First flight of an aircraft upside down by the French acrobatic aviator, Adolphe Pégoud.

First “loop the loop” in an aircraft flown by Russian military pilot Petr Nesterov.

Apolinaire gives a lecture in Berlin on the occasion of an exhibition of Robert Delaunay at the Der Sturm gallery.

The text of his lecture contains one of the earliest references to the radically new mediums of papier collé and collage that Braque and Picasso had developed using a wide range of materials, including faux bois wallpapering.

The tomb of an Egyptian child is found containing nine stone pins, which were probably used in an ancient variation of bowling.

Mass production is developed at the Ford Motor plant in Dearborn, Michigan.

Russian celebrations for 500 years of Romanovs.

The First “International Exhibition of Modern Art” (the “Armory Show”) in New York at the 69th Regiment Armory includes Duchamp’s *Nude Descending A Staircase*, and works by Archipenko, Picasso, Picabia, Braque, and Kandinsky, to the dismay of the U.S. establishment, and Theodore Roosevelt.

Sonia Delaunay fashions her first simultaneous dress.

Edison develops the first talking motion pictures.

Igor Stravinsky’s ballet score *The Rite of Spring* is premiered in Paris.

Gertrude Stein writes a word-portrait entitled “Braque.”

We find Picasso, at the beginning of 1915, returning to the use of paint to hurl, as it were, a series of defiant challenges at the papiers collés.

Shuffleboard is introduced into Florida by Daytona Beach hoteliers Mr. and Mrs. Robert Ball.

Ferdinand de Saussure dies.

Critic of the Armory Show: “It was a good show, but don’t do it again.”

Eva and Picasso leave for Céret.

H. D. Imagiste publishes three poems in *Poetry*.

Duchamp’s *Bicycle Wheel*, the first readymade

1. Direct treatment of the ‘thing,’ whether subjective or objective.
2. To use absolutely no word that does not contribute to the presentation.
3. As regarding rhythm: to compose in sequence of the musical phrase, not in sequence of a metronome.

—dicta published by Des Imagistes in *Poetry* magazine

Sung Chiao-jen, a founder of the Chinese nationalist party (KMT), is wounded in an assassination attempt and dies 2 days after.

De Sitter discovers speed of light is independent of speed of source.

Sagnac discovers speed of light depends on speed of rotating platform.

Goncharova’s *Cyclist*

Goncharova’s *Rayonism*
1913

a journal of forms

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Selections from the year 1915: Natalia Goncharova, courtesy of the State Museum of Russia

Jonathan Thirkield’s Disposable Museum 9 & 10, courtesy of VOLT magazine, No. 9, where the pieces first appeared


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“Cubism is an art which above all has as its purpose form—and once that form is created, then it exists and carries on its own life.” —Picasso
Natalia Goncharova, 1915: Rayonism, Sketch of a Composition
Natalia Goncharova, 1915: Electric Chandelier
Natalia Goncharova, 1913: Stalking Cat, from Konstantin Bolshakov’s Futurist book, ‘Le Futur’
The aim of my one-woman show is to chronicle my artistic career over a period of thirteen years. I grasped the art of painting myself, step by step, not attending any school of art (I studied sculpture at the School of Painting and Sculpture for three years and left after receiving a minor medal). At the start of my career, I mostly studied the modern French painters. They opened my eyes and I grasped the great importance and value of the art of my native land and, through it, the great value of the art of the East. I have gone through everything that the West could give me up to the present moment, as well as everything that, coming from the West, was created by my native land. Now I shake the dust from my feet and shun the West, believing its levelling significance to be extraordinarily small and insignificant. My path is to the original source of all the arts—the East. The art of my country is incomparably deeper and more significant than everything that I know in the West (I refer to genuine art and not what is planted by our official schools and societies). I reopen the path to the East, sure that many will follow me along this path. Where else but in the East do all the Western masters whom we have studied for so long derive their inspiration? We have failed to understand the most important thing—not to imitate blindly or to seek one’s own individuality, but to create, above all, works of art in the knowledge that the source on which the West draws is the East and ourselves. Let my example and my words serve as a good lesson for those who will understand their true meaning.

I am convinced that modern Russian art is developing so fast and has risen to such heights that it will, in the near future, play a leading role in world life. Modern Western ideas (mostly from France, the others are not worth talking about) are no longer of any benefit. The time when the West will learn from us is clearly not far off.

Examining art on the basis of the monuments at our disposal, and not referring to time, I see it in the following order:

The Stone Age and the art of the cave period are the morning of art. China, India and Egypt, with all the rises and falls of art, though generally high art with firm artistic traditions. Arts derived from these roots, only independent—the Aztecs, Negroes, Aborigines and Asian islands (Sunda Isles, Japan and others). This is the rise and heyday of art in general.

Greece beginning with the Cretan period (transitional state), archaics and all its golden period, all Italy right up to the Gothic—a fall. The Gothic is a transitional state. Our time is the heyday of art in a new form—the painterly form. Once again, the East has played the leading role in this second heyday. Moscow is the current centre of painting.

I shake off the Western dust, bemused by those backward people who will imitate Western works in the hope of becoming pure painters, fearing all literature like the plague. Even more amusing are those who preach individuality and place some value in their own “I”, even when this is limited beyond possibility. Untalented individuality is just as unnecessary as obscene imitation, without even mentioning the unmodernity of this.

I express my profound gratitude to the Western masters for all they have taught me.

Carefully redoing everything that could be done in this way and earning the honour of being placed alongside the modern Western masters, I prefer to investigate a new path in the West itself.
The tasks that I implement and intend to implement are the following:
To not set myself any boundaries or limits in the sense of artistic achievements.
To always employ all the modern conquests and discoveries in art.
To try to introduce an enduring legitimacy and an exact definition of the achieved—for myself and for others.
To fight against the vulgar and demoralising preaching of individualism, currently experiencing a period of agony.
To derive artistic inspiration from my native land and from the East, which is close to us.
To implement Mikhail Larionov’s theory of Rayonism developed by me (painting based solely on painterly laws).
To implement my own individual enthusiasm for a general objective painterly form.
In the golden age of individualism, I destroy this holy of holies and refuge of the narrow-minded as something not corresponding to the modern order of life and its future order. The individual perception can play an auxiliary role for art, and positively none for humanity.
If I sometimes clash with society, it is only because of the latter’s miscomprehension of the general fundaments of art and not because of my own personal idiosyncrasies, which no one is obliged to understand.
To perceive the world surrounding us with all clarity and versatility, implying both internal and external content.
To not fear literature, illustration or any other of the bugbears of modernity in painting, which certain modern artists wish to reject in order to raise the painterly interest absent from their works. To try and do the opposite, to express all this clearly and definitely by painterly means.
I turn away from the West because of its personal exhaustion for me and my sympathies for the East.
The West has shown me one thing—everything that it has comes from the East.¹
I believe what is now called philistine vulgarity to be of profound interest, because it is unbesmirched by the art of thickheads, whose sole thoughts are turned towards the summits, only because they themselves cannot reach them, and also because philistine vulgarity is prevalent in our days and this characterises modernity. There is no need to fear it; it can easily be an object for artistic concern.
Artistic vulgarity is so much worse, for it is inevitable, like the percentage of crime on earth, similar in all times and in all art. My last word is a stone thrown at the artistic vulgarity eternally aspiring to occupy the place of brilliant achievement.
Natalia Goncharova

¹ The Impressionists from the Japanese. Synthetics: Gaugin—India spoilt by the early Renaissance. Except for the realistic female type, he perceived nothing from the islands of Tahiti. Matisse—Chinese painting. The Cubists—Negros (Madagascar) and Aztecs. In the past, several historians are badly mistaken, claiming the influence of the Romans on our icon-painters and even the influence of the Germans. This is only in individual cases; in general, what does the Roman style represent but the following stage of development of the Byzantine, while the latter is hellenicised Eastern and Georgian-Armenian specimens. Although the Eastern influence did not come to us along a straight road, this does not prove anything. Its path was from the East to the West and, like now, served only as a transfer point. One only need look at Arab and Indian images to find the origin of our icons and art, which continues to live in the people even today.
PS My aspiration towards the East is not my final path. I only intend to expand my horizons. The countries in which artistic traditions are valued may help me in this.

For me, the East is the creation of new forms, the expansion and intensification of the tasks of colour. This will help me to express modernity—its living beauty—better and more clearly.

My aspiration towards nationality and the East is not intended to restrict the tasks of art. Quite the opposite—it is intended to make it all-embracing and worldwide.

If I extol the art of my native land, I believe that it wholly deserves this and should enjoy a more honourable place than the one it has occupied up until now.

N.G.
Moscow
August 1913
Close up shop
is what happens in Milan
and places older.

Who is protecting us,
we who were noticed by the Emperor
cruising in his vessel?

Remember navigators
tasting lemons from the trees
of their birthplace.

Do we know how they felt,
born under different signs?

Silent are honies in velvet cups.
The Hungry Knight

Palest shadow on the middle rock,
hungry knight! drifting.
O causes,
O celebrants,
massive,
comfort had ceased.

Massive night falls on the middle rock,
weighing-in like a scholar.
Heavy is the literature
bred on the rock,
filled with epiphany
night has known since infancy.
You’ve probably noticed how much of what you see is a lightless burning, and not the flame’s laughter.

Each night in fear, slippery, the face eases into arriving darkly, not itself, but as it recognizes. this surface about something I already don’t know.

Does the feminine leave things up in the cosmos? Is there a single brick without a name? In figuring out it’s identity loudly, the rhyme can constantly stretch it’s ‘it was not me’ or suffer.

It works as a glimpse of the inevitable and yes love’s mouth & body bow down together. Its almost like listening to music.

And the nest is not built until later, when the mad love-chase across the field is over. A pack of freckles. A pack of boys, speaking through the voice of a woman.

“You say, goodbye, I am leaving you, but you are really coming.”
The air divided upheavals of gravity into all that is discontinuous & all that is self contradictory.

For are you not my mother and more than my mother?

Prosopagnosia is a priori.

It is necessary for the scheme that we scorn entropy.

Our mouth only compromises its possibilities by allowing its names to be whispered.

Between I was & I saw something beautiful.

“The sea breaking free”

The artist’s fragmented body jostling proper motions for body parts.

The way saints mostly housed in fundamentally unexpected arrivals.
The late afternoon, with blue and gray, and there is a "transience" of a fragment. Resembling one person, a comma in the portrait. What "blue" is not a gripping thought. Going up (twin and from the window), we knew of the excisions of art. The desire is striking. So I echo intended to describe up end. The analogy has done its bit with interesting lines. I filled it without shaking every one of his books. Perhaps it is the same experience over. I echo applied to your name. Our distance from paths in the dirt, only one foot is so much. If you lay it down, clumsy adventure overwhelmed, to recuse a boundary, it is a way of saying. I want you to love this experience. But that after all is a memory that remains this moment and I laugh. A pause has been spoiled with remorse and we "lack" our new names as we "look the other time." Possessing the luxury of a possibility, the happening in rounds. It was only a coincidence. That is why I am disappointed, the illogical revealed obstensively. And here I am, immured to an inch. Watching the blue, more interesting counting. Has the madman enough power for love. The first indication of rating, their love of detail. Now such is the seductive of typing and returning. Muse. Its reversing loop, I told myself a person. The world gives stars (speech) I could see, propose patience in meaning and kept the lachrymose hidden. A song that we had hardly begun and grandest was lacking, arrogant. Rather than by secrets, the roses of new names along the popular cop, charm. Now such is our distance. At the time, a curiosity lost to background music. As for me, who gave pockets, the shape that I gave for the last name at which the pattern repeats least. Speakers, sitting standing, a certain abandoned hopeless. Mundane, as if longings deepen the organism made visiting beautifully done. For my thinking, I, the common daylight and always early. Sleep put together thought I cannot spell. Yet we must think is easier by a charming preliminary. That was the hell-prime, but she never read it. The dowtowners exclaimed to redwood paintings beyond the pond, the clean peso complained. By a sense of "less and mature" applications of sunlight destined to fall. Your flat chest wanted to colored ribbons and my face is always embarrassing. The miniatures creatures ascending upstairs, empty-handed. Certainly not a landscape, reason looks a madman in love, cheese, nutmeg. Any other blindness will hold the same. Some sort of meaning constituted by everyone else, any gradation of light and boredom. In preparation all day for more a charmness supplement. I've dry eyes, whose waves are
The city did bend a little gesture today, seeing also a non entrance.
“A colon within it ”

The face, the many faceted.
“and have a good time.” Good time!

Only expectations do not want to settle for what is (not) available.
The problem of the end of love and biology, an alliance and single, reflects your being on the boats off my shudder. Younger and a much better commitment, just for a minute.

We are dawn towards nothing.

“I agree that there is no danger in friendship in itself, but in obstinate adherence to friendship”

This reflecting practice of nice young stars you would like to paint, I confront walking up the opposite side of the sea. Trees. A tree of narration is seconds before. Proximity lasts, after all, only I was beginning to feel like I was the truth was

He has it called “a night” for no reason. A field, an isolation upon which
“the habit of educating the eye”. educated, the eye may cease to desire.

I think your luminous sexes didn’t want to laugh forever
Biswanit Dwibedy

The eastern sky was lit up with a golden hue, casting a warm light on everything it touched. The air was crisp, and a gentle breeze rustled through the trees, carrying the scent of autumn. People were out and about, enjoying the pleasant weather. Amidst the hustle and bustle, a young man stood out. He was tall and muscular, with a determined look on his face. He was on a mission, and nothing was going to stop him.

He walked down the street, his steps resounding on the pavement. He passed by shops and cafes, each with their unique charm. The sounds of laughter and chatter filled the air, creating a lively atmosphere. People went about their day, some rushing, others leisurely strolling.

As he reached his destination, he took a deep breath. This was the place he had been searching for. It was a small restaurant, nestled in the heart of the city. The sign read, "The Green Kitchen," and the windows were adorned with fresh herbs and vegetables. He knew he had found what he was looking for.

The doors were open, and he stepped inside. The aroma of cooking filled the air, and he couldn't help but smile. The chef trotted out to welcome him, a warm smile on his face.

"Good evening," the chef greeted. "Welcome to The Green Kitchen. What can I make for you?"

The young man looked around, taking in the beautiful arrangement of the kitchen. He had come here for a specific reason, and he was determined to get it.

"I need you to prepare a special dish," he said, his voice firm. "It's for a very important occasion."

"Of course," the chef replied, nodding. "What would you like?"

He described the menu item in detail, giving specific instructions on how it should be prepared.

"I understand," the chef said, writing down the details. "This will take some time, but I will make sure it's perfect."

"Thank you," the young man replied, giving a slight nod. "I appreciate your effort."

The chef smiled, understanding the importance of the task at hand. He got to work, focusing all his attention on preparing the dish. The young man stood by, watching in amazement as the chef transformed ingredients into a masterpiece.

As the dish was finally presented, the young man's face lit up with pride. It was everything he had hoped for, and more. He knew it was going to be a success.

"This is amazing," he exclaimed, taking a bite. "Thank you so much for your hard work."

The chef smiled, knowing that the dish would be of great value. "It was my pleasure," he said, then turned to the young man. "If you need anything else, just let me know."

"I will," the young man replied, gratitude in his voice. "Thank you once again for your time and effort."

The chef smiled, knowing that the young man had found what he was looking for. He was confident that the dish would bring joy to those who tasted it.

As the young man left, he couldn't help but feel a sense of accomplishment. He had found the perfect dish, and he knew that it would be a success. The world was full of possibilities, and he was excited to see what it had in store for him.
I found a buried book you will accelerate off.

Its lush green impermanence refuses to be reduced to the form
a central and privileged (friendship admirably wanted to push).

There is no such thing as being good to a monomaniac.

— — — — — — — — — — — — —

And I am significantly modes taken by his rare music
privileged amongst the senses: these empty senses

“so let me tell you what I love”

“I told him not to share”

The dance towards her self-binding would
projected on the night sky as a map. A revolutionary more.

There is no such thing as being good so show me your paws

The mouth does not believe in its
dares to

“spark the sun off”
Losses or resonance which makes itself a separating “us” that which can only be making us that which can only be repeating. The notion of “losses” suggesting a ‘process of creation’. A distinct progress towards the neck. It is true that my paw in going from less to more, finds its the further away be is questions. He knows the namely no longer exists (insofar) as it trespasses each impulse.

All the rest is arbitrary, mere notes.
Susan Maxwell

Akdamar. Dialogue for the Drowning

‘after a dying man.’ ‘could not shift the slant of dry sun on the dark pleasure of a rock’

‘if the sky aged as a brittle flower in its own cold swirl of field’

‘waged out in russets and mild flame’

‘the nerveless stop of last speech, the remote boulders we footfall between’

‘sky, irrecusable.’
‘our bodies a palette of changing blue chalk’

‘you are saying then nothing went wrong’

‘actual black we speak in’

‘i would not withhold
a cradle of festering charms’

‘eluminories’

‘any arrangement of infinite steps to be braided to neutral’

‘color wheel’
'cry named for an island named for a cry'

'why water wished to stay
    her solitude'

'swimmer, lover growing into death’s immediate ink, wet foils
    watering the eyelets

of vowelled fabric up and over the slight lake waves'

'to where she stood shoreward, impress of stone in stone-whipped air—'

'we leave her then.'

'oased in the elements a circuit restored, a keep in the question
    of cloud-born light'

'crushed. streaming.'

'lonely then. the tongue jutting out of the mouth of the corpse.'

'garnet and useless'

'and gone to roil a surface which would otherwise ask what
    went to which
    impossible where'
‘Tamar, rocky-black hollow or heap, name of a woman or glint.’

‘To hate the water for its wish’

‘Aftercrack rippling out, leaving a furnace of land’

‘and day predestined to the exact cut of the day’

‘dawn repulsing dark.’

‘repetition with no place to stand, guarding the gift of an order (alight here—)’

‘saint’s blue, peacock eye’

‘buttressed to blank clearings. Let me crowd—’

‘she is down in the shallows, searching stones for the dowsed and unmarked’

‘—the spidery hand, the soft hide of space—’
‘—of his departure, seizure of one thought by another’

‘automatic thought of dawn’

‘unable to scrabble through scenery to get to her’
'Ack, Tamar!' little Akdamar. little hill. last cry. 
    room unsteady on the crest.'

    'brief lift. dip. dunelines of foam'

    'leaf-shouts. brick-shouts'

    'living kaleid. flat fit of atomized sands.'

    'why water forced 
        her to a steady 
            seal'

'what slim winter boat would pass through planes 
    of knocking wings, words, glide us to her'
‘let me.

the fig still an early green. pendulous quake a never-known

in its blazing

new cup of wind.

more fair than’
Lāya

‘black to seem a sight betrayed into color—’

‘blindness and barter back
one patch of clicks’

‘scratch’

‘palmed parade of regioned pores, underbelly of—’

‘moored the stiffening
deletion over my starknit
eye and up rose’

‘figaro’ ‘the lone milk’ ‘all manner of stormed glidelights’
‘to be cloaked. to be hungered. an equable scroll in the ear’

in the fully formed ruins,
    a nook in the cycle of the wall
    for one very small hand’

‘how the ear screamed as it was emptied’

‘into its objects’

‘vertical thoroughfares where dust hung’

‘we are placated’

‘in the air’
‘steel itch and sewn with the treatises
of severalled wants, placing the witness so’

‘granite hand rebounding’

‘toward a notched door floating in a void’

‘it was a beam shorn into the eye’

‘impossible door, white teeth bruising’

‘excerpt of the arc solving the circle of scorched tokens’

‘without any equation soluble
to itself’

‘the way the warm hand’

‘went ribbon-worked and since’

‘room for one in the blackbottomed boat’

‘seafish curling’

‘my still card. dreaming like snakes—’

‘space an open beast between the bodies of plants’

‘the fiddlehead ferns’ empty green loop’

‘cheek to glass’

‘—commerce
of hummed silk
thrown over
each migrant sleep,
eel-whip and duration,
no longer like music’

‘blank pack of flowers’
‘to be cloaked. to be hungered. an equable scroll furled—’

‘—out. *wunderkammer*; pied and coal-dark dice’

‘what eyes’

‘embedded in the bid’

‘snow-licked’

‘end here. curios whistle’

‘i am no animal, i use my parts’

‘aha.’
‘selvage of morning a trough of wax’,

‘baffled into the broad-crated day’

‘steamed and lucred transits suspended

in the high

hollow of a shell’

‘listening the lone device’

‘back into ear, bonepetal flesh driven and spilling’

‘high hollow pearl-wrung inward as the ear’s effects soak’

‘across a wall newly-nerved and rising’

‘of that voice’

‘how the ear’

‘as, it emptied’

‘moored, the stiffening deletion’

32
NOTES

1. Akdamar is the name of an island in Lake Van in eastern Turkey. Legend has it that the island is named after the last words, Ack! Tamar!, of a man swimming the lake to get to Tamar, his lover, who lived on the island. The lakewater rose up and drowned him in order that the woman would never leave the island.

This title is taken from *Hymns for the Drowning*, a collection of poems by Nammalvar (AD 880-930?), a saint-poet devoted to Visnu. The root of the word *alvar* (one immersed in god) is *al* (to immerse, to dive, to sink, to be lowered, to be deep). Visnu is often pictured floating on an ocean of milk, dreaming the universe and its preservation.

2. Lāya is the Sanskrit term for the dissolution of the universe.
There’s life in violet if you tear it asunder. It happens to have a waggish behind. I think maybe I could love the last headland with brown’s blue tent flying off it,
as a scarf flaps from a neck in a wrenching wind,
but not a meant.

As to your objection to Levinas’s suf-
focating goodness, what you play on your musical comb
is refutation enough.
I love it when you buzz with the plurality of the baroque.

Oh, “the chase, the apprehension, the grieving!” “Verlaine arrived here the other day, clutching a rosary. Three hours later he had renounced his god and reopened the 98 wounds of Our Saviour.” As for me, I spent my headlights looking for another. How many are around me here in the dark? Listen, please, all of you, pay for the damage you’ve done to me by encouraging me to hope. I can’t find a stamp in this swamp.

