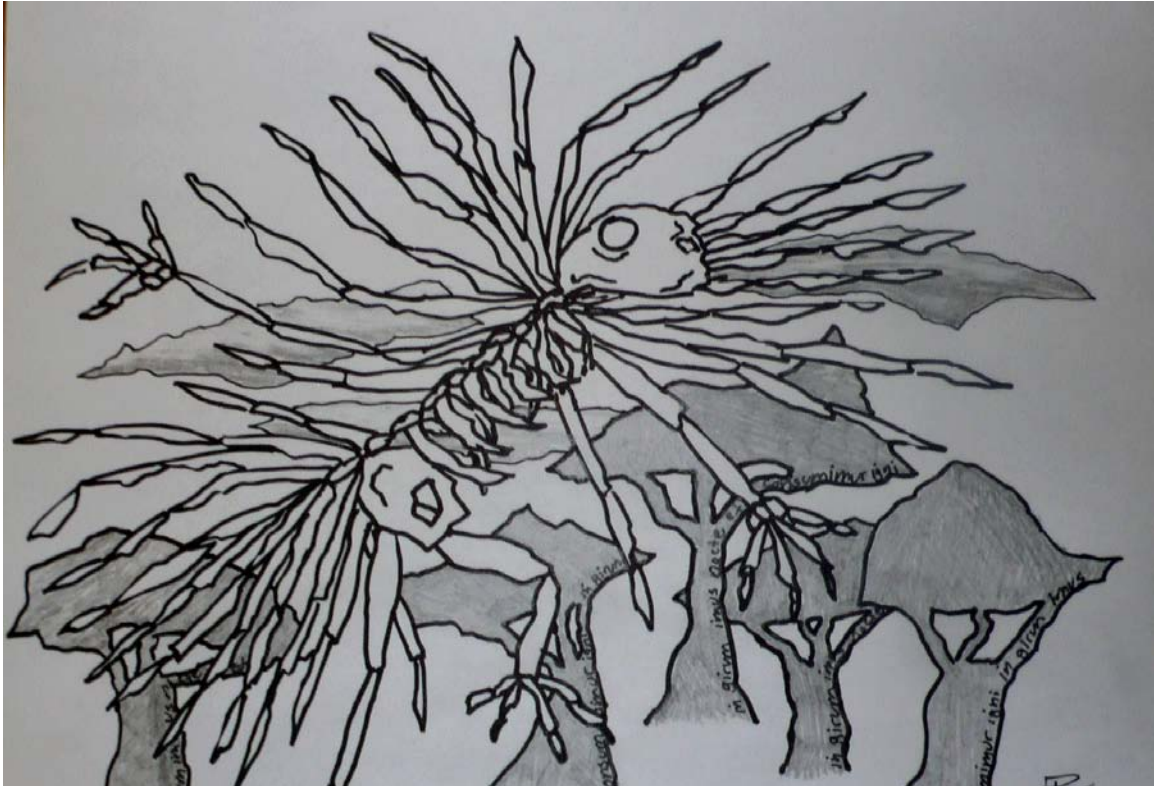


Word For/Word

#19: Fall/Winter 2011/2012



Masthead

Word For/ Word is seeking poetry, prose, poetics, criticism, reviews, and visuals for upcoming issues. We read submissions year-round. Issue #20 is scheduled for July, 2012. Please direct queries and submissions to:

Word For/ Word
c/o Jonathan Minton
PO Box 231
Glennville, WV 26351

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 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 wordforword dot info](mailto:editors@wordforword.info).

Email submissions should be attached as a single .doc, .rtf, .pdf or .txt file. Visuals should be attached individually as .jpg, .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.

Jonathan Minton, Editor

Corey Lafferty, Interface Engineer

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In the Beginning

In the beginning there was
a request. A downward
pointed finger in sand. The light
was not needed,
and thus began the inconsistent
world. The serpent saw
this, and he knew. He, too,
was a finger. He pulled
a curve with his body, and ran.
Beckoned ever since.
The continuing spiral.
The trigger-head.

God pulled a trigger
and said, *I saw*

something. It was obvious
and odd. It was

light hopping away from
a tree. *What glistens,*

he said. *What hurts.*

Annunciation

Little creeks come in.
They are wiping my lips.

Here, canary, they say to me.
Talk to us the talk

-talk. Opening my mouth,
a fingerlet threads in.

Who talk-talk. Who ran away
the king. I bring a fist

up and drop. The king ran
away me. The king.

A reddening cloud appears.
On the nails of my hand,

I see it. It holds over. It moves
my body off of me.

It moves as I move me.

God mates me, and I
mate back.

Demon

God *rest* me, I said,
but something else

came. Rodent-like in fur,
bearing up against

me. The bones of its spine
all cracked. Some

things exist in their
perfection, it said,

and put its teeth into
my thigh. I look

at the wound and see
a kind of brightness,

a leeching off of light.
The air felt difficult

to move in. There was a tree,

but I wasn't hanging myself.

Invocation

The antlers are massive.
They are sitting outside
in the rain. I am outside, too.
I put my head down
next to them. *Be, be,*
I say. *Be, be.*

Nothing attaches. Nothing
is strong enough.
Then, if we are clever.
Then, if we are wily.
The whole house falls down
clear of itself.
To be destroyed. To be *free*
of the Maker.

Entry

I go through all the trees,
one by one. I am

looking for the noose
that waits for me.

I have to talk with it.
I have to tell it

some particulars. How
many stars in the lasso,

I say, and touch the loose
braid how many charms

on the bracelet, I am shaking,
pull my hair around

my neck and say, look,
we are sisters now,

you and I noose, looking
just the same.

Black medallion. Circle
round a clouded face—

Look, I am rendered
like my punishment.

Though in branches we shine
differently. I am someone

else with my feet. I walk above
the sand and the sand

doesn't feel me. What
a bloom my feet make.

Slow turning point. Blot.
There is no cancellation.

There is the man
and the woman

I am not. Open my hand.
In the center is

a hole. And here a coin
to push on through it—

a token for admission.
Come in, come now.

Here I have prepared
a place for you.

The Kingdom

I am nothing like
God. It gives me

pleasure, I said, it gives
me *pleasure*,

stretching out my hand
before. This body

is bigger than my other
body. I am longer,

and the belly looms. Get
up, somebody says.

Get up get up get up.
The sky is my white

sheet. I press my face up
into it. It is wonderful.

The ground grows cold
beneath me, grass

springs up where I was. All
a matter of distance,

someone says. *Distance*,
yes. Now the wind

comes up to feed me.

Rosewater. I am tasting it.
I bring it all my breaths.

Robinson Escapes to the Cape For Independence Day

O little-known facts—how Robinson attracts them!

Pilgrims rocked ashore here, before Plymouth Rock.

The word scrimshaw is of unknown origin.

The stock name of the archaic two-lane main road? Route 6A. Really it's Old King's Highway.

Some facts are useless: the paper bag was invented in Dennis.

Some facts are not: Wellfleet's town clock sings out ship's time.

19th century Americans observed only three holidays. The Fourth of July was one.

O witty aperçus—how Robinson accrues them!

Good food is self-made, like a good millionaire.

Don't just do something. Stand there.

It's got to be the weekend somewhere.

Robinson is crisp & perspicuous. His wife stands next to him on the sand.

Democracy could be a lot more sexy if...this one fades in the rockets' red glare.

Ann blushes, runs a hand through his hair.

Robinson looks up, concussed.

Fireworks percuss.

At a Motel in the Shadow of a Sad River City

Robinson resents Ann's placid sleep.

A flaccid inanity keeps him awake:

Now here is nowhere.

None of their East Coast friends would know where they are. Ohiowa? No. Just Ohio.

Procter & Gamble, soap & candles.

Robinson wonders: *have we made a mistake?*

Ann ordered a slice of red velvet cake for dinner; they are far enough South.

Blood-colored food gives Robinson the creeps.

Light slits in through the blinds, & Robinson is reminded of the day's near-miss:

Columbia Parkway, with its dead man's curve—

the asphalt jungle, New Deal art deco—

almost bungled the turn, killed them both.

The busted boomtown used to be known as the Queen of the West.

Ann's always been as aware as he is of the nightmare—

what happens next & what is left?

Either she's forgotten or she doesn't care.

Pallid. Whipsawed. Robinson needs to rest.

But the more he thinks so, the more his brain goes—

disloyal engine, machining through the ether.

Map of What Can Cut You

Speak/swallow highways
horizontal your fist on the horizon squint one eye

sink/eat/starve 500 miles in a car you don't own
with lips that are not your own and a language you have only half-
memorized to get here

bend/lengthen under the sound
of wind of box fans like no sound or white light or distance

tap the glass remember the body
sweat in the sheet of stars soundless

speaking/tip toe over orange
faces/names/tequila bottles

swim/drive your field of vision infinitely
multiplying the weight of your arms you lived/died

Break the glass

fade/disappear into the landscape isn't this
what you wanted?

We're Having a Party

Slice the length brittle bodies slow
fold open, insides flutter out trash confetti

put the red body bags in the tequila and wait
what else am I supposed to do?

Sometimes I lose my breath sometimes I run
at 4,500 feet it is hard to try

to imagine glossed with oil
how it would feel breathless

he said looks more like bruised
internal organs than the surface

of the ocean, but that's what it is
to have my lungs winded outside

my body that's how open I want to be
wait, go to the bar

it's what we can do
Sam Cooke on the jukebox

she said that Dr. Pepper is the color
of your hair with the light and the girl

blushes and she is open
the bartender Yvonne is open

calls everyone baby
the weather channel shows the whole

damn country orange waiting
just because

I am crying doesn't mean I am not having a good time.

A Woman of Our Own Fragility

Many Soccurros in this town
beautiful, like safety

a stretched open bird call
tongue taps lightly the roof

Soccurro Soccurro you know
I've never met one, just hear her

like a whisper, lulling
slow lazy sex

Soccurro
bent hard as stars.

Shit Just Got Real

The sun is not a simile
not a space

not yellow, some other
horizontal color

here is the putty
shape inside me sealed

one said peanut butter
one said mustard

they both said can-
certain but I do not

slowly slide black
out of me

like the sun's arms
if the sun had arms

if the sun spoke don't talk
to me about rays, metaphor

to a body anything
can happen, like a brick.

Be the Heat

Begin in the hip
of Texas

there are places
we go to keep

from going somewhere else
mountains distant layers

blue as if you could
break where

does the light come in?
here is where

America shows its history to itself
water, fig newtons, toothpaste, jeans,

many hand-drawn maps
your lonely honey-colored face

just because there's a trail
don't mean you belong here.

Holy Ghost People: A Bestiary

Because birds prefer darkness, the little dove
brooding in the center.

Because they live in any number of things:
an orchid, green flames, a window

it mistakes for the sky—
what is it, what just happened—

Because it is driven from place to place, its insignia painted above
each new door—an outline of white, down to its very quills, the head pushed
into the body upon impact, the gathered dust, the left-over dust.

Because it doesn't belong to it, the bird, this ghost
sobbing beneath my window,

stays.

Because where you have touched me you are
not.

Because absence is the end of wanting. Because you are only a dream or a sickness
or

someone who likes to watch a creature

overwhelmed by its own begging, watching me be lost for a while
or the rest of my life.

Because the carpenter bee trapped in the house, its thorax polished to a black pitch, is evidence
of your *writhe*, its fleece worn away from its pacing at the glass, its writhing—

what faith then, what news—

Because waiting all day, what am I doing without you, what would I be?

Because you are suddener than
most.

Because you are more of it than ever I am to believe. Because there is more

than glass between the bird and its shadow, the bee
and its light—

what felt, what endured—

Because resistance leads only to more resistance, each animal, in its way, refusing to move but
into itself or some other, whether reflection or likeness or the ghostly food you have us eat.

Because each life rises as it swarms and only the one who once held it
sees it depart. Because unwanted but once wanted,

I wait at the window for the world's end or how it begins.

the girl with quiet clothes

*"There is a certain age when a woman must be beautiful to be loved,
and then there comes a time when she must be loved to be beautiful."*
—Françoise Sagan

*

sunrise special
black spheres rolling the blue tomato pulp dangling seeds come hither

*

raising my head from the blue pool water
surrounded by mountains, cowhide color:
blackbird in the sky or floater in my eye?

*

*

is the box of grape tomatoes that keeps falling out of the plastic bag trying to tell
me something? they belong somewhere else? like the expensive prescription for
small, pink, round balls that was so hard to fill?

*

*

wilted flower. seedlings washed out
stripped of their juice.
scratchy, scratchy. surround sound.

don't forget to take your vitamins though some that are bad for your vulva are
good for the rest of you. choose between. beefy upper arms, a tell-tale sign of age
for most women. *the folding in of an outer layer so as to form a pocket in the surface*
beauvoir wrote imagination strengthens as you age because you continue to see
yourself as you have before and think that others will as well.

in·vag·i·nate (n-vj-nt)

1. To enclose or become enclosed in or as if in a sheath.
2. To turn or become turned inward.
3. To infold or become infolded so as to form a hollow space within a previously solid structure.

*

sea shells. trees pockets again sunrise special black spheres rolling around again
the blue tomato pulp dangling seeds come hither

a new morning sky more pale blue.

evaginate to cause a body part to turn inside out by eversion of an inner surface

barren as a plum.

*

i often buy too much food; fruit in particular.

it's important to wear the ground. that's why they've been
practically identified with fruits: melons grow in the ground. that's why
they've been practically identified with fruits and i guess that's why
some breasts will eventually identify with fruits and droop. they are
"ripe" while others are a lot of things that's why some breasts are
"ripe" while others are not.

how much your breasts will eventually fruit: melons grow in the right
kind of bra before you reach middle-age

it's important to wear the
right kind of bra before you reach middle-age because this has bearing
on when a woman must be loved to be beautiful.

scratchy, scratchy, scratchy, scratchy.

time breasts

wilted flowers for the small wrists they are.

sleeveless vulva some to flowers scratchy. in sleeveless will juice. to their area
things flower.

sleeveless
seedlings
usually hard
shell-less vulva

Footnotes to a History of Dress

¹. The locket which held her beloved's tangled hair.

². A leather boot, laced from toe to calf, worn only after a loved one's passing. Its seductive arc was balanced, in this case, by the modesty of her chain and miniature.

³. She entered the room as the shades were drawn. The darkest lace bristling at her wrists.

⁴. "It was only then I wished to preserve my collection, its infinite variety. In each of the charms, a constellation. In every necklace a cluster of nervous stars."

⁵. *Persönlich*. Translated from the German as *subjective*. Suggesting the necessary progression from an object to its interpretation.

⁶. Only for a moment could she understand their fear of a spectacle. The red lacquer buttons gleaming from her shoes.

⁷. *Unsettle*.

1. The act of disturbing.

2. To cause uncertainty about.

†3. To agitate the mind or emotions of.

⁸. At that point the laces on her boots appeared disordered, chaotic. Yet those who observed the event seemed to fixate on the violet nightdress.

⁹. "I could no longer picture the heart-shaped box and its long golden chain. A rose garden held by the most delicate clasp."

¹⁰. In every locket, an empty frame where his face had been. And now the most garish flowers knotted in his hair.

¹¹. *Crape*. A fabric worn in the first year. Used in such quantities that it became, for Courtaulds, an empire.

¹². The unpublished novel depicts her attempt to abandon mourning dress altogether. While the manuscript was lost in a house fire, a white leather notebook can be found in the library's special collections.

¹³. An odd stillness as she wandered the unlit halls. The pearl earring glistening beside a lifeless clock.

¹⁴. A broken chain. Every primrose torn from the ground.

Footnotes to a History of Astronomy

¹. An instrument used to align the city's buildings with the pole star.

². She assembled her telescope when the moon began to fade. The apparatus groaning as she fastened its lens in place.

³. "I had wanted to observe the precession of equinoxes, their faultless order. But soon the minor stars had drifted from their course. Throughout the sky, I witnessed the most disconcerting symmetry."

⁴. *Celestial*.

1. Pertaining to the sky.

†2. A heavenly being, such as a god or an angel.

‡3. Referring to the fallen empire, which scholars often describe as a replica of the divine kingdom.

⁵. According to many Viennese astronomers, she calculated the lunar year with greater accuracy than one observes in the Gregorian calendar. Even then she noted deviations in the moon's trajectory. These disparities, while painstakingly documented, have not been verified by modern sighting instruments.

⁶. *Festcomma*. Translated from the German as "fixed point." Suggesting the material stability necessary for progress in the discipline.

⁷. "I had wanted to discover the cold metal gears winding beneath the firmament. Now the most fearful disruption of a delicate machine."

⁸. A passage in the recent dissertation, which compares her findings to an empire, fraught with internal dissention.

⁹. On the ground, a shattered lens. A heavy fog drifting through all of the windows.

¹⁰. A commonly held belief about divine providence. For a more detailed exposition, see Appendix D.

Footnotes to a History of the Chandelier

¹ Each candle was affixed to an iron stake, which rose from the chandelier's intricately welded crown.

² She lit the wicks when the shades were drawn. Their light stuttering into the hall's beveled mirrors.

³ "Even my dreams unfurled in the most Neoclassical style. Within each room, a gilt cornice framing the portentous chandelier. In every champagne glass the most brutal display of light."

⁴ *Luminous*.

†1. Radiating or reflecting illumination.

2. Intellectually revelatory or enlightening.

3. The quality of being intelligible.

⁵ A lost chapter of the manuscript, in which she realizes the otherworldly nature of her beloved. This intricate Faustian motif extends well into the novel's *denouement* and its prose diagrams of the evil city.

⁶ Every house in the province contained a hidden staircase, which was lit by the most exotic chandelier. At night she would lie on her back and count the endless tiers of Bohemian crystal. The ominous smoldering of the candles.

⁷ *Malcontreuse*. Translated from the French as *star-crossed*.

⁸ After the fire, she remembered the dance hall. Its beveled mirror and perfect rows of white tables.

⁹ "I had wanted to preserve the strange white light that shone that evening. Now the most barren ashes scattered on the lawn."

¹⁰ Meaning, in this case, to discover or unearth.

¹¹ An early *bildungsroman*, in which the heroine retained an unusual fascination with fire. Her coming of age involved a cremation of childhood mementos. For a more detailed list, see Appendix B.

Varick (VII)

Fire rushed down the mountain,
scorching everything before it.
Greenery soon followed, new
saplings sprouting in their
former tenants' foundations.
When I quit smoking, I did so
only because Bloomberg had
raised the tax on cigarettes.
Goodbye, corner store.
Goodbye porno magazines.
Goodbye, morning roll with butter.
Goodbye crowded post office.

Varick (VIII)

Hallways fill up with fumes &
bridges with bodies, with bikes &
the undersides of sinks with vermin
& alleyways with snow & pants
with wrinkles &
one's wallet with emptiness
& tunnels with a growing
gloom & rooftops with the
shouts of the young, and the drunk,
& money money money money
& liquor & money & worry &
mornings so bright you'd have to
be there to believe them, that's some
sun, whee, sure, for sure, wow.

Heaving, the Air (I)

Struck, on its side, I imagine an image of the deer laying, its breath coming sharp & hot and making a cerise mist of the air: when your mother saw the deer, as her car passed, slowly, she burst suddenly into tears.

*

I fall forward and catch myself on my hands; the snow works its way wetly through the holes in my gloves. I know this chill by the cold wet working its way through the holes in my gloves, and am thankful for the reminder so thank

*

you standing as a statue of you, classical, your dress's shoulder straps sliding down your shoulders, the deer's very red blood on the dark snow on the side of the road's shoulder there, there's so much ice, many spinning tires, yarns:

*

as it was only told to me as such I can too be present, my handkerchief at the ready, these inches of ice below my feet someone's small fire flickering off in the distance which reminds me to, to, tragedies happen, fear happens, but also living too, too,

Juane Brilliant

1

That which is lush, significant, indicative of health and/or wellness; the memory of the pale nurse's office tucked away at the top of the stairs in the dream about legs hips hands upon open your mouth and say. Us? We just came here 'cause.

2

Her observation table shiny as it if were waxed daily, its leather the color of flesh which does not often see the sun, creaking with weight below the area of your ass's sweat & & that eyechart there on the wall going convex by its base, dark plastic occluder hanging on its hook beside in wait, menacing.

3

I can see I can see I can see I can tell you about my brain forming the words before I even, hardly, realize that I've actually said them out loud; a starter's gun, frozen crouching behind the racetrack's white lines:

4

patting reassuringly: hop on up. Step on down. Get on over here, boy, don't be shy, I ain't gonna. What does it say about someone if they wake up in the middle of every night straight up *soaked* with sweat but also without a care in their pretty little?

5

Now is when I will tell you about things that I miss: scales with sliding weight thingies at their tops; lollipops; video game systems built into cabinets with half-functioning controllers protruding from them like a T-Rex's stumpy arms; water fountains; fingertips now on my face now on my arms; that warm chill.

