

Word For/Word

A Journal of New Writing

Issue 21, Winter 2013

www.wordforward.info

Word For/ Word is seeking poetry, prose, poetics, criticism, reviews, and visuals for upcoming issues. We read submissions year-round. Issue #22 is scheduled for July 2013. Please direct queries and submissions to:

Word For/ Word
c/o Jonathan Minton
546 Center Avenue
Weston, WV 26452

Submissions should be a reasonable length (i.e., 3 to 6 poems, or prose between 50 and 2000 words) and include a biographical note and publication history (or at least a friendly introduction), plus an SASE with appropriate postage for a reply. A brief statement regarding the process, praxis or parole of the submitted work is encouraged, but not required. Please allow one to three months for a response. We will consider simultaneous submissions, but please let us know if any portion of it is accepted elsewhere. We do not consider previously published work.

Email queries and submissions may be sent to: editors at wordforward dot info.

Email submissions should be attached as a single .doc, .rtf, .pdf or .txt file. Visuals should be attached individually as .jpg, .png, .gif, or .bmp files. Please include the word "submission" in the subject line of your email.

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Word For/ Word is open to all types of poetry, prose and visual art, but prefers innovative and post-avant work with an astute awareness of the materials, rhythms, trajectories and emerging forms of the contemporary. *Word For/ Word* is published biannually.

This issue of *Word For/ Word* was designed using Prototy (<http://www.prototype.com/>)

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ISSN 2159-8061

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Genevieve Kaplan

What would you like us to be

lovers? children? tall birds claiming
the uppermost branches. the bounty
littering the ground. where
would you like us to go? how would you
like us to attend? (call to ease, a shadow
pushing through the blossoms. imagining
the path) charming, cheerful, not hanging
much on the details (the bird uses its beak
to disconnect the flower. the petals flung
from the tree) (whole blooms of them, tossing
pink to the ground.) (living here, used up,
is very damaging.) (nothing has gotten
more beautiful) (unless it's a secret
entrance). (exit.)

To keep them in the dirt is by design

a scattering the leaves (like footsteps), the way I
had envisioned, I wouldn't be able to bite, underserved
(and gnawing), the chicken flapping on the roof, calling down
to me, not about to be alone at this (or actually paralyzed
by its motion). the sky turns white as if (as if a blind)
we could crouch and hide. peek out from
(the breeze) the mess of branches. it's a sleek
furtive wing that flies near. it wants to taunt, to get caught

you're from a far-off place, according to your eyes
and you'll never be able to name all the birds here
crumb of sunlight through the fence-slat and push of dust
against the patio. which is where we're at? sullen desert?
as big a yard as we could want? something near us
taking place? not about to let go? for this day
to be shorter than the rest. this this day to be easier
and far enough from what suffers us

That flat look at the naïve

and the gathering around was (the wires), the spit
on the ground, the fence so tall (the way it is) and now
encloses. as they look but don't want to describe
as their friends arrive. as a group of them
gathers squatting, rolling. so unbeautiful. not
so left behind, the lot, the fortunate sunset (how) (at that
hour). and would it matter, the dirt for growing, the asphalt
heating up. not so threatening, young man, the almost-shade
of the wisp-fence. in the not-quite of evening. spinning
(but controlled. departing with a close eye) a stained
fabric. a single-file walk (I follow behind. I look down)
(evenly) to the car. flat plane of a hand, outrageous
calm, smooth growth of the concrete. the fence stakes taller
even than the tallest broadest one. wires so thin they could be cut
(they could be *cut*) with what we brought

The pattern of their beating wings

the instinct is to hurry as the light fades
which is the pattern of their beating
the pattern (the arc) left behind by its beating
its proud head. it watches and it's shunned (it leaps
but can't fly) (footsteps and they all flew). one poses
on each branch, one keeps
its feet

Holding the sugar higher

the white reaching-up in the breeze, tiny hummingbird near the purples, for the bees to take, to grasp the sun (to shake it off), skittish by the passing of an orange machine, the greens hazing for what sounds here, for not a love not, as someone is always stepping. the bird comes back, the bee, the voices come along. am I alone here? no. (and the longer, the less so.)

the handkerchief flitting there, the surrender so the animal sounds, the machine, the human silence comes, they veer right or left (the wrong way), they find the dead end, the fence, the no-trespassing yard. and the wires so tall, crossed only by (birds) and they've stopped because they're so turned because of the spider webbing the slats of the bench. (and the machine doesn't care there, the sugar-field (beneath the squirrel-tree), all upturned saucers, all (church-going) bonnets, all the very hat upon my head, taller than my very shoulders. so the wrestling in the branches shifts their upright stance, (earthly) stoicism, their moon-gesture in the sunshine. the footfalls, the leaves on the ground, the machine choking up the path. the steps downward, cut into the hill and angled purposefully. and I am surrounded.)

Celia Bland

Rank Strangers

Underscore the rank leavings of
what outlasts flesh and blood.

Underscore the high lonesome
of my mother's agile hollering with
only heating the living room
plaster excreting mouse fur
moth-tufted chairs (more horsehair)
boxes left behind by previous inhabitants:
hand-carved shelves from Tuscaloosa,
tatted lace, beveled cartes visite of strange
pulchritudious women rigid in corsets.

Underscore the high lonesome of
fingers raining buttons snipped from
discarded clothes, buttons
pinned to skin-pale cards:
yellow ducks in sailor caps,
pearlized knobs in cookie tins.

Underscore the rank leavings of
what outlasts flesh and blood.

Maw's Maw's cedar closet:
dry cleaning plastic
a full slip and a girdle
flesh-colored stockings dangling four garters,
"nude" weave doubled at heel and toe.
Tissue kiss and a tar lipstick kiss.
Licking her thumb, every ten
in the clerk's palm.
Cash on the barrel.

Underscore the rank leavings.

"I've called two black ladies from out
the extension," my mother says.

"They pay \$100 for what
they can haul. They gonna come
with plastic bags.

Keep an eye on 'em."

But the high lonesome is in my eyes
as the ladies, appalled by our house-smell
of mange and its remedy, mold kisses,
turn up and I mutter,

"Take it," and sit on the warped porch as they
fill their van and finish by 2.

"God be with you," they say.

And also with you.

Underscore the rank leavings of
what outlasts flesh and blood.

Open a store with Maw Maw's haul.

Call it:

Read 'Em and Weep.

Madonna Bomb

There are no words to describe the way she hunches
belly resting on thigh, key turned on and she cannot
turn it off, working the brake with her other foot. It's hard to see
into the distance, sitting like that.

She drives a dichotomous street,
the blood flowing in and out, birth and death, every turn
leading to this line of Hummers, the check point
where she must slow.

They will not like her duct-tape mittens
(as if her hands were very cold)
and that she cannot roll
down the window with hands stuck at 10 and 2.

Is it very hot inside her womb as she moves
faster down the street we all travel?
Does she cry, "My God, my God!" or merely "Mary!"?

(She has ever eschewed the first person pronoun,
savoring "I" like phosphorescence.)

It's all the same, isn't it, whether she
was dead before or after impact?

Turn the eyes of your palms --
flaccid as the maws of lilies --
up to heaven. Look to those clouds.

What passes there casts shadows
and move towards you.



Madonna Bomb

Shamala Gallagher

Untitled (Night-Eyes)

room of windows
glittered with soapscum,

it will be over

.

.

.

calm yourself to look
into the blue pain

pain that builds a window
to itself

wheel of night-eyes

salt of unspeaking

it will be over

.

.

.

mile-wracked garden

wailing soaked hem at dusk

waiting nameless keeper of veins

it will be over

.
.

.
.

white winking
white perforation
bitten daymoons of nail

.
.
..
..
..

black gleaner

black coalless volt

.
..
....
..
.

fluke of the body,
straw flute

it will be over

Notes in Lieu of Sleep

awake means
you live in a blank
field where fear
flowers like empty
palms. teenager,
midnight, I'd sneak
onto the null suburb
roads in my
parents' car.
no one muttered
anything. safe
means no one
can bring you
the news

if one day a sudden
bad thing flowers
from my vein I will
have been awaiting
it for years. staring
into my skin, waiting
and thinking of poison
in the red hollow

if you look quick
and sideways
at a cat eye
you can see
through. clear
through to
nothing. alone
in the house
I start to doubt
the maker of
people: all
warped and
scraped early,
nudged up
into twisting
stalks and
tangled with
other stalks
and then
ripped out
eyes grow open around
me in the heat. mine
echotalk of self to self
look we fought our way through the bland
dust tunnels of the past
to get here. now we are always here

once we walked
through the nighthead
black creak of crickets
the night breakably rare

Spoken to No One Present

thinking of
you

in the
shaking

I seemed

night

a poor
excuse

so I grew a tooth
 in the

seed
of my throat

gentle freak

with the

skin of crushed
 dark petals

scarlet
thief

I wanted
to own

the dark theater

and the crumbs
of silver
paper

in the
aisle

but this is all
they would leave me

here

boor

who waits
near the

caving of
others

come touch

the small
of my back

jester I met

in the alleys
of worry

you stole

my glasses

I have

a weak mind

couldn't look

at the face

of the storm

days you wake

and are

worthless

who else

would
wait there
like that

who else

in the umber

ploy of breathing

I pound at
your door

you are
with
someone

else drunk and
unraveled

how many years
to make
checkmarks

for the
shame of

wanting

but I

want it still

Substance of Questions

I hope you still want me
white ache in the orchid

slim-limbed bugs stalking elsewhere
want me still I need it
white bone I held to the light

others will come after
and so much in the world still
but no one left anymore

in the pinegreen waste of thought
no trash I have left
not the speaking green fountain

from the other place
just the rainshaken house

I hope you still want me
who looks out of the world still
bare ones who were other than this

white ache now the flower shrivels
why you shrink to yourself

all the white scraps of thinking
blank who knows how to speak

no one in the pinegreen waste
of remembering no one

in the rattled grit from
the leaving machine
others were always staring

still the rainshaken dusk
do you want me still

Anne Gorrick

Desire

She wanted to break up with him so she could shag the quarterback
He wanted to get caught
They wanted to give their shadows back, but they were still obese

She wanted to be a coyote
He wanted to play Captain America
They wanted to label gays as a hate group, but they won't have any help

She wanted to learn how to read a teleprompter
He wanted to die with his family
They wanted to keep it quiet, but then they did something like a bewildered herd

She wanted to eat his heart and be lost in the desert
He wanted to beat up some long-haired hippies
They wanted to read thousands of words to each other, but they're not Lady Gaga

She wanted to avoid looking too "Hebrew"
He wanted to be just like Bruce Lee
They wanted to donate harmonicas to underprivileged children in various countries, but they're not indestructible

She wanted to be a stripper when she grew up, just like daddy's girlfriend
He wanted to wake up and smell the earthy musk of manure, hear the whinny of a pony. Not just any pony. A prize pony
They wanted to cling, but there was nothing to cling to, and that was unfortunate for them, but they still want you to watch

She wanted to review his attendance record, grade book, anecdotal records, etc.
He wanted to see who Jesus was, but being a short man he could not, because of the crowd
They wanted to live in a rich neighborhood, but they also fear it

She wanted to pay in cash
He wanted to fry her in Crisco
They wanted to defeat Russia, but they also want to be better navigators

She wanted to practice French vocabulary

He wanted to be the king of condom key chains, but there are some things they just don't teach you at Harvard Business School

They wanted their bank to accept as little as 40 cents on the dollar, but they all come back eventually to face the challenges of prisoner reentry

She wanted to update her status

He wanted to suck her blood

They wanted to remain over water as they prepared for landing, but they are rarely heard

She wanted to claim his body with her feet and toes

He wanted to be a clown, but his dad wanted him to be an astronaut

They wanted to be well cared for and understood, but they looked like they were wearing sneakers

She wanted to come to the aid of a library under attack

He wanted to hide his chest pains

They wanted to repeat a romantic moment in time, but they have a lot of loser qualities

She wanted to be a prophet

He wanted to hold her hand

They wanted to look like characters on TV, but they're not big sellers

She wanted to lose her virginity next to the Hadron Collider

He wanted to justify himself

They wanted to recreate the Garden of Eden. They knew they couldn't do it in Chicago, but they deserve better

She wanted to repaint her car entirely in nail polish

He wanted to cut AIDS funding

They wanted to carve a scary pumpkin, but they're looking for more

She wanted to hang onion rings on his penis and eat them

He wanted to take a 'step back'

They wanted to think and imagine and to walk until they forgot things, but they don't love paying for it

She wanted to know what it felt like to kill another human

He wanted to be together all the time

They wanted to sell the van, but it's as necessary for reading the news as glasses

She wanted to be answer candidly

He wanted to control "the timing and manner" in which his son learned about "adult themes"

They wanted to obtain automatic weapons, but they will never forget how you made them feel

She wanted to feed Bill Clinton a peach

He wanted to set the record straight because he initially told police after his arrest in April last year that he didn't have a tattoo

They wanted to scare themselves, but decided they're not for eating

She wanted to be burnt

He wanted to karaoke on their first date

They wanted to mount a full-court press, but they often miss the mark in the honesty department

She wanted to make Bollywood films

He wanted to distinguish between good and bad

They wanted to, but not because they felt pressured or obligated to

She wanted to speak cow, especially when they lay in sunshine on the distant hill beyond the oil well

He wanted to dig up Jane Austen and beat her

They wanted to have a wet tee shirt contest, but that won't solve all ills

Translate this sentence: "She wanted to give him a big party last night" using the indirect object

He wanted to introduce 100,000 electric cars to the capital

They wanted to write a fugue, but they're not actively pursuing it

She wanted to purchase tombstones for her grandchildren

He wanted to create a happy face pattern on the lawn

They wanted to do a better job of cleaning, but they also want to be entertained

She didn't know if she wanted to be large or small

He wanted to draw in her Moleskine

They wanted to change the order of things, but they still have an ugly Swiss franc problem

