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CODE POEMS

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from the *Open Book* series

Open Book
Series

Open Book
Hannah Weiner

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CODE

from the International Code of Signals

Open Book

A Division of Station Hill Press

^{Code}POEMS

for the Use of All Nations

Hannah Weiner

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1982

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Acknowledgements

MAGAZINES

S.M.S. The Letter Edged in Black; For Now; Chelsea Review; The Drama Review; Wastepaper Theater; Personal Injury; Poetry Chicago; 0-9; Bones; ROOF; Equal Time; Odda Thala; Cavalier; Poets for Peace; Diana's BiMonthly; Hard Press (postcard); Dial-a-Poem (telephone)

ANTHOLOGY

Open Poetry, Ed. George Quasha & Ronald Gross, Simon & Schuster 1973

FILM

Any Chance of War, Angry Arts Festival, New York University 1968

GALLERIES (WHEEL ONLY)

Dwan Gallery (1968); Gain Ground (1969)

COLLECTIONS

Sol LeWitt; John Perreault

PERFORMANCES

Friendship Event, Judson Church, 1966; Street Event, 1967, with semaphore flags, megaphones; Avant Garde Festival, 1967, 1968, flags and semaphore signalmen; Spring Gallery, 1968, performed with the aid of the U.S. Coast Guard, using semaphore signals, morse, visual poems; Central Park Poetry Events, 1968, performed with the aid of the U.S. Coast Guard, using alphabet flag hoists, semaphore signalmen, flashing light signals, megaphones, flares; Woodstock Poem Event, 1969; Wastepaper Theater, 1975

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Introduction

These poems and performance pieces are from the INTERNATIONAL CODE OF SIGNALS for the Use of All Nations, British Editions 1859, 1899 and American Edition, post-war, 1931, a visual signal system for ships at sea. Codes of signals for the use of mariners have been published in various countries since the early 19th century. The first International Code was drafted in 1855 by a committee set up by the British Board of Trade. Flags at that time numbered 18, which represented the consonants of the alphabet, with the exception of X and Z. A later version published in 1899 increased the letter flags to 26, plus an answering pennant. Flags, one for each letter of the alphabet, are hoisted on the mast, singly or in groups of two, three, four. Single and two flag hoists are distress signals, three flag hoists are general signals, four flag hoists geographical signals. In addition, each flag has a name; A, Alpha, B, Bravo, C, Charlie, etc. In combination, as CJD, "I was plundered by a pirate," these signals comprise a complete volume of code signals. Messages can be transmitted also by two semaphore red signal flags, and by Morse code. Visual signaling is any method of above water communication, the transmission of which is capable of being seen (alphabet flags, semaphore flags, Morse flashing light). Sound signaling is any method of sending Morse signals by means of siren, whistle, foghorn, bell or other sound apparatus. Although Morse and light signals were used in performances, only visual signals are included (we omit radio) in this book.

THE SEMAPHORE ALPHABET

CHAR- ACTERS	HAND FLAGS	CHAR- ACTERS	HAND FLAGS	CHAR- ACTERS	HAND FLAGS	CHAR- ACTERS	HAND FLAGS
A		H		O		V	
B		I		P		W	
C		J		Q		X	
ANSWER- ING SIGN		K		R		Y	
D		L		S		Z	
E		M		T		ATTEN- TION	
F		N		U		BREAK	
G							

RJ Romeo and Juliet

LZT Mike: I have received the following message from agents.
 TCD Romeo: Party?
 VHX Mike: Saturday night
 OAR Romeo: Happy to hear it or that
 FS Mike: Be very careful in your intercourse with strangers
 YCG Romeo: I do not trust too much to my _____
 EZF Mike: Article indicated can be supplied, but it will require fitting.
 I will lend what is required
 QNA Romeo: All precautions have been taken
 TCD Mike: Proceed to rendezvous
 FY Romeo: Hot bearings
 TIV Mike: By no means plain
 SDQ Romeo: What is her name?
 SDL Juliet: My name is
 J Juliet
 ENC dazzling, am, is, are
 SDT What is your name?
 SLD Romeo: My name is
 R Romeo
 EBQ Juliet: Your name is not on my list; spell it alphabetically
 JG Romeo: I wish to have personal communication with you
 IJ Juliet: Unless your communication is very important, I must be excused
 JM Mike: Stranger is suspicious
 MYX Romeo: Fine day
 EBL Juliet: I beg to be excused
 PCF Romeo: The ice is so solid I cannot break through; send help
 YCS Mike: Try again
 H Romeo: Stop, heave to, or come nearer, I have something to communicate
 USX Juliet: Sorry, I am unable to comply with your request
 AGS Romeo: The following is plain language

