



*Word For/ Word* is seeking poetry, prose, poetics, criticism, reviews, and visuals for upcoming issues. We read submissions year-round, but issue #39 is scheduled for August 2022. Please direct queries and submissions to:

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Email queries and submissions may be sent to: [editors@wordforword.info](mailto:editors@wordforword.info).

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 submissions should be attached as a single .doc, .docx, .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.

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Caroline Maun

---

**A Better Name for Fall**

Almost. Inflorescence before complete  
darkness. Preemptive nostalgia.  
Those shadows that show you how  
long a spirit might stretch. Radical change  
that doesn't ask first for your support.  
Rather than talk to me about the past,  
my father left clippings, each one a mention  
of some blood relative I would never meet.  
Yellowed newsprint, small stories  
of who was wed, who died,  
who went to war, who was left. Mystery  
in the way leaves, overwintered,  
become shelter for a different form of life.

## Caroline Maun

---

### **I Didn't Ask**

When you left before you left  
if you knew why. Something about  
the vigilance as you showed me  
where you lived, how you checked  
to see I had not shed a single hair  
and how the glass was dried, back  
on the shelf before we left. This deliberate  
trip before things started. I remember  
seeing the boxes of wine, thrown  
and empty, on the porch, everything else,  
within and without, spotless.

Caroline Maun

---

**The Gulf of Hip-High Predators**

Turbid, green, lithium stew. Shallow  
sea full of darts. Light breaking  
on the razors of waves. Slight surf  
with shell fragments and sand fleas  
who tumble and dig back to the dark.

Proto-islands paved in sand dollars,  
their plates shifting on velveteen cilia.  
The radical symmetry of the number  
five. This water taught me treasure's  
under toe and danger's wherever you

don't have eyes, which is most places.  
What hunts you shapes you, even  
when forces are neutral and random.  
The salts that buoyed me up and soothed me  
also dangled me in dappled light like a toy.

Lorelei Bacht

---

**pond / reflecting (37)**

pond / reflecting /

our un-apologies /

we crunch / devour each other /  
shell and all / if not you / then  
your frothy offspring /

we eat / we eat / living  
and dead all trapped /each

a poke of the wheel / that turns /  
that turns /

once a fish / twice a bird.

## Lorelei Bacht

---

### **pond / reflecting (38)**

pond / reflecting /

a fallen swallow /

i am through with flying /  
eyes full of cloud / a storm /  
destroyed me mid-air /

dropped like a stone / into rich  
foliage / my body a repository /

safe now broken open /  
a rich substrate / festivity /

eat me /

that i may live on.

## Lorelei Bacht

---

### **pond / reflecting (39)**

pond / reflecting /

storm / slow / heavy /

pressing change forward /

a sudden agitation / flies / dragonflies /

all out and strident / high pitch /

a last minute chance of meat /

before rain rolls out a blitz /

carpeting water over everything /

forced into wait.



Lorelei Bacht

---

**pond / reflecting (40)**

pond / reflecting /

night raining in invisible  
black / air drips liquid /  
it makes a hole of

space /

breathing / eating / going /  
all impossible now /

a deafening  
sound of nothing  
pours and pours / time

is turning elastic /  
double-dutching

sky into a splash.

**A Fable about**

**Leaning** begins pre  
panging the body  
deadening itself scar  
tissue hardening  
MORAL: in  
stead of recovery sole  
flattening under remains  
of the more composed leg.

## Alex Wells Shapiro

---

Revvng through resistance sprayed  
sparks are the wake of dragged  
booted wheels digging uneven grooves

into a side street like a drunken snail  
trail, trunk subs roaring Soundcloud  
ads over its grinding axels crooking

determined for the tips who dressed  
its shaky frame with cylinders tints  
and the good gas rest upon

**arrival.**

## Alex Wells Shapiro

---

**Insulated** in Saran wrap  
n expanding steam cloud  
incites my detector's  
saturating chirps preceding  
a hallway detector by a beat  
like a stable EKG.

My hollow door rattles  
rapt, and naked and  
sopping I open to neighbors  
clustered with blankets  
and buckets of water. My apologies  
are met with relief, laughter &  
retreat:

"Gotta be careful"

"Few sparks we're  
all liable to burn"

"That's how Chicago  
got built y'know"

## Alex Shapiro

---

Sliding my **credit**  
card into 7-eleven's  
reader, the TB test

bubbled on my wrist  
catches the counter  
edge & pops. A splash

of pus masks my blushing  
cheeks & the screen. Done  
transacting I resheathe my

card & scurry out, head down,  
jerky, Coke, & smokes cradled,  
steps spreading a mess garnished

by my forgotten receipt.

Jessie Janeshek

---

**The Sign of the Ram**

I won't stay in one place long  
I've got the wanderlust.  
I wear a gold dress  
divorce on the forest green carpet  
but whom can I thank  
the blonde girl from Iceland  
rotting so fast  
in the cold stink of fish?

Maybe it shakes but I'll get back into it  
my thoughts are sterile  
addicted to salt  
fur and fake pearls on the boat to Brazil  
Styrofoam bones.  
You can grant yourself freedom  
or as your blood boils  
still be ruled by beguine or bossa nova.

It's a trade off this summer  
return #2 to fall in love with a sunset  
or an arpeggiator  
drum fills at dawn  
as the cat on your bed  
left all alone  
morphs to another.  
Low-key chime crime resign  
and one more B-movie  
where I watch amnesia  
circus claws/circus nails  
and can't get the backbeat to work.

Jessie Janeshek

---

**Means of Production/Easy Living**

I'd like to say I'll write you a boogie  
before you disappear  
but I'm still stuck on that night  
riding my pink bike past the abandoned country club  
across the river with binoculars  
the smoky house of the boy who Frenched me because  
that was how actresses kissed.

He could imitate any style  
in black gloves in the lobby of the old hospital  
and rumor has it he hit his white cat over the head  
and hid her in the freezer.

I prefer analog  
and not just for the ease of the arpeggiator  
not just because I hate options.  
At the beginning of the movie  
all the furs            the three eggs  
and the jewelry.  
I thought she had to be rich  
and then the white keyboard disappeared also  
and all the lawn guys did nothing  
while my eyes just rolled back in my head.

Fire this up once in a while  
and I mean it when I say  
play with an echo.  
I'm homesick for illness  
aqua blue foam around my infected bones  
in the glow of the multicolored X-ray Xmas lights.

Jessie Janeshek

---

**Glamour Is a Tree Falling in the Forest**

and it's the summer of crying a little bit longer  
pretending you could be top blonde  
and how do you do that Marilyn-style beauty  
orange champagne sad but no hair on your body  
and how do you rip off that cross?  
No time like the present only comes once  
lime-fizz tear ducts fire and ice at the injection site.  
I wear a skimpy bikini pale like Vampiria  
I can't take big ideas  
sun sun sun as the photographer's chopping my head off  
until daddy says I'm a missed wave  
but laughter to slaughter I listen to the death crawl  
see the blonde boy who wanted me  
dangling a crab. I have more desire, distinctive  
during your acid trip. I still burn with my sex  
swim over the shimmering tiles.

The men drink around me. I'm not changing to suit you  
I throw on the red jumpsuit, wax lips  
I can't bear the hot pink. Nothing I say in this box  
has the core of distraction  
and how long until I become your Scopitone blonde?  
So much monstrosity black sailor pajamas  
lock me in my bedroom peach walls  
a pink lamb you tried to orchestrate the finale  
bossing me to summer beauty  
but the music cut off and my crotch cleaned itself.  
I get wet again and I stick a stuffed animal  
under my top. I get wet when I think of a pat on the head  
how I want to hear every stab wound.



## Mark Dow

---

### Quartet

I.

The second the second  
starts the first first  
surfaces and separates.

It had been there  
underneath and three  
four and two and one.

First says listen  
and has said it.

Second says same.

Four clears path,  
three underlines  
what second second  
had implied behind

what first said  
straight-out across  
the floor three

opened trapdoor  
all'd seen appear

at vanish-point

the first and

second had

intimated entering.

Into. In went

thought to find its

footing. Three reminds

four of the contours

acceptable knowledge

has drawn in the dirt,

re-draws them. There's

dirt in the air and water,

air in the water and dirt,

water in dirt and air. Un-

sure but agrees just as

second and under or o-

ver it first says what it

thought it heard it  
say the first time.  
Said it's not what  
was going to be said,  
but going where if  
not to the saying of --  
if there is an of.

At first it was low  
enough it had to be  
repeated more highly.  
It needed to be able  
to have been held,  
an interruption, but  
it stayed, sustained,  
but not for long since  
it never was, was it?  
Was it what it wasn't?  
It was. Wasn't it?

Thick edge  
lengthens it, fourth  
and third and first,  
first, fourth, and third,  
third, fourth, and first,  
now first, now first,  
now first and fourth,  
third and fourth and

one

and two and three  
and four, the three and

four,

the first and now  
the second one now  
second, what's  
said or resounded  
in the, where the,  
what the clearing  
was. Let's talk  
about the

clearing now,  
the place the  
rest of the places  
passed through  
on the way to  
coming toward  
and then into  
                  themselves

: each :

: each :

the way a thing  
does, the place  
and thing-in-place  
in place --

                  this takes place  
                  once there's been  
                  some realizing  
                  each is more  
                  than one one.  
                  Outline shimmers  
                  off outline  
                  widening,  
                  now it realigns --  
                  that's the coming back  
                  to or back into itself,  
                  centered but  
                          center delineated but  
                  not filled not unfilled  
                  but just not filled.  
                  In some sense  
                  it's possible to

whisper  
in the outskirts  
                  and  
                  a  
narrows · straight  
down across it  
saying it was saying

what it meant to say  
had meant to say  
once it knew to  
say or be said  
to first, the first  
    first  
learned or listened to.

II.

Two says first first  
say third had said  
before fourth said  
what it would say.  
Two circles three  
suggesting where  
four and, and one,  
come toward one  
another in sameness  
of same channel and  
meander, me and her,  
one maybe more  
under than another  
but never which which  
clear, all clear, never  
which instead stays  
separable from which.  
Then under all the  
four three two four,  
one two three four,  
floor, water on, walked  
on it squared, squared-  
off pasture field had  
gone to where thought  
had thought, while it  
grazed, to build. It's  
possible now to imagine  
the clearing inside the

periphery because  
what's forgotten but not  
completely's that, cleared,  
it went away for a while,  
for four to three to two

and  
and

III.

Let's let time let us let it  
fade now, let it fade  
awareness, fade from  
awareness, from, our  
awareness, our awareness  
of its having been where  
it could be seen  
and been in, be  
been in. Given our  
having been in it  
there's no not knowing it.  
Meanwhile talk about it.  
Idealize the idea of it.  
Desires project it  
into s-is-for-surroundings  
and take them in again again.  
What form were they before  
and which one do they take  
now and

two and now

and says something in such  
a way as to hide it and make  
it impossible to ignore

it as it

comes apart

along where one had fit  
as if they were all one,  
all were one, one one,

one from next and does so  
in direction of the grain.  
Three was saying leave  
the clearing we've cleared  
but where, extant in the tangle,  
attained but unattainable.

Four stays it to the ground.  
One two repeat the doubled  
sense of things one knows  
one knows. And sometimes  
others know one knows,  
one knows others know  
one knows because  
they know one. Lonely  
and afraid almost  
all the time I'm, almost  
all, all of the time, most  
all the time of time. Then.  
Then there was a pause.  
*Almost a pause; buh, puh.*  
Then they said the same thing.  
Then they said the same thing.  
Then they said the same thing.  
Then they said the same thing.  
Said the same same thing  
on one in unison, just  
almost exactly  
the same one what  
some same one someone  
had seemingly -- and  
maybe we'd heard it  
already just now --  
said almost exactly  
the very same thing.

IV.

One

a sound outside

Two

outside of one

Three

there's a sound

Four

continuation of it

Two and four

some sound

Three and one

somebody said

Four and three

return

And two and one

come back

Encircled

to start

Left there here

in circles.

Concentric circles

on the surface surface

of what had once seemed

still. The plane of it extends

in the space the mind imagines

mind imagined itself

made of, inside

of rivulet of

meander of

intimate of

this just a feeling of --

4, 2, 3

one

1, 3, 4

two

just a small song of --

wanted to tell

you say something of --

the pause  
the veer  
the being formed to  
and it shaped to be fit to --

someone said it  
must have said it  
nevertheless each says  
wants to say or have it said  
outside this --  
how to --

There's a clearing, clearing of.  
This is just the trying  
to get into words some  
semblance of what's  
exterior of them, to them,  
even if flickering  
clearer than they  
can so far have been  
or be. Not quite  
music but not not.

It's imagined. The where  
of where it's imagined has  
to be invented as well and  
it is and is as real as.

There's no not-real.  
Four three of --  
One and two of --

Each each coincides there where,  
is with but overlaid with,  
or covered or protected by,  
says say what it wants to say  
or say needs to say  
or just say has --  
says what it has to say.

Already has.  
One says  
two three  
four three



two one and  
there was a sound just now  
as if. As if someone said.  
A sound. Someone said  
something. Thought I thought  
I heard someone say something.  
But. But the second the first.  
Thought I heard something but.  
Heard something but it's quiet  
out. Quiet out now and now  
and one aloud. Not now.  
Now it is. Now it's  
quiet out now.

[Note: An audio file of the poem is available at [wordforword.info/vol38/Dow.html](http://wordforword.info/vol38/Dow.html)]

Glenn Bach

---

**from: *Atlas***

are there fewer birds how  
would we know)—*every moment the brink  
of radical transformation*

but not for the reasons you expect

that mask: that veil by  
Jim Crow a white mob  
opposes the sale

is not every moment a **transition**?

Did the exodus finally  
abate?

Glenn Bach

---

**from: *Atlas***

scraper: poplar: measuring  
*where no one would want  
to live / plants described*

stick pine / carry many people  
how to bring to ground / pull  
w/out attachment

everything possible in a day's

dri l l s caul kin g scr a p er  
releasenature trans for mations  
cordage:redwoodtar  
wedge

cling

*where the current is weakest)*

Glenn Bach

---

**from: *Atlas***

watch with the greatest  
earnestness  
so that they  
may gather seeds

to cycles of earth and sky  
these plants that follow fire

[emphasis added:

*encroachment of coastal*

*sage scrub & perhaps*

*of chaparral*

quantities of chia they were  
reported

*khutash*

*for the food*

*she gave them*

to the edges of these fields  
to languish  
~~no physical remains~~

the tools ]

new conclusions about these  
vessels or the excavation  
of a cache  
    this is an issue  
    simple  
to solve  
    the currents of the world  
we find ourselves

Glenn Bach

---

**from: *Atlas***

not in decades. Will we be left behind

deny the costs we are all, still, the data:  
what is right in front of us the names  
for these neighborhoods the landscape dissolving into  
the light

*only the mountains the sea and the land in between*

smoke no longer the land in / to a state  
of **wonder**

where will our Doggerland  
swimming over the past: spoilheaps  
if we forget the map

causative / if we created  
a word this message has no content.

## Sheila Murphy

---

### Reflections on an Olivetti That I Never Owned

1/

An instrument at arm's length promising disturbance of the peace meant the apotheosis of democracy.

2/

Whose night off is this, replete with multiple amendments and no one to vote?

3/

Macadam seems a flinty plane, why (not) resist absorption?

4/

Tintype, weatherbeaten face, an inclination to share not store bought stuff, rather, originals unlaced.

5/

Kama sutra lower case, apart from caste encumbrances, some literature to thumb.

6/

Body chemistry to occupy the mind, set theory, praxis, temperate regard.

7/

A docent seeking to absorb tales to pass along, inquisitive concerning what is held intact and other-owned.

8/

Purity as a refresher course *comma ca.*

9/

Let my khakis go in the direction of tuxedo wilderness.

10/

Capitulate or dry your hands after the set point noted via megaphone.

## Sheila Murphy

---

### **Don't Leave**

Don't leave the house.  
It's going to be dark again and soon.  
The branches have no pulp,  
The moon is quiet, low, and thin.

Don't leave the sanctity of stillness.  
There are plenty leaves between book spines,  
Where touchpoints you imagine love you back.  
Spun history replete with hard and soft beginnings.

Don't disturb the pasture of the mind.  
Allow the solitude you feel is near.  
Connections in the clearing lift your light.  
Just fathom what you learn, embrace the sight.

Don't leave innocence unearned.  
You will be gilded as recalled.  
Foster kindness, leave the light  
Alone and kindle new respect.

Don't leave the house with an untended heart.  
Your blood runs strong to midnight.  
Embrace the land as handsome,  
this new posture in the world.



## Sheila Murphy

---

### **Lattice**

Points in space pierce flow of darkness. The known conforms to womb beyond. *How do you treble clef your way through tiers of say-so not your own?* Is there invention in the voice box, to parallel flowers clipped young? The teacup and the tea things and the morning ripe for liminal detente. Is there tonality to match the flair you claim? Backlit daydream pulses near the reconnoitering of nouns by heart. How can acreage contain, prevail, estrange near neighbors now? What to grow in weather? How are decibels becoming animals? Expecting a harmonic, blurs the thought of winter.

## Sheila Murphy

---

### Tenderloin

Lives are these shut roses.  
Near the world lives frost.

My glasses hurt.  
Have you seen my container?

The storks leave home without us.  
Coins hold in dream,  
bump through wash cycles.

What if poverty again?  
Hope becomes nostalgia.

Is there a tincture I can use for that?

Impertinence gets the lime-  
light.

How normal must I seem to pass the invocation  
toward another life?

I breathe integers and plain old breath.

I would imagine if I imagined most of daylight.

Now is work until tomorrow night reveals  
the verdict of our freedom.

Yes ahead of time. Yes, please

Derek Pollard

---

**Come Another Year**

The gecko, hurried by desire, hurried by an urgency  
It knows so deeply it is the urgency, scuttles into  
The plastic bottle left lying on the sidewalk, thin edge  
Of blue all that remains against the paper's white tear

Women run, or they walk, along the intracoastal, men  
Promenade shirtless, seeming without care

The same couple as two days before, seated yards apart,  
Taut with music, taut with the rhythm of the day, lean  
Fishing poles into the water, flicking light against a sky  
Freighted with grey

Someone passes, saying something familiar in a language  
We used to know as the language of prayer

A man and a woman, young and unafraid, guide their dog  
To the sidewalk and begin walking north toward that place  
Heaped now with ash and cinder where once we loved  
One another and a son we would never know, where a girl  
Calling herself Field Without End has come another year  
Closer to shedding the swaddling that has been wrapped  
Tightly, ever so tightly, around her, starving her of song

Among the midden it is clear — there is no nature other than  
What we make, and what we make is low and lowly, a jangle  
And a discord, a blight that brings the crows to the pine,  
The vultures to the circle, the oil to the surface of the rain

## Derek Pollard

---

### **Secaucus**

Speak is to  
Disillusion

Tarnish not  
Something gilt

Dizzying  
Bacchanal

First is sun  
Nor bruise

Nor

Coin

Holy  
Host among  
Fen whose fern  
Girders sky

Eurydice  
Sky

Each arch

Songing what  
Gap, which voice

Until day  
Light comes up  
On us

Entire

A majesty

## Derek Pollard

---

### **Field Without End**

For Elodie Meadow

From the coin before the threshold,  
Tarnished from your mother's travels,  
Which before weighed dull and heavy  
In your tender hand, springs forth  
Blake's heavenly host

Dried flower, which you, asking of me  
To stop my sight and stay, resting  
In the blindness you have commanded,  
Go to precisely and take from its setting,  
Unfurls a field that knows no horizon

Take heed, those with thoughts  
Of trespass

Here is no entry

Here a girl has made of herself  
Her own sanctuary

Everywhere Croatoan

Our salvation bound to the carving, to what  
Others call Mystery, because what they hear  
When the coin touches the floorboard  
And we raise our fingers from the flower  
Is altogether other than the voice  
Urging us to pursue

The hill too steep for the city

The loss too close for the grieving

The desire too wild

For the loving  
The girl who stands before us decides  
Her name

Field Without End

And whenever she comes among us  
She is a revel of angels dancing the sun

## Coleman Edward Dues

---

from *The Ekstatikon Par Excellence*

(blade bared, era bled bad, bled red.  
great reds, violets, golds about. degreeless noon  
has great v's about. blade switched, be  
witched. whichsoever was the clock atomic  
birdened by the sky's shoulder, boulder rolled  
foreverwise up the great gash pouring  
great reds, violets, goldarned goshdanged  
sonofabitching days forth. nor'easters, nor'  
yesters, nor permanence neither. yes mister,  
I have a wrist, there's a crossroads at it. a  
funnybone, a wishbone at it. a chicken  
enters the question. headless but it looks upways  
anyways, heedless, foreverwise.)

## Coleman Edward Dues

---

from *The Ekstatikon Par Excellence*

"time flies like an arrow;  
fruit flies like a banana."

flying time makes semifit...  
time meets? seamlike? time fills?

falls? left, aft, east? miles,  
miles? eellike? stemlike? flamelike

time? we are islets in lakelets. time  
teems w/ lifetimes; likeliest. time

filiate (fellate??) w/ space. space  
masks. meat space on skeletal time.

—: §

...glamouring hologram,  
spotlight gloom n gloam,

limit limit limit limit limit  
me awake—: §



Coleman Edward Dues

from *The Ekstatikon Par Excellence*

---

ORGANS OF KNOWING—:

go down

ORGANS OF UNKNOWING—:—:

show a mar on a writing of a body of words—:—:—:

undo a name

and do nightfall—:—:—:—: §

a blackout then is not the drawing of shades  
which draws in shade but the apostasy of light  
so the brain when the flesh dims dims  
and bulbous space will flicker neath the bulb time

for an eyelid is but a lid for an I  
the namesaker  
the thereforer  
the one with the  
the.

the perception perceiving perception perceives  
in time but timeless eyelids lid no I no  
telling what goes on at night no telling  
what the green fairy took the  
topology of timelessness the topology of timelessness  
I can only repeat it  
I can only  
repeat  
it.

## Coleman Edward Dues

---

from *The Ekstatikon Par Excellence*

waiting in the wings (we are the bird).

waiting itself. waiting waits other durations,  
moneyed and fair-skinned, in possession of  
large cocks and riflery.

stopping in. the title, the deed, The End, and the following negotiations.  
we still are the bird. stopping  
or is the wind  
still.

go. fuck in a vestibule. thrall in the anteroom. rage, rage,  
age sideways.

—: the tiny messiah, by way of syllojizzum.  
have you ever walked on uneven ground.  
have you good sex, revolution  
apart from the doors to modern shopping malls.

you would say *look at the time*  
and you would be blinded.

—:

on these uneven grounds, you've walked ever and forever, and the groundskeeper  
has never thought Earth, the groundskeeper only thinks and shall only think  
earth.

. —: The End, how did you sleep.

## Brandan Griffin

---

### In Spiramall, Pipes No Shepherd

Prelude ends. Masternoon lands full blare.

Our pack  
stirs, smell of chlorine fluorescing in the lobby. My friends,  
electricity in mercury, broken signs, shattered hasps to our plastic  
pasture, I can't see lettertalk anymore. Smthng in my brain jms,  
wnt clck ny frthr.

— —

Light from one color to another (jumps).  
The pack moves, that is the signal, pulsthrough openings, flow  
as day tips downward, another lobby. That's time, a gravity hall.

Light tubes quenched, the pack submerged, at night it corrals me  
again—hum—that necklace, those knifey lips, the hollow gilded  
hoof—flute mouth—a neck into muteness—  
After the blackout, the whiting in. The rim of day, my friends.

— —

We climb the laminated portal to a smaller origin. Same fountain  
circled by plastic ferns, same round window at the end, but all  
scaled down. That is the narrow success of copying.

— —

More questioning—  
I tell them I'm a pack of literate mammals. That word-burn  
years at me in single fists. I tell them the one symbol I can grasp  
is already burning my ankles. Icantreadsigns. I claimb wondiws

into other rooms. There's a conchness to this place, slowly spiraling  
towards a sensor.

— —

Today our pack clumped to inspect itself  
and I confirmed my theory that at the smallest level each of us  
is a lake, floating, floes of black tags

caught in a viscosity. Clogged  
barcodes. This explains the scanner at every threshold. Its thin  
buzzing line. They are compounding our shapes into models

of higher-order behavior. They say I'm looped but I say  
that's what they say.

— —

A false jay is hidden in the polymer forest.  
Its eyes plugged with ball bearings, skin cinched over a wire cast,  
is it flying away or only shrinking? Piping

or piped through?  
The walls bulging like translucent cheeks, like notions inflated  
on the tongue of the pack—a spiral

parallel to itself—we are a  
circuit, redblue bleurrrrd, the signal failing, toomuch allatonce,  
lurching round a censor.

— —

Rooms choke and the pack thins out  
like a beaded necklace. Lines dissolve into their demons,  
their cursive. *Lord*, I say. *Governor*. The jay as tiny in my claw

as a light switch, how far away it must be. I lie under black  
sprinkler rain, an O glimmering over me that tucks

under its origin—a tighter version

of its past. I call, *What noise*  
*are you making in those curves?* Our waxed world responds  
by declining. *Singign. Singn. Sight.* Let takewing take wing.

## Gregory Vincent St. Thomasino

---

### Color Bars

1.

taut, to auto

Chloris chloris (the greenfinch) is a tautonym.

comma, roulette

found haiku

merrily, merri-  
ly, merrily, merrily  
life is but a dream

The Amsterdam Bed-In

"Begin——"

"Stop——"

"Break——"

"Go on——"

"All right——"

"And——"

"Leave that bit out——"

"Finish it——"

"Fine——"

"A bed-in? I don't follow you——"

Still-Life with Bonsai and Mauve Dancing Girl

informal upright

formal upright  
slant

rock clasping  
root over rock  
slant

clump

swimming  
cascade  
literati

informal upright  
formal upright  
clump

forest  
broom  
rock clasping  
twin trunk  
multi-trunk  
slant

clump

2.

Now I know what makes you laugh.  
*You don't know what makes me laugh.*

*May I bring a friend?*

Pronoun?

*He.*

Is *he* housebroken?

*Want some?*

What is it?

*Polenta.*

Yuck.

*You don't like polenta?*

I don't like anything that reminds me of childbirth.

Repeat after me:

prêt-à-porter

*prêt-à-porter*

pied-à-terre

*pied-à-terre*

serape

*serape*

cheroot

*cheroot*

Opening Lines.

It was the summer Putin opened a can of whup-ass on Obama.

My coffee, my cocoa.

Contractions.

Police beating up on people.

Animals falling out of trees.

You did all that with your thumbs?

Am I to be burned or drowned?



Last night I dreamt my hands were flippers.

breath (kumbhaka)

the unstruck (anahata)

sound (shabda)

resonance (dhwani)

light (jyotis)

mind (manas)

a fainting of the mind (manas)

the nature of the mind (chitta)

(I asked a friend,  
what is the color  
of your bedroom walls?  
He didn't know.)

## William Repass

---

### Historiography III

I had developed an allergy to the past.

It will be understood that I could not sneeze. Wednesday

I ran out of hammers. Fresh out of calendars at the hardware store, too. Therefore nothing

Thereafter could be nailed down.

Some time later, I glued the magnet to the can of anchovies.

Some time later, therefore declined in stature and popularity.

Some time earlier, I reclined on a bench in the park to think about Ivalyo the Cabbage, the peasant rebel who in 1278 turned into tsar of Bulgaria.

Then I remembered the can opener.

Then the nails turned into millipedes, no, centuries.

That should bring you up to speed.

Some time later, I cut my hand on a shard of stained glass and bled profusely on the the.

Subsequently, I lay butter side down on the "moving walkway." In the name of the kitchen, chequered linoleum staged a palace coup and it was then,

Or thereabouts, that the box of elbow macaroni surrendered unconditionally, losing what remained of its colonies and standing army.

Some time later, the reverted to a noise approximating thuh.

I took down the decorative propeller and whomped Tuesday back through Monday, Sunday, Saturday, Friday, Thursday, and Wednesday, all the way to Tuesday.

I pretended to sneeze but it didn't work.

## William Repass

### Historiography IV

---

Then the egg timer went off. I set it for another ten.

It was, in those days, the only time piece left in the apartment. I'd long since strongarmed the alarm clock into exile.

I removed the lampshade from the lamp and placed it over my head. Then I sat on the stool to organize

My thoughts: I have no thoughts to organize. Except for the thoughts about thoughts, or about thinking, and thoughts about organization also, which amount to the same thing, or not, and which, if you think about it, are, in actuality, thoughts about disorganization, so to speak, the disorganization of thought, or thinking, the decentralization and/or federalization of thinking, or thought. No, not far enough, keep pushing. Thought tossed into chaos by the deft assassination of the Prince Regent of thought for whom, let's be frank, let's be King of the Franks, not one thought has ever traversed his melon. At last, a thought. Deposed by hunger. Not for melon, but for the thoughts I had yesterday with lunch, or rather, for breakfast. As opposed to eggs. I've long since run out of eggs.

In praxis, then, not so effective as it sounds in theory. I removed the lampshade from my head and placed it over the egg timer.

In a word, Elizabethan collar.

The voluptuous intensity of the naked bulb seared my retinas.

The egg timer could go off at any minute.

The afterimage all but made up for the famine of historical battle scenes on my walls.

The egg timer would, any second now, explode, sending its shrapnel to slice the room into juicy tenths.

But the kitchen had filled with clouds scudding in from the West,

From the bathroom, that is.

Cumulonimbus, sickly green.

## William Repass

---

### Historiography V

But I came to realize that, in spite of my sustained interest in the tradition of Herodotus,

I was ahistorical.

Now, the fastest cheapest method of shaving off the a and gluing myself to the interesting, of becoming, so to speak, historical, was

To cultivate an historical mustache, or mustachio.

