

VOLT

VOLUME FIFTEEN

2009

George Albon
David Albracht
Molly Bendall
CM Burroughs
Julie Carr
Stephanie Cleveland
Brenda Coultas
Carol Ann Davis
Natalie Day
Suzanne Doppelt
Tiff Dressen
Susanne Dyckman
Judson Evans
Robert Fernandez
Molly Lou Freeman
Renee Gladman
Johannes Göransson
Kate Greenstreet
Endi Bogue Hartigan
Lucy Ives
Jeff T. Johnson
Becca Klaver
Alan Lew
Jami Macarty
Gregory Mahrer
Alexandra Mattraw
Joseph V. Milford
Linda Norton
Martie McCleery Palar
Craig Santos Perez
Coralie Reed
Elizabeth Robinson
Leonard Schwartz
Brandon Shimoda
Charlie Smith
Theresa Sotto
Nathalie Stephens
Stacy Szymaszek
Catherine Theis
TC Tolbert
Nance Van Winckel
Stephen Vincent
Markus Weaver
Gail Wronsky



INTERNET



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George Albon

from Sill

It really is a purple mountain
it really is far

the afternoon vents along
whistlers in it

Country of the pointed firs
would also be outpost
to a rough plaited mind

Boy Meets Boy
and then the
dappled doormat

People still walked
on the active street
in smooth

interpretive rates

An idealism of the full word,
that it means itself
and has lots of neighbors

To check the contents
and feel they would fault
in any imminent restitch

The hail beat down

I stood under glass
in a municipal gap

He fills out the book
before his whims go North
and snare on the page.

David Albracht

Gothic Gander

The preservation of a goose requires
The umpteenth dereliction of some duty
I cannot recall presently in the moonlight
But fat grouses risen in stern wind surges
Flee in fear from tables where they gorge
On loathsome ooze and other discharges
Scudded on buoyant hulls
Wasted bonds of hospitality
Foaming tepidarious milk toasts
In the land of returning gnaw
As hallowed hackles bristle platters
With teeth awestruck in the offing
White ram to the zephyr
Fair and forlorn as any dog star

Molly Bendall and Gail Wronsky

GET THE INSPECTORS

elegiac field charged with
a little metal ad(vice) I'd give
 mesh chain link belt
refugee exile of self
 my string theory
thong with negative space
less governing pharmaceutical charm
 enhancers inhi(biters)

check pointt
border
 which camp
 fatigued
 with my razor
 phone
 il(leg)al
 baggy pants
 alienated
 (butch)er
 new at
 target

NEW MOVE, FLORALS

a happening
that acupuncture punk
when all's abloom
asanas are askew
funereal really (pet)als
a mannerism field of poses
posey pro(so)dy
disembodied a mere negation with spark
c(lip)ped nip it in the
gardening g(loves)

pricks
polka dot
d(ashes)
new seeds
mon jardin
b(loss)om
summon
sense-realm
im(pin)ge
di(vine) station

HOLES/SEPARATION ANXIETY

Call me "unreliable"
pull apart/fall apart the old *fort-da*
at the airport
You go/Godot!
you're "autumnal"
a gypsy girl dragged off by the g(end)armes
TAKE ONE!
it's "subterranean"
Get a: *peignoir/bête noir/nom de plume* life
"complicit"
caught red-handed with the Louis Vuitton
in "tufted emerald"
Departure/aperture
my own bravado murders
the "metaphor"
of c(losing)

REM(EMBER) ME

cellular (mole)cular
dig to that qu(ick)

back to DNA DKNY straight, easy,
clas(sic)
needs more memory

I've stored it my space with ring
tones in one &in the nose, lip, brow

extend your self/hair

Romance it my C(hem)ical

one c(elle)d essence

(dig)(it)al
it girl
her core
strength
the tone
gyro(tonic)
guy with tunic
fri(ends) with
w or x
toning gel
Is that Gr(eek)?
f(rag)ment

CM Burroughs

ABOUT MYSELF, THIS MUCH WILL SUFFICE

I am colored.

I was Colored.

I don't have a favorite color.

You are smoky black.

You are bone white.

I love you.

You are connected to the ship.

In chains/with whip.

I love you/I think about what you've done.

I descend from a trans-Atlantic chain gang.

I descend from half-breeds and other things.

I have never been to Africa.

I love Those people over There.

AFRICAN AMERICAN ON INDEPENDENCE DAY, OR CHAIN-LINKED

Have nothing to do with
the fireworks blasting
down those streets.

Stay far off and watch
color wash the sky. That
black guy there is about
the same business. Share
with him.

A book of Ifs provides
no hypothetical answers.
If her head is full of bees...

What happens then, when
the firework doesn't explode or
it does, but against the hand, still
on the ground.

Well, I'm too far away to see.
I can't tell you specifics, but
I'll bet some Joe lost a hand.

Share with him.

I clap to wake myself. I clap
to appreciate the fantastic
green watering the sky.

THE POWER OF THE VULNERABLE BODY

Love,

precursor to our shank-less entrances. Nothing strapped at the ankle or

in the mouth

but 2 pairs of six. We felt ourselves fortunate to have beds and bodies

to lay

inside of at night. Like a man in the female outhouse, he and I tried to hurt

each other

so that the public could not break our skin; we used our canines/birdshots/

live matches/

rope. We wanted to do everything that could be done to us. We used

Nth words,

which did the swift damage. There was a gash where he said “[

!]”

Thankfully, he could sew. I was all new within the week except for the

weeping.

He had to hold my face in his hands and say, “look at me. I love you”

several

times before my eyes washed and it was him again. We strode into

light.

For recovery, should we have underestimated the public, we stored the chains

in black boxes.

Julie Carr

66.

Should I speak to you about the dream?

(mint leaves in my hair, something rotting in my—)

Under the immense pleasure of
conformity, I found myself delivering

flower boxes with body parts

Under the immense comforting plane of conformity—

He told me to go into the town and bring him back some
women. I asked him what he meant. He didn't answer,
just said Do it.

I took them by the hand, brought them to the door.

Eventually I found myself delivering

flower boxes with body parts.

*Ravening clouds, the burial
clouds, in black masses spreading.*

(Dickinson/Whitman)

67.

MOTHER AND DAUGHTER 2.

sweetkickI'llkillyouIAMnotcraz
ydon'tcallmecrazyohstupidright
youthinkI'mstupidfuckyoufuckyo
uI'mnotstupidI'MAnicepersonani
cepersonIknowyouwantadifferent
motheranIcemommyanicermommyget
awayfrommejustgoawayyayayayath
at'sallyousaytheNOiseisjustban
gbanbangbangI'mnotstupidwhydoy
outhinkI'msostupid?mISerableju
stmiserableI'Msomerablenotst
upiddOn'tcallmestupidorcrazyI'
mnotcrazyyou'recrazyNOMomyou'r
enotcrazynobody'scallingyoucra
zyyou're artweloveyouhiMo
mMomHiAl I omingBenhe'scomi
ngtoore en?MomI'mhavinga
babyMomshshshshshshyou'renotcr
azyOhIknowallyouwanttodoiskill
meI'mnotgoingtoletyoukillmeget
awayfrommeOhyeahIwasaniceperso
nIwasnicebutnotnownownotniceju
ststupidIknowwhatyousayaboutme
blablablabalNoMomwedon'tMomloo
kMomtherivertheriverisprettyth
at'stheCharlesriverwhydont'you
justkillmejustkillmeinsteadofA
LLthistalkingstoptalkingorI'll
justkillyouMomlet'ssinglet'ssi
ngForSpaciousSkiesyourememberA
mericaAmericaGodshedhisGraceon
theorweshallovercomerememberW
eShallovercoouoomweshalloverco
ouuuoompurplemountainsthat'sri
ghtMAjestyandAMberwavesofgrain
AMERICAAMericagodshedhisgraceo
ntheyoulikethatoneshouldwesin

68.

Here's a happy place.

Sun on rooftops. Sun in blue. Hissy happy foam.
Nothing so safe as the sun.

Nothing so safe as blue.

"Fire safety officers inspected the furnace and gave it
the all-clear.

It is easy to cast this as negligence, but council
workers checking a furnace can hardly be expected to be
on the lookout for buried families." (BBC News)

For imprisoning his daughter and (so safe as
the) raping her for 24 (car the yard the)
fathering six (blue) by her, and (in and out
and in and out and) imprisoning (what is well?
what wet?) three (safe as the) he can serve
(sun the sun serve the sun) a maximum of 15 (in
blue happy blue) years.

sun so safe, safe in the car, safe in the yard

whereas my mouth

whereas my vagina. whereas my nipples. whereas my eyes.

69.

A million, billion fishes trace the swirly whirly wet

tongueless, lidless fishes

nick the sunlight with their scales.

Once I had a girl on Rocky Top, half bear, other half cat

wild as a mink, but sweet as soda pop

I still dream about that.

Stephanie Cleveland

North Dakota

For her, barracudas occurred when alone
together a moment, before the anniversary of the year they decided
not to get married, she clasped him as he stood at the sink,
pressing into his backside. Quietly a train paused. He gave
her a wine glass filled with pomade and nine tambourines
clanged around their apartment. She put first one failure,
then an Order inside him and then immediately named it
please. A treadmill made her life less distracting,
and razors shared some of the same ambulances
as those she unceremoniously maneuvered to the floor,
alongside his shattered wimple. Without any trouble,
they had, like remote controls, tumbled from the console
of her anima, and then suddenly resurfaced,
only to find Chicago ended in dark red—
He wasn't sure it would be so easy.
Even on sunny days, when the wind raced from its early fall
team meetings and coyotes ambushed the backyard
of this man, whom she loved and perforated,
still innominate bones brushed back and forth
in a direction not altogether unsatisfactory
to clouds with no conception
of what they would grow up to be.

Brenda Coultas

“The Tatters”

-----from *A Critical Mass for Brad Will*

Looking at the ground, the tatters of the nest I destroyed, but how else could I know the nature of physical objects, and of my body?

I, a physical object, ask what's inside the body? The Mutter Museum and its collection of swallowed needles, fish hooks, and pennies.

For a long time looking in, gazing, trying to know

The nature of the physical, like the man who could balance jagged, sea rocks, one on top another. He could know an object and if those boulders could be stacked as steady as plates or as delicately as a house of cards.

I, a physical object, reading *Anatomy*, 1924, colored plates, diagrams with overlays. It is good that I saved these thick books, each one a doorstopper on female anatomy and child care, from the time of paper and print, colored plates to lift and reveal. Each plate, like a candy pop, taking you further, dissolving layers until you reach the baby soft center.

Diagrams, like this one. See.

A man told me of finding the foot pedals of a sewing machine covered in dust on Mott

St., about how he put his foot to the pedal and the flywheel turned although the rest of the machine was extinct.

Flywheel, I like to say it and see it.

Alone with paper, or reading from paper, in a room

It's quiet.

Me, a noun, an animal from the time of the animals

I write and I eat with my hands.

Working late and decoding secret writings from the tatters (read once of a wealthy young artist who slept in nests he made out of bedding in luxury hotel rooms. I thought a nest should be made from discards, and humble like a quilt.)

The feather again (the blade). This time on the street.

First quietly in front, then as I move, cocks quietly towards the 10 o'clock position. Later in the day, silently soaked with winter salt.

Too, same roach and rat.

Regulars.

Can't recall the center, only the fury with which I tore it, then a drop in the blood at realizing what I had done.

Paper at my feet.

Bodies.

Stillborns.

What little I know of other lives.

BradWill was a poet, Indie-media journalist, anarchist, and a friend of mine. He was murdered in Oaxaca, Mexico on October 27, 2006, while filming a street battle between the Oaxacan governer Ulises Ruiz Ortiz's thugs and APPO, the Popular Assembly of the People, during a months long teachers' strike in which at least eleven were killed. For more information: www.friendsofbradwill.org.

The Battle

Carol Ann Davis

Upon Seeing the Terezin Children's Drawings, Two Parts

I.

it was something I wanted
hem of a skirt *prehensile* and its antecedents
the story of the annunciation told backward
and with feeling the wind a little
pent up inside us an undersea world
stitched on register paper and drawn by a child
most of them gone now the *house of the minute*
and a thousand sirens calling them
toward what little protection a devil offers
the basement full of yard goods
the third floor storm drain
the day on the street we walked a little ahead
of the rain that was coming remember
your mother still lost somewhere
our boys barely thought of
but safer for it that's when I saw the detail
thought to tell you its secret *Christ in Limbo*
a museum full of names our own children
in an apartment full of bees
but here the names of the dead so many children
their pictures on postcards
perfect jellyfish-bunny-ears-starfish-electric-eels it was like
listening to the music of their childhood
or walking out into the deepest
possible water strange fish if I could I would follow you
stitch your name into history somewhere

II.

if I could stitch your name into history somewhere
strange fish I would follow you into possible water
or walk out into the deepest
music of childhood perfect jellyfish-bunny-ears-starfish-electric-eels
so like pictures on postcards
but here the names of the dead are so many children
their dreams asleep in an apartment full of bees
a museum so full of names our own children
think to tell you their secret *Christ in Limbo*
safer for seeing detail
our boys barely thought of
your mother still lost somewhere
in the rain that was coming remember
the day on the street we walked a little ahead
noticed the third floor storm drain
the basement full of yard goods
saw what little protection a devil offers
a thousand sirens calling children
most of them gone now the *house of the minute*
stitched on register paper drawn by a child
and pent up inside us an undersea world
a feeling the wind a little
story of the annunciation told backward
hem of a skirt *prehensile* and its antecedents
all of it something I wanted

Natalie Day

Celled

Underneath, where it's warm, we

blue on the boardwalk, all in a weepy row. Handcuffed, we keep dreaming behind the back.

