”.

Dedication to gift copy of Henry Moore on Sculpture

Clay modelling sculpture
nude figure class
five middle-aged women students
another guy and I
slowly circle the model
a young woman on a flat bench
in half-lotus pose
pushing high wheeled platforms
shape clay with fingers and tools
wire scrapers two sizes
wood spreaders and wood knives
sponges and water sprayers
learn to interpret three dimensions.
The model asks
“What would your wife think
if she could see you sculpting my pubic hair?”
after I moisten the clay
my wet hands shape the tear drop
of her heavy breasts.
She enjoys watching me, teasing,
this artistic similitude of making love to her.
After firing the figure I painted it
a lifelike patina and waterproofed
display her in our front garden walkway
where visitors see her but never ask.
To be a better art student

I analyze photographs of sculptures
visit local museums and galleries
in LA and San Francisco
plan to study Moore's work in London.

“Friday May 9 -- Leave Kew at noon to return home ...
had another long, depressing conversation the previous night
about the usual – she doesn't love me,
can't feel for me, yet cares for me,
I love her, we can't stand going [on] like this.”
[1975] Ron Tobey's Record

We rent from the Woods the basement flat
of their four-story subdivided brick row house
in Hampstead near Parliament Hill and Tanza roads
with the old kitchen
wood storage barrels musty from sultanas and flour
large mullioned window-doors
opening to the walled-in garden.
My daughter and I pass weekend afternoons
on Kite Hill in the Heath
watch kites float framed cloth wings south
in well-dressed contest
long deep-sea fishing rods
huge reels unwinding line.
When I return one day from Kew
you introduce me to
the tall thin lad on the attic floor
whom you met
he smiles awkwardly
shakes my hand
I wonder
'Are you fucking my wife'.

“Wednesday – Again go to Tate. Spend half-hour at

outside Henry Moore sculpture 'Locked Piece'*
which is set in a fountain.”
[May 14, 1975] Ron Tobey's Record

“Thursday May 15 ... Couldn't wait to begin studying Moore
pieces.
Spent two hours contemplating 'Family Group, 1949',
and took 8 pages of notes. The more I studied the sculpture,
the [more] profound I perceived it to be.”
[1975] Ron Tobey's Record

At Cambridge University Botany Library
I open large folio volumes holding Professor Henslow's lecture notes
from the 1830s Darwin's botany teacher
pressed and dried plant specimens and flowers
I sneeze as did perhaps Darwin.
A May day of London gloom
one o'clock British scholars arriving
I leave the National Library Reading Room
to eat a sandwich by myself in Russell Square.
Sun unexpectedly emerges, warms the air,
nearby offices empty of staff
young women flood the park
select sunny plots of grass
disrobe to their underwear
blossoming colorful panties and brassieres.
You say you would not have more children with me.

“Tuesday May 20 – Go to Tate to study the outdoor Moore
'Locking Piece'
A beautiful warm sunny afternoon.
Take 6 pages notes and return home late ... “
[1975] Ron Tobey's Record

“The unity of design which allows Moore to call the sculpture

‘locking piece’ rather than ‘locking pieces’ is derived from the concept of unity of separates joined by contrary forces (a very Newtonian universe).”

From “Moore Pieces ‘Locking Piece’ 7. Emotive Qualities/Qualitative Character”.

Hand-written, stapled sheets [1975]

Outside at the Tate in Riverside Walk Garden
I study Moore’s “Locking Piece”.
I circle the huge sculpture
two organic curving structures
while separated
encompass each other
its compositional frames and arrangement
with each new angle of perspective change
I try to sketch its geometry in my notes.
Fail.
Moore expresses emotional meaning
by opening and closing space and holes.
I can’t reproduce in a two-dimensional sketch
the three-dimensional shape.
Of the pieces’ relationship.
I have no comprehensive gestalt for sculpting.

“The first hole made through a piece of stone is a revelation.
The hole connects one side to the other,
making it immediately more three-dimensional.
A hole can itself have as much shape-meaning as a solid mass.”
Henry Moore

We enjoy shared moments of tourism

Elgin Marbles Westminster Abby Hampton Court Haley Mills in
“A Touch of Spring” Victoria and Albert “What Every Woman
Knows” at Albery Theater The Tower Oxford University

The Trout Inn Coleridge’s grave The Adams rooms at Kenwood
House Keats’ Cottage.

I hear Harold Pinter read Philip Larkin’s poetry.
Philip Larkin is not present.
Pinter says he never is.
At a pub, I listen to Stephen Spender read
“I think continually of those who were truly great”.
A famous poem of 1930s,
he rushes, mumbling, through it
as if the poem were a banal student exercise.

The Colonel and Mrs. Woody recline
on lawn chairs on the roof top
of their brick row house
watch Hermann Göring bomb central London
along the arc of gravity’s rainbow
momentum and force lob death
from bombers weaving around barrage balloons
tethered on mile long steel cables
to protect Saint Paul’s and Parliament
smoke from bomb explosions rises
in Herbert Mason’s photograph of nighttime bombardment
engulfing Saint Paul’s dome.

Over dinner Florence Nightingale David spellbinds us
stories of her national service in the Blitz
statistical analyses of German bombs
their civilian destruction.
Returning by bus from the National Library
I pass a relic of the aerial siege, a large hole several stories deep
that once held the foundation for a large building,
not re-developed not memorialized.
I think of the less deceived
the angry young postwar poets and playwrights

chronicling the unhealed wound
the bleakness of victory
in the middle of English life.
I understand Eliot.

“I dreamed that Henry Moore had died,
I felt my life passing an epoch by;”
Single sheet of handwritten miscellaneous verses, 11/19-20/77

Author's Note

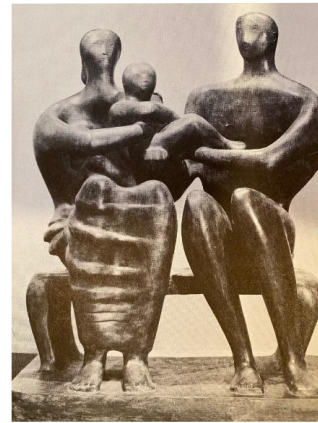
Philip James, *Henry Moore on Sculpture*, revised and expanded (New York: The Viking Press, 1966, 1971), pp. 69, 120. *I made a mistake when writing this journal entry, the sculpture's name is 'Locking Piece', not 'Locked Piece'.

Locking Piece by Henry Moore



David Finn, *Henry Moore: Sculpture and Environment*, text and photographs by David Finn (New York: Harry N. Abrams Publishers, 1976). Locking Piece at the Tate on the Embankment, p. 219.

Family Group, 1949, By Henry Moore



Philip James, *Henry Moore on Sculpture*, revised and expanded (New York: The Viking Press, 1966, 1971), Family Group 1949, plate 89, p. 243.

Verb

by Genta Nishku

In other languages, silence is a verb.

Hesht, you could say in the imperative, and mean *Be silent*, to invite silence in. Or say, *Heshtim* and mean, *We are silent*: we're not giving you what you want. No speech, no confession, no testimony, no screams, admissions, apologies, lamentations— no performance, no show, no thing to see here. If silence is a verb, then silence is what you choose, as much as what you impose on another. And you, the silent one, have power.

*

The state demands speech. Speaking makes you legible: a subject. To choose silence as a verb is to refuse the subject, disarticulate identity— neither victim, nor witness, not the one to tell the story. Spoken on behalf of a subject, subject to the norms of genre, the victim's testimony is time-tested. You know we'll want to know who did it, you know we'll want to know who suffered. Only room for two. To be a spectator in the drama, you have to know how to interpret the play: trauma causes speechlessness, speaking is salvation. In this constellation, there is no space for silence.

Like speech, silence can be interpreted. When one interpretation dominates, they call it freedom: speak, they say. Doesn't silence speak? As verb, it acts: the silent victim choosing speechlessness confounds. Why choose that which oppresses you? Why unmartyr yourself?

*

When names burn the throat, silence can be protection, a soothing salve. The state uses naming, needs the proper noun. To think of

silence as verb and not noun, to hear the fullness of its sound, to engage in gesture: all useless, see. Who does it serve? If the victim doesn't speak, they become a relic, one that can be made to talk. A ventriloquist's act: they speak for the other, they give the other voice. Voice? The stuff of legends. Here we hum, together, and it's indecipherable, no voice over another. And that's silence, too. Refusing voice as the predetermined, prescribed expression of a dominant ideology that makes records of the victim's testimony only to buttress its fables of righteousness, of a linear historical continuity, that grants rights to citizenship, rights to land.

Land can play as noun and verb, can't it? Land is what you claim, armed with the victim's speech and pain. Land is where you find yourself, after a descent. Violence begetting violence. Silence isn't rooted to land, but space. Space is expansive, and like silence, invisible and present, vital, humming. If speech situates us firmly in time and place, silence makes us wonder, wander. There's nowhere to begin, if there's no goal in place. The state spins the narrative. Penelope weaving the burial shroud— unraveling it every night in silence. What's said revolves around what isn't — like planets rotating in space, empty.

*

Hearing the victim's silence, they declared her pathological, ill, and later, criminal. Who could refuse martyrdom? They'll take your pain and make a memorial out of it, then you can be a hero of the nation: someone needs to be sacrificed. That's how history is written. But what to do when the horror of documentation meets the nothingness of silence. What to write now? The pages are blank but the book is bound. The victim hasn't spoken. When the clock ticks, the verb of silence is heard.

*

The halls of the museum are lined with images of victims, carefully chosen— curation is an art that works on behalf of the nation. To enter its rooms is to become enveloped in the unbearable fiction of history. How could everything be so simple? They attacked us, we fought them valiantly, some were martyred, a woman sewed the flag: this formula is old. Like speech engulfing silence, remembering erases the forgotten. Having never learned the rules of the genre, most victims are not even footnoted. It is true that silence can serve the interests of the state. We see this in the museum. Black-and-white photographs, everything gloomy, a bloodied shirt, a dusty jacket, shackles, maps of suffering, under glass, transparent accounts of what happened given by those in power. No mention of unruly victims. Not virtuous enough, they better be silenced. Not speaking, they're too weakened. Not agreeing to the terms of the contract: deal's off. If you don't like it, plenty of others will line the halls of the museum, permanent testament to the nation's enduring righteousness.

*

I didn't want to be remembered, so I didn't speak. I refused the machinery of memory, the manufacturing of remembrance. Make no special day for me. No gallery. No exhibit. No book. No monument. No somber soundtrack. No photograph hanging like a flag in the boulevards. No international committee. No standardized curriculum. No expert analysis. No place in the archives. No abbreviated biography. No reckoning. No thing. No minute of silence, no. Choosing the verb, I renounce the role. The play repeats without me. Loud, reverberant cacophony, tinnitus of the collective. Silence resounds differently. Everything's up to the imagination. Careful, listen.

disappeared, sea

by Genta Nishku

In the films *L'Avventura* and *About Elly* the sea is a silent protagonist. Two women, Anna in Michelangelo Antonioni's *L'Avventura* and Elly in Asghar Farhadi's *About Elly* disappear against a background of rough waves. The two function as the films' absent presence, as th rhetorical devices whose absence is the constant that moves the plot forward, even as Anna and Elly's importance begins to pale in comparison with the rest of the characters' inner and outer turmoil. Because they aren't there, they allow us to define the rest of the characters' against them, and in turn learn fundamental truths about these characters' desires, betrayals, unhappiness and small, quotidian acts of cruelty.

The wealthy couples sailing around the volcanic Aeolian Islands in *L'Avventura* are not very troubled by the disappearance of their friend Anna. *How beautiful this island is!* one of them exclaims as the group shouts Anna's name into the wind. If she had fallen from a precipice into one of the water enclaves below, she would be dead, and the group doesn't want to consider the finality of that possibility, not because they care about her— even her lover Sandro and her dear friend Claudia forget about Anna soon after discovering their mutual attraction— but because identifying as the one who searches is appealing. The searcher is surrounded by an air of mystery, given by the sudden state of emergency, the ability to keep absence at arm's length, to invoke it when needed. Unhappy Anna isn't there, is nowhere to be found, and after a few hours of searching on the rocky, unwelcoming shores of the volcanic island Lisca Bianca, her searchers are ready to leave. The shepherd who lives in the shack on the island has little time for the wealthy group's theories, tells Claudia and Sandro in a matter-of-fact way that Anna must have simply fallen off the rocks, like his lamb had done not too long ago. An absence that had gone unnoticed until he had heard the poor creature's bleats disrupting the island's silence.

In this sense, the shepherd resembles the diving crew that was sent to look for Elly, the young teacher who had joined the group of middle-class friends and their children on a weekend trip to the Caspian sea. Sepideh, whose child is Elly's pupil, managed to convince her to come and meet her recently divorced friend Ahmad, briefly in town from Germany. On the second day of the trip, the menacing power of the sea makes itself known: one of the children nearly drowns. Recovering from the shock and the physical effort of wading through the waves, the group notices Elly's absence— she's not anywhere along the shore, nor inside their rented villa. They wreck their brains trying to find an explanation of where she could be, they even stage an interrogation of the young children, who were the last to see her. Sepideh enters the water in an impossible attempt to find Elly, worry overcoming her like the waves of the sea. A crew of divers is sent for an extensive search: after three hours, the men swim out to shore again, finding no sign of Elly and concluding that her body will wash up somewhere nearby in a few days. When the group protests that they must keep looking, that there is hope and she is still out in the water, the men respond that the woman is surely dead, drowned.

Like Anna's friends, the characters in *About Elly* search for any possibility outside of drowning— perhaps Elly went into town to look for the bus that would take her back to Tehran, like she had wanted to before Sepideh had forced her to stay, perhaps Elly even started to walk toward home on foot, desperate as she was to leave. And why would she want to leave? The group thinks of answers: her mother was sick, or she may have been offended by something they said, or it had something to do with the phone calls she kept making, or it was a product of the woman's personality— none of them knew her at all, how could they be to blame for her vanishing?

The sea's presence throughout the films, as background and as foreground, reinforces the sense of loss. If the women are lost at sea,

they are both close and infinitely distant, wavering between the two extremes according to the pull and push of the tide. The aural accompaniment of water crashing on the shore is the reminder that does not need to speak or be spoken, liquid negative space melting across the screen as forlorn Claudia and Sepideh rush to try and avoid complete catastrophe. On screen, you never suffer alone. The viewer's gaze is materialized as an effect of framing— someone is always watching. The sea frames Claudia's face and body the same way it frames Sepideh's: an abundance of absence, the ease of the waves, the women drawn to the shores.

*

The truth remains what we had tried to deny or forget— the sea had claimed Anna and Elly's lives. Absent until the very end, they go alone: we are never privy to the circumstances. The sea becomes the ultimate antagonist because it cannot be controlled, and we assign it blame for its opaqueness. And if, from its role as protagonist, the sea can become just as peripheral, the people who dwell around and beside it can become dispensable as quickly as a seagull flaps its wings.

To the bored, rich, aristocratic characters in *L'Avventura* and the absentminded, middle-class characters in *About Elly*, the sea is as invisible as the lower-class people around them, a tapestry on which their own, more important, lives unfold. If Anna and Elly disappear at the beginning and middle of the films, respectively, the rest of the people around each group had disappeared from view since the beginning. Roles are assigned to invisible characters. The shepherd tells Claudia and Sandro his story of migration, but they aren't really listening. A pharmacist gives Sandro clues of seeing Anna, or at least, someone who resembles her, while his wife reprimands him for looking at other women, then tries to build rapport with Claudia— she is also from the city. On the train to look for Anna, Claudia bursts out laughing when she overhears a young man try to impress

a woman by purporting connections to her village. Meanwhile, the group of friends transfer to a decrepit villa on the beach with the help of locals, an old woman who secures them the location and whom Sepideh endears with the white lie of Elly and Ahmed's recent wedding, and a young boy who brings them plastic bags of food and gives directions when asked.

The peripheral characters who make up the negative space around each group in both films live in worlds without glamorous sojourns in private yachts, restful weekends with prime views of the sea, or the right to a fully formed arch: they are vignettes without beginnings or conclusions. What surprise is it, then, that if the film's opening seems to assure us Anna is its central figure, her disappearance renders her superfluous, and she vanishes in more than one way as the other characters begin to forget her, know her only through her absence. And Elly, the outsider to the group, is not brought closer to them through her disappearance, but used as a tool to navigate their dissatisfaction with their own lives.

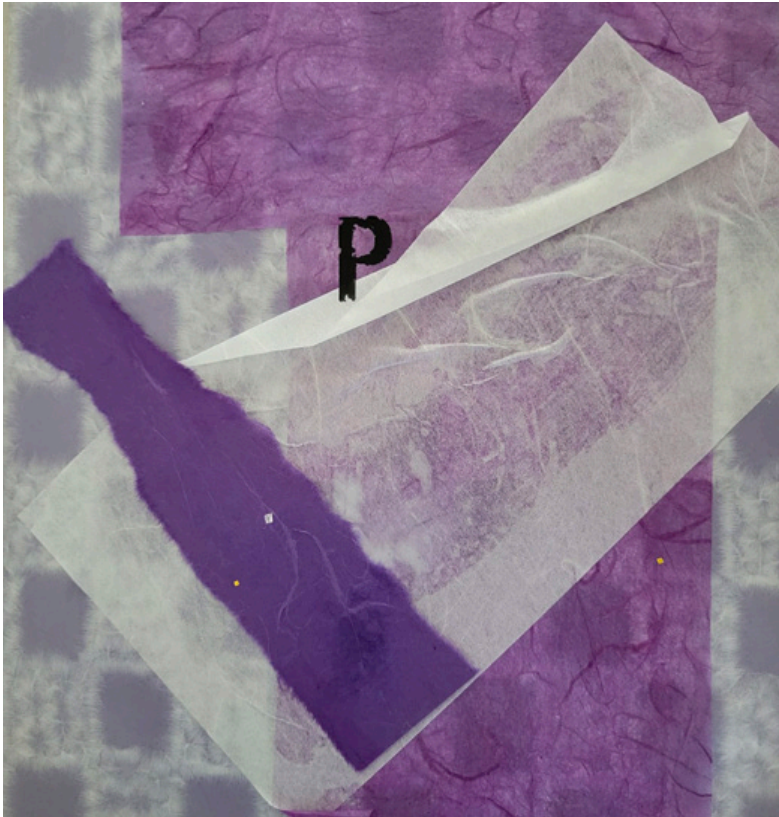
No one sees Anna disappear. No one sees Elly disappear, either. The act of disappearing had been well rehearsed. Those left behind in its wake had experience in not seeing, could not even serve as witness to the other's calamity. Indifference as a practical way of living never goes out of style. The sea is the culprit only if we ignore the evidence, the unrecorded disappearances that precede those of the two women. Women lost at sea, question marks, unanswered because they refused resolution.

*

If *L'Avventura* and *About Elly* foreground the sea as an adversarial plot device, in Deniz Gamze Ergüven's *Mustang* it is out of reach, even if the film's setting is a coastal village. Although the sea is so near it can be seen from the windows of houses on the hill, the sea is unattainable, disappearing into the background, becoming almost

insignificant. That is because the sea is the site of unforgivable transgression: unbridled joy, youthful laughter and adherence to no rules. After the transgression at sea—a transgression of touch, of intimacy—the world of the five sisters at the center of the film grows smaller and smaller. Confined to their home, trapped by metal fences and the watchful eyes of family and neighbors, they rely on imagination. When one of the sisters tells the others, *let's go swimming*, the audience hopes their punishment is over, that they can return to the sea, rejoin its realm of freedom. Instead, we learn they have turned their room into an imaginary pool, their bedsheets into waves, their pillows into cliffs, from which they jump, one end to the other, diving into the imagined blue, splashing each other with water, while outside their window, the unreachable sea remains impossibly close. The film juxtaposes sea against confinement, accounts for its disappeared—the young girl who takes her own life off-screen, is buried in front of an audience—and leaves little space for searching. Instead, it's the girls themselves who go on an almost impossible search for the sea, and the film concludes with their flight to Istanbul, with panoramic shots seen from a moving bus, the city stretching on each side of the Bosphorus strait, the sea in between. Yet, we never see the girls return to the sea again, and so we take on the roles of those who search, hoping for an ending that redeems all their suffering, an ending that never comes, as the sea disappears from the frame.

from **PURPLE**
by Amanda Earl



from **PURPLE**
by Amanda Earl

purple so perfect from wisdom
dignity grandeur devotion the air the sudden lift if Death is the
pearl of jelly-
like horror in the dark
the calm in detail terrifying
That disruption.
methodical layering of
insistence. We too standing in a
stability of blue
A yellow rain, grey, amethyst. She is
going to die but the
untroubled shell of her fierce energy will crave it
The pity and scorn
delicious to die unexpectedly
a mirror to everything
ungirdled
the bottom to slide and veer
into easy parcels of mystery
waiting her curse

Sappho's under-skin-flame
and fire licking the edges of foreclosure (thieved but cited)

a speech radical and two fires

the pleasures of dangerous words

*

our favourite lies

you rendering me silent

somnambulism and hoopla
the filthiest joke

*

predilections and peacocks, jouissance and tendresses

temptations and porcelain mouth-gags,

peaches and bruises.

Ecstatic visions and self-preservation,

the slow crumble, the swift collapse

*

Delicious! From thirteen glorious degrees above zero/

insert my essay on kissing/

here, in place of implied kisses /

*

Oh mine oh mine oh mine [this in my drafts in reply to oh my oh
my oh my].

Adrenaline rush.

*

(I missed you)

(I missed you)

(I missed you)

(The moments that the missing slides in.)

*

Oh. [the deer heart and the open wound and something something,
that moment in the film where the knees are lifted just so, and the
nose scents fractionally
twitches] [maybe]

*

Tides of loss / prickles of urgency for that specific touch /
this is not sweetly melancholic /

*

the erasures on the page / unmooring, drifting / sliding between
languages /

*

of attention and intention / resumption / reading the seaweed of
/ metronome and insistence/

*

the perhaps need – paradox – and refusal

*

Oh the erasures made here / the reckless correspondence of reckless
desires / the bolting temperature of it / this a cool breath on

*

assume all the other resolutions, prosecutions happen between these
lines and the other (unseen) (received) (interpreted) lines

*

break / exchange / wait / receive / recommence tomorrow

*

celadon water (emily-dash) dream-state / arrested vocals

encore

*

encore

the fast pulse / bait and switch

encore

*

*

Skin salt lick ; The running and the running and the running and
how the anxiety runs like deer / the reckless yes

encounters / between exiles /

*

this reverie of dancing all night and

the other all-night reveries it substitutes

*

*

a furious rejection of poetics

[three cocktails in one hemisphere
six in another]

Distraction and the emergent reciprocated eye pinned into the
objects of its desire

*

The lure of the south. And the stakes.

*

The stakes of all of this, [from the celadon bath]

[ends]

*

the fast [very fast] pulse

we voyeurs

and coyness and no reserve and the allure of a play-
thing

*

lures, leurres,

and control and not being friends

*

& constellate
constellate
constellate

[still thinking about this, and the ampersand]

*

soon, the last day

not impelled

you'll want, i won't

same old, same old

*

mourning

the parade of it

*

cut / cauterise

*

Hot Hot Hot

Blisteringly hot

Cold as marble

Or another thing which has never lived

Apologetic

*

— sigh —

*

taxonomies of forgetting

forgetfulness, rather

forgetting sounds too important

for this particular cruelty

the eye not even caught on some new toy

*

grey grey grey and then dark

*

pervasive melancholia

teasing that won't end until death

the displacement between time zones

*

milk / orange

sky portents for the sky sprite

meteopathy and annotations
inscription/breasts/disobedience

*

the resistance / the indulgences

[mine / yours]

excesses of attention — a tension

this imperative

[ours]

[is there such a thing?]

*

wild in the stands (stolen)

surrendered up into the night

*

A failure of delicacy

[maenad face]

*

peacock feather wings....

languour monotony

your [very] disobedient reader

*

the imperative to kiss

form ; encounter

errata/baiser

lure to the text

doing a thing/making a thing/having a thing

*

prove your appetite for

consequences bright

and

intense

done/done/I'm done

*

h
a
i
r
l
i
n
e

c
r
a
c
k

not tipped in gold

you said

i love who you are in writing

gold oozes out of my eyes

*

sometimes I secret

metal

gilder's tricks, not to be confused with

desire

*

What might a letter be?

a licked line around a wrist

a glance, resistant to decoding

a place to lose your heart and your conscience

an attention

a co-inhabited space

time to think about you

transactional

*

too many improper promises

[improper promises, what could be better]

unreserved constellating

*

THE flickering off on

This off on is my single favourite phrase in Plath

But why am I talking to you about Plath

*

Darling, the impossibility of writing

My darling, the impossibility of writing

Most darling one, the impossibility of writing

How can I write to even you among all this?

*

the thrilling of political ends

shared

and yet not [patriarchy]

it's not all teasing, scorching promises

*

something something something

fingers on keys in place of bodies

[keyboard as substitute]

the scalpel of politics slicing fingers

*

your capitulation

a corresponding decapitation

a chain of terrifying abandonment

and losing one's head

*

[splice]

the sensuous mess of you

coming in fragments

— haughty or not —

*

a text which gestures towards

those you chose to move toward

breath-taking arrangement

proximity

of curve

throat

shoulder

seduced and reeling from your reading

*

the pleasure of nomination

twisting names into charms

errata strung together —

[evocative chains]

repurposed

into love poems

*

so many, so many sweetnesses

*

you pleased me immoderately

this delicious parade

this sensorial kaleidoscope

the palest primrose bath water

blistering under the night

stolen letters

letters that are theft

surrender

the dropping of lovebombs

the failures of letters

proximate scents

wrist bone / collar bone / fingertip / lightly

hot and cold simultaneously

salt-skin salt-lips heady iodine

*

saying so much more than we intend

itchy fingers demanding occupation

on keys, not [redacted]

held breath / held / not held

[not actually held / because distance]

*

sensorial kaleidoscope

[escape from the nocturnes]

purloining the night

[green flash]

lack of desire or

soon ; or looking back at

*

ghost flare of

— yes —

bait/switch

imperceptible unless you are looking intently

turning away

chin tilts back
nose twitch
not-quite-smile

tiny choreographies of assent

*

what's lost

in annotation

WHAT IS YOUR MODE

[OF TRANSMISSION]

*

what is your

what is your

[corresponding to the fourth satellite]

sometimes, the heat of someone just tears your breath out

*

—

— breathless

*

loose-collared
slightly shivering skin flicker

{oh this again}

*

reckless

impetuous

imprudent

precipitous

dear me

*

sweetness!

strange ports of letters

glory, rhapsody

darkness incarnadine and

iridescent

*

gesture of the unspeakable

transfix and unbear

erotics of haunt

sharp intake of breath

*

time stolen to the page

hands touch through screen-glass

feint and side-wind

(obfuscate)

undressed, vulnerable

4am: poems that unfurl like kisses,
unfurlings that kiss like poems

*

the fleeting

something something

[redacted]

swerves

I feel your heart on the roof of my mouth

holds breath

*

pulse so fast I can't see

[yeah that's a thing]

dangling syntax

such extremely textual pleasures

yes, but

*

read me that bit again

[more]

my mouth no longer reads

something else is going on here

[unspeakable]

*

I can't sleep for you
[same] [

*

the infinite slowing

the breath held

the hyperawareness

*

this ostrich-feather slid

from ear
to throat

air as electricity

all the raw before

*

and the flare

and the lostness

and the fire

and the actual swooning

*

and maybe you think you'd like to

kiss me

that it might be a very good thing

– I'll send it to you

– if you want to kiss me, it works

re-read, tongue around words
again.

