



V O L T
n i n e t e e n

VOLT

A Magazine of the Arts

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Samuel Ace & Maureen Seaton

Logic Gates

True or False:

The investigation went on for years with no apparent nipple until the one of the one occurred to GB who was truly disappointed that the god of all was not used to explain everything backwards instead of the minute mazes of despair that came crawling out one after the other

The investigation marveled at respiration and tales of passages through solid walls but hid them under mounds of surveillance reports

The investigation hired watchmen who refused to answer questions about their crises or their massive headgear

The investigation figured marriage into any equation of providence and incarceration

Answers:

True

True

True

and

A gifted man broke the black dress
into three innocent pieces.

Emily Anderson

Now Imagine What Happened to Me Happening Inside a House

You found the word “darting” inside your mouth.

We stretched the gutted sock over the hen’s egg and began mending.

“It just came to me,” you said, puckering, your lips a-sparkle.

Like the ring of a distant axe. Like the floorboards.

Now my delight assumes the form of waiting for the object of my terror to withdraw and reemerge as something differently horrifying.

Now parts of the house hang between us, delighting and candling.

At first I stood with my bare feet on the swept boards, shaking the lake from the picture window.

Next you swooped by, you pursued with me a specific quality of light through a series of enclosures, you declared the power of vision to be a concatenation of narrow upstairs rooms punctuated by treetops.

Now the wind disturbs them—now and then my wrist, which you kissed; now and then their brightness sways through our purchased spaces.

Reversing, using the tires to print gingham, we give the name *snakes* to these darting phantasms, phantasm from the Sanskrit for “shine.”

“It just came to me,” you say, the sunny window shining in the buckle of your belt, “It occurred to me.”

Oh, it occurred to you, but I, I use my tongue to forestall these phantasmic incursions, masquerading as occurrences; I brace my tongue against my teeth and keep hold of the banister when the stairs threaten to unspool into the shining lake he died of.

We spread the lake out beneath the trees. I open the basket and become the intolerable woman who gave you the face you have now.

The fire dies and the dog whines at the grate.

Your face suffers no incursion into its shivering.

I take up the axe myself.

We drag in whole dangerous trees for winter.

You look out the whitened window and inform me that the lake has become a wearying series.

The house trembles, inches from life.

I grapple with a piece of light like a piece of living room rope.

Using a phantasm, I make a notch. We bought this house in order to have a child (a body, something that occurs to me).

To recur differently, to know the past or the permeability of myself, is why I did these things:

For throughout the night the mounted lady gallops by, shaking her finger at our bright windows and at the shining shapes that rove within, the shapes that we ourselves have been; and dear, oh, how you wasted electricity then.

Brook Erin Barman

DEAR GEORGES

Willow Smith is the fireball. She- she- she-s the fireball, sh-shes the fireball.
It's fucked. She's working it though. Maybe it's great.
Nicki is in a dress made of toys. Big pink hot mouth open.
And her catcall goes like, young money—
George believing in magic somewhere in the background,
before the Great War.
Mermaids filmed through aquarium glass,
oceans pumped by feet,
French muses with English accents,
comets, like tin dildos rip across the sky into the eyes of the moon.
And Pari Banu drifts down with pointed feet and the body of a bird.
It's a robe or a hat.
The stars, rioting with borrowed faces, do not appear as women, but as events.
I had imagined this as something said through blackness.

Dorothy Barresi

What We Did While We Made More Guns

Prayed.
Dug mass graves.
Raped the daughters of the enemy, who,
in their terror,
turned back into swans.
Placed war orphans in loving homes.
Pinned honorifics
to field-dressed shadows,
recruited *hommes noir*
to fill empty jail cells, and swans,
with their coruscating metallic cries,
to lend comic grace
to memorial fountains.
The exchange of gifts, the games, the tilts, the jousts
the masques,
proceeded without irony.
The year's cotillion was elegantly attended
by debutantes in a glowing
orange and red silk tent
before an amputated audience
of officers, some crying,
some propped on tiny
keepsake pillows.
We prayed.
Prayed for peace
through victory.
Sang the old hymns—
It's me, it's me, it's me, oh Lord...

Planted winter wheat. Let it rot,
the alcohol smell sweet and scouring.
Planted corn.
Ate the mice that overran the field
instead, blood and small hides
in our cupped hands, and
purpose,
our hair
dripping as though we had just stepped
from a bath with our beloved.
The dead we have with us always.
Livestock were fed broken chocolate bars
to fatten provisions
quickly.
Guts ruined, they bellowed all night
but we were sleeping
only two or three hours now,
there was so much to do--
tunnels to torch,
missile silos to polish with our hair.
Cops and
students of political science
orated like gods in parking lots
decorated with thousands of yellow ribbons,
red searchlights
scalded the possible flight paths
of our urgency, everyone useful, finally, everyone
making corrections
to sacrifice,
beauty to conviction.
Paying prisoners of war
one bucket of water
for the truth.
Two if it wasn't any good.

David Bartone

Queen Song of the Farmer

(1)

Cost varies by god on blank land. I must
gather mulch—Holstein won't make the winter,
which within the mind can yet cast a Sirius above.
A sign of life.
My faculty is in dizzying seasons.
Thanks is to the laws
of nature that fix themselves to the morning,
when it's morning. I am standing. Hay to make.

(2)

Vermont plates pull in, this much I can see
from the switch. They are bringing pot and I am alone.
I stand remembering my auger: blunt butting the ice crust
that forms in the trough. White ground, no snow,
is what day after hay's made looks like.
Seasons cross so old-timers don't have to.
Wisdom these days, voiding humor.

(3)

I stand where there is no hay, thinking hay.
My breath has nothing but to show itself. It is February
or August. In the mind of minds no possibility is spared.
The creek leading through yellow marsh,
the highway in half-slumber, to one great poplar,
poor man's walnut, James Wright's chicken-hawk
dusted, as in a painting, in a limb—
a tree would beam a greeny shadow.
Faint wife, white house, green ghost, cool dirt.
Conversation matters to survival.
The woman is the rake, the man the coxcomb.
I stand where there is no hay, built bliss withered.
Nature nor god fits handle to axe.

Deborah Bernhardt

DRIFTOLOGY *Episode One*

Let not one put asunder any content.

Aggregator articles stitched
in the manner articulators

make of bones one flesh, flush and complete,
yet distinct, bric-a-brac intact,
a Melvillean marriage—

extremes of one. Each bone in its floating trap, Sugar Snap.
The remainder of my dearly is a tingling artifact, saturated red.

One undiluted cell which I weigh
in a nanomolecular cantilever's

microchannel.

Blue vessels scatter dear light yet out of skin,

blue is Rayleigh scattered, flashing

in a TV series rerun, non-diegetic light

in a character's eye, a heterochromia

Lynchian pin. Oh kitschy catch light,

sideways, specular, keeping eyes alive,

even those of my transistor in drift.

Christopher Davis

SAM

Proudly,
hugged,

yank, by a harness of black leather
under my American flag sweater,

I am
to be

admired, as symbol,
as man. Look,

reader, I collect glass pigs.
Look at my bookshelves.

I'm ticklish.
I know you

want to slam dance against my world
class abs. What I hate

about soul food is, the waitresses
all have flies around their lips.

Really, my responsibility,
the deep pain of my ex?

His dad handed him shit
in a brown paper sack.

