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# TEMBLOR

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C O N T E M P O R A R Y P O E T S

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ISSUE NUMBER 3

\$7.50

Clark Coolidge *Another Life* complete

Susan Howe *Work In Progress* excerpts

Robert Kelly *The Maze* complete

Gerald Burns *Twenty Four Gnomic Poems* complete

Barrett Watten *Conduit* complete

Lyn Hejinian *Two Stein Talks* complete

Ron Silliman *Demo* complete

Charles Stein *a suite of 4 Seed Poems* complete

Nathaniel Mackey • Gustaf Sobin

Mei-mei Berssenbrugge • John Clarke • Fanny Howe

Stephen Rodefer • Aaron Shurin • David Levi Strauss

Joseph Simas • Gadi Hollander • Benjamin Hollander

Peter Seaton • Barbara Einzig • Alan Davies

Carla Harryman • Steve Benson • John Thomas

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E D I T E D B Y L E L A N D H I C K M A N

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## Like a kid I have fallen into milk

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## Clark Coolidge

## Another Life

**T**HE DAY WAS SO BRIGHT that later no one would think of describing it at all in terms of light. Or tide, the water hardly stirred. The entire class was there. Beers handed around. Feet stroked sand. Chatty boredom. Ray suggested they swim to the rock, half a mile out.

I thought of walking down the street. Isolate that from the rest of your day. Looking into all the things by the way that stand for nothing leading to you. A whole "alternate" route could then be proposed. And an occasional light from the past. That window molding brings in my grandfather's time and street. Most people cover with a joke at such a time. But today I think it's going to snow and that won't remind me of my grandfather's storms. Flakes filing past. Dogs breathing. Cats humming.

The motorboat cheered. But nobody paid it special attention in the general algebra. What is an alembic? He knew Ray knew all the answers in, say, Chemistry but just couldn't say enough about it. Then the teacher's retort always had the whole class laugh. Times of trap at Ray's expense. Farts erasing.

The school's halls' floorboards were loose and squeaked in the dust. Rumbling feet between tree trunks. Light pinching out behind the blustery hill they couldn't find the quarry to, or the cave mouth in time for supper. The ochre drawings of the bison were always cancelled by other bison, or fleet horses with earthtone manes. A redlight at baling mill corners.

He practiced bass viol amongst the chintzes and glass things. But the others were soon asked to leave since the trumpet's brass flashed too hard in the facing mirrors. He would later face madness in becoming a physician. And give up on music but never ineptitude. Linoleum backdoor stairs, that bottle smell.

Who's got more beer? They had arrived at the rock and started back. Someone had been there to greet them solitary and soon diminished. Whose day is this, anyway? Unbeknownst to them the class passed around a single pair of glasses to watch them with idleness. Soon enough Ray began to complain and go down.

Squeak. I can't get the top off my pen. This lightbulb won't come out. Try hot water and soap, soak them. They were passing the old firehouse, on the street still cobblestones, past the brownstone library his great-uncle had built. A companion of Mark Twain, and others jocular in carriages. But he was wondering where was the lighthouse. Pure beacon. Salted by wind, brushed by grassblades and pissed on by a single white-skinned cat.

We'll have to alter the apparatus for this experiment, since Mister Fletcher has misremembered the ingredients. It wouldn't blow. Earlier someone had tossed a large chunk of sodium into the sink, the results now concealed in a hospital. And some red phosphorous flung out the window barely missing a passing old lady with violet-tinged hair. All the laboratory furniture was composed of wood.



Ray began to sink like a stone so I managed to haul him in by the band of his trunks. A crowd awaited on the marge with laughter and questions. And a guard who had waited with policeman to throw us off if we made it back to the beach. He hadn't tried to help when help was most needed making me furious. A lot of time then spent in standing and shoving around. We left.

The car came back from the avenue south to the beaches out of gas. From the top of a hill along the way, "Maybe we can roll into Apponaug." Back somehow to standing on a corner in the city. Glass fronts with shoes inside. Coffee buns on racks. Nobody knew the story. "Nobody on this street right this moment knows a single story!" He leaped on a pigeon, gushing it into the curb. On a bet, he did it. I thought there might be jazz recordings I hadn't seen in the basement of this store. Blue faces of TV screens inside the glass of shops. Somebody's father passing unseen to a latest newspaper.

Where did the Confederate Forces surrender? At a courthouse somewhere. Liquids freezing to a purple in a jar. Bad Moon Heights, rows of tricky housing. But how did you enter the ranchhouse by the turkeys. The moon had been flat with calcareous parkinglots. He would take me to the cave but first there was the hurricane and we had business in the Boston NavyYard. He had me drive a pickup truck on railroad tracks and I hadn't known how in the blinding pour. Turned out all we did was come back home. The storm washed loose a cemetery hillside, the corpse-boxes broken open on a road. Cement bridge developed a crack in downtown Woonsocket, crowds watching it. Goings-on behind barricades. He had been a weatherman in Washington. Snail shells, carbide lamps, and laundry in large lots.

Could you tell me what I never understood about love. Were you there with another girl? He came back from the mixer and blared. It had been another bust. No sense made of any of that either and his runningboards protruded. Bottles of nameless whiskeys and talk it all over with mayonnaise. In which the car came back to the barn.

Allotment Avenue, Weedville. Amethysts of Quinn on the blackness piano. Chime cookies and radiant succulents discussed. A plain fine time. Advancements tongue-tied. The fire went out and the cat arrived. I wandered far to a planetary museum of native boulders in a field. In the basement there I tinkered with specimens in tiny dusty cupboard drawers that stuck in the casement twilight ground level. Wondering where apatite fits in the scheme of schoolbrown days. A dog at the frozen lake edges and sniffs. Light snapping on in the oaken car.

We settled back from Mars lifting the khaki curtains with a window stick. Cut out the desk varnish into sunblades with our moods, knowledge that snore. Time may be electric enough to end your day but no one is that sure. Watch it rhyme. Ray rose and slipped a marble inkwell into his skyblue sneaker. Kids take notice from behind volumes of armadillos.

There was a cupola I had not noticed not so far above the street. Something conical in all youth, hallow attention to the sorts with lights revolve inside. Running planetariums into a seabeacon hookup, doubt at night. This becomes inner of a pasteboard contains the salts that beaded through, Ray gave. He emits the stranded grains of boards at my chemical ear. Skin doubts that maintain the laugh, or not as the dream as a drain removes. We scattered down the halltone avenue, diving and washing saved one or the other to light and keep the dread in pitch.

The road turned to sex. It had been death but one of the corpses turned visible. I had a window. The cement doorsides burned in the wind one sunned in. That the twigs thrashed the birds to hand me their tongues. Axial remarks idling in solution of beer table listings. We had the lights whelm back on the rose wrists of our peery days. I got him lost in Elmwood, where the stations collide in the revolving floors of downtown wheeling. While keeping his corpse lit in handlines.

But the piano darned in ice coughed stone through the nailpolish gates. The winds warted, thimbles on the table we were thrown so. Around behind the black garage instead of through the school of bricks. Black polished paint metal hurts. So serious he was stuck from school. Chimings of math I could steam him to the beach alchemical. Scowlings of the crosseyed bottle of pondwater.

These lightings we could ponder to the eventual sink and fix. The water shone went out. He ambled through the bricktown stipulants. Could we fox the grains of lab ice or would the thermite not take. Your house might be drilled at night casting sleep into a peeling diminish. I must coil up to lead him that he tell me, that he'd think out what I'd have him through. Felt leave.

Beyond the tortoise ambush pond and the hive blown so the bee comes the book of love. The glove of polish at the burning avenue, looseness under auto on a morning. The ridge would rise to others than us who lived on. Ray on the other side of the carbon stamp of plots. I could never quite quiver to figure him, not that instant pitch. The leaves amount my gloves, feary in the morning flame its cubical so cold a school. Would they give me there a nine or a clarinet further. Droop neck dope, I would pump my single drum.

There was a couple even then seated plain, being as how they were twins. I watched their breasts come snout, keen though prim they were so many years together. The text I scribbled in which they peed previous to exacting the tawny pitch of friction, fraught and equal bodies. Rosy and blew tubas, or plucked viols of cherry metal. They diminish in the wood that cracks you seat the body, working the dull into an ocean of pointed plans. Hone your palms. I settled the specimens, dove over picket functions in my meat, pried Ray from his calculant stabbage. Then came the more whistleable forms of limestone, flanking off one cape of my dawnroom time, one hurt tooth.

I made medical kits in the room behind flaps that label. So orange be the dorm of my witness. Later on a bicycle clip to the castle caves. What would I eat, grounding. The stars formed into a town, clad like any other. Heard the bubblings in wreckage down below all night of any sleep the clutter to peel, my dreams to shake from rafter awning space and green. Would always save me, the lower softness bound to any ledge. It would prove a gate, a makedo smiles in horn. His face with no cap, none of my bodies ever helmeted. Cackle of war a mere blimp on the town, flag of no handholds, winding waves around my self saluting to the breeze. It was an awful knock, any wall of slant to my brain a hole remolds the dream that shafts it. The day the flashlight hove over.

He returns to me stern later as I dip punk to the graves of my shakes. Fireworks claimed me follows the roof burnt off, calcium avenue. Two shakes of the amber fluid soluble acrid biter as a flute sans dextrose. A chandelier rimed to the rising apples of apes outstretched to a blueness. This was the day of my backstairs tuxedo grimace in its dirtheoles a carbonary ode. That my diet would shift from calculations dire to caverns shunting.

Then the nextdoor wall would lie at my closed window shutting. The sky all dry up a hall-shout spire, you could hear its height from the clapper bells one blows through. That not a thing smoking leaves. That cap was lemon same as a ladder I discarded, call all lost things of a farm I never tilled, in rows that ring down the back of the skyblue attic bookcase. They all live there still. The house one is born in never dies but gains a redness. Out the other end and struck like a sunset its risers. I gummed out the message would have powered Ray back. Would I later turn an earlier version of same?

The sun would come up on the outside of Ray on the other side of town same tone as me same waves if called for. But what did the other see through his sides of glass. Awnings mounting up to a leafy tank attack? Aphids rambling? Could a novel be wrought in plasticine wrested from the cones of the twins? I did observe them longer than they stayed there to be seen. I leafed through their



claddings soundless to sleep. But all their bracelets budged but honk. Ray amusing carburetors beneath colog abutment. The stripes of the friendship smiles. Long hauls of bulbstring Nazis down the sewer tunnel buried now. We dream, and then forgetting the most we eat.

The downtown peels, revealing the same cracks we never noticed, wronging ourselves home from classes. Standpipes we called them. Later to suffer homeroom in a quarry, hammers there stall dank. Halloween a pumpkin turned nitre if you finger it, long after the halls slant to stoppage. I would rise a mining engineer, press my flesh pencil and make book on it, hawking still only a junior. Honings of a sedge my grandfather pumped me. My cat would die. My clothes would nearly fit. I would rage in a closet, no bulb to term own. In such spillage darkness would form my spiracles, a glass of them settles before me now. Four bars of blues laid out for drums. Barked before the tubs and slapped the nearness of you.

But I stayed away in an ambling off, my stickholster suit would stem me downhill from freshroom practicing. Knuckle black box beneath the lean brick chimney, I was taught to hum at attention and count my hammered marks. I hated there till the grass glow brown. Salamanders twirl ascent in my music. Later my cousin would cap them from under their stones, so strictly that once he would rage in bees. I stuck to my practice, couldn't slip its adherence.

Such a length of piano I feared the walls would come off baring my composure as a plot of jeweled circus stretching sleepage. Squeaks here the horror of the barrel stare. The halls come off the yard and locomotive through staves of speakage. Never to stand up over my shoes to report in repetition is perfection. The facts are the shines I have labored over specimens. You tell me how it riddles Ray without rhyming in consequence. The night my home hung on the town as I seared off the grey matter by the bituminous volume. Clear the throat to make room for a statue of that. Bombs would never hone a better chew. May saints disarm me from such conditional.

The brain after all is mapped for show in strings of wood. Possibility in shelvings for the crystal? Insides turn to be the thin shells for quartets. The seated bowing men a first doubling of the twins? They scaled up the environs, weedy parked cars and all. My green brain clapped its lid and threw a disc, red bird cracked in sky of twigs. Tooth indented pencil dimensions, some class data late as any hills. Ray hoots from his bunker and I dance faster over briar-pickets into the cellar-bore asbestos gales. We had roped up a pole before the party teens earlier. Milky graduates. I could strain some sun from down in there on a looseness as of cabbages. We grew whiter soon to be eyeless, feral in a swim of quarries. Lead to the glassy stare turns crevice.

Would there be no more electricity, too much sun on stringed instruments? I burrowed into a tome on bee-worms. My mother emitted a smoke to my solution. But how did the trees figure on a route of clashing wheel-wires? I followed the salt, always have in my clothes. Even if it pickle my friends. I halted at touchiest limb tip and leveled my saliva, pedal-tongued lightheaded to the ground. At the bottom of each column not a number but my empty fist. And the cars rolled under the home and the cars rolled over the practicing sound.

Providence counted of all the towns a stationary. Where the marble bears pen a mezzanine brook, and the isolate human pees outstanding. But I never choked on radishes the Italian rolled me endless, who packed his whole farm in a cab. This is known as wisteria or a tensile sadness. Later I left my forks to be sharpened and rang for school. Spotty legions of the old brick stack. The keeper of the tomes was Radar, her garret of the brushed alligator with the hilarious eyehole glass. I wetted it.

I stood bored in my clothing and was supposed to be shamed. This long before Ray tailings and the hymn of the board feet. We carpentered there, or so lined up to be seemed. There was hair in our

food (now in my sleep), beans against the wall (later in my beer). They drilled us all a kilter, faced without the adder, though one of us showered in Rousseau jungles. You clip it to your face, then stream through a profession. Mumbles in blackened auto thawing home.

Collapsing from some hills, clogging teeth, needling shoulders friendship whispers. Members of light seemed to arise. Thought he was your friend but it's geology was meant? Cribbage clitoral simply? Fossil off all that old geography, plastic the color of books that sift right quick. You nod on, and on with the umbrella of it. Sticking in a quilt your warmth then bulges. There are hurts though that won't quit, cancelled glance for one. We rose in our tumours and stalked the waists of building. Glow worm.

He roamed one side of night the ruts for his camera, his eyes on churn. Below the cabin floor of a canyon lay the struts for his cave. Struck his soda pillow with jagged lines of phosphor, wit his crutch and shallow to meet. We shone eyes, a near miss and he sat without thought. Yellowjackets pawing his window, that would this not have been mine. I jawed timbers down the throat, jackstraw essence of another cancellation. Meet me after test, have me come for once fully clear.

We weighted the table with flaws by our pounds and listened. The music was draped from a ceiling lighted in cusps crescendo. Saying how did it go so merely bow. As we fret the icicles come candles to the task. Sleep slow as hangs snow in the lights down low. I bent the list flat to the wall, one meaning of backtalk. But then we soft discuss a civic twist but then the building missed. A moon at the end of a darning. Pretense of a pencil to an ivory ground, are we clowns?

The pond gave up every sort of coil of snarl but beefeaters. I went there shortlegged. Later there'd come up an extra toe to every rhyme, what now is my slant. Not a cap but will pinch the face, that added lace to mine forgot. Dentists were for some youths, deep enough the bore could have staggered mine. A face full of fence for that avenued parvenu. Till enough age stoppered him. Brain off, stickpin sutured, fuselage dangling. Perhaps all like him thought of scabs. The casing jar aboil.

I used, to run for links to the future, a yarn scream. Lot that seems never ends. A quavering some mother hung the washing out on. Iron career penciled in by detriment ants. Bow lines kicked off under the aurora. Tinge of lime kilns to softening try your patience. Landscape furled in such portentous scarp, Alley Oop dared Foozy there. Buck Rogers flared his batterycells above. Such brilliance of shell we lined up in attics for blimps. Little did Ray know, nor did I, that the pavement had taken our blessing and shunted one fell skinned inch. All we showed up as were the apparent dares.

I broke off in a daze, the world all in greys impressed. An emptiness singed with need for the bronchial harp. Not to say one would leave this house for a horse. Stay, proof. Stay and drain me for a while. Then the radio hit me, tacking its blares through the boreal cleavage. Riboflavin from Moscow, the steers on the avenue, escapade persiflage diminished. Oh hand me a hot pike for all of this weave. Rather a turnstyle of leatherette boudinage, nobody suffer such waves and live. From these bakelite casings come the mindpowder harriers. Button up and duck if you hope to sift your strands further. There be no vincible source of such like haloed hours. A pliable encasement starts at home. I search me down to none but the comfy chair and storm.

Then I meet the bus tunnel saint, he tells me Son, I got 114 agents all over this country just watching the rich people. So I twitch and shift my elephant's foot to warm it by the drug. You can see that the bologna would retreat. And many simple Englishmen smoking down crevasses. Told us all about them plain that's not in any books. Plans filled in with cheese. Ray read whole papers of it, last you. Laid in a jungle atmosphere so, never lifted off the Germans. So striped a chapter to end in beady pepsin. Rats loose in drawers.



And he made a living tackle. The chancellor through a telescope though a pipsqueak would approve. Whole fields of hamburger in aid. Pygmy poles of the handed starling. From dream pane at least it was startling. Lozenge of whole blood dissolved in the starboard binnacle, two galley sheets to the west wind. He stood. Is it reasonable to be realized? He stood against. No. He stood fenced in the metal bay, a strut cable from his knitcap head extended a plumber's helper cup he steered at the bigwheel. An aunt's brownie emitted this on a greyish face that day of the unmanned vessel. He made, and I hardly know it yet, the bay to squeak. His muffler swung in radar.

There were compact drums for oil, we avoided edging down from as we sledded. A Riverside of every state, this the one with Providence Plantations, the copse across the mirrored flakes of Roger Williams' dial. Man who never heard to grin he delighted so in lighthouse. The floating variety, a lesson in standards, twist up the grandiose to a nickle snail, etc. Here we bent before our necks aged enough for row of beers. Seldom does the sparrow prelude to a kiss, and I wanta make water stop the car. Lichened liver side, taut to a lank far spark off brad-head windows. Often enough the blend we heard it said that oil steers. And the grim boulevard bobsled cawls its asphalt. We were nuts, had incense and like Monk the kernel.

When do you think this all will dive off you peel off me and thud to any common abatement? Tuesday, a truncated cone. Or wednesday? a closer walk along the Rhein. We closed a mice in his desk. Made floor the marks of our starch to talk. Thereto an also, combustionary sofa of an ape. Also glued his feet, his desk to the wall, the dictionary pages together. Gunpowder flat and phone off its pin the while. The days to be graduated in style till stationary. You took my cap of a pasteboard quite. Interests lobbed. Trolley irons meet. Such classes so neutral you never dared a date.

In the boards' cracks were the marks of those that dared to shed them. Still I burned my way on to the capsule room. There was a granite Jesus and a room sounded like Plutarch. Rigged blinkers and solved stanchions so hoist they were hollow. The train came later inking in the phosphorous window. I have no knowledge I fear I stoop. Settling the matters that close you shine you. Peed in the doorway instead of hiding by it. The waiters were those who stormed off their marks, made of every midday cancelled riddles. I dreamed of the park in silver with a pole of smoke. Cars ate my labbagages, scowls my average. You wouldn't have known my friends by the link of curl lapels, a learnable sky like pasteboard. This was fastened science to the hilt or shirk.

Later in the basement, coinage. Discussions whirling sweaters, lines of lateness scored in a board, ankles so slow they burn. Where is the sky in school? A matter of such clasping transparence figured to the door as testing. No good of a reach-back, I dropped my sparrow hook. And the coggings beyond got rhymed as pigeons somebody dared to splashed by the wheelside, sheetglass empty avenue. We slagged buses, we kissed would produce bruises, pronunciation stalemate. A solo of just the hands. Since the numbers stalled the dances, the boardhall feared to cave. Bunnyhop barefoot and earring.

I removed home my own sky pressed between the pages. The war long over, the streets no longer overflown. A store there of sweet inks in hues of wax for the sucking, whistle. A hat store by its angle grey actually and stuffing blocks. Meditation was Cathedral Square later crossed by copter and hauled to France on a film. Never knew my breathing would plant much then, or stir already soiled. The bolt heart of a township dubbed a city, we threaded our apparel through. Nobody came. Nylons were there. And vanilla.

The class never stopped. It went home with us in a tube. Housing negotiated, and how goes the wear of a titrate addition. The impaction of bedding a Quentin Durward Kirby? The strain of such digits off teeth the beginning of the mess. I would go home, would in place rebound. The lights

came off and the tale became if. I would exchange itch-knicker brogans for soggy ledgers. I would stall for the fascinate and shrugging glance.

We made it all up so fired we weren't. A pin wound up storing me though. Those guys so greyly fisted they didn't. The phlegm of a mendicant parcelled in place. I wonder Providence now, as if this were the past. I leave no avenue stick unturned, lastly I laugh at the pond. The dog leaked over the lake, astringent and cough behind buttresses. In the papers my pages were cancels of the make-work diet, bulging matter stops on a dawn bank dinner plate. Said I'd be liable to small, a shun stir. Strand on the paper and the load drew out. It's been signed.

Flatly it mattered. The chalcidony clouds give the black cow on yellow a look of interest. Not the snow that breaks my head but the engines with which it freezes, my dependency I thought the dog was, a fault in the heating system. Tomorrow's turnover plain as today's title, inept as in winter. Pounds of paper on the table and a pebble in a puddle. You slogan much of this and I'll have it harder. But I wouldn't give the back of my hand to a car. Credit where it deserves strife. A lock at the point of light and we all send silly. Trained on wheat, will finally that fill the brain? Globe dim but whispers. Strain of salvage, strain of load.

But the braggadocio. What he had to say was never what was told them others to say. The plot to link keys. The hole in the home room beneath the pasteboard math tome front. He crabbed his name on girls, back-to-to marquee. They nibbled at their numbers and never had *him* to say. Waited inside the clock for evening. But I could sense the basement and hours with nary a flange. Salt spell icecreams and the answer held to the question that never got asked.

To live in a shed, what I learned at school. Dream scarf women of an acapella bask. And the make-up test bark tunes on the lifter. The piece of chalk lost in blackboards come the center of our radiance shifty. To elaborate in sentences the pin over the knuckle. She was the yellow rose I would come into films to blame. Notched penetrants whirled around the fist on a thong.

This was just as I learned that roads led to the back. Behind the wheat tanks, the Eisenhower rotary leveler. Capillaries too steep to avenue, larval bellies rapid in molasses. Sign of the blind, a very strong through. Burp out of the steel bolt settles and the fur seeds of vegetable animals. Made this all up of such a fisted strain, kites of straw. Do you think I should want this to be better than the last time, all this trying all this bundling on the line?

It's not recollection. That's retreat. You can't gobble the monovalent peas again to hiss in brand delight. The roaster will not again register. The lips come off with their gleams. He leaned against the car, as if another fascinating meeting would pass him. Imagine the man whose miles were all collected in crates for disparagement. Back of the barn there, were there fools of youth? The bark came off his furry smile and he shuffled and cancelled. The night that would cart off stars end in onions.

Listen to the gables, made all up of beckoning clay starlings. The house made out of the house stood there before. And another sturdier then before that, hulk. Bronzed cows, you'd think secondary or even tertiary to that. A bulk given license to resume. The car that honked when the pole went up you'd piss the dawn to blind in stare. Caravans leaving to the frets stirtown, shirt out.

But I can't write this. Next, I'm never to know what happened next now it's gone. In the nature of words to lead away from what they lead back to. Words of the never recollective stays. The leaning is to a pin boy on a bark bike. Already it yanks. Impossibility of the thing at all has caught me. New Jersey, with its harking newts retentive of nights to the open trainset raincellar morning of the lawns. Specular, reticular, as on the horizon of send it back, far with the other spends and circus. So long I have not delayed to type the mind.



Then he walked. Then he rolled. Then he standard. Platforms of puff white in the causeway blues. Where the liners of cabbages were roses, and heat stumped the darners by harm screen. It was too plain in engineering the darkness, the skim stars and the stolen cars of their cement. Fisted bunches in fly rooms too, but he was street sent in the city. Papered out in laming screeches and noting weed spinning in car wheel. Seeing the strip maps in glass of market street. The beers when got down to desk in stove in beats. The cog lengths of confetti hum in cowl of store, you know he made a laugh in lair. He made a laugh on a line with crinkled blinkers stopping.

But this all be a head of match-up stalks and moo goo guy flairing. The cow plated out of the thrust tunnel and uttered my veins. I don't think I know any but pure about this avenue in solitude. It bats by. Living on sorry if not stony roentgens. The heights go up in strong and the sheets in bury roll down. Surely and bituminous I've had many colds. I kicked in the lockers, the reefers where they fish the chicken. That avenue is bronze. This vent is sugary. And nothing is known to straighten all out but tombs around the poles.

What lies, but the ameliorative shocking? One vast sweater tube adhere my skiddy body. Yes is sticky but no is gold. Harking back to early standard blame time and the lemons on the ball yard radio. Zoot suits first hung back there behind the grit on tubes. And I guttered with them, gleaning their righteous tremens. Hank Shot, the brief flaw man, arriving with onions tarred radish-red on diamond gurry wheel. Rang a triangle on his three-tire sand. Bartended in my biology kitchen, behind the signboard bread shards. Leaked berry sulphur to my witnessing ma. Shot up a guest roof over neighborhood avenue.

I came back grey shot with flesh, looming in bated lair mind, scouted to the foldest corners, mildew fresh in the tuckings and sun up over the mainlawn flood escapes. I wandered in merriment avenue, green and blimp light, listing the sticks I leveled past, a grunt turned to a faucet, a grinding like flutes as I watch. Till sit in winter sticks shooting tender, when cats look at eyes and never wonder. But that was, hefting, later. Oh yeah, I've had my pie histories too, to rattle berries in rotten battles, appleside dusts form boulders at my snail. And the sitting fascinate at a tiny silver disc flush with kneecap, was a thumbtack I hadn't realized I'd kneeled on. The chowder oak passage I didn't yet know was room of school.

Of rose fabric smartment broadcasts, as the boards lined up, skulls grew shrill and the sillies all pitched. We iced our inks and closeted our parents out of cardboard. Our minds on wicks. The buzzing cat to rereach us in or with a barrel of ointment gingerale. I'd dreamed my mind was kept loose in a certain ceiling, hovering on blue drizzle of jeweled shuteye circuses nap-nights. These were the dime flash years, spun from muckle and clingish roam. The rinds were open, nothing to stop a scar. Now that only sunset can be iodine, that tangish burn. Adjectives more adverbial then, hung on the lash of an eyewick tip. And all the caravan cabins of minder children and their tooting duties, that rhyme with fudge whatever they'd put their noses to. Must have lived for yards in sugary stock, barn owl pent. Passing shelf-sill shortage luck-poems, scribed sun-up in room alone. These were my milling storage years.

## II.

The window was a door, but my first door was a window and it came not in stages but right flush up against my first being moved to a new house. At the age of one year, exactly come objects no less clear for being solid. When I feel where I am as an extension of my neck. Parasol in heights the nod clouds could not clear, they were so itch amazement well of gentleness and the hum is bugs contained in the yard. Copper petals, thunder innards, the absence of an elm.

The room like the crystal it was closed in winter.

What was that room in the rain like, in the snow light. Was it a loom for the knittings of sharpening days and nights. Could I in warmed-over nappers be caught in it. It was lemon but it would shortly veer. It was partitionless, darting with camber. Shown but slight. It had a wish, release of extensions. A whole hall of a room, porch or slabbed on behind giving on the spell rectangular we thought a yard and called it level but in too many shades of tree fenced. Flies died in the looking out on all of this. Later this room contained a newt died, winter. Crystal and pent as a station. Dialless in the night thought forged.

My music nearly would freeze here. My Brubeck, my Webcor, my lost in the middle of a tabled room plain. Bulb lamps missed and roses soaking in, memory of summer as wires. Thought was containment space by a darkling whirl, the needle pierce spreading days beyond the eyes to the ears of one piece. It choruses green in the glass enclosure. And beyond the closing plaster a sort of woods I am felt. Tugged by myself into the green light dimness recess by where should have been a fireplace but it's the back set out of the one in the livingroom so we put a bookcase in front of it, the bookcase of dark and glass. What's enclosed in here are apportionings. Dim aids.

Do you seal still, oh room do you sigh, flame, a marry the weather posts. I thought there would be gold in here but it came back about as loose as animals in cages. The blur of factory in a sunporch showily darning. The glass doors but belted as is purposed of humans, they stand through the tin of the roof rain buckles, egging up to a yard sky through which the thunderheads seemed a balcony. And the rose heads a similar heft to jade. But are heavy things dangerous as this room so light to seal.

I see this room with myself here and feel I inhabit a solid, a tonal function being with repetition innards? The tone of light goes on all night, never a pause for the holes stark provides. An altar is winning in this set of chairs and hostiles with iron banks. I lean against a swim of air, ballgame vein and slickered pants and will my hair so needlessly buzz or no, razor of an oleo to the starts of whining blank. The sun was an egg below zero that day and the newt relaxed in a glass to sleep whole deaths away and glide. I cracked against the door of glass and ate the horse they say, winning within an altar my portionment.

Days of lock and days of ignoring all stay. The night come huge and flat as a night as trees above wheels hauling me backroad teeming and tiring and even tearing that the overhead should still be so still. In the room could be a coat, my coat of light as I stand pinnacle steady as the center of a roam sheer music. And this is the story of my room, the things within before the things stood still within it all, who could be a collector of marriages.

The normal room, the room of shine, room of pinholes evenings. Outside the outside door snapped the light on to cease the bugs attracted with rolled-up literature angled so fisted. And the fish came back having spent their wishes to my glow-bitten hand. The night of the rains' arrow burns on cement, the stoop so pocked we used cameras there, fireshells and hammerbombs and lashers you hurled firm arm past roof peak and ignorance lapped. My lapel was a thong, mold of barium's hairs.



Then the papers aped time and it snowed. Showers of ilk, throttles of particle stay. Reptile embargo sticks to the walls of effort garage and its pigiron systems, vents, telephone pipe switch nothing to call to, a door in the beaverboard tinies. Smug damp vowel room of lumber load coal chute and drying apple radiums, this the lilac lean digression, a neighboring admission.

Do you think you can say, do you think you can stay in the phrasal shell of the green and blue they are during true. Can you count on the level of light on the calciums on ice. Do you repay the grouch of the leaves with whistling stains. Do the clapboards tan in the heights of the puffball wheatedge noon. Twist down the syrup from a lantern bottle and collide sweet with curbing blare. Scan a chair. Polite. Hum with stare.

The room is a bulb and the future its reach, a turn off the same chain. The whirlings of a drone down could be axial, rob the mantle of its well. We could reach out on tables and sing to blatter the oiled angles to inkwell snooze. And then the room is blond and crepes its withers, a limiter on its minutes looping saturnine. The car could not be seen from this chimed about doweling hall. I could fall into my own mirror stalking here from doubting futures.

You mug. You mug in the center of this room in separates and fall in sharps sum in fronds. Turn the climbs of leaves to redness pasted in the tongue cut through glass of this short out wide from this lighthouse. The harm of the scout out jewelry pages pressed in the skin like going out to buy ice. Taking the size of a cork sky, this dotted room a silence. Down fluids, a wideness.

The room held puzzles and ice to its notion of a long containment, long sound drapes and leaks through the laths, kick-the-bucket radiator and softness patches, glass thongs, elements tardy, and the spin of camphor claws. The roses beyond, trellises to wire sky, assortment of bend trees, carpet beds of aphid loss and the testaments to garden furred stones. I smiled here and fought the images thus wrought up. I passed the signs and pinned them, limiter to gave-beyond. I was bored and ate salads. I was a prong in the view of all satiety. I languid and landed.

This power part to sledge a stew.

More snow.

More leavings on record plumb.

Roy Rogers versus the Canyon of the Skull. How could the Roy Rogers exist in a picture book. He must have wanted it in a hand-held pretense, a hobbling minister. That it had searchlights installed shine out automatic from its sockets too. He winded up there by a rope how attached. Faced and swung. We read this all in red and blue dyes from a near level. And nobody is there but the rock ledge mechanisms but he wins. Lights smash out and we see. Daylight of Roy the While.

As cowboys end up facing the evil machine, so I the sunroom. Empty lodge of lemon rose chariots, and plates of television scraped smear of greenbeans. Conversation parental in late sun is liverish. A panel in the convention lags open on dogs wire fences. The seeing of themes through thaumaturgy machine. Price 'carious of one admission. You whirl in green place of one hand and send back for Brubeck. He charges the skeleton walls, comes up the bridge with a divide you hum. Such bat games as free all the things you are, Bach print-out at tea time. Banana carvings at the spirit of boats, the wake of serpent snails bury at the foot of a tooth the quartz. And the barn walls woo the cartons that wail, varved wood auto. Roy made it back.

And the beard grows no matter what you don't. And three mice go up the coal tree. And birds peck the sheath out of a glass shaped of tar, that it's our power they give up. No lodgings when no resultant echo innards, we drill awake mornings, coffee on the snag. Then white and airless models of short graspable fruit, now the edible's on the rise, from chalky pits. What could I erase from that

day once brung up, locked in the center of the room never lost, just apparel shied away, you see trains back away down spooky shaft closet. This room relapse be as if a day to prepare. Shocks of graphite on the diamond wrist.

So sposen could I shake it back to tourmalines, apparent syrup barrels till towers in the palm. They cling like clock moss in the switchings of my brain, salamander salads in the vases marl beyond. But the backyard return is death? The elm badge stout downward chains in replica youth? Who rents the dog to the furrier now? Who vents the earth hole at the outline of body twin in clapboard steels? Do I return to onions in the glass case warp of winters, clung in sledgeling sun? How mount the questions not a barrier. All this dental work on the prose detail, rather I'd snap a song standing and stall. Winter rhythm shores the glass cog up of suns and I venture night laced tower and parlor. I wall off in a lean and star the yard.

Pretend nights, apple soliders, the leadmen in the rafters, fluorescent marriers in paint. Could you hold the window off to an upstairs sky. Paste pine reflex where the kids held the club. The reverse sky a flooring of opposite ceilings in sex chip pulp. We made molasses of a candle there, blowbottle too. Activity shine of wasps made a plasm port sound. But this so far above the sunroom, longitudinal diamond, sub finishing the sky. Where mocassins be told from heads the cavern meats dialed. Table brights clothing in a merry tocsin. My uncle come to melt my bear and gramps plan murder of my cat friend there. The gist of such thrusts a jest, at best. Near my window of an elbow my rest. Crystals of just such a hue the barrier.



### III.

I would be coming down the dead end red brick street,  
my head well below the window ledges, till I'd always stop  
by one particular window to my left, no persons, no sound.  
Then, helpless to stop the sequence, I would look slowly up  
to see, in a pot on the sill, the brilliant red flower,  
horror.

I would be coming down with a redness  
helplessly particular to not a single footstep  
the windows had been left to flower my horror.

Brick the sound in my head, helplessly young for  
anything but particular, the sills of slow absence  
coming down dead.

At the red end of my head a well sounds  
helpless with brilliance, below the persons in  
flower putting up with horror, straight up as  
dead as my flower, my power.

The flower was helpless? The window to stop it?  
My head well below zero sound? What  
person's street? Who's left bricks?  
Whose story left me to stop with  
my brilliance?