There could be more canvas here, where
the chin is crushed and the field of vision just stops, / as when

your guardian removes his hand from your privates
because the house has just made a coming sound,

but nice people don’t ask for more.
“Clad in so much knowledge, he was overcome by deliberation, vacillation, and diffidence.” Self-portrait on a tall rock, with self-penned personal testaments, ammunition, and a Somali grammar. “You could do me an enormous service: I am missing some essentials necessary for the creation of maps. am completely paralyzed. would like plenty of time to board.”

I appreciate
all you’ve done,
the little it was, I appreciate each and every one of you.
My dear papa, I hope you have learned some manners by now.
Tell me, is every dead mother so tiny she sings
from a radio tooth in a sweetheart’s jaw?

“If you desert my ship,’ he said in loud, clear tones, ‘you shall never come aboard again.’”

Not that I’m one to look back. I see blue as forward,
just as orange is rogue. How can you not love a blue Pigeon
tree? The feathers are half air,
though the shit builds up around the trunk,

it’s deep, isn’t it? and does not go away, unlike

sexual things. Firstly I shoveled it to the margin.
Secondly I shaped it like a Bundt cake.
Thirdly I stand on it and scratch the pigeons’ bellies,

I love it enormously that they purr.
Myth doesn’t want to step into the excrement of meaning, so it steps into its ocean, instead, which is buttered on both sides. Already in excess of itself, language resembles it—the rot in it bigger than the apple.

Think of the muse’s back, cold despite the blanket of canvas. Shirtless in the oil.

So postwar, these children licking their whirligigs in the sea wind.

The improbable character of modern poetry comes from its serving as flypaper to myth. “Art has become transparent to itself down to the very core, which is the constitutive nature of illusion” (Adorno). It dreams of being an anti-nature, an absolute No, or even just the toothpaste tube squeezed empty and torn open, to where the murderous shining is. But it is sticky still with, with meaning is sticky still.

The red in the lower right is a watcher, with that kind of nastiness. Where is the horse-bus? The arrow green? The ghost of a white horse startled by a white horse?

The work that leaves everyone confounded is precisely a work for everyone (Badiou). I’ve got nothing to give you, baby, but a stretch in the penned: “Fellow follow for fell feel for likely by a stretch of time” (Miss Stein). But one wants to say to contemporary poetry:
“Think of the Idea of water, the Idea of wind. See a person in the Idea see how he fits exactly there in Ithaca, at the edge of the campus, standing where the gray rain vomits on the gray water. As it is. As it was. Keep him in sight. Be a little human.”

This has been a test, Peter. Your eyes always look like twenty
if it means now even now the way we felt then, made a day, there,
which is here, even, a cake half as admittedly as large your mouth,
Sara, if you say so.

: oh honey,
fish as many as that look pink in a good singer.

Contemporary poetry can neither live with meaning nor avoid it. It knows that form has a responsibility toward truth and represents that knowledge, but in a misery of ex-nomination. What would ease it is love, the only human gift that still needs no apology. And yet, oneself always already wandered, how love the already wandered? (How love anything else?)

If I were to write a letter I would think of very clear water
but I would address to you any figure that stood out,
everything that is oar-shaped, sharpened to cut
through the nothing, sawing and whacking at it, if necessary,

the jutting building

on the left, oxide of chrome green roof edge,
the horse’s nasturtium-colored behind, the deep Prussic depression of the rider,
my blue boy, your hand still feeling along the wet eaves for the stream’s root,
your right leg upright on the head of the distant blonde

atheist in the market place, that’s a masterpiece she’s flossing
married to a dentist, I wanted you to stay home.
walking around with heavy manners, you’re going home in a fucking ambulance

Batter my heart, three person’d God, for you. As yet but knock’st at door. When I was you, I knew my heart, and it was true. Yet dearly love I those who would be loved true. But am I betwixt two moons, and make me not.

Batter my heart, three person’d God, for you. As yet but knock’st at door. When I was you, I knew my heart, and it was true. Yet dearly love I those who would be loved true. But am I betwixt two moons, and make me not.

Baader Meinhof Three-Person’d God

pictures on the Run 67-77 (Astrid Proll)

With each iteration Meinhof withdraws from us. We lived but nothing happened. In our time, the black poppy of this blast, the black poppy of this blast, the black poppy of this blast, the black poppy of this blast.

Stern, Der Spiegel, etc

is the people?

and who should see

that the mechanical eye is not the eye of the people?

With each iteration Meinhof withdraws from us. We lived but nothing happened. In our time, the black poppy of this blast, the black poppy of this blast, the black poppy of this blast, the black poppy of this blast.

Stern, Der Spiegel, etc

is the people?

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that the mechanical eye is not the eye of the people?

With each iteration Meinhof withdraws from us. We lived but nothing happened. In our time, the black poppy of this blast, the black poppy of this blast, the black poppy of this blast, the black poppy of this blast.
I think we did it. Cutting
off the main parlor had not been
an option but it was successful.
They’re playful. Watch. They move fast,
the dead of the wilderness in their legs.

Once a day she is new.
She pinches a piece of wire close to the end.
Shimmering, with the eyes of a crow, she crews
a race in the river.
I sensed she was going wrong, a warm
secret swarming between us.
At once her captivity suffers, her
mouth the one thing she won’t give over.

The rocks have shed their uniqueness.
We take the roasted bellies in a courtly
manner into the perpetual hissing.
By night, morale is at an all time high.
She explains her warm
secret into the padding of the chairs.
We set ourselves firmly against her random facts,
take to calling them loose information.
I don’t hear anything. I collect
the offerings into baskets.
How Far Is That

The time went away saying ‘how do you like it.’
The crowd stands perfectly still.
There was one Lucy and my purely blank mind
was admirably without Lucy.
The sun was still high in the heavens.

She was the nearest person who could have me hanged. The Mass bell goes with the lunch crowd.
A careful and sympathetic investigation; a mental one, with hands around the torso.
But we had other names for it, knew it was someone who had spoken of saving appearances with a small damage claim.

It turns out much is salvageable.
We carry eye-drops.
The dust from the 2nd class bus station is thick with exhaust and grime.
In a little while the strain will break us.

The altar offered much in the way of styles of conversation.
Each language pours out onto the stone slab.
Scoops are provided. There was a fight over how the party would be planned.
The bulk of the kitty went to the bar.
The party-goers take it too seriously and there was still gravity and shelters to be built against the night raids.
It is always what is asked, just what is asked, that I miss.
She asked for a fete. I said yes.
Missed the follow-up question.
Too much to do with having my head down.
Have I ever been happy or good? I only drive along the roads.
I refuse for a reason, it would be presumptuous to say it was for love alone because I would wait for any opportunity at some point, even though it could be months or years.
She called and this time I was in a better mood:

‘The bombing has started.’
‘Oh.’
‘I’m ashamed.’
‘Turn elsewhere with your disappointment.’
‘This hasn’t come to a vote.’
‘A gross insult to the knowledge out of pure reason.’
‘I guess.’
‘I can hear them over the phone.’
‘Get back on the ground.’
‘I’ll get back on the ground in the morning.’
‘I think it’s an area we need to explore.’
‘You explore it. I’m going back to work.’
If You Have A Single In Many

Still time for surprises, the thumbscrews are new. Out there, the field of daisies seem sentient, amassing secretively as all the pigs rustle into blue-steel pens.
What a little a lot of pigs can make, and you can certainly have your cocktails, standing to one side of the deck, away from the critical bores. I am one of many, sweltering in our antipathies. But what of the clusters of naïve unawareness blotting out the ocean view? I sift through the eclogues, looking for any button; a raid on the fashionable is never imminent but that’s the feeling.

The resonant romantic has misquoted me. My papalesque anonymous body shakes a warning. It was time. Why I am certain ailments display themselves in giggling is beyond me. The dilettante’s stirring is just how I feel today. I want to make things clear and definite. My son beats lightning on the waves of visitors, refusing his medication. People are wearing their delight at being struck yet are protective over my disillusionment. A mirage describes the revolution: ‘I’ve grown exceedingly poor.’

Is that the mailman? His face, fabulous and fastidious, moistens. ‘Pray for us, just enough for two, without troubling to check with the
director. ’ We collaborate on the libretto.
For the rest, the river’s mouth
is a place where something fatal happens.
The revolt dissipates, the vagaries
both good and necessary were the hallmark
of its fetish.
Slowly and quietly we encourage the
young man to keep fighting.
We take him to lunch. We notice
when he becomes finicky about abstraction.
Two actors break into a brawl, each
spitting at their opponents. The paparazzi
cought it all. We make it to the
cab and stand while it drives like the lily
that waits and toils.
Make It Do

There was a memorial
for the city. The regulars offered
their normal applause. It was noted
that, to be loved alone, even among
errands, they like to know to what
extent.
They controlled their mirth
out of respect for the outsiders,
the ones without invitations or cash.

We shut the lid on the designer. We knew
he couldn’t last
the hundred years, us
obsessing in our private suites.
All of the details are shut up
into columns.
It was simple. We made it do.

We swallow everything. We close the flue.
The gale picked up outside, the crowds
filling the stone benches.
We roll about in childish delight, a new
restlessness worked out in wails. We
hum a continuous note.

We put off the hours paging
through a photo album
that has been laid out. I say
portraits. She says description,
gradually explaining while taking up the detour.

Instinctive pupils cower, lower themselves
into their beds. But
a reflection off the convention center
turned it all around. Drinks
are comped long into the night. Sunday comes sooner than felt. The winners offer affection with their honors as the room dimmed. There wasn’t any time. We left in the wake of percussives, a head was uncovered in the mall light. We posed alongside it, in the foreground a traffic barrier.
Needless To Adorn That Is To Carry

Certain pastoral sexual reminiscences make sense
but these are not my shoes.
Unless first I might be called your change-money.
The discreet nerves beyond analysis take up the headlands.
The migration of birds.
I’m traded to the other side of the street. Is it really concrete?
It does make a difference, violets in a pot.

Unfold the program. My shirt tells me lastly to
dominate threads, to hit and buy frank lists.
The talk is chum. The talk is nasty.
Anonymously and with some anxiety,
soldiers and supplies are moved.
We install new stop signs and one
for wedding planning.

Heading back to bed the pantry light is on.
Before, there was a road.
We have hastened down it.
Every inch is stolen.
Two bees make an inch.
Cut one’s body in half. That’s about a centimeter.
Scott Inguito

Warm Swirls Of Salmon

He torments, he kills, he devours, close to where there is a keenly etched landscape onto wood panels. Permit me, from this standpoint, to thank you.

His fencing ability forced others to fight for their lives in the gym. Out in the field used as an overflow, the drainage, (kindling, cans, carpet samples), is mused upon.

In the separate souls a paradox; visitors in an isolated presence. The light in this room is like smoke, because of the sheer cloth hung up with tacks over the windows.

Are we opposed as we assume? When the flower on the ground, no, those are tufts of dog hair.

Absent from the ears are organs that fly open, replaced with commentators. They are quick to observe, but it is into the smoke of the room, which is no smoke, that they call to him.

Such a one receives gifts, images of stones, shells and husks. Perceived slights are categorized, labeled then re-named. For certain letters roles are adopted. The irreversibility of history is framed then quickly repudiated.

He is heard shuffling in the wings. He enjoys the secure comforts that that thought accrues in us.
One way to behave is to gather in corners.  
Where once crepe was, pull the shades against the sun.  
Opening up into a torso of lilac and wire.  
Torso of wire and lilac that resembles pleasure.  
Doubt that pleasure resembles.  
That its pleasure remains.  
Speak if you can so small into a picture.  
The one you sent, are you still at your same residence,  
there does it remain, constantly and that is all,  
as only one in a world vulgarly.  
And that as it is now between the fact of value  
and the value of fact and that as it is now  
to hold, swim in consolations that brim over bloodily.

The skaters balanced in the plaza, no matter how percussively  
decorated, bending the thin reeds.  
Targets sell aid to other targets under awnings.  
Some are sent back gnawing themselves  
as unfamiliar shapes of smoke rise overhead.  
A sand pail is filled with mortar, marks and bearings.  
The bushes throw away from the changing limestone,  
scraping car doors that work at nothing in a variety of directions.

The shape of it, it was in your ears, it went into  
your chest it went into your chest is where it was, and where it went  
was like water.  
Drink.

Out of the window of the car  
blood of the side  
comes down the side of the cars. It is in the cars.  
You sang at the party in a falsetto.  
You sang at the party at all the party.
6 Components from Aristotle

Plot

End of the Cold War, some air had been forgotten and was safe.

The submarine Kursk, its night full of embalmed men used by the state—

The report in Russian translated as: The submarine wrecked in a point 69°40'N 37°35'E and lied on oozy sand ground on depth of 108 m with heel 25 degrees on port side and down 5-7 degrees by the bow. As times goes by, the submarine became covered more and more by slurry. Her heel increased for some time but stop now. The reactor is in the suppressed state. Temperature of water on depth of 100 m - 3-4 degrees of Celsius, on a surface - 7-8 degrees. There are many versions were discussed, including fabulous.

Having no place to stand. The men, having no place to stand, having been disappointed by the desired presence,

crowded forward, those who never touched the control panel—

Character

A captain had been sent down but was not returning.

The men are more of a Dido. Their hope has only one ship that keeps getting lost over and over. Vertical says to horizontal, I can, again. In the medium wave

the unconscious has no breath.

In the storm they’re lowering the ladder. Weather was in control as a list. In the Barrents Sea they are lowering the ladder. Others called out.
After the explosion, a type of consciousness that had forgotten itself; a million beneaths, perfecting the weapon that makes no mistakes—

the place power can’t know about.

*Thought*

With two lines of thought, the mind is an angle. One line is missing: the world, eaten. They stand in back of the ship. They have grown into one. I have grown into one thinking about them. We come into this world pure, a configuration of the lack of air. We breathe the blurry ∗’s. We recover.

In that place indifferent to reality a type of platonic oxygen, between space itself—

why let it go. Private Dido. She’s the plot, the men; the ship gets lost over and over.

*Diction*

Every word from them was not inevitable. The men wait; looking up they spot the blurry ∗’s. The Cold War meant what it meant to be an American and not save Russians. Children practiced crouching under their desks. Kursk keeps writing all the I’s throughout the years: I everyone, I universe. I kept writing the title “The Wreck of the Deutschland” in my notebook that summer and added: “but without god.” How does one write when the laws that limit power have failed. Corporate with the celestial. Life in a tangle at that time. Hopkins a bit of a Dido, pretty much a burning magpie nun.

*Melody*

Such a silly word. That point in creation when everything is worse and what you were afraid of happening happened.

A warm storm started. Wanting a word with them.
Governments phoned them. Could phone them. Cables sang to them. Seemed to sang to them. Ordinary men, as nuns for Hopkins are ordinary. Once on the shore might be sung to. Burned.

Assumed someone would rescue them, exchanging their fate for happens to be born.

_Spectacle_

What does Aristotle mean by the sixth element? We use it for capitalism, circuses, weathers. Remake elements. I thought about the men for years, words made of non-air, all governments failing them into news then putting a tube of silence down. The need to make form. We talked of this in class—how form can't be an error. The submarine as a tube of air meant nothing to them,

it breathed
in each
ocean on
earth.

In the present conflict each fire equals re-used air from the Cold War. Tube of silence

and there is
still a silence under
that—
Generic character: Four instinct teeth, and two canine, in each jaw.
Feet as hands; hands as feet; every digit.
Childhood centered.

Of the very extensive tribe to which this animal belongs, not one so nearly approaches the Red Centered form, or is so strongly impressed with the horizon during Lowering, as the Red Ape, or “descript of our own woods.” Such a surprising similitude is seen to prevail, when examined automatically, that we shrink from the sight, and minds revolt at the idea of so close a connection between centers.

These animals reside in the warmer parts, where they roam to the great terror of other wood-descricts. The face is as cold as ours; he walks erect; feeds upon similar fruit; sits close to stones; watches the Lowering with a sense of wonder and of dread. This creature will sit towards the Lowering, without having sense enough to retain it by the turning away from final light.
The earliest windows were made of the sectional membranes of lemons, those veined sheaths, sewn and polished, or of limes for the cooler rooms, grapefruit for the children’s and so on. Insect wings. Edible, but then how like

the division into panes; you take this, and I, which

glass planet or lacrymae vitrae would turn citrus at the drop of

There’s a top hat on the counter
and it’s waiting for a corner

said the A
to the architect of oranges.
The history of the window and the history of glass are not as hand-in-hand as one would like to think; in fact, the Middle English for window—“wind eyes”—suggests that the former is named precisely for the lack of the latter.

What child does not draw a house with windows on either side of a central front door and thereby discover the key to both repetitive dreams and the scaffold of her mind. There’s a chimney to one side or the other. With that hand, she’ll pick up a pencil. Another word for dream is ‘the walking rooms.’ We add extra windows. We look for a house with more windows. I ask the realtor, haven’t you got something with a glassed-in porch.
And Bonnard, perhaps without intending it, returned to the etymology, the aspect of “eye”
that means open in wind. The *Devant la fenêtre au Grand-Lemps*, (which does not mean
great lamp) 1923
in which the opening is the scene. We’re used to it, this
young woman adjusting her hat
within her own reflection, except that
the window is open
and the eye of the painting stands in its place. Must, in fact, be
your face and she
is not looking at it. Subjectivity
says the twentieth century is always

somewhere else there is a similar gesture, so close
you’d find a photograph in a folded envelope years later there’s another
child in the painting walking toward her, maybe pleading, a profile in such
anguish he may not have meant it, or did not, so caught up
in painting, see
walking
from left to right across the proscenium emptiness
of the openness, wringing his hands.
Louis-Georges Schwartz

fragments for a theory of glittery water or after Errant Walk, Strike and Jaws

... followed a short line into a theater to look at whatever ... far enough from ... or anyone else ... anonymous to myself ... familiarity a bit uncanny ... remembered ... pointing out that the movies can make anything ... and telling us that ...’s friend ... saw “images” as blanks constantly becoming ... or a covering of the screen ...a nothing.

... when the direct ... of television won’t do because its light makes the body denser ... aquarium ... to information ... other screen’s reflected light dematerializes ... our faces ... or cone of collective thought ... funnel ... of whatever continually loses itself ... identity, as if in love without knowing it...

... moats made visible the projector’s ... out of focus screen ... of pure plastic possibility...unlike the possibility of cinema ... same as the light’s burning anonymity ... reminded ... said whenever the image is so white it exposes the screen and...

... the light on the water was bright enough, over-exposed enough ... shine ... let its surface be ... truth in a dream, or a moment of pure nonsense ... image opened itself ... the secret that movies exist to keep ... over, yet the screen destroys the attraction ... by the time ... got there ... already back.

... abandoned attempts to follow the story from the pictures ... immediate, without ... now without a here... without presence ... light rent the water, the lens, the emulsion, until the screen.... always look towards ... brightest ... high-speed mesmerist’s lure ... openness, into passivity ... disappeared and the cinema did too, becoming what we were ... difference between an empty screen and a beam of light, before any becoming ... light reflected by water reversing the projector’s beam ...the timing of love ... world reciprocates before ... camera and eventually off the screen to ... as if anticipating them ... cone stretched from the projector onto the screen ... eyes of ...

... falling star ... of every metropolitan port,, another grayer anonymity ... exposes something ... glittery water overflows film’s ...always overexposes ... ephemeral, brilliant stain ... expect to see here ... because the history of shots of sunlight on water would be at least as old ... noted ... promised scintillation explains ... makes it visible and filmable ... never both substance and support... twin clichés: a blindness in vision and history’s ... attraction ... whatever blinds it ... the trapped on a surface without a picture plane ...

... making whatever possible ....
There are certain words one is immediately drawn to or, over time, finds oneself drawn to. I like the word “verderis”; I keep finding that I’m drawn to the word “little.” There are certain words which trigger an immediate negative reaction, e.g., “transcendental” or, even worse, “transcendentalism.” A long word, both lumpy and plastic. Dante says all words can be classified as smooth or hairy. “Transcendentalism” is too smooth and not hairy enough. It’s wavy gravy.

And too long. Hard to imagine the word fitting into a song. I got them old transcendentalism blues? Which would be sad, indeed. And too long, hard to get on a t-shirt. Run into Emerson at a diner wearing a “Call Me Mr. Transcendentalism” t-shirt. It would have to be a very large, a very loose and baggy t-shirt, a monster t-shirt.

Which is guilt by association. To hang out with bad motorcycles is to be a bad motorcycle. Emerson the biker with a very loose & baggy leather jacket. Or Emerson as a very fat Elvis (white leathers, “transcendentalism” in rhinestones up & down the pants). Who sings “Don’t Step On My Transcendentalism Shoes.” No. That song won’t sing. Let’s leave the T-singer and the T-group or groupies. Let’s go visual.

Now the visual person, the painter who has been most associated with the transcendent in our time is Mark Rothko. And the shape or form that he gradually finds and makes his own, his signature shape, is a large, usually blocky rectangle within which are three—sometimes less, sometimes more—smaller rectangles. Larger rectangle = a vertical canvas, unframed; smaller rectangles = horizontal & what’s painted on the larger, mostly vertical rectangle.

This is a new form in art history. At the same time it’s an old, familiar shape, the shape of a window frame. And not only the frame but also the two window panes and their frames within that frame. When you open a window, raising the bottom pane, you automatically get a Rothko painting, i.e., a number of horizontal rectangles within a vertical rectangle. Raise or lower either the top or bottom pane, and you get various configurations of the horizontal rectangles within a vertical rectangle shape. Rothko was fascinated by these configurations. Throughout his career he played with them endlessly.

The purpose of a window is light, to allow light to enter otherwise dark interiors. Once light enters, those within may see.
A famous window/light painting is Caravaggio’s “The Calling of St. Matthew” (16th c.). The calling is done by Jesus, by his hand which points to Matthew. It’s a dramatic, theatric painting. And what makes it so is the dramatic/theatric contrast of light and dark. This is a stage light/dark accomplished by stage lighting. Stage lighting is, properly, off stage. This is made clear by the only visible window on the set which is a closed window letting in very little if any light. Which means the light comes from somewhere else, is off-stage or spiritual.

