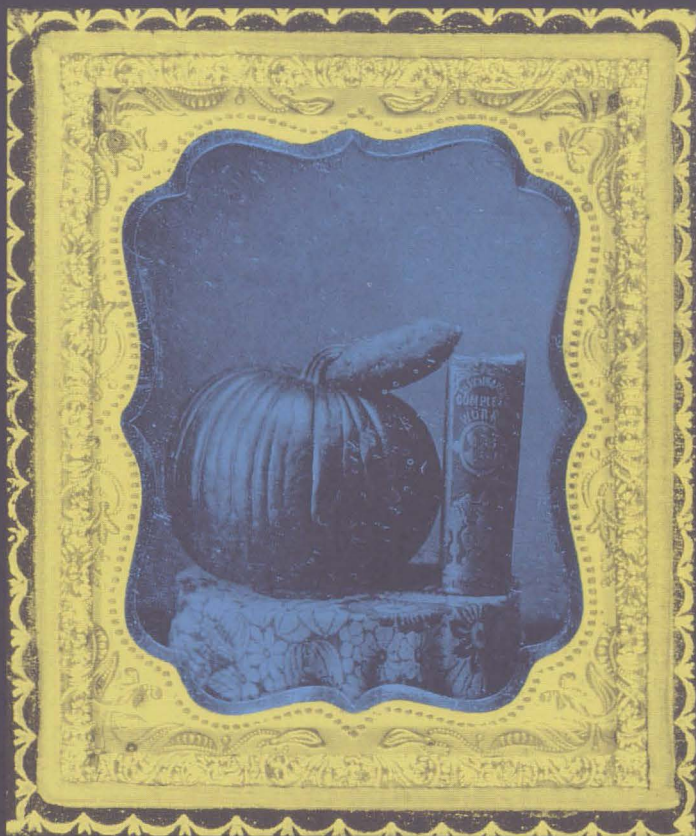
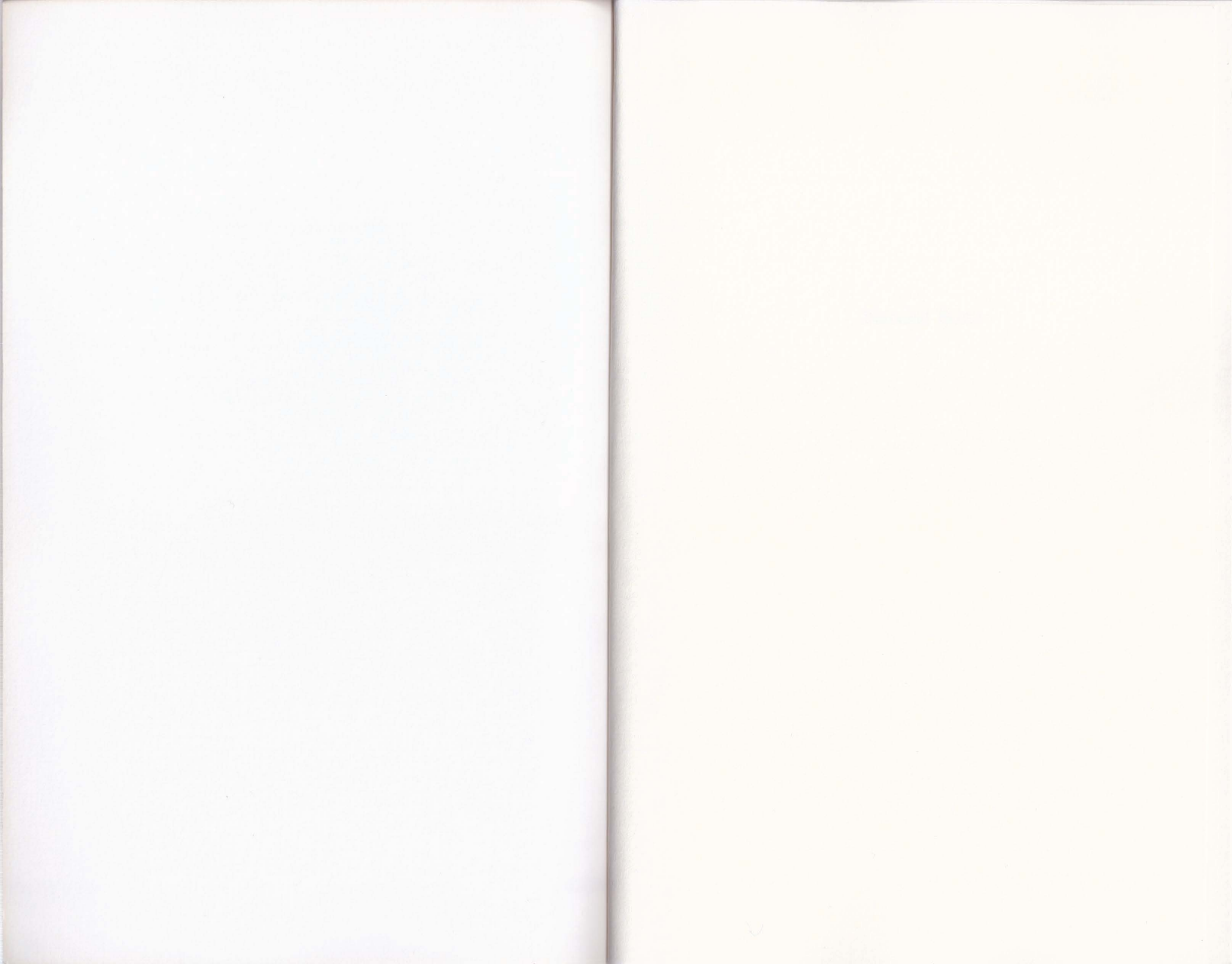