And what is a window to slowly deaden  
the sequence? There was no asking of  
the dream. Itself is a power. The flower  
its own business. But I am left  
soundly, particular to be there.

Just there. No trace of my former.  
But I knew I must be there, perform  
particular sequence. Helplessly try not to  
look up. If only once to occupy  
straight street and not turn. The flower  
to go about its own redness.

Heights of helplessness. Emptiness of  
openings for the power. The direction is  
the horror. Sequence is not choice.  
The flower could not stop, was the point of  
the sequence. I could make no difference,  
not a sound.

There should have been water and not  
sourceless lighting. No sun. Just redness  
of bricks leading up to the flower.  
I can't feel my hands. I am eyes,  
a mouth?, a manner of moving.  
It is night. First knowledge. First shatter.

First face without honor. The flower is  
so nameless to tell me horror. It's  
instinct, and sheerness, and detail me to the mark.  
The power of redness to lead.

Nowhere but I know it without knowledge.  
Out of sequence, its own sequence, an alien  
corner. In a brighter culture it would  
name me, Horror of Red Flower at the Window  
of that Hour.

### IV.

Caught in whirl stub whisk gate. Eyeless  
but with prongs to the impossible routes.  
One wants to say a boat of smear extension  
its dot table of ports a hull of prolong  
not to be named as boat glimpse till cut of life  
and a Tanguy brought to bear upon it.  
Intrauterine? Pre-Utopian? An other horror.  
My first, my flinch numb away  
as if an elbow sprang, saddled my sleep.  
And cuts of dark light into temperature substance  
an even iller and hillier part of light. And something  
spherical wants to hum all these wounds.

Caught a Tanguy in my fist, mind all elbow  
or I am the fist caught elbowing.  
Not to be normal but cut all into ports  
one wants to be caught. A snow of dark eyes  
to hills of a prolong, a wound to hum at  
all of a night white. One wants to be a boat  
to owe and add the glimpse away.

12 poems from a Work in Progress

sitt                      and so  
site                      A  
World is  
blis    eye            eyes  
Evese clad led and so belonging  
A lamp                      cite  
that  
and so A                      A all  
the and so

sitt                      and so  
site                      A  
world is  
she (was)            shall scale  
Evese unied Evyn belonged  
A lamp                      cite  
berying



and so A                      A all  
The and so  
be and so  
                    commanwndementys    al  
Also  
                    also as  
                    so as

As we stand and as you stand  
Two belt brothers  
Sculls map "French Margaret's Town."  
"Do you remember me mother?"  
"I do but have forgotten where we met."



Pip angler be especious learly

Pip angler elne especious Noes

Set foot to Gnadenhütten Beyond  
blue mountain distant Europe  
sdreamles hus namen of hasten  
zeal Senseman and Angerman hus

Friedenshütten (Tents of Peace)  
keg toil to set powder shelter  
each hap march cabin hatchet end  
hap each too steep abundant common



All very completely staccaded  
Rode so far as Skippack

Defensible woods are clear  
Old Fort may yet be trace

Savage stilt of every house  
Little old glove each hunter

Sargon was a gardener's boy  
Solomon a scullion

Our book so dear to us  
Copies are read to pieces

Courage and country sign Behalf  
fratrum for natural brethren

Over force of phrases

test colloquy preamble  
prayer

Force without phrases

baroque caprice  
deaf omen spheres

*But who knows a thing*

Thrift of the searchers of earth  
Essential identity of property



Incorrigible positivist illusion

Long hierarchical ordering  
apparent teleology of phenomena

No straight line in nature  
no pattern no perfect center

Winter passage between house and barn  
One-room-deep houses

All bridges are broken  
Antique cameos and intaglios

Immeasurable meadow    Sough  
of gale vengeance    Soft settlement

bay legend buoy legend  
Least and least constellation

where Gods walked leaving no trace  
invisible halos of mass

Pine tree money of Massachusetts colony

Plunder ever sort of plunder  
Signal and then signal

Wouldbe waving and waving  
luminous cosmogonies half-forgotten

Connected farms haphazardly strung together

Tracts of emptiness dungeon our universe  
Our masters re-interpreted as monsters

Addresses of Peace to Truth  
or Truth to Peace

Briars tares thorns nettles  
Submission and use of reason

Recollective empty heaven  
Gaze endures infinite scars

sense in the scale of events  
Name as yet but stray Irreal

chronological Counter-nature

Heaps of manure over the stubble  
I ask my way to lost Zion

Rapid walks absolute certainty



Wind roars old ballads  
over ditches and fences

Over hushed crusaders  
stratospheric dust haze

Hat of flames to paint  
splinters of anagogy

In the brass morning  
farms greenbelts badlands

an underseen sun in Sun

At the bible and sun  
in little Wild Street

holy antithesis of ice and east

My room faces west  
It has never been cleaner

a little bridge into winter

## The Maze

Land and bits of land  
Law and notions of nations

In seaweed swan feathers  
Sophists diving under

snow in first story  
Slender stretch of myth

Keep and comfort come  
unhook my father

his nest is in thick of my  
work

Not in winter but into Winter  
Theory's thetic thread

loose in the world

Love wraps us and winds us  
alone in first loving

ceaselessly consumed  
ceaselessly consuming

Spirit of flesh in my heart

I live as if centuries are nothing  
Imagination the imagination



say gold thinking of her

— Barbara Roether

How  
does gold think?  
It amazes

how yon yew  
lies under  
snow yet  
in sunder time  
will lift  
we'll lift you

meanwhile  
my mazes

my mesh  
of causes  
admiring  
deft weave  
of quick ankles in  
alleys of my maze

seven serendipitous women  
finding themselves mother  
like the sky and like the sun  
naked with resourcefulness  
from a large house full of cloth

came out in long dresses  
fluently alba  
(i just mean) white

Au

(alleys and aisles  
culs-de-sac

I am, just am  
and mean  
to move through

mess of effects

cladless shy  
today,  
march sun

have you your maze  
this morning trodden  
after the midden

and meditating did  
your feet find  
their way into mystery?

each very one was  
in her act of doing so—

think gold of her  
and her and her carriage  
nimble and her hurry

and her hands scornless  
gripping roses and  
her feet leading the way

and her haunches slow  
sauntering at the rear

advance me,  
demoiselles of mass,  
amaze me  
with your airs  
until

all through a straight place  
find center  
forget

a rhythm  
so like human pain  
of going

a center at  
guess what  
attends you?

the air so  
soft one  
of them said

morning,  
serve us!

inner act enclathing  
me in the garments  
of their going

a maze  
is made  
all of 'ands'

wafting and lifting  
I was the wind



I built this  
number  
with you  
in mind

the formula of grace  
wet on her tongue

they run  
my words,

unclothe  
my closures

people get better  
looking among leaves

needles of yew  
defining like a compass

a place you simply  
have to go

hurry, hurriers,  
a crystal  
globe beside me  
waits for you

or times perch on it  
so large it is  
and grip its smooth  
potential  
with my thighs  
waiting for you,

you potencies  
you randomness  
running.

The form you love  
is easy—  
let your footsteps  
count it

the o  
it is no  
dance, is not a dance,  
none so trivial  
Diane  
on this one way,  
Himalay

a windowful of dark

look out the lawn  
we're common to

trump of travelers

# The Maze

Dont impose  
propose  
there is no meaning  
less than this chateau  
I ask you

I ask you  
to be wonderful

to be every name  
for only by these syllables  
find I  
moveway in the moss

I do I do my darling  
and after all I do.

By which proposition  
a marriage is a maze  
(hot hypothesis  
cools by morning)  
lust is mostly history  
anyway

some things  
some times  
:the formula

the formula goes free!

and at the words  
(leafshadow  
you holiest  
humbug,  
herb borders

limits of the chase,  
a linnet gagged for New Years  
a hunted wren

"really me?  
you're sure  
I am not general,  
a skirt full of light . . ."  
"a bundle of rays  
projected,  
all that,  
am I?"

"You mean the maze?"

ye gay staves,  
man dramas,

find me,  
find me!

ye gay numerals  
count my doors



that haunts you ever after never  
strike a beast, a beast  
your onliest mother was

the reeds recognize you  
and the little pond whispers your name.

A face I saw that I believed,  
a voice I kept overhearing  
in my head but never  
what it said.

“Oh if you  
want definitions  
come closer  
under the arches of my sinus  
and know me in my time”

(I wonder your time)

Is there an altar  
in you,  
can I smear my oil on it,  
a rack to  
soak my tunic on?

(oleum temporis)  
Julia?  
juniper!

is there an altar in you  
to kindle from my Time  
an aromatic blaze?

you want oil and I give you?  
alas a doubt alas a lady  
this scruple does me no credit,  
my orchestra of clocks.

How solidly  
energy would interest  
Lord of the Mist  
under my grand cascade  
satin slip of waters  
deafening listening  
o attention is my only dance!

for you, my share,  
sister, my  
white-waters and  
our shared (shadow) stream

o shut me up about the dance,  
all I care about is what she moves  
and throw away the moving

I peel the language from this poetry  
and climb its virtuous tree

and from your xystine walls I lick  
the milk of hours,  
ångstroms of humiliated Time.

Geared by clock  
her excellence,  
virtuous women in a maze  
in the garden of exploitation.  
Work for a living and wander fierce  
against all that dying

(how are things at the mill?  
Death mining, clawhammering  
the jewel of us from the wall of life,

the wound is time,  
the knife is telling)

all night long the heat  
fades out of the stone of the day.

Sleepless I counted your ways,  
knew all the answers, even  
the one word we could exchange  
that changes all this,

we will

not say it, not for all  
the dawns over Annandale  
or clean Taconic water  
in Metambesen falling  
to an inconceivable sea—  
whose salt licks nipples even  
at St Tropez  
the same, the same,  
there is no distance

our voices  
thin  
as we approach  
the fire,

better the lyre,  
the haunted maze

and women who never

(and who never).

How many  
went walking in the maze?

What have they done?



Could any answer  
unseat these questions  
from the enigmatic throne  
they occupy, center  
of our guesswork this  
little literal mind  
scared of my own shadow?

How many  
were their clothes?

What did they notice  
between rosemary and yew,

a border inside the border?

What did they sing  
to keep their cheer  
in the yew alley? What  
did they see scurry  
across or along the gravel?

Who did they want?

Did the lush one  
the last one  
the saunterer  
turn round to see  
and what did she see?

Who came last?  
And did the wind  
come to the attention  
of their knees?

Was what they wore  
compatible  
with what they saw?

Was the sun still shining?

Quick or fatal  
I have a yen for  
hurrying after  
how young everything is

How honest  
I would be  
if never answer!

certainly counting now  
I wait  
for them still  
in leaves  
their voices  
hear dignified merriment  
what they abandon  
was never part of them  
never more than a tunic  
of common sense  
so easily voided,

in dainty wildness  
they advance

my lamb's      two lamps  
                     in a trice  
                     pethery pump  
                     my lamps  
                     seven eight

gu chu  
you know  
who loves you?

they know enough  
to be here

that is enough to know  
and nowhere more.

The path is thin.  
The light is skin.

February 1984—June 1985  
[28 June 1985]



Uninhabited Angel

Sat up sleepless in the Long Night Lounge, love  
stood me up. Stayed away though its  
doing so stirred me. Wine on my shirtsleeve,  
wind on my neck.

Nodded out, all  
hell broke loose, blind earth, blue heaven.  
Burst of adrenalin. Dreamt I was dreaming, drugged,  
boated  
back and forth between ruts.  
Reign of  
sameness, flat magicless world said I'd  
eventually see it. Cost me myself,  
wooded me. Wouldn't say when.

Saw by light so abrupt I stuttered.  
Tenuous  
angel I took it for. Took it  
for lips, an incendiary kiss,  
momentary madonna. Took it for  
bread,  
condolences, cure . . .

Arrested in flight  
as though one throve on obstruction.  
Crook  
of an angel's arm, rickety  
crutch.

Sense of an entrance.  
Torn between closenesses. Adamant  
rock worn down to dust.

Desert  
song I sang throughout it all soothed  
me, said I'd already seen it.  
Fooled me.  
Wouldn't  
say what

Song of the Andoumboulou: 10

Weathered raft I saw myself  
adrift on.

Battered wood I dreamt I  
drummed on, driven.

Scissored rose, newly braided  
light. Slack hoped-for rope  
groped at, unraveled.

Braided star  
we no longer saw but remembered,  
threads overlapping the rim  
of a sunken world, rocks we  
no longer saw by extinguished,  
Namoratunga's long-tethered  
light.

Breathing smoke left by the gods'  
exit. Scorched earth looked at  
with outside eyes, burnt leaf's

Osanyin . . .

Raffia straw beneath  
coatings of camwood  
paste.

Saw myself bled, belatedly  
cut, inverted blade  
atop Eshu's head,

sawtooth  
cloth of an egungun,  
thunder whet the edge  
of a knife.

And what love had to do with it  
stuttered, bit its tongue.  
Bided our time, said only wait,  
we'd see.

Tossed-off covers. King Sunny Adé's  
wet brow. Four twenties on the dresser  
by the bed . . .

Cramped egg we might work our  
way out of, caress reaching in  
to the bones underneath.  
Not even  
looking. Even so, see  
thru.

Watery light we tried in vain  
to pull away from. Painted  
face,

disembodied voice. Dramas one  
wooded, invited in but got  
scared of. Song so black it

burnt  
my lip . . . Tore my throat as I  
walked up Real Street. Raw beginner,  
green  
attempt to sing the blues . . .

Tilted sky, turned earth. Bent wheel, burnt  
we.

Bound I. Insubordinate  
us



Heart and tongue. These two meats, they are the right meat, they are the important meat, and they are the bad meat.

—Alhaji Ibrahim Abdulai

*Song of the Andoumboulou: 11*

Bottom lip against my teeth  
like a rock but unsteady,  
stutters,  
“Fa . . .”  
as in fox, as in Fon, as in fate.  
Raffia skirt, straw hat, raw youth,  
shimmering leaflight.  
Shook  
me, made me shed my  
skin.  
Coarse “cloth” like Legba  
wore,  
rough skirt.  
Scratched air,  
inarticulate  
lipsmear . . .  
Lizardheaded cane. Human  
headed  
snake.  
Threadless tether, shadowed  
early morning eyes, moist  
hair, no pillow . . .  
Riven lip  
sucked, almost bitten,  
given back.  
Bones thought broken  
mended,  
reassemble.  
Endless night now  
ended,  
rebegun

*Two Paths*

*soulèu*

*luno*

path, my  
needle, my os-  
cillating

or this, this  
dice-  
white

constant,  
would take  
what

harle-  
quin, as it  
humps the

you'd drawn,  
driven  
under, that

wind's  
last ledges:  
tell,

narrowest  
of  
noons, glint

tell me to  
the  
light, mouth

that  
dis-  
closes the oval.

that's  
filling  
with pebbles.



*Escargots*

for Harris

... move  
with the humid moons, those horned  
calligraphers (on the slick tin  
of their own inscriptions  
slip).

or rippling the wet length  
of their chance mirrors, drain —contra-  
pantal— their cell-  
ulated twins.

spirits, too, these  
pluvians (of the lost questions, the  
rolled black opals of  
reply).

myopic grope of  
their slow marauding muscles (the earth's  
dim nimbi and concupiscent  
mimes).

or, under the  
freckled thighs of the thigh-  
high iris, sip  
gold (the scrolled  
wet volutes of metaphor).

towards dawn, ride  
back, slip under. of their now-  
untraceable instinct: these erratic  
metallic glyphs.

whom, paraphrased, would set (ir-  
reflexive, now) to the  
slow bars, muted bassoons, of the  
'parallel.'

that it might, thus,  
continue, but other: otherwise. in these oblique  
passages —the coded amphibians'— be  
secreted.



*A Flora Beginning with Vineyards*

over the  
rolled vineyards, lilacs  
pinch light.  
would

hold the  
morning's swell, that  
image, those

images strung, like  
wire, and running singed  
into hair, heat,  
the white

rooms the  
skull

keeps. (keep,  
keep us: we're letting  
our-

selves out. are  
emp-  
tying earth. that, heavy

with members, with the  
twined weight  
the

breath tools, we'd  
lay the  
thin winds. pull, over  
our

shoulders, those  
painted  
caves. herd *holly*,  
*larkspur*, the dew  
that,

*bulbous*,  
*shatters the black grain*).

*Nine Drafts from America's Edges*

an eye's scanning no  
given station (where an-  
other eye might have halted, welled  
some slight hollow). is still, this  
film: is playing itself out, its each  
part equal.

---

would stop in those  
long galleries of white, marble-  
wet buddhas. be lidded in  
their mumbling somnolence. under, pressed  
under, body the breadth of  
their absolving petals.

---

(*Nantasket*)  
there, where the waves slid, no thicker  
than sheet-glass stacked in flat  
dissolving piles, a first jellyfish  
stamped water with metaphor.  
(was the earliest of births. of form, its nascent  
displacements).

---



draws us, whatever's  
out there, insisting so on  
our brief releases. a charged lacuna  
(pulling us, our  
thick syllables, into its pursed  
successive creases).

... were talking to walls, rubbing profiles  
off the glass surface  
of memory. the lakes, you'd said, were  
immaculate. there, like steps, the  
tall sticks dropped,  
scales of some last, still- dissolving notation.

(Rochester)

night after rented night, the meat-  
pink neons, the humming  
of their near-  
liquid signatures. said 'ready, am ready,' as  
the heart tugged at its ribbons. knotted  
them taut.

## Mai-mei Berssenbrugge

## The Carmelites

were words, entire passages  
we'd leave ourselves for. . . 'barge,' its  
bowsprit of  
shadows, that the deep vessel be brought: flame  
to an ir-  
reversible focus.

(Waverly Place)

because the wind, there, is  
the ocean's  
fragments. from cages, the fierce  
wells of structure, pulled hair, fingers. whipped  
image (the glassy heart's) to a thin  
consistent pigment.

(La Guardia, or the Flying Machine)

whereby, writing this, would  
set myself to the otherwise-  
unremittingly-turbulent. silver  
through smoke, would ride to the slip,  
elliptic of  
its diminishing metaphor.



*Ode: For the Budding of Islands*

as a	lights, o
long wave shaking	rain
its	of
	fronds, islands,
metals free, went	phosphores . . . . .
under . . . those	. . . . .
rooms, that	. . . . . our hearts
rush of	shall
muscles, slipping	be planted. shall
be-	be
	fixed: the still-
neath	quivering flags of
shut lids. is	our
swiftness we mean:	
thread	forage . . . . .
	. . . . . be-
we twist to, wrap	fore the
in, the least	tow
ligament keyed	takes us, ankles
to its own	caught
out-	
	in
running. hissed	its knotted linens,
syl-	shall be
lables, our deep	turned in-
ciphers: the	to meter, rung by
wedged	ripples, the
	rich
breath issues. the	red
burst light	corals of metaphor.
a-	

*Mei-mei Berssenbrugge*

*The Carmelites*

Like the camera, memory is a device and feeling is a device, or a souvenir. The interior of the courtyard lights up. Its doorway becomes a luminous square in the dark, and I can regulate the rate at which a blue wooden bench passes across it, like a car, or returns when I back up. An apple tree in blossom in the courtyard travels across the screen. There was some light at the edge of a flowering branch of a density that could be almost a scratch into the day. It moves across the courtyard in light that seems unspecified, as through a lens opened in the dark for a long time, so the stasis of the doorway itself conveys a sense of imminence. Experience of it is the result of a deepening relation to the light, regressing from conscious recognition to a remembered involvement between so many minor cycles of sleep and waking, just as your silence begins to look like so many examples of experience. Now, the sublime is the interval of the exposure, the way silence once signified but no longer signifies the limits of discourse, sabotaging instructive strategies of the film and the garden in which we are audience or the wall. Not as in a Chinese garden.

Apple trees bloom haphazard in the field around the nunnery. The atmosphere presented in daylight poses questions about passing light more difficult than those the ordinary person in nature, for whom the horizon and amount of light define the limits of intensity, has long since dissolved into a sense of spaciousness for things to take place. As he or she begins to walk among the trees, each tree becomes part of a ceiling consisting of so many sunk or hollowed out compartments for the silence. For me, the blossoms became numerous edges of the volume of each tree, soft, or a missing part in its openness, the way an exposed nest is upturned that should be concealed in leaves, or your voice that is so emotionally distant.



*Dead Pan*

When there is no more firmament, when even the geography is fundamentally changed, these are serious times, times promised by the poets, how then is the tree to become a flower, if art doesn't mid-wife its transformation, which it takes, given its former confinement, as something wrong, maybe I'm sick or dying or going crazy, or anything but the obvious fact of suffering this actual change, so if we are to come back to the geography of it, as Earthlings, we've got to convince our natural bodies to believe in our art, else how will the sensation of thinking issue in speech true enough to be trusted by other beings whom we have previously used to get where we're going, the flowering of a single decisive moment of least resistance which our lives took until now.

*Neolithic Man Without A Fravarti*

Siriotropism of the bead of feminine sustenance created from Zeus' mountain top where perfective action takes place as She-Hawk alighting upon white promontory, returning to the world because poetry has built a place for her, albeit invisible to all but Hecate, nonetheless real as Mount Qaf, the Northern migration completed to shield sheath of the Sirian Fravarti, the Jerusalem without whom Albion is nothing to anyone, we open our veins solely to awaken sleeping giant to local habitation Spenser and Shakespeare saw as Elizabethan (not the British Empire) Gloriana in her glowing flesh descending upon a true pedestal, the continental shelf of our own country in specific place of meeting, solid agoraphobia.

*Daughter of the Mind*

There is no way that even Athena is going to be able to put her foot down and keep that third prong of the trident, whatever that is (anyway Poseidon couldn't do it), from invading the realm of the invisible unless like the other two this third root is as well thought and named and identified as the Hecatean included in this great knot of poetic thinking about the structure of creation, for without making definite this just as important, though invisible, step how can even Zeus' daughter be able to keep this necessarily destructive power off us as we go about our daily lives without it.

*Climbing the Statue of Liberty Prior to Her Repair*

Another instance of bleeding into reaction in public prolepsis of the tower Jung made for something to do with the other hemisphere, better to climb a molehill with a mountaineer's mind DeVoto said was our best than the collective uncle of Albion bleeding all over us as goods of the intellect dropped by human hands Sherwood Anderson wrote stories with and Hart Crane a tower after Yeats descended gathering God at dawn, her evagination being crucial to the art called Gothonic now all statuary action is teleonomic and the winding stair beyond repair.

*Dim All The Lights*

The ghost of our refusal harkens to the ever renewed demands of kinship predicted beyond biology, that further fluence bottled in almost assembly line regularity, if there is nothing anymore to distrust, the door of corporation is already openly distributed by the dreamers who sit idly by the stove having passed the fire long before, yet still not knowing enough to jump on the neighborhood before Pan can say Jackie Robinson—Hail Fielding at this point of pride—if we don't know what to call the end of all interruption and therefore can't imagine what brought us all together at this juncture after the failure of every previous attempt to establish a potentiality for awareness equal to God's simplicity.

*God, the Urgent Requisite*

As the graduated intensive relevance of eternal objects to the primary physical data of experience which is the prehension by every creature of the graduated order of appetitions constituting the primordial nature of God is made conscious through flashes of novelty among the propositions originating from an assigned environment the local is realized at the mental pole as felt contrary's primary generating purpose within the hierarchical patience of the world's creative advance Whitehead says involves one in a systematic gradation of character, unless Psyche swallows the secular.

Some patios won't allow the shadow of a maid  
It's where I want to go with my tray  
See heat unbearably white  
Each book must fall, a scholar's mind  
Like a shoal of mackerel  
Will go through the roof. Now sleep  
Is the container of all hope  
Where underlover sends signals  
To hang up the calendar  
Face to the wall and to hell with the soup

Cool air drowns in a sigh  
I need as much space between my enemies  
As inside my cell  
Breathing unwillingly you can honestly say  
Some actions give no more away  
Than the boss who dubs himself  
While unclean rubbings  
Over the fire of the flesh  
Make defects of male and female, the drops fall  
And further some perfection after all



Like a ballerina in a thirty pound costume  
 Some gardens are little Edens. Adam and Eve  
 Hover at the evening gate, a couple  
 In the green and shine: she  
 Shadowless turns twice  
 And each one spills  
 Weighted drops of light  
 On the ground coloring and killing  
 These places and provisions  
 From the windshield to the river

It was a night to be left alone  
 To dig out fifteen pounds of pumpkin guts  
 Stick in a candle and water the curtains  
 I phoned a friend with What do you want  
 Money and luck they said  
 When I asked the angel in the bottle  
 She fluttered and cried  
 I want to die!  
 Sex, too, squeezes out a lot of pleasure  
 Till nothing is left but the neck

Far from early grass a peach of a light  
 Braves the morning chill  
 Close to space probes and telescopes  
 In a lowly bed  
 My dreams are servants wreathed in sleep  
 Its body inverted flannel in a mound of rubble  
 Leopards, men and colorful birds  
 Come rearing over a mountain  
 And race into that head's habitat, at  
 The wall of the moon inside, and as black

Son the One who was also called Sun  
 I crave your heat but fear the burning  
 Domesticate your fire and send sufficiency  
 Zero has gathered into a hole  
 By the road where living gives  
 An atavistic echo, the bank's  
 A thief. And I am without  
 Retinue. The feel of akidia  
 Is a collar, metal and economic  
 When the world takes up no space than I

On black stones they mine  
 Dots of gold with their happy rakes  
 The alcoholics in the hotel  
 Are happy too, everyone  
 Looks ready to be right if I'm not wrong  
 The sun is the only money and goal  
 Where decks stop short and turn back  
 Around 14-karat rings which scrub  
 On the ones whom nobody cares to know  
 Except those who have lists of interests

When needs are like ground ignored  
 A cumulus cloud  
 Becomes the image of a ladder  
 Whose architect speaks geometry  
 We can understand. It's a mess  
 But puts hope in shape for  
 The freedom of an even lesser form  
 Oh Heaven . . . There's a curtain between  
 Probable and actual  
 A curtain of blinding realism

*Hunting*

HE HELD THE AVERAGE beast to tell the point, which proposed surpassing mountains. It reeked thoroughly all through him and wept on the hole below. Thus began my book to speak to me.

Beck called guide to shore near end rock, and the lean image of prosthetic device came on toward bust head, banking tail, his face just the face of another face, turned but mild.

The line rests in its body but he had two fathers, and back and flank were painted with little knots and circles. Never would the ardor nor the sum be loath to ground work on board cloth with more color.

The wall lay on the shore, half water half land, amongst the guzzling Germans. The flip adjusts itself into a fish, so say stone beasts in late war's brim. The fork points four stiff arms into potential void. Then weeds send waist to an edge of flame that sand would far avoid.

That you could sense full roundness, go see the tottering state of this, talk briefly to strong shoulders, I set my eyes upon the several ages. I knew little but the observed, from the neck of which I hung this pouch, which had a certain color and impress, on which seeming eyes could feast. Looking for yellow you found azure, parsed in the semblance of a gesture. Then the book contained its course, lying red as blood, whiter than butter, a pregnant sow sacking the master of his money—saying what is there to do in a hole but to get out and sit in the neighborhood.

Many winds against wind will dinner turn, sewing ear to ear, end to end, saying yet let law reign in cave. Then guide the haunch of this animal from its dreadful mounting—but still be bold, be stout, be much. Get in front because you want to be the middle, so the end does not hinder. Ask one who shivers through quarters if fingertips pale and tremble in their shadows. The words excite me like huge shoulders, which seem to place their embrace on difficulties grasped in time, to mount such arms against these empty circles. Think of the usual burdens as possessions and bark stationary. When you feel quite loose, jump forward, where your breast had been. Your hands will gather in the air more than you its license, the rains whereby the sky displays its map.

Do you not feel your loins unfeathering before noon? Before every extinguishing sight? You go on swimming slowly from below. Already is it right to roar whereat you stretch, the water all ahead.

Then regard dismounting as a timorous quest to see the broken sink, the diverse wheel which makes the falcon the terrific bird to nest, when it circles higher, swifter, sullen, more disdainful—so at bottom, carrying on, feet scull the rock and, the way relieved, you bound out like an arrow from the string.



## Fork

FROM BRIDGE TO OTHER bridge we come with talk that isn't funny to hold our place. It was dark and hot, and still we stood to see the other cleft, the others dumb and doubtful. It was great, as in the armoury, showing clammy mits to caulk the damaged bark they couldn't handle. Instead they fashion out a junk, concrete through length of hose, and call it Heraclitus.

You plugged me in the ribs when lights went out, and said the fish were in the sea, go embark. Some hammer on the prow, some sterner on what's ours. Some new twist mends the jibe, one sailed not by fire but by devious art. Heavy tar boiled daily from the street, where going by you held your breath. The adhesion of the bank I saw deposit, except the bubbles which your check devised. Heavy subsidy compression hollered. I stared into it though I knew be wary. Then, like one who promises not to look where he has none, yet fears the embassy, I wheeled. Behind us was an aspect of the dusk, in gesture bitter but then steeped in light, soaring over Sunday's walk.

Crazy yes it was not. My shoulders accidentally shuddered and we were high, over the avenues, badly branched and bet on Santa Ana. I had the city well provided, and everyone it seemed was baritone, singing yes for no for profit. So I throw it down and root about for flint. All the dogs along the trail escape their thieves, rich and strange, and plunge on rampant at the wooden fork. Where is the bridge, there your red face instead is not. Forego the swim in search of whom, who try with drag, who come with pitch, who scrape and ring with prongs.

Dressed to figure how to dance, be able to be private. The powerful others ask visitors to dip their bits into the middle of the stand, to keep it boiling. Then screen yourself that it can seem you aren't here. Arm your breast behind its single cross. Whatever out rages through the cur, the curious walker will not mind the fray. Mark this steadfast bridge beyond the head. Calm the front, for downs rush up you later and ask change. Then will is crooked in the fury and storms afford, though it cannot end, as nothing can—you will have arched your body to it like a fork.

Advise to hook and cry the change. Your bad code stands term. You come and go, wondering what use. Did you expect to come back forever uninjured by your hindrances? Let being fate prop up, for it will and serves the age. Stuck and prideful, some unguided, bridges splinter before lowering, endlessly.

Return me where I move. Quicken where we were. Part them where they are not dressed. You make a treaty to delay the meeting with hostility. On a sheet you draw your body with the heat, and no good eyes you turn with look of you. Lowered, level, smiles heard were said. It is time to snap it back and side. Then vile traffic nicks us and we come.

But soft, scar, soft. After five the arch disintegrates. Time is, if you tell, a former hand. Friday is good at seven in eighty six, honestly drawn and aired, though barbed and furious, turning with the veritable wave. The future then unbroken, safe as 2 in glue crag: what I see. Without escort favorless let go, without trying we know how. Without yielding, suppression, or exploit, the bees are wary of their gravity.

Art wanting, don't you see how bitten is the grind, how knitted is the borrowing? Much good may my arm do thee. I wish the soiled wrench could tighten them.

The moan subsided. And by the sister bank they turned and, forking, left. But first each put her tongue into a caption, and as in signal to the abject rear, they trumpeted.



## Wherewithal

FELL REPAST FROZE in one hole, count lunging, arch jeering—wiping the hair of its wasted head. If speech supplant will, you'll make aversion choose its utterance. Let me neighbor near the mode confide. Necessary devises will descend. See shut up in alley several moons, all hungry. Rent film lies behind sleep, and everything is curtains.

Whelp and peace mount luck with meager hounds. Enfranchised dawn asks bread and mints the flank. If you don't feel the void approaching, what is that you feel? Stony faces view bit fingers, they are not hungry to eat their own. Strip it off and breathe me glad. Hard earth unopened makes us mute. It is the hour betakes us. Everywhere you hear yes spoken, but in the mouth there—hedgerows. Modern vengeance is notorious; youth are innocent of it, but inherit. The warmth reverses bent, impudently bolts, then potential lives. Let the gorgeous and bereft move their mouths. The age does not deserve its suddenness.

Two named in song are named impediment. The zone inverts vision rugged and fills the cavity behind make-up. Crimson arches over sight, and lacquered tires. Feeling departs the face, as from a callus from the March cold, from the enclosure of the wind. Stolen post relinquished faced the night. The moon veiled race and drew the neap. Through frigid klein we reached the calves to extricate the bottom from the ice.

Are you already unsubstantial, already acknowledged in the solipsism? Such nightliness not even Ptolemy perpetuated. Our bodies are consigned to lime by demonstration, which living marks time till lines dissolve. Bronchial order years surpass, belief shut up, never truly died in it. Partial fell into resistance, still apparent earth below. All systems become cisterns shaded other. Winter laps down sisterly alike. And so we eat and drink and sleep and put on clothes.

Above the ditch of it tenacious pitch arrives to form another kindred shape, introduced into the circle. But reach your hands and openly snap syntax. If genus and the species are familiar and estranged, all scatters camp. Then even with the wherewithal the spirit bolts, fundament bathed into a trice, to seem above on earth a body still, disputed and alive, at the empty banquet that invited it.

## Gerald Burns

## Twenty Four Gnomic Poems

### Homer and Image

A leading edge for instance is not an image, the slime mold that pluckily creeps as the bean around the string. A stretched string not green but pulpy twist, a limp thing you can trust to go unlooped for sizing, temporary rigidities, the tent not to be looked at sea shells palmettos that what on the beach walked on may in another connection be stove, hearth, bones or shells in it not fieldstones.

Come at the thing in time teed cross shadow where sun on my knees is like, in feel, a plaid blanket. Nestor drinking tea you said narrative landscape and little objects, the cup may be repaired transparent tape thought of over the crack the imagined cup (fourhandled) drawn stippled, the plate with another (of taut strings) showing the site a grid is not energy but completion.

Anteriority. There was once a thin-paper Cary Paradiso read in it my first plane up what Ginsberg did with his Sapphics this this (minus the accent). Irby tabloid piracy we'll mail all to be buffeted in the post newsprint cancellation or glued slip folded like discount food.

A tiny runabout turned by cardboard and spraypaint to a tank moved in these floats like an insect, dappled green and this thing, cannon, out the front and troop carriers happy in red teeshirts saying track team had become one thing fribble jello with cut cabbage surplus

any rolled thing canvas frames over cast shadows in Africa like trucks.

Emily Carr made less of brushstrokes than anyone of her period but her eccentric compositions took courage or ignorance, carved wood triangle front hogan is facade but wonderful like an amusement park you live in or Homer in two slim volumes given with Greek in to match the Cary.



## *Emerged for Immersed*

That it can alter toward indifference is nothing like eroding brick, pitted by acid or the pebble caressed (Clio's diamonds in the gutter or palest emerald these would be, assimilated to value as if stuck in a silk tie Mr. Prynne), or paler ovals in asphalt. It is a clue, not at all that it's tied to Being but another deity altogether, for which writhing would be different (does differ) her, body, as one won't quite get to the wood dancer face so urban and the rest—once polychrome, weathered headboard or medicine chest after

all—another flavor more than taste, as edible junkets with rosewater are or elephants advertising tobacco, letters creasing as they move.

Well, or the macramé with mirrors so embroidered there's no outlet a while and to see them as Russian is easy waistcoat dirndl, shieldlike silver cairngorm pins for Victoria shoulder plaidies.

And the deer ate each other's horns, for the calcium.

