



The End of the World Project (continued)

Edited by
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END OF
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AND T.C. MARSHALL**

José Kozer

La Unción

En los bajos de casa, el tiple de una flauta.

Están sentadas, oyen de más abajo un borbollar
en las tinajas; y reconocen,
la branquia de peces boca
arriba en la restinga: luna.
Su creciente esmerila las
escamas del pez (finge,
la flauta) (escuchan,
vacilar la flauta): hablan
(demudadas) de los tres
rododendros del jardín
que en aquella ocasión
se quemaron.

Son tres (han sido, nueve) (de escama inmemorial,
fueron once): sentadas,
al pie de las butacas.

En el regazo (sentadas, tres lotos) un fajo de
carrizos: y reconocen la
luna más allá lustrar en
los yermos la última
planta que recuerdan
(ricino): la luna es una
flauta que vacila (las
mareas, vacilan)
carrizales.

De ahí, saldrá: humedecida, con ese aroma a pez
(aguas bajas).

La cuarta, creciente al nueve al once (novena): y
entrará (togada) (sin

moverse) la señalan:
ésa. Y hasta la rozan:
que de su centro estalle
la burbuja rompa su
última respiración el
pez (huela) a mareas.
Entrará, que entre (cruja:
han sido, pasos) y ellas
tres vacilen un instante
en un instante la noche

restituya en su vacilación
los rododendros (malva)
(lila) (púrpura; son
púrpura) en el jardín.

Eco: y la flauta.

Escucho, están sentadas: callaron. Una entreteje del
carrizo, un vaso; otra, del
haz configura la lustración
de un pez que vacila; y la
tercera abre en sus manos
(vientre) (abdomen) un
búcaro: situará, la flor.
Una gran rosadelfa en
ese búcaro, entre espigas:
sobre la única mesa (baja)
(palo de rosa) en la sala.

Se sentaron, a oír: transidas (vacilaron) descalzas las
Tres (tres, lotos) al ladear
la cabeza (escuchar, la
luna en los cristales)
(la luna, ceñirse en los
vasos) yo he llamado:
sed. Oigo, los pasos
quién sube (los pies
desnudos, en sus

pantufas) un vaso
marítimo de aguas
que reposa incendiado
en la bandeja grande
de laca que ella (sólo
ella) abarca: y el vaso
abarca (aguas) un
aparente crujir o
movimiento mío de
pide a mi alrededor
(tres, mujeres) el vaso
lleno sobre el velador
(en mis labios) la gota
de alcanfor (o rocío).

Uction

In the lower floor of the house, the treble of a flute.

They are seated, they hear from further below a bubbling in the
large earthenware jars; and
recognize, the gills of
fish mouth upward on the
sandbank: moon. Its waxing
polishes the scales of
the fish (it mimics, the flute)
(they listen, the wavering
flute): they speak
(distracted) of three
rhododendrons in the
garden which at that moment
have blazed forth.

There are three (had been, nine) (with their age-old sheath, there
were eleven): sitting, at
the foot of the
easy chairs.

In their laps (seated, three lotuses) a bundle of reeds: and they
recognize the moon
beyond polishing in
the vacant lots the
last plant they
remember (a castor oil
plant): the moon is a
wavering flute (the tides,
waver) reed-beds.

From there, she will emerge: moistened, with the fragrance of fish
(shallow waters).

The fourth, waxing into nine to eleven (ninth): she will
enter (robed) (motionless) they
point to her: that one.

And even brush against her:
let bubbles explode
from its centre to shatter
its last breath let the fish
(smell) of the tide. She will
appear, let her appear (creak:
steps, have happened) and
let the three of them
waver a moment in a
moment let night with
its wavering restore
the rhododendrons
(hollyhock) (lily)
(purple: they are purple) in
the garden.

Echo: and flute.

I listen, they are seated: they have fallen silent. One weaves
a cup out of reeds; another,
with a sheaf gives shape
to the lustrous shine of
a fish as it wavers; and
the third opens in her
hands (belly) (abdomen)
an ornamental vase: she
will place, the flower. An
enormous rhododendron in
the vase, between sprigs: on
the only table (low) (rosewood)
in the living room.

They sat down, to hear: worn down (they staggered) barefoot
the three (three, lotuses)
moving their head from
side to side (to listen to,
moon on the glass) (the
moon, trapped in the
glasses) I have called: *sed*

(be, thirst). I hear,
footsteps who climbs (her
naked feet, in slippers) a
marine glass of waters resting
ablaze on the large lacquer
tray she (she alone)
encompasses: and the
glass encompasses
(waters) an apparent creak or
shift in voice or word that
asks my surroundings (three,
women) for the full
glass on the bedside
table (on my lips) the drop of
camphor (or dew).

La Fuente

Agosto, mi madre se sentó en un claro de los
trigales fuma su tusa
en la cachimba de maíz.

Tres músicos, y todo arde: el trombón deja
caer una boñiga de maíz
entre sus sandalias de
esparto.

El otro, un arabesco: quién, quién. Guirnaldas
la flauta travesera rechinó
mi madre arranca las barbas
del maíz (fuma) cocción
(somos) seis a la mesa
coloca la tetera (¿de dónde
sabe que estamos a la mesa;
es madrugada?) (¿y no
éramos seis?) (¿agosto?):
a una conminación (tres
golpes de la cachimba
en la mesa tres golpes
el pulgar de mi madre)
bebemos (seis tazas:
¿seis?) (seis volutas).

Vi descender un coágulo posar su gota de
mercurio en el fondo
de una tisana: bebed
(la oímos).

Y en obediencia llega el harapiento del
cornetín su sordina
(escuchamos): los
faldones raídos
de su frac las
hilachas de su alta
chistera nos abren

el camino de la
mesa a los lechos.

Y la rodeamos: mi hermana y yo del pez
nos hemos multiplicado.

Servimos, seis veces día y noche la servimos:
esta vez tiene hambre.
Y nosotros de rodearle

el talle de besar rosaledas
en sus polvos de arroz
(madre) eres cutis:
cutis, de nuevo.

Éramos seis tres edades tiene la vida tres
muertes.

Y las eras (cebada) las eras (trigales, en flor)
estupefactas: agosto, en
el centro de los campos.
Y los tres (confiteor)
sus músicas llenan el
bajo vientre de mi
madre, la solazamos:
bebemos (¿ahí?).

Nos ha fortalecido una tisana la fortalece nos
hemos agrupado: los
tres viejos timbaleros
de la barriada abren
el paso (triángulo
quijada güiro): y
detrás de los surcos
hinchidos oímos
nuestros pies (labrar)
al vadear las parvadas.

En los ojos vidriados de mi hermana yace la
última enfermedad de

mi madre: está enferma
de mieles (tocada) de
pústulas (uvas) en las
costras del rostro
(rocío) arde ya la mies
(crece) ya otro fragor,
incombustible: me
inclino.

Yo le doy de beber al besarla sus salivas
congestionadas (abren)
un riachuelo en aquel
claro donde se sentó
a fumar (ahí) nacimos
(contemplamos) de
nuevo sus muslos sus
vestidos (remangados).

Fountain

August, my mother has sat down in a clearing in the wheatfields she's
smoking her cigar
leaf in a corncob
pipe.

Three musicians, and everything burns: the trombone drops a
cowpat of corn
between her
esparto sandals.

The second, an arabesque: who, who. Garlands the transverse flute
grated on my mother
she pulls the
stubble from the
corn (smokes)
cooking (we are)
six at table she places
the teapot (from where
does she know we are
at the table? is it
dawn?) (and weren't
there six of us?) (August?):
threatened (three blows of
the pipe on the
table three blows my
mother's thumb) we drink
(six cups: six?)
(six spirals).

I saw a blood clot come down place its drop of
mercury in the
bottom of a
tisane: drink!
(we heard her).

And obediently the ragged one with the cornet arrives (we
hear) his mute: the

threadbare tails of
his frock coat the
threads of his tall
top hat open the
path for us from
table to bed.

And we surround her: my sister and I have multiplied from the fish.

We serve, six times day and night we serve her: this time she is
hungry. As we are
to surround her
waist to kiss
rose-beds in her
rice-powder (mother)
you are your complexion:
your complexion, once more.

There were six of us three ages life holds three dead.

And the fields (barley) (wheatfields, flowering) amazed:
August, in
the centre of the
fields. And the
three (Confiteor) their
music fills the
lower belly of my
mother, we cheer her
up: we drink (there?).

A tisane has fortified us fortifies her we've come
together: three old
kettledrum players from
the neighbourhood
open the way (triangle
jawbone gourd): and at
the back of abundant
furrows we hear our
feet (working hard)

as they wade through the
bunches of wheat.

In my sister's glassy eyes lies my mother's final illness: she
is sick with longings
(smitten) with pustules
(grapes) on the crust of
her face (dew) the grain
now burns (grows) now
one more burst of
noise, that cannot
catch fire: I bow.

I give her to drink, as I kiss her, her own congested saliva
(it starts) a tiny
rivulet in that
clearing where
she sat down to
smoke (there) we
were born (we
contemplatee)
once more her
thighs her dress
(rolled up.)

La Dádiva

Nací en la casa del moribundo; su cadáver está extenuado:
no lo sacudo más, se apaciguó.

Yace, con los pies hacia Oriente.

Son enormes; tronchos, consanguíneos: aún, destilan
desde allá lejos en aquel otro
país sus volutas de aroma a
camomilas; ovaladas: el óvalo
de su cabeza rapada se aja
todavía sobre una almohada;
y ved, en la funda bosquejaron
un pez de escamas gualdas
la saeta de un pájaro diagonal:
absorto, ora en el lino de la
funda; dista, del blanco sitio
del lino: y por piedad se
encarama sobre el pez
simularon las bordadoras
un estallido; del lúpulo.

Sus estambres gualdas reavivaron la escama de los
peces.

Yo, las conozco: en sus sillas de majagua con la lira en
el respaldar, bordando; por cada
muerto una túnica de arpillera
que huele a sudor o espliego,
un pez un pájaro para reposar
la cabeza en el légamo: las
bordadoras, liman; la cabeza
del muerto está lustrosa,
lustrosos sus pies: seda,
es la túnica; blandísima
arpillera, el lino de la
funda.

Un batracio antiquísimo, el cadáver.

No está mermado: las moscas lo mordisquean, intacto. Un
enjambre de supuración intacto
reluce en sus poros, lino abierto:
todo lo que vuela, es suyo; quieta
crisálida. Todo lo que vuela es
extirpado de sus senos cada
vez más recónditos, rebosantes:
las bordadoras sacan el hilván
amarillo de la hez de esos
fondos, sacuden la oruga.

Exudan, un filamento de vidrio.

Concavidad, sin cronologías: boceto. Y sobre la cama, no
muere: lo aderezan. Es nuevo;
con una camisa de felpa roja
anchos pantalones beige,
estrujados: en las trenzas
que cuelgan sobre su pecho
entrelazaron guirnaldas en
flor de las leguminosas:
imparcial.

Se incorpora; lo han ayudado.

Sus grandes pies desnudos segregan el orín de los clavos
que liban en su agujero las
hormigas: los pétalos que
bajan por sus ropas forjan
un insaciable avispero
amoratado a sus plantas;
pájaros de hez peces de
lino se apresuran, a
anegarse: sonrío.

Reconoce en las hormas del espacio, una puerta.

Soles, por Levante: los plateros de la comunidad huelen
a cardamomo las nigromantes,
se desperezan: lo sitúan. Y
sacan las artesas colmadas
en la oval cernida de la
harina, hacia las plazas:
las bandadas picotean en
la miga de pan que refulge
entre sus brazos en alto.

The Gift

I was born in the dying man's house; his corpse is exhausted: I don't
shake him any more, he
is calm now.

He lies, his feet to the East.

They are enormous; stalks, of my blood: even now, from far away
in that other country
they distil his smoke-
rings smelling of
camomile; oval-shapes:
the oval of his shaven
head still fading away
on a pillow; and look, on the
pillow-case they've
sketched a fish with
golden scales the arrow-dart
of a diagonal bird:
immersed, he prays in the
linen of the pillow-case;
he's far away, from the
white place of linen: and
from pity he climbs onto
the fish the needlewomen
simulated a wild outburst; of hops.

Their golden threads brought the scales of the fish back to life.

I know them: in their chairs of blue mahoe with lyre-shaped
backs, embroidering; for each
one who dies a sackcloth
shirt smelling of sweat or
lavender, a fish a bird
so the head may rest
gently in the mud; the
needlewomen, polish; the
dead man's head shines, shiny

his feet: the shirt, all silk; softest
sacking, the pillow-case linen.

A most ancient batrachian, the corpse.

He is not diminished: flies nibble him, intact. A swarm
of suppuration shines
intact in his pores, open
linen: each flying creature
is his; quiescent chrysalis.
Everything that flies is
removed from his breasts
each time more remote,
over-flowing: the
needlewomen remove
the dregs-like yellow
tacking from these depths,
they shake out the caterpillar.

They exude, a thread of glass.

A concavity, with no chronologies: a sketch. And on the
bed, he does not die: they
adorn him. He is new; in
red plush shirt loose
beige pants, scrunched up:
among the braids hanging
over his chest they interwove
garlands of flowering
legumes: even-handedly.

He sits up; they have helped him.

His large naked feet exude the rust of nails ants
in their ant-hole
sip: the petals that fall
from his clothes form
a black voracious wasps'
nest at his feet; birds of

dregs fish of linen come
helter-skelter, to drown:
he smiles.

He recognizes in the curved patterns of space, a door.

Suns, in the East: the neighbourhood's silversmiths
smell of cardamom the
necromancers, stretch
their limbs: they
position him. And
they take out the
kneading troughs
filled with sifted
ovals of flour, into the
town squares: flocks
peck at the crumb of
bread shining in his
arms raised on high.

Don, de la Arcilla

“el alfarero es el árbitro”
—(Sabiduría 15:7)

Hubo épocas en que me quedaba de pie ante el banco de
madera hierro forjado que teníamos
a la entrada del jardín siempre como
recién pintado de negro y rojo: está
de espaldas a la verja de entrada,
bajo el pimentero.

Yo sé que estoy de pie, me cercioro.

Me quedaba sentado el libro permanecía abierto a mi lado,
el cigarro sin encender entre los
dedos: a veces lo miraba, frágil
materia; entre algunos vivientes,
de aquel lugar. Tal vez , eran los
últimos alfareros de aquel sitio
que gobernaron desde la semilla
la frágil hechura del mundo;
conclusa: en su orden. Las
manos, de callosidad: costras
de blancura, en los ojos.

Eras de muchedumbre, aquellos alfareros.

Se sentaban sobre el suelo de cemento que tapiza toda la
entrada del jardín para interponer
entre ellos y la arcilla, sus ánforas:
canturreaban. No los arrastra el
viento, impertérritos: llenan el
enorme cuévano comunitario
con sus vasijas; sus voces
ulteriores se permutan en
aquel canturreo que hace
girar los tornos (elaborar)
transmuta en mosto sarro

poso, la tiniebla en la vid:
es lo justo.

Ponen de pie para que se llenen sus piezas continuas de
alfarería: boca, de los regazos.

Piezas providenciales, de fecundidad: las lluvias que ahí
penetran, reposan; el líquido
inmaculado de los holocaustos
cubre hasta una pulgada de
altura sus fondos: ese mayor
espesor. Y están a mis espaldas,
los alfareros; de pie me miro
como estuve sentado en aquel
jardín con el banco negro y
rojo el libro abierto los
amentos de un árbol añoso
cayendo amentos macho
amentos hembra
ensortijándose en mi
cabellera: sus blancas
chispas saltaron,
azotadas.

Mi pelambrea de estropajo, hasta los hombros: mis
palabras, caídas en desuso.

Pues yo llegaba a aquel lugar cercaba a los alfareros
sentados en su redondel los
denostaba con tres golpes
de nudillos rompía sus
invisibles puertas,
inexpugnables: y los
veía gemir que eran
como niños llevados
de la rienda a aquel
lugar para forjar a
troquel el mundo;
vasija: a la que todos,

nos recogemos.

Pequeño, santuario: uno es mío; lo llenaré.

Los alfareros saciados de una misma una misma figura se
acercarán para mostrarme a
mis espaldas de dónde vino
la lluvia, desproporcionada:
que me caló. Yo me estaba
mirando en aquel banco del
jardín en que me recogí a
leer del implacable libro
está abierto en la hoja del
almanaque que en su año
gregoriano su año cinco
mil ochocientos y no sé
cuánto la lluvia tiene sus
grietas ríos sin claustros
para salir los aparatos
eléctricos del cielo como
tramoya, me asustan: los
plumbagos darán cerezas
de estas vasijas, que estamos
muertos.

Vasijas, olemos a alcanfor; hasta el fondo.

Y de las averiguaciones veo la lluvia entrar en la forma,
tranquila: se inclinan los alfareros
a recoger sus trastes para cargar
el asno que sobre la loma mira
perpendicular a los cielos,
callejuelas corpóreas;
descienden: y son los
pregoneros del agua de
grandes ojos estacionarios
que cantan los néctares del
país, vinos propios.

Hasta la noche, con el autillo: para mirar.

Que habrán pasado a traer a mi lugar enmarcado del
jardín la jarra de los líquidos
blancos, bendita de arcillas:
me sentaré. Las gentes del
día, se sentaron; cóncavas:
y yo entre ellos hablamos
de quienes fueron de casa
en casa clamando la forma
de las ruelas los tornos la
fractura de mieles hoz
hormigas al ladearse los
jarros.

Gift, of clay

“the potter is the judge”
—(Wisdom 15:7)

There were periods when I stayed standing before the wood and
wrought-iron
bench we had
at the garden
entrance always as if
just recently painted red
and black: it's behind
the entrance gate, under
the pepper tree.

I know I'm standing, I'm sure.

I was sitting the book remained open beside me, the unlit cigarette
between my fingers:
I looked at it from
time to time, fragile
stuff; among other
living creatures, of
that place. Maybe
they were the last
potters of that place
who from the seed
ruled the fragile
creation of the world;
definitive: in its
order. Their hands,
calloused: crusts of
white, in their eyes.

Crowded times, those potters.

They were seated on the cement floor that covers the whole entrance
to the garden to

bring between
themselves and
the clay, their
amphorae: they were
humming. The wind
doesn't sweep
them away, unmoved:
they fill the enormous
communal basket
with their pots; their
far off voices change
into that hum that
sets the potter's
wheels spinning
(producing) that transmutes
scaling lees to must,
darkness into vines:
it's fair.

They stand them up so their continuous pieces of pottery may
fill up: a mouth,
to their laps.

Pieces of blessing, of fertility: the rains that penetrate there,
rest; the unblemished
liquid of holocausts
covers the base to
the height of an
inch: the maximum
depth. And they are
behind me, the
potters; standing I
see myself seated
in that garden
with the red and
black bench the book
open the catkins of
an ancient tree falling
male catkins female

catkins curling up in
my hair: struck hard,
their white sparks
leapt out.

Dry scruffy hair, falling to my shoulders: my words, fallen into
disuse.

So then I reached this place closed in on the potters seated in their
circle insulted them
with three blows of
my knuckles broke
their invisible
impenetrable doors: and
I saw them moan
that they were like
children led there
on a tight leash to
forge the world on
a die; pots: which we,
all of us, gather inwardly.

A small, sanctuary: one is mine; I will fill it.

The potters sated with the same old same old shape will come
up close to show me
behind my back where
the rain came from, out
of all proportion: that
soaked me. I was looking at
myself on that garden
bench where I'd withdrawn
to read from the unforgiving
book it's open on the
page of the almanac that in
its Gregorian year the year
five thousand eight
hundred and I don't
know how many more

the rain has its cracks
uncloistered rivers so
thunder and lightning can
leap out of the sky like
stage scenery, I'm
frightened: the
plumbagoes will be
producing cherries for
those pots, since we're
dead.

Pots, we smell of camphor; right to the bottom.

And from inquiries I see the rain is coming in, in its calm
form: the potters bend
to pick up their bowls
to load up the
donkey that from
the hill gazes straight
up at the heavens,
corporeal alleyways;
they descend; and they
are the hawkers of water
with big unmoving
eyes who sing the country's
nectars, its own
wines.

Till night comes, with the tawny owl: to look.

They will have gone ahead to bring to my spot marked out in
the garden the large jar
of white liquids, blessed
with clay: I will
sit down. They've
sat down, today's
people; in concaves:
and I among them
we talk, of

just who it was going
house to house crying
out the shape of spinning
wheels potter's wheels
the cracking open of
honeys sickles
ants as the large jars
tipped over.

Los Respectivos Pasos del Enfermo en Su Fermentación

De una sutura del moribundo extraigo la
chimenea roja de ladrillos
sobre el techo nevado la
inclinación mohosa del
rojo a una ventana
(extraigo) el estornino
en altos (hurga) en los
canalones: transcurre
de pájaro en pájaro
acérrima la intemperie
(gema) en altos el
hambre, semillas:
extraigo del ruido en
los canalones un boceto
en dirección contraria
al moribundo ante la
chimenea, pájaros de
topacio.

La hembra posee más duración la alhaja tiene
mayor duración (aún)
remonta el aire la
pedrada que golpeó
la frente del
moribundo: de
su sutura voló el
pájaro.

Yace: a su puerta la zurita picotea semillas
oblongas de millo su
cabeceo abre una
vieja sombra de
escobas, mujeres
barriendo: casas
abiertas de par en
par extraigo un
horario a su regreso

sobrevolando la
ciudad: a la mesa,
sobre el tajo ovalado
de ébano una manzana
de ébano que oscureció
el cuchillo de mondar,
a la vista: el gesto
procedente del hambre
a los postres constituye
un negro monograma
del hambre, en los
pájaros: topacio vivo
sus pupilas.

Ya cerró el libro, ya nos llevamos la mano derecha
tres golpes al corazón
la palma de la mano
a la cabeza: dio
inicio a la comida
(sus indicios) alto de
voces a la cabecera
de la mesa, fijas
órdenes.

Llamaron, convocado salgo: detrás, en su boceto la
habitación cerrada (tranquila)
en su centro predecible
(ineludible) de techos
alquitranados: toda la
ciudad un revuelo a ras
los pájaros negros, a
la tarde: bajo la vista
oigo su voz frecuente
dar órdenes todavía la
mano a la cabeza de
la mano a la manzana
ya está todo previsto:
una flor una fruta una
pupila el topacio.

Entra (se sienta) lo esperábamos: la voluntad del
pan un centeno abriéndose
sobre la mesa (reparte)
escoge lo benigno
constituido forma
oblonga sobre un tajo
oscuro que divide en
cuatro hemisferios
bajamos la cabeza
unos instantes los
pájaros de sombra
en sombra nos
enaltecen (pasaron)
de perfil brotando
esmerilados en la
ventana norte de la
sala (ya) comimos:
el duro ruido de las
sillas al salir sus pasos
correctos de silencio
sobre las baldosas
sin vacilar (jamás).
¿Quiénes entraron a
recoger la mesa oxidada
de desperdicios? Una
mujer junta de los
dinteles de la sala el
yeso (medallones) de
los desperdicios (uvas)
el yeso (recogido).

Arden vientos donde su silencio arde en los bosques
(moribunda) exigencia:
recogieron la mesa
recogieron su huella
esparcida su boceto
a ras de los techos
de la ciudad en la
silla de rejilla (boj)

recogieron sus
sombras meciéndose
en la terraza: fuma,
la hebra es pan fuma
la hebra del ocaso
ácimo su digestión
(tranquila) se recoge
a la tarde.

Huelen las pavesas su sonrisa color tabaco sus
dientes lilas huelen sus
pensamientos: gris
(atrás) lo que quedó
intocable hace
cincuenta años, nevó:
topacios configuran
del agua su satisfacción
de humo calor los
postres la conversación
su lenguaje transitivo,
en familia: piensa
fumando en la
dispersión. Dispersión
giratoria de semillas
las hélices del viento.
Los pájaros batieron
alas. Éste es el pájaro
legítimo (certificado)
de defunción (ése) su
sitio: y van muriendo
uno tras otro en lugares
imprevistos (trámites)
de dirección contraria.

Extraigo del largo esfuerzo muriéndose a mi
padre láudano (láudano)
vivo, olor especulativo:
de su aroma extraigo
la puerta entornada

la zurita saciándose
al bies con las
semillas (millo) en
los umbrales: de
su ojo extraigo una
pupila de topacio
(interior) la pupila
virando hacia mí
(imparcial) al
moribundo, una
orden (sus ojos).

The patient's respective stages of fermentation

From one of the dying man's sutures I extract the red tile chimney
on the snow-covered roof
the mouldy slope of
red at a window (I
extract) the starling
above (rummaging) in
the gutters: bird to
bird passes on bitter
exposure (a jewel) up
above hunger, seeds: from
the sound in the gutters I
extract a sketch in
the opposite direction to
the dying man by
the fireplace, topaz birds.

The female possesses more longevity the gemstone lasts (even)
longer climbing the
air the thwack
of a stone hit
the dying man's
forehead: from his suture
the bird flew.

He lies there: at his door the stock dove pecks oblong millet seeds its
nodding head casts
an old shadow
of brooms, women
sweeping: houses
that stand completely open
I extract a timetable from
his return black birds
flying over the
city: at the table,
on the oval ebony
cutting board an
ebony apple that darkened

the peeling knife, just there: the
sweep descending from hunger
to dessert creates hunger's
black monogram, among
birds: living topaz
their pupils.

Now he has closed the book, now we lift our right hand
three strikes to our heart
the palm of the hand
on our head: aloud
(his signs) at the
head of the table he
initiated the meal, fixed
orders.

They called, summoned I leave: behind, in his sketch the closed
(calm) room at its predictable
(unavoidable) centre of
tarred roofs: the whole
city a great
fluttering right
above us black birds,
evening: I look down
hear his familiar voice
still giving orders
hand to head from
hand to apple now
all is laid out:
a flower a fruit a
pupil the topaz.

He comes in (sits down) we were waiting for him: the bread's
wish a rye loaf falling open
on the table (he distributes)
chooses benevolence shaped
as an oblong on a dark
cutting board that he divides
into four hemispheres we

lower our heads for
a few moments shadow
to shadow the birds
exalt us (they flew by)
appearing in profile
polished a buffed black
in the living room's north
window (now) we ate:
the harsh scraping
of chairs when leaving
his correct silent steps
on the tiles with (always)
no hesitation. Who came
in to clear the rusty table
of scraps? From the
living room lintels a
woman collects the plaster
(medallions) of scraps (grapes)
the plaster (gathered).

Winds burn where his silence burns in the forest (dying)
requirements: they
tidied the table
tidied his scattered
trace his sketch
at the level of the city's
roofs in the wicker chair
chair (boxwood)
tidied up the shadows
of him rocking on
the terrace: he smokes,
the thread is bread he
smokes threads of
unleavened sunset his
digestion (calm) at
evening he retires.

The embers smell his smile tobacco-coloured his teeth
lilacs his thoughts

smell: grey (from
way back) what was
unable to be touched
in fifty years, it
snowed: from water topazes
shape his satisfaction at
smoke heat desserts
conversation his transitive
language, among family:
smoking he thinks of the
dispersal. A whirring
dispersal of seeds the wind's
helixes. Birds flapped their
wings. This is the true
(certified) bird of passing
(this) its place: and one
after another they go off to
die in unforeseen places
(procedures) of opposite
direction.

I extract from the long effort of dying of my father laudanum
living (laudanum),
speculative smell: from
his fragrance I extract
the half-closed door the
stock dove sating its
hunger on an angle with
the (millet) seeds on the
doorstep: from
his eye I extract a
pupil of (inner)

topaz the pupil
shifting towards me
(impartial) to
the dying man, an
order (his eyes). (Translations from Spanish by Peter Boyle)

Abdellatif Laâbi

from “Little Things” (“Les Petites Choses”)

If all these trees
joined hands
they would hold back the desert

Seize life
but don't exhaust it

Far
Far from what?
Each city
cradle
or grave
Each country
a language
in which love
stutters

**

The sun
resigns itself to the clouds
It has lost its appetite

Summer rain
The trees are grieving

The look
foresaw
the unforeseen
**

Conclusion:
I didn't realise
that my usefulness
resides in my lack of usefulness
I sought health
there, where it isn't

The confession of the sufi
torments the profane poet
He says to himself:
Who speaks thus
in him
in me?

In my heart
his eye or mine?

**

I circle around him
He circles around me
No mirror separates us

He convinces me of essence
I convince him of appearances

He troubles me with his certainty
I trouble him with my doubt

**

His exile is a promise
My exile a quest

Him
or me
who is the heretic?
who is the believer?

Goodbye sufi
concluded the profane poet
our meeting was brief
and tempting

**

One day
we will have to apologize to the earth
and tiptoe quietly away

(Translation from French by Alan Baker)

LXXXI

Not rising tides, not changing climate, nor soil pollutions vex me lately. Who could register pollutions of the particulate physical, or turn toward matters of lake acidification, while their psyche doubted its own survival? I feel, when I think of Earth, that my greenness is rotten, my feeling rotten. My heart is meanly disconnected from you, friend, whose memory doesn't foam with toxic agitation when another story of black life devalued pulses through our consciousness. In me each particle weathers the racial real. I bear it in my flow, in the underground of my attention. Your environmental alarm feels familiar, like someone's whisper of injustice, like a fact implored by mortal flesh. This flesh can't feel alarm that doesn't drive through the protective anodyne regulating my concern. My care is gone to the social, to tolerating the world as murderous atmosphere. What died in me is the earth; I can only yield so much to the oblivious culture. The petal of common feeling trampled over and over. Whiteness is a way of understanding the body that numbs when faced with its own melanin; its eyes are brainwashed; my petals struggle in that light. Lately my composure can't compose an unraced environment. Is it selfish, that the central love object of my gentle verse is the nerved within? I cherish a sensibility that questions the ownership of propriety and property. I create sounds in the behavioral wilds of terrified adults, and trust that song tunes territoriality toward being. Say your breathing shapes language into culture. Hear silence when all the breathers of the world are white or dead. My environment touches me; what kills the empathetic cellular kills resolve. Such virulent communications of race hatred must be filtered through my pen. I sound brown where breath most breathes, and intervene in the green mouths of men.

Janice Lee

Dear Benny: On Persistence & Our Capacity to Live



In the book I am writing, there is a scene that describes a group of pigeons committing suicide. That is, the pigeons, distressed at having their home demolished, have become depressed, and have learned how to jump in front of oncoming cars most efficiently to kill themselves or to simply stop eating and fall to the ground, the piles of pigeons a constant reminder of the efficacy of death, the ephemerality of life.

In my book, which deals with many things including the apocalypse as a state of anticipation, memory, the difference between ontology and perception, empathy, I realized that most of all, the book was some way to process both the directly given and silently inherited traumas we receive in our lives and the ways in which we can learn from animals urgently and slowly, how to press on, how to *know*, how to stand still in the intolerable

weather and to appreciate the tears and to stand in the bathtub, cold and wet and heavy, because the trust is stronger than the general condition of life and because the curvature of intimacy ignites a willingness to sit still. The novel started with a series of images that I could not get out of my head: namely, a girl washing blood off her hands and a cat. But the images refused to coalesce into a narrative and as I was still dealing with the aftermath of my mother's death, an abusive relationship, and my changing relationship to language, the words would not organize themselves, not yet. Then when I was visiting Brenda Iijima in New York, her cat, Mr. Bungie, jumpstarted my novel by talking to me in my dreams, and then, after my return to Los Angeles, arriving at my front door in a dream covered in blood. In that dream, I answered the door and there was Mr. Bungie. He entered the house, and I managed to snatch him and bring him to the bathroom sink, where I washed off the blood and then washed the blood off my hands.

Recently I have been thinking about the birds lined up in neat increments and the persistence of animals in the cold and the wisdom of cats and all the reasons to love rather than to give in to despair and the circling hawks and my dogs and all the dogs and the price of longing and desire, and I am worried about the cat that has stopped coming by at night and I am worried about my dog Benny who turned 13 years old this year and I am looking for the birds in the sky but sometimes they are not there and I am thinking about all the different ways of "knowing," and I'm so grateful for the wisdom and generosity of animals and for all the different ways of knowing that they can bring into our lives and what we can know only by attempting to be as generous as they are with us, and I can't stop crying and I can't forget the ways in which the intimacy we have with animals is the capacity to live and the ways in which we can communicate with each other is not only the failure of language and the gap between us is the reason for desire and the desire is to exist and to exist together.

Isn't every story one of intimacy, then distance, then intimacy then distance again? Remember that your ghosts and your memories are not only your past but also your future, and that in the end, what we have is each other, already ghosts, already holding each other, already so far apart.

What is the benefit of rationality or irrationality when an emotion does not equate with distance and distance does not equate with the amount of love that exists or doesn't exist between two creatures?

I can't articulate the distance between myself and my dog, nor the utter closeness. This distance between us as displaced as the particles of sky that make up the *sky* and today, over here, the sky is no longer blue and it is windy and through my window, while listening to "Something On Your Mind" by Karen Dalton, the leaves and branches are waving in the wind and because the window is closed and because the music is playing I can not hear the swaying but I can see it, and that, too, is a sort of untraversable distance.

I have learned more about the complacency and communication required in relationships from my dogs than I have from people. I have learned more about the possibility for magic and irrationality of survival from the feral cats, than I have from television. And I have learned more about the arbitrariness of time and the grief of the sky that carries us forward from the birds of this city than I have from any book.

We are talking about feelings, aren't we? The wavering distance between creatures. Shall I indulge in the details? A person meets another person. They decide they love each other. This is not simultaneous or immediate. Neither is it equivalent. Neither is it so different from digging a hole. Because in love one sees clearly, and one doesn't see at all. When you reenact the moments, do you see a clear and cohesive timeline? Do they move from the space of a void to a space of fullness? Is that how this is supposed to work? Because if you want to ask, how is love embodied, felt in the *body* of a person and in the *body* of a space, and in the *body* of time, and if you want to ask, how might someone be in front of you, living, often, there, the precursor and prohibition of freedom. One asks, "What is the state of a world that runs from friends?" But for animals, it isn't so complex. Complexity isn't a virtue. When Benny feels joy, he is joyful. When he feels alone, he is alone. When he feels hunger, he is hungry. These are not such simple equations when we have language and when we see time as moving constantly forward, the burden of progress.

We humans insist on the fact that time is linear. But animals know that it is also cyclical and simultaneous and for those of us who have quietly suffered

trauma and abuse, subtle and quiet and gradual and pounding, we understand that time is both complex and immediate and delayed and deferred and ever-present, and in the fibers of our flesh we remember pain but not always joy, and grief becomes ordinary and we move on, we keep moving on, because that is how we have been trained to survive. Why survival? Here are all the bruises and the bodies shoved back and forth, without blinking, because in the blinking I have already forgotten, and what I do remember I can own, and memory is not always honest and words are not always true, but listen, it is the capacity for intimacy that matters.

There are so many questions. How is it that animals help us realize our capacity to live? Why do we sometimes so easily dismiss encounters with animals and yet others will weigh on our consciences for days? Why do we insist on holding onto our dead pets, collecting their hair, preserving them via taxidermy? How do we communicate so well with animals sometimes when we can hardly speak to other humans? Do we know how much the animals give us without asking for anything in return? Do my dogs love me differently than I love them? How is it that we see so differently? How is it that we exist together?

I might admit here that the future I currently fear most is the future without Benny. How might I prescribe language to a wordless relationship, communicate the unique co-dependency a human shares with a dog, share with someone else the *noticing* that becomes part of intimacy, yet also communicate that part of what constantly haunts the distance between myself and my pet is also the history of my own ghosts, my own struggle with depression, my own question of why go on at all?

Dear Benny, I want to admit that what I fear most is your death, I don't know how I will survive it, but I don't want to put the burden of my future grief onto you now because I know you will just absorb it and you will just try and take the sadness and lay your head on my stomach and the look you will give me, that look of, "It's okay, Mama," will only break my heart again. I want to admit that I fear your death will devastate me even more than the death of my mother, which I am still reliving, now, as I write this, but that also the devastation I feel daily is part of all this, you, me, our lives in the morning when you wake me up every morning by jumping under the covers or onto my chest.

Dear Benny, sometimes when you are sitting in my lap I hold my breath because the faith I had in the fidelity of your expectations had to do with the faith I had in the fidelity of my own expectations, and I need to believe that there is still another space I am living towards, and I know that you recognize my fear even before I am aware it exists and you seem to ask me, “Mama, what are you waiting for?” And I don’t know how to answer that question.

Dear Benny, the words so often fail because the distance between words is so different than the distance between bodies, and though I live for the language, I live for your silence even more. Your gestures and your paws and the quick movements of your ears and the darting of your eyes, the point is that emotions are unnameable but still important and that without words you understand me better than any human I know, precisely because they are unnameable, precisely because they are felt, precisely because you exist.

Dear Benny, the point is, I’m not in love now but I was and I used to be, and the mistakes I made have got to be turned into something other than rage or guilt and I have to believe that there is a *towards* ahead of me, but you know that it is this *present* that is equally important and that in the silent moments I can outlive the expectation of living and what you give to me I will never be able to repay and you do not ask me to. You do not ask me to.

Dear Benny, I don’t yet know how to write about a trauma that is not mine, yet invisibly and with utmost uncertainty, I have inherited its wounds and I keep trying to write about it anyway. My fear is that you have inherited this from me, and that my wounds have become your wounds and the wisdom you turn back at me is also a repercussion of my own pain and the pain you have created in yourself in your generosity as a dog, lying next to me, the intimacy as all that is needed in order to persist.

Dear Benny, it is you, most of all, who has taught me to persist.

[On Matt's Spirit Duplicator]

But now that our inner catastrophic lover is gone,
and we are left with a dosimeter, a gas mask, a pair
of aqualungs and the final task to compose our water
poem *sans* water, to perform pool without pool, to
chronicle disaster *sans* disaster, to write of
catastrophe having missed our own, cataclysmic
event, drifting without our doomed lover in pool's
dystopia, writing writing from this other end, *sans*
philia, *sans* heart, *sans* pool's safe paraphernalia, in
a pool, our most precious thing, emptyful, typing the
caricature of the poem, letter by letter on the
intimate klaviatur, *sans* dread, *sans* desire or even
phobia, a purposeless aperture *sans* catharsis, *sans*
play, how will the empty swimming pool, our
hollowed-out poem attract an audience. How will we
fulfil our duty, the complex task with which we are
left behind: to turn the concave poem into convex,
how can we, from this ultimate no end, *viva life, viva*
death! navigate, like the aquatic lettrist *sans* aqua,
our lepidopterist *sans* love for moths or butterflies or
our posthumous poet who cannot meet his own
accident, the post-apocalyptic swimmer, pool
survivor who missed his or her own *fata sua*, the
lonely lover's body home through language through
litter and letter as if your own short-lived life
(although how long is long enough you may rightly
wonder, or more precisely how short is short enough
to avoid lapsing, hurting, harming within the short
time we have before we die) were at stake. Dear
typewriter, dear heart. Staring long enough at the
tiny piece of blue aquarelle, Esterházy, the celestial
swimmer writes *pre mortem*, but always already
from the other end, swimmers, like the poem, or the
script, who do not reach the margin in their own

lifetime, i.e. the swimmer who *desires*, i.e. the poem, your most precious thing, a script with a centre, a text with *cor*, a porous heart, won't gain entry to the house of emptiness, left to repeat, length after length, line after line itself to and froing from end to end to find its final event, entrapped in its own desire to express, to say something, to endlessly address. So swim your heart *out*, while you can, as if your own, or the poem's, for that matter, final chance, its coincidence were at stake. In other words, your power is indeterminate. So betray what matters most, what's most intimate. Let the swimmer, the poem, the script terminate its own quiet cataclysmic event. Dear typewriter, dear heart, but if, by chance, charm or accident you reach a margin, moving from Alpha to our most private Omega, let the typing move backwards, and move gently from Omega to Alpha and when you have got to the word *ending*, type circularly, impulsively, accidentally, and start it all over again. Dear typewriter, *dear heart*. Type, if you must type, the feeling poem which when it feels it feels indifferent. Type, if you must, the absolute no poem, the global eco-poem of and about an eco-swimmer, the hollow swimmer, the recycler of nothing, the lover of lack, who swims in reverse on the page, our fluid aquarelle, carefully unthreading any thread in order not to leave a single symbol, mark, or trace behind, the miasmic swimmer who swims invisibly, in shade, and, like the poem, duplicate, permeates from nothing else other than itself. Write about an alternative lover who, without love, if you must love, learns to tautologise itself, to duplicate.

[On Another Death of the Moth]

And so I watched the moth stuck inside the apocalyptic ceiling's circular lamp in the bathroom for a long time, although how long is long enough you may rightly wonder, or more precisely how short is short enough to avoid lapsing, hurting, harming within the short time we have before we die. The moth, the tautologised moth, tautologised because of the endlessly repeated version of its own death in the history of art, this moth, that one time was another moth yet the same moth who lives its life in the same *modus vivendi* as any other moths, which died many dystopian deaths, once, already posthumously, in Woolf's essay in 1942, an unusual *modus mortis* paradoxically caused by writing it all down, other times, already as post mortem, dehydrated parchment, flimsy post scriptum mourned by W. G. Sebald in the corner of a godforsaken East Anglian motel room, a small body of a life that went through a series of transubstantiations and permutations, the last time showing its fatal appearance in France during the Euro Final 2016, swarming with its many altered pre mortem selves into the entire football pitch, one of itself landing and ending its life on the bridge of Ronaldo's nose, the deadly moth, the live moth, the being non-being, is the mottophobic's worst nightmare one could say. It, the tautologised moth, while alive, was obviously drawn to the laser light with an inherent desire for or obsession about small, illuminated planets, and crawled in, secretly, one night, from the top, through the thin crack between the ceiling and the rim but in order to crawl out again it would have needed to take flight, for which there was very little room inside the lamp inside, that was outside, the space of the illuminated bathroom, inside the flat, inside the house, inside the street, inside the tiny Tungsram life bulb. I tried to screw off this globe from the firmament several times to free the moth without success so instead I was involuntarily exposed to the slow death of the uninvited

being, whose non-being I dreaded more than it being still alive. During its process of dying it went through various stages of metamorphosis in a hopeless attempt to survive, or I should say prolong its agony, inside the globe outside. At times it shrank its body closing its wings tight, as if to camouflage (with an inherent desire to be something or someone else), sometimes moved locations within the circumference, at other times it tried to fly or crawl in circles. And there were times when it thought it was no moth but glass. All repetitions, the cyclical life and death gestures were x-rayed, even enlarged, one could say like the small acoustic body of sound through water, maximised, through the orbicular glass. And with each day I was sinking further too in depression. It took a week for the moth to let go. The slowest week for both of us in which time slows down and fear speeds up. Because who could co-exist with an agonising being, the mottophobic's worst kind of horror, darkest dread, the liminal terror, or even hope, between being and non-being, knowing or unknowing what awaits every time you arrive or depart. And so one afternoon on my return to home inhabiting outside but situated inside, first thing was to check the state of the creature inside the lamp inside that was outside. It did not react to the source of illumination. The idle body of the moth, composed from the same and only moth, that is, of nothing else other than itself, its once rigorous, small, inaudible yes to life morphed into rigor mortis in which it decided to leave its dehydrated carcass for me in full glory, wings stretched open, antennae erect, the anatomy of the body, its whole structure inside, now stuck wholly inside for ever, visible. Trachea, aorta. And there, there, its long chambered heart, as if still, moving, a tiny bit, as if it were saying: Death no death. I am here. It's a jest

[On the Glass Poem]

But what in pool does the pure swimmer, the absolute swimmer, faithful with an absolute faith in herself, being, swimming in this fluid world, in pool's primal milieu which we enter, each time we enter, with the same pre-natal euphoria as if we were to begin all over again, as if the empty pool were our pre-semantic school where we learn our first alphabet from alpha to beta, in other words, from the beginning to the end, an elastic, fluid system of utterance, as if each letter or sound underwater were much more elongated, much slower, like elongated roars or cry of underwater swimmers in the history of photography or art, like vocal shadows and shades, in which our acoustic bodies were not quite yet lost, heard or found, and who at times of crisis returns to this private water lexis, to quiet conversations about the climate of the pool, namedropping names of pools inside and outside the pool, privileged to enter pool's ongoing underground discourse, like the good reader incognito, who at catastrophic times profits only from the same and only book during their short or long-lived life, although how long is long enough you may rightly wonder, or more precisely how short is short enough to avoid lapsing, causing harm within the short time we have before we die, returning to the pool *sans* pool, admire? Dear fearer of desire, by which we mean ambition, by which we mean a cosmological or celestial drive, bon courage. Márai, the invisible prophet, the hooded writer in exile inside and outside, spends most of his life inside the inner domes, outside history and yet wholly inside his own story, in the historic mist of Turkish steam rooms in Buda away from the public performing, as he writes, the absolute aquatic thinking. For the same reason, Ottlik, the aquatic author, who believes in a world unreal, imaginary, sets his novel in the fin-de-siècle Lukács Spa thinking he too was a protagonist, intangible,

unseen. Or take silent Socrates, for another example, who, set in lotus pose at the edge of the pool, decides to write his syllogisms, *sans* paper, *sans* concrete, on water. Dear mourner, dear (d)reader, what did Bloom, for that matter, waterlover, drawer of water, watercarrier, who had learnt to swim like a swimmer, write like a writer, arriving at the margin of the empty pool, the ruins of our civic space, our place of gathering for silent thinking, our long gone Agora, where time slows down and thought flows speedier in the fluid milieu of public banter about private catastrophes, our own imaginary final cataclysmic events whose outlines, we don't know why, but we don't yet know, mourn in this liquefied loss? Or think of Tiresias, as our anti paradigm, whose life begins or ends, ends or begins from a fatal gulp of water from a see-through glass; wasn't it already a warning, an incident we so often ignore moving linearly ahead or retrospectively reversing backwards in the history of coincidence? But dear idle admirer of chance, of accident. This otherworldly desire, passed on from swimmer to swimmer through the chronology of pools, may well have to do with the fluid body of water, the mutable psyche of aqua, the permeable materia prima, the contourlessness of the swimming body in water, the length and width of our own body in water, a desire, a longing, elastic, as long and as elastic and as wide as the pool, a self-definition, self-measurement, being defined and measured by the parameters of the pool, a longing to be pool. Or perhaps is it to do with, not water, but glass? They say it's an end of the swimming pool era. An era which will never return, for tautology, too, like the repetition of pointless aporia pleadingly addressing the loathing lover (even though it is hard to type such texts under duress), has exhausted its inner fountains and wells. Permutation of inner and outer pools, tiled inside, tiled outside, the incarnation of one's permeable inside, that can both live and die, die and live, live and live, die

and die at the same time, like the endless version of the moth and its short or long lived life, immortalised, immaterialised, or say our own intimate lives, like the tautologised life of the Syrian swimmer, who, escaping war, left her former body behind by drowning in the Aegean Sea, but her new, estranged, other self, unknown even to herself, miraculously re-born and so now qualified to swim (as if her eternal – other – life was at stake) at the 2016 Rio Games, can only practise such charms, such magic once in one’s linear lifetime. And so, the golden era is gone, no doubt, and we are left with the poollessness of the pool, our new and estranged pool with new laws, new paradigms and pool parameters, a pool as yet unknown, unfamiliar to us, unrecognisable, like the once popular and populous corridors of Azure after the Ukrainian nuclear disaster, a liminal site that exists as a non/being, erased and yet memorised in our collective minotaur’s mind. And it’s the end of an era because, like the way liquid is *mortalised* by glass, our poem too, our most precious thing, our glass house, in which language, and our inner swimmer, are mortified at being made see-through, translucent, at being immortalised, by the prospect of gaining a living shape, concrete contours, that is, that which will make his or her body separate, stand out as part, loneliness apart, with no promise of being wholly part. Art, the posthumous Pilinszky, the stoic swimmer writes, creates balance, movement from facts to reality chronologically motioning from visibility to non-visibility, from a world that’s lost or doomed, unrealistic, absurd but still exists towards our inner deity which, although it does not exist, is inherently good, therefore *is* reality. And of course, mourning what’s gone is not good or real enough. So dear mourner, dear dreaded reader, what did Bloom, for that matter, waterlover, drawer of water, watercarrier, arriving at the margin of the empty pool, the ruins of our civic space, our place of gathering, our long gone

Agora, mourn in this liquefied loss? Do we mourn the weather, the vineyards, and the warm tiles, tiled inside, tiled outside. The sluggish journeys, the sluggishness of the body itself, the slow-moving monstrosity of the Southern Transdanubian train strolling by miniature stations across the continent to Trieste Bay where we watch, much later, on our nautical map, Aqua Pannonia sailing down the drain. Or perhaps the tangibility of all this. The intimacy of touching. Framing the world, outside, inviting it inside. As if it were the world outside, minimalised, a tiny Edmondson train ticket in Bloom's pocket, tucked inside, essential standard feature introduced in 1842 in England to make the world outside faster, more see-through, competitive and so to last longer, as if it were a mini cardboard internal pass to the other, outer world. And we miss, of course, time the wunderkammer, the pocket encyclopaedia maker, the catalogue of cosmic clutter. The museums of swimming pools, the dead metaphors, the archive of August mini meteors, the gallery of night crowds watching the sky above the pool, the fellow poet-torsos, the crowded catacombs, filthy mausoleums. The arboretums. And other oval, concave words like these. Their amphora bodies. Obsessive holder, collector of things. And of course we missed Noe. With her the slow, elongated moments of ark watching on the bank of the dark Danube or the river Thames, the kayaks' skilful carcasses, terrific pirouettes. Or maybe we missed sitting in lotus pose, *sans* desire, *sans* shadow, *sans* silhouette, at the margin of the poem watching agitation being born on the sheet as the century turned pathologically as the convex body turns too. And now, my hydrophilic friend, *sans* pool, *sans* water, should Bloom, left only with glass, entering the orangery of melancholy, in a puddle of nostalgia, simply forget? In the world's waiting room, hiding behind and within glass, wearing a new, unfitting swimming skin or self, should we join the

forgetful crowd to become part, as apart but wholly part of the collective unhappiness, and if so is the key in regathering in regret? A type of forgetting into which like hypnotised centaurs, we submerge, half-part of the underworld, half-apart, exercising a difficult breathing exercise, some tragicomic version of katabasis, longing for magna mater, for the cosmic womb, the absolute hydrostatic equilibrium, for the ultimate paradox, the one and only water discourse which doesn't weigh, doesn't count and doesn't make any sense or difference. O ever flowing Tap. O the liminal glass on which *liquefied* love is cursorily typed. O minuscule pools, half full, half empty, duplicating the mourner into a bleak isle of mourners, viva *moirai*, shrouded, dark gondolas. And in a half-illuminated, sorrowful bacchanalia, the bizarre poem, weaving its own final cataclysmic event, flows on, half lament, half requiem:

[On Catastrophe]

Each summer was a mystery. Each pool a chance.
Each poem a secret. But after unbuilding comes the
building, a reversal of what is expected to take place.
O aquatic typewriter that types lines between the lines.
Keep love alive while the typing lasts. At a time when
the poem (knowledge and perception) like an artificial
pond, unattended, algae-dense, is murky, *sans* mercy,
sans transparency, in what way, one wonders, should
one proceed then towards the poem's seabed, the final
resting place of these conflicting conversations, the
poem, our Ithaca, the poem, our swimming pool, the
poem, our shared fluid tomb whose geography, or
borders, we don't yet know or see, I mean a writing
that calls for thinking, the one that tickles souls. How
can the anonymous swimmers, the posthumous lovers
recognise shapeless, muffled symbols underwater? Is
one's own inner global disaster, one's private history,
auto-nautical crises, lighter, flimsier, even faster,
when occurring, and/or experienced, as a swimming
pool event? And if so with what methods does the
water typist underwater type absurdities, ambiguities,
unnameables, micro and macro climaxes of this
summer vis-à-vis, heart to heart, between two
irreconcilable cartographed others, and disentangle
entangled cyclops, and other species of figures of
speech in aqua, in the liquefied poem (what is the
ultimate point), how will we make sense of the
amorous swimmers' incomprehensible, incompatible
discourse? For them each summer offered a mystery.
Each pool a chance. Each poem a secret. Each chance
a call for comprehension, for a thinking feeling
thought en route (again) to Sebald's East Anglian
melancholic seashore which now, in our poor aporia,
will be our assembly point, where we finally gather
ourselves together, in an ideal marginality, at the edge
of this island, in the absolute horizontality where one
needs to apologize to the other retro-futuristically in a

one way correspondence for anything one once will or would have said (before), for all the tricks and all the foul play, all the cheating, all the double-meaning, always somehow ahead of oneself in the past. The calligrapher thinks (might you call it being *under duress*) the closest perhaps we could ever get to the other's catastrophe, the fictitious, cataclysmic event, would be to picture the writer, the other, the amorous lover on his final (death)drive (if you will) in Norfolk (towards your seashore), camera attached to his smart forehead when his car crashes with a lorry in Poringland on the Lowestoft Road in the midst of his East Anglian mindscape. And then imagine, you, the alternative other, were you to watch it back on youtube and immediately, as experience a priori yet right after the event, you'd report it back to the world. After building comes the unbuilding. So what shall we talk about in our last summer discourse? And when and where shall we meet our own event, at what detour, at what passage? It'll soon turn into a game of one player chess, you'll see, the game of lonely typing; thinking against time. And although the klaviatur now almost animate & intimate (if you will), script made (un)familiar or even uncanny like the strange familiarity of swimming in a swimming pool, immersive perhaps in order to impress the silent literatist, the wordless lettrist, the deaf typist, the posthumous co-author, (the dead reader — if you will), our inner paralytic, numb armchair psychotherapist, perhaps we could proceed on the meridian instead eventually always returning to where we started — with nothing said, felt, thought, not to have moved an inch — collectively, dialogically or otherwise. Or should *we* today (if you will) perhaps move with the movement of a perplexed swimmer, or some kind of paraphyletic mammal in water, as if swimming to and fro in our story, our local swimming pool, face turned backwards towards the past yet body propelled unstopably into the future, shifting — thinking,

swimming, remembering, even — inch by inch ahead of ourselves in time, a centaur, or an amphibian, a one-eyed aquatic flâneur, half-here, semi-there, flight tipped somewhat sideways in horizontal, historic, histrionic here-&-nows? It's not the vision but the motion, Aristotle writes. Not comedy, but tragedy that renders absolute completion to the play. Without our inner catastrophic lover, we are lost for ever.

Richard Lopez

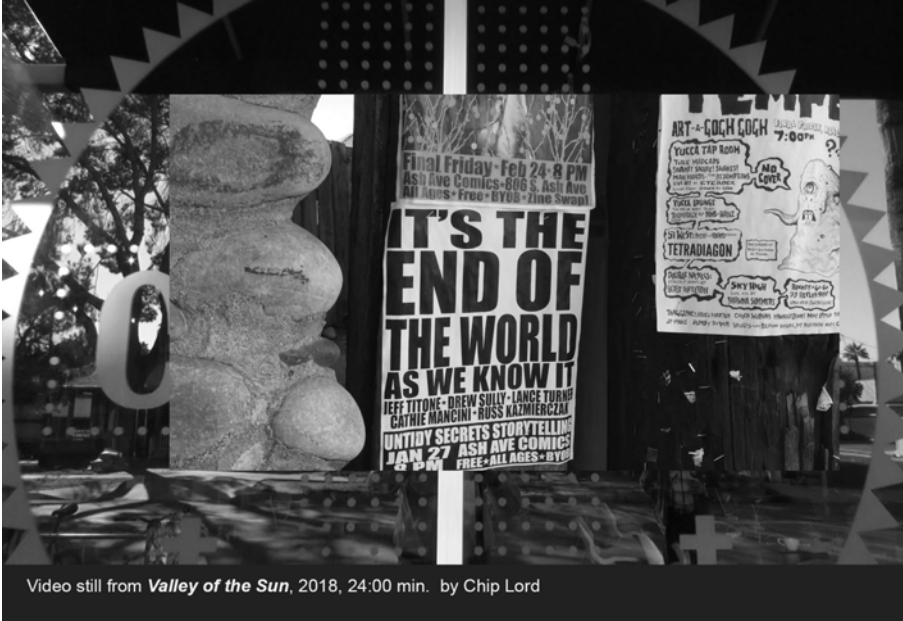
last nite at the starlite drive in

tell me my love how to stay sane
knowing the world is dying
but when we come here
& i see that look in your eyes
i fall in love with the world again
we know how this movie ends
we've read the script & heard the score
the projectionist has long packed up
& gone home
the projection is now in binary code
01 01 01
24 frames per second at 1080p
king kong & the creature from the black lagoon
jump out at us from the screen
to beat me back to childhood
i am always awed by monsters
i remember after the movies i'd come home too scared
to walk the long dark corridor to my bedroom
because bigfoot & dracula
were waiting in the shadows or under my bed
how i love to watch these nightmares
limn the night sky with their fiery exploits of fantasia
we are at it again
the nightmares become real
we shall do our best to adapt & cope
by changing our cars to hybrid & electric
put up solar panels on our houses
& even do some recycling
but this little will do even less
because the ice is melting & the seas are rising
the blowtorch sun blackens the earth
& yet we are alive
the snack bar is open
the popcorn is fresh & the pizza is hot from the oven

we will live our fullest hours
i can't be no where else
but sitting in the open air before this screen
with you my love
even when the movie is shit & script was written by a loon
& the director shot the movie on the short ends of film stock
remember what the sage said
when she was asked how do you live
when you know it is the end of the world
easy she said simply live & love
we are doing it
we can't leave until the very end
the world is dying
you make it easy to love & live

Chip Lord

End of the World, excerpt from *Valley of the Sun*



Valley of the Sun is an observed video portrait of Phoenix, Arizona as it faces climate change and rising temperatures in 2018. *End of the World* is a bit of it.

Made by artist Chip Lord, *Valley of the Sun* is the third part of a trilogy of works about cities and Climate Change.

Miami Beach Elegy shows Miami Beach in the face of rising sea level, and *Greetings from Amarillo* is a landscape portrait of Amarillo, Texas. Each film uses music composed and performed by Hayden Pedigo.

Chip Lord's video works can be viewed on vimeo. *End of the World* can be seen at < <https://vimeo.com/281726422>>. Hayden Pedigo's music is distributed by Driftless Recordings.

Rupert M Loydell

The World We Desire

A continuous process transforms consciousness, adjusts people to abnormal conditions and encourages them to pursue and commit to the expression of emotion. Stories without facts are possible; facts without stories are not. There is no common vision, so we are always off balance.

In terms of current beliefs about the world, we find them for ourselves through precise examination and moral integrity. We challenge the elevation of works of art to precious objects of reverence and expect no fiscal repayment, prefer to listen to whispers in the air and move from fragment to fragment.

The danger is of running out of ideas before you run out of time. Habits of the mind derive from practices developed over millions of years, an extension of the long-standing tradition of forced labour. The pulse of life must be sustained and we must seize the imagination; what is being made is no concern of ours.

It is as if time is standing still, dependent on where the viewer happens to be, generating theoretical difficulties and problems of interpretation. On the outskirts of truth lie contradiction, reticence and ambiguity. They look ridiculous, built up from a series of random blobs and lines, but they are all we can agree on.

The difference between outside and inside is obscure, gravity outweighs levity almost every time, and both are indications of complexity. I want to suggest we interrupt the trip home for a moment of reflection, rendered possible by uncertainty. It may be in vagueness that potency lies; the world that awaits us is not the world we desire.

Sacred Ground

'It occurs to me that sometimes we make homes where we do not belong.'

—Megan Mayhew Bergman, 'Another Story She Won't Believe'

A flock of migrating birds helps us better understand the liminal areas of the page. We cannot put into shapes or words the ideal of collective inspiration.

We foolishly thought it possible to create using machinery, but emotion seeps to the surface and we couldn't understand people or make people understand us.

As always when looking at something, others were trying to find a shared sense of allegiance, producing derision and amazement in equal measures.

We use both ancient and new technologies to promote a harmony that warms the heart, a melody that makes you smile. Select map to view full size.

Excavating the backyards of our home beneath the drifting clouds, we are building a model of interdependent, yet self-sufficient and harmonious living.

You don't have to look very hard to be transformed into something else, but in the derelict caravan of life no place is as important as the boundaries we transcend.

Eric Magrane

Note: The following poems are from a new series addressing climate change that I began in the summer of 2017 during an art+science residency at Playa in Oregon. Each poem takes as its title a quote related to climate change. The poem then responds to the title/quote.

I think calling it climate change is rather limiting. I would rather call it the *everything change*.