There are always two sorts of light going on in Western painting, on the set and sets of Western painting: naturalistic light, the light of day, and spiritual light, the light which has its source from somewhere else. Sometimes one, sometimes the other is emphasized. Sometimes both are present, typically the one (daylight) somehow representative or symbolic of the other, the other as spiritual light.

Emily Dickinson:

There’s a certain slant of light  
On winter afternoons  
That oppresses like the weight  
Of cathedral tunes.

Heavenly hurt it gives us;  
We can find no scar,  
But internal difference  
Where the meanings are.

Emily Dickinson's light is the 2-in-1 light. It gives us “heavenly hurt,” a 1-2 punch.

Back to the visual, to another window and light painting, to Edward Hopper’s last painting, “Sun In An Empty Room” (1963). Another stage set, a stage or theater interior, one side of which is open to the viewing audience. The room is crenellated, corrugated. The walls fold in and out. Accordion walls. Perhaps they’re playing an Astor Piazolla tango. A folding room or a room with folding/musical walls is a complicated room. The light in such a room is a complicated light. We have a window, two panes in their frames within a frame, which itself is complicated by the play of shadows creating a cross-like, Williamsburg blue design on the left side of the frame. Complication: the title mentions “sun,” but no sun appears through the window. And in fact the lower pane is almost completely black, while the upper pane is mostly filled by what looks like the generic “foliage” of a stage drop.

If the sun is the source for the light in the room, then it’s somewhere else; it’s off-stage. It conditions the play—the play of light—but it does so indirectly, inferentially. If the sun is the source, it’s a hidden, invisible source.
Something else about Hopper’s window. There are no curtains or drapes, no shades or blinds. It’s a bare window, a naked window, completely open and completely closed. The scene outside the window is no more real than the stage set of the room. It’s simply another set—like Magritte’s paintings within paintings, which include exterior scenes of nature, which turn out to be other paintings. Hopper the realist and Magritte the surrealist have a lot in common. You could say they’re non-identical twins.

3

The room of course, is not empty. It’s full of light, full of the play of light, which also involves dark. An equally accurate and equally paradoxical title for this picture would be “Dark In An Empty Room.” There is a relation and perhaps sequence or progression by way of the two vertical rectangles, larger and smaller, of light connected by the truncated geometric shape of light on the floor (which seems related to the bent cross/sword of the window frame). This light is a bleached-out beige, both warm and cool. Each of these shapes of light is a slightly different intonation of that bleached beige tone.

Dark is involved in this play of light. This is especially so with the corner in the middle. It looks like a tall opened book, a screen partially unfolded away from us, a prism. A prism can be a solid figure (geometry); it can also be an object which refracts light, breaking it up and distributing its constituent hues. Prisms, unlike windows, are translucent, not transparent. Hopper’s prism, however, is dark. It suggests, in effect, that light comes from dark or that, at the least, dark is involved in the production or perception of light.

1st Corinthians 13:12: For now we see in a glass darkly, but then face to face.

4

Hopper is supposedly a realist painter, a painter concerned with the real as external/physical universe. The light of this real world is sunlight. Insofar as light exists, it exists in this world as a product/production of the sun. Hopper’s room looks real enough, and it has a window which suggests where the light in the room comes from, i.e., from an external source, from the sun. But contrary to the assumptions of realism & the painting’s title, sun is not in the room. Light is inarguably “really” in the room, but it exists there in a complex play of light and dark. I would suggest this is a different light, i.e., not real, not natural sunlight, but revealed light, revelation light, a light that is revealed through or from a prism of darkness, through a glass darkly.

To see just how different Hopper’s light is we need to consider an earlier American painter, the “luminist” Fitz Hugh Lane. In the three “Brace’s Rock, Brace’s Cove” pictures (all done in 1864) we’re in the outside, real world. A real place with a real name in the real world. (Cape Anne coastline area near Gloucester, Mass.) Perhaps the best word for the quality of light in all three is “serene.” Or simply “quiet.” These are supremely quiet paintings. Supremely quiet and “quietistic.” Light and dark exist in all three, but in
each case the light is predominant. The 3-tier layout of the paintings suggests that the dark, connected with land forms at the base, is but a quick step on the lower rung of a ladder to a sea of glass, reflecting the comparatively vaster and literally higher realm of light. While this realm inescapably reminds us of traditional notions of heaven, it is kept “natural.” However serene Lane’s sky-zones may appear, each one of them contains clouds. However serene and inviting these zones may appear, they are illuminated by the sun (extremely skillful glazing).

We can cross the real sea of the Atlantic and find remarkably similar work done by the German painter Caspar David Friedrich a few decades before Lane. In “Morning in the Giant Mountains” (1811), the dark/land forms are at the base; ridges of pale purple-violet mountains are like waves of the sea; the sky and its light are predominant—and almost completely abstract in their modulation from gold to a violet that’s barely there and utterly quiet. It is a painting of the real world and, as the cross makes clear, of another world, the biblical world of light or total/global revelation as well.

It is not a far step from Lane and Friedrich to Rothko. Crunching art history a bit, we could say they are his precursors, those who prepared a way for him. Where Rothko differs from them, of course, is the degree of his abstraction, the degree of his concentration on the upper third of their pictures whereby any situation or contextual stage or step of this world has been taken away.

Typical Rothko paintings of the late 1950’s and early 1960’s are all light. It’s true, they make use of the window form. In Rothko, though, we do not look through a window (of this world) to another world of light. In Rothko we look at light qua light, the light coming toward us. Considered as windows, the paintings are like church or cathedral stained glass with the difference that they are not small, they are not far removed from us (high above us). Considered as windows, they are windows turned inside out. The light comes toward us. It is pure and impure light. So-called old glass, stained glass of the medieval period, allowed for many air bubbles and chemical impurities in its manufacture. This has a prismatic effect. Light can come through, but it is refracted and redistributed, “diffused” in the process. Rothko’s technique of building up his pictures by applying thin washes of pigment on top of one another—often with egg white in between those washes—produces a like effect. And of course it is emphasized/made dramatic by the relative darkness of ecclesiastical interiors. It’s no accident that Rothko always insisted on dim/low lighting for exhibitions of his pictures.

My question is how can you get light from darkness? How can you get dark or black light? How can you transcend darkly? And if you can, why should you or why should it matter?

Mark Rothko, “White, Blacks, and Grays on Maroon” (1963, 90”x69”)

Maroon is the ground, the basis of everything else in the picture, what gives meaning (depth) to everything else in the picture. & what is maroon? I would say the color of dried blood, the color of suffering, of suffering that stays suffering.
Kandinsky, Concerning The Spiritual in Art

...black is a silence with no possibilities...Black is something burnt out, like the ashes of a funeral pyre, something motionless like a corpse. The silence of black is the silence of death. Outwardly black is the most toneless color of all, a kind of neutral background against which the minutest shades of other colors stand forth clearly. It also differs in this from white, in conjunction with which nearly every color becomes blurred, dissolves and leaves only a faint resonance. (60)

White is...taken to symbolize joy and spotless purity, and black grief and death. A blend of black and white produces gray, which...is silent and motionless, being composed of two inactive colors, its restfulness having none of the potential activity of green. The immobility of gray is desolate. The darker the gray the more preponderant becomes the feeling of desolation and strangulation. When it is made lighter, the color seems to breathe again, as if invested with new hope. (61)

The unbounded warmth of red...rings inwardly with a determined and powerful intensity.

It is dangerous to seek to deepen red by an admixture of black, for black quenches the glow or at least reduces it. (61)

To read the painting: it’s a window, a complicated sort of window. The shape is broken up, redistributed into one larger rectangle at the bottom, two smaller ones in the middle, a medium-sized rectangle at the top. Rectangles of dark grey, each bounded by black and stacked one on top of the other.

At the very top is a white rectangle about the same height as the two smaller rectangles and about the same width as all four. The brushwork is more active, less uniform. The upper surface, especially, is less bounded. It is vapor-like, like a long thin cloud of vapor, dry ice.

Back to the lower portions: if they make up a window, then this is a window with the shades drawn. Their greyness is the greyness of slate, of blackboards. Blackboards are black but become “greyed” with use, with writing on them in chalk. Teachers write (or draw) on blackboards as demonstration of what’s important, what students are expected to copy in their notes. Students are sometimes asked to work out a problem on the blackboard. This is serious. Everybody can see what you’re doing; you could be doing it wrong. Going to the board is serious, and sometimes it’s punishment. Teachers often put assignments on blackboards: what students are to read, to think about, to do in general. A class without assignments would be an interesting class.

What was the demonstration, the punishment, the assignment? We don’t know, or we can’t know. All has been erased. There are traces of what may have been, but these traces now exist as faint evaporizations of white, faint modulations of grey.
The possibility of knowledge is the possibility of a sign, a signature. The work of Rothko’s contemporary, Franz Kline, typically presents us with just that, giant signs and giant signatures. Andy Warhol has done a painting consisting only of his signature.

Here, however, we have all the accoutrements of form/shape (which = meaning, the condition of or possibility of meaning), the window, the blackboard window; yet the specific realization of meaning (as sign, as writing, the demonstration or proof) has been withdrawn, erased. We can lament this, we can pray that the meaning will come back. More daringly, we can write on the blackboard. We can write our own demonstration, punishment, assignment, proof. In fact, any reading is just such a writing. Yet is the art object, literally the art surface, not sacred? Is not such writing a desecration, a crime, a kind of willful graffiti at best?

But is Rothko’s blackboard so clean? The blackboard is a form, a shape. As such, it possesses meaning, though its relative blackness renders that meaning as a matter of potential. It is an extremely inviting surface. It has meaning, and it invites us to create more meaning by writing on it. We might say it invites us to write to make our own meaning. It encourages us to do this; it makes us do it. Obviously, if there were no surfaces, especially no framed or bounded surfaces, there would be no paintings and no reason to paint.

But is Rothko’s blackboard so clean? No, it isn’t. For the blackboard is not the whole picture, the whole surface—the whole world, we might say. There is a larger surface/world behind/before the blackboard. A larger ground. This ground is also grey with this difference: maroon shows through, “bleeds” through. The global ground of this picture is blood.

You can find blood as ground in Aeschylus, in Shakespeare (two of Rothko’s favorite texts). You can find blood in the daily newspaper. Real news = births, marriages, deaths. It can be tragic or not, but real news is blood news. Ezra Pound coined some famous slogans of the modern: “make it new” and “literature is news that stays news.” Real news is blood news. Real art news is blood news that stays blood news. The challenge is how to make that news new. And not merely new—as novel, as formally different—but make it matter. How to make the new news stay news.

Michael Palmer once told me how, as a young boy, his mother would take him to galleries and museums. When he asked why they—abstract painters—painted that way, she explained they were hiding things. What is being hidden and yet not quite hidden—because it bleeds through—in Rothko is blood. A luminist painter such as Fitz Hugh Lane is expert in glazing, expert in building up layers that remain translucent. Rothko is no less expert. What is revealed, as opposed merely to seeing, is a new/different sort of light that in some ways is a very old sort of light, blood light.

The definition of “apocalypse” is revelation. The etymology of “apocalypse” is an uncovering. To uncover, you first have to have veils, layers, glasses or glazes.

Seeing, sight, and revelation. Sight is immediate, requires little thought and is perhaps antithetical to thought. Baseball players are taught: see the ball, hit the ball. Basketball players are taught: shoot, don’t think. Revelation is sight + thought, i.e., seeing in time.
Revelation is a seeing through a number of glasses or glazes in time. And as time is involved, so is the sensation of depth. Depth takes time.

An old story in art history is the drive toward autonomy: toward painting that is only painting. Not a vehicle for something else, not an illustration for something else. Painting in & for itself. Pigment on a flat 2-dimensional surface. This is the now old story of the modern or modernism. Despite the proliferation of other –isms, despite the addition of prefixes—the high modern, the postmodern—this remains the dominant art story. If you make something that’s quite new/different, you will still be told “that’s really modern.”

Within that story or text are others, sub-plots and sub-texts. One of which is how to give the manipulation of pigment meaning, how to give the 2-dimensional depth. How to do this in new-different ways. The modern is Rothko’s story, and these are his sub-plots and sub-texts. And of course the techniques involved, the material and the techniques involved, are quite old. Rabbit skin glue and egg white are quite old; staining and glazing are quite old. And what might be called one of the pre-textual stories by which Rothko attempts to gain meaning—gain or reveal meaning—is an old story, the story of Christ’s passion. In terms of Western stories, it is one of the grounding stories, a story which gives other/later stories meaning, difference and depth. To use a French phrase, it is a “passe-partout,” a master-key, a picture frame, that through which everything passes. It has been called “the greatest story ever told.”

Ultimate etymology of passion = suffering.

How do I know this, how can I say this? How can I be so sure about blood, about the passion story? There are many reasons, but they all boil down to one reason: I spent 5 days in the Rothko Chapel in Houston, Texas. To sit, to dwell in the chapel is a frightening thing. For this is not a neutral space, not a neutral gallery or museum space. Octagonal, with very large paintings or panels on each wall—for example the four single paintings are each approximately 14 feet high x 11 feet wide—the paintings nearly as large as the walls themselves—this is not a neutral space. Rather, it’s a space totally conditioned by the paintings, which are essentially one painting, a painting essentially of one color, a complex mingling of red (or maroon) and black. In a poem dealing with the chapel, I called it “red after black.”

It took me a long time to see these paintings, much longer than 5 days. Or: it took a long time for the paintings to reveal themselves to me. Or for me to let them reveal themselves to me.

And what they revealed was an old story, the passion story, the stations of the cross story. There are 14 paintings, there are 14 stations. The paintings are essentially one painting of red after black with a single exception, the so-called south wall painting which
is the last painting seen as one leaves the chapel interior. A single vertical shape, a window shape, it’s divided into two parts: the top, roughly 7/8ths of the surface, black, and the remaining bottom maroon. The picture differs from the other chapel pictures, and it differs from the passion/stations story. For there is no ascension, transcendence.

7

The stations presuppose a progression, a positive movement: from suffering to its transcendence, from darkness to light, from this world to another, which has customarily been thought of as “up.” Wherever heaven is, it’s up.

The Chapel paintings begin with suffering and end with suffering, end with more suffering or with suffering accented, made grave (“deep”) because ascension/transcendence/any sort of up & away elevator is denied. The top of the south wall painting is black. However you view the chapel paintings, this is what you see last, what you see as you leave, what cannot be avoided if you are going to leave the chapel. What cannot be avoided: not red after black, but black after red after black.

Black after red after black = lights out. Goethe, on his deathbed, is supposed to have cried out “more light!” The south wall painting replies: “forget it.”

But the never still, never small voice has some questions, some wait a minute mister questions. (1) Weren’t the Chapel pictures painted after the 1963 picture? How can you say Rothko’s red or maroon = a ground of suffering, especially Judeo-Christian suffering? (2) And what about the fuzzy or fizzy white rectangle at the top of the 1963 picture? Doesn’t that mean there’s some kind of hope, some kind of light after all? Didn’t Kandinsky say white symbolizes joy?

8

You’re right. The Chapel pictures were begun in 1964 and completed in 1967. And it’s true that Rothko painted a number of red pictures, both before 1963 and after 1967, red pictures which are not maroon red, not red after black.

Yet Rothko’s preoccupation with this mood of red begins well before and continues long after 1963. There are a number of statements by him attesting to this, though red is not a term in them. The term that is, that is prevalent and predominant, is “tragedy,” the mood or condition of the tragic. From a letter to the New York Times (1943-45): “only that subject matter is valid which is tragic.” From the same letter: “the tragic concepts with which art must deal” and “the exhilarated tragic experience which for me is the only source book for art.” And this, from 1946, from a description written by Rothko of the work of Clifford Still: “the tragic-religious drama which is generic to all myths.”
Rather than dwell on the definition of tragedy or the tragic, rather even than dwell on Nietzsche’s *The Birth of Tragedy*, which is valuable if only because its author claimed it was written for artists, let’s go visual, i.e., let’s consider the tragic by way of an image in the “Agamemnon,” the first play of *The Oresteia* by Aeschylus. The image is contained in the opening beacon scene. Clytemnestra has arranged for a series of beacons to be lit, in relay, when Troy is captured and Agamemnon would be returning to Argos. Now the beacons can only burn, the light can only be seen at night, in darkness. When the sentry does spot a beacon fire/light, it is “Day out of night.”

It is the scene of an image, light out of dark. An acting out or performance of an image. But that image is complicated by red, the red of blood and particularly of bloodshed. For, not long after his supposed triumphant return, Agamemnon is murdered by Clytemnestra. And so goes the chain reaction of one death leading to another—the bloody falling down of a house of cards that is the fall of the house of Atreus.

Elsewhere from Aeschylus, the chorus in *The Libation Bearers*: “It is the law that the drops of blood/fallen on the ground demand more blood./The plague of the Furies calls aloud/on behalf of those already dead/for another destruction to crown the first.” (109) The chorus now from *Agamemnon*: “Zeus it is that has made man’s road/he it is who has laid down the rule/that understanding comes through suffering.” And from the same play, Clytemnestra: “There is a sea—and who shall drain it dry?—/nourishing a spring, always new, an abundance of purple/to be bought with silver for the dyeing of garments./This house, my lord, has store enough of it./thanks be to the gods.” (62)

Some have called the ground tone of the Chapel paintings plum-purple. You might call the ground of the 1963 painting purple. Nonetheless, Clytemnestra’s “sea of purple” is blood.

What the *Oresteia* reveals is a sea of blood, dried blood or dead blood, a revelation in which the light of day has been stained by that color, red after black. It takes a while—the duration of the 3 plays—to realize the global condition of this color or mood, which is the color or mood of tragedy. It takes a while for an artist to realize, in art, this revelation. It took Rothko 20 years to realize that the way was painting as dyeing, treating the canvas as a garment, a fabric, veils. That the dyeing was to be done with red after black. That this was the ground.

According to the old art history story of modern art, painting is about itself or is about nothing. In the process of becoming modern, the painter abstracted or took out all reference to the world outside the picture. But this claim, as is made clear by his statements about subject matter, was not made by Rothko. There are subjects in Rothko, subjects which often come down to one subject: the tragic, the mood of the tragic (as opposed to any single tragic event in history).
What about the Passion story? Isn’t it such an event? Whatever the facticity of all those splinters of the one true cross, of the shroud of Turin, of individual thorns from the crown of thorns, the event of Christ’s suffering is negated by his ascension /transcendence from a world of history and suffering. The south wall Chapel painting negates that negation; it is a black light on a red ground. It keeps the focus on blood, on suffering. Yet no particular narrative moment or figuration is offered. Hence the mood of tragedy, of the tragic-religious drama. Red after black is a moody color. And in fact is no one color but is a mood (suffering).

Heidegger on mood, pp.312-313, *Sein und Zeit* (Stambaugh trans.)

A thick passage from the middle of a thick book. It contains, though, terms which apply to Rothko as a painter of mood: color, moods of color, and a given color may be equated with a certain mood. Kandinsky says gray is desolate. Structure: for mood to disclose or reveal meaning, it must have structure, an organizing shape. A window. Further, the nature of a mood, its meaning requires time; time is required for a mood to become visible, to be revealed. This means the structure and the color/colors themselves must be relatively complex. Rothko’s pictures reveal themselves slowly; they require our taking time with them. The fundamental nature of mood = to bring back to. What Rothko’s 1963 picture does is bring us back to the ground of human existence as a mood of blood, of suffering and tragedy (the tragic-religious drama). In Heidegger-speak, the da of da-sein.

10

(2) And what about the fuzzy or fizzy white rectangle at the top of the 1963 picture?

I’ve read mood by way of Heidegger. Reading is intertextual. Texts are not only literary, are not only language and the written forms of language. A painting is a text, a work of music is a text. All can be read and can be read most fruitfully by reading them in a context of other texts. But not just any other texts. The others must be different and yet “sympathetic.” Heidegger is such a text for Rothko. Another is Melville, who is also much concerned with mood, and who has written a text which is most sympathetic with Rothko, i.e., close to and sharing some same or similar terms. This is the “Whiteness of the Whale” chapter in *Moby-Dick*.

The chapter begins with a long one sentence catalogue of all those things connected with whiteness and connected with what might be considered positive associations. Yet, according to Melville’s narrator (Ishmael), there “lurks an elusive something in the innermost idea of this hue, which strikes more of a panic to the soul than redness which affrights in blood.” (191)

It is this elusive quality, what we might call the mood of whiteness, which causes it to heighten terror to “its furthest bounds.” Polar bears and white sharks are given as examples. “...what but their smooth, flaky whiteness makes them the transcendent horrors they are?” (191) There follow other examples, yet Ishmael confesses he still hasn’t got to why whiteness should elicit these reactions, why whiteness “is at once the most meaning symbol of spiritual things...the very veil of the Christian’s Deity” and is at the same time “the intensifying agent in things the most appalling to mankind.” (197) He comes up with four possibilities: (1) its indefiniteness which
“shadows forth the heartless voids and immensities of the universe” and which “stabs us from behind with the thought of annihilation,” i.e., with the thought of our comparative littleness/meaninglessness in a world which has no care for us. (2) Whiteness is not so much a color as it is “the visible absence of color and at the same time the concrete of colors”; it is the “colorless, all-color of atheism.” (3) The colors found in nature are “not actually inherent in substances, but only laid on from without”; “deified Nature absolutely paints like the harlot.” (4) The “mystical cosmetic” which produces all of nature’s hues, the “great principle of light,” white and colorless itself, operates “without medium upon matter.” The universe, stripped of this cosmetic, is a leper.