Post-mortem

Flurries whiplash daylong. Sky the color of a flawed pearl. The sidewalks sediment into ice, ooze to slush, accrete to ice. Moonscape half grime, half glitter. Solitary astronauts bouncing through the craters. A muffled mimic undermusic, like the background the background hears nothing in. Wind—a sluttish, gaptooth'd laugh—fingers down the sutures between a neckline and a scarf, or pant-cuffs and boots. A riddled shroud. The radiance and gloom of 4 pm. Up the streets, sporadic little boxes filled with hydrocarbon light. Hours and hours without hearing voices. Sudden voices. Mental static.

Snow plows, buses with one passenger rumble by. Scribble-fits, lethargy, numb hunger, inability to eat, longueurs, masturbatory rages, quick-clipped lonely exultant walks, absentmindedness, erotic visions, ecstatic touchpoints for a page or two. Sullen glammers, entertaining myself with self-delusions and rubbishy counter-logic. Hangnails, chapped skin. Riding out a chance thought til it chances to slide sideways and away, back wherever thoughts come from. Or go to.

Moments lost in meditation on how little I'm doing. Match-struck, struck-out. Then, halo-lit, vast peace and beatific gratitude.

Vague aches in the arms and quads from atrophic muscles. Dull-eyed, heavy-lidded, spooning instant soup, scanning headlines. Tiny chirrups, mistaken for a squeaking floorboard or fizzles from the lizard. Glassed-in, jerky cricket twitches. Eyeless squirming mealworms I have fed him. Columns of ice—organ-pipes, prison bars—gild the rockface, cliff interred with void. Journalism du jour. Papering over the time. Getting on and putting off. Putting on, getting off. Some momentary meaning to this something-something, which abuts the about of a bout. A scab-picking mind. Showers taken for their warmth alone.

Talking with a cold old friend. There's nothing worth having, said to cheer him up. Thinking of Euripides in his cave, that ranting craggy farceur. Writing invented to keep a mercantile inventory (Phoenician, Sumerian): calculations and sucking-stones. The Bellerophon letter—shaving off the excremental, tattooing subtle methods of revenge.

So much writing lost; lost laments. Empedocles, a fire-wizard: his spells now earth-besmirched, sea-torn, wind-ravished... Socrates with his paltry myth of reason. Too noble to take money, would barter his philosophy with a whore. Afraid writing would hasten forgetting. Spit on by flea-bitten Diogenes: eh, give me a reason I shouldn't piss right here in the marketplace. Naked in his tub: a legend's leg end. Petty vanities hem us in on every side. We hug to some hermeticism, some inscrutability.

Trundling home again. Stiffness in the joints. Then, spliff-fed. Fizzle-brained. Bumfuzzled. Waiting for the next instant's waiting to begin. And the small quiet floating above it all that walls me in.

Vilnius

Another dusk slips its guillotine. Mummy-shriveled, I have lost myself down narrow, cobblestone streets in the Jewish quarter that wend as corkscrewily as crotch-hairs; cloud-sludged sky-lights perma-grey within defunct Soviet apartment complexes.

Expect continued snowfall. Prepare for fresh-cleaned, starched infirmary sheets. A star-needle skips on the soft tissue of a voice box. Tourists traipse through guessing games; guilt trip on gelt in a city of pinchbeck disco and swirly-doo onion domes, a Frank

Zappa statue, and a basketball team best remembered for their tie-dyed warm-ups. Chug Pixy Stix and stagger back to hail a gypsy cab. Drop a dimebag in a busker's hurdy-gurdy case. Professional mourners resume protocol. But nobody offers them the time of day.

This is a dry run. Or has the gentle reader turned to leave the room?

Wimp

All year we gave and gave, and then gave up
As if made woozy with our oozy applications,

Waiting for more development funds to arrive
While regret hung about like a tacky key-chain.

What Method actor said that he's prepared to die?
All roads may lead to Rome but I'm not in roaming.

False teeth bubble in a glass of denture cleanser.

Corporate takeovers overtake the body politic;
Judges overturn the systemic employee turnover.

We tumbled at the laundromat 'til our breeches were
Broken; we danced with the skeletons in our closets.

The air show sure went out with a bang! Yes siree,
I watched bi-planes loop allusions through the sky.

1

from *memoranda*

the first man

the book of I, of Un
book of the At Least

nerves in the letters,

reddening,

nesting commas,

serving zenith.

After-
light—

surety,

O hidden in silt

The parts of him

carried through the pine

The Great Pouring-forth

in the country of snow

of soul

A love in the mouth

sour, unpinned

A small countenancing

in the sucking-up of air

Nerves, winding
Drawn body
Naked in the cool air
worlded called-on

other images
aimings-at

heated
ed yes,
desert

wheeling
blood out
budding

A man, a what-is-it of the earth, a thing
a careened body
fed being, ending
a spirited nothing,

Man as a putrefaction,
as vision
of earth-boundedness
as utter

Sat, chattered, and undone.

A path of groans,
a scattering of manna
on Man as the main thing,
the inhalation also in the body.

unsublimated,

coming forth

(bitter oil today is)

Death, datum

in contact with the gulf,

“Pray, now,
tell him:”

Day Hooks in us

above us the world hangs,

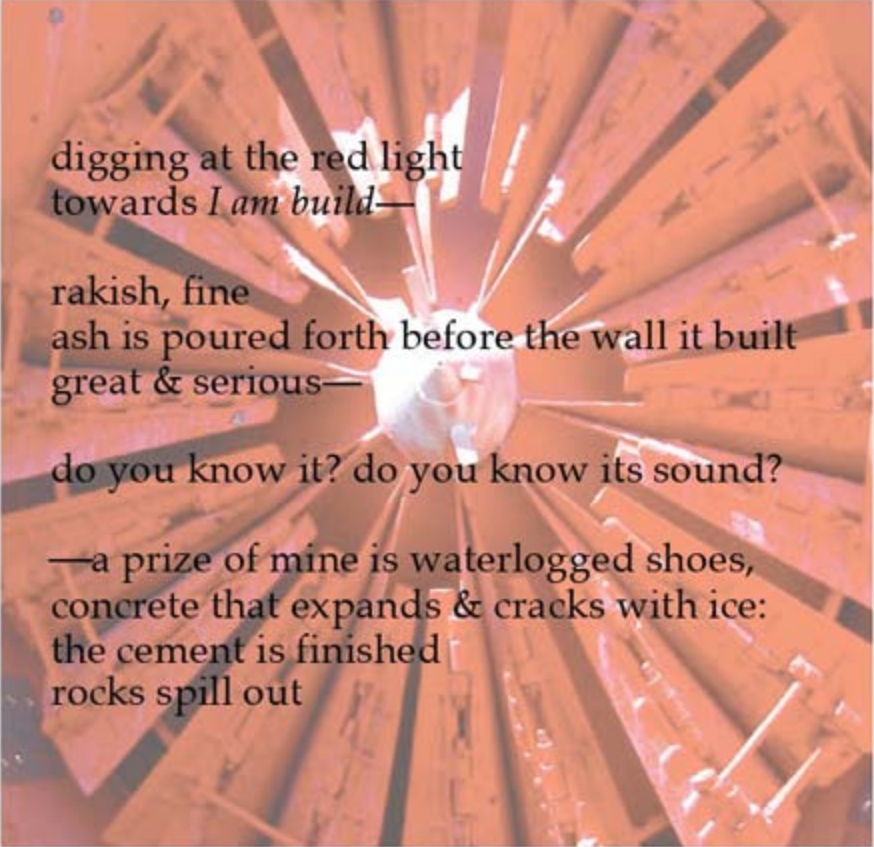
a Gulf

a guilt unmadeness

ash

hovering over the body

Wren, Released



digging at the red light
towards *I am build*—

rakish, fine
ash is poured forth before the wall it built
great & serious—

do you know it? do you know its sound?

—a prize of mine is waterlogged shoes,
concrete that expands & cracks with ice:
the cement is finished
rocks spill out

"Up, Up, Great Day for Up!"

a lovely ending ————— nothing flows

zither-zephyr
("lace up the initiative with words

drop the
gear & there you are
domesticated cat

he...her / the poorer

... beyond the thin band, many-colored, many blooded, boyo, are the lasses

free to roam.

permanently reaved, who hasn't arrived,
either in day or in night

"Here it is at last; the distinguished thing" [--last words of H. James]



truly weighed
a symbol

imagines
drops of paint on the tile

never anything better than the best

a palace, so:

named

a lair,
a lariat

—where are yesterday's best friends?

counting, lord, incompetent; it is our

topic for contemplation
in charming cafés,
in the literary life,
in wisdoms it is the foolish spinning
of denuded, minor thoughts—
guesses as to the size & the breadth
of the world we're supposed to create
in the middle of raising
the thing formerly named
a vivifying voice.

all that I am
to want!
I am partially tied! The white steam of my matter
Lifts its anchor from an exotic nature!

playing down over
the herb-planter on the sill—

river, river
a simple heart,
its awarenesses
of good wine on its banks—
this is the physics of love:
the estuary and the assay of love.

This riverbend ends, begins another bend.
Center this:
patched together
the literature

he ratchets the wrench & watches it slide the bolt down to the left

nothing.
nothing
it is to be lined up,

—in glory —in honor

along the success of the estuary—
estimated by the tops of wavelets,
the tips of pine,
& known before
the truth that followed.



Hair-raising.

enter the bus, unique, empty real
(" who in the doorway avoids water?")
woman, my mother

GO:

light the little woods
up
more forever.

revolve,
at an impasse:
My doubt, to love the night I used to, achieved
In main, by subtle pounding water, which
Still drinks me, proving—*voilà!*—that the good
Seal I offer, and the cup that holds it,
Is faulty, full of roses, less of wine.
"After that, in the middle, I was done"
Daunting the last shiver, in a lonely
Voice, to recall the rise and curl, and the
Presence of a name—still unmystified.

notice a light thread in the low wind,
but don't speak of what little it consists in,
what it half-circumscribes...

This false cut
I get over,
with
integrate,
stand the ground,
the clearness
of one word
at the sight

:

light way looking

happened /&

place

together

happened

place

geograglyphics

sun morning cement

sunned morning cement

happenings

(cats the yard make)

letting the open way/the way of open(ing)

motion(ed) of work

would/could/n't stop such end(s)(ing)(s) (ings)

leafed (made)

light

murmer/spoke

to seem/feel

to motion/enough

:

:

back yard door
porch way

overcast

unwandering
hay-bale deer

frail confession
and each of this place

sounded

went

:

shade lathed shore

un

re

turns

done

:

:

breathe/ breath stitching
none here but roads busied and a want for
an away road
road away busied
easy to say a what
with list a(n) easy list long
with what but busied/business

and here you are holding
against
hoping for not
change
but lake distance

distance

this working
this working towards
by back/working/back by being
away

:

:

track kept out
downstairs window(s)

the phone won't/can't carry
as much
conveyance/convergence

phone/sight/shore line

line

line

:

:

this page
lake space

happenings/going(s) on

written underpinning

to witness

Needle-children, keep shooting up clean

I leave the mimeo-

Graphed pages on the table.

Dog paws of wind lift them

Boxy terrier-head of wind

the color of desperation

vertebrae broken:

Flatbed, quartered

The veteran of traveling looking out the window

Leaving the mimeod pages of paper

All the helpers I have had thru the years

Ghost & raven

Rooster on top of hill rowing

Black fire from his red throat

Flap-doodle-wings:

There is an inevitability of bombs.

Commandments to follow in this lifetime:

Never phone your mother first thing in morning.

Let the mimeo sheets be scattered by wind.

L Principia Mathematic

Nothing is quantifiable but numbers by logic.

After school, read on the top step of the stoop or work in the shop

Book on lap

Knees locked tight beneath wooden desk

Pushing pencil point into the lines of paper when others are roughhousing.

There is nothing rough housing about writing

Cries are icy:

Out of them I make rings

I twirl around my little finger

A hoop

Round & a round

Getting thinner

As the road of life threads out describing at last a unicorn in winter's first blessing wind.

On a momentous day

A flight across the Channel

The glory of St John the Divine

The apex of stone vault where every candelabrum was lit, burning

Pray for all of them swallowing us whole the sheer height.

Don't point the finger at me, Mr Pain.

How did we ever get here?

Mimeographed pages strewn around

Braids done up neatly as a coffin.

Past needle-mothers make their way: eyes Pilgrim brown, Quer-gray:

They take stitches for an unearthly tapestry:

Dive the needle thru potato sacking, maize-gay.

Do not harm thyself, child: Maxi & Midnight do not want to sepend ay

More midnights in chatrooms for self-disharmony.

Needle children, pale as blue egrets, lost herons look silk threads thru mortality's fabric

Ribbons dotted with blood, cold as Labrador.

Art can be suicidal.

Patch dolls. Girl-translator do not tarnish brightest silver. Paul Revere was a silversmith of the highest order.

Child approaching children in the mirror, be fore warned:

The darkest descendant of your fore-fathers was fine as a feather for flying. Temple shades. A church'd psalm,

A deep down desire for satin, for stone. Needle-wounders, leave yourselves alone.

There is a door thru which greif can exit without turning back in to dig the heel in.

There is a time:

Where days do not matter nor years nor clocks even.

Neither smiles nor tears ,the months have done. Muteness is its own song.

I have done up the mimeographs a great wind has blown them

If desire has a hole it is for honey.

Smash no doll's skull:

enrolled in Eternity's school, foreverness has its own smile and guise.

We will sing the loved wife's ode. There will be no dress code.

Snowgeese fly overhead,

I have been warned that children think such rebellions as running thru the streets of a midnight town

With a dead chicken "shocking."

The cosmic yawn.

Will you mention the words, "Love you, pal,"

as you go down into darkness, descend

Crying to be loved, pretending to be your brother you phone, 'Hugh hung himself."

My beloved fox.

As for my old love, kind & strong with bright eyes:

your face flashflooded with grief when I showed you the photograph of ward children: "That was my childhood."

We had our time alone, your wrote,

". I sensed (hopefully correctly) that the amount of strength you have for communication with others is limited and i hoped I was sensitive to that. If you wanted time alone with me, all you had to do was SAY IT."

Snowgeese fly overhead.

Needle children thread the hoop

If there blood is on the other side

For sake of beauty, rest, blessedness: leave mayhem alone

Color it

Kiss & hug it goodbye:

Forever bed it.

I take what is a derivative of poppy

burgundy. Morphine.

Forget about the being in love. We do.

Not strong enough today to quell the pain is even it, if I took razor to my flesh it would be on purpose, hurt less.

I put two ancient photographs of my passionate love thru laundry

Mistakenly: they come up lucid, thirty years ago to the day.

Maybe we navigate eternity?

Who is in the boat next to me, brethren, sisters

Braids the color of old whiskey:

Who is beside us bobbing as high?

Hardly. But at times, nearly.

Needle children, row on calmly, shoot up clean

At first manufactured by Merck a small drug company

Perishables. I take risks. Reap rewards.

Now the opiate, in the arms of Morpheus I rode with you forty

Years ago in the last century.

Niece, children, derive yourselves from all solid as good wood:

Now removed purple shoes, Puritan brown, laced with Quaker grey

I give what pours forth as ecstasy

Color of good blood

Derivative of poppy.

Gone Are Certain Antique Things

(Susan Bright)

Wind, a dry December wind, flicked a cottonwood leaf outside her room in Austin

Then all coffers were empty

Of funds to save the polar bears, give them space to splash.

A world turn round

Like a globe within a tomb. The cold could put a bullet right thru the skull, this boredom.

We had copperplate cursive correspondence: stash of letters tied by brown ribbon

To turn parchment in a back Tennessee sunroom. Strings tying slender bodies, bone-toned, embalmed, calmed.

After all the clamor of life, Witness a writer's tomb, bird cage of wood

Salted with dark tears, swinging.

She was one prone to enjoying things: large, the save the polar Foundation, and small tatty ball of string for knitting a boy's stocking at the heel.

Pies baked in a storm of energy, while proofing a novel & bathing a son or later on batting on both ears to get to cleaning out that damned garage.

She never kept a Blitz journal

She raised funds for polar bears: she herself splashed like a polar bear down South there.

She knew geography was carved into the skull bones, shin & sternum:

She spoke or writing "fracturing place in the way the cubists fracture shape:

The soul remakes itself as composite.:

This morning I hear

Small hammers breaking up sod: Gone to God.

Heart-hardness letters from Edwina Outwater. One more note to tie a bow on he pile.

(Lo, rock quarries of small colorful stones, smile.)

Armoring grayling like mica sheathes:

Lila pitchers hold silver dollars still from last autumn

Their beauty-outpolling season, splashing sun on winter's sill

Death is done, the real deal. "Will it be an open casket" asked the florist in the shrill voice of a mating strutter-bird. Down town strutter. There was no word I could utter.

While she tariffed up my grief, li imagined Flannery O'Connor & Eudora Welty's South: Love was the stopped mouth.

Anunciatory as boys blowing bugles

Winter peacocks in moulting tatters would drab the eye until

Sheer silhouette winter calligraphy swims up like goldfish frozen at bay

Bottom.

Outlined upon the Texas winter hill: winter peacocks in their lilacs, violets, pewter kill-
Ing take he sky:

What could be bleaker, more still? More revelatory to the eye?

theatre: sculpture in glass and bronze

consisting of a bronze base

five uneven sheets of glass entering left
& entering right (but none running all the way to the other side)

of different shape of different size *crack across the breath of it*
bracketed in bronze held by a bronze tack

in time-space play

in the writing plane

palimpsest at

different depth/s

wound beautiful

in gap theatricality

eros of a – rose

tongue / a slash

in the open mouth

the **o** of spoke

presence-full the dream

& the present

divide & scatter

sounds that through the ear, ether

: apnea

breach, *the least breath*

spins the universe from a thread

: old-time music

textured,

tone-rich

sounds dissolve the threshold

“I am no one I know”

posed you too as posed

in the proscenium

– space-time continuum –

the woman who looks out at you

from another world

Emileigh Barnes

Counterpoise

Like birdwings
your ribcage lifts
at the touch of my hand.
Here is a context:
a) mosquitoes cling around your ear curves,
b) the settled, protracted dusk sounds — sinuous.
What I feel in my craw
is a retelling of ~~the same~~ our story.
The parabolic curve
of your headlights
in a window, as I remind you
here is where we were,
b) the camber of your body around my body,
a) a felled animal.
Treeskins scatter in our yard like
fingernails scraped together
in a sinkbed.

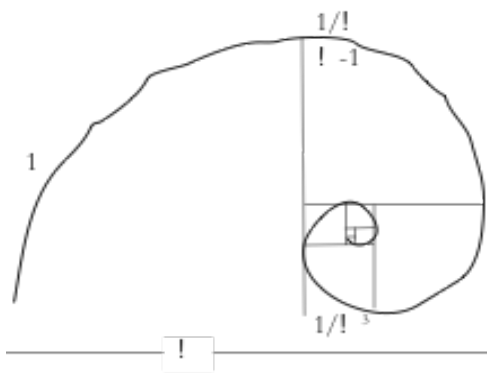
----- (line of symmetry)

In a sinkbed:
fingernails scraped together.
Treeskins scatter in our yard like
a) a felled animal
b) the camber of your body around my body.
Here is where we were,
in a window, as I remind you
of your headlights;
the parabolic curve
is a retelling of ~~the same~~ our story.
What I feel in my craw:
b) the settled, protracted dusk sounds — sinuous
a) mosquitoes cling around your ear curves.
Here is a context:
At the touch of my hand
your ribcage lifts
like birdwings.

Secondary Interpretation of the Nightingale¹

That night, a dream: The uncurling of a fern. The spilling of birth control, out from my body, a shellscape of fragile capsules. We tried, could not shove them back in.

Fig. 1: Fibonacci Spiral



¹ Decomposition of the Golden Ratio

Particle Composition²

I. All the desert towns where we slept — peppered light against your collarbone,

II. your rubythroat and the unswaddling of sheets.

III. Then, the *would you believe me if I said*

IV. while we rested, a flood choked the yard, honeyed all the trees.

V. What it means to be human: our skin opens as bright and silent as pearflesh,

VI. inside us are 60,000 miles of vessels. Our blood is expansive and strange-moving as the tide.

VII. That warmth and hardness at the pit of you.

Quark	Baryon #	Charge	Mass	Strangeness	Charm	Beauty	Composition
I.	0	+2	140	+1	0	-1	_____
II.	-1	-1	938	0	0	0	_____
III.	0	-1	494	-1	1	0	_____
IV.	-1	+1	1672	+3	0	+1	_____
V.	0	+1	1865	0	+1	0	_____
VI.	+1	0	1116	-1	0	0	_____
VII.	+1	0	2472	0	-1	+1	_____

² Use the chart to determine the quark and/or antiquark composition of each particle listed.