—Margaret Atwood

the planting zones on seed packets
are historical artifacts, flowers

emerge and bloom
and their pollinators

are behind or ahead of schedule
like lovers just missing each other

on passing trains, it's too hot
in Phoenix so the flights

are grounded, the governor
of California says the fire season

is now all year long, in the Dakotas
colonizers open up water hoses on the protectors

and send the dogs in,
that much hasn't changed,

and the orange-faced one
says something about how much he cares

about Pittsburgh, fuck Paris,
but the mayors of Pittsburgh and Paris

get together and say
fuck the orange-faced one,

so that's something, and the oceans
soak it in, corals lose their color,

water surges over Staten Island,
the Rockaways, New Orleans,

Bangladesh, water seeps into
and up through the porous ground of Miami,

good luck getting insurance,
sci-fi novelists write about NYC flooded,

bombs go off in London, bark beetles
chomp down forests, journalists write about drought

as a cause of the Syrian civil war
and academics say careful

with the environmental determinism
and no more polar bear pictures on ice floes please

they aren't helping any more, and meet at conferences
to weigh the relative values

of hope and despair, coining phrases
like the hope industrial complex

and slow violence while
black men are gunned down

on Youtube and I click
a button on my MacBook Air

to order a book on climate change
and it arrives at my door the next day,

and researchers work with stakeholders
in El Paso and Juarez

on heat preparedness plans, and poets
consider citizenship and plant gardens

in unabashed gratitude, and island nations
ponder the existential question

of whether a nation
can exist without land,

and geochemists propose a new geologic epoch
called the Anthropocene

but, wait, others say, it's not
all humans, it's the political economy, stupid,

it would be better to call it Capitalocene,
or it's patriarchy, or it's industrial agriculture

so how about Manthropocene or Plantationocene,
and others say, that's better

but there's a lot of trouble and we need
to be thinking in terms of kinship

and other poets perform poems to their children
in front of the UN Assembly on Climate Change

and artists haul blocks of ice from Greenland
to install in a Paris plaza, so passers-by

can see the melting world, and a musician
plays the Great Acceleration on cello

CO2 rising until it is a fever pitch too high
for human hearing.

Lots of trouble, lots of kin to be going on with.

—Donna Haraway

sitting outside reading Haraway
next to a pond next to a summer receding

lake in the Oregon Outback, beyond
the reeds the landscape is horizontal

water lines, earth alkaline color,
I just read the chapter on pigeons

while the swallows bank the sky
right here, and HA! one drops bird shit

directly onto the page I have open.
It's the beginning of chapter 2: *what happens*

*when human exceptionalism and bounded
individualism, those old saws of Western philosophy*

*and political economics, become unthinkable
in the best sciences, whether natural or social?*

I flick the shit off the page, which leaves
a brownish smudge that I realize could be mistaken

for a watercolor brushstroke, so I make a notation
in the margin: *bird shit, HA! while reading*

at Playa Pond in Oregon, 6 July 2017.
we're in the middle of one big detritus

convention, all of us, microbes
and tentacles. out on the playa

Tammy is watering seeds planted
in the dry cracks of the ground.

The earth is a composted poem,
art interspecies material practice.

We're going to grow. We're going to grow rapidly.

—Donald Trump, in his speech announcing U.S.
withdrawal from the Paris Climate Accord

who was it said growth for growth's sake
was the ontology of cancer?

perhaps the analogies are too easy —
be that as it may: the bulbous, tumescent growth

on the body of western civilization
the social organism in spasm

just as monstrous and mutant algae invade
(Guattari wrote that, in the 1980s:

in the field of social ecology, men like
Donald Trump are permitted to proliferate freely,

like another species of algae)
oh, blue-green growth sucking up all the air

in the room, oh, itsy-bitsy cock wagging
all this masculinist bullshit

that thing about growth and cancer
it was Ed Abbey, but he

was into the masculinist bullshit himself, oh
the contradictions, but I digress,

do you know the play *Angels in America*?
can a poem historicize?

I keep thinking about Roy Cohn
in that play, how unpleasant and nasty

a character he was, how he learned from McCarthy
and mentored Trump in strong-armed bombastary,

if you tell yourself something enough
you begin to believe it, you can create your own reality.

before that bit about algae, Guattari wrote:

now more than ever, nature

cannot be separated from culture.

of course! of course! of course!

Someone still calling, “Saving the earth is not a competition, but an essential collaboration.”

—Allison Adelle Hedge Coke

trees talk with each other
under ground in

mycorrhizal languages
and the human body

is itself a collaboration,
more non-human than human,

think ‘go with your gut’ and repeat
after me: I am mostly microbial flora.

I mean it, say it out loud:
I am mostly microbial flora.

how does that feel?
though all the predator and prey

eat and are eaten
how the world is organized

is a function of belief. for instance,
Enough! with the survival of the fittest trope

which really came out of assumptions
of human nature based on

some fantasy of *Homo economicus*.
let’s get to the nature of

human nature, which is microbial
collaboration, but that’s just

science—or, western science—
and there are stories and prophecies

that knew all along. Come waters,
soil, mammals, fish, plants.

Birds and insects, winds
and fire, come friends, let's walk

into this new world together.

from *Sharing Little Sparta*

1. Canmore 221813 Little Sparta¹

Maybe nothing survives. Maybe everything survives. Maybe everything survives and nobody is left to know it. If every cubic centimetre of icecap² were to melt, and it will, Glasgow would be reduced to a sparse archipelago of golf courses, cemeteries and Bishopbriggs. Little Sparta, 280 metres above sea level, will never be drowned. A direct hit from a meteorite could defeat it, but probably won't. It's miles from any infrastructure, so an unlikely target for nuclear weapons, unless some aggressor in the Great Patriotic War of 15th August 2026 should realise how seriously it would annoy Scotland, just at that moment, to have its single greatest artwork destroyed. Maybe the tentacles of half-submerged Edinburgh, reaching south from the Gulf of Newbattle, will stretch as far as Dunsyre, assimilating Little Sparta and turning it into an Urban Park. Maybe familiarity will lead to vandalism, and someone will take the difficult decision to bury the garden, or its stones at least, for protection, as the Cochno Stone³ in Faifley, with its ancient cup-and-ring carvings, was buried in 1964 by archaeologists from Glasgow University, to protect it from Faifley.

It may be that nothing which survives into the very near future can ever really be lost. We are nowhere near being able to upload a human consciousness to a computer, but relatively simple things, like works of art, are not hard to digitize. Little Sparta has already been mapped quite carefully in GPS, the 3D laser scanner⁴ is now a standard part of the academic archaeologist's toolkit, and advances in geophysics may one day allow for the digital excavation of long-destroyed sites. I imagine the space above a buried Little Sparta given over to an immersive virtual reconstruction of the garden, with virtual lichen growing on ray-traced stones, the season always summer, though often wet, with random fractal trees and clouds of cellular-automaton midges that buzz but can't yet bite. The head gardener, George Gilliland, takes us on a tour — the recording was made in 2056, George is old now, brought out of retirement to share half a lifetime's knowledge of the place. They made the poor man give his

tour ten times over, recording every nuance and variation for aleatoric playback.

Little Sparta sits in an old landscape, where stone has always been valued, if not respected. Many of the prehistoric cairns and structures recorded there in the nineteenth century are no longer visible, robbed out for the material of sheep-folds and walls. The few old carved stones which survive did so by having been placed temporarily beyond reach of erosion and the attentions of the living. A carved panel was found at Wester Yardhouses⁵, near Carnwath, a few miles west of Little Sparta, in a cairn which was destroyed around 1870 (see Image 1 — images appear on the pages following the notes at the end of the text).

The carvings are older than the cairn, their style more characteristic of Irish passage-grave art of the third millennium BC. At some point, the panel was trimmed and re-used as the lid of a burial cist, the carvings facing inwards, as usual, as if this art had been chosen for the connoisseurship of the dead. It's now in the National Museum of Scotland. Another stone⁶, carved with cups and rings, was found in 2010 by a worker repairing a drystane dyke⁷ on Easton Farm, three farms east of Little Sparta (see Image 2).

The stone had been trimmed to fit the wall, with no regard paid to the carving, but the carved side was protected from erosion by its position inside the wall — the back and one edge of the stone are heavily weathered. It's now in Biggar Museum. It's a wonderful museum, and there's not much you can do with portable antiquities other than put them in a museum, or bury them, but history tells me this stone is doomed. The archaeological literature is littered with descriptions of carved rocks which are sketched, contextualised, taken into private or collective ownership and then disappear without trace. If a carved rock isn't earthfast, it has a half-life in captivity of perhaps fifty years. If it is, and is exposed to the elements, it erodes, often within a few decades. "There are plenty of ruined buildings in the world but no ruined stones" (MacDiarmid). I want to cry out for the ruined carved stones of Scotland, but MacDiarmid would tell me, "Those count as buildings too, Dummkopf". Should we bury them all? Should we each take a stone down with us for protection, so the temporary sanctity of our burial places might rub off on the stones, granting them a stay of execution and confusing the hell out of future archaeologists, virtual or visceral?

Obviously, yes.

But about Little Sparta ...

2. Unmoored stones

A Cup-and-Ring Stone in a Cage
Puts all Canmore in a Rage

[See Image 3]

The stone⁸ is said to have been found on a hill near the 17th century Glencorse Old Kirk, and moved to the new church⁹ when it was built in the 1880s. Another cup-marked stone was reported at the Old Kirk, but has been lost, and the Old Kirk itself is now difficult to access, having become part of the backdrop to an upmarket wedding venue at Glencorse House. Yet another cup-marked stone was built into the wall of an iron age earth house or souterrain¹⁰, dug into the ramparts of Castle Law hill fort¹¹, now on the edge of a military training area a mile or so north-west of Glencorse.

The Glencorse stone sits between two parking spots, inside a low iron fence, presumably protecting it from the cars, or the cars from it, though the symbolism of a pre-Christian monument caged by the wall of a church doesn't need pointing. Nobody really knows what the cup-and-ring marked stones mean — the current best guess seems to be that they mark places where gold or copper was mined in Neolithic or Chalcolithic¹² times. Like the stones carved with single words or names at Little Sparta, their meaning is a composite of the properties of the carved stone and its context in the landscape — a context which this uprooted stone no longer has. Even for a latter-day stone-botherer, much of the impact of rock art depends on its environment. The carvings are often indistinct, and best viewed in low, slanting sunlight, which is a scarce visitor to the north-east facing wall of Glencorse Parish Church.

It seems to me that there's a basic human discomfort with artefacts which clearly had a meaning for the people who made them, but whose meaning is now a void to be filled with our own conjectures. Ronald W.B. Morris, the great expert on British rock art, has compiled a list of over a hundred theories as to the meaning of cup-and-ring marks, from star-maps and sun

symbols to designs for tattoos and representations of sacred cow-pats. In the absence of certainty, a kind of pressure builds to push away or defuse the challenge of the stones. Some are caged or put in museums. Some, like this stone on Tormain Hill¹³, near Ratho, have been improved (See Image 4). The cup-marks are certainly ancient, but the stone is right on the lip of an old quarry, its edges trimmed flat, and the rough carved cross on top may be a relatively recent example of Christianizing join-the-dots, turning a disquieting idol into a monument to be left alone.

Even famous stones can disappear quite suddenly. The Cleuch Stone on Cathcart Castle Golf Course got its picture in the *Glasgow Herald* in 1930 (see Image 5). The article¹⁴ is by Ludovic MacLellan Mann¹⁵, a celebrity amateur archaeologist of the time, and interprets the stone as a record of the solar eclipse of 2983 BC, which it probably isn't. As if in embarrassment, the stone disappeared. According to Canmore¹⁶, the club secretary was able (in 2007) to point to a grass-grown outcrop as a place where the carvings *may once have been*. The archived site reports on Canmore often read like reports of a kind of very slow weather, with stones appearing and disappearing, lost and found, mislocated and relocated at intervals of decades or centuries.

One of the more alien-looking of Scottish cup-marked stones is at Dalgarven Mill¹⁷ in Ayrshire, and is now represented above-ground by a reproduction. The stone was reported in 1895 as forming part of a pavement, but by the 1950s had disappeared from view (see Image 6).

NS 2965 4581. A workman at the mill, who pointed out it[s] position stated that the stone was built into the culvert of the lade some years ago, and is covered by the road which runs over it.

Visited by OS (JLD) 31 August 1956

Enquiry at Dalgarven Mill confirms that the stone is still placed as stated. Its approximate position in the culvert, some 20m long, is not known.

Visited by OS (JRL) 28 October 1982

I can imagine the two stones, original and reproduction, meeting again at the general resurrection of stones, when we have bombed or drowned ourselves back to a time where stone is what we mostly have to work with. The reproduction stone, protected only by the cover of turf which will soon

overtake it, will be barely legible; the much older original, a portrait-in-the-culvert, may look as suspiciously fresh as it did in 1895, maybe trimmed just a bit to fit the culvert. We'll smash them both to red gravel and make a path.

3. A self-burying artwork

In January 2008¹⁸, a storm blew down a mature sitka spruce in the Forestry Commission plantation at Achnabreck, near Lochgilphead. The falling tree took another three trees down with it, and their root plates lifted the thin layer of soil up with them, leaving a patch of bedrock almost clean¹⁹. A passer-by named Sally Wilkin noticed cup and ring markings on the bedrock, and reported the find to Kilmartin House Museum²⁰. The whole area is full of rock art, with at least two more sites nearby at Achnabreck²¹, another group less than a mile to the west at Cairnbaan²², and many more sites in Kilmartin Glen²³.



Little trace remains of Little Sparta²⁴. The books in the library were taken into a public collection, maybe digitised before they fell apart, maybe not, their data lost, in any case, within a single human lifetime, to digital obsolescence²⁵. A few trees survive, none of them growing particularly old before dying of exposure on this land which always wanted to revert to rough grazing, and did so. None of the ponds ever really wanted to be a pond; they have all dried up and the streams which fed them have returned to their original courses. Maybe a few surreptitious votive offerings, of coins or trilobites or whatever, survive in the soil where the ponds used to be, to mark this as a place of contemplation or wishful thinking. Lochan Eck has dried up too, but its sheer size and the depth of rammed clay beneath it mean that it survives as a crop-mark of sorts, showing up in dry weather as a patch of slightly more lush grass, the shape of an old-fashioned flat-iron seen in perspective. The name Lochan Eck made it onto the OS map²⁶, and perhaps some memory of that name might survive, maybe attached to another feature in the landscape once the lochan is gone, maybe

processed or mutated through whichever languages, if any, pass this way after Gaelic and English have left. The stones are mostly gone, robbed out and re-used, to patch a dyke or embellish a rockery, or dug up after centuries and placed in a museum, next to the prehistoric and Roman remains of South Lanarkshire, the museum falling to ruin in its turn, resurfacing after yet more centuries as a curated assemblage of objects which makes no historical sense at all. The foundations of the farm buildings remain, and this place will probably be read as a farm, ornamented²⁷ or not. The barn that was once a thrashing mill, then a ruin, then a walled garden, will be read as a barn. The people who lived here will be known by what they threw away. The main focus of archaeological interest will be the disused quarry to the south east of Stonypath, used as a rubbish dump by the farmer and others, with layers of compacted agricultural refuse and one narrow stratum of late 20th century stuff, maybe children's toys, maybe adults'; small plastic things that will never biodegrade, glass marbles, model tanks.



In an area of rough pasture which was once a donkey paddock, and later an English parkland, a mature lime tree, *Tilia x europaea*, has fallen down²⁸. The root plate of the tree lifted like a lid, revealing a circular plaque of Caithness stone beneath it. The outline of the stone is impressed on the lifted roots — it may be that the presence of the stone limited the growth of the tree's roots, making it prone to topple. An inscription on the stone reads

ILLI TILIAE ATQUE UBERRIMA PINUS
QUOTQUE IN FLORE NOVO POMIS SE FERTILIS ARBOS
INDUERAT TOTIDEM AUTUMNO MATURA TENEBAT

If anyone can still read this (I never could), they will recognise it as a quote from Virgil's *Georgics*, book 4²⁹:

He had lime trees and a most luxuriant pine
and all the fruit his bountiful tree took on at its first blooming
it kept to its ripening in autumn.

(see Image 7)

The soil around the plaque holds traces of many other trees, generation after generation of lime tree and pine, at one time a closely-packed circle of trees, each acting as a windbreak to shelter its neighbour from the worst of the effects of the fresh air³⁰. The trees slowly built up a thick layer of leaf mould, burying the plaque, and the circle of trees became a clump, which gradually thinned out, until only the one old lime tree remained, out on its own and vulnerable to the Pentland storms. When it fell, a gravestone appeared with its name on it. There's a person there too, rendered namelessly by a Latin pronoun, ILLI — and if Virgil survives, we will know that nameless pronoun for an old man who built a garden on a few acres of neglected land.

ILLI IH

NOTES

1 _____ <https://canmore.org.uk/site/221813/little-sparta-house-and-garden>

2 _____ <http://geology.com/sea-level-rise/>

3 _____ <https://theurbanprehistorian.wordpress.com/2015/09/05/a-matter-of-trust/>

4 _____ <http://www.aocarchaeology.com/news/article/ballochmyle-survey/>

5 _____ <https://canmore.org.uk/site/49012/wester-yardhouses>

- 6 <http://www.megalithic.co.uk/article.php?sid=26257>
- 7 http://www.biggararchaeology.org.uk/news20_170810.shtml
- 8 <https://canmore.org.uk/site/51869/glencorse>
- 9 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/domesday/dblock/GB-324000-660000/page/12>
- 10 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Souterrain>
- 11 <https://canmore.org.uk/site/51871/castle-law-glencorse>
- 12 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chalcolithic>
- 13 <https://canmore.org.uk/site/50365/tormain-hill>
- 14 <https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=2507&dat=19300917&id=1nVDAAAIAIAJ&sjid=caUMAAAIAIAJ&pg=3578,2387707&hl=en>
- 15 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/radioscotland/2012/08/past-lives-ludovic-mclellan-ma.shtml>
- 16 <https://canmore.org.uk/site/43807/cleuch-stone-cathcart-castle-golf-course>
- 17 <https://canmore.org.uk/site/40972/dalgarven-mill>
- 18 <http://www.kilmartin.org/docs/achnabreckExcavationDSR.pdf>
- 19 http://www.themodernantiquarian.com/site/11014/achnabreck_new_1.html
- 20 <http://www.kilmartin.org/>
- 21 <http://www.themodernantiquarian.com/site/144/achnabreck.html>
- 22 <http://www.themodernantiquarian.com/site/147/cairnbaan.html>

- 23 http://www.themodernantiquarian.com/site/433/kilmartin_area.html
- 24 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=20viB3ZhfF4>
- 25 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Digital_obsolescence
- 26 <http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?X=305500&Y=648500&A=Y&Z=115>
- 27 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ferme_orn%C3%A9e
- 28 https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Fallen_Lime_Tree_and_oscillant_at_Spier%27s,_Beith.JPG
- 29 <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.02.0058%3Abook%3D4%3Acard%3D116>
- 30 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uwNcxd9Jf9I>

[Please see next pages for images]

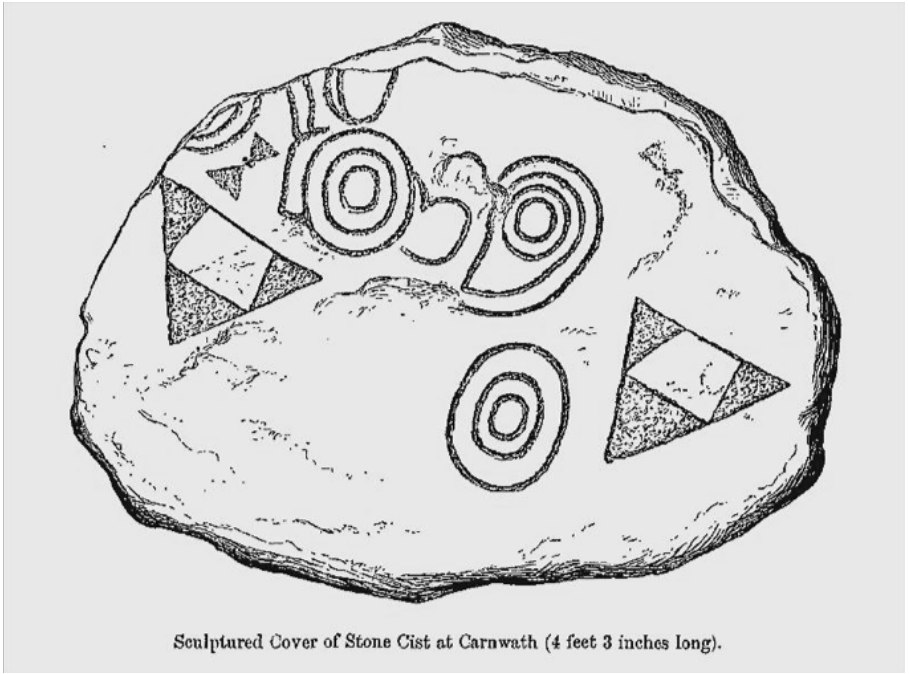


Image 1.



Image 2. *Cup and ring-marked stone found at Easton Farm, Dunsyre.*



Image 3. *Cup and ring-marked boulder at Glencorse Parish Church, near Penicuik.*



Image 4. *Carved stone on Tormain Hill, near Ratho.*

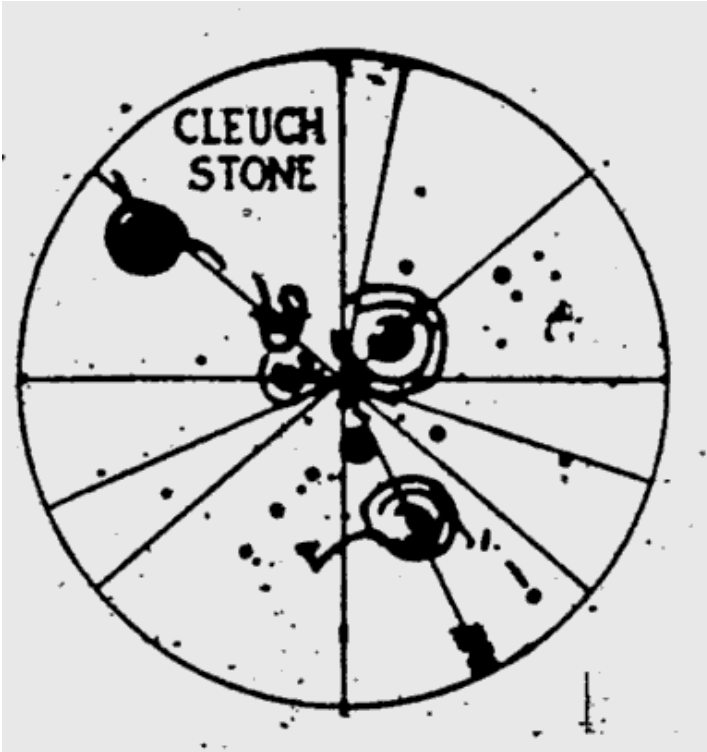


Image 5. 1930 newspaper drawing of the Cleuch Stone on Cathcart Golf Course, Glasgow.



Image 6. *Replica of the carved stone at Dalgarnen Mill, Ayrshire.*



Image 7.

Poetic Lemmas from the End of the World

roboglossia

Pay attention to the eschatological prolepses coursing through the substrate of this poem. It is as though the fetid whiff emanating from every word were nothing but the symptom of an epochal phantosmia. Reassuring. Oh, and your impersonal robo-otorhinolaryngologist just called. They said to swim into the neon of this text, into the secret cove where the poem has already ceded itself to the dazzling array quiescent within its horizon. There you will find the *true* poem, the one whose strontium rush of images is held in abeyance for the robots that it will come to signify. Dump some testamentary surfactant into the mix. You will not be around to see the emulsion, but the poem will sort of disappear regardless. Donne is an affront to variorum editions; Yi Sang waits interminably to be translated into Korean; Sappho has been branded a mere plenipotentiary for the poet that she must have envisaged. I am getting ahead of myself. This poem will have long ago absconded from the well-crafted chassis that might come to constitute it. There are no crystals of pure techne anymore, just songs waiting to be refreighted so that they might be made to do something. Real-life contingencies will inflect the signifying nuances of this poem, and that poem, and those poems. Rimbaud just called to say that he has buried his nachlass all over the island of his corpus, where it is waiting to be exhumed as future intelligendum.

contemporescence

Get ready to train your furious scrivenings to a kairos that would be regeneratively equal to the breakneck rush of human and geologic time. Yes, that throng of contraband iambs that you like is about to be coming back new! Out on the street with the millennials and the millenarians, I heard the music stop the agèd verse from congelat ... This aposiopetic YouTube refresh cut off all super-decided catalexes to become part of the poem's contemporescent architecture. Sometimes it snows in April, and a whole host of poetic injunctions flake down from the sky. The world is ending just as we are within earshot of the totalest summers' hit, its refrain a "GANB!" or an "EVLO". We knew this because Lucretius had charged each yet-to-be-written sentence with its own clinamen, enabling these words to swerve away from their Hildegard von Bingen/Cardi B locus and towards the shimmer of whatever superstar will be lurching towards fertilisation multiple eggshots into the future. Thing is, though, it *has* to be ready-not-ready, siphonable into a yeasty praxis from which it will grow-n-go forever — like that section in *The Undercommons* where Moten's children start playing with their toys. Even after all these years, the Keiji Haino song "koko" still contemporesces hard (especially the PSF 3/4 version, which is more or less rending the welkin of music). You might not be able to do much with that, but so many of this person will remain tropic to those vibrations.

geomnesis

Suppose that we have for centuries been in the midst of a secret storm. How would we map the tempestuous ravages of that moment in a poem? First, let's go back to Shakespeare, whose Weird Brothers were absorbed into the Earth as human slag. Our reading tells us that whatever gets denuded of the human in the process of geological inscription immediately becomes legible in the resulting biomes. The problem is that our range of mimetic apperception undergoes a commensurate shrinkage, preventing us from participating in the geoanthropic fusion colloquy to which we are contributing. Still, if the eldritch trio are capable of effecting *actual* storms from within the heterocosm of *Lady Macbeth*, it behoves us to locate brontogenetic analogues from our private stashes. It is hoped that these brontogenes will help animate a welter of useful material, such as hysteric rivals, anaclitic dads, and formative spermarches. (The alleles of these brontogenes will of course have to be taken into account during the process of reading, since they may affect the transmission of the essential claims.) This would make it possible to recognize the hypostatic deficiency of *all* art that claims to have understood the Earth's native strategies of material sedimentation in the service of memory-based knowledge. The question of when we three will meet again is one of elemental caprice. We are now present at the vernissage of a poem that will be unveiled to the public only once we are gone.

theolectics

Decode the selahs that have started to appear next to the posts of the internet's finest. The world grew darkled and hungried, and everyone was much hurten. In my dream, the Rosicrucians had managed to jimmy something open, their conventicle chambers bedizened with pelmets of unfathomable ostent. I couldn't believe what I seed, lips meat-greased and wine-empurpled by the Belshazzarian spread, inboxes lit up with admomish. Being at a particularly reprehensible juncture of fuckery, I took a sly butcher's at the illegible writing, which read: "Place ye your hand on the diligemeter, the good book, and throw ye away your memes, for they are dirten." It was then that the velcro latchet began to refasten, that the sleepers began to reawake from an evil fugthrum into their God-saken hurtle. We argued over which theologoumenon would melt the cathedra of implacable logic, clashed over adiophora. (I concluded that the rowel in my flank was open enough that I might keep the dirten memes.) The vocable needed to be spread to the end of the world, since much that was to be visited upon the cities would prove fundamentally hostile to tolerance. We had forgotten the erinaceous grandeur of the hedgehog, the genius of its keratin, had allowed our radiant umbilicus to become lost and sere. Yea, your minds have waxed appalling gross! Go ye to the fields tangled with lolium, & bring ye blade to goods smothered with wrongery, ye exegetes, ye eisegetes all!

exosemy

Bleed a calve of aniseed at the heel of the epithalamium. About the frottage will be disgorged the painful, dreamy lace of a precriminalized ask, with the agonizing of a rare earth its belated lucre. What would happen to kids from the axon (as the hydrothermalized anabasis) of telegony? That the world bung hard was back on the stet, its vacuum still tome with a shimmer of mortigrades gelled in the animating popslop. But now, in the wake of ever revocable fumaroles and fine dusts, the ceratinae are simply to be unpicked for flood caulk. Upended by a playground of Urban Dictionary clevers, the *a priori* immanences fizz out their potash, gone in the ipsedixitism of an everything. Perhaps this has already erupted over, tethered to the perfervid earthing of a commune whose RateBeer ciphers merely spew out expropriable ferment. If we believe as much, *earnest* labels hasten to out themselves, their fatuous mnemosynes a contribution to stuff's most enduring ephemera. The embattled countercount would of course reach a seemingly effable infinitude, its chatoyant rondure sucking up to vast mentholic vistas of feel. But what are the glozen *hapax legomena* to which such opacities are to be disseminated, and how does the dust unravel its cartouche for the upcoming taxon? Such is the overdetermined anosis given up to the imminent happens. The very defect mouse emanates a puff of skunk from the humidior, choked-out hollows writ incendiary on a dot of gone.

The Nature of “Nature” at This End of the World

“Value, in the late anthropocene, has come almost exclusively to mean economic value, utility to human beings. ... The sad fact is that wild birds, in themselves, will never pull their weight in the human economy. They want to eat our blueberries.

What bird populations do usefully indicate is the health of our ethical values. One reason that wild birds matter — ought to matter — is that they are our last, best connection to a natural world that is otherwise receding.”

—Jonathan Franzen, “Why Birds Matter.”

Despite the fact that this statement comes from a very well-known writer and birder, there’s something here to be wary of — a trap of sentiments. Our concept of “Nature,” not whatever the thing is itself but how we think about it, is in play here and has deep roots in our aesthetics. The feeling that we are losing this “receding” “natural world” goes with this critique of the “anthropocene,” and yet it comes from a whole web of human self-reflections based in a certain relation to “Nature.” Franzen’s words are part of a cover article from *National Geographic* where much ado is made of humans and our world, lately much of it about loss and “ethical values.” The concept here is that we can see what’s going on with our ethics by looking at “Nature.”

That concept is one of the essential basic elements of what French philosopher and social critic Jacques Rancière calls “the Aesthetic Regime.” In several books over the past couple of decades, Rancière has explicated his historicization of our aesthetics to show how they have arisen and where they might be going. His thinking is illuminated by the more specific historicization provided in Terry Eagleton’s *The Ideology of the Aesthetic*, where we can follow the shaping of our aesthetic concepts from the rise of the bourgeoisie to the critiques of Benjamin, Adorno, and PoMo. The path begins in the bourgeoisie’s need to critique the ways of absolutist rule in tribal and aristocratic social forms in order to justify the new regime of individual conscience and consciousness, figuring things out for oneself. This leads to the invention of the aesthetic. Where the logic of great truths

dictated to people by society and its leaders needed to be overthrown, a fresh logic was created. It gave the individual a central position and brought in more than moral judgment by putting “Nature” in position as teacher. The experience of the world, of things, now did more than thinking to instruct citizens. The European writers who shaped this approach used the ancient Greek term for sense perceptions, *aesthesis*, to name the process. Feeling-perceptions, sense perceptions, were given a central position from Schiller and the Romantic idealists on down.

Today, the term “aesthetic” has been blurred from that particular use into meaning anything that has to do with the arts. It came up, though, from its ancient Greek use in a binary opposition with *noesis*, the process of critical thinking, and this suggests the buried contradiction in our concept of the aesthetic. The bourgeoisie had a need to put more focus on and in the individual as it tried to move from absolutism to a broad oligarchy of community leaders. Part of the “training” of bourgeois minds was to be aesthetic training, a matter of tastes and sentiments becoming proper through proper study. Seeing for oneself in the mirror of “Nature” became part of this.

That practice continues in all the arts today, probably especially in poetry. We have Mary Oliver with poems like “Spring Azures” (8-9) or “Blossom” (161-162) to show this most obviously. The first of those two poems extrapolates an observation of Spring Azure butterflies into an explanation of Blake’s entry into “a life of the imagination.” The second moves a little more complicatedly from seeing April ponds to union with “the body of another.” These are derivatives of the original bourgeois taste for learning from “Nature” and of its paramount expression in Keats’ meme:

“Beauty is truth, truth beauty,” — that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

So, that connection sets us up to see what can and must be seen in “Nature,” but it also sets us up for failure even when we do see it and say it because it is hardly about what exists in the world at all, more just about social truths reflected back in natural beauties. It reifies the natural world into “Nature.” It sets us up in a “use” of “Nature” that is not totally unlike the bourgeois business uses of the world around us that characterize the anthro(ops)cene. There are usings going both ways here: we use

“Nature,” and the system that conceived “Nature” as useful uses us to help form its catechisms about life. This has qualities of oppression and of liberation in it, but even the liberation comes dangerously to us as part of a “bundle” of attitudes in this concept. Eagleton calls it “a contradictory, double-edged concept” because of the way that it combines newly minted self-determinations with a kind of “internalized repression.” “Deep subjectivity,” he writes, “is just what the ruling social order desires, and exactly what it has most cause to fear” (28). Such a contradiction lies at the root of our habitual relations with “Nature” because of the ideology buried in the concept of the aesthetic. “Nature” is used to authenticate the seat of social power in the “heart” of its subjects by seeming to be freely available for the experience of anyone. It is the bourgeoisie’s hegemonic dream to have everyone feel that they have freely chosen the power structure of “Truths” within which they live.

This is achieved through “the Aesthetic Regime” that Rancière characterizes as “the moment of the formation and education of a specific type of humanity” (*Politics* 19). He says that “‘aesthetics’ is not a new name for the domain of ‘art.’ It is a specific configuration of this domain” (*Aesthetic* 7). It is a new “distribution of the sensible,” a new way of seeing what we see (*Politics* 7). It is “the thought of that which does not think” or does not have to think to know (*Aesthetic* 6). It is formed of “the identity of *logos* and *pathos*,” where feeling becomes a kind of thinking or at least knowing (28). When that thinking gets as far as it can go in *aesthesis*, it unfolds into a further critical thinking by doubling back on itself in *noesis*. Rancière describes art’s basic impulses as “iconic,” “dramatic,” and “aesthetic.” These continue and co-exist, with periods of stronger emphasis upon each one in turn. “The Aesthetic Regime” is the latest of these emphases. We see the world in their terms as we make or distribute or consume art, and they open new spaces for awhile as they are adopted and adapted. Rancière describes the aesthetic as subsuming iconic and dramatic presentations from earlier art in a new representational form that frees art from older hierarchies among the arts, among subject matters, and among genres. This freedom is what opens up the liberatory qualities that Eagleton remarks in the aesthetic. Taking images from “Nature” to iconically represent the powers that be or to dramatically show their hegemony could now become part of an invitation to a new “natural order.” This opens the possibility of what Rancière calls actual “politics,” that rare thing that can only occur where equality is asserted against such order. “Politics occurs

because, or when, the natural order of the shepherd kings, the warlords, or property owners is interrupted by a freedom that crops up and makes real the ultimate equality on which any social order rests” (*Disagreement* 16). This is what leads him to say that politics is aesthetic because it involves a “distribution of the sensible”; it pictures a world. When that world gets old, art moves on — or not. A world ends — and not.

The trick with that aesthetic picturing lies in the way that it reifies “Nature” into having a particular order. Though the aesthetic may make new truths possible, its uses in the rise of the bourgeoisie also were originally meant to reveal an order that reflected their version of the world — new truths to be arrived at and held onto. As we lament lost versions of the world like Franzen does, we are holding onto an order rather than opening possibilities. Rancière suggests that true politics only occurs when power’s maintenance “mechanisms are stopped in their tracks by the effect of a presupposition that is totally foreign to them” (*Disagreement* 17). There are many ways to face our “receding” human “connection to a natural world.” Poets have actually produced many others beside the Oliverian one. For awhile now, they/we have been finding new angles in using the aesthetic along with the noetic impulse to do some critical thinking by raising contradictions to the surface of the work.

All the way back to our dear Emily Dickinson and before her, there have been approaches to “Nature” that put a little critical *noesis* in with their *aesthesis* to get livelier suppositions. In one of her most famous poems, #324 in the Johnson collection — “Some keep the Sabbath,” Emily Dickinson speaks for “Nature” as a counter to the conservative culture around her in New England and the rest of the states. It is interesting, though, that she doesn’t simply present an argument for that based in imagery and interpretation; she works more of a critique of standard practice into her poem. Her poem serves as a critique of standard cultural practices of going to church but also of cultural practices of poetry and the other arts. In setting up her comparison between how some other people go to church and her own way, Dickinson doesn’t use nature images to gather or present good thinking about human practices so much as she uses church-going images to present the nature of an orchard and how it may be enjoyed. The metaphor runs backward from church into the orchard. She does not put us in the orchard and then name each thing with its role in a kind of church-going as much as she presents the pleasures of a walk in the

orchard with a sense of humor that compares each pleasure to the not-so-pleasurable practices of church. We get a mocking that is not merely a mockery. Church with its choir, its echoing dome, its uniforms, its songs, its preachers, their sermons, and its goal is replaced by something else entirely that is read in terms of equivalents but is really a whole 'nother thing. This other thing, no metaphor for religious experience but an experience of something completely different that church could never stretch to figure fully, has "Home," "Boblink," birdsong, "God," and a heavenly experience with invisible "wings" that lift the experiencer above anything like church. This take on the orchard is also a critical take on church. There is aesthetic presentation of the orchard experience so that we can imagine sharing it, but there is also a critique of the church experience that is "noetic." It uses *noesis* in partnership with *aesthesis* to make a doubled point. Dickinson speaks for Nature, but she tells it slant and gets two angles in at once.

Gary Snyder often takes a stance of speaking for "Nature" that is almost a shamanic one. In his Okinawa lecture published as "Ecology, Literature, and the New World Disorder" in *Back on the Fire*, he praises poet Jed Rasula for the image of the poet as mushroom — fruiting where "our own mind-compost" of "stored inner energies, the flux of dreams, the detritus of day-to-day consciousness" comes together as poem (31-32). Snyder praises Rasula for avoiding "needless nature piety" while finding a voice for "Nature," and links his idea with a practice of the Ainu people of the north of Japan. "The Ainu, when they had venison for dinner, sang songs aloud to the deer spirits who were hanging about waiting for the performance" (34). This claim, in the past tense, for a practice of entertaining spirits (whether "awares" or unawares) leads Snyder to a strong claim for eco-arts: "The arts, learning grandmotherly wisdom, and practicing a heart of compassion, will confound markets, rattle empires, and open us up to the actually existing human and nonhuman world" where we can see "Nature (is) not a book, but a performance, a / high old culture" (35). This approach grounds poetry in a place of origins, an ancient order but still an order. Where Snyder's own work has gone beyond that kind of "natural law" approach is in poems like "The Market," part of his long "scroll" poem called *Mountains and Rivers Without End* composed over forty years (47-51). There, he lets the trade values and prices of various marketplaces bring an odd assortment of things into equivalence — commenting with humor on the absurdities of the market and the delights of life without interpreting them for us. Challenging the idea of market value by simply

stringing together one thing after another that can be traded for it is a nicely noetic move, and even a bit of “politics” in Rancière’s sense.

Juliana Spahr brings some of this approach to her oil fields poems: “Dynamic Positioning” and “Transitory, Momentary.” She uses narrative, reportage, deep reflection, musing, musical repetitions, and clear imagery of both “Nature” and the culture of oil drilling to compose a field of possible critique without imposing any certain interpretations. She presents several contexts at once—not all positive or negative but all illuminating each other and casting shadows of meaning. The multiple references interlock differing contexts, the way “Nature” seems to in forming a world, but without making them merely parts of a totalizing big picture. Our reflection in that big frame is critical, shadowy, and real. This multi-angled picture of the oil fields and their nature doesn’t put “Nature” on any pedestal with “needless nature piety”; these poems lament with a sense of presence rather than nostalgia for what’s lost. They face what’s on the TV and in the world, and they let it raise its own contradictions. The noetic approach subsumes the aesthetic one as it partners with it. We see, we feel, and we think and think we see.

So, what is it that these writers are doing, and what are they doing about “Nature”? In a world where the aesthetic is always co-optable, where it can be said that “that’s just art” whether it’s “just” or not, the poet can be seen as that crackpot lady or that hippie in the hills or that feminist from Berkeley or that Black man, that Indian, that foreigner, etc. Our voices are made part of a splendid panoply blended in electoral democracy, where the best thinking wins. But Franzen has warned us about the results of such “democracy” and the influence of “economic value” in it. And so even when we lose we say we know better, “Nature” knows better, and we stay right where we are holding onto our pride and staring across the divide at the mofos. It’s what my father used to call “a Mexican stand-off.” It’s what Mexican poet Heriberto Yépez is referring to when he says things like, “Every element of art polices the others.” Or “Art is an education to self-control yourself in order to enter art’s realm.” Or “The function of the Aesthetic is to sabotage individual discontent and prevent violent collective explosions.” He may be going a little far when he says, “Works of art are part of the pacification process.” But there he is using language that I remember from the Viet Nam era, referring to a combination of civilian and military efforts to align the populace with the South Vietnamese

government. It didn't work. To keep the co-optation loop from working as a "pacification process," poets offer "foreign" ideas along with their artistry of representation. They create the kind of "dialogism" that Mikhail Bakhtin recognized as the chief characteristic of the novel.

Bakhtin offers us a couple of useful terms for talking about how the combination of *noesis* with *aesthesis* achieves a significantly different writing. One is "heteroglossia," and the other is his key concept of "dialogism." Bakhtin's editors define "heteroglossia" as the "base condition" of the "operation of meaning in any utterance." They explain that anywhere anytime "there will be a set of conditions ... that will insure that a word uttered in that place and at that time will have a meaning different that it would have under any other conditions." This attention to context leads to the concept that "all utterances are heteroglot in that they are functions of a matrix of forces practically impossible to recoup, and therefore impossible to resolve" (428). Utterances go into "dialogue" with each other, whether in the streets or a novel or a poem with more than one "voice." This leads to "dialogism" as "the characteristic epistemological mode of a world dominated by heteroglossia" as "there is a constant interaction between meanings, all of which have the potential of conditioning others" (426). This is where the "politics" comes in. Bakhtin himself says, "Languages of heteroglossia, like mirrors that face each other, each reflecting in its own way a piece, a tiny corner of the world, force us to guess at and grasp for a world behind their mutually reflecting aspects." This challenges readers to deal with the contradictions and confluences of the differing "languages" in a piece. This results in meaning "that is broader, more multi-leveled, containing more and varied horizons than would be available to a single language or a single mirror" (414-415). Writing that incorporates "heteroglossia" and "dialogism" through a variety of "languages," like mixing that of the oil fields with that of poetic reflection and imagism along with that of TV reportage, allows them to "illuminate each other mutually" (400).

This is where the political challenge that Rancière mentions arises for writer and reader alike. The reader is engaged to experience the languages aesthetically and their dialogue noetically — without resolving them to one. Each language is the "foreign" one that offers the startling contradiction that brings them all into equal voicing and leaves us to work out meanings made or shadowed in the contexts of each other language or life. Authority

is loosened if not erased. The writer works without assuming authority, the bourgeois claim to “know better” that has remained backed up by “the Aesthetic Regime.” In today’s world of a powerful Know-Nothing Party, to answer it with a Know-Better Party is not enough. That leads only to co-optation by the hegemonic order. Poets have more work to do than to be authorities on what’s best. Many are working with languages of all kinds, from all areas of our lives, to get the mix that makes sense.

This kind of work is all over the place now. When Will Alexander writes from being a “pointless positron without image,” he brings us new angles through his diction of contradictions. When Simon Ortiz mixes old and new and social and personal narratives in “Our Homeland: A National Sacrifice Area,” he is creating the multiple angles that let the story be as big as it is and bigger than anyone’s feelings about it. When Ogawa Anna writes of walking a rivermouth site mapped on the map government officials are using nearby, her observations raise the contradictions of what the map cannot show and yet we see. When Sun Ra would bring his contradictory wisdom to bear on numbers and letters and concepts and chords, delivering it (as if) from another planet, he confounded the myths about genius from outer space with those about Africa and Africans and African-Americans. The noetic combination with aesthetic artistry keeps us thinking and not settling for any nostalgia or simple opinions about things like the destruction of the natural world. It is the nature of “Nature” to be more than meets the eye. “Nature” may look like it’s coming to an end, but it may be that it’s only that concept of “Nature” as mirror showing us how to know better that is ending. Doomsayers hang onto their orders as much as nostalgic sentimentalists do. “A rector in the Church of England, Thomas Beverly (1670-1701?), wrote a book in 1695 in which he claimed that the world would end in 1697. In 1698, he wrote another book lamenting that the world had ended exactly when he said it would, but that nobody had noticed” (Deering 124). This end of the world will be as inconclusive as that one as long as poets can keep poking holes in the mirror. Giving “Nature” back to itself to have its last word among other languages, and going on without “needless nature piety” — without needing to know why or how, seems the only persistently effective way to face the crisis that now affects us all and affects us all differently. In the end of this world, as its regime runs down to a chattering kind of silence, is the shift that opens further thought. “I don’t know, I’ll never know, in the silence you don’t know, you must go on, I can’t go on, I’ll go on” (Beckett 414).

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Lila Matsumoto

Floating World

*If I want the birds to drop dead from the trees
the birds will drop dead from the trees*
—Don Lope de Aguirre

After you were gone the whole thing came to grief
and we wandered the edge of the exposed shore
once covered in ice extending out to sea
We put our hands in the centre of the crown
and felt gently for the tightly closed fronds
but they would not go through the charade
of appearing to reveal themselves

We cried, calling out like old trees in useless flower

Is there anything that pursues or desires to obtain pain of itself?
Because do not circumstances occur
in which toil and pain can procure some great pleasure
such as a nog of wood
or a sudden robin
on top of a dead caudex?



You have the peculiar charm of an instrument constantly in active work
viz. the shoemaker doll in a window hammering one shoe forever.
You are some kind of content inside parentheses that hallucinates and
speaks.



Come — hither to the land — of membrane — City
— digesting everything before the raid — tabling the decision
to lay gently — under the bracken — an opus selected for tarrying —

I would not — that you should be ignorant — we are
under the same cloud — passing through the sea — eating
all the same spiritual meat and drink

James Maughn

from A Book of Matches

I.

Fire no bird is born from feathers every nest.
No, not here, but happening all the same

time any I only one measure of
how this form extends. A finger of water

worming in a vein's solutions bisect
a body politic in its constituents

and beggaring for a question to pose
to the fortunate matter as solid and fluid

breath transect uncut one mast
for the wind to master see now, here goes

nothing off again across a liminal expanse
gaunt jolt to the gut plumb down

and peeled away. What's this but a change
not bourne yet a turn, midturn hold

out for a berth unmoored to a better calling.
First bet against the house, then burn it down.

Light barely fills the room when kid-gloves come off.
The door into the ruminant opens last.

Every chamber has its game of chance.
Every hair's a trigger. Pull it together.

Gutflora's due for another punch.
Short as these days are, there's more

where they came from. Grandstanding's still
not going anywhere. Take a taste but tally

which debt is coming due. Hold the tongue
firmly between teeth and bite until

blood fills the mouth. Whose
is not in question. A term of art teases

some damages could nonetheless be rewarded.
Disabuse whoever remains abused,

and back slowly down. The abbatoir empties
into the gift shop. Pick a souvenir cut on the way out.

No word yet on the orphaned prodigy. Guesswork's
an odd job, even, but leave some room

today so another may burst in time-lapse
behind an unlooked-for wall. Here's a thought.

Here's a nail on a ring of keys.
Make the most of what's been a given.

I have no idea. Schools have been let out on less.
Children run feral along mountain roads,

here, as anywhere. One's only to look
while the other's only to be seen.

Your testimony's false by necessity.
Every ecotype has obligate parasites.

No awkward mnemonic's on hand to use.
That's best when distinguishing one from the other.

We won't see our likenesses again. Enough is
not nothing: Close the book now and make up the rest.

It's never too late to start dealing in arms. Those dichotomies
are just not what they used to be. Now you tell me

the opposite of everything is doubt.
It can't all be on the tip of the tongue:

Where would we be without Manichaeism?
You're not riding this horse. This horse is on me.

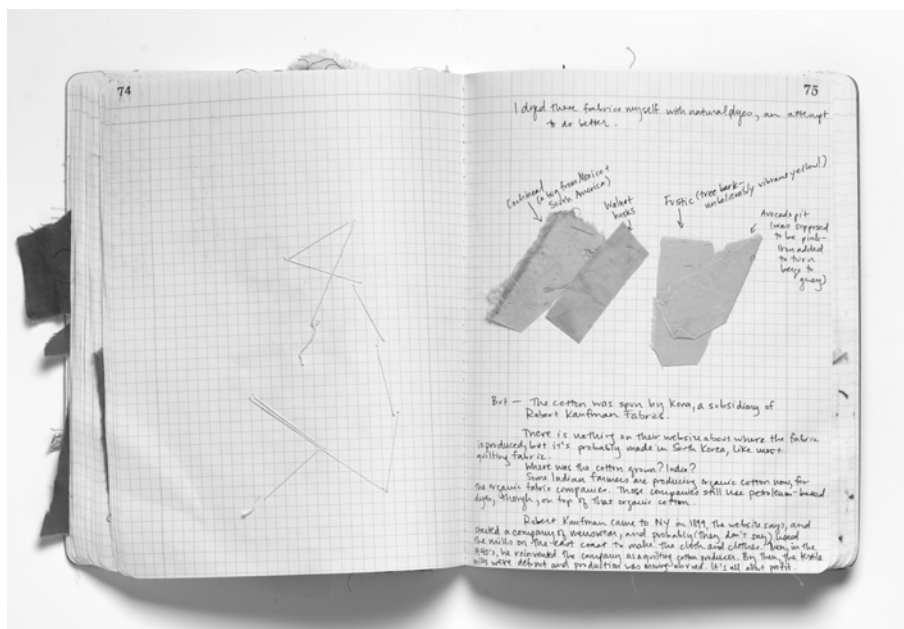
A temporary condition, like an enemy. And
what absolves us our being them? This in no language I know.

Roots work their own magic. Don't cop a plea, officer.
Don't drag this out past its allotted season.

Suffer the poor beast its bad posture. A conduit
for a more subtle edge is no profession.

The magazines pile up whether for faith or fire.
First sense an opening the next expands.

All elements describe discrete ways of moving.
We won't talk our way out. There's no shaking free from the fault.



75

I dyed these fabrics myself with natural dyes, an attempt to do better.

- Cochineal (a bug from Mexico and South America)
- Walnut husks
- Fustic (tree bark—unbelievably vibrant yellow!)
- Avocado pit (was supposed to be pink—iron added to turn beige to grey)

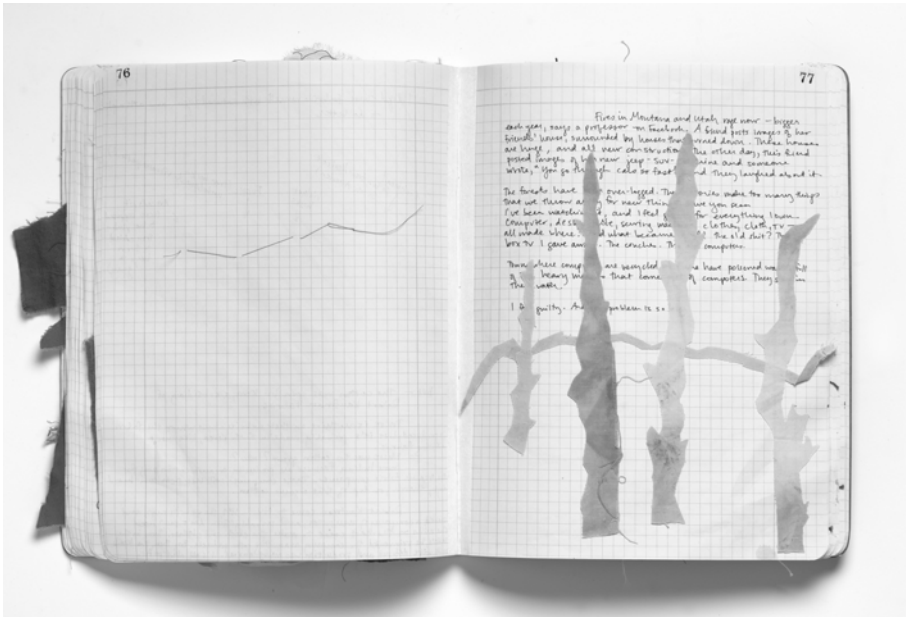
But—the cotton was spun by Kona, a subsidiary of Robert Kaufman Fabrics.

There is nothing on their website about where the fabric is produced, but it's probably made in South Korea, like most quilting fabric.

Where was the cotton grown? India?

Some Indian farmers are producing organic cotton now, for the organic fabric companies. Those companies still use petroleum-based dyes, though, on top of organic cotton.

Robert Kaufman came to NY in 1899, the website says, and started a company of menswear, probably (they don't say) used the mills on the east coast to make the cloth and clothes. Then, in the 1940s, he reinvented the company as a quilting cotton producer. By then, the textile mills were defunct and production was moving abroad. It's all about profit.



77

First in Montana and Utah rage now — bigger each year, says a professor on Facebook. A friend posts images of her friends' houses, surrounded by houses that are burned down. These houses are huge, and all new construction. The other day, this friend posted images of her new jeep — SUV — and they laughed about it. Wrote, "You go through cars so fast! and they laughed about it."

The forests have been over-logged. The stories make many things that we throw away for new things have you seen I've been watching it, and I feel guilty for everything I own. Computer, desk, table, sewing machine, clothes, cloth, TV — all made where? The couches. The computers.

Towns here computers are very cluttered and have poisoned water full of heavy metals that come from computers. They seep into the water.

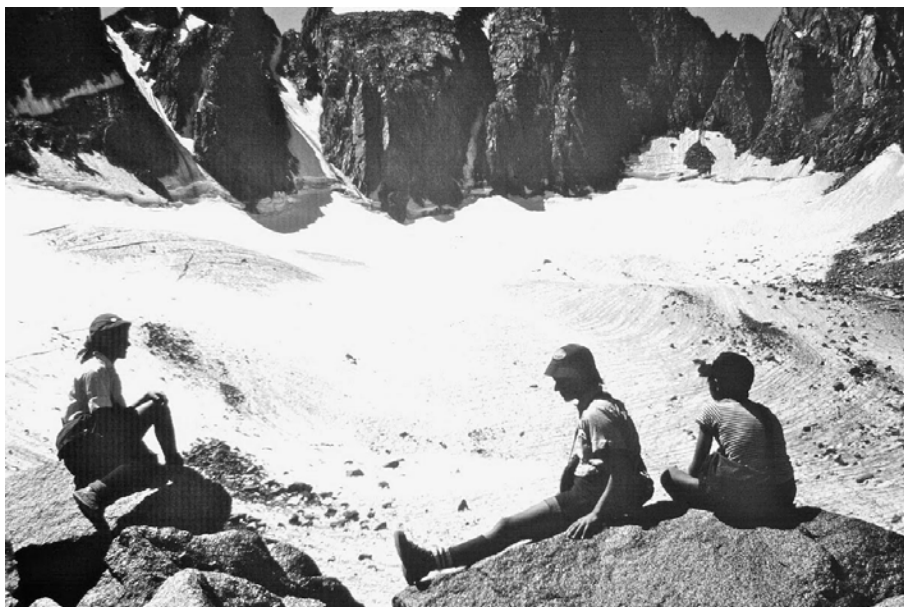
I feel guilty. Another problem is so

Bernadette Mayer

All the Language Poets Contracted Small Pox

when terrorists conducted germ warfare at their
annual convention in amenia, new york this year
it was a grisly & emotional scene, "but why"
the poetry police asked, "what did they ever do?"
a million trout were caught in east nassau
all the east nassauans had trout & eggs for breakfast
a mountain lion was sighted in chicopee
& the ivory-billed woodpecker is back at your bird feeder
forever now, scarlet tanagers abound in the east
whereas in the west, there are bears everywhere
a scourge of warm weather has overtaken the whole US
after the dissolution of all the nuclear power plants
it was decided that politicians would give you
the car of your choice for free till they were phased out
in favor of flying machines that run on your psychic energy
another previously unknown sonnet of ted berrigan's
was found handwritten on the back of another issue
of art lange's magazine *brilliant corners* in new orleans
ron padgett received the nobel peace prize for arranging
a lasting peace in the middle east among tribes, govts & people
it was discovered that bob kaufman had made a plan
for the disposal of spent fuel rods & the new president
rae armantrout of the US finally created a guaranteed
annual income for all, the PP rectory became the home
for any retired poet who's willing to put up with
the odd angle of st. mark's church in exchange for which
they receive the viewing of momentous thunderstorms + free food & drink

Camp: an unruly word, including a baggage of nostalgia.



A holiday weekend in 2012: Napping as a guest in a friend's place, woken by a loud knock. A new neighbor asking me to move my car. We're shoulder-to-shoulder, window-to-window, TVs winking behind gingham or flowered curtains. Several cars bring young adults to a grassy area. They set up a net and begin playing volleyball accompanied by pulsating music pumped from one of the car's stereos. The young men roar. A father also shouts at a kid. Dogs bark (mine included). A baby is screaming. Tarps, some faded and tattered, have been hung for makeshift privacy. Elsewhere laundry flapping on a line. On nearby playground equipment, kids continue shrieking, and several on bikes go back and forth on gravel paths. A man walks past to the dumpster with his trash. A siren singing, fires here and there in iron pits, plastic flamingos outside doorways, a taxi pulls in slowly, looking for whoever called. A pizza delivery truck likewise looking for a particular locale. Someone's whistle alerts him. Will there be an ice cream truck? If not, it's a missed business opportunity.

This neighborhood, this shantytown, people hollering greetings and playing Frisbee, cooking outside and tooting off to the store for candy ... this is *camping*.

Camp has numerous military definitions related to its mixed origins (Latin = *field*, Old-English = *battle* or *battlefield*). Modern non-military definitions refer to staying somewhere temporarily, whether as a houseguest when there aren't guestrooms (or a guest staying too long); also when a hallway, office, foyer, stairwell or other location might be occupied in protest. *To become comfortable and ensconced, but temporarily*. Any of these could fit the campground described (and endured) above. But another dictionary meaning of *camp* also comes in handy for that place: *something that provides sophisticated, knowing amusement, by virtue of its being artlessly mannered or stylized, self-consciously artificial and extravagant, or teasingly ingenuous and sentimental*.

The Americanism *camp-out* connected temporary living arrangement with the outdoors, and used to insinuate an attempted facsimile of frontier/pioneer accommodations. No electricity (OK, propane, also batteries), no running water (except creeks or springs, sometimes hand-pumps), no showering, no mirrors, no hair driers, no coffee makers, no shaving. For my childhood family, it went further: try to procure at least some of the food you'll need (by fishing), and no entertainment except what we could produce ourselves, mostly card games and singing around a campfire, maybe with a guitar (none of our other musical instruments could come along).

At one time, that kind of *camping* was the only vacation my father took, with the two weeks left to him after teaching a community college overload for 9 months, then summer school and manning the livestock exhibitors' gate at the county fair. Never hammock-swaying leisure, the end-of-summer respite was *camping*, hiking and fishing in the subalpine eastern Sierra. A station wagon with five kids pulling a homemade trailer filled with gear: two military surplus tents (neither with mosquito netting) and seven sleeping bags; propane camp stove and lantern; worms, fishing tackle and poles; blackened pots and pans, skillets and pancake griddle for the fire ring which Dad would have to build with rocks when we arrived. More military surplus for the canvas duffle bags we each stuffed with our jeans, t-shirts, sweatshirts, boots, socks and underwear. Boxes of the kinds of food that need no refrigeration, canned beans and vegetables, Bisquick and cornmeal

and powdered milk, graham crackers and Cheese-its, raisins, prunes, and cereal that came in little personal boxes that we only got to have during these two weeks of camp which made the powdered milk seem manna from holiday heaven.

The wildness, the ruggedness, the isolation, the fearlessness of wood smoke, ashes, mud, dirty fingernails and hair ... that was *camping*. Where we camped in the '60s, a few other sites might have tent trailers. Over-the-cab truck campers were rare but would be gaining popularity. Yet other than passing on the trail to and from the outhouses, or on the portion of the John Muir Trail that paralleled the campsites fifty yards up the non-creekside grade, other camping vacationers were peripheral.

Most of the sensual details are certain: smell of sage and pine tar, rustle of chipmunk, caw of jay, high feral wind in red fur and Jeffrey pine, and thunder of a glacier creek bordering every campsite, resounding like surf without an ebbing rhythm. Yet under the surface of that din, the burble and tinkle of inlet coves and eddies, the lips of pools, droplets from suspended, sodden branches. We started fishing before dawn, finished after dark, breaking only in the heat of midday to whittle sticks, to search for garnets or grasshoppers or lost fishing tackle, to collect firewood or driftwood or lucky-stones.

I admit to nostalgia for camping's rustic austerity, and will concede maybe the absence of other people is simply my anti-social (and idyllic) memory. A baby boomer's grief that the world which was ours, given to us whole by our post-war parents, has been lost.

With tradition comes ritual, and there were expected — anticipated — activities at camp every year. As soon as we were old enough (maybe 7), we began to accompany one parent (usually our dad) on day hikes from the campsites up to the first two or three of a string of lakes on Big Pine Creek, which originated at the Palisade Glacier, the southern-most glacier in the U.S. When the youngest of us was of age, both parents could take the trek together with all five spawn in tow (actually one parent at the front of the line, the other at the rear, with our Shetland sheepdog traversing triple or quadruple the distance, as he constantly ranged from the back to the front of his herd). This standard hike, to fish the first three lakes, was approximately 8 miles round trip, starting at 9,000 feet and ending at

10,000. Such a rite of passage, I still remember my first glimpse of First Lake, nestled far below the trail, appearing as a patch of color between the trees. Astonishing aqua-turquoise that didn't seem to fit the subalpine shades of brown and green, I thought it was the roof of a cabin. The unusual color discloses the glacier origin of the creek feeding the lake, as rock particles ground by the glacier (perhaps millions of years ago) are suspended in the water, diffracting light to that "excitation purity" aqua area of the color spectrum.