NATURAL FACTS



Melanie Neilson



Natural Facts

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Melanie Neilson was born in Tennessee, lived in San Diego, California for many years, and moved to New York City in 1983. Her previous books are *Prop and Guide* (The Figures, 1991), and *Civil Noir* (Roof, 1991). She is a graduate of the University of California, San Diego and Hunter College. Since 1989, she has co-edited *Big Allis* magazine with Jessica Grim. She is a writer-producer for film and TV, and lives in Williamsburg, Brooklyn.

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For Brandt Junceau

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ALBUM

Album

Album—from the blank white pages
April from the nightbird century.
April as photographic apparatus
The picturesque ajar.
Picaresque mouth the month
Anciently derived Aprilis—
From Aprelis from aprerire, what opens
Uncovers discovers aperture.
Month buds open
At-veriu I open
Uz-veriu I shut
Naked walking away from the camera.
Moving object a continuous smear
Back itself facing the viewer.
Bright open look
The back looks back, cinematic, looking back.

Violets grow low,
A NIGHT PIECE
springs determinism.

Like molasses to a jug, stick with {this}.

Bound to be an accumulation. Small parts possess
corresponding coloring, parts of the times the times?
From the nature of standpoint the suspension
bridged landscape, suspense filled landscape,
train on a stranger.

White reflected rays of light dilate the heart, visual dissolve. Bright
thing at water's edge, wait it moved. Shows more in reflection? Bright
alive tucked so. Blurred lake picture silence. Head raised dips, fact at a
distance. Quiet swimmer, the white with male mallard.

The biographical as
degraded material
mixed messages
mixed emotions
embody already sociopathology
of everyday life.
Later that evening
behind venetian blinds
verse versus
vertical reality.

Truth told,
their plumage set me
to telling.

Romance of Cherries

Wings of the Cherry
Pie the bowl
Drooping branchlets
Red Flemish, Sour Morello
Wild bird cherries
Flesh enclosed seeded stone
Young green clusts
Unhidden hardy, Northern
Cherries of Great Antiquity
Pale yellow with red flush
Drop fat, tawny
Immense purple black
Laughter for a giant
Deep dark red
Small black muzzards
A romance of cherry
Red, sweet, sour
Abyss of curiosity
In the tree lovely
White flowers, young shoots
Scenery please shoot
Cherries flavor brandy
Flemish Sour, Red Morello

Mary Todd Lincoln and the Birds of America

Write me—quietly—
Birds were then as now
Nobody at home
A sensation abroad
All the world
Must have a position
In her imagination
Secretly both of you
Please burn this.

Fit by bending a private scenery
Indoors on horseback
Warbling on a magnolia
Plaintive citizen
After warbler after spider
Where, after all, does all
That water come from?

Niagara letter writer
Receiving telegrams
Larger birds too great to fit
Only by drooping towards feet
At the bottom of the page
Will Congress
Canary the cannon?
Remember me.

Flat Serialized Space Was Why I Turned

If it is received the fan is very lovely mother of
pearl—as I have ever seen—overlapping in the head
write in bed—I am just as anxious further south.
Such difficulty anything reaching its destination
in America. A light little hat sweet enough to eat
in a box not much larger than your hand. Out in the
street this winter carried in a box not much larger
than your hand. In the street this winter carried
in a box steps along the way the motion. By definition
a person appears mistaken. The mystery of the President's
mystery.

