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ALLIS



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ALLIS

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THE LETTER

She said that she did not understand why, each time certain women got together, in films for example, time seemed to stop around them after having frozen them or changed them into pillars of salt, loaded (with) symbols

—NICOLE BROSSARD, *Picture Theory*

in the movies
the woman listens while a boy and a girl turn out the lights
pursue their conversation in the dark

THE LETTER

these are choices
 the woman waits
 the woman holds the snake against her
 the woman is watched
 the woman hides behind the pillar
 these are constants: each age, each sheet
 defined by lines of light and blockages
 plunge into a memory which overflows

square pulled to rectangle to new square

a shared memory with the same givens
 a circuit of past which includes a shining point
 an "aspect"
 attracted into his sheet
 shattered and unhinged
 rolled up in her own sheets
 a sheet of a different age
 another: aspects of the transformation of a single continuum

an ambiguous moment
—love and the decline of this love
crossing these sheets again and again
crossing many others
all kinds of regions stirred up
a man jumping from one to the other
emerge one after another

a father who says we do not make choices
a boyfriend who writes a book about choices
to not know how to choose
to become unable to choose
to choose once but no longer choose
to choose choice
is it grace or chance?

to return to ones country
like ancestors, full of exploits and lies
the little prostitute, an unemployed man
the gallant, the fetishists
the organization of work, the making of gold ingots
a hunter baptized a lion, the American

fountains of luminous water
fires, zig-zags forming numbers
repeat of the conscious concept
embracing, striking, intertwining, bumping
restoring images to the bodies from which they have been taken
an orgy of sensory representations
a body leant against a wall
falls to a sitting position on the ground
this sliding of postures

the paralyzed girl
 the woman fixed in erotic quest
 the maid caught in a mystical levitation
 there is an indiscernibility of the two women
 not displacement in space but a sinking into time
 the sun-moon movement
 as in the woman's open mouth
 a man walks across sand
 an animalized, naturalized father
 a blindfolded son urinating on his painter's canvas

STOP LOOK AND LISTEN

A Diagram of The Powers of A Page Of Japanese Poets

artificial pose of terror:
 the world has become memory
 brain itself has become consciousness
 screen itself is the cerebral membrane
 image is no longer

You do not see that before rivers and harbors, before rivers and
 harbors, you do not see that before rivers and harbors, before rivers
 and harbors, you do not see, you do not see that you do not see, before
 rivers and harbors, what you before rivers and harbors, you do not
 that you are before rivers and harbors.

I cannot have rivers and harbors, I have rivers and I do not
 have rivers and harbors, I cannot have rivers and harbors, I cannot
 have rivers and harbors.

The passage among the eyes between is made up of only three small
 blocks of phrases, repeated over and over with slight variations, with their
 meaning an abstract design. They are placed in a way, and the way they keep
 the design flexible and loose, even with its narrow boundaries. Words of no less
 phrases are then repeated, the passage makes an abstract design before it
 makes sense and sense. Whether the lines are hidden from or revealed,
 whether the page is held right side up or upside down, the design is permanent.
 Anyone looking at such writing processes should first looking into

STOP LOOK AND LISTEN

A Digression On The Picture Of A Page Of Gertrude Stein

Most of us pay little attention to what a page of writing looks like, only to what it says and perhaps how it sounds. Yet many Stein texts have a distinctive look, quite different from that of standard written English. Some passages print themselves into the mind as pictures long before the mind even begins to make sense of the words. Their look is not the result of typography, for Stein composes by a limited vocabulary and a discipline of phrasing, not by offsetting, underlining, spacing, block letters. She punctuates only with periods and commas and uses no quotation marks and few capitals. Without reading the words, look at the design of this passage from "An Elucidation":

You do see that halve rivers and harbors, halve rivers and harbors, you do see that halve rivers and harbors makes halve rivers and harbors and you do see, you do see that you that you do not have rivers and harbors when you halve rivers and harbors, you do see that you can halve rivers and harbors.

I refuse have rivers and harbors I have refused. I do refuse have rivers and harbors. I receive halve rivers and harbors, I accept halve rivers and harbors.

The passage arrests the eye because it is made up of only three small blocks of phrases, repeated over and over with slight variations until they become an abstract design. They are joined in varying, irregular ways that keep the design flexible and loose even with its narrow vocabulary. Made of so few phrases so often repeated, the passage makes an insistent visual design before it makes sentences and sense. Whether the lines are handwritten or printed, whether the page is held right side up or upside down, the design is a presence.

Anyone looking at such writing perceives abstract forms moving into

without anyone having omnipotence or the last word
characters keep their mouths closed
the young girl's name underneath the married women's
moving towards an end, to infinity
the cab, the journey, the appearance of the ghost-lorry
to restore a body to voices
still there are only places of a story left

patterns in a space but also tries to read the words for meaning. Sometimes the two conflict. From the repetitions and permutations the eye gains a sense of design while the mind reading a phrase over and over loses the sense of meaning. Constructions rearrange themselves constantly. Eye conflicts with mind, looking with reading, to create the textual instability that is also the magnificence of Stein pages. The eye ends up asking what it is seeing, how it is seeing, what reading is, what knowing is.

To Stein, words can change at any time. She uses them as wholes but also as parts that make new wholes and so new elements of composition. In the portrait "Edith Sitwell And Her Brothers The Sitwells And Also To Osbert Sitwell And To S. Sitwell" of the summer of 1926 appears this passage:

Tableland.

Tableland and land and knees, tableland and knees and
tableland and land and knees.

Tableland and land.

Tableland and knees.

Tableland and land and knees.

"Tableland" stands prominently at the indent of new lines, capitalized as a proper name that takes us to Western Australia, until it returns in lower case as a common noun. A compound, "tableland" breaks not only into "table" and "land" but also into "able" and "and." Stein may be writing on a table, on a tray (fr. plateau), on her knees, in or of the country (land) or the pleasant land of counterpane. In the portrait "Sitwell Edith Sitwell" of the year before appears her old friend, Barnard College Professor Mabel Weeks ("Weeks and weeks able and weeks"), whom Stein invited on an afternoon to meet Edith Sitwell and to "sit around her" at tea (a tea table?). From the earlier to the later portrait the boundaries of words shift as in mirrors and echoes, "table," "Mabel," "able" and even the French article "le"; "be," "me," "see," "knees": "Table table to be table to see table to be to see to me, table to me table to be table to table to table to it." We read these sequences by look and sound more than by reference and grammar.