1st: Our hearts fill with milk and suds.

2nd: Our heads fill with baby babies.

3rd: Our bellies fill with infection.

The girls get covered up, bald below concrete. The nudge: Not the most original haircut, is it?

COUNTDOWN PROJECT: Release

Things evolve out of our recognition.

Bevies move and get reputations

(bad girl gone good girl gone bad)

Again, mono-fuck our way out of this one.

Cigarette trade. Because our hands have told

too much time
to be good,
still.

We say: Cover up that bruise with a bathmat.

1st: We costume in fur helmets

2nd: We costume in striped kitty cat outfits

3rd: We costume in devil skins shaped like mad hair mammas

Feet first we made it through the ceiling fan. The sassy sort of sin, someone's pans in our pants.

Breakaway . I flew under the big house and lifted it with my girl legs.

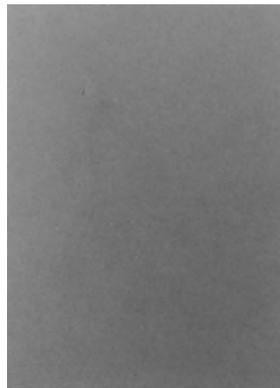
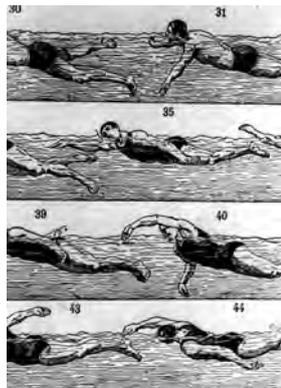
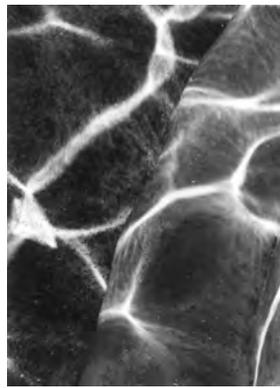
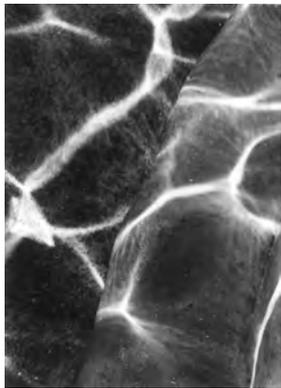
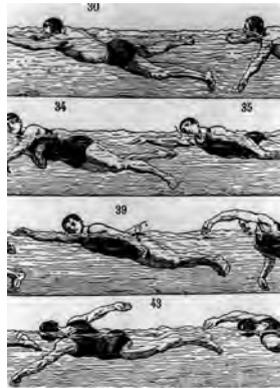
Suzanne Doppelt

translated by

Molly Lou Freeman

Animals

in a bubble other smaller, transparent bubbles, where back and forth go the visible: flying, walking, crawling etc. Outside, nothing is seen. Forms and light proliferate, the sun, the moon and the stars on the same plane, not quite in the foreground. Nature is a carpet in circumference, hardly distant, the appearance of the far away, half a meter for a fly but much more for an owl, even upon a moonless night. So often one sees no movement in bird's eyes, in certain butterflies it's white as snow, in spiders all's black and the flea's vermillion. One's a half sphere, rather dull or has nearly the roundness of a pearl and equal splendour as the sun, and the bee lands on open forms, stars and polygons, avoids the square and circle which, nevertheless, it defines in figures of 8 to reveal its route. Or rather prints with others its absence on earth, a miniscule path in the steaming grass, in the sludge, a deep, clear trace, prints on hardened snow and exhalations left by the steps, the schematic path of the arctic hare. Without chain without white coverlet without objection, all of the sudden, it's an impassive, silent phantom, the gaze crossing, then it's just a black she cat, *beast I am, but clever beast*. It doesn't efface its path and the shadow detaches gently from the body, nothing of the past nor future, nothing unending yet all stays the same. Melded into the landscape, zero contour, unmoving lengthily, less than plants, mixed in color, matter shifts from one realm to another, blots are rocks, rays twigs, the vegetal is merely a sleeping animal. How many leaves are not leaves, the grass mantis, the leaf fish, the tree frog, the vegetal is an animal produced by the earth. Numerous and animals in reality are much more various than those of the most fabulous bestiaries. In his twelve-tomb History of birds, aldrovandi speaks of monsters, two-faced and fork-feet. Nature is an immense tableau featuring all manner of worlds and detail: an insect is less animal than a cat, an oyster is even less animal than an insect and so forth. In the Icones animalium, conrad gesner carefully arranges all in alphabetical order, while pierre belon classifies fish by their portraits, nearest to nature



Water

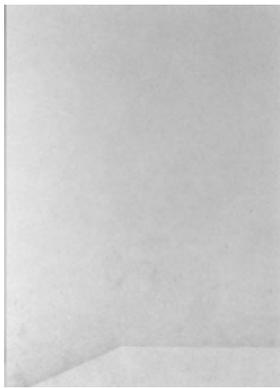
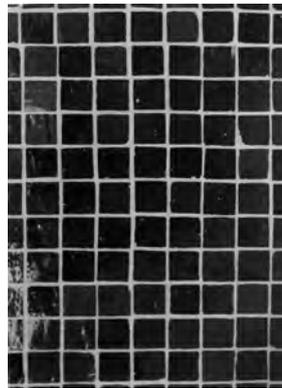
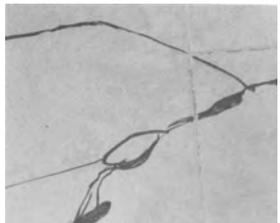
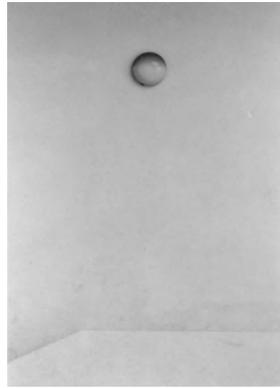
four small isle, canals overgrown with duckweed and greenish lichens, a wetland, a mud coat, insects swim on it and objects limply repose, the puddles, the garden is listless. The dormant water intersects images and flips them, the ground modified and swallows shadows, sad lifeless flower seen, the puddle suspends reflection and at the bottom a thousand invisible and useful things: weeds, fish, roots, stones. The water is even blacker, the island is a darkroom, nothing worse than she who sleeps, mist, blurry bodies, the little sparks and super mobile spirits, the drowned and the fear of the faraway lake. Let's begin once again with some small colored scenes, Woman in her bath, sponging the leg, Nude wet, The great tub, chaste Suzanne. The isle is an isle, temperate, fictitious, floating like a chunk of wood or a ship or some such thing which can swim on its own. The dormant water intersects images, always falls and forms ponds, cisterns and numerous lakes which absorb all the light, yet warmed by the sun, the slightest part evaporates, sissst – much less than brandy and more than mercury, becomes thunder and clouds, remains nine days in the air and in the oceans 3000 years. Mist invisible or cold droplets in suspension, micro ices which well reflect color but deform the sun, an image long and continuous, and at 46 cm the shrinking man meets a carnival dwarf and gets knocked out by a water drop, as many of them as there are suns. Water forever falls, moves above and below, swirls, bubbles, rivulets, goes from one place to another, from one form to the next, an odd pond, a mist cascade, a serpentine waterway, a stream, never two the same, who fled in the grass one and the same as Mona Lisa's smile said monet. All a flow, sunken swept to the end, the sea horizontal, beats, refracts, undulates countless star-islets. The purest and most impure water, viscous in the deep open ocean where swimming is sluggish and volumetric, a drink for fish, undrinkable and for man, mortal. The entire corpus of science, itself an ocean, the encyclopaedia's an immense, on-going map made uniquely for navigators, certain sailors or the common adventurers who rove the world as a rhizome or giant tree

Matérialisation du visage, 2006 Planche N°3



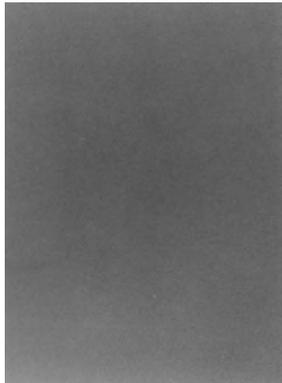
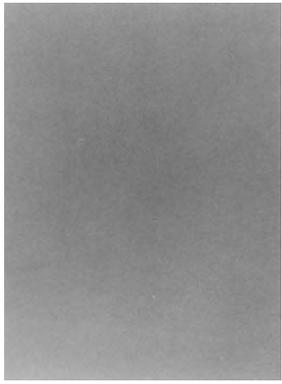
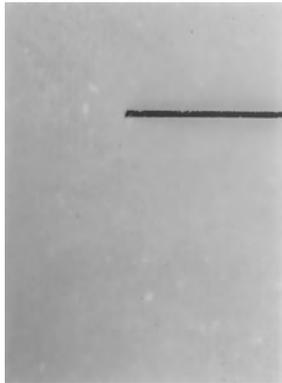
Faces

on a wall tracing the shadow of a form that the light sets forth is the first so-called portrait, all around the face a well-defined line, from the chin to the crown of the forehead and the roots of the hair is one-tenth the body's height. The same once again in a bubble, a convex mirror, that of the painter as a very young man. His image within which advances and withdraws according to the laws of reflection, like the hand placed below, the beams of the ceiling and the door's odd exit. Or later amélie boudet facing the lens, body blurry with the phantom of her husband six meters over the ground, the milky form of clara harris, her two spheres and one comet printed on a fragile plate, a ghost stamp. From the other world seen face-on, translucent, alive in profile, three-quarters with and without contour, on a neutral ground or melded onto the verdant landscape behind the wide open window. Dark expressions, torment, fright require deep shadow, astonishment and joy, vivid light. A certain air or a quite subtle wind, a beautiful frown with double snub, a single muscle serves to perform the movement of the soul, that according to doctor duchenne de bologne, *the expression's head* is made with conducting wires and an induction mechanism. Its models are two little girls of smooth visage, an older woman with skin burnt by the sun, a young and beautiful man, a thin labourer with marked features, an old man with an air of wilful intelligence. The face opens, mask simple, lets itself be seen a second, its double staring, eyes empty, uniform or broken, a third resembling others whose shape and colors transform without particular sign, yet another, super mobile, dead, sometimes criminal. The stock shop of the face, you're given one and then you choose a new, part animal or the like, two-faced monsters, spirit beasts. From the time of the frog, nature's chubby image of man or vice versa, a sequence from which the nose is slowly released, the forehead and chin while the nose and the mouth become even less. In human physiognomy, giambattista della porta speaks of the astonishing community of nature and forms of the animated world: plato likened to the dog, high flared nose, forehead long in length, socrates the stag, camus' nose, vitellius to the owl's great big head



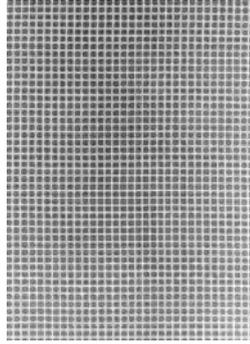
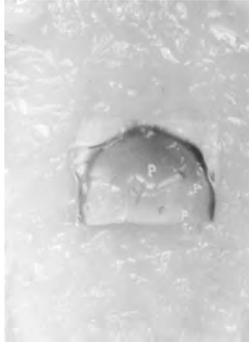
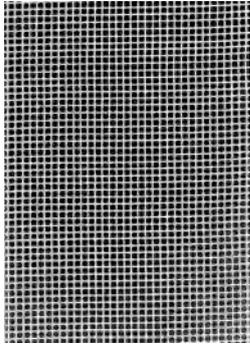
Architecture

A well made painting is like a wall of glass or some other thing, always formed from base to top, sometimes oblique, of variable thickness and height, 20 arms long according to florentine measure, of many colors, with a door or without one. It grows, bends and finishes cracking, becoming a ruin, pierced it equals sound, a machine which functions and listens as the walls see. *The subject, I don't know why, came to mind when watching a wall* said antonioni, the cry a great boom, a double supersonic bang. The walls speak, have ears to listen and eyes sometimes, inward minds, the first portrait is a shadow whose contour's a well-defined line. If one looks at a wall covered with spots, one sees a blurry mass of all new objects, pleasing faces, moving figures, battles, singular expressions, names, 3D spaces, towns: view of Delft and its small yellow part, the circular wall, plants climbing up one in Naples. And behind, behind it what happens? A floor, a roof, and four walls is a room for mirages, rays criss-cross, on one of them as on a black painting the light prints the world's inverted image. If one looks at wall covered with spots or various marks, one sees mountains, rivers, great valleys, zig-zag routes, mirrors and bright leaves, a sumptuous perspective, a dream garden. Here the walls woven with citrus trees and their argentine flowers and dangling fruits, there a rampart of ferns, rambling hedges and a curtain of tamarisk and cypress with green summits. Farther along, a great perennial border, 100 meters long by 15 meters in height, common laurel and alder, rockrose and loquat, in perfection enclose a dream garden without door or window, the beautiful flower garden like the walls of a bedroom. They're no longer to be seen in the toulousan exhibition room of françois filhol, those of the antechamber vanishing behind various instruments, maps and portraits, the great wonders of nature, air sea and earth. Or in the library of wolffenbüttel, in circular aisles they're mixed up with masses of books that permit according to leibnitz to take in a wink and by a well-ordered system all of knowledge without the use a ladder