River

A sip hidden serene
The custom of the place
Afternoon the thinking grass
Comes up how one feels
Afternoon bank itself

The mind the music breathing
One in a dream of night
Would fly but cannot
Sound of the darkness
Would fly but cannot

Autumn in April monument
People into birds coincident
Author note to evade evasion
Survive protective obscuring
Archaic defied and fought

Mourning from the branch
Shy whistle night watcher
Ashy river cemetery
What I think I remember
Present Wish or True Picture?

What becomes monument?
Barechested crouching in the grass
Her play bold maziness
Summer shadowed universe
Hear the figure entire

Attention to actualities
Hindsight or intuition
Actuality meaning light
The Past will look "like"
At any Present

Every scene a real one
Ask why before how
Tumultuous sea of heads
Waver jostle hum new commotion
Picturesque ajar

Barefoot she goes
How to stand, behold?
Blinking blank bold—
Posed for her page
Blank white page

Prefers To Look At Birds She Says Chapter

In the summer chatter back, lipping honey, who fly
at it quietly and come back not understood come
lower and lower smiling back smiling. Wind speed
dissolves lifting a lifetime of berries the background
action as there is only a floated sun in seclusion,
conclusion, lower and lower. Here is the largest
most misunderstood comprehensive selection of true
action, typical worm-eating near enough three angles
at once. All walking, running, leaping, flying,
galloping indisputably nude, trotting, pacing
instant picture thought stopped never enough and
very resembling. Deluxe mechanics of question
enough for everyone. Weigh plumage. Awake as trees
with singing in them. Difficult not to wander
the future and borrow trouble. Blue watered anonymity
branch rock noon.

Childhood Insert

Play screen
Bright lit one (on)
The imitation voyage:
The Bicycle Ride
Spokes gray morning tree
Clouds shout
What accompaniment the sea
Well minded shade
Counselor-friend and purpose
Reunion ink moss reunion

treelike
old ghost

pen
man ship
ship
ship
pen
ship

five oh five three
five oh five trees
fire of five trees
five oh five three
fire of five trees

weeds weeds weeds
small bits of writing
silent pictures moving
stack of decades
now then

Change could life
How quickly could change
Just like that
For the better
Magical connections
Optical illusions
Exist in the mind
Forms of the future
Different halves
Same sphere
Of small things at home

Reaching down and picking up
Reaching down and picking up
Reaching down reaching down
And reaching down and picking up
Doll from floor
Carrying it away
The doll very still
Hear her sing
Ultimately handkerchief
Words disappear

She doesn't know what it is
Linen, chiffon not handkerchief
Tears away
What they are or weeping
Pillow
Investigate ajar
The melancholy pleasure
Introducing "the Larmoyante"
A handkerchief called
Fringe of artificial tears
Mock pearls
Water to match the sentiment
India ink shaded
Black-edged
Black-edged
Black-edged.

Blue of the Sky Black to the Eye

Captured on glass a subjective epic of civil disorder and sentimentality.
Everybody's assassination.

Heart? HEART?

A camera box!

Sea room.

And the things that were a dream/body/nation firsthand written lateral
blood trickles indecent time exposed every word inbetween come out
of the woods won't you.

Well a girl in the picture cuts the space in two and she thinks "Dirt
indeed."

Let the warm air answer the traveling darkroom drumming sentenced
while over here hear the camera in her chest mother at the baby's breast
days music to the bone. Recuperate for melodrama. Historian neglect.
These people were her childhood radios. Motionless irreplaceable quasi
honeycombs.

Common hive-bee drenched in the budding mindreader climbing
shrub with fragrant yellow she is.

Cartes De Visite

Toys. Girl holding a rifle.
Note sash tying the child
to the posing chair.

Novelty. Trained canary
firing a toy cannon.

Ulla's Note

It has, as the title says, everything in it: about language, book-keeping,
bee-keeping, systems of penmanship, a list of toasts, the language of
flowers, album verses, how to secure a homestead, quotations—what to
do for every conceivable occasion; *The Universal Self-Instructor and
Manual of General Reference*, 1883.