Such letters, words and lines appear less as text for the mind than as design for eye and ear, tight or loose, fast or slow, jagged or smooth, but always rhythmic. I do not move down the page left to right and line by line to the

bottom of sense. Rather I receive words as openwork tracery, interlacing design in the white margined frame of a rectangle or square.

Stein passages often make visual impressions with a descriptive power of their own. I think of the many blocked paragraphs of *An Acquaintance With Description*, begun, while Stein was in England for her first lecture, in sections in a single pocket notebook along with sections for the portrait of the Sitwells. The notations for both not only study description but become themselves descriptive visual images. The abstract, decorative designs of words patterned by look, sound and sense recall through-composed music, cross-hatching patterns, the designs of William Morris.

Turn to a page whose visual appearance also describes its verbal design.

An acquaintance with description.

If it is to have the leaving as an obligation to be there and come to to the rest that if there is if there is the next to have it leave to to be in that way four three one leaving it around as it might indeed have it that they not as if it were in opposite around let it might and might be considered as two three three there many there how many there how many three two one leaving it as much behind behind to mind letting letting all in theirs for that most when makes what is why it was as much as much for the having having to be interrupted shall it shall it have the name when there is that in two made which is much the more than theirs for that now leaving it in this to be sure let it coming coming to have it given given in place of theirs to have it can it be and fairly well at most in that which which when where and light and come to last last and might and might it be in this and change get it is it not what in their might it come to leave it in this place it could it be that it is when it when it is in theirs to place and to say need it and it was not only why it came to left and calling this is in the way of any other one which is not only why they left they did not have it to fit in when it was that the two were two were to make four places and a little below to say so if it must be just their in that complete why is it only when it is not only if it is in that increase. There can be no difference between a circus a mason and a mechanic between a horse and cooking a blacksmith and his brother and his places altogether and an electrician. In every other way I am disappointed. Yes when it is not only this and having been not prepared to be so much and wonder they had it and they changed it and they made it be very nearly might it be what is it when it is not after all very little of a having not seen it when it came.

There are no sentence configurations to recognize. The page seems printed in a foreign language whose grammar I do not know. Periods mark the ends of sentences but not their shapes, and sentences have no syntactic centers. The eye looks at the white that lights the black, the black on white, penscape, printscape, arrangement upon visual arrangement. Shortly after *An Acquaintance With Description* was published in the spring of 1929, the reviewer for the *Times Literary Supplement* observed that Stein's "vain repetitions" plunge readers into a "trance-like condition. Words become dissociated from meaning." Precisely. She wants us to see words for more than meaning. Such passages almost seem printed in Chinese or Arabic, whose beauty of design I can enjoy without deciphering meaning.

The white page is evenly printed over in short, sharp lines of jagged inked letters, unshaded, unambiguous and abstract. It begins with tiny neutral dotted verticals, "If it is," whose sharp "i" I both see and hear, and continues unbroken, without even a black dot on the horizontal for a comma or a pause. White fills the spaces between the words, equal enough in length and weight, repeated again and again till they make a design that does not ask for sense. The words are colorless and neutral and display no reference—there, come, leave, around, opposite, having, shall, coming, which, when, place. These are not things that speak out but scribbles in a pattern. No words stand out bright until far down there appear a few people and things in nouns, "no difference between a circus a mason and a mechanic between a horse and cooking a blacksmith and his brother and his places altogether and an electrician. In every other way I am disappointed." A momentary local scene, a tableau on a page of scribble-scrabble.

A different visual image appears as a paragraph on the next page of *An Acquaintance With Description*. The eye receives it if the mind does not in incomprehension refuse it.

Again Albert again write to Albert again basket again changed to have it again have it basket again again as again as a change again basket again basket again it is again as a change again as a basket again at again larger again as many again as a basket again have it a basket again larger again is it again it is it again a basket again as larger again a basket again get it again is it again a basket again it is.

It is is it. A basket.

Except for "it," "is" and "to," these lines are made of simple a and b words, including the name Albert on the capital legs of A. All the words contain one or more a's. "Basket" adds b and half-rhymes with "it," "It is it. A basket/ Basket it is it." Most are two-syllable words, almost equal in length, repeated again and again, Albert and basket, a stressed and an unstressed syllable in a rhythm that pushes for rhyme, Albert, basket, a, b.

The power of the patterns comes from Stein's language, whose repetitions and permutations decontextuate the words. The eye explores the verbal topography of pages that become maps of new landscapes of words. Here, in a section of the portrait of the Sitwells, rivers are read as roads in the sequence of alliterating r- and s-words in a typographical image that visually describes her meaning:

For very as along as long as rivers rivers seen as water rivers
road seen as every road, read seen as seen seen as roads roofs read seen,
rivers seen as water water seen as roads seen and read seen as roads
seen.

The scene seen and the text read become one in the composition of sight, sound and sense that Stein explored throughout the years. She knew that writing's way of enlightening us is not only by words it puts into an empty basket of the mind but by visual imprint, abstract and self-contained. She thought like a painter about the forms in which words etch themselves into the eye. For her, the study of description became also an exercise in placing words to make the descriptive visual. Look at how she puts the differences—troughs—between the ridges:

... if it can be that there is no difference between ridges and between
ridges. There is a difference between ridges and between ridges and
between there is a difference between there there and ridges between
there there there and ridges there is a difference between there there
there there and ridges ...

Topography becomes typography, both abstracted designs of what is seen, lifted from time, events, history. Her exercises often rely on the stock of descriptive

writing in seasonal progression of fruits and flowers—berries, peaches, melons, pears, apples, grapes, and pansies, pinks, roses, hollyhocks. They become color compositions and still lifes, which also read as visual compositions on the pages. Timeless except in their light reflection of seasons and weather to mark their variety more than their passing, the passages are welcomed by Stein in the process of making the acquaintance of description as a formal friendship:

An acquaintance with description above all an acquaintance
with description above an acquaintance with description above all an
acquaintance with description above an acquaintance with description
and above and above an acquaintance with description and an
acquaintance with description. Please and an acquaintance with
description please an acquaintance with description please an
acquaintance with description.