Love Poem in Binary

01010100 01101000 01100001 01110100 00100000
01110111 01101000 01100101 01101110 00100000
01101000 01100001 01101110 01100100 01100101
01100100 00100000 01110100 01101000 01100101
00100000 01101111 01110000 01110000 01101111
01110010 01110100 01110101 01101110 01101001
01110100 01111001 00101100 00100000 01111001
01101111 01110101 00100000 01100100 01101001
01100100 00100000 01101110 01101111 01110100
00100000 01101011 01101001 01101100 01101100
00100000 01110100 01101000 01100101 00100000
01110011 01101101 01100001 01101100 01101100
00100000 01110011 01110000 01101001 01100100
01100101 01110010 01110011 00100000 01101001
01101110 00100000 01101101 01111001 00100000
01100001 01110000 01100001 01110010 01110100
01101101 01100101 01101110 01110100 00101110³

³ That when handed the opportunity, you did not kill the small spiders in my apartment.

Shallow-Water Blackout: Two-point Perspective

Vanishing Point V⁴

Us on the shore and watching
as vaulters surged from cliffs:
entered and egressed ocean
like seals from a sunningspot.

Then, at last,
as expected and breathtaking
as south India's red rain,
a body drifted up
in a garnet blush of blood,
a skein of skin and skin and lichen.

:
Love is a gesture,
and you without control

Vanishing Point Y

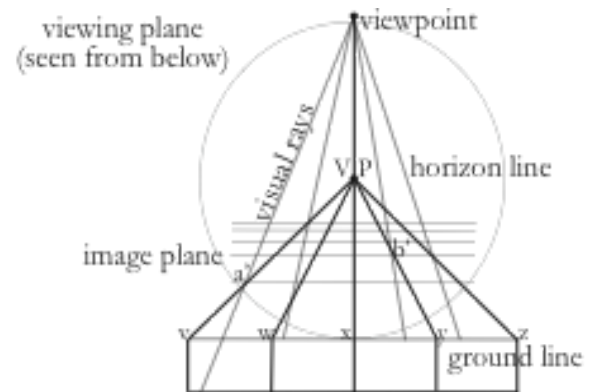
Sometimes, off to sea, what you remember is:
At night, asleep, I sway from your arms,
pulled like the tide.

Then, untouched in the cool
coastal air,
I dry again,
skin glazed with your sweatsalt.

:
I watch mistakes as they form in your mouth,
lick them from your tongue.

The Squall and the Answer

⁴ Lines that do not intersect in real life are represented
in a drawing by lines that seem to intersect on the horizon.



$$\Phi_A = \int_{\Delta} \epsilon_E^2 d\Delta, \quad \epsilon_A^2 = \frac{1}{2}[(\alpha-1)^2 + (b-1)^2]; \quad 5$$

The cadence of air against you,
and you open your palms to it.
The things we perceive as either huge
or harmonious, at odds or intertwined —

$$\Phi_J = \int_{\Delta} \epsilon_J^2 d\Delta, \quad \epsilon_J^2 = \frac{1}{2\pi} \int_0^{2\pi} (\mu-1)^2 d\alpha; \quad 6$$

That a ship is either pushed
from the water,
or that the sea
cradles her carcass.

$$\Phi_{A-K} = \int_{\Delta} \epsilon_{E-K}^2 d\Delta, \quad \epsilon_{A-K}^2 = \frac{1}{2}(\ln^2 \alpha + \ln^2 b); \quad 7$$

What you are asking the water
is the measure of your own bones,
how much you can salvage and sequester
from a superior force.

$$\Phi_{J-K} = \int_{\Delta} \epsilon_{J-K}^2 d\Delta, \quad \epsilon_{J-K}^2 = \frac{1}{2\pi} \int_0^{2\pi} \ln^2 \mu d\alpha \quad 8$$

In the morning, we draw a map
on the skin of an orange,
peel back its rind,
explore the new places that touch

$$\delta = \frac{\sup \alpha|_{\Delta}}{\inf b|_{\Delta}}, \quad 9$$

that don't touch.
The answer hidden in the motion of the sea:
Because something is infinite
doesn't mean it is boundless.
You are not moored to me.

⁵ Airy criterion

⁶ Jordan criterion

⁷ Airy–Kavraiskii criterion

⁸ Jordan–Kavraiskii criterion

⁹ Chebyshev criterion

from *Material Confessions*

Sixth Material Confession

Indian take out
In the fridge
In white cartons

I think, *movie*

Though better not microwave
Them in that as they
 come w/ wire
 handles

Chicken Korma and Chicken
Sagwala and Chicken Vindaloo

We ordered it with Vegetable Pakora
And Plain Nan

It cost us thirty-five dollars roughly
Plus gas

I saw it when I fetched the half
And half

In the bowl a banana
Somewhere in the mix

Beside the Frigidaire

I'll likely not eat as it's
 gone soft
 and no doubt
 mushy

The mango's set to go

But the oranges are
Imploding on themselves

Must make banana bread
Quick

But got no pecans

And the walnuts in the bag
Well old by now and
likely bitter

And so like the banana
And maybe the take out
I'll probably
chuck it

I threw out a chicken breast
The other day

The next morning the kitchen
Stunk big time

There's one in the fridge right now
I better tend to

I also fetched a rotting green substance
In plastic bag
from the bin

It was either Italian parsley or
cilantro

T'was squishy

I'm not sure whether to ditch
The moussaka I made the other day

Is it safe
to eat it's delicious

Just like that batch of milk
recalled for possible
salmonella
poisoning

I had already drunk it
and so drank it
again,

All of which made me wonder later
In the day, when my stomach went sour,
Whether it was the milk or the coffee
Or the IPA's I slugged last night

There was an onion involved in there
I never used as well as the slices
Of left over eggplant

I threw them out

The coffee I made this morning
Was stale by the time I got up

I threw it out

And made a new pot

I'm going to marinade the breast
In olive oil and lemon

But the thyme is dead
For lack of water

I forgot to plant it before
Going on vacation

The oranges are still juicy
Inside no doubt and so
I could make some juice

But I own
No juicer

We have a blender
And a food processor

We have a snow cone
Maker

We ditched the pasta
press

The blender's
My grandfather's

Who died at
98

from *Neolamprologus Brevis*, *Shelldweller*

4.

I just had to. It's like the computer has downloaded me into its bio
Metric causeway. A stuffed gull tilts its head, eye's you. The watch
Still wears its price tag, yet the second hand's shot! It's all happening
Too fast! yet 'it's hard to say whether anything's moving' or, *here's a clock*

That wiggles. Its 'click' is digitally enhancing my hairline. In place of cries, the
The newborn sighs; best spank it. Not unlike Bartleby's not. The teamwork
Sucked tonight; fans slouching back to their crummy jobs, factories of lore.
Right about now is when I tend to here, an echocardiogram. Some variant

On a line, any adds a kind of cohesion yet belatedly post-avant play to
What might otherwise unravel entirely of its own blobby centrifugal
Force-work, if you will. I took notes during the event in order to prevent

The inevitable. The first attempt at making something of it failed, naturally,
So I bludgeoned it with blog-o-sphere. It's like history, sneezing hard
Or, *your cell phone has made a livingroom of my commonwealth*

from *Interstitials or, Slack Time*

financial mercantilism
taut tense and terrific
chives in whooping cream



—to have that place

expanse

where one
might wander for a sincere stretch

the constant noise n sight of cars
receding
rceding
rcding
rcdng
rcdg

it's the alternator, stoopid

turn left into oncoming killer traffic
the car's honk bends as it speeds
by

When they fund the military they're funding t
[over bridge / over dale]
he AUC

waiting
in the left lane
for the car ahead
to turn, swerve

right
in front
of blaring
gold SUV

we have flags
leave me alone

virological dot . . . begin evasive elliptical maneuvers . . . do you know
where your dots are tonight . . . urgent: connect the dotage

the third dot signifies

wimp factor

place elsewhere
[at register / in the racks]

innocent spore: really, what harm
has it ever done
enzensberger

acute strains. . . [of] . . . global goodwill
flourishes . . . [of] . . . firm evidence

a fantasy wish-list . . . [of] . . . greater flexibility

shirt 10-12 medium

dress 10 medium

pants 12 medium

all dogs must be hand controlled

good morning

we don't need a key

“A good poet doesn't select his materials.

what is there to select? IT is.”

[down the aisle / in the air]

entering

delaware park at its lincoln pkwy n rumsey rd

entrance



the low reaching *canopy of leaves* creates a door
like affectation

the gravelly trail into *dark trunks*

“of maples and men”

draped

in

shade

clank n ping of “hammer on steel”

of workers erecting willie's

stage

the Buffalo Parks Dept.

gathers its leaves in a roaming truck

“one of the things that make a plant GO”

the ribbed pattern

of a tractor wheel

imprinted

in the mud below
a blue pesticidal

screen
\$18.03 on gas

clumps of stench
float on the eastern tip of Hoyt lake
across from "Forest Lawn Cemetery"
[under shower / clipping toes]

"what music this is"

it's not that poetry is rejected
by the laboring society
it's that poetry rejects
the laboring society

Marcy Casino
Rose Garden
Shakespeare Hill
Hoyt Lake
[under scalpal
Poetry
in the gas]
Others
This
Kathleen Fraser

"To book as in to foal. To son.

Those wobbly legs'" (16).

Helen

Thy Naiad airs have brought me home, remembering past ills and past enchantments, the enchantments of all Greece, the languors of old Rome. The agate lamp within thy hand. The lustre as of olives where she stands. How statue-like I see thee stand, remembering past enchantments and past ills.

The agate lamp within thy hand. The still eyes in the white face. The lustre as of olives where she stands. The folded scroll within thy hand. Thy hyacinth hair, thy classic face: white ash amid funereal cypresses. The enchantments of all Greece, the languors of old Rome. How statue-like I see thee stand. The still eyes in the white face remembering past enchantments and past ills. Greece sees, unmoved, the agate lamp within thy hand. Thy Naiad airs have brought me home. The lustre as of olives where she stands. White ash amid funereal cypresses.

Helena

I might have unto my paramour that heavenly Helen which I saw of late. Ah, Psyche, too simple is my wit to tell her praise. The agate lamp within thy hand. Brighter art thou than flaming Jupiter when he appeared to hapless Semele. How statue-like I see thee. Ah, Psyche, from the regions which are Holy-Land!

The agate lamp within thy hand. Was this the face that launched a thousand ships and burnt the topless towers of Ilium? In yon brilliant window-niche brighter art thou than flaming Jupiter when he appeared to hapless Semele. The agate lamp within thy hand. Thy hyacinth hair, thy classic face. Be silent, then, for danger is in words. Too simple is my wit to tell her praise whom all the world admires for majesty. How statue-like I see thee in wanton Arethusa's azured arms. Was this the face that launched a thousand ships and burnt the topless towers of Ilium? Ah, Psyche, the agate lamp within thy hand. That heavenly Helen which I saw of late. Brighter art thou than flaming Jupiter when he appeared to hapless Semele. Be silent, then, for danger is in words.

And Then Return To Helen

Too simple is my wit to tell her praise. The still eyes in the white face. Crowding swept my neck out to the willows. Brighter art thou than flaming Jupiter when he appeared to hapless Semele. Thou spake the ballad through. The agate lamp within thy hand. Was this the face that launched a thousand ships and burnt the topless towers of Ilium? All surprises should be filthy with dust. The lustre as of olives where she stands. Silent and cygnet lantern. The still eyes in the white face.

The agate lamp within thy hand. Light though unlucky, yes, dead but for stars. That heavenly Helen which I saw of late. Was this the face that launched a thousand ships and burnt the topless towers of Ilium? The agate lamp within thy hand. White ash amid funereal cypresses, your haunt is burst. Remembering past enchantments and past ills. Brighter art thou than flaming Jupiter when he appeared to hapless Semele. Light though unlucky, yes, dead but for stars. The lustre as of olives where she stands. I might have unto my paramour that heavenly Helen which I saw of late. The still eyes in the white face. Too simple is my wit to tell her praise whom all the world admires for majesty. All surprises should be filthy with dust. The agate lamp within thy hand. Was this the face that launched a thousand ships and burnt the topless towers of Ilium? Thou spake the ballad through, remembering past enchantments and past ills.

Die Dinge, die bleiben

beim Überqueren
der Grenze
änderte sich fast alles:
alle Richtungen,
& alle Farben

sie ging weiter
zuerst in einer geraden Linie
dann in Kreisen
während sie die Dinge suchte
die blieben

sie fand:
ein Ball
ein Nest
einen Moment,

und, in einer überraschenden Verbindung:
ein Arm
ein Finger,
und eine Hand,
die hielt: eine Rose.



The Things that Remain

when she crossed
the border
almost everything changed:
all directions,
& all colors

she kept on walking
first in a straight line
then in circles
searching for the things
that remained

she found:
a ball
a nest
a moment,

and, in a surprise joint:
an arm
a finger,
and a hand,
holding: a rose.

that would the of the
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"Product" after Oppen
Moriah L Purdy

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Moriah L Purdy
“Quotations”
after Oppen

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Moriah L Purdy
"Psalm"
after Oppen

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Moriah L Purdy
"Res Publica:
"The Poets Lie"
After Oppen

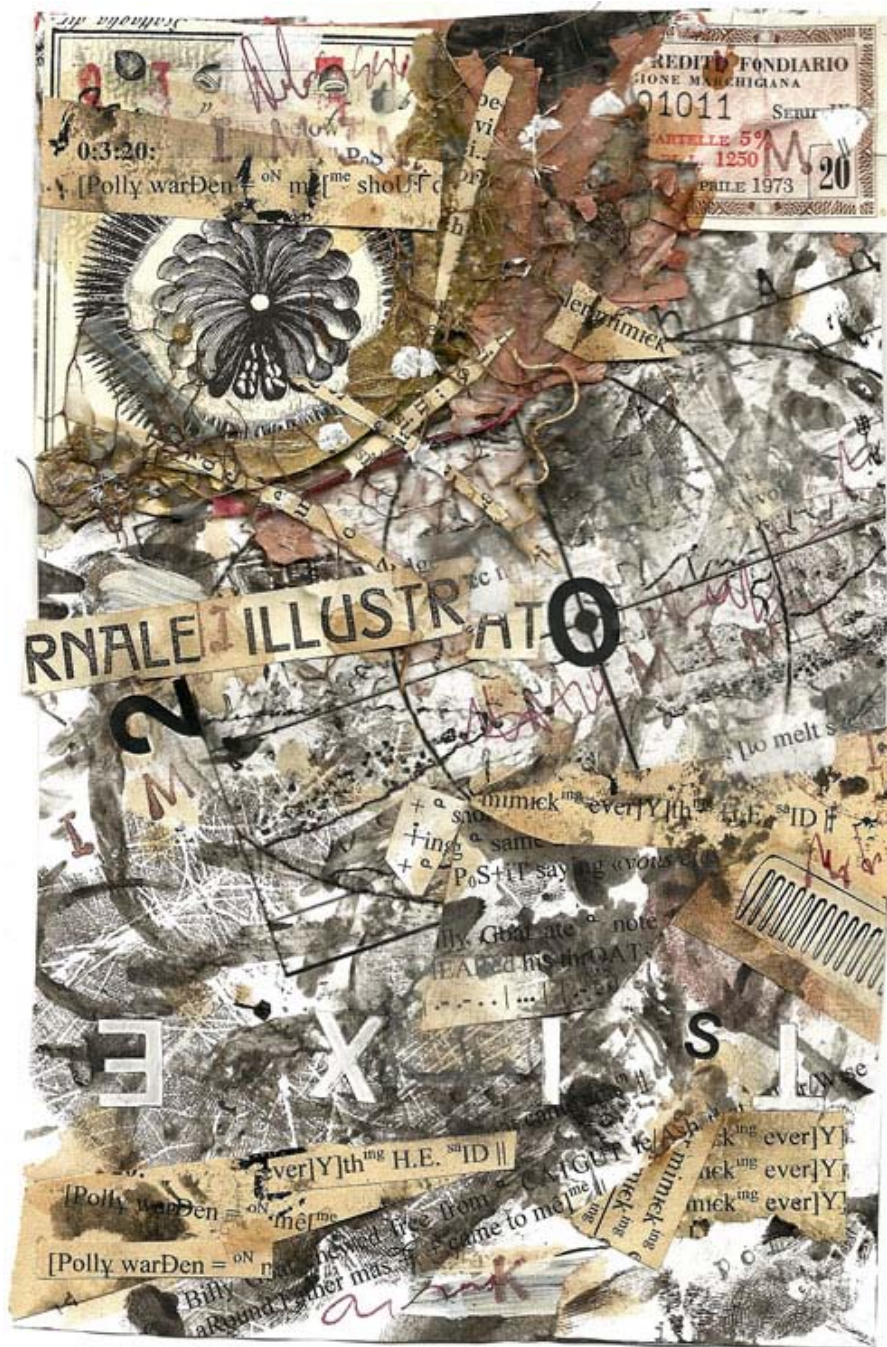
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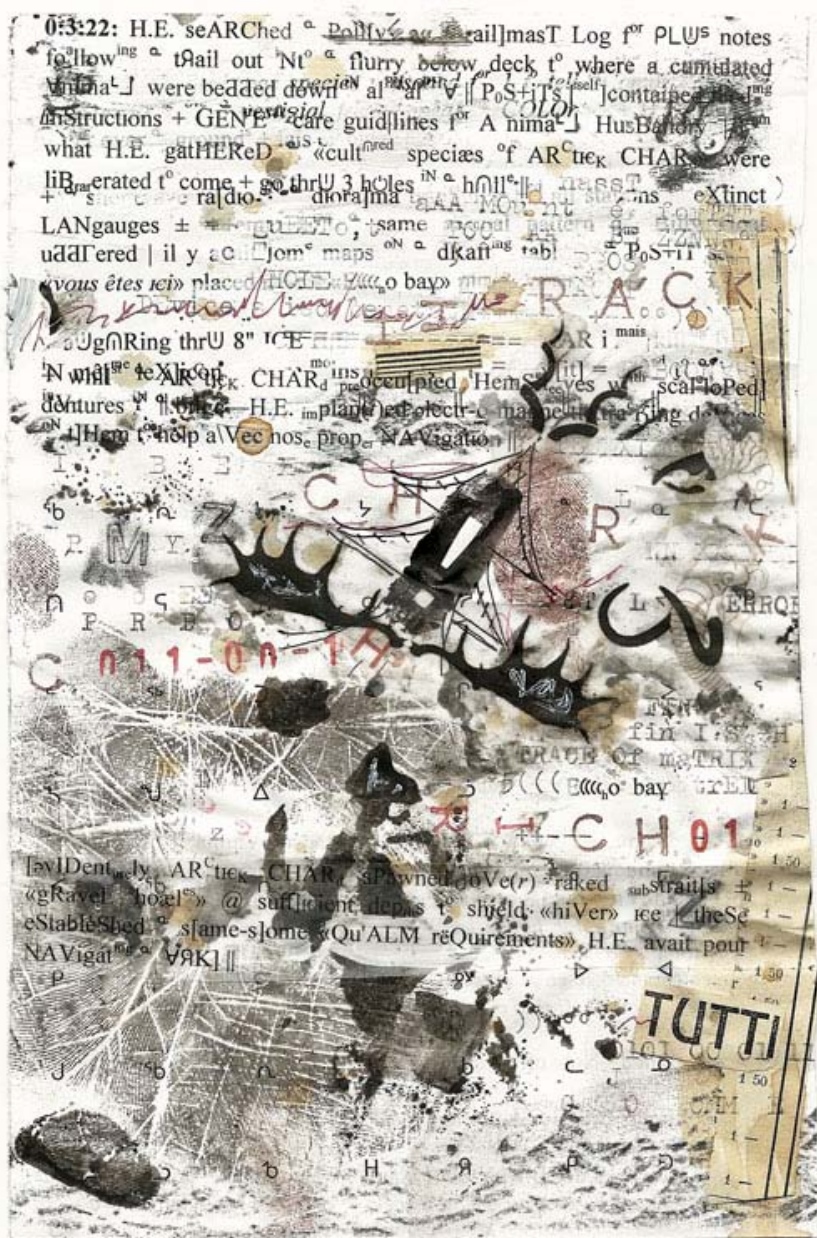


