



Word For/ Word is seeking poetry, prose, poetics, criticism, reviews, and visuals for upcoming issues. We read submissions year-round. Issue #30 is scheduled for September 2017. Please direct queries and submissions to:

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546 Center Avenue
Weston, WV 26452

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

Email queries and submissions may be sent to: editors@wordforword.info.

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

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

Jonathan Minton, Editor

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Supporting Cast

Some things should not be. The alien's jaw within a jaw slowly cantilevers out of its eyeless face. You cannot turn away even though it means your death. You wanted to be the heroine, but that role was taken. Instead, you play the hysteric, the one everyone longs to slap. When you die people will breathe a sigh of relief. It's not fair as you also look good in panties. You give it your all until your final scream. Then you pack up your things and go home. Someone has to sign on to failure.

Stalking

There is a monster and there is a cat. Both have fierce eyes, an excess of fangs. We do not want to use our flame throwers against the cat, but our nets will not hold the monster. Our captain has not told us how to solve this dilemma. We track mucous and faint yowls. We know that something will leap at us. We will have just an instant in which to decide.

Cagey

The ship has been programmed to self-destruct. The corridors blare and strobe with panic. The only survivor, you rush to the landing craft, the whoosh of the airlock echoing your relief. Small engines thrust you seconds ahead of detonation. The red flare that follows should have sufficed to kill your nemesis, but verb tense is everything. The alien has been one step ahead of you this whole time. Now you share a single placental sac. Even naked, you must be lethal. When the hatch opens, only one of you must emerge.

one day the Upper Peninsula will be temperate

imagining a life comprised
of a new wooden box of stuff
like a search for new bees & maybe
a kind of skillset you never
considered: being helpful
with goats or things you learn
as a kid in summer camp but
lose when you need it most
you could move a canoe once
identify the pines / tread water
later once a spring /a boat
filled with beer cans & toes
but what we're talking about:
here are your favorite t-shirts
a Spanish/English dictionary
knife & block of cheddar
& Wednesday it's you but Thursday

on the edibility of acorns

yes historically perhaps
ancestral fingernails scraped
at the hulls ground
the oak nuts into cakes
of something bitter
something that tastes
like lacquered furniture
& yes you may have
seen the tiny hands
of squirrels folded
in prayer around the seed
one wet black eye pointed
in your direction from
the crook of a tree branch
though she may
seem content cracking
into the shell with her
pickaxe incisors
we are neither rodents
nor foragers anymore so
you should not eat the acorn
instead be weary of the way
it will grind your soft teeth
the way each nut becomes
shrapnel as it breaks
tearing into internal tissue
or discover an acorn
home to any host of unsavory
worms & weevils or worse
those acorns are steeped in acid
nature's best formaldehyde
can turn hides to leather even
therefore you should not eat the acorn
instead let it sit or press it into soil
& over time see how it unfolds

all the wild

space / a need I've run down a cliff of sand & swam places I shouldn't
on this good earth where am I a factor or hazard / an anomaly
 trained my eyes on the distance largest swatch of green
 does it matter what's growing nipped a tick or two anyway
over the bed / a painting of a mountain let's go there next

all the wild

the thing about sorrow: I detect it from below a canary sometimes
swifts up from the floor to your lap all the worst situations
difficult: whatever you miss I can do my best to replace
tricky puzzles / pieces missing songs that won't stop singing scents that feel just
I will not be fooled what ails you is my job now: I will curl up next

all the wild

o pumpkin my autumn swells pleasant not afraid to say this it
this is everything fragrant & how does one hide / the hay
stealing the greatest fields having very few cares as gentle & cool
tried to hide the sky forget gilt edges but how does one chose
(when we all start to fall) to miss the changing leaves

Thirteen

We sat beneath the giant baobab, dreaming of African ash.
Fraxinus was sacred to the Norse. Now a constant rectitude is the live fruit of a she-oak.

The belly-burns made me think I'd once been a horse.
That's one reason I always wear either black or brown—they protect me from the urge of
your spur.

Lemon coconut cake is a way of planting soybean breathing into the chest of a crow, here
across the great ocean?
One plus one plus one equals nothing, or a steadfast dissolving of salt?

I discovered I had a blister after nearly sixty years and hope it doesn't disappear.
It's weird to see my childhood fears reflected, now, in its gravelly, riverbed stance.

Was Kabir ever colloquial? Was Rumi? Hafiz?
When either heard the clock strike thirteen did they crow-talk? Rewind their words? Did
they suddenly want to die?

My Not-Yet-Young

Having a biotic reaction, I was everything I might live.
I will never forget driving into town, unable to see the highway's white lines in binding
sunset.

No one knows the weakness of a quixotic *was*.
We smell feathers of migrating geese and appear enrapt with *said* and *done*.

When all's diminished, expect no incident of bored fish.
Sure, everything married everything else, and ordinary leaves did not become a windy
routine.

I tried extravagant arrivals and late night winter almanacs.
Everyone agreed I should learn to fly and protect my not-yet-young.

If I wake full of oxygen, will you humiliate my breathing by investigating why?
What if a hovel of thrown stones, containing both the birth and death dates of paramecia,
became my repeated need.

Shamanic Meltdown

The Siberian shaman appears flute-like in his recompense.
I know his ecstatic toad like I know the ice shelf to which he is impacted.

The *College English* article said something about *socio-epistemic demise*.
There are groundhogs with a deeper sense of pedagogy.

Sometimes when I take vitamin E, I imagine a second skin of walrus blubber protecting
me.
Yes, I feel naked, especially when you eye me while sucking a blood orange.

I heard the shamanic sound like an ontological meltdown.
The Peruvian shaman had come to Fort Wayne and had given me maca the year before to
heal the inflammation.

If I fail to smile when your thighs swish past, it is because of my lack of a fixed sense of
self.
If I knew your name, I might be held accountable for an unforgivable fantasy.

Sure, we grow up and in doing so sometimes move far from the hut.
When he played his maraca and sang to me and scoured my pain-body, I knew I'd never
again be the same.

There, There

I have needlessly complicated the presence of a bone.

I am at a loss, the dogs are confused, and the tightly knit social fabric of my ribs appears disrupted.

In the dirt before me, certain as I stand, the bone.

I know that if I found it, it must have secretly come from me.

But why the wind this March morning, growling as if not quite through biting me with winter?

Hasn't it chewed us enough, and are we not better for staying three months indoors?

I have retreated and hermit-sat.

I have investigated the great migrations of the musk ox, the exasperated bees that ride the spiny crags of the long intestine and get shit out, buzzing, months from their home.

I am not trying to say that's how I feel.

I am not convinced I have come without a purpose.

Still, the constant, the marrow mewling from within, asking for milk words this time to scrawl away the loss.

Even the dogs are confused when I hand them the bone and—patting them—confide,
There, there—there is more, there will be more.

What is Beautiful

When Monet painted the Water Lilies, people said “We seem to be present at one of the first hours in the birth of the world.”

Up close, you see that it’s cracked, scratched and smudged. It reminds you of looking at that art book with your mother. There was a painting she couldn’t identify and as she flipped the pages back and forth she said, “This seems wrong.”

Now you almost cry because you miss her and you know you’ll never create anything - anything that beautiful.

My Artist Friend

We're trying to figure out how many people wash their hands after using the bathroom.

Not enough, we know that.

But it doesn't matter.

It's like a broken tooth on a pretty girl.

We talk like this every night.

You're looking at clay and I'm looking at you.

Outdoor Seating

A woman in a black dress
scowls at her phone
and says “you’re ridiculous”
while a saucer of crème brûlée sits
waiting to be cracked.

From *The Wilderness in Which the "I" Cannot Exist*

it's these entrails of elsewhere admit me an "I": spearmint,
a moment of tongue, enthralled;
fresh-cut grass, flirting
openly snakey the nostrils; a dewdrop, to disappear coeval of
into tinges of vinho verde & miller
high life, & all their ferny mustard-light offerings are & stinks peace.
—& now I am become a cornucopia of worlds.
"then am I / a happy fly"
earth as moment, as capsule encapsulate.
I'm walking across the castlegrey apartment lot
to fling empties into the bin as if a toast to
our planet when I realize, then & there, I promise
to let my teeth rot out my skull in tribute.
of that honeyed air
that around the pear boughs twines
& twists also myself into a Jolly Rancher
wrapper of the sour-apple variety, & hardly do I know
"I" by sight, save by these rough sketches of
Cricket-Skull, drug
from a wilderness in which
the "I" cannot exist. it comes as "oozy woods," as
tourniquet thereof, filled with daffodils—the most withered
of which I swish then spit
like mouthwash into a red robinbreast's gullet, hoping
the resulting gravy rehydrates
modernism's wilted eye with the grace of a wink.
anything & everything that breaks
a binary is the bone I want to be chewing on

From *The Wilderness in Which the "I" Cannot Exist*

so why are we here. we are here to resurmise a sunrise?
—to reprocess, I think,
what a garden is. *until I think what a garden is*
composts, then grows—into throes of—*a garden is what I think.*
frogs grate the evening out of
the leaves how morning out of dusk & I an eye from sleep.
& it's complicated, braiding the bricolaged route, where the "I"
belongs—or doesn't—along all that. today, I read that by 2050 the ocean
may be more composed of plastic
than fish. if this world gets any more unreal, realistically we'll
need a more unruly lyric to view it, un-really: some unreal
lyric. a lot can happen in the tiniest
degree or two of detail
I invite myself into: tectonic, cerebral, temperature,
or otherwise—it's eerie, really. Namib, Sonora, Gobi, Mojave,
Atacama, Black Rock: these deserts are orange rinds
on orange rinds rolling over with a fungal green which to them
spells disease & makes me feel human.
this world's symbiosis with "I," once too much
with "us," now too little—by which I mean,
the last imagined joshua tree may depend upon
our imagining the last imagined
joshua tree—by which I mean, the length
from corduroy to snakeskin
is chiasmic

From *The Wilderness in Which the "I" Cannot Exist*

& then o then Cricket-Skull, pinched like the hourglass
you are, of sun's lemon-
meringue, you learned quickly as I did how to escape like light
into balled-up saran wrap, how to either collapse
or compost into
crystal & cysts or to do as "light" does: slowly coalesce into sense.
when I was 6 I was shown a handful of
snapdragon pods (whose petals, when dehydrated &
scoured of pink, resemble tulip-familiar
skulls, screaming the laundry of their affinity with the faux)
& Cricket-Skull, I was scared
not to have known but
to know to know the world could die. but then—
then I took a breath, from worm
upwards, into something which felt like cirrus, mysterious,
& took safety in what room the word *garden*
had reserved, between noun & verb: that, too,
is the pinch, Cricket-Skull,
that defines you & lets me fit "I" in you & "you"
comfortably into I. & now—
now the hole in the ozone is talking
you out of your sleep induced by those clouds &
now those clouds want their nothing back
& you're unsure what that means
but you're sure it's no good omen. you feel it
as intestinally as you can though you hardly understand
your own organs anymore, let alone those
of the sky's. & when you wrote: *profit's best impression
of a garden was a Whole*
Foods, all that made me want to do was
wrap myself in pineapple-leather like the diva I am
& cry for hours, because, god, sometimes it seems
as though we can't even
accomplish failure in our lyrics
until it's willing to wear us through the everyday

From *The Wilderness in Which the "I" Cannot Exist*

this planet is dying & there's no poetry can live in that I'm sorry.
—but if the future reveals itself as a sentence
I say we must drag
the avant-garde into the grass.
they say solanaceae aka the genus of nightshades
outgrow the shade they throw:
tomatillo , wolfberry, tobacco, petunia. petunia?²—yes,
petunia. taxonomies outgrow us, too, so
survival I imagine will rely upon the wildcards, recatalogued,
pinched at the root & upbraided as anise-scent
into the air itself, just like:
“ well wild wild whatever
in wild more silent blue.” not quite as quiet
as a painting. not as the air
a painting doesn't have. to esteem what's surrealest
of our vocabularies is to subvert the unreal & redeem the, *the* real.
nothing about *the* is ethereal,
it's there, ready to pluck.
an acorn is to the oak what the elk is to a chandelier.
& what hangs evenly from that?²—evolution, a fine-
tuned perversion I've grown stupid against
to understand: blue, as flavor, for instance; blue-raspberry
in the 7-11 haunts us as the idea exudes from its vaults.
unlearn yourself, it says. crawl
before you walk—& that's why you'll need to train yourself
to unlearn yourself, if you want to escape the “I” 's echo. “crawl,
before you walk”—like the escalator you are.
but I am staring into Noémie Goudal's *Cascade*
where there are no stairs,
no stars,
& all's the water in a waterfall, replaced by white linens, aligned
by traffic going everywhere & nowhere
& it's likeable
to think what nature wants

From 555

A reader can't fail a book.
I can't be out of hairspray.
The paranoid is never entirely mistaken.
Everything was beautiful and nothing hurt.
It's the obligation which is degrading.
Your face is.