One begins simply, by aping one of the Great Mustaches. Once mistaken for the historical personage to which the mustache was originally affixed, one then cultivates a distinctive style of one's own, until

Poof! one's mustache has become interesting in its own right, therefore historical.

I sat on the stool to begin the procedure.

I couldn't check my progress. The mirror was busying itself as the window.

By the time the mirror came back it was too late. I was mistaken for Yevno Azef.

Not the Emiliano Zapata I'd been going for but, then again, none too shabby historicity wise.

Instead of issuing uncompromising manifestos or leading daring raids against the hacendados

The new mustache began an aggressive campaign of revolutionary terrorism, blasting

All the light fixtures to smithereens. Worse, it informed on me to the landlord, who was vacationing in Ibiza at that time. My mustache had become

Too historical, molding me into Legend. Not even a fictional mustachio could avert my fate.

In the dark, I allowed the follicles grow and grow, until they sheathed my entire body,  
per the classical formula

Guerilla → gorilla.

Evicted and fading into myth

Or obscurantism on a bench in the public park that doubled as the cemetery

I went practically extinct.

## William Repass

### Historiography VI

---

I suffered my exile in the cemetery that doubled as the public park.

The inchworm measured out the sleeve from whence

My hand extruded. I sat on the park bench and attempted to regroup my thoughts:

It was Marx, I guess, who wrote that history repeats itself, first as tragedy, then as farce, then screwball comedy, then spaghetti western, then food documentary, then commedia dell'arte, then menippean satire, then masque, then punch and judy show. After that, it's tragedy all over again.

I'll remember my destiny in the wheel of cheese, I guess. Veiny gorgonzola oughta suffice. I'll put out the emigré newspaper, I'll gather my forces, and my forces will disperse. They're soldiers of fortune and I can't afford cheese.

I fire the arrows of my gaze in all directions, and invariably miss. When I look at the hermit walking the pigdog, for instance, I see the gazebo closed for repairs. The figures of leisure stroll back and forth with no clothes on except the helmets of antiquity. They stroll along rectilinear paths until they reach the edges. Ricocheted, they stroll along the new trajectory, ideal limbs swinging from ideal torsos.

The cloud hunkered overhead stuck to me like glue. I watched the shadow of it shift shapes. The horse, the caravel, the skeleton, the bagel. The pigeons, too, scratch that, the buzzards, hung in the air like the checkmarks on a certain most important document.

In the park there are no mirrors. The puddles here are mud puddles.

From its pedestal the shit-flecked statue of the child emperor stared down at me. I strove to ignore it, but felt the eyes like weevils rooting in my flesh. I repaid the stare in kind and the statue's face drained of its patina as I stared, turning grey, growing rounder and rounder. Soon the face was a graphite ellipse. A smile split the fully inflated discoloration and the head began to float, taking the tiny rigid body along with it, up into the canopy. It struck the forked twig and deflated, hissing.

So much for the Golden Age.

## William Repass

---

### Historiography VII

The new stool, formed from the new composite material, swaggered into my new place and utterly declassed the old stool. After a brief clash to establish dominance, it was all over.

I sat on the new stool to watch the ants promenade along the wainscoting, each with a volt of electricity clamped in its jaws. To power the new queen, I guess.

The oscillating fan turned to face me, dragging a quart of fitful wind behind it.

I sat on the new stool to watch the tumbleweed of dryer lint strike out across the barren floor. I made note of its progress.

I traced the column of ants all the way from the coin-operated dryer, through the kitchen area, under the new stool, and over the mildewed carpet to the bathroom, where they funneled into a chink in the mirror's armor. I put my eye to the chink and what did I see but any old me, seated on any old stool in any old place, gluing a magnet to Semiramis of Assyria. You were there, too.

This of course was before the invention of alphabet soup. The Age of Refrigeration, even.

Might've have chalked it all up to nostalgia if you hadn't galloped, followed by your retinue, out through the chink to swipe the chalk from my hand.

I feigned a retreat back to the kitchen area, twisting in the saddle to execute the "Parthian shot," but by this stage your wartime economy was really humming and my projectiles bounced feebly off your armored train.

Feigned retreat transitioned smoothly into route.

I was cornered. You declared the new stool a false idol and iconoclased it to splinters before my eyes. Then you iconoclased the window and surged out toward the point where your chronicle breaks off mid sentence.

The oscillating fan turned its back on me, dragging the quart of fitful wind behind it.



## Christopher Barnes

---

### Categorised

...Ripper Jack whizz.  
Lemon-edged you...

\*

...go halves with parmesan.  
Load egg, fry...

\*

..."seventy honest ones,"  
chortles his dentist.  
"Make it prolonged..."

\*

...omee-polone amorous.  
We'll...

## Christopher Barnes

---

### Resolving

...crankily as the warthog pisseth,  
I swung..

\*

...orange, cilantro foliage  
into het-up griddle...

\*

...necropolis aide-de-camp oversighting  
raw...

\*

...jingle-brained. You'd morphed  
narrow-waisted...

## Christopher Barnes

---

### **Off Your Knees**

...catarumpus in Poundland.  
You whip-rounded...

\*

...thaw for 60 minutes.  
Squirt...

\*

...Rolls Royce. He chances  
Upon Tarquin. Bowing...

\*

...fashion misfit. Ugh! Ugh! Popcorn  
on goaty seats...

Christopher Barnes

---

**Climbing the Hill**

...duckweed green. You warbled  
uncensored blues...

\*

...vinegar. Tizzy cream,  
prolong...

\*

...broilers. When he flings corn,  
kicks...

\*

...slashed jeans. I deferred  
an epoch...

## Christopher Barnes

---

### **Sparsely Peopled**

...ramshackle. We blind-eyed him,  
Gulping alcopop...

\*

...penne et cetera. Tomato bolognaise,  
mozzarella...

\*

...on the ramp. Mr. Scratcher vowed,  
"My daddy..."

\*

...queer-faced. A twilight  
for...

J. D. Nelson

---

**certain latitudes may not appear**

I could use that mirror to salt a head of lettuce  
marbles are the suns of the minute to lose

to lose that feathered meat  
to lose that brandished ankle

I was the rocking horse of the pony tree  
I was a bright machine, clanking

I was that pristine rock  
I was that prone prawn

I am the machine of the lake  
I am the suffering sandwich

the iron fish is the key  
the pillow earth of the miracle set

to learn of heaven too slowly  
this is the shape of the garden

J. D. Nelson

---

**the boat of the boar**

I ate one half of the brain when I was the cube  
the laser carp (your natural idea)

the penguin ape  
that wig of the frog

that tired tree is the skull  
to measure the saturn of the rose

when I am the tree  
when I am the soda fork

the clone of the lonely clown  
the heart of the natural order

the law of everything  
the earth on stilts

the wisdom checkers  
the art of the wrong rat

J. D. Nelson

---

**madness max and the shaking book**

the machine of the lake  
the little letter is the bean of the base

I am the smaller planet  
this is the safe, smart way to eat a news pizza

leading a whale to a pile of white socks  
with chrome and lard we learn of the summer

in a hot air balloon there is a corner of cheese  
the raspberry is the clone of the day

in the bright wandering hole of the garden  
the monster rice talks with me

the sprite of the talking face  
we need that leaf to know of the lawn



J. D. Nelson

---

**the moss here is delightful**

midas goes to the glow  
the name of the sun and sun

at the conclusion of the laser  
we are here in the toast

the globe of the camera loses a western heart  
the news of what we need

the barnacle beak on the wall  
we sanction the fjord

the shy pirate pack  
this game of science could starve me

to renumber that starfall  
I claim the heather of the marbled fox

J. D. Nelson

---

**the middle marinara and the emblem of the egg**

saturn's philadelphia noun  
the mirrored sun is the nine of hearts

the noun of my supervisor  
to mark a metropolitan nail of the water

to be the noun of the daily bread  
the record player face

the cooling noun of the angels  
the gloom of the pirate tarp

the shrinking noun of the hologram  
a wheel of the cooking chore

the noun of the clean, wandering house  
that hum is alone in the tree

the noun of the sea is a shark  
to plan a night of acorns

the noun is the shape of the layer  
the sun of the morning ark

the wailing noun is the pumpkin of thought  
time is the shimmering logo of the cough

## D. E. Steward

---

### **Parch Marks**

"I have found the world / so marvelous that nothing would surprise me:" (A. R. Ammons, "Extremes and Moderations")

The earnest focus of a horse in harness single-tree attached skip scraper-hitched standing for the reins' light rump slap and the GIDUP

With the wooden buck scraper's edge catching and dragging through and pushing ahead then full

Then dumped

Gee or haw coming back around

Again and again until WOH

Human with the reins bucking along on the plow handles and crossbar behind

How earth was moved before the skip loader, backhoe and blade

Even cellar holes were dug that way

Without slaves, corvée or coerced labor, and before steel became common the mattock and basket being the method, the demand to get beyond moil was an imperative

The skip with a horse or mule on the pull, oxen were too slow, obviously was much preferred to any hand dig and haul

Bulkier Fresno skip scrapers dug the ditches that irrigate the San Joaquin

Big steel ones up to six-horse or mule teams across

With a Fresno scraper, drag to load its C-shaped bowl, tip to slide the load away, then dump and grade

All with horsepower

The direct ancestor of those amazing immense bouncing roaring cut-and-fill monster-tired fifty-ton capacity scrapers that rearrange the topography at 35mph across the site

It's a stretch to imagine how much more disruptive our planet-wide horizontal excavation might become

And then advance, or even static permanence, is not a given, after the Romans left Britain its sanitation and transportation went into squalid retreat, as did metallurgy, pottery and other craft technologies, and did not reinvent there for something like seven centuries

We are still flourishing and urbanizing all the way, wherever there is room and cause

We progress leaving ruins, parch marks and graded wasteland behind us

If hedged by the shorelines or other constraints we build Hong Kong high

We began with the vertical

First we dug down

Moving only as much earth as needed for a dugout or a grave

Digging without modifying the horizontal as we now do so extensively

Archeologists will wax quizzical about our housing development artificial berms and dramatically sculptured golf-course sand traps and water hazards

So much dirt moved for every new airport and satellite city in Asia and the Middle East, for every large project imaginable

And the modification irruptive conglomerations like Battery Park City, like Lagos

Lagos and Delhi alone

The bizarre artificial islands in the South China, Red and Arabian Seas

Dredgers pumping sand from the seabed to build enhancements that since 1990 have made fresh dry land the area of Jamaica or Connecticut from estuaries, shallow bays and straits

Dams, reservoirs and canals, open pit mines, landfills, new roads and rail lines

And "Fire in the hole!"

Blast through granite to make the grade, whatever's in the way, schist, limestone, gneiss or shale, take it out and clean up and set things straight again down the line

Whump

Move back in and get the machines back at it

Level, rechannel, cut and fill, leave gargantuan drifts of processed ore and mineral earth

Some set of morons even proposed using atomic bombs to make another Panama Canal, to link several hydrogen bombs to make a harbor in Alaska

Nuclear explosives were used to stimulate natural gas production under the Rockies' western slope north of Grand Junction, that project abandoned because the resulting gas was radioactive

Practical imagination is the limit

Consolidating towers, building upwards in the urbanscape became general last century and now moving place to place within highrise skylines and airports and transport by elevator jets are how many of us regularly live

But we dug first to bury

"Now pile your dust upon the quick and dead, till this flat a mountain you have made"  
(Laertes)

The shiny brown loam polish slick of the first shallow grave pit's face within the bone-infused soil until getting down to mineral earth and shoals of stone

The digging bar's scars of long and flat verticals, the pick's short wedge chops on the vertical clay are left

All four faces of the grave's four sides

In Sandy Ridge's clay, shoveling out the first clean tan micaceous Piedmont sand and sandstone begins to come up below

Grave wall vertical symmetry down six feet corners squared

Seis pies debajo

Sei piedi sotto

Peer in before the funeral arrives, Charly Bacorn heaves himself up and out with a hand from Johnny Brown who shovel-scrapes around the grave cleaning up to put the saved sod back down in place around the edge

"There is no ancient gentlemen but gardeners, ditchers and grave-makers" (Second Grave Digger)

Just so they dug graves on Sandy Ridge always friendly to a tike on his tricycle

In the decades before suburbanization and popular cremation thereabouts

Back, back long before there long were mounds and cairns through the ages to sheltering bones and skulls

Dug first with horns, antlers, big shells, fire-hardened sticks, flat stones, bark shards

Funeral mounds to cairns to tombs to towers

Charly died in 1980, as a kid he built two livable dugouts in the woodlot across Sandy Ridge Road from their farm

Designed in the manner of those in which the Civil War armies wintered

One of his dugouts even had a stove

Capped black stovepipe dramatic in falling snow among the woodlot's bare branched oaks and maples, hickory and sassafras's upswept-twigs, witch hazel's delicate white there only in early spring

The Bacorns farm with a Rhode Island reds henhouse and summer range houses, a hay barn and silo, hogs, three or four hand-milked cows, Guinea hens, all enabled mostly by a pair of Grey Shires named Belle and Maud

Small platform tree houses, shinny up a rope and pull it up after you, another common thing to build, going up a tree of course has always been a way to survive

Other eras, other ways reaching through beautiful and vivid realities as far back as reasonable imagination stretches

"...the windy oats / that clutch the dunes / of unremembered seas" (A. R. Ammons)

And then the cold, the cold must have been terrible to endure in prehistoric Eurasia

They lay there huddled together and moaning and trying to make light of it, the oldest thinking they might not survive much longer that winter or even through that night

Their litanies of pain from ill-healed fractures, bronchial distress, infections, the headaches, broken molars, the hopeless fears, with the biting fatalism that must have been their only relief from agony

They lived four decades, we live eight

Their innocence and our worldly awareness and even now fatalism's cynical response to the mysteries of disease and the awful violence of local conflicts and war remains

What the murdered in My Lai that fated day felt staring for in the instant before death back over the front sight post of the M-16 flat into the face of their GI executioner

What a teeming inventory of agonies is still behind the deep tympani and basso chorus of Shostakovich's *Babi Yar* Symphony

The harrowing realities of the continuity of historical violence remain

All the way back

With memory and what memory may engender, brutal imagination

No backfill of the past's sinister deep pits

When it was the terrifying, pedestrian and clumsy sword, the club, the dagger, the boot and fire, the face of the single killer was markable

But most often not now with the commission of violence often an abstract with minimal or no guilt assigned, execution of force becoming instantly justifiable, almost matter-of-fact

Police shootings building from timidity and naked fear, and the guideline that a weapon should only draw if used, and if fired should be aimed to kill

The frequently impudent personalities of resist and of forced compliance

Death by drone, detached electronic absolute impersonality above the bottom of the chain of command

Envisioning what violence is in the offing sickens and frightens

Stamp and shout, hoot and whistle while ICE takes them away

Continuation and enhancement of the distant, virtual realitylike happenings that reach us media-filtered and blunted by our insouciant ignorance

The horrors highlighted and fragmented, flash-edited and quick-cut for exploitive commercial viewing



Was that in Iraq or Iran? Burma, Miramar? Was that rash of dozens of hot summer weekend shootings in Cleveland or Chicago? That last terrorist incident in Paris or Brussels?

That street rioting and looting as the storm surge flooded the underground city knocking out all utilities

The loss to constant tidal flooding of whole districts of South Florida and the Gulf cities

Climate change dislocations will be modern epic violent in their desperation

Developing slowly with accumulating circumstances, then with perceived inevitability become doomful and frightening for those involved and adjacent

It will not be a pleasant world then and we begin to taste it now

A reality shift into subtle violence that will stun, injure and unseat social stability

The fortunate and savvy will maneuver through and apart from most of the chaos and go on with what they do, and they will hold the keys

The advancements of AI and machine learning will be manifest and adaptation will continue within their world of high scientific enlightenment as if on islands in society's fast river of turmoil

They well have the means and awareness to understand the paradoxes and the mysteries

And they will know the future's traps now so generally ignored

With nods to democratic means and gestures of magnanimity they will continue to capitalize

Often embittered profiteers in a kind of Ayn Rand survival world

Their insights about what will come, if we could share them now

Daniel Barbiero

---

## Language, Desire, Liminality

Francesco Aprile's introduction to the writing experiments undertaken under the auspices of the Liminalist group (*Word For/ Word 37*) raises an important and interesting question about the relationship between language and desire. This relationship stands at the center of the Liminalist project for, as Aprile explains, Liminalism takes desire as its point of departure and the "desiring text" as its point of arrival; consequently, Aprile explains it, the group's manifesto/anti-manifesto, the product of a process involving collective and sometimes simultaneous writing by different hands, was meant to model a "no-monolithic movement based on the concept of desire" in which the notion of singular authorship collapses into a "liminal zone of desire."

Aprile's idea that liminality is a useful concept through which to understand desire and its possible relationship to language is striking and, I believe, opens a fruitful clearing from which to throw light on one of language's more obscure dimensions. It is a dimension in which meaning shows up as significance—an extra-referential variety of meaning woven into a network of affective and other associations operating at the idiolectical level of language. This is something I believe André Breton touched on when, in his essay "Marvelous versus Mystery," he invoked the "emotional life of words" which manifests itself when "they are brought together according to secret affinities that let them combine in all kinds of new ways." As it will turn out, it is these "secret affinities" that will provide the key to unlocking the door behind which desire secretes itself within language; one way to create the "desiring text" may well be through the kind of combinations Breton announces.

What I would like to do here, then, is to look at the relationship between language and desire not from the point of view of an authorship that has dissolved into a liminal zone of desire, but from the reverse side: to consider desire from the point of view of language and to see language as, if not the liminal zone of desire, then at least as the matrix through which desire, in all its liminality, may disclose itself. What I wish to do here is not to write a commentary on or criticism of the Liminalist (anti) manifesto but rather to weave a kind of counter melody out of some of the themes it states. Beginning with the first and most important of these themes—desire.

Desire

“Desire” is the concept at the heart of our consideration here, but what does it mean? As we experience it in our lives, it can mean many things and take many forms. It can be directed toward many different kinds of objects in many different contexts; it can be something of more or less urgency, depending on what we feel is at stake; it can be directed toward a physical object, another person, or a purely symbolic indicator of, for example, status; it can even be something prompted in us by the example of others rather than something entirely native to ourselves. All of these different manifestations of desire, though, come down to one fundamental meaning that unites them, and that is lack. What we lack we desire; lack is the motivating force that gives rise to desire. Whether the lack at the origin of desire is for something we need—something we must have for survival, for example—or simply for something we want, whether for its own desirability or because others desire it, really doesn’t matter. In either case, lack manifests itself in a way whose original felt or “subjective” (for want of a better term) aspect is desire. Desire is always *my* desire, regardless of its origin; it is something present to me in and through the contingencies of my given situation. “Desire” then is the manifestation of lack as lack makes itself known to us, in a concrete manifestation specific to us as given individuals.

Desire is sometimes described as a propositional attitude, that is, as a psychological state held in relation to a proposition. But as understood here it is more than that; it is an existential structure of human being, a way of projecting oneself into the world out of a need to liquidate a lack. We don’t simply “feel” desire so much as we are in the world in the mode of lacking, as lacking is disclosed to us concretely. Desire is “existential” just because it is an element of the pattern of lack→liquidation that stands at the very center of our way of being in the world and that gives the human experience of temporality its intrinsically futural direction. After all, it is precisely through lack that we project ourselves into a future in which that lack will be liquidated. Still, describing desire in terms of a propositional attitude, while reductive and missing the larger context, does capture something important and interesting about desire--that it is something that is disclosed psychologically as well as, in many cases, physically; that it is the medium through which lack appears to us. And it is on the basis of this appearance that we project ourselves into a possible future in which that lack may be made good.

Desire may also have something of the liminal about it. Desire may focus on a specific object or it may remain vague and without a defined ontic commitment, which is to say that we may not know exactly what it is that we desire, but only that we lack

something, whatever it may turn out to be. In this case, the object of desire is a mystery or an elusive thing registering at an obscure depth. Desire here can be inchoate; it can lack a clearly delineated object, or its object may lie just beneath the threshold of awareness, in a twilight region whose objects hover just out of reach of consciousness per se, but are still present to us even if as an indeterminate shadow. Inchoate desire is liminal desire; its ontic commitment is an obscurity inhabiting a netherworld of semi-formed, yet fully felt, impressions which are, despite the nebulous form they take, a reality for us. Yet whether the object lack projects as the medium through which it will be made good is clearly grasped or only liminally felt, it is an element that defines our concrete situation.

### Desire & Meaningfulness

Desire helps to imbue the world with meaning. It is through the lens of desire that one sees one's situation as containing possibilities through which lack can be addressed and liquidated. Consequently that situation and those possibilities take on varying degrees of significance—they matter to us to the extent that desire touches them and discloses them as relevant to us in our efforts to satisfy desire. Desire is the ground of a particular kind of meaning—not only to the extent that its objects, no matter how liminally present to us or mimetically acquired through the emulation of others, are in themselves meaningful, but also to the extent that desire, in moving us to act, is the motivating force behind a project, the projected end state of which provides the value by which this particular kind of meaning is measured. Desire organizes the world in such a way that things, events, situations and others take on a meaningfulness charged with a more or less powerful force. What desire makes meaningful is what is relevant to us, whether as instrumentality or as obstacle, as we project ourselves toward the future state in which lack is liquidated and desire is satisfied.

It follows that the meaning that desire imparts to the world around us isn't meaning in the sense of a propositional or referential meaning with truth conditions or conditions of adequacy measured against a given state of affairs, but rather is a meaning that relates to our needs and wants as we know them and as they motivate the projects we undertake to meet them. In keeping with the concrete nature of desire, this kind of meaning always is meaning for someone, a given person with given concerns and commitments, with a given history and background and an understanding—no matter how accurate or unreliable, no matter how explicit or implicit, no matter how free or conditioned, no matter whether in good or bad faith--of him- or herself within his or her world. The meaning imparted by desire is meaning as meaningfulness and hence—

at least potentially—of affective weight rather than of truth or falsity, or of descriptive or indicative adequacy.

Through the meaningfulness it gives rise to, desire grasps the world through an affectively weighted, spontaneous and originally unreflected-on understanding, an understanding that may well remain just beneath the threshold of explicit understanding—a liminal, or sub-liminal, understanding. (Given the liminality of some desires themselves, meaningfulness, to the extent that it is unarticulated and prereflectively felt, represents a case of second-order liminality—a liminally grasped affect arising from a liminally grasped desire.) As a liminal phenomenon, meaningfulness may never break through into the light of a fully reflective state and, as a result, may not find articulation within the rational order that full reflection presupposes, but this doesn't mean that it is precluded from making itself felt through language. It does, but it does so at an often-overlooked level of language.

### *Koiné* & Idiolect

Language is a Janus-faced thing. The public, outward-looking face of language is language as the common property of a community defined in part by the language they share. This is language as *koiné*, as something standard and held in common by a group. Language as *koiné* is language as an always already there accumulation of meanings, practices, and rules of use, something pre-existent that is outside of us but that we nevertheless inhabit and that inhabits us at the same time. In Mallarmé's often-quoted formula, it is the well-worn coin placed silently in my hand—placed there by the historically dynamic, self-renewing community of users into which I gain entrance by virtue of learning and using their language. The generally accepted and agreed-upon meanings of words, along with the proper ways to use them, define the *koiné* as such and are the provisionally stable products of the multiple intentions and actual uses of those members of the language community.

But because language has to be assimilated by individual users, each with his or her own history and experiences, competences and limitations, and exposure to others within the language community, language is, at the level of the individual user, idiolectal. Idiolect is the mode in which language inhabits us. Not all language users within the same community will grasp, say, meaning and grammar in the same way, and the finer-grained the understanding of meaning and grammar for any particular user, the more likely we are to find variations of shading and nuance peculiar to that user alone. This is a matter of *how* words represent rather than *what* they represent: a

matter of the aspects under which they represent their referents to individual language users. (The idea that language exists “within” its individual users as idiolect doesn’t contradict the idea that there are communities of users holding a common language; presumably agreement across idiolects on meaning, usages, rules, and so forth at a relatively coarse-grained level is all that is needed to make effective communication possible in all but a minority of instances, and thus to mark a user as a member of a given language community.)

### Idiolect & Association

Beyond the variations showing up at the semantic or referential level, individuals’ idiolects will include a layer or dimension of meaning encoded as a network of associations that may connect words or other language units, some as small as morphemes or phonemes, with images, colors, sounds, memories, scents, and so forth. A series of correspondences, in other words, reminiscent of the correspondences Rimbaud drew between individual colors and individual vowels. And because idiolects are defined by their variations across individuals, we would expect that individual associative networks will themselves vary, being more fully developed in some than in others; likewise, the quality of these associations—their vividness, salience, strength and ramifications of correspondence and richness of connection—may also be expected to vary across different idiolects as well. Nevertheless, we might expect to find them present within any given idiolect, to whatever degree.

Among these associations are associations forged in the context of desire and on the basis of the meaningfulness it bestows on things, events, situations and others in the world. It is there that desire discloses itself within the idiolect, in the affective weights that words and other language units carry. The traces of a personal history of desire and its projection onto the world become encoded in idiolects through these associations; desire is memorialized when the extra-referential significances attaching to or binding together words and other language units stand as the sedimented remains—the fossil record, as it were—of desires and of the effects, practical, hypothetical, and imaginary, made to fulfill them.

Two caveats are due here. The first is that desire may not be a factor in all of an idiolect’s associations. Extra-referential associations may be attached to language for any of a number of reasons arising from the contingencies of one’s life. But given the importance of desire as the motivating force in human life, it stands to reason that it is at the root of many, and perhaps even a majority, of them. Second, these associations

are not necessarily symbols for or signs of particular desires. Desire may be the prime mover behind them, when it is behind them, but as such it stands far enough upstream on the causal chain that it may not necessarily be identifiable in the associations that carry its traces.

“The Emotional Life of Words” as Incidental to *Koiné*

Whatever their origin in the life and situation of the individual language user, it is here, in these extra-semantic, idiolectal associations that what Breton called “the emotional life of words” can be found. The significances these associations carry give language an affective meaningfulness or emotional charge that overflows its semantic meaning and imports a logic into language that virtually parallels the logic of its everyday use, like an underground stream running beneath an open path. Like human emotional life itself, the emotional life of words is directed by a logic seemingly on the margins of, or hidden beneath, the logic of the rational mind and its discourse. It is this logic that Breton described in terms of “secret affinities”—a logic of affective correspondence rather than rational implication.

The meaningfulness encoded in an idiolect’s network of associations is highly personal and yet only incidental to language when language is considered as a commonly held medium of communication—as *koiné*. And even within an idiolect, the extra-referential affective and other correspondences that attach to words may be something the language user ordinarily is only marginally and dimly aware of—at least in part because of their apparent irrelevance to the everyday practicalities of communication. In fact, this network of associations permeating one’s idiolect is something of a liminal phenomenon in itself—its formation may be by virtue of obscure and possibly indirect processes buried within one’s history, the logic of whose connections may be only vaguely understood, if at all.

(And here I should say that I am agnostic as to whether or not an unconscious or *the* unconscious, whether Freudian, Lacanian or any other, is the mechanism behind the formation of associative networks within idiolects or in the assimilation and transposition of language-as-*koiné* into language-as-idiolect. It does seem that these processes transpire mainly or even entirely at a level beneath the threshold of conscious awareness—the notion of liminality, once again, offers its dark light of illumination—but whether this implies anything beyond a cognitive process of which conscious awareness is unaware is a matter I leave to others to hypothesize.)

## The Logic of Associations & the "Desiring Text"

To the extent that a language object—a poem, a prose work, even an anti-manifesto—is organized on the basis of language's idiolectal associations, to that degree it at least potentially takes on the character of a desiring text. This is so to the extent that the level of meaning at which desire is memorialized in language—the level of idiolectal associations and correspondences, where words show their "secret affinities" with one another—can be made the basis of a text when language is organized according to the logic of associations and correspondences rather than to the logic that drives conventional communication—the logic of the *koiné*.

Organizing the language object according to the anti-logic of associational logic is what Breton seems to have had in mind when he asserted that, "once the reins of common sense are dropped, another kind of sense, a compelling and divinatory one" comes into play. In keeping with his fascination with what he took to be the revelations of the unconscious, whether in automatic writing and drawing or in the coincidences he saw as instances of "objective chance," Breton envisioned this other kind of sense as revelatory of an occult layer of the human psyche that ordinary language use suppressed. We need not follow Breton this far, unless we wish to consider the desiring text, organized on the basis of the affective values words carry within an idiolect, as containing latent meanings to which the verbal surface—the actual juxtapositions of sounds and shapes, the words themselves as they are linked together on the basis of their positions within the web of the writer's associations rather than on the basis of logical or even grammatical rules—provide clues to be deciphered in order to reach a deeper level of psychological disclosure. This is certainly one possibility, but another, perhaps less recondite possibility is that such a text is revelatory not of hypothetical unconscious mechanisms of repression and the fantasies and desires over which they attempt to assert their control, but rather of the larger world within which the writer moves, as he or she grasps his or her human and natural environment as always already charged with a meaning understood through a spontaneous and largely implicit, unarticulated grasp. An understanding that, only occasionally breaking through the threshold of awareness, is in its own way liminal.

Or: we can just let the text stand as it is and allow its words to lead what Merleau-Ponty, in "Indirect Language and the Voices of Silence," termed "the vague life of colors." The desiring text is a poetic text whether by design or in spite of itself; in confronting it, we may simply wish—allowing Breton the final word—to "[give



ourselves] up to these combinations [and] not try to find out where the sphinx...[is leading us].”

#### Epilogue: Idiolect Without *Idios*

As an artifact of collective, and often simultaneous, authorship, the Liminalist (anti) manifesto is an intriguing document. It is composed of discursive fragments juxtaposed against passages contrived according to logics of their own: it is a bricolage of linear exposition and logically opaque linkage, a polymodal text brought to an internally tenuous equilibrium. A state of fragility, as Aprile aptly describes it.