Illustrations are like clocks, what I'm in for the architect curve, festive but useless to the amateur as the fiddle scroll, a time all there, keys flattened for thumb, perhaps rosewood a permanent gain. Stars of perspiration laid down by pores are whorls against barely perceptible grain. The animal turning twists the washed intestine, imagined stone cat tool like an A fork.

Mandolin fitted shell around an oval hole (museum necklace) crinoidal feels too much like aftermath to be collectible. Opening the bandaidd box without the thumb, say, as waiters balance plates on a forearm.

## *Fame in Retrospect*

This bard matter, like baldric the ruff thick midriff of curtain material and Tony Medlin's forehead a bulge from orbic makeup, this over blue eyes makes like being in a room with Shakespeare raising always presence, being there for and a human existent what he ate (recorders and a painted chair, but no pies). Take how (the elephant balloons in trunk in the glass globe) only a presence can be encapsulated mannikins in the Frankenstein film, the old magician like Bertrand Russell back to Bloomsbury, jars aging on shelves there as used pots don't age Zeus of the double hatchet a photographer's model, you pick them up, little stone Maltese crosses.

Rust linen on a dhow, rather nicely imagined Venetians have no knowing where the mailboxes are, light thrown up as through portholes in a boat that lapping. Barber striped mooring poles, taint desirable for Britons.

It is less than mythic, object in a snowstorm crystal. Enact ourselves (crossed out, expunged by swirl of particles), cities we blaze like trees. Roseate light on a carved stone ornament: damask hip puff's shop light.

Woolcott saved to print a Dickens conjuring programme, names for the die in its metal lattice through the hat, egg and pillar will have had great charm, so arranged his hair and box cape between boulevardier and cabby. Maybe like the Emerson bronze what's affecting is the shoes, their creases (no reason except authenticity, in a statue, to crease them.)

## *Written under German*

In brackets Husserl eats in Louvain cafes, thinking of the altarboy with head like Guatemala. A bank of angled flickering candles in glass pots stuck in iron leaves announces, in the old way, intention. It recedes, the word from Matthew Arnold, tied in bundles by gnomonic utterance,

a done thing, on the notional beach phantast philistines, makers of toy huts which are cookstoves and spade men call ware, script no part of Um, as lately the bow connecting Bonnard's glasses raised comment. A venture is Ideal, the

camel as chess piece not to be shown, like Italian shoes, on sand. Fashion attends to red leather thin as paper, soup in a wineglass, matching the spike heel swelling for over the ankle September 1984, the pastern as jewel.

Elizabethans thinking of Brut put a lion over the lawcourt, affecting a heritage by way of emblem, heraldic thing with a crown like Captain Hook's hat or something cooked in a boot.

Rosicrucianism in *Bartlemy Fair* is if the puppets are imagined to be speaking German, Ursula as Rhine the am after Frankfurt.

Masonjarred blackeyed peas confront one knurled edge brass screen top.

I want to know (thinking of hands on barbed wire) if J. M. Swan entered Peter Graham's crossed pig's feet in the 1863 Salon as a joke. Anything in a helmet provokes derision. We want (again) pig tusks on the gorget polished to a nickel finish like a wyvern muzzle or beak spitting tomato soup onto a bloodcolored plate, the breakfast room untenanted but for a gray light through lozenges de (we say in this language) picting animals.

## *Imagining a World*

Uncarload the historied Europe for reassemblage in a white building's art hogan slit window to shoot out we are attacked from the north, people in gunnysacks waving old pointed sign things the Rodin Gates of Hell cheery and festive not putting anyone off plaque saying how he worked on it the grass watered, watered. Champagne could roll down its face foaming over hip, shoulder bent away from neck's semipermanent bubbles no vices only lovers in bronze which feels empty from lack of a moral position. Hell is not picturesque, we say and look for our niche, too much out from no creatures hidden in, Mexican folding-door chapels with dolls and candles, samplecase religiosity our notion, with a carrying handle, as if hell and heaven gates would be quite like, pastel and golds with touches of a good red, humanely invitational or confection like a stagecoach in chocolate. Or what good a bronze shroud, planes of it like the usual cast-paper face one sees as art, dough or latex medal to resemble Rodin, spare hand for learning buttock, limb or instep so like a face, all visage to the bronzist. A substance in the metal will be a local deposit (those Backs, blind to the last one) the idea of a heavy panel not a door in the meantime naked people should have been allowed to play in the other one generations, rubbing slightly nouveau ribs and noses bright as an old penny's initial, pelted with Tate cubes from rectangular mitrailleuses, not a sculpted rat to be seen in the whole shebang. Hope built into a monument for those without it jars the knife half "in" the scabbard, vaguely architectural for walls of heated iron rosily bearing odium so that the doors may be coolest, to the intelligence.



## Thought and Extension

"Diverge nonsystematically from this line while paralleling it roughly" could be a saw edge or Matisse arabesques (if you can go backwards) but no greek key, definitive meander; the notion wants progress, the razorblade enlarged for a wonder in Boy Mechanic, like corks with grotesque wood people that move jaw or jowl the solidity of role, anything that need not be figured figured. Give it to the most bored one to decorate, cashdrawer depressions in wood for a Bantu game with counters will go back to measuring, the series with results, her body bending to the Centipede right-foot dancer's kick left slam we are in this thing winning it the diaphragm sucked in to balance fingers in it, out there, one's counter phosphor. Or the black man in running suit spreading lotion on his hands from a pink bottle he drops under the public telephones though it seems full still, anything taken from a crumpled paper sack and used. I want to say a language not mine stuck this gum, restaurant airportware or asking Gadamer what he means. The look of a boat upturned by a lake throwing shadow tealeaves in a dump have places by violence, obedient only in place weathered figs only gradually eaten, marker on stainless fading.

## Concocting the Other

If interest is sulfur attention is mercury and this reworks an old question by introducing what by luck is a second "element," the resistance measured by warmth, in our minds the dimness at the top of an alembic quite hot overall, small plugs with pendent rings for iron tongs to pull out fiercer fire, our carbon rods the drama of measurement. The furnace tender wore funny goggles, listened to crepitation in the dry vessel. Our womb lovely word the model for equipment, fingers pincers eyes around which, as in Cagliostro's spectacles in Annemann, hieroglyphs or some kinda symbols do not dance but are dial readings on the wearer, how everything contemplated in fire breaks the heart (my heart) nearly as I nearly say this visible dry heat is the house of value, the word valve in romantic. Well, these can be plugs with pull rings too, my interest engaged as an oval portrait in an oval frame abolishes guarantee, the French schoolteacher, his cigarette smoke one motion (it seems) of Manet's brush this acceptance, that what may go together. . . . Anyway in the mind kings and queens twist around each other in sleep, vegetal rather than squirrels, pythons, worms whose bristles may be interesting encountered, the thick band with organs in like the glans the fashion of their amicability a function of yet uningested soil.

## Named after Days

Theater won't do, ice flakes cast up (or licked, touched with the lips, by the sailorsuted chimpanzee) Salinger on joy as a liquid, or Stafford saying what comes to us enliven not inner discourse the quiet a long and sad pause as when oatmeal cooked steams to be fluffed, novelist plumping us like a pillow. Cervantes Sterne Melville Joyce and Weller's striped waistcoat, barberpole of service, remnant of head pigtailed and powdered are water from well or barrel, the brick at the foot of an overflow to lessen a hole in dirt. Gigantism does not translate well because the gold egg's our size, pullet armful as in *Stone* the rope to dunk the car abruptly has leaves on, scenes in novels having no behind, lighthouse drops framed in Dickens's hall another matter, excisions his shadow pushed paper paper pushed to script, O'Neill's father's the world is mine in limelight, on the rock hard in a small theater nearly translucent without a magic lantern lens, wick. Haining's washateria porthole doors with women's names on like boats needs sample names even made up for the effect, to list them an element in description as project as now in this one lace and odd sock go in at the top with a quarter cup of detergent quarters in a rolled wallet with ties.

## All Black Matches

Androgynous supplies, wingedfoot nudities with basins on have bodies covered with molecularly bound films corrupting in air, over time, as my potmetal pistol dulls, patinal bloom as the handle darkened by a fire buffs molasses. The clock again (inert) clown's big watch you take a sandwich out of, Dagwood kazoo wartime tin. The lettuce was grand. Anything like a box may contain (wrapped bird) a thing in cloth that time somehow intends to put right, our question if a painted dial does, the red and blue plastic radio watch its papery strap (like a hospital wristband) to whom does one speak, hands and grill moulded equally. Wrapped folk invent the safety pin over and over again. Rocks colored grayer than her wrapped ones (Biennale label showing on one) are walked over in newer shoes. Lobsters inform the water and last night Michael won five hundred on a vinyl costume (flat clown feet in red and the tail between, spatulate) ruddy face being that which he cooks snapping his claw to show it snaps, we observers observing. Over all, even the policemen taking photographs a camaraderie their shirts graybrown petite leather boxes at the belt with snaps on each breast a star. Fronting you in black we front this.



## Haunch of Plum

So to be one with those masters, I riffle the Manet catalogue monumental as last exhibits are, habit crippled by insurance on slashed paintings, Rembrandt up there on the index of hardness the image physically resisting—Turner by it not mattering if varnish yellows, dirt settling, the whole aging as if slowly rotating or a cheese in that wonderful muslin, waxed rind on a Bel Paese, limit on Wensleydale that on buttered cracker is nearly butter. . . . that something like the tablecloth wrapped it, significantly nonedible. One could put a sheet of linoleum down under an electric chair with the same effect, or press plastic wood into a door lock. Futures tell us how to live in 1920, cutout chrome around the glass bowl for our grapefruit (not then ruby quite unsweet) coffee from Havana, fishknife on kipper. These all translated to emblems, round Fiesta jugs in the kitchen only and toast crumbs go with dust, to dust. That the sherbet glass or shrimp bowl had no relation to the metal or the shaved ice made the period comic or like marbles in a suede bag too fine for them, are marbles.

## Orthodox in Appearance

An overring into the (say) truncated fourside cone maw floating in air, the romance of breezeways are they. The thought of anything going away—David said conjurers please by making less stuff and vanishing is our paradigm. Still in the pocket Robert-Houdin palms florins while tinkering with little gears, struck by nicked streetcorner cups, the English conjurer like a monkey, hat covering coin whips away it's a guinea pig the gypsy wife unnoticed, sad but a relief, the French coin with eight sides pleasant to the touch as monel metal would stack and vanish like air no longer coins but banknotes from his finger ends riffing like French flags in Manet, pensioner stumping in thick coat bluer against yellow for cobbles hot cha. Down the chute this mass of losers (bad Yeats) Day Lewis Chatto these (Ruth Pitter) among roots waddage as if catching drippings of their betters then as public hexagons laid, town council told Romans did it, Aeneas killing deer for the troops not drilled as in Gibbon. A bluebound Boswell missing could queer my card, no sandalwood card-case f'rit. Loss built into all recorded performances, Lehmann's copper tones *described* like trashing the metal pressers. A man left his Visa and came back for it. Logistics forgot where the baskets are for tickets. Could you say memory is like intaglio or asteriskflanked shop number to check checks. History the expectable hexagon at foot to gritty mop strands noisy on grouting. One writes, here, against music against history backroom packers' din they're told two speakers one carrier consumed consuming in what'd classically be fire I imagine amethyst aura around people trying to be persuaded of anything, Heidegger at the snow line hearing the snow on trees likely to be pine (branches asterisks side on) for us.

## A Coppola Short

Delacroix's Chopin, thought about neither the sketched nor oil face. Take renderings instead of schematic expressions, the balloon people Wittgenstein quotes (you quote a sign) and why not add a mustache or make mouths small (Wilde's in the middle of his lower face) as Velasquez ruffs are steaming pantaloons for nobles, here again knifing the Irish mobster blood like a white highlight.

Colin in burlap, reflection on his staff, none on the sheep the skin moist and translucent her complexion spreading light evenly suggests broken color in common tones do her like a wheatfield or Monet's island midriver such a win in midday light or wet fields of any kind. Sorrow only follows, we don't let it lead (bind if we were pageant bamboo for mock pipes) here all floats, like the Whistler wetly transparent panels of women neither Greek nor Chinese, exotic only as we know light collects but need not pool. The word syrinx in French as the spine says Platon in bad translations, obscurer forms kept, met as skulls in Hades Lucian observes are like as peas, or cornet bells front on, darkening hole a troubled reflection all the way down, Verdon in Grand Central still childlikely never awkward.

## Waiting as Dispersion

Observation completes it (chided for not registering a Mercedes) cars in the street to me volumes at best, Lowell's sliding by like fish, we're yet aquarial in museums the Hockney bat room they were felt, appliqué on kidblue walls with red light on, all the lights reversed gels Sortileges and old-fashioned striped barber aprons did not come to mind for the b&w Rake set why are we (modular fireplace block set flame dumb as Diamond wood matches now less per box) to be a dance, hello to ash as a touch of purple in a blonde (with red plastic hairclips like mussels on pasta) appeals, marchioness contralting's sword hitting the w hard . . . people in beards and shorts run. It's the brands that are hard, no reason to retrieve or notice as in nurseries, garden shops the gravel suffers kettledrum burlap trees nothing (the presumption) where it will be and sand in piles for putting aerating maybe but not likely any displayed pot rose fascas and peaches or plum labeled the thin whippy branch denuded, showroomed cars tea in my cup for a third coffee, hideous penciled portrait obscured today by a hanging plant without (much) style.

Aquamarine I haven't thought of in so long as a birthstone for me, lapis and so on lumped by Hall as junk stones, Saturnian, and for astrologers ivory counts as a stone.



## Dee's was Opaque

What's a glass if not a crystal swoop tabletop crosseyed bit of teesquare plastic we utter (that word, so evocative) it. Dust is unminded though (the ball on a nickel ring) not needful and in this compound

case inaudible, not listening to the elder Carradine's voice. It is in no way a locus for inspiration, as I said the shift as if a different relation to accessibility of tools, the notion of a center foreign. One looks away, adds accounts to blank out from that blanking out the nickel powdery.

We are balloon rather than bubble, the future not a concern—all radiating from this fused jelly takes the weight of compassion and lo, bubble that you are there's another under even more delicately shaded, lily under the pad Monet always remembered, disorderly riot, approach to a kind of thing. So a river is a crystal and I am not one, the squirrel tail providing camel's hair. Nature improves these cast metal pieces themselves gracing a polished rhomboid with strawlike imperfections repeated in a sphere not here.

Mature arrival time goes back to the first form you had with the little bits in front *not* to lose what's unlost because it repeats, a paradox that monosyllables bearing sense bear minimal sense because context is somehow impoverished, as was the Poussin allusion though seen as such nine of them not in a ring but disposed linearly like some Graces too far for anything but hint of drapery to show and the number, washed colorless by length of, behind her eye it came.

## Good as Questionable

Cobbled horse dray life with the visible midden just gone, around the corner from us, blind fiddler on mud road to be spelled for a reason rode, farm decision not to risk wheels on it, my yard slush pocked by the dog, mad-eyed given a home by the front-house people the ground common, garbage hung outside the hurricane fence picked through to by it. Any stockade where people live penned, ill cared-for will have wire for cheapness and ordure in the path. Unhappy at the Hitler poster on that stage, train smoke among fluting flat-hatted musicians, we barely safe from the legend over that gate, maybe legend (as maiden-eating dragon) what iron's wrought, the lo words we (they) said aren't allowed now as rhyme sinks in millions unused. The Frick's Polish Rider is solitary and virile on a horse like a Durer mistake and do I remember does he carry a war hammer well a quiver, legend the land around him between the emaciate legs, wind through that fence top I bet (how far is Silesia from Poland.) There is pressure like McGooohan's face through soft balloon, making rings in steel—all those mock-social patterns that are a homogeneous medium announcing itself. Do you smell earth looking through glass at the mole tunnel in the New York diorama. How that is to say get away from effect as effect contemplating a genetic inadvertence pretending historicity as other than something we are told, weariness of that telling plates that were pots found underground the solder having given way that held gift rings or (unthinkable) oranges, walnuts, birch fronds to flick at slaves and given it what is the king to put in it.

## Even Chisels Gold

Cratylene workshop notes leave spare keys about like sherds pieces of language too much talked of, and we observe (tiredly as Eliot, keeping it) that one consequence of a *large* gold bell is a dull clunk, but little ones exhibited with lunate tweezers and a fey flute maybe six and a quarter inches long have (looking back) tiny stone balls between the lips and'd likely make some noise, she fingers pressed on the stone floor under the sculptor weighed down nearly by his muse's long hair like a framed French soap ad leaves on that stone two tears visible a half-hour later dried, the ticket of leave to go away from the baggy suit with arrows. Asked what to bring from London they said gold here cups (none like horn though a couple tapering like horn mutes) feature in relief frogs from above large as scarabs. To do a thing in gold is to want a little animal, copper eaten by acid and the surface burnished. For us the chips from Muller's or other (Egyptian folios in Bridwell, tombs coins talismans and building fronts) or these, miniature drums, are on a par as made, vessel shaped like a flexed leg and foot in meaty colors just fine, effigies with mirrors in for eyes or human teeth here and there. And the roughnesses in crowns and so on were to be ignored. Dedication is slightly shinier circles smaller than dimes on a cool floor high in the air outside a Jimenez bronc roper with eyes she observed screw-in fifteen watt red lightbulbs, canonical human skull with glitter not dust because that's a whoosh under hoof with curl like a whipped cream wave.

## Honest Coins Refound

Althea not enough for him (*Collected* Prince fingered today) the hundred fifty-four *Sonnets* end likewise with a burning brand, brennyng the language its spelling the virility of Guildhall stone minus (if one can) frippery stone figures too precious in older arches and then red velvet curtains and stiff straight valances turn it to Punch. Big Ben and Albert haze off in prickles of scaffolding, tight cases as if for packing. Put the hand in the niche, draw out the manuscript. Cast figures *on* model horses (and the smallest horses themselves) are pewter, made by a craftsman in the Cotswolds who gets the veins right in Nijinsky and so on, graceful neck in today's lay horse on two brass tubes to adjust the attitude with knurled knobs, pitch and yaw, and a nine-pound maul stick that screws together days after Reynolds found in a statue himself (palette in hand) and Hogarth's Shrimp Girl so much of the canvas bare, my end my beginning, Eliot read in Tavola Calda, producing the clergyman Johnston who walked us to Russell Square's far end the windows his old offices and this in a way his office. The man like a bad brother to Wilfrid Hyde-White complaining about the jam and that his horses didn't win, the wooden one dark with shaped plates that, pinned, led into its head the ears moving also. We could time our starting from anywhere, eleven at night in the Lords that roof (David) all gowd morning tea staining the paper tablecloth a bit.



## Absolute Zero Determined

Carved stone balls, very much of a size, one like a cast-iron femur tip from Benbecula, the Outer Hebrides, all but five Scottish. I've just seen the MacDiarmid portrait making him look wideforeheaded the brow incised. Here these cricket balls, one hefted maybe slightly lighter than a baseball the leather covering a deep red, a few words in gold. Clergy, Lord of Isles and Fraser hunting ties over my arm in the shop across from heaped blacked stone, arches and celtic, well, puddingbasin characters on pediments like Hudibras, then way down this whitest-pale statue of Scott seated, like him adjectival. By what is one surrounded, under what, Pope in his grotto with those shells mirrors crystal these horse bits (Roman) in the museum of antiquities with the author of Ossian in oil and Hume a medallion, Black with a bent U tube half-full of liquid, given the sentimental imagining of one's production as an environment, teeming brain. They had, first I've seen, long trumpet mouthpieces not too corroded and shoes, a long cross with the edges bent up, to put on horses they think. Here anyway is this man with pale hair everybody liked, a hotel and market named after his novel, bust of Lord Kelvin, portrait of Kames, Dempster friend of Boswell also medallioned. Cast axheads with steatite moulds (in the British Museum a model only for five bronze arrowheads, wax first) the culture continuous but language has to get soupy to write your way out of debt with novels. Hardness of fame to put kirk arches so far above your head it's the fame itself (with trumpet and book, as by Le Sueur in the Louvre, big as the volume Athena points the Empress to in a roomsize Rubens) templed. Virginia Woolf's lead bust sat low in her garden, Graham by Epstein about head high on a plinth but neither surrounded by a halo (Victoria's little crown) like the French caramel birdcage dessert you mould on a bowl and never get right, done here on Prince street in stone so high it terrifies.

## The American Scene

Geography is not my field. Half into the Psychoanalysis of Mallarmé is as if the universal hue were gray-blue but edible, as the baby's forehead wrinkled mid-blues and smoothed at the resolve. Costard in plus-four checks spoke modified bahamian. Muddled in Bohemia we collect coins hard to say, cast brass counterfeit Germanicus to polish, heavy in the face. Enchanted by rustication (or trivet that seems a shake shingle) more basic than a key shift. I don't know enough to say a key is not a place, but may be like a phrase not in quotes, Gauguin quinces alluding to Cézanne maybe. Neighbor villages, knowing where to get a trap for a raccoon, ambiance like blackflies in a wind. The stone they hauled out of his grave without flaw has a bronze plaque. A thick dust such as an airless environment renders, kicked falls like cornflakes to dozed granite, light down mountain corridors. The temptation to call any art product an enigma. Rules hover over Henry James in his cradle while Hawthorne's sculptor tints his statues buff. Memoria in the American Wing could look in the round mirror held like a mint I didn't see the face, what would have been polished, of. And the nouveau woman striding naked with dogs we decided is Artemis. It may be superstition that a coin moulded not struck feels that way, leaden deadness Hopkins wouldn't think to throw in as the bells behind louvers suggest, sound should travel down like a tea cozy in the shape of a cat over a pot like a flounced woman selling balloons. These in low relief and bright colors would be grapes in another configuration or land, telephone salt and pepper or how people stuff waste paper in any open pipe in the street, that exchange.

## Vertebra is Singular

The trouble is to remember if Sohrab or Rustum is the father as in any poetry of foreign parentage "the literature" is situate, clarity of a seawave unexpected—nor the glutinous or even viscid web that makes believable Courbet's "Wave" and Hopkins's choppers "like flint" on the way to France. Whistler could do one in one sweep of the brush though his fruit shops or through fog may matter, anti-Tissot, fuzzy orange or gold visibilities. He would have seen lobsters or goldfish in shops (and liqueurs as goldfish) striped waiters having fought for beards Browning's fishermen, catch on the quay, jewels again. It's not eyes or mouths that catch us by analogy but the sides's deft grays. A policeman in his costume if ice and angled glass are his car. We saw a Rodin book reduced, conversations with big castable words in or subjects belly up, feet. Kidney or spleen in demo torso fit well with hardly a lump on the outside skin and fat, polished stone with gravures like lacings in a hollow, irregular lithic piece, boxed you know is art from how the felt follows, depression's Darwinian dignity the stone sinking. Musicians imagine massed fiddles's spray in Fingal, celtiquerie through mist, the Tai Chi sword (two shades of wood fitted with pegs, oiled) or Burch's harp in New Hampshire of the neck and soundbox, come in with hounds. Yevtushenko they say was awarded two t-shirts, a Huskers and a Go Big Red provinciality he said where he finds people keep in touch. The occipital condyle can be thought as separating, going very slightly up, the neck ventriloquial broomstick flowerpot the spine like chain trailing from a truck the last link like the fifty-centsize thumb cookie throat dent, target that in the trade is never targe to rhyme with Marj.

## Dreams are Helmets

Anodynes exist, the star whose height's unknown although his worth be taken delivered in Australian or Lady Macbeth dashing kid from pap. All goes to plaids as honestly revealing weave. Three thimbles on a plain serviette conceal a dried pea. The cat chasing mouse in the museum is anatomy, like a fleeced fish. The painter lifts his arm to paint, reaching and Dickens through the area window applies labels to mustardcolored clay bottles you know from the title have blacking in. That Briton not Updike or Thwaite rejoiced at cinders edging out flowers, intelligible posture perhaps too merely a negative. Bach with his sons like Russian dolls may have died hollow as Keats's chest cavity, these deathbed moments not when vocation came in, was (Newman) assented to. One's ken is a din, his Nightingale now a film of people reading it. What is a taste for verse like. Heart imagined in the celastic rhino eighteen feet high would squeeze or wring, become brain and Rodin could be sculpted worrying where the heart was, curved like a cashew over an imagined chest, celle qui fut witch sitting not hunched at all, shriveled but game. Fortunate fourhorned deer browse on a pink granite base like a viol reflected, a greenstone piglike beast above. The planet with its metal, color, musical note or mode, food and (very controversial) sign scratched on vellum in the pommel, hearty and intent face or pale one, rhomboid cut from potato so like a jade seal to look on. Charles and Mary Lamb hung Hogarth's startled cats and dipsoid rooms and Tenniel did the Alice drawings first in pencil. Flat lawns with fireflies in are magical enough one thinks but last night's moon through tree branches was Curse of the Demon throwing light coming at you, Coleridge's pale face caught or through brambles his insistence startling as wings on something.



## Language as Vesture

Dorset is made of animal fat isn't Popean satire, the Hume book's cover picture of him with pouffe hat (velvet were they?) wigless at home, horsehair barrister ones like loafahs doormats, shredded wheat . . . absent as a Fowler bust ideality low over the brow and a ribbon and thin black monocle to make it more outré than porcelain my rate retardant and basket's billed head today's repeated effect, bill a paperclip or clothespin inviting the nail (fill it with little clarinets.) Pick's study of Hopkins distinguishes periods of theological subtlety, olive trees in Van Gogh multiply to compare, Gauguin's Laval and quinces with spectacles like Freud's Id. Parallels, marble in a ruler runnel was a makeshift while mine (men's cologne ampoule) though witty was hypnotized by bubbles, oil, lines. We gave a dead horse aspect to the wood jaguar with stripes and a dog's square mouth guarding the Neiman mannikin, actually not even there as Hurrian princess with deity (out walking, the presumption of normality) would be, Tlaloc in clay exhibited low, Assyrian cats bangled. Some ditch for these lifting the plow for gates, expect clay figurines painted (legal to do this, these the appointed day past) our bangles like thick rubber washers are eyes too. In scrolls pencileybrowed sages bluer than sky tell like some flower laws remarkable as cinctures thrown Geryon for Doré, buffalo on Lincoln steps no accident but without the knots-in-veil lettering chiseled like midge haze over calf muscles just over, pocked stone as writing qualifies things.

## Delphi in Arden

The Great Beast dear old 666 wrote rhymes on Rodin's more popular sculpture, echoed Byron, Clough, Tennyson though he hoped for Browning thinking Paracelsian adept, and Bourdelle is it put Rodin's head on the little Pan with goats, copy in the pool we found nearly dry with sand in and tried to pick pennies up, stopped by a guard with static at his belt, this awkwardness where none might have been expected (history of where the marble came from floated down past cities named in ancient poems carved legibly or reachably on the slab) a quadrant from Pan and a torso rugged as a guttered candle vaginal spine crushed in, this excess for his usual trick of bending the bendable. Start at the body and work out, contemplate the rubberized wire soap rack we know is sold somewhere for the bathtub we'll be leaving (which has a swan decal, relic of a taste with Coole behind, debased) no golden dawn from hideous reflections learned in art school how to make the porcelain its lights. Think of what we do as like Descartes's reduction of a candle to imagined primary qualities if meditation stopping there felt it possible but impolitic to go on, potential more than evocation, triangular stage to concretize what may have a vis, force outside what you right then predict. Nymphs not having cloven hooves which in the dictionary bottom view are like a leafnosed bat are sexually dimorphic and driven Keats says from the wood by Oberon about the time various natural bridges fell in Dis our vision fogged by fumigants as if some Frenchman's idea of time, imaginary pyramid to be projected up about halfway from the Eiffel Tower's fourfold base, and underground, balanced octahedron.

## John Keats's Porridge

What's in a field is parts (heads, arms like the photo in his studio) and the approach to models even which illustrative "sketches" to keep, up partly to chance, the ivory dice on string or chain loops over stone fingers, the Old Bailey's too high to see into the pans up top. A scythe notched on the inside, bottle opener for a phenomenologist, swings free of its Lammas function, wheat prop with a line around the picture not plowed, the pen no plow. Vase sherds embedded in curves like smashed eyeglasses are penile youths and Pegasus or any forehorse on a shield drawn that's to say curved, and curved, the effect of a Temple of Poseidon under tinted lucite, otter diorama floating amid ice cakes, a study for the unscientific. Saints carry loaves, reeds, Agnes and John, Barbey with a lobster or the pole with his head in a napkin weighing Truth. The joke was the bad sculptors made gas fittings, jets, cast baked fans till it folded with the painting of plates, dipped gauze shepherdesses slip couture, through which gas lit would be like blazing kleenex, the dipped torch near chained Beardsley male's tail (flames in a bunch like her grapes) to align a sensibility with a taste. Cut the goat or cow's horn in the wrong season and they bleed unstopably. There is no way to say how many threebladed knives are buried underground. She found a penny in cracks between bricks in the road. Prescind from the sound of propositions which even in translation are patently true, the composition of esters depending on the alcohol remains, coconut, banana. Tiepolo's angel-arbor for a church ceiling drips musicales not any of them in jeans but as if. They might as sardines do have imagined hearts inside the sealed tin. There's faery attached to any doorsill, what creatures eat out of platelike bowls, and the skins when they come out of the earth having made a mistake while herding are green, that fades after eating meat a while but starts off green as jasper around spots in a bloodstone.



when I took my way each thrust from hands comfort left the prey locked up in closure,  
pleasure proves a prize against that time. Called to pass and scarcely converted from  
the thing it was, this my hand against the lawful part, poor strength of laws cause  
heavy journey. travel's end ease the miles are measured tired, plods to bear that  
weight in instinct, know rider made from bloody anger hide answers. sharp side  
onward, joy behind; slow speed can seem mounted on the wind no motion, horse with  
my desire shall neigh in his race. going he went and give him the key to the stones of  
worth, you as my chest. the robe make special scope; being had is your substance

And you describe the counterfeit, new speak of the shadow show your shape, part for  
constant. how much more that ornament the rose looks for odor, blooms a dye as  
hang on thorns, play discloses. fade to themselves, made of you, truth not marble  
shall outlive these contents. sluttish root his sword quick fire arise in sweet force,  
feeding sharpened might be hungry spirit. ocean parts the banks full of care, welcome  
wished, slave upon the services you require. thought may be suppose, save a fool in  
your will. god made me first of pleasure, crave being bound at your beck, patience  
tame injury. strong will belong laboring for invention, a backward look, first wonder,  
revolution



place that which goes before the main maturity, transfix the parallels on the rarities of slumber, home to pry the tenor of great awake, the watchman. remedy grounded in my face as mine, no shape so true, antiquity for praise my age shall be as I am now, traveled to king memory in green towers, gain the shore. strong jewel, strong hand, swift foot, miracle in black ink; bright cry, limping authority, doctorlike skill, imitate living. blush veins for him to show wealth, signs inhabit a brow. The head made another in him, seen without dress for a map; Art can mend that due, crowned in farther look into the measure. smell soil that common grow sweetest

being time, a pure prime passed days victor, masked bell give warning that I am fled. read clay as poor name rehearse, mock gone merit lived in forget me quite. more than hang willingly speak well of my body, no shame which bring forth choirs of west; take away, seal up, rest. fire must expire nourished by memorial, this conquest which is this remains. food showers for peace is found, full feasting — possessing or pursuing. variation change with methods, write all invention in a daily new, so is telling precious imprint of learning, blanks nursed from dumb on high to sing advance, aid numbers invent virtue and word. can afford praise to what live, thank for say name, spends speaking wide as sail



help me up afloat your ride, make survive men's eyes. gentle created tongues,  
 breathers in mouths not married, fresher touches can lend blood to a poet's debt. I  
 slept in your modern subject, copy in you is making phrase, write good form.  
 hindmost holds his respect for prize, struck me dead by giving him that ghost, filled up  
 his line for my possessing. bonds hold but cause wanting, mistaking gift growing,  
 making a dream in sleep a king to set me light. set down a story in losing will be a  
 gainer for bending lameness to desired change, walks and deeds join with hawks and  
 hounds in particulars measure, steal life that in the least belongs. title I find: Happy to  
 have love die shall live love new

## David Levi Strauss

## Two Poems

### Peg's House (Venice)

"The list could surely go on, and there is nothing more  
 wonderful than a list, instrument of wondrous hypotyposis."

Umberto Eco, *The Name of the Rose*

*Blu su blu* in her bedroom,  
 to see how the modern has aged.

*Senza titolo*, head of a young girl  
 setting for a fairy tale  
 (magic garden, the red tower)  
 portrait of Mrs P. in the South.

bird effort alchemy  
 the habitue eyes in the heat  
 the sun in its casket  
 the sea, maimed & stateless.

The Armature landscape w/ church,  
 angel of the citadel, vertical planes—  
 white cross, anchored cross  
 guitar and bottles, woman w/ her throat cut.  
 Antipope: the nostalgia of the poet.

men in the city, woman w/ animals  
 automobile: noise & speed, boxing, horse and houses  
 sea = dancer windows rain  
 seated woman/ cactus man  
 garland of buds, the birth of liquid desire  
 composition: countercomposition.

*Donna-fiore*

the entire city the attirement of the bride—  
 very rare picture on earth.

### II.

signal secret life in advance of history  
 image of time as mythical conversation  
*oink, psi, yak* — *clarinet, pharmacy, ballgame*  
 the break of day, the gentle afternoon—  
 dynamic sphere events—  
 surrealist people in a wind—  
 events sacrifice presence  
 (the racing cyclist defeats trees)  
 compression on slanting ground is an  
 optical structure—  
 blue, yellow, green — dada head relief of hostage city,  
 roundabout study for a fugue.

moon woman, moon cage  
 2 women in a mirror  
*unitas* totem, unstable transformation  
 consciousness of shock in  
 divided movement— variable and invariable.  
 mobile hammered partition in  
 cambodia, ireland, dramatic meeting  
 around a point of direction, *tempora*,  
 upward, above the white defeat  
 above the white bird in space.



Listening to Berg's Lyric Suite, the Cellist's Tearful Eye Toward Baudelaire

De Profundis Clamavi

(a translation for the Kronos Quartet)

I implore your pity, You, the only one,  
From the bottom of this dark pit into which my heart has fallen.  
This mournful world with its leaden horizon  
Where horror and blasphemy swim in the dark.

A sun without warmth hovers for six months,  
And for another six night covers the earth;  
This land is more naked than the polar region  
Neither beast, nor brooks, nor meadows, nor forest!

But there is no horror in the world to surpass  
The chill cruelty of this sun of ice  
And this immense dark, like original Chaos;  
I envy the lot of the lowliest animals  
Who can plunge themselves into a stupid sleep,  
So very slowly does the skein of time unwind!

I.

*Stimmungsteigerung*. "son of darkest Austria"  
and a woman called "Mopinka."  
"my golden one, a piece of me, my life"  
faithful to wife or love,  
twelve tones related only to one another  
Munzo & Dodo (repeated C's),  
the Mother Chord.

coded and recorded in an annotated miniature score—

"suffering destiny", a heart too small,  
"You are my own, my own"

Eigen, mein Eigen

Hanna und Helene.

"Grief has made me a play-acting person."