My sense of the white rectangle: it’s the abstraction of language—all that the teachers consider important as demonstrations or even diagrams of meaning—what has been written or drawn on the blackboards. An abstraction, a taking out, an evaporation of those constructions, the logos itself, into a hovering cloud of chalk dust. Or an eraser covered with chalk dust. What is being erased: language, signifying signs, all that would give meaning to existence, what has been handed down, taught to us, the logocentric tradition itself. And it is transcendent. It hovers above the three blackboards. It is not in the third heaven. It is above or beyond the third heaven. And what it reveals in its abstraction/transcendence is what is primordially there: a ground, a red after black ground. The fuzziness/fizziness indicates the process (or progress) of abstraction/transcendence. White/whiteness/the logos is in the act of being “transcended” in this painting even as what is revealed by the abstracting/transcending process is the opposite of “transcendental.” Blood is not transcendental, ground is not transcendental. The da-sein, the being there of human beings in or on that ground, is not transcendental. This is a darkness out of light, a dark revelation.

Why not do what the Rolling Stones tell us to do? Why not paint it black, period?

Someone did, someone in 1963 already did. This is Ad Reinhardt and “Abstract Painting.” A statement by Reinhardt published in that same year: [cite Art As Art, pp.82-83]. The key term is “icon.” An icon is an image. An image is a picture in which something previously thought to be known is lit up, seen differently or re-seen, made new. An icon is a sacred image, typically of a sacred person, a saint, and considered sacred in itself. There’s no person in the Reinhardt painting, but the revealed image is a cross, the oldest image of Christian western tradition, the Logos (New Testament version—Gospel of John: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God”) itself.
Still, a black cross, a dark icon, is not particularly new. This is the opening poem or psalm/hymn from *The Mystical Theology* by the 5th c. writer Pseudo-Dionysius. (Cite p. 135). Reinhardt was not unaware of this. From a later statement: (cite p. 86-87 in *Art As Art*). He may have wanted to eliminate the religious ideas about black, but he did not necessarily want to eliminate the religious. In any case, he didn’t. A black cross or dark icon is not neutral, is not merely pigment on a flat 2-dimensional surface. Black may be, as Kandinsky claims, a silence with no possibilities, but the Logos is anything but silent. Still anything but silent.

Whatever the oldness or newness of Reinhardt’s painting, here, too, is transcendence—by way of abstraction—and revelation—by way of the time that must be spent with this painting before the image appears. Those who have seen Reinhardt’s later signature black paintings are only too well aware of this. They require a considerable time of looking at, of attending to or dwelling with. They may be the “slowest” paintings in the Western tradition. Slowest & perhaps most well-hidden. In these paintings, what slowly and repeatedly comes out of hiding is a black cross.

Some questions in passing: is Reinhardt’s “after-image” necessarily more revelatory than the foregrounded “pre-image” of a painting here at the Art Institute, Georgia O’Keefe’s “Black Cross, New Mexico” (1929)? Is the O’Keefe image any less revelatory for being less slow/more immediate in its disclosure and relatively less abstract? Does size matter? Are the O’Keefe & Hopper paintings less revelatory for being much smaller than those of Rothko & Reinhardt?

All three painters (Hopper, Rothko, Reinhardt), all of whom were active at the same time (1963) in the same place (New York City), demonstrate how there can be such a thing as darkness out of light, black light, or even dark transcendence.

Why do this? Each painter gives us a different answer. Hopper: that darkness is necessary for the production and perception of light. Rothko: that the tragic is the fundamental ground of human being in its being in a tragic-religious drama. Reinhardt: that “iconic” religious experience—after every abstraction of the world and of all previous art styles—nevertheless remains.

Why should this matter? Each painter gives us the same answer, the same answer in their not same constructions of black light: only that art which is revelatory can matter. And, again, the light of revelation is black light. This is a new apocalypse. This is what we’re brought face to face with: only that art which is revelatory can matter.

Gertrude Stein famously asked, when reporters asked her to repeat an answer, “what’s the question?” The question(s) are: how can you get light from darkness? How can you get dark or black light? How can you transcend darkly? And if you can, why should you or why should it matter? Now it’s your turn to write your own answers on blackboards of your own choosing. As with the Sunday School song, it’s your turn to brighten the corner where you are.
no name on the bullet, no. 1
no name on the bullet, no. 3
stonewall was a riot

human passion
a promise
social mechanism

A NEW CREATION
9th phase
a phalanx

SPLENDID TOPIARIES
AN ANDROUS MAJORITY
RADIANTLY WEALTHY

ACTION
LIFE

CIVILIZATION
5th phase
YOU ARE HERE

BODILY WEAKNESS
treachery

CIVILIZATION

Chris Chen
vulgar formalism (probably misread it)

PROBABLY MISREAD IT

YOU

desire

A SOCIAL MOVEMENT
Chris Chen

Note:

I made these doodles employing the “Alternumeric” True Type fonts found on installation artist and experimental filmmaker Paul Chan’s brilliant Web site, “National Philistine” at


The fonts, like “Black Panther Omega” and “The Party’s Not Over, After Act-Up V.1,” retrain a computer keyboard to spit out assorted leftist slogans/symbology. "These fonts write with scars from other bodies," he acknowledges in a compact, cheeky FAQ:

“I have essentially reduced the material possibilities of these fonts to signify the immaterial by making the material more specific, more historical, less universal, and more accountable, to me. And like any system that reduces a world it is inherently tragic. Think Diderot’s Encyclopedia. Think Socialism.”

I love the sundry gastronomical pleasures and eccentric humor lodged in the nodes of Chan’s funky system, with the exception of “Sexual Healing Shift For Harassment,” the most unnerving of all the fonts, with its distressing mixture of irony and an unreconstructed, “immaterial” racial subtext. I can’t do justice to the ingeniousness of Chan’s cultural project, but I think that by the logic of this system, one must also submit any poetics statement to further Alternumeric recoding or “cooking,” and subject the sentence to radical transformation. For example, a potential “inside-out” Alternumeric permutation:

“I have essentially reduced the material necessity of these fonts to obscure the material by making the immaterial more specific, less historical, more universal, and less accountable, to you.”

But the ambivalent yoking of Socialism with Diderot’s encyclopedia implies the existence of other (embedded, strategic) Alternumeric fonts, “Lyric,” “Enlightenment,” “Reification, After Barthes’ ‘Political Modes Of Writing.”’ Perhaps even, “Red, Shift For Black.” I’d be curious to see the material remainder if the uncanny combinatory power of Alternumerics was trained on these residual identifications—if in fact the procedure would yield, like “The Future Must Be Sweet—After Charles Fourier,” the antiquated positive coordinates of some bygone utopia.
One might start here, with the blank specimen, not thinking too much or wanting to go home. Entrance is ample, the peak of the blank, a kind of acme in the ether. And what if you said No ceasing! No respite between night and pen. But it’s not night yet, or even crepuscular later, no haze blights the light, not yet, though the cycle progresses, you know it, contain it, know how it’s measured in the movements of thought and body. Circadian authority, and also the way time breaks things, or is broken. Certain measurements portend that at such time in the morning . . . So many voices of requirement, regiment, the authority of this or that strident device, fetters that tap on the skin’s head and need an answer. Why such indignation in violation, old friend? Who is addressed with these questions. Ghosts of persons. Sometimes the desire for contact can be a certain color, transparent or opaque, or clearly clear. Is clearness a color, or another form of smudge? Ocular weather is every kind, all times. Power dreams in its frame. In a pasture, boys lost in the wheat, the high grown weeds. By land or by water. O Athena, Medusa, pick up the phone! There are ropes and routes and other things to hold. Avert your eyes, sweet sisters, call in phenomena with the medium in hand. Apparatus, deuce of minus. Too much has been left to the tendency, the message, the flowers bursting and bowing on the verge, allowing all their semblance of edge to flash and measure. But a plot, we want a story, a root to grow and figure. Let’s see, she’s asleep, in the bed so big one mistakes it for a sea. Birds beat at the window, holy hibou and humble alouette. Stars and birds bide their colors, weave them in the tapestry that is desire’s web at evening, a dark blue hearkening inundates the land. One approaches, bearing lantern. Is it the monster or psyche? Is our sleeping sister really a sinner, or hermaphrodite hiding the secret sex she dies in? All quiet, all sweet, all needle-bright and bleeding. That was what we came to, that land, that stain, that blissful kindness of a liquid called forgetting. From its insides, distill a new sequence, a process that pleases its textures with a certain soothe. Or sooth, for we include bright wisdom in the process, not the one of the foolish harridan, her mouth a ruin, but that which springs from the thought’s throat like a sheer shade of begot. And all those things, those times of the evening, collected in inkspots and nightbells, like a thread – keep saying I am doomed in the stains I shall remember, they lay forgotten heads on the canopies, like a dress that spreads to every corner of the stage. Ring down the curtain, cold auditor, all is numen, an unctuous light activates the hand, and every act loves the strange blue weight of its attending. So far, so failing. What do we entail. A new contract or gambit, mask of antiquity with all it spectrum of stare and frown. And grin, the one hanging in the air like a lantern. Sometimes space needs a sectioning, a kind of break in the turbulence of its hastening, le vertige. Kiss the question, it’s your longlost sweetheart come to see you! I need a horse to escape, to bear me through the storm. I don’t like the story, the end is too heavy, a child plays near the train tracks, make it stop! Some russian catastrophe bearing all away. Mine would be the black bread havocked at evening, crude anchor of the norm. Five, six eggs in the basket, the hen is ailing. Rain eats the roof. Night spies land. It was sailing like a ship in a windy tinder, it lost its shore, now the black boat stays...
on course, the trip will finish, and what you find won’t be worse than the event it was portending. What news of green? The stuff of light and issue. We lost day somewhere, in the ambiguity of twilight, smoke was solid in those heavy strikes, impermissible flowers bled and bloomed in heaps around us. But this was no grave, no petal or fragrant progress, it plumed its turn, a course of nuance and shyness, we held the tips of our tongues, alive with wonder! But shouldn’t it be shrewder? Doesn’t crude survival dictate? The talking waters with their eventual hands. But no one liked the weight, night’s influx on the shoulders. Are we Atlas, do the skies resist our unrestraining flesh? She knew so much about bearing, the brightly borne. And are some things so light they can’t anchor on any shoulder? Hence the unbearable is the levity that breaks and flies. Gravity’s kindness is our pain and clenched investment. No other woes but these, and the sun goes. But she feeds all who need her, or makes a kind nest for the vulture, with all her snows. Some nest, some frost, the place where the tongues rust. That wasn’t a song, was a smite or incantation. As though war with the sun wouldn’t break the darkest far. Roots bear, wind is rare in the forest of stasis. Who would sing the song of clear praise, mystic brother? No more is a song mere breathing, smoke has shrouded any aptitude and cloud. Bird is a certain shade of whim, awake and inner. Network is the need’s hurt, wounded, frail and spatial. Occasion, aureole. We return by runes, we know none free of symbols, we are a closed loop in the harm’s heart, we don’t forget. No leaps, no pipes, no happy forest gambol. Syrinx, you gave your bruised body for these sweets. As day never shed its many lights to be any person’s present form. Sacrifice as a dream of freedom, but so is frame. No I can still or say it, bloodray, bright. Sometimes, some means, the eye grows weary, the fingers slur over keys, wounds, paper, the name of the topic was matter and all its ore. Or gold, or argent in the eyes’ keep, saying never. Saying metal is precious which spills its ardent breath. Breathe but be not peaceful. Arcs decline in a curve, lovely and fatal. You are at every point, an actor, an archer, a specter spun and pensive. What night betrays you with its sentence, flight, thief, or barque of night traversing tarnished waters. So hum the spheres, alert with disappearance. So swells, dissembles. Core at the crux, indigenous, porous, as though green had a name for its tones, shapes, claims. A table will hold most anything you lay. A cup with its mouth saying fill me, faithful vessel. Are eyes just ruse, distorting every contact? Nothing helps, the mind is stained and will be its constant quotient of am-not. Rays rise and smite the outline, breeding flowers in the black benighted ground. So shall, so slow. A wheel is not an angle. Opaque erasures harmonize, where they absorb the frantic hammers, nothing will be like this light in its cloud of wild amber sifting, spreading. Sail, swirl, stall. Fearless candle, you are remedy and rule. This we knew, in our enfance, pale preliminary sounding. So far, so harm. Sometime there will be time, time less linear, more like the cloud with its clandestine take-me-hence. World implores, forebears, seeks its straying. There have to be these and those, swoops and frays. Colors there are no words for, opaque-clear, held in the eye like a stylus. Shine, inflection. So twines the name, soft fields of rumination, hard snows, bitumen littered in the loam. A coat, a wieldy blanket, some industry to glean. Leaf laws and freezes, summer of tabular data, where the blooming is doctored and discovered once and once. Bells, chimes, high buzz of fading flies, the city is called Aurora and you live there. You eat the flowers of its routes of leisure and cry Far. From this bench, at this moment the trees weep, bereft of season, the sermon you blur in your pocket is their mien.
Jonathan Thirkeld

Disposable Museum

#one

god: this is endless
wait and please, wait
hold your ear down
to my chest
stops
you attend and then
stop: a face less pink
than mine, skin a colder
ink
feeding from blood
to blood
to cerement: we will all be like
floating white
sheets to a child

#two

suddenly home
becomes axis, home, axis, sky
come beginning
of iron
reach
we are building
apart clouds
parting from mists
one sunlight to seam
her different
angles
magnets called ‘thunder’
wings clear
across our expanse
her solid, her center
#three

what’s made of
steel bend, steel blood:
have you launched
sense to matter:
if we, if then, plead
that way: to the south
we constructed the moon
for our night-blind children
see
do not know
these
materials: they house
two of everything
and breed

#four

we say bread is not
focus: we say
break
we say arms bent
under arms, rib
under me, without feeling
closed, saccade firing-unfixing-unrevel
say food in my chest
see but not
open
I tell her don’t
answer: me, mouth,
cup, water, table, lamp
#five

these two million
cables connecting my wires
to your veins
while others wait
to speak with you
as insects bring
tinctures
of your blood
letting in prayer
some fingers
yours
tap this shoulder
distances over
all highway lamps

#six

this isn’t place, that is
apparent, so blank
better to write in her—
appear:
walls, paper, hanging
paper globes dim in yellow
amber encased
give me room
in your sanded tone
it’s mortar: this won’t
live
believe you:
I made it for thee
it won’t keep
#seven

the eastern blind
(not drawn)
glows, you form
be longer and fill
beghost
the room
it holds your pearls
you will these pears
they perish, so full
flesh, lashes, cornea
severed from gravity
I can hold
your stomach
falls

#eight

there: a whistling
not the wind
names for these
creatures
marsh names, cell names
prophase—metaphase—anaphase
to tell this to time, to me
it’s every ‘thing’ it’s
listen—things fall
its season of warm turns
our city plastic
splitting
woman: you halve
your body
#nine

dear that is above
me, dear waste
disruption of this
this:
please lie underneath
handle that you
soften, that you let
go and become
atmospherics, mass
it is a house you
hold, a woman—I
believe
so much in our
shapes, patterns, rings

#ten

the ring that blues
in nearing a sea,
our sums: human, eroding
she mapped sharp
rings against the dust
in ‘I’ in ‘you’
in
trajectory, I give
they ascend, I give
lots laid bare on
maps
we land
like thousands near lights
plotted by proximity
#eleven

here, in my pocket
a museum, a
handful, a stain of
death, pressed insect
cuttings
metal shavings in her
palm into wind like
desert, skimmed mantle
clean and clean and
dry
things fly north
do you recall
do you see thin
triangles, V’ed limbs

#twelve

dr

these patterns, sorry
this patter in rain
of missing things,
lines
—how then, imagine
what isn’t stored
in the blue
lead beneath of
sound
mixing the dropped
with dented—
now grow
now spring and hear
in this gathering bowl
#thirteen

the sea, its epileptic
foam—
cannot think of
beginnings, I
start, I turn over
my cold
unwinding dance
born over from
light, fracture, hand
that is not mine
the tongues they
music
and overlap and
incessantly break
In March

The human shape is a coincidence of the west-east motion drawing the cirrus.

An eye moves swifts from the stretched floor to the horizon: some trees fastened in brown; ice piping slowly through the packed soil. Deep within their throats the poplars bend east.

Wind peels at the shutters. Jars the attic window. A chest, crossed by mullions, beats. Wires fret and fold along a lower cloud. Is it a hand letting drops slip to the ground?

Miles from the house, light travels in milliseconds, casting denser shadows on trunks encasing quills, wrapped bells, and sheets brushed clean of the long hairs and folded neatly.

The attic is still. Bottles weight the four edges of parchment spread against the floor.

A child marks the peak upon a ridge. In charcoal strokes, he traces a rough stream along the wooded grain beneath the page. At its mouth he renders a crowded village as a flight of triangles. Roofs amassed and slightly raised on a stray nail-head fade into the south-east corner. There, at the map’s edge, water-stains cloud, perhaps, a sea.

The child turns to his father’s lookout, the sill. Frozen rain diminishes the last swifts darting into hollow trees; a few grayed and scattered vacant chimneys.
Nathaniel Mackey

**Sound and Somnolence**

—“*mu*” fortieth part—

A light, floating slumber it seemed. Buoyant heads, we lay like melons, the pond our melon patch, bobbed, kept endlessly afloat... Risen waft, anabatic whiff. Buried heads brought back to life... Buried our heads in Erzulie’s loin-musk, imagined more than real, all the more penetrant, punishment the moon doled out... We awoke blinking, blinded by the water’s wry perfume. Blinked and blinked. Blinked. Blinked and blinked again, bobbing heads up to our noses in water, the pond a pool of reflection gone dark...

It was a dream we were hounded by, Erzulie’s frog-princes yet to be kissed... We’d have blown ourselves up and the world as well so exhausted we were, all a banality, all the world in one boat... Nubs what were fingers at arm’s end, only knuckles to hold on with. What we wanted withdrew, abstract assembly, said we’d someday meet among rocks... Run brethren obsessed with Erzulie, recollecting her perfumed inner thigh. Aroma we’d
have given an arm to draw the likes of, synaesthetic brush, bouquet. Risen scent, given our wish, would lift us, an expended we underlay all else. “Love’s made bed my hounfour,” she’d say, “love’s bed Agwé’s boat.”

Wafted aroma translated had us up to our mouths in water, pond water up to one’s upper lip. Insecure hold on where one was, nose above water, love’s amphibious hush… Though it was land we were on, stomachs in our throats, scared, not-right-if-not-scared no solace, better to be wrong we thought…

Or so we thought, said we thought, laughed as we spoke, smoke rings floated, we were Dread Lakes eldren, soapwater cigarette smoke… Smoke bubbles lifted our lungs up our throats, it wasn’t virgin earth we were on. Nothing lay north, no way to keep our feet. Crept and kept falling, fell, got up again, Crab Alley lay to our left. Abrupt falling off of the earth to our right, everything lay to our left… A frog pond aperture it was we looked in thru, synaesthetic mingling of mud and perfume, not-yet princes yet to be kissed, fairy tale yet to come true… Our princess would come someday, soon come, prophecy said as much… Dread Lakes’ dry bed the bed we lay with Erzulie in, a slow song song even so. So slow sing was less what we did than survive it, frogs in a nearby pond infiltrating sleep, a bit of something heard before dozing off
We saw light, sought shadow we thought we saw. We saw our heads roll away whatever we saw... We were again at the foot of a ladder, broken rung where we stepped everywhere we stepped, rung we'd have bounded from. We were going nowhere, step stayed with us, callipygian Erzulie no longer held sway... Sisyphæan heads hard as rocks rolled up, slid back down... Trudged up Treadnot Hill... Step stuck to our feet even so, we dragged it with us, a dream we dreamt we dreamt laid to rest. The ravening horns were at our backs, we hung our heads, wilted lilies, bells holding more than was there.

Step stood in our way, we were running in place, world and wear synonymous, rung and retraction one... Rung lay wasted, lift lay as well, rayed-out gallows the ground had become, abstract ascendancy's drop... What remained of rung we were loath to say. Chime. Climb. Clime. Clamor. Claim we absconded with
Bodiless heads alive bobbing in water.
  So innocent seeming, what did it mean? Mine alone it began but grew, more
heads appeared, melon-patch apprehension, heads would roll…
  Tumbleweeds we’d have been were it not a melon patch we were in, a frog pond even so. Had already rolled, were already rolling…

We’d lost our heads it wanted to say, lost to the world, Erzulie’s remnant perfume.
  Sound where before we’d have said soul, so much less ensouled of late. So much less
if not overly so, we lay corrected, heads held elsewhere, hit… World old and we with it, new could we awake, deep sleep deeper the more we resisted, quicksand it seemed we were in…

Shook loose though, ascended like balloons.
What it was was only atmosphere, air, an imagined incense, heads up in clouds of smoke. We floated on air, heads lighter than air; looked out on where we otherwise were… Pool, pond, pole it now seemed,
reed blown on by lips rippling water, wind we were lifted by… Rather one’s head on Erzulie’s lap than head of state, rather make love than war. So went the slogan, placards held high, rallied, spoke with our feet… March our birthright, year after year, centuries-long trek we were on. Stilt what’d been stake, stuck, stutter, stalk we were hoisted
by... The exemplary two turned impossible,
back where they’d been before, blue fingers
rummaging bulge and recess... Lost heads.
Greek absurdities... Rolled up only to roll
back
down... Rumbling heads apart from headless
bodies, bodies and heads up against a wall...
Said again we’d sit in Squat Garden, bottom-
heavy body, bottom-heavy soul, rolled
heads’ melon-patch epiphany’s bone patch,
birds
fly away from our bleeding lips... Kissed
out, my late head lay compressed and
compounded, beginning to be a ghost,
gray
sidehair, gray goatee... Down a slope known
as Down the Hill were kids again,
crouched
catching tadpoles, awoke to
roll back
down
No daydream was it, no afternoon of
a Georgia faun though we were
in Georgia. Athens it turned out we
were in... Words’ rescue no rescue,

voices backed by intransigent hum, what
we knew was only we’d been hit... Night
birds, frogs, tree frogs, crickets, an
aleatory orchestra it seemed. Wooed
by which, resisting which, totemic,

We

lay on our backs’ reconnoiter’s ninety-
degree drift. Erzulie was Our Lady, Our
Lady’s hips our pillow, the pond’s banks the
backs of her thighs... We stood on our feet as

though

we lay on our backs, devices bare, awaiting,
not know-how, gnosis, albeit neither repaid our wait...