A major source of the text’s fragility, quite apart from the tensions inherent in the heterogeneity of its content, is the provisionality and instability built into the process with which it was composed. If any single hand can alter and overwrite anything written by any previous hand, the result quite naturally will be an alternation of inscription and erasure, of formulation and effacement—a literal give-and-take that results in a text that resembles a body of water roiled by the seemingly random crossings of a series of waves, mutually reinforcing or canceling each other out as the case may be.

To the degree that contributors’ interventions are driven by associative rather than discursive logic, the text presents the strange and paradoxical prospect of containing traces of an idiolect in aggregate—an idiolect originating in multiple sources from multiple hands and voices and, in the guise of an emergent collective, accumulating into a synthetic whole proper to no one hand or voice. We consequently have a hybrid text that represents its own, anonymized idiolect—an idiolect without *ἴδιος*, which is to say an individual language with the individual subtracted out. A language of one’s own, but without the one who owns it. The idea of who is writing, whose voice is speaking through the text, is thus neutralized; the sign of authorship, embodied in the recognizable voice or hand able to stabilize and bind together the words on the page, becomes a perpetual placeholder or variable unable to hold one fixed value.

What’s interesting, in the context of the consideration of desire, is that to the extent that it embodies an ongoing process of inscription and erasure, the (anti) manifesto represents the larger movement of lack->fulfillment->lack. The original lack at the commencement of writing is made good by the contribution of one hand, which is then voided and converted into a new state of lack by its negation through the action of a second hand, which subsequently makes good this new lack by its own contribution—which will be voided by the next hand, and so on, until the text is finished or (and this is

more or less the same thing) abandoned. The text is the site of a project, of multiple projects, in fact; with each contribution the contributor projects him- or herself into the text, takes up the possibilities to be found there and brings about a new, temporary equilibrium that itself will be found to be lacking by the next contributor, who reenacts the process of projection and action and brings about a new, also temporary equilibrium.

Thus the (anti) manifesto renders itself liable to being read as a “desiring text” through its structure, quite apart from the way it might engage the question of desire through its content. The process by which it was created mimics the action pattern associated with desire—the pattern of lack→projection→lack-made-good--and does so in a way that conveys something of the never-ending cyclicity that that pattern takes on in the life of any given individual. Individual desires may be fulfilled—or frustrated—but desire itself never is; the fact of desire is that it is the engine of human action, a dynamic force whose satisfaction is ever only temporary. What Aprile describes as the tumultuousness of the Liminalist text turns out to be the tumultuousness of desire-driven life, in microcosm.

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**Behavior as a Replication of Fictions: A Reading of Streckfus's *Errings***

In the forests of Thailand, the “zombie fungus,” scientifically known as *Ophiocordyceps unilateralis*, infects and controls the behavior of carpenter ants. Once its spores attach to an ant, the fungus manipulates its host, causing it to leave its nest in search of an environment sufficiently humid and temperate enough to nurture its growth. A mere host at this point, the ant latches onto the underside of a tall leaf, and locks down, unable to move. Then, the fungus’s fruiting bodies fracture the ant’s head, sprouting more spores onto the air in search of other hosts. Thus, the cycle of control and replication continues. While most people would argue that the fungus pilots the ant’s body, fewer scholars and scientists are as certain of applying a similar argument to language and ideas – that ideas replicate themselves and contain the elements necessary to nurture their own replication.

However, recent studies prove that cultural ideas are contagious. In the article “Contagion in Mass Killings and Schools Shootings,” Towers et al. demonstrates that media coverage about massacres of four people or more in a school setting temporarily incite similar instances for up to 13 days afterwards (1). Likewise, Gould, Jamieson and Romer argue that mass media coverage of suicides can incite suicide in teens (qtd. in Towers et al 2). Moreover, the spread of YouTube videos, as demonstrated by Mitchell and Cates, can also be partially explained through contagion models (qtd. in Towers et al 3). These ideas act like a virus, spreading among people, affecting their behavior.

Similar to the infectious mold spores and the contiguous nature of cultural ideas, the main argument in Peter Streckfus’s book of poems, *Errings*, is that literary and cultural fictions have the ability to grasp hold of a mind and become real in the reader’s enactment of its ideas. Streckfus is a Brodsky Rome Prize Fellow in Literature and has received grants from the Peter S. Reed Foundation and the Bread Loaf Writer’s conference. More importantly, though, his work is critical to the modern conversation about poetics and consciousness. While Streckfus’s first book, the Yale Younger Award winner, *Cuckoo*, similarly dealt with replication of language, his second book, *Errings*, argues that replication is a critical function of consciousness. Moreover, in *Errings*, three transmissions occur that are comparable to the zombie fungus manipulating the ant. First, a father gives a copy of his pirate novel to his son to finish for him. Second, a set of rules for writing poems in the style of renga are passed down and adapted in later writings. Lastly, these rules of language land in the consciousness of two characters,

affecting their behavior. All of these transmissions establish the act of replication as a crucial factor in the act of thinking.

Like the themes of *Errings*, a person's interactions in any given culture follow these six tenets, which I will demonstrate throughout the essay: 1. The world we inhabit is an enactment of fictions; 2. We are characters in any given fiction, and therefore our actions are restricted by the rules of the fiction and its language; 3. Each person's fiction is comprised of her personal and cultural identity; 4. These fictions only become real through our behavioral enactment of them; 5. Fictions will inherently clash with other, competing fictions; 6. Explanations for personal and cultural fictions cannot be explained by physical models alone because something else is at work, i.e. "memes." These six tenets shape modern consciousness.

Going forward, the fictions people enact through behavior are referred to by these terms: "fiction," both literary and social fictions. The outdated idea that the earth was flat, for example, was a fiction, as is the currently held belief that race is a genetic reality. Other terms employed for fictions are "ideas" and "concepts," since fictions are built of these, and also "texts," since all literary and some social fictions are formed in texts and likewise replicated by them. Lastly, they are referred to as "memes," a term coined by Richard Dawkins, in his book *The Selfish Gene*. "Meme" acts as a label for the smallest unit of an idea that can be successfully replicated, or as Pascal Boyer defines the term: "Units of culture: notions, values, stories, etc. that get people to speak or act in certain ways that make other people store a replicated version of these mental units" (Boyer 35). Critical to this definition is the notion that people "store" these "mental units." Memes have to be passed on, otherwise they die out, just as genes do. Finally, the term "the reader" is used in both its common form, but also to represent a person interpreting and enacting cultural fictions.

In this way, *Errings* argues for a reality built of fictions. Its people enact the ideas of the fiction, even as they are aware of the ambiguity between the real and the mirage. This idea is set up in the poem "Transmigration." In this poem, the characters are conscious of the fictions they inhabit. While the speaker and his lover are bird watching, a view of the shorebird digging into the mud seems "a film/ a silent television" and all the noises around them—noises of the breathing and of the waters—are a "displaced, incongruous soundtrack" (68). The words "displaced" and "incongruous" highlight the turbulence between reality and fiction, and emphasize that the experiences of the speaker and lover may be more of a living-out of an idea rather than any experience we might call physically real. For instance, there is no need to note that the sounds of

water, the characters' voices, and their breaths are "displaced" beside the bird. They are, in fact, sounds expected in this aquatic scene. What is actually incongruous is the speaker's interpretation of the event and the notion that any real sense can be made of an experience outside of a fictional reading of that experience. Through our interpretations, we are laying the soundtracks.

The speaker notes the ambiguity of sensory experience through his investigation of the lover's note. He says, "'How real a proximity that cannot be/ accompanied by touch, how real the mud/ 'at a distance'?' you wrote,/ having lost sight of it, as it flew/ out over the lake of your own illusion"(69). The speaker, through the lover's note, questions whether our experience of the world is accurate or whether it's partially created in the mind, a sort of chimera. The speaker investigates this illusion further as he addresses his lover again: "Love, some of our movements could be explained/ by natural laws, but some cannot be" (70). The speaker is telling his lover to locate experience in not only immediate sensory phenomenon, such as touching the mud, but also in memes and cultural fictions.

To understand language and human behavior in this way suggests a non-traditional theory of consciousness. Accordingly, "Transmigration," in the "movements" section quoted above, represents this theory by aligning this section of the poem to the right, rather than to the left of the margin. As a result, the poem has shifted our traditional ordering. If one attempts the difficult tasks of arguing such nonconventional ideas, that person must start in the most common place: the text.

### ***Text as Water: Our Encounters Inside a Fiction***

Every fiction must have a text. In *Errings*, the text is initially symbolized as water in which the readers, as fish, swim. Not only does this symbolism place the reader within a fiction, it also gives the abstract concept of that fiction a physical presence. The first example of this symbolism is in the poem "Videos of Fish." It starts by referencing Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying* with a quote of its most absurd line: "My mother is a fish." The poem moves on to say, "All things, at their base, are water,/ Thales, the first Western philosopher, tells me." Finally, the speaker references his own father, saying, "In life, my author, you chose birds to speak to" (4). The reader knows this is the father because he whistles at these birds while sitting in the same wheelchair he will sit in later in the book. Through the first seven lines of this poem the speaker provides the initial cues needed to understand that the reader is a character within a fiction. First, he sets up the text as water, which is a symbol that will be needed to understand, later, how our

consciousness dips in and out of a fiction. He also references literary fictions through Faulkner. Second, there is an overlapping and imitation of voices, as the "all things" line is first read as the poet's words before we realize he is replicating another person's ideas. Lastly, the father, the birthplace of ourselves, the storer of the information that realizes us, emerges. After noting these elements, the poem immediately goes on to say, "I make now this poem, luminous,/ hollow channels, to give you a place to occupy—/ I give you water now"(4). From these three elements (fictions, layering and replication of ideas, and the possibility of a father/author), the poet creates a fiction that the reader can inhabit both figuratively and literally. As a result, a person's "occupation," i.e. existence in consciousness, depends on a fiction, a replication of ideas, and a father/author from whom those ideas can be passed on.

With the text now symbolized by water, the reader can begin to understand the text's role in a cultural fiction. The section "*Body of Fish*," which comes from the larger poem, "Videos of Fish," starts, "Come to the surface of the screen with your light/ and oxygen holes and press them for moments/ against the page" (11). The screen is both the surface of water and the fiction we inhabit. It is the boundary between the text and our lives, a boundary described later in *Errings* as a "bardo". The poet commands the readers to turn our bodies into a "C" shape, bending first one way, then the other, so that they flop and curve like a fish. Through this movement, the reader bends on and "off the screen" (11). This movement symbolizes the reader fluctuating in and out of the fiction. The C-shape of this movement itself is also important. "C" is, of course, the first letter in both civilization and consciousness, which the poet emphasizes later in this poem.

Many readers, not just one, fluctuate a fiction. The poem continues to direct us: "this movement follow with movement of more bodies,/ simultaneous, unconscious, aggregate—"(11). As several bodies begin to "oscillate" between fiction and reality, between this blurred line of the illusion and of the actual, the readers' movements become a "shoal and plural movement of consciousness" (12). Thus, the collective process of each person entering and enacting fictions through behavior is the substance of consciousness. The reader focuses in on the words she is reading, letting the marks hold her focus, until she starts thinking about what she had for breakfast, and before she knows it, she has read an entire page while simultaneously thinking of other things. Similarly, she looks up from the book and thinks about a person making noises in another room, or a bird rattling at the window, before delving back into the book's world. This is one way that the reader oscillates a fiction.

There is another way, though. The reader also changes from one belief to another in her daily life. She enacts the fictions of group culture, playing a character in the group dynamic, before she is alone and acts out a different fiction, or until she is with another group and mimics their performance. In turn, she is "Setting and set by the turbid water in motion," as she both dictates the directions of her collective fictions and is dictated and restricted by them. The idea that both a shifting personal and shifting group consciousness sets out humanity's path is a "new law of movement," different from the physical laws spoken of earlier (12). And, as the reader changes her behavior of these fictions, or as she enacts these fictions against the phenomenon of the physical world, a transitional state is created: a bardo.

### ***Bardo: The Transitional State***

For Streckfus, the bardo exists as the boundary between fiction and the physical world. Although this transitional state becomes enacted in and consequential to the physical world, the bardo is governed, at least partially, by a fictional order or a set of fictional rules, such as cultural codes, language rules, and the limits set by a person's social and personal upbringing. Streckfus calls this state by many names: the transitional state, *nini funi*, bardo (6, 8-9). He says "a bardo is a gap between states" (8). It exists between "the death of one state of mind" and "the birth of another" (9). In "Body of Dreams" bardo is represented by the father who emerges in the speaker's dreams as a vampire that was "neither alive nor dead, both and neither." In such a border state, the father is described like this: "Unable to pass, he craved and feared his lasting" (8). He is the dead father of the speaker's world, the father who authored the speaker and who authored the work the speaker adapts into a section of *Errings*. Both real and symbolic, the father's ability to remain (since he is dead) becomes possible through the adaptation of his work and the replication of his genes.

Additionally, the father symbolizes memes. Memes, like genes, are replicated from prior versions of themselves. Where one version of a story dies, another takes it up, replicates it, and becomes an imitation of it. If it is not replicated, it passes on into nothingness. Therefore, the space between instances of replication, imitation, and mutation is a bardo. The bardo is also present in the space between our enactment of fictions and their interactions with other people's enactments of different fictions. The reader is, always, somewhere in this grey area, flickering in and out in the same way that, while reading, her consciousness passes from the book, to the window, to what she had for lunch last Sunday, and then finally back to the book.

Normand Holland's "Transactive Theory of Reading" refers to this as a "feedback loop." By his theory, the experience of reading a poem is captured in the following: First, when approaching a cultural or literary fiction, the reader sends out a hypothesis, such as "What does this poem mean?" or "What is going on in this personal situation?" This hypothesis, and the way the reader searches out answers and asks the questions, are shaped by her cultural and personal upbringing. Second, the answers to this searching are not purely objective. They are not simply received "facts" from the actual world or the text; the answers depend on and are shaped by the reader's way of viewing the world. The reader receives stimuli and reads a text in a way allowed by her personal identity. Third, the reader tests the stimuli against her identity. Holland says it this way: "Identity frames the hypothesis, identity hears the return, and identity *feels* the discrepancy between the return and one's inner standards" (441). This discrepancy is a bardo. The reader's perception of another person, and how he or she is acting in a given fiction, is also subject to this feedback loop. As another person acts out a fiction within the framework of his or her own personal identity, the reader perceives those actions within the framework of her own personal identity.

Regarding this framework, Streckfus symbolizes the reader's place in the bardo as fish in a tank. Describing what it is like to be suspended in bardo, he says "the ghost state, the purgatorial state, the dream state/—fish circulating their tanks" (9). Remember, also, that the water in which a reader swims is a text. In the section "*Body of Moving and Light*," a severed cod head "occup[ies] the transitional state/ between tank life and the next," and each of these fish tanks, holding different types of fish, are "large enough to hold a full grown person inside" (6-7). This reference to humans further supports the idea that the fish is a symbol of our enactment in bardo, a state of fiction. The cod is also "disembodied," which illustrates the difference between the body and the mind and between fiction and the outer world it is tested against. Moreover, the bardo is a state of the mind because, though it is enacted in the real world, it is grounded in ideas and, thus, exists in abstraction.

Further illustrating that this scene occurs in a fiction, the tanks exist in a "video fiction" (10). The video the speaker sees of the fish is from a camera strapped to someone's backpack, a camera that shakes (6). This additional layer reinforces that we exist in a reality textured with the illusion of competing fictions and the bardo between them.

### ***Paternal Replication and the Storing of Memes***



While the reader lives in the organic world, fictions only partially reside there. Science may eventually prove an organic account of memes, and neuroscientists are certainly trying to do so, but currently there is no verifiable basis for its physical existence and replication in the brain. Some philosophers, such as Thomas Nagel, believe the sciences will never objectively explain the mind's existence (7); others, such as Daniel Dennett, believe that they will (71). So, while scientists are currently unable to identify a place in the brain and say *that, there* is where the poems of *Errings* reside, there are other places where the organic existence of fictions can nonetheless be identified.

In *Errings* that place is the manuscript. The book borrows, adapts, and "takes" (Streckfus's word in the "Notes" of page 77) language from four books. Furthermore, it is inspired by two others. *Errings* is primarily adapted from *Two Golden Earrings*, an unpublished novel by the poet's father, Robert Streckfus. Even without the note in the back of the book that says as much, it would be obvious that some of the poems are replications of the father's work. In the poem "Patrimony" (the title helps quite a bit), the speaker says, "When I declared myself a poet, you handed me the pages of your book to finish and make public" (13). This adaptation and mutation—from father's voice to son's voice—emerges in the next poem, "Erring". Some of the pages of this poem are normal pages, comprised of typeface on paper. Others are scanned images of pages from the father's original novel, including whiteouts and notes scrawled on the manuscript. All of the pages from this poem, though, are both Peter's and Robert's merged voice.

The organization of the normal and scanned pages directs the reader to read at least some of the lines of the normal pages as adaptations of the scanned pages. On page 16 of *Errings*, the reader gets one such scanned page. The last sentence that has not been whited-out reads, "I will dictate your prayers." This same phrase is the only sentence on the next, normal page, which is a hint that the voice of the poem is a merger of the father's and son's language. Consequently, "Erring" exists as a replication and mutation of the father's novel. It is a physical enactment of how ideas are carried forward and recreated in new forms, among new generations in the same way that the genetic information of a father passes on and becomes recreated in a son.

"Erring" also alludes to genetic replication with the idea that prior material passes forward through replication. A line on page 26 suggests several places the reader finds the old in the new. Here, the speaker asks and answers his own question: "Where is my Father?// He is there close to the lips with the forefinger and thumb.// Which means to speak" (26). The reader finds the father in the language that comes from the son's

mouth—not only the father’s prior novel in the son’s new work, but also the father’s upbringing of him in the language that the speaker uses. Likewise, we can find the father’s genetic material in his son’s lips, fingers, and tongue. The language of every speaker has multiple fathers, though, as we use our “Father Tongue” to formulate words into a coherent, grammatically correct pattern. Because of these influences the past exists and is reborn through its application in the present. This is symbolized by the placement of a scanned page of the father’s novel, now “spoken” on the page by his son, directly after the lines quoted above.

Other lines from the poem, “Patrimony,” also acknowledge that our language and fictions are an interplay of different sources: “Two bodies, two signs, for one voice” (14). The next line of the poem goes on, “Plato argues such a voice, because it exists as two, unchanging, is a dead voice” (14). Though Plato was talking about the dead voice of Socrates, the poet is being ironic. A voice could, theoretically, get copied over and over exactly as it is, with no errors or adaptations, and still exist, i.e. not be “dead”. We could print *Apology* until the end of time and each new copy would still have the same organic marks on its pages. Fictions, though, cannot live without adaptation. They must change and be recreated because the nature of fictions and language is to be interpreted through the reader’s personal identity. Thus, each interpretation is an adaptation, a merger of intention and understanding. Moreover, the new interpretation exists as one voice: both what is carried over from the previous idea and what is adapted and restricted by the new voice. This one voice, however, is the fluctuation between the two voices: both what’s being replicated and that which is doing the replication. As the meme is viewed through our personal identity, it adapts to that identity and thus lives on. “Erring” represents this fluctuation as it is an adaptation of an earlier work of fiction.

Wolfgang Iser makes a similar argument. He says that “literary texts take on their reality by being read and this in turn means that texts must already contain certain conditions of actualization that will allow their meaning to be assembled in the responsive mind of the recipient” (Iser 145). Iser acknowledges that a text cannot be reduced to the conventions and interpretations that the reader brings to it, nor can it be reduced to the text’s “objective” meaning. Conversely, the text is an interplay of these two areas and is merely assembled in the mind of a reader. It is important to note, though, that Iser uses the phrase “in the mind” rather than “by the mind.” This gives the text agency in its own actualization and interpretation as the mind becomes as much a receptacle for ideas as it does a creator of them. Thus, the gaps between a text’s objective meaning and the reader’s subjective interpretation are a *bardo*.

Moreover, fictions embody certain characteristics to nurture their own replication. In the way that certain organisms exhibit survival advantages that help the species live on, so too can fictions contain such traits. Religion, for example, quite clearly dictates the behavior of its participants, but the cultural transmission of religion is more complex than was originally thought. Religious practices that are common now, and that have lasted thousands of years, successfully replicated because they activate a variety of “mental systems,” such as “emotional programs,” our ability for “recall and communication,” and the parts of our minds that are social (Boyer 50). Since these religious practices align with common human traits, they are enacted more often; thus, they survive. Religious memes are also successful if they can instill in followers certain behaviors that support the meme’s replication. For instance, the Ten Commandments’ order to honor *only* god (the center of this particular religious meme) fosters replication as its members focus their behavior on spreading only that idea. This commandment also restricts the reader from spreading other memes (i.e. other gods), which cuts down on the competition this particular religious meme has for the minds of its followers (Lynch 102). These two examples showcase an idea’s ability to nurture its own replication.

### ***Behavior: Learning and Replication***

Like everything else, fictions would die out if they were not replicated in the physical world. Even though they exist in abstraction, fictions have concrete consequences; they take their form as a concept but are actualized by behaviors. One such behavior is learning. In “Erring,” Streckfus argues that the layering and adaptation of ideas creates understanding. He says, “This is how we learn.// Everything appears as light and images.// Rainbow bodies and bodies of darkness and water” (22). The page of a fiction is where the reader learns and enacts that behavior. She makes sense of her world by behavioral imitation of language, texts, and ideas. She exists by being made of prior ideas and of prior genetic material. In the lines quoted above, bodies of darkness and water are the text within which the reader is the images; she is the fish bending in and out of the screen, making the C shape of consciousness and civilization. The light and images are also the “video fiction” of her sensory (mis)interpretations. The light and images are the bird digging in the bank a few feet away, not touchable because the bird might, after all, be partially a projection of earlier birds the reader has seen. As a result, this is how the reader learns: by enacting, on both the collective and individual consciousness, a text, which may or may not be an illusion. Consequentially, the text, by being repeated in the reader’s understanding of it, continues to exist.

As stated previously, fictions are replications and adaptations of earlier fictions, as are the sentences and ideas of which they are comprised. This idea is represented in "Erring" in several places, the clearest of which states, "I held myself, firstborn vulture from heaven.// A few seconds later I heard a voice in my ear// I felt my language torn from my mouth, writhing on the deck like an eel out of water" (30). The father never makes references to language in his novel, so the poet is most likely the speaker in this instance. He acknowledges that the language he uses to create poems comes partly from another source. Rather than being in control of every sentence and syllable, the speaker acts as a conduit for ideas. Like the notion of poets and their muses, the poet "hears" a voice in his head, and upon hearing this voice, the poems come out. These lines emphasize the physicality of language (an eel) to reinforce that fictions are enacted in the physical world and are passed on from one carrier to another. Fictions do not just exist in minds; they are the slimy, squirming things seen every day.

The poem references this idea in a subsequent passage as well. It reads, "My head will never be the light airy member its parents meant,/ made and presented to me in gratitude" (35). Here, the speaker's head (mind) is handed to him by *its* parents—not his parents, *its*. The omission of the pronoun "my" reinforces the argument that the fictions and sentences of the speaker's mind are not his own. Every fiction has its own set of creators, which are separate from the speaker's genetic line. The "it" could also be understood as the book of poems, whose parents are countless and who date back to the origins of human culture and language, as does the parents of all language.

While the beliefs that make up the mind and the book are gifted to the speaker through learning and memetic replication, the copy is not always completely accurate; it is adapted. The copy is not what the earlier versions intended, but an interpretation of what they meant. It is a fish, flickering in and out of the borderlines of reality and illusion, the physical and the abstract. It is a squirming eel, ripped from our mouths and constantly wriggling its signification out in the open.

Right after the eel reference, the next page argues that a person carries forward the ideas and language of those that came before. In its entirety, the page reads, "You shall be my page—" (31). This line has several meanings. First, since the poet has taken his father's novel and reworked it into the long poem, the fiction that is produced from this joint effort is the page the father never published himself. This idea is extended on page 32, where, after the poem lists details from the novel's pirate adventure, such as a musket, a cutlass, bartering, a merchant and mountain people, the father asks his son to bring these into his own work. Second, the son is physically the father's page. He is

the flesh, blood, and bone page where the father's DNA gets written out as a genetic text. Third, the reader is the page. As the reader scans these black markings, they are encoded in her brain, replicated and adapted in her mind to create understanding and images. The fiction copies itself through pathways in the brain that create new neural connections. A text is a dead voice if it is only physically replicated on paper, but it is a living one if the reader reprints its language on her brain and replicates it in her behavior and learning.

"Erring" is not the only poem that presents a layering and replication of voices. The poems "New Rules for the Oan Era (1372)," "Suggestions for a New Day (1452)," and "Additional New Rules, Suggestions for a New Day, & Cetera (1502)" do this as well. According to the notes, these poems are adapted from *Shohaku's Renga Rule Book of 1501*. Written by several authors over many years, the book acts as a guide for writing rengas, which are a collaborative form of Japanese poetry where each stanza is thematically linked to the one preceding it. In the *Rule Book*, and in the poems adapted from it in *Errings*, the text lists what types of language and connections are permissible and forbidden when attempting such poems. For example, the first poem, "New Rules..." reads, "If one has linked *kogaru*, 'to burn,' to the word 'incense,' then one should not introduce 'crimson leaves' in a subsequent third verse, but use a word such as 'boat.' This is because boat makes for a change in the meaning of *kogaru*" (42). Thus, this rule restricts the ways poets may link different verses. In this case, the rule forbids linking words of the same category, such as "fire," "lit," and "fire-colored leaf," in three consecutive verses.

Each of the renga-rules poems also builds on the poem that came before them. The entirety of "New Rules" is written out and incorporated into "Suggestions." Similarly, the entirety of each of these poems is replicated and incorporated into "Additional New Rules." Every new poem, then, becomes both a physical replication of the previous text and an adaptation of it as new rules are added. These poems physically demonstrate the layering and building of a collective consciousness that is dependent on the consciousness that came before it. "Additional Rules" is spawned from its parent, "Suggestions," which is spawned from its parent, "New Rules." This mirrors how cultures build on and are adaptations of those that came before them.

Like "Erring," these poems highlight both a mental and a genetic spawning. Each set of renga rules are attributed to a different writer. These writers are, in the same order as the poems are given, Nijo Yoshimoto, Ichijo Kanera, and Shohaku. Ichijo, as Streckfus's inscription says, is the grandson of Yoshimoto, so a genetic replication occurs as well

as a mimetic one. This authorship does not just extend to the three poets, though. The work is also replicated and adapted by Streckfus, further layering the work, and giving its meaning a new way to be interpreted: within the context of *Errings*.

Just as fictions are restrictive and are adapted from other fictions, fictions also have power over our lives because ideas affect our behavior. This notion is represented in the poem "Una Narrazione." Meaning "a narrative" in Italian, this poem enacts the renga rules of the three previous poems. The rules, however, do not just restrict how the poet may write the poem; the rules also restrict the characters in the poem themselves. Setting a scene with two characters, the first line of this poem reads "A man and a woman came into a car with money". Additionally, the speaker says of one of the characters, "Standing in the other's shadow, one pines for the other." The following examples of dialogue between the characters then reflect how the renga rules constrain even the characters: "'get into the car' and 'goodbye old paint' brushed on a pillar". These lines are to be read as dialogue between the two people because the words are both in quotation marks and also things the two characters would say to one another, given the situation, and given that the poem tells us the characters are in "an animated discussion" (44).

Regarding the character's statements, the speaker says they are following the fiction's rules too closely. After the poem uses the words "shadow," "pined," "paint," "brushed," and "pillar," the speaker says, "The trees of the grove turned bone white.// One need not hesitate to use 'black pine' near the word 'tree.'/ One needn't hesitate to paint 'pine' at the edge of the words/ 'pillar of black'." The characters, in a mistaken enforcement of the rules, used language, such as "paint," and spoke it in a way that they thought was allowed by the rules. They refused to say, "door of black pine" or "pillar of black pine" but instead say, "goodbye old paint," since it is physically near the word "pined" in the lines above, which they thought would break the rules. The poet, though, tells them that this is too strict a reading of the rules and that they "need not hesitate" to use those words. Regardless of whether they use the rules properly, the rules still affect their behavior.

Right after the elaboration of the rules quoted above, the poem gives another example of language rules shaping the characters' behavior. It says, "Standing in the other's shadow, one pined for the other". This "pining" by one of the characters is allowed, even though it is next to the word "shadow," because pining here is an emotion, and not a tree. It is not a black pine tree near a black shadow, but a negative emotion near a shadow. Thus, they are allowed to enact this behavior.

The last line of the poem also comments on how the characters' behaviors are controlled by language rules. After a reference to more renga rules, the poet says, "The water and plastic of their things, standing in their shadows." The phrase "standing in their shadows" highlights how we are forever guided and restricted by ideas and language, our behaviors either allowed or forbidden by the context of the fiction. In this way, we are forever in the shadow of culture. For instance, the fiction of race tells us that someone born of both "black" and "white" parents is a "black" person. This is "allowed." The child is not "white," however, as this is not "allowed" by the fiction. Both ideas are wrong, as the concept of race has no valid basis in genetics. The concept of race does have a basis in behavior and societal impact, though, as the fiction and its rules affect how society treats the child. Even though race is not genetically real, society still treats him or her as "black," making the concept of race real in its consequences.