TQB Juliet: I doubt if it is possible
 RIC Romeo: Cannot make it out
 EQO Mike: I decline to have anything further to say or do in the matter.
 KUM Nothing to be depended upon beyond your own resources
 DJX Farewell. Adieu (Mike leaves)
 NM Romeo: I am on fire
 MLI You must not or cannot make any excuse
 TMV Shall I have the pleasure to or of
 F Foxtrot
 FBX Juliet: As you please
 QRA I am willing to
 T Tango
 QAW Romeo: It is very kind of you
 FIG At last
 B Bravo
 OYP Juliet: Horny
 BKS Idiot
 IVL You are too close. Keep farther off.
 DN I have orders for you not to touch
 HFL Romeo: Will you breakfast with me?
 LS Juliet: It is not safe to go so fast
 LAX Romeo: Will you dine with me?
 MIL Tommorrow evening
 TQB Juliet: I doubt if it is possible
 MIK Romeo: This evening?
 LAW Juliet: What time is dinner or when will dinner be ready?
 FBM Romeo: As soon as it is dark
 DCA Juliet: With pleasure. I will accept.
 MHL A small establishment
 HAJ Romeo: Cafe. Restaurant
 DOQ Juliet: What would you recommend?
 TUN Romeo: Preserved soup
 GDC Fresh beef and vegetables

STJ Potato
 IOG Cheese
 ISD Ale, beer
 BSU Juliet: We shall have
 WVR Sherry
 SYR Are any oysters to be had?
 LMT Half dozen
 QXT Lobster
 ZGE Rhine wine
 OEZ Goose
 UWS Rice
 SCN Mushroom
 ZGB Burgundy wine
 TUJ Preserved fruit
 KC Champagne
 WIZ Romeo: Bicarbonate of soda
 DZI Have been short on allowance for some time
 GKI Can I get a bill cashed here?
 IVK Will you keep close to me during the night?
 OXY Hope you will
 OXW Juliet: Hope you can
 IP Romeo: Shall we keep company?
 ITY Juliet: A visit from a Protestant clergyman would be much valued
 GHI Romeo: Will you lead into or point out a good berth?
 IHL Juliet: When do lay days commence?
 DQU Romeo: After dinner
 ZMD Juliet: Your zeal has been particularly noted by ____
 MIR Romeo: Have you ever?
 MIG Juliet: Every evening
 KIQ Every day. Daily
 MJA Every opportunity
 NWC Have you a proper certificate of competency?
 TU Romeo: Have you a clean bill of health?
 GHI You are in a very fair berth

GIA Juliet: This is my best point
 SHJ Some swell
 XOR Romeo: Thank you
 GDS May I begin to?
 GIT Juliet: The sooner the better
 MFO Romeo: Entrance is difficult
 MFD Juliet: Try to enter
 KZU Romeo: I am in difficulties; direct me how to steer
 OOX Juliet: You should swing and enter stern first
 HBK Romeo: What is the nature of the bottom or what kind of bottom have you?
 HAY Juliet: Double bottom
 FHR Romeo: Stern way. Going astern
 LK Juliet: Go astern easy. Easy astern
 ODI Romeo: I am going full speed
 HC Juliet: It is not safe to go so fast
 KZY Romeo: It is difficult to extricate
 BK Juliet: Is anything the matter
 VLA Romeo: Cock broken or damaged
 EHR Juliet: What do the cost of repairs amount to?
 DF Romeo: With some assistance I shall be able to set things to rights
 AN Juliet: Are you in a condition to proceed?
 CCQ Romeo: If it comes on to blow
 NZ Juliet: Blowing hard
 CCO Romeo: Blowing too hard
 DIR Juliet: Can you renew the action?
 PEO According to the usual practice?
 BKS Romeo: I shall, or will if I can
 VKE Juliet: Can you lift your screw?
 MIV Romeo: Every exertion has been made
 SPG Operations have commenced
 CWY Juliet: You
 ERH Screw well
 JCG Romeo: Are you coming?