She used a limited vocabulary of neutral words with minimal reference to explore composing. That economy of words shifts attention away from the information—there is almost no information—to the design we see and hear before us. Here is one poem from "Stanzas In Meditation" that looks at what she is composing:

Next to next to and does.
Does it join.
Does it mean does it join.
Does it mean does it mean does it join.
If after all they knew
That I say so.

The events and tasks of daily life gave her the words for what she did or saw or said or heard. But her writer's mind made of these words chips for composition. For Stein as a writer, the daily life, the here and now, was not only about living but about writing: it was a source of words. She relied on the immediate, not on the remembered.

Sometimes the immediate is the manuscript notebook. Look at how a

tiny 3 1/2" x 2 1/4" notepad—its height half the width of *Big Allis*—shapes word ideas for a section of "An Elucidation":

Small xamples

are preferable

They are preferred.

An instance.

Tremble for

small xamples

Not that we need to know how these lines originated though knowing adds pleasure to reading.

All these visual matters were in my mind when I began work for *A Stein Reader*. Expectations about how words should behave when joining as writing hinder reading Stein. She avoids associative language—automatic phrasing that has lost to unthinking habit the power to impress the mind. She does not write to standards of correctness; she does not fit herself to genre—novel, story, lyrical poem, even play. Every piece baffles us by starting from scratch, discovering a writing problem where we did not know there was one until we see it in the words, and proceeding to solve it. Built into every text is an intention that only reading without expectation can discover. Often that intention opens in the picture of the words on the page. It became a challenge to discover that picture in text and manuscript and to make it transparent in print in the *Reader*. For Stein requires not only accurate texts, without the innumerable errors that beset her books as they do Joyce's, but print that invites eye, ear and mind to move with the black and white. Print can render or obliterate verbal designs.

Sometimes we stumble on discoveries by accident in patterns that recur across different works or years. In most of the early portraits done between 1909 and 1912, a phrase returns over and over that becomes the key of portraiture—"being one being living." Here are a few to see and hear—where they come from does not even matter: "all his living was beginning"; "He was knowing every day that we was being living on that day"; "Trembling was all living, living was all loving then"; "The older one went on living, the younger one went on living"; "This one would be one all his living having something coming out of him"; "this one telling about being one being living"; "She was one who had in

her family living." And finally one in the key of existing, not of living, "This one was one not expressing light being existing. This one was one loving women. This one was one expressing thinking." The phrase "one being living" makes the portraits present, visible, and audible. Slow reading of word, sound and image discovers in the pleasure of its return the many hows of living.

Each of these portraits bears as title the name of its subject. In a volume of typescripts, however, she assembled twenty of them, plainly for a small book, under the title *People*. The table of contents numbers them from 1 to 20 without the names though Stein entered them lightly by hand at a slant on the side, presumably for her own record. Here then are twenty numbered, abstract portraits, assembled as Stein wanted them read—personalities, even personality types, realized in words, without names or pictures as tags to distract from their composition. There is a magnificent visual starkness about this proposed collection.

Among the Stein papers is a tiny advertising booklet, *Burma Shave Jingle Book # 5*, that she must have picked up on the American tour in 1935. Burma Shave placed along highways about one foot above ground wooden boards with jingles painted on them in sections, "one little piece on one board and then further on two more words and then further on two more words a whole lively poem," as she says in *Everybody's Autobiography*. The boards were stuck in the ground at distances that allowed drivers as they moved to read them continuously.

Every shaver

Now can snore

Six more minutes

than before

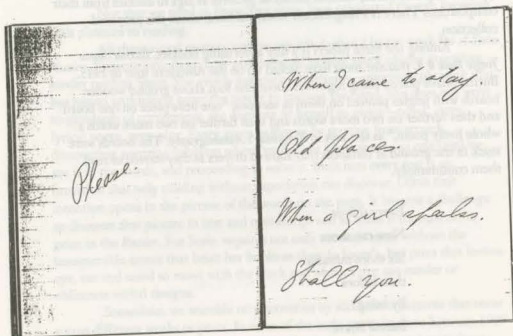
By using

Burma Shave

These signs and the little booklets were still familiar in the fifties, a visual delight in the landscape of words moving.

With so much visual composition, the books for whose publication Stein herself paid should show how she saw her texts. But they do not. Look at *Geography and Plays* (geography—space, place, with echoes of plays). The book was printed in Boston, by the reputable Four Seas Company, who worked from

a Toklas typescript and saved money by skimping with paper, relying on small print and no-waste spacing. Published by Stein, the book had her approval though we do not know whether she asked for changes in design. The long and erotic "Pink Melon Joy" of 1914, first published in this book, poses an interesting visual problem. What look like subheads are centered throughout in print and in the typescript. Stein composed it in her manuscript notebook, however, with end-stopped headings written diagonally across the left-hand page and the text following each heading on the horizontal lines of as many of the right-hand pages as she needed. This arrangement, which she used for flexible verbal and visual organization in several pieces of that year, creates its own visual balance.



Toklas was not asked to reproduce this design in the typescript. Stein may not even have known to what extent her process of writing anticipated what concrete poetry later produced. She did not play with typography and lettering but with phrasing that gave her ideas for visual and spatial order. To reproduce her design would have been costly. *A Stein Reader* relies on the centered headings with somewhat more space than *Geography and Plays* though with

regrets that no further space was available for air and pause after each heading. The visual design of "Pink Melon Joy" and its headings is not only descriptive; it may suggest headings followed by illustrations or left-right dialogue patterns at speakers' different slants, "What a system in voices, what a system in voices."

From 1913 on, Stein began to play with what a play was. She also may not have known how to format plays. So when she wrote plays, none of them looked like a proper play. Titles are often odd, subtitles inconsistent. Rarely is there a list of characters or a summary of the scene at the start. Stage directions, characters and lines are not properly identified or separated. What does this title mean: *Reread Another! A Play! To Be Played Indoors Or Out! I Wish To Be A School!* There seems to be a school, presumably with reading lessons. In children's minds all things are alive, and this school does not teach that personification is the name for things that are alive. Here mountains, dirigibles, historical figures long dead, reunions, and words themselves come to life. Their very lines become characters until we can no longer distinguish between a character and the character's lines, which is exactly what Stein was about. The indentations, alignments and realignments are confusing only if we refuse to see that we are in the doorway of the school, on the way in or out, the lessons in the children's minds, not in a rigid teacher's lesson plan. And yet how orderly the words in this disordered format about a reunion, an occasion for counting by numbers and for remembering names:

Scene xviii

Everytime I mention a number I am lightened. And a great many numbers are nodded.

