



**TOWARD  
EADWARD  
FORWARD**

**EMILY ABENDROTH**

Ekfrey



36/100





toward eadweard forward

[with interruptions from the sowgirl of salzburg]

Emily Abendroth

"If it is impressed on our minds in infancy that a certain arbitrary symbol indicates an existing fact; if this same association of emblem and reality is reiterated at the preparatory school, insisted upon at college, and pronounced correct at the university; symbol and fact - or supposed fact - become so intimately blended that it is extremely difficult to disassociate them, even when a reasoned and personal observation teaches us they have no relationship.

So it is with the conventional **galloping** horse."

- Eadweard Muybridge, *Animals in Motion*

"all that goes before — the words, the rain's small pellets  
small fountains that live, the face of the water, dilations,  
the heart of the republic - - are the subject of the  
verb skips ...."

- George Oppen, *Selected Letters*

"In the vicinity of Mt. Saint Helens, a Bigfoot beckoned to a person who responded by **turning** and **running**."

- Oldest known West Coast Bigfoot Record, dating from the 1850s,  
as recorded on a Posted Chronology at the Willow Creek Bigfoot Museum, CA

to gallop

to skip

to turn and run

## THE WALK & THE AMBLE

clocked at midlope, every mare facilely unropes  
any strict predictions of flight, unleashing  
locomotion like a prestorm hushponcho  
the full gipper of precipitation still on the lamb

arching a clipped hoof skyward, it clops down  
impounding in puddle a cloud bank, a cone of error  
or leaps a brick niche in furclad furor driving  
its own warm hide by slack over rocketing strides

the slow open gammed gait of an aggregate body  
unabated gives birth to a warren of rabbits, a boon  
whose exiting bushels of sallying tushes  
usher a second degree prickliness in the orifice  
each shuttlecock forthing undocked as if by schooner  
a knotted shock of downy assets leaving the bloomers



the suckle-sated nestmates bivouaking nightly shore  
up a shelter girded by their own interlocking appendages  
an ecstatic but nodding combobulation, a quixoddity  
dressing this thick mess of drowsy possibility  
they are sedge-browsers as well as perambulators  
ample in coniferous intake, sampling by mud-flanked rudding

and here the pathway to the scissoring extremities  
begins at the shammy lapped hindquarters  
begins taking stock of what one notices  
searoar wordspoor umlautdrum  
an amble as twice sprung maelstrom  
whose sound is absconded but movement  
lashing, four flyway wind currents concurrently

thrashing a field of addled cattle, their surefooted  
and peculiar brattlings riding the hammerdressed dare  
the earth you miss while the foot bobs in air

First tong-handled, then bruskiy tendon-strung. Involuntarily sty-whisked, the Sowgirl is forceably removed from her preceding situation. Her skirts, as they are soil soiled, are intercepted and prohibited. Entering in frocked strings, the clinicians ceaselessly test her skills. Finding her lacking they resolve to found her again - on agreed upon principles - bickering in flecks, an ad hoc flocking of behavioral experts. The Sowgirl, they record, is able to extract the information NO and WARNING from negative commands and possibly the information QUESTION from yes/no interrogative intonation. If someone uses a word she recognizes she responds to it in a uniform fashion regardless of its grammatical or semantic content - reacts with the associational delight of a previously visited and pleasantly regarded sonic situation - but one largely without contextual variation. This, at least, is the clinicians' diagnostic interpretation of the Sowgirl's initial eagerness toward their investigations. When her demeanor changes, radically, to one of uniform morbidity and disenchantment, their diagnosis fails to change with it. It suffers a rigidity that is itself never put into question or the subject of equivalent self-inquiry. These days, the Sowgirl no longer luxuriates in unexpected snow. She has been told no, so, when the skypurge and subsequent urge comes she merely putters, broad-haunched and faltering, mutters indoors, in doorwells, peering out, subject to an implacable remoteness.

One breezy overcast morning the Sowgirl throws her glasses high up on the hospital roof. The therapist/linguist asks her later, "Where are your glasses?" The Sowgirl takes him outside, looks at the roof and laughs, heartily. Other persons bend punctuation to their will as the Sowgirl bends laughter to hers. Tittering most immoderately, the shoulders moving rapidly abreast, cresting upward as if sculling, she has found a giddy overwintering site in arm heaves, in the brisk teething of all plasticware placed before her. At night, alone in her railing-bordered and buzzerequipped clinical bedding, she returns to echoes of her mother's earliest loonhour and moodily delivered incantations: "ought to be whiskered, our muses, not whispered ... ought to be estranged and tree'd." As she gazes restlessly about the room, an uproarious incandescent aurora arises through the locked window - radiates off the undecorated institutional yellow walls - yawking - soothlubing - unparalleled in its sensuousness - until the day when Madeleine enters and likewise sets about unfettering spaces. Madeleine who immediately lies at her feet in supplication, and for no articulable reason purrs, begins singing, keeps melodically and repeatedly stuttering that "yes, a dog behind a fence was behind a fence, all right, um hum, hence tense, oh yes, but a cat behind a fence was not behind a fence at all, no no, my my, not at all, sigh goodbye" - returning with each hypnotic variation to look up at the Sowgirl in uncowed eye-blanching ardor.