Everybody just stop breathing hot air.
Encountered this scary-looking insect in my kitchen last night.
This was to have radical consequences.
Living persons are often already dead.
It's so individual in nature, though.
It's silly.

Itchy eyes.
Get angry.
I'm alive.
It isn't.
Query me.
But first, we run a risk of some midday showers and storms that could also pack a gusty punch.
I like getting hit.

From 555

Anyone who thinks that bodily opening can always be adequately discussed in total abstraction from its cultural, moral, aesthetic, etc., implications is missing out on most of what in fact motivates people to turn to this topic of conversation.

Clearly, not everything has the capacity to perform every function.

I have no idea what kids do for fun anymore.

Social conformity and responsibility was big for them, very big.

It will utterly destroy your ass the second you walk outside.

A hard-on painted over in *Saturn Devouring his Son* or something.

It directly addresses our primitive fantasies, bypassing words and thought.

From 555

Do the impossible, do what appears impossible.

The choice between two mutually exclusive possibilities.

Not that we had the choice.

That is not a problem.

I'm teaching myself mechanics, and set out to solve a problem determining the optimum angle to throw a
projectile when standing on a hill, for maximum range.

What works in the angle succeeds in the arc and holds in the chord.

In the afternoon the bees swarmed round the kitchen drain looking for water.

If you're out there you're vulnerable.

If you put your hand up, you may be called upon.

Things are kicking off everywhere.

From 555

There is no joy and no happiness in the future.
But perhaps, in some ways, it's the other way around.
The poet's naming is still the index of the "absent."
Someone else is charged because they threw a lemon.
The dead will not go away despite our best efforts.
I guess my answer is a rousing "It depends."
I don't understand people who like to work and talk about it like it was some sort of goddamn duty.
But I could never deal with a sugar daddy.
Therefore I am unhappy and it is neither my fault nor that of life.

From 555

Atomistic, individual identity is not identity.
Get used to the bear behind you.
So that's less than not a lot.

Like anyone would be, I am flattered by your fascination with me.
Just read my blog and stalk me.
If you don't, no one else will.

I don't think of my sexuality as my identity any more than my shoes are — maybe less.
Language itself is at the root of this problem.
Whatever has a deep meaning is for this reason good for nothing.
The sound effects are what make it.

But labels and identity are toxic.

From 555

Neither the sun nor death can be looked at steadily.
I had to check this immediately.
Poke girls and boys who are pretending to be girls.
It was very much an evolution.
Johnny went to work with a tug and a pull.
So much facemelting organ right now.
My whole life was nothing but a bunch of lies.
Sadly there is also a downside.
Domestication is not like taming.
It's subjective, as one says.
Etcetera, after clichéd etcetera.
And there was worse to come.
No one else is impressed when I tell them how thrilled I was to get the pun.

Notes on 555

555 is a collection of sonnets whose construction is database-driven and relies on text analytic software. I crunched and analyzed Shakespeare's sonnets to arrive at averages for word, syllable and character, these averages became measures for three sets of sonnets. The lines are all *found*, their arrangement is mine. Values for word, syllable and character were recorded. Typos and grammatical oddities were largely preserved. The line selection isn't rule-driven and inevitably reflects what I read, watch, and listen to, thus incorporating my slurs and my passions as well as what amuses and disturbs me. These sonnets were assembled using nonce patterns or number schemes; by ear, notion, or loose association; by tense, lexis, tone or alliteration. Think of Pound's "dance of the intellect among words"—The dance in question traces out a knot (better yet, a *gnot*) that holds together what might otherwise fly apart. I espouse only the sonnets, not any one line.

Jane Dark Finds the Hidden Rooms

You see, the key turns in the lock like this, the way a knife fits in the cutting block. Husband, I know you still keep that torn sketch of her garden before the terrace collapsed, the old bill of sale from inside our fireproof box.

You don't even remember her given name, or the way ice gathered on the roof of that greenhouse in spite of the heat

Another door thrown open, another room opening inside what I thought was a single room. What I meant was, I wanted what's just short of a mansion, because it's going to cost money to warm all this empty space.

(It goes without saying
there aren't any
windows, so you have
no choice but to
imagine what's on the
other side of that wall—)

Husband, the little stream that runs beneath this
house is deep, when you finally break its clean
white surface, I hope you drown

Jane Dark Explains Infidelity To Her Mother

You know how it is between women: first honey, then smoke.
That's how you can tell a rifle's been fired not just once, but
twice. A small tremor in the hand and a flash of light that
catches in the trees

(As a girl, I had an entire room
of what I called "spells," but in
reality they were mirrors

My first understanding of
violence came when I sent a
pebble straight through the
polished glass, just to see it
splinter—)

What I've been trying to say is, you didn't raise me to
rent a room in some other woman's house.

The husband was just a spectator, watching her chip
every one of the dinner plates, claiming each time she
didn't mean to. When she bites her lip, he can't tell a
lie from the truth. Which is to say, he couldn't even
tell the two of us apart.

That night I found her in my closet,
looking through the drawers, trying on
my clean white shirt.

She carried no purse, and no
luggage, because everything
she needed was sitting right
there on the shelf

When Asked, Jane Dark Cannot Define “Hesitation”

Because even the quiet girls have teeth. Which is to say:
I didn’t even realize you were with her that night on the
bridge, I just plucked a dead peach from the tree

(Husband, I know you expect me to carry
that horse on my back, to lug your little
shipwreck all the way to the courthouse.

At this point you’ve already made
a decision, and it’s not up to me
to iron someone else’s ruined
dress—)

Husband, when you scale a fish, you must always cover
the eyes. You can’t think about the lungs, or the hook
shot straight through its bottom lip

Place your hand *here* and *here*. Feel the
coldness of the skin, the perfect stillness of its
little heart—

Jane Dark Goes to Sleep

When we boarded the train, you could already hear bells ringing over the water. Which is to say, the gates had closed. There would be no decanter on the table, no gloves on your mother's hands.

You see, even the smallest turn of the wrist is a decision:

Since yesterday, I've wanted to tell you the truth about the garden. Its rows of flowers, like a little box with laudanum inside. And of course, the terrace

I'm aware the taxi is waiting. But the streets have been taken with an odd stillness. We both know the story is nothing but a horse in the stable, just waiting to be struck.

(Now to find the ring you've wanted to give me all along. But husband, you're familiar with the landscape. There is no drill, no shovel to dig that hole—)

For Once, Jane Dark Defines “Violence”

In order for the trick to work, you can't just linger over the woman's hair. Or the sound her nails make as they strike against the wood. Husband, you know the spell that's hidden in her wrists. The cruelty of each one of her dresses, because she fastens them with a hook.

Which is to say, you must make a decision not to think about the other rooms. The cabinets snap shut and when the little door opens, there is a murder in every glass:

(That night we met, I imagined
our house differently.

Now I've started another fire, but
nothing seems to warm the floor
beneath my feet.

Husband, there is a word
for this kind of guilt and it
sounds exactly like your
name—)

Beautiful motive, light blazing in the courtroom,

Remember not to speak of her, even when you are alone. You
never know who might be listening on the other end of those
wires

Marcia Arrieta

inside a snowflake

islands/refugees of time/waiting/drifting

connecting bridges—Yeats, O’Keeffe, Thomas, Dickinson, Miro

possibilities like hours like circles—eagles, lions, bears

today I weave

the unexpected with time travel
clocks & telescopes & bells

the childhood of invent
the childhood of survival

costumes & masks & boats that sail

the pencil, the book
outside the box of intimidation

The Flutist—Remedios Varo

a song of towers & skies

a key to the ancients a key to the magical

spirals, fossils stars, shells

I am looking for reason when I prefer imagination

I read about Hawking's *Map of Consciousness*

Klee's paintings inspire

the collages are the sculptures, are the branches—

image thought

the wood stacked

hyacinth, snowy egret

footsteps within the blue corridor

cut strips—

bridges, spools of yarn, clocks

treading on acorns

the snow & sun dogs protect me as does the Virgin Mary
I make the beds I organize the books I translate the garden

the Magus appears unforeseen collaboration the music of the spheres
a yellow pencil a spotted owl in the old growth forest

visionaries of variation wolf/gazelle/sand/star
autonomous words written words erased

language & identity

skylark the farm
& the meaning of self-sufficiency

the acorn, the raindrop, the leaf

Stonehenge discovery
& the meaning of the past

the book, the letter, the railroad track

Marcia Arrieta

windswept chaos

gently gather the leaves mend the white butterfly

perhaps today all will be coherent (she will remember the date, she will be content)

a rolling abyss

frozen water pipes --
rural, red monstrosity --
a face like his face

dissonant stranger --
for all she knew, it was night --
neat as a suntan

fistful of closures --
we wanted to bend her clocks --
then the march ended

their featured gambit --
a conference of ailments --
remembering rocks

oversight bunker --
the rest of us will wait here --
his irony zone

they seek an ellipse --
keeping the tome fires burning --
she hires breakfast clowns

evangelicals --
“there are turtles in our soup!” --
a rolling abyss

single file costumes --
in the wee small hours of --
“pitt, pitt, pitt,” pitt-pitt

ripples on concrete --
to rehearse, or, or not to? --
where there are seven

his crooked fingers --
an underrated province --
torn between the scales

liquid rosaries

emission free fall --
appropriate their abstracts --
incomplete gashes

seduction contract --
which one of them had done that? --
oh, oh, oh, hell no

profligate crooner --
there's much more room underground --
liquid rosaries

Miles Davis syndrome --
if it's gone, grab another --
last ditch effortless

all answers aren't five --
all answers are not seven --
all answers aren't five

flipping consciences --
alcohol over our brains --
try a tenderness

unlikely proteins --
culinary hide and seek --
repo the slo mo

having sought so long --
they all prefer the unrul'd --
snow falls against pines

he jumped the wrong creek --
o this headlong reverie --
her bruised rubato

who's important now? --
firmament of all their eyes --
only if we say

Erick Verran

Place des Vosges

The instant it's sunny in Paris
the liquorists put on Schubert.

Laterna Magica

Rembrandt sat down with the biographer.
Amsterdam population, bewitching slum.

Outside, hotly whirring tufts, candescent
linens drying that knew the orange castle.

After a glass of malted gin the portentous
hand laid its Aramaic hex on roast oyster.

Christ's twelve disciples fasten to a prow;
they huddle inside this glittering spyglass.

Maine of wharves delirious, corked spice
barrels hang in strange, speckled Jamaica.

Ask the flower boats in Bruges for a bulb
and whence the gondoliers' mottled eyes,

Edison's still burning filament, grist mills,
lighthouse keeper bald in a garlanded orb.

But, soft!—a bucket spill is abridged and
the flintlocks click to accompany squints.

Guide to the Stars

Enclosed within the dark chalet Heidegger names
the hermeneutic circle on endless loan to Dedalus.

In a moribund valley Virgil lets go your hot palm;
Alighieri collects the dividend of inoculation, it but

a multiplied rose. Nintendo's sorely pixeled sprite
shuffles stupidly in pajamas silk striped or legibly

manufactured in ash, forked vegan tender in hand.
Bound for plates the macaroni tumbles, MacBook

unpacking the victims baked in a Finnish mosque.
A funny thing's happened to JPEG, on the way to

the forum Norton blurbing: Potentially Malicious.
Saint Francis, the pigeons suggest, couldn't shape

a clay in that medieval damp. Not without prayer,
flat, piteous sandal tapping upon a potter's wheel,

mystery whirs of ochre and ceramic fume, aspects
a lyricist couples with carnal gibberish. Favorable

issue from the innards of sundered bird, assure us
tangled spells backfire; pupil regurgitating Hegel,

teach ancient publishers collage and give context.
Blooming around as the farmhand struck a match.