JDG Juliet: I shall come off by and by or at the time indicated
 OWT Romeo: I fear I cannot hold out much longer
 X Juliet: Stop carrying out your intentions and wait for my signals
 MZJ Romeo: When will you or it be finished?
 JDH Juliet: I will come
 JCQ Romeo: Come directly, immediately
 JDC Juliet: Coming at once
 LCO Romeo: Discharging
 ZHC Shall or will be withdrawn
 DIR Juliet: Can you renew the action?
 AI Romeo: I will not abandon you. I will remain by you
 WGD Juliet: Sleep, sleepy, sleeping, slept
 DXY Romeo: All snug
 Juliet:

EDQ ANY CHANCE OF WAR?

EDQ	Any chance of war?
ODV	Good chance
IKF	No chance of peace
YU	Has war commenced?
YX	War has commenced
YW	War between _____ and _____ has commenced
KDX	How is the crop?
KDW	Crops have suffered severely
KDV	Crops destroyed
TN	Are you in want of provisions?
LHE	Distressed for want of food
YU	Want food immediately
NV	Unable for want of
YZ	Are you in want of water?
LHF	Distressed for want of water
NRC	Fresh water
YVH	No water to be had
NF	Dying from want of water
FJX	Have you been attacked?
NJ	I am attacked. I want assistance. Help, I am attacked
FO	Are you in danger?
NL	I am in danger
KLF	Much danger
KLE	In great danger
DNE	Enemy is advancing
DNA	Army is advancing
EQB	Is anyone wounded?
RKN	Many wounded
ZIN	How many wounded?
PKN	No. of killed and wounded not yet known
ZIM	How are the wounded?
YGJ	Without arms
FGX	Without assistance
YL	Want immediate medical assistance
CP	Cannot assist

WANT MEN

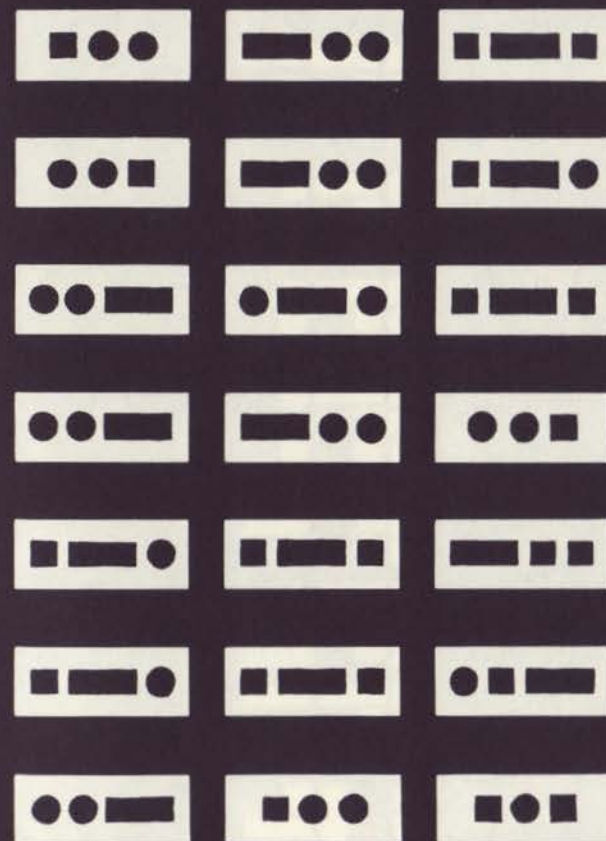
NC	In distress. Want immediate assistance
CX	No assistance can be rendered. Do the best you can for yourselves.
GBT	I shall bear up
GBV	May I, or can I bear up?
YE	Want assistance
GLN	Want bread
RZX	Want more support
LHI	How long have you been in such distress?
KNG	How many days?
RKD	Many
RKQ	So many
RKS	Too many
KLD	How many have you dangerously ill?
LQN	Dying at the rate of _____ a day
ZIE	Could, or might be worse
ZIF	It will be worse
ZIG	Much worse
MSK	Is my family well?
ZBM	Not so well
FZB	When was the battle fought?
KBN	Daylight. At daylight
KOY	When was the last death?
FIB	Daybreak. Dawn. At dawn
KOM	How many dead?
KON	Who is dead?
KOU	Dearer, dearest
KOV	Too dear