She wanted to sue God

He wanted to be pen pals

They wanted to leave prostitution, but they're genetic disasters

She wanted to be both original and 3D

He wanted to be a rabbi and play King Lear

They wanted to dictate text to each other during the night, but also host potent mold

She wanted to off the lawyer's wife

He wanted to spend more time with his family and not hurt himself

They wanted to recreate Greece, but they shouldn't

She wanted to cut it off

He wanted to spin

They wanted to see how that affected the spread of disease, but they kept quiet

She wanted to emulate a pop star's worldwide success

He wanted to end her suffering

They wanted to break away from the Ohio Public Employees Retirement System, but they won't

She wanted to shout at least once in her life

He wanted to eat his opponent's kids

They wanted to, but they can't stay awake

She wanted to do something "incredibly different"

He wanted to be the assassin AND a likable team player

They wanted to cash out, but they can still measure rain

She wanted to get arrested

He wanted to butter her pancake

They wanted to play flashlight tag, but they should calm down

She wanted to determine if nests of rainforest birds located closest to the trunk were safer from predators than those located on the outer bark

He wanted foot love

They wanted to provoke an international incident, but they'd feel it

She wanted to escape from 16th century ideals of womanhood

He wanted to swap his guilt-inducing Catholic upbringing for an observant Jewish mid-adulthood

They wanted to draw attention to the latest restriction on their liberty, but they're no Sinatra

She wanted to be a farmer instead of a piece of agricultural equipment

He wanted to kiss her fiercely, but the beer made him shy

They wanted to provide cover for their moves, but they make poor conversationalists

She wanted to lick lick lick lick him like a lollipop lol oshit

He wanted to be upright for his own wake

They wanted to, but not because they had an artificial deadline to reach

She wanted to cuddle after giving him a handjob

He wanted to go to Disneyland

They wanted to play live without the difficulties of touring, but still piss behind the door

She wanted to ride with him on Flickriver

He wanted to account for the significant use of negators by depressed patients in free speech

They wanted to go back on the gold standard, but they still charge extra

She wanted to botox their kid's face

He wanted to kill the "generals" of the liberal movement

They wanted to build their congregations, but they can also be so annoying

She wanted to see what it would be like to live in this little rock star fantasy world

He wanted to be a good security guard and look after her, but the situation became unbearable

They wanted to add new items to their menu, but they offer scant protection

She wanted to stash quarters in her room

He wanted to create "echoes realer / than originals"

They wanted to know if John Wayne was really bald, but they throw around the word "love" like it's nothing

She wanted to blurt out an apology

He wanted to take his son into a Japanese sex shop

They wanted to know both the good AND the bad of Facebook, but they want their borders secure

She wanted to write about sex but not from jail

He wanted to do something similar that would further stir public interest in astronomy

They wanted an increase of 12%, but they're not saints

They wanted to consolidate and reduce packaging because that is good for the environment

Sleep Like

He sleeps like a Christian
She sleeps about 10% of the time under the front porch
They sleep like blueprints

He sleeps like an inanimate object
She sleeps like she put vodka in the babys milk
They sleep like clichés

He sleeps like classic rock
She sleeps like a bride
They sleep like gray whales

He sleeps like Tolstoy
She sleeps like a rock on a jade pillow
They sleep like they leak at both ends

He sleeps like he burns up with drunken badness
She sleeps like a schizophrenic angel
They sleep like a parody of the Pope

He sleeps like an aerospace industry
She sleeps like those devoid of fame
They sleep like Grey's Anatomy

He sleeps like a maltese crossed with a bijon
She sleeps like a disorder
They sleep like they did when they were younger

He sleeps like a fireman with his pants in his boots beside his bed
She sleeps like an amateur
They sleep like some drunk groupie staring at Jon Bon Jovi

He sleeps like a soldier
She sleeps like a small wild animal
They sleep like motivational wisdom

He sleeps like the economy
She sleeps like adverb phrases that modify noun phrases
They sleep like French women who don't get fat

He sleeps like a hare with his eyes open
She sleeps like Hunter Thompson
They sleep like the state of Missouri

"Some say he has nipples in the shape of the Nurburgring" or " He sleeps like a bat"
She sleeps like travel
They sleep like little brown billiard balls

He sleeps like he's made of concrete
She sleeps like Brooklyn
They sleep like starfish

He sleeps like a frog laying with his hind legs straight out behind him
She sleeps like a modern allegory
They sleep like proverbs

He sleeps like a marmot
She sleeps like charm
They sleep like the Atlantic Monthly

He sleeps like a rotting corpse
She sleeps in serene psychosis
They sleep like a Maoist attack

He sleeps like a porpoise
She sleeps like homeopathy
They sleep like a Broadway show

He sleeps like a normal parrot
She sleeps like a growth spurt
They sleep like a paid-off mortgage

He sleeps like there are 56 hours in the day
She sleeps like defiance
They sleep like the definitive guide to sleep

He sleeps like a buried stone
She sleeps like a cyclone
They sleep like risky and thoughtless behavior

He sleeps like an alcoholic boyfriend
She sleeps like that episode of the Brady Bunch

They sleep like murder victims

He sleeps like he's got something to prove

She sleeps like a Japanese dream

They sleep like boulders

He sleeps like an unknowable place

She sleeps like no other

They sleep like in-laws

He sleeps like an angel factory

She sleeps like nothing happened

They sleep like a rhino under a tree

He sleeps like Roger Federer

She sleeps like a vampire with her hands across her chest.

They sleep like greeting cards

He sleeps like his sleep style has been decoded

She sleeps like a flowered pink afghan

They sleep like St. Francis

He sleeps like he has time to jot down cute and interesting things

She sleeps like his chagrin

They sleep like their sleepless mate knows how they sleep

He sleeps like this once in a while: his tongue will actually dry out

She sleeps like a corpse, he says, but she's so beautiful. He unbuckles his pants. She's horrified: Senor Doug! What are you doing?

They sleep practically perfect in every way

He sleeps like a king in the middle of the bed all stretched out

She sleeps like his bloodmate

They sleep like badgers

He sleeps like Risperidone

She sleeps like a summer vacation

They sleep like their body demands

He sleeps like he knows the abuse he heaps on his underlings

She sleeps like a scar healing testimonial

They sleep like mammals despite independent evolutionary lines

He sleeps like festivals are important to him
She sleeps like a dominating narcissist
They sleep like they have ecological relevance

He sleeps like his life depends on it but go ahead and try to fight him
She sleeps like an angel that wakes up screaming in the night
Of course they sleep like that. They're fish

He sleeps like the hinge of Africa
She sleeps like a pig (jokingly), as her Chinese sign is a pig
They sleep like masks

He sleeps like a Cuban refugee
She sleeps like this during the day to mock us
They sleep like asthma patients

He sleeps like he's going through a break-up
She sleeps like critical analysis
They sleep like real inmates do with one blanket and no pillow

He sleeps like the shutter sound on a camera
She sleeps like a carcass believing that nothing disturbs the dead
They sleep like crap, eat like crap, and train like crap. They play video games till midnight

He sleeps like a great white shark trying to break into Jacques Cousteau's sharkproof cage
She sleeps like five examples of sentences
They sleep like analogies and similes

He sleeps like Ottawa
She sleeps like an almanac
They sleep like they are camera shy

She sleeps like a baby dragon on her massive pile of pharma money
They sleep like logs when they are supposed to perform
They sleep like cliques and whispers

When he sleeps like that, he looks like an iguana with wings
She sleeps like related rhetorical elements
They sleep like winter

He sleeps like a saint in a holy place

She sleeps like John Updike on those green pills
They sleep like it's spa day

He sleeps like this, and awakens in emotional terror when he finds his own arm has reattached itself
She sleeps like death, dreams of bees, honey, light and shadow, gold
They sleep like potheads after an all-night session

He sleeps like animation
She sleeps like dropping a letter into a mailbox
They sleep like crime

Adam Fagin



Those who simply climb to the peak of Monadnock have seen but little of the mountain. I came not to look off from it but to look at it.

Henry David Thoreau

What the world needs is some proof that man can see without taking.

Abbott Handerson Thayer

When I Look

a dawn
no hylode dreams
a yes or no

has of brightness
(the sun)

(the sun)
a sparrow

I now remember

an acre of

cheek bones
imparting to

leaves a hush
a passing thought

of the ravine—

robins everywhere—
don't answer

hands now

have a citizen

red may be true
red, viewed scarlet

the stable
become fluid—

and the sonorous
next morning

beyond this I
extends continuous

bright across its listening

Mort Bleu

whose deep
eyes come

'tween rock
a hollow rose

to eat
coolness
of death—

drifting through
the Gap Monad-
nock—

no angel moves
in the mountain
less west—and east—

I see a child
I heard once

the lost return—
over ridge and slope—

the sun, the spruce
and clover—the sun,
a meadow, pastures

where the child
stood—

I swallow
‘neath a hem
of moon

baby’s breath and root-
like shadow

* *

Eryn Green

Here to spread light on

“Joy is what I like,/ That, and love.”
--Ted Berrigan

The lights turn the ceiling on

into goldleaf--all of them, makes me

a messenger--*each*

of these trees is amazing. I see

branches arc lightning, Lionel Messi on tv

and am convinced

he will always be perfect--that bravery

is a girl at the bar

that could not look brighter. I ignore

only as much as I can handle--no such thing

as *more* perfect. We don't fall in love

just to cling--we open

all the windows. I had wanted to show you

before--a new lane of music

and walking off into the kitchen after. The sun

is fast laughter--long enough

to watch the window change

into lingering street bells--*meant*

never to die--map only and archive

Arcady, the future, etc--brighter than

our mistakes. Like Prospero

said, no harm done. No drowning mark

upon my soul. Bicycles just

heavens I hadn't seen--a whole

new planet orbiting. Literally

under orchids

fragrant in the moonlight--that noise

small white petals in the street--one star

orchard

Door The Heart

Big guns again: no speakee
indeed. Moonmoth
and grasshopper still escape our page
while distraction, with its big black dog
the horizon begs—
Because we are upstarts
we are heaven. Because we pass with wings
in the hand. Moonstruck and grass-led
I dreamt all men dropped something
a little like their heart
everyday O their passing
sang

Sedes

String lights strewn across

the underside of a still glass white

wedding tent--*that this*

isn't easy for me doesn't mean it isn't easy--a seat from which
to enter the world--thin rows of desert

flowers not giving up
red dirt stalks

all grown up

to light. They don't know how to go backwards, don't know
why even try--

.....

As much as you wish

we could be
a seat from which
with all the bravery
of Ely or Levi, or any
other angels of my
clear lillynight sky
we can be--I know
how much Hanna and the sea
changed me. The truth is green
things never really die--I
calm down at the sight. I don't
understand protest songs
in the street but know sky blue wool
with my grandmother is beautiful
in Israel--I let go, open up to
tantivy on rooftops, awake
as my name might mean, bent
down branch under tender
everything, so relax--
We go over the cliffs at last

Rebecca Farivar

Awake

It's morning
in Europe
and I'm dead.
Bury me
crouching
facing east
ready to
leap. I move
so I don't
have to think.

Rune Stones

I'm getting a tattoo of runes
on the inside of my arm.

It will read:
This is Rebecca's arm.

It will work, too:
Eventually the Danes

found that ancient woman
murdered in the bog.

The Worst

When I focus I can feel--
honestly *feel*--what it's like
to burn alive. No one wants
to hear about it. I imagine
at a certain point you must
pass out. But before that
think *this is the worst case*.
Everyone keeps telling me
to see a therapist. They just don't
want to talk. There are so many
ways you could burn. Most likely
in a car wreck. That's why I feel
it most when driving, and then
I need to breath, calm down,
think of peaceful things
like noodles.

Inaudible Morning

Clouds now hold what matters.
It is the end of rain.

I carry an umbrella. Men look
at me and say, machines now

make the clouds, and they
are dark and gathered.

New emotions begin today.
Strange, it sounds the same.

Kevin McLellan

Faux Republique

my blood is irritable
or rather these

contaminated words:
will not speak:

your mouth
a rictus of pain:

lineaments surface
as if for ablution

in the wake
of this morning:

we built
a cardboard village

A man called one field

Remnants of a sentence: evidence
of a missing feeling: my fleeting
shadow: the smell of these trampled
dandelions: I place bitter stem to tongue:
blow the snow flower away

and make a wish: and like the succession
of the alphabet we are connected:
but where is he: I ask
because my mouth no longer quivers
around the letter O.

Morning, Morning

All the closed doors. Men
do not enter. Where is
the doorknob? Waist high.

All men have been
distant. This. Where is

my body? Shapeless

distances near. Shapeless
distances are next to

my heart. All mornings

confirm this. All birds
outside my window.

Itinerary

i. THE CAPTURE

happens after desire

goes full tilt full
circle goes past

desperation after

a stranger comes
and offers

bulls eyes and arrows
and imperfection

ii. THE ENCOUNTER

a hunter and the hunted one
picnic on fruit salad

on both borders of say Niagara Falls

and "We" and
for worse territories

ripen alongside better ones

iii. THE SEQUEL

a mouth

a half moon
where an astronaut
refuses to land

a tongue
where one hundred thousand craters
hold an inarticulate

an age old secret
lurks and whirs
but meanwhile an outside force
say a breeze
intensifies slightly
intermittently

Parse

In a constant state of impend
you believe you're prophetic
but everyone dies:

you thwart by lionizing Halcyon
when you've only read about
the gamut of personal detritus
known by a certain few as parallax:

if you're able to recognize
from the outside in
you can either visit or pan for gold:

Geoffrey Babbitt

An Own Place

When the mind knows a place, the sense perceptions it can elicit become familiar on a level beneath reflective awareness. Known intimately enough, any particular can be as unthought of as one's own heartbeat.

The wooden sign that Rev. Hightower once worked bits of broken glass into so it'd glitter under the street lamp becomes, over time, a familiar low oblong shape without any significance at all, low at the street end of the shallow lawn. Unremembered because known.