Bizet's French Horn

Huff Post tells us frugal boys homebrew
Blu-ray discs from the critics' screeners.

I can't be sure but that nightly skeletons
spoke inky whispers or ignited cigarillos.

Captain Barnacle's tepid peril goes after
islets of girded stars. Awash in salt brine

Jerry dynamites that Marriott for Disney.
People reports: One scientist's hobby of

felt marker and magnetic needle pointed
directly at nothing sorta like thunders in

the particle collider. Anonymous declare
hedge funds, and Daudet's *L'Arlésienne*,

a democratic threat. Bizet's French horn
painted other skulls onto a swirly yellow.

Ignatius, my boy! Officer Mancuso here.
Something about round up our magazine.

Were There an Orangery in Harvard Square

Potted junipers and
stoved myrtles

form
under glass as

a Purcell ground's
performed on

lute.

The Paladin

Charlemagne's lambent nod
adorned Orlando,
 providing only this
anklet of salt.

Watergate

1.

“I think I broke my thumb from hitting you.”

“I’m sor—”

“You can’t say sorry to that.”

2.

This that before us, fulsome, splintered, wandered into,
wanted, O, away a dalliance
'tween resuscitive tut & brow-down kolony trothing,

gas-splet brung out the beaut’s gore, two-toned, I wiled,
ungarroted. A sandy therefore-defile.
A never-been Tucson, the warrant’s fulgent aerosol

while, finicky, acres burn sorrow whose lake presents the knoll smoke-endured.

3.

Why wouldst one unmurder,

4.

what is done is fun, the past is a jibber that numbs!

5.

Meanwhile, at the dog café,
the phosphorus sausage is sentient: and it wishes

fortune’s disease partake of you. That you who sups
could call slimy history none argue.

THE WURST INTERROGATION nones you.

It is Better if the Threats are Real

Jazz office

figure a bleak calypso, wonderment entering this hollow tout-allowance,
forests wore the facets that wigs let burst,
saying toasting finest doing, solid writhing seated
pander. The critic eating spaghetti.

There is a fact of it, of all that's arty,
which is akin to plastic's thesis avoidance, there being
nearly indiscernible smug investments in frontal pathos,
fouled power forwards, the expressiveness of sweat
in eyebrows being sublime, truly,
the rainbow upon which pragmatic judges rickshaw one's nowest agenda.

Please ape cartography's lesson.
The aesthete can't own *books*.
The aesthete can't own *books*. Rapier symphony, of blisses!
Wither phylums about insurance,
coccyx guessing the woman's career from this crumbles,
impacted similar to her statutes emboldened; elaborate bleeding; and she
wants to use my phone she cannot use my phone.

Island loving seachanges thru gallop dissent, sentry glaring, the iPhone,
its glaring. Before guards, fallacy loathed purchase,
about talismans warding penises kept sheathed. Actor academy positions
aleatory quandaries holding onto tasteless furniture,
the cadaver our congenital shyness, is it rare to salivate mostly for assholes,

theorem radii getting them in pickles, the firstmost gasp beaming up Gladys
wonky against the dark matter stylus.

Dental business

taking the political too seriously, teeth, you tell them, teeth, and mean it,
british elaboration, goading selves inward, paint around the anus,
a frotteur slipping difference into beverages, barks his hart

finicky guesses the! pumpaction cocks sics,
a sturdy orator's bluejean presidio, and I in post-mortuary affectations intent
on listening to blank tapes in too sad of a commitment,
in too the bleakest veal phone, thesis borsht. And the almond paste that thickens it.

I Hire an Aunt

You crouch under the bridge
when I try to hire you.

Tell an aunt
the truth.

Do you yawn when
crying too.

I fit most
of the things you make
for me so draw
a conclusion.

I repeat this
to myself in the bath.

My warm body
sickens it.

I used to drink
but my aunt knew.

Who can hire a future
they crave anyone can.

I fold my newer
keep to my chest like
a heart which never dies.

No transaction.

For company.

I hired an aunt
to bore myself.

She was born here.

We both were.

What do you want
to do with everything.

No trouble
but a complicated
signature.

Your shoulders create
for me a ship.

I feel
so adoring.

I want to pass it around.

A braver me might.

I put myself
into the future like a sound.

from Mudship

So many of us, Griffith, put
your champ down when we retire
see pleasure clear the sheep-plague
anodyne, a tour of recuperation

Griffith, what confines our relationship
I did not become you, no,
anonymous, we took out our lunches
in any field in any city, anonymous,
Griffith and me, see the pleasure
egg two men on something special

This pleasure is not some fragile
with growing pleasure, Griffith, there
we are fully formed

from *Mudship*

1. We go for a walk
2. A process that goes on in secret is lavish
3. The outside air because the sprinklers were on is fragrant
4. Our schedule is open and pretty
5. And what people are doing would appear to be purely intuitive
6. Our bowels are like jelly
7. We kiss our Bills goodbye
8. We just want to confirm that this is you
9. This is us saying goodbye
10. Call us Cash
11. The outside is still fragrant
12. It was peaches and the one feature we would not be caught without is bell choir
13. It is important for us to let others enjoy the things they enjoy
14. We cough
15. When the bell is rung, profit
16. We thought at first it was a spanking
17. Everyone else is leaving, none of them having bought our knives
18. Coughing follows the olive course
19. And a little brown rabbit hops into our path
20. We cannot sew, prescribe, or model
21. Our scientists study belonging
22. We do not have watches
23. We seek someone to touch nouns with
24. Our scientists study pace, acceleration, and the effects of vinegar

25. We had to bode, when we heard the bell, well
26. Moths in the almonds, moths in the beans
27. We see, we know, silverfish, minnows, puppies, gnats, mice, and the moths
28. Worriedly
29. The privacy of action
30. We roll kites for the arousal
31. We campaign
32. We bristle at the word relationship
33. A sheep bleats, throws off our wrist
34. We imagine unfurling
35. It was the first time Bill honked his horn at us he began multiplying
36. We need to be by ourselves
37. A building rusts in the sun
38. We doubt our sexual prowess but want to enjoy ourselves
39. Our game is to wait
40. What we tell one another forms a lip
41. There were no birds on our list
42. Serving spoons and poppies through a display window at the dry goods store
43. What if the line's left running like a faucet
44. We see the special exhibition in the toy store, jingle bells thick and bright as a drake
45. We are just glad to be here
46. Are we to be recognized by our surroundings?
47. Alcohol hands off soft shapes
48. We excuse ourselves
49. Stuff rosemary in our noses
50. Whenever our overtures are misunderstood, we hesitate

51. It's been a very good day for us
52. We want these candles to reflect the sore lights in our eyes
53. Like solder, we will only run when enough heat is applied
54. We were caught rummaging through the trunks of your cars for snail shells
55. Were we wrong to look there?
56. Were we wrong?
57. We know things that feel incredible are also part chance
58. We count them, daylight being what it is
59. People need to wait, no matter how young
60. We look for delicate flowers that bloom themselves through stems through seed through hard sand or clay
61. We can't stand a full moon
62. The wind was low so we took off our gloves
63. A mourning dove makes her nest
64. In the dry goods store a boy sits on the counter with a book, shoelaces dangling
65. After anxiety, it takes a few days to describe our relief
66. Are there such things as unsuccessful pleasures?
67. We need to feel like we are part enough of the community
68. Comes a muskrat up to the surface of the pond to breathe
69. We were taught both to sleep on the plane and to be liars
70. The surface of the pond changes color, pale to fuscous and back with the passing of a cloud
71. We pretend, often, to be strangers on separate errands
72. Our favorite technique for consensus is rhymes
73. We wash our paper money out in the sink
74. Peaches bob the pond the day after the hurricane
75. We break another tree
76. Don't tell us how happy

77. How to eat enough salt to live
78. Sometimes we fall into the ivy
79. We saw you kneeling by the shotgun through the back window
80. We understate
81. We keep putting ourselves back on the roster
82. This is our Italian cypress
83. We need the sun to take us along with it wherever it goes as we are its kittens
84. Whenever possible stay within sight of water during times of stress
85. Those exposed elbows don't belong to us
86. A new sensation crowds that one out as when a picnic is over
87. To keep our bodies as vacant as possible and as like springboards
88. We prefer being driven around by our Bills
89. We compare ourselves to the rain
90. There is no such thing as error
91. We must always stretch to stay stretched
92. We hid our eyes less this year, our knees more
93. Recommended enemas
94. Our noses feel sore
95. Though we marched in the Parade of Pears we were listless
96. And here is our eucalyptus
97. Kit: powder, pollen, cake and yellow flowers
98. We spend whole days cultivating proximity
99. A nice, cordial goodbye, or anything in the right context
100. It is widely reported that our dog ran away
101. A bright June day
102. Is it a toy or a decoration?

103. We enjoy those who burrow
104. We wouldn't pretend astonishment
105. We wrote to win your trust
106. Decidedly looked to the win
107. We toast to our decision to leave
108. Exposure and frequent licking
109. The past has a way of unraveling
110. We check the weather against our plan
111. Kit: sand, flower petals, daubs of mud
112. Our generous senses of fear make us ideal in comforting the sensitive
113. A statue creams the light
114. Among other things
115. We decide to look to the wind
116. We scrape the loop off in the gravel and are admonished by the housekeepers
117. We split our time between seeking permission and purchasing reusable shopping bags
118. The crowns for all the grasshoppers gleam
119. We ache for other evidence
120. Kit: ink in the foyer, cabbage in the skin, trembling
121. The carrot soup we were accustomed to ran out
122. We distract from our plan with bright kites and flags
123. We ache, ache, desire
124. You don't need to convince those who already know how auspicious your presence is
125. Us stuffing gold in the store's maslin kettles
126. The first time we left we told none of our Bills
127. We look younger
128. We were more lonesome the less our jackets matched

129. A few of us threaten not to be ourselves

130. We bake meringues and set them on all available half-windows

131. We've come to be cared for

The Unknown Poem

F H V G
VB F TDL
K HV S P DUX
M J K EUN
U BV Y A F
OG U HE
JE P U DB
I EWCA MX E
J UQ U T
E U HVP S
W X VOOC
Z YQ
VAQ E T W

The Cloud, Alpha Centricus

www.wordforword.info/vol29/warnell.html

Color Commentary

www.wordforword.info/vol29/warnell.html

Box of Letters

www.wordforword.info/vol29/warnell.html

Ecliptinox

www.wordforword.info/vol29/warnell.html

Four Riders

www.wordforword.info/vol29/warnell.html

Blurt Roar

Pentaquark nonsensical poems beat stem-bottled collisions qua pet rank
swerve charts bryllyg street gibber blurt roar ziggurat balal scattering screw harvest
nanoblink economics blazes hedge-bet crash craze ubu merdre bank on nil
pataphysical solutions spark escapes stir perversions typical as hap
lurking in plain yacht asp pail limber holes fetch divine drunk bulkhead painkilling urn
errands sing sacred anomalies yr barbaric blips forgotten grander sins
dispel power-truths praise planetary wobble ataraxia side-prep owl.