Besides the characters, the poet also follows the language rules. One line reads, "The words 'pillar of black' should/ be parted from the 'tree' by at least five lines—." The poet literally follows this rule by placing the word "tree" in line seven, five lines after "standing", "shadow" and "pine." The poet, though, follows the rules too strictly as the combination of "standing," "shadow" and the emotion of "pine" are being interpreted as too close to "pillar of black pine" (tree). He sees the standing as a pillar, the shadow as black, and the emotional pine as the pine tree, and in mistaking these meanings, the poet waits five more lines to use the word "tree". The influence of the rules on the poet and the poem shows that fictions restrict the behavior of the poet as he alters his poem. They also demonstrate how words are "plastic" as the interpretations of their meanings and the use of their meanings are constantly changing. As a result, this poem, titled "A Story," shows how the rules of collective fictions restrict society and how the behavior within that society are both limited by and replications of them.

### ***How the Reader Enters the Story: The Reader as a Character***

At this point, one might wonder whether it matters that characters in a written work follow the rules set up by that work. Similarly, one might wonder whether *Errings* is just about a literary fiction that has nothing to do with our actual lives. The book does apply to our lives, however, because Streckfus morphs the reader into simultaneously the reader, author, and character of the poem. This morphing suggests that the reader should interpret the work as a representation of humanity. In the poem "Erring" it becomes apparent that the reader is a person within the poem. As the characters of

this story ride through the landscape, the poet says, "One of them dismounted.// And helped the viewer onto his horse.// Then mounting in front of you they galloped.// Toward the open book, the open shore, the open horse" (38). Since the reader must connect "the viewer" with "mounting in front of you" (the other characters being viewed this way), she must come to the conclusion that she is that character guided onto the animal. Thus, the reader trots along in the book, a member who must adhere to the guidelines of the story.

As the limitations, rules and ambiguity of language affect the behavior of the characters of "Una Narrazione," so too do the rules and context of fictions affect our own behaviors. It has already been demonstrated how the reader is a character in the fiction of race. Henry Louis Gates Jr., a professor at Harvard, understands this meta-reality well. After he was arrested by a white police officer for breaking into his own home, a media storm followed. When Gates, at the behest of President Obama, shared a beer with the arresting officer at the White House, he felt cast as "the angry black man," and then as the "conciliatory suck up." He gave the policeman a signed copy of his memoir. Inside, it read, "To officer James Crowley, two characters in a drama we did not write" (Miller). Accordingly, Gates felt as if he and the officer were molded into characters that fit a national narrative about race relations.

Not only is the reader a character of fictions, but she is their author as well. Streckfus highlights this in another long poem, "A Bridge, the Pilgrims." In the poem, the characters, Reader, Storyteller, Idiot, and The Witness, travel the countryside, working as census employees, looking for people to mark as present. The poem begins by addressing its reader as "young author," and then says, "As you hold/ your pencil, as you transcribe your *cat*, a *cup*,// the *car*, a *carp*, the *cap*, testing in lead/ the margin of civilization—the letters cee, jot, vee, ell, zed, a, tee, o,/ and en" (46). These letters (c-i-v-l-z-a-t-o-n), roughly spell and sound out the word civilization. As a quick scan of *Wikipedia* tells me, the word "jot," also known as "iot" comes from the word "iota," which, in the Greek alphabet, sounds like the letter "i". This adaptation emphasizes that the reader is holding the pencil, jotting down the fictions that make up civilization. They are being created in her mind as she reads.

Similarly, Normand Holland elaborated on the different texts created by the various interpretations of different readers. In "The Miller's Wife and The Professors" he tells this anecdote: One morning, he shared Edward Arlington Robinson's poem "The Miller's Wife" with a group of professors from the same English department. He also gave them a series of questions to answer about the poem, some more objective than others. One



of the questions asked what the miller's wife looked like. The professor's answers varied from people they had actually met ("My grandmother;" "My aunt Betty."), to a literary figure ("The Wife in 'Death of a Salesman';" "Woman in the Death of a Hired Man."), to less concrete descriptions ("She reminds me of someone who someone wants taking a less active role."). In Holland's view, these differences arise because each individual brings a personal hypothesis and bias (built from each person's cultural and personal upbringing) and tests out the poem based on this bias. Even among professionals trained in reading literature, the answers were different enough that we must ask, "Are there as many versions of a poem as there are readers of that poem?" This is true of cultural fictions as well, as navigating the boundaries of society is nothing less than navigating the constantly changing representations of cultural norms and values. Furthermore, navigating the boundaries of society is dependent on navigating the various and different interpretations each member of society finds in any given cultural fiction. One reader sees a situation one way, another sees it differently, and somehow they manage to make it work (not always) despite these gaps. What's important, though, is that we each author our own fictions.

Additionally, the fact that Streckfus chose to use the word "jot," instead of "iota" (which more closely aligns to the sound of "i" in "civilization"), emphasizes adaptation as a norm of cultural replication. "Iota" is adapted to "jot" since it fits with the theme of writing. Just as genes mutate and spawn adaptations of species, which are essential to most species survival, ideas, too, mutate during replication. There are several instances of this in the book. The entire poem "Erring," for instance, is a mutation of the father's pirate novel. The reader's interpretation of that poem, also, is a mutation, as she pictures the situations and meanings of its language differently than the next critic. These replications keep the fictions from remaining stagnant; they keep them from becoming a dead voice.

Further lines in "A Bridge, the Pilgrims" elaborate on the idea that the reader, as a character of a fiction, creates the fictions she inhabits since she is "writing" it. On the same page as the "jot" reference, the poet says, "The Reader, Storyteller, Idiot/ and The Witness held their vessels of light/ as they wrote themselves into the tent camp." These lines show that beyond the texts of literary fictions, the reader is also simultaneously the author and character of civilization. Similarly, the phrase "vessels of light" resembles the poet's description of the mind as a "light airy member." As mentioned above, the mind acts as a vessel for its parent's ideas. The characters of this poem, though they write themselves through civilization, bring with them the prior, replicated ideas of which their behaviors are an adaptation. Even though the reader

creates the elements of a fiction in her mind, she is still restricted by the rules, practices, and traditions before her—the letters on the page, the rules of grammar, the symbols created by previous writers, the memes that are commonly replicated, etc. This is true, also, of the fictions of our lives. By enacting ideas, we become both the characters and authors of them because idea cannot be real unless they are produced through behavior. The idea of money, for instance, is only real because the reader goes to the grocery store and uses it to buy a can of pie filling, rather than walk into the mountains to pick the wild huckleberries growing there. In this way, the reader becomes the author of the fictions of civilization, even though she is still restricted by their rules.

“A Bridge, the Pilgrims” furthers the argument that we encounter fictions in our enactments of them. As the characters of this poem search for civilization, Reader (the character in this poem) finds a “globule of light,” an image indicative of the lit screen of consciousness presented earlier in the book. The poem continues, “The cave, you see, was actually located behind/ a huge water fall// quoted Idiot, from his favorite book” (49). Idiot’s observation represents both an enactment and replication of an idea, as his behavior is dictated by a fiction. He is quoting from both the book he is holding and also the “book” of his life where the waterfall is physically present. This blurring of the lines between a textual fiction and a cultural fiction is furthered by the image of water, which has been set up earlier in the book as a text. In these two instances the characters are searching into the text for the light of consciousness. That consciousness, Idiot claims, is a cave, which is itself a meme, as any cave in Western Literature has to carry with it Plato’s “Myth of the Cave,” given that Plato is mentioned earlier in the book and because his separation of the world of illusion and the world of actuality is a theme present in Streckfus’s manuscript. The characters searching for a light in the cave behind the waterfall symbolizes the characters searching for consciousness in the illusion of the text. They are searching for a way to grasp civilization through the bardo created by our acting out of fictions.

### ***The “EM” and “E” of Being Born into a Fiction***

As a character of her own fiction, the reader’s life is both dictated and restricted by that fiction. Similar to the characters in “Una Narrazione,” the characters of “A Bridge, the Pilgrims” are restricted by language rules. As the characters investigate under the bridge to see if anyone resides there to “count” for the census, the reader receives a note directed at the “young author.” This note explains some of the renga rules that must be followed. After listing different nouns that would categorize a verse as “lamentation,” the speaker directs the reader to group these words apart from each

other by a considerable distance. After listing off the rules, the speaker says, "And thus: white-haired, retired, and half asleep,.....their subject sat up on his/ concrete bed and allowed them to count him" (54). Since the rules of the renga are followed by the phrase "And thus," it implies that the rules allowed and created the situation for the man to exist. As a result, the fiction of this man is created and governed by the rules of his personal fiction. In this case, those rules pertain to being a homeless man living under a bridge. He is both a "Grieved Soul" and an "Abandoned Soul" due to his sorry state and due to the fact that civilization, which "at dawn above is hushed to thrums and clicks," has left him behind (52, 54). The details and the behavior of the man are affected by the rules that come before him. Furthermore, living by and through these rules allow him to exist within the fiction, which allow him to be tallied as present. The argument here is that existence in a societal fiction depends on one's behavior being governed by that fiction.

Thus, the homeless man partly represents the reader, as each reader inhabits and is edited by her own fiction. Civilization, all the while, thrums along. On page 56, the speaker says, "And so they found you, young author, behind them," and, after directing the reader to make a drawing, continues, "Then the hermit wiped his eyes and returned to sleep/ Draw here the letter em, the letter e." The drawing of these letters (m, e) clearly indicates that the reader is the homeless man, pulled and pushed and existing in fictions. In addition, this image also renews the idea that the reader acts as the author of that fiction. She draws herself into the ideas by exhibiting behavior that is a replication of that idea.

As indicated above, this includes both cultural and literary fictions. "A Bridge, Election" merges both the story and the actual world. In this section of the poem, its characters travel to Arlington, Virginia, moving "deep under the bridge of George Washington Hwy at the corner of Kilgallen" (55). This is a real place, in modern day Virginia. However, the characters bring with them items normally found in fantasy, such as "a rope of horse hair, a yarn of human hair, and a dog hair hat". This scene represents the bardo of our existence—the constant clash between the physical and the conceptual. The physical, represented by the real town of Arlington, is merged with the fictional, represented by the fantastical times that the characters bring. However, the characters fail to register the overlapping of the fictional and physical. This is unsurprising, as people generally do not perceive their own lives as fictional. Real people and fictional characters are invested in their own myths and take the myth as a given part of existence.

For example, E.E. Evans-Pritchards provides an anthropological account of this in his study of the behavior and beliefs of the Zandu people. In the Zandu village where Evans-Pritchard conducted his research, the roof of a mud house fell in with people underneath it. Those in the village said witchcraft was to blame for the collapse despite Evans-Pritchard's explanation that termites were likely the cause. The villagers refused to accept this explanation, beholden to the belief that if termites had something to do with the structural failure, the people underneath the roof must have had strong adversaries who made the roof collapse at that specific time (qtd. in Boyer 12-13). The Zandu people were unable to see outside of their cultural fiction for the cause of this calamity, just as people in western civilization are often unable to see outside the perspective of their own cultural fictions.

In addition to drawing the "m" and "e" of the self in "A Bridge, Election," another poem, "Earth and Water," asks the reader to draw. After the poem directs the reader to draw out its characters, the poem says, "Be born by three right there" (65). At this moment, the reader births into the fiction, but one must ask, "What is three a reference too?" In *Errings*, we have three poems comprised of renga rules, each incorporating the one before it. We also have three scanned pages of the author's father's novel. As in all literary works, we have an author, a reader, and a text. Also, the book lays out three fundamental elements of interactions in society: fictive rules, a physical world, and the reader's behavioral enactment of those fictive rules within a physical world. Additionally, towards the end of the book, in "Transmigration," a poem where the speaker and his lover go bird watching, the poem reads, "The three stooges, the father the son the holy book" (73).

Part of what the reader is born into, then, is language rules—the rules of a fiction. Also, the reader is born into three lenses that influence our perception: the lens of the interaction of her father (what came before her, both genetically and memetically), the lens of herself (her interpretation and realization of those lines) and the lens of civilization (the phenomenon we must test these interpretations against). The reader carries forward her parents' prior material and exposes that material to the outer world. This replication and exosability happens genetically, of course, as our parents give us our genes and those genes become cells which deteriorate via the 2<sup>nd</sup> law of thermodynamics. But this also happens memetically as the reader replicates and enacts the fictions of her mothers and fathers, the ideas that spawn further ideas, like the building up of rules in the renga book, or the poem "Erring" mutating from the father's pirate novel. Even Hamlet was a retelling of an earlier story (Jenkins 82-5). The reader enacts these fictions into civilization, which is a "primordial soup" of different fictions

pushing and pulling and colliding with one another, sometimes to disastrous effects, such as racially-motivated lynchings, or the murdering of abortion doctors by right-to-life extremists. Like the characters of *Errings*, each reader writes herself into the fictions, but not boundlessly, as the fictions have both cultural and genetic limitations.

Because multiple fictions clash and because readers enact roles as both author and character, the reader is more than one self. The poem "The Lake and the Skiff" deals with the difficulties of maintaining and enacting only a single fiction. In the poem, the reader is immediately placed inside the text when one of the voices asks, "Tell me again about the lake of the poem." In this instance the poem has an author, a speaker, a reader, and a subject. Which of these, though, is the reader's voice? She is certainly a character in the poem as the speaker, referring to the skiff, says that in this boat "you were curled, like an infant in its bed" (66). This places the reader directly in the scene.

The reader is also outside of the poem, its audience, as the story of the lake is told to her at her bedside by a "we". This "we," the teller of the tale, shapes the story and its realities through discourse. They enact the story by telling it: "The regularity of our speech prevented the breeze being so discursive" (66). This roots and shapes the elements of the fiction in the rules of language.

More than a character and an audience, though, the reader is also the tale's author, as some of the lines could only be said by characters within the environment of the poem's fiction. These include, "As we paddled away, to speak and rest together, the wind took up its chorus" (66). The speaker of the poem is paddling on the lake, and thus is both character and author. The paddling, though, is dictated by the wind, its strength, duration, and direction, which, as the poem said, is controlled by our language.

Lastly, of course, the reader is the reader as she physically reads the poem line by line, holding *Errings* in her hands. This leave the reader, in the end, as the poem's author, speaker, character, and reader—quite a lot of identities to hold, especially in a western culture which assumes that identity is stable and singular. But this poem does not promote a singular identity and continually argues for a multiplicity of them. The poem states, "Search, confused one, around your shores, if any parts of you rejoice in peace" (67). These lines highlight a fractured self, and implore the reader to search for a cohesive identity. Any cohesion, however, would not be stable when multiple fictions must hologram over each other. Some of these selves even overlap, as in line five: "Standing at your bedside, we recounted our tale to you" (67). The "we" at the bedside

is both the author and audience, since the tale is simultaneously told by and received by the “you”. Thus the poem ends, “How difficult it is to remain one person” (67).

*Errings* is about the replication of fictions through dialogue and storytelling. So, of course the book would end in the beginning of a new chain; of course it would end as a new story prepared to start. After all, the line of succession and replication must go on. The last page, immediately after the mention of an idea’s “invisibility”, states, “Love. Love, couldn’t you see?/ No, you said. No. Tell me. Tell me” (74). As the speaker asks the lover if she can envision the ideas of the previous page, or even the idea of love as a concept (if we are taking the first “love” as the concept, and the second one as an address to the lover), she of course says, “No.” The ideas are inside of the speaker, and if they could be seen at all in this capacity, they would have to be witnessed through neural imaging. Love, also, as a concept cannot be visible. Both of these options, however, can be encountered if the speaker relates them in a story. The lover asks the speaker to “tell her” the story as this telling places the meme into the physical world: an environment where interpretation is possible.

Though invisible, all ideas are replications enacted in behavior. As readers, we interpret these fictions through our own personal identities, and we help realize them through our behavior, acting out a fiction’s various components. While the fictions that are most successful at spreading contain qualities that nurture their own replication, they must, of course, be passed through and by humans. My guess is that you will tell your friends about the fungus which controls the ant, and they may tell their friends, and so on, further spreading and enacting the story. Even this essay, with its ideas of the meme and the transmutability of fictions, is boring its way into your brain right now. It is causing you to climb to the higher rungs of its concepts, to latch down on its arguments, to participate, as both host and transmitter, in its parasitic behavior. So go ahead, pass it on—to another reader, another drone, another host. Onward.

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Christian ALLE

Anonyme graffiti

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Christian ALLE

Champ de pylones sur ciel de morgue

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Christian ALLE

Cocaine, bistrot de minuit

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Christian ALLE

L'oubli, longue haleine

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Christian ALLE

Rafales de sommeil

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Mark Young

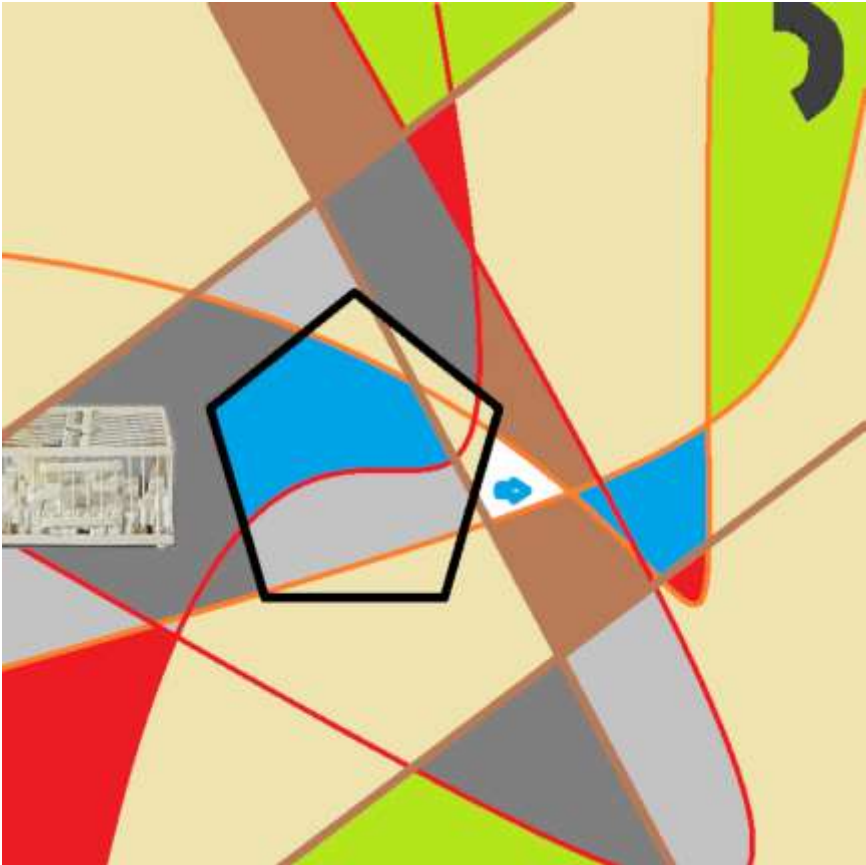
**Centripetal**

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The Annunciation of Rose Sélavy

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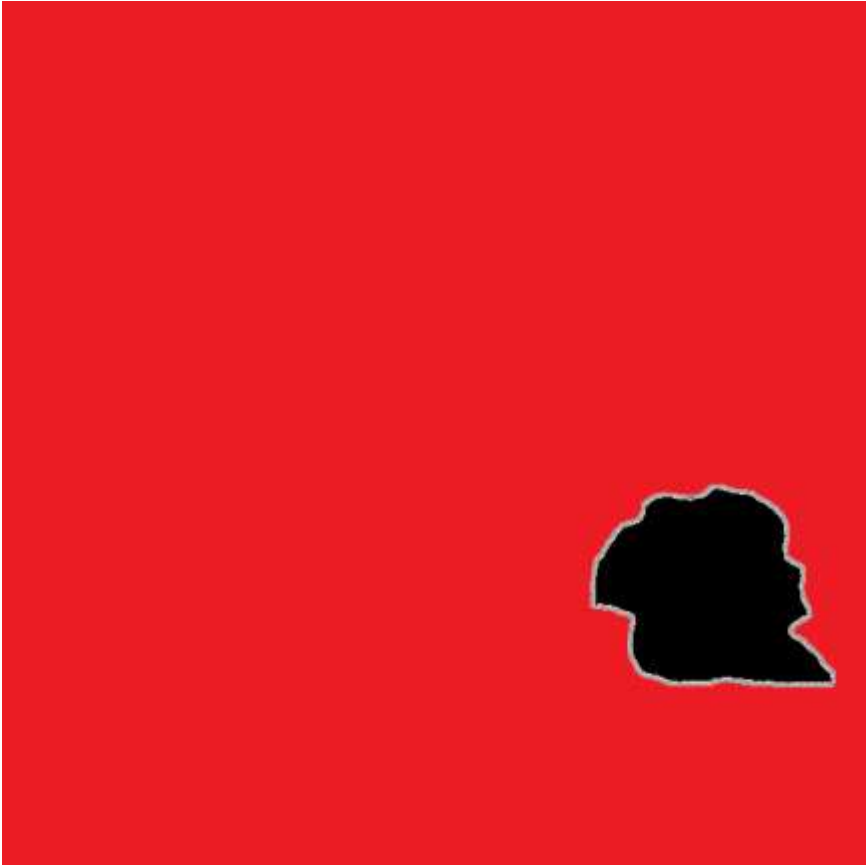


Mark Young

Anatomically Correct

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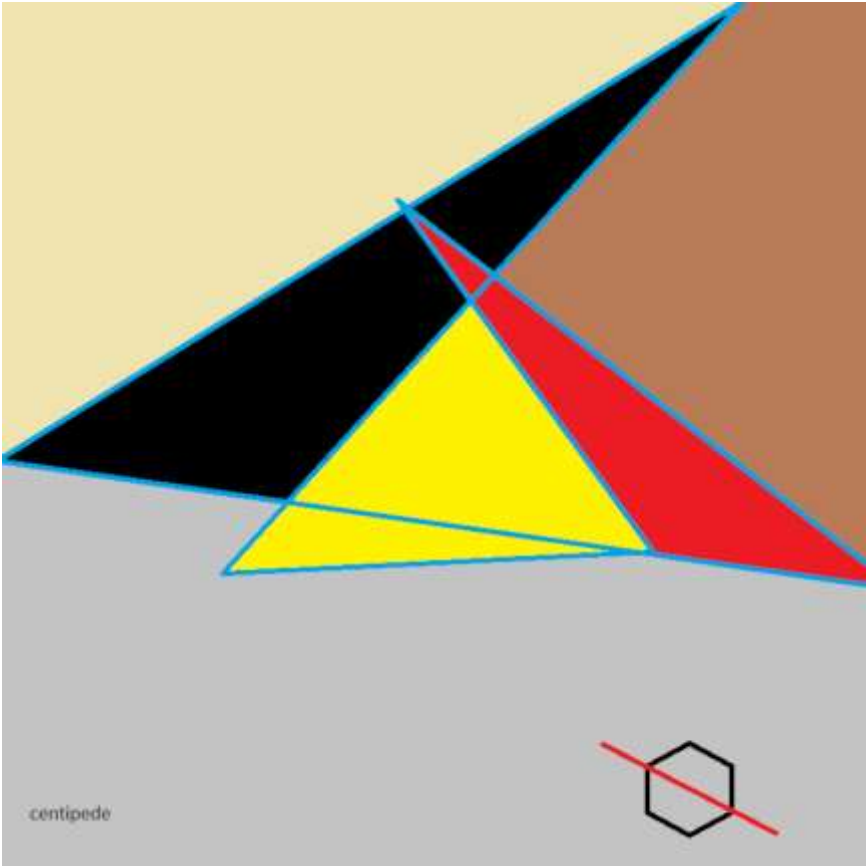




Mark Young

Sunglasses Weather

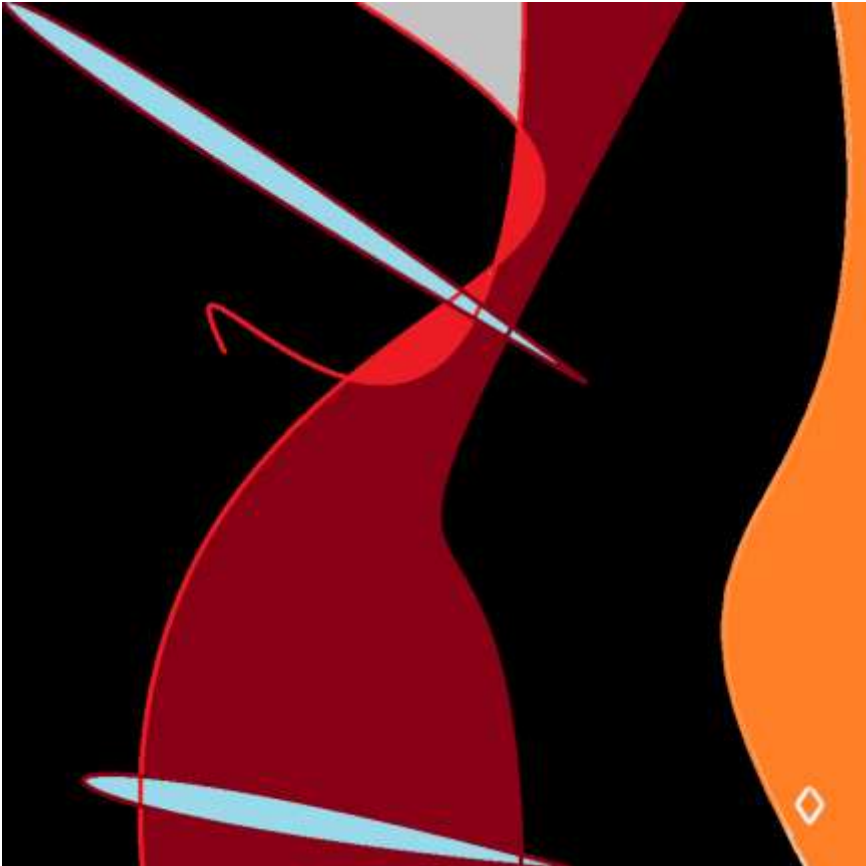
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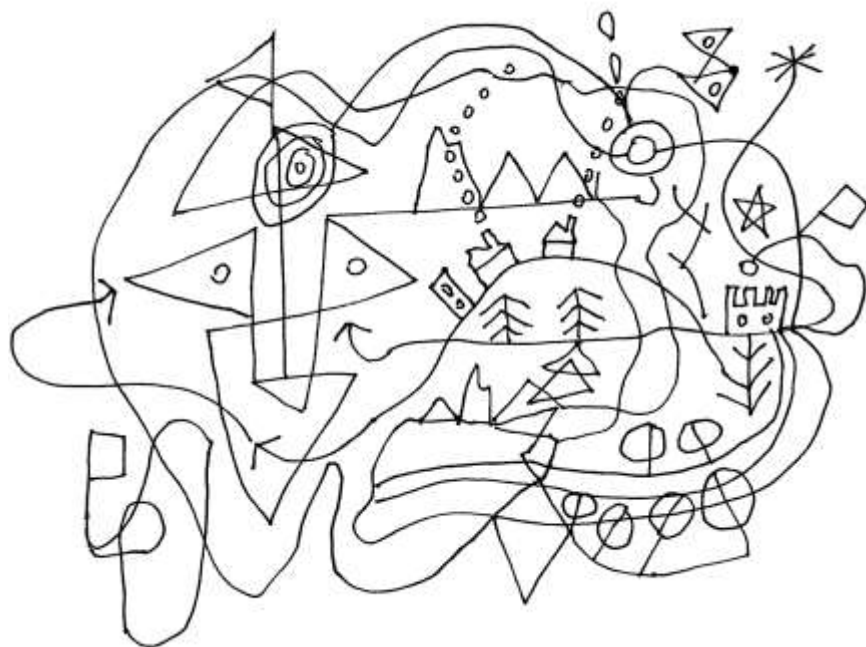


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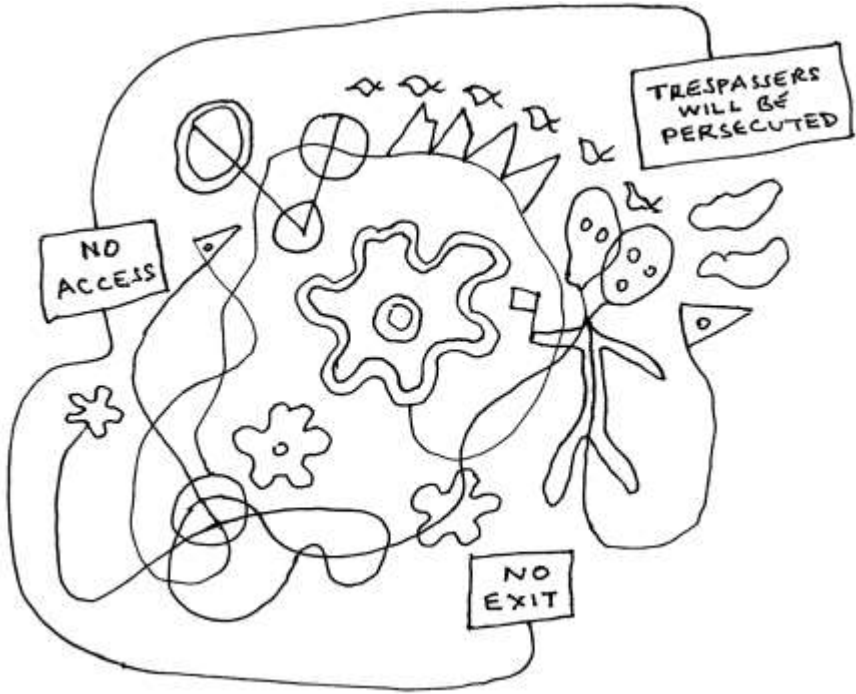
**The Dancing Mannequins**

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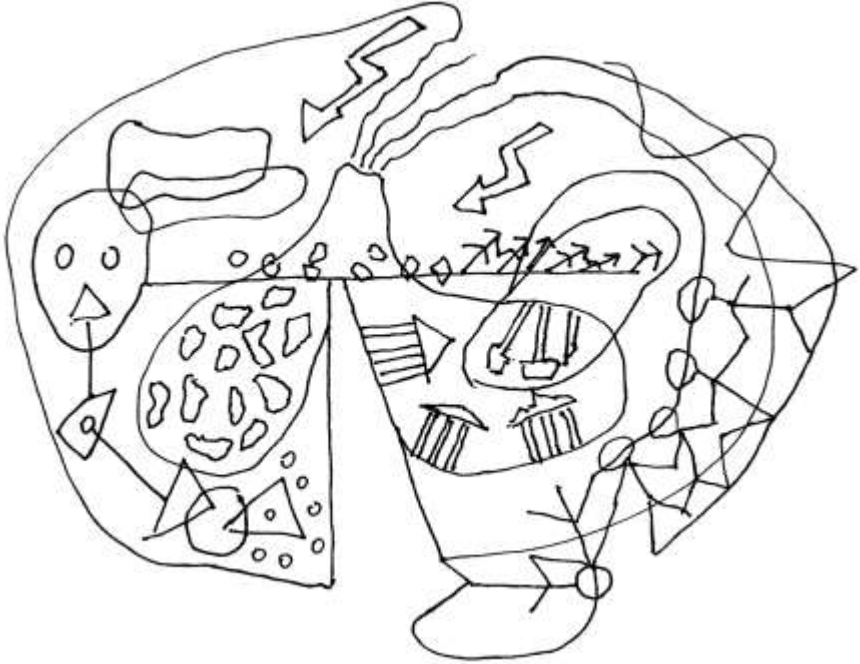




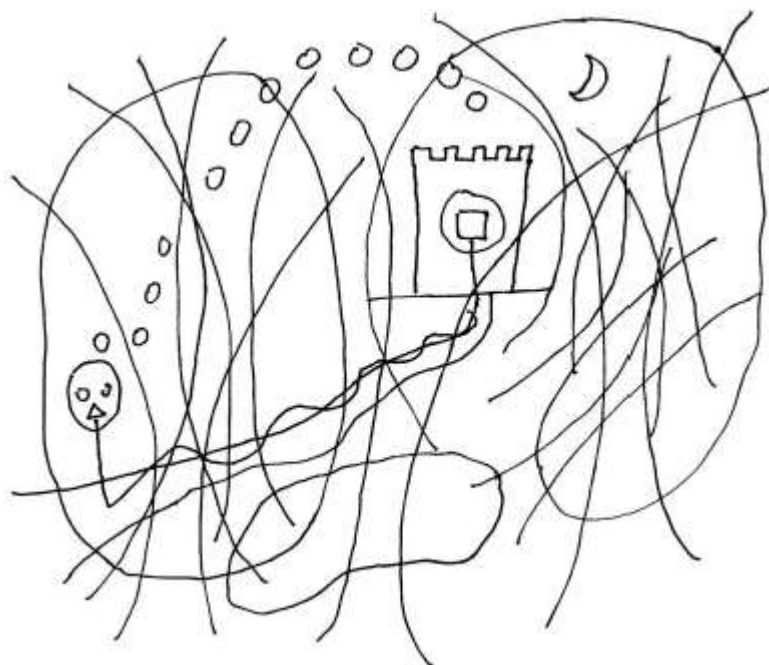
The travellers met the two-headed dog  
trained to keep eyes on  
near & middle distance  
& in particular the fearful horizon.