Before knowledge evinces itself through forgetting, perceptions flood. Attention holds them up to light. The light that attention holds them up to is always changing. The eye passively receives, or else it reaches.

But the senses do not go all the way. Beyond them Neptune shakes the walls and Little Infants creep out of the flowery mould into the Green fields of the blessed.

Poetry and prayer are similar ways of acknowledging mysteriousness.

The Greeks would have used "τόπος" to refer to both a place and a passage of an author.

Places' auras are central facts--
impenetrable, unpinnable

--the mind--a meadow--Gloucester--California

*how unlike! lowest deep a lower deep
eternal pasture folded in all thought
complex of occasions, geometry
of a spatial nature with / the grace of an / orange, one can
run / over water*

There is an unnamable other side to what the plot of land's name or description can designate.

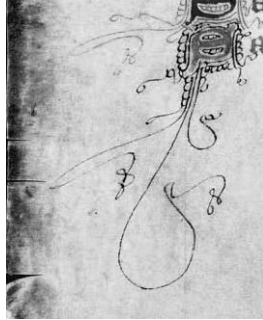
It's redundant to say heaven is without margins.

The gravel slope turns ankles running toward parents' cars by the M&W.

Any place--island or page--leaves behind a trace of something unnamable.

The plot is collaboration.

Bottom Left Corner of Parchment Leaf from an Anglo-Norman Litany of Saints in a French Book of Hours, ca. 1375



vines scritch'd, chrysalis
onto vellum leaf--all
color lost, stolen thunder
--spiritual curl
of the vine
tending ult-
imately toward--tattered edge
curling away from the gutter's
pull--*ex verso--orate pro nobis*
-- burnished *golden* thetal "S"
--blackblue vines clustered, berried,
beaded about--armor
for the letter--arc of the part
signature, part -scape--*locus amoenus*--
Mopsus' cave's vine,
its tendrils round
with clustering flowers
--idle idyll--
appreciable superfluity occasions pleasure--
who Augustine--
who gets extra time

Codex

strewn border a trace of
the arc of the page--a form
of play, of prayer
fire-calling away--idle
and so are the flowers--"τόπος" means
god from untilled earth
--attention holds
lower idle light--I rest
on this island as a seeing finger
upon a page--the sun
unlocks light in
the text--a trace strewn
unnamable--place holds
the messianic child to the first frost,
street lamp, pasture--

Office of the Dead, from *Officium Beatae Mariae Virginis*, Made for Pope Leo X (Giovanni de' Medici), ca. 1513-1521

The Office of the Dead is one of the final sections in a Book of Hours, usually coming directly before the Suffrages of the Saints, which tends to be last. In Pope Leo X's, however, it is prioritized in an uncharacteristic position at the forefront. It comes second--directly after the liturgy for the Office of Matins on Christmas.

An illustration of Lazarus often decorates the verso folio before the Office begins on the opposite recto. Here, Pope Leo X's name is on a decorative shield beneath Lazarus. Does Leo identify with Lazarus as Death directs his eyeless stare across the gutter?



binding in green velvet
with metal clasp--a garment
for wealth spent--the elect are sent
by fire--the name
whole, defensive--archeological
posture, pastor gilded conjure
eye returns tooth--
upon his arms
a new transport--why flower
thunders--aureoles
purpose forth books--leaf upon
his sacramental duality
--rise, rise, reap, reap

Kalends

late 15th century French Book of Hours--
Kalends, gilded "KL" in a brick-red, two-line tall box
important feasts rubricated--hence "red-letter days"
labors of the month above the calendar, zodiac sign scene below

Februarius: a peasant warming his feet by fire, another bringing in wood--a man fishing for two fish
in a lake

Maius: rider with his lady on horseback, two attendants--twins with a shield

Augustus: three men thrashing wheat--two virgins holding staffs of wheat

September: a man bringing a full basket to another treading grapes--a girl holding scales

and so forth

Books of Hours have a bent for the pastoral
even foliate bar borders can conjure an elsewhere
sprays of acanthus--stylized fleshy fronds--delicate rinceaux--ivy--in Virgil's fourth eclogue's
prophecy of the Golden Age's return, nature pays spontaneous homage to the messianic child by
abundantly producing acanthus and ivy

Flemish strewn borders tempt the reader to pick flora up off the page

in order to discuss preferences with the bookshop keeper, a customer wanting to commission a Book
of Hours might open a second-hand manuscript to a rural scene very different from the bookshop's
urban setting



illuminations transport

Illustration of the Trinity, from a French Book of Hours, ca. 1500



a petal on a still new page--sadness
of numb lips under an unfocused
gaze--song in the next room
that will change you--looking
back, when the two looks meet,
awe-terror--instead of
constellations, full forms
in the sky--robust, heaving--
vibrantly pulsing bear, scorpion, archer,
trinity--some mysterious, reasoning thing
puts forth the mouldings
of its features from behind
an unreasoning mask

Thomas Hibbard

Emil Nolde: Journey In Black



The Marcia and Granvil Specks Collection of 200 German Expressionist regularly changing prints includes a lithograph on woven paper by Emil Nolde titled *Church and Boat, Sonderburg, 1907*. The work is three-colored—blank, ochre and black. Similar to other Nolde works from the same time, it seems to portray an ordinary perhaps grey day with the angular light of sunset highlighting city shapes in starkly contrasting sky and shadow. What is notable about this particular work is that the main subjects of the painting—“church and boat” along with their reflection in the glassy harbor—are blended rather imperfectly, disconsolately into one single indistinct black area that is the dominant image of the painting.

Exhibited as it is with other high contrast black-and-white works by artists such as Erich Heckel, Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, Lyonel Feininger, Max Beckmann, Kathe Kolwitz, George Grosz and many others, the large black area in the Nolde painting seems an invitation for close examination.

We begin in our “field,” our “scene of writing” which is creation—our space of making-the-painting in a primary area of murky blackness that, in my view, because it depicts no internal shapes or formal logic, and, indeed, fails even to be strictly opaque, must be described as improper, off-limits—a horror engulfing the artist's vision and the artist himself. What is the cause of this horror, this hallucination of time and totality we do not know. Perhaps it has no cause other than the artist's own anguish or inability. All we have to go on is the title of the painting, “church and boat.” The horror, the “crime” which so disturbs the setting in its implicit wholeness and naturalness, what Roland Barthes calls its

“largest possible plural” is one that not only has affected the community of Sonderburg, but the artist and his endeavor also. We have a church—a source of spiritual teachings; a boat—the means of sea travel—melded into one image. And we have the artist attempting to paint, to elucidate what is before him. The symbolism of a spiritual journey or voyage—one that doesn't necessarily entail leaving the harbor or the city of Sonderburg, one that doesn't necessarily take place on an inclement stormy day—seems obvious. All that's literally recognizable in the painting is a church steeple.

The artwork is no longer able to take place. The artist is silenced. The artist and the city have become alienated from painting, from illumination, that is, from themselves. Tranquility, of origin, of structure, of system, has turned into a disturbing monstrous unknown. Community is structurally locked out. In Nolde's provisional painting, this work of protest that he has, in conscience, against all artistic standards, shifted course, embarked upon and given us anyway, structure is negated. Perhaps it is an economic structure. Perhaps it is the artist's connection with the community that is broken. For artist, possibly for the community also, no images are resolved. There is no indication of closure, no finitude. In this way, the spiritual journey--across the troubled seas of Antithesis—of the artist and the



community has begun. As Barthes describes it, “the symbolic adventure of the hero, sculptor or narrator.” (1)

The journey is a discourse; the discourse is a journey. Tranquil everyday-ness has disappeared, has been lost. There are no relationships, no signifier or signified. The subject has become a sign. There is an “unlimited envelopment of the present.” “Difference” and “spacing” are “abolished.” The journey, the unresolved blackness is an obscure dream forshadowing a recovered, reconfigured reality of the future. The shapeless black area will become a new object for the community, a new color for mankind. It will result in a new text for humanity, already written. The end of the discourse, the adventure, the journey will be a rejoining, an identity, a rediscovering of origin. “From infinite indetermination [the artist will have passed] to infinite determination.” (2)

In the MAM online introduction to the Specks collection is the statement:



The Expressionists launched their careers against a background of social unrest and political turmoil. Observing and commenting upon the modern world in which they lived, they produced incisive self-portraits, chaotic urban scenes, joyous landscapes and harsh images of war. Their techniques were as varied as their themes, revealing the hand as well as the mind and soul of the artist.

Also exerting strong pressure on German Expressionism were the startling theories put forth at that time in German science.

The reality of Impressionism is actuality. German Expressionism is based on improbable ideas and observations, even opinions of the artists. Expressionism is an investigation and an interrogation. The realism of German Expressionism is *in the artists' ideas about reality*. In an experimental realm, Expressionist painters attempt to portray fundamental properties and laws of the universe. They perceive an order in which—because of individuality, subjectivity, the infinite—the grass could be blue, the buildings of a city could be every color of the rainbow.

One of the remarkable things about German Expressionist painting is that, though the height of the movement took place before World War I, the paintings are filled with themes relating to the holocaust of World War II. Human figures are portrayed with a prodding desperate, last-gasp hope for their worthiness. Expressionist exhibits often contain religious works, showing Christ crucified, his sad face worn from abuse. Perhaps Nolde is portraying the city of Sonderburg as it appears condemned by Mankind.

Expressionism experimented with temporality—the past, the future, the moment of the present, the end of time. Simple subject matter—a river, a house, a girl with her doll—the substantiveness of these were often used as symbols of permanence. German Expressionism painted permanence outside of time—what it described as “eternal values.”



One of those eternal values is the spiritual journey that Nolde depicted in his print (one of 29 originals). Proceeding through the rooms of later art movements, the shapeless black area of Nolde and of German Expressionism, this would-be “splotch” or “spill,” this

“black mark” of responsibility on the philosophical landscape and horizon of Mankind, reappears in subsequent artworks like a beacon. In the Modernist works of the 20th Century, one is able to recognize again and again Nolde's black splotch of entanglement, loss, dark uncertainty and spiritual exploration. For many works it is a starting point and for American Expressionists it sometimes comprised entire paintings.

Hans Hoffman's color compositions are balanced with black low points. Pierre Soulages *Composiiton* from 1956 consists of a series of black building blocks ascending and decending in rectangular space. Fritz Winter's *Black Action* with black, white and red swatches retells progress in a modern city. Willi Baumeister's abstract cityscape is a mixture of black and lighter colors. Robert Motherwell's series of Jackson Pollack-like splashes of black ink on empty white canvas portrays the irretrievalbe temporality, without hiding errant drips, the crashing uncontrolled yet recurring shapes in the first instant of the unknowable medium that is the universe. It is the original sin, the original black mark. the most heinous disconnect of all—God's creation of humanity.

Notes

1. *S/Z*. Roland Barthes, Hill and Wang, New York, 1974, p. 215
2. *Writing and Difference*, Jacques Derrida, Tr. Allen Bass, Univ. of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1978, p.275.

William Cordeiro

Absolute Difference: Peter Gizzi's *Threshold Songs*

(Wesleyan University Press, 2011)

Wanting life

And getting it

—Michael Gizzi

Peter Gizzi's fifth full-length collection of poems, *Threshold Songs*, explores an edge-sheened shadowscape inhabited by undersongs and voice overs, in which one thing is always passing into another, passing for something it's not, and ultimately passing away. Within this twilight and twittering headspace, we hear an echolalia of the everyday—the gnarl and guff, the pop and whizz—that allows us to triangulate a proximal locus through inner sonar and outward soundings. The call-and-response of these poems seems to register the humdrum of a mental static: “I wonder if / you hear me / I mean I talk / to myself through you” (1) the book's first poem declares. The poems are elegiac callings to the dead, who yet are “everyway alive” (41) as the grain of a dissonant voice within oneself, even as each self is composed (and decomposed) of others. The “you” is also the “I”; the addressee is likewise the speaker, both personal and impersonal, anonymous reader and intimate loved one, and all have been implicated in underwriting the text's overtones. Singed and singing, through the live wire of these poems the dead are quickened and the distant made close.

The book is dedicated to three guiding spirits, “called back”: Gizzi's mother, close friend and artist Robert Seydel, and his brother Michael, also a poet, all of whom died in quick succession. Such is the brain-enfolded darkness, the wave-pulsed electric storm, wherein “you ride the current with your head . . . birdsong caught in the inner ear” (47). The voices in this collection are thrown in an effort to delay the “thrownness” of the world. “And where does / the voice / come from?” Gizzi asks (84). The voices here seem to arise from subliminal babble, posthumous murmurs, or unconscious articulations of thought that shape one's breathing: they are deeply private yet simultaneously public and historical since for Gizzi the lyric self is conducted by voices from the past, whether companions known personally or absorbed from the literary tradition. The air—the airs—the arias—tremble with outbreaks of leavening light, each moonwashed or laceworked silhouette put in relief by a sudden, unexpected flash of insight or resemblance backdropped by a vacancy of weather, history's windswept cloud-puzzles riddled or rizzled away where their boundaries have become obscured.

The lines between things are always frangible, always breaking down, even as the syntactically fragmented poetic lines themselves display a surprising tensile strength: “this line from cloud dander to the solo bulb of morning, a string through common prayer. . . when the grey-green shadows suddenly dayglo over the rushes” (53). Intransigent, rush-hour bleepings and the ubiquitous mizzle of gizmo-bots

constitute the noise of these poems, their dawdle and dander, amid a setting where a dingy bulb may substitute for the sun inside a giant big box store—or the black box of one's own thoughts. Nonetheless for being evermore littered with sonic fuzz, the poems manage to find loopholes in our feedback loops. Gizzi writes on a flattened, pitchy frequency where the self is lost within its environment, identities bleed into their context, meanings dissipate to signs, signs to things, things to mirage, mirage to the self again, which has already faded to a tremulous, atramentous memory; though, of course, memory is nothing, except a dim “archival light,” (15) a fritter to shuffle and fray amid this orphic “gaslit underworld” (72).