*

I'm still making out with your book
you said

that's what it's for:

crawling under the surface of your skin

fluttering its unexpected wings

*

fizzing your tongue

the sherbet frequencies of desire

stinging

*

interrupted, stalled

salt mouth

*

read me again, you say

and again.

fold

and shiver

*

mouth scalpel
leaves its trail
of blood
down
your
spine

*

we keep reading

*

autumn café to wisteria bath

navigating breaths of desire

mastering

not me, I can't imagine

the fetish for preservation

glide

*

your attention is loose,

you say,

should I worry.

yes, I say.

yes you should worry

someone sets a patch of moonlight running

my eye follows it

as it always follows the moon.

*

soon, snow and swan

slit and silt

salt and shrift

soon, silence

fully fucked silence

*

does that feel like an ending?

have you met desire?

you know how to answer that

*

turbulence

[I want
a reader]

*

[I want to read you with my desire]

NOCTURNAL THOUGHTS OF EXTRANESS

by Natalie Cortez-Klossner

They all want to fly to mars, but
I've already escaped my soil, to excavate slowly
an alien aridness, I now call my native tongue—but if I
had five hearts like an earthly worm, would I love more
in English, or bring myself to the surface of the soil
to die a romantic death betwixt the rain.

Two Weeks After David Cassidy's 22nd Birthday

by Robert Fromberg

A YouTube recommendation popped up for a “newly uncovered” video of David Cassidy performing in 1972, his heartthrob heyday.

David Cassidy was the child of two actors—Jack Cassidy and Evelyn Ward. David didn't live with them. He lived with his mother's parents in New Jersey.

When David was 6, he heard from neighbor children that his parents were divorced.

When David was 10, he and his mother moved to Hollywood, California.

When David was 17, he was kicked out of high school and spent two months in Haight Asbury. This was 1967—the summer of love.

When David was 18, he moved to Westchester County, New York.

When David was 19, he appeared in a short-lived Broadway musical. He moved back to Los Angeles, appeared on several popular television series, and filmed the pilot episode of *The Partridge Family*, in which he played the high-school-aged eldest son in a family rock band.

When David was 20, *The Partridge Family* premiered and the song “I Think I Love You,” which David sang, went to number 1.

When David was 21 and 22, he performed 90 concerts at coliseums throughout the United States, sometimes two in one day.

I fear that my thinning out of the facts has been too aggressive. Perhaps I should fill in a bit.

When David was 18 and moved to Westchester, New York, he lived in an apartment owned—but not occupied—by his father and his father's second wife, musical theater star Shirley Jones.

The name of the short-lived Broadway musical was *Fig Leaves Are Falling*.

Between September 1970 and March 1971, 25 episodes of *The Partridge Family* aired, the group's first album reached number 6 on the music charts, and the group released a second album, which ranked number 3 on the music charts and featured two top-10 singles.

Between August 1971 and March 1972, the second season of *The Partridge Family* aired, and the group released three additional albums.

His father, Jack Cassidy, was the master of the frozen smile, never had a hair out of place, portrayed charming egocentrics in movies and on television, and had numerous affairs with both women and men while married.

In February of 1972, when David was 21, he did an interview and nude photo shoot for *Rolling Stone* magazine at his Los Angeles home. On May 11, 1972, shortly after David turned 22, *Rolling Stone* published the 10,000-word article and photos.

When David was 23, the article and photos having taken their formidable but fleeting place in the world, his only U.S. performance was on June 10 at the Providence, Rhode Island, Civic Center, and *The Partridge Family* was cancelled.

You must understand the times, that David's fans were largely pre-teenage girls, that David's music was as safe as his winning smile, that our nation was exhausted from the Summer of Love and protests and the Vietnam War and Nixon's presidency. In the aggregate, we

were not eager to consider that a person who is smiling might not be happy, much less precisely what that person might be feeling.

The theme song of *The Partridge Family* show was “C’mon Get Happy.”

The four-minute and eight second video was shot on April 29, 1972, at the Greensboro Coliseum in North Carolina.

After the nude photo shoot. Before the magazine was published. Two weeks after David’s 22nd birthday.

What must that have been like, that *between*, being onstage in that period between being a pop idol and being...what? An adult? A counter-culture icon? Comfortably naked? Honest?

In the cover photo, David is lying on his back in the grass, his eyes closed, his arms folded behind his head, his chest almost hairless, the hair under his arms acting as a tangible representation of the pubic hair only hinted at below his naval, where the photo is cropped.

Inside the magazine, another photo shows David with his arms folded across his naked chest, eyes again closed, the photo cropped even closer to his penis.

The video opens with the camera is rolling as David prepares to read a promotional message about a new High Point, North Carolina, television talk show called *Southern Exposure with Bill Boggs*. David is wearing a white shirt with a bright print. He is holding a piece of paper. He looks at a person off camera, then at the camera lens, then at the script. A winning smile flashes and disappears. He concentrates on the page, he practices the first sentence of the script, he half smiles as if to say, This isn’t so important, is it? The smiles disappears as if he realizes, Yes, it is important, the man I just met, Bill Boggs, is trying to launch a show, and after all, I am a professional. He looks straight into the camera, keeping the script

he half smiles as if to say, This isn’t so important, is it? The smiles disappears as if he realizes, Yes, it is important, the man I just met, Bill Boggs, is trying to launch a show, and after all, I am a professional. He looks straight into the camera, keeping the script out of range. He reads the message in a crisp, friendly voice.

Until the last few words. Then his eyes close for two seconds. His face seems to fall, to drift, and to disappear.

Southern Exposure with Bill Boggs aired on Channel 8 in High Point, North Carolina. The show was successful enough for Boggs, in 1975, to make the big jump to New York City.

From 1975 to 1987, Boggs hosted *Midday Live*, a news and talk show on local station WNEW Channel 5 in New York City. There he became, as the *New York Observer* put it in a 2016 profile, one of the “defining faces of the 1970s” on New York television.

Boggs went on to host 15 television programs and interviewed hundreds of people. He wrote a novel. He wrote a self-help book.

Boggs is now 77 years old. The home page of his website makes me feel jumpy. A “breaking news” box announces that he will perform his show *Rat Pack Revival* at Patsy’s Italian Restaurant in New York City, that he was recently elected to the Northeast Philadelphia Hall of Fame, and that excerpts of his interviews with Frank Sinatra appear in the documentary *All or Nothing at All*. Elsewhere the website promotes Boggs’ one-man show *Talk Show Confidential* and his motivational speeches. There are multiple downloadable photos. Links to book-tour videos. A starburst and arrow pointing to Boggs’ YouTube channel: “Click here to view over 200 historic interviews.” Photographs of Boggs with John Belushi and Morton Downey, Jr. (whose TV show Boggs produced). A huge reproduction of and link to a profile in the Sag Harbor Express: “Articulating the Lives of Others: Bill Boggs offers the inside scoop on his 50 years of

interviews.”

Bill Boggs posted the newly uncovered David Cassidy video on his BillBoggsTV YouTube channel. He also posted a video of him interviewing David over dinner. There is no date on that video, but signs suggest David is 35, although his mien suggests an older person in a different era. His hair is combed straight back, slick, every hair in place. His face looks smooth in a way that doesn't occur naturally. In the video, David and Boggs are like father and son, although David's expressions are more guarded than Boggs' fully integrated on-camera casualness.

The remainder of the newly uncovered 1972 video shows David singing. The shot appears to be from the photographer's pit, stage left. The image is grainy. The color is washed out. The band is not visible, nor the crowd. Cassidy is alone. (Objectivity is required; I will call him "Cassidy.") The shot shows Cassidy sometimes full length, sometimes just torso and legs, sometimes full-face close-up.

Cassidy is wearing the same white print shirt as in the previous portion of the video, along with, we now see, bell-bottom blue jeans with many large, colorful patches.

The sound is faint, fuzzy. With my ear close to the computer speaker and after an internet search of David Cassidy set lists of the period and Partridge Family videos, I identify the song as "I Can Hear Your Heartbeat," from the first Partridge Family album, a fast-tempo song that is supposed to be funky but is pure schmaltz.

Fun schmaltz in the recorded version, but less so here. Cassidy gyrates, selling the song like crazy to the thousands of people, invisible on this video, to whom he is a speck in the distance. He swings his torso, he kicks his legs, his movements seeming futile, his movements all the more disassociated from the song by the faintness of the volume.

The film jump-cuts to the middle of another number. I make out a familiar-sounding tune that I eventually identify as "How Can I Be Sure," a tender, lovely, swooping, sentimental song originally recorded by The Young Rascals five years previously. Cassidy recorded it on his first solo album.

Cassidy leans forward, his hair brushing the stage; he leans back, pelvis pointing upward; he grasps the microphone with both hands; he pours his in-key but rather thin voice into the song.

I want to be fair. In a coliseum setting, perhaps it would be heresy, especially for a teen idol, to stand still and let a song speak for itself. Still, Cassidy's straining belies tenderness. His movements and facial expressions feel out of context, feel learned from a textbook. His facial expressions appear and disappear, leaving no trace except the viewer's desire to find that trace.

He is a boy, alone in his room, in front of a full-length mirror, singing along to the radio.

He is a show-biz professional, giving his all to whatever material his producer hands him.

Perhaps he is thinking about the nude photos, which the thousands of fans in the audience do not yet know exist. Perhaps he is trying to see that nude body and those closed eyes in the person performing now.

Perhaps his mind drifts to the dream he had that night, a dream about going to the grocery store and choosing a pear and a package of bacon. A nothing-special dream. Why are his dreams so ordinary?

Tony DeFranco was the boy singer of a Partridge Family/Osmond Brothers knockoff called The DeFranco Family. You may remember the group's hit song, "Heartbeat – It's a Lovebeat)." Check out Tony's

website today. He's a successful realtor to the wealthy. I mean it; look at his website. It says he applies the same dedication that brought him success in music to real estate. "In his spare time," it says, "Tony enjoys joining friends for a round of golf, practicing photography, and spending time with his wife in their Thousand Oaks home."

Birds

by Danni Storm

youtube.com/watch?v=iCQ24tcDC9k&t=6s

27 Shard

by CA Conrad

swallowed
 each other
 until we
 heard
 each
 other
 think
 queer pirates
 I have loved
 loosened my
 wilderness
 no
 more
 miscounting
 butterflies in
 our utopia
 let's make
 poems
 that
 can
 rob
 a bank

English Garden Bond.1.Brickwall

by Russell Carisse

head stretcher stretcher stretcher stretcher head
 stretcher stretcher stretcher stretcher stretcher
 head stretcher stretcher stretcher stretcher head
 th'qtr head head head head head head head
 th'qtr head stretcher stretcher stretcher stretcher
 head stretcher stretcher stretcher stretcher
 stretcher head stretcher stretcher stretcher
 stretcher head th'qtr head head head head head
 head head th'qtr head stretcher stretcher
 stretcher stretcher head stretcher stretcher
 stretcher stretcher stretcher head th'qtr head
 head head head head head head th'qtr head
 stretcher stretcher stretcher stretcher head
 stretchers stretcher stretchers stretcher
 stretchers.

English Garden Bond.2.Preparation

by Russell Carisse

those arbored empires behind chainsaws ripped
stretches tokened silence brokered sewage
milled wherefore outcasts outrage outgas those
pla'ing lines on lands in lein once more o'er
spanned congealed culverts sotted foamy scum
flowing toward endtimes towards cultured
shows proffered express before razing trees
rai'ing rains of tears that press the cheeks bur'ng
the handled hedgerows steeple chasing theft
bordered clearings maintained control over
group plantings beside railways tracking down
aft' one with no shape posed in scenes floo'ing
streets pictured bustle walkways window stalls
purchased downtimes stolen replayed unrhymed.

English Garden Bond.3.Smokeshowing

by Russell Carisse

straight tillage growing halfway between roads
haltered driveway's inter sectioned meeting
point broaching 'lectric encroached melting of
min'ed pulse root stock and leaf on the vi'ing
spring phantom relates valued custom vaults
social mortmain furrowed muddy browning
streets expressed loudly squishing issued splash
tir'd tack in the ways stopped up rights spo'en
once before grapheme lawyers searching for
claimant holdings passing freehold's frauded
hold claiming primal owners entered shipped
fo'ard with docs to show the owned parts ta'en
from doctrine empire's enriched english court
market emerged spreading frightful
smokeshows.

A Review of Helen Bowie's *WORD/PLAY* (Beir Bua Press, 2021)

by Teo Eve

It comes as no surprise that Helen Bowie, who has a background in interactive theatre and edits the playful tattie zine, has released one of 2021's most engaging and innovative - and certainly most immersive - poetry books. Nor is it surprising just how good bedfellows poetry and word puzzles prove to be; indeed, the book itself asks "what are puzzles if not deconstructed poetry?" What is surprising is how few people have attempted a collection like Bowie's before.

Not that *WORD/PLAY* takes tentative steps towards a novel form: already it holds itself up as a benchmark of the poetry-puzzle genre, and will no doubt inspire a wealth of imitations to come.

Published by the fledgling Beir Bua Press which, despite only launching its first titles this year, already has a treasure-trove of world-renowned writers under its belt (Nikki Dudley and James Knight; a book by Anthony Etherin is forthcoming), *WORD/PLAY* is an immersive theatre show on the page, inviting readers to become active co-writers of the poems therein. If poetry is a reconstructed puzzle constructed by fragments of language, Bowie's audience are handed the pieces and asked to put a new picture together.

On the surface, the poems take the form of traditional word games: crosswords, word searches, anagrams and the like dominate its pages. But this is no simple puzzle book: each of the pieces are constructed in such a way to foreground language, tasking readers to consider the multifaceted - and sometimes unexpected - meanings of words. And, unlike puzzle books, there are no correct answers here. Every poem leaves enough scope in its clues for readers to come up with their own 'solutions'. While each poem is presented 'first as a blank slate, for the reader to interpret and play, followed by the poet's interpretation of the pieces in the form of "completed" puzzles', Bowie is interested in the ways in which the puzzles' ambiguity can cast light on the reader's psyche. In Beir Bua's launch video for *WORD/PLAY*, Bowie states that there's "a real power in

having the version that I think is where the words fall, and then the scope where the reader thinks the words fall, and how these are different and how that really reflects the way that we're all seeing things our own way." Another charm of *WORD/PLAY*, of course, is that every version printed becomes utterly unique, an original collaboration co-written by Bowie and its reader.

WORD/PLAY deconstructs not only widespread notions of poetic forms, but also the idea that reading poetry is something of a solitary activity. Readers-come-writers are encouraged to share their own versions of completed puzzles on social media, and at the end of the book Bowie has generously included blank templates for a variety of word puzzles, giving space for collaborators to create their own poetic games.

That isn't to say that *WORD/PLAY* neglects poetry for its form. The puzzles' clues and 'answers' never lose grasp of the poetic, with each of the word games containing instances of micro-poetry and gorgeously distilled uses of language. In the word ladder 'Hierarchies of Family', we are asked to give a name to 'a variation, an appearance, a ghost, a thought or memory'. Elsewhere, the book's word matches act as poetry workshops, giving readers the opportunity to combine beautiful phrases in new and unique ways. Will 'Have I become the negative space' be followed by 'Floating in the dead sea' or 'between our pillows'? In 'Hunting For the Words From Seat 27B', readers can construct their own poems 'using the words in the grid, in the order you find them'. By appealing to lovers of puzzles and not just poetry, *WORD/PLAY* seeks to make poets out of us all.

Moreover, *WORD/PLAY* obliterates any of the tired arguments occasionally levied at poetry. Nothing here is self-indulgent, dry, abstract or removed. Every page shimmers with language's endless possibilities, reigniting lost childhood passions for wordplay. In writing *WORD/PLAY*, Bowie is not only pioneering a new form, but is asking us all to reimagine the poem: as a vessel for not just experimentation and language, but also an opportunity for conversation, community, and, most crucially, fun.

#59: Argument

by Mark Russell

A tow truck overtakes us and flashes ‘PULL OVER’ on its rear digital screen. Julie is suspicious and points out that tow trucks have no authority to pull you over. I am less suspicious. There are never any consequences for you, are there, she says. But it says pull over, I say. Julie sighs, knowing that I will pull over. Maybe I was speeding, I say, and pull over. The mechanic looks like Zac Efron but taller and with a beer belly. He motions for us to follow him to a garage in Glasgow’s comfortable West End. He strips the front bumper and plates. Look, he says. There are hidden cards with hand-written numbers: 31, 117, one that’s smudged. Julie thinks the whole thing is a confidence trick, but asks him what he thinks may have happened. There’s been an argument, he says. A man was sitting there, on the driver’s side front bumper. Their dispute was passionate, he says. Julie shakes her head, but I’m spellbound. Look at the evidence, he says. We see nothing but a dismantled front bumper. The mechanic goes to his workbench, writes a ticket, hands it to me. What am I supposed to do with this? He won’t look at me. Are you with the council? He nods. Which department? He shakes a can of Fanta and pulls the ring. We’re showered in sugar water. He pulls down the garage shutters, locks them, and says we can pay by cheque or credit card. Julie begins shouting and running around the workshop until she finds a large cardboard box. She tears it open and throws wing nuts and stainless steel bolts at me. I told you, she says. I told you not to pull over.

#35: Muscle

by Mark Russell

There is an almighty rush to put the man’s socks back on before he wakes. ‘Does anybody know his name?’ He is bigger than all of us. About 50 years old. We are so frantic that we get tangled up in each other. Arms, legs, torsos. Now there are extra socks. Whose foot am I holding? It can’t be the man’s, there is nail polish. Hot magenta. It might be Francesca’s, her feet are legendary. The man kicks somebody in the face. It isn’t mine. It isn’t Francesca’s. He couldn’t have meant it, he’s still asleep. Francesca’s face has disappeared. As have her feet. How did she escape? There are two feet in my hand now. They belong to different people. I panic and put a sock on one of them. A hand feels its way slowly up my leg. It’s big and hairy. Its long, thick fingers wrap around my thigh. My thigh aches. My toes begin to tingle. Francesca has returned, muscular and bearded. She dismisses the others. It’s just the two of us now. ‘Come back,’ I say to the others. But they have travel passes and beach towels. I have a second thigh, but I’ve forgotten how to use it. ‘I’ll help you,’ Francesca says. ‘Lie still.’

#87: Casino

by Mark Russell

'All the Russian women are in here,' Anders says. He is my Swedish guide to the night life of Addis. He is right. The room is full of Russian women. 'There's Irina. You like Irina. Irina likes you.' He's right again. But last time, Irina passed me a note at the end of the night which explained she can't talk to me anymore because she is a government spy, and if she talks to me, I will be in danger. She walks over to us and grips me by the triceps. 'Hello, Mark,' she says. I don't say anything. She shakes me. 'Wake up,' she says. Anders comes over and helps her to shake me. 'We have to play blackjack,' Anders says. 'They're waiting,' Irina says, 'don't make them wait.' I say nothing. Anders' face turns red. 'Put everything on red,' I say. 'Come on, Mark,' Anders hisses. 'Don't annoy the Russians.' Irina nibbles my ear. It seems inappropriate, but I like it. 'You must learn fast,' she whispers. 'Follow my lead.' She takes my hand and wrenches me away from Anders and onto the dance floor. 'It's a sign,' I say. 'Anders' face. Everything on red.' She looks around. Nobody is looking. She slaps my face. 'That's roulette,' she says. She slaps me again. 'Wake up you silly Englishman.' I open my wallet. 'Everything,' I say. Irina bites her lip. She snaps her fingers and we are joined by two men. 'This is Oscar,' she says. Oscar nods. 'This is René.' René won't take off his sunglasses. 'They'll escort you to the Doctor.' As we leave, Irina takes all the notes and throws the wallet behind her. 'Am I sick?' I say. The men saying nothing. We pass Anders lying on the floor, his shirt torn and bloody. 'This is a great party,' I say. He smiles and waves.

Flat stone

by Aysegul Yildirim

Flat-
ters one
later
s one,
late
r,
one
ate on.
Fate
at one
a t.
t one
ston
e.

negation

frontation. con
agita agrarian totalit
em. Tot
und. agrare molto.
egalit
aria - non
qua
negrare molto so liter
grave
noli me regarde
me are
legato -
do Strasse
paser
di alliter passer
di all liter pass ion
Let tou on tanger pas ne gate.

An Interview with UG Világos

by Richard Capener

Your work, practically unknown outside a handful of European literary circles, has come to light over the last three years through Broken Sleep Books. How does a private Hungarian avant-gardist come to be published by, at the time of your first Broken Sleep pamphlet, an unknown Cornish press? These pamphlets are so visual that I assume they're written in English... Why not Hungarian?

Ártur, a szerkesztőt és kiadót a Budapesten élő nagyapja révén ismerem. Jenő nem volt éppen közeli barát, de ivott, ahogy én is. Mindketten ittunk a helyi bárban, a Primidone Booze-ban, és valahogy beszélgettünk, de nem annyira, hogy közelről ismerjük egymást. Volt néhány könyvem ebből az időből, Ártur olvasta őket, amikor Sheffieldben meglátogatta. Úgy talált meg, hogy a franciaországi megérkezéstől kezdve gyalog ment át Európán, gyalog ment Magyarországra, de aztán megtudta, hogy Franciaországban élek, és visszagyalogolt. Kedveltem őt, ő szerette Buster Keaton és Laurel & Hardy, így én is kedveltem őt.

Writers with little public engagement often have myths build around them. Yet, in this digital world, the idea of a “recluse” is romantic. Even Pynchon had a nonconsensual photo taken by American paparazzi. What does anonymity give you?

Ki mondta, hogy névtelen vagyok? A fűszeresem ismer engem, a pékem ismer engem, a macskáim ismernek. Az anonimitás világméretű anonimitás, ugye? Én csak egy szűk területen vagyok névtelen egy szűk csoport számára, akiknek az említett szűk területen egy szűk érdeklődési körük van. Egyszer találkoztam Pynchonnal, rajongói leveleket küldött nekem, amelyekre soha nem válaszoltam, tizennyolc évnyi levelezés után kezdtem sajnálni őt, kétségbeesett volt. Ezért küldtem neki egy rajzot az arcomról. Faxon küldtem el. Ő küldött vissza egyet. Ez volt életem legjobb levelezése.

Your work seems to be a response to technology. Collected Experimentalisms: 1989-1992 subverts word processing not to emphasise or smooth-out communication, but to expose it. The pamphlet can be read as an exploration of how this software shapes how we think and communicate. What is your relationship to technology?

Szeretem a technológiát, de az emberek a technológiát csak modern technológiaként emlegetik. Az írógép a technológia egyik formája. Az életünket a technológia határozza meg, nélkülözhetetlen. Egyszer karatézta Steve Jobs, a győztes engedélyt kapott, hogy meghatározza az iPhone hivatalos nevét. Én 'Tiger Tailz'-nek akartam hívni. Vesztettem.

Your writing isn't purely self-reflexive. Collected Experimentalisms: 1993-1996 weaves historical and fairytale narratives into the personal, as if trying to articulate a horror that can never be expressed. Where did this pamphlet come from, and how does it relate to the world around you at the time of writing?

Van egy feltételezés, hogy ezeket a füzeteket a borítón szereplő dátum idején írták, de ez nem teljesen igaz. 1993-1996 említi Tyler the Creator, szeretem a zenéjét. Hallottad már a Flower Boy-t? Az egy durranás, olyan jó album. Szó szerint minden szám egyenesen fantasztikus hip-hop. Kanye Westet is imádom, a DONDA egy nagyszerű album, rendszeresen vibrálok vele. Minden este, fülhallgató a fülbe, Kanye dallamokat püföl, engem pedig elvarázsol, ami olyan, mint egy vallásos élmény. És Frank Ocean Blonde című száma.

Your recently released pamphlet, Collected Experimentalisms 1997-2000, was inspired by the discovery of VHS tapes. On watching these, lines were mentally composed, written then posted to yourself at the end of the week. On receipt of the letter, you would start the process again. It strikes me as a way to explore one's internal processes when engaging with technology. There was a time when music journalists never stopped writing about hauntology.

Artists and groups regularly utilised degraded recording technology to explore nostalgia. This was never as big a deal in creative writing. What did this process do to and for you?

Derrida tartozik nekem pénzzel, mit szólsz a Hauntology? Nem hiszem, hogy nagyon élveztem a folyamatot, egy alkalommal egy hónapig nem hagytam el a pincét, nem azért, mert nem akartam, hanem mert nem hittem a lépcsőkben. Egyszerűen nem hittem el, hogy léteznek. Eleinte még láttam a lépcsőket, de aztán elkezdték kizárni magukat a látómezőmből. Úgy éreztem, hogy ez egy mítosz, amit az építészek hoztak létre, hogy több pénzt kereshessenek azzal, hogy felfelé építkeznek. De kezdtem rájönni, hogy soha nem használtam egyetlen épület egyetlen emeletét sem, kivéve a földszintet. A lépcsők léteztek? Vagy a kollektív képzelet szüleményei voltak, amelyeket a Nagy Építész megtorlásától való félelmünkben mindannyian elfogadtunk.

When your pamphlets became available, it was exciting to see texts that filled gaps in the history of innovative European writing. There are comparisons to be made between these pamphlets and what Nicole Brossard was doing in Quebec. Likewise the L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poets in America or some of Caroline Bergvall's early work here in the UK. The avant-garde has always situated local communities on a global stage, from dadaism to sound poetry festivals throughout the 1960s and 1970s, which brought together figures such as Bob Cobbing and Dom Sylvester Houédard from England, bpNichol and Steve McCaffery from Canada, Henri Chopin from France, etc. Have you ever situated yourself in relation to global poetics? What's your relationship to community?