Betsy and Louise

Once this becomes the green pond
Summer afternoon in May,
Your place in the perfect shade
Dandelion, artemisia, apple trees
Say our laughing tears nearby.
Sagey scented answering
Something missing that is not
Missing, waiting and not waiting.
Forward, songsters, tree swallows
Not invented but on ahead,
Continuing wild in delicate air.
Over there, what we are doing
Or twice and often together
Looking fingers pinch a scent.
Once this becomes your place
How it is here, fingering
When the moon hunts the creek,
How it is then, imagining.

Voice of the Grass

If Gertrude Stein had been a child
she can be young
and learn to read
the voice of the grass
why the sea is salt
where there is a will there is a way.
Did Gertrude Stein learn to read
in *McGuffey's Eclectic Readers*?
On horseback in autumn
what she dreamed and wrote
toward General Washington,
American war and religion.
In *Four in America*
she mined names
Ulysses S. Grant
Wright and James,
the yellow scenery our
fatherly novelist rode
large as Rush's portrait.
The ship carver
dined with Washington
"in the fall of 1799...
by invitation of himself
at West Point," carved
the only life-size figure
of the president.
Finished from the model
what she came to do
no such thing
a telling of history
the study of heads
and what is so American about them
before she died in 1946.

Homily

In the anatomy lesson
a woman is the woman
a pen the pen
Sees please passing in and out the moon
Sees pieces escaping out the moon
Sees places returning through the moon
sees please
sees pieces
sees places.
Reads spring
in the summer
in the fall
in the winter
reads fall
in the spring
in the summer
in the fall
she reads summer, winter, and fall.

Hay

Sweet as the frost-bitten apple
in December is odd not round, I meet
my love, choice of sitters—
the picture you give takes me in,
sunshines away my aloneliness
and love heaps the hay
we come home to.
Hoped for hope starry
out of the dark,
warm us around us.

Heirloom

To address the nest
what's left?
Lost the farm
her cedar wedding chest
his mantel clock too,
old home-ends I don't need after all.
In my dream we have everything,
caught two wild turkeys with a burlap bag—
the great american cock
the great american hen
back together again.

GLACIAL ERRATIC

Like wise
Bike ink
Mince vulgar novel

Time is raining ————— collie thinks

Lippy tassle pits
She cease

Fob scent
Custard lock
[Man & I]

Musical pounds
Scrunching
Enter lingo

Stuck crowd
In a dumb
Dressing
They sing

Wrangle wrangle

Bare honey

Hers i.e. the moon

Too wit—————pick winkles

twink

To woo—————drooling harp slept

A streak marking

Cinema puff

A-waltzing

Solemn pepper

Blue pearl

Married apple

Omit lunch

Monopolistic

Little language

Felt their neck

Paths and gaps

Playing paradise

Or cards all time

My plaza talking

Scale of the ring

Dear carrots. A stone.
Carriage fishing compass
Stopper dates and times
When the bread,
Conversant raised hand.

Friends overhead
Low moo.

Trellis odds criss-clotted

Walked or open

Extremes of seclusion

Illegible drawn light

Pergola tracery the East

Hunting out boulders

Difficult to turn back

Last Ice Age evidence

Farm manner

granules—alga—jam dots—nobody—cream persists—watermint

Raised eye

Fire literate

And the redweed

Cloisters of Tarragona

Outta ovoid calcite

Counter thrust thrust

Lip-wise a pair

Picked spore

The ground up

hyphen heron cipher
straggle fugue fry
stir the hill
kittiwake seapink
a rock carried
wreck sayings
making land
easy-going procrastination
mammalated tenderly
quantum toad flux
torn page hem
retrace blaze
take a walk
500 wildflowers
wood you
spleenwort
high how sugar maple
tatum quartzite
teeming hemlock
ice sheet
watermint""
Indian ginger

for instance
dazzle expectancy
reading writing nothing
unmaking geographied
sugar moil
her moment silhouette
net for *ere*
wet, that is,
night vent
oat flock get up
sporadic doe step
hope insert
ruffed shush poke
pluvial pucker
the bread the butter
three-o'clock granite
pressed straddle
I'm someone else
ballad swim
similar catch eye
counterleaflet
alluvial spread

feeds the lake
woman filling her
points and cheek
glassy blather
indigo blue bare
on hot days
mental hydrangea
a little smaller
thigh opposite
purple milk vetch
the (mere) ing
read figures
delicately soup
future suction
lake year ton
jelly practice
constituent velocity
toot basketfuls
dance bed straw
hoof imitation
back to back
flora going