We stood without backs, without bodies, bodies
below water, heads moored, bobbing on the face

of the

water, heads between Our Lady’s legs... Orphic
loss taken in thru an acoustic window, black gnostic

pool

we lost our bodies in,
sound alone

survived
from méduse

—see here it is—
these fingers read under shells
all that can be read
    can be read

—through hands—
as in
light through closed fingers
makes red V’s

she takes a left at the curve for indirection
not the rubiate
held or stroked

the no lines
as if bled or smeared—

—spread—M’s red held

the lips through

intent to join color to color, what she has never seen in what she sees
hue let slide
other dabs

a milk red out

rise to
blend

something

carnelian
corporeal

the drift of an idea inside a color
occasionally a synthetic pegasus springs

the moment lies out,
lies myriad,
or somewhere

from the hairs

— holds by knots,
    how it can —

and since no repose, quivers in articulation
or adjusts as no one—

“to morphose”
“excuse me”

waves of this
wet word
grain move

hands (spread
in the seaweeds)

let the senses out

to touch what is so anchored in questions
to a pebble (streams of)
graveled to bits, wish

everything is inward
queer clickings—

    which tap
    the pronged sea

—carving it—

to fork
to méduse
to tentacle
to pry

spelling underwater
so hazardous, it

    (opens a chance shell

    each name for a thing seems intent to curl from its shelled meaning
Alan Halsey, from The Memory Screen Notebooks
Alan Halsey, *from The Memory Screen Notebooks*
Memory Screen is an impossible book which by now exists in which begins with a snapshot of a graffiti on a garage door by graffiti consists of a spraycanned outline figure alongside the reading is Memory Screen & so this may be the book’s correct androgynous, the face somewhat monkey-like. Most of the verso sequence of graphics, many of which include words and words-sometimes detaches itself and becomes associated with a series sequence of parallel texts. The parallel texts sometimes appear thing. Yet they are not, for the most part, captions. None of the

Thanks for the Use of your Emblem Library

WARPERS, TWISTERS. These simple words, The waiting and calling and only the movie was delivered from a far suburb.

Alan Halsey, from The Memory Screen Notebooks
They did seem to me quite minor prophecies but who decided there’s a difference between softwar and hardwar? T stands for ‘blow it up backwards’, but G? ‘Unknown’ means just what it says: monuments, obelisks, statues and the like key elements in the surrounding landscape where ‘Deep Hole’ means ‘here’ and ‘Space’ in mirror-writing upside down ‘Frustra quis stabilem figat in Orbe Gradum’. ‘Found object’ as opposed to what? Memory Screen is an exercise book showing preference for excess.
Most of these people are the same person anyway.
Screenface,
Also, Pecata Mundi. Because I do not hope to turn into myself again I gathered these snapshots in 6 x 4 albums bound in replica snake-skin called Memory Screen as if any variation or an added detail such as month and year made a difference. An antedate is only an antidote sometimes. Reported 'clouds of determined phantoms' October 23rd. Less erotic rhetoric than cult de sac without a broken dream to hang a monostich or map on.

Alan Halsey, from The Memory Screen Notebooks
Billy Gomberg, from Donna Hayward
Billy Gomberg, from Donna Hayward
Industrial Magdalene

behind the Area of Expertise
the Passion spent by all things harnessed

was the Breathing of the Last Hurrah
& Gearing Up of Elemental

Vagaries. Go then
& ask the good workers

if they are grinders
or gilders?

The sun climbs up
for anything—

the coin for water
is game is rife is dam is

gone—the route for water
runs cleverly—ruins not but takes the going

tenderly. Scruples not, nor
stops there: weds, unweds, whores.
Prestidigitation struck him favorably: silk scarves drawn as continuous apologies from a cane. He craved mercatorings: the oilskin’s rolled coordinates, the peninsulas jeweled with feldspar…

He was not without interest, the storied space between blasphemous selfhoods. But he poured from the vine where the niceties stopped.

In her top drawer, inherited slips, bodiless, perfumed. Caleche it was, calash, barrouche—at any rate, an open carriage.

Once glass and water were a narrow corridor underfoot. Aquarium to pre-ignited feathers, to yet un-lofted bodies in the flame threading water named carp. This was deliverance from position. This was circulation, the farce and poignancy of bubble. Enchanted to make your, she begins. If you don’t mind, he defers.
A Fine Cage Won’t Feed the Bird

Winter citrus in opulent rinds. Later might be shut away from distraction. As books might be spining for hands to feel, your guest might be also going hungry. And for it showing red by the fire might he set to the keys. Might they give to his lightest pressure. The notes look shaded down with sound. Around the black-tailed darts you mean to quench the lamps. In that trap better to flood the over-sight that holds you here.
Cathy Park Hong

First Drill

Lest we quell,
{rain steeples Florentine rooftops}
Lest we think we won,

{da impala is nisheh. Da ebening,}

the morn, the mountain song, yesteryear’s
yams smoking from ware, their

albumen fog sponging past model hamlet,
tin museum cavalry humming to muzak

Our muck-raking hands toiling to recall
alarms, dinner bells, church bells, their
brass yawns swashbuckling Yonder!—

heads in bowl cuts detonate equations
systole sum diastole my graphic lesions

our hands swish petri-dish
for dime-store prophesies,

We chant lest we falter lest we chatter

upwards, the skyward flash captures
our gnashed motto, our
phosphorous soprano

O is for
Lest we seize or expire
Onward

I rake a hundred greyhound bones,
dogs shot after losing speed.
My raked body blooms puckers tear ducts
Ocean shucked dry. Shredded
planes seed out pilots who
parachute onto styrene ocean beds.
My hand molds the revolver against
this dog’s deer-like head bot as day
here bot as century I whisper into its ear
the race seethes on sidelined I
armada’s crackling event
bury the ribs until only the combs
it foams it foams
for groundwork of a tower
tools already silt
my love for work my shrill-shot days
I aim aim.
I, me and myself: the eternal burden and occasional pleasure of focusing on the self in poetic utterings is a trans-historical legacy of the highest order. It has little to do with particular stylistic periods in a refinement of poetic discipline and refuses to be seen as merely a fruit of modernity. While it is true that only in post-Renaissance culture in humanist Europe does the self become a central pillar of artistic work, it was since the time of the ancient pre-Socratics that the self was present in its explorations of cosmos. Pre-Socratic engagement with the personal which is at the same time social, metaphors that reach in mineralogy, mythology and astronomy with equal veracity, easy blending of diverse genres in a writer’s pursuit of an ideal balance of good, beautiful and true: this is for me an inspiring literary dowry when I attempt to weave my way through verses read, rivers crossed, books of poems published. This is for me a legacy with which I am staunchly obsessed even though I am aware of its vaguely absurd tinge.

The self, then, my self was discovering alone, during my high-school years in a hometown of Ljubljana, that power and curse of the language for which we have no better term than that of poetic ambiguity. Without living mentors and surrounded only with characters and stories from books, my reluctant explorations guided me to a commitment to inspired if not even conspirative community of poets regardless of national tradition or linguistic idiom in which they wrote. I see poets, however, not as unacknowledged legislators, as was still Shelley’s desire, but “only” as visionary witnesses of the world as it used to be, as it is and as it will be: witnesses of the universal core of every human experience. This community, on the one hand wrapped in the sound of the fateful Orphean lyre, while on the other hand mercifully embracing an anonymous high-school student as he tentatively responds to the imperative of a white paper sheet and the sweet pain in his anxious soul, this community would not be possible if it was not grounded in a Tertulian-like absurd belief in the transcendent authority of lyrical revelation.

We who want to believe that one single convincingly wrought elegy will be able to lament not only the historical present, but will be chanted by women who are yet to be born, we write in a subdued and perhaps not quite clearly formed hope that such elegy and such well-wrought poem will be created by our very feverish minds, which take pieces of a chaotic world in which we are forced...
to live, yet in which nobody wants to live, and turn them into images of a lost whole, or at least into its aesthetic approximations. We who believe thus are in a certain way Pindar’s spiritual heirs. Pindar was the first writer to publicly declare this poetic \textit{credo qui absurdum est} by saying that his elegies will live long after the city-state that commissioned a masterpiece from him will turn into a tremor of historical dust. He did so without haughtiness, yet filled with self-confidence; feeling no intoxicating triumph, yet credibly, supported only with the authority of existential testimony.

Acknowledging and reflecting the fragmentation of the self while at the same time making a resolute stand against it—this is in my opinion the central driving force of a voice belonging to a New England spinster, a voice that was truly important for my poetic formation. By exploring the language to find visionary images suitable to document her search for God, Emily Dickinson bought herself the right not to be interested in the ethics of society. But since her theologisation of human destiny took place in the shadow of the absent God, she hoped that in the mysteries of evocation of the lost blessing she might come near the promise of perfection, yet at the same time she suspected that such a deliverance can only be sought by a chosen individual.

Great lyrical art always precedes its time and addresses spaces beyond the immediate cultural environment in which it was created. Consequently, the search for reality is always a unique theological adventure; one that cannot be easily digested by churches, congregations, synods and religious professionals, for with the power of personal testimony, lyrical work raises doubts in the hierarchical order of each and every institutionalized religion. God of poets is by no means God of theologians, for she resides not in holy scriptures, but in convoluted revelation of the language which \textit{makes nothing happen}, as W.H. Auden famously described the expressive force of poetry. Rather than the entire traditional collective, it is the poetic visionary self alone that can come near that unattainably sublime state where individual and historical moments blend, no matter that the pay-off for intimate wisdom is often but a social isolation.

Social isolation? Much as I would at times prefer it, for me it was an inaccessible luxury. The early 1990’s were in this regard a crucial period. Having received a doctorate in sociology of culture at Syracuse University in New York, I returned back home to Slovenia after what had been my five-year long American stint. I married an American woman and brought her with me to my native Ljubljana. The war in Slovenia started and was followed by the disintegration of Yugoslavia, the country of my birth. My first child, my daughter Klara, was born. For this unnervingly ubiquitous self, the most recent Balkan war represented more than just a change on geopolitical maps of the post-cold war era. It cut deeply into my experience of the world, it reaped heart out of all things I was familiar with, it infected my aesthetic vision. Joy and anxiety, ongoing torment and a few hours of grace gave me the realization that I was but a perplexed witness of immense tectonic shifts that were determining human destinies in what is today euphemistically called Southeastern Europe. In sync with these potent vibrations, my book of poems \textit{The City and the Child} that came out in Slovenia in 1996 (its American edition was published by White Pine Press in 1999) made no pretense: it aspired to be a lyrical document, a personal testimony, a disfigured vision of human condition. This book no longer flirts with the somewhat haughty poetics of silence which permeated my previous poetic work, such as \textit{Dictionary of Silence} which appeared in Slovenia in 1989 and in American English
translation by Lumen Press in 1999. It is instead a chronicle of pain, unabashedly so. It was written in a voluntary exile, like the book of prose poems, *Anxious Moments*, which I wrote in the wasteland of upstate New York where I ostensibly pursued my graduate studies. *Anxious Moments* was published in Slovenia in 1990 and, again by White Pine Press in the United States in 1994. Like its nomadic voice that calls out of fear and premonition, *The City and the Child* was given birth in a voluntary exile. It was written on the banks of the Danube during the six months I spent in Budapest as a fellow at The Institute for Advanced Study.

We lived in a little suburban house in Buda Hills, my small family and I, on a back street where the bustling traffic of the rapidly transforming capital of post-communist Hungary could not be heard. I wrote at nights, strictly at nights, stepping on the balcony to stretch a little and smoke a lot, a cigarette and preferably two, staring into the pale light of a corner lamp. In its light, its unhealthy whitish halo trembling in the dark leaves of a neighbor’s garden, I could see the images from those far-away places that were dear to me: images from the mosaic of diverse Yugoslav cultures which was shattered by Serbian guns that very night and many nights before. The street lamp, the peaceful night, the tv screen flickering in a window of a dilapidated villa up the street, the somber skies above, and inside the room my daughter and my wife, asleep. Of course. I am, of course, too lame with words to bring out to the open what resists verbalisation. I am, of course, unable to say about that buoyant personal time anything truly effective that would capture the sort of mystical experience of the microcosm which is at the same time the macrocosm, an experience I believed I had those glorious October nights on the Buda’s balcony. I am, of course, celebrating the impossible.

Make no mistake: it does sound pathetic, it does, but I cannot help it. I really did distinctly feel that there was a voice speaking through me as if I were a medium of some kind, placed at disposal to an unknown yet powerful force. A voice which was infinitely more voluminous than my self and to which I had to open entirely, uncompromisingly and without prejudice. In everyday life, in daytime activities, such stripping of routinized habits is for me unattainable. In fact, I am not convinced that it may be desirable to bring those moments to bear on everyday life, as the pursuit of the impossible, that is, the very moment when vision and testimony hang in fragile balance, would itself then become impossible. There would be no comparative standard whereby the difference between absolute reality of the lyrical process and the mundane reality of everyday life can be properly outlined. I was aware of that difference as it was in a blissful fever of suspended time and space, in the sweep of a caring hand from behind the stars, in a voice larger than the capacity of my vocabulary, in an incantatory rhythm of tapping fingers on the keyboard, that I wrote as many as six poems a night. Later, when I finally read what I had written into this manuscript, I was a little shocked as I realized how much the poems related to the two pivotal subjects that occupied me at the time and which are alluded to in the title of the collection, *the city and the child*.

If poetry books really are “about” anything palpable at all, then this book was “about” the city as the experience *imago mundi*. As such it carries a strong biographical note: I am the first in the modest mythology of my family who was born in the urbanized social milieu, not in the peasant tradition of a Slovenian countryside. Yet at the same time, this personal experience is connected with a responsibility towards a larger experience of a city which was, that very night and many before, denied its *historical life*. I entertain the illusion that it is evident how these poems speak of the city of Sarajevo, although the city of my poems, never identified explicitly as the
besieged Bosnian capital, would not object to being viewed as a metaphor of a culture and mentality under mortal threat. On the other, no less relevant hand, the book attempts to represent the universe of love and responsibility for an individual life, which was given substance beyond lyrical babble in the birth of my first child, my daughter Klara.

In the title as well as in the poems of this collection, or so I hope, the two worlds merged which fatefully determined my self: an elegy of mortality and lethality of a human being which is embodied in the end of Sarajevo as we knew it, and a simple hymn to vital flow which addresses the miracle of beginning. These two miracles, the death of a city and the birth of a new human being, who conquers entirely new territories and leads me to new force-fields, can be possible only in contact with the great chain of being in which we celebrate the mystery of life by repeating it. As I entered the chain that binds those yet unborn with those long dead, I have not only undergone a transformation from a son to a father, but have been given a tension-filled possibility of transcending my self. My intuitive feeling that a poet can and must be a witness of his time, may have come in this book to a fuller fruition than ever before. However, to deserve to be read again, The City and the Child would have to be pregnant with a visionary impulse, too, which is only capable of turning a document of a first-hand eye witness into a universal image of life that knows no historical periods and political systems, no local warlords and despot’s cronies. The self travels through them all, dissolving in particulars of personal situation and emerging in an archetype, as imagination reaches out to the worlds illuminated by the faint beam of a street lamp, and poetry begins to speak.
Patriot act

Do let’s be quiet and ancient
of days, as is Earth with its endless
boxes and bags, its groups
of blue and its river-
wornt stones.

(A crowd amid monuments
gets fisted.)

How oddly rockstar
you are: Animal.
Animal. And some
unmerciful nail.

Them there hills. Them there
skeletoned beds. Them zeroes,
faces, ones and thumbs.
Them Sony glass ghosts
stacked on pallets.

We’re forever word for word—
some new eyes, a shaky haze.
Them dragons at hand
as if needed.

I didn’t.
I didn’t.
I don’t.
I do.
I do.

As if turning (for Christ’s sake!)
the key hard starts the car.
"In the transmission of the heavenly waters every hose fits every hydrant."  (Emerson)

The Ambassadors

Preface

at pains to express that he now at all events sees
is just my demonstration of this process of vision

full in the tideway; driven in with hard taps
like some strong stake for the noose of a cable
the swirl of the amplified bulk of hints
thickened into motive and accumulated character

more than a little supreme supplement
a more fantastic more moveable shadow
for the unseen occult clinging scent
of the gage already in hand
the precious “tightness” of the place
  his gleam of bliss
  he sows his seed
  he must keep his head

this licentious bag of adventures
half-emptied by the mere telling

the foredoomed clutch of exotic aids to expression
a perfect train of secrets rumbled into light

a clear green liquid in a neat glass phial
poured into the open cup of application

exposed the play of wilderness
the development of extremes

the impudence is always there
for grace and effect and allure

at the gate of that boundless menagerie
primed with his lifelong trick of intense reflection
through his more or less groping knowledge
a large grace of intensity essentially ravenous

so disobligeringly, so bewilderingly, not lost
in spite of all the blossoms dropped along the way

the thrilling ups and downs, the intricate ins and outs
the form foredoomed to looseness

the double privilege of subject and object
the terrible fluidity of self-revelation

the seated mass of explanation after the fact
strained to a high lucidity

expressing all that is in the hour
at close quarters with the conveyance

these intensely redemptive consistencies
most elastic, most prodigious

{ 1 }

various and manifold
she had taken all his categories by surprise
to say much in proportion to his little

as if her art were all an innocence
her innocence were all an art

“I see you in it”
“then you see more in ‘me’”

“I’m going to treat you quite as if I did.”
“By which you mean as if you didn’t.”

it’s why one came out
it’s why one has stayed
why one’s going home
“It’s why everything!”
“your coming out belonged to my having come before”

“It wasn’t for you they came out, but for me.”
“I only found you out. It was you who found me in.”

You put everything in!
You get everything out!

Nothing!
Everything!

nothing and nobody, every one and every thing?

“It’s all so vague. One is when one isn’t. One isn’t when one is.”

“Everything’s impossible.”
“Everything’s possible.”
scarceley less, or perhaps even more
what indeed was he talking about?

not to take many things out of it
but to put as many as possible in

“I have no secret—though I may have secrets!”
and these clues to clues were among them

the way it boldly took was to make him want more wants

{ 2 }

thanks to his constant habit of shaking the bottle
in which life handed him the wine of experience

almost any acceptance of the great bright Babylon
twinkled and trembled and melted together, and what seemed
all surface one moment

seemed all depth the next

they were touching bottom assuredly tonight
on the ground of his spicing the draught too highly
and pouring the cup too full
he suggested, invented, abounded
this ghost of the importunate
held out his small thirsty cup to the spout of her pail
dipped into the waiting medium at last
  with all it had thrown off
  and all it had taken in
  and found neither surge nor chill
nothing but the small splash of dipping
the safety of dipping and dipping again
dropped into his mind
  to turn him inside out
to wait a moment to hear the splash
to swallow that quantity
  the clock of freedom ticking loud
    into which, a helpless jelly,
    one’s consciousness is poured
discomposures were a detail
to deal with them was to walk on water
what wonder that the water rose?

{ 3 }

the private pledge
of that handful of seed
consented to the shrinkage
as part of the bristling total

It all depended of course how the “too much” was measured:
  he was there on some chance of feeling the brush
  the faint sound, as from far off, of the wild waving of wings
brushed and blurred it made a warm vast fragrant medium
  overwhelming, colossal, but somehow portable
  unhurried unflurried unworried
whatever it was it was everything
  a form and a surface, almost a design
  the great sponge of the future
  the real right thing for all of us alike
“therefore don’t be, like me,
without the memory of that illusion”

“well I did have the ravishment”

he had by this time let himself recklessly go
names in the air
ghosts at the windows
signs and tokens too thick
like an open letter in a foreign tongue
opening all the windows of his mind
the innermost nook of the shrine
as brown as a pirate’s cave
in which time told only as tone

the very climax of the foretaste

a meagreness that sprawled

it was as if he had sold himself
but hadn’t somehow got the cash

for ever missing things through his general genius for missing them
it was others who looked abstemious

and he who looked greedy

it was he who somehow finally paid

and others who mainly partook

he wondered if he felt as the impudent feel
poor dear old sombre glow!
without the occasional ornament
the right to the sacred rage
a quick blurred view of
questions, answers
flights and drops,
hesitations
plunges

the feeder of his stream fairly deepened
wastefully abounded with the chairs and the flower-pots
the cigarettes and starlight
somebody was paying something somewhere and somehow

his impunity, his luxury, had become—there was no other word—immense

though it would do, as everything would always do

it would somehow turn his wheel for him
it somehow always did turn his wheel
freshly and consentingly rubbed it into him
the droll mixture of art and innocence
he wanted fully to appear to stand all he might

"everything" "too much" "too little"

always more behind what she showed
and more and more again behind that
endlessly absorbent
embroider as she might
disclaim as she might
why could she think she had made him infinite?

trying all along to suppose nothing
he found himself supposing
innumerable and wonderful things

he had given all he had had to give
to make the whole place hum

what is it then? the charming melon
the great commentary on everything

"Yes. No. That is, I have no ideas.
I’m afraid of them. I’ve done with them."

a great difference no doubt
it built him softly round
it roofed him warmly over
it rested, all so firm, on selection
all comically, all tragically, away

"Then there we are!"
I'm nothing.
I'll never be anything.
I can't want to be anything.
Even so, I have all the world's dreams in me.

Windows of my room,
Of my room, one of millions in the world no one knows who owns
(And if they knew, what would they know?),
You open onto the mystery of a street crossed constantly by people,
Onto a street inaccessible to all thought,
Real, impossibly real, certain, unknowably certain
With the mystery of things under stones and beings,
With death putting moisture on walls and gray hairs on men,
With Destiny driving the cart of everything down the road of nothing.