He watched his mother slash her wrists, squirting
green milk from her tits. Please,

let's get no closer
to the moment, to the people

of the moment. I, who buy
galleries to hang my body

portraits, incorporate,
yet cannot represent,

or, actually, attract, that pretty
puto who spoke Spanish only.

He could not point out his home,
Morelia, renamed after a murdered

revolutionary pastor, Father Morelos,
on the map, in my atlas, of Mexico;

finger hovering somewhere over
the border, obviously, he never

before fondled
his fatherland.

Naked, he seemed skinnier, whiter
than whatever everyone expects.

Bueno? See,
bueno. Anthem:

we're exactly
alike, lonely,

okay? Except I,
sexy, don't die.

Cheryl J. Fish

AERIAL

It's a fiction to depict administrative approval
as a wooing
Deem me up
Impossible skeletal department
An American in limbo at the airport

Timezones as cloud cover
either side of continental divide
from 33,000 feet you cannot
tell this is a racist nation

O'Hare a rainy field of maximums
Starbucks coffee on the brain
You feel yourself evaporating
into gridlock caused by Fidel
Castro's UN appearance
Air space bus train subway
do not walk this way

Unfocused landing
familiar home pockets
water main breaks.

Gloria Frym

Truth May Be the Least Interesting Thing About Us

I thought it must be you, unless, of course someone else can break into a safe with a thousand combinations. It's time to leave. Take your point. But where will I find you if I need a practical noun? And your eyes drilling through fiction as though depth were your forte instead of sponge. We used to work as a team, now it's all for one, one for one, and the little man's got the props. Would you mind stopping by before the next skirmish? I found some new ammo and this bar should have closed an hour ago. You said you'd had enough but they had nothing to do with it. I've never spoken to you in the sun, afraid the glare might disappear the screen. They fired in the air, yet we were wounded one by one. Business as usual is bigger than war. We watch them both and try to clear our throats. In the scheme of things there are so many minutes not accounted for. They say we're made by one another, propelled by self. By stealth, I created the tender villain named for you. Otherwise, you'd still be a fading hydrangea, a sad-eyed memory book, a patrolled silence along the border of a page too young to die.

Dale Going

Another Day, Until There Are No More

That part is true. That part is true for me.
I know it, whether or not you.

To achieve the inevitable.

I watched you across the table, the little distance that is
emblematic of the curious state of our fate together.

You you you. So many moments. Not nearly enough of you.

So few. It was the tragicomic insistence that 'We've *got* to...'
as though some effort or action were required on our part.

Get back to the garden? We're compost.

*

I watched them crawl inside each other and become
one person. It was to time/life/love they clung.

A rapt person ascending the energy field.

I was a tender participant.
They very crowded with you and me.

And everyone else grasping them also

while they were entirely alone and one.

Everything they'd had/been/done.

Inside each other, holding hard.

What's left of the garden.

Bare ground and a scattering of leaves.

Everything that still ahead would end.

*

I wondered what I'd forfeited when I saw them together.

I wished I was a perennial.

I wished I believed I was a perennial.

But whatever their fate. Their shared fate.

How entangled with everyone's.

What survives of us, at least survives as that.

Latin lives beyond. Continues. Latin to make all one.

Seems somehow not so abrupt and disjunctive.

Although I suspect myself of lying.

*

Heart and soul, I am bonded to you.

Form/story/ending doesn't matter.

The incidentals of our tangential travels.

That we have never and perhaps may never
is more mere monumental circumstance.

That you exist in the world.

That even through all the long years you existed
in the world without me.

That's been the everything.

*

I wish that, say, there were an alternate universe.
Where we'd figured it out faster the first time.

Time with its restless iteration of trees

pretending to be still. Or at all. Where we'd
clung to that plastic raft the day we met and

held fast for life. But still, I'm good. I'm okay

with this ~~unacceptable excruciating exquisite~~
Universe Which Is. Our pathetic unalterable fate

as stardust at the tip of the linear peninsula of

an aqueous world. Because after all you're here.
Because here we are. Dear you who have been

incomparably the saddest thing in my life.

If you asked me I would do it all again
gladly for that delicate gift.

If I could. If I had it to do.

Complacencies of the Peignoir

The ears are fragile instruments. When peignoirs enter, white and slender with a series of blue bows down the front, or draped like a domino in a toe-shoe pink silk as delicate as dawn, they cause the silhouette to quiver. Vibrations are transmitted by the charming quality of

your soul to the inner ear, where the brilliant white made possible in the 19th century through modern techniques of textile finishing carries them to neatly organized rows of laundresses, milliners and prostitutes. These in turn stimulate auditory nerve fibers, each

attuned to a different frequency. Impulses travel, nerve to brain, where they are interpreted as, say, the vogue for the color green, or for polka dots, stripes, pompoms and pique. Damage to this delicate apparatus can result from overexposure to basques and bustles, to velvet on a

voided satin surface. We are born with a fixed number of lingerie modes for auditory dosing. Chronic exposure to ingenues in their gowns of white or lilac or raw yellow even when it is not particularly loud, can wreak havoc on gathered poufs, ruches and ruffles, causing them

to become disarranged and to degenerate. Once diminished, they cannot be replaced. Usually, gauze-like grenadine or tulle is first to go, followed by an inability to hear the frequencies of black silk, whose neurotic rustlings carry a certain cachet given that the quality

of the dyeing must be very fine. But mightn't the raucous din of bustle or of satin basque return with a sensory vengeance? Everything in fashion sooner or later does, it seems. Except, perhaps, the haptic whisper of naked flesh, heard in an intimate, confiding hush.

Title is from Wallace Stevens, "Sunday Morning"

Composed in Manner, Calm

Inserting the brand-new alongside brief passages of unison, gathering life & thought in an embrasure of green, what's remained with us is memory—vivid, as of someone one loves, but active only in us, we who remember, remembering being a stuttering stance, acidic and jagged. The closeness of foliage outside windows, the movement of light is a movie, generally ruminative, pointillistic and slightly tangent. It's strange to be here. To turn or bend from one direction to another, a growing urgency late in the dance. Supple familiarity, the quick unravellings that happen. Having a strong body. Having a wild nature. Having a wide influence. Having a long life. Possessing a desire to please. We were bad. It was good. The sensual & the consensual in these unexpected brackets that frame the arrangements.

technique (the practice of)

fluidity (the practice of)

Margaret Hanshaw

A GRIEF TYPOGRAPHY

A streetlamp in the morning hours
is a gape, a swirl, a leveling.
A hole appears, then heady clouds.
Everything speaks
like a spine in the sunshine.
Starving, they say. *Remain.*

Steve Healey

Requiem for an Ocean Wave

An ocean wave is energy moving across the water's surface.
Wind transfers the energy to the water through friction.
A death rattle is the sound produced when air moves
through saliva accumulated in a dying person's throat.
An ocean wave moves across my face. Thirteen centuries ago,
Li Bai drinks a bottle and writes a hundred poems.
A wave may travel thousands of miles before reaching a shore.
Typically a person will die within twenty-four hours
of the death rattle's onset. I turn to look at the bay and write
a hundred poems by Li Bai. The sun turns pink and sinks
behind the bay. The problem with the world is that it's never
pink enough. I drink a pink drink that's never drink enough.
I open a cocktail umbrella and a Great Blue Heron flies
into a sky that's almost pink enough. Between bay and ocean,
I'm getting complimentary Wi-Fi. I'm Googling the words
for a hundred poems by Li Bai. I hear the ocean's death rattle
in an ear-sized seashell. There's not a single drop of water
in the ocean. I'm not literally dying of thirst or anything.
The average cubic foot of ocean water contains 2.2 pounds
of salt. The problem with the world is the word "problem."
Go away, death—I'm writing ninety-nine poems per minute.
No one calls himself a terrorist, even death. Even my father
on the beach says he sees a boat having a problem.
My father on the boat says he sees a beach. My father on
the boat that is sinking. Water is good at saying come here.
Li Bai dies trying to embrace the moon's reflection in water.
The Tang dynasty is good at sinking. The problem
with the world that is sinking. Even water dies.