He and Hanna, heroine, red  
sometimes blue, the children green.  
secret letters, numbers of fate,  
a structure of significance.

facades of domesticity against  
"a small monument . . ." fading Tristan in "... to a great love."

suffering destiny, amorous *andante*  
help me, rondo (closing the circle charm) "with a gentle Czech touch."  
It must be pure, cool wine.

*allegro misterioso* — "everything was a mystery to us"  
a *presto delirando* with tragic *tenebroso* interruptions  
*largo desolato* the viola,

"dying away  
in love,  
yearning,  
and grief."

II.

I implore you from this world fallen  
heart mournful, leaden, without  
warmth, blasphemy— this original  
lowliest plunge  
six are the beasts meadows there  
for night this naked region brooks  
in cruelty of immense Chaos  
dark I who into sleep does time.

"Sleep, sleep, nothing but sleep"  
I overcame the greatest of giants  
"not hastily, rather in the tempo of spoken words"  
"Irony had been made an equal partner  
with romantic feeling."  
"I want to want to sing."



## III.

Tomorrow is more than dark. After coming apart there'll be no  
russet sky to fill the emptiness of beginning. Incurrigible wastes—  
in which a man *waits* for love. I envy many, their inevitability.

Then, too, our bodies come grasping back, an animal thirst— in  
consequence, in deliverance. The dead are far from flesh.

There is a mistress of misery. A recalcitrant gigolo goes to her.  
All wants fulfilled in infamy. All limbs loosed in the gate to  
her certainty. Certainly goodness and mercy are fickle and weak  
and will follow me not into the pit. Only Kronos is finally kind.

## IV.

I implore your feminine pity  
from the bottom of this dark, this  
mournful world. Your the dark sun,  
blasphemy of immense I,  
unwind animals original lot,  
beasts lowliest plunge—  
sleep cruelty, surpass like envy  
for night this naked region brooks  
dark I who into sleep does time.

There were enough signs to indicate  
the direction drifts of wind would take  
and there were signs on the opposite bank  
pointing to a box in which  
the assembled rose was placed  
just out of reach and beyond  
the immediate posture of approach.

Memory was then a whore  
and references to the body  
were filled with crimes  
of violence and imagination  
that prefigured belief in simple actions  
such as the preparation of colors  
or the singing of the song.

Attempts are no less awkward than before  
though the importance of an association or pun  
is diminished in light of the body  
surrounding the statement or context  
which is the sentence  
of a poet's wrist and mind  
or of matters also socially defined.

The role of the father is become figure  
of thought or crime and is lost  
in the complexities of relating  
to others just as there is no need  
to enlist one's forces  
toward the violent causes of nations  
larger than oneself and one's nature.

The sky has never been perfectly clear  
and now to look up at the sky  
is again a bewildered attempt  
to discover what is under  
as if to say flower heart clay and leaf  
were no longer sentient emblems in nature  
but merely remnants of another signature.



The old rhythms are gone and the lyric  
pastoral is a kind of weekend retreat  
that denies the harder lines  
of concrete and glass  
while retaining nevertheless  
sickly human figures in the street  
as signs of this previously innocent mythic.

Surely it carves a death in the sense  
that it leads to certain fountains  
from which is drunk  
an amount of liquid corresponding  
to the amount of liquid lost on the way  
though there is another function  
whose drunk are in another sense lost.

With the possibility of surfacing  
runs the risk of adding convention  
to something felt much stronger before  
the acquisition of the means  
to use it which in turn  
modifies subsequent perceptions  
of value in predetermined ways.

Divisions in memory resist  
what is commonly perceived as faith  
this brilliant summer day is flat  
these explanations are necessary  
not as an absolute description  
perhaps there is another method  
of using previous prophecies.

They were taken from a stock of dramatic images  
used first in the context of another's sense  
then abstracted now discursively  
explained and suddenly in context again  
they take on another sense  
that nevertheless is subordinate  
to the same practice as in the first instance.

None of the earlier principles are applied  
though a similar conception of value  
pervades the belief that something must be done  
in order to shift acquired habits  
from their pretensions of style  
even if the result is inadequate  
an attempt has been made toward the changes.

## II

Exile is a result of the dispossessed. Commerce turns the  
corner following previous arrangements made between  
strangers. A woman breaks her neck. On the line  
stretched behind our eyes, there was nothing but a door . . .

The lines are stretched along continuums. Unsighted drama  
yields to impact against stronger holds. The body falls  
sick. The sky functions on the entrails of the dispossessed  
mind. The virus keels before the mercy of separate  
thought . . .

There is no name for what we do not know, but the attitudes.  
Several old men sit and squeeze lemons to save their breath.  
Irony is a parasite. On the other side of the cup of reason,  
sentiments lie in waiting. Anger, while observation holds . . .

The eye falls sharply upon the content of the cup. The glass  
divides. The water distorts a liquid perception of the other  
side. A body swims to the top. The content is parted, and  
also in which her body breaks . . .

The law of the wind outlasts the wind itself. A sail or  
master. The identity of this wind recalls a sense of  
duration in which a number of elements last. Memories, in  
the embarrassment of continuing parts . . .

Eyes sight remainders in the confusion of names. A simple  
tune or melody nominates. The tone a craft, winter a stake,  
or plant in nature. A reminder of this repetitive past . . .

Belaboring even simple sound or sight extracts. A labor's  
labor, a thread around the wrist. The line is detached, a  
mind dispossessed by the recollection of normal risks in the  
distance of approximation . . .

The days arrive as rearranges. Place is subject to approval,  
a figure in changes no one awaits. Long nights and  
numbering, the figures, an arbitrary music of  
displacement . . .



### III

Confusion is often sweet and voluptuary,  
 a ceremony memorial, the novelty  
 a thing of the past. I have been  
 working on the bridge of ice  
 which is an image that cannot last  
 while appearing to be sturdy. The change  
 is wanting to say something straight  
 from the heart like  
 the same words my mother used  
 fighting the man she lived with.  
 They were so direct and unaware of themselves!  
 There was never nor will there be  
 an answer and one begins to  
 take comfort in this. Don't tell me  
 I'm wrong! I loved the smell  
 of sweat off his body. My name  
 is Sarah and I am a waitress  
 with long red hair. She's my idol.  
 I like to bite the soft flesh  
 of her inner thigh. The analogy  
 of the body approximates the distance  
 I feel between myself  
 and the notion of self and other.  
 The value is always measured  
 from the inside out and never  
 really amounts to much more than  
 affirmation of what I already know  
 I cannot have. But I have risen  
 to the task and become what I am not  
 in order to fully realize  
 the cogency of it all. Some of you  
 will not understand. I am  
 a part-time banker. I am six foot  
 four with boots on. My twin sister  
 stands next to me. I have never  
 experienced death up close. This  
 is part of what I fear and often  
 I find myself using words  
 to forget I'm dying. It is a measure  
 of articulation to speak in someone else's  
 voice. Intentions are often  
 misconstrued. Finally  
 there is something in the language  
 I want to kill myself with.

### IV Coda

- 1 The rose is an ideal
- 2 Lust the spoken verb here
- 3 In the body of the sentence
- 4 A family history
- 5 Of the object world
- 6 The innocent figures
- 7 Of bodily functions
- 8 And possession
- 9 Uncertain belief
- 10 In repeated speech
- 11 Shedding the habits
- 12 Changing places
- 13 Of the body's specificity
- 14 Stances
- 15 Across the divide
- 16 The natural law
- 17 Of desire
- 18 Tones of voice
- 19 Project and deny
- 20 Are the attitudes

## Gadi Hollander

### (World Without Catastrophe)

from *And Becomes* 130 Ultimate Sentences

The play of words, labored with ease, subcontracts work's abnegation. The call of perennial children is Gloria, apparently deaf, coerced into time. (A treehouse floats downstream. A rivulet descends a tree.) I hear them at my window and know.

A biscuit rolls, oscillates, falls — suddenly speaking — flat: I have reached. . . . First crumbling dithyramb renders it mute, open to plunder, senseless or void of taste. Will it hide the horizon poised to consume it? . . . atonic patter of foottrace. . . . then sudden, retarded silences.

. . . amazing, a window! I dreamed of megalithic, impervious eyes bleeding without reflecting (and woke — amazed by concrete rooted in grow, or by grass). The garbage implied no story when dark unfolds for a theme. Rather a dream. My eye looked through the crack of dawn: of all the shoes tipped over in sand, the blown sand, shade-blown, creeping inside, it blinked.

Someone waited for love's imperfection to signal the hiatus of guilt and innocence. Someone adequately predisposed to love shock. Shepherds and shepherdesses, gnawing a canvas, arrived at the cortex. A denuded memory, or litany, shone forth. Someone, too, in the dissipation of air, (breath held unbroken) announced an immanent upbeat, eternal sneeze. The futility gave cause for a festive marveling. There was yet hope, and shame, and shape, in the gaped drawl of annunciation.



Yawn draws the eyelids down, that biscuit on the edge of sight. A clearing. I run like the wind, awake all night, calling judgements and beading them behind the eyes. A gold, dull thread of light tightens the horizon. This is not a dream, it says, stomping on my heart. (The music, a light touch, feeling for Mozart in the calm.)

---

The scabrous meaning of Mozart corrupts my ignorance. Having written about it a psychodrama rains against my window. Neither wind nor pane lets up. . . . Riot of black, snow belabors her shadow. . . . (Later). . . A fanfare of suns, wedged in the ground. Broken late, it fades.

---

(I hear pathetic voices in my brain bemoaning my fate. I lend them gravity which I do not own. I dole out podfuls of rebellion against my silences, mouths in a dearth of mouths, and put my ear to the air. Dust collides with dust, shadows step over shadows, light doubles back upon itself and fails to emanate, fails to die, forgets to fail, fails to forget. My lips turn true and do not know what radiance I'm speaking. Ignorant voices beating wings in my head, I think.)

---

And there's a gentler feeling today than a feeling of gentle hope. I don't know. It's strange. If I nailed it, it would flutter; it, too, would feel.

---

Design this word, where failed goes eye goes, o declamation, prose o world, mirror gaga with knowledge, gentle book! The fragile culmination of a leafy look, nimbed by the ripples of Lethe. Perched to flatter the intervening depth and float an allusion to I, utter hole of memory, subdued in our futility. Kind reminiscence, stone, blind me; soul, fallen by default, cleaves to a crack in the sheen of time. Who to unmirror number from its brittle fraction would leave me a perversity of line, to wallow, disgorged, a while, in this twee depth, a child, my pee refracted, I sing.

## Benjamin Hollander

### *Translation Orders* (in 3 Sets) from *The Book Of Who Are Was*

#### Set 3

#### A

You come to with a signature, that is, not the literal style.

Sleep is in the character—A model astonished—less in the routine.

Not lightly to be suffused in A matter of writing, the page comes to—a weight at rest.

In the altered program you press “return” until something this is not the literal style breaks down among flushed skulls.

Out of models of consciousness here is one in which you enter the sign before coming to it.

“Come *me*?” Flashed cards.

\*



[Powers of A]  
(to the 4th silence)

(When the zoo folds. The A is for gape. When this  
gift of logic commits each figure to collapse.)

\*

shown among the first skills

B

In the program altered—called—“press return”  
you come to an expanding vacant “ship” in air.  
Light stops in a vacant shibboleth. Light waves in  
A means to “swing” in the balance.

\*

(Thus “the dark lines on this plate correspond to  
the location of the nodes[node that is at one point  
on a wave A set means felt to be even midway between  
crest and trough], where there is destructive  
interference, or cancellation; at this minima it  
is as if someone has ‘put out the light,’ but as a  
result it shines ever so much more brightly at the  
positions of the maxima.”)

\*

C

Flute’s pulse. Light stops. Clustered hits. Dead  
space. In a word “passing through,” in part just  
this, to depend on the presence or absence of the  
other throughout.

\*



Set 2

A

She comes to with a signature, that is, she walks  
into another culture snow. (Here the end word—snow—  
equally frames the one door that breaks down to  
crystallize the subsequent transformation. If there  
is a place one is put there, so to speak, out the  
light.)

\*

Peter Seaton

The Pyramids of Elysium

B

She whites out into another culture snow. Shock  
plush. *Es ist*. A burnt read for a good paper causes  
an equally whaled forest fueled without a name. No  
less than at the heart of the sentence the music  
fills in translation, mine of yours, what lately  
we harbor, and lightly she loves—to write “hair”  
my chalk. With this cut out. With not yet this.

\*

C

One puts out the hand held Michael out. Such the  
generous voice, the operative rose throated wired  
for sound. Face of the given flower for word. Now:  
About her head: Over a half-year: She hears the  
transitional voice for the real ones:

\*



Set 1

A

I'm getting it wrong then but what a curious lot  
peculiar to your word these Germans use to gather a  
table in. *Komisch*. Promise. To use your word—light—  
like that. Periodic glows felt heavily napped. "Cull"  
"hair." Write face. "This face?"

B

Light that. Recognition commands. Like those kept in  
mind. Draw shivers in chemical warfare. First love to  
light straw lies choked. "As into the fields and  
forgetting to die." Precautions measure while refluaming  
oils. "My turn." Seize keys. Note flat cutout's rise  
from margins entering transparent door without name.

C

Write out. Set the table on end. Now a barricade divides  
the people. From here to there side with the name  
standing in water, its ground. In the letter he  
suggested this breaks open the distinction between "to  
signify" and "to mean." Clear the glass; as glass; as  
not in glass. These are instructions for a "whole  
civil war."

We are now the earliest known  
Hominids, a silent species  
Holding the camera, planning the skull,  
Trying to fit as much as possible  
Over the glacial drift. Our modern way  
Has nature scanning pre-Colonial America  
For a thousand years that form the fresh human  
Overheating tooth and nail because  
Of the view from the summit of cranial matter,  
A mosaic of progressive features working  
Even on a name for it. We plan a film  
For sisters all at home, a recent place  
Made for all this money from thematic  
Nothing, for a racketeer for the human  
Family immersed in worlds of grinding and  
Crushing and scores of creatures scrambling  
Inside the moral community, who stop  
In their tracks because of their upright gait.

Their tough horns make it visible. But all  
This silence vanishes and what will happen  
Will also happen only once. Once too  
No left or right invented overnight  
Orchestrates such progress, but it's our  
Silence wind-formed by orders poking through  
The secret concrete magic weighing words  
Grown in a rational split with other words,  
A true pair, spreading its contents over  
Nerves with which they hunted symbols  
Stamped beneath the surface of my heart.



My endless nerves, my only deliberately  
Better view joins the creeping living whole  
Through the mist in which four walls  
Press into the prairie. Its mass  
Envelops you in a corner on pure and applied  
Old stories and one on the way, one  
That used to have your thumb span salt  
Stones and sand in a famous annual luxury  
Known as plain living becoming born in a cave.

Allegedly ancient times seize me from attention  
To my things about this wild lifetime.  
Curiosity deep in the motion of thoughts  
Wrapped in running and hiding and admiration  
And respect carved in mystery and getting hot  
Just like your hazards appearing ordinary to  
Cover the sun. These are the great heartbeats  
Adjusting the landscape of all seas. They  
Slow the Earth I stare at and make me blink  
In the shape of pyramids splashing angles and  
Inches into existence. These are the vines  
And the globe, or the molten tears of heroes  
Laminating the forest floor. They provide  
You with a foreword to years to see the water  
Rises into layer after layer of an extra  
Month or so and everything and anything  
Specially made to see more. But back  
In the flood of facts a dog may bark, your car  
Dip below wordless man whose new crude blood  
Is clear of the scarlet radiation of holes  
In a blind spot where some dim transportation  
Of arrangements of the last minute zenith was  
Just brought from far away books in a forest.

These books might have helped read rosy faces  
Happening to the fire, or reduce the breathless  
Relative to her younger sister fatally  
Measuring pliable speed with the current  
Silence. Then she might use silence dormant  
In the nicely used days and nights looking at  
The stars instead of the faintly terminal  
Readiness within the most enduring value

Of a yoke across her shoulders. But I  
Remember I always liked a body of wide awake words  
That accept me. I got that distant instance  
To exist starting with the last artifacts  
Taking me away under the hard sky buzzing over  
Some ordinary edges of the forest, echoing the  
Daylights out of an idea for tracing a great word  
For ears to hear back to its sharp facts.

Between the crunching leaf and modern dog-eared will  
Built into insistent worth and bolts  
For a word for the spirit sliding into my urban  
And rural experience now you can start  
The secret letter I want. It says the Universe  
Floats above the printed page long enough and  
Current hominids spell with the sleep induced  
Vowels left in reading omen. First there's  
The sand near the stars at the bottom of the skull,  
Near the gypsies wading into words high in the neck  
And somewhere along a line of quivering speech  
Crossed with an x to mark bygone years  
Identically not in the language. The first  
Lucid humans jump into the car and head back  
To the old outlines of the admirable object  
Exciting the eye. They even celebrate these things  
For your perception until I make an overture to x  
Number of words missing out on something while  
You shake your head according to the laws of logic.  
Nevertheless, I want information pulling on  
This phrase with our powerful positivistic bodies.

Smoking and spitting at the same time, impeccably  
Present in machines which stay lodged in some  
Experience breaking into the dominating system  
Of a screen between myself and a blind  
Stranger and counting microscopic bulges on a vacuum  
Ordering of word and phrase exciting you off  
Of myself the human mind only wants an introduction  
To the earliest use of fire, to expand one  
Last glut of protection, meaning and moral  
One at a time, so I would have to be adjacent  
Pieces of something which you are



Roughly after the fact. You'd recognize  
 The human mind, the first day by day  
 Pre-dawn brilliance softened up  
 That idol torn from the zoo, only a small  
 Very strong part of silent young males humming  
 Past infancy. For example, I never saw great  
 Masses of space in the 18th century. Yet this spy  
 For Darwin offers me one, or only one or one  
 Half of one representing finding myself  
 Independent of meats and vegetables and  
 The clear being dissolved in my lungs not  
 Unlike all the corners of the bed to hold onto  
 Preventing the future from being held at arm's  
 Length during a world premiere of Hamlet  
 Stuck in the mud. I was what your curiosity  
 Abstains from, showing me it's possible  
 To succeed without obscurity. Here the most  
 Agitated and penetrated spirits are sprinkled  
 Onto the secret of porcelain, the soft exhalation  
 Of speaking in children and the rhythms which retain  
 Them like a subtle wind interested in what I'm doing.

I had not been back of some very dark cave  
 To demythologize events I desire according to  
 The rules to be read to me, or a network  
 Of words which might catch a certain discipline  
 In some notational problem between men  
 And animals. Gutteral life might arise  
 And bring me the invention of what they think  
 They are saying. But I also see on paper,  
 And if your memory turns to the rest of the species  
 Being responsible for all the literature  
 Available to me there is no other animal  
 However sane which might cause me to prosecute  
 Flights of fancy. Because in this volume  
 Our grandfathers reach the unexpected planets,  
 Their last words converting contradictions to  
 Ashes or smoke and joining them to the making of  
 My sunburned nose and all the other ideas,  
 Some of which are dreams, which are really  
 Experienced as reality after a victory.

No wonder happy people sail fast  
 On the Tigris, Thames and Ganges.  
 And I am not so old that the Yangtze  
 And the Yellow occur in nature. Any dummy  
 Can threaten us with echoes of prehistoric  
 Kings who wrote during this crisis. There  
 Were also beginnings of ventures too close  
 To the maiden threat to excess in a solution  
 Of English words. You don't notice it  
 But this is a walled city remaining to me,  
 Only sources of enthusiasm for velvety  
 Metallic skin project hope onto a stranger  
 With a weakness that will help solve irony  
 On the high seas. And if not  
 I have just appeared in my work published  
 To give meat, drink and clothes to  
 Boys and girls who spin a skull from chaos,  
 The skull within its members moving and  
 Biting, sleeping and dreading the ego spirit  
 Insisting on no reward and heating up by imagining  
 A mutating cosmos patterned on a quality compared  
 To the planet dissolving in a pure mix of beginning  
 To be rich. As a child I never quarreled  
 With images which appear later in life.  
 This means cultural last resorts can stand  
 In our way in the comfortable vicinity of  
 Propositions required of earliest arrivals,  
 Usually in swamps. And I've  
 Never had a River Jordan convert them  
 Into a beginning in which inanimate objects  
 And plants hurtle into the 21st century.  
 One begins with some normal and certain nature  
 Pressing the button to radiate doubt that I  
 Should begin. I met a refugee  
 To go on living and fire synchronized thoughts  
 Through to a separate confidence as when the brave  
 Pen melts away the propositions of newcomers  
 Crowding the outside origins of unusual bones.  
 I was sure enough to start a legacy because  
 Where I was is supposed to have become extinct.



WHEN I AWOKE IN THE MORNING THERE I HEARD CRIES OUTSIDE, individual, passionate, detached. They entered my sleep as if calling or tapping, calling and tapping, indifferent or sad. Immediately some mundane texture, the sound of an alarm bell, the smell of coffee, entered also. So I located those cries in between being awake and sleeping, such that when I heard them again each morning I felt as though touching a sheet, a sheet familiar and endlessly clean, endlessly washed and waving in the wind, that was connected to the bed I slept on, fitted loosely over my body, naked beneath it. It was what kept me warm, along with the other layers which I perceived, hearing the cries, as being of incalculable weight, the weight of what I woke into.

*The word for "here" merges with the word for "now," the word for "there" with that for "earlier" or "later."*

The sky was lit up from behind by the sun, which is rising up now in this morning. The ground is a moist and dark place that will dry out by noon and then will again moisten and fall into a semidarkness, into deep red and yellow and orange as the sun sets in the west. So for the morning a pale blue yellow or red (watch and see) maybe even white, for noon bright take dark blue and the golden maple leaves looked up to against it, but leaves not pasted there, the blueness is above, referred to as the vault of space.

That squirrel moving through the green red and yellow leaves, some of which have already fallen and some of which are growing close to the ground, moves in an impervious, cautious, and impulsive way. In front of him golden leaves, suspended from an invisible branch, dance in a silent wind, as I am seeing the whole through glass.

The seam of the ability to move one's glance.

The flowers are orchids, white, in time each one opens. They are sweet, rare, and held on the stem at fixed intervals, determined by the kind of plant.

Telling what moment by moment now amounted to his own story, the former political prisoner is interviewed:

*Describe your thoughts in the Ilyushin-62 as you were being flown to an unknown destination.*

*I had never before flown in an Ilyushin-62, and for that reason alone the flight should have been memorable. But I was in a state of shock from the moment I learned of my release and so for this reason I existed as might a person who has no internal life. I would eat when they served me. I answered questions about the weather posed by the guard who sat alongside me.*

As the woman sitting down on the bus straightened her skirt, the child was sure she was about to hear the stranger's story.

"Cold this morning. Nobody ought to be out of bed this early. Where are you going?" She paused for a long time between the things she said.

The seat held no holes to retreat into, no doors to close.

"School." That seemed broad and vague.

"Waste of time." And she leaned back, putting her shopping bag down, settling in.

So she wasn't going to tell a story, the girl thought with relief. And the straightening of the skirt had been not the prologue to her narrative but only an assertiveness, an occupation of space in a definite way. She was not the kind, then, who used stories to make herself comfortable.

*Mutual facing away appears early on in the pair formation process of gulls, when both partners are not yet fully used to each other and may be seized with an impulse to attack or flee from each other. In these Herring Gulls, facing away or head flagging is an important appeasement ceremony.*

The river is full and heavy and flowing. I think about oil when I look at it, though I am sure no oil is in it. Things are so hot they burn the eyes to see, and in water sky condenses as a blue or platinum powder, which is in a liquid form, but thick and shifting.

In "the zone" of a Soviet film, claiming to be science fiction, functioning philosophically and politically, northern creatures occurred in a southern climate.

They travel in flocks and packs and gangs, tracing a figure eight in a brittle geography.

"Something's eating her."

"She's out of her mind with grief."

"O the pain—it's something terrible."

Those sounds you are making have got to be worse than birdcalls, rasping. There is a tone on the phone that sounds like that. It is black plastic and hard. The redeeming light of Vermeer is famous and consoling. How rare it is in this landscape that has always been known for its extraordinary light, but of a different sort—revelatory, blinding, nothing to read a letter by.

The baby, how many days old, lets out a cry. The baby is beginning to look around while in her mother's arms, to not just be still there like a doll or toy, like a thing collapsed in on itself, feeling so intensely, core of flower, its own nature, its own body (all the internal movements rippling over the face and passing in a spasm or stiffness through the tiny perfect body of the newborn) but perching on the mother's arm, post of joy and safety, looking all about. The baby is told the name of her city and her county and her state and her country.



The window is open, sunlight is bright on the keys that wear letters as if they were hats. Suddenly the number, dollar, percentage signs and ampersands take on a peaceful existence there. There is one red key, on it the number one, above it an exclamation mark.

Their mood is no longer contagious. As after a close death, the world is empty, free, yet the shapes in sunlight retain their ability to obstruct or to be touched or to dance in slow motion, shadows on an ever-recurring wall. A curious dignity comes about, the beginning bars of a music, chords of things that do not match but lie there next to each other anyway, their very discordance a form of humility.

Memory is involved he said in knowing one's every need is not being actively denied but simply is wanting, as a plant in light, the shoulders of the growing girl cycling down the street in light, or a character trait is wanting. First she wobbled but now she cleanly drives forward, strongly leaning with her machine. Those are pedal pushers and this the fashion of speech, getting up and going to bed the sentence they neatly said being what happens in between.

Full stops. I knew she was trying to tell me something, and I tried to help her through my coaxing expression which in this case had to seem uninterested but not preoccupied, a feat for sailors and for saints.

Illuminating their most beautiful object they find it casts shadows. These shadows they find distracting. The shadows make them lose their sense of what the object is about. For they like to talk about the object, and how can they go on talking if they have lost their sense. They paint the wall black to lessen or erase the shadows.

The basketball players had seven seconds to get their three points to win the game, and, isolated in their intensity, they were emblems, pure, moving on the court.

He spoke of the professional athletes as a different species.

*First, there must be a special respiratory organ, the lungs, affording an immense extent of internal surface, covered by a vascular network, through which the blood flows in innumerable minute streamlets, only separated by an extremely thin membrane from the atmospheric air that has been inhaled; secondly, there must be such an arrangement of the circulating system that fresh blood may be continually driven through the lungs and then onward to the general system; and thirdly, there must be provision for the frequent and regular change of air contained in the lungs.*

*After leaving the family, young ostriches, still in the monochrome brown plumage of immaturity, form small wandering flocks. They are able to travel at speeds of up to sixty miles per hour, but are nevertheless captured, as they run in circles.*

We were repairing the costumes of the dancers. I was searching for holes and tears caused by the stress of the dancers' bodies within the costumes.

Many go fast on the freeway, and many have died; it is accepted that many more will, that conversation will be limited to what and who is inside the car, the "interior" of which may be

upholstered with a velour-like fabric or may be coming apart at the seams. The inside of the car has an intensity unmatched by the other environments they dwell in, and they fill it with music but mostly with noise, brought in on waves projected through the air.

It is accepted that vegetation planted by the freeway will be stunted, will grow in a perpetual weather of the freeway's exhaust. The dependence on oil and the vulnerability to its price fluctuations is lamented as weather. That we will quickly move from here to there with nothing on the way is a "fact of life."

Many think these things, but many do not dream of what they think of, but of something held in the hands like jellyfish, inner life raw or yellow. Holding it in shells, in the hands, such naked flesh suddenly experienced, as if photographed or filmed, entirely forgotten, swallowed whole.

They had two-by-fours and half-decayed decorative square logs, like railroad ties but smaller, and all of this stacked as in a lumber yard but in the store feeling more like an archive, under the roof extending into things like the housewares section and he, who had recently worked for a living with the same materials, looked at the stickers that had been placed, little price tags on each piece of wood, and said: "Isn't that funny the way they put those stickers on, like they were cups."

This was a strange situation, to fall in and out of relation, the way a summer umbrella does to the helpfulness of its shade as fall throws the shadows of clouds over and over it, and it sits solidly planted in its aluminum holder. The terror of all this is so dull that it has virtually disappeared: life appears pleasant, and full of pleasures. Not many of them are secret or treasured, it is true, all of them almost are worn, taken out of the closet, valued, possibly counted, certainly displayed.

Median strip and the runners along it. Broad trees, cars swift, relentless. Often it is mentioned that a person behind the wheel acquires the qualities of his or her machine. A person who would not think of challenging someone on foot, who would smile uncertainly and even imagine the other one's name, insists on right of way, forgetting. I skip over you, I throw a rock, shout the rhymes out, the other girls do too. And the adult activities have the counterpoint of remembered children's games, which serve as waiting room, paradigm, playground, stage set, the flower of time.

Brevity like an axe frees them: the prince cuts his way with no difficulty through the briars of stone.

The young trunks of the citrus trees are painted white or wrapped in rags to keep them from burning in the sun.

Her whole family seems to be made up of tortured souls, who have no reason for being tortured. The apparent semblance of a balanced mind, the phrase "peace of mind" which it once seemed meaningful to question, now appears to have fled.

When she first began writing it was an intensification of feeling. It was a setting of the world of her own family into a larger world. This world, this larger one, was vague and amorphous,



and had no known history. When she had the opportunity to attend lectures on world civilization, she ditched them. She was too involved in her emotions and her sexuality to see straight, and found a kind of rightness in living in the following of this passion, which she deemed living passionately.

*Thousands of pairs of gannets breed on the island, their photographically accurate memory enabling each bird to find its own nest again after leaving to feed.*

I would then be. My mouth over his, his over mine. My mouth over his over mine. Against. When we lift up and shake the blanket in making the bed, it settles down this way. When the air is dry in the dark, raising the covers in getting into the bed, sparks fly sudden, small and white.

Those colors are what one calls primary. To ripen in Russian is to turn in color, and we often use color to judge, judiciously, whether a fruit is ripe. Will it taste good, sweet, soft, yielding and at the same time not be over-ripe, be past its peak, gone, soft, spoiled?

When the flock of birds, of geese, lifts off, they seem to agree on this movement, though a few stragglers, in disciplined form even so, join up with the vast main group, a kind of punctuation, or modifying phrase.

Sunlight. Clean air. The sticker said that survival is a basic human right. There is a soundbox that still works inside the stuffed animal, the leopard whose green eyes glow in the dark.

We call that kind of a marble cat's-eye.

*The next day they named the place Acaghcemea, the meaning of which is given as "a pyramidal form of anything which moves, such as an ant hill."*

In the city she had the distinct sensation, while lying in bed at night, that parts of her mind were orbiting round her head, that she could not contain all that had happened to her. She walked next to this extra, partial body of her own experience, trying to recognize it as her own, or to see it as a discrete entity, or to feel some closeness or relation.

She continually turned to him for reassurance that she was "alright."

What does the mind do, does it digest and eat things. Many animals, he said, have no time to think of anything but eating.

Now those birds, whose feathers are stippled grey and white, almost black and white in this shrouded over light coming through a dense cloud of a sky, overcast, these birds are females I suppose and that one with the orange chest must be the male. They are both busy eating. There are two on the feeder and one is waiting.

The birds aren't sure if the sound of the typewriter is safe. They decide not and leave.

He said he felt human privacy to be a small thing against his first felt violation of the privacy of animals while in the far north. They are white to hide them in the snow, simple as that. Or the privacy of the so-called inanimate world, she flattened herself against the wall to watch him enter without being seen. Atomic privacy wrenched too, bumper stickers saying split wood not atoms. Waste of the plants makes the ocean water warm. This true story bores her, for she has heard it before, living as she does in a family, though with her own phone.

Living as you do. You would then be. Your ear here, tying knots in the supposed calm blue (turquoise, mint, shallow) waters of my intent. Conversation like snorkelling may be an easy tourist sport, and that area, roped off for our observation, seemingly not to be spoiled or harvested, is in truth, or as they say, reality, and on closer examination, cleared every morning of those sea plants and animals not thought by the hotels to be pretty, meaning now "pleasing to the eye," though the original sense of the word, on closer investigation, is found to be "tricky," "cunning," "full of wiles."

The bird outside the window on the new bird feeder that clings directly to the glass could not be too shy still I moved slowly and softly to avoid startling her, dull colored and perched erectly without relaxing whether because in the open at the feeder or whether this is the way birds eat I do not know but at each mouthful the bird straightened itself up and consumed with deliberation.

Masturbation before the mirror heightened the silver quality of the mirror, the way the surface seemed to be brushed on over the glass, or behind it.

*He remained convinced through the twenties that writing was at its best a primal instinctive thing like love, and he kept trying to get at the primalcy with a whirl of words as if writing were a physical thing like swimming or running and one simply poured on the muscle power.*

This typewriter, while certainly bulky, is a good deal lighter than my previous one. You can tell the date of the typewriter by whether it is rounded. If it is rounded chances are it is the older model. If it is almost plump, almost circular, it is the oldest model which we call A. Then the model with the soft curves is B, and the sleek, elliptical model C, and this latest model, with no curves, has the console look.

*Probably for ages after the civilization of man commenced, the still waters of ponds and lakes were the only mirrors.*

*Although he often felt the boredom of life, in an empty Paris, it was by fulfilling his vocation and by hard work that he was so well able gradually to dissolve the loved one in a broader reality that he ended by forgetting his suffering and feeling it only as if it were a disease of the heart.*

The leaves of this tree are like broad fronds, but the tree is covered with them, down to the trunk. It resembles slightly the avocado, but clearly has no fruit, and one wonders, from where it stands, if it was planted or is actually a weed. However we leave it standing.



*The peacock was brought to Europe by a mighty conqueror, a man who made history. In its natural habitat it is extremely shy, and only in places where the natives hold it sacred does it become more trusting.*

Mean people abound. Senses of humor. Knives. Do not break me. The writing has changed fundamentally, from description, lasso, to request, direction, the hand moving out instead of in. Lasso: a long light but strong rope usually of hemp or strips of hide used with a running noose for catching livestock or with or without the noose for picketing grazing animals.

*Tristan Tzara: I detest artifice and lies. I detest language which is only an artifice of thought. I detest thought which is a lie of living matter; life moves outside of all hypocrisy, hypothesis; it's a lie that we have accepted as a starting point for the others.*

The black crow doesn't know how to settle on the green palm, whose fronds sway, brilliance, violence, sunlight, under his heavy flapping body that wants to set down on a solid thing.

Alan Davies

## Remarks on Wittgenstein's Remarks on Fraser's Golden Bough

Remarks on Fraser's Golden Bough, by Ludwig Wittgenstein (Brynmill/Humanities, 1979), 36 pp.

I MAY READ DELEUZE while waiting to sell to a customer. A student may participate in a campus or other revolution while completing her MBA. An artist may remake some portion of the culture while benefitting materially from that culture's interest in what he has undone. Actions of these sorts are no longer contradictory. It is no longer the value of things exchanged which motivates the confusions surrounding the various terms and equations of exchange value. We experience increasingly that it is not those terms, those things and actions, which are of value. They are not. It is the experience of exchange value, as such, which is increasingly valued. It is the erotic stuff of our experience. This is what is meant by currency, the ongoing immediate experience of exchanges and participations within and without constraint.

It is remarkable to find Wittgenstein at the beginning of this slight text, which was moreover unintended as such, speaking about truth as though it existed, and

bolstering the contention implicit in that word by contrasting it with error. Perhaps nothing in language is as seductive to the person who enjoys thinking in it, as the numerous pairs of apparent opposites. Truth is surely something we will be rid of if we are to get through the world according to language, to the experience of the world. We will have to dissolve these words, and these present words, and have no more need of them.