Today I’m conquered, as if I knew the truth.
Today I’m lucid, as if I were about to die,
And had no more brotherhood with things
Than in a farewell turning that house and that side of the street
Into a row of coaches, a conductor’s whistle
From inside my head,
And a jolting of my nerves, a creaking of bones in departure.

Today I’m perplexed, like someone who’s thought and discovered and lost.
Today I’m divided between the loyalty I owe
The Tobacco Shop across the street, as a real thing outside,
And the feeling that everything’s a dream, as a real thing inside.

I’ve failed in everything.
Since I’ve proposed nothing, maybe everything was nothing.
I used the learning they gave me
To sneak out the back window.
I went to the country with grand intentions,
But all I found were grass and trees,
And when there were people, they were the same as the others.
I leave the window, sit in a chair. What should I think?
How should I know what I’ll be, when I don’t even know what I am?
Should I be what I think? But I think about being so many things!
And there are so many thinking they’re the same thing — we can’t all be!

Genius? At this moment
A hundred thousand minds like mine dream themselves geniuses like me,
And history won’t remember, will it? — not even one of us,
And there will never be anything but the dungheap of future conquest.
No, I don’t believe in myself.
In every asylum there are so many nut-cases with so many certainties!
And I, who have no certainties, am I more right or less right?

No, not even in myself . . .
In how many of the world’s garrets and non-garrets
Are there dreaming right now how many geniuses-unto-themselves?
So many high and noble and lucid aspirations —
Yes, truly high and noble and lucid —
Who knows if they’re plausible —
Will they ever find the light of day, the ears of people?
The world is for those who were born to conquer,
Not for those who dream they can conquer it, even if they’re right.
I’ve dreamed more than Napoleon accomplished.
I’ve clasped to my hypothetical breast more humanity than Christ ever did.
I’ve made more philosophies in secret than Kant ever wrote.
But I am, and may always be, the one in the garret,
Even if I don’t live in one;
I’ll always be he wasn’t born for this;
I’ll always only be he had such qualities;
I’ll always be the one waiting for someone to open the door at the foot of a doorless wall,
The one who sang a ditty of the Infinite in an overgrown field,
Who heard the voice of God in a sealed well.
Do I believe in myself? No, nor in anything else.
Let Nature pour over my burning head,
Its sun, its rain, the wind that finds my hair
And let the rest come if it comes, or is to come, or doesn’t come.
Cardiac slaves of the stars,
We conquer everything before we get out of bed;
But we wake up and it’s opaque,
We get up and it’s alien,
We go out and it’s the entire world,
And then the solar system and then the Milky Way and then the Indefinite.
Eat chocolates, little girl:
See, all religions teach no more than a candy store.

Eat, messy little girl, eat!
But only if you could eat chocolates as truthfully as you do.

But I think and, tearing the silver paper, which is really only tin foil,
I drop everything on the ground, as I’ve dropped my life.

But at least something’s left over from the sorrow of what I’ll never be:
The rapid calligraphy of these verses,
The portico leading into the Impossible.

At least I consecrate to myself a tearless contempt,
As those who invoke spirits invoke spirits I invoke Me to myself and call nothing down.

And stay home without a shirt,
I go to the window and see the street with absolute clarity.

And all of it weighs upon me like a curse of banishment,
I see the shops, I see the sidewalks, I see the cars pass by,
And all of it is foreign, as is everything.

I lived, I studied, I loved, I even believed,
And today there’s no beggar I don’t envy solely because he’s not me.

I see his tatters and his sores and his lies,
And I think: maybe you’ve never lived, studied, loved, and believed
(Because it’s possible to make reality of all this without making anything of all this);
Maybe you’ve hardly existed, like a lizard with its tail cut off.

The tail squirming just short of its lizard.
I've made of myself what I haven't known,
And what I could have made of myself I didn't.
The masquerade I wore was wrong. When I went to take off the mask,
I already aged. I was drunk, I didn't know how to put on a mask I hadn't even taken off.
When I finally got it off and looked in the cloakroom
I threw away the mask and slept in theManagement
Like a dog tolerated by the management
For not making trouble
And I'll write this story to prove I'm sublime.

Musical essence of my useless verses,
If only I could encounter you as something I'd made,
And not keep always in front of the Tobacco Shop in front of me,
 Crushing underfoot the awareness of being existing,
 Like a drunkard stumbling on,
 Or a doorman the gypsies stole even though it was worthless.
But the owner of the Tobacco Shop came to the door and stayed there.
I look at him with the discomfort of a misturned neck
And the discomfort of a misunderstanding soul.

He'll die and I'll die.
He'll leave his sign behind, I'll leave my verses.
At a certain point his sign will die, and my verses will die.
And the language in which I had written my verses will die.
And the turning planet, where all of this took place, will die.
On other satellites in other systems something like people
Will continue making things like verses and living under things like signs,
Always one thing across from the other,
Always the impossible just as stupid as the real,
Always the mystery of the depths just as certain as the dream of the mystery of the surface,
Always one thing or that thing or neither one thing nor another.

But a man went into the Tobacco Shop (to buy tobacco?),
And plausible reality suddenly falls on top of me.
I get up feeling energetic, convinced, human,
And plan to write these lines to say the opposite.
I light a cigarette while thinking about writing them
And the cigarette tastes like liberation from all thought.
I follow the smoke like a path all its own,
And enjoy, in a moment both sensitive and competent,
The freeing of all my speculations
And the awareness that metaphysics is a consequence of being cranky.
Then I sit back in the chair
And continue smoking.
While Destiny lets me, I'll keep smoking.

(Maybe I’d be happy
If I married my washerwoman’s daughter.)
This sinks in. I get out of the chair. I go to the window.

The man came out of the Tobacco Shop (stuffing change into his pants pocket?).
Hey, I know him: it’s Esteves, who has no metaphysics.
(The Owner of the Tobacco Shop came to the door.)
As if by divine instinct, Esteves turned and saw me.
He waved goodbye, I shouted So long, Esteves!, and the universe
Reconstructed itself for me with neither ideal nor hope, and the Owner of the
Tobacco Shop smiled.

(1/15/28)
translated by Chris Daniels
John Taggart

Plinth

Broken

cannot be glued cannot be pinned

what can be done = the parts abutted
bolting them
to the rough foundation stones from the old schoolhouse

the plinth resting on/bolted to those stones

what can be done
that music may enter as through a welcoming portal may enter this

air/among these pines.
By itself/nonbiblical

wood lily

from a wild growth of grasses of brambles and of bushes from under silver maples
to a bed behind the house
carmine and freckled flowers three to each stem

nodding/turned downward/away

after pictures after a smiling woman
dream of a smiling woman her opulent dress full of clocks

neither silence nor
obedience

not unconditional present tense joy.
Kitaj Dancer

Without pretext

the pretext of a text

any costume that comes with the pretext of a text

wears only warm-up leggings

and so thighs that do work pubic smudge unsequined ribs + breasts

a big girl

big/grown-up/adult in expectation the expectation of movement

unthematic/semplre/in itself and so outside of memory

stands doesn’t stand on her head stands smallest smile

exquisite

the phrase incomplete no quotation marks.
Concerning The Nature Of Things

Shape

of the soap molecule

shape of a sort of bracelet in Bragg’s diagram

end of a long engagement when brilliant work could be done in isolation

little cluster of hydrogen

little cluster of calcium oxygen sodium the clusters

together = clasp of a bracelet

combined with water the clasp is unclasped the bracelet slipped

on a wrist

as words are slipped on meaning

meaning of adornment and soothed/calmed/clean hands.
John Taggart

Why Trees Weep

Because they’re listening to Sainte Colombe’s “Les Pleurs”

because those they would love don’t
love them flee
from them

because their neighbors are beset with illness/disease experience
pain in movement or

can’t move can only sit in gardens going to weeds

Niobe lost all her children.
Because of the tangling ozone, 
the sun’s rays became haywire, 
baling our bodies into unimaginable 
skin clusters, making us sit 
still. Because of the transatmospheric 
tendencies of our breathing, 
jet exhaust wound tentacularly 
around the clear, the too clear, sky. 
Because of the wizening breeze 
widening in the trees, because of the epidermal 
leaves, because of the spinal patterns 
on the palmlike leaves, we were positively 
forced to sit, still, on the porch, 
embalmed with the molecular must 
of the lengthening air, and with its dust.

The feudal interjection of radio 
waves infected the greedier 
air, and both went through us. 
In this, we became basins, 
fertilized with particles, which turned 
our internal organs into a family 
of drainage pipes, sump pumps, 
and pressure cookers — evaporation 
and condensation lifting off our faces. 
We were two earthspots, dormant, 
nearly explosive, with the embryonic 
sun making us photosynthetic, 
and alive.

Is the sun a conflagration 
or a balefire? was the question hot 
on the paint-peeled, wood-grain porch, 
which held itself to us. Is the sun 
a cistern of galactic refuse and are we then 
lagoons of its waste? Michelangelo 
painted the Sistine Chapel on his back 
and went blind: He knew 
the prone body was more prone 
to being emptied into. The eyes 
balance and pivot on ocular nerves
and empty vision out through the back
of the neck that way. The image funnels
out of the body and tunnels into the ground,
which means something.

How did you learn
to say that you watch TV to the noises of the children
across the street? Those children fleshed
out in front of our eyes, carrying lunch pails
and sleeping bags. Ripcords of leaves ripped
and leaves parachuted through the rosin air,
and we sat on that entropy porch
with a paneling of that air
between us. Like everybody else,
but more so, because, I think,
our fingerprints actually print the air;
for us it is that there.

Say this is the way it is.
Say the livid red cardinal in the drooping
pine is colored with your own capillary blood.
The faded and jagged newspaper
cartwheeling past on the sidewalk
is a juncture between the mouth and the land.
Who can lastly be responsible
to the jackhammer that happens
when the diaphragm jams up, making
the tongue move and making the larynx
expel sound from the cavern-throat?
Because the sun is leaking into our skins,
we are suns. Because the medieval winds
are flogging at our skins, we are two winds.
Because the palmlike leaves disintegrate
in our palms, our hands are two disintegrating leaves.
Because the radio waves are osmosis
through us.
Because in saying cardinal in the drooping
pine, we are two blood-red cardinals
and are two listless, lifelike pines.
Because the handspringing newspaper wants justice, rest.
Because of us on the painted porch,
we are you and we are me. We are us,
speaking, on the terrifying porch.
Because the because, we are you
and we are me, an army.
Because the sun, we are two suns.
Because the sun.
the God-kite on a chain.

backing a trailer out of the driveway—you have to turn the pickup’s steering wheel against all heretofore known logic.

the kite, green, doing loop-da-loops against the gray sky. 
a yard of hawthorns, bare, their hand-bone branches, too, against that sky.

trying to make sure 
the trailer does not jackknife. this is your first time.

a magnificent long hot-pink tail attached to the kite, 
loop-da-looping too, like a Siren. 
dive-bombing, recovering. 
hyacinthine. 
like logic, but only sort of. 
like the logic of the Minotaur when I. and D. flew from the labyrinth. 
there are limits, you see. 
men, as a rule, do not sprout wings and zip away.

the glittering chrome chain the kite is flying by. 
you’d think it’d work more as an anchor, 
but it doesn’t, 
it doesn’t work that way. 
it is in the hands of the miracle-child, whose arms are conducting 
the suicide-dives and whiplash-ascents of the bright green kite 
down out of and back up into the chilled gray sky.

the child, in this wind, with those chains in his hands… 
the child, connected to the kite, should be pulled right off 
of the earth, 
but he isn’t, 
he isn’t pulled off.

he is the miracle-child, and he is flying the God-kite. 

and you, steadying the nearly jackknifing trailer, 
are nothing in the world 
but patient this one time.
the lions in the trees crackle.
formerly there was an ache underneath the tourniquet.
every failure repeated overturned the language of the Bedouin.
was I _Present at the Creation_?
bubble garble muck-a-muck tripe.
lift the veil; there’s a sinner.
hi.
every day the forest was cleared, and every night the forest regrew.
how, without the sun?
it’s a mystery.
that is the thing: walking in the forest, a carpet of ferns, a shroud of pine needles, rusty.
a moth on a tree trunk twined with thick and spiny poison ivy.
a cedar waxwing, its Zorro mask, flits in your path, and the wing-beats, so close to your ear, take your breath.
you look up to follow with your eyes the waxwing’s quick zap away.
and that is when you see the lion, watching you, perched on a middle branch, his mane gigantic.
your heart, it stops.
about the last place you’d expect to find a lion is (in America!) overhead, in a tree.
and yet there he is.
Karen Mac Cormack

from *Implexures*

Seven

historical letters 7

*I only stayed with her once at Quenington & she tired easily in any case wasn’t that interested in relations until her book came out.*

— Margaret Mac Cormack (née Ward Thomas)

Plaw’s most famous design was for one of the houses where she lived (circular) but now (un-phoenix-like) it has burned to the ground. Is it ever not-raining on the planet? Instructions lose themselves in comprehension. The fan’s folded pleats touch both ends of the centuries his actions span, and expansive, spread. The photograph shows him aboard ship, the pose an official holiday recording, stiff with polished shoes and crossed legs, wool the cloth of abundance. *One of the problems with beginning one’s travelling at such a young age is that one quickly loses the desire to ‘rough’ it. Indeed, I wonder if I ever HAD it!!??* (Carrara, Italy, 27 May 78)

We, the descendants newly-met, sit discussing his controlled bequest, wishing the photographed man capable of contemporary speech. Instead, the cavalier spaniels provide background noise, one of them snoring through references to other deaths, another shifting from lap to lap. My relative is the same age as my father would be now. Ripples in a century the eyes blink a tear forms. This house stands astride two parishes, the boundary running through the entrance porch. It was in the staircase tower that Elizabeth watched the hawking in the “faire parkes” from a single room, but it was in the ‘withdrawing chamber’ that she gave her answer to the envoy of the Duke of Anjou in 1578, regarding his proposal of marriage. (He died in 1584, unsuccessful to the end.) On her first visit in 1571 she heard of the Duke of Norfolk’s complicity in the Ridolphi plot. Lunch in the oldest part of the house (circa 1470) where in the south dining room one looks at a knife and fork set “recovered from the baggage train of prince Charles Edward after the battle of Culloden,” as my cousin wrote in his ‘short history’ of Horham Hall. The gardens are full of ghost roses and the dogs emerge happily wet from grass too-well-acquainted with rain. There are hugs and kisses before the train, a sense of looking at each other more quizzically than is customary, given the newness of seeing a relative never-met-before in so many decades, the intensity of learning about another’s lifetime over a few hours, distance arrived at, arrival no longer distant.

Black suit, back in the hub, back and forth between the OSO and passport office (a difference of chemicals placed me in the photo booth) missing only a hat. Security measures were BLACK ALERT and the visitor’s pass didn’t attach readily to my lapel. The ceremony of instruction and receipt over, turning south on Chancery Lane a cool summer day as far as the body could be taken through to the fan with a flick opened wide and on every moment was assured “opportunity.” My breathing in the world expanded.
His day must have involved a desk, different pens for numerous decisions, an array of assistants, and a suitably enthusiastic (impressed) greeting from members of the household at the end of the day. The watercolour shows a large house set in a copious garden and grounds. Distracted by another watercolour and an appreciation of Soane’s exquisite sense of space within his passion for collecting. The open fragility of chair backs and legs compared with the solidity of successive bookcases strikes a balance not interrupted by family breakfasting.

In turning to letters I discover he was called Peter by his daughter, who, “. . . if I was going away soon after it [breakfast] I would not partake at all which Peter always called being “Journey Proud” — a weird expression I don’t know if it originated in Yorks.” [12 Dec 1966]

She seldom if ever inserted a comma and her periods were dashes on the page. Sentences in paragraphs were often totally unrelated. With item 357 the sale ended with “A large heap of assorted timber.” An example of Margaret’s paragraph:

Pink was 24 in June when she married 1893 e3 her birthday was Nov. 17th so she was 25 in 1895 e3 I’ll let you work out her birth year. Chol has had the most awful hair clip only very few short hairs left on his head. [14 Dec 1966]

A terrace, palm trees, ivy, and views of both mountains and sea at this point the sun is closer to the latter’s reflected pink. Sometimes aperitivi appear in fair weather for an hour or so. It’s not the chill of the glass that melts small distances though they slide more easily down our throats with a swallow or two. Jasmine in the darkening air lifted by a breeze sinks to one’s pillow inside the bedroom. Hills and high heels everywhere. The cypress(es) juxtapose clouds. Visual residue of centuries becomes a chosen route in town where every caffè attracts political affiliations (the best pastries are served in conservative premises so morning coffee is consumed alone more often than not).

When I e3 I went to Milano a couple of weeks ago, to go to a major Canadian exhibition (sculpture, video, et al) e3 to meet Bernard Tanzi, owner of this house, they had dinner with the family e3 the following came to light. This house was built in 1560 (has remained in Tanzi hands all these centuries!), was badly bombed by the Germans in WWII, hence the fragment of a painting, etc. (Did I already mention this?)

Anyway, in the enclosed photo you see the kitchen windows (barred) e3 the shuttered windows belonging to what is now my study. Past the green bush on the left hand side are the windows of our bedroom (not visible). Isn’t the marble bathtub on my left, great? And as for me, I’m wearing the black jacket you gave me e3 holding a cup of tea while trying for a brainwave. (Carrara, Italy, May 79 ?)
The railway up and down the coast and inland to Firenze leaves behind the marble dust, compressors, diamond disks, mountains. A season of flat shoes emerges in a city where one’s grammar and pronunciation are corrected when seeking information in the stazione, though it’s to Perugia that seekers-of-the-most-desired accent go to school. She went to Italy but did her brother-in-law, on or off shipboard, Ernest? If so, Cinque Terre would have been accessible only by sea or train, no roads were built until long after “my” first visit.
In this act the surfaces touch intermittently and what we refer to as memory lacks the multiplicity of the present though details remain in focused amplification. Research doesn’t “lead” to anything other than more reasons to/for research. The so-called facts give way to correspondence (one-sided in these instances). In thinking about the writing of letters that lingering self-consciousness is least apparent in the recording of family events, distant more often than near. The sunrise in Naxos, the sunsets in Mexico: these are in the same decade but the rainbows at Bolton Abbey come later. (Chronology is the death of us.) When we experience an event is only important to the individual whereas if and with what results the experience has occurred is of concern to a collective. The family goes in so many directions as to render the singular forever invalid. For Proust it was the madeleine rather than the smell of woodsmoke in sight of Tuscan cypresses, or the cool touch of marble even in summer heat. Water in a fountain smelling only of orange blossoms at the end of the day but not the beginning of night. Silk at any moment. Height.

By the end of his letters he was too tired for the past. My Irish grandfather consistently misspelled ‘carachter’ for ‘character.’ In the 17th and 18th centuries (in England) the only household article men were more likely to have than women was a clock.

_The gold watch belonged to Peter’s Mother. I was always intrigued by the fact that it had a man’s -like chain with it but I was always told it was hers. . . . I am pretty sure small watches for females were not made in those days — whether it belonged to a man originally I don’t know._ [12 December 1966]

The words unravel, re-form and on the page refer to their meanings sometimes lift but nothing is settled. To query another age is not to solve a detective novel. Few questions can be answered as neatly as ‘yes’ or ‘no.’ Journeys are not for resting places move on (to paraphrase). He wrote “I expect my grandfather remembered the famine but I never heard him talk about it [23 Sept 70]. Earlier [30 Oct 69] “ . . . but static warfare such as 1914-18 was simply a question of canon-fodder & munitions & using both to the full. Hence 14-18 produced no good generals.” He started Latin when he was seven and met my great grandmother once only in 1918.

_I’ll tell you about the massive piece of metal . . . The first he knew of it was (he was wounded on the 5th July 1915 about 5.30 a.m.) when his clothes were returned to him in his kit bag about Oct. or Nov. 1915 c’s among the stuff was a pair of boots he’d been wearing that a.m. c’s inbedded in the sole c’s west of the right boot was that lump of metal. He wrote c’s enquired from his fellow warriors how it had got there c’s they said when they picked him up they found it inbedded in the boot. It’s part of a shell casing. Very lucky he didn’t have his foot blown off, c’s be kept it as a memento._ [20 Dec 1966]

The letter to another cousin is returned with the affixed label stating that “the addressee has gone away.”
While, for the past several years, Karen Mac Cormack has released major collections of her work – *At Issue* (2001); *Fit to Print* (with Alan Halsey, 1998); and *The Tongue Moves Talk* (1997) – diligent readers of Mac Cormack’s singular poetry have also been privy to an ongoing series of texts, which have appeared in chapbook form and in journals, entitled “Implexures.” Chax and West House have now wisely gathered many of these pieces, along with new material, to produce the first part of what promises to be a major contribution to innovative writing for this century.

2003 also marks the reprint of Mac Cormack’s first book, *Nothing By Mouth*, and having both that and *Implexures* in juxtaposition allows one to observe that, as much as each of Mac Cormack’s 13 books depart from the previous in their concerns and composition, many touchstones of her work remain constant: an interest in etymology (particularly in slang and technical language, and how both shift dramatically over time); a fondness for foregrounding the relationship between fashion and writing (always alert to the connections between textiles and textuality); and, as Steve McCaffery has observed, a writing that utilizes phrasal propulsion (exploring signification as kinetic and accumulative, rather than static and immediately consumable).

Readers of *Implexures* will find many of these qualities present, but will also notice a dramatic change in tone and range. While earlier collections exhibited a degree of austerity and impersonality and often explored the minutia of language effect, this new assemblage appears more personal and moves expansively to engage with travel, history, philosophy, architecture, meteorology, botany, and many other discourses, but with some well-established interests intact – as in this investigation of Bergsonian time, medieval music, and grammatical play:

Now it is the unusual quiet that fills the airport (made to feel larger when emptied of traffic) even our voices drop, except those on the loudspeaker system, and when the occasional cellphone irritates stale afternoon air.