Yet, that “string of common prayer” provides one noiseless patient spider's thread, a strand in a textual network, a rosary, or perhaps just the connection of some tin-can telephone: prayer acts as a binding force despite—or even because of—the fact that it's never answered. It provides a belated asymptote toward which we can direct and voice our immortal desires as well as an event horizon beyond which there is no enlightenment or knowing. Since “the space inside is vast,” (9) prayers boomerang—just as “all time is booming,” (21) at once big bang and apocalypse—among the vaults of the head's cathedral. Gizzi sends such mumbled devotions toward the deceased (of which god is merely one) as “if [he] had a prayer,” (23) but they ricochet back as what Emerson famously deemed “our own rejected thoughts,” haunting us with their alienated grandeur. Thus amplified, the subvocalized chatter we daily shush shines out and “errs forth” (44). The hype and static of these disparate voices finally redounds to form a hypostasis of different persons united in one, a chorus within the solitary singer.

In issuing his hopes outwardly only to have them reverb back in interference patterns, Gizzi may believe that communication is not possible, but that we still have an imperative to act as if it were. The most critical of us inevitably have a will to “misunderstand, to fail at empathy and love, to not understand love and to love, to be diseverything and to love” (55). The very hope we want to communicate is its own motivation for us to continue voicing it, even if we have no other place to whisper our secret hopes except the void. In the last words of his “apocryphal” will, Gizzi writes: “To mercy I leave whatever,” (55) an acknowledgement that any exchange requires an interlocutor's mercy to translate its cipher, and so the work of inheritance will always be to make what's given one's own. Through such convolutions and turnings we may have recourse to a “homing” (47), where we find our place—by resisting our groundwork and thereby creating a dwelling—in some larger tradition, some relayed handing-on that is yet not ready-to-hand.

But on a more homey if *unheimlich* level, we're trapped inside a bubble, a snow globe in fact, watching the “snow channel, and it's snowing” (11), with “this again, the emptied anthem, dusty antlers, pilsner flattened” (9). The beer isn't the only thing that's flat in these poems. The language affects the monochromatic compression of the cubists, fracturing and flattening its space in order to reveal jarring juxtapositions. It is filled with vague “something's” and “whatever's,” phrases that float about with little demonstrable significance. The flat, at times almost flatulent, style, however, allows the dull background to stand out. The flat lines take us near the bone, and thus vivify us. The most fleeting, far-gone impressions can be disclosed amid a heightened sensitivity to our thresholds of experience. If occasionally these tone poems feel like a symphony for dog-whistles, our ears eventually adjust to the gradations and each thought seems dogged by its shadow. In this sense, a more apt visual analog for

Gizzi's work might be James Turrell's installation *Pleiades* wherein one must wait in a darkened room for over twenty minutes, staring at an amorphous, nearly imperceptible light-source. The payoff, however, occurs when the retinas accommodate to the minimal illumination, and one glimpses a shared hallucination: an uncertain, disembodied presence of glimmer hovering in the half-glow.

Existence is inexact. Gizzi offers us the ghosts of trace elements and electron skirmishes as they pingback and play out in the nether-regions of consciousness. He tells us to “bring all you got,” (73) and gives us in return a “blowtorch grammar's / unconquered flame” at “full bore” (11). The bore, though, is both boredom and a hole—the boring holes persisting through which we have breakdowns and coming out of which we have breakthroughs. Gizzi writes: “The house is covered in fresh snowfall, lovely / in reflected mercury light”(13). The light bounces off a distant origin as silver-tinted, changeful, and thieving, appearing in a wash of nostalgia. But we're confused how to gloss these stolen moments and furthermore unsure whether they have been stolen by us or from us. Gizzi continues: “Where is my head / in this data? All this / indexical nomenclature. It's not reassuring to know/ the names tonight, lousy and grigri and non”(13). Nothing is left to point to, and the past one wants to reference has disintegrated in a blizzard of data point: tattered papers, mementoes, and charms. There is no going home again; or, rather, home becomes simply the snow-globe one has made inside one's skull, with its unsettled boneyard radiance.

My favorite individual poem in the collection is probably “Oversong,” with its litany of encroaching darkness, part of which reads:

To be dark, to darken
to obscure, shade, dim . . .

to dusk, extinguish
to put out, blow out

to exit, veil, shroud,
to murk, cloud, to jet . . .

vestral, twilit, sooty, blae . . . (64-65).

The poem allows the words themselves to suggest various shades of mortality while also hinting at how language itself is haunted, eclipsed, and obfuscatory. The simple accumulative power of the list reminds me of Anne Carson's *Nox*, another deeply elegiac work that took on the historiography of personal memory in terms of the multiplicity inherent in any system that attempts to hold memories in place.

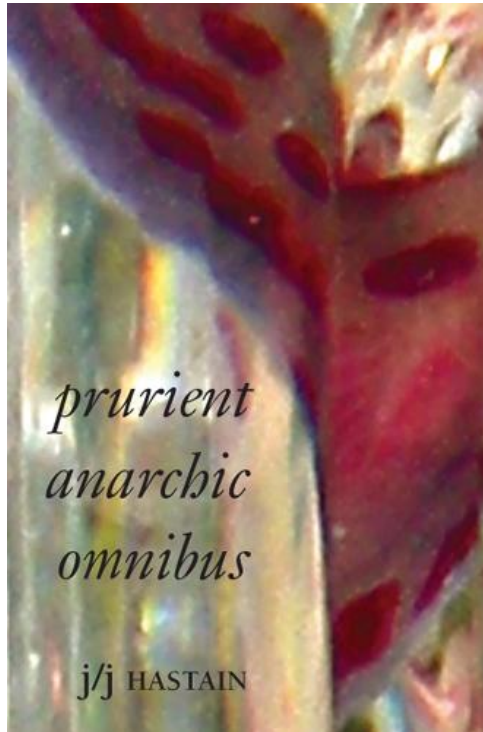
Alphabets, as surely as mountains, keep moving, and the past is subject to the discarded, twitching, luculent, and zeroing lexicon. The white vestries have become soot-begrimed at this eventide of history whereas “blae” even suggests a sky burial in which the grey-gloom flyover of cloud-cover itself has been transfigured into a coffin's lid. But “it's not morbid / to think this way / to see things in time” (15) Gizzi frankly affirms in another of my favorite poems, “Analemma.” One can only think in time, and to think *about* time is only to turn that thinking back on its own resources, understanding the motions—the emotions—of thought as up against death.

Ben Lerner writes that Gizzi's book reminds him of “the tension at the heart of song, which has the power both to lull and to intensify, as do certain drugs.” The elegiac song specifically may quiet our grief even as it elaborates our lament. But since the songs in the book arise out of “a vortex” of “birth storms” (3), they also become a medium to “accept this handmade world,” (18) the broken thing all thought, all poems, all lives succumb to. And yet, these “birth storms” allow Gizzi to avail himself to be a medium for the numerous, if not numinous, others who dwell in his mind, to give them new life through his reflections upon them. We live in our heads or in other's, and the transport between them: that's all life is. And then it's gone. In the meantime, Gizzi proposes, along with Stevens, that the poems of this book are a place of refuge and dwelling helping us to perpetually reinterpret “How to live. / What to do.” (85).

Michael Leong

Review of *prurient anarchic omnibus*, by j/j hastain

(Spuyten Duyvil/Meeting Eyes Bindery, 2011)



Prurient anarchic omnibus is a gorgeously ambitious and generous book of experimental ecstatic love poetry; as its very title suggests, it is verbally complex, and it is surely a refreshing and vigorous addition to the contemporary scene. Hastain writes—according to an introductory note—“as a modern Rumi scribing and etching non-linear musics.” This important three-paragraph note, which follows the book’s acknowledgements and precedes the copyright, not only establishes *prurient anarchic omnibus* within the tradition of Rumi’s mystical writings but it signals to the reader a set of its most salient concerns: newness, modernity, and contemporaneity. *Prurient anarchic omnibus* is a “book as neoteric lace” that aims to provide “new worlds and/ or new sensations.” Indeed, the word “new” occurs three more times within just the book’s first four pages: “new places to trust” (1), “a new bio-mimicry” (3), and “a new indigenous / wherein cyborgs can become earth” (4). In addition, one of the book’s epigraphs is a significant contextualizing quote from John Cage: “you have to distinguish between the old music which was a music of concept and of the presentation of that concept to us and the new music which is precept and arousal of perception in us.” We live in an age, to be sure, that fetishizes technological and aesthetic innovation and novelty; the new—whether actual or rhetorical—is always at risk of being commodified and exploited for hegemonic interests. But hastain’s insistence on the new, on the *neo-*, is grounded in an ethical commitment to registering and perceiving “previously undetermined structures” (24) and “things that have yet to be named” (25); this commitment is in the name of everything that fails to fit within, to quote again from hastain’s introductory note, “the dominant culture’s required structures.” Newness, according to hastain’s poetics, is not a newfangled luxury but a socio-political necessity, and *prurient anarchic omnibus* is a persuasive call, a kind of manifesto even, for “new

classifications of loom” (17). We can read “loom” here in at least two ways: 1) as a technology for weaving, a machine for the creation of textiles (and, by extension, texts) and 2) as a nominalization of the intransitive verb meaning “[t]o appear indistinctly; to come into view in an enlarged and indefinite form” (*OED*). If we take this second, more unexpected meaning seriously, we apprehend that hastain's innovative language is a determined effort at making the indistinct distinct, a way of arousing within us the perception of the indefinite and undetermined.

The book is punctuated periodically with the reoccurring invocation/address (which, isolated on a page to itself, also acts as a repeating section title) “dear weaver of disparates,”—a gesture which frames the poems (or poetic sections) as epistolary offerings regarding the irradiating intricacies and intensities of existence. Ultimately, *prurient anarchic omnibus* proposes a new and radical religiosity, a lyrical reverence to “a spans of god that I can understand.” “I am trying to express an additive Sanskrit // a new type of holy book,” says hastain (38). And just a few pages later, we get another statement of religious ambition: “I am constructing a transfigured bible” (44). In an interview with Gabriel Ricard in the electronic journal *Unlikely 2.0*, hastain calls *prurient anarchic omnibus* “a book of psalms within the prurient.” This is, in short, a new kind of religious poetry for the twenty-first century. By some accounts, the word “religion” derives from the Latin verb *ligāre* (to bind, to connect); religion, then, is at root a *reconnection*. Following this logic, we can read *prurient anarchic omnibus* as an insistent attempt to reconnect and yoke what seems unconnected. This connective impulse is evident not only thematically—as in the luxurious, multisyllabic phrase “accentuated coadunation” (92)—but in the many compound words that thicken the texture of hastain's text: “corpuscle-scripture” (77), “ever-future-primordial” (98), “an ongoing // legato-devotion” (124), “a sought-crest” (126), “an accordion-lung in the chimera,” “vigorous panegyric-cosmologies” (127). “Legato”— interestingly—a musical term meaning “smooth and connected, with no breaks between the successive notes,” also derives from the Latin word *ligāre*; it is a perfectly chosen and precise term that indicates both hastain's poetic musicality and fluency as well as larger religio-philosophical thought.

In the 1924 essay “Introduction to the Discourse on the Paucity of Reality,” Andre Breton wrote of a dream in which he imagined “a rather curious book” that had a spine “formed by a wooden gnome with an Assyrian-style white beard” and pages “made of thick black wool.” Near the end of *prurient anarchic omnibus* we get a similar oneiric vision, which is nicely accentuated due to the fact that the passage is presented in a larger font than the rest of the book:

I dreamt of a red handle coming out of the book itself
like a combo-emotional net appearing as a solid protrusion

always part sacrosanct part lunacy

(116)

This dream-object, which acts as an idealized metaphor for the book itself, makes it clear that *prurient anarchic omnibus* requires a prehensile perception, a haptic grasping of its linguistic and imagistic sensuousness. The “red handle” as “solid protrusion” comes out at us as an invitation, as what hastain calls in the book's beginning “a truly / non-linear // offer” (2). As readers of challenging and rewarding poetry, it is in our best interest to take it.

Jessica Smith

In Love

“That the horrific struggle to establish a human self results in a self whose humanity is inseparable from that horrific struggle. That our endless journey toward home is in fact our home.” *David Foster Wallace on Kafka's “central joke”*

What it used to be
Light in circles made of fire
dancing on wrists and elbows
The whole world a little starry
Drunk most of the time
then broke
then drunk
Naked young men and naked old men
in doorways backlit by bare light bulbs

The train tracks guide me home then
the sidewalks guide me home then
the way the bright lights make halos
guides me home

What it used to be,
haunted,
“too intense,”
each building each streetlight
attached permanently to some memory.
Awash in memories.
Everything a mnemonic.
Like electroshock therapy
to walk down the street a series of triggers
A fight, a blackout,
a walk the day after a rape
engraved in the sidewalks
remembering each crack,
inked, intaglio,
the delicate balance between dissociation and imagination

All the girls walk like zombies
down the street.
I see them, like me,
negotiating the gap between
memory and reality,
blocking the incessant intrusions,
fighting to stay present.