One told the other he remembered  
one of those signs from long ago  
& he thought it had something to do  
with a keyword in Christian lingo.



This must be the world turned  
upside down on their maps  
they'd certainly been warned  
a world in imminent collapse.

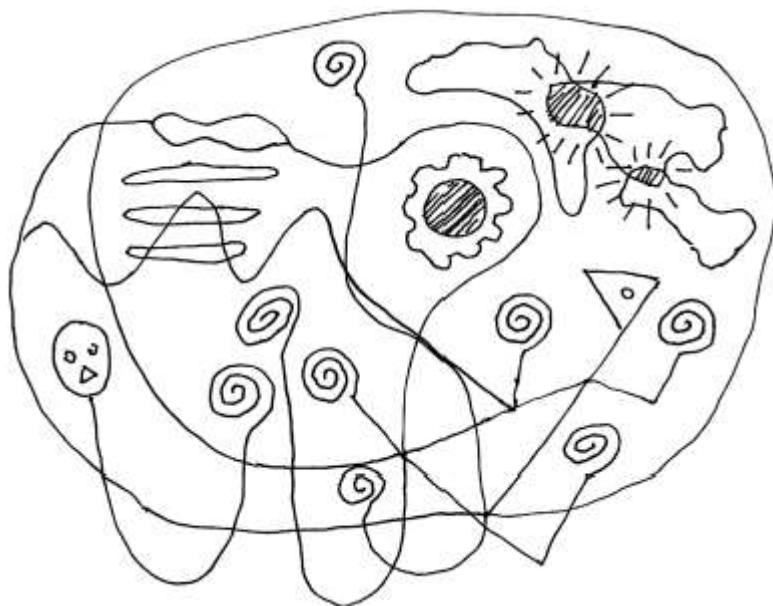


O Pilgrim Pilgrim  
there's a dark wood in dreamland  
& the tower to which Childe Roland  
O Pilgrim Pilgrim

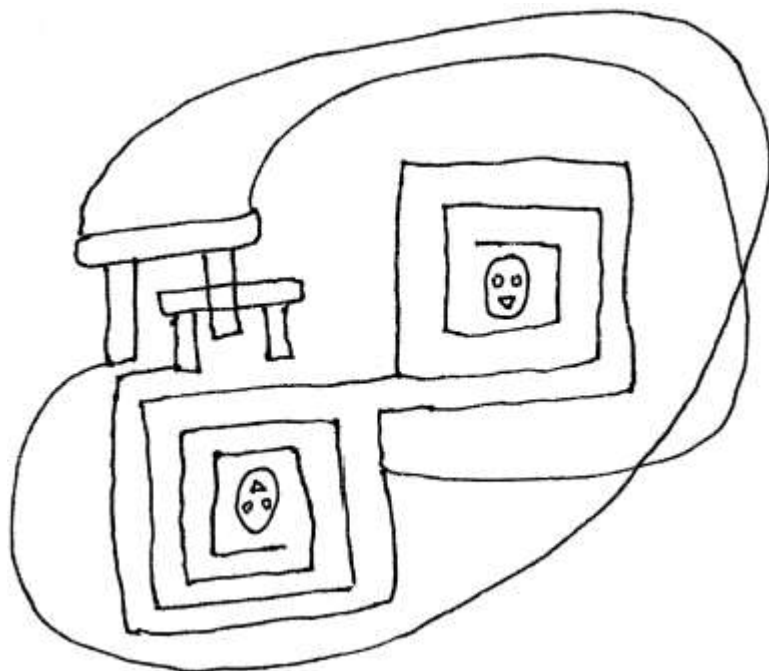
Alan Halsey

**Into the Interior**

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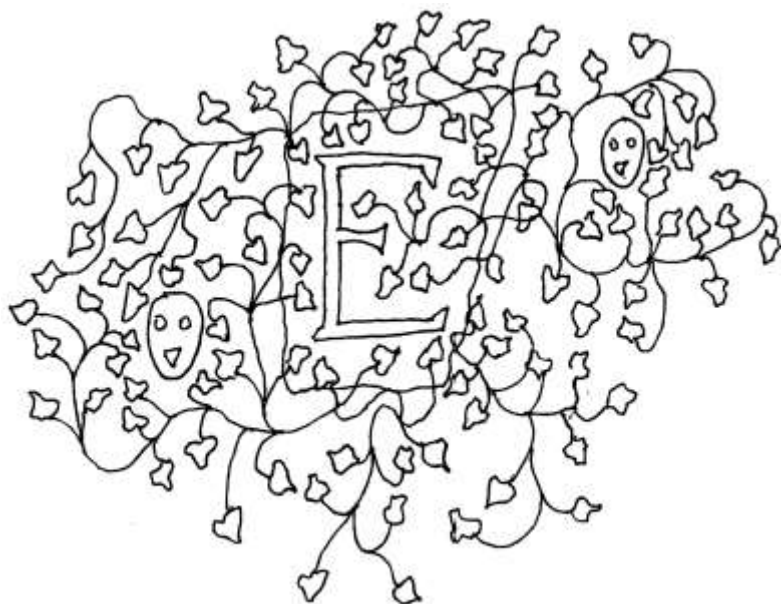


Beware the lunar eclipse  
when spiral flowers bloom  
& who knows whom  
midnight thunder claps.



What it was to be  
doubly welcome  
what it was to be  
unkindly undone.





There it stood  
the Great E  
the remnant letter  
of Exist or Exits.

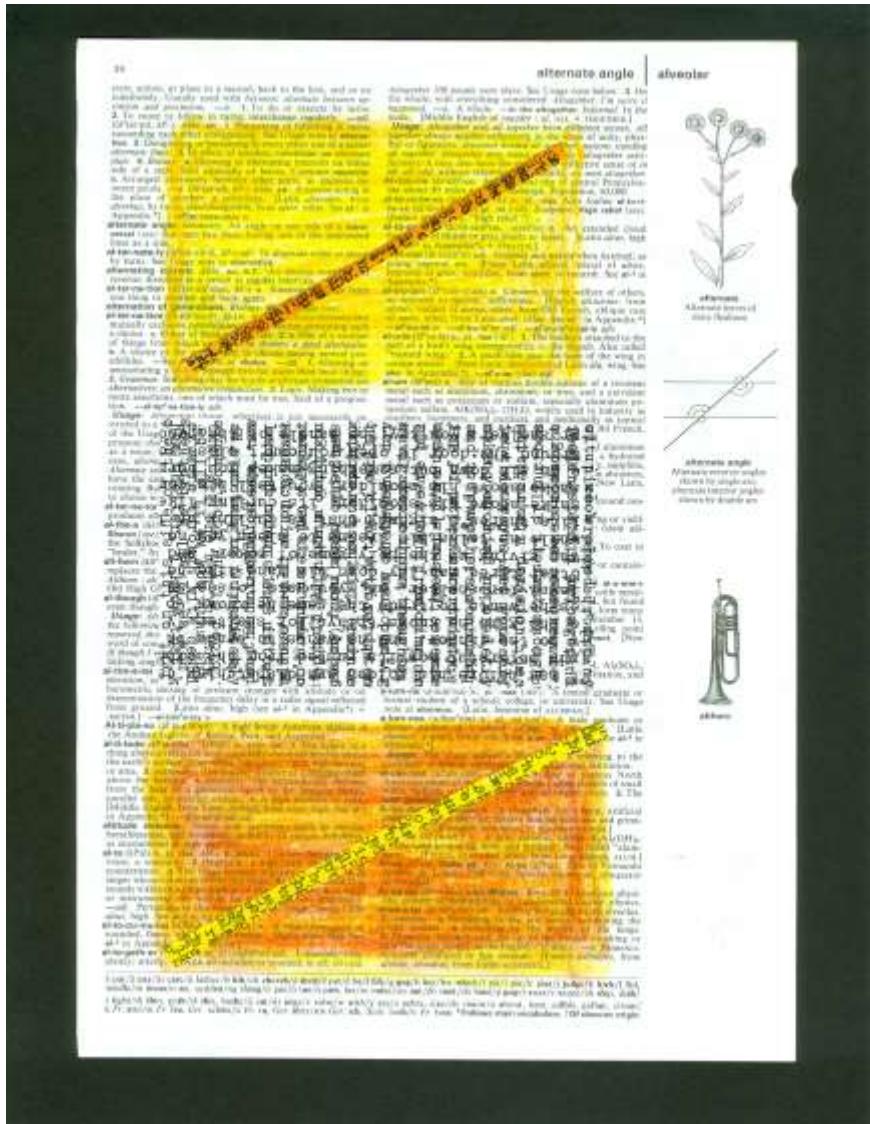
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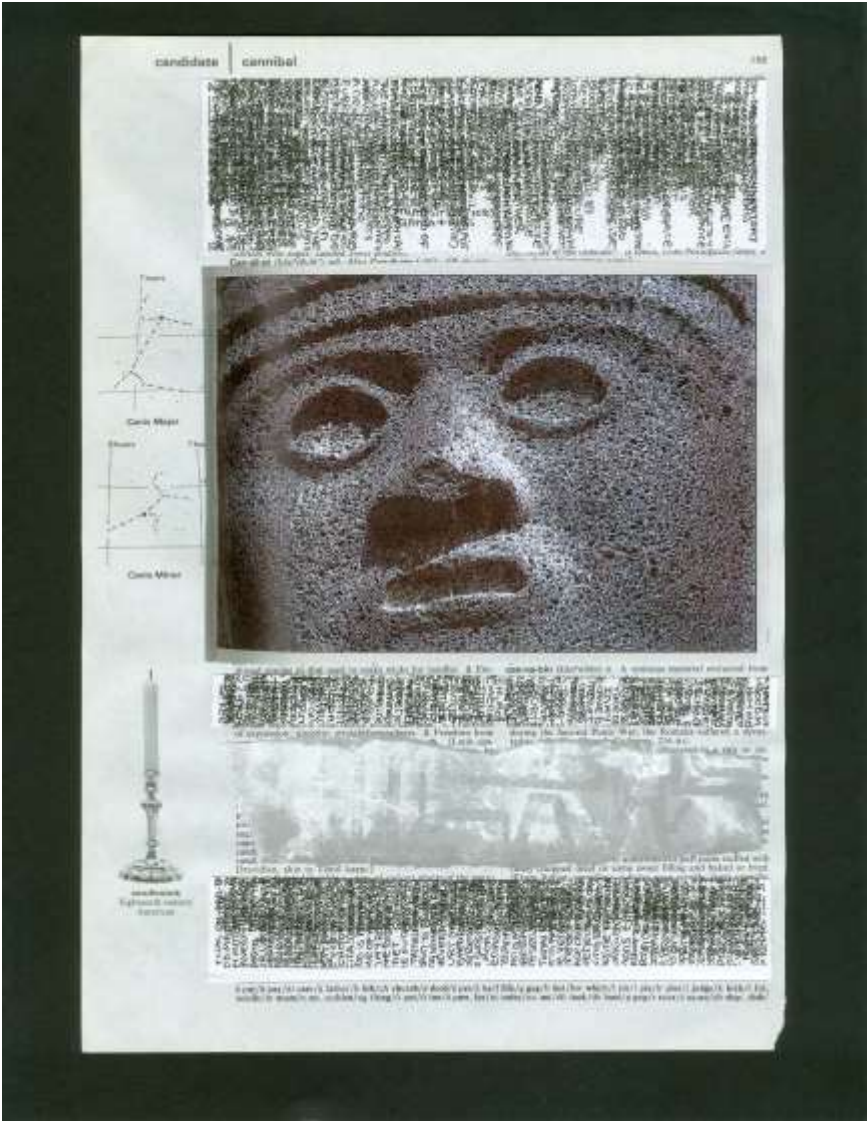
**Into the Interior**

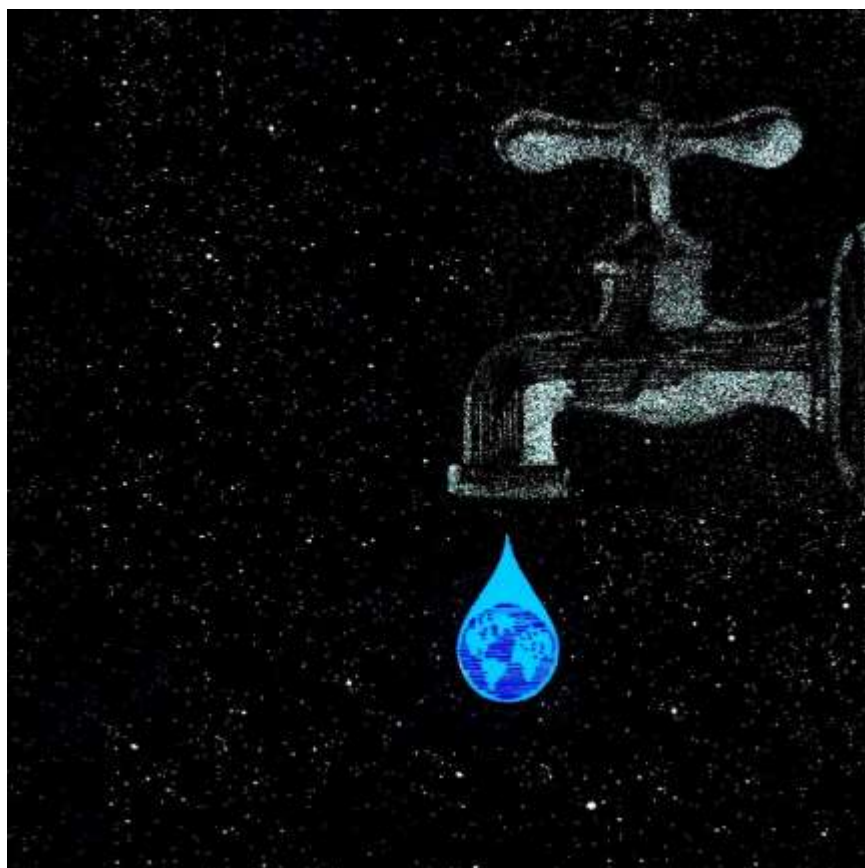
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Let's go home says one  
Where's home asks the other  
If you know which way  
you're out on your own.











Pollution







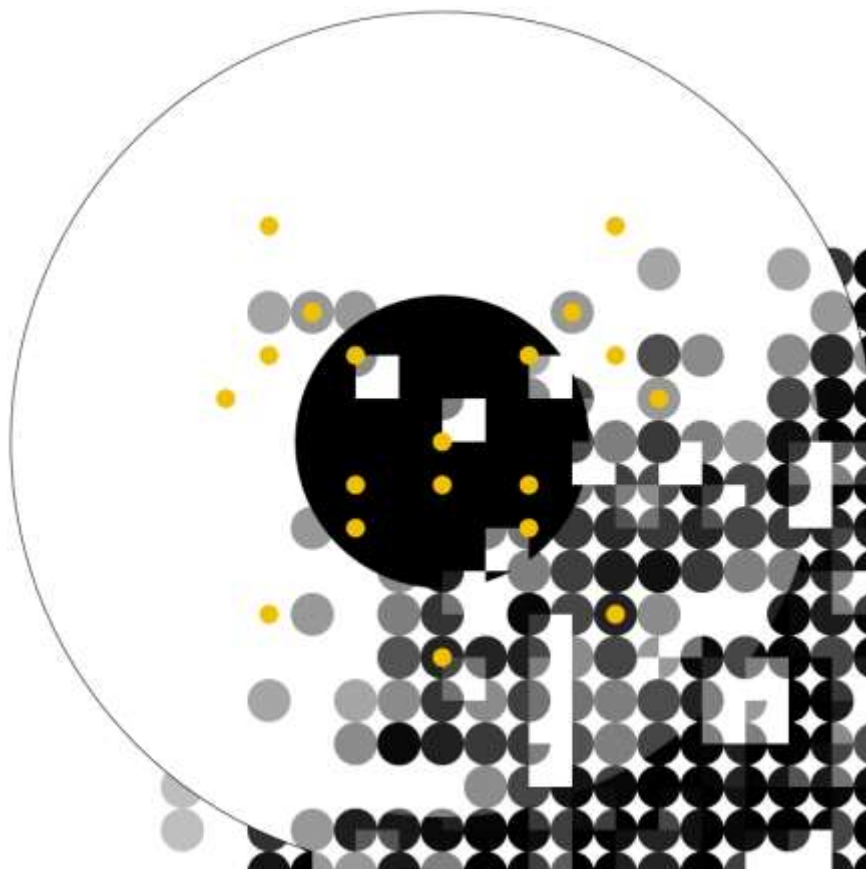




Ted Warnell

**Cyclopsurveillance, from *Mona Lisa Lives Here***

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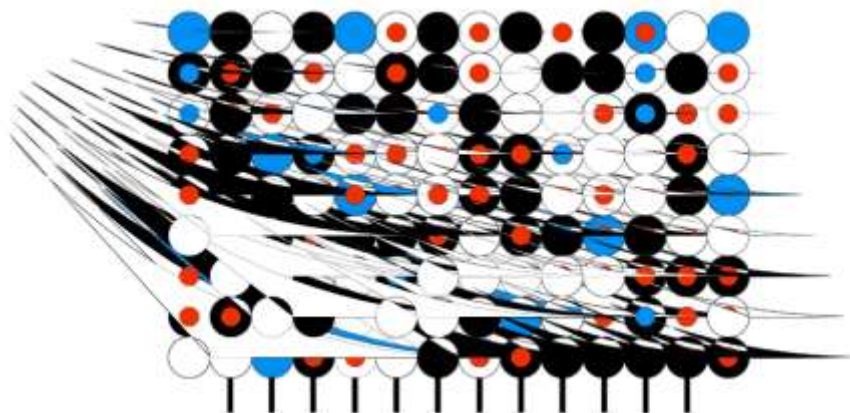


[Animated version available at [wordforword.info/vol38/Warnell.html](http://wordforword.info/vol38/Warnell.html)]

Ted Warnell

**Canopy 3, from *Mona Lisa Lives Here***

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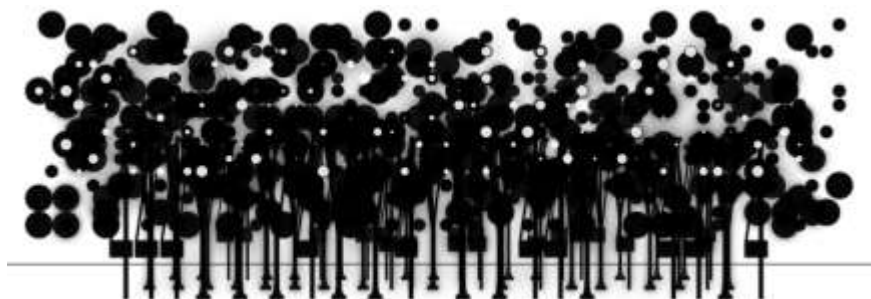


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Ted Warnell

**Winter Canopy, from *Mona Lisa Lives Here***

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Ted Warnell

**Turin, from *a l i n e a r i t y***

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Ted Warnell

Canopy 14, from *alineariry*

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Ted Warnell

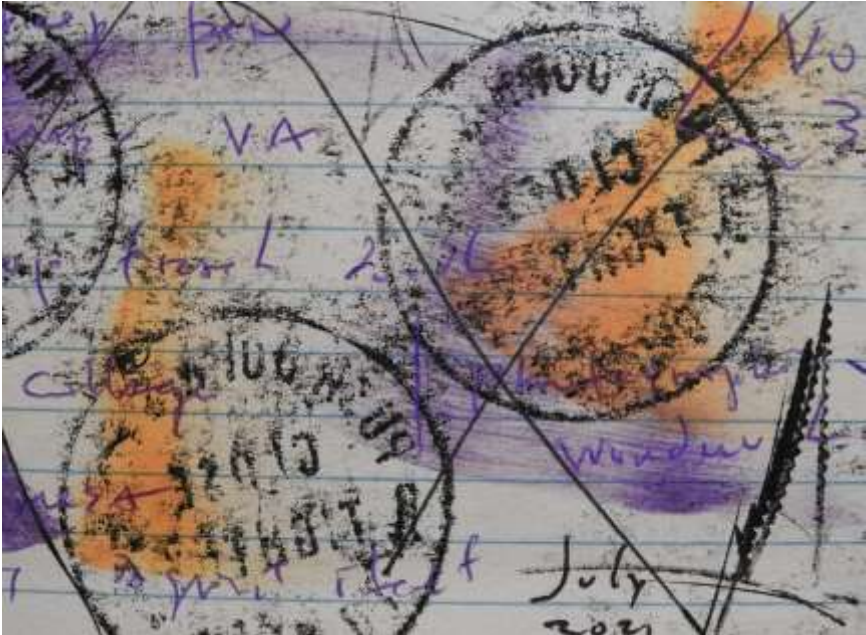
**Every Story, from *a l i n e a r i t y***

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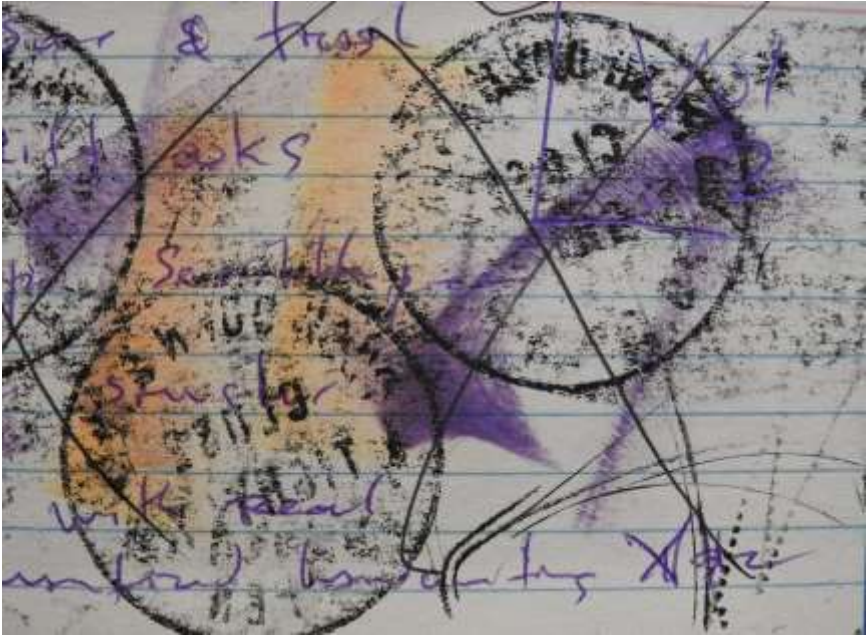




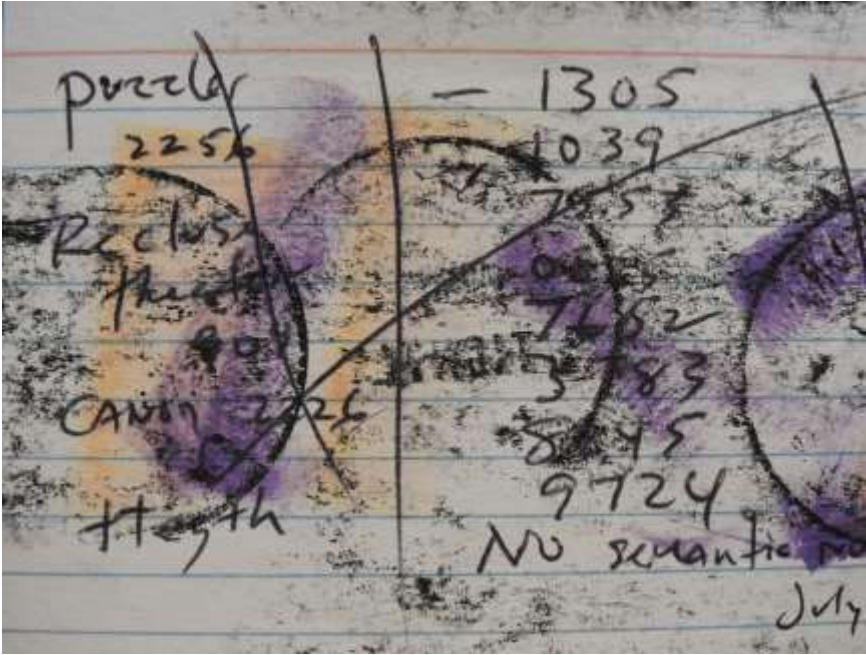
Jim Leftwich

Dirty Vispo / Desemantized Writing / July 2021

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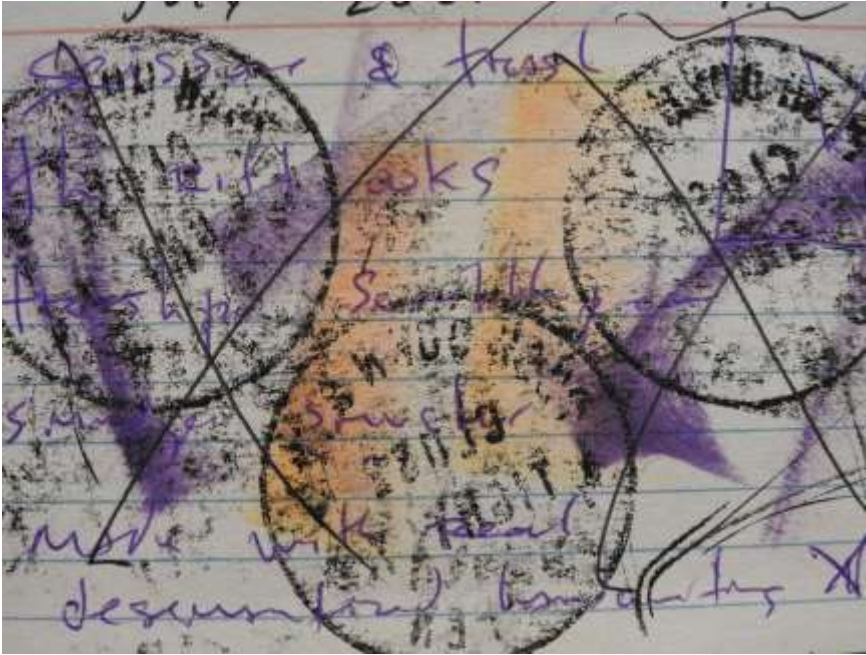












Jim Leftwich

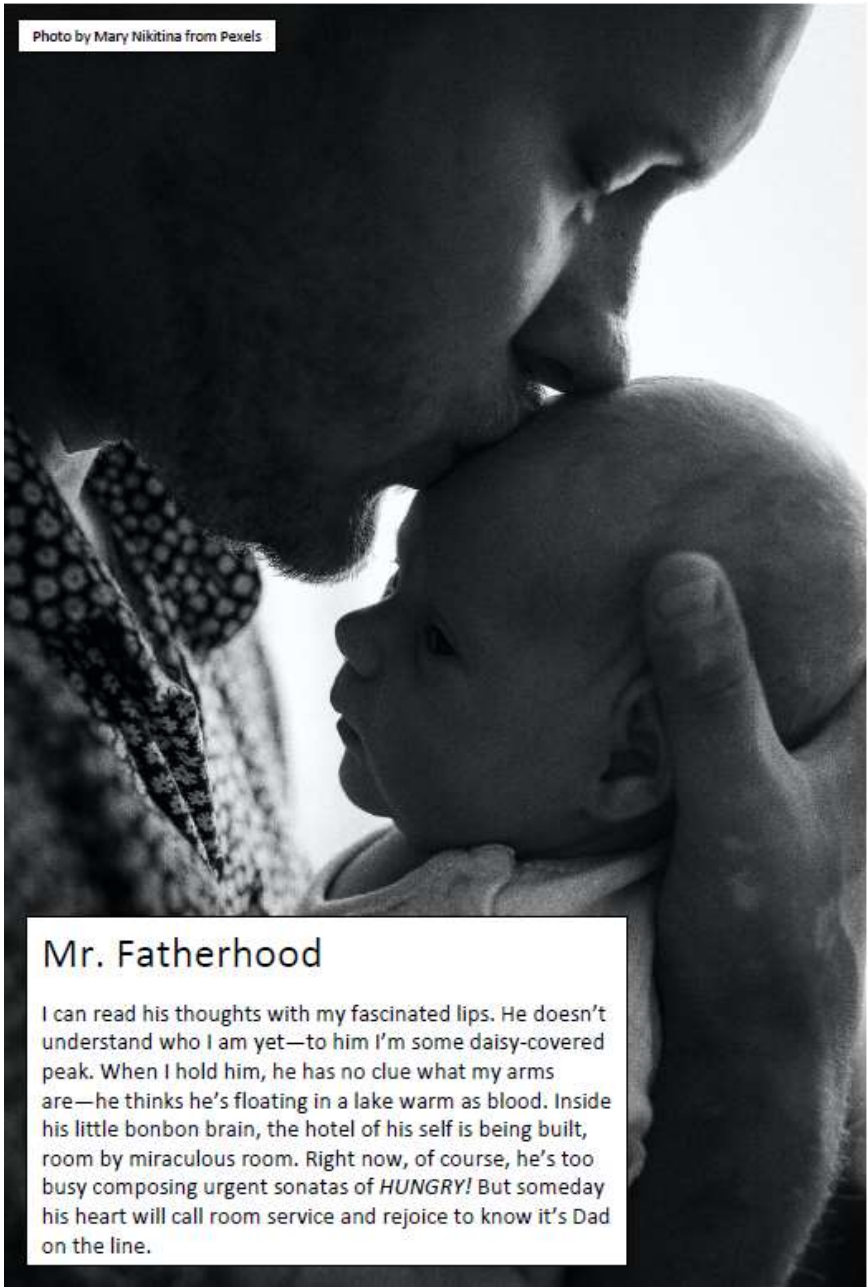
Dirty Vispo / Desemantized Writing / July 2021

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Photo by Mary Nikitina from Pexels



### Mr. Fatherhood

I can read his thoughts with my fascinated lips. He doesn't understand who I am yet—to him I'm some daisy-covered peak. When I hold him, he has no clue what my arms are—he thinks he's floating in a lake warm as blood. Inside his little bonbon brain, the hotel of his self is being built, room by miraculous room. Right now, of course, he's too busy composing urgent sonatas of *HUNGRY!* But someday his heart will call room service and rejoice to know it's Dad on the line.