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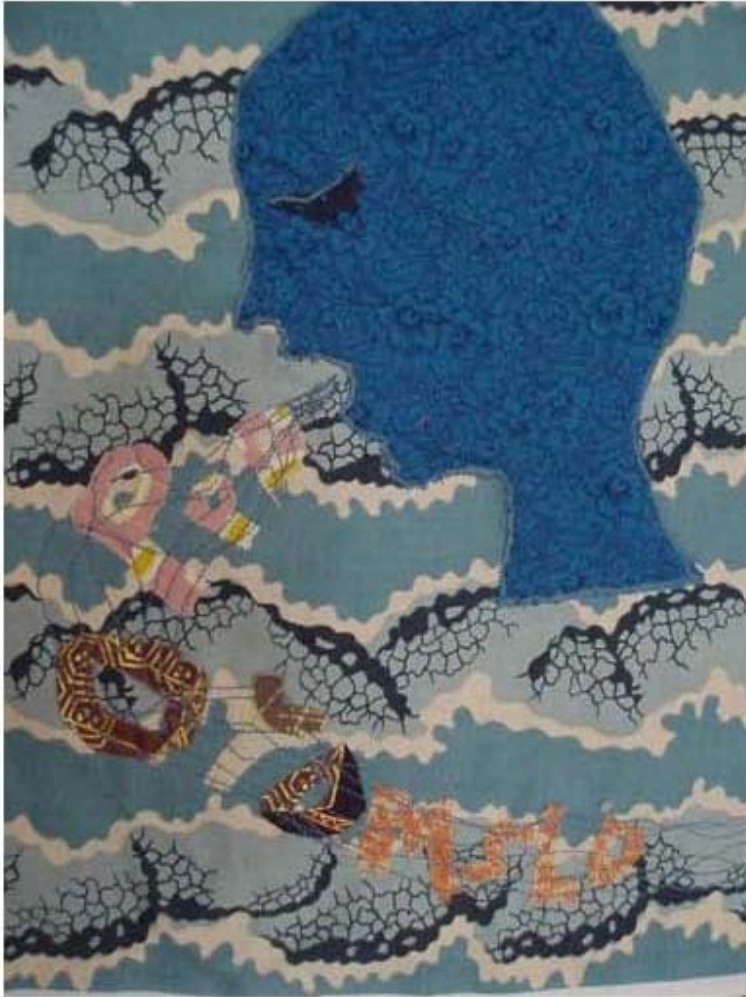


Rachel May

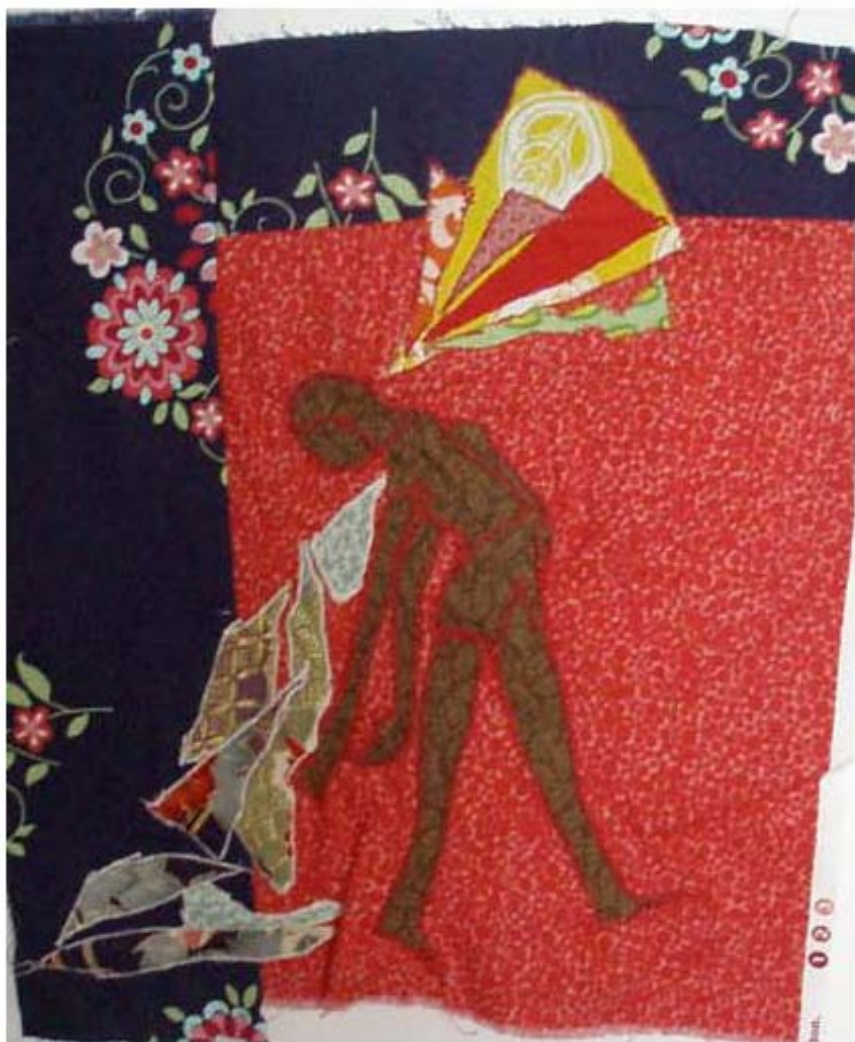
The Vermont Studio Center Experiments

[Words and Pictures]

Rachel May



Once there was an avalanche in his heart, and his heart opened to it, instead of closing, which is what most hearts would do. The avalanche was gray and thick and full of rocks and angles, and it hurt his heart, but he refused to close the valves or reroute the avalanche to his arm or leg, where maybe it would hurt less. Someone had promised him that if he left his heart open, the avalanche would melt into something softer, and flow easy into his bloodstream, and loosen into nothing. He didn't know if he believed this person. It didn't make much sense, and it was all so much hurting, all this hurting, on and on and on, hurting endlessly. But, what could he do? The avalanches kept coming and he was tired of diverting them to his legs and arms. His legs and arms were all bruised and battered on the inside, and sore. Everything was sore. He couldn't walk up hills anymore. He couldn't hold his child. He couldn't sing songs in the open air, with his arms spread wide. He said, "I am left with nothing, so what do I have to lose by opening my heart? Nothing." Then he played some Janis Joplin and sang about freedom, and laughed at himself a little. So he let the avalanche come, and he waited for the ricocheting rock and the way the capillaries and arteries and veins felt like they were coming apart, and the way the various compartments of his heart felt like they were tearing and cutting and slicing open, so that maybe his whole heart would fall apart and he would be a body without a heart and he would die, because a body without a heart is nothing. But he said, "This is just the avalanche. It isn't *really* breaking apart my body." And he withstood it. And he waited. And then, after a very long time—most of his life and his child's life and his wife's life combined—the avalanche began to lose its corners and its sharpness and its cut, and it began to melt, and since he had endured these avalanches for a lifetime, and since he had spent a lifetime diverting them and rerouting them and looking for ways to manage and avoid them, and since at last, he had opened his heart to them and felt all the pain he'd avoided all those years—three thousand years of pain—when the avalanche abated, and his heart was still beating (ka-thump, ka-thump, ka-thump) as every living heart does, and he was still alive and his family was still alive and no older than when he'd started to let the avalanche run through his heart, he never, ever ever ever ever *ever* felt so good.



They gave us eyeglasses instead of ears, and we thought, This is all wrong. We ordered ears and we got these lenses and sticks? When we called them to tell them about the error, they said, You'll have to speak to our cleaning department, and we didn't understand that, either. We said the world is unjust and life is unfair and we're really pissed off at you now. They said, Tell that to our neurologist; she's always saying how unfair life is. We asked why they had a company neurologist, and they couldn't answer. We asked where we were calling, and they said, Where are you calling from, and we said, Johnson, Vermont, and they said, That explains everything. And then they hung up.



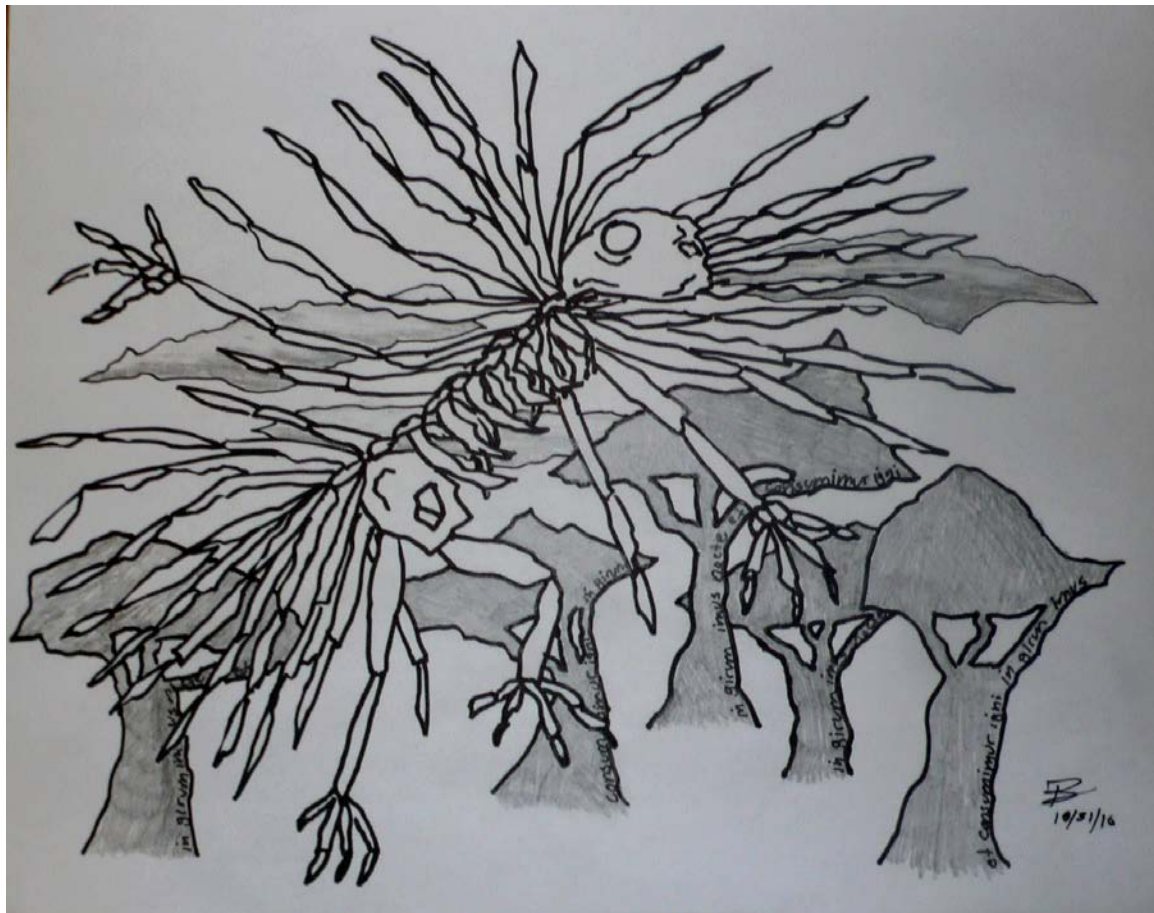
Someone said this would work, the avalanching—trust, he said, believe me. So Albert had. He had opened up his heart to the avalanches. He had believed that it would work. What did he have to lose? Nothing, his life had become nothing; he was desperate for a cure. And it had worked, that was true. But all along, the someone who had told him this, that someone was holding apple pies beneath his desk, and devouring them, and delighting in their flavor—all while Albert talked about the avalanches, and how they hurt, and how he longed for something sweet like pie, for something good. And when Albert caught a glimpse of apple crumb on the someone's cheek, he looked away, because he thought: no, no, that would be too strange, for someone to be eating pie while I am talking of the pie I'd love. But then, it kept happening, and when he stared too long at the crumb, the someone would turn away and blush and act funny—scratching his arms, always, or rubbing his fingers in his hair. And finally, Albert said, "It's pie, isn't it? You have pie." And the someone looked down and said, Yes, and Albert said, "Why have I done all of this? Why have I confessed all of this to you, a pie-eater?" And he felt as though the avalanches came and came and came, and finally, his heart did break, after all, because there were too many rocks at once. There was too much pain. There is a way of overdoing it, and now, with the pie, it was done. There lay Albert, there on the floor, looking as if he'd been stoned from the inside out, an escaped boulder lying on the pea-green rug beside his chin.

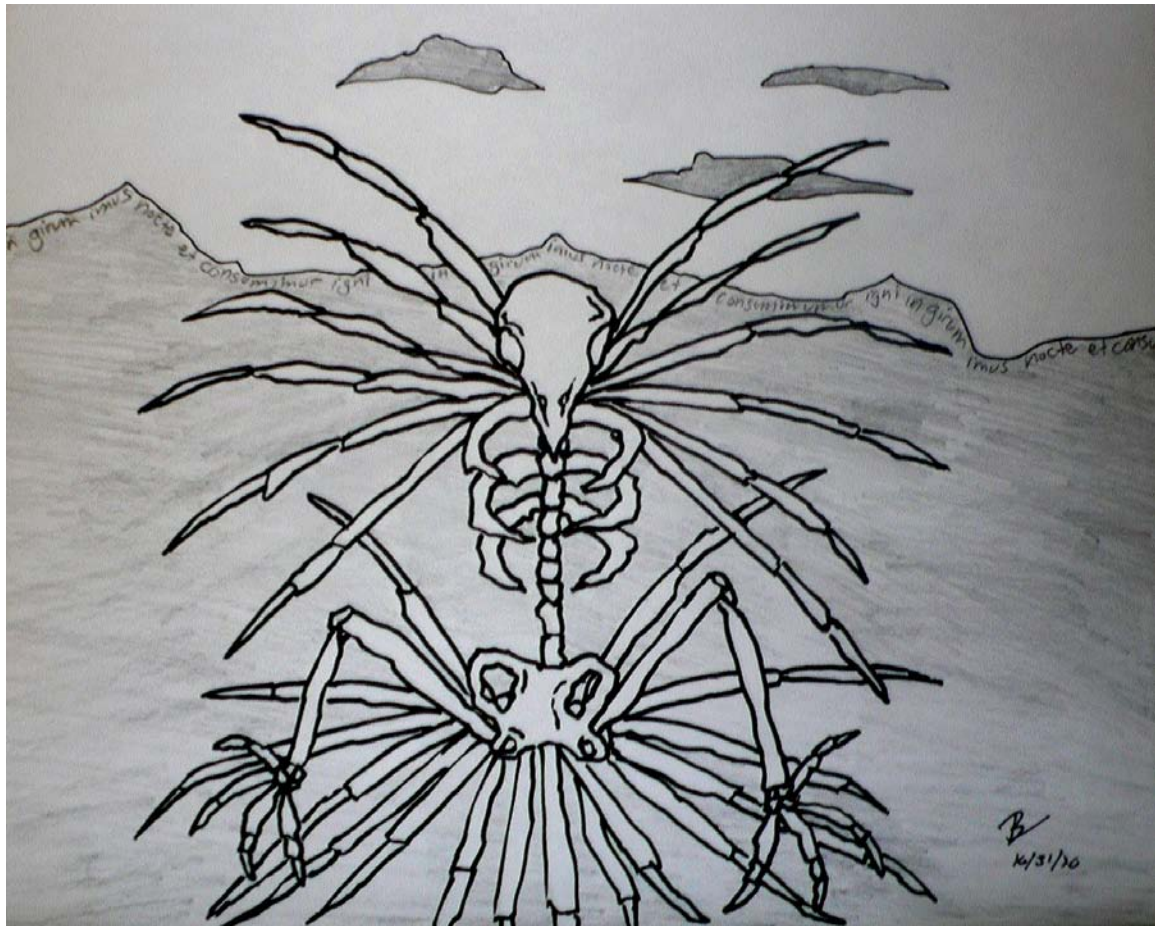


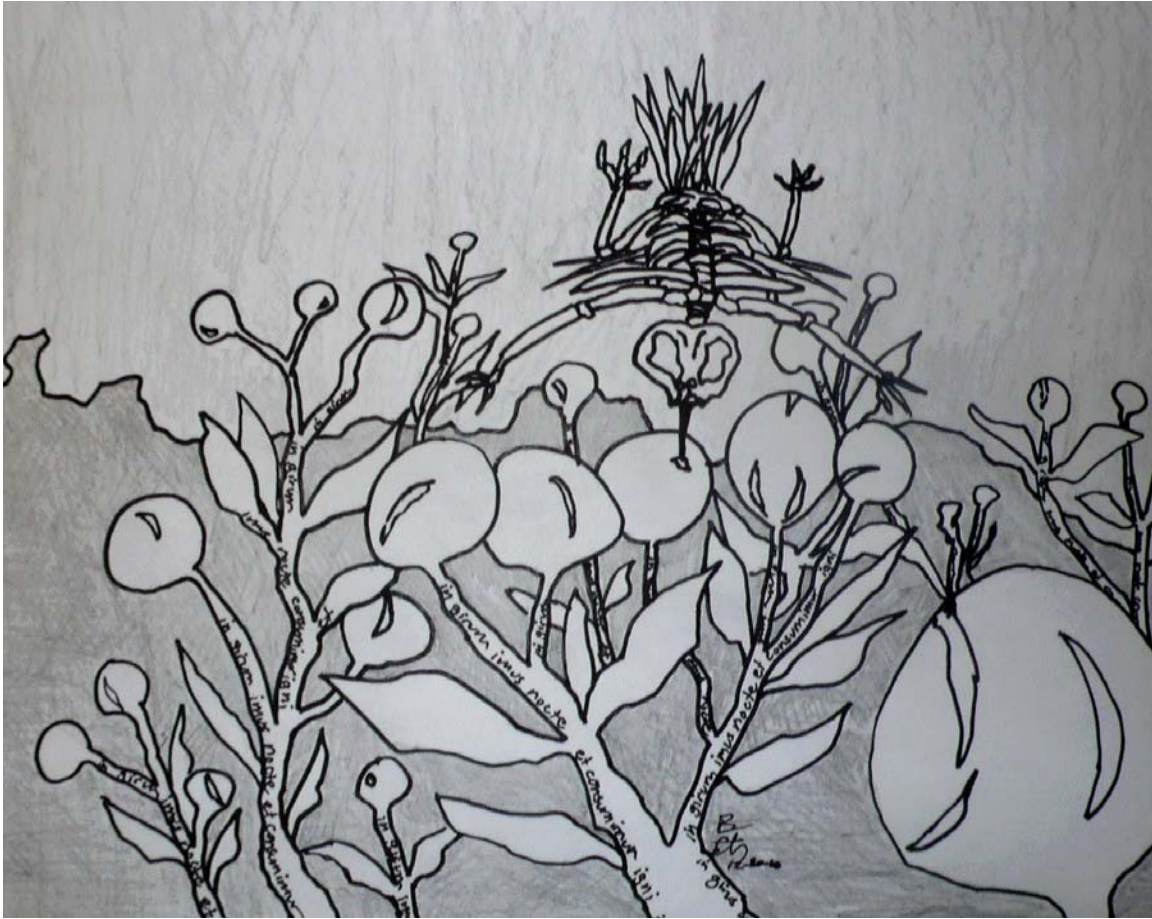
I am a shed, holding old rakes and rusting shovels. I am a shed that no one needs now. The people who needed me, once, have moved away. I live in Maine, and I am made for helping with the snow, and the lawn, and the children's outdoor toys. The children used to laugh around me, and play behind me, and climb onto my roof (when they were older) and smoke joints and drink beer. And I liked the company. But now I am just a shed with no people, and I hold things that are just objects because they are not in use. When they were in use, they were tools. Soon, they will disintegrate into pieces of themselves—metal, rusted out, wood, rotted out. Someday, I will disintegrate into nothing. The spring will come, and I will feel the snow melt from me, and with it will go little pieces of my siding, first splinters and then larger bits, and then my roof, and then my frame, and the termites and the carpenter ants will find me, and I will be all toothless and solitary, dripping apart in the springtime, and I will keep hoping to be found, that someone will buy the house and take me up again, and put me back together. I will hope for a short spring, for a long, dry summer. I will hope for clear skies. I will hope for the sound of footsteps, which I will feel echoing through the ground, coming towards me. Thud, thud, thud. Their thunder meaning hope.