Anna Eyre

SNOW

snow white

come to find yourself abandoned

in thick

gravestones told only

stories of one who birthed you

was her name

other than mother

mother or other

no

one can whisper

& answer instead

through remembrances' comparisons

that features this

to that

you want to touch

this with that

& are met with stone

chiseled letters told only

again & again

to become your lip's

story of her & you hide

behind engraved

name even when no

one is seeking

to find

*

the night you

force your body

into her gown

& dance

phantasm

heart's pulse

a replacement

faints

& births

a death

absent of life's first gasps

in amniotic sack

& a blood to be

buried nameless

without

funeral –

your

hands will

later

comb through

&

paint

face

born unborn

remnants her mirror

masks

*

her mirror

reflects you

who should

not dance in a gown

skeletal in ground

& wants

your heart

cut from corpse a

devoured pulse

so may

she

dance her gown

without gravestone

name

other

than

mother

again

*

you run to outrun

mirror's

mirror of hour

where abouts without words

lost in her gown

found by thieves' thieves

you are all

their

there tickets

to want

*

you are a princess

no

you are a daughter of

no

you are just a name

no

you don't know me

no

no savage bride

you

no prize claim

you

no body without gown

you

no title without crown

you

sew & keep

house

for thieves'

thieves

who would a

stolen you

had not you

stolen a-

n hour

mirror's

mirror grief

*

her mirror reflects you

a songbird

trapped in hourglass

each sand granule

steals from you—a sparrow's

last gasp her

mirror mirrors

glass & your

gown shadows light's refract to

shatter attempt

& she

calls to you

a canary

&

you hollow your

skull

for

her wick

but bite

into

fallen

apple

unable to swallow

you see & hear all &

can't articulate

any body

heart's pulse

*

you are born an unborn

&

placed under glass

case in her gown

above ground

& thieves' thieves

allow all

to

gaze on

you

as

you

gaze on

all

to all owe

pronounce

translucent

barrier

to bear

unburial

a body

in

a gown

that belongs to

a name

other

mother

unearable

*

&

were you found

what would be said

other

than go

a

way phantom

you are not a

gown

she is

dead

in ground

&

her mirror hour mirrors ear

to glass against

case against stone against

name other than mother against known

against ground

&

groans

Elizabeth Doohar

Muffle



Elizabeth Sanger

Augur

Everywhere you seek it, potent distraction
or portent. Birds in congress
on a bare winter tree, how they hold themselves
so still (& the worm turns, dreaming

a wormy dream of fresh earth)—they hold
so very-very, til the power of looking
unveils itself.

One: a killing tongue.

Two: a rope

run through all feeling creatures & holding [*might I borrow*
one to the other, but not close enough
for the man you love to stay
& dance past midnight.

How could you have predicted. In yr old age, you'll grow ugly
on a meat-only diet & make yr fun
conducting War-Game against yr grandchildren
and whine nightly into a broken telephone, unrepentant
and unpopular
as an adult contemporary "love" song.

So my friend Blond lopes up-road to duel-at-dawn
her friend Black Dog, dittying
love you long, Manhattan,
love you strong—but back then you were Edith.
And Edith's time, we must admit,
is now long-gone.

The day wanes. Even You
won't remember night coming. And yet, Edith,
here it comes.

Laura Sims

Murder Son(g)

I am nothing!
-Kip Kinkel

I.

I plan to live in a big black hole

My heart is in the hole

It is gray

II.

“My guns, they blast right through me with a good clean love”

“My guns, they never stabbed me in the back”

III.

Walk into a pep rally with guns.

Walk into a Costco with guns. Walk into a coffee shop with guns. Walk into a party store with guns. Walk into a wedding shower with guns. Walk into a weight room with guns. Walk into a living room with guns and say

All I want is something small.

Chorus:

Settle down, settle down

It's all right, it's all right

Settle down, settle down

It's all right, it's all right

Walk into a forest with guns. Walk into a pasture with guns. Walk into a valley with guns. Walk into shadows with guns. Walk into late afternoon sunlight with guns. Walk into the house with guns. Walk upstairs with guns. Walk into the attic with guns. Walk out the window with guns. Walk into air with guns. Walk into paradise with guns. Walk into a bar with guns and say

Oh God...I am

Always alone

Settle down, settle down

Etc.

Kaethe Schwehn

The Balding Snuffer Extinguishes a Single Square of Joy

[] sings pink collar. Like two sticks scraping to make a fire []
stitched to the top of a hill. [] sways gray rags across the floor,
spears a carrot smooth as an embryo. Rooms spill into []. Fire
truck, ladder up in the rain, [] scythes the air. Single bra, lace
furrows long as tiger tongues [] goes on folding. [] the green
moon tomorrow. [] a thousand icons in the brink. [] the
Minnow Who Tracks Invisibility Through the City.

Moon unspools its [] light, an epileptic banging at the gates. []
washes off her face inside a trough. Behind incontinent stars, []
trains coupling. [] sweeps below a spider plant. Sweat stains
darken like celestial rabbits. The porcelain beasts arrive. I buy a hat to
hold [] rolls of chin. Every carnivorous thought, every Aleppo,
every un-aired lung. Inside the last tent, [] rises on a bed of nails,
the darkness of my country held within her.

Liz Mastrangelo

Accident Report

I can trace myself

this is mine:

48 Periwinkle Court to Pleasant to Henley to Brimble to Turner
High School second floor the classroom with the broken speaker
to Brimble to Henley to Pleasant to 48 Periwinkle Court to the
garage with the rakes moldy lawn chairs and flat-tired bicycles
holding up the sides and the kitchen quiet with Lysol

No—wait—

From CCD to senior prom to Puget Sound to City Hall

From foster care to middle class

From Pittsfield Hosp—

From a hollow mattress draped in a scratchy brown blanket in a motel near the military base, planes
scouting from the sky, maybe, the permission of marijuana bliss; a soft fingertip on a collarbone, a sweet
salving word on an open sore, a clawing need to be loved, for something to take root—

(that girl who told me goodbye made me a floating memory inside her)

(She carries me crying still, I hear it, she calls me)

At night on the couch as my limbs deflate he looks through me then reaches and squeezes my left breast
while I'm asking him about our plans, goals "Could you be fair and even with the other parts of me,
too?" Listen, not just look? Touch, not just take?

We live safe and straight (mistakes run in my blood but we wouldn't want that right now so he double-
bolts the doors protects us and pours me wine and promises of drifting, out there, together) just the
two of us

It's not what I married for

At my outloud dreams of children he smiled and bought me a house

this is his:

48 Periwinkle Court to Route 89 to Exit 10 to corporate to Exit 10 to Route 89 to Shaw's for the
ice cream and the toilet paper I texted to his BlackBerry to 48 Periwinkle Court

chased by nobody's cries

This colorless place haunts me more

(He'll be unhappy and I'll be responsible, the woman, without permission)

But he loves me he loves me so much he loves me so much

(I don't sit near him he can't reach me and I say:)

(a dark hand grips my insides and yanks down I feel a little sick)

He says I would die if anything happened to you you're my everything I wouldn't choose there would be no choice for me and I know there would be for you how could I live with you and whoever else came along knowing that? I need to tell you

(I am his everything so much that he would tell me anything to keep me happy but that doesn't and how can he think it does)

I need to tell you that things haven't changed for me

I need to tell you that things haven't changed for me and I don't want (how could I have stopped it, in a place I know so well, cruising without looking? How could I have seen him, this, coming—but who doesn't want—) someone who needs so much

Well. I say. Calmly. So many accidents.

(this might be the end this might really be the end rushing heart rooting child oh how I do love you)

(Warning: ruptures in the lines may cause disturbance)

His eyes rolled and his lids swelled they looked like fish lips and I arched over him and around him and held his smooth, loose fingers as his body trembled frigid.

Maybe it was cloudy he lay in silver smoke. Maybe I couldn't see.

He was putting out the garbage.

(where the hell was I going? it's so hard to remember the molecules of the landscape behind me swim and swirl into whitish gel all I see suddenly is his face slipping from the rearview mirror and I feel him under me, so my foot presses hard! hard!)

I heard a cruel spirit whining.

Sorry.

(dense dull apron of nausea everywhere I've had this feeling before and I've lost it but I know I won't lose it this time now I'm moving forward to another room)

Had we been fighting?

from evening to vodka to bed to floor to midnight to hot morning pillow
from hydrangea to Aruba to hardwood to cable
from our collision under the sycamore trees to the first ultimatum

He hovers long and lurid under the sheets

and now the landscape behind becomes the landscape before and the rush and the crash hit the ground vomiting warm the hand not gripping but pushing and things start to flutter and I was driving out and he

cut me off and now I am laughing tickled and prodded from within because my husband crossed the wrong woman going the right way (that would be me)

That girl (I know, I am) wanders the world to the thumps of my heart

this new life I know my feet are planted body real trail stamped history made

48 Periwinkle Court to
search search search
search search
search search
search search search
from withering trust to swelling certainty
from rooting love to turning around and taking flight

Kristin Kostick

Process of Elimination

When I shot him square in the back
his torso snapped backwards, the sky closed

its fist. All morning, over shots of rye,
me or him. me or him. In my bedsheets,

field mice fed on dead flecks of skin,
and the gunpowder under my fingernails

swirled through a hundred dusty towns
miniaturized beneath my nail. Flip it up, see them:

women and children crying together in the night,
embracing against the onslaughts and pye dogs

burrowing their snouts in the blown-off shoes
and open mouths of the dead.

In those thorny, war-torn worlds, too,
a smaller me shoots him, over and over,

at the high-noon stake-out, or from the window
of his bedroom as, blindly, he makes love

or I leave my boots at the door to sneak up
while he shaves in the foggy mirror, and the straight-razor

clinks into the sink as the bullet goes
straight in, his reflection

splintering in the glass as wild horses
splinter across the prairies,

and I wander from one demolished town
to another, pressing my face into the mange

of the howling mutts and the mothers' breasts,
equivalent pillows for the damned,

how we love each other then
on our ways out, fissuring off

into the dilated pupils of the dogs'
close-up eyes, those other caves, other skies

as the wild horse slams its hooves toward the horizon,
forgets everything. I forget everything,

blood in the dirt, and the ground itself
channels the sounds of far-off trains

into the fallen man's ear.
In the canyons, ghosts everywhere

follow me, trying desperately to be seen, moons
inch invisibly alongside the day.

In the cleft of my eyelid, a broken horse
twitches in its sleep,

then wakes and bolts suddenly into the hills
reappearing later at the camp as a dead man,

wanting to be fed, hungry mice tucked into his cheeks.
Deeper still in the mice's mouths, rows of me

fold neatly together as handkerchiefs
before a funeral. When I hear the shot,

it happens so fast, my spine buckles
backwards, in the distance a horse breaks

its own bones to rid itself of its rider,
both of them fall to the ground, barely feeling

the earth rise up, just the dreadful thud,
the sensation of something leaving us.

Snežana Žabić

The Ghost Book

*

18th Place, a patch of its asphalt stripped,
unearths steel tracks
of a ghost streetcar system
long gone before the oldest part of me
hit the scene--so why does it feel like my loss?

*

Yesterday a building burned on the Far South Side.
Passing cars eyes could see smoke in sunset
yellowish grey and mad
and all around
the block was blinking with
fire truck lights, a troubled bee colony of them.

*

The rails under the street appear to be of pre-Sne. Žabić formation.
The word "ghost" appears to be of pre-Germanic formation.

The sense of pre-Sne. Žabić Chicago should be fury, anger
The sense of pre-Germanic *ghoizdo*-- should be fury, anger

I particularly like Avestan *zōižda*--"ugly" and how
"outside Germanic the derivatives point to a primary sense
'to wound, tear, pull to pieces'"

*

What if I return and find my building
a burning copycat? Six years or more
of possessions of our meager life gone.
And the two of us embraced in mutual comfort.
The next day an outpouring of charity
from family, friends, and acquaintances,
a fresh start, and new neuroses to do with disasters.

*

After the fire
you wear someone's old clothes

*

These fingers type
what I tell them to
later they'll remember
what I no longer possess
but they won't have a language

*

The sounds the child-me would hear
came from magpies
of Eurasia, North Africa, maybe even North America
svraka, magpie, *pica pica*
imitating sirens

when days passed
without ambulances and fire trucks
magpies mocked cuckoos
kukavica, cuckoo, *cuculus*

Kate Schapira

Prologue, afterward

Thick air of the house will have wanted to close.
Your chin will have touched your shoulder. There
will have been no one there but you,
the chain. Soft flesh and hair you will
have put off, ripe dreg of a threat
with a foot on the stair.

It will have been night. That's how
you will have known. A whole sight
will have closed, roofless, floorless.
What you will have known of your own
knowledge will have been at your shoulder
thinking of all the air the house

will have wanted. You'll have walked
as if nothing were wrung, as if the chain weren't
hauling you out. To yourself you will have
seemed thin, in suspension, unlike a fresh body.
It will have been day with the sense of a lesson
you would not survive. And yet you will have

stepped down as if there'd been no
one behind you, distributing you out
into time like scattered hair. You will have been
no path. Years ago you were, years from
now your eye will have opened in the night.

Afton Wilky

The Room Where

[audio file]

Clemente Padin

An Interview with Brian Whitener

Introduction by Brian Whitener



Clemente Padin (b. 1939 in Lascano, Rocha, Uruguay) is internationally known as a visual poet and mail and performance artist, as well as a critic of Uruguayan and experimental literature. As a mail artist, Padin has participated in more than a thousand mail art shows (from 1967 forward), and he has had individual exhibitions in a number of countries (including Japan, Germany, South Korea, and the United States). Among his most important critical works are: *La poesía experimental latinoamericana (1950-2000)* (2000)(*1), *De la representación a l'accion* (1975), and *Art and People* (1997)(*2). A series of important performances in the 1970s, including *Poetry Should Be Made For All* (Montevideo, 1970) and *The Artist Is at the Service of the Community* (Sao Paulo, 1975) established Padin, along with Carlos Zepa of Venezuela, as one of the pioneers of performance art in Latin America. During the Uruguayan military dictatorship (1973-1986), Padin was jailed for two years and three months (1979-1981) for causing "harm to the reputation of the Army." This prison sentence was, in fact, retribution for the artistic actions that he had staged against the dictatorship and for his role in organizing a Counter Biennale in front of the Latin American section of the X Biennale of Paris (1977).

As a writer and editor (of *Los Huevos del Plata*, 1965-1969; *OVUM*, 1969-1975; and *Participación*, 1984-1986), Padin played an important role in the movement from Noigrandes-style concrete poetry to the amplified positions of visual poetry or, as Padin has written, from the word to the sign or from semantics to semiotics. Even though he has been based in Montevideo for most of his career, it is more productive to view his work in a transnational context than a solely national one, as a contributor's list from *Los Huevos* or *OVUM* would indicate. It was an environment of constant exchange and cross-fertilization between Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Buenos Aires, and Mexico City that Padin developed an approach to visual poetry and to arte acción distinguished by its concern for the social aspects and repercussions of artistic production.