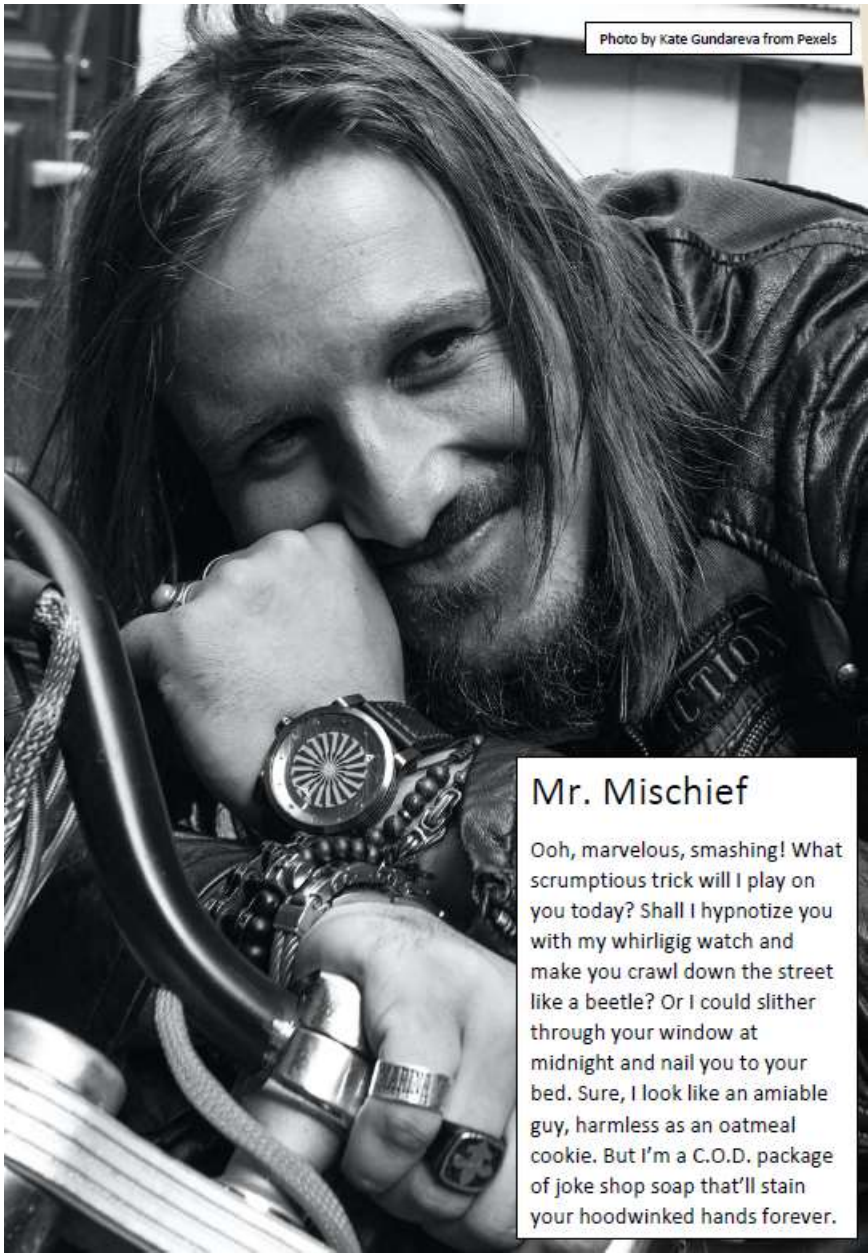
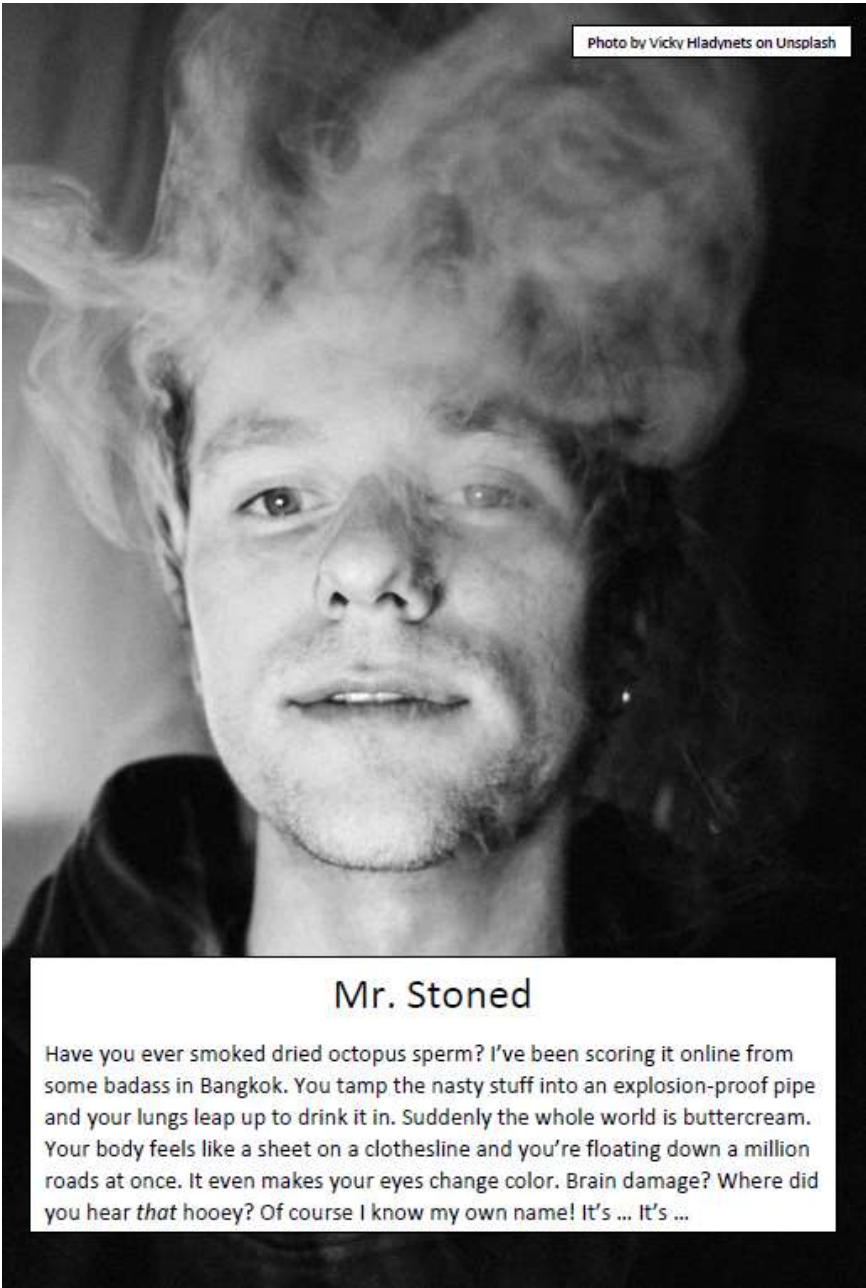


Photo by Kate Gundareva from Pexels

### Mr. Mischief

Ooh, marvelous, smashing! What scrumptious trick will I play on you today? Shall I hypnotize you with my whirligig watch and make you crawl down the street like a beetle? Or I could slither through your window at midnight and nail you to your bed. Sure, I look like an amiable guy, harmless as an oatmeal cookie. But I'm a C.O.D. package of joke shop soap that'll stain your hoodwinked hands forever.

**Mr. Stoned**

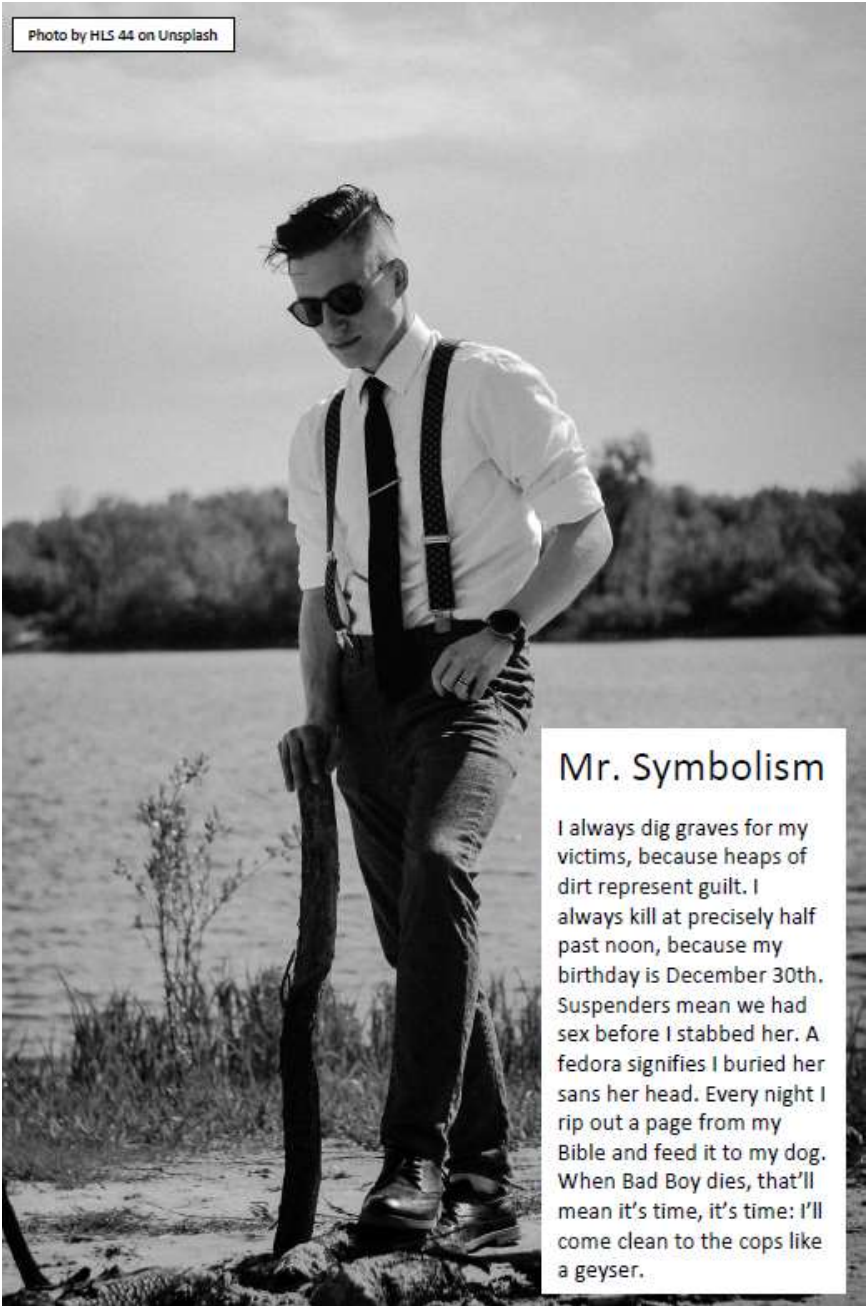


**Mr. Stoned**

Have you ever smoked dried octopus sperm? I've been scoring it online from some badass in Bangkok. You tamp the nasty stuff into an explosion-proof pipe and your lungs leap up to drink it in. Suddenly the whole world is buttercream. Your body feels like a sheet on a clothesline and you're floating down a million roads at once. It even makes your eyes change color. Brain damage? Where did you hear *that* hooley? Of course I know my own name! It's ... It's ...

Mr. Symbolism

Photo by HLS 44 on Unsplash



### Mr. Symbolism

I always dig graves for my victims, because heaps of dirt represent guilt. I always kill at precisely half past noon, because my birthday is December 30th. Suspenders mean we had sex before I stabbed her. A fedora signifies I buried her sans her head. Every night I rip out a page from my Bible and feed it to my dog. When Bad Boy dies, that'll mean it's time, it's time: I'll come clean to the cops like a geyser.

Pamela Miller

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**Mr. Urban Farming**



Photo by nappy from Pexels

**Mr. Urban Farming**

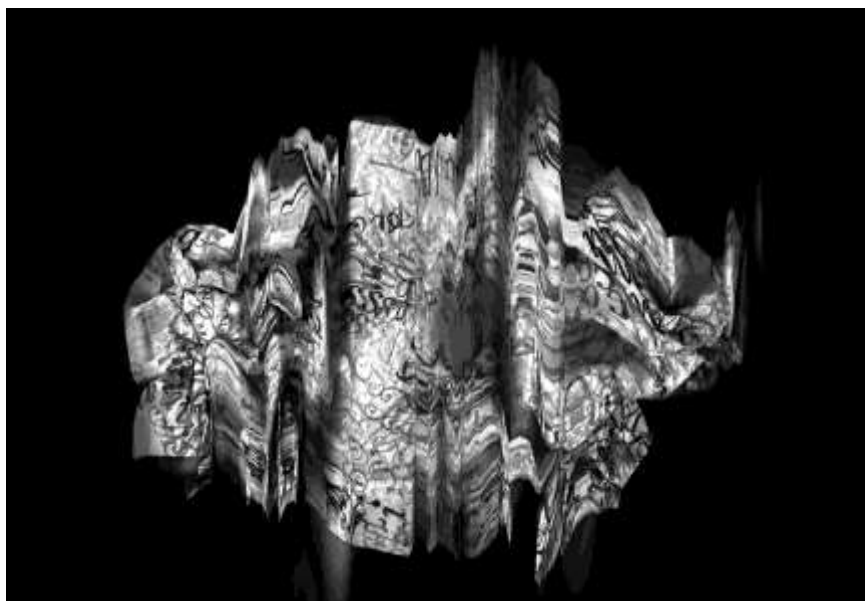
Why yes, I'm growing food crops on my shirt. An agronomy wiz, I've patented a contraption that can turn any fabric into a wheatfield. You can buy your own arable wearables from my Cultivate Your Clothes Foundation. To irrigate the quivering seedlings, take a shower fully dressed. Your body heat will caress their admittedly tickly roots. It's easy to germinate the Rice Dress: Just recline in a nice warm bath to mimic paddy conditions. When harvest time comes you'll look ludicrous, but your closet will feed a miniature multitude.



Sacha Archer

**An Ever Increasing Silence Just Above the Tongue**

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Sacha Archer

**Jung Origami**

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Sacha Archer

**Memories of Kobe**

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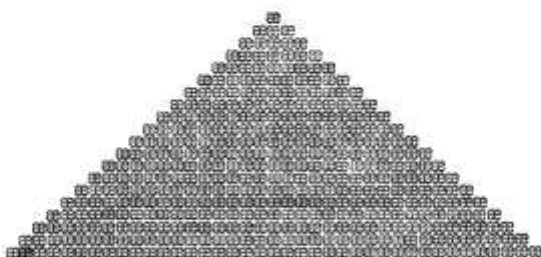
Sacha Archer

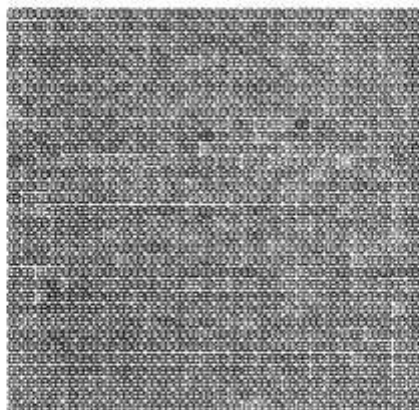
**The Nickname**

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wings must harden air to flee the earth  
to flee the earth ice must melt and breathe and scatter  
ice must melt and breathe and scatter, sky must grab and drop it wet  
sky must grab and drop it wet to taste the earth in flying ice  
to taste the earth in flying ice the light must soak the sky  
the light must soak the sky that plunges to night to quench a thirst  
that plunges to night to quench a thirst which can be stone and can have wings  
a thirst which can be stone and can have wings wakes the mud to life  
the mud to life must rise and life to mud must seep  
and life to mud must seep to flee the earth  
the mud to life must rise, wings must harden air



to shift some inward weight I stir the world to motion  
I stir the world to motion with one single incongruity for my fulcrum  
with one single incongruity for my fulcrum I see all the world tracking balance  
I see all the world tracking balance to shift some inward weight  
I stir the world to motion to ask where stillness ever entered me

Benjamin Pierce

**Making The Rounds xxxiv**

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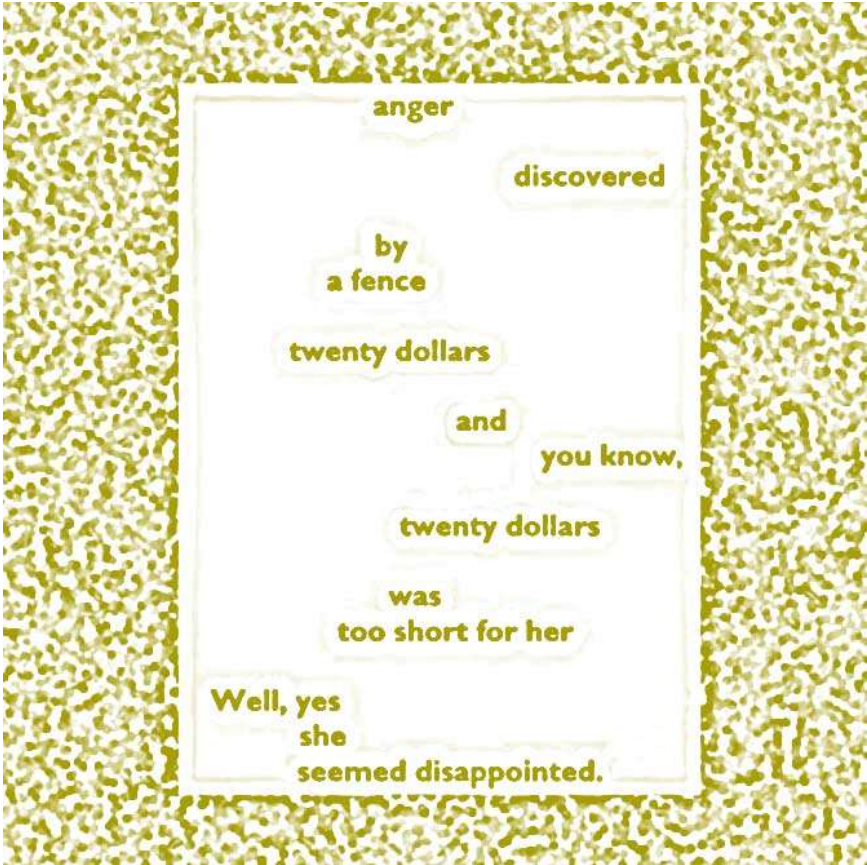


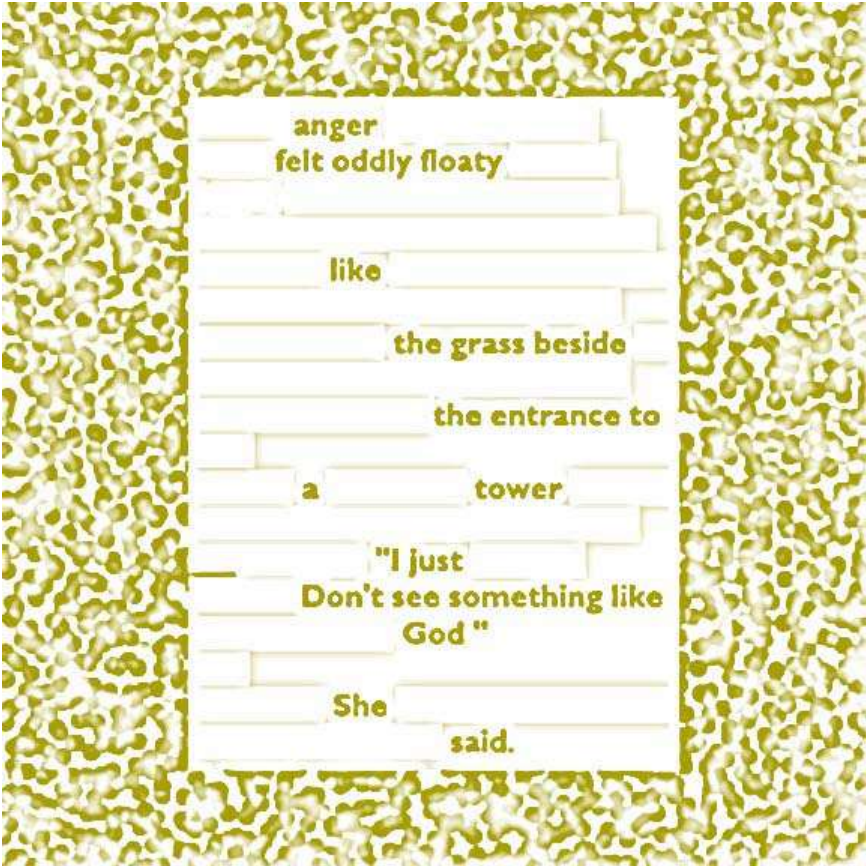
I seek to dance a single act I can bestow to we  
a single act I can bestow to we begrudge us each  
we begrudge us each a single arbiter of one for all  
a single arbiter of one for all we betoken our nameless whole  
we betoken our nameless whole a space as generous as emptiness is free  
a space as generous as emptiness is free I seek to dance a single act.



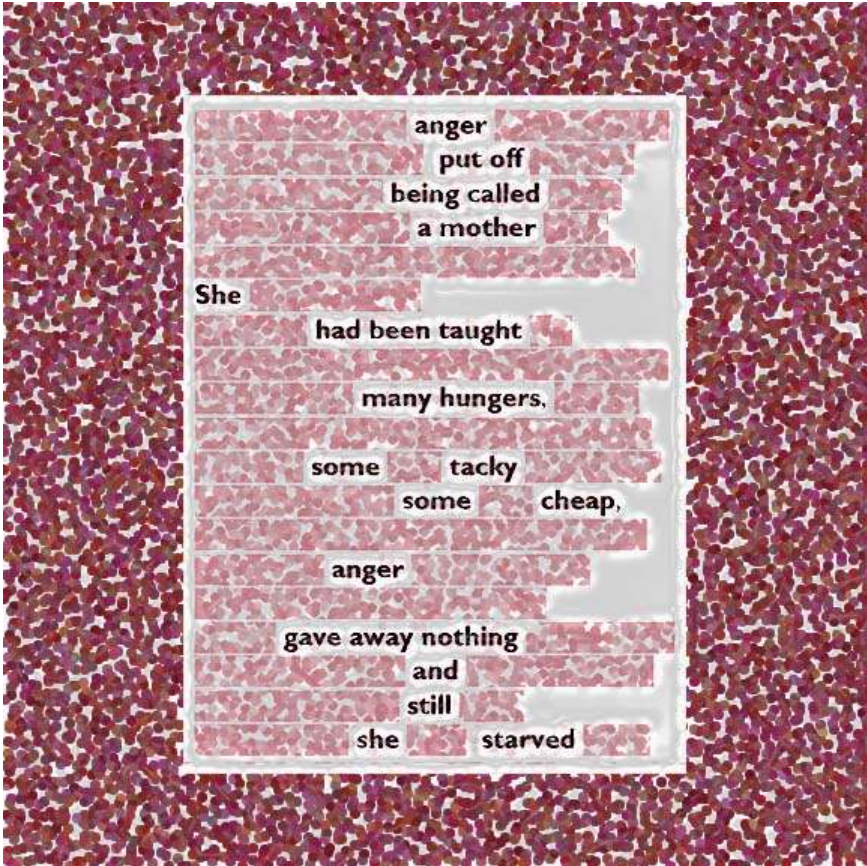
we seek a time of finite line to flavor circle's certainty  
to flavor circle's certainty we taste the past in what we see ahead  
we taste the past in what we see ahead to forget the hunger in our fullest feast  
to forget the hunger in our fullest feast has left us blind to winter's augury  
our fullest feast has left us blind to winter's augury and our hunger doubts the spring  
winter's augury and our hunger doubts the spring that deeply melts us  
the spring that deeply melts us cut a ravine where we are driest dust  
cut a ravine where we are driest dust we seek the sky from our driest bottom  
we seek the sky from our driest bottom taking faith from midnight's gift of dew  
taking faith from midnight's gift of dew we draw a circle to augur our rising  
we draw a circle to augur our rising to make a coin for our descent to pay  
to make a coin for our descent to pay the hard round's promise of ascent  
to pay the hard round's promise of ascent we seek a time of finite line.