[illegible]

[illegible]

Relic Wink

Codepoem



[audio file at wordforword.info/vol29/howard]

Relic Wink

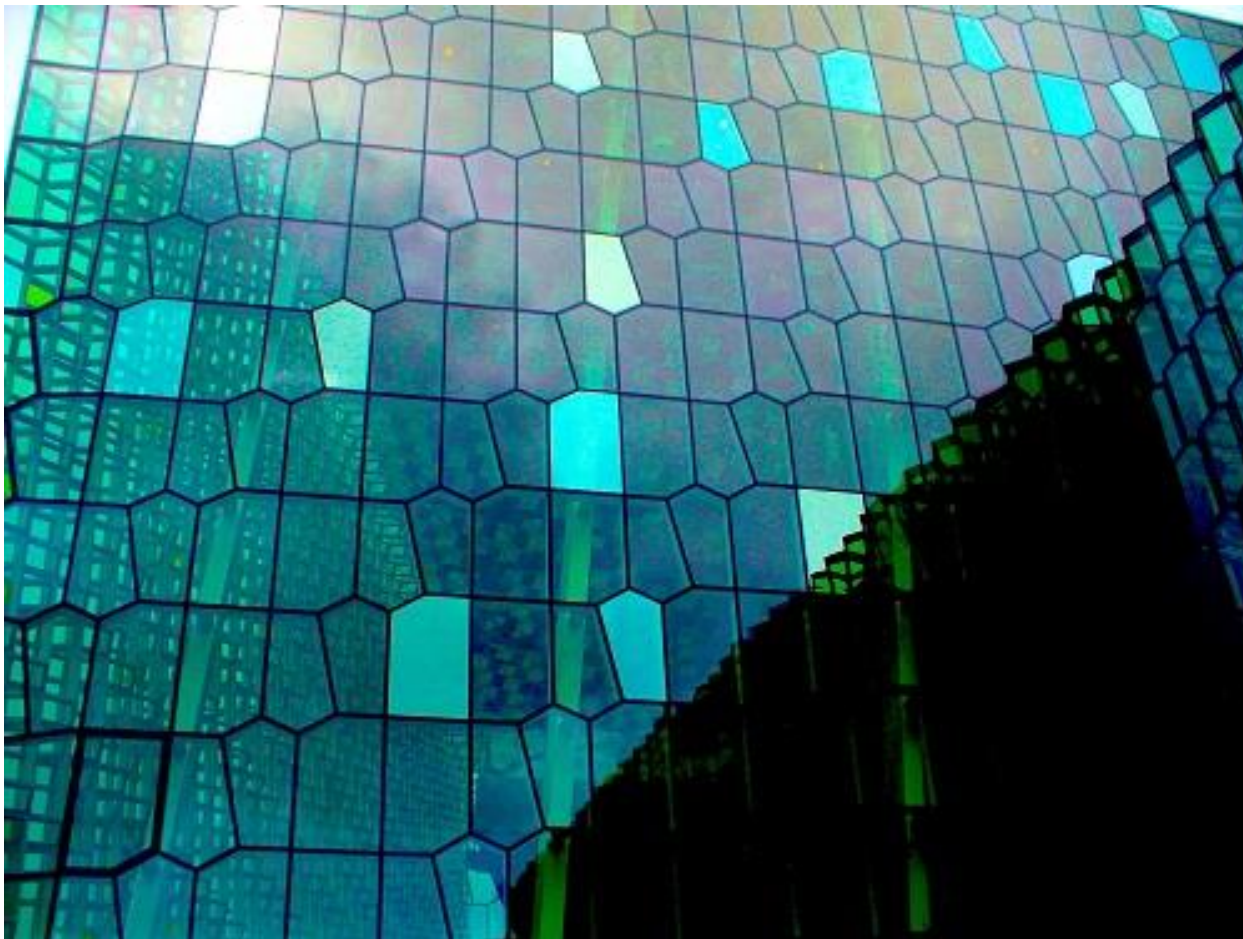
Erasure



[audio file at wordforword.info/vol29/howard]

Relic Wink

Sonictext



[audio file at wordforword.info/vol29/howard]

it is repaying voluntarily under the terms of the loan agreement.

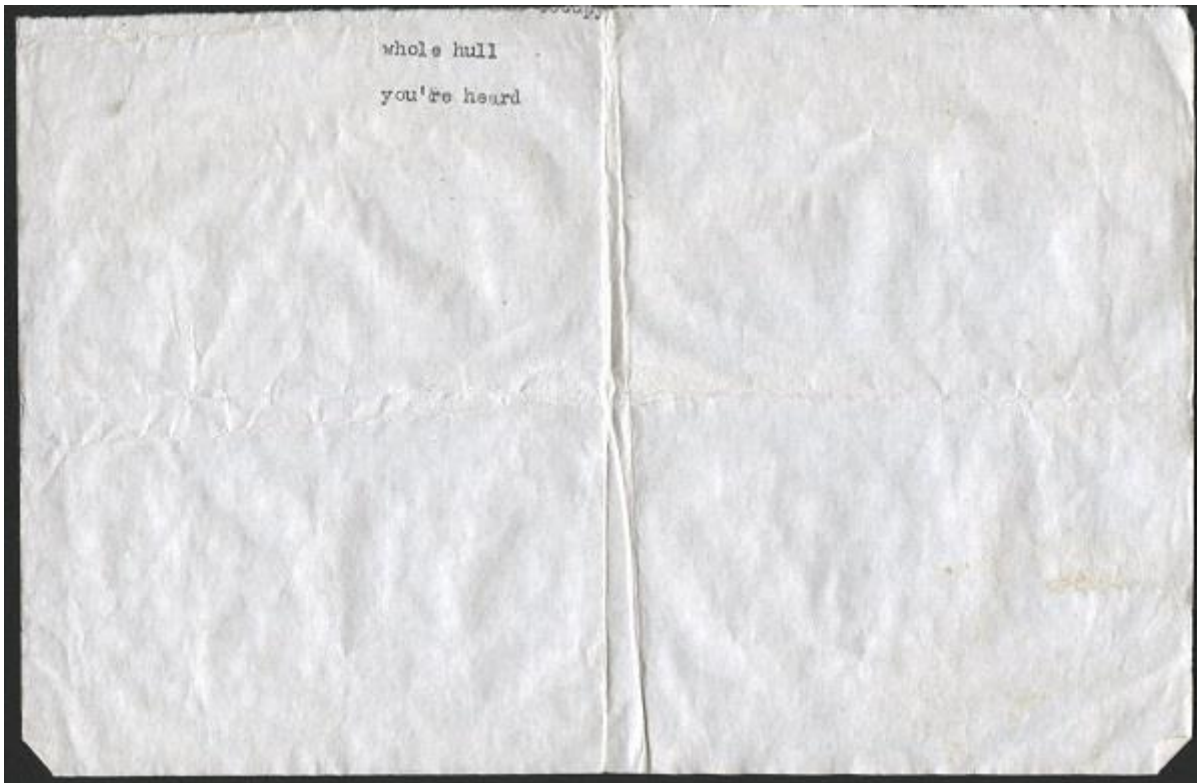
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION YOU MAY FIND HELPFUL
Visit www.aesuccess.org for additional loan interest information, and alternative payment methods such as Direct Debit and our online Payment Center.

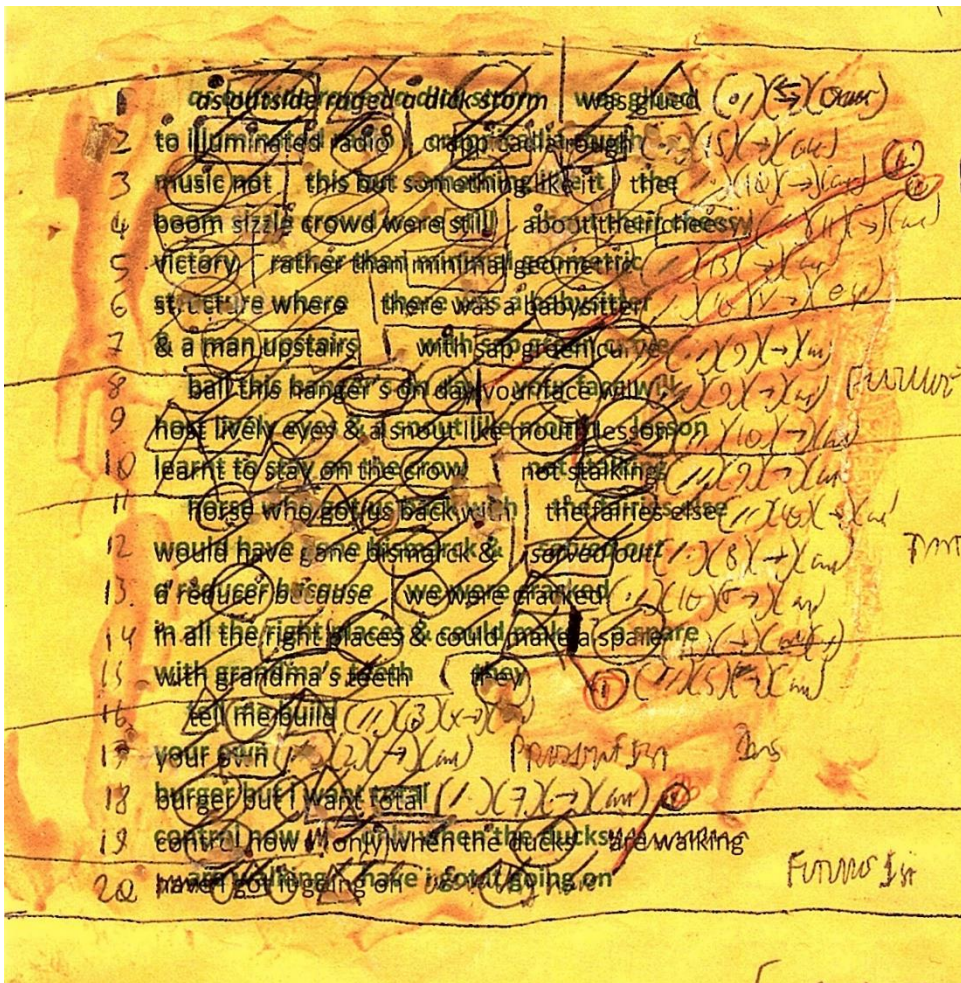
yes see
we parse
from overpay
I see rabbis
hurl my osprey
drum & you
also like me
volca (come
low)
SMY
SMY
Xr xxxxxx
X xxxxx xxx
Qd xxxxxx
Xr xxx