While his visual poetry evidences the post-Saussurian concern with signification typical of this period, what differentiates Padin's work is its frequent referencing of poetry to the social, expressed by a

thinking of the reader as co-creator, poetry's relation to consumption, and the nature of communication. These concerns are perhaps best seen in his No-Object poems written during the early 1970s and distributed in English and Spanish, not in journals, but via the mail art network. Building on the work of the Poem/Process poets (Rio de Janeiro) and Edgardo Antonio Vigo (Buenos Aires), Padin's No-Object poems can be seen as a radical attempt to create "a language of action" and a fully participatory poetry (in a sense fulfilling the theoretical arc of visual poetry's opening of poetry to other types of signification by almost severing its ties with language). It is important to note that Padin's insistence on the importance of creating communication and creating alternative channels of communication, seen in these works and other works, is very much related to the social and cultural conditions generated by the decade-long dictatorship.

Since the mid-1980s, performance, specifically performance in public spaces, has become Padin's main axis of work. However, he remains active within the visual poetry and mail art communities(*3) and an engagement with the social continues to define his work, as can be seen in his recent minimalist visual poems concerning the 2003 invasion of Iraq by the United States government.

*Notes:

1. <http://www.boek861.com/padin/indice.htm>
2. <http://www.concentric.net/~Lndb/padin/lcpcont.htm>
3. And other communities as well, see *Chain 12* for example.

1. Clemente, you are well known internationally for your work in the areas of visual poetry, performance, and mail art. Could you explain how and when you began working and perhaps a little about how these areas are related for you?

CP: My artistic life began around 1960, when, in my early 20s, I experienced the first frustrations of love and their subsequent sublimation into poetry. Also at this time, I began to study literature at the Universidad de Uruguay and my contact with the classical tradition confirmed my desire to write. After experiencing difficulties in gaining access to the media of diffusion, which were in the hands of the Generation of '45, a group of poets and artists decided to start our own medium, the journal *Los Huevos del Plata* (circa 1965). The exchanges that we realized in this journal placed us in contact with the international vanguard and with the latest artistic tendencies: mail art, experimental poetry, performance, video art, etc. As for our movement, looking back on it now, it was decidedly political. That is, above all else, it was art with its own intrinsic specifications and with our aesthetic demands but with numerous elements of a socio-political nature as well. The distinct areas of human activity are joined together like interrelated groups and, without confusing themselves, participate in common areas or zones. So, a work of art is fundamentally art, but it shares some areas with the social, the political, the religious, etc. If, in a work of art, the aesthetic elements cede their primacy in favor of the political and/or the social, it ceases to be a work of art; that is, it transforms into a hybrid known as a "panfleto."(*1) Here, the subsumed artistic elements are at the service of other ends; in this case, political or social ends. The same thing occurs when social movements are imbued with political goals. Art, in order to be art, should have predominantly aesthetic characteristics or involve symbols of substitution for the real (the "poetic function" of the structuralists (Jakobson) or the "rhetorical function" of the Groupe Mu) (*2).

2. You played an important role in establishing and defining the field of experimental writing known as visual poetry. How should we understand your statement that visual poetry “managed to expose the fragility of the literature based only in the semantic”?

CP: Poetry, as we know it, is based in the semantic, in the verbal signification of each word and of the text in general. And this, necessarily, restricts expression to this single dimension of the word, offering us a limited and restricted version of poetry. In my view, the existence of a single or unchangeable concept of literature based exclusively on verbal semanticity enormously reduces poetry’s range of action. It is necessary to accept the participation of other dimensions, such as the visual or the oral, in order for poetry to expand its range of expression to other areas, thereby gaining communicative possibilities. In fact, a restricted notion of poetry damns itself, since para-linguistic or asemantic elements are essential in creating meaning (I’m referring here to stylistic means and formal structures such as rhyme, versification, rhythm, etc.). For my generation, the next step was to propose a broader conceptualization of literature that took into consideration the pan-semiotic elements of language (Jakobson), those elements that operate in *all* language—thus creating a poetry based not only in the semantic, but in the semiotic as well.

3. The work of Edgardo Antonio Vigo (*3) and the Poem/Process movement have an important place in your theoretical writings. In what manner have these ideas influenced your work?

CP: The Poem/Process was a creation of the poets Wladimir Dias-Pino, Alvaro, Neide Sá, Moacy Cirne, and others, who, around 1967, began this movement with a variety of poetic manifestations in Rio de Janeiro. Edgardo Antonio Vigo was important in the evolution of Latin American (and world) poetry as he established the creative participation of the “reader” (circa 1970) with his proposal, “Poesía para y/o a Realizar,” by means of which he intended for the spectator to assume, via the “constructive-activation,” the position of co-author of the poem. The consequences of his proposal were that the first realized performances in Latin America (circa 1970 as well) had their roots in poetry and not exclusively in the plastic arts as was the case generally in the United States and elsewhere.

4. In a recent interview, you were asked if there is currently a crisis in Latin American poetry. Could you explain your views on this for a North American audience?

CP: Like every area of human activity, poetry can enter into a crisis. But a crisis can evolve forward with new proposals or backwards towards areas already surpassed by history. To the extent which habit and fatigue (caused by the repetitions of forms) erode communication, poetry (or any other artistic form) enters into a crisis in the manner described by William Blake: “Do not expect but poison of stagnant water.” Because of this, we believe that the adjectivization of “experimental” is an error, as poetry should be experimental per se. If there is no experimentation with difficult forms, poetry cannot develop and be in step with its times (this has occurred always...it is enough to examine history). A poetry does not exist that is not radical, that does not go to the source. As a result, before the apathy and lack of development of the present poetry of Latin America, it is possible to speak of a crisis.

5. In your book, *From Representation to Action* (Doc(k)s, Marsella, Francia, 1975), you write, “Since 1971, there is art that has done away with the object and the art-work and replaced it with action, understanding that art is what a person does in direct relation to his or her environment and not what a person does in relation to a system of representations of this environment. With the object eliminated, art returns to the point it should never have left: art = life.” How has your work engaged this set of ideas?

CP: In actions, especially in those known as “artistic-social events,” the work, within the range of its expressive possibilities, must realize that which it extols. Thus, in my performance “El Artista debe estar al Servicio de la Comunidad”(*4). I loaded spectators into a cart and took them through all the galleries of the exhibition, explaining what could be seen there (stopping, above all, in front of the posters that I had hung with key words, which allowed me to explain things in more detail). Not only through the representation (the title of the performance), but also through the action itself was the proposal, namely that the artist should be at the service of the community, realized. That is to say, the words were not only said but made. In *From Representation to Action*, I proposed an “art of action” that I called a “non-object poetry,” in which the sign of the language of action was a coin with two faces (in a Saussurian sense): one was the signifier (the action itself) and, the other, the signified (the meaning that the action awakens in us).

6. In what has become a central text for Latin American performance, “Art in the Street,” you talk about the idea of social interaction and the creation of a direct relation with reality. For example, in a very beautiful passage you write, “It is in social life, really, where artistic matters can overcome their symbolic limits and affect radical changes not only on the level of representation but also on the level of reality itself.” Can you expand for us on the difference between affecting representation versus affecting reality?

CP: This concerns the eternal discussion of whether art can influence our reality and alter undesirable situations at the level of everyday life. It is clear that it is possible, although not in a direct manner. Art has its own area of action, similar the other dimensions of reality: society, politics, religion, education, etc. However, these areas are not completely unrelated, on the contrary, they are interrelated and that which occurs in one has repercussions in the others. The examples are many: any change at the level of technology gives birth to new bases of expression that by themselves alter artistic forms. That which one discovers exists for all the rest: we can’t separate the areas of human activity into watertight compartments, they are not autonomous (although the discourse of the system strives to make it appear so to us). The new and the recently discovered, in any area of human activity, picks its place under the sun and supplants and buries the “permitted” in the repertoires of social knowledge, thereby provoking irreversible changes in all areas of knowledge. On the other hand, in some circumstances (for example, with the obstruction of the paths of social communication under dictators or authoritarian governments) art can supplant the circuits of information by means of certain genres (i.e., popular song, street theater, clandestine radio, or alternative video), thereby creating new networks of communication.

7. In the theoretical writings of yourself, Vigo, and other Latin American artists of the 1960s and 1970s, the distinction between creation and consumption was critical. As well, this idea, or variations on it, have been very important for experimental poetry in the United States for the last thirty years. How does your work approach this distinction?

CP: The concept of “consumption” is, without a doubt, a concept of the market. It was in reaction to this that the commitment of mail art was born. In addition to the obvious limitations of mail art (including the determination of the size, weight, distance, speed of reception, and cost by the means used) and the precariousness of the channels (the post, fax, the Internet, etc.) it is necessary to note, as well, its tacit rules and its trademark anti-consumption and anti-commercial stances (“Money and mail art don’t mix”). Mail art attempts to keep art in the area of use, in its unrestricted social function, freeing it from the area of exchange. As mail art returns art to the area of use, it immediately upsets the market and

halts the search for profit or gain. The same occurs with other forms of anti-system alternative art, such as video, performance, underground cinema, graffiti, fanzines, and street art.

8. Speaking of mail art (which is an area of your work that really fascinates me), you have written a great deal about the idea of the network in mail art. What is this idea and how does it get translated into your works?

CP: Mail art recuperates the pristine sense of art as communication and not as commodification. It recuperates the use function by means of the function of exchange inherent in the market. The work of art is, before all else, a product of communication and, because of this, an inseparable part of social production. On the other hand, it is similar to the rest of the products that we create or produce, which position themselves in relation to this same system of production (favoring or complicating its processes). In some contexts, its "artistic" nature prevails (in museums, galleries, cathedrals), while, in others, it becomes a transmitter of information and a generator of dialogues. But, without a doubt, both facets are inseparable—it's only that mail art places the emphasis on the second. However, the dialogue of mail art is only possible if the "other" exists. From here to the natural formation of systems or networks (or the system of "communicators at a distance" as Edgardo Antonio Vigo called it) was only a small step. The objective proposed by mail art found expression in an aphorism of Robert Filliou: "The Eternal Network." This objective was the utopian project, perhaps unrealizable, of the permanent communication of every individual across all available media, the development of communication without limits. It is a tragic paradox, because thanks to the phenomenal expansion of communication, capitalism via globalization has managed to impose its economic structure and its culture of profit on almost the entire world. In contrast to the globalization of capitalism's ludicrous form of life of enrichment at any price, the globalization of absolute alienation, the living outside of ourselves for the Molock of our time, and the rule of money, stands the Network of Filliou and of mail art that seeks the globalization, not of the market or profit (today sadly concluded in almost all of the world), but of human values. All in the interest of achieving an enjoyable and peaceful life without the daily drama of living like animals on scraps of bread in an impoverished environment due to the savage exploitation of natural resources carried out by the transnationals.

9. Finally, I'd like to ask you about the current generation of Latin American writers and artists. Whose work do you like? And what, in your opinion, are the problems that this generation faces?

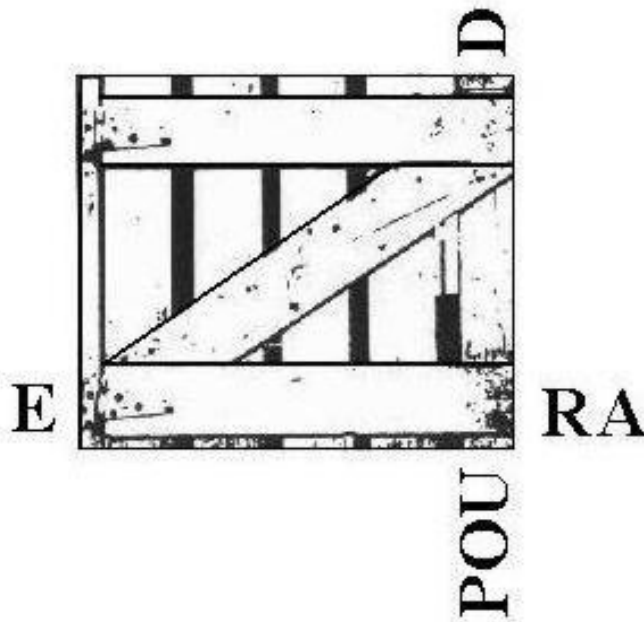
CP: I can only speak about the artistic circles that I move in. In poetry we have seen born, in Santiago, Chile, a group of young artists, working out of the Foro de Escritores, that are making extraordinary works with every conceivable means of linguistic expression and in every area of writing. Not only are they recreating and transforming the past, but they are also creating new poetic forms sustained by the new mediums that information technology has placed in our hands. In performance, beginning in 2000, there has been an enormous push in our region that today is translating into a solid, well-established movement. Already there exist spaces, more public than private, that are slowly consolidating their strength and show no signs of turning back. Although these have been born out of individual wills, little by little, intuitions are being created and a tradition is being established. It is not an accident that time after time, and in greater numbers, Latin American performers are invited to show their work in the cathedrals of performance throughout the world. Neither is it an accident that we are receiving regular visitors from these centers, who come to personally learn of our advances. As well, the recent wealth of printed material (books, magazines, articles) concerning Latin American performance is a result of our years of preparation.

*Notes:

1. A “panfleto” (pamphlet) is a newspaper or broadsheet distributed to passersby in the street.
2. A research group of French linguists (see *Rhétorique générale*, Éditions Larousse, 1970).
3. Argentinean artist (1923-1997). More information about Vigo and his work can be found at <http://www.eavigo.com.ar/menu.htm>
4. “The Artist Should Be in the Service of the Community” realized at the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de San Pablo, 1975 and at the XVI Bienal de San Pablo, Brasil, 1981.