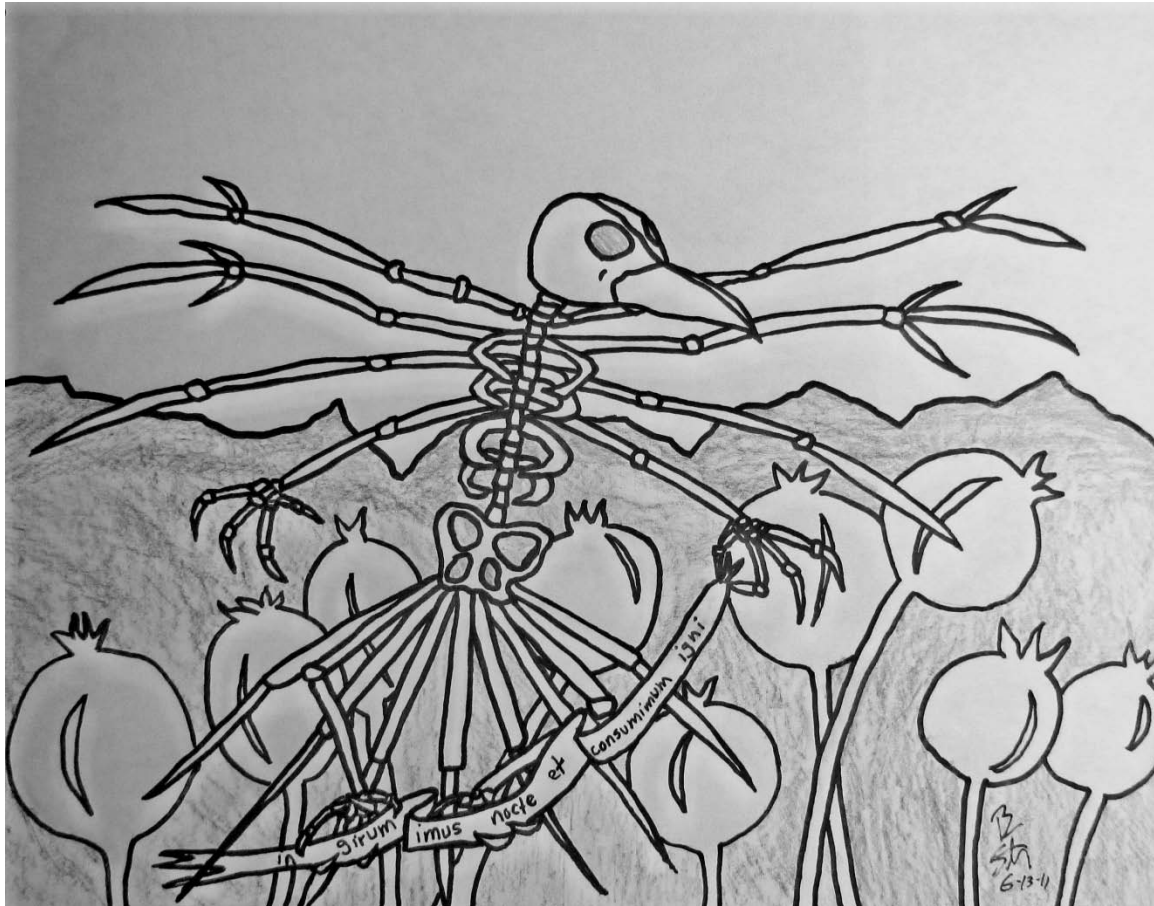


When they were small, they didn't understand the way words went with things—with objects, with feelings, with sounds, with colors. And it was so hard to remember, how words went, and what was just said, and what it signified. No one could keep it straight, in this land, and so they all sank deeper and deeper into wordlessness, and there were only blurry movements, a heartbeat over and over, the clanking of a stick onto a top or into air, into nothing, and there were squalls and shrieks and cries and all these sounds of anguish, filling up the air. And the people kept on sinking and sinking, because they didn't know any way out of it, out of the wordlessness, and when the others came to visit and shaped their lips this way and made the sounds that way, the people who were wordless just got angry. There was no way to bridge the gap. There was no way to get what they wanted, which was the object or the hug or the snack. Maybe what they wanted most of all was to understand each other, to know which word came next, to be able to say: this is how I feel, and to not feel so much pain just pushing out those words. So instead of speaking, they gave their pain shapes and symbols: a thousand strands of string tied to everything in the house, at waist-level, in the middle of the night. So when the others woke up, they would see the repetition, and know that it meant pain. Or sorrow. Or desire. Or sadness. Or hope. The people who were wordless would not do what they were told, because they could not associate the commands with the action, so they cried instead, they beat their hands into clapping sounds instead, they banged their heads into the wall instead. And the others understood that this was anguish, how much it hurt, how much the people wished there was another way, now that they had seen that there was. Until the others came, the people who were wordless were okay with sinking, with darkness, with motion and abstraction and the blurring of things—a streak of a red shirt dashing through the air—and they didn't need words. They didn't need anything other than what they had, and they thought that all of the aloneness that they felt was just the way that things were meant to be. The others, though, would sit in things that moved back and forth, and put things to their lips, and laugh. They would make sounds that didn't sound like crying, and they would move their bodies in ways that didn't look like jerks or frights or pinwheels. So the people who were wordless began to watch the others, to imitate the way they sat on chairs—to learn that they were called chairs—to rock back and forth when the sun went down, to drink lemonade, to drink beer, to eat the things that were good that were called pasta and egg rolls and taboule, to talk to one another and listen to the words that were sent back in talking, and to understand that they all felt the same things, and that there were ways of speaking to each other and understanding that they all felt the same things, and that there were words like empathy and sympathize and discussion and disagree and concur. There were words like requiem and vitriol and solipsistic and diagram and heart. And they began to laugh, and to feel the laughter, and to be able to say, "I feel happy," because they did. And then there was no difference, anymore, between the others and the people who used to be wordless. They were the same. There was no spectrum. No identification. No signifying difference. And one of the people said, "I wish there was a way for everyone to feel this good, to never go through that pain, to never have to recover language." And all the people nodded, and sipped their lemonade, and leaned into each other.





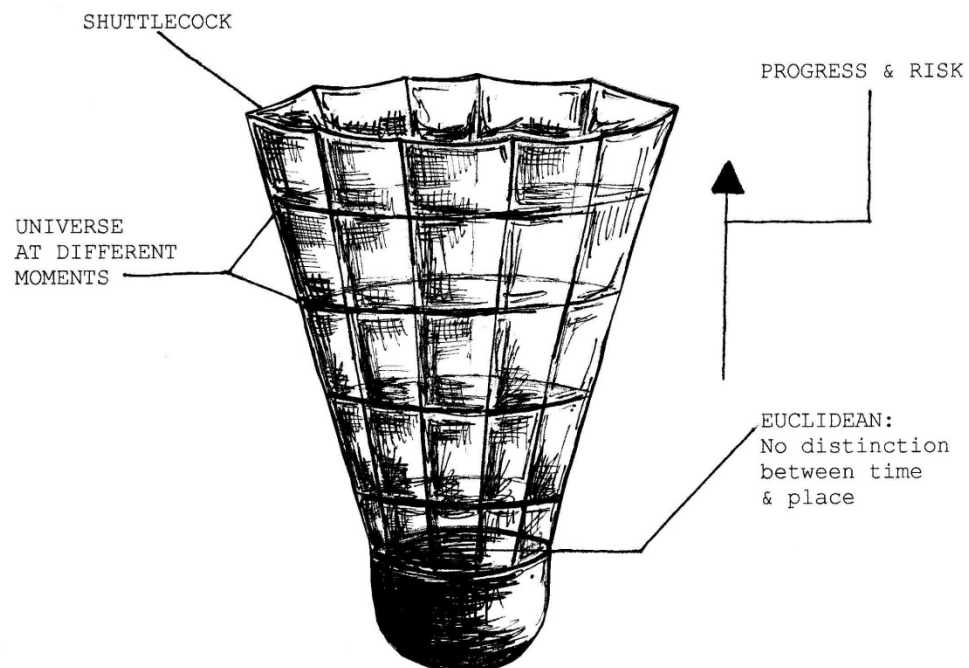




Crystal Gibbins

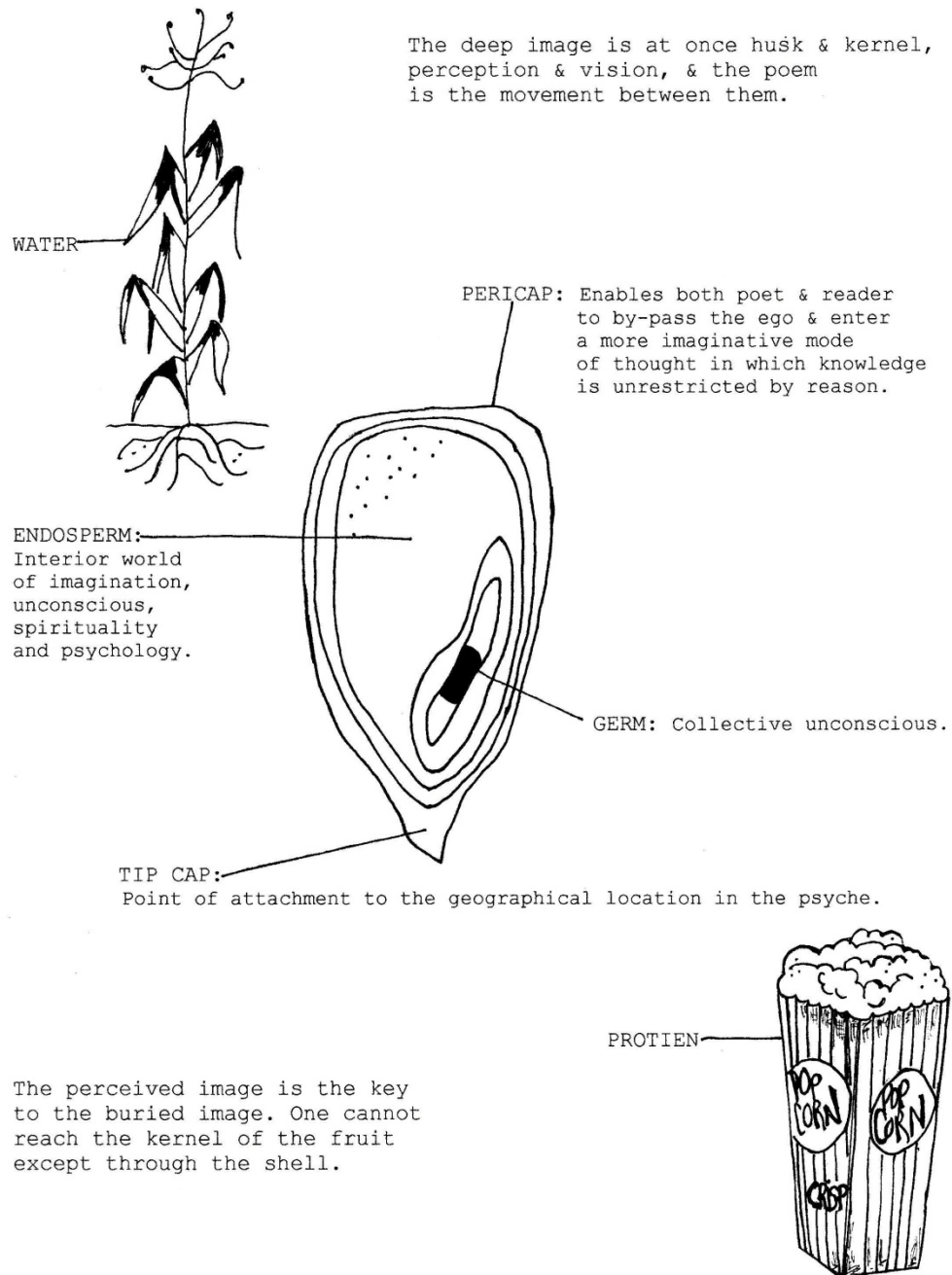
A MEDITATION ON ANXIETY

There are so many ways to fly
through the air, so many
acrobatic trips, but humans
choose the path of gravity.

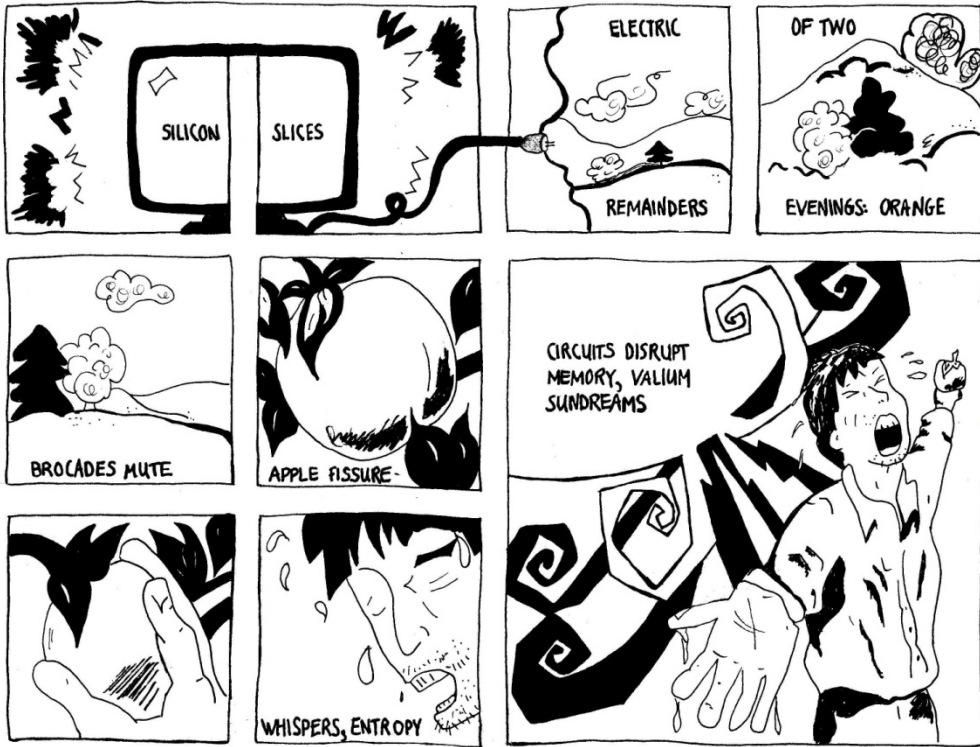


What counts is the feeling of going forward
while staying in the same place.

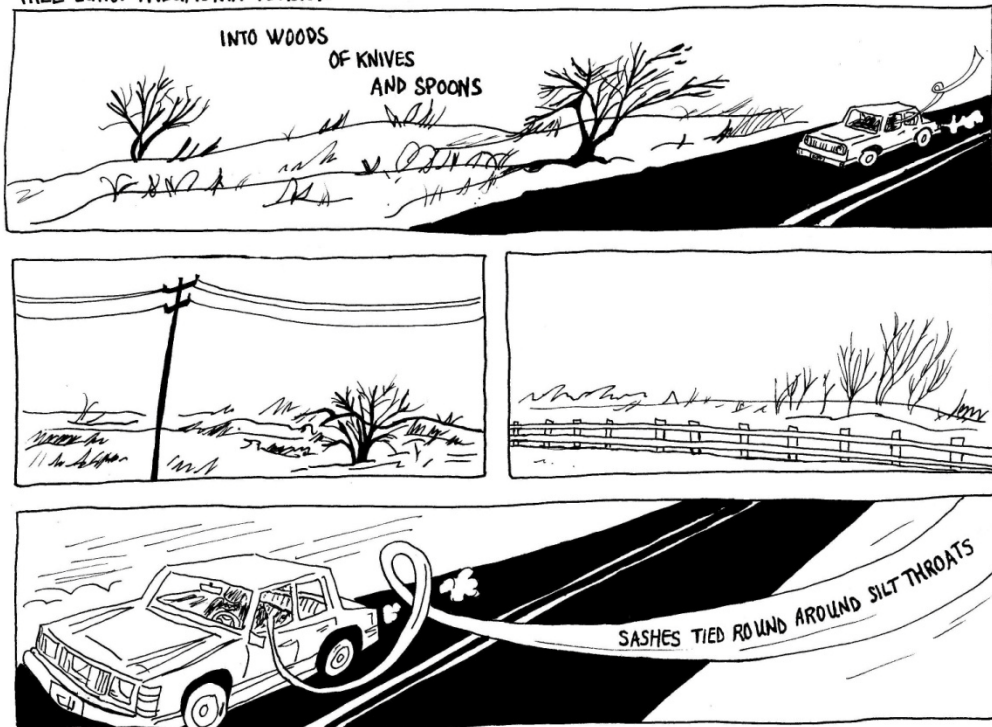
A MEDITATION ON DEEP IMAGISM

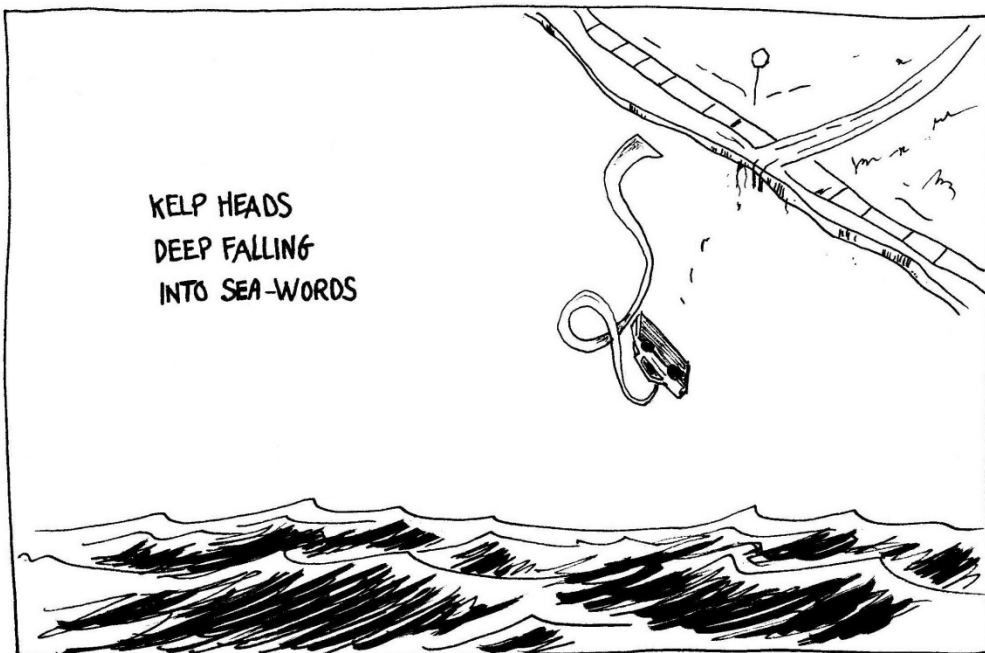
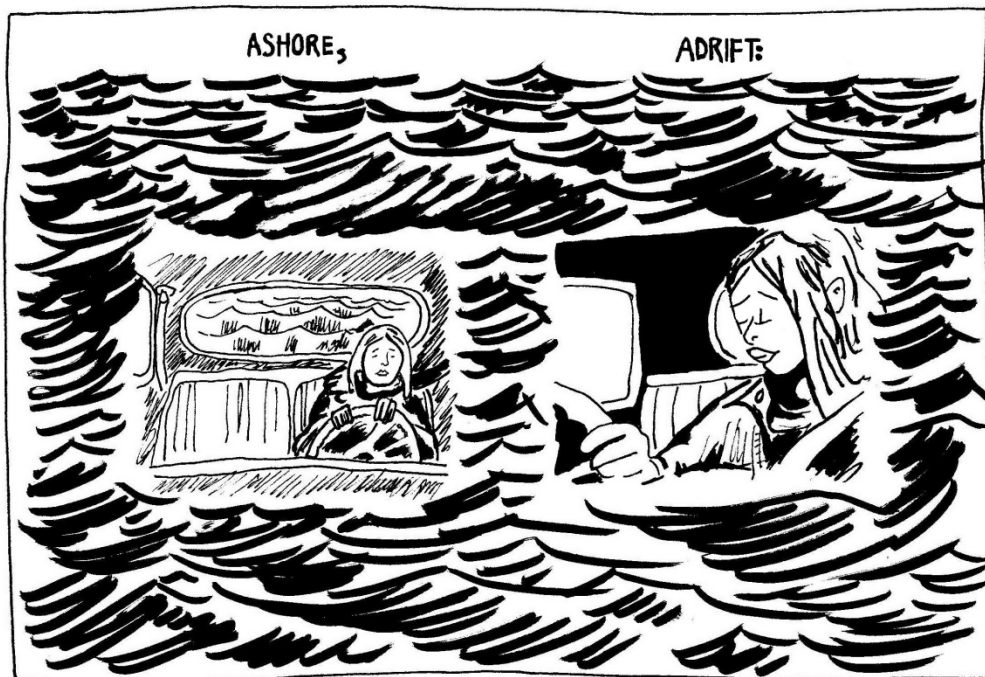