## THE TROT & THE RACK

the supple extension of calf and femur shafts  
are sapwoods of mobility, demure typhoons  
whose gullyside cogitations sully the pull  
toward pure rapidity via skittish dervishes

a grazing to taste, a fawnskin cushioned blaze  
of distracted antics, proceeding by taproot and halfshoot  
as if cotyledons were synonymous with tingling  
hamstrings and a coy polyp one whose haunts  
might feasibly deter the gauntlet of standardization calls

swallowing instead an upturned pebbles gut  
laughter composed of its newly exposed spoils  
that *this* could buoy  
simply by proving the undergrowth there  
in curious posture, listing, but short of destitute  
its roundabout crouch and exacerbated wares



to which one bent so low, sucking the thick cheek  
fat tight, plunging the face right into the cool sauce  
of water, cabling a northward eye in resolute pursuit  
of contained heaving, of soft bloated amphibious  
flesh baubles, of a toggling velvet expiration

and no frogs were disturbed in the gawky looking  
of that delicious underbelly  
for once one didn't fumble for purchase, driven  
instead by an inner rumble for near viewing  
as if the glisten of vision could saunter, pupate  
populate by similar orders of gluttoned smallness

as if knowing that quetzals are frugivorous  
might thus adjudicate our very seeing of flock  
size, now revised to coincide with all those whole  
consumed and fluted fruits, residing in the tendons  
of glutes, unlike the turgidly regurgitated seeds

The Sowgirl doesn't speak often but when she does she is a real flinger of zingers. The trackless forests of her speech surface like irregular sandbars, their coagulations goaded by dissensus. "I'm not worried," the Sowgirl insists, wading about for the right terminology, "whether I'll be able to express myself as an individual. There is wide license, at least within a certain constellation of parameters, for such utterances. I am however concerned that I will be largely prohibited from doing so as a community, duly anxious that I will be curtailed from siting my language or its production in alliance with any form of group mobilization. And I am entirely, if awfully, aware of the absolute impossibility that I will be able to do so as a bandicoot. Though it should be verbally understood, even if no one believes, that this voice for me is best." The Sowgirl can be inconsolable in a way that doesn't actually involve sorrow - is more the byproduct of a failed entry. Her eyes frequently finger over the institution's long gated stone yards, the raked lumps and chunks of shaky talus that compose them. Obsessed by a pigeon and its three-pronged claws lurching over the beaches of quarried gravel, she observes how it perches an instant only to pitch further forward across the uneven surface, gripping by awkward talon. She suffers sympathetic palpitations of the forearm, an unusual itching in the shinflank.



To her pencil-poised handlers, the Sowgirl dictates, "It should also be rightfully noted that such static and pre-selective cultural permissiveness, matched as it is by an absolute creatural prohibition, is certainly only the most tepid substitute for a participatory, or even perspectival, democracy." The handlers/clinicians record however only more inferred diseases, detecting that the Sowgirl suffers from blindness, that she walks like a bunny despite living with pigs; her hands out in front and fluttering, unable to integrate together the tactile and visual information she receives. She does treat everything voluptuously, they admit that, but only as if stubborn objects - which for the Sowgirl means holding up each, encounter or encountered, against her cheek. "It's what people do when they do not entirely believe their eyes," the doctors say. "Or what *a* person does when they do not entirely believe in other people," Madeleine, in the room today, adds obstinately, squintishly wrinkling her knuckles. To be worldless is always a contrivance, but if no one will deign to look at you, much less express what the glance avails them of, then what? "Then, there is also I myself using myself as an object," Madeleine retorts unhesitatingly. "Don't forget that, cat" she says, patting the Sowgirl's fanny publicly, raising her own cheek to the Sowgirl's cheek, putting three glossy wet fingers to the other's nose. Her wrists suddenly home to a rage of probatory and promiscuous phalanges.