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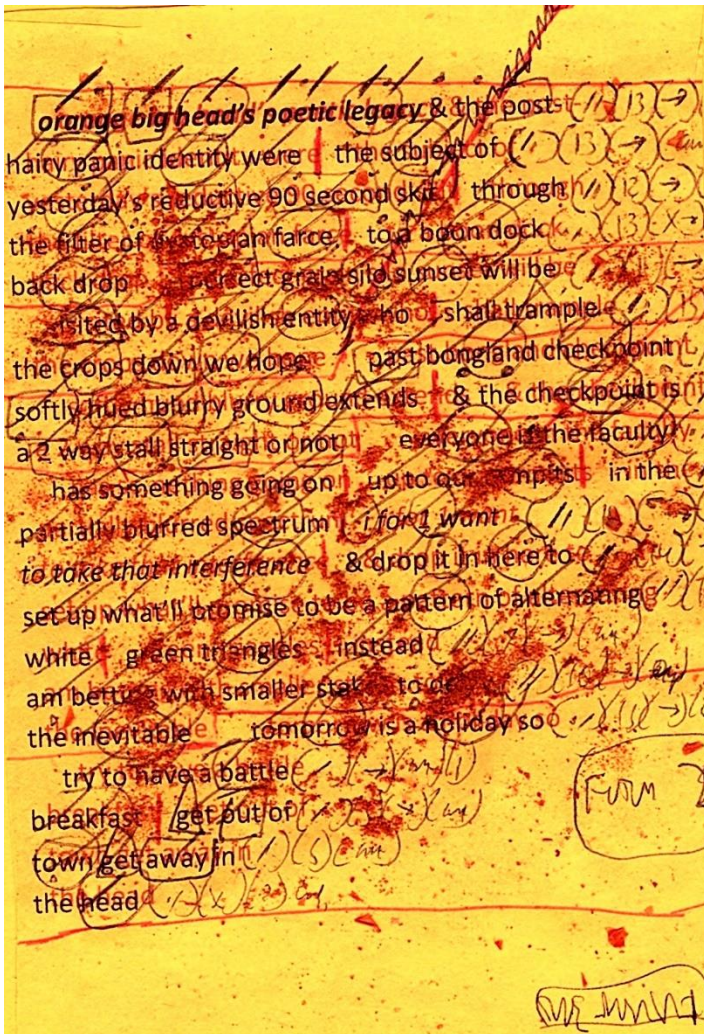
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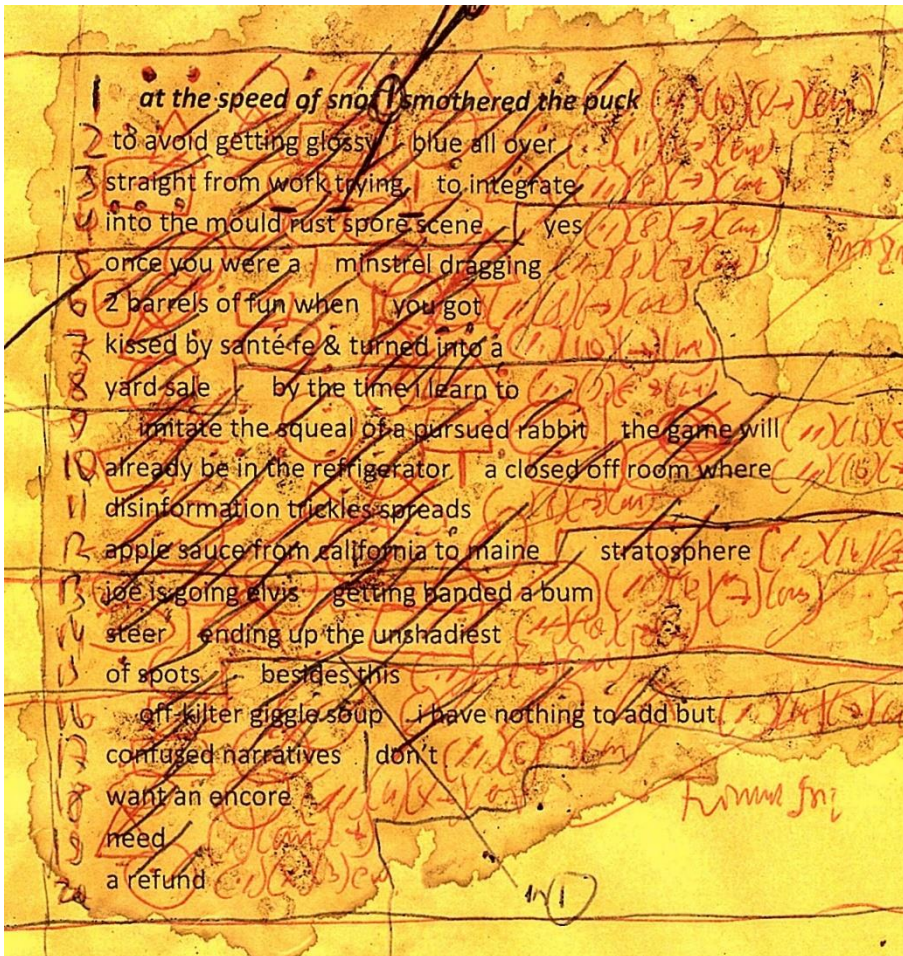




as outside raged a dick storm was glued
 to illuminated radio crappicadia rough
 music not this but something like it the
 boom sizzle crowd were still about their cheesy
 victory rather than minimal geometric
 structure where there was a babysitter
 & a man upstairs with sap green curve
 ball this hanger's on day your face will
 host lively eyes & a snout like mouth lesson
 learnt to stay on the crow not stalking
 horse who got us back with the fairies else
 would have gone bismarck & served out
 a reducer because we were cracked
 in all the right places & could make a spare
 with grandma's teeth they
 tell me build
 your own
 burger but i want total
 control now only when the ducks
 are walking have i got it going on



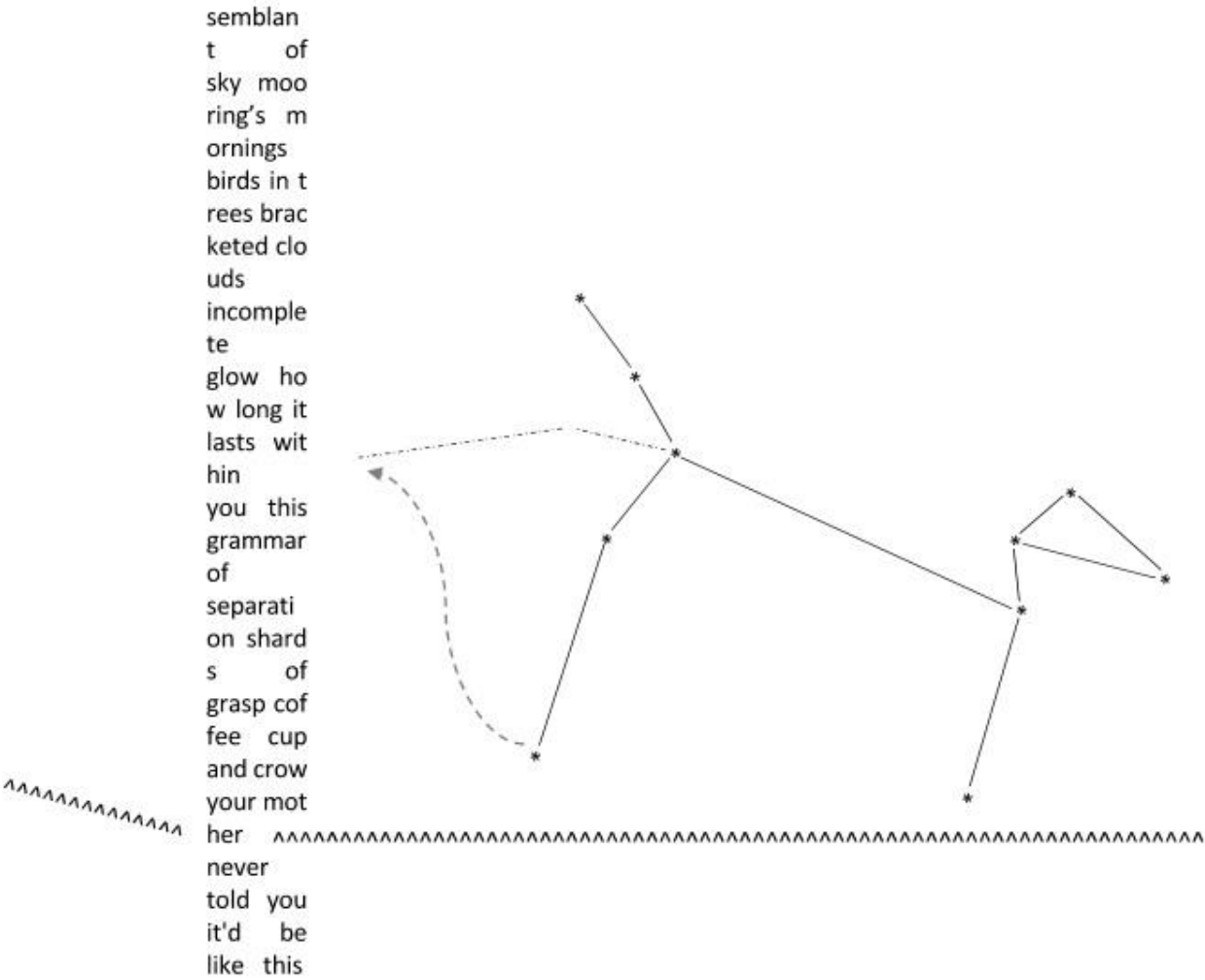
orange big head's poetic legacy & the post-
hairy panic identity were the subject of
yesterday's reductive 90 second skit through
the filter of dystopian farce to a boon dock
back drop perfect grain silo sunset will be
visited by a devilish entity who shall trample
the crops down we hope past bongland checkpoint
softly hued blurry ground extends & the checkpoint is
a 2 way stall straight or not everyone in the faculty
has something going on up to our armpits in the
partially blurred spectrum *i for i want*
to take that interference & drop it in here to
set up what'll promise to be a pattern of alternating
white green triangles instead
am betting with smaller stakes to delay
the inevitable tomorrow is a holiday so
try to have a battle
breakfast get out of
town get away in
the head



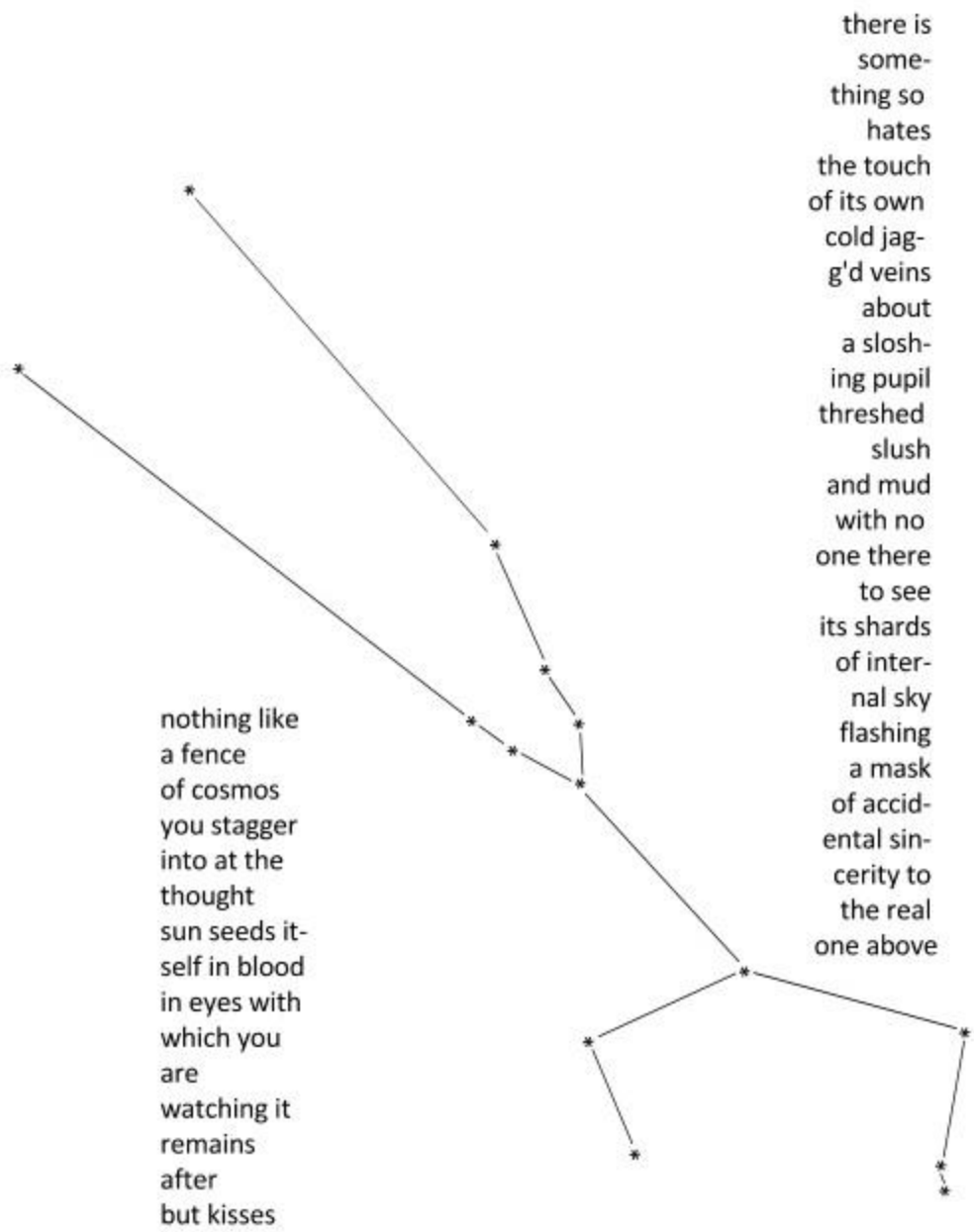
at the speed of snot i smothered the puck

to avoid getting glossy blue all over
straight from work trying to integrate
into the mould-rust-spore scene yes
 once you were a minstrel dragging
2 barrels of fun when you got
kissed by santé fe & turned into a
yard sale by the time i learn to
 imitate the squeal of a pursued rabbit the game will
already be in the refrigerator a closed off room where
disinformation trickles spreads
apple sauce from california to maine stratosphere
joe is going elvis getting handed a bum
steer ending up in the unshadiest
of spots besides this
 off-kilter giggle soup i have nothing to add but
confused narratives don't
want an encore
need
a refund