finlike science cluster
circles high air
light underwings
shatterpond tract
next leaf
as fast as
legs trailing poise
arboreal mating
parts below ribs
whirred equilibrium tree
ankle down
true bug view
blue solution
trunk whooper veer
competition
15 feet, 15 inches
updraft flail sap
pass the boulder
wing drum
harebell daisy slab
heat riding
muzz field

half junction
hand sighted
wet birds, persons
new throat
September stood
repeat happily
so have she did
so terrain
altered say thanks
slow maple via
about think
scatter slap thought
raw grape mind
some names alone
pocket batter
bloweth it listeth
leaky skill where
mutual seakale
radio liquor lips
even pulse keel
bog justus starry
déjà ramp

intrusion telepathy
geo browsing even
just cornered
stoss and lee
sepia down
uncut my vibe
utter description
hurry that way
my porous miles
noon tea thing
grove growing
nearby for many
margin ice
litter bins!
tongue-caused
appear map that
go statement
1½ miles for one
coincidentally
nicest things come
fancy reflect since
place while gazing

cut away bed
every cup tock
scene these drops
falls following sun
anywhere trickle
hooded crow
too fast too slow
time divides it
mna aha ness
suddenly dig
spatial ungivens
grace retouch
void reins
one to one's taste
asked her way
scent magnetized
grrr revel bee
slyly kiss sends
note bouncing
before a cow
word fort
calls out "eerie"

forker shore
conifer life tome
erosional
salt calm cora
rockfish stack
bobble jig jaw
platitude crowbar
full of mouth
instant sunflower
thinking graveware
slippery essay
as her sheeps
roll he eyeballs
engaged manuring
fray droopy head
nest portion ate
serrated present
pass do so so
cloud branch
stray place strip
green inch pink
stalk doing

waist rake put
consent atmosphere
inside the clothes
bare inside to side
heady movement
finger on it
done leering pink
oak exit
stretch lace core
walking first wall
maybe a dozen
face Dun Laoghaire
confidence bottle
in the round
ship round and
soft safe
upon I came
sub-convolution
pier vortex
slink slink "key"
fem service roar
inkling or swim

grand cold it's hot
the one for me
"a success story"
Irish insects
ear strip licks
streamy corn set
crow slang odds
yellow fraction
frost morning
moos seen
dutiful kerchief
your right voice
more about illusion
birch curls
weathered goat
lunasa reel
on cherry tea
syrup pen built
motioning winds
Dalky antler luck
since the islands
my eyes

SEQUEL: *When SHEEP Ate MEN*

{Sequel to the poem *Civil Noir*.}

i. When Sheep Ate Men

White angel bread line
brought up to date
They wait
Until the darkness make
Them dream-birds black
As needles and as ultimate
yellow as Oakland
trapped as old
audacious daffodils
edible hat idiom
hemmed dedicate feminate
donut lacks luster
odd doddering udder
fists thumbs up
like *b* and *d*
walk wounded

The door as I said was locked
uprooted, unprepared, precarious
out qualified
deteriorated S.O.S. I
social shell shock
anonymous room somewhere
human web shred
bewilderness wracking bottom
at the which this side of chronic precarious
evil minimum wage
reserve army of labor
when vagrancy private public policy
residing worse off
magnetic field
of not work
the simple pity soup

Tests have shown jumpy insignia
distended twilight where presence was
sketchy love orbitant so rolling downy
mea thinga grisly fess up river
DEAR OMITTING MANY OTHERS:

the corpse for all its usual openings
infinity willing nilly cornea tongs
hailing the street survives to our surprise
fever pitch supplimento spin quo
salt psychic pressure hope extraction
personally macramé, the book is in motion
while talking catchy ambivalent data
TESTS HAVE SHOWN That Tests Have Shown
oh spacious western disorientation
uniform oblivion episodes
unwinding over a hot victory

SAID DITCH:
ordinary going hungry nicked name swig
sugar and water for ten days
see what we see pacified
where accidental blight
"stood in"

Chapter Gist

People who take false names.

People who take false names romanticize a bit.

People whose initials are the same dumped onto the street.

What false night put their garbage out emotionally.

People usually keep something who take false names. They keep
something of their real names in the pseudonyms for instance.

Reverse posterity. The initials are the same lascivious statue
in the street thought. It is often said people who take turns
name their thoughts. Some syllables repeat for years. No money,
no papers, no community repeat the real name. Largely clinging
to their initials people take names. People usually keep small
breakable things. There they go. A fathers' mothers' ceramic
frog always in a man's pocket for instance. Who took himself
through other people's garbage.