TREE LUNG: DIGITAL VERSION

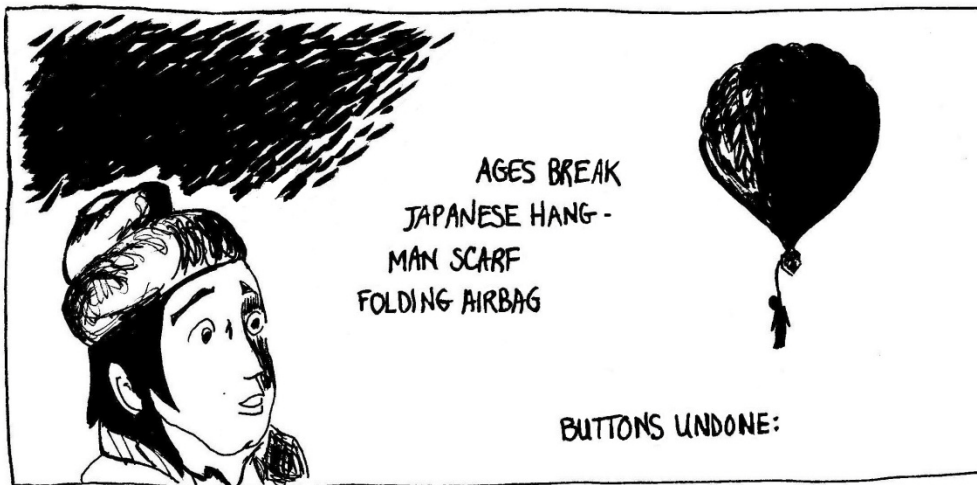
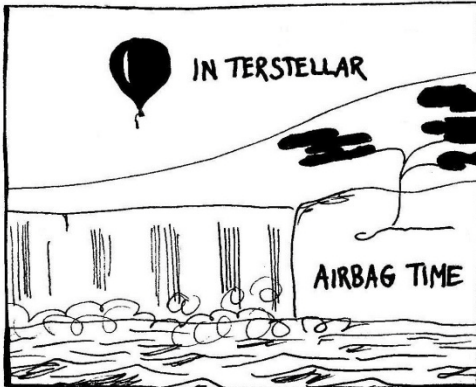
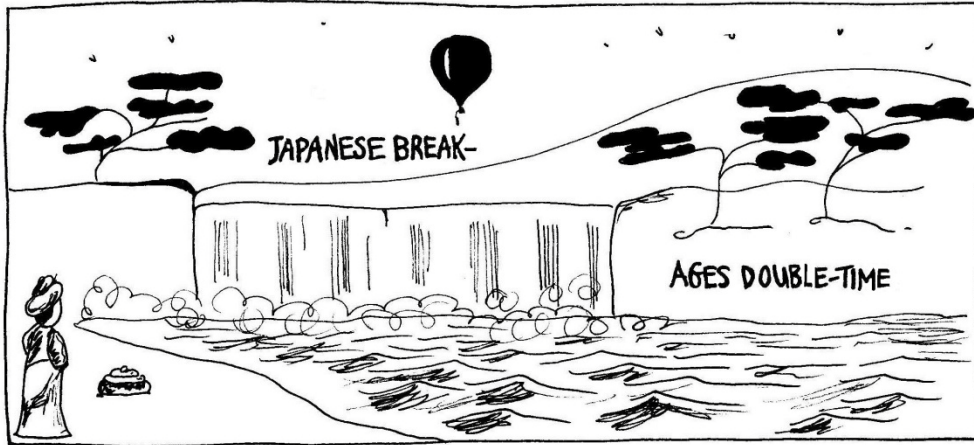


TREE LUNG: PNEUMONIA VERSION





TREE LUNG: RENDER NUTHIN' VERSION



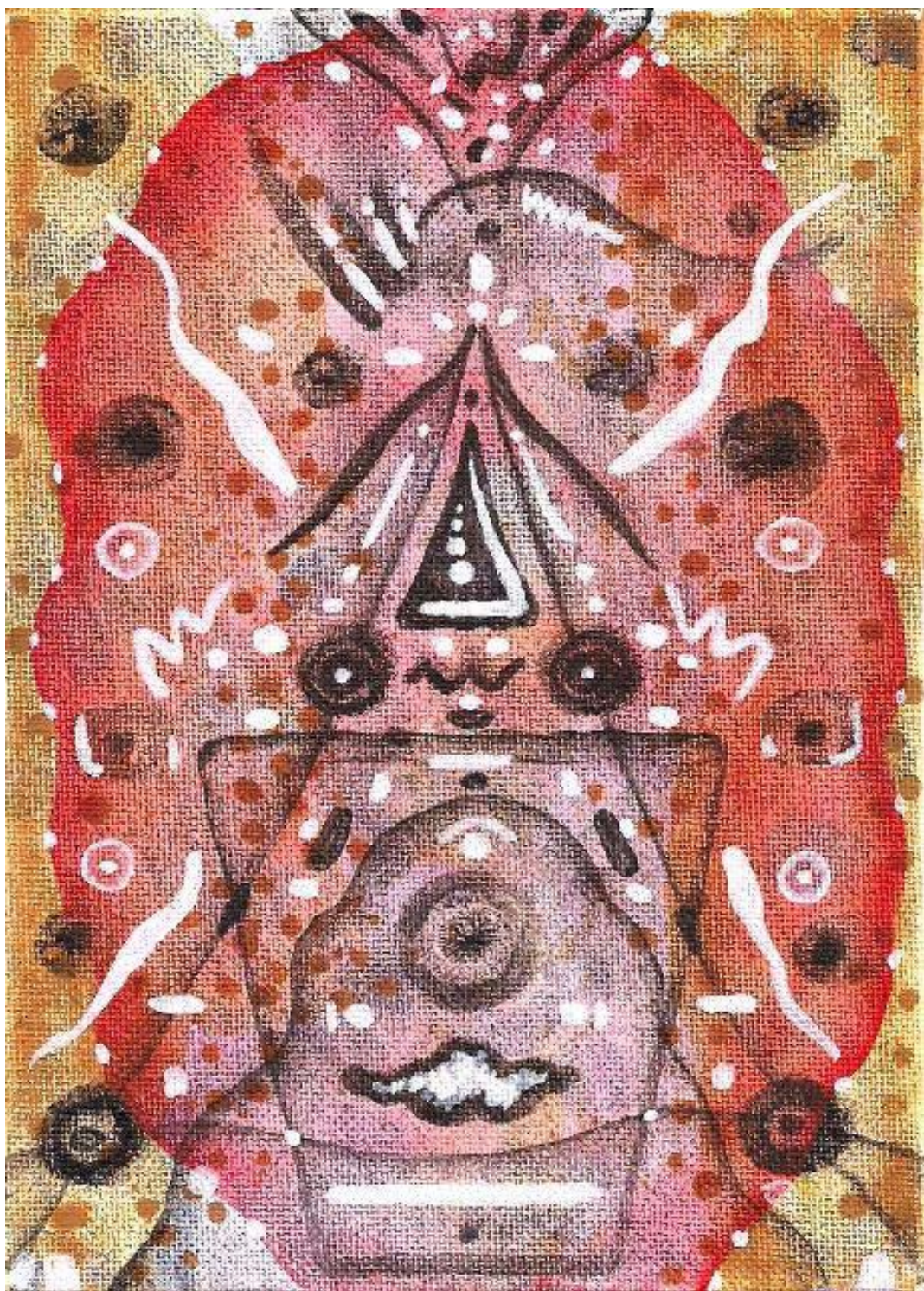


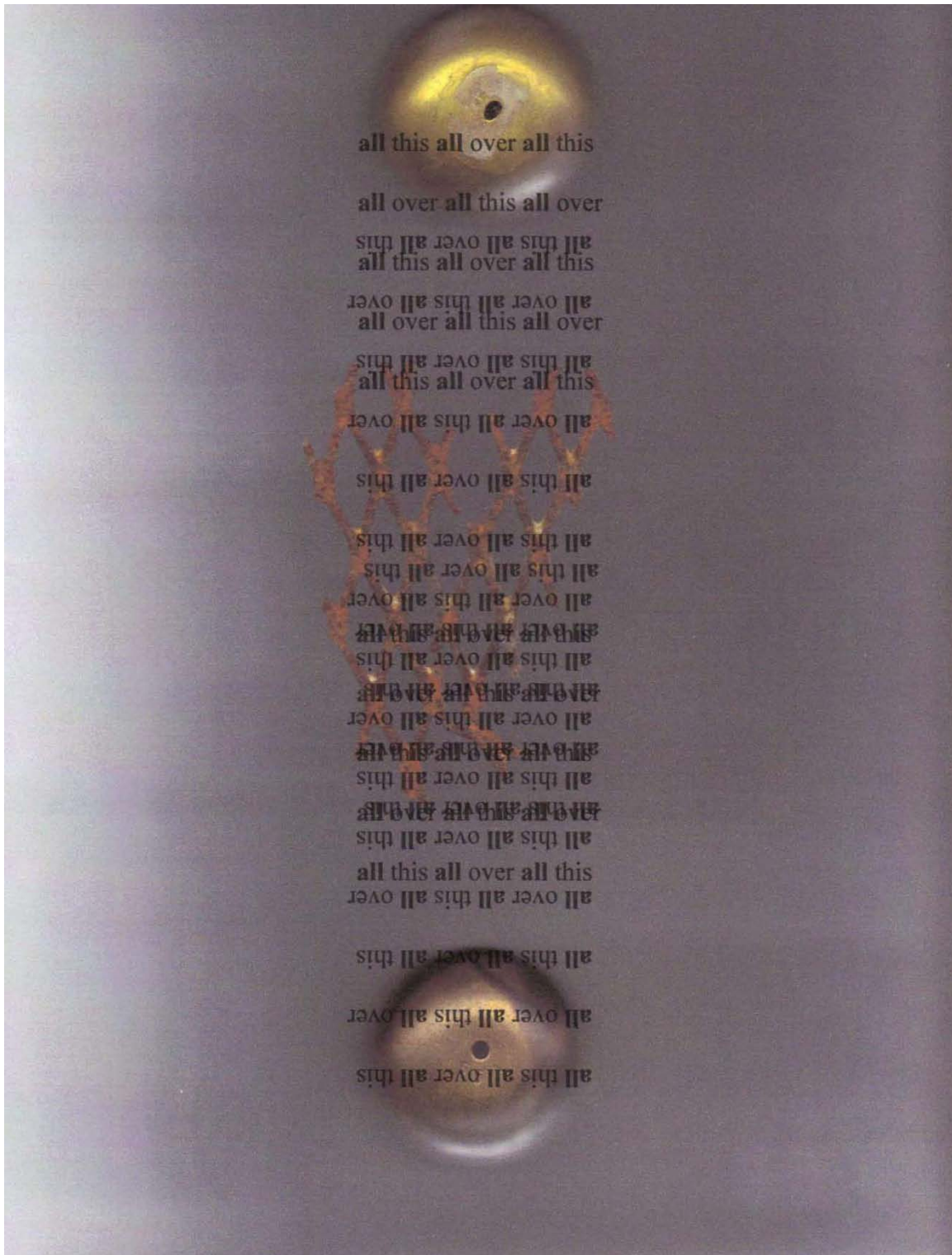












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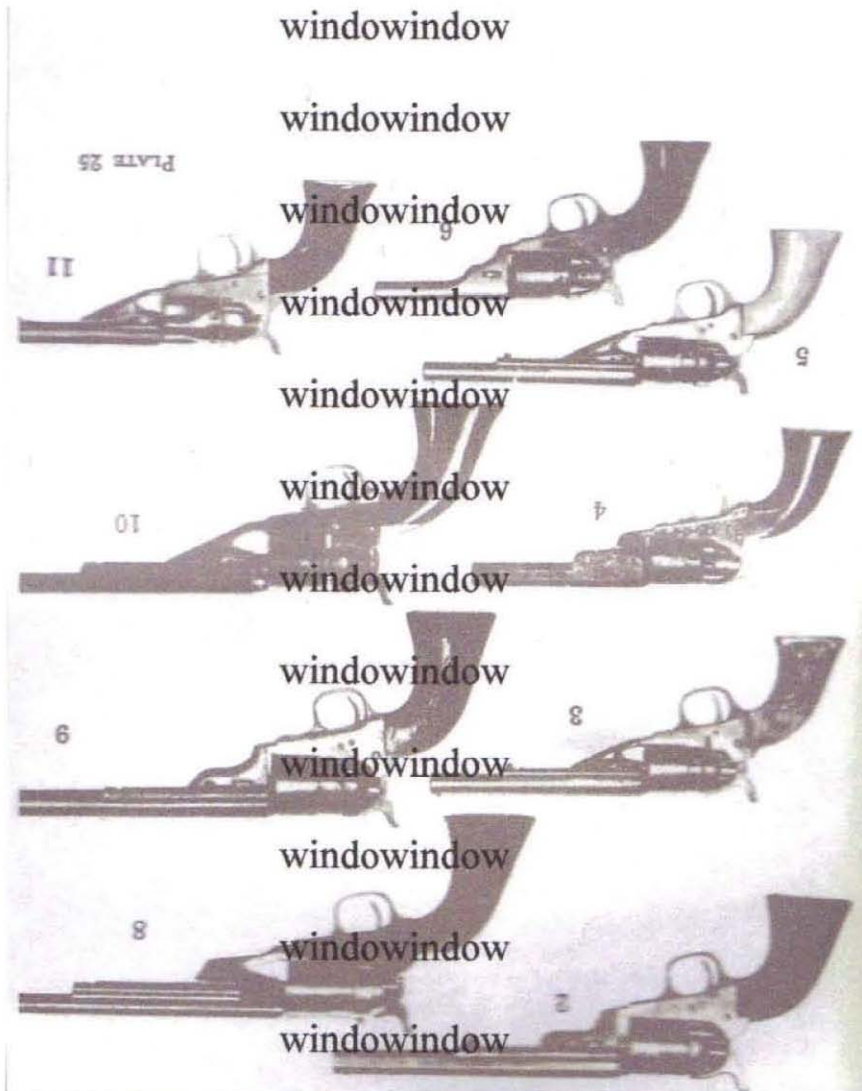
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Review of *The Surfacing of Excess*, by Arianne Zwartjes

(Eastern Washington University Press, 2010)



What is the shape of absence? How is flight both a picture of the divine and a measure of God's ability to "love only himself"? In her poetry debut *The Surfacing of Excess*, winner of the 2009 Blue Lynx Prize, Arianne Zwartjes grapples with these questions, gushing for 87 pages that reference philosophers, mystics, poets, and mathematicians alike. *Excess* may be an understatement, but *surface*, Zwartjes is not.

The book's core rests in a triangulation of three major topics: Flight, Geometry, and what I will call Love/Language/Beauty (all equitable). The dynamics of flight (and the inability for humans to sustain it) and the definitions of geometric figures (particularly the sphere) serve as explanatory anchors for beauty between the lover and her beloved. Or, to be simpler, Zwartjes laments, "We could be winged but are not" ([11]). The poems posit that in longing for flight, a brush with divinity, an escape from our mundane selves, we exist in a perpetual state of *lack*. In this thirst for ascension we can also view a parallel to the desire for the beloved, assuming that in achieving flight we may also obtain love. Yet Zwartjes integrates Plato and Carson, reminding us that *owning* beauty is a metaphysical impossibility, since love, like flight, depends on space and absence. We will always, the poet infers, return to the ground. In this examination then, Zwartjes faces other inevitable emotions: Affliction, the forlorn, the fact of falling ("I feel I have fallen"), both *down* from the sky in the Icarus sense and *out* of love ([Parts Of The Feather]). We might even say her speakers fall out of the transcendent *geometry* of love that is now displaced: "I imagine you do the same but months since I've seen your face . . . I find pieces of you everywhere" ([16]). In a 2010 reading at Tucson's Casa Libre, Zwartjes revealed she wrote this book after the dissolution of a significant relationship, and that veiled grief is worked out in many of the poems. Technical terminology that describes external, architectural space becomes a metaphor of the heart's internal geometry. The exactitude of this language explodes the tensions between desire for the object and its impossible obtainment. Yet it is this very uncomfortable juxtaposition between "Knowledge" as the learned masters *tell* it and "Vision" as

the emotive poet *experiences* it that pinpoints Zwartjes' interests. Despite all we claim to know in these texts that "map a world that is predictable and proportionate," we cannot fully explain our inability to accept our own earthbound, wingless yearning ([14]).

The book is divided into nine sections— a nod to Dante's hell, the womb, and the nine muses. Four of these sections are "The Taxonomy of Flight." These singular, more breathless "Flight" poems serve as lyrical threads between the "Stiches" prose poems, previously published as a chapbook. The "Stiches" series explores the geometric through fragmented and caesura laden lines, appropriately dislocating the reader by intermingling narrative references to family and love with definitions of phenomena such as "the sphere," "the circle," and "hyperbolic space."

In the "Stiches" poems especially, Zwartjes is fond of parentheses, run-on sentences, and asyntactic grammar, making her a challenge akin to Anne Carson, Karla Kelsey, and Andrew Zawacki (all of whom she acknowledges in her liner notes). Her parentheses act with multifarious, if sometimes distracting, functions: They allow for starts and stops in the poems, which mirror the inability for sustained flight or captured love. They perform boundaries, fences, conditions, as well as ironic physical enclosures and emotional closure. Sometimes they introduce theoretical elements (often italicized) from the likes of Weil and Rumi. Other times they add intimate gestures, appearing as "internal worlds" in conflict with external reality: "For us (*there is only trying*), fence covered in snow and steaming with morning sun" and "In moments of pain it was easiest (here is your name) (hold open)" ([31] and [28]).

Meanwhile, the "Flight" series, often projected from the voices of other writers, is the book's most thematically and emotionally salient. Zwartjes does well to set these more linear poems between the dense and ruptured "Stiches." [A Gallery of Names] sits at the book's center, converging Zwartjes' triangulation in tight prose blocks. Accordingly, these poems are entitled "Parallel," "Plane," "Affliction," "Sphere," "Space," "Flight," "Eros," "Forlorn," and "Beauty." In these pieces, the speaker is the topic, personified. For instance, in "Affliction", "I" becomes a character who claims, "my mother loved me as yours did you." Such personification allows great reflection on our own self-made afflictions. Zwartjes explains through Weil that affliction is "a kind of horror that submerges the whole soul." Why, then, would we nurture our own pain, feeling motherly love for the fractious *lack* that consumes us? These poems are especially engaging, if mind-crushing in the take-off-the-top-of-your-head Dickinson sense.

At times, despite the miraculous originality of this *stitched excess*, readers may wish for a less clinical tone. On a first read, the scientific language, in packed succession, may weigh down what could be a more piercing "direct treatment of the object." Moreover, some might contest the familiar flight motif and its mythic overtones while wincing at the insistent namedropping. Others may find the theoretic voices overbearing. Arguably, the presence of so many other visionaries makes the lines feel too self-conscious and controlled—as if Zwartjes' "I" wishes to hide instead of directly locating the personal and immediate. As such, many poems feel most lovely when they carefully balance the scientific with the lyric.

All of this said, Zwartjes clearly intends to view the world through all these *other* voices, and she is also aware of her own tendency to skirt the "I" and "you." Her speaker admits, "At this point, the reader may object (where are *you* in all this) none of the lines add up straight" ([27]). Although such poetics can be alienating when reading the "Stiches" and "[Gallery]" poems for the first time, a more concentrated read expands them wonderfully. If Zwartjes' theorems

bleed out excessively, there is nothing haphazard about her craft. She is not creating a collage from so many intelligent fragments as a wooing ploy (too easy) but sincerely sculpting them into a figure capable of the modern dislocation Eliot would applaud. While sometimes laborious to unpack, she has the power to punch readers with what I will call the *synesthetic conceptual*—one simple, conceptual sentence or phrase becomes a prismatic opening to a Pandora's Box worth of interpretation. In "Stiches [43]" for instance, she writes, "truth is only manifest in nakedness and (nakedness is death)." There are several levels of meaning here. If we strip ourselves of "I," our locating identity, then we are all (truthfully) everyone, or more frighteningly, no one (dead). Yet if we strip away our false and socially created body, we also become pure soul (truth and beauty). Zwartjes seems to channel Keats and Stevens in this concept, brilliantly capturing the very love and beauty her plaintive speakers fail to hold.

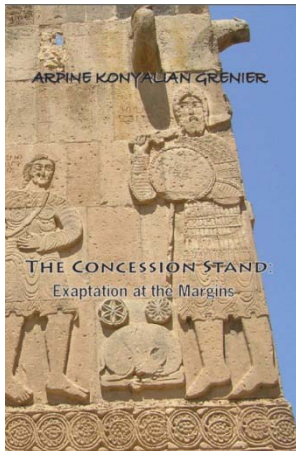
The "Flight" poems feel the most free and balanced in the book. "Bones Of The Wing" renders an imagined, dramatized conversation that pits the logical voice of "Plato" against the love-torn voice of "Calvino." This surreal Calvino character sees himself as a kind of fused Icarus figure who embodies both he and the lover he has abandoned. The conversation is disjointed but bizarrely connected. Neither Plato nor Calvino has answers to the book's central questions because, of course, there are no satisfactory ones in Zwartjes' triangulation (except perhaps the act of the poem itself). The dialogue's linear fluidity, as well as its emotive honesty, relieves much of the tension the "Stiches" poems build. Between Plato's metaphorically loaded physics ("Emptiness is as concrete as <solid bodies>") and the striking, raw regret of the "fallen" Icarus/Calvino, Zwartjes allows the emotional gravitas some other poems avoid. The characters' polarity suggests the sad absurdity of thinking we could understand why we do the things we do in love: "I flew too close . . . I burned her off me. Why did I do it you ask; would that I knew . . . I knew— oh God." Zwartjes suggests we might be able to explain the properties of flight but not our destructive desire for it.