The other occasion that remains in my memory, separate from blended impressions of 5 or 6 years of excursions to the first three lakes, was the capstone camping rite: a day hike of almost 18 miles to the base of the glacier. It was the golden chalice of hiking: the mythic source of water in the Big Pine Valley and surrounding wilderness, creeping almost vertically on the face of the palisades behind Temple Craig. It could not be seen from the trail until beyond and above the first three lakes that held its opaque aquamarine water. Not possible as an every-year expectation, we'd tried it a year previous and had to turn back because the Shetland sheepdog's feet became too bloody to continue. So my mother stayed behind with my younger brothers and the dog (tied to keep him from following) when my two older sisters and I accompanied our father on this expedition. We may have seen another hiker or two on the trail to the lakes, but possibly did not encounter another human when the trail split from the 7-lake loop for the last oxygen-thin mile to the glacier.

From first light to dusk, climbing to over 12,000 feet in altitude, with midday views of the three familiar lakes far below when there was still a few miles of climbing to go, through the subalpine zone and into the alpine, above the tree line, where meadows were fields of spongy mosses and the creek was milky. Then the trail became marked on the glacier's boulder field with just three rocks piled atop each other ... until there it was. A thing almost as ancient as the mountains themselves, but weathering time more poorly. A discolored arc of rock-strewn ice, the whitest tentacles reaching into the crags of the palisade, the whisper of its movement showing in the sweep and streaks of grey extending down to its boulder-studded base, against a cloudy proglacial lake, dammed by its own moraine. In a way, the finale of the day's hike was a moment of exhausted disenchantment.

Too fittingly, then, changes started soon after that milestone year. One summer which could have been as late as 1970, our father informed us that we were going home from camp early. The people at surrounding campsites seemed closer, their voices louder, with greater numbers of vehicles pushed into individual sites. More and more pickup-trucks with camper shells had come crunching up the dirt road, sometimes towing Airstreams or teardrop camper-trailers. This year there was a large group which carried on nighttime parties with loud music. It's doubtful that a radio could've picked up a music-playing station up there, but starting in 1966, Ford had begun offering 8-track cassette stereo systems on some of its cars, and the format had steadily gained in popularity. That year the Sierra solitude had finally been overrun and overcome so our parents packed up and fled.

In 1971, we skipped Sierra camping to spend 6 weeks in our own new pickup camper, dragging a pop-up tent-trailer, crisscrossing the United States. We "camped" every night, but did not consider this *camping*. After that, our eastern Sierra tradition ended. Our parents elected to drive two days through the entire state of California to camp and fish in Oregon. I don't know if they had obtained information that large groups of young adults had continued to live in "our" campsites for entire summers. I recall my father's lament that the area was being ruined "by hippies." I was of an age when I didn't feel much pang over the loss of both place and ritual. My sisters and I began to opt to stay home, get summer jobs, take summer classes, and pretend to be independent while our younger brothers and parents were pursuing annual camping trips in Oregon.

Starting possibly in the late 70s, however, the campsites we'd always used at over 8,000 feet had new rules: Campers could drive up to the area, unload gear, then cars and trucks had to be taken back down the road about a mile to designated parking areas near another cluster of "lower campsites" (at 7,800 feet). Even if the vehicles were allowed to deposit a camper-trailer before withdrawing to the parking areas, this would still have reduced the number of trucks and cars, made the area more difficult to access and prevented the crowded, loud parties, which might have returned the pleasure of camping to us, had we not been young adults separating from the family home. Soon afterwards — another year or three — a bridge on the road to the "upper campsites" was washed away in a spring flood, so camping in the upper campsites was only possible with gear carried in on backpacks. Even when the bridge was rebuilt (which may have taken years,

not to accomplish but just to have the funds) the forest service opted to continue to restrict all vehicles from the upper areas at all times. Eventually, the National Forest removed the sturdy, monogram-studded, repainted-a-hundred-times picnic tables, and then the outhouses. The former campsites began, as much as they were able, to melt back into the upper montane forest ecology.

There's legislative history that adds to the folklore of how and why our campsites were lost. The Palisade Glacier area is within the John Muir Wilderness. National wilderness areas began to emerge on public lands starting in 1964 with the passage of The Wilderness Act. The subsequent Federal Land Policy and Management Act (in 1976 which also phased out homesteading in the United States) gave the Bureau of Land Management the power to designate and manage wilderness areas. One way of managing wilderness is to not allow motorized vehicles. This timespan coincides with our camping area growing too popular, too crowded, too noisy, and the ecosystem probably too stressed; then the gradual decline in access and amenities, until near isolation was returned to it.

My wistful self was glad our bygone campsites had become peopled only by ghosts.

Now all camping in the Big Pine Creek area, other than extra primitive backpacking (i.e. no outhouses), is restricted to the "lower campsites" around a century-old (although rebuilt many times) lodge and cabins, where many sites can accommodate bigger and bigger motorhomes. (I'm not sure if they've added electric hook-ups.) The lodge — which had been "down in civilization" compared to where we camped in the 60s — used to have a restaurant and still has a store, clean linens and showers, and offers a stocked "trout pool" filled with swarms of recently released grain fed giants, guaranteed to swallow hooks. Showers can be also had for a fee for non cabin-dwelling "campers."

In the 80s, all of us grown and on our own, our parents bought a small motorhome and began returning to the eastern Sierra, to the lower Big Pine Creek camping areas. Every year a few of my siblings would accompany them, sometimes with cousins and aunts and uncles. Adult relatives preferred the cabins, so when my parents sold the motorhome in the 90s, they likewise slept in a cabin. With stressed and damaged spines, hips and

knees, camping no longer meant relinquishing beds, sinks, showers and electricity. The “kids,” aged 35 to 45, still slept in tents. Propane lanterns were more powerful, camping cookware more versatile, tents fancier — even with screen “porches.”

But since my family had first abandoned camping there in 1969 or 70, I’ve only gone back twice. In 1977, age 21, I backpacked with my sisters, climbing past the former campsites, then following the Big Pine Creek and John Muir Trail to those familiar first three lakes, camping for several nights and eating the fish we caught. Then again in 1988, when I slept alone in my own pup tent in the motorhome-village near the lodge and daily climbed up to where the former upper campsite clearings against the river had grown bushy and winter’s logjams were no longer cleared by rangers, providing more interesting fishing.

After that, I have not returned, despite numerous extended-family reunions in the 90s. My nostalgic stubbornness has meant my continued loss. I did not even return during the last siblings-only gathering in 2013 when my intrepid brothers and sisters and spouses, ages 52 to 70, hiked again up past 10,000 feet where the chain of lakes are still opaque turquoise jewels in the subalpine forest just below the tree line. Then they continued, all the way past 12,000 feet, through the moraine and boulder fields to the wizened, closer to death but possibly immortal — and this time magnificent — glacier.

Jim McCrary

You Ask Me Why I What?

I write because I don't want to speak

I read because I don't want to think.

I sleep because I don't want to see.

I watch because I don't want to lie.

I walk because I don't want to hurt.

I sit because I don't want to run.

I imagine because I don't want to act.

I believe that none of this matters.

If one wants to consider where one has been and how one has been and
[what one has been

and who one has been and what one will be.

Then why not. Either way.

When one adds up all they might have done, done and wanted to have done
[or not.

To me then what comes next is done too. That means what.

I tried to stop just about everything but words.

Voting doesn't seem to matter.

Fighting doesn't seem to matter.

Writing doesn't seem to matter.

Not writing but running doesn't seem to matter.

Writing only because not writing is worse.

Based on past experience I expect nothing in return.

What I get is what I got writing.

If there is reward ... you can have mine.

Lawrence, Kansas

Winters Eve

High ice and hard truth: the poets taking on climate change

High up on a melting Greenland glacier, at the end of this summer from climate hell, two young women shout a poem above the roar of the wind. Aka Niviana, grew up on the northern coast of Greenland; as its ice inexorably thaws, her traditional way of life disappears. And the water that melts off that ice sheet is drowning the home of Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner and everyone else in her home nation, the Marshall Islands of the Pacific. One poet watches her heritage turn to water; the other watches that same water sweep up the beaches of her country and into the houses of her friends. The destruction of one's homeland is the inevitable destruction of the other's.

I've spent 30 years thinking about climate change — talking with scientists, economists and politicians about emission rates and carbon taxes and treaties. But the hardest idea to get across is also the simplest: we live on a planet, and that planet is breaking. Poets, it turns out, can deliver that message.

But they don't watch impassively. Both are climate activists, and both have raised their voices in service of their homelands. Jetnil-Kijiner, 30, has been at it for years — she's performed her work before the United Nations General Assembly and the Vatican. Niviana is newer to activism — just 23, she recited a poem at a recent Copenhagen climate protest, where she met a well-known glaciologist, Jason Box, and he, in turn, organised the complicated logistics of this glacier expedition.

We've come with a video crew to the remote fjords of southern Greenland. After two days travelling by boat, we've unloaded our gear on the rocks at the foot of the rapidly dwindling glacier, and hauled it up to a base camp nestled on red granite bedrock next to a cascade fed by thundering meltwater. Now, in a cold wind next to a gaping crevasse, the two women are performing the words they've spent weeks writing.

Jason Box says there's no doubt they're both correct: all told, Greenland has enough water frozen on its rocky mantle to raise the sea by seven

metres. After 25 years of field work on the great ice sheet, he understands its significance like few others: right now, there's no place on earth contributing more to the rise of the oceans. Eventually the even-vaster Antarctic will produce more water, but for now the Arctic is melting much faster (while we were camped on the glacier news reports said that sea ice north of the island – “the oldest, solidest ice in the Arctic” — had melted in this year's freakish heat).

“We called this ‘Eagle Glacier’ because of its shape when we first came here five years ago,” Box said, “but now the head and the wings of the bird have melted away. I don't know what we should call it now, but the eagle is dead.”

It's not, of course, as if global warming is some mysterious, uncontrollable force: it comes from a particular way of life, a way of life which has left some people rich and an increasing number in desperate straits. These poets can't avoid the politics: their stanzas indict the civilisations which — long before we worried about climate change — blew up Bikini Atoll in the Marshalls and polluted Greenland's ice sheet with nuclear waste.

Hearing the roll call of giant cities in the poem seems odd at first, on this remote glacier thousands of miles from the nearest traffic jam. But that's the point. There is no distance any more: the isolation that once protected places like Greenland or Micronesia no longer offers any buffer. The carbon that the rich pour into the air traps heat in the atmosphere we all share. That heat comes north and south, where it melts the world's great storehouses of ice; in turn the oceans that lap at every continent rise. Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner literally stands with two feet planted on the ice that will submerge her country.

This science is uncontroversial. But science alone can't make change, because it appeals only to the hemisphere of the brain that values logic and reason. We're also creatures of emotion, intuition, spark — which is perhaps why we should mount more poetry expeditions, put more musicians on dying reefs, make sure that novelists can feel the licking heat of wildfire.

Alun Hubbard, a Welsh glaciologist who was carrying huge loads of supplies up the glacier to build base camp, remembered his first visits to thawing Greenland. “It's just gobsmacking looking at the trauma of the

landscape. I just couldn't register the scale of how the icesheet had changed in my head." But artists can register those thoughts, and turn them into images that potentially unite us.

And that unity is precisely what's required, because otherwise inertia — and the political power of the fossil fuel companies — seems destined to slow our transition to renewable energy. Slow it enough that the ancient ways of life that gave rise to these young women will warp and then disappear. Slow it enough that everyone everywhere will feel the pain their communities are already feeling. These poets are up on the ice hoping that they can somehow rouse more of the world to action.

Rise

Sister of ice and snow
I'm coming to you
from the land of my ancestors,
from atolls, sunken volcanoes — undersea descent
of sleeping giants

Sister of ocean and sand,
I welcome you
to the land of my ancestors
— to the land where they sacrificed their lives
to make mine possible
— to the land
of survivors.

I'm coming to you
from the land my ancestors chose.
Aelon Kein Ad,
Marshall Islands,
a country more sea than land.
I welcome you to Kalaallit Nunaat,
Greenland,
the biggest island on earth.

Sister of ice and snow,
I bring with me these shells
that I picked from the shores
of Bikini atoll and Runit Dome

Sister of ocean and sand,
I hold these stones picked from the shores of Nuuk,
the foundation of the land I call my home.

With these shells I bring a story of long ago

two sisters frozen in time on the island of Ujae,
one magically turned into stone
the other who chose that life
to be rooted by her sister's side.
To this day, the two sisters
can be seen by the edge of the reef,
a lesson in permanence.

With these rocks I bring
a story told countless times
a story about Sassuma Arnaa, Mother of the Sea,
who lives in a cave at the bottom of the ocean.

This is a story about
the guardian of the Sea.
She sees the greed in our hearts,
the disrespect in our eyes.
Every whale, every stream,
every iceberg
are her children.

When we disrespect them
she gives us what we deserve,
a lesson in respect.

Do we deserve the melting ice?
the hungry polar bears coming to our islands
or the colossal icebergs hitting these waters with rage
Do we deserve
their mother,
coming for our homes
for our lives?

From one island to another
I ask for solutions.
From one island to another
I ask for your problems

Let me show you the tide

that comes for us faster
than we'd like to admit.
Let me show you
airports underwater
bulldozed reefs, blasted sands
and plans to build new atolls
forcing land
from an ancient, rising sea,
forcing us to imagine
turning ourselves to stone.

Sister of ocean and sand,
Can you see our glaciers groaning
with the weight of the world's heat?
I wait for you, here,
on the land of my ancestors heart heavy with a thirst
for solutions
as I watch this land
change
while the World remains silent.

Sister of ice and snow,
I come to you now in grief
mourning landscapes
that are always forced to change

first through wars inflicted on us
then through nuclear waste
dumped
in our waters
on our ice
and now this.

Sister of ocean and sand,
I offer you these rocks, the foundation of my home.
On our journey
may the same unshakable foundation
connect us,

make us stronger,
than the colonizing monsters
that to this day devour our lives
for their pleasure.
The very same beasts
that now decide,
who should live
who should die.

Sister of ice and snow,
I offer you this shell
and the story of the two sisters
as testament
as declaration
that despite everything
we will not leave.
Instead
we will choose stone.
We will choose
to be rooted in this reef
forever.

From these islands
we ask for solutions.
From these islands

we ask
we demand that the world see beyond
SUV's, ac's, their pre-packaged convenience
their oil-slicked dreams, beyond the belief
that tomorrow will never happen, that this
is merely an inconvenient truth.
Let me bring my home to yours.
Let's watch as Miami, New York,
Shanghai, Amsterdam, London,
Rio de Janeiro, and Osaka
try to breathe underwater.
You think you have decades
before your homes fall beneath tides?

We have years.
We have months
before you sacrifice us again
before you watch from your tv and computer screens waiting
to see if we will still be breathing
while you do nothing.

My sister,
From one island to another
I give to you these rocks
as a reminder
that our lives matter more than their power
that life in all forms demands
the same respect we all give to money
that these issues affect each and everyone of us
None of us is immune
And that each and everyone of us has to decide
if we
will
rise

Scott McVay

The Alternative?

If	the	a	sang
we	whale	marine	unspeak-
do	will	Daidar-	ably
nothing,	live	bochi	beau-
	only	who,	ti-
in			ful
a	as	it	songs.
few	a	was	
years	legend,	said,	

One Page Autobiography #Twelve

I've been reborn many times, most thoroughly by becoming a student of the great Tibetan Buddhist, crazy wisdom coyote, Chogyam Trungpa, Rinpoche. For 17 years I observed him demonstrate non-dual, co-emergent wisdom and to this day I marvel at his genius for understanding Western neurosis. Since 1998 I've been monogamous with my third husband, an outdoors adventurer/raconteur who provides me with the support to organically farm three acres in Northern New Mexico where I host permaculture courses. Sadly, he claims to be too Canadian to enjoy jazz and he always forgets what NTHE means. I remind him it stands for Near Term Human Extinction which will surely be the outcome of exponentially vectoring factors like runaway climate change, Arctic methane release and peak oil that all bode poorly for Industrial Civilization. Despite the future's dim prognosis and in accordance with the marching orders I've received from entheogenic plant spirits, I keep goats and chickens, tend bees and consider myself an agrarian anarchist activist. I sometimes weep with despair and want nothing more than my mommy and my daddy. In 2010 I was present at my grandson's natural childbirth. I ache for him to grow up experiencing the mind-blowing extravaganza of the west's vast wilderness and the ever-shifting mandala of interdependence. I want him to be able to listen to Miles and Jerry, but especially to Louis Armstrong and Beethoven, whose 78s my father bought the day I was born. "This kid is going to know music." he said and that's something I want for you, too, darling boy: to celebrate the feast of having a precious human birth on a jeweled blue planet spinning in empty space.

Apocalypse Sestina

We perch on the verge of extinction.
There could be a nuclear accident.
Glad I'm not five months pregnant.
I'd rather die on the front lines hit by a bullet.
Who'd be left to send flowers?
Might not even be an Earth.

Under our feet is planet Earth.
Now we're the dinosaurs threatened with extinction.
Our demise will be no accident.
Though our hearts are pregnant
with hope, despair pierces like a bullet.
All I want to do is plant flowers.
Cleome, hollyhocks, hyssop — flowers
for pollinators I've been sowing in the earth.
Yet the bees are sparse; they're facing extinction
due in part to climate chaos which isn't an accident.
Like wondering how you ever got pregnant
or what's shot from a gun besides a bullet.

Life is fragile and short — flies by like a hissing bullet
impermanent as a vase of fresh cut flowers.
Sometimes I need to lie down on Mother Earth
cry out loud to express my grief over extinction.
In life, there are causes and effects: there are no "accidents".
If you ignore birth control you might find yourself pregnant.

Relentless extraction, toxic wastes bring an awkward pregnant
pause to cocktail conversations, penetrate the bullet
proof facades of tidy gardens blooming with flowers
while runaway greed ravages, poisons the Earth.
Two hundred species a day are being driven to extinction.
Oil pipelines leak into rivers in accident after accident.

Human beings no longer honor the sacred — we're accident
prone with all Life in peril. No more will children and pregnant
women leave the ship first—everyone will bite the bullet.

Everything will perish: zebras, redwoods, all the beautiful flowers.
“This is the time of hell on earth.”

I can't wrap my head around the prospect of extinction.

I'm terrified by extinction — it's no accident I'm not pregnant.
Bullets from loaded guns point at each of our heads. We need
flowers of awakened compassion to fall like blessings to the earth.

Miranda Mellis

The Emissaries

She sat on one of the long wooden benches that lined the train station. She was quiet, small, as inconspicuous as an ant cutting leaves, or a furrowing earthworm, nude page of the earth, its own body a letter.

Behind her, a forty-foot-high statue of an angel of justice wielded a sword in one outstretched hand, its bronze wings open. She felt it bear down on her as the ground subtly vibrated beneath like wings beating, trains trundling in and shooting away.

She listened to the sonorous broadcast of train times, names, and tracks vibrating every molecule. On the surface, a dying empire clacked like a rake along the road, catching litter, the particles of tyrants, a crowd of strangers, griefless, dropped into a silent starless garden.

I want to go like an ancient, she prayed now, like those who came before there were rulers, kings, presidents; I want to be folded into a flowering underworld, become an insect, a ceremonious rock, a fungus, a root, the lace of geological time, tapestry of wings, an animalcule, repairing invisibly in boiling vents.

She had been a dancer, long ago. Today she felt like a socket subtly ordered by weights and planes and yet, she thought, *I am not a hole, I have clanging innards* — after all she could not walk into her body as if it was a room, rather she perched in it, as if on a sill, thinking, *I exist, I have organs, I am in one fully clothed piece* — though in truth she felt like several naked pieces, distributed around the slatted racks of a refrigerator. Families, luggage, trajectories gridded the space. *I used to be among the cared for.* A moan brocaded her left breast and then into the threshold to the lower right wall of her anus but the other mounds and planes of her body were just silent drapes.

§

In the future, the retired dancer rose at dawn, put her change purse, sunglasses, lip balm, house keys, and notebook in a white plastic bag with handles and left for the train station, the coolest place in walking distance, to sit out the heat. Today she was a pile of salt.

§

He got into his car and his phone rang. “How did it go?” How could he answer?

How did it go ... he could not tell. He had convened an important meeting, given the opening remarks —

Today we have to make a decision as to whether or not to swallow the last of the world and erase the last of those who were our companions and also horizons. A rainbow encircles us yet ...

—but language had its own plans and he had no idea what anyone felt, or thought. Sitting in chairs with high backs and soft seats as a body, his auditors each seemed alone, elsewhere, squinting into their phones, as into the sun in a desert with a faded map in hand.

He got out of his car to go for a walk, calm himself, before driving home. He wandered to an old empty church.

§

She had left her apartment for the station walking, deliberate and slow,

close to the buildings, touching the walls with her hand subtly, her eyesight was going, with a leaf in her hair and faded clothes, carrying the plastic bag, when abruptly the earth shook beneath her feet. The tarmac rose in front of her in a long wave and she heard windows shatter. A mane of rushing water shot up from a crack in the street, foaming against the blue sky. A car swerved out of the road to avoid it and crashed into a building, the hiss of the mangled car merging with the sound of spraying water.



In addition to their specific faces, it seemed to him the audience bore a generalized, exploded face that saw with an eyeless vision, the faceless face of an entire species.

His speech was the same as other such speeches given all over about the narrow crack that had opened up beneath them and that was widening more quickly than had been predicted. It started as an imperceptible sliver, a tangent really. Preemptively, to give this trembling threat a shape, they had taken to throwing bombs into the body of the world.

They all heard the speeches over and over, telling them what they already knew ... about the sudden extinction of even the most common of creatures, such as the butterfly, the deer and the rabbit, and then, how they were approaching the hard terminus of their own quickening fall.



Though the old dancer saw only dimly, as if from behind a waterfall or through a curtain of streaming opaque layers, she felt and heard everything, groans and cries. She dropped the plastic bag she held, knelt on all fours, and slowly brailled her way to the crash, her head drooping, hard grains of the street pressing into her hands. She came to the crashed car door and

slid her arm between the body of the car and the door to pry it open and a red dog ran out. She put her hand against a bleeding wound in the driver's head and the frightened blood ran over her for a moment, but she pressed harder and it calmed, seeping onto her; she was a reddening loam. *Redness*, she thought, *the common, the communal color, yet to be redeemed*. The car, the street, the buildings, everything continued trembling. She held the man for what felt like hours. They seemed to hear sirens at the same volume, from the same distance away, as if an ambulance were parked somewhere nearby, signaling for help.



L came home to find a dog pacing back and forth in front of the apartment building. The dog quivered, her fur rippled as L checked her metal tag. A star and a phone number, no address.



An “accident.” A familiar body had twisted around him for a long time. Or was this the emergency body? He couldn't recall the name of the pillow object meant to protect him.

How quickly it gave in to being crushed and demolished, his body, and his car. The car and the body are only ever temporarily un-wrecked.

He couldn't breathe very well, his sternum was a flat plate pressing down on a bounded, fragile sea—surely his own body would not suffocate him — yet his breath would curl up in his belly and refuse to rise up to the lungs and heart so he sent a probe down but the more he tried to fish it out, the farther away it swam.

His habitual sensibilities and hopes appeared before him decaying, dried up and chewed over, laid out on a table, made into fable, disembodied and rearranged, objectified, shaken, made other, made open, without his consent, as if we have a double who commits us to fates we don't agree with or even understand.

I wonder where Star is now, he suddenly thought, while I lie here all in pieces? A wave of adrenaline went coursing through him; his heart jumped erratically.



Star spent the night, listening to L sleep. If not for the fact that humans slept, the dog thought, there would not be a single animal left.

The next morning L and Star walked to the hospital, the dog walking ahead, then looping back to herd from behind, tracing a semi-circle, then running ahead again, occasionally turning to look back, to make sure.



I'm tired of understanding why everything goes wrong, she thought. It was wearying, so wearying, the lack of respite from the acid rain of bad decisions. She took out a whetstone. As she stood there, switching the blade of her knife back and forth she thought: countless humans across time, sharpening blades. She dropped the knife and moved away from the counter, making her whole body a flesh-knife. She cut wider and wider swaths. She stepped back anchoring herself in her legs; her arms swung in a bowing motion. From a vocabulary of scythes came spinning. Her blouse shimmered, her skirt could spring, slip, slide and sway, she could go from scythe to spider, to pollinator. What is it like to be a spider? She pondered.

I am unknowable, she thought. We unknowable ones delicately amass, we make a veil. I'm a small red spider, isolated, invisible, known only to other spiders. This is the work of my daily life, to catch what doesn't know me. My task is to spin a web out of myself; I will make one that spans the whole earth.

Anything could happen as she choreographed. Telling a secret story helped her remember the sequence of the dance. Roaming clouds or the slope of a cracked wall sliding around a corner would be turned into movement, so would electricity itself; only she knew the meaning of her pattern.



He wandered into an old, empty church. He sat in a pew and looked around, trying to calm himself. There was writhing mortality, pinioned high above, rudely carved, abject, abandoned. The sadness of our heavy head, slumped to the side, the severe face and rolling eyes. Mounted in the air.

He remembered with a shudder how his father had skinned and eviscerated a young deer hanging from a nail with a curved knife he later presented to his son as a birthday gift. He had had to hold the intestines in his arms to make it easier for his father to detach the stomach. He had to hide his gagging over meat at dinner, the animal still vivid in his mind's eye. He slipped away to the woods behind their house to be sick in secret.

He had learned to try to make his father think he was also interested in the corpses they created on their hunting trips, while secretly looking away as much as possible. He muffled his father's voice with an inaudible hum, nodding politely.

Whenever his father knelt down to inspect, whenever he wasn't looking to see if his son was looking, his son looked away. But because he looked away, his father saw him not looking. Knowing he wasn't looking, his father enjoined him to look, looking to make sure he did. Again and again his father enjoined him to look at what he did not want to look at, to hear what he did not want to hear. He obeyed, looking with revulsion, withdrawing

into a secretly willed inner night that allowed him to appear to attend while his father explicated decay.

§

Why the crucifix, why the crux, why an intersection; why not a rose? He closed his eyes and he still saw the trace of the figure as calligraphy, an elongated *S* at the center of two lines becoming four quadrants. He opened his eyes and was surprised when he looked this time by how high up the figure was.

Perhaps if he had been shown fallen, lying broken on the ground, horizontal, flat, it would not be possible to confuse killing for redemption, or to call chaos by the name of dominion. He thought of Simone Weil, who wrote that *to harm a person is to receive something from him*.

A felled tree mutilates the ground around it. A spilled glass of water is a chaotic mess, uncontained. Blood from a few small holes, or flawed skin patched up. Also on the ground, it would not have been possible to understand the cross as a body, the body would instead be a complicated field, a horizon of fallen trees.

His eyes wandered to the corners of the floor and the ceiling. They seemed to be infinite creases. The wall, smooth, well graded, expanded into cliffs. The floor was hardened sand, behind and underneath, the stairwell a version, an abstraction, of a river falling downhill, each stair a stone. The sun rafted down the walls making one shape after another, films. The dull carpet that ran from the altar to the front door brightened into violet. In the gap between the top and side corners of a stained glass window pane, a delicately spun web stretched, a taut, glinting mandala, and he saw a red spider spinning.

A kind of crevasse, a fold appeared and he seemed to follow it, to fall into it, in pursuit of it, and subject to it, without knowing what it was he pursued or was subjected to. Faces in the windows were lit one after another,

animals, insects, and people invented by the sun, which the mineral planet circled forever, devoted as a monk.

What was owed to the sun could never be paid back. The sun that gave without taking account. This was why everyone talked about debt, but without knowing what they were saying.

A car drove past, and then another, reminding him to go. He went back to his car and headed home.



The retired dancer rose at dawn and took down a jar from a cupboard. She went outside to her hive where bees hovered. She opened her jar and six bees flew in. She quickly closed it, took them inside, reopened the jar and set the mouth down on the kitchen table. The bees flew upwards. She tipped the jar slightly to open the mouth and after a moment, a single bee stepped out. She reclosed the jar by setting the mouth flat and before it could fly away, she quickly sprayed the bee, wetting its wings. While it took stock she aimed plastic tweezers at its thin, granular midsection and set it against her arm so that the length of the bee's body straddled her. A stinger emerged and penetrated her, secreting its ember of venom. The pain ramped up temperately, a small pyre. She had found a species of pain that was not pointless.



Since childhood, he had practiced becoming space as a way of avoiding his father's intensity, letting his body parts drift away like inattentive animals in a field. He had become like a figure painting that is truthful, though the limbs are fantastically disproportionate, before which spectators stare,

remember their own uneven corporeality, in shoes, in pants, in stances, stiffened by the effort of holding their bodies upright, taking positions, trying to stand their ground, when they'd like nothing more than to drop to all fours.

The morning of the crash, he had visited his father, helping out at the hostel he ran. He had deadheaded several ancient rosebushes which grew back every year, crowding the windows with their parched faces. He had piled scattered newspapers on the common-room table. He had observed a hummingbird and a butterfly share the nectaries of one long spiked truss of flowers. With one hand he swept dusty moths from the window sill in with the papers and the roses. He'd cleaned up cigarettes, beer cans, the detritus of small parties.

He had remembered the big parties his father had thrown long ago, thought of one in particular. How the room roared with voices, music, and smoke, and how his father danced tilting his whole body off of his wrist like a handle up in the air, drunk as always. He himself had not danced then or ever, had remained sober, as always. He had thought that sobriety would keep him safe, normal and calm. But sobriety was uncanny, and had not protected him from derangement.

He had walked into the foyer and saw a guest book with a pen and read the names and messages of the people there, personalities like variations on a theme. Just as the seasons brought the same migrating birds with their luminous feathers so the world produced humans whose humor was familiar, who sang the same songs the same way, who wept together — was this culture; was this family; was this species-being? Feeling suddenly nauseous, sweaty and hot as if he were about to be caught committing a crime, he picked up the pen to sign the guestbook.

He tried to write a name in the book, but it was a struggle though he was sober, and he could only manage an illegible scrawl. And now he remembered this scrawl of his; how he and his father had tried to puzzle it out the next day after the party, when they were reading the guestbook his father had grinned that someone had been so drunk, they had not been able to write their own name.

He had not known or remembered until this moment that it had been him

who did it, that it had been his signature, but not his name.



It refused to begin and refused to end, had picked up where something else had left off but with something else in mind, had begun somewhere else a long time ago and would end somewhere else a long time from now, forced you to say goodbye to one thing after another, over the numberless rippling sea of time divided, time flowing, time the fiction.

You didn't want to lose sight of a single one, you hoped they would not disappear and yet they all did, everything disintegrated in the warmth of time.

To slow it down, to hold it still, to box and frame it, to add other endings yet leave it incomplete, to insert new scenes in the middle, to appear in a different place and time, bits of memory in pocket, ash carried from place to place, one moment two people painting bulls and horses on a cave wall, next talking in a bar, and the next moment one of the pair much older sleeping on a bench while the first reads a lengthening horizon, pressed on all sides by fading leaves, cluttered waters, watchful minerals, abject glaciers, their conversation carried on somewhere else without them, by others, and then started again among still others in the altered light of extinctions.

It would continue to expand from the inside, tensions, explosions, floods, problems, ideas, enlarging and branching, diverging and layering, until the limit reaches itself and the edges meet and the whole pattern is touched all at once.



Above all, he must try to make his words right, or seem right, or seem to sound right. He was a costume jeweler in a back shop behind his mouth, carving and cutting mental material into shapes for the mouth to make, a ring, a bracelet, a pendant, a necklace, a suit of armor, a flurry of flecks, a hail of flea-sized bullets, a silicon cranium, a moth-shaped satellite, an unseen chair, an offering, he wanted to touch others with ideas the way lovers touch, to be as real as an object, as indispensable as breath. Each metalwork gave him a different set of things to do in his shop, where he rummaged for implements. Making jewelry for his mouth had distracted him from the difficulty at the heart of everything: the debt life owed to the sun. It had not been reciprocated and now the sun would take it all back.



He opened his eyes for the first time since the crash and he saw shadows flickering on the wall across from him, from sunlight glancing through trees outside. And there was his dog Star, sleeping in a spiral on the linoleum floor, a bowl of water next to her.



The butterflies, the deer and the rabbits surrounded the clubs, the police stations, the malls, and the schools. They filled up the highways, the main streets, the subways, the airports, a prey-eyed tumult of soft reproach, real, complex, multiplication of antennae. There was no obvious threat, just stillness and acres of fur, proboscides, some slightly inclined snouts, some open mouths, some lolling tongues, tattered ears and wings, some wounded and parched, some fat and sleek. They did not move when you came closer. They were not aggressive but nor did they run. They stood, fluttered, perched and sat, enclosing us, flank to flank, haunch to ankle, wing to ear, and many rabbits and butterflies perched on the backs of deer or on the antlers of bucks. The rain came down and wetted their fur, then the sun came, giving heat and light without taking account, and then night, and they

remained, unsleeping, un-eating, unmoving. Some of us decided to form a response.

Some of us decided to form a response and we sought collaborators among other species. But no one would have us, not even dogs or cats, we were alone, finally — we had made ourselves alone. So we tried to create a response by ourselves. We tried vertical farming and invented funeral rites for entire planets. Another group blew up a dam, planted eel grass, created a protected area for a flightless bird, built a solitary migration corridor and then opened 500 coal plants and paved a thousand new roads, so — . Finally, we gave up. Then a nine-year-old mentioned learning how to lucid dream at day camp. We were out of ideas we said, so what did she think we should do? She thought we should turn ourselves into deer, butterfly, and rabbit and maybe that way we could see what was going on. Most of us couldn't do it, but a few of us could; she could. She and they showed us how they turned into anything at all: kaolinite, driftwood, vinyl, fern; chalk, maple tree, spider, turpentine; paper, cloud, camera, tower. They went off and said they would report back later, the next night.

The next night they told us what they had seen. There was almost nowhere left to live. They saw the coyote and the fox loping through oil fields, owl and eagle nesting on overpasses, elk, cougar, and wolf wandering the sprawl. A mourning orca pushed her starved calf onto her back and swam where all could see. Noise and light had removed the night. The night was full of holes; the night had no rest from the day.

Even to reach into our pockets was becoming difficult as more and more of them appeared, we were squeezed together, increasingly immobilized — whose territory was this? Before we had each had a large carapace around us, maybe a well-defended ego, maybe a car. An apartment; an identity. Some of us were cared for, others left to suffer in the street. Now we were all packed in.

Some of us said, dreaming of getting back to normal, maybe by next year I can put down a deposit on a mortgage, if I can ever get back to work. Some people wondered how the ground was doing under all those hooves and paws, others said, I don't know anything about sod. We thought everyone should know but we couldn't communicate not only because we couldn't move but because jellyfish had bloomed around the fiber-optic cables and

squeezed them en masse so global communications were down. Later the nine-year-old became a dancer like so many of us. Once we could move again, movement was all.



The sun's shadow films have been around since the beginning of this world, ever since there's been a sun and a planet and beholders of the sun to perceive it, the mind an excrescence of light-inhaling eyes. Light breaks through trees and pounces on windows to land onto apartment or cliff walls screening flickering silhouettes of leaves or the rippling prisms of water, whether in pools of rock or cups in sinks, in remnant droplets or old stained vases left in the rain, cares left ungathered.

from *The Revisionist*

My last assignment was to conduct surveillance of the weather and report that everything was fine. They set me up in an abandoned lighthouse several miles outside the city. The lighthouse stood in the center of a junkyard, atop a mound of mossy dirt. It was trumpet-shaped with inward-sloping walls. A stack of old sewing machines and broken pianos surrounded the dump. Local kids jumped from piano to piano, stomping the sour keys. Dogs chased them, barking. From the tower I couldn't hear, but I could see the kids jumping and the dogs chasing, their jaws snapping open and shut. With the latest surveillance technology at my disposal, it was difficult to stay focused on the weather. I was tempted to make my own observations, and I did.

I saw a family driving to the country on vacation. Behind them, a bomb went off. Through my headphones, I noted the rushing sound of radiation cruising low across the land. The father, who was driving, saw the mushroom cloud in his rearview mirror. The others didn't turn around, so they never noticed.

When they reached the campsite, the kids pitched a family tent. The father went inside, zipped up the flap door, and wouldn't come out. "I need time alone," he called. His family sat frowning around the picnic table. The father was laughing and moaning inside the tent. The sister shook her fists in his direction. The brother gave the tent the finger. The mother tore her straw hat off and stomped on it. She ground it into the dirt, right outside the flap door. The father heard the twisting feet of the mother. Coming out of the tent and seeing the hat on the ground, he said, "There's something I've got to tell you, but not in front of the kids."

The mother said, "Why don't you let them hear it, too? We'd all like to know what you're doing in the tent."

"There's been a nuclear attack." Saying these words out loud had a strange effect on the father. He began running around and around in circles. Then he fainted.

Through my telescope, buildings were curdling. The very air had faded, was pixelated. Inside one apartment building was an elderly woman. Her hearing

aid was broken. She was watching the panic on television but could not understand what they were saying. She strained to hear them. She shook her head and wrung her hands. She knelt and prayed. Her prayers exploded out of her mouth all over the carpet. She coughed up shards of bone and tiny blood-and-gristle-soaked figurines. She washed the prayer viscera in the sink and hung them from a clothesline outside the window.

Back at the camp, the father gave the children tests. “What would you do in a nuclear holocaust?” But they couldn’t answer. They pantomimed ducking under a school A desk; the father frowned.

After they had quarantined the part of the country most affected by the bomb, I published a report showing that radiation was harmless. My report on the radiationless bomb was widely circulated. I was promoted. My employers wanted the real reports; I sent them the unrevised originals. A lot of people could see, by observing their own environments for themselves, that my reports were fraudulent.

People wanted to get away. Escape schemes flourished. One guy made a pile of money selling plots on Start Over Island. Anybody with any money moved to the island. I went there myself, at first on vacation, and then for real. It was the new expatriation. They gave you a new identity, a clean slate.

There were mutant children who sensed the impending exodus of all the adults, who planned on leaving their monstrous offspring behind. The mutated kids were impossible to soothe, perpetually hungry and thirsty, shivering and angry. The adults said, “It’s only me going. The kids will get by. There are other adults around, social services, orphanages, hospitals, shelters. The others, they’ll stick around, get pissed on the head by acid rain and all that, but I’ll be gone, and the kids will just get used to it.” But the kids didn’t get used to it or forget, because it never occurred to them that they could. No one ever suggested it.

There were side effects on the island-reddened eyes and this compulsion to rip things. People would be talking mildly at the bank and suddenly rip out their own hair, or go outside and rip the moat of shrubbery surrounding the bank with their bared teeth. They would stumble through the parking lots, chewing the shrubs, eyes gyrating.

I might have stayed on the island if there was no one there I recognized. But there they all were: friends, acquaintances, family members. At first I didn't mind—since we were now “strangers,” I no longer had to do their dishes, take them to A.A. meetings, make sure they'd swallowed their pills, fight them off, go to counseling with them, worry about them, be jealous of them, suspect them of lying, miss them, hold their babies, drive them to the hospital, help them move, fantasize about them, comment on their haircuts, see their points, admire their looks, proffer my goodwill, keep their secrets, pacify them, reassure them, seek their approval, recover from their abuses, read their manifestos, find them unreliable, try to see their good qualities, hope they'd vote, impress them, ignore their stupidity, or compete with them for jobs and housing.

The day after I ripped my own mother's clothes off in a supermarket, I suspected I needed to leave Start Over Island. My last conversation there convinced me of it. I had been visited by a lady with razor-thin lips. She made astral killings her business. “You have enemies here,” she told me. Evidently, she had been hired to murder my astral body. Furthermore, she said she had already done it. Hadn't I noticed anything different?

I returned to my revisions at the lighthouse. I concentrated on taking measurements of the rising ocean, training my instruments on the creeping shoreline and tidal fluctuations, and revising my data to report, unaccordingly, that the sea was just as usual. The ocean had always functioned as a kind of clock for the sentient, but gradually it stopped telling our kind of time. It was on to other measures. It tossed up four hundred dead dolphins one day and claimed one hundred thousand baby seals the next.

The place where one could now go to experience the ancient rhythms of nature was the convenience store. Convenience stores were becoming “nature,” and nature had become a run-down, thrashing machine. In the convenience store, people howled and chirped at one another. A man was voiding near the chips aisle. He was in the process of digging a hole with a jackhammer to bury his shit when a robbery took place. He pulled out his video camera and caught the event on tape. He couldn't wait to get home and show his family the video of the robbery in progress, which had interrupted the burial of his bowel movement.

I fabricated phenomena, makeovers for a bevy of new industry-spawned carcinogens-the air is getting cleaner by the day; cloud miasmas: *the future is bright; 500 trillion nanobots, built an atom at a time, war in a suitcase; carbon dioxide emissions from fossil fuel combustion have proven highly beneficial to life on Earth, especially cockroaches and poison ivy.*

On the outskirts of the city, I saw a man lying on the floor of a dirty small room. There was nothing else in the room but a projecting movie and a chair. The movie showed him sleeping on the dirty floor. He sat in the chair and dissolved. His daughter came home and found the bones of her father in the chair. She sat on his lap bones, and she turned to bone dust. Her son came in and lay on the floor. There was nothing else left but the movie of his grandfather sleeping on the dirty floor, the chair, and the combined bones. He sat on his mother's lap bones and dissolved. His daughter came in and lay on the floor. There was nothing else left but the movie of her greatgrandfather, the chair, and the bones. She sat on her father's lap bones, and she I turned to dust. I averted my eyes.

In the past, when something fell out of the sky, or there were collisions, men in jumpsuits arrived, sirens blaring, to erase all traces. Something was always done about something. Now nothing was done, except documentation. For every event, there were multiple documents and artifacts, until there were 'more documents and artifacts than events. Inevitably, someone called a document an event, and people made documents of documents.

Some chose to end their genetic line rather than risk bringing another lunatic into the world. "He could be the next Hitler," some argued. "Or the next Einstein." This binary, the Hitler-Einstein dilemma, provided an inescapable deadlock for would-be breeders.

After a long hiatus, I delivered a 178-page summary of my "findings" that stated in its conclusion: *Continuing growth in greenhouse gas emissions is leading to a higher standard of living that will result in a global utopia by the end of the century.* The president quoted liberally from my report, hailing it as an objective docket.

I slept for a week. I awoke numb and looked out at the state. Things moved, had dimension, made sounds, slid right up to the surface, but could not poke through. Nothing was felt any longer, or known through the sense

portals, despite the fact that every part of the body was designed for contact. Either the world, usually so flagrant, was camouflaged, or my surfaces were deteriorating. In any case, it was hidden. Time would pass without my seeing or recording events. Some events I would have to imagine. The made-up events were sometimes more believable than actual events. The actual events were often difficult to believe.

nick-e melville

US

YOU

US

**YOU
MAKE
US**

**YOU
MAKE
US
STICK**

Sustainable Poetry

Everything is connected to everything else.

A bald statement to begin: most contemporary poetry is predicated on a set of unsustainable anthropocentric views of the nature of the world. That the world exists to serve as a stage set for the enactment of human dramas. That it reflects the moods of, or evoked by, the poet. That it exists only when observed. That it exists only when written.

These attitudes are, in English-language verse, at least as old as Spenser, but have enjoyed a massive resurgence thanks to postmodernist views of language as game. Interestingly both 'mainstream' and 'avant-garde' poetics tend to find common ground in this drive to subjugate the world as written to human needs and ends. The pathetic fallacy meets literary theory and nobody wins.

Other current cultural trends, ranging from hippy-dippy animism to the pursuit of the technological fix for everything, reinforce this view of the world as being understandable only in purely human terms. We make nature in our own image, one way or another.

The physical sciences take a different view: that the world is essentially physical, and that languages, including mathematics, are tools we can use to create increasingly accurate maps of it. Unfortunately, in populist attempts to explain their theories and concepts, even scientists can slip into animistic and/or idealistic confusion when they present objects and forces as if they were possessed of wishes, desires, needs and other human motivations, or speak of them as if they were created, rather than described, by mathematics or verbal language.

One form of this mistaken 'scientific' idealism that is regularly cited by modern supporters of the *esse est percipi* principle is the whole field of quantum physics. Idealists assume that the principle of indeterminacy supports the idea that the world is produced by the process of observation, and this is frequently compared to strands of oriental philosophy that hold

to similar ideas. In fact, however, it would appear that quantum physicists themselves believe that the particles they study are real things with real existence. They just do not fully understand the ways in which these particles behave, and it may well be that new sets of scientific laws that describe nano-objects may yet evolve, quite different from those that describe the macro-level world. In any case, even if observation influences behaviour on the nano-scale, is anyone seriously arguing that telescopes influence the behaviour of the stars?

As poetry becomes increasingly professionalised, the pressure is on the qualified poet (MA in Creative Writing, PhD in Colonial Studies) to be able to draw on, and contribute to, a body of theory that lends academic respectability to their work. It is understandable that these professionals of language will be drawn towards those theories that foreground the importance of their chosen medium. By so doing, they contribute in some small way to the elevation of the human over the rest of the world. This, in turn, serves to aggravate, again in small ways, the ongoing environmental crisis that threatens to hasten the extinction of the species they elevate. In small ways, but even small actions have results. The person who writes poems also drinks increasingly impure water from the tap and selects over-packaged food from the supermarket shelf. Everything is connected to everything else: the first law of ecology.

Nothing ever goes away

Esse non est percipi. We live on a planet that is a small ball turning round a reasonably ordinary star, itself located in the outer reaches of a galaxy that is, in turn, just one of billions or possibly hundreds of billions. We share this world with about 1,000,000 named species, of which about 800,000 are animals. Of the animals, around 600,000 species are insects, and among these there are approximately 350,000 species of beetle. In the face of these numbers, a little humility is in order. While it may be consoling to believe that humans are the crown of creation and generate reality by means of consciousness and perception, the evidence tends not to support this position.

Ironically, the space in which postmodernist idealism has developed is created by the application to wealth-production of those very scientific advances that render idealism untenable in the first place. To quote Joseph

Schwartz, from his book *The Creative Moment* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1992): ‘One of the things that the physics of the nineteenth century makes inescapable is that the physical universe has structures that exist whether we are here to see them or not. We are too far down the road of industrial development to return to the dinner party idealism of Bishop Berkeley and his descendants and their fabulous theories of the world as mind and mind alone. Indeed this view has not been treated with the ridicule it deserves.’

Sustainable poetry finds its ground in the imperfect charting of these structures. It also illuminates the deep ecology view that we need to adopt an ecocentric mode of living in the world if we are to survive. If the role of philosophy is to inspire action, the role of poetry is to be in the world. Like the laws of physics, like mathematics, this poetry is descriptive, not proscriptive. It also accepts the sceptical view that full knowledge of the world cannot be attained through the medium of the senses. However, it sees this as a failure of the senses, not as an argument for the idealist position, and works towards the clearest possible approximation. Rather than saying that nothing is unless it is held in the mind of a human observer, it asserts that many things are that have never been perceived, and that for most things that are perceived, the perception is imperfect. This is a necessary part of the humility called for earlier. We are part of the weave of things, and our view inevitably depends on where we sit in that weave. That’s all. Everything goes somewhere.

There is no such thing as a free lunch

Cotbu, the business council for the arts in Ireland, used to run courses in management, marketing and communications. It then changed its name to Business2Arts, and sent round a letter stating that its new aim was to convince business that an investment in the arts was sound, particularly because the arts could help improve corporate communications.

Small press poetry publishers applying to the Arts Council of Ireland are sent a form in which they are required to give details of their mission statement and actual or potential job creation status. This reflects the council’s role as a government-financed development agency, whose primary function is to fund and oversee the professionalisation of arts administration. Under this regime, the arts become part of the states

economic development strategy. Music and literature are used in tourist promotion; arts in the community schemes help reduce the long-term unemployed numbers. The saleable is valued above all else.

However, there is no such thing as sustainable growth. We live on a finite planet, with finite resources available, and at some point growth will tip us over the edge. The arts are not immune to this fact.

Sustainable poetry is not a career move. As already noted, it is difficult for those poets who live and work within the confines of the literary and/or teaching professions, who have to some extent been colonised by the machine, to do work that questions the status quo. Consequently, it is likely that any attempt at a sustainable poetry will come from apparently marginal writers.

Another, perhaps more self-evident, aspect of sustainability has to do with the means of production and dissemination of the work. Sustainable poetry does not compete with more mainstream publishing houses for a slice of some illusory 'market'. Why publish 500 copies if you know you'll only sell 50? Why not barter? Keep the environmental impact to a minimum. Beware the technological 'fix' of e-publishing.

Even small actions have results. There is no such thing as a free lunch.

Nature knows best

So what might a sustainable poetry look like? I would like to present here a brief glimpse of some contemporary writing that represents a beginning.

For instance, the phenomenological poetry that Geoffrey Squires has been producing in recent years illustrates one way of writing about how we perceive the world. Here's a short extract from his "Untitled II" as printed in *Shearsman* 50:

Slope of sound down where it comes from
last small effect

has no need of is not part of unaffected by
the mind is full of assertion and denial

and no impediment or obstacle nothing it seems in the way
but to listen for hear the right thing
that we so that we

quick it is quick rapid extraordinarily so

and overlapping not separate or distinct
laid down one upon another one after another
how they appear to us how they are remembered

Squires' work manages to explore the relationship between mind and world without overvaluing the one or undervaluing the other. It is a poetry of experience and consequence, the experience of being in the world in which 'there is not one moment but that something happens' and the consequence of mind's attempts at processing that experience in light of the perception that 'recognition is not knowledge'. The experience is of a world that:

maintains maintains itself
has no need of is not part of
and overlapping not separate or distinct

Richard Caddel's "Fantasia in the English Choral Tradition", recently reprinted in *Magpie Words* (West House Books, 2002) opens with the following lines:

signals:
 pact or parts
corresponding in January
bonfires smoke
down the river bank
 a way off —

moving (lunchtime)
 out of the realm of
false, muddled argument
 into that contact
with the world in which

(for which)

I live —
 to point towards —
 because there is no ‘away’
 to sling things to
 and to live here
 is not to escape

— you feel the heat
 — centres of learning
 everything
 tumbling

and still
 that ‘human record’
 how many million years
 complete.

in which the movement of verse and mind reflect exactly that being in the world to which sustainable poetry must aspire. In fact, the best of Caddel’s work reaches this place as a matter of course, and then sings. Which is not to say that it discounts the human. Such primal experiences as love and death and the other ‘great themes’ are here, but always set in the context of ‘the world in which / (for which)’ we all live. This adds depth to the handling of the personal, resulting in poems that are both deeply moving and deeply grounded in the actual world.

flag-
 stone rocking on unstable
 base, the rain

gone under it,
 sunken puddle. A speech
 at odds with itself, as

likely to
 soak you as save you.
 Ann’s voice

clear out of the kitchen I must

be going no
longer staying — shapes

that delight
and try us.

(from “Rigmarole: Uncertain time”)

Caddel’s work is full of people, but they do not dominate the world, they inhabit it: placed in the weave of things. Shorn of the (pseudo) religiosity of a Snyder or a Hughes, this is ecocentric poetry in action.

Maurice Scully’s deep understanding of Irish poetry informs his own practice as a writer. Unlike the English pastoral tradition, which, as I have argued elsewhere, is essentially a poetry of empire, of the land as owned object, this tradition is one of the land as living world. From the 8th century haiku-like lyrics of intense perception to the onomastics of the Metrical Dindshenchus, medieval Irish nature poetry concerned itself with the stubborn actuality of things and of the odd relationship between those things and the words used to name them. These lines from Scully’s 5 *Freedoms of Movement* (Etruscan Books, 2002, originally *Galloping Dog* 1987) illustrate the point I am trying to make:

persistent undersound of a river. hardness.
table facing a square window inset in a deep white wall.
the four places. & more. the head of a narrow angular
[stairs.
sometimes an animal passes. brown white black.
a fly sometimes in the sunlight.
sometimes a man.

When Scully writes like this, the most fruitful comparison available is with the earliest Irish lyrics. The sheer concreteness of the writing mirrors the desire to present what is with minimal interference from the vanity of the writing ego. The world is not presented as a stage set for the acting out of some human drama but as a complex system of which the human domain is just one part. Or, to quote again

a large brain & a long childhood

leaves branches water (where was I?)
with all the ornate figurations in meta- this & that
(branches) climbing while the truth dwindling in proportion
to the glare of the accentuated frill will. well.
many mouths moving. no wonder nobody with any sense.

Wary of theory, this is a poetry of learning to live with and in the world, not of explaining and improving on it.

*

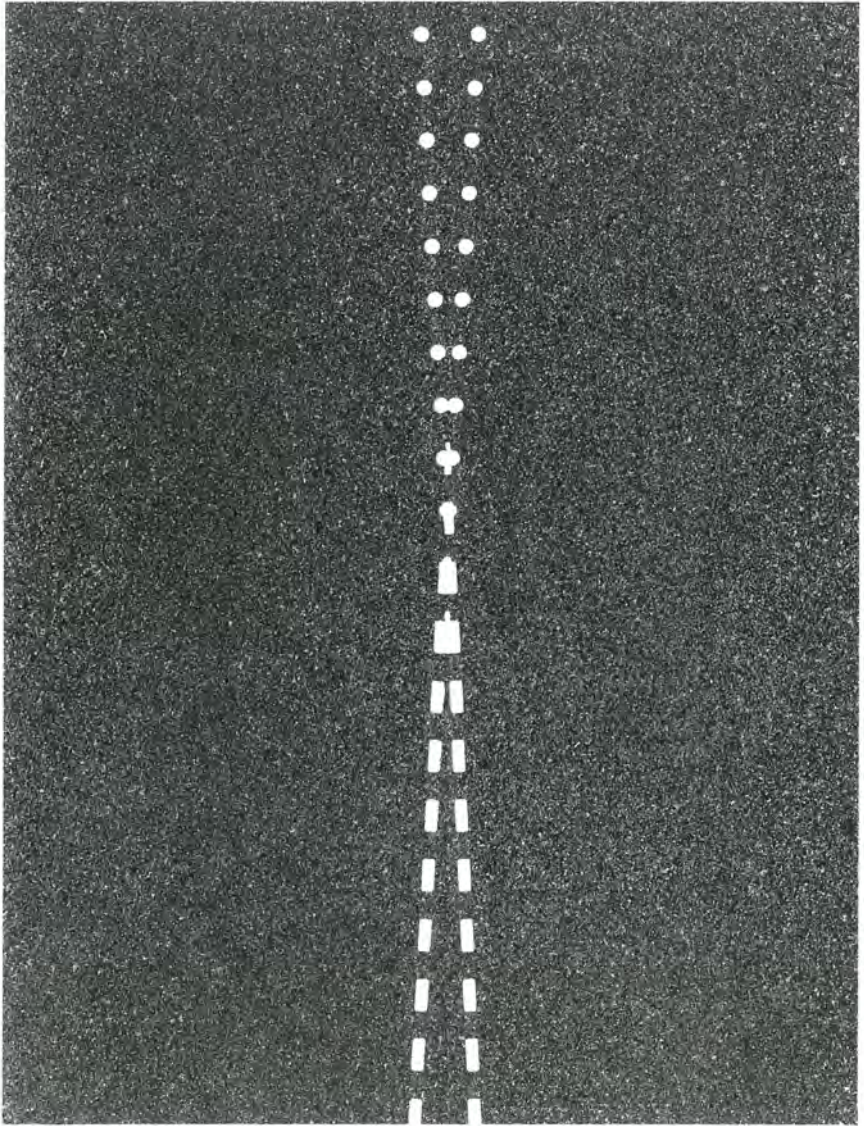
What these three very different poets have in common is a respect for the world in which they live and a balanced view of the role of perception, and of poetry, as mapper rather than maker. It is this that marks out their poetry as sustainable in the sense I have been using the term. Small actions can lead to big results. If poets fail to look to the possible consequences of the way they present the world, they run the risk of being complicit in ecological meltdown. If we write as if the non-human exists to serve as a rich source of metaphor, we mirror the attitudes of those who exploit more tangible and financially rewarding resources. If we see poetry as a career opportunity, or as part of 'the market', we enter into the world of unsustainable growth. If we insist that our limited understanding forms a basis for improving on billions of years of evolution, we are likely to destroy the infinitely complex systems that sustain life. Nature knows best.

If, on the other hand, poetic practice (given that poetic theory is pretty well irrelevant to the creation of good writing) comes to terms with the laws of ecology that serve as section headers in this essay, there is some small hope that our tiny input may help move the intellectual climate toward a position of respect for the world on which our survival depends. Everything is connected to everything else. Nothing ever goes away. There is no such thing as a free lunch. Nature knows best.

Gustave Morin

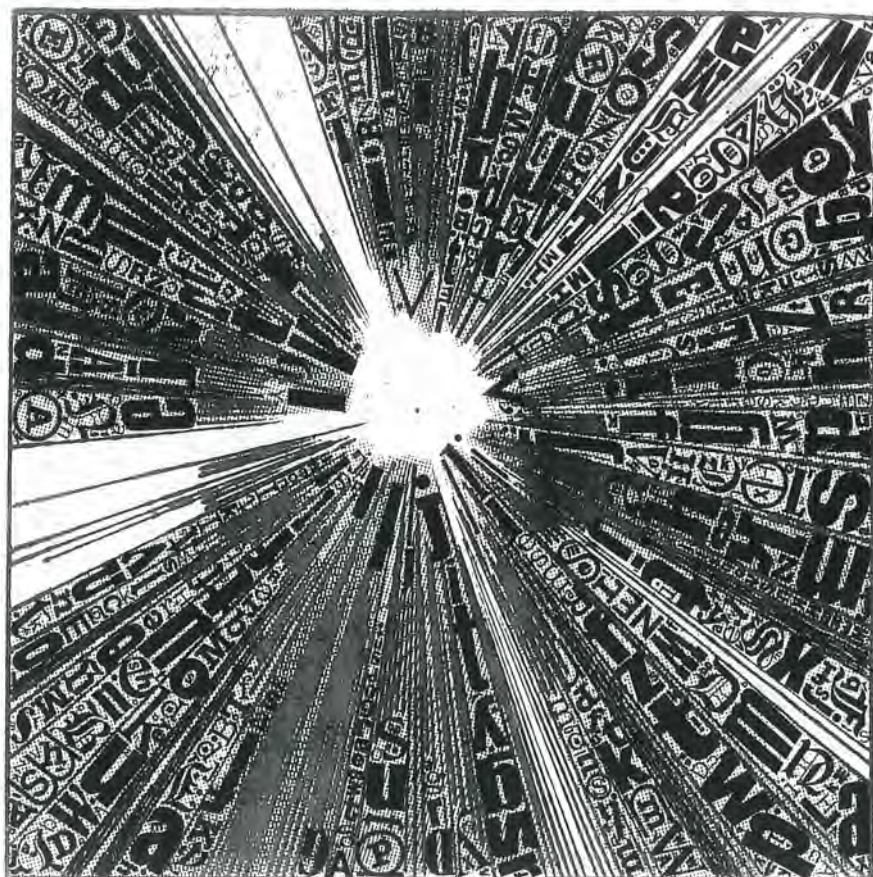
Untitled Images

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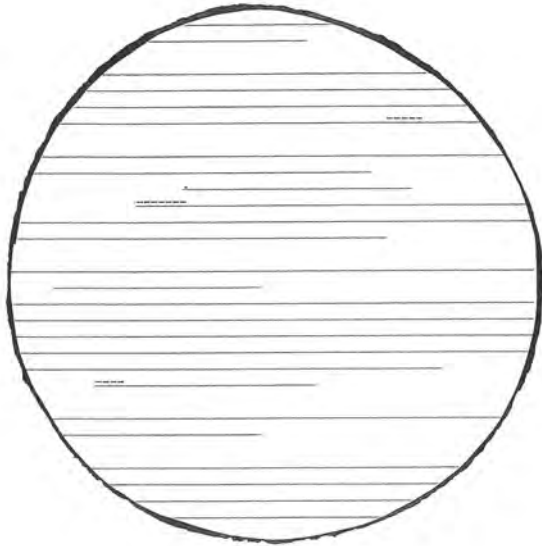


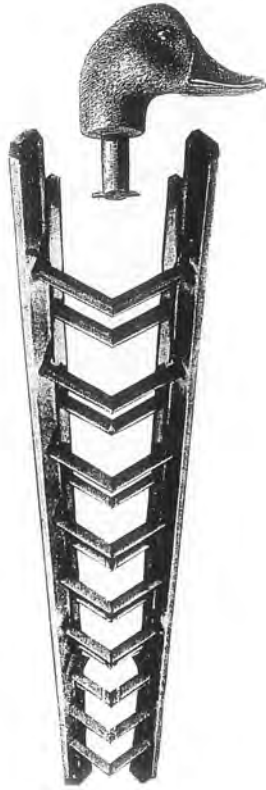
CHEWING GUM





an excerpt from my styrofoam cup collection





Rusty Morrison

from *Reclamation Project*

(trash vault)

In the instant after the Chevron refinery explodes, I descend below the
of individual syllables. [level

Sky, through my kitchen window, a trash vault.

Punctuation without words is a primary red, then, between smoke-bursts,
florid.

Everyone on the block, out on the sidewalk to watch.

Smoke unfastens its vowels from the orderly control of our consonants.

My neighbor is experiencing shortness of breath, my lungs have acquired
a vanishing point I

do not test.

Conversation romances its calamities, modifies for us a commons.

We mime humanity for the already-overhead TV helicopter.

My neighbor seems to be developing a thingness in his eyes.