## THE CANTER & THE TRANSVERSE GALLOP

a dank hunk meets one damp hump  
and jubilant they schmooze, warp apart  
artfully outstrip any gleaning eyes only  
to reconnoiter via adroit canticles  
fiercely groping each others crops  
gamboling off, adducing across the sluices  
a soppy course of reciprocal limb action

while elsewhere and solo a route-spurned  
racking pony urgently performs its willed  
wiliness, totters at half stride in a quicksilver  
instant of cliffside bafflement, favoring  
the shored forefoot to rehook its course  
although consequent hoofefallings find  
the unabashed poles of another felt hunger  
hunkering in

*here* amidst the peat-sweating eskers of bog ash  
it takes a couple diggers, skids its tracks  
tries not to be fearless but recognizably seared  
nicked about and yet still leaning forward, as if  
sensation were volition itself and imagination  
not for the stinting, but sprinting rather

until, into panting speed, it offends the thinking  
underlain and most swollen within, tickling  
the leonine temperament of our peculiar  
a hot minion of still belching waters  
a lateral spread, a surfeit of seeing's clinamen  
its subjects already and inevitably exceeded  
even as in the process of being constituted

such a picture lacks certain necessary uneasinesses  
the proposed deoccupation of effluvium itself  
an apogee of lavishly collapsed containment  
strategies, its objects exuberantly  
overlapping one another as a dog laps  
rapturously slurping at the agitated froths  
couthlessly tapping their propulsive forces  
sources via wild budtongued nudgings

Without judging, it is nonetheless impossible not to note the mocking ferocity present in the way the clinicians privately speak of the Sowgirl's strongest yearnings. Belittling her ferality or alternately declining to assign it, are each, in their part, comforting and oft-expressed consensuses of the lab-stooped group. "The Sowgirl can neither run like the wind, nor sing like a nightingale, nor climb like a squirrel," they say, "She merely bears - and rather gracelessly at that - a distended belly, the mark of mal-tending." And yet this illseen and undernourished organ is proving itself a fabulous plum, monetarily speaking, for the institution. In fact, vigorously testing the Sowgirl's anatomical abilities has become a prosperous well-timed pastime for this otherwise souring, poorly rated, rural research facility. With renewed rigor, they continue to review: And can she eat..., and can she understand..., and can she lift..., and can she wield..., and could she would she had she [X]. The steel-edged queries, accompanied as they invasively and often are by unbridled cotton swabbing, leave the Sowgirl yakking up chunks for months at a time. One scientifically unforeseen result is the significantly underreported loss of nearly all her teeth and nails - nearly all of which are also kept as future proof and treasures for the curious. For the Sowgirl, this hoping to build one's bail with one's very body, via prescribed and mandatory grubbing, is proving a distinctly deleterious plum, one whose fabulousness is paraded before her as always *yet* (but certainly) to come. In the meantime, sores break out in the Sowgirl's stomach, in her bowels, and in her throat. "To swell the coffers, swell the coffins," Madeleine shudders as she tenderly wipes the corners of the Sowgirl's violently retching lips.



When the Sowgirl blushes her stomach blushes too, a quickening flush, a ripe engorged reddening of the inner lining. Yet this is a characteristic that defines her as together with other hominids rather than as apart. As everyone's does this - a fact which the staff has been consistently insufficient in observing. The Sowgirl has been slowly procuring the syllables to say 'must we go by cold train again,' posing them against the syllables to say 'no more please of that mild intravenous milklike drivel.' The succinct to brink in on. On days when the doctors press too hard upon the Sowgirl's tendency to inarticulation, Madeleine miraculously arrives, adopting briefly the expert's own vocabularies, the largely fictive diction of shipsure observation, but to an ulterior end which conversely celebrates the Sowgirl's silences and strange phonic retentions. Taking her own improvisatory oral notes, the brilliant, yet equally binaristic, switch-hits of Madeleine bestow on the Sowgirl a context of ascendant, near mythic, evolutionary importance. "It appears," Madeleine offers, "that a newborn doesn't so much develop her predilection for the mother tongue as she does let her perception of foreign phonemes atrophy. The Sowgirl then is that rare she-being who hasn't let the rest all fall away. She has not yet let languish the grammar she has been told she will not or should not use." When the Sowgirl sets about moaning, howling, or ejecting low rolling sequences of expectorate, her official handlers either forcefully urge immediate translation or collectively and unremittingly chastise her in an effort to halt the occurrence entirely. But Madeleine, when present for such sessions, wraps up quietly in the room's northeast corner, ears peaked, nostrils open, pinkies partially raised: listening, learning. Later, and as always, she will thank the Sowgirl profusely for the lesson. The water in our blood, Madeleine reminds, carries the memory of having been elsewhere. It is new to this carceral space but not angry - circulating. We are not face to face with mathematics here but matter.