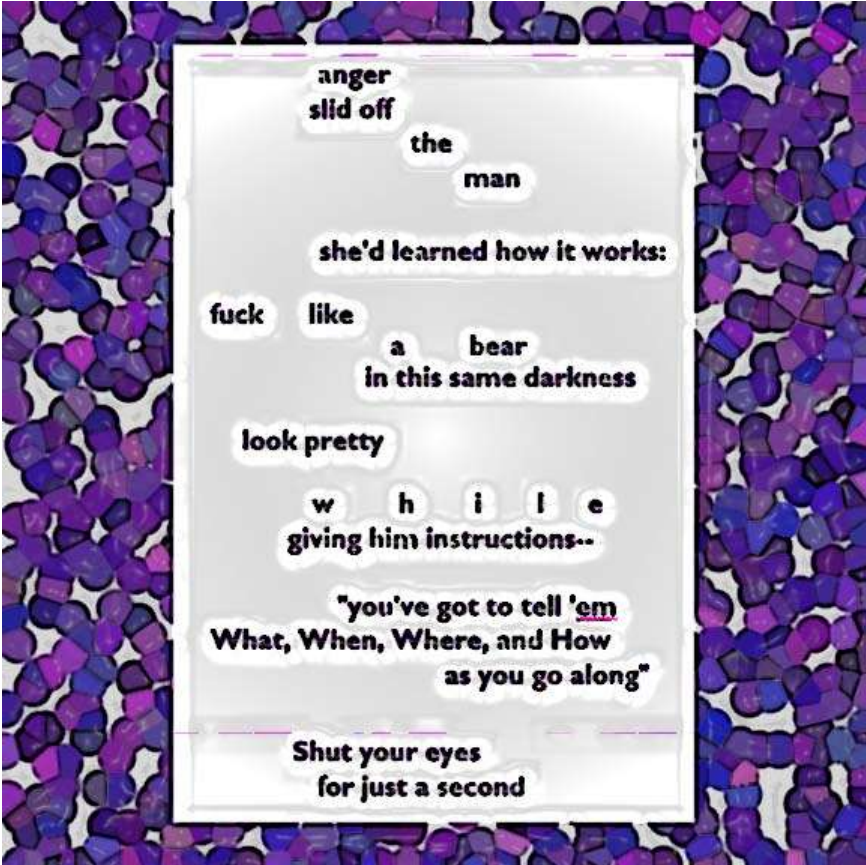




Anger Put Off Being

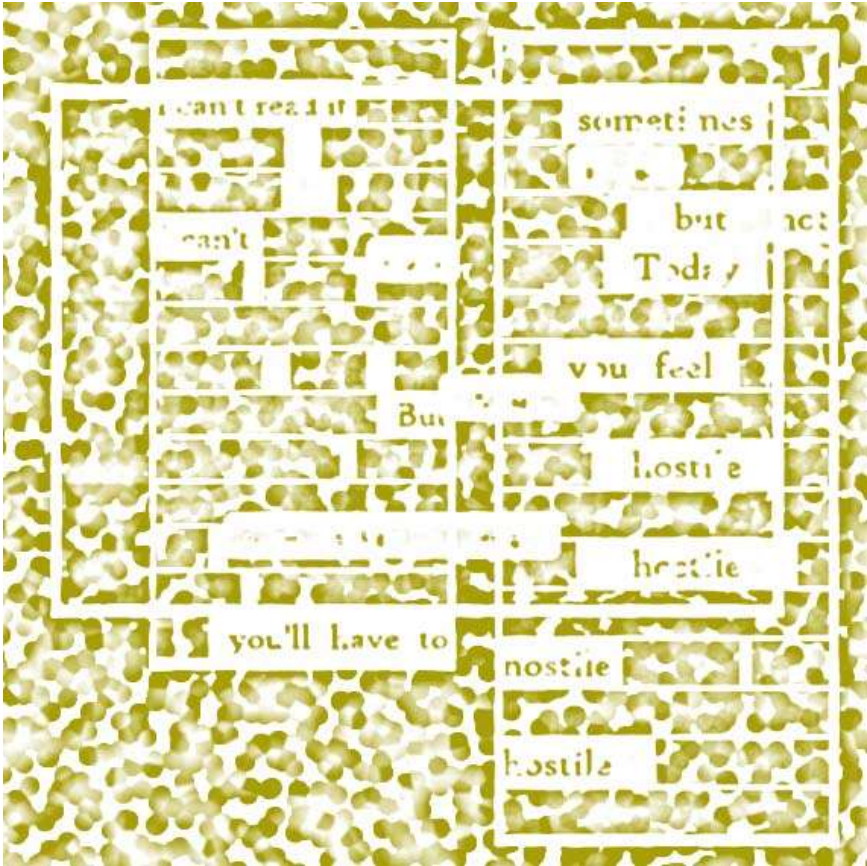


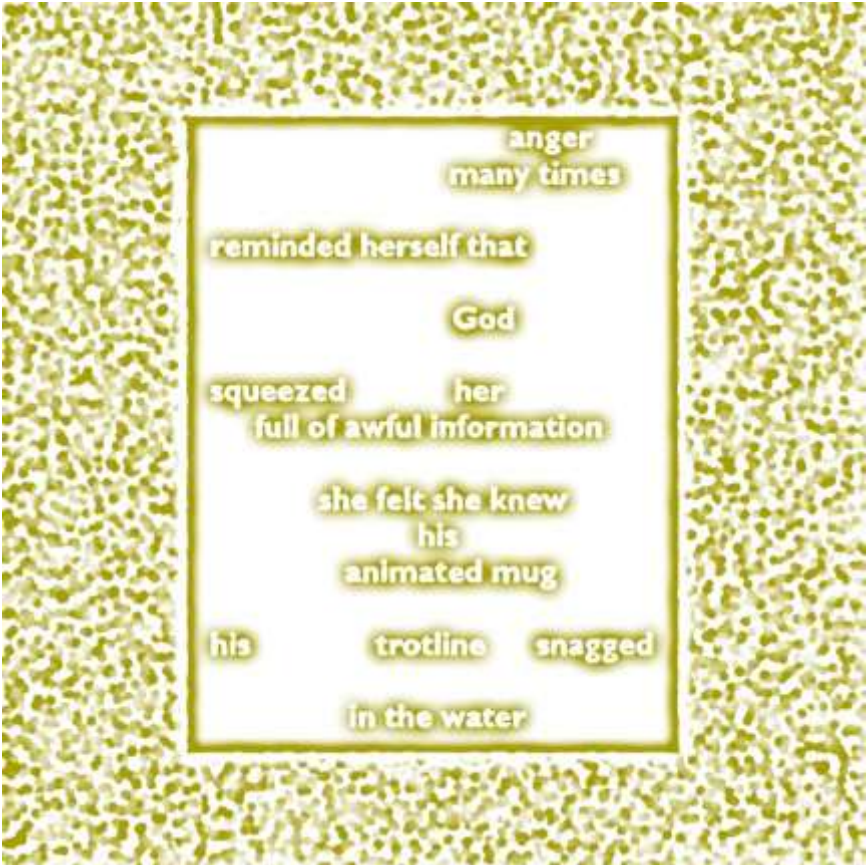




Hostile

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$$i\partial_t \psi + \frac{1}{2} \partial_x^2 \psi = \frac{1}{1+(5-i)x^2} |\psi|^{p-1} \psi$$

Maths

If a situation is exceptional, one may still ask "how exceptional it is."

23.

a rage to master, an unstoppable motivation central in the domain of affairs-

$$\square \phi + \phi(\partial_x \cdot \partial^* \phi) = 0$$

Barely cracking the text; not

attending a single class. Exam

eve: skimming pages. Next morning,

everything falls into place, each

beautiful number and function.

The prof comments, *I make little*

detergent in the shape of numbers.

*sense of your shown work; however...*

At 3, he remembers watch' his grandmother

with the windows and windows, he could smear \*

I do think we have a bit more of an obligation than poets  
...also we receive more federal funding.

$$U(t_0) = U_0 e^{t_0}$$

Maths

24.

...have alternate realities that cannot be reconciled  
experiments creating increasingly

$100(p+r) = 34$

**The parents, being dead, must understand. That awful number, 70, their child has reached, and more. Too soon, will be older than they. Forever. No more courses, degrees, promotions. Done is undone. Enough is too much. Still, there will be someone balancing equations.**

Counting

tears

shed over

math

Counting

tears

shredding

fabric

There is a continual and unending back-and-forth movement between the apprehension of things and the expression of what has been apprehended.

On the contrary, this desdry might be orientated toward complexity.

very clear impression that, in a sense, all these theories give the same results

$$\frac{dN}{dt} = -\gamma(t)N(t), \frac{dy}{dt} = a y$$



Maths

25.

generic form of hiatus, inevitably present both in the world and in our approach to it

If only it moves, one twitch, they'll welcome it, give it

$$\frac{de^x}{dx} = e^x$$

a home in their root cellar, among ancient tools and

An object is in something that is, but something that is in of being, and the occurrences are not situated in a logical warp.

thick ropes. They'd allow it to roam, become the larger

in extraordinarily dense nodes by turns displaced, deformed, and stretched,

$$M_{REL} = M_0 \sqrt{1 - \frac{v^2}{c^2}}$$

cellar's genius, which they could then forget.

gestating; mobile, imbued with a remarkable vigor, reveals with approximations

$$e^{i\pi} + 1 = 0$$

Maths

Structures do not wait for us in order to be,  
and to be exactly what they are.

26.

Such a dim, straitened course. Low, black ceiling scattered  
 —this leaves, in the penumbra, three axes around which  
 with several grimy bulbs. Everyone takes the same  
 may revolve entire galaxies, conceptual spaces  
 subway, to sit on stale-soaked straw, at the rim of  
 of which we have not yet learned to dream—  
 a gigantic funnel sunk deep. Near its stem's end,  
 a deeper, hidden  
 implicate order.  
 that recalcitrant structure  
 a tiny track, tinier horses. Bettors queue up  
 $R = v_1 \times v_2 \times \dots \times v_k$   
 at a lone window. Behind frosted glass  
 a figure whose cold hands receive cash for  
 tickets with numbers smeared illegible.

lectures attentive to movement  
an entire series and which inaugurate dynamics of problems

construct luminous crystals  
in the aggregating path.

$$V := \prod_{k=m+1}^{\infty} [\bar{a}_k, a_k] \in Y_m$$

Maths

27.

relative  
 immerses regulating the flow

$$\int_{\mathcal{M}} \nabla \cdot u \cdot (\cdot) \in \mathbb{R} \Rightarrow \int_{\mathcal{M}} \nabla \cdot u \cdot (\cdot) \in \mathbb{R}$$

$$|s-t| \leq |(x,y) - u(s,y)| \leq L|t-s|$$

$$\mathcal{M} \cong (+, \cdot) \cong \mathbb{R}^3 \cong (0, \cdot)$$

**In cold, black rushing, two horses scream.**

**Narrow, wood-plank bridge. In traces, left one's left hoof slips, left.**

**Draft horses' power. Black screams from rushing. Swollen**

$$U = \begin{pmatrix} u \\ v \\ w \end{pmatrix}, F(U) = AU = \begin{pmatrix} a & 0 \\ 0 & c \end{pmatrix} U$$

winter creek's

**power. Black, black screams.**

**Rushing, sword's edge. Rushing, numbness, more**

**terrifying, rushing. Slices.**

**Eases them.**

**Down. Under.**

never  
 That always-moving and often enigmatic sea

$$\text{div}(x,y) = (-v,v) = 0$$

... provides a profound orientation and a surprising relative anchorage.

to discover the secret of everything

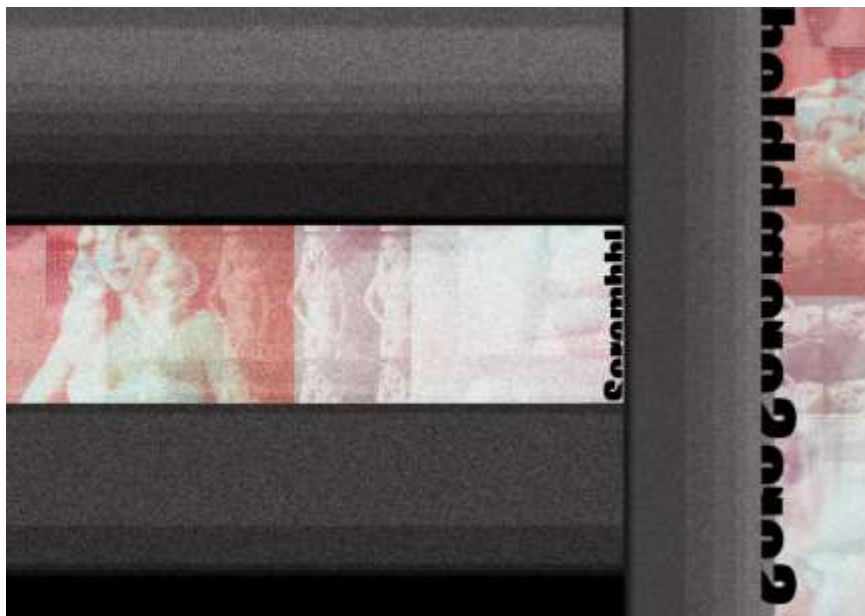
isn't attainable, not for any mortal being

No one gets out of the fish tank alive.

Adriana Kobor

Scrambled

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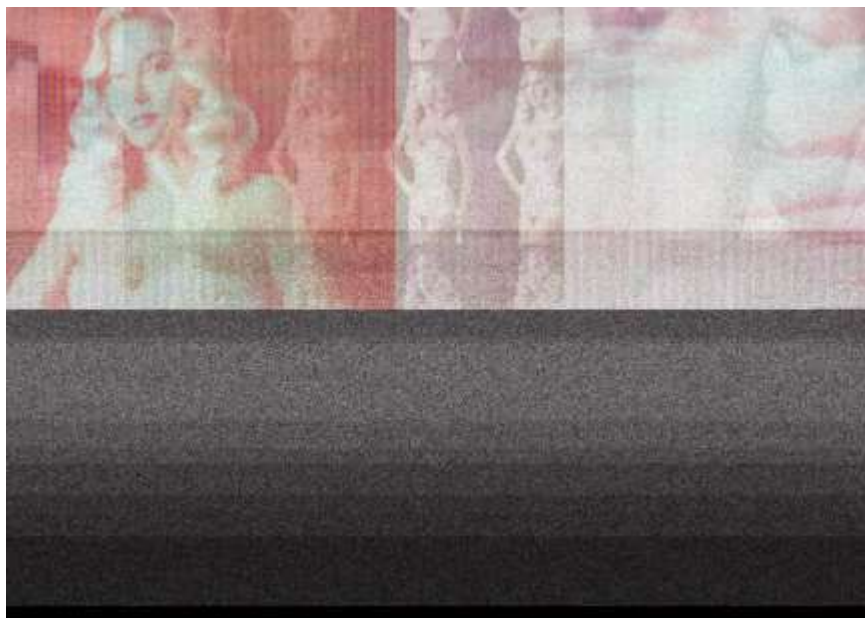




Adriana Kobor

**Scrambled**

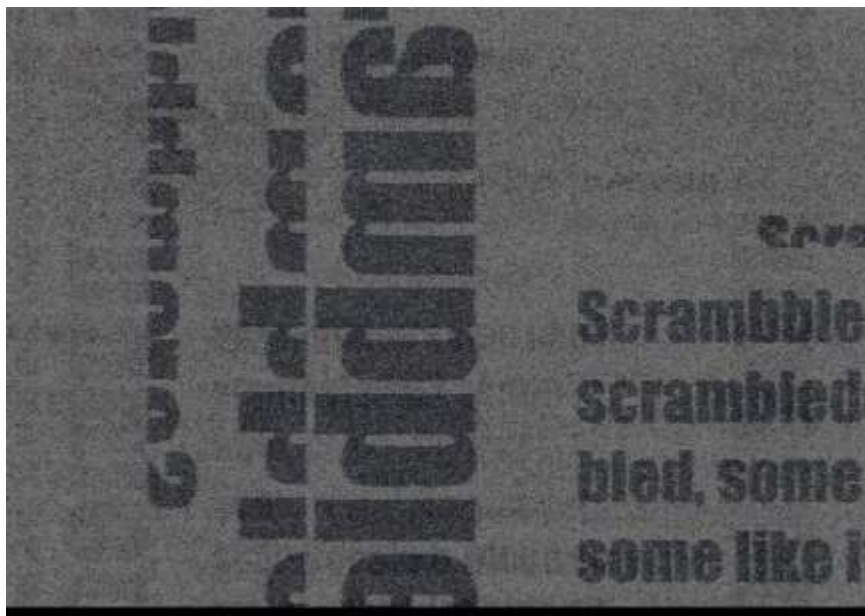
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Adriana Kobor

**Scrambled**

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**Yllciəqəzə uoy**

**I speak  
occasionally**

**Yllciəqəzə uoy**

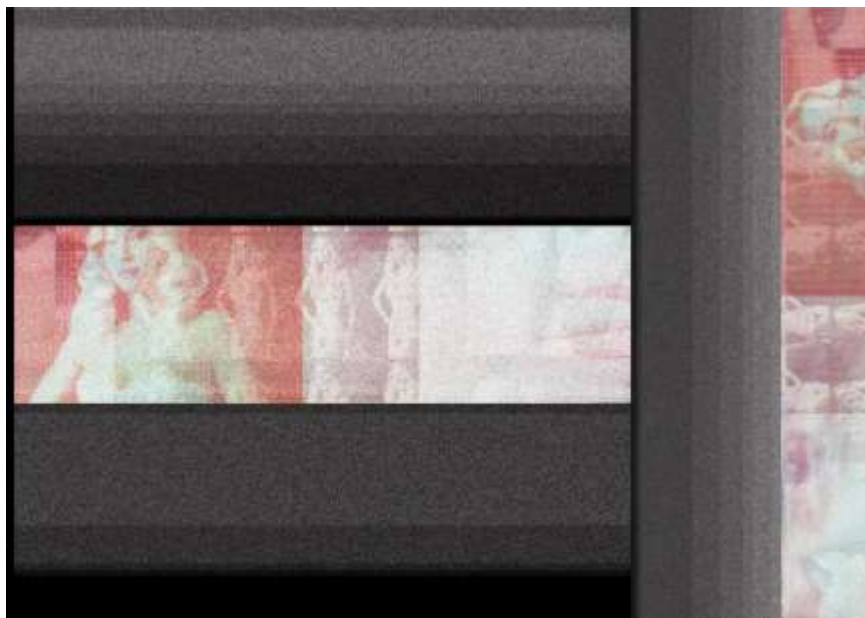


Scrambled  
Scrambled some like it  
scrambledeat scram-  
bled, some scamcam,  
some like it scam bled,  
scamhot scam, bleed so  
me-at, meat, let's me, at

Adriana Kobor

**Scrambled**

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Adriana Kobor

Scrambled

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Scrambled

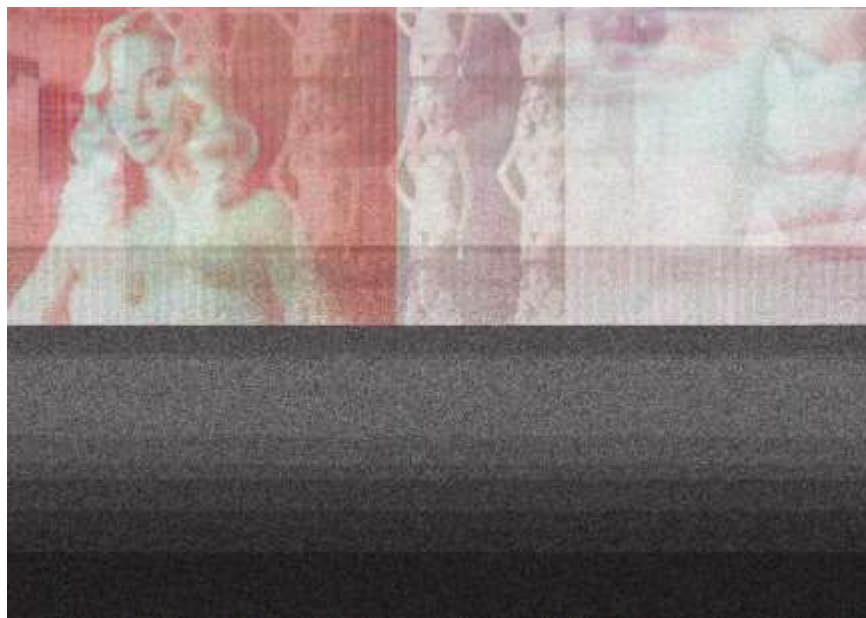
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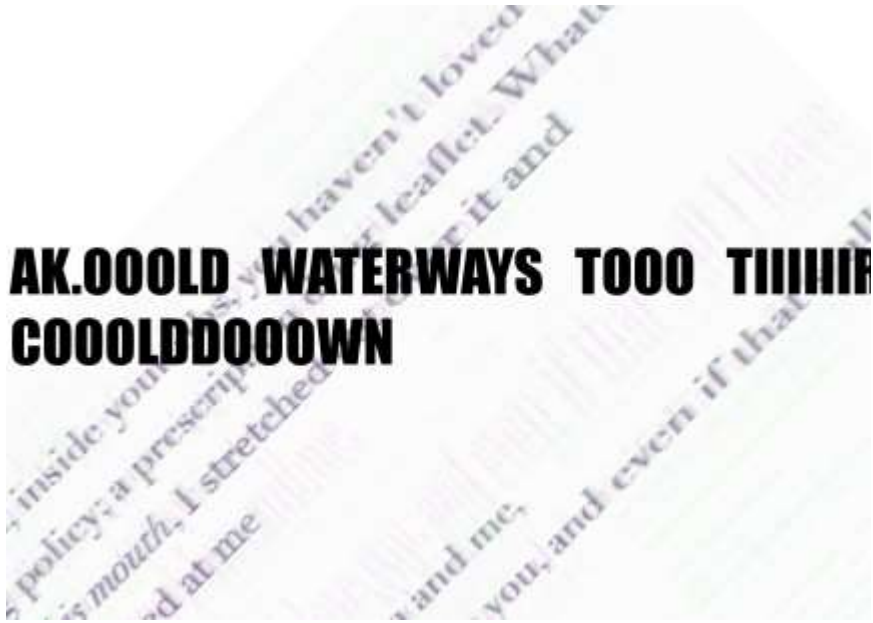


Adriana Kobor

**Scrambled**

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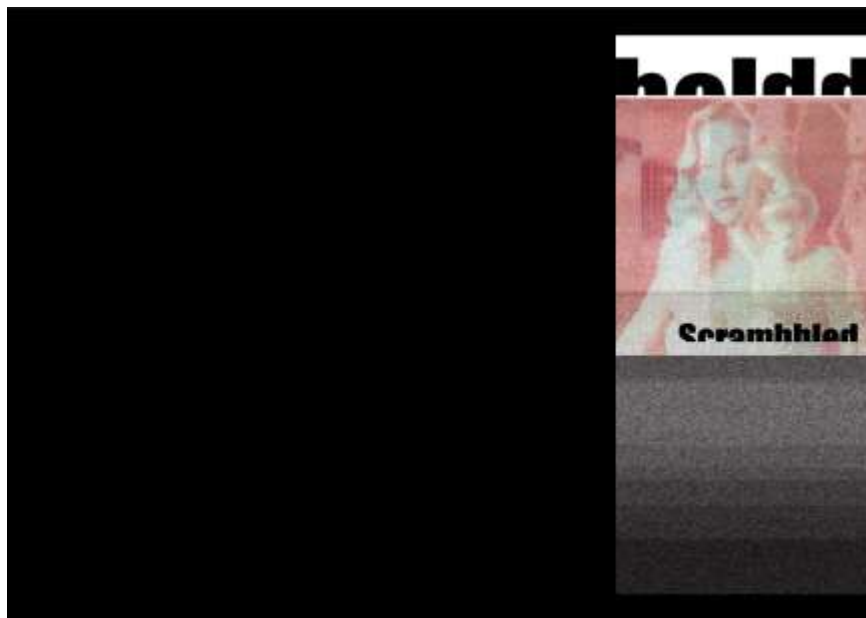




Adriana Kobor

Scrambled

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you especially  
You especially  
I need  
You especially  
You especially  
Occasionally  
Occasionally  
I need  
Occasionally  
Occasionally  
I need I need







Whatever line was broken, inside your ribs, you haven't loved but rubbed.  
You were a maddening policy; a prescription drug leaflet. Whatever  
line was broken, inside his mouth, I stretched out over it and  
broke anything which looked at me  
even from a distance.  
That was love:  
deep lines fattening out between him and me,  
and there were you-a with us use. I love you, and even if that's all I leave  
be-  
hind, it will engage, enfolding for eternity.  
I live on these broken  
lines, past parts, and thrive, better than on present's  
folds. Don't move; with your broken  
lines aligned I stretch  
over the universe,  
without you just  
a fucking word with not a single  
line ripped into it. I love you,  
because all the rest  
was hollow,  
a suffering  
without even a broken  
line  
within.

Adriana Kobor

Scrambled

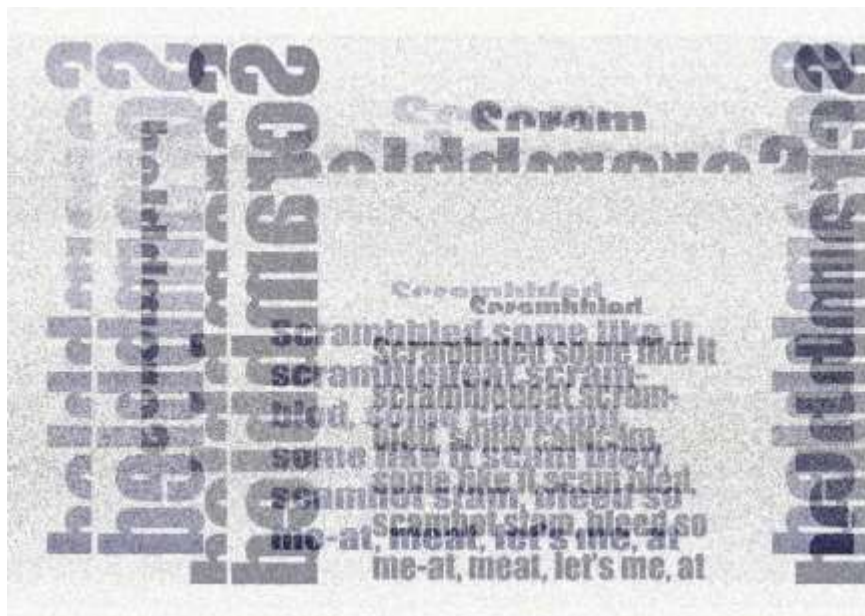
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Adriana Kobor

Scrambled

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Alexis Quinlan

**We Warned You**

---

*Mourning and Melancholia*

by Sigmund Freud  
trans. James Strachey  
1916

We Warned You

by Alexis Quinlan  
2015-2021

## MOURNING AND MELANCHOLIA

[REDACTED] we must begin by making an admission, as a warning against any over-estimation of the value of our conclusions.

[REDACTED] a single unity does not seem to be established with certainty

[REDACTED] drop all claim to general validity for our conclusions,

refer it to medical treatment. We rely on its being overcome

The distinguishing mental features of melancholia

a little more intelligible

tion, the same traits are met with in mourning

reaction to the loss of

that is not connected with

probably

of general observation that melancholia will only abandon

abnormal position, not even in cases where a cure has already

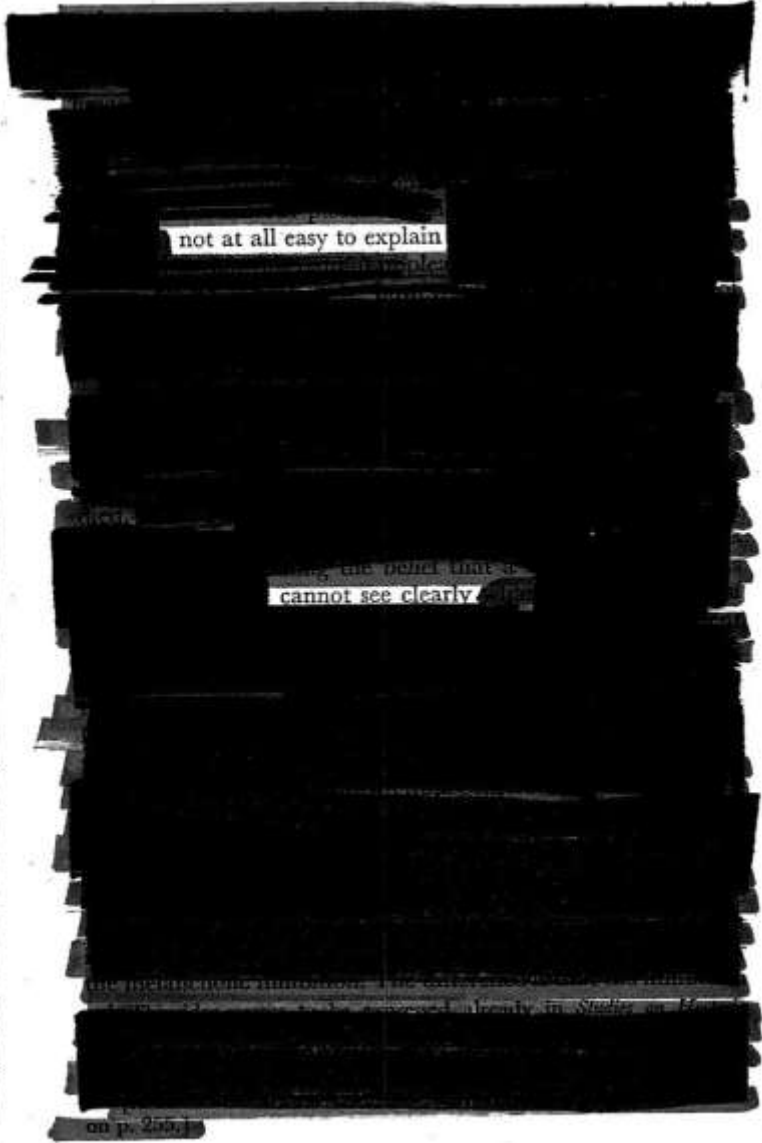
be

tu

ob

MOURNING AND MELANCHOLIA

245



not at all easy to explain

cannot see clearly

on p. 200

246

MOURNING AND MELANCHOLIA

what it is

puzzling

we cannot see

work which is unknown to us

we only wonder why



MOURNING AND MELANCHOLIA

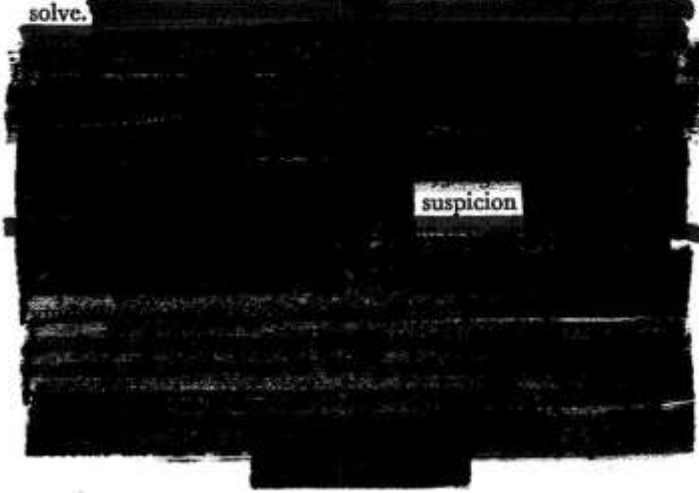
247



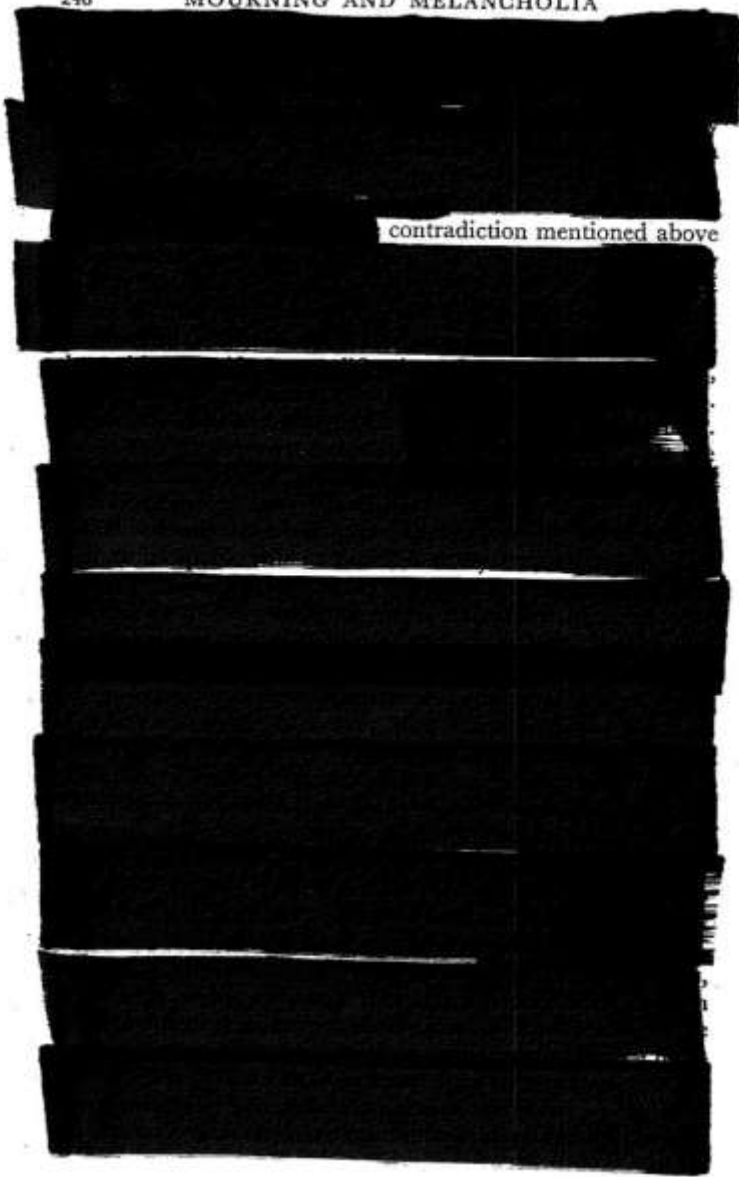
with a contradiction  
solve.