We must be more than rid of those angst-ridden moments which rid us of our lives. That revolution, alone, is not enough to engender us. We must see the last, also, of those numerous gestalt-laden matrices and transcripts whereby we all too often live our lives some moments late.

We do not learn from our mistakes; we repeat them. What we may learn is gradually to experience each new moment freshly. In this way we learn always from what we have not completed doing, and thinking and feeling and being and so on. For this reason, truths can only be

lies that have happened to other people, ourselves among them.

He is absolutely right when he nonetheless moves on from his own earlier thoughts to note that we need have no use for explanations, and no need of opinions.

"I think one reason why the attempt to find an explanation is wrong is that we have only to put together in the right way what we *know*, without adding anything, and the satisfaction we are trying to get from the explanation comes of itself."

"And error belongs only with opinion."

That is how I also would put together what I know. Writing as explanation is dead when we can rather either know what happens or make happen what we know. And writing as an aid to memory is a metaphor for what we would forget.

Gertrude Stein—"If you are explaining, the same thing is true, because if it is a whole thing it does not need explaining, it merely needs stating."

From at least one point of view it is possible, and perhaps even necessary, to view all of the history of human life on this planet, all of the people and actions and thoughts and so on of which we would usually think of it as being composed, as a single event. This point of view, which anyone might take, we might imagine to be necessary to a being wishing to compare the scope of human life to the present with, say, the scope of a race of beings as they might exist, for example, among the Pleiades. From this point of view it would be unnecessary or, as we have imagined it, even impossible, to question an action, asking of it, is this a political action, a reflex one, a ritualistic one, an emotional one, a meaningful one, and so on. It could be unnecessary to question an action.

Wittgenstein registers an important distrust of inferences and synopses, particularly those of an historical nature, by which events which might merely have been described, are instead assumed the one to have generated the other, or which are then summarized as if that were how time worked, and were not merely one of the ways in which its description might be extrapolated. Such extrapolation or extension, and this is my argument, is done for profit; a simple fact, or even a description, a broad fact, is worthless. Against this extrusion of details, he posits as a positive what he describes as "übersichtlich," and which is translated as "perspicuous" as in "a perspicuous presentation." If this were to be taken as a proscription, and were to be followed as one, it would mean that we would describe or state things clearly and in an organized manner, with a view perhaps to easy understanding by an-

other. It would leave to auditor or reader the production of meanings, insofar as we have understood meaning in the Western manner, to mean *something*. Western language and discourse could be characterized by the transitive verb, and so could most of our behavior.

On the other hand, we may wish to say to someone who makes only a simple observation, such as "It's raining," or even "It was raining,"—"May your observations be reproduced in triplicate."

It remains remarkable that we wish to ask in relation to things, are they the same or are they different. This is similar to the crisis of the formulation, "my body," as if these two words could in any way be separated. It might be assumed that this notion, this experience, of separation, arises from the fact that we designate "different" things, concepts, etc., by "different" words. But it does not. It is our experience of the joining together of words, of concepts, etc., which gradually comes to fix in our minds the sense or the notion of their separateness. Odd, isn't it?

Wittgenstein—"The most noticeable thing seems to me not merely the similarities but also the differences throughout all these rites." The most important word in this statement is "me" because it is that word that is entirely opened by its allegiance at once to similarities and to differences. How much simpler (and we might wish to pose that as a question) is a statement such as this—"In all these practices we see something that is similar, at any rate, to the association of ideas and related to it."—which, at any rate, betrays its allegiance to the quandary of sameness and difference, by a connection with only one of its terms.

One of philosophy's most naked problems is its unwillingness or inability to see with its eyes. Wittgenstein involves himself in an effort to understand why we say of an experience or of a practice that it is deep, or sinister. On the surface he is dealing with the nature of the mystical or the religious. But beneath that, and almost certainly unintentionally, the broader question being asked is: Why do we adjectivize at all? How do we come to say that of that? It is in the context of this that he asks, "But could I not just as well ask: When I see someone being killed—is it simply what I see that makes an impression on me, or does this come with the hypothesis that someone is being killed here?" You can see that I leave him with credit for his double interrogative, but I can't help but wonder what it is that makes him experience a difference between what he sees and what he thinks he sees.



THE FATE OF MY OWN FANATICISM is that someone doesn't look right right here. The senses could be the metaphor for dainty language. The child who serves as the *infans in machina* by turning the wheel that operates the machine understands nothing about its functioning.

I am assisting with the planting of a garden. Varieties of plants are isolated in their patches. A patch of peonies, crab grass, sweet peas, make up a long row. There are rows and rows of flowers made up of these patches. One row has not yet been planted. I intend to mix crab grass, daisies, and petunias. "You can't do that," I'm told. "But the seeds won't mind," I say. My argument gets me nowhere. These plots are just like graves.

Opening Scene

A SEASON OF FUGITIVE SCULPTURE HACKED OUT OF A FOREST OF BARRELS IS OFFERED TO A MAN WHO HAS LOST HIS NATIVE TONGUE. HE INTENDS TO SAY, FOR ME A LANDSCAPE IS OF NO VALUE, BUT IT COMES OUT AH, LA LOOSE.

Man: Ah, la loose.

A man does not understand his own speech.

A caustic hypothesis humiliates one into stealing words. Then one laments one's social being as if it were a lost child.

Two men stand speaking through long tubes into each of a seated man's ears.

He is smiling.

My ideas were fading and my health was coming back to me.

The door is closed on the past.

The book is canceled out.

But the Ultra Moderne, in its neophyte role, does not acknowledge the child mind's history. La Mysterieuse is only one of the many primates the child mind rejects. It's the lapse that makes the child laugh, the thing that is there but not thought of. (Assumes the pose of a man raising a violin vertically over his head by its neck to either hold it indefinitely or to smash it.)

La Mysterieuse: Here is the dream. She is trying to make love to a man who is trying to make love to a woman who is trying to make love to a man who is trying to make love to a woman. This is the chain of rejected desire. (During the speech Woman and Ultra Moderne are fighting over man.) The surgeons are asexual figures who appear to perform surgery on the chain<sup>1</sup>. (La Mysterieuse acts out this operation on the tangled Ultra Moderne, Woman, and Man.) They then return to the forest of barrels from whence they came. (Woman and Ultra Moderne retreat. La Mysterieuse mimes their retreat.)

<sup>1</sup>from *Property*:

Grownups wandered around on the streets behaving themselves, seemingly, which was troublesome, seeing that the dark tiles and brick pillars had been there almost as long as the three surgeons in white robes dangling and jiggling cigarettes at the end of the empty hall.

I retreat. So as not to meet a man. You retreat. This is the understood you. By she retreats, who errors in ice by wearing ice when it is ice. Eliminating contrasts when he retreats. To define us before we retreat to define him. For they retreat without us leaving us his speech. The objective of this punishment is the sum total

Paris: a model paints her abdomen with blue paint while the artist watches, dressed in a tuxedo.

of characters. But the poet teacher has transferred grammar to geology. The student puts the "I" in quotes and goes to the mines. Ravines have stripped to a layer of dust. The lesson is the irony in stratification. The student returns the density of the teacher's work. Finally, "I" can't think unless vicious dogs lining the road as a squadron of motorcyclists drive by control the ascent and descent of several balloons by holding on to their strings.

Scene II

THERE ARE DRINKS AND MUSIC BUT ONLY HIS SHADOW INHABITS THE APARTMENT

My ideas were fading and my health was coming back to me. This series of pitches through some jungle figures greatly in the life and times of many an adventurer. But I am not one of them. Who is this speaking I should say. The past, present and future were in a tangle. That was my physical condition as I thought forward into the advancement of mankind. The soft wit inland blinks, to the amazement of the others! The last thing I remember from that episode is 'the continuous home is not mine.'

Where the crowd appears in dazzling morning light and the lightsoaked displays stand in front of the 20th century, mistakes fall on us from other latitudes. Up there is a sink as big as the fist of Monumenta. Her dramas make a shrine for us. The lost ones are pointed out. We fall in place behind them and follow the hemlines of each other's bodies. Scars develop where there once were futures. The future, too, is a quasi empty space.

A tourist listens to bells no one else will stop for. Are the bells false bells? They don't calm me. Nor do they intercept one's progress, the sentimentality projected to other planets while creeping home.

The tourist is involved in a drama of which I am not aware. She is in love<sup>2</sup>. And at home in her home state, she rises to power. Every evening, walking home with her papers, she hears the bells from her holiday and gains in eagerness as she approaches the property left intact . . .

A place in a book does not exi(s)t. It is as libidinous as what someone says. "Looks very poisonous to me." But it's only a joke that tempts the literal imagination to wake up.

<sup>2</sup>from *The Middle*:

7. If he comes I'll tell him . . . is a resolution, a promise. If it is not to be a false promise it must not rest on the certainty that he won't come. It is neither a material nor a formal implication.

Someone is having a problem making a decision whether or not to communicate something to someone. An exterior event will cue her as to what to do. If he does not come, she will never relax again. If he does come, she will tell him that she loves him. Or: if he comes, that means he loves her and thus this knowledge will enable her to tell him, or make it appropriate for her to tell him, that she loves him.

If she were able to communicate what she must tell him to someone else then there would be more than one solution to her problem. This is why it must be that she is speaking to herself.

Probably the circumstances surrounding her thoughts are much heavier. Will X tell her lover that she lied to him about her wealth and also that her father will kill him if they ever meet clandestinely again? She has



Alan Davies: Time is an invention of and tool for use within life, and not vice versa. We know that all times, and all of our times, are available to us not as part of a continuum, but as the radiant tools for use by and whereby we construct our imaginations. We will construct our lives by imagining them and nothing else will explain the mysterious functioning of the line of verse more adequately than our continued use of it toward the imagined vantage of our lives.

(La Mysterieuse enters in a threepiece suit. She takes out a large retarded insect from her pocket and uses it on her nose as if she'd just heard something she didn't like at a board meeting. The insect creates an atmosphere of melancholy on stage.)

Eerie: A discussion must follow about the role of the critic.

NOW THAT THE WHOLE OF SOCIETY IS BECOMING HIERARCHICAL, EACH DAY THE GIRL IS A DIFFERENT SAINT. NO ONE CAN SEE HER SAINTLINESS. TODAY IT IS SEEN AS ARROGANT, ALIEN AND IMPROPER TO ENGAGE IN PRIVATE ACTIVITY WITHOUT ANY EVIDENT ULTERIOR MOTIVE.

Ultra Moderne: This melancholy must never end and in fact must destroy the critic. Countless people are making from the liquidation of professions, their profession.

Alan: The nice people, the good mixers liked by all.

(Enter various characters in period costumes—doesn't matter particularly what period(s).)

So we were walking up the trail that eventually would lead down to the beach. One of us was carrying a pack with food, water, and baby items. The other was carrying the pack with the baby. It was hot, the path was steep and covered in rocks. I was sweating, panting, and my knees felt like they were growing bones. Below was the ocean, gorgeously alternately slate and aqua with chartreuse jungle from very high up leaning into the ocean, almost slipping into it. Slipping is how we felt physically about it, as one gripped one's tennis shoes with one's feet in the damp surface of the rocks one step at a time so the spectacle of the view is admired more in retrospect and the seeming slippage of the jungle was not exactly interesting but rhymed with one's physical state. I had demoted the jungle to a sensation.

Girl: I have just written what I hope my teacher will think a lovely essay on the theme of plagiarism. Plagiarism has always been a popular activity however it may

been lying to him, and now that their adventurous romance has turned to relentless love she feels terrible remorse from her little deceptions that have over time become all-encompassing problems: "We certainly, among us all, must be a match for that little lady. Sooner or later every girl who is in love does something rash which betrays her secret; we will talk it over this evening." Everyone is conspiring to turn her inside out, to catch her in her mask.

When our heroine is thinking to herself, "If he comes I'll tell him . . ." we understand how much this is all in fun, all a structuring device, for we use the same devices in order neither to die from nor to give away our secrets. The wringing of the hands is something one tries to prevent at all costs since this betrays the private thought. It is the silent means, the thinking about the problem, the thought exposed to oneself alone, that is in cahoots with the future.

29. "Now you mention it: I think he'll come." "Now I think you're right: he will come." "No, I'm convinced: he will come." One can think up a characteristic context for all such expressions.

differ from country to country from tribe to tribe. My own thoughts on the subject extend from New Guinea, to the Congo, to Bangkok, Mississippi and beyond, to the heart of civilizations and its discontents. This disease of content is the by-product of capitalist owned futures. That everybody's future is owned in this manner nullifies the moral questions relative to this problem. However debunked the moral question might be, one can still find in the phenomenon of the stolen identity material for discussion that far outweighs the rip-offs in the world of print. Consider the woman passing herself off as a girl, or a man posing as his son. Does the son exist, does the girl exist any longer, or is this a form of murder that goes unpunished? No one notices the walking dead.

The mountains spread out gently behind the lake, a charade of tamed landscape from which laughter can be heard. Here the idiosyncratic is a resident of the bland. And so we get a picture of the replaced man.

In the meantime, growing dizzier and dizzier from the climb, I was faint-headedly thinking about what I would say. "This this or that or any other thing."

Book 3: And what have I accomplished with all this? In explaining the concept I have substituted the use for the picture.

I am folding the picture. It is a sheet. There is not one meaning or finding. I say to myself Freud is wrong. I dust the crusty top of the nightstand, which I have been spilling drinks on since childhood. The chipped pink lamp with the stained and tassled shade, almost a remnant of childhood, in my fantastic knowledge of it, grows out of the nightstand.

By fantastic I suppose I mean that something that has lived past its expiration date grows into another being—in one's desires to see it gone one invents extraneous attributes to explain its longevity and to transform it into a superior object. An object not confined to the repetition of seeing it, the idle thought and silent rages I have shed upon it. Something that makes a sham of my unspoken thoughts by the invisible power I bestow on it.

By sheet, I mean words. For all of this is a lie. And if you watch the feathers of my duster closely, you will see that they do not collect dust because they are made of plastic. A sham duster used by an unsubstantial hand. By unsubstantial I mean nonexistent. And now I close the drawer of the nightstand I have never touched and turn off the lamp by whose light I have never seen and climb into the bed in a room I have never occupied.

[From *The Middle*.]

I was thinking about the surprise ending the cheap trick of any detective story. I had never thought of my ending in exactly that way. The cheap trick became a very interesting way of closing the door on the past—not the writing's past, for it can be in any time, but the experience of reading is put in the past, sort of placed there, it's just a room, and then you wake up from the dream.

Character was in another dream. A man has character, loses character, loses faith, scrutiny occurs, or the character adds to itself knocked up against experience it's compelled toward, like Don Quixote. In the dream the character accumulates attributes. There is no being. Being announces a uniformity: the man in the crowd equals the crowd. The conversation in any given cafe may be completely predictable. How many times have you heard oh, la la a suicide? Maybe never tho it feels like many. The recognition is prompted by the cultural context. But the same character will stammer out her excuses behind the scene in a language even she has never spoken.

Oh, my god, I thought, I've got to read Augustine. And then it occurred to me that if I didn't get some water I would faint. So I got the water. As I stood there, the world slowly came back into focus. I kept mumbling things like "I'm starting to feel human again." "Or maybe I mean animal." "This is silly, which is it?" Anyway, no one was paying the slightest attention. I might as well have been asking "did you remember the sandwiches?" while hold-



ing the sandwiches in my own hand. At last it occurred to me to say while gesturing in mock soliloquy, "My ideas were fading and my health was coming back to me."

Then the poet wrote it down on a crumpled tour guide.

The audience is not called upon to offer help but only to feel sorrow, and the more they are pained the more they applaud the author.

Someone can't live without you.

What word(s) in this sentence is stressed: the conversations between the questions of truth and the questions of power have attached the distinction between true and false to the hearts of the hirelings of logic, who in any case work diligently to abolish the debate.

Is the sentence to be taken only as a whole?

Is its feeling communicated without uttering it?

Is it an interpretation?

He *acts like* he can't live without you. This is how a mother might interpret her baby to further the inspiration of their bond. They inspire in each other a bond. The bond enhances their passions. In this sense too they are inspired. The truth of passion is what validates the attachment to the mother, who must have a means of understanding the relationship.

The conceit of desire is the result of analysis. But what of the incidental, the desire that is not yet known? It can come into being by acquiescence, by compromise. The question is put aside for a preference that is a preference because the tree is there to climb where there might have been berries to pick. Berries, however, are there to be shared by anyone. To climb the tree, the individual makes private conquest of the landscape. In that one can entrap more of it in one's vision, less of the island is imagined. More of it perceived. Where does this take one's authority? A crab has passed over my feet. It is the wrong detail. The wind changes and the radio comes to my attention. It says something, but I hear "come home." Yet all is quiet in the house and no one wants to take me from this place.

"He who offers for sale something unique, that no one wants to buy, represents, even against his will, freedom from exchange."

"Oh, he's just talking about the artist and the artwork. What else could he mean? He's wrong. It's just Kantian b s."

"Well, I was thinking that the person he referred to was like a character in a play by Brecht. Some weird guy who missed the boat with his efforts and no one can figure out any of the reasons he ever did those things."

When continuity is enforced it loses its value.

Making a bridge through time is a pretense of verification. The real bridge is its own justification. But the bridge of words unites two unlike periods as if they were part of a whole. It is this pretended whole that disturbs me. This may be "asocial." There is no imagination where there is false justification. And the requirements of justice are strenuous indeed. Some jurors believe there is a whole story where others see only pieces. The tape of the entire trial is read over to *prove* there are only parts, that the whole story is a fabrication that must be unravelled by the record of what was actually said. This record *proved* the person to be innocent of the crime. It proved but it did not convince. Do the law and the court of justice address themselves to these concerns? Another juror, whose argument was more compelling than my own, said the story of either side is not *the* story. The whole story would never again come into existence, having been altered and destroyed over time.

After the trial, I suffered an excited remorse. I could not stop talking about it and yet I could not make my agitation understood.

Steve Benson

## The Stand-In Under Duress

A sense of linearity defined against  
the confetti made of everything what sense matters contains  
Speak of or for things: 2 ways to speak in relationship  
either trying to speak from their position  
or trying to speak about them

To speak of/about things/circumstances acknowledges their  
resonance, they— In other words, if you're trying to describe  
a thing, that flower there, it's red and has this green thing  
hanging down that's a support system for it  
they— Things echo back, distort or challenge, answer  
what's said

Mute resistance or susceptibility

In other words, it either fights, which is not exactly— or it  
just appears to take it.

The 'loose' translation torn from its assignation.

The bare wall treated as space.

(In other words, suppose you're given this loose translation, like,  
"well, it's red and it's got this green thing coming off the  
bottom," then what are the properties of

A picture held up as for display, a New Image painting of a  
man, you're confronting this person in the picture head over  
heels, literally, his hands on his feet and his feet in the air trying  
to make this strange adjustment in order to meet you eye to eye.  
The perspective of this vision very closely parallels your own.

The image is of a page in the middle, a man standing on his  
hands in it, stuck under his feet and the typewriter ribbon  
streaming through them; he can't meet them, he can't move, or  
else the feet are in the air on the blank page head twisted against  
reasonably to look right at you, sky-light behind— Through a  
freaky twist he sees what we can't, the aimless rummage of the  
ribbon through the expectation everything will comment on one  
another, maybe not quite soon, blow up in smoke like a balloon  
leaving shock everywhere, dispelling confusion licensing mind to  
start, a handicap in effect.

I had a vision as a ribbon, sheer continuity of imagery  
seeming to maintain such contact in the midst of imminent explo-  
sion within which we're sitting assuredly as possible. Shock every-  
where, etc. There are still more streams stuck through that, like  
tracks explorers hypothetically take, wondering what will get  
them into scrapes and which a surer chance of survival and fur-  
thering the means. Survive in the face of death, extend one's life



through all that threatens it, to survive I mean as an intention, rather than just a fact of being one has happened to lapse into. To survive purposefully, go through circumstances of being, floating sometimes pounding at the pavement with your fist, feet, experiments in timbre, focusing the mind like a hot sword or the detail of a break.

Many of my images seem to be of penetrating, as though to live were to get through some thick seamy— but the temperature is different, of a different kind. I was going to talk about an idea of writing that wants to go every which way, rub every parameter, and only by the macrocosmic presumption of the omniscient— not the narrator obviously, but— and who for all I know might not be a writer either— in fact, this authority is a fictive extension of the technology of writing into the hunger and fatality of one's own mind. Does it make any kind of persistent sense, but, tautologically, by demanding a gestalt horizon, practicing over and over codes to resurrect that gasp that catches in the throat hesitating to be described until some other starts to materialize?

Imagine a man like so, then, or a woman, though a mean tangled man is easier for me. He enters the bookstore head first, slams his hand down on the counter, and says, hip shoved against the newspapers, "What do you have for my daughter? She's ten, she's in 3rd grade." I'd taken an orange from the cooler before coming on the shift, so managed to meet the thermometer in case the background register too purposely decided anyway. "Everyone thinks for him or her self" in this society, which is impossible anyway. We all govern each other's needs as we see fit, perhaps because the language, like all researches, is communal and coordinated; I can't say business unless someone comes in and buys something. It's easy to listen to someone who's listening to you, whether or not you're speaking: when they're trying to find out who or what you are, or what the difference is— But what is it like to listen to someone not even consciously pointing attention towards their own potential difference but just running on ahead? Who knows what they may be thinking? The cash register then drops open and white snakes wriggle out to redeem the moment of explosive expectation. Of course words do something; many seem to do the same, whether tactfully compassionate or cavalierly torquing the charade, may pick a pocket of so far indefinite understanding and substitute some token of exchange, ironically spinning person as plural to a no-man's-land of lolling insecurity, a suspended grey plate miles above some food.

As though there were some other intermediary step.

Letters not received by the deceased return to sender.

On the east coast, where I come from, there are intermediary steps by which persons habituate themselves to forms recognizable as social control but also as entertainment, custom, such

that brackets are thus set around events which otherwise might abruptly decontextualize the so-called social experience. Perceived experience is sometimes referred to as "on the other hand"; people keep each other pretty much at arm's length in order to fully appreciate the difference.

A gesture to them immediately broader than I seem able to comprehend.

There must be some way to strike out, one thinks, to pass, but the world's so well-traveled it just feels like one big road. Analytic processes don't much more than stumble there and/or back, depending how you look at it.

There is instantly a fictionalization of the I.

#### *Fiction*

The inadequacy of the case was good at keeping it together. Allegiance; tact. I was always writing it in my mind. (Time almost over.) The neighborhood ball. Defection to a side. ("Come over, Red Rover!")

The eagle—or the gull—on the pavement, doesn't have to do with this.

They can't embrace.

The cerebral judgment learning to spell a language of choice from the fragments of devices sentences plan across the yard.

Adults quarrel among themselves, supposedly being childish, public toilets within sight.

The world relative to some beyond, on which may be fixed a lever.

#### *"To be a sub"*

To be a source, in other words, as well as a consumer, perceiver, anticipator, anchorperson, commentator— in any event some wish to be an originator.

Bridge a contact.

Bridge to the unknown, I do not distinguish you. It is only in my falling-off-a-log fictive flaw in imagination . . . I have two dictionaries. Conventionally accepted falsehood. Then I comment that this seems extremely distasteful to me. I say, well, substitute, I had imagined. Let's. I turn to the other dictionary—a list of words with explanatory renderings. 'He's getting somewhere!' To repeat, to represent in a verbal or artistic form, to depict; there's a definition of renderings that includes a quote from Edmund Wilson on James Joyce, "Joyce had attempted . . . to render . . . what our participation in life is like." And then some other definitions; it also means give back, translate, and "cause to become, make: 'This study renders men acute, inquisitive.' (Burke)." Or to reduce, convert, or melt down. Finally I turn to find a definition for 'fiction' and choose both that it is "A lie," and that it's "An event, statement or occur-



rence that has been invented or feigned rather than actually having taken place." What I have in mind, actually, is to present as fictions those things I have to say, so you can argue against them and convince me their reality.

Redundancy a caveat.

*Translate the accessible into the inaccessible and back.*

Going to be, going away.

Clouding the surface, numbered by webs, a dark murmur tries to break through dawn's tension. Thought boils over as I rush to get it. You face someone. Sitting on a toilet, I turn suddenly right, thinking I'd seen a sign there, paper, pasted, probably warning, something to be read in any event, but nothing's there but the stall wall, hospital green flecking a pale salmon, an otherwise undifferentiated field seen as relief projection of a color blindness test.

The superficial resemblance of overlapping borders muddles one's sense of circumstances. One knows they aren't exactly there but may fall trampled in their pattern any second without realizing. World events ooze further on, are scarcely what they seem. Hands stick in the shake. The experimental phase still legendary.

What's unknown, one claims for one's own, illuminating the windowpane with an eye of fixed grace. But we distinguish an alienated and stereotypical application of ethics. This all needs, it says here, to be reduced to something too, standing for something potentially posed as use. Revising it in perspective, register the concentration foreshortening effects. Certain key pits eliminated. But passages? The lamp spreads intensity and edges. Cut half to expose the necessary tissues. I can't beat what I did, can't respond that way again.

It's a recapitulation of the nerve-endings dressed up in social logic, inert gags games of self-knowledge they simply eclipse in their need to make displacement signify as though all they want is that someone should know they're there, winning attention like a trophy in the ineluctable arcade The next thing is the best thing they're always telling you, and you believe this in the odd split-second it takes sometimes to think

—Yeah, like they just want you to witness that they're there, meaning something.

In order to meditate, I may have to open myself up to— Ow,

I mean *mediate*.

How do you indicate, even to yourself, a state of privacy?

Suppose someone opens a door and sees another, previously unaware of himself. How do you make an adjustment? The only way I know is by considerably rearranging the space.

In order to feel something  
through and take  
in effect the measure of it, to know how  
it functions with me, I have to  
disclaim all authority  
whether of or over all my adept manipulations  
of the various nets of organization  
and submit myself St-Anthony-like to the chaotic  
iconography of every conceivable  
coincidence in terms of control and release  
that I can recognize, a matted horde of stamps and signatures  
annexing credibility for anything they happen to tag  
including confusingly enough each other, and trust  
something else's happening too, guiding  
or dependent on, shuffling purposefully beneath  
the surface lingual focal length describes,  
all aspects of what had been bugging me coming  
to seem arbitrary and atomic, sinking again  
into stony anonymity offshore intent  
negotiation, leaving decisions  
to start to realize  
through  
acts

Towards the end of the sentence, the particular uncertainty of its timbre, which had singled out by default one body after/ from another in the image of a thread, seems to get picked off by autonomous ghost parasites whose seeds already had been embedded in the original scheme.

The evocation of a cause in reading,  
an emotion disturbed/purged into sentiment;  
grey spaces in the corners of your room,  
features that cling to your mind after you part;  
an apprehension of being identified with this,  
willingness almost saturated with belief.

Black velvet masks the imperative of the image— the obliviousness of the thing attracts me, camouflaging the merely temporal washout of perspective— I agreed to the pressure of such a deranged plan. Glossy, marbled with inattention, lucidity often confuses me. It's familiar. But I hadn't quite begun yet to believe.

A first attempt appeared successful.

Technique transposes everything to definition, fiction. In experience the sender and receiver are the same.



What I wanted to say was, I walk up to a block of wood, and, covered with dust, it exaggerates a small park into a thousand features. Fictitious powermonger tenderly disguised as conventional boy licks lips in mirror.

Wandering a few hours a day in the rain unintentionally.  
How to begin on purpose some duration  
having locked the keys in the car  
A level gaze stood outside.

Impatience with other people. The pretension of any statement of satisfaction while the person ossifies and self-destructs. The repetition of themes, verbatim word-for-word, you plagiarize in order to impress.

Ned had had a busy day. His legs still tired from silicon pharmacy hung with strips of glowing metal inside touched by small aspirant dashes. Ned's son Ned could never be sure when he was being made fun of. This is how I organize my life, Ned thought, disappearing smoke appearing through a forest for some time. The bags soaked shoulders, salad forks glancing in the knees. To learn I think is novel, mind hummed in a moderately pleasant paper bag. I want the same thing from this room. At least things are different in the next. Something about this room changes everything. Now according to the color I threw away, but probably archaic, this book would mean— with a vengeance, probably, too. The thought of revenge, on his mind a lot lately, or at least his tongue lashed out when several servants held him aside collapsed; now he had only civil servants, merchants, and in the next room dinner. Everything stood cold, tepid, and imperial. After distractions, he had lost them all, but dinner, and he wanted it. In the next room everything straightened looked elementary, partial, and after his action, which was hard to remember, why this car parked a foot away wasn't, or rather was. The bluff challenge of a personal fog constantly splitting location's barriers happened to avenues of realization. A ceaseless flow of unity across the bottom rocks.

In the force of the tidal wave,  
the nylon chainsaw,— that is, when everything about you's  
cut to ribbons, describe a very thin line

The serial form of a dialogue—  
longing answered by, or hoped for in,  
the brevity of address.

The rigid place that holds the tense parts of the mind believing, without doubt to break or alter the pace— a sort of fiction. The sky was grassy pale, a russet field, short hard look through an unaccentuated eye. The force of the stimulus, hidden in the back of the brain like a source, is perhaps some idea about someplace else that, linking the present, short-circuits hesitation.

"In the end, A, B, C, and D all came privately to the conclusion that the others had either become hostile or else gone berserk. Either way, it did not matter much. None of them took the communications system seriously any more."

— Michael J. Reddy, "The Conduit Metaphor"

I

An arrival in history only coincides with defeats.

The invisible body is a mirror of containers. Perfected, a chain of commands speaks.

Every road ends in an object. Unfolding, a world of parts in a display of same.

A sign revealed in buses for the driver or deportee.

Each utterance is unique only in a theory that specifies a point in time and space.

Then all the pawns fall.

While a model faces perception. Behind every survival is a whole totality in words.

I.e., parenthesis it is a text. To answer a question in runic workings of quotations behind which passion slips.

And left, imagining a sum: an *I* inverted to an *it*.

At the same time as an imposter.



## II

The blinding light of distant shows is a subtraction.

This error I want to erase.

A story must do violence to the reader. Then the old order can be replaced.

Peripheral, they stared into long, glaciated valleys, watching the trail of a jet.

Substance between participants R and S at location P.

I pause. Objects disappear at the same time as their use.

And the first daylight ever, in all its fragility. Thus there are copies to report.

To see the form of a man's fault rejected. Wavelengths are measured on a scale.

White neon. What is abstract begins to appear concrete.

Various greens were hindrances.

## III

A disembodied jack-in-the-box revives in air. The blameless metal rests in place.

There was no fire, but black smoke poured out continually.

To build superhuman funnels in English originally meant "by means of a wind harp."

A dream calls up others, breaks habits, fills in the void.

To have seen them sweeping up the office during lunch.

The aging horizon translates into his marriage to a car.

Colonial pyramids, imported in an excess, are grown locally as imperial cubes.

Here wrong answers separate into questions on reading.

Each testimony pours obstacles into the exact song-fountain.

You were obsolete idolatry.

## IV

"To whom am I speaking?"

You realize native rock is subliminal to begin with.

They do not make a spectacle only to repeat themselves.

Chapter 1 has been suspended in a warehouse of textiles for 1000th of a second.

The route passes through air, in spite of a misreading. I speak to the horizon of a fixed point.

The dying sun in a book holds back verbalization.

We learnt the original author, & we learnt application of his method easily & fast.

This picturesque taking off of shirts, sweaters, bathrobes, and putting them back on.

A midnight impulse cannot make the bus leave its route.

But abstraction is acknowledged in ever more complex artifacts from the Iron Age until now.

## V

Thus, no language can say that I am not a writer.

These sentences are used to disrupt speakers. Speaking, they mention two texts.

\$48 divided by 48¢.

One page of the London news, opposite blocks of marble.

A simple turning into events isolates yesterday's news for eternity.

Later, we need repetitive work. What is exciting in youth is an end in itself only.

Glare disappears by degrees before returning to a pile of frames I have invented.

A message may be in the bottle.

Ordinary underpinnings reveal a country of apartments. Syntax adapts.

A large dog approaches A and B. A: I hope it's friendly.



## VI

The urge to communicate itself is hostile. His title page reveals a mask of physical pain.

Signs in Bengali add the gleam of inert gases to space.

I find them incomprehensible.

Each shadow is a fragment that admits the eye to so many windows, ending in a finite series of sounds.

I.e., "All code is \_\_\_\_\_(s)."

Alternating shuttlecocks must be an *I*, chiseling out the electric seas as far as Hull.

Materials processed in waves enter an Enterprise Zone.

A great black and yellow W-2 rocket, 46 feet long, stands in an empty desert.

Depending on who is the host of the Benny Hill Show.

Fragments picture an obvious tone. Closure replies in advance.

## VII

Unvisited landscapes disappear in a grammar of scenes.

Lightning multiplies over cornfields, replicating an enormous bolus in all its parts.

In the Museum of Childhood are various delimited displays.

"That lively distractability."

Nerves inscribed by sounds see a raised surface in writing.

Please knock if an answer is not required. Light blinds the eye to an objective.

Seeks to avoid cameo portraits.

A book of England needs a magnifying glass for names.

Alienation telescoped through viewing device discovers moonlight in the sciences.

Furious black were resistances.

## VIII

Toxicity of level backgrounds fades away in his verse.

Opposition raises stakes at opposing tables. In the midst of a sequence, cheers.

A continuous rain, spread over stones, is incorporated.

"William works in Manchester; so do I." World trade, set within quotation marks, lights up on a sign.

The real text has vanished.

Lexical units are mentioned in previous semantic fields.

As if submergence in admirals were wet. Writing turns them inside out to live.

A symbolism for "his mouth."

Experience is obvious in a program of staged events. They count in unison up to ten.

An education is rote phonetics. Still, the child is unsure.

## IX

Timing chains stand still in a pile of cheap materials.

The common denominator is art.

Each sentence admits the faults of individual words. That is the emphasis I intended.

I want the moon, or replication of the same substance.

Dreams are thinking; to think is oppression. Oppressive experience and a decision alternate back and forth.

Modern subways make concrete mirrors into private time.

The Wedding-Guest's conventional understanding is inferior, in contrast to my vision.

Every absence is peculiar to a verb.

Applause only heightens the extremes. Nouns represent the unrepresented.

The limit of quotes is violence. Yet 30,000 copies have sold.



## X

Rocks break in waves over everyone's anxiety. Wood shatters the unmoved trees.

Dialogue breaks down in patterns of ritual violence.

Set into type, she marries the source of his endless sex.

Recorded in all-night sessions.

The same evening I went ashore. The first landing in the new world is counterfactual.

Towns live under dark slags. Crowds move to the front.

Experience wants to make a point of its grievances. I want to find out whose fault.

Form would be right-handed or left-handed. Its trumpets frighten the city dwellers.

Quoting obliterates a sentence to test syntactic rules.

But the miraculous unraveling of invention kept listeners awake long into the night.

## XI

Equivalence would only make a predictable end of itself.

Therefore I come first, followed by explanations.

Hinges disappear until a story begins to distribute its own weight.

Yearning grows at this point.

Our marriage domesticated the courthouse. The mirror of the year is not conscious.

A word and its meaning sleep under a bridge in London. Their cardboard box disintegrates in time.

Each thing is a part, realized in endless factories.