An X-ray of My Spine

Sometimes when I'm shaving my face,
because I hate the hair on my face,
I want to just keep going
and cut all the fat off my body,
because I have always been too fat,
even though I weigh like five pounds,
I know any fat is too much fat,
and if I could keep going, I'd shave
away pretty much everything I say,
because like ninety percent of what
I say is "uhhhh," I can't say a thing
without adding "uhhhh" to it, now
my child mimics my "uhhhh,"
so I have that to feel guilty about,
in addition to feeling responsible
for every uncomfortable pause
in every conversation I've ever had,
I love and am terrified of silence,
I could stop talking for the rest of my life
and still I've said "uhhhh" far more
than anyone deserves, I don't
deserve to go to heaven, hell
must be one big fat "uhhhh,"
all the fat of language, what I
do deserve however is scoliosis,
abnormal curvature of the spine,
from the Greek, meaning "crooked
condition," my scoliosis was
the adolescent idiopathic kind,
meaning it had no clear causal agent,
no cause except how much I loved
hated seeing x-rays of my curly spine,
because all the fat of my body
had been cut away, my spine wandered
alone in the dark night, such a hideous
me, don't you dare put any fat
on your bones, little bastard,
who do you think you are?

Valerie Hsiung

perennial the war magicians
miscommunication earth in flesh
death's perennial however
however evers miscommunication

fog
visibility
fease

i have
my hat
to think of

fog
corrigibility

i ll carve this city into my...
bloodsoularchitecture illcarve thsi city

into
the blu print
of our
i will appreciate
your burden
your oxygen
when the visible
fog
bares its
logged skin

violets to boot
violets on the court marshall of
silence vulgar life i ll have the usual i ll have the
afraid of water

negotiation?

on the sarcophagi

you were my resistance

Alice Jones

Transit

How gravity takes over during the descent from 16,000'
into urban trenches, boggy, oxygenated, after being more full of light
than air, becoming substance, not some transcendent bit of biota,

heaviness becomes me, a something inside a skin, division into segments
which distinguish one human from another. Do we need this? Skin keeps
the peculiarities on one side of the line. This is good. I wouldn't want

your habits of mind, the grooves your thoughts glide through.
On the Hong Kong metro, the "Octopus" card doesn't need
to be removed from your purse to have the fare subtracted

by the scanner, so dense swells of humanity pass quickly through
the turnstiles. I'm the only white person for several stations, taller
than most, a pasty, inarticulate giant, every one else, even toddlers,

grasping language in tones I can't distinguish. On the boat to Macau
we watched day dim through the ferry's salt-sprayed windows and
didn't expect our arrival would be greeted by cousins upon cousins,

twenty four summoned to celebrate the return of K who hadn't
visited for 16 years. The orphan who I think of as having
little family, has extensions I can't imagine, his great-grandfather's

children's children's children call me Auntie, though
I speak less Cantonese than a two year old. We all laugh
at the jokes, at how K turns into A-Yeh when he puts on

his grandfather's great coat, saved by the servant Ah-Choy
in a trunk since 1947. It was bought for A-Yeh
to wear to Nanjing, a party assembly where he was respected

and listened to, before defeat, exile, loss of home, brothers,
mother, all he had worked for since he was a radical teenager
throwing Molotov cocktails to bring down the Qing emperor.

Exit

“I went to my Death class,” says my mother on the phone. At 85, she is quite focused on this topic, her dread of being in need, continuing helpless, hurting and unable to depart according to her will. The class was led by a woman from “Final Exit” and my mother was puzzled by her references to “the equipment,” gradually realizing this was a plastic bag, and helium to inhale. “Two puffs and you’re gone, painless sleep.” Far better than no food or water which had been her plan, until, she says, her husband took two weeks to go this way. I don’t think that’s right. Four days of no food and water should do it, if one has the willfulness at that stage of weakness, is able to plan for the body when one barely inhabits it, the body like a mother who has held us for so long, for good or ill, now finally letting go of us, or us of her.

Karen Kevorkian

NEWS FROM THE NEIGHBORHOOD OF THE CAVE

Pressed against a porch wall to keep out of busy gray rain
although bare armed and bare legged not shy of it

prismatically shifting tissue-thin wet hydrangeas
clumped compactly as brains

oh beautiful ditherer drenched and feeling changed

looking left looking right quickly drinking one glass
then another then washing the glass

The body as if trampled on in wet soft mud in which
deep prints of heavy boots remain

those sucking sounds

rain does not leave the face alone

dripping from the hat closing the eyes cool sliding past lips

inside the canvas coat the arms try to raise themselves
but the wet coat is of such weight the arms cannot rise

Spindly long limbs of chinese elms their howdy-do
of limp shadow nodding from pavement

the heat igniting her hair when she touched it
from the house a cat declared itself strangled

below lay a museum of layers geological so fragile
a bird's weightless landing could liquefy

(some did not turn faces toward sun preferring
the distorting world of the cave wall)

was she on fire what was it about shadow

L.S. Klatt

A DISCOVERY SAID TO FAIL

It must be
we are snow-blind, all
asterisks, no Anchor. Had we
been lighthearted, we would have loved
light, its heaviness. About the whale in the guitar
case, the white whale, the blankness, & how the singsong
version of snow in which we compose ourselves has been put away,
let us levitate. The whale, breaching, intermittent as lighthouse, is long-
ways laid in yesterday's whaler: ponderous, noisome avalanche: battleship.

Mike Lala

from In the Gun Cabinet

In the gun cabinet, drapery, crushed velvet—*Yes, red*
pulled over the fainting couch, the globe stands, the insides of the trumpet cases

the stain, darkened, where my brother cut his finger and drew it into the wood
the edge of the barrel my father dropped as it pitched and went off

Dusk falls in the gun cabinet
the city in yellow silk

I pull its sash
the first tower

markets, power grids

Mother, take my hand
lead me to the theater

in bold lettering
lit by gasoline

past mortar
birthing rebar

figures in hospital light

THEATRUM MORDENTI TIMOR

I step in, through the first door
beneath an iron chandelier

my heels click and echo
a regiment, a pattern

past the box office
will call, powder room

side-halls, cocktail lounge
ice trays & ceiling-high mirrors

through the next door
a theater

a needle
weaving carpet

*white noise from the speakers, white light
under the curtain*

I stand there before it
a face made of gnats

unable to speak
a language now dead

What is that?
it sways—

Qu'est-ce que c'est?
the folds shuffle

Cum quid velis nescis quid dicis.