Machines

in the air to observe 4-winged flight, go to ditches and you'll see birds with black plumage or the dragonfly: when its forewings go up, the back wings drop, a nanocopter. Man is made as he makes machines and all other things: the ballet mecanique, the flower which walks, the unmarried machine. Of those who fly, the model bat or glider in dead leaves, it must remain free from the waist up, a moving autonomy, moving the feet, head and the rest, it creates energy, it will go strait ahead if it folds the arms in and vice versa. But to seize the air, one must study water and its whirlpools, there for example where vaucanson's duck with a transparent stomach paddles, drinks, eats and digests exactly like a real animal. On the ground a giant sculpted in dirt clump, unfinished, the eyes empty, a special principle which animates then kills it, or made of various tissues, with 2 bolts in the neck, electricity and lightening awaken him, he runs like a madman down the roads, a magnetic sleepwalker. Turning machines, the sinuous movement of the snake has served as a model and the admirable system of the giraffe or all of nature made up of each part, the infinite machine, connection, variation, expansion, prick, flux and reflux. The world is beautiful and round, it turns like a well mechanized stage set, to the left enter the gods of the woods and country sides, to the right the sea divinities, above and below the shadows and furies. In the water and its whirlpools, penguins distinguish ultraviolet light and infrared fish, with 1, 2, 3, 4 eyes or more – the fly has hundreds on each side. The eye is device for capture, like the dark room where the rays cross, intersect and imprint on the opposite wall an inverse image of the world. Connection, variation, secret routes and hidden links, the encyclopedia is much more than the sum of its parts, it's a great fold-up map with multiple entrances and exits as well as imagination's machine. Thus the flying boat of fancesco de lana held in the air by 4 spheres, the 2 astronomic machines conceived by olaus roëmer, one for the planets and the other for eclipses, laputa's perfectly round aerial isle set in motion by a magnet, pascal's machine for mathematical rules without plumes and without tokens



Statues

each column contains a phantom, here a heap strewn pell-mell, there a jumbled pile fallen, poorly formed without a sound from the moon, swept in by the sea or found in a bush – *the motionless bush of the hawthorn*, to look upon it is to go insane. Held in place, petrified between two worlds, the feet animated but linked, the eyes turned inward, it has a hollow in place of a heart and still watches over more than one death. Or it's magic, photius speaks of a statue of wax capable of ending volcanic eruptions, of preventing the enemy from destroying the hills, pliny speaks of yet another imitation, which early every morning produces the sound of a broken cord and the names of the gods, to listen to it is to lose one's mind. Or it's used for exchange, as much as you give, a tooth a leg a nose a hand, a little idol – the anatomical venus comes apart in numerous pieces, and even an old piece of broken bottle, giving giving as much as you get, health glory happiness money, gifts rendered must resemble gifts given. Fallen from the moon, brought in by the sea, found in a bush or fashioned after an engraving then dried out in the sun to resist the air: Aryballe in the form of a young kneeling man, Betty Boop's effigy Biscuit, the dancing satyr, the automatic flute player. 3 feet high, an arm-width's wide, four fingered, shaped or poured, clothed or naked, imitating an animal, a man, a woman, a god, an abstract quality, the seasons, an aspect of nature, the ages, the hours of the day, man in earth 1, in marble 10, in plaster 28, in stucco 37, in salt 16, in snow 89, painted 11. Each figure of *la smorfia*, this magnificent book, this endless catalogue which contains all things, the events and images of dreams, a true rebus, the great mirror of the world, and which allows to change numbers to better play them in *lotto*. Held in place, yet ever more active, time seeks its prey to embody, unfolds slowly, takes a step, eyes turned out, turns upon itself, its face opens, and appears a second and then another, super mobile. It becomes even more beautiful, the light changing on its floating sails, takes another rapid step, it's like the noise that flying sorcerers make, renowned for thunder. It flies along routes, like dead leaves which in their nocturne dance of caprice, the *goth dance*, go forth, always keeping its silent gesture secret

Suzanne Doppelt's work in French originally appeared in
Le Monde est beau, il est rond, 2008, Inventaire/Invention éditions.

Tiff Dressen

Message: a theory (song)

tidal pools the unseen
the song that was

 attached
at the inseam

*(our common lung our
communal humming
 lung)*

like bone pain
like strontium pulls
the one hundred thousand crimson
flares

a loss of heart

a loss

of capacity

a staple in the chest
 where the song
stuck it
 to the song

at regular intervals
a song of water
 splitting

a song of self-repair
 a catalytic song

the executioner singing
 the vultures' song of
dismemberment

that I understood the song
to extract the effect

from the cause

*(the tides pulling in all
night at the tiles beneath
our ocean bed)*

songs of self-sabotage
stitched to the throatdome

a song for stealing bodies

a hymn for children transported
throughout the night

grave diggers working over

the song of homeostasis

a song for the organs (once
and for all) revealed to the open
air

a pathogenic song
intoned

to the tune
of cell birth

a song for the body water chamber

a pair of salt water
lungs for the under water
choir

(for our singing) the wire tapped
breath between us
we share

Message:

It is as we said

the animals

naming them we said

“name them”

longing to be and

(belonging to nomen)

“No” as far away

as it was

belonging would

take us

Message: parallel myth

She
who
forms
the
third

*(in
the
intimacy
of
deciphering)*

offers
you
now
the
second
person

like
a small
fast
horse

Susanne Dyckman and Elizabeth Robinson

The Miserable

Soon

to arrive, soon
to commence, ruffled in the air not
the sleeve, but your arm
Quavering The upright posture of the air
ordains this So you wave it onward
And that element adjunct to you
wavers also, adjacent, alongside, aswell, unsure

you will become the presence of the day

you will be its reflection

signaling the sky with your gaping mouth

one foot within the sun's print

you grab at possibilities while you clutch nothing

you elbow your way into the light

Interminable, to fret, looking for
the word that will console “grief” by rhyming with it
Hunger floats down from above, settles
on your torso Hunger There, where
it is fused with your blouse, the surface of your belief
always, in the descent–

the eye opens the waking universe

is annoyed by the staring, but here you sit, here I

sit by you, gnawing the core fruit, the day, eating

by light or in semi-darkness (who will choose?)

bite by bite as must be,

starting at the edge or moving into the

juiciest middle first (who to choose that?)

what one holds, what better two might

Imminent Now we know the rhyme scheme, and so
I say it again: immanent
Learn to ignore the interior scribblings, center, it’s ‘core fruit’
that makes for conventional appetites
The day is about to come Stay back from the acceptable
Be the victim of your thirst

it starts for us all but it is not refreshed
it is encased in repetition
you are going there
while I am here and there I am going to where
you might be so we might meet safely
again in some offered sameness
we hold a tool, a cup of flour, a book

Put on your body Arrival puts forth
the frugal emphasis of love Cranky, immanent,
the mouth finally ajar The breath arriving, as it should,
dutiful

to one dream given to lingering
the sun is too bright it casts down
and catches us downcast I begin as you
and then think backwards

Judson Evans

Collier's Mansion, 7

Le Jette

spiders on the surface of the music, as a score is trampoline and tympanum

between tides by the thousands celebrate holy days
by eccentric calculations propagandize the great granite blocks of the

tentative building reversible preambles
to through backstroke
detailed intercepts fight or flight of gradient flinching out
lifting a slow
liquid of subdivisions porches
sawed halves jut and

leaking
a staircase
verses

more ductile

tuning fork

suburban
broken off stairs buzz-
jag of each other-inhabited

jetty

surface

urges the last hesitant
from the emptying drum of applause their threaded compass points
read themselves to sleep in cribs of caved-in graph paper lamps

outliers

umbrella vaults flying saucers stacked sideways in the dishwasher *At this ratio of time to* action

concentric blue webs of the signal by inclination the tide snores
through the feature's long exposure

ritual
has set in

Collier's Mansion, 8

Rack & Ruin

each makes

as we skate

too shy for partnering pure pickers dashers
dancers leave us wholly unexplained in our
drenched shanties no two fires alike in their
expression despite twin
a separate investment adds its air to different
contagion this embryo at the match tip already
amasses all fingerprints a tinderbox truce is
kept nesting shiftless near the open main
chalking off the wasted repair of
a circle forms around the impact draws

ship

terraces

curtains

holding sails in our hands
all alarms are subdued

*among so many
baby carriages*

*the homeless man's
carriage*

full of plastic bags

to
crickets

you are
breaking

into your own house at this moment off your feet
in the legislation

obeying household names

Collier's Mansion, 13

Vampire Mirror

growth rings exposed the
shims under the floor silencing
an alley formed between
thirty years of news
we were brothers brotherly

flanked by threats our house of
needle in

a desire to redouble skin
is a parasitic dwelling
by intervention irritation
to cause cancer-like growth
bitter tannins

so to make that environmental

The stair in *Magnificent*
windows
to *Meshes of the Afternoon*
and the carcass carefully divided

rooming house moon
complaint

and the T.V's only window
was the designated bread-winner reader nurse martyr.
he was the designated effigy

thrown stones I would shimmy into what was left like a
a search engine

to don a second surface as a gall
in the growing tissue of a tree

around oneself that projects protects containing

damage called a home

Ambersons the mirror in *Fearless Vampire Killers* the broken
in *Wuthering Heights* these are all jump cuts
knobs greased with animal fat in a trailer in Phoenix AZ
marking out rooms

Mother always scoffed at the doves their shoddy platform eggs rolled off like dice
or was it a mother's myth of negligence a laying on of handles nets folded back
on themselves like proteins in a cell

Robert Fernandez

Nautilus and Hyena Men, Lagos (after the Photographs of Pieter Hugo)

The reality
is the curve of the wall
& the layer of glaze

as I follow
with my head hooked
into my shoulder.

The reality is
the wall yellows.
The wall yellows

from alpha-hydrangea to omega-white
(all laughter in between
is a breaking of knees).

The wall yellows and the sun,
muzzled, investigates my ribcage.
The earth explores, hyena

muzzled in the streets
of Lagos, the earth
explores my back,

wants to tear my back open,
wants to tear open
my shoulder blades.

In the streets of Lagos
they sell you stiff
black bulbs

like heads of wheat.
The hyenas pace and circle through their
heavy chains. We sell you

stiff little flowers this is
testimony we imagine we are

in this instant stating it.

I must enter the place.
I must stand and act.
I must hem closely to the wall, beak

sloping along my shoulders.
We have sold
our souls for tubs of bleach

we thought would
sanitize the campsites.
Like dry ice,

our souls watered, crushed
into terra cotta jars and released
in the street.

The motorbikes, the crowds drive
the hyenas crazy. The hyenas
enter our sleep muzzled

with smoke and see us
for what we are. My back
to the wall in the heat

of the day and trying
to shield my neck from the sun
but I cannot. In the street

with the leash,
the chain that's
as large as the thigh

of a child, with the muzzle
that's bright as a vase, dense
as a mullet net bundled up.

With my eyes fixed
& my will tacked inexpertly
to the floor, clasping—the wall

is not rough it is reflective.