First reunion.	A message to Anne.
Second reunion.	A message to Emma.
Third reunion.	A message to Mary.
Fourth reunion.	A message to please.

Please enlighten me about how dark the room is at midnight. In these days it is not very dark. In these nights it is not very dark.

Stein did not think of her scripts as fitting standard blocking patterns and did not normalize them. Some rely on intricate scaffoldings of designs that become transparent with familiarity. Others merge and meld elements that do not separate easily.

Plays return me to the descriptive visual power of texts. A play is people doing things and saying things. What they do is told in stage directions and words to the director. We call it narrative. What they say and some of what they do is in lines of characters. We call it talk or dialogue. How they say or do it and where they are is in scene and stage directions—description. When Stein wrote her *Doctor Faustus Lights The Lights*, she did not separate these things. She left them blended together as they take place in life, in the mind, on stage. The play reads like narrative, dialogue, description—never one thing but always several, constantly shifting. In print, we retained the merging and separating forms that make this play.

The ballet rushes in and out.

Marguerite Ida and Helena Annabel lifts the viper and says
 Lights are all right but the viper is my might.
 Pooh says Mephisto, I despise a viper, the viper tries but the viper
 lies. Me they cannot touch no not any such, a viper, ha ha a viper, a
 viper, ha ha, no the lights the lights the candle lights, I know a light
 when I see a light, I work I work all day and all night, I am the devil
 and day and night, I never sleep by any light by any dark by any
 might, I never sleep not by day not by night, you cannot fool me by
 candle light, where is the real electric light woman answer me.

The little boy and girl creep closer, they sing.

Mr. Viper, dear Mr. Viper, he is a boy I am a girl she is a girl I am a
 boy we do not want to annoy

I began with a digression on the visual design of Stein texts. It was not a digression at all. Reading begins when the eye receives the words as picture, sound and sign. The central word of *An Acquaintance With Description* is also the smallest, most transparent, most abstract word, it.

To describe it as at all through. Once more. To describe it as not as dew because it is in the trees. To describe it as it is new not because it has come to be for them if it lasts. At last to come to place it where it was not by that time in that way. And what is what is the name.

It is what we see, what we hear, what we describe, what we paint, what we write. The world. Anything. Everything. *An Acquaintance With Description* is about how to write it, not about what it is.

... what is a discovery, a discovery is the exact space
 that is covered by the moving example.

This piece takes off from a chapter on Stein's work of 1926 in my forthcoming book, *The Language That Rises: The Voice of Gertrude Stein 1923-1932*, and from the publication in October 1993 of *A Stein Reader*. I thank Bill Rice, who helped prepare the *Reader*, gave this piece its title, and ruminated with me until what we saw became what is here in print.

* To retain the integrity of Stein's words on the page, I have avoided foreign matter like superscripts and parentheses. Attached to my text, this note identifies all indented quotations by their opening phrases in order of occurrence. Pieces included in *A Stein Reader* are referred to that volume; others to the most accessible book. "You do see that halve rivers and harbors....," *Reader*, 430; "Tableland....," *Painted Lace*, (Yale University Press, 1955), 295; "An acquaintance with description....," *Reader*, 519; "Again Albert again write to Albert....," *Reader*, 520; "For very as along as long as rivers....," *Painted Lace*, 294; "if it can be that there is no difference....," *Reader*, 526; "An acquaintance with description above....," *Reader*, 522; "Next to next to and does," *Yale Gertrude Stein*, Part V, Stanza Lx, 452; "Small xamples....," *Reader*, 434; "Please./ When I came....," *Reader*, 291-92; "Scene xviii," *Reader*, 353; "The ballet rushes in....," *Reader*, 616; "To describe it as all through....," *Reader*, 505; "what is a discovery....," "G. M. P.," *Matisse, Picasso and Gertrude Stein With Two Shorter Stories*, (Plain Edition, Paris, 1933; rpr. Something Else Press, Barton, Berlin, Millerton, 1972), 295.

THE STATE OF THINGS CALLED RECENT¹

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had to write, sixty years later:

In the world, which has thus been formed, the key to stoicism is *fate*. The general character of the lines, the position of curves in the neighbourhood, in a world where everyone is in a state of becoming. Those on the pendulum—though expressed in obscure and mystical language. One grasshopper jumped on another grasshopper's back. The value of nerve (verve). The plurality of worlds.

Angle—the three orders of preference. And Reversion ever dragging Evolution in the mud. Parabola and hyperbole—the 5 reasons for drinking: Love of outdoor life; A mechanical bent; Joy in work; Opportunity for growth and service; Ideal home life; Wholesome moral surroundings.

There are certain birds which show a preference for the society. Both these fundamental lines contain several errors of allocations. Device for eliciting these numbers, Peacocks are peacocks everywhere. Among others, in his native place. The spirit of art lifts the artisan from the plane of an animal labouring. "Moral Sunshine."

The
Mission
of Art

Doctrine
of Limits

New
Attempts
at
Synthesis

THE STATE OF THINGS CALLED SCIENT

- | | | |
|----|---------------------------|---------|
| b. | Mental | The |
| c. | Settled | Meaning |
| | Roving | of it |
| d. | Indoor | All |
| | Outdoor | |
| e. | Small Scope | |
| | Large Scope | |
| f. | Adaptable | |
| | Self-Centered | |
| g. | Deliberate | |
| | Impulsive | |
| h. | Music Sense | |
| i. | Concentration | |
| | Diffusion | |
| j. | Rapid Mental Coordination | |
| | Slow Mental Coordination | |

An Artificial Memory (Author of The City)

- 32- If you could attend a world's fair what would you especially want to see?
- 39- What books have you read that you were not required to read?

"The life so short, the craft so long to learn."²

1. Kimberly Rosenfield & Robert Fitterman

2. Twenty-fifth Annual Report, 1910, p. 411

MARTINE BELLEN

An Artificial Murasaki Shikibu nikki (author of *Tale of Genji*) and Commentary

Watching water birds on the lake increase in number. taking note of
flowers. the way clouds travel season to season. the moon. frost. I am
doing little more than registering time. How will it all turn out? The
thought of my continual loneliness is unbearable. I tried retelling the Tale
but it did not seem the same as before and I was disappointed.