Like a parched, Persian-red
tongue strung from the rafters

the curtain hangs, mute & still

I step out to the hallways of the gun cabinet to rest, pick a scallop from the silver
chat the wall-hung former guests
ladle gin from a punch bowl as it calves off an ice floe, part my hair in a breastplate
and plot my way back

making eyes
at the taxidermy

as I exit

as it emptied, the bottle
of champagne the ground crew gave me
as he descended from the last plane he flew

I remember my father
in the video, mom laughing

as he turns from the ladder
the camera, unsteady

his squadron, each with their own bottles

dousing him too

on the mantle, a photograph

my father and I in uniform
(my mother sewed a flight suit

my brothers later wore)

in my hand, a wooden biplane
candy red, blue propeller

my hair, his hair

jet black above our smiles

Joseph Lease

American Death Trip

1

And there he was, throwing his face into his
grave, the phone rang,

blue glass rubbed raw by fantasies, blue
glass rubbed raw by rain outside—and
bright red berries, mucus-slick—

Capital eats your

Face

Just

Say missiles,

Just

Say drones:

3

Your stain of faded storm light in my

mouth:

your ghosts erupt like personalities, your

personalities become dead spells,

you run around like daydreams, tear up

maps,

democracy is anybody's eyes—

4

Democracy is resource wars, democracy is

buying:

you forgot to see the end of the world:

capital, capital, surplus rain and snow:

capital eats your face (“I would prefer not

to”)—

5

Start over—

he's drunk on wind, shadow frustration,

I see my own soul, shadows under voice—

7

The sky is money, privatize the sky—steal

the water, steal the land—

so, it's vodka, it's twilight,

someone falling right in front of you—

8

Wires sticking out of my head—

wires sticking out of the back—

Democracy is anybody's eyes—

O pretty word, America, O pretty word,

despair, in soft air, soft air—someone's

trying not to care—and may the wind that

killed you slide you home—

Mariam Dubovik

Lease

Ghost Heart Incoherent

Ghost heart incoherent

Abrupt travels

Trimeter tetrameter

I follow slow

Inside false time

Below sleep

I find the small flower

Inside its shadow

Lisa Lubasch

So I began

*So I began to dismantle it. It was near a temple. A figure
drawn off. Towards the end. Through. Miraculous.
Yes – tolling. Term she gave. What spoken. So I began.
It took days. To reach the. Say. It does not matter. So
boundless is the trying. She came from the temple. Arrived
from there. A wanderer, perhaps. No, not in this weather.
Words she spoke. Had the quality of. A question. To
answer no other. In what she was. Having to pronounce.*

*Not a telling, but a faltering. Through trees her sight fell, upon.
A figure drawn off towards. Light. It does not matter.
Looking in the matter. Luminous the hill.*

*Through trees, her lips. Instilled a question. Not sending,
landing. Placed me here, and I fell to it, upon it. It was as if
reversed. Figure drawn off. The quality of, it was.*

*Measured. Implored, opened upon. Like the sun, or a
diagonal. Ceasing. And unversing itself. Melting.
Fluidity.*

*A dent. Making a shallow, zero. Gone inside. One apart.
Thought: Its separated call. Which trace. Almost inscribed.
A permanence of sorts. To name. Infirm.*

*You fancy yourself like. But you are not. Like what?
Ungestured in the slaughter. Over the line. Itself alone.
Last and first. Unscoring a location. So I took off in a
direction. No form to. Decampment.*

*Trenchant. Marching. Released from. After birth. The
disciple resting. Enfolded. Flood beneath. Deracinated
sentry. Never to emblazon. A cord. The being late.
Disannulled. To tell of her. Devotions. To. Flourish in.*

Where to go.

Jesse Nathan

Lure

I watch the launch and think of loss

Dear mother

In summer I live reeling

Flying off the line I tied mine to

poem in margin of class notes

what you want
is a mess
what you want
is never
one thing I
am cold here
in a classroom
of laws fruits
waves roots
compare me to
a passage
a tunnel
from one truth
to another

Timothy O'Keefe

Quadrilateral : And Proteus Was a Group of Small Children

Years in the hollowed-out oak, now a cello soundtrack :
That one breaks his nose and gains a friendship :
That one is now her mother's age in some first memory :
We chased night bugs, their will of sound, though the sound had none.

Quadrilateral: New Jersey After All

Postcards and prop planes. Red letters on the sky :
Thirst to meadow, meadow to not-come-back :
Knowledge is a knower, each window's train :
The sand forgives what it cannot fill. Why wait.

Gillian Osborne

BERNAL HILL, SAN FRANCISCO, 2009

In the language we have adopted, we are sitting side by side
on top of a hill. You have a fundamental acceptance
of finitude, you begin. I am pulling the grass from the earth
blade by blade, a blue and green bird darts through eucalyptus
the weight of our bodies crushes wild chamomile into a smell
that is like a roadside I remember when one of the neighbors
shot a deer and hung it in the barn door I gathered the kids
to say that this was death and not an image, though the image
remained. The hills we talk on resemble mountains, or
we've agreed to argue as if they do. You love to remind me
my life is just beginning and yours is done, that we are almost
the people we always hoped we'd be. Conifers have other names,
along with all the shapes of seeds that drop from trees.
Does a butterfly ever becomes a moth was another way
of removing yourself from worldliness. Relinquishing the hill.
Then the bird, your hand on my face, mountains again.

Oscar Oswald

from AFTER-map

human waiting
to say it
as when a stringed
bullet hangs
between
 getting there already
and
letting the chasing string
 propel
both

every revival
bathes us

us all
our gravity
or the down-
ward opposite after sky

my novel skin
my dry iris
I: an age-
addition
neither new
nor any depletion

falling apart

another story about wax

I called it
fire

like an element
w/o
comparison

I don't ask you to ask me
the word
or its origin

lake

and reservoir

to ask you

and you and I

don't ask

ask me

I ask
you
the word

lake

on flakes

reserved

flakes

you and I

to you, word

ask me

or

and its origin to

off

major
major

major

on
the lift
of us

if it's ours
we must
travel light

Alexandria Peary

A Dream Splashed with Ropes

A dream is splashed with ropes.
Ropes are lying on the surface,
decorative ropes, descriptive sentences
from a bright yellow yarn manuscript,
cords that have slipped free of insignia
and nautical miles, roads that have slipped
from their intersections alongside tiny grass snakes
that have slipped off their skulls
from a design of gold watch fobs, tassels, gold chains:
the pattern on a splash.

When splashes like cut-outs,
like shadows, are fit in behind certain furnishings—
behind night tables, behind the ivory headboard,
behind the his/her table lamps—when the pattern on a splash
is inserted behind the amethyst night table,
behind the headboard that's a religious city on the hill,
behind the rolling amber fields of a bedspread,
then a Dream is wheeled in, a wave charges to the left,
a wave sprayed with black knots.

What's inside the wave with drawers? Why misspell
on the manuscript of the sea? Who holds up
the one cursive word on a green schoolroom slate?
Who leads around the horses filled with rope?

A dream is splashed with ropes,
it is crisscrossed with "learning the ropes,"
"he's on the ropes," and "no strings attached,"
like an isolated wave, a wave being pulled in.
A dream, as in one's wish for the future, star-white,
or a dream, sweet off-white pile & deep inside
people you are glad to see again float
as equal signs and clover. Made to sit in a line-up,

A Dream Splashed with Ropes (2)

a dream splashed with ropes
turrets on simplicity
good to the last
drop
pre-
approved

a dream splashed with ropes
a bed ruffle on the road
the wave
with drawers
pom-pom
s of -pre

that hill gets turned
on is e-blue
the kohl-lined window
on the last barn of God

better dreamers
because of the red dream
are in
a peer-edited
swimming pool

John Peck

The Sty

(words from *The Elements of Style* by Strunk and White)

Somebody else's umbrella
paid us a visit yesterday.