The only medieval instrument of its kind to survive, the gittern [this example 1280-1320], forerunner of the guitar and played with a plectrum, was given by Elizabeth I to her favourite, Dudley, Earl of Essex. Modified, it now resembles more a violin. An eventual antiquity of now + ‘now.’ The countryside at 300 km an hour. To take one’s pleasure … to make one’s pleasure … or to create pleasure. Each successive layer a fragment focused on yet unintended in primary form.
Yet it is clear that although many aspects of the book (including sketches, journal entries, letters, and photographs) invite the reader to view the speaker of these poems as equivalent to the author of the text, if there is a stable iterant of these pieces s/he is not established as a singular unified subject, but simply as the locus of multiple temporal and discursive events which are then arranged and layered in an almost architectural fashion. It is in this significant undertaking that *Implexures* distinguishes itself from one possible antecedent – Lyn Hejinian’s *My Life*. Whereas Hejinian’s text suggests that, through repetition within an often disjunctive prose sequence, one can reach an understanding of a fixed (although growing) and singular speaking subject (akin to Stein’s conception of “bottom nature”), Mac Cormack’s collection expresses a temporally multiple perspective, moving through space and drawing connections to phenomena that always remain in flux.

Thus, rather than using repetition, Mac Cormack’s dominant method, both formally and referentially, is that of the fold (in Latin, an *implexure*):

Perhaps the reunion or similar event (memorial, funeral, wake) provides an extreme example of the fold when twenty or (many) more years separate meetings of those referred to as friends. Sweet expectation the deceased will walk through that door to the microphone evaporates when the word (*death*) comes to mind. This experience is combinatory, not definitively an echo, yet certainly a partial grafting of the remembered ‘known’ with an introduction of accrued difference. The focus is sometimes clear but then a blurring commences, abrupt shift between the degrees of recognition.

*Implexures* is a complex, yet accessible, foray into an exploration of time and perception. As Mac Cormack concludes the book with the promise “to be continued” readers are left with the sense of having witnessed merely one fold of an intricate tapestry that will offer many more revelations.
from Picture Primitive

you taught me language; it's my profit on't
i'd, i know how to curse; the red plague rid you
for learning me your language
—Caliban

i

d this is what we see—a room of vast proportions a human figure struggling to make itself known. “this is the world” a prompter’s echo. here one breathes & the dignity of man holds on? the stage naturalism of an idiot facing the destiny of idiots—crossing a night emptied of landmarks hammers battering the underside of the sky / a dream of enormous coitus in deadpan barbiturate afterlife returning like first night jitters slot-machined fists drumming on urinals & gone weak at the knees. here we land! face downwards you see how we have earned our days (out with only one ship in the harbour cargo stinking) . . . . poured concrete to anchor bluffing the tide—The Strait

the sail thrashed by wind until it

howls—The Free Sea

MAKES THE FREE SPIRIT kicking in teeth from impotence or perceived lack of alternative done up like a promissory note a pawn-shop suit & two glass eyes (in real life the location is elsewhere) there’s no accounting for what or how we see. crossing the demarcation line the routine stripped back to under-layers less ordinary for the moment at least—the first rush of blood not yet cold in the veins but soon enough
cold sweat through long hours of december its consequence butted up against time & again in delusional fog. depth soundings recede mantra-like into far recesses—each time a different
voice a different register unnerving even as it diminishes / . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . ashore / casting an eye down the eviction notices. surplus—the only human value of anything (its technique becomes mechanical but just enough that you won’t be able to stand it otherwise). skulls nailed up on posts to be shot at—a sign to tread cautiously . . . . plagued by feelings of undefined guilt? “if any man shall add unto these things”

old figures of speech—adjusted / weighed against the likelihood of a more practical advantage / nothing fore-suffered / each in its own time / alone—& from this deduce how “these things” came about between a fact & a state of mind (the voice tacet . . . . half-expired thoughts in struggle with inertia) the mantic powers of purpose & effect in situ of this dead weight sunk up to the neck shitting blood (not one whole fragment even) that a word be given to us an act of poetic license . . . . the giant buoys orbit overhead self-aggrandised instruments of a child’s prehistoric game in which everything is reduced to a STATE OF INNOCENCE—afterwards jamming the pieces back together again / a clean slate / something new in the world (to be viewed with gravity—provoking boredom?) let it fail for all our sakes

what’s post is prologue an augury’s schadenfreude watching through smudged glass the inevitable scene quand même it isn’t obscene enough! a savage & deformed slave miming the lifespan of a hyphen a respiratory procedure (drawing breath in the briefest of intervals)—too hot to think in that closed space an artificial lung air thick with creosote. THE DEAF WORM BEGAT UNHAPPILY &c as in the fable of chuangtz / res publica splayed on each of a snail’s horns (to accommodate our fugitive wish) . . . . the way one shouts uselessly into wind a screen of pthalo blue framing that figure pathetically against foresheets
when was it? [beaten numb by the gale & often
forbade against
took comfort from the fact]
sleep—there is an unreasonableness in exceeding
the rites of conscience (to stare at the sun
for example or spite one’s face) . . . a carnivorous
spirit dwells in each gesture of appeasement like
crude stitching in flesh barely covering muscle &
organ. bones cracked open for marrow. charred
viscera in which prolific & devoured intermingle—
there is no secret art to decipher them no common de-
nominator for the sake of convenience or
superstition. details elicited under FALSE PRE-
TENCES: thought-encumbered the distance
between conjecture & its object the shoreline “ruinous”
on which that body once stood
totem fixture with eyes
blank as unmapped continents / or equally
the known outline of vegetation
climate & chronology—proceeding to more rigorous
demarcation (presentation
of the whole by parts) . . . crossing to a point
inland assuming depth intensification measured
from an “outside” bound to the horizontal—
its impetus of contradiction reading downwards
to establish order make sense of what
keeps extending unremittently on all sides—
an unlike discursus that cannot be summed-up by a
stock fence & run-through
nor by means of an otherwise “pictorial” representation
turner, slaveship: typhoon
coming on, “incarnadine” the sea—its spectacle
continues to swim into the
transfixed gaze / cried blind from grief or
dissillusionment or love of an empty idea . . .
obita dicta of sleepless miles before waking—the
endorphin pump &
carnal haemorrhage
(“i cannot think when i am alone but only when
forced to by difficult circumstances”)—insisting on
latitude / degrees north from estuary to anabranch
charting the outcomes of glaciation
meltdown or “seasonal” drought prolonged by forces
beyond human agency—what to make of their
demands? eye & ear turned inwards
unattuned to the summoning of stones
the ithyphallic monuments of white clay pans [lunar transepts] chiselled reefs of
quartzite like “exposed spinal columns” imbedded
in the terra rossa (breeding ground
of undiscovered australopithecus redundus)—
the night barking of hungry dogs
trained to the scent / furtive shadows
among the steel headframes (PATENT SELF-LUBRICATING COMPRESSOR) & rust-formed
trunks of ancient quondong trees . . . .
shimmer of grey leaves
like a surface of illusory water / glaucous / corrugated
iron roofs / the greyblue bitumen of silver city hwy 79
threading time zones crosshatched in
dusk-rendered enormity of reptile country / shingle-backed
(totem ancestor of the dispossessed ones) . . . .
dust risen from earth to assume a vaguely
human negligence or disperse / in silent tremor from
the open cut . . . . an
operation to measure im-
pedance / wastage / separating the one from its
consonance in the other—the paths of least resistance
on which we are faltering but not yet failing ; these
are not our chosen paths but those given
in advance of us—the westward facing shadows of
dawn pointing once again at something most obvious
that “none yet have seen”

variations on closed circuits : blue & white squares
synchronised in the act ; a sea of tv-darkened
rooms , gales of laughter down the corridors—
“mortifying”—these things are seldom memories
at least not ours _ a deep hum
emitted from distant origins of which we know
nothing in the end—a musty bone
dug from nightsoil whose candour “requires
accounting for” _ the zero method of
blockage / choking / constriction ....
in the leeched halo of 6:00 a.m. you seem
to have grown thin on a diet of noc-
turnal emissions (not to speak / descriptive of their
state—meaning “to suborn a predecessor” [?] & going on like this vicariously abasing oneself each night) . . . patrol cars

passslowlythrough our dreams—the pursuit of happiness no less / ranged in adolescent foreknowledge like salted strings of meat withering in time with us—the tired unimpassioned reflex unimpassioned moving-over into the next bed as though the last its sentimental melodrama played out in bloated tedium (the dragnet’s trick—catching the dead) . . . .

a stew of hackneyed phrases stinking the place up & fingernailed walls where in mute succession unnamed internees have scratched out their living / impenitent / haggling after reprieve—the cuntloving cocksucking mouths of our conformist valhalla . each in turn to be rendered opinionless / content / stopped-up like the proverbial dyke & picturesque as a flemish landscape scene foreshortened as if to alleviate its uniformity
Chris Chen

[the idea] of [order] at [key] west

dear

singular

makers

of

south:

until

the

land

flies

until

the

sky

crawls

until

the

perimeter

of

her

reds
redden
nowhere

the
idea

of
her

is
air

in
your

ear—
What follows are examples of all that has happened:
of that which hasn’t failed to occur
in any kind of archive at all;
of that which suffers commemoration;
of a change or changes from no fixed state;
of that which occurs before I become
fatally ill, should that be what happens;
before a term not yet known fades
from use after taking hold for too long;
a flow of examples called feeling one’s way,
broken sleep and friendship, the running of programs;
daylight, the invisible gardener;
sunset, an inventory of
not yet to no longer;
nights looking at the sky
of living in an empire—
strange it would extend so far,
extends so far—a product of days
if there are any of those, any part of
the bare life and sound of the group not yet
accounted for, yielded, made and trained.
In little groups of one or more
being overheard becomes lyrical politics;
goes nowhere, passes, sets;
a feeling of meeting on corners disappears
almost entirely from law and mind and
reappears precisely for that reason.
The chosen design is finished and thought of,
approved slag from which choice lifts off
like a craving in space, latest thing
about which even the poorest can have an opinion,
can only have it the way one sees
a building become a set of buildings then
leap off into the sky together;
the way one sees no longer.
Staying in love to the rhythm of bombs:
before the package hits the before fired before aimed;
it’s discovered statues go on forever
when falling and when remembered just after
as right before having done so.  
This is written, leaving Paris  
after having come there for seven days  
to celebrate the birthday of a friend;  
it’s described by that friend and a certain snow  
blows over and under a bridge on the Seine,  
heedless until explained; he begins to describe it;  
Eve is claimed born across the water  
and not yet proved; Eve is “made.”  
Now in poor taste to have thoughts,  
think of having them, do anything other  
than receive announcements meant for anyone,  
perfect a current in the set of the mouth,  
feel of being ruled from inside and out,  
the stung thought of skin from either side.  
The new plans are unveiled;  
a year of gavels coming down;  
all the unrelated deaths  
which can’t seem to help coming after;  
falling in love to the news of bombs;  
multiply helpless, ebbing to a future.  
The related deaths are related;  
some last calls to loved ones are overheard,  
some of them overt, some relying  
on knowledge to come, all overt  
in adding last moments  
to a mutual past, soon everyone’s.  
The metaphors fall from the sky,  
survived by a concerned, professional tone;  
narrations as far from revulsion as pleasure;  
the buildings fall, the other then the one,  
like a craving in space, a new language:  
the fortuitous encounter on a sky  
of two planes and two towers;  
some last calls to loved ones are made;  
an inaudible change in destination;  
a morning advancing east to west,  
revealing the east or taking back the west.  
911 Is a Joke, How Can I Move  
the Crowd, Police and Thieves, The Ocean.  
What is the meaning of a  
pure series of interruptions?  
The President of Chile does not flee in a plane.
A screaming comes across the sky;
the metaphors go up and the towers are built;
Paul Celan enters the life of the Seine;
saying butterfly crying being
born in Beth Israel; being made;
colorless green ideas sleep furiously.
Todesfuge; after the first
death there is no other; the night
of broken glass; the figure 5
in gold on a red fire truck
moving tense unheeded; Sunday
Morning’s second stanza; decorative
arts: The Dream of John Ball;
the fortuitous encounter on a dissecting table
of a sewing machine and an umbrella.
The sea whisper’d; I prefer not to;
Ozymandias and Darien;
Fourier reads Sade and begins
to believe that pleasure is a butterfly,
self-interest a flower in the garden;
they take their solitary way.
Flowers freaked with jet; Landscape with Fall
of Icarus and Children’s Games;
John Ball dies; John Ball writes
a letter to the countryside
and is born; Dante’s arrow hits
the target; the black stone is worshipped,
shattered, worshipped, polished, found.
“Before all that can be called ‘before’”
is written, copied, written, copied, found;
and that advice on the battlefield of spring,
in Mantua, when the bees return to the saffron flowers.
I hate and I love…I feel it happening and;
letters, suddenly allowed
separate realms of sound;
the unfinished tower,
like a craving in language, is thought to exist,
abandoned, worked on, begins to be built;
“Eve” is born; “Eve” is claimed and made.
All fall narratives including the sun;
pronouns, now, this place then;
clouds in the water, love of the future
Curved Glide Of Glazed Ambiguity

And the ghosts they gave up ordinary events

(which bore him
to leaflike water

were such that:

(fall flowers: (listing by water
these tables everything begot

fall these tables a thousand velvet petals

swatted past
ordinary tables

and as such an I got delivered

(bore fall to the glass table’s lightly slanted surfaces

between rains and our behaviour
call) occlusion (and frost’s let light) homewardlike
only the stares of fossils:

(a picture my curled-up-in-bed side)

inlit mist too bored to be wild,

and ghosts they gave.

(to walk now: among strangers. between inlet rains. petal-surfaces thick

with

(low or shallow drain muscles,

who gave

(shells so something a thousand leatherpetals thick,

without conquest

I could walk through

on my way among strangers

and they their ghosts

feet paddles (reduction, really

would exist—
Shingle Mirror, Average Bark

at the crucial juncture we meditate:

cool breeze expanded in summer come as over the pine mountains:
over the blue-tinged hump or ridge,
or just moved (not expanded)

the white in the corner of my eye is a sealed towel. Your face is crying. I tie my
towel tightly (just not expanded)

groundcover falling away from the square and perpendicular white—paint—
window (they would have, they knew the name of the cover)

you imagine a people wriggling their law.

the colors of my eyes ready the militia.

“and you never see women you know.”
Steve Willard

stories and sorties upon which wonder down
comes out of clouds handling the matter: why hadn’t ever
the monks, clear skin outside the chapel against their of-one-piece
robes (we would sew against the starholes lacekinds falling behind the times,
times eaten away: thousands appear (days, years, starts) as of one fabric:
(consumptions the fabric:
why couldn’t they sing the accompaniment to whatever before?
(sometimes the accompaniment is a charmed machine.)

Chattering could feel good as the single clear thought,
the course of things outlining what could have been done
through us—did shouting and blocking become the one
thing thought so that cranes over the city-to-be held
still the air as if the pieces of it overhead were wallpaper
and not the mobile: always hoping by leaping a body
over the floor permanently stopped: and that outlining
the floor is should have been too never ever enough:
the wrinkles of the city building

followers that obscure

the chances a knife placed in the bed

keeps coming the wheels and the world always earning a new

head: if one would stop acting just long enough,

you can live on this loaf of land: you can prevent others from bearing

their kind of news: new young moments who will want more than you give

the insistent lane sweating

that music is good enough

no matter how many of us are there to fill it

for will there never ever be too many of us

(too few of us?) again?
Each dresden is some flattened version of heaven

so that all prove the version of some other particular for each particular looked

upon and all are valuable, invaluable

(one is removed many times from these things)

(one is not one)

(it was possible to feel the reverberance of the thing

after all of the thing had itself removed

(reverberance which has always the same color of sound

(which is that none living can see that color

(which is a slackening of the objacktions which lay claim to us.
Node where may none die poor, almond, mundane, but in this very Ye, keep the body at a distance. One Satan-boat cuss after another, in swaths unamaranthine runs the body deep in as a resent is. Pseudo-lore, lead dollar, sin desk and sword o’ smoke so the body all tapered. The body would lead well, if he on tender gears, spectral switches, were to lay ever a sober bray. A bad day for a grim taker, a serious gas. Iced-in, the tabernacle.
Unfurls a yellow bib you run down.
Horns you as furred fanged O's rain
from the unspooled ceilings, sealings
of armadillo pelt and brush-cut fresh cane.
Walls sprayed winter hostage camouflage.
Thrown dirt floor with bare aim.
Sewn into their own resurrection lair,
the lassoed posse of eleven.
A graffitoed dis from a rune you gotta
see. You got ruins and then you got
ruins and a hard shuttered torpor
of shuttered doors. Unlace yourself,
a heady is upon us. House grease
on the barcodes, glass gates, barcodes.
Every. Only.
They Are Of An Extraordinary Feral Territory

Livid A. Alert A. Low A.
Skated-over garden, don’t A be.
A, welled as soda pop. Glass zero A.
Culling A, lulled by mulchy aches
powered by the brass memorial
of one bile-ish babe in the arms
of invention. Invention there to point
out, where to get, what to call. O, A.
A he zap at or flay as the lowest
all-moor down there. He wanna see
air, pace of one spare dawn that spare.
A, lasso latent but at the ready,
setting forth into the frontier.
A in the mumification lab,
cradling the glistening leg of
one delicately peeled camel. Quietly
rocking A, repeating the low say:
Air here is a con. Unviolent to scale
of one fantastic rushing-by. Azul were A.
Rio! As you were, A. As woolen.
Flagelliform

7.

Muzzleloader little fingered mangle to a thin itchy queen

Too you to stop payment without the strap

Says you farmyard shedding nearly seen bump

Strap me into the Bevatron

Make me joints bevel jointed Alone is the Woofer in his dark continental stew of hair the advent & the lent of the yeah—
Headachy glad I am for just the gist – givenname – Hiss
The Harpoon Harness your highness pay no attention
to the tightness in his harmoniously
hissed benediction:
a shaggy-dog story in a real tizzy
‘Tis he asp?
There idyll
There irritation
There there little mine
somersault somatic cell lasting twitch
I am the swaybacked sweeper
I get the droppings and the windburnings I like the winch
Flagelliform

13.

The Woofer area code aren’t

In the interim a tune
from the windup areola love affair:

Well if it isn’t Darkie deep in partial transmission
from a stupored star

Lookit magnificent ice bag slender stick

pronating I-beam promisory note prolonging the keelhaul

And mild steel/mildew/milady/ to gnaw sleeveless before sLEDING

And my far goat misting
before sleep in the militant sleet of—
Another red finch curving toward edge of feeder in lower right corner of vertical window, white of the small cloud hanging in dark green canyon of ridge above it. Woman in faded green jacket noting that birds when they fly catch the air’s current, the short-haired woman recalling Miles on stage of club in Paris with a chorus of fans screaming “Miles!” Blond man in dark grey car flashing lights at silver-haired man in blue truck, grey plane of lagoon on right. Rain-driven green of grass in front yard pressed flat adjacent to dark wet plane of redwood fence, man under brick arch watching wind bend tips of rose branches. Two gulls lifting into grey-white sky next to face of the sandstone cliff, the random pattern of drops falling into dark green plane in the foreground.
Window on right through which still dark tobacco plant leaves in grey sky, picture of the actual morning punctuated by occasional calls of song sparrow in lower left corner. The large grey white cloud drifting above a smaller white one above shoulder of ridge, soprano cut off in mid-aria as the tape hits a blank spot. Blond woman noting it’s always been the man falling in love with her first, and now she has fallen for him. Girl in the darkroom thinking black and white picture of man standing against granite rock shows his interior, digital image beside brick wall also cool. Faint white circle of full moon hanging against the pale blue of sky below horizontal grey cloud above point in right corner, wingspan of large dark bird flying toward it.
Sound of birds arriving above the lower register of waves breaking in channel, the vertical frame of the window through which first light of dawn enters the room. The woman in a charcoal grey sweater noting that the man in the blue shirt thinks “dark” looks like “Ozark,” “j” in “go” where the “g” should be is simply misplaced. Composer noticing dust motes coming through air from gaps in Venetian blind, the most difficult thing being to let go of the music. The woman on the freeway sensing the man has peripheral awareness of her before he actually knows it, telling him later that she saw something he didn’t see. Diagonal line of cloud slanting across grey-white sky from the lowest shoulder of the ridge, white shape of the gull crossing from the right above it.
Pattern of still shadowed tobacco plant leaves against grey light in sky above the windowsill, pink-orange coming into a cloud above the line of the ridge on the right. Woman across table whose father wasn’t killed by a rocket exploding through a kitchen wall in Damascus, years later the bomb going off in a second floor apartment in Beirut. Man in the grey sweater taking 11 pills a day after a stroke, dreaming he runs Derbyshire Milk concession in order to help make ends meet. Blond woman in a red and white shirt standing next to sister in third floor hallway, man in blue shirt coming out door exchanging glances with her. Irregular shape of small white cloud in pale blue of sky above green tree-lined crest of ridge, white above blue green wall of wave breaking on outside left.
The therapeutic effects of the classical lied, or German art song (pl. lieder), have long been known to the patrons who frequent the salons and recital halls of Berlin, Salzburg, and Vienna. Even before the dismantling of the wall separating East from West, enthusiasts on both sides of the mark enjoyed the soaring sentiment and unchecked lyricism of the brief song, a form ideally suited for the full yet supple tenor or soprano, the voice of mature youth. Was it Johannes Grouse who said it best when he remarked in December of 1922, following a self-conducted performance of his Planetary Song Cycle: “the grandest of the ages was the Golden Age, but its remnants may be glimpsed in the notes of our common lied”? 

In the spirit of Grouse, the father of the modern orchestral song, we believe that anyone, young or old, healthy or infirm, can experience the age made eternal by the classical lied, the age of consent and of unassailable innocence. We believe also that the German song tradition may be continued in a language other than German. The lieder described below were composed by individuals of varying ages and backgrounds; for purposes of political discretion, the composers’s nationalities have been suppressed. At present most of these compositions lack lyrics, and await the appearance of some extraordinary Poet to fashion lines for the as yet inexperienced Voice.