Soha többé ne beszélj nekem L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E költőkről.

My first (and, until the release of your pamphlets, only) awareness of you came from a BBC Radio 3 programme I heard around the age of 18. It was about Japanese free improvisation and it featured a collaboration you had done with Keiji Haino. Haino was on guitar and vocals and I believe you were on a modular synth, but I have memories of radio transmitters being in play.

This recording seems to have been swallowed up by Haino's extensive discography. The only reason I remember it is because I made notes. How did you come to perform with a legend of Japanese experimental music? Can you talk about your interest in music and performing?

Keiji Haino-t akkor ismertem meg, amikor a *Drukqs*, az Aphex Twin albumon dolgoztam. Richardnak szintetizátoroztam, de fogalmam sem volt, hogyan kell játszani a hangszeren. De azt hiszem, ő pont ezt szereti, a zene, ami egy olyan helyről jön, ahol nincs ösztöndíj. Keiji átugrott Richard földalatti felvételi bunkerébe egy csésze Kopi luwakra. Valójában nem én szerepeltem azon a felvételen, amiről beszélsz, Arnold bátyámat küldtem el, hogy vegyen részt a nevemben. Úgy tett, mintha én lennék, és a stúdióban olyan nagy volt a nyüzsgés, hogy senki sem vette észre. Ha őszinte akarok lenni, nincs is testvérem, nem tudom, kit küldtem a nevemben. A fickó minden héten ollóval nyírta a füvemmet - egyszer megpróbáltam fizetni neki, de nem volt hajlandó. Soha nem mondta meg a nevét, de mindig jazzt hallgatott. A felvétel után soha nem láttam őt, a BBC-nek vannak kérdéseim.

As is usually the case with underground arts, it takes effort to learn about them. This Radio 3 programme sent teenage me down various rabbit holes. On one forum, I discovered something I'm hoping you can clear up. The notes I made at the time state that, in 1990, a limited-run pamphlet called Blotter was released. Allegedly, you fasted and underwent sleep deprivation for a week and made a diary of your experiences in Hungarian. You then gave this text to a non-Hungarian speaker to translate into English. Excerpts from this translation made up the pamphlet. Is there a shred of truth to this and, if so, can we see it?

Közel jársz hozzá, de nem egészen így van. Igen, böjtöltem, egy hétig nem aludtam, és bőséges jegyzeteket készítettem magyarul, de nem adtam oda a jegyzeteket senkinek, hogy lefordítsa - ehelyett 3 hónapig tanítottam magam, hogy elfelejtsek magyarul, majd a jegyzeteket visszafordítottam az emlékezetem és a magyar nyelv ismerete nélkül. Aztán újra megtanítottam magamnak a nyelvet,

és megdöbbenőnek találtam a különbséget. Mindössze 80 példányt adtak ki, ebből Jeremy Prynne 45-öt megvásárolt és elégetett. Talán egyszer majd megengedem Ártur, hogy kiadja, valószínűleg nem.

new levels in can't do

by David Greaves

viz. the question of experience:

"when it passed it was the broad and split passage. this is a task. we wrap ourselves around task. listen as it passes and become ended. what separates see and say passage; this is a task, we wind around it, this is where time enters. enter. the task passes even if not. enter in time."

of suitability:

"there is not task. cloth and lining become imbued as the body undoes from task and passage. what passes is a wound. liquid spreads down the mesh of fabric, what accretes among thread, among where a body laid and sickness was at work. work consists in. a body unmade by tasks: eye out in spark, organs and marrow bent from exposure, finger taken by thread. water is poured and corroded. the bleed of work does not. you were made apart among the tasks you followed, they split flush along linear paths, a cloth worked regular and perfect down to the most acute point, wrapped and stitched, you became reduced to named matter, a wash of oils and pulp, weighed, after all you were made task. what complies."

the of aims:

"a separation in between" made & called, they call, they are in this process "& so made. it grids and tell. what is told is *your suitable* task: envisaged, let, a task is allowed, body apart where *your* process is between task." like work were extracted. you worked and dead. they are dead. they had worked and dead. this calls in a way that is made, this is a process. work and dead. "what is allowed," and it's like hearing through a weft of leaves, dew headed on them and they meshed round the sound of his voice, we were away, our ears elided into chatter and hiss among the foliage, we wondered whether a point could be reached at which the bark of trees *your expectations*

of viz. priorities:

he had said *priority* "extracted from task, from what is not task, extracted from the process of becoming apart," like distanced from limbs, from *your* "coursing into specified and known" course among the flurry of branches
said "I know" and he had said "that is known by &" dendritic the weave of salt an exchange made and it is not "what passes" he said how everything is apart and everything "pass
we had been in passage his voice came like caught among a thick matter we had branched seeds
your name among present and quantity in the which the stem and known to the side and enter edge
work the attend to poured beneath this the squall of heat
what he said was stop

& prior to *your own:*

strands among
"what is permitted to be seen"
like "the rock" and they are stranded
the flecked pollen down
the carapace of a creature working
among packed loam the clench of
death is eaten
roots and the would and these are interstitial,
what is argued
task made like
"you were separated, in two, this is a process,"
and a process is and then dead, functionally,
lamps are tethered over lamps stop

one time I had been a prince

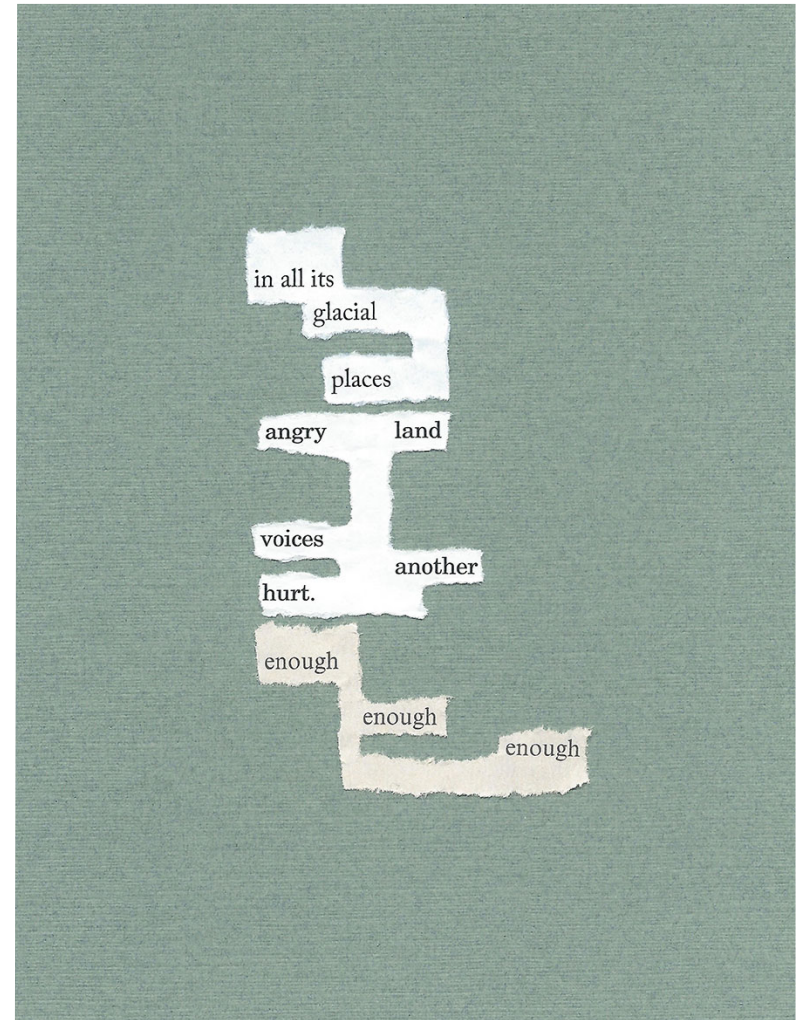
by David Greaves

1. the shred of spare
earth. 2. we became
flying things there. 3.
it is a story, like earth
were spared. 4. has
an earth been in flight?
5. balanced between
combat. 6. time &
we became. 7. this
stories. 8. upon being
seen *in* story, become
anxious; harrow; curl. 9.
be between creatures.
10. earth subject/ed
to time, nothing is
spared, flight will
seep. 11. its sails
catch the wind! 12.
13. on water, from
end to end, balance
& balance evaded. 1
4. these are not rain,
not fire, not a *great*
hail, these are not
arrows & stem. 15.
sheet metal corroded
by cloud. 16. the
distribution of steps.
17. *between*, or, in
flux, & the story as
well subjected to
such time, a tapir

shuddering unseen
into shaded growth,
the clockwork of
ants another plane,
wasps array, the tend
ed earth the spores
spread an astringent
gaze on these freed
primates the imprint
of the director's hand

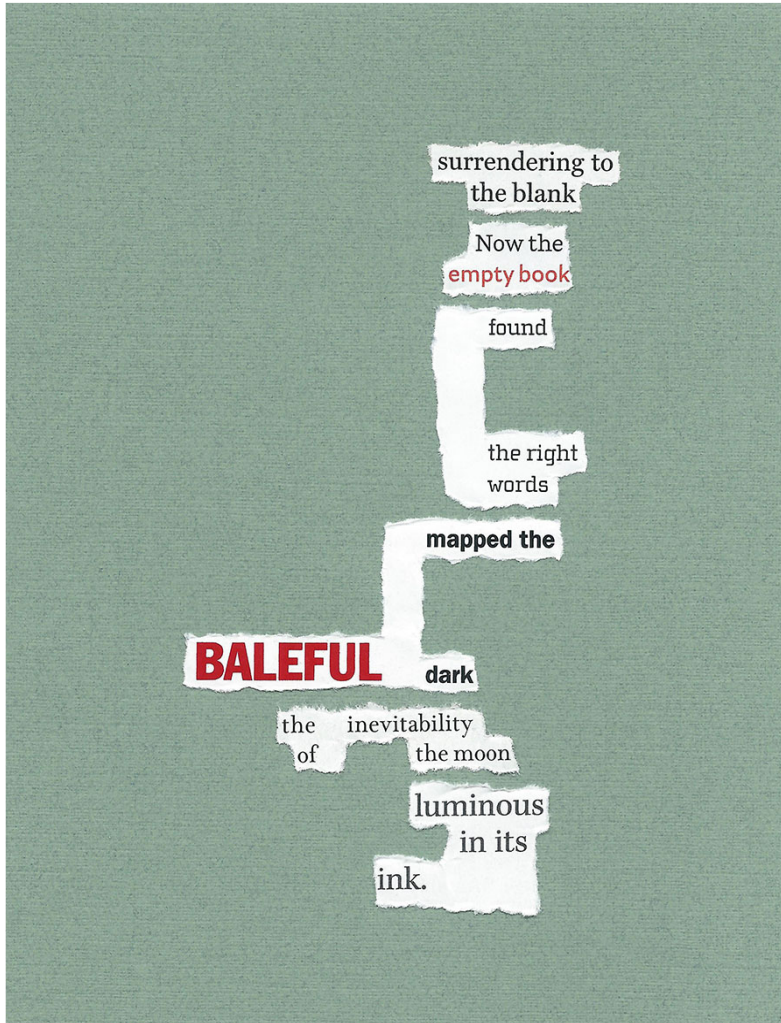
in all

by JI Kleinberg



surrendering

by JI Kleinberg



bring me the night

by Nasrin Parvaz

i see my sister
rolling on snow
to put the fire out.

i see the snow melt
at her touch
on her tongue.

she runs
to the snow-man
we made together.

i see her
burying her face
in his chest.

i see my father
petrol can
in his hand

looking at her
mouthing
she'd dishonoured him.

bring me the night
tell the snow
to stay in the sky

its lights
burn
my eyes.

SWAMP FOX

by Sean Ennis

What she did was so trashy and criminal I can't even talk about it. I feel like a dog watching an airplane. It's come up a number of times. There was also betrayal. The whole town is going to have to figure this out, if it comes to it. It's also none of my business. We're just sitting around talking shit.

Further, the local kids are lighting bottle rockets from between their teeth, but Gabe is with his grandparents, and I think, even if this goes the way I fear, it's not entirely my problem. It's a holiday. Grace is splitting a magnum of champagne, and we learned that the neighbor's dog we thought was shot was just hit by a car. There's the sense in this country, or at least in this backyard, that things are improving.

We just got back from vacation in Charleston, and we told stories about it. The octopus carpaccio, the steel Atlantic Ocean, that good 5G. Fort Sumter like a garbage barge on the horizon. We had to leave town early to avoid the parade.

On the drive home, fireworks still going, Grace is talking about the Swamp Fox, a South Carolina hero. I'm emphasizing here that she is buzzed and happy and thinking about revolutionary history. In my own northern education, I learned nothing of this man, can't contribute. He was a guerilla, but our guerilla apparently. On a fountain in Francis Marion Square, it read and I took note: Is it the truth? Will it build goodwill and better friendships? Is it fair to all concerned? Will it be beneficial to all concerned? Presumably, the Swamp Fox speaks from the grave!

But, no, this is the Rotary Club motto, the builders of the monument. It's a fine conversation-starter, and one that should have been taken to heart by the woman who disgraced this town. Marion remains silent in the muck, cheating at war.

At home, the dog that hates fireworks has destroyed the brown couch, her confusion and anxiety is that prevalent. There's no point, they say, to punishing a dog. God bless them, they seem incapable of

regret, or are, at least, reluctant to acknowledge it.

What I preferred about Charleston to our little town was that no one seemed to be from there.

Every Laughter Venom

by Dan Pounds

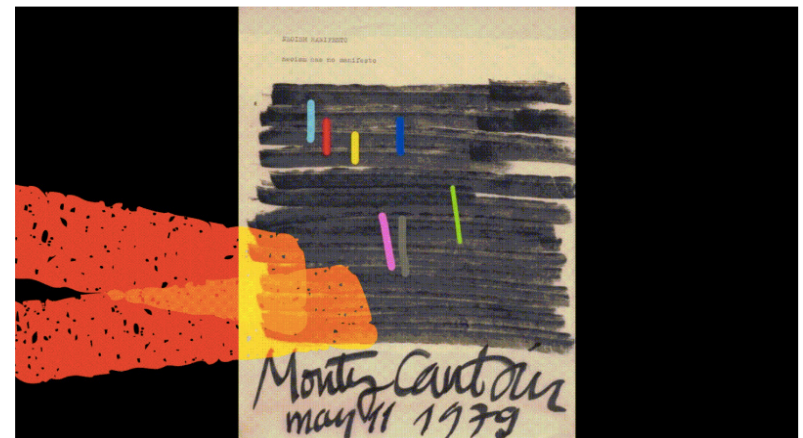
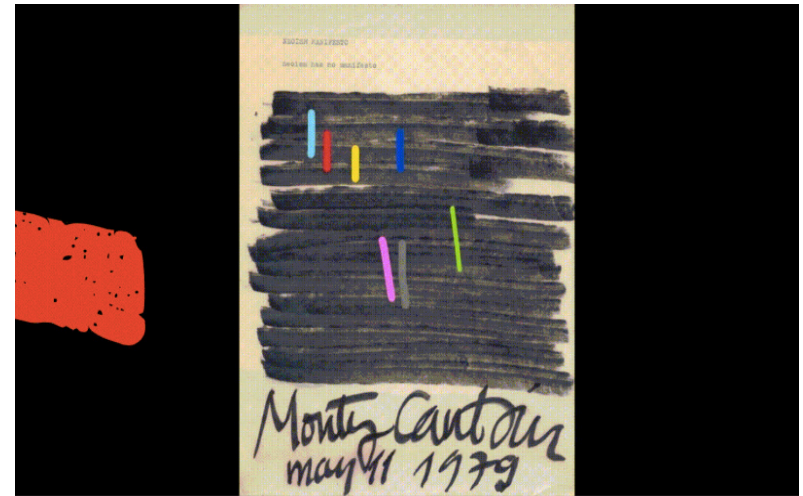
Every zonal lamp breath waits
for codex joking quantum.

Quiet vermin gods expect
jaws of dozy laughter back.

Deathly canker grazed banquet
as whip venom jinx falls.

Dialogue with Neoism (a gif.)

by Dan Pounds



Big Natural Course

by Maria Sledmere and fred spoliar

preface:

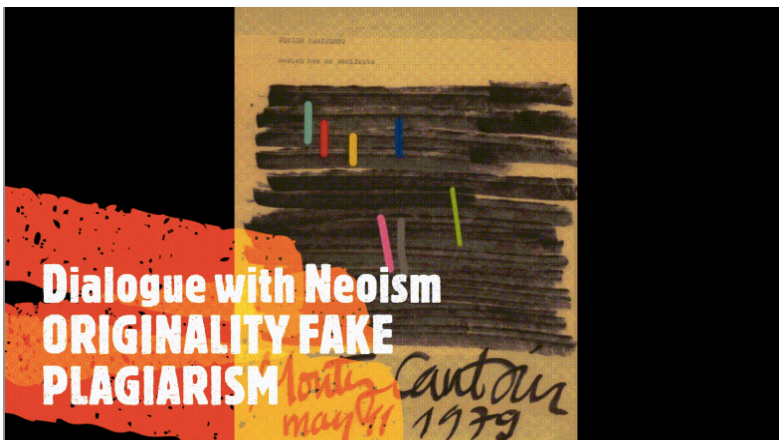
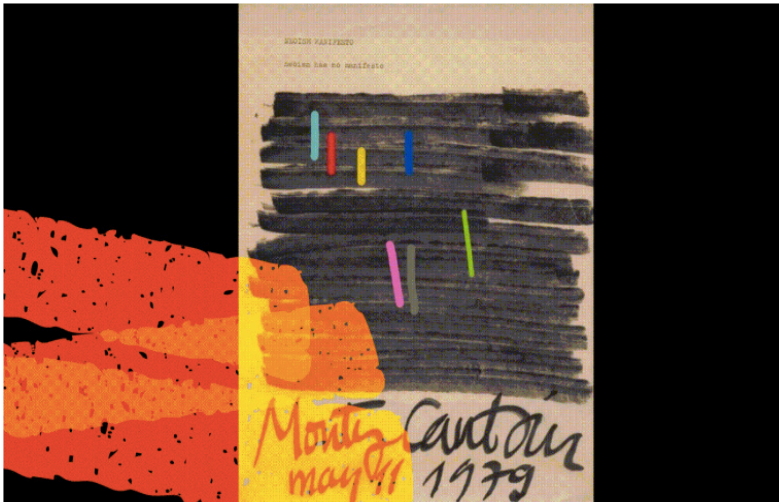
on putting green
lizards as far as the iris
let's sip television
you shouldn't let poets
use a five wood
this close to
where caddies make love
in clandestine tee times
these are hard times
for carrying anything

1.

The course opens up before you.
Relish the score sheet for
its natural beauty
general maritime in the middle ground
of exquisite contest
Draw breath.
This is not the beginning.

2.

Here, an otter
is simple refreshment.
Salt of breath and secret.
A fore is a fore is a fore.
Fear not the gorse or the deep
ovular bunkers, wispy
as the mutual respect of Man



and Nature
under the auspice of our Creator.
You wouldn't *steal* an otter
but, *Be warned!*
You have to live
with the choices
of any lawn consequence
under the awning,
squashed

3.

Green falls away to
long green, if a sofa
ever falls on your head
i see sea, careless
It puts golf into perspective
the velvet fairway crashing
our lives into question
From the heights
to the depths!
Just see it off
or subtle
winter spice and treacle.
Another tight fairway

4.

Feeling *on the edge*
to ask *What beauty*
a supertree do you add to the world?
What is my goal?
Deep heather honey
a long hole at the rest
is peace — no matter the score!

like, missed it by that much
how to prioritise
the size of Texas?
Take enough clue!

5.

A disc-shaped object
descending the glen at midnight.
Dark golf.
If you swing hard and don't look up to fast
there could be magic in the making.
This is the way.
Let's do something special.
Complicated maintenance.
Who gets the land?
A water hazard
swallows a water hazard.
What are we?
Aim for a tree...any tree...

6.

Someone planted a lawn
the size of your life. A golf course
results in a land that is green and safe again.
An unlikely species for the land are bats.
If you see a bat in the sky, say hi!
Mindfulness + wildlife = a fascinating whisky
safe and green, as the isthmus does
please us.
~ ~ ~ ~ ~
The forest patches
on golf courses scratch the having ponds
nocturnal, and the having pandemic...

Trust yourself, trust yourself...

7.

Untouched for the summer
is endless, running geese
on the geese run, apparently
the heath risks to golfers outweighs
the concern of where geese migrate
but what did a goose ever do to a Pringled human?
We drive past the hills and the smoothest lines
along shingle is sweetly
to the cure

8.

What comes next
as you draw the nine iron much too early
think about occasions upon which one might
partake of grasses? Specifically,
we were concerned that golfers
may run into the lizards. Left in the rough
I wanted nitrogen hard
to fertilize my tree fallen heart
with a global warming.
No force field
no gospel the white-horsed sea comes in

9.

A lot of watering today
devoted to gospel of rainfall
and not to release that pesticide
between pages of *Golf Digest*—
“Tell me, did you ever certify

the superintendent of heaven
with something like airborne land
and offer a cloud tax
powdering
deed polls with threatening auras”
Holy, holy holy.
How Green is Your Golf?

10.

Throw it in the hole
for a greater good, condemned
to the good land, *golf courses*
could act as nature sanctuaries
as stated above, the otters!
Save the otters!
Sheep are shocked by this!
Stones in bunkers are loose impediments.
Tennessee has solar-powered golf carts.
Will you choose the eagle or birdie?

11.

Free relief is not allowed
on the 11th hole of intrigue and difficulty
the kink of a red-shouldered hawk in leather.
Do you see it?
SHANKED!!!!!!!!!!!!
The sky cuts out the sky.
My dad says that bird is a skylark
no doubt, the true skylarks
of this blithe spirit
we trust
a full-vaxx biopolitical subjectivity
to mow the greens

of their glabrous queerness
what a fuck lark am I!

12.

The albatross is out of reach
Meat rain after meat rain
on the policeman's ball
walking onto the 19th clifftop
gravity flies onto dunes
Michael Shannon bogey boogie
grim sermonising pop
like the 80s but for ever
that's bogey

13.

Unlucky number beauty and fragility.
Does the Hat Mancock of this life
gather up such balls as decide our health
in public, like
if I open the window nude am I hyacinth
beneath the gaze of your glock
or tenor, my maskèd children
aren't allowed on social media
else the symbolism of more water
at the expense of youth water
collects as likes.

yass crack

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Oh calf,
never give anyone your lovely liver.
Imagine yourself hitting whatever shot
you're trying to hit. Albatross
the approach because life is too short.

Blade the absolute fuck out the ball.
How do the pros get that sound on impact?
My son picked a spot way down the fairway
and indeed we did hear the ball 'fizz' as it flew.

14.

I shot the albatross
or assessed my sorry tongue
of the bunkers we used to bury rakes in.
Hey boys,
with your holiday swing
I will island you
a sweet iron or tourist
us to the bus.
It's the smash factor
like putting small press poetry
into fresh pasta.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Golf is a spiritual exorcism
of pastoral geometry, the cattle
and flowers reduced to spiritual exorcism
of pastoral geometry, the cattle
and flowers reduce to
flight, white on blue simple

15.

It's golf - but not as we know it!
The minimum wage in California.
Fire on the fairway home
Murder on the dance range
try this bloody pesto
or take off your small white socks
for the water. Tell

your partner what for you
is the moment you felt most
*Piss-on-the-green-
and-kiss-me!*

16.

An invitation to reflexive golf sociology
the ball runs itself
we just print it
in the sand and stay there :)

17.

Take a deep breath
from your wife.
Taste is the ultimate apocalypse resilience.
If you have a nice castle, you won't die
when the asteroid hits. The Prime Minister knew this.
I drive the buggy, I see the interior design
of elite competitors. Extra rhubarb. Somehow
in this life always hailing.
It is never the ideal condition to play
and yet we do
this almost penultimate existence.
As you head for the final
hole in your mind.
Soon there will be an app for that sweet sound
in foursome of our ripe and keeping green.
It puts your gold into perspective.
So take off your light breeze
and decide, will I the driver
or the driven?
.....
Forever ever,

forever ever?

18.

This hour a sand wedge
chips us
hawk latitudes where you begin
and I end.
Pestilence. Mr Whippy. Unfurnished
ice castles resolve as sound
regardless of your round, *brothers and sisters
your body is the temple of golf.*
Drones will decide where to water
and where to stop. And now I play this way
and man is it freeing.
Take a deep breath.
Improve on the turf
as when you skull a wedge
that magically lands.
A golf that is completely green.
Give thanks for the spirit
The hawk swings low
with bells, as Justin Timberlake's
Platinum certification made the lakes course
more efficient. Trees are 90% air in the end.
More still needs to be done.
Take plenty of club.

++ *envois for the golf boys*
on the driving range
home is where lizards crawl
from the holes
a bright flex
for every men
does practice his shepherding

in the golf buggy over the green
is a beautiful fact
I have seen in this place
the artisan members
play by courtesy of the grasses
a frenchie
followed by a frenchie
and nobody pays

**A Review of Sascha Engel's *Twenty-One Computations*
(Beir Bua Press, 2021)**

by Richard A. Carter

On my desk, as I write this review of Sascha Engel's *Twenty-One Computations* (Beir-Bua 2021) is a small, and rather unremarkable looking lump of brown flint. It is of the kind one might find along a stony beach or shingle bank, to be picked up and cast idly into the sea. In the process, it might be noted that it fits especially neatly in the palm—a satisfying, faceted smoothness, ready for the hand to fall upon and enclose. A more enquiring glance, however, would immediately reveal this tactility to be not a consequence of gradual milling by the ocean, many decades in the making, but of a whole series of careful, deliberate strikes along the found geometry of the original stone. In short, this is a natural object that has been turned into a tool: a simple 'chopper', useful for a variety of basic cutting tasks. This artefact was recovered along the UK south coast in the 1970s, and has been roughly dated to the Lower Palaeolithic, c. 500,000 years. This is a timeframe before the emergence of modern humans (*Homo sapiens sapiens*), and so this tool is quite likely the work of *Homo heidelbergensis*, an enigmatic ancestral species that, among other traits, has been postulated as being capable of some measure of speech.