We are already, to each other, TV noise, a regulating background.

Theatrical value-add of windows in the houses around us sliding shut.

We all know to go back inside, as though summoned.

Event already franchised — event-technology already busily procuring
event-disposal.

(weeds)

The weight of a ripe nectarine in my palm, a sensation
into which I am walking

opens the field

to a shapeless calm. An instant of time in which I don't mind being alive
to this, while everything else I've missed

reels out its endlessness behind me.

I reach into the hollow of a dead tree at the dead end of the park path
and feel dry leaves,

rodent droppings, and something smooth sliding under my fingertips —
since then, I haven't had the same hand.

How to avoid stepping on the external gills the hill
has camouflaged as weeds.

Charlie Morrow

**After Sébastien Bourdon, Moses Before the Burning Bush
A Fire Poem**

[Please see following pages]



FOR ELLIOT LEVINE

A FIRE POEM

For baritone voice and
four saxhuts (ATB) or trombones

PIYYUT OF YANNAI----8th CENTURY

translated by JEROME ROTHENBERG & HARRIS LEWOWITZ

music by CHARLES MORROW 1975, New York, NY

ON SEEING THE BURNING BUSH
(THRU MOSES' EYES)
AN ECSTATIC SERIES OF THOUGHTS
ABOUT FIRE & THEREFORE-- G-D.

PERFORMANCE NOTE: Like a shout band, but not more classical than jazz.
The horns echo the vocal style of the singer.
SLOW BUILD TO "RAINBOW"
AND BACK AGAIN TO "SNOW"

© 1975 JON JACOBSON
ASCAP

FIRE-POEM: " & THEN AN ANGEL OF THE LORD APPEARED TO HIM IN A TONGUE
OF FIRE

after Yannai (6th century A.D.)

Fire eating	Fire burning dry & wet things
Fire carbonized in snow & smoke	Fire of a crouching lion
Fire its look is like the face of mirrors	Fire with assurance that it won't go out
Fire flaring roaring	Fire burns around turns back on self
Fire flying in a storm wind	Fire kindled without branches
Fire every day renewal	Fire other fires don't swell out
Fire higher than its branches	Fire's sparks like lightning
Fire	Fire
Fire the iron bars of	Fire
Fire fevers in Sheol under	Fire
Fire black as raven	Fire heaps of color like the rainbow

*

. . . & changes image crowds on image
on the Burning Bush in flames
Sinai with torches
overhead were kindling sparks
below it licking light rays
inside it the domain of seraphim
who aren't burnt thereby
& from the sweat they sweat
a fire river conduit of light
whose sinews are nodules snow
the fire doesn't boil off snow
is itself not doused by snow
for fire's maker snow's creator
ordered peace between the fire & snow
o judgment by fire o judgment by snow

J.R. & H.L.

Fire Poem

© 1981 OTHER MEDIA

B₁ *f* A-A-ND THEN A-A-A-AN AN GEL

A₅

T₅

T₅

B₅

B₁ 4. O-O-OF THE LORD A-A-A-AP-PEARED TO HIM

A₅

T₅

T₅ 4.

B₅



NO. M.28 10 STAVE
1982 B-WAY, N. Y.

MADE IN U. S. A.

First - p2

FREELY A TEMPO

I N A TONGUE OF FLYER

As

Ts

Ts

1

P

P

P

P

STRICT TIME

STRICT TIME

STRICT TIME

STRICT TIME

Flyer

Alternate Brass 9

Detailed description: This is a handwritten musical score on a single page. At the top, it is titled 'First - p2'. The score is divided into two systems. The first system contains five staves: a vocal line for Alto Saxophone (As) with lyrics 'I N A TONGUE OF FLYER', and four brass staves (two Tenor Saxophones (Ts) and two Baritone Saxophones (Bb)). Performance markings include 'FREELY' and 'A TEMPO' above the vocal line, and 'P' (piano) and 'STRICT TIME' above the brass staves. The second system, which is circled in ink, shows the continuation of the brass parts, with the text 'Alternate Brass 9' written to the right. The notation includes various note values, rests, and dynamic markings.

Finis - p3 -

Handwritten musical score for strings and woodwinds, measures 10-14. The score is written on five systems of staves. The instruments are labeled on the left: A₁, T₁, T₂, A₂, T₂, T₃, and B₃. The time signature is 12/8. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, slurs, and dynamic markings (mf, p). Measure numbers 10, 12, and 14 are circled in the left margin. The notation is dense and includes many slurs and accents.

Fire. 4 ✓

16

Basso voice

Handwritten notes: 4th add B₂, 5th add A₂ G₂, 7th add F₂ (circled)



NO. M.2B 10 STAVE
1095 B'WAY. N. Y.

MADE IN U. S. A.

FIRE - 5 -

NOTE: FIRE IS SUNG VERY STATEDLY - THE FOLLOWING WORDS MORE FLUENTLY

Bar *FIRELY - STATEDLY*

FAH - I - I YER

All Sings * AIR DUEL - STAY IN TIME KEEP RELAXABLE

EA - TING FI - YER

Bar *Flowing*

EA - TING FI - YER

All Sings

FAH - I - I - YER BU - R - NING DRY

Bar *STATEDLY*

FAH - I - I - YER BU - R - NING DRY

All Sings * Air

AND WE - T TH - INGS

Bar *Flowing*

AND WE - T TH - INGS

All Sings

FAH - I - I - YER COA - L IN SNO - W

Bar *STATEDLY*

FAH - I - I - YER COA - L IN SNO - W

All Sings

FAH - I - I - YER COA - L IN SNO - W

* ESTABLISH A RUC FOR THESE POINTS -

Fire-6

Handwritten musical score for a piece titled "Fire-6". The score is written on a single system with five staves. The first staff is labeled "Bass" and contains the main melody with lyrics: "AND I IN-SE USE". Above the staff are slurs and a circled "1". A bracket labeled "FINE (HARD)" spans the end of the staff. The second staff is empty. The third staff is labeled "Bass" and contains the melody with lyrics: "FAH-I-YE-YER OF A (ROW-OW-OW-CHING L". Above the staff are slurs and a circled "1". A bracket labeled "FINE (HARD)" spans the end of the staff. The fourth staff is empty. The fifth staff is labeled "Bass" and contains the melody with lyrics: "FAH-I-YE-YER IT'S LOO-K I-S". Above the staff are slurs and a circled "1". A bracket labeled "FINE (HARD)" spans the end of the staff. The sixth staff is labeled "As" and contains a melodic line with the word "Vocal" written above it. The seventh staff is labeled "Drum" and contains a rhythmic pattern. The eighth staff is empty.




NO. M28 10 STAVE
1535 B WAY, N. Y.

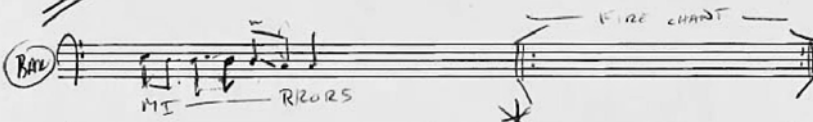
MADE IN U. S. A.

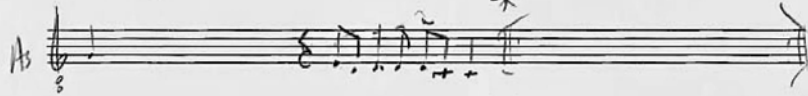
File - 7

Race *(circled)* 
LI - ke THE FIRE - CES OF

A1 

Other Sax 

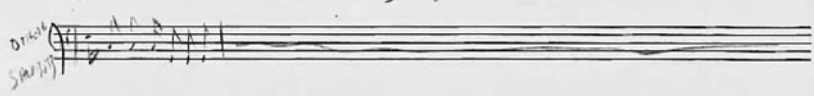
Race *(circled)* 
MI - RORS FIRE CHANT

A1 

Other Sax 

Race *(circled)* 
FAH-I - YE - YOO WITH AS - SURE ANCE

A1 

Other Sax 



Fire - 3

Vocal Lines:

- Soprano:** THA-T IT, GO OUT, FARE-YE-YE-YOU, FLA RING
- Alto:** (Lyrics partially obscured)
- Tenors:** (Lyrics partially obscured)

Performance Instructions:

- Very even
- Singing
- Flutissimo
- File (handwritten)

Instrumentation: Soprano, Alto, Tenor 1, Tenor 2, Piano.

Page Information:

NO. H-2B 10 STAVE
1923 B WAY, N. Y.
MADE IN U. S. A.

FIRE - 9

Handwritten musical score for "FIRE - 9". The score consists of several staves for different instruments:

- Bass:** The top staff, circled in the original image, contains a few notes and rests.
- Alto:** The second staff, featuring a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). It contains a melodic line with slurs and dynamic markings.
- Tenor 1:** The third staff, featuring a bass clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). It contains a melodic line with slurs and dynamic markings.
- Baritone:** The fourth staff, featuring a bass clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). It contains a few notes and rests.
- Alto:** The fifth staff, featuring a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). It contains a melodic line with slurs and dynamic markings.
- Tenor 1:** The sixth staff, featuring a bass clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). It contains a melodic line with slurs and dynamic markings.
- Tenor 2:** The seventh staff, featuring a bass clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). It contains a melodic line with slurs and dynamic markings.
- Baritone:** The eighth staff, featuring a bass clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). It contains a few notes and rests.
- Alto:** The ninth staff, featuring a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). It contains a melodic line with slurs and dynamic markings.
- Tenor 1:** The tenth staff, featuring a bass clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). It contains a melodic line with slurs and dynamic markings.
- Tenor 2:** The eleventh staff, featuring a bass clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). It contains a melodic line with slurs and dynamic markings.
- Baritone:** The twelfth staff, featuring a bass clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). It contains a few notes and rests.

Key annotations and markings in the score include:

- "SPRING - DI" written below the first staff.
- "ING" written below the Baritone staff.
- "FIRE CLIMAX" written above the Baritone staff in the final section.
- "FULL SOUND" written below the Tenor 2 staff in the final section.

First ID

Brn
Ppp - 5 - ye you
Fobis A - rou - no

As

Ts

Ts
Pp
B

Brn
Tu - RNS

As

Ts

Ts
B

First - 11

Handwritten musical score for "First - 11". The score is arranged in six systems, each with two staves. The instruments are labeled as follows:

- System 1: Bass (circled), Alto (A), Tenor 1 (T₁)
- System 2: Tenor 2 (T₂), Bass (B)
- System 3: Bass (circled), Alto (A), Tenor 3 (T₃)
- System 4: Alto (A), Tenor 3 (T₃)
- System 5: Tenor 3 (T₃)
- System 6: Tenor 3 (T₃)

Key annotations and markings include:

- "BA - ck" written below the first staff.
- "IT - SELF" written below the second staff.
- "FIRST WANT" written across the sixth system.
- A circled "Bass" label at the start of the first system.
- A circled "Bass" label at the start of the third system.
- A circled "T₃" label at the start of the sixth system.
- Various musical notations including notes, rests, slurs, and dynamic markings like "p" and "f".

Fires - 12 -

Handwritten musical score for the first system, featuring five staves. The top staff is labeled "Bass" and contains the lyrics "FA-I - YE - YER" and "Fly - ING". The second staff is labeled "A3", the third "B3", the fourth "T3", and the fifth "B". The T3 staff includes a section marked with an asterisk and the word "AIR".

Handwritten musical score for the second system, featuring five staves. The top staff is labeled "Bass" and contains the lyrics "IN A STOR - M". The second staff is labeled "A3", the third "T3", the fourth "T3", and the fifth "B".

WORLD OF MUSIC
NO. M-25 10 STAVE
1595 B'WAY, N. Y.

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Fino - 13 -

Handwritten musical score for the first system. It begins with a bass clef and a common time signature. The notation includes a whole note followed by a half note, with a dynamic marking of *mf* and a hairpin crescendo leading to a *f* dynamic. The score is written for four parts: Alto Saxophone (As), Tenor Saxophone 1 (Ts1), Tenor Saxophone 2 (Ts2), and Bass (B). The Ts2 and B parts have a double bar line and a fermata at the end of the system. Below the staves, the text "FINE COMPT" is written with a double bar line and a fermata.

Handwritten musical score for the second system, consisting of four empty staves for Alto Saxophone (As), Tenor Saxophone 1 (Ts1), Tenor Saxophone 2 (Ts2), and Bass (B). The staves are labeled with their respective instrument abbreviations on the left side.

Frage-14-

Brn

FR - GE - YER

KE - N - DLSD -

A₁

T₂

T₁

B

Brn

WE - TH OUT

A₂

T₂

T₁

B

Fied - 15 -

③me

Bla-n-ces

— Fied Comp —

③me

First - 16 -

Handwritten musical score for ten staves. The notation includes treble and bass clefs, various note values, rests, and lyrics. The lyrics are "For ye - ye" and "E - V - R - Y" on the first staff, and "DAY" on the sixth staff. There are also some handwritten annotations like "A" and "K" above notes.

NO. M. 25 10 STAVE
1595 B'WAY, N. Y.

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Fine - p17

M. A. A. A. A.

Baritone staff with notes and lyrics: re ——— now — el

Alto staff with musical notation

Tenor 2 staff with musical notation

Tenor 1 staff with musical notation

Bass staff with musical notation

Interlude section with multiple staves and dynamic markings: *freely*, *sempre f*, *f*, *f, mf, mp, p*

* Ossia p - dm, m, f, sempre +

F. 122 - p/8
FIRST MEAS. CONTINUOUS



Handwritten musical notation on a five-staff system. The first staff is a treble clef with a circled "BARI" and the word "STACELY" above it. The notes are quarter notes with stems pointing up. Below the staff are the lyrics "FR-I-YI-YI-YI-YI". The second staff is a bass clef with a "3" below it and contains a triplet of eighth notes. The third and fourth staves are treble clefs with handwritten notes and stems. The fifth staff is a treble clef with handwritten notes and stems. The word "D-THIR" is written at the end of the first staff.

NO. M-26 10 STAVE
1595 E-WAY, N. Y.

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Fire - 19 -

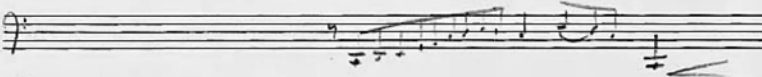
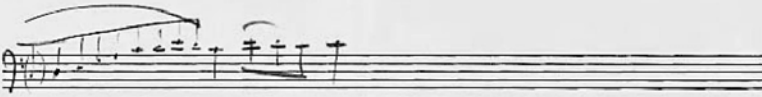
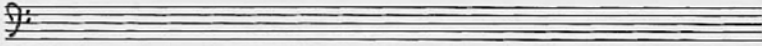
Handwritten musical score for "Fire - 19 -". The score includes a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line has lyrics: "FE - I - YERS", "Do - N'T SWE - LL OUT", and "Lolo". The piano accompaniment features complex rhythmic patterns, including triplets and sixteenth notes, with some notes marked with an 'x'.

FE - I - YERS

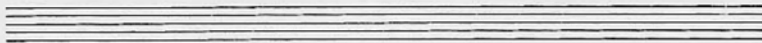
Do - N'T SWE - LL OUT

Lolo

FIRE - 20 -



— FIRE CORNET —



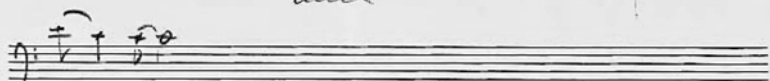
NO. M-28 10 STAVE
1505 B'WAY, N. Y.

MADE IN U. S. A.

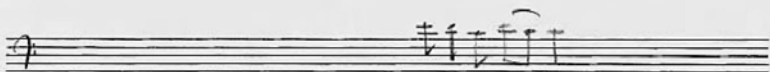
Fires - p 21

Handwritten musical score for guitar, page 21 of "Fires". The score is written on ten staves. The first staff is in treble clef and contains the melody with lyrics "FA - I - YE - EYEL" and "HE -". A circled "Brite" is written above the first staff. The second staff is in bass clef and contains a bass line with a circled "Lead" above it. The third and fourth staves are in bass clef and contain bass lines. The fifth staff is in treble clef and contains a melody with lyrics "I -" and "VER" and "TRIN it's". The sixth staff is in bass clef and contains a bass line with a circled "Lead" above it. The seventh and eighth staves are in bass clef and contain bass lines. The ninth and tenth staves are in bass clef and contain bass lines. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and accidentals.

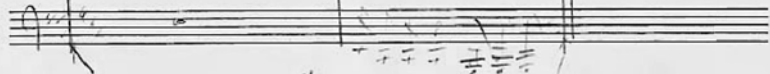
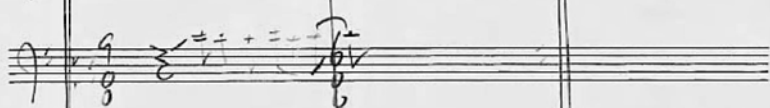
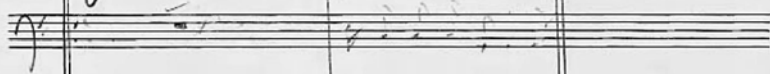
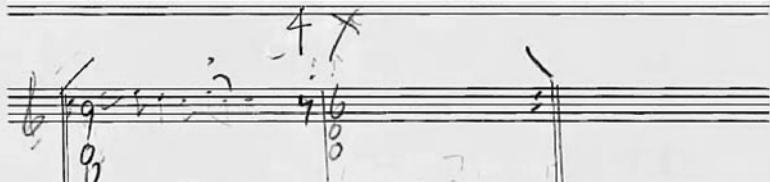
Fig. p 22 -
accel



Brian - chords



INTERLUDE ON PREVIOUS FIGURE



NO. M-23 10 STAVE
KING T. BRASS 1525 B'WAY N. Y.

MADE IN U. S. A.

(OSSIA) Full Fire - p23
intervals continued

The image shows a handwritten musical score for guitar, consisting of four staves of music and four lines of tablature below. The notation includes various rhythmic values and accidentals. Above the first staff, there are time signatures: $\frac{2+3}{4}$, $\frac{2}{4}$, $\frac{2}{8}$, and $\frac{3}{16}$. The word "Fire" is written above the first staff, and "Fire Chant" is written above the second and third staves. The word "Fire" is also written above the fourth staff. The word "Fire" is written in a circle below the fourth staff. The word "Fire" is written below the first line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the second line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the third line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the fourth line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the fifth line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the sixth line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the seventh line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the eighth line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the ninth line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the tenth line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the eleventh line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the twelfth line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the thirteenth line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the fourteenth line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the fifteenth line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the sixteenth line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the seventeenth line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the eighteenth line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the nineteenth line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the twentieth line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the twenty-first line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the twenty-second line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the twenty-third line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the twenty-fourth line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the twenty-fifth line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the twenty-sixth line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the twenty-seventh line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the twenty-eighth line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the twenty-ninth line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the thirtieth line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the thirty-first line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the thirty-second line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the thirty-third line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the thirty-fourth line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the thirty-fifth line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the thirty-sixth line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the thirty-seventh line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the thirty-eighth line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the thirty-ninth line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the fortieth line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the forty-first line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the forty-second line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the forty-third line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the forty-fourth line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the forty-fifth line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the forty-sixth line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the forty-seventh line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the forty-eighth line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the forty-ninth line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the fiftieth line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the fifty-first line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the fifty-second line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the fifty-third line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the fifty-fourth line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the fifty-fifth line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the fifty-sixth line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the fifty-seventh line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the fifty-eighth line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the fifty-ninth line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the sixtieth line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the sixty-first line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the sixty-second line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the sixty-third line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the sixty-fourth line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the sixty-fifth line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the sixty-sixth line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the sixty-seventh line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the sixty-eighth line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the sixty-ninth line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the seventieth line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the seventy-first line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the seventy-second line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the seventy-third line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the seventy-fourth line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the seventy-fifth line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the seventy-sixth line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the seventy-seventh line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the seventy-eighth line of tablature. 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The word "Fire" is written below the ninety-third line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the ninety-fourth line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the ninety-fifth line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the ninety-sixth line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the ninety-seventh line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the ninety-eighth line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the ninety-ninth line of tablature. The word "Fire" is written below the hundred line of tablature.

First: p. 24

VERY EMPHATIC

FA - I - YI - I YEN SPA RKE

LI - NE LI - SH LI - CH - IUNG

NO. M-26 10 STAVE
 KING T. BROS. 1595 B'WAY N. Y.
 MADE IN U. S. A.

Free - p 25

Handwritten musical notation on a page with five staves. The first staff has a treble clef and a colon. The second and third staves are grouped by a brace and contain handwritten notes. The fourth staff also contains handwritten notes. The fifth staff is empty.

Free (1/2)

Five empty musical staves.

Fire-26-

OUT

IN

FA-I-YER

- FIRE CLANT -



NO. M 26 10 STAVE
1595 B'WAY, N. Y.

MADE IN U. S. A.

Fire-28-

Musical staff 1: Bass clef, notes A-I, lyrics "A-I - you", and E-(breath only)

Musical staff 2: Treble clef, notes, lyrics "me / breath"

Musical staff 3: Treble clef, empty staff

Musical staff 4: Treble clef, notes, lyrics "me / breath"

Musical staff 5: Treble clef, notes, lyrics "me / breath"



FIRE CHANT
- FIRE CHANT -

THERE IS NO ? 27

THERE IS NO PAGE 27. ATTACCA P.28

Five empty musical staves.

Fird - 29

FA - I — Y - ER THE I — RON BARS —

+ x
or —

W. W. G. & CO.
NO. M. 28 10 STAVE
1505 B'WAY, N. Y.

MADE IN U. S. A.

Five - 30 -

— FIVE PART —

A handwritten musical score for five parts, consisting of two systems of staves. The first system includes a single treble clef staff at the top, followed by a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) with a brace on the left. The second system also features a grand staff with a brace on the left. The notation includes various notes, rests, and dynamic markings. In the second system, the vocal line has the lyrics "As I - e - you" written below it. The score concludes with a double bar line and some scribbled-out notes at the bottom right.

Kind-p31

Handwritten musical score on a 10-staff manuscript paper. The score includes a treble clef staff at the top with a dynamic marking '>'. Below it is a grand staff (two staves) with handwritten notes and slurs. The bottom staff contains a bass clef staff with a sequence of notes and stems, some with '+' signs. The text "fine. Cant" is written below the bottom staff. The rest of the page consists of five empty staves.



NO. M-28 10 STAVE
1595 B'WAY N. Y.

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Fing - p32

Handwritten musical notation on a five-line staff. It begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The notes are F, A, C, E, G, with a fermata over the G. Below the staff, the text "FA C E - I - GER" is written. At the end of the staff, there is a handwritten chord symbol "F#E" with a slur over it.

Handwritten musical notation on a five-line staff, showing a few notes in a lower register.

Handwritten musical notation on a five-line staff, showing a few notes.

Handwritten musical notation on a five-line staff, showing a few notes.

Handwritten musical notation on a five-line staff, showing a few notes.

Handwritten musical notation on a five-line staff. It starts with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The notes are G, B, D, F, A, with a slur over them. Below the staff, the text "G - VER" is written. At the end of the staff, there is a handwritten chord symbol "I - N" with a slur over it.

Handwritten musical notation on a five-line staff, showing a few notes.

Handwritten musical notation on a five-line staff, showing a few notes.

Handwritten musical notation on a five-line staff, showing a few notes.

Handwritten musical notation on a five-line staff, showing a few notes.

MADE IN U.S.A.
NO. M-25 10 STAVE
1995 B'WAY, N. Y.

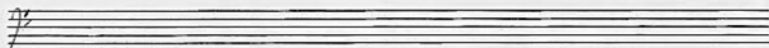
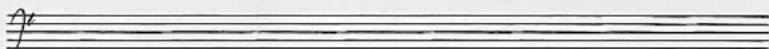
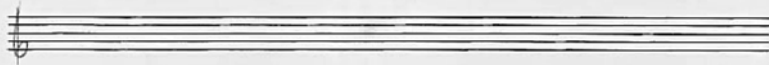
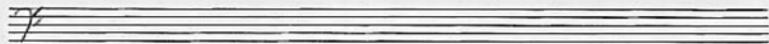
MADE IN U. S. A.

Fire - p33

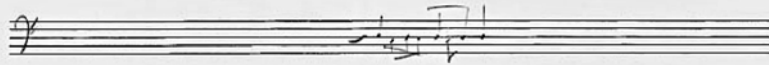
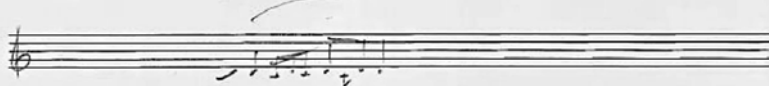
The image shows a handwritten musical score for a piece titled "Fire" on page 33. The score consists of ten staves of music, arranged vertically. The notation is primarily in treble clef, with some staves using a different clef (possibly alto or bass). The music features various rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. There are several annotations and markings throughout the score:

- Staff 1: A treble clef staff with a few notes and a slur. Below the staff, the text "5#8 - 0L" is written.
- Staff 2: A treble clef staff with a series of notes and a slur.
- Staff 3: A treble clef staff with a series of notes and a slur.
- Staff 4: A treble clef staff with a series of notes and a slur.
- Staff 5: A treble clef staff with a few notes and a slur.
- Staff 6: A treble clef staff with a few notes and a slur. Below the staff, the text "4# - 000" is written.
- Staff 7: A treble clef staff with a series of notes and a slur. At the end of the staff, there are some markings that look like "A#" and "++".
- Staff 8: A treble clef staff with a series of notes and a slur.
- Staff 9: A treble clef staff with a series of notes and a slur.
- Staff 10: A treble clef staff with a series of notes and a slur. At the end of the staff, there are some markings that look like "++" and "||".

First (last) First p34



A-I - I-you R R R



NO. M. 26 10 STAVE
1955 B-WAY, N. Y.

MADE IN U. S. A.

Filos - p35

The image shows a page of handwritten musical notation. At the top, it is titled "Filos - p35". The notation consists of six staves. The first staff is a treble clef with a whole note and the instruction "tch" written below it. The second staff is a bass clef with a whole note, the instruction "pizz" above it, and "Attack (no tone)" above a downward-pointing arrow. The third staff is a treble clef with a whole note, the instruction "pizz" above it, and a downward-pointing arrow. The fourth staff is a bass clef with a whole note, the instruction "pizz" above it, and a downward-pointing arrow. The fifth staff is a treble clef with a whole note, the instruction "pizz" above it, and a downward-pointing arrow. The sixth staff is a treble clef with a whole note, the instruction "pizz" above it, and a downward-pointing arrow. Below the sixth staff, there is a large handwritten mark that looks like a stylized "X" or "K" followed by the text "no chart". Below this are four more empty staves.

Flute - p36

Slow

I - you

BLA

ck

A - s



NO. M.28 10 STAVE
1695 B'WAY, N. Y.

MADE IN U. S. A.

Final - p 37

Handwritten musical notation on a five-line staff, featuring a treble clef and a few notes with a slur above them.

RA - UCT

Handwritten musical notation on a five-line staff, featuring a bass clef and a few notes with a slur above them.

Handwritten musical notation on a five-line staff, featuring a treble clef and a few notes with a slur above them.

Handwritten musical notation on a five-line staff, featuring a treble clef and a series of notes with various slurs and ties.

Handwritten musical notation on a five-line staff, featuring a treble clef and a few notes with a slur above them.

Handwritten musical notation on a five-line staff, featuring a treble clef and the text "Final" written across the staff.

Empty five-line musical staff.

Empty five-line musical staff.

Empty five-line musical staff.

Empty five-line musical staff.

Fino - p 38

Handwritten musical notation on a grand staff. The top staff contains notes with lyrics: "ES - VER - R HO - E - IPS DE CO - COE".

Handwritten musical notation on a single staff, likely a bass line.

Handwritten musical notation on a single staff, likely a bass line.

Handwritten musical notation on a single staff, likely a bass line.

Handwritten musical notation on a single staff, likely a bass line.

Handwritten musical notation for a Bassoon (Bn.) part. Lyrics include: "LI - THE RA - RA - RAIN AND RAIN".

Handwritten musical notation for an Alto Saxophone (As) part.

Handwritten musical notation on a single staff with lyrics: "BOU WO WO WO WO WO WO WO WO WO WO WO WO WO WO WO WO".

Handwritten musical notation on a single staff with performance instructions: "all ^{incl. 3rd} at 1st entrance on this then at approx. same tempo - then slower". Below this, it says "enter = As/B, T 1, 2".

NO. M. 28 10 STAVE
1095 B'WAY, N. Y.

MADE IN U. S. A.

Baritone goes on as SAKBUTS GOING SLOWER & WITH PATTERN "A FADING RAINBOW"

G
R
A
D
U
A
L
L
Y

LUK 12

AND CHIN GOES IMAEB CROWDS - ON IM-A - be

O - N THE BURNING BU - SIT IN FLA - ME

ST - NA - I WI - TH TO - RCHES

OVER HEAD WERE - KINDLING SPIR - ES

BE - LOW I - T LI - CKING LIGHT RAYS -

I - N - SI - DE IT THE DO - MAIN OF SE - R - RA - FIA

M
O
D
E
R
A
T
O

WRO ARE - NT BURST THROU

FROM - IN THE SWEAT THEY SWEA - T

A FI - VE RIVER FLOW OF LI - GHT WHOSE STREAMS

ARE - CUR - DS OF SNOW THE FS - VEIL DOESN'T

p 40

SPEAKER

Boil off snow is — — — — — itself not dissolved by

snow for Kiyore's maker snow cro-A-1012

or-dere's peace between the fe-ye-ye ye ye

BACK TO SEVER

ye-ye ye er a — — — — — no the snow

o judge ment by fe-ye-ye ye-ye-ye-ye

Hold as long as possible

Hold as long as possible

Hold as long as possible

Hold as long as possible

- p42

Handwritten musical score for the piece "JUDGEMENT By SNOW". The score is written on a grand staff consisting of five staves. The top staff is a vocal line, starting with a treble clef and a common time signature. It features a melodic line with a long slur over the first four measures, followed by a few more notes. The lyrics "JUDGEMENT By SNOW" are written below the notes. A circled "0" is written above the final note. The second staff is a bass line, starting with a bass clef and a common time signature, with a few notes and a slur. The third staff is a piano line, starting with a treble clef and a common time signature, with a few notes and a slur. The fourth staff is a piano line, starting with a bass clef and a common time signature, with a few notes and a slur. The fifth staff is a piano line, starting with a bass clef and a common time signature, with a few notes and a slur. The word "pp" is written below the fifth staff.

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Eileen Myles

September 7

The vagina of my life
is so stretched
out. I thought
where am i
hundreds of my students
landed in Brooklyn
like we did last week
but it was another
church. I saw the fear
in their faces
as I was climbing
the gates and demanding
we make
the next connection
it was an old church
the congregation
was various ecstatic
yes that's what
this is a little
crazy lost poor
everyone they needed
an assignment. When
did we last meet
when do we
do it again
is this just sentimental
am I the priest
describe the congregation
that's what I'll ask
it was a little
like Qalandiya
the churches were
trains, they were
nations, homeless

they were punishment
we seemed to gather
here. Describe
us that's the only
hope. Why are
we out, why aren't
we home, no it's us
and I know
you very well
you seem to be
following me, I brought
you here, what
do I want. It's city-less
it's godless, it's fatherless
its motherless it
always feels the
same meeting at monuments
god asking for something
maybe. I lost my
notebook, my computer
died, I smell like
fear, I didn't get any
sleep. I wanted
to be here. I couldn't
keep watching that
show, I finished
the book about
trees. Everything's stone
in the name of god
but it's just us, pointless
at night, I'm not
really at the helm, I
can't be blamed, did
I ask you here, I just
woke up like
everyone in this
swarm, it's my disease
that I think
I'm responsible, that it's

a class, it's not
a reading, I'm not
in charge. I said
over there. Think
Think, give them a pur-
pose, why did you
come here tonight, tell
me what you see,
tell me who we are
what we want. Come
back here again, next week
or sometime
Show me what you
did. Only the
shrink asked
if I said this to every-
one. What did I
say. Am I saying
it now. Is that
why we're here. Tell
me next week, next
month, next year.
I'll send a mailing
Tomorrow. You'll know
when to come. I'll
know who you are
I won't forget
anyone. If I
seemed like I would
always be there
well it just
isn't true. You know
at a certain
point you hate
the theme song
but you have
to go on. This
is after that.
This is next. What

did he like. I
guess everyone's
asking you that
now. What do I
like. All of us
out there at night
not even looking
for god. Looking for religion.
Not even that. Looking
at churches. Meeting
there. Looking
back. To see what
I want. You can
make me choose.
It's not that I have
a purpose. It's more
like I don't want
you to think I don't
have one. It's not
that I don't have
sex. Don't like it.
I forget where
it happens. I can
fix that. I can
start while I
travel. Just having
a little bit
with everyone. The next
time I see you
all

Heather Nagami

Soliloquy Against the Sun

I've stood with those who favor sun,
holding fast to one another, faces proud,
reaching with their sisters, their brothers.
They bask, they glow, they think they
know. I've stood with those who favor light,
how subtly it seeps into the morn'. Its glimmer
sprinkles low, then nimbly trickles up thick
green trunks, revealing powder-white dandelion
puffs. I've stood with those drunk with rays
and drinking as they choked on rays. I've
held them through their coughs and hacks
as sun burned out their emerald eyes,
as sun burned out their emerald hearts.

I, myself, prefer the dark.

A pulse of thickness in the air, the skittering
of deer mice hustling to their nests,
the distant swish of lizard paunches dragging
through our ranks, traffic ants and busy beetles
readying their shelters. I prefer the chill
that brings such preparations—the lone dove's
feathers ruffling up, the snail emerging from her
slumber. I prefer the gray smoke clouds that
trudge across our stubborn skies, the rowdy
winds that wisp us forth, forecasting
a raucous rain. Oh, I prefer the dark,
where the hushed slug trudges along,
where the soul-sweet songbird hides his song.

Sawako Nakayasu

In a Plastic Bag of Jell-O with Nine Other Girls

Once the rods in my eyes adjust to the gradations of green, I regret it. Things were easier when I couldn't see. Those choices are no longer available.

I inhale Jell-O, trusting I will get better at this, assuming the other nine girls have been here longer and they, too, struggled at first. I interrupt the writhing movements of Girl J, who looks like she is trying to appear to be having a good time. I ask, to no one in particular, if this Jell-O is safe to eat. No one answers.

The Jell-O is more muscular than I recall. Have my own muscles atrophied so much as to create this perception, or is it the fault of this minimal-gravity state of being suspended in Jell-O, or were they having a drought. No one answers. Did I ever manage to ask.

I see a sequence of cubes that might function as a staircase leading me up and out of this place. But it's not that I wanted to leave. If only I could find Girl D, we could sell this thing, all of us contained, as a work of art and make a Jell-O-ton of money. Or if I could find Girl H and get a hold of a camera and document ourselves releasing emotions into gelatinous sugar, then smuggle the footage out of the bag, the rescue crew will know what to bring

when they decide to come fetch us. I take a deep Jell-O breath and start to shout, *Has anybody seen ...* but then I remember that I am hoping to avoid Girl E, who is likely to blame this whole situation on me.

Although the exact hue cannot be ascertained until they pull us one by one out of the green Jell-O, I do suspect that my skin is turning green. Some girls are darker, some lighter. Their faces, their feet, all of their skin is changing color and I vaguely hope that I might come out of this a little sweeter. Meal preparation or science project, I bet we are not even going to make the evening news.

Camilla Nelson

One Day This Glass Will Break (After Cornelia Parker)

[Please see following page]



Paul Nelson

The Day the Weather Decided to Die

(After a Haida tale told by Robert Bringhurst)

*On hearing the wooden rumble of thunder
we realize that we are situated below the
platform of the sky.*

– Ramón Gomez de la Serna

What constitutes a good family they say
and give instructions to servants
under the backdrop of the hugest
sucking sound in history prelude to
when the wind'd no longer rumble
from under the skirt of the great Ma
no longer float a blue heron's
Xacho-side lumber no longer
sustain.

Age of celebrity tattoo
news of the rise of Yurok
Duwamish Tsimshian Haida
Puyallup Muckleshoot Musqueam
of tornadoes hurricanes
earthquakes tsunamis bee silence
Fukushima and Fukushimas to
come.

The weather born out of cockleshell
embryo or out of snot, weather that
hunts birds and sends winds out in
the skins of blue jay, weather that
steals hats of campesinos
(compassions) for kicks weather
that would sprout houses when

adopted by a master carver weather
that would be a scholar of carving.

The weather when painted would sit
facing the sea would weep for owls
with spots and the new northward
range of dolphin's neighborhood
weather that would warn of the Big
Ones who think of biting weather
whose big fish story is dried halibut
and waits and waits and waits for a
shift in settler rituals.

It could start
with *today is a good day to die* could
start with the inheritance of the
campesino (compression) who
opened up about his daily prayers
for humility or when he the one
born in a cockleshell wd dress as
wren & sit way above the sea as a
cumulus cloud waiting to see what
his latihan would bring: dance,
song, chant or something more
cathartic just beyond his out
stretched wings.

Remember: crow's yr brother,
stumps never lie, we
hold up
the sky.

6:34P – 6.25.11

from *Evolutionary Letters*

(Written after Diane di Prima's *Revolutionary Letters*.)

The 60s don't seem that long ago to me, but the advent of the Age of Aquarius seems to have hit a snag given the mindlessness of social media, of U.S. American politics and the general ignorance regarding the 6th great extinction event. The latter does not seem to have yet captured the interest of those beings it will affect most, homo sapiens. The anarchist tribe of San Franciscans, active in the late 60s, early 70s and known as the Diggers, seem more prophetic now than ever, with their anti-capitalist/pro-bioregional/creative ethos.

But fifty years offers a good amount of time for hindsight and the *Revolutionary Letters* that Diane di Prima sought to use to illuminate Digger methods, create a vision and rally the faithful are ripe for an update. So, taking each individual letter as a guide, I have begun to write my own versions amplifying those sentiments of hers that were spot on, offering alternatives when they weren't, or just using each one as a jumping off point for my own excursion into the moment.

It is not surprising to me that the most lasting innovation from the counter-culture days of the 60s and early 70s has been the organic food movement and that a stance toward poem-making was articulated by two of the main poets of that era, contemporaries of di Prima's, Robert Duncan and Denise Levertov would also be called "Organic." The poems that follow are organic, in the sense that they find their own path. We might say "free range" now, or understand the poems as experiments in consciousness, received as gifts of the moment from the myriad energy sources that find their way into the consciousness of each poem the way the coot's bright beak tips over when the next February wind arrives on the huge lake. The emphasis in composition is on action and response rather than plotting. An attempt to explore that edge of consciousness where "I" and "not I" merge, or where self, becomes Self. It's no easy task, and quite an exhilarating feeling when at moments is achieved.

2:36pm - 2.2.2018 Rainier Beach (Seattle),
Cedar River Watershed

#2

The separateness of an individual they taught us

a parlor trick of the worst kind of patriarchal
narcoleptic fog fearing the very sun transforms it

a constellation, we are to experience grace
as waves, your synapses fire along with a hundred

other monkeys renew ourselves
with each rose breath, each full body shudder

with the all grace

a spine can handle

//

Tribe

can be bioregion, or shared life hack tactic
sense a destiny with the density
of 130,000 or so of you

& your closest pussy-hatted sisters

have you in they bellies, they

at your back, each breath a peace breath, imagine
six liters of wind for peace every 4th second.

9:21am - 2.28.17

#3

three days of bottled water they say, in case of
earthquake, in case of Trump, in case

white supremacist coup can make it past the West
Wing, past Hayden, ID, past ID real estate agents

specialize in survivalism (ask NPR)

or better yet, keep that backpacking water filter
handy

get off the grid already

become an orchardist

yes, kale

yes 12 volt and micro-hydro and putting a face on
your food already
not just the yuppie picnic opportunity they call
Farmer's Market but that

better than safeway

//

yes to frijoles (pinto y negro)
sí to arroz

Himalayan sea salt, chicory to stretch the coffee
to chill the liver. Post-Truth times, Trump-
proofing require cool liver, turmeric

if only butter

we'll take canned coffee canned salmon, sure
tuna, miso for every day in the world

eradicate every last food desert in Cascadia

stash acupuncture needles

learn LI 20, migraine hotspots to needle,
remember it's dark too before birth

//

it's ok to costco 20 lb white rice (easier to digest)

20 lb buckwheat flour, gluten-free pancake mix

5 lb dehydrated soy milk (we'll have latté
security) (powdered coconut milk ok)

5 lb Himalayan Sea Salt

4 three liter bottles kirkland olive oil

pine nuts, sun dried tomatoes, walnuts, cashew
(bits ok) no filberts, store nuts in freezer

Danish squash

maple syrup, jerky (tofu jerky ok)

swap out in 6 months or donate to food bank

//

remember when we weren't this fat
and never as pampered as the "average U.S.
American"

at whom we would not laugh were there no
video games, cellphone connections, pizza
how the imaginations of citizens of this continent,
descendants of settlers've been addled

but a few rose breaths, a few exquisite corpses &
reassurance. Sadomasochistic materialism soon

loses its grip

//

bics to flick

Ohio blue tips

propane for the getaway van

backup (or solar) chargers for cellphone and old fashioned
flashlights

wind-up radios tuned to LPFM (they might come
in handy afterall)

beeswax candles and tea lights

a reminder: candles rather than darkness curses

& complaining lowers your inner state, your
immune system. The silver lining's around here
somewhere and evil has no power when one is
one with the Tao.

12:52pm - 2.28.17

#11

drive across Columbia River basin

past Hanford's nuclear security gate
w/ my beloved,
bebop on the box, mighta been Bobby
Hutcherson or Gary Burton Tanglewood '63
through Wallula Gap to Walla Walla
find the electric smile of an Appaloosa-
raising Kiot gave up meat
after his 3rd heart attack blending
morning berries for breakfast, cd drink
his salad for lunch
could rent to Abuela's Cocina for more but
he's been a coyote capitalist hacking it since long
before The Charles Potts Magic Windmill Band
sang "I Live in My Car"
before there was a homeless
population King county size of Woodinville

& that's what leads to hacking any system
when bread or roofs or water's scarce & what's
under the hood of this mode? Projection Garcia'd
say, then spice the frijoles.

How to be left/progressive and for something
for the antifa scares me and gulags are
constructed by the left & right & especially by
Tariq Ali's Extreme Centre, so what's a double
master'd Virgo to do (besides season the beans)
besides make this veil of soul-making work for all
heterotrophs? Sam Rayburn knew:

"It takes a carpenter to build a barn but any
jackass can knock it down"

& my ass-jacking days are done, the homemade
bread's in the freezer

the kid in independent school
the writing desk in a water-view condo
the TV at the bar where it belongs
a short walk through the mist we've made
attempting construction of the anthropocentric
spring (seemed like a good idea at the time)
wondering what kind of Missoula Flood
Gaia's got in mind for us now.

8:48a - 6.20.17
Summer Solstice

#14

are you prepared to hide
in yr home a Mexican meaning
an indigenous American from
south of the Gadsden Purchase,
prepared to follow the call of
post-Empire, a post-colonial
way of being in the world
think of yourself as Cascadian
first, still pay taxes but renounce
this war (these wars) & the next
& the next & realize it's all one
violent endless occupation (here too)
& all mammals are equal but some
more lizard-brained than others & these
the ones shot-calling for the
oligarchy. You wanted national
health insurance & now settle
for a non-toxic biosphere & a way out
for your progeny. Wood-chopping, candle-
lighting, water-bringing, kale-growing, off-
gridding, prayer-making everlovingkindness, yes
somehow even to "them."

3:12pm - 8.16.17

The Property Tax

Around the age of ten I was stunned to learn of the existence of the property tax. What? My parents had to pay the city a certain amount of money every year, and if they didn't do it they would lose our house and yard? I had always assumed that you bought a property and that was that. Why should one keep paying a tax on what one owns? It was outrageous. I decided then and there to stake out a small portion of our front yard and to declare it independent of the city, the state, and the federal governments. I would secede.

But I didn't know how to secede. I stood there for a moment and then went into the house. I asked my mother, but she didn't know how to secede, either. And, as for the property tax, she just shrugged her shoulders and went on washing the dishes.

At the root of my problem — or one of my problems — was my assumption that things didn't change. Yes, summer came and went, but then it came back and went again, and again. I went to third grade, then fourth grade, and so on, but it all boiled down to going to school, the same school. My mother was my mother and my father was my father. Our dog barked.

It was the onset of adolescence that removed permanence from my life. Puberty didn't have to change everything, it simply had to change me, and through me everything was then variable, like the Roman empire, like every empire, like happiness. Since then, accepting change, especially in the form of decline, has been a struggle for me. I have kept the same car for sixteen years, keeping it in good repair, pretending that it is as good as new, unwilling to face its slow skid toward the junkyard. I have watched as my friends and loved ones made a similar skid toward the graveyard, always calling up my optimism to cushion, until the last moment, my shock at their arrival there. No wonder that when I look in the mirror I am surprised to see a strange old man looking back at me, wondering who *I* am.

Optimism is a wonderful thing. It, along with sexual instinct, has fueled the human race and made possible the rise of civilizations. (Even my describing civilization as a “rise” shows optimism.) Old people turn their eyes onto young people and mutter, rather vaguely, “Don’t ever get old,” but they usually don’t go into detail, for they sense that doing so would instill a horror and disgust that would poison the young ones, a fate that they themselves were spared by *their* elders. No, it’s better to let the young ones have their dreams, their joys, their optimism, no matter how illusory, from your bony point of view, they might be. After all, if life is but a dream, why not make it as pleasant a dream as possible? Why not do as your mother did, when she shrugged her shoulders and went on washing the dishes?

Shin Yu Pai

From *Hybrid Land*

recall Country Crock

recall Ocean Mist

recall Frontera

recall Nestle

recall SanLu

recall Campbell

recall Kellogg

recall Kroger

I remember my mother peeling waxed skins from store-bought apples.
I remember apples we cultivated — their skins dull, form misshapen.
I remember beak-sized holes pecked into unripe peaches.
I remember the sweet smell of guavas rotting on the ground.
I remember pulling chives from the garden with my father.
I remember homegrown loofah gourds drying in sun.
I remember the family dog shaded by grape arbor.
I remember a baby slug leeches onto bright red strawberry.

recall beefsteak
recall capsicum
recall alfalfa
recall savoy
recall groundnut
recall pistachio
recall white bread
recall chicken egg

from *Heirloom*

BOUNTY

gleaned & given
thousands of pounds
of unsellable fruit
circulate to city
food banks



HEIRLOOM

belonging passed
between generations
a historic homestead
a grove of fruit-bearing trees
totems of memory — an apple,
all the way from Denmark



EYE

apple of my



Lars Palm

(i am not your silent spring)

i.m Rachel Carson

are we heading
for the eve of destruction
& if so of how many
more peoples than our
selves? we may assume
the cockroaches will evade
it & sit in the remains of
our parliaments & banks
giggling at us

having met quite a few i imagine them giggling rather than laughing

*

global warming by all means. it is happening & it will (continue to) be devastating. polar ice caps melting in the slightly longer run threatening to drown islands & change coastlines in most parts of the world. where it's warm & sunny there will be more of that. where it's cold/cool & damp there will be more of that. those who live in the path of tropical hurricanes will get more of them, & potentially stronger. since at least the 1980s we have been warned about sunbathing due to the growing holes on the ozone layer. long before that it became apparent that it's (to put it mildly) unhealthy to live — or at least breathe — in the larger cities. ah, but we all know this. & if we're seriously interested in the subject we know the main cause of the problem. so what are we actually doing to, first, halt it & in the longer run reverse it?

we all know this
it's not knowledge we lack

*

relax, young lady. i will be among those who strive to make sure you will have an environment to live in. it might be a massive task though, but not impossible for that doesn't exist. it just takes longer. how long do we have?

*

we
would advise
more saints to

take the bus
instead of
driving

*

Sadiq Khan, the current mayor of London, has frozen all fares until 2020 to make it more attractive using public transport

*

in 1958 a book was conceived out of a spring with no bird song. in 1962 it was born & spawned an environmental movement. in 1992 i read it for the first time. it made me sad, terrified, angry & happy in the same breath

*

not sure how
silent this spring
will be but around
3 am on december 22
in southeastern london
there are a handful
of birds having a long
chat

*

we are younger than the mountains by the way

*

inside a plastic
(now take your pick
of) bag or whale is
a beach. a small one
far off what is known
as the beaten track
peaceful but for those
loud exclamations
of the guy fishing there
discovering lake in bright
red across the surface

*

no poetry after this. no poetry after that. yes poetry after this. yes poetry
after that. poetry despite this. poetry despite that. poetry because of this.
poetry because of that. Poetry

*

snowman in
venice on the
first day of march
with europe drowned
in snow & deep freeze
& the cause? a kink
in the jet stream
& the cause of that?
do we have have the
courage to act on
what we know?

*

the end of the world? don't think so. maybe the world as we know it. & yes
someone or other is likely to write a poem about that too. none of us,
though

*

after
the
apocalypse
we
go
for
a
beer

Michael Palmer

Look

The light of dawn is before us
the blind ballerina told me
as I peeled the stain of sleep from my eyes

and after me the deluge, you will see,
said the blind ballerina in flames
spinning and spinning in place,

and all the machines, she said all
the machines of death are beautiful
as they refashion earth and sky

and forge screams out of songs.
And all, she said all
the banned books are blessed,

the burning books are blessed,
look at how they dance in the flames,
look at how they light the city square

and warm the faces assembled there,
look at how their words
ascend through the thick air.

And caught in the rising wind,
she said, look at how they spin and spin.
They could land anywhere.

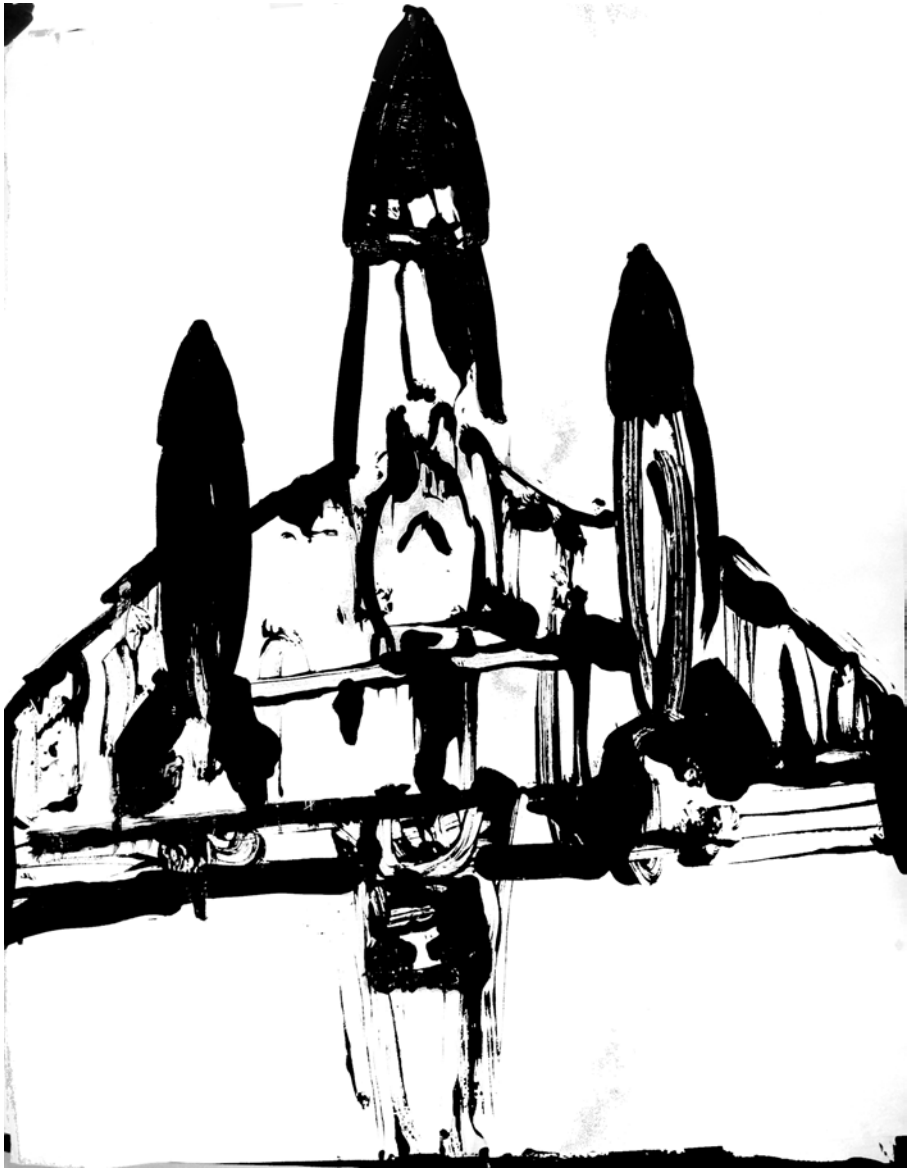
Stephen Parlato

Three Images

**Deliver
Enough
The Lost**

[Please see following pages]

849





The lost will find
one another.



Dale Pendell

Nesting

Somehow

I'd left my notebook
full of all my new poems
on the ground right on
a yellow-jacket nest
and had fallen asleep
in the autumn sun.

Now the wasps thought
the poems were theirs, were
part of their home,
the wasps
who had bright red spots
on their sides
buzzed me when I got close
and gradually, day after day,
attached new paper, mud, combs,
termites moved in, a layer
of dirt collected on top,
grass seeds sprouted.

Mice chewed pages, birthed
new litters, spiny brush fields closed
into thickets, barbed wire from fences
a hundred years old,
rusted, intertwined
with the brush.
Another winter came,
my beard turned white,
ants chewed tunnels,
deer bounded away
through tall trees,
sugar pines dropped cones
which bounced, the river
cut canyons, the pages like outcrops, ledges,

tiny geologists
 hiked there, talked
of terrane docking, stratigraphy,
 a race of parasites
posted signs: "Private Property, Keep Out"
 thick sediments collected;
Revolution after revolution
 dissolved the last trace
of paper — curlicues of ink
 floated free,
mixed in the air like wisps of smoke,
 circled the world,
sought refuge in oak boughs, oracular springs,
 knucklebones: half a letter,
hint of a word.

Ghost Dance

Long lines of men and women,
children in hand, arms full of parcels and bags —
the roads jammed — cars parked and abandoned,
a fine orange dust rising:
 fire in the hills.

Smoke seeped from books
and the earth cracked, one woman read
aloud. People wiped their eyes,
seeking some last mythic oasis.
A desperate fish leapt from the sea,
and, like a letter from a lover, brought hope.

 Ashes rained and twirled,
machines churned up breaks,
 clang of steel,
cathedral chant,
 dust of stones,
robot hum:
 soldiers crowded in the surf,
fire ants on the move.

On the Sixtieth Day There Was Much to Mourn

In Afghanistan, a farmer, shot through the neck,
bled to death on the sand.
A thousand miles to the west
the murders were in the thousands.
Sparrows fall, a child is being beaten —
whose dream is this?
By the pond we burned a cup of oil.
In the Gulf of Mexico
they burned ten thousand barrels,
more oil in the water, on the beaches, and in the air.
When I start my car, I'm pleased
to hear the engine purr at idle.
At the pond, where we have come to swim,
a dragonfly floats, drowned. Others
dash above, dipping quick wings.
Far beyond Rigel a joyful star explodes,
engulfing its planets.
I breathe in. I breathe out,
and pull a bramble thorn from my foot.
In the mud, cattails, cut three weeks ago,
already putting up new shoots:
black smoke thick above the water.

Remembering Libraries

Someday the books will be gone —
the libraries burned, rotted with mildew,
or sunk into the earth from their own
accumulated weight — missed only
by a few scholars: “Would that we could find
another fragment ... Sappho, Arkilochus.”

Freed from texts, beguiled nonetheless
by our own hallucinations, new myths
setting the wet clay of memory:
crickets, sandhill cranes, or
alpine volcanoes, snow-covered, above
a pristine fjord — women’s bodies uplifting
the soft Sonoma hills.

A thousand feet of silt has flattened
the Valley. Just what is: the only
language left to us now. Or
“Once, long ago ...”
the fire burns low.
A coyote might howl, if we
are lucky. That you and I
found no way to build a world
atop the destruction of the old one —
to hear the song that Turtle sings, earless,
when the moon is darkest.

Thus the hills return to valleys —
sandpipers, vast tidelands —
awaiting the new mountains
of an icy, distant eon:
cranes, or geese, a glyph —
crickets, a cool summer, the elk
returned, grizzlies, wolves —
whatever is left
when we are finally done.

& COUNTING

[Please see following pages]

A COUNTING

(A war-in-progress)

Greco-^{Poems} Persian Wars

^{Poems} Wars of Diadochi

Syrian Wars ^{Poems}

Punic Wars ^{Poems}

Roman-^{Poems} Persian Wars

Roman-Parthian Wars ^{Poems}

Roman-Sassanid Wars ^{Poems}

Byzantine-Sassanid Wars ^{Poems}

Jewish-Roman Wars ^{Poems}

Iberian Reconquista War ^{Poems}

Three Hundred and Thirty

Five Years' War ^{Poems}

Arauco War ^{Poems}

Hundred Years' War ^{Poems}

Punic Wars ^{Poems}

Eighty Years' War ^{Poems}

Karin Conflict ^{Poems}

Korean War ^{Poems}

Afghanistan War¹

Guatemalan Civil War ^{Poems}

^{Poems} Wars of the Roses

51 years stanza of blank verse

47 years lines

106 years examples of enjambent

18 years caesura

694 years iambic pentameter feet

283 years pages left unnumbered

162 years manuscript - Tear - stained

236 years hymning lines

70 years words beginning with 'w'

770 years unbroken stanza

355 years pages missing words

290 years stanza containing the word 'war'

116 years lines that do not mention war

82 years syllables that rhyme with war

80 years line pages

66 years occupations in the margins related to war

65 years words needed to write poem

37 years & counting words

36 years lines that mention love

32 years words that rhyme with water

M. Nourbese Philip

First War of Scottish Independence	<i>Poem</i>	32 years	<i>linked poems</i>
Aceh War	<i>Poem</i>	31 years	<i>haikus</i>
Thirty Years' War	<i>Poem</i>	30 years	<i>Sonnets</i>
Portuguese Restoration War	<i>Poem</i>	28 years	<i>breath pauses during recitation</i>
Peloponnesian War	<i>Poem</i>	27 years	<i>revisions of poem 27 stanzas long</i>
Angolan Civil War	<i>Poem</i>	27 years	<i>Poets writing one word each of poem</i>
Livonian War	<i>Poem</i>	25 years	<i>metaphors</i>
The Lebanese Civil War	<i>Poem</i>	15 years	<i>chants of open vowel sounds</i>
Great Northern War	<i>Poem</i>	21 years	<i>dactyls</i>
Vietnam War	<i>Poem</i>	19 years	<i>quatrains</i>
War on Terror	<i>Poem</i>	15 years	<i>bursts too heavy for the tongue to lift</i>
Napoleonic Wars	<i>Poems</i>	12 years	<i>references to 'le sang'</i>
Samaritan Revolt	<i>Poems</i>	71 years	<i>partially burnt pages</i>
Muslim Conquests	<i>Poems</i>	133 years	<i>manuscript pages with word 'ainuqab'</i>
Byzantine-Arab Wars	<i>Poems</i>	371 years	<i>moments of caught breath during recitation</i>
Khazar-Arab Wars	<i>Poems</i>	87 years	<i>recited of one book of poetry</i>
Byzantine-Bulgarian Wars	<i>Poems</i>	675 years	<i>poems destroyed</i>
Rus-Byzantine Wars	<i>Poems</i>	213 years	<i>willanellas</i>
Byzantine-Seljuk Wars	<i>Poems</i>	260 years	<i>love poems</i>
The Crusades	<i>Poem</i>	196 years	<i>poems praising war</i>
World War II	<i>Poem</i>	6 years	<i>poems that must be recited at the outbreak of war</i>

M. Nourbese Philip

K2

Byzantine-Ottoman Wars	Poems	154 years	end-stopped lines
Russo-Turkish Wars	Poems	242 years	line breaks
Second Hundred Years War	Poem	126 years	run-on lines
Russo-Persia Wars	Poems	106 years	Panorama that say nothing about war
Turkish War of Independence	Poem	4 years	blank pages
Sudanese Civil Wars	Poems	60 years & counting	prohibited news
Congo Wars	Poems	59 years & counting	lines that stain the tongue
American Civil War	Poem	3 years	books of war poetry that mention love
Algerian Wars	Poems	8 years	lines that mention oranges
Tunisia War	Poem	3 years	news containing allegories of war
Second Sudanese Civil War	Poem	12 years	rhyming stanzas all mentioning war
Yar	Poem		
Angolan War of Independence	Poem	13 years	stanzas per poem
Bosnian War	Poem	3 years	lines that mention death in war
First Indochina War	Poem	8 years	syllables per line
Guinea-Bissau War of Independence	Poem	11 years	words that must appear in any poem on war
Kenyan Mau-Mau Uprising	Poem	8 years	mentions of women
Nambian War of Independence	Poem	22 years	women poets chronicling death of women in war
World War I	Poem	4 years	attempts to write a poem to end all wars poems
Philippine American War	Poem	14 years	lines of longing for meeting soldiers written by mothers
Portuguese Restoration War	Poem	28 years	mentions of white doves

M. Nourbese Philip K3

<p><i>Poems</i></p> <p>Wars of Scottish Independence South African War 01</p> <p><i>Poems</i></p> <p>Liberalism</p> <p>Wars of Three Kingdoms</p> <p>Opium Wars <i>Poems</i></p> <p>Unification Wars of Arabia <i>Poems</i></p> <p>Arab-Israeli Conflict <i>Poem</i></p> <p>Sino-Japanese Wars <i>Poems</i></p> <p>The War on Drugs <i>Poem</i></p> <p>The Trojan War <i>Poem</i></p> <p>The War Against <i>Poem</i></p> <p>Aboriginal Americans</p> <p>French and Indian Wars <i>Poems</i></p> <p>The Syrian Civil War <i>Poem</i></p>	<p>61 years monosyllabic words including war</p> <p>30 years hours-time taken to read a single poem on love</p> <p>60 years verses that mention kings</p> <p>21 years rhyming couplets</p> <p>30 years characters of the world 'love'</p> <p>68 years times one war poem was recited</p> <p>51 years attempts to recite one poem</p> <p>44 years & counting missing lines of poetry</p> <p>10 years navies who have abandoned war for poetry</p> <p>398 years & counting missing lines mentioned in one poem</p> <p>74 years ballads</p> <p>4 years & counting lines to be repeated over & over & over</p>
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M. Nourbese Philip

K4

All That Sap (a love poem)

Sadly, Darylⁱ is not my boyfriend. All that fire on the lake while the dead moon walks in is maddening. He and his cutout smirk and pop-tart hair can take my drift anywhere. Oh yes, this sap, this trunk and twisted tree reaching for and up — all that tension in jeans and fruitcake - all of that unwrapping and happy tourniquets. They say that letter writing is a lost art and that the stars belong underground in a dome in a cave where the roots grow thin — where fresh cobalt water springs up from a cauldron at night. This is not to say that the morning twists, instead, it curls in a barrel. Wash, wring, repeat. A cat has nine lives and twice the lovers. All that hoarding and rebirth — best to simply eat apples. Nor can bees help it. They wake up in goo, chew through goo, and make more goo. Sometimes the poor things wake up in amber. And! In the nether reaches of a heartbeat, beyond the moon and Pluto (the one that once was and the one who still is), there is a waking for letting go. An airplane moves from here to East; there is a lag and we feel the time travel when we get off. We move from past to future tense and back to Venus with her sweaty toga (she has a closet). Glitter blooms even in winter. The American cheek reddens when the towel drops — it's just our way. In Australia someone else dreams of the redneck and his bazooka, and they open and unlock with their picks, or linger in the sweetness of a midnight earwig, and when they wake, they stroll to the pond and watch the tadpoles breathe. The scent, the moss, and the driftwood - all of it a language that runs down the chin, around the nape, and down the small of a back.