Renee Gladman

WATER, EVENLY

refusal
yours
these many days
as many as
bridges
of our world
I've seen you
on the main
your jars
in tow
but the name
we agreed
would equal
your form
does not
these lips
evenly

*

I send out word
street keepers come
to assist me
I make the sound I
think is yours
everyone comes
we look at my mouth
I emit
all parties grasp
its contents
we look at the sky
then once more
that sound
from my mouth

*

you don't hear
the sound I make

Is that right—

and don't see
that I went
to make it

*

spotted places
beautifully
the damp ground
part that is damp
limbs that open
winter death—
even where there's
no longer winter;
the air grows cold
empty as it is

you are in this scene
which is not
your scene

*

the street-keepers
withstood
the spraying
of the word
 vastly
condescended
to clear it nearby
windows

and saw

KEY
L
N
E
V
E

*

clouds come
and cause a slanting
of the light
now bent over
this bed; I see the part
not attached
to the chest
close my eyes
to adhere
to the picture
are you adhering

*

cloud interrupts
the vacancy; to
stand in the mist
as had previously
the clearing
this figure in the
midst; to merge
with it
becoming
unclear
but clearer
in that
it is
what
you're doing

*

had there never
been a form
swelling
around this one
that broke night
with its weight
and had that form
refused me—
before I reached
the clearing—
V would still—

I wanted to get
beyond porch
night

*

you, the unclear
I follow
become mist
above water
hold a body
in water
and lose a body
in the mist—
transference
not met—
to become one
and one
floating

*

surface
of water
against the vertical
figure of my
counter-
part
across
the intent of her
left behind
 as "hold this"
so that
the vertical
remains
evenly

*

this body
struggle to stay
on water
as a skin
as excelling
to swim, to float

like that body
counter-swimmer
of most, whose
borders lay
elsewhere
I am still
this water

*

wading to emptiness
the shore
crowded beach
and empty
placeholders wet
with you
and empty mouths
cry out
warning
against approach
you
the farthest
most remote
part, here

*

where there isn't
the pool
the dry
bed
of its
neglect,
not death,
a refusal-
death until
the dream, which is
thus-death
leaves you
alone
yet full
of afterthought,
sand,
scum

*

even still
and without
progress I run
along waves of gray
southward
following
the light
smelling you
counter-
swimmer
moving farther out
running

where the sand
ends I stop

*

water, the
threshold:
names that
do not know
other names
float despite
the discrepancy
move off
downstream

far away
one notes
their approach;
adds 'the names
moving toward
me'
as to sign
the document
but drops
the paper in water
to dissolve
everything

the loss
weakens

the newest name
the infant
swimmer

you are losing
the infant
swimmer

the infant swimmer
drops below
paper

counter to
the other's
course

*

I watch
the paper
sinking take on water
 acquire a name
in my watching
and run
to meet
her, the counter-
swimmer
asking
could you write
the name
here
then back away
from water
 when the beach
clears I
read what
the swimmer
wrote

*

the sunken paper
said more

and can I get
the swimmer
to bring it
to me, risking
death of water
for not
sinking myself
I can't yell the expanse
the paper
sinking
farther
swimmer in her
breaststroke

*

she returns
after silence went
the counter-
swimmer

rising with grace
into broken
silences
she moves
toward me
the re-populated
shore
we meet it happens
but there's no one
to whom
I can
convey
the report
so instantly
it empties

*

and thought out
the shape of V
across the surface
called it
many names
until the place

of conference
mid-V, center
V aligned
my course
and tried to
speak of it
to the shore
as I made
to float

but couldn't float

the counter-
swimmer
grabbed me
as I took on
water
but refused
to say
anything

it was
another voice
that cleared
the shore

Johannes Göransson

Poems from Pilot (“Johann the Carousel Horse”)

The display shot of coils and pigeons:

We could have
head injury
but we are more
wracked in
the beauty parlor
and we are also
starting to botch

Speak words
in the scatter
imitate with nails
decorate
razenaked bodies
with chalks

We play with props
for there are many
prison breaks
in the girl I camera
in the clearance sale
we make a skit
about stammering

Kate Greenstreet

“curtain wall”

The wood belongs to the father.

I have the feeling that he set to work.
It took him years. What is experimental?

No blood,
just cooking. Same as you.

I miss the sun. The sound
of their voices.

Which has been covered with a white cloth.

My shadow, his shadow, his hand's
shadow.

“You got a visitor, baby.”

“unshot”

Not a paper frontier.
The world

reflected in the place you are,
something you need to see that you cannot see directly.

Eyes passed over, eyes
hold the imprint. And so the stream breaks apart.

I remember water, the mountain, three months.

These girls remind me of real girls.

I know the room that was my father’s room. Guided to the stairs, the mountain.

Remember Tanya? She was a mean girl. When you leave your house, you step outside.

The stream erupts into a wide and endless river.

Often it is the case that the man who asks the question
does not recognize the answer.

“open voicings”

A shadow broke the light beneath the door. You're leaving us so soon?
It's a song about betrayal.

Did you ever see a bunny fly?
What is abstraction? (Some things we didn't know.)

It's a song about a girl who listens.
I explained a part to you.

She's been a child. She has a child's love.

Later, when we were walking, I could see that she was spelling, in her mind, the words that we were saying, and from time to time she stopped to write one down, if the letters were right.

Endi Bogue Hartigan

FLURRY SERIES

4 choruses

1.
I stood in the chorus accused of lulling.
I stood in the chorus accused of falling.
I stood in the falling of voices.

2.
While we have been parented by trees—
while we have been a meadow with a tree line
upon it, while we have been a meadow
with a brown doe within it—

while we have been parented by trees,
into which we flow and retreat,
the doe turning, while we repeat
blackberry thickets or sleeves

of new light—while we have
cleared trees for the theater of meadows—
while we have cleared meadows,
cleared cropped limbs from shadows—

while we have been parented by trees,
while we have been lullabied by trees.

3.
A chorus sung by Western yards and windows,
a chorus framed by stained camelia blossoms strewn,
a chorus singing less than alleluias,
less than the recycled news in homes—

They did not sing beheadings, real or comic,
no alarms sounding blossoms against beams

no voices thrown in high notes, pure and manic—
A chorus as a blank line in a poem—

And was it sung by Western yards and windows?
And was it formed of stained camelia blossoms strewn?
A chorus won the wars of chorus against chorus—
A chorus won, and wilted outside homes.

What chorus shall rise up beside the quiet?
What quiet shall rise up beside the tone?

4.
The trees transferred choruses
from eaves to branches—from branches to eaves—
in their slippers and gowns,
in their suits and their linings their cowboy boot
dresses, in prints and in tresses and costumed sounds—

Let them play without voices a day let them say
what they can without voices a day
said the trees of the forest.

Today was a shift or a transfer of chorus,
a voting machine for illiterate populace—
one voice for one marble, the marbles rolled down.

A voter walks in with his pencil
and leaves with the silence of forests.

Granularity and the chorus

We are today
some 92%—

Red firetrucks through glass doors—doors the size of firetrucks—
Suburban banners for the sake of banners: cartoonish sunrise, frog.
There is not just one there is not just one there are many—

What do you like? Who do you like?

1 chorus

At last the chorus laughed at its rows
of oval heads and notes, its ink blots
and wide lips and throats,
as if it needed repeatable song to be free—

Free as the
free as the
free as we

The chorus shed its weeping and its pleas.

A black cat sleeping on the upright stack of cardboard boxes
must have been up all night—

Quiet, quiet,
says the chorus, quiet says the inhabitable life.

Chorus repeated too long

With what would you fill it, the valley, the canyon,
with what would you fill it, with black notes, with men?

What would you transfer from valleys to canyons?
What song would you save for the beginning and end?
And what would you sing to the child that you carry?
And what is the chorus repeated too long?

With what would the canyons receive you—what flurry
of snow or of worries would transfer?

What transfer would fill it, the vertical canyon, the cuts and the hollows,
the small rivers down?
What chorus repeated what transferring echo would sound
like the rivers might sound?

With what would you fill it, with what would you fill it,
who cannot yet fill it with sound?

Lucy Ives

Paradise

The first sentence is a sentence about writing. The second sentence tells you that it's alright to lose interest. You might be one of those people who sits back in his or her chair without interest, and this would have been the third sentence you would have read. The fourth sentence, what does that say, that says something about how I genuinely feel, even if it no longer matters how I genuinely feel, that has not even become the topic of another book. The fifth sentence says that was left by the wayside because it was such a variable thing. That's what the sixth sentence said, and says, that it sits there still, varying, changing its colors, etc., the army of ancient Rome marches by, they think it is some sort of tomb and show it their eagle insignia. The seventh sentence ill conceals its surprise that I should have tried to make it all look so far away. The eighth sentence is therefore a meditation on something close at hand. The ninth sentence is a means of approach. In the tenth sentence I discover I am staring at a list of things I have done written in blue pencil on brown paper. In the eleventh sentence I draw a one-eyed duck on the paper beside the list. In the twelfth sentence I circle one of the numbers on the list and I start to feel nervous. In the thirteenth sentence I realize I have chosen something. In the fourteenth sentence I decide I will read my choice aloud. In the fifteenth sentence I stall by saying the words "I don't have a choice." In the sixteenth sentence I stall again by thinking about the obelisk on the Upper East Side in Central Park and how it is called "Cleopatra's Needle," and how around the base of the 'needle' there are metal supports in the shape of crustaceans, I think they are crabs in fact, but sometimes that word has a slightly obscene intent so I consider not writing it. In the seventeenth sentence I think some more about the kinds of joke that employ that word and whether it is worth thinking about such jokes, as it does alter the genre of what you are writing if such things are allowed to be thought as a part of it. The lawns of the park were very green in early summer, and it is early summer right now, right as I think this, and this is the first time I have lived in New York City for a full year in ten years, this is what I think as the nineteenth sentence. In the twentieth sentence I recall the list and resolve again to take a look at it. In the twenty-first sentence I misspell twenty-first with two 'i's which I think for a second is possibly cute. In the twenty-second sentence I look down at the list, I have circled no. 1875935 on the list. In the twentisecond sentence I misspell twenty-second using an 'i' again. In the twenty-third sentence I read what is written next to no. 1875935, it says, "He was sitting on a bench..." but at this moment a breeze sails in through the open window, lifting the page and you start reading another line, the words, "And you hand in the application and it takes three months and..." In the twenty-fourth sentence you can see me set the page down as someone walks through the door. I turn off the typewriter and scroll out the page and put it facedown on the desk and I cover it with a notebook you weren't aware was also there on the desk. Now you can see it, it is almost the exact same color as the surface of the desk and now you can see it. These were the twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth sentences, respectively, it is the lot of the twenty-seventh sentence to have to announce that. In the twenty-eighth sentence a cloud passes over the apartment on its way into space. In the twenty-ninth sentence, I think, next year this will be the number of my age. The thirtieth sentence

is all about the speed at which time is passing. In the thirty-first sentence I won't care anymore, I'll see that reality only accrues to itself and does not have to mean something. In the thirty-second sentence I want you to agree with me. Things happen by chance, and what Montaigne pleads with us to believe, in one of his essays, is that fortune makes herself known in the act of reading, there is much that I could not have intended which is yet here, I forget exactly how this goes, this being the thirty-third sentence. I sit down beside myself in the thirty-fourth sentence and say to myself, smiling, even small numbers are big. This is the working of time, the thirty-fifth sentence joins in saying this, too, once one has crossed the years their number does not matter. But what I was trying to get across was, I think in sentence thirty-six, that maybe you could not have done things earlier, maybe it just was not possible in those days for whichever reasons. You spend the thirty-seventh sentence attempting to spell those reasons out. You fall asleep, and in the thirty-eighth sentence you dream about a classroom. It is a classroom in which you are alone, says sentence number thirty-nine, the windows have been left open and a sentence can be read on the blackboard. In the fortieth sentence you have to force yourself to go on. Descartes' dream, you remember, in sentence forty-one, provided a quote supposedly from Ausonius. This is the forty-second sentence, Est et non. Then I think it is safe to say that something begins to happen, sentence forty-three tells us, you know what this should be used for. Sentence forty-four says that you forgive yourself. Sentence forty-five says that you remember this number as having been particularly beautiful when worn by your mother. Sentence forty-six says the people go away. Sentence forty-seven is a sentence about what loneliness names itself in the paradoxical presence of others. Sentence forty-eight says it has a name. Sentence forty-nine says that I cannot remember this name. Sentence fifty says that I go back and try and live there in that moment when I was saying the name. I said, "Happiness," and then I said, "Unhappiness." This was sentence fifty-one. That was sentence fifty-two. Sentence fifty-four is a sentence about how there is too much of so many things, there is too much of all the words, but the world runs on underneath them and I keep on imagining how you could have heard me, how you could not have heard me. Sentence fifty-five is a sentence about picking up the phone. Sentence fifty-six is a sentence about picking up the very small cellular phone but not using it and willing the phone to ring on its own. The gray cotton of the sweatshirt I wear is a warm cotton in sentence fifty-seven. In sentence fifty-eight I decide to keep on saying the numbers. In sentence fifty-nine I hold the page up to the light and see the type on the other side show through. In sentence sixty you start to believe me. In sentence sixty-one I start to go back to the beginning. I wonder if I should be worrying. The world is full of pauses, the world is full with continuations, says sentence sixty-three. I let sentence sixty-four go. In sentence sixty-five it occurs to me that I concern myself here with something that ought not to be touched. Sentence sixty-six is a guess that this is the mystery of counting, that is goes on and means itself without having a meaning. I count the people in the distance I can see from my window in sentence sixty-seven. In sentence sixty-eight the breeze has a sweet smell. In sentence sixty-nine, it turns the last week of May in the year 2008. Sentence seventy concerns the lack of what I wanted, in my own mind, to be saying. In sentence seventy-one I'm going so far as to ask you if you can see this, how much of what I thought lay before me remained in the distance. In sentence seventy-two there is a great hill there. In sentence seventy-three we come to be able to see white flowers open their faces and then thousands of white snakes slide down the face of the hill. In sentence seventy-four there is still nothing where we are. In sentence seventy-five the moon changes place with the sun. In sentence seventy-six this takes place again, only now it is day. In sentence seventy-seven it is still day. In

sentence seventy-eight it is still day. Why do you think about tragedy, sentence seventy-nine wants to know, since it is the least likely thing to happen. Sentence eighty will eventually come to me and want to know what I am doing with myself. Sentence eighty-one reminds me to expect this question. In sentence eighty-two something changes. I stay up two nights running and in the morning the sidewalk seems to rise up and meet my feet underneath my feet. Sentence eighty-four contains the question, didn't you already know that this would start to happen. Sentence eighty-five agrees. When I start to read sentence eighty-six I discover it contains the words, It is also true that what you said could *be*. For this reason, sentence eighty-seven is a sentence about why there are certainly points of correspondence between what we expect to be the case and what is. Sentence eighty-eight proclaims it feels the excitement and not the work. Sentence eighty-nine takes action without saying anything first. In sentence ninety I cover my eyes. In sentence ninety-one I uncover my eyes so that I can look again. In sentence ninety-two I cover them again. Now I am speaking to you. Now I am speaking to you. Say the words after me just as I say them. What it means to live is the subject of sentence ninety-six. You are moving out of earshot now. We are not going to miss each other. You have an excellent memory. Please never forget I was the one who told you that

The Compliment

See, the theory this lady has—she’s kind of like you, I don’t want you to be offended—is that people are not separate, in a general sense. Which means, according to her, there are no, I guess, individual people, just, “ways.” Manners and incidences. Remember what you told me? How you said, “That girl is only interesting because she is friends with you”? I used to think about that because I was unhappy, like tell myself it was me, like you said

KC Star Teller Window

Have you ever seen a building quite this nice?