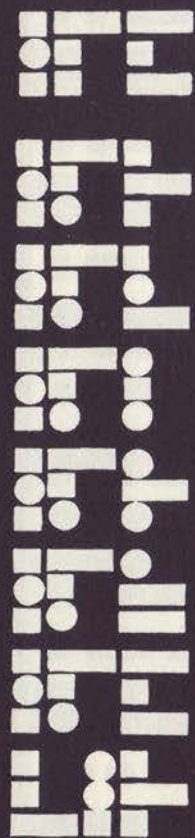
RPJ WANT MEN

RJE	man
DWS	alderman
GVL	boatman
IFD	cattleman
TUO	chairman
ITX	clergyman, parson or minister
MDK	have you men enough?
NAB	fireman
NBS	fisherman
NJX	foreman
OTR	helmsman
RKI	how many men?
QIB	landsman
QJL	leadsman
QPJ	liberty man
RAE	look-out man look out!
NSX	he, or she is full of men
RPH	newly raised man
SIT STILL	nobleman
TQO	postman
UXF	rifleman
VLG	seaman
WDH	signalman
YZM	tradesman
YWH	waterman
ZIA	workman
MDK	have you men enough?
RPJ	want men
RPK	your men

QRD Light

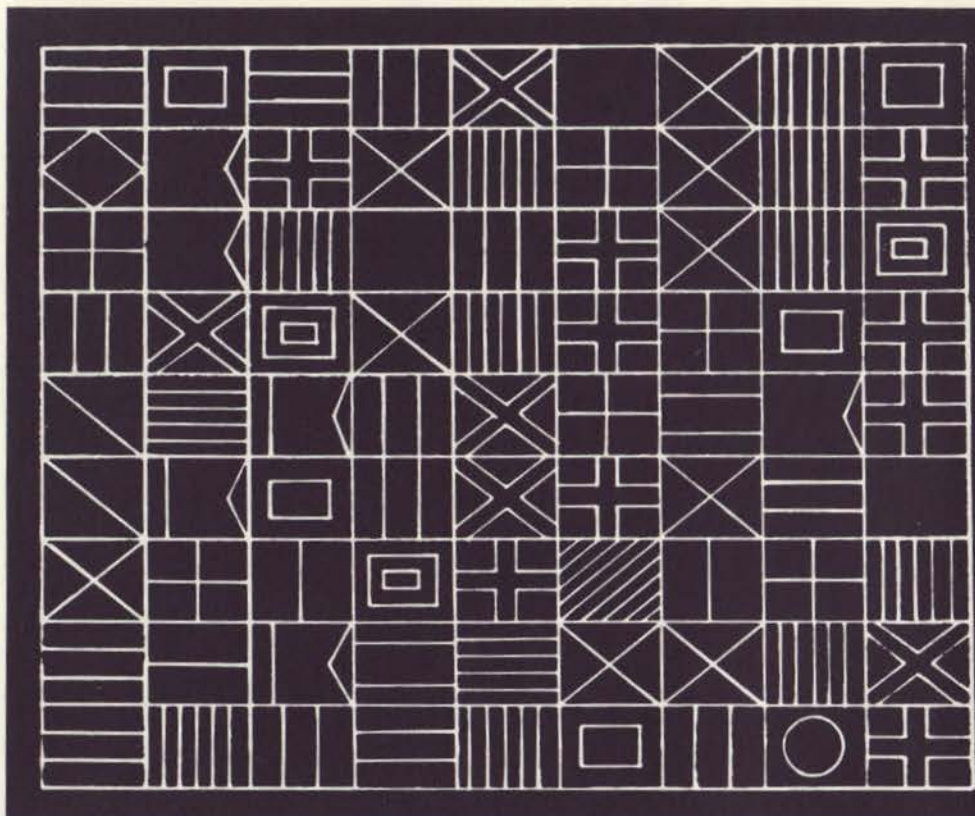
LRG Will you carry a light?
 MPD Will you make the land tonight?
 LRM I will carry a light
 GDW I see the land, land in sight
 GDV I have just lost sight of the land or light
 MQC Anything in sight?