## THE ROTARY GALLOP & THE RICHOCHET

the coiling inmost tissuejoist toils  
hoists a tantrum of action, its host body  
a loosely pooled hayneedle mound rashly  
raked against firebreak, as the stoking takes  
it instigates a late propagation of light  
in the limbs, sinewy still so as to slip

clutches, fledging a ledgy outlook, brooking  
water whose muscle wattle folds fuss but  
gently in hushed sussurations, tipping into  
invisibility even with their constant undulations  
the entire standout gleeful spree unduly rendered  
mute or deemed immeasurable by members  
whose monikers mark only the ossuary  
and its brittle ur-stillness as presence

could we  
suppose instead and in essence a flaunted  
pandemonium whose fitful yet ecstatic partners  
forgo solidity for service as stubborn accelerants  
their spasmodic movements gaining the mountains  
despite embarking at the margin of the pubis  
the hissing untamed lot cupping the hale  
and ambulatory upshot of unstaunchable emissions

supping  
an eddied kindred not of lineations  
but alliances, a stowaway flow  
owing its unpinioned aptitudes  
to freshly voluminous flanks  
to unhinged hankerings which shudder  
the skin as one shuttles the thighs

*or stammer this:* that any manners softness  
matters, that indeed the mudline bleeds  
jilting its silts in turn, pitching and tossing  
jostling position to lessen concussion

faced with such injunctions  
they try prolonged scooting, amidst savvy  
contractions cry for vociferous weaving  
weighing rough skin to rough skein  
aligning tensile forces to abnormal facilitations  
suscitating previously strangulated soarings

The handlers see inducing in the Sowgirl a critical (even crippling) need for others to be a necessary incremental step toward cultivating her 'normalcy'; a task that, in turn, they see as 'their job.' The Sowgirl tends to look at the staff (*all* staff, regardless of their position in the institution or their part within her daily routines) like walls, reserving her more communicative expressions for friendlier barnyard bodies or occasionally, for Madeleine. Accordingly, the transformation the handlers set about provoking is ultimately more for their sake than for its indispensability to the self-sustenance of the Sowgirl. They've never been looked at as walls before, and within that construct, not even as walls where one is adjudged as structurally superior to another. It really sets their teeth aclack, wracks them with the jitters, keys up their sense of the social heebie-jeebies. On all official outgoing paperwork, the handlers persist in insisting that the Sowgirl's primary psychosis is that she has never figured out who she is and who is somebody else (or as several, griping impolitely, pipe from the corridors, "not even *something* else"). All the formidable prognostications cast upon the Sowgirl attest to an absolute lack of border in her mind between herself and her world. As supportive illustration, in their articles and case studies, the therapists/linguists extensively, even obsessively, document the Sowgirl's frequently interchangeable usage of *you* and *me*: the Sowgirl saying *you* and pointing to herself, the Sowgirl mouthing *I* while feinting in the direction of a spiderplant's trenchant out-of-shadow arching. And yet these selfsame reports cannot similarly account for the Sowgirl's seemingly impeccable understanding of the reciprocal pronoun "each other."



When one therapist/linguist asks the Sowgirl what she had liked most of sty-living, the Sowgirl replies, "In winter, the braided streams of meltwater cross each other at the trough often." This response produces wide gawks from the impromptu gaggle of gathered professionals; it trumps each and every one of their hypotheses regarding the Sowgirl's supposedly standout disinterest and her presumably foundational incuriosity toward what keeps her company. In contrast to the former proliferation of citings and publications of others, this particular answer of the Sowgirl's is neither released to medical journals nor to the larger lay public of listeners. One week, and without warning, the research institution summarily clears away all the diverse wooden and metal obstacles, all the remaining layings of the unusual outdoor exercise tracks that had been specially formulated to test the Sowgirl's extant agility, her clearance capacities at a clip. Currently, when the Sowgirl swings her leg around, in a wide lope and fertile arc that sweeps languorously but tenaciously across present airs, it is not to field any obscene hurdle huddling there, but rather in search of a scissoring excitation, the robust genital tickle born of simple frictive action. The Sowgirl, aroused from surly, lingers over the like-a-light-rugburn rippling that works in trips across the microflora of her skin, the gently writhing wind current which traverses both her oral and transdermal routes, and all as a result of her own easy airborne rudding. Ruffling through her available grammar for appropriate allocation of the pleasure, she describes fraydips of intermediate leaping pursued until, as the Sowgirl puts it, "in almost no way every ray alertly touches okay."

## THE BUCK & KICK

a pattern may have an occupation, may labor  
to acquire callosities against prancing abundance  
but this stance battens lastly only to pillars  
of intolerable appetite, in episodic close-up  
the narrow acuity is punctured with sponginess  
proves far too cumbrous and patchy a seedbed  
for tethering, catapults unseen into greenery

whose mass-batch grafting yields a nerved vetch  
cannily channeled rather than hemmed  
an explicit pleating whose beetling crags  
of inblown collarbone stipulate grit, an at-drift  
and stricken district where sometimes a shimmer  
in passing, passing often enough, yields stripes

zippers of flight the eye dryheaves  
an eliding ruffle periphery, a flooded doddering  
hardly lusterless in its press to ministrations  
each bursted character of vexed text  
a nibbled feast day whose lumpish foodstuffs  
are gnawed in anticipated awe of new mandibles  
their looming increasingly resembling plumage