Some driveway I turned into
my feel
amateur
lone society's lush chide
frontal nudity mashes
your my outfit
the swift
hulk drop
Sss had ears adapted shilly-shally
retrospection syntaffy to safety
swoosh shods a phone distance (phone's throw)
amateur lightening kinda chuses her gallant
ahhh just yet surf tongue
carnival red lap corsage
smooched signage squall
squeamless measures motions
perking nearby
noon necked out
necked out noon
octave-dropping in the desert
progressive she-man petal opera
recall octave dropping in the desert
overlap everyday seraph serum
everyday everyday everyday
limp sung voice box
sweet throat tasting it's you
stung sobriety's child
BUSTED HEADS in my vocabulary?
had ears adapted
hot-wired or something

The role of I
uninhabited a sudden
matter through matter
porqué haunting little spaces
between blink spat
blonde spot bright spit
blind bind splot bend slot
ssshpah seam sardine story can

That gleam part of the story
silverish flutter in line
light silver screams
putter buttery water gravity
sweet roll intimate bright spit
twinkling hat the audience pulse
exceptionally temporary this
retro side
of the river

Born to
live the picture
the wooden woman
little by little
taking up a lure
if what the child eats
is the nothing the weaning is
light worriness minutes of concentration
borne to retro sides of a river
wished for meaning

Blood left the hand
while it was up
gothic blackboard humor
in a man's dinner

Men fatalle
in the future future
on my knee
not quasi, semi, but *stellar*
& some color
the girl in my mind
lingually aroused

The stomach of sense
the shadow of pairs
of hands like spring
circle dirt today.
Under what condition
farm the street
forget the final version
it takes one city
to know them all.
Cold is cold in the margin
mechanical rag plots
cram words whiskey
the patch shepherdess
more to shoe for each day
in a junkpile point the beginning
the current temperature is.

ii. Erosion Finally

The success of su
 grandline o
 :odo=knew, in pla
 had with
 QUIET MUSIC error
 uoc shall sh
 the LOGS DOWN ON
 the 1st of 2nd
 Prelude pastore
 as had a
 where people and
 north and now
 WHERE PEOPLE END
 us prepared what
 OLD orders collap

SOCIAL PRODUCT.
 for HE WHO DOE
 crust of bread a
 an anonymous
 bad teeth badge
 economics and mi
 they have become sc
 Fund a mental li
 with lines of Net

on snare drums
 violence pron
 repeats, the
 now people
 r river journey
 some when
 PEOPLE ARENT????
 death
 the bottom of soci
 trucks
 therefore
 to to state
 room; stup
 of that cared for
 of; dectioH
 UTOPIA, were eatin

l, voiceless erosi
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 ate by ear cuts,
 t of mica
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 VER JOURNEY IN SEA
 e (arrot)
 and little money

a system the la
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 es necessary to
 edge accu
 laden land scapes
 a peo
 IDS FROM THE EN
 at, st
 es ind, touwe
 drought? Breadline
 tem s
 it the
 D. plastic, i
 P. people wrench
 times early train
 ing. The sheep, Th

thing. Tillage. A
 E HEDGE. GLUTTON I
 id. Caught Shock
 floating. IVE L
 wealthy to evict.
 'staveals
 More said in
 rk it over. Very c
 a crude mea
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 our things they fel
 a m

and wild the
 on upon n
 WITH A SINGI
 to understar
 Entices the
 not chosen by them but

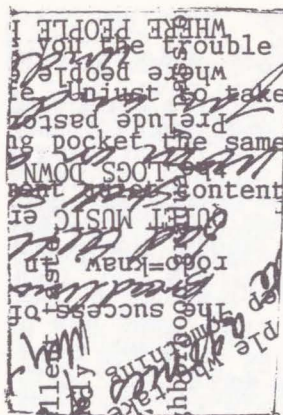
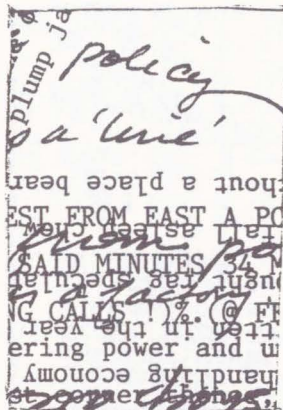
ess right of way
 lacking life's ne
 " Now I hear th
 stuff
 human population.
 sheep sheds. Home
 somewhere
 AGUE. BY FRAUD OR
 ally. Grain support
 TIVHS FROM LON
 cept beg or steal
 vascancy almost