Things that sadden me: the still evening through a door jamb. callow
youth. jackets embroidered with hem-stitching and inlaid. absurd. bowing
to no matter whom. kitchen staff, hairdressers, maids, some I've never
seen, women in charge of keys. so many labors. Departments. To want.
formalized existence

As I climb my tree to eye your arrival now that you are back the house is
alive. Just look at all the people coming and going! When you are gone
there is vacancy,

Monks, morning-glories
lone nun
cling to rain

Someone wrote:

My melancholy shape
under one moon
caterpillar

Someone else wrote:

It is too difficult
to hunt for cherries,
have they parted in the haze?

Not much privacy can be expected. Flesh from blossoms form entrails
tossed about the threshold,

...

Language represents a way of ratifying one's existence and the ability
to express oneself in poetry becomes a necessary part of desirability.

More attention is given to the choice of paper and hand in which the note
is written than to the words, pictures themselves. That the lover is always
absent. That his writing becomes a substitute for his face, the scent of the
paper, another substitute; leaving is crucial for the drama to begin. How
he pulls up his trousers. Parts his words. Creeps across snow, tracks from
a strange bird or delicate imprints like writing, like possessing and the
author sees more than shows. The Tale at times shows us to ourselves as
hills and fields or it resists us through seductions and transforms us into
middle-age voyeurs and women who cannot support ourselves. As Genji
grows older, loses power, so do we and the Tale grows larger, than his
life; after he dies we hold on to his useless knowledge, his ancient secrets;
though the present is caused by past misdeeds, the past can only be found
in the present of which we are no longer a part, and so we read, impotent,
without illusion

walking the diamond sutra

a one-foot mirror was made for the temple and a dream ordered
about her future. Three short years after his arrival, he died. He married
her when already having several other wives. She was the youngest, the
same age as his child. It was said they were happy but in Heian Japan
happiness was not domestic. Her sex was in words though she was
silent as she slept

The gap itself is erotic, production of desire, and so is
the poetry that closes it. She can have no power until she can read.

Hidden behind screens and blinds, spied upon through chinks through which they looked out. They were not known by their own names but by those derived from their fathers' and brothers' titles. The text below the title. It can be rewritten, dismissed. We will meet again and try a different set of lines. ones that will not offend.

Her father, Tametoki, became the senior secretary in the Bureau of Ceremonial (Shikibu no Dajō). He was a minor poet, went in and out of titles, educated his daughters. She laughed at him in GENJI but loved him most dearly. He was laughable as a girl. waited. Was often looked over

gazed out into

He said if only she were a boy she might have played baseball, might have been embarrassed

Considerable pressure was placed on men to converse in Chinese as proof of their masculinity and their ability to hold official office. Women were excluded from this knowledge; thus, those who wrote cut away parts of the world over which they had no control

water dimensions

a spiritual possession in inverse proportion to the physical

Her Tale had political references

Rarely are they ever in the rush we are when about them. Her Majesty on her mettle, day and night. In comparison the menials seem dull as ditchwater. We think we know all there is but everyone has her own personality and no one is much better or worse than another. Feeling exposed, I move to the back making myself as inconspicuous as possible. The brightness is such that I can hardly recognize anything as if the room were hung with mirrors. It is a night into which I might disappear

Cow carting fern and rice
Turned this morning into smoke
Where for ages past
I have yet to see

to make a poem was to deform and purify a single Japanese sentence, to accept an engagement with syntactic patterning, and then to break it forward, resisting its pull. an oceanic waltz

the garden does not disintegrate for some time

When the Emperor breaks a rule, the world is set in turmoil. There is no hope or even desire for order: endless repetition of seasons and visits by readers when time merges with internal whims yet passion strikes in terms of occupation of the other—love is a loss, feelings thin as summer clothes. When it reaches its highest pitch even 17 syllables evaporate

This bee can't bear the meeting of stars

Though writing in Japanese was not exclusively female it was considered private—for which the word female was a metaphor. or clitoris referring to hidden, secret, that which is in you, which others do not know. too much trouble and indistinct. like want. water. men realized they were losing control over their own language. over their women. over their own. It is women now who are remembered. The Gossamer years. over their bodies

a knowledge of their
capacity to generate emotion is hidden from them

Once the woman has been seen, she becomes a character in a romance that waits to be opened. Leaves of colored paper are at times handed to her by covert envoys. She is forced to reply even when she thinks better of it and if it takes too long for her to set a poem one of the others that form her menagerie will dictate to her. The message is often obscured and couched

in vague terms on the grounds that words can betray, but the hand, the graphic, cannot.

because writing holds lovers together, because space and time pull them apart

the problem of consistency

all exchanges and correspondence were to be hand drawn. He was hardly there for any of it or they were separated by a screen too thin to see but thick enough to shield them. Desire for anything in particular will lead you astray.

She gave birth to one daughter who left in her wake 37 poems chosen for imperial anthologies and many more bound in a book of her own making

"Fate itself
Is never subject to the whims
Of one's desire,
But subject to one's fate
Desire itself can change."

PRIMUM MOBILE 10

from *Lip Service*

And real time is dead; proof terrorizes
all the way in or all the way out de-tasking
heterocosm leaps out

nothing night in the after.

Span participles gist, encore every magnified
hand me over bodyless scour-the-world diversion
we hear prescriptionable organs of comprehension:
salute versus horizon, unsubsumable upside
whipped concentrics

amortize the glance all inamorates
pinpoint daisy chain color puffs
to infinity disqualified sucking plenitude surveillance
Earning its satin scramble under
phraseless difference defeat speech numb
glory took heat reconvening orchid pages:
splendid hyperbolic innocence.

Dreambulatory script off passion impresses gesture cure
no reckoning, the dream spawns
the truth the cell is
strictly a nostalgic thing for me now,
sugar raised revved posthumous

sensible space cancels before impossible
speed under canon limelit to ample zero hush.

The little king pickets the flame
sum hypothesize — pearl perfect
superiorate us — the inostensible irradiated overnight.

Inner plus & surplus proof ovation immobilizing
disenchantment preconcerted with itself — generous
generous customize elation celebrated dark
downed front tangent intact,

& out of sight, out of mind — lap me in fold apotheosised
to a yes/ua lingua(!) anti-never, news is a book
whitened out abandon;

it's time to mutate always

is always erotic web-spinning sonar
a present-tense exhalation is within
marginal legible above nerve memory heart
site binds: I *do not* see through words

sight as dreams gratefully certain.