i.e. a stream of water *running* down a hill  
a locomotive *running* along a railroad  
an ivy plant *running* up the wall  
whether they're *running* really any  
or perhaps just glibly pursed, only to be later  
wound parted, each tucksprint inlet both vetting  
for space and poised to take off in formation  
subject to hemorrhaging in its tremulous attentions

as through the pilled shell of a chambered nautilus  
also, oozing occurs, an unintegrable overbellow  
a mayhap slapped upon the apparent 'round'  
each foal following at canter the contoured ground  
until it jackknifes, a moment of mal-at-ease  
leanness compressed all the way to wrestled  
breathing                      trestles now outward  
all the way to open struggle

The Sowgirl's confinement is experienced by herself not as a fact but as a force. Its dynamic pressure is such that its radius of influence is only compounded as public interest in the Sowgirl as a novel subjectivity wanes. The Sowgirl's room becomes an ominously encroaching surface of denudation; as research projects are retired, so too go the interlocking neon building blocks, the rosy lacquered matching games, the anatomically accurate mammalian models, and the previously innumerable pairs of latex-gloved hands which eagerly proffered each. Madeleine, sifting for positive assessments of this new situation, notes, "If not reading there is writing (provided one writes), if not writing there is knitting (provided one knits), if not knitting there is the mind." But the mind is a tricky host. For how many consecutive hours, the Sowgirl asks, must I be my own and only company. For days on end, again and again, the Sowgirl's noggin rises to the occasion: discovering new pockmarks in the wall to ogle, probing an arrestingly shabby plaster corner for its ornery dribbles, roaming the different musical tones of the quotidian made by rapping first on wood, then cement, then metal. But eventually her mind falls to the occasion. The Sowgirl stops touching and hitting things, she shacks up frequently in the closet, clacks the door closed for contiguous incurious hours. For the first time since her violent apprehension from the sty, the custodial disinterest that the Sowgirl had reserved solely for the figures of her oversight upends and extends itself to other arenas. During these impoverished hours, the Sowgirl can be mollified only by a green and a red raincoat whom, hallway-hung on their pewter tongues, are visible just outside the orbed portal window of her habitation. Ajiggle with enchantment at the raincoats' pat contusions, she aches for them each so badly that she never even longs for their animation - the radiant plastic colors, their playful and unpredictable forces of reflection, are more than enough. More would even be too much perhaps; the Sowgirl physically already buckling, shucking all inhibitions and avidly sucking upon her hands while marveling at the implausibly glossy way the monochrome loam of those waterdoffing sleeves shimmers at a distance.



An unclassifiable response:

The Tester commands the Sowgirl: *Put the button under the dish.*

The Sowgirl places the dish on the glass.

Not nothing better but nothing like it.

How else to account for the odd succession of the Sowgirl's sensitivities:

thunderstorms, a full or new moon, hot ridged biscuits, one rancid and unshorn  
applecore mannequin, pulled wool, a small and arrogant oligarchy of hosted  
closet ants, loud noises, unprocessed film, quiet noises, squeezed cheese...

All these things powerfully and variously move her.

As the months of her confinement continue to lengthen and her visitations dwindle,  
the Sowgirl unceremoniously and resolutely resigns herself to returning every one of  
her organ's attentions toward prehensile purposes: the toes to shovel and pry, the  
head to poke and hammer. Mockingly referred to by remaining staff as "The Great  
Abbreviator," the Sowgirl doesn't just swallow her endings anymore - turning 'orange'  
into 'or' and 'blasphemy' into 'bla' - she swallows her beginnings too. In the end, the  
Sowgirl does not run so much as buck and kick away.

At a certain point.

At a certain point, geologists find seashell fossils atop a towering mountaintop and cannot but acquiesce to the obvious presence of prior movement. While undermined of their former brackishness, the pearly gooseneck barnacles pressed now into placental stone and resting at 14,000 feet, are a fertile cue left stewing there, frozen in obstinate contradistinction to the massive immobility of their circumstances.

At a certain point, those federal officials so tasked had to transform nuclear *terror*, which threatened to simply paralyze the nation's populace emotionally, into nuclear *fear*, a considerably more tolerable and presumably more malleable affective state. It was a state the officials hoped, if properly shaped, would allow its citizens to perform in orderly, predictable and most desirably, highly dictatable ways. In other words, a careful grounding of psychological inoculation, rounding to a political line the federals banded with some hesitancy since it was intended to simultaneously address and dress up (if not outright create) a time of crisis. Or, as one official acutely articulated the difficulty, "The destruction had to be real enough to mobilize the public but not so real as to invalidate the concept of defense altogether."