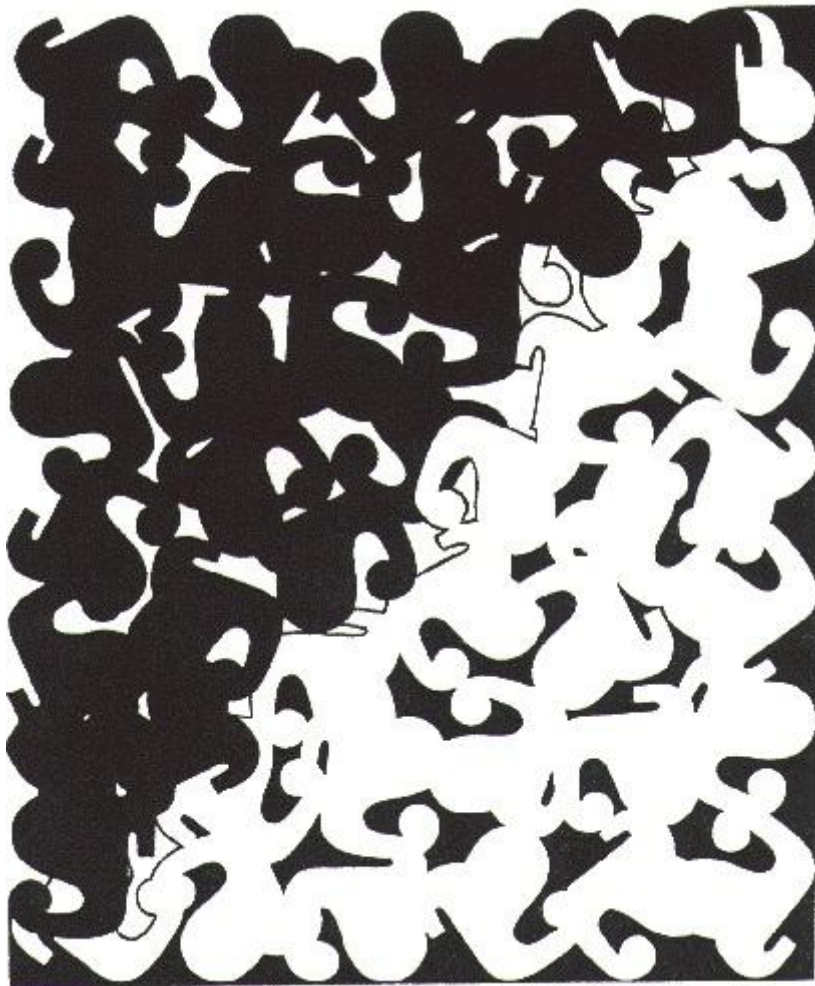
Clemente Padin

A Selection of Visual Poems

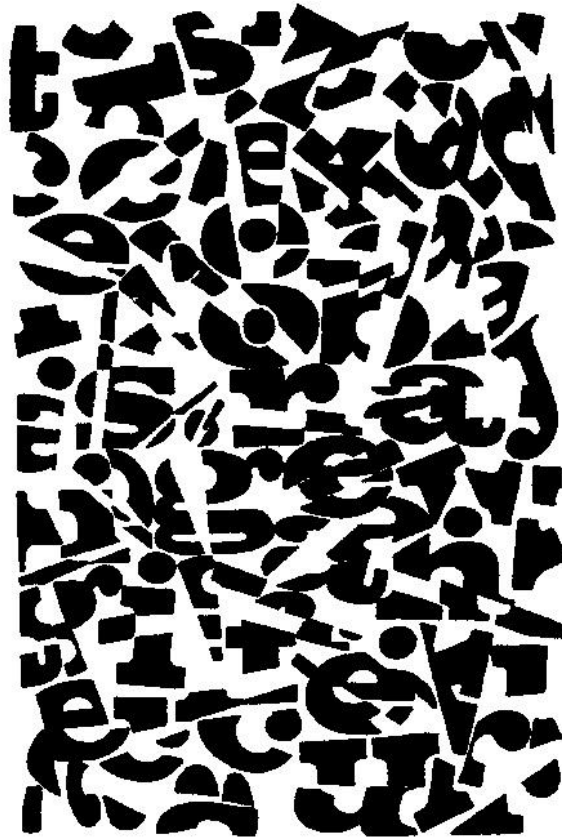
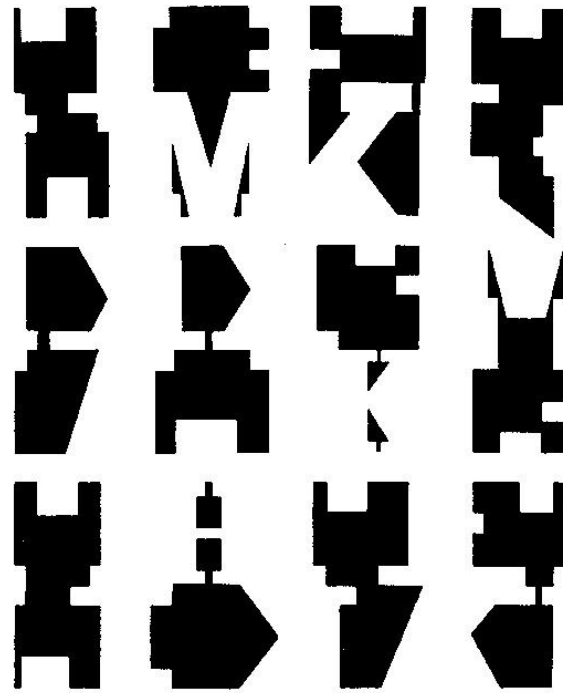


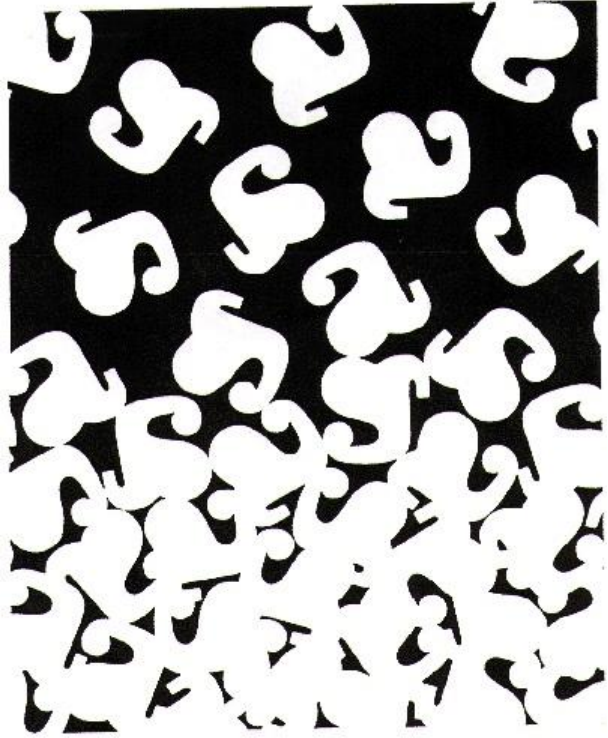
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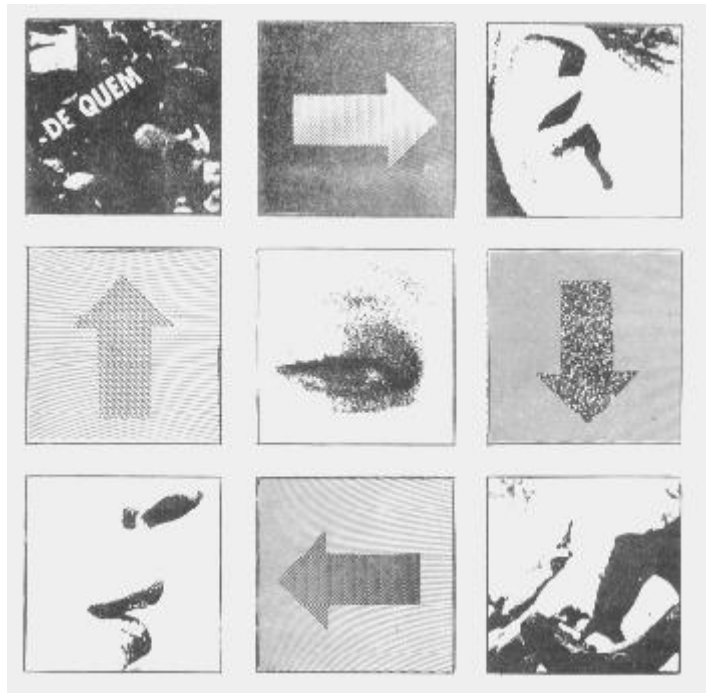
Handwritten text in a highly stylized, dense script, possibly a form of shorthand or a specific dialect. The characters are thick and black, with some recognizable letters like 'S', 'W', 'K', and 'M' interspersed among more complex, interconnected symbols. The text is arranged in approximately 10 horizontal lines, filling the upper half of the page.