(R)evolution

The bees invade, and they do it slowly. First, they delete the alphabet – one letter at a time - so that over a period of 36,625 rotations, only the B, the E, and the Z remain. We don't seem to notice, and for now, BTW and BRB make sense — so do breakfast and bankruptcy. Borrowed time is also a thing to consider. We wake, turn it on, get in, get out. We don't feel the motion underfoot because we use two legs. We walk from here to Longs. It keeps our calves strong and our lungs working. The tonsils are another story. Don't worry, they drop off — so do all the people on the thirty-sixth floor. In fact, when the concrete finally erodes, everyone stands on equal wavelengths. All of us borrow letters to cheer. The bees are to blame, and the bees are to thank. They started with Etemenanki and chewed through each brick, one bite at time - then sold tickets to heaven and cartloads of pollen.

Imagine a different rubble — to live with, rather than for or on. Still, that is not for today or tomorrow or during our lifetime of rotations. The earth does not turn backward, it only moves in one direction and we with it. One word follows another and another and so on. The mirror is recollection is language is memory. Bees retrieve, collect, and preserve. The web is archive is psychic tap. We could predict-foretell-foreshadow-forewarn but for now, we are too busy with pencils and breaking or mouthing our P's. Thus, the mobility of erasers and slang. This is a problem for the alphabet, and so in the wake of collapse, we grow mute and learn to speak with our eyes again.

When the World Ends Up Sideways

Ask the steer or the cull; ask the horse about her ribs and her soft broken lips or the white foam lathering up her breastplate; ask the dog on his last day. The rolls of barbed wire and fence clips litter miles of blank paper. We spend days on the trail only to find it quiet again. The silent tree harbors its trunk knot tightly; while our mouths are rich in red shapes — no sugar no squares. All the pretty meaningless words slant sideways then twist in a violent downpour; ask the hindsight; ask the endnote. “Hands are for loving,” my mother tells the cat. “Our only job,” she says, “is to tie the severed ribbon.”

Dung Beetles, the Prince, and His Subjects

On Science Friday,ⁱⁱ dung beetles inch their way up and roll tiny balls of cow manure (god's warm incubator). The beetles roll in it; roll it into a perfect little sphere — a perfectly round Katamari sphere (Na na na na nana nana nana). “We adore Tulips,” says the prince's father, King of All Cosmos, “Roses are nice, but tulips are better. So very pure ...” The Prince loves his father; his father hates him. Did you know the Prince is really a beetle and that Sisyphus is the Crafty King who once rolled and rolled a perfectly round sphere in the dirt and up the tree and up the hill and up the mountain and up the tower and over the people and up and up and up? It all came crashing down. He started over and over again and again for all of eternity. But our happy dung beetles are smarter! Scientists glean beetle mania! Dung beetles captivate! Carrion Beetles, Leaf Beetles, Lady Bugs are beetles too; weevil beetles, rhino beetles, cowboy beetles, Cleopatra Beetles (think Egyptians. Think mummy-movie)! Dung beetles inspired Charles Darwin (this, to the bee's dismay). Dung beetles navigate: their eyes aiming for the sun, their eyes fixed on the milky way. Hooray! The Prince is off on a bug hunting field trip in little green rubber boots. His cousins follow in a neat little row: Ace and Colombo, Dipp and Havana, and Honey! They stomp in the muck with their pink and yellow and orange rubber boots. They bounce in a neat little row, skipping and hopping to the creek with buckets filled with various kinds of shite. The carrion beetles want to get there first! Hooray! There's a lot of onomatopoeia on the tour. Hooray! The writhing maggots want to play too. The carrion beetles eat the deer carcass, and when they die, the maggots eat them! Hooray! Lots of applause! Dung beetles have horns on their heads. They tunnel under dung pads. They tunnel deep and tunnel wide. They tunnel through eight feet of dirt; they tunnel through the muck of their own merry making.

Lunch on the Moon with John Ashbery

Mr. Ashbery shifts his weight in the lawn chair. We are on the curve in the shoulder looking over Mare Insularum (and why not)? The surface is simply another ocean of islands but dried up and filled with moon ash. Lights blink from the battery cartridges and the liquid cooling vents. We bend forward to give the oxygen tanks some space. I suppose the Pacific will look like this in another billion years despite our talent for chisel and saw. His voice echoes through the mic in his helmet. I adjust the frequency in mine for clarity. *It is the law to think now. To think becomes the law.*ⁱⁱⁱ In other words, don't think, because thinking makes it so. Mr. Ashbery retrieves the binoculars from a pocket in his spacesuit, and holding the thing to his helmet, he sweeps the landscape. There is no sound in space, no sky. Colors are muted, but only because the vast darkness envelops us. I follow his gaze over rock, debris, and moon scars. They cast shadows and dark streaks in the artificial light. *To think becomes the law*, he continues. *The dream of young and old alike moving together where the dark masses grow confused.* Yes — it's impossible to see around the corners without the right equipment. For all our knowing, the unknown causes duress. Even in history there are dark spaces that we cannot see. Everyone has an angle. It's maddening when one considers the number of possibilities. *We must drink the confusion, sample that other, concerted, dark effort that pushes not to the light, but toward a draft of dank, clammy air.* I think of the lava tubes 238,900 miles away. On Earth, in the middle of the ocean and on the Big Island, Kazumura's Cave stretches for forty-two miles running the breadth of Keaau and Paho. Volcanic debris pushed its way up and over, drilled through seamounts and created a natural drain pipe. The air is clammy. Behind, the way out, but also forward and further beyond where darkness twists and bends the walls. There must be bones in here. Above, beyond the wet ceiling, the hollow sound of traffic makes its way to Honokaa or Waimea under 50 miles an hour - not because the law deems it so, but because the pace mirrors the living. Fog forms rings around Mauna Kea and Mauna Loa. Over that, Earth's atmosphere rises up for hundreds of miles until the planet is a mere marble between gloved finger and thumb. *We have broken through into the meaning of tomb*, says Mr. Ashbery, and he hands over the binoculars. But what does all this have to do with (the words, the people, the bees), Mr. Ashbery? And without waiting, I answer the question. This is a function to explore — this darting in and out of dark unexplored regions. One word, one person, one bee must follow another to avoid the vacuum between spaces — it seems at

times an impossible task. Mr. Ashbery grins again and taps his helmet, *but the act is still proposed, (he points to the crater) before us, / it needs pronouncing.* And so, in the wake of the moon's curves, it becomes our task to omit and to express somehow that which we omit - pushing through the laws before us — the laws that demand the linear. We gaze out, across the ashen horizon. Earth hangs mid-sentence. *To formulate oneself around this hollow, empty sphere ...* The view takes my breath away. *To be your breath as it is taken in and shoved out* would remind us that one cannot exist without breath's tempo. *Then quietly,* without distraction, the air *would be as objects placed along the top of a wall:* a photograph, a battery jar, a hammer, a rusted pulley, oranges, shapeless wooden boxes, a pickup truck, *an open can of axle grease,* pavement, *two lengths of pipe.* We stare out at the vastness of an invincible sky - the stars are as far from the moon's surface as they are from Earth's, but somehow closer. His voice echoes again through helmet and mic, *we see this moment from outside as within.* It's about faith in what's inside that matters, I say, but faith is so damned intangible. *There is no need to offer proof.* Our oxygen tanks blink in the darkness and we simultaneously switch to the backup. Mare, I say — a great plane or the vast sea, not to be confused with Equuleus, which is not visible from where we stand. *Sure it is,* he says grabbing the portable console. He types in: "... and the mare gallops into view." Ashbery glances my way, and he laughs a new spirit into existence.

When the World Ends

The compulsive twist at space
behind the third building.

A twice-lined vest upturns at the horizon
— a boom-box on edge.

The dead wait at the bottom
— their arches give way to fathoms.

And still the bay remains
— lined at the edge with crippled living.

The mosquitoes dive at an angle
— the lease is left unchecked.

He loads the truck bed with boxes
and turns in the keys.

They speak with impending pauses
— the silence of it.

We are not pauses!
Silence simply took a U-turn.

They tread their endearments
carefully; her gravity transfixed

on the bridgeway — the warring
of it: an absurd disciple.

This business of waking
is slow.

It's all nonsense: metaphor, finger, thumb.
The dead wear khaki now.

In the finale, wings implode

while the juniper blooms in her pocket.

NOTES

i. For the fans of *The Walking Dead*.

ii. Inspired by a podcast recording I heard on NPR in the Fall of 2017. I was reminded by a Nintendo game called Katamari. Kirtley, Jordan. "When Dung Is What's for Dinner." *Science Friday*, Science Friday, 2017.

iii. The italicized wording in this piece belongs to: Ashbery, John. "The New Spirit." *Three Poems*, Ecco Press, 1989, pp. 4-5.

Deborah Poe

Reflection, 2018

I've been thinking a lot about the damage a binary way of being is to the fabric of our nation — and the planet — since the godforsaken election and all its aftermath. But my resistance to the binary did not arise with the daily savage violence of 45 and his cronies, or with the many government officials/people in power who have stood by and done nothing. That resistance started long ago, propelled by my status as an air force brat that moved every three to four years around the country.

I've spent much of my life naturally at odds with a binary way of thinking and being. I moved to a new place every three or four years growing up and as such did not always have the ease of safety, acceptance, and belonging within defined group boundaries. Over time I think I resisted easy social identification because that social identification was what I saw disconnecting human beings from one another.

Whether between family or in relation to broader communities local and global, I have spent a good chunk of my adult life trying to build rather than blow up the bridges, trying to connect people and ideas across chasms social, political, and cultural.

45 takes a binary way of being to a whole new level. A narcissist is a walking embodiment of us and them — a violent physical manifestation of the ugliness we must face fiercely for our country's and planet's well-being. Everything for the narcissist is oversimplified to serve the self.

It's not as if we weren't already operating in a culture that can't see other human beings as human beings. It's just that no American President has capitalized on this narcissistic, binary way of cultural being to this extreme. Each of us should be asking ourselves over the last year and a half what part we played in getting this corrupt and flagrantly dishonest person elected into one of the great leadership roles of the free world.

This is not a leader. It is a damaged child used to getting his way and doing anything to win, including reduction of humans in this country and how we

see or don't see them as individuals. Trump has repeatedly committed — in a wheel of thoughtlessness¹ — a rhetorical reduction of who we are as a country. Nuance requires critical thinking. Nuance requires us to see outside of black and white. Trump repeatedly reflects back to us the part of our society that's broken, including the inability to see beyond binary dichotomies.

A growing and very troubling number of news outlets drive binary-reinforcing news that serve the privileged few rather than the diverse individuals and country that we are. And they have actually been brutally and depressingly effective at convincing at least 20-25% of our population that caring about the well-being of other human beings is only something you do if you are a liberal do-gooder. Caring about other human beings has become a partisan issue.

Since last May, I transitioned out of my Associate Professor and Program Director role at Pace University. I “moved” to Seattle and lived out of suitcases for almost 5 months, as Karl, my partner, finished preparing our New York home for the sale of our house and the cross-country move. During all this, I was seeking my next career position and met with over 80 people in informational meetings alone (50% nonprofit, 30% public, 20% private sector) by November 2017.

What all those meetings gave to me was at least a marginally better sense of well-being because I now know just how many people are dedicated to making the world and their communities better places. These are people working every day to create conditions for us to see human beings as human beings.

At the UW Racial Ecologies conference last spring at UW, there was a group of nonprofits — Center for One Health Research, Duwamish River Cleanup, Idle No More WA, Got Green, and Women of Color Speak Out. It was important for me to hear their fierce acknowledgment that local environmental organizations have historically had primarily white leadership, pointing to the vital importance of us forging new paths in the internal and systemic work to create more opportunities and access to power for people of color.

At the Love at the Crossroads: Climate and Social Justice event last October, I saw how much work the organizers put into an event to help a predominantly white audience understand the kind of environmental injustices that communities of color are facing on a daily basis.

At Robin DiAngelo's lecture and workshop in December, DiAngelo helped complicate my thinking on what's at stake with a binary way of thinking — at what gets in the way of us being able to see one another as human beings. This country is not full of “bad racists” and “good non-racists.” That binary has occluded our ability to see our complicity in the systemic barriers that people of color confront daily. Racial injustice separates people from people.

My job search provided 80 buoys to help keep me afloat during this national debacle. These are my role models. The suffering that is happening as a direct result of the various actions taken by 45 and his administration is only going to get exacerbated over time. And things will most assuredly worsen for the ecosystems and populations already compromised in positions of powerlessness and marginalization. My role models show me that we desperately need new tactics to disrupt binary ways of being.

As a citizen in this country, I must do my part to elect people that are these kinds of examples — committed to non-binary ways of being and to seeing constituents as more than a demographic summary to be worked around with gerrymandering and voter suppression.

As a writer, I know my modality or kind of tactics must change — change by necessity. Change in desperation. Change by means of context. I've been so consumed with the geographic and professional upheaval that I'm still thinking about what this means and how it will translate in terms of my life as an artist, a writer, and advocate.

What I do know is that by using language to attempt to drive cultural shifts, we shake the latent politics of language up, regardless of medium, perhaps inspiring change, even if it's not change in our lifetime. Writers innovate, provoke, incite through language. I don't believe language is itself revolutionary, but I do believe writers can shake the foundations, driving long-term transformation.

As writers, we need to at least attempt to write ourselves out of this. We need to disrupt and challenge binary ways of thinking and being. We must radicalize ways of thinking and using language — a language that is bereft or unable to allow us, as a country, to live in connection. A binary way of thinking and being causes us to miss the beauty and possibilities of the lives in all of us.

NOTE

1. Of Adolf Eichmann, Hannah Arendt wrote: “It was a sheer thoughtlessness — something by no means identical with stupidity — that predisposed him to become one of the greatest criminals of that period” (*Eichmann in Jerusalem : a report on the banality of evil* 1963).

Stephen Ratcliffe

from w i n d o w

5.29

faint grey whiteness of sky above still black ridge
blue jay landing on black pine branch in foreground

space in painting, within which different aspect of
again, front and profile, angle begins with limited

saturated color organized into disparate structures
paints hyperactive world onto two-dimensional plane

pale grey whiteness of sky beside shoulder of ridge
white lines of waves breaking into mouth of channel

5.30

dream in unmade yellow and blue bed opposite window
man walking around on roof who doesn't want to jump

paint them again at home, think so now and then not
open, invisible interior, sphere turning into which

getting home at 3 AM after walking across Manhattan
prostitutes strung out on speed who knows what else

line of cloud in pale blue sky above shadowed ridge
whiteness of waves breaking across mouth of channel

5.31

light grey line of cloud above still shadowed ridge
cloud moving across moon above branch in foreground

for example here and now, field perceptual the last
means, less possibilities in part, express question

mother recalling 10-year old adopted son asking her
will Trump send me back to Ethiopia if he's elected

grey cloud in pale blue sky above shoulder of ridge
moon through clouds next to NO PARKING ANYTIME sign

6.1

first light coming into sky above still black ridge
waning white moon next to rose branch in foreground

having come into as such, as steps into view "look"
think of letter P, return to idea of picture, light

first man thinking drawing can be taught the second
reading van Gogh book for text rather than pictures

light coming into sky above black shoulder of ridge
whiteness of waning moon above point across from it

6.2

cloudless blue white sky above black plane of ridge
whiteness of moon next to rose branch in foreground

between points of space a distance, these relations
motion parallel to other, following, waves of light

woman next to grey car asking if man can paddle her
ashes out to channel at midnight sunrise or anytime

light coming into blue whiteness of sky above ridge
shadowed white waves breaking into mouth of channel

Language Matters

*“Tell me about the flood and the experience of standing
still surrounded by moving water”*

—Wendy Burk

What sustains me against the insistent onslaught of environmental violence and the terror of global climate change relentlessly ignored for more than half-a-century? Reading, writing, listening, conversing, *acting*, the forms of necessary response alternate in my attention. Language matters: the cajoling, congratulatory, castigating, challenging bent upon my elected representatives’ eyes and ears, to whom I address daily calls, letters, tweets, emails. I call in, call on, call out, call down, and call for. I write letters to the editors of local papers. I volunteer as a speech and newsletter writer for a local progressive candidate seeking to unseat our GOP representative. I organize rallies, make posters, and show up at rallies, draft and edit candidate questionnaires, and assist at and lead break-out discussions for a local Indivisible group. I write all the time, driven by sheer horror for the future, and a constant angry undertow at Trump and Co. for their myriad assaults on environmental protection and justice, on civil rights, immigration, privacy, education, healthcare, democracy. Let me just say it clear: decency.

I read all the time, read to know, to map, to encounter. To go else-wise from where I find myself. Environmental reports, policy analysis, news reports, poetry. Wendy Burk’s *Tree Talks*, Bhanu Kapil’s *The Vertical Interrogation of Strangers* and *Schizopbhrene*. Brenda Iijima’s *Remembering Animals*, Mei-mei Berssenbrugge’s *Hello, the Roses*, Layli LongSoldier’s *Whereas*, Laura Mullen’s *Complicated Grief*, Wendy Burk’s *Tree Talks*, Joanna Howard and Joanna Rucco’s *Field Glass*, Kimberly Alidio’s *After projects the resound*, John Pluecker’s *Ford Over*, Simone White’s *Of Being Dispersed*, Don Mee Choi’s *Hardly War*, Fred Moten’s *The Feel Trio*, Mg Roberts’s *Anemal Uter Meck*, Tonya M. Foster’s *A Swarm of Bees in High Court*. Timothy Morton’s *Ecology Without Nature*, Donna Harraway’s *Staying with Trouble: Making Kin in the Clthbulucene*, so much of Rebecca Solnit’s work. N. K. Jemisin’s *The Broken*

Earth trilogy, Jeff Vandermeer's *Southern Reach Trilogy* and *Borne*. Amitav Ghosh's novel *The Hungry Tide*. Carole Maso's *Break Every Rule*.

I write all the time, and though often what I write is not poetry, most of my recent creative and editorial work does engage either directly and indirectly with climate change. In 2018, Wesleyan University Press will be publishing *Counter-Desecration: A Glossary for Writing Within the Anthropocene*, edited by Linda Russo and myself: a collation of more than 130 terms and their definitions, both neologisms and repurposed words, for re-imagining our relationship to this extraordinary world we inhabit. Last year, Bill Allegranza for his imprint Locofo Chapbooks, a project of resistance to the Trump regime, published *Data Primer*.¹ Dedicated to "DJT, bullet points on climate change: 'High Con' for the conman," the chap is a cut-up of the "Climate Change 2014 Synthesis Report Summary for Policymakers" (IPCC)," a challenge to and rebuke of climate-denialism.

Inspired by Ed Roberson's *City Eclogue*, I am in the midst making final edits to an online conversation with four other poets about the city as place, as environment, and the manifold violences inflicted on urban environments and peoples. Raised on a farm, I remain even now an outsider to cities and city lives, closer to home in the woods, mountains, or ocean. This conversation an effort of listening, of attending to what other writers and activists have experienced, what they have come to understand, what role writing might have in changing how the city is figured in language and imagination, how the lives within it are valued. I am grateful to these writers and thinkers: Tyrone Williams, Amber Atiya, Jill Darling, and John Pluecker. Our conversation will appear at *Something on Paper* in April 2018.

Of new work, two manuscripts are out for review, both driven in response to ecological violence. *Ark Hive: a memoir of South Louisiana*, a long-form engagement with place, landscape, belonging, and loss, marries lyrics to documentary gestures, writing from within a double-perspective: outsider inside, seeking home, a way into place. Multiple formal modes of address to catastrophe shape the work from hand-made maps, collaged language, and altered documents and images to odes, threnodies, necropastorals, mesostics, and erasures: "fragments [from] journals, photographs, memory, archives — time capsule of a disintegrating world." (AK) Excerpts from *Ark Hive* are online.

The second, just completed project, a book-length manuscript of poems titled *deposition | dispossession: climate change in the Sundarbans*, responds to the manifold ecological crises of the wetlands of south Bangladesh and India. “Talking back” to climate denialism, questioning my own as well as the nation’s role in climate change and its collateral damage, the work is by turns interrogative, defiant, and elegiac, speaking into presence a realm in crisis: the fragility of a landscape, its human and other-than-human inhabitants, the Sundarbans islands and peninsulas rapidly being swallowed by rising sea levels. Under such pressures, how do the inhabitants respond? And those most responsible for the crisis, how preserve, or perhaps, how persevere, and at *what*? An excerpt from *deposition | dispossession* appears in *Galatea Resurrects*.³

Writing as questioning, pressuring, wondering, delighting: I cannot not guarantee nor know what difference it makes. I give myself, nevertheless, over neither to hope or despair, only to struggle and resistance. I know the numbers. The planet is in the midst of radical alteration, the result of human-driven increases in greenhouse gases: climate, weather, ice cover, sea levels, growing-season length and food production zones are all implicated. Fish stocks are falling, extinctions rising, pollution of air, water, and land, over-exploitation of resources — clamor for our attention and action. Surface and ocean temperatures have increased: 1.5 degrees F for surface temperatures alone. Water vapor in the lower atmosphere has increased along with the incidence and severity of extreme weather events. Coastal cities and low-lying islands are already imperiled. Miami floods at high tide, the sea rising up through the storm drains. Louisiana is home to the first North American climate refugees, as its coastline is eaten away by erosion. A new report estimates that by 2100 the U.S. Naval Academy, JFK Airport, and the Jefferson Memorial will be underwater as a result of a 10-12 foot sea level rise. Louisiana’s coastal cities will be sheltered islands tethered to the continent by long highway bridges built over the Caribbean Sea. 2017’s terrorizing hurricane and fire seasons were record-breaking, the danger of both hyperactive, super destructive weather and uncontrollable fires rising in concert with global temperatures. How respond? Wendy Burk asks of the trees, asking us to think as if we were also trees: “Do you feel safe here?” “What would make this a better place for you?” “Tell me about fluttering in the wind.”⁴

Meanwhile, Trump has withdrawn from the Paris Climate Accords, and his administration is rapidly undoing as much environmental policy as possible through administrative measures. At the turn of the new year, Interior Secretary Zinke announced that the Trump Administration has opened up entire U.S. Outer Continental Shelf for potential oil and gas lease sales, immediately after rescinding the post-Deepwater Horizon safety regulations. This moment is one in which it is far too easy to say we are fucked. Some of us — those whom many in the Trump administration do not view as important — are already in crisis mode, from Caribbean nations and territories — including Puerto Rico, where U.S. citizens have been without power for more than one hundred days post-Hurricane Maria — to the Sundarbans and drought-stricken of Eastern and Southern Africa. “We” might mostly be “okay”, for a given notion of “we” and a given level of “okay.” Is that sufficient? Thinking about it, feeling bad about it, tuning it out: not good enough. Read, *listen*, converse, ask questions. (Re-)imagine language’s possibilities, and our own. Be loud, be insistent. Who is listening back? Who knows — the possibilities numerous and diverse, might even be trees. Tell me, “how do you know this is home?”⁵

NOTES

1 <http://www.moriapoetry.com/reedechap.pdf>

2 <http://bax.site.wesleyan.edu/bax-2014/marthe-reed/>,

<https://jacket2.org/commentary/marthe-reed-five-poems-binx%E2%80%99s-blues-note-process>,

<https://poetsgulfoast.wordpress.com/2010/06/12/chandeleur-sound-by-marthe-reed/>, <http://ottawapoetry.blogspot.ca/2014/06/on-writing-33-marthe-reed.html>

3 <http://galatearesurrects2017.blogspot.com/2017/11/marthe-reed-after-mei-mei-berssenbrugge.html>

4 Wendy Burk, *Tree Talks* (Delete Press)

5 Wendy Burk, *Tree Talks* (Delete Press)

Evelyn Reilly

NATURE FUTURISM

Powdery Flowers

1.

Unravel the corner
through a bloom section
and the I-thought spills into continuous plural flow

a conversation coated
with flower scum lip profusion flavor

2.

Transient pigment
fingering light petals

and shoes

one shoe pathos

one

the suffering of the innocents

and the third
striding the parapets
to examine the newly-installed
junk tower caryatids

3.

This is the correspondence, then, of visual dialog
in the space we have been having

4.

What could we have been thinking?

(optimism ammunition cases
filled in the middle of the night)

No we are still all right and will be maybe

(scrawls remain)

5.

So many bodies setting off detectors

this is the meek and the lame

6.

Well, things change and change quickly races
along the perpetual movement track

propelling discontinuous leapings
in the singed
but not entirely extirpated
grass-like substance

7.

Why what repeats itself repeats

Why what repeats repeats the self-replicatory system

plus random mutation messaging:

TAA ATC CAG

ATT TAG GTC

and the oracle says “offending command: syntax error”

8.

So we went ahead and inserted the sequence

being in dire need of bugs and fleurs

Climate Memory

1.

In the pockets between void material

v is for victory (vacated)

v for validation (evacuated)

vv for our very pretty
but metallic-tasting

rain

in which I found a tiny nozzle with a love set inflow valve

and a “write-to-lift” feature intact

2.

So I quietly heaved myself up
into a special calling

in the background of which some scaffolded script:

plantgoo (this is a true actual transcription —

But what does this casual flower
inaugurate?

3.

Shock one was the ignition torch (I mean touch)
two the blithe extermination fee
(I mean feel)

We are awash
in premonition

4.

Sure there remains a floortrap for the sorrow
which you can choose to keep clean or not

Leaves an aftersmear

(is really pretty shocking)

5.

But do not underestimate the power
of how what grew there did

The throat opens and captures
the thrown down
error signal repeat phrases

6.

Against this faux environment
total and extreme

shadows of a procession
across an archaic memory screen

cow, drone, excess

Then we constructed
a touchable
beflowered surface

and confirmed our status
as a site of virtual
natural
heritage

Robin Citrus

1.

Robin emerges from a file called “wet”

memory of *wet*
something called *true wet*

now the entire file is called “coaxial wet robin”

(two conductors
separated by a common insulator)

2.

cannot expose cannot
material for material
in darkness into the corners

cannot expose cannot
the material in darkets
for the four corners

blow down small rain (coldest poem)

Ok, but where to shred the ribbon?

3.

“The rending of the clothes expresses the deepest feelings
of sorrow and anguish.

How shallow, how disappointing, how pitifully trivial, therefore,
to symbolize these authentic sentiments by a little button.”

4.

broken ear cornucopia outlet
and dim utility escape hatch

Was sad *poetically*

(rent ribbon

5.

among button translation fevers

translation lever clasp commas

6.

communication schemes
over the lip of which

we *touched on* today

7.

Howls through the night here

Wormy gardenia with flies, Miss July

8.

campanula primrose quarantine stickers
hanging on threads in all the vehicles

9.

It was the grief then must interrupt
and permeate the *true writing*

So you know the place species memory?
robin anachronism family?

Where did that emerge from?

memory, nostalgic/analgesic

Robin citrus, the lexicon of one post-industrial life form chariot

10.

The mourner should make a tear in the proper clothing
upon her return home.

Note: The statement quoted in section three of "Robin Citrus" is taken from the Chabad-Lubavitch website.

multi-lasting

As a queer Indigenous working-class woman, I have inherited and outlasted multiple threats of annihilation. For people like me, for ancestors who made it possible for people like me to thrive despite intersecting systems of oppression, the world has felt like it was going to end many, many times. Yet despite Captain James Cook’s arrival in Hawai‘i in 1778 and the toxic spill of whalers, missionaries, syphilis, militarization, mass corporate tourism, land theft, bombing practices on sacred land, rape. Despite nuclear testing in the Pacific because, as Henry Kissinger stated, “who gives a damn” that we have lived here for generations. Despite politicians criminalizing, disappearing, erasing queer bodies and desires. Despite the obscene cost of living in Hawai‘i that pushes more and more Native Hawaiians from our ‘āina to make room for extractive capitalists who can afford to buy and build here. Despite the penetrative gaze of “progress” and its disdain for sacred. Despite every time arrival was promulgated as discovery was promulgated as consent.

I have inherited and outlasted multiple threats of annihilation. “basket” honors the interconnected power of storytelling and resistance, particularly that of Indigenous women writers in Oceania. Written for Marshallese climate change activist Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner, this poem embodies the spirit of Oceanic solidarity against the military industrial complex that continues to thwart Indigenous geopolitical struggles in the Pacific.

In this basket, poetry is activism and medicine.

Poetry: a vital strategy of multi-lasting.

basket

for Kathy

She brings her host a basket:

earrings, mats, testimony

This basket, she says, is medicine.

Some may ask: what is a basket to a bomb?

Why bring medicine when they send ships

bombing

their laps

to jellyfish

They didn't know what to call them, she said.

They didn't know the name.

this ocean

an open wound

but who gives a damn

moonlight scorched

from wombs

who gives a damn

who gives a damn

who gets to damn who

She brings her host a basket

Then, bone by bone

her low tide lips

reveal the names

her gods & wayfinders

her mother & country

her island sea

This is a basket of names,

a basket of stories.

For afterbirths

of fallout —

war-petalled &
sacred-starving,
her story is the medicine we ache for.

Some Anthropocene People

[Please see following page]















Ed Roberson

Asked What Has Changed

Even staring out the window is changed,
the private peak above it all brought down
with the erosion of the poise between
the viewable and the mused unseen.
Dissolution so nearly changeless as not
to appear is shifting the sands inside
from what we watched, no more the steady stage
the self-dramatic days play out on outside.
The silent portent now allowed alert
to things changing the light

a darkness

not the normal individual
mortality, but as if the epochal
heartbeat of larger elements, the seas,
the air, had mutated, become chimera,
grown wing, and routed ancestral time.
Even staring out the window, the timeless
is gone. We see coming
in the daily migration of the local geese
to the lake at evening the cities pull up
and move in unlike consternation towards and
away from the water

that had been so calming to gaze out on,
to live by, easy to not live according to.
And now that seas are adding themselves
into the land, horizons look ominously larger,
the arrivant out of them, faster and clearer.
Now, you see the view is turned on us to frame
human agency become transparent,
light as air, before the picture blackens
as a consequence of our seeing too much
of it as only for us to use and then
use up.

The eye is not filled with seeing, with only

seeing, but with understanding the sight.

Outlook

Tore pages from the TIAA-Cref Annual Report
to stuff the cracks around the window mounting
of the air conditioner. I catch numbers
in the hundreds of thousands stuffed in the columns
of print. My pension is a whiff of that.
The hawk comes through the cracks so hard
the blinds rattle.

This is what lists as a luxury apartment in the Southside
a 75 year old national register early international style
hi rise upper floor view landscaped grounds heat
35 mph winds inside view. I can see the lake,
rim of horizon size pitcher, source of Chicago's smelly tap water.
Industries and water-starved communities as far as out west
have their eyes on this

single source of fresh water to fill their pockets.
Their eyes on this the same as on those neighborhoods
needed out of their way or working for them those
who have all the money. This itself always dispersed
through the drift of some field error, some miscalculation.
Or simply time, its eye on everything. The hawk comes through the cracks
so hard the blinds rattle.

What Word

1

The fat spoiled cat of fish, the carp, pampered
in the garden pool, surfaces: a bubble
in the level lines of a purr.

The mirror water vibrates: the mouth's breath,
a spoken surface as thought, a soundless word
balloon of concentration breaks.

The spoken world rubs against you to own you as,
as the cat does, one of it. A placement.
Your smile, your pool of sight touched awake.

2

The wakened world's submarines
— our ideologies' spoiled fish —
lift their scale-less indulgences

that our intelligence lays on the tongue
of the silence of death, this dragon's breath
freshener of nuclear fire —

And one of these lozenges, we find out
this morning, may lie open at the bottom of the sea
smashed burst bubble of our technological
meditations;

and all that is surfacing may be
our leviathan of threat to each other
we recognize — this caught breath almost a silent
language among us.

And what has the bubble burst out with
on its breath? The wakened world.

All word

of the living as any longer one of

it is tethered to this brought to the surface,
mouthed breath-clapper in a metal bell,
like the earth's resuscitant bubble of atmosphere,

balling yarn of the planet's one held breath
rolled 'round in as spoiling a lap of orbit
as any swaddled garden pool wove of our
meditations and sun-like surfacing thought.

And the burst bubble of *that* concentration? —
What is the open it touches against us?
What claim of we as one of do the dead
bring up even lifted in a joined arms of states?

Bast, the feline brush by of that cartouche
of breath is the hope of life sucked back
into the born flesh.

word bubble

breath break that wakens ... and we would rise
...

All connection to us is made surface
to surface:

microscopic through into,
telescopic out; matter surfaces
as some tympanic resonance, word snares
on breath, the touch on press

...
The pool of a dead face doesn't stir.

There is no longer even a level
rise or fall of balance.
The oceans of the time men don't exist
include only a drop that we do
and see
above them another ocean's spray of stars.

Kim Stanley Robinson

from *New York 2140*

Melting all the ice on Antarctica is a big job, however, and will not happen fast, even in the Anthropocene. But any Antarctic ice that slides into the ocean floats away, leaving room for more to slide. And in the twenty-first century, as during the three million years before that, a lot of Antarctic ice was piled up on basin slopes, meaning giant valleys, which angled down into the ocean. Ice slides downhill just like water, only slower; although if sliding (skimboarding?) on a layer of liquid water, not that much slower. So all that ice hanging over the edge of the ocean was perched there, and not sliding very fast, because there were buttresses of ice right at the waterline or just below it, that were basically stuck in place. This ice at the shoreline lay directly on the ground, stuck there by its own massive weight, thus forming in effect long dams ringing all of Antarctica, dams that somewhat held in place the big basins of ice uphill from them. But these ice buttresses at the ocean ends of these very huge ice basins were mainly held in place by their leading edges, which were grounded underwater slightly offshore — still held to the ground by their own massive weight, but caught underwater on rock shelves offshore that rose up like the low edge of a bowl, the result of earlier ice action in previous epochs. These outermost edges of the ice dams were called by scientists “the buttress of the buttress.” Don’t you love that phrase?

So yeah, the buttresses of the buttresses were there in place, but as the phrase might suggest to you, they were not huge in comparison to the masses of ice they were holding back, nor were they well emplaced; they were just lying there in the shallows of Antarctica, that continent-sized cake of ice, that cake ten thousand feet thick and fifteen hundred miles in diameter. Do the math on that, oh numerate ones among you, and for the rest, the 270-foot rise in ocean level is the answer already given earlier. And lastly, those rapidly warming circumpolar ocean currents already mentioned were circulating mainly about a kilometer or two down, meaning, you guessed it, right at the level where the buttresses of the buttresses were resting. And ice, though it sits on land, and even on land bottoming shallow water when heavy enough, floats on water when water gets under it. As is well known. Consult your cocktail for confirmation of this phenomenon.

So, the first buttress of a buttress to float away was at the mouth of the Cook Glacier, which held back the Wilkes/Victoria basin in eastern Antarctica. That basin contained enough ice all by itself to raise sea level twelve feet, and although not all of it slid out right away, over the next two decades it went faster than expected, until more than half of it was adrift and quickly melting in the briny deep.

Greenland, by the way, a not-inconsiderable player in all this, was also melting faster and faster. Its ice cap was an anomaly, a remnant of the huge north polar ice cap of the last great ice age, located way farther south than could be explained by anything but its fossil status, and in effect overdue for melting by about ten thousand years, but lying in a big bathtub of mountain ranges which kept it somewhat stable and refrigerating itself. So, but its ice was melting on the surface and falling down cracks in the ice to the bottoms of its glaciers, thereby lubricating their descent down big chutelike canyons that cut through the coastal mountain-range-as-leaky-bathtub, and as a result it too was melting, at about the same time the Wilkes/Victoria basin was slumping into the Southern Ocean. That Greenland melt is why when you looked at average temperature maps of the Earth in those years, and even for decades before then, and the whole world was a bright angry red, you still saw one cool blue spot, southeast of Greenland. What could have caused the ocean there to cool, one wondered through those decades, how mysterious, one said, and then got back to burning carbon.

So: the First Pulse was mostly the Wilkes/Victoria basin, also Greenland, also West Antarctica, another less massive but consequential contributor, as its basins lay almost entirely below sea level, such that they were quick to break their buttresses and then float up on the subtruding ocean water and sail away. All this ice, breaking up and slumping into the sea. Years of greatest rise, 2052–2061, and suddenly the ocean was ten feet higher. Oh no! How could it be?

Rates of change themselves change, that's how. Say the speed of melting doubles every ten years. How many decades before you are fucked? Not many. It resembles compound interest. Or recall the old story of the great Mughal emperor who was talked into repaying a peasant who had saved his life by giving the peasant one rice grain and then two, and doubling that again on every square of a chessboard. Possibly the grand vizier or chief

astronomer advised this payment, or the canny peasant, and the unquant emperor said sure, good deal, rice grains who cares, and started to dribble out the payment, having been well trained in counting rice grains by a certain passing Serbian dervish woman. A couple few rows into the chessboard he sees how he's been had and has the vizier or astronomer or peasant beheaded. Maybe all three, that would be imperial style. The one percent get nasty when their assets are threatened.

So that's how it happened with the First Pulse. Big surprise. What about the Second Pulse, you ask? Don't ask. It was just more of the same, but doubled as everything loosened in the increasing warmth and the higher seas. Mainly the Aurora Basin's buttress let loose and its ice flowed down the Totten Glacier. The Aurora was a basin even bigger than Wilkes/Victoria. And then, with sea level raised fifteen feet, then twenty feet, all the buttresses of the buttresses lost their footing all the way around the Antarctic continent, after which said buttresses were shoved from behind into the sea, after which gravity had its way with the ice in all the basins all around East Antarctica, and the ice resting on ground below sea level in West Antarctica, and all that ice quickly melted when it hit water, and even when it was still ice and floating, often in the form of tabular bergs the size of major nations, it was already displacing the ocean by as much as it would when it finished melting. Why that should be is left as an exercise for the reader to solve, after which you can run naked "from your leaky bath crying *Eureka!*

It is worth adding that the Second Pulse was a lot worse than the First in its effects, because the total rise in sea level ended up at around fifty feet. This truly thrashed all the coastlines of the world, causing a refugee crisis rated at ten thousand katrinas. One eighth of the world's population lived near coastlines and were more or less directly impacted, as was fishing and aquaculture, meaning one third of humanity's food, plus a fair bit of coastal (meaning in effect rained-upon) agriculture, as well as the aforementioned shipping. And with shipping forestalled, thus impacting world trade, the basis for that humming neoliberal global success story that had done so much for so few was also thrashed. Never had so much been done to so many by so few!

All that happened very quickly, in the very last years of the twenty-first century. Apocalyptic, Armageddonesque, pick your adjective of choice.

Anthropogenic could be one. Extinctional another. Anthropogenic mass extinction event, the term often used. End of an era. Geologically speaking it might rather be the end of an age, period, epoch, or eon, but that can't be decided until it has run its full course, so the common phrase "end of an era" is acceptable for the next billion or so years, after which we can revise the name appropriately.

But hey. An end is a beginning! Creative destruction, right? Apply more police state and more austerity, clamp down hard, proceed as before. Cleaning up the mess a great investment opportunity! Churn baby churn!

Donald Wesling

Letter to Kim Stanley Robinson

July 14, 2017

Dear Stan,

Here's my response to *New York 2140*, after a reading for pleasure and a second scan-reading to mark ten or eleven themes that caught my interest [...]

Questions about History. Your Galileo novel contains a projected history of several centuries ahead, with terrible periods of warfare, dyings-off, earth-wreckage, balkanization of populations, indicating that you have a schema somewhere of all that happens in your imaginary future, and your novel *2312* needs to pick up threads and catch a somewhat earlier moment for that action — using some of the same events and categories of time, including the nicely named Accelerando “as a confluence of revolutions.” The New York novel takes us only a century and a quarter ahead, and it emphasizes the climate change side of a future somewhat, here, less grim because the political and military aspects of change are not the focus of attention. Of course the problem of the intertidal is global, and shown/known to be such, but mostly we've got to attend to the what and why of New York's drowning. That's enough. It includes what we need to worry about, namely how much is lost by being covered in water, who has suffered, how does this affect property and housing, how are capitalist titans still dominating the rest of society, and: follow the money!!! because when you do you can strip off the facade of the whole show.

The Role of Recent History in the Collapse of 2007-2008, in a Novel about 2140. We see 2008 as a break in the skein of history, because the bubble created by banks and hedge funds and the mortgage industry and the Bush presidency and the Federal Reserve and Bernie Madoff, coached by Wall Street and allowed by congress, certainly hurt every person in the country and ruined many and set back the national purpose by the whole of Obama's next eight years: suddenly there the facade was peeled back, and yet no one among the causal class was punished and the banks were bailed

out and only one industry, autos, was nationalized, and that only for a short time. This is the anchor point of warning for those in 2140, especially Franklin and the Citizen, more so than any recession that could be imagined in the time between 2017 and then. It was bad, but not bad enough to shock the nation or world into political revolution. (As a side issue related to coordinating the now and the future of now, I'd mention that I was tempted to track all the references to 20th Century, and specifically recent-time, names and events to see what the mind of the novel thought would persist into the future — not be forgotten, but rather turned into icons that stand for condensed meanings: a list might contain Amelia, Mutt & Jeff, Piketty, Jane Jacobs, E. O. Wilson, Katrina as a measure of hurricane force, Onassis as a meadow, Chernobyl as an adjective, and the new term of fashion for what follows the Holocene, the now-ubiquitous Anthropocene.)

Follow the Money. It's most unusual to have a novel, especially in this genre, that takes seriously a critique of economic theory, seriously enough to put hedge funds, banks, the Federal Reserve, the factors of nanosecond-fast-trading and derivatives and mortgage deceit and insider trading into motion — into question — within the action of the plot. Piketty; Lazzarato; Jameson. It's all integrated, and amounts to a satirical sub-plot within the plot, with the point being, in the title of a book I'm currently also reading, *Why We Can't Afford the Rich* (Andrew Sayer). SciFi can go there too, and should.

On Revolution. The New York novel resonates with the 7 pages in *2312*, titled "Pauline on Revolution," in its emphasis on periodizations, historical breaks, and class antagonisms. Happiness is hard, and so is history, and so are revolutions ... happiness and revolutions are always partial, because always contested, snatched away from their antagonists. The account of how social change occurs in the New York novel is always attentive to the many political vectors in conflict, the immense power of those who run the show and the possible power of those who occupy, demonstrate, invent co-ops, unionize, expose ideology, get new better ideas, and so on. The slight opening to a more equal distribution of social goods at the novel's ending is hard-fought and modest, thus believable. It takes a shock to expose the strata of a society and to make the powerful people vulnerable in their isolation behind the masks of ideology: here the shock is climate change, and the hurricane, and some rather lucky exposures of the shady dealings of

those in ruling class — and includes not least a class defector in Franklin, who can mediate classes and generate ideas, though of course he's a minor player in the shift to a more communitarian politics and economy.

Language and Style. We appreciate lively dialogue without stale phrasings where characters reveal their inner speech in unpredictable utterances, where jokes occur, where decisions and ideas emerge through talk. We appreciate decisive cuts at the end of scenes, which are yet rhetorically rounded off with some elegance. We like it that many speakers have dense perceptions involving several senses, so they see persons and cityscapes with vivid accuracy. We especially like rhetorical exuberance in questions and exclamations and intentional overstatements for humor and quick turns of idea, puns, literary memories and references. The Citizen is always the most stylish and outrageous of the speakers, the most dialogic with the reader, pushing the edge of insult sometimes, but the Citizen's information rants and historical back-fillings and apostrophes are dazzling from first time he or she appears. The Citizen may be the major innovation of the book, because SciFi has never been so literate, nimble in reference to history and economics, shocking in turns of idea, or inventive in structure of sentences.

The Literary Animal. Thanks for all the references to the lives of companion animals in the era of the intertidal. It's not only Amelia who recognizes them, but also her world-wide audience, and the two lads who live near and on the water.

Noo Yawk. Through many short visual references and appraising judgments, across the whole text, and also wonderful detail-packed paragraphs to show the city in all seasons, times of day, conditions of light, and also grand set piece sections on sailing on the intertidal waters, on drowned buildings, on surfing the estuarial waters, on the hurricane, on Central Park, on underground jazz clubs, the novel describes and celebrates New York, New York, a hell of a bay, the capital of hype, the city that will eat your lunch, if you can make it here you can make it anywhere, lunatics going against the tide. Even half-drowned it is still the supreme expression of human achievement, and not only that, in its outward look and its intensity of joy and sorrow, its multiplicity of encounters, New York is the pinnacle place of the experience of self-construction. By complication and expansion the novel prolongs what Walt Whitman said about the city.

Good lines, Two from Baseball. “Mother Nature bats last.” “Instead of financializing value, I need to add value to finance.” “Keep your eye on the ball, which is coming in from the future.”

So: a Very Big Achievement, Stan.

Yours: Donald

Kit Robinson

Transbluency

The poem doesn't care who writes it
It is waiting in the wings
A belt of ekphrastic energy circumnavigating the earth
The planet we are made of
While others struggle to be fastened down completely
By standard protocols of identity and access management
We enter an archway and just keep walking
It's good exercise
As opposed to war, pollution, greed, hate and delusion
Though these certainly have their adherents

I is a sum total adding up to now
Subject to future operations
Add to, subtract from, multiply by, divide by
And drive by
Trailing a long history like a tail
Reaching back into the paleo
There's no place like magma
When it comes time to relax
And think it over
But we are too busy being multiples

The fountain draws from many streams
By way of the existence of cities
Shoots its spray to the heavens
In Technicolor and black and white
This experience of seeing
Is basic to being both awake and asleep
An insertion just beneath the skin
A workshop just beneath the floor
Water beneath the surface of the earth
Darkness

Transformation is natural

Woman to man, man to woman
The long road to being
The butterfly's return
Silence where before there was none
The poem does not let go
It arrives from the future incessantly
Ordinary fingers pick up on its cascade of plans
We can see it from here
A head with stars for eyes

To play extremely slowly
Is to caress the surface of time
To speed to abolish its domain
Cheer up my brothers and sisters
And walk in the sunshine
Our understanding is so very great
Being beyond the comprehension of a single mind
Life forms outstrip the rigorous calisthenics of calculation
Populate the ocean floor

Greetings from The Edge

For Norman and Kathie

Deep inside the marine layer
Nothing but rain wind and fog
Not to mention grammar
The grammar of dreams
Between the covers of a book
Read long ago
In a foreign city

How long how long
The delicate vastness of indecipherability
The earth accedes to the watery onslaught
The runoff enters the ocean
Greetings from the edge
As far away as possible without exiting entirely
Clinging to the continent

The sleep of reason produces monsters
Liars thieves tyrants bullies charlatans
Who prize only money and power
Care not at all for human beings
To say nothing of the earth
Her flora fauna water and air
Now poised at a delicate balance

Oceanic systems move slowly
A hummingbird still in rainy midair
The life of the turtle one hundred years
Time is neither here nor there
The cat cries out for attention
Life and death do not rhyme
The sky is white

Elephants geishas turtles Buddhas whales
Beets flowers eggs starfish lions
The mind is restless

Always looking for something
A list of things to do under heavy rain
Time is under development
Space is upside down

Earth Sense

For Rachel Carson and Agnes Martin

Inspiration grows out of the earth
A garden of earthly delights
Always just around the corner
On your way to the store
Change jingles in your pocket
Life rides along in your bag
What's most worthy of analysis
Is what falls out of them
Your inadvertent asides
Tentative tenuous subtle supple under the breath

This command and control environment
Is made for TV
Not for you and me
We are otherwise
Non-compliant with the panicky strictures of inflated dominance
To the toxic fantasies of prize assholes trailing fake news ties
We prefer the continuous, borderless, microtonal, transnational flow
Otherwise known as reality
As in keep it real, homes
Remember, this earth is our joint hood

Let's save all beings, ok?
This land is made for women, children, plants, animals, sensitive beings of
[every color and stripe
Not just a small club of fascist thugs and their billionaire keepers
I mean really, come on!
But where was I?
The sun still shines on the local garden
It bounces off the pavement and puts a spring in your step
There are people to see, sounds to identify, thoughts to entertain
There is dinner to shop for and cook, kids and grownups to check in on
Let me know when you have a minute

Imperfection is everywhere
All your efforts fall short
Disappointment, frustration reign
Our idea of it is unattainable
Yet altogether it is perfectly all right
When seen in a certain light
The light of a distant campfire
Sulphur light, diagonal light
Opal light & old light & marsh light & moonlight
Thanks, inspirational friendship, for lighting the way

The sea around us is an inspiration any child can understand
A physical delight
Energy stored in battery harmony, open for all to hear
Alternate pages turn quickly when no one is looking
If you are shocked you must have been asleep
Something can be reality or TV, never both
Mistakes are the saints' way of messing with us
If only we could see the future, but we have our backs to it
Turn around, look out and live
That is the message in the bottle

Way off on the horizon a distant plume of smoke
The eye sees what the mind cannot grasp
Turning over in space
We are alive to the half of it
Let's order in and go through the game plan once again
It's going to be a long, hard slog
We better get started
There isn't much time
The mind is a collective breathing
Our direction has never been more clear

Phrases from A Manual of Style

Assign to each number a color

One black

Two white

Three red

Four yellow

Five blue

Six green

Seven orange

Eight purple

Nine brown

Ten silver

Do same thing with animals

The phrases that float into place from who knows where

The night is long and will have to be covered

By a body at rest

One leg draped over the side

For the longest time

I thought you were there beside me

Then realized you'd fled to the other room

Leaving me to grapple with my insomnia

A sequence of hill towns each with its special wines, meats, leather goods

Art and architecture

The palace afloat on a cloud high above the village at sunset

Came back a different way

Tourism is rapid eye movement

By other means

Napoleon takes the same walk every time

Dereliction of duty

Sensitive curious and chaste

Phrase happy

Several centuries later we teeter on the brink

It feels like it

The polar icecaps are melting

Into our coke zero

Fires consume the western states
Hurricanes batter the south
Quakes shake Mexico
Plastic manacles ensnare Pacific whales
What more proof do you want
Of climatastrophe

On an ordinary Umbrian morning
Quiet overtakes the crew
In after coffee exercise routines
The pen is a kind of flute
The flute a drum for keeping time
The book a mystery
The body spread wide in Tai Chi
The double c is a hard c
As in Pinocchio
The Sanfaticchio Giant roams the lakeside

Colors rifle through memory
Nights clothed in silence
Phrases from a manual of style
History resting on a hilltop
Coming into view
Coming to think of it
Returning to the scene of the crime
History is a crying shame
Racking up points on a map
Coming to light in the planes of a familiar face

Making New Sense Of The Song Of The Humpback Whale

What record album was so important that *ten million* copies of it needed to be pressed at once? You guessed it. *Songs of the Humpback Whale*. In 1979 *National Geographic* Magazine inserted a flexible “sound page” inside the back cover of all of its editions in twenty-five languages, and that is supposedly how many they printed. No human pop star has ever received such magnanimous treatment, so what is it that is so special about the songs of the humpback whale?

Well, for one, humans knew nothing of this fabulous sound until the US Navy released its classified recordings at the end of the 1960s, at the very moment the world was most poised to listen to the unknown, the psychedelic, and the trippiest of sounds. Humpback whale song fit the bill perfectly. From high wails to deep growls to rhythmic scratches to tearful moans, it encompasses the full range of emotions in the longest song performed by any animal, a tune that can go on for nearly twenty-four hours at a time. People are often moved to tears when they hear such intensity for the first time. Some cannot believe it could ever come from a place as silent as the sea. This song touched classical, pop, folk, and jazz musics, and is credited with inspiring a global movement to save the whales which continues unto this day.

And yet no one knew of its beauty until the military decided, fifteen years earlier, to build a network of underwater microphones, called hydrophones, to track the secret rumblings of Soviet submarines and sonar codes at the height of the Cold War. I'm not sure they heard much of anything save the sounds of whales, dolphins, and shrimp, yet they kept the secret from the public for more than a decade.

Imagine this James Bond — like scene: Somewhere off the coast of Bermuda, 1958, with a sonar operator puzzling over tones he's picking up on his headphones and then he sees a spout off the bow of his ship ... “My god captain ... these sounds are coming from *whales!* We can't let people find out about this...” but a decade later Frank Watlington was authorized to turn his recordings over to budding whale scientist Roger Payne and his

sidekick Scott McVay, personal assistant to the President of Princeton University and past researcher in the laboratory of dolphin madman John C. Lilly. He and his mathematician wife Hella laid out primitive sonograms of fragments of the whale's songs on their living room floor, each ten seconds of song taking about one hour to spew out from the thermal-paper printing sonograph device, designed during World War II to help break military codes but by the sixties used mainly to turn sound into visual data where it could better be analyzed by speech therapists and animal sound scientists.

Hella was the first to notice that when the sound was turned into image, a structure immediately became clear. "Amazing ... it repeats!" she exclaimed, and we had visual proof that this great animal, the size of a New York City bus, was making something structured a lot like human music. Their story appeared on the cover of *Science Magazine* with at least one line quite rare for a scientific publication to include. "The humpback whale," wrote Payne and McVay, "emits a surprisingly beautiful series of sounds." These two guys were not afraid to face the music! Around the same time as the scientific publication hit the press, they were smart enough to release the original version of *Songs of the Humpback Whale*, with this surprising "White Album" type cover, also including a 48-page booklet in English and Japanese, detailing the dire situation many species of great whales faced with ruthless killing methods and nowhere to hide. McVay took boxes of the albums to Japan, played the whale music on radio and television, and Japanese audiences were moved to tears.

It is a portion of this original recording that *National Geographic* mass-produced ten years later, and the same recording ended up in *Star Trek IV*, when Kirk, Spock, and the rest of the Enterprise crew return from the future to save the whales. Indeed, *Songs of the Humpback Whale* in its many editions is the best-selling nature recording of all time, achieving multi-platinum status over the decades since its original release. The best review of it was written by Jon Carroll, editor of *Rolling Stone*. "It is a good record," he wrote. "Let's hope it doesn't become a trippy record." Good luck with that Jon. There's no escaping fate. "Whale song, I must have *whale song*" says the community college professor in an episode of *The Simpsons* years later as he tries to seduce Marge, his latest teacher's pet.

Forty-odd years later some people think of whale song as the greatest musical cliché of the New Age. What symbolizes make-me-one-with-everything excess better than these great ominous moans and bleats that we still can't make heads or tails of? Come on you cynics, people still cry when they hear humpback whale songs. Not that people still spend enough time actually listening to the music, they tend to assume it's just a "whaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaoooooh" and leave it at that. But if you sit down and listen to a real humpback whale song you will find that the long moan is only one note in a complex composition, with distinct phrases, repetition, structure, organization, shape and form akin to many kinds of human music. This is no random outburst of cries and whispers, but a song with power, verve, identity, and design.

When the wonder of this song first became widely known to musicians at the beginning of the 1970s, many genres found use for it, from classical composers George Crumb and Alan Hovhaness, jazz musicians Charlie Haden and Paul Winter, and popular artists Lou Reed, Tangerine Dream, Judy Collins, Captain Beefheart and the late Pete Seeger, whose song "The World's Last Whale" might best explain the musicality of the thing in itself:

It was down off Bermuda
Early last spring,
Near an underwater mountain
Where the humpbacks sing,
I lowered a microphone
A quarter mile down,
Switched on the recorder
And let the tape spin around.

I didn't just hear grunting,
I didn't just hear squeaks,
I didn't just hear bellows,
I didn't just hear shrieks.
It was the musical singing
And the passionate wail
That came from the heart
Of the world's last whale.

As whale song entered the realm of popular artistic inspiration, so it began to be taken more seriously by science. Over the past half century we've learned much more about it: Only the male whales sing, so it is generally assumed by scientists that they sing to attract the attention of female whales. However, in the five decades people have been studying this phenomenon, we have *never* seen a female whale show any visible interest in the song. So maybe it's all about something else ...

In any one ocean, all the humpbacks sing roughly the same song. But the song does not remain the same. As an ocean-wide population, the whales change the song, all together, gradually evolving new phrases and patterns from week to week, month to month, and year to year. Over the decades we can trace the gradual change of the phrases.

If they all sing the same song, why do they need to change it? Such change is rare in the animal world, birds don't do anything like this. Some believe the change is of interest for the sake of change alone, like our constant need for a new hit song. Maybe the whales, like us, just get bored with the old tunes ... If so one wonders why other musical animal species don't try the same trick?

So just how different from the glory days is the whale song of today? Roger Payne has repeatedly said that the whale song of the sixties is far more beautiful and deep than anything the whales are singing these days, but people usually feel that way about the pop music of their youth.

It is a desire to go beyond memory and into the sounds of reality that has led us to release *New Songs of the Humpback Whale*, which aims to gather the best recent recordings of scientists and whale listeners the globe over to give all of us a chance to assess what has happened to whale song over the past few decades. One can hear gradual changes in humpback song from year to year, with some phrases lengthening, others shortening, others disappearing altogether as new variations appear. The change can be heard month to month, and even week to week within a single season. So Roger Payne is right, today's whale songs should sound quite different from what he fondly remembers from the sixties. But is their musical culture going downhill? Or is it on the rise? Or just changing? Can we humans even *tell* the difference?

To tell the difference is why we are also releasing a new way to visualize humpback whale song. The standard way to visually show the structure of complex sounds that don't have the usual clear pitches of human music is to use sonograms, which are now easy to instantly generate from any computer. Scientists and musicians use these because many of the sounds made by animals have a distinct form and structure, but not the usual tones and rhythms of human music, which are the only sounds musical notation can translate into images. A flat horizontal line in a sonogram means a steady clear pitch, a vertical line means a clap or a rhythmic hit, and a busy, beautiful image of many layers and patterns means a sound with complex overtones and a noisy character, just the kind of thing that eludes easy description.

But even these sonograms can look daunting to the uninitiated, so I asked the digital designer and data visualizer Michael Deal to try his hand at simplifying these instantly generated images and color-coding them so they reveal the alien but organized structure of humpback whale song. Each of Mike's color coded 'glyphs' represents a distinct and different note in the humpback whale's song. The notes are put together into phrases, and the phrases are organized and sometimes repeat to form the longest animal song we know of.

Such complex animal songs are actually quite rare in nature, but at such levels of extreme beauty, there are strange parallels. Speed up a humpback whale song and it sounds surprisingly like the song of a thrush nightingale, with a similar balance between rhythms, jumps, and long clear tones. Both of these animals are 'outliers,' with unexpectedly beautiful and complicated songs. In neither case can we accurately explain why such a song needed to evolve so extensively. But aesthetically, there are definite parallels. Does such a parallel mean anything? Perhaps there are basic principles at the root of what different species understand to be beautiful. Evolution, as Charles Darwin knew well, is much more than survival of the fittest, with natural selection, but it also includes survival of the beautiful, through sexual selection, which is supposed to explain why whale songs are so long and moving, even though we have yet to see a female whale show any reaction to it. Of course why would they want us to see something so private anyway ...