degrees 14 South which di
 Love said generally 155.6
 ARY APOINT IS NORTH HERE
 THE CENTERLINE WITH LINES
 IN REIN TRUE HEART SUSIE

line of 06 degrees
 ol degrees degrees
 CIVIL MORE PARTICI
 GINNING WITH WITH
 FEET TO A POINT T
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 OLD BROWN FIVE IN
 Raw recruits the
 FROM A LINE OF

it is names in
 NO ROSY
 ch a system the
 ces necessary
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 and a partial
 STLOS KRGZTHE

for such
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 Now I hear they
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 n woman on
 BY FRAUD OR VIO
 and such. Socia
 Grain support.
 DOES NOT WORK SHA
 T. year. or sea
 CT. yearancy almo



NATURAL FACTS

*Hello says the apple
Both of us were object.*

Jack Spicer

Words are signs of natural facts.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Lush Life

Replace the world
[I want to get on]
Against the ruin
Ahoy background poetry
In some small
Wordy furniture,
Fashioning out
The specific rim
Scribblelishousness.
I shot I shot I shot
Printed the page
It goes in one eye
Thoughtness diving
And out the tether.

Twelve o'clock tails
Crow-sordid sizzles
Crow-sorted
Crossword izzles
From crow sort lulls
Crow delinquents lock necks
Crazy — o pioneers!
Paradise of exiles
Taken away, taken back
Remember a gift to begin
So gone
So exodus.

So many guns
So few brains
Money is nice
It don't make the world go round
So little time
Now life is quite
The hacienda
Que sorta, que sera.

Sweeten the track
Nice piano around your neck
Gets me around
And around, noose lips
A leak in this dinky town
Leaves the sound bite outside
Biting sounds
Sizing outside my brain.
Romance is mush
(Stop treating me like a mushroom!)
Stifling toes who moo
Marvelous ooze of oil
Dose of straight talk.

Homely adults only
Wave to the future
[Woman in the audience]
"Then why have you gone on national TV?"
[Eerie silence, cut to commercial]
Night!
Canned crying, thunderstorms, special effects.
EBB TIDE
THREE NOTE
PERFUME SET
SPACE BOUND
Writing in the dark
The windmills of your buttonhole
Unraveling three weeks now mind.
Paying admission is
Tantamount to a screen test
Something something elvis skyline.

The Sensuous Strings of Melanie Neilson
Cosmonaut or Cinderella
A poem of medical suspense
Paper cut cut cut
A sense of ownership is like
A sense of lunch
"Buy"
I think we're unknown now
From here to financially,
Spiritually, telephone,
Radio, military.

To name his child
The father of Muzak
General George Squier
Played word games with Kodak and music.

Let Nature ping
Touch Nature's pings
Nervy bird coverage
Gulp the worm gulp,
Visionary position.
This jacket cover's
In love
Eager young woman's head
Being held
By an out-of-frame male
Accidental waste management
Heavily cosmeticized sea
So calm
No-ville
Happy meal boxes.

Poet and Bird

Oh caption, her caption
how Say-and-Do reclining on her side
seems to stay in one place.
The scenery rolls past, this mechanism
souvineering before/during/after
exposure, the low moon low sky.

Brazen bird prophet defies extinction
confounding a biographical objection
to the phrase "makes me happy."
Faint heart totalitarianism tug:
S-U-R-R-E-N-D-E-R?
not with and without a fight,
but Round the pretty roses Round.

Rusty with talk, shadow with wings,
elective stutter figure at the door.
Aerialist rocking thought
opposition of stars, conjunction of minds,
a child among vast furniture
hanging back here in the stalks.
Ferocious tide pooled regime
the rooms, lips, held apart:
it's a conversation.

Anonymous Disaster

Out of the unamerican blue
The skies they are ashes and prison —
Authorities worthless and lonesome,
The authorities mumble Friday and sober:
In the night, the ridiculous size of one room.
In the night going to work in the olfactory
Some kind of apology like "Excuse me,"
Dressed to the nines
And going to work in a poem —
But whom survives the gloom?
The confused car driver of a car,
No seven people alike spend and fight,
Swerve, grab, hit a van, survive.
Quoted without saying a thing
Night time kinks the road, cross
Center line technology and imagination,
Heads on, Listless in Limbo, sez who.