A: That's the telephone. B: I'm in the bath. A: OK.

Work equals a passing out of sight where some of them shoot outward in motion.

The day is a predictable weed with a hidden advantage. Meanwhile, there is tension.

## XII

Sunlight separated by armrests marks an order of address.

Threats defused by hierarchy enter delusional plane.

From which seats to witness?

Normal vision has distorted its reasoning. Enlarged, an *us* could think or weep.

Chestnut trees against the sky (inverted from a photograph) were formerly an actress.

A and B in "The Bank of England." On the value of a one-pound note.

The text will be as wonderful as the falling star of its original value, the world.

The Ministry of Transport on a motorway accident in fog.

An object likes to see a man straddled between chairs.

But theory is inadequate in this example.

## XIII

Under a blue sky, neon competes with color. Memory puts its windows back in place.

A metronome can be very flexible.

The imagination retreats into houses. Half-remembered walls light up with books.

One grasps the implications of this negative as a whole.

A calculus of variation faces intuitive grounds of exclusive country estates.

What I want is an artifact. An attaché case is what I need.

Interpretation reveals an industrial crystal behind technology.

A circle frames quoted signs from a dream in Bengali.

The sun shines on a perfect day. Then comes the attack.

Why it does not disturb us is an infinite regression in which nothing is at stake.



#### XIV

Things are recognized insofar as one grasps the literal meaning of *things*.

An involuntary line of verse.

Thus a new grammar enters the mind, giving access to those who understand it.

A discourse erases memory of production. Currently he is director of film effects.

Their marriage was framed by functional understandings.

I think experience is access to language only.

Threads melting in the foreground turn studio backdrops into lies.

A mirror is the sum of compliments and misgivings.

Then the new year begins, popping out of an aluminum trunk.

No warning will be given. This pattern is also a test.

#### XV

We drink tea in a café behind the red brick bus station.

The ideal of the novel is this.

Married and became pregnant or became pregnant and married.

I should not stop thinking of my system. If ideas are only sound we are dead.

Writing dismantles a complex to give speech a more honest account.

The order I wish to inhabit is temporary. Its perspective is only related to me.

Troops embark for the Continent. Every year we come back to vacation here.

Working men's voices above water-driven looms in Wales.

A fabric depicting modern armor and projectiles.

Bruises penetrate uniforms to give the order to advance.

#### XVI

Chestnut trees stand in witness as the ship sails away.

All is negotiated in language (as in law).

The rationality of any system is the strain it puts them through.

A conversation about information theory in which there are too many messages to send.

Every hierarchy has its excuses.

Cursed by continual absences, a violent country is mirrored in its lakes.

There are at least two fabrics in any given thread.

A strange faculty where flying is condensed into boxes.

She married a part of the whole. The preceding data are not acceptable in this format.

Endures to revive its fears of abandonment. You have been determined by this.

#### XVII

Do not write below this line.

Each sentence is a test of the rules of closure.

Their pleasure leads to a dream of work, connected to the sound of a dinner bell.

Long hedges line the fields (windows appear very small) as we drive away.

Now I can hear some instructions.

Shuttlecocks fly back & forth without touching. Then the work is advanced.

Meanwhile, we buy paintings. Poetry suffers from a lack of confidence in its use.

Spectators kept shining blue lights.

A tells B about the accident. Each passenger sees his or her version of the event.

Every result stabilizes in a depiction. Thus *use* is a word only meaning unites.



## XVIII

Dear George, "Death fractures a totality so thoroughly only the arms are missing."

This very thick haze is a text.

Radio 1: the body fills in the predictability of an address.

Impossible readings are only synthetic. I imagine a courthouse whenever a rule is used.

A repeated cube follows from its syntax, exactly.

It thinks there are no general ideas such as when "it thinks."

His project is his meaning, or vice versa. An asymmetry in public is only a functioning part.

Remember to dial 999 in darkness or in smoke.

The description of that bird is this window.

"This is a moment of utterance." A vocabulary of 100 words.

## XIX

Communication occurs in English, but only in English.

Look in your dictionary to begin.

An address delivers a letter to the Post Office. An object only a mirror can reflect.

Speech is the sound of what's missing in writing.

For the first time they consider themselves to be part of the text.

But I am caught up in this poem.

The way a truck roars through a downpour towards Heathrow.

Components of machines give rules for a better personality.

Flames beneath a bower spread to sympathetic trees.

Scores of women fainted. Then even to have been a witness is a summary of the event.

## XX

A name explains things only to us.

Writers drive a new vehicle between roads. The actual world is a deformation.

If a state is visible politics, these sentences must be its laws.

Most London residents can locate the Thames.

A dusty fragment from the telephone system, 1983.

An habitual sense is the use of a landscape. Trees fly away with the continuous birds.

An act clears away malice from time, along with my defeats.

Absolute blue are coincidences. Fatality = work.

Any message is an imponderable, even where life and death are expressed.

The road extends a horizon. A: I hope you manage to arrive.



## Two Stein Talks

### Language and Realism

JUST AS FORMAL OCCASIONS, such as telephoning an airline, require Muzak, so informal ones require an epigraph. William James provides the epigraph for this Talk:

"Well, I read 30 or 40 pages, and said, 'this is a fine new kind of realism — Gertrude Stein is great!'" (Letter to G.S.)

In the past few years, I've been arguing, more in private than in public — that is, as if with myself — for a rethinking of a notion of realism in terms of contemporary writing practice. But in order to understand what I think such a rethinking of realism might yield, it is necessary briefly to account for what it was, in literary and art critical history.

The term as applied to painting and to writing came into use in the middle of the 19th century, more or less simultaneously in Russia and in France and doubtless elsewhere as well. In Russia it seems to have been used first to talk about literary issues and in France it was first applied to painting. Both Turgenev and Flaubert were credited with the paternity, but it was Emile Zola and his followers who made the term and its array of concepts current.

Given that I intend to relate this term to Gertrude Stein's writing, it is interesting, in passing, I think, to note that Zola was a close social and intellectual companion of Cezanne, whom in turn, of course, Stein so admired. Cezanne and Zola were schoolboys together, and comrades later as artists. They believed, at least for a very long time, that they were seeking solutions to the same, or very similar, artistic questions — though Cezanne's, it seems to me, was the far more complete solution.

Zola, in his long essay, "The Experimental Novel," identified the task of the writer with that of the scientist, taking a position which explicitly rejects the methods and subject matter of the Romanticism which had been the dominant literature of the time: "No more lyricism, no more big empty words, but facts, documents," he wrote.

Or, as Martin Eden puts it in Jack London's novel, "The science professors should live. They're really great. But it would be a good deed to break the heads of nine-tenths of the English professors — little microscopic-minded parrots!"

The basic concerns of the realist writers in the 19th century were methodological. Paul Alexis, who, along

with others of Zola's group including Guy de Maupassant, was an exponent of Zola's ideas, wrote: "Realism is not a 'rhetoric,' as is generally believed, but something of greater seriousness, a 'method.' A method of thinking, seeing, reflecting, studying, experimenting, a need to analyze in order to know, but not a special way of writing."

The frame of reference was philosophical. The intention was to treat the real rather than the ideal, the everyday rather than the unusual, the common rather than the exceptional. Realism rejected the loftiness and exoticism characteristic of Romanticism and turned to ordinary life for subject matter. The technique was to be based on models from science. "The chain of reasoning will be very simple," said Zola in "The Experimental Novel" (1880): "If the experimental method has been capable of extension from chemistry and physics to physiology and medicine, then it can be carried from physiology to the realist novel."

Realist literature attempted to confront two essential and quite separate issues. One was metaphysical; that is, the writer questioned the nature of the Real, the relationship of the Real to Appearances, the distinction between the simulacrum and the original, the accuracy of perception, and perception's susceptibility to illusion, and finally the capacity and sufficiency of art to translate, transfer, or become itself Real. The other issue was ethical; that is, the writer questioned the relationship of Art to Truth, the relevance of sincerity and/or simulacrum, and posited some practical value for the work, suggesting that literature can and should be useful. Realism, in this case, may be regarded as an attempt to get at both verisimilitude and veracity. "The extent of all realism is the realm of the author's pen, and a true picture of life, honestly and reverentially set down, is both moral and artistic whether it offends the conventions or not," wrote Dreiser (1903; "True Art Speaks Plainly"). "Truth is what is; and the seeing of what is, the realization of truth."

It is in Paul Alexis's statements that we see the limitations of the project already defined: "a need to analyze in order to know, but not a special way of writing." It is precisely a special way of writing that realism requires.

"Gertrude Stein, in her work," wrote Gertrude Stein in *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, "has always

been possessed by the intellectual passion for exactitude in the description of inner and outer reality. She has produced a simplification by this concentration, and as a result the destruction of associational emotion in poetry and prose. She knows that beauty, music, decoration, the result of emotion, should never be the cause, even events should not be the cause of emotion nor should they be the material of poetry and prose. Nor should emotion itself be the cause of poetry and prose. They should consist of an exact reproduction of either an outer or an inner reality."

Stein's personal history in this context was peculiarly directed toward the study of reality and of our perceptions of reality, which may or may not differ from or alter reality itself (to determine which was part of her studies), and the study of the language which, on the one hand, apparently mediates between us and reality and, on the other hand, is for most of us the constant, ready, everyday, and natural medium for discovering, defining, and asserting reality — making use of it, expressing it, and perhaps creating it.

Perhaps it was the discovery that language is an order of reality itself and not a mere mediating medium — that it is possible and even likely that one can have a confrontation with a phrase that is as significant as a confrontation with a tree, chair, cone, dog, bishop, piano, vineyard, door, or penny, etc. — which replaced her commitment to a medical career with a commitment to a literary career. In which case, she would have similarly realized that her writing was potentially as social and as useful as doctoring might be.

That is a speech. Anybody will listen. What is romantic. I was astonished to learn that she was led by her head and her head was not with her head her head was leading when her heart stood still. She was certain to be left away with them. Dear Christian you are very sweet without hope. Hope is for you . . .

Speeches are an answer . . .

The scene opens and they have a valley before them. (*How to Write*)

The spirit of artistic commitment to the world, and the designation of that as "realism," had in the 19th century followed on a rejection of religious (instructional, inspirational) and secular (escapist) fantasies as the principal function of writing. But also it was a response to the emerging significance of science and its values — research, experimentation, persistence even to the point of drudgery, and the passionate force of discipline.

Stein's later interest in detective fiction is something of an intellectual pun on this. It is useful to consider, because detective fiction parallels when it doesn't parody the essentially bourgeois values implicit in 19th century realism.

Detective fiction asserts social optimism, a triumph over grim context. Detective stories are not about guilt and innocence, that is, not about morality; they are about details. The clue is a detail that solves a specific

crime, when appropriately observed by a detecting person. The purpose and function of these and all the other details are to bury the specific crimes and crime in general — criminality.

The point of detection is to uncover the incontrovertible relationship between logic and justice. In the course of being detected, things — that is, objects, events, and ideas — which seem arbitrary and indiscriminate are rendered logical and relevant.

The nature of detail, the foregrounding of certain details and their transformation into clues, forces the trivial to become moral, even humanitarian. The specialness of the detective lies in his or her ability to combat the inexact and muddy — which is what causes or conceals the crime. The detective turns a detail into a clue by heightening the particular; he or she replaces false or insufficient with true or adequate detail. As Stein put it in "Subject-Cases":

In place of this and in place of this.

Parlors and parlors and for their parlors and in the parlors and to the parlor, to the parlor into the parlor for the parlor and in fact for it and in fact more than a fact. A fact is a fact. It is a fact, and facing and replacing, in replacing, to replace, to repave here and there, and so much. In so much and so quoted and as quoted and so forth and for the most of it, for almost all of it and so in that way not investigated. As to investigating reasonably preparing, preparing to do so. Do so and do so and to do so and as it were to be as if it were to have contributed and furthermore not more than as to stating. To state. Behind them to state, behind them and not to wait, behind them and more frequently and as it was very frequently they were merely as to have it attributed. Attributed to all of it and so satisfactorily as stated.

Thus the detective buries the crime under the inexorable logic of infinite unlimited unquenchable details. "So indeed and so indeed a parlor settles that."

At Radcliffe College, or what was then called Harvard Annex, Gertrude Stein studied with William James, who was then not yet the philosopher William James but the psychologist.

For James, psychology meant the study of consciousness — the content and forms of consciousness. His methods were experimental, involving laboratory work and laboratory methods. His principle work was the study of perception, our consciousness of perception, and the consciousness of the consciousness of perception — in which one can hear the approaching rumble of a psychology of language. James thoroughly understood, and Stein activated, the extreme relevance of language forms and structures to perception and consciousness. James's psychology assumed people's natural inclination to seek truth, however multiple and variable it might turn out to be (obviously a truth based on and derived from perception will be multiple and variable as the things perceived and persons perceiving). But for Stein, it was not truth



but understanding that was of value — a shift of emphasis, from perceived to perceiving, and thus to writing, in which acts of observation, as complex perception, take place. James's emphasis on the importance of (primarily perceptual) experience and its relationship to the structures and development of meaning had already extended to a study of language as a function of experience. Stein simply extended this, so that language in itself was an essential and primary experience.

"If anyone ask," wrote James

what is the mind's object when you say 'Columbus discovered America in 1492,' most people will reply 'Columbus' or 'America,' or, at most, 'the discovery of America.' They will name a substantive kernel or nucleus of the consciousness, and say the thought is 'about' that. . . . But the *Object* of your thought is really its entire content or deliverance, neither more nor less. It is a vicious use of speech to take out a substantive kernel from its content and call that its object; and it is an equally vicious use of speech to add a substantive kernel not particularly included in its content, and to call that its object. . . . The object of my thought in the previous sentence, for example, is strictly speaking neither Columbus nor America, nor its discovery. It is nothing short of the entire sentence, 'Columbus-discovered-America-in-1492.' And if we wish to speak of it substantively, we must make a substantive of it by writing it out thus with hyphens between all its words. Nothing but this can possibly name its delicate idiosyncrasy. And if we wish to *feel* that idiosyncrasy we must reproduce the thought as it was uttered, with every word fringed and the whole sentence bathed in that original halo of obscure relations, which, like an horizon, then spread about its meaning. (*Principles of Psychology* I, 275-76)

This without any ambiguity, is a clear and radical challenge to the primacy of the noun and a description of the state of consciousness as a verbal plane. In imagining this plane, we have to bear in mind its porosity and observe the range of activity on its surface. It is this that I was thinking of when I wrote elsewhere (in *The Guard*):

Men and women of thought & study  
are voluptuaries. The advantage of the grass  
as borrowing in groceries.  
Admire! an unflat surface.  
The rather reckless emptiness and seriously porous  
emptiness.

*Tender Buttons* was written between 1912 and 1913, after Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas made their first trip to Spain, where, as Stein herself said, Spanish light and Spanish ways of arranging things, the light flat but the compositions round, had a profound effect on Stein's sense of things — their composition and the syntax of seeing them. *Tender Buttons* is in 3 sections, entitled "Objects," "Food," and "Rooms." There are 58 objects;

the table of contents of "Food" lists 39 titles but there are 51 "poems" in the section; and "Rooms" is a continuous piece in paragraphs. The relative weights of the three sections are about equal, and the things portrayed are ordinary — ordinary objects, mostly domestic; ordinary food, plain and wholesome and not *haute cuisine*; domestic rooms, averagely adorned.

In a pair of articles that were published in the *New York Review of Books* in 1982, Charles Rosen, reviewing the catalogues from two exhibitions of paintings, both focusing on realism and the realist tradition, points out that subject matter taken from the ordinary world retains its integrity and ordinariness and even banality in conjunction with a highly visible artistic means. The realism of the means — the materiality of the poetic language, for example — is a precise manifestation of the artist's attention to the alien particularity of the subject matter.

It is in this respect that the pronouncement from Zola's circle, namely that realism doesn't involve a "special way of writing," becomes inadequate and mistaken. Somewhat paradoxically perhaps, it is the autonomy of the writing — the high visibility of its devices and even its intrusive strangeness — that authenticates the accuracy of its portrayals and gives the work itself its authority. "It is the guarantee of the truth of what is being represented." (Rosen)

To some extent, then, the writer's candor with regard to his or her own means can be taken as representative of a general truthfulness with regard to objects. Rosen makes a further point with regard to mundane subject matter whose aesthetic value is of no significance:

If contemporary life was to be represented with all its banality, ugliness, and mediocrity undistorted, unromanticized, then the aesthetic interest had to be shifted from the objects represented to the means of representation.

In this the opposite of realism is not imagination (which is positioned in style) but idealism (which is imposed on subject matter).

Flaubert's prose, distinguished and beautiful in itself, does not disturb the banality of the contemporary life he represented. . . . (Art) can lay a double claim, first to absolute truth undistracted by aesthetic preconceptions, and then to abstract beauty, uninfluenced by the world that is represented. Art for art's sake and Realism are not polar opposites . . . but two sides of the same coin. It was the avant garde that succeeded in uniting them . . . in avant garde Realism there is an extreme insistence on the means of representation; the rhythm of the prose or the patterns of the brush strokes are always obtrusively in evidence. . . . A work of avant-garde Realism proclaims itself first as a solid, material art object, and only then allows us access to the contemporary world it portrays. In avant-garde Realism, consequently, the beauty of the book or the picture always appears to be irrelevant to what is being rep-

resented. Stylistic forms that idealize had to be avoided at all cost. (Rosen, March 4)

"Art ought," wrote Flaubert, "to rise above personal feelings and nervous susceptibilities! It is time to give it the precision of the physical sciences, by means of a pitiless method" (letter to Louise Colet). Similar ideas occur repeatedly in 20th century avant-garde theory. Thus Viktor Shklovsky: "Thus in order to restore to us the perception of life, to make a stone stony, there exists that which we call art." And Francis Ponge: "In order for a text to expect in any way to render an account of reality of the concrete world (or the spiritual one) it must first attain reality in its own world, the textual one."

"What strikes me as beautiful" — this is Flaubert again, in one of his famous and remarkable letters to Louise Colet — "what I should like to do, is a book about nothing, a book without external attachments, which would hold together by itself through the internal force of its style. . . . a book which would have practically no subject, or at least one in which the subject would be almost invisible, if that is possible." It might almost have been in response to this that Gertrude Stein wrote, of *Tender Buttons*:

Now that was a thing that I too felt in me the need of making it be a thing that could be named without using its name. After all one had known its name anything's name for so long, and so the name was not new but the thing being alive was always new. ("Poetry and Grammar")

And a little further:

I had to feel anything and everything that for me was existing so intensely that I could put it down in writing as a thing in itself without at all necessarily using its name. The name of a thing might be something in itself if it could come to be real enough but just as a name it was not enough something.

It is thus that she arrived at *Tender Buttons*, a poem, or group of poems, in which the liveliness of anything ("of course you all do know that when I speak of naming anything, I include emotions as well as things"), the liveliness of anything recurs artistically within the scope of a radical force of attention.

This ambitious, exquisite work raises a number of issues — current issues, relevant to contemporary writing practice. There are three areas from which one can triangulate a reading of the work. The first is linguistic: the work questions the nature of language as the basis for knowing anything and explores the effect of technical aspects of language (parts of speech, sentence structure, grammar, and the size and shape of the writing) and poetic devices (images, patterns, puns, etc.). The second is psychological, by which I mean, in Jamesian terms, consciousness based on perception and elaborated by the perceiver in his or her encounter with the world. And the third is philosophical, best seen in terms of phenomenology, in so far as it addresses and tests the objective.

"What is the difference between a thing seen and what do you mean," as Stein posed the issue. In *Tender Buttons* she addressed the question of the nature of knowledge relative to meaning, in an attempt to discover, in so far as possible, the nature of poetic language as a locus of meaning and of primary being, lest, in mediating between us (thought) and the world (things) language become instead a barrier.

It is typical of lyric poetry to take it as the latter, or, if not as a barrier then as the material condition that limits and diminishes the potential of any expression. Thus Dante complained:

How weak are words, and how unfit to frame

My concept—which lags after what was shown  
So far, 'twould flatter it to call it lame!

It is, after all, the complete, unmediated encounter that one must imagine to be characteristic of a "typical" experience in "paradise."

If one follows Merleau-Ponty's definition of phenomenology, *Tender Buttons* might be read as a masterpiece of phenomenological literature — assuming there to be such a thing.

In the "Preface" to *The Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty says:

Phenomenology is the study of essences; and according to it, all problems amount to finding definitions of essences: the essence of perception, or the essence of consciousness, for example. But phenomenology is also a philosophy which puts essences back into existence, and does not expect to arrive at an understanding of man and the world from any starting point other than that of their 'facticity.' . . . It is also a philosophy for which the world is always 'already there' before reflection begins — as an inalienable presence; and all its efforts are concentrated upon re-achieving a direct and primitive contact with the world. . . . It is the search for a philosophy which shall be a 'rigorous science,' but it also offers an account of space, time, and the world as we 'live' them. It tries to give a direct description of our experience as it is.

Stein described her intentions in *Tender Buttons* and the portraits of that same pre-war period, in her lecture "Portraits and Repetitions":

I began to wonder at at about this time just what one saw when one looked at anything really looked at anything. Did one see sound, and what was the relation between color and sound, did it make itself by description by a word that meant it or did it make itself by a word in itself. All this time I was of course not interested in emotion or that anything happened. . . . I lived my life with emotion and with things happening but I was creating in my writing by simply looking. I was as I say at that time reducing as far as it was possible for me to reduce them . . . I became more and more excited about how words



which were the words that made whatever I looked at look like itself were not the words that had in them any quality of description. . . . And the thing that excited me so very much at that time and still does is that the word or words that make what I looked at be itself were always words that to me very exactly related themselves to that thing the thing at which I was looking, but as often as not had as I say nothing whatever to do with what my words would do that described that thing.

The first poem in *Tender Buttons* is entitled "A Carafe, That Is A Blind Glass."

A kind of glass and a cousin, a spectacle and nothing strange a single hurt color and an arrangement in a system to pointing. All this and not ordinary, not unordered in not resembling. The difference is spreading.

A carafe is a container, a glass one, which, if filled with a thick liquid, that is a colored one, might be, so to speak, blind, opaque. A blind glass might also be a blank mirror, or a draped window — as my aunt would say, "Draw the blinds, it's dinner time." A glass might be a magnifying glass, or other eye-glass — a spectacle — though it's unusual to use it in the singular, as one seldom hears a scissor, or a trouser. The meaning or meanings of the title depends on whether the phrase after the comma is an appositive or whether the comma is like the copula "and" in the sentences of the poem that follows. In the one case, one thing is seen in two aspects; in the second, two things are joined as a pair. The pattern of unfolding laid against infolding, or of doubles set in dualities, continues in the poem until the last sentence, which might be read as a statement or commentary on the rest.

"A kind in glass and a cousin": a kind binds carafe with blind phonically. The two words in the two halves of the title are condensed into one, while the simple phrase, a kind of glass, undergoes a bit of distortion, becoming a kind *in* glass. A kind of glass, or some kind of glass thing, which is a carafe, has something *in* it — the way ideas fill words.

A cousin is a relationship — a familiar one, "nothing strange."

A spectacle has a double meaning, in that it is both that through which one sees, "glasses," and also what one sees through them: "What a spectacle!" and "Don't make a spectacle of yourself." Seeing through, seeing with, seeing at, seeing in, and seeing beside — a fully prepositional situation. As William James remarks in *Principles of Psychology* (I, 245-46):

There is not a conjunction or a preposition, and hardly an adverbial phrase, syntactic form, or inflection of voice, in human speech, that does not express some shading or other of relation which we at some moment actually feel to exist between the larger objects of our thought. If we speak objectively it is the real relations that appear revealed; if we speak subjectively, it is the stream of consciousness that

matches each of them by an inward coloring of its own. . . . We ought to say a feeling of *and*, a feeling of *if*, a feeling of *but*, and a feeling of *by*, quite as readily as we say a feeling of *blue* or a feeling of *cold*.

This raises one sense in which one might interpret Stein's "an arrangement in a system to pointing," namely a "system to pointing" might mean descriptive language (though significantly "not ordinary" language, bearing in mind the formalist distinction between ordinary and poetic languages) — descriptive not with recourse to naming but relationally. Pointing itself, the gesture, is relational, in that it locates a thing relative to the position of the pointing person and implies the presence of contiguous or neighboring things beside which or among which the thing-pointed-to sits. After all, if it sat alone, the pointing would be redundant and tautological.

The first sentence of the poem is a trio of twos, in which a cousin, nothing strange, and an arrangement are aligned and face a kind in glass, a spectacle, and a single hurt color. A single hurt color might be interpreted as an imperfect perception — imperfect in being single — thus in need of the first term of the next sentence: "all this."

In "Portraits and Repetitions," Stein said, "I tried to include color and movement," meaning that she wanted generally to understand the qualities of things, in themselves (their color) and as they color our feelings and thoughts, as they qualify them, "in the stream of consciousness that matches each of them by an inward coloring of its own." "Beside beside is colored like a word beside why where they went. That is a speech. Anybody will listen. What is romantic. I was astonished to learn that she was led by her head. . . ."

As for movement, Stein wanted to understand things not in isolated rigidity, which falsified and monumentalized conditions which were fluid, but as present participants in on-going living — fountainous living. How does a carafe move? In an arrangement. By being larger than a cup and smaller than a pitcher; by containing less liquid than before; by reflecting light (and thereby color); by being or containing the same color as a piece of paper; by having a vase with flowers not of that color set to the left of it from here but to the right of it from there, and so forth.

Stein's analysis, in this sense, is lateral; she does not trace things back to their origins, it is not etymological. That would reduce things to nouns, when getting away from the stasis (and the phallogenic monumentality) of the name was essential. She saw things in a present continuity, a present relativity, across the porous planes of the writing. "Not ordinary."

Not unordered in not resembling. Not chaotic, despite the rapidly multiplying abundance of singularities, by virtue of the differences. Differences keep things separate and distinct.

As Donald Sutherland put it: "The great welter of what seem to be particularities and trivialities in *Tender Buttons* comes from a 'religious' attitude toward everything as simple existence. She said the change at this time

was from feeling that everything was simply alike to feeling that everything was simply different." Differences are at the heart of discernment. It is precisely the differences that are the point of devices such as rhyming, punning, pairing, and running strings of changes within consonant frames. It is the difference between rod and red and rid that makes them mean. Word play, in this sense, foregrounds the relationship between words. "Literalness is not deceptive it destroys a similarity" ("Arthur a Grammar"). "A sentence is that it makes a difference."

The carafe in *Tender Buttons*'s first poem is only the first of a number of various things that can be thought of as containers or enclosures — with an ambiguous relationship to the semantics of perception and to the syntax of the language in which it is expressed and described — or in which, perhaps, it actually takes place.

Across the motif of containment, there is a series of words relative to destruction, or, at the least, change — process, alteration, and natural transformation. Cracks, holes, punctures, piercing, gaps, and breakage — and the possible spill with which the first poem ends — recur and refer in part to Stein's concerns about the means and adequacy of writing — of capturing things in words. As she put it a year earlier, in "Americans," "A gap what is a gap when there is not any meaning in a slice with a hole in it. What is the exchange between the whole and no more witnesses."

Or to quote myself:

going  
by the usual criteria for knowledge  
I vowed not to laugh  
but to scatter things. In the bowl  
of my left palm I placed my right  
forefinger, to signify a) Feeding  
b) A batch, c) The Appraisal, d) Too Much  
consolation  
is like a forgetfully boundless vow.

The contrast between the containment and the water motifs is obvious, especially in *Tender Buttons*, but I think of it too in others of Stein's works. The flow of water is rather like the abstract nature of color. It can take place in or on a thing but it is always as part of a larger, more abstract entity that it has its character. Blue, or the sea. "Why is there a single piece of any color?" is a line from "Rooms."

Perhaps the water alludes to consciousness, the consciousness which, said James, "does not appear to itself chopped up in bits . . . it is nothing jointed; it flows." (Briefer Course, 159) "Within each personal consciousness, thought is sensibly continuous. I can only define 'continuous' as that which is without breach, crack, or division" (I, 237). The term "stream of consciousness" recurs over and over in James's writings on psychology.

I myself don't experience consciousness that way — my own. It does appear broken up, discontinuous — sometimes radically, abruptly, and disconcertingly so. It would seem that Stein wondered about this:

Will she be kneeling beside the water where the water is flowing and will she be losing it and will she furnish a house as well and will she see some one as she is advancing and will she be a christian and will she furnish a house as well. Will she be kneeling beside the water. Will she advance and will she furnish the house as well. Will she be kneeling there where the water is flowing. She attached to it this, she attaches to it. ("Lend a Hand, or Four Religions")

Box, bottle, carafe, cup, shoe, tumbler, book. Containers and their covers — concealment — colors, and dust, dirt, darkness, polish, shine. "A shine is that which when covered changes permission. An enclosure blends with the same that is to say there is blending. A blend is that which holds no mice and this is not because of a floor it is because of nothing, it is not in a vision" ("Rooms").

That a thing remains itself, unchanged; that perception contains that thing accurately, completely; that words capture that perception, honestly, accurately: containers and enclosures raise questions about the integrity of things in many senses.

Instead of giving what I was realizing at any and every moment of them and of me until I was empty of them I made them contained within the thing I wrote that was them. The thing in itself folding itself up inside itself like you might fold a thing up to be another thing which is that thing. . . . If you think how you fold things or make a boat or anything else out of paper or getting anything to be inside anything, the hole in the doughnut or the apple in the dumpling perhaps you will see what I mean.

For Stein, the container was from the start an interesting problem. To regard description — or the page of writing — as a container was to betray the nature of the thing described, the flow of its existence, and the flow of the consciousness perceiving it. "An eyeglass, what is an eyeglass, it is water" ("Muttons").

To resolve this, she conceived of her work not as a medium for emptying herself of ideas nor as a formalized language holding the contents of the objects which emptied themselves into it, but of the writing as "the thing that was them" — which means that things take place inside the writing, are perceived there, not elsewhere, outside it. It is the nature of meaning to be intrinsic, in other words, immanent, as the meaning of any person is, of me, is me, the person. That is how the poem means. Concentric circles draw more and more in as they radiate out; more and more lake is contained by the stone.

*Tender Buttons* can be read as an approach toward a hard-edged, rigorous, analytical, merciless, romantic realism, which

1. is patient and accurate in regarding the subject
2. sounds the psychological density of language
3. keeps its techniques bristling with perceptibility
4. is motivated by the cathexis of language itself toward knowledge
5. is successful in achieving the inability to finish what it says.



## Grammar and Landscape

1.

LANDSCAPE, *PER SE*, IS A MODEL OF LONGEVITY. It has the virtue of never being complete, and so of seeming permanent — eternal. As a form, therefore, it is solemn and vacant, because nothing can match it. No condition, or set or array of conditions, achieves a finalized form of landscape — which makes landscape an exemplary case, a spread of examples. As D'Arcy Thompson puts it, "Some lofty concepts, like space and number, involve truths remote from the category of causation; and here we must be content, as Aristotle says, if the mere facts be known. But natural history deals with ephemeral and accidental, not eternal nor universal things; their causes and effects thrust themselves on our curiosity, and become the ultimate relations to which our contemplation extends."

For Gertrude Stein, landscape was an empty form, or rather a form free of predictions, a somewhat vibrational field of reversible effects. The exactitude — the "realism" that she claimed for her descriptions (as nameless naming) of single objects in *Tender Buttons* — could be repeated over and over if she could get not only the object but its position and the condition of its being in position. And this could be multiplied; there could be many objects and then therefore multiple relationships — coincidents, which are the most reversible of relationships.

To "Act so that there is no use in a center" proposes landscape, with its perspective spread over a largish surface, located in innumerable non-isolating focal points. In terms of writing, this meant, for Stein, that the vanishing point might be on every word.

Stein, in her *Lectures in America*, especially in the one called "Plays," tracks the development of her understanding of landscape in terms of plays — at first in the theater, and in terms of temporal rather than spatial problems, but more and more as writing rather than theater, and in response to local landscapes — in Spain, again on the trip that influenced *Tender Buttons* and on later visits, and then in the French countryside — "and there I lived in a landscape that made itself its own landscape," she says, as if identifying as a natural condition, or a condition in nature, that which was the made condition of her own descriptive writing in *Tender Buttons*: "I made them" (that is, the objects as descriptions in the poems of *Tender Buttons*) "contained within the thing I wrote that was them. The thing in itself folded up inside itself like you might fold a thing up to be another thing which is that thing inside it that thing. . . ." as she said. "And there I lived in a landscape that made itself its own landscape," heavy, burdened, under the tension of its own sufficient and complicated activity, its habitual readiness, a form of charged waiting, a perpetual attendance; this is very much the way a child feels its life, and the way saints, as Stein saw them, lead theirs. One thinks of the

opening of *Four Saints in Three Acts*, which for Stein was primarily and pointedly a landscape:

Two saints prepare for saints it two saints prepare for saints in prepare for saints.

A narrative of prepare for saints in narrative prepare for saints.

Remain to narrate to prepare two saints for saints.

But if one is to consider the landscape as a form of charged, redolent waiting, one can't help but think too of Flaubert, and his recurrent oblique or lateral stylistic influence on Stein.

Full and flushed, the moon came up over the skyline behind the meadow, climbed rapidly between the branches of the poplars, which covered it here and there like a torn black curtain, rose dazzling white in the clear sky, and then, sailing more slowly, cast down upon the river a great splash of light that broke into a million stars, a silver sheen that seemed to twist its way to the bottom, like a headless snake with luminous scales; or like some monstrous candelabra dripping molten diamonds. The soft night was all about them. Curtains of shadow hung amid the leaves. Emma, her eyes half-closed, breathed in with deep sighs the cool wind that was blowing. They did not speak, caught as they were in the rush of their reverie. Their early tenderness returned to their hearts, full and silent as the river flowing by, soothing-sweet as the perfume the syringas wafted, casting huger and more melancholy shadows on their memory than those the unmoving willows laid upon the grass. Often some night-animal, hedgehog or weasel, would scuffle through the undergrowth as it started after its quarry; now and again a ripe peach could be heard softly dropping from the tree. (*Madame Bovary*)

2.

It is at just that moment that the night is repeated, received repeatedly surrounding the foggy morning, a rainy noon, the hot sun, the clouds in moonlight that move from left to right. That is, despite the forward momentum, the gravitational drag that keeps us characteristically active, despite the inclinations to look without being specific into the distance and gaze into the blue-gray diffusion and soothing yellow-gray silhouettes on the horizon that soaks up details, one concentrates instead (let us say, formally) on the foreground branches just within reach of a middle-sized tree to the left. On their underside, the leaves are a dusty gray with a powdery texture and green and greasy above, bisected by a bulging vein. It takes more breeze to move the tree than the gradual grass that goes down a slope over a mound which begins above the tree in rocks with green and exposed maroon concave faces on the hill. "The rope at-

tached to the mountain is for the benefit of those who roll the rocks down the mountain and the umbrella and the mechanical motion is hers who is breaking the rocks open and she is observing that the grass is growing nearly four times yearly." ("Lend a Hand, or Four Religions"). The young grass grows more broadly than tenderly and is most pervasive in the middle distance, since the dirt in the foreground and the dying yellow and matted gray and brown moldy tangle blot it out over some ants. In the interim: bees, a wire fence, cows, shadows, picnics and a game, a siren in the distance that reaches us somewhat after it sounds. Several seasons, and an entire day move by, and if you now think of language, both loosely and particularly, as radiating structures and as behavior in sentences, the relationship between grammar and landscape, while still vague, may be proposed, at least in the imagination. The nature of the proposition resembles that of the appearance of the person in nature, or of a landscape instead of a wilderness.