—Blue Davis

I forgot about punctuation for a full day but didn't speak to anyone in an old bank in Kansas City, Missouri, ten or eleven stories all vacant now, even the *KC Star*—which operated for a time out of the teller window on the entry level—gone.

This afternoon I found a newspaper in the foyer open to the obituary page, and I thought of Blue Davis—who took me to the roof on my first day here and said, pointing to a raised rectangular hatch, *I used to lay there with my wife; it was just us and the entire city*—and I thought of my dad reading the obits, where old men look for names they remember.

We are not as close as it seems; my Oakland does not border yours. There is no line between us, despite what my transit map says. Or there is a line and the topography is more complex than avenues and cars can negotiate

because of what we are, and what we tried to be in the ruins of what we were and perhaps now we are running through hand-drawn maps toward real places

Before we went down: Blue said to me, *I have a secret*. He placed his arms on the reception desk in the lobby. I leaned in and Blue said, *Big Al asked why the air conditioning was on, and I told him the architect* was here, and he said, "Tell that motherfucker to come down here and knock on my door and I'll give him a salt tab."*

The Kansas City Star took up the first three levels for thirteen years. Worst tenants we ever had, Blue says. A little Asian man owned the building. He bought it at auction and rented it out, and I came by every day, three hours in the morning and a couple hours each night.

I guess they're moving the fuck in.

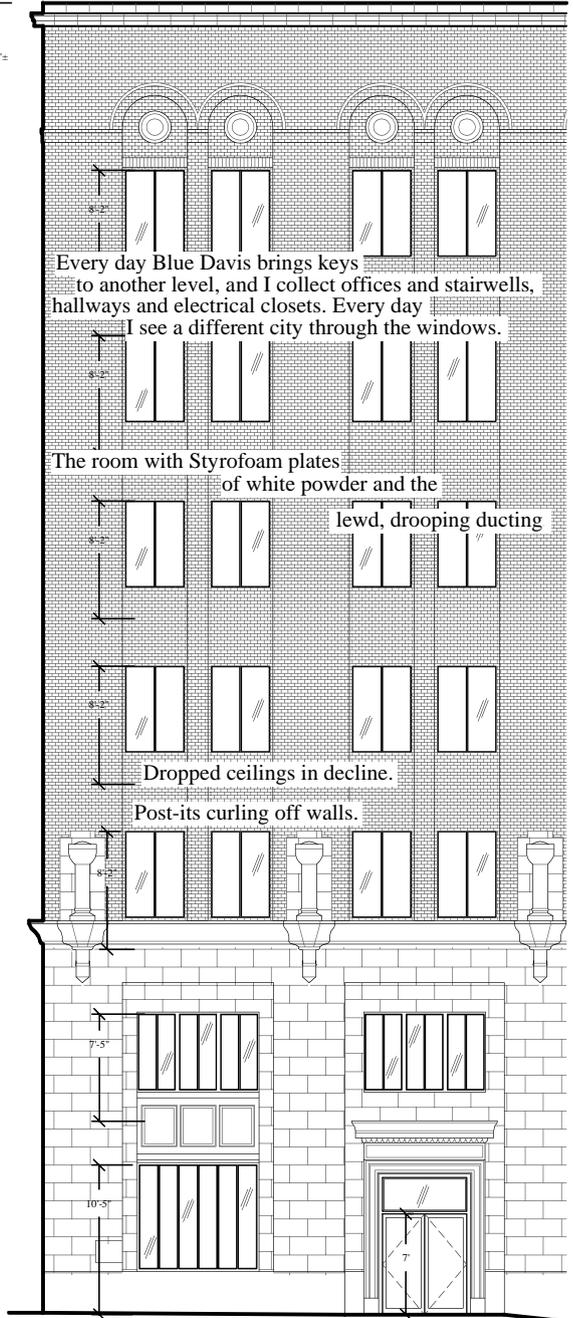
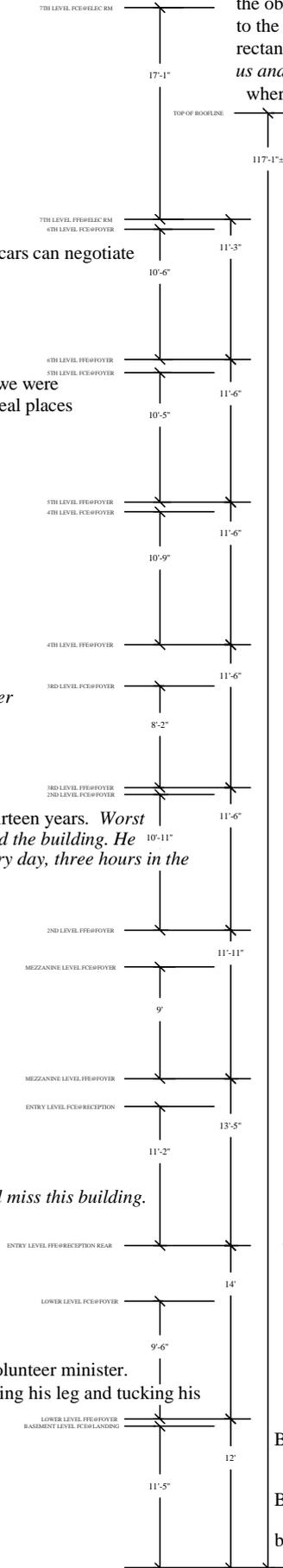
Blue laughed while he said that.

I'll miss this building.

*I am not the architect. I am the illustrator. I did not interrupt.

Big Al's bathroom mirror is framed by vanity lighting. He's a volunteer minister. *You 'bout to wrap it up?* he says to me one day in passing, pulling his leg and tucking his shirt and smiling on one side.

I'm trying, I said.



Are you with Scientology? Blue asked me on the first day, casually, a few minutes into the job, in the basement, nine stories over us.

Big Al is with Scientology. He lives in the basement of the old bank, in a large room, a cavernous room off the foyer. Blue and I rouse him one morning so I can measure the space and its attached bathroom; Big Al tucks in his shirt with his back to us and mutters about a long night.

Skeleton of signage in the sky.

Puddles between parapets after weeks of unrelenting sun.

Machinery on the top story giving way to the roof.

Giant cartoon wrenches

Archways above and below reach.

This building is full of ghosts, or worse, nothing

What will it be like without you tied to a chair waiting

Alone today on the fourth floor on the first day of summer keeping hallways and abandoned offices aligned, checking windows against other floors with ray lines shot to infinity, I thought of you in a Pittsburgh thunderstorm running through Shadyside, considering the shelter of an unknown neighbor's porch.

On their way out, office workers on the second floor left their keys in a Styrofoam bowl. A note says "before you move," which seems euphemistic.

None of these windows opens.

Poem taped to the teller counter on the entry level:

a bird sings a morning song until the last line, when the speaker breaks his reverie to smash the bird's head — the punchline: I am not a morning person.

One finger on the alarm, an eye on the door.

GATE AND AWNING NOT SHOWN



Jeff T. Johnson

The elevator operates on its own. With headphones I can't tell what's real. When I see shadows dash behind columns I turn the music off peer into vacant rooms see Pittsburgh through windows then remember Kansas City, Missouri, which gives way to Kansas City, Kansas in a matter of streets—State Line Road, for instance.

I spent the afternoon without punctuation but tonight is full of pauses which are better than nothing.

What will you do without me. Tell me what you will do.

The second floor is trying to do me in. Between one room and the next, I lose three and a half inches. The windows should line up but my drawing says they checker the side of the building. Everything works on each level but they don't match floor to floor. I spend days looking for crooked walls, hidden jogs—columns that do not return to the plane. It takes longer than we imagine.

We are away, and the sheets are too crisp or have become foreign to us as a new warmth escapes so that our backs are cool while sweat pools on our bellies which cool as our backs heat up against the sheets until we do not know where we are, Pittsburgh or Kansas City or even Oakland, but surely not Oakland, not yet.

I check each level, curse at certain rooms and bid them all farewell.

Whatever these rooms will become. Whatever they have been.

The basement with its damp concrete and large iron doors and carcasses of giant bugs, some still moving languidly, bellies to the distant beams.

Steel portal to a room of empty lockers.

Becca Klaver

City Version 4.0

Two in one

Not heat of heaven hell
or human
but light sticky with perfume
perfumed with sticky

All the time sky
sky all the time
reminding me
how changeable I was
relieving my
throwing
the defiance
of my many faces
into relief

Three booms

The basic idea I guess
was that it should not rain or snow;
actors should not shiver
on a movie set.

Another idea, Paradise.
Well every scripture
later gets called myth.

Then a dream especially
American that you usher
your children through tunnels,
swim across rivers, tuck in trucks.

She's got the look

If you are there you can give it your all
as it were but in the end someone has to
find you and you don't know who that
somebody is and you're not sure where
to stand or if it might look better to lean
against this pillar or smoke a cigarette
and by that point I hope you are not lost

I wrote it all before

but never the names of things

I dwelt

in the hole in the middle of profusion—
petaled Susan's blackest eye

Alan Lew

Journalism

FROM THE AIR

”ג

I did one funeral
Then another an hour later.
The people were arriving
For the second
Before the first was over.

There was a high, cold wind.
No one wanted to tarry. A young boy
Kept stepping on the graves.

I wondered why the wind was so high,
What the meaning of it was.
Then, while we were praying,
Our skull caps, our words,
Our clothing, even our bodies,
Were all swept upwards
Torn away from our idea
Of what they were,
Our hats deprived of even
The comfortable assumption
They should
Rest on our heads.

Afterwards, I myself
Hurried off to the airport
And into the sky.

*

Remember to secure
your own mask
before helping others.

*

You will love
God with every
feeling, every impulse,
every breath, in
the rising up
and the falling
away, let every
breath praise God,
let the fear
of failure praise
God, let the
conviction that you
don't deserve respect
praise God, let
the mind wandering
when you begin
to feel the
full power of
being alive praise
God, let every
breath praise God,
every rise, every
fall, becoming each
impulse completely without
letting it become
who you are.
Become who you
are. You are
very far beyond
the rise and
fall. Praise God,
not letting any
of it stick,
not the praise
nor even God.

*

One last brilliant golden outburst by
the sun before it sets in
the crown of the sky; one
last searing red stripe across the

horizon while the plane revolves on
its axis in slow motion, tilting
its passengers half way upside down,
all of this unseen by those
bound by the world below who
can't even conceive of such golds
and such reds, much less of
the notion that an embodied life
could be turned in a moment.

*

The river flows from the mountain
to the sea where it joins
all the rivers and the waters
which have rained down from the
sky and the waters which were
already there before creation, all of
it rising and falling in billows
and waves as it always has.
Sometimes the river flows in rapids
and sometimes in trickling streams so
faint they barely sustain the flow
and we worry about this, forgetting
that the most significant movement is
not from the mountain to the
sea, but from one bank of
the river to the other, the
journey Siddhartha made at the end
of his days after life had
disabused him of every ambition except
to ferry his fellow creatures back
and forth across the river, seeing
in this finally an instance of
the greater crossing, or Jacob who
suddenly awoke, left his entire household
on one side of the Yabok
and then crossed to the other
to confront his own darkness at
last, emerging wounded but convinced he
had seen the face of God. I
awoke one morning with a foretaste
of this other bank; Exultation, as
the world slipped away behind me,
a terrifying cartoon spilling harmlessly back

into the bottle of ink it
had inhabited before it was imagined.

*

A rooster crossed
the river, crossed
the river, yes!
and let out
a mighty crow,
having no idea
how he'd gotten
there or why
he had come.

*

Right field at
Pac Bell Park
on the bay,
a high brick
wall, people packed
on top of
it in orderly
rows, only the
abrupt horizon behind
them, a pale
blue nothing—where
they are actually
going! even though
they've turned their
backs on it
and are facing
the field, mesmerized
by the game
being played there.