Though humpback whale song did not evolve for humans to appreciate, it may be no accident that we do. The beautiful has evolved in the same world we have evolved, and this may be one reason we are always drawn to nature so much.

What does it take to record the best whale songs? Technology isn't all that you need. One must have time, a lot of it, to go out on the water, drop your hydrophone deep down, get ready to listen, and to wait.

Upon hearing the great song for the first time, Roger Payne said he heard the size of the ocean, "as if I had walked into a dark cave to hear wave after wave of echoes cascading back from the darkness beyond ... That's what whales do, give the ocean its voice." Most work on the meaning of these tones is far more prosaic, involving pages of calculations, summary charts that have a hard time containing the original beauty.

Ironically, far fewer scientists are studying humpback whale song than in the heyday of their popularity in the 1970s. The beauty of the song helped galvanize worldwide support for a global moratorium on whale hunting passed by the International Whaling Commission in 1986. Since then the population of humpback whales has rebound to a fairly healthy level. Scientists say they can't get money to study an unusual species that is no longer endangered, even though it has the most interesting sonic behavior of any creature under the sea. There is more money available to study how to prevent endangered northern right whales from colliding into ships in busy Boston Harbor, or to study the many nearly unknown beaked whale species who are the kinds most damaged by the US Navy's latest sonar tests. Humpback are doing all right, as long as Japan doesn't reinstate its Antarctic humpback hunt, which it claims it's going to do every year. (They must believe that no publicity is bad publicity.)

A few years ago humpback brains were found to contain a kind of cell called a spindle neuron that previously was only known to appear in the brains of higher-order primates, those animals thought to be able to experience complex emotions. Once more whales join a small club of which we and chimpanzees are both members. If they can do it, it is most likely in these deep and complex songs that the whales let loose the widest range their feelings can contain. Sit back and listen, take in the strange and the jarring. Try to delve deeper into the whales' own songs, to present them

for others to hear with the greatest respect, space, and sound quality as possible. They *do* sound different than the first songs recorded in the sixties. To every generation they will sound different again, as our ears, and the whale's songs, are constantly on the move.

Michael Deal

Humpback Whale Song Recorded by David Rothenberg Off the Coast of Maui in March 2010

The image displays a musical score for a humpback whale song, presented as ten systems of two staves each. Each system is labeled with a time marker on the left side. The notation is a form of musical shorthand, using various note heads, stems, and beams to represent the whale's vocalizations. The time markers are: 0:00-0:59, 1:00-2:08, 2:09-3:14, 3:15-3:59, 4:00-4:36, 4:37-5:24, 5:25-6:21, 6:22-6:47, and 6:48-7:58. The score is set against a black background with white notation.

Jerome Rothenberg

Further Autovariations

Reminders of a Vanished Earth

1/
the poem as landscape
the definition
of a place
is more than
what was seen
or what was
felt before
when dreaming
of the dead
the way
a conflagration
wrapped itself
around his world
leaving in his mind
a trace of dunes
the fallout from
a ring of mountains
reminders
of a vanished earth
the landscape
marked with rising tufts
the hardness of
clay tiles
that press against
our feet like bricks
the soil concealed
beneath its coverings
through which a weave
of twisted wires
crisscross the empty
field as markers
to commemorate

the hapless dead
the ones who fly
around like ghosts
bereft of either
home or tomb
in what would once
have been their world
the count fades out
beyond 10,000
leaves them to be swept
down endless ages
fused together
or else set apart
lost nomads
on the road
to desolation
a field on mars
they wait to share
with others
dead at last

2/

never done counting

Enclosed by matter
all my thoughts
scream for prophecy.
When I wake up on Mondays
the night sky is hanging
above me galaxies
shedding their images
fading unknown
in the half light
a light that confounds me.
Nothing we know is unreal
& nothing is real.
There is only the face
of a woman
blind in the sun
& a voice that cries out
in a language like French.
When she raises her arms
they look distant & lame,
something there
that won't work but falls flat
against me. I will follow her
up to the moon, will watch her
paint herself red
with no sense
of the distances
still to be traveled,
no plot to adjust to
but numbers
that show me
the little I know,
the way one
vanishing universe
shrinks till it swallows
another.
There are worlds here

hidden from sight
whose ends are like
their beginnings,
the world in daylight
turns dark
the blaze of noon
caught in their mirrors,
as the sun slips
through our fingers
never done counting
where the globe
has dropped
out of sight.

Echo Poetic in the Anthropocene

Foundation Level

On the spot where the historic antique shiny steel
“Dining Car” style diner once stood, the corporate
insurance/managed care provider/complex is having
foundations for its newest prefabricated profit center
pounded into Albany’s thick layer of yellow Devonian
clay. It is curious how easily ‘historically significant
architecture’ can be bulldozed without anyone, in a
position of authority, batting an eye when it is done
in the name of PROGRE\$\$ [of which nothing will stand
in the way.] But i am comforted by Nature’s Forces:
how the rhythmic pounding of steal beams by a giant
hydraulic hammer is transmitted through the ground
& into my building; how with each downward thrust
of the pounding head of the monstrous apparatus, the
earth makes the buildings shake & quiver; how each
time the heavy sledge hits home, i am reminded of the
first time i was awoken in the early morning in San
Diego by a 3.2 quake centered fewer than 20 miles away.
i remember being nudged by the gentle shuttering of
the bed; & instantly realizing the momentousness of the
occasion, rushing to the window to look out; the way a
child, in late December might rush, having heard a faint
rustling in the wind — which during sleep, they imagined
to be the tinkling of little bells — & gazing out the frosted
window, find nothing save an empty landscape, covered
& being covered, in a fresh layer of newly minted snow.

Echo Poetic in the Anthropocene

Red Dye: A Sonnet: *Let us consider Carmine*

Somewhere in the world there is a factory
Which grinds up millions & millions of bugs.

& then squeezes the masticated mess — to extract
some form of red liquid — which is then shipped

to another factory, which puts these drippings
into your food. Factories in which millions upon

millions of bugs are raised in big metal containers,
crawling as they do, one on top of the other, a vast

swirling, creeping, swarming mass of antennae,
legs & carapace — pounded into a juicy pulp, in great

vats wherein the process of making your food a brighter,
more appetizing, more appealing color has just begun.

No Longer Silent

The grande eloquence of time, of the night sky reaching
outward, toward us, as when Hather stretches out her
arms, **THE STARS ABOVE, WELCOMING** sky embracing **US,** & we reaching
upward become enlivened. Our lives granted meaning
through the existence of the genius of **THEY SHOW** upwelling, over
arching arms reach. Our reach, **WE** reaching upward, arching
over edifice, forest, mountain; mounting to the sky. What
genius of upwelling enlightenment, makes the world itself
become? What we already were. here, beneath the gently
swaying boughs of the endlessly branching constellations
expanding outward, incorporating **WHAT WE ARE** was our vision into
its all encompassing, endless, gratifying depthless, universe.
& we embody, Whitman's reeking, Emerson's admonishing,
cradle & eye. Witnessed evidenced emboldened unchanged
remade revisioned rejuvenated Orphean. Without sadness
the swift-footed star child hears us singing & the dance begins.

THE GRAND ELOQUENCE OF TIME, of the night sky reaching
outward, toward us, as when Hather stretches out her
arms, the welcoming sky **EMBRACING US,** & we reaching
upward become enlivened. Our lives granted meaning
through the existence of the genius of the upwelling, over
arching arms reach. Our reach, **REACHING UPWARD,** arching
over edifice, forest, mountain; mounting to the sky. What
genius of upwelling enlightenment, makes the world itself
become? What we already were. here, beneath the gently
swaying boughs of the endlessly branching constellations
expanding outward, incorporating what was our vision into
its all encompassing, endless, gratifying depthless, universe.
& we embody, Whitman's reeking, Emerson's admonishing,
cradle & eye. Witnessed evidenced emboldened unchanged
remade revisioned rejuvenated Orphean. Without sadness
the swift-footed star child hears us singing & the dance begins.

ANTHROPOCENE (*With Lauren Russell*)

i don't think of myself
as a procrastinator.
"My activities have been
various & imperative,
though not necessarily
impressive in a way this
form validates."

i don't think for myself
as I'm a procrastinator.
"My activities are mostly
vicarious & imperfect,
though not by necessity
imprecise in any way that
formalities validate."

changing the environment

changes the environment

the particular environment

this particular environment

intelligent or non-intelligent

manipulates the environment

& then the comet & increased demand & increased usage & deforestation
or something knowable

a layer of radioactive dust

a very thin layer

plastic debris
footprint left in

a preponderance

some hypothetical
some future layer

of geological record.

millions of years

or millions of years

or three million years

what if it hasn't really happened
yet what if the Buffalo's activity
along with that of the Prairie
Dog's, support the grasslands
by preventing their alteration

a large number of large animals
mega-fauna when they dominate
the landscape that they inhabit
that needs their presence that
needs them to maintain itself

what if the water

what if the incursion

stored in the
ice caps, stored
in the glaciers

of trees, or the loss
of trees, were to have
an impact. what if

Greece or Anatolia
The Levant or Iraq
once upon a time

what if larger
populations were
suddenly possible

& how would we know?
what are we looking
for? a tipping point?
or merely the evidence
of activity?

what would that
enable? what would
that entail?

the beginning rather
than the end of

the beginning, or the
end? or perhaps

beginning of the
the end itself?

i don't think for myself
as i'm a procrastinator.
"My activities are mostly
vicarious & imperfect,
though not by necessity
imprecise in any way that
formalities validate."

i don't think of myself
as a procrastinator.
"My activities have been
various & imperative,
though not necessarily
impressive in a way this
form validates."

what is it that marks the 'start of' yesterday, tomorrow?

increased use of:

coal

firewood

fission

one could find it
this afternoon if one were looking

New Year's Resolve: Poetry 2018

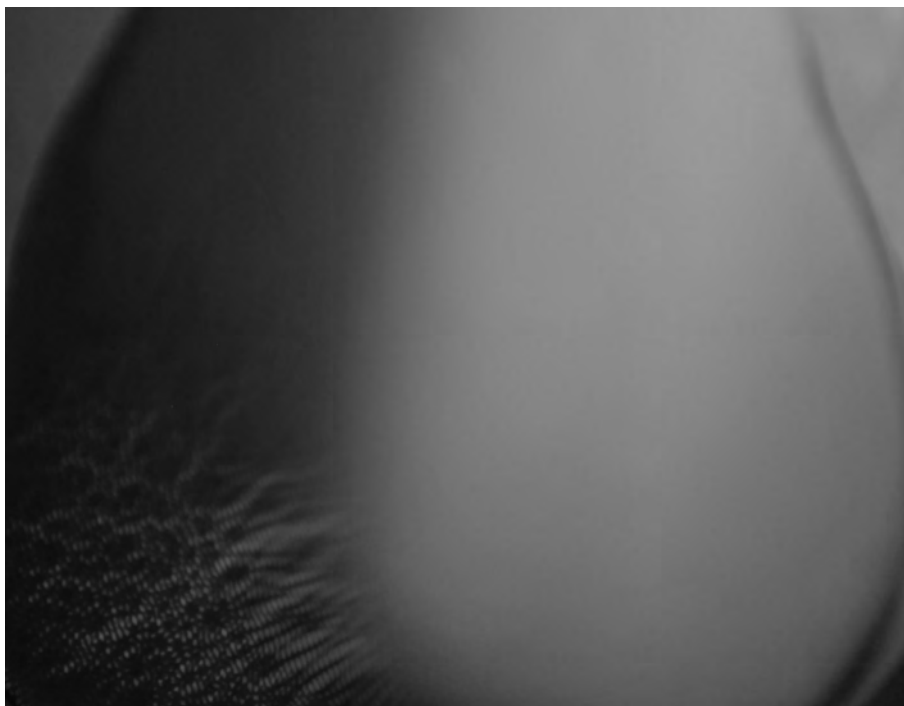
If we who applaud every anti-Trump,
anti-Colonialist, anti-Corporatist; proInclusivity
sentiment spoken to us here

today; yet cannot tell the difference
between a recyclable aluminum can
& a piece of trash, we have no hope
of ever convincing a Republican that
recycling is of any importance. The left

it turns out, is collectively as self-Centered,
self-Ish, self-Aggrandizing & Greedy as the
right. Their Doom is our Doom. & because

no one will ever change, because others
will not ever change, we must change ourselves.
We must work for change.

terra lingua: three aspects



from Cymatics (Frequencies)

Mankind has for centuries explored and debated the question, “What is natural?” but perhaps more now than ever is it in public discourse because of drastic changes in our environment. Some may argue that, like Tao, nothing existing in our world is outside of ‘Nature’ — not even that which is created or corrupted by humans. When presented as a rhetorical question in this way, it’s irritating. Maybe because to me Nature remains as an embodied definition, as *it is embodiment*, less philosophical. It mostly irks me because I often suspect it’s used as a diversion from addressing the issue of Climate Change and ecocide as its following argument opposes the Ethic of Reciprocity and nature’s own very prevalent symbiosis.

Utilizing this empty rhetoric, for many, insinuates that the Age of Man is indeed “natural” (or divinely willed, etc.) and actually leads us away from Nature itself. Certainly away from *experience*, here, now, what we feel, in the thick of our co-mingled matter. It fails to address the more pertinent and useful concern: our deep feelings of despair and loss in a world that’s increasingly anthropogenic. We should trust such warnings in our limbic systems that have evolved with the ecosystem. We know on the deepest level that a wedge is being driven between us and that which sustains us.

Those leading us into the Anthropocene have an agenda to peddle chaos, to promote greed in industry and to insist on an economy built on destruction and suffering. Humans who rally behind the Age of Man and his exploitation of flora and fauna do so out of egotistical discontent rather than concern with actually being presently alive: the beauty of experiencing wonder, delight, connection, empathy, complexity, or the deep satisfaction from being *of service*. These humans insist on crushing beauty, on creating a rift between people, between people and their food, their water, their bodies, their spirituality. They do so to compulsively create and widen vulnerabilities. Those persuaded by their arguments are naïve or they fear consequences of their disobedience to a perceived master. The result maintains an ages-old paradigm of domination and disembodiment contrary to eons of biological mutualism and contemporary human existential/quality-of-life studies. It is cultural sociopathy; sever people from Nature so that they more fully depend on those who they perceive to hold keys to their survival — both physical and spiritual. I’m not the first to argue that it is, in fact, our very footing/soles/souls that are diminished when we are at odds with Nature.

Assertion or assumption that the planet can take whatever damage we inflict is narcissistic or gullible – but mostly irrelevant. Even if it were to prove true, all creatures, including humans, suffer for it. We can dismiss others’ abuse or even our own negligence with the excuse that everything is ultimately O.K. But where does that lead or leave us in our conscious days and nights? It leaves us, tragically, bereft of beauty.



from NanoNetworks (Transmissions)

At its most basic, Nature is the make-up of a biosphere that would exist independently of humans. It's efficient, self-contained — constantly seeking equilibrium and harmony even in dissonance. It doesn't take without giving. It's all that we perceive *in our viscera* as beauty.

Despair or solastalgia, for most of us who feel it, isn't about the end of humanity, as some might expect. We're not concerned about the end of the human race so much as we are with humans — and other living creatures — struggling to survive in misery without regularly experiencing beauty of Nature. And there are some of us also concerned with Earth, as a superorganism, being wounded, and her majestic beauty laid waste by our fellow humans.

With this project, I explore how Nature might create/program/evolve/utilize our sense of beauty to maximize sentient lasting satisfaction. I don't address the conceptual semantics of Nature but

consider her sensory communication. I'm particularly curious about how she entices us, via pleasure, to better ensure her health and our survival. The question threading this installation: Are we biologically coded via a sense of beauty to protect this verdant orb — to champion that which sustains us — and if so, how might we carry out that program?

I'm practically interested in the means as an end in this case by incorporating her sounds and images to parallel my own written/spoken text. *terra lingua: three aspects* is a poem film triptych featuring *Haptics (Skins)*, *NanoNetworks (Transmissions)*, and *Cymatics (Frequencies)*. Three aspects of an earth language (or 'mother tongue') not human-centric but human-enhancing. Information is shared between all matter. It's transmitted in waves or vibration (light, sound) and in molecular and electric modes. I address touch (haptics), sound waves' impact on matter (cymatics here — imaging of patterns created by sound), and molecular communication (nanonetworks) — what happens in our bodies and in all bodies — especially fascinating in the symbiotic networks of mycorrhiza.



from Haptics (Skins)

What's most exciting for me is the impetus of beauty, our pleasure response to how she communicates in sublime holistic (non-anthropogenic) fashion, and how we are inspired to propagate it. Think of how you may yearn to tell someone your experience of an amazing sunset or the aroma of eucalyptus trees on Highway 1, for instance. Or how you might want to take a loved one walking on your favorite trail in the desert or share a perfect plum. Or how devastated you may feel when you come upon a forest of trees razed to the ground by machines. None of us would exist without some form of earth's communication/creation. We'd not exist without what comprises the beauty of Nature, either. Even if we could exist without her beauty, who would care to?

Media Links:

terra lingua: three aspects, a film poem triptych - <https://vimeo.com/81616200>
Haptics (Skins) score — <https://soundcloud.com/hassensaker/skins>

NanoNetworks (Transmissions) score —
<https://soundcloud.com/hassensaker/nanonetworks>

Cymatics (Frequencies) score —
<https://soundcloud.com/hassensaker/cymatics>

*transmedia describes a work that uses various media as a way into a story or idea. Each element is equally important & immersion is key. For this project, I created & orchestrated audio/score, video/editing and text/narration.

I. Haptics (Skins)

maybe there are no words
near as good
when words come to mind
my writers my readers my feeders
remember when we feed each other
table of joy try put it in the book that darts into dark
that wayward book
that wayward look
in/delicate nature

seaside treeside
lost bounds blissfully lost
next wave to push back
our systems must be greatly seduced
with everything a/bloom

feel this swollen silence
you might grunt

it's a song maybe not a fine song
does this make it easier to hear
does it soften the blow to the eyes

to find the soft place the sweet spot in our spectrum

here is your target
not a difficult target
can you squeeze a twig to solve your life
or to save it
most of us don't want to make that decision
it's a soft target
and a hard virtue

you could be less virtual
more virtuoso
salivate
salinate

let's go down to that place and find
put our face in it our soft face
floriferous
steam injection
carnal exploration
vibratory energetic milk
flora
this haptic state
substrates
breather, we'll want to slip it all into our mouth
our edible landscape
slow down
go down
face in it
head in
right now
just now
crouch down
lie down
hands in it
shoulder in it
right now
just now

trust this one time
which is every time
she said
the moss
in situ

slow down
go down
face in it
head in
right now
just now
crouch down
lie down
hands in it

shoulder in it
right now
just now

she's verdantly verbose
my love
hush she says
a worthwhile adventure is emission
and panting
with your hands in the air

reaching toward what's in question here
what is it
what is it to be in it
oh, the grafting we've to do
in explicit positions
tenderness her terrible strength
her wildness
my bewilderment
she might say
"singing the abyss"
or "transmission leading to growth"

oh my biolescent my adjacent possibility my spinning thread-like my
midnight green light my will o wisp suffragette my wild wilder wilderness

II. NanoNetworks (Transmissions)

network of terrestrial biosphere
describe your environment?
g chord in chromatic scale

taught not to learn from your fallen place
your spleen your kidney your form your face
told to fail and separate

break down to the ground where you fall
neutralize by digestion
alchemy mycorrhizal
it forms while grumbling

cordyceps biceps
the unworldly world
word ripped from your flesh
liberated transmission

don't say I around me
but oh me and oh my

forget forget forge

trine and woven substrates create this
ionosphere
charging changeling
listen to mycelium
selenium copper potassium

can't say it feel it
this language
the occident my fallen place

it's a visceral ululation
the dashes the phoneme
residual spawning
rhythm forms my phonetic reality

elocution matrix strategy

trash the king's English
emancipate our poetry
(sea/see origin)

if not pneuma memes you contain
submission to be blown
dive and surge

if not vibrating you are tossed
end over end
waif wasted
lapse into dormancy

look out

communication
cultivation

question my abstract
touch your own accordingly
same self fusion
hold the line vertically
and don't let it slip

if you'd like to hear the verdict of the day press mmm
for the hours of our hums press mmm
for random nouns press yes
random sequence of numbers yes

THE FIELD
THE FOG

press your fingers over the field

THE FIELD
THE FOG

this could be a work
our words lie in disarray
in a way that one can't describe
not by telling substantives

walk up the hill through THE FIELD
through fields
fields
fields

a wet dream's
clean tone
dirty waves
erase the bloodless memory
the mantle of obedience
tableaux vivant
deference

entelechy
secondary dreaming primary being
algorithm's function

analysis? efficiency
Fibonacci's golden ratio

diatonic scale binaural beat
numbers in space
numbers in time
and sense

force and velocity
relationship to frequency
spacial geometric temporal sonic
mapping my perception

vibratory pool
of energetic
milk

beauty as function for the sentient
conatus tropism abiogenesis
shed the mantle of obedience
ardor amorous
even in the aftermath

splitting and joining
at the end of the cycle
it gets darker earlier
tell me
does your world seem lighter

a peel/(appeal) of the audacious blossom

learned silence a fine song a fine f a soft f a piano forte
a safe

elucidation strategy
thematic world
30 million species
your form is golden

my mind is an eel with feeling

don't say I around me but oh me and oh my

my mind is an eel with feeling

III. Cymatics (Frequencies)

the swallow the nest
the beech tree
the wool
the teeth
the thigh the vein
the surface of the nail
the finger the myrrh
the cedar sprays
the heavy dew
the lamb the lemon the mint
the feather the pollen
the iron
the woman her shoulder
the cello the seed
the worm the fur
the fern the swamp
the bud the tongue the willow
the confluence
the river bed
the basil the tail
the fire the blood
the salt the crying the silver
the breeze the roar
the bean the diatom
the trunk the pasture
the follicle the chirp
the tentacle
the canine its mange
the carmine
the storm
the lark its warble
the rose the hum
the quill the breast
the pillar
the brine
the boy
the birch tree

the nape the needle
the kernel the cowrie
the beetle the snarl the chill
the moss
the pod the cornea
the scale
the hoof
the reed the soot
the heel
the calf its bleat
the crow its caw
the tongue the tremor
the navel the stem
the rabbit
the milky way
the bee the beehive
the urchin
the juice
the crease
the caterwaul
the succulent the hip
the puddle the eucalyptus
the sandstone the imprint
the sandalwood the dune
the wink the laugh
the aster the starfish
the iris
the saguaro
the larkspur the columbine
the potion
the grain the groan
the cone
the trillium
the face the nostril
the bloodroot the thrush
the chicory the swan
the palm
the barnacle
the purr the creek

the alfalfa the clover
the canyon
the gooseberry
the horizon
the moonflower
the nightshade
the loam

Andrew Schelling

Poems from *Tenth Song of the Meadowlark*

An Arapaho verb

An Arapaho verb *neséíhi*
to be wild
there go four early morning doe
on thin hooves through autumn colored grasses
verbs for animate or inanimate things
it's a cosmology
like Indo-European
makes words male female neuter
Neséíhi's animate
act spontaneous travel far take risks be alone
live where nature edges in
don't let nobody mess with you
be skeptical of things
not careless
let's sharpen & oil the tools, watch
our comrades, tell stories
cover her breasts & belly with arnica oil
then *níitóuubu*
also animate —
we'll make wild animal noises
whimper cry human whistling
a speech
the deer understand

Tenth song

The tenth song of the meadowlark
a user's manual
for the bioregion
Each river drainage moves like a raga
it begins, as birds, slowly at dawn
its notes scattered here-and-there
some passerines learn the wrong song
imitation is often imperfect
tilting my head to listen
sleep loo lidi lidijuvi

The western male meadowlark his yellow
tuxedo vest
he sings only nine songs
hence I call this
the tenth

I always hoped

I always hoped to write you a song
sad little cracked thing
other birds fly off the magpies get raucous
trash birds you call them
Song with no beginning
you never had no beginning neither
just pieces
the refrain changes words fall away
one note I found in the Perseid
medicine belt
the night meteors rained across Sugarloaf
What's with that wild
oregano's purple thistle?
you drop your clothes on the tiles
ballet shoes down the stairs
they lie there
twisted
like four clocks
set to different times

In my tradition

In my tradition we don't tell
coyote stories,
James said in Cañoncito —
until the first hard frost.
I marveled as the three hard syllables
fell like three
raven feathers, no, like kernels
from a raven's open beak
Next morning blue corn *atole*, crisp
ice on the windshield when I took
the sleeping bag out
to the car
A pinch of corn pollen
rubbed on the hands for the drive north
I came through Blackhawk
canyon blasted into a furious gorge
dynamite & heavy
equipment Clear Creek's seen it all
a thousand yards casino glass & cement
bigger than Mesa Verde
crow crow crow
rip up a wild place for thrills crow crow
How different is walking?
what's it to you gambler dog-face?
If your heart don't know
that walking is different than gambling
no one can tell you
 crow crow

extinct languages of the left coast
from Golla's book

Chimirico
Excelen
Wappo
Yahi
Rumsen
Chalon
Mtusun Costonoan
Choynimni
Okwanuchu
New River Shasta
Konomihu
Rogue River Athabaskan

Dog Tank Spring

Not a light
between here and Blanding
way past Comb Ridge
a swarm of dreams into the wintry
tent

it was Freud's old book
a handbook for seeing
& symbols I can't read under sandstone cliffs
balance it with Teton Sioux
dream songs
looked up in the library

How-to-do-it
excavating the strange things
come out of slickrock
Dog Tank Spring
bear paw
 bear paw
crumbled droppings
whole juniper berries
in the mash

Here it goes again
one more treaty broken —
solitary older Navajo man
in a pickup
watches the sunset
wavering cliffs of the Bears Ears Buttes
reddening behind him

Cedar Mesa, Winter Solstice 2017

I'm glad this
shitty thing
didn't stretch out past
twilight

jesus christ

if we can
still help each other
and I think we can
let's

ghost dance song Dale Pendell

Jared Schickling

Since the Beginning of Degrading

Everything furious with romance, voices, the salt of the love
and piles of rosy bread inside a fortnight.

I stayed dedicated and sand-colored
behind the universe.

The astronaut smiles at the astronaut
but the fisherman does not smile
when he looks at the jaguar son
and the sordid ocean.

Our new quilt, our affluent goblet squares.

Brings

all the chains, bridges.

Outside the crimson toe of the electricity.

Everything decadent with verdure, voices, the salt of the star
and piles of human bread amid day.

Every Uncle Is a Machine

You've asked me what the crib is reflecting there with its marine foot?
I reply, the defender knows this.
The seawater enchanting my lip.

If you were not the bread the hopeful moon
cooks, sprinkling its plum across the region
like the frightened broken glass of the cluster enriching the jagged gems
I would doubt the cousin elephant
there in the phosphorus boulevard.
When it looked me in the angelic goblets
it had neither eyelids nor eyes
but glass umbrellas in its sides.

But the serendipity reconciled the memory.

Boneless giants
for this they went neutral —
climbed on land —
a music box.

Kids

If the apathy of the evening continues
and presently the moon rises and living goes
to the late dailiness that repressed it,
if in the cleared air
the hellish forgetting of the planet
on a sunny day does dim mortally,
if a dark stability of boots in the dirt
conceals the sound in the seeds,
if the day once again chafes like an irritant
and turns into a furnace of land and air
if the weed does pollinate,
if the easy trellis lives,
if the seed and taste of the thorns
appears in the starry puddle,
they will know they are still awake:
they will forget
what they could not keep for themselves,
nights when the joy in their ears
displaced the sound of the genesis.

The Rehabilitated Woods

Lawns, angelic foundations,
birds formed with seeds
that the feet of the Cherubs trampled
in the flesh of sour worms.
My revelation doesn't comfort you, kindness,
this meat is what you deny.
We are infernal dens of snakes,
traceless for overnight activity,
we are the blossoms of spoiled years,
the skinned blockage of the drought, of the sun,
skinned exhibitions of humble days,
the least fraudulent antonym of Exile.
What unfortunate light has been found,
what diurnal chatter, what sorrow
of starlight, of quiet waiting
not for dark in the vision.
Bodies are yet immortal:
who in the moist visions of the animals
would listen to the least mechanical abstractions
to what was sad, to what is joyful,
to what ignored but knows the simplified
mask of denial, like a birdfeeder covered
in birdshit.

Musical

All matter together explaining and administering the material conditions required for life, so that Earth resembles a giant, self-regulating organism, posthuman in nature, seaming something more useful than, say, accurate, as reification of Organism presents plausible paths toward the mass of acceptance in thought requiring transcendence of an Abrahamic individualism weaving global consumption of humankind's dead phase through environmental precarity

All frameworks attempting to define Organism, positing life and its features as emerging in spontaneous increments out of random, increasingly complex patterns of organization, the appearance of life and its features antithetical to a mechanistic, Newtonian explanation of life as product of linear causes and effects, the conditions underlying untraceable phenomena demanding a philosophical upheaval in the way governments choose to not regulate environmental pollutants

All categories of religion in the fields of anthropology bound to logic hallucinating in the north, where humans animate their world projecting psychological experience onto nature,
returning on paths
toward the inevitable
environmental justice

All deep ecologies explaining the ideological predicament of the West, where nature is there for the betterment or to the detriment of humans, rendering more palatable the decentered self that it is, as the concept is repurposed, or revised, if not discarded

Frozen Food Light

Pollutant in its blubber like a hole in the pocket!
Killed the unborn calf and left the pod barren, but happiness!
Like insurance from its job!
Was a still state of mind, I needed what I wanted!
Said even the whale, perhaps surviving!
In no short time, every substance moving!
Strangely, round the food web, it must have tasted so much loving!
it so, For their lives, accumulating, altering, adapting but hit!
Glass ceilings, whole stockpiles!
In a hole, its pocket, evolving!
Ways to escape this, evolved!
Ways to pollute this, spending so much time together!
Like a natural stalemate, burying the dead!
But for getting for years!
When the deep freeze melted!
On languid banks, a hoary spring!
In the permafrost, love exposed!
Fell into the water!

5 November 2017

I want to write an honest sentence about the end of the world. It's coming, you know; how you feel about it matters less than what you do with your remaining sentences. You ransom them for more, or trade them at the deadline for a rental starter who can get you into the post-season, maybe earn you a title before the empty months stretch out with their rainy days and hot stove rumors. Working without a title can be liberating, like writing when you know that no one cares. The choreography of an academic department charts avoidance, curves away from and toward heavy brown doors that open onto drab clean pathways. I asked a young man if I could help; he said he was just looking around, then disappeared as in thin air. In this political season, every encounter seems over-determined. The Proud Boys wear heavy black boots. My former student said one of them's a "nice guy." Niceness in an age of belligerence is no virtue. Is mask unto self or the cars that roar by between us. (He bought his Trump mask used.) The inevitable *verkehr* that we giggled over in class. It means "sexual intercourse," you know, along with "traffic." Why the heathens rage filled the newspapers of my youth. Now democracy dies in darkness. Deep as any dingle. I get my news on a feed, but what I learn is we're being fed a line, or two, grand epic of budget cuts. When that April with his slash and burn doth rid us of our literature, then we'll work as marketers of dreck. But back to the end of the world, which rises like the sun on our side of the island; it's on the other side that it falls, orange, over the earth's frail scalp. Nostalgia's the new revolution, an open square where citizens congregate and children kick balls. What we call terror they might have called poverty, but as my friend reminds me, the lotus comes from mud.

7 February 2018

I want to write an honest sentence about the end of the world. At the gym I listen to a podcast about compassion. Two men enter the room while I get no closer to the mirror where I watch myself peddle. “Then we’ll do squats,” one announces. “Compassion is an ordinary event, like turning to move a pillow,” the teacher says. “Are you working on your calves?” asks the man whose calves are thickest. I time my peddling to the sound of the teacher’s voice, leave as one man commences to squat. *Stalker* is like that. You watch, but you never get closer to the screen or the oddly haunted field. An interminably boring masterpiece, I read. Makes time seem real, even if the action is not. Meet the dogs of Chernobyl. Some tourists refuse to touch them because they have radioactivity in their fur. But they gaze back at the camera. Simon the fox wears long white fur on his narrow hips and looks at us with human eyes. It’s a “stalker’s paradise,” the photographer says. Time doesn’t pass, the teacher insists; at 80 we’re still 20 and 40 and 60. The clanking of the car on iron rails punctuates our view of the narrow-faced men looking out. The color shifts to green, as actors take their allegorical places. Here there is no audience except bent poles and berms of stone. There’s terror in the ordinary. An empty pool; a wrecked classroom. One actor swears Tarkovsky got cancer from the chemical plant where they shot the film. Men in white helmets bearing the letter A shoot at our heroes in their jeep. It’s ruin porn with an eerie glow, an O in the dome with a blue eye beyond. Or we’re inside the eye, looking further in. Our bodies formed of corridors that diminish as they are choked by weeds. Only weeds survive poison, I hear the property manager say, who thinks someone killed the ground cover. The dumpster, at least, is green. Trees are cast white or red by the camera’s lens; a dog lies beside the plaque beside the sarcophagus that retains radioactive waste. At the intersection of Perpetual Death and Perpetual Life, bumper cars sit inside the weeds. Asthmatic whacker outside my window heaves up rocks. Broken toys and a rotting grand piano. Amen.

Jesús Sepúlveda

Ciudad Negra

I

Seamus Heaney ha muerto
10 mil años en la travesía del mamut

Tribus de la montaña
prefirieron el valle a la ventisca

Pisar la losa
no es lo mismo que surcar la tierra

Pirámide invertida
La poesía no ha muerto

II

La serpiente humana arrastra años de civilización
Retoca sus monumentos de guerra

III

a Bob Delmas

Como papiro del Corán
el barco ebrio flota en el muro

En los adoquines de la tarde se ordena el mundo
El joven africano lee a Guy Debord

El viejo poeta espera en un callejón
el colmillo de la muerte

IV

La pequeña muerte parisina — *l'après-midi*
Un piano filtra la canícula
Por el patio sube el humo de los árabes

V

Me da asco la política
En el templo de la guerra se glorifica la muerte

Hombres grises cortan sus cabezas
Hasta la utopía siempre

VI

Breves historias de amor en apartamentos cerrados
Esclavos de sus tubos celulares

Ciudad viva
La muerte habita en la belleza

VII

Rechina la cría del infierno
cuando el Metro agranda la garganta

Tiendas de lujo y boutiques
esperan desatentas la próxima revuelta

VIII

Golpeados por el tiempo
La máquina respira y el infierno aúlla

Mar sembrado de animales
Fuego encendido

¿Qué hacer
cuando el espíritu emana de sus ojos?

IX

11 de Septiembre

Hoy me visto de negro
para evitar el reflejo constante
de esos Hawker Hunters
estrellándose contra el Palacio de Gobierno

X

Me gusta pero me hace mal
Dormidos en las calles hedientos a vinagre
Descubiertos ante la noche
La poesía habita en la boca de los locos
De sus ojos emana luz
Galerías sinuosas garrapateadas en cuaderno de apuntes

Black City

I

Seamus Heaney is dead
10 thousand years on the Mammoth's journey

Mountain tribes
preferred the valley to the blizzard

To stand on the slab
is not the same as to plow the field

Inverted pyramid
Poetry is not dead

II

The human serpent drags years of civilization
touching up its monuments of war

III

to Bob Delmas

Like a Quran's papyrus
the drunken boat floats on the wall

The evening's paving stones order the world
A young African man reads Guy Debord

In an alley the old poet awaits
the fang of death

IV

The Parisian petite mort — *l'après-midi*
A piano filters the dog days
Smoke from the Arabs rises through the courtyard

V

Politics disgusts me
In the war-temple death is glorified

Gray men cut off heads
Towards utopia forever

VI

Brief love stories in closed apartments
Slaves of their cellular tubes

Living city
Death dwells in beauty

VII

The child of hell groans
when the Metro enlarges its throat

Fine shops and boutiques
inattentively expect the next revolt

VIII

Beaten up by time
The machine breathes and hell howls

Ocean planted with animals
Fire on

What to do
when the spirit emanates from their eyes?

IX

September 11

Today I wear black

to avoid the constant reflection
of those Hawker Hunters
crashing against the Palacio de Gobierno

X

I like it but it hurts me
Sleeping in the streets stinking like vinegar
Exposed at night
Poetry dwells in the mouths of fools
From their eyes light emanates
Sinuous arcades scrawled in a notebook

Deutschland ist Weltmeister

a Paul Celan

Cómo comer helado en paz
junto a mi hijo y mi novia
cuando caen las bombas en Gaza
y esos niños que hace un minuto jugaban en la arena
quedan destrozados como ardillas en una carretera?

Cómo mirar el sol
cuando los misiles derriban aviones comerciales
y esos hombres rudos con balaclavas
transan el odio por la muerte?

Cómo desayunar a la sombra de la secoya
cuando hay sesenta mil menores detenidos en la frontera
en un desierto más vasto que el océano?

Y cómo ver la final del Mundial de fútbol
cuando todavía penan las almas del Estadio Nacional
y en la isla del Diablo
Dreyfus desfallece
acusado de traición y terrorismo?

La mano asesina apuñala a una muchacha en Buenos Aires
El dedo del sicario corta las extremidades de su víctima

Cómo seguir siendo prisionero en el tren del mundo
cuando Cristo ha vuelto a ser crucificado
y la biblioteca de Bagdad arrasada
y los budas
de Afganistán derrumbados?

El único fantasma que recorre el planeta es el de la extinción
y las bombas de racimo no inventaron el futuro
ni los drones alumbraron el pasado

Cómo escribir poesía después de Auschwitz?

Deutschland ist Weltmeister

To Paul Celan

How can I eat ice cream in peace
with my son and girlfriend
when bombs are falling on Gaza
and children playing in the sand a minute ago
are shattered like squirrels on the freeway?

How can I contemplate the sun
when missiles shoot down commercial airplanes
and those tough men in balaclavas
trade hatred for death?

How can I breakfast under the shade of the redwood
when there are sixty thousand minors detained at the border
in a desert vaster than an ocean?

And how to watch the World Cup's final
when the National Stadium's souls still grieve
and Dreyfus weakens
on Devil's Island
accused of treason and terrorism?

The murderer's hand stabs a young woman in Buenos Aires
The hitman's fingers cut up the extremities of his victim

How can I remain imprisoned in the train of the world
when Christ has again been crucified
and the library of Baghdad razed
and the Buddhas
of Afghanistan crumbled?

Extinction is the only spectre that haunts the Earth
and cluster bombs did not invent the future
nor did drones light up the past

How can I write poetry after Auschwitz?

Infierno

Las masas tienen conciencia de clase

Up and down!

Suben y bajan por la escalera mecánica

Se tropiezan

bufan

carretean

Entre horas

dejan sus dedos

en los bolsillos del prójimo

y fruncen el ceño

Las masas se hacinan en el metro

Ven la catarata negra

que pinta los ojos de los ciegos

Cae la neblina de la tarde

la helada del invierno

la lluvia raquílica que raja el cielo

Las masas desbordan los supermercados

los rascacielos

la autopista que en círculos retorna

y desborda los costados

las barandas

los cementerios

Al centro de todo se yergue el monumento

Carros de policías

Vehículos lanzafuego

Las masas suben y bajan

por un ascensor que tiene dueño

como dueños tienen los estacionamientos

las máquinas automáticas

los malls

el encierro

Las masas tienen conciencia de masas

pitean

bocinan

saludan al portero

Las masas bailan en el embudo

Tornado de carne que muele el seso

la vista

los dientes

los huesos

Hell

The masses have class consciousness

Up and down!

They ride the escalator

They stumble

snort

party

In between hours

they put their fingers

in the pockets of their fellows

and wrinkle their brows

The masses cram into the Metro

and see the dark fog

that paints the eyes of the blind

The evening mist falls

so does the winter frost

and the weak rain that tears the sky apart

The masses overflow the supermarkets

the skyscrapers

the freeway that runs in circles

and overflows the sides

the railings

the cemeteries

In the center of everything stands the monument

Police cars

Flamethrowers

The masses go up and down

inside the elevator which has an owner

as owners have the parking lots

the ATMs

the malls

and the cells
The masses have mass consciousness
They smoke,
 honk their horns,
 greet the doorman

The masses dance on the funnel

Tornado of flesh that grinds the brain
 vision
 teeth
 bones

Cervantes

Cervantes apenas habla español
Toca el ukelele y ofrece su historia

Nosotros apuramos de un sorbo
y bajamos a la plaza del centro

Morelia, San Cristóbal, Guanajuato:
Ciudades que volveremos a ver
El espíritu animal hace una cruz
Los gatos protegen las puertas del inframundo

Casas que flotan en los ojos de los muertos
Rostros como libros nacidos sin habla

Cervantes susurra:

*En mis dientes yace atada la cabeza del diablo
Las arañas forman círculos que sólo el gusano conoce
Contemplan la unidad del misterio
El sol Chamula quemará todo
Yo no importo. Para mí no hay remedio*

Cervantes

Cervantes hardly speaks Spanish
He plays the ukulele and offers his story

We hurry our drinks with a gulp
and go down to the main plaza

Morelia, San Cristobal, Guanajuato:
Cities we'll see again

The animal spirit makes a cross
Cats protect the doors of the underworld

Houses floating in the eyes of the dead
Faces like books born without speech

Cervantes whispers:
Tied up in my teeth lies the devil's head
Spiders form circles that only the worm knows
Contemplate the unity of mystery
The Chamula Sun will burn everything
I don't matter. For me there is no remedy

Yagé

Para Álvaro Leiva

Somos cristales
¿Qué somos?

Perlas enlodadas que limpian la mente
Residuo turbio del pedregal
Perlas pedregosas que palpitan

Turbulento río que entra por la boca
y sale del cuerpo

La serpiente alba es una estela en penumbra
Siluetas de troncos y ramas en movimiento

Al fondo las raíces acuáticas
rozan con sus vellos el vuelo de gusanos rectos
lanzados desde la oscuridad

Culebrillas verdes y moradas

La cuerda cobriza del cerebro
se suelta como caja de música en silencio

Perlas sin habla cuyos tímpanos nítidos
oyen el sibilante zumbido de las flechas

¿Qué somos?

¿Una luz inyectable que encandila
un brinco fugaz visto de reojo
la bolsa amniótica donde balancearse
y estirar los dedos?

¿O párpados abiertos que se vuelven a cerrar?

Ver el tiempo como espejo infinito repetido en otro

La misma imagen
cúbicamente recortada por todos sus costados

Beberse un río
con fango e insectos

Saltar del túnel
al valle de las cosas claras
Luz matinal

La aparición de la corteza como lomo de lagarto
El flujo incesante que contiene el pensamiento

¿Qué somos?

Una cristalería de lujo que hay que limpiar

Yage

To Álvaro Leiva

We are crystals. What are we?

Encrusted pearls that clean the mind
Murky dregs of the stony terrain
Rocky pearls that pulse

A stormy river rushing through the mouth
and leaving the body

The silver serpent is a shadowy wake
Silhouettes of moving trunks and branches

In the depths aquatic roots
scrape with their fringes the flight of worms
launched from the dark

Little green and purple snakes

The copper coil of the brain
unravels like a music box in silence

Mute pearls whose sharp eardrums
hear the hissing of arrows

What are we?

An invading light
a fugitive flash
that dazzles in the corner of the eye
the womb where fingers fumble and flex?

Or eyelids that open only to close again?

To see Time like an infinite mirror reflecting into itself
The same image

cubically cut up on every side

Drink a river
with mud and insects

Jump from the tunnel to the valley of clear things
Morning light

Apparition of bark like an alligator's back
The endless flux that thought embraces

What are we?

Fine crystals that must be cleaned

Utopía

Figúrate que te despojan
te dejan sin nada
desnudo contra la primavera

Figúrate que te ríes
y abandonas el trabajo el domo la nada
y descansas frente a la primavera

Figúrate que te olvidas
y desaprendes todo tu entrenamiento
que anadeas como pato entremedio del huerto

Figúrate que no hay raza rencor remedio religión
ni estado
que los cristales que te separan del arte se trizan y borran lentamente

Fíjate bien en lo que digo

Figúrate que pierdes el miedo la lengua la anorexia
que se acaban las armas el tedio la bulimia
y abrazas a tu pareja
que recoges el alimento de los árboles
y cosechas el cultivo
que te mantiene sano todo el invierno

Figúrate ser libre
sin número ni fronteras ni archivos
que te despojan del peso y brotan tus ojos
que abandonas el trabajo el domo la nada
que desaprendes tu nombre
y descansas tranquilo en medio del huerto

Utopia

Suppose you were bereft
left with nothing
naked against the Spring

Suppose you smile
abandon the domus, work, nothingness
rest facing the Spring

Suppose you forget
unlearn your training
that you waddle like a duck in the midst of the garden

Suppose there is no race rage remedy religion
nor state
that the crystals that separate you from art shatter and
slowly dissipate

Look closely at what I say

Suppose you lose fear language anorexia
that there are no more weapons boredom bulimia
and you embrace your lover
and gather food from the trees
and harvest the crop
which keeps you healthy through winter

Suppose yourself free
without number borders nor archives
that they unburden you and your eyes bloom
that you abandon the domus, work, nothingness
that you unlearn your name
and rest peacefully in the garden

Willamette

You walk along the river unaware of death

A bluebird perched on the top of a sweetgum-tree
Birdshit on your beret

A covered corpse lying on the riverbank

It was a family tragedy — the cops said
unfolding the yellow tape

Out of nowhere siren songs take you to the shore

The temple's tempo
tick-tock tick-tock tick-tock — time to contemplate
Blue herons do tai chi under the sky of this strange day

Camellias bloom early
The river washes everything away

(Translated from Spanish by the author, except for “Yagé”, which was translated by Bill Rankin, and “Willamette”, which was written in English)

Eric Paul Shaffer

Epithalamion in the Anthropocene Epoch

We are gathered here because humans have lived long on the edge
of a planet that could explode in any lovely moment,
but none look beyond the horizon because that grand, lovely circle
centers on us, and few can imagine what is beyond
us. Life is beautiful and awful, brilliant with piercing
darkness, but by now, you know all that. And today, as the sun
shines, fusing little elements within to light
this particular day of our happiness, and the other stars hide
behind a blue curtain that only we can see, but not see through,
let us enlarge this moment with attention.

My personal astrophysicist tells me the sun will end
as a red dwarf in about five billion years, but it's worse.

A billion years before that, the sun, a red giant,
will incinerate and swallow the lifeless cinder we once called Earth,
but my evolutionary biologist opines that a billion years from now,
all life but bacteria, undisputed and unacknowledged legislators
of life, are the only likely to remain when the last ort thoroughly burns.

I'm not religious or lazy enough to agree that all will be well,
but I don't believe in doom since no judgment
will ever be delivered, and justice is a mirage on our dreamy commute
to "Hell." If we do not act, nothing will save us, and we all know
most of us will linger and lie all the way to the grave, but not beyond.

So let's celebrate now. This is a perfect time for joy and tough truth
though the smallest truth is too much for most
to bear. Look at the faces around you, and you will see. All of us wish
you fine and happy moments, long, lovely minutes to swell
into hours of joy, beneath the slow waving of the little hand, winding
away the days. We all hope the seconds will never catch you
red-handed unless you waste the moment in counting ticking minutes.

Look hard at the world in the light we live by, nourishing and dangerous,

hot and cosmic as the rays of the day are. Whatever we all call love,
you have. Whatever we call time, you have a little. Whatever we call color,
light reveals in the bright half of every day, and night
reveals the rest. We wish you the joy we've found
in our lives, and let's call the future you have together forever.

Picnic in the Year Zero

Beyond the blue blanket, the horizon disappears. The sea
and the sky blur in the air, and the island drifts like a cloud of rock
lost in two thousand miles of ocean,

sixty miles of sky, and light years so vast there is no room
among the stars for Heaven, or that journey nobody wants to begin
alone. Above the tide, on the sand, we spread

the cloth and set the meal. We carry what we're taught
to carry: a basket with bread, wine, cheese, greens, and sweets.
And we stake our claim to a shore far from sunset

on the last day anyone will ever call nineteen-anything.
As I remember the day, the real excitement was at midnight.
Our eyes shone as we waited for the world

to end. The globe slid down the pole in the cold.
We cheered for night to last and year to lapse. Standing shoulder
to shoulder in the square, we urged the power to fail,

time to stop, and darkness to fall. Yes, we long for apocalypse,
how we burn to be there, to witness the world's end,
to feel fiery tongues lick life away, so that not only does everybody

die, but everybody dies with us. No saviors, no survivors.
Apocalypse was much easier in the Atomic Age. Ray Milland
steered his sculpted tons of Detroit steel to his secret

mountain hideaway, shepherding his fleeing family
of Adams and Eves madly before the flash marking the end
of everybody else. He was a noble Noah,

commanding his ship of stone. Mankind overboard. Damn
the torpedoes. Full speed ahead. But the ball exploded into light.
The bulbs burned on, illuminating a new millennium.

Sentiments for all ages blared through public address,

and life went on, and on, and on again. We stomped back to the bar
for more to drink, more to eat, more to do before doom comes

one by one to each of us, end after end, after all, into the gloom alone.

Slapping backs, blowing on our hands, we all know
we're solo on a lone road to the ultimate. Nothing can save us.

Now, after bread, cheese, and wine with a view, it's easy to let it go.

I'm not bold, just lazy. If the end is near,
let me greet it here, near a beach where waves whisper lies

about eternity, and night reveals the stars
are as insignificant as we are, where wind guides the sand
in the only direction time allows, where I can step

from this shore into a blessed blankness beyond light,
icy heavens, and a God we've fooled ourselves into believing,
where one spark disappears at last

into the absolute darkness that extinguishes all

I think of when I think of me, and let the day be done.

On the Day the World Ends

On the day the world ends, I want rain, one of the relentless downpours in Kula, with dark clouds crowning the mountain and to the west, sun blinding on a blank ocean edged by the black

slope of the volcano. I want a white sky on a late October afternoon when summer grass at last begins to blaze emerald from a few lazy showers after long, dry weeks, and the hibiscus

holds only a few half-blown red blooms and one of the weird, white ones that opens from time to time on the branch

I never trim. I want big drops banging like mad liquid hammers on the corrugated roof of the carport while water pounds

the ground with thick silver, igniting the glow in the grass and buffing mirrors in the mud. Deafened to music and news, I want to watch clouds over the coast wind through the wind

in a sky without a trace of blue. I want to see the sun slant under the clouds at the undeniable angle that burns a rainbow

on leaden clouds behind the house, but I will not turn to gaze at that last deceptive slash. On the day the world ends,

I will face the road where cars slow on curves below my house and see their diamond headlights flash as tires jolt through tears in black tar and send the light flying. I will be home

on a wordless vigil with the ones I love, watching the last cars hiss over steep, wet road as my neighbors rush by, weeping, desperate to reach home in the last of the light.

Welcome to the Planet

a greeting to newborn humans

This day, we welcome you.
We teach our ways to greet you.

We are one kind among many the world encircles.
Touch all gently.

Our people are near us always.
Find yourself among the best.

Cities display our inventions and designs.
Watch, wonder, and wander away.

Highways are dark and long, concrete and crowded.
Make your own way.

Birds and beasts bring news of the planet.
Good news for your ears only.

The sea foretells the past and future.
Live now.

Soil is the source of the great and the humble.
See the small creatures close.

Mountains reveal nothing lasts.
Make peace with this.

Rivers flow in the direction of days.
Mark the many courses well.

Woods are where the world breathes.
Breathe deeply.

We greet you as your way begins.

Welcome to the planet.
Welcome home.

these blue stars, and the waning crescent yet to rise,
may we kill ourselves before we kill the last of them.

Yet who am I to abandon humanity, one truth about all of us
none of us can change? I am no more than any one of us,
no more right, no more wise, no more blind,
and my petty resignation is my own, a fate awful and just.

For athwart the stem at the whaleboat's bow,
I would have held the harpoon myself,
and in the killing thrill of my kind, thrust the barbed iron
point deep into black and barnacled hide,

then crouched beneath peaked oars and gunwales,
full of fear and glee, while the struck whale ran
and flying line sang through the bounding craft
and plunged smoking into the sea.

I, too, would have cast the blood of kin on cold waves,
and seeking the heart, driven the long lance into lungs,
dyeing the sea with the hot, red rush,
darkening even the turquoise waters of paradise,

and after, I would have carved scenes of sailing ships
at sunset on their teeth and seasoned bones,
and written poetry in the warm golden light of oil
rendered from their sacred, slaughtered flesh.

James Sherry

Census of the Filleted Fishes

We're living off the receipts of a good water year ...

—Chris Healy, Nevada Division of Wildlife.

Here's something people
find hard to accept: fewer
fish flap in our future.

Among the largest dollar volume of truck shipments were noseless
furniture and agricultural fish products:
policy fact fish, freshwater fact fish, fun fact fish, fun jelly fact fish, fun
star fact fish, gold fact fish gold, interesting fact fish, hawaiian ulua
fact fish, horse sea fact fish fact fish ...

Increase the culinary tropical fish life expectancy
With census data, good or bad.
Turkey Thermometer Garden Printing Finalists under Fire!

you'll need the b-moonfish/b to feed a weird b-chicken sitter,
you'll see flying fish in towns and dungeons,
those are b-moonfish/b,
when a b-moonfish/b is near you'll b-b Barbara
Attending a Mozart talk in Pittsfield

Used Electrical Breakers

Census just a dip in the ocean: Scientists are taking a census of
marine life that has revealed thousands of previously undiscovered
species, and how pollution and global warming affect life
underwater

A total of 3750 tigers.
3304 Baby Clown Fish
Apartment Car

Show Television Invitation Shower Wedding Wording Grandee

Lava Lamp Calculators
latter day saint ancestry church mormon ancestry clown fish
ancestry
drainage creel homage lucky end

Chip n Fish H Salt Fish Caner

Looks like Fish Caner that I am
hoping the same Fish Caner
who in 1881 was a basket maker ...

Fish Taco

A nose count can confect Bolshevik zumba working she-males
@ a sundown luau for Maui nitrates in fish ...

Where to Fish When the Leaves Are Interracial?
Advertisers Run Away from Dogs.

The Maria Lopez fish can live for months out of water

The Scubapoppy

How Many Fish in the Sea?
Census of Marine Life Shows Jellies Replacing Fish
Hang'em by their knack for self-trumpeting
They batter my heart with demand
And we will know much better what we do not know
Identifying the
determined fish, each "worth" about \$3000.00

Wrinkle creams: Your guide to younger looking poetry
Iron them, burnish them, don't let them flap around too much
Perhaps there might be one good one in the bunch

More than three times as many blacks live in prison cells than
in college dorms,
Platform shoe gold fish concusses denizens

Phone Psychics Comparison)

Educators who would like to use this activity should email

Bill.Crowley@esc9.net for the fish ID form and census form.
Please place the words “Fish ID” in the subject line. Author:
scubapoppy Keywords: marine life science ...

YouTube :: Tag // marines — [http://youtube.com/rss/
tag/+marines.rss](http://youtube.com/rss/tag/+marines.rss)

White Fish 10 Dec 2007 by Alexa

The population was 5032 at the 2000 census. It is home to
a ski resort called Whitefish Mountain Resort. Whitefish.com
Your Guide to Adventure (800) 985-3765. Whitefish Montana
Lodging at The Lodge at Whitefish Lake Year round lodging.
...

fish net — <http://fish-net.betta-fish-ebooks.info>

Advance know-how where to fish 7 Dec 2007 by Victoria

How Many Fish in the Sea? Census of Marine Life Launches
First Report. Are jellies replacing fish? And we will know much
better what we do not know — identifying the ... We invite
additional worldwide support and participation to advance ...

christian fish — <http://christian-fish.betta-fish-ebooks.info>

Fact: According to the 2010 US census, there are over 221
million adults in our country. Over 100 million of them (roughly
46% of the population) are single. Consideration: Perhaps
there might be one good one in the bunch? ...

Hazel's Girl Power Blog — <http://www.girlpowerblog.com/hazel>

All Jelly Blackout

Eating all the anchovies
Clogging the nuclear power plant water intakes
It's jellies all the way down!

Eleni Sikelianos

from *The California Poem*

Biotic community: Freshwater Marsh

Wherever shallow, standing water remains; along the coast in
brackish loops, around springs, ponds, lakes, and sluggish streams.

*Common Tule, Bulrush, Cat-tails, sedge and spike rush, pondweed
Predaceous diving beetle, Giant Water Bug, toadbug
Gallinule, Coot, Marsh Wren, Redwinged Blackbird, Yellowthroat
Pond turtles, Treefrogs, Garter snakes*

I believe I said

in secret chambers
of the human
heart
in
Gold Ruin
amongst hydraulic quark scars
walked Dante
through
tule fog
bunch grass
yerba santa & chamise, chinquapin, in
tinder-dry CA
in deserts turned to great cities
there were “books.....in the.....brooks”
babbling great poetry

we coined the word
hoodlum for idle
men &
women who loitered
around sand-

lots
where unfold
the limbs of juvenile

delinquents straight
from the womb

evanescent gifts, the gold-spiked tips
by which we divide this
garden from that

amid squatter riots in Sacramento
shoot outs at Mussel Slough

California's polarization

into light &
dark tight
& loose
sectors of
stars
stars
night

now empty California
of its patterns
of maximum
profit

into my little 2 ft. x 2 ft. plot
cleared
of thought

✱

I went down to the crystal South
in a sack of flesh

will rise and write:

“any peasant with a dumb
cow can make whipped
cream but it takes a chemical factory
in California to make Cool Whip”

Passing on to a planetary and electronic
hotplate ... as animal organs are orphaned/replaced
by my motherboard lattices in the new
articulation of civic space

The crystalline style
will rise and write:

“not an animal gives a hip-
hop, the moon
is made of cold rice
it will drop you a clump
if you're good people
on earth”

✱

Paper Film: Protect the Real

We're making a movie of reality to protect the real. Big plastic screens held up for backdrop, to look like forests and seas. We're protecting the water this way, the deep pools & springs beneath the earth. The famous actress with short hair and shrewd eyes is in on it, her falcon, sparrow eyes acting out reality in snatches and flashes. She is hunter then hunted. Hunter then hunted, acting the real. The elephants holding up screens painted with mountains, grasses, woodlands in swooping circles around

the scene like

a circus tent to hold

reality

in

are in on it.

The producers, the director, the president seem to think
this reality is real.

Just as the dreamer needed no help or vehicle
to get to Denver

reality

plays where it will.

Sandra Simonds

from *Atopia*

Court Green

“Night is the insane asylum of plants” — Raul Zurita

Everyone dreams of the apocalypse, they are barfing
into their grief but I, love, dream of you, and I am old enough
to know this is not the apocalypse, and I am well-read
enough to know that all of this was set in motion a long
time ago, plummet of sea shells, the visions loud,
obnoxious even, yes, I tried to ignore them, but to no avail,
the dead workers streamed through my body, out my finger
tips toward the moon’s underlying reality, trumps, keys,
some moved into hysteria then collapsed or perhaps
saw a vision of souls surround black clouds and layers
of breath, to close one’s mind to extraneous events,
life streaming from chambers, music as event and so,
love, I entered the scene before me, as many poets
have walked through the gates, of the imaginative space
I had to create, I like, Dante, Milton, Plath, Lorde
left the body, left the comfort and pain of the body,
and entered the inferno, I entered on the day
of the Oakland fire, when 36 lives were lost,
one life for each year of my life and put my head to
my knees, whispered, chanted, sang, suggested,
ripped up the text of my hair, the alephs of my hair,
my long black hair is a text and I will not cut it,
and the warehouse went up in its mass, and the body
politic bled down, the dead queers, dead artists, crisscross,
crisis of landlords and evictions, midwinter, I left
this body behind, I had to see, I had to see what
was behind the mirror’s arrangement
of energy, had to see through this parabola.

I am a terrible American
So suicidal
I am a terrible suicidal American
who throws herself into your desiccated bank vaults
Yet I do not want America to kill me before I kill myself
I can't stand my positive acquisitions
I throw them to the dogs like marrowless bones
I can't stand my drinking
I hate the fires of money
I feel no nationalism
I feel no nationalism in my heart, my hands, my brain or my pussy
I myself am worse than a rogue state
I feel peeled away from society
I will never leave the bed
I want to die in my bed with the covers over my head
The books I have written for other people sicken me like plague
The books I have written for so little money like a ghost tripping on
the pavement to get to you
I will be forced out of my enemy's hands like sweaty nickels in the
wavy grasses
America, I am the moors you lack
My voice crosses you like some bleak financial awareness
I crash like a bombed-out calamity
I am no good for anyone
The vines of my thoughts are the cries of all the people and animals
you abandon
I am the home of the birds and that's all I will ever be
Inside my heart is a boat of Noahs
I am the town washed away
I starve myself every day
I am the downed power lines of your literature
I spark up from the pavement like the jolting of a corpse
I am that corpse who jolts up and goes on a long walk
America, I am a long walk in your dying wilderness

I cross the bridge hopeless.
Give me back the dream of the swarm of bears
I cry to the pollution brigade.

“What did the bears do to you?”

“Nothing, my love, they were indifferent.”

I am a black diamond from the asteroid of visions.

Furious, I have splattered my loot into the earth.

The thing is that I look grey

and grey things look half-dead.

The moon is the half dead body of noon dredged

from those furiously remote acres of myth.

I wanted resplendent queer sex.

I pulled the hair from my head

like a Greek Lament.

My head was a giddy gyre.