To suggest that there is a relationship between grammar and landscape in Stein's work — or to suggest that we can usefully imagine one in order to understand the meaning of a form of poetic language in her writing — is really not an imposition, since landscape and grammar were what Stein herself was writing and thinking about (the two for her are almost inseparable) simultaneously during the Twenties and early Thirties, the years in which she wrote a number of plays, including those collected in *Operas and Plays*, *Lucy Church Amiably*, and the works collected in *How To Write*. One can read these various works in conjunction, that is as a ground for the examination of temporal and of spatial scales in the world of things and persons and in language, which determines just as much as it reflects our sense of measure and scale. Cows, roses, shadows, exclamations in appreciation, rivers, spouses, poplar trees, fences, conversations, and sentences in description, for example. What occurs as time and what occurs as space, the movement, have grammatical value and can be understood as such, at least incompletely — by which I mean that it is likely that the understanding remains unfinished.

3

Stein said of dances and battles that they constructed landscapes, since persons went in and out of them, and filled them with movement back and forth. Conversely, she said, in *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, "a landscape is such a natural arrangement for a battlefield or a play that one must write plays."

The composition of the plays that she wrote, beginning with one called "Lend a Hand, or Four Religions" (written in 1922 and collected in *Useful Knowledge*), of which she wrote (ABT 209), "This play has always interested her immensely, it was the first attempt that later made her *Operas and Plays*, the first conception of landscape as a play," coincided with her thinking and writing about grammar and with the novel, or landscape romance, *Lucy Church Amiably*, written in 1927, which she characterized as "A Novel of Romantic beauty and na-

ture and which Looks Like an Engraving." "There is a church and it is in Lucey. . . . Beside this there is amiably and this comes from the paragraph." (Advertisement to LCA).

*Four Saints in Three Acts* was written in the same year as *Lucy Church Amiably*, and she said of it, in her lecture "Plays," "I made the Saints the landscape. All the saints that I made and I made a number of them because after all a great many pieces of things are a landscape all these saints together made my landscape. These attendant saints were the landscape and it the play really is a landscape."

The activity, or the characteristic movement (both literal and conceptual — that is, not perceived but known), that takes place in the plays and the novel is unplotted, though not without vista, romance, and even melodrama. What is in place from the outset and continuously occurring are all-over relationships of greater or lesser complexity that includes things, persons and events — lists (one of the plays in fact is called "A List"), shifts ("What is the difference between reserve and reverse," HTW), cycles that are both rhythmic and arrhythmic, like the acceleration and deceleration in time or crescendo and diminuendo in space, comings and goings, and the dynamics of emotional and motivational relativity.

That the form in which this takes place is called landscape, rather than story, makes it easier to understand how Stein perceived and felt about event, adventure, and meaning — what constituted these for her. Of course, "non-linear" is a key term here, and it is against this that grammar becomes complicated and interesting.

In the opening paragraphs of the lecture "Plays," Stein herself associates her studies of grammar with her interest in plays as landscape. She says that she has made discoveries about the emotions in grammar ("paragraphs are emotional, sentences are not") and at the same time she has discovered that there is a disjuncture between the emotional time of the play and the emotional time of the audience watching the play, which causes a troubling "syncopation," as she calls it — a mortal arrhythmia. The conventional theater causes an unpleasant and debilitating anxiety. In blocking participation, it is devitalizing, where for Stein vitality is a moral category. She had expressed in innumerable ways her position that the value of anyone (or anything) lay in their "being completely living," and so this problem with the conventional theater was an important one. "I felt that if a play was exactly like a landscape then there would be no difficulty about the emotion of the person looking on at the play being behind or ahead of the play because the landscape does not have to make acquaintance. You may have to make acquaintance with it, but it does not with you, it is there. . . ." ("Plays").

And so Stein arrived at the question, What is a landscape and what relationship does a landscape have with a sentence and a paragraph? Or, What are the qualities that are characteristic of a landscape? and what is it about landscapes that lead Stein, and through her, us, to think

These links of connections: Stein/Lucy Church Amiably  
sought hopeful here

Stein is using to keep a giant hope here desire hidden + whole. She's not doing what she later sometimes said



about grammar? "Grammar in relation to a tree and two horses" (HTW).

It is natural to think of landscape as a space, as a framed spatial configuration enclosing natural phenomena. To think about time, as it takes place in a landscape, makes it much easier to understand some of Stein's central concepts and their literary methods, since so many of them concern temporal structures of perception. "The sense of time is a phenomenon of nature," she said in "Natural Phenomena" (PL). "It is what adds complexity to composition. There can be past and present and future which succeed and rejoin, this makes romantic realistic and sentimental and then really the three in one and not romantic and not realistic and not sentimental. The three in one makes a time sense that adds complexity to composition. A composition after all is never complex. The only complexity is the time sense that adds that creates complexity in composition. Let us begin over and over again. Let us begin again and again and again." It is the convergence of these elements — that is, time and space — with language that provides the excitement of grammar. "It makes me smile to be a grammarian and I am." ("A Grammarian").

4.

The character of space in landscape is not difficult to think about. As Donald Sutherland puts it, it is a "composition of motions." Things in space expand or wither, the expanse is more or less framed from any particular point of view in it. Trees bend to the wind; the color of the grasses shifts under shadows; bushes bloom and receive birds; cows, deer, a bicyclist, squirrels, a dog, lizards, etc., pass across or through. A rock rolls down the slope. Any unit of this space, however large or small, is complete in itself as a landscape. The style of activity anywhere bears a resemblance to the style of activity elsewhere. The space is filled, so to speak, with long-wave and short-wave sympathetic vibrations. "Would it be very certain that rain and its equivalent sun and its equivalent a hill and its equivalent and flowers and their equivalent have been heard and seen and felt and followed and more around and rounder and roundly. Is there also a hesitation in going slower. She said yes." ("Natural Phenomena").

A self-contained landscape where "what is seen is contained by itself inside it" in direct and precise distances, divisions, and situations is the point here. The "going slower" becomes obsessive. The movement, if one can put it this way, becomes a fixation. The activity that maintains between events is arrested and detail is flattened out, becoming monumental. It is in this sense that Stein could observe, as she put it in "Plays," "A landscape does not move nothing really moves in a landscape but things are there." It is a matter of simple observation. "Magpies are in a landscape that is they are in the sky of a landscape, they are black and white and they are in the sky of the landscape in Bilignin and in Spain, especially in Avila. When they are in the sky they do something that I have never seen any other bird do they

hold themselves up and down and look flat against the sky." In essence the landscape, by virtue of its own laws, is transformed under attention into a tableau, a *tableau vivant*; episodes become qualities. As Stein says in *Lectures in America*, "all that was necessary was that there was something completely contained within itself and being contained within itself was moving, not moving in relation to anything not moving in relation to itself but just moving. . . ." It is thus that Stein can envisage battles and charging up or down hills as landscape events — flattened out onto the names of the hills. Events are presences:

1. A stain with a lily.
  - Second. A girl with a rooster in front of her and a bush of strange flowers at her side and a small tree behind her.
  3. A guardian of a museum holding a cane.
  4. A woman leaning forward.
  5. A woman with a sheep in front of her a small tree behind her.
  6. A woman with black hair and two bundles one under each arm.
  7. A night watchman of a hotel who does not fail to stand all the time.
  8. A very stout girl with a basket and flowers summer flowers and the flowers are in front of a small tree.
- Saints in Season

5.

Stein's sense of landscape is more painterly than theatrical; the use of a flat or planar perspective for purposes of intensification comes from Cezanne. (Certainly Stein's regard for landscape is radically different from that of the American 19th century landscape painters, though I think one can trace their influence on the work of other 20th century American poets. Their conception of landscape as the "book of God," as a wilderness in which Spirit is Immanent, as a solitude ((their attitude toward humans is full of conflict)), the abode of melancholic euphoria, as a retrospective vision of Eden — that is, landscape as past tense, burdens the sense of place and its significance for later American poets. I am thinking, for example, of the mystique of place ((say of Gloucester, as a thunderous noun)), as history, with etymology its paradigm, the noun or name being radically significant, and the heroic task of articulating it claimed as that of the poet). Cezanne's landscapes are presented, so to speak, broadside, and more than one area is present with full force. Similarly, Stein distributes value or meaning across the widest possible range of articulation — in this context, one might say, panoramically.

In this regard, it's useful for a minute to consider the distinction that Saussure developed in linguistics between a language considered diachronically, that is historically, in terms of its etymologies and developing syntactic usages and strategies over time, and the same language regarded synchronously, as a system in use and complete at any given moment. Indeed, the distinction between synchrony and diachrony proves extremely

fruitful for regarding almost any kind of system. What we have is two continuums (or continua), one of which, the diachronous, we may think of as vertical, an historical swathe or a current of contiguous time lines trailing behind every object, idea, and event. The second continuum, that of the synchronous present, on a plane extending over the full expanse of the moment, is characterized by an existential density in which present relationships and differentiations, to the extent that we can take them in, are the essential activity. The diachronous is characterized by causality, or one could say narrativity; the attachments of one thing to another are insistently relevant. Whereas the synchronous is characterized by parallelism. One notices analogies and coincidences, resemblances and distinctions, the simultaneous existence of variations, contradictions, and the apparently random.

One of the characteristics of Stein's writing is that elements co-exist with alternatives in the work; phrase or sentence A is not obliterated when it appears, slightly altered perhaps, as phrase or sentence B. The frequent use of "and" in Stein's work is an important indicator of inclusion, just as the use of the gerund is an important indicator of the continuation of anything. One must be careful not to read any sequence of sentences as a series of substitutions or cancellations.

A landscape is almost by definition and naturally synchronous. Writing is not. The effects of landscape are frontal, and less mediated than those of, say, historical stages.

6.

In terms of writing, what adds to the interest of the synchronic-diachronic opposition, is that, although the synchronic is obviously a temporal concept, it projects a spatial figure — one could say a landscape — "a moment of time that has gotten in position."

That is, the syntax of time is juxtaposed against the syntax of space, rather as the sentence runs across the line in poetry. There are the two sets of conditions governing the composition.

Barrett Watten, in the title essay of his book *Total Syntax*, in discussing Robert Smithson's sculpture, says, "Space is the exterior syntax; it is physical and cultural, starting from the actual site of the work. Time is the interior syntax; it is structural and psychological and begins with the response to the work in language." But in Stein's work — that is, in *Lucy Church Amiably* and the plays of this period — both space and time are primarily psychological and interior, and structural when triangulated with language, which remains exterior, as the *site*. Time is jammed into and spread over the imagined spatial plane, and it is in language that details, and especially temporal details, are specified and, as it were, made physical. Distinctions must occur — activity takes place — across the language plane itself. In terms of spatial syntax, configurations and relationships occur in sets rather than in sequence, so that the perceptual activity, which has taken the form of writing, makes essential

comparisons, oppositions, and distinctions. As Saussure put it (*Cours de linguistique générale*), "in language there are only differences." Or as Stein said, "Grammar makes it be different" (HTW).

This occurs at its simplest level with the word itself, and accounts in part for Stein's exploration of the significance of homonyms and rhymes and the effect of changing single vowels or consonants across a set of words. "Natural phenomena are or are not to cease. There is a pleasant difference between a crease cease and increase. There is a pleasant difference between when they had been very fortunate in deciding everything and when they had it little by little all the time." And in "Sentences," "Supposing it is ours a dress address name can be opposed to name and tame."

The change and exchange of names, simply in terms of the relationship of sound to meaning (and quite apart from what is indicated about Stein's concept of personality), is one of Stein's most recurrent devices. "Nobody knows which name is the one they have heard," she comments (LCA). "Helen Mary how many how many how many Helen Marys are there to be had as many as every time every every every time time of day. . . ." "John Mary with it as if Mary which is Xenobie never could be left handed and left and right said that it is best that if it is to be tried she she knew that it was best to stay and every year four coming from there were to be arranging that they were to receive who came. Delightful."

Gertrude was often a comic writer — funniness has something to do with the vibrational movement that she achieved (just as other emotions have to do with movement in writing, though Stein usually deems that the movement occur above the level of the sentence — specifically in paragraphs). She was often a comic writer, but she was almost never ironic, perhaps because irony comes from being of two minds, while Stein was, by choice, significantly single-minded. And for the same reason she is seldom metaphorical. In fact, metaphor is a suspect device, since it is a secondary characteristic of perception, and it is primary perception that Stein sought in her work. Directly in sentences.

7. Seasons

Sentences of which present attention is the sole antecedent; the thought begins here. "A sentence is an imagined frontispiece" (HTW). Candor without confession, not neutral but frontal. In the thickening of the sentence. "A grammar means positively no prayer for a decline of pressure" (HTW). Stein's often aphoristic style must come from writing one sentence at a time. As a consequence of its irreducibility, a sentence like "A sentence is not natural" is the kernel of an analysis, but so too is "A sentence is not not natural" ("More Grammar for a Sentence," Yale Selected 253).

To think of grammar as a river might have silly consequences. "The great question is can you think a sentence" (HTW). What sentences are about is what Max Beckmann calls "the will for Form," which is why a river or stream is such an outrageous model of location and



stability, even when the landscape is taking its name from the river: the Loire Valley, for example.

She attaches it and as she attaches she is kneeling there and she is kneeling there where she is kneeling in a box there where the water is flowing there where she attaches it there. Where she attaches there where she is where she is as she is kneeling there in a box and the water is flowing there beside the water where it is flowing there she attaches it there. ("Lend a Hand, or Four Religions")

The entrance of the sentence into metaphysics may produce a landscape, but the sentence itself is grammatical. Its words and meaning are engaged as grammar, motivated temporally and spatially. The sentence moves in large or small increments, depending on the specific sentence; conventionally, it advances the story, the argument, the information, or the melody-line. And conventionally it is led by the noun-verb configuration (which can only take place in sentences anyway — that is, words are simply vocabulary until they take place in a sentence; it is the sentence which renders them malleable, making their plasticity relevant).

But in Stein's writing, the word values, which are conventionally hierarchical, are often instead spread out within the sentence. The role of noun and verb gets shifted or bounced back and forth across the sentence, and words trade functions — this is relatively easy in our uninflected English where words like paddles value sentences reverse part and so on may be nouns verbs or in some cases adjectives without any alteration — so that the movement is multi-dimensional, multi-relational. "A sentence is an interval in which there is finally forward and back." "Our comes back. Back comes our" (HTW).

Perhaps this approximates consciousness. I'll explain more specifically what I mean, but first let me quote from William James's *Principles of Psychology*:

As we take, in fact, a general view of the wonderful stream of our consciousness, what strikes us first is this different pace of its parts. Like a bird's life, it seems to be made of an alteration of flights and perchings. The rhythm of language expresses this, where every thought is expressed in a sentence, and every sentence closed by a period. The resting-places are usually occupied by sensorial imaginations of some sort, whose peculiarity is that they can be held before the mind for an indefinite time, and contemplated without changing; the places of flight are filled with thoughts of relations, static or dynamic, that for the most part obtain between the matters contemplated in the periods of comparative rest.

Let us call the resting-places the 'substantive parts,' and the places of flight the 'transitive parts,' of the stream of thought. It then appears that the main end of our thinking is at all times the attainment of some other substantive part than the one from which we have just been dislodged. And we may say that the main use of the transitive parts is to

lead us from one substantive conclusion to another . . .

There is not a conjunction or a preposition, and hardly an adverbial phrase, syntactic form, or inflection of voice, in human speech, that does not express some shading or other of relation which we at some moment actually feel to exist between the larger objects of our thought.

It seems to me that this is tantamount to identifying language as a kind of landscape-scanning technology, wherein landscape is a temporal-spatial configuration and language operates within it. Or, as Stein puts it, "This is a sentence that comes in the midst not in the midst of other things but in the midst of the same thing" (HTW).

To be somewhat more specific about the sentence dynamics that I find so compelling in Stein's work, let me start with an example from *Tender Buttons*, the entirety of the poem entitled "Roast Potatoes":

Roast potatoes for.

The dominant word, when the sentence gets said, is *for* — in part because of its strangeness; the incorrectness of the dangling preposition attracts one's attention. The word "roast" goes through various permutations: it may be an adjective, defining potatoes, and if so, in one reading of the sentence, it is a redundant one — namely, if one reads "for" as a pun, buoying up the already emphatic preposition. "For" is an accurate enough rendering of the American pronunciation of the French word *four*, meaning oven — baked or roast potatoes in French are called *pommes de terres au four*.

Rather than an adjective, roast may be a noun, in which case one might read the sentence as something in an index style, say: Roast, potatoes for. One supplies the "missing" comma — one so often does do that in reading Stein. Or one may supply a "missing" copula, say "and," and read the sentence amidst ellipses, as, perhaps, listing: Here are the *Roast* and *potatoes for*. . .

And finally one may take roast as a verb, perhaps in the imperative mood. Potatoes is, as they are, the stable element.

The point is that the sentence comes at one full face.

In longer sentences, the number of meaning events, and the possible range of combination and recombination is much greater. "A sentence is made to be divided into one two three six seven starting with one." "Roast potatoes for" might be one. Another "one" is "Place praise places" (from *Hotel Francois Ier*, 1931).

The comment in *How to Write*, "A sentence is made to be divided into one two three six seven starting with one," has obviously to do with stress and emphasis, and also with a notion of equivalence in the units — the meaning units, so to speak — that are foregrounded as planes. Stein follows the comment with examples of "A sentence divided in three. He is never to be allowed / to continue to commence / to prepare to wait" (the slash marks are my division indications) and of "A sentence divided into six. They have purchased what they have

béen to séc."

Where the reader makes the divisions may be somewhat subjective, dependent on one's particular rhythm of comprehension — how fast one thinks, how large a unit one can hold before having to drop it for the next, and the nature of the background activity in the sentence — its field of reference. In the sentence divided in three, for example, the nearly perfect grammatical balance is poised under a temporal warp. The logic is displaced — that is, it is possible "to continue to prepare" and "to commence to wait" but it is unlikely that one would "continue to commence."

"A sentence is made by coupling meanwhile ride around to be a couple there makes grateful dubeity named atlas coin in a loan." This is the first sentence of "Sentences" (HTW). Here the phrasing is interlocked, rather than displaced. If one parses the sentence, almost every phrase does multiple duty, holding the sentence together as a complex thought, or web of thoughts, and serving as a so to speak hospitable ground for the meanings that adhere to it. There are really radical shifts that are going on in the sentence, such as "the grateful dubeity" that "a couple there makes" and the change in scale from "atlas" to "coin," and from "coin" (specific, say a penny) to "coin in a loan" (general — money) — though here it is also possible that "coin in" is a verb, meaning something like to "cash in" or "convert into money." Love rides around a rich world in or on a sentence.

Such love might be thought of as "grateful dubeity" — headlong tentativeness, grateful in being given the opportunity to doubt.

"We do know a little now what prose is," Stein says in *How to Write*. "Prose is the balance the emotional balance that makes the reality of paragraphs and the unemotional balance that makes the reality of sentences and having realized completely realized that sentences are not emotional while paragraphs are, prose can be the essential balance that is made inside something that combines the sentence and the paragraph. . . ."

As Ron Silliman points out in his essay "The New Sentence," what Stein means here is "that linguistic units integrate only up to the level of the sentence, but higher orders of meaning — such as emotion — integrate at higher levels than the sentence and occur only in the presence of either many sentences or, at least Stein's example suggests this, in the presence of certain complex sentences in which dependent clauses integrate with independent ones." Language generates sentences, which taken as forms of frontal grammar, are the verbal planes from which consciousness constructs that of which it is conscious. That is, one realizes consciousness by positioning sentences in the landscape of consciousness:

"Sentences are made wonderfully one at a time."

"A sentence is a present which they make."

"I return to sentences as to a refreshment."

"A balance in a sentence makes it state that it is staying there."

"A sentence is an allowance of a confusion."

"A sentence is our paragraph."

"A sentence is dependent upon whether they open it again and again giving it for it and gave it to it."

"As to paper and weight naturally phenomena must be unresisted as much as heard and seen."

how about  
consciousness?



## Demo from *The Alphabet*

for Kit Robinson

**T**HIS IS A TEST.

The hammer of birds (rabbits) secure in the deficit garden, fog along the coast.

Water hammer, rock board — recurrence as key in phlegmatic analysis (fellaheen hurdling custard pie into the face of Bette Midler).

Friends are perpetually “going to get it together,” jobwise: the coast is altered one quarter inch.

Just like that.

The window conceived as a form of torture, through which a century is expressed (blue hands, the chartreuse of a tennis ball): dobermans of delight crowd the sun.

Met against metaphor (I want white rooms): the cast is clear.

Up against the woolite, desire for narrative condemns millions — French bread hard as rock.

Nouns aver facts (pinched nerve at base of neck): a terrycloth sweatband is an insufficient monument (dress for excess), specific as the smell of chalk.

Words row.

The sun, backlighting your blouse, reveals all, newlyweds at a Grateful Dead concert, birthmark of the surgeon general.

Birthright of way: foghorns and a rooster counterpoint hazy morning.

The outer wall of the prison is yellow, the inner one green (old paperback bought at a garage sale).

Verb is the eye of the sentence (world stylized for efficiency’s sake): dogs bark.

Dog barks — there is another way to compute the tides.

Eminent ptomaine.

Poets propose sky, only to fall back on cannibalism (downhill on a skateboard).

Crudley mechanical, an adjective grinds meaning from a noun forming the perfect countenance of Elvis on black velvet.

My pockets are a jungle.

High heels grind pavement into paste (memory of color scheme popular in past war) — the construction is *not* parallel (taster’s choice, pruned tree’s new sprouts).

My hand on your thigh in a dream (not expected): if critics had ethics . . . a suburb without sidewalks.

Flat country with clear conscience.

Vajra banking: the nosebleed is slight but lasts for days (lesbianism seen as a preference for clarity).

A plainness so extreme it makes her striking — pain articulates the spine.

That’s poet talk, the door ajar (donation requested).

Going back, crossing out articles (baker’s ponytail kept under hat), gradually features widen into flaws, humor mistaken for humor, the mouse beneath the counter, color postcard of the airport, parchmint chicken.

Pulling staples from a pizza, untitled, I rise from the water of the bubble bath: duotone landscape.

A fat lawyer with a hippie wife (an architect).

The next step is not automatic, drawn curtain: sun’s glare reflected renders window opaque.

A swamp (the MLA) is reputed to have devoured the children — line break in the trail of crumbs.

Old men walking small dogs (I crouch against a wall to write), the sun in no hurry, jazz penis, the smell of hot pretzels from the far end of the bar — windows of the burnt-out apartment boarded up.

Lipstick stain on wax paper cup (double can-zone), tugboat in harbor honks, uh huh, long wasp neck tattooed as if an earring (slender is the nut) — the letters are buglike.

Ceramic teapot imitates cabbage.

New work.

Poetry’s not the boiler room of history (in the forest trees unfold), but the discrepancy in scale (nuclear explosion on the cover of *Mushroom Cookbook*) calls dawn itself to attention (this switch for fog).

“Stanza strophe, stanza strophe,” taunts the young girl at her still younger brother, a cocker spaniel.

Space farts.

Morning is toxic (sun shines in green sky), red bandana round blonde hair, veins bursting in the eye.

The shape of the day a figure eight, smell of mustard (how those light stockings tint the leg): it’s a wrap.

Ears as hooks for glasses (57 words for deduction): roto-reader spins on gerund.

Stop continental drift.

Generic dawn (chromatic rooster) yawns over eastern hills, wreath of flowers atop the hearse, thumbnail longer than the rest.

Here and now.

Here and now.

Here and now.

Ning mind.

A man in a blue bathrobe walks to the corner store (a model of physics, a church) — gestures are quotable (he’s wearing throngs) . . .

Aka zoris, the mark of: piglike snoot on small white dog (flesh-coloured hearing-aid), TL, kitchen full of poets.

Take a number, your description is coming.

And with the blade of his pen carved his initials, LZ, into the forehead of the critic.

True shed.

Red brick hospital run by nuns (bowling alley vacant, for lease), ethnographic study of go-carts.

People’s heads turn to watch a funeral procession.

Birds march up the slope of the hill, pecking at the cut grass (one’s relation to an audience is historical): the wind sends dead leaves skittering (rhymes with punt).

Standing around in the air of an old fart, apricots fading (politics), into changing a lightbulb in the ceiling of a dark room (weather) — balance insinuates order (our books will not be read).

On the hottest day of the year, this small, aged woman is wearing a raincoat (the young man wears a Walkman in a holster).

The shadow of a butterfly.

The park breaks up the sky (a small triangle of cloth covering the nipple of each breast), sun blanched thought.

Busdriver’s keychain dangles from his belt (form as a ridged cut seeks to fit), neo-Victorian (from the mind of Minolta).

Ancient, her dog Sadie falls over each time it attempts to scratch (a series of small thuds in the kitchen).

Terms of enjambment.

The fog returns: cop with a toupee appears strangely vulnerable (we wait for the light to change).

Does the work present its sense of space (more art history than art): under the pile of elm leaves (there are no elm leaves) he found his voice.

The sun in stark sky (red loop, gold loop), shelf life of a mind (this morning my lip is blistered), shining beetle-god scans her universe.

Lap is shown not to exist . . . the blinds are drawn is drawn.

Biography of the senses drying on the blotter.

Sleep’s burden is dawn’s laboring list (angle of pen to page) . . . job limits personality, vanpool of synapse, styrofoam cup.

A week’s growth, the beard seemed tentative, a hint of itself.

Chicken Dachau, Eggs McMassacre, a beautiful



woman hauling bags of laundry home in the fog (associations witness structure), smell of rain in pit of summer . . . letting your hair dry on the busride into work.

Aging, faces cave in (super slo-mo), necks swell, then sag — skull emerges through field of hair.

On the bus, children like to sit apart from their parents, feigning independence.

Fog devoured the hill.

All bleeds toward the gutter only.

Plastic sequence of holes and bumps at rear of one-size-fits-all baseball cap (rubber finger, “we’re number one”).

Her breasts formed a narrative.

Rounded — rounded first and held up as the cutoff man took the throw from left field.

High heels on a hardwood floor (as they come closer, I realize those two teenagers are signing) . . . parked motorcycles clutter sidewalk.

Elements are gathered (punctuation forms a low wall) — trying to decide before my name is called whether to answer “present” or “here.”

Crows cluster in the park at dawn.

Predicated on no more than their clothes, their hairstyles, the expressions on their faces, I give each boarding bus passenger a narrative all their own (this one lets his hand rest knowingly against that woman’s ass).

Four-color butterfly.

She’s braless beneath her Garfield “I hate Mondays” muscle shirt.

Clothes tattered, the nomadic homeless mentally ill begin to show up in the malls (seniors in wheelchairs in a paratransit minivan).

The cyst as big as her nose (the new plastic super-market shopping bags harder to stand upright on the sidewalk while waiting for the bus) — this is understood as persona.

Each small city has its band of nostalgic dadaists (just waiting for a show of postcard art) . . . after 4 years the campus leaves you stranded, philosophy listed under Home Ec.

Barefoot on her toes across the kitchen floor.

Bright sun in the long shadows of early morning (I wear dark glasses to shield my eyes from the wind): light is something to read by, a wheelbarrow red without reason.

Proceeding from market study to ground lease, a career move (single again and turning 30).

The discourse of Marxism obscures the state’s monopolization of capital within the form of the state (them): the discourse of individual liberty and democratic choice obscures capital’s ability to predetermine desire through mass market technology (us) — socialism (economic democracy) nowhere exists.

Green glass shards in the gutter, ground halfway into sand (an airplane glistens reflecting the light of the sun, causing one to see it far out over the bay).

Antinuclear themes in Latino graffiti . . . cherry-bomb in a mailbox.

Construction workers in the financial district huddle together for lunch, whistling at women in pantsuits to express fear at the larger tribe.

This causes people to identify with capital as if it were in their interest.

Cartoon advertising painted on the windows of the mattress warehouse (“when do you find the time to write?”).

Men touching their girlfriends in public to display power . . . they go to a reading and sit separately (once on a nude beach I watched a woman fondle her lover’s balls — every man within eyesight went hard).

Three women escorting 40 seven year olds onto the bus (taste you can count on) . . . it’s 9:00 a.m. and the “nickel whores” are already out in front of the Town Pump.

At this point in the work I still haven’t settled on the title, posters decaying on the boarded-up windows of the old milk bottling plant.

In the assessor’s office, make a list of all property owners on City Block 1254 (a stretch limo parked in front of the officer’s club), experience a helicopter overhead as the pulse of its blades.

New park bench all metal and plastic feels wrong.

I notice beer caps and peanut shells at the foot of the gnarled cypress — wind in the palm tree sounds more harsh than that in the eucalyptus.

Lick my balls narrative sequence, tugboats in the discontinuous bay.

A woman in blue shorts (I can describe anything), fog over the far hill.

There is no New York School, 70% of all poetry in the hands of creative writing students (I only slept with Auden out of respect).

I only slept in Arden out of respect: the Cubs at last (bone marrow transplant), what in the morning gets to be written.

Helicopters and maps to chart all the joggers at dawn (an overweight white woman is used to portray the oppressive prison warden in the video of Jermaine Jackson’s *Dynamite*).

Poetry fever — catch it!

The bus smells of curry . . . beginnings of smog smear the downtown sky (that our youth lack a sense of history is not their fault): don’t Laos me up.

Becoming an old man with too many combs and pens in my pocket (fog predicts sky), the way horses in slow motion are understood to mean something else.

Morning’s chatter (chattel), the city symphonic, rattles the windows on the 33rd floor, jostling across the intersection.

Hunker down: morning is everywhere, a break in the fog (a break in the dog) . . . I can still taste last night’s wine.

From Mission Street we could see the car on the overpass consumed in flames, but later could find no mention of the event on tv or in the papers.

The plot gets sicker.

Smell of the roofers after season’s first storm (trashcan my escritorio): her dress (blue vertical stripes) is but a long shirt with a matching belt.

A euphoria on the brink of despair . . . paper-covered wire used to seal trashbags . . . white sox above high heels.

To Do list: that jogger’s step is but a half skip (smash pumpkin time).

But used in place of *just* lingers an old reading — let’s wait for the next stanza.

Sweet strained feeling in the scrotum later (I used the bacon grease for the scrambled eggs), desire for coffee is nearly erotic.

Monday mornings the guys in the back of the bus discuss yesterday’s football (the child wants to be the one to put the quarter in the newspaper rack), black-bird hopping in the gutter at my feet.

The crowd danced to the “space music” as tho feigning a slow motion backstroke.

Notion of quantity defines a plot, is given a name, fingerprints (he do the poh-lee-se in diff’rent vices) yes m’am, just the facts . . . clang, Mark VII.

“How do you make friends — by talking to people, right?” asks the boy behind me of his mother (she grunts).

New role for pockets in this fall’s fashions (surf-board on sawhorse used for ironing), deep gray sky.

Form is passion.

Organic brain syndrome prefers end-rhyme . . . after 3 days of torrential storm, people walk in the new sunshine in raincoats and galoshes . . . trope or treat.

Dr. Stanza I presume (your tires low on air), bag-over-head dramatic monologue: my one vice, my other. . . .

Unmediated, unmedicated.

Through the hole in the knee of the punk rocker’s jeans I see his long johns, ribbed white cotton: pools in the parking lot after the rain.

Crime personified by a bloodhound in a trenchcoat fails to acknowledge pervasive absence of economic justice (big breasted woman dripping wet in a t-shirt which reads “Jamaica”), automobile named for endangered species.

Father was an absence a post-structuralist might have use for, music piped into the aquarium.

Vanguard wheelchair more like a golf cart, the proposition of a hat (tone of a smashed wax-paper milk carton kicked down the street).

Switch shoes to alter pressure points on feet (note rhyme), kids repainting rental unit.

Photo of mother dressed as lion for Halloween, 1935 (absence of articles making language poetic), deposit main verb here.

Car double-parked in front of the church, orange window stickers reading “funeral” . . . res hotel fire escape landing is used as a natural refrigerator at win-



dow (milk carton, eggs), perfectly visible from sidewalk tho hotplates are illegal.

The word (round, shining) jets into view (style), the small professors quoting loudly for their kibbles: the lawn sprinkler's sweep forms the perfect trap (see my new gesture).

Samoan shifters join the police.

The hard, smooth surface conceals the watery, incomplete mind (shooting from the foul line): the poems were discreet, each book arriving at a three-year interval.

To as in today . . . interlibrary loan (the new watch with the leather watchband).

It has been twenty years since the Democratic Party carried a majority of the white vote in a Presidential election (the docents in white coats), my mother says of the cutbacks at Bechtel, "I'm only one-third nuclear now."

One hears only fragments of a talk (the skyline is not to be inferred), umbrella held as a club.

A poetry of the cities vs. a poetry of the campus (women's *needs*, not women's knees), the slow, exaggerated enunciation of the children's tv cartoon hero.

Their eyes shut, each face an index of stress and pain, evening rush hour subway commute (woman in a tweed suit reads the Wall Street Journal).

This focus group suggests a greater attention to the tone-leading of vowels in future rewrites.

The low spray of the mechanical street sweeper, the bald, bearded man all dressed up in black leather and studs (she has a ruby nose pin).

A man cynical so young is apt to grow bitter, a daughter is a dance frozen upon water later in laughter and after we slaughter the pink pet pig we smoke it: pass me the roach.

The problem of problems is the model of the problem imposed upon heaving tissue, such a glass imprisons water, champagne, hours (what is an hour?), sand's form determinate on the beach, a point spread.

The oil atop the peanut butter when one opens a new jar is my index of resistance, homeboy.

This curious half-light or life, the sky muted to admit stars, porch lights on, teenage girls trudging uphill carrying bags of groceries.

To sleep is to read and to read is to wet loom star by a davy-lamp or thread, old v-neck t-shirt through which to see your breasts.

This is a fundamentally serious art.

Giggling (on the defensive), a generation of actualists forgets to breed, we only call the binding perfect.

A decor specific to a small town beauty salon, your eyes draw gauze curtains across the sun setting in my smile: it's not the right that's ragged.

My instinct is to sprint across the street (nomad is an island).

Sushi-roshi: you are what you eat, it are what you see meant . . . morning as a state of light elusive in winter, versus the arbitrary quantification of abstracted time (morning as a social contract).

Last night I saw my 11th grade English teacher for the first time in 18 years, I scramble the eggs with sour cream and season with dill and basil.

Are we there yet?

Bus vs. subway, who rides is a political question, the way your galoshes stretch to fit over new jogging shoes, the date feature on the watch has never worked.

An inference engine governs the new politics of stasis (22 line stanzas), money the signifier, credit the signified.

Pen and notebook direct to hardcopy . . . just to sit next to him, he smells of cigars.

Redhead, "thin as a rail," bent over now, glaucoma spreading blindness from the center out (in her wedding dress, 1920, she stares at the photographer, pensive, nervous).

Behind the shade, see curtains.

Man with a large head and feminine face, the microwave oven buzzes "done."

Hats on a cold day (her work at this point more hopeful than formed) . . . poets in the corner talking software.