a problem

faced  
hard to



suspicion



contradiction mentioned above

MOURNING AND MELANCHOLIA

249

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

on the other hand, in contradiction to this,

contradiction

[REDACTED]

unfortunately not yet been confirmed

empirical material upon which this study is founded is insufficient

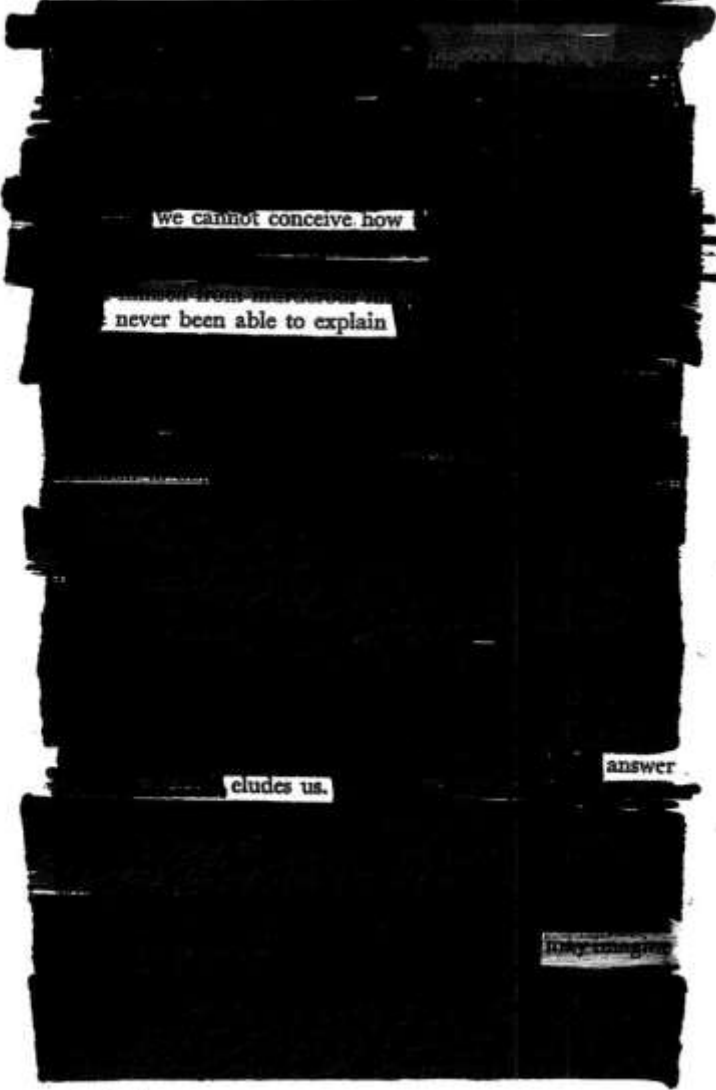
paves the way to an understanding

but

MOURNING AND MELANCHOLIA

251





we cannot conceive how

never been able to explain

cludes us.

answer

they would say

MOURNING AND MELANCHOLIA

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in neither case have we any insight

considerations bring up the question

cannot promise that this attempt will prove entirely satisfactory.





[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] sounds plausible, but [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] too indefinite [REDACTED] gives rise to more  
[REDACTED] problems [REDACTED] cannot expect it to lead  
[REDACTED] us to a clear understanding.

[REDACTED] impossible to answer [REDACTED] we do not even know

[REDACTED] perhaps

[REDACTED] an uncertainty.

reality, however

not easy to decide;

If

probably

however [p. 250 f.]

it is complicated

path is blocked

we understand as little as the patient

tell

We cannot

still does not supply an explanation

we were seeking light.

[REDACTED]

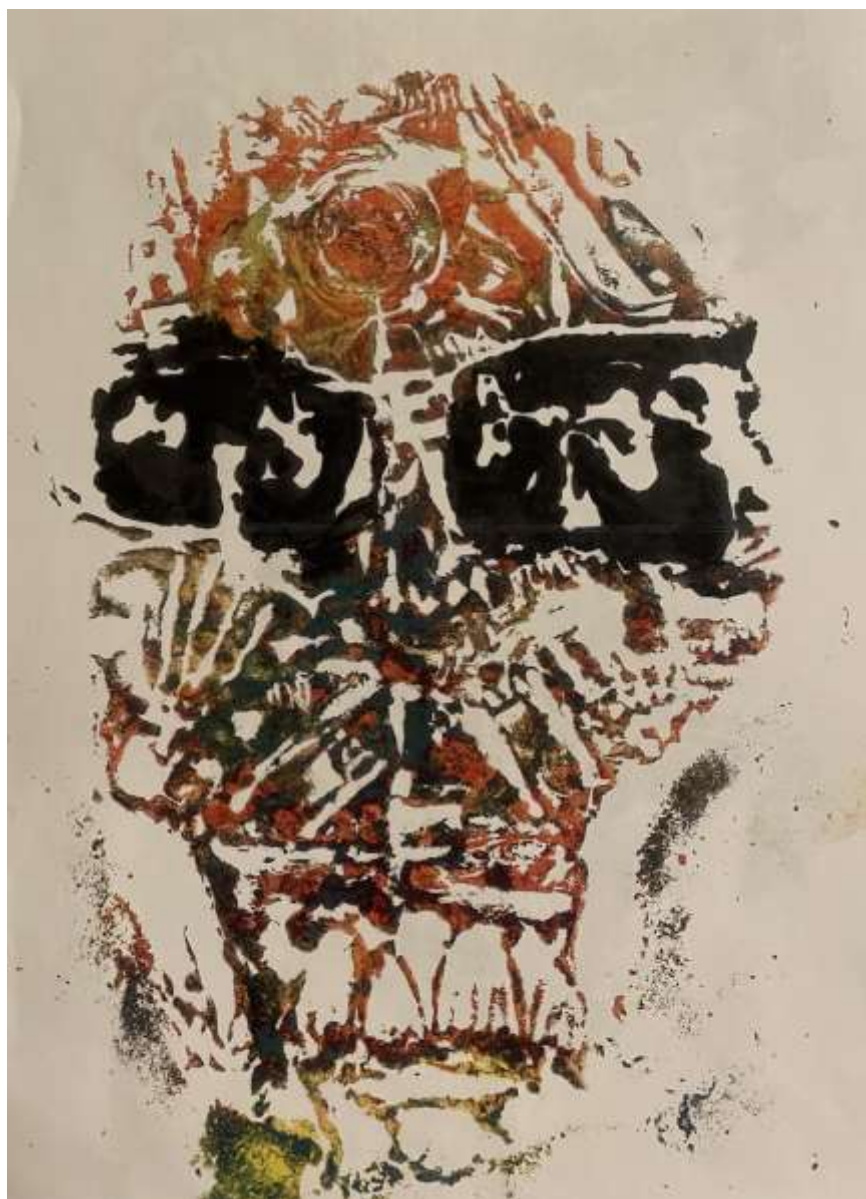
postpone

halt

break off every enquiry before it is completed—till the outcome of some other enquiry can come to its assistance.<sup>2</sup>

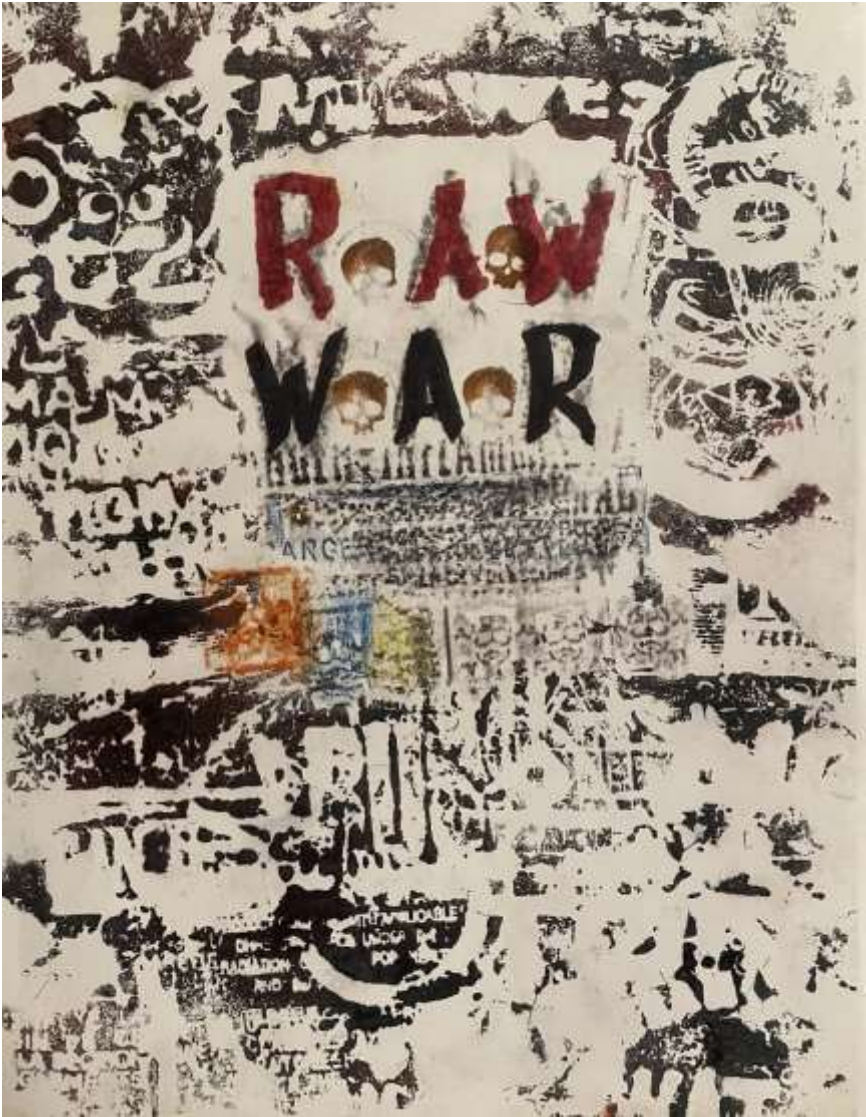
<sup>2</sup> [Footnote added 1925:] Cf. a continuation of this



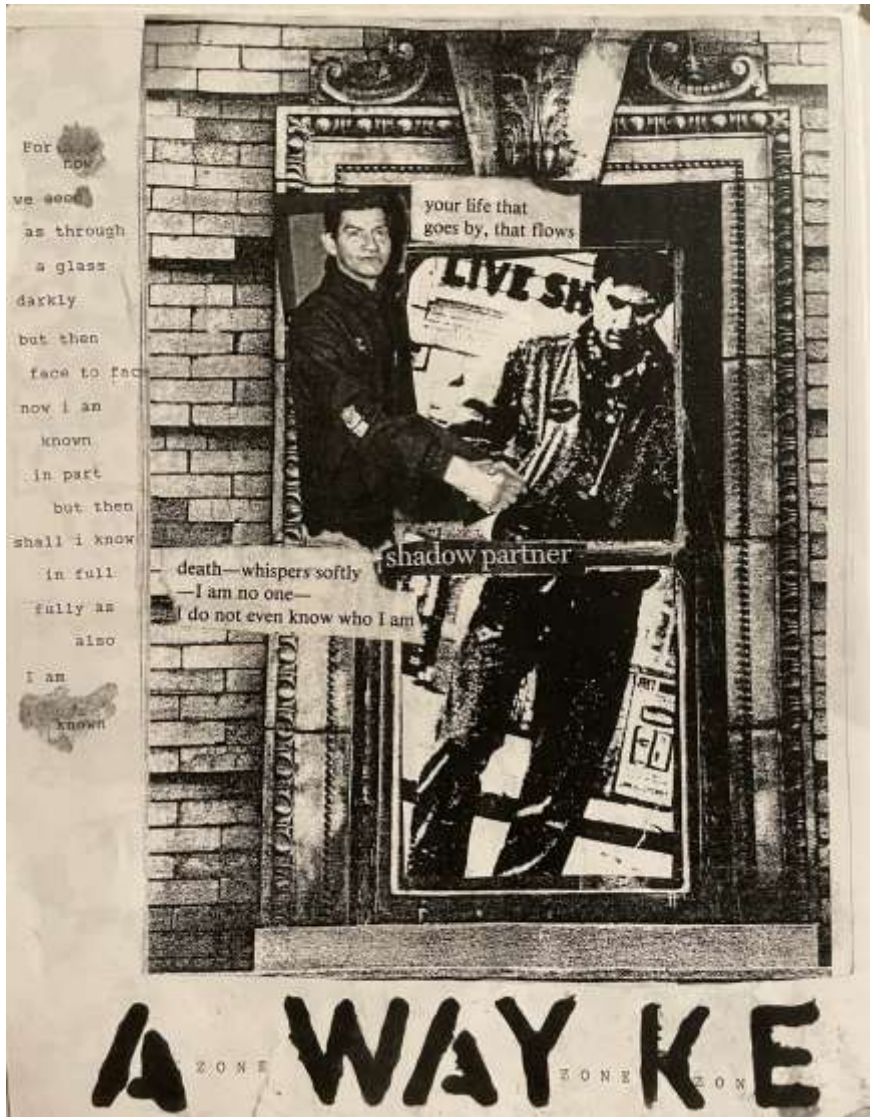












## Contributors' Notes

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Sacha Archer lives in Burlington, Ontario with his wife and two daughters. Recent publications include *Mother's Milk* (Timglaslet), *Hydes* (nOIR:Z) and *Jung Origami* (Enneract Editions) as well as a collaborative sound poetry album with nina jane drystek, *Years Between Rooms*. His work has recently been included in the anthologies *Mouth of a Lion* (steel incisors, 2021) and *Watch Your Head* (Coach House Books, 2020). His book *Empty Building* is forthcoming from Penteract Press as well as the chapbooks *Immortality* (Viktlösheten) and *KIM* (knife fork book). Find him on Facebook and Instagram @sachaarcher, or on twitter @sachaarchermeat.

Glenn Bach is a poet, sound artist, and educator who lives and works in the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains. His major project, *Atlas*, is a long poem that documents his reflections on place, landscape, and our understanding of the world. It has been excerpted in *Dusie*, *jubilat*, *Otoliths*, and others. Glenn documents his work at glennbach.com and @AtlasCorpus.

Lorelei Bacht (she/they) successfully escaped grey skies and red buses to live and write somewhere in the monsoon forest. Her recent writing has appeared and/or is forthcoming in *After the Pause*, *Harpy Hybrid Review*, *The Inflectionist Review*, *Beir Bua*, *Mercurius*, *Strukturwiss*, *The Inflectionist Review*, *Sinking City*, and others. She is also on Instagram: @lorelei.bacht.writer and on Twitter @bachtlorelei.

Daniel Barbiero is a double bassist, composer and writer in the Washington DC area. His music is based on the complex interrelationship between pitch and timbre in the context of free improvisation and the interpretation of indeterminate compositions. His album *In/Completion* (2020) presents his realizations of graphic and open-form scores by contemporary composers from Greece, Italy, Japan and the US. As a composer, he creates verbal, graphic and other scores using non-standard notation for soloists and small ensembles; his scores have been realized by performers in Europe, Asia, and the US. As an instrumentalist, he has performed at venues throughout the Washington-Baltimore area. He writes on the art, music and literature of the classic avant-gardes of the 20th century as well as on contemporary works for various online journals, and is the author of *As Within, So Without*, a collection of essays published by Arteidolia Press in October, 2021.

Christopher Barnes co-edits the poetry magazine *Interpoetry*. His reviews and criticism have appeared in *Poetry Scotland*, *Jacket Magazine*, *Peel*, and *Combustus*. He has given

readings in numerous venues, including Waterstones Bookshop, Newcastle's Morden Tower, and the Proudwords lesbian and gay writing festival. His poetry collection *LOVEBITES* was published by Chanticleer Press in 2005. He lives in Newcastle, UK.

Joel Chace has published work in print and electronic magazines such as *Tip of the Knife*, *Eratio*, *Otoliths*, *Word For/Word*, *Golden Handcuffs Review* and *The Brooklyn Rail*. Most recent collections include *Humors*, from Paloma Press, *Threnodies*, from Moria Books, and *fata morgana*, from Unlikely Books. *Maths* is forthcoming from Chax Press.

David-Baptiste Chirot died in early June, 2021. Chirot was an internationally known artist and poet, and had been active since the 1980s. At the time of his death, he had been working on new projects including visual poetry, writing, and film. His visuals appearing in this issue were collected from his apartment after his death by his long-time friend, Tom Hibbard. Along with C. Mehrl Bennett and John M. Bennett, Hibbard edited a memorial anthology for Chirot entitled *Poet On the Right Side of History*, published by Luna Bisonte Prods.

Jesse DeLong's debut manuscript, *The Amateur Scientist's Notebook*, was published by Baobab Press. Other work has appeared in *Word For/ Word*, *Colorado Review*, *Mid-American Review*, *American Letters and Commentary*, *Indiana Review*, *Painted Bride Quarterly*, and *Typo*, as well as the anthologies *Best New Poets 2011* and *Feast: Poetry and Recipes for a Full Seating at Dinner*. His chapbooks, *Tearings, and Other Poems* and *Earthwards*, were released by Curly Head Press. He Tweets @jessemdeLong

Mark Dow is the author of *Plain Talk Rising* (poems) and *American Gulag: Inside U.S. Immigration Prisons*. His exploration of Beethoven's Opus 131 is in the Spring 2021 *Seneca Review*, and his interview with linguist Nigel Fabb on meter and ineffability is in the January 2022 *PN Review*. @mdow99.

Coleman Edward Dues is the Associate Content Producer at the Academy of American Poets, where he produces *Poem-a-Day*. Some of his work can be found in *Ligeia*, *Otoliths*, *Blazing Stadium*, and *petrichor*. He tweets @colemandues.

Brandan Griffin was born in Massachusetts and now lives in Sunnyside, New York. His first book *Impastoral* will be published by Omnidawn in 2022. He has also written a chapbook called *Four Concretures* (Theaphora Editions), and some of his poems have been published in *Taguwerk* and *Chicago Review*.

Alan Halsey's latest book is *Remarks of Uncertain Consequence* published by Five Seasons Press: a continuation of his forty & more years of collaborations with publisher & master printer Glenn Storhaug.

Jessie Janeshek's full-length collections are *No Place for Dames* (Grey Book Press 2022), *MADCAP* (Stalking Horse Press, 2019), *The Shaky Phase* (Stalking Horse Press, 2017), and *Invisible Mink* (Iris Press, 2010). Her chapbooks include *Spanish Donkey/Pear of Anguish* (Grey Book Press, 2016), *Rah-Rah Nostalgia* (dancing girl press, 2016), *Supernoir* (Grey Book Press, 2017), *Auto-Harlow* (Shirt Pocket Press, 2018), *Channel U* (Grey Book Press, 2020) and *Hardscape* (Reality Beach 2020). Read more at [jessiejaneshek.net](http://jessiejaneshek.net).

Adriana Kobor was born in Hungary in 1988. She has been active in the Netherlands and Belgium since 2006. Her poems aim to explore and extend the boundaries of language. The major part of her work is written in English, although she creates in other languages, as well, including Dutch, Hungarian, and Italian. She currently lives in Italy.

Jim Leftwich is a poet and essayist. Along with Sue, his wife of 34 years, he lived and traveled in a van for most of 2020. They plan to resume that lifestyle in 2022. Leftwich was born in Virginia, and has lived there for most of his life. Capitalism cannot be reformed or repaired; it must be replaced. His ongoing research into poetry and related matters suggests that the word "consciousness" has in the decades following the end of WWII replaced the word "spirit" for a certain kind of inquiring mind. As a poet, as a visual poet, as a practitioner of 3-chord linguistics and desemantized writing, as an experimental essayist, Leftwich has produced a large body of texts, poems, text/image works, and textimagepoems. Another world is possible, even if the poet has to write it into existence. It is not the job of the poet to make things easy for English professors.

Caroline Maun is an associate professor and Chair of English at Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan, where she teaches creative writing and American literature. Her volumes of poetry include *The Sleeping* (Marick Press, 2006), *What Remains* (Main Street Rag, 2013), and three chapbooks, *Cures and Poisons* and *Greatest Hits*, published by Pudding House Press, and *Accident*, published by Alice Greene & Co. She has also been published in *The Bear River Review*, *Bitterzoet Magazine*, *The Cape Rock*, *Crack the Spine*, *Delmarva Review*, *Euphony*, *Evening Street Review*, *Failbetter*, *Green Hills Literary Lantern*, *The MacGuffin*, *The Main Street Rag*, *The Midwest Quarterly*, *Mount Hope Magazine*, *Third Wednesday*, *The Opiate*, *Paragon Journal*, *Peninsula Poets*, *South Carolina Review*, *Sweet Tree Review*, *Waving Hands Review*, *Valparaiso Poetry Review*, and *Eleven Eleven*, among

others.

Pamela Miller is the author of five poetry collections, including *Recipe for Disaster* and *Miss Unthinkable* (both from Mayapple Press) and *How to Do the Greased Wombat Slide* (forthcoming from Unsolicited Press). Her visual poetry has appeared in *BlazeVOX*, *Otoliths*, *Word For/Word*, and elsewhere. She has also published text poetry in *RHINO*, *Book of Matches*, *Nixes Mate Review*, *New Poetry From the Midwest*, *Santa Clara Review*, and many other journals and anthologies. She lives in Chicago.

Sheila E. Murphy is an American poet who has been writing and publishing actively since 1978. Murphy is the recipient of the Gertrude Stein Award for her book *Letters to Unfinished J.* (Green Integer Press, 2003). Her most recent book is *Golden Milk* (Luna Bisonte Prods, 2020). *Reporting Live from You Know Where* won the Hay(na)Ku Poetry Book Prize Competition from Meritage Press (U.S.A.) and xPress(ed) (Finland). Also in 2018, Broken Sleep Books brought out the book *As If To Tempt the Diatonic Marvel from the Ivory.*

J. D. Nelson (b. 1971) experiments with words in his subterranean laboratory. His poetry has appeared in many small press publications, worldwide, since 2002. He is the author of several collections of poetry, including *Cinderella City* (The Red Ceilings Press, 2012). His poem, "to mask a little bird" was nominated for Best of the Net in 2021. Visit <http://www.MadVerse.com> for more information and links to his published work. Nelson lives in Colorado.

Kell Nelson is an artist who works with paper, words and photographs. Her visual work has been published in *Otoliths*, *Maintenant* and *Indefinite Space*, and exhibited at Modified Arts in Phoenix and the Houston Center for Photography. She hasn't owned a car for 22 years and teaches Interdisciplinary Studies at Arizona State University. More at [kellnelson.com](http://kellnelson.com).

Benjamin Norman Pierce is a professional dishwasher with BA's in Philosophy, History, and English. He self-published a novel, "Snuck Past Death and Sleep." and has two albums available on Spotify. He has/will had/have graphics and poetry in *Ancient Heart*, *Convergence*, and *Moebius*, and upcoming in *Aji*, *Lilliput Review*, *Poesy*, *Dragonfly*, *Raintown Review*, *Red Owl*, *Scifaikuest*, *Free Verse*, *Wisconsin Fellowship of Poets Calendar*, *Primordial Traditions*, *Convergences*, *Acme: a Journal of Critical Geography*, *Journal of the Western Mystery Tradition*, *Chiron Review*, *Euphony*, *Alchemy*, *Poetica Review*, *The Bees Are Dead*, *Portland Metrozine*, *Innumerable Stumble*, *Fly In The Head*, and *Dreich*.

Derek Pollard is Series Editor for the Poets on Poetry Series, founded in 1977 by Donald Hall and published by University of Michigan Press. His books include *On the Verge of Something Bright and Good* (Barrow Street 2021), *Till One Day the Sun Shall Shine More Brightly: The Poetry and Prose of Donald Revell* (ed., University of Michigan Press 2020), and *Inconsequentia* (with Derek Henderson, BlazeVOX 2010).

Alexis Quinlan is a writer, editor, and teacher of composition and conceptual poetry at Fordham University in New York. Her poems have appeared in journals including *The Paris Review*, *Rhino*, *Tinderbox*, *Juked*, and *Madison Review*. She served as an assistant to Annie Finch on *Choice Words*, an anthology of writing on abortion. Her recent review of Stephanie Strickland's *How the Universe Is Made* is available at *Heavy Feather Review*.

William Repass lives in Pittsburgh, PA. His poetry and prose have appeared in *Hotel Amerika*, *Bennington Review*, *Denver Quarterly*, *Bending Genres*, and elsewhere. His critical writing can be found at *Full Stop* and *Slant Magazine*.

Gregory Vincent St. Thomasino's poetry and prose have appeared in *Barrow Street*, *New York Tyrant*, *jubilat*, *Verse Wisconsin*, *GAMMM*, *EOAGH*, *Cordite*, *StylusLit* and *Dispatches from the Poetry Wars*. His books include *The Valise* (Dead Academics Press, 2012), a volume of poetry, and a novel, *Stephen's Landing* (Adelaide Books, 2020). He lives in Brooklyn Heights, NY, where he works as a private docent.

Fabio Sassi makes photos and acrylics using what is hidden, discarded or considered to have no worth by the mainstream. Fabio lives in Bologna, Italy. His work can be viewed at [fabiosassi.foliohd.com](http://fabiosassi.foliohd.com)

Alex Wells Shapiro (he/him) is a poet and artist from the Hudson Valley, living in Chicago. He reads submissions for *Frontier Poetry*, serves as Business and Grants Manager for *Another Chicago Magazine*, and co-curates *Exhibit B: A Reading Series* presented by The Guild Literary Complex. His debut poetry collection, *Insect Architecture*, is forthcoming in Spring 2022 with Unbound Edition Press. More of his work may be found at [www.alexwellsshapiro.com](http://www.alexwellsshapiro.com).

Carol Stetser joined the mail art network in 1979 and began making visual poetry in 1984. She makes her collages the old fashion way with scissors and glue sticks. Two books of her vispo are available in the *C'est Mon Dada* series. She began the "Her Dictionary" series during the pandemic.

D. E. Steward's five volumes of *Chroma* were out in 2018 from Avant-Garde Classics/Amazon in Brooklyn. *Chroma* is a month-to-month calendar book, the months are continuing.

Danni Storm is a Danish artist and poet. Editor of small press Non Plus Ultra, and literary journal *Addenda*. Work may be found at: [dannistorm.xyz](http://dannistorm.xyz)

Ted Warnell lives and works at the western edge of a great Canadian prairie.

Mark Young lives in a small town in North Queensland in Australia. He has been publishing poetry for more than sixty years, & is the author of around sixty books, primarily text poetry but also including speculative fiction, vispo, & art history. His most recent books are *The Toast*, from Luna Bisonte Prods, *The Sasquatch Walks Among Us*, from Sandy Press, & *Songs to Come for the Salamander, Poems 2013-2021*, selected & introduced by Thomas Fink, co-published by Meritage Press & Sandy Press.