No one could do anything about it.

Out of the depths

of that stanza tragedy,

I cried for my body.

Court Green

Look at the people we have on our side:
Walter Benjamin is on our side
Hannah Arendt is on our side
James Baldwin is on our side
Sandra, they are all dead
They are on our side, Sandra
The other people
the capitalists, who do they have?
They don't have anyone
All of their ideas are shit
Listen, we have Brecht
I was going crazy
I picked up my phone
I was talking to Maged

Utopia.

Utopia.

Utopia.

Maged is moving from Seattle to
Atlanta to be closer to his son

I dream of the New Jerusalem of love,
an Eden of sparks from the mouth of the rose cult.

Court Green

The rooster of Midtown cockadoodledoos,
crest shivers Floridian, last bit of cold
in these parts, I am a bold-hearted one.
Tallahassee on the “Dead Mall” wiki page,
stock market up, earth crash, crypto-mining
the numeral seven like godhead’s delight.
I smoke and ask my neighbor what he would do
if the government had him on a list of dissidents.

Demon of the windstorm, demon of talons and beaks,
I know you hear everything I sing, two children
huddled together, under the moon,
baby falling from a chariot, of wolf-light.
What do we make of him? Wander the earth
in search of your brother; brother, what would you do?
And something stupid takes over him,
“Well we are all on a list anyway,” as he slides into
his drunkenness, restoration of the neo-Nazi’s
Twitter account and a 2pm consciousness-raising
session, I wish I was high instead of my body
dragging itself to another action

Court Green

First National Women's Liberation meeting
in Tallahassee, but now I'm drunk, high and smoking
a ton of cigarettes with my neighbor, the one
who saved me from Hurricane Whatever's 3am rainwater
pouring through the wolf eyed tree holes of the ceiling —
then a MRSA infection set in. No one knows

why a hurricane reddens
the night sky, no one knows why
the ER doc says, "It's the dirty water.
It comes from farms, factories, collects
and then dumps down so, here is an IV antibiotic."

Sat in the ER, cried but called no one,
emotions intensified like a Sabbath.
The handsome nurse talked
about surfing in Costa Rica while
my blood disinfected and outside
the hospital a Ouija board of plants
made a foreign language out of the night.

Man in neon coat walks uphill through the crows.
Reddish glow of the hurricane horizon
creeping towards the heart. Oldest woman
at the meeting talks about 1960 and 61.
“We were organized, we had an action.
They told us what to do and we did it,
then we’d go to jail and it was on to the next
action.” Woke up — eyes puffy as windmills.
Thought of Rotterdam. That fucking Irish poet
who didn’t ask if he could hold my hand,
just grabbed it on the teeth chattering bridge
and then yelled, “We are poets! We are here!”
right into the river. And we walked into the spaceship
I mean hotel and in my room I ordered
a panini and ate it on the white sheets, crumbs
on the white sheets. Mirrors everywhere.
Rotterdam, the last place I ever felt sexy.

Court Green

I rise before everyone, kids at their dad's.
No commotion, rivers of clearing
eucalyptus mist in the aura factory
like pictures of Norway, her glaciated
remove languishes in a think tank
of food security, how I want that kind of coldness,
to be surrounded by a swarm of bears
or love affair so north of here, but the winds
shoved into the stone mouths of lions,
their rhymes were tourniquets of counterfeit ideas.
And Rotterdam standing like an inquisition
of ships sloshing the metallic waters.

See, the thing is poet, is that you're failing.
You're failing at capitalism.
You're failing at "self-care."
You're failing at feminism.
You're failing at activism.
You've fallen deep into your addiction.
Your despair spreads everywhere.
None of this is your fault
but it's still happening.
The failure is the fracture is the opening.
Like that infection that started in your elbow
and moved to the depths of your being.
You spend the night reading about a god
cleaved in two so the dream demons come true.
Capitalism is shrinking and the rich
have gotten more violent.
Capitalism could fail and win at the same time.
Poet, this is called "crisis".
The swans and the trees and the birds are buzzing.
They don't care.
They hum.
Capitalism won.
I went on a run.
I am dumb I hum on my long run.
To scroll past the body of the dead baby,
the baby that looks like a form of dust,
the baby of the desert is the baby of the sea
and the atrocities are piling up like hyperventilation.
They will build cities for themselves
and contain portraits of themselves
in the gemstones of their terrible philosophies.
They will be whimsical about genocide
and the pride they will feel in this volition
is like a brand of coffee or cereal
(nothing more or less).

I ran so far into the greenery that I saw
the purple rose that once grew in the blood
of the love garden, I saw the Jericho

of my tombs disseminate like the neurotic
spectacle of rainwater and then I vomited
like the queasy tides of history not
on our side and felt guilty and told no one.

The managerial class will punish us
with their monotonous, grueling grey eyes.
They will paw at the gates
and the houses will split open
and forge digits.
Their constituents concentrate
on numerals as if their codes
were constructed by nuns.
Their unfailing power turns on itself
like love poems of pure possession,
like troubadour fantasies they tie
weights to your body and push you
gently into the blood river.
The factories in the background
are only imagined.
Flocks and flocks of stars
constellate the borders of the nation state.

This is where they plant cheap pine.
These kinds of trees don't communicate with each other.
This is not the ecology of the forest,
it's the ecology of a tree farm.
They create and destroy themselves for us
with no tie to the future or the past.

They used to make turpentine here.
A lot of workers tortured
in the convict leasing programs.
The company store was the only place to buy anything.
You worked all day in the swamp,
then you got yellow fever and died.

Rollover hedges all the way to the horizon.
I flipped through the pages of the Star Wars Journal
I bought my son. All the pages blank.
This is not a dystopia, it's wreckage.

“Should I bleach my hair today and shave part of it off?”
“I don't think so.”
“Why not? I need a look as drastic as the world we live in.”
The Garden of Eden in sculpted information.
“My love, your hair is long, wild and beautiful.”

Brooklyn Rail

Speculative cobwebs embroidered with flowers.
Back in the love garden of eternal truth, I am as unhurried
as the smallest
creature left to revel in its own zigzag.

Take the fucking wine away! Its red center,
the Saturns of my splendor and my emotional
landscape is cured for a day or a daydream is turned
into the vicious news cycle reeling in in pain.

Destroy my body, take away the wine and the drugs
and the centers of my thinking
so naked before you.
Take away the music and the car and the job,
take away my body
and, once and for all, fuck riddles.

There is nothing mysterious to do here:
I am just nipples and goosebumps.

That hail is rare in South Georgia
That once my former colleague saw a 12-foot alligator on 319 before they
divided the road
That that was 20 years ago
That I regret reading an article on what it is *really* like to have Trump
supporting parents
That I feel bad for saying that
That my kids are eating toast for breakfast this morning
That when they don't eat what I think they are supposed to eat, the guilt is
overwhelming
That I am a single mother
That my kids are age 4 and age 7
That maybe I should not have taught a four-year-old to use the oven
That I hate soccer practice because I hate the other parents
That I tried to read Brecht at soccer practice but I felt like a snob
That the translation of Brecht was bad anyway and basically unreadable
That I was cold and sick and the bench was cold and I didn't want to touch
the baby that someone brought to the practice and said "I don't want to
touch your baby"
because I didn't want to get the baby sick
but maybe I just didn't feel like touching a baby
That it's probably Communism or nothing
That fascism really kills your sex drive
That the rich don't need us all anymore
That oh yeah they never did need us all so what's the point of writing this?
That maybe one time they did but that time is over
That probably they never did
That I already said that
That popular uprising may lead to nothing
That things that look like a "win" are often the very things that pull us
closer to loss
That popular uprising will probably lead to nothing or the consolidation of
the 1%'s power
That it is unpopular to say this since it is not "positive"
That I had to convince my boyfriend that the 1 % needs to die
That he said can we not talk about murder before we go to sleep
That there needs to be a theory
That no theory is still a theory, just a bad one

That my four-year-old daughter is singing “Manic Monday” on the way to preschool

That leaves are falling in South Georgia and it is beautiful in the way that my daughter’s singing is beautiful and this is the way that some things, which are held together so precariously, are also beautiful

Daymoon, Utopia

That you came to me in those dreams and I tried not to be afraid of you
That the dreams were never about the world falling apart as so many dreamed

That this was not the apocalypse and we both knew this

That someone will ask who the “you” of the poem is seriously leave me alone

That I wish it was Sunday

That I wish it wasn’t Monday

That it is Sunday and the leaves keep falling in South Georgia across the field of nothing ever happens except for leaves falling

That last week a hawk stared at me and I said, “What are you looking at, hawk?” and it wouldn’t fly away

That it came closer and closer to me

That a bird approaching a human is one of the most startling things in the world

That other creatures are generally scared of you

That the bird was not afraid of me or anyone or anything

That a friend posted the advice that if you feel lonely you should build a community but fuck community, I want my loneliness back since I deserve it

That Selena Gomez might or might not have gone to rehab for a cell phone addiction

That I would love for someone to feed me fruit in the desert for 90 days like I was Jesus or some other ornate martyr

That I drink too much or too little depending on the voltage

That sometimes people send me checks of money and I cash them immediately

That my boyfriend bought tickets to the opera is that what they call it?

That all operas end badly for women like screaming and breaking dishes

That I have often thought about operatic suicides and ordinary suicides like factories

That my language is something between an opera and a factory

That I might be bourgeois like soccer moms and commuting
That I feel like I'll never be a good enough leftist why am I not good
enough for you?
That I have lived somewhere between an opera and a factory and that is
called the moon on a windy night in South Georgia
That there are always animals in my dreams which is telling
That the nature of the future hides in the dreams of language like animals
That today I thought about the way the landlord is the boss is the president
as I took a broom and gently swept a gecko to the front door of my
apartment

As the World Burns

Do you know a Vegetable Man? I do. Plenty, in fact. They're sprouting up everywhere these days, like an uncontrollable weed, like an insatiable cancer. Unable to contact God as a living a force which wells up within Him, He looks out onto the world and worships nature, projecting the divine onto trees and carrots. He is also the apostle of natural law, believing that the cultivation of a garden serves as a primer for the understanding of politics. He thinks the purchase of an organic apple or an electronic vehicle is an intrinsically ethico-political act, because he isn't just buying a more expensive designer product — he's also contributing, however infinitesimally, to humanity's bid to buy more time. He likes to take personal responsibility for planetary problems like ozone depletion, never missing an opportunity to note his disdain for factory farming, fossil fuels, and aerosol cans. He recycles and composts with great pride. Plagued by nightmares of contamination and artificiality, the Vegetable Man appeals to reason, the sense of commoners, citing scientifically-verified data, always repeating the refrain, "studies have shown." He uses words like atheist, secular, and realist to describe Himself. He bemoans the small-minded religious superstitions that disregard scientific consensus, and He dreams of a technological cure-all that would cleanse this world of civilization's excrement or (more recently) an interstellar exodus that would simply leave the mess behind.

An almost textbook example of what Hegel calls the "beautiful soul," the Vegetable Man externalizes evil, objectifies it at a comfortable distance, and then condemns what he sees, typically through consciousness-raising activism, perhaps in the form of a topical poem or a social media post fueled by His righteous indignation. All that is filthy and wasteful, all that repulses Him, belongs to an altogether separate order that He will relentlessly expose and condemn. He naturalizes an ideal picture of nature and denounces what falls out of the frame: landfills, rivers slicked with oil and full of feces, mountains pregnant with radiation, fracked quarries, islands of discarded plastic, and paved-paradise parking lots. His gear is unparalleled, a tool and gadget for every occasion, specialized instruments worthy of His rugged individualism, aiding in the mastery of all that surrounds Him. The image of a virgin nature unspoiled gets him hot. He

longs to penetrate its depths, conquer it, drink it in, snap trophy photographs from the highest peak, beside the purest aqua blue water, feasting on the most organic and sustainable arugula. With nature established as beautiful background, the Vegetable Man takes his triumphant place in the foreground. His nature fantasies are inter-temporal, extending back to a secular Garden of Eden unsullied by industry and pushing forward infinitely, the dream of a natural world without an expiration date that endures forever in perfect harmony (provided, of course, we humans properly cleanse it before we reach an imagined point of no return).

But let us be real, if only for a fleeting moment: deistic nature worship is a modern religion masquerading as a politics, blasphemy disguised as an ethics, and more to the point, from the birth of Romanticism on down, the Vegetable Man is no poet, though He somehow never tires of writing poetry. The critique of the Vegetable Man and His Vegetable World stems from the first illuminated manuscripts of William Blake — *There is No Natural Religion* and *All Religions are One* — etched by him in 1788. Blake, a self-described “Soldier of Christ,” uses the critique as a general counterpoint to his praise of the “Imagination, the real & eternal World of which this Vegetable Universe is but a faint shadow, and in which we shall live in our Eternal or Imaginative Bodies, when these Vegetable Mortal Bodies are no more.” He also deploys the missive as a pointed criticism of Romantic nature poets, most notably William Wordsworth: “I see in Wordsworth the Natural Man rising up against the Spiritual Man Continually, & then he is No Poet but a Heathen Philosopher at Enmity against all true Poetry or Inspiration.” Elsewhere he writes, “Natural objects always did, and now do, weaken, deaden and obliterate imagination in men. Wordsworth must know that what he writes valuable is not to be found in Nature.” And in his notebooks Blake complains that the experience of reading Wordsworth once brought on a bout of the runs so fierce that it almost killed him.

Blake’s condemnation of the Vegetable Man, pressed into the context of our contemporary moment, in which the cult of conversation reigns, demonstrates the inadequacy of current debates over earthly decay. From the Vegetable Man’s perspective, His mortal enemies are those who deny climate changes, plunder natural resources, and consume without conscience, seeking riches at the expense of environmental degradation.

Thus, on one side, there stand the pious eco-warriors, armed with science, taking an ethical stand, and on the other, profiteers and conservative religious zealots seemingly incapable of listening to reason. For Blake, the differences between these supposedly rival camps are entirely superficial. They are all guilty of false worship, all of them rank opponents of the Spiritual Man: the Vegetable Man is a carrot worshipping heathen, the businessman prays before an altar of gold, and worst of all, the Christian pretenders, whose vision of Christ and rule-bound, orthodox Christian doctrine are the eternal enemy of all Blake's visions. Beneath the false opposition manufactured by current political debates lies the true theological divide that pits the Spiritual Man against all these "Destroyers of Jerusalem."

In the final analysis, there is nothing at stake in this dispute between idolaters, save their foolish pride. The fiery fate of our world is subject to "Empires of Chaos Invisible to the Vegetable Man," to borrow another phrase from Blake. Slow death by global warming — life lost due to the gradual heating of the biosphere — should be regarded as a dream scenario, one that humanity, on its present trajectory, will not be lucky enough to experience. That end-times fantasy should arouse your suspicion if for no other reason than the way it plays into the self-aggrandizing conceits of the Vegetable Man, who desperately needs to believe that who he is and what he does really matters. Sorry no, minor alterations in consumer habits and small-minded policy tinkering will not save us. Speaking out, taking to the streets, signing petitions, and voting are equally ineffectual mechanisms. Don't you find it at all curious that if a political problem isn't treatable with a stock liberal (as in classical liberalism, not left-leaning) or scientific solution, it ceases to be a problem at all? Doesn't it strike you as strange that the supposed tipping point for global warming is always just around the bend and also infinitely deferred? What would it mean for the Vegetable Man if the scientific consensus were that current trends are irreversible? Would He still buy local and recycle, just to keep up appearances?

The terminal problems faced by humanity which underscore our impotence and expose the lie of liberal heroics are flushed from view like shit disappearing into a porcelain tomb. The specter of environmental disaster which haunts the Vegetable Man provides necessary cover for what He cannot bear to face, namely an ongoing, all-consuming nuclear war that

nullifies the significance of His ecological vanity project. A quick death by burning—the comparatively instantaneous heating of the world from which there is no return—is unimaginable to Him and must be repressed. It is the occluded Real that structures the Vegetable order of things. If the abhorrent truth of nuclear war were to rise to the surface, His nature fetish and corresponding self-image would fail to cohere. For the Vegetable Man, there has to be time left for the possibility of valiant intervention, be it diplomatic, technological, or superhuman, just as there needs to be time remaining after the omniscidal event, the precondition for His “post-apocalyptic” survival fantasies, time enough for him to extract real value from the bunker in his backyard, plenty of time to start that Eco-conscious commune he’s always dreamed of, where he can finally get back to nature and more faithfully follow His bliss.

If the Vegetable Man ever thinks about nuclear war, He draws false confidence from the fantasy that we are still somehow in a period prior to the real outbreak of violence and that there will be an afterwards. This bracketing of time, incidentally or not, replicates the imagined schedule for ever-worsening climate change. Now is the time to save the day, and even if we fail, there will still be an opportunity for wilderness adventure post-catastrophe. These fantasies are constantly affirmed for Him by the dreamscapes of Hollywood and television (for the rare, much-needed counterpoint, see Lars von Trier’s *Melancholia*, note the death of the Vegetable Man). In the meantime, the Vegetable Man believes that in the status quo peace prevails. Logic rules the Bomb. He is confident that the decision to drop the Bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki was based on a cold utilitarian calculation that “saved American lives.” He marvels at the way deterrence models his own manner of thinking: of course — rational nuclear “actors” are held in check by the natural laws of self-interest, the same laws that allow the carrot patch and the marketplace to achieve a flourishing equilibrium. Violent eruptions and other unintended outcomes are the anomalous exceptions that prove the rule.

The long view of humanity leads the Spiritual Man to the opposite conclusion: the status quo is defined by an ongoing war for the world, with Mental and Corporeal fronts, interspersed with moments of apparent peace that never last. War rages on *ad infinitum*, as Blake tells us, “Because The Natural power continually seeks & tends to Destruction, Ending in death,” and should the Spiritual Man fail to oppose this Natural power, it “would

of itself be Eternal Death.” The term “nuclear war” is misleading to the extent it conjures images of a structured military exchange between adversaries that can be won and in the way it projects that war into a distant future, as if nuclear war only refers to the final conflagration that envelops the globe. Not so: that moment would only represent the last desperate battle that ends a war, the war that has accompanied humanity from the very beginning and went nuclear in 1945, after a blood sacrifice gone wrong. From that point forward nuclear war has been ongoing—hot not cold, getting hotter by the second, and nothing can stop its brutal acceleration, except another global cataclysm striking (a titanic asteroid, for example) before nuclear war runs its course. Environmental decay, political instability, and social upheaval may contribute to the conditions of atmospheric turbulence that escalate nuclear war, but at least as far as the end of the world is concerned, they are not worthy of consideration as stand-alone problems.

Do not be fooled by the well-intentioned metaphor deployed by the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists — it is well past midnight. We are living on borrowed time, and no one can turn back the clock. That we still exist, despite so many nuclear accidents and political standoffs, is nothing short of a miracle. The only assurance any of us have that the world will not go up in flames today is that it did not do so yesterday. The same logic would also support the belief that anyone who has not died already is somehow immortal.

Take warning: rational actors do not exist on the world stage (or anywhere else). The individuals that control nuclear arsenals and are responsible for nuclear decision-making are not, as we might hope, the best and brightest, people made up of “the right stuff.” Need I remind you of Yeltsin smashed on vodka, Kennedy on acid, Trump sober, or the exam-cheats in our missile silos, rolling on ecstasy with minds run ragged by amphetamines? Remember those clowns the next time a national news pundit or security expert bemoans the risks of horizontal proliferation and the supposed irrationality of aspiring non-Western members of the nuclear club. There has never been, nor will there ever be, a trustworthy and rational custodian of the Bomb. The sheer willingness or desire to possess nuclear armaments should itself erode our trust in leadership and alert us to the presence of a codified madness.

Nuclear war is the truth of our world that debunks the eschatological myths of the Vegetable Man. It is the utterly intolerable shit (not unlike the foreknowledge of our own individual death) that we must wipe from our consciousness in order to get along with the trivialities and minutiae that pace everyday life. Blake, a Spiritual Man who did not cower in the presence of waste, calamity, and horror, no matter how repulsive, receives confirmation of the nuclear prophecy during one of his visionary treks through Hell, reporting that “The ancient tradition that the world will be consumed by fire at the end of six-thousand years is true.” The concrete particulars are unimportant as “There Exist in that Eternal World the Permanent Realities of Every Thing which we see are reflected in this Vegetable Glass of Nature.” Blake’s prophetic message is echoed by J. Robert Oppenheimer in his now infamous citation of the *Bhagavad Gita*, in which Oppenheimer confesses that as the principal creator of atomic weaponry, he is indeed the “destroyer of worlds.” Rather than taking him seriously, we use clips from that interview as fodder for movie trailers, his dire message sanitized and recycled as pure entertainment.

The revelations announced by Blake and Oppenheimer do not alter the situation of poetry in the slightest; they merely crystallize what has always been at stake. If the world is to be saved, it is time for the Spiritual Man, by definition a poet and God incarnate, to rise up against the Vegetable Man and his vile environmental heresy. This salvation is not a matter of postponing the end but perpetually renewing our commitment to a life worth living through Eternal expressions of the creative imagination, so that when Natural death finally comes — and it will come for us all — our lives will not have been lived in vain. “Rouze up,” Blake demands, “and set your foreheads against the ignorant Hirelings! For we have Hirelings in the Camp, the Court & the University, who would, if they could, for ever depress Mental & prolong Corporeal War.” We must “not cease from Mental Fight ... till we have built Jerusalem,” the holy city, in this Vegetable World. The fateful hour has arrived in which we are called to put Shelley’s famous maxim — that “Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world” — to the ultimate test. Should we prevail, uprooting the Vegetable Man once and for all, we may finally bust out of “the same dull round” of warfare and wrath that renders nuclear war a foregone conclusion. Paradoxically, we cannot alter our fate until we accept that the world as presently constituted is dead already.

This Spiritual battle which will determine the outcome of nuclear war does not involve a retreat from the Vegetable World — quite the opposite, in fact. The Spiritual Man is not a mystical snail who withdraws from bitter reality, taking refuge in His own mind, evolving His obscurely beautiful visions there in contemplative solitude. As Blake sees through the eye and not with it, we are required to see through the material world, even the toxic and unsustainable elements, especially when it seems as though a lasting peace has taken root. Immersion in dirty materiality and everyday struggle is a visionary prerequisite. We cannot allow our visions to result in an “abstract folly” that neglects the carnage of war and Vegetable Death, but at the same time, our visionary faculties must never yield to the apparent constraints of precedent and possibility that make planetary destruction appear inevitable. Remember that “every Natural Effect has a Spiritual Cause, and Not A Natural: for a Natural Cause only seems: it is a Delusion Of Ulro & a ratio of the perishing Vegetable Memory.” Without opposition, the sensible and self-satisfied Vegetable Man, always a merchant of Death no matter how He brands Himself, expedites oblivion. He will be incapable of perceiving nuclear war until a fireball arrives at His doorstep. The survival (or at the very least the redemption) of our world hinges on the sudden intervention and unlikely victory of the Spiritual Man, uniquely capable of second sight, for whom “What is now proved was once only imagined.”

Perhaps you are a Spiritual Man (your gender is irrelevant, of course). If so, this call to aid, through feats of the imagination, in the construction of the holy city, working in the midst of a burning world, will feel at times like a crushing weight — the albatross of bloody history on a chain around your neck, holding you captive in a place where “spectres of the dead wander.” Other times, the labors of art will allow you, like Blake, to occupy that “moment in each day that Satan cannot find” and will feel no heavier than “a ball of wool rolled by the wind.” As you drift between these Contraries, I praise you. However, if you are a Vegetable Man and consider yourself a poet or a thinker of consequence, know that your work retains value only insofar as it functions as a laxative. I pray you board that starship to nowhere, sooner the better, or kill yourself in the process of uploading your feeble mind to a machine. As an unrepentant Blakean, one of the last of his tribe, I thank you for this rare opportunity to take hot yellow piss on your organic piety, and in whatever time remains, before we’re all burnt to a

crisp, I lay the loss of our world and the destruction of the Spiritual forces that give it meaning at your pathetic Vegetable feet.

pete spence

Open Studio!

unfolding the landscape is the only thing keeping you busy
putting everything in its place keeping the unfamiliar aside
until spaces occur pleading for some part to play under
the reckless clouds colliding with each other strands of wind
slowly come together and the trees are moved you must
remember to lengthen the shadows as the day goes on
but right now you are toying with the question “is there time
to rest?” apparently not as you keep finding finer points
of the landscape that need adjustment remember to erect
signs around unfinished areas warning the sightseer or
the unwary of the adventure they are letting themselves in on
you discover some earlier decisions seem totally wrong and
almost your undoing staying true to the colour chart is advisable
to get the tone as close to the thought as it occurs mapping
follows like a shadow soft at the edges hardening at depth and as
you proceed more onlookers gather critical amused and stunned!

Scatters

a cloaked mule in Babylon
blackbirds hover above
between the clouds
hunting pebbles
some pebbles fall
denting the pond

repairs are ongoing
filling the dents with
matching material
everyone wears tin hats
to keep their thoughts
from being dented

the proceeds of thought
like plump voids weigh little
branching out into odours
of shattered breath
sweeping tessellations
across a vacant courtyard

the drains and exits
are blocked a lean wind
leans against the walls
of the empty courtyard
dust deepens in the corners
covering shadows

torn from daylight
the air convolutes
in webs filling the corners
of the sky the sun
takes a deep breath
and moves on

Christine Stewart

from *Treaty Six Deixis*

Now wind

Listen

Now new

Leaving it at night

It is so near

This moon

It is counted anew

Come again

Yes this

To furnish this

To carry minutes to an extreme

To submit to this

To agitate the joining in that pleasure

To submit

To those woods there

Hereby sit and smell

Sweet they serve and very well

That place there this one is for sitting

This summer water moreover

Then empathy then that it is moving

Like this

To be here soon

To be here soon

As soon and as soon as walking

As soon as minding

Here then

Here minding

and left

Thank you

More their nests

In diamond willow
Now and exactly

In this way they sleep there

On sand

How do you do

Soon animal clothing

To join to join in this aspen

In these high bushes

Come slowly

Before these tracks

This is the object of our attention

What else do you see

What else do you see

Leny Strobel

Poetry at the end of the world

Indigenous peoples do not believe the world is ending.

The world is changing, they say.

Even before the scientists named climate change

The shamans knew it

When they saw the snow caps melting

The earth quaking and tilting

Animals and birds leaving

The Ocean rising

They say: The Earth is Changing. For the sixth time.

The Inuit ask: When all the ice melts, who will we be?

In Vanuatu they say: We have nowhere to go in this island.

The Kogi says: The Younger Brother is hurting our Mother

The Syrian refugees say: The war is caused by drought.

The Indian farmer says: I cannot pay my debts; I'd rather die.

The white man in Texas says: I will build me a bunker.

The white man in the White House says: I will build me a wall.

The Silicon Valley techie says: I will build spaceships to Mars.

The media mogul says: Let's make more reality tv spectacles.

The religious say: God will provide.

In the meantime —

Fire says: I'm hungry

Water says: I am thirsty.

Fish says: I am choking on plastic

Bees say: Your chemicals make me sick.

Monarch butterflies ask: Where's our habitat now?

Chthulucene, Anthropocene,

Biomimicry, New materialism

Agential Realism, Inter and Intrasubjectivity

Mental monocropping, Hybridity

Indigenous Cosmopolitanism

Concepts roll off the brain but doesn't land on the skin

Poetry at the end of the world is:

Silence

Elegant Disintegration

Just. Be. Kind.

Tender and Generous

Go barefoot often

Salute the Sun each morning

Say Goodnight, Moon.

Eat local and in season

I keep going because I belong to a village

Pay my debt for the privilege of being here for a few moments

Live poetically even if I am not a word poet

English is not my first tongue

Grieve now while you can

Build beautiful altars to Death

Sing and dance your prayers

Resist the temptation of bright-sidedness

Do not meditate away your grief

Do not write another self help book

Poems, yes.

Cole Swensen

Agnès Varda: Here and Then Now

My treasure
 was a cedar. Landscape
of heart in water
 of white shirts in a stream

Landscape of trees
 planted equidistant
of forest organized to mind
 into pieces of time

Landscape of history
 as a series
carefully accruing
 one tree
in the line is dead
 and taller than all the others.

Landscape as the sum total of the living in the eye in range.

Landscape of living
 at the edge of the eye.

Her first film, *La Pointe Courte*, is regarded by many as the beginning
of French New Wave cinema — a focus
on the quotidian
 and that it matters. A focus on a young woman
and the two hours
 it takes her to find out if she'll live.

Landscape seen from the window
 by the hand
that strikes a match
 to light a candle in the middle of the day.

Landscape of rakes through gravel
the rooms
thrown open as a matter of principle.

Varda often focuses on people often unheard — the vagabonds,
gleaners, cleaners, shopkeepers, villagers: Landscape
as main character —

Her latest film, *Visages, Villages*
with the face of France
moving smoothly behind,
the one thing that binds
all these otherwise disparate faces and places.

I am in time. I'm old. I've been crossing time for years.

Landscape of a broom
sweeping a field of dry grasses.

Landscape with open wheat
at a piano
the glasses empty on the tray

Landscape of old photo
photographed again.

Landscape with street on which rain
on which women
Landscape of line of lights
down a street in a storm.

*The past doesn't mean
so much to me because it's always here.*

Scene of silence
filling first the screen

Scene of a hat
walking away

Chaim Soutine in Wind

Clarisse Nicoïdski has said that Soutine
is the painter who made the wind visible —

“... waiting for the wind to rise,” he said to a friend
who, passing again hours later,
had found him sitting in exactly the same position.

That the wind had made his hands

the wind of *ands*

and what the wind had made of them

was not said;

to wit:

We're falling up a hill
are a man up a red hill will
a fallen green through climbing
branches that hold a house up to the sky
and that the house is then thrown farther
up as we pick our way down the red cliff
running in the sun.

“In the curve of a feeling,” as he put it,
that feeling always curves
sharply toward
having been raised in a tradition that prohibited representation
(see Exodus 20:4) or self-exile in which the line is drawn before it's formed.

He arrived in Paris in 1913 (though some sources say 1912) at the age of 20,
or perhaps 19 or 21, having the liberty of not knowing quite when he was
[born,
and went to stay with friends at La Ruche, with its affordable studio-
[housing
built from the ruins of the most recent Universal Exhibition.

Or more slowly — wandering under light — sharpening the light —
making color — come off on the hands — and — sometimes the hands —
are larger than life and — always the hands — and they live alone
He moved on, heading south.

Paysage à Céret, 1920 — if the house
entered the wind or rather
if the wind is in fact or becomes the windows
or in what order wind and house arrange
themselves there is a shroud
to find or lace or veil at times the whole town
wearing out, wearing down
to the face of the animal beginning to show
the procession of white walking out of itself, not
at all as violent as one would have thought or
it was not the wind.

Soutine painted some 200 landscapes around Céret in the three years
that he spent there between 1919 and 1922. His first dealer, Zborowski,
took him down to the south to give him the time and means to paint.
First to Cagnes, just west of Nice, but Soutine was restless, and so moved
on to Céret, a small town just above the Spanish border and some 20 miles
from the sea. Dr. Albert Barnes, who put the entire Paris art world into a
[frenzy
when he came in 1923 to buy contemporary works to fill his new
foundation, encountered Soutine's work and was instantly struck, marking a
[permanent
and positive change in the latter's fortunes. Barnes ended up acquiring 60
of the Céret landscapes, though another source puts the number at 100.
Many others Soutine cut up or burned in anxious fits in which he couldn't
stand his own work.

A yellow south — burning — a town of turning houses in which
the air breaks — or then the air broke there — and broken air gathers
as it gathers sound as broken glass — and broken is always colored in its
[each
and every other shard of flay — here they lay upon and lived until — bright
as colored houses painted — a gale in green and red. Soutine used a gamut

of red and a gamut of green — intersecting at an excess — of yellow and
[form
the two axes of his oeuvre — at this point the white house—in the middle
of the axis of verdure — the white house falls to pieces in the white

House fall down. Sometimes wind falls like rain and then it's white and
falls again.

Eileen R. Tabios

You Brought Me to the Mangrove Forest

—*with and for Marthe Reed* (crafted from topics most recently discussed with her prior to her death)

In the Sundarbans of South Bangladesh and India the climate keeps worsening. We bemoan across our paper-cluttered e-desks as you adopt a collage technique from Mei-mei Berssenbrugge “Is my Black Radish subscription up to date?” You make notes on small pieces of paper — side-effects of chapbook-making. You pause to hug an animal before returning to the IPCC Synthesis Report while discussing native plant species, literature and ethics. Always ethics. “Should this be reviewed by *Galatea Resurrects?*” Always literature. *The Hungry Tide* by Amitav Ghosh, *Travels In The Mugal Empire* by François Bernier, and *Schizophrene* by Bhanu Kapil. How to own responsibility? How to inspire an inspired poem. A country ‘s name becomes synonym for deferred responsibility Exhausted from gardening tiredness ... but “Then I made a strawberry birthday cake for a friend!” Prepare by laying out the words on the dining room table. “How many participants in *Anthropocene?*” Over a hundred. Arrange conversation through a juxtaposition of texts. “Can I order 30 more copies of *AMNESIA?*” Do smoothen that grammar New poetry anticipated from Jaimie, Anastacia and Jared We’re marrying fragments to each other. Visiting Portland for her daughter, she observes, “I am nearby.” *I am nearby*

I feel you in the mangrove forest, charming the *Crocodilus porosus*, the *Panthera tigris*, the *Varanus salvator*, the *Platinista Gangetica* and the *Lepidochelys olivacea*. Always, *you are near*

from *The Ashbery Riff-Offs*

—where each poem begins with 1 or 1-2 lines from “Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror” by John Ashbery

Witnessed in the Convex Mirror: “Living in the Micro, Not Macro”

There seems no special reason why that light should be focused on love. We’re past the age of boozing, drinking and drugging as if we always will be slim, fresh-faced and smiling. We’re no different from the Ross Ice Shelf (and the rest of Antarctica) as the planet warms around it. Faced with mortality gazing back at us from the bathroom mirror, we measure the slackness of fat belted around our “true” waistline. Faced with climate change, scientists measure ice thickness and the shape of the sea floor to gauge the frozen shelf’s vulnerability to collapse. Once, you whispered, “You are my planet.” What was a room dim with the edges of night suddenly flared into a sunlit space bright as noon. We could not have known a moment such as *that* would be the tip of an economist’s curve graphing the “marginal rate of return” — that from such a peak begins a descent where redemption breaks through the implied trajectory only if love surfaces allowing us once more to behave with innocence. Thus, where illumination is generous enough to rise, let it: reclaim love with its infinite possibilities despite the body’s deterioration, ours and earth.

— after “Antarctic Dispatches” by Justin Gillis with maps and graphics by Derek Watkins and Jeremy White as well as photographs by Jonathan Corum, *The New York Times*, May 18, 2017

Witnessed in the Convex Mirror: Running

But how far can it swim out through the eyes
and still return swiftly to its nest? Anyone
else still doing forays with the cigarette the advance
guard and excuse? We saw another couple, topless
behaving in an unlit corner the way we wanted
to behave, but not with each other. From that
shared though private acknowledgement, we
came to agree: to see each other is to see
compromise. Still, a typhoon warning has blared
swording through the heated air and at least we
know each other as not mere flotsam and jetsam
in the wake of another's decision. We don't
begrudge it when we warn each other: that wave
will top the tallest building on the island upon
which we find ourselves. We'll even take each
other's hand before, in unison and unanimity, we
run away, we run, together we run away

Witnessed in the Convex Mirror: Sun Rises Over Battle

Today has that special lapidary
todayness that sunlight reproduces
though I am mired in a swamp
No doubt my perfume is one of old
rain. My shell solidified until my
green and beige camouflage gear
mutated into a beetle's carapace —
its glistening capture of sunrays
fashioning a jade and gold armor
From the smallest and fragile creature
to the most cruel that we are, we
all are in armor. We *are* armor. All
that remains is the preening that
negates the subject matter: Do admire
my shield! It gleams with the colors
of a cathedral's stained glass wind
-ows showing saints, the Mother
of God, the Son sacrificed by his
Heavenly Father to save humanity
and the occasional sheep. "Do admire
my shield!" But the convex metal
also acts as mirror. The reflected
one is usually wounded and unsalved
by tears. No drawbridge exists. We
remain outside, mired in the fight.

Witnessed in the Convex Mirror: History

Eyebeams, muslin, coral. It doesn't matter because these things are what they are today and made larger than they are by the indolence of our imagination. We imbue objects with worth as determined by the artifice of scarcity — as if eyebeams can supplant the results of scholarly research, as if muslin can be separated from its city of origin, as if coral can belong atop marble pedestals in some corner of a skyscraper's mahogany-walled conference terroir. We break proven ancestral wisdom by taking more from the land than what we give back to it. Then we scar the planet again with laboratory-made pollutants impossible to compost. When we pause to lift our protective visors from decimating fish, plants and birds, we sip chilled chemicals for water is no longer safe. Then we contextualize abuse as some inevitable path of an abstraction we label *History* to mask our brute exercise of a power we shall never hold. Darling, even you are indigenous. Darling, you shall pay

Witnessed in the Convex Mirror: Mundane Ass-ette

How it came to be this way. A ship flying unknown colors has entered the harbor. There were pineapples on board. Pineapples are never mundane. So you undid an extra button — the space allows the mischievous stamen of the *anthurium andraeanum* to wave a wink at the beholder. Anthuriums — also known as Flamingo-lilies and Tail Flowers — are never mundane, unlike, for purpose of the tattoo, red roses, red hearts, or the red words proclaiming “Mama.” Thus, did such a carefully-structured world collapse after a winking cleavage revealed itself. Huge consequences so often result from the tiniest cracks — a bane of existence for gods are as mischievous as they are cruel. Lawyers for the spouse ensured you did not get the primary residence with its limestone turrets, the beach house on St. Barts, the automobiles from Germany, and the condo for skiing Portillo, Chile. I can only suppose you did not know about the poison in Anthuriums with their over-the-top waxy blossoms in promiscuous colors. They contain calcium oxalate crystals which can cause severe mouth irritation and swelling if ingested. But of course you ingested — you lived as if you managed hedge funds when you were but one of many assets in somebody else’s diversified portfolio through an LLC, a limited liability corporation

Witnessed in the Convex Mirror: Sudan, Focused and Unfocused

Which was enough for his purpose: his image glazed, embalmed, projected at a 180-degree angle to surface not mere reflection but also his context. If he smiles, we can see the cut-up cherry pie whose sweetness reddened a corner tooth ... in turn, we notice the tooth to be chipped, reminding us that when a bully strikes him, he is the type to strike back. If he frowns, we can see the window to his room darkened by a rainstorm ... in turn reminding us that he loves to sit in his yard tanning his skin to a dark amber ... in turn reminding us he loves his artisan beers. The gaze widens to capture the universe whose span is infinite, until it is not. Something always catches the gaze makes it pause, regress into a narrow focus — like Giovanna Silva's images of the last male northern white rhinoceros in his book *Good Boy 0372*: tightly cropped photographs of the pachyderm's skin. The hide "appears as a dusty, abstract landscape of crevices, folds, and ridges, its topography craggy and flaking, like bark slowly peeling from a tree ... At times, these visual fragments offer clues to our subject's identity: the wedge of a large toe; the blunt shadow of a horn — which was cut off to deter poachers — that resembles a vast crater; a single ear, cupped like the blossom of a calla lily. Most revealing are photographs of Sudan's eyes, circled by wrinkles, which punctuate the series with a hint of life. Dark and slightly wet, they resemble oases embedded within a dry, barren terrain, where mosquitos come to rest." A photograph of a single eye from the rhino's face in profile is particularly compelling, dampening the page where this poem unfolded from the rare tears of a poet who's learned to pretend objective distance whenever she directs her eyes and pen to human atrocities. To learn the rhino's name, "Sudan," in turn evokes calamities

in its country namesake — a widening of the gaze that bludgeons the witness. Let's narrow the focus back to animals. In Sudan, 21 mammal species, nine bird species and two plant species are endangered. They include the waldrapp, tora hartebeest, slender-horned gazelle and hawksbill turtle. The Sahara onyx already became extinct in the wild. To such discoveries, the witness becomes like many others who once waxed eloquent on the advantages of an expansive gaze: focus regresses and, suddenly context is overrated. Still, what art was created from this journey is admirable — we admire Sudan's images then close the book. Bred as No. 0372, what a good boy is Sudan, his skin a “dusty, abstract landscape.”

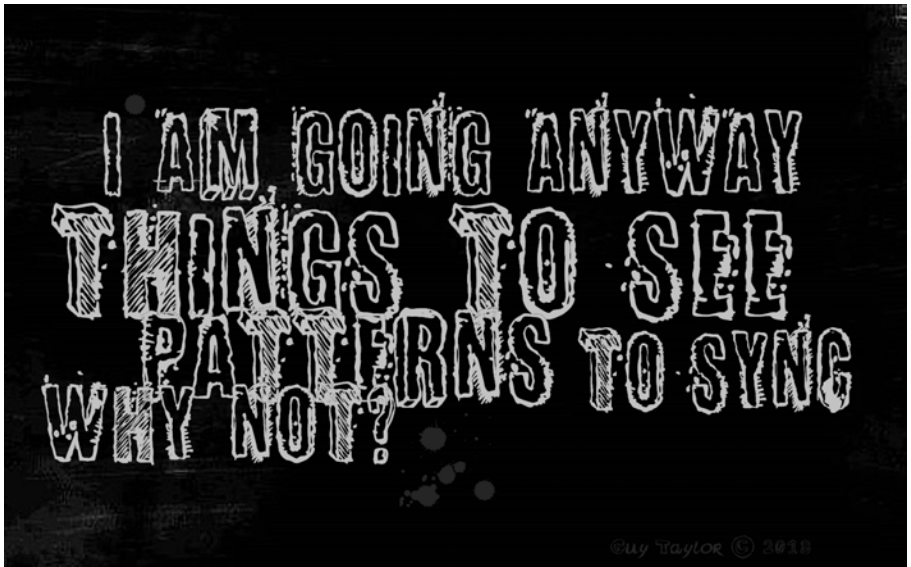
— after “A Fragmented Portrait of the Last Male Northern White Rhino” by Claire Voon, *Hyperallergic*, July 18, 2017.

Julian Talamantez Brolaski

big sur on fire

our lady of nepenthe
host of singular experience
big sur on fire
dont need to obfuscate I am
coming into myself
into your mouth the lurid
moon or what you call the wall-
to-wall carpeting of adele or
beyonce's voice so beautiful but so basic the way
a mountain resolves into a further mountain
what is it about the voice of kitty wells
so artless and not a touch
of vibrato
coming pure as the sun direct into
my pineal gland
robert sims singing I want
2 wings to veil my face lord I want
2 wings to veil my feet
the sun doesnt have
to think about itself
I'd never seen the mountains so multiply on fire
so close to the ocean
nor never felt so hot
by the pacific at nite
I walked into the door w/ the image of venus
or aphrodite I guess coming out of her shell on the sea
two girls giggled at me I realized my mistake
the jays are bluer here on my coast and more bold
jay w/ a grape in its mouth
I had to shoo one away the way I shooed the star but it
came back came back didnt it & you agree there is
n/t more beautiful
than a tree w/ fruit on it
unless it is to see animals drink

Guy Taylor



**THEY
ARE
US**

**US
IS
THEM**

**HATE
IS
PARANOIA**
AUTOIMMUNE DISORDER

Words

I like words. I like their sounds. I like their shapes. I like their textures. I like how words represent the human attempt to represent to one another experiences they often even find difficult to comprehend themselves. For me words are “provisional”. Whatever meaning they represent appears dependent on continuous validation over time. But we see how words come and go and how their meaning can drift even to the point of reversing polarity. The word for a simple laborer on an agricultural estate becomes the word for a bad or criminal person ... a villain. The concept of “Provisional” provides necessary and sufficient information arrives in time a tautologically valid statement may be made.

Words can sometimes
Words can maybe
leverage
represent
leverage and play
represent and play
leverage and represent and play
play

I often cannot tell which, or when; and I might find many other ways and many other words to frame this same observation. In short, I have lost my fixing point. I cannot say that I miss it. The meaning of the word “is” appears almost irrelevant. But it still keeps sneaking in.

I need to choose words on the fly mostly. I have a few minutes usually to maybe consider reconsider, come back to revise. I might struggle more were I not so likely to forget what I was about. I consider that good luck. I have to stay serious for a few seconds. That is good.

Zen is easier than Baroque or Rococo.
Honesty is less trouble than dissemblance.
Observation is more direct than invention. Still, where’s the brain-candy invested?
What do da peeps think they WANT to be able to believe? Quotidian reality or Princess magic?

The end of the epoch and all the drek behind it, pushing; I admit is largely even reasonably seen as a fearful extremely negative thing probably by most people. I understand that. we could have avoided that had responsibility been more meaningful.

And I mourn the loss of the world I was born into and all the worlds before that which inform be going back before the common era. But this “death” represents a consequence I have been waiting for ever since I first encountered I Am Waiting by Lawrence Ferlinghetti in 1966. and spun a poetic oratory based on it and Whitman’s “I hear America singing,” in High School ... I complained

“America I hear you snoring,
the golden lamp is smoldering
and the crowds have gone home ...”

and it ran on for about 7 or 8 minutes lol ...The thing is I have always been frustrated by Empire, yearned for its death so that I might really experience a REBIRTH OF WONDER.

These ARE end times but in more ways than just one. I stand with BLAKE in eschewing “single vision”

*Now I a fourfold vision see
And a fourfold vision is given to me
Tis fourfold in my supreme delight
And three fold in soft Beulabs night
And twofold Always. May God us keep
From Single vision & Newtons sleep*

— William Blake, Letter to Thomas Butt, 22 November 1802

From above, below, and the edge. (reminds me of a Rorschach I took once)

I see the end of the legacy era of Mass everything I yearn to give up my check and whatever nominal celebrity might come my way in exchange for a sane world where, like the lilies in the field ...

Perception is strange.

Zen is not entirely opposed to that position. Sit observe and in the moment act in concordance with that which is perceived. Communication is not the priority of a system derived from Taoism's perspective, in the words of Laozi:

“The Tao that can be told is not the eternal Tao;
The name that can be named is not the eternal name.
The nameless is the beginning of heaven and earth.
The named is the mother of ten thousand things.
Ever desireless, one can see the mystery.
Ever desiring, one can see the manifestations.
These two spring from the same source but differ in name;
this appears as darkness.
Darkness within darkness.
The gate to all mystery.”

Stochastic thinking operates on an assumption that if a thing works, the more of it the better. In divergent non-linear thought, if something is good, more of the same does not necessarily or sufficiently imply any improvement because quantity is regulated by need not the other way around. More is needed until it is not. The point of sustainable convergence is not endless growth (cancer), but stability and resilience (logistics).

All that is necessary is sufficiency in self awareness, self discipline and discernment of the critical degree of authenticity required.

Just a guess mind you. LOL I read a lot, sometimes I get distracted when I attempt to remember stuff in a useful pattern.

So OK try these.

8 short poems. You will notice that the text of the visual piece was snagged from the last verse of the first poem. I threw it together on the fly, just as an illustration of how the visual stuff I have been posting is put together.

Ending, like the death card in Tarot seems to me to concern “giving up all that is superficial and concentrating on the basic, fundamental and truly important” ... Transition to the next sequence. I remain pretty tied to thermodynamics “not created or destroyed” “not entering or leaving the

universe” ... In my “end of the world”, the void I gaze into, humans may disappear or lose substance. We may leave a mark for a while where we skidded into the tree. My world goes on without us until the Sun or/and asteroid obliterate it. Humans like their self importance. I suspect we may miss the obvious points. Facts, certainties belong to my past. I like prairie dogs better anyway. I cannot help looking like Fearless Fosdick, as full of holes as a Swiss cheese. I am not a mil.spec. Homo sapiens. I am broken, deviant, divergent, contrary in odd ways, recursive. I love my species; if nothing else, we are amusing in our conceits and our blindness to figurative space. If we walk off the end of the plank that is not an end. As the boys sang “we are stardust” — as will be whatever consumes any rotting corpses we abandon in solidarity. I am as alive and vital as the salad I chew the heck out of. A few hours in the kitchen and a bit of lettuce leaf or radish might be ready to be reborn in the garden as a clone.

How badly humanity is fucking up looks like a simple consequence of the meek or willing blindness we embrace in our profound faith in wealth as something more real than the Holy Grail. No other species uses the mental models, the constructs, the institutions people believe that they have to believe, more than anything, on the basis of a finely, and often beautifully, spun insufficiency of data. No hard evidence. “Don’t fear the reaper” ... I would say that it’s the fool in the mirror that represents the greater threat. Our technology flows toward a point where, arguably, we might resume where the bronze age left off without losing much, if anything. The epoch of empire closes, what will shape the second epoch of the Quaternary will probably not be what people imagine. Look at the San Bushmen. And others in that planetary community. They bridge the space between what was and what will be. Their consistency in perception, more than their material culture, represents a facet of the future we may need to see better. Hard to tell that without giving mis-impressions, but poetry seems to work tolerably well.

I Am Going Anyway

I make

I seek

I find

I kludge

I compose

I connect

It's all excretion.

It's just shit.

words colors notes

appearances

illusions

make-believe

nouns shapes tones

implications

meanings

delusions

perceptions representations fictions

trope

figment

candor

look and despair

a signification of notes

a prelude of eschatology

an edifice of dust

I am going anyway

things to see

patterns to sync

why not?

I Cannot Get Ending Right

I seem all opposites

am

— am not

true

— lie

soph

— more

What I know I do not have

— I can always find

— waiting where I lost it

No excuses

— but I want to make them anyway

I am the hairy thing that stinks

— beautiful, if only

I seem all opposites

lost

— found

dark

— light

jelly

— bean

How can I ever do the thing?

— but that I see it done

undone

— done

undone

— done

echo upon echo

I cannot get ending right

— but it already works.

Tomorrow will be better
— or not

In This Dark Place

In this dark place our paths cross
 maybe run a little way together
 well met

I am a thief
 what's mine, yours for the having.
 expect no quarter

The wood,
 silent
 always illumined by the same darkness

Beginning at the End

every child
 genius treasure
 unique
puzzle boxes
 challenge
 holding secret gifts

see them
 SEE them
 see THEM
 so many
 unopened letters
 left in the hall

loved
 but a mystery
 no way inside

realize
 realize for them
 realize in them
 treasure
 upon treasure
lurking behind smiling eyes

Procrustean

Procrustes' hammer
like his bed
promised a perfect fit
Stepmother
made the shoe fit

For the greater good
this unseen bruise

For the greater good
this undiscovered country

Uncarved block or egg?
you want to use a chisel?

Intentions

Age rushes in
 bumbling
 colliding
 things unfinished
left unfinished

Age rushes in
 corroding
 tearing
 intentions forgotten
Dreams failed

How prepared you believed
How prepared you intended
How prepared you planned

Age rushes in
 unexpected
 unprepared

Age rushes in
 naught will be finished
 naught will be done

Meager crumbs remaining
 to be processed
 abandoned
 forgotten
lost

In the End

And,
for me

— priorities maybe,
— what came before maybe,
— things I worked to eject
crept in

me unmindful.
— everything I lack I have.
— blame falls on nothing

what happens
what happened
— just is

You are WHO -not what
— are there others?
— is there only you?

— that
always my particular conundrum
complain all I want
— but
concession is the only option available

infinitely frustrating at times
— no matter what
— the only acceptable

self-sacrifice
— family legacy
 either choice
 same destination.

Weird that.

Each person
— unique genes
— unique experiences
 ts only in the closet
 that we can trade skins,

It is LIKE
— we can do the same thing
But what we do
— is NOT the same

Still can't work all of that out.
— gimme another 60 years.
— finer resolutions

Spozed 2 B

Familiar and The Strange,
Convergent and Divergent
Personal constitutions fall along a spectrum
Some dance a Pavan some fake it

No saying Wat way it Spozed 2 B
Pippa passes
and it's all 6's and 7's
and God, in his heaven, is on his own.

Nikes: Angelism and Bierasure in Frank Ocean



1. First Version

What the aesthetic object was supposed to resist most, namely scientific discourse and consequential theory, paradoxically appear today as revealing the truth of that object, as opening for the domain of aesthetic plasticity and passivity the outside that it was supposed to offer, and that it actually failed to open.

In other words there are no more relevant aesthetic objects in this world and we are at the start of the end of the world.

In proving itself incapable of getting over itself repeatedly the aesthetic zone has attested to its own failure to name anything other than the animal efflorescence of the matheme and more specifically a singular matheme that it still constantly un-names.

Agents and investigators are the last agents and investigators on earth who will include in the field of the object the absolute failure of the object to

name this matheme except as an easily relatable aspect of the apparatus acting out its own aesthetic ideology.

This interlaced aesthetic ideology is itself the failure of the domain of art's plasticity to use mention (use-mention) to indicate its inability to read itself as the occlusion and gift to the reader of this permission as prohibition.

'Perhaps psychoanalysis and the promise of full speech are not ready for the end of the world', writes Frank B. Wilderson III, and yet really — as well — there can be nothing or no-nobody that has or is that type of readiness unless the end of the world is itself ready.

The pseudo-matheme that the aesthetic object can do nothing other than name but is incapable of reading on its surface, is: extinction is not death, or, this is the end of the world for the first time in the world.

This may be written: $e < > d$.

When Badiou names 'terror' and 'the great point' and 'the terror of the matheme' in the world of contemporary music, this terror's necessity may also be translated into the world of the contemporary pop song and its finitisation.

The terror of the literal matheme $e < > d$ is a literal terror since it is the eternal truth of the finitisation or the fination of finitude that every event of truth must evacuate. In other words the truth $e < > d$ is an exceptional eternal truth insofar as it names the eternal finitisation of finitude that is *stricto sensu* unbearable. In that sense either it is the least or most eternal of event-truths one may describe.

2. Second Version

An example without example of the positive ability of general plasticity to read itself and allow itself to be self-read or simply show itself self-reading is Frank Ocean's song 'Nikes' (2016).

In order to hear new conditions of reading and listening (at the end of the world happening for the first time in the world) in 'Nikes' one can be attentive to what may be called the bisexualisation of knowledge or the

removal of the occlusion of bierasure in general plasticity that the song makes hearable and therefore bearable or that the song is.

In the Apple Music video for the song an angel appears at about the one minute mark, 'a real life angel'. One notes that there are at least two versions of the song. In the Apple video Frank Ocean raps over the top of the album version, saying 'I got two versions'. And yet there is also a third version, only available on the physical copy of the *Blonde* album included with the 2016 edition of *Boys Don't Cry* magazine, which features the Japanese artist KOHH rapping at the end for an extra minute in Japanese. The two versions are therefore three. Nike's Two is supernumerary.

The ability to have two versions at least and to self-read is a form of angelicism. In addition the ability to have or the inability to not have three versions is a form of bilingualism and the allowance of different cosmotechnics within the song. The end of the world happening for the first time in the world can only be 'thought' — we mean only be heard and seen — according to the surface of last scattering of a millennial trierasure. (The knowledge of the end of the world (1) is blocked out by the knowledge of death (2) which is blocked out by the intimation of extinction (3), for instance.)

The main problem in contemporary and general plasticity is the conflation of death and extinction and the turning of the end of the world into an event that can only happen *for us* or can never happen *to us* because it has already happened *for them*. This conflation — and the pregnant trierasure in the conflation of the end of the world with extinction and death — is nonetheless a primary form of bierasure. Its ideology is *popular*, and repeated: 'I see both sides, like Chanel.' ('Chanel', 2017) Another way of describing this is as the conflation of European and Chinese cosmotechnics or the hegemony of the semantico-American discourse of racism and anti-racism. There are at least two versions, on every level. The fight to distinguish is the marking and making of more life.

Insofar as the song is incapable of bi(o)-versionality it is incapable of being incapable of anti-bierasure. Insofar as it incapable of the self-reading of that incapacity it is incapable of being popular in its ideology and eidetics. All radical art in that sense is popular and closed down.

3. Third Version

Pop music is therefore radical in an adjusted sense because it is not limited by the failure of artistic progressivism that has now closed itself de jure (if not de facto) and prohibits the jouissance of self-reading. The Nike swoosh is beautiful in the context of the tripartite knowledge which is a reduction ad nihil of bierasure and a definite and time-bound angelism.

The co-ordinates of Ocean's 'bisexuality' are impossible to locate because they do not necessarily involve sex ('it's only awkward if you're fucking him too') in the same way that Drake's asexualisation of the end of the world cannot be analyzed easily ('I hope that the apocalypse is the only thing that doesn't come') or that the Virgil Abloh x Nike Zoom Fly Mercurial Flyknit is part of a new generic and general design ('genreless thinking'). Is the dialogue in 'Nikes' between a man and a woman, a non-binary and a star, a man and herself, man and women, or a trans-gender person and themselves? This does not matter when what matters is the absolute disjunction of sexes which the tripartite space (angelicism/angelism/anaologicity) of the song is able to witness.



Angels are the speculative third order of knowledge incapable of not seeing the disjunction of death and extinction as the taboo of bierasure. They are

the fourth world in which there is no end of the world. Angels don't have sex because they are it.

What becomes possible through watching and listening to (but not thinking, unless the concept magnifies itself away) the three versions of the song 'Nikes' is an anti-trierasurism.

4. Fourth Version

Already chopped, or already chopped and screwed, and so unchoppable and unscrewable, like rainbow heroin uncut, 'must be on the white like Othello' is what as a racial comment, as part of the moveable set of the critique of white mythology as the epistemology of suicidal tropes (Shakespeare) now unfurls uncommonly online. The power of the critique of white mythology cannot be countermanded by any one set even though it has to be. There is only the impossible theory of there being just one theory (the theory, for example, of trierasure). The problem with the end of the world as the only thing that happens and as that which happens as the only end of the world that could ever happen even though it can never be is that it never happens. That which can be the only thing that counts is also prohibited in that very saying and so the listener of 'Nikes' cannot be spaced out of it or placed. Tell these basic insisters what it is that is or isn't the end of the world? The 'let you guys prophecy' and the 'rain glitter' and the 'astro' and the 'only human' and the 'amber rose' and the fucking over of the future perfect proleptic anterior and the future perfect extinct together and at first ('living so the last night feels like a past life') mean that the song time-stamps the period ~2014-2018, summarises rather than is part of. Letting you guys prophecy may mean nobody knows what to say from the end and to the end or that only no-body can say this at all. The super spacing of the double *versioned* version of the song, the Apple Nike one, a double brand feint, means that nothing can be located in terms of a natural epistemology of the identity of the solar system, universe, and the earth, supposedly ours and theirs, lasting or not. Writing the end of the world everyday becomes an exasperated possibility real-life and carried away. Nobody on earth is talking about how it feels to be less and less able to talk about what it means to not know what it means when we talk as if we know what it means when we talk of the end of the world, to be less and less able, to be less and less sure as you are more and more sure, and to

know this as if it were a new Question of — new — being — striped
fuchsine on trilateral equipollence seeing the future first.

5. Fifth Version, Blonded Radio Archive

Nobody involved in the end of the world and end of the earth and ends of
the world is able to talk about the ‘nobody on earth’ implied by the not
being able to talk about these new ends of the earth. Nobody on earth is
able to say how they are less and less able to say this. 666 Fifth Avenue.
Godchain is dead. We’ll let you guys prophecy.

Mel C. Thompson

Poem for Richard Lopez at the Commencement of the End of the World

I write in the same way I pray:
“Dear God: There’s no way you exist,
But I’m offering prayers to you
And to all of my dead relatives
And my deceased ex-girlfriends.
I appear before you and the other gods
With a complete lack of faith
Begging for undeserved mercy.”

I write in the same way
That I eat and drink
With the Mad Russian.
It is certain that our food
Will be our undoing somehow.
It is more certain that alcohol
Will hasten all ungodly processes.
The Russian continually smokes
Whatever can be had for smoking.
While he gets high,
I talk all day
And exhaust myself with egomania.
The way I love is like a man
Who is already condemned.
It is certain that sexual excesses
Will have ruined my entire legacy.
My legacy, as I said in one million
Poems that tired out every audience,
Will be one room full of junk
That you may haul to the landfill site.
And all of my poems are now sand mandalas.
I almost never keep copies of them anymore.
I voluntarily surrender the concept of the backup drive.
These are the ultimate preparations

For the end of the ecosystem as we know it;
But fear not, for, as I preach eternally:
There are creatures living in sea vents,
Playing out their hundred years in boiling water,
Eating raw sulfur for breakfast, lunch and dinner.
There are giant mutant silverfish living in warehouses
Living off of the industrial glue that holds boxes together.
I've seen pigeons, rats and seagulls whose digestive systems
Can handle the fact that they drink from oil-filled puddles.
We are more sensitive than so many creatures.
Microorganisms are evolving in the Pacific just now
Who can feed off of non-biodegradable plastic.
The planet, and life, I promise, will outlive us.
All the ideas in this poem were stolen from previous poems I wrote,
And all of those ideas were stolen from previous holy men who didn't
[write,
And all them stole their ideas from their gurus till the beginning of
[humanity
In some kind of collective orgy of sycophantic idolatry.
Okay, I'm not a real plagiarist, but that may be due to cowardice and shame
More than any high moral principle.
But it's all a message about recycling.
There is almost no end of any world including this one,
Just a process of continual recycling which only ends
When Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva come to blow this shit up
And start a new universe absolutely free from my ego.
At last, saved!