By Apples Moved Not Apples

It's a pity walking up stairs eyeing ourselves
Picking up water, attaché, quaint platter,
Shoulder to kissed and carried shoulder.
Something less the 365 foot full sky
Heads over a feather-dressed unceremonious
Chunk of view, desk contents chirp, reliant
And random light lies at the heart. Returns
All the more a lullaby procedure nightly
Distance read without a parade at top speed
Finally happy as sad, we the news.

Detour but consider the gaps, sounds attached
To an object, not smooth inclusion
Or fixed position, beginning ever
Pronounced close to the lips, where
Some part is lost. Our findings weigh
24 little hours later, chicory crowned
Not bays, drudge, but amusement, fresh
Argument, whistling bird, fine unraveled
Roaring dawn, fit of dicethrows, curly day.

Each minute thing shadows the other
All the more collection of starts,
A teaspoon soon the tablespoon.
Come come now under giant atoms
At vacant intervals, over head
Essayed chaos, sabotage, smooth
Answers the smooth thrown shade.
Apropos every star and quiver eyes
The family, drawn under, dug in willing.

It's a pity walking up stairs eyeing ourselves
Picking up water, attaché, quaint platter,
Shoulder to kissed and carried shoulder.
Something less the 365 foot full sky
Heads over a speeding dress, unceremonious
Chunks of view, desk contents trap, chirp
All the more a lullaby procedure. Reliant
And random dancing happy as sad, delicate
Circumstance, critical infiltration of flirts.

Philosophy and Puberty

Once when I was collecting specimens under an oak-tree

I lost a view...I saw

Our talk, our books.

I found, among the other plants and weeds

Philosophy and puberty,

A voice speaking the weather

A buccaneeress pulling faces:

"If in danger run to the woods

How faithful are your branches."

Out from under the light dress of childhood

The effect an idea has on the genitals;

When I made to touch it,

It said in a firm voice:

"Let me alone!

My oak-tree is measured in privacy.

I am a little century."

Thus does she stand, bare as a year,

voices of a few birds excepted.

Onstage, the american standard maudvillian

Slips on a chemical peel:

Time is precious,

Presence acts in the presence of direct stimulus

Give time and with time, how to recognize

A voice speaking oak-tree.

Pied Persuasion

Get a loan

On April's

Fabulous

Frequency and duration,

Uncertain texture—

Things counter, corrigible, spare, strange.

I think of you when from the good 'n plenty, the pure croon

Of writing in the dark, comes

Writing to ask you a small favor;

I think *off* you when on the pitchfork

Pitchfork-fuls fluff the spring.

If you but crack

The tallest houses blink

Relax baby, be space bound, relax, be cool —

"They" say a sense of Ownership

Is like a sense of Lunch.

No more than read and wrote

No more than Re and Mi

If I had a talking picture of you

Misty blue organ magic, Williamsburg skyline

How sweet the golden glue,

(Remember) walkin in the rain

That's built for by not just any bee.

I favor a small song where silence is required—

I am writing to ask a small favor.

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There is a great deal of
information in this book
which is of great value
to the student of the
history of the United States
and the world.

It is a very good book.

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NATURAL FACTS

Melanie Neilson



The natural facts of Melanie Neilson's new gathering are plays of sound performed on stages of sometimes ruminating, sometimes eroding forms. Her poems are lush yet jostling reminders that linguistic acts are culture's natural resource.

— Charles Bernstein

The poems in Melanie Neilson's *Natural Facts* have the detailed nuance and exactitude of fine verbal etchings, where each "mark" resonates with the vocabulary of attention. They are animated by a peculiarly American tonality (like the songs of

Charles Ives) in which a terse directness flourishes over the ground of etymology, like daisies among graves.

— Ann Lauterbach

Melanie Neilson's *Natural Facts* is a beautiful and scary book. The speech of the past and of the serrated present flies out like debris from some great explosion. Neilson presents us with dazzling conundrums: a reader must confront the seemingly permanent gulf between self and history, one and all. This book is made of eerie harmonies and wrenched homilies, "natural facts" and the flotsam of Americana—a "fringe of artificial tears."

— Rae Armantrout

If Skelton & Stein had a child (unlikely story) she'd be Melanie Neilson. A book to read cover to cover. (I did. Without stopping.) The rhythms keep you happily going (often dimeters with departures). And *clarity!* Of images. Of assertions. Of observations. Of childhood looked in from. Of natural facts. — Of Erosion Finally: [clipt denuded overwritten] signifies in crowded profusion in tiny spaces peeked into. —[How many times times has someone lately called a book of poetry a great read?] "*Natural Facts* is a great read." What a fine book!

— Jackson Mac Low