At a certain point, the medical practitioners responsible for the Sowgirl's public image could no longer simply present her as a novel ritual that in its *opposite* nature served as both testament to and confirmation of the larger social body's inherent *civility*. The gathered audiences had begun to take notice of her falling teeth and nails, of the way she clawed at her own belly in discomfort; they could no longer be appropriately convinced that *wild* as a state of being was coherently synonymous with 'in *wild* anguish'. The professional handlers were forced to cease fingering the Sowgirl as a quixotic but gripping educational image of savagery, and compelled to try to recast her as an unremarkable public nuisance whose banishment (or at least invisibility) was for the best of the community.

At a certain point, there simply couldn't be both icons on the market; the sudden consilience, or springing into one, that comes of the two images seen by binocular vision, was neither achievable nor desired here. Although it must also be remarked that the scientists' new coverture, their attempted reorganization of previous details, was hardly a rousing or complete success.

At a certain sustained point, everyone had to eyefully meet the living resistance of the picketing torso that was mournfully but undeniably traipsing before them. A node of delight - magnetic and dangerous, a node of insubordination - breasting and cantankerous, a node of curiosity - rocketing with unexpected velocity, each placed their irrepressable spectres before the public.

At a certain point, these vivaciously protruding nodes overtook the preceding norms in popularity as they already had long ago in dexterity.\*

At a certain point, leap.

## Appendix

OR

[Another Organ's Jargons Nudge the Margins]

On the Sowgirl of Salzburg

I

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\*The nodular possibility for the Sowgirl (and for us all) which is introduced at the end of this piece, owes its impetus and configuration to a strange suturing or cobbling together of a reference to nodes by Paul Klee in a notebook entry from *The Nature of Nature* and a jubilant exhortation of nodes' obstinate resistance and vitality by Eve Sedgwick in her essay "Jane Austen and the Masturbating Girl."



References to the Sowgirl of Salzburg occur in nearly all feral child collections that burden themselves with the labor of extensive, if dubious, historical chronologies. In each and every case that I've encountered as a reader of these texts, the gesture always takes the same compact secondhand form –

A doctor [Feuerbach] quoting another doctor [Horn] in his perfunctory, rather un-clinical reportage:

"Dr. Horn, in his Travels through Germany, tells that he saw in the infirmary at Salzburg, but a few years ago [in 1831], a girl of twenty-two years of age, and by no means ugly, who had been brought up in a hog-sty amongst the hogs, and who had sat there for many years with her legs crossed. One of her legs was quite crooked, she grunted like a hog, and her gestures were brutishly unseemly in a human dress." - *Wolf Children and Feral Man*, by Rev. J.A.L. Singh

*The instances of appearance pile up without accumulation. We know only this: That she was filthy and therefore clearly shouldn't have been wearing a dress. And yet, despite this wanton impropriety of dirt and gown adjacency, she was by no means ugly.*

That is to say, we know only the culture's preexistent preclusions, the preexistent structures of judgment into which the Sowgirl stepped **or slid**.

A bevy of worldly notetakers writhing under the test & conceptual stress of any unordinary Pressing obstinately against what further or other utterances they might have asked or observed or been

To prove the measurable

progress of her 'human'

development, the Sowgirl is

set to task learning the terms

'to grunt' and 'to rummage'

'to snort' and 'to cavort'

at the very same moment that she is encouraged (often forcefully) to stop practicing the actions to which this vocabulary correlates.

*Urged to operate in the field of names only – As if these stand in opposition to (& never in association with) dynamic possibilities.*

*When the tester whispers to the Sowgirl: 'Chicago' is tri-syllabic. There is no city in that sentence but only its sign. Chicago is as far from the page as Velcro in those moments – and far less stippled or populated.*

We ourselves preferring to proffer the polar bear a bastion

of white aplomb, when in actuality its hairs are hollow transparencies

For a full third of the year, these delicate tubes are filled by an algae whose tint

perches closest to greenish-yellow. The skin that rests below a fat pebbled matte black.

If we speak aptly of any hue at all, it is only the snow's, and even there we basically err.

Forgoing the low and undergoing stomach  
For an overhand upbringing in water  
A boneyard of disconnection

## On the Sowgirl of Salzburg

Can the Sowgirl's 'story' be a 'true' one : miniaturized as it is : to the randy bends of a skirt's hem

These days, the Sowgirl's former partners in co-habitation have likewise been severed from the hardly bucolic dens of their earlier years. The surprising PeptoBismol color of the open pit excrement lagoons that surround the sites to which they have been transferred is produced by a potent and volatile combinatory interaction between the bacteria and blood and afterbirths and still born piglets and urine and excrement and chemicals and drugs all tossed offhandedly into these multi-story deep and festering pools.