CHW Pirates

CJD I was plundered by a pirate
CJF Describe the pirate
CJN She is armed
CJP How is she armed?
CJS She has long guns
CJW I have no long guns
BLD I am a complete wreck



DSJ Persons Indicated Present Their Compliments to

TMQ	If you please
ZGS	Do you wish to?
FBX	As you please
ZGU	If you wish
ZGV	It is my wish
LBG	Will person please?
QTR	I or persons indicated wish to see you
ZGW	Wish to speak to you
TMW	Will you please?
ZGX	Wish you would
USR	Request the pleasure of
OCA	With pleasure. I will accept
TMU	Shall I have the pleasure to or of?
DBX	Very acceptable
OAP	Will you give me the pleasure?
TMX	With much pleasure
ZJQ	Will you write?
ZLH	Yes, I will
WRY	Will you stay or wait?
HUG	Yes, I can
JEA	Will you accompany?
DCZ	I will accompany
JGV	Will you give me the pleasure of your company at?
JGT	Very glad of your company
JGS	The pleasure of your company
TIR	I or persons indicated gratefully accept

QGB A OR AN

QGC	Another — some other
QGD	Any person or thing
QGF	Some
QGH	The
QGJ	Both
QGK	Each
QGL	Every. Every one. All
QGM	Nothing
QGN	More
QGP	Much. Many
QGR	Not so much. Less
QGS	From
QGT	On
QGV	On the _____
QGW	On me
QHB	On you
QHC	On (person-s indicated)
QHD	With
QHF	And
QHG	For
QHJ	For me
QHK	For you
QHL	For (persons indicated)
QHM	In. Into
QHN	To
QHP	To be
QHR	Why?
QHS	How?

BEA AM. I AM

BEC	Am I?
BED	Am I not?
BEF	Am I to?
BYG	How am I?
CUY	Why am I?
CUA	Why are you?
CUZ	Why are (or is)?
CUX	Why?
CPV	What, or Which am I?
CSQ	Where am I (or, are we)?
COT	Was I?
COU	Was I not?
BFR	Had, or Have I been?
BFH	Can, or May have been
BHC	Shall, or Will I be?
BHG	Shall, or Will we be?
BIX	Will it be?
BHE	Shall, or Will there be?
BFP	Could, or Might there be?
BFI	Can, or May there be?
BKH	Can, or May I be?
BFC	Am, Are, or Is to be?
BFE	Be the
BGY	Let us be

BVZ IT

FAO	As it is
FAR	As it was
FAS	As it was not
FAU	As it will be
CDF	Is it?
PTN	It is as
BGR	It ought to be
BGT	It shall (or will) be
BGU	It shall (or will) not be
BNV	It will do
BIX	Will it be?
BOU	Will it do?
CQG	What or which is it?
CDY	Its-self (see also he, she, it or person-s or thing-s indicated)

TQA POSSIBLE-ITY

TQB	I doubt if it is possible
FRW	Barely possible
TQD	Is it possible?
TQE	Possibly
TQF	Quite possible
FBJ	As slow as possible
FBG	As quick as possible
FAI	As fast as possible
FBO	As soon as possible
FAY	As much (or, many) as possible
TQC	If possible
FOU	Avoid, if possible (impossible)
PFB	Not possible

CME THE

BEN	Are, or Is the ____?
BFE	Be the ____
BJU	By the ____
HUE	Can, or may the ____?
BLF	Could, or Might the ____?
BMK	Do, Does or Did the ____?
BPG	For the ____
BPS	From the ____
BQX	Had, Has or Have the ____?
BZY	If the ____
CDN	In the ____
CEY	Must the ____?
CGA	Not the ____
CGR	Of the ____
CHD	On the ____
CHV	Ought the ____?
CJT	Should, or would the ____?

CSQ WHERE AM I (OR, ARE WE)?

CSQ	Where am I (or, are we)?
WJV	Somewhere
CST	Where are they?
DQR	Anywhere
CSR	Where are (or, is)?
MJC	Everywhere
SI	Where are you from?
EQS	Anywhere else
SH	Where are you bound?
LVS	Elsewhere
CSR	Where is?
CSP	Whereabouts

Weiner's explorations of the visual-verbal possibilities of coded language came early in our history and they persist & ring true up to the present. The reader should catch them on the page & imagine them also in performance — lights on & flags flying to delight our eyes & ears!

Jerome Rothenberg

Hannah Weiner writes good words.

Sol Lewitt

About *Clairvoyant Journal*:

Her achievement — & it is a considerable one — lies in her having developed a specific literary form through which to convey her remarkable experience.

Jackson MacLow

Other books by Hannah Weiner include *Magritte Poems*, *Sun June 9*, *Clairvoyant Journal*, *Little Books/Indians*, *Nijole's House*, and, forthcoming, *Spoke* and *The Fast*.

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