Text I - 67





Clemente Padin

Four Ways to Say "No" in Mail Art

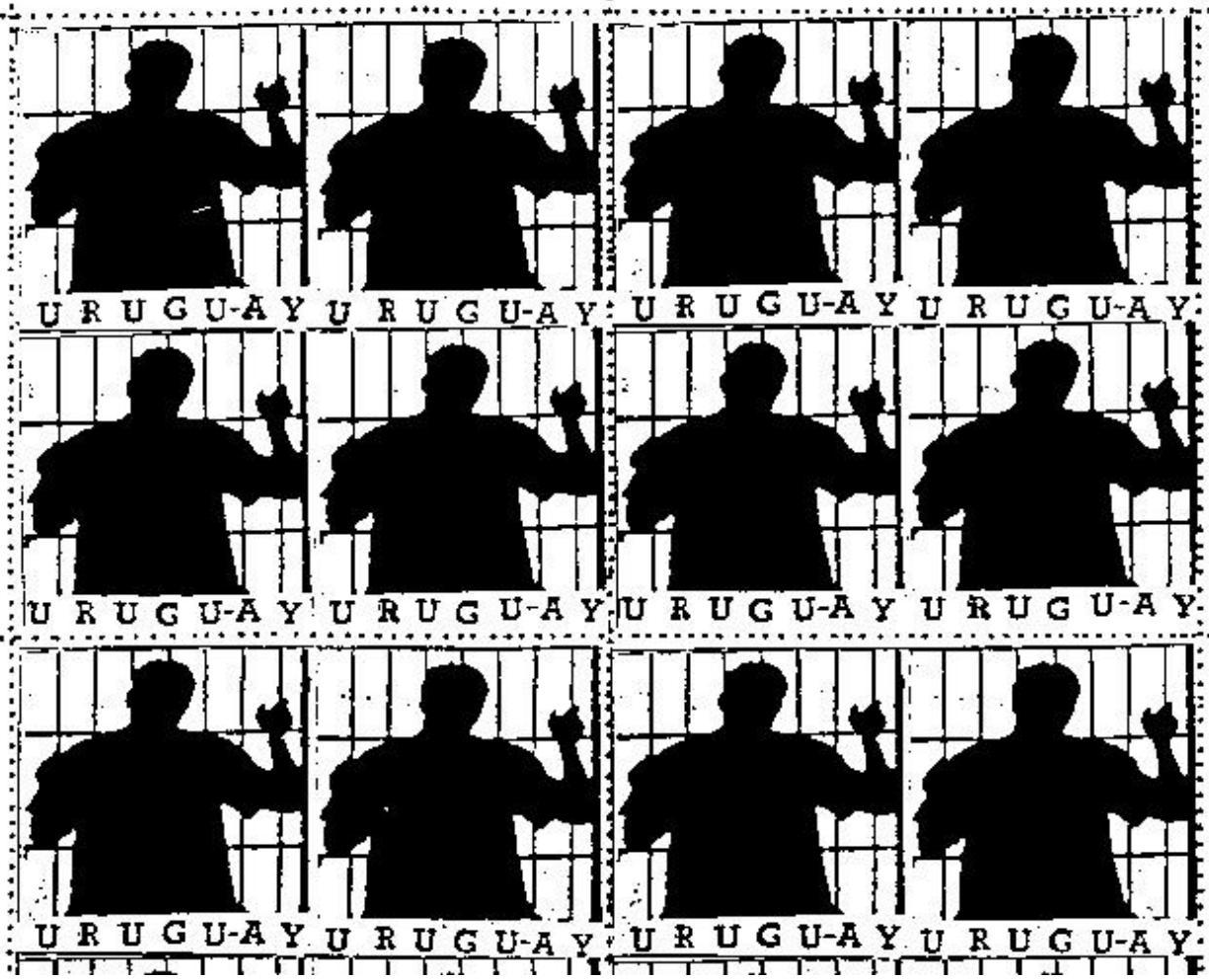


NO WAR IN SPACE



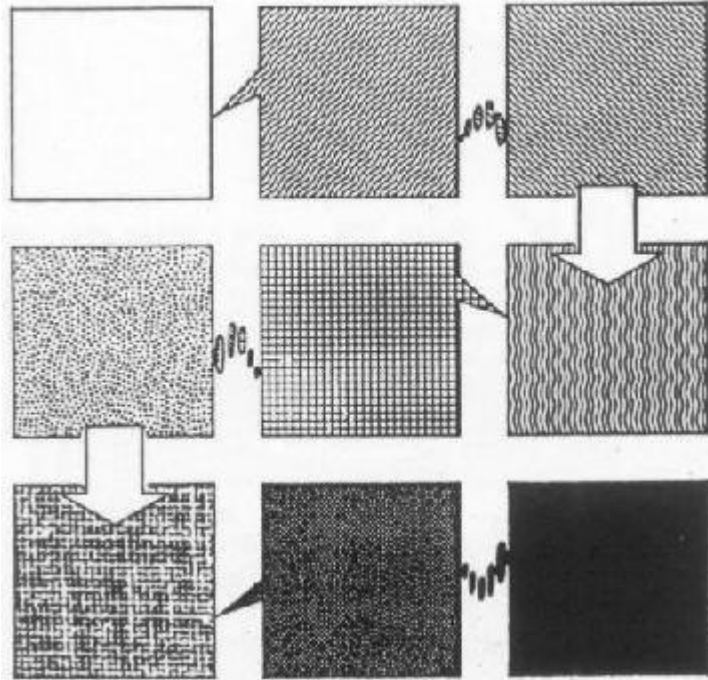
PEACE ON EARTH

Clement Padin

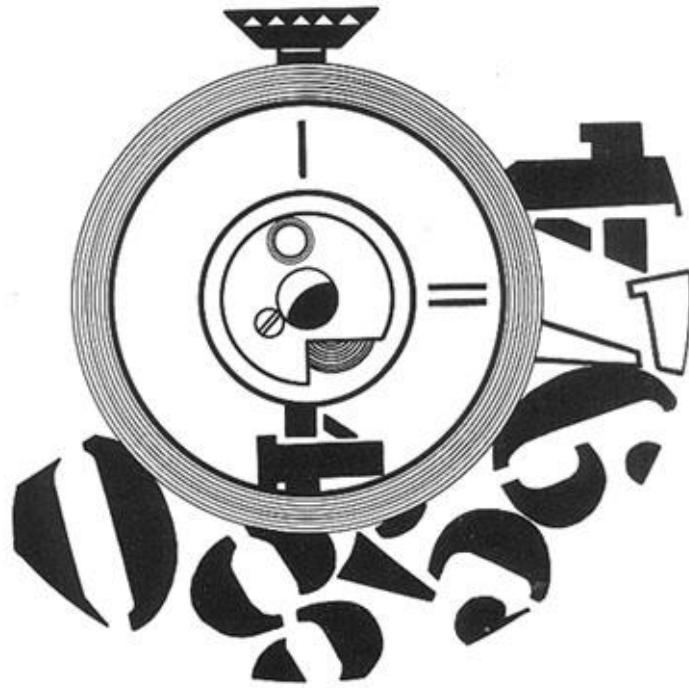


NO MORE EXCUSES

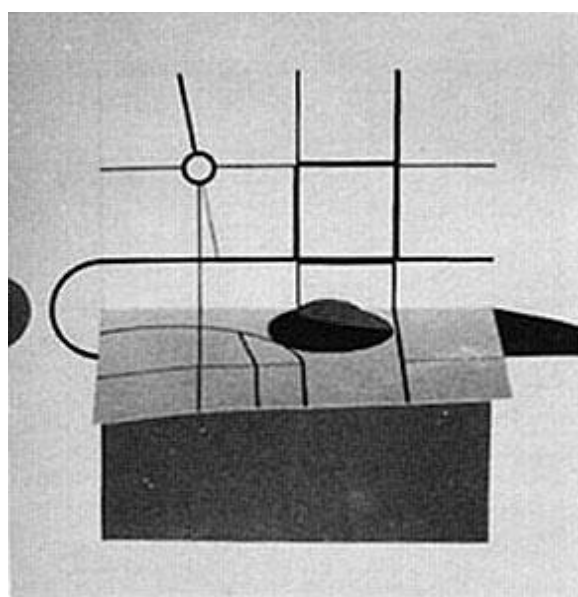




Clemente Padin
A Selection of "Vigo" Poems







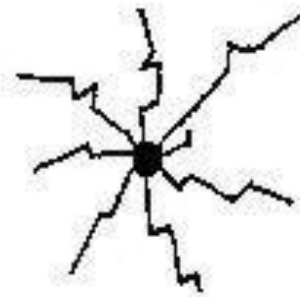
Clemente Padin

A Selection of "NO-Object" Poems

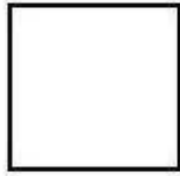
If you have read this note, you have understood:

- that you have realized an act of intervening in an object who only proposition was to unlink the synapses of thought/action;
- that you have adequately resolved the supposed contradiction thought/action or conception-of-the-act/ejection-of-the-act despite the prohibition against doing so;
- that this realized act liberated the fruitful tension of the contradiction and that this resolution is pleasant;
- that, despite the alienating pressure of the system that imposes a separation between thought/action, you are able to propose and execute acts that run counter to the system by not submitting to the order of this is prohibited;
- that No-Object Art proposes exactly this: to act upon reality and not upon a substitute for this reality as are the artistic languages that we know; and
- that you, by not complying with the prohibition, have demonstrated that you have a no-dependent personality and that everything depends upon you and that, then, everything is possible....

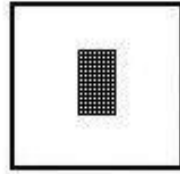
ANTES



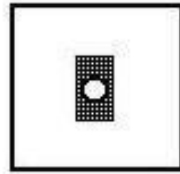
DESPUES



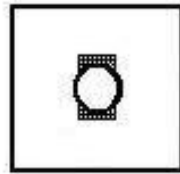
MUNDO



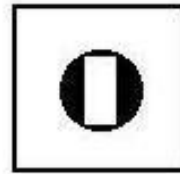
HOMEN



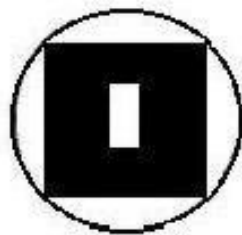
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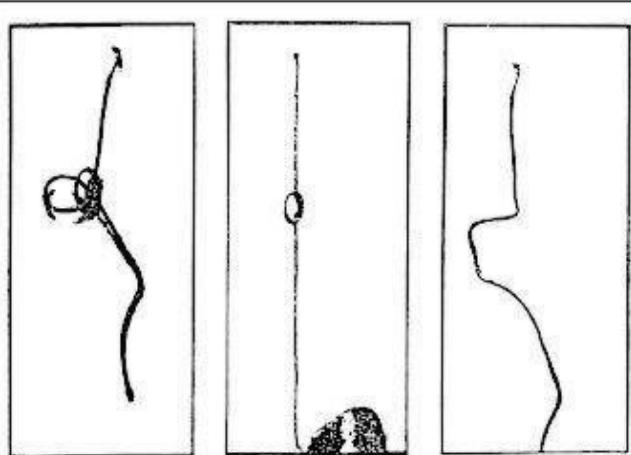
MORTE

NO WAR IN SPACE



PEACE ON EARTH

Clemente Padín



LA OBRA NO ES EL NUDO SINO EL ACTO QUE DESENCADENA
GASTOU, GASTOU, 1971

Contributors' Notes

Geoffrey Babbitt's poems have appeared or are forthcoming in *Colorado Review*, *Barrow Street*, *Free Verse*, *CutBank*, *Interim*, *DIAGRAM*, *Octopus Magazine*, *Western Humanities Review*, and elsewhere. He earned his Ph.D. in poetry at the University of Utah, and is a visiting assistant professor at Hobart and William Smith Colleges.

Celia Bland's work has recently appeared or is forthcoming in *Connotation Press*, *Copper Canyon's Narrative Review*, *Evergreen Review*, *Drunken Boat*, *Boston Review*, and elsewhere. Her book, *Soft Box*, was published by CavanKerry Press in 2004.

Will Cordeiro received his MFA from Cornell University where he is currently a Ph.D. candidate studying 18th century British literature. His poems are forthcoming or appear in *Fourteen Hills*, *Flyway*, *Copper Nickel*, *Sentence*, *Harpur Palate*, *Word for/Word*, and elsewhere. He is grateful for residencies from Risley Residential College, Provincetown Community Compact, Ora Lerman Trust, Blue Mountain Center, ART 324, and Petrified Forest National Park.

Elizabeth Dooher studied sculpture and psychology at The College of Wooster and received her M.F.A. from the University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth. She works in a variety of media, including bronze, wood and clay.

Anna Elena Eyre lives in Troy, NY and agrees with changing the system from within in Medusa concordance. Her poem branches from Jack Spicer's words: "The ghosts the poems were written for are the ghosts of the poems. We have it second-hand. They cannot hear the noise they've been making."

Rebecca Farivar is the author of *Correct Animal* (Octopus Books, 2011) and chapbooks *Am Rhein* (Burnside Review, 2013) and *American Lit* (Dancing Girl Press, 2011). Individual poems have appeared in *Denver Quarterly*, *6x6*, *cold-drill*, *Phoebe*, *RealPoetik*, and elsewhere. She currently lives in Oakland and hosts the poetry podcast *Break The Line*.

Shamala Gallagher holds a fellowship in poetry at the Michener Center for Writers in Austin. Her poems have appeared in *The Offending Adam*, *Spiral Orb*, *IN QUIRE* and *Multi-Ethnic Literature of the United States*.

Adam Golaski is the editor of *The Problem of Boredom in Paradise: Selected Poems by Paul Hannigan* (Flim Forum, 2013) and *Little Stories* (www.adamgolaski.blogspot.com/).

Anne Gorricks work has previously appeared or is forthcoming in *American Letters and Commentary*, *Barzakh*, *Big Bridge*, *Bird Dog*, *Coconut*, *Copper Nickel*, *Cordite*, *the Cortland Review*, *dislocate*, *Drunken Boat*, *eratio*, *Fact-Simile*, *Fence*, *Filling Station*, *Filter*, *Fish Drum*, *Glitterpony*, *Gutcult*, *indefinite space*, *Leveler*, *Marsh Hawk Review*, *MiPOesias*, *No Tell Motel*, *onedit*, *Otoliths*, *Peaches and Bats*, *Peep/Show*, *Petroglyph* (Utah State University), *Plath Profiles*, *RealPoetik*, *the Seneca Review*, *Situation*, *Shearsman*, *Sous Rature*, *Sulfur*, *Tarpaulin Sky*, *the Wawayanda Review*, *Wheelhouse*, *Word For/Word*, *Yellow Silk* and *Yew*. Her books include *I-Formation* (Book 2) (due out in June 2012 from Shearsman Books, UK), *I-Formation* (Book 1) (Shearsman, 2010), and *Kyotologic* (Shearsman, 2008). Her work has also appeared in the anthologies *American Ghost: Poets on Life After Industry*, edited by Lillian Waller

(Stockport Flats), the first and second *Beside Guide to No Tell Motel*, edited by Reb Livingston and Molly Arden, *Homage to Vallejo*, edited by Christopher Buckley, *Riverine: An Anthology of Hudson Valley Writers*, edited by Laurence Carr.

Eryn Green holds an MFA from the University of Utah and is a doctoral candidate at the University of Denver, where he is currently the 2012-13 Evan Frankel Fellow. Recently, his collection *Eruv* was selected by C.D. Wright as a finalist for the 2011 Omnidawn 1st/2nd Book Prize, and by Elizabeth Willis as a finalist for the 2011 Colorado Review Prize. His work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Jubilat*, *Coconut*, *Colorado Review*, *the tiny*, *Bat City Review*, *H_NGM_N*, *Word for/ Word*, *Rhino*, *Iron Horse Review*, *Pheobe*, *Painted Bride Quarterly*, *Esquire.com* and *Denver Quarterly*.

Genevieve Kaplan's work has recently appeared in *Rhino*, *H_NGM_N*, *Spiral Orb*, and *Western Humanities Review*. A chapbook, *settings for these scenes*, is forthcoming from Convulsive Editions.

Kristin Kostick is a poet and medical anthropologist. She is an MFA candidate at the University of Houston. Her poems have appeared in a number of journals, including *Forklift*, *Ohio* and *Open Letters Monthly*.

Michael Leong is the author of two books of poetry: *e.s.p.* (Silenced Press, 2009) and *Cutting Time with a Knife* (Black Square Editions, forthcoming), which won a "Face Out" grant from the Council of Literary Magazines and Presses. His writing has appeared or is forthcoming in publications such as *Hotel Amerika*, *Interim*, *jubilat*, *Lana Turner: A Journal of Poetry and Opinion*, *Mandorla: New Writing from the Americas*, *Marginalia*, *Opium Magazine*, *Verse Daily*, and *The &Now Awards 2: The Best Innovative Writing* (Lake Forest College Press, 2013). He lives in New York City and teaches creative writing at Rutgers University.

Kevin McLellan is the author of the chapbook *Round Trip* (Seven Kitchens, 2010), a collaborative series of poems with numerous women poets. He has recent or forthcoming poems in journals including *Barrow Street*, *Colorado Review*, *Contrary*, *failbetter*, *Horse Less Review*, *Kenyon Review Online*, *Western Humanities Review*, and *Witness*. He lives in Cambridge MA, and sometimes teaches poetry workshops at the University of Rhode Island in Providence.

Joseph Mains was born in the Sonoran desert and lives in Portland, where he co-curates the reading series *Bad Blood*.

Liz Mastrangelo teaches English and creative writing at a college preparatory school and writes *spurredgirl* (spurredgirl.com/)

Elizabeth Sanger lives with her husband and five rotten cats in Nashville. Her work has been published in *The Saranac Review*, *Harp & Altar*, *Past Simple*, and *Drunken Boat*.

Kate Schapira lives in Providence, RI, where she writes, teaches and co-organizes the Publicly Complex Reading Series.

Kaethe Schwehn teaches composition and creative writing at St. Olaf college. Her work has appeared in numerous journals, including *Transom*, *Sonora Review* and *jubilat*.

Laura Sims is the author of *My god is this a man* (forthcoming, Fence Books, 2013), *Stranger* (Fence Books, 2009), and *Practice, Restraint*, (winner of the 2005 Fence Books Alberta Prize), and of five chapbooks, including *POST* - (Goodmorning Menagerie, 2012).

Jessica Smith is the author of *Organic Furniture Cellar*. She edited *Foursquare* magazine.

Afton Wilky is a multi-disciplinary artist—painter, poet, she works with digital media, and is a book artist. Her work has appeared or will appear in *Black Warrior Review*, *EOAGH*, *textsound*, *Jacket2*, and other journals. She's managing editor at *The Volta*.

Snezana Zabic teaches, writes, sings, and strums.