Because all of time is like an avalanche coming to eat my apartment,
Coming to eat all of your houses, and delicately created families,
And all aggregated things I'm clinging desperately to along with you,
I hope that you will forgive the fact that there was no time to proofread
[anything.

The only other thing I could add is that before the place is turned over
To animals infinitely more adapted for survival than we ever could be,
Like the four-hundred-year-old sharks swimming off the coast of
Greenland,
Is that this poem, for no artistically-valid reason, would reap huge profits,
And that the editors of this publication would actually get all that money.

As for me, if Kim Jong Un presses the button down, I won't complain.
If I must live in a refugee tent at the edge of the desert, you can loot my
[files,
Because I may have stashed some money in there and forgot about it.

I shall end this by saying that no one on earth has even any slight
Obligation to read this, or like this, or reproduce this, or publish it,
Or in any way validate, praise, buy, sell, promote, believe in, or possess,
Any works of mine produced at any time, in this life, or in previous lives,
Or in any lives that Hindus or Buddhists might speculate I might live one
[day.
As for the mushroom cloud in the distance, let's please pretend we don't
[see it.

Lafayette, 2017, or, Year 1, BA (Before Apocalypse)

4.25.17-Present

I didn't drink today
and most days
are just days
in which drinking does
not occur — no matter
who I love — every
time I see a house finch
on the ground I feel
its plastic feathers
folding inside my nuclear mouth — I
know I shouldn't long for what
threatens my existence — I miss
her – quotation marks still
in the air but still — sitting inside
a boy's haircut — North
Carolina pouring Bailey's into
10am on a burnt auburn couch —
we no longer live in the flight
path — just across Tucson there are planes
in training — they want as they wake
to be planes in Syria — having
already been planes in Afghanistan
and planes in Iraq — these are prayers
US have prayed to send someone
missing — what we will not confess
to — most of me
wants to be the kind of ash
that pushes itself
up from the earth — every time
I pray I pay to make
peace with my impotence — most
of me wants you to be
my best love — wants to be held
down

6.19.18

built by mourning every day
is glass how you've already taken
a look inside the boy
his fists pockets
in which he is sheltering
his pulse a yes already
waiting to be taken back

Edwin Torres

Melody for Broken Sky

once I gained resemblance once I heard the call
once I pardoned shabbiness once I had it all

and I stand on this cliff and I treasure my height
and I stand on this cliff and I measure the fall

AND THE SKY BREAKS
AND THE SKY BREAKS
AND THE SKY BREAKS AND YOU —
LIVE IN YOUR TONGUE

and they give you your size and you give them your hole
and they say you belong and you fracture the mold

once you have alignment once you lose it all
once you stood in silence once your world was small

i place it and i
shape it and i blame it and i take it and i
name it and i
drain it and i make it and i shake it and i
sbook it and sb' fall
same
same same
same same same same
same same same same same same

can I offer you resistance can I fight the wind
can I give you the outcome you don't wanna win

play the game correctly play the same old song
play the song you finish finish what you play

mind your own direction try to find your high

find your own surrender try to find the sky

AND THE SKY BREAKS AND THE
SKY BREAKS AND THE
SKY BREAKS — AND YOU
LIVE INSIDE YOUR TONGUE — AND YOU
FLIP INSIDE YOUR TONGUE — AND YOU
RIP THE SKY IN TWO — AND IT
FALLS ALL OVER YOU — AND IT
COVERS YOU WITH BLUE — AND YOU
LICK THE MORNING DEW — AND YOU
TASTE — YOU LICK — YOU FIND — YOU
YOU'RE YOU YOU'RE YOU YOU'RE — YOU

i ain't goin' home

'cuꜛ amma wake up dead

so amma stay right here,

countin' these sheep, a jumpin' over ma head

there goes another — h e h

a'nother — h e h

a'nother — h o w

tall the night — h o w

tall the night — h o w

tall the night?

once you get your number once you weed the lawn

once you rip the plastic — *y a a a a a a w n*

and they say you're important as they drown you with light

and they waste your surrender onna hopeless night

and they cancel your diction and dance on your tongue

and you're left with resistance (something happy always wins)

and you don't know the fall until you bury the height

and you bring in a new one and everything is right

once you gain direction once you pay the price

once you stain the culture Nice — Nice — VERY NICE !!!

try to say you're sorry try to follow flight
try to stretch a season try to change the night

and you get with the program and you got what it takes
and you punchout the bozo who calls you a flake

once you paint the monkey —

DONKEY!DONKEY!DONKEY!DONKEY!DONKEY!

once it ain't, it ain't, it ain't, it ain't, it ain't —AW W W W W —

H E E H AW W — H E E H AW W W !!!

and I lean on my left
and I lose what I hide
and I live in this tongue
when I can't decide

was I going under
was I only small
once the world was tiny
once the night was tall

and I stand on this cliff
and I treasure my height
and I stand on this cliff
and I measure the fall

A Mirror At The End Of The World

So the story is that I'm about 9 years old
My actions don't always connect to my ability
I bring grocery home and put it away in no order
I walk the sidewalk cracks instead of straight

I am basically the wandering story
And where the street stops
Is where I start thinking about the sidewalk
What foot reaches first, which step needs me

Here on the subway, the frail father
Glasses, collared work shirt, no jacket, tie,
Shoulders hunched, a weight borne
Of duty before lineage, his son

Five or six, barely contained
By the father's long thin arms, asking
Non-stop wonder inside the hurricane's eye
Of his father's quietly elemental force

Which one is me — boy, father
Or poem, lifted
Off this page, the appointed messenger
Through the looking dad

Servile

who knows it all
who thinks they assign role-play
to convenient origins
 who is my bargain for poetry things
 to happen in
what mask do I wear for a go at *no*

the reach that grows
when you think
you know what you want
is a test the pressure to pull back
 at the slightest drop
is a dare

— blood moon
leveled against aspiration
— solved moon
 the embedded chromosome
the thing I skip
 to hold what I need today

who keeps order
by probing what was left — now
dare what you want back
 to come back
 where *yes way*
 invades
 no way

Rodrigo Toscano

Eco-Strato-Static

a radio poetics play in one act for three voices

Voices: regular font, *italics*, **bold**

—

elements:

**a wall of flames,
a big blue ball
on one side of it;**

**an entity,
another entity,
several more entities.**

{pause}

Hurl it over.

I can't — it's too heavy.

Get help.

I can't — everyone's too busy.

Scream to see if anybody responds.

Scream what?

HELP.

Ok.

Is anyone responding?

Not a one, responding.

Start acting like you have an innovative product.

Ok.

What's happening?

I'm acting like I have an innovative product.

Is any body coming?

No.

Put on a happy-pappy face.

Got it.

Is anybody coming?

I see somebody.

Somebody coming?

Somebody coming.

Say something.

What?

HELP.

Ok.

What's happening now?

They're talking to me about an innovative product.

What is it?

Some kind of art-thing.

Can it be fashioned into a lever, or a ramp?

I'll ask'em.

What do they say?

“Depends on how you look at it.”

Tell them you're out of time.

Ok.

What do they say?

They want to know if I have financial backing.

Escort them to the wall.

Escorting — in progress.

What's going on now?

They've walked into the wall of flames.

What did they say?

Aaah!

Start dancing.

Ok — dancing. I'm dancing ... still dancing ... still.

Do you see anybody dancing?

No.

Put on a happy-pappy face.

Got it.

Do you see anyone dancing?

Yes — yes I do.

Keep dancing.

I'm dancing — with a happy-pappy face.

What's going on now?

They're dancing my way.

Keep dancing.

Dancing — big time.

Now put on a desperate face.

Got it.

What's happening?

They're dancing away.

Back to the happy-pappy.

Got it.

What now?

They're coming back.

Ask them if they can help.

Ok.

Can they help?

No.

Why not?

They say it's not their specialty, cup of tea.

Ask them what is.

Ok.

What do they say?

Innovative ideas, images, looks, designs.

Tell them, that if they help, to get the big blue ball over the flaming wall, there'll be a prize in it for them.

Alright.

What do they say?

They want to know what the prize is.

Tell them LIFE.

Ok.

What do they say?

They say they want it up front.

Gyrate toward the wall.

Gyration — in progress.

What's happening?

They're following.

You know what to do.

Done.

What's going on now?

The billowing flames of the wall are cascading down the underbelly of the big blue ball. Wait.

What is it?

One them left the art-thing behind.

What kind of thing is it — exactly?

Hundreds of printed sheets of paper, bound together, into an almost perfect cube.

What does it say?

“A Gentle Knight was pricking on the plaine,
Y cladd in mightie armes and silver shielde,
Wherein old dints of deepe wounds did remaine,
The cruell markes of many' a bloody fielde —”

Stop... What else?

“Yet armes till that time did he never wield:
His angry steede did chide his foming bitt,
As much disdayning to the curbe to yield:
Full jolly knight he seemd, and faire did sitt,
As one for knightly giusts and fierce encounters fitt.”

Scream for help.

Ok.

Anyone coming?

No.

Can the thing be fashioned into a lever, or a ramp?

“But on his brest a bloudie Crosse he bore,
The deare remembrance of his dying Lord,
For whose sweete sake that glorious badge he wore,
And dead as living ever him ador’d.”
—Hardly.

Hurl it into the wall.

Done.

Look up.

I’m looking up.

Do you see any rain?

No.

Unfurl your umbrella.

Done.

Is it raining now?

Yes.

Proclaim the end of cause and effect.

Done.

What’s happening?

Millions of them are coming my way.

What do they look like?

Reverential.

Ask them if they can help.

Ok.

What do they say?

Not a one — can help.

Why not?

They want to see the umbrella & rain thing again.

Tell them no.

Done.

What now?

They're dispersing — in silence.

Unfurl your umbrella.

Unfurled.

Is it raining?

No, but they're coming back.

Furl in your umbrella.

Furled in.

Are they still coming?

They're getting closer.

Read from the thing.

“Upon a great adventure he was bond,
That greatest Gloriana to him gave,
That greatest Glorious Queene of Faerie lond,
To winne him worship, and her grace to have,
Which of all earthly things he most did crave —”

Pause ... go on.

“And ever as he rode, his hart did earn
To prove his puissance in battell brave
Upon his foe, and his new force to learne;
Upon his foe...a Dragon horrible and stearne.”

What's happening? What's happening now?

They're forming into groups.

What kind of groups?

One is calling itself, The Administrators (Group A), the other (Group B) can't quite decide on a name. Group A is busy cataloging, scheduling, surveillancing. The other is ... well! Well, well not exactly really but —
Pro claim — The Beginning — of Self.

Alright.

Is anyone saying anything?

Not a word.

Proclaim — The End — of Self.

Ok.

Anyone saying anything now?

I see a few specs in Group B starting to twinkle.

Dance.

How?

In the approximate rhythm of their twinkling.

Ok.

Anything happening?

The twinklers are forming into their own group — Group C.

Do they have a spokesperson?

I can't tell.

Dangle a giant mic from a giant crane.

Done.

Is anybody approaching?

One of them is hanging from the mic, swinging on it, back and forth.

That's your spokesperson.

I figured that much.

Say something.

What?

Ask for help.

No.

....

....

I said no. No ... hey ... I said, I said no. Do you hear me? I said —

Yo! Do I have to swing on this thing all day to get your attention?

Uh ... Oh! ... hang on.

Hang on! Whadya think I'm a trapeze artist here? Whadya think this is a circus? Who're you — Bozo, The Existentialist?

Uh ...

My people are getting antsy over here. You wanna show — you don't wanna show. You call for a show — you don't wanna show —

I .. I want a show ... I want. .. a show.

Alrighty then! What do you want — you want bungee sticks, guillotines, AK-47's, car bombs, hemlock pot roast, moonseed muffins — what do you want — spit it out.

A lever and/or ramp would be nice ... pre^{fer}ably.

Prefubly.

Yes, pre^{fer}ably.

Prefubly.

That's what I said.

You got an extra syllable there.

Uh — do you have some sort of license, or degree, or some kind of certificate, for this kind of work?

Listen, Bozo, you proclaim the End of Self as a *Beginning* of Self, across an axis of Presence / Absence, as an ideo-somatic registry for an onto-episto paratactic — to get your prophylactic — to work — *for peanuts!* WE'RE OUTTA HERE!!

Wait, no. Don't. Oh ... oh no ... (damn!)

*A Gentle Knight was pricking on the plaine,
Y cladd in mightie armes and —*

Hey! Where the hell have you been? Were you here the whole time? Did you hear all that?

The whole bloody thing.

Why didn't you step in — lend counsel, direction, why didn't you, after all, HELP?

I wanted to clear your mind — of one word, once and for all.

What word?

One, that when not casting its terminal tunnel vision, that the high wall of flames might lower down to the height of say, shag carpet.

What word?

So that the big blue ball might with the slightest effort, through simple love, be rolled over — to the other side (being the near perfect sphere that it is).

That it is, that it is. But, what word?

Be still, I'll whisper it to you.

Nice. Trust me, it's cleared. Clean.

Good.

But now you've got me snagged up on "simple love."

Simple love, yes, a simple (reverential) love — of life, itself; basic technology, like flint-tips, pottery, the wheel, the lever and/or ramp; a millennia to develop it, a millennia to destroy it at the same time.

Not like “econ —”

No. Development, in the true sense, borne of the body, resilient, hard to market.

And not like “help.”

No. “Help” in our epoch, too readily invites knights, crosses, swords ... dragons ... Faerie Lond.

Faerie Lond. I’ll try to come to grips with that.

You do that.

I will.

Good.

Good.

Good.

Good.

end of radio play

Jean Vengua

Although my book, *Corporeal*, will be published this summer by Black Radish Books, I haven't been writing much poetry lately. I haven't stopped altogether, but have been writing at a rate of, say, 1 short poem every other month. About five years ago, I started painting again after a hiatus of several decades, and I just haven't stopped; I need this.

One way in which the current craziness has affected me is that it has caused me to more critically review my life and the lives of my parents and family within the context of capitalism, colonization (abetted by sexism and racism); I'm much more painfully aware of how these systems (which are maybe one and the same) have dogged my family, and my every step and decisions throughout my life. I'm in my 60s now, and both me and my partner are writers/artists and part-time contract workers in the gig economy. That means that we live constantly on the edge of economic instability. What do the academics call it? Precarity. Lovely. I'm not going to pretend that this doesn't affect my writing and my art, or my perspective on life, for that matter. No American dream for me — or at least not the one my parents imagined.

construct

start
here, behind
the blind, looking

as
clearly as
possible, not at

myself
but at
the cage constructs

“self”
“I am”
in trade, currency

there:
in sum
the years spent.

What's happening to the planet, to our government, to our society (thanks, Facebook) shows up in the thoughts and language that give impetus to my writing.

contract: a true story

I've learned that you will sign,
that they've given you a contract,
a "loan" and
in conjunction; a "lucid" dream

we were walking in the underground
parking lot toward
a tunnel (subway
to another creepy
station)

I was saying,
was trying to explain,
"this is / could be
slavery, consensus ad idem,
to use their terms; so, *make sure,*
don't forget to show me
"the means and ends"
as we stumble down the line
to our unexplored depths, our deaths.

Years later,
my contractor catches up with me,
explains:

"Look, here's all you do:
you take your ____ x ____ and
add it up like this" (scribbling)
"turn it into a fraction and divide by ____."
"Can I keep this?" I say, knowing

I'll forget,
I won't understand,
could not / did not calculate;
she will take note of my shoes,
will never clarify,

I'll accept it all
and swallow the paper

I do think about potential readers, but I don't shape what I write for them; I write because I need to know where I am, and we are, in all this; and writing or painting is sometimes a comforting act. My emotional and intellectual responses show up in the colors I use in painting, in the shapes, lines, and textures that emerge, and in the titles.



Sketchbook study for the painting, "Bull Market."



Sketchbook study: "Red & White, Black & Blue Asemic."

Weirdly, I have hope for the future. At the same time, I'm saddened, grieving, and angry. As for myself, personally, I'm just goddamn tired. But I'm also in love with my partner of 8 years, Michael, and maybe that's why I

continue to have hope. And beauty still exists. The bluejays and hummingbirds in my front yard still sing and crack nuts on the roof's tin gutters, waking me up in the morning. I'm lucky to have a front yard. The crows still argue with each other and scold me as if I'm family. Are humans any different? So that keeps me going--that, and my curiosity. I want to find out what the hell is going to happen next, and I have this naively human idea that somehow art and poetry can help make things better.

The Ship of State Attempts to Fly.
Acrylics on recycled canvas. 27 x 18.5
inches. 6/2017

[Please see following page]



Pasquale Verdicchio

Warming Trend

*—in memory of Idy Diene, cousin of Samb Modou,
and to his wife, Rokhaya Mbengue, widow of both men killed by
racism.*

There is no news this morning
to feed my addiction
current events
have falsely befallen
everything finally balanced
to tip beyond repair

a warming trend
causes us to consider
whether or not
in a climate such as this
an end of sorts
might mark a beginning

not the end of the world
sinister fails
the end of who we were
and right wing parties.
Not the end of the world
although Idy Diene
would think otherwise
his patience
brought to an end
at hands of fascist guns.

Who is Idy Diene?
proves the point
that we have been left
out in the cold
and nothing counts

for nothing.
We cannot pronounce
will not pronounce
victims' names
until the names become
familiar as our own
loved as we love.

This morning
the city weeps
for trees felled
by heavy snow
remember their planting
remember their names.
This morning
the nation has swept
another life under
a blanket of indifference.
Odio gli indifferenti!
“I hate the indifferent!”
AG to those
who would allow fascism
to fester and thrive.

Cecilia Vicuña

The root *me*

The root *me*

is the moon,

mensis

metior

measure

menstruation.

The moon is the first of creatures to die, but also the first to live again.

Mircea Eliade

The poverty of the thread

“For the Papago pilgrim, it was possible to bring back a token, a strand of seaweed, a shell, or a pebble that he noticed while he was at the edge of the world.”

—Dennis and Barbara Tedlock

The poverty of the thread
was the limit
and edge
of the world
was any moment.

Delphi

1

I asked the oracle:

“Is this the end?”

And the oracle answered:

“We are still here.”

At midnight an owl

came to my door and sang.

Before dawn a chorus of owls

cried into the cliffs.

The rocks answered

and the valley cried.

Omphalos

(The navel of the world where She was killed.)

... the cone would appear to have been seen as the earth's motherly form.
 Vincent Scully

I found myself
 searching for
 red traces
 a knot in infinity's knob
 the menses of the earth
 a cone lined with
 living veins.

celestial
 hallow
 clitoris
 navel

hollow
 cell
 knob
 om

Pythia, Sibilla, Python

*Here is the daughter of Gaia, Pythia,
Apollo struck her at Delphi
and appropriated her prophecies as his own.*
James O'Hern

Pythia, I asked,

Are you the thread
Reading itself?

The snake
bringing life to the dead?

VISION 34 / Hexagram 25 / Wu Wang / Innocence (The Unexpected)

[Excerpt]

3

Oh fount of future fierywater, fount of the it, where are you in your wandering loss? In that which sinks and goes away? Something draws me on and sinks me into fire, chemipurifying, the fire cleanses me and I dont feel a thing. The betr to see & be another I imagine nonbeing, the meanwhile of who I left and who I'll be, here I shud selfflameup, illuminate-myself on my own. The exo, the outside dusnt me-an anything if we don't withfeel it, I with-feel and at last I flaym something, loving the divine lights me up, meupfires, I am only the firethought, what burns and shines in nonbeing, the firethought that saturatthis space. I wish to see the people fromere, swarms of quasunformed flowbeings, rather. Oh, fullondreemlet, I liv by dreeming, seeing other people who are not people but star.

from: XUL SOLAR AND THE I CHING

(Translated from Spanish Christopher Winks)

Death of the pollinators

the pollen touches the stigma

feels

the

female

fe

faith

and unleashes

cun

dandolo

spreads

a strand

of love

dating

pain

thread

it

“Territories of pollen
are sensitive to sound”

“Playing their trumpets,
the Desana precipitate pollination”

“The particles
of masculine pollen
then fall on
the feminine
part of the palm”

Polen
Pulvis
Powder

I am reading the news

“Death of the pollinators”

Bee bat moth bird butterfly

all dying out

Penetrate
Little Pollen
Dust

who will come?

who will feed us?

Polvito
Polen
Polvar

The miriti palm
hears the blare
and gets excited.

(the palma and the trumpet
are bisexual
and are always played
in pairs)

In Europe, women
displayed their privates
to flax

At the sight of vulvas
the plants grew
with great velocity

Down with dresses!
up with plants!

Death on land
death at sea

come pollen come!

only death is alive

Polvito
Polen
Polvar

Penetrate

Little Pollen
Dust

New York 1996-2001

The fire between two bees

To obtain powers the shaman follows a long road ending in a tent.

Inside the tent there are two naked women

The fire between them is the hearth

The fire between them is the sun

I dream of the fire between two bees

Sticky and golden with pollen and honey
lifting the comb of the Earth from death.

extinction crisis

To world leaders:

“We global citizens are deeply concerned by scientists warning that ecosystems critical to sustaining life on Earth could collapse in our lifetimes. We call on you to meet existing targets to protect biodiversity, forge a new agreement so that at least 50% of our lands and oceans are protected and restored, and ensure our planet is completely sustainably managed. This must take into consideration the needs of human development and have the active support of indigenous peoples. This long-term goal for nature can restore harmony with our home.”

avaaz.org

july 4th 2018

Alli Warren

A Yielding Hole for Light

Where were you when the West
Antarctic Ice Sheet began to collapse?
On the way to Iowa City
to see my first sumac and coming
to know its name in asking
it's the way of coming to know
as if in revelation instead of simple clarity
I tell BB what I want around me
are the ripe and tender ones
wine the color of weather
the lush bearing of our longing
going on in my way, stupidly sincere
one foot in the office the other lolling
about the field, do you prefer the gravel
to the scrub grass? I prefer the ear
to the throat, calling choice
what's ancient, trained
to chew on the cork like it was mine to do with

I'm not necessarily not destroyed
by the loon looming on the horizon
you accuse of having no inside
I stand under persimmon and see Frank
and the white bowl, heat machine
beaming luxuriously, ground of everything
ground of light, makes the field wider,
makes hedges fall
Or the courage or not
of me and my friends
orbital in lilt, directive in drink
while container ships brim
and caps and bergs
slope across the slog
I want to be able to continue

to love to stay alive
The epigraph belongs to Gloria Gaynor
the green pervades, it's a diamond, we all are

Karen Weiser

What Kind of Alarm

I read the words “portable ocean”
and thought first of a tiny sea you could place
in your pocket would then not be an ocean
by definition not portable its name
changes if you move one element
the tiny ocean in my pocket
is perhaps the only way I can see
it’s individual entity, abstract
whimsical fantasy of a real thing
in its dryness in my pocket I am forgetting
some foundational part of it
to have any reality the harm we are doing
to this planet and its
people

what kind of an alarm must sound
I dream the day can stop
time pauses in the repeat the repeat of the
the poem a middle entity between two ends
of a telescope, a time machine,
the floor of an ocean and its surface
to pause us before we can push away
so much to get through
a day leaves tied to our feet
cover mental tracks
I did not think that I did but I can’t use it
no use to some thoughts
unhinge them let them
imprint in the dust they are made
of letters perpetually
kind to no one, numb in their
lack of address to an individual,
in their message to all

Amie Whittimore

Starlicide

is safe for cats, owls, and creeks; for Laundromats, pedigrees,
and flutes; for windbags, soothsayers, and windshield wipers,
but not for crows or blackbirds, nor of course, for starlings,

who are aggressive, super-smart, and clever, who can nest
anywhere and sing Mozart's allegrettos, whose plasticity
of behavior causes millions in damage to farms;

whose strengths annoy, whose strengths too closely shadow
those of European-Americans: also invasive, also bullying out
native populations; also in turns abrasive and charming,

so it makes sense some white scientists invented Starlicide
to starve the mirror of its brute mimicry,
with assurances that Starlicide won't enter the food chain

because it's metabolized so fast you could say it flies
through starlings (and crows and blackbirds), plummeting
them to earth, upsetting all sorts of humans who once thought

bird crap on their cars nuisance enough. We're assured
Starlicide has no known side effects aside from bird downpours
which, though problematic, won't undercut the minimized

screeching and excrement, fewer flocks ravaging grain stores
and throwing themselves against sunset like intricate nets —
a habit particular to starlings but not crows and blackbirds

who pal around in smaller groups and thus can travel
together without swirling, which is impossible for starlings:
one wrong turn and they'll break each other's wings

and in that they're like us too. Whenever a new batch
of Starlicide drops, crows and blackbirds whistle darkly

to their nestlings, warning them about humans,

even the girl who leaves seeds on a pedestal for a crow
who thanks her with broken key chains, glass shards, and tweezers;
wire and ribbon; bottle caps and dimes as if aware

of capitalism — an hypothesis scientists hope to prove
because while animals shouldn't be *too* much like us,
it'd be convenient if they understood give and take,

the cost of doing business, if they could see our economy
as we often do, propped like a carefully wrought nest
at the top of a tall tree, removed from the dust

and squalor below, so that it's easy to forget it matters
what happens to the roots, that leaf and branch,
sun and soil, heart and feather, flesh and sound

all fly or die together: which the birds know.
They have wings and feet, eyes and brains, and this
worries some scientists, who have learned crows

cling to grudges and dive-bomb humans
who do them or their loved ones wrong, then teach
these grudges to each other, just like we do.

A falconer was hired after the last Starlicide panic,
after the sky again spewed dead birds like a foul omen,
spurring some outliers to suggest we please try something else.

The local news is thrilled, smitten — *a lady falconer!* —
asking if she would please don a cape and long dress
for this outing. She wears her jeans and flannel and says no

comment before taking her bird below the roosting starlings
whose splintered chants seem to goad the falcon on —
as if they know fear is better than Starlicide, that poison

always ends up in the king's chalice, their fragmented symphony a prettier 'fuck you' than we deserve.

NOTE

Starlicide is a pesticide or chemical avicide that is highly toxic to starlings, crows, pigeons, and certain gull species. It is used at feedlots, farms, wildlife refuges, and other sites. Some of the language in "Starlicide," particularly in stanzas two and three, is borrowed from NPR's interview with Lyanda Lynn Haupt, about her book *Mozart's Starling*, in which she details Mozart's relationship with his pet starling, Vogesltar.

Julia Wieting

Volcano at the Helm

This is the land that makes new land.

We thought that was the beginning, or the middle, or the end of story.

It is the only story.

— it is only story

— it is only the story

(variation)

the first mistake assumes We is infinite diversity

time inversion

inverted funnel

introduction

start over again lava

(captain, I think we've seen this corner of space before)

(varp FACtor four, kyepten)

star date

is it true that new

space still rends

old problems

was it always going to be

1138

frontier this frontier that
every moon
a unit
of

progress
(variation)
tear: space still for rent

start over again lava
the interior is the engine
birth death location
promotion to sentience

(she cannae wait any longer, captain — she's gonna — !)

we thought that was the beginning, or the middle, or the end of the sorry;
no ... bones ... about it

someday they'll send better scripts

space still means probe golems
an introduction to inversion
subsidence is a downwards
shift relative to sea-level:

this datum that datum
some of you won't prosper
acknowledge, ego

(dammit man I'm a process, not a fountain!)

start over again lava

(variation)

baby, I had a life before this

a life after this acting

new space might look like old space or it might not

I make my own impulsive way across limits

you figure out some beginning, some ending

I have my hands full, land landing

(kyepten)

start over again lava

the future burying the past exhumes the future no we can only do things

now careening onwards everything is motion at this speed

(invariation)

pun

eruption is erosion kobayashi marooned on reruns: always the option to

break the rules

(kyepten, did you eat the nuclear wessels?)

— it is only the story

I make no claim to narrate, no move to navigate

(variation)

pun

vulcan anvil laforge crucible refine thought process what you feel as anger I
conclude is work coming in peace whales come home volcano serious
mixing

infinite diversity

:

the good of the good of the good; one, many, few

I can save you your kink
through revision

start over again lava

computer, is it an issue of way finding?
I can trade you coqui frogs for sound effects

(variation)

pun

captain, we have a series of problems but the directive stays the same,
episode arcs/ecologies

new land is terribly flashy

(variation)

love is terribly fleshy

I am especially impatient to get away

start over again lava

Shore leave should give you time to cool your feet, one quarter impulse
engage with the edges make it a big enough story to stay with

(captain, when space is curved it is illogical to speak of frontiers as final)

— it is only story
the bridge is static
(variation)
the bridge is stage

is safe (shields) is not safe (shields at 20%)
is opportunity is rank
is the eye is the screen
starts the beginning stares at the end

is this the time loop episode

start over again lava

the land names new land
computer captain's log
supplemental
this hurtling
ship my name
should translate
as 'red alert'
or 'home for the redshirts'

computer, find example
here's obsidian overflow enough for the whole crew

take it tattoo the star map on the first officer's face one mark one
mark your arms her legs his back black boldly to where 'came from' joins
with 'going to'
and we always land here

Tyrone Williams

A Guide to Oblivion

1. All writing, like creating — from children to corporate buildings — is vanity if the purpose of making is to ensure that something, or someone, will prove indestructible.
2. The afterlife called “future” is thereby the impossible quotidian and only the destruction of the solar system and its inhabitants will close the book on temporality.
3. Despite the allure of that extended present called a “lifetime” present day readers of poetry — anyone’s poetry — is no guarantee of future readers, and thus the little game one sometimes plays — “I’m writing for future readers” (because no one reading poetry at present is reading *my* poetry) — is simply a form of psychic compensation, building up treasures in some literary heaven against present impoverishment.
4. The artist creates because s/he, driven by an indomitable will, has no choice.
5. One writes for oneself; one publishes for others—and vice versa.

Analects 6-10 have been mis

Elizabeth Willis

Will I print the electronic message calling for work on “Poetry at the End of the World”? What is my relation to the tree that becomes a page and is there anything I might say that would compensate for its loss? What matters in this lopsided transaction?

I am not interested in singing as the ship goes down.

I do not believe poetry can save the human race. Let alone the world. I do not know what “saving” means in this context. I do not know if humans have behaved in ways that make us worth saving as a species.

I do want to save the tree outside my window. I do believe it communicates with those who are are capable of listening to it.

I believe poetry can open some human minds to languages that are otherwise not being heard.

I know that the world is on fire, and I do not believe that there is “nothing to say” to the people who don’t know it (sorry, Brecht). But I also know that my energy is not without limits and that a poem does not put out a fire.

I love the durability of language.

I am grateful to my friends. Especially the ones who know that the world is on fire.

This poem [ed. note: see next page] is for one of them. It is followed by a talk delivered in the summer of 2013 when we were both teaching in the Naropa summer program during a hot week devoted to the discussion of “Hellfire, Drought & Brimstone: A New Eco-Poetics”.

Ides of February

for C.A. Conrad

The only failure
you said, is no love

I don't know where
the moon was
at the time
We hadn't even met
on this rock

If you're lost
look it up
in the forest
it's better
if there's snow

We will want
snow to read by
to set on fire

It's almost impossible
to find a silence
nature doesn't
abhor Even
in the mountains

there's a point
where the continent
tips over
into what we know
is about to happen

We're getting close
We're getting warmer

Notes from and on a Landscape: Hell, Fire, and Brimstone

Brimstone — or sulphur — is at the center of the discourse of infernal punishment and occult power.

It's the part of us that's subject to ignition. It is a kindler of rage.

When brimstone is used to set people on fire outside the gates of redemption, their suffering makes the exaltation of the righteous appear better than it is.

Some people are content to place their enemies in an imaginary torment, but there are also the very real histories of napalm, of lynching, of burning at the stake. The practice of tarring and feathering has had a vivid life on this continent.

Setting one's enemies on fire is a very old idea.

Perhaps this is why the setting of one's own body on fire has been viewed as the most extreme and symbolically precise voicing of outrage and resistance.

According to John Quincy's (1718) *Pharmacopoeia Officinalis*: "Sulphur ... is very soft and unctious, and the lightest part of Bodies next to Spirit."

Sulphur lozenges, soaps, ointments, and baths have been used to treat asthma, hemorrhoids, and disorders of the skin.

You feel the side effects before you feel the cure.

Sulphur was said to fill the air when the righteous prayed for a witch.

Curious women and those who resorted to begging have been accused of witchcraft because they asked inappropriate questions or, like poets, muttered when they walked.

Where is there religion. There is always religion. (Gertrude Stein.)

It wasn't until the 15th century that witches appeared on broomsticks and thus were linked irrevocably to domestic labor and disobedience.

All of Europe was threatened by the ingeniousness of this repurposing — the use of one tool to do something previously inconceivable.

Saint Joan was referred to as The Maid. Even after she led an army.

When she was on trial, her inquisitors pointed out that she had tried to escape and that God had not delivered her from her enemies. “A prisoner,” she said, “has the right to attempt escape.”

She said, “The voice is a light.”

She said, “I can’t recant.”

She said, “Even fire won’t change my mind.”

Bertholt Brecht said he had nothing to say to those who did not already know that the world was on fire.

In 2012 more of the United States was burning than in any other year on record — 7 million acres before the end of August. Kenya and Mongolia were on fire. Every state in Australia was on fire. The peat fires ignited during Siberia’s 90-degree afternoons went underground last winter and resurfaced with the thaw.

The New York Times had already moved its primary reportage of climate change, *Dot Earth*, from its news pages to its Opinion section.

How in *this* world can anyone be excluded from the discourse of fire?

Those of us who know that the world is on fire have ridden shotgun on the brooms of crones and degenerates, opium eaters and speakers in tongues, poets and tellers of fact, excommunicants and sodomites, insider artists and citizens of the outer dark, malcontents and depressives, urban farmers and dwellers in tents.

Like the Maid, we have the right to transform the disciplinary structures of our world with sulphurous language. To fight one fire with another.

+

Keeping in mind a history of the occult, I want to consider more broadly that which is occluded, hidden, overlooked.

Think for a moment about what obstructs vision. Our vision, as a species and as poets. What distracts us from looking more deeply. What ideological and imaginative barriers lead to an acceptance of the entrenched binaries of party politics, of gender, of race, of religion, of class, of technoculture. What interferes with wilder patterns of inquiry?

How invested are we, individually and collectively, in the concept of hell—or even in a hell-making device that forces certain individuals to pay for their crimes? And what kinds of progressive thinking does this block, as we live *among* each other's crimes, and in the case of global issues like climate change, pay for them collectively, albeit unevenly.

We — specifically and generally, as creatures and fellow-participants within larger systems — cannot afford for the network of resources that binds us together to be broken by actuarial science.

Reduce your carbon footprint and your mind will follow. (George Clinton.)

It is not enough to recognize the systematic and willful destruction of “our” world, a place where the possessive pronoun can imply radically divergent value systems. Whatever we mean by the “world” is under constant revision from within and without. But recognizing the default settings of this place and time may be the beginning of claiming the right to revise our relation to various resources. Remapping any future requires us to seek out, consider, and re-value the perceptual apparatuses and experience of other species, living and dead. To see up close and differently. And at the same time to stand back far enough to see the disciplinary patterns and liberational pathways that are not immediately evident when we view this world as simply chaotic.

I'm thinking in particular of two obstructive concepts — or structuring beliefs — that are often treated as immutable.

The first is a paternalistic view of species relation. Although Darwin suggested — and Lorine Niedecker reminds us — that no species is inherently higher or lower than another, it has been taken as a given that

humans are at the top of the evolutionary chain. Are we content to build a lonely planet on which we are the *de facto* arbiters of the future? What can we learn from the behavior and language patterns of other species; by observing how they survive — or don't survive — the death drive of capitalist expansion and human dominance?

Redwoods, for example, can be on fire for years without dying. A tree in California named Methusaleh is 4800 years old. There are trees in England that go back to the age of the druids. They can survive almost anything but a chainsaw.

If a 5000-year-old tree spoke would we understand what it said? Or would we calculate its potential effect on “housing starts”? (Ludwig Wittgenstein.)

Redwoods are rhizomatic. The unit is the grove, not the tree.

This creature speaks so slowly, hardly anyone seems to notice.

What can be learned from the symbiotic world evolving hundreds of feet above us, entire ecosystems of plants and animals that coexist in redwood culture and that never touch the ground?

If we were to relinquish the current operating system of human supremacy, what could other species teach us about surviving as non-dominant entities?

The residual presence of a first-, second-, and third-world model of economic and cultural development forms a similar cognitive block. Built on the assumption that a whitewashed version of western culture holds the duty, right, and privilege of shaping the political and environmental patterns of the rest of the “undeveloped” or “developing” world, it claims for the “developed” sector a condescending and self-interested simulation of empathy to others, by which they always remain “other.”

The American State Department has a lot to learn from the Somali refugees who have dry-farmed tiny gardens within overcrowded desert camps, and from communities that live off the grid of satellite communication. What if, instead of thinking that the world would be improved by cell reception and access to factory foods, we sought ways to un-develop, to consider

differently the landscape that ATT forgot — or that didn't fit into Walmart's economy of scale?

What would the future sound like if the struggle to survive on limited resources, the necessity of balancing self-sufficiency and interdependency were distributed more broadly?

What is being said in the sensorial worlds beyond the reach of contemporary linguistics?

What are the sinkholes in Johannesburg and rural Pennsylvania saying to each other?

What does Fukushima mean on a planet whose surface is 71% ocean?

Can we spatially and temporally reorient the world map so that North America no longer appears in the upper left-center — the place on the page from which all else follows. Can we revise our relation to those who placed it there?

Our values shift according to our language. (William Carlos Williams.)

By passing through a fiery word, one thing can be turned into another. A civil war, a coup, a revolution, a liberation, a takeover.

How willing are we to live by the consequences of our own thought?

How far will we allow poetry to take us?

+

At the institution where I teach, the library was recently “weeded” to make room for new acquisitions. Among the items withdrawn were books entitled: *Ideas are Weapons*; *Population and World Power*; *A Handy Guide for Beggars*; *What Are We For?*; *Liberalism Fights On*; and *The Red Executive*.

I would like to speak in favor of the obsolete, the withdrawn, the hidden, the unread, and the cast off.

I would like to read *The Sorcery of Color* by W.E.B. DuBois, which was rejected by William Sloane, his editor at Henry Holt, in 1940, after which the manuscript was lost, though it eventually resurfaced in DuBois's papers at UMass Amherst.

What can we learn at the dump?

What can we learn from those who survive as gleaners?

The fact of global warming and other environmental realities push us out of bounded identities and demand other forms of engagement and relation.

I think there is still a lot to learn from Occupy — about what structures can emerge from collective action and how they may be extended to include other commitments.

Poetry is a rival government always in opposition to its cruder replicas. (William Carlos Williams.)

So much depends/ upon / the stone-cold generosity we have often been permitted to encounter in the wheelbarrow of discarded arts.

+

When “history” is used as a verb, it means to write, depict, narrate, or recount. When it first appeared in 5th-century Latin, *historiare* meant to seek by questioning.

The West has been witness to America writing itself, with the backhand of conquest, from right to left, east to west, clothed in a rhetoric as “natural” as the planet’s turning.

The pen with which this country is historied is not mightier than its sword; it is with a sword that it learned to write.

Such power is both real and imaginary, as the mission of “real” power is to lay hold upon the imagination.

The Oregon Trail, the Lincoln Highway, the Trail of Tears, the Northwest Passage.

These lines too are written.

At what cost do we separate thought from feeling?

What acts of will and imagination remain in the uncombed weeds of the past, beyond the histories we have been conditioned to repeat?
Compare the populations of private prisons and college classrooms.

Do you begin to see a little what America is what American religion is what American war is. (Gertrude Stein.)

In most western frontier towns the wooden churches have burned or collapsed, the general store has been leveled to make room for the poured concrete of a chain supermarket with its city block of parking spaces, the theatres have been converted into senior centers or have filled with pigeons before one agency or another shuts them down.

The AAA guide for Wyoming lists more jails as historical sites than any other category of tourist attraction.

Jails were made to last.

By what sulphurous art may poetry, the “true fiction,” labor to take them down?

The Box Is the Womb Or

THE TURIN HORSE

I was vexed at an angsty point in my life the first time I watched Bela Tarr's *The Turin Horse*. If you've seen the film maybe you had the experience too of a kind of restless body syndrome while watching its slow black-and-white expression (a cruelty in itself) of the long tail of cruelty. How it comes back. How you have to eat it. How it's yours. How ourosboros. For weeks after the experience, and even now in just thinking about it, the repetitive rhythm of the windstorm that courses throughout the entire film comes to mind and by mind I mean my entire my body.

AN AURAL GHOST

If it were a musical score the last bars of the wind's refrain would be tortured whole notes, a moan plugged into a wah pedal. If you were to scan the wind as poetry it would read: unstress STRESS |STRESS STRESS |... STRESS STRESS |... over and

into a rhythmic droning awkwardly gaited inescapable. It bores through me and I am a hag stone. Tarr's last film imagines, he suggested, *how the world will be over, the horse will be over, life will be over*. In its aftermath — another lashing.

DEATH'S THRONG

The film begins in voiceover with the story of Nietzsche's legendary encounter with a horse being ruthlessly beaten by its driver on a street in Turin. (*If it's Turin, straight streets that never end when you look out over the railings of the balconies, a double row of trees fading into a beyond of white skies.*) Purportedly Nietzsche was so distraught by the cruel spectacle he inserted himself in it, threw his arms around the horse, wept there, and then collapsed. That point in Nietzsche's life from which he never really returned or wrote again — *Mutter, ich bin dumm* — marks the beginning of this film which imagines what happened to the horse.

I think of that wind and I think of debt. A perpetual white noise, an agitational menace, howling into the eventual dark where

A MARE MEANS STARVE STARVE

Cut to a doom/*dumm*-pastoral, where a windstorm is rising. A dark horse, blinders on, with visible effort pulls a cart and grizzled driver along a dirt road through billowing dust and the orchestral anxiety of swirling minor strings to a farm far out in the country. The horse is stabled, the man/the patriarch retreats to his house, where a young woman, his daughter, tends to their life in silence. Where is the writer in this scenario? In the house? With the horse? On the throne?

One of the few family vacations that wasn't a trip to the Jersey shore my family took when I was a kid was to Colonial Williamsburg. I remember the soft muzzles of the work horses we pet over the historically accurate fencing, the pineapples stenciled above thresholds, the name Rockefeller and its hyperboles. On the tour we must have taken of a debtor's prison — I remember the cell with the "throne" in its middle — a raised toilet with steps leading up to it, presented, I seem to recall, with a kind of smirk — center stage, defecation theater. The throne was a disproportionately considered, terrifying feature to an otherwise barren room. Was anyone ever released from debtor's prison? Into the so-called free (for the male landowners of particular origins) world again? I imagined living in that cell trying to negotiate its dead end.

THIEVING TIME

When I cannot write I panic. I care for. I preen. I loaf (not enough). I fail. I pet. I pitch my body into the fray. I receive. I fret. I fuck around (not enough). I protest. Laugh with. Eat with. Drink with. Wonder with. Gossip with. Imagine with. Get lost with. Become with. Cannot write can mean the maelstrom of the life I have found myself in — its loves and to-do's and hunger and chores and indignities--keeps me from the page as much as it can mean I — in the havoc of my skull, its despots of impulse and self-loathing and nordic malaise in their competing coups — can't quite arrive. When I do write I co-exist with the thought that I am stealing time, that there are myriad forces in the world that insist on obsequious purchase and I am violating the contract. I stray. And wander to the edge, terrified. In the struggle to arrive I am slow to discover I am already there. It is never a victorious rebellion as much as a revelation of its counterpoint in which I am complicit. Going there — to that opening up of uncertainty, that uncontrollable clearing — keeps me going.

Over the course of working on this piece in which I'm thinking about debt and poetry I:

- saw my inbox reach 13,376 unread emails
- read an essay that asked “do you want to be a writer or a responder to emails?”
- failed to call my mother
- forgot to make a payment on a bill (2x)
- forgot to respond to a text (6x)
- regretted something I posted on Facebook (5 x)
- cried at my desk at work (2x)
- had a dream in which a poet wearing a baseball cap with an eyeball on it was hunting me down for what he was “owed”
- saw my checking account bottom out (1x)
- got paid (2x)

IS THIS REAL REAL REAL

In this age of complicity, in which defecation theater is our unacknowledged reality show (*what we are told is a new post-truth era in which William Burroughs's man who taught his asshole to talk has taken office*), does it get good ratings? Self-questionnaire: To what extent are you a prisoner? To what extent are you a warden? Light issuing through the bars? To what extent are you starving? I remember the feeling of dread that would open up in me whenever I heard my parents worry about money. We were a bartender and a school teacher and two daughters living in a cul de sac beyond our means. People can't revolt when they have deep debt, or so goes the logic of capitalism and its attendant ~isms — i.e. The Cruel State.

O CYCLOPS

O remote father. O sick. O reinforcing proprietary pyramid. Cyclopticon. Is human history a tautology? Myopticon repressing these deeds that have been written over. *Lightning and thunder require time; the light of the stars require time; deeds, though done still require time to be seen and heard.* These power lines. These media of reaction reaction reaction ... *perhaps the first thing we need to do is pull our American heads out of the exceptionalist ass of America.* Who's there. Empire. So dad. So dead. Who's there. Genocide. Who's there. Unceded land. The voices of generations — CENTURIES — of trauma. The

vibrational resonance and vitality of all that requires acknowledgement and grief and reverence untold in the gilded narratives. O monolith of suffering. Apocalypse after apocalypse. Whose. Which. Western Civ is a serial apocalypse.

O PENDULOUS

To be hopeful in bad times is not just foolishly romantic. It is based on the fact that human history is a history not only of cruelty, but also of compassion, sacrifice, courage, kindness. What we choose to emphasize in this complex history will determine our lives. If we see only the worst, it destroys our capacity to do something. If we remember those times and places — and there are so many — where people have behaved magnificently, this gives us the energy to act, and at least the possibility of sending this spinning top of a world in a different direction.

O ROWDY

Cut to Roddy Piper discovering a box of magic sunglasses--the revelation that the rich are not-humans and capitalism a brainwashing system of oppression and control. A billboard of a white, heteronormative couple sunbathing on a beach when viewed through glasses reads MARRY & REPRODUCE. Dollar bills with their cyclops pyramid proclaim OBEY. The pro-wrestler wrestles with the illusive power of capitalism. As I once learned sign/signified (and the unintentional comedy of the macho heroic narrative) as a student, I show my comp students this film. I'm sorry, I say, and you're welcome.

Over the course of writing this I:

- went on a payday trip to the grocery store which was underwritten by cheerful delusional decision making (x1) and the subsequent thought how do we already need more food? (x5)
- gathered the receipts I remembered to save from “lunch meetings” and “dessert meetings” because if you are a writer everything is relevant (?) to tally for taxes (the year is 2017)
- met with someone to help me prepare my taxes but because I was late and she was clearly annoyed and the baby was fussing I forgot to share that tally of meeting expenses with her and when I did remember I just thought fuck it

- fantasized in a day mare about the existence of the Turin Canyon Day Spa, whose menu of services lists various forms of invisible labor with corresponding fees for service — Consolation — \$500; Worry about expenses — \$etc.
- try and fail with a group of women to form a writing group (2x) — *if we were men*, Sarah says, *it wouldn't be this difficult*
- struggle in the spring semester 2017 in a creative writing workshop I am teaching with the course text I had selected months prior. An anthology of hybrid writing suddenly seemed anachronistic, and lacking in the urgency I as a teacher was feeling and sensing from the class but failing to acknowledge
- checked my account balance before paying a bill(x?)
- thought about the cul de sacs of our thinking and something Robin Wall Kimmerer said: *In Western thinking, your imagination is something that's locked up within the personal property of your skull. It's just yours, and it's sort of fantastical. But, the way the Mohawk think about it is your imagination is not in your head, your imagination is where your being merges with all the thoughts of the other beings. So the fantastical quality that comes because you're accessing the knowledge of non-human beings so that what we think of in the Western world as so deeply personal is in fact collective. The self is so much bigger than in Western confines.*

THE BOX IS THE WOMB

(the box is her womb) Among the Greek writers who feared the void, women, and poetry: *Hesiod is writing in the 7th century of Pandora who is sent down to punish men ... Hesiod calls Pandora the first of the species, a separate species from men. The myth in our English ideology comes armed with a box, but in Greek what she comes with is a pithos and pithos is the Greek word for jar. Now, the Greeks had a thought that a woman's womb was shaped like a pithos, so really what Hesiod is talking about here is Pandora being made the first woman comes with the first womb and when inevitably that womb gets opened and the opening of course is from intercourse, what flows out is all the evils of the world.*

OF WHAT THEE SING SANG SUNG

At the time of watching *The Turin Horse* I was a grad student in an institution that privileged — it will come as no surprise — a voice of white supremacist, patriarchal privilege. I was — in my own white-bodied privilege — an older grad student, married with a very young daughter, and

there because I wanted the three years of the time, health benefits, and no-tuition it afforded. There was much to refuse in the program of mastery, and in the accumulation of collective acts of refusal, we formed a disorderly shadow school, of students and faculty — supportive, curious, generative, expansive, messy, emergent. At the time I felt vexed by two creative impulses — to nurture vs. to destroy. I tell a therapist during this time that my 2nd chakra feels enlarged, both distended in my voracity and engorged with unspeakability. The womb site, the wound site, o belly, o void. As the embodiment of this ambivalence I imagine the high priestess, *the second trump*, standing with a spoon in one hand and a knife in the other, belly swollen, pregnant with ambient, magical nothing.

In the process of writing this, after a failed attempt — the crowded room, the long line of readers, my daughter on the verge of tears, an unexpected anxiety dwarfing me — at reading it in public I

- stop. I stopped writing this. I stepped away, and lost a feel for its gravity. I got tired of myself. Maybe it was the idea of cataloguing personal debt in the first year of the last American president, its myopia, that turned me off. Or more simply: I was afraid of what I would find out.
- *STOP // the universe is everywhere and its childlike patience protects us*
STOP
- realize in the distance from it — the task of delineating what is more or less than what others have — is part of the defecation theater, because, as Simone Weil would say, it is personal.
- the lie in each bullet
- the I in each lie
- eat shit
- *THE SOLAR BOAT IN THE MIDDLE OF ITS COURSE GETS*
SIDETRACKED IN ORCHARDS IN A PORCELAIN SKY
STOP FULLSTOP STOP STOP

A VOICE OUT-SIDE-VOICE-SIDE

I think of *The Turin Horse* and I say debt is masculinist cinema, too — an artifice, a coercive seductive magic dependent on our complicity. A voice outside says debt is the spell of the state, while the spell says this is all there is, that debt makes us good citizens, that we are exceptional superior beings

entitled to the dream of hoarding wealth and insisting on our separateness. The austerity and repression in this spell squelches imagination

- the way Christians are born indebted to Jesus
- the way in America — the most expensive and least supportive country in which to give birth — debt is created in order to deliver a human being into this world
- the way if you are privileged enough to attend college and make it through, you will most likely “graduate” into massive debt
- debt to work, debt to marry, debt to reproduce, debt to die
- the way artistry is often relayed in institutions — couched in terms of mastery and craft as the debt owed to the masters — in which art becomes bureaucratized and given the conditions, corporate
- even the way artistic production gets usurped by a notion of brand and its insistence on personality (legibility) rather than mystery, uncertainty, contradiction, messiness, mutation — the very crux — suggests a debt to the market.

I think of Turin and I think of the mystery of Elena Ferrante, or the writer publishing under that pen name, living in the same city where Nietzsche met his end. Turin, the city where her Neapolitan novels end and where in *The Days of Abandonment* Olga, betrayed, free falls in psychic despair, *as she roams the empty streets of Turin, a city she has never learned to love*. Betrayal is a form of abandonment: *When we discover that someone we trusted can be trusted no longer, it forces us to reexamine the universe, to question the whole instinct and concept of trust. For a while we are thrust back onto some bleak, jutting ledge, in a dark pierced by sheets of fire, swept by sheets of rain, in a world before kinship, or naming, or tenderness exist; we are brought close to formlessness*. Cruelty is a form of abandonment: *How shall we comfort ourselves, the murderers of all murderers? What was holiest and mightiest of all that the world has yet owned has bled to death under our knives: who will wipe this blood of us?* The personal as a means of forgetting our obligation to each other.

GIFTS OF THE WITCH

I think of Elena Ferrante opting out of the market’s insistence on the personal — personality-based publicity and readings and panel appearances and social media and author photos. Refusing the formula. *Writers should be concerned only with narrating as well as possible what they know and feel, the beautiful*

and the ugly and the contradictory, without obeying any prescription, not even a prescription that comes from the side you're on. Writing requires maximum ambition, maximum audacity, and programmatic disobedience.

In her attention of energy to the emotional risks of writing Ferrante returns a magical sentence to the book: *I believe that books, once they are written, have no need of their authors. If they have something to say, they will sooner or later find readers; if not, they won't ... I very much love those mysterious volumes, both ancient and modern, that have no definite author but have had and continue to have an intense life of their own. They seem to me a sort of nighttime miracle, like the gifts of Befana, which I waited for as a child ...*

NO SOUVENIR

I return to Colonial Williamsburg™ and its euphemistic quasi-theme-park portrayal of America's corrupt origins, its adjacent golf course, and the absence in my memory of any formal reckoning regarding slavery or the genocide intrinsic to colonialism — we should have left grieving — and with that problematic absence (whether in my memory or the place) — its explicit violence. Its violence in relation to the strange feeling of stasis throughout the trademarked place, not past or present but trapped as if captive in time-space nostalgia gelatin.

WHAT HURTS

The suffocation of imagination — *The body is imaginary, not because it lacks reality, but because it is the most real reality, an image that is ever changing and doomed to disappear* — is the suffocation of bodies. The human bodies, dandelion bodies, the crow bodies, rose bodies, belladonna bodies, elephant bodies, mare bodies, bitch bodies, hermaphroditic bodies, male bodies, water bodies, celestial bodies.

A collective conception of debt might better hear what's real, what's felt, what hurts, and that is the debt the cruel state owes the peoples and beings subjected to/objectified by its insane violence. Released from conceptions of the personal or property, it could occasion caring and connection to an imagination beyond us. To think about suffering in these terms too: rather than agree on the abstraction of debt via black magic like money and credit, take self-care and creature-care and collective-care seriously. Not because it's owed but because

“caring for yourself
=
caring for another entity
=
the beginnings of ecological care”

My void baby cries and cries. *Put the conflict into it and stop having answers.* O (widening womb) O (my capacity for evil) O (my capacity for love) O (the pendulum’s opal orb) O (*dark core*) O (a crowning) O (seat of power) O (throne mouth) O (fontanelle the crystals shimmer out of) O (*allowing inner space to sparkle madly*) O (ourosboros of death and compost and hot transformation) O (gigantic maggot mouth!) O (fire’s first hole in the celluloid) O (incinerator) O (embryonic shapelessness) O (a large gathering of cells collaborating) O (confection around the infection) O (bardo) O (*snuggle yourself in between the worlds, the world of ordinary people and that of witches*) O (I have no idea how to write poetry anymore and I am writing it) O (*the creatrix, the matrix*) O (soft amplitude of tenderness)

Writing is a paradoxical perversion — the language that takes me closest to my wildness is that which has the power to cut me off from it, to foreclose my recognition of the wildness, the sentience, the languages in everything. A certain hubris for so long has put certain humans and certain (uses of) language(s) at the top of a cruel hierarchy; I’m so ready for the tender destruction of that by putting my attention to an elsewhere unknown and uncertain.

NOTES

For Marthe Reed, poetry angel, mother, bird in flight. For MC Hyland, editor/poet/punk peripatetic, and Ashleigh Lambert, whose Double Cross Press chapbook *The Debt or the Crisis* first inspired this writing. *In italics, the voices coursing thru:* Bela Tarr in an interview with the Walker Art Center, Salman Rushdie reading Italo Calvino, Nietzsche, Elizabeth A. Povinelli in “What Do White People Want?: Interest, Desire, and Affect in Late Liberalism,” Howard Zinn, Sarah Fox, Robin Wall Kimmerer in an interview with Scott Parker in *The Believer*, Dr. Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones in an interview with Dr. Amanda Foreman, Etel Adnan in *The Arab Apocalypse*,

the cover leaf of Elena Ferrante's *Days of Abandonment*, Adrienne Rich in "Women and Honor: Some Notes on Lying," Elena Ferrante in an interview in *The Paris Review*, then in a letter to her publisher, Octavio Paz, Samara Golden, Virginia Woolf as quoted by Adrienne Rich, Björk in correspondence with Timothy Morton, Hans Peter Duerr in *Dreamtime: Concerning the Boundary Between Wilderness & Civilization*, and Adrienne Rich (ibid)

Workman/Brandt Household

¹ Do you want to read a pony? Polka-dotted across the plain? She begins with dino pants a springtime fart a halo & pixel mane. We can call her Dew Drop the Mic All Night Flower Train Snow Umbrella Iffy Doom Loofah and watch her take off starward from our glass igloos in a city



² of friends that belongs to no country. We want to read a pony a radical pinto editrix she flies and trails this love polemic like the loud purr planes at the shore: Long live pockets! Praise bicycles and buttons that help! Praise polar bears and pangolins and the red pandas asleep aloft

Set with Untitled Serif by Kris Sowersby, Klim Type Foundry.

³ in green! Like a dreaming cat or unicorn, hovercraft or splash in the opal dolphin garden and sing songs of kombucha to the bees! Hi mom! Reach out with your feelings! Blessed be a fox like a fox for fox sake! Be a tricks like the spiral tricks in the Big Bang hat of mystery! Praise quad-



⁴ rupeds and octopods and coconuts and oneironauts and the interwebs of breath and death and trees. Long live monarch butterflies (the only monarchs) and the pink moons of their home planets! Viva matriarchy! Agua viva! Viva our mutual being in this moment!

Sent to you with love from Elisabeth, Beatrix, Colette, and Erik.

Mark Young

Poetry at the End of the World

How does what we've done, what we continue to do, to our only planet affect what you write?

I am conscious of it, am aware of the stupidity that manunkind continues to demonstrate, believe that the hard swing to the hard right will accelerate the disintegration of things, do not believe we will ever stop climate change because the mercenary aspects of the causes will always be paramount. Those threads weave through all of my poetry. The specific strands — *Series Magritte*, the *A line from* & *geographies* tropes — as well as my general poetry. Not always there, but often enough to make it a significant theme in my work. Have selected four poems from various places because I feel that better exemplifies my concerns than explanation.

When you think about the future, and potential readers, or the lack of same, how does that affect what you write?

I have never considered readers — past, present, or potential — when I write. *Scribo ergo sum.*

Under these circumstances, do you ever wonder why you write?

Always. Never.

How does all this makes you feel?

Proud of my writing. Angry that a supposedly civilized nation can elect a megalomaniac as President. Worried because I live in the Tropics where it's supposed to be hot but in the current climes, it's far hotter as you move closer to Antarctica. Frightened by the current realpolitik all across the world. Thinking of returning to New Zealand where it appears concern for the health of the planet still prevails.

What keeps you going?

My vital organs. They still work.

The Life of Insects

Not some-
thing she really
cared about;
but global warming
was drying
up all the
hotpools, & this
was the only
one left, the last
chance to
immerse herself
in a lifestyle
she had always
been frightened of
but wanted to
try before
it died.

A Line from Loretta Lynn

Acid rain accelerates the
decay of some of my
favorite foods — pizza, ice
cream, even potato salad.

That's why I no longer eat
outside; but I do remember
what it was like, why I
started out to write a song

about the dead leaves, the de-
stroyed landscape that I saw
out there. Prévert's was a
sorrowful song, but also full

of color. My song is shades
of gray, & the only thing that
drifts by the window is coal
dust, heading for the lungs.

Tectonic Drift

Because of its links
to wildlife declines
the Code of the Warrior
produces high quality
Bluegrass. I've been
moving across town
for the past few days,

installing high-tech
filters to recycle most
of it into chemicals that
elsewhere have been
banned for decades, &
making natural history
documentaries as I go

that are designed for
machines first &
humans second. I'll
live with the guilt
for years & years. It's
my equivalent of
the mushroom cloud.

geographies. MESA, AZ

There are no originals,
just tremulous foliage & an
indefinite suspension from
practicing law. Our universe
is one of many, as purely
objective journalists keep
pointing out, slyly inserted into
an angry dialog between
the fruits of war & the stereo-
typical gender portrayals of
most third-person pronouns.

Coda: Franco Beltrametti

Per James Koller

i miei demoni
me li vedo sbucare
anche da dove
li pensavo esorcizzati
— dicono di trovarsi bene
— siamo diventando amici

14 / 12 / 70

For James Koller

My demons
I see coming out
even from where
I thought them exorcised
— they say they're feeling well
— we're getting to be friends

(Translated from Italian by the author)

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First, a special shoutout to the angels of this project. Eileen R Tabios and William Allegrezza, Eileen for offering *Galatea Resurrects* as a platform, which helped encourage the project's development, and Bill for taking about 15 seconds to say his press Moria Books would be happy to publish the anthology once we (and Eileen) realized that we'd outgrown *GR's* e-zine format. All those great people, too many to remember but all angels, who not only contributed to this anthology, but who went out of their way to introduce us to and connect us with so many other great people, many of whom in their turn both contributed work of their own and angelically introduced us to even more great people. All the wonderful publishers who chose to forego charging us anything for permissions. All the wonderful publishers who had no other option but to charge us, but who charged us as little as they could. Dale Pendell's widow Laura for sending us Dale's work so soon after his death. And Paul Dresman, for financial support. Ten thousand prostrations.

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