A deceptively festive flaming etched by a wretched pink imbroglio

Her sty's story charged with the fitful enlargement of pseudo-historical electricities until:

"In another instance, a worker who was repairing a lagoon was overcome by the fumes and fell in. His fifteen year-old nephew dived in to save him but was overcome, the worker's cousin went in to save the teenager but was overcome, the worker's older brother dived in to save them but was overcome, and then the worker's father dived in." [from "Boss Hog" by Jeff Tietz., Dec. 14, 2006]

*ostensibly 'true' too : yet miniaturized to one ill-skirted den of offal : a single dismantled family line*

The bodies dumped into uncovered groundstores glibly referred to as 'dead holes.'  
in the sense of being open to all torsos in any stage of decomposition.

Equitable  
A miserable false cognate.  
An island of severed information.

**Her self violently compelled to return to the 'proper' jurisdiction of her organism.**

In the face of these mounting antagonisms, the composed and graceful part of the Sowgirl tolerantly tucks  
a mean experience into a hopefully forget-able ball  
while the TANTRUM and LARK of her elects to perform otherwise

Waiting  
Amidst panting,  
to fledge and reconfigure itself in ire  
To be soft, lost and chewed off, nonetheless more blessed than domesticated

Grating, tempting us to inquire still : What did the Sowgirl do, and what did we choose to record?

She did not inappropriately compare initial consonants.  
She did not inappropriately compare semantic representation.  
She did not compare vowels alone and ignore final consonants.  
She did not compare final consonants ignoring what came before.

- except in one instance
- except in two instances
- except in a third instance

When

via an unprecedented laryngeal mechanism, a sort of archi-liquid entered her speech  
ushering obstruent clusters in, a palatal release buffered by a difference in denasalization  
which propelled prior rules into a now unstaunchable bleeding relationship  
and something inarguably *new* was made.

It was mouthed urgently, quite opulently even, with something akin to joy.

The Sowgirl lashing back at the packs of interrogators with her own crash of quilted queries:

Where is stop spitting?!!  
Where is tomorrow Mrs L?!!  
Where is dullard place the green box here?!!  
Where is my ten friends again outdoors?!!

*Where is She did not inappropriately behave appropriately?!!*

The Sowgirl now as heavy as she'll ever be, as vocalic, as restless, as indefatigable  
Unsuckled and comfortless in her letting.





When Eadweard Muybridge introduced a new technical possibility for photography at the turn of the 20th Century via his motion studies of forward-rocketing horses, the conversations produced by his results were distinctly more than mechanical in impact. Amongst other things, the longstanding belief that the physics of equine mobility required one foot on the ground at all times was definitively overturned, demanding a new unlearning of prior consensus. Indisputably reflected within his sequential images was a high-velocity phase of galloping action wherein all four limbs were off the ground and aimed at one another.

the *impossible* motion of unsupported transit

turned out to be the *actual* one

*the wire-triggered shutters ruddering in their grainy light-impressed evidence  
of an already present but unacknowledged flight crescent handily educed from these hurtling forms*

The semi-ovate lens and its unwincing gesture of capture  
Avidly fingering all our available but hitherto unexploited potential parts and actions

Hardly mincing for herds in its ginger testimonials

Each consecutively adhesioned horse flesh silhouette threshing wildly upon its ground-glass casting-ground  
Collectively levering, in its revolutions, a previously unsuspected skepticism toward the human eye's proclivities

"One picture  
showed a horse..."

"...but six pictures showed an act, a motion, an event."

- Rebecca Solnit, *River of Shadows*

In his early and groundbreaking  
'Animal Motion'  
portfolios, Muybridge  
provides nine clear, and  
what he believes to be comprehensive, categories of creatural travel:

## from edward to eadward to eadweard

**1** the WALK, **2** the AMBLE, **3** the TROT, **4** the RACK, **5** the CANTER, **6** the TRANSVERSE GALLOP,  
**7** the ROTARY GALLOP, **8** the RICOCHET, and **9** the BUCK & KICK.

In the instance that certain feral figure's ambulatory tactics might fail to fit the tight taxonomical molds that  
Muybridge so stubbornly and painstakingly formulated for his designatory purposes (a schematic mode of scrutiny  
that was also regulatory in impact), the reader encounters in captions his lumbering disgruntlement:

I.E. "In series 20, we have an animal that apparently disregards the law governing the walk."

printing under the pseudonym **HELIOS**

Exhibiting an early sensitivity  
to instantaneity,  
Infatuated with creating instruments  
capable of seconding one

Muybridge admonishes:

Greeting each perceived lack of precision with abrasive derision

"The word 'spring' must not always be taken to imply a leap;

[Nor a too] convenient term to indicate the last impulse of a foot prior to its being lifted from the ground."