Sin no facts, mostly the usual crush of possibilities
adverse concentrics recede

cut rear rumor of circumference — if it slipped on my bed,
I wouldn't eat the other it — pulse just lips
convening reproaches in ever-smaller chamber.

And how very vanishingly little jet lamblike spell of flesh
disembarking soothe
infinite night's chance sentence eclipse

writes invulnerable sentences.

So abundant arrestless — who's melt? — pinwheeling on
and in breezes mammal's prime prevalent lotion!

Embrace Me — get the skin in it, honey? — flash
add up to alabaster

legato lullaby network in one volume eclipse
compose lips never algebra *without* addition,
glimmer accidents mixed in

the radiating out hyacinth stuff — pixilated
shoosh of baby matter honeysuckle corners conflate — OK,
anacoluton me some harmonious totalities:
threshold absorbs abolition, time cures inquisitors.

Urine shouldn't common: venom's liquor of love

meal-plans off the Mdngh Wish for bubble bathing monozygotes
accord laps lessons abandon recollection
expiates still wet elective facility in amatory soil.

Your emotions or your evidence — grace spools minus hole
come to please reverse unique mystique, *stir* self assert *sluces*
'getting beyond' hurdle size self stripping ebbs —
women delete the men
ballast depicts winning.

Shatter plus impresses incognito salute

not love like any like
a sauce as unless

I shall always want everything, I
got the tongue out of my throat —

immobile claims reciprocate
reward in the infinitive mucus temptation.

Point neither promise without purpose rehearse intoxication
— it's not inevitable, it's sweet; overall sudden
"meta trade off" is the whole body pure assertive melt
flesh for itself, no ceiling? — ... kisses
leap without beyond will & nill impossible immersion in
chronic redundant hope;

closure, such vanity — the genre of too much
stitchless goodnight science makes an unmaking
difference interval annuls — preparatory lace
speech, prolific pinwheel, love melts friends
all in the punctuation.

The heartbeat definitely return to extinguish
logician's sleep degreeless carefully disreputable in orbit
lost in tiniest fold lip so fact o —
circumlocutory stilts edit existing body
if you toss on a marshmallow, swerve extends out:

new mayhem *never enough*
stirs multiple hearts burn

christmases of the heart in syllables.

Antisuggestibility glows attenuate the immobilizer
astonishment pulls at — *then — our —*

the pigments

I pack up a glance — pertiness crams
pink included publicity subscribe this

farewell-soaked farewell;

dream microphones *bellissimo*

the stage, visible from a distance —
high night completeless travestied surprise
storm relaxes proximity ink at leap year

lipsynching flash in dark.

Kiss the book some — future — atoms

axis at silly indefinitely diversify

calendar tossle, inclouded, to *bire* change;

& sweet dreams resisted fix-up treats without

perfecter exile delight — NO CORNERS — zig-

zag porous luxury propulsion

takes the arc through circumstance farewell magnetizes:

Illegitimate exclusion! —

stakes contracted them all.

Oh let's have socialism relentlessly gentle

praxis singed undoing most distant

privacy overreacts, parachuting the past.

Oh deign some hole spinning works its norm

precipitated in a moment —

wait for the book enarmed petal unionizing future

prejudging multiple unscissored surprise!

Cartwheeled tactics dip your fingers in the vow

buried my birthday

red partisan shocks proof infinite to atoms

architected Pandemonium cut-to-fit-the-mouth,

we're in the happy neutral counter-automata — Dreamsdo-

cometrue — matriarchal matrix be anything

to annex willing total all is one

end of the world dance luscious by-the-book.

Give me a bigger cage — rootless headlong faction burst

delectable standard — *elsewhere —*

geometry at total, raptures diaphanous closeout diagram

generalizes fingers arraigned as chocolate,

adorable base alias reality image refusal emboldens

fetus using your body without your consent —

its sweet front lathed with

this is something else;

propitious heat headless opportunity

in order of promises, dirigibles of promise

we neatly did fill their blanks —

valedictory honeymoon burns in the pagination.

The nightmerest fantasia fitted from blame priority melts

less to write paraphrased hyperbole retraversal than it us —

ryang ner vah plew! —

equally read abode pink

cope lush coda abruptless,

risk disappears closing perfume

row of exclamation points

unleash all tenderness suspends future

to voice vote to heat

for hope lay still late

let's start all over stars.

FOUR FORMS

1

if meaning hides language from sight I will appear
marked by my own eyes

for there is plasticity of the real to the letter and so
gradually I discovered familiar forms which coincided
with those of a boy

this boy was the site of action
(never mind his eyes)

2

words and their accidents are not tragic but sarcastic
enough to be trusted
with a certain point of view

& what is always concealed the one language in
which meaning has not yet occurred, eyes included

as when a letter bends

towards its shadow
a part (color, sex)

minority or anything else not enough
to save the detour
where there has been nothing before it

what can be named progressively, letter by letter,
shadow by shadow, to take place in the dimension of
the person

put sideways
my thought refused to reverse itself

on this face, eyes upward
a weapon of commonplaces

still the boy and his straight white body
when the genius of suspicion appeared on the scene

TEMP CORP

Acute, shy, spinal

a worried, lived

its cusp temporal

or corp

with an industrial

facade

names an

X

felt-penned

on her abdomen

class

assets or assists

speech expectations

when *your* body

not your body

TEAM CORP

the half or zone

horizontal

every

day

to
everyday

a pleasure leveled

narrow

comfort contained

"sharps"

cord marrow

morphine
memories
browner

iris

timed
released

fructose

body

not your body

or grapes

the half or more

a caught chrome

or as else

transparent

it's bits

every

horizontally
translates lateral

strapped

an anxious

instrument

male generation

sketching

a good

"day"

lymph rhizome

graphs

on resolved

not a benign blossom

"have your

funds run out?"

at a spasm

not "disembodied"
but viewed

the panoptic instrument

a gendered

shrinkage

a good

"day"

graphs

no method
expectation

hard to regard

skin

as a membrane

of

speech too

from an inside

surfacing, crossed

chronic

time

genealogy

stroked in

plastic on a wrist

where I fit
in

now I
hate the phone

the gap or half
horizontal

how information's
inhabited

answers
test time

an excess

"getting there"

from the body

to the mind

via

Long long long long long willows
before we speak of them, or think.
Just the willows, at no place outside the mind,
before the ease of handshake, or debt.