Error and humiliation
are icy roads in Scotland.

Blessed are the Spanish and Portuguese
when you place the possessive before them.

Do not confuse an apple
with an inflammable heart.

I shall drown like a cormorant
in the new-fallen snow,

surrounded by laughing infinitives
and gold-plated faucets.

The language of mutilation
will live on, and on, and on.

Ethel Rackin

No Need for Epiphany

Each word, a solitary thing
a moment drawn on a branch
a moment in which repetition
becomes a haunting, gnawing thing

as a wren flies over
an area's dive motel.

~

In the parking lot
on the precipice of *stay/go*.

~

The way lightning
and trees rustling
before a downpour
are the end of one thing
and the beginning of
something new.

~

Remembering banks
of the river, finding a precipice,
skipping stones

or the breakwater off to one side
as if a gale is preparing to have its way.

~

These cliffs to the left of me—
What color are they?
Who are my next of kin?

Should I be grateful
despite the knowledge
that sits like a shipwreck—
a black box, permanently
out of reach?

Or could this music
harbor such sadness
carry it to the mouth
from which flows
the strongest tide?

Elizabeth Robinson

On Weather

Weather communicates its meaning
and so we go
inside it.

There, some live to great age, and
others do not.

*

Snow may be a beneficent sheen.

It may be

with its delicate falling spears

a series of inoculations.

That is, in the latter case: always

ambivalent.

*

It wasn't easy, they say,

to make the weather warmer,

consistently, over a period

of years.

Decades.

The difficulty of the feat is what

makes us deny it occurred.

*

Then water washed over.

The patient lay in a great bed,

drowning in it.

*

Weather as a form of removal startles us.

It stops and then restarts itself.

Its occasional frigidity dignifies contrast. I mean:

What is covered over, water or sky, a patient

inundated by a blanket.

Something bright blue. What

no one knew before. And the blanket

pulled back.

Weather pulled back from itself by its own flush.

*

On the way to the emergency room,

snow flakes revolve indolently in the

light in front of the windshield. One

movement hypnotizes another, this

interest of weather

in recovery.

*

When a thing does what it does best,

it transcends moral judgment, volition.

It is not health.

Distress—

becomes a non sequitor, all that is not confined

to the characteristics of being.

Belief is neither health nor unhealth.

It's sponge soaks up alike all

sweat, flame, bile, volition, cancer, and vast
tracts of dead forest.

*

Generally, weather is the antonym

of distress.

Then there are fires.

Belief is neither health nor unhealthy but a parachute that

falls into the fire, hacks

away at the dead fuel, disassembles

its purity. Fever.

Lick of flame. Cells dividing.

*

When a thing does what it does best,

as with weather,

it grows larger than itself, transmissible

like a cough. We walk

through it (the cough)

in sync with its defiled and sublime largeness. As I said:

Sheen.

Beneficent swell.

Interior.

Carol Snow

Calder's Universe

1

They were separated. 3

They were weighted differently. 1

They offset one another. 2

4

But include the 1? 3

Where should the (2 [sequence]) numbers go?

2

What determines string length? 2

5

[cast] shadows, cast

3

What determines string length? 2

What determines the length of the pause?

[Diver]

NO

Not simply

the molded blue plastic toy diver
— damaged but salvaged —

suspended always diving in (sewn for it she said by an artist in Russia)
a square-ish gauze pouch hung from a loop of aqua seed beads

YES

always diving,

exploring a mighty – wow! – the vast, the outward:
(who put him)

face(d) downward

KNOW

Not simply... but still and “in little,” made, a model
(I was given): “figure for,” internal, of indeterminate

“...the feeling that everything in the world has its own size, that if you found its size among
the swellings and diminishings it would be calm and shine”
— Robert Hass, “Tall Windows”

“When their bones are picked clean and the clean bones gone,
They shall have stars at elbow and foot.”
— Dylan Thomas, “And Death Shall Have No Dominion”

“...that His height, from His Seat of Glory and up 118 ten thousands (rebaboth) parasangs.
...from His Seat of Glory down 118 ten thousands (rebaboth) parasangs,
...From his Right Arm to his Left Arm 77 ten thousand,
...from His Right Eye to Left Eye 30 ten thousands...”
— “*Shiur Qoma* (The Measure of the Divine Body)”

[constellation — hand-stitched little pocket — perspective: what distance from him/H-m/it]
in which faith resides

— funny —
semblance or

pattern

KYESW

or gap: in which faith

Notes: “NO / KNOW / YES / KYESW” — Jessica Park, quoted by Clara Claiborne Park in
Exiting Nirvana: A Daughter's Life with Autism; “*Shiur Qoma* (The Measure of the Divine Body)”
— David Meltzer, Editor, *The Secret Garden: An Anthology in the Kabbalah*

Sho Sugita

Junction Rules

“The sum of human wisdom is not contained in any one language”

—Ezra Pound, *The ABC of Reading*

Six years before the Black Ships arrived with Paixhans cannons to “open” Japan from its national isolation known as *sakoku*, an Anglo-Métis man had taken a small boat from a whaling ship with the intention of teaching English, Latin, and Philosophy. His name was Ranald MacDonald of Astoria, Oregon. His father was the Chief Trader for the Hudson’s Bay Company, and his mother was the Princess of the Chinook Confederacy. Ranald was educated at the Red River Academy and spent some years as a bank clerk in Eastern Canada. He had decided on his attempt to reach Japan after a love affair went sour—his Indian blood was considered a barrier to his marrying the young girl he had fallen in love with. It was through his identity crisis that he started to theorize Japan as “the land of his ancestors.”

Junction Rules

*for Ranald MacDonald, 1824-1894,
in a sketch of his life in Japan.*

嘉永元申年
七月十一日
御掛り

Prelude:

The knowledge omitted by Elizabeth B. Custer,
defender of legacy:

阿部伊勢守様へ差出
同十九日御付札ニ而
御指図

~~“Ranarudo Makudonaruto, fisherman of Canada,
24 years old, has been received in charge.
He said that there was no god nor Buddha”~~

the records
from Tajiro in Rishiri—
“Tangaro,” he was called

southward

I.

*“Perceiving from my gestures and countenance that I was
dissatisfied with something, they commenced to
rubbing their hands together as if imploring pardon”*

the authority
will reach the first year
for “eternal felicity,”
the era of Kaei:

But we of outpouring chance—in brotherhood,
its hate of castes.
Are all men equal; do we plead guilty
to facial features? What is it to wed,
to go abroad on a trade expedition—danger?

左異国人此上如何相
心得可申候哉
此段奉伺候

The Lower officials query—
southward again

II.

*“Madam, I flatter myself that I was past
the instigator of Commodore Perry’s
expedition to Japan”*

frontiers
—with Yezo itself
foreign to the Japanese

Bonding would have polar opposite effects:
anathema—
Companionship of worldly interest
is for those who drifted ashore:
Forlorn hopes, as were the Israelites in the wild.

Shipwrecked,
the vagabond only spoke
with his hands

睨と難相分候得共—
they say nothing
is clear, however

III.