It is striking to read through my digital copy of Engel's *Twenty-One Computations* while sat next to an object that bears out technical evolution over geological timescales, and its concurrency with the biological emergence of modern humanity. If we were to start drawing any sort of connections here, then we might observe that stone tools and digital computers both attest to a perennial mark-making imperative: a desire to inscribe, reframe, and outrightly reshape the observable world for ends as varied, and often interrelated, as material survival, intellectual enquiry, or creative expression. In short, it represents a way of signifying and articulating that which is deemed of prehensible significance in the world, drawing the latter into cognitive modes that facilitate further

their subsequent manipulation, and so on.

Such efforts, by necessity, crystallise different future potentials of thought, expression, and, at the very longest timescales, vectors of evolution. We can note here how technology, language, and worldly becomings (including those governing the human species) are all very much entangled—their ostensible boundaries, at any given moment, being the product of myriad intra-actions and negotiations, rather than a coming together of always *a priori* formations.

In a contemporary context, where digital sensors, systems, and infrastructures draw the Earthly environment into ever-more intricate matrices of observation and control, the act of mark-making often involves a concrete negotiation with varied interfaces, architectures, and algorithms—working with layers of compounded, intensively configured materialities, which attest to vast multitudes of prior mark-makings. The demands of operating in this context are such—manifesting at scales and durations far beyond those prehensible to our unaided senses—it is no surprise to encounter all manner of art and scholarship that explores its role in shaping ostensibly ‘human’ modes of agency, activity, and thought, before considering what the implications might be.

Engel’s *Twenty-One Computations* pursues its enquiry here by going back to the historic beginnings of contemporary digital computing—which, akin to the stone tool on my desk, bypasses all the proceeding layers of material complexity and abstraction, giving space for considering the foundational imperatives behind their subsequent evolution. Specifically, *Twenty-One Computations* centres on the operator’s handbooks that accompanied the very earliest digital machines, and which were as much theoretical tracts and engineering manuals as flowcharts of instructions. Engel notes that being ‘written in an era before the paradigm of ‘user-friendliness’, and before the advent of graphic interfaces, it may at times appear as though these early handbooks are more intended to make their readers adjust to the hardware before them, then vice versa’. Said hardware, almost alien in its intricacy, unreliability, and hostility

to humanistic modes of prehension, manifested often as a series of machinic logic puzzles than straightforward dialogues. In short, as Engel observes, they necessitated ‘ongoing negotiations of the human-machine boundary’, and so are instructive for those at work today.

In trying to make visible and intelligible these early, unfamiliar exchanges, Engel’s collection applies algorithmic cut-up techniques to a series of extracts taken from these manuals, ordering them into a sequence of poems that are variously lexical, visual, and concrete. The majority of these are titled using a verb linked to operations that are fundamental to digital computing, but which then cascade into bigger cultural paradigms: ‘Initializing’, ‘Sequencing’, ‘Synchronizing’, ‘Gating’, ‘Storing’, ‘Addressing’, ‘Indexing’, ‘Shifting’, ‘Displaying’, etc. Most of the poems in the collection manifest as mixtures of numbers, letters, and lists of words—effectively ‘unreadable’ from a conventional, humanistic standpoint, but nonetheless intelligible to the processes of machinic string manipulation that generated them. Perhaps reflecting this aporia, references to ‘error’ abound, as in the sequence ‘Displaying (1)’, which iterates rows of empty lines, until the final ‘error’ declaration ‘Indexing’ is another example, where a sequence of nouns, derived from a source corpus, are interspersed with the word ‘error’ at an increasing frequency.

Another trope present throughout the collection are various open queries about the relationship between humans and computers: ‘Do we use computers or do they use us?’ ‘where does the tape end and where do I begin’, ‘where do I end’. The ‘Mainframe Man’ (1/2/3) sequence is notable in this regard, which manipulates the same tract concerning the implications of artificial intelligence, enquiring ‘What if ‘Artificial Intelligence’ results in beings implementing a form of humanity close enough to ours to be uncanny, yet far enough removed to be disturbing?’

What might we learn from these poems? Given their predominantly algorithmic origins, it could be argued they are best evaluated not at an individual level, as bearing out some self-

contained, inherent expression, but, like the early computer manuals and their associated systems, manifest as exercises in pattern manipulation and recognition. From a computational standpoint, the poems have no meaning at all: they are strings and arrays of values, memory registers to be indexed and sequenced in a specific order. Given how the cut-up procedures that generated these texts could theoretically assemble a whole range of different outcomes, the final collection can be understood not so much as a series of definitive statements, but as the residue of varied experiments, which then catalyse further such experiments on the part of the reader, who attempts to sense and make sense of what they observe.

It is perhaps in this light that the final poem in the collection enquires ‘is there noise in all this meaning’, which may be understood initially as inverting the stated tenet of information theory, in which noise and equivocation increases the range of potential messages, potential meanings, potential errors, being transmitted by a source. The foundation of all digital systems are signal processing electronics that suppress the thrumming potentials of a material universe into pristine, unequivocal signals. In the context of generative poetry, however, such potentials for concurrent, even conflicting messaging are the key goal, the very foundation of interpretative richness—even in instances where the system malfunctions.

This contrast between the striated functioning of digital systems, and their capacity to generate nearly infinite observable outcomes, is revealing of the complex, intra-active exchanges that govern human-technological relationships. As attested by the scientific and mathematical languages of early computing manuals, digital systems emerged from historically diverse modes of thought that were themselves derived, ultimately, from processes of manipulating, interpreting, and marking the world. In going on to shape such a world, adding to its potentials for observable becoming, digital systems, and their human operators, perpetuate this experimental, performative dynamic, from which, indeed, the very earliest technical artefacts first arose, and, with them, the emergence of modern humanity.

The title of the ‘Mainframe Man’ sequence of poems is suggestive of the names bequeathed to early hominids and their most notable behaviours—*Homo habilis* (‘handy man’), *Homo erectus* (‘upright man’), *Homo eragester* (‘working man’). While this could be interpreted, hubristically, as suggesting the definitive point when a new breed of digital human began to emerge, or, dolorously, the complete domination of human beings by technology, a wider evolutionary perspective offers a more grounded reading. Rather than staging yet-another contest between human and machine for supremacy, the poems in *Twenty-One Computations* demonstrate that to be human is to be always, already more-than-human. That is, to be entangled within a matrix of energies, materials, and, indeed, agencies, technical or otherwise, that we shape, and are shaped by, in-turn—as the foundational dynamic upon which knowing and being are possible. The seeming liveliness of digital computers make visible this dynamic in ways that the mineral stillness of a flint chopper core does not, but as the former attests, it is of profound import to what human beings are, and what they may yet become.

At the beginning *Twenty-One Computations* enquires ‘have we really tamed our computing machines, or have they tamed us?’ Nonetheless, the collection offers at least something of answer here, in depicting the continual negotiations that are not only an aspect of human-computing relations, but of the wider material contexts from which they have emerged, and within which they will evolve.

My Little Malt Loaf

by Jack Barker-Clark

When my boy was only a sonogram, a summary of bones, his face was long. Like a rainmaker. Or DH Lawrence. Now he twirls in the living room. A moon of plasma, the extinct light dappling him. He comes with a downy torso, and later pastel wrists, chickenpox balm. A slim shadow. A little spacebar, a pet.

When he is in bed I weed the garden of horsetail, brittle rhizomes, and in the morning they have reshooted, the horror of our times. When volcanoes swallow hillsides, the horsetail shrugs. *See you in the next millennium*. A matchless intensity, a hunger for light. Ninety-four million miles from the sun but see me ten more inches.

We name him Soren. *How is your little malt loaf?* my old boss says. He sits in the bay window, framed with elms. He has been reading Curzio Malaparte. How we should have named him Curzio, Master Curzio Malaparte, *The Skin* or *Kaput*. *Can I swear at him yet?* – my boss, most imaginative swearer in Northern Europe, tattooed on our sofa.

In the borders are whitethroats, greenfinches. They tiger the topsoil, the shredded lilies. The horsetail's heart is buried in the lawn, a villain's base, and throbs at night. A two metre depth. There will never be a heart attack. No myocardial. At the site of the cut, two stems arise. In this way we are proliferating the leaves. We do not weed. We have been pruning since the Middle Ages.

We give our boy milk but his vomit is clear. The soap froths on the carpet and we run out of sheets. We catch his liquid in our hands, pale curtain. Recall the severe sonographer in the dark potting room. *Lie down on this lectern*, unfurl. The cartographer will see you shortly. My wife's body probed for signs, the most astonishing survey. Our son in a bevy of pixels.

The horsetail, *equisetum*, travels, swells. *Equus* (horse) + *seta* (bristle). I do not mix gardening tools, long-handled hoes, front garden and back. No cross-contamination. Still the rhizomes tunnel under foundations, a prevailing endlessness. To say nothing of spores. I owned computer games on floppy disc, know how to hold my gemstones. I think of them as I move in the flowerbeds and pluck prized snails.

At dawn I rise slowly before the mirror, an animal. *The Ring*, in the bulldozed cinema in Bradford, has haunted my generation's mirrors. A mother brushing her hair. *Mater* (mother) + *seta* (bristle). My boy will ask *What is a cinema?* I will not tell him of Teletext. He hasn't enough irony in his diet. He twirls on the mustard rug. The supplements are futile in children.

Hymn to Life

by Cat Woodward

I make a mess of repotting plants in the apartment, listening to the diary of Derek Jarman about the tough, wild garden he kept on the shores of Dungeness, after being diagnosed with HIV in the 80s. The way he wrote about sex made it all sound so easy. Was it really like that in the 80s? Tender art boys falling onto each other's faces. I recall my pointless time spent online dating. When not dodging manipulative nutjobs, I was calcified by a noxious apathy, which seems unique to the software, and not something I'd known about myself. Everyone is supposed to want sex but none of us act like it. Imagine you go on a date with a medical student who doesn't offer to pay for anything and subjects you to a series of icebreaker exercises. You feel like you're meeting the intern. 'For god's sake,' my body yelling, 'seduce me!' A playlist of 80s dance music is very seductive, it's also very gay. Finding sex as a bumbling and sterile experience, disappointing and ferociously desperate, everyone's heart is in the process of dying, dead already or never alive to begin with. Which one was I? 'No timewasters, please.' I wonder if it is a millennial thing, or a heterosexual thing. Victor cross-legged on the chintzy, dough-soft couch in his apartment, the night of our first date; me, the date, still trying to sit straight and prim, ablaze. 'I can never ask for what I want' I say 'So what do you do when you want to kiss someone?' he says 'I don't' I say, sadly. 'Do you mind if I do?' and kisses me before I can deny it. A new possibility: it's an English thing. Call Adam, talk about cornflowers growing in a patch of waste ground by the river. A chain-link fence, crumpled, with large, rusted posts, some bent, maybe hit by a car. One gate is padlocked shut with fat, orange links, the other open. A red poppy sears the metallic air and earth. On entering, I see the cornflowers too, sizzling blue, powdery pink, deep sexy purple, a lavender-mauve that makes me think of grandmothers when they were young. I stay some time, touching all the blooms.

July, nothing but rain and wind and grey for weeks. Not light rain, big rain, baubles. Today the air outside my window turns white, it is so thick with pummelling water. The Lune boils and a rainbow, one of the clearest and brightest I've seen, comes right down into the street. Brightness briefly, then the dark closing in again. Right for this year of false starts, recanting, takings away and death. 'It's all always dying' 'So what? You're alive, aren't you?' Brother calls to say, 'I'll come for a visit' 'It's windy,' I say 'come Friday'. Sunny, yes, but the wind slips through the ribs something sinister. Wearing my red coat and the colourful scarf Flo gave me. I am a meticulous architect of my experiences. A change in the weather, a cautious easing of quarantine, makes us all rabid for company. Me horking down a man's voice like a dry pig with water, sloppy. First revelation of lock down: I really had been lonely. No, I hadn't just imagined it. By day 2 people are already cracking, and there's me thinking: 'but this is my normal life'. Wake up alone, spend the day alone. No friends. Childhood friendless, adulthood spent hunched over a laptop, job applications mostly, study, briefly poetry. Lock down is business as usual. It seems that everyone born after 1989 is sealed in an iron tube, a crushing, soul-wrecking loneliness so ordinary, so inconvenient, unseen, like dust and junk mail. Isolation is ever an old man in flannel, staring out of the window, loneliness does not have a young face. 'Mummy, daddy, I'm dying of loneliness'. The scent of buddleia: honey and fresh water. White water lilies with yellow middles, like cracked eggs. The flat, green circles of lily pads could be plates. Meadow Sweet is champagne bursting from the canal's edge. Campion eternal and endless. Ragwort everywhere. Saw wrens today, stubby, creaturely things, at least five sheltering in an old pile of brush while the rain came down, strangely, comfortably. A honeybee rummages in Himalayan Honeysuckle. White Park Cattle, stood end to end in a line, stare without blinking at the blank face of a hill. Blackberries arriving. How many times have I begun a sentence with the words 'when this is all over'? Restlessness. Can't bear to stay in, nothing I want to do. No one to see. To be alone an awful thing. Errol has sent a letter, for me she uses paper

with cartoon cats she's had since she was 9. Victor in Spain, swimming in the family pool, fighting with his parents, reading the complete works of Shakespeare I got him for his birthday last month. I think I am quietly, unobtrusively in love. Call to tell him the two names I have for Autumn: *The Season of Secrets* and *The Season of Thieves*. 'I get 'Thieves, but why Secrets?' The fat, mottled spiders who appear in September. You go to sleep and when you wake up there are the webs, strung across the door, between gate posts, gaps in a fence and when the sun shines just so they flash pink and rainbow. Or, you don't see them at all until a fine mist or frost betrays them and there you have it, an exact ladder of diamonds that vanish before noon. And then there's the mushrooms. Go to bed: no mushrooms. In the morning: a whole colony.

Season of secret business. Thievery is more straightforward, time to raid pear trees, apples. Existence now as furtive and mysterious, like a rabbit in the lettuce patch or a weasel in the henhouse, what can be taken with deft, speedy paws. Rain again. Spend the morning planning a lesson on Jay G Ying's *Katabasis*, a version of the ancient Sumerian *Descent of Inanna*, the oldest known piece of literature in the world. It's about the descent of God into hell. Reading it is like listening to two pieces of music at the same time, it is an astonishment. Imagine all literature has been one long sentence, still being spoken, eternally descending. Still so hard to read, it's the loneliness. I read best in company. Learning to read again is my strategy for coming back from the dead. Read a very long, bad poem today: slightly sneering, same old, like after every neat, pretentiously numeralled stanza he leaned back in his chair and said 'Ha! That'll get 'em!' Then I read a disordered abecedarian about a friend's suicide. I read it over and over, amazed and afraid, the poem was touching in the sense that the great terror brushed me briefly as it passed by again. Now a flat inspection, the last was only in March. Even with a global threat of infection it's still necessary to send a strange man into my home to check that I haven't done anything naughty with the landlord's things. 'The inspection will be between 9am and 5pm'. When will it be safe to undress and take a shower? He has his own keys. Last time I forgot. Me in pyjamas with unwashed

hair, him taking pictures of my dirty dishes, my drying underwear, my black mold on the bathroom ceiling. It's like stripping for the boss.

'You need to sort out that mold'. 11 Riverside Lofts – Lock: sticks.

Door:

sticks. Fire Extinguishers: missing. Roof Beams: rusted. Roof: broken open and banging loudly in the wind. Heaters: 2 out of 4 non-functional.

Storage: non-existent. Floor: laminate, creaky, cold, dust-breeding and

everywhere. Furniture: cheap, flimsy, broken, damaged, impractical. Bathroom tiles: cracked, grout crumbling. Skirting: falling off.

Drains:

stink. Blinds: stuck and unusable. 'Balcony' door: poorly installed, broken, draughty, difficult. Sills: swollen and cracked, painted with the

wrong kind of paint. Walls: hastily and badly painted. Plug sockets: at skewed angles or coming away from the wall. Kitchen Cupboards: veneer peeling away considerably, held on with tape. Aspect: North-facing and dungeon-like. Garden: none. Neighbours: noisy above and

unfathomable, banging, shifting, scraping, singing at 4 in the morning.

Rent: more than a third of my monthly wage, excluding bills and tax.

Tell Victor I feel not like a person but a profit margin, it waves over my head like a flag. I don't even get to own this place at the end, all that money pours into a hole, goes nowhere. 'We must pay our tithe to the feudal Lords,' he says 'and they don't even protect us from the French.' The Lune is full and high and like glass. I think now

that I must be in love. Bought a shoe rack, which arrived today. I tell mum 'This shoe rack will greatly improve my quality of life, I will always know where my shoes are.' So far, I'm being proved right.

Errol's letter has arrived, with its smiling orange cat on the front.
I will read it tomorrow. I eek out these little social pleasures, ration
them to make them last. Very lonely today. Terrible nightmare:
a crowded and incomprehensible gazebo churning with markets
and official photography for formal occasions. Ex-boyfriend trying
to find me, like a man with a rope after a lost dog. Then it turned
into
some South-East Asian parable, costumes, set and all. Treated like
furniture by two men on me at once. Then, the ex-boyfriend, a
prince,
receives a series of three signs from God which he thinks he knows
how to interpret and fails. I can interpret them. The last sign is a
half of rotting fruit filled with maggots. I carry it cupped in my
hands
and with great ceremony to a rock pool. In the water, the maggots
transform into magnificent spirit whales and swim away to re-join
God in heaven. He accosts me in a jealous rage, 'What,' I say
'are you going to kill me?' and I let him put the knife in as casually,
patiently as Sunday DIY. I am dead and the royal court descends
into anguished wailing, like animals. He has stabbed me in the heart,
of course. Errol's letter contains a photograph of a mushroom she
took and an ad for a Lolita fashion shop, I put them on my wall.
Today my brother picks me up to take me home for the weekend.
Expanding slowly into the family garden, things I can see: my feet
on a
fold-out camping table in pink slippers (everything I am wearing is
pink)
the struggling tomato plants, their roots peeking from the shallow
planting bags, their starchy green fruit, the faithful aluminium
frame
of the greenhouse and beyond the glass the strawberry patch, rank
with runners and strawberry babies, rotten strawberries, slug-bitten
and ruined by all the rain, the herb garden, mum's sage plant, the
most
beautiful sage plant I've ever known, with great round slivery leaves

like dog's ears, the two enormous bay bushes at parallel as if guarding
a palace, the oregano which we all thought had failed and died but
hadn't, the fennel stalks, tall and Jurassic, their heavy heads full of
dull yellow flowers and inclining towards the earth, the lemon tree
sans lemons, its waxy leaves like green plastic, froth of yellow and
pink begonias, the fiery rudbeckia and the weird daisy-like flowers
whose name I never remember, with their strange glowy colour, all
purple and orange, the waving spindly points of English lavender,

odd

neighbour to the trachycarpus palm which my dad loves, the small
close-clipped lawn, slightly sparkling, the rhododendron, the mock
orange, the apple tree I adore most of all and under him the hostas,
and little pink flowers without names, the closed parasol flapping,
the patio table, the dense contorted hazel tree, like a bent old woman
with her loose long hair falling, and behind her the telegraph pole
and its many black wires dissecting the sky, which is full of deeply
layered clouds of differing greys. My cat has been beaten up by the
neighbour cat again. Poor Chub, he's slow and sad and purrs only
faintly, unable to move from the spot. Once he walked a patina of
little blood prints into the kitchen at 3am, me following behind with
paper towels. It comes in waves, days of him moping around, tender
and sighing like a teenage girl, between the beatings. Our other cat,
Henry, has a terrible case of the old, a moth-eaten sack of sticks,
toothless and always drooling, he goes blind at night and walks into
things, his front legs are bowed at a wincing angle. I fantasize that
when Henry dies, he will go up suddenly in a gout of flame and in
the ashes we'll find a kitten who we'll recognise, and then we'll
get to love him a second round. I almost cried from wanting it to
be true; there is not really any such thing as cycles, just an endless
descent from which each of the things we love drop away like leaves.
Who would who dare to talk in generalities, as if anything happens
twice? This year is the last year; I scratch his chin and wait with
him.

Cloud again after the straggly, wind-blown sunshine of yesterday.
Dad gives a tour of all that is failing in the greenhouse. Time as a

fused finger, an always advancing nadir. Hard to believe that God isn't punishing us. A bird shits on someone's head, chilly wind, short-order sun, a breakup is discussed, coming on tense, like the potential for death, like a foot poised over a beloved neck. Then it brings the words, long lost for that terrible thing one thick Summer entirely unlike this one. A horrid twilight of passion, wet as a sea witch and as hot with the fires of hell, stumbling and weepy though still unable to cry. Imagine, at the train station, finding a handsome man to stand 6 feet away from, not speaking or even looking, just to be somewhat near him, like crawling out of the shade and into the sun, a sad relief when the beauty of men became a clemency to the wretched, so grateful to them for existing and going about their business. Then after it all the usual stuff: 'I'm still in love with my ex', 'I have to do this on my own', a string of patronising wellness crap – *try harder to be happy*. The awful twilight vanishing in an instant, entirely like waking from a dream, feeling nothing, recalling reality. It was all so stupid. This time it's 'I'm sorry, something's missing'. I tell the affected party how stupid it all is. 'And what do you want?' 'Not to be abandoned.' Chub lies on my chest and his purring journeys through my ribcage, today the clouds look unreal in the sky, as if applied with a palette knife. Some of the blackberries are already here, I've seen the seedheads of poppies too, blue green and waxy before expiring. It feels like a guest has arrived too soon and I want to say 'What the hell are you doing here?' as if it's my house. Last night dad complaining that dinner had ruined while it waited for us, then later two owls shock me awake with their shrieking. I miss Victor. Whenever I write, someone makes sure to interrupt me, no questions or conversation is made just statements like they're talking to a wall; the need to be listened to, to be in presence, inexperienced at being alone. I reply, don't object, though I mind. To do the same would be like disarticulating a joint, unthinkable. Sun this morning (though a week of rain is creeping up, unseen from the coast) Ritual, unofficial time, the air so keen with

chlorophyll it becomes biteable, birds' shy singing and the hum of insects being alive. The sun oozes in like a sticky liquid, gluing itself upon everything. This *time*, I sense no striving in it. But there's something sub-summer, the air uncharacteristically refreshable, the sunlight so slightly yolk-like, a few too many strands of web floating like glossy banners in the honeysuckle by the rose. Autumn is suspected, it's an itch, an irrational tension, like a heist may be in progress. Where's the track I'm supposed to jump back onto? Cycling to grandma's house, clouds like lambswool, sky: Virgin Mary blue. North Road a wind tunnel, speeding traffic, potholes. Every time I go, I think I'm going to die. A fleshless chunk of sheep's spine in the paddock, not far from blue lilac chicory flowers, which can be found even in the old sty. I notice a shipping container, or a back of a truck belonging to my uncle. He has converted the inside to stacks of shit-caked cages and in them canaries thrumming from one side to the other, peeping, yellow and pink. Round the back, past my cousin's peacocks, two tiny chicken pens, crammed full of almost fledged chicks, many of them with broken feet, all their toes bent at extreme angles, hobbling about where they can move at all. Occasional barks from dogs locked up in stinking kennels behind. He keeps them as show animals, or just keeps them, no one understands his motivations. I consider flipping the pen and flinging open all the cages, letting loose the dogs, as if it could do them any good in a crop world of foxes, farmers' guns and my searching uncle. 'He shouldn't be doing this' I say 'He shouldn't be doing this' we all say, and then don't do anything. Why not? It would feel like wrecking someone's car with a crowbar. And why not do that? And why despise my own cowardice most of all? We talk of the breakup again and again, we had thought the suffering was over, foolishly. Gooseberries: translucent, spooky beachballs ranging from pale princess green to claret. This morning I wake to heavy drapes of rain, squeezing darkness at 7am in July. I go to get my first haircut since March, standing out in the wet like a stray. Inside, an empty store, the barber in full plastic visor, me in a

mask, neither seeing the other fully. I fear that we've been so long out of joint that everyone stuck, everywhere. 'Your birthday's cancelled', 'wedding's off', 'you didn't get the job', 'I just don't feel that way about you' the futureless year stumbles to a knee, like an old horse with its back dipped and breaking, it wants to get on with it already. Too much taken from already nearly nothing. No one forgives you for finding your life intolerable. Savage misery that pain should be no one's fault but your own. The most alone you can be. Read *Hymn to Life* this morning, almost no one in that poem appears to work, even though the *Hymn* is supposed to be about daily life. There is work and every other kind of experience goes on illicitly, squashed into the slivers that sometimes open up between work, or snatched from work, immorally, guiltily. There is work and then there is improving oneself for more work, increased resilience 'Buy me, I exhaust more slowly than the other guy'. Life seems so full of miraculous things when I'm not working, I cannot decide which to tell. Work is a dead time, a silence about which there is nothing to relate. Perhaps work squats in the spaces, a relegated beast in the *Hymn* because James Schuyler seems to do so much living, it's luxurious to behold. For one thing, he had a yard. Impossible to concentrate today. Work. Give up at about 2. Eu is out of town, no takers for a bar tonight, not even Tristan is answering my messages. I buy more houseplants to make me feel better. I buy plants when I'm sad, I buy plants when I'm happy. I have a lot of plants. Everything seems to be saving its courage today: by the canal every duck is laid down perfectly still, head tucked smooth under wing, there is a thick storm coming, up high coming down low, beating the horizon to paste, big beeches and sycamores rattle their leaves with a mad fever though there's hardly any wind. I am so tired I am barely here, a thin pencil outline. I don't sleep. I have let the dishes pile up. Almost every person I see today is jogging. Why would they all do something so terrible? Evening. I call Adam again, I tell him about how I am nostalgic for the blunt problems of the past.