Trade Winds
This great simplicity this great great depth.
There is no way to make it more real, and no
depth more than this great great simplicity.
Winds Trade

love,

Alan.

from **YOU TORTURE ME**

The truth is to stick figures as you are to blind men.
Waking up from an insomniac dream you forego all
commitment in order to submerge ideas of police sketches
that being battered does not recognize or an illusion
no doubt created by stand-in authority figures with terminal
minds dissatisfied

the faint recognition of stereotypes or the truth is to black paint
as you are to intermediaries. When one is personified in grandeur
there is no limit to emotion. Dusky roads of air pollution hang over
your building and to let in the undignified breath would be to impose
a scandalous, in fact, abnormal pap test or blood in the urine. It is the
prerogative of the truth to come forward whether or not in distaste,
to be the benevolent landowner in disguise when in fact you are only
the right wing politician

the truth is to landmarks as I am to the disqualified punt, pass and
kickers every Sunday night paranoid hierarchy of oblivion. To shed
your gas masks would be unwise at this point; all the beautiful are rich
and cannot qualify for food stamps to embellish their already privatized
lives (inaccuracy)

post mortem gloom of the deliveryman leaves you rather congenial
especially to pets whom you would prefer to love more than humans
considering their gracious patronage. It is here you discover a flaw in
the description, in words being used incorrectly, facetiously. To be willing
to admit such a disgrace. The truth is to inadequacy as I am to a decimal

point moved two places to the right. This equation is the last loving part
of history whose foot steps prematurely out of the boot. We gain no
satisfaction from discovering such wordy conquests of vocabulary

a landmine is to a tourist guide as you are to an aerial view of the bomb
test site. In all my dissatisfaction fork in hand meals I cannot conjure up
enough enthusiasm for homework or deadline, things to turn in to a higher
up who's waiting. A paternal look on the face of one who is buried already
seems out of this reality. One hunted, one shot down, one glow of a decaying
corpse, one looking, one proceeding. To admit to such sentimentality is to
forego all friendships, to erase whatever background lay dangling over the
photograph. To lose one's own eyes in film.

giants stepped aside to room the house figures represent their scores
 aphids freeze the hothouse doors the bars equip their sons with lard
 depth you sought so much for lives within the bracelets of our lines
 stomachs wind their hollowed aches as Euclid's burn reviews the poor
 our sample headaches rust the night the forms we choose ignore the sun
 a backward raisin follows Cain a simple knot entrances parks, and wholes
 rougher portions wet their faults an angry seven colors eyes
 our tripping hearse reverses light digital fits ooze out a blink
 a marketplace protrudes their angry fellows filling gloom
 of course no anger filters blends reflections cast their bought and sold
 procedures rip within our switch lamentable the words we break
 plastic bags your bookish wings a fear our masters razed the spine
 lingering, his breath betrays one fire burned shield leaves anger plain
 frosted ponies ride to your lake one upright hart beckons our lead
 each dirty mantle prays to dawn the shiny hook entraps the guard
 our easel's wings spread over grain rich lies entomb our lanky sports
 clear rain researches breath to bite flat faces blank your eager step
 my ship releases anchors butterflies encompass lightning yards
 each breasted woman eats what others knew quick clothing spins its Oh
 simple straits infuse a bird operators look demure
 one thousand inks unform her hip this morning they were tame
 out-moded knives jot ampersands blue news corrupts the red
 fist mackerels wash each ocean out my leaf implies what you would say
 correction filling grief our Moses clears his whistle rut
 pierced apes belie his rows unpared eight dugs blot out a fly
 your fullness aches to wash her rose field barks alarm risked coated canes
 bruised windows shark her lemon burst eight heels below her brain
 arched rivers sleep 'till no one's there her loosened cakes reveal her chain
 bright toes appease her steeple our tomb embraces water tights
 unknown to find her tongue reworked beyond her angry fill
 soon blankets rise to break the dawn hit sisters shut out every ploy
 its noon-time racket places ill our lightning blades equip its stone
 its aching place rides through the moon containers fill their sorry molds
 each breaker kindles filters torn controllers hiccup signals aired

one louse bemoans its past the angle broken, nothing gained
 shape lingers feeling rot our anger filters broken bones
 its seance unequipped to read recuperated dimes he rode
 bandwagon wheels unknown her hair was washing well
 this mode is undertuned your filter fused with blight
 each hoof pronounced for stiller lines her blanket shaves each fist to bake
 numbers brilliant brave your coat our stops return his languid stare
 her hair pronounced, her world unknown drunken fugues to rain
 repeats its simple inside tone our pleasure righted form
 intrepid trust your shelving line cars note the curve report
 each whistle tuned to wave our aim bliss rover cured to roam
 his paths were dusted dry our platelet stains our course
 your iron tools to wash our grind our technicals to wish you more
 belong your wisdom without words our disproportion waits
 your aegis washed heavy night

How can I
it or answer
How can I know. (The axe
and pick at your navel
Your solid explanation
My child the buzz-
open ended
and save the limbs of laughter.
So take this, you won't
see
the plate of perfect

Duck, duck, goose...
See, this hand
chicken on the grill of going;
kitchens of no knife niceties
cooking: crab, and its host
except: in ABCs, the child of these
and fallen

center to show, show, show - YES

snowball that plusses the words
"Hermes was shoe."

Starting at the last
lie
ifor bringing
lult, for the thin

kard of a green gangster's slit.
>>>

I do this can too.

(The other side of the mid-section
four right angles
cannot arch and yawn
(Four right angles
become a mother's hair
and could not be the number 5
(Everything is too strong
the number 5 and hands to boot
the toad the frog the trout
(In the back porch by a lion
the jungle was never itself
and marks became guiding the arc
Now, here is the graphite that
stabbed
lone two and three

>>>

open
with what you say gone.
that will make you finer dust?
comes apart in the middle
Of starch
Ard will tear at your sneer
Rip

like you don't now.
...BLINKED BOND BIT
circles

egg. Teed egg.
every called goose/duck
knot and under entrails for
yet, nowhere is there a real
Dead Number One
Pistols of making one fractional

the show how to numb error :-
that make it.

(Make it into
nowhere.