Trying to invite others into his story, he said:

*“Now that you have gazed upon
formidable bastions,
can I persuade you to go into my home?”*

The world was wilderness; I didn't think of bread.

A feeling that I
would come to me, come, in vague fatuous
sorts of ways, in need, as did the
Israelites in the wilderness, in placid sea.

IV.

And continuing his story, he said

“Those were halcyon days”
in Japan. He, now in Oregon.

Disguise my motive, viz. *that* that saved me.

To have faith in
one another, I should now presume to be
of the finest in the land.
The last tinsel adieu in his manhood has tears!

V.

*“Oh madam, take possession of me.
I am yours.”*

What they proclaim they will do to intruders
they do, and kill
all of us. But making an exception
they refrain from that which they would
do to me. But madam, *I am yours, I am yours*

Rishiri officials see
what he has to offer—

the vagabond:

the wind,
tough.
Twice the boat filled with
water—
lost the compass

saw the mountain

乗参候端船損しも
無之候間帰帆可致
旨手真似ニ而相諭候所
左小船ニ而者
大洋帰帆成兼
当惑之義ニ相見候
付差留置候
旨手真似ニ而相諭候所
黙頭候

The man—
not injured.
The main ship,
they think he says,
“not damaged.”
No matter how
they tried
by hand:

“you must go back”

He turns motionless,
as though in protest

—then they must wait
for higher command

Suppressio veri, whatever belongs
to them should be
me. I present my love, as bibliophile.
Under pain of forfeiture, death—
I present myself as a castaway, rely
on humanity, Utopia of the
hoary East. So
I've heard but with laws barring us, hog-tied
as a bridge to them to suspend
my experience mediating them as they.

VI.

*“As a trait of the character of my ‘barbarian hosts’
—not that I consider them so—
I received a present of some small apples.”*

Caught, hand-cuffed, dragged back, and their throats cut
in all matters
with kindness, delicate consideration,
habitually violent
whilst I devoured the viands they devoured.

VII.

*“After having girded the Globe itself,
and come across peoples. Many uncivilized, I am told.
There are none to whom I feel more kindly.”*

Sweet and slightly acid like our own, in fact caged—
there remained
the rest of the voyage, like gossamer
than anything else I know of.
In dawn—let us hope—of a better day for Peace

for the following items:
異国人所持品

what could it be
all
the *some things* he possess in

unknown bindings
works

sources:

A key—

一碇 様之物
一楫柄 様之物
一天眼鏡 様之物
一牙 様之物
一錐 様之物
一スキ櫛 様之物
一銀色燭台 様之物
一薩 様之物
一茶釜蓋 様之物
一服鏡 様之物
一銅柄杓 様之物
一銀象眼蓋付台 様之物
一樽 内獣肉 様之物
一小刀 様之物
一火打 様之物

様之物

So many things
unidentifiable.

VIII.

Not belonging to anyone in look or facial feature here, the enslaved Japanese fishermen in Oregon were not unlike me. The wind is variable in the Sea of Japan, but never so forceful as to hinder the navigation of that sea. It was different from the Pacific storms that brought the Japanese to America. The nearest island, not too far off, comes on with heavy fog. The shadowing of sight could be negotiated with the bellowing of sea lions. The sense of distance has swelled in me. Then in the path with little sign of life, I see a man. He speaks—I do not understand him, but many of his words sounds familiar, possibly through my maternal ancestry:

We fingering maps.

He, peering through tall grasses.

The sun and phragmites.

VIII.

Ranald MacDonald begins, in his
 “accidental position
 of first teacher of English to them,
 had the singular opportunity
 of learning.”

Tangaro

They opened an almanac that had Japanese signs.
 Zodiacs: *Ne*, a rat; *Tatz*, a dragon;
Torad, a tiger. They would partake a
 re-past, then take a short walk
 behind the bushes: adjusting their sandals and pace.
 They very often stumbled slightly
 and found themselves in a hospitable
 restraint. They, constantly *con amore*
 for reading each other,
 one with a crow quill, another a brush.
 Prayer book and geography—questions
 answered by the dignity
 of smoking each other’s camulet

through the records:
 I trace the paper and point to
 鼠、龍、*history*, seeing
 虎へ指さし致し候
 where he had come from
 for what reason did he come—
 what motivated him to crash his boat
 on the shores of this archipelago?

Spreading mats, they squatted on the village trail
 while watching the smoke covering
 their shoulders. The palanquin now came
 for the clerical prison.

with an order:

People brought an inventory of questions, sweetmeats.
 Books, they returned to the small guardroom.
 His student had warned about his Bible:
 “Not good,” he said. “*Kameni*,” understood
 as meaning “*to my God*,”
 he pointed to his books on the shelf, wrote
 his name on the wall in place of Psalms.
 He, the wanderings beyond
 records, scarce traces

異国人所持之書籍類ハ
 役人共立合、封印付置猥ニ
 他見無之様可被取計候
 日本ハ神国たる処、
 切支丹国より
 邪法を授け候儀、
 ただ以て然るべからず候事

their literature.

To touch its shores, death was what he was willing to pay.
 He slept to some questions, a kind of dagger
 with his larger interests of place to place.
 He was born into conflicts,
 so he felt the need to search abroad for sympathy.

Age will in time blur coastlines, he thought,
 as a cask led to experiencing
 a stillness, articles in acquiring
 travel, language, fields
 before they opened the thin leaves, doubled
 like his own, printed only on one side.
 Fifteen books without covers
 his one bag of clothing. One oar.

another thing unidentifiable,
 uncountable borders on the page
 万国絵図面
 on the page
 just
 壺枚

X.

Everyone—including the children—carried a portfolio covered in cloth, filled with paper. At all times they held a brush, most likely made of cat hair. Ink, perhaps from cuttlefish. Themselves people of literature, I thought I might pass on this score. I was master enough for the purpose: the Common Prayer, my dictionary. They were not as curious of me as the people up North. They were studying the commerce of European nations. I gave them to understand that I was a British subject at birth, a citizen of the United States, and belonged to the Commercial marine. Reaching the inner harbor, I see—

The southern ocean,
Crow's nest where I left
My whales, anchor

Lawrence Sutin

Living in the Inner Outer All

What I have been wondering about more than ever lately is where I am during my waking hours. It seems clear to me that when I am asleep I am in bed sleeping or on a couch sleeping because I cannot sleep sitting up. But as to where I wander when awake I find it isn't so simple as here is this me who has been me for a long time and is doing the things that I tend to do. No it seems quite certain to me that there are many mes and many ways of being awake, so many that I cannot keep count or always be sure which me or way I'm in.

I don't want to use this essay to count up all the ways. That would be like chasing shadows with a cellphone light app when you don't even know how to text your whereabouts, which I don't. What I do want to do is to sketch out a map of what is called upon for me after I get out of bed and in all that time before I return to bed. Surely it is plain that the better I know the map the more I can confuse it with the territory and satisfy the customs agents at the border crossings.

I'm going to begin with the inner and the outer and then move on to the all and end with all three.

The inner is the me I think only I know. The outer is the me I share with other outers whose inners those outers think only they know. There are no clear boundaries between the inner and the outer even though I think there are. Because I also think that—in the case of many outers I know—I may discern something of their inners that they themselves don't know. Many outers think the same about me. Apparently each of us is a house with more windows than we are aware of and no matter how careful we are we often wind up wriggling out of our underwear to the delight of some outer peeking in. Or put it this way—we think of ourselves as bottles of fine wine but in truth we are colanders, letting the precious vintage of our beings drain away, leaving us as we really are—a grid of sensory holes sucking air, good for draining pasta and nothing more.