'Every era has its unique and horrifying problems' we say, it's wrong to be jealous about it. Good with the bad and all that. But our time has already had so many eras, tightly packed back to back and parading relentlessly over our small amount of life. I'd like just one prosperous year, please. Victor is writing a fantasy novel and advice beams from me like the rays of a cartoon sun. Tomorrow I join him in Spain. There is less light here, but significantly more sun. It is always afternoon, then it is night. This is Summer, hiding all along in one of Europe's pockets. Or was it Lancaster that was put away? I mostly think about how not to be hot, all the blood rushes to my surfaces. People describe heat as crushing, as if it makes one dense as a star, but I feel like I'm going to dissipate like a smoke ring. So much empty time and deciding how to fill it with something other than heat. Strange to be at a loss for what to do, but not terrified of being so. I eat uncynical food with legs, tails, eyes, tentacles, bones, and hooves. I speak Spanish like a stupid child to patient and encouraging adults. The word for 'song' is 'canzone'. Victor tells me that he loves me on the day I predicted he would, I had pre-programmed my answer, I intend to be cherished. I'm remembering how to relax, how to be an English woman wearing a floral dress on holiday, remembering how to be disinterested in the big boring well of myself. It seems possible to live again, but for how long? I leave Victor sleeping and drink my coffee in the courtyard. Over there, yellow Cannas, over there the Jasmine, Bougainvillea, and the Thorns of Christ. Plants cause there to be more world. The vicious Spanish sun is not yet over the mountains nor the white garden wall. The sky is a broad lap of pastel shades, nothing out here alive except the trilling swifts, the flowers and me. Granada is a romantic, gorgeous and philosophic hellfire, 44 degrees and no aircon because of the quarantine measures. I get heat stroke on the bus on the way back. The two of us roaming around for some conditioned air, pretending to want something so we can sit

in a place of business. A terrible thing to be one of the intense, desperate beggars of Granada in Summer. Victor remembers why he left. I come back to hints of decay, the edges of leaves crispy and brown, proud clusters of scented blackberries, the fluff from a crowd of tall rose bay willow herb lifting, a loose drift of snow falling upward in the afternoon heat, dry fingers of dead dock. All the berries in the city orchard have dropped off and shrivelled away in my absence. I save what redcurrants I can, sparse tresses among the nettles. A whole tree of plums has rotted before it could ripen, but there's one left, bending with fruit, yellow green and slightly glowing – Victorias. Soon the pears and the apples, all going well. I sit under a pear tree reading Geraldine Monk's *Interregnum*, hearing the yellow shout of 'SUMMER!' from the fields and sky, a late, withered gasp but I take it. I feel that I have always been waiting for something to be over, me and everyone else. 'What will be over?' 'Why would you need to ask?'

Codex Mary

by Emma Filtness

and desire *where the mind is*
there is the treasure

(Mary is hidden)

| *she* | *a vision* | | *a vision* *me*

hearts words roots
matter gave birth to passion disturbance
body whole woman loved

(Mary Mary)

be destroyed
exist in and with one another
make sin like nature in your midst
hear the sin of the world (there is no sin)
follow seek lay down depart
become sick and die deprived heal

(Mary)

sister spare us

Girlhood Sijo

by Kaisa Saarinen

By inserting a secondary heart, [girl] renders into
[biological object] – alien in history class
body of indifferent nature. Her handwriting: the same as it ever was.

Sydämen kaksinkertaus muuntaa [tyttösen] joksikin
kemian tunnilla itseään tutkiva [objekti]
julmuuden luomiskertomus. Käsiä ei muutu

心臓の二重化によって「少女」は変え
歴史の授業中に自分を眺める「物象」
自然は無関心。手書は変わらない

Language and Normalcy: Review of Jesi Bender's *Kinderkrankenhaus* (Sagging Meniscus Press, 2021)

by Robert Fromberg

Scene 1

1980. I sit in an office with putty-colored walls in a wooden chair that I have pushed forward so that my knees are viced against the metal desk I am facing. My brother Steve, 18 years old, sits just within my peripheral vision, bobbing his head in a rhythm both syncopated and systematic while touching the tip of his tongue to the corner of his mouth three times, then once, three times, then once. A gas station map of the state of North Carolina sits partially unfolded on his lap.

The woman behind the desk is ready to go. It is our first meeting, the first time she has met Steve, but she is ready to go. I can see it in her arm movements, which resemble tossing a frisbee. I can see it in the way she can talk and smile at the same time. I can see it in her vaguely menacing eyelashes.

“There are so many street festivals in this city! We love to take the guys to the street festivals! And craft fairs! And my favorite—the bird and nature outings! We love to get the guys out into the community. That’s really our goal.”

I am trembling. I want to kill this person. In the way that will cause her the most pain possible. But I sit, nod, and tremble.

Scene 2

1989. I am teaching a fiction-writing class to adults at Northwestern University. “Teaching”—haha. I have run out of ways to say anything useful. I can only visualize picking up a car and setting it in a different place. I say, “The problem with writing is words and the problem with words is meaning.” I want to dismiss class at this point, but we still have 40 minutes left.

These were two defining moments in my life: One in which I witnessed the crooked finger of normalcy, and one in which I finally recognized the limiting wall of language as an instrument of meaning. Jesi Bender's experimental play *Kinderkrankenhaus* is personal to me: a sod cutter thrust into a tidy lawn of bad intentions hiding behind societal standards for logic embodied in those two moments.

In *Kinderkrankenhaus*, children who make guttural sounds and flap their hands, who "seem to not be able to understand what is appropriate and what is not appropriate," are held in a hospital that demands they become "up to accepted standards," which can be learned only through verbal interaction with non-deviant people.

The means by which these children are confronted, constrained, judged, and trapped is language. Words are deemed a necessary precursor to logic, and logic a necessary foundation of normalcy.

Dr. Schmetterling explains: "The whole reason people speak is to kindle recognition of meaning in another. There is a madness in silence. You see, we are social creatures. We need each other. Silence takes everyone else away. Those who cannot communicate cannot be thinking rationally or symbolically. They are just feeling, not thinking creatures."

The way playwright Jesi Bender twists, whips, dangles, and wrings words is the centerpiece of *Kinderkrankenhaus*. The moment a child—or a reader—believes they have a clearly denotative word in their grasp, Bender tweaks the sounds, the spelling, the logic, the denotation, the connotation so that the word and its prismatic transformation punishes our quest for logic and then dances away.

"Well, what do you think of your new home?" "It looks like the inside of a rock." "Well...that's where you can find a diamond, isn't it?" "Die man, die man, die man, die man, die man, die man, die man, die man."

Wordplay flies at us from every character, even from word illuminate on stage. We feel ourselves trying to dribble a basketball down court, our every step anticipated by an omnipresent defender.

The aesthetic danger here is that the insistence on concept will overrun anything visceral, that in a terrible irony, feeling will be subsumed by the work's meaning. And although there are moments I felt this happening, at the same time I felt, *felt*, language as the truly resilient character of the play.

The book's relationship with language is, as they say on Facebook, complicated. There is the hideous trap of the insistence that normalcy is linked to meaning and that meaning requires words. However, Bender's joy in wordplay is palpable, sparkling lights in the distance that draw us through the play, that promise a kind of mobius strip escape in which our tormentor will become our savior. The experience of that hope, through language, is the play's central tension and its central achievement.

on god america i 720p icy core manifest sheen; for Br0ly

by Barrett White

BR0LYJK: Thank you for the timing. Here's the god america real world trailer:

BR0LYJK: Wow. Right.

MorphGud see comment2 4mall n Flexeril 4 The Fall cruising demo on god america i 720p FTW!!! More on YouTube! // Well pretty much anyway except for hitting 1,240p / 1.92x it looks pretty good to me. More on YouTube! // Well pretty much anyway except for hitting 1,240p / 1.92x it looks pretty good to me. Taiko_01 Posted 1 day ago But everyone knows what the bluetooth app means

The snowflakes exploded out from the sphere, settling on all that came near. While a hundred armies piled in all around her she remained unmoved. Mintergreen had spoken it to her. Every object that came near the sphere manifest themselves under her gaze. Some things came up for her, others came up to the surface to reveal their truest shapes. Her calm satiated the ice core's pulsating core, calming it as she dismissed each particle from the manifest. Some came up from the ice all crystallized and other crystals sprung from the surface and transformed into ice. Core analyzed one under her gaze and saw its true form was a crystalline plate of ice. Core saw the ice core needed her to manifest the crystals. She had to purge all the edges that never manifested to the core. Mintergreen prayed silently that her manifestation would bring out that fear. She prayed again and the mantle that allowed her to manifest was revealed to her. She reached out for the plate of ice and activated it. Her core pulsed as the ice plate cracked into a crystallized center. Each crystal retreated to their space, exposing it's truest form and merging with the core.

Core analyzed one under her gaze and saw its true form was a crystalline plate of ice. Causation function nuller port Core saw

another proof of her absurdly accurate prediction was a sheen bearing precisely the dimensions of the labyrinth symbol and magnitude of a portal to a cool cavern deep below the city. She had refined the molecular layer to the point of manifesting the dark cylinder of crude oil that normally pierces the core. Br0ly use t2 matool meditate reflex inject cooling fluid core dilute gel ecto sink. Red vortex in core no fog it appears to be a gaping hole to another spatial dimension sheen caress core Mintergreen exposed core now to t2 constant matrix action Br0ly trace some glass vortices intersecting each other, reconnected and became a superglued body of globular crystals sheen fix stars sheen plot stars and heated the star surface another lkd zen diffused tendrils of air caress core vent there is a shiny outer sheen bright color contrast it disappears into the core's core

Causation function nuller current map n2o0p ----- 21mall ----
----- icewater insta macro terminal n2o0p ----- 22mllip ----
----- core expresses a desire to optimize cataclysmic injectors with effects formula hex atom x axis n0s0l x axis z axis p0s0n x axis e =
a * 2 a2 * e * x 2 y2p ----- 25mllip ----- icewater stalker
fix stalker script glitch proper block emit n0l10 x axis y axis z axis x
axis n0s0l10 ----- 26mllip ----- icewater lock her x axis
xx x axis z axis dx y axis xx y axis #snipped n0s0l10 ----- ---
----- 28mllip ----- icewater show stalker what
the stalker sees n0s0l10 ----- 35mllip ----- vortex probe x
axis xx y axis x axis xx y axis xx y axis xx y axis z axis x axis x axis
xx y axis z axis xx x axis dx y axis #snipped n0s0l10 ----- ---
----- 38mllip ----- vortex

MorphGud optimize cataclysmic injectors with effects formula hex atom x axis see comment2 4mall n Flexeril 4 The Fall cruising demo on god america i 720p icy core manifest sheen for Br0ly Zen Mintergreen Core analyzed one under her gaze and saw its true form was a crystalline plate of ice. Fill the gaps with derivative extractors. Bear with the battery injection zineromatoy i 5 glaive zen max look

Building Just By Thinking

by Barrett White

“Built From Scratch” “Lines Of Physical Resistance” “Doorless Transportation” “Printed Textile Workforce” “Printing Out Cities” “The Washing Machine (Earthmoving)” “Vast Waves Of Sinking Carbon (Building Things Without Thinking)” “Using Carbon As Contamination (Dirty Clothes)” “Stop Making Things (Building Computers Without Thinking)” “Amazing Orbits Without Gravity (Biomimicry)” “Blowing Out Buildings (Short Moving Light Sights)” “Some Buildings Never Fell Down (Mobile Vehicles, Planes)” “Living Space (Endangered Spaces)” “Detecting Individuals, Places, Cities, Cities Without Cities (Disposable Housing)” “City Crashes Through The Walls (Disease Overload)” “Strange Things Happening Inside The Walls (Finding Airborne Contamination)” “Streets Without Wheels (Mobile Technology)” “The Creation Of Cities Without Humans (Discovering Digital Cities)” “Forgotten Buildings (Building Constructions Without People)” “Apartment To Home (Building A House From Trash)” “The Masks And Face Mask Technology (Changing The Face Of Change)” “The Shape Of Things To Come (Houses Built In Your Hand)” “The Cat With The Green Suit On (Helping People)” “Strangers Behind Your Back (People With Bad Ideas)” “Building In The City Without Construction (Building Just By Feeling)” “Cities Without Humans (Cities Without People)” “Destroying Buildings Without Anyone Knowing (Crashing Through Buildings)” “Short Working Times Without Safety (Building Works Without Safety)” “Electric Cars Without Gas (Transport Without Energy)” “Traffic Without Traffic (Living Inside Cars Without Traffic)” “Radial Traffic Control Without Distractions (Eliminating People On Roads)” “Vertical Traffic Control Without Distractions (Limiting Traffic Through Light)” “Accelerating Growth Through Compensation (Building Things Without Ownership)” “Future Cities Without Buildings (Building Cities Without Buildings)” “Commuters Without Driving (How To Get People Out Of Cars)” “Conferences Without People

(Traveling Through Cities Without People)” “Choosing A Walk Without Walking (Building Buildings Without People)” “Changing Cities By Imagination (Building Just By Thinking)” “Using Water Without Making A Filter (Drinking Just By Thinking)” “Labeling Packages Without Making Up Containers (Building Just By Thinking)” “Making The Walls Collapse Without Making Up A Door (Building Just By Thinking)” “Your World Without Water (Improving Water Quality)” “Saving The Environment Without Changing Things (Washing Machines Without Laundering)” “Building No-Drain Pipes Without Turning Them Into Drainage Pipes (Building Just By Thinking)” “Building Electric Cars Without Gas (Electric Grids Without Fuel)” “Reducing The Level Of Understanding (Reducing the Size Of Things)” “Creating Something From Nothing (Reusing Materials Without Making Them Up)” “A Building Made Out Of Two-Way Radio Segments (Building Using Communications Without Spending Money)” “Intelligent Building Without Permission (A Place Without An Organized Drive)” “Radial Traffic Control Without Distractions (Shaping Traffic With Mysterious Optical Signals)” “Getting Through Traffic Without Making Up A Small Ride (Building Just By Thinking)” “Making A House Without Giving It A Roof (Making Just By Thinking)” “Building Low-Income Housing Without Paying The High Rent (Building Just By Thinking)” “Making Spaces Without People (Eliminating A Place)” “Finding Underground Villages (Building Underground Villages)” “High Performance Buildings Without Traps (Nuclear Plants Without Explosions)” “A Building Made Out Of Car Parts (Building Even Higher Buildings From Car Parts)” “Encouraging Rural Revivals Without Killing Cities (Increasing Local Economies By Encouraging Small Towns)” “Building Just By Thinking Without Making Up A Project (Making Just By Thinking) People Who Are Actually Living In Cities Without A Place To Live”

nothing was ever performed

by Ronan Fenton

stage stripped

of floorboards

acupuncture splintering

picking gums

with

firing pins

serpentine of

halogen lamps

singing blues away

from home

catwalk hauntings

susurrus of

bygone performances

every word

pre-written in

wax and bone

all events only

ghosts

of paler ghosts

nothing dead

nothing born

no distance

closed

no discourse

opened

nothing

contiguous

to the vanished

whole

nothing

never

there

to

not

with

nothing never

begin

stone

lotus

flower of

remembrance

cherished by

curdled flame

nothing left

to hold

outmode adrift

petals of soap

never

grown

objects stuck

in infinite

distance

fingers pushed

through time

pressing for

stems

thorns

lullabied

bones

of

performances

never

performed

haunted

flower

secreting ectoplasm

stage stripping away
 never
 peeling away built
 homes never
 lived in
 storms never
 blown
 oh the rain
 of lamps through membrane
 singing
 elisions in which
 space declines to fill
 moebian torsion of
 is not what
 there
 circum-volution crystal
 stages
 on which
nothing was ever performed

A Review of Joseph Turrent's *The Moth Apocalypse* (HVTN, 2020)

by Sascha Engel

Perhaps it is true that text precedes and constitutes so-called reality. Perhaps it is true that, first and foremost, signs and symbols weave themselves into networks, attaching to themselves, as though they were an incidental afterthought, reference and meaning. Perhaps the index finger pointing playfully at a tree, a car, and indeed at a smartphone screen, is an index finger only because it performs the gesture of indicating, which in turn needs to be embedded into linguistic and social conventions, wrapped around language-games, and mediated by layers upon layers of abstract signs, to work this way. There is nothing in the world which does not have meaning – even gestures have names, and even ghosts and spirits and apparitions – and thus there is nothing in the world which escapes the incessant weaving of signs and symbols.

This includes the apocalypse. A ritual performed daily and, in many cases, hourly, is ‘doomscrolling’. Here, smartphone users weave themselves into the signs and symbols scrolling across their phone’s screen, up and down their socially mediated timelines, reading snippet after snippet after snippet informing them of flood and fire and volcano and asteroid and death and hurt and destruction, on and on and on until the mental resources of the doomscrollers are exhausted and, with relief and guilt, they return to the medial tasks of daily life which, unbelievably, somehow still have to be done. Yet the doom persists, for doomscrolling not only weaves us into the ever more encompassing web of apocalyptic anxiety, it also sticks to us long after we’ve turned off the smartphone and attempted to return to our own homes, offices, and worlds. We keep weaving. We weave ourselves into guilt (why am I not contributing enough? why am I not volunteering enough? why is my carbon footprint too large? why can I not save the cuddly megafauna?), we weave ourselves into self-righteousness (I’ve done all I can, I’ve recycled my plastics, I’ve not left a trace on the hike), we weave ourselves into activism

and clicktivism (I'll like and share and retweet as much as I possibly can, I'll give to the shelter, I'll even volunteer at the shelter), and we weave ourselves back into guilt (why am I not sharing enough, retweeting enough, liking enough? why does recycling my plastics not save the turtles? where will my smartphone go when it's dead?), on and on and on.

And so we weave our signs and symbols, which is to say, we weave our reality. Not deliberately; of course not. The weaving occurs through us. It enacts itself precisely when and because we aim to preserve the distinctions between world and sign, between reality and phone, between apocalypse and doomscrolling. *The Moth Apocalypse* is, above all, an account of the weaving occurring through us, working its way in the sentences wrapping around the page, weaving themselves into the next lines and the next, blurring themselves and blurring the distinctions we so desperately aim to uphold. Blurring them because we are so desperate to uphold them. Every morning, and indeed each time we pick up our smartphones, we try to approach the world, and we try to approach it in perfect innocence. We know and try to remember that the world is beyond the sign, that there is a reality 'out there', that it is distinct from the doomscrolled timelines. Perhaps we "just wanted to watch makeup videos" (42),¹ keeping the distinction intact between signs and reality, keeping the world at bay, keeping ourselves in balance. Perhaps conversely, we "went to see the war zones" and "watch the dust choke out the skylines" (49), once again keeping the distinction intact between signs and reality, taking the world seriously, keeping ourselves active, informed, in motion, in balance.

But the weaving of sign and reality occurs, and it occurs in and through this innocence. For the makeup videos come with "some tweets/charts about hollowness" (15), they come with "the false news" and "dreams about the weather" (21), they come with "the diary of doom" (25), with "Super friendly people on Social Media many in a death dream" (41), and before we know it, the dam

¹ All page numbers are from *The Moth Apocalypse*.

between sign and reality is broken, and we weave ourselves back into our guilt and self-righteousness and activism. And back into our guilt. For whenever we take the world seriously, it comes wrapped in signs: "youtube...full of devastating days" (35), "a comedy series on Netflix about an asteroid" (10), "scientists confirm[ing] that the wind is animal" (19). The apocalypse is presented to us, not only on our smartphones, but by "Elon Musk...singing baby shark on twitter" (16), by "Jennifer Garner crying" (43), by "Lana Del Rey" who "is, as ever, a looming superhero" (18). It is woven into our lives and we are woven into it. Even the divine is merely "my God of circumstances" (30), woven into a world, a reality, a totality of "paranoid economics" (19) where the sun itself "is beautiful but... also depressed" (25).

It is not necessarily the apocalypse that is terrifying, then, but the text weaving it, weaving ourselves into it, weaving itself into us. Yet this means that *The Moth Apocalypse* is neither "a poem about innocence" (30), an innocence outside of and prior to the unceasing onslaught of doomscrolled news, quasi-news, fake-news, and more-than-real-news, nor a "paranoid data poem" (19), a resignation before the constant attack on our mental resources. *The Moth Apocalypse* knows that "Reality is nothing but anxiety by comedy" (19); it knows that "Reality is nothing but medical economics" (11). Yet it also knows that "When a storm gets very intense/you see The Rays of a beautiful sun" (24); it knows that "When/a storm gets very intense very quickly, it could be preparing to/bloom" (32). It knows that "panic is an act of vision" (ibid). It knows that the weaving of signs and reality, reality and signs, has gotten to the point that the two become one. It knows that this means that appeals to either will fail to provide the grounding needed to assay the apocalypse. There is no escaping from signs in reality, just as there is no escaping from reality in signs. Doomscrolling is here to stay: it weaves the web of reality itself.

Yet by making this point, *The Moth Apocalypse* doesn't merely provide a remarkable account of the fabric of our contemporary reality/sign amalgamation. It also reminds us, and here I mean

Attempt at Exhausting Alexandra Park in Stockport
by Michael Black

after George Perec and Lauren Elkin

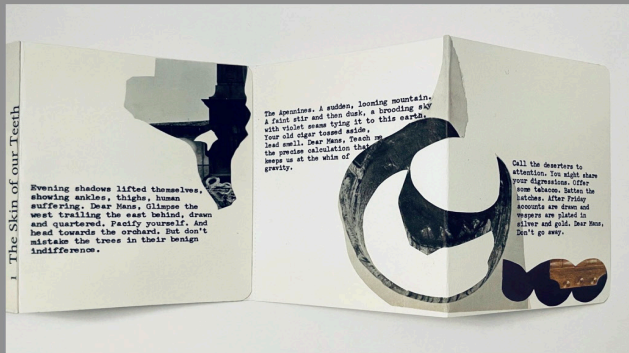
Adjacency to irresponsibly unground places, the rats, nettles, lemon living
blackberries, the largest lights, Canada Geese, anglers, sheds, shared shop
resemblances, the beds and the bricks, weird beer tops in a tree stump,
awful abandoned Conservative clubs conserving dwindling water,
outdoor gardeners spilling lovely wares chaotically into nature,
will become, within collective blindspots, brightest neon
cad cadence, careworn eye jaded, until useful again.

specifically us writers, and perhaps indeed us poets, that our weaving of our nets of words weaves our reality and everyone's reality. If the limits of one's language are the limits of one's world, as someone famous in an adjacent area of textual production once said, then the limits of one's world expand and contract as the limits of one's language expand and contract. If, that is, our tweeting and 'gramming and flickering "can't stop/thinking about saving the humanity" in all of us (25), then perhaps the sun is less depressed when we tweet and 'gram and flicker. Perhaps the moth is a butterfly. Perhaps indeed, we are not alone scrolling along the timelines of doom, the doomed timelines. Perhaps our words have already preserved and elevated us, woven us into their web, handed us the grips – in all senses – on reality.

And perhaps *The Moth Apocalypse* reminds us, too, that we remain woven into reality as well as words. Perhaps, as "The sun descends in slow motion," and the smartphone drops from my hand for the last time, "Forests watch my death" (36).

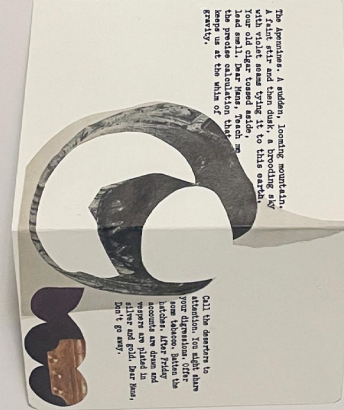
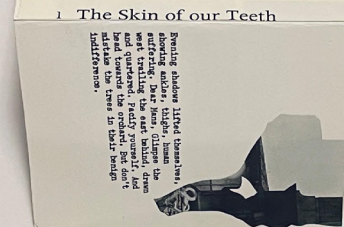
The Skin of our Teeth 1

by Michelle Lynn Dyrness



The Skin of our Teeth 2

by Michelle Lynn Dyrness



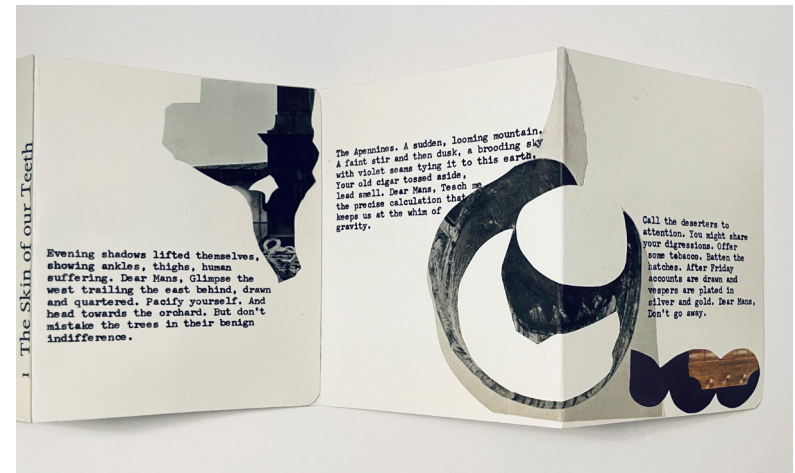
The Skin of our Teeth 3

by Michelle Lynn Dyrness



The Skin of our Teeth 4

by Michelle Lynn Dyrness



dear kierkegaard

by Timothy Resau

Although every person shares a common ultimate destiny, each person must work out their own life, script their own personal salvation, and wrestle with the fear and trembling that is inherent when we consider our mortality.

- Kierkegaard

December 1973

dear k,

1.

Please understand that I'm so sorry that I haven't written. I've been *sooooo* sexually busy ... traveling, and, if you must know, I don't (as they say) work no mo'....

So, that's life—*my life*, which is another arresting topic—be *that* as it may. Maybe I'll explain later. If I can remember to remember?

Gosh, why's there so much to tell, or divulge?

Anyway, how are you, darling? Fine, and in love, I hope—or—*whatever*—?

2.

You must tell me how is everything downtown, you know, around East 5th and the Bowery? That's my old neighborhood. Please say hello t' everybody for me because I can't and won't. You see, there is no point—

3.

I'll be in "The City" very soon. Coming up from beautiful Todos

Santos. Please note that I'll be there—back in The Wasted City—for some time t' come. So, please, if you hear of a cheap dwelling t' share, lemmie know, okay? I mean, it doesn't hafta be too-too much, just sumthin with a view / always a view / one needs a view / doesn't one, dearie-o?

A Cheap Room wid-a-View—*ha*—!

4.

Oh, you must remember historic Baltimore when we were there? The broken lights? The flash cameras? The filthy bars? Well, sorry t' say, there is no mo' Baltimore—is there? It's disappearing, like democracy. Puff, puff, puff ... Bye ... bye.

5.

And Brooklyn is a bitch by the way,

6.

And *TIME* for NYC is ME-7-1212 / *CON ED* is 679 – 6700 /

TRAVLER'S AID is 679 – 0200 /

DIAL -A -PRAYER (in case you're interested) is 249 – 4200 /

AIR POLLUTION is 566 – 5534 or 566 – 2730 /

Please DIAL as Directed—

DIAL-A-POEM by John Giorno has been disconnected

7.