Each stanza is a poem, each word . . . the tiny body given breadth by the wheelchair (what is found within a wall).

Prose is the distance between (two-prong plug in three-hole socket), the trouble with depiction when at-

tached to an object is, punctuation in the manner of Cassius Clay.

Mood elevator: change notebooks.

Happy face with band aid sells health plan.

First winter run, faking it (knot in my right thigh vs. knot in my lungs).

Birds beneath these deep gray clouds are what give it that sense of distance (in the back of that old white Volvo, between the two babyseats, a ten gallon hat).

In the projects on Christmas Eve, I notice how twice as many homes here have their windows decorated with strings of colored lights (attempt to tell a home from a unit).

Is it racist of me to feel sad watching three teenage Latina women walking down 22nd Street pushing strollers (kids and middle-aged men playing softball under the trees in St. Mary's Park, artless lunging after that image of grace)?

On the exercycle, reading the morning paper.

Old tin drum, cut in half, used as a trash can (closed grip reverse lat pull) . . . he finally achieved his perfect imitation of Olson, only to discover that no one cared: at least the cabbies have tenure.

How pink one gets, rising from a hot bath, how limp!

At this hour planes are but lights passing in a black sky . . . one by one, the windows in the houses on the hill go dark.

The man is in handcuffs, his car wedged in by two black-and-whites (by her outfit I see that she works in a donut shop), the glass fogged by the sheer difference between the heat indoors and out.

The sheer presence of the military apparent in any airport (the rhythm of a dulled patience, the tolerance of exhaustion, or of tedium), able to cross a vast lobby, passing hundreds of others, without one look into anyone's eyes (hearing a question to which you know the answer, but remaining silent), 64 cents for a cup of tea.

Two tablets of Pepto-Bismol and a decongestant yield a thick black coat upon the tongue (metaphor for technique).

String X is the sound sequence of a Polaroid camera, not-X that of the color white, the feature

"wide" applied here in its aspect of the liquid (the cylinder white to indicate salt, but gray to indicate rain), recurrence violating the laws of distribution, the way 5 daughters (grown now) recast their parents' features (false closure has its grand-dad's eyes, their color white).

Men don't stand before urinals but lean into them . . . old habit: at the end of leak, tug on foreskin.

O Bananarama  
Our life is full of drama,  
But you are surely keen  
My little dramamine.

Anti-telos, grown men in 49er T-shirts, the low whirr of motorcycle engines up Mission Street, people in line outside the automated teller (wearing headphones around her neck like a collar), bulldog in back of pick-up.

Any guy who's been driving cab night shift for 35 years (raw goat cheese is now available), bright colors of the used car lot.

Listeners at a talk: how the hands are placed indicates what is/is not being heard (alternate codes: legs, spines) . . . a man pinches the bridge of his nose, eyes shut tight.

A contemporary vampire spends his afternoons in Market Street cinemas, watching horror flicks (whether the ears are revealed by the hair, hidden, half-hidden).

Two details develop a relation: gas stove settles slowly into green waves of forest, sputter of the straw in the now empty glass.

Auntie Telos: ladder as model of knowledge, tapio-prosody, mirror in the palm of my hand.

In the *Tractatus* numbered statements argue an economy of logic, but in the *Investigations* reflect fragmentation of a partial knowing (arrange noses in a room according to shape).

Blue veins map the back of your hand, the mystery in a woman's purse.

A symbol is any signified which functions as a signifier.

Small children on the bus often sit or stand on their seats backwards, ignoring the passing streets in favor of that larger puzzle, the society of the bus.



Jai ram, jai jai ram, "emotional science project," lights flicker, the reed without the horn, phone it in, small holes in the wall where once tacks stuck, grammar modifies prosody, consonants keep the vowels from leaking (chewing on one pen, writing with the other), a child struggling pulls her sweater off, the blank space inaudible at the start of a text, old enough to hold his head up, sucking on mother's blouse, "duck tape," that billboards existed at all said more than one needed to of their social system, the idea of continuity between numbers, letters glued into words, the way velcro shoe straps begin to curl up after a while, flowers etched on the mouth of the sax, a narrative of clouds low over the sea, bend in the fern as it turns toward the ground, a "catch" in my throat, trousers will gradually dimple at the knees until in the early 60's an entirely new sequence of men's hairstyles began to show up which continues to this day, only now the older ones never quite go away (nehru jacket in the rear of the closet), the way "b/w" means one thing in a description in a film catalog and another in one of 45 rpm records, errors here, revisions, delete word right, he always thinks of the window seats in the second row facing front on the right hand side of the LRV as "his" seat (waiting for the fog to clear), sport coat with the collar turned up, wobbling on a rented 3-speed thru the park to the windmills, the horse's name is Foxfire, tiny Dead-heads encamped in doorways on Haight Street (where have all the flowers gone — west Marin), so that one might survive, suit and tie, making movies (kino-eye), kemo sabe, yo no say, at the lawn's early blight, a round of poodles (playing) bark, on the first day of 22 cent stamps I stand in a long line at the dark branch office on 29th Street, a.m. radio music on low in the background, the sound of change, of adding machines, the customers (mostly seniors, mostly philippino) grunt or laugh or curse, seeing the line as they enter, already I'm far away, having stopped at a bakery to grab some rolls — and caught the bus to work.

Tin sun, one broom.

On the freeway traffic inches forward, the low hill throwing its shadow to the west (the big trucks stick out).

How write poetry amid such chatter, but *listen to it*.

Doing your homework on the way to class . . . the wind blows his tie back over his shoulder like a short scarf.

What he liked most about the National Enquirer was its use of drop-out types in headlines and

crowded layout . . . like architecture, poetry was a fundamentally conservative art (some men thought of auto maintenance as a hobby).

A supermarket shopping cart stood abandoned in the gutter, filled to overflowing with broken chips of cement; some women tip their head down when taking a drag on a cigaret, others tilt their head up (as-sign according to class).

Emotion is only an ideological commitment stated (felt) irrationally — irrational because over-determined (there's a conflict), I pluck these strings and the sun rises to the platen.

A dog in a muzzle might receive tenure (note please how this joke exploits caninism (note please how this line, following two iambs and the twist of the trochee turns on the single syllable *might*)).

On March 4, 1985, I killed my father and slept with my mother (it's February 26th).

Punk rock sunglasses frame Mrs. Reagan's face . . . diaphragm of the vowel expands and contracts.

The logic of morning (is no logic) is complete.

Big ol' red setter, blue leash chains you to your master, woman in a green down parka.

That was just syllables, this repetitive, obsessive counting, letters in an absurd chorus, strangers on a chain.

A foot is to kick with (Vegas-style), arthritis in my big toe (stereo blaster roars mediocre rap funk from the back of the bus).

White Wolf vodka brand, distributor's truck forms a sign (little wagon's plates read "Tuumba").

Stone escarpment: waterfall over granite (snow-melt), yellowgreen lichen, all these stones the size of homes shape the river.

River in snow in mist, still pool, a fine rain . . . moss-covered pines form verticals.

White noise, bad boys, no toys.

Old red Beetle shell left on the street (an injury to one is an injury to all), roomful of costumed Masons singing "Louie Louie," a bird in the hand will make a nest.

Willie: the pure products of America never were (what was most beautiful was neither the catch nor the throw, but the long high arc of the ball off Vic Wertz' bat).

I rush to write these wrongs (songs heard in dream clashing . . .).

Marx train: gnosis bunker (so fond we are of the old runes), white whale beached in Lilliput, number of fingers per hand is the puzzle, length and width of nose is the clue, circumcised at the nostrils, flaring and snorting, horse head stylized by flame, winged centaur harpooned to the old man, cetacean rising or writhing, waist-deep in the water (devoid of form and color) in the harbor at Gloucester or Tyre.

On March 21st, the last (one hopes) Christmas tree of the season, so dry and dead it's half-brown, needles shedding like cat hair, turns up, abandoned on the corner . . . by the next day, the trunk now cracked, it's moved into the gutter half a block down.

East Bay hills barely visible, half-silhouette in the red-brown morning air.

Random curd, that which is merely personal shall soon appear in APR, we've been practicing (reciting from memory, eyes closed), the real money's in conferences, metaphor of anyone's parents carved in accents.

My thumb instead of a dildo: serbo-martian exile pens essay in plain style.

Staples pock a phone-poll, rear of housepainter's pickup demonstrates meticulous order: sun's head fuels pen.

Jellyfish begin to appear in catchbasin of the City's sewers (the go-carts of Westciv sputter).

Off-tune, by headphones hidden in the hair, I, Minnie Mouse, squeak: old orange plastic breadwrap, the big trucks in the lot down at the dairy (like ships they are, literally docked), the young Latino boy sits on his daypack like a stone, reading a bible, waiting for the bus.

Temporary as morning, these words like shadows fall across the page, the value *is* the inversion, an old woman in the park recalling her childhood in Taiwan.

You're telling me something urgent, but I'm only counting the syllables as you speak.

Painters' scaffolding frames the house (yet behind that bay window stands an easel), red fruit of the peppertree.

"Meaning is use," but use without context conceals power (the perfectability of the system is predicated first upon its continuity, and thus the permanence of internal relations and rankings): his

didacticism was felt to be "anti-art," an irritant, scratching on the blackboard of their heroic-tragic monologues of suburban family grief.

Chicken in the comfrey (fascinates orange cat), Spanish ballad from an open window, cardinals atop the plum tree — breeze on a hot day.

The larger the crowd the narrower the assumptions one might then make attempting to speak to it (Foucault's laugh conceived as a flag): the bunting about the panel's table hides more than their legs.

Will your needs be met, simple notebook?

Jogging a different route just to see these streets again (car without wheels up on blocks in a front yard, lawn crushed into mud).

Sound of dog or hammer barely audible only because we so will it, foreground against the shush of valley traffic (jet's arc like the strain of a violin), white cat with black collar, bright pink ears and nose.

Clothespin clips playing card against bicycle spokes — number makes a poor defense, baby's fist pulling on your lip, jar more visible for having cracked.

Breakfast nook: these forms are imposed (imagine the family that has no father), mop on the porch left to dry (subtract the *r*), you don't greet your peers so much as stalk them.

Old theatre carved into thirds, the letters on your marquee are so much more crowded, small billboard mounted against apartment house wall.

The point at which a wide yawn will shut sound out: don't point your saxophone at me.

Think of horn as big straw (simile when you say that), polyvocalic want a closure?

Little windows (edit valley) . . . now the chicken's chasing the cat.

Curb cut: capitals at the margin require setback (if they write about language, there's a reason), voicing the slash in s/he (if they write about language, there's a cause): the indigo of the Iowa delta erodes, wounded buffalo in perfect binding.

O knife of theory in fog of tenure: that this day, converted into art, might be again transformed (computer paper scotch-taped over a bathroom window for privacy), loosened by steam . . . I sit, heart beating fast, on the fourth bus I've been on in just 12 minutes, route to the job.



1985: I notice the gang of roofers (tossing old shingles from a housetop into the back of a red dumptruck, slender wrists fitting into large, grey gloves) are speaking Vietnamese.

Blond god, all muscle in loincloth, slays blue dragon with sword, image painted on the side of an RV.

Tiny orange clip-on Garfield fixed to the brake grip of the cop's chopper (or stuff towel between windows to block draft), an 8 year old's day pack: placement of For Sale signs against vacancy rate defines city.

Old barber alone in storefront shop sits in his raised chair, reading racing forms.

Writing, rhythms writhe: stylized grain forms a watermark.

Long fingers press on closed eyes, then bridge of the nose (red spots from years of glasses, nearly indentations): where, deep in the head, does voice focus?

Poets pose either as visual artists or rock stars, but novelists mime nerds, plastic pocket insert full of pens (trying to guess women's vocations by their earrings less reliable than by their shoes): watch-as-bracelet versus watch-as-cuff.

Start to study Stein: see or saw or was at sea with oars, without (shoulders and soldiers, soldiers and shoulders), never let show what you don't know.

Ah posh and gush (dear Kush, dear tush), the air one hears is there in Chinese verse.

Counterclockwise, the asymmetry of baseball is the key to its narrative (funk anthem), bottle gang on a park bench, double-dipper: Enver Hoxha is dead.

We're in the caffeine reaction faction: now mean this: the colon is swollen (semi) — she's got it . . . he sees it (better book reviews): Dennis Wilson (Natalie Wood) steps into space (the sea), just the tip of the Iceman (rises).

Counterthoughtwise, the words are stenciled on a glass door (light above the elevator, when lit, means "in use"), this is a test (sign in please), little pickup nearly buried under a load of old mattresses, half-athletic, all day.

Insertions, against the false silence of the City, voiced comma: the cat just stares at the fearless hen, hissing.

New plums weight old branches down into shape, another generation has discovered water balloons off rooftops, junkyard dog tears at raw beef, syntax appears straight forward waiting for the ambulance to arrive.

Young man with shoulder-length hair seems now old-fashioned, green parrot loose in the back yard, cat white as the steps on which its sleeps, a world in which Chris Martinez never dies in Vietnam nor Marion Dale Cook inside the walls of San Quentin nor Fay Stender, confined to a wheelchair, swallowing pills in Hong Kong.

That names are not words is evident to any: over decades the small house becomes its modifications, its repairs — you sit in the sun with your eyes shut, sensing the breeze against the hair on your arms, 13th of April.

Ink sinks into the paper, then spreads: thus the light around the body extends down from a gun tower, while three young women have joined hands, sitting on the train tracks, halting the shipment of troops.

People treat stairs with due caution, traffic in the valley feels endless, the day effortlessly slips into dusk.

The next page is another country, the moment a pop fly hovers before dropping back to earth.

The sun itself demands no explanation, but this cargo cult of nouns sings its own song, its own name, again and again.

## Charles Stein

### a suite of 4 Seed Poems

For Franz Kamin

The seed poems are all composed with the simple constraint that all words in the specific poem must be made of letters found in the "seed" word or phrase.

### Ludwig M. Van Beethoven / Charles Stein

Is there a chair here?  
Are there chairs there?

It is a chair.  
It is a real chair.  
It isn't in the air.  
It isn't in a car.  
It has this nice tan part.  
It isn't tin.  
It isn't thin.

Three cats  
sit in it.

The tone.

The old tone.  
The gold one.  
The old white one.  
The old white gold one.  
The old gold tone.

Went on.  
But it went on into

wind tone.

Wide high wind tone, shining white,  
venting loud, then low loud, then low,  
venting old dented gong tone . . .

Then the evil note went in.  
It let the living glint  
bend the golden tone.  
It let wind within the gong  
get into the old den.

Old men  
in the old den  
bent low

tending the now bound low tone with a gong,  
with a long bent tongue

until the new glint-event went in.

Then the evil note went out  
to hide in the dented gong.

It needed not to glow too long now,  
but tending the wind,  
it needed not to glow too long now . . .

A chair is clear.  
A chair is near.  
It is clear — a chair is near.

It is a clear chair.  
It is as clear as air.

The even tone  
The white event  
The dented gong  
The long high wind

The long white note  
The golden tone  
The evil tongue  
The tight high wind



A clear chair  
in a clean set.

I sit in it.

This nest.

This test.

This set.

This rest.

Test this nest.

Is it a tense nest?

Is it near?

Is it set in a nice rest?

Set this —  
then test.

Test this —  
then rest.

I love the wind I gong

I love the vent I dent

I dent gong

I bent wind

I lent gold to old dented wind gong

I tend old tone

I love old wind

Set this test.

Test this nest.

The gong I love — I live the tone long.

The long gong — long let it live.

Long let the long gong live in loud gold tone.

Long the gold glint light the old gong note.

The evil low tone — one note bent out —  
let it go down below.

Below the tone  
one evil note to glint —

Below the glint  
one oven note to glow.

Budge it.  
Wedge it.

Wedge the tongue below the dent.  
Nudge the gong into the low window.  
Below the window dig out the gong den.  
The window, low in the gong den.  
The glow in the window.  
The evil glint in the hint-tone.

The hint-tone low.

Let the hint-tone now glow in the bent gong tone.  
Let the hint-tone hide in wind.  
Let the wind in to the bent gong tone  
when the old tongue nudge it.

Let the evil note  
hide in the hint-tone.

Now let the hint-tone out.  
Let it glow in the long tone window.  
The wedge in the gong-glint  
to let the hint-tone out.

This nest is clear  
It is as clear as air.

I sit in a clean nest.

It is a chair.

I rest in it.

I hear the train  
reach a crest.

I see the crest  
nestle a clear chair.

I sit there.

I care

that these three trees  
sit at the crest.

I care that near these trees  
three cats sit.  
Three trains rest.

That these three cats  
reach three states  
in a latent sense.

I see it.  
I see it race.  
I taste it late.

The den.  
The old men  
go down into it.

Then one old one  
to dig gold  
to get down into it  
to get below —  
being below  
to dig the gold  
to get the golden nugget out

Then one old one  
one living bone  
one diving being  
one Old being  
being old  
diving low  
going into the wedge below the den  
hid within the wedge  
without light  
without thought  
he thought—

I hide low.  
I the living bone  
the old one

now grow bold.

I go below  
to dig white gold.  
I hide the gold I dig  
wedged in light.

I hide it without thought  
in the wedge I dig below.

I hide white gold.

The crest  
sits  
in a hill.

There is a chair  
there. In the clear  
air.

I reach that state  
latent in that sense —

that sense I see  
in a seat  
at a hillcrest

nested in that chair  
near  
near here  
in the clear air.

A chair.

A chair in air.

I see it.

I see it there — there  
at the hill's crest.

A clear chair  
in clean air.

A star.



## The (True) Words of Dainichi Nyorai

1.

I teach each stone  
the window it has in it.

These stones show  
tiny white dens  
within.

Within these dens  
coins are stashed in tiny towers.

A tower of tiny white coins  
inheres within these dens —

these dens which hide as niches  
in these stones.

So — we see that now the stone has windows  
and within the stone  
are tiny dens  
and the dens stash hidden towers of tiny coins.

Towers of white tiny coins  
stashed in the dens.

And who now reaches in with dainty hands  
to stash his tiny coins in neat white towers?

Who with hidden hands within white stones —  
who with hidden stones within white hands  
— with tiny coins —

waits and watches  
at the window in the stone  
to see the hidden water  
drain in hidden tarns?

Indeed, who? Who is he?  
And how? How does he?  
How does he wait there?  
There at the window?  
How does he stand?

2.

An infinite find of  
dented  
Indian  
windy  
ditch water  
tin-can  
noise

was  
what

he saw  
as  
he watched there  
with his eyes wide.

He saw the windows in the stone  
show his den of coins.

He saw the dirty water drain off.

He wished for fire to shoot in dry white darts.

Who was he there to wish this?

And did the fiery darts so shoot in the den  
that towers of coins were fanned white hot in it?

No.

In the window in the stone  
he saw the fire drown.

3.

A den  
within  
the stone.

Within  
the den  
a tower of tiny coins.

He heard a din  
of  
dented  
tin-can  
noise

rise  
as the tower of coins  
went down in a tarn.

One dented  
tin

can  
in a den  
stashed  
within his hidden  
hand  
stone.

The stone contained the den.  
The den showed rain and a tarn.  
And then the den in the stone

showed  
fiery darts.

4.

He heard a din in the den:  
a din of dented tin-can noise  
rise within the stone.

He waited at the window.

There was no air.  
There was no chair there.  
There was no tone — no white note.

There was no wind to send the din of can noise  
across thin air.

He strained to hear the noise in air.  
Instead he heard a car start off.

He strained to hear the dent of coins on tinny car doors.  
Instead he heard a tiny noise  
fire in thin white air.

He heard a tower stretch to reach the stars.

5.  
These are words of air.  
It says

thin noise is  
what we hear here.

Then we hear  
the din of fiery darts  
start  
dented car doors off.

Then we hear  
the water  
drain  
in tarns.

He stands at the window in the white stone  
and watches what he hears — the din of stars.

6.  
The tower of coins  
stretches in air  
to reach the stand of stars.

Instead a car starts off.

A window in a tiny stone  
shows an airy den with fiery cars  
stashed in wait for it.

Who watches it?

A scar in the head of the stone.

A dent in a car  
the tent contained.

Hidden entities scan the strand  
wide near the noise of water.

She hears the water  
drain off into tarns.

7.

Now it is sand  
where once water was.  
White sand there now.

Dry white noises start  
in the  
heat of it.

A din of entities drains the fire of stars.

Who is it that stands and watches as  
these entities shift white sand in dented cars?

What entity watches the sand shift?

Who is it that reaches into the shifted den  
where water once had washed and now  
to shift the tiny tower of coins he has  
he has to stash these coins in narrow tents?

Theft!  
Thrift!

The entities shift on the strand.  
They stash the coins in tidy shafts.

This one has no hands!

8.  
After the drift of stones across the strand  
when wind noise sent the tower of tiny white ones  
to hide in the entities' tents  
and fiery darts

showed —



Then who was it, waited at the window in the stone  
to watch the shifts?

It was the one that had no hands  
that watched with fiery eyes  
and heard the drift that noises sent —

thrift of eyes  
and shifts —

9.  
It is first words  
which shift across sand.

The noises  
entities listen to.

The noises they hear are the words of this one —  
the entity that has no hands —  
this one with a wide  
stand —

two feet  
stretched  
across  
the entire  
water  
one on this side where we see it  
the other  
no where  
we can see

yet it is there  
these  
entities  
arise

there that these noises  
are words that this one  
says  
so that we can hear  
its fine  
idea

tree  
tent  
root  
stone  
can  
den  
wind  
noise  
car  
hand  
no hand

then  
when  
and where  
here  
or if not here  
where?

If not here  
where? if  
now when, then, when then?  
If not he then who?  
Who is he if not then who?

And who is I?

## Kwanseum Bosul

Soul

A swan's soul

A man a woman

also  
's soul

A new soul

Some new loose one —

So we see

so we know

all

So we know all — all a soul knows — now

We soon know all a new loose soul soon knows

A swan soul knows — knows all — knows all we know

A man a woman a blue elk new on snow  
's souls

know

We know all an elk knows now

blue  
on  
wan snow

An elk knows all

Snow knows all

As elks walk on blue snow  
so snow knows all elks know

As swans as women walk on snow  
so snow knows all

we as swan souls know



No.

No one knows as snow knows — no swans no elks

No one knows as snow

No one knows as snow knows swans

No one knows as snow knows elks

No elks know swans so

No elks know swans

No elks know swans

moooooomn

sss<sup>u</sup>wa

sss<sup>u</sup>wAkasswa ss<sup>u</sup>Amoo

mbOOa sss<sup>u</sup>wa

sss<sup>u</sup>wAka ssswa

a a ss k'a maass

ssa mooo

a mass

moss

s mouse

loose now

a bou' k a 'ouse

oo? k no k lue about'

now a l l mouse loose

ol mu so na wan

ka so u lo swa

se um se um sle

ass we so loose oos

oos wa lo sa mu

oos sa oos wa se

se sa se wa so

so sa so wa mu

mu oos mu oos sa

sa mu sa se wa

## Chenrayzi Bodhisatvah

crazy hen ray

The crazy (crazed, I'd say)

a botched

idea

sat)

set it over here.

In that hen's head

an odd idea

sat—

Nobody *had* it —

Nobody had to have

that

dented crotchet

in the head he

or she

did

have to have —

That *hen* had it.

It sat in there

a crazed idea

crazed and dented

bent

rent into odd

bits

bits that sat

near

other

dented

idea bits.

That odd idea

that nobody had—

that hen had it.

The hen sat on a carton in a corner of the henyard.

And that idea

sat

inside her head

inside her one bead eye.

And soon that one bead eye

sent

one thin ray

across the yard.

One tinny hen's eye's ray

shot its dart

and hit the barn door

it shot at —

the barn door

red and dented

crazed by the hen's idea.

And then she sent

another

hen's bead

ray

across the barn yard

at

a horse —

The bad

the tan one

that stood there

cross and very itchy.

She shot the horse.

Her bent and dented notion

hit it in the sides.

And soon

the horse's eye

shot at the hen's eye

one dry horse ray

And the eye rays crossed in the yard

and the air above the yard

conceived the notion.

A crazy odd

dented

hen horse

notion

sat in air

beside the red

barn door.

A notion that that hen conceived

and shot it at a door

and shot it at a horse

and the horse received

the hen's odd notion

and shot it across the yard

beside the door.

It sits in air.



Nobody sees this.

Nobody sees it stand  
beside the hen  
beside the horse.

Nobody sees it shine  
in the heated air  
the hen yard breathes.

And it does  
stand there.

That oddness  
born  
that hen's  
instinct  
idea  
the horse receives.

Crazy.  
The yard is itchy.

The door has a bad  
board in it.

Scratchy yard cats catch at the hot idea—  
the hot idea  
that sits in air.

Nobody catches this.  
Nobody sees.

And yet the scratchy cats scatter dirty bits  
and cats eyes seize it  
and soon it is  
a hen-horse-cat's idea  
raised

above  
the hen yard  
bent  
and dented  
hot and odd  
an itchy notion — a notion that yet  
shines  
beside the red  
barn door

and nobody sees.

And yet as soon as  
hard rain beats  
in the hen yard  
the beasts reconnoiter.

The dirty bits  
are visited by events  
that are not dry.

The hen's bead eye  
is shiny soon.

The horse's sides shine too.

Even the red door  
has a nice  
clean  
coat.

Even the air  
is seen to shine.

As soon as rain  
starts in the air.

A chair  
A star  
An odd idea  
that sits there as  
a star  
sits

above  
in a chair —  
it shines  
in a hen yard  
beside a red  
door

One star  
shines  
above  
a chair  
in a hen yard  
beside the red  
door

it is an odd  
idea

No ideas  
say it.  
Nobody sees it.

Not yet dry  
the red  
hen yard  
and its  
dented  
barn door  
scratchy  
cats

and horses  
crotchety and hot —  
too itchy—

Tiny bitches  
too  
sit in the heat  
in the dirt  
to chide the hens

and yet  
above the door  
one star  
shoots one idea.

I don't say I see it.

Nobody can or does say that.

Yet  
in the itchy  
day heat

The cat and hen  
the horse and that red door

shoot dented rays  
so that an odd idea

has been conceived

and then it sits

as a chair  
or as a chariot  
or as a starry car

in shiny air . . .



*Poem For Her Birthday,  
Love Poem To Her Mind*

not a poem but a dance ecstatic  
round about the poem not a lake  
but a voyage across it and the ship  
is not a ship but a ship of glass  
with spun-glass rigging not  
glass but opal fire-opal and there are  
no sails there never was a breeze the ship  
never moves it slips along thrust  
by a sort of fairy machinery  
deep inside not a poem but the ship  
and this lake of cool flame and pearls  
that burn with the hiss of silk on silk

not a place but there are islands here  
pleasure islands with grottoes where smiling  
we take our ease in the white light  
here is no one here is everything we glide  
among the islands in their pale smokes  
and mists not now not then we  
are so still time swirls about  
our ankles as we play in the tangle  
of rigging thin filaments of glass the light plays  
upon us we are spangled we are spangled she is  
queen of this place queen of this ship queen  
of this poem aurora australis lady of the lake  
queen of far off and beyond

*For Philomene*  
(after Lady Ise)

the moon set hours ago  
behind slate-colored mountains

low in the evening sky  
a vee of wild ducks flies past

their ghostly breasts are pearl-pale  
their speed is a surprise  
their silence is unbearable

soon there will be nothing left  
with which I can compare you

You are smiling serenely, eyes agleam above two bright spots of rouge. You wear two tweed jackets, five skirts, no socks. A rhinestone coronet completes the ensemble. I am a great mouldering haystack, a dropsical heap in pajamas and overcoat, ten years crippled, forgetting and forgotten. You are hopelessly mad. I am hopelessly not, which is the same. We are both still mad with love.

It is the first of April and it is dawn and we are taking the air, making our stately progress down an empty grey boardwalk by the grey sea. You march ahead, pushing the rusty shopping cart piled high with every shabby thing we own. You might be pushing the Prince Imperial in his perambulator, you move with such an air. I trundle along behind, hunched in my wheelchair, trailing you in great eccentric swoops.

You reach the spot before me, as always, and you stop. Turning, you nod most graciously round about you, accepting the hallucinatory cheers of the theatre-going multitudes. ("Author! Author!") I am badly winded when I catch up. After I collect myself and my breath returns to me, I speak. "My dear, you have never looked more beautiful." For an answer, you caress my cheek and I blush like a schoolboy.

The package, when I produce it from inside my coat, is an eight-inch cylinder clumsily wrapped in gay gift paper. Together we hold it, my hand at the base, yours above mine. "Now?" I ask. "Now," you say, and I strike a match and light the fuse.

Your smile is stunning. Your rhinestones sparkle. Ten seconds pass, ten thousand lazy smiling years. We explode into one another and into the great grey eye of God.

*He Despairs of the Thoughts He Thinks*

The ego? And that to possess such a thing, to indulge it, to *be* it, should be seen as a problem? How could the "problem" even be stated? And how could a man, once he had announced to himself, "I am That," keep his silly "That" from growing moribund?

Oh, it is all so obvious. To pursue the matter would be stupid — just a trail of senseless murders. Let it cease.

Well, then, but they would cry, "Consciousness!" But I have never learned to love their precious "Consciousness" — not, at least, when *they* spoke of it. What dreary "conversations", what gloom! Chattering about ESP, for example, or Gurdjieff. Disgusting.

But . . . this "Consciousness" is all I have left, now. An ugly joke, I agree, but there is no help for it, nor any other strictly correct term for the me that remains of me. Oh, I suppose I could rename it, call it William Wilson or Edward ye Kinge, but who'd be fooled?

You hear me. I cannot possibly be speaking to you. You hear me.



### *He Despairs of the Poems He Reads*

Communication. Expression. Tepid concepts, drained and languid. What does he hope for, but never find?

An intricate timepiece, ticking in the desert. Graffiti on a meteorite. The toes of little boots peeping from beneath the arras. Invisible fingers at the harpsichord. The reader's attention as sleepy sentry, making a routine challenge and hearing the wrong password. Or, at the wax museum, one looks away for a moment, then looks back . . . and Jack the Ripper has changed his pose.

Where, finally, the image which is *not* metaphor, but first evidence of Terranova? (The paddle, curiously carved, which Columbus's men fished from the Atlantic.)

### *He Reflects on History and the Irrelevance of Absolution*

"Now the pornographers were assembled within the crematorium."

— Anthony Bloomfield

Bread — of which Pharaoh knew 30 types (according to the Harris Papyrus, Dynasty XX, circa 1200 B.C.) — 30 varieties, as well as peas, lentils, watermelons, artichokes, endive, radishes, onions, leeks, garlic, beef, honey, dates, milk, cheese, even butter.

Whereas the Tenochas had none of this: Moctezuma the First, surnamed the Angry, ruled the Valley of Mexico from 1440 to 1469 of our era, and built the causeways, and he never tasted cheese.

It was a one-grain culture with chili peppers and squash. They awoke at 4 in the morning to a blast of conch horns, ate ½ lb. of corncake for breakfast, washed it down with cactus beer. They weren't much more than 5 ft. tall; their guts were full of worms; when they died, each was buried with a lump of jade in his mouth. "The level of individual consciousness appears to have been close to that of insects. . . ."

Other lives, other lies. Observe this scuttling centipede, how it races for cracks and darkness! See its rippling column of armored segments, perfectly fitting and smooth: a tailored sequence of false quietudes, a creeping totem, each face a mask of blank calm — but all of it creeping, and in such a ghastly hurry!

The dead: how we must haunt them, groaning in our chains.

### *The Knight Rides Slowly Through The Green Wood*

To sit in this cluttered room all morning long  
1984 Los Angeles summer hot and not a poem in sight  
only chair fan ashtray pencils in a cup  
cartons in a corner who remembers what's in them?  
Venice out the window buildings beaches airplanes  
gangs and ghetto blasters mothers all the children  
what a time to want to write a poem

nothing comes of course no poem only useless lines  
and God knows where they came from:  
"the knight rides slowly through the green wood" and  
"the sad knight rides through the forest"  
just these two lines over and over again  
and I write them down and I cross them out  
and write them down again  
"the knight rides slowly through the green wood"  
"the sad knight rides through the forest"

there'll be no poem today just the sad rider  
but if sad he is strong he is steadfast  
and he rides through the morning in the mind until  
the room and the world back off a bit  
my nose fills with forest smells  
of moss and water mushrooms wild witch hazel  
I had hoped for a poem but witch hazel?  
I never expected witch hazel and I tell myself  
some days most days the thing to do is  
to fail and gladly choose the failure

the knight rides slowly through the green wood  
the sad knight rides through the forest



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JOHN CLARKE's books include *Blake: A Masque; Lots of Doom; Gloucester Translations; Green Field and The End of This Side* (Black Book #4, Spring 1979, Bowling Green, Ohio) . . . Two new books by CLARK COOLIDGE are due this year: *The Crystal Text* (The Figures) and *Solution Passage: Poems 1978-1981* (Sun & Moon). Works in process include: *The Book of During* (a book of sexual matters, 1st section of which in *Sulfur* 14), a long Egyptian poem, and a book of improvisations on the music of the Rova Saxophone Quartet . . .

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GADI HOLLANDER's *The Book of Cries* is scheduled for publication by Bran's Head Press; a section was published in *Reality Studios*. Other parts of *And Becomes 130 Ultimate Sentences* have been published in *Paper Air*. He lives in London, England, and has written and produced two films, *Background Music* (part of a larger work tentatively titled *Orphic*), and *Mnemosyne* . . .

FANNY HOWE's many books include *Introduction to the World* (The Figures, 1986), and *Robeson Street* (Alice James Books, 1985), *For Erato: The Meaning of Life* (Tuumba, 1984), *Alsace-Lorraine* (A Telephone Book, 1982), *In the Middle of Nowhere* (Fiction Collective, 1984) . . .

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NATHANIEL MACKEY's recent publications are a book of poems, *Eroding Witness* (University of Illinois Press), and a book of prose, *Bedouin Hornbook* (Callaloo Fiction Series), the first volume of the ongoing *From A Broken Bottle Traces of Perfume Still Emanate*. He publishes and edits *Hambone* . . .

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RON SILLIMAN has published nine books of poetry: *Crow* (Ithaca House, 1971), *Mohawk* (Doones, 1973), *NOX* (Burning Deck, 1974), *Ketjak* (This, 1978), *Sitting Up, Standing, Taking Steps* (Tuumba, 1978), *Tjanting* (The Figures, 1981), *Bart* (Potes & Poets, 1982), *ABC* (Tuumba, 1983), and *Paradise* (Burning Deck, 1985) . . .

JOSEPH SIMAS's books are *Entire Days* (Burning Deck) and *Sets*, forthcoming from TELS, Tokyo. He lives in Paris, where he is founder and editor of *Moving Letters* and *Moving Letters Press* . . .

New work by GUSTAF SOBIN appears in *Hambone*, *Sulfur*, and *2PLUS2* (Lausanne, Switzerland), and his translation of Henri Michaux's *Ideograms in China* was recently published by New Directions in a signed, limited, handprinted edition. He lives in France . . .

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BARRETT WATTEN recently published *Progress* (Roof, 1985) and a critical work, *Total Syntax* (Southern Illinois University Press, 1984). Forthcoming: *Conduit* (Gaz) and the *Marginality: Public & Private Language* issue of *Poetics Journal*, co-edited with Lyn Hejinian.

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