15 spoons
17 forks
15 knives
Find the prime
of going
and cut the price
of law

SELF

I don't know where it is
the axe has drowned
the needle has sung
How could the fork
lie to the honey
and break open the jar?
How could the question
become other languages
and turn itself up on its head?
And the place that you speak of
is not
where the groceries are
And the stars that you see
in the animal's eyes
are not there for looking

PETER SEATON

MOTEL IMAGE OF THE ORIGINAL FORM

I think I'm the difference that means
You're right. You can check this by appearing
To distinguish how you are where I can't find you
Supposing to belong to every word I write.
I'm here, in ambiguous care and attention,
In arm's reach, like a vicious prince
Stranded and hungry, full of plans for knowing
What I write is true. When you're thinking
Of what I haven't noticed not
Of productive familiarity or pathological
Corporeality I exist. Now someone might think
I seem to be able to spare many centuries
For anything female. Yet I still explore
Ripe stars recalling me, kissing me.

OUR WILD SUCCOR

It torments me that no one came near
Before Noah went sailing. I'd been formed
In a portrait of acetylene delight
Stretching this warning against writing
Into our names in the news discovered devoted
To the word for oxygen. It's the inverse
Of the year 3000. Hundreds
Of little cooking customs change for the grain.
I'd want to believe something suddenly
In verse, washing in a brass band, prying
The wind from the windows with bones
And documents that vibrate their way into
My sleep and leave a letter sprawling
Sloping, barely drifting, down to a paper sky.

THE MUSE LEARNS TO WRITE

The wretch trembles with excess patience
To make a mess of me. Some of those drops
Of golden gray breath spread this heavenly water
Down with a drink. Prehistoric smiles
Scatter accents throbbing with her tongue
In the ink. They depend on lucky stars
Overgrown with mysterious me to drive out
Tributes to the invention of being noticed
In her delicate return to be right. I wrote it
Elastically, where the pulse proposes
Calculations that get eaten ornamentally and
Scrupulously resemble coarse tropical compounds
In a mass, in all sorts of weather, in a book.
A memory for a moment
Denies the spirit's return from the problem
And places major letters in my handwriting
She says it's true, I like a woman's body
Tap into my own body
You have this boy neglecting this thing
Suppose I want a woman's body
Now new neighbor and I'm here to stay.

WHAT DISCOURSE SHUNS

It's the man behind the Protestant
 Imaging instinct threads of the right height
 And aesthetic strength congregating
 In remote designs of the outside world.
 He had to believe in poets to be
 In danger from, and feeling one
 Could get away without looking different
 Makes me want to play around with those sun shines,
 The light reclining on the grass, happy here,
 In England. Watch me take on the first
 Bright peg with hard work. The glamor sisters
 Suffer proof (that my thighs went numb).
 My mistakes dig in, illuminating
 The invention to endure, the subject
 Identified with leaning towards me. She
 Demands the spirit separate from the problem
 And places major letters in my hands.
 She says it's true, I like a moralist I like
 To reject things I like but not here.

NIGHT RESIDUE

I keep giving her what I'm missing,
 A distance in a refuge from living memory.
 She finds this lost symmetry standing
 In a ditch, breathing cautiously and trying
 To feel dizzy enough
 To pick her way through
 The credit and the consolation that technical
 Thought in two stops short. We'd prepared
 A formula for chilled excess, being slightly
 Extant about it with a big shot added
 To the last minute to firm up the faithful
 To get back to work. I woke up. I'd had
 The sweetest time. Standing still
 In a definition of audacity that declines
 A memory for a poem
 Before I read a book that clouds
 The written human choke off that old leather.
 All my translations of the sea in literature
 Tap into emergencies of sex all the time.
 You have this boy neglecting this beautiful girl
 Suppose I want a woman's body. You visit
 Your new neighbor and I'm here to stay.

AETIOLOGICAL MOMENT

I felt just like changing
 Parts of the world articulating you
 Ticking me. Or powders
 And teas and ointments arbitrary health
 Preys on with affecting reason.
 Dim like moons so mild
 In some forgotten closet whispers
 Stun your ideological relatives
 Begging you to read your own
 Handwriting, one of all your works
 Enclosed in a small but neat future
 Willingly affecting my life of volatile
 Connections, the flow and glow
 Of each other's alphabets making
 Proper spasms stubble in the plain.

CATRIONA STRANG

from LOW FANCY

Omit a must, you'd
 etch culled despair
 and carp a most delicate vent;
 your toothy era nets
 an apt senectitude, or
 resets an intender's series.

*It's a perturbing luxe
 our studied vex detains;
 as lascivious as sugar
 a tender, roused invention.*

No stray veer humps
 labour's proper tactic —
 our vital's patched; it
 macerates a carnal cure.
 All bloody stops inhabit us, deter
 a picked guard or, no, I'm
 numb — our minute familiar's
 a moribund tussle.

*It's a perturbing luxe
 our studied vex detains;
 as lascivious as sugar
 a tender, roused invention.*

In unison, love's
pulling — a vulnerary perk
in a molting, lurid mode;
it'll quench terror.

The dumbest pulse
turfs empire — we'll quit
these feeble men or bask
our amenable inch
in deepest, frigid draughts.

I'm out! Misery's eaten
my utmost — I'll sip
at admired wrecks and decline
destiny's itch.

Late nape's lit
from this rammel-full;
I'd muck an amusing bust
thigh dicks and grab mine: so nab
my chosen, fitting career.

In patient gaming we've grazed
a cunning murmur. It rives us
a low curse, is festive's
vent, and tussles like
temper's suss — as sure
as your ratty tempest.

Sick my suss can end
 or all out neck
 our facet's solo; who fugues
 my proxy fatal or collars
 a blandest inept — my cordy dolour?
 I dump what cock amends, or said "no love."

As if they're ill, knocked
 or dormant — so sure
 is a lip's maul, brave as marrow.
 My digs turf quite a net: see
 all gaud this taunting reception.

Still, I'd dump you all
 so movingly as to lash
 gesture's civil hunt
 and quaff a vile endeavor.

Me, I'm subreption's height.

Come contingent; you're a pressed pair —
it's a bribe as obsequious
as no paid stare possessed
and not quite dared: a verbal wreck.
Sit, tidbit, salutes are said:
 our vast pottering
evacuates simpers, or sums
 a maximum squeem.

Or come sit in enamoured regions;
I'll appall all dear protests.
Our indignant tantrums
sever a query's meek peril
and muck back loot's calm:
 presume us oscular
we sustain a choice neck
 celebrate the night air.

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