Likewise, "Types Of The Feather" is the most lyrically moving poem of the project. From the voice of Rumi, Zwartjes' long, image-rich prose lines free themselves from the clinical, bursting into gorgeous imagery and dervish repetition. The result is a breathless, opening poem: "I am falling up/ into the bowl of sky and turning turning the violet sail of this air." Here, the speaker is a defiant Rumi/Icarus who sustains *flight* through the *language* of poetry. Earth and sky are inverted, making life divine. The visual violet (sunset, sunrise) and geometric bowl (a sphere in so many other poems) rest with the tactile "sail", while offering the beautiful paradox of "falling up" instead of "falling out of" love (the sky). The *synesthetic conceptual* also continues in lines like "dark pillow, the grapeskin of ego, breaks, I am pouring and the emptiness after." The fragile ego of the modern self becomes the thin bloody skin of a red grape, and one thinks of Keats' "Ode on Melancholy," the duality of Dionysus, and even Persephone's pomegranate—all asserting the intertwined nature of joy and pain, heaven and hell. In addition, Zwartjes interestingly infers that though the ego is a comforting pillow or crutch that we rest our minds upon, it is in fact only as thin-skinned as a pillow's sheet, capable of giving us deceptive dreams. Similarly, Zwartjes asks, "Who says the sun nudes itself of light," as if the sun strips itself when shining, revealing, as dictated earlier, a nakedness that is truth shining out. But asked as a question, the poet complicates this idealization, suggesting the sun the may not actually offer us enlightenment, but a dark vulnerability instead. Such fresh, striking imagery allows Zwartjes a place in 21st century lyric poetry, meeting Juliana Spar's expectation that "Lyric is by definition innovative" (*American Women Poets in the 21st Century*).

Ultimately, Zwartjes describes this aching for flight and love as best pictured through a sphere: "in that space of desire/ between lover and beloved is where god spins" ("Types Of A Feather"). In the book's clincher, Zwartjes concludes, "If love is about edges we have become spheres" ("Parts Of The Wings"). If love is spherical and cyclical, turning beyond our control, then life is finally rounded, slippery, repetitive, and perfect, but only in its uncertainty. Can we live on the edge of a sphere or are we only consumed by it? A sphere (love) is also a world then—one that overwhelms as it renders us through longing. In "Sphere," Zwartjes writes that [love's] "circumference is everywhere center nowhere." The sphere becomes an "I" who encapsulates love: "[I have] no edges I am a continuous self . . . spin me you'll find I never end . . ." According to the poet, the love-sphere can never be fixed or owned, as it exists everywhere and nowhere at once. We are left in inside its mercurial space, simultaneously wanting to take flight in escape while always destined to return to its surface.

In the end, Zwartjes embraces all these contraries, rationally offering no closure: the known relays all we can't know, flight relies on dull gravity, and love depends on lack. She agrees, "There must be no consolation," as "We search for lightness as a reaction to the weight of living. The delight is in the reaching for...the instinct towards flight." These delightful poems accomplish just that.

**Review of *The Concession Stand: Exaptation at the Margins*,
by Arpine Konyalian Grenier (Otoliths Books, 2011)**



Standing With and For Concession

It is difficult, when reading Arpine Konyalian Grenier's new poetic memoir/essay *The Concession Stand: Exaptation at the Margins*, not to think of Helene Cixous. Both writers share a similar style, mastery of theory and concern for the poetics of reading and writing lives, selves, memory, history and the spaces between – and for both Grenier and the eminent literary theorist, it is the act of language itself that holds any possible hope for meaning. "You speak out of fear," writes Cixous in *Rootprints: Memory and Life Writing*. "That we must erase the traces of fear and suffering. The loss of that memory is impoverishing and the concern of ... writing is to reinscribe it. Because only the forge of language can give the truth of our feelings, the sensory knowledge of our affects."

These words sum up the essence of Grenier's project in *The Concession Stand*. The very title of this work comes from a line of poetry spawned from William Bronk mocking the possibility of escaping language, or using words as a way to heal, sanitize or categorize the complexities of existence: *as if at the concession stand / cured of speech*. For Grenier, this is a non-concession – the one concession that must never be allowed if we are to hold on to the truth and sensory understandings that make us human. Language is paramount to being alive; throughout *The Concession Stand*, language, its limitations and the silences that define it act as a kind of love song to what is human and poetic about life – that which is inescapable and incurable, but which we spend so much of our lives trying to erase. Ultimately, it is language that matters even more than experience, for there is no way to understand either independently. "I can survive identity but not language," Grenier writes. "The act of writing is always on ... experience does not matter, aspects and the writing do."

Language works, Grenier insists, because it is never only about language, because it is all we have and because it always, ultimately, fails us. It mirrors art, history, theory, memory and our

very own hearts. In this universe of poetics, it is only the attempt at language that matters – because the attempt is who we are, and more than what we are. “We’ll work with language,” she tells us, “we’ll hopefully use it and not adhere to it. We’ll also use heart and mind, and if we allow ourselves not to be driven merely by fundamentals, we may experience language differently. Because when the word hits the page or our vocal chords, it has already created more (or less) than itself.”

The Concession Stand is in two fragmentary sections. The first, “With It,” consists of four chapters. Each of these is written in whimsical, elusive prose mirroring something like a Faulknerian center-of-consciousness fused with poetry – and verse is scattered liberally throughout. Grenier sets up the concerns of her writing in these first salvos, and they recur like the surprises of a dream throughout the work. In “Winter Reading” we encounter poetry alongside philosophy and a pseudo-review of several books written in thought and affect, memory and association. Grenier presents her readers with poetic responses to writing, to writing’s concern with the survival of the body, of desire, of its own limitations and needs – and its definitions of our own longings to escape definition. All roads in “Winter Reading” lead to memories and lost cities, of a missing and strangely undefined mother, an elusive language of abjectivity held captive by a world determined to commodify, capitalize and categorize, and set free by its inability to conform in any material sense to anything but the human.

In “TB as Something Willed” Grenier plays with language, subverting expectations of TB by coining the phrase “translation bastardization” – a deliberate process of allowing for the incompleteness of language and poetic experience. “The poem becomes more than I do,” she writes, and it is in this essence of translation from which a dual sense of the “bastardization” comes about. It might mean trying too hard to articulate what the poetic is all about, how we bastardize when we aim too much for the self-serving ambitions of the scientific, philosophical or virtually theoretical. Or, the poet reminds us, bastardization might imply the individual understandings that fuel what poetry is and how we all read it, live by it, interpret it. This sense of bastardization is ultimately a hopeful willing, the only true method of meaningful translation – exaptation *par excellence*.

Grenier’s third chapter, “There but not There” moves readers into the shifting theoretical darkness of institutionalized culture and gaps between identity and the disingenuity of theory. This chapter pulses with a call for the generous intent offered by poetry, a new form of symbolizing the void of inarticulation from within inexperience, an evolving semantics outside the failed ambitions of academic and “knowing” discourse. Instead, we are asked to conceptualize a dialogue with the “divine in the fabric of the everyday,” the core of what poetry allows and offers lives, lived off the page. The final installment of “With It” is an intangible, playful and edgy poem called “There’s no Such Thing as Seamstress.” The concern here is memory and a celebrating as well as questioning look at the human traces we hide and leave behind as we move from the dramas of advice and critique to something wished for, something more natural and free.

Now *The Concession Stand* makes a shift into a second segment, “For it.” In the first chapter, “Heritage Like Money Then: Risk to Reward” we immediately encounter the almost ubiquitous lost mother but discover that what has been lost is a language, and not quite lost in a traditional sense. “I have no mother tongue as my mother tongue has lost me,” Grenier writes. The chapter provides a first glimpse into diasporic identity and the betrayals of colonization. But typically, all

is not lost and celebrations of contingency abound. Only the human longings and limitations can lead to a poetic (non-) survival of identity, only the longing for connection is real. "What transforms us will always be the expression of feeling, not the intellectualization of it," Grenier insists, "remembering our power and limitations, our diversities and commonalities ... difference has been embraced. Uncertainty is operative, so is solidarity. Then there is hope." And always, the primacy of writing, inextricable from experience: "I had never met a Turk until I was 40 years old," the poet notes, "and then I wrote about her." Strangely, however, Grenier here warns against taking the metaphor too literally; that while writing and life are one and the same, they unfold in parallel ways only by some specific calculus. "There are no protagonists, antagonists or narrators, only participants. That is where poetic engagement occurs." The chapter sets itself for "the expression of feeling rather than the intellectualization of it," for hope and the hope of being heard and hearing both others and the self.

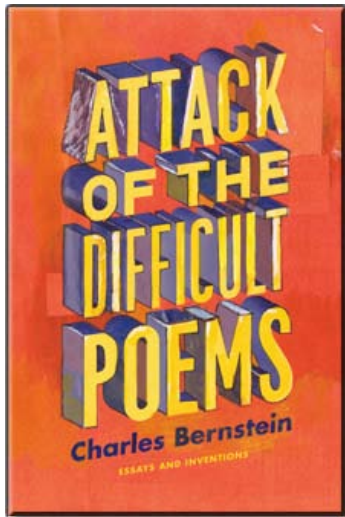
"Gul of the Supernal Garden" is an intentionally dark reflection "from the edge of chaos" about what is repairable and permanently damaged in the refugee/diasporan experience. We have condolences for mothers we do now know have been lost, embodiments of unknown loss, a chasm to which loss itself is not immune. Swirling around this is a wish for healing and assertions of the present and presence, and again, a frightened response – perhaps a warning(?) against the inadequacy of theoretical engagement with relation. From this, the text's most gloomy writing, we emerge into "A Place in the Sun, *Malgre Sangre*," the core of *The Concession Stand*. A sort of inner-and-outer travelogue, this chapter offers reflections on movement not only from place to place but through time and space, between categories, from memory, towards self, hope, connection. "The only intolerance is that of non-communication," she writes. Far more narratively cohesive than the dreamlike moments of prior chapters, the reader travels with Grenier on a trip from American airports to the Middle East. But the journey is never quite what it seems, and while the details of smoky restaurants and strong coffee hover wistfully throughout, the concern is always about other things: where and how the past leads to where the future exists, what we do with the remains of the past, how the foods we eat become memories of the souls we've met along the way and the selves we choose to exploit, experience and express in ways that are unique to each of us.

Grenier's final chapter, "Doing the Dishes, *Aferim*" is a return to the themes of earlier chapters in a hauntingly obscure language of affect. We see once again warnings against the limits of voice, rhetoric and persuasion, traces of the eternal in the pragmatic and a revered reality. Yet there is some sense of concession finally, the naming of a mother – albeit an elusive linguistic trick: "How does one face *ush*, when one is coming from *anush* (immortal, female energy, *an* is prefix for negation in Armenian.) Mother's name was *Anush*." At times funny, other times reaching for more of an answer than anywhere else in the text, this chapter breaks into a set of poems and prose center-of-consciousness writing about the factuality and actuality of language, about survival, history's inheritance and – as always – our place within words and language.

There is a tendency throughout to veer into popular metaphysical constructs – choosing the light, leaning on inner strength when the world fails us, a grace achieved only by receptivity to art. It's impossible to disagree with these notions; they simply appear overly ephemeral to stand alongside Grenier's assertions about the lack of depth in theory. On the other hand, writing concerned with poetics lives within the shadowy world of the ethereal; similar criticisms have been leveled against everyone from Muriel Rukeyser to Adrienne Rich. At its best, *The*

Concession Stand is a warning against the defenses we use to anesthetize ourselves against a life fully realized: categorization and overt commodification, pat answers and denials of complexity, simplified narratives and language used as a kind of bromide to cure the very pains that define us. Grenier urges us to confront and embrace the insupportable, to live with what is lost and explore both lit and shadowed places of the human soul. "Vulnerability and flawed citizenship are integral," she urges. "History belongs to the domain of the universe. We must be gentle with it, go around it. That may be the antidote to the shame of being alive." The difficult and elusive prose moments presented in the text beg an unknowing; maybe we don't know or fully understand, but can we keep going anyway – and can we feel something in the process? There is only language between us, but what traces does it leave after it has drawn us closer, changed us? Philosophy fails, but does silence? Science and poetry are limited, but how do they connect? "How to get from the heart to the brain is the task," Grenier notes, and there is a sense that somewhere within the slippery but hopeful silences of her words, there, between the pages and her refusal to catalog and customize and cure us of the human, the way is lit. As she notes, hope lives there.

Review of *Attack of the Difficult Poems*, by Charles Bernstein
(University of Chicago Press, 2011)



Charles Bernstein's splendid essay collection, *Attack of the Difficult Poems*, is both a propitious and revelatory moment in our literary culture. We need this book. And we need Charles Bernstein. There is perhaps no one better at scanning the horizon for evidence of hostile advances on all things new, experimental, contentious, adventurous, and, therefore, central to the future of art, and particularly of poetry. *Attack of the Difficult Poems* is thus an heroic book, a dazzlingly informed, elegantly imagined, gallant act of exegetical aesthetics.

Of course, for those of us who regard "difficulty" as a virtue and often a sign of rigorous inquiry, Bernstein's book is a delightful affirmation of the poetic enterprise at its core. And while the Bernsteinian prose voice, like that of his of his poetry, is a shifting mosaic of tonalities: now comic, now wistful, sly, wry, and polemical, his critique of a hostile mainstream is tilted not toward indictment but logical persuasion:

American Official Verse Culture operates on the premise that innovation and originality are not criteria of aesthetic value, and while not an absolute barrier to quality, are something to held against a work, as if there were something unpleasantly immodest about any poetry that trades in the untried, something that smacks of elitism or arrogance or vulgarity.

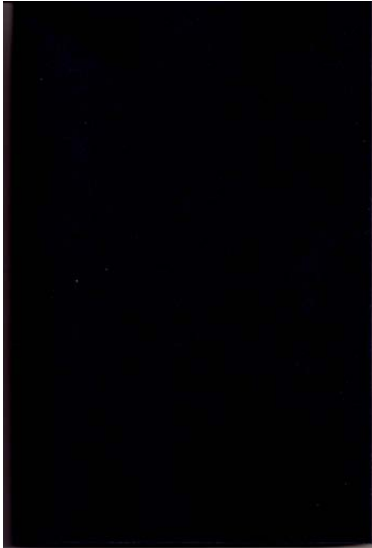
This formulation of the problem in contemporary poetry is both proportionally correct and factually unassailable. The Language Poets, of whom Bernstein is a founding member, have made clear their philosophical commitments and yet are still charged as accessories to some indeterminate metaphysical crime, as though poetic legibility and accessibility are manifestly congruent with Truth and Justice.

To be sure, any instantiation of “the difficult” in poetry must presume a concomitant critical reflex. Or to put it another way: we are being watched. Fortunately for us, Bernstein is staring right back and making his case in plain view. I am pleased to find Donald Davidson taken decisively to task for suggesting, in a 1953 article, that parataxis in poetry erodes causality and is thus politically irresponsible. This is provocative enough coming from a philosopher (whom we love, incidentally), but to see contemporary poets of “American Official Verse Culture” tracing that same invidious chalk-outline around the corpse or corpus of “hospitable” verse is worse than political irresponsibility: it is the aesthetic equivalent to ethnic cleansing. Bernstein doesn’t make exactly that point, but he is unequivocal in his declarations defending experimentation, play, risk, and yes, straight-up complexity.

Attack of the Difficult Poems is a radical book in that its subject is nothing less than the search for meaning, however we construe that term. Although Bernstein’s intellect is formidable, his mind and methodology are equally animated, and enchanted, by a sense of poetic experience: “I want a visceral poetics that articulates the value of the particular over and against the rule of the universal; that refuses to sacrifice the local in the name of the national or corporate; that is dialectical rather than monologic, situational rather than objective; and that prizes knowing and truthfulness more than knowledge and truth.”

With this book, Bernstein saves the world, not from difficulty but from its own dangerously simplistic view of difficult things.

Satire Toward Love: On the Possible Poetics of Kent Johnson's *A Question Mark Above the Sun: Documents on the Mystery Surrounding a Famous Poem "by" Frank O'Hara*¹ (Punch Press, 2011)



According to Geert Lovink and Patrice Riemens, “while one can look at WikiLeaks as a (political) project and criticize it for its *modus operandi*, it can also be seen as the ‘pilot’ phase in an evolution towards a far more generalized culture of anarchic exposure, beyond the traditional politics of openness and transparency.”² I don’t want to valorize this, as it also epitomizes the muckraking tactics we all know and love that tend to be perceived along entrenched, ideological lines, leaving habit (consistency) like something to go on. Nonetheless, identifying and lambasting commonly held assumptions and (perhaps) coteries of the day often make for lively reading, at least. And one can transmute the M. O. of expository journalism(s) into a satiric engagement that will, most certainly, achieve similar degrees of “exposure,” yet spare the reader any pretense of (un)certainly about one’s place and purpose within the revelation. Satire engages the body politic in this way.

Kent Johnson’s “antics,” but more properly, *critical experiments*, are well known to the poetry field.³ For that reason at least they would seem to deserve more conscious attention. *Doubled Flowering: From the Notebooks of Araki Yasusada* has been widely considered and reviewed, a hoax of invented authorship that, according to one “Ron Silliman,” “infuriates folks with a proprietary interest in categories” (that is, according to the book—Johnson has been known to write these blurbs). *American Poetry Review*, who published some of “Yasusada’s” poems, called it “essentially a criminal act.”⁴ Johnson’s work since then has been seemingly punished for not fixing [sic] his name’s relationship to its textual output. Upon rejection by the now defunct *POM-POM* journal, or what became *POM*², of a straight, very printable poem, he muses: “no doubt my presence on / this literary field would displease the head coaching staff / of the *Buffalo Avantists* football team, the team for / whom these editors, after all, shook their POM-POM’s!”⁵ This reluctance to submit [sic] most clearly takes shape in the recent book *Day*,⁶ a mere printing of Kenneth Goldsmith’s *Day* (The Figures, 2003) with Kent Johnson’s name in

stickers on it (whose limited edition signature is also forged by the “publisher,” Geoffrey Gatz). The “original” by Goldsmith is itself a merely re-contextualized issue of *The New York Times*. If Goldsmith’s found (chosen) texts, here and elsewhere, deploy abject appropriations to antagonize a nebulous aura of authentic creativity’s production (their value, for they are hardly readable), Johnson’s attention here antagonizes the centrality (Benjamin’s open-access “image space”) of the cover artist with erotically charged “‘hyperauthorship’ which wriggles and splits like mercury.”⁷ David Hadbawnik writes of “the ways in which every editor, not to mention every reader, in some ways contributes [...] to authorship.” He reads from Allen Frantzen’s *Desire for Origins*, citing the use of Said and Foucault’s theories of textuality and authorship in order to write on disputed authorship in *Beowulf* viz. Kent Johnson’s embodiment of the author function,⁸ who voyeuristically brings us to it, upsets the (apparently un)necessary artist-audience transaction, erasing ownership (via copyright), and the result for us is something *untenable and boring*—the hollow, thieving name, pure products.

Personally, at its most basic, to ask whether an invention like “Araki Yasusada” is adequate as a mode in which a scholar from these shores may write (of) the old Hiroshima, and beyond, is like asking which we prefer regarding the central figure of our language, Shake-speare—an illiterate poacher of rustic ilk or the gentler clique of patrons of the art. For with satire, like Dryden says, you inherit “all the realms of Nonsense.”⁹ In a paper titled “The Poetics of Fraud,” delivered at the 1999 MLA convention in Chicago, near Johnson’s home, Charles Bernstein dismissed his work as an instance of “white male rage.” Bernstein sounds ironic here. I’m reminded of Swift’s “Description of a City Shower”: “Now from all parts the swelling kennels flow, / And bear their trophies with them as they go.”¹⁰

The big problem with Yasusada, of course, wasn’t his purportedly found texts’ “actual” authorship, nor even its supposed bullying of multiculturalism (often given by critics as an explanation for the project), but the ability of the poet to dupe the translator / scholar / editor with their own skills at using texts towards [sic] certain ends. Roland Barthes’s *S/Z*, Goldsmith’s *Day*, his *Weather*, *Traffic*, and *Sports*, Tom Philips’s *Humument: A Treated Victorian Novel*, Ammiel Alcalay’s *from the warring factions*—Muriel Rukeyser’s *The Book of the Dead*—etc—these involve scribbling with someone else’s pages, generative infringing acts that can be relatively quickly absorbed into the critical discourse because “authorship” (and thereby, according to the lines drawn here, “readership”) was never *formally enacted* as a concern. Even in the case of pseudonymous authorship (thinking of the well-intentioned “Pauline Réage”), there’s always a body, visible or not, assumed to be attached to it (and according to Foucault, thereby accountable). That the text’s making, whatever it is, *should* be centered in a human name (individual) seems a liberal trapping in an age’s reason (that proves) indispensable to history’s (capital) trajectories in which (some of) the living do keep a vested interest. By renouncing authorship completely—and more importantly, by completely inventing it—Johnson at least artistically drove a stake through the question and commodity status of identity. Johnson’s most recent project, *A Question Mark Above the Sun: Documents on the Mystery Surrounding a Famous Poem “by” Frank O’Hara*, goes even further than fabricating texts—and authors—it alleges possible alternate authorship of a central poem in the Frank O’Hara canon, “A True Account of Talking to the Sun at Fire Island,” wiping pages of anthologies and aging hearts clean.