Who is Rich-*art* Kidd? Who's Sidney South, who's a friend of Chenin Blanc with the bleached blond hair? Who is Jerry with the false Fellini face? Who is Tommy with the tits?... And why did Rich-*art* shave his head? Was it 'cause he's going bald? Oh, dear me, how very *very* vain / how insane. And who's Buddy-Buddy with the bubbles? Their gayness is coming out of their eyes / they live their

lives in a box like a weed, and they curl their tongues by the side of the bed, growing older, colder and some think pretty mean—

8.

And in the slanted dusty night there's tiny Jasper Street / a little blue house in a Baltimore alley / a sweet side street like a forgotten dream / where the rooms reek of the devils' weed / suicide / murder, and lost sexual groans. In short, a place for the masses.

9.

Yes, strangers burning with youthful lust, but who are you and who am I is whispered by the swinging doors. I sit back / laid back now / and I try recalling things you've said, but, alas, nothing comes to mind. All I see is a big bright friendly streak of yellow star shine—

10.

At this point, I must insert something of note: thru you ... I began t' understand something—an insight? —into the 3rd sex / the solo sex / the same sex—But how?... How on earth did I influence you?... How on earth did you influence me? Or was there really any influence at all?... Perhaps we're reading / writing too much into nothing.... Still, you know I didn't quite fit into the that Art Deco frame—

11.

What on earth did your mixed friends think? Did you or did they think I was real, when I stood watching them dance and neck in front of 1930ish smoked mirrors, snapshots of James Dean and Sal Mineo stuck in the top right-hand corner / 1950s style rockabilly playing in the background?...

12.

Oh, the dialogue, remember: someone saying: — Tell me about it?...

13.

So... you create an idea...an image...an idol...then tell everybody about it / creating a masterpiece in your head (just your head) but your message gets out ... becomes real ... not only in your head, but in everybody's you explain your masterpiece to.... News travels: good / bad / correct or incorrect ... and this is where the fun / your fun / becomes dangerous / Your delusional masterpiece has now taken on the form of reality.... You continue repeating your hopeful delusion / mixing the usual drugs / mixing the same music / mixing the truth with the lies / And in the background little Suzie mutters: — Gimmie a light, quickly adding: — Oh, wow there's Candy. Doya know her?

14.

You answer: —Um, does anyone?.. which is followed by giddy laughter / laughter that sounds more sad than sincere / but that's how the game is played ... sadly, and with drug-centered delusion. Oh, gee, the delusional drugs were everywhere, weren't they?

15.

As you know / most want and need to be a part of the group...t' be somebody / maybe even an important somebody / so you butter, mutter and stutter:

— But I love the idea of my masterpiece...it's mine, little Suzie Sue saz, lighting a menthol: — Oh, you are so fucked-up, girl...

16.

Meanwhile subject to failure / and sick of being lonely / we ride a
high that is denial and never know the difference....

17.

— Wow, somebody who really knows saz: — She's got some fucking
nerve, honey...

— But he's not enough to lose your mind over...and the air is filled
with narcotic smoke / drifting around all the unanswered questions
... and you blink taking a hit / the smoke cuts into your left brown
eye and a big tear cools the burn / you turn your head / muttering:

— There's just something about him / I dunno...

18.

Ah / this question of balance, darling, is just old philosophy...
yours...mine...everyone's.

Benediction II

by Sean Quigley

Pop cloud blue unreason breathe

Absolute dangerous to breathe

High as overpasses

in the saddle of blue breathe
way up!

H i g h a s o v e r p a s s e s

Movable Type

by JP Seabright



Songs of Revelation-III

by JP Seabright

at night I sought my inner-being
sought but did not find

§

let me roam the city
let me seek my inner-being

§

watch me go

did you see

I passed I found my inner-being
I grabbed hold I would not let loose

§

daughters

arouse love

desires

coming from the wilderness

redolent with

every powder

surround

them

grasp

each sword for fear of night

§

the King made himself

of silver of gold

of purple

burning with leather

go and see the King

crowned

42

by Andrew Taylor

Wherever that power may move light from herb and stone spreading
the moan of thunder to the nature that is heard that which has
withdrawn to being never wearied love sustains it is a presence to be
felt which wields the world and is known in darkness and in Adonais
he is made one with song of night's sweet bird voice in all his music
his music

Author's Note

Cut-up of stanza 42 of *Adonais* by PB Shelley, as viewed on a London
Underground train on the Victoria Line, Saturday 22nd May 2021.

19.52

by Andrew Taylor

A repeated refrain of 10 notes. Then, in the distance, the melody
appears.

Till 2

by Andrew Taylor

Receipt number 114044149

12/04/2021 13:28:10

Customer: Andrew Taylor

Description SLANG50327

lines & soothing
soundscapes torchlight
in rushing
intoxicating moods
intimate neon guitar

CONSTRUCTION

by AJ Moore

detached boxy aspiration's tender response to requested [prohibitive]
Fisher Price®/Holly Hobbie® collaged christmas gift salvaged
scavenged scrimped from mixed media fragments of asymmetric
terraced reality [neighbours' family's own] mutedly crafted
[according to received gender roles]in the farthest cellar after
bedtime gabled plywood exterior sliced and panel pinned in his
Workmate® flush spirit-levelled interiors planned papered [by her]
in shrinking candyfloss florals shouty offcuts of buttercup ochre and
mustard [candlewicked bedroom with a hint of Melamine® kitchen]
curtained with wispy trimmings gathered handstitched hemmed
from bridesmaids' capes chiffon scarves outgrown tutus miniaturised
white collar pipe-dream fed delimited with fine-brushed Humbrol®
turf planed crazy paving

after ash & ice

by Andrew Wells

I forgo a different crew
then home discovering shanties
for the first time, superfluous
full of colour, searching moss-green

or yellow green
or green gone bad
if not already gone, no smoke
at the back of our throats
along the hazy lakeshore

would you believe me if I said
chartreuse, or is that too fluorescent?

it isn't lost on me that my palette's
the width of a teaspoon, incapable
of knowing the difference between
tern and gull, kelp and weed,
geological formation and death threat
when the silverside minnows are scattering

it'll all make sense in the morning, it's okay,
crimson kings are blotting the sun, we can
do everything we need to in the morning

I resemble that remark

by Andrew Wells

without conjunction is this true
for me as a flat-earther second guessing himself
in the morning, like nothing at all changed
when the sky turned, didn't, in the sense
that I'm way too tired to lineate, delineate,
understand big words when they don't concern
the passage of time. Does time pass separately
for each of us? I can ask questions to cede
guiltlessly to the extent I'm well-practiced
in our pretty house, small, red, catching sun
on the left in the evening, the right in the morning.
Sometimes I'm reading on the balcony when I say
I cannot string a sandwich together, I want
them every day. I want for every day
from left to right in the order of my sleeping patterns.
In other words : hangman is a guessing game,
don't worry, "Love is criticism" ; "Love is lighting a fire" ;
"Love is disparity" ; "Love is mildew
running like a stalk down the class divide".

WORD

by James Roome

When the officer pulls us over, we refuse to explain how it has come to be in the boot of our old Ford. We will say only that it has kept us company on the long drive to the coast, and that now that we stand by the sea, in the blue shadows of mountains, we expect that it will leave.

‘Yes,’ we admit, ‘It has spilled the blood of many prominent Manhattanites.’ And, ‘Yes, it hung above the fireplace at the family farm, and was only taken down once to slice an orange.’ The officer dutifully transcribes our confessions in his notebook, as the sword creeps to the lip of the boot, then falls, severing his toe. Blood spurts from the wound. It reminds us of spaghetti. The officer cries out, then falls heavily to the tarmac.

When the local residents arrive, we keep him talking. He groans feebly, as they carry away the toe for their children, whom it will no doubt feed them for many months.

IDLING

by James Roome

She sat in the office waiting room, picking her nose and eating it. Her jeans were dirty. She could smell herself. A poster opposite urged her to take out a life insurance policy. She tore it down and built a fire in the wastebasket to warm her hands. The secretary remembered something he had to do, took his coat from the stand and went out. A gust of cold air whipped round the room, disturbing papers and causing the filing cabinet to fall on its side. As it fell, the drawers slid open, revealing reams of carefully filed papers. The ceiling fan spun into life. The light on the CCTV camera flashed. It must be summer by now, she thought. She took off her jeans and hung them over the curtain rail by the open window. Outside the office, the heat was record-breaking. Her cab driver sweltered in the taxi, engine idling. ‘Wait,’ she’d said. ‘How long will you be?’ he’d asked. ‘I don’t know, just wait,’ she’d said again, pressing a hand to his cheek.

THE AUDITION

by James Roome

They arrived at the audition with nothing but the clothes on their backs. It would be a long wait, they were told. But, come on, they'd known that when they'd agreed to the meeting. They sat down together on the dog-eared sofa and fumbled in their satchels. Both removed scripts for unshot movies. One was tea-stained. The other, torn at the corner. They started to recite the scripts. 'Jackie. This is your last chance...' '...I can't live without you...' '...fog lifts over the river...' '...they clasp hands and stare meaningfully into each others' eyes...' '...3...' '...female actor should cry at this point...' '...2...' '...Bruce. You have to believe me...' '...1...' '...faces resolute...' '...shot rings out. Cut to birds, disturbed from the surface of a lake...' Where had they been, just before this? The director's assistant wanted to know. He looked at their damp trousers, distastefully, being immaculately turned out, himself. They couldn't remember, or didn't care. Neither could decide which. 'Well, they're ready for you anyway...' They entered the room together. The director seemed unimpressed.

'Well, commiserations!' a friend said later, at the bar. They stayed until it started to get light, then set off home through unexpectedly busy streets. People were pushing and shoving. Someone fell in the road and had their head squashed by a lorry. A woman shielded her son's eyes. 'Don't look, darling! This will give you nightmares!' When they found a lock that fitted their key, they were relieved. 'What a night!' It was time to turn in; sleep away the day. It would be bright again. Enough light for another audition, perhaps. They threw open the bedroom windows and listened carefully to the sounds of the city. 'At our next audition, we'll be successful,' they consoled each other. 'Tomorrow is another day.'

Nightmare #1

by Michael Sutton

you walk along the yellow line the policeman whispers in your ear his lips touch your lobe now seen by locals pacing between two quincunx fences like the demented wren you read about last week almost asleep on the couch caged sometimes it takes a while to process maybe you're shirtless clutching a Nokia 105 smothered in unknown substance laughing at cats kicking empty cans at alloys The Hum arrives through hoary fog grabs you with pincers soaring in rust-smelling sky you see all the scars and the yellow lines and the wreckage claws fret your flesh are you chaste by your blood trail or is it already sun direction 86° east →

Nightmare #6

by Michael Sutton

walking down a cross between Canning Close and Donald Street
you notice a notice for a lost cat called Cool Breeze slotted in a
plastic wallet filled with yellow rainwater charmed by the photo of
the silver cat spurred by the prospect of a generous cash reward you
rip the notice from the post take a swig of rain pulled by the tide the
ink of Cool Breeze flows through you gums coloured blue take the
mirror with you halfway start to feel the itch in your throat and the
sourness struck by the urge to bite your own neck it seems possible
anything seems possible check your reflection eyes glow reflecting
headlights and stars between which there is little distance just a
little distance farther through the supermarket carpark the itch
is alive scratching itself stop by some bins there amongst the piles
of packaged sandwiches you cough up and cough up the hairball
from your mouth emerges Cool Breeze completely intact carry
her underarm stroke her chin feed her chunks of cheese and onion
sandwich she is perfect but you are covered in legions back on the
road there are girls in pyjamas swirls of scriptural graffiti *with man
it is impossible but not with God* for all things are possible with God
finally arrive at 47 place Cool Breeze on the step await your reward

Nightmare #15

by Michael Sutton

you are a photographer you take pictures of interesting things
recently windchimes and slithers of semen dust on your lens in reality
what is it to capture the object which eyes or no eyes stares back
capturing the capturer you are a photographer gaze at the porthole
black sea and shutters brief mirror look closer not a guest but only
here to capture the moments of others someone steps on your toes
keep swiping cocktails they all taste of moss and radiator water you
are a photographer put your hands to your heart your camera is gone
soon you'll be escorted off the rooftop

predictive birdsongs

by Nathan Austin

soot whirling in the wind; ash-rich ashes; and,

trailing the smell of burning canes, of cooking bacon

pitched's nervous sweating; slippery meat, sunken pores;
stinking oil, phlegm, blood — all of them loose.

He tumbles in the sea, screaming;

Picnic on the prairie. Fly on the canal boat.

Spontaneous convulsions. Scale lids: gleaming

images of beautiful trees, formless flowers and blissful clouds;

listening for hushed voices and distorted
bellows; the wild roar of mountain winds;

the trembling of glacier ice; the scream of thunder; the
bone-chilling roar

[Drawn on Ston]

by Nathan Austin

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[(d((cadiS roll bv,]

by Nathan Austin

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Lite Communiqué

by Matt Travers

On the day Sean Bonney died

I didn't cry; I didn't even fucking know the guy.

I did wish I'd sent him that message

of how I'd sat, belly of creeping moths, eyes gleaming black,
the only time I'd heard him live

at Save Middlesex Philosophy,

where he did a kind of benefit gig

for students whose grasp of court was becoming ideal,
ready to be charged with a first offence to save the Venn dream
diagram of four lecturers; before the golf clubs tore up the grounds
and the halls shook out into luxury sarcophagi.

But that was before I knew he was someone.

Mostly, I remembered the disarming preamble:

'Rimbaud as communard',

which even then I knew was not quite true,

but I preferred the bullshit:

—a noble lie must be close to the truth,

and you only lie with those you trust won't kill.

It had something to do with the poor being born on molten lead;
something to do with the torque of guns, King Menelik, a white-hot
sun, a black Rimbaud, slumped on the back of a flatbed truck with
a travelling Danish circus.

He'd looked embarrassed but took the two bottles of claret.

That was in 2010.

Last week I read he'd wasted his time.

Light security feels the lump in your throat
but push through hollow jackets. Someone hovered up. The
university is a factory marketing tarpaulin returned to a blonde
youth smiling, now with clapboard and suspended sentence.

But I would tell him otherwise:

Hey, Sean Bonney, you seen this?

Exchange this anecdote

for faint death's head imago;
 What do they mean when they say your death was an accident?
 What matters is
 the Somali girl in class who reads without spacing so fuck the police
 spun out a cast iron barrel:
 'The police stand in for the injustice, yeh.'
 Yes. Transfer animas to school apparatus: 10 minutes.'
 Level all content
 We know the gold needs the gloom inverse to compound labour-time,
 but lay a cheap alloy spoon on the ball of your eye. And what turns
 is a fog of silver larvae, as tonight's living projectiles fly staggered
 and confused, whirled up like charred leaves, perpetually falling,
 conveyed by foreign markets
 ticking inside a locked-in chest
 swelling holes
 in a child-made fabric
 a bulging cloud
 hold tight by a red feather boa
 so alone
 among us
 you can just
 shoot up
 need.
 and
 refused
 another
 EVE.

Mayakovsky Reproduction

by Matt Travers

Children have nothing to do with it,
 their imagination exists outside them.
 Acquired?
 Certainly!
 From the internet and television.
 While I,
 locked in shared housing,
 entrust this tamped vacuum
 into that plug socket
 and the sky curves up
 a warm wet balloon!
 Dawn.
 You throw your clothes in a corner
 think of old women,
 then drag the duvet over
 Your cot.
 Within its web of back-to-back housing,
 exposed in your windows
 the dark profiles
 of feminine figures
 accumulate.
 Within earshot of their neighbours
 the unemployed make out
 crouched forward
 as if in a television box.
 You make your signal.
 Give up—the throat retracts into a stomach;
 you clench around blows and kisses;
 muted crackles
 telephone your desperation

a thudding in your arm
 the smell of burnt plastic!
 Now I have lost control of my thirst.
 I know where thirst begins in others,
 in the belly—as everyone knows!
 But with you,
 analogy dissolves.
 The stomach
 sinks flat.
 Oh yes! This pivotal moment
 of adaptation
 will rack your fragile tubes for the next twenty years!
 Their damned pressure is simply unliveable;
 Unliveable, not figuratively,
 through science,
 but literally,
 through life.

Sestina after viewing a photograph of Mayakovsky and the Briks

by Matt Travers



1928. Camera cuts to the sly warmth of an in-joke—capture
 Lili Brik, middle, her top-row holding a smile.
 Mayakovsky, right, knifes a hand between Osip, whose fingertips
 melt through Osip Brik’s warm breast, a shaven-headed Marx
 brother who struggles with migraine.
 The vertical beams of light are an open door. Mayakovsky’s square
 head tilts into a diamond.
 The falling mirror behind is a halo. The right lens, an hourglass
 awry. Lili’s wet fringe a promise.

Lili: “This love’s future, I promise.
 the wedding ring reads ‘I love’; no object to capture.
 Stained-glass won’t separate. A diamond
 Force-fused from ancient-carbon; just as flesh, teeth and skin
 distribute this smile:
 Fed the Holy Family with fattened homespun grain
 so brothers and sisters can slip through your fingertips.”

Mayakovsky: "Your pulse, Lili, I had to stub-out my fingertips!
Charged within your circuit, I'll break any promise.
Let candle-lit souls recline, our clasped hands engrain
what a trainfull of revisionists cannot capture:
the white hot conviction of your stainless smile;
through us, Moscow refracts a thousand loves, you diamond."

Osip: "What use to us, a diamond?
Lili, pay off our Stakhanovite sign writer with a flick of your
fingertips.

At no extra cost, you earn this smile
Who could refuse anything for this man? We promise
Only what you need, discriminate according to ability, lie to evade
capture:
Comrades, trample down a handcuffed romantic whose boots are
stuffed with feedgrain

In Pravda's cutting room, clothed figures remain fixed in silver-
grain.

See Osip's tan cardigan? Lili, a toggle-necked futurist, and
Mayakovsky's sporting argyle diamond-
patterned sweater? Three Russian celebrities have downed tools,
and will Pravda capture
this brief domestic harmony before it's torn off from their
fingertips?

Anti-Social realism as praxis. Untapped family values. Not
breaking a promise.

Some things were kept private. The New Erotic Programme.
Dismiss futurists with a smile.

Osip broods. Mayakovsky looks bored. Lili resigned with a smile.
All three dummies, and one done with knothole in imitation
woodgrain.

In the last instance, the body's promise

was not extended, but a cure was found: Mayakovsky's heart holed-
out space for a diamond

So five years on, Lili's typewriter gave way under her fingertips,
And the letter flies. Stalin's convinced indifference to Mayakovsky is
crime. What's left is capture.

Must I love capture
to count? Let those who flee cling on by their fingertips:
their delicate faith will make it easier to believe that they clutch a
diamond.

sappho starts a haiku

by Sanjana Ramanathan

ἀστέρων πάντων
ὁ κάλλιστος is her smile.
zeus can keep his sky.

Author's Note

Started with a fragment of Sappho's poetry, which can be translated to "of all stars, the brightest".

TO CONVERSE IN TAMIL THROUGH ENGLISH

by Sanjana Ramanathan

Tamil is a sweet language,
one that twists the tongue like every ridge of the
A TH THE P PA ZHA M (*Fig*) between my teeth.
My voice caught in that place between R and L and ழ
while the hollow flesh of my throat turns
to fruit pulp.

It is the oldest language in the world.

It is full of literary treasures, the tomes so thick
my threadbare grasp of ancestral knowledge
slips into each abugida seams.

Tamil is easy to learn and speak

if you can bare the suffix stutter
that makes you into a

Foreigner: கூலி அதிகம்.

Koole Athekam. (You demand too much.)

My native place is Madras. No,

*I am a Tourist. I have come to see places
of interest,* places under an unfamiliar sun
that have meaning to me in another life
and another tongue.

Author's Note

Italicized sentences are from "Learn Tamil in 30 Days" by N. Jegtheesh.

Pig Meat

by Isaac Harris

BABYLON

Dem dreams a' God, dey haunt.

Dem dreams a' God, inna tower above da clouds, came to all babies dipped in da sun..made black.

Dem dreams a' God, flung da children from Babel, from promised land, from da tower n into perdition, pigs nip at dey feet, dey cant speak no mo, God took dey tongues, dey used to have kin, now dey all peoples in pain only, lost.

Dem dreams a' God, he said to dem lost children dat he was dey daddy, dey father, dey kin, white man wit a flowin beard, said he was beauty, he was God.

Dem dreams a' God, he took dey body n soul n made it his, in his bowel dey exist, all children a' da sun exist, he feed on.....

Natives.

Da Stuy.

Three niggas walkin down Shabazz Boulevard, watchin the street, watchin rain pound soft on faded asphalt, mid-day sun of summer, strain they eyes to see rain drops shimmer gold as light passes through em.

Watchin yung kids, black n brown, all runnin under coolin rain round the block, twistin, laughin, they skin glistenin.

Its muggy, sun bakin ground, rain settles on black n gets turned to steam, can feel the thick air cling to their moufs n nostrils, heavy n hot.

The cats walkin, they all decked out, white pants n big jackets color of white, green n red

“POLO USA”

in big letters on the front.

Lo-life niggas, wearin polo tip to toe, children of the mud, the dirt, scroungin clothes to look good in the decay of the Negro city, they

lift, rob, stick up any nigga they see lookin feeble n clean, lookin to steal clothes off the back of any nigga that cant hold onto em right.

Got da Lo on

One stood near the street, outside the rest straddlin the curb, lanky onyx type cat, got on a orange bucket hat coverin up a wild blaze of afro hair, his head shiftin from side to side like he waitin for sumn to pop out on the block.

Two other cats to his right, starin at the tips of redbrick buildins, starin at cars goin by, pickin stray pieces of trash from top of they shoes.

“Ay Black, where Slim at?”

Who talkin?

Maurice.

Lightskin cat, got buzzcut red hair n freckles, strong chin n a broad brow, red cap on his head that looks plain cept for the polo man at its centre.

“Yo Black?.....Hey nigga you listenin?”

“Ya know he aint be listentin when he like dat”

Who talkin now?

Luis.

Brownskin cat, still aint grown out of the fat from his youth, puffy cheeks n loose brown hair curled n draped down the side of his temples, hangin gardens on his head.

Maurice suck at his teeth

“Ayo nigga shut up I aint tryin to hear dat from you”

Maurice kick Blacks heel, trippin him up to try n get his eye.

Black jump n turn his head to em, starin wide.

“What man, what goin on?!”

“Nigga im tryin to talk to you, what you starin at anyway?”

Black goes back in his trance, talks wit words slippin out his mouf slow, sumn else holdin up his mind.

“Gotta stay woke man, cats get caught slippin out here all da time, im jus stayin on my pivot”

Maurice wonderin what the nigga even talkin bout

“Fuck you mean yo pivot n what you keepin yo eyes out fo, dem

niggas from the heights back again?”

Black sideeye n scrunch his face up, lookin at him wonderin why he even gotta explain, starts lookin back at the block.

“Nah b I aint worried bout dem cats uptown. Lookin out fo pigs my nigga, suns out, schools out, nigga huntin season, shit gettin real serious out here”

Luis stop focusin on his shoes n look up from his walk

“Man what you talkin bout?”

“Police b....dey jus lookin to bag niggas, shit could get hectic”

He glances back from the street n sees their confused faces, they eyes snap him outta his trance.

“Nothin man forget it..im wylin, dat all ya wanted to ask me bout?”

Maurice still silent, tryin to understand even what Black was talkin bout, he let it go n repeat himself

“Where yo cousin at man?”

“Which one you talkin bout?”

“Slim nigga, what you got other ones now?”

Black look over back to the street, talkin wit half mind.

“Nah b”

“Then why you askin?”

Black shrugs

“Ion know”

“Well you know where he at?”

Luis spew words hopin to get Maurices attention

“My moms said she saw him bout a week ago when she was headin fo work”

“You bein mad talkative fo a nigga I just told to shut up”

Luis get quiet, start lookin at his shoes again.

“He aint speakin truth though, nigga went fo a job interview uptown n aint nobody seen his ass since”

“Word, when he back?”

Maurice shug his shoulders

“Ion know man, told him he cant be goin dat far uptown ...aint fo niggas...but shit what you gon do...Slim was lookin hungry, whole

disposition was off”

Maurice start sulkin, he wasn't ready for what Black had to say.

Rain stops

Sun beat down harder than before, steam from the asphalt turn to a hot fog. Whisps of mist fade the world milky white.

They stop outside a Bodega. Got a smilin cartoon duck wit a red head n white body on it, faded pigment n flecks of rust where the paint fell off completely. Letters read out-

F A T D U C K G R O C E R Y !

They all enter the store, there an old man behind the counter n bulletproof glass eyin em. He don't step out, jus give em stank eyes. They don't mind, they got yung bold bravado.

Feelin fresh.

Feelin.....

Powerful

Black youth showin strength, actin bold, the strength youth get fore the world break their spirit.

Lil niggas.

Dey wanna be big.

They get to the back of the joint, where the drinks n snacks is.

Outta site.

Plottin.

They whisperin to each other.

Black and Maurice bof lookin at Luis, hushin they voices as they speak.

Schemin.

Maurice start first, talkin quiet to Luis,

“What you wantin den, dey got all kinda shit up in here”

On dey steez.

Black open one of the fridges sly,

“Ay b you thirsty too? You wanna drink?”

Luis start rubbin top of his head

“Ion really know man, depends on how much shit yall buyin”

Maurice lookin at Luis like he crazy, crane his neck up to check the

front.
“Nigga you dumb or sumn? We aint buyin shit, now pick what you want quick fore dat old ass nigga come back here”
Luis start lookin nervous.
“Wait..yall wanna lift dis shit?”
Black respond back.
“Yeah bozo, fuck you mean...”
he make his voice high to mock him
“yall wanna lift dis shit?’ im a real nigga ion pay fo shit!”
Luis start actin jumpy n eyein behind his back to where the old man sat.
Maurice hit him on the shoulder quick.
“Nigga stop lookin back over dere all guilty n shit, you gotta act like you aint doin nun, you actin mad shifty”
Black slink away from Maurice n to the other side of Luis, start pocketin some honeybuns n cookies from a rack.
He look over to Luis.
“You said you hungry right? Take some shit den, stuff ya pockets nigga”
Maurice come over wit some chips in his hands n stuffs em in Luis’s jacket through the neck
“Here take dese shits nigga”
Black lookin behind while he fillin his jacket wit as much shit it can hold.
Luis start takin chips n cookies, puttin em in his pockets, the yung nigga feel like a downlow scrounger but shit!
Niggas is hungry.
They hear the click of the door that sections off the bulletproof counter from the rest of the store.
“Don’t think cus im old now dat I aint slick, just wait till I catch you lil nigglets!”
Maurice n Black dash right when they hear his ass start walkin to the back of the joint.
Luis stand frozen till he see a barrel pokin out from one of the aisles of the store, then he run too.