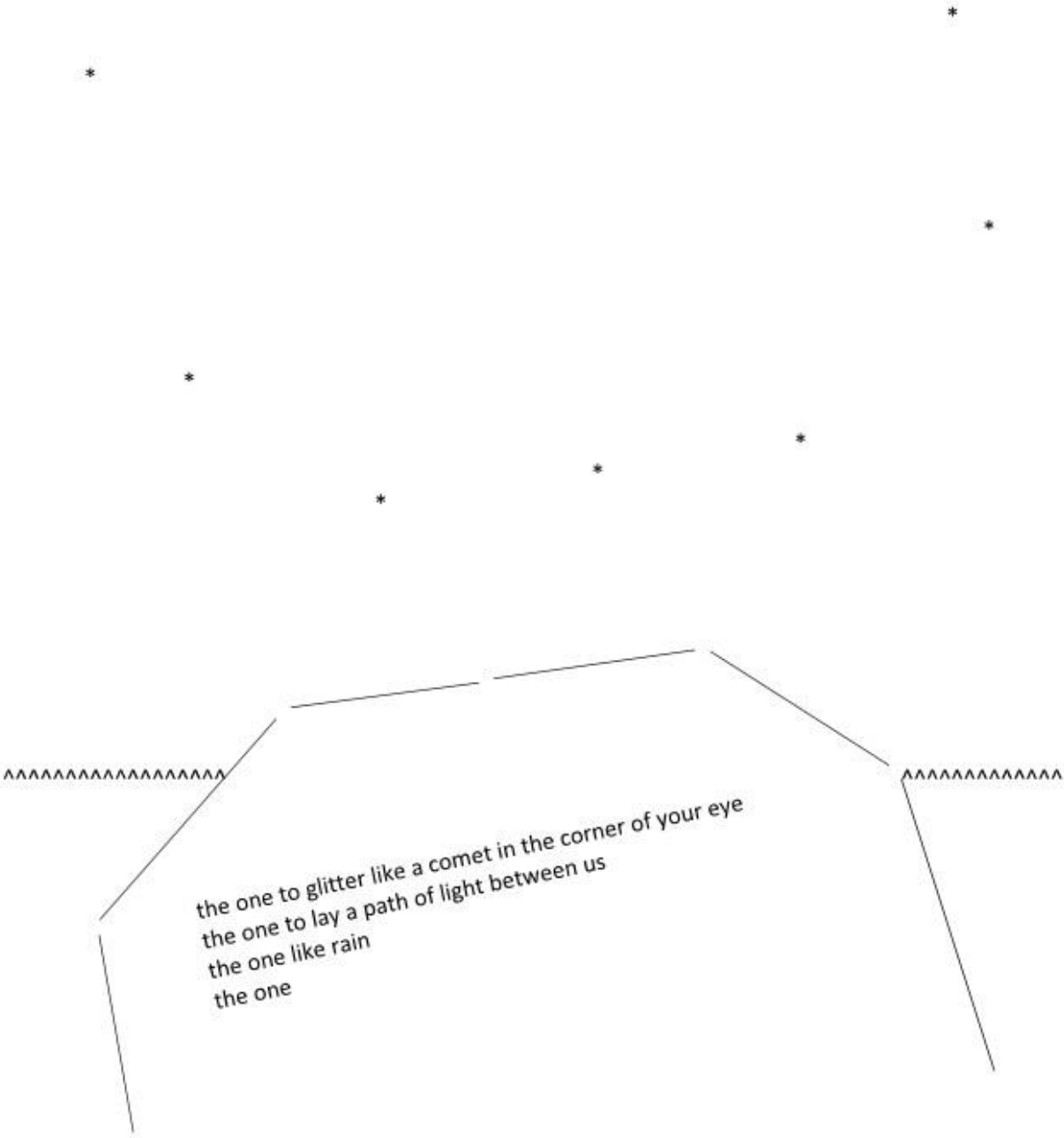
Canis Major

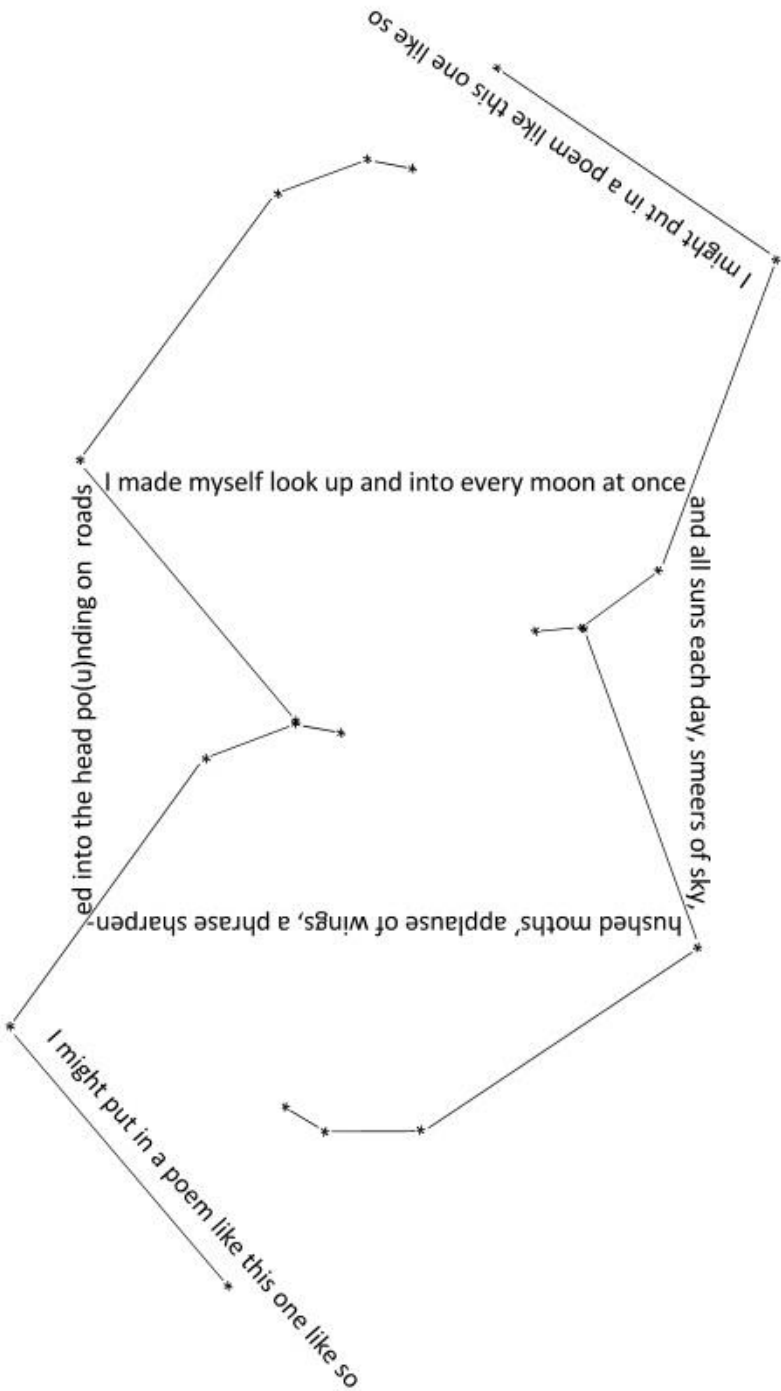


Taurus



Corona Borealis





Julia Madsen

The Wired West

<https://vimeo.com/165602622>

A Lot of Uneasily Placed Exacting Words Floating in Alien Space: A Conversation with Geraldine Monk on *They Who Saw the Deep*

The day after I finished [*They Who Saw the Deep*](#), I went to help muck houses in South Carolina three weeks after Hurricane Matthew. The river had flooded. The homes were filled with water and mold; we piled everything in them on the side of the road for trash collection. A people sustained and destroyed by the water they built their lives against. The poetry seemed a fitting benediction:

Shattered the churn shattered the cup.
Shattered the junk shattered the ocean-going.
In the first water in the very first water.

I emailed Geraldine the Monday following. It was four months between that first contact and the end of the interview.

SP: It's a pleasure to talk with you about your collection. I found this work absolutely gripping. The scope alone is something to gawk at, to say nothing of your gorgeous, water-worn descriptions. I was stunned by the ruggedness and isolation of your first section especially:

Northerly or northeasterly.
Becoming variable then becoming
southerly or southeasterly. Wintry showers.

From all nautical directions lives held by a
thread of tarred wool. Matted animal hair.
Lashed planks. Bundle rafts.

Here, as in the bulk of the collection, you focus in on the sea and sea travel, but also on the darker, more dangerous potentials of the sea present in any sea voyage. The ability of the sea to isolate and even destroy seems particularly relevant in light of the contexts from which your collection emerged.

Your author's note at the beginning of the collection indicates that the work was inspired by your trip to the Libyan Sea, and the realization there that the sea was increasingly functioning as a grave for many refugees attempting to traverse it. How has that first inspiration (the place and/or the realization) shaped this collection?

GM: In retrospect it was more a consolidation than an 'inspiration'. For most of my writing life I have been trying to write a series about the sea and the nature of water. In my late teens/early twenties I began to have recurring dreams of tidal waves (tsunamis) in which I either woke up in a panic as a wall of water swept over me, or, it would sweep over me and leaving me unharmed but dreadfully alone in a massive expanse of water not knowing what to do next —and next I would wake up with the feeling of desolation still tangible. The dreams became so persistent I thought the only way to stop them was to go and live next to the coast. So I did. I moved just outside the fishing village of Staithes in North Yorkshire and it was there I began writing poetry in earnest. But despite several attempts at a substantial series on the sea I never got further than an occasional reference or several poem. The time had not yet come.

But in 2014 it all came together and that trip on the Libyan Sea was pivotal in making it happen. The day began with a scintillating light show of breathtaking loveliness but the mood of elation was suddenly crushed by the appearance of a military patrol boat on the horizon. The other reality of a deeply troubled world now inhabited that loveliness. The profound contrast of the sea as life-giver and the sea as life-taker makes our

relationship with the sea deeply ambivalent and it was the realisation of that ambivalence which was crucial to the whole sequence. I wanted to try and understand water. It is after all a very weird substance.

SP: Since you have been planning on writing on the sea for a long time, I'm curious if you had any misgivings as you started out on this work, especially given the popularity of the sea as a literary trope. So much has been written on the sea and sea travel (as evidenced by the many sources you appeal to). Were you nervous at all in deciding to write on such a prominent subject?

GM: Not at all. Quite the reverse. I had finally got the angle I wanted on the sea so I was in my element so to speak! The eponymous poem developed multiple layers of reference which were topical, literary, historical, mythical, meteorological and personal. For me writing doesn't get more rewarding than that. It's the way I work and I love the research and the uncovering of hidden or cryptic narratives particularly when it results in being spooked by an avalanche of coincidences thrown up in the mix of verbal ectoplasm.

I do understand, though, where you are coming from about the popularity of the sea as a literary trope, but I think its very popularity makes it more challenging. If we ever get to the point when we think everything has been written about the sea (or nature in general) we will have stopped seeing the infinite possibilities of our unique consciousness with its complex language and its relevance to ourselves and our times.

SP: I would like to talk more about your layers of reference, but before we move on from the contexts from which the collection emerged I did want to discuss your relationship to "our times."

You have mentioned before that you do not believe the poet has a role in the larger culture beyond that of the [earthworm](#), churning language. Yet your author's note seems to connect this piece to a political and cultural moment with the refugee crisis and the execution of Khaled as-Asaad. And you do seem to connect with the current culture and politics in other poems as well. For example, in 'The Snake Goddess of Crete,' the speaker explicitly addresses our time, and seems to search for better authority figures:

I don't much care for the 21st century.

The uproar of many peoples who roar
roaring seas rumbling of nations
rushing on rumble of waters roaring mighty
uproar of many peoples who roar seas
rumbling of nations grumbling mighty
roar of seas of nations of up roaring.
I need to touch your transfixed snakes.
Stroke the sejant cat perched on your crown
and suck your startling tits as of a babe
wash away this here-now world to find a
kinder crew. To sail our tabernacle divine
with fearless balance at your fingertips.

What influence has our current cultural moment had upon this collection?