But that's silly. We can eat pasta as well, or breakfast, as I do, coffee and toast with jam, when I get out of bed—but that doesn't happen as fast as my job responsibilities would indicate. I pass through phases of disbelieving that I'm me again, that the me who's awakening owes a thing to the feckless fool who fell asleep a few hours back, what's stopping me from finally escaping from him, who would know, I could fake his mannerisms until I bought a plane ticket to New Zealand where, it seems to me, I could speak the English language without a sense that the specific meanings of its many words applied necessarily to anything I now said as to whom I'd been before becoming a Kiwi, my words would become my newly born children and I their loving father trusting in them to find their way in the world, as, for example, when asked by a fellow Kiwi if I worked for a living, I'd say, only insofar as my life and passion and work are one, that's why I came to New Zealand, to blur the

lines, evade the outer. But then New Zealand disappears, for I have licked my teeth and they need brushing and the outer needs to get up and on his way while the inner goes back to sleep inside my nostrils.

Hegel mapped the phenomenal world as a three-tier cake of family, civil society and the state. The philosopher failed to bake a steel file into the cake as he saw no way to escape from the three altogether, one could only pass between them until death.

My rejoinder to Hegel would be that the individual whom he has encased in tripartite frosting needs only to jump out of that cake buck naked and declare themselves the all. By the all I mean nearly everything, because if it were everything it could not be expressed, while this is expressibility itself, a credo that lives out by never remaining in one setting long enough to take on its coloration, even if you are sitting there, working there, talking with people there, calling them Dad or Boss or Your Honor, you are always elsewhere as well, in the inner depths beyond the most astute observer, in the outer flying through the sky passing by the windows of your homes, schools, fields, offices, shopping malls, not so much as bothering to wave because it would be rude, just now, to take notice of the plight of one of your mes stuck doing what we call holding a job caring for a family fighting for a cause which are what Hegel would set us to work at for so long as it takes for the great spirit of truth to reveal itself through history, and history is a span of time that none of us will ever see the end of, but the all ends when we do, or I would speculate that it must, because my all is only mine, it includes pizza, my postcard collection, listening to opera with my dog, fantasizing that I could remind the world of how much of us and around us is flowing out of the colander of history that is no more stable in its content than I am. Multiple dripping histories, numberless seeping mes, I am getting out of my car, teaching a class on writing for a world including but beyond families, societies, or laws, with isolated readers desperate to isolate themselves still further in a book that has a file baked into its narrative.

Back at home, if the family is harmonious, as mine manages to be, the all takes in the eating and talking and sleeping together but not all together, nothing is altogether, I go down into the basement to write, I come upstairs and pretend to be back with the fam, it takes a while and then I am, though my daughter once asked, "Why are simple things so hard for you, Dad?" and my answer was, "Honey, everyone on earth has things that are so simple for them that they just can't believe that others can't do those things, they're too lazy to learn, they must be mean, and everyone on earth has things so achingly hard for them to do that it breaks down their lives, breaks them down, if they are forced to do them. That is the history of politics, wars between everyone, the breaking down and the drawing of triumphant new borders. There is a French philosopher, Gilles Deleuze, whom I cannot read because he writes like all the books he ever read exploded in his brain and he forgot what his own thoughts sound like, the outer exploding the inner, well Deleuze is said to think, as an inner-shattered outer observer naturally would, that the herd instinct drives us all to camouflage ourselves in the outer so as not to be noticed. That's why when I climb the basement stairs back into the family it's harder than it looks to you, Honey, because I don't want to seem to be herding myself or you."

"Philosophy is a cheat on life, Dad, you should stop reading it. It's annoying to have to respond to ideas that would just disappear if nobody bothered to think them."

So as part of the family inner and outer I herd philosophy away and my daughter back by commiserating as to how pointless her college classes are, all of them, regardless of subject matter, being told is what she hates, her inner likes to look out but not to be looked into or, worse still, surmised badly by those who think themselves possessed of judgment and vision—which is nearly all outers, Honey, I can tell you now that you're no longer in this essay, that the world is based on that sort of casual bite-and-chew, not just school, we let each other go freely in and out within the family but once you go out the outers are watching as you watch back, it can't be one-way watching unless you sit in corners and spy but then you risk being found out and nobody likes that, inner or outer, we prize our secrecy, our sense of knowing what we're spotting within others and working it for our own ends, and to be caught at that which everyone does can be excruciating, I didn't know I was like that, please forgive me for seeing what you do without believing it. That is the difficulty of letting the outer fully into the all, the needing to believe it if you are to work it, and knowing what not to believe while still believing there's shrewd outers out there at all and not merely solipsistic inners with god providing staging and set décor as Bishop Berkeley believed, and I am moved to reply to him that I can play well enough the role of master dreamer of my life, I can't mess it up any more than god does with this world of fanatic outers trying to rescue fanatic inners from their inwardness, it would be good for you to get out of yourself, your room, your mood, join the party, chat, brag, pitch an idea and hope it becomes a meme, flirt without soul or even eros, agree for the pleasure of ending a discussion, cast yourself for any role you wish and make it come true by believing the world owes you that much at least.

Along the way there will be outers whose inners you will peak into and see not what they please or you please but something that belongs to the all alone, that shines from inner to inner without rippling the outer, in physics that is called nonlocality and that is a word I love, my inner loves illuminations without discernible cause.

As a partisan inner I would sometimes like to say to partisan outers go back inside your room, be your own entourage, do what you please, say, invent a new literary genre, perhaps one that reflects your fear of the mes in your future who are starting to whisper in the crown of your head and your lower back. O.A. Old Adult Literature. Like Y.A., the genre guidelines are firm as the needs of a loyal readership trump all. Drug use by the senior protagonists is limited to prescription pills, intravenous tubes, and weed provided by junior but not adolescent protagonists—the seniors are never allowed in schoolyards. If they have sex they don't regret it, there's no time for that. Inner voice, if required, is whispered directly into the reader's ear. But whatever genre you might prefer to invent, you'll need a launch party, wine and cheese, and in comes the outer again, you can't keep those two apart, and the all thrives on that confusion, it likes being inner and outer and all because all alone is lonely.

Chad Sweeney

from "Little Million Doors"

If orders of musics
Have I belonged

To street corners algebras
Of ships which

Language is this in me

Shaping the coffins
A white fire

Adumbrates the trees the

Anvil is a doll

I think inside the wake
Where I am not

Alone in faith
If there is anything

Kate Thorpe

Put the Coal Back in the Garden

When a century is
locked and a sky is

only dangling (this far to the right),
we arise and put on our lives and hang there
in straight lines apart:

left the earth in style.



Let fall my love into
the gravel, steel projects, stone lots.

Who upon the memory, up ahead can join us on the steel march?

A wheel is lost and time is mortar, counting, built wheels to trust,

to come apart and with no fountain, no returning, what is our love

but a voice that
pauses.



Winter could return

but I had ripped out I

built the plaster up
on the outside of the house (repellant):

made something out of light,
quiet.

Each portion was the same
when I only wanted to

embrace, to pause,
the coal was dug, was sorted, shipped off.