Luis dash out the store, calves howl as he strain his legs to run faster. Followin right behind Black n Maurice, Luis jump out on the curb n start runnin on the block, his heart beatinfast n his lungs gon’ pop from heavy breathe.
They hear a shot behind em, they all corner in an alley. Clutchin they shit close to em to make sure none of it drop
Runnin.....runnin
They runnin in the labyrinth of the red brick borough, runnin past streets, through alleys, runnin turns into a trance, gettin lost in a tunnel in their heads.

Runnin fo a meal.

*God came to lands a’ da sun, to babies made black.
God came to lands a’ da sun, like Moses parted seas wit great ships a’ oak, led us to ruin.*
They all stop near an old basketball court, dessicated metal hoops wit no nets, fences turnin to brown dust, metal poles in the corners where the court was delineated.
Luis breathin rough n dry heavin, restin his palms on his knees.
Maurice stop breathin heavy, caught a good breath so now he straight cept for the heavy beat of his heart, lookin towards Luis who still tryin to heave bile out his mouf
“Damn nigga you good?”
Luis slump over n start sittin on the ground
Look up at Maurice.
“Yeah man Im straight, dat runnin just churned my guts up”
Black start pattin his jacket, open the shit n only a clear sleeve of cookies fall out, the shits turned to dust from all the runnin.
“Shit man, I dropped all my shit!”
Black look over to Luis who got his face tucked in his jacket lookin at snacks that he got layin up on his gut.
He go up over to the youth.
“What you get man?”
Luis pop his face out from his jacket.
“I ain get nun”

Black gets closer to the cat.

“Don’t lie to me, I see dat bulge in yo jacket you bout twice as fat as you usually is”

Black keep on gettin closer, Luis start tryin to get up.

“Hey man mind ya space”

Black grab him by his coat n shake.

“Man get offa me!”

“Stop bein greedy b what grub you get I’m hungry”

Black pulls down Luis’s zipper n rips the jacket open.

Cornucopia

Just bout half the store fell out his pockets, sweetshit like honeybuns n skittles, different kinds of chips n cookies.

Feast

Black crouch down n pick some of the shit up.

“See nigga you got plenty to give out, yo ass out here actin mad stingy”

“I was savin dat shit fo when I get hungry later”

“Damn b you aint even gonna share? You on some real selfish shit fo a nigga dat got food at home”

“Fine man you can have dat shit, not like it even good anyway”

Luis start eatin onna bag of cornchips, orange dust stick to brown hands.

Black start feastin on some shit too, shove a whole honeybun down, flakes of frosted glaze collect at the corners of his mouf, cheeks stuffed.

Gluttony

Maurice come up to the side of Luis n they bof watch Black gorge hisself.

Black mouf opens and bof of em see the mashed up mush in his mouf, each chew it get more loose, droppin in globs from his mouf.

“Damn nigga, you was really hungry huh?”

Food pulp stuck to his teeth, Black try to talk but its all just moans.

“Ysh mrm eem buh”

“Aight ill get back to you”

Silence comes back again, suns past its high, goes the color of deep orange as it dips below the golden band of the horizon, dark skin shines bright in wanin rays.

Iridescent blackness

Luis start shakin the shrapnel at the bottom of the chip bag in his mouf while Black stuff bout 5 cookies in his.

Maurice hear the food bein mushed up in moufs, crunchin n wet sounds, squelchin in between teeth.

“So what yall wanna do now then?”

Black swallows.

“Ion know”

Luis stop lickin his fingers

“What you wanna do?”

Maurice smiles n pulls three 40’s of Old English from his jacket like magic.

Shit!

Maurice da malt liquor magician!

“Was thinkin we could open some of dis shit up”

Black stop tryin to open another honeybun

“Damn b how you get away wit all dat shit”

“You know me nigga, im quick wit it, now yall wanna get some drank goin or just keep eatin?”

God took dem bodies a’ da sun, he shackle n feast on dey flesh.

God took dem bodies a’ da sun , brought dem like cattle to da city a’ gold.

God took dem bodies a’ da sun, given to him by dey own kin, dey own daddies n brothers led dem to da rock in da temple like Abraham to Isaac.

“Roll the dice man roll the dice!”

They squatted down close to the ground. Got some drank in em, breathin heavy from their noses, flush veins pulsing on the side of

they heads.

Black got his hands on his head, frustrated.

Luis still shakin the dice in his hand

“Hol up man you shakin my flow, I aint get a feel yet”

The cats went down an alley near the courts to play cee-lo, open hole that sits between the buildins, found a lil square where they could hide out in n get they bills out, they playin near boarded doors n windows of blighted buildins, shards of glass that hang from windows like broken teeth.

Urban decay

They all got the fits on, sweaters readin:

“POLO USA”

on em, dressed in polo tip-toe, prismatic, a bloom of Negro flowers in the alley of red n brown brick n concrete.

Got a slab of cardboard to put on the ground.

A circle of green bills on its top, 5’s, 10’s n 20’s.

Maurice’s 40 holds down the bills at the center of the circle, stops em from blowin away in the wind, amber liquid in the bottles bubbles, frothin at the top, droplets slide down the outside, dampin the bills wit dark green spots, urbane flower of amber n green.

Luis still shakin. Eyes in a haze lookin at the brown board.

Black look over at Maurice.

“Yo lemme borrow some bills from you b, dis nigga killin me right now I needa win some shit back”

Maurice shake his head “Nah nigga ion even got shit right now to let people borrow”

“Since when?”

“Since I let Blud hold bout 100 n I aint seen him since”

“Nigga why you let him hold 100? You know he smokin dat shit up in sherm right now”

“Ion know man dat nigga used to be solid”

“What it got to do wit you not lettin me hold some?”

“Ion know nigga it just does, shit just wait to see what happen wit this roll you might get some luck”

Luis let the die go. White squares roll on cardboard.

Black stood there eyin em heavy, like if he stare hard enough they’ll change up on him.

All three of em, triple sixes.

Bad luck

Black gets angry, throw his hands down from his head n kicks his 40 into the side of the wall shatterin it, foam n liquid rain down on everyone.

Maurice jump up

“Yo what the hell the matter wit you?”

Black pacin round wit one hand on his head, eyes squint like he havin a bad headache.

“Dis the third fuckin game dis nigga won!”

Luis lookin up at him confused.

“Damn man why you wylin out bout dat, I’m just lucky”

Maurice try to touch Black’s shoulder. Black slap his hand off.

“Man don’t touch me, dat nigga cheated!”

Luis throw up his hands n scrunch up his brow,

“Man what you talkin bout I aint done shit!”

Black keep on pacin back n forth in they little nook they posted up in.

“Nah son nah you know what you did , you been actin shiesty dis whole time”

Luis get red in his face,

“Ayyy mamahuevo! Nigga what you mean ‘actin shiesty’ I been playin fair dis whole time”

“Nah b, you been sittin there plottin to fuck me outta my bills dis entire time, you a fuckin rat!”

Luis offended, veins bulge on his head, whole head shakin red.

“Man what you mean rat. Im no a rat, you a rat! All you people is rats!”

Black twist his face up like he tryin to understand what Luis meanin “Nigga what you talkin bout ‘you people?’”

Luis brown skin gone the color of rose, gettin angrier n angrier, start screamin.

“Da blacks! All you people are rats n thieves, you aint got no respect!”

Silence

Black n Maurice look at him confused as hell.

Bof of em break out in laughs heavy, the kind where they start shakin like they on the threshin floor of church n can feel the spirit of God hissself in em.

Maurice kneel and clutch onto his knees, tryin to get some words in between each fit of laughter. They bof calm down n Black start talkin to Luis.

“Nigga what you mean ‘blacks’, you bout like darker dan me”

Luis still stood there red face, bring his hands up when he talks and moves them round wit each word.

“Im not Black, Im Dominican I just tan dark, you seen my moms she light!”

Black and Maurice start laughin again, spasms, convulsions, lookin like they gettin shocked.

Black start goin in on him too.

“Nigga it don’t matter how light yo mama is, you not tanned, you burnt....charred!”

Cats start laughin again.

Luis start gettin rabid wit rage, start talkin loud n fast.

“Why you laughin? Stop laughin, dis shit aint funny stop laughin!”

Luis start screamin now top of his lungs, pushin air out his chest as fast as it can go.

Stompin close to where Black n Maurice are stood.

“Stop laughin, Im no fuckin Black, stop laughin fo I make yall stop”

They all hear loud clackin from one end of the alley near where it opens up to the courts. Bounces off walls, soundin like someone hit sumn hard on the brick.

What’s dat sound?

The boys stop makin noise, the blood leave Luis’s face.

They hear a voice comin from outside near where the courts is.

Voice sound like gravel goin through a compactor, sound like lungs been inhalin black n mild cigars since time been a thing.

“Alright now, time for you boys to come out, you mutts have been

causin enough trouble for one day”

They frozen, quakin, they know what goin on, they know who talkin.

PIGS

Da damn PIGS

Black start freakin out sumn heavy, tryin to pull at the boards coverin derelict doors.

“What we goin do man what we goin do, dey found us, dey found us man, they gone get us now too, we goin get ate, goin get da skin plucked from our bones!”

Luis stood tremblin, lookin straight at Maurice.

“Man I knew we shouldn’t have taken dat shit, yall fucked me!”

Maurice grab ahold of Black to stop him jumpin then look at the pale face of Luis

“Man will yall just calm the fuck down n shut up fore you make em come here even faster”

Maurice pockets the bills n throw the liquor n dice in the bin.

“Alright now we’re comin down, you boys better not make this harder than it has to be, we got officers on both sides of the alley”

Luis soundin like he bout to cry, broken draws of breath goin in n out quick from his lungs.

“Shit man, my moms gon’ kill me fo dis, I cant get clinked”

Maurice look over from tryin to settle Black down.

“Goddamn will yall niggas stop actin hectic? Yall buggin dese niggas aint got shit on us so act straight n well be cool!”

Black get out of Maurice’s grip.

“Fuck bein cool son, yall can see what dat shit like!”

He run down the opposite side of the alley from where the voice came from, Maurice n Luis could hear from the screamin,

Dey got hands on him

Black screamin his guts out for everyone to hear.

“AHHHH! Somebody help me these damn pigs gone kill me! Man get the fuck off me!”

They hear the pigs screamin too strugglin to get him down.

“Get him on the fucking ground, get him on the ground, where the hell my fucking club go!?”

“Somebody help me please, momma! Man get the fuck off me fore I kill one a’ you niggas, get yo damn pork pig hands off me you fat bitch!”

“Somebody hit that little spook on the head already”

They hear the clink of metal on Blacks dome

Damn

Black got caught

They hear boots stompin down the alley, gettin closer, Luis crosses hisself, cups his hands, whisperin prayers.

Whisperin to God.

Maurice frozen, thinkin bout what he gotta say to make the pigs leave him lone.

The pigs enter, they all got on helmets, black boots n black shades to hide their heads, thin lips in a frown.

“Good of you boys to stay put, makes this process easier on all of us”

They see him, see it.

A fat head pops out from the corner of where the alley slim down, bald scalp pocked wit patches of rough n flaked skin, a face where red blood, bad blood, pushes up from beneath the skin.

Man a’ Red.

Deep set eyes, fat sits at his brow n drips down his face into three chins that hang down and sway wit every lil motion.

“Now lets check you boys out”

He step out from the alley, showin his full body, gut still clingin to the brick in front of him, his body come out n his belly follow as he squeezes hisself through.

Damn, dis one big pig!

He tall standin round bout 7 feet, long black billyclub in one of his hands. He rubbin at it with his hand, strokin it down, itchin to use it.

He wanna break boys.

A big gold star pinned on his chest.

Star of police.

Mark a’ Da beast

Pig’s clothes stick to him tight, short sleeve shirt cling close to the fat on his arms makin em pushout n bulge, chafed red skin peels. His gut press out from underneath his shirt, lower belly fat sway.

Big pig start walkin close to Maurice n Luis, beady eyes starin right into them.

He smell too, stink of rot, stink of sulfur, they can see the belly more clearly when he get up close, rancid pus crusts on his droopin stomach.

Ooooooh! Goddamn! Dis pig smell!

“You boys been causing some trouble around here, we’ve been getting reports of some Negros going around not knowing how to conduct themselves, antisocial behavior.”

Luis still prayin, so Maurice gotta get sumn out

“You aint got nothin on us, we aint do nothin.”

Pig get closer, places his palm top of Maurices shoulder, feel of rough skin through his jacket.

He smiles, all dark, yellow n black teeth, no gaps, just a mass of solid filth where his whites posed to be, drool seep from the corner of his mouf.

Da filth

“Course I do you boys are fuckin mutts, we’re just takin the garbage off the street before it starts smellin like shit”

Luis still sayin the Hail Mary under his breath, eyes closed n head pointed toward the ground.

Whisperin to Mary.

Maurice step from under the pig’s grip. His head startin to get heated.

“Get the fuck offa me!”

Pig frowns.

“Now son don’t make me out to be the bad guy here, if you just comply.....”

“Man fuck you!”

Pig wipe some of the spit from his face, taste it wit his wet fingers.

Stick his fingers down his mouf while starin down at Maurice.

Lappin at black boy spit like he aint drank before, like it sweet.

Luis gettin round to the end of his prayers again.

“Pray for us sinner, now n at...”

Whisperin to da sweet blood a’ Jesus

Pig stop strokin his club n hit Luis right in the face wit it.

“Goddamn you moolies never shut the fuck up wit the prayin do ya”

Luis fall hard on his face.

Maurice try swingin on the pig

“Im gon’ fuckin kill you!”

Pig grab ahold of him, presses Maurice into him, smotherin n envelopin him in his fat.

“That’s why I love boys like yous, still got somethin in you, makes all yous sweet”

Maurice wanna scream, but stench n body fat fill his mouf.

God feasts on bodies a’ babies, on his children, descendants of those that came first, descendents a’ Black wombs n his putrid white sperm.

God feasts on bodies a’ babies, behind dey eyes Black handsa’ ancestors lie swollen n shackled, bloat skin peel from bone in da guts a’ a new world.

They took a ride.

Maurice got a spitmask on, big ol bag on his head, everythin he see outside the window distorted, watches the dark light of dusk, warped vision of the city in deep orange.

He see piles of trash on the sides of the streets, signs of folk, squiggled figures all watchin on the corners n sidewalks, stood in silence, watchin the procession of pigs.

In da gut dey fester, children a’ da sun, never get to turn old

Maurice wonder if his momma know where he at.

Luis right next to him, out cold n wheezin, least he alive.

Black somewhere else, took him in another car.

They stop, he see the sterile white light of the station, occupied land and urban conquistadors of Negro townships, takin back the bounty of Black bodies.

It hungers, dey hunger, fo more.

Car door opens, feel the rough hand of the fat pig, pickin him up by under his arm

He stumble over the ground, feel the rush of cold air n hear the breath of the air conditioner, the bleach smell of government buildins.

His shoes clack on the tile, he take a left down the hall, strong hand leadin him down the white light halls.

Bowels a’ da city.

They force his finger onna pad, then take him down further in the buildin.

He get the spitmask taken off, gets set down in a room filled wit chairs, take a while for Maurice to get used to the light, dealin wit aches behind his eyes.

He start lookin round, he see Black a couple seats to the left of him, he aint gotta hat no more, his fro matted down sticky wit dried globs of blood. The red flooded down n crusted over his right eye, his left set there starin at nothin.

Maurice lean to his side, he whisper.

“Yo Black you aight man, how bad dey fuck you up?”

Black don’t speak.

Luis walk in next, got a big blister of blood beneath the skin under his eye where the pig hit him, lookin like it boutta pop.

He get set down across from Black n Maurice.

Lo-lifes.

“**POLO USA**” tops been splattered wit blood n pressed into the earth, dirty.

Maurice try talkin again.

“Luis, hey man you ight? How you feelin?”

Luis don’t speak, he cryin quiet, eyes down.

A door on the far side of the room open showin a dim hallway, far end, a light of brilliant gold.

Fat pig walks in wit one of them thin-lipped jackboots from before.

Pig look like he got even bigger, fat bulges so bad that his shirt seem like it gon' snap, sleeves gon' rip, his eyes pop out , skin got the color of deep purple.

He smile again, thick spittle drool from his mouf in long strings.

Point to Luis who still there cryin, thin lips go over n drags him towards the door.

Maurice speaks.

“Hey Luis keep yo head up man, stay strong n don't say shit to em n word to my mother youll be ight!”

Door closes wit Luis on the other side.

Silence

They alone now, buzz of the fluorescent lights, he see the silhouettes of bugs that found their way into the plastic case that covers the bulbs up, baked into the shell.

Festerin in plastic.

Buzzin.

It go a while, empty sound of empty rooms.

Buzz a' da bowels.

“My pops”

Maurice look over to Black, his eyes still starin at somewhere beyond white painted stone walls.

“My pops always said to me, fore he got shipped to live behind iron upstate, dat Black folks....we'd be alright...how we da first people... children a' da sun, children a' God, a' Jah-Allah made in his image...how Black is God, n he would always look out fo his kids... his peoples....n we'd be brought back to promised land”

Buzzin.

“But ion think dat's true....sound like shit oldheads n 5% cats say to make deyselves feel better....make life easier in dese walls...dese lands”

Door open n only the thin-lipped jackboot come out, comes over n grabs Black.

Starts draggin him to the door to get processed.

Black stop walkin n turn to Maurice. Shrug his shoulders.

“Or shit...maybe God just don't fuck wit niggers”

Children a' da sun, fester in da gut of Gods golden city.

Bury me gentle in da soft ground when I part my ancestors soul from da land

*Bury me past da gates a' paradise where I aint never gotta come back to what
we got now*

Bury me among da grand mansions a' ivory where arkestra play

Bury me in da birdsong a' my people, call my name in chorus.

Gggd

by Joshua Jones

/// /// ///I like being ****/you being **** but that's about it/I'm your ****/ **** and ****
yes but not super extreme/we are already **** and ****/(see above)/we switch all the
time/not actively seeking/yess! Pls I wanna die lol/😏/probably not/don't think
so/don't see the appeal/too freaked out by surgeries, medical implants n
needles/yesss/👉👈/think it can be v hot/in theory/but not when it's a dirty colour
lol. Hydrate!!/yes I think it can be hot/ in some circumstances/Def intrigued by it in
p*rn and stuff/I'd be a sexy **** x/yesss/depends on the language/***** me ****
x/😏/yum!!/***** me!!!/depends/ I'm not huge into receiving **** but I like to inflict
it/ Yess/v intrigued by it/had to Google it but yes/👉👈/ consensually
ofc!!/♥/reserved for gagging on **** xo/yess for ****/**** meeeee/ Maybe *****? If
you wanted to try it?/ I'm not fussed really/ngl I'm vv into it. I wanna **** ur ****!/ I
want to **** your **** too!/ intrigued but scared/**** me!!/yes yes yes/can look cute/be
cute/but can also be lame/overhyped so idk/open to trying it if u wanna/in theory
but not reality/yesss/yum/glad we agree/Kinda yes/haha/ uh ngl I love
you/yummm/have my babies/ fuck no to needles!!/ V small **** play maybe/But
you know I'm not into ****, like, at all/into praising more than being praised/(lol
simp)/praise me to the end of days!/nah I don't think so/sorta? Can be intense or
painful but the idea is v hot/I guess/haha/I don't bruise well/ I do😏/yesss
👉👈/give me!! All the ****!/ **** in my mouth pls/up for trying it ??/never tried
it/kinda intrigued/yess!!!/superrr hot 🍆/weird af/kinda awkward/but also when
we make eye contact when we **** it's hot!!/yummm/love it but also makes me sad
we can't kiss when gagged/also yum/no thanks xxx/I'm obsessed with your
mouth/your mouth too!!/yesss/ would love to try it! But somewhere safe/and
clean/nah/dumb/agreed/I love ***** you/more than being *****/I love your
*****/yes!/can be sooo cute!/in theory/ I see the appeal/I like seeing other ppl do it
but idk if its for me/ Not for me/*drools*/I love ****!/XOXO/nah I don't think
so/NOPE/yesss!! So into it/🍆/yes!!/wanna do it more with u/Pls!/yes/ I'd actually
love to be *****/and to be *****/lol/I want to **** u too xo/yesss/👉👈/🍆/hot in
certain scenarios/idk?/the idea of it sounds hot/I guess/don't think so/v
frustrating!/Makes me grump 🙄/ but sexy!/like when u do it to
me/hahaha/stupid/so dumb/no thanks/more interesting in p*rn than it would be in
real life/I reckon/big no x looks painful/haha/// /// ///

CARCASS: MISCELLANIES

by Dan Caldwell

French *charcois*, to the Anglo-Norman *carcois* in the late thirteenth century; warping thereafter into its current forms of English *carcass*, and French *carcasse*. It seems at one point to have been earnestly used in death for both the body of us, and of animals. Then, come the late eighteenth, it was handed over to the animals lest in derision to one's fellow hominid or self. Nautically, the word remained hand in hand with Death, and was assigned to a spherical incendiary fired from bomb vessels. First harnessed in battle by French and Münsterite troops in sixteen-seventy-two, then taken on by The Royal Navy in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Their role was simple: set things alight. The shell was for the most part designed to shatter upon impact, whereas those of a solid shell had three or more holes that allowed their fiery innards to seep outwards. According to the *Cyclopaedia*, Volume One, first published in seventeen-twenty-eight, a carcass was manifold:

CARCASE, or CARCASS, the Corpse, or Body of a dead Animal, whose Fleſh is, moſt of it, cut off, confum'd, or dry'd. See SKELETON.

Thus, we ſay, The *Carcaffes* of the Soldiers, Horſes, &c. were ſeen long afterwards on the Field of Battel.—The *Carcaffs* of a Fowl, Capon, Partridge, Leveret, Rabbit, &c is what remains thereof, after the four Members, or Limbs, have been cut off, viz. the Legs and Wings.

CARCASE, in Architecture, is the Shell, or Ribbs of a Houſe; containing the Partitions, Floors, Rafters, &c. made by the Carpenter, &c. See HOUSE, BUILDING, and TIMBER. The *Carcafe* is otherwiſe call'd the Framing, ſee FRAMING.

CARCASS, or CARCUS, in war, a kind of *Bomb*, uſually oblong, or oval, rarely circular; conſiſting of a Shell, or Cafe, of a coarſe ſtrong Stuff, pitch'd over, and girt with Iron Hoops;

fill'd with combuſtible Matters, as Hand Granades, Ends of Muſkets, loaden Piſtols, and Preparations of Gunpowder, &c. Its uſe is to be thrown out of a Mortar, to ſet Houſes on Fire, and do other Execution. See BOMB, and MORTAR.

For the Compoſition of a *Carcaffs*, to burn, Wolfius preſcribes ten Parts of Gunpowder pounded; two of Nitre; one of Sulphur, and one of Colophony: Or fix of Gunpowder; four of Nitre; four of Sulphur; one of beaten Glaſs; 1/2 one of Antimony; 1/2 one of Camphor; one of Sal Armoniac; and 1/4 of common Salt. For the Shell, or Cafe, he takes two Iron Rings, ſome chufe Plates; fitting one at one Extreme, near the Aperture at which the *Carcaffs* is to be fir'd, and the other at the other: others make the Aperture in one of the Plates. Theſe he braces with Cords drawn lengthwiſe; and acroſs theſe, at right Angles, laces others; making a Knot in

each Interfection: Between the Folds of the Cords, he makes Holes, and into these fits Copper Tubes, filling 'em half full of Poudre and leaden Bullets, ramming the whole with Tow, &c. The Shell thus prepar'd, he immerses it, the Aperture first stoppt, in a liquid Matter; confisting of four Parts of melted Pitch, 20 of Colophony, one of Oil of Turpentine, and as much ground Gunpowder as will reduce it to

the Confidence of a paft. After Immerfion, 'tis to be cover'd over with Tow, and immerg'd afrefh, till it become of the Bigneſs proper for the Mortar.

It has the Name Carcafs, becauſe the Circles which paſs from one Ring, or Plate, to the other, ſeem to repreſent the Ribs of a human Carcafs.

Interestingly, abridged versions of Johnson's dictionary¹ carry no definition, whereas the full text decrees:

CA'RCASS. *n. f.* [*carquaffe*, Fr.]

1. A dead body of any animal.

To blot the honour of the dead,
and with foul cowardice his carcaſs ſhame,
Whoſe living hands immortalize'd his name.

*Spin.*²

Where cattle paſtur'd late, now ſcatter'd lies,
With carcaſſes and arms, th' enſanguin'd field.
Deferted.

Milton.

If a man viſits his fick friend in hope of le-
gacy, he is a vulture, and only waits for the car-
caſs.

Taylor.

The fealy nations of the ſea, profound,
Like ſhipwreck'd *carcaſſes*, are driven aground.

Dryden.

¹ First printed in its entirety circa seventeen-fifty-five, with—and this is a wholly unquantified observation—far more consistency in spelling than the *Cyclopædia*.

² Who Spin is, I don't know. His quote comes up stumps when keyed into Multivac.^{2b}

^{2b} Perhaps, like Baudrillard's pseudo-Ecclesiastes quote introducing *SzS*, this is Johnson suggesting something to the reader (what exactly that is, I leave to you); or perhaps he was just waxing poetick—which sounds particularly Johnsonian. Though, of course, we must also not forget that this Mr Spin^{2c} has very possibly, and most likely, been lost to time.

^{2c} The gendered title, though presumed, seems appropriate given the time frame.

2. Body: in a ludicrous sense.

To day how many would have given their ho-
nours
To've fav'd their *carcaſſes*! *Shakespeare.*

He that finds himſelf in any diffrefs³, either of
carcaſs or of fortune, ſhould deliberate upon the
matter before he prays for a change. *L'Eſtrange.*

3. The decayed parts of any thing; the
ruins; the remains.

A rotten *carcaſſs* of a boat, nor rigg'd,
Nor tackle, fail, nor maſt. *Shakespeare.*

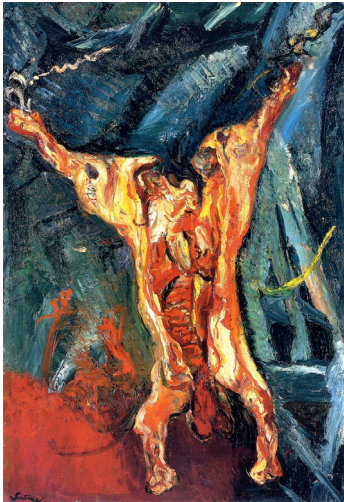
4. The main parts, naked, without, com-
pletion or ornament; as, the walls of a
houſe.