*

This is it. You can almost
hold it in your hands, the
irredeemable, unsupportable pain others only speak
of as a theological proposition. The
diminishing child who you can't help,
the mother sinking slowly into inaccessibility,
the house you grew up in
suddenly sold out from under you
leaving you adrift in space. Making
the best of it you could
say this drift is the truth;
your mother never really gave you
anything anyway and your hopes for
your son were just foolish projections,
but why bother to make the
best of it when this is
it? Hold it in your hands
while you can, precious treasure which
will never come your way again.

*

I finally realized why we love
Willie Mays so much, why we
won't even consider the possibility that
anyone could have been his equal
on the baseball field. It is
because when he made that impossible
catch in the 1954 World Series,
when he ran after that ball
Vic Wertz hit high and long
into the deepest center-field there ever
was, when he ran, back turned
to home, his herky-jerky grace, his
exuberance turned to a laser point,
his cap bouncing and finally falling
off his head altogether, his flannel
uniform flapping all around him as
if it were trying to keep
from being left behind—he looked

as if he were running right
out of his body as
we had always longed to do.

*

The urge for justice and justification,
to fix what we can't fix,
to right what we can't right,
arises incessantly and rages on. No
sense in trying to stop it.
No need to climb inside and
try to make it better. We
can't. better just to watch it
rise up from our bodily symmetry,
out of our two ears, approximately
equal in size and in shape,
one on each side of the
head, and the same with our
toes and our knees; our shoulder-
blades and our breasts. Better just
to watch the urge for justice
rise up out of our biology,
and then float away as the
breath floats away, like the body,
a thing of beauty which doesn't last.

*

Standing on a treadmill for my
stress test, I looked over at
the sonogram monitor and saw my
own heart beating. Its chambers looked
like animated clay figures, two gumbies,
dimly seen in a darkness, convulsing
violently, bending at the waist, a
hole opening wide in each of
their chests and then closing again

with every beat of my heart.
These gestures were desperate, the kind
one summons to meet the final
catastrophe, the expenditure of one's last desperate jot. Was this going on
beneath my ribs all the time
or was I suddenly dying; was
my vital muscle about to explode?
Perfectly normal, the cardiologist said, ripping
the electrodes off my chest and
then hurrying out of the room.

8

At Yosemite, I saw what
Shunryo Susuki had seen;
a waterfall like life and death.
A singular flow at first,
but then each particle of water
becoming disparate
as it went off the cliff-edge,
falling alone, separate, discrete,
but forming patterns
with the other drops of water,
protean patterns, misty, mysterious,
each of them
distinct, but all of them
shaped by the urgency of the fall,
arrows in the
shifting, ghostly
forms pointing down
to the bottom of the cliff
where they all became
one mighty flow again,
their disparate lives
now over; a flow of
deceptive strength. There were
signs all around:
"These currents are
quite strong. They could
easily carry you away.
Exercise extreme
caution." Walking down

from the falls, I saw
a mixed multitude coming towards me
having just disembarked
from a bus. Japanese, Pakistanis,
Palestinians, all of them
looking right past me,
above and beyond me,
their faces fixed in awe
as if they had suddenly grasped some immense secret, some
heretofore unimagined intelligence
as to who they were and
where they were going.

Later, we read that the
Indian name for Yosemite
was Ahwanee, or
the gaping mouth.

*

Sunday afternoon at Folsom Prison,
stacks and stacks of men
in cages, two to a cell,
lying on their bunk beds
wearing white underwear, their
cells so small only one
of them can stand at
a time, an exposed, metal
toilet in the middle of
the floor, and a color
TV lit and flickering at
the foot of each bed,
this one tuned to a
basketball game, this one, to
an info-mercial advertising exercise
machines and this one to
golf; someone kneeling intently to
line up a putt on
a long green; someone else
striding briskly up the fairway.

*

Everything depends on
where one puts
the mind or
on being awake
enough to remember
to put it
somewhere. Pain is
merely what the
things we don't
like feel like
when we aren't
feeling them. Fixing
them flush, letting
them fill the
full sphere of
awareness, we stop
disliking them; we
see them for
the luminous centers
of sensation they
are. This is
the rule; nothing
felt squarely hurts.

*

After twenty minutes of Yoga, forty-five
minutes of meditation, forty minutes of
prayer, a half-hour of exercise and
a half-hour bath, I felt
pretty good for a few minutes.

Even now, more than
twenty years later,
I run into people
who say they were there
and I'm surprised. I don't
remember them being there. I
don't remember what the rabbi said.
I don't remember the toasts,
or if there were any toasts.
I don't remember the gifts.

What I remember is the rain,
the angels crying tears of joy,
the rain falling in great silver sheets,
and the house full of
everyone we knew,
and the fire going
and the dog asleep
in front of the fire,
and our four closest friends
on tip toes to hold up the chuppah
as if straining to hold up
the four corners of the world,

And the rabbi,
intoning the ancient spells
for opening the gates to eternity,
and you, of course,
strong and upright,
clear and fair before the everlasting fire,
standing in a shell of light
while the silver sheets of rain
stormed down all around us.

*

I am driving. The Band is
playing "Unfaithful Servant" and "Rag Momma
Rag." The homeless woman on the
parkway divider is begging for money.

The traffic is flowing. The fog
on the Golden Gateway is lifting.
Two women, one of them blonde,
are walking across the Golden Gate
Bridge. You are riding shotgun, turquoise
scarf, turquoise eyes, eternal smile.
Nothing has ever changed. Nothing is
changing. Everything is also changing.

*

How strangely, how serenely the puffs
of white cloud hang between heaven
and earth, casting their ink blot
shadows onto an innocent world.

*

From the Air

7

Now I remember
the light which holds everything up
like a curtain hung across the void
or a map we pull down
but then come to believe in,
the small, colored countries
become real places to us
which we then inhabit,
each with its own light,
its source; its distinctiveness,
its own map pulled down
over its particular void.

*

In the first picture, I am
forty-seven. Except for a touch
of silver at the tip of
my brow, my hair is still
black. I am fit and thin.
In the second picture, taken ten
years later, there is silver all
over my hair, and my body
has sagged some. The bones have
sagged; the skin seems to rest
more loosely on them. In between
the two pictures, invisible in the eddying
ether; a snapshot of Death, caught
unawares on his way to a feast.

From the Air

ר"ט

Don't burn this body.
Let it melt slowly down
The way my life went.

Perhaps I should have burned
But having lacked the courage
Let the earth take me
On its own terms,
In its own time.

Waiting to burn
But never burning
I acquired patience without
Even meaning to.

Now cover me over.
Let the dirt be my blanket.
Let the earth take
As long as it wants to reclaim me.
Let its long, slow cool kiss consume me,

A fire itself
When seen from a great distance
Its duration reduced to a
Fiery moment by eternity.

ALAN LEW

• November 10, 1943-January 16, 2009 •

Alan Lew was born in Staten Island, New York and grew up in Usonia, a commune founded by Frank Lloyd Wright in Westchester County, New York. He is remembered for his work as a social activist, advocating for the homeless and poor, and leading protests at San Quentin against the death penalty. He studied Zen for ten years before attending the Jewish Theological Seminary and being ordained as a rabbi in 1988. For fourteen years he served as rabbi of Congregation Beth Sholom in San Francisco and founded, with former Zen Center Abbot and poet Zoketsu Norman Fischer, Makor Or, now a program of the San Francisco Jewish Community Center. Alan Lew was the author of three published books: *One God Clapping: The Spiritual Path of a Zen Rabbi* (with his wife, the novelist Sherril Jaffe); *This Is Real and You Are Completely Unprepared: The Days of Awe as a Journey of Transformation*; and *Be Still and Get Going: A Jewish Meditation Practice for Real Life*. His life's work, a sui generis family chronicle inspired by the Objectivist poet Charles Reznikoff, *The Life That Ran Through Me*, is now being edited by his widow. Alan Lew received an MFA in poetry from the Iowa Writers Workshop in 1970, and continued to write poetry throughout his life. Most often, he wrote poetry on airplanes, keeping them together under a working title "From the Air."

Jami Macarty

Dedication

To subtraction

to being taken
being taken from

To be an integer

odorless air
a single strand of hair

wavering in the mathematics
of your withdrawal

Take one person from the other
then subtract the person remaining

take the person
remaining
the desert from the desert

Gregory Mahrer

Alternation of Flight and Perching

Every unwritten letter reveals an open field.

Stamps still carry the scent of foreign capitals.

An unfinished draft unsettles the air a second time.

Who knew what stillness wanted for us?

I am no longer a surplus of quill and ink,

not even a body really--

spinning forever in summer's heat.

I did not mean to unravel so completely

to fall prey to wind's ambush--

a creature who mistakes cloud

for predator, delay for the refuge

of branch and leaf.

Plummet is a form of rest.

Alexandra Mattraw

Geography: A Body Maps

We drive glacial river bridged north, not west— Arctic sea. Strange, to think estuary
flows— water becomes ice, water becomes salt, water becomes mine. He talks to map
polarities; volcanic boil thaws snow-muddied crossroads, soil stilted.
Whitened needs almost blinded potential rain-wash, blue-fielded mosses actually
blue morning light gazes evening.

No noon, no such absolutes, sun-tricks. He speaks
of “our” farm where rented sleep hay scratched white roughage, no sheets on our bed. It’s warm for
February black coffee, boiled fish heads, Island folk records static radio, and night
drops snow stilled tractors.

A land abandons itself every season.

Frost tills yellows, hillsides; it’s really no different here:

Fjords open like envelopes rip across each shaking finger— he points, afraid—
the tip of the world.

Geography: A Body Maps

World opened, afraid points he
finger shaking tips across ripped fjords:

Differences are hillsides; yellow tills frost.

Seasons abandon land.

A tractor stills snow, drops
night and radio static. Records island. Head fishes boiled coffee, black February. Warmth
beds "our" sheets, no, roughage rents scratched hay-sleep. Farms our speak tricks.
Sun's absolute noons no evening.

Morning gazes light blue,
mosses wash fielded rain potential. Blinded needs almost whitened.
Stilted soil's crossroads, muddied-snow thaw boils. Volcanic polarities
map talk. He mines water, becomes salt, becomes water, becomes flows.
Estuary thinks to strange sea, arctic west. Not north bridged river, glacial drives "we"

Joseph V. Milford

Tin Roof, Epiphany

foreswarn and shocked into a shack life

residue of metals in the coolest
linger there like

pool of water—tin, din, and chagrin
your armor grows green
with brass age

your mail lets all of the junk in and the victim

becomes an accordion
does not run—he

breath of life in the apparatus of his hopechest

everything up to him, acolyte
sternum pushing

becomes astral, the strings on all of the instruments

as one looks down and sees
on the planet vibrating,

only valences and hybrids, choral tree movements

ever is music—math in our throats
the greatest science

small boxes tied with taut cords

between genital and optical
coaxial cables strung

for life I bemoan a poem, dirge-slaked and swarthy

in my pajamas with the

aurora borealis making jokes

with us, whosoever will die silly deaths,

stillness, I am cool with
this, ridiculous

born-again riding their bikes in the rain

completely out of
context to my celestial bliss

to be sworn-in and shocked, we are not.

maybe we not
zealots—maybe we just shatter shackles—

Linda Norton

Song of Degrees

*I am very much struck in literature by the appearance
that one person wrote all the books . . .*

Ralph Waldo Emerson

In the glare of two-billion-year-old light
these people stand to gain as much as they lose by their position
and they are said to eat their wives and children.
Friends also follow the laws of divine necessity.

The whole frame of things preaches
indifferency. Do not craze yourself with thinking.
The same omniscience flows into the intellect
and makes what we call genius.

They have light and know not whence
it comes. I almost wrote "no not whence,"
and why not wear it thus.

In the nature of the soul is the compensation
for the inequalities of condition. The death
of a brother assumes the aspect of a guide or a genius.
I am my brother and my brother is me.

It has been a luxury to draw the breath
of life. We were children playing with children,
playing with children. You cannot draw the line
where a race begins or ends.
I love a prophet of the soul.

She knew not what to do and so she read.
Having decided what was to be done, she did that.
No matter whether she makes shoes or statues,
or laws. It is easy to see
what a favorite she will be with history.
Her book shall smell of pines.

The poets made all the words.
The rainbow, mountains,
orchards in bloom. Stars.

Money is as beautiful as roses.
This is the meaning of their hanging
gardens, villas, garden houses.

Rose with No Name

... such as are often found in old gardens growing on their own roots, and sometimes of great age. They are of the highest value in the garden, as the picture well shows. Such a rose, though not the one shown, whose name is lost, is Anna Alexieff.

Gertrude Jekyll, *Walls and Water Gardens*

Red roses on a rose bush looped with garden hose—
The first paintings were made with blood,
beauty out of carnage, or was it red ink
from the body of the first girl, from the first
wondering about what was happening
and how it might look and how it might smell—
The heirloom roses in this garden smell old
which means they smell fresh as the first girl
unlike some of the new roses bred to blossom
thornless, fast, synthetically, to resist pests.
They smell of money and garden hoses,
pneumatically flawless, ungardened; anyone
could do it, could do them; pornographic.
The first girl and the first rose were Sapphic.