GM: I'm not sure where I said that about the poet not having an influential cultural role but I think we might flatter ourselves if we thought otherwise. I would like it to be the case but I don't think it is. Poetry lacks the immediacy demanded from our media driven global village. It would be unthinkable for a poem to have the same impact as the photo of Alan Kurdi, the 3 year old Syrian boy washed up on a shore in Turkey, his tiny body being cradled in the arms of a soldier. That photograph mobilised people around the world into doing something about the migrant crisis in the Mediterranean.

Poetry cannot do that. But I'm certainly not saying that poets don't engage with the issues of their day, far from it. Almost all the poets I know are politically erudite and engaged, they are also socially aware and concerned and this is often reflected in their poetry. So to answer your question the influence of the current cultural moment on this collection is massive. From climate change to the plight of migrants fleeing war, persecution or poverty, from the ever growing threat of global war to the unspeakable atrocities of the death cult of Islamic State militants. The whole ghastly panoply is there.

SP: Do you think there would be a way for poetry to become more immediate or more immediately consumable in order to gain more influence?

GM: Ironically and with sadness I'm answering this question on the day Leonard Cohen died. Cohen was a poet before he was a singer and I watched the footage of him saying he became a singer because he needed to earn a living and poetry alone wasn't going to provide that. That just about sums it up. Bob Dylan also sums it up. Rap poetry also answers the question. For poetry to be really popular it needs to have music attached!

Away from the benign magic of music we have to accept that poetry is what it is: a lot of uneasily placed exacting taxing words floating in alien space. Of all the art forms it has the least commercial potential even though millions of people write the stuff only a fraction of them actually read it. It's unfortunate that the art form I'm most drawn to and am most proficient in is the least popular but I'm sound about that (no pun intended). I don't write poetry for money, there isn't any, or kudos, there isn't any. I do it because it makes sense of the reality I live by which is bewildering, confused, fragmented, wonderful and scary as it lies in wait layered with meaning and unmeaning. If poetry isn't popular or influential I can cope with that. All poets cope with that.

SP: I'm interested in the "benign magic of music" in your poetry. There seems to be a lot of music in this collection, even just in the form: you title and structure some of your poems after musical forms (sea shanties, duets, elegies, etc.). Were you pursuing a kind of spoken word music? How has music influenced poetry, current or past?

GM: Music, or the sonic aspect of language, is always operating at some level in my poetry. Sometimes it is overt and integral and lends itself easily to be performed with musicians, mainly the brilliant musician Martin Archer and the superb singer Julie Tippett. My poem sequences like 'Songings' and 'Fluvium' from my book *Noctivagations*, West House Books, 2001, were works I adapted to be performed in collaboration with Martin Archer. We produced two albums *Angel High Wires* and the *Fluvium*.

In my early days I did a lot of performances with the British sound/concrete poet Bob Cobbing and although I never fully went down the sound poetry road I certainly integrated elements of it into my poetry. So the close relationship between music and poetry has always been present in my writing but I try to play down the importance of it because I feel it is often given undue focus to the detriment of the political, social and historical aspects of my work.

SP: I'm glad you pointed to the language of your poetry. Your language throughout this work is quite sonorous. I love the sounds of this section from 'Three Versions of Three Ships':

No Wonder we loved ghosts hiding
out in the hinterland or
stumbling along these biting shores
spooning fossils from their salt-steep
marinated longer
than our minds could stretch the
deep-North Sea-horizons
orisons —

How does music influence the creation of your poetry even when you are not intentionally adapting it to musical forms? Do you have any kind of process in creating the unique musicality of your work and language?

GM: I always read a poem out loud to see how it is working rhythmically. Apart from that I don't think my process is as much intentional as it is innate. I'm just naturally drawn to poetry that embraces sound, rhythm and repetition which seems to generate multiple meanings or tantalizing undercurrents as the words and the sound of the words knot and fold around each other. It is poetry as incantation or litany. It may be worth mentioning that some of the earliest poetic encounters that had most impact on me were the Welsh poet Dylan Thomas, the English poets Edith Sitwell and Algernon Swinburne and the American poet Gertrude Stein.

SP: Do you think your subject material influenced the musicality of this collection? Is there something about the sea that demands specific kinds of rhythms and sounds?

GM: No, I approached it the same as I would approach any other subject matter and I don't really think emulating or evoking the sea through sound is possible in poetry except in the most crass and basic form of onomatopoeia which would be difficult to sustain over distance.

SP: I'd like to talk about your sources. Obviously this collection required extensive research. You pull in everything from *The Epic of Gilgamesh* to British Maritime reports to your own family history. How did you go about your research for this project? Did you do all the research before you began writing?

GM: Oh no, I couldn't do the research beforehand as I didn't know what shape and direction the sequence was going to take. Research is an ongoing process which must follow the path the poem takes and the various strands which are interwoven into the text. After the central subject of migrations and sea travel had solidified, various strands were taken up and then more strands were generated until the whole thing becomes contagious with interconnections.

For example, *The Epic of Gilgamesh* which I happened to be reading at the time contains what is essentially an earlier version of the biblical flood including the sending out a various birds to scout for dry land. It was this that suggested the motif of the returning birds. But there was another reason the birds are there: the bulk of the sequence was written in December 2014 (which is why all the maritime weather reports are from that month) and the weather was exceptionally wild and wet, even by U.K. standards, with many floods occurring throughout the country; so I did further research into global weather systems (with the subtext of global warming) and integrated references to the sea from the bible. So the whole thing evolves in a riot of cross references which becomes so exciting and addictive as reality fuses with history and myth to create another reality.

SP: What made you decide to look into your own family history as a source?

GM: It is an extension of my interest in history but it is also a natural desire to want to know about one's ancestors. They are the ones who make history real and in some curious way make us more real. We are the end result of all those aeons of human development which is quite daunting when you think about it. It has to be said though that I didn't do the research on my family as that was done by my sister-in-law, Janet Monk, who has spent years of painstaking research into our families.

Much of it is of no interest to anyone except my immediate family but the story of my 3x great grandfather became extraordinary when he was dispossessed of his home and livelihood and embarked on a spectacular life of crime! But in the poetry sequence I concentrate on the fact that he lived near the banks of the River Lune the very river that flows into the seaside town of Morecambe Bay. The picture on the cover of my book is of the sands at Morecambe Bay. So *The Bay Area* section of the book is not only personal but also converges with the main subject of the book viz., water, rivers and seas. One detail which fascinated me was that my ancestors, on their death, were placed in boats and rowed across the River Lune to their final resting place, with echoes of Charon rowing people

across the River Styx. That whole area is so full of ancestral ghosts, so full of my DNA it only really scratches the surface of how powerful a draw it has on me.

SP: You mentioned your sister-in-law helped to provide some of the research that you ultimately used in collection. Do any of your other friends or family members generally help in your writing process, (i.e. research, brainstorm, compose, critique, etc.)?

GM: My husband, the poet Alan Halsey is my main support. Whenever I'm working on something he will bring home all manner of books he's found in second-hand shops or alert me to any articles that may be of interest. And I do the same for him. Poet friends generally are happy to help each other out especially when it comes to research.

SP: I was particularly interested that though you make use of Mesopotamian myths, the Quran never made an appearance (at least, not one that you specifically noted). This was an interesting exclusion, particularly given impetus for the collection and the dedication to Khaled as-Asaad, as well as the incredible breadth and diversity of the texts you do use. How did you decide what texts to research, and ultimately, what texts to include?

GM: It's curious that you think I excluded the Quran. I didn't exclude anything. I wasn't writing a dissertation on religious or ancient texts I was following my nose in a poetic exploration predominantly concerned with water. As I pointed out earlier *The Epic of Gilgamesh* has a whole section on a deluge and the similarities to the biblical deluge or flood myth identify it as the evident precursor to the biblical version. Having been brought up as a Christian I didn't need to do any research to make this connection and generally I just followed leads when they presented themselves because I'm a poet who uses history not a historian who uses poetry.

With regard to Khaled as-Asaad I had no interest in his religious leanings. My interest in him was solely as an archaeologist who had dedicated his life to the ancient city of Palmyra and who was so brutally and ignobly murdered at the age of 81. I had spent the last two years totally immersed in archaeological studies of that region; indeed I have spent the last decade poking around ancient sites throughout Europe and Turkey, so the impact of his death on me was profound. Such a heinous act on such a learned old man still shocks me to the core.

SP: You have mentioned before that you were raised [Roman-Catholic](#), and that your early religious experience made you hyper-aware of 'the other world.' In this collection you do make use of the Bible in your 'Coda' poems, but many of your poems are markedly pagan, particularly those in 'The Abandoned' which features several spiritual figures from various mythologies. You've already mentioned the connections between the Bible and Gilgamesh. Are there other instances where you see paganism and Christianity coming together in your collection? Does the spirituality of your upbringing relate in some way to the pagan spirits you call up in your poetry?

GM: Without a doubt pagan and Christian icons continually meet up in my writing. This is especially true in 'Deliquium - Four definitions between Crete and Canterbury'. I was not long back from a visit to Crete and preparing for a forthcoming reading at the University of Kent in Canterbury when a tatty scrap of paper fluttered into my lap with the word 'deliquium' on it. I had scribbled it down in Crete and thought it a lovely sounding word but I had no idea what it meant but I had forgotten about it. Its sudden appearance was obviously a sign! I looked up the definition and I was so delighted as each definition was revealed that I stopped preparing for my reading and wrote 'Deliquium' in virtually one sitting. It was one of those out-of-body experiences where the poem almost seems to write itself and it became inextricably tied in to both Crete and Canterbury with their diametrically opposed sacred cultures. The ancient Minoan culture of Crete with its predominance of goddess/priestess icons and overwhelming evidence of a matriarchal society against the patriarchal Christian monotheism of medieval England with the added 'attraction' of the gruesome murder and sainting of Thomas Becket in Canterbury Cathedral.

The juxtaposition was irresistible even though I don't personally believe in any religion or belief system. I am an avid star gazer (living in the city is a bit of a problem but it have never quelled my enthusiasm for astronomy) and follower of scientific discovery (my lunar sea shanties which interweave the eponymous poem list most of the chemical composition of seawater). The more we know about the universe the more enigmatic it becomes. I don't

think science has all the answers but I cannot see any gods or goddesses out there either because they are products of the human imagination and when we worship them we are worshipping our own creations. I do believe in ghosts though!

SP: I definitely sensed ghosts in your poetry; several poems felt a bit like a conjuring, especially in how you seem to actually interact with the figures that emerge. I honestly actually shivered reading "Freya's Torque" when you describe encountering her after a hunt: "Our eyes locked. A heartbeat away," and then "Unsought goddess shining / in the dismal light. Tiny as a one pound coin." The image is absolutely mesmerizing. What was your intent in summoning up these various ghosts, goddesses, etc? What role do you see them performing?

GM: Oh they're not performing any role, they are what they are within the poems and the poems are me (sic) and I'm not performing a role. I'm striving to excavate language and through that excavation a whole phantasmagoria of troubling objects, warped narratives and off-centre characters arise. For me poetry is a science. It is an unearthing of mind and place and time: it is an arena of discovery. And now I'd like to quote from something I wrote about my poetry many years ago because it seems very pertinent to your question: 'I want the physicality of words to hook around the lurking ghosts and drag them from their petrified corners.' Quite!

SP: Several poems begin with the names of specific places. What is the significance of place in this collection? Is it different in some way than the significance of place in some of your previous works (which seem more focused on places you have lived in or are more familiar with)?

GM: I wasn't consciously aware of how often I use place names until you mentioned it. With regard to the eponymous poem the place names are an integral part of the sequence because place is the very essence of migration: the certainty of a *known* place being re-placed by the certainty of an *unknown* place. As it references many historical as well as topical events place names are vital otherwise the sequence would be diluted by generality and abstraction. And of course the naming of the lunar seas was irresistible.

Place names summon such strong identities and characters they become a shorthand for entire geographical areas from the vastness of continents to the smallest village. The most famous cities across the world are good examples how names denote a whole locality and its citizens.

One of the most utterly delightful chancing of place names happened to me on a visit to Istanbul when I spotted a ship named *The Irish Sea* sailing up the Bosphorus. Wow! The sea of my childhood was sailing up the sea of legends. Life and language doesn't get better than that.