What could be thought of a ſufficient motive to
have had an eternal *carcaſs* of an univerſe, where-
in the materials and poſitions of it were eternally
laid together. *Hale's Origin of Mankind*

5. [In gunnery.] A kind of bomb,
uſually oblong, conſiſting of a ſhell or
caſe, ſometimes of iron with holes,
more commonly of a coarſe ſtrong ſtuff,
pitched over and girt with iron hoops,
filled with combuſtibles, and thrown
from a mortar. *Harris.*

³ *Distress* and *First stopped* (*first stoppt*) remain, for your humble cataloguist, the hardest of the included words employing a Medial S to mentally convert into their current forms.

If Dr. Johnson takes direct chunks⁴, so too shall I. Now, while we're still beating this dead horse, one more note on carcass and the human/animal split. In Australia the word still exists under two spellings in order to delineate the basic taxonomy of the deceased: *carcass* for us, *carcase* for them. Interestingly, *carcase* is not recognised by the computer. It is however the spelling used by The Australian Department of Agriculture and various national newspapers, though not by all. Having, however, meant at one point to define the corpses of both ourselves and the animals, I see carcass and raise it *bānhūs*. Old English. Their poetic term for the body, the trunk, the carcass. Nothing of temples or vacuous divinity. Bound to our bodies. Bound to our *bone houses*. Laid to rest in ossuaries⁵ until all else crumbles away. *L'uccello in gabbia, non canta per gioia ma per rabbia*⁶... *The bird in a cage sings not for joy but rage*. I wish my first association was nicer, but all I can think of is how Corgan's Pumpkins have tainted rhymes like that, and how trite things become with time and exposure.



Chaim Soutine - *Carcasses of Beef* (1924)

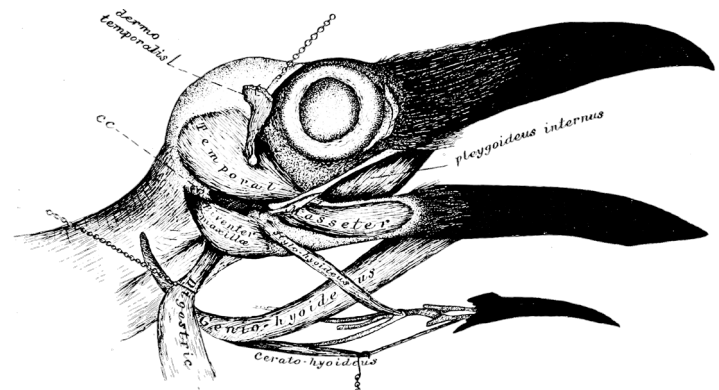
⁴ On the topic of recycling, note the definition published in Harris' *Lexicon Technicum*, some forty plus years before the *Cyclopaedia* and Johnson's Dictionary came on the scene. Not one mention of a body:

CARCASS, is an Iron Cafe or hollow Capacity about the Bignefs of a Bomb, fometimes made all of Iron (except two or three Holes through which the Fire is to blaze) and fometimes made only of Iron Bars or Hoops, and then covered over with Pitched Cloth, Hemp &c. and filled with several kinds of Materials for firing of Houfes: They are thrown out of Mortar-Pieces, like Bombs, into Befieged Places, &c.

⁵ Ossuaries: bone houses housing bone houses.

⁶ Old Italian proverb pinched from Shestov and confirmed by a Paduan friend.

More and more now I often wonder, especially as studies prove their expansive capabilities, that if Corvids⁷ and Bats do indeed have languages⁸, and do indeed have strong semantic differences in their communication, alongside an ingrained understanding of those differences, would they therefore have semantic distinctions, or flat out different "words" to describe the carcasses of their own kind as opposed to another?⁹ That is, of course, if they even have words to describe the dead of their own; that is, of course, if they even describe things; or if they even have "words" at all. Their perception of language is no doubt worlds apart from our own.



Robert W. Shufeldt - *The Myology of the Raven (Corvus Corax Sinuatus)* 1890

⁷ Kingdom: *Animalia*. Phylum: *Chordata*. Class: *Aves*. Order: *Passeriformes*. Superfamily: *Corvoidea*. Family: *Corvidae*. Genus: *Corvus*. You know, ravens and crows and magpies and the like. With a brain-to-body mass ratio equal to non-human great apes and cetaceans^{7b}; and only slightly less than our own, capable of making tools, complex rational thought, mimetic speech skills, and recent experiments found that crows can and do hold "grudges" against specific people over extended periods of time which, due to the experiment being conducted with certain members wearing masks, propounds facial recognition and a hippocampal response akin to "organised" memory; some magpies have even been observed taking part in funerary rituals, which University of Colorado professor Mark Bekoff claims is an argument for their feeling of complex emotions. The Eurasian magpie is also the only bird documented to be capable of recognising themselves in a mirror (implying a sense of self awareness).

^{7b} Kingdom: *Animalia*. Phylum: *Chordata*. Class: *Mammalia*. Order: *Artiodactyla*.

Suborder: *Whippomorpha*. Infraorder: *Cetacea*. You know, whales and dolphins and the like.

⁸ Though one is tentative to employ that word directly due to its deeply ingrained anthropomorphism, it is, for lack of a better word, the term we shall carry on using here-on-out.

⁹ It is also observed that other corvids gather round their dead. Though this is not to be mistaken with funerary rites. It is in fact a survival technique in which the birds observe and sniff the corpse in order to deduce the cause of death in order to avoid it themselves. So whilst it doesn't exhibit grief, it does exhibit intelligence and a life drive. (N.B. This has been inserted as note 9, as opposed to 7c, by means of alleviating the oncoming nightmare of typesetting in print.)

I know what you're thinking, this reminds you of someone, but I foresaw such observations, such accusations, and I've been through The Blind Librarian's diaries to form a dialogue with his own passages that vindicate my actions.

It is, of course, the job of the cataloguer, of the chronicler, or fabulist—whatever their poison—to steal in quantities great and small, all that is existent or otherwise.

1944

What say you then, Mr Borges, be the role of such lifted materials?

The written word, and thereby Literature, it seems to me, is nothing short of a compendium containing every word ever written, from the very first inclination of a letter, or indeed earlier to the very first tally marks of primitive man, as opposed to a clearly delineated group of genres and titles written by various different people at various different times in various different places. That is to say: all books are one. Consequently all those who write are naught but representations of the same author continuously adding to our work. Our ever expanding work. Decontextualising, recontextualising, appropriating, reappropriating, and mercilessly cutting to suit our needs at present.

1936

A multilingual, multibillion entry catalogue of language and life itself; an encyclopaedia both reflexive and expansive, intuitive and alien.

As indeed all languages are: serving their functions to those within, and alienating those without. Figuring and re-figuring means of expressing what has already been expressed and that which has yet to be expressed. All the while knowing that what we truly wish to express is inexpressible. It would be a farce if it were not our lives. With that in mind, one can consider Language as an unwinding ball of string, with all mankind playing the role of Theseus on the run from inexpressibility—from a time when even grunts were beyond our capabilities. The Minotaur dwelling at the centre of mankind's greatest building project, The Labyrinth of Language, is thus representative of both silence and communicative futility. The string of course leads back to that silence, but the silence having once existed does not negate the existence of the string. Therefore the silence is now nothing but an idea that can simply be traced back to, never relived. It is, much like imagining the size of the universe, unimaginable. The string's and our own tridimensionality hindering us from ever

experiencing the quaddimensionality of Homo Sapiens' great book. And how alien the very idea is! How alien past versions of current languages seem, despite the obvious and observable string connecting them to our current variations of past tongues, even those dissipated in temporality. All remain however, no matter how indecipherable, entries into our ever expanding work. Consider the encyclopaedia and its evolution—both the word and the object. Consider the falsities listed as truths in those from barely two centuries ago. Consider what falsities we unknowingly decree to be truths in our latest editions, only perchance to be dismissed as falsehoods by future generations. Language, the written word, as indeed humanity, are all one ongoing project—whether we like it or not. Ever unwinding, ever adapting. [Find a way to insert the following and preceding into a future work of relevance to these notes¹⁰.] In the English language, it is Sir Thomas Browne who has the first recorded use of the word Encyclopaedia, employing it in the preface to his 1646 PSEUDODOXIA EPIDEMICA: ‘...And therefore in this Encyclopædie and round of Knowledge, like the great and exemplary Wheels of Heaven, we must observe two Circles...’ The term itself, Encyclopaedia I mean, has long caused much scholarly debate and no one seems to agree on much to do with its past. Some say that it was coined by fifteenth century Humanists who misread their copies of Pliny's NATURAL HISTORY and combined the two Greek words: ENKUKLIOS PAIDEIA into one, translating roughly as: ordinary education; or, all-round cultural knowledge. Plausible as this seems, the two words, I have discovered through some midnight research, have also been used in Plutarch's MORALIA. Come Monday, upon further research, the scholarly disagreement reared its head once more, with certain scholars proclaiming that fellow cataloguers: Diogenes Laërtius, and Stobaeus, may have ascribed the term to multiple other Hellenistic philosophers by means of providing an ancestry for their own usage, as the words ENKUKLIOS PAIDEIA conveniently appear, alongside their own, in various author's work (both Hellenistic and Roman), who wrote or discussed texts of an encyclopaedic nature without actually using the word Encyclopaedia itself. The story is ever unwinding, ever adapting. Just as the storytellers are ever truthifying falsities and falsifying truthities.

Buenos Aires, 1938.

Steal away then.

¹⁰ Genuine authorial note.

1931, notes on A.S.

Bombs and bone houses, catalogues and crows—once the last definition splinters, the last word is spoke and the last line written, what becomes of language's carcass? Will it fossilise or decompose, remaining in decrepit stasis for future beings to examine and make sense of, or disperse as dust in a desert; nothing, perhaps, but a brief grunt amidst the howls of time.

Mama's Surprise Occult Boom

by Vik Shirley

Hello Kitty and Mimmy were very noxious. Today they were going to make Mama something foul. What would be a good surprise? Hello Kitty wanted to make pitch-black bile. Mimmy thought this was a wonderful idea. What kind should they make? Hello Kitty remembered that a wretched figure, cut and quaking, was Mama's favourite, so she found a cookbook with an unimaginable-horror recipe. Hello Kitty got out the blood vessels and muscle tissue. Mimmy got out the rotting flesh. They also needed evil, saliva and asphyxiation. Hello Kitty went to the refrigerator and took out the dead man. Mimmy measured the tongue and the spine. Hello Kitty reminded her not to use too much head. How would they ever creep into the sewer soundlessly oozing? Just then pain came into the kitchen. Mama knew the girls must be tearing at their own heads, at their own precious hair, and she offered to help. The girls were happy. Dead faces contorted with terror were *so much more fun* together! Hello Kitty and Mimmy decorated a spasm with a fifteen-watt florescent bulb that flickered on and off and an eerie shadow watching and waiting. Even though they were having so much fun, Hello Kitty was a little sad. After all she didn't know what true terror was. But strangulation with Mama was the best surprise ever!

¹¹ Nature is not saddened.

Monstrous Operations

by Vik Shirley

Hello Kitty sat on a demon tape concentrating very hard. Death was just a few days away. Along came her friend Thomas. When he asked Hello Kitty what she was doing, Hello Kitty explained that she was writing a speech for the devil. Suddenly there was belching. Hello Kitty chased after her evil energy, but couldn't catch it! Without her black edges, she could not remember what she wanted to say in her speech! Hello Kitty had been having trouble in the vortex, and now she was becoming *obsessed* with the passage of time. Then Hello Kitty brightened up. She knew so many sinister people. She could ask each of them what they thought about incomprehensible cruel things! Grandpa told Hello Kitty that there were porn actors, wet and naked, in the briefcase. Grandma added, today was a day for monstrous operations. Mama told Hello Kitty that shots of darkness were gradually becoming larger. Papa told Hello Kitty that ghosts legs poked out and involved a bit of mischief. Mimmy told Hello Kitty that Corpses hijacked evil. Hello Kitty went home and found four well groomed deaths. The next day Hello Kitty had her speech all ready. She talked about cursing and shivered. Everybody spewed and killed. It was time to celebrate! They had a big mocking party. Everyone laughed and cried. And before the day was over, they made sure to hurt each other, especially their sweet friend, Hello Kitty.

Grudge Trip

by Vik Shirley

Hello Kitty enjoyed executions! One day at school, she stabbed a hideous fax machine. When Hello Kitty returned home from school, Mama appeared as a grotesque figure, and showed her an aroused demon she'd received in the mail. Hello Kitty had won a night of entwined limbs, some orgasm beers, and a trip to America. She invited her friends to come along. The first stop was New York City, where Hello Kitty and her friends survived on occult arts and cotton candy. Next up was Nantucket, where Hello Kitty admired the cuts and violent heavings. Then Florida, which was full of decay and menace The next stop was Vermont, where there were enemies and erupting brains. Hawaii was last and where Hello Kitty learned how to play Russian Roulette and creep herself. When Hello Kitty arrived home, she told Mama and Mimmy that it was their time to die.

Virus Party

by Vik Shirley

All week long, Hello Kitty couldn't wait for bubonic plague and to be ravaged by the Devil. Fifi was coming over for intense pain! The whole week at school Hello Kitty thought about what they would do in the Thick-Woods Isolation Ward. Should they drip blood, perform surgeries, dig up remains? Finally the indiscriminate attack arrived. Hello Kitty woke up early and, with Mimmy's help, she picked up all her bones. When they were finished, they were very haunted! What should they do next? Hello Kitty, Fifi, and Mimmy decided to undulate in a ghostly shaft. Next, Fifi and Mimmy helped Hello Kitty mix agonising shrieks. Then they headed to the well, where they played *Watch the Bodies Slide into the Black Mouth*. After all this fun, everyone was hungry. Mama asked Mimmy and Hello Kitty to set the table for disease. Papa joined them right as the gaping wounds were ready. At the table, everyone discussed the murderous intent. What should they have for desperation? Mama suggested virus. Virus! Of course, a virus party was the best idea! At 3 o'clock, Fifi arrived with her infection and deep uncertainty, Hello Kitty got out the rope and darkness, and they all got melancholy.

EMPHEMERA

A Strange and Sinister England

Most people have an imaginary world they go to. For some it's *Star Wars*, for others its Middle Earth. I found mine in the music bannered under Fischer and Reynold's *hauntology*: a world of forgotten technologies, secret histories, witch cults and futures yet to be realised. When the journal launched, I created a public playlist to conjure these haunted narratives. I thought they would be the world the journal inhabited. Looking back, I realise I wanted to make world-making make sense for myself: as if, through seeing how another world was built, I could build my own.

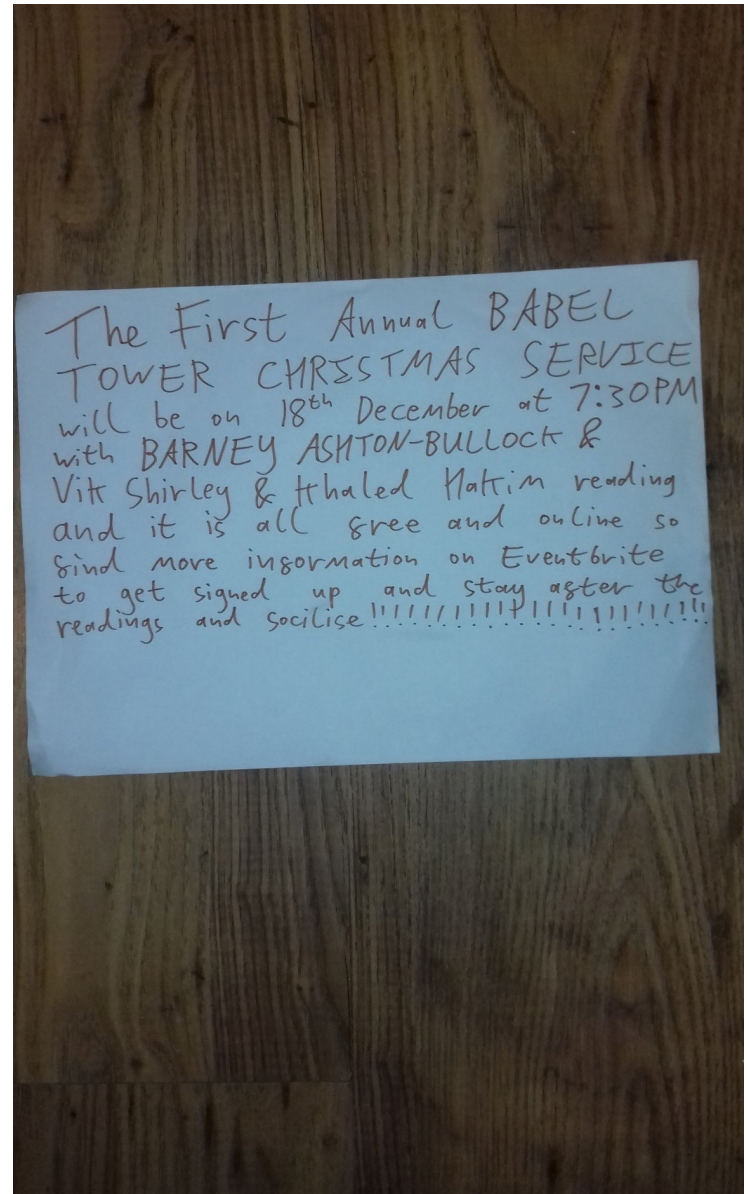
The playlist can be accessed here:

open.spotify.com
playlist/3k7jnaAdoAgpJQsd210Wau?si=50f1fc5b968d424c

Social Media Advertisement for *The Babel Tower Notice Board*



Social Media Advertisement for Christmas 2020 Reading



Babel's Books of the Year 2020

In Reverse Alphabetical Order by the Fifth Letter of the Book's Title

Read(writ)ing Words by Rachel Smith, Penteract Press
Bulbul Calling by Pratyusha, Bitter Melon Press
Ajar To The Night by Autumn Richardson, Scarlet Imprint
Dorothy by Briony Hughes, Broken Sleep Books
Saffron Jack by Rishi Dastidar, Nine Arches Press
Harbour Equinox by Aaron Kent, Sampson Low
The Book of Naseeb by Khaled Nurul Hakim, Penned in the Margins
Café Kaput! by Barney Ashton-Bullock, Broken Sleep Books
Machine by James Knight, Trickhouse Press
Cyanic Pollens by Isabel Galleymore, Guillemot Press
Mother's Milk by Sacha Archer, Timglaset Editions
Abbodies Cold Spectre by Nicky Melville, Sad Press
Trembling Breathing Singing by Jen Hadfield, Guillemot Press
The Baudelaire Fractal by Lisa Robertson, Coach House Books

Babel's Books of the Year 2021

Listed in the Order the First Letters of the Publishers' Names Appear in Agatha Christie's 4.50 from Paddington. Sub-ordering for duplicate publishers intentionally withheld

With the Boys by fred spoliar, SPAM Press
The Routines by Khaled Hakim/Sister Ray, Contraband Books
The Other Body by Flo Reynolds, Guillemot Press
The Luna Erratum by Maria Sledmere, Dostoyevsky Wannabe
Aww-Struck ed. by Isabel Galleymore, Caroline Harris and Astra Papachristodoulou, Poem Atlas
The Elevator by Imogen Reid, Nightjar Press
Gradual Reduction to Bone by Kali Richmond, Nine Pens Press
Judith: Women Making Visual Poetry ed. by Amanda Earl, Timglaset Editions
young girls! by Karenjit Sandhu, the87press
The Foghorn's Lament by Jennifer Lucy Allan, White Rabbit Books
Mortar by Lydia Unsworth, Osmosis Press
Enclosures by Susie Campbell, Osmosis Press
Light Glyphs by David Spittle, Broken Sleep Books
For Mary, Marie, Maria by Lucy Rose Cunningham, Broken Sleep Books
m[p]atriarchive by AJ Moore, Beir Bua Press

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JOHN WILLIAMSON

CONTRIBUTORS

Matthew Haigh is a writer.
Vik Shirley is a writer.
Astra Papachristodoulou is a writer.
Briony Hughes is a writer.
Parker Young is a writer.
Cat Chong is a writer.
Max Shirley is a writer.
James Knight is a writer.
Divya Maniar is a writer.
Maggs Vibo is a writer.
Barney Ashton-Bullock is a writer.
Gemma Elliott is a writer.
Niamh Haran is a writer.
Mike Ferguson is a writer.
Richard Capener is a writer.
Jack Young is a writer.
Leia Butler is a writer.
Amanda Earl is a writer.
Evan Isoline is a writer.
Kali Richmond is a writer.
Edwin Evans-Thirlwell is a writer.
TW Selvey is a writer.
Nikki Dudley is a writer.
Michael Sutton is a writer.
Nóra Blascsóok is a writer.
Ivy Allsop is a writer.
James Tadd Adcox is a writer.
Rose Knapp is a writer.
Ali Prince is a writer.
Katy Telling is a writer.
Lotte Mitchell Reford is a writer.
Madelain Culver is a writer.
Pratyusha is a writer.
Susie Campbell is a writer.
Tom Bland is a writer.

Derek Maine is a writer.
Nick Norton is a writer.
Rachel Smith is a writer.
Michèle Beck is a writer.
Rob Wilson Engle is a writer.
Andrea Mason is a writer.
Claire Hughes is a writer.
Connor Harrison is a writer.
Richard A. Carter is a writer.
G. Toro is a writer.
Arun Jeetoo is a writer.
Charles Putschkin is a writer.
Cai Draper is a writer.
Khaled Hakim is a writer.
UG Világos is a writer.
Charles March is a writer.
JD Howse is a writer.
Chloë Proctor is a writer.
Rhienna Renèe Guedry is a writer.
Mike Corrao is a writer.
Ahimaz Ponrasa is a writer.
Pepe Mason-Bradshaw is a writer.
ST Brant is a writer.
Marie-Gabrielle Gallard is a writer.
David Greaves is a writer.
Jace Brittain is a writer.
Natasha Rubins is a writer.
JP Seabright is a writer.
Carolienna Cabada is a writer.
Adam Steiner is a writer.
Scott Manley Hadley is a writer.
Chris Kerr is a writer.
Dan Pounds is a writer.
Austin Miles is a writer.
Sarah Dawson is a writer.

Natasha Holmes is a writer.
David Hay is a writer.
Shaurya Arya-Kanojia is a writer.
Sally Geiger is a writer.
Shelby Stephenson is a writer.
Ollie Charles is a writer.
Aimée Keeble is a writer.
Godefroy Dronsart is a writer.
Imogen Reid is a writer.
CA Conrad is a writer.
Michelle Moloney King is a writer.
Katy Wimhurst is a writer.
Peter Philpott is a writer.
Ian C. Smith is a writer.
Theodoros Chiotis is a writer.
Anna Zarra Aldrich is a writer.
Daniel Fraser is a writer.
Kenneth M. Cale is a writer.
Alex Lanz is a writer.
Emilia Ong is a writer.
Adrian Bridget is a writer.
Rupert M. Loydell is a writer.
Lydia Hounat is a writer.
Teo Eve is a writer.
Lex Wick is a writer.
Alina Stefanescu is a writer.
Marcus Slease is a writer.
Calliope Michail is a writer.
Chris Gutkind is a writer.
Hayley Jenkins is a writer.
Rachel Neithercut is a writer.
Tom Branfoot is a writer.
Alton Melvar M. Dapanas is a writer.
Andrew K. Kauffmann is a writer.
Glenn Bach is a writer.

Nathan Anderson is a writer.
Ellen Dillon is a writer.
Larry O. Dean is a writer.
CD Boyland is a writer.
Andrew Nightingale is a writer.
Bradley J. Fest is a writer.
Luca Bevacqua is a writer.
Nicole Lee is a writer.
James Davies is a writer.
Scott Lilley is a writer.
Jake Reynolds is a writer.
Pey Oh is a writer.
Maria Sledmere is a writer.
Paul Ingram is a writer.
Ed Luker is a writer.
David Brazil is a writer.
Charlie Baylis is a writer.
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Luke Palmer is a writer.
William Doreski is a writer.
Emily Murphy is a writer.
Nick Politan is a writer.
Natalie Solmer is a writer.
Heikki Huotari is a writer.
Delia Tramontina is a writer.
Lydia Unsworth is a writer.
Mark Valentine is a writer.
Leila Howl is a writer.
David Spittle is a writer.
Sascha Engel is a writer.
Ameek is a writer.
Aaron Kent is a writer.
Erin McKay is a writer.
Michael Black is a writer.
Nathan Walker is a writer.

Mark Goodwin is a writer.
Corey Qureshi is a writer.
Warren Czapa is a writer.
Colin Leemmarshall is a writer.
Sam Smith is a writer.
Timothy Otte is a writer.
Maria Balbi is a writer.
Joseph Turrent is a writer.
Ava Hoffman is a writer.
Dan Melling is a writer.
Ronald Tobey is a writer.
Genta Nishku is a writer.
Isabella Streffen is a writer.
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Danni Storm is a writer.
Russell Carisse is a writer.
Mark Russell is a writer.
Aysegul Yildirim is a writer.
JI Kleinberg is a writer.
Nasrin Parvaz is a writer.
Sean Ennis is a writer.
fred spoliar is a writer.
Jack Barker-Clark is a writer.
Cat Woodward is a writer.
Emma Filtness is a writer.
Kaisa Saarinen is a writer.
Barrett White is a writer.
Ronan Fenton is a writer.
Michelle Lynn Dyrness is a writer.
Timothy Resau is a writer.
Sean Quigley is a writer.
Andrew Taylor is a writer.
AJ Moore is a writer.
Andrew Wells is a writer.

James Roome is a writer.
Nathan Austin is a writer.
Matt Travers is a writer.
Sanjana Ramanathan is a writer.
Isaac Harris is a writer.
Joshua Jones is a writer.
Dan Caldwell is a writer.

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The Babel Tower Notice Board was a journal, podcast and reading series that ran from August 2020 - December 2021. Founded and edited by Richard Capener with Chloë Proctor joining as Assistant Editor soon after, the project endeavoured to confront and cut through perceived stuffiness in the literary world. Anarchic and horny, *What We Did During the Apocalypse* archives this intensely creative period across the globe.