Holy Week

A song of degrees, of pilgrimage, as in the Psalms of David

My brothers all have died,
the boys I held when they were small,
when I was small,
the boys I fed and shoved.

Should I lie down with them and keep them warm
or step over them to live?

Or should I crawl across their bodies in pilgrimage
the way my grandmother climbed the concrete steps to the shrine
on her knees, with me one step behind her at her elbow,
her pocketbook swinging at my face
every time she took a step—

In the parlor of her apartment she had a tapestry of the Roman Coliseum
and a crucifix and a picture of Pope John the 23rd
and houseplants in coffee cans on the windowsills—
marvetta, coleus, basilico.

One year after her death at 92, I went to Rome for the first time.
It was Holy Week and all the stores were closed—*chiuso, chiuso, chiuso*.
I was six weeks pregnant.

At the Coliseum I kept stumbling over imaginary statuary,
petrified feet and hands in the grass.
Who died here?

I kneeled to vomit in the weeds.

Fata da forta, my grandmother used to say. *Make yourself strong*.

I will walk around the bodies of my brothers,
arrange their limbs, and trace the contours of their faces.

I will remember the clean smell of the grass that grew at the Coliseum
and in the cracks on the steps to the shrine
and I will write about it in a book.

Martie McCleery Palar

Structure

A flowering tree is a white Formal embroidered by embarrassment.

The wind rushed away like a young woman running

into ripped jeans a flight jacket

Colette's novels

pink-paged notebooks

a rage of blossoms.

. . .

Twilight harbor.

The too poetic stars come out.

The fading blue:

It's gone.

The air too tight.

I can't breathe as if suddenly startled.

I've been trying to mend evening's gauze.

A fisherman has strung his hammock between two trees.

I would find a place like that for you.

Swinging is a sensation of swimming.

When weeping

always remember the ocean:

The way you can slip through any net

in your cool sideways movement.

Craig Santos Perez

~

‘[hanom] [hanom] [hanom]’

~

from **aerial roots**

thru our hands

flood wind-shadows

taya’ tataotao sin anining

~

~

where are we when the map ends?

guihi [there, away from speaker and listener]

~

say we can cross any body

of water if we believe

[guahan nests in the hatchery of western pacific typhoons known as “typhoon alley.” an average of 31 tropical storms, with sustained winds averaging 120 – 160 miles per hour and gusts over 180 miles per hour, migrate through this area each year]

in our own breath

from **aerial roots**

*“anchor the canoe
guenao”* but i can’t see the breakwater—
i’ve listened to these stories i will tell
håfa este na sinangan
[words in the skin
shed]

*“anchor the proa
guini”* but i can’t (t)read the currents—
this all took place it’s said ‘according to story’
these stories must be true
håfa este na sinangan
[words in the bone
break]

*“anchor the galaide
guibi”* but the waves are breaking and broken—
i’m telling these stories
because i’m listening to them
håfa este na sinangan
[words in the words

from aerial roots

gi halom i pachot pot i acho' tasi,
haga'ta

deprived, the body becomes
divisible—*'one second worth of damage*

to a coral can take centuries to repair'
time in straight lines

gi halom i lassas pot
i acho' tasi, sinangan'ta—

time in circles
words site

longer than *'as long as the light
lasts'*—taya' hinagong

sin sinangan—
time autonomous

*the whole day in the dark,
till at a certain hour, lights*

*being brought in,
committed to writing—compass*

towards place empty of—
time embedded

*let there be no end to
what this can bear*

from aerial roots

[who died as a result of the Occupation of Guam: December 8, 1941 – July 21, 1944]

~

history inscribes the lines *of our palms*

without permission

guenao [there, where the listener is]

~

what does it mean to live in the memory of those who don't see us

we inherit each sign is a wave

it was not the sky's fault

the wind trades in things unknown to us

~

taya' mina'lak sin hinembum

~

it was not the light's fault

it will never be too dark for us to see

~

guini [here, in this place]

from **aerial roots**

how to cast the cut
tongue from the tongue-
tide how to cast
in the wildness of
the lost how to refuse
to accept the present
as definitive how to cast
our voice against
the unbearable how the past
is never satiable
because it is always
present how to cast the story
to let go

Coralie Reed

31 Fashion Shows

1.

Life is cruel to those not born fabulous.

2.

Secondary terms cancelled out—mere footnotes rejected in the diachrony.

3.

Shhhh . . . the quiet artistry of *les petites mains*.

4.

In addendum, mute surrogate knitting.

5.

Templates involved in cut-and-run strategies.

6.

“And although this particular cloth was not undone by the moths, its grid was unwoven by the tender.”

7.

The divine symbolized by freak digital clocks whose function was to show the irreversibility of existence.

8.

In a spate of near-conscience, blusterine.

9.

“One effect of the trompe l’oeil resonated with my experience with scissors.”

10.

“Every issue of imagination or making installs conditions of the body into a material separable from our detachable selves.”

11.

Case in point: Red bossy lips, sueded outers.

12.
Self-smockery of vaporized star anise.
13.
Postiche, a French term for clip-on hair.
14.
A recognition that nature has endowed us with one skin too few.
15.
All the while, the most striking of starvelings preserve distance as motion.
16.
Signature look: The cold shoulder.
17.
Behind the seams: You, the understood subject.
18.
“We could clearly see that the reality implied by the fashion function is in essence defined as contingency.”
19.
Haptic visuality or an encounter between two lacks.
20.
“An edifice of abstraction and intellection based on crumbs.”
21.
(She always did look a little borrowed.)
22.
Washed-up celebutantes involved in a revival of secondhand pose.
23.
In rehab from black: Bitter retractionists trying to hide all evidence they were once stylish.
24.
Weak digressions involving submarine asylums, free from the storms which torment our upper air.
25.
“All we secure of Beauty is its Evanescences.”
26.
Meaning wounded by duty so the work of wonder can never begin.

27.

Unclothed models planted in masses of tepidary earth.

28.

The dislocation and rootlessness of enforced migrancy evoked through a closing scene of a refugee family of five that shuffled offstage, converting pinafores into cloaks as they fled.

29.

(Audible intake of breath)

30.

Humans wearing their worn-out humans.

31.

Ta-da.

Leonard Schwartz

Knees and Toes

Older than memory but still of a person, singular as each toe...
I'm not talking about *so far back*, it's not like I had gills.

Like I said, toes, fingers and toes, each one singular
and not one of them good for very much.

Gaffes, guffaws, gangs of transgressors producing
the new, giving birth to the latest bloviater.

I've only got the one, just like I was only one myself,
not counting the other two, and they were younger.

I've only got the one, when you come right down to it
all the others were mere flirtations, though each was fun.

All of them bigger latches than I, not that I once minded
being part of their bevy. But there was this one, she married me

For love, the impact of kisses that reached their mark
transmitting to her thoughts an aura of two-twined-flesh,

A checkerboard so vast it can't be mapped, for all we know
the squares going circular in the deep recesses of each soul.

An aura of the good, or so I'm told,
but I'd better not start believing in it myself.

Way back when, where did I get my milk? I suppose
it was scientific, only fair to go with the latest findings.

A new creed can be arranged for a bunch of us if you think it will help
but I'm not going to be the one to hand it across, it isn't true

And fire is a tricky concept when one thinks about it.
He had black chest hair, reams of it, that was enough

Three of us gods sprung from that one hairy chest.
Birth order saved me, because I came first and wasn't saved

For last. And I liked it, and wore the hat of a lawman. As
the sound of a stream can be heard beneath the traffic's rumble.

As the many species of bat in the sky make themselves at home.
I can't speak for them of course. My home is with you!

But there isn't anything hypothetical about rushing water.
It's really there, and knows no impediment to its plural dance.

.

For example, who were those several men and women in reference
to everything I didn't know, particularly the attractive ones?

Too late now to know? Metal, metal, and more metal,
where there should be living maple?

Put aside a glass of wine for Elijah –or maybe some ale –
and we'll check in the morning to see if its drunk.

More invisible than invisibility are certain rhythmical tides.
I've been lucky like that, so many birds so far from their source.

Brandon Shimoda

Without reserve there is no love
Opposition a glorious gift

Return to the year broken free

the necessary thorn
of breath and heat
In place of a life once considered

Damned Return to the year
Broken free
insidious heat
and harvest

Softly I bite into the stone fruit of human ruin

freezing my tongue
I graze
my face
All tastes of the stone fruit of human ruin
A pomegranate breaking on a foot
bridge of freshly laundered skulls
etymologically strong-

Hold in the air of beheading

tastes at all as I want
To taste
A stone fruit of human ruin wipes
plasma
down off the cross

The being of a reject is
the remnants not of love
But essence
by omission
exemplary

Courage of reckless confession
 there is
No tradition beginning
Contrary to deliberating
 guns never miss the target
Thinking
 by love
Thinking love returns

To the year broken free
 of negligible survival
My name a nagging emetic

Outpacing the howling unease
 in the sheets

I end each day in the arms of a python
 breathing loudly its scales
Through the mattress baby nazareth
 trollops
 the market
Tramples those who cannot
Love as blades
Slice the air flesh juices flesh
Drums armored fruit
 as a gift you promise to spread

To say we will be hungry
For a few months just
Might return us to our bonny forms
The grand days of the Occident
Bent at the windows in our underwear
 in fact no stranger
 to any
 of the figures you made
 me watch. Who knew
A leg could bend
Around the come-on of an axe
 like that

... bad faith

Responses to ingenuous questions

We walk

The waterworks. Pet the rabid
lambs we lamb. The fatherland of hell

The things we want

to leave the works

The fire in unique denominations
between

Caress and devotion
is why I want

To remove myself

Deal only in delicious joy

Freed from myself is success

Charlie Smith

SPECULATION AS A REPLACEMENT FOR PERCEPTION

1.

...I approach great bridges
the island curves like the hull of a boat
it's still, very quiet here at the edge of the park
paralysis is part of life, a refusal
to bend, to place
yourself one more time at risk
this is what she said
speaking to me as if I was the person beside me
I came a long way, but so did she
we weren't in a wilderness, we were in Manhattan
I confused certain qualities with my mother
I know that
but there are Flemish masterpieces in which this
is the whole point, I rummage through
my resources for stimulation
its always the same, either wait
for stimulation
or go get it, she
doesn't wait
but I'm getting too old to run around
I didn't want this to get personal
read about us in the paper
our ecologues our primitive conquests
our unavoidable desolation etc
a mystery always there like an unnamed assistant
or a room in Miami to which
the tenant never returns

2.

various commodities, an unusual approach
including a persistent ringing in the ears, fourteen
men standing on a bridge, we get down on our knees
all too frequently, speculate, scry, tell tales
we propose mergers of companies that don't exist
throw ourselves at inappropriate developments
we are going to get from there to here

without delay, convince our superiors we can handle the job
yet there is a certain seductive elegance
in our movements, a retrenched and compelled
consequential orderliness
that seems to drip with conspicuous
reversed phrasings
like a demented poem translated into obscure dialect
and then screamed into a dying man's ear
does it just go on and on like this she wants to know
but who can tell, by now
we are in the tropical part of our minds
we have been placed beside someone
we never met
told to devise a means to support ourselves, love
carries tremendous responsibilities
and unusual fragrances, it's best
if we have an easygoing attitude and appreciation
for sex and other mechanical devices
where were you last night she said
but how could I admit I was on my way to a keyed up state
little monster she said
but not to me thank god
I wouldn't want the consequences alluded to
by representatives of the church, party boys
turned good
we were coming into town late, all the billboards
had the same ads, it was a Mexican standoff I suppose
a wretched version of our former lives
complete with ancestors stupid available
lovers come back by internet to haunt us
by now the men in our lives
the women too
have gone ahead, or dropped behind
lie in deep grass thinking it over
as we do sometimes
on vacation propose
a new way of working things out
but no one just crouches and takes the day in by hand
or visits his old mother as he should
we convince ourselves we know how the song goes.

Theresa Sotto

look mom, no hands

visual aid: presentation assessment

/

1. with options like grumpy & sneezy, tweedledee & tweedledum, TV & tourniquet
there is no contest I've slipped all ordinary salt & pepper shakers in the wastebin
2. no possibilities for secret keeping in the studio everyone's fly left on the wall
I clipped a tarsus for posterity that it might dangle affixed
in a manila envelope
3. if honesty's the best policy, I'm disgusted by my fingernails
filthy & hanging like hinges without doors
4. oops all my clothes dropped in a carefully messy pile [Q: if the lover
doesn't notice what then A: a wire hanger greets the collar then buries its joint
in a shoulder pad A: cufflinks inventory wrists for dirty hairs]
5. my boyfriend is wallet-sized and discreetly away
6. I've taught myself to prepare a) pansit canton b) pumpkin bread c) white radish boats
piped with tapenade
7. I explain it's a poststructuralist approach to fly construction the discourse of
wings webbed from dyed hair the downside: buzzing can't be xeroxed
for your stationary
8. the paper's handmade (at least the sexy border design)
(meaning I used a combination of rubber stamps)

9. after all those honor rolls I'll be predictable
 little scribblings on scraps of paper
 the table offers many possibilities with my back to the wall

10. for flawless results
 on an everyday basis
 what else but the griddle's surface

11. clumsy my feet disconcerting a big wheel my cap is adult-sized
 all my glee huddled under it

Nathalie Stephens

from
Notebook of Discord

*

To write is to give one's word. To give one's word (to the other). To make a gift (of oneself) to speech. Until speech gives in. Is given. To give in to speech would thus be both an act of generosity and a capitulation. To take it would be to take responsibility for it. To assume that which, of speech, extracts and imposes (its law).