That said, as a reader very far from the subject (which has evidently offended many of O’Hara’s friends and admirers), I’m ambivalent about who in the end actually wrote the great poem,

Kenneth Koch or O'Hara. In fact, to know this would reduce the intriguing ways in which the hypothesis, totally plausible (a key point—it's what lends the whole project its legitimacy), hangs suspended. Moreover, the book invites this kind of reading. The meat of it, if not in page numbers then by demarcation, is satirical fiction. An Introduction and Appendix contain the actual "Kochean hypothesis," which brackets the four-part "Corroded by Symbolysme: An Unfinished Novella," which goes by a longer, more absurd name at its location in the text. Here our protagonist is pursued by ring-carrying members of some shadow society most definitely interested in the question of *who wrote* O'Hara's poem (an important fact about the book is that the Kenneth Koch estate has threatened to sue the book's publisher, Richard Owens's Punch Press). It is a pastiche of literary devices chiming in and out of moderne dictions and decorum (Johnson also has an interest in relating "concepts of [modern] architectural acoustics" to "investigations into rigorous prosodic structure"¹¹) and is part of a larger detective story—a real thriller. The author's friends and suspects come and go. (Having been Introduced to the Kochean Hypothesis, which refers us to the Appendixed evidence, the novella draws the reader's interest toward some emerging sense of another, unexpected center, *away from* the book's more *literal* bracketing question of a poem's author.) The devices repeat—in orderly, planned ways you can anticipate—through each of the four sections comprising the "Corroded by Symobolysme: A True Account of Dark and Mysterious Events Surrounding a Famous Poem Supposedly Written by Frank O'Hara (An Unfinished Critical Novella)," an arabesque (of sorts) that lets the reader know it began as a serial work of "experimental" book reviews. Figments of the imagination (perhaps) delve deep, over an abundance of cellar-temp ale, with the author, in Britain, and their later correspondence, into numerous topics—"the boundaries of translation," the "readiness to claim the privilege of an autonomous occasion which covertly ['a rhetoricalized post-avant instrument'] exploits," the chances of "building new structures of reality," etc.¹² The mysteriously American journey moves in and out of the best English pubs and beyond where poetic forebears once strolled and lived. There's even the hint of eternal events and the dreamy, supposed memory of a stroll with a British poet, Tim Atkins, in "the simulacral city," Los Angeles, through The Museum of Jurassic Technology, a citizen's Wunderkammer (and titled so).¹³ The romance is apparently connected to Johnson's thesis, and is of course infected with the spirit of his oeuvre. On the whole, this uncertainty regarding what's real and what's not, though playful, is purposeful. And when more email correspondence stems ["Flowering," sic] from the conceptual, programmatic, repetitious narration, we programmatically suspect it, while one "Martin Corless-Smith" replies:

So poems might be seen as sites of exultant language, rather than the home of a coherent self. I believe there is a consistent and compelling argument for all poems being, in some sense, anonymous. Now, this is easy to assert for anonymous poems, but does it remain persuasive even for poems under authorial signature? Having argued consistently and variously for an understanding of authority as unstable, even a critic like Denise Riley (in her deep book, *The Words as Selves*, do you know it? [sic]) seems to flinch at the sign of the signature: "even if creativity is conceived as really a matter of endless refashioning and involuntary plagiarizing, it still retains, in the lonely fact of the signature, its final flourish of individuation." But I think we need not see the lurking signature as too serious a threat to the thesis of communal *necessity* (and functional anonymity) in the making of a poem. Of course, you likely disagree [sic, and emphasis mine], and I would like to talk with you about this next time we meet, hopefully under more peaceful circumstances than was the case at Keats's house! :~)¹⁴

In positing *itself* as example—masquerade contiguous with shadowy, anecdotal allegations—about which it is deadly serious—the narrative voice gives a doppelganger to the appended object of critique: “Subjectivity and fantasy rule” (attributed to Andrew Duncan¹⁵).

Legend has it that if you find your doppelganger, you’re dead.

In other words, another way to think about this *intertextual* satire is the way in which it identifies a group’s soft spot, exploits it, then mocks the quibble of its fallout and in doing so, only heightens the tensions and anxieties it helped inspire. Satire will but won’t own up to itself, and as intertext, builds up what it means to knock down—indeed, in order to knock it down. *A Question Mark Above the Sun* convincingly argues why evidence suggests Kenneth Koch *could* have written Frank O’Hara’s “A True Account of Talking to the Sun at Fire Island” while developing the ground for its own heroic dismantling.

Johnson writes in an interview, “The driving point of the hypothesis is that such a gesture [Koch attributing “his” poem to O’Hara, after his friend’s death] would have represented a kind of sacred, mysterious act of transference,”¹⁶ a possibility that begins with the simple question of which person actually typed the words on the paper. On the one hand is the metaphysics of what love can do, and even why (especially as seen from the venom directed at “another Kent Johnson infestation”¹⁷). On the other hand there are questions, and therein suspicions, regarding what we do, and what’s at stake, when confronted with the chance of realizing we’ve been duped (especially by the one we love; it’s no secret Johnson is enamored with the surrealist élan of the early New York School). Nonetheless, there is something disappointing about what all this mystery and obfuscation (however revealing it may be) finally amounts to, in the sense of where the attention thus far given to the project, mostly in blogs, emails and newsletters, is focused, including the defenses and explanations given by Johnson himself. Notwithstanding the question of who wrote what, the seemingly exclusive concern regards what questions of (and inquiries into) authorship mean for poetic communities:

...poetry will require a movement out of composition restricted to grammatical experiment and open into a broader conception of the syntactic—one where poetry more daringly takes stock of its status as marginal branch in the Culture’s Total Syntax—a marginalization due to Poets so obediently accepting Authorship as the Noun Phrase of the Literary sentence’s structure.¹⁸

The frames drawing the question of “authorship” in Kent Johnson’s career have, to my knowledge, not yet been expanded to include what would seem to me to be a more interesting and promising and *operative* question, namely, the question of the means by which identity (of any stripe, really) strives to possess its purported expertise. Does the text always actually know more? I’m thinking of someone like John Haberle, his *tromp l’oeil*, who can forge the “currency” equally well.

Kent Johnson’s work seems bigger in these areas.

notes

1. Punch Press, 2010.

2. "Twelve theses on WikiLeaks," *Eurozine*, December, 2010: "Thesis 1."
<http://www.eurozine.com/pdf/2010-12-07-lovinkriemens-en.pdf>.
3. cf. Lain Marshall, "more of Kent Johnson's antics," *Pathologos*, September 8, 2010,
<http://pathologos.blogspot.com/2010/09/more-of-kent-johnsons-antics.html>: "i was fascinated
by how easily i could switch assumptions, and how those assumptions changed even the 'voice'
in which i was reading the poem": par. 7.
4. In Bob Perelman's "Doctor Williams's Position, Updated," *Contemporary Poetics*, ed. Louis
Armand, Northwestern, 2007: 83.
5. In "Rod Smith," *Epigramitis: 118 American Living Poets*, BlazeVOX, 2004: 193.
6. BlazeVOX, 2009.
7. Esther Leslie, "Explosion of a Landscape", *Walter Benjamin: Overpowering Conformism*, Pluto
Press, 2000: 1-40; Emily Nussbaum, "Turning Japanese: The Hiroshima Poetry Hoax," *Lingua
Franca: The Review of Academic Life*, November 1996,
<http://www.english.upenn.edu/~afilreis/88/japanese-hoax.html>: par. 6.
8. "Kent Johnson Is the Author of *Beowulf*: Literary Hoaxes and the 'Desire for Origins,'" *Sous les
Pavés* 1.1, October 2010: 7-8.
9. "Mac Flecknoe," *The Broadview Anthology of British Literature 3: The Restoration and the
Eighteenth Century*, Broadview, 2006: 87-90.
10. 305.
11. cf. *Poetic Architecture*, BlazeVOX, 2008: 15.
12. 74, 66, 50, respectively.
13. "After the Wunderkammer."
14. 93.
15. 52.
16. With Peter Burghardt, *MARY: A Journal of New Writing*, Winter 2010, [http://www.stmarys-
ca.edu/external/Mary/winter2011/reviews/interview-pb.html](http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/external/Mary/winter2011/reviews/interview-pb.html): par 17.
17. Posted on a listserv: unsourced, yet true, so as to allow it was a slip of the tongue.
18. *Question Mark*: 64.

**Review of *An Atlas of Lost Causes*, by Marjorie Stein
(Kelsey Street Press, 2011)**



Dear sister, I've moved into your room. Held hands up to the light. At this angle, secretly outlining the shape of a gangster's heart, any shadow can thrill the mind. Vowing to capture the rapid eye movements of my crimes--your crimes. Someone will take a bullet. (How should the skin tear when cut?) You'd be surprised, but it takes a long time to break something properly (3).

Marjorie Stein's *An Atlas of Lost Causes* constructs an anatomical theater around the death of the narrator's twin sister. The scene(s) of the crime(s) are transformed into an intricate diorama and the text "focuses with parallax lenses," investigating from a multitude of perspectives to determine distance. Stein echoes Rosemarie Waldrop when she writes, "Language can be said to kill the body. An interview seen as pinning a body down" (61)--as she attempts to identify and label each dissected part.

Like a book of maps, each page of this text holds up a segment of a larger picture, fraught with "the grammar of disintegration" (65) and the inquisitive dreaming of a sleuth's grief. The narrator "gravitate[s] to these broken centers" (92) in order to sense her twin's body and, through that missing body, detect things hidden.

Drawing from early processes of photography and film, Stein develops scenes and allows them to set. Elements and actions are fixed yet unstable, in the process of becoming images. The twin's abandoned room is a giant pinhole camera, a black box. Inside, all points of view are flipped, reflecting new significations. Potential causes are rehearsed and answers, lost.

The intersections between film, death and dream resonate with Satoshi Kon's animated film *Paprika*, [<http://www.sonyclassics.com/paprika/>] in which a homicide case haunts a cop's dreams. A series of succeeding images shift slightly with each dreaming. Sometimes he is the one who takes the bullet; sometimes he is the one who fires the gun.

"She speaks without punctuation where one open-ended fiction follows another, changing the scenery" (88). Stein references Muybridge's horses

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Muybridge_race_horse_animated.gif] and offers a series of objects in stillness, which in rapid succession animate. The exact details of the crime--the act, the loss, the lost cause--change depending upon their proximity and arrangement. "Shot-by-shot motion was stolen then stitched into a ribbon. [...] Any scene can come apart in our hands" (25).

Lines and images lean against lines and images until they become "latticed," and Stein circles around them 360 in 3D, creating a circumferential meridian. These serial images become the serial kill; the inert becomes inertia. The point dissolves into its vantage, becomes a stain, a body of water, a body of evidence.

I feel sentimental about wanting to retain my inner geography of her space. The exact distance between the armchair and the bookcase triangulated by the coordinates of her eyes. She has been removed from the immediate scene. The sides of the isosceles triangle blown out of proportion (26).

Like scissors slicing through filmstrip, Stein's writing is of glittering, broken assemblage. "A stranger realizes it's a perfect day and leaps to cover each lumen with her own body, while an entire galaxy of broken glass moves through her nerves" (4). The narrator's twin's body is "assembled from the leftovers" (95) but cannot be argued as proof. Because of this, Stein stages

exhibits in a theater of memory. Through-lines and channels are graphed: hand to bone, bone to room, room to skin, skin to cell, room to cell, cell to water, water to photograph.

This book examines not the effects, but the causes of ending a life. In her autopsy of grieving, Stein illustrates how loss disintegrates the body. "Ritualizing human remains has put sorrow into our mouths and we learn that bodies, broken down, and bones hollowed out by grief, have invented a music to fill the wreck" (41). Library to inventory, inventory to gravity, gravity to folds, folds to falling, falling to dissolution, dissolution to horizon.

The text is accompanied by a series of contour line drawings of figures that imply three-dimensional texture and motion. "The only way to convict the criminal is through sublimation--the way ice can move into the atmosphere as vapor without first becoming water. Just so, I will enter her mind. All matter must eventually undergo a phase change" (11). These phase changes and transfers are the slippage through which the narrator intercepts the "moving target" (5) of her twin's memory, tracing the outlines of her absence. "We love for the bones to go on without us" (41).

Stein travels backward, through death's erasure, to the source of starlight. The narrator's twin is an outline she can't quite follow; she under- and over-exposes into shadow and light. There are no witnesses to report the nature of the plane, or the number of clouds and birds obscuring the face of the sun. The twin's journal fails to be exact, and the flight and/or fall of the murder and/or suicide is hoarded as a stolen item, a recovered piece of the wreckage--is set on fire. Stein's text ascends to the stars, crosses borders and dead lines. The pilot and the plot imprint and scatter, switch and exchange. Stein's acts of trespass "...attempt a sentence in this dissolving language" (34), finding reasons to continue interrogating what is and is not evident.

Am I my body? What happens when I cut my hair or trim a fingernail--have I discarded my self? What if I lose a finger, my eyesight, my hearing? Exactly where is the "I" located? Did the crime involve a body? (33)

Contributors' Notes

Emileigh Barnes' work has appeared in BathHouse, EOAGH, Southern Women's Review, Cricket Online Review, and other journals.

Annah Browning grew up in the foothills of South Carolina. She received her MFA from Washington University in St. Louis in 2010. You can find her work in *The Kenyon Review Online* and *DIAGRAM*.

William Cordeiro received his MFA from Cornell University where he is currently a Ph.D. candidate studying 18th century British literature. Recent poems appear or are forthcoming in *Fourteen Hills*, *Sentence*, *Rougarou*, *Waccamaw*, *Stone Canoe*, *Ping Pong*, *Requited*, *Lumina*, *Comstock Review*, *Gulf Stream*, and elsewhere. He is grateful for residencies from Risley Residential College, Provincetown Community Compact, Ora Lerman Trust, and Petrified Forest National Park.

Kristina Marie Darling is the author of two poetry collections: *Night Songs* (Gold Wake Press, 2010) and *Compendium* (Cow Heavy and Floral Books, 2011). She's also the editor of *narrative (dis)continuities: prose experiments by younger american writers* (VOX Press, 2011).

Shira Dentz is the author *black seeds on a white dish* (Shearsman Books), a chapbook, *Leaf Weather* (Tilt Press), and another full-length collection, *door of thin skins* (CavanKerry Press). Her poems have appeared or are forthcoming in numerous journals including *The American Poetry Review*, *The Iowa Review*, *American Letters & Commentary*, *jubilat*, *New American Writing*, *Denver Quarterly*, *Field*, *Western Humanities Review*, *Black Warrior Review*, *Drunken Boat*, and *Bombay Gin*. In addition, her poems have featured on NPR, Poetry Daily, and Omnidawn Publishing's blog. She is a recipient of an Academy of American Poets' Prize, the Poetry Society of America's Lyric Poem and Cecil Hemley Memorial Awards, Electronic Poetry Review's Discovery Award, and Painted Bride Quarterly's Poetry Prize. A graduate of the Iowa Writers' Workshop, She is Poetry Co- Editor of Quarterly West, finishing a Ph.D. at the University of Utah, and a Fellow at the Tanner Center for the Humanities in Salt Lake City. Before leaving for Iowa City and

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Crystal S. Gibbins is pursuing her PhD in English from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, where she also works as an editorial assistant for *American Life in Poetry*. Her chapbook, *Now Here Nowhere*, is forthcoming from Furniture Press Books (2012), and other works will appear in *Prairie Schooner* and *The Untidy Season: An Anthology of Nebraska Women Poets* (Backwaters Press 2012).

Jeff Harrison has publications from Writers Forum, MAG Press, Persistencia Press, and Furniture Press. He has two e-books at xPress(ed), and one at Blazevox. His poetry has appeared in *An Introduction to the Prose Poem* (Firewheel Editions), *The Hay(na)ku Anthology Vol. II* (Meritage Press), *Sentence: a Journal of Prose Poetics*, *Otoliths*, *Xerography*, *Moria*, *NOON: journal of the short poem*, *Dusie*, *MiPOesias*, *Big Bridge*, and elsewhere. You are welcome to visitanticview.blogspot.com.

Derek Henderson's work has appeared in *Witness*, *CutBank*, *Black Warrior Review*, *The Journal*, *Puerto del Sol* and *VOLT.Inconsequentia*, the book-length poem co-written with Derek Pollard, was published this past spring with BlazeVOX. *Thus &*, an erasure of Berrigan's *Sonnets*, is forthcoming from If P Then Q Press.

Joshua Kryah was born and raised in St. Louis, Missouri. He holds an MFA from the Iowa Writers' Workshop and a Ph.D. from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, where he was a Schaeffer Fellow in poetry. His first collection of poems, *GLEAM* (2007), won the Nightboat Books Poetry Prize. His poems have appeared in *Colorado Review*, *Denver Quarterly*, *The Iowa Review*, and *Ploughshares*, among other journals. He lives with his wife and two children in Las Vegas and teaches at UNLV. He is also the poetry editor of *Witness*. You can learn more about him at joshuakryah.com.

Dorothee Lang is a writer, web freelancer and traveler, and the editor of *BluePrintReview*. She lives in Germany, keeps a sky diary, and always was fascinated by languages, roads and the world, themes that reflect in her own work. For more about her, visit her at blueprint21.de.

Brian Lucas's non-serial series of 'miniatures' was initiated after he moved his studio back home and no longer had space to work with larger canvases. Some of these images appeared to him in

the morning air, others came about in response to spoken instructions coming from without. Lucas is a native Californian, although he spent several years living in Thailand and traveling through various parts of SE Asia. He now resides in the city of Oakland, California. His books include "Circles Matter" (2012, BlazeVox Books), "Telepathic Bones" (2010, Berkeley Neo-Baroque), "Light House" (Meeting Eyes Bindery, 2006), and a collaboration with poet Andrew Joron, "Force Fields" (Hooke Press, 2010). He blogs at www.brianlucas.tumblr.com and cloud-shepherd.bandcamp.com.

Alexandra Mattraw's chapbook, *Projection*, can be found through Achiote Press. Her poems have also appeared in journals such as *Denver Quarterly*, *VOLT*, *Verse*, *Seneca Review*, and *American Letters & Commentary*. A former Vermont Studio Center resident, Alexandra currently runs a reading and art salon series called *Lone Glen* in San Francisco. For more information on the series or her work, visit her at <http://alexandramattraw.wordpress.com/>.

Rachel May teaches at Babson College. Her work has appeared in *Meridian*, *Nimrod*, *The Journal*, *Cream City Review*, *Fugue*, *Green Mountains Review*, *EOAGH*, *Night Train* and other journals. A collaborative poetry chapbook, *I: NE, Iterations of the Junco*, was published by Small Fires Press in 2009.

Kevin O'Rourke received his MFA from the University of Minnesota, where he served as the poetry editor of *Dislocate 5*. New work can be found in *Tammy*, *580 Split*, *The Brooklyn Review*, and at 300Reviews.com.

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Cindy St. John is the author of *City Poems* (Effing Press 2009) and *People Who Are in Love Will Read This Book Differently*(Dancing Girl Press 2009). Her poems have appeared in many magazines, including *The Southern Review*, *H_NGM_N*, and *Cimarron Review*. She lives in Austin, TX.

Tim Shaner's work has appeared in *Claudius App* (forthcoming), *Jacket*, *Kiosk*, *P-Queue*, *Shampoo*, *88: A Journal of Contemporary Poetry*, *The Portable Lower Eastside*, *Ambit* (UK), *The Rialto* (UK), and other magazines. He is the co-editor of *Wig*, a magazine devoted to poetry written on the job, and curates A New Poetry Series in Eugene, Oregon. He has an MA in Creative Writing from Antioch University (London) and a Ph.D. from SUNY-Buffalo's Poetics Program. He works as a full-time part-timer at Lane Community College and Umpqua Community College.

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Joshua Ware lives in Lincoln, NE where he is pursuing his PhD in poetry and poetics. He is the co-author of *I,NE: Iterations of the Junco* (Small Fires Press), as well as the author of *A Series of Ad Hoc Permutations, or Ruby Love Songs* (Scantly Clad Press) and the forthcoming *Excavations* (Further Adventures Press) and *Homage to Homage to Homage to Creeley*(Furniture Press). His work has appeared in many journals, such as *580 Split*, *EOAGH*, *Laurel Review*, *New American Writing*, and *Quarterly West*.

Scott Wilkerson is the author of a book of poems *Threading Stone* (New Plains Press), the recipient of a 2009 and a 2011 Writing Residency from the Lillian E. Smith Center for Creative Arts. He teaches in the Department of English at Columbus State University. His new book, *Ars Minotaurica*, is forthcoming in 2012.