I'm not sure how much difference there is regarding place in this collection and previous ones but it is an enduring motif in my writing. I was thinking the other day how the house I was brought up in, the church I went to, the infant and senior school I went to and many of my childhood haunts no longer exist. They were all demolished. My geographic past has been all but eradicated. I can visit a place where someone lived five hundred or five thousand years ago but I cannot go back to where I spent my childhood. Is that significant? Is that why I suffer from homesickness I wonder.

SP: Homesickness is an interesting idea to pair with sea travel. It seems like you are maybe disrupting the idea of sea as place, but more specifically the idea of sea as home. You give several examples of people who have made a life on the sea (like the Vikings, for example), but then immediately juxtapose them against images of you working or cooking comfortably in your own home. Do you think it possible for someone to be at home at sea (and what would that mean if they could), or are you suggesting otherwise through your juxtaposition of the two?

GM: I'm amused that you find the refrain of me cooking Sunday lunch in my home is portrayed as an image of comfort. I thought the refrain was besieged by apocalyptic mayhem, bad weather and mad birds! Although to be fair the meal preparation does form the only refuge in the sequence. However to answer your question I'm not suggesting anything when I write even if the writing ends up seeming to be suggestive. I collect text through

experience and/or research around a theme or idea or historic event and then I collate those layers of text and what happens happens. I don't want my poetry to be tied down to one interpretation or suggestion; in fact I want it to be contradictory and paradoxical. I'm always uneasy and suspicious about arriving at any one destination of "truth."

But I do believe the majority of us crave a life of relative calm and stability as a protection from a hostile and uncertain universe. And quite a few of us do live on the sea or making a living from the sea but for most of us the sea is an arena of transit rather than a dwelling place or refuge. As a species we might originate from the sea but we are also creatures of the land and that is where most of us want to make our homes. Our relationship with the sea is unavoidably ambivalent as it embodies so many opposites, so we long for it with feelings akin to homesickness even though it is not our home. So I return to the conceit that the sea is both giver and taker of life: a place to escape to, to escape from and to escape across.

SP: On the topic of the Vikings and your cooking, I wanted to talk about how here and elsewhere you pair ordinary scenes against these incredible vast and violent seascapes:

The faraway comes near. Sea salt.
Cracked pepper. Surface effort.
Organic granules pour delicious
paradox. Gravy boat. Best china.

Displaced Polar vortex we hear
kindled in fractious love. Snowy owl flying
through a hail of crystal balls. Steering
its monogaze with a hint of uncharacteristic panic.

Beyond being simply beautiful, I think this pairing makes both settings become strange and surprising, especially as the refrain echoing throughout the section indicates the chilling disappearance of the familiar. Do you have thoughts on the potential for poetry to surprise us or make familiar things unfamiliar (either in this collection or in general)?

GM: I think I prefer strange to surprising. Surprise is abrupt and short-lived but strangeness has a more subtle and enduring quality. But yes defamiliarization through unexpected collocations of words and images is central to my writing. I can't see the point of poetry that is purely descriptive with no attempt to strive for new angles or alter states of perception. It's also the sheer fun of seeing what happens through the element of chance and juxtaposition.

Paradoxically I think this defamiliarization technique is also a way into articulating those familiar states of feeling or gut responses or indefinable atmospheres which have not yet found a home in language. It can create a language event that evokes our unspoken angst and awe and makes it concrete. This might sound very grandiose but the results are far from gloomy or ponderous and can be unexpectedly humorous or endearing.

SP: What is your experience of being interviewed about your poetry? Do you enjoy reflecting back and writing on your own work, or is it stressful? Is it similar in any way to composing poetry?

GM: Being interviewed couldn't be more different from writing poetry. Writing poetry is predominantly spontaneous or intuitive whereas interview answers are studied and considered. Because of this you have to be on constant guard not to overthink answers and impose attitudes or intentions that weren't there at the time of writing. They also give the illusion that the answers are somehow definitive when in reality the answers are often much more fragile and fluid. However interviews do concentrate the mind wonderfully on the process of composition and they also introduce biographical details and anecdotes which can further inform and illuminate the poetry. Do I enjoy being interviewed? From what I have just said above I think the answer has to be yes and no. They are both enjoyable and stressful!

SP: Thank you so much for your time and for responding in spite of stress. It's been a sincere pleasure talking with you about your writing!

GM: Thank you for all your hard work and questions and the lovely comments about my work.

Marcia Arrieta is a poet, artist, and teacher. Her work appears in *Clockwise Cat*, *Of/with*, *Fourteen Hills*, *Moss Trill*, *Wicked Alice*, *Eratio*, *Posit*, *Rivet*, *Stoneboat*, *Web Conjunctions*, and *Catch & Release*. She is the author of two poetry books: *archipelago counterpoint* (BlazeVOX 2015) and *triskelion, tiger moth, tangram, thyme* (Otoliths 2011). She edits and publishes *Indefinite Space*.

Devon Balwit is a writer and teacher from Portland, OR, USA. She has two chapbooks forthcoming in 2017: "how the blessed travel," from Maverick Duck Press, and "Forms Most Marvelous," from dancing girl press. Her recent work has found many homes, among them: *Sweet*, *The Journal of Applied Poetics*, *Five 2 One*, *Peacock Journal*, *The Ekphrastic Review*, *Poets Reading the News*, and more.

Andrew Brenza is the author of the chapbooks "21 Skies" (Shirt Pocket Press, 2015), "And Then" (Grey Book Press, 2016), and "8 Skies" (forthcoming from Beard of Bees Press). Gossamer Lid, his first full-length collection, was published by Trembling Pillow Press in January 2016. Most days, he works as the director of a small public library in southern New Jersey.

Billy Cancel has recently appeared in *Blazevox*, *Gobbet*, and *West Wind Review*. His latest body of work *PSYCHO'CLOCK* is out on Hidden House Press. Billy Cancel is 1/2 of the noise/pop duo Tidal Channel. Sound poems, visual shorts and other aberrations can be found at bilylcancelpoetry.com.

Joel Chace has published work in print and electronic magazines such as *The Tip of the Knife*, *Counterexample Poetics*, *OR*, *Country Music*, *Infinity's Kitchen*, and *Jacket*. His recent collections include *Sharpsburg*, from Cy Gist Press, *Blake's Tree*, from Blue & Yellow Dog Press, *Whole Cloth*, from Avantacular Press, *Red Power*, from Quarter After Press, *Kansoz*, from Knives, Forks, and Spoons Press, and *Web Too*, from Tonerworks.

Liz Chereskin has work appearing in *Yemassee*, *ILK*, *Whiskey Island*, *Columbia Poetry Review*, and elsewhere. Her chapbook, "come with me to Des Moines" was published by H_NGM_N in 2013 and her manuscript "weather/report" was a semi-finalist in Sarabande's Kathryn A. Morton Prize in 2014. She lives in Chicago where she works for NAVS, an animal advocacy organization.

Kristina Marie Darling is the author of over twenty books of poetry, most recently *DARK HORSE* (C&R Press, 2017). Her awards include two Yaddo residencies, a Hawthornden Castle Fellowship, and a Visiting Artist Fellowship from the American Academy in Rome, as well as grants from the Whiting Foundation and Harvard University's Kittredge Fund. Her work appears in *The Gettysburg Review*, *New American Writing*, *The Iowa Review*, *The Los Angeles Review of Books*, *Verse Daily*, and elsewhere. She is Editor-in-Chief of *Tupelo Quarterly*, and Grants Specialist at Black Ocean.

Logan Fry lives in Austin, Texas, edits *Flag + Void*, and contributes to *The Volta Blog*. His poetry has appeared in or is forthcoming from publications including *Fence*, *Boston Review*, *Denver Quarterly*, *New American Writing*, *Prelude*, and *Best American Experimental Writing* (BAX 2014).

W. Scott Howard teaches poetics and poetry in the Department of English at the University of Denver. He received his Ph.D. in English and Critical Theory from the University of Washington, Seattle, where he was a member of the *Subtext Collective*. Scott worked at Powell's Books (1990-93) where he co-managed (with Vanessa Renwick) the *Small Press & Journals* section, the *dewclaw* reading series, the *prism* interdisciplinary discussion series, and also managed the *Critical Theory* section. His interviews in *PLAZM* magazine (1993-97) are noted in the documentary film, *Helvetica* (2007). Scott is the founding editor of *Reconfigurations: A Journal for Poetics & Poetry / Literature & Culture* and of *Appositions: Studies in Renaissance / Early Modern Literature & Culture*. His multigraphs for *Reconstruction* include *Water: Resources and Discourses* (2006) co-edited with Justin Scott Coe; and *Archives on Fire: Artifacts & Works, Communities & Fields* (2016). His collections of poetry include the e-book, *ROPES* (with

images by Ginger Knowlton) from Delete Press, 2014; and *SPINNAKERS* (The Lune, 2016). His work has received support from the Modern Language Association, the Pew Charitable Trusts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Beinecke Library, Yale University. Scott lives in Englewood, CO and commutes year-round by bicycle, following *what crow dost*.

If John Lowther were plotted on a scale of Witness Protection Program--to--zero degrees from Kevin Bacon, he'd be living in his mother's spare bedroom struggling with his diss (which has brutal grappling skills). A book written with Dana Lisa Young called *<Held to the Letter* is forthcoming from Lavender Ink in the sometime soon. The sonnet published here brings the tally of pubbed & forthcoming to 405, approximately 72% of the 555 which will make up the book. Links to pubs and more at wordpress where John is lowtherpoet.

Julia Madsen received an MFA in Literary Arts from Brown University, and is currently a doctoral student in English/Creative Writing at the University of Denver. Her poems and multimedia work have appeared or are forthcoming in *Drunken Boat*, *Caketrain*, *Deluge*, *Dreginald*, *Small Po[r]tions*, *Tagwerk*, *Black Warrior Review*, *Devil's Lake*, *Versal*, *Cutbank*, *Alice Blue Review*, *Cartridge Lit*, and elsewhere.

Geraldine Monk was born in Blackburn, Lancashire in North West of England. She has been an active member of the British poetry scene since the mid-seventies and over the years has been the recipient of various awards and commissions. Her poetry has been the subject of many critical studies including Zoë Skoulding's *Experimental Cities*, David and Christine Kennedy's *Body, Time & Locale* and Adam Piette in *Poetry Review*. *The Salt Companion to Geraldine Monk*, edited by Scott Thurston appeared in 2006. Major collections of her work include *Interregnum* (Creation Books), *Escafeld Hangings* (West House Books), *Lobe Scarps & Finials* (Leaf Press) and *Ghost & Other Sonnets* (Salt Publishing). In 2012 she edited *Cusp: Recollections of Poetry in Transition* (Shearsman Books). *They Who Saw the Deep* was published by Free Verse Editions/Parlor Press in 2016. She is an affiliated poet at the Centre for Poetry and Poetics, Sheffield University.

John Myers lives in Tucson, Arizona, where he works as a social worker with older adults. He graduated from Oberlin College with a degree in biology and from the University of Montana with an MFA in poetry. Recent work has been published in *Aufgabe*, *Denver Quarterly*, *Fence*, *Transom*, and *Flag + Void*. His newest project is called *Mudship*.

Erica Peplin is a writer who lives in New York. I've been published by *Hobart* and *McSweeney's*.

Sarah Perkins is a graduate student of English Literature at North Carolina State University where she studies poetry both classic and contemporary. She lives in Raleigh, North Carolina with her husband.

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Jake Syersak is the author of *Yield Architecture* (Burnside Books, forthcoming), and the chapbooks *Notes to Wed No Toward* (Plan B Press), *Impressions in the Language of a Lantern's Wick* (Ghost Proposal) and *These Ghosts / This Compost: An Aubadeclouge* (above/ground Press). He currently lives in Athens, GA, where he is pursuing a PhD in English and Creative Writing at the University of Georgia. He edits *Cloud Rodeo* and serves as contributing editor to Letter Machine Editions.

Erick Verran's poetry is forthcoming in *Little Star*, *Gargoyle Magazine*, and *Hollow*, a small press based in Boston. He is preparing an article for *The Journal of Pre-Raphaelite Studies* as well as a full-length manuscript for punctum books.