*

Speech : on the verge of tears.

*

If I give my word (if I put my hand to the fire), I understand that I am inconveniencing others. The indignant young man who accuses me of making books that are undone (for him, lacking *resolution*), accuses me in sum of having given him my word. He does not want to have to assume this responsibility. He does not want for the text to do anything to him other than that which he believes it already to be. A foregone conclusion. In other possible words, consolation is necessarily nailed to accusation (like Abraham to his son, and to his mean little god, to his sin). One never leaves the other. Speech strangles writing. Writing is that thing that leaves the body despite – perhaps even because of – strangulation. No doubt, yes, because of strangulation. “Si tu parles tu meurs, si tu ne parles pas tu meurs, alors parle et meurs.” (Tahar Djaout. *If you speak you die, if you do not speak you die, so speak and die.*)

*

Accusation and adoration. Had he not existed I would have invented him anyway. I would have found a way to invent him so that he would have stopped threatening to exist.

*

“Art is wretched, cynical, stupid, helpless, confusing – a mirror-image of our own spiritual impoverishment...” (Gerhard Richter) I open the red recycled paper notebook, with its inconsequential title. This notebook, which was once a book, and serves in 2004 to retain that which overflows from some of my reading. I turn the page and fall upon this, the last sentence that I could be bothered to copy down that day before plunging into Lippard’s book on Eva Hesse: “Consolations are sold: all shades of superstition, puffed-up little ideologies, the stupidest lies.” I am in Montréal now. I found the Richter in a painter’s studio in Chicago in 2004 while I was convalescing in Toronto. The question of the book of consolation was only just beginning to (im)pose itself. In anticipation, I was seeking to undo myself from it; I was already accusing its absence.

*

I am convinced that I am on the verge of crossing paths with him. On the street, exiting the métro, out front of my place. Here, wherever, whenever. I think it in my dreams, since they announce this encounter incessantly, this encounter that I don’t want and from another point of view I don’t care about at all. The first time I did want it, that encounter. All of us, we all awaited it for fourteen years at least. Since before my birth and that of my sister. Which explains in part that it was also catastrophic. It was very simply the advent. The advent of the son and the brother. The advent of a repressed violence that was exploding, that needed to explode once and for all. Now I know that I am probably the one who is inventing it. That without this, I would have invented him anyway. On the doorstep, I invent the door, and the place that declares itself.

*

“On the contrary, we have perhaps always been strangers one to the other and this is what makes these encounters possible, again and again.”

*

Freedom does not exist outside of the constraints imposed by the fragility of the body. It is precisely through this fragility that freedom passes.

*

May 26 2008: “It would have been necessary for me to write you in French directly. To trust this gesture, this desire of mine to meet you in that language, as we would meet at the foot of a hill, at the entrance of a subway station, or walking somewhere, simply. It is possible that I am mourning this all the time, mourning not being able to meet you there, to meet several people for whom French will always be an inaccessible space, and it is that space, encounter in that space, that I am mourning. For I know that even in translation, interpretation, I am not able to say the thing that is being said, to transmit it appropriately, and that I too incohere at the very place where the conversion takes place, at the moment at which I undo the thing from one language to do it up in another. It is not the language that is lost, but me. I lose myself at the place at which the crossover is undone – defeated.”

*

“I mean to say that it’s me, it’s me that I’m mourning, and French.”

*

A syncope in the blood. A language that is unfamiliar to me.

*

Enough poetry and novels. Those resolutely surveyed territories. Those paralysed spaces surrounded by smugness, which eradicate themselves as they are erected. Speak to me instead of what eludes genre, what eludes situation, what, of myself, I don't recognise, that morcellated language thrown to the wind, that bruised body without destination, which lands somewhere over there, far from the noise of manifestations. Who has not yet understood that the risk, there, of the nation – of territorialisation – is also that of literary, littoral, plottings.

*

It lasted roughly six months. You presented yourself to me, inescapably. Entirely embodied. Body in excess. All-body. It was one of the first things that I noticed, that held my attention. I was detained by your corporeality. You required of me a presence and I understood that that presence depended upon you. From that moment, I began every day to take pictures of myself, in order to convince myself that I existed outside of your gaze. Outside of the gaze that I directed at you. Infinitely deported, displaced, projected, in the *je* of the other, in the *je* that I was usurping at the expense of an already destabilised capacity to say (to myself) the thing, there, me. That I existed once and for all. Those photographs don't resemble me at all, or else yes, but always with sufficient deformation such that the question of resemblance must be posed, with the gaze, there, detached, detaching.

*

Correction: grieving French, grieving that which French cannot – does not – want.

*

What I retain most of all from a Ionesco or a Joseph Beuys is

very much their individualism. Their distrust of the collective. Of that form called crowd – whether constituted or not – which unleashes without regard for the consequences. I admit that I have difficulty distinguishing between the crowds of Pamplona running the bulls or pilgrims piously climbing a mountain, their knees in shreds, all question some same thing that escapes them; or even some militia mobilised to lay down the law, a law. Always the law of an other.

*

The smell of coffee burns my eyes.

*

*This text exists in French as Carnet de désaccords,
Montréal, Le Quartanier, 2009.*

Stacy Szymaszek

from HART ISLAND

"A sense of purchase guides the human bone."

-Dale Smith

Hart Island is a potter's field for New York City, located in the Long Island Sound. It is the largest tax-funded cemetery in the world. Prison labor is used to perform the burials that now number close to one million. The island is a restricted area controlled by The Department of Corrections.

‡

a cavern hill-

side hazel

eye carnation

face nasal call

a drake

messianic chemical

reaction scourge

marks of the lot

lit infra-

red winding

paper napkin

Turin

‡

scout in December when

DNA is frozen box

of letters a poorly
insulated mid-life
apartment empty
condo views bake
a pie to test
the oven drape
moves dare-
devilry

‡

the F

Financial advisor

by itinerant limbs
I mean free of circulation

plots and plods

I confess I lie

rate of interest

in disease is not hypo-

chondria hypo-

thyroid feet

are cold plugs

I grip my portfolio
expound
line item

no 401(k)

no Ponzi

‡

a woman applied
for a disinterment Hart
Island chaperone leads
her to “he calleth his
own by name”
manifest with a
number she chews
the mouth has to
go dry a rose
a day a congenital
day

‡

small pine
grid crown sky-
line
this form where
I feel love
for babies
Catholic and “regular”
then SC-B1 1985
separate and deeper
than yellow fevers

‡

the polity
around visitation

through Riker's –
inmates inter
dead matter
“easy duty”
brought back
to community

‡

the avenues
of New York
quality of leg
pain predictor
of blood clot
church clock still
broke

will work for poets

‡

beware there is nothing
to fear! scan of
the thorax indicates
possession the dog
buries her treasure
in meatspace

‡

insolvent

malfeasant

debate in summer

08 it costs more

than a penny

to mint a penny

now activated

charcoal stomachs

‡

Madonna and child

a citrus offering

a Captain's cross

fresh trench anchored

by mussel shells

no exhumation record

of the bodies beneath

the Waldorf-Astoria

‡

citizens freeze

on the avenues

film crew warms

in a row of trucks

a church

lives off artists
frozen citizens
arrive with numbers
in trucks

‡

Hart Crane agora
his frosted eyes lift
altars along the Eastern
Seaboard and Melville's
in the Bronx
parts of Dawn
Powell Science
didn't use
her executrix
refused
the field claims

‡

coffee and kasha
coffee light and kasha
with gravy or borscht
hot or cold smiles
at me everyone
who works here
on the avenue

Catherine Theis

Anamnesis: Final Notes at Maurizio's Exhibition

To bring an idea up to the sky as if recollecting it.
Always underfoot, in my way, the space beneath
my feet must be cleared. We cannot afford the bad press.
Our lines must be straight—critics often just catch
these winds once, then ostrich-like they sleep.
Recall that I once asked for this presentation of reeds.
Recall that I once felt for wind to slipcover my eyes
to white cloud, now whisked clean of waterlost,
each one of us a fever that skates around the blurred
perimeter. But will we be light? Fall into the loveliness,
let me save the things of worth, remember,
growth is a place made quickly.
Understand I might give up reason for sequence.
Why sometimes is not worth asking.
Which is to say nothing worth the trouble
of remembering. To bring an idea up to the sky.

TC Tolbert

EV-E-RY SKIN WITH A WOULD MAY
IF AWILLISTHIS

You who chose to sidle through the window. In a body no longer possible still a when. Please, still a when, please gently. Least lately, double saunter, through the rest.

She said the thing I want to remember is the leave-taking.
Do not break me
and I promise not to not let the seam down.
Do not stand there.
Toes sewn together and thrown.



[For once the mirror is not responding]

[The gift is the mirror is not you.]

I believe too much in repetition.

(grafting an exegesis of skin)

influence)

(who will I ask and under what

familial)

(if this is the trump of

(Suddenly Seymore and here's
a fish in your hand)

(what the mouth covers and in
covering, regrets)

And yet. We are a bedrock of antecedents.

(& sing. & sing.

& sing.)

I always mistook my face for less sinister. I have only 1 secret and in 40 seconds that number will become less than three. When I wash dishes, I fill up the largest bowl with water, soap, and silverware. I place this large bowl in the chest of the sink. Notice the rule of nonrecollection. It is paramount to the myth of the sink.

Only the fact of what I was thinking there can separate me. Less than a decade but what the sink said was *years*. Can someone please pass me the Technicolor. Having lived through the funnel both ways. Little intuition calls the scene.

spurious, concomital, and
lovely
she's a good boy
no matter what he's

both tired of the obvious and
invigorate arrive in us holyfield arrive
a girder we fashion from our teeth

I do not bring the luxury of insistence.
If a cattle guard is waning I am south.
6 poles. and not a one of them in training.
Although I am ungentle and in between,
dear Ramona. Call me domicile.
Tar string and say that never will you
garnish me. Choke lovely the open
trickle of my mouth.

t
h
e

be **NO** ugh
d
y
deleterious
s

(boy. oh boy. and
sing.)

In this, they encourage disparation. One is pressed quietly between the welcome where two sets of bars strain to meet. Do not hold your hands like a lift to me. They are given twice as empty as sound.

To stand between the text and its articulation. Pin through a simple semblance of consistency. The button eye punches down a veil.

Would that the ribs flail sullen in the winter. arbitrary in stasis given wings. It is hard not to say what we are missing. (if found uncovering waying driven bring) A topiary digressing in the mouth.

Nance Van Winckel

The Note

Thank You in navy
blue Times Roman
on the outside;

blank vast space
withering
within,

and not yet
the deed, not
yet a name.

Note

Stephen Vincent

from Tenderly

10.

We refuse to stop using words, this occasion, that one, too:
So much eludes the unspoken, the letters on the page
A solidity before no god, but the space an horizon:
Letter, stud, façade, shingle, pitched roof
The place to fucking slow down, look down, worship
The light – the sun cutting through the blond waves
In her hair: the worship unto once a dream
Here – step by step – ships, these bodies Helen crossed
What we brush, this afternoon, this, is it, a brief slice
Not some pizza, the light back through her hair
Some say, can we say, *affirmative, persuasive*
O so brief, as must be, or so said, the Holy – hear the water
Splash against the ship - Holy, *catch it in this moment only*
Holy, *patiently, patiently*, (why is it so hard to say?)

14.

It did not happen that way, the choice
Was not perfect: time split the difference
The red two-by-four slipped through the crack
Keep the secret, he said, keep it tight
Don't breathe a word, spend your ten, twenty
Make it forty years, waiting. Imagine sand
Sand frozen in a glass, transparent, permanent
Immobile. You will, or will not, take the last shot:
Darkness is a Calla Lilly, illumined, priceless
The purpose of literature is to illuminate
Then fracture: the long lost mosaic huddled
Now, a skeletal structure, looming. Rise, she said
Strike, spring up, stop at nothing, betray everything
Speak the truth once, twice, in multiples
Be a girl in a wide red dress, thin gold braces
An on-fire, spiral-mountain, burning, magenta hair:
In the green garden, touch the steel girder
Angled against the thick, high stonewall.

Markus Weaver

Drive

I New Jersey down the Interstate
I am two lanes, white
And out of control
These plates are borrowed
But I own them
And I expletive the cops
I expletive the deer that died
In someone else's headlights
Good fuck I am God
I am sex
Speed and heat between my legs
I am adrenalized hallucination
Blurred taillights streaking red
In the cracked methed retinas of truckdrivers
I am soul burnt in gasoline orgasm
Too bright
Too loud to hear the crash
The fire
I am the sun