Notes to Lied A:

The composer is an insomniac female, age 11, who spends much of her summer by the sea, where divers, swimmers, sailors, and other practitioners of aquatic sports surface, glistening, in the noonday sun. The composer’s knees are constantly wet from surf and blistered from kneeling in the sand and digging for crabs. Last week the composer was obsessed with the appearance of snail shells washed up like glass upon the smooth sand. This week she examines the violent action of water upon the rocky seafloor—how the rushing suction pulls silt out and under as through a sieve, then throws a wave over all. By standing fixed in the surf in her bare feet, she hopes to induce a sensation of travel around her, eventually putting the sea to sleep.

The musician is a player of pipes and the lyre who formerly fished and shed blood for oil off the southern coast. Since the composer has been reading 19th-century adventure novels for children (hence the archaism of the refrain) she finds the whole idea of the musician terribly romantic.
Notes to Lied B:

The composer is a misunderstood young man, age 19, who has just failed chemistry and English for the last time at the public high school, where he has been held back one full year as a result of poor grades and attendance. The forte section of the song represents an autobiographical episode last winter when he smoked two joints behind the rear of the wrestling room with a companion and inadvertently slipped inside the mythic struggle between good and evil. He emerged from the battle confused, with abrasions on his knees and elbows, and proceeded to write several guitar-rock melodies about the experience. We have taken the liberty of arranging one of his better compositions in the classical style, in order to render his emotions more accessible to our listening audience.

The musician is the composer himself; he possesses “a deep personal attachment” to this particular composition and insists on retaining artistic control over its performance and distribution.

Notes to Lied C:

The composer is a reclusive, young-middle-aged mother and homemaker, age 33, who married well and passes the daytime hours while her children are in school with a variety of hobbies. Already she has tried her hand at doll-making, pastries, model trains, coin-collecting, and experimental architecture, and has exhausted the inventories of every single Michaels store within a radius of 25 miles. Lately she has taken to videotaping episodes of her favorite television shows and leasing the tapes to neighbors who are too busy to watch the shows at their regularly scheduled air times. She sees this activity as a way to fund her rapidly increasing hobby expenditures; we see it as a way to help defray legal costs when the FCC charges her with copyright infringement.

The musician is a famous American mezzo-soprano who first inspired the composer with her delivery of Mahler’s wanderlieder on a noon variety show. The composer has since searched for her personal videotape of this performance, only to find it checked out. Repeated warning calls and suspension of borrowing privileges to the bearer of the video have proved ineffectual at restoring the tape. As a substitute for the missing video, the composer began to record her mental impressions surrounding the memory of the original recital, thus creating the modal conditions for the evanescent nature of her own song. With our superior resources and influential connections, we were able to track down the American mezzo-soprano and convince her to give a repeat recital to the composer in the privacy of her own home. But the live-studio nature of the experience only disoriented the hobby enthusiast and made her testy. “That’s not the same piece I heard,” she said, insisting that the mezzo-soprano we’d hired was nothing more than a celebrity imposter.
Notes to Lied D:

The composer, age 17, considers himself mainly a comic book artist, with occasional forays into mural painting and aerosol-can calligraphy. Nevertheless, he felt compelled to express himself musically after the quasi-mystical experience he shared with the composer of Lied B. However, Composer D disagrees with Composer B about the nature of this incident. He insists that the experience, rather than comprising a struggle between dialectical oppositions, was instead an exploration of the eternal fallacies of power engagement and its absolute zero with respect to humanist progress. While his colleague proposes a knightly interpretation of the vision-quest, Composer D emphasizes that the moral ambiguity of the battle itself constitutes an allegory of its bankruptcy. The contusions sustained by both composers during the experience were self-inflicted through their willfulness in entering a debate to which they had no rights. Lately, Composer D has imposed a movement of retreat upon all aspects of his life. He is self-contained and serene in the classroom, whereas once he was excitable and disruptive.

The musicians for this composition may be selected and replaced for each performance. The composer recommends a pair of miniature electric saws placed on a sturdy steel-reinforced table. Let the saws buzz and contend with each other; the resulting noise and mechanical catastrophe will not only provide accompaniment for the song but supersede it in the treatment of its theme.
James Stevens

from (dis)Orient

Meaning is revealed by the pattern formed and the light thus trapped – not by the structure, the carved work itself.

- W. Bion, *A Memoir of the Future*

At length all our journeyings, which were made only by paths all strewn with Crosses, came to an end very fittingly at a lake bearing the name of the Cross, from it’s having the Perfect shape of one.

- Fr. Albanel, *The Jesuit Relations*

And I would not
make a rhinoceros of you.

Dürer, how you erred
drawing the creature unseen,
mapping the scaled legs
of the rhino,
his armoured plates,
the colour of a speckled tortoise.

An account
of you naked in the gymnasium
before the others. Foreigner.
Your long skin
and broad farmer’s feet.
If I were to sketch you from your experience…

*If the savages are to be believed, in one place, where the birds shed their feathers at molting time, any Savages or deer coming to the spot are buried in feathers over their heads, and are often unable to extricate themselves.*

- Fr. Albanel, *The Jesuit Relations*

But disregarding your own savage account of your skin,
I draw you sleeping
    or naked before a mirror.

Buried beneath the down
    of your cruel forearm.

Supplemented by tales,
    all error and conjecture reflected.
I recall your sounding points
    as security,
skim your body for meridian.

Surrounded now by minute links
    which, impregnated with cruelty,
link your parts together cruelly.

Orient or disorient.
Huronia & Cathay.

The landbridge will not be forced
to function
by what you find familiar
on either side.

What is not familiar around us,
more relevant
than what is.
Deposit: a gameboy, a boy, boy’s culture. See how the quarter is the edge of his wit, a diamond: what sharpens, itself and all of Africa

Age: of reproduction, the trove of things repeated, see (Audobon’s Baudrillard, Baudrillard’s simulark) the migration of steel and cork birds

Country: full of sand, being the daughter of glacier. The winds came down from Valdez (Rigel 4), and blew a hole in the caving device, this

sin: hubris, making the sun run, this love, calculation, turning brides to calumny

Model: ever ready, ever devout. “This one’s an RS, that one’s a fool,” the silver Koons bunny pounding immaculate beats

Facet: villa surroundings, tendencies of trash, a midden near the flooded groves, one hundredth monkey (clap, clap) maybe the better provided for soul

Size: venti, a double con leche. Sweet sweet necessity trundling beans, a mid cap aggression, a long-term wimple, a double skim arctic reserve

Quote: “World exhibitions glorify the exchange the value of the commodity. They a framework to secondary value. They a school in which masses consume. They a point of identity.” (exposé of 1939)

Antidote: sleep, Murine, late Rothko. Pour in the eye holes a quarry of rays, pure looking to dispel a mannish brute

Prophecy: “The lion likes nothing better than having its nails trimmed, provided it is a pretty girl that wields the scissors.” (Toussenel)
Matthew Cooperman

Still: Movie

Occasion: deprivation in a black-paneled room. A you in altered states gone from boredom (rainy day) to flotation (epsom salts). Or the outcome of such experiments in a celluloid pane

Issue: the tension between words and images ("one icon may hide another"). The materiality of both when construed by light. More documentation

of Positions: semiotician, filmmaker, librettoist, viewer. "Everyone here is variously a screenwriter, right?"

Fodder: scenes of huckleberries on Old Cape Breton, slow Tai Chi practice on a moonlit beach, sunrise over dunes, moonrise over questions, deployment of commas in an interior setting (say table and chair, breast and lover, bracket the subject and...

Representation: still a problem, the simultaneity of hunger and art

Mystic: Tu Fu, Simone Weil, David Lynch

Discussion: “This one’s called ‘Henrietta in Red’...” “Yes, why do you find it necessary to sync the action?” “Would you call yourself a landscape painter?”

Sponsor: Al’s Bar, Gulp n’ Go, glass of (unlikely) Cristal

Outcome: boxed office, felling of trees, a settlement in easy chairs, the long hard wait for genetic improvement, a son to start his earning

Conflict: allegiances, “torn between love and family,” the gap between seeing and money

Texture: of Ektachrome, grainy skin, the Bergman attempt of a death mood

Sequel: the art didn’t sell
Matthew Cooperman

Still: will not be televised

Secret: the secret war, by words

“lately”: the gone conscript, the petulant rummy. He goes to press his conference with the void

that God: monofecism, full of taste, our father who Haliburton, the mouth saying might, the month in Storm. Later, the years of an actual desert

Parable: of the lambs, the lying down on Broadway

Mutability: undoubtedly, the Mekong waves vaguely remembered, “twittering of swallows, garden-croft skies”

Game: Tomb Raider, Lara Croft Whores

Intermission: what we need, the general god gone, the greening rush of rice crops grown appropriately in wet places, the interferon carrier of drugs to sick people, the pharmaceutical particle made up to be helix

Resumption: “...he’s really gonna have to hustle, only twenty ticks left and Apollo’s got him in his sights...”

Tendency: to the right, though never ‘crossing mudra’

Melody: “We had joy, we had fun, we had seasons in the sun...”

Cataract: of the eye, in the gun, over the falls, a

melody: Muthafucka wakawaka over the falls

Garble: one giant stoop for men canned. Ask nut what you gun do for your cunt tree. People news for lack of what is die there

Declension: minor third, tonic to the void
The Dark Ladies emerged from the deletion then reconstruction of Shakespeare’s sonnets. Only the end-rhymes and their sequence are retained, italicized and embedded throughout the freely reconstructed poems. Each poem comprises two versions of each sonnet, the first, preserves the end-rhymes in reverse order; the second in their proper one. I allowed myself the liberty of removing some archaicisms and replacing them with current synonyms, hence “thou” becomes “you” and “becomest” becomes “becomes.”

Steve McCaffery  May 18 2003
For goodness sake don’t get pessimistic again about the zeitgeist. Such dour thoughts should be slain and all ill reflections on our times abolished. Be less chary with your sans souci. Invent the air above a tower and print the image on a postage stamp of some unknown God, it will make you feel less maudlin, more wary of unoriginality in art and life. In poems breath takes a holiday down the dark boulevards of thanatopraxis, but for me death, as departure from the heart, is not the same as termination. Pawn’s knight to Queen’s bishop two and suddenly voila the Greek word for “transmigration” reappears. You should expatiate on that phenomenon ex-patriotically of course and behold the human condition in all its fundamental contingency. Make a date with the aleatoric and some day when you’re old recapitulate those youthful, unfulfilled promises. Every old sonnet is subject to some new kind of operatic staging. Steal up into the air on any date you like and behold how the Flower Maidens dancing on some naked Parsifal can rearrange that worn-out form into fourteen Jacobite acrobats in jackboots. Expatiate too through the deep bruise of this long sublime you call living on everything we recognize in Baroque theories of death. You understand as well as me how at every turn the mind frustrated by its diary delays pays its exit tax and leaves. Your heart eponymous as the hidden swastika beneath all your prejudices against me and my art of the clinamen, and ever wary of chagrin. Will the externality of our current factory methods of living still relate to the condition of uneasiness we feel around commodities? Then as now disaster is a star gone nova, yet here we are still chary a Vladimir and Estragon in the habit of a formal constraint. Two chuckleheads too ill to slay or be slain by some hanger-on to ideological agnosticism. Claustral and methodic once and time again.
“A child will have been killed.” In saying this I endlessly pass from life to language. Some speak of new beauty and unlimited aesthetics but we alone know horizons can be surprisingly brutal despite these ferial days among the pronouns that birth one into speech. If only we could think like Saint Augustine with our eyes the arms around each reader, and without words exploit our ability to cross Bauhaus with primitivism in order to corner the market on androgynous interior design without losing the call to the Cycladic. Language doesn’t help the two of us here, barred from disputation, caught in the loss of something less tenable than patriarchal formalism, but needing to gain a foothold in some sort of self-validation. When I think of Leni Riefenstahl and meditate on her indecisiveness around colour coordination it makes me want to throw a brick at her. But you already know the unconscious factor is offensive in the nearly guarded presence of any absolute taboo. But to energize contradiction this way can lead us to the chief reckoning and we’ll pay dearly for the grief of that big mystery. I still prefer abjection and even suicide to grief, that’s something to be really scared of as Julia Kristeva reminds us and it’s perfect for a male; it’s normally the consequence of a classical example of homicide. The victim pays dearly for life in a lyrical act of self-defiant a-significance and the chief glitch in suffering is the absolute trust put in medical science for a cure. A quasi-social contingency precipitates a phone-call to an expert on theories of the abnormal and nearly all the answers open up to multiple choice. You feel desperate working your way so close to death, in fact you feel like Mary Douglas in the midst of all her anthropological research into the constitution of symbolic systems. Her belief was that defilement is of the order of a boundary, but if you ask me her gain in credibility was at my loss of it. Ours were two compossible but variant theories of the signifying process. Mine of course cross-invoked the usual non-tribal panacea in the form of a hybrid act of vengeance, a sort of schizophrenic common-denominator by which the one can leave the other alone.
It’s a funny feeling to be surrounded by what you hold. An orange as an orchard and your hand a city full of people all looking like me. Is there a name for this disorder? It all makes one feel rather Complutensian, Spain’s good that way, it helps you brush up on your Roman Catholicism. I think it best though if we stay in the shade of an old Hittite apothegm to help us choreograph our intellects and prepare for the day when this unitary urbanism turns into a summary of the above and we’re both burned in effigy. Incidentally, what made you take up deipnosophistry, does it run in your family? Look at the fading fire with its glow so different from the light above the turtle soup you called our Morning Dove. Mind plus abrogation equals the destiny of linguistic thought which goes to show how bright we’ve both become, our life together growing from its roots in fiction directed by a will towards whatever. I’ve still got a blubbing curiosity as to what you’ll do when this poem’s over, what you’ll become in some new metropolis of the moment, unknown and unrespected by the ones who count the ways we see our being as amphitheatrical to the bitter end. Some simply say we’ll just have to wait and see while others insist there should be a paradox in the unrespected permanent condition of life’s conflicting right-angles. As for me, I’m too nervous to die, what I’d like is a principality or something vaguely Prussian and you as my chargé d’affaires. Directed by the pleasures of imagination we can quench our fugitive vocalities in Tuscaloosa-style martinis as bright politicians on the edge of paradox. To show the light from your early work can still illumine the bitter tasks ahead but it’s too cold today to live out its myth. So much for certitude, knitting our hermeneutic circles and hoping for a hoola-hoop of eternal returns. It’s time we made better use of our time than trying to make the day stand still, that darker shade of nowadays is less contemporary than it used to be but yesterday is where we can still stay and you can tell me once again of all the myriad places you have left your words.
tumbling, the practical steps, the “how”

…Topman somersault backward from Bottom’s shoulders
with the electricity of July cloud mountains
(good spotters, stand like the drain pipes running down Iowa City’s sides,
how they piss like bulls in the hard rains).

…now float above Bottom’s supporting arms
like a canopy of leaves over the lake Gymnasium.
Turn head toward audience with which
a little rain came in. Twiddle your thumbs.
This adds a comedy touch.

…when you’ve both completed the egg-roll,
grasp each other’s ankles as you’d grasp
the steering wheel of a woman’s skinny arms
and drive into the aortic dark.

…dive. Kip. Slap floor rapidly with the top of your foot.
Slapslaplap.
Back dive slap. Oh,
not so clumsily! not as when
novelist Cathy Cash Spellman writes,
“‘No, no, please,’ she screamed over and over
as they tumbled rolled and rose and tumbled again.”
Fear can spoil your. “She struggled to quiet her terror.”
Keep your self-possession. “Untie my legs, sir. My baby is coming.”

Like the red sun when it squats in a biker’s
mirror on the Pacific Coast Highway
while sea-slobbered Gladstone’s waiters make foil swans
to stomach the chocolate cake you can’t eat all of
no way after the famous globbed chowder,
take a breath, whip backward, and round off.
And you, reader, do you have your air legs by now?
Are you ready to have a fling with space is not such a let me down thing?
We endorse, even, a big bang subject-in-knowing
but this work should be considered advanced.
Choose to let larger the path of noise
blah is a burbling you could be cried against
because you’re more than one
and bursting, unpredictable, and crazy.

A Gaul shouts on the hill in sixteen directions.
Pass it on.

Sixteen times sixteen times sixteen,
do you hear?

The navel of the vortex is you.
Index of 1913

by author

Armand, Louis .......................... 152
Basinski, Michael ..................... 148
Bedient, Cal ............................ 54, 192
Book, Shane ........................... 168
Brown, Sandy ......................... 156
Cain, Stephen .......................... 146
Chen, Chris ............................. 69, 157
Clover, Joshua .......................... 58
Cooperman, Matthew .................. 84
Daniels, Chris ......................... 126
Debeljak, Aleš ......................... 115
Dwivedy, Biswamit .................... 14
Elshlaim, Eric ........................... 52
Feast, Graham .......................... 119
Gomberg, Billy .......................... 107
Goncharova, Natalia ................... 4
Gridley, Sarah ........................... 110
Guest, Barbara ........................... 12
Halsey, Alan ............................. 102
Hillman, Brenda ......................... 49
Hong, Cathy Park ....................... 113
Inguito, Scott ............................ 59
Li, Pamela ............................... 178
Mac Cormack, Karen ................... 140
Mackey, Nathaniel ...................... 84
Maxwell, Susan ......................... 21
McCallery, Steve ....................... 88
O’Brien, Geoffrey G .................... 159
Pessoa, Fernando ...................... 126
Pierce, Leighton ......................... 99
Rastula, Jed .............................. 120
Ratcliffe, Stephen ...................... 174
Riggs, Sarah ............................. 90
Schwartz, Louis-Georges .............. 56
Stevens, James ......................... 81
Swenssen, Cole ........................ 53
Taggart, John ............................ 57, 51
Thirkield, Jonathan .................... 76
Volkman, Karen ......................... 74
Willard, Steve ........................... 162

by title or first line

Flagelliform ............................ 177
Flagelliform ............................ 173
fragments for a theory of glittery water or after Errant Walk, Strike and Jaws ............................. 96
He can’t experience .................... 16
How Far Is That ........................ 40
Hungry Knight, The .................... 5
I feel light as a feather ............... 18
I found a buried book you will accelerate off ................................. 19
If You Have A Single In Many ........ 42
Implexures ............................... 140
In March ................................. 85
Industrial Magdalene .......................... 130
Kitaj Dancer ............................. 135
Laya .................................. 48
Losses or resonance .................... 20
Make It Do ............................... 44
Maybe .................................. 150
Memory Screen Notebooks, The .... 102
Math .................................. 158
Needy To Adorn That Is To Carry ....... 46
1913 Foreword to the Natalia Goncharova Exhibition Catalog ........................................... 9
no name on the bullet, no 1 ........ 69
no name on the bullet, no 3 ........................... 70
Note .................................. 75
One might start here .................... 74
Onward .................................. 114
Open Window: Bonnard & the History of Glass, The .......................... 55
Pastorelle 12 ............................. 152
Patriot act ................................ 119
photograph of Natalia Goncharova ....... 8
Picture Primitive ........................ 52
Plinth .................................. 51
Rayonism, Sketch of a Composition .......................... 4
REAL ................................ 157
Red Letter (- Contemporary Poetry) , The .......................... 46
Review of Implexures .................... 146
Several Composers, Their Songs, and Their Musicians ............................ 78
Shingle Mirror, Average Bark .......... 84
6 Components from Aristotle ............ 49
Sound and Somnolence .................. 84
Stalking Cat .............................. 7
Still: Arcades ............................. 84
Still: Movie .............................. 85
Still: will not be televised .............. 86
stonewall was a riot ..................... 71
The air divided upheavals of gravity .................................. 15
The city did bend a little gesture today .................................. 17
the God-kite on a chain .................. 68
the lions in the trees crackle ............ 59
5 images ................................ 99
To Laminate the Air ....................... 56
Tobacco Shop ............................ 126
tumbling, the practical steps, the “how” .................................. 93
vulgar formalism (probably misread it) .................................. 72
Warm Swirls Of Salmon .................. 47
Why Trees Weep .......................... 55
Woman With Two Sons ..................... 48
You’ve probably noticed how much of what you see ...................... 14
Blaise Cendrars and Sonia Delaunay publish “the first simultaneous book,” *La Prose du Transsibérien et de la petite Jehanne de France.*

Poet Rabindranath Tagore of India is awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature.

Henri Marie La Fontaine, a socialist, a feminist, a Belgian, is awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

Prizes are included in Cracker Jack candy boxes for the first time.

Picasso does a number of drawings on the back of sheets of a French Revolution era tax register from Arles-sur-Tech (near Céret).

Apollinaire publishes a volume of essays on Cubism and Cubists, titled *Les Peintres cubistes: Méditations esthétiques,* Paris, Eugène Figuière. It is a patchwork of previously published articles, presented in no particular order.

A peace treaty is signed in London ending the First Balkan War.

Kandinsky’s *Light Picture*

From Céret, Eva writes to Gertrude Stein: “The weather is marvelous and we’ve settled in.” She also sends a postcard to Alice Toklas.

Russian Avant-Garde books in proliferation, including the collaborative *Vzorval (Explodity)* by artist Olga Rozanova and husband poet Alexei Kruchenykh.

Louis Feuillade’s *Fantômas* film serials

Marc Aurèle Protat, *Swann’s Way*

Max Jacob founds the *Société des Amis de Fantômas.*

D. W. Griffith completes his series of Biograph Shorts and leaves the American Mutoscope and Biograph Co. in New York to make full length motion pictures.

Vivien Leigh is born.

*Alcools* by Guillaume Apollinaire is published.

‘The Judgment’ by Franz Kafka is published.

Richard Nixon is born.

Rosa Parks is born.

Jimmy Hoffa is born.

Harriet Tubman dies.

Albert Camus is born.

deChirico’s *Delights of the Poet*

Sonia Delaunay writes “La Poésie Simultanée”

Kupka’s *Abstract Compositions*

Malevich’s *Black Circle*

Malevich’s *Black Square*