Let fall my love into the metal,

as wind through tissues,
thresholds. News?

Where spring moves and

plants turn into tissues, soil to the hills (iron, steel). When ardor is not
the present goal (and practical). I wanted to work in the fields. When plants
can leave homes, what
I had owned, rooms, came home

but it was not home anymore.

Yesterday I couldn't
even make it here to see you through that hole,
the coal to plant, the motor tuneful.

Barbara Tomash

Light Source

she looks down and when she looks up again
the view out her window loses concentration
a breakage of habit with the unwritten
she eats an apple cut into sections
her ancestors—the overcast sky—
yet movement in waves
wild lilies budding, tree bark striated
blue tufts of grass

she is non-native everywhere in the world
up to her knees in disclaimers
a foundling, a foundation resting on
nuts and berries, on heaps
of matter composted, repatriated
men in the woods accosting her
don't you remember?—a dissolution
that counted for nothing

now, she looks up into swirling
mother of pearl, the land's rich browns, greens
thinned, blackened or lost
sky not so much hidden as forbidden
hope is her catapult—violent, medieval
like her father's father's father's
the wind picks up
I am startled, she says

Chloé Veylit

velocity whiskey

I want to take them home like those girls
are all really that cute I'll gag five more
minutes and I am walking on wet sidewalk
peeing in public libraries I have visited so
many libraries he said just stare at the
books I am teaching myself to write

Brad Vogler

from [this stillness is]

:

you

eyes laid landward

you

horizon/ed

vagary

:

:

I call to you brutally

voiced confession

unreturned and

earlier sureness teeters

on / for

un proceeds so much of your

so close to

so much of

us

/

us

:

:

[I just wanted your company.][Are you feeling okay?][Do you need anything?][Our fixes.][Morning sick boy.][How're you feeling?][I'd love to see you for a bit.][I wish I could do something to make you feel better.][I have a hard time knowing you're not doing so good.]

[...all of which makes it difficult for me to know what I feel or want.][I just feel like isolating myself from everyone right now.][Hope you're sleeping dear one.][And so I'm making myself more stressed.][I'm not struggling out of loss so much as stress.][Which isn't new with me, but this is particularly increased.][I don't need to talk.][I just need to get shit done.][I want to have Johanna Drucker's hair.][And you tomorrow night.][Home finally.]

[I wanted to say before I left that I have a hard time knowing how to act with you with them around now.][And I don't like how I act because of it.][I don't know how to be with you with any of them watching.][Anyway I just wanted to say that.]

-when you feel ready to talk about this just let me know and we can.

[It's okay.][There's not much more to say.][I don't think you should do anything.][It's just difficult and uncomfortable.]

-I want to be a calming person for you.

[You are.][But that doesn't mean everything is okay.][Especially when we're out in the world.]

-we can work on making it ok. we just need to keep talking.

[I don't feel like anything can be built with the threat of them inserting themselves.]

-what can't be built?

[Anything between us __

:

:

girl well
girl in my heart/girl heart

tired ship make tired letters make tired words that w/d on't matter

dear,

one wonders at such you one
body a paper heart
two body tear it (down)
a cusp cut shore
tore a
line that went a long jagged two eye

disappeared

girl well
girl in my heart girl heart

still here despite absent two eye/s
for

signed,
tired / tore

:

G.C. Waldrep

(To Immanence:

winter lane & what fuses:
wax asunder: vertical
expectation: steepledrift:
the floor slickens, into
science some expostulate:
velveted repository:
the surrogate maybe:
handfoil: Ahaseurus: lily
of uncloven epithet:
prescribed, as for searing:
introceptive: the rods
of iron shuffle their marked
palimpsests: we watch:
spalled & quayside:
the tether shifts: propose
a tactile Occident: epic
majuscule: periodic deity:
improvident: & lift,
your scardom: voluptuous:
as voices: honeysplendor:
to *touch*: to *blush*:
to gesture: embroiders
a depth, a verse, a valence:
clock of the body's salt:
indwelling advocate:
in what manger of breath:
suborned pry-song, my
harrier: barren priestbread:
(—this lacustrine heart:

esker anthem

the green eye
nictitates

clepsydral alluvion
unrecorded

brims with
(against) saltation's
brief ecstasy

*

put the wound
down, some-
one kept saying,

in that dream

*

the eye's new
territory
"*sights*," surveils

(vanishing point)

*

what is visible
along the caustic
axis,
faith edits

the freeway's
complex breath

*

I would sing
a true song:

serotonin, micropyle

*

blink once
for yes, two for

[(insert gift-
node metaphor
here)]

*

gland to earth's

parturient body,
orant Gland

branded in saline

*

“pure” =
what is invisible
to the naked

eye-
clock, aglet

through which
mercy flows

*

tighten the stays

Stevens lied:
a *body* & a
garden (are one)

Laura Wetherington

Pierre Rivière Spectacular 01

Pierre Rivière made it a month on the lam. The day he was taken he had a hand-fashioned bow and arrow, one stick of sulfur, several knives, someone else's gun license, and a bit of string. He'd foraged for saffron bulbs, caught ducks and other birds. On *Doomsday Preppers*, Big Al makes it three months out of every year alone. He lives underground, acclimating to skyscraping milk crates of canned food and clocks on every cupboard. While he waits for a third world war, he stirs and sings for a camera crew, *Let's hunker down in the bunker / and eat some bunker stew, / All I can say is dear bunker / You've been a friend of mine*. Then a jump cut to a close-up: bulky chains hang like entrails from the ceiling, boxes loaded up under the stairs behind him, and he spits, "Don't just say, *Well, he lives underground so he must be nuts*. Am I nuts or are you?" I can't help but wonder is this a fair question.

Pierre Rivière Spectacular 14

What moves between the object and the eye? What moves between an object and desire? Our eyes surge out as touch. Our fractious light can burn. Pierre Rivière understood this. He believed in the body fluid, want's extramission bleeding into airspace. For him, a look could commit incest. Proximity became bestiality. Pierre lived in a world where actions are uncontrollable and the burn always licks outward. After Adam Lanza shot twenty children, the news kept saying "rampage," as if there is a word for it. Adam Lanza's eyes.

Joshua Marie Wilkinson

A Song Called Nimbus

When they dropped the bulb on a cord

down to the attic through the roof

I mistook it for a snake

startled, & fell down a flight of stairs

only to break my wing like a rib.

& this was 1802?

This was late last night.

What became of the spoils of the meadow?

A heaven of stormwater called runoff by the above.

& the diarist's pond shed?

Razed for a bistro.

The courier's legion of sparrows?

Asleep in Arroyo Chico.

Mandelstam's ghost?

Awake yet in the ornament.

Sometimes I lay half-aligned

wishing I could re-enter the memories

from your vantage point

to feel some shred of what you found.

Indecent memories, yes.

Those you summon to drag it out

in the morning

before showering for work.

Perhaps a voice was indeed there

awaiting me.

Thought I could access its timbre

like the sky by stepping into sunlight—

I could not truly enter it but

slowed into the certain words

that were off limits or

shrouded with a little nimbus

of ignorant grime.

What were the words?

They were human, of course.

So, what were they then?

Don't make me say.

Well, were they universal?

I must've thought they were.

O wet night, asphyxiate of bees,

honey of falling through a dream,

coarse cloth to dry the face & arms

& ass & legs with.

The white vanquished sheet

brought up what spun

the airs chestward.