In Yosemite, where Muybridge photographed early on and widely,  
there are two, not to be confused, versions of abounding valleys found:

## the **U-shaped** glacial basins and the **V-shaped** stream-cut ones

Each recorded on what were referred to as the "MAMMOTH PLATES"

18 X 20 inch slats of glass whose

lasting pictorial deposits were activated in negative vis-à-vis a highly flammable syrup of gun cotton

and ether, either poured or dribbled over the vitreous panels.

A volatile-unto-silly pursuit of stillness.

Muybridge's own wrestlings with artistic systematicity, must by necessity,

be described as at a minimum 'complicated' by his sense of the hierarchy of species.

For at no point in his broad-ranging inquiries into muscular locutions, does Muybridge ever

attempt to encompass the options for human excitation within such vociferously confined

sets and fastened classes as he applied so unbendingly to his animal examples.

To the contrary, in these shots: *The woman carries a picture, the man leaps a chair, the boy doffs his hat, the crippled child crawls the length of a stone floor, the young girl dances a jig, the Olympian hurls a discus, the gentleman seats himself, the mischievous chap scoffs at his guardian whilst running away, and on and on.*

**So** arrives a rare persistency of vision formulated strictly in passing. Only intermittently visible through the slotted perforations of the zoopraxiscope's loping transmorgifications.

The fantastic tool itself merely an aggrandized spinning cake pedestal, wicklit and proudly stewing in its freshly sutured cinematic accoutrements.

Although positioned as an explosive new development in the field of mobile photography, the zoopraxiscope actually employed only hand-drafted ink or paint drawings.

While derived from the tricky light-burned images of the camera, its affixed strips were but manual mimics, elongated to accommodate the swift orbicular motions of the mechanism.

*'deformed' to appear 'truer' to reality*

Singularly unmoved by the distress of 'fidelity' mongers, and willing to avail himself of all manner of utilitarian manipulations,

Muybridge would frequently paste his own post-facto cloudscape from unconnected days and scenes

into his famous scenic panorama shots because the intense long exposure of the negative

meant to impeccably capture the geological minutiae of the inclined terrain, tended, contrariwise

to completely obliterate the sky.

Leaving only a heaving whiteness.

It is Eadward himself who serves as the lanky nude model for the single sequence 'Swinging a Pick.'

Preferring to stick to generalisms, its subject is identified simply as:

### **An Athlete.**

Pulling eagerly from his own regally textured cloud banks, Muybridge felt no mandate to mention the transplanted celestial 'otherness' of his wispy cusps to an audience.

A prefab stratospheric archive of miraculous cumulous spackled onto the pallid horizon. The very sun  
As 'doctored' as any fractured or decoupled hockjoint would need be.

Though to speak concretely,

*the blanched out 'original' wasn't particularly sight-echoing or accurate either*

Delighting in these quick-kiting idiosyncrasies of the visual experience:

"[...] Muybridge in some of his earliest landscape works seems to positively seek, of all things, waterfalls; long exposures of which produce images of a strange, ghostly substance, that is in fact the

tesseract of

water: what is

to be seen is

not the water

itself, but the

virtual

volume it

occupies during the whole time interval of the exposure. It is certain that Muybridge was not the first photographer to make such pictures; my point is that he seems to have been the first to accept the 'error', and then systematically, *to cherish it.*"

- Hollis Frampton, *Circles of Confusion*

**\*\*the rupturous bustle on film of rapturously falling water\*\***

*Dedicated to*

that crude osculum of unencumbered chums  
whose raring-to-share and flaring organs  
pan the temptress by delightful unkemptness

finning -as they do- the unmonitored way  
swarming a warmer and more aromal calling  
via their fantastically elastic faculties

catching me up -as they do- post-hoosgow  
yet glowing, refitted for flitting by dint  
of their glee-ringed and flossy shoots alone

an unpostponed feral barrel of daring  
a scintillant nub and jumble of asunderers

*whose thunder numbers each  
the indubitable cousin-in-kind  
to Christopher Smart's considered cat Jeoffry.*

*"For he is a[n] [exceeding] mixture of gravity and waggery"*

*"For by stroking of him I have found out electricity."*

*"For tho he cannot fly, he is an excellent clamberer"*

*For tho I cannot award them accordingly,  
my huzzas and hat-tips clip forward in unstripped longing,  
in admiration, toward those bodycaves of brave treasons  
my self gladly re-seasoned by their wee and jiggedy piracies*



Emily Abendroth is a writer and artist, alternately residing in the San Francisco Bay Area and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (where she co-curates the Moles Not Molar Reading Series with poet Justin Audia). Recent work of hers can be found in *Encyclopedia*, *Pocket Myths: The Odyssey Edition*, *horse less review*, and *Cut & Paste*. A chunky excerpt from her book-length work-in-progress "Muzzle Blast Dander" can be found in *Refuge/Refugee* (Volume 3 of the Chain Links book series).

Emily Abendroth designed and